

Book presentation

**Turkish Religious Foundation  
Centre for Islamic Studies**

This new Turkish encyclopaedia of Islam is an ambitious and wide-ranging project that will rapidly become an indispensable reference work for the study of social, political and cultural aspects of the Muslim world. As stated in the preface to Volume 1, the work is a statement of pride and confidence in the Islamic religious and cultural heritage, at a time when the Muslim world is overcoming, with great determination, its long-held inferiority complex *vis-à-vis* the modern West. Accordingly, the *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* was conceived and designed by – and is being overwhelmingly executed from within – a community of Muslim scholars, mainly Turkish. It is thus markedly different in scope and in tone from Leiden's *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. This latter is seen by the editors of the new encyclopaedia as primarily a project of European orientalisks.



# Turkish Religious Foundation Encyclopaedia of Islam

Systematic work on the TDV encyclopaedia began in 1983, with publications averaging almost two volumes annually since 1988. Approximately 40 volumes are envisaged in all. Indices of essential topics in fifteen (later to become seventeen) different subject areas (e.g. Arabic language and literature, history of religions, *hadith*, Islamic arts, geography of Muslim countries, Sufism, Turkish history and civilization, etc.) were compiled mainly by trawling through relevant published works and manuscripts, rather than by relying upon existing encyclopaedic models. The result is a unique combination of 'gazetteer', 'who's who', a dictionary of terminology, and an 'enquiry within and upon everything'. As such, it is certainly a guide to what almost every specialist in Turkish and Middle Eastern / Islamic Studies generally uses.

Entries on persons include, as expected, caliphs, sultans, shahs and vezirs, teachers, judges, seyhs and Sufis, mathematicians, legal experts, artists and literary figures, statesmen and politicians, from the seventh to the twentieth centuries, and from all over the Islamic world, though with an understandable preponderance of Ottomans and Turks in later periods.

In addition to covering all Muslim countries, major cities, staging posts, watering holes, etc., the geographical coverage also includes more surprising entries on, for example, 'Amerika Birlesik Devletleri', 'Almanya', 'Avrupa', 'Filipinler'. For each country/continent, coverage is generally in three parts: physical and human geography, history, and Islam in that area. The entry 'Avusturya' also has a fourth section on Austrian scholars of Islam from the sixteenth century onwards.

The *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* is being published by Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, which was established in 1975. Among the purposes of this foundation are the following: promoting religious values, relieving the economic problems of the destitute, and offering grants to students. ◆

• *İstanbul Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı.*  
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