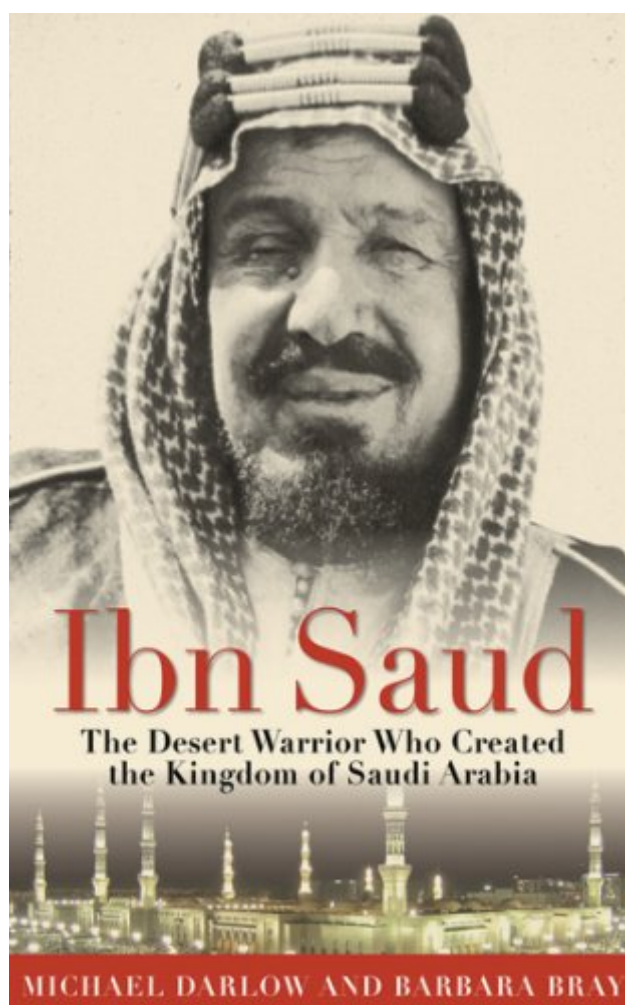


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Ibn Saud: The Desert Warrior Who Created The Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia



Synopsis

Ibn Saud grew to manhood living the harsh traditional life of the desert nomad, a life that had changed little since the days of Abraham. Equipped with immense physical courage, he fought and won, often with weapons and tactics not unlike those employed by the ancient Assyrians, a series of astonishing military victories over a succession of enemies much more powerful than himself. Over the same period, he transformed himself from a minor sheikh into a revered king and elder statesman, courted by world leaders such as Churchill and Roosevelt. A passionate lover of women, Ibn Saud took many wives, had numerous concubines, and fathered almost one hundred children. Yet he remained an unswerving and devout Muslim, described by one who knew him well at the time of his death in 1953 as “probably the greatest Arab since the Prophet Muhammad.” Saudi Arabia, the country Ibn Saud created, is a staunch ally of the West, but it is also the birthplace of Osama bin Laden and fifteen of the nineteen 9/11 hijackers. Saud’s kingdom, as it now stands, has survived the vicissitudes of time and become an invaluable player on the world’s political stage.

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Customer Reviews

With more anecdotal material than Robert Lacey's *THE KINGDOM*, this biography is more personal than the Lacey treatment. Ibn Saud, like Jalaladin Akbar has some remarkable characteristics that grace the greatest of history's leaders. Charismatic, fearless and magnanimous in victory, Ibn Saud's creation of a unified Arabia, much like the efforts of Otto Von Bismarck in Germany, is marked by cunning and daring and a willingness to attack any defeat rather than let it lie. Because of the insular nature of the harem and family life, this book is only a glimpse into the life of one of history's most interesting founding fathers. The book's strongest point is its bibliography, both its length and breadth so that the reader may explore other subjects that arise in the telling of the Saudi tale.

3.5 stars in my opinion. Lots of information, excellent research, and a thorough bibliography. However, the book reads a lot like a text book. And the book is misnamed. It covers the period from about 1870 to 2010 in the events of the development of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. About 75% of the book covers the life of its founder Ibn Saud. But its thrust is the kingdom and Saud; it's not strictly a biography. Good reading if you want to get a good overview of Ibn Saud and the birth and development of Saudi Arabia.

This is a must read for anyone who wants to understand Contemporary geopolitics. Why Saudi Arabia is the way it is has been very well brought out. Saud's genius in building a kingdom and dynasty is very evident. OTOH, the book is an undisguised PR effort for Ibn Saud. He is praised to the sky while others are dismissively caricatured. While opponents are 'fat, murderous, treacherous', Saud can go from being far sighted and wise to a simple Bedouin for whom a man's word is his contract (within the same chapter). Once you discount that, it is a rewarding read.

A great book for putting so many Middle East issues into focus, including historical perspectives that help one see the traditions of violence accompanied by a certain code of moral conduct. An added bonus was the added insight it provides to other countries like Britain, US, the Netherlands (all oil and geo-strategic related) in addition to the locals- Iraq, Iran, Turkey, but also the religious cultures of Wahhabism, Shiite, Sunni. Bedouin nomads, and the towards the end the emergence of Israel headlong into this mix. Women's rights issues receive less consideration - just enough to put things into perspective. Ibn Saud as a leader seems to be a honorable man of strong character - always forgiving his enemies but being forever vigilant and quick to react when cornered. One of the best historical treatises I have read among the popular literature with abundant footnotes. Slow to start

but becomes more and more intriguing as you go. Congratulations to the author.

A host of folks ought to have read this book before making decisions involving the middle east!! Particularly G.W. Bush and his coterie that were going to make him a heroic nation-builder, not to mention Tony Blair as this is nothing short of an excellent review of Islam and its combinationa and permutations. The fact that so many acted in ignorance is no excuse for short-sighted reactions to that area of the world.

I learned a lot about the Bedouin way of life, and I came to respect Ibn Saud in a way that I did not expect. There was somewhat more detail than I felt was necessary, but it did not interfere with the overall flow of the book. I do not understand or agree with the current way of life in Saudi Arabia (at least as it is portrayed in our media), but I now have a much better understanding of the forces, culture, and this powerful character who created it. In spite of the brutality in his story, I feel Ibn Saud was a truly great leader and an admirable man.

Very informative and detail. Gives a good understanding of much of the Saud family and the objectives of Saudi Arabia.

to understand present day Saudi Arabia, you can find no better history than this book. It is also very readable and exciting.

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