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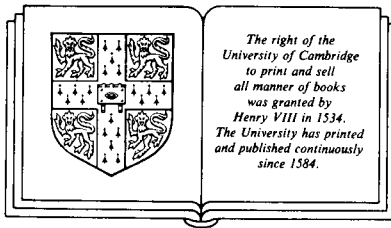
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*Nomads and settlers
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NORMAN N. LEWIS



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*To Rosemary,
with gratitude and love*

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Preface

Thirty years ago I wrote an article entitled ‘The frontier of settlement in Syria, 1800–1950’ and rashly prefaced it with a note stating that I was writing a book on the same subject, in which I undertook to ‘deal in greater detail with . . . the extension of agriculture, peasant colonization and the settlement of nomads in Syria in the last 150 years’.¹ This book is the long-delayed and partial fulfilment of that undertaking. By way of explanation for the inordinate delay I will only say that the circumstances of my life changed radically about the time the article was published and that from then until I retired, in 1981, I had no opportunity to finish the book I had started.

I also said in the prefatory note to the 1955 article that in the projected book I would make reference to the sources of my material, and this seems to be the best place to do so. The article was based in part on observations I made and conversations I had with the people of the country between 1942 and 1945, when I was stationed in Syria, and between 1948 and 1955 when I lived in Lebanon and made a number of trips to Syria or Jordan. My visits to the area were less frequent between 1956 and 1980, but in 1981 I spent three months in Syria and I have made two other extended visits since then. I have, therefore, been able to observe developments and to note what people have told me over a forty-year span, and to incorporate some of what I have learned in this book. During the period between 1942 and 1945 when I served with Spears Mobile Clinics (SMC) I was peculiarly well placed to learn from observation and discussion. Because those of us who worked in SMC brought much needed medical services to different parts of the country, including some of the most remote, we were welcome guests, and some of the people we visited were pleased to find that we were interested in their affairs. They were happy to talk about themselves, their tribal and other affiliations, their history, the way they managed their flocks or farmed the land, and so on. It was possibly in those days to talk to men whose memories went back beyond the First World War, to beduin who had taken part in the ‘wars’ of Ibrahim Pasha al Milli, to Isma’ilis who had

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emigrated from the 'Alawite mountains to establish villages east of Salamiyah early in the twentieth century and even, very occasionally, to Circassians who still remembered their youth in the Caucasus. During my later visits, in the 1950s and 1960s, people were equally ready to talk about the effects which the rapid economic, social and political developments of that period were having on their lives, while today, as in the earlier periods, tribesmen who were born nomads but who are now villagers are interested in discussing how and why this change in their way of life came about.

Information derived from conversation with villagers and nomads may, of course, be suspect and must be evaluated critically. A distinction should, however, be drawn between information given by people talking about their own affairs and about the recent past, which is likely to be relatively reliable, and the often more dubious 'oral history'. I have made use particularly of the former. Where passages in this book (including some reported conversations) are based on such personal communication no reference is given in the notes.

British consular records are another source of which I have made a great deal of use, and again the long period during which this book has been in preparation has been of benefit. During the years 1950–55 I had the good fortune to be asked to examine, put into good order and catalogue the collection of nineteenth-century consular papers from Beirut, Damascus, Jerusalem, Aleppo and other Syrian cities then stored at the British Legation in Beirut. Since then I have lived for most of the time near London, within easy reach of the Public Record Office to which many of the papers of the Beirut collection were sent to be housed with the vast national archive of such material.² I have therefore been able to spend more time studying these voluminous records than most researchers have the opportunity to do.

The notes at the end of the book will show that I have also made extensive use of books and articles written by travellers, which are often the only source of information about remote parts of the country. Such books are of very unequal quality and all of them should be used with caution – as of course should the consular records and every other source of information – but Khazanov is surely right in saying that one should not belittle the reports of travellers and observers but should extract the maximum amount of information from them.³ Travellers are most to be distrusted when they generalize or write from hearsay, and are most useful when they record their own experiences and observations; even someone whose veracity or judgement is suspect is probably telling the truth when he says that he stayed the night with the head man of a certain village, or that he examined the ruins of another which was then totally

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deserted. Such scraps of information may be valuable when compared and combined with information from other sources. They help, for example, to make it possible to map the boundary of the settled country early in the nineteenth century, or to trace the progress of the occupation of Jabal ad Duruz later in the century. More thorough and reliable travellers and observers provide much more than a mere scattering of such useful details; I have particularly come to appreciate the care and accuracy with which a number of archaeologists in the second half of the nineteenth century and in this century have recorded topographical, demographic and other information. The notes would have become intolerably voluminous if I had cited every travel book which I have used. I have, therefore, only identified the more important ones and those from which I have quoted or which support a dated statement of fact. Much the same principle is followed in regard to the consular despatches and trade reports; only a small proportion of those from which material has been drawn are identified in the notes.

