MAP 1  The World on the Eve of the Arab Conquests.
MAP 2 The Arab Empire in AD 685 (with approximate dates of major campaigns).
MAP 3 The Arab Empire in AD 750 (with approximate dates of major campaigns).
end a 1,300-year-old tradition of polytheism, among the ruling elite at least. Judaism seems to have been the preferred variety of monotheism, though some favored Christianity, especially those with close links to Christian Ethiopia on the other side of the Red Sea. Second, they used the combined resources of their realm to expand northward and succeeded in bringing under their sway many of the Arab tribes of central and north Arabia. Some they chastened by conquest, as is reported in triumphal terms in a number of royal inscriptions,
MAP 2.2 Syria, Palestine and Jazira.
“the Persians no longer have a king, they have sought refuge in a woman” and many took to pillaging the frontier lands of the empire. Some men from northeast Arabian tribes went and joined those who were massing on the borders of Persia and started raiding the local nobles, seizing whatever they could. Later Muslim historians maintain that Abu Bakr participated in the planning of these attacks, but this is clearly a retrospective attempt to bring all fighting against the empires under the banner of Muhammad’s community. They also wanted to provide a neat chronological schema: the mutiny of the tribes of

MAP 2.3 Iraq and West Iran.
monks and the property of monasteries, but their raids were only minor irritants and, after the brief incursion in AD 269 of Zenobia, “queen” of Palmyra, Egypt faced no further external aggression until the seventh century. Perhaps because of this the armies of Egypt were ill prepared when they were obliged to face the onslaught first of the Persians, in 617–19, and subsequently of the Arabs, in 640–42. In the summer of 633 Heraclius ordered his governor of
Babylon, a little to the south, but he was distressed to learn that the Arab division coming from the south was now on the west side of the Nile. Rather than attempt a siege of Babylon while the Arab forces were separated, he sought to entice the Byzantines out into the open. He divided his own army into three units and placed them at the three points on the triangle formed by Babylon (to the south), Tendunias (to the north), and Heliopolis (to the northeast) (Map 3.2). The plan was that while ‘Amr’s unit, situated in front of Heliopolis, engaged the Byzantines head-on, the Arab unit placed just north of Babylon would march out and attack them from the rear. The tactic worked and in the early summer of 640 the Arabs achieved their first major victory on Egyptian soil.

MAP 3.2  The Battle of Heliopolis.
Iran (Maps 2.3 and 3.3)

At the same time 'Amr was pushing into Egypt, other Arab armies were seeking to consolidate their hold on Iraq and to prepare the ground for extending their conquests into Iran. To realize these aims they needed a headquarters. They could have used the Persian capital, Seleucia-Ctesiphon, but it was such an enormous sprawling site that it was likely deemed unsuitable for a military base, and perhaps also it smacked too strongly of the ancien régime. Instead

MAP 3.3 Central and East Iran.
nature of the terrain presents a more serious challenge to would-be invaders. Increasingly, however, the superpowers of Byzantium and Iran became involved up until AD 428 much of these lands had belonged to the kingdom of Armenia.
among the ships like dust from dry land and that the sea was dyed with blood.”
Abu l-A’war ordered that they fish out the corpses of the Byzantines and their number was estimated at some 20,000.

