



King Hussein of Jordan: A Political Life

Nigel Ashton

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A towering figure in the history of Jordan, King Hussein reigned for nearly half a century, from his grandfather's assassination in 1953 to his own death in 1999. In this fascinating biography, Nigel Ashton recounts the eventful life of the king who not only survived but flourished amidst crisis after crisis as ruler of a poor desert nation surrounded by powerful and hostile neighbors. Hussein skillfully navigated complicated relationships with the British, his fellow Arab leaders, the new bordering state of Israel, masses of dispossessed Palestinians within his kingdom, every U.S. president from Eisenhower to Clinton, and every British prime minister from Churchill to Blair. This book illuminates the private man, his key relationships, and his achievements and disappointments as a central player in the tough world of Middle Eastern politics.

Ashton has had unique access to King Hussein's private papers, including his secret correspondence with U.S., British, and Israeli leaders, and he has also conducted numerous interviews with members of Hussein's circle and immediate family. The resulting book brings new depth to our understanding of the popular and canny king while also providing new information about the wars of 1967 and 1973, President Reagan's role in the Iran-Contra affair, the evolution of the Middle East peace process, and much more.

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