

# HISTORY OF THE ARABS

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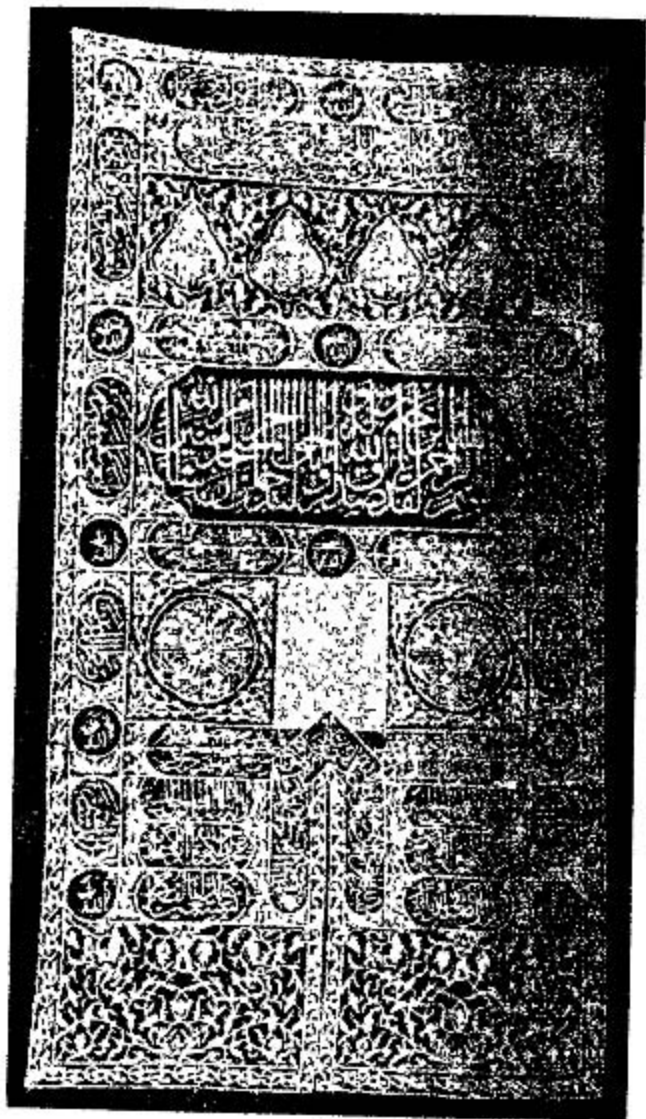
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*From Ibrāhīm Rif'at, "Mir'āt al Haramay"*

**THE CURTAIN OF THE DOOR OF THE KA'BAH AT MAKKAH**

Bearing koranic inscriptions which include sūrahs 1, 106 and 112

The prominent inscription above the centre is the first part of sūrah 48, verse 27

HISTORY  
OF  
THE ARABS

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES  
TO THE PRESENT

PHILIP K. HITTI  
PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF SEMITIC LITERATURE  
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

TENTH EDITION

M  
MACMILLAN

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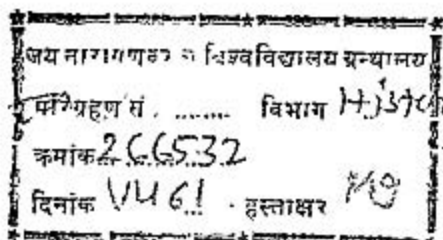
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## PREFACE TO THE TENTH EDITION

THE year 1970 marks the thirty-third anniversary of the publication of *History of the Arabs* and witnesses its tenth edition. The initiative for its writing was taken by Mr. Daniel Macmillan, who, as early as 1927, wrote to the author suggesting a book comparable to Ameer Ali, *A Short History of the Saracens*, first published by Macmillan and Co. in 1900. The occurrence of the word "Saracens" in the title left no doubt about the obsolete character of the work.

In my youthful enthusiasm I signed a contract in 1927 agreeing to deliver the manuscript in three years. (A representative of Macmillan, who was then touring the Arab world, suggested an Arabic version of the book and I thought I could do that in a couple of subsequent years.) When the book at last appeared, in 1937, the New York publisher (before St. Martin's Press) asked my opinion as to the number of copies to be imported and when I offhand suggested a hundred, he shot back, "Who is going to buy that many?"

As a matter of fact the American public, even at its educated level, was then almost illiterate so far as the Arabs and Moslems were concerned. The rare courses in this field were limited to a few graduate schools and offered as subsidiary to Semitic studies and as contributory to philology or linguistics. Nowhere were such courses given for their own sake or as a key to further investigation of Arab history, Islam and Islamic culture. This was substantially the situation until the second World War. It was not until then that the American government and public were awakened to the fact that here are millions of Moslems and tens of thousands of Arabs with whom they had to deal and of whom they should have some understanding.

