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The Rise and Fall of Culture of Learning
in Early Islam

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Introduction

Muslims' contributions to scholarship in the early years of Islam are by now well documented by Muslim and non-Muslim scholars alike. The number of Muslim scholars who make the list of those who contributed to just about every intellectual enterprise then known is impressive. But that is the story that has been told many times before; there is very little new to add to what has already been written about that period of Islamic history. The historical period under review here is the first three hundred years of Islam that predates the flourishing of scholarship in Islam. To single out the first three hundred years of Islamic history is not to draw attention away from the subsequent events that have already been much worked over, but rather to try to understand what caused those events to happen. One needs to ask the question: what made the Muslims to almost suddenly break out onto the intellectual scene with such dash, pomp and brilliance and then with equal suddenness disappear in the