

THE MUSLIM ODYSSEY

HISTORICAL INTENSIVE HANDBOOK



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The Muslim Odyssey

Welcome aboard!

We are poised to embark on a meandering journey through the vicissitudes of Muslim history. Before launching ourselves into the fray, what is '*The Muslim Odyssey*'?

An educational platform providing courses, infographics, social media mini-series and God willing, historical tours, *The Muslim Odyssey* (henceforth TMO) does not have an official incorporation date, organically evolving out of a single student's academic drive to discover historical territory sidelined in traditional seminaries as a garnish or barely an afterthought.

Having partnered with the webinar providers, *Siblings of Ilm*, for an introductory exposé on historiography and currently trudging through a granular analysis of each dynasty on a yearly basis, our attention now turns towards a more accessible, one-stop-shop, panoramic treatment of Islamicate history.

Founder & instructor:

Adil Tagari is an alumnus of *Abrar Academy*, Preston, graduating from the traditional 'Higher Islamic Studies' programme (*Ālimiyyah*) in 2021. After studying jurisprudence at *White Thread Institute* (2021-22), he served as an Imam at Masjid Salaam, Preston (2023-24). He is currently enrolled as an MA student at the *University of Central Lancashire* on its sociology of religion course (RSC).



Student Induction

This tutorial will introduce the course, lay the foundations, explain its pedagogy (strategy of teaching/learning), set expectations, and ensure your experience is enlightening and satiating.

As ambitious as the project seems, charting the entirety of Islamic history within the short span of a year is a tall order. However, this intensive aims to periodize Muslim history according to the following chronological trajectory (Saleem, 2022) so that the content is divided up into palatable portions:

1. **Beginning** (Prophetic & succeeding generations)
2. **High Caliphal Imperium**
3. **Age of The Muslim Commonwealth**
4. **Gunpowder Empires**
5. **European Dominance & Colonialism**
6. **20th Century 'Wild East'**

Considering obvious time limitations, themes one to four will be covered in year one. A follow-up installment for five and six can be designed later, however, syllabus formulation has not begun.

This is a bespoke, tutored course. Contact time is limited to one lecture per week. Although each seminar is self-contained and equips you with all the necessary information to paint a vivid picture of that era, a level of extra-curricular reading or self-study will supplement the core base of the lecture and expand your horizon.

Under each section of this handbook, you will find:

- **Targeted Reading Quotas**
- **Multi-Media Resources**
- **Maps** (Sluglett & Currie, 2014 & Ruthven & Nanji, 2005)
- **Further References** (split between 'beginner' & 'intermediate' levels)

The reading material combines academic and popular histories. As is self-explanatory, the 'beginners' table comprises books which are pitched at a non-specialist audience, thereby not discomfiting the reader with analysing contrasting narratives, engaging with various scholarly views and with minimal source tracing or academic apparatus.

The 'intermediate/seminarian' section aims to expose more curious and experienced students to an assortment of works and historiographies, which may contain one or more elements from the previous paragraph.

As is always the case, keep your wits about you and engage the texts with a balance of criticality and open-mindedness. Lamentably, there exists a paucity of Islamicate historical material for the Anglosphere which has been created 'by Muslims, for Muslims'. This means that we are compelled to consult 'coffee table'¹, Orientalist² and prejudicial non-Muslim histories which may be loaded with biases, academic products which may be overstimulating or authors who may not be sympathetic or genuine to our cause.

Our meager effort henceforth is to slowly wrestle our heritage away from others and to reclaim and reinvigorate our own impoverished tradition.

Rather than allowing the instructor to drone on about military history, each module will be highly dynamic in its attempt to reconstruct a holistic representation of the age, without digressing from the storyline drastically. For individual lessons, our broad narrative arc will briefly track the following:

- **Economics**
- **Politics/Administration**
- **Religious Trends & Heresiology** (sects)
- **Islamic Intellectualism**
- **Diplomacy & Foreign Policy**
- **Culture, Architecture & Civilization**

¹ Casual with a focus on style over substance

² Western academics who study Islam

Each session will, at the very least, bequeath you with the understanding of 'what happened', 'when it occurred' and 'who was involved'. The 'why' and 'how' factors can be expanded on in further reading.