The demand, subsequent to the appearance of the first English edition, for translation rights—not only into Arabic but into varied Asian and European languages—left no doubt about the timeliness of the work and its capacity to meet the need. It is gratifying to note that since the publication of the ninth edition

four years ago new versions have appeared in Italian, Serbo-Croat and Polish.

In this edition, as in earlier ones, an effort was made to take into consideration the results of new researches, to update the material in text and footnote, and to plug that seemingly inexhaustible supply of errors—otherwise called typographical. About sixty sheets, including four maps, have been thus treated.

P. K. H.

*January, 1970*

## PREFACE TO THE NINTH EDITION

IN the first four editions of this book, appearing 1937 to 1949, the story ended with the Ottoman conquest of the Arab East in 1517. Beginning with the fifth edition an attempt has been made to cover the modern period down to the year of publication. This attempt to keep the story up to date in an area undergoing changes with a rapidity unparalleled in its history, and at the same time subjected to intensified research by Western as well as Eastern scholars on a scale hitherto unattained necessitated many reprints and new editions. In each case revision has included correcting factual and typographical errors, adding new data, and replacing references to footnotes with more recent and critical ones. In the present edition no less than seventy pages and eight maps have been thus affected.

Meanwhile the widening spread of the ecumenical spirit in a shrinking world and the heightening awareness of the desirability if not necessity of intercultural understanding have encouraged the translation of this volume into a number of European and Asian languages beginning with Spanish and ending with Urdu and Indonesian.

P. K. H.

*August, 1966*

## PREFACE TO THE EIGHTH EDITION

POLITICAL changes of historical import have marked the last three years in Arab lands. Mauretania and Algeria were freed from France, and al-Kuwayt—with reservations—from Great Britain. Syria broke off from the United Arab Republic, and al-Yaman followed suit. Political changes generally reflect social and economic upheavals and in turn react on them. As a matter of fact, the entire area has been and remains in a state of transition.

In this edition an attempt has been made to make room for references—brief as they are—to these momentous changes in the hope that they would enhance the usefulness of this book to both student and general reader. Meanwhile advantage was taken of the opportunity to clarify certain ambiguous passages and correct hitherto-undetected slips in text, footnotes and maps.

P. K. H.

*December, 1962*

## PREFACE TO THE SEVENTH EDITION

POPULAR interest in the Arab peoples and lands—as measured by space coverage in the daily press—as well as scholarly interest, evidenced by the volume of book output, are still mounting. In the last four years, since the sixth edition was issued, more works dealing with the history, culture, literature and varied aspects of the life of the Arabians and Arabic-speaking peoples have appeared than probably in any equivalent period in their entire existence. The output has been featured by the abundance of scholarly works in Arabic and by Arabs.

The author has meanwhile endeavoured to keep abreast of the progress in research in this field. He has also undertaken repeated journeys to all the major countries treated in the book. Throughout, he bore in mind the possibilities of improvement of the material therein.



As in the earlier editions, statistical and other data that became obsolete have been brought up to date, new editions of books referred to in the footnotes have replaced old ones, and mis-statements have been corrected. Careful consideration has been given to all suggestions for improvement from teachers, students and readers in all parts of the world. The result, it is hoped, will enhance the value and increase the usefulness of the book as a text and as a general work of reference.

P. K. H.

*March, 1962*

## PREFACE TO THE SIXTH EDITION

AS in earlier editions—the fifth excepted—alterations in the sixth edition consisted largely of correcting misprints and minor errors, bringing certain statements and references to books up to date and introducing changes in the light of new researches. Due consideration has been given to reviews of the book in learned magazines, including reviews of translations of the work particularly into Arabic, Spanish and Urdu. Scholarly interest in the Arabic-speaking peoples and their lands has been so intensified—in both East and West—in the last few years that the alterations necessitated in this edition exceed those of any preceding one; only few pages escaped some treatment. One radical change relates to the pre-Islamic kingdoms of South Arabia (pages 52-5), where new explorations have been recently made. Of the maps several received additional place names occurring in the text, while one, page 684, had the boundaries adjusted.

In the case of the fifth edition the main change involved the addition of a new part, Part VI, under the title Ottoman Rule, which brought the history down to the present time.

The author acknowledges his indebtedness to students, colleagues, readers and friends, too numerous to name, who have personally and generously communicated their views and suggestions to him for improving the usefulness of the work.

P. K. H.

*November, 1955*

## PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION

IN response to requests from reviewers and readers this edition has been enriched by the addition of a new part, Part VI, Under the Ottoman Rule, thus bringing the story sketchily to the present time. The new part benefited by criticism from my colleague Professor Lewis V. Thomas and the old by several reviews, the longest among which was that of Professor Richard N. Frye in *Speculum*, vol. xxiv (1949), pp. 582-7. Of the many students who offered fresh suggestions and critical remarks, special mention should be made of Richard W. Downar and Howard A. Reed.

