HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

ARABIC HISTORY

About the Professor

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Course Description

This course aims to provide students with a survey of Arab History from ancient times until the present day. The course discusses the role Arabs played in history of the ancient Near East and discusses conversion to Judaism and Christianity in the pre-Islamic period. It presents the rise of Islam, the expansion of the Islamic Empire, and the far-reaching effects of this expansion, and continues with the history of the Arab world in the medieval, premodern, and modern periods, covering the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates, the Crusades, the Andalus, the Mamluk dynasty, the Ottoman period, a the periods of colonization and independence, the rise of the oil industry in the Arab world, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. It aims to provide an understanding of social dynamics by addressing the roles Jews, Christians, and women have played in Arab societies.

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THEMES

Arab is not the same as Muslim. This course explores Arab history from ancient times until the present and attempts to place it in the wider context of world history. The history of the Arab world is necessarily linked to the history of the Islamic world, but it is important to realize that Arabs were important actors in ancient and late antique Near Eastern history prior to the rise of Islam. Arabs are first mentioned nearly three millennia ago, in an 853 B.C.E. inscription by the Assyrian ruler Shalmaneser III, who refers to Gindibu, a king of the Arab lands. Domestication of the camel allowed Arabs to travel great distances and to survive in relatively inhospitable desert territory, but they were concentrated on the edges of the desert and in constant contact with settled areas. They had built kingdoms—often buffer states at the edges of agrarian empires such as those of the Romans, Byzantines, Parthians, and Sassanians—with large urban centers such as Petra, Palmyra, and Busra. Strategically located between the Mediterranean and Indian Oceans and flanked by the Persian Gulf and Red Sea, Arab populations played a critical role in global flows of commerce, culture, and information. It is unknown to most that entire Arab communities had adopted Judaism or Christianity centuries before Islam came into being and that the majority of the inhabitants of what is now the Arab World did not become Muslim until four or more centuries after the death of Muhammad, the founder of Islam. Significant minority communities of Arab Christians continued to thrive in Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, and Iraq where they have played key roles in medieval history and in the formation of modern Arab national cultures. Before the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948, communities of Arabic-speaking Jews could be found throughout the Arab World. In fact, some of the most important figures of Jewish history such as Maimonides flourished in the cosmopolitan environment of the medieval Mediterranean. After 1948, many Jewish populations dwindled through emigration to Israel and other countries in Europe and the Americas, but significant communities remain in Yemen and Morocco. In addition, the Islamic world expanded to encompass many other peoples who did not speak Arabic as a native language, so that now the Arab world represents only a fraction of the Muslim world. There are more Muslims in India and Pakistan, or Indonesia and Malaysia, than there are in the Arab world.

The Islamic expansion. The rise of Islam in western Arabia led to a massive migration out of the Arabian Peninsula and the establishment of a world empire that stretched from Spain to the Oxus less than a century after the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632. This may be seen as the last of a series of migrations of Semitic-speaking peoples out of the Arabian Peninsula or the Syrian Desert, which had brought earlier waves of Akkadians, Canaanites, Aramaeans into the Near East and South Arabians into Ethiopia. The Islamic Empire incorporated what had been the Persian Sassanian Empire, a large part of what had been Byzantine territory, all of North Africa, and territories in Spain and Portugal and then Sicily and southern Italy. Arabic language and Islamic law and ritual became the dominant basis of this new Empire, just as Latin and Christianity provided the basis for Western European culture. This means that the Arabic alphabet is recognizable across much of the Muslim world, as non-Arab Muslims continue to read the Qur'an in its Arabic script for liturgical and ritual purposes. In addition, the Arabic script was adopted and modified for use in Persian, Urdu, and other Islamic languages. Likewise, Islamic cultural and religious practices across the Muslim world display a degree of unity. However, one of the great debates in Islamic history has been the nature of the relationship between Arabic culture and Islamic injunctions.

Closest rival. The Islamic world represented the closest "other" to Western Europe, which did not have as direct, intense contact with other major regions of the world such as sub-

Saharan Africa, the Indian sub-continent, Central Asia, or the Far East. Competition and conflict between Islamdom and Christendom over territory and resources as well as opportunities for exchange and trade have shaped political history around the Mediterranean from the seventh century until the present. Some scholars have even opted to think of Europe and the Muslim Middle East as one contiguous civilization. In addition to border warfare and other invasions by parties on each side, the two civilizations influenced each other a great deal, in matters of military technology, trade and commerce, language, agriculture, medicine, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, and other sciences. Influence on Europe from the Arab world traveled through many channels, but the most prominent are Sicily and Spain, which were under Arab rule for centuries, the Crusader states of Outre-Mer, which placed Europeans in charge of large territories on the Mediterranean coast of Syria and Palestine, and the great trading states of Venice and Genoa. In the Middle Ages, the Arab world experienced a flourishing economy due to well-organized agriculture and irrigation and a monopoly over trade in spices and other luxury commodities between the Indian Ocean and Western Europe, which facilitated the support of scholarship and technical advances. This resulted in a flow of information from the Arab world, which was in a dominant position at the time, toward Europe. This situation would come to an end after the Europeans found a sea route to the Indian Ocean, around the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa, bypassing the Arab Middle East and cutting out the middle man. During approximately the same period, Arabic scientific and philosophical texts that had preserved and expanded on Greek, Persian, and Indian intellectual traditions were translated into Latin making the knowledge preserved in Arabic scholarly traditions available to Europeans.

Non-Arab dynasties. The first few centuries of Islamic history were dominated by the Arab dynasties of the Umayyads (661-750), with their capital in Damascus, and the Abbasids (750-1258) with their capital in Baghdad. Until the ninth century, they maintained central control over most of the vast Islamic Empire, but then, the governors of outlying regions began to establish themselves as hereditary rulers, and independent dynasties were formed on the periphery of the Empire. In general, they paid tribute to the Abbasid Caliphs and acknowledged their suzerainty, but they wielded the power, in a relationship not unlike that of the shoguns to the emperor in Japan, particularly after the Buwayhids conquered Baghdad in 945 and the Abbasid Caliphs no longer controlled any territory themselves. Overall, the pattern was that Arab dynasties gave way to Persian dynasties, which gave way to Turkish dynasties. Persian dynasties such as the Samanids and the Buwayhids dominated in the tenth and eleventh centuries, but from the eleventh century on, Turks, who had come into the Iran and the Arab lands as mercenaries employed by the Abbasids and other rulers, become the dominant governing and military class. From 1055, when the Seljuks gained control of Baghdad after conquering most of Iran and Iraq, until World War I, almost all regions of the Arab world were ruled by Turkish dynasties

Colonial experience. Most regions of the Arab world, with just a few exceptions, became colonies of a European power, primarily Britain and France, but also Italy and Spain, for some period in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This shared experience has given them shared histories of modernization and influence of modern European culture and institutions, as well as particular animosities to domination by outside powers but at the same time strong historical ties with former colonizers that continue to influence culture, education, economics, and politics. The colonial period was also crucial for drawing the map of the modern Arab nations, creating the modern Arab nation states, and determining the form the particular nationalisms would take. The colonial experience bears directly upon modern Arab experiences with liberal thought and modern modes of governance. Human rights, capitalism, democracy, and gender equality, for example, are dynamics subjects that consume Arab societies today and are related directly to the region's colonial past.

Continued importance. The Arab world continues to play a central role in global politics and world culture. It remains a center of geographical attention for the religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The production and exportation of oil, an industry that has grown to colossal proportions in many nations of the Arab world, has had many economic, political, and social implications for Arab nations and for their relations with the West and other parts of the world. Because a large proportion of known oil reserves are found in the Arab world, and particularly in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq, their importance in world geopolitics is not going to diminish in the future. In addition, the conflict between Israel and Palestine has been a continual focus of attention since before the end of the British mandate and the founding of Israel in 1948. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism and radical Islamism since the Iranian revolution in 1979 are also a topic of current concern for the Arab nations, for neighboring regions, and for the Western powers, and this tension rose to new heights following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The recent series of revolts and protests throughout the Arab nations that became known as the Arab Spring called global attention to the Arab World once again, and the Civil War in Syria continues at this very moment. The region will continue to be an area of major world concern for the foreseeable future.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To gain a sound knowledge of the history of the Arab world in pre-modern and modern times.
- To gain an understanding of Arab and Middle Eastern history as part of world history, and to appreciate the region's pivotal role at the center of the three continents of Europe, Africa, and Asia before the discovery of the New World.
- To gain an understanding of the influence of Arabic culture and learning on Europe, particularly through contact during the Crusades and Arab rule in Sicily and Spain.
- To gain an understanding of the colonial experience of the Arab world and the profound impact this has had on the modern Arab nations.
- To gain an understanding of some of the main issues in the contemporary history of the Arab world.
- To improve research and writing skills through textual and historical analysis, particularly through the use of documents and documented evidence.

REQUIREMENTS

- Students are expected to complete the assigned readings and to complete written answers to two or three out of a set of questions for each week. In many cases, there is no correct answer to each question. Students should aim to formulate their own opinions on the material and will not be expected to agree with the professor or the authorities whose studies we read. Their focus should be on explaining their points clearly and in a logical manner, supported by examples from the text. Arguing from the text is absolutely essential for success in this course. For the question sets, footnotes are not required. Citations from the particular works we are reading for that week may be parenthetical, e.g.: (Hitti, p. 54). Students are encouraged to explore areas and ideas that may be tentative, unfamiliar, or unusual.
- Two assigned papers, 10 pages each. The first will be due at Week 8, and the second at Week 15. The papers will be judged first on argument, originality of thesis, and the use of textual evidence; second on proper form, structure, and documentation; and third on mechanics, clarity of expression, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and so forth. Footnotes and bibliography are required for the assigned papers and should follow the conventions of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Of particular important is the marshaling of documented evidence to make historical arguments.

GRADING

Weekly writing assignments: 40%
Paper #1: 30%
Paper#2: 30%

Instructions for Paper Assignments:
Each paper will be 10-12 pages, double-spaced, and include full bibliography and footnotes, following either Chicago or MLA style. Writing should be formal throughout. The papers will be judged on both content and form: first, on argument, the use of explicit evidence, the marshaling of that evidence in a logical and cogent manner, and correct documentation; second, on the formal structure of the essay; and third, on style, mechanics, and so on.

Assignment for Paper #1:
Paper #1 will be due in Week 9 of the course. The paper may address any issue relevant to the first two sections of the course, classical Arabic literature or medieval Arabic literature and its influence on Western Europe, but the following are some suggested topics:

1. Capital Cities of the Arab World. Explain the role that one or more of the following cities played in the history of the Arab World and neighboring regions: Medina, Damascus, Baghdad, Cordoba, Cairo, Tabriz, Istanbul. What were its distinctive features? How was it connected with the rest of the world economically, politically, socially, or intellectually?
2. What role has geography played in the history of the Arab world? What effects did the geographical and environmental nature of the Arabian desert, the Syrian desert, the Sahara, the Straits of Gibraltar, the islands of Sicily, Crete, or Cyprus, the valleys of the Nile, the Euphrates, and the Tigris have on pre-modern history?
3. Explain some aspect of the Islamic conquests of territories throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and into Western Europe, Anatolia, the Caucasus, Transoxania, and Sind. Why did they proceed in the manner and order they did? Do you think alternative scenarios could have been possible? What? What were the factors that made them so successful?
4. Discuss the influence of Greek, Persian, or Sanskrit learned traditions on Arabic learned traditions in the Middle Ages. How and why did they take place? What sorts of works were translated, and why? Discuss specific examples. What were the effects of the translation movement?
5. Discuss the influence of Arabic learned traditions on Latin and other European learned traditions in the Middle Ages. How and why did they take place? What sorts of works were translated, and why? Discuss specific examples. What were the effects of the translation movement?
6. Discuss the legacy of any dynasty that we have studied.

Assignment for Paper #2:
Paper #2 will be due in Week 15 of the course and may address any issue relevant to the third section of the course, modern Arabic literature. The following are some suggested topics:

1. What role has geography played in the history of the Arab world? What effects did the geographical and environmental nature of the Arabian desert, the Syrian desert, the Sahara, the Straits of Gibraltar, the islands of Sicily, Crete, or Cyprus, the valleys of the Nile, the Euphrates, and the Tigris have on modern history and the formation of the modern Arab nation states?
2. For which modern Arab nations is it best possible to make the claim that the very existence of the nation, or at least a major aspect of its current shape and borders, was the direct product of European colonialism? What are the best counter-examples?
3. Describe the historical relationship between the foreign policies of Britain, France, and the United States in the Arab World.
4. How did British colonial rule differ from French colonial rule, and what were the consequences of this for the colonized populations.
5. Discuss the formation of any modern Arab nation and show what it owes to pre-modern historical developments, its colonial experience or lack thereof in the 19th and 20th centuries, and its post-independence relations with other Arab nations and with Western powers.

TEXTS

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FURTHER READING

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Pre-Islamic Arabs.

Reading: Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 1- 111; Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs*.

Censored Pagan Legacy. In Arabic, a rainbow is *qaws quzah* "the bow of Quzah," a reference to the pre-Islamic thunder-god, Quzah, and a genius is `*abqari*, which derives from the Valley of `Abqar, an area in Central Arabia famed as a favorite haunt of genies, the muses of pre-Islamic poetry. Few modern Arabs, however, recognize these as relics of pagan beliefs, something that points to a particular historical problem regarding the pre-Islamic history of Arabs. Because Islam arose in opposition to the pagan traditions of the Arabs, they are regularly denounced in Islamic literature and, unlike the pagan Greeks and Romans in Christian, European culture, they were not recuperated and accorded exalted standing in Islamic culture. The result is that many aspects of pre-Islamic Arab history, culture, and especially religious traditions were regularly suppressed during the Islamic period.

Arabia in Ancient History. Although it is often supposed that the Arabian Peninsula has been home only to nomadic tribes since time immemorial, the truth is that it and its geographical extension, the Syrian Desert, which reaches far into northern Syria and Iraq, covering the entire region between the Euphrates River and the eastern borders of what is now Israel, Lebanon, and Syria, have been the site of numerous civilizations, many of which controlled vast areas and far-reaching trade networks, supported complex societies, and built impressive temples, palaces, and other monuments. One of the main things that enabled the Arabs to gain long-lasting power and influence in the region was their effectiveness as long-distance traders. The domestication of the camel enabled them both to survive in relatively harsh environments and to travel and transport goods great distances over land. Combined with the relative difficulty of maritime transport, particularly in the Red Sea, this gave them a near-monopoly on trade in certain commodities such as the aromatics of South Arabia. For convenience, one may divide the area into three main regions: East Arabia, South Arabia, and North and Central Arabia.

East Arabia. The region from which the historical and archaeological record provides the oldest material is East Arabia. Records from nearby Mesopotamia provides information about regions of the Persian Gulf, termed Dilmun and Magan, which were stops along an important maritime trade route to Meluhha, a region further afield and probably located in what is now the Indus River valley. Dilmun was apparently located in Bahrain and the adjacent region of what is now the Saudi-Arabian coast. It appears in the sources as a major trade depot already in the third millennium B.C. One of the main items traded there was copper from mines in Magan, present-day Oman. Dilmun continued to be named in the sources of the second and first millennia B.C. The neo-Babylonians gained influence in the region in the sixth century B.C.E. In the time of Alexander the Great, it was called Tylos, and later, the Greeks referred to a town called Gerrha in northeast Arabia that had apparently taken over the lead as the main center of trade in the region.

South Arabia. Archaeology reveals important civilizations in South Arabia from the late second millennium on, including Yemen and the Hadramawt to the east. There were four main ancient groups: the Sabaeans, with their main center in Ma'rib, the Qatabanians at Timna, the Minaeans at Qarnaw on the Red Sea coast, and the Hadramites to the west. The income of the region came from long-distance trade of luxury items from India and Africa that the locals transported to Egypt and Syria, agriculture, primarily by terraced farming, and production and trade of incense and perfume from the aromatic sap of local plants, the famous frankincense and myrrh of the Ancient Near East. The longest lasting of these

civilizations was the Sabaean, the capital of which, Ma'rib, was continuously occupied from ca. 1200 B.C.E. until ca. 275 C.E. This civilization appears in the Hebrew Bible in the person of the Queen of Sheba. Described as the ruler of a prosperous kingdom, she is supposed to have traveled to meet King Solomon (970-931 B.C.E.), asking him questions about his religion and bringing as gifts spices, precious stones, and 120 talents of gold (II Chronicles 9:1-9 and I Kings 10:1-10).

The Himyarites, Judaism, and Christianity. In the fourth century C.E. the Himyarites were able to gain control of all of Yemen and the Hadramawt and to extend their influence into surrounding regions. The Kindah tribe of central Arabia became their vassals and, assuming the title of King of the Arabs, controlled central and northern Arabia. It is not entirely clear from the available sources, but the Himyarites adhered to a monotheistic faith and termed their god al-Rahman "the Beneficent One"; this may mean that they had adopted Judaism. It is clear that the last Himyarite ruler Yusuf Dhu Nuwas (517-25 C.E.) had adopted Judaism, and persecuted Christians in his realm in retaliation, he reports, for mistreatment of the Jews by Christian powers. He is responsible for the 523 C.E. massacre of Christians in the town of Najran, north of Yemen, perhaps the event connected with "the People of the Ditch" referred to in the Qur'an (Q 85). In reaction to Dhu Nuwas' actions, the negus Kaleb of the Aksumite Kingdom of Ethiopia (ca. 100-940 C.E.) sent forces to invade and conquer Yemen, building a Cathedral in Sanaa. After an attempted Yemeni rebellion, a second Ethiopian commander, Abraha, was sent to subjugate the Yemenis, and he may have led the expedition against Mecca described in *Surat al-Fil* (The Elephant, Q 105). The warrior Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan from southern Yemen rebelled against the Ethiopians and ousted their forces ca. 570 C.E., exploits that became the material for a popular epic tale in later centuries. Interestingly, the earliest extant biography of the Prophet, the *Sirah* of Ibn Hisham, connects the rise of the Prophet Muhammad with the ousting of the Ethiopians from Yemen.

North and Central Arabia. This region also witnessed the rise of a number of important ancient states, and sources record their presence from early in the first millennium. The region they inhabited had much scarcer water and limited access to ports for trade with outside regions. They were more nomadic and often dismissed by outsiders as mere raiders. Nevertheless, they established significant towns and cities and gained wealth from the trade in South Arabian aromatics. The Midianites of the Bible, among whom Moses took refuge when he fled from Egypt, were in the northwest corner of the Arabian Peninsula. The Bible mentions King Solomon's receipt of tribute from "all the Arab kings" (ca. 970-931). In an 853 B.C.E. inscription, the Assyrian ruler Shalmaneser III refers to Gindibu, a king of the Arab lands. Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727) boasts of defeating Shamsi, queen of the Arabs and Zabibe, another queen of the Arabs ca. 738 B.C.E. Sargon II (721-705 B.C.E.) appointed a certain Idibi'ilu the Arab as guard of the border regions. The Babylonian ruler Nabonidus famously fled Babylonia and lived in exile ca. 552-543 B.C.E. in North Arabian towns, though it is not known why he did this. The Nabataean state, with its impressive capital at Petra in Jordan, flourished from the fourth century B.C.E. until it was annexed by Rome in 106 C.E. Palmyra (Tadmur) in eastern Syria was annexed by Rome in 20 C.E.; they became Roman vassals who fended off the Romans mortal enemies, the Parthians, with great success. Their queen Zenobia (267-272 C.E.) gained fame for leading a short-lived revolt against the Romans. There were other significant states besides these, such as Thamud and the Lihyanites in northwestern Arabia. In the centuries before the rise of Islam, the two superpowers, the Byzantines and the Sassanians (c. 240-652), had adopted the old strategy of using one Arab tribe to defend the border regions from attack and to control the more nomadic tribes who lived further into the desert. The Byzantines' vassals were the Ghassanids or Jafnids, who had their capital at Busra, south of Damascus, and the

Sassanians' vassals were the Lakhmids or Nasrids, who had their capital at al-Hirah in southern Iraq. The members of both tribes had adopted Christianity.

Arab Tribes. The Arabs were traditionally organized into tribes, and this presumably goes back to remote antiquity and survives to this day in many parts of the Arab world. Many tribes took an animal as their totem or emblem and became known as the Banu Asad (Sons of Lion or the Lion Tribe), the Banu Kalb (Sons of Dog or the Dog Tribe), Quraysh (Little Shark), and so on, while others took the given name of an ancestor who supposedly originated the tribe. Tribal organization is more flexible than many realize: new members can be adopted by the tribe or become attached to it as clients. Genealogies may be altered or created, and ancestors invented in order to serve contemporary political interests such as cementing an alliance. Before the advent of Islam, the Arab tribes were divided into two great federations that claimed descent from two ancient brothers, `Adnan and Qahtan: the Northern Arabs claimed descent from `Adnan, and the Southern Arabs claimed descent from Qahtan. Because of many migrations, the northern and southern designations no longer corresponded to the geographical location of the two groups. The *Sirah* (Life) of the Prophet Muhammad presents his genealogy in such a way as to combine descent from `Adnan (since Quraysh, the Prophet's tribe, belonged to the Northern Arabs) with descent from Ishmael, thus connecting him both with the Arabs' primordial ancestors and with the prophetic line of Abraham.

Questions:

1. When and why do Arabs first appear in historical documents?
2. What are the main pre-Islamic Arab dynasties? How do we know about them? What do we know about their religion?
3. How and why were Arabs central to global politics and trade?
4. Describe the religious situation in pre-Islamic Yemen.
5. What was Petra?
6. What kinds of Arab Christianity existed in the Near East prior to the rise of Islam?
7. What role did the Arab Christians play vis-à-vis the Sassanian and Byzantine rivalry? Who were the Ghassanids and the Lakhmids?

