

was only strengthened when his teacher and mentor in Najaf, Mullā Muḥammad Kāzīm Khurāsānī (d. 1911), lent his assistance to the constitutionalists by sending out letters and official statements against anti-constitutional forces. Āqā Najafī later collected all such documents in his *Hayāt al-Islām fī ahwāl-i āyat al-malik al-'allām* ("The life of Islam: the biography of the sign of the omniscient king). His other works include a treatise on afterlife called *Siyāhat-i gharb, yā, Sarnivisht-i arvāḥ ba'd az marg* ("Journey to the west, or the fate of souls after death"); a commentary on Bābā Afzal Kāshānī's *Risāla-yi tuffāḥah* ("Treatise of the apple"); and another commentary on *Du'ā-yi Ṣabāḥ* ("the morning prayer"). Some of his work has remained unpublished, including a 1328/1910–11 essay on the Constitutional Revolution called *Uzr-i badtar az gunah* ("An apology worse than the sin"), a 1930 travel diary of a trip to villages around Qūchān, and a 1933 commentary on Paul Doumer's *Livre de mes fils* (most probably through its 1911 Arabic version, *Kūtāb al-banīn*).

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## Arabs (historical)

**Arabs** (*'arab*) as a designation for groups of people in Arabia and adjacent areas is documented continuously from the middle of the ninth century B.C.E. to the present.

### 1. THE PRE-ISLAMIC EVIDENCE

The term appears for the first time as the epithet of a person called Gindibu *ar-ba-a-a* (= *arbāya*), whose name is found in a list of kings of Syria in the monolith inscription of the Assyrian king Salmaneser III (r. 858–24 B.C.E.), describing the battle of Qarqar in 853 B.C.E. In Assyrian inscriptions from the time of Tiglath Pileser III (r. 744–27 B.C.E.) on, people called *arab* are mentioned as dwellers in the Syrian desert in and around the oasis of Dumah. They were the target of at least two major Assyrian attacks, under Sennacherib and Assurbanipal. The *arab* in the Syrian desert also appear several times in the Old Testament (e.g., Jeremiah 25:18–26) The *arab* and the *arbāya* also occur in the inscriptions of the Achaemenid kings (Darius I, Xerxes I, Artaxerxes I) and are identified as ἄραβιοι in Herodotus. Herodotus's (d. c. 430 B.C.E.) ἄραβιοι lived in the area between the eastern Nile Delta, southern Palestine, and the Sinai Peninsula (Herodotus 2.75, 3.5). This region was ruled by the Arabs until 106 C.E., when it was incorporated into the Roman imperial system as Provincia Arabia. One of its rulers was Geshem/Gashmū *ha-'arbi* ("the Arab"), mentioned in Nehemiah (2:19, 4:7, 6:1–2), who lived in the second half of the fifth century B.C.E. During at least the last two centuries of its independence this area was ruled by the kings of the "NBT," the Nabataeans.

Arabs are further documented in the Hellenistic and early Roman period in Ḥawrān (in present-day Syria and Jordan), the Bekaa Valley (al-Biq‘ā) of Lebanon, central and northern Syria (around al-Rīstān and Qīnnasrīn), central Mesopotamia, and South Arabia. In Mesopotamia they were an important component of the state ruled from Hatra from the first to the mid-third century C.E., serving as a buffer between Parthia and Rome. Arabs are also mentioned during the same period in Osroene and Adiabene, kingdoms in Mesopotamia. In South Arabia, Arabs are mentioned about forty times in Sabaeen and Qatabanian inscriptions from the first to the sixth centuries C.E. An isolated early mention (*ʿrbm*) may, however, be found in the inscription RÉS (*Répertoire d'épigraphie sémitique*) 3945 by the Sabaeen ruler Karīb'il Watar, datable to the seventh or sixth century B.C.E.

