STATE AND RELIGION IN ISLAMIC SOCIETIES

I
INTRODUCTION

The relations between states and religious institutions and communities have for more than a century been a central concern in the study of Middle Eastern and other Islamic societies. The study of the life of the prophet Muḥammad and the caliphate, and of Muslim juristic, political, literary and philosophical theory, have all reinforced the notion that Islam does not have a church institution, that Islam encompasses all domains including law and the state, that the state and religious community are one and the same, and that state and religious authority are embodied in the same person. This is still the common view of many western and Muslim scholars of Islam.[1]

In consequence, Islamic societies are said to be fundamentally different from western societies. The European societies are presumed to be built upon a profound separation of state and religious institutions. This view ignores the variety and complexity of the European cases. It ignores the numerous examples of state control of religion, the phenomenon of established churches (such as the Anglican church in England), and the concordats in Italy. It ignores the integral connection between religious and political nationalism in such countries as Ireland or Poland. It ignores the close identity between religious affiliation and nationality in Holland and Spain. Finally, it ignores the connection between religion and activist political movements, such as the liberation churches in Latin America.

None the less, this presumed difference has commonly been used to account for the differing historical development of western and Islamic societies. Western societies, with their inherent separation of secular and sacred, church and state, civil and religious law, are said to have promoted an autonomous domain of secular culture and civil society which are the bases of modernity.

[1] B. Lewis, *Islam and the West* (Oxford, 1993), p. 4.

Conversely, Islamic societies, lacking a differentiation of secular and sacred, have been tied to binding religious norms, inhibiting their potential for secularization and development.

This trope of orientalist discussion has become an important contemporary political issue in the Islamic world, where the formation of national states has led to a marked secularization of public life. Political identity has been defined in national terms. Islam has been disestablished and Islamic religious associations proscribed in many countries. Secular educational and judicial institutions and legal codes have replaced Islamic education and Islamic justice. Now the neo-Islamic revivalist movements (the ones commonly called "fundamentalist") denounce this trend and call for a return to a state that represents and embodies Islam and enforces an Islamic way of life.

On all sides there is a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding about this subject. I would like to propose a more accurate historical view. My goal in this paper is to survey Middle Eastern Islamic history, and to account for the emergence of the principal Islamic patterns of state-religion relations so as to know better — without anachronism, cultural bias or political preference — what has been the history of the relations of state and religion in Islamic countries. I believe that, contrary to received wisdom, there is a notable differentiation of state and religious institutions in Islamic societies. The historical evidence also shows that there is no single Islamic model for states and religious institutions, but rather several competing ones. Moreover, in each of the models there are ambiguities concerning the distribution of authority, functions and relations among institutions. Finally, there are evident differences between theory and practice. I hope that the present article will advance the state of discussion among specialists, but more importantly will give non-specialist readers a good grasp of an issue that has considerable public importance, not only in many Muslim countries, but also for the way in which Europeans conceive of their relationships to these countries.

II
THE PRE-ISLAMIC PRECEDENTS

This question was, of course, not new to the Islamic era. There were both ancient and more immediate Roman and Sassanian precedents for later Islamic theory and practice. Here I shall take

a couple of examples to set the stage for our understanding of the evolution of the Islamic situation. In ancient times we already find an institutional differentiation of state and temple, state and church, state and religion, but with unexpected ambiguities concerning the nature of royal and religious authority and the division of secular and sacerdotal functions.

The ancient Near East provides two very different precedents for the relationship between state and religious institutions. The ancient Egyptian pharaohs were considered divine beings. No differentiation was made between divinity and kingship, nor between kingship and military, political, magical and religious powers.[2] The first differentiation of religion and state, king and priest, sacred and royal authority, became meaningful in ancient Mesopotamia. The emergence of temple communities and temple cities in the fourth and late third millenniums B.C. created a new and more complex structure. As the villages and/or lineages allied for the purpose of erecting the ancient Mesopotamian temples, they brought into being at one and the same time communities of faith, economic bodies and political units. To construct the temples, it was necessary to mobilize the labour resources of numerous small communities, to transfer some of the surplus wealth of agricultural, pastoral, fishing and mining groups to the temples, and to arrange some mechanism for the redistribution of resources among specialized producers. The priestly leaders who directed the construction of the temples and their ceremonies created a system of economic redistribution to sustain the temples and the peoples committed to their construction. In the early temples, priests served the functions of worship, of economic management and of judicial and political leadership.

Between 2700 and 2400 B.C., the temple communities evolved into more differentiated societies. The separation of political functions and religious authority began with the emergence of *lugals*, local war-lords, who conquered villages and temple cities and created the first territorial city-states — progressively, city-states and multi-city-states. The ultimate step was taken by a foreign conqueror, Sargon of Akkad, who around 2400 B.C. conquered the southern Mesopotamian cities and established the first imperial regime.

The emergence of an imperial state ruling over numerous cities

[2] P. Springborg, *Royal Persons: Patriarchal Monarchy and the Feminine Principle* (London, 1990); M. A. Hoffman, *Egypt before the Pharaohs* (New York, 1979).

and temple communities marks a defining moment in the history of states and religions. With the emergence of kingship, the temples were reduced to what we would call religious functions. Temple lands were turned over to the royal household and ultimately to feudatories and private owners. Similarly, the economic functions of the temples were partly vested in royal households; in later times market economies replaced the temple redistribution system. Finally, the emperor Hammurabi (d. 1750 B.C.) deprived the temples of the last vestiges of their judicial authority. The temples became specialized units for worship, while the priests became specialists in religious ritual and religious theory.

However, the redefinition of the temple community in terms of religious functions did not mean a clear-cut separation of state and religious institutions. The ruler also absorbed many of the sacred functions of the temples and the sacred authority of the priests. The ancient Mesopotamian kings were not usually considered divine persons, but they claimed to be the anointed representatives of the gods, capable of interpreting their will as expressed in signs, omens, oracles and in the dreams of the royal person. The rulers were officially the heads of the temple clergy and were responsible for the construction and the maintenance of the temples. They took the lead in festivals and ceremonies, including the ceremonial union of the ruler with a goddess at the New Year which signified the rejuvenation of the land, the return of fertility and the restoration of order in nature and the cosmos. The Mesopotamian rulers were at once kings and high priests, heads of state and heads of religion.[3]

Thus the ancient Mesopotamian precedent gives us a partial differentiation of state and religious authority. While the temples were originally the bearers of economic, political and religious roles, the separation of functions created an ambiguous situation. The temples remained largely sacerdotal institutions, but kingship and religion were still merged. Now the king was the chosen agent of the gods; his authority stemmed from divine selection; he was the chief intermediary between human society and the divine beings; and he was the high priest on special occasions and the chief authority over temples and clergy. The ancient

[3] R. M. Adams, *The Evolution of Urban Society* (Chicago, 1966); H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature* (Chicago, 1948); I. Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1967).

precedents, then, created the separate realms of state and temples, but an ambiguous distribution of sacred and secular authority.