It is beyond our scope to render a social or 'bottom-up' history of ordinary life in each period. Instead, our spotlight will be shined on 'aristocratic history' or the stories of great men, or the traditional elite-based history of early Muslim chroniclers.

The contents of individual sessions are tailor-made for an audience of mature, over-16 students, regardless of their academic background or learning ability. Although pitched to learners from every point of the spectrum, the module notes below cater to the more advanced or elite pupils with additional layers of academic material to be pored over independently, thus keeping everyone engaged and without disenfranchising or underwhelming the more seasoned students.

Note-taking is religiously encouraged.

Each lesson will end with an in-class trivia to shore up key information and aid in retention.

The classroom atmosphere will be relaxed and casual. Rather than the instructor monotonously haranguing the class, this is intended as a two-way relationship: a non-judgmental space where you are implored to critique, question, chime in and challenge: *dialogue*, not *monologue*.

Last but not least, we pray for a fruitful voyage, and we hope the Almighty irrigates our minds and hearts with uplifting knowledge.

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Essential Reading

The programme does not feature a standard textbook. Rather, the core content has been drawn from a variety of sources, with research ongoing as a continuous editorial process. This approach promotes a more fluid and lucid delivery style and arrests the prospect of students sinking their heads into a tome the entire lesson, instead forging a more interactive session.

However, to add further flesh to the bones, the following short reads have been prescribed for you to bury yourselves in. Acknowledging your myriad daily commitments and how time is of the essence for many, simply surveying two books from the shortlist below will make the reading task more appetizing. Ultimately, the discretion is yours to choose two, but 'the more the merrier'. You have the entire year at your service, so plan your reading seasons in advance.

Each of these reads is a comprehensive, single-source solution, that provides a handy and brief snapshot of history. PDFs will not be available for all.

- **A Story of Two Civilisations**, Ridhwan Saleem
- **Islam: A Short History**, Karen Armstrong
- **Lost Islamic History**, Firas Alkhateeb
- **The Book of Islamic Dynasties**, Luqman Nagy
- **A Short History of Islam**, S.F. Mahmud
- **A Short History of Islam**, Al-Djazairi
- **Destiny Disrupted, A History of the World Through Islamic Eyes**, Tamim Ansary
- **Lessons in Islamic History** (translation), Shaykh Al-Bājūrī

Skim through the contents pages and pick two that appeal to you. Each offers a unique repackaging and snapshot of universal Islamic history, with unique perspectives, themes, and varying formats of information organisation.



Lesson One

Historiography

Targeted Reading:

| Beginner | | |
|---|-------------------------|--|
| What is HCM? An Islamic Response to HCM | Muhammad Safwan Qureshi | Online article (10–15-minute read) |
| Intermediate/Seminarian ³ | | |
| <i>Tārīkh Ummat-e-Muslimah</i> | Muhammad Ismail Reyhan | Vol 1, 51-78 Vol 2, 41-58 |
| Muslims' Collective Amnesia | Yakoob Ahmed | 51-page academic essay (With a five-minute summary – Yaqeen Institute) |
| A History of Muslim Historiography | Franz Rosenthal | 66-99 |

Additional Resources:

- **Islamic Historiography**, Chase Robinson
- **The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs**, A.A. Dūrī
- **A Survey of Early Muslim Histography**, Muhidin Mulalic
- **Orientalism**, Edward Said

Multi-Media:

- **Western Historical Critical Method: Muslim Historians Toolkit**, Dr Jonathan Brown, Karima Foundation, YouTube
- **Orientalism & Western Academia**, Imam To & Dr Shadee, UTICA MASJID, YouTube

³ Alumnus or student of a traditional *Dār 'l-'Ulūm*



Lessons Two - Five

Abū Bakr ؓ (632-634CE) - 'Umar ؓ (634-644CE)
- 'Uthmān ؓ (644-656CE) - 'Alī ؓ (656-661CE) -
Ḥasan ؓ (661)

