and missionaries traded their goods, ideas, and faiths between these two regions. India has been the Persian Gulf's primary trading partner and source of supplies such as foodstuffs and wood, which were critical to the survival and prosperity of people in the *khalīj*. This section focuses on the Gulf's outward orientation toward the Indian Ocean (M. Redha Bhacker) and important aspects of the relations between the peoples of the East African coast and those of the Persian Gulf (Abdul Sheriff). Providing examples of events and incidents from the Indian Ocean, the Gulf, South Asia, and East Africa, this section shows how people conceptualized and practiced a "pluralistic" notion of civilization. The raison d'être for such interaction and communication across the Indian Ocean was trade. The diverse essays in this section provide the reader with a fascinating and very informative picture of the economic and social relations and intercultural exchanges that took place between the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean, and the Swahili Coast over the *longue durée*.

The third section, "The Role of Outsiders," highlights the role that outsiders—including the Portuguese (João Teles e Cunha), Dutch (Willem Floor), Ottomans (Frederick Anscombe), British (J. E. Peterson), and Americans (Gary Sick)—have played in the Gulf. The book in general and this section in particular are very informative and analytical with regard to the Iranian element in the Gulf. The book encourages an understanding of Gulf history that does not undervalue Iran's influence throughout the different periods. It suggests, however, that in reconstructing the history of the Gulf, one should leave behind polemics such as whether the region's proper name should be the "Persian Gulf" or the "Arabian Gulf," since the area has always been ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse. The Gulf should not be considered a mere annex of either Iran or the Arab world.

The Persian Gulf in History represents a signal achievement in the study of the Gulf as a single unit of analysis. The book's distinctive combination of perspectives, approaches, and topics represents an unprecedented collaborative effort that helps to reframe our understanding of the Gulf and that leaves scholars with fruitful inspiration for new inquiries. What does "cultural pluralism" or "multiculturalism" mean? How did it develop in the Gulf? Who contributed to its development? How is it relevant to contemporary society? What are the unique markers of *khalījī* culture?

The Persian Gulf in History is a very timely volume. It challenges the methods scholars have used to understand and represent the Persian Gulf. The inability to conceptualize the Gulf's history as a unified whole has resulted in limited and partial historical representations of the Gulf. This book instead focuses on the society of the entire Gulf littoral and emphasizes the connections between the Arab and Persian coasts. It will be indispensable reading for anyone interested in a region whose strategic, political, economic, and financial importance has grown spectacularly in the last four decades. The book is well put together and extremely readable. It should be required for any university-level course on Gulf history and deserves to be on the bookshelf of any serious Gulf scholar.

ADEED DAWISHA, *Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009). Pp. 408. $30.95 cloth, $29.95 e-book.

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Political science professor Adeed Dawisha has provided policymakers with a highly readable interpretive account of Iraq's political history from Britain's creation of the state in 1921

through 2008. Dawisha's contribution to the field holds certain advantages over earlier surveys of Iraqi political history in the 20th century (including those by Longrigg, Khadduri, Sluglett, Marr, and Tripp) in that its narrative continues beyond the 2003 Anglo-American invasion, boasts a lucid analysis of Iraq's national political culture, relies largely on Arabic sources, and is evenly critical of several key players in Iraq's modern stage.

Instead of utilizing a straightforward chronological structure, Dawisha employs a hybrid approach by repeatedly discussing three themes in successive historical periods. This not only allows for a more analytical discussion of his chosen themes of governance, democracy, and national identity but also results in occasional—and perhaps inevitable—redundancy. Following a brief introduction, the first six chapters address these three thematic areas twice in succession, first during the state formation of 1921 to 1936 and then during the dynamic instability of 1936 to 1958. Then, after a chapter summarizing his conclusions regarding each of these topics for the monarchic period, each theme is subsumed within three further chapters devoted to the revolutionary decade of 1958 to 1968, the Baʿathist era of 1968 to 2003, and developments since 2003. This structure devotes more analysis to the monarchic period and offers increasingly less analysis as the narrative approaches the present.

Iraq should be approached as an extended interpretive essay. It is informed by political science paradigms and a "great men" theory of history, designed to influence policy debates and intended for readers reasonably familiar with modern Iraq. It is not ideal as a college textbook because much of the discussion requires prior knowledge of the outlines of modern Iraqi history. It is more suitable as a companion volume for advanced undergraduates, graduate students, or aspiring policymakers striving to engage with historical debates concerning the evolution of Iraq's political culture. As the contribution is not exceedingly theoretical or analytically groundbreaking and does not offer significant new sources to the historical debate, it may prove less interesting for advanced scholars of Iraq.