The pre-Islamic evidence does not support the idea that “Arab” was a general designation for people living on the peninsula. Instead, Arabs appear as groups living among other groups in the above-mentioned areas. The occasional use of “Arab” as a general term in Greek and Latin texts is based on the use of “Arabia” as the name for the entire peninsula, a designation going back to the Greek discoveries associated with the campaign of Alexander the Great. Greek geographers from Eratosthenes of Cyrene (d. c. 202 B.C.E.) onwards named the newly-discovered land “Arabia,” and its inhabitants were consequently sometimes called Arabs, ἄραβες or ἀράβιοι. Further, the evidence does not support the idea that “Arab” at this time designated nomads, Bedouin, or desert-dwellers in general. In addition to the fact that these terms are not necessarily synonymous, classical Bedouin culture arose later, especially in the third century

C.E. Because the word “Arab” occurs as early as the ninth century B.C.E., it cannot refer to Bedouin of this kind (Caskel, *Die Bedeutung und Zur Beduinisierung*; Bulliet, 28–110, Knauf, *Midian*, 9–15). The Arabs in antiquity had a special relationship with the camel, documented already in their first appearance at Qarqar. According to the Assyrian evidence, the *arab* in Dumah were ruled by priest-queens, *apkallatu*. From Hebrew (Jeremiah 25:23–4) and Greek sources (Herodotus 3.8; Diodorus Siculus 19.94.2–95.2) we hear that they did not till the soil, they did not drink wine, they did not live in houses built from stone, they worshipped only two gods, Ruḏā and Alilat (= Allāt), and they had their hair cropped in a special way. On the Assyrian reliefs one can see that they were dressed in a short loin-cloth, like the *izār* of present-day male pilgrims to Mecca. The sources also distinguish between Arabs and Nabataeans, even though they were obviously closely associated, as in the kingdom between Palestine, Egypt, and northwestern Arabia, governed by kings called in the literary sources Kings of the Nabataeans or Kings of the Arabs.

Arabs almost always appear in military contexts and were much used as auxiliary troops, border guards, and police forces by the empires, a fact that may account for their two different designations: the Assyrians fought against *arab*, but those in their employ are mostly called *arbāya*. Likewise, in South Arabia the enemies of the Sabaeen and Himyarite kings are *ʿrb* whereas their auxiliaries, allies, and border guards mostly are called *ʿrb*. The Arabs employed by the empires often stood under a special command represented by an officer, called a *kbr* in South Arabia, an ἄραβάρχης in Egypt, Nabataea, and Syria, and a *rbyt* or a *sh-l-y-t-ʿ* (*shallīṭaʿ*) in

Hatra (in present-day Iraq) and Osroene. Finally, ἄραβιοι appear in a great mythical scene in Nonnos's *Dionysiaca*, written in the fifth century C.E. but going back to a Greek text from about 400 B.C.E. In this epic (20:142–21:325; 40:294–9) the Arabs constitute the entourage of the semi-divine hero Lycurgus in his fight against Dionysus, the god of wine. The myth itself originates in southern Syria where both Lycurgus and the Arab presence are well documented in texts and inscriptions from late antiquity.

The term “Arab” disappears from sources dealing with North Arabia from about 300 C.E. onwards. The Namāra inscription from 328 C.E. (Dussaud) is, in fact, the last major testimony of Arabs in the Syrian desert. The ʿRB mentioned in that inscription (ruled by *mr' l-qys*) are to be sought in that area. In the fourth century, Arabs are replaced by Saracens in the Graeco-Latin sources and by *Ṭayyāyē* in the Syriac ones. There are numerous passages in Greek, Latin, Syriac, and Talmudic sources from this period in which these two are distinguished from the Arabs. It has been assumed that major changes took place in North Arabia in the third century, caused by the introduction of new weaponry from Iran (Caskel, *Die Bedeutung* and *Ṣur Beduinisierung*) and the disappearance of the traditional Arabs in this period may thus be connected with this process.

## 2. THE EVIDENCE FROM THE PRE-MODERN ISLAMIC PERIOD

There are astonishingly few occurrences of the word “Arab” in pre-Islamic poetry. In the Qurʾān, the adjective *ʿarabī* is found on eleven occasions in the Meccan *sūras*, apparently always with reference to the language of the Revelation. The word *aʿrāb* occurs in ten passages in the Medinan

*sūras* (Q 33:20, 48:11, 16; 9:90, 97–101, 120). According to Qurʾān 33:20, they live in the *bādīya*—originally the land outside a main, usually walled city, in this case most probably Yathrib/Medina—with a status subordinate to the Muslim community and bearing the obligation to take part in war. Not all inhabitants of the *bādīya* were thus necessarily ʿrb. The parallel functions of the *aʿrāb* in the Qurʾān and the ʿrb in the South Arabian inscriptions perhaps indicate that the two forms performed a similar function. In later Islamic literature *aʿrāb* is used generally for people living as shepherds outside the cultivated areas and becomes more nearly synonymous with our term “Bedouin.”