Turning from the ancient era to the late Roman and Sassanian predecessors of the Islamic empires, we find more highly evolved institutions of state and religion and a more complex differentiation of roles. The Christian churches, born in opposition to the Roman state, had evolved as independent institutions. A church was a legally recognized, hierarchically organized corporation. Indeed the church hierarchies were the most highly organized religious bodies to be found anywhere in the world. The bishops of the churches were free to determine internal administrative matters on their own. Religious doctrine could only be promulgated by the bishops and the church. Only the church had the power to offer the sacraments that opened the way to salvation. Yet while institutionally separate from the state, the church was not only a spiritual institution, but an administrative and political authority. At a local level, Christian churches had jurisdiction in many matters that we would now regard as secular. Matters of the civil law of family, property and commerce, and even some matters of criminal law, were regulated by churches. The churches were important educational institutions. Bishops were often the governors of their dioceses. Despite the official separation of church and state at the imperial level, at the local level the church was a civil-political institution (*ecclesia*).[4]

With the adoption of Christianity by the Roman emperors and the consecration of Christianity as the official religion of the empire, the relationship between church and state became exceedingly close. The emperor became the institutional head of the church. He was responsible for the appointment of bishops and for the convening of church conferences. He took a large role in seeing that these conferences produced theological decisions that were consistent with imperial interests. The emperors also assumed responsibility for the persecution of heresy, a task which was closely allied to the subordination of peripheral Roman provinces, especially in the Middle East and North Africa. Theological policy was linked to political objectives. The masses were expected to adhere to the religion of the ruler.

In the Sassanian empire, the relations of churches and the state were different. The Sassanian shah officially adhered to the

[4] H. Lietzmann, *A History of the Early Church*, trans. B. L. Woolf, 4 vols. (New York, 1950-3).

Zoroastrian religion, but he was in fact the tolerant patron, not only of the Zoroastrian temples and *mobads*, but also of the organized Christian churches, such as the Jacobite and the Nestorian. The Sassanian rulers considered each of them an intermediary responsible for the civil and tax administration of their adherents. They created the policy which would in Ottoman times be known as the *millet* system. While Byzantine policy called for a church unified under imperial authority, committed to carrying out imperial policies in the domain of religion, Sassanian policy tolerated a multiplicity of religions and churches, each of which was committed to maintaining the administrative authority of the shah but not to any politically inspired theological or religious programme.[5] Both these precedents would later influence the organization of relations between the state and religious communities in the early Islamic era.

III

ISLAM AND THE DIFFERENTIATION OF STATE AND RELIGION

The Arab Muslim conquests of the Middle East in the seventh and eighth centuries introduced new premisses about the relation of state and religion, but Arab Muslim practices and concepts gradually evolved into substantial conformity with Byzantine and Sassanian precedents.

Islam was first introduced into an Arabian society that was profoundly different from those of the imperial Middle East. While the Middle East was already a highly developed axial age society built upon agriculture and urban settlement, organized religious associations and imperial regimes, Arabia was a politically fragmented region, largely pastoral, primarily pagan in religion, and without either an organized state or a region-wide church. It was predominantly a lineage society. To this society the prophet Muḥammad (*c.*570-632) brought a revelation of the existence of things unseen that conferred upon him authority over all things visible. He organized a Muslim community to fulfil God's command in matters of belief, ethics, family, commerce, politics and war. Islam became a rallying-point for a coalition of lineage groups and created a new superordinate organization. In the early phases of Islam, religious identity did not

[5] A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 2nd edn (Copenhagen, 1944); M. G. Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest* (Princeton, 1984), esp. pt 3.

supersede, but was rather superimposed upon, clan, lineage and tribal units. Also there was no differentiation between Muḥammad's prophetic teaching, his authority in moral and spiritual matters, and his role as a tribal mediator, arbitrator and organizer. No distinction was made between the realm of religion and that of the state.[6]

With the Arab-Islamic conquests, Islam introduced into the Middle East an alternative, undifferentiated concept of the relations of secular and religious authority. Between 632 and 751 the Arabs conquered the Middle East and adjacent parts of North Africa, Spain and Inner Asia as far as the border of present-day China. The caliphs, the successors of the Prophet and the new emperors, established a regime that would last until 945. Though the doors of revelation were closed, the caliphs inherited the Prophet's executive authority. Their authority to implement and defend the truth was as great as his authority to announce it. The caliphs' authority applied to everything from individual piety to ritual, family, business, political and military matters. It was a seamless authority inherited by the men who stood in the Prophet's place.

On the basis of this authority, the caliphs claimed to be *khalīfat allāh*, not only successors to the Prophet, but vice-regents of God. They assumed the protection and endowment of Muslim worship, the organization of mosques and the defence of the pilgrimage. They claimed authority in legal and doctrinal matters and the right to defend the Muslim community against heresy.[7]

The subsequent evolution of the caliphate, however, led to a breakdown of the initial concept and the progressive separation of religious and political authority. To sustain their authority, the caliphs adopted the trappings of Byzantine and Sassanian imperial power alongside their Islamic identity. The Umayyad dynasty incorporated Byzantine artistic, architectural and ceremonial motifs into the caliphal court and into the palaces and mosques constructed by the dynasty. The 'Abbāsid dynasty, in its turn, patronized Hellenistic philosophy and science, Pahlavi literature, and other aspects of the Middle Eastern imperial cultural tradition

[6] W. M. Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca* (Oxford, 1953); W. M. Watt, *Muhammad at Medina* (Oxford, 1956); E. R. Wolf, "The Social Organization of Mecca and the Origins of Islam", *Southwestern Jl Anthropology*, vii (1951), pp. 329-56.

