HISTORY OF THE ARABS

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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

[Frontispiece

HISTORY OF THE ARABS

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES
TO THE PRESENT

PHILIP K. HITTI
PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF SEMITIC LITERATURE
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

TENTH EDITION

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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 Elsasser, 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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