The word *ʿarab* is used with several different meanings in Arabo-Islamic literature, especially when referring to the time of the Prophet and the first century of Islam. It may be used as a comprehensive term for all Muslims, that is, the tribesmen and their associates, in other words the citizens of the Umayyad empire. It can designate the full tribesman, as opposed to the *mawālā* (client), who could be a tribesman from another tribe or a non-tribesman. It is on several occasions used for the *muhājirūn* (Meccans who emigrated with Muḥammad to Medina), sometimes including the *anṣār*, the nucleus of the troops of the Islamic movement. Sometimes it seems to designate a section of a tribe or people attached in some way to a tribe. An expression like *ʿarab Kināna* may well mean Arabs coming from, being attached to, or being part of the Kināna tribe. A similar usage is found in pre-Islamic South Arabian inscriptions, in which expressions like ʿrb *Kādt* (“the *aʿrāb* of Kinda”) parallels ʿrb *Sbʿ* (“the *aʿrāb* of Saba”) or ʿrb *Ḥḍramawt* (“the *aʿrāb* of Ḥḍramawt”) (Binay; Jamme, 665, line 2; Iryani 32, line 3, in Müller, 225–56;

Abadan 7, line 13, in Robin and Gajda, 113–37). It also seems to have been used by the *anṣār* and their Yemeni allies as a designation for themselves as distinct from other groups. From this usage developed the idea that the Yemenis and the *anṣār* were the “real Arabs,” *al-‘arab al-‘arība*, a concept that can be traced to the beginning of the eighth century C.E. (Dagorn 208–9, 217). In the later Umayyad period the Syrian Qudā’a tribes headed by Kalb, who formed an alliance with the Yemenis, were included among the “real” Arabs. The other tribes were classified as *‘arab musta‘rība*, “secondary Arabs.” Sometimes a third group, *al-‘arab al-bā‘ida*, “the bygone Arabs,” are mentioned. This group comprised seven legendary peoples in pre-Islamic Arabia, among them the ‘Ād, Thamūd, ‘Imliq/‘Amāliqa, Ṭasm, and Jadīs. Sometimes the Yemenis are included as an eighth people. This idea had a profound impact on Arabo-Islamic historiography, and the genealogical system found in most Islamic historical works reproduces it. The concept of *‘arab* as encompassing all tribes of the Islamic state is reflected in the term *ayyām al-‘arab* (days of the Arabs) as the designation for the history of these tribes in pre-Islamic and early Islamic times, exemplified by the titles of books by Abū ‘Ubayda (d. c. 210/c. 825) and Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 204/819 or 206/821) or the *Kitāb al-‘arab* in Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi’s (d. 328/940) *al-‘Iqd al-farīd*, dealing with the pre-Islamic history of the tribes.

The many meanings of the term Arab in the sources dealing with the early Islamic period is reflected in the entries on *‘arab* in the large mediaeval dictionaries, from al-Khalīl’s *Kitāb al-‘ayn* through al-Azhari’s *al-Taḥdhīb fī l-luġha* and Ibn Manẓūr’s *Lisān al-‘arab* to al-Zabīdī’s *Tāj*

*al-‘arūs*. These entries, which largely copy one other, preserve mutually contradictory meanings of the word and should be read with this in mind. The *‘arab* are people with a documented genealogy, *nasab* (thus belonging to certain tribes), or those speaking pure Arabic, or people living in villages and fortified cities (*amṣār*). The *a‘rāb* are a separate group, living in the *bādiya*, the areas outside fortified cities, especially steppes and deserts. A plausible interpretation of these different meanings is that they reflect historical developments during the period from the time of the Prophet to the fall of the Umayyads. *‘Arab* in the first Islamic century was a politically and ideologically important term, which was applied to various groups during the early period of the caliphate and adopted by all the tribes as a self-designation. It played an important role in the *shu‘ūbiyya* debate (about whether Arabs have a privileged position in Islam), reflected, for instance, in the *Kitāb al-‘arab* by Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889). The extent of its use among the tribes during the Islamic Middle Ages has not, however, been investigated.