The Arab fleet continued toward Constantinople, chasing the surviving Byzantine ships as far as Rhodes. The capital’s inhabitants were now nervous, since they knew about the Arabs’ approach by land and by sea, and were shaken by the naval defeat at Phoenix. The emperor entered the church of Hagia Sophia and implored God to aid the city; he lifted the crown from his head, put aside the purple, donned sackcloth and sat on ashes, and ordered a fast to be proclaimed in Constantinople. As the Arabs drew near in the early autumn of 654, Abu l-A’war ordered the ships to be deployed in lines and to attack the city, but out of nowhere a storm brewed, a miracle worked by God to save the Byzantine capital, said its inhabitants. The sea was stirred up from the depths; its waves piled up high “like the summits of very high mountains,” and, together with the raging wind, broke up the Arab ships and sent their war machines and sailors plunging headlong into the seething ocean. When the Arabs encamped at Chalcedon saw the power of the storm
provinces of Khuzistan, Fars, and Kirman, but the north and the east had experienced little more than opportunistic raiding. The only major Arab garrison was at Merv, and even here the troops were not permanently settled but came on rotation from Iraq. Arab rule was still, therefore, very precarious, but the death of Yazdgird and the flight of his sons to the east meant that there was no obvious person to lead a comeback and most of the region’s potentates were happy to do deals with the new rulers in exchange for being left alone. For example, when the Arabs approached Merv al-Rudh, in modern northwest
of the provinces of Zeugitana or Africa Proconsularis (modern northern Tunisia), Byzacena (southern Tunisia), and Numidia (eastern Algeria). To the west was Mauretania (western Algeria and northern Morocco), dominated by the towering Atlas mountain range. The Vandals had captured this region in the 430s and it remained in their hands for a century before being retaken by the Byzantines in the 530s. The Vandals had ruled with a light hand and had kept mostly to the fertile agricultural areas near to the coast, and so the residents of the interior—in the mountains and deserts—had begun to establish
105 Romans annex the kingdom of the Nabataeans, creating Roman Arabia
224 Sasanian dynasty comes to power
241 Persians annex the kingdom of the Hatrans, creating Persian Arabia
312 Conversion of Constantine to Christianity
582 Ghassanids dismissed from Byzantine service
594 Conversion of the Lakhmids to Christianity
c. 610 Victory of Lakhmid army against the Persians at Dhu Qar
614–28 Persian occupation of Syria and Palestine
622 Muhammad founds his Muslim polity at Medina
628 Muhammad gains control of Mecca
630 Muhammad forms alliance with the town of Ta’if and the tribe of Thaqif
630 Heraclius restores the fragment of the Holy Cross to Jerusalem
632 Death of Muhammad
634 First documented encounter between West Arabian armies and the Byzantines
636 Battle of Yarmuk
638 Battle of Qadisiyya; capture of Jerusalem
640 Capture of Seleucia-Ctesiphon; raid against the Armenian capital of Dvin;
Mu‘awiya becomes governor of Syria
641 Capture of Caesarea
640–42 Arab conquest of Egypt
642 Arabs engage the Persian army at the Battle of Nihawand
643 Arabs launch an unsuccessful campaign into Armenia and the Caucasus
646 Byzantines briefly recapture Alexandria
649–50  Arabs raid Cyprus and Arwad
ca. 650  Failed Arab expedition into Nubia
650–53  Truce between the Arabs and Byzantines
651–52  Death of Yazdgird III
652–53  Armenia becomes a vassal of the Arabs
654  Media and Badhghis throw off allegiance to the Arabs
654–55  First major Arab expedition against Constantinople; Battle of the Masts
656–61  First Arab civil war
661  Mu'awiya becomes caliph
664  Juansher, prince of Albania, pledges allegiance to Mu'awiya
668–70  Arab offensive against Constantinople
670  Founding of Qayrawan and establishment of Arab army in Merv
670s  Guerrilla movement of the mardaites launched in the Lebanese mountains
673  Arab naval raid on Lycia; truce agreed between Mu'awiya and Contantine IV
674  Arab raiding party crosses the river Oxus for the first time
683–92  Second Arab civil war; Byzantine raids on Ashkelon and Caesarea
680s  Revolt of Kusayla in North Africa
685  Khazars raid Armenia, Georgia, and Albania
692  End of peace treaty between Byzantium and the Arabs; Battle of Sebastopolis
ca. 697  The death of the Berber leader known as “the prophetess” (al-kahina)
697  Failed Arab expedition in Zabulistan
698  Arab capture of Carthage
703  Arab garrison defeated by an Armenian army at Vardanakert
706  Arab capture of Paykand; slaughter of Armenian nobles
708  Arab capture of Tangiers
709  Arab capture of Bukhara
710  Arab expedition in Sind
711–14  Invasion of al-Andalus
712  Capture of Samarkand
717–18  Failed Arab siege of Constantinople
718  Byzantine forces raid Lattakia
726  Khazars kill the Arab governor of Armenia
728–30  Major uprising against the Arabs in Transoxania
730  Khazars capture Ardabil
731  Battle of the Defile in Transoxania
732  Battle of Poitiers/Tours
737  Arabs establish buffer against Khazars in north Caucasus
740  Arab army defeated in Anatolia by the Byzantines
740–42  Berber rebellion in North Africa
744  Baghawata Berber dynasty established on Atlantic coast
750  Abbasid dynasty takes power after overthrowing Umayyads; a branch of the Umayyad family establishes itself in Spain
751  Battle of Talas
757  Midrarid dynasty (from Miknasa Berbers) established in Sijilmasa
776  Rustamid dynasty (of Persian origin, supported by Berber Ibadis) established in Algeria
788  'Alid Idrisid dynasty established in Fez with support of Awraba Berbers
821  Tahirid dynasty (of Persian origin) established in east Iran
861  Saffarid dynasty (of Persian origin) established in Zaranj
875  Samanid dynasty (of Persian origin) established in Bukhara