Several maps were revised. That on page 5 (the Moslem World) was brought up to date, and the one on page 495 was redrawn and made to change places with the one originally on page 522.

P. K. H.

July, 1950

## PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

THIS edition has benefited by fresh studies in which the author has for some time been engaged in connection with the preparation of a volume on the history of Syria and Lebanon, as well as by visits he made in the summers of 1946 and 1947 to almost all lands of the Arab and Moslem East. While in Su'ūdi Arabia he had an opportunity to discuss with Thomas C. Barger the results of surveys made by the Arabian American Oil Company; the discussion was of assistance in revising several paragraphs dealing with the geography of that land.

As in the past, suggestions from students, teachers and readers in different parts of the world led to the emendation of a number of passages in the text. Special mention should be made of the contribution of a student in my graduate seminar, Harry W. Hazard. It may be worth noting that the low dates which mark the publication of several Arabic texts cited in the footnotes belong to the Moslem calendar, which began A.D. 622, and whose year is lunar.

P. K. H.

April, 1948

## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

IN preparing copy for this edition careful consideration was given to all available reviews of the second edition as well as to communications made privately to the author by students, teachers and other readers of the book. The products of recent researches appearing in learned journals and new publications were also fully utilized. This resulted in several corrections of inconsistencies or minor errors and in the clarification of certain ambiguities in the text. The footnotes received further treatment involving the addition of newly published sources and reference works and the replacement of earlier editions by more recent and critical ones. In this connection it must be noted that whenever a work is cited for the first time in a footnote, the full title, including name of author and place and date of publication, is given; after that the title is abbreviated. When a biography of an Arab author is sketched in the text and reference is made to his major work, that reference usually comprises full title supplemented by a reference to any existing scholarly translation into a Western European language, particularly if English.

The third edition, like its two predecessors, owes not a little to my graduate students and to members of the Summer Seminar in Arabic and Islamic Studies.

P. K. H.

*April, 1942*

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

IN this edition an effort has been made to bring the material up to date and to introduce necessary emendations. Due consideration was given to critical comments whether privately communicated or published as reviews, among which that of Professor George Levi della Vida in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, volume 59 (1939), was the most comprehensive. Into the footnotes were incorporated certain items of the selected bibliographies which originally were to be appended to each chapter of the book.

Of those who contributed to the first edition Dr. Edward J. Jurji and Dr. Nabih A. Faris have made further contribution to the present one; and of my graduate students George F. Hourani offered several suggestions on the Byzantine relations and Floris L. Ferwerda collaborated in reconstructing two of the maps. Dr. A. R. Nykl, of Madrid, read the chapters on Spain.

The services of all these gentlemen and the co-operation of my wife are herewith gratefully acknowledged.

P. K. H.

September, 1939

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THIS is a modest attempt to tell the story of the Arabians and the Arabic-speaking peoples from the earliest times to the Ottoman conquest of the early sixteenth century. It represents many years of study and teaching at Columbia University, the American University of Beirut and Princeton University, and is designed to meet the needs of the student as well as the cultivated layman. The field it covers, however, is so extensive that the author cannot claim to have carried his independent researches into every part of it. He therefore had to appropriate in places the results of the investigation of other scholars in the East and in the West, to whom his indebtedness would have been more apparent had the selected bibliographies appended to each chapter in the manuscript appeared in the printed book.

While in preparation certain chapters of the book were submitted to various scholars for their criticism. Among those who made a distinct contribution were Professor A. T. Olmstead, of the University of Chicago; Dr. Walter L. Wright, Jr., now president of Robert College, Istanbul; Dr. Costi Zurayq, of the American University of Beirut, Lebanon; and two of my colleagues, Professor Henry L. Savage and Professor Albert Elsassser, of the Department of English.

For several years the manuscript was made the basis of a graduate course, and it benefited considerably from suggestions and criticisms offered by my students. Among these special mention should be made of George C. Miles, now of Rayy, Persia; Butrus 'Abd-al-Malik, of Assiut College, Egypt; Edward J. Jurji, of Baghdad; Harold W. Glidden; Richard F. S. Starr; and Nabih A. Faris, of Jerusalem. Dr. Faris rendered further service by collaborating in sketching the maps, reading the proofs and compiling the index.

To all these gentlemen, as well as to my wife, who co-operated in typewriting the manuscript and proposed several improvements, my hearty thanks are due.

P. K. H.

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# CONTENTS

## PART I

### THE PRE-ISLAMIC AGE

#### CHAPTER I

	PAGE
THE ARABS AS SEMITES: ARABIA THE CRADLE OF THE SEMITIC RACE . . . . .	3

Claims on our interest—Modern explorations—Ethnic relationship: the Semites—Arabia, the cradle of the Semites.

