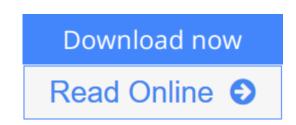


### In God's Path: The Arab Conquests and the Creation of an Islamic Empire (Ancient Warfare and Civilization)

By Robert G. Hoyland



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In just over a hundred years--from the death of Muhammad in 632 to the beginning of the Abbasid Caliphate in 750--the followers of the Prophet swept across the whole of the Middle East, North Africa, and Spain. Their armies threatened states as far flung as the Franks in Western Europe and the Tang Empire in China. The conquered territory was larger than the Roman Empire at its greatest expansion, and it was claimed for the Arabs in roughly half the time. How this collection of Arabian tribes was able to engulf so many empires, states, and armies in such a short period has perplexed historians for centuries. Most accounts of the Arab invasions have been based almost solely on the early Muslim sources, which were composed centuries later to illustrate the divinely chosen status of the Arabs.

Robert Hoyland's groundbreaking new history assimilates not only the rich biographical information of the early Muslim sources but also the many non-Arabic sources, contemporaneous or near-contemporaneous with the conquests. *In God's Path* begins with a broad picture of the Late Antique world prior to the Prophet's arrival, a world dominated by two superpowers: Byzantium and Sasanian Persia. In between these empires, emerged a distinct Arabian identity, which helped forge the inhabitants of western Arabia into a formidable fighting force. The Arabs are the principal actors in this drama yet, as Hoyland shows, the peoples along the edges of Byzantium and Persia--the Khazars, Bulgars, Avars, and Turks--all played critical roles in the remaking of the old world order. The new faith propagated by Muhammad and his successors made it possible for many of the conquered peoples to join the Arabs in creating the first Islamic Empire. Well-paced, comprehensive, and eminently readable, *In God's Path* presents a sweeping narrative of a transformational period in world history.

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"[A] splendid new history of the Arab conquests.... Hoyland...has performed an invaluable service. His book will surely serve as the definitive account of the Arab conquests for many years to come." -- Tom Holland, *Literary Review* 

"*In God's Path* is a thoughtful and nuanced guide to an age that was far more complex than we might imagine from older accounts." --Philip Jenkins, *Books & Culture* 

"An illuminating, richly detailed, highly readable study of one of the crucial periods of history." --*First Things* 

"This is perhaps the best introduction to the Arab-Islamic Conquests available. Never before has this story been told on the basis of such a wide range of sources, as Hoyland draws discerningly on the testimony of both contemporary non-Muslims and of the classical Islamic tradition. The author's elegant style, fascinating observations, and sharp analysis bring one of history's great moments to life, for the benefit of students, scholars, and the general public. This book is original, authoritative, and a joy to read--I cannot recommend it highly enough." --Adam Silverstein, author of *Islamic History: A Very Short Introduction* 

"With its exceptional clarity, balanced judgment of both Muslim and non-Muslim sources, and a broad perspective that encompasses peripheral peoples, Robert Hoyland's new book provides an account of the rise of Islam that is as definitive as it is accessible." --G. W. Bowersock, author of *The Throne of Adulis* 

About the Author

Professor of Late Antique and Early Islamic Middle Eastern History at New York University's Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, **Robert G. Hoyland** is the author of *Arabia and the Arabs*.

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