

BOOK REVIEWS

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SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2002). Pp. 362. \$12.95 paper.

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Seyyed Hossein Nasr's panoramic study stems from his observation in the Preface that "there is no religion about which so much has been written in the West by those opposed to it than Islam" (p. xiii). According to Nasr, this animus, and the misunderstandings it willfully creates, predate but have been exacerbated by the tragic events of 11 September 2001. Thus motivated, he develops a spirited defense and illumination of "the authentic teachings of Islam anew in light of the challenges of the present-day situation" (p. xiii). Nasr's purview is vast, encompassing the diversity of Islamic voices—"the spectrum of Islam" across Sunnism, Shi'ism, Sufism, and their subdivisions—and what these voices have to say on divine and human laws and justice, community and society, in the human context and in the relationship of human beings to God. In his exploration, the author delineates those values and traditions that are common to Islam and the two other great Abrahamic faiths (frequently highlighting where they have been jettisoned or diluted in Judaic or Christian practice while maintained in Islam). He also directs us to areas where Islam stands alone: for example, Islam is less rigid in *orthodoxy*, or assertion of religious truth. There is no magisterium or synod in Islam, where the emphasis is rather on *orthopraxy*, or the correct practice of received divine truth, embodied in the "pillars" of Islam, which include acts of daily prayer, fasting, alms giving, and pilgrimage. On occasion, Nasr's evolutionary distinction between the Abrahamic faiths may take on an implied judgmental tinge. For instance, in his chapter "Divine and Human Laws," he writes, "From the Renaissance onward laws became more and more secularized in the West, and they came to be seen as ever-changing regulations devised and defined by society to be made and discarded as circumstances dictate" (p. 116).

Nasr maintains that this is in stark contrast to the "Islamic perspective," which he holds as consistent with Jewish law and the Christian Old Testament, in which "Divine Law is to be implemented to regulate society and the actions of its members rather than society dictating what laws should be" (p. 117). Fair enough, but herein lies the germ of the problem that the reader for whom Nasr is writing, versed in the tenets of the Abrahamic faiths, may have with at least part of his message. He writes with passion, authority, and, for the most part, conviction on Islam with respect to its essential oneness with Judaism and Christianity and its inclusiveness of them. "Churches dot the skyline of Cairo, Beirut, Damascus, and many other cities, and synagogues are also found everywhere a Jewish community lives from Teheran to Fez" (p. 51). He quotes the famous Qur'anic passage, "Had God willed, He could have made us one community" but chose to have us learn from each other in our diversity (Q. 5:48). He offers illustrations of how Muslim respect for law, community, sexuality, art and music, and—dare one say—values of love and compassion resonate with those of cognate faiths.

In this spirit, *The Heart of Islam* joins a literature most recently and notably exemplified by Vartan Gregorian in *Islam: A Mosaic, Not a Monolith* and Feisal Abdul Rauf's *What's Right with Islam*. Whereas Gregorian (and here I must reveal that this scholar is the president of my foundation) blends irony, humor, sensitivity, and admonition, Nasr's defense of Islam can become defensive and at times pokes jabs at the other Abrahamic branches, Christianity in particular, that may seem gratuitous or at least insufficiently argued. To cite just one example, in his chapter "One God, Many Prophets," he takes to task Christian missionary activity and its deleterious impact—especially with respect to attempts at religious conversion—on not only Muslims but also "Hindus, Buddhists, and others." He goes on to conclude, "This question of Christian missionary activity (of the Western churches, not Orthodoxy) is a complicated matter requiring an extensive separate treatment, but it must be mentioned briefly here" (p. 47). To flag this is not to deny that Nasr may have a valid point to make about something important but, rather, to say that he does not do it justice by scant discussion.