#### CHAPTER II

THE ARABIAN PENINSULA . . . . .	14
---------------------------------	----

The setting of the stage—Climatic conditions—Vegetation—The date-palm—Fauna—The Arabian horse—The camel.

#### CHAPTER III

BEDOUIN LIFE . . . . .	23
------------------------	----

The nomad—*Razza*—Religiousness—The clan—*ʿAshbiyah*—The sheikh.

#### CHAPTER IV

EARLY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS . . . . .	30
---	----

South Arabians—1. Relations with Egypt—Sinitic copper—Frankincense—2. Relations with the Sumerians and Babylonians—3. Assyrian penetration—4. Neo-Babylonian and Persian relations: *Taymā'*—5. Contacts with the Hebrews—Biblical association: Old Testament references—6. In classical literature—Roman expedition—The aromatic land—Gold.

#### CHAPTER V

THE SABAEOAN AND OTHER STATES OF SOUTH ARABIA . . . . .	49
---	----

The South Arabians as merchants—South Arabic inscriptions—1. The Sabaean kingdom—*Ma'rib dam*—2. The Minaean kingdom—3. Qatabān and *Hadrmaut*—4. The first Himyarite kingdom—The Semitic origin of the Abyssinians—The castle of *Ghumdān*—The Romans displace the Arabians in maritime trade—5. The second Himyarite kingdom—Christianity and Judaism in *al-Yaman*—The period of Abyssinian rule—The breaking of *Ma'rib dam*—The Persian period.

## CHAPTER VI

THE NABATAEAN AND OTHER PETTY KINGDOMS OF NORTH AND CENTRAL ARABIA . . . . .	PAGE 67
--	------------

1. The Nabataeans—The Sinaitic origin of the alphabet—Petra—2. Palmyra—Odaynath and Zenobia—3. The Ghassânids—The Syro-Arab kingdom at its height—Al-Mundhir, son of al-Hārith—Fall of the banu-Ghassân—4. The Lakhmids—Al-Hirah at the height of its power—The royal family Christianized—5. Kindah.

## CHAPTER VII

AL-HIJĀZ ON THE EVE OF THE RISE OF ISLAM . . . . .	87
--	----

The Juhūliyah days—The "days of the Arabians"—The Basūs War—The Day of Dāhis—North Arabic in its influence as a language—The heroic age—Poetry—The ode in the classical period—The Mu'allaqāt—The pre-Islamic poet—Bedouin character as manifested in poetry—Bedouin heathenism—Solar aspects—Jinn—The daughters of Allah—The Makkan Ka'bah—Allah—The three cities of al-Hijāz: al-Tū'if—Makkah—Al Madīnah—Cultural influences in al-Hijāz: 1. Saba'—2. Abyssinia—3. Persia—4. Ghassānland—5. The Jews.

## PART II

## THE RISE OF ISLAM AND THE CALIPHAL STATE

## CHAPTER VIII

MUḤAMMAD THE PROPHET OF ALLAH . . . . .	111
---	-----

## CHAPTER IX

THE KORAN THE BOOK OF ALLAH . . . . .	123
---------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER X

ISLAM THE RELIGION OF SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF ALLAH	128
---	-----

Dogmas and beliefs—The five pillars: 1. Profession of faith—2. Prayer—3. Almsgiving—4. Fasting—5. Pilgrimage—Holy War.

## CHAPTER XI

PERIOD OF CONQUEST, EXPANSION AND COLONIZATION, A.D. 632-61 . . . . .	139
---	-----

The orthodox caliphate: A patriarchal age—Arabia conquers itself—The economic causes of the expansion.

CONTENTS

IV

CHAPTER XII

PAGE

147

THE CONQUEST OF SYRIA

Khalid's perilous march—The decisive battle of Yarmūk—The administration of the new territory.

CHAPTER XIII

AL-'IRĀQ AND PERSIA CONQUERED

155

CHAPTER XIV

EGYPT, TRIPOLIS AND BARQAḤ ACQUIRED

160

The library of Alexandria.

CHAPTER XV

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE NEW POSSESSIONS

169

'Umar's constitution—The army—The so-called Arab civilization—Character and achievements of the orthodox caliphs.

CHAPTER XVI

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN 'ALI AND MU'ĀWIYAH FOR THE CALIPHATE

178

The elective caliphate—The caliphate of 'Ali—Periods of the great caliphates—The caliphate, a pre-eminently political office.

PART III

THE UMAYYAD AND 'ABBĀSID EMPIRES

CHAPTER XVII

THE UMAYYAD CALIPHATE: MU'ĀWIYAH ESTABLISHES A DYNASTY

189

The claimants to the caliphate disposed of—Mu'āwiyah, the model Arab sovereign.

