PREFACE

This study was initiated nearly four years ago by the generous help of the University Grants Commission. In the beginning I did not comprehend fully the complex nature of the problem which later, I came to realize. The more I went into the depth and breadth of the problem, the more I found myself dedicated, zealous, though sometimes in utter despair. Nevertheless, I feel to some extent satisfied with the achievement not because I have done well and overcome heart-breaking difficulties, for it is not to be claimed that nothing is left unsearched in this field, but satisfaction in the sense that I took up an unexplored field for this undertaking. As a result of the study I am able to present something concrete, original and fruitful. This may serve as a foundation for further inquiry and search.

The first chapter of the study deals with the development of Arab Historiography in Medieval period from Pre-Islamic times down to the end of the third century A.H. The second chapter discusses the Life and times of Ibn al-Athir. The third, fourth, fifth chapters examine the source of Ibn al-Athir's historical information. A detailed, exhaustive survey, inquiry and criticism has been presented in these chapters. Chapter sixth analyses the method of arrangement and presentation of the material in historical perspective. The last chapter evaluates Ibn al-Athir as a historian. It tries to study the attitude, concept and historical thinking of Ibn al-Athir.
It has become traditional to thank all those who extend their help, whatsoever it may be in relevant of any human effort. No other means has been evolved by human mind to express the feelings except through words, though words have their own limitation which convey the feelings and ideas. Therefore, I have to adopt the same instrument to express my own feelings. I am highly indebted to my noble Supervisor Dr. S.Maqbool Ahmad, whose genuine interest, scholarly guidance and unending sympathy, throughout the period sustains not only my zeal in this work but also without which it would not have been possible for me to do this intensive study. I am extremely grateful to him. It is a matter of pride to acknowledge indebtedness to Dr. Abdul Aleem, Head of the Department of Arabic & Islamic Studies for his intelligent and thought provoking suggestions which he gave to me from time to time. I thank the University Grants Commission for sanctioning financial help which enabled me to carry out this project with success. In the last my sincere thanks to those friends who helped me by their valuable suggestions. I am thankful to Mr. Azmatullah Qureshy who took personal interest in typing my thesis.