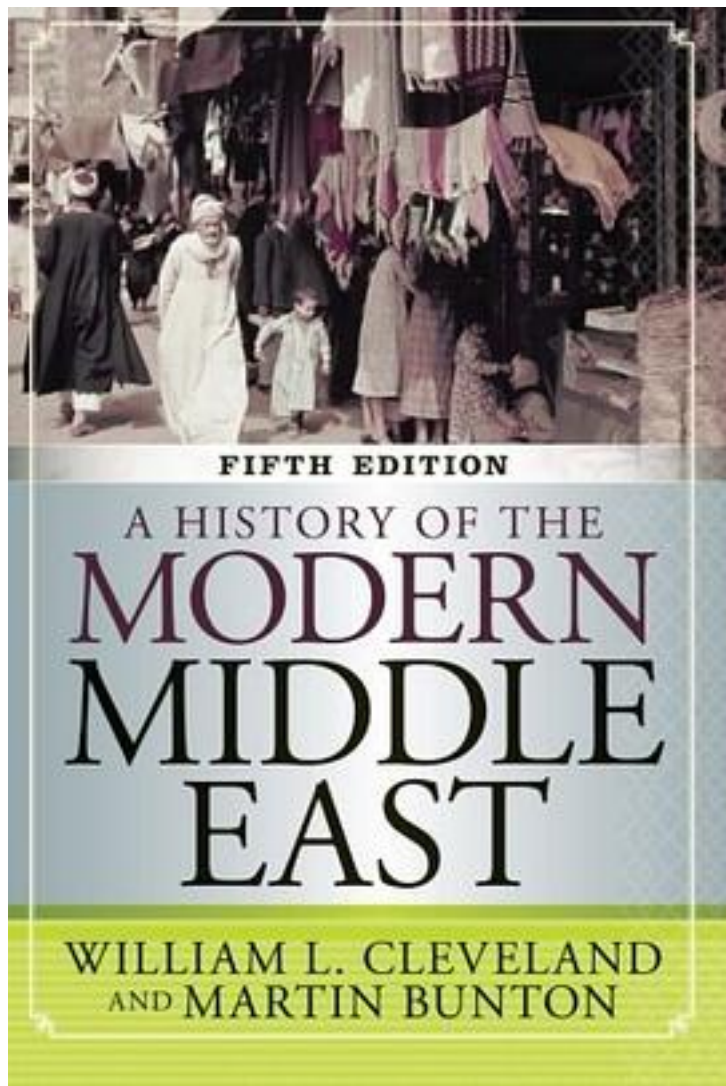


A History of the Modern Middle East



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The religion of Islam is often viewed solely in terms of its origins in the
barren
sparsely settled Arabian Peninsula. To be sure
it was in the Arabian
city of Mecca that Islam was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in the
years A.D. 610 to A.D. 632. However
during the century following Muham-
mad's death
the Arabs expanded out of the peninsula and conquered a
world empire stretching from Spain to present-day Pakistan. The great capi-
tal cities of the first Arab-Islamic empires
Damascus and Baghdad
were not
located in Arabia but in the long-settled lands of antiquity. To understand
the development of Islam and Islamic civilization
we must recognize that
the Middle East region into which Islam expanded was a rich repository of
centuries of accumulated intellectual exchanges
religious experiences
and
administrative practices. Islamic society built upon these existing tbunda-
tions and was shaped by them. As Ira Lapidus has written
"The civilization
of Islami
though born in Mecca
also had its progenitors in Palestine
Baby-
lon
and Persepolis."

作者介绍:

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