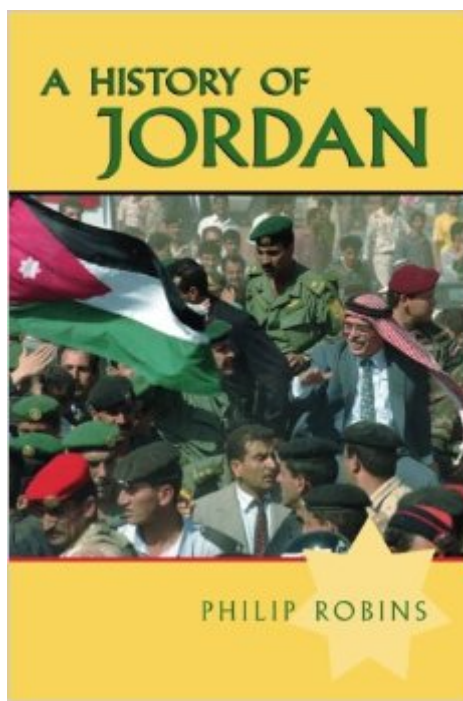


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A History Of Jordan



Synopsis

Philip Robins' survey of Jordan's political history begins in the early 1920s, continues through the years of the British Mandate, and traces events over the next half century to the present day. Throughout the period, the country's fortunes were closely identified with its head of state, King Hussein, until his death in 1999. In the early days, as the author testifies, the king's prospects were often regarded as grim. However, both King and country survived a variety of existential challenges, from assassination attempts and internal subversion, to a civil war with the Palestine Liberation Organisation and, in the 1970s and 1980s, Jordan emerged as an apparently stable and prosperous state. However, King Hussein's death, the succession of his son, Abdullah II, and recent political upheavals have plunged the country back into uncertainty. This is an incisive account, compellingly told, about one of the leading players in the Middle East. Philip Robins is University Lecturer in Politics with special reference to the Middle East in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford. His most recent book is *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War* (2003).

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There isn't much written about the history of Jordan because there isn't that much to tell outside of the modern era. From the Crusades to the 1870's Jordan appears to be a rather uninteresting underpopulated backwater of the Ottoman empire. Ch I gives rather short shrift to the past before 1920. One concludes that Jordan is a modern construct and not a successor state, as might be considered to be the case of Egypt, Syria or Iran. Little is said here about the migration of

Hashemites from the south or of the origins of roving Bedouins and the relationships of different groups of clans prior to the origin of the state, or why the Royal Family who were from Saudi Arabia were able to assume rule so easily. The book's approach is to view the history of the country using Royal family as it's focus. We learn about issues of succession, the relationship between the Royals and various Prime Ministers, Parliament and key figures such as Glubb Pasha, the British Army Advisor who was on permanent loan to Jordan and head of Jordan's Army during the key time frame from 1939-'56. pp42-45 does give some limited information on the different tribal groups and credits Glubb as the establishing force for unity between the various tribes - the first time they had been united since the fall of the Ummayyad Dynasty in 750 AD. To a larger extent the book focused on personalities rather than policies. The treatment of the Royal family is nearly hagiographic, reserving itself for only the mildest criticism. A second example is in the coverage of the various individual holding the post of Prime Minister, in particular the rivalry between Wasfi al-Tall and Bahjat al-Talhuni. 'Tall was energetic, loud and on occasions, course. Talhuni was quiet and careful.

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