CHAPTER XVIII

HOSTILE RELATIONS WITH THE BYZANTINES

199

The Marraites.



## CHAPTER XIX

- THE ZENITH OF Umayyad Power . . . . . PAGE 206
- An energetic viceroy: al-Hajjāj—Conquests "beyond the river"—Conquests in India—Against the Byzantines—Conquests in northern Africa and south-western Europe—Nationalizing the state—Fiscal and other reforms—Architectural monuments.

## CHAPTER XX

- POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS UNDER THE Umayyads . . . . . 224
- Military organization—Royal life—The capital—Society—Clients—Dhimmis—"The covenant of 'Umar"—Slaves—Al-Madīnah and Makkah.

## CHAPTER XXI

- INTELLECTUAL ASPECTS OF LIFE UNDER THE Umayyads . . . . . 240
- Al-Baṣrah and al-Kūfah—Arabic grammar—Religious tradition and canon law—History-writing—St. John of Damascus—Khūrijites—Murjītes—The Shi'ah—Oratory—Correspondence—Poetry—Education—Science—Alchemy—Architecture—The Mosque of al-Madīnah—Early mosques in the provinces—The Dome of the Rock—The Aqsa Mosque—The Umayyad Mosque—Palaces. Quṣayr 'Amrah—Painting—Music.

## CHAPTER XXII

- DECLINE AND FALL OF THE Umayyad Dynasty . . . . . 279
- Qays *versus* Yaman—The problem of succession—The partisans of 'Alī—'Abbāsīd claimants—The Khurāsānians—The final blow.

## CHAPTER XXIII

- THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE 'Abbāsīd Dynasty . . . . . 288
- Al-Manṣūr, the real founder of the dynasty—Madinat al-Salām—A Persian vizirial family.

## CHAPTER XXIV

- THE GOLDEN PRIME OF THE 'Abbāsīds . . . . . 297
- Relations with the Franks—With the Byzantines—The glory that was Baghdad—Intellectual awakening—India—Persia—Hellenism—Translators—Ḥunayn ibn-Ishāq—Thābit ibn-Qurrah.

## CHAPTER XXV

- THE 'Abbāsīd State . . . . . 317
- The 'Abbāsīd caliph—Vizir—Bureau of taxes—Other governmental bureaux—Judicial administration—Military organization—The governor.

## CHAPTER XXVI

ABBĀSID SOCIETY . . . . .	PAGE 332
Home life—Baths—Pastimes—Slaves—Economic life: commerce—Industry—Agriculture—Dhimmis: Christians—Nestorians—Jews—Šābians—Magians and other dualists—The Islamization of the empire—The conquest of Arabic.	

## CHAPTER XXVII

SCIENTIFIC AND LITERARY PROGRESS . . . . .	363
Medicine—'Alī al-Ṭabarī—Al-Rāzī—Al-Majāsi—Ibn-Sīna—Philosophy—Al-Kindī—Al-Fārābī—The Brethren of Sincerity—Astronomy and mathematics—Al-Battāni—Al-Bīrūni—'Umar al-Khayyām—Astrology—The Arabic numerals—Al-Khwārizmī—Alchemy—Al-Jāhiz—Lapidaries—Geography—Greek antecedents—"World cupola"—Literary geographers—Yūqūt—Historiography—Early formal historians—Al-Ṭabarī—Al-Mas'ūdī—Theology—The science of ḥadīth—The six canonical books—Jurisprudence—The four orthodox schools—Ethics—Literature—Belles-lettres— <i>The Arabian Nights</i> —Poetry.	

## CHAPTER XXVIII

EDUCATION . . . . .	408
Elementary—Institutions of higher education—Adult education—Libraries—Bookshops—Paper—General level of culture.	

## CHAPTER XXIX

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FINE ARTS . . . . .	416
Architecture—Painting—Industrial Arts—Calligraphy—Music—Musical theorists.	

## CHAPTER XXX

MOSLEM SECTS . . . . .	429
Rationalism <i>versus</i> orthodoxy—Moslem inquisition—The Ash'arite system prevails—Al-Ghazālī—Sufism—Asceticism—Mysticism—Theosophy—Pantheism—Mystic poetry and philosophy—Fraternal orders—The rosary—The cult of saints—Shī'ah—Ismā'ilites—Bāṭinists—Qarmaṣians—The Assassins—Nuṣayris—Other Shī'ite heterodoxies.	

## CHAPTER XXXI

THE CALIPHATE DISMEMBERED: PETTY DYNASTIES IN THE WEST . . . . .	450
1. In Spain—2. The Idrīsids—3. The Aghlabids—4. The Ṭulūnids—Public works—5. The Ikhshīdids—A negro eunuch—6. The Ḥamdānids—Literary efflorescence—Raids into "the land of the Romans".	

