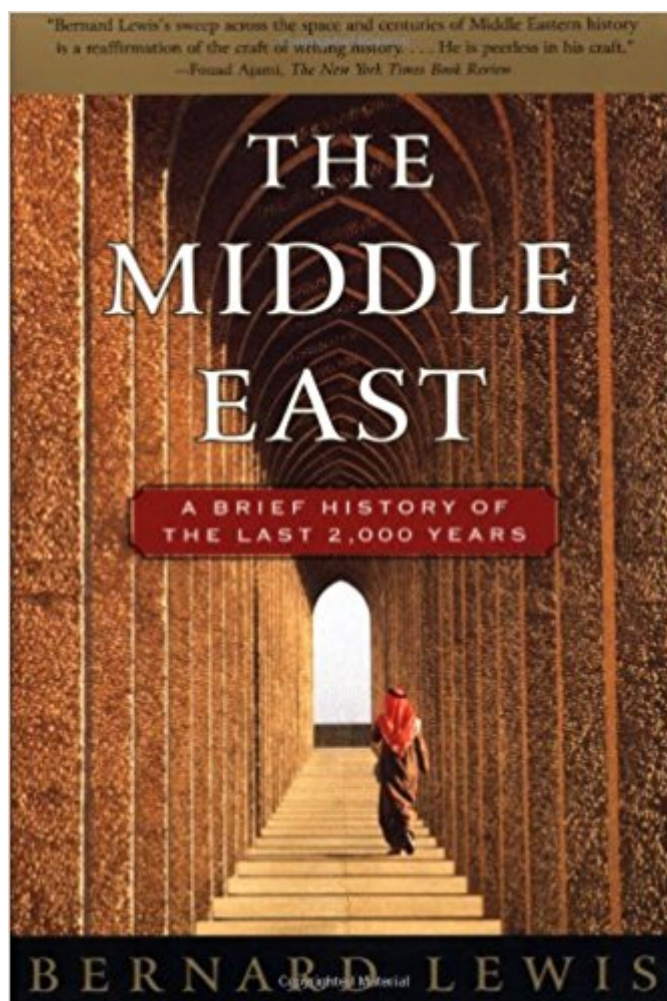


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The Middle East: A Brief History Of The Last 2,000 Years



Synopsis

In a sweeping and vivid survey, renowned historian Bernard Lewis charts the history of the Middle East over the last 2,000 years, from the birth of Christianity through the modern era, focusing on the successive transformations that have shaped it. Drawing on material from a multitude of sources, including the work of archaeologists and scholars, Lewis chronologically traces the political, economical, social, and cultural development of the Middle East, from Hellenization in antiquity to the impact of westernization on Islamic culture. Meticulously researched, this enlightening narrative explores the patterns of history that have repeated themselves in the Middle East. From the ancient conflicts to the current geographical and religious disputes between the Arabs and the Israelis, Lewis examines the ability of this region to unite and solve its problems and asks if, in the future, these unresolved conflicts will ultimately lead to the ethnic and cultural factionalism that tore apart the former Yugoslavia. Elegantly written, scholarly yet accessible, *The Middle East* is the most comprehensive single volume history of the region ever written from the world's foremost authority on the Middle East.

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Customer Reviews

To gain a better understanding of contemporary Middle Eastern culture and society, which is steeped in tradition, one should look closely at its history. Bernard Lewis, Professor of Near Eastern studies at Princeton University, considered one of the world's foremost authorities on the Middle East, spans 2000 years of this region's history, searching in the past for answers to questions that will inevitably arise in the future. Drawing on material from a multitude of sources, including the

work of archaeologists and scholars, Lewis chronologically traces the political, economical, social, and cultural development of the Middle East, from Hellenization in antiquity to the impact of westernization on Islamic culture. Meticulously researched, this enlightening narrative explores the patterns of history that have repeated themselves in the Middle East. From the ancient conflicts to the current geographical and religious disputes between the Arabs and the Israelis, Lewis examines the ability of this region to unite and solve its problems and asks if, in the future, these unresolved conflicts will ultimately lead to the ethnic and cultural factionalism that tore apart the former Yugoslavia.