It is in his treatment of Christianity, and especially in that of the post-Renaissance Christian West, that Nasr will raise most eyebrows. The issue is joined in his Preface, where in the context of—quite legitimate—discussion of Western distortion of Islam in the West, he observes, again in passing, that "the new methods of rationalist, historicist, and skeptical scholarship about religion growing out of the so-called Age of Enlightenment (which was in reality an age of the darkening of the soul and eclipse of the intellect) began to apply their methods to the study of Islam in the name of Orientalism" (p. xii). This is a perfect example of a valid point undermined by gratuitous swipe. For better or worse, this unprecedented age of cosmic inquiry has shaped, and continues to shape, more than two hundred years of Western history. The problem is later compounded, when, in seeking to underscore his central argument that the Christian West has abandoned its received Old Testament guidance, Nasr writes, "In America one always speaks of the separation of church and state, although religion itself has never been totally separated from political life from the time of the writing of the American constitution onward" (pp. 147–48). The fact is that, despite the current spirited debate over our nation's founders' intent with regard to religion in public life, God is not mentioned (and presumably deliberately so) in the U.S. Constitution. Indeed, the document, like those principally responsible for framing it, is widely considered a product of the Enlightenment that Nasr rejects, not of Christian doctrinal tradition.

These criticisms are relevant only in that they address fundamentally important questions that Nasr chooses to raise. It is by no means a rejection of the book or its core theme and purpose to suggest that, in his masterly survey of Islam, he brings other faiths to the discussion and seems occasionally to give them short shrift.

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ABDULLAH SAEED AND HASSAN SAEED, *Freedom of Religion, Apostasy and Islam* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2004). Pp. 227. \$29.95.

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Apostasy (*ridda*), meaning renunciation of Islam and adoption of another faith system, is one of the most contentious issues across the Muslim world today. Abdullah Saeed and Hassan Saeed join the fray from a strongly held and variously expressed secular and liberal perspective in that religion is unequivocally regarded as a "covenant between an individual and God" (p. 172). Fully conscious of the tensions and sharp contradictions that exist between this

modern Western perspective and the Islamic worldview in accordance with which all schools of Muslim thought and jurisprudence—whether Sunni, Shi‘i, or Ibadi—have traditionally seen and experienced their faith as a sociopolitical bond as well as a system of ethical and spiritual teachings and beliefs, Saeed and Saeed nevertheless try to build a case for a radical rethinking of the apostasy laws whereby Muslims have traditionally endeavored to defend the security and political integrity of their community (*umma*) as well as its ethical values and spiritual beliefs.

The two authors divide their subject into three parts. The first consists of eight chapters briefly surveying the historical context of the apostasy debate, the development of apostasy laws as part of Islamic law and jurisprudence, and the views of some contemporary Muslim thinkers on the subject. The second part, consisting of four chapters, reviews Malaysia’s experience as a case study. Chapter 13, which constitutes the third part of the book, summarizes the authors’ case for the need to rethink apostasy laws with a view to bringing them in line with secular liberal values and principles.

As has often been observed in this drawn-out debate, opinions are frequently polarized between two sharply opposed and staunchly held points of view. Instead of patiently and systematically building a factually accurate and logically consistent argument, Saeed and Saeed exaggerate—sometimes even caricature—what seem to them to be weaknesses of their adversaries’ case while ignoring facts and evidence that do not fit theirs. One example of this is Saeed and Saeed’s consistently dismissing the sunna as a source of legislation in Islam, another point on which all Muslim schools of thought—whether Sunni, Shi‘i, or Ibadi—have been in full and well-founded agreement. Not only does the Qur’an itself repeatedly call on Muslims to obey the Prophet and follow his example and directives, but some of the most basic duties of Muslims—including prayers, fasting, haj, and *zakat*—are inconceivable without the sunna and Prophetic directives. What the Prophet says about other aspects of Islam—including the treatment of apostates and prisoners of war, for example—cannot therefore be simply ignored or wished away.

