



The Near East: A Cultural History

Arthur Cotterell

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This ambitious and wide-ranging popular history is the first narrative account of the entire Near East (Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States), from the genesis of civilization in the fourth millennium BCE until modern times. It provides an historical outline of the civilizations and cultures that dominated the region, one that has had an immense impact on the development of humankind, ever since the ancient Sumerians invented urban living and writing around 3200 BCE. Later, the Babylonians and the Assyrians built upon the Sumerian legacy. They were the world's earliest great powers, whose actions in the cradle of monotheism influenced Judaism and, eventually, Christianity and Islam. The Near East discusses the long eras of Arab, Persian and Ottoman rule, and the destabilizing intervention of Western colonial powers. Cotterell's book is a timely reminder of how historical events have shaped the outlooks of various peoples, just as political turbulence in the Near East is challenging both neighboring countries and the wider world.

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