[7] E. Tyan, *Institutions du droit public musulman*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1954-7), i; P. Crone and M. Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge, 1986).

that defined the caliphate in universalist terms. Coupled with these forms of non-Islamic Middle Eastern political culture were institutional developments which centralized political power, concentrating military and bureaucratic resources under the authority of the caliphate. Thus the caliphs, who began as the deputies and successors to the Prophet, attempted to combine their religious authority with the routine forms of Middle Eastern imperial, cultural and institutional authority. Though the religious claims of the caliphate did not lapse, the institution increasingly resembled the former Middle Eastern empires.

The transformation of caliphal authority was part of a larger process of the differentiation of the Arabian Islamic complex of the tribal-religious community and state into separate components. Just as the caliphate evolved from a religious to a monarchical identity, so the tribal nation in arms was displaced by professional forces and by a fiscal bureaucracy. At the same time, the post-conquest Arabian Muslim population began to generate socio-religious institutions of their own. In the garrison cities settled by the Arab-Muslim conquerors, kinship, clan and tribal structures were transformed by new patterns of military organization, economic activity and residence in the midst of non-Arab populations, and new groupings emerged, some based on neo-traditional tribal identities, others based on religion. Muslim scholars and holy men, the companions and descendants of the companions of the Prophet (without office or sacerdotal status), Qur'ān-reciters, scholars and ascetics became in daily practice the custodians and teachers of Islam. They came to embody the personal, moral and devotional teachings, and the social and communal counselling and leadership roles, that were part of the prophetic legacy. As clan and lineage ties lost their practical meaning in a rapidly changing population, religious scholars gathered around themselves students and clients seeking fellowship and guidance in the study of the Qur'ān, the sayings of the Prophet (*ḥadīth*), law and theology, or in the practice of ascetic renunciation and self-purification (Sufism). Such groups had a strongly sectarian quality. Some of them were Khārijis and Shiis. The Shiis, who held that 'Alī, Muḥammad's cousin and the fourth caliph, was the only legitimate successor to the Prophet, and that only his descendants are rightful leaders of the Muslims, became the leading political opponents of the caliphate and denied the legitimacy of the established regime. Others remained within

the Sunni camp, accepting the authority of the caliphate, but turned to the study of Qur'ān, *ḥadīth* and law as the truly meaningful expressions of Islam.

By the ninth century, these small and informal religious associations were consolidated into organized religious movements. The Shiis codified their religious and theological teachings and developed a festive calendar and ceremonies of pilgrimage. The Sunnis consolidated into schools of law, devoted to the legal teachings that embodied the moral and social impulses of Islam. The scholars, surrounded by students, interested members of the community, patrons and clients, and legal functionaries, such as witnesses, orderlies and clerks, became community leaders. Thus in the ninth and tenth centuries there emerged a new pattern of state and social organization in the Islamic lands. The caliphate had evolved into a political regime, legitimated in both Muslim terms and in terms of the cultural heritage derived from the non-Muslim political traditions of the region. At the same time, the sectarian form of religio-communal association became the norm for most of the Muslim population.

The emergence of two institutional structures with different élites and a different ethos generated an intense struggle between the caliphate and the *'ulamā'* (religious scholars). From the very beginning, the caliphate had claimed to be the protector of both the religious and the political interests of Muslims. To enforce these claims, the 'Abbāsid caliph al-Ma'mūn (813-33) initiated an inquisition that attempted to force the leading Muslim religious scholars to accept the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān and his authority to proclaim this doctrine. Most of the religious leaders capitulated. Only Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal refused to accept the caliphate's contentions. Already reputed to be the greatest scholar of *ḥadīth* in his time, Aḥmad now emerged as the public leader of the religious scholars. He denied that the Qur'ān was created, and affirmed the transcendent authority of the written word as opposed to its human interpreters.

The Ḥanbalī view made the scholars, not the caliphs, custodians of the truth. For the Ḥanbalites, the *'ulamā'* were obliged to uphold the teachings of Islam, to "command the good and forbid the evil", and to enforce those teachings in the community at large. In pursuit of their obligation, they could refuse to obey the caliphate in matters where the caliphs departed from the law, but they did not claim the right to rebel against the regime as

such. They remained committed to the caliphs as the successors to the Prophet. None the less, the distinction they introduced made the religious scholars the true leaders of the Muslim communities, and the religious communities independent agencies within the caliphal order.

A protracted struggle between the caliphate and the *'ulamā'* eventually ended with the victory of the latter. In 848-9, the caliph al-Mutawakkil reversed the policy of his predecessors, abandoned the thesis that the Qur'ān was created, and in effect conceded both the point of doctrine and the claims of the caliphate to be the ultimate source of religious belief.

This struggle was a crucial turning-point in the relationship between the caliphs and the religious communities. Henceforth, the caliph would remain the official head of the Muslim community and the symbol of Muslim unity. He would remain the administrator of Muslim religious and communal interests, but no longer would he be recognized as a source of religious belief. Henceforth, the sectarian communities under the leadership of the *'ulamā'* would evolve independently of the state under the aegis of the religious teachers. Thus the struggle over the createdness of the Qur'ān confirmed the institutional separation of the caliphate and the community, the division of authority between them, and the separate roles for each as bearers of part of what had been the legacy of the Prophet. Henceforth, the caliphate would evolve, contrary to the Muslim ideal, as a largely military and imperial institution legitimated in neo-Byzantine and neo-Sassanian terms, while the religious élites would develop a more complete authority over the communal, personal, religious and doctrinal aspects of Islam.[8]

IV

THE POST-IMPERIAL, SALJUQ STATES AND COMMUNITIES

The separation of state and religious institutions was confirmed by the historical trends of the next two centuries. The territorial empire of the caliphate collapsed in 945 and the domain of Islam was parcelled out among independent local regimes. Beginning in the eleventh century, the region was also subject to repeated

[8] I. M. Lapidus, "The Separation of State and Religion", *Internat. Jl Middle East Studies*, vi (1975), pp. 363-85; I. M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 45-54, 120-6, 162-80, 225-37.

waves of nomadic invaders from Central Asia whose chieftains established a succession of short-lived empires. The Saljuqs, who reigned from *c.*1040 to *c.*1200, defined the political institutions of the new era. While the state was in the hands of nomadic chieftains and war-lords of slave origin, Saljuq-led governments cultivated an Islamic identity. In principle, they recognized the legitimacy of the caliphate. They portrayed themselves as the defenders of Islam. They enforced Islamic law, patronized the pilgrimage, endowed colleges of learning and religious activity, and sometimes waged *jihād* against non-Muslim populations in Anatolia and Central Asia.