Another point on which the two authors base their argument is that almost all Muslim countries today are multireligious societies, whereas Muslims, Saeed and Saeed allege, evidently believe that all Muslims must reside in a *dār al-islām* that accommodates only Muslims (p. 170). It is hardly necessary to point out that Muslim states and societies—beginning with the very first one established by Prophet Muhammad in Medina—have almost always been multireligious and multiethnic. As Adam Mez stated many years ago, the first and most striking feature that distinguished traditional Muslim societies from Christian medieval Europe is that within the borders of the former lived people of many faiths, and all these peoples, as Mez put it, lived “side by side in an atmosphere of tolerance absolutely unknown to Medieval Europe.” Writing some two centuries earlier than Mez, John Locke not only pointed out the same fact in his classic *Letter Concerning Toleration*, but he held it up as an example for his contemporaries to emulate.

Saeed and Saeed, citing writings and utterances of modern Muslims from Muhammad Abduh to Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi to Rashid al-Ghannushi, try to give the impression that all these thinkers are more or less in full agreement with the two authors’ point of view. In a similar vein, Saeed and Saeed discuss nominal or “cultural” Muslims who have only a minimal affiliation with Islam and jump to the conclusion on the next page that they are akin to apostates “if not actually apostates” (p. 172).

The book also contains a number of factual errors, such as the statement that the Kharijites and Shi‘is were intent on reviling leading figures of the early Muslim community, “including the first four caliphs” (p. 39). It can generally be concluded that the book—far from providing a coherent and convincing argument for the two authors’ point of view—can at best be regarded as yet another example of the contentious and not altogether accurate debate for and against apostasy laws that goes on in many parts of the world today.

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CARL W. ERNST AND BRUCE B. LAWRENCE, *Sufi Martyrs of Love: The Chishti Order in South Asia and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). Pp. 255. \$69.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

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Carl Ernst and Bruce Lawrence have drawn from their many years of research on Islamic mysticism to produce a groundbreaking work on Chishti Sufism in South Asia. The book examines the Chishtiya in the subcontinent not simply in terms of its historical development and influence, but also as "a complex of spiritual practice, historical memory, and ethical models" that has been engaged in a continual process of evolution (p. 1). From this point of departure, the book seeks to dispel the hermeneutics that have long dominated the study of mystical Islam of a "golden age" of Sufism, its subsequent decline, and its contemporary revival.

As a corrective to most Western Orientalist research, which has concentrated on the 13th and 14th centuries as the "classical" period, Ernst and Lawrence use an expansive arsenal of sources dating from the 13th to the 20th century. Many of these sources have long been considered "spurious" and thus unworthy of serious academic investigation. However, adopting this approach has enabled the authors effectively to demonstrate several things. First, they illustrate some of the major disparities between Western Orientalist research and the Chishti literary tradition. While the former has tended to link the ebb and tide of Chishti development to the vicissitudes of Mughal political fortunes, the latter has suggested that Chishti Sufism continues to evolve and expand, remaining much more dynamic than most scholarship has conceded. Chapter 1 lays the foundation for this central argument, drawing from some of the very dialectical concepts found in Sufi thought and practice—*fanā'* and *baqā'*, love and knowledge; *shari'a* and *ṭarīqa*, the structure of the orders and the anti-structure represented by antinomian dervishes—to illustrate some of the contradictions inherent in characterizing the Sufi lineages and their representatives. Second, the authors reveal in chapter 2 how the Chishtiya both embodies and transcends its Indian and Islamic identities, especially through ritual practices like *samā'* and *dhikr*. Third, they illustrate in chapters 3–6 that linear historicizations of the Chishti lineages, masters, and shrine cults have created a misleading picture of Sufism's development. Instead, the authors look to a variety of Chishti sources to devise a "synthetic portrait of the recurrent paradoxes of sainthood" (p. 71), despite the acknowledged difficulty of definitively assessing the shape and character of the Chishti literary tradition. Fourth, they illustrate some of the ways in which the Chishtiya has remained responsive to the needs and concerns of the times. Chapter 7 takes up this subject by looking at how Chishtis today have appropriated technologies such as lithographic print, the Internet, sound recordings, television, and film to spread the influence of particular lineages and to promote ideals that are global in scope, such as the marriage of spirituality and science.