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A New Religious Movement. The national language of Morocco is Arabic; nearly half of the vocabulary of Persian is Arabic; and the Spanish words for the common foodstuffs "olive" (*aceituna*), oil (*aceite*), "rice" (*arroz*), and "sugar" (*azúcar*) are Arabic as well. None of this would have been the case if it had not been for a tiny religious movement that began in the early seventh century in the Western Arabian town of Mecca and led to the creation of a vast world empire, changing the course of history in the Middle East, Europe, and beyond. Mecca, dominated by the Quraysh (Little Shark) tribe, had two main claims to fame. It was the site of an important religious shrine, a rectangular building called the Ka`bah, the site of an annual pilgrimage that brought devotees from all over the Arabian Peninsula in the last month of the year. The Meccans also controlled the trade caravans that linked Yemen with Syria. Over several preceding centuries, Jews and Christians had established an increasing presence in and around the Arabian Peninsula. Jewish communities existed in a number of North Arabian towns, including Yathrib, Khaybar, Tayma', and others. The Himyarite kings had converted to Judaism along with large numbers of the populace, and Jewish communities continued to thrive in Yemen after the end of their reign. The vassal kingdoms of the Ghassanids and the Lakhmids had witnessed the conversion of many tribes on the outskirts of the Syrian Desert to Christianity. Ethiopia, across the Strait of Mandib from Yemen, was home to the Aksumite kingdom, and the Negus or King Ezana had converted to Christianity in 325 or 328 C.E. Christianity was the dominant religion throughout Egypt, Palestine, and Syria. Najran, A Christian town north of Yemen and not too far from Mecca, had a cathedral and a bishop; it had been the site of a massacre of Christians in 523 C.E. at the instigation of the Himyarite ruler Dhu Nuwas. The new religion emphasized monotheism and the Biblical tradition. The new message embodied in the Qur'an presented itself as a scripture and a confirmation of earlier scriptures, including the Torah, the Psalms, and the Gospel. The sole recognized deity was Allah or al-Rahman (the Beneficent One), the Arabic word for God, meaning the God of the Bible.

The Prophet Muhammad. The outlines of the Prophet Muhammad's life are known less from the Qur'an than from the *Sirah* of Ibn Ishaq (d. 767) as edited and presented by Ibn Hisham (d. 833), which is the Islamic version of the Christian gospels, in that it begins with the Prophet's genealogy, the prediction of his mission, and his miraculous birth, then follows his life chronologically until his death, concentrating on the events of his mission. He was born ca. 570 and grew up an orphan, his father Abd Allah having died before his birth, and his mother Aminah having died while he was very young. He was raised by his uncle Abu Talib and grew up a well-behaved and trustworthy youth. He traveled to conduct trade with the caravans to Syria. At the age of about twenty-five, he married Khadija, and older woman who had been married several times before. They had a number of daughters, but no sons, and the only daughter who survived her father was Fatimah. In about 610, Muhammad had his first revelation while on a retreat in a cave on Mt. Hira outside Mecca. The angel Gabriel instructed Muhammad to recite, and he was inspired with Q 96: "Recite in the name of thy Lord who created, * Created man from a clot. * Recite: And they Lord is the most bounteous, * Who taught by the pen, * Taught man what he knew not. * …"

Preaching and Flight to Medina. The revelations continued, and three years later Muhammad began to preach. He urged the Meccans to forsake their gods and therefore the town's ancient and revered shrine, which provoked a negative reaction on the part of the leaders of Quraysh. Muhammad and the small but growing group of converts were ostracized. Because Muhammad was protected by his clan, the Banu Hashim, he was safe from harm, but when his uncle Abu Talib b. Abd al-Muttalib died in 619 and was replaced as head of the clan by Abd al-Uzza, another uncle who was a sworn enemy of Muhammad, he lost the support of the clan and began to face danger. He attempted to seek refuge in Ta'if, a nearby town, but that did not work. He was then asked to go to Yathrib to act as a mediator in ongoing tribal disputes. In 621, he and his followers escaped to Yathrib, which came to be known as al-Madina (*the City* of the Prophet), in an event called the Hijra (the Flight).

Conflict with the Meccans. In the period from this time until the Prophet's death in 632, the Muslim community became a political entity with the Prophet as its leader. The followers who came from Mecca were called *Muhajirun* ("those who made the Flight"), and the new converts from Medina were labeled *Ansar* ("the Allies"). After a series of battles against the Meccans, the Muslims established a sufficient power base through allegiances with numerous tribes in the area. By 630, they had amassed enough power to be able to take Mecca. By the times of the Prophet's passing in 632, most of the Peninsula was under the sway of the Muslim community. There is some indication that the Prophet was intending to expand to the north, because he sent a military force to raid Tabuk in far northwestern Arabia shortly before his death.

Expansion, Byzantium, and the Sassanian Empire. After the passing of the Prophet, many of the Arab tribes that had sworn allegiance conceded their obligation to pay zakat on the grounds that it was tribute due to Muhammad in particular. From the Muslims' point of view, however, they had converted to Islam and so could not back out. Under the leadership of the first caliph, Abu Bakr (632-34), they conducted *Hurub al-Riddah* (the Wars of Apostasy) in order to unite the Peninsula once again under their leadership. Under the second caliph, Umar ibn al-Khattab (634-44), an incredible expansion of the Islamic polity took place. Muslim armies pushed northward into Syria and Iraq, defeating the armies of the two superpowers of the time, the Byzantines and the Sassanians. The political fates of Byzantium and the Sassanian Empire of Iran differed radically. On the one hand, the Sassanian Empire was toppled quickly: by 652, just twenty years after the Prophet's death, the last Shah was killed and the Empire ceased to exist, granting the new Islamic Empire vast territories in Iraq and Iran. On the other hand, the Byzantine Empire would survive until Constantinople fell to the Ottoman sultan Mehmed the Conqueror in 1453, over 800 years after the death of the Prophet. Certainly, the Byzantines lost extensive territory in the Middle East and North Africa, but already in the seventh century a stable border was established a bit north of the contemporary border between Turkey and Syria, and this remained the border between the Islamic Empire and Christian powers for many centuries. The following chronologies provide a synopsis of the expansion of the Islamic Empire.

Expansion into Syria, Anatolia:

634 Battle of al-Ajnadayn
635 Damascus taken
636 Battle of Yarmouk
638 Jerusalem taken
639 Caesarea and Ascalon taken
641 Raids into Anatolia
642 Dvin in Armenia attacked
649 Cyprus taken
655 the Battle of the Masts—Byzantine navy defeated

674-78 First siege of Constantinople
717-18 Second siege of Constantinople
820 Conquest of Crete

Expansion into Iraq, Iran, and Central Asia:
637 Battle of al-Qadisiyyah, Sassanian forces defeated
637 Sassanian capital, Ctesiphon, captured
642 Battle of Nahavand, Sassanians defeated again
643 Central Persia conquered
643 Invasion of Azerbaijan begins
649-50 Istakhr (Persepolis) taken
652 Merv, seat of Yazdegird III, taken; the Sasanian Empire comes to an end
705 Balkh
706-9 Bukhara
710-12 Samarqand
712 Khwarazm
712 Sind (modern Pakistan)
713-15 Farghanah

Egypt and North Africa:
640-42 Egypt conquered
647 First invasion of Libya and Tunisia
670 Qayrawan founded
682 Uqbah ibn Nafi` reached the Atlantic coast of Morocco
710 Tangier falls to Tariq ibn Ziyad
711 Tariq ibn Ziyad crosses into Spain
717-18 Conquest of most of Iberian Peninsula
718 Muslim forces cross the Pyrenees into France
721 Battle of Toulouse—al-Samh killed by Odo of Aquitaine
720-759 Narbonne in southern France adopted as center of Muslim territory
732 Battle of Poitiers or Tours—Charles Martel defeats and turns back Muslim forces

Sicily and southern Italy:
827 Conquest of Sicily begins
832 Palermo taken
843 Messina taken
878 Syracuse falls
902 Taormina, last holdout in Sicily, falls
846, 849 attacks on Rome
869 Malta taken
847-871 Bari, in southern Italy, becomes capital of independent emirate
909 Fatimids take control of Sicily, attack southern Italy
915 Fatimids defeated at Battle of Garigliano in southern Italy by Pope John X
934-35 Fatimid sack of Genoa
1060-1091 Norman conquest of Sicily

Questions:
1. What is Muhammad's claim vis-à-vis Judaism and Christianity?
2. How does the Qur'an relate to the Hebrew Bible and the Gospel Tradition?
3. Compare the Qur'an and Bible in terms of structure.
4. When did Islam become a political entity and not simply a religious mission?
5. Did the Prophet envisage the conquests that occurred after his demise, or not?
6. How did the conquests proceed? Why?

7. Did the Islamic conquests change the course of subsequent history? What are some salient results of the conquests?

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The Umayyad Dynasty

Reading: Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 189-296; Robinson, *Abd al-Malik*.

Caliphs or Kings? The Prophet Muhammad is famously held to have predicted, "The Caliphate will be thirty years, and after that there will be kings." This repeated apocryphal statement was evidently promulgated by enemies of the Umayyads who hoped to discredit them by characterizing them as secular rulers concerned only with their own wealth and power, who had lost sight of their religious duty to serve God in ruling over the Muslim Community. The image of the Umayyads spread by their enemies and successors, the Abbasids, is one of immoral, materialistic, hedonists who spent their reigns hunting and swimming in baths of wine with slavegirls in the harem. This is history as told by the conquerors, of course, and may not be reliable as a portrayal of reality. The problem is that few historical sources from the Umayyad period have survived, so that we may never know their side of the story.

Restoration of the Tyrants of Quraysh. If one steps back to take a broad view of the first Islamic century, it is shocking that the Umayyads came to rule the Islamic Empire so quickly after the rise of Islam, for they were the leading clan of Quraysh, the enemies who had most bitterly opposed the Prophet's early mission and the nascent Muslim community. Abu Sufyan, the leader of the Umayyad clan, was the general of the pagan Quraysh in their battles against the Muslims. His son Mu`awiyah battled `Ali b. Abi Talib, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law. Yazid, Mu`awiyah's son, sent the troops who killed Husayn, the Prophet's grandson, on the plains of Karbala in 680. Considered from this perspective, the establishment of the Umayyad dynasty represents the triumph of the worst nemesis of the Prophet's family, as if the son of King George III (1760-1820) had become the president of the newly independent United States and then created a new monarchy. When Mu`awiyah named Yazid his successor, he made the Caliphate into a hereditary office, a major change from earlier practice. At least according to later sources, the first four Caliphs had a right to the office on account of their superior merits and virtues and the principle of heredity was avoided on purpose. (It is often overlooked that all of the first four caliphs were related to the Prophet by marriage—this may in fact have been the decisive criterion.) The hereditary principle established by Mu`awiyah continued unopposed for the remainder of the Umayyad period, and was adopted not only by the Umayyad dynasty in Spain and the Abbasids but also by the Fatimid Caliphs and the Twelver Imams.

An Empire based in Syria. The Umayyads established their capital in Damascus. This occurred originally because Mu`awiyah, the founder of the dynasty, was the governor of Syria and had the support of the Arab tribal troops under his command there. It had far-reaching consequences. It meant that the strongest influence on their administration of the Empire and their general culture came from the Byzantines. At the beginning, state administration was done in Greek, and Greek-speaking functionaries were hired as part of the state apparatus. Governors were appointed to other provinces, and judges to serve along with them. Umayyad architecture betrayed substantial Byzantine influence in the form of Roman columns, frescoes, and mosaics. The Cathedral of St. John was converted and expanded to create the Umayyad Mosque. The Dome of the Rock, built by Byzantine craftsmen at the behest of Abd al-Malik in Jerusalem in 691, outdid even the Umayyad Mosque's fame but used Byzantine craftsmen and had similar Byzantine features, such as the octagonal design typical of a Christian *martyrium*, the lavish use of mosaics, and a golden dome. The switch of the administration to Arabic language was undertaken by Abd al-Malik in the late seventh century, but Greek would survive alongside Arabic in official documents for several centuries.

Expansion under the Umayyads. The Empire expanded rapidly during the Umayyad period, and reached to southern France in the West and Sind (modern Pakistan) in the East. Two major sieges of the Byzantine Empire's capital Constantinople, in 674-78 and 717-18 failed to topple the city. The Umayyad state engaged in more or less constant border skirmishes with the Byzantines, and instituted the practice of sending a *sayfiyyah* or summer campaign against them each year. Such campaigns continued in the Abbasid period; because the Abbasid capital was further away, Harun al-Rashid made the city of al-Raqqah, on the upper Euphrates, his base for military operations in the Byzantine Marches.

Shiite Rebellions in Iraq and the Hejaz. The Umayyad period witnessed a number of major revolts aimed at toppling the regime and making a member of the Prophet Muhammad's family the leader of the Muslim community. The most famous of these is the revolt of Husayn, who refused to give allegiance to Islam's first hereditary ruler, Yazid, son of Mu`awiyah, when he acceded to power in 680. Husayn marched from Medina across northern Arabia to Iraq, answering the plea of the inhabitants of Kufa to lead them in rebellion. However, spies warned the Umayyad authorities, and an army was sent to prevent Husayn from reaching Kufa. The Umayyad force stopped Husayn on the plain of Karbala' before he reached the Euphrates, and after a standoff of several days, during which Husayn refused to swear allegiance to Yazid and the Kufans failed to come to his rescue, a battle ensued in which all the adult males in Husayn's group were killed. This is the tragedy of Karbala that Shiites remember—and in many regions reenact—on `Ashura', the 10th of Muharram, the first month in the Islamic calendar. Yazid's right-hand man was al-Hajjaj, renowned for his shrewdness and brutality, who not only ruled the Shiites of southern Iraq with an iron fist but also served as commander of the entire eastern half of the empire. Southern Iraq was the site of several subsequent rebellions of the same type, including that of the Tawwabun (Penitents) in 684, that of Mukhtar al-Thaqafi in 686-87, and that of Zayd in 740 C.E.

A major setback for the Umayyads was a revolt in the Hijaz, the historical cradle of Islam, led by Abd Allah ibn al-Zubayr, who established himself as ruler from Medina between 680 and 692. The revolt gained wide support, succeeded in gaining the allegiance of several provinces, and prevented the Umayyads from controlling the annual pilgrimage and access to Islam's holiest cities. It provoked the Umayyads' alarm particularly since they were faced for the first time with an internal rebellion they could not easily suppress. This may have led the Umayyads to stress the Islamic religious importance of Jerusalem and to build the Dome of the Rock.

Tribal rivalries. Another challenge for the Umayyads was the continuation of ancient rivalries between the confederations of Qays and Kalb, representing the Northern and Southern tribes of the Arabs, both of which were represented in the Umayyad forces. Some of the Caliphs were not successful in controlling this rivalry and exacerbated them by favoring one side over the other.

The Abbasid Revolution. From the perspective of later sources, the Umayyads' tendency to act like secular kings or Arab chieftains rather than leaders of an explicitly religious empire led to their downfall. General discontent of the piety-minded and disgust with the Umayyads' extravagance, drinking, hunting, and other vices, combined with the Shiites' goal of restoring control over the Islamic community to the family of the Prophet, fueled the Abbasid revolution. The revolt began as an underground plot that stretched throughout Syria, Iraq, and Iran. It began in earnest in Khurasan, eastern Iran, led by a talented commander named Abu Muslim in the name of an anonymous would-be caliph whose identity was not at first revealed. Instead, the revolutionaries referred to *al-rida min ahl al-bayt* "the acceptable man from the family of the Prophet". In 750, the revolutionaries took

Damascus and put an end to the Umayyad regime, executing the caliph and his male relatives. One member of the family, an uncle of the Caliph named Abd al-Rahman, escaped to Egypt and crossed all of North Africa in disguise. He eventually made his way to al-Andalus and established a new Umayyad dynasty there, ruling from the capital, Cordoba. The new Abbasid regime immediately shifted the imperial capital to Wasit in southern Iraq, then to Baghdad, presumably because that was a region of strong Shiite and anti-Umayyad sentiment, as opposed to Syria, which was home to staunch supporters of the old regime. After the success of the revolution, the Caliph, a descendant of the Prophet's uncle Abbas, turned on the Shiite leaders who were instrumental in making the revolution possible and had them killed. This purge earned the first Abbasid caliph the epithet al-Saffah "the shedder of blood." Shiites completely changed their attitude to the new regime that they had initially supported, now viewing them as sworn enemies, just as unsavory as the Umayyads had been.

Questions:

1. How did Abd al-Malik try to compensate for the alleged failures of his Umayyad kinsmen?
2. According to Robinson, why did Abd al-Malik concentrate so heavily on building the mosque at Jerusalem?
3. From Robinson's perspective, why is it not appropriate to describe the political project of Ibn al-Zubayr as a counter-caliphate?
4. What role did the Ahl al-Bayt play in the Abbasid revolution?
5. Were the Abbasids Shiite?

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The Abbasids

Reading: Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 297-428.

Baghdad, the Abbasids' Capital of the Islamic Empire:
In 750 C.E., the Umayyad dynasty, which had ruled from their capital in Damascus since 661 C.E., came to an end, overthrown by a revolt that had started in far-off eastern Iran. The victors established a new dynasty of Caliphs, called the Abbasids because they were descendants of the Prophet Muhammad's uncle al-`Abbas. The new dynasty immediately moved the capital of the Islamic empire to Iraq, ruling first from a city called Wasit—i.e. Middleton—between the Tigris and Euphrates in southern Iraq. In 762, the Caliph al-Mansur founded the new capital city of Baghdad, situated on the Tigris River at a point where the Tigris and Euphrates come close together but do not join—they join far to the south, just north of Basra. This was very close to Ctesiphon, the ruined site of the capital of the Iranian dynasty, the Sassanians, which had been toppled by the Islamic invasion over a century earlier. The new city was built as a circle with the Caliph's palace at the center. It has been claimed by some that this plan was inspired by Euclid's geometry. Baghdad grew rapidly. It was the capital of an empire that stretched from Spain to Pakistan and received a enormous revenues from the provinces. In addition, advances in irrigation, central control, and technology produced an unprecedented agricultural surplus in Iraq itself. In addition, through the port city of Basra at the northern end of the Persian Gulf, Baghdad controlled trade from the Indian Ocean coming into the Middle East, a trade route made famous by the stories of Sindbad the sailor, who, whenever he got fed up with the easy life in Baghdad, took a boat down the Tigris to Basra, where he outfitted a ship with merchandise and sailed down the Persian Gulf and out into the Indian Ocean. After braving horrific dangers, he returned laden down with spices, jewels, cloth, wood, and other luxury items. The tremendous income produced by agriculture was supported in part by the labor of slaves from East Africa, who rose in a tremendous revolt around Basra in southern Iraq between 869 and 883. By 850, Baghdad was the largest city in the world outside China, several times larger than the largest contemporary cities in Europe. It is estimated that Baghdad had roughly one million inhabitants, and reports state that there were ten thousand public baths in the city. One frequently cited symbol of the Abbasids's power is the fact that the Caliph Harun al-Rashid (r. 786-809) sent a white elephant as a diplomatic gift all the way to Charlemagne in France.

Persian influence. Whereas under the Umayyads, Byzantine influence had been strongest, under the Abbasids, Persian influence was paramount. This is seen in the Abbasid caliphs' adoption of Persian royal culture as a model for their own imperial rule, with huge palace complexes, elaborate protocol and ceremonies, and the employment of men from prominent Persian administrative families as ministers and high functionaries in their government, such as Ibn al-Muqaffa`, the Barmakids, and the Nawbakhtis. It was also evident from the tremendous Persian influence on both high and low culture, including cuisine, fashion, music, didactic literature, mirrors for princes, and more, in Abbasid Iraq.

Foreign women. One aspect of this shift in palace culture had a profound effect on the caliphal line itself. Whereas the Umayyads generally married Arab tribal women from a prominent family in order to cement tribal alliances with military commanders and other nobles, the Abbasid Caliphs began to marry foreign women who had come to the palace as slave concubines, and these women became influential in palace politics and successfully got their sons to accede to the caliphate. An important type of influential woman for the early Abbasid period was the *qayna* or professional singer-slavegirl, who was also adept at

composing poetry and setting poems to music, endowed with erudition and ready wit, and served as an intellectual companion for the caliphs and other elite men.

Civil war. Persian influence came to a peak after the civil war that pitted two sons of Harun al-Rashid, al-Amin and al-Ma'mun, against each other between 809 and 813. Al-Amin was born of an Arab mother, had an Arab vizier, al-Fadl ibn Rabi`, and held the western half of the empire, while al-Ma'mun was born of a Persian mother, had a Persian vizier, al-Fadl ibn Sahl, and held the eastern half of the empire. Ma'mun, and the Persian side, won in 813, when he was able to leave his temporary capital in Merv and march into Baghdad. The rivalry between Arab and Persian culture erupted in a societal and literary debate termed the *Shu`ubiyyah*, in which champions of each side praised their group's accomplishments and superior qualities while denigrating their opponents. The Arabs denounced the Persians as cowardly, stingy, and effeminate, while the Persians denounced the Arabs as uncouth, ignorant, and unsophisticated.