None the less, these states were not considered inherently Islamic. Turkish regimes looked back to their tribal ancestry and their conquests as the basis of dynastic legitimacy. By the cultivation of local languages, poetic traditions, architectural motifs, musical themes and cultic practices, or through universalistic, rationalistic, cosmological, philosophical and scientific pursuits, Middle Eastern states asserted a legitimacy independent of religion, and identified themselves as cosmopolitan, imperial and patrimonial regimes based on non-Muslim civilizations.

In the same period, Middle Eastern societies, disrupted by political turmoil and nomadic invasions, reacted to the upheavals by converting to Islam and by organizing themselves into communities based on religion, including Shii communities, Sunni schools of law and, later, Sufi brotherhoods. In the late tenth and eleventh centuries, the schools of law, already well established, acquired *madrasas* or colleges, buildings with endowed support serving as residences for both scholars and students and providing stipends for religious study.

Furthermore, in the course of the eleventh century the common people came to be identified with the schools of law. The leading scholars had close ties to merchant, bureaucratic and official families. They had a popular following among the people who sought their advice and protection. The schools of law came to serve important administrative, as well as religious and educational, purposes. The scholars took charge of judicial administration, local police, irrigation, public works and taxation. They organized education and charities. They officiated at births, marriages and deaths. They gave healing and spiritual consolation. Thus the ordinary daily relationships that constitute a civil society — marriage, family, inheritance, business dealings,

friendships, education, arbitration and litigation of disputes — all came under the purview of Islam.

Another type of religious-based community organization was built around Sufism. Sufism began as the purely individual quest for spiritual enlightenment and closeness to God among holy men and ascetics, but it gradually evolved into a social movement. Sufi masters acquired disciples. On the military frontiers of the Islamic world, and subsequently in the towns of the interior, the Sufis acquired residences for teaching, missionary activity and charitable work.

The group structure of Sufism was progressively consolidated in the course of the tenth and eleventh centuries. The residences, once homes to eclectic comings-together of itinerant mystics, gradually became the homes of organized brotherhoods. Formal ceremonies such as the giving of an *ijāza* or certificate of learning, the passing-on of the *khirqa* or the patched cloak of the master to the disciple, the conferring of a *silsila* or chain of authoritative transmission going back from the present master to the Prophet, turned students into disciples totally dedicated to the service of the master. The only route to spiritual salvation was complete dedication to the master.

Then in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the various groups of Sufi masters and their disciples were linked together. Those masters who were students of a common master in the previous generation came to consider themselves members of a brotherhood, a *ṭarīqa*, a loosely affiliated international association of Sufis who shared the same religious practices and spiritual tradition. Extended Sufi networks were promoted by ambitious masters who sent their disciples as *khalifas* or delegates to establish branches of the principal brotherhood. In the course of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Kubrawīya became important in Iran and Transoxania, the Suhrawardīya in Iraq, the Qadirīya in Iraq and Egypt, the Shādhilīya in North Africa and the Chistīya in India. The Sufi brotherhoods organized not only the relations of masters and disciples, but brought into their reach lay affiliates, who looked to the Sufi orders for ritual leadership, healing, mediation, welfare services and political spokesmanship. As Sufism spread, the great mass of the population became affiliated with one or several of the brotherhoods in addition to their affiliation to the schools of law. By the fifteenth century, throughout the Islamic lands the common people were

ordinarily both the clients of schools of law and members of one or another Sufi brotherhood. The schools of law and the Sufi brotherhoods had become the backbone of Muslim community organization.

These religious groups commonly withdrew from political affairs and turned into self-protective communities concerned with worship, ceremony and healing activities, the administration of religious law, education and the upholding of morality and of the symbols of an Islamic order. While many avoided contact with rulers, courts and the holders of political power, the religious élites none the less took on a this-worldly responsibility for the upholding of community life and for the teaching of religiously defined ways to personal salvation. Thus they preserved a kind of purity, avoiding the potential corruption of politics, but remained engaged in the needs of their people. The split between Muslim states and Muslim religious communities which came into the open in the ninth century was now fully institutionalized in a structure of society which separated local community organizations from states.

In the Saljuq period, a new relationship was worked out between states and a society organized into sectarian religious bodies. The newly dominant conquering Turkish peoples and slave war-lords, eager to calm resistance, to assure the passivity of the governed populations and the steady flow of taxes, decided to use the local religious élites and the existing communal structures as a mechanism to enforce and facilitate their rule. To do this, they accepted the caliph as the nominal head of the Islamic community. They agreed to enforce Islamic law. They suppressed Shiism by force and assisted in the triumph of Sunni Islam throughout much of the Middle East. They upheld at least some of the symbols of an Islamic order in the ceremonial, literary and artistic statements of the courts. In order to secure the co-operation of the local religious élites, the Saljuqs constructed mosques and *madrasas* in every major city, endowed them with funds to train students and religious cadres and made themselves the patrons of the people who spread Islam, administered local affairs and taught obedience to the regime. Patronage allowed them to influence the appointments of judges and teachers, and gave the state indirect control over a religious establishment dependent upon it for financial support.

Reciprocally, the Muslim religious leaders, remaining true to

the caliphate in principle, adapted themselves in practice to the new realities. They accepted the existing states as the necessary political condition of their era and claimed responsibility for the implementation of the Prophet's tradition in the domain of the small community and individual lives. They were not in fact committed to bringing about a restoration of the true caliphate, and accepted the legitimacy of the Saljuq states. While many religious leaders avoided the state, others served in government offices, assisted in local administration and taxation, and worked out the co-operative relationship between the military élites and the local religious élites, between *amīrs* and *aʿyān*, which became the basis of the Saljuq empires.[9]

V

THE LATER DIFFUSION AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE SALJUQ SYSTEM

The Saljuq system of relations between *'ulamā'* and the state, worked out in Baghdad and Iran, was carried westward by the Saljuq conquests to Syria and Egypt, and was later adopted by the Ottoman Empire in Anatolia, the Balkans and the western parts of the Fertile Crescent. A similar system was constructed by the Safavids in Iran between 1500 and 1724. The expansion of Islam the world over by conquest, trade and missionary activities also introduced these institutions to the Indian subcontinent, the islands of South-East Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and other regions.