Ernst and Lawrence argue that the history of the Chishtiya is better understood as a series of five cycles that represent a "comprehensive restaging of those major periods within which the patterns of piety and practice distinctive to them emerged" (p. 14). The first two cycles, which unfolded in the pre-Indian phase (7th–12th centuries), can only be reconstructed from fragmentary information contained in later literature and for this reason do not receive much attention. Rather, it is the last three cycles (12th–21st centuries), which occurred in the Indian subcontinent, that are the focus of this study. These three cycles are particularly important for understanding the multiple roles that genealogies have played in Chishti spirituality. For instance, they have operated as an organizing mechanism for Sufi lineages, as a means of

authenticating the past and linking the present to it, as a way of (re)organizing the Islamic past and its meaning for particular lineages (since the genealogies often contain stories of Muslim exemplars who were not mystics), and as instructional and edificatory materials for those who pursued the Sufi path, sought to do so, or sympathized with those who did.

The book's exclusive reliance on texts obscures some important facts. For instance, several statements reinforce the perception that women are noteworthy only in their connections with major male saints (pp. 86, 90, 122). Much of the available information about saintly women is based on popular legends, and there is admittedly little written about them in Chishti literature. Yet those who do appear in such works as the *Akhbar al-akhyar* deserve more than a passing mention. Bibi Fatima Sam's shrine was frequented by many of the prominent Sufis of Delhi, such as Nizam al-Din Auliya. Besides in the *Akhbar*, she is mentioned in the collection of Nizam al-Din's discourses, *Fawa'id al-fu'ad*. Outside the Chishti literary tradition, evidence suggests that saintly women were sometimes considered de facto shaykhs. The biographical *Mirat al-kaunain* and the discourses of Sharafuddin Maneri, *Khwan-i pur ni'mat* (both Firdausi Sufi sources) mention women who were popularly referred to as shaykhs. And despite the authors' statement that women could not become *khalifa* (a type of successor) of shaykhs, some Chishti sources mention women who did. One notable example is Bibi Hafiz Jamal, Mu'in al-Din Chishti's daughter, who appears thus in the *Dalil al-ʿarifin*, composed in the 13th century by Mu'in al-Din's disciple Qutb al-Din; the *Siyar al-aqtab*, a 17th-century work by Allah Diya Chishti; and *Bazm-i sufiya*, the 1970 work by ʿAbdurrahman Sabah al-Din. Aside from this oversight, the book paints a rather homogeneous portrait of Wahhabi reformers that does not acknowledge the problematic nature of the term and its application or the fact that, among such reformers, there was never a consensus on the permissibility (from an Islamic legal point of view) of such practices as pilgrimage to the tombs of Sufi saints.

Undoubtedly, *Sufi Martyrs of Love* is the most important study of the Chishtiyya to emerge in recent years and should be part of the collection of serious scholars of Sufism. Particularly helpful is the list of death dates for saints important in the Chishti lineage, which appears in the appendix, and the extensive bibliography at the end of the book. Although this work is best suited for the specialist, graduate students and even upper-level undergraduate students will find it illuminating, and thus it should be part of the collection of research libraries.

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WALID A. SALEH, *The Formation of the Classical Tafsīr Tradition: The Qurʾan Commentary of al-Thaʿlabi* (d. 427/1035), Texts and Studies on the Qurʾan (Leiden: Brill, 2004). Pp. 277. \$122.00.

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Walid Saleh addresses a major lacuna in our knowledge of the development of *tafsīr*, the two centuries that separate al-Tabari (d. 923) and al-Zamakhshari (d. 1144), by examining *al-Kashf wa-l-bayan ʿan tafsir al-Qurʾan* of al-Thaʿlabi al-Naysaburi (d. 1035). The *mufasssirūn* of this period were extremely active, and the Nishapuri school was particularly influential. Saleh argues that al-Thaʿlabi “radically transformed and reshaped medieval quranic commentary” and was more influential than even al-Tabari in “redirecting the course of the genre” (p. 5). Because al-Thaʿlabi does not simply rely on al-Tabari but goes back to the original sources, Saleh astutely points out that we now have “for the first time . . . two sources which are fully independent of each other to reexamine what we know about the early period of quranic

exegesis. Any scholar who plans to study the development of early *tafsīr* must henceforth utilize al-Thaʿlabī's work" (p. 9).

