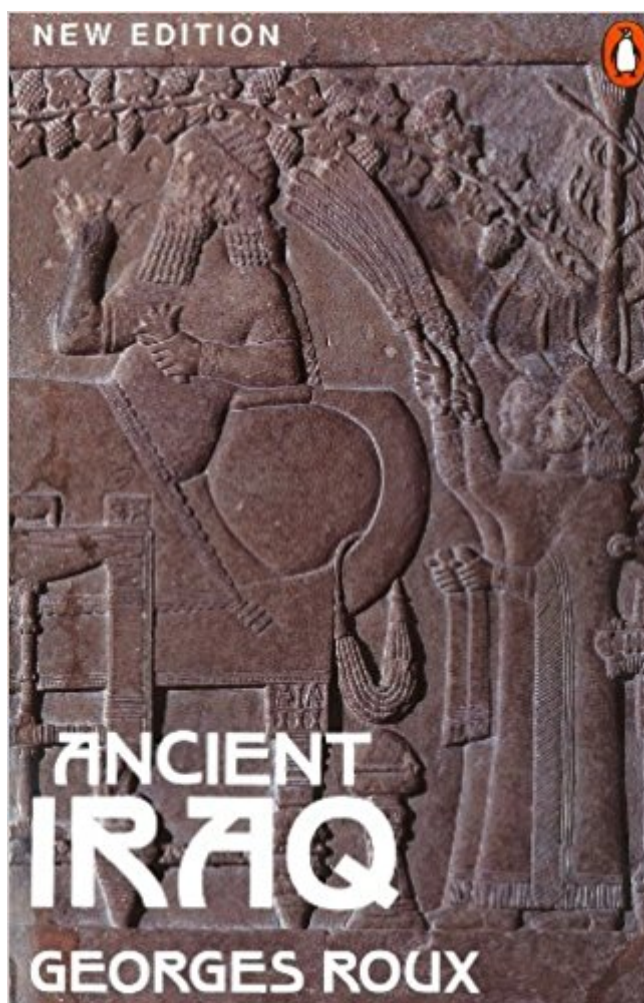


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Ancient Iraq: Third Edition (Penguin History)



Synopsis

Newly revised and containing information from recent excavations and discovered artifacts, Ancient Iraq covers the political, cultural, and socio-economic history from Mesopotamia days of prehistory to the Christian era.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

My family is Assyrian/Chaldean. I've been writing about and researching Mesopotamia (now -- sort of -- Iraq) for well over a decade. I read this book three times, detailing the research laid out by the author, and still could read it again and find more. It is an unbiased, EXCELLENT and scholarly analysis of actual findings from the region. There are plenty of pieces of this cradle of civilization to uncover via other resources, however, this is a wonderful work of masterful research and thoughtful, but unimposing observation. HIGHLY recommend.

I appreciated Georges Roux's book on "Ancient Iraq" very much. At over 400 pages, it is hard to call the book a survey, but it is. The problem is that the topic itself is enormous, spanning over 3000 years and encompassing multiple, complex civilizations. Additionally, since the topic itself is so old, predating the rise of "classical" Greece, information upon which the book is based is almost always incomplete and frequently of questionable veracity. So when an author like Roux overcomes these problems and still manages to create a truly fun book to read, you can appreciate his accomplishment all the more. The book starts off with a very nice and relatively thorough description

of ancient Iraqi geography and Iraqi civilizations predating the Uruk period, which began roughly 3500 BC and is considered the first "historic" period--where a written language was used. After that, the book delves into the better-known Sumerian civilizations, Akkad, Third Dynasty Ur, Babylon, etc. I especially appreciated his sections on the Aramaeans, Urartians, Kassites, and other less well-written-about civilizations. I'm sure Roux could have written entire books on "Neo-Assyria" or "Neo-Babylon", but the overview he provides did enough to get me interested. I was occasionally concerned that the book was outdated because, in its origins, it started out as a compilation of essays Roux wrote between 1956 and 1960 for a now defunct magazine called Iraqi Petroleum. Admittedly, the book was re-edited in 1991 and is now in its third edition, but I just didn't get the feeling it was thoroughly updated except for one small section. On the other hand, the constant fighting in the country since the last edition has probably hindered and prevented much work on the topic, so you can make an argument that the state of the art hasn't advanced much since the book was written, except for scholarship taking place outside of current day Iraq. Unfortunately, the book is also severely lacking in images. Roux offers only 15 black and white glossy pictures inserted in a bundle in the middle of the book. There are perhaps 10 basic drawing diagrams scattered throughout as well. Could have been better. You can try Googling for images. Nevertheless and regardless of all the above, the book itself is very well written and scholarly. Roux has an enormous enthusiasm for the topic, and I had a hard time putting the book down. I wanted to give the book a 5-star rating, but after going over what I just wrote, it's got to be a 4.

I bought this book to follow up on a wonderful podcast of ancient history which I'd enjoyed: "The Ancient World" by Scott Chetworth[...]. I did so with some trepidation, because "Ancient Iraq" looked rather imposing, which made me fear that it would cover the history of ancient Mesopotamia in much more detail than I would be able to digest. My fears were unjustified. The book is thorough, but neither goes into over-exhaustive detail nor is written in turgid academic prose. Moreover the history that this book tells is so old and so unknown to most people that it has a unique fascination. One is being shown a very, very different civilization from our own, almost impossibly distant in space and time, yet recognizably human. The process of discovering that strange old world is intrinsically interesting, and the author of this book is a great guide to it. One of the best things about reading history is that it lets you learn about human nature by seeing what amazing variations have been wrung upon the basic theme of "civilization". This history book is a perfect example of that.

This is an exceptionally well-written, insightful and documented historical book. It provides the

geographical details, a summary of archaeological findings and records, narrates historical events and recounts Mesopotamians' daily lives. The author also provides rationale and credible explanations of events and changes, which help make sense of thousands of years. The reader is captivated by the author's passion for a humanity's period of history that spans millenia: when Alexander the Great invaded Mesopotamia, he was separated from the Sumerians' time by a longer interval than the one which sets us apart from Ancient Romans - by a thousand years. Yet cuneiform was still used, Sumerian still understood together with Akkadian. Though I cannot judge the book in terms of accuracy and whether the theories presented are still the most current ones, this is outstanding material, which helped me make sense of a period studied many times in school but never fully comprehended. It is true that there are many names, and kings, but it is not the author's fault: how could you write in a single book the history of Europe since the early days of Greece to Obama's presidency? Yet the time span is similar. The only real weakness is in the lack of maps, and the quality and location of the images in the Kindle edition,

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