In the Ottoman Empire the evolution of relations between state and religious élites led to the direct control of the state over

[9] Tyan, *Institutions du droit public musulman*, ii; M. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, ed. R. W. Smith, 3 vols. (Chicago, 1974), ii, pp. 12-152; H. Laoust, "La pensée et l'action politiques d'Al-Māwardī (364-450 / 974-1058)", *Revue des études islamiques*, xxxvi (1968), pp. 11-92; H. Laoust, *La politique de Ġazālī* (Paris, 1970); G. Makdisi, *Ibn 'Aqil et la résurgence de l'Islam traditionaliste au XI^e siècle, V^e siècle de l'Hégire* (Damascus, 1963). On social organization, see R. W. Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur* (Cambridge, 1972); J. E. Gilbert, "Institutionalization of Muslim Scholarship and Professionalization of the *'ulamā'* in Medieval Damascus", *Studia islamica*, lii (1980), pp. 105-34. For the *madrasa*, see G. Makdisi, "Muslim Institutions of Learning in Eleventh-Century Baghdad", *Bull. School of Oriental and African Studies*, xxiv (1961), pp. 1-56; D. Sourdel, "Réflexions sur la diffusion de la madrasa en Orient du XI^e au XIII^e siècle", *Révue des études islamiques*, xliv (1976), pp. 165-84; G. Makdisi, "Ash'ari and the Ash'arites in Islamic Religious History", *Studia islamica*, xvii (1962), pp. 37-80, xviii (1962), pp. 19-39; J. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford, 1971).

religious institutions. The Ottomans brought *'ulamā'* judicial and educational activities under bureaucratic control. In the course of their expansion, they created a sequence of colleges in Anatolia and the Balkans which they organized into a teaching hierarchy. The most recently founded colleges ranked highest in the bureaucracy. Teachers were appointed by the Ottoman state and all teachers participated in a graded hierarchy, advancing from college to college as part of a defined career path. A similar judicial hierarchy was created in which the cities of the empire were ranked in order of historic and practical importance. Judges were promoted from one city to another as they climbed through the judicial bureaucracy. At the top of this bureaucracy stood the chief *qāḍīs* and the *qāḍīs* of the army, who acted as informal administrators of the system. Judges were particularly important in the Ottoman system because they not only dealt with the administration of religious law, but assisted in the assessment of taxes, the administration of army regulations, the supervision of the urban guilds and the regulation of the urban economy. In the Ottoman system, an interlocked hierarchy with a defined career course for both judges and teachers, supported by state salaries and endowments, brought the whole of the religious establishment under state control. At the same time, the Ottomans suppressed independent Sufism. Sufis were either attached to the court or dispersed. Shiism was proscribed. By defining the limits of religious autonomy narrowly, the Ottomans transformed the system of state patronage of religious activities and informal religious acceptance of the state authority into a state-dominated version of Islam.[10]

The Safavid empire in Iran began, like the early Arab conquests, as an undifferentiated religio-political campaign. The Safavid family were Sufi sheikhs living in north-west Iran who,

[10] On Ottoman political institutions, see H. İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age*, trans. N. Itzkowitz and C. Imber (London, 1973); H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1950-7); N. Itzkowitz, *The Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition* (Chicago, 1972); C. H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600)* (Princeton, 1986); on the Ottoman religious institution, see Gibb and Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, i, pp. 19-38, ii, pp. 70-261; J. K. Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes* (London, 1937); R. Lifchez (ed.), *The Dervish Lodge: Architecture, Art and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey* (Berkeley, 1992); R. Repp, "Some Observations on the Development of the Ottoman Learned Hierarchy", in N. R. Keddie (ed.), *Scholars, Saints and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East since 1500* (Berkeley, 1972), pp. 17-32.

as Muslim holy men and later as self-proclaimed descendants of 'Alī, united individuals, small bands of warriors and some clan groups into a unified body that was eventually capable of overthrowing local dynasties and establishing an empire. After the conquests, however, the Safavids moved away from their original combination of religious and political leadership into the more familiar differentiation of institutions. In order to buttress their rule, the Safavids withdrew their charismatic claims and built up a more conventional religious establishment. Importing Shii scholars from the Gulf region and Iraq to man the new establishment, the shahs appointed the leading Shii *'ulamā'* to the positions of judges and teachers and created a supervisory bureaucracy to administer their activities. The shahs provided endowments for the great Shii shrines and otherwise brought the religious establishment under direct control. They violently eliminated all rival forms of Islam, including the Sunni schools of law and the Sufi brotherhoods. The Safavids adopted the prevailing Middle Eastern pattern of differentiated state-political and religio-communal institutions.[11]

Even so, Ottoman and Safavid state control over religious leaders did not obliterate the distinction between the court, military and bureaucratic élites on the one hand, and the religious teachers on the other, nor the distinctions of function, ethos and authority between them. The states focused on military power, public order and taxation; the religious communities dealt with individual learning, pious practices, prayer and ritual, social welfare and the mediation of local disputes.

In both the Ottoman and Safavid empires state control over the religious élites was an extreme variation in the spectrum of relations between state and religious élites found in Muslim societies. In the Mughal empire, for example, the state made its own

[11] R. Savory, *Iran under the Safavids* (Cambridge, 1980); A. K. S. Lambton, "*Quis custodiet custodes*? Some Reflections on the Persian Theory of Government", *Studia islamica*, v (1956), pp. 125-48, vi (1956), pp. 125-46; J. Aubin, "La politique religieuse des Safavides", in *Le shi'isme imâmite: Colloque de Strasbourg, 6-9 mai 1968* (Paris, 1970), pp. 235-44; S. A. Arjomand, "Religion, Political Action and Legitimate Domination in Shi'ite Iran: Fourteenth to Eighteenth Centuries A.D.", *European Jl Sociology*, xx (1979), pp. 59-109; S. A. Arjomand, "Religious Extremism (*ghuluww*), Ṣūfism and Sunnism in Safavid Iran, 1501-1722", *Jl Asian Hist.*, xv (1981), pp. 1-35; H. Algar, "Shi'ism and Iran in the Eighteenth Century", in T. Naff and R. Owen (eds.), *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History* (Carbondale, 1977), pp. 288-302; S. A. Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order and Societal Change in Shi'ite Iran* (Chicago, 1984).

claims to religious authority. Under Akbar a court cult was established centred on the ruler, integrating Muslim and Hindu themes in a more universalistic veneration. The court, however, did little to bring outside sectarian religious activity under state control. While it endowed *madrasas* and gave direct patronage to some *'ulamā'* groups, most religious activity remained autonomous. Reforming movements, Sufi brotherhoods and Muslim shrines remained independent. In India, there was no single dominant version of Islam and no all-embracing religious establishment, but rather numerous independent and competing religious bodies.

