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052164335X - A History of Saudi Arabia
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A HISTORY OF SAUDI ARABIA

At the beginning of the twenty-first century Saudi Arabia is a wealthy and powerful country which wields influence in the West and across the Islamic world. Yet it remains a closed and enigmatic society. Its history in the twentieth century is dominated by the story of state formation and nation building. After the First World War and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, ʿAbd al-ʿAziz al-Saʿud, known as Ibn Saʿud, fought a long and arduous campaign to bring together a disparate, tribal people from four corners of the Arabian peninsula. In 1932 the kingdom of Saudi Arabia was born. Drawing on historical and anthropological skills, Madawi Al-Rasheed traces its extraordinary history from the age of emirates in the nineteenth century, to the Gulf War of the 1990s and, recently, to the celebrations of 100 years of unity. She fuses chronology with analysis, personal experience with oral histories, and draws on a plethora of local and foreign documents to enhance the narrative and to shed light on the social and cultural life of the Saʿudis. This is a rich and rewarding book which will be invaluable to students, journalists, policymakers, and to all those trying to understand the enigma of Saudi Arabia.

MADAWI AL-RASHEED is Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology at King's College, University of London. Her publications include *Politics in an Arabian Oasis* (1991) and *Iraqi Assyrian Christians in London* (1998).

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
 Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521643351

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First published 2002
 Reprinted 2002, 2003, 2005

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Al-Rasheed, Madawi.
 A history of Saudi Arabia / Madawi Al-Rasheed.
 p. cm.
 Includes bibliographical references and index.
 ISBN 0-521-64335-X – ISBN 0-521-64412-7 (pbk.)
 1. Saudi Arabia – History – 20th century. I. Title.
 DS244.52 .A43 2002
 953.805'–dc21 2001043609

ISBN-13 978-0-521-64335-1 hardback
 ISBN-10 0-521-64335-X hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-64412-9 paperback
 ISBN-10 0-521-64412-7 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2005

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*In memory of 'Ab̄ta and
her daughters Juwahir and Waṭfa*

Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	page ix
<i>List of tables</i>	x
<i>Chronology</i>	xi
<i>Glossary</i>	xiv
<i>Map 1 Saudi Arabia, main regions and cities</i>	xvi
<i>Map 2 Saudi Arabia, main tribes</i>	xvii
Introduction	I
1 Society and politics, 1744–1818 and 1824–1891	14
The origins of Al Sa ^c ud (1744–1818)	15
A fragile Sa ^c udi revival (1824–1891)	23
The Rashidi emirate in Ha'il (1836–1921)	26
The Sharifian emirate in Hijaz	30
Hasa in the nineteenth century	34
Emirate formation in Arabia	37
2 The emerging state, 1902–1932	39
The capture of Riyadh (1902)	39
The First World War and Ibn Sa ^c ud (1914–1918)	41
The capture of Ha'il (1921)	43
The capture of Hijaz (1925)	44
The <i>mutawwā'a</i> of Najd	49
The <i>ikhwan</i>	59
An alliance not so holy: Ibn Sa ^c ud, the <i>mutawwā'a</i> and the <i>ikhwan</i>	62
The collapse of the <i>ikhwan</i> rebellion	69
3 Control and loyalty, 1932–1953	72
Marginalising Sa ^c udi collateral branches	72
Consolidating Ibn Sa ^c ud's line of descent	75
Power and pomp in the pre-oil era: the <i>majlis</i>	80
State affairs	86
The oil concession (1933)	91

viii	<i>Contents</i>	
	Oil in commercial quantities	93
	Oil and society in the 1940s and 1950s	95
	Saudi Arabia and Britain	100
	The end of an era	105
4	The politics of dissent, 1953–1973	106
	The reign of King Saʿud (1953–1964)	106
	Saudi Arabia and the Arab world in the 1950s	114
	Saudi Arabia and the United States in the 1950s and early 1960s	117
	The reign of King Faysal (1964–1975)	120
	Faysal and the Arab world	128
5	From affluence to austerity, 1973–1990	135
	Affluence: the oil embargo (1973)	136
	Vulnerabilities: Saʿudi–American relations in the 1970s	140
	The reign of King Khalid (1975–1982)	143
	Austerity: the reign of King Fahd (1982–)	149
	Saudi Arabia and the Gulf context in the 1980s	155
	Saʿudi–American relations in the 1980s	160
6	The Gulf War and its aftermath, 1990–2000	163
	Saʿudi responses to the Gulf War	168
	State responses: the reforms of March 1992	172
	The Islamist opposition	176
	Succession	186
7	Narratives of the state, narratives of the people	188
	Official historiography	189
	Political speech	196
	The historical narrative challenged	199
	The centennial celebrations: the capture of Riyadh revisited	204
	The centennial celebration challenged	215
	Conclusion	218
	<i>Appendix I: Al Saʿud rulers in Dirʿiyyah (1744–1818)</i>	224
	<i>Appendix II: Al Saʿud rulers in Riyadh (1824–1891)</i>	225
	<i>Appendix III: Ibn Saʿud's sons (1900–1953)</i>	226
	<i>Notes</i>	227
	<i>Bibliography</i>	235
	<i>Index</i>	247