Religious authority. The Abbasids were not entirely satisfied with their imperial image and, consciously countering the Umayyads' supposed lack of concern with the faith, actively sought to engage in religious action and propaganda. One telling sign of this is their adoption of theophoric caliphal titles that were clearly religiously charged: *al-Mahdi bi-llah* "Guided by God", *al-Mutawakkil `ala llah* "Placing Trust in God", *al-Muntasir bi-llah* "Victorious through God", and so on. Between 833 and 848, the caliphs from al-Ma'mun (813-833) until al-Mutawakkil (847-861) led, along with Mu`tazili theologians, the Inquisition (*al-mihnah*) designed to force judges, other officials, and prominent religious scholars to accept the theological doctrine that the Qur'an was created and not eternal, a policy that ultimately failed. The Caliph al-Qadir (991-1031) promulgated a document called the Qadiri Creed a number of times during his reign with the express aim of removing Shiism and Mu`tazili theology from the public sphere. Even the late caliph al-Nasir (1180-1225) sought to exert his religious authority by granting diplomas to the leading jurists of the four Sunni legal schools. While it is true overall that the Abbasids lost political and religious authority over time, episodes like these show that they continued to claim religious authority in various ways throughout their long reign.

Intellectual Center. Baghdad became a center not only for wealth, power, and luxury, but also for scholarship. Scholars of all fields flocked to the city because of opportunities to learn, obtain books, get support through stipends provided by wealthy patrons, and find work as copyists, tutors, and lecturers. In nearly every field, whether grammar, literature, history, Islamic law, mathematics, or astronomy, the academics of Baghdad were soon producing the most advanced scholarship in the world at the time. This blossoming of scholarship was helped by the discovery of a way to make paper quickly and cheaply. Before the late eighth century, scholars in the Middle East wrote on parchment, made of animal skins, or papyrus, made of the papyrus reed native to Egypt. Parchment was extremely expensive and time-consuming to produce. Papyrus was less expensive, but was brittle when dry and did not last in humid climates. The Abbasids learned to make paper out of pulp from craftsmen in Khurasan (north-eastern Iran) who had in turn learned to make paper from Chinese craftsmen who had been captured at the Battle of Talas in 751 C.E. By 800 C.E., factories around Baghdad were producing paper at an astonishing rate. The availability of cheap paper led to an explosion in publishing that saw Baghdadi authors writing individual works of 3,000, 5,000, even 30,000 pages. It is estimated, for example, that Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (d. 923 C.E.), the famous historian, hadith scholar, jurist, and commentator on the Qur'an, wrote 40 pages a day for 40 years. A new profession came into being, that of *warraq*, or "paper man". The *warraq* was a combination copyist, bookseller, and publishing agent. In the ninth century, there were over 100 bookshops in the "Market of the Papermen."

The Translation Movement. The translation movement was important from about 750 C.E. until 950 C.E. A few works had been translated before the Abbasids came to power, but translations began to be produced rapidly and in large numbers soon after the establishment of the Abbasid dynasty. The Abbasid caliphs who were most active in promoting translation and supporting translators were al-Mansur (775-785), al-Hadi (785-786), and al-Ma'mun (813-833). Many other figures, including viziers, government secretaries, and individual scholars, patronized and supported translation. The Caliph al-Ma'mun built a royal library called the Bayt al-Hikmah ("House of Wisdom"), which served as an important resource for scholars and translators. He and other caliphs paid to have scientific works brought from the Byzantine Empire to Baghdad, including superior manuscript copies of works that were available only in corrupt form. Works were translated into Arabic from a number of languages, primarily Greek, Persian, and Sanskrit. In some cases, the works were translated directly, say, from Greek into Arabic or Persian into Arabic. In other cases, works were translated from Greek into Syriac, and then from Syriac into Arabic, or from Sanskrit into Persian and then from Persian into Arabic.

The Sciences. Numerically, the most important body of material translated was made up of Greek scientific works, which were held to be the most valuable. Some literary works were translated, such as *Kalila and Dimna*, an originally Sanskrit work that had been translated into Persian and was translated into Arabic in the early Abbasid period by Ibn al-Muqaffa` (d. ca. 756). This work was a collection of advice tales with animal characters, but was understood to contain valuable advice for rulers and government officials. The scientific works translated focused primarily on astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, medicine, and philosophy, and secondarily on other topics such as music. Many Greek works became standard textbooks in the Islamic world, including Euclid's *Elements*, on geometry, Ptolemy's *Almagest* and *Tetrabiblios*, on astronomy; Aristotle's *Organon*, on logic, dialectic, and philosophy; and Galen's sixteen books, which constituted the entire curriculum for the study of medicine.

Christian translators. Many of the most famous translators were Middle Eastern Christians who spoke Arabic as a native language but had learned Syriac and Greek in the course of their religious education. Perhaps the most famous is Hunayn ibn Ishaq, who translated hundreds of works, including most of the books of Galen, in addition to supervising a workshop of other translators, including his nephew and others.

Transmission and elaboration. The translation movement played an important role in preserving classical heritage. There are still many classical Greek works that have only been preserved in Arabic versions—the original Greek versions have been lost. Greek manuscripts were copied in Byzantine territory specifically for the translation movement, which led to a revival of scholarship in Byzantium itself. The Islamic world played a crucial role in transmitting knowledge of these works to medieval Europe. Primarily in Spain and Sicily, many of the Arabic translations were translated into Latin. However, the scholars of the Islamic world were not mere transmitters. They assimilated and built on the achievements of the Greeks in nearly every field. They developed algebra, produced the general solution to the quadratic equation, discovered the lesser or pulmonary circulation of blood in the human body, and made many other similar advances. Examples of works by Muslim scholars that criticized and revised classical scholarship include Abu Bakr al-Razi's *Doubts about Galen*, on medicine, Ibn al-Haytham's *Doubts about Ptolemy*, on astronomy, and Avicenna's *Eastern Philosophy*, which outlines his major areas of disagreement with Aristotelian philosophy. Moreover, the effect of the translation movement reached beyond the scientific fields in which works were actually translated, exerting a profound effect on the theoretical discussion of grammar, theology, law, and the other Islamic sciences. By

the end of the ninth century, Baghdad was home to the most advanced scholars in the world in most fields, something that would have been impossible without the translation movement.

Decline. The translation movement ended in the late tenth and early eleventh century. Sources of patronage dwindled. A conservative coalition opposed to the rational approach adopted by most scholars in the sciences grew strong, and was supported by the Caliph al-Qadir (991-1031) and the Turkish ruler Mahmud b. Sebuktegin of Ghazna (997-1030). Mahmud's conquest of the Buwayhid capital of Rayy in Iran in 1020 and the Seljuk conquest of Baghdad in 1055 put an end to much official support. Funds were funneled into other areas where the study of the rational sciences was limited, such as *madrasa*s or colleges of Islamic law, and the religious sciences were favored overall. Moreover, there was less and less tolerance for strictly rational approaches in society at large and among scholars as well.

Questions:

1. Why did the Abbasids found their capital in Iraq?
2. Compare and contrast the Umayyads and the Abbasids.
3. What were the Abbasids' claims to authority? What were their religious policies?
4. What role did Abbasid Baghdad play in intellectual history and the transmission of knowledge?
5. How might one define the periods of Abbasid history?
6. Explain the causes of the civil war between al-Amin and al-Ma'mun. How did the war end, and what were the consequences?
7. What were the salient features of Abbasid court culture? To what extent were these related to Persian models?
8. Discuss the function and status of the *qiyan* or professional female slave singers and musicians.

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The Shiite Century.

Reading: Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 429-89, 617-32.

Shiite political hegemony. Between about 950 and 1050 C.E., Shiites controlled nearly all of Islamdom. During this period, which Hodgson called the Shiite century, Shiite dynasties were formed and acquired unprecedented power. They included the Buyids (or Buwayhids), who controlled most of Iraq and Iran; the Fatimids, who controlled Tunisia, part of Algeria, Sicily, Libya, Egypt, the Hejaz, and southern Syria; the Hamdanids, with capitals at Aleppo and Mosul, who controlled northern Syria and northern Iraq. In addition, the Mirdasids and `Uqaylids controlled parts of northern Syria and Iraq for a time, while the Mazyadids, based in Hillah, reigned over a territory in southern Iraq. Ismaili states ruled in Pakistan and Eastern Arabia, and the Isma`ili Sulayhid dynasty reigned in Yemen. Zaydi Shiite states were established in Gilan, Azerbaijan, and Yemen. Because of the political power of these dynasties, Shiites enjoyed unprecedented freedom and influence in society in general. They had better access to high offices in the state, serving as ministers, judges, secretaries, and treasurers. They were economically prosperous and excelled as merchants dealing in cloth and other goods. For perhaps the first time in history, they were able to debate religious doctrine openly with their opponents.

Public presence. Shiite Islam entered the public sphere in an unprecedented manner. Shiites publicly performed the distinctive Shiite call to prayer, with the added creedal statement, "I witness that `Ali is the ward of God," or with the statement, "Come to the best of works," replacing the Sunni phrase, "Prayer is better than sleep," in the call to dawn prayer. They celebrated other distinct rituals, which may have existed for many years prior but which had been performed only in private. The two most important such holy days were `Ashura', commemorating the martyrdom of Husayn at the Battle of Karbala, and `Id al-Ghadir, commemorating the Prophet's designation of Ali as his successor in a speech on his return from the Farewell Pilgrimage, which Shiites celebrated openly in Buwayhid Baghdad as well as Fatimid Cairo. Shiite pilgrims to Karbala, the site of Husayn's martyrdom, proceeded in a parade from Baghdad with decorative banners.

Shiite religious literature. Prominent Shiite scholars wrote many works defending Shiism from ideological attacks on the part of the Sunnis and providing the basis for later elaborations of Shiite religious literature. Baghdad and Cairo became major centers of learning for Shiites. It was during this period that the four "canonical" hadith books of the Twelver Shiites were compiled, paralleling the six books of the Sunnis: *al-Kafi*, by Muhammad b. Ya`qub Kulayni (d. 941); *Man la yahduruhu al-faqih*, by Ibn Babawayh al-Qummi (d. 991); and *Tahdhib al-Ahkam* and *al-Istibsar*, both by Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Tusi (d. 1067). Legal manuals that served as standard legal textbooks for aspiring Twelver jurists were published, including al-Shaykh al-Mufid's *al-Muqni`ah* and al-Shaykh al-Tusi,'s *al-Nihayah*. For the Isma`ilis, al-Qadi al-Nu`man (d. 973) compiled the major legal work *Da`a'im al-Islam*, a compendium of the law that included a detailed statement on *wilayah* or allegiance to the current Imam. Leading Twelver jurists wrote works on *usul al-fiqh*, legal hermeneutics or jurisprudence; these included a work by al-Shaykh al-Mufid (d. 1022) which has been preserved only in abridged form, al-Sharif al-Murtada's (d. 1044) *al-Dhari`ah ila usul al-shari`ah*, and al-Shaykh al-Tusi's *al-`Uddah fi al-usul*. Al-Qadi al-Nu`man wrote *Ikhtilaf usul al-madhahib*, a sweeping refutation of Sunni legal hermeneutics. Al-Shaykh al-Mufid wrote *Kitab al-Irshad* (The Book of Guidance) on the lives of the Imams. Abu al-Faraj al-Isbahani (d. 967) wrote *Maqatil al-Talibiyyin*, a work detailing the long history of failed Shiite revolts and the imprisonment and martyrdom of their leaders. Al-Sharif al-Murtada completed major works on Shiite theology, including *al-Dhakhirah*, a

general compendium, and *al-Shafi* (The Cure), on the Imamate. Al-Shaykh al-Tusi wrote a major Shiite commentary on the Qur'an, *al-Tibyan fi tafsir al-Qur'an*. Al-Sharif al-Murtada's brother, al-Sharif al-Radi (d. 1016), compiled the speeches and sayings attributed to `Ali b. Abi Talib, which he gave the title *Nahj al-balagha*h (The Path of Eloquence).

Shiite intellectual contributions. In addition to works related directly to Shiite doctrine, Shiites made many contributions to general Arabic and Islamic letters during this period. The Persian Shiite minister of the Buyid ruler Baha' al-Dawlah (988-1012), Abu Nasr Sabur b. Ardashir (d. 1025-26) founded Dar al-`Ilm (The House of Knowledge), an extensive library and research institute, in Baghdad in 991 or 993, following the model of al-Ma'mun's famous Bayt al-Hikmah (The House of Wisdom), which had been extremely influential in ninth-century Baghdad. Perhaps in an attempt to rival Sabur b. Ardashir's Dar al-`Ilm, the Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim (996-1021) founded Dar al-Hikmah (also The House of Wisdom) in Cairo in 1004. Ibn al-Nadim (d. 990), a Twelver Shiite, Mu`tazili theologian, native of Mosul, and professional bookseller, wrote *al-Fihrist* (The Catalogue) in Baghdad in 987. One of the most important sources for intellectual history of the Arab and Islamic worlds, this work presents a virtual card catalogue of all the libraries of Iraq in the tenth century, listing all works in Arabic that Ibn al-Nadim had either seen, heard of, or read about in earlier biographies, along with curious anecdotes such as an account of al-Ma'mun's dream of meeting Aristotle, the supposed cause of his profound interest in Greek learning. Another major general work by a Shiite author of this period is Abu al-Faraj al-Isbahani's (d. 967) *Kitab al-Aghani* (*The Book of Songs*), the single most important source for the history of music in the medieval Arab world. Some of the most famous poets of this period were Shiites, including al-Mutanabbi (d. 965), considered by many to be one of the greatest poets in the history of Arabic literature.

The Sunni Revival. The period came to an end with what has been called the Sunni Revival. The Caliph al-Qadir several times during his long reign (991-1031) promulgated the Qadiri Creed, the chief purpose of which was to forbid the open debate and teaching of Shiite and Mu`tazili doctrines, and tried to have it enforced in Baghdad, forcing prominent scholars, including the Shiite jurist and theologian al-Sharif al-Murtada, to sign it. His campaign was supported in by Mahmud of Ghazna, who, when he conquered Rayy in 1020, executed or exiled Shiite and Mu`tazili scholars and philosophers and burned their books. The anti-Shiite banner was taken up by the Ghaznaids successors, the Seljuks, who sacked the Dar al-`Ilm and the house of al-Shaykh al-Tusi when they conquered Baghdad in 1055, forcing the Shiites to remove their religious scholarship to Najaf. The Zengids, Ayyubids, and Mamluks promoted similar policies of excluding Shiism from the public sphere, with the result that Shiite populations in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere, which had grown during the period of Shiite political dominance, dwindled, disappearing in Egypt, Aleppo, and elsewhere.

Questions:

1. What were the Shiite dynasties that ruled in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries in the Islamic world? Why did they appear at this point in history?
2. What were the bases of the Buwayhids' power? What was their relationship with the Abbasid Caliphs? Why was it expedient for them to convert from Zaydi to Twelver Shiism?
3. The Ismaili movement had attempted to foment rebellion and to found a state in many parts of the Arab world and elsewhere. Why and how did they succeed in Tunisia?
4. Why did the Fatimids move their capital to Egypt?
5. What Shiite holy days became public rituals during the tenth century?
6. What are some of the major works of Shiite religious literature produced during this period by the Twelver Shiites? By the Fatimids? What is the evidence of the influence of Sunni models and Sunni concepts in their works?

7. What are some of the Shiites' major contribution to Arabic and Islamic letters and learning in general from this period?
8. By what sorts of arguments did Shiites support their doctrines against the Sunnis?

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The Arabs in Spain and Sicily : Influence on Europe

Reading: Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 493-614.
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Channels of cultural transmission. Throughout history, there has been sustained or intermittent contact among the cultures that surround the Mediterranean, and the contact between the Arab-Islamic cultural region and Western Europe is one part of this larger phenomenon, which goes back to the civilizations of ancient Egypt, the Near East, and Anatolia, and perhaps even earlier, to prehistoric times. In particular regions in particular periods, though, this interaction was more intense than in others, and one may single out historical cultural conduits of Arab and Islamic influence to Europe, including the Arab presence in the Iberian Peninsula (711-1492); Arab rule in Sicily (827-1091) and the period of the Norman and Hohenstaufen kings until 1266; the Crusader presence in the Levant (1097-1291); the Ottoman presence in the Balkans and Eastern Europe (14th c. – World War I); and the trade contact of the Genoese and the Venetians with Arab and Islamic economic centers throughout the Eastern Mediterranean. One might include as well the French, British, and Italian colonial presence in the Arab world, which resulted in the importation of foods and other influences back to the metropole. In these last cases, however, the bulk of the influence was going the other way, since the colonial powers were radically transforming Arab polities and societies. Of the conduits of Arab-Islamic influence to Europe, the most important for the transmission of knowledge was undoubtedly the Arab presence in Iberia, which had a tremendous impact not only on Spanish and Portuguese language and culture but also on the culture and learned traditions of Western Europe in general.

Arab-Islamic presence in Iberia. By 712, only seventy years later, the Islamic Empire controlled all of the Middle East and North Africa, spanning from Morocco to Pakistan, and Muslim troops crossed from Morocco into Spain. They rapidly conquered most of the Iberian Peninsula (now occupied by Spain and Portugal), leaving only small sections in the north unconquered (the province of Gallicia, for example). They even took over southern France for about thirty years, and were only defeated by Charles Martel near Poitiers in 732. The Muslims did not maintain control of southern France and northern Spain for long, but they would hold on to about two thirds of the Iberian peninsula for over four centuries, one half for two more centuries, and the kingdom of Granada in the south for two further centuries, eight centuries in all.

The Umayyad Caliphate and its aftermath. After the fall of the Umayyad Caliphate in Damascus as the result of the Abbasid revolution in 750, a member of the Umayyad family escaped in disguise, fled across North Africa, and ended up in Spain, where he was named amir of Cordoba in 756. He established a new Umayyad dynasty that would last nearly three centuries. In the mid-tenth century, these Spanish Umayyads revived their claims to the Caliphate and adopted the Abbasid custom of taking religious titles designed to stress their roles as religious leaders and authorities. The Umayyad state disintegrated over a thirty-year period as a result of civil war, ushering in a period that is known as that of the "Party Kings." During this period, Islamic territory was divided into many petty kingdoms with capitals at Toledo, Malaga, Seville, and so on. The warring between these states weakened the Muslims, politically. In cultural terms, however, this period was a high point in Andalusian arts and letters because of the expanded opportunities for patronage. The "Party King" period came to an end with the conquest of nearly all the Muslim territory in the Peninsula by a new Berber dynasty from North Africa, called al-Murabitun ("border warriors") or the Almoraves (1086-1147). They ruled in Spain for about a century, until

they were overrun by another North African Berber dynasty called al-Muwahhidun ("those who confess the unity of God") or Almohades (1147-1228).

The Reconquista. In 1085, Castile took Toledo, the first major capital of the petty kingdoms. The Almoraves and the Almohades kept the Christian forces at bay for over a century after that, but a major blow to the Muslims came in 1212, when a combined force of Christian powers defeated the Almohades in the battle of Las Naves de Tolosa in central Spain. Subsequently, the main cities of the Andalus fell in rapid succession: Cordoba in 1236, Valencia in 1238, Seville in 1248, and Cadiz in 1250. From this point on, the only Muslim territory in the Iberian Peninsula was the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada, which would survive until 1492, when it fell to the Catholic monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabel, and the last Nasrid ruler, Abu Abd Allah, left for exile in Morocco.

Alfonso X and the Translation School in Toledo. In 1085 Toledo became the first major Muslim capitals to be taken permanently by Christian powers. It became a major Spanish capital, and was particularly important as a conduit of Arabo-Islamic cultural material into a Latin, Christian environment. Under the patronage of such rulers as Alfonso X (1252-1284), ruler of Castile, Leon, and Galicia, known as Alfonso the Wise, it became a major center for translation. Among the most famous works he had translated were *Calila e Dimna*, a collection of animal-fables similar to *Aesop's Fables* that derived from the Indian *Panchatantra* (Sanskrit, ca. 300 C.E.). That work had been translated into Persian by Burzuwayh before the advent of Islam (ca. 70 C.E.), the Persian secretary Ibn al-Muqaffa` translated it into Arabic in the eighth century, and Alfonso had it translated into Spanish in 1251 or 1261 C.E. The work became extremely popular and influential in European literature. Another popular work was *El Libro de los Engaños*, a translation of the Sindbad cycle of stories from Arabic. Alfonso had a number of non-fictional works written which apparently drew on Arabic sources as well, including a book on chess and other games, a book on precious stones, and a history of the world. Other texts that were translated during this period include the Qur'an, medical works such as the Canon of Medicine by Avicenna (d. 1037), philosophical works such as commentaries on Aristotle's books by Averroes (d. 1198), and hundreds of other works in mathematics, astronomy, pharmacology, and other fields.

El Conde Lucanor. Some Arabic literature entered Spanish and Latin through less direct channels. *El Conde Lucanor* is a well-known work written after 1326 C.E. by Don Juan Manuel (1282-1348), a noble and nephew of Alfonso X. In this collection of 51 *Exemplos* or advice tales, three are explicitly presented as Arabic in origin, others are demonstrably so, and others portray action in a Middle Eastern setting. The explicitly Arab tales are each based on an Arabic proverb. Each of the three ends with the original Arabic proverb transliterated into Latin letters and accompanied by a Spanish translation. Other stories are clearly of eastern origin though they do not include any actual Arabic phrases. One story depicts Saladin's attempt to have an affair with a noblewoman and her success in deterring him. Another story, now famous throughout the Arab world, features a man and his son who are going to market and have brought their donkey along to carry the goods they will buy. People pass by them and remark that they are stupid, since both of them are walking and neither is riding the donkey. Then the father tells his son to get on the donkey. Another group of passers-by remarks that it is wrong for the son to ride and let his poor old father walk. So they switch places. Then, another passer-by comments that it is mean of the father to ride while his poor, tired son walks. Then they both get on the donkey. Yet another passer-by remarks that it is cruel for both of them to ride the donkey, when they are so heavy. The father uses this experience to teach his son not to base one's actions on what people say. Many other examples of influence have been discussed in scholarship, but still more remain to be detected.