Although fresh primary-source research is not evident, the author does offer several fascinating historical details previously unknown to this reviewer, largely gained from Arabic sources and, for the 1970s onward, Dawisha's personal recollections. For example, Bakr Sidqi tried to pack the Iraqi military college with Kurdish officer candidates in 1936, Nuri al-Said advised the British to attack Egypt in 1956, Jordan's King Hussein tried to tip off his Hashemite cousins to the pending coup in 1958, and ʿAbd al-Salam ʿAref demanded that ʿAbd al-Karim Qasim admit to ʿAref's role in the 1958 revolution prior to Qasim's execution in 1963. While such intriguing anecdotes spice up an already engaging text, some of Dawisha's statements betray his own cultural proclivities. For example, he argues that Nasser's Egypt was struggling "to stride out beyond the intellectual confines of its own Egyptianness" (p. 166) or that Kurds needed to curb their "feral and more anarchic impulses" (p. 279). These are viewpoints unlikely to gain universal accord.

Some of Dawisha's conclusions will prove contentious to certain readers and gospel truth to others. As one might expect from a historical analysis of Iraqi politics, such statements largely pertain to post-1958 developments. For example, Dawisha's assertion that "any talk of Party autonomy was pure whimsy" (p. 229) after 1968–70 would be countered by those dating Saddam Hussein's complete personal domination of the Baʿath party to 1975, 1979, or even 1990. His characterization of the level of violence surrounding the 2005 elections as no worse than that in other Third World countries (p. 254) and his labeling of the 2006 Badr Corps' infiltration of the Ministry of Interior as "alleged" (p. 255) also invite disagreement. (Later in the book he actually treats the Badr Corps' infiltration as a fact [p. 267], which betrays that this section was written relatively rapidly). Finally, the characterization of Diyala and Taʾmim as "predominantly Arab" provinces (p. 250) may be technically true (at times), but it papers over the complex and often sordid history of ethno-sectarian engineering that portions of both provinces experienced.

Dawisha engages the debate concerning the origin, extent, and evolution of certain constants in Iraqi political culture after the state's initial formation with relish. This debate, an attempt to finger the original sinner for as many negative characteristics of Iraqi politics as any analyst may choose to identify, defines the underlying political views of most scholars of modern Iraq. In Dawisha's case, while he does identify such original sinners throughout the period in question, as well as the roots of several phenomena in the monarchic period, most of his analytic conclusions place the blame for Iraq's political problems squarely on the twin legacies of the 1958 revolution and the extremes of the Saddam Hussein regime that evolved out of it. In terms of his discussion of events after 2003, it appears as though Dawisha was either squeezed for space or hedging his analytical bets for the future. While this is certainly understandable considering the potentially positive turn that took place in Iraq as this book was heading to press, the relatively compressed and conservative presentation of events since the fateful Anglo-American invasion renders the final chapter the least convincing of the work. Many American policymakers will feel far more reassured in their own motivations and legacies from Dawisha's recounting than from those of other scholars.

Aimed at informed readers rather than specialists, *Iraq* does not include a note on transliteration and does include several unconventional, hybrid, dialectical, or simply incorrect transliteration choices and/or typos, such as *maddrassa*, *fetwa*, *nidham*, *shiyukh*, *ʿijmi*, Muhamed, and Barazani. This is not a major problem, but the lack of any maps of Iraq and its provinces or of Baghdad neighborhoods will prove disappointing to some and confusing to others. Finally, inclusion of a chronology would have been exceedingly helpful since Dawisha's expository structure is not conducive to readers' recalling the order of events. In spite of the critiques mentioned here, Dawisha's contribution is on the whole an engaging, lively, thought-provoking, and profitable read.

SIMON SMITH, ED., *Reassessing Suez 1956: New Perspectives on the Crisis and Its Aftermath* (London: Ashgate, 2008). Pp. 270. $114.95 cloth.

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Academics, like politicians, enjoy celebrating silver and golden jubilees, centennials, and other ceremonial occasions. While the latter use these occasions to boost their legitimacy and elevate their prestige, the former tend to search for some meaningful, authoritative narrative that will hopefully endure until at least the next celebration—the discovery of which perhaps leads to a different kind of prestige. The Golden Jubilee of the Suez Affair in the summer of 2006 prompted the organization of several conferences in the West and the Arab world. The volume under review is the first to emerge from these conferences (and there are more to come). It is the product of an international conference held at the University of Hull; Simon Smith gathered some seventeen academics to collaborate on a book about the 1956 Suez Crisis that included in its title promising terms such as "reassessing" and "new perspectives." Some articles follow through on the use of such terms, but the volume in general does not offer a meaningful rethinking of the event.

A look at the volume's table of contents reveals two problematic issues: first, no structural logic dictated the ordering of the articles; second, of the fifteen pieces, twelve were dedicated to issues related to the superpowers (Britain, the United States, and France) and the United Nations. Only three articles deal with regional actors—and of those, one focuses on Turkey,