Illustrations

1	Street scene, Riyadh, circa 1940. © Popperfoto	<i>page</i> 102
2	King Faysal in the Regents Park mosque, 1967. © Popperfoto	129
3	The Ka'ba, Mecca. © Popperfoto	145
4	US army tanks deployed in the Gulf War, 1990. © AFP/Popperfoto	165
5	Women shopping in downtown Jeddah. © AFP/Popperfoto	167
6	Invitation to the centennial celebrations, 1999	204
7	Advertising Ibn Sa'ud's biography on CD-ROM	207
8	Publicity literature from the centennial celebrations, 1999	210

Tables

1	Government revenues 1946–1952	<i>page</i> 94
2	Volume of petroleum export and GDP 1965–1975	120
3	Volume of petroleum export and GDP in billion SA riyals 1982–1997	149

Chronology

- 1517 Ottoman authority established in Hijaz
 1550 Ottoman authority established in Hasa
 1670 Banu Khalid rebel against the Ottomans in Hasa
 1744 Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab arrives in Dirʿiyyah
 1780 The Saʿudi–Wahhabi emirate expands in Qasim
 1792 The Saʿudi–Wahhabi emirate expands in southern Najd
 1797 Qatar and Bahrain acknowledge Saʿudi authority
 1801 Saʿudi–Wahhabi forces raid Karbalaʾ in Iraq
 1802 Saʿudi–Wahhabi emirate expands in Hijaz
 1804 Madina acknowledges Saʿudi authority
 1811 Egyptian troops land in Yanbuʿ
 1818 Egyptian troops sack Dirʿiyyah
 1824 Turki ibn ʿAbdullah re-establishes Saʿudi authority
 in Riyadh
 1830 Saʿudi rule expands into Hasa
 1834 Turki ibn ʿAbdullah assassinated by his cousin, Mishari
 Turki’s son Faysal becomes amir in Riyadh
 1836 The Rashidis establish their rule in Haʿil
 1837 Saʿudi ruler Faysal captured by Egyptian troops and
 sent to Cairo
 1843 Faysal returns to Riyadh
 1865 Faysal dies
 Faysal’s son ʿAbdullah rules in Riyadh
 1871 The Ottomans occupy Hasa
 The Ottomans occupy ʿAsir
 1891 Saʿudi rule in Riyadh terminated by the Rashidis
 1893 The Saʿudis take refuge in Kuwait
 1902 Ibn Saʿud captures Riyadh
 Riyadh ʿulama swear allegiance to Ibn Saʿud
 1903 Ibn Saʿud adopts the title ‘Sultan of Najd’

- 1904 Abha in °Asir falls under Ibn Sa°ud's authority
 1906 Ibn Sa°ud conquers Qasim
 1908 Ibn Sa°ud challenged by his cousins, the °Ara'if
 The Ottomans appoint Ḥusayn ibn °Ali Sharif of Mecca
 1912 Ibn Sa°ud establishes the first *ikhwan* settlement,
 °Arṭawiyah, for the Muṭayr tribe
 1913 Ibn Sa°ud establishes the *ikhwan* settlement al-Ghaṭghaṭ
 for the °Uṭayba tribe
 Ibn Sa°ud conquers Hasa
 1915 Britain acknowledges Ibn Sa°ud as ruler of Najd and Hasa
 1916 Sharif Ḥusayn declares himself King of the Arabs
 1924 Ta'if in Hijaz falls under Ibn Sa°ud's authority
 Sharif °Ali replaces his father, Sharif Ḥusayn, in Hijaz
 1925 Jeddah surrenders to Ibn Sa°ud
 1926 Ibn Sa°ud declares himself 'King of Hijaz and
 Sultan of Najd'
 1927 The *ikhwan* rebel against Ibn Sa°ud
 1928 Ibn Sa°ud meets the Riyadh °ulama to solve the
ikhwan crisis
 1930 Ibn Sa°ud defeats the *ikhwan* rebels
 1932 Ibn Sa°ud declares his realm the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
 1933 Ibn Sa°ud signs the oil concession
 1939 The first oil tanker with Sa°udi oil leaves Ra's Tannura
 1945 Ibn Sa°ud meets American president Franklin D. Roosevelt
 Ibn Sa°ud meets British prime minister Winston Churchill
 1946 Ibn Sa°ud visits Cairo
 1953 The Council of Ministers established
 Ibn Sa°ud dies; his son Sa°ud becomes king
 Sa°udi ARAMCO workers organise the first demonstration
 1955 A plot for a coup by Sa°udi army officers discovered
 1956 Sa°udi ARAMCO workers riot in the eastern province
 1961 The movement of the Free Princes established by Prince
 Ṭalal ibn °Abd al-°Aziz
 1964 King Sa°ud abdicates
 Faysal becomes king
 1969 Sa°ud dies in Greece
 1973 As a result of the oil embargo, oil prices increase
 1975 King Faysal assassinated by his nephew, Prince
 Faysal ibn Musa°id
 Khalid becomes king