Mudejars and Moriscos. Even after the establishment of Christian political domination over the entire peninsula in 1492, Arab-speaking Muslim populations continued to be an important part of Spanish society, living as *mudéjar*s, that is protected Muslim populations, for a short time in Granada, and longer in Murcia and Valencia. Their status was similar to that which Jews and Christians had held under Muslim rule. In the course of the sixteenth century, this option, too, was closed. Muslims were given the choice to convert or to leave. Many converted, but conversion did not bring an end to their problems. The new converts were termed *moriscos* "Moor-like," stressing their continued similarity to Muslims (Moors). They were continually suspected of having converted for convenience's sake alone and secretly harboring attachment to Islam rather than Christianity. Many became sincere Christians, but it is known that many were crypto-Muslims, pretending to be part of the Catholic Christian faith for fear of punishment while practicing Islam in private. These crypto-Muslims became a primary target for church authorities. In 1502, the Muslims of Granada were baptized by fiat, and Muslims under the rule of Castile had to choose between conversion to Christianity and exile. In 1525-26, Muslims under the rule of Aragon, particularly the large populations living under protected status in Murcia and Valencia, faced the same choice. The final expulsions of Moriscos took place in 1609-14; after that, the Iberian Peninsula was entirely Christian.

The Flight of Muslims. As a result of these expulsions, many Andalusian Muslims migrated to Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and other Muslim territories. The Andalusian immigrants often faced difficulties in their new Muslim surroundings. In many cases, they spoke Spanish more than Arabic, and their customs made them more like their Christian neighbors in Spain than their new Muslim neighbors. Many knew little about Islam or common Islamic practices, and so were viewed with suspicion by the locals. Eventually, they assimilated, but not without exerting important influences on the local cultures. Andalusian dishes, traditional clothing, and music remain an important part of the cultural heritage in certain parts of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia where there was a high concentration of Andalusian immigrants. Despite the many conflicts of medieval political history in the Andalus, and despite continual interreligious polemics, Islamic rule provided a stable environment in which Muslims, Jews, and Christians flourished and interacted in relative harmony for several centuries. The term *convivencia* "living together" has been used to describe the special situation of harmony and interaction that obtained in al-Andalus.

Chronology of the Arab/Muslim Presence in Spain:

632 death of the Prophet Muhammad
640 conquest of Egypt by Arab/Muslim forces
690 by this date, all of North Africa had been conquered
712 Berber and Arab Muslim army crosses over from Morocco into Spain.
Gothic kingdom with its capital at Toledo collapses.
Cordova becomes the capital of Muslim territory in Spain.
732 Arab/Muslim army defeated by Charles Martel between Tours and Poitiers in France.
This marked the furthest reach of their invasion.
747-50 The Abbasid revolution. The Umayyad Caliphate in Damascus overthrown.
756 Umayyad survivor, Abd al-Rahman, escapes to Spain and named Prince of Cordova.
Umayyad dynasty established in Spain (756-1031)
759 Muslim armies expelled from southern France.
929 Umayyad Caliphate in Spain declared by Abd al-Rahman III (912-961 C.E.)
997 Umayyads attack Santiago de Compostela, the famous shrine city of St. James in the far North of Spain
1009-1031 Protracted civil war in the Umayyad Caliphate

1031 The last Umayyad Caliph, Hisham III, is deposed and replaced by a council of state. Ibn Jahwar is the first consul.
1031 Beginning of the "petty kingdom" period, in which there were as many as twenty-three independent city-states at one time
1085 Fall of Toledo to the Christian ruler Alfonso VI
1086 The Almoravid ruler Yusuf ibn Tashufin crosses over from Morocco. Defeats Alfonso VI of Lean and Castile at Zallaqa near Badajoz.
1091 Almoravids conquer the Abbadids of Seville
1094 Almoravids take the Aftasids of Badajoz
1094 The Cid (Rodrigo Diaz) takes Valenca an holds it until his death, in 1099
1099 Almoravids take Valencia
1110 Hudids of Saragossa vassals of the Almoravids; last "Petty Kingdom" left
1118 Saragossa taken by Alfonso Christian powers
1142 Hudids overrun by Alfonso I el Batallador and Ramiro II of Aragon
1144 End of Almoravid power in al-Andalus
1147 Almohads cross into Spain; take over territory of the Almoravids
1147 Christian powers take Lisbon
1178 Treaty of Cazola partitions Muslim territories to be conquered by Castile and Ragon
1195 Almohad victory over Castile at the Battle of Alarcos
1212 Battle of Las Naves de Tolosa. The Almohads are defeated by combined forces of Castile, Aragon, and Navarre.
1228 Almohads leave the Iberian Peninsula
1229 Jaime I of Aragon conquers Mallorca
1230 Permanent union of Castile-León
1235 Nasrid dynasty founded in Granada
1236 Cordova conquered by Fernando III of Castile-León
1238 Valencia conquered by Jaime I of Aragon
1248 Seville conquered by Fernando III of Castile-León
1250 Cadiz conquered by Christian powers
1266 Alfonso X of Castile-León conquers Murcia
1309 Allied forces of Castile and Aragon fails to defeat Granada
1469 Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon marry. They become known as *los Reyes Católicos* "the Catholic Monarchs."
1478 The Spanish Inquisition is established.
1479 Castile and Aragon are formally joined into one kingdom.
1492 Granada falls to the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabel.
1492 Expulsion of the Jews from Spain.
1501-2 Alpujarras rebellion near Granada
1502 Muslims under the rule of Castile (including Granada) must convert or be exiled.
1525 Muslims under the rule of Aragon (Valencia, Murcia, etc.) must convert or be exiled.
1609-14 Expulsion of the Moriscos from the Iberian Peninsula.

Questions:

1. What is Menocal's perspective on the Umayyad Dynasty in Spain and its relationship to the Abbasid revolution?
2. What was successful about the model of al-Andalus?
3. Explain in detail one example of scientific exchange between Europe and the Middle East.
4. Explain in detail one example of cultural or literary exchange between Europe and the Middle East.
5. Analyze and comment on the following text by the 9th-century Spanish Christian author, Petrus Alfonsi, who is decrying the youth's obsession with things Arabic in his work *Disciplina Clericalis*, What do we learn from his descriptions about the culture in

Spain during his time? Why is he upset? How does he perceive the relations between Muslims and Christians? What role does language play in the conflict? How closely is language related to religion?

My fellow Christians delight in the poems and romances of the Arabs; they study the works of Muslim theologians and philosophers, not in order to refute them, but to acquire a correct and elegant Arabic style. Where today can a layman be found who reads the Latin commentaries on the Holy Scriptures? Who is there that studies the Gospels, the Prophets, the Apostles? Alas, The young Christians who are most conspicuous for their talents have no knowledge of any literature or language save the Arabic; they read and study with avidity Arabic books; they amass whole libraries of them at a vast cost, and they everywhere sing the praises of Arabian lore. On the other hand, at the mention of Christian books they disdainfully protest that such works are unworthy of their notice. The pity of it! Christians have forgotten their own tongue, and scarce one in a thousand can be found able to compose in fair Latin a letter to a friend! But when it comes to writing in Arabic, how many there are who can express themselves in that language with the greatest elegance, and even compose verses which surpass in formal correctness those of the Arabs themselves!

6. Read the following excerpt from Exemplo XLI of *El Conde Lucanor*. What are the two "additions of al-Hakam"? Why was the first "addition" inappropriate or undignifed? What is the moral of the story?

There was in Cordova a Moorish king named al-Hakam, who governed the kingdom well. He strove to act honorably on his own part and to be just with others. Indeed, he did all that was required of good kings, not only in guarding their kingdoms, but in augmenting their territories, with the view that they might receive the praises of their people and be remembered after death for their good deeds. Yet this king gave himself up to a life of luxury and enjoyment; vice and disorder reigned in his palace. It so happened that when they played before him on an instrument which the Moors liked very much, and which they called *Albogon*, the king perceived that it did not sound as good as it ought, so he took the instrument and made a hole at the bottom, in line with the other holes. Since that time, the *Albogon* has given a much better sound than before. This must certainly be considered an improvement, but it was not an act suited to the dignity of a king, and so thought the people. When they heard that the improvement was made by the king, they exclaimed in a ridiculing manner in Arabic, *v.a he de ziat Alhaquim* (*wa-hadi ziyadt al-Hakam*), which means "This is the addition of al-Hakam." This saying became so common all over the country that it at last reached the ears of the king, who begged to know why the people always used this saying, but his attendants took pains to avoid answering his question. He, however, insisted on being told the truth and the meaning of the expression, so they were compelled to tell him. When he heard it he was very much grieved, but instead of punishing those who related the origin of the saying, he resolved to do some worthy deed, in order that the people might be compelled to praise him deservedly.

At this time the mosque of Cordova was not yet finished, so King al-Hakam did all that was necessary for its completion. In this way it became one of the most beautiful mosques the Moors had in Spain. Glory be to God! It is now a church, called "Saint Mary of Cordova," and it was dedicated by the good King Ferdinand to Saint Mary after he had taken Cordova from the Moors.

Now, when the Moorish king had done so good a work as that of finishing the mosque, he said to him self, "The people have hitherto made fun of me for the addition I made to the Albogon (one of which instruments he then held before him), but now they have reason for praising me, for have I not completed the mosque of Cordova?" From this time the Moors

ceased to make fun of him; and to this day, when they wish to extol a good act, they say, "This is like the addition of the King al-Hakam." ...

Notes:
The King Alhaquem of the story is probably the Umayyad Caliph al-Hakam II, who ruled from 961 to 976.
Fernando III of Castile conquered Cordova in 1236.
The Mosque of Cordova, which has been converted into a church, is still standing. The main structure of the church has been built inside the mosque. This leaves a great deal of the original structure intact, but disrupts the space and view considerably.

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The Crusades.

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The Crusades, 1095-1291 C.E. The Crusades were a series of invasions of the Middle East led by Western European Christians between the late eleventh century and the end of the thirteenth century, with the aim of conquering territory for Christendom, especially Jerusalem and the surrounding territory. The various campaigns are usually labeled as numbered crusades, though one might view them as a continuous stream. They represent one of the most intense periods of conflict and exchange between the Arab World and Western Europe, and they had a number of long-term effects on the region.
The Border with Byzantium. From the seventh century until the twelfth century, Byzantium was the main enemy power of the Islamic Empire, whether the Umayyad Empire, the Abbasid Empire, the principalities and the Fatimid Caliphate of the Shiite century. The border was not rigidly fixed, but fluctuated back and forth in a region between northern Syria, northern Iraq, and southeastern Anatolia that the Arabs termed *al-Thughur* "the Marches". Border skirmishes and raids were common. From Umayyad times onward, a *sayfiyya* or summer campaign was assembled and set out every year. The Byzantine Marches became the primary locus for *jihad* in the Islamic world, attracting warriors desirous of plunder as well as pious ascetics determined to defend the borders of the Islamic world from fortified towns such as Malatya, Mar`ash, Tarsus, al-Missisa, and Adana. The situation was stable, though there was constant conflict, until the mid-tenth century. In what may be termed the Byzantine Crusade, the generals Nicephorus Phocas and John Tzimesces conquered a large swath of territory in southeastern Anatolia and northern Syria, as well as Crete and Cyprus, including the main cities of the border region, but also Antioch and Tripoli. Byzantine forces even besieged Aleppo, capital of the Hamdanid state, in 953, and the Hamdanids were forced to pay tribute for several years after that. The Byzantines held these territories for roughly a century, until the tide turned once again when the Seljuks conquered Iraq in 1055 and then turned toward Syria and Anatolia.

The First Crusade. Most analysts agree that the key event leading up to the Crusades was the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, when the Seljuks defeated the Byzantine army and as a result conquered a large part of Anatolia, threatening even more Byzantine territory in subsequent years. The Byzantine Emperor set alarming calls for help to the Pope and Western Christian powers when the Seljuks reached the Marmora, across from Istanbul. It took time for the Western Christians to react, but in Clermont, France in 1095, Pope Urban II announced the First Crusade. By 1097, an army of Western Christians—the Franks, as they are called in Arab sources—assembled in Constantinople and advanced through Anatolia towards Syria, reconquering territory from the Seljuks. Over the next two years, they reconquered most of Anatolia and territory all along the Syrian littoral, establishing five states: the Principality of Armenia, the County of Edessa, the Principality of Antioch, the County of Tripoli, and the Kingdom of Jerusalem. They built fortresses using architectural and engineering principles developed in Europe, and built infrastructure allowing them to receive supplies from the sea.

The Second Crusade. The first of the Crusader states to fall was the County of Edessa, conquered by Zengi, a Turkish vassal of the Seljuks who ruled from Mosul in northern Iraq, in 1144. The fall of Edessa provoked the Second Crusade (1147-49), which focused on Syria. Its leaders decided that they should conquer Damascus, the true center of power in Syria, recognizing that the First Crusade's main failure was not to take either Damascus or

Aleppo. The Franks' siege of Damascus failed, however, and they withdrew without attaining their goal. Nur al-Din, Zengi's son, subsequently adopted a policy of attempting to overthrow the Fatimids and thus unite Syria and Egypt against the Franks. He conquered the important border town of Baniyas in 1164, gaining a reputation that rivaled that of his father, Zengi. However, Amalric I, the King of Jerusalem, was steadily gaining power. He captured Ashkelon, the main outpost of the Fatimids, in 1168, and advanced on Egypt. In order to prevent Amalric from successfully laying siege to Cairo, Shawar, the Fatimid vizier, had Fustat burned, leaving the walled city of Cairo to face the Crusader forces.

The Third Crusade. The third of the great commanders of the anti-Crusade forces was Saladin, son of Shirkuh, a Kurdish vassal of the Zengids who served under Nur al-Din. Saladin ended up replacing the vizier of the last Fatimid Caliph, and then abolishing the Fatimid Caliphate altogether in 1171. With the Fatimid Caliphate removed from the picture, Saladin could coordinate Egyptian and Syrian forces to attack the Crusader states, something that had been impossible before. After cementing alliances and subduing rebellious forces, Saladin led a successful campaign against the Kingdom of Jerusalem, defeating the Franks at the Battle of Hittin in 1187, forcing them to take refuge in Acre and regaining Jerusalem and much of the surrounding territory. This event provoked the Third Crusade (1190-91), the most famous one, in which Richard the Lion-Hearted, Philip Augustus, and Frederick Barbarossa took part. The Third Crusade regained some of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and conquered Cyprus, but failed in it main objective, the recapture of Jerusalem itself.

Later Crusades. The fourth Crusade never reached Syria. For reasons that remain unclear, they attacked the Byzantines and ended up founding the Latin Kingdom of Byzantium (1203-61), forcing the Byzantines to establish a new capital at Trebizond. The Fifth and Seventh Crusades adopted a new tactic. The Franks thought that if they could conquer territory in Egypt, which appeared to them less well defended and more accessible from the sea, they could then bargain with the Muslim powers and get Jerusalem in exchange. They may also have had designs on Cairo, the center of the Muslims' power, and together with it access to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean spice trade. Both attempts failed, mainly because the Crusaders failed to hold Egyptian territory for long enough. In the Fifth Crusade (1215-19) the Crusaders succeeded in taking Damietta, on the northern coast of Egypt, in 1219, but held it for only a short time. The Seventh crusade (1249) was much more of a disaster. Louis IX of France attacked Egypt, taking Damietta and Mansura. It was thus more successful than the Fifth Crusade initially, but the Franks advanced too far inland, and the Ayyubid forces surrounded and captured them. Louis IX was held for ransom. The Sixth Crusade (1227-29) was not really a crusade at all but a series of negotiations. The Emperor Frederick II led it while excommunicated and concluded a treaty in 1229 with the Ayyubid Sultan al-Kamil (1218-1238), according to which he rented Jerusalem for ten years for the Christians. The Christians did not give it back when the ten years were up, but in 1244 Ayyubid forces retook the holy city. The Eighth Crusade (1270) never reached the Middle East. Louis IX of France set out ended up attacking Tunisia, a tactic that also failed, and he ended up having to be rescued. By the late thirteenth century, the Muslim forces were in a position of superior power, having united Egypt and Syria. The Mamluk Sultan Baybars (1260-77) reduced the remaining Crusader territories in Syria, and shortly thereafter, in 1291, Acre, last Crusader outpost, fell to the Mamluks.

Cultural exchange. The Crusades had a number of important effects. Despite the conflicts and warfare, significant cultural exchanges occurred, for the Crusader Franks often stayed for long periods, ruled over native Arab populations, and dealt with neighboring states. They learned Arab customs and ways, and brought some back to Europe when they left. While the Muslim forces learned of new weaponry and techniques for building

fortresses, the Crusaders learned how to cultivate sugar cane, acquired a taste for spices, various types of cloth, and luxury goods, and adopted Arab heraldry and falconry.

The Anti-Crusade. The Crusades also provoked the anti-Crusade, an ideological movement the goal of which was to mobilize Arab society as a whole to oppose the Crusaders. This involved propaganda of many types: buildings dedicated to pious causes, books extolling the sacred status of Jerusalem and other holy sites in Syria from an Islamic point of view, and treatises and sermons urging *jihad*. A signal propaganda piece was the ornate and sumptuous *minbar* Nur al-Din had built in Aleppo for the Masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem, decades before Jerusalem was actually captured. Starting with the Zengids, the anti-Crusade created the unified *jihad* theory, which connected the threat of the Shiites with that of Crusaders. The logic was that Shiites weaken the Islamic polity from within, making it vulnerable to outside attacks. People throughout the region were alarmed by the Assassins, Nizari Ismailis who had split with the Fatimid line in 1094, established a series of fortresses in Iran and Syria, and carried out highly effective attacks under the direction of their leader Rashid al-Din Sinan (1162-92), known to the Crusaders as "the Old Man of the Mountain" because he resided in the mountain fortress of al-Masyaf. Among others, they succeeded in assassinating the Fatimid Caliph al-Amir (1130), Raymond II of Tripoli (1152), Conrad of Monferrat, the King of Jerusalem (1152), and made nearly successful attempts on the lives of both Nur al-Din and Saladin–twice on the latter, who only survived a stab to his neck on one occasion because he was wearing chain mail while sleeping. Nur al-Din, Saladin, and other Ayyubid and Mamluk Sultans regularly discriminated against Shiites and sought to marginalize them. When Nur al-Din captured Aleppo, he outlawed the performance of the distinctive Shiite call to prayer as part of a program to remove Shiism from the public sphere. Saladin broke up and sold the Fatimid libraries, and Sufi masters, law professors, and preachers worked to convert Shiites and suppress the remaining pockets of Shiism in Egypt. Shiites fled to southern Egypt, Yemen, or remote or mountainous areas in Syria, and the population of Shiites throughout the region dwindled, disappearing in Egypt and Palestine. Aleppo, which had been roughly half Shiite, eventually became an entirely Sunni city, as did Tyre on the coast of southern Lebanon. Shiites remained mainly in two areas, Jabal Amil, inland from Tyre and Sidon in southern Lebanon, and the Biqa` valley in northern Lebanon. With regard to the Ismailis, Saladin reduced the threat of the Assassins in Syria, and Baybars reduced their remaining strongholds in the late thirteenth century.

Status of Christians. Another effect of the Crusades was the deterioration of the status of Christians in the region because they were seen as potential allies with the Franks. Both the conflict with the Crusaders and economic troubles led to the mistreatment of and enhanced restrictions on local Christians. Particularly when the Franks committed a perceived crime or infraction of the rules of combat, some Muslim rulers retaliated against the local Christians. An example of this occurred in 1124, when the Franks besieged Aleppo and desecrated the Muslim cemetery outside the city walls. The Zengid ruler, encourage by the judge Ibn al-Khashshab, retaliated by converting four of Aleppo's churches into mosques. Precise information is not available, but it is very likely that large numbers of Christians in the Middle East converted to Islam during the period of the Crusades and their aftermath. Yet another result of the Crusades was the establishment of strong ties between the Maronite Christians of Syria and Lebanon, an offshoot of the Syrian Orthodox Church, and the Papacy in Rome as well as the kings of France. The Maronites became a Uniate Church, affiliated with Rome and recognizing the authority of the Pope but retaining their own distinctive Syriac liturgy. These ties would continue after the Crusades and have lasted until the present day.

Questions:

1. What were the main causes of the Crusades?

2. What were the lasting effects of the Crusades?
3. How did Arabs interpret the coming of the Christian crusaders?
4. How did Christians from Europe understand Islam?
5. What was the relationship between Arab Christians and Christian crusaders?
6. What were the salient aspects of anti-Crusade propaganda in the Arab lands? Give examples from literature and architecture.
7. What role did Shiites play in the Crusades? How do they figure in anti-Crusade propaganda?

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The Mamluks.

Reading: Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 671-705.
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A Shift in power. The period between the tenth and thirteenth century witnessed the shift of the main centers of power in the Middle East from Baghad in Iraq to Cairo in Egypt. Writing in the late tenth century, the traveler and geographer al-Maqdisi claims that Fustat has "abrogated" Baghdad, meaning that it has completely superseded the Abbasid capital, presumably in economic and cultural terms. Part of this shift is explained by the waning of the Abbasids' power, but it is also related to a shift in the Indian Ocean trade, which used to go primarily through the Persian Gulf to Basra and Baghdad, increasingly when through Yemen and the Red Sea to Cairo. This was helped by the Fatimids presence in the Mediterranian, which facilitated trade with Western Europe. Just as control over the extension of this trade to points north and west contributed to the prosperity of Abbasid Iraq, it now contributed to the prosperity of Fatimid, and then Ayyubid and Mamluk, Egypt, which maintained a monopoly over the spice trade, and particularly over that of pepper, selling spices and other luxury goods to the Venetians and Genoese, who then distributed them throughout Western Europe. The arrival of the Turkish Seljuks in the central Middle Eastern lands, their conquest of Baghdad, and their subsequent expansion into northern Iraq, Syria, and Anatolia shifted the centers of power north. Another blow to Baghdad was the Mongol conquest of Hulagu in 1258. Immediately after the conquest, Hulagu established his capital far to the north, in Tabriz, Azerbaijan. From the thirteenth century until the Ottoman conquest of Syria and Egypt in 1516-17, Cairo and Tabriz became the two main centers of power, and the Arab world was divided between the Ilkhans in Iraq and Iran, and the Mamluks in Syria, Egypt, and the Hejaz.