A noted Middle East historian, Lewis (Islam and the West, LJ 5/1/93) has written a 2000-year history of a region stretching from Libya to Central Asia. He concludes with the effects of the Gulf War and the entry into negotiations of the PLO and the government of Israel. Beginning his history before the rise of Christianity and Islam, Lewis seeks to illuminate the connections between the ancient Middle East and the modern region. He outlines the histories of pre-Islamic Arabia and the two great empires of Sasanid Persia and Byzantium. These entities formed the backdrop for the rise of the Prophet Muhammed and the formation of the Islamic polity. Lewis concentrates on the cultural, social, and economic changes in the region while keeping the political narrative to a minimum. He includes many direct quotations from a variety of contemporary sources to highlight a given period and place, providing an immediacy of experience not offered by conventional narrative or analysis. Highly recommended. ?Robert J. Andrews, Duluth P.L., Minn. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Bernard Lewis's "The Middle East" is a thorough and comprehensive history of the region, though overwhelmingly focused on the Muslim/Arab dominance of this region. Though labeled as a history of the past 2,000 years, it's mostly a history of the past 1,400 years. Persians, Christians, Romans, and modern Israelis operate on the fringes. Still, if you want a history of Islam in the Middle East, this is the book for you.

This book is representing a thorough reference to all people interested in understanding the history and the dynamics of the current Middle East region, where the writer has demonstrated the full history of the region with the outside world in a simplified way. Moreover, he had the power to link the history with the current status of those countries in a pragmatic unbiased way. The book is an asset for those who are looking for a clear understanding of the ME region even if they are not

academics and I highly recommend this book to anyone who are in need to understand part of the current global powers movement without being over saturated with unnecessary details.

This book does a good job giving a history of the Middle East. It is effectively organized and does a fairly balance view of the various religions that have arisen in the area. This book is a stepping stone into a deeper series of studies and is useful for helping the reader to see what they are really interested in. The author does a good job giving the history as the people would have viewed themselves in each time period. I.e. when discussing the Ottoman Empire, the priorities of the Sultans is rendered fairly accurately as they themselves would have given it and not played down to try to seem like the Ottomans were mostly peaceful coexistence types. As with most empires, there was a balance between peace and war and the author does a good job showing that. However, as we reach into modern times, there is a hint of the "we all need to get along" message in how some modern Islamic societies are portrayed and while that is true for some people and governments, that message needs to be better balanced with the opposing views of those who believe that peaceful coexistence is not possible. I am not saying that the author did a bad job at all, just keep in mind that it is harder to maintain that balance viewpoint when there is so much propaganda going in all directions. To be fair, any historical works which touch on events in the last forty to fifty years has to deal with this issue. So, my advice, read the book and then dig deeper into what you found most interesting. Enjoy.

This is a wonderful, brilliant book by the Dean of Middle East historians, Bernard Lewis, Professor Emeritus of Near East history at Princeton University now in his 96th year. Dr. Lewis's unique erudition and mastery of the subject matter is immediately apparent upon first reading the book, however, be forewarned that Dr. Lewis does not suffer fools gladly and assumes of the reader a fairly strong knowledge of Middle East history as well as a high level of reading comprehension skills which makes this "brief" overview a bit of a contradiction. Still, this book, which incorporates an immense amount of informatio, was my introduction to the Middle East and each time I re-read it, I find new nuances that make it an endless source of vast wisdom, insight and intellect.

Is not a blow by blow account of the generals, crusades and wars but goes through in great detail the economics, politics and shifting alliances of the Middle East. Well worth the read. Try also Lewis's "What Went Wrong" which is shorter and punchier. One complaint: the Arabic characaters are not displayed correctly and are nearly impossible to read. So, when you come across the name

of a location or a person, the character is tiny, unreadable and annoying.

This is a really excellent book to begin to understand the Middle East. It is definitely a starting point and no book can encompass the complexity of the region.

Excellent brief historical presentation of the Middle East. Mr Bernard Lewis accomplished his purpose of introducing us to the Persian and Byzantium empires from the pre- Islamic Arabia and the founding of the Islamic state. Also he establishes the link between modern Middle East and the Ancient civilization. I would consider this book as an excellent historical resource.

Brilliant clear writing by a man who really knows his subject backwards sideways and inside out. It is not academically heavy, but purely enjoyable particularly to a layman like me. I will certainly want to read more books by Bernard Lewis.

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