‘Abdallah ibn Sa’d, Quraysh, a conqueror of Libya and governor of Egypt (644–56)

‘Abdallah ibn al-Zubayr, Quraysh, rival caliph to ‘Abd al-Malik (683–92)

‘Abd al-Malik, Quraysh, caliph (685–705)

‘Abd al-Rahman ibn (Muhammad ibn) al-Ash’ath, Kinda, general (d. 704)

Abraha, Ethiopian ruler of Yemen (ca. 535–65)

Abu I-Awar, Quraysh/Sulaym, general and naval commander (d. ca. 670s)

Abu Bakr, Quraysh, caliph (632–34)

Abu Musa al-Ash’ari, Ash’ar (of Yemen), general and founder of Basra (d. ca. 660s)

Abu ‘Ubayda ibn al-Jarrah, Quraysh, governor of Syria (634–39)

‘Ali ibn Abi Talib, Quraysh, caliph (656–60)

‘Amr ibn al-‘As, Quraysh, a conqueror of Palestine and Egypt (d. 662)

Busr ibn Abi Artat, Quraysh, army general and naval commander (d. 689)

Constans II, Byzantine emperor (642–68)

Constantine IV, Byzantine emperor (668–85)

Cyrus, Chalcedonian patriarch of Alexandria (630–42)

Dewashtich, lord of Panjikent, rebel leader (d. 722)

Gao Xianzhi, Tang general of Korean origin (d. 756)

Gaozu, emperor of China (618–26), founder of Tang dynasty

Gaozong, emperor of China (650–83)

Ghurak, lord of Samarkand and king of Sogdia (710–37)

