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Nota di contenuto	Cover -- Contents -- Acknowledgments -- 1. Introduction -- 2. Approaching a Theory of Sectarianism -- Defining Sectarianism -- Drivers of Sectarian Identity -- External Influence -- Economic Competition -- Competing myth-Symbol Complexes -- Contested Cultural Ownership of the Nation -- Ethnohistories' and the Formation of Sectarian Identity -- Assertive, Passive and Banal Sectarianism -- 3. Sectarianism in Iraq -- Iraqi Nationalism between State, Sunnis and Shi'as -- Sectarian Relations and Dominant Narratives of the Iraqi Nation-State -- The Conflation of Sectarian Identity with Ethnicity -- The Suppression of Shi'a Identity -- The Interaction of Sunni and Shi'a identities -- 'We're all Brothers' -- Class and Geographic Boundaries -- Sectarian Relations in Social Relations -- A Final Qualifier -- 4. The Events of march 1991 -- Beginnings -- Leadership and Coordination -- The End of the Uprisings -- Iran and the Uprisings -- Contentious Symbolism -- The Consequences of the Events of 1991 -- 5. The Sanctions-Era -- The Economic Breakdown -- Neo-Tribalism -- The Religious Revival -- Al-Hamla al-Imaniya -- Sectarian Identity --

Conclusion -- 6. Sectarian Relations and the mythology of 1991 -- The State's Response -- The Page of Betrayal and Treason -- Al-Intifada al-Sha'abaniyah -- 7. Sectarian Relations in Post-2003 Iraq -- The New Iraq -- Sectarian Identity in Post-2003 Iraq -- Outsiders, Insiders and the Formalisation of Sectarian Politics -- The Collision of Myth-Symbol Complexes in Post-2003 Iraq -- Sectarian Nationalism in Post-2003 Iraq -- The Contest for Cultural Ownership of Iraq -- An Old Symbol in a New Environment: the mass Graves -- Iraq, the Arab World and Arab Identity -- Arab Fighters in the Sectarian Imagination -- Competing Victimhoods -- 8. Civil War -- What is a Civil War? -- Ethnic Conflict. Sectarian Relations and Sectarian Civil War -- The Symbols of Assertive and Aggressive Sectarianism -- Fixing the Breakdown -- Conclusion -- Notes -- Selected Bibliography -- Glossary -- Index -- A -- B -- C -- D -- F -- G -- H -- I -- J -- K -- L -- M -- N -- O -- P -- R -- S -- T -- U -- V -- W.

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## Sommario/riassunto

Viewing Iraq from the outside is made easier by compartmentalising its people (at least the Arabs among them) into Shi'as and Sunnis. But can such broad terms, inherently resistant to accurate quantification, description and definition, ever be a useful reflection of any society? If not, are we to discard the terms 'Shi'a' and 'Sunnī' in seeking to understand Iraq? Or are we to deny their relevance and ignore them when considering Iraqi society? How are we to view the common Iraqi injunction that 'we are all brothers' or that 'we have no Shi'as and Sunnis' against the fact of sectarian civil war in 2006? Are they friends or enemies? Are they united or divided; indeed, are they Iraqis or are they Shi'as and Sunnis? Fanar Haddad provides the first comprehensive examination of sectarian relations and sectarian identities in Iraq. Rather than treating the subject by recourse to broad-based categorisation, his analysis recognises the inherent ambiguity of group identity. The salience of sectarian identity and views towards self and other are neither fixed nor constant; rather, they are part of a continuously fluctuating dynamic that sees the relevance of sectarian identity advancing and receding according to context and to wider socioeconomic and political conditions. What drives the salience of sectarian identity? How are sectarian identities negotiated in relation to Iraqi national identity and what role do sectarian identities play in the social and political lives of Iraqi Sunnis and Shi'as? These are some of the questions explored in this book with a particular focus on the two most significant turning points in modern Iraqi sectarian relations: the uprisings of March 1991 and the fall of the Ba'ath in 2003. Haddad explores how sectarian identities are negotiated and seeks finally to put to rest the alarmist and reductionist accounts that seek either to portray all things Iraqi in sectarian terms or to reduce sectarian identity to irrelevance.

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