

WILLIAM OCHSENWALD  
SYDNEY NETTLETON FISHER

sixth edition



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# *The Middle East*

## *A History*

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SIXTH EDITION

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**THE MIDDLE EAST: A HISTORY**

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# *List of Maps*

The Mediterranean and the Contemporary Middle East	ii–iii
The Middle East	iv–v
The Geography of the Middle East	4–5
The Middle East in Antiquity	12–13
The Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, C.E. 600	27
The Spread of Islam	40
The Umayyad and Early Abbasid Empires	54
The Early Medieval Middle East, ca. 1100	123
The Crusades	129
The Late Medieval Middle East, ca. 1300–1400	139
Expansion of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1574	166
Iran, 1500–1800	219
The Transformation of the Ottoman Empire, 1574–1798	235
The Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, 1798–1914	263
Egypt in the Nineteenth Century	282
Qajar Iran, 1800–1914	351
The Middle East in World War I	370
The Partition of the Ottoman Empire	377
The Middle East in World War II	463
Modern Turkey	477
Modern Iran	502
The Palestine Mandate, Partition, and the 1948 War	535
The 1973 War and Israel's Peace with Egypt and Jordan	560
Modern Egypt, Sudan, and Libya	584
The 1956 and 1967 Arab-Israeli Wars	592
The 1982 War and Divided Beirut	634
The Iran-Iraq War, 1980–1988, and the Kuwait War, 1990–1991	657

# *List of Charts and Genealogies*

Periodization in the History of the Islamic Middle East	10, 26, 122, 136, 203, 260
The Umayyad Caliphs	51
The Early Abbasid Caliphs	65
The Twelve Imams	91
The Later Abbasid Caliphs	127
Ottoman Rulers to 1566	163
The Safavids	216
Ottoman Rulers, 1566–1703	232
Ottoman Rulers, 1703–1839	249
Dynasty of Mehmet Ali	280
The Qajars	350
The Hashimites	434
The Later Saudi Rulers	702

## *About the Authors*

WILLIAM OCHSENWALD attended the Ohio State University (B.A., M.A.) and the University of Chicago (Ph.D., 1971). He has been a member of the faculty of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University since 1971, with occasional leaves for research in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Britain, and France. He has received grants from the Fulbright-Hays program; the American Research Institute in Turkey; the former United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; and the Social Science Research Council and American Council of Learned Societies. In 1979–1980 and 1991 he was an Associate Fellow of the Middle East Centre, University of Cambridge. He is the author of three books, *The Hijaz Railroad* (1980), *Religion, Society, and the State in Arabia* (1984), and *Religion, Economy, and State in Ottoman-Arab History* (1998), and the co-editor of *Nationalism in a Non-National State: The Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire* (1977) and has published many articles, among them essays appearing in *The Middle East Journal*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *Die Welt des Islams*, *The Muslim World*, *Arabian Studies*, and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

SYDNEY NETTLETON FISHER was born in Warsaw, New York, in 1906 and attended Oberlin College (A.B., M.A.) and the University of Illinois (Ph.D., 1935). He was a member of the faculty of the Ohio State University from 1937 to 1972. Professor Fisher was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and a member of the Accadèmia del Mediterràneo. He served as Director of Publications of the Middle East Institute and as editor of *The Middle East Journal* and contributed articles to numerous journals and encyclopedias. He was the author or editor of several books, among them *Foreign Relations of Turkey, 1481–1512* (1948), *Social Forces in the Middle East* (1955), and *The Military in the Middle East* (1963). He died on December 10, 1987.

# *Preface to the Sixth Edition*

The issues troubling many parts of the Middle East have sharply increased in severity in recent years, while the impact of the region on the rest of the world has dramatically grown during the period of time since the appearance of the last edition of this book in 1997. The terrible events of September 11, 2001, in the United States have particularly emphasized the importance of increasing the understanding of the Middle East in other parts of the world. A sound knowledge of the history of the Middle East is a prerequisite to viewing its present-day circumstances with understanding and clarity.

This book first appeared in print forty-four years ago. Sydney Nettleton Fisher, who wrote the first three editions (of 1959, 1969, and 1979), provided an immensely useful and widely read guide to comprehending the complex and controversial history of the Middle East. In my revisions for the fourth and fifth editions, appearing in 1990 and 1997, I retained much of his earlier work while also making numerous changes.

For this sixth edition I have again made many changes, affecting almost every chapter. Probably the most important change was the combination of the two volumes of the fifth edition back into one, so as to make the book easier to use. It will now be possible for readers of the early chapters to follow a theme through to the present, while those chiefly interested in modern times can also easily review events from earlier times.

