Wednesday, November 14, 2007
5:30 P.M. in the Music Room of Dumbarton Oaks
1703 32nd St., NW, Washington, DC 20007
Please R.S.V.P. to Polly Evans at evansp@doaks.org or 202-339-6942

Summary: The coming of Islam in the Middle East represents one of the great
watersheds of human history. The Arab-Muslim conquests of 630 to 750 led to the
establishment of a new political system, a new ruling class, a new language of culture
and administration and perhaps most strikingly, a new dominant religion. Furthermore
the new order was destined to last. With the exceptions of Spain and Portugal, all the
lands conquered at this time were destined to remain under Muslim rule and become
Islamised and in many cases Arabised. Yet the study of human history suggests that
transformations are seldom as dramatic and complete as this might seem. This lecture
will examine how the new order took, adapted and moulded features of the old and how
the continuities between antiquity and Islam are, in some ways, deeper and more lasting
than has often been appreciated.

About the Speaker: Newly appointed Professor of Arabic in the Department of the Near and Middle
East at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Hugh Kennedy (Ph.D.
Cambridge) was formerly professor of early and medieval Islamic history at the University of Saint
Andrews in Scotland. Among his books are The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates (1986),