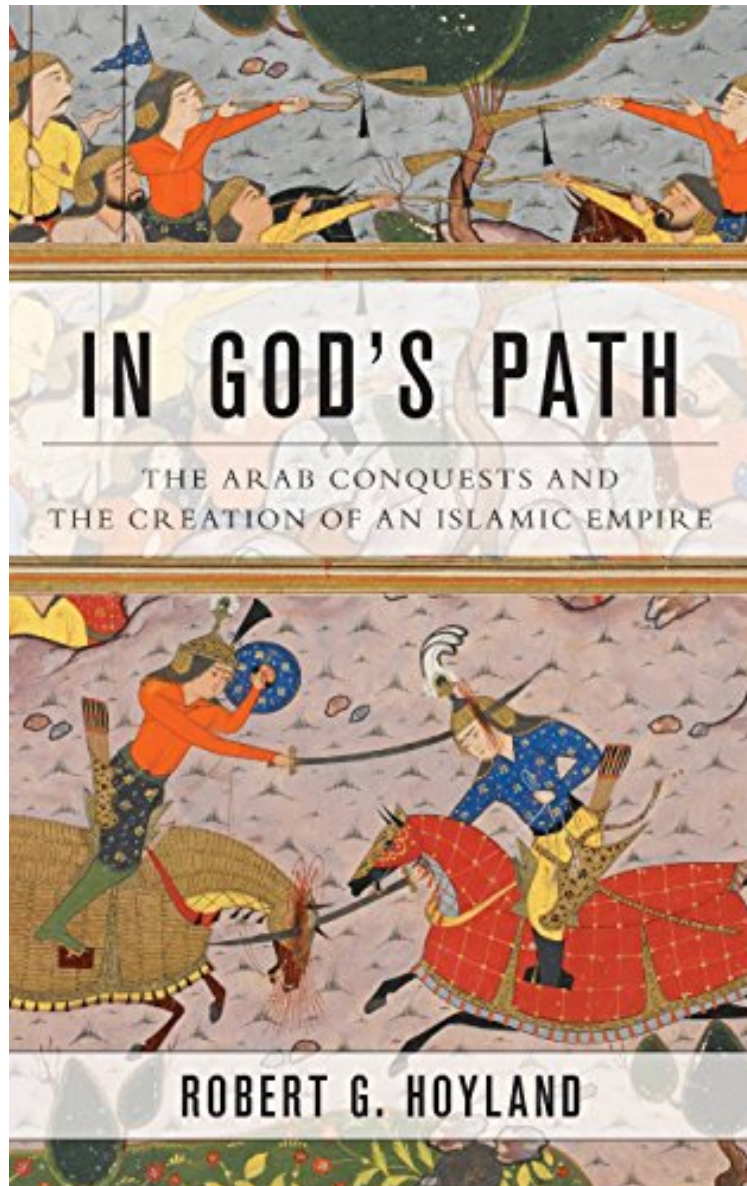


[Library ebook] In God's Path: The Arab Conquests and the Creation of an Islamic Empire (Ancient Warfare and Civilization)

In God's Path: The Arab Conquests and the Creation of an Islamic Empire (Ancient Warfare and Civilization)

Robert G. Hoyland

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Robert G. Hoyland : In God's Path: The Arab Conquests and the Creation of an Islamic Empire (Ancient Warfare and Civilization) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all

praised In God's Path: The Arab Conquests and the Creation of an Islamic Empire (Ancient Warfare and Civilization):

