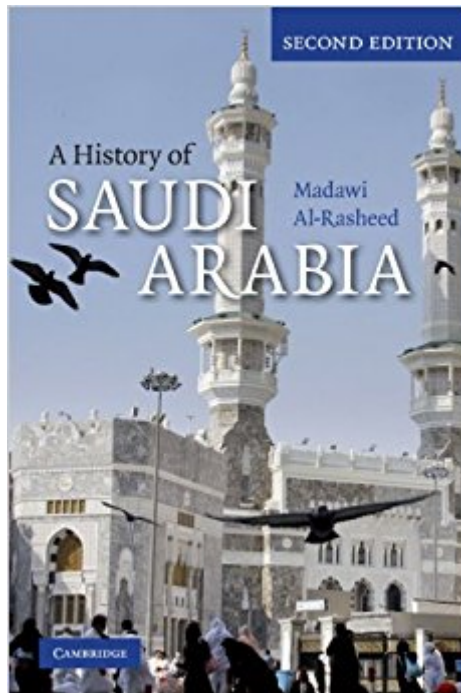




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# A History Of Saudi Arabia



## Synopsis

This updated edition analyses the challenges, both internal and external, facing Saudi Arabia in the twenty-first century. Two new chapters discuss the political, economic and social developments in the aftermath of 9/11, painting a vivid picture of a country shocked by terrorism and condemned by the international community. Madawi Al-Rasheed reveals that fragmentation of royal politics, a failing economy and fermenting Islamist dissent posed serious threats to state and society in 2001. She assesses the consequent state reforms introduced under pressure of terrorism, international scrutiny and a social mobilisation of men, women and minorities struggling to shape their future against a background of repression and authoritarian rule. While Saudi Arabia is still far from establishing a fourth state, there are signs that the people are ready for a serious change that will lead them to a state of institutions rather than princes.

## Book Information

Paperback: 342 pages

Publisher: Cambridge University Press; 2 edition (May 17, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0521747546

ISBN-13: 978-0521747547

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.7 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #341,522 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #44 in Books > History > Middle East > Saudi Arabia #302 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History > Middle East

## Customer Reviews

"An accessible narrative that even those readers already familiar with the outlines of Saudi history can read with profit." Middle East Policy "The book...is written in a style that quite simply makes for a 'good read.' If I were recommending one book on the history of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia...this would be it." Middle East Journal "Al-Rasheed's book is concise, timely, and well suited for a broad readership...Skillfully written and insightful." History: Reviews of New Books "Madawi Al-Rasheed's critical reinterpretation of Saudi Arabian history is not only timely, it is provocative. It is informed by both excellent scholarship and a familiarity with the subject that comes from knowing it from the inside. Both sympathizers with and critics of the country will find their stereotypes of the Saudi reality challenged." F. Gregory Gause, III, University of Vermont "This is one of the most refreshing,

well-researched and clearly-written books to appear on Saudia Arabia in recent times." Hala Fattah, Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies"Al-Rasheed has written a strong general history of Saudi Arabia that at the same time offers analysis of selected narrower issues and phenomena."

- Peter C. Valenti, New York University --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This second edition analyses the challenges, both internal and external, facing Saudi Arabia in the twenty-first century. Two new chapters and an updated conclusion bring the history of Saudi Arabia up to the present day, analysing the political, economic and social developments in the aftermath of 9/11.

I found this book to be the most informative and concise introduction to modern Saudi Arabia currently available. I lived and worked in the Kingdom in the late 2000s during which time I read most of what had been recently published. Much of what was available was written by western journalists with only a very superficial understanding of culture, politics and economy of KSA and much seemed to be aimed at satisfying the market for sensational anecdotes of their short "bungee jumps" into the region. Ms. al-Rasheed's book is a well researched and beautifully written study of the making of modern Saudi society and its role in the region.

Before reading this book, I knew little about the history of Saudi Arabia. After reading it, I know a lot. So the book definitely served its purpose. But there are a few weaknesses that I must mention:1) The book is definitely written in an academic style. As an academic myself, I can appreciate that. But for a more casual reader, this fact might be somewhat off putting.2) Perhaps this comment is a continuation of the first, but why must Arabic words be so heavily emphasized? Do so when there is no English word but come on, a phrase such as "... the head of the royal court (diwan), who was appointed as clerk (amin sir)." verges on showing off.3) The first 7 chapters were written for a 2002 edition; the 2010 edition adds two new chapters. But it seems as if the author did nothing to revise the first chapters. For instance, the old Chapter 6 says about Bin Laden's blame for the 9-11 attacks that "... hard evidence remains at this point very elusive." Probably in 2002 this statement would have been acceptable. But for a book copyrighted in 2010, the statement is ludicrous. When updating to a new edition, checking everything is a good idea.4) Chapters 7 and 8 show the author looking at very current events (ie, for Chapter 7 current in 2002 and for Chapter 8 current in 2008) and vastly overstating their importance. In particular, not every small London-based group and not

every proclamation of the king will be crucially significant. Mentioning these without going into detail is a good idea, at least until the group or proclamation has proven to be important. While I have mentioned 4 flaws, I still liked the book quite a lot, hence its high rating. If you are looking for a good history of Saudi Arabia from 1900 to 2000, this is a book to consider. It's a little weaker on the period before 1900 and after 2000.

Learned a bit about real history of how Saudi came to be a Kingdom. Didn't change my opinion of the royal family at all. Pictures were nice addition.

written as if the reader WAS VERY FAMILIAR WITH GEOGRAPHY AND PREVIOUS HISTORY1 2  
3 4 5 6 7 8

The Saud family is the monarchy, which is the state, of Saudi Arabia. This book shows how that state of affairs came to be. I found the material on the 1930s especially illuminating, because it provides us with a picture of the Saud family, and to a degree a picture of Arabia, before the rest of the world came to appreciate the strategic significance of petroleum, and before the Second World War made all national boundaries something up for negotiation and renegotiation. We're also treated to an illuminating discussion of when marriages (and by extension polygamy) is, and when it isn't, a valuable tool for the forging of political alliances. This is an analytical take on a subject usually rushed through with clichés.

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