This differentiation of state and religious institutions was not, however, entirely clear-cut. First, the separation has never been recognized in ordinary Muslim discourse about state and religion, and it has only occasionally received formal recognition in Muslim political theory. It did win an indirect tacit acceptance. Beginning in the eleventh century, Muslim theorists such as al-Bāqillānī, al-Māwardī and Ibn Taymīya attempted to devise a new theory of the caliphate to preserve the historical and religious continuity of the Muslim community and to symbolize the ideal existence of the *umma* while at the same time allowing for historical actualities. The upshot of their theorizing was that the state was not a direct expression of Islam, but a secular institution whose duty it was to uphold Islam; the real community of Muslims was the community of scholars and holy men who carried on the legacy of the Prophet in daily life.[12]

Secondly, Muslim empires have cultivated a religious aura apart from Islam. While their activities were based on *siyāsa*, the exercise of power justified in its own terms, a form of *raison d'état* or political rationality, Muslim rulers borrowed the pre-Islamic Persian monarchical vision of the ruler as a divinely selected person, God's vice-regent on earth for the maintenance of order and the shepherding and protection of the common people. The Perso-Islamic political tradition also saw the ruler as an ideal human being, the equivalent of the Hellenistic philosopher-king,

[12] E. I. J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam* (Cambridge, 1958); W. M. Watt, *Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh, 1968). On juristic political theory, see A. K. S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam* (Oxford, 1981); Y. Ibish, *The Political Doctrine of al-Baqillani* (Beirut, 1966); al-Māwardī, *Les statuts gouvernementaux ou règles du droit public et administratif*, trans. E. Fagnan (Algiers, 1915); Ibn Taymīya, *Ibn Taimiyya on Public and Private Law in Islam: or, Public Policy in Islamic Jurisprudence*, trans. O. A. Farrukh (Beirut, 1966); H. Laoust, *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques de Takī-d-Dīn Aḥmad b. Taimīya, canoniste ḥanbalite* (Cairo, 1939).

who not only ruled and enforced law and order, but whose example led lesser humans to justice and salvation. The ruler, apart from Islam, was a sacred figure; the state, a divinely appointed institution.

Finally, there was an ambiguity in the concept of secular and sacred. The ordinary functions of Muslim community life and the daily activities of scholars and holy men involve activities which come under the purview of Islamic law and Islamic morality, but constitute from our point of view the realm of secular affairs. Business, administration of trusts, property issues and inheritances are only a few examples. The domain of the Muslim religious community which embodies the Islamic ideal is, by virtue of Islam itself, the realm of the mundane.

VI
THE UNITARY IDEAL

While the institutional separation of state and religion was the norm for Middle Eastern (and other Islamic) societies, the alternative concept, derived from the experience of the Prophet, of an identity of political and religious authority and of state and religious community, remained important in tribal societies, inspired resistance to state authority, and sometimes led to the overthrow of established regimes and the formation of new tribal empires. In many rural areas, the local religious teachers were popularly venerated Sufis who did not accept the state order and led tribal resistance to both the dominant regimes and the urban forms of communal organization. They developed their own set of religious ideas, blending Islamic precepts with local non-Muslim popular religious traditions, to maintain the separateness and independence of their peoples from the city-based, state-ruled dominant society. They sometimes organized their peoples for war and for conquest. These tribal empires, however, would also go through the same evolutionary trajectory as the early Arab caliphate and eventually conform to the more general historical Middle Eastern modes of differentiation of state and religious organization.

North Africa was the most fertile region for unitary movements. There, the Arab conquests had generated small-scale state-formation among Berber peoples in southern Tunisia and Algeria. Now an Islamic vocabulary and Arab leaders allowed for the articulation of common interests transcending kinship, lineage

and tribal identities. The Rustamid dynasty came to power on the basis of Kharijism; the Idrīsids and the Fātimids were Shii dynasties; the Almoravids and the Almohads adopted reformist Islam; in Morocco, the Sa'dian and Filālī dynasties were based upon the Sufi qualities of the leaders of the tribal-Islamic movements. These societies were based upon the integral unity of tribe, religious association and state.

The Fāṭimid case, however, illustrates an ambiguous outcome. A unified religio-political movement evolved into a full-scale Middle Eastern empire with only partly differentiated state and religious institutions. The Fāṭimids were at first the leaders of a Berber reformist movement, but after the conquest of North Africa and Egypt in 969, they became the rulers of a Middle Eastern empire built upon slave military forces and a bureaucratic administration inherited from previous regimes. In this case, however, the separation of state and religious institutions was not as clearly marked as in the case of the 'Abbāsid Empire. The Fāṭimid caliphs always maintained that they were the direct descendants of 'Alī and of the Prophet, and they maintained (in principle) an overarching religious authority. The religious institutions of the regime — the judiciary and the *Dār al-'Ilm*, or academy of religious learning — were court institutions. Fāṭimid-Shii affiliation remained the special religion of the political élite. The mass of the Egyptian population continued its Sunni affiliations. In this case there seems to have been only a partial differentiation of religious and political institutions on the state level, and a deep gulf between the state élites and the common people.[13]

The Filālī dynasty, which still rules Morocco, illustrates another variation. The movement which brought this dynasty to power was originally a coalition of southern Moroccan pastoral peoples under the leadership of Sufi reformers. Sufism had become important in Morocco as the organizing basis of Moroccan resistance to Spanish and Portuguese occupation of the coastal

[13] On North Africa, see J. M. Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1975); A. Laroui, *The History of the Maghrib: An Interpretative Essay*, trans. R. Manheim (Princeton, 1977); C. A. Julien, *History of North Africa: Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, from the Arab Conquest to 1830*, trans. J. Petrie (New York, 1970). On Fāṭimid concepts of authority, see J. M. Bloom, "The Mosque of al-Ḥākim in Cairo", *Muqarnas*, i (1983), pp. 15-36; C. Williams, "The Cult of 'Alid Saints in the Fatimid Monuments of Cairo. Part I: The Mosque of al-Aqmar", *ibid.*, pp. 37-52; M. Canard, "Le cérémonie fatimite et le cérémonie byzantin", *Byzantion*, xxi (1951), pp. 355-420; M. Canard, "La procession du nouvel an chez les Fatimides", *Annales de l'Institut d'études orientales*, x (1952), pp. 364-98.

