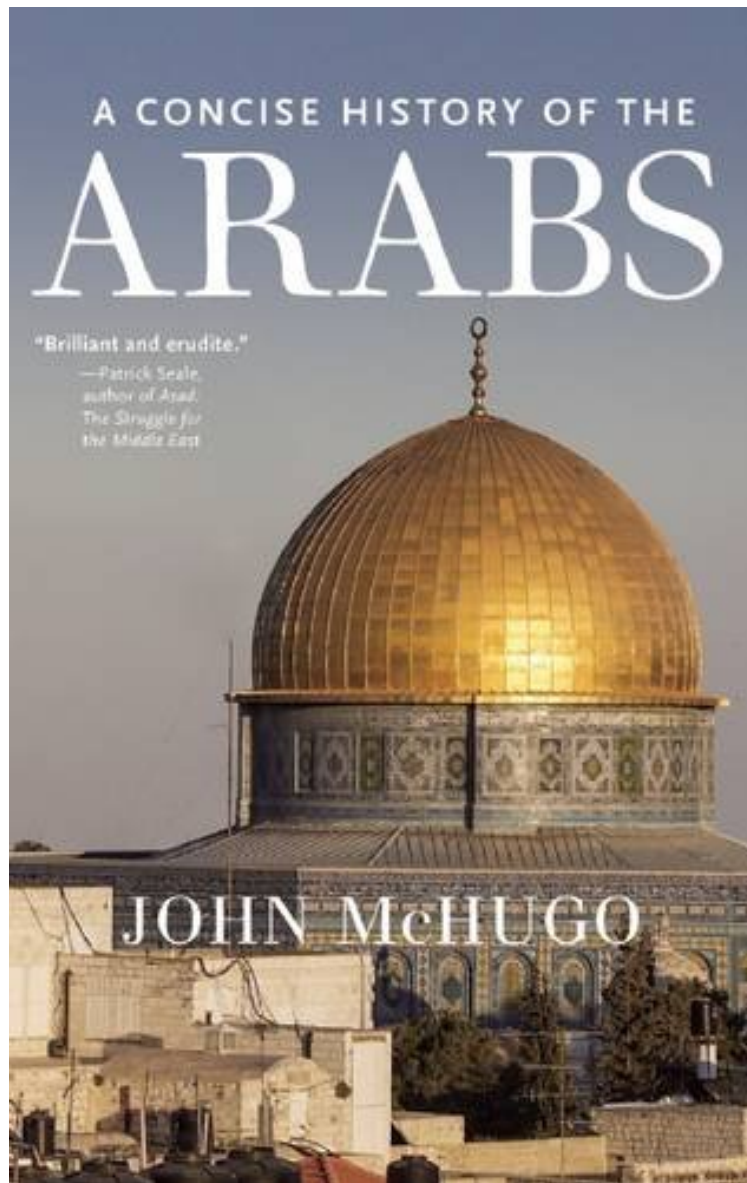


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A Concise History of the Arabs

John McHugo

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John McHugo : A Concise History of the Arabs before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Concise History of the Arabs:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars By mr david curran A great short book for people who can't tell a Sunni disposition from a Shiite shape 8 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Too concise and rather biased By Aron Matskin I bought the book because it was recommended by Tyler Cowen in his (and Alex

Tabarrok's) blog Marginal Revolution. After having read the book I am a bit baffled why he liked it. A Concise History of the Arabs is too concise to further one's understanding of Arab history. The book is full of facts, but they lack serious context. The overarching message is that during the modern times the Arabs have been victims of colonialism - mainly British and French - and Zionism. They have a distinct culture and a worldview based on, but not necessarily identical with, Islam. That culture is in some important ways superior to the Western secular culture of hedonism and excess. Their recent past as victims of that same Western culture, however, did not let the Arabs develop a healthy response to modernity causing Arab-on-Arab and Arab against the West violence. Still not all is lost - the Arab Spring may turn out to be the new beginning for them. All well and good, but the author ends up more or less just stating that point. His analysis is extremely one-sided and biased toward the Arabs and against the West. He seems to be hiding behind the disclaimer that his history is "concise and not definitive". But is such a case he should have found a neutral context for his work, not a moral one. 0 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Worthwhile By Bad Leg Interesting knowledge acquired in reading this book. I'll finish it eventually.

From Algeria and Libya to Egypt and Syria, the Arab world commands Western headlines, even as its complex politics and cultures elude the grasp of most Western readers and commentators. Perhaps no other region is so closely linked to contemporary U.S. foreign policy, and nowhere else does the unfolding of events have such significant consequences for America. A Concise History of the Arabs argues that the key to understanding the Arab world today and in the years ahead is unlocking its past. John McHugo takes the reader on a journey through the political, social, and intellectual history of the Arabs from the Roman Empire right up to the present day. His sweeping and fluent account describes in vivid detail the mission of the Prophet Muhammad, the expansion of Islam, the origins of Shiism, medieval and modern conflicts, the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the interaction with Western ideas, the struggle to escape foreign domination, the rise of Islamism, and the end of the era of dictators. McHugo reveals how the Arab world came to have its present form, why change was inevitable, and what choices lie ahead following the Arab Spring. This deeply informed and accessible account is the perfect entry point for anyone seeking to comprehend this vital part of the world.

"A lucid and highly readable history of the Arab peoples up to the present day. John McHugo has provided a way of understanding this complex and ongoing story that will enlighten all who read it." Charles Tripp, author of *The Power and the People* "Even those who are familiar with the story of the Arabs will find this new history thrilling and poignant, woven with a layered texture of knowledge and empathy that deftly stitches familiar figures into the narrative in a fresh way. It is no small feat to compress the fourteen centuries from the dawn of Islam to the new Arab Awakening into such an effortless read." David Gardner, international affairs editor, *Financial Times*, and author of *Last Chance: the Middle East in the Balance* "This concise, brilliant and erudite book is the product of wide reading, hard thinking and years of direct experience of the Middle East. The author, an international lawyer and Arabist, has managed to throw fresh light on 1,400 years of Arab history from the Prophet Muhammad to the Arab Spring. There are lively and informative insights on almost every page." Patrick Seale, author of *The Struggle for Syria* "This is a concise historical survey of Arab history from the early Islamic period to our day, including Western-Arab and Western-Muslim encounters ... A well-written, original and stimulating introduction to the Arab world." Gilbert Achcar, author of *The Arabs and the Holocaust: The Arab-Israeli War of Narratives*