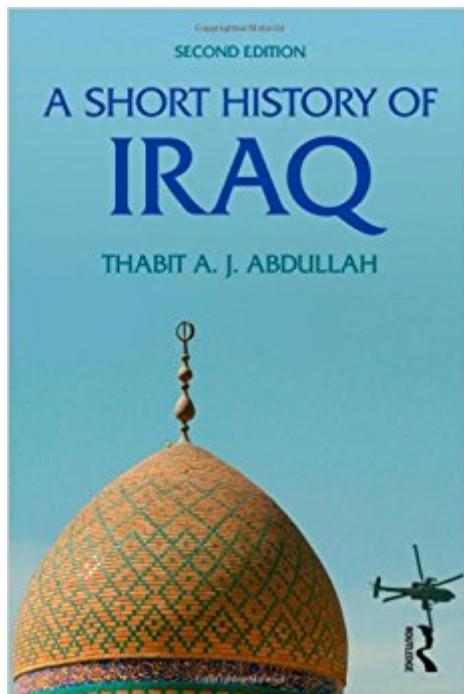


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A Short History Of Iraq



Synopsis

This accessible guide has been fully updated to take into account the Iraq War and subsequent developments, whilst retaining its character as a non-partisan and approachable text for students and interested readers alike. The twentieth century witnessed the transformation of the area known currently as Iraq from a backward region of the Ottoman Empire, to one of the most important and dynamic states in the Middle East. The rise of modern Iraq has its roots in the second half of the nineteenth century when Ottoman reforms led to gradual state modernization and increasing integration in the World Economy. British control after World War I was one of the determining factors in the establishment of the current borders of the country and the nature of its subsequent national identity. The other important factor was the highly heterogeneous nature of Iraqi society being divided along tribal, ethnic, religious, and sectarian lines. This book focuses on the interaction between the old and the new, or between continuity and change, as it is manifested in the nature of social development, nation-building, the state and the political opposition. An entirely new chapter focusing on the recent conflict has been added, and will contain sections on: The new chapter will have the following sections: The Question of American Intervention Invasion and the Fall of Saddam Looting & the Collapse of the Central State The Provisional Authority's Reforms The Nature of the Resistance Iraq's New Political Reality Elections and the Rise of Sectarian Parties Social-Economic Transformations The Challenge of the Future.

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Customer Reviews

Since the war in Iraq in 2003 and the consequent occupation of the country by British and

American forces, Iraq has been the object of intense public scrutiny. Amid rising tensions in the Middle East, the importance of understanding the history of this country has only increased. Although often viewed as an artificial British creation with an inherently fractured society, Iraq has a long and sophisticated history of administrative and economic unity which created a firm basis for cooperation and coexistence within its diverse societies. This unity still makes sense today despite the formidable problems of occupation, feeble state structures and chaos. Going right back to the roots of Islamic institutions in the medieval period, Professor Thabit A.J. Abdullah looks at the interaction of old and new, continuity and change, as manifested in social development, nation-building, the state and political opposition. By placing the country in its historical context, he shows that the current turmoil in Iraq is not simply due to the emergence of pre-existing social, religious and cultural divisions, but to the unravelling or weakening of social ties linked to a number of factors, including Ba'thist totalitarianism, wars, sanctions, and the destructive policies of the American-British occupation. In this new edition, *A Short History of Iraq* has been fully revised throughout and now includes a new final chapter covering the seven years since the beginning of the Iraq war. Documenting developments leading to the fall of Saddam and covering recent reform and resistance, this chapter also addresses central questions such as the validity of American intervention and the future of Iraq. *A Short History of Iraq* serves as an essential historical guide to this fascinating and largely misunderstood country, as well as providing a searching commentary on an increasingly significant region of the world.

AUTHOR Thabit A. J. Abdullah is Professor of History at York University, Canada. He is the author of *Merchants, Mamluks and Murder: The Political Economy of Trade in Eighteenth Century Basra* (2001), and *Dictatorship, Imperialism and Chaos: Iraq Since 1989* (2006).

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This is a fairly short book and a fairly quick read. It seems to me to be thorough and honest. I am not an Arabist and have not been there, so perhaps I am too trusting. But this history of Iraq by an Iraqi rings true to me--and it's not entirely pleasant reading for an American. The book could use better maps. In a sense the tone is looking back to a golden age before centuries of turmoil. Iraq once had 20 million people, a population it would not again reach for more than a thousand years.

The catastrophe was the Mongol conquest that caused incredible carnage, huge population loss and massive destruction of agricultural infrastructure. Interestingly and sadly, Abdullah says that Iraqis compare that to the chaos following the American invasion. How widespread that view is, is unclear. The book provides a background for making sense of Iraqi history. A predominating factor is outside overlords: Mongols, Ottomans, Persians, British, Americans. The history is overall rather grim. It is best on events of the 20th and 21st centuries. Some readers may object to the overall mood of the text, but I found it informative.

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