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pressed itself in subtle details of social life and outlook which still distinguish the Arabized Iraqi majority on the Mesopotamian plain from Arab populations elsewhere in the Middle East. These distinctions are not easy to identify, much less to demonstrate, but few observers would deny that there are aspects of community life in Iraq and a characteristic approach to the problems of government, technology, and economic organization which in degree or kind set off the country from its Arab neighbors despite common Moslem traditions and faith, and a shared language.

The essentials of Iraqi culture have endured despite incursions from all sides. The deserts to the south and west of the Mesopotamian plain constitute no barrier to mounted nomads, the passes in the mountains to the north and east provide entry corridors. Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Mongols, Turks have followed one another in the area, each contributing in greater or lesser degree to the physical mixture and cultural complexity of a civilization which three thousand years before Christ was already a composite one.

Thirteen centuries of participation in the Moslem Arab world, however, provide Iraq with ample reason to identify itself as both a bearer and shaper of the Arab tradition. There are important minorities in the country but most either are Moslem or count themselves

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