Targeted Reading:



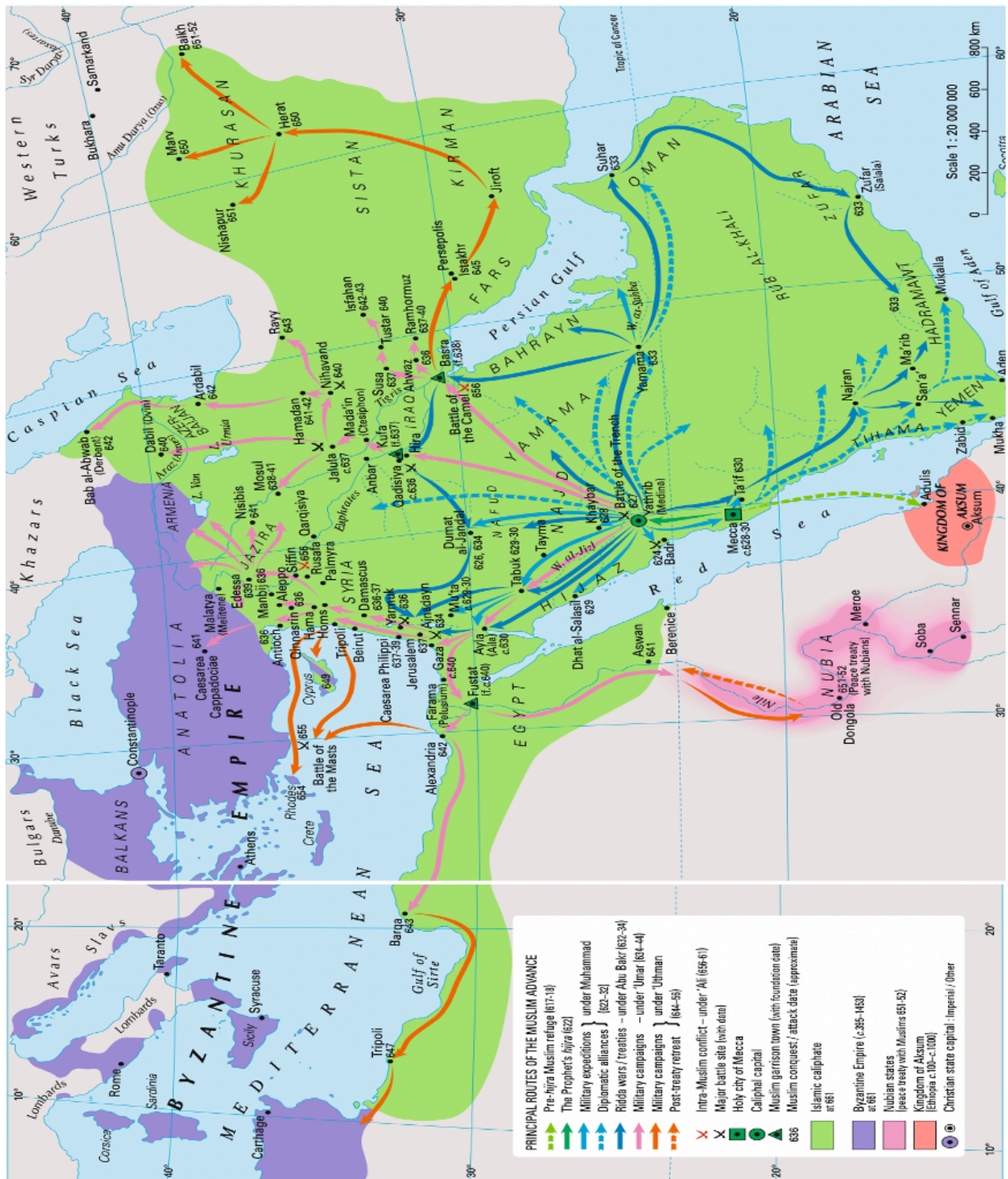
| Beginner | | |
|--|-------------------------|----------------|
| Lessons In Islamic History | Al-Bājūrī | 81 - 100 |
| Intermediate/Seminarian | | |
| <i>Tārīkh Ummat-e-Muslimah</i> | Muhammad Ismail Reyhan | Vol 2, 319-352 |
| <i>Al-Tārīkh 'l-Islāmī al-Wajiz</i> | Muhammad Suhayl Taqqūsh | 67-108 |
| The Preaching of Islam: A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith | T.W. Arnold | 45-131 |