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. The role of religion is never dismissed or downplayed but is held in a perspective so that the events can be more easily understood in human terms. This is especially gratifying for those of us that are well versed in Byzantine and Persian history. Those tumultuous times can now be more readily viewed and understood on their own terms. There is something to be said for a balanced multi-perspective presentation and 'In God's Path' does just that--admirably so. The events may have occurred a long time ago but the repercussions are as recent as today's headlines. This should be a 'must read' book especially for Westerners that have a poor understanding of the histories of South West Asia in general and the Arabs in particular.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An excellent introduction. Although relatively short, this book provides an excellent short history of the early expansion of the Arab/Muslim Empire. The author makes a number of valuable insights into the emergence of the Umayyad and Abassid empires. His use of available sources is admirable, and his conclusions flow logically from his sourcing. This is the sort of work that can create a lot of argument among specialists, but provides a much more nuanced picture of early Islamic history. Very recommended.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Illuminating Study of Early Muslim Conquests. By Howard R. Seccombe. A widely shared impression is that, immediately on conversion to Islam, Arabs swept across the Persian and Roman empires, wielding the sword as alien invaders. This study demonstrates that most elements in this story are false or at best simplifications. The Arabs in the heartland of Islam were partly Romanised, familiar with military service. People other than Arabs joined the conquerors, who also fought each other and used negotiation as well as violence in their conquests, which took place over an extended period.

In just over a hundred years--from the death of Muhammad in 632 to the beginning of the Abbasid Caliphate in 750--the followers of the Prophet swept across the whole of the Middle East, North Africa, and Spain. Their armies threatened states as far flung as the Franks in Western Europe and the Tang Empire in China. The conquered territory was larger than the Roman Empire at its greatest expansion, and it was claimed for the Arabs in roughly half the time. How this collection of Arabian tribes was able to engulf so many empires, states, and armies in such a short period has perplexed historians for centuries. Most accounts of the Arab invasions have been based almost solely on the early Muslim sources, which were composed centuries later to illustrate the divinely chosen status of the Arabs. Robert Hoyland's groundbreaking new history assimilates not only the rich biographical information of the early Muslim sources but also the many non-Arabic sources, contemporaneous or near-contemporaneous with the conquests. In God's Path begins with a broad picture of the Late Antique world prior to the Prophet's arrival, a world dominated by two superpowers: Byzantium and Sasanian Persia. In between these empires, emerged a distinct Arabian identity, which helped forge the inhabitants of western Arabia into a formidable fighting force. The Arabs are the principal actors in this drama yet, as Hoyland shows, the peoples along the edges of Byzantium and Persia--the Khazars, Bulgars, Avars, and Turks--all played critical roles in the remaking of the old world order. The new faith propagated by Muhammad and his successors made it possible for many of the conquered peoples to join the Arabs in creating the first Islamic Empire. Well-paced, comprehensive, and eminently readable, In God's Path presents a sweeping narrative of a transformational period in world history.

"[A] splendid new history of the Arab conquests.... Hoyland...has performed an invaluable service. His book will surely serve as the definitive account of the Arab conquests for many years to come." --Tom Holland, Literary "In God's Path is a thoughtful and nuanced guide to an age that was far more complex than we might imagine from older accounts." --Philip Jenkins, Books Culture "An illuminating, richly detailed, highly readable study of one of the crucial periods of history." --First Things "This is perhaps the best introduction to the Arab-Islamic Conquests available. Never before has this story been told on the basis of such a wide range of sources, as Hoyland draws discerningly on the testimony of both contemporary non-Muslims and of the classical Islamic tradition. The author's elegant style, fascinating observations, and sharp analysis bring one of history's great moments to life, for the benefit of students, scholars, and the general public. This book is original, authoritative, and a joy to read--I cannot recommend it highly enough." --Adam Silverstein, author of Islamic History: A Very Short Introduction "With its exceptional clarity, balanced judgment of both Muslim and non-Muslim sources, and a broad perspective that encompasses peripheral peoples, Robert Hoyland's new book provides an account of the rise of Islam that is as definitive as it is accessible." --G. W. Bowersock, author of The Throne of Adulis About the Author Professor of Late Antique and Early Islamic Middle Eastern History at New York University's Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, Robert G. Hoyland is

the author of Arabia and the Arabs.