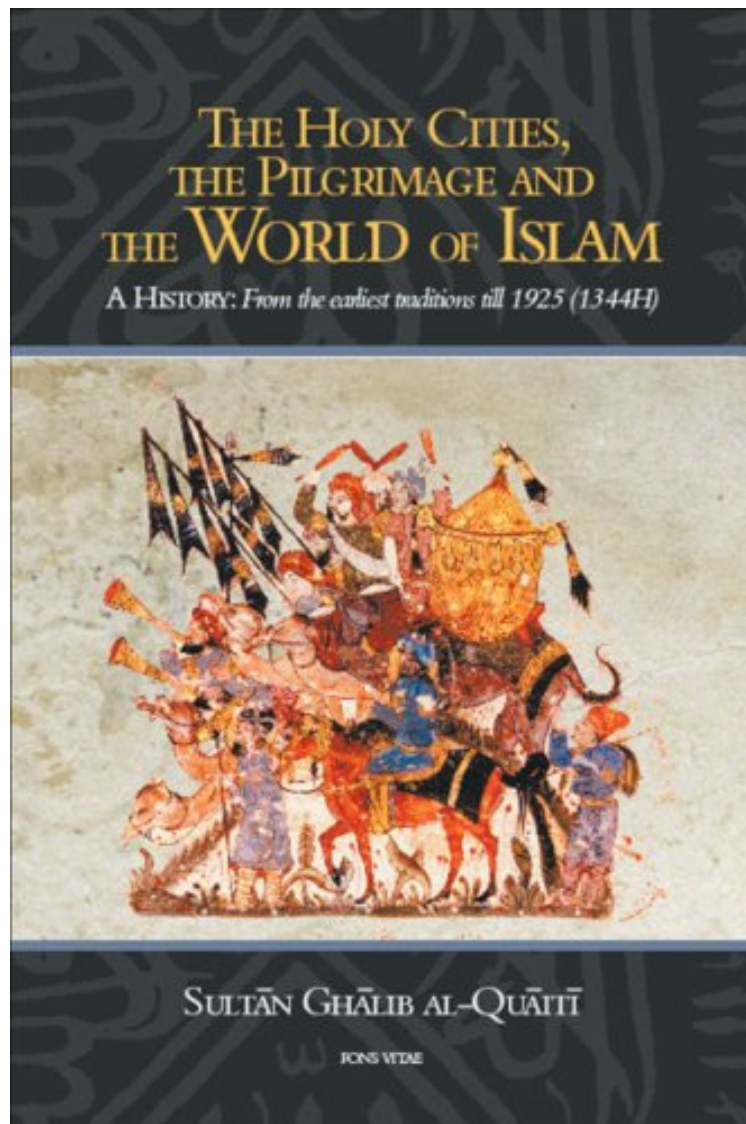


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The Holy Cities, the Pilgrimage and the World of Islam: A History: From the Earliest Traditions till 1925 (1344H)

Sultan Ghalib al-Quaiti

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Sultan Ghalib al-Quaiti : The Holy Cities, the Pilgrimage and the World of Islam: A History: From the Earliest Traditions till 1925 (1344H) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Holy Cities, the Pilgrimage and the World of Islam: A History: From the Earliest Traditions till 1925 (1344H):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Credible History of Arabia's Sacred Cities By Robert Lebling
The British-educated author was the last Qu'aiti ruler of Yemen's Hadhramaut. He left the sultanate in 1967 when it became part of the People's Democratic Republic of (South) Yemen, and has resided in Saudi Arabia since then. He has benefited from his residence in the Kingdom by producing a rich history of Makkah and Madinah and their role as holy cities, as pilgrimage sites, using a wealth of source material unavailable to most scholars. His documentation includes Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Urdu sources as well as Eastern and Western diplomatic records. The sacred sites of Madinah hinge on the Prophet Muhammad, who fled his hometown of Makkah with his followers and settled there, making it his base and second home. Makkah's holy precincts long predate Islam; its original sacred house, or Ka'bah, was built by Adam directly below the heavenly throne of God, and the second one was constructed on the same spot by the Prophet Abraham. The author begins with these earliest accounts, and moves at a comfortable pace through the era of Muhammad, the Umayyads, Abbasids, Fatimids, Mamluks and on to the Ottoman period and the rise of `Abd al-`Aziz ibn Saud, unifier of modern Arabia. Sultan Ghalib's almost conversational style carries us effortlessly along what could have been a difficult road. He walks us through the many buildings, rebuildings, expansions and renovations of Makkah and Madinah, always taking great care to put the changes in understandable context. In 1630, Makkah was devastated by heavy rains and torrential floods, and as many as a thousand citizens died. The flooding brought down the walls of the Ka'bah, requiring a massive restoration effort. The author lets us eavesdrop on impassioned local parleys, as Makkan scholars and prominent citizens debate the best way to proceed. They finally agree to sell off some treasures stored in the Ka'bah, so that rebuilding can begin at once, weeks before Ottoman assistance arrives from Egypt. The author keeps his story human, and thus interesting; he gives us warts and all, and in the process maintains his credibility. [A version of this review appeared in Saudi Aramco World, Mar/Apr 2009.]

Tracing the history behind the rise of the Islamic world's great pilgrimages to Mecca and Medina, this account proceeds from the earliest traditions to the fall of the Ottoman Empire. From there the discussion turns to the short-lived Hashemite Kingdom and the establishment of the writ of the Saud over the two Holy Cities in 1925. An appreciation of a powerful cultural and religious phenomenon, this beautiful book draws on the firsthand accounts of historians and travelers, many of them eyewitnesses, to breathe life into the scenarios described. A spectacular photo essay by the granddaughter of the late King Faisal, Princess Reem Faisal, is also included.