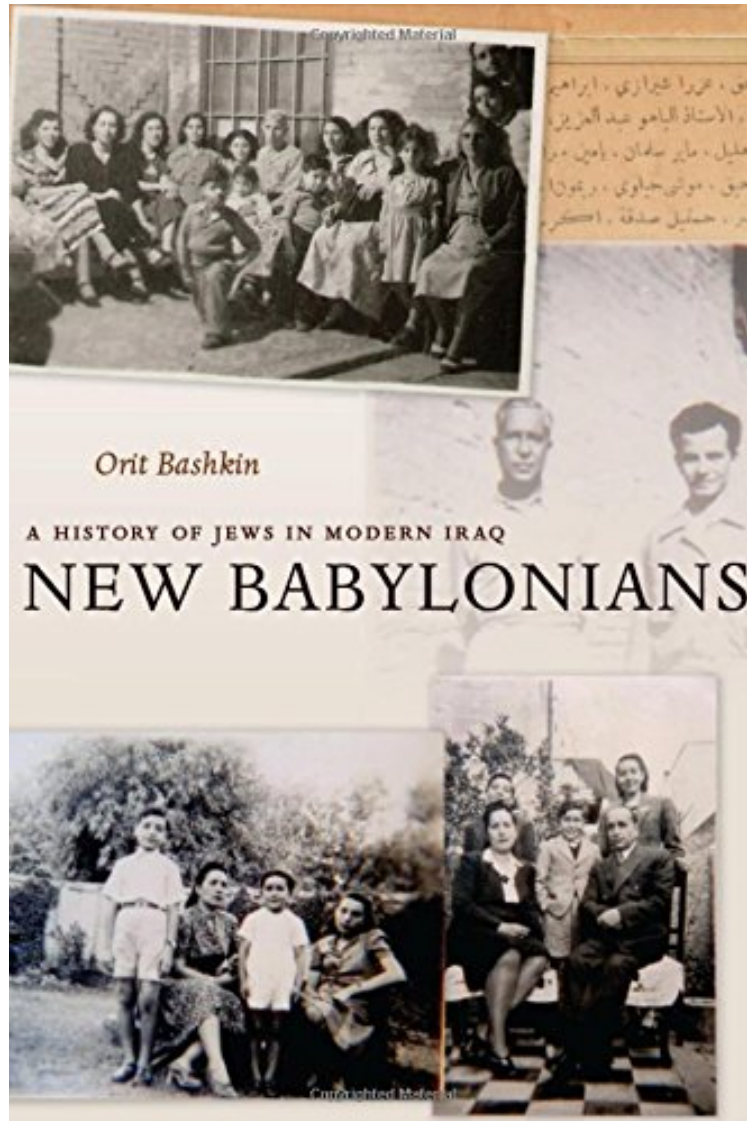


[Download free pdf] New Babylonians: A History of Jews in Modern Iraq

## New Babylonians: A History of Jews in Modern Iraq

*Orit Bashkin*

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**Orit Bashkin : New Babylonians: A History of Jews in Modern Iraq** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised New Babylonians: A History of Jews in Modern Iraq:

Although Iraqi Jews saw themselves as Iraqi patriots, their community which had existed in Iraq for more than 2,500 years was displaced following the establishment of the state of Israel. *New Babylonians* chronicles the lives of these Jews, their urban Arab culture, and their hopes for a democratic nation-state. It studies their ideas about Judaism,

Islam, secularism, modernity, and reform, focusing on Iraqi Jews who internalized narratives of Arab and Iraqi nationalisms and on those who turned to communism in the 1940s. As the book reveals, the ultimate displacement of this community was not the result of a perpetual persecution on the part of their Iraqi compatriots, but rather the outcome of misguided state policies during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Sadly, from a dominant mood of coexistence, friendship, and partnership, the impossibility of Arab-Jewish coexistence became the prevailing narrative in the region and the dominant narrative we have come to know today.

"Altogether, Bashkin's book greatly enhances our understanding of the history of this vibrant and deep-rooted community, which flourished in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society for centuries: its contribution to modern Iraq, its cultural and intellectual achievements, and its global economic and trade exposure and success in Iraq and elsewhere in the diaspora. Her book is honest, well-balanced and well-documented, and she approaches her subject with an open, sympathetic mind." (Abbas Shibliak)"Orit Bashkin's riveting new book is, without doubt, the first attempt at providing a full portrait of the rise and fall of the Baghdadi Jewish community in the course of the eventful 20th Century. The book is based on rich documentation, memoirs, communal, and school records. Bashkin's narrative is a shining example of solid scholarship and, at the same time, a coherent account of the vicissitudes of the modern history of a dynamic Arab-Jewish community the like of which is no more in evidence." (Sasson Somekh author of Baghdad, Yesterday (2007))"This is a major contribution to the study of Iraqi Jews in modern times, shedding light on Jewish involvement in Iraqi intellectual and political life as part of the Iraqi nation until regional politics forced an abrupt breach and the annihilation of the community. The book is recommended for academic libraries with collections on Middle Eastern, Jewish and minorities' studies." (Rachel Simon Association of Jewish Libraries)"Bashkin recounts the last chapter in the history of the oldest Jewish Diaspora community in the Arab world, in Baghdad. . . Recommended." (M. Gershovich CHOICE)"New Babylonians is a meticulously researched and path-breaking treatment of a topic engaging several interlocking contested histories: Jews of Arab countries, the Arab-Israeli conflict, democracy and post-colonialism, and the Communist Parties of Iraq and Israel." (Joel Beinin Middle East Journal)"A profound sense of loss permeates Orit Bashkin's elegantly written chronicle of the last years of the Jewish presence in Iraq, viewed mostly through the writings of Jewish intellectuals in Iraq at the time and later in Israel, and through interviews with them . . . It was only after the creation of Israel that the Jews of Iraq came to realize they could no longer stay in what they long continued to regard as their homeland. Bashkin has told their story with great insight, scholarship, and affection." (Peter Slugett American Historical )"This remarkable book examines the tragic modern history of the oldest and most deeply rooted Jewish community in the Arab world. Bashkin succeeds in avoiding the many pitfalls which confront an author dealing with such a charged topic by deploying empathy, careful historical analysis and great rigor. This book should be welcomed by all those who seek to free themselves of the blinders imposed by different varieties of extreme nationalism, and as such should be welcomed by scholars everywhere." (Rashid Khalidi)About the Author Orit Bashkin is Associate Professor of Modern Middle East History at the University of Chicago. She is the author of *The Other Iraq: Pluralism and Culture in Hashemite Iraq* (Stanford, 2008).