Additional Resources:

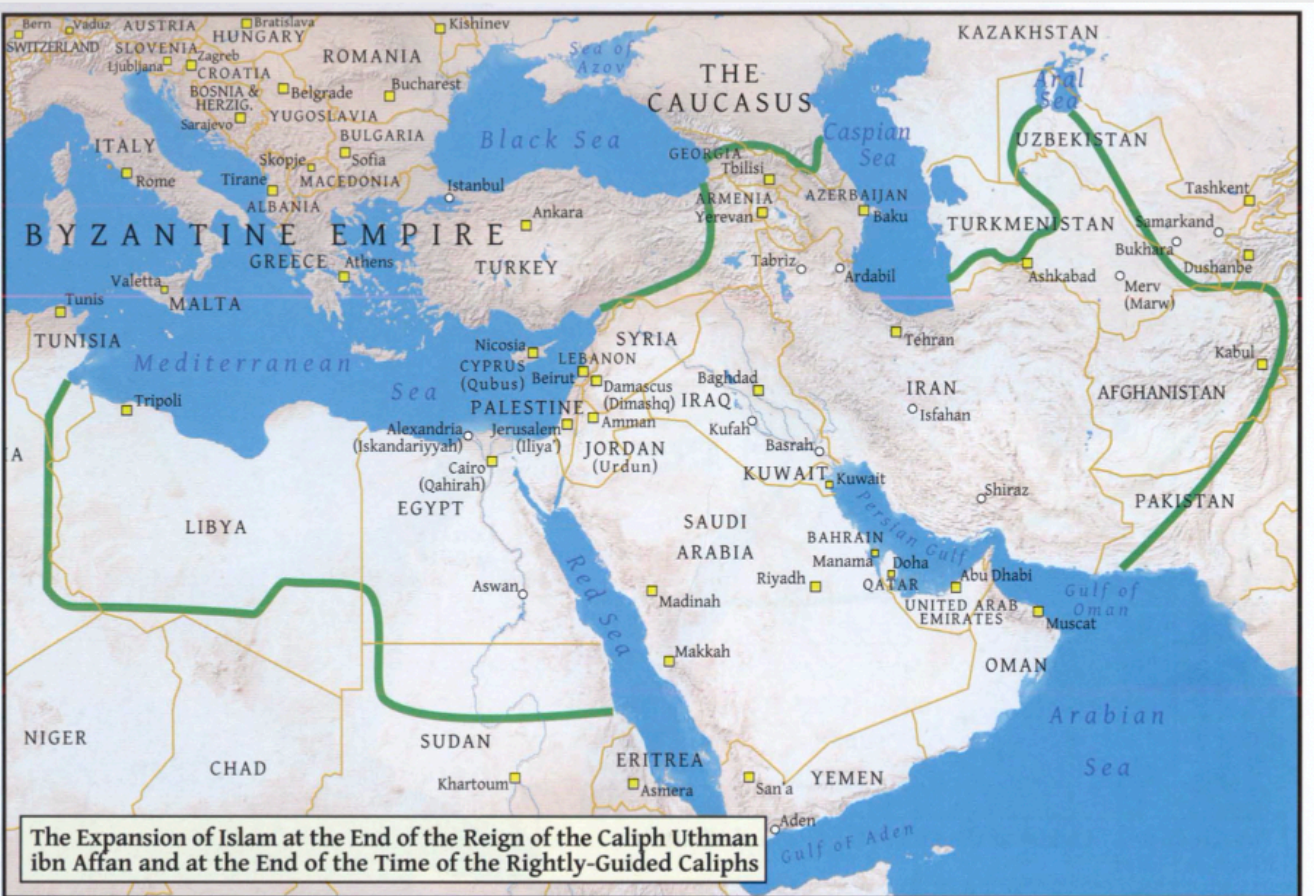
- The History of the Four Caliphs, Al-Bājūrī
- The Great Arab Conquests, Hugh Kennedy
- The Biography of Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, Al-Sallābī
- The Sword of Allah: Khalid Bin Al-Waleed, A.I. Akram
- Investigating the Standpoint of the Ṣaḥābah During the Fitnah, Sayyid Muḥammad Amaḥzūn
- The Origins of the Islamic State (two volumes), Al-Balādhurī, translated by Philip K. Hitti
- Ḥamalah Risālah al-Islām, Muḥibb al-Dīn Al-Khaṭīb

