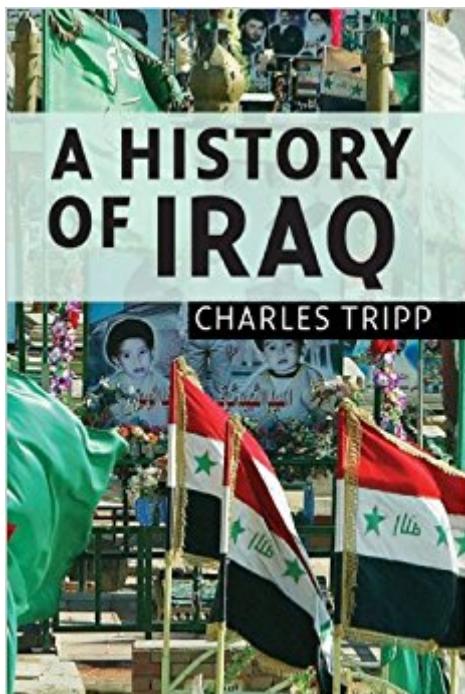


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A History Of Iraq



Synopsis

To understand Iraq, Charles Tripp's history is the book to read. Since its first appearance in 2000, it has become a classic in the field of Middle East studies, read and admired by students, soldiers, policymakers and journalists. The book is now updated to include the recent American invasion, the fall and capture of Saddam Hussein and the subsequent descent into civil strife. What is clear is that much that has happened since 2003 was foreshadowed in the account found in this book. Tripp's thesis is that the history of Iraq throughout the twentieth-century has made it what it is today, but also provides alternative futures. Unless this is properly understood, many of the themes explored in this book - patron-client relations, organized violence, sectarian, ethnic and tribal difference - will continue to exert a hold over the future of Iraq as they did over its past.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Tripp offers a lucid, digestible overview of contemporary Iraq's byzantine political power structure. Placing the evolution of the modern Iraqi state firmly into historical context, the author analyzes the roots of Islamic law, the negative effects of British imperialism, the controversial Hashemite monarchy, the fledgling republic, and, finally, the emergence of the militant Ba'th Party and the subsequent dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. Also included are cogent examinations of social, cultural, and economic traditions that have contributed to the development of regionally aggressive and rabidly anti-Western policies. This insightful investigation of an often bewildering Middle Eastern nation should be considered for purchase by all public libraries interested in building a comprehensive collection of national histories of the region. Margaret FlanaganCopyright ©

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... "a well-written and well-researched overview of Iraq's history...the book's perspective and interpretation are new and interesting...the volume in hand not only provides first-rate material for exploring Iraq's past and its future, but also a plausible account of how the state got where it is." The Middle East JournalReview of the first edition: '... by far the best and most serious history of Iraq to date.' Efraim Karsh, Reviews in HistoryReview of the first edition: 'Tripp offers a very readable account that presents the many different political figures, the ebb and flow of central government relations with Kurds and Shiites, and the ongoing regional and international coverage.' Foreign Affairs'Charles Tripp has produced a well-written and well-researched overview of Iraq's history ... the book's perspective and interpretation are new and interesting ... This book contains considerable food for thought ... the volume in hand not only provides first-rate material for exploring Iraq's past and its future, but also a plausible account of how the state got where it is.' The Middle East Journal"Tripp offers a very readable account that presents the many different political figures, the ebb and flow of central government relations with Kurds and Shi'ites, and the ongoing regional and international coverage." Foreign Affairs

There are a number of works that address the history of Iraq as this ought to inform American policy there: Toby Dodge's *Inventing Iraq* and Liam Anderson's and Gareth Stansfield's *The Future of Iraq* and Christopher Catherwood's *Churchill's Folly* come to mind. This is another in this excellent set of works. Tripp traces Iraqi history--and its implications--from its status as three provinces in the Ottoman Empire (Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul), the British Mandate (covered so well by Catherwood's book), the early and later Hashemite Monarchy, the very brief "republic" (which term needs to be placed in italics) from 1958-1968, and the Ba'th rule (including Saddam Husain's dictatorship). The details in this historical analysis provide extremely useful context for understanding the country called Iraq; it also helps inform us as to the challenges of creating a unified country that can produce a sense of "nationhood." All in all, a good volume for those who want to understand the background to where we currently stand. . . .

"A History of Iraq" is an excellent, readable narrative covering Iraq's modern period from its creation out of the Ottoman Empire through today. The first chapter provides background on the Ottoman provinces that make up today's Iraq and then it goes on to cover six more modern historical periods:

The British Mandate; The Hashemite Monarchy, 1932-41; The Hashemite Monarchy, 1941-58; The Republic, 1958-68; The Ba'th and the Rule of Saddam Husain, 1968-2003; and The American Occupation and the Parliamentary Republic. Compared to other books on Iraq published today, Tripp merely provides a historical narrative without political histrionics or polemics. Yet, still, in the end you feel you have a better understanding of the "why" of Saddam Husain, and "why" Iraq is where it is today with the potential of parliamentary democracy. Throughout these historical periods, there's one constant regardless of the leadership and type government; that is the power of patronage and its use by the nation's leaders to get and maintain control of power. Yet, it's not as simple as it would seem given the Shi'a vs. Sunni vs. Arab vs. Persian vs. Kurd dynamic. It makes for a much more complicated environment than exists in other Islamic countries where one religious group or ethnicity tends to dominate...if anything, you're struck by the need for Iraq's leadership to compromise with all major groups -- and if it doesn't, the other groups can, will, and have created violent political instability throughout Iraq's modern history. Generalizations about Iraq cannot be made without significant qualifiers and caveats. A definite must read for anyone who wants to understand Iraq while avoiding the tremendous political bias that tends to dominate most books on Iraq today.

Essential reading for a primer on Iraq (or Phebe Marr). Once you are done, move onto Batatu and al-Wardi for deeper analysis.

...this is a good place to start. Interesting, insightful and relatively short on Iraq history (ap. 300 pages with photos). Focus on politics and the way different groups and actors inside and outside Iraq have used the Iraqi state to advance their interest and how other groups have tried to avoid or to fight the powers of the same state. Three factors play out in this dark neverending drama: patrimonialism, oil and violence.

Do you want a better understanding of our current relationship with Iraq? This book does a great job of explaining why Iraq is such a volatile country, and why we have such a strained relationship. It's so good that I told my teen to share it with her high school history teacher when they were studying the Middle East.

College book requirement. Interesting book. I majored in Political Science and this book is engaging and easy to read. If you like the topic, it helps a lot

Good for recent modern history.

That is true that Tripp is not Iraqi, but really he wrote something about Iraq history. The book is a good reference for scholars and interested people.

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