The notes and the bibliography will show what other sources I have used. I particularly regret that Ottoman documentary records are conspicuous by their absence; I hope that other students will be able to correct and amplify this book by reference to them.

In a book as short as this it would be impossible to treat every aspect of the subject. I have therefore written only a limited number of relatively detailed studies, each of which deals with a specific area, or a tribe or other community. As many such studies as space would allow have been included, inevitably at the expense of extended discussion or generalization. In most of the studies the relationship of man to the land is a main theme, and the approach is that of a historical geographer. Partly for lack of space and largely for lack of qualifications, I have made no serious attempt to enter into matters which are the proper concern of social or political scientists, but I have benefited greatly from the work of a number of social anthropologists who have worked in Syria or Jordan, as the acknowledgements, notes and bibliography show. I am particularly grateful to the authors of the theses listed in the bibliography for allowing me to make use of their work.

The bibliography is deliberately brief, specialized and selective, listing only works to which I have frequently referred. The names of others which are mentioned only once or twice in the notes are not repeated in the bibliography.

I am indebted to a very large number of people for their help. The majority will not be named; they are villagers, tribesmen and others who will never know of the existence of this book. Amongst those who have helped me and who might perhaps have some interest in the outcome I

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would particularly like to thank the following; I hope they will not object to being bundled together unceremoniously, without titles or other identification: Raouf Abu Jabir, Riccardo Bocco, Ray Davies, Dick Douwes, Deirdre Evans-Pritchard, Ronald Jaubert, Sulayman Khalaf, William Lancaster, Stella Lewis, Maurits van Loon, Victor Menage, Gunter Meyer, Abdul-Karim Rafeq, Seteney Shami, Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, 'Abd as Salam 'Ujayly, Liz Wetton. Above all, I am grateful to Albert Hourani, for his often-renewed help and encouragement.

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Abbreviations

<i>AAS</i>	<i>African and Asian Studies</i>
<i>AUB</i>	American University of Beirut
<i>GJ</i>	<i>Geographical Journal</i>
<i>IFD</i>	Institut Français de Damas
<i>IJMES</i>	<i>International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JESHO</i>	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
<i>JIMMA</i>	<i>Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs</i>
<i>JMES</i>	<i>Journal of Middle Eastern Studies</i> (Jerusalem)
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JRAI</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute</i>
<i>JRCAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society</i>
<i>JRGS</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Geographical Society</i>
<i>MEJ</i>	<i>Middle Eastern Journal</i>
<i>MES</i>	<i>Middle Eastern Studies</i>
<i>PEF</i>	Palestine Exploration Fund
<i>PEFQS</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement</i>
<i>PGM</i>	<i>Petermanns Geographische Mitteilungen</i>
<i>PRO</i>	Public Record Office
<i>RB</i>	<i>Révue Biblique</i>
<i>RCAJ</i>	<i>Royal Central Asian Journal</i>
<i>GA</i>	<i>Révue de Géographie Alpine</i>
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft</i>
<i>ZDPV</i>	<i>Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palaestina-vereins</i>
<i>ZFAE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Allgemeine Erdkunde</i>
<i>ZGEB</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin</i>

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Notes on transliteration and references

The use of Arabic and Turkish words has been reduced to a minimum. When a place name has an acceptable English form that form is used; in the transliteration of all others the system recommended by the US Board on Geographic Names and the British Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (the BGN/PCGN system) has been adopted. The principles and conventions embodied in this system are also used in the transliteration of other Arabic names and words, but the only diacritical marks shown are the 'ayn and the hamzah. When a place name starts with the definite article this has been dropped in the text, though not invariably on the maps.

The spelling of Circassian names does not follow any consistent scheme.