Multi-Media:

- **Early Muslim Expansion**, feature length documentary complete with visuals and cinematic map-displays, **Kings and Generals**, YouTube
- **Khalid ibn al-Walid, a Profile of a Warrior**, riveting university lecture with enchanted story-telling techniques, **Professor Roy Casagranda, The Austin School**, YouTube







Lesson Seven

Umayyads (Cordoban, 756-1031CE)

Targeted Reading:

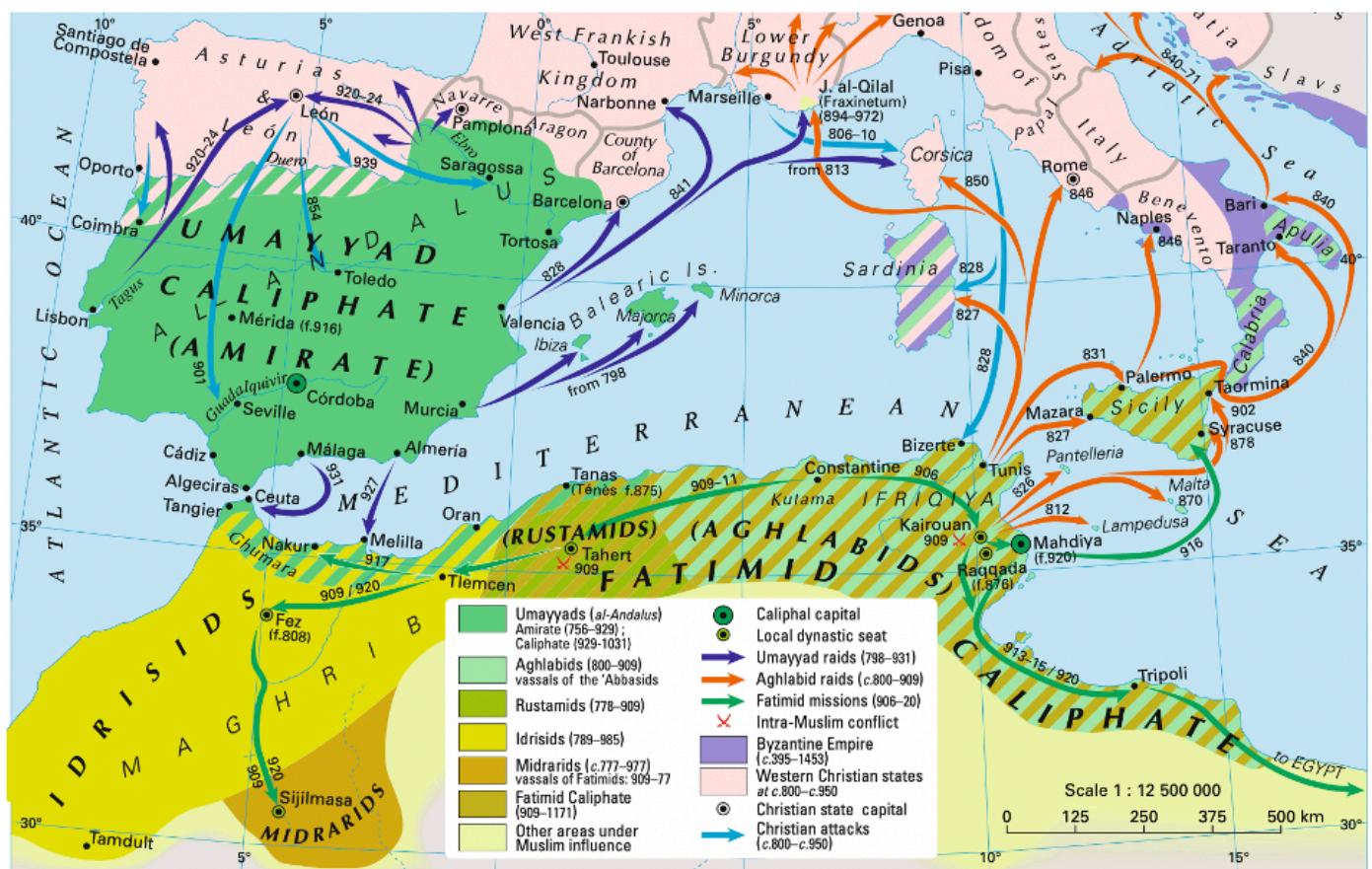
| Beginner | | |
|--|--|---------|
| The Book of Islamic Dynasties | Luqman Nagy | 9-16 |
| The Islamic History of Europe | Stef Keris | 10-12 |
| Intermediate/Seminarian | | |
| Moorish Spain | Richard Fletcher | 15-52 |
| Legacy of Muslim Spain Essay title: Political History of al-Andalus | Editor: Salma Jayyusi Essay author: Mahmoud Makki | 3-49 |
| A History of Islamic Societies | Ira M. Lapidus | 579-610 |