Slaves on horseback. The Mamluks began as imported slave warriors serving under the Ayyubids (1171-1250). Turks had been imported already by the Abbasids as military slaves in the ninth century. Turks were prized as military slave because of their training from a very young age in riding and archery. The excelled at mounted archery, and had special composite bows which allowed them to shoot with a great deal of force while handling the bow on a horse at full gallop. This made the Turks the ideal soldiers to meet the Mongols, who fought in the same manner since they came from a similar geographical and cultural background. Both had been nomadic sheepherders who depended on sturdy horses to herd sheep over vast territories on the steppes of Central Asia and excelled in mounted archery for hunting and tribal warfare. The Mamluks took over when the last Ayyubid Sultan died, and his widow, Shajar al-Durr, took over as regent, marrying Aybak, the commander of the Mamluks. Shajar al-Durr was not long afterward assassinated, reportedly being beaten to death with wooden clogs by the women servants in the bath, and the Mamluk dynasty ruled Egypt, Syria, and the Hijaz, the former territories of the Ayyubids, from 1250 until 1517. Ther reputation was established when they defeated the Mongols at the Battle of Ayn Jalut in 1260, stopping the Mongol advance through the Middle East and preventing them from taking over the entire Arab word. Because of this military success, the Arab World came to be divided into three great regions, Iraq, under the Ilkhans (1258-1349), the descendants of Hulagu, with their capital in Tabriz; the Mamluk territories, and North Africa, under various Arab and Berber dynasties, including the Almoravids, the Almohads, the Hafsids, and others.

Cairo as a world capital and intellectual center. Under the Fatimids, Ayyubids, and Mamluks, Cairo became a world capital, and when Fustat burned during the Crusades, the

population became more concentrated on the walled Fatimid city, which had been originally designed for the palace, the government, and the troops. The Mamluks engaged in a large variety of building projects that were connected with purposes of propaganda, legitimating Mamluk rule by presenting them as patrons of Islamic devotion and charity. Their buildings include mosques, *kuttab*s or elementary schools, *sabil*s or public fountains, hospitals, *madrasah*s or colleges of law, *khaniqah*s or hostels for the training of Sufi mystics. Along with this went the building for pious purposes elsewhere, especially in Mecca and Medina but also in many other cities in the realm, including Damascus, Jerusalem, and elsewhere. Patronage of the pilgrimage was a major undertaking of the Mamluks, who in addition to providing for the safety and organization of the annual pilgrimage caravans from Cairo and Damascus, also sent an ornate *mahmal* or carriage on the pilgrimage, delivering the new covering (*kiswah*) for the Ka`bah as well as lavish charitable gifts. There was ample response to this patronage, particularly since Cairo and Damascus became havens for scholars fleeing Mongol rule in Iraq, Iran, and Transoxania. The Mamluks followed Turkish rulers' tradition of promoting the Hanafi legal school even in Egypt and Syria, which were predominantly Shafi`i, produced numerous endowed positions for immigrant Hanafi jurists. The immigrants also brought expertise in the rational sciences in particular, including medicine, mathematics, astronomy, logic, and philosophy. As a result, Cairo became the leading intellectual center of the Arab world, and arguably of the entire Middle East.

Two Dynasties. The Mamluk period is generally divided into to dynasties, the Bahri Mamluks, who ruled from 1250 until 1390, and the Burji Mamluks, who ruled from 1390 until 1517. The Bahri Mamluks get their name from the river (*bahr*), because their barracks were on the island of al-Rawdah in the Nile ever since the first corps of Mamluks was established to serve as a bodyguard for the Ayyubid sultan al-Salih Ayyub (1240-49). They were primarily of Turkish and Mongol descent. The Burji Mamluks were named after the Citadel (*burj* = "tower"), and they, of Circassian descent, originated as a bodyguard of the Bahri Mamluk sultan al-Mansur Qalawun (1279-90).

A Military Elite. As with other Turkish dynasties, there was a shard divide between the Turkish ruling military class and the rest of the populace. Mamluks were brought to Egypt as slaves, given rudimentary instruction in Islam and rigorous military training in horsemanship, archery, swordsmanship, and other battle skills. They had two types of powerful loyalty, to their master (*ustadh*), the Sultan of Mamluk commander who had purchased and trained them, and to their comrades (sing. *khushdash*), peers who were members of the same cohort of imported slaves and trainees. Commanders rose through the ranks, becoming leaders of ten, one hundred, one thousand mounted warriors, and then possibly even the sultan. The monarchy was strictly not hereditary, and many sultans passed the rule on either to the leader of a rival faction of Mamluks, or to the most prominent member of his loyal followers. No one outside the military corps could become Sultan or a military commander. The commanders were supported by temporary grants of agricultural land, which they were expected to administrate and use to support the warriors under their command. Even their own offspring were excluded from the military and the positions of command in the government. They formed a subordinate class termed *awlad al-nas*, literally "the sons of the people, meaning sons of the members of the ruling class. From this period in Egypt and Syria, even more than in earlier centuries, Turkish identity came to be associating with the ruling, military caste. The Turkish rulers were separate from and inimical to the Arab-speaking populace, and prone to act violently and arbitrarily, and tyrannically towards them, something that would continue in later periods. In addition, during the Mamluk period began the process of borrowing Turkish vocabulary and linguistic features into the Arab dialects of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria that would continue and intensify under the Ottomans.

The Abbasid caliphate of Cairo. In an unusual attempt to legitimate their rule in yet another Islamically sanctioned manner, the Mamluks fostered a new line of Abbasid Caliphs in Cairo, beginning in 1261 with a fugitive uncle of the Abbasid line. Deprived of all territory and removed from their base in Baghdad, these caliphs become something like the emperors in Japan. Well kept, they were trotted out on special occasions to lend solemnity to the celebrations, and they confirmed the appointment and sovereignty of each new Sultan. When the Ottomans conquered Egypt in 1517, the Cairo Abbasid Caliphate came to an end. Eventually, the Ottoman Sultans would claim the title of Caliph for themselves, until Atatürk abolished the Caliphate along with the Ottoman Sultanate in 1924.

Questions:

1. Describe the organization of the Mamluk government and military elite.
2. What was the relationship between the military rulers and the judiciary and religious scholars and officials under the Mamulks?
3. How was trade organized under the Mamluks? What were the major trade routes, and who were the Mamluks' main trading partners?
4. Compare and contrast the Mamluks with any other Turkish dynasty: the Ghaznavids, the Seljuks, the Zengids, the Ottomans.
5. Compare and contrast the Mamluks to their contemporaries, the Monghol Ilkhans.
6. How did the Mamluks engage in Islamic religious propaganda?
7. Examine and analyze one outstanding monument that was built during the Mamluk period.

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The Ottomans

Reading: Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 709-58; Bruce Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire, 1516-1918: Social-Cultural Histor*y. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Ottoman conquest, 1516-17. The Ottoman state began ca. 1291 as a small principality on the Byzantine frontier in Eastern Anatolia, and its main order of business was to raid the Byzantines incessantly, carving out an ever-larger territory for itself. The Ottomans conquered Bursa in 1326, making that their capital, then Edirne (Adrianople) in 1366, along with additional territory in both the Balkans and Anatolia. Though nearly wiped out by Tamerlane at the Battle of Ankara in 1402, the Ottomans quickly recovered and conquered Constantinople in 1453, bringing the Byzantine Empire to an end after over seven centuries of intermittent warfare with Muslim powers. Firmly established in Istanbul, the Ottomans expanded both in Europe and Anatolia, coming into conflict with the Safavids in Iran, whom they defeated in 1514 at the Battle of Chaldiran in Azerbaijan, and the Mamluks in Syria. In 1516, the Ottomans defeated the Mamluk forces led by Qansuh al-Ghawri at Marj Dabiq north of Aleppo. The next year, 1517, they marched through Syria and defeated Tuman Bay and the remaining Mamluks at the Battle of al-Raydaniyyah, north of Cairo. In less than two years, the Ottomans had doubled the size of their Empire and become rulers of a large part of the Arab world, but they did not stop there. In 1536 they conquered Iraq from the Safavids. Later conquests in North Africa gave them suzerainty over the local rulers in Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria. The campaigns of Sinan Pasha in the mid-16th century gave them control over Yemen. The only territories that they did not control in the Arab world were Morocco and parts of the Arabian Peninsula.

Power shifts north. From the perspective of the native Arab population, the Ottomans resembled the Mamluks in their Turkish language and cultural background, their separation as a separate military class from the populace in general, and in their patronage of Islamic architecture, learning, and charity in order to establish political legitimacy. There were a number of important differences, however, In general, the centers of power moved further north to Istanbul, Tabriz, Isfahan, and Bukhara, key points for controlling the Silk Road. Cairo ceased to be a major world capital and began to lose the glory it had had during the Mamluk period. While Cairo and Damascus continued to be centers of learning, the main intellectual center became Istanbul, where scholars of Turkish and Persian origin had an advantage, and the scholars of Cairo and Damascus became subordinate to and dependent on “the Turkish Mullas”, who occupied the major posts of judge and law professor not only in Anatolia, but in the provinces as well. The former Mamluk territories became sources of tax income for the central government in Istanbul.

Decline. The Ottomans on the whole were better organized, more capable, and less rapacious than the Mamluks, but overall the Arab provinces experienced a decline during this period, the causes of which were not only political but also economic. In the sixteenth century the European powers, led by Portugal and including the Dutch and the British especially, began rounding the Cape of Good Hope in order to reach the Indian Ocean and trade directly with East Africa, Yemen, Oman, India, and points further east, thereby breaking the Middle East’s monopoly over the spice trade which dated back to before the Islamic period and thereby depriving the region of a lucrative source of income. Under these circumstances, income from trade along the Silk Road, which stretched from China through Mongolia and Central Asia to northern Iran and Anatolia, became more important, further consolidating power and economic prosperity in the northern tier of the Middle East, farther from Arab regions. While Syria, Egypt, and Iraq continued to be important

agricultural regions, by nearly any measure they deteriorated considerably and particularly after the Ottomans' heyday in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Naval presence. While they were expanding their territory in the Arab World, the Ottomans were also expanding north through the Balkans into Central Europe. An oft-cited indication of the extent of their expansion is the fact that they besieged Vienna twice, once in 1529 and once in 1683. The Ottoman presence in the Balkans and north of the Black Sea would be reversed in European attempts to end Muslim control and to expel Muslims in later history, leading to a series of conflicts with the Russians in the 18th and 19th centuries, the Crimean War, the Greek War of independence, the conflicts of World War I, and most recently the crises in Bosnia and Kosovo. In addition, during the period of expansion the Ottomans developed a strong naval fleet in the Mediterranean and even reached into the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. They challenged the European powers and only lost their dominant standing in the late 16th century. The turning point was the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, in which the navies of the Holy League (including Spain, Venice, and others) destroyed the main fleet of the Ottomans near the Gulf of Corinth.

Barbary corsairs. While the Ottomans were no longer able to meet the navies of Spain, Portugal, and England on an equal footing, their navy and the navy of their vassals in Tripoli, Tunis, and Algiers preyed upon Mediterranean shipping until the 19th century. In a form of state-sponsored piracy, captains supported by local rulers raided commercial vessels, taking ships, plunder, and captives. The captives were generally held for ransom or sold into slavery. Some captives became renegades, converting to Islam and working with the pirates, even becoming captains themselves. This piracy led to the political and military involvement of the young nation of the United States with the region. Morocco was one of the first nations to recognize the United States' independence, and North Africa appears in the Marine's song: "From the halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli …" commemorating their expedition against the Bey of Tripoli in 1811.

Napoleon in Egypt. The Ottoman Empire in the 19th century was described as the sick man of Europe: the European powers were crowded around him as he lay dying, waiting for the moment when he would pass away so that they could carve out pieces of territory for themselves. The rivalry between the circling vultures, the French, the British, and the Russians, however, had the effect of delaying the colonization of the Arab world for nearly a century. The entire Arab world could have become colonized at the end of the 18th century, for it was then that Napoleon invaded and conquered Egypt, one of the most important Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The French occupied Egypt from 1798 to 1801. However, the British, anxious to prevent strategic points on the route to India from falling into the hands of rivals, were instrumental in ousting the French from Egypt and preventing them from returning. Napoleon's invasion was a shock to Egypt, the Arab World, and the Ottoman Empire because it made it clear that the Europeans had gained a tremendous lead in military and technical advancement. Napoleon brought scholars in all fields along with the expedition. They wrote the *Description de l'Égypte*, a multi-volume record of the flora, fauna, and monuments of Egypt. They made demonstrations of chemistry and physics to the scholars of Egypt, showcasing some of the great advancements the French had made in these fields over the previous century. Because of their discovery of the Rosetta stone while restoring a fortress, Jean-François Champollion would decipher hieroglyphic writing back in France.

Muhammad Ali and modernization. From 1805 until 1849, Muhammad Ali, an Albanian by origin, served as the Ottoman governor of Egypt. Undoubtedly in reaction to the technical superiority of Napoleon's army, he embarked on a large-scale reform and modernization project that transformed Egypt and soon outstripped the efforts of the

Ottoman central government. He sent educational missions to France to learn military sciences, mining, engineering, medicine, and other topics. The graduates returned to Egypt to teach a new cadre of civil servants. A government newspaper was established, as well as a printing press for Arabic books. The first railroads were built, and steamships were used on the Nile. Roads and infrastructure were built, and irrigation and transport for agricultural goods were improved. In order to generate income, Muhammad Ali promoted state control of agriculture, concentrating on the production of cotton, Egypt's most lucrative cash crop. The army was organized and modernized. Muhammad Ali and his son Ibrahim led military expeditions against the Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia in 1811-18 and then fought the Ottomans twice, in 1831-33 and 1838-40. They defeated the Ottoman forces at Konya in 1832 and again at Nezib in 1839 and certainly would have toppled the Ottoman government had it not been for the intervention of the British on both occasions. These shows of strength allowed Muhammad Ali to rule over Syria for a time and to establish a dynasty in Egypt that would last until 1952; his successors first adopted the title Khedive but were recognized as King in the twentieth century.

The British occupation of Egypt. While the European powers colonized peripheral areas, including Algeria, which the French invaded in 1830, and Aden (South Yemen), which the British occupied to serve as a coaling station on the route to India 1839, they did not occupy the central territories until much later. An understanding, referred to as Entente Cordiale, stipulated that the British and the French would not oppose each other's interests in the Middle East as long as they did not undermine those of the other party. This policy, which was put into a partly secret treaty in 1904, prevented the colonization of the Middle East and the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The Khedives Sa`id Pasha and Isma`il engaged the French to build the Suez Canal, which was completed in 1869. This broke down the tacit understanding with the British, because they viewed foreign control of the Suez Canal as a direct threat to their interests in India. Lacking the administrative abilities of Muhammad Ali and tending to spend much more that the government could afford, Ismail drove Egypt into debt, and in 1875 the British bought a controlling interest in the Canal and became intimately involved with the administration of Egypt's finances. This led to the British occupation of Egypt in 1882. Elsewhere, Tunisia became a French colony in 1878, Sudan was conquered jointly by the British and Egypt in 1898, Libya was occupied by Italy in 1908, and Morocco divided by the French and Spanish in 1912. The central Arab lands remained provinces of the Ottoman Empire until WWI.

Questions:

1. Describe the Ottoman conquests of the Arab provinces. What factors led to their occurrence?
2. In what ways were did the Ottomans continue the legacy of earlier dynasties in the Middle East, and in what ways did they depart from earlier examples?
3. What are some of the long-term effects of Ottoman rule in the Arab world?
4. What happened to the great capital cities of earlier periods—Damascus, Baghdad, and Cairo—during the Ottoman period?
5. Describe the effects of coffee and tobacco on the Arab World.
6. How did Napoleon's invasion of Egypt affect the history of Egypt and other neighboring regions?
7. How would you characterize the relationship between Muhammad Ali's Egypt and the Ottoman sultanate in Istanbul in the first half of the nineteenth century?
8. What are the major reforms that Muhammad Ali instituted, and what long-lasting effects did they have?

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20th Century Arabic History : Colonialism, World War I, and Independence

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Conflicting promises. World War I and its aftermath determined many of the national boundaries found in the Arab World today. Because the Ottoman Sultan sided with the Germans in the War, the Allies were determined to dismantle the Ottoman Empire once and for all, wresting from it the remaining Arab territories—Syria, Palestine, Iraq, and Western Arabia—in addition to territories in the Balkans and in Anatolia itself. Called "the Sick Man of Europe," the Ottoman Empire had had its demise delayed by the rivalry and mutual suspicion and balance of power among Britain, France, and Russia, but World War I provided an excuse to break the *status quo*. During the war, the British government made three contradictory promises concerning the post-war political geography of the region. First, in the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence (1915-16), a promise was made to the Sherif of Mecca that if the Arabs were in rebellion against the Ottomans, they would receive control of the Ottomans' Arab provinces—essentially all of Syria, Palestine, Iraq, and most of Arabia. The Arab Revolt was successful, for the rebels ended up taking Damascus from the Ottomans. (This is the story told in the classic film *Lawrence of Arabia.*) At the same time, the British and French drew up a secret treaty, the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916), detailing how the Ottomans' Arab territories would be divided up: the French would get Syria, including what is not Lebanon, while the British would get Palestine, Iraq, and Western Arabia. In addition, the Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917 expressed support for the formation of a Jewish national territory in Palestine. The key passage of the document reads as follows:

> His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

The Shaping of the Modern Arab States. The British could obviously not honor all these commitments simultaneously because they were mutually contradictory. At the end of the War, Faysal (Omar Sharif in the movie) was declared King of Syria, his brother Abd Allah became King of Iraq, and his father Sherif Husayn became King of the Hejaz. The French, furious and determined to get what was rightfully theirs according to the Sykes-Picot agreement, expelled Faysal from Syria. Scrambling to make amends and to uphold their end of the bargain, the British made Faysal King of Iraq and Abd Allah King of Trans-Jordan (now Jordan), which they conveniently carved out of their Palestinian territory. Sherif Husayn's Hejaz fell to the Saudis in 1924, the monarchy in Iraq ended in 1958, and Jordan now is the only remaining monarchy that resulted from the fascinating historical episode of the Arab revolt. The other nation that was created as a project by the European powers was Lebanon. France divided its territory in Syria into two parts, Lebanon and Syria, expressly in order to create a Middle-Eastern nation with a Christian majority. A political system was devised that divided up power along confessional lines: the president would be a Maronite Christian, the prime minister would be a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of the parliament would be a Shiite Muslim.

Exceptional states. In some cases, nations were formed against the plans of the colonial powers. The Saudis conquered most of the Arabian Peninsula, ousting Sharif Husayn from the Hijaz. If it were not for the presence of the British, the Saudis probably would have gained control of the entire Arab Peninsula, including all the Gulf nations and perhaps Oman and Yemen as well. Only Atatürk's dramatic military campaigns in the years between 1918 and 1923 prevented the allies from carving up what is now modern Turkey into pieces divided between Britain, France, Italy, and Russia.

Colonization. The nations of the Arab world all share the experience of colonization, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and independence, mostly in the decades after World War II. Algeria was colonized by France 1830-1962, Tunisia 1878-1956, and Morocco 1912-56; Italy controlled Libya from 1908 until 1942; Britain occupied Yemen 1937-1961, Egypt 1882-1952, and Sudan 1882-1956. After World War I, the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East were put under the control of Britain and France; Palestine, Jordan, and Iraq to the British, and Lebanon and Syria to France. Because of Woodrow Wilson's influence at the Conference of San Remo in 1920, these territories were not termed colonies but rather "mandates," a term that recognized the intention to grant them independence eventually, after a suitable period of tutelage. Iraq gained independence in 1932, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan in 1946. When the British left Palestine, the state of Israel was established as a result of the war of 1948, and the remaining parts of Palestine came under the control of Egypt (the Gaza Strip), Jordan (the West Bank), and Syria (the Golan Heights). Israel would occupy the latter territories in the 1967 War. The only nations not colonized by European powers were North Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the Gulf countries.