References to despatches of British Consuls are made in the following form: name of consul, location, date of despatch, Public Record Office reference number. For example: Jago, Damascus, 21 November 1876, FO 78 /2494. Initials of consuls, original numbers of the despatches and addressees are not shown. In the notes to Chapters 2 and 3 no location is shown if the despatch originated in Aleppo and in the notes to Chapter 5 no location is shown if the despatch originated in Damascus.

The annual Trade or Commercial Reports written by consuls in the second half of the nineteenth century and in the early part of the twentieth century are referred to as TRs. The reports were printed in *Parliamentary Papers/Accounts and Papers (Pp)* of the House of Commons and are most easily found by reference to the Index to these papers. The manuscript originals may usually be found with other consular despatches under FO 78 or FO 195 at the Public Record Office.

Publication details of books not listed in the bibliography are given in the notes. Full titles of theses and of some official publications are not given in the notes but are shown in Sections 2 and 3 of the bibliography.

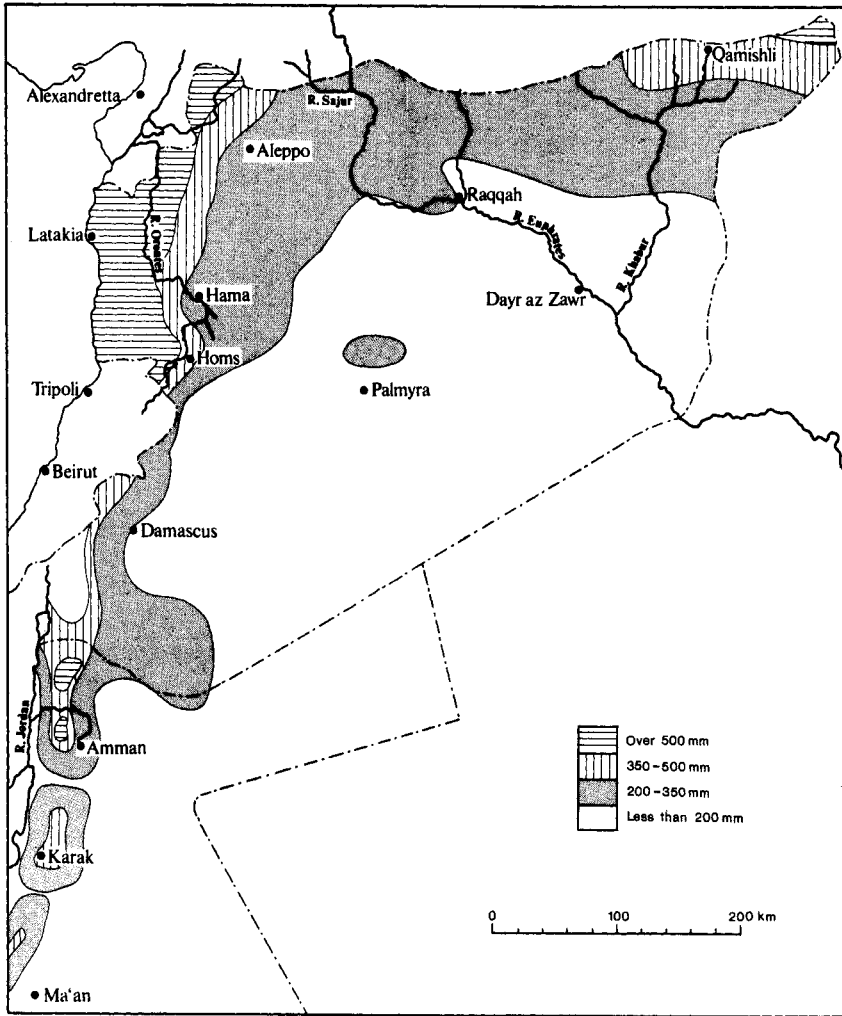
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Map 1. Syria and part of Trans-Jordan: average annual rainfall

The isohyets are based on those in *The Climatic Atlas of Syria* (Damascus, Ministry of Defence, 1977) and the *Climatic Atlas of Jordan* (Amman, Meteorological Dept., 1971). The Syrian isohyets as shown (which differ considerably from those in earlier publications) have been 'made official' and used by the Ministry of Agriculture to establish the six 'Agricultural Stability Zones' into which the country is divided and of which a map is given in the *Statistical Abstract* of 1978.