## CHAPTER XXXII

## SUNDRY DYNASTIES IN THE EAST . . . . . PAGE 461

1. The Tahirids—2. The Saffarids—3. The Samunids—4. Ghaznawids—Maḥmūd of Ghaznah—The imperial guard—A servile war—The *amir al-umārā* in power—5. The Buwayhid dynasty—'Aḍud-al-Dawlah—6. The Saljūqs—Tughril in power—Alp Arslān—Saljūq power at its zenith—An illustrious vizir: Niẓām-al-Mulk—Disintegration of the Saljūq realm—Baghdād unmindful of the Crusades—The shahs of Khwārizm—Enter Chingiz Khān.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

THE COLLAPSE OF THE 'ABBĀSID CALIPHATE . . . . . 484  
Hülāgu in Baghdād—Last champions of Islam.

## PART IV

## THE ARABS IN EUROPE: SPAIN AND SICILY

## CHAPTER XXXIV

CONQUEST OF SPAIN . . . . . 493  
Gothic kingdom destroyed—Mūsa crosses the strait—A triumphal procession—Mūsa falls from grace—The conquest explained—Beyond the Pyrenees—The battle of Tours—Civil wars—The amirate.

## CHAPTER XXXV

THE Umayyad AMIRATE IN SPAIN . . . . . 505  
A dramatic escape—Cordova captured—Moslem Spain consolidated and pacified—A match to Charlemagne—An independent amirate—Treatment of Christians—Renegades in arms.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

CIVIL DISTURBANCES . . . . . 512  
The "slaughter of the ditch"—Race for martyrdom—Flora and Eufogius—Provinces in revolt—Ibn-Ḥafṣūn.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

THE Umayyad CALIPHATE OF CORDOVA . . . . . 520  
Caliph 'Abd-al-Raḥmān al-Nāṣir—Al-Zahrā'.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

## POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS . . . . . 526

Cordova—Governmental institutions—Industry—Agriculture—Trade—  
The caliph in his glory—Educational activity—Amirid dictatorship—  
Collapse of Umayyad power.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

## PETTY STATES: FALL OF GRANADA . . . . . 537

The 'Abbāids of Seville—Al-Mu'tamid—The Murūbits—Coinage—  
Persecution—The would-be Arabs—My Cid the Challenger—Collapse  
of the Murūbits—The Muwahhids—Founder of the Muwahhid  
dynasty—Al-Manṣūr—Banu-Naṣr—Alhambra—The last days of  
Granada—Morisco persecution.

## CHAPTER XL

## INTELLECTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS . . . . . 557

Language and literature—Poetry—*Muwashshahs*—Education—Books  
—Paper—Historiography—Geography—Travels—Influence over the  
West—Astronomy and mathematics—Botany and medicine—Ibn-al-  
Bayṭār—Medicine—Al-Zahrāwī—Ibn-Zuhr—Transmission to Europe—  
Philosophy—Ben-Gabīrūl—Ibn-Bājjah—Ibn-Rushd—Ibn-Maymūn—  
Ibn-'Arabi, the mystic—Toledo, centre of translation.

## CHAPTER XLI

## ART AND ARCHITECTURE . . . . . 591

Minor arts—Ceramics—Textiles—Ivories—Architecture—Alhambra—  
The arch—Music—Influence in Europe.

## CHAPTER XLII

## IN SICILY . . . . . 602

Conquest—In Italy—Across the Alps—Withdrawal from Italy—The  
Sicilian amirate—Norman conquest—Arab Norman culture—Al-Idrīsī  
—Frederick II—Sicily's place in transmitting thought—Via Italy.

## PART V

THE LAST OF THE MEDIEVAL MOSLEM  
STATES

## CHAPTER XLIII

## A SHI'ITE CALIPHATE IN EGYPT: THE FĀTIMIDS . . . . . 617

Isma'īlite propaganda—The enigmatic Sa'id—The first Fātimid—The  
fleet—The commander Jawhar—Fātimid power at its height—A de-  
tached caliph—Decadence—Fall.

## CHAPTER XLIV

LIFE IN FĀTIMID EGYPT . . . . .	PAGE 625
High life—Administration—Scientific and literary progress—Hall of Science—Astronomy and optics—The royal library—Art and architecture—Decorative and industrial arts.	

## CHAPTER XLV

MILITARY CONTACTS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST: THE CRUSADES . . . . .	633
Saljūqs of Syria—Complexity of causation and motivation—1. Period of conquest—The Byzantines recover Asia Minor—First Latin principality—Annoch reduced—Jerusalem captured—Italian fleets reduce seaports—Baldwin I, king of Jerusalem—The third Frankish principality established—Social contacts—2. Moslem reaction: The Zangids and Nūrīds—Enter Saladin—Hittin—Siege of 'Akka—3. Period of civil and petty wars: The Ayyūbids—The Frankish camp—Egypt, the centre of interest—St. Louis—The Ayyūbids gave way to the Mamlūks—The last blows: Baybars—Qalāwūn—'Akka.	