Colonization in the Arab World:
Morocco 1912-1956 (France South; Spain North) (Spain retains Ceuta, Melilla, Western Sahara)
Algeria 1830-1962 (France) 132 years; 1958-62 War of Independence
Tunisia 1878-1956 (France)
Libya 1908-1945 (Italy) British defeat Italians in 1942, administer Libya 1942-45
Egypt 1881-1956 (Britain) revolution in 1952, British troop withdrawal in 1956
Sudan 1898-1956 (Anglo-Egyptian Condominium)
Palestine 1918-1948 (British Mandate)
Lebanon 1918-1946 (French Mandate)
Syria 1918-1946 (French Mandate)
Jordan (Transjordan) 1921-1946 (British Mandate)
Iraq 1918-1932 (British Mandate)
Aden/Southern Yemen 1839-1967 (Britain)

Independence. The Arab nations all gained their independence in the decades after World War II, the only exception being Iraq, which became officially independent in 1932. A few of the independent states retained a monarch: Morocco, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates until the present, and Iraq until 1958. Most of the states created a republican government controlled by a single party. The president had sweeping powers, and the checks and balances instituted in the constitutions were weak. Presidents stayed in office for many successive terms, even life, and maintained control through the military and oppressive state security systems. Lebanon, with a confessional system, was something of an anomaly. The Arab nations embarked on ambitious projects of modernization, expanding infrastructure that had been begun in the colonial period: roads, railroads, airports, electricity, water and sewer systems, and so on. Most nations emphasized the education of the population and the control of the media, establishing state radio and television, as well as state-controlled newspapers and state

security apparatuses. Arab nationalism, the ideal of uniting the Arab peoples into one great and powerful nation, was a powerful ideology in the mid-twentieth century and reached a peak in the 1960s. It led to the formation in 1945 of the Arab league, the Arab version of the United Nations. Gamal Abd al-Nasser, president of Egypt from 1954 until 1971, promoted Arab nationalism by founding 'The Voice of the Arabs", a radio station that broadcast throughout the Middle East and North Africa. He sent Egyptians to teach in public schools all over the Middle East, particularly in Algeria after its independence in 1962, when it had adopted a policy of the Arabicization of education but did not have teachers who had been educated in Arabic. The short-lived Union of Egypt and Syria between 1958 and 1961 was the closest Arab nationalism came to being implemented in practical terms. The Egyptian invasion of North Yemen in 1962-67 was also viewed as part of the broader strategy of spreading Arab Nationalism. However, most Arab nations promoted their individual nationalisms and often came into political and economic rivalry with their Arab neighbors. While paying lip service to Islam as a source of inspiration, these nationalist ideologies were essentially secular.

Frustrated expectations. While many of the Arab nations made progress toward creating a middle class and mitigating some of the disparities between the pre-independence elite and the common people, their promises of prosperity and progress held good for one or two generations. The nationalization of the Suez Canal, land reform designed to break up the huge landholdings of the wealthy landlord class, and the nationalization of foreign companies all provided opportunities for Middle class Egyptians. Similar programs were undertaken in other Arab nations. Taha Hussein, the minister of education, famously stated that education should be like air and water, available to all free of charge. Gamal Abd al-Nasser instituted a law that guaranteed employment to all university graduates. Again, many Arab nations tried to institute similar policies. Such promises soon faltered, however, as the people's expectations and aspirations rapidly outstripped the government's ability to provide employment and opportunities. Unemployment rose rapidly, particularly among the youth, including new cadres of university graduates. In addition, many states experience the continued influence of the former colonial powers, as they did not have the technology or experience necessary to run certain sectors of the economy, or because corrupt government officials benefited from arranging lucrative foreign contracts.

Haves and Have-nots. In the decades after World War II, oil began to become a decisive factor in the politics of the Arab world, dividing the Arab nations into haves and have-nots. The oil-producing nations were able to modernize incredibly rapidly, while those that did not have oil revenues had to pursue much more modest programs. The haves imported labor, and the have-nots exported labor to the oil-producing nations, Europe, and elsewhere.

Questions:

1. Compare and contrast French and British styles of colonialism using examples from the Arab World.
2. How did the European powers shape the nations and borders that we see in the Arab World today? Are there any nations that would not have existed or would have differed radically from their current state had the French and the British had their way without any resistance from the Arabs themselves or from outside powers?
3. What role did the United States play in the peace conferences after WWI?
4. Describe the workings of the one-party system of government in any Arab nation. What were the advantages and disadvantages of such a political system? What has been the subsequent history and legacy of these systems?
5. Describe the relations of the newly independent Arab nations to their former colonizers. Did they reject ties with the colonizing power and attempt to forge relations with other powers, or did they continue to have a close relationship with

them? What effects did these ties have on economics, culture, education, and politics?

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Zionism. Zionism is a form of Jewish nationalism, the idea that Jews should have a national homeland. It developed in Europe in reaction to the historical situation of Jews in the majority-Christian states of Western and Eastern Europe, in which Jews were often prevented from owning land and restricted to certain professions. With the Haskalah or "enlightenment" movement of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the foundation of reform Judaism by Abraham Geiger in the nineteenth century, there developed the idea that Jews should naturally form a nation like the other nations of Europe and that this would be a crucial step in removing the various forms of discrimination the Jews suffered. The strongest proponent of Zionism was Theodor Herzl, who published *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State), the key document of political Zionism, in 1896. In 1897, the First International Zionist Congress was held in Basel, Switzerland, and the attendees agreed to work toward the establishment of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine and to encourage the colonization of Palestine by Jewish agricultural and industrial workers.

Jewish settlement in Palestine. As with Christians, Jews from all parts of Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa, made pilgrimages to Jerusalem throughout the Islamic period. Some decided to settle in the region, close to the holy sites, in what is called *aliyah*, "ascent, going up," becoming known as *olim* "those who go up." Zionism produced new waves of such settlers, with the difference that many of them were not religiously motivated, but rather leftists with anti-religious ideologies who sought to create utopian communities based on egalitarian labor and work toward eventual Jewish nationhood. The first Aliyah occurred in the late nineteenth century, and the second Aliyah occurred 1905-14, particularly after failed revolution in Russia, and created cooperative agricultural settlements termed *moshav* (settlement) and *kibbutz*. These waves of immigrants created what is called the *Yishuv*, the collective Jewish presence in Palestine before the establishment of the State of Israel.

The British Mandate. Following WWI, the British took control of Palestine and neighboring Trans-Jordan as mandates or colonies-in-training. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 had committed the British government to assisting Zionist aspirations for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, but they found themselves in a difficult situation, for they had also promised that this homeland would not interfere with the rights of anyone else. From early on, conflicts arose between the Jewish settlers and local Arabs, and these escalated throughout the mandate period. WWII and the Germans' attempt to annihilate European Jewry made the Zionist cause more urgent, and Jewish groups tried to smuggle more Jews into Palestine while the British tried to maintain the status quo, and some Palestinians, including the *mufti* al-Hajj al-Amin, expressed sympathy for Nazi ideology and even cooperated with the Nazis. The three-way conflict between the Jews of the Yishuv, local Arab communities, and the British would continue until the British withdrawal in 1948.

The Foundation of Israel. When the British withdrew, a war broke out between the Jewish settlers and the Palestinian Arabs. This is termed the *Nakbah* "Setback" by the Palestinians, but "the War of Independence" by Israelis. Because of the highly contested nature of this history, there are two sets of terms for the various events that have taken place from then until the present day, and two (or more) sets of conflicting interpretations

of the historical events. It is often difficult to determine objectively what happened because everything that is written about the conflict is written from the point of view of one side. Prior to the end of the British mandate, the U.N. had proposed a partition plan, but the Palestinians rejected it, and the significantly expanded borders of the State of Israel were determined mainly by fighting in 1948. Palestinians were displaced to Lebanon, Jordan, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. Arab countries refused to recognize the new state, and the Jews in Arab countries experienced harassment and discrimination in retaliation. In a few years, the efforts of Zionists to increase the Jewish population in Israel combined with mistreatment in Arab nations and elsewhere led to a large immigration of Middle Eastern Jews to Israel.

The 1967 War. In the years following 1948, the State of Israel was successful in building infrastructure, governmental institutions, and the military, establishing a stable state. An early display of their military activity was their participation in 1956 with the British and French in the re-occupation of the Suez Canal after Gamal Abd el-Nasser had nationalized it. In the meantime, Palestinian resistance became more organized with the formation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), dedicated to the creation of a Palestinian nation, in 1964. The Israeli military were wary of their neighbors and especially of a coordinated attack by Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. In 1967, seeking to pre-empt what was perceived as an imminent attack, Israel attacked its Arab neighbors, and in six days achieved a stunning victory, destroying the air force of Egypt and wresting the Golan Heights from Syria, the West Bank from Jordan, and the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt. From 1967 on, these occupied territories have been the main bone of contention between Israel and Palestine and the Arab World. The war was a tremendous blow to Arab nationalism, for the defeat was humiliating evidence that the overblown rhetoric of Gamal Abd al-Nasser and others was not matched by material progress in military technology or political and diplomatic savvy.

The 1973 War. Tension between Egypt and Israel remained high after the 1967 war, and low-level border fighting continued during the War of Attrition in 1969-70. In 1973, in what Israelis call the Yom Kippur War and Egyptians "the Crossing" or the 10th of Ramadan War, Egyptian forces crossed the Suez Canal, breaking through the heavily armed Bar Lev line and occupying a large part of the Sinai Peninsula. The eventually turned, and the Israelis occupied a large region in Egypt in retaliation. The overall effect was a restoration of pride in Egypt, something that would eventually lead to a peace treaty. After intense secret negotiations, Sadat made an official visit to Israel in 1977, becoming the first Arab leader to do so. Under the auspices of President Carter, Sadat and Begin signed the Camp David Accords in 1978 and in 1979 the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel was signed. The Sinai Peninsula was eventually returned to Egypt. The peace treaty has been in effect ever since. It is stable but has been described as cold or unfriendly, and it has not necessarily improved the situation of Palestinians.

More recent conflicts. In response to the growing strength of the PLO in Lebanon and to attacks across on Israel's northern border, the Israeli military invaded Lebanon in 1982 and established a security zone in southern Lebanon. This security zone would involve the Israelis in Lebanon until 2000, create a Lebanese Christian proxy militia, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), and spur on the formation of Hizb Allah, a Shiite armed militia and political movement dedicated to ending the Israeli occupation. Though the Israelis withdrew in 2000, they attacked Lebanon again in 2006 in response to Hizb Allah's growing power.

The First Intifada. In 1987-1993 the Palestinians took matters into their own hands and engaged in an ongoing rebellion against Israeli forces in the Occupied Territories. This did something to sway public opinion around the world and in Israel itself and was a major

factor in bringing about the Oslo I Accords in 1993, which called for the creation of the Palestinian Authority, essentially an interim governing body for the Occupied Territories and set out a roadmap or timetable for peace negotiations. Palestine was not a state yet, but this was the closest they had ever come. After the Palestinian Authority was created, Yitzhak Rabin, Yasser Arafat, and Bill Clinton were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. A second agreement, the Oslo II Accords, were signed in 1995, and negotiations on the status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip began.

The Second Intifada. Progress towards peace broke down for many reasons, including the building of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories, the Israeli usurpation of land in the Occupied Territories for security reasons, the building of a Security Wall, and various attacks on both sides. From 2000-2005 the Palestinians again engaged in sustained rebellion against Israeli forces, which resulted in the renewed and reinforced occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza strip. The situation was defused for a time after a Peace Summit at Sharm al-Shaykh in Egypt, at which an agreement allowing for self-government of the Occupied Territories by the Palestinian Authority. Elections were held in 2006, but when the militant Islamist party Hamas won a majority, many of the supporters of the Palestinian state were reluctant to fund them and actively undermined them. This created a rift among the Palestinians, and the Gaza Strip, under the control of Hamas, split off from the West Bank, under the control of Fatah. From that time until the present, the Gaza Strip has been the main site of conflict, primarily because the Hamas take a more intransigent stance toward Israel and are viewed by Israeli authorities as more dangerous. The immediate causes of conflict are rocket attacks on Israel, which became the excuse for a full-scale Israeli invasion of the Gaza Strip in 2008-9. The divide between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank continues today, as does the continual conflict between militants in the Gaza Strip and Israeli forces. The construction of Israeli settlements continues to be a bone of contention, but the main obstacle for future negotiations is the status of Jerusalem, for both sides insist that the capital of their state must be Jerusalem.

Chronology:
1948 War
1956 Suez Canal Crisis
1964 Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) formed
1967 War
1969-70 War of Attrition
1973 War
1977 Sadat visits Jerusalem
1987 First Intifada
1978 Camp David accords
1979 Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty
1982-2000 Israeli invasion and occupation of southern Lebanon
    Creation of security zone in southern Lebanon
    Creation of SLA (South Lebanon Army)
1987-1993 First Intifada
1991 Madrid Conference
1994 Peace treaty between Israel and Jordan
13 September 1993 Oslo I Accord signed by Yitzhak Rabin, Bill Clinton, and Yasser Arafat
1994 Palestinian Authority created
1994 Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, and Yasser Arafat given Nobel Peace Prize
28 September 1995 Oslo II Accord—Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip
July 2000 Camp David Summit
2000-5 Second Intifada begins with Sharon leading a visit to the Temple Mount.

February 8, 2005 Sharm al-Shaykh Summit: Roadmap for peace.
2005 Israeli withdrawal from Gaza
2006 Hamas wins Palestinian elections
2006 Israel-Lebanon War
2007 Hamas takes control of Gaza from Fatah
2008-9 Israeli invasion of Gaza

Questions:

1. Define Zionism and give a short summary of its history.
2. Analyze the Balfour Declaration. What is it a promise to do? What does it not specify or spell out?
3. What was the 1947 Partition Plan?
4. What are the Israeli and Arab interpretations of the conflicts of 1948, 1967, and 1973? How does the relevant terminology differ?
5. What were the causes and results of the First Intifada?
6. What were the causes and results of the Second Intifada?
7. Give an overview of the political issues regarding the status of Jerusalem.
8. Give an overview of the political issues regarding the Dividing Wall.
9. Give an overview of the political issues regarding missile attacks on Israel from the Occupied Territories and from Southern Lebanon.
10. Give an overview of the political issues regarding Israeli settlements in the occupied territories.
11. Discuss the history of relations between Israel and Egypt, Israel and Lebanon, Israel and Jordan, or Israel and Syria.

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First commercial production of oil:

Egypt	1911
Iran	1912
Iraq	1934
Bahrain	1932
Saudi Arabia	1938
Kuwait	1946
Qatar	1949
Libya	1960
Algeria	1962
Emirates	1968

Oil a necessity. In the nineteenth century, with advent of the science of refining, oil became a universal product. Its initial use was as a source of kerosene. This flammable substance was excellent for use in lamps. With the first successful oil drilling operation in 1859, petroleum flooded the market. The invention of the gas-powered automobile in 1864 made use of gasoline, a byproduct of the refining process. Many years later, with its improvement and mass production, automobiles would create a major demand for oil. The First World War made oil a commodity of strategic interest. In the years preceding it, England and Germany were trapped in a naval race for dominance of the seas. The British Admiralty, under Winston Churchill, sought new ways to modernize their warships to maintain nautical superiority. One option was to engineer British boats to run on oil instead of coal. Petrol-powered ships could accelerate faster and reach higher speeds than their coal-driven counterparts. Additionally, oil was cheaper, more compact, and required less maintenance than the traditional source of fuel. In 1912, the Admiralty commissioned five oil-fired warships, followed by many more. However, the advantages of oil did not come without a price. While Great Britain possessed large reserves of Welsh coal, it had no immediate access to oil, and the military was reluctant to commit itself to an unreliable source of fuel.

Anglo-Persian Oil Company. Operating in present-day Iran, the APOC struck oil in 1908. Six years later, in an incredible financial maneuver, the British Admiralty purchased a 51% holding in the private company. With its supply of petrol secured, the navy shifted production to oil-fueled ships. Even though naval engagements did not figure prominently in World War I, the Admiralty's decision was momentous. It recognized the strategic importance of petroleum and the attendant need for the state to protect its oil interests. Furthermore, England was now dependent upon the Middle East for its survival. Without Iranian oil, it would be virtually defenseless. Many other countries would follow this precedent of government involvement and reliance in the Middle East throughout the 20th century. After World War I, the great powers recognized the vital importance of oil. After World War I, oil companies scrambled to obtain oil concessions around the world. Of particular interest was the territory of the former Ottoman Empire (comprising what is today Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Turkey, and the Sinai Peninsula), which had an untapped wealth of petroleum beneath its surface.

United States' involvement. Unlike most European countries, the United States was blessed with internal sources of oil. The relative self-sufficiency of the USA in the first half of the twentieth century left its government indifferent to the petrol politics in the Middle East. This attitude changed dramatically after 1941. Just as the First World War demonstrated the importance of oil to Europe, so did the Second World War for the United States. American petroleum had proved vital in the war against the Axis Powers, fueling Allied ships, transports, planes, and tanks. This revelation was underscored by the possibility of an oil shortage in the future. In 1948, increased domestic demand led the United States to import more oil than it exported for the first time ever. While the USA had enough oil for its current needs, what if the country and its allies faced another major war?
Aramco
Change of agreements
Seven sisters

The Iranian Coup. One of the first casualties of the Cold War in the Middle East was Mohammed Mossadegh. The populist leader became Prime Minister of Iran in 1951. One of his first acts in office was the nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, the pre-eminent symbol of Western imperialism in the eyes of his constituents. Fearful of the growing power of this popular rival, the Shah of Iran fled his country. For Mossadegh and his followers, the decision to nationalize AIOC was a symbolic, nationalist one. Without the British experts to run the company, its production dropped off dramatically. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company was its primary source of petroleum for the United Kingdom. Its leaders were both enraged over its loss and determined to retrieve it. Great Britain blockaded Iran's ports to prevent the oil from reaching customers. However, Mossadegh remained popular and even won another term in office. While the United States initially accepted Mossadegh as a bulwark against Communism in the country, it became more suspicious as he signaled Communist leanings. American leaders feared that Iran's defection would create a Soviet bloc out of the entire Middle East. This was an unacceptable risk to President Eisenhower. Consequently, in 1953 the USA, Great Britain, and Iranian royalists launched Operation AJAX to overthrow Mossadegh and restore the Shah to power. The mission succeeded and was soon followed by a new consortium of foreign oil companies in Iran. The lesson learned by many Iranians and their neighbors was that the United States and Europe respected Middle Eastern democracy so long as it served their own economic and political interests.

The Suez Canal Crisis. The United States responded differently to another case of nationalization. Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser came to power in Egypt in a coup in 1952. Unlike the conservative monarch he deposed, Nasser hoped to maintain neutrality in the Cold War. His other objective was the construction of a dam on the upper Nile to provide electricity and irrigation for Egypt. Unfortunately for him, these two goals conflicted. After he displayed his neutralist tendencies through recognition of Communist China and other diplomatic *faux pas*, the United States rescinded its offer to fund the Aswan Dam. In response, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, planning to use the income it generated to pay for dam. This action infuriated and terrified Great Britain. In addition to the loss of profits, the nationalization of the canal gave Nasser a firm grip over Europe's access to oil. Western Europe received two-thirds of its petroleum from tankers that navigated the Suez Canal. Should Nasser close the waterway, the continent would face a major energy crisis. Additionally, British leaders feared that Nasser's successful takeover could set a precedent for further acts of nationalization in other countries. Great Britain conspired with France and Israel to retake the Suez Canal in an armed invasion in 1956. The United States was outraged; fearful that European-Israeli aggression would alienate the entire Middle East and provoke a Soviet response, President Eisenhower demanded a cessation of hostilities. When the three powers refused to comply, Eisenhower placed economic sanctions on France and

Britain and threatened an oil embargo. The two European powers complied, and Israel soon joined them in withdrawing from the Canal Zone. The crisis also boosted Nasser's popularity immensely, making him the undisputed spokesman for Arab nationalism. Just as Washington feared, he drifted closer to the Soviet bloc, accepting military advisors and funding for the Aswan Dam from the USSR.

OPEC. The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries was founded by representatives from Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela in 1960. Although the various states had discussed greater collaboration in the oil industry since 1949, these plans remained loose and theoretical until ten years later. Afraid of losing control of their primary source of revenue, representatives finalized plans for an international body to regulate the flow of petroleum. Initially OPEC met with minimal success. While it intimidated the oil companies, the organization itself was divided by political and economic rivalries. Effective cooperation on oil control was beyond its reach at the time. Also, the international environment was not yet ripe for a powerful oil consortium. The world was enjoying an oil surplus, so the ability of the five nations to manipulate its price was severely limited. The embargo against the United States and Great Britain for their support of Israel in the 1967 war failed abysmally. While Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, and Algeria stopped shipping petroleum, Venezuela, Iran, and Indonesia undercut their efforts by increasing production. In 1973, however, the organization enforced a strict oil embargo on the West for its allegiance to Israel in the Yom Kippur War. First, it unilaterally raised the posted price of oil by 70%. Second, it reduced production of oil among its members by 5%, to be followed by monthly cutbacks of 5%. Third, it declared an embargo on all countries sympathetic to Israel. These three measures limited the global supply of oil and quintupled its market price. Panic struck the citizens of consuming countries, and people lined up for hours to fill up their tanks at gas stations. The embargo ended in March of 1974, when the USA agreed to facilitate a peace between Israel and Syria. However, the high prices remained. The petroleum-producing countries had demonstrated their collective economic might. OPEC capitalized on the panic of the Iranian Revolution of 1979 to spark another price-inflating oil crisis. However, that was the last display of its economic might. OPEC had driven the cost of oil so high that other countries began to explore new energy options. Foreign leaders looked into alternate sources of fuel, such as natural gas. They also instituted nationwide energy conservation efforts. Some countries invested in non-OPEC oil sources, while others began expensive drilling projects at home. Internal divisions also weakened OPEC. Without an Arab-Israeli war to unite them, the individual member countries soon returned to their individual struggles and vendettas. Although OPEC still exists today, it no longer wields the economic force that it possessed in the 1970s.

