THE HISTORY OF ISLAMIC POLITICAL THOUGHT

From the Prophet to the Present

SECOND EDITION

ANTONY BLACK

The History of Islamic Political Thought

From the Prophet to the Present

Second Edition

ANTONY BLACK

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藏书章

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To Aileen, and Christopher

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The History of Islamic Political Thought

Abbreviations

Abbreviations in Roman type refer to entries in the Bibliography.

AS	Alam and Subrahmanyam (eds) (1998)
BL	Ashtiany *et al.* (eds) (1990)
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
CH India	*The New Cambridge History of India*
CH Iran	*The Cambridge History of Iran*
CH Islam	*The Cambridge History of Islam*
EI	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn
IC	*Islamic Culture*
IJMES	*International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*
IS	*Islamic Studies*
JSAI	*Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*
LM	Lerner and Mahdi (eds) (1963)
NL	Nasr and Leaman (eds) (1996)
Q.	Qur'an
REI	*Revue d'Études Islamiques*
SI	*Studia Islamica*
VC	al-Farabi, *The Virtuous (or Excellent) City*, ed. R. Walzer (see p. 77, n. 14)
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft*

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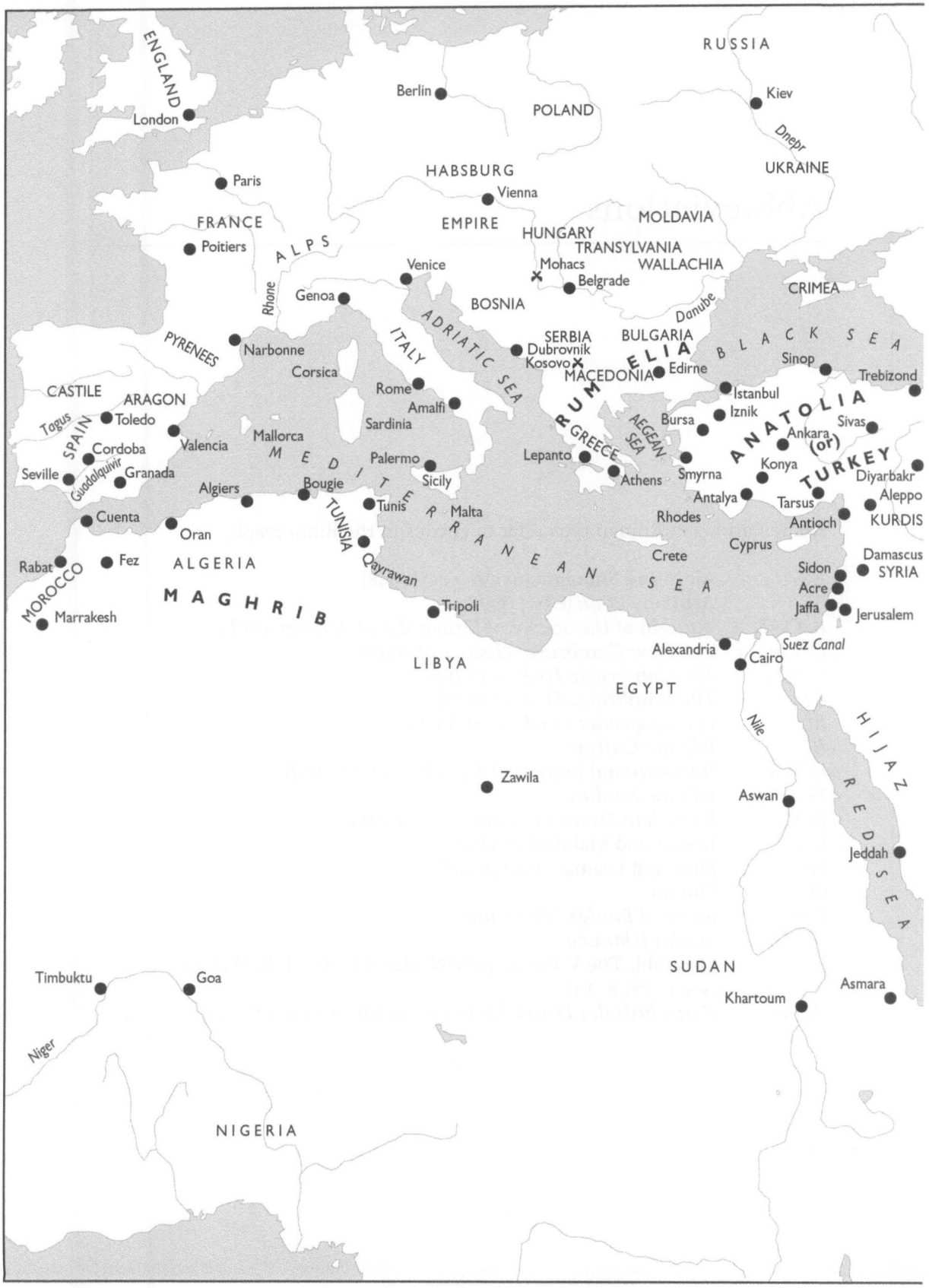
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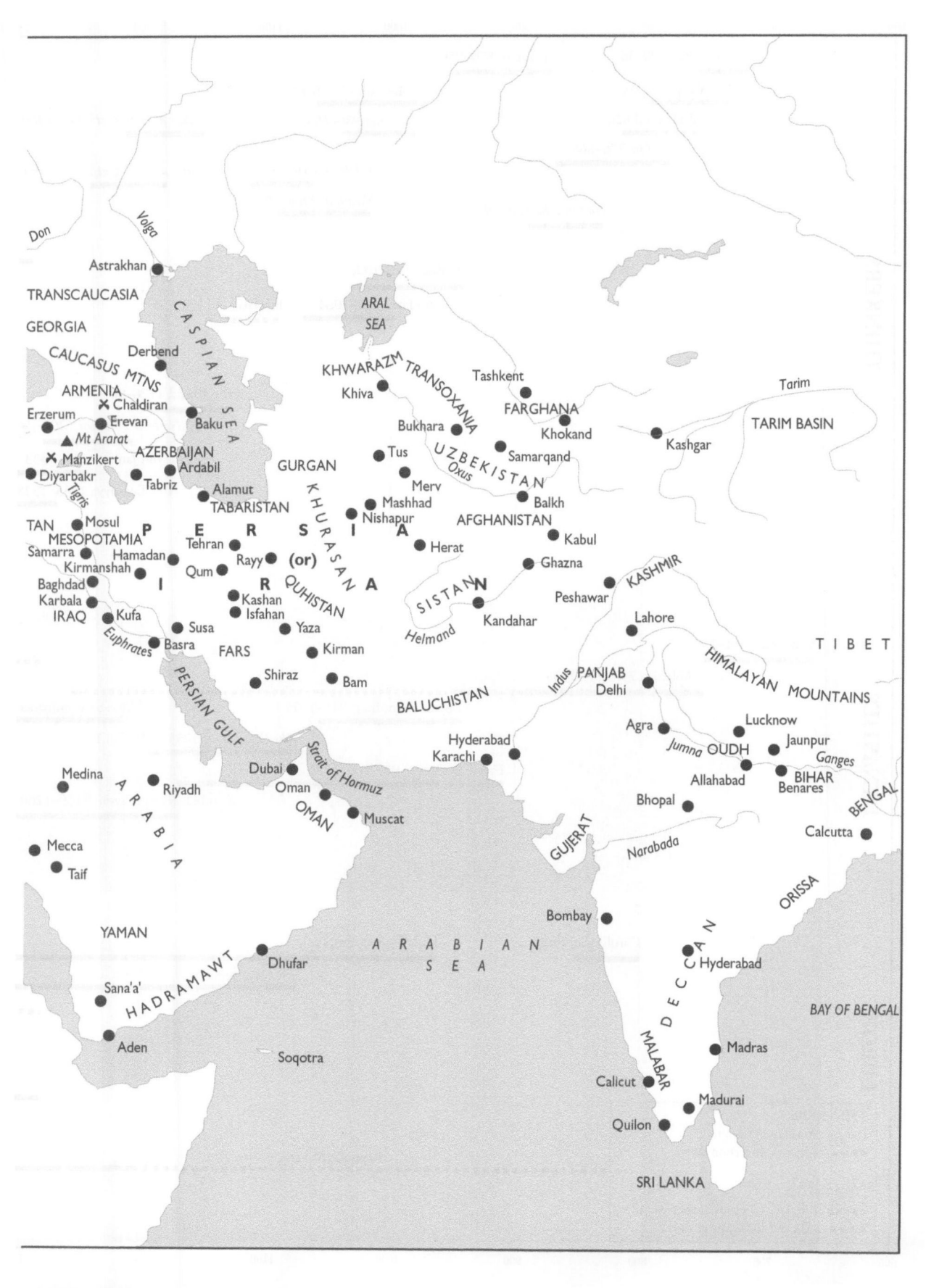
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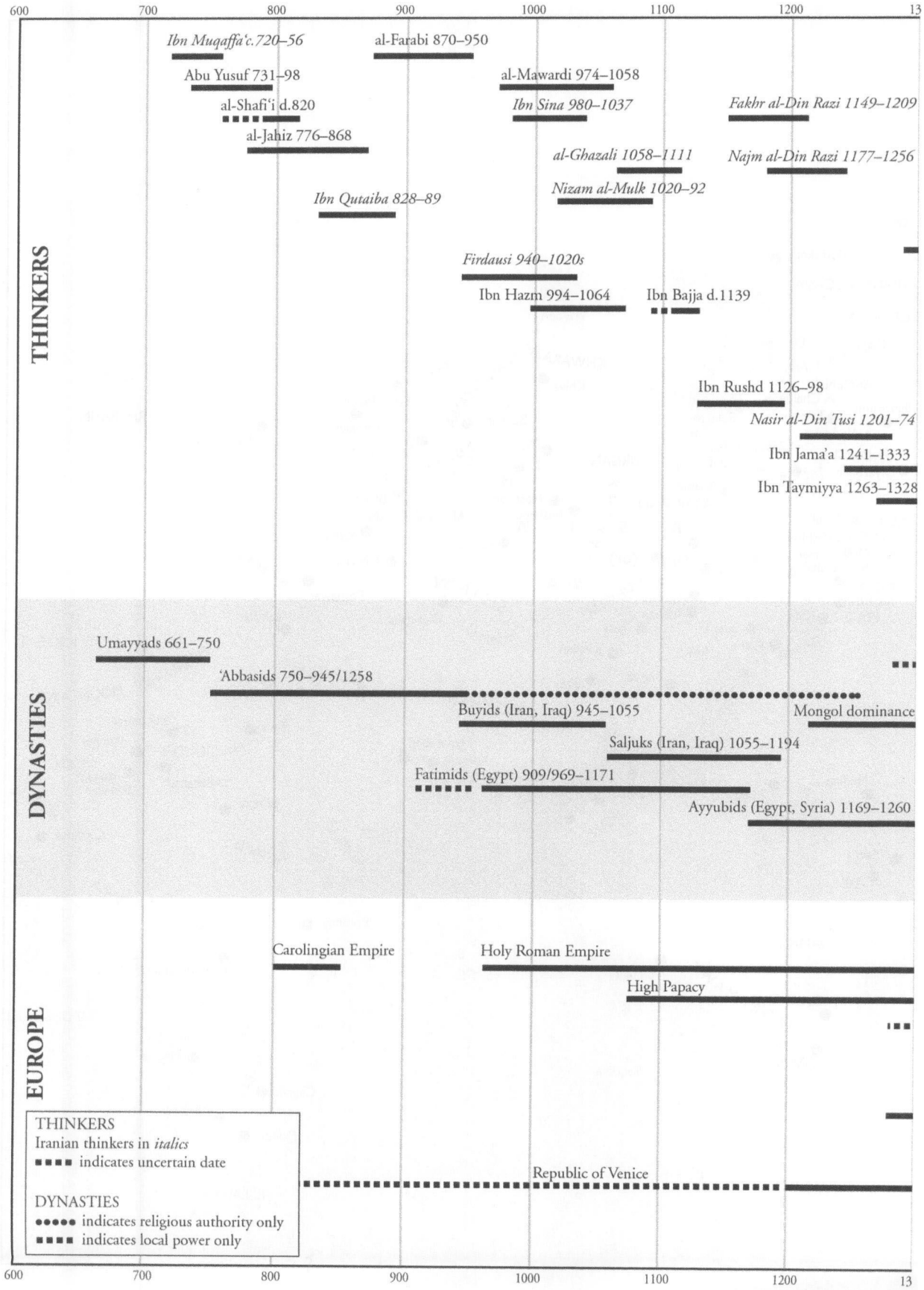
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800
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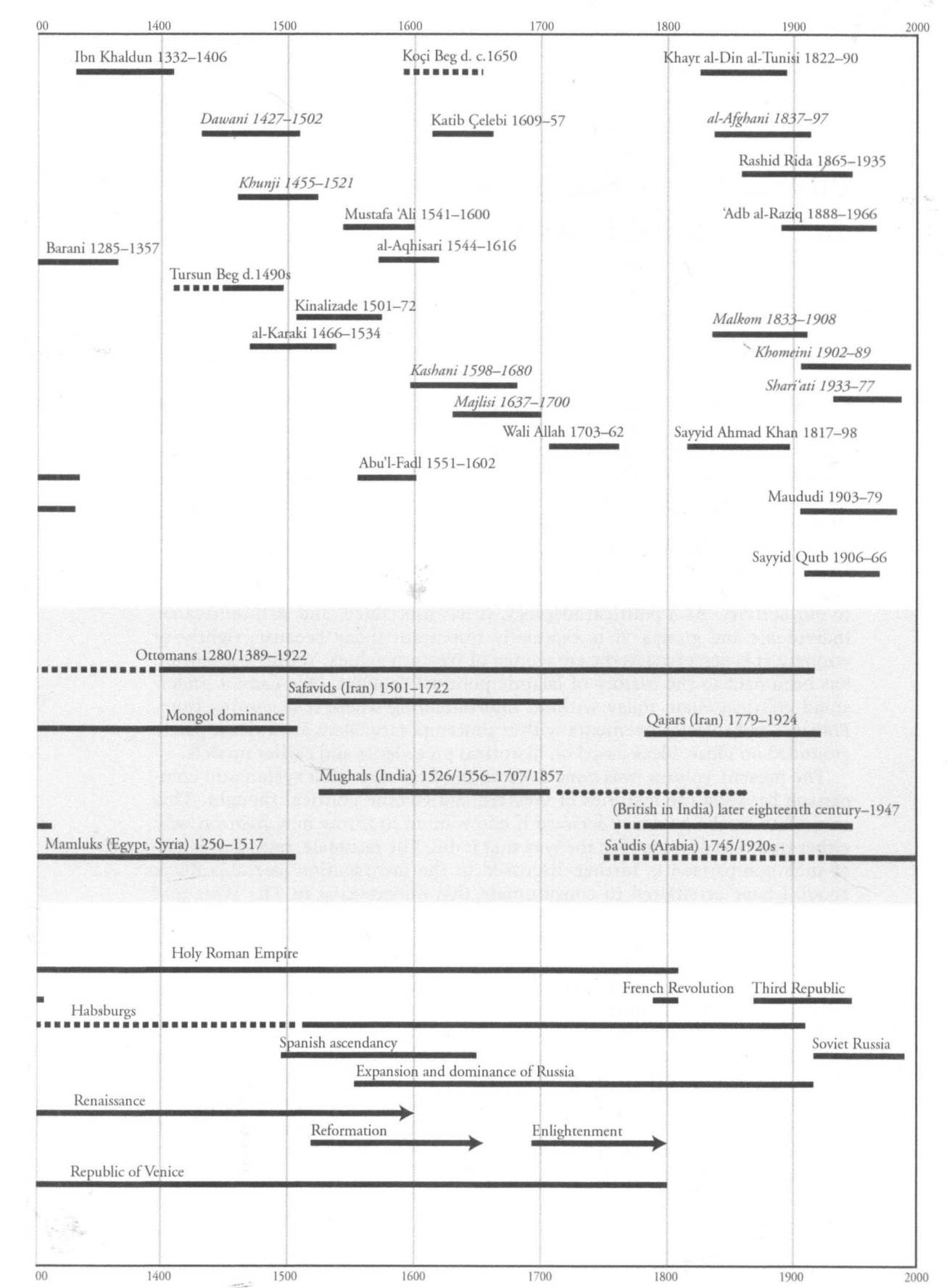
1200
13
THINKERS
Ibn Muqaffa'c.720–56
al-Farabi 870–950
Abu Yusuf 731–98
al-Mawardi 974–1058
al-Shafi'i d.820
Ibn Sina 980–1037