towns. The Sufi-led tribal movement brought to power sultans who combine in themselves the personal religious authority of Sufi masters and their reputation for *baraka* (the ability to channel God's powers and blessings into the world), who lead the country in festival celebrations such as the birthday of the Prophet and Ramadan, and who enjoy the executive authority of caliphs in political administration. The Moroccan ruler is at once head of state and head of religion.[14]

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, reformed Sufism became the basis of a new wave of unification movements. In Mecca, Medina, Cairo and other centres of Muslim study, a religious reaction against the tendencies of state-sponsored, syncretic non-Islamic culture, against Shiism, and against popular Sufi practices such as the veneration of saints, led to a revived demand to restore the true Islam. This Islam was understood to be transmitted in the sayings of the Prophet, and in a reformed Sufi practice which eliminated those aspects of Sufism influenced by Shii beliefs or by the cultural practices of non-Muslim populations. The revived form of Islam also took as its ideal the integration of religious and political authority in a single individual in imitation of the Prophet. This ideal spread first in religious circles, but it soon made a worldwide impact. Students coming from diverse parts of the Muslim world to Mecca and Medina returned home to bring the reformed teaching to their own societies. These reformers were particularly effective in organizing religious movements in tribal societies: the Wahhābī movement in Arabia, the Barēlwī movement in northern India, the Sanūsī movement in Libya and the Fulani movement under the leadership of 'Uthmān Dan Fodio in West Africa are all examples of reformist movements in lineage or tribal societies leading to the formation of states dedicated to the integration of political and religious authority.

[14] H. Terasse, *Histoire du Maroc*, 2 vols. (Casablanca, 1950); A. Hammoudi, "Sainteté, pouvoir et société: Tamgrout aux XVII[e] et XVIII[e] siècles", *Annales E.S.C.*, xxxv (1980), pp. 615-41; G. Drague, *Esquisse d'histoire religieuse du Maroc: confréries et zaouias* (Paris, 1951); P. J. André, *Contribution à l'étude des confréries religieuses musulmanes* (Algiers, 1956); J. M. Abun-Nasr, *The Tijaniyya: A Sufi Order in the Modern World* (London, 1965); R. G. Jenkins, "The Evolution of Religious Brotherhoods in North and Northwest Africa, 1523-1900", in J. R. Willis (ed.), *Studies in West African Islamic History*, i (London, 1979), pp. 40-77; C. Geertz, *Islam Observed* (New Haven, 1968); V. J. Cornell, "The Logic of Analogy and the Role of the Sufi Shaykh in Post-Marinid Morocco", *Internat. Jl Middle East Studies*, xv (1983), pp. 67-93; E. Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas* (Chicago, 1969); E. Gellner, *Muslim Society* (Cambridge, 1981).

Reformism also led to movements of unification and revival in peasant societies undergoing commercialization. They were particularly important in Bengal in the early nineteenth century, where the Farā'iḍī organized peasant producers of cotton and indigo in opposition to Hindu and British tax-collectors. In Sumatra the Padri movement took hold among producers, transporters and marketers of coffee at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Reformism developed also among Singapore Arab and Malay merchants. At the end of the nineteenth century, reformist values spread among the plantation owners and workers of Malaya and Sumatra who produced rubber, coffee, tobacco, pepper, sugar, palm-oil and other products for the international market. All these cases are examples of the spread of the unified idea of Islamic state and community.[15]

[15] For an overview of the reformist movements, see J. O. Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Boulder, 1982); N. Levtzion and J. O. Voll (eds.), *Eighteenth Century Renewal and Reform in Islam* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1987).

On Reformism in India, see Y. Friedman, *Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī: An Outline of his Thought and a Study of his Image in the Eyes of Posterity* (Montreal, 1971); Shah Waliullah, *Sufism and the Islamic Tradition: The Lamahat and Sata'at of Shah Waliullah*, trans. G. N. Jalbani, ed. D. B. Fry (London, 1980); S. A. A. Rizvī, *Shah Walī-Allāh and his Times: A Study of Eighteenth Century Islām, Politics and Society in India* (Canberra, 1980). On the nineteenth-century reform movements in Bengal, see M. A. Khan, *History of the Fara'idi Movement in Bengal, 1818-1906* (Karachi, 1965); R. Ahmad, *The Bengal Muslims, 1871-1906: A Quest for Identity* (Delhi, 1981); S. Ahmad, *The Muslim Community of Bengal, 1884-1912* (Dacca, 1974). On the college of Deoband, see B. D. Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Princeton, 1982). See also F. Robinson, "The *'ulamā'* of Farangī Maḥall and their *adab*", in B. D. Metcalf (ed.), *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of adab in South Asian Islam* (Berkeley, 1984), pp. 152-83.

On Indonesia, see C. Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Glencoe, Ill., 1960); C. Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism in a Changing Peasant Economy: Central Sumatra, 1784-1847* (London, 1983); D. Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1942* (Singapore, 1973); J. L. Peacock, *Purifying the Faith: The Muhammadiya Movement in Indonesian Islam* (Menlo Park, 1978); J. L. Peacock, *Muslim Puritans: Reformist Psychology in Southeast Asian Islam* (Berkeley, 1978); H. M. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia* (Ithaca, 1970).

On West Africa, see Abun-Nasr, *Tijaniyya*; B. G. Martin, *Muslim Brotherhoods in Nineteenth-Century Africa* (Cambridge, 1976); C. C. Stewart, *Islam and Social Order in Mauritania* (Oxford, 1973); H. T. Norris, *The Tuaregs: Their Islamic Legacy and its Diffusion in the Sahel* (Warminster, 1975); J. R. Willis, "*Jihād fī sabīl Allāh*: Its Doctrinal Basis in Islam and some Aspects of its Evolution in Nineteenth Century West Africa", *Jl African Hist.*, viii (1967), pp. 395-415; M. Hiskett, "The Nineteenth-Century Jihads in West Africa", in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, v, J. E. Flint (ed.), *From c.1790 to c.1870* (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 125-69; M. Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate* (New York, 1967); H. A. S. Johnston, *The Fulani Empire of Sokoto* (London, 1967); M. Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth: The Life and Times of the Shehu Usuman Dan Fodio* (New York, 1973).