Additional Resources:

- **The Ornament of the World**, Maria Rosa Menocal
- **The Martyrs of Cordoba**, Jessica A. Coope
- **Story of the Andalusis**, Issa Meyer
- **The Falcon of Quraysh**, A.I. Akram
- **Abd al-Rahman III**, Maribel Fierro
- **The Fall of the Caliphate of Cordoba**, Peter C. Scales

Multi-Media:

- **The Lost Kingdom of Al-Andalus**, one and a half-hour, high quality audio narration, Kalamullah.com
- **Cities of Light: The Rise and Fall of Islamic Spain**, full-length documentary/movie (2hrs), HD, 3D high-colour mapping, computer animated art from museums, extensive shooting of Spanish landscape and historical sites, stunning battle re-enactments, filmed over 18 months, www.Islamicspain.tv/the-film
- **How the Muslim conquered Spain**, short documentary, **Kings and Generals**, YouTube



Lesson 12

Morisco Ethnocide (1492-1614CE)

Targeted Reading:

| Beginner | | |
|---|---|--|
| The Muslims in Spain | Stanley Lane-Poole | 235-247 (Pages may vary depending on edition) |
| Intermediate/Seminarian | | |
| Legacy of Muslim Spain Essay title: Political, Social & Cultural History of the Moriscos | Editor: Salma Jayyusi Essay author: L. P. Harvey | 201-235 |
| Muslim Minorities and the Obligation to Emigrate to Islamic Territory: Two fatwās from Fifteenth Century Granada | Essayist: Kathryn A. Miller | 256-288 |