Saleh's first three chapters provide important background information. He begins with a thorough biography of al-Thaʿlabī—his areas of expertise, later reputation, and known works—by using material available from the biographical dictionaries; the autobiography of his principal student, al-Wahidī; and al-Thaʿlabī's own notes about his teachers. Saleh also examines the modern secondary literature on al-Thaʿlabī, particularly the claim that he was a Sufi. Saleh argues convincingly that he was not and suggests that al-Thaʿlabī's *Qatla al-Qurʾān* (in which he advances the interesting thesis that dying from hearing the Qurʾān recited is martyrdom) is not a Sufi text at all. By portraying reading the Qurʾān as a tool for salvation and a form of jihad, al-Thaʿlabī attempted to elevate the role of reading the Qurʾān in Muslim piety. The third chapter provides a brief analysis of the sources used in *al-Kashf*, which is made possible because of al-Thaʿlabī's own detailed discussion of the different versions of the texts he used and the merits and flaws of all the *tafsīrs*, including works on *gharīb*, *qirāʾāt*, and *sīra*. Saleh also provides a concise analysis of the structure of *al-Kashf*.

In the next three chapters, Saleh turns to an analysis of the hermeneutical principles of *al-Kashf* at the theoretical and practical levels. Saleh examines al-Thaʿlabī's extensive introduction in detail, in which the exegete outlines his own hermeneutical principles. Not only does al-Thaʿlabī review almost every important work of the preceding four centuries, but he also discusses his own approach. All previous *tafsīrs* have some failing, but he aims his to be comprehensive, well organized, reliable, intelligible, and written in a good style. In chapters 5 and 6, Saleh presents various aspects of al-Thaʿlabī's hermeneutics as they were put into practice, allowing Saleh to compare them with the theory outlined earlier. Chapter 5 presents several key themes: the merits of reciting particular suras, the salvific role of the Qurʾān, the role of philology, and the anthological nature of the *tafsīr*. Perhaps the best example of the theory being put into practice is al-Thaʿlabī's emphasis on reading and studying the Qurʾān as the highest form of devotion. Chapter 6 looks at al-Thaʿlabī's tendency to employ mystical interpretation, fictive narrative, admonitory and exhortatory discourse, political interpretation, tangential prophetic interpretation, and excursuses.

In his last chapter Saleh traces the use later exegetes made of *al-Kashf*. What he shows is that *tafsīr* did not stagnate after al-Tabarī, as is often assumed. Nor was he even the most influential exegete. Al-Thaʿlabī seems to be far more important in later works. However, al-Thaʿlabī had sought to "neutralize the Shiʿī position and inoculate Sunnīs against Shiʿī propaganda" by including pro-Shiʿī materials (p. 219). For a while, al-Thaʿlabī's *al-Kashf* was clearly the most widely read medieval *tafsīr*, but ultimately he came to be seen as a liability to the Sunni cause by the likes of Ibn Taymiyyah when Shiʿī polemicists began using *al-Kashf*. This is ironic since it is al-Thaʿlabī who upheld Sunni understanding of the Qurʾān in the face of Shiʿī (and other sectarian) challenges.