Gregory, governor of the Byzantine province of Africa (d. 647)
Habib ibn Maslama, Quraysh, conqueror of Armenia (d. 662)
Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, Thaqif, viceroy of the East (693–714)
Harith ibn Jabala, Ghassan, chief and ally of Byzantium (d. 569)
Hassan ibn Nu‘man, Ghassan, a conqueror of Africa (d. 698)
Heraclius, Byzantine emperor (610–41)
Hormizdan, senior Persian general, defended Shush and Shushtar (d. 640s)
‘Iyad ibn Ghanm, Quraysh, conqueror of Jazira (d. 640s)
Jayalbhata IV, king of Gurjara in northwest India (fl. 730s)
Juansher, king of Caucasian Albania (ca. 635–70)
Justinian II, Byzantine emperor (685–95, 705–11)
Kahina, “queen of the Berbers,” rebel leader (d. late 690s)
Khalid ibn al-Walid, Quraysh, a conqueror of southern Iraq and Syria (d. 642)
Khatun, wife of the ruler of Bukhara and regent for her son (d. 690s)
Khurrazad, “prince of the Medes,” commander of northwest Persia (d. ca. 650s)
Khusrav II, Persian emperor (591–628)
Kusayla, Berber chief, rebel leader (d. ca. 690)
Leo III, Byzantine emperor (717–41)
Martik, son of the Khazar khan (fl. 720s)
Maslama, son of ‘Abd al-Malik, Quraysh, general, besieged Constantinople (717–18)
Mu‘awiya I, governor of Syria (640–60) and caliph (661–80)
Mu‘awiya ibn Hudayj, Kinda, a conqueror of Africa (d. 670s)
Muhammad, Quraysh, prophet (d. 632)
Muhammad ibn Marwan, Quraysh, general and governor of Jazira and Armenia (d. 720)
Mukhtar ibn Abi ‘Ubayd, Thaqif, rebel leader (d. 687)
Mundhir ibn Nu‘man, Lakham, chief and ally of Persian Empire (504–54)
Musa ibn Nusayr, son of a freedman, a conqueror of Mauritania and Spain (d. 716)
Peroz III, son of Yazdgird III, strove to restore Persian Empire (d. ca. 680)
Qutayba ibn Muslim, conqueror of Transoxania, governor of Khurasan (705–15)
Rustam, “prince of the Medes,” commander of northwest Persia (d. 638)
Rutibil, title held by a number of rulers of Zabulistan in modern central Afghanistan
Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqas, Quraysh, a conqueror of Iraq and founder of Kufa (d. 675)
Shahbaraz, Persian general and briefly Persian emperor (April–June 630).
Smbat Bagratuni, chief prince of Armenia (693–726)
Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem (ca. 634–38)
Suluk, Chabish-chor, leader of the Turgesh branch of the western Turks (715–38)
Tariq ibn Ziyad, Berber, a conqueror of Spain (fl. 711)
Theodore, Byzantine commander-in-chief of the Egyptian army (ca. 639–42)
Theodore Rshtuni, chief prince of Armenia (d. 655)
‘Umar I, Quraysh, caliph (634–44)
‘Umar II, Quraysh, caliph (717–20)
‘Uthman, Quraysh, caliph (644–56)
‘Uqba ibn Nafi’, Quraysh, a conqueror of Africa (d. 683)
Vahan, senior Byzantine general (d. 636)
Valentine, senior Byzantine general (d. 643)
Wu, empress of China, de facto ruler due to sickness of her husband (655–705)
Yazdgird III, last emperor of Persia (632–52)
Yazid ibn al-Muhallab, Azd, governor of Khurasan (702–4, 715–17) and Iraq (716–17)
Ziyad ibn Abi Sufyan, adopted brother of Mu‘awiya I and viceroy of the East (670–73)

For information on historians and chroniclers see the Appendix.
Qusayy (founder of Quraysh power)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>'Abd Manaf</th>
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Hashim (clan)

| 'Abd al-Muttalib |

Muttalib (clan associated with Hashim)

| 'Abd Shams (clan) |

Nawfal (clan)

| Umayya |

| ‘Abd Allah = Amina |

| ‘ABBAS |

| HAMZA |

| Abu l-'As |

| Harb |

| = 'A'ISHA b. ABU BAKR of clan Taym |

| = Hafsa |

| = Umm Habiba |

| = ‘Abd AL-MALIK |

| = YAZID |

| MU’AWIYA |

| MARWAN |

| Umm Kulthum and Ruqayya = ‘UTHMAN |

Note: Names of those who played an important role in Muhammad's lifetime or afterwards are in capitals.

Genealogical tree of the tribe of Quraysh
Genealogical tree of the clan of Umayya

Note: Caliphs or claimants to the caliphate are in capitals.