## CHAPTER XLVI

CULTURAL CONTACTS . . . . .	659
Nūrīd contributions—Ayyūbid contributions—In science and philosophy—In letters—In military art—Gunpowder—In architecture—Agriculture and industry—Water-wheels—Trade—Compass—Racial admixture.	

## CHAPTER XLVII

THE MAMLŪKS, LAST MEDIEVAL DYNASTY OF ARAB WORLD . . . . .	671
Dynasty established—Bahri and Burji Mamlūks—Ayyūbids and Tartars repelled—Baybars—The caliphal episode—Qalāwūn and the Mongols—His hospital—Al Ashraf—Mongols repulsed—Egypt at its cultural height—Famine and plague—The downfall of the Bahris.	

## CHAPTER XLVIII

INTELLECTUAL AND ARTISTIC ACTIVITY . . . . .	683
Scientific contribution—Medicine—Jewish physicians—Diseases of the eye—Medical history—Social science—Biography—History—Islamics and linguistics—Story-telling—Shadow play—Architecture—Art—Illumination—Luxurious living.	

## CHAPTER XLIX

THE END OF MAMLŪK RULE . . . . .	694
Specimens of Burji sultans—Desperate economic situation—Indian trade lost—Monumental works—Foreign relations—Cyprus conquered—Timūr—Timūrīds—Ottoman Turks—Safawīds—The decisive battle of Marj Dābiq—Egypt conquered—The Ottoman caliphate.	

## PART VI

## OTTOMAN RULE AND INDEPENDENCE

## CHAPTER L

THE ARAB LANDS AS TURKISH PROVINCES . . . .	PAGE 709
North Africa—Pirate states—The splendour that was Constantinople— Ottoman culture—The imperial set-up—Inherent elements of weakness— The loss of North African states.	

## CHAPTER LI

EGYPT AND THE ARAB CRESCENT . . . .	719
Mamlûks remain in control—'Ali Bey declared sultan—Napoleon Bonaparte— Muhammad 'Alî founder of modern Egypt—Syria—Provincial administration—Economic decline—Fakhr-al-Dîn, enlightened amîr of Lebanon—The 'Azms in Syria—Palestine has its dictators—Bashîr al-Shâhîbî—Autonomy of Lebanon internationally recognized—Al-'Irâq —Arabia—Wahhâbis—Ibn-Su'ûd—Intellectual activity.	

## CHAPTER LII

THE CHANGING SCENE: IMPACT OF THE WEST . . . .	745
Cultural penetration: Egypt—Syria and Lebanon—Political penetration —The British occupy Egypt—French and British mandates—An Egyptian reformer—Nationalism—Trend toward union.	

INDEX . . . . .	759
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## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	PAGE
The curtain of the door of the Ka'bah at Makkah	31
Sabaeen types . . . . .	33
Ancient Egyptian representations of Arabians . . . . .	34
Scmerkhet, the sixth king of the first dynasty, smiting the chief of the Nomads . . . . .	35
A frankincense tree and a Mahri collector . . . . .	51
The ruins of Naqab al-Hajar and two lines of inscription which furnished Europe with its first sight of South Arabic inscription . . . . .	53
A table of alphabets, including Ra's al-Shamrah cuneiform . . . . .	56
Himyarite silver coin . . . . .	58
Himyarite silver coin . . . . .	73
Petra: the Palace . . . . .	73
Petra: the Dayr . . . . .	77
Palmyra: the colonnade and triumphal arch . . . . .	86
Nabataean bronze coin . . . . .	101
The Black Stone of al-Ka'bah . . . . .	103
Makkah from the mountain of abu-Qubays . . . . .	115
Muhammad's journey through the celestial spheres . . . . .	135
The Egyptian and Syrian Maḥmils on their departure from al-Muzdalifah to Mina, 1904 . . . . .	137
Pilgrims around the Ka'bah performing the Friday prayer, 1908 . . . . .	137
North-eastern view of the Ka'bah, 1908 . . . . .	218
An imitation in gold of a Byzantine coin with Arabic inscription . . . . .	218
Copper coin of 'Abd-al-Malik . . . . .	223
A Byzantine weight validated by al-Walid (†715) . . . . .	230
Damascus today, as seen from al-Şāliḥiyah . . . . .	257
Interior of the Dome of the Rock . . . . .	258
The Mosque of Makkah seen from the east . . . . .	259
The interior of the Mosque of al-Madinah . . . . .	263
The Dome of the Rock and the Dome of the Chain . . . . .	266
Umayyad Mosque of Damascus: the colonnade and northern minaret . . . . .	268
Façade of al-Mushatta . . . . .	

