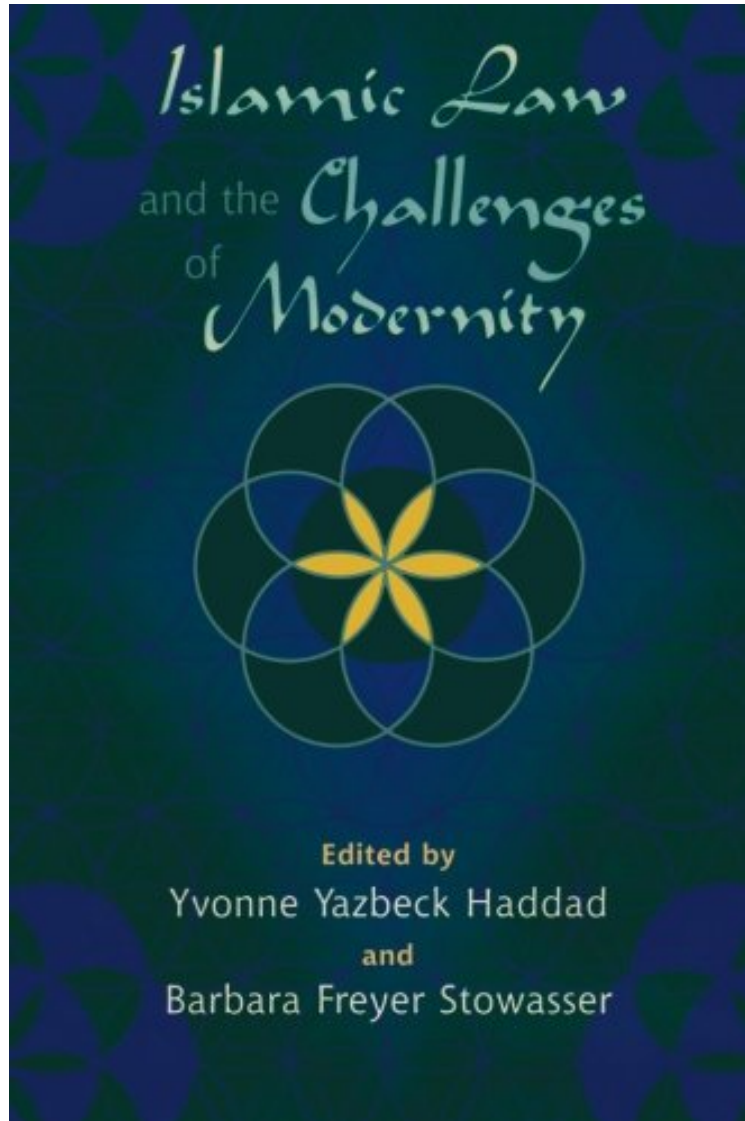


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Since Europeans first colonized Arab lands in the 19th century, they have been pressing to have the area's indigenous laws and legal systems accord with Western models. Although most Arab states now have national codes of law that reflect Western influence, fierce internal struggles continue over how to interpret Islamic law, particularly in the areas

of gender and family. From different geographical and ideological points across the contemporary Arab world, Haddad and Stowasser demonstrate the range of views on just what Islam's legal heritage in the region should be. For either law or religion classes, *Islamic Law and the Challenges of Modernity* provides the broad historical overview and particular cases needed to understand this contentious issue.

These essays are a useful contribution to the increasing number of debates on Islamic law today. . . . the broad spectrum of themes and the style of writing ensure that scholars from a wide range of disciplines will be able to absorb the main arguments and perceive the specific ethical dilemmas in Islamic legal discourse today. (Journal Of The American Academy Of Religion) This compilation of eight research articles on Islamic law by leading experts, edited by two equally distinguished scholars, is a timely work that is rich in its analysis, broad in its scope, and balanced in its approach. The discourse envelops the intricacies, contradictions, and interpretive controversies of Islamic law as faced by the modern-day Arab states. It covers the impact of East-West interaction on Islamic legal codes and Sharia; the relevance of traditional Islamic customs/rules to present circumstances; the competence and caliber of Islamic scholars who are supposed to define and elaborate the practical aspects of law; and areas of dispute especially in matters of family law and gender related aspects. The work defines these topics well and provides excellent citations and sources for further research. The contributors address the subject from a variety of vantage points and provide sufficient background on the issues from theoretical and scholarly as well as historical and political perspectives. Highly recommended. (Choice) About the Author Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad is professor of history of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations at the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at the Edmund Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. She has taught Middle East history and Islamic studies at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Hartford Seminary; and Colgate University. She is a past president of the Middle East Studies Association. Haddad's research interest has focused on twentieth-century Islamic thought and Muslims in the West. Her numerous publications include *Contemporary Islam and the Challenge of History*; *Muslim Communities in North America*; *The Islamic Revival*; *The Muslims of America*; *Women, Religion, and Social Change*; *Muslims on the Americanization Path?*; *Muslims in the West: From Sojourners to Citizens*; and *Muslim Minorities in the West: "Visible" and "Invisible."* Barbara Freyer Stowasser (Ph.D., Islamic Studies and Semitic Languages, Universitat Munster) is professor of Arabic in the Department of Arabic at Georgetown University. Since 1993, she has served as director of the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies. She served as the 34th president of the Middle East Studies Association (1998-99). Her publications include a book length study on *Women in the Qur'an: Traditions and Interpretation* (Oxford University Press, 1994), an edited volume entitled *The Islamic Impulse* (CCAS, 1987), articles published in American, German, Arabic and Turkish journals and periodicals, and book chapters in collected volumes. CCAS recently published Dr. Stowasser's *A Time to Reap: Thoughts on Calendars and Millennialism*, an exploration of how Islam, Christianity, and Judaism have historically treated periods of apocalyptic imminence.