Fakhr al-Din Razi 1149–1209
al-Jahiz 776–868
al-Ghazali 1058–1111
Najm al-Din Razi 1177–1256
Nizam al-Mulk 1020–92
Ibn Qutaiba 828–89
Firdausi 940–1020s
Ibn Hazm 994–1064
Ibn Bajja d.1139
Ibn Rushd 1126–98
Nasir al-Din Tusi 1201–74
Ibn Jama'a 1241–1333
Ibn Taymiyya 1263–1328
DYNASTIES
Umayyads 661–750
'Abbasids 750–945/1258
Buyids (Iran, Iraq) 945–1055
Mongol dominance
Saljuks (Iran, Iraq) 1055–1194
Fatimids (Egypt) 909/969–1171
Ayyubids (Egypt, Syria) 1169–1260
EUROPE
Carolingian Empire
Holy Roman Empire
High Papacy
Republic of Venice
THINKERS
Iranian thinkers in italics
indicates uncertain date
DYNASTIES
indicates religious authority only
indicates local power only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1400
1500
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2000
Ibn Khaldun 1332–1406
Koçi Beg d. c.1650
Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi 1822–90
Dawani 1427–1502
Katib Çelebi 1609–57
al-Afghani 1837–97
Rashid Rida 1865–1935
Khunji 1455–1521
Mustafa 'Ali 1541–1600
'Adb al-Raziq 1888–1966
Barani 1285–1357
al-Aqhisari 1544–1616
Tursun Beg d.1490s
Kinalizade 1501–72
Malkom 1833–1908
al-Karaki 1466–1534
Khomeini 1902–89
Kashani 1598–1680
Shari'ati 1933–77
Majlisi 1637–1700
Wali Allah 1703–62
Sayyid Ahmad Khan 1817–98
Abu'l-Fadl 1551–1602
Maududi 1903–79
Sayyid Qutb 1906–66
Ottomans 1280/1389–1922
Safavids (Iran) 1501–1722
Mongol dominance
Qajars (Iran) 1779–1924
Mughals (India) 1526/1556–1707/1857
(British in India) later eighteenth century–1947
Mamluks (Egypt, Syria) 1250–1517
Sa'udis (Arabia) 1745/1920s -
Holy Roman Empire
French Revolution
Third Republic
Habsburgs
Spanish ascendancy
Soviet Russia
Expansion and dominance of Russia
Renaissance
Reformation
Enlightenment
Republic of Venice
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1500
1600
1700
1800
1900
2000