Other important changes include coverage of the dramatic and controversial events that have taken place since the appearance of the fifth edition. Some examples are the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, the subsequent war in Afghanistan, changes in Iranian politics following the election of President Khatami, the collapse of the Israel-Palestinian peace process, and the development of the second Palestinian intifada. In addition, much new research dealing with earlier times has been incorporated into appropriate chapters. Since general studies, monographs, and journal articles of high quality dealing with the history of the Middle East continue to appear in great abundance, I have made changes in the bibliographic references found at the end of each chapter. Unfortunately, due to space considerations I have had to omit mention of many valuable and useful works, an especially frustrating necessity in the flourishing field of Arab-Ottoman provincial history. However, I have been able to include some sites available by computer on the World Wide Web, trying to pick those most likely to contain

valuable historical information or analysis rather than polemics or partisanship. The reader should be aware that since web sites frequently change their addresses and even occasionally disappear, the sites mentioned in the text may need to be found using search engines or may no longer be available.

In response to suggestions from readers, I have moved the two chapters on the history of post-1945 Israel, Jordan, and Palestine to an earlier location, thereby providing a better context for the chapters that follow. Many readers also asked me to include a chronological guide to key events, and so I have added a chronology at the end of the volume to provide a general framework for historical changes in the various regions of the Middle East. Throughout the book I have sought more directly to guide the reader's attention to crucial themes and to eliminate superfluous details. I have substantially expanded treatment of the history of women and social and economic history. Finally, I have made considerable revisions to Chapter 19 on the Safavids.

In this edition, I have attempted to provide a somewhat more systematic transliteration system than was employed in earlier versions, but I have not attempted, nor achieved, complete consistency. As Sydney Fisher pointed out in the preface to the first edition, words from Middle Eastern languages have been written in English in different ways, thereby causing much confusion. Most specialists have strongly held but divergent views on proper transliteration. I have usually opted for the simplest and most widely employed methods and spellings. Thus, I have shown 'ains in Arabic words in only one case (the Ba'th political party), and only in a few cases have I employed the symbols needed to represent modern Turkish spelling. In some cases, however, I have opted for a spelling that is closer to the original, as in Quran and ulama, rather than Koran and ulema.

I have the pleasant duty of thanking a number of people for their assistance. For all three editions for which I have been responsible, the most important suggestions for revisions came from students taking my classes, who offered frank and useful recommendations that led to many changes. I also owe a debt of gratitude to the following persons for their advice and proposals for change in earlier editions: Karl Barbir, Jean Braden, Linda Darling, Ronald Davis, Justin McCarthy, Donald Reid, Ezel Kural Shaw, and John Voll. For the sixth edition I thank Professor Corinne Blake of Rowan University, who kindly sent me an advance copy of an article providing many insights into web sites and the use of information technology for the study of the Middle East and Islamic civilization. For their very useful suggestions, I also wish to thank reviewers

Nathan Citino, Wittenburg University  
Robert Olson, University of Kentucky  
Clarence Zylstra, Whatcom Community College  
Ismail Abdalla, College of William and Mary  
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Patricia Risso, University of New Mexico  
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Once again, professional colleagues who have written other general studies of the history of the Middle East provided important new ideas, data, and interpretations which



challenged me to rethink my own earlier work. I found especially useful and stimulating works by Albert Hourani, William L. Cleveland, Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., and Ira M. Lapidus. For the sixth edition, recent publications by C. E. Bosworth, Bernard Lewis, Glenn E. Parry, and especially Palmira Brummett have been important to me. Of course, I alone am responsible for those faults still remaining in this new edition.

My general approach to the history of the Middle East rests upon foundations established with the help of dedicated teachers and scholars with whom I have studied. They are Sydney Fisher, William McNeill, Marshall Hodgson, William Polk, Richard Chambers, Reuben Smith, Leonard Binder, and Marvin Zonis. I have also gained many insights about general surveys of the history of the Middle East from discussions with Jere Bacharach, Herbert Bodman, Lynne Rienner, and Marilyn Waldman.

My past and present colleagues at Virginia Tech have been of considerable assistance through their stimulating and provocative discussions. I wish to thank Burton Kaufman, Charles Kennedy, Robert Landen, Dean O'Donnell, Djavad Salehi Isfahani, and Peter Schmitthenner. I am especially grateful to Glenn Bugh, whose tactful help on ancient and Balkan history was invaluable. I highly appreciate the assistance of Andrea Kavanaugh, who provided exciting insights into communications technology in the Middle East and North Africa. I acknowledge with gratitude the support of the department of history at Virginia Tech under the leadership of Burton Kaufman, Albert Moyer, and Glenn Bugh. The three departmental secretaries—Linda Fountaine, Jan Francis, and Rhonda Pennington—assisted me patiently and efficiently. The staff of the Interlibrary Loan office of Newman Library worked diligently in providing access to many books and articles.

I am very grateful to friends and family who have provided encouragement and support during the long time needed to complete this new edition. My thanks go in particular to Stewart A. Dean, Elizabeth Fisher, Barbara Kaiser, Donald Miller, Ronald and Joyce Ochsenwald, Jon Miller, and David Starkey.