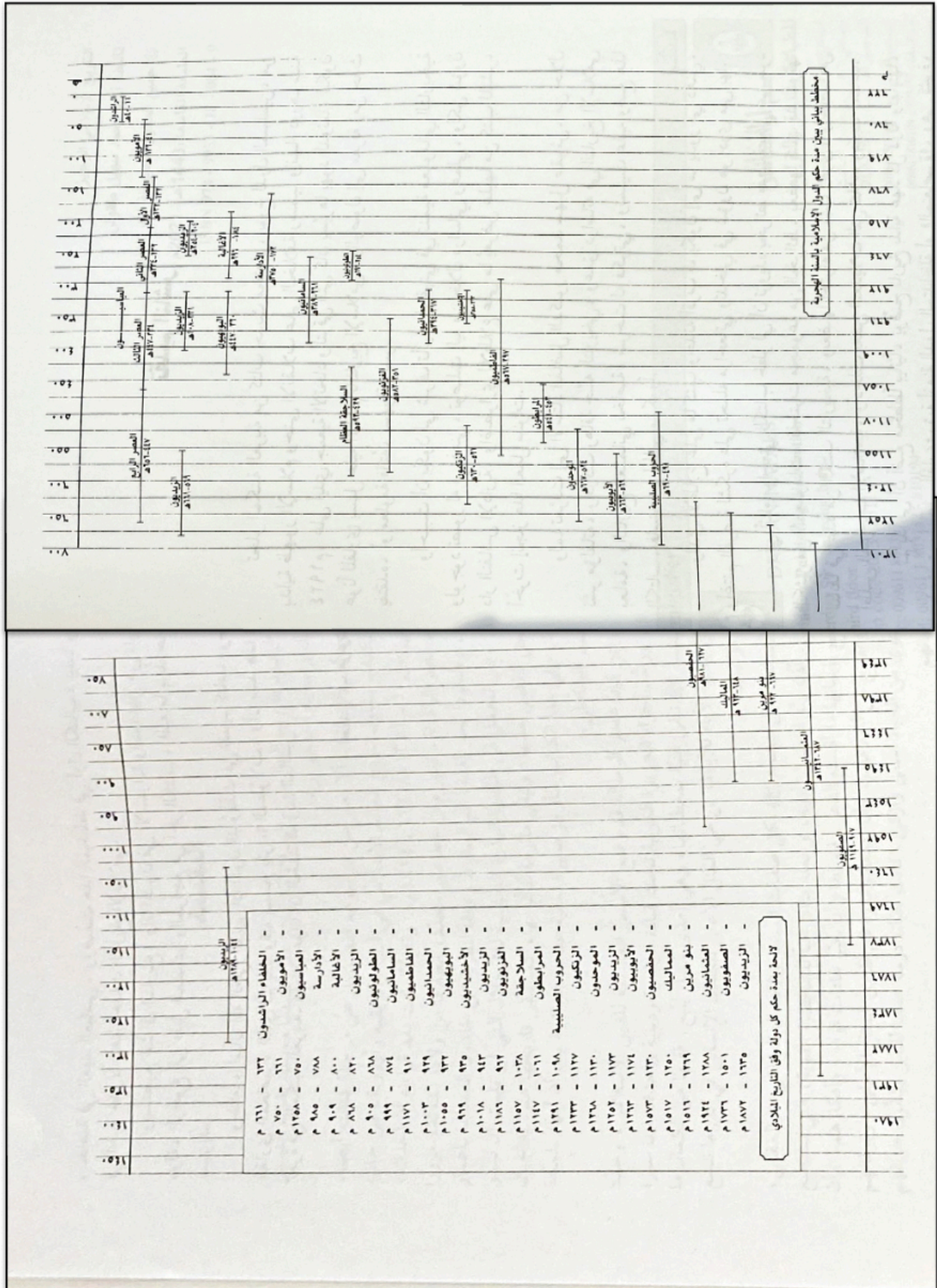
Additional Resources:

- **The Moors Last Stand**, Elizabeth Drayson
- **Blood & Faith: The Purging of Muslim Spain**, Matthew Carr
- **The Muslims of Spain Post-1492 In a Global Context and Its Relevance to Muslims Today**, Ibn Abi Hashim Al Muhajir
- **The Moriscos of Spain**, Henry Charles Lea