Chronology

xiii

- 1979 The siege of Mecca mosque
 1980 The Shi'a riot in the eastern province
 1981 The Gulf Co-operation Council established
 1982 King Khalid dies; Fahd becomes king
 1986 Oil prices decrease to their lowest level since the 1970s
 King Fahd adopts the title 'Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques'
 1990 Saddam Husayn invades Kuwait
 Sa'udi women defy the ban on women driving in Riyadh
 1991 The Gulf War starts
 The liberal petition sent to King Fahd
 The Islamist petition sent to King Fahd
 1992 A sixty-member Consultative Council established
 Sa'udi Islamists publish the Memorandum of Advice
 King Fahd announces a series of reforms
 1993 The Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights in Saudi Arabia (CDLR) established in Riyadh
 1996 Terrorist explosions at Khobar Towers
 Terrorist explosions at al-Ulaiyya American military mission, Riyadh
 The number of members appointed to the Consultative Council increased to ninety
 1999 Saudi Arabia starts the centennial celebrations
 2000 Oil prices rise above \$30 per barrel
 Two Sa'udis hijack Saudi Arabian Airline flight from Jeddah to London; they surrender in Baghdad

Glossary

<i>‘almaniyyun</i>	secularists
amir	ruler, prince
<i>‘amm</i>	public
<i>al-‘ammīyya</i>	vernacular Arabic
<i>‘arḍa</i>	sword dance
<i>‘aṣabiyya madhhabīyya</i>	sectarian solidarity
<i>‘aṣabiyya najdīyya</i>	Najdi solidarity
<i>‘aṣabiyya qabaliyya</i>	tribal solidarity
<i>‘ashura</i>	anniversary of al-Ḥusayn’s death
<i>badu</i>	bedouins
<i>baghi</i>	usurper
<i>bay‘a</i>	oath of allegiance
<i>bid‘a</i>	innovation, heresy
<i>dā‘wa</i>	religious call, mission
<i>dira</i>	tribal territory
<i>fatwa</i> (pl. <i>fatawa</i>)	religious opinion issued by <i>shari‘a</i> experts
<i>fiqh</i>	Islamic jurisprudence
<i>fitna</i>	strife, dissent
<i>ghulat</i>	religious extremists
<i>ḥaḍar</i>	sedentary population
<i>ḥajj</i>	pilgrimage to Mecca
<i>ḥizb siyasi</i>	political party
<i>hujjar</i>	village settlements
<i>ḥuquq</i>	rights
<i>‘ibada</i>	Islamic rituals
<i>‘id al-adḥa</i>	festival marking the pilgrimage season
<i>‘id al-fiṭr</i>	festival marking the end of Ramaḍān
<i>ihṭilal</i>	occupation
<i>ikhwan</i> (sing. <i>khawī</i>)	Muslim brothers/companions, tribal force
<i>‘ilm</i>	knowledge

Glossary

xv

<i>imam</i>	prayer leader/leader of Muslim community
<i>imara</i>	emirate
<i>iṣlah</i>	reform
<i>al-jahiliyya</i>	the age of ignorance
<i>al-jazira al-‘arabiyya</i>	the Arabian Peninsula
<i>jihad</i>	holy war
<i>khadiiri</i>	non-tribal people
<i>al-khuluq</i>	morality
<i>khuwwa</i>	tribute
<i>kufr</i>	unbelief
<i>mahdi</i>	one who guides
<i>majlis</i> (pl. <i>majalis</i>)	council
<i>majlis ‘amm</i>	public council
<i>majlis al-dars</i>	study session
<i>muṭawwā‘a</i> (sing. <i>muṭawwā‘</i>)	Nadji religious specialist/volunteer
<i>nahḍa</i>	renaissance, awakening
<i>al-naksa</i>	the June 1967 humiliation
<i>naṣiḥa</i>	advice
<i>ni‘ma</i>	divine abundance
<i>qaḍi</i>	judge
<i>ramaḍan</i>	Ramaḍan, the fasting month
<i>shari‘a</i>	Islamic legal code and rules
<i>shaykh</i>	tribal leader/religious scholar
<i>shura</i>	consultation
<i>sura</i>	Qur’anic verse
<i>al-shu‘ba al-siyasiyya</i>	political committee
<i>ta‘aṣub</i>	fanaticism
<i>taghrib</i>	Westernisation
<i>tawḥid</i>	doctrine of the oneness of God/ unification
<i>‘ulama</i> (sing. <i>‘alim</i>)	religious scholars
<i>umma</i>	Muslim community
<i>wali</i>	Ottoman governor
<i>waqf</i> (pl. <i>awqaf</i>)	religious endowment
<i>waṭan</i>	country, fatherland
<i>zakat</i>	Islamic tax



Map 1. Saudi Arabia, main regions and cities. *Source:* F. Clements, *Saudi Arabia, World Bibliographical Series* (Oxford: Clio Press, 1979; reprinted 1988). Courtesy of Clio Press.



Map 2. Saudi Arabia, main tribes. *Source:* D. Schofield and R. Kemp, *The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* (London: Stacey International, 1990). Courtesy of Stacey International.