

Islamic rather than European societies. Blake examines the evolving concepts of time through the Safavid, Mughal, and Ottoman empires, and their connection to the development of significant religious practices such as the timing of the five daily prayers, the holy months of Ramadan, and the Meccan pilgrimage. Religious beliefs and practices shaped the concept of time, and in turn, new understandings of time gave order to daily and religious life. Blake discusses the various social practices and values that were adopted and reinforced through the defining and redefining of the concept of time, and argues that the calendrical innovations achieved by the Islamic *munajjim* (time specialists) were motivated in part by the attempt to distinguish Muslim communities from their Jewish and Christian neighbors. ✂

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Niss Bouhout
Virginia Tech

NOGA EFRATI. *Women in Iraq: Past Meets Present.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2012. xviii + 236 pages, acknowledgements, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth US\$40.50 ISBN 978-0-231-15814-5.

Drawing from current scholarship in English, French, and Arabic, as well as archival material, periodicals, and private papers, Noga Efrati examines the ways in which Iraqi women's social and political rights suffered under British occupation during the first half of the twentieth century. Efrati focuses on how oppressive British laws, particularly the Tribal Criminal and Civil Disputes Regulation, undermined women's positions in the realms of family law and politics, and relegated them to the status of second-class citizens. However, through the development of a robust civil society, Iraqi women did attempt to gain social and political equality during the British occupation and after its downfall. Efrati concludes by exploring how the struggles of Iraqi women to gain greater social equality constituted a significant step toward Iraq's modernization. Nevertheless, as Efrati discusses in the epilogue, progress toward women's rights suffered significant setbacks as a result of the U.S. invasion of Iraq of 2003. ✂

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Niss Bouhout
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