In his *Muqaddima* (1:2, trans. Rosenthal 1:249ff.), Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) defines the people of the *badw* as those who dwell outside the cities, making their living as peasants or shepherds. The harder the living conditions, the stronger the sense of blood ties. These ties are strongest among the *‘arab* who live under the most extreme conditions of all and to whom tribal solidarity built on blood ties (*‘aṣabiyya*) is the defining feature of identity. The *‘arab* are thus a section of the *badw*, the people of the *bādiya* (the Bedouin), characterised by the importance of genealogical relations. Thus according to Ibn Khaldūn not all Bedouin are *‘arab*.

### 3. THE MODERN PERIOD

Among the tribes of Arabia today the term *‘arab* seems to signify people with a genealogy or belonging to a lineage connecting them with certain forebears. This traditional definition is probably a heritage from the early Islamic period when the term was given this sense. A modern definition of “Arab” was first advanced by the ideologists behind the modern Arab nationalist movements. The criteria are several common characteristics: language, culture, history, and sometimes even ancestry. This definition, based ultimately on the European concepts of nationhood, developed during the last decades of the nineteenth century and turned out to be useful as an ideological weapon in the struggle against European colonial powers after World War I. The Pan-Arabic ideology was finally made politically manifest in the creation of the Arab League in 1946. The influence of the new concept of Arabism culminated ideologically in the writings of Šāṭi‘ al-Ḥusrī (d. 1949) and politically in the career of Jamāl ‘Abd al-Nāšir (Gamal Abdel Nasser, d. 1970 C.E.), who tried to implement the idea by taking the first steps towards a pan-Arab political structure. Despite the failure of this project, Arab ideology still plays an important role in political rhetoric. Its most important result, apart from the abolishment of foreign political control in the Arab world, is the revival of the ‘Arabiyya language (modern standard Arabic) and its introduction as the official language in nineteen states from the Atlantic to Oman (as well as a second language in five others). Another lasting result of the modern Arab nationalist movement is a widespread sense of belonging to an Arab nation independent of the borders of the modern Arab states, bound together by a common language and cultural heritage.

### 4. ETYMOLOGY

Many etymologies of the word *‘arab* have been suggested, none entirely convincing (Retsö, *Arabs in antiquity*, 107ff.). We can dismiss the often quoted explanation based on the assumption of metathesis of a root *‘b-r* “pass by,” sometimes linked with *‘ibrī*, “Hebrew,” ascribing to *‘arab* the meaning “passer-by” (i.e., “nomad”). We can likewise rule out the explanation already recorded in the Middle Ages, that the name is derived from the word *‘araba*, the name of a region (*Lisān al-‘arab*, s.v. *‘-r-b*). The words *mu‘rib* and *‘arīb*, “pure, unmixed” are well documented as descriptions of the ‘Arabiyya language or one who speaks it. It is doubtful, though, whether this was the original meaning of the designation for the groups of people referred to. Concern for genealogical purity is well known among the traditional *‘arab* today, but because the genealogical definition of an Arab seems to have risen late (at the end of the Umayyad period), genealogical purity is unlikely to have been the original meaning of the term. The root also means “be mixed” (Lane, s.v. *‘-r-b*). The polarity of meanings of a root is well known in Semitic languages; in this case the root meant originally “to enter.” Based on this etymology as well as on hints in the pre-Islamic sources it has been suggested that the name originally designated a cultic association of some kind (Retsö, *Arabs in antiquity*). The term “Arab” has, however, had widely different meanings during the almost three millennia of its documentation, whatever its origins may have been.

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JAN RETSÖ

## Arcot

**Arcot** is a town located on the Palar River in southeastern India, west-southwest of Chennai, formerly Madras.

The name Arcot (Ārkāt) is thought to be derived from the Tamil Ārkkad (“six forests”). First mentioned by Ptolemy as “Arkatos,” the town or village is mentioned in the Tamil sources of the Chola dynasty era (third/ninth to seventh/thirteenth centuries) as the site of a significant fortress. It was not until the late Mughal period (twelfth/eighteenth century), however, that Arcot became a