The Transformation of Nomadic Society in the Arab East

Martha Mundy and Basim Musallam bring together an international team of contributors consisting of archaeologists, geographers, historians, anthropologists and agronomists in a penetrating interdisciplinary account of the transformation of nomadic society. The chapters provide an integrated analysis of the changing relations of ecology, economic and socio-political organisation in the steppes of the central Middle East, documenting the longue durée of history alongside the more rapid transformations of the twentieth century. A series of maps and figures illustrates the narrative while a bibliographic essay analyses the existing literature. This is an accessible and interactive book which provides a comprehensive overview of a fascinating and complex society. It will attract readers from a variety of disciplines, including those interested in contemporary environmental and development issues.

Martha Mundy lectures in Anthropology at the London School of Economics. Her publications include Domestic Government: Kinship, Community and Polity in North Yemen (1995).

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Gordon Johnson, Chairman of the Publications Committee of the University of Cambridge Oriental Faculty
The Transformation of Nomadic Society in the Arab East

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Society and environment in the great arid and semi-arid zones of the Arab World have dramatically changed over the past century. This transformation is the subject of this volume which brings together specialists in geography, archaeology, history, anthropology and agronomy. For three thousand years pastoral nomadism was the main form of human adaptation to this harsh and fragile environment, which covers over 70 per cent of the Arab Middle East. Common to all the contributions to this volume, and the source of their strength, is a vision of pastoral society not as a world apart but as one bound up with the wider structures of economy and polity.

Most of the chapters were first presented as papers to the symposium on ‘The Evolution of the Steppe in Arabia and Bilâd al-Shâm’ held at the Institute of the Arab World, Paris, in April 1991. The symposium proceedings, which differ substantially from the present publication, were edited by R. Bocco, R. Jaubert and F. Métral (Steppes d’Arabies. États, pasteurs, agriculteurs et commerçants: le devenir des zones sèches, PUF/IUED, Paris/Geneva, 1993). Alison Betts wrote a joint chapter especially for this volume with Kenneth Russell, who died in May 1992, before its completion. It is to the memory of Ken Russell that we would like to dedicate this volume.

We are grateful to several institutions whose support made this volume possible: the Groupe de Recherches et d’Études sur le Moyen-Orient Contemporain (GREMO), Maison de l’Orient Méditerranéen, Lyons; the Institut Universitaire d’Études du Développement (IUED), Geneva; the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, Yarmouk University, Irbid; the Institute of the Arab World, Paris; the Ford Foundation, Cairo; the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), Aleppo; the Centre for Studies and Research on the Contemporary Middle East (CERMOC), Amman; the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), Paris; the French Ministries of National Education and Foreign Affairs; and the Centre of Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge. We also wish to thank C. Beamish and E. Tampier for their translations of some chapters from French.

The system of transliteration adopted for Arabic terms is that of the International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies. However, in the case of some place and personal names, not in italics, it was not always possible to
standardise the transliterations of all vocalisation. Where this differs from the IJMES system, it follows the author’s style. All maps except those accompanying the article by Jörg Janzen (chapter 13) were drawn by Yves Montmessin of the graphics department of the Maison de l’Orient Méditerranéen, Lyon.

The bibliography brings together the references from all the chapters in this volume to form, with the bibliographical note by Riccardo Bocco, a comprehensive overview of the literature on the steppes of Arabia and geographical Syria, and the current state of knowledge.
## Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>ACSAD</td>
<td>Arab Centre for the Study of Arid and Dry Lands</td>
</tr>
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<td>AGS</td>
<td>American Geographical Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASFEC</td>
<td>Arab States Fundamental Education Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAR</td>
<td>British Archaeological Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSOAS</td>
<td>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERMOC</td>
<td>Centre d’Etudes et de Recherches sur le Moyen-Orient Contemporain</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHEAM</td>
<td>Centre des Hautes Etudes Administratives sur l’Afrique et l’Asie Modernes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNRS</td>
<td>Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>IBRD</td>
<td>International Bank for Reconstruction and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICARDA</td>
<td>International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFEAD</td>
<td>Institut des Etudes Arabes de Damas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJMES</td>
<td>International Journal of Middle East Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPC</td>
<td>Iraq Petroleum Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAE</td>
<td>Ministère des Affaires Etrangères</td>
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<tr>
<td>MRT</td>
<td>Ministère de Recherche et Technologie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEF</td>
<td>Palestine Exploration Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEDES</td>
<td>Société d’Etudes pour le Développement Economique et Social</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZDPV</td>
<td>Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins</td>
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The Arabian Peninsula, Syria and Jordan