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The Cambridge Companion to
Modern Arab Culture

Dwight F. Reynolds brings together a collection of essays by leading international scholars to provide a comprehensive and accessible survey of modern Arab culture, from the early nineteenth to the twenty-first century. The chapters survey key issues necessary to any understanding of the modern Arab World: the role of the various forms of the Arabic language in modern culture and identity; the remarkable intellectual transformation undergone during the *Nahda* or “Arab Renaissance” of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; the significant role played by ethnic and religious minorities, and the role of law and constitutions. Other chapters on poetry, narrative, music, theater, cinema and television, art, architecture, humor, folklore, and food offer fresh perspectives and correct negative stereotypes that emerge from viewing Arab culture primarily through the lens of politics, terrorism, religion, and economics.

DWIGHT F. REYNOLDS is Professor of Arabic Language and Literature in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He is the author of *Heroic Poets, Poetic Heroes: The Ethnography of Performance in an Arabic Oral Epic Tradition* (1995), *Arab Folklore: A Handbook* (2007), co-author and editor of *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition* (2001), and co-editor of *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, Volume 6: The Middle East* (2002).

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DWIGHT F. REYNOLDS is Professor of Arabic Language and Literature at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His research areas include Arabic literature, oral poetry, music, and folklore. He is the author of *Heroic Poets, Poetic Heroes: The Ethnography of Performance in an Egyptian Oral Epic Tradition* (1995) and *Arab Folklore: A Handbook* (2007), as well as co-author and editor of *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition* (2001).

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A note on terminology and transliteration

Technical terminology has been held to a minimum, but a few terms are so commonly used that they have been retained. Thus the Eastern Mediterranean region of the Arab World is referred to as the Mashriq (Arabic for “the East”; in other works sometimes spelled Mashreq) and North Africa is at times referred to as the Maghrib (Arabic for “the West”; elsewhere sometimes spelled Maghreb), and the term Levant (roughly Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, and Syria) also makes a few appearances. Since the term “Berber” (derived from the same origin as the term “barbarian”) is increasingly deemed outdated and even offensive, we have opted for the terminology that is now being used internationally: Imazighen (for Berbers as a people), Tamazight (as a global term for the Berber languages), and Amazigh (for the adjectival form of Berber, e.g., Amazigh culture). These and other terms are found in the Glossary at the back of the volume.

Academics have developed various systems for writing Arabic in Latin script that involve a large number of diacritical markings both above and below many letters. In order to make these essays more accessible to the general public, these markings have for the most part been avoided here; speakers of Arabic usually have no real difficulty understanding transliterations even without these markings, and for non-Arabic speakers they only serve to make those words opaque and hard to grasp. Only in the cases of some Arabic technical terms and words that are unfamiliar to all but specialists have full transliterations been included in parentheses according to the system of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES).

A large number of singers, artists, writers, movie stars, and other known figures have adopted their own preferred westernized spelling of their names, and many songs and film titles are also found in certain common English spellings: when these are mentioned they are sometimes accompanied by transliterations in parentheses. Since some books are published in English translation with titles that differ substantially from their Arabic originals, literary works are cited by a literal translation of the Arabic title with the transliteration in brackets, followed by the title of the English translation. For example, Tawfiq al-Hakim's *Diary of a Public Prosecutor in the Provinces* (*Yawmiyyāt nā'ib fi al-aryāf*, 1937; English translation, *The Maze of Justice*, 1947).

Several of these essays make references to online sources. Since copying out URL addresses is time consuming, and such addresses are often short-lived, wherever possible a general site (such as www.youtube.com) and keywords are listed instead. Only in cases where keywords will not lead to the desired link (such as on Arabic-language sites), have full URL addresses been given instead.

Chronology

- 1798 French invasion and occupation of Egypt under Napoleon Bonaparte
- 1801 Surrender and withdrawal of the French after defeat by Anglo-Ottoman forces; birth of Rifa'a al-Tahtawi
- 1805 Muhammad 'Ali (Mehmet Ali) officially recognized as governor of Egypt
- 1820–22 Muhammad 'Ali invades and conquers Sudan
- 1820 A series of “truces” establish the Trucial States (modern-day United Arab Emirates) as a British protectorate
- 1823 Birth of 'Ali Mubarak, author, educational reformer, and champion of modernization
- 1826–31 Egyptians sent to study in Paris accompanied by their chaplain, Rifa'a al-Tahtawi
- 1830 French invade and conquer Algeria, ruling for 132 years until Algerian independence in 1962
- 1835 Rifa'a al-Tahtawi founds the School of Languages in Cairo; establishment of the Egyptian Museum of Antiquities (later the Egyptian Museum)
- 1839 British forces occupy Aden (South Yemen)
- 1848 Algeria annexed and declared an integral part of France
- 1849 Death of Muhammad 'Ali; birth of Muhammad 'Abduh, Muslim religious reformer
- 1860 Violence between Christians and Druze in Mount Lebanon leads to intervention by French, British, and Ottoman forces
- 1861 British take control of Bahrain; birth of Jurji Zaydan, author and historian, whose series of historical novels were influential in shaping the *Nahda* (Arab Renaissance) vision of the Arabo-Islamic past