	PAGE
Qusayr 'Amrah from the south-east . . . . .	270
Pictures on west wall of the main hall of the Qusayr 'Amrah . . . . .	272
The Ḥaram area from the north-west with the Aqṣa Mosque in the background . . . . .	277
Anglo-Saxon gold coin imitating an Arab dinar of the year 774 . . . . .	316
A twelfth- or thirteenth-century vase from al-Raqqah, once part- time capital of Ḥārūn al-Rashīd . . . . .	336
An astrolabe dated A.H. 1010 (A.D. 1601-2) . . . . .	374
The oldest representation of the Caesarean section . . . . .	407
A silver portrait coin of al-Mutawakkil . . . . .	416
The Malwiyah tower of the great Mosque at Sāmarrā, ninth Christian century . . . . .	418
Stage towers, <i>zigurat</i> , of the Anu-Adad temple at Ashur . . . . .	419
The monk Bahīra recognizing the prophetic mission of Mu- hammad . . . . .	421
A scene from al-Ḥarīrī, <i>maqāmah</i> 19 . . . . .	422
Dinar of Aḥmad ibn-Ṭūlūn, Miṣr, A.D. 881 . . . . .	450
The Alhambra and Granada today . . . . .	552
Pavilion in the Court of Lions, Alhambra, Granada . . . . .	590
Carved ivory casket . . . . .	593
Interior of the great Mosque of Cordova . . . . .	594
The Hall of the Ambassadors in the Alcázar, Seville . . . . .	596
Cappella Palatina, Palermo . . . . .	608
An Arabic map of the world . . . . .	611
The coronation mantle of Roger II, with Kufic inscription on the semicircular border . . . . . <i>facing</i>	614
Fāṭimid carved rock-crystal ewer bearing the name of the Caliph al-'Azīz, 10th century . . . . .	632
Qal'at al-Shaqif (Belfort) . . . . .	649
A Frankish dinar struck at 'Akka in 1251 . . . . .	658
The ancient citadel of Aleppo . . . . .	660
Interior of the Crusading church of Notre Dame at Anṭarṭūs (Tortosa, modern Ṭarṭūs) . . . . .	666
Dinar of the Mamlūk Baybars . . . . .	670
The Madrasah of Qā'it-Bāy, Cairo (exterior) . . . . .	698
The Madrasah of Qā'it-Bāy, Cairo (interior) . . . . .	700
The flag of the Ottoman Empire . . . . .	709
The <i>Ṭughra</i> , calligraphic emblem, of Sulaymān the Magnificent, bearing his name . . . . .	714
Coin of 'Alī Bey . . . . .	721



	PAGE
Muḥammad 'Alī, founder of modern Egypt . . . . .	723
Coin of Maḥmūd II . . . . .	725
Coin of Maḥmūd II . . . . .	725
Coin of Sulaymān I . . . . .	727
Fakhr-al-Dīn al-Ma'ni II, amīr of Lebanon 1590-1635 . . . . .	730
Coin of 'Abd-al-Majīd I . . . . .	735
Muḥammad 'Abduh, modern Egyptian reformer . . . . .	754

## LIST OF MAPS

The Moslem world . . . . .	5
Arabia—land surface features . . . . .	16
Arabia of the classical authors . . . . .	45
Ptolemy's map of Arabia Felix . . . . .	47
Ancient Arabia—peoples, places and routes (including the chief later Moslem towns) . . . . .	63
The North Arabian kingdoms before Islam (including the chief later Moslem towns) . . . . .	69
Al-'Irāq, Khūzistān and part of al-Jazīrah <i>between pp. 148 and</i>	149
Syria—showing the Junds or military districts . . . . .	151
Lower Egypt—illustrating the conquest and showing the Moslem towns . . . . .	162
Provinces of the Oxus and Jaxartes <i>between pp. 208 and</i>	209
India—illustrating the Moslem conquest and the later kingdom of the Ghaznavids . . . . .	211
Empire of the caliphs, ca. 750 . . . . .	216
'Abbāsīd caliphate, ninth century . . . . .	324
The Iberian Peninsula—illustrating Moslem occupation . . . . .	495
The Iberian Peninsula—mid-twelfth century . . . . .	522
Morocco under the Muwāhhids . . . . .	547
Sicily and Southern Italy—to illustrate Moslem occupation . . . . .	603
Islam and Christianity on the eve of the Crusades . . . . .	634
Crusading States of Syria, ca. 1140 . . . . .	642
The Mamlūk kingdom . . . . .	684
The Ottoman Empire at its height, ca. 1550 <i>between pp. 716 and</i>	717