Preface to the Second Revised and Expanded Edition

This aspires to be a complete history of Islamic political thought from the beginning (c.622) to the present. It aims to be both a description and an interpretation. I have explored the milieu, meaning and significance of thinkers, ideas and political cultures. This work encompasses religion, law, ethics, philosophy and statecraft. These have been expressed in systematic treatises, occasional writings, official rhetoric and popular slogans.

The history of Islamic political thought is a gripping story in its own right. Up to now it has been neglected by all but a few specialists. Islam was, and is, one of the most powerful means of explaining human life and giving meaning to our activity. As a political ideology, it has motivated, and still motivates, individuals and groups. It is especially important today because, rightly or wrongly, it is perceived as the antagonist of Western values. Yet little attention has been paid to the *history* of Islamic political thought. One cannot understand political Islam today without understanding where it is coming from. Political and social movements within contemporary Islam are at least partly grounded on ideas; ideas based on historical precedents and earlier models.

The present volume was conceived as the first stage in a systematic comparison between the histories of Western and Islamic political thought. This seemed to be the best way forward if one wanted to throw new light on why either tradition developed in the way that it did. The rationale, indeed urgency, of such comparison is further discussed in the Introduction (see also Black 2009). I have attempted to consummate this undertaking in *The West and Islam: Religion and Political Thought in World History* (2008). In recent years, comparative political thought has become increasingly popular. Sometimes it means little more than incorporating non-Western ideas and authors into the study of political theory (Dallmayr 2010) – an admirable enterprise, but not strictly comparative, 'multi-cultural' rather than inter-cultural.

There are several reasons why a second edition is necessary. The first edition was published in July 2001. Since the jihadist attack on the United States in September 2001, there have been developments in Muslim political thought that need to be seen in a broad historical context. I have attempted to incorporate the new trends in Islamic political thinking, reformist no less than Islamist. The relationship between Islamic and Western political thinking has become a matter of urgency.

It goes without saying that the responses of the US and UK governments would have benefited from taking some account of the historical and political knowledge available to them at that time. It might have made them see the two (very dissimilar) societies that they considered invading in a different light. They might have recognised, among other things, along with Ibn Khaldun (below, Chapter 18), that less sophisticated humans have within them resources of spirit that others fail to recognise at their peril. They might have thought twice about playboy acts of childish (because not properly thought-out) revenge – not the best advertisement, you might say, for a 'civilisation' that some claim to be 'Christian'. And these gave their opponents a kudos they did not deserve.