Saleh's superb analysis of al-Thaʿlabī's *al-Kashf* alone makes his book the most important study of *tafsīr* in many years. However, Saleh also makes two equally valuable, but more methodological, contributions. First, Saleh argues that the *tafsīr* tradition is genealogical in nature. "One cannot study any given Qurʾān commentary in isolation. It has to be seen in conjunction with the tradition that produced it and the influences it left behind" (p. 15). That is to say, new *tafsīrs* adapted, refuted, abridged, and modified earlier material while at the same time adding new material (p. 199). Saleh exemplifies this particularly well in Chapters 5 and 6, where he frequently compares al-Thaʿlabī's exegesis with those of al-Tabarī, al-Zamakhsharī, and al-Qurtubī, highlighting influences and differences in methods and doctrine. Second, Saleh argues in his introduction that the traditional categories of *tafsīr bi-l-maʾthūr* (tradition-based) and *tafsīr bi-l-raʾy* (opinion-based) are in fact ideological divisions used by Sunnis to undermine non-Sunni or deviant Sunni approaches. "Most of the *tafsīr bi-l-maʾthūr* is in reality a *tafsīr bi-l-raʾy*" (p. 16). In its place, Saleh suggests that *tafsīr* can be divided

into encyclopedic and madrasa categories. The former is a form of *ijmāʿ*, though a consensus achieved not by exclusion but, rather, by inclusion. That is to say, the encyclopedic works attempted to include a plurality of meanings. The madrasa works, by contrast, were produced in the context of the encyclopedic works; they are often summaries and might be monovalent, but they need not be. They tended to advocate a particular position but did not “refashion” the tradition (p. 22). These two types of works should not be judged by the same standards. While Saleh returns to this subject briefly at the end of the book, this intriguing argument is left tantalizingly underdeveloped. This should not be construed as a critique, however. Saleh’s thorough analysis of what should now be seen as one of the most important works of *tafsīr* is already an extremely valuable contribution.

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RAYMOND WILLIAM BAKER, *Islam without Fear: Egypt and the New Islamists* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003). Pp. 320. \$29.95 cloth.

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Raymond William Baker introduces us to a coterie of Egyptian Islamist intellectuals he labels “the New Islamist Trend” (elsewhere he calls them “moderate” or “centrist” Islamists, and a few times they are given the lofty title “the Islamic Awakening”). These thinkers, who include religious scholars such as the late Muhammad al-Ghazzaly, journalists such as Fahmy Huwaidy, and lawyers such as Kamal Abul Magd, emerge out of a *wasāṭiyya* (middle) tradition that eschews the violence and intolerance of the most radical Islamists, while rejecting what Baker calls “secular extremism” that seeks to banish religion from the public sphere entirely. Baker’s aim is twofold: he wants to give a flavor of the New Islamists’ thinking and, just as important, to ease the suspicion that Westerners might harbor toward those who label themselves “Islamic” or “Islamist.” These are laudable goals, and this is the work of a mature scholar who knows his subject well—so well, in fact, that he often recedes from view and allows the New Islamists to speak to us directly.

They have a lot to say. Baker dutifully reports New Islamist wisdom on everything from the state of the Egyptian educational system to the status of women, freedom of thought, the welfare state, and scores of issues in between. If there is anything in the New Islamist program that Baker finds wanting, he does not let us know. At first this strikes the reader as an admirable bit of restraint on the author’s part—indicative of a desire to remain in the background and let the subjects do the talking—but soon it becomes clear that Baker comes not to judge the New Islamists but to praise them. Indeed, in almost three hundred pages, the New Islamists seem incapable of saying anything that is not “enlightened,” “pragmatic,” “tolerant,” “impressive,” or “seasoned.” This would be fine if the New Islamists were in fact all of these things. But as in any group of thinkers, some of what they say is worthy, and some is not so worthy.

Consider their stance on freedom of expression. We might expect that those whose words and thoughts are routinely suppressed by an authoritarian regime would be among the most ardent champions of free speech. But the New Islamists, who have had to contend with all sorts of government harassment and censorship, are not above using the levers of government to harass and censor others. For example, Baker tells us of a New Islamist professor of literature who sued the Egyptian TV monopoly for broadcasting “un-Islamic programming”—in this case, a popular song-and-dance extravaganza aired during Ramadan. Baker applauds the plaintiff for using the courts to mount his attack and for refraining from questioning the programmers’ “personal status as believers”—as though this were not the least that decency

required. He paints as eminently reasonable the New Islamists' demand that artistic expression be consistent with "Islamic values," but he never considers whether it is legitimate for any group to set itself up as the arbiter of what is or is not Islamic.