VII
CONCLUSION: THE TWO MODELS AND THE CONTEMPORARY SITUATION

Thus the history of the Middle East and of the wider Muslim world reveals a variety of institutional situations. The supposed Muslim norm of the integration of state and religious authority, and the identification of state and religious community, actually characterized only a small segment of Middle Eastern and other Muslim populations. Undifferentiated state-religious situations were characteristic of lineage or tribal societies, as in Muḥammad's Arabia, North Africa and Morocco, early Safavid Iran, and as in the reformist period of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Even in such cases the conquest of an agriculture-based, urbanized society would start a process of differentiation that broke down the integral connection of state and religion.

Conversely, the historic norm for Middle Eastern agro-urban-imperial societies has been the institutional differentiation of state and religion. Royal households or courts, political élites and the language and cultural style of the ruling classes were different from those of religious élites. In the 'Abbāsid, Saljuq, Ottoman and Safavid empires the central fact is the differentiation of state and religious institutions, and the central problem has been to define the relations of the two. These relations vary across a wide spectrum from a high degree of state control over a centrally managed religious establishment, to a more independent but co-operative relationship (as in the Saljuq case), to full autonomy and even open opposition to state policies.

Even in cases where Muslims, at least in principle, maintained their aspiration for an ideal society in which state and community were integrated, they were not necessarily committed to bringing it about in practice. In return for state support, the *'ulamā'* legitimized the reigning governments and taught the common people the virtues of acceptance and submission. Despite the common statement (and the Muslim ideal) that the institutions of state and religion are unified, and that Islam is a total way of life which defines political as well as social and family matters, most Muslim societies did not conform to this ideal, but were built around separate institutions of state and religion.

Thus we have two principal Islamic theories of the nature of

an ideal Muslim political society. One looks to a unified state and society under the leadership of a caliph whose authority extends to all realms of personal and public concern. The second tacitly recognizes the institutional division between the structures of state and religion and looks to the religious sphere for personal and communal fulfilment.

Each of these concepts of the Muslim political order — the unified and the separated state and community — has had a profound effect on the current history of Islamic societies. The contemporary Islamic revival (so-called fundamentalist) movements are inspired by the vision of a prophetic community. They attempt to return to the principles of Islamic morality and to a renewal of personal commitment to the symbolic foundations of Islam. They commonly aim to control the state and to use the power of the state to enforce Islam. While religious reformism once served to integrate families, clans, lineages and clientele groups into unified political bodies, or had a powerful appeal in societies in transition from peasant to commercialized agriculture or from small-scale to larger-scale trading communities, especially in South and South-East Asia, today the ideal is taken up in the very different environment of the urban petty bourgeoisie, the depressed victims of the old-fashioned bazaar economy, petty traders, craftspeople and mobile and sometimes *déraciné* students.

However, despite the appeal to the unity of state, religion and civil society, there is a considerable uncertainty about the ideal goals of the revival movements. The union of state and society envisioned in the neo-Islamic rhetoric is not an institutional arrangement or a commitment to any particular type of state institution, be it monarchical, representative, democratic, capitalist or socialist. The revivalist movements are not interested in constitutions; they are concerned rather with individual morals and ethical behaviour. To them the state is simply the force that requires the mass of the people to adhere to Islamic laws. The ideal state has no institutional form; it is embodied in the leadership of individuals dedicated to Islam who mobilize other individuals to realize religious values.

Thus the revival movements have ambiguous political implications. While some revivalists believe that the control of the state is essential to the success of an Islamic social and moral programme, in practice it is not always clear that the revival movements give priority to political objectives. Many look upon states

as inherently corrupt and incapable of realizing Muslim values. The state is not expected to embody transcendent values. Because they do not see the state as a realm of moral fulfilment, they do not expect that it will serve their aspirations for empowerment and economic well-being either. As in the case of their historical predecessors, there is an ambiguity in their attitude towards political power which leaves the way open for a renewed separation of political and religio-communal concerns.[16]

The historical actuality of the division of Muslim societies into a realm of political authority and a realm of religio-communal affairs has other contemporary reverberations. The long-established differentiation of state and religious communities has legitimized political power apart from Islam. The Ottoman empire in particular achieved a *de facto* legitimacy as a conquering state and defender of Muslims, apart from religious validation. Ottoman (and Iranian) rulers were conceived, too, as vice-regents of God — direct agents of God's authority on earth. Beyond the theory of Islamic states lay the reality of legitimate non-Islamic monarchies. Religious communities embody a corresponding tradition of political passivity, and a tendency to accept political actualities and state power based upon conquest and preserved by force as an inevitable reality. In this tradition the realm of Islamic authenticity lies within the soul of the individual, and in the behaviour of individuals in small communities.

This historical orientation provides a template for the construction of modern Middle Eastern states around secular cultural identities and development goals defined in either capitalist or socialist terms. In such states as Turkey, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Jordan, Islam has been disestablished or the Islamic religious establishment brought under state control. Islam no longer legitimates the state and no longer defines its moral or social vision. All of these states have set up secular educational and judicial systems which actually compete with, and even replace, the primary functions of Islam. Where Muslim religious life has in general become separated from state institutions, it flourishes in a differentiated "civil society". The fact that the mass of the population has Muslim loyalties means that states give special consideration to Muslim symbols and Muslim practices. In recent years, with the rising importance of mass Islamic

[16] For a recent review of contemporary revivalist movements, see C. E. Butterworth and I. W. Zartman (eds.), *Political Islam* (Newbury Park, Calif., 1992).

identifications and strong Islamist political movements, state élites have deferred to popular pressure for official recognition of the primacy of Islam and have relaxed, or even reversed, the earlier demand for secularism; still, this has not led to the dismantling of secular legal or educational institutions.[17]

In so far as the historic legacy remains an important factor in the contemporary Muslim world, its diversity is the basis of a corresponding diversity in the relations of states and religious communities. Today, as has been true since ancient times, we still find both integralist religio-political movements, states defined in Islamic terms, a *de facto* institutional differentiation of state and religion, and a great variety of relationships between the two. Are the Islamic cases really different from the Christian, or the Middle Eastern cases from the European? Or is it time to abandon the clichés concerning the unity of Islam in favour of a more complex and realistic appreciation of the issues?

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[17] I. M. Lapidus, "Islam and Modernity", in S. N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *Patterns of Modernity*, 2 vols. (London, 1987), ii, pp. 89-115.