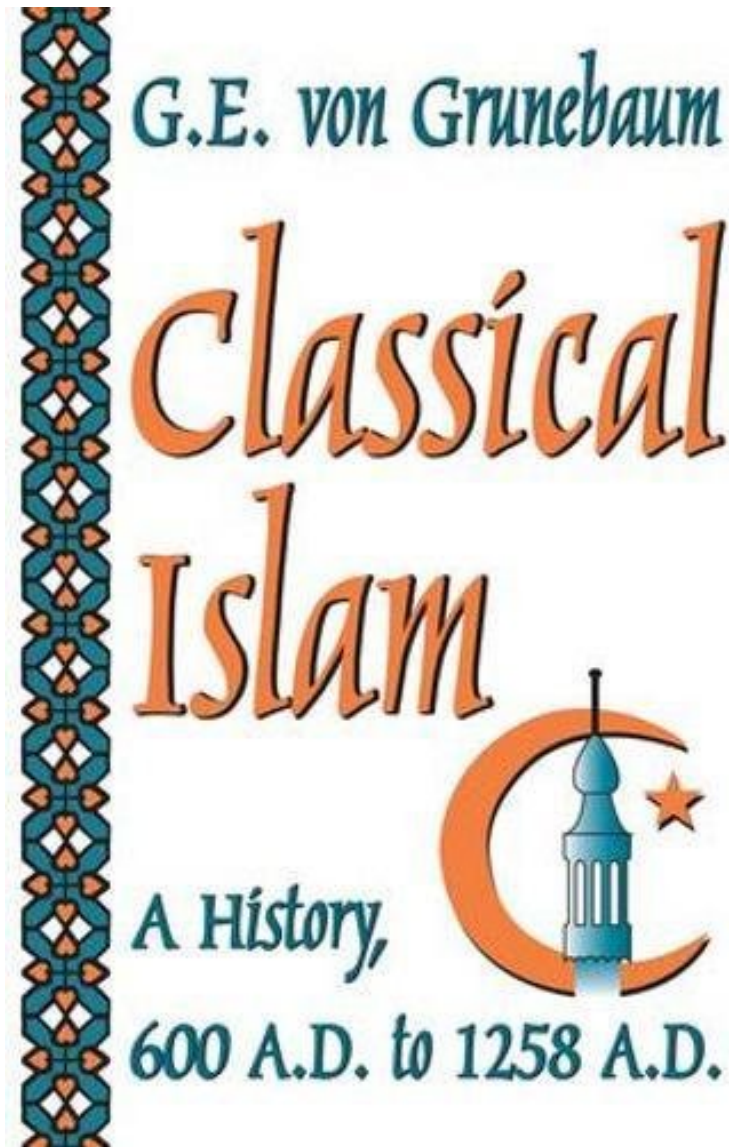


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Classical Islam: A History, 600 A.D. to 1258 A.D.

From G E von Grunebaum

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From G E von Grunebaum : Classical Islam: A History, 600 A.D. to 1258 A.D. before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Classical Islam: A History, 600 A.D. to 1258 A.D.:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I'm sure the information in this book is good and the author is an expert in the subject ...By HotmannI'm sure the information in this book is good and the author is an expert in the subject matter.BUT, it is very hard to read with one sentence after the another being awkward and overly complicated.There is barley a simple, easy to understand sentence in the whole book and I wonder if it was even

edited. I read the 1st (pre-Islamic Arabia) and the 2nd (Muhammad) chapters and then gave up. I was disappointed because I am really interested in the birth of Islam, but I will have to find a more "user friendly" source. It seems like the author has written this book for (and to impress) other Islamic scholars rather than the general reading public. I think this was translated from German and that might be a big part of the problem, but even the original language and interpretation are not made clear in this confusing and difficult tome. 3 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Classical Islam (pre-1258) By William Garrison Jr. Classical Islam. From the book: The period from 610 A.D. when Muhammad received his 'call' until the conquest of Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258 is known as the 'classical' period of Islam. The author examines the relationships, both cultural and political, between the Islamic world and the Mediterranean countries and India and elaborates on the economic, social, and intellectual factors and forces that shaped the Muslim world and molded its interaction with 'infidels.' To the Muslim, man has declined below the measure of the heroic ancestors; their greatness is as much an incentive as an embarrassment. What terminates in 1258 is the major chain of political legitimacy to which reality had failed to conform for rather more than four centuries when the extent of the Muslim empire had ceased to be coterminous with the rule of Islam and the unity of tradition had become no more than a postulate. Chapters: 1-Pre-Islamic Arabia; 2-Muhammad; 3-External power and internal division; 4-the Umayyads; 5-the Abbasids; 6-Islamic society and social-religious movements; 7-Egypt under the Fatimids and Tulunids; 8-the Arab West; 9-The Horizon of Islam: Theology, Philosophy, Literature; 10-the downfall of the caliphate; 11-the Latin States; 12-Divisions in the Islamic world; 13-Religious reform and Berber nationalism; 14-Withdrawal and mysticism at the end of the caliphate.

This study of the history of Islam to the extinction of the Abbasid Caliphate by the Mongols, first published by Professor von Grunebaum in German in 1963, should find many readers. As one of the very few books which offer a concise and scholarly conspectus of the first centuries of Islamic history, it will undoubtedly appeal and be of value to those who are beginning work in this field. It may be even more rewarding to those who already have some background of knowledge, and can thereby appreciate the interpretative insights in which it abounds. P. M. Holt, Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. A translation of the late G. E. von Grunebaum's work *Islam in Seiner klassischen Eposhe*, published by the Artemis Verlag, Zuerich, 1966 [A] useful addition is the extensive bibliography of items mostly in English. James A. Bellamy, Journal of the American Oriental Society. Neither the author nor the book under review needs an introduction for the readers of this journal. Gustave von Grunebaum was, or should we rather say, is the doyen of the European Islamists, his classical publications are available in German. His *Studien zum Kulturbild und Selbstverständnis des Islams* (Artemis Verlag, 1969) is a special gift to the German reader, and the German original of *Classical Islam* has been in use as a textbook for a protracted period. I purposefully deferred the writing of this review, in order to find out how American students fare with this book. According to what I have heard from them they would subscribe to the author's judgment: By her translation Mrs. Watson has somehow lightened the sternness of the original, I mean the readers have found that the English version of the book makes easy reading. The illustrations are judiciously chosen and enhance the gracefulness of the book. The bibliography, partly provided by Stanford Shaw, adds much to its usefulness. S. D. Goitein, *Die Welt des Islams*. Writing a history of classical Islam is always a laborious and thankless task. The historian who undertakes to reconstruct in a narrative way any portion of early Islamic history from its vast and scattered sources exposes himself to sure attacks. A modern historian therefore has to use what R. G. Collingwood calls the scissors-and-paste historical method, by which the historian himself must make a personal judgment as to which reports are to be taken as true accounts of history and which are to be considered false. [I]n this book, translated from German by a capable translator, the thoughts of the author are well-expressed. This makes the book very stimulating and enjoyable to read. Wilson B. Bishai, *The American Historical Association*. About the Author G.E. von Grunebaum was professor of history and director of the Near Eastern Center at the University of California, Los Angeles. A world-renowned scholar in the field of Islamic studies, he served as general editor of conference papers and series monographs emanating from that center. Among his books are *Medieval Islam*, *Islam: Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition*, and *Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization*.