The Persian Gulf War. Iraq was not on good terms with its neighbor Kuwait. It had long asserted that it had a rightful claim to the small country. More recently, during the Iran-Iraq War, Kuwait had lent Iraq vast amounts of money to help fund its ailing economy. Now the Kuwaiti government wanted to be repaid. There was also the matter of oil. Furthermore, Kuwaiti oil companies had tapped into a large oil reserve which Iraq claimed was under its sovereignty. Kuwait had also been violating OPEC regulations by pumping out more petroleum than it was allotted. Kuwait increased its revenues by selling a larger volume of oil, but its higher production lowered the overall price of oil around the world, including in Iraq. Now more than ever, Iraq was dependent on its petroleum for economic survival. In addition to these frustrations with Kuwait, the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein had grandiose visions for his nation. With Iran in shambles, he saw Iraq as the next great power in the region. By seizing the oil-rich Kuwait, Iraq would control a fifth of the world's oil reserves. Hussein would also be in a prime position to invade Saudi Arabia and further consolidate his hold on the oil market. He hoped to translate this newfound wealth of petroleum into a superior military. The invasion of Kuwait was met with nearly universal

condemnation. Even the Arab states, on whose behalf Hussein claimed to speak, joined in the placement of economic sanctions. The United States organized a global coalition to present Iraq with an ultimatum: withdraw from Kuwait or else. Hussein refused, however, hoping that the global coalition would not hold and that the Iraqi occupation would be accepted as a *fait accompli*. He even took action to undermine the solidarity of the coalition by antagonizing Israel with missile attacks. However, the alliance remained firm. In January of 1991, allied aircraft struck at Baghdad. Short-lived ground fighting ensued in Kuwait, resulting in a quick Iraqi rout. The brief Persian Gulf War demonstrated the persisting importance of oil to the world, even after the end of the Cold War.

The U.S. Invasion of Iraq. In 2003, after the Bush administration argued that Saddam Hussein was harboring weapons of mass destruction, the United States invaded and occupied Iraq, toppling Saddam Hussein's government and installing an interim government. Eventually, Saddam Hussein was captured, tried, and executed. A representative government was elected. It later became clear that the case regarding weapons of mass destruction was contrived and that one of the main causes of the war was the desire to control a larger share of the vast Middle Eastern oil reserves. This may be regarded as a key strategic goal of the United States in order to secure fuel for the future. However, it has equally become clear that the greatest beneficiaries of the occupation were major oil companies with ties to Bush and Dick Cheney, Bush's vice president. After the occupation Halliburton, Baker Hughes, Weatherford, and Schlumberger, all four with ties to Texas, were granted access to the most productive oil regions of Iraq. The government planned for them to invest up to 150 billion dollars in the Iraqi oil industry, which is now dominated by foreign firms. Iraqi oil production is now up to the highest pre-invasion levels, and U.S. oil companies are making tremendous profits.

The future. The high prices of oil have led the U.S. and nations around the world to seek alternative energy sources, cut on energy consumption, and step up local drilling. The recession also reduced demand for oil world-wide. The U.S. is producing more oil, and exports are actually going down. The extent of oil reserves in the Arab countries and Iran mean, however, that the region will continue to be a major player in the international oil market, though they will not exert the same level of control over Western nations that they did in the 1970s. The oil-producing nations in the Arab world now face the challenge of diversifying their economy before the production of oil slows down. Dubai, for example, has made itself a world business center in the space of a few decades, but the world recession forced it to seek billions from Abu Dhabi in order to get out of debt. Abu Dhabi's government is seeking to make it a world leader in many areas, including self-sustaining green building. None of these nations have succeeded in establishing significant local industry or innovative businesses, but the oil will not run out very soon.

Questions:

1. When and where did the commercial production of oil begin in the Middle East?
2. Sketch the origins of the following companies: BP, Shell, Aramco.
3. Why is oil in the Arab World relatively easy to produce? How did this differ from the production of oil in the United States and other regions?
4. Where are the major reserves of oil in the Middle East? In the world?
5. What were the arrangements between the oil companies and the governments of Arab nations originally, and how did they change over time?
6. Did the large oil companies constitute a cartel or not?
7. What does OPEC stand for? When was it founded? What have been its major accomplishments? Has it had any failures?
8. What have some of the economic effects of oil production on the major oil-producing nations such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and so on?

9. How was oil a factor in the First Gulf War and the United States' invasion of Iraq?

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Christians in the Arab World.

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Christianity dominant prior to Islamic expansion. When the Islamic expansion occurred, the majority of the population in the Middle East and North Africa was Christian. The conversion of the Emperor Constantine to Christianity led to the establishment of Christianity as the religion of the Byzantine Roman Empire. Despite the differences that arose between the various sects of Christianity, Christian dominance became coterminous with Byzantine Imperial control, so that Christianity dominated Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia. Beyond these borders of the Empire, Christianity also established many footholds. Through Egypt, Christianity spread to Sudan and Ethiopia. The Nestorians and Jacobites (Syrian Orthodox) spread Christianity in Iraq, Iran, reaching beyond the Sassanian borders into Central Asia and India. From Tunisia, Christianity had spread west into Algeria and Morocco. Even experts in Christian traditions often forget that St. Augustine was a Berber from Tunisia.

Early Arab Christians. Centuries before the advent of Islam, Arab communities had converted to Christianity. Many Arab tribes inhabiting Syria converted to Christianity, and some of these fought against the invading Muslim armies. The two Arab principalities located in the border region between the Byzantines and Persians, on the one hand, and northern Arabia, on the other hand, were both Christianized. The Ghassanids had their capital at Busra, south of Damascus, and their eastern counterpart, the Lakhmids, had their capital at al-Hira, south of the Lower Euphrates in Iraq. From these centers, Christian influence penetrated further into the Syrian Desert and the Arabian Peninsula. Christianity also entered Yemen from Ethiopia. After the Negus Kaleb of Aksum ordered the invasion of Yemen in 525, the Ethiopians had a cathedral built in San`a'. A Christian community was established north of Yemen in Najran, and Quss ibn Sa`idah, one of the most renowned orators of pre-Islamic times, was the bishop of this town. In modern times, when the vast majority of Arabs are Muslims, it is important to remember that Christianity was the dominant religion throughout what is now the Arab world before the advent of Islam and that large numbers of individual Arabs and numerous tribes and larger communities had adopted Christianity.

Conversion to Islam was gradual. It is equally important to remember that the Islamic invasion did not immediately establish a Muslim majority in the region. In the late seventh century, the Muslims were a tiny minority in the Middle East, less than 10% of the population. Their percentage of the population probably did not reach 50% until 100 C.E. in most areas. Christians continued to run their affairs, worship as they had, and speak their native languages for many centuries after the invasion. Dialects of Aramaic, the main language spoken throughout Syria and Iraq prior to the Islamic invasions, have survived to this day in mountain towns in Syria, Turkey, and Iraq among Jews and Christians. The Coptic language did not die out until as late as the 16th century. Documents continued to be written in Greek, Persian, and Coptic, sometimes along with an Arabic translation, throughout the Umayyad and into the Abbasid period, despite the official conversion of the chancery by the Umayyad Caliph Abd al-Malik in the late seventh century.

Chief religious rival. The former dominance of Christianity in most of the conquered territories, particularly in the locations of the centers of power, and the continued majority presence of the Christians in society, as well as the long confrontation with the Christian power of Byzantium, made Christianity the main religious and cultural system with which Muslims compared their own. This marks a significant shift from the society portrayed in the Qur'an, in which Judaism is the main foil for nascent Islam, presumably because of the Jews' strong presence in and around Medina. Thus, the early Muslims first prayed toward Jerusalem—on the grounds that that was the site of Solomon's Temple, and fasted on `Ashura', the tenth day of the first month of the year, Muharram, corresponding to Yom Kippur in the Jewish calendar. After the community was established in Medina, the direction of prayer was changed to Mecca, since the Ka`bah was reinterpreted as the Temple of Abraham, originally dedicated to the Biblical God but later corrupted by pagans, and the fast was changed to the month of Ramadan, both apparently in an attempt to distinguish Islam from Judaism. Later, the *minbar*, a raised platform from which to deliver sermons in the mosque, was initiated in an obvious parallel to the pulpit in Christian churches. The *mawlid*, or birthday, of the Prophet Muhammad came to be celebrated by Muslims in imitation of the Christians' celebration of Christmas. Muslim saint veneration was most heavily influenced by Christian traditions of saint veneration. Al-Qadi `Iyad wrote his famous work on the miracles of the Prophet Muhammad, *al-Shifa* (The Cure), in order to counter Christians' stories of Christ's miracles.

Monophysite sects. An important aspect of the Christians of the Middle East that shaped their relationship with the Muslim rulers was their split from the imperially sanctioned church of the Byzantines, who came to be called the Melkites (following the king or *malik*). The split can be dated to the Council of Chalcedon (the Fourth Ecumenical Council) in 451, which denounced as heretics the "monophysites"—Christians who insisted that Christ had one nature, in which divine and human mixed, as opposed to the official view, dyophysitism, according to which Christ had two natures, a human one and a divine one. The monophysites included the Jacobites or Syrian Orthodox, with their center in Antioch in northern Syria (now Antakiya in modern Turkey), and the Copts, with their century in Alexandria. Together with Rome and Constantinople, these two cities were recognized as the most ancient and venerable sites of Christian learning, and their bishops were recognized as the most prominent Christian authorities. After the Council of Chalcedon, however, they grew independent, the bishop of Alexandria becoming recognized as pope of the Coptic Church, and the bishop of Antioch becoming the metropolitan of the Syrian Orthodox Church. The officials of the Byzantine Church shunned them and discriminated against them, and this became one factor that induced them to accept the rule of the invading Muslim armies over the Byzantines.

People of the Book. Because the Qur'an recognized that Jews, Christians, and Muslims worship the same, Biblical God, Judaism and Christianity were accepted as legitimate religions and Jews and Christians were accorded a recognized status in society that was not available to pagans. The Qur'an terms them *Ahl al-Kitab* (People of the Scripture) but says little about specific restrictions except the imposition of a special tax, called the *jizyah*—later interpreted as one dinar, or gold coin, for each adult male. Jews and Christians under Muslim rule in later centuries were subject to a number of additional legal restrictions that go back to a document termed the Pact of Umar. There has been a long debate regarding this document, which resembles a treaty between a conquering force and the conquered population. Some claim that this was originally an agreement made during the caliphate of Umar (634-644) with the Christians of Jerusalem. Others maintain that it was a treaty with the Christians of Damascus concluded by the Umayyad Caliph Umar b. Abd al-Aziz much later. In any case, it likely derived from actual agreements that were then modified and incorporated into the law. The pact stipulated that Jews and Christians are to be granted

safe passage, the safety of their property, and the freedom to practice their religion in return for adhering to certain restrictions. These include not repairing of building new churches or synagogues, providing quarter for Muslims, giving priority to Muslims in public thoroughfares, not engaging in public religious processions or carrying or displaying the cross in public, not riding horses or using saddles, not bearing arms, wearing distinctive clothing, including a *zunnar* or leather belt, and not taking Muslim names. The Jews and Christians who abided by these rules were held to be under the protection (*dhimmah*) of the Muslim state, and were entitled to protection from outside aggression. These restrictions were elaborated in later periods, so that proclamations ordered that Jews wear yellow and Christians blue turbans, or specifying that a Jew or a Christian could not be appointed to a position overseeing Muslims.

Effect of the Crusades. The Crusades (1095-1291) had a tremendous effect on Christians in the Arab World. Because they were considered actual or potential allies of the invading Franks, local Christian communities were subjected to more discrimination and harsh treatment than had occurred in earlier periods. The link between the acts of the Franks and the treatment of local Christians is dramatically exemplified by the siege of Aleppo in 1124. The Franks camped outside the city desecrated the Muslims' tombs in their cemetery, and in retaliation, the Muslim ruler confiscated the Christian Cathedral of Aleppo, along with three other churches in the city, and ordered that it be converted into a mosque immediately. Many Christians living in the religion along the Mediterranean coast of Syria fell under the rule of the states of Outremer: the County of Edessa, the Principality of Antioch, the County of Tripoli, and the Kingdom of Jerusalem. They came to have close relations with the Frankish rulers, with Catholic orders of monks, and with Catholic Church authorities. One consequence of this was the formation of the Maronite church, which broke with the Syrian Orthodox Church, forming a Uniate church with their independent tradition but with their allegiance to the Catholic pope in Rome. In the 16th century, a Maronite college was established in Rome to teach priests from what are now Lebanon and Syria, and the French king took on the role of protector of (Catholic) Christians in the Middle East. These connections have continued, with ups and downs, until the present day, and are partly what led France to establish colonial control over Lebanon and Syria following World War I.

Prominent roles in society. Many of the previsions of the Pact of Umar were not enforced in many regions and periods of Arab history. Jews, Christians, and Muslims often shared the same customs and social and cultural practices, had similar names, wore the same clothes, and so on. New churches and synagogues were built and older ones were repaired. Christians and Jews often served in high positions in the government, in many cases after converting, but in some cases without converting. However, periodically, often in times of economic troubles or unrest, calls for the stricter imposition of these restrictions on the People of the Book were made, churches were torn down by angry mobs, and so on. Muslim rulers often relied on Jews and Christians to undertake sensitive tasks. They were considered neutral parties uninvolved in the factional rivalries among Muslims. In addition, they would not be able to hide or escape with the aid of powerful backers if they embezzled funds or committed some other infraction. Christians served as accountants and tax collectors throughout the Islamic history of Egypt, until the 20th century.

Declining populations. Through the course of Islamic history, the percentage of Christians in the population has steadily dwindled in many regions. Christians have become highly self-conscious minority groups, less than 10% of the population in Egypt, and less that than in Iraq, Syria, Palestine, and elsewhere. The native Christian populations in North Africa completely vanished during the Middle Ages. Conversion occurred from many reasons: oppression, avoidance of the *jizyah* tax, marriage, employment in the government, and so on. Throughout the years of contact, Arab Christians adopted and adapted many of

the practices of their Muslim neighbors. Copts, for examples, claim that wine and all alcohol in *munkar* "reprehensible". When asked how they can say this when drinking wine is central to Christian worship and is drunk in communion, they reply that the sacred wine of communion is different from ordinary wine and that it does not inebriate.

Colonial period. The 19th and 20th centuries witnessed not only the establishment of rule by Christian, European powers in most regions of the Arab world, but also the sending of Christian missionaries from England, France, the United States, and elsewhere to the Arab world. They generally had little success converting Muslims to Christianity but were nevertheless influential. Protestant and Catholic missionaries did succeed in converting Arab Christians of other denominations. Their greatest success, however, was in education. Schools that they founded educated generations of leading intellectuals and reformers and had a significant impact on societies throughout the Arab world but especially in Lebanon and Egypt, where the oldest and most active schools were. The modern American Universities of Beirut and Cairo began as missionary schools and are now premier institutions of higher learning in the Arab World.

Modern discrimination. The *jizyah* was abolished in most parts of the Arab world in the 19th century, but Jews and Christians are regularly discriminated against in the modern Arab world, despite the fact that have been legally recognized as having rights equal to those of their Muslim compatriots in most nations. Coptic Christians in Egypt complain of discrimination in school, work, and politics. The best students of the class are generally announced, and most teachers make sure that the top three are Muslims even when it is obvious that a Christian student is superior to them. Christians are passed over for promotion in government departments, partly because many Muslims share the view that Christians should not be in charge of Muslims. Copts regularly complain that they must wait years and years to get government permission to repair their churches, and so on. There is thus tension between modern conceptions of secular citizenship—or religious equality—and pre-modern notions of societal hierarchy based on religious identity.

In the present day. Christians continue to navigate tensions that arise from living in a society dominated by Islamic religious discourse, particularly after the wave of conservative Islamism that has swept the region since the 1980s. In Lebanon, Christians retain the upper hand, political, because of the odd confessional system established by the Constitution, which Muslim Lebanese naturally resent. In many other Arab nations, such as Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq, Christians are legally recognized as equal citizens but must deal with societal obstacles of various types, and they have suffered attacks in the wake of political upheavals in the last few years in Egypt and Iraq. Now with the civil war in Syria, Syrian Christians fear that they will lose any protection they have should the rebels win and oust Bashshar al-Asad.

Questions:

1. When and how did Arabs first become Christian?
2. What significant historical roles did Arab Christians play prior to the advent of Islam?
3. What elements of the Qur'an reveal important Christian influences?
4. In what ways did Islam borrow elements from Christian tradition or develop along parallel lines? In what ways did other elements of Islamic theology, law, or ritual come to contrast with Christian theology or practice?
5. Characterize the status of Christians living under Christian rule. What restrictions were they under? Were the restrictions enforced? What important roles did they play in society?
6. What is the status of Christians in the modern Arab nation states? What problems do they face?

7. What are the main sects of Christianity in the Arab World? What claims to fame does Eastern Christianity have vis-à-vis Christianity in general?
8. What are some of the manifestations of saint worship and popular piety in Arab Christianity? How do these compare with popular practices in Judaism and Islam?
9. What role do Christians play in the modern nation state of Lebanon in particular?

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Jews in the Arab World.

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Jewish Diaspora. Along with the alphabet and oil, religion has been the Middle East's most successful export; Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, are now the religion of a large percentage of the world's population, including many communities far from the Middle East. Although Judaism does not boast the same sort of numbers of adherents that Christianity and Islam do, its spread is just as impressive, and, moreover, its influences on the other two Abrahamic faiths are many and profound, so that it is inextricably part of them. Judaism arose in Israel but spread throughout the Roman Empire, so that by the time of the Islamic expansion, Jewish communities already existed in most of the areas conquered by the Muslim armies. Unlike the Christians, who had held the reins of power, the Jewish communities did not have to adjust much—they remained a minority living among a dominant majority and having to conform to certain restrictions imposed upon them by that majority. Indeed, their treatment under Muslim rule is generally considered better than under Christian rule. In addition, they were not directly implicated in conflicts between the Muslims and outside Christian powers, something that worked in their favor. Whereas the Christian population disappeared in North Africa and became concentrated in the central regions of the Middle East, probably because of such tensions, Jewish minorities continued to exist in every region of North Africa and the Middle East. This only changed with the establishment of Israel in 1948, after which the Jewish population dwindled to tiny numbers in most Arab countries.

Judaism and early Islam. Islam in its formative stage and the Qur'an as a sacred text were heavily influenced by Judaism, for Islam was, from the beginning, a continuation of Biblical tradition. Jewish tribes inhabited Medina, the site of Muhammad's establishment of the Muslim community as a political entity, and a number of nearby towns. The emphasis on scripture, prophecy, and law in the Qur'an are reminiscent of Judaism, and a number of specific aspects of the religious law, such as marriage, divorce, ritual ablutions, prayer, and fasting, all resemble Jewish religious law. The early Muslims prayed toward Jerusalem, the site of the Temple, and fasted on `Ashura', the tenth day of Muharram, the first month of the year, just as the Jews fasted on Yom Kippur, the tenth day of the first month of the year. These last rituals were changed to the prayer toward the Ka`bah in Mecca and the fast of Ramadan, ostensibly in order to distinguish Islam from Judaism, but many similarities remained. In later centuries, when the dominance of jurists as the primary religious experts was established, Islam came to resemble Judaism in key features and to be distinct from Christianity, in which theology was the queen of the sciences and the source of religious authority.

Early conflicts. The relations of the early Muslim community with Jews in Arabia can only be described as tragic. After the migration to Medina, the Prophet established parameters for the new community in a series of documents later termed the Constitution of Medina. The document provides for civil engagement and participation of the Jews in the new community, though scholars argue about the exact sort of relationship envisaged. After the Battle of Badr, the Banu Qaynuqa`, one of the Medinese Jewish tribes, broke their agreements with the Prophet, which led him to besiege their quarter of the city and then expel them. A second Jewish tribe, the Banu Nadir, was accused of plotting to kill Muhammad and expelled as well. A third tribe, the Banu Qurayzah, was killed after supposedly betraying the Muslims in another battle against the pagans of Mecca, the Battle of the Trench. Other Jews continued to live in Medina, but in 641, Umar ibn al-Khattab, the second Caliph, declared that there should only be one religion in Arabia, and expelled the

Jews from the Peninsula, including especially the Jews of Khaybar and the Christian community of Najran, north of Yemen. He apparently did not include Yemen in his definition of "Arabia" for Jewish communities continued to live there until modern times.

The Pact of Umar. After the Islamic expansion, the Pact of Umar, discussed last week with regard to the Christians, became the basis of legal restrictions on Jews under Muslim rule as well. They were recognized as a People of the Book, meaning that they were monotheists who worshiped the correct, Biblical God, and had a legitimate scripture. They were also *ahl al-dhimmah* "the People of the Pact", meaning that they in effect had a treaty with the Islamic government, in which they agreed to abide by Islamic legal stipulations regarding their behavior and their relationship with Muslims in return for protection and protection of their religion. The stipulations were theoretically identical to those imposed on the Christians. In practice, as mentioned earlier for the Christians, many of the stipulations were not actually carried out. Jews often did not wear distinctive clothing, gave their children names that were not distinguishable from Muslim names, repaired and built synagogues, and so on. In some cases they were discriminated against more than were Christians, who often had larger numbers and more societal backing. In other cases, however, they fared better than the Christians, who were seen as natural allies of foreign Christian powers.

Centers of learning. Though Jewish communities existed throughout Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, the Middle East remained an important religious, cultural, and economic center for all the diasporic communities. Before the Islamic conquests, the most important regions for Jewish religious scholarship were Palestine and Iraq, where key post-scriptural texts that formed the basis of Rabbinic law, the Mishnah, Jerusalem Talmud, and Babylonian Talmud, were compiled. The yeshivas or legal schools of Sura and Pumbedita in Iraq were the leading centers of Rabbinic learning in the early Islamic centuries, and both relocated to Baghdad in the tenth century. The gaons, or heads of the yeshivas, in Palestine and Iraq were the most prominent religious authorities in Judaism in the high Middle Ages, and the exilarch, the "ruler" of the Jews in exile was an exalted figure in Abbasid Baghdad.