I can only hope that this sixth edition will be as useful to students and the general public as preceding versions have been. In this way the memory of Sydney Fisher, an inspiring teacher, writer, and friend, will be commemorated.

William Ochsenwald

# *Preface to the First Edition*

For the last two thousand years and more the west has been drawn to, involved in, and fascinated by the culture, religion, resources, and politics of the Middle East. First the Greeks, then the Romans, later the western Europeans, and now the Americans are discovering the Middle East and its peoples. Historically, the area has been labeled the Orient, the East, and Levant, or the Near East; at present the most widely used term is the Middle East.

The United States, because of her great power and world position since the end of World War II, finds herself concerned with the contemporary problems of the Middle East. In general, Americans of today, many of whom have just become cognizant of the existence of the Middle East, find numerous aspects of its life and affairs quite unintelligible. This is particularly true when these complexities are expressed in the various and often conflicting pronouncements of propagandists for the Arabs, the Israelis and Zionism, the imperialists, the oil companies, the internationalists, the isolationists, the various nationalisms of the Middle East, and all sundry interests.

The attempt of this volume has been to present a brief account of the contemporary Middle Eastern scene so that the beginning college student or general reader can place the area in its proper setting and perspective. Many of the present situations and problems cannot be appreciated or evaluated properly without a knowledge and comprehension of the past, since the contemporary civilization of the Middle East probably has deeper and more significant roots in its past culture and experience than many other civilizations.

With this in mind, it was deemed advisable to begin the story, after a short introduction, with the life of the prophet Muhammad and the revolutionary changes that he made upon the society of his time. From this point the narrative has been carried forward, changing the central locus of the scene from Medina to Damascus to Baghdad to Asia Minor to Istanbul and back to the Arab lands as the fortunes of the area have developed, and at the same time examining each era more in detail as the present is approached.

Certain technicalities have been simplified for the beginner. The titles of many positions, past and present, have been translated into English equivalents in order not to confuse the reader with strange words or tire his eyes with unfamiliar combinations of letters and words. The transliteration of Middle Eastern proper names has always presented difficulties. In western literature pertaining to the Middle East, one can find the name of the Prophet rendered as Muhammad, Mohammed, Mohammad, Mohamed, Mahomet, Mehmed, Mehmet, Mehmet, and several other ways. In this book, Muhammad has been used for Arabs, Mehmed for Turks, and Mohammed for some others when individuals spelled the name in that fashion. For most words a spelling has been employed that would render them and their pronunciation most easily adopted by American readers. Where names of places or people have acquired a widely accepted western spelling, those forms have been used.

Since almost every volume concerning detailed or specialized aspects of Middle Eastern life and affairs contains considerable bibliographical material, and because of the excellent and wide coverage provided in Richard Ettinghausen's *A Selected and Annotated Bibliography of Books and Periodicals in Western Languages Dealing with the Near and Middle East with Special Emphasis on Mediaeval and Modern Times* (The Middle East Institute, Washington, D.C., 1952 and 1954), the inclusion of an extensive bibliography has not been felt necessary. The bibliographical entries at the end of the chapters have been supplied to indicate to the beginning student where easily accessible additional material on particular subjects may be obtained. These titles are suggested to serve as second steps for inquiring students who wish to dig more deeply into the many topics discussed only summarily in this text.

In gathering material for this volume it has been necessary to refer to a wide range of books, produced after years of diligent research and study by several generations of scholars in various lands. All will recognize my debt to these; students familiar with the literature of the diverse aspects of Middle Eastern history will appreciate my indebtedness to scholars of other years. This text could not have been written without their labors.

Through the years it has been my good fortune to obtain a closer knowledge of many aspects of Middle Eastern affairs and society through personal conversations and correspondence with many individuals concerned with that area of the world. Without mentioning names, I wish to thank them for the contributions they have made, sometimes unknowingly, to this text. Specifically I desire to pay tribute to inspiring teachers and mentors who have given me a better understanding of general and detailed problems and periods of Middle Eastern history. They are Frederick B. Artz of Oberlin College; Dr. Edgar J. Fisher of Amherst, Virginia; the late Albert Howe Lybyer of the University of Illinois; Philip K. Hitti and the late Walter Livingston Wright, Jr., of Princeton University; and Paul Wittek of the University of London.

In addition to these I am under deep obligation to my colleagues Professors William F. McDonald and John R. Randall for their criticism and aid in regard to certain chapters. Also, Dr. Halford L. Hoskins of the Library of Congress and Professor George G. Arnakis of the University of Texas read the entire volume, offered valuable suggestions, and caught numerous errors and slips. Dr. J. Merle Rife, State University, Indiana, Pennsylvania, was most helpful in assisting in the compilation of the bibliographical references.

However, any faults in fact or judgment which remain are my sole responsibility. Further recognition is due The Ohio State University Graduate School for assistance in the preparation of the manuscript.

This text could not have been prepared without the tolerance and cooperation of my entire family, which has lived with the manuscript for several years.

Sydney Nettleton Fisher

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