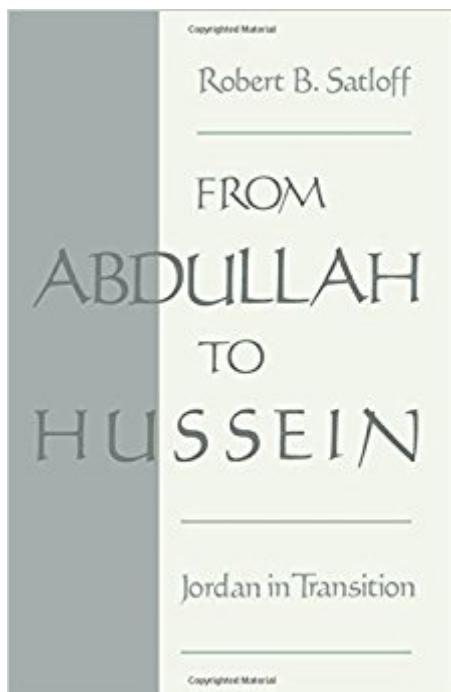


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From Abdullah To Hussein: Jordan In Transition (Studies In Middle Eastern History)



Synopsis

This book examines the most turbulent period in the history of Jordan's ruling house, the six years following the assassination of the kingdom's founder, Abdullah (1951-1957). Those years witnessed the country's lone episode of weak monarchy, when the king--the novice Hussein or his ill-starred father, Talal--was not the preeminent political actor in the land. Rather, it was during that time at the regime was left in the hands of a mix of Palestinian, Transjordanian, and Circassian royalists who had never before wielded executive authority inside the kingdom. Based on exclusive interviews and newly released archival resources, this book traces the only two royal successions in Jordanian history: the eleven-month reign of the little-known Talal, and the early years of King Hussein.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

For nearly six years, from the assassination of King Abdullah in July 1951 to King Husayn's declaration of martial law in April 1957, Jordan went through a hair-raising process of monarchical and political transition. Those years witnessed "the short, unhappy reign of King Talal," his succession by the seventeen-year old Husayn, the near-drowning of Jordan in the swirling currents of Pan-Arab nationalism, and the eventual "Hashemite restoration" which has lasted to the present. By combing the archives, reading the published sources, and interviewing many participants (including King Husayn), Satloff has with outstanding skill pieced together the first reliable history of that turbulent period. As his title implies, the story is mostly about personalities; by bringing them to life, the author infuses his analysis with verve and interest. Satloff holds that by the time Abdullah

died, his kingdom had been transformed from the simplicity of "old Transjordan" into a rather more complex polity, one in which the king relied on a small, select cadre of politicians and doers. Husayn first asserted his independence from those "dinosaurs" (most notably, by firing Glubb Pasha) and chose to steer the shoals of ideology (which at one point endowed him with a foreign minister whose overriding passion was to eliminate an independent Jordan as a step toward Arab unity). But, in the end, Husayn returned to his grandfather's ways, looking to the "king's men" to help him sustain a Hashemite monarchy in a most inhospitable environment. *Middle East Quarterly*, September 1994

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