An Introduction to Islam by David Waines. 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, xi + 367 pp.

An Introduction to Islam by David Waines consists of three parts: Foundations, Islamic Teaching and Practice and Islam in the Modern World. The author begins by characteristically painting the picture of pre-Islamic pagan Arabia on the eve of Islam's advent. He discusses the role and significance the pre-Islamic Arabs accorded to their pantheon of deities, as well as the (largely inherited) moral codes that governed their conduct in tribal society. Waines neatly ties this into what follows, where he discusses the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, the event of the revelation of the Qur'an and the opposition he encountered by his fellow tribesmen in Mecca. This is followed by a discussion of the Qur'an's significance, its conception of divinity, and the content and importance of the Hadith as a source of guidance for Muslims. The section is rounded off with discussions on topics such as the first period of civil strife (fitnah) after the Prophet's death, and the interesting body of literature devoted to Muslim-Christian polemics in early medieval Islam.

The transition from the first part of the book to the second part is rather fluid. This is because the second part is essentially an elaboration of the themes discussed in the first. With remarkable ease and accuracy, the author elucidates the historical development and main features of Islamic law in both its theory and practice. Returning to his earlier discussion on the Hadith, here he briefly outlines how its corpus came to be collected. Readers unfamiliar with the main theological controversies that confronted Islam in its

formative years (e.g., the problem of free will and the status of the grave sinner) will find the section devoted to Islamic theology fairly useful. Waines goes on to explain some of the principle doctrines of the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites and outlines some of the ideas of Neoplatonic Islamic philosophy, albeit through the lenses of Ghazali's famous refutation. Surprisingly, the author does not discuss any of the major developments in Islamic philosophy post-Ibn Rushd, such as the important work of the Ishraqi (Illuminationist) school (incidentally, the founder of this school, Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi, was a contemporary of Ibn Rushd). The last two chapters are devoted to Sufism and Shi'ism respectively. Although Waines does misrepresent Ibn al-'Arabi's metaphysics of Being by calling it a "system" (pp. 153 and 192), on the whole he presents the Islamic mystical tradition in a refreshing and informed manner. His section on Shi'ism is splendid. It is written with considerable care and he effectively isolates the main themes characteristic of Twelver Shi'ite thought and practice.

In the third and longest part of this work, Waines incorporates Ibn Battutah's travel accounts into the book's narrative. This works very well as it gives readers a sense of the diverse and rich cultural patterns that were intricately woven into the fabric of fourteenth century Islamic civilization. After reading through the section, this present reviewer could not help but marvel at how the observations of a fourteenth century traveler and legal judge from Tangiers could so effectively contribute to a twenty first century introductory textbook on Islam. Additionally, Waines takes readers through some of the essential features of the three important "gunpowder" Muslim dynasties, devotes an interesting discussion to the role played by the Mosque in Muslim daily life and outlines some of its different architectural and artistic expressions throughout Islamic history. The

remainder of the book looks at important topics such as the emergence of Wahhabism, Muslim reformist thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the controversial Rushdie affair, the Israel-Palestine conflict, the rise of Osama bin Laden, and the aftermath of 9/11. Appended to the book is an interesting discussion, "Excursus on Islamic Origins", which highlights the contributions made by several modern western scholars to understanding Islam's principle sources, while also managing to take into account the personal predilections of each author under consideration.

One of the most significant features of this book is the way the author relates the characteristic aspects of Muslim civilization to Islam's sacred sources. He does this especially well in his discussions on the sources used in legal reasoning in Islamic jurisprudence and on the significance and meaning of Islamic architecture. Waines clearly articulates a wealth of information in beautiful prose, presenting the book more as a sustained narrative rather than as a dry textbook filled with factual information. The book also includes a map that features the most important cities in Islamic civilization, along with more than twenty black and white photographs of the many cultural faces of Islam, the different types of Mosques found throughout the Muslim world and several exquisite stylized pages from the Qur'an. There is little doubt that this second edition of *An Introduction to Islam* will be a useful textbook for introductory university courses on Islam.

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