- 1869 Opening of the Suez Canal; completion of the Khedival Opera House in Cairo, inaugurated with a performance of Verdi's *Rigoletto*
- 1870 Establishment of the Egyptian National Library (Dar al-Kutub)
- 1871 Premiere of Verdi's *Aida* in the Khedival Opera House, Cairo
- 1872 Establishment of the Teacher's College (Dar al-'Ulum) in Cairo by 'Ali Mubarak, combining traditional Islamic learning with Western education
- 1881 French Protectorate of Tunisia established and lasts until Tunisian independence in 1956
- 1882 Britain invades and occupies Egypt, effectively controlling the country until the 1952 Egyptian Revolution; 'Ali Mubarak publishes '*Alam al-Din*, a novel-like work in which the main characters debate the advantages and disadvantages of Western and Eastern culture
- 1883 Birth of Jubran Khalil Jubran, poet and writer, in Lebanon, later known as Kahlil Gibran after his emigration to the United States, author of *The Prophet*
- 1899 Kuwait becomes a British protectorate
- c. 1904 Birth of Umm Kulthum, Egyptian singer who became the greatest Arab musical figure of the twentieth century
- 1911 Libya invaded by Italy and ruled until 1943 when it is seized by the Allies; birth of Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz
- 1912 Morocco divided into Spanish and French protectorates that end with Moroccan independence in 1956
- 1916 Beginning of the Arab Revolt against Ottoman rule (Lawrence of Arabia)
- 1919 Treaty of Versailles ends World War I and divides the Middle East among the Western powers
- 1920 Beginning of French Mandate of Syria and Lebanon; beginning of British Mandate of Iraq
- 1921 Hashemite Prince Faisal placed on the newly created throne of Iraq by the British
- 1922 British Mandate of Transjordan established by League of Nations; nominal end to British occupation of Egypt, though effective control lasts until 1952
- 1923 Publication of Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet* in English
- 1926 Republic of Lebanon declared
- 1928 Unveiling of the statue *Nahdat Misr* (Egyptian Renaissance) by Mahmoud Mukhtar

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xx Chronology

- 1932 Ibn Saud completes conquest of most of the Arabian Peninsula and declares the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; Cairo Congress of Arab Music
- 1934 Establishment of the Academy of the Arabic Language (Cairo)
- 1934 Establishment of Egyptian State Radio
- 1936 Iraq granted nominal independence from Britain, but British troops remain; establishment of Egyptian national film studio
- 1943 Control of Libya wrested from Italy by the Allied forces
- 1945 Foundation of the League of Arab States, originally with six members (Egypt, Iraq, Transjordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Syria); now includes twenty-two states
- 1946 Transjordan becomes an independent monarchy; Lebanon achieves full independence from France
- 1948 The United Nations recognizes the establishment of the Jewish State of Israel in Palestine
- 1949 Transjordan is renamed the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- 1951 Libyan independence from Allied control
- 1952 Egyptian Revolution topples the monarchy
- 1953 Independent Republic of Egypt declared
- 1956 Nasser (Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir) becomes president of Egypt; the Tripartite Alliance (Britain, France, and Israel) invades Egypt and seizes the Suez Canal; after an international outcry, including pressure from the United States, they withdraw their forces
- 1958 Iraqi monarchy overthrown in a military coup
- 1961 Kuwaiti independence from Britain
- 1962 Algerian independence from France
- 1967 The "Six Day War" with Israel
- 1969 Egyptian film *al-Mumiya* (The Mummy) is released
- 1970 Death of Nasser; Anwar Sadat becomes president of Egypt
- 1971 Bahrain and United Arab Emirates become independent from Britain
- 1973 The "October War" (or "Yom Kippur War") with Israel
- 1981 Sadat assassinated by Islamists; Mubarak becomes president of Egypt
- 1988 Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz awarded Nobel Prize for Literature
- 1996 Qatari-owned Al Jazeera Arabic satellite TV channel begins broadcasting

- 2003 Saudi-owned Al Arabiya Arabic satellite TV channel begins broadcasting
- 2006 Al Jazeera English news service begins broadcasting
- 2010 Self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi in Tunisia sets off large-scale demonstrations that unleash the “Arab Spring”
- 2011 Massive demonstrations in Egypt lead to the intervention of the Egyptian military and the toppling of the Mubarak regime