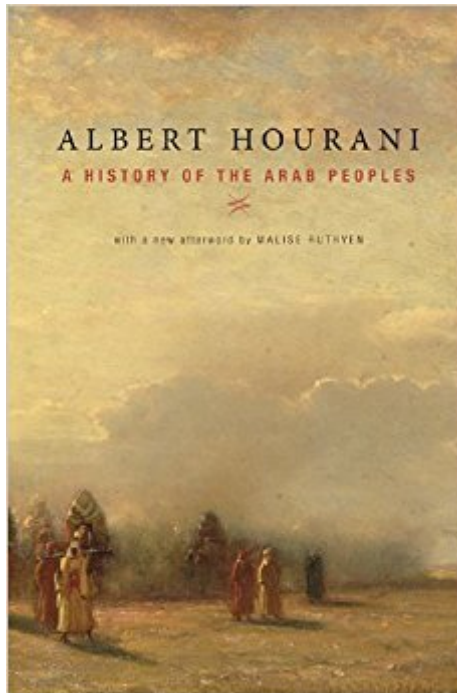




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# **A History Of The Arab Peoples: With A New Afterword**



## Synopsis

Upon its publication in 1991, Albert Hourani's masterwork was hailed as the definitive story of Arab civilization, and became both a bestseller and an instant classic. In a panoramic view encompassing twelve centuries of Arab history and culture, Hourani brilliantly illuminated the people and events that have fundamentally shaped the Arab world. Now this seminal book is available in an expanded second edition. Noted Islamic scholar Malise Ruthven brings the story up to date from the mid-1980s, including such events as the Gulf War; civil unrest in Algeria; the change of leadership in Syria, Morocco, and Jordan; and the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001. The terrorist attacks in the United States, ongoing crisis in Iraq, and renewed violence between Israelis and Palestinians all underscore the need for a balanced and well-informed understanding of the Arab world, and make this insightful history of the Arab peoples more important than ever.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book by one of the most distinguished scholars of the Arab world and the Middle East is a splendid achievement that can be read with profit by rank beginners and jaded specialists. It is, moreover, written with the grace and wisdom that those who know Mr. Hourani's works have come to expect. This is history in the grand style. It can lead to a better understanding of the Arabs, past and present. (L. Carl Brown New York Times Book Review) There is something deeply reassuring and even redemptive about this very fine book. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of this book for this time. Here at last is a genuinely readable, genuinely responsive history of the Arabs. [Hourani] completely controls the best in modern as well as traditional

Western scholarship and often lets the Arabs, their poets, historians, sages and ordinary people speak along with, rather than against, that learning. (Edward W. Said Los Angeles Times Book Review) [An] elegantly written study [Hourani] delivers a grand story in a deceptively quiet and gentle tone of voice; a vision of the great journey of the Arab peoples. (Robert Irwin Times Literary Supplement) Mr. Hourani is one of the few scholars capable of writing a worthwhile history of the Arabs from the rise of Islam until the present day in under 600 pages. His treatment is inevitably broad-brush, but never superficial. He covers not only political history but culture, society, economy, and thought; and this distillation of a lifetime's scholarship is the book's greatest virtue. (Economist) This is a brilliant book, perhaps a landmark. It radiates the penetrating light of Albert Hourani's massive erudition upon what he calls the 'deeply disturbed societies' of the Arab world [Hourani] is able to explain, concisely, matters of surpassing difficulty which must be understood in order to make sense of contemporary events [A] rich and often gripping book. (Thomas W. Lippman Washington Post Book World)

Albert Hourani was Emeritus Fellow, St. Antony's College, Oxford. He died in 1993. Malise Ruthven is a former editor with the BBC Arabic Service and World Service in London and is the author of Islam in the World and Islam: A Very Short Introduction.

I needed some background for the complicated situation the world is watching in the Middle East right now, and boy, did I get it. Just a shame that things are changing so hard and fast that the book becomes more and more historical by the day - but what it covers is essential to parse what reporting and the hundreds of different voices claim about what's 'really' going on out there. If you read this book and still have kneejerk reactions to current events, you're doing it wrong. The book gives one great pause, and that's good.

This is a great asset to my personal library. It is informative, well documented, and scholarly, while at the same time fascinating reading. It has been an enormous help to me as I am studying the cultural-geopolitical history of the Mideast. It is next to impossible to understand the ongoing problems of the Mideast without understanding the history of the Arabs, Iranians and Jewish settlers of that region. This fine book covers the Arab history splendidly.

Classic analysis written by understandable language.

A comprehensive history of the Arab people.

Arrived as promised.

great

I love reading history and enjoyed this immensely. It was eye-opening as to the many different groups that make up the Muslim world.

As Director of St. Anthony's College's Middle East Center, Professor Hourani acquired a reputation for resolute evenhandedness with regards to Middle East topics and issues. His book serves as a useful introduction to the history of the Arabs from the rise of Islam until just before the Gulf War in Iraq. Hourani uses clear language to create powerful images while presenting a concise overview of a considerable time span. He covers the evolution of Islam as well as the social and cultural evolution of Arabs from Morocco to the Persian Gulf. Exploring the daily lives of women and fellaheen, merchants, and the educated elites, among others, Hourani portrays the lives of the people in society highlighting many of the rich cultural traditions. Using explicit details with incredible scope and breadth, he also explores Islamic law, theology, and spirituality as it developed over time. Aside from the comprehensive aspect of the book, Hourani succeeds best at discussing major events and issues that evolved over some 1300 years with elegant writing condensed into a single volume. This book is a useful read for the beginning student of the region in need of a broad understanding as well as anyone interested in an evenhanded review of the Arab peoples.

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