Parallel legal scholarship. Jewish scholars and Jewish converts to Islam played crucial roles in the elaboration of Islamic religious sciences. The Hebrew Bible and Jewish commentaries on its books provided a great deal of material to explain the stories narrated in the Qur'an. Although such Jewish traditions were later termed "Isra'iliyyat" and rejected as authoritative, so much of them had already entered hadith, commentary on the Qur'an, and stories of the prophets literature that it became a permanent part of Islamic tradition. Many later Muslim scholars avoided reading the Bible, but certain exceptional figures such as Ibn Hazm and al-Biqa`i became experts in Jewish and Christian scripture. The number of similarities between Jewish and Islamic legal rulings and between the systems of legal education and the process of seeking legal opinions suggests that there was significant borrowing, in both directions. For example, requests for a legal opinions are termed in Hebrew *she'elot*, and in Arabic *masa'il*, both meaning "questions"; the responses are termed *tshuvot* "answers" in Hebrew *jawabat masa'il* "answers to questions" or *fatawa* "legal opinions" in Arabic; the jurist who gives the opinion is termed a *toshev* in Hebrew and a *mufti* in Arabic. In both systems, a student received a document termed *semekha* in Hebrew and *ijazah al-ifta' wa'l-tadris* in Arabic at the end of his studies, recognizing that he had finished his education and was now a fully qualified legal expert. It is the answers of these legal experts that have law value rather than the decisions made in court cases. There are many other close parallels between Jewish and Islamic law.

Islamic influence on leading Jewish scholars. Many of the greatest scholars of medieval Judaism were strongly influenced by Islamic models. Sa`adya Gaon (d. 942), a native of Fayyum in Egypt who spent seven years writing and teaching in Baghdad, wrote a number of works in both Hebrew and Arabic, including an Arabic translation of the Torah and other books of the Bible, polemical works against Karaites and other Jews denouncing what he viewed as heretical opinions, Arabic treatises on Jewish law, most of which have been lost, and a ground-breaking theological work, *Kitab al-Amanat wa-l-i`tiqadat*. Especially in the last work, Sa`adya drew heavily on Islamic theology (*kalam*). Many do not realize that Maimonides (Mosheh ben Maimon, 1135-1204), one of the greatest Jewish scholars of all time, wrote only one work in Hebrew, and the rest of his voluminous output entirely in Arabic. A rabbi, physician, jurist, and theologian, he was born in Cordoba, the former capital of the Umayyad Caliphate in Spain, then traveled through southern Spain to Fes in Morocco, and ended up in Egypt, where he became *nagid* or leader of the Jewish community and physician to al-Qadi al-Fadil and Sultan Saladin. He is known to prosperity especially for his legal writings. His fourteen-volume *Mishneh Torah*, the only work he wrote in Hebrew, is still considered an authoritative codification of Talmudic law. It presumably drew on a number of models in Islamic law and theology, though specific sources have not been identified.

Economy. Throughout the medieval period, Jews were involved in long-distance trade. The Islamic world facilitated this trade, because passports and local citizenship were not required for one to move through the various parts of the Islamic world and engage in trade. The Jews had a network of merchants stretching from northern European cities to the Mediterranian, and thence throughout North Africa, the Middle East, and to India. For the Fatimid and Ayyubid periods a great deal is known about this trade from the Cairo Geniza, essentially a burial vault for old paper which was rediscovered in the nineteenth century and has provided thousands of documents on a bewildering variety of topics for modern scholars to decipher. As in Christendom, Jews' economic opportunities were limited by societal restrictions, and they specialized in certain trades. In many areas, they lived in separate neighborhoods, such as *harat al-yahud* "The Alley of the Jews" in Cairo, or the *mellah* quarter in Moroccan cities; rural *mellah*s in Morocco were separate villages near established Muslim villages.

Special roles. Jews were often granted privileges and called on to serve in sensitive roles, such as physician to the ruler, particularly important because a corrupt physician could easily poison the Sultan, or as high administrators, including accountants and viziers. In the Mamluk era, the master of the mint, who carried enormous responsibility, was always a Jew. (This tradition has continued in modern Morocco, where a number of ministers, including those of Finance and Tourism, have been Jews.) The Jewish community was on occasion the source of loans and extraordinary levies when the treasury was empty or the ruler needed to make extraordinary military expenditures. In many cases, this cooperation between the Muslim ruler and trusted members of the Jewish community led to the granting of favors and privileges, such as the right to build or expand a synagogue.

Discrimination and persecution. On occasion the recognized status and protection accorded to Jews have broken down, particularly in times of unrest and economic depression. In 1066 a massacre wiped out the Jewish community of Granada, and other attacks occurred sporadically throughout medieval and modern history. In addition to regular discrimination, extortion and mistreatment have often been inflicted on the Jews. In the twentieth century, Arab nationalism, European occupation, and Nazi propaganda led to a deterioration of the status of Jews in many regions of the Arab world. In Iraq in 1941, hundreds of Jews were killed in a Baghdad massacre that became known as the Farhud. When the State of Israel was founded in 1948, efforts on the part of Zionist groups to

increase the Jewish population of Israel combined with worsening social conditions led most Jews in Arab lands to emigrate to Israel in the 1950s. Few remained, except in Morocco and Yemen. The new Arab Jewish immigrants to Israel faced discrimination from the northern European (Ashkenazi) Jews, who were on the whole more educated and already controlled the governmental and social institutions in Israel. Many immigrated to Europe and elsewhere, but both there and in Israel, they have retained their traditions, including their Arabic dialects and particular foods and festivals from their old countries in the Arab World.

Questions:

1. Discuss the roles of Judaism and Christianity in pre-Islamic Yemen.
2. What evidence is there that Judaism exerted an important influence on the Qur'an and the early Islamic movement?
3. In what ways did Islamic law and ritual come to match or be parallel to Jewish law and ritual? In what ways did it come to contrast with Judaism?
4. What is the Pact of Umar? What is the controversy about the dating of this document? How do you imagine it could have become incorporated into Islamic law? Were the stipulations enforced in everyday life?
5. Characterized the status of Jews under Muslim rule. How did it compare to the status of Jews under Christian rule?
6. Analyze the works of Saadya Gaon or Maimonides and discuss how they are related to Arabic-Islamic traditions of learning.
7. How did the formation of State of Israel affect the Jews of the Arab World? How do their traditions differ from those of European Jewry? How well did they integrate into Israeli society?

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Women in the Arab World.

Reading: Roded, *Women in Islam and the Middle East*.

A skewed view of pre-modern Arab women. In accord with the dictates of political mobilization, there has been a tendency in feminist scholarship to depict pre-modern women in the Arab world as completely and utterly backward. To claim that women in pre-modern Arab society (up until, or even especially, in the nineteenth century) were universally uneducated and had no access to higher culture is meant to bring out the stark contrast with the progressive, "modern" period, when women are being educated, entering the work force, and competing with men openly on a more equal footing. This point of view, seen in the works of Arab feminist authors such as Fatima Mernissi and Nawal al-Saadawi, in addition to the writings of scholars of the modern Middle East, is skewed, over-generalizing, and more often than not simply undocumented, but serves an important polemical purpose, to claim that the liberation of women is a necessary part of the sloughing off of backwardness required by entrance into the modern era. Such views produce a striking defect, and shared by many other studies of modern Middle Eastern history in general, which is the monolithic, undifferentiated portrayal of the period before "modern" times. Another shortcoming comes from a simplistic and undifferentiated understanding of patriarchy itself. Many studies tend to omit a full portrayal of the power politics that obtain in society, so that, for example, Fatima Mernissi speaks of the oppression of women when mothers-in-law abuse and lord it over their daughters-in-law. Indeed it is oppression, but Mernissi apparently does not notice that mothers-in-law are actually women too, and her model does not explain why young wives count as women and mothers-in-law do not, or how exactly women fit into domestic or societal power structures. In portraying women as utterly oppressed, many studies tend to ignore the ways in which agents in a subordinate social position can and regularly do exercise power.

Women in Islamic law. In the Islamic legal framework, women suffer from a number of handicaps that make it clear that they do not enjoy legal rights with men.

- blood-money: the indemnity paid for killing a free woman (50 camels) is half that paid for a free man (100 camels)
- testimony: the testimony in court of two women is deemed equivalent to that of one man in most cases
- inheritance: the inheritance of a daughter is one half that of a son
- *mahram*: a woman travelling should be accompanied by a male family member as a chaperone, while men have no such requirement.
- marriage: most legal traditions prevent an unmarried woman from acting on her own in choosing a husband; a guardian (*wali)* must act on her behalf).Divorced or widowed women, and, according to the Hanafi school, an unmarried adult woman, may contract a marriage without a guardian.
- polygyny is allowed (up to 4 free women), but polyandry is forbidden
- slave concubines are permitted to men, but not to women
- divorce: men are presumed to have the right to unilateral divorce without cause, while
  women are permitted to seek divorce for cause
- discipline: the husband may beat his wife for disobedience
- sex: the wife is required to provide sexual access to her husband when he desires except for cause such as illness, menstruation etc. The husband should also provide cohabitation (with sex implied) for her, but this requirement is not stressed as much
- household duties: it is presumed that a woman is responsible for keeping up the household and child rearing. It is presumed that the husband is completely

financially responsible for maintaining the household, which includes paying for shelter, food, and clothing.
- leaving the house: a wife may be restricted from leaving the house if it is seen as interfering with household duties or providing sexual access. The details vary a great deal between the law schools
- clothing: men are required to cover from their navels to their knees in public according to the predominant opinion, women may only reveal hands, feet, and face in public
- child custody: it is assumed that in cases of divorce, child custody reverts to the father; children remain with their mother to be reared only when very young
- management: it is presumed that husbands are in charge of their wives and children

The Qur'an and women. The Qur'an makes only a limited number of statements relevant to law regarding women, such as matters of marriage, divorce, and so on. The following are the verses related to veiling.

"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and to keep themselves chaste. That is purer for them. God is aware of what they do." 24:30

"And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and to display of their adornment only that which is apparent, and to draw their veils over their bosoms, and not to reveal their adornment save to their own husbands or fathers of husbands' fathers, or their sons or their husbands' sons, or their brothers or their brothers' sons or sisters' sons, or their women, or their slaves, or male attendants who lack vigor, or children who know naught of women's nakedness. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And turn to God together, O believers, in order that you may succeed." 24:31

The key phrase here is *li-yadribunna bi-khumurihinna `ala juyuubihinna* 'that they should cover their necklines with their wraps/robes' (24:31). This seems to mean that women should cover their necklines, and not anything more. The term jayb, most commonly "pocket" in modern Arabic, refers to the collar or neckline clearly in the following verse, which describes Moses' hand's turning white when he sticks it into the neck of his robe: *wa-adkhil yadaka fi jaybika takhruju baydaa'a min ghayri suu'* "Stick your hand into the neck of your robe, and it will come out white, without being harmed." (27:12; 28:32). In any case, these verses do not seem to justify the heavy veiling practices found in Islamic law. In addition, Islamic law nowhere requires that women cover their faces. The term *hijab* 'veil" refers most directly to a cloth that covers the hair, not the face. Nevertheless, it has become popular in some circles in some parts of the Arab world for women to wear a *niqab*, or face-veil, a practice that is not sanctioned by Islamic law.

Another verse cited often is Q 4:34: ". . . As for those from whom you fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to beds apart, and scourge them. Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them." The key term here is *fa-dribuhunna* "so beat them." The literal interpretation of the verse is that it permits husbands to beat their wives. Even to medieval commentators, this verse sounded quite blunt and crude; it is even truer of modern commentators. Both tried to explain away or soften the import of verses such as these. Another verse states, "men are in charge of women" (4:34), and is also subject to the same kind of softening interpretations. In order to defend Islamic positions, apologists typically stress that Islamic legal rules represented a vast improvement over the norms supposedly obtaining in pre-Islamic Arabia: women were property; polygyny was unlimited; women received no inheritance, and so on. Most of these statements do not accurately represent the situation that obtained prior to Islam, for it appears that there was

a wide variety of marital arrangements, in some of which the wife had many rights, and that some women owned property. The general claim may still be true, however. Another tactic is to explaining away or attempt to soften the import of verses that seem heavy-handed, so that “beating” is taking to mean “staying away from” or “hitting lightly, or with a twig,” and so on.

Modernist and feminist interpretation. Modernist and feminist reformers often proceed by
stressing Qur’anic texts which imply the equivalence or parallelism between men an women with regard to faith, piety, moral qualities, basic religious obligations and taking them as implying that men and women are essentially equal. Another tactic is to historicize the text. If the intent of the Qur’an was to improve pre-existing conditions in 7th c. Arabia, they argue, shouldn't we be able to continue improving them as changing times allow? Yet another common tactic is to stress particular scriptural texts and interpretations that the legal tradition has not emphasized in arriving at legal rulings. For example, they cite Q 4:3 "If you fear that you will not deal fairly by the orphans, marry of the women, who seem good to you, two or three or four; and if you fear that you cannot do justice (to so many) then one (only) or (the captives) that your right hands possess. . . . together with Q 4:129: "You will not be able to deal equally between (your) wives, however much you wish (to do so),” drawing the conclusion that, since it is impossible to treat co-wives equally, this amounts to a ban on polygamy.

Lives of Women in the early community. Moving away from the Qur’an, modern feminists in the Arab world have often drawn on Islamic history for models of strong women. Khadijah, the Prophet’s wife, is an interesting case. She was certainly older than the Prophet, by as much as 15 years, and had married several times before him. She was wealthy, and engaged in trade. In fact, Muhammad had worked for her prior to their marriage. She was presumably the one who proposed marriage, and he did not marry any other women until she died. Other model women are `A’ishah, by many accounts his favorite wife, Zaynab, the sister of Husayn who confronted the Umayyad Caliph Yazid after Husayn’s martyrdom at Karbala, and others. Feminists often point out that women during the Prophet’s time and the succeeding generations moved freely in society, had access to the rulers, and were not afraid to speak their mind when the occasion called for it. When Umar, the second caliph, tried to set a limit on the dower (mahr), a woman remonstrated in public that this was depriving them of a right explicitly stated in the Qur’an, and Umar had to withdraw his proposal.

Ideals vs. practice. Many of the typical forms of oppression and mistreatment that women suffer in Arab societies result from the violation, abuse, or manipulation of Islamic law, not from its correct enforcement. So, for example, in many parts of the Arab world, women are not given any inheritance because the brothers of the deceased confiscate the entire inheritance, in direct conflict with Islamic law. In many Arab societies, a wife is not given her dower, but her family uses all or part of it, when it legally belongs to her alone. According to Islamic law, a husband has no right to use his wife’s property, but husbands often do so, citing pressing need. In cases of divorce, husbands are required to pay their wives the complete dower, which may include a substantial deferred amount. In order to avoid doing so, a husband may simply mistreat his wife until she gives up claims to the dower in return for the divorce. In addition, the law envisages that husbands are the primary breadwinners in a family and that they will be able to provide appropriately for their wives and children. In practice, this is not always the case, and women may in fact be bringing more income to the household. The law has no mechanisms for increasing her rights accordingly in such situations.

Women's legal rights. Women are part of the class system, which enters into the legal system in many ways, with the result that upper-class women often have a very powerful position in society and in the law, and are in many ways more powerful than lower-class men and women alike. When the dower is not specified in a marriage contract, a wife is awarded *mahr al-mithl* 'the dower of a similar woman'. This is usually defined as the dower of a sister or paternal cousin of the bride, and it depends on social status. The concept of *kafa'ah* 'compatibility' is used to determine who an appropriate spouse for a given wife is, and this also depends on social status. In addition, the appropriate level of support of wife is determined by what she or a similar woman—her sisters, paternal cousins, etc.—should expect according to their social status. So, for example, if a woman of her status would have a nursemaid for the children, she is entitled to a nursemaid provided by the husband, and if she chooses to nurse the children herself she is entitled to the pay of the nursemaid. In addition, women are parties to the marriage contract, and they or their representatives can negotiate for better stipulations, up to and including the right to unilateral divorce. The bride can ask for a large deferred dower, a restriction on polygamy, release for specific causes such as imprisonment, drug addiction, loss of reputation or social status, lack of support, or the right to unilateral divorce. The existing system has some advantages for women that Western critics may not be aware of. Women keep their maiden names. They remain independent economic entities.
They may even remain Jewish or Christian while married to a Muslim man. The husband is prevented from confiscating or using a wife's property for the upkeep of the family; property does not become common or shared after marriage. The husband is obligated to provide all food, lodging, and clothing for wife and children.

Women in the pre-modern Arab world. The Arabo-Islamic genre of the biographical dictionary provides rich material for the study of the history of women, not only presented incidentally in accounts of the lives of men, but also as objects of attention themselves. Marilyn Booth has discussed several biographical texts devoted to women from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, emphasizing the adaptation of the traditional genres by early feminists in order to present contemporary women with accounts of exemplary role models from the Arabo-Islamic past. She has provided what is perhaps the best analysis to date of pre-modern women's biography in an Arabo-Islamic context. Several studies have shown that women participated to a significant extent throughout the medieval period in Islamic education, especially in the science of hadith and the transmission of the canonical texts of the Islamic sciences. While women were certainly much less frequently educated than men, it is now clear that many women in the pre-modern Islamic world were indeed educated. They could read and write, and many participated broadly in the preservation of the patrimony of Islamic religious literature. A number of female scholars gained great renown in these fields, such as Shuhda bt. Abi Nasr Ahmad al-Ibari (d. 1178) a very important transmitter of hadith, particularly al-Bukhari's famous collection *al-Sahih*. In the capacity of students, teachers, and transmitters of the Islamic patrimony, women often entered the public sphere, including religious institutions traditionally dominated by men such as the mosque and the *madrasa*. M. Z. Siddiqui even argues that the level of participation of Muslim women in the study, teaching, and transmission of *hadith* represents an outstanding feature of medieval Islamic society unmatched in other cultures of the period. A few exceptional women became recognized as authors and leading scholars in their own right. Among the most brilliant female scholars was `Aishah bint `Abd al-Hadi al-Ba`uniya (d. 1516), who excelled in Arabic grammar and rhetoric, Islamic law, theology, and mysticism. Her collection of poetry has survived, as well as a number of treatises on mysticism and a fragment of an autobiographical text.

Mystic women. Another important category of women in the pre-modern Arab world is that of women mystics and saints. Perhaps the most famous of these is Rabi`ah al-

`Adawiyah (717-801). A native of Basra, she is reported by later sources to have developed an Islamic mysticism based on the concept of love. Shrines to female saints may be found throughout the Arab world, including the shrine of Sayyida Zaynab in Damascus, the shrines of Sayyida Zaynab and Sayyida Nafisa in Cairo, the shrine of Aishah al-Manubiyyah in Tunis, and many others.

Elite women. Yet another category of important women in the pre-modern Arab world is that of women connected with the ruling elite or military class. A number of important works have been devoted to this group, including, in older scholarship, Nabia Abbott's *Two Queens of Baghdad: Mother and Wife of Harun al-Rashid*. Recent works on women rulers include Fatima Mernissi's *The Forgotten Queens of Islam,* and Farhad Daftary's article on Sayyida Hurra, the Sulayhid queen of Yemen. A number of important studies have been devoted to women's roles and the exercise of power at court in Timurid Iran, Safavid Iran, the Ottoman Empire, and Moghul India. This overlaps with consideration of women of the ruling classes as patrons of art and architecture, custodians of property, and founders of endowments. The modern historian may, in fact, be able to learn the most about this particular group, because they figure most prominently in conventional sources such as chronicles and endowment deeds.

Poets and performers. Yet another category of prominent women is that of poets. Al-Khansa' was one of the most famous poets of the time of the Prophet, famed for her elegies for her brother Sakhr. Talented women poets arose in nearly every era of Arab history. During the early centuries of the Abbasid caliphate, *qiyan* or singing slavegirls often gained renown as poets in their own right, and were prized for their ready wit and their ability to compose verses extemporaneously. Some found their way into elite households and became wives and mothers of caliphs and viziers.

Women in the modern Arab world. Throughout the Arab world, independence and the establishment of modern nation states brought with it universal education for girls as well as boys, or at least the aspiration to provide such an education. In some areas, this was met with resistance, on the grounds that it would prevent girls from learning to run a household or by teaching them to write, encourage them to write love letters and form unsanctioned relationships. Now, education is seen as essential to finding an appropriate marriage partner; the higher one's level of education, the more educated one's husband will be. Women have entered the workforce in larger numbers, and women are taking on larger roles in business and politics. Some of the gains made during the post-WW II era have been eroded by the wave of Islamic conservativism that has swept the Arab World since the 1980s, but female education has been strong overall, and this promises to produce further changes in the future. In some countries such as Saudi Arabia, work opportunities remain limited to certain fields, such as education and medicine. A recent film, *Wajda*, and a recent parodic song, "No Woman No Drive," both poke fun at the Saudi law that prevents women from driving as nonsensical, backward, and unfair. It seems likely that this law and other restrictions will be struck down in the not-too-distant future, particularly given that they are not the norm, even in neighboring Kuwait, which has admitted the first women representatives to its parliament.

Questions:

1. Who are some of the exemplary women from Arab and Islamic history? What role did they play in history? How have they been portrayed, and what messages have these portrayals been used to convey for modern women? What do we learn from the portrayal of the death of Fatima in Roded's collection?
2. Define the Islamic legal term *kafa'ah*. What are the implications of this principle for women's rights?

3. Describe the roles that royal women played under the Umayyads and the Abbasids?
4. Describe the roles that Arab women played in medieval societies.
5. What assumptions and concepts do the folkloric stories of Juha and his wife, etc., reveal about women, marriage, relations between men and women, and related matters.
6. What are the salient features of feminism in the Arab world? Who have been some of the main actors? What did they accomplish?
7. How has the rise of Islamist politics in the Arab world affected women?

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