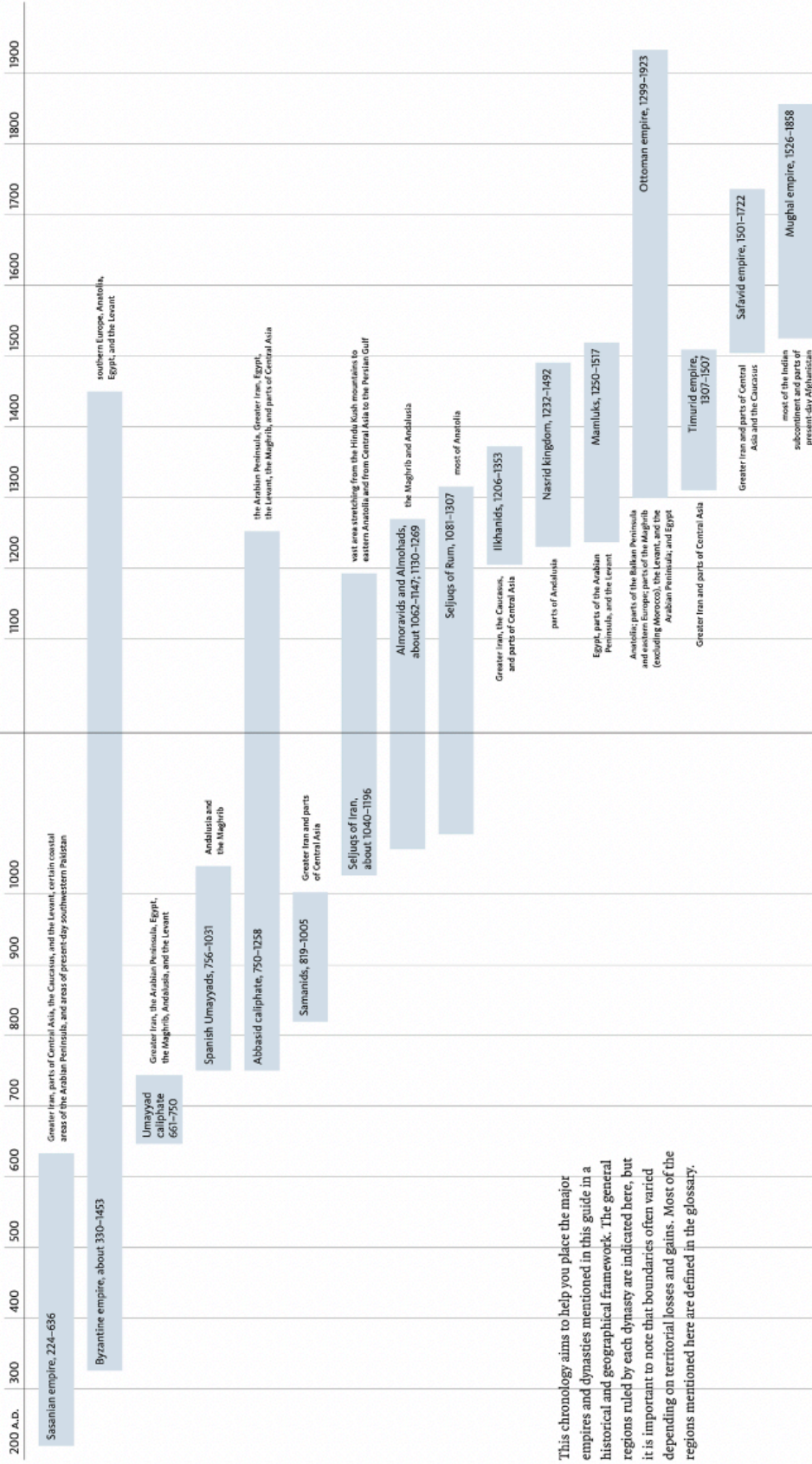
Multi-Media:

- **In Search of My Roots**, Andalusian road trip following a Spanish director discovering hidden Muslim lineage, **Al Jazeera English, YouTube**
- **History of Moriscos**, 30-minute lecture, **Adnan Rashid, YouTube**

Addendum A: Timelines



Chronology of Major Empires and Dynasties in the Islamic World



This chronology aims to help you place the major empires and dynasties mentioned in this guide in a historical and geographical framework. The general regions ruled by each dynasty are indicated here, but it is important to note that boundaries often varied depending on territorial losses and gains. Most of the regions mentioned here are defined in the glossary.

ART OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD: CHRONOLOGY

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