

KIRKUS REVIEWS

TITLE INFORMATION

PERPLEXITY OF IRAN

ChamanAra, Sohrab

Xlibris (80 pp.)

\$15.99 paperback, \$3.99 e-book

ISBN: 978-1469168562; April 16, 2012

BOOK REVIEW

This brief look at the history of Iran has an eye toward using the region's diverse past as an argument for regime change.

Political unrest in the Middle East is deeply rooted in the region's complex past, and its present and future are inexorably tied to events predating even the formation of Islam. This is especially true in Iran, a country that, despite its controversial role in the war on terror, is presented by ChamanAra (*A Journey to the Truth*, 2005, etc.) as a pluralistic society, both in its origins and as it exists today. However, according to the author, it is because of Iran's vocal, ruling minority that the country stands at odds with its neighbors, so the dream of peace remains out of reach. The book's solution is an optimistic though not implausible one, which suggests that regime change in Iran is possible without foreign military intervention. Instead, by utilizing the country's moderate base (both at home and the millions of expatriate Iranians), religion and government could be separated in the country through the rejection of Sharia law, along with limited diplomatic pressure from the United States. Diplomacy in the region is, of course, not to be frivolously approached, so ChamanAra provides a useful "crash-course" in Iranian history, which looks at the conflicts that shaped the country and illustrates how they affected the Muslim faith, with emphasis on the differences between the Shia and Sunni and a focus on the hard-line offshoot, the Wahhabi. This history is exceedingly useful in understanding the book's principle arguments; citation is poor, however, with most of the facts culled from Wikipedia, lending some doubt as to their validity. While it's clear that ChamanAra has an impressive understanding and deep passion for Iran, the passion is outweighed by all the cold, dubious facts. The narrative occasionally slips into a reserved, almost detached tone, punctuated by obtuse metaphors and some intellectual condescension in its portrayal of Third World countries after World War II. In the end, the book's revolutionary ideas aren't adequately explored; instead, they're lost in what amounts to a short history book.

A fine starting point for those interested in the history and future of Iran, but far from definitive.

EXCERPTING POLICIES

Please review Kirkus Media's excerpting policies before publishing any portion of this review online or in print for any use. To learn about proper attribution and to ensure your use is in compliance with our guidelines, we invite you to visit <http://www.kirkusreviews.com/indieexcerpts>.