There have been advances in scholarship in recent years. Patricia Crone's *Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (2004a) stands out as a combination of precise analysis and broad insights. The works of Wael B. Hallaq (1997, 2005) throw new light on the development of law and jurisprudence. Abdesselam Cheddadi (2006) has given us the most complete analysis and reinterpretation of Ibn Khaldun to date. Finally, there are the imperfections in one's work which one only becomes aware of over time. It is a bonus to be able to remedy these.

The book is divided into five parts: Part I, the formative period, from early Islam to about 1050; Part II from the Saljuks to the Mongol invasions – the most prolific period; Part III from c.1220 to c.1500, a period of isolated giants and the decline of classical Islamic thought; Part IV the early modern empires; and Part V the period of Western influence and interaction, from c.1830 until today.

For this second edition, I have reorganised, supplemented and completely re-written Part V to take account of recent developments. I have re-written the chapters on al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun. Several other chapters have been revised. Chapters 7, 10, 12, 13–17 and 21–23 remain as they were in the first edition.

STYLE

I have attempted to present ideas remote from ourselves in time and place as far as possible in the idiom of those who expressed them and in the categories of their own culture. Many of the categories of European historiography (such as 'medieval', 'renaissance', 'feudalism' and 'class') are not directly applicable to the Islamic world,[1] and I have avoided them where possible. I have given the meaning of original words or concepts (for example, Shari'a) at its first mention and in the Glossary; I have subsequently used either the original term or the closest English equivalent (with a capital letter: Law, Code, Religious Law). Diacritical marks are omitted in the main text but are given in the Glossary and Index. Sometimes terms like religio-political or moral-legal best describe what is being discussed. Dates are based on the ('Western') Common Era (BC/AD).

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

I have indicated further reading in notes at the beginning of chapters or sections. In order to minimise notes without cluttering up the text, I have used the

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author–date system for frequently cited works, which are in the Bibliography, and conventional referencing for other works.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My knowledge of original languages is confined to a limited acquaintance with Arabic. I have relied almost entirely on translations of original texts. I have tried to acquaint myself with the nuances of key terms so as to be able to grasp and convey the meaning of the originals. Since I do not read Arabic, Persian or Turkish, I am more than usually indebted to other scholars. I am grateful, first and foremost, to Islamicists who encouraged me as a novice when I set out on this venture despite my linguistic deficiencies, in the hope perhaps that division of labour may sometimes be fruitful. I am grateful to Patricia Crone, Sami Zubaida, Oliver Leaman, Richard Kimber, Ahmed Andrews and the late Salim Kemal for enlightening discussions. Patricia Crone has read and commented exhaustively on drafts of Chapters 1–5 and 12, and responded more than generously to my many queries about early Islam. Sami Zubaida has enlightened me in many conversations, and read and commented on Chapters 25 and 26. I am also very grateful to numerous scholars who have generously given their time to read and comment on various chapters: Michael Cook and Ira Lapidus on Chapters 1–3; Wilferd Madelung on Chapter 4; Oliver Leaman on Chapters 6 and 11; Carole Hillenbrand on Chapters 7–9; Kate Fleet on Chapters 20 and 21; Charles Melville on Chapter 22; Virginia Aksan on Chapters 24 and 25; Brian Baxter and Antony Wood on the Introduction. On Ottoman political thought Metin Kunt gave me advice, and Rhoads Murphey clarified some textual points. These colleagues have saved me from many pitfalls, and indicated omissions, which where possible I have tried to make good. I have not always succeeded, and the errors which remain are entirely mine.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Janet Coleman, and the directors of the European Science Foundation project on The Origins of the Modern State (1989–92), Jean-Philippe Genet and Wim Blockmanns, for including me in a working-group on The Individual in Theory and Practice. It was through their intellectual hospitality, and the associated meeting with Turkish scholars in Istanbul (October 1991), that the present study was conceived.

I am grateful to the Nuffield Foundation for giving me a half-time research fellowship in 1993–4, which enabled me to continue research (though alas not to continue learning Arabic) despite being 'head of department'. I am also grateful to the British Academy for two small grants and to the University of Dundee for a small research grant, which have enabled me to travel to libraries. I would like to thank Nicola Ramsey of Edinburgh University Press for her thoughtfulness in helping me prepare this second edition.

My friends and family know how much I owe to them.

NOTE

1. See Antony Black, 'Decolonization of Concepts', *Journal of Early Modern History* 1 (1997), pp. 55–69.

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