In at least one case—the 1994 attempt by Islamist militants to kill Naguib Mahfouz—this New Islamist pretension has had disastrous consequences. Baker tells us that al-Ghazzaly, who emerges as something of a hero in this book, condemned the attack and rushed to Mahfouz's bedside. But al-Ghazzaly was not innocent. He had been a member of the al-Azhar committee that banned Mahfouz's 1959 novel *Children of Gebelaawi*, fixing it in the Egyptian imagination as blasphemous. Baker argues that there is a "difference between criticism and violence" and that al-Ghazzaly's critique of Mahfouz's writings was worlds away from the attempt to take the author's life, but it is hard to justify the distinction. Censorship may not involve bodily harm, but it is violence nonetheless. And it cannot help but pave the way for real brutality.

Baker makes much of the fact that the New Islamists routinely denounce the intolerance of their more radical counterparts, but he fails to ask whether they live up to their own rhetoric. He opens the book with an account of a famous 1992 debate between al-Ghazzaly and Egypt's foremost secularist, Farag Foda. The audience apparently included several young Islamist hecklers, and Baker gives al-Ghazzaly great credit for silencing them. The episode is presented as evidence of the New Islamists' temperance, moderation, and civility. But careful readers will recall that, shortly after this event, Foda was gunned down by Islamist radicals. At the assassins' trial, according to press reports, al-Ghazzaly testified that Foda was an apostate and that his murderers had simply carried out a responsibility shirked by the state. Baker tries to rescue al-Ghazzaly by telling us that his testimony has been "distorted in tendentious ways as a justification of the assassins" but he never clues us in to exactly how. In the end, he suggests that al-Ghazzaly did not really endorse the killing and that he should have made himself clearer. But al-Ghazzaly made his living interpreting the word of God, so it seems odd to argue that he did not know the meanings his own words would convey. In any case, Baker gives us no evidence to support his assertion.

This is not to say that the New Islamists are all of a piece or that they are wholly intolerant or illiberal. Although Baker seems to think of them as a bloc (the book is littered with formulations like "according to the New Islamists," or "the New Islamists made it clear," or "the New Islamists insisted"), he does reveal some tensions among them. For example, we read that Kamal Abul Magd's response to the Mahfouz assault was not only to condemn it but to criticize al-Ghazzaly's earlier efforts to silence the writer. Elsewhere, we see instances of real tolerance, such as Fahmy Huwaidy's spirited rejection of the traditional Islamist suspicion of Coptic Christians. And when we read of the New Islamists' attempt to convince the Taliban not to demolish the ancient Bamiyan Buddhas, it strikes us as something akin to an act of heroism.

But the overwhelming feeling one has on reading this book is that Baker is too quick to accept what the New Islamists have to say. For example, he writes that the New Islamists believe that "secularists have a place in the Islamic community . . . provided they do not call into question or actively undermine its foundations, thereby endangering the community and depriving it of its Islamic identity." But isn't that just a sanitized way of saying that secularists may think what they like as long as they keep quiet? And when he assures us that "many secularists in fact do accept the principle of applying sharia," we are forced to conclude that either he does not take secularism (or the shari'a) seriously or he is operating with novel definitions of both. If "moderate secularists" are those who accept the shari'a, then it is no wonder that they "pose no problem for inclusion in an Islamic community." But it should bring us no comfort.

Still, none of this is to deny the importance of the New Islamists' work or the service Baker does in presenting them to us. We constantly hear that Islam is in need of "reform." One of the virtues of this book is that it gives us a close look at the kind of painstaking intellectual labor such reform involves. Whatever their faults, the New Islamists represent the most liberal elements of the religious movement, and they spend much of their time trying valiantly to stretch,

bend, and redefine Islamic concepts to render them more capacious and forgiving. And so we see them pay lip service to the Islamic injunction against *ribā* (usury) but go on to declare that the interest charged by banks is *ḥalāl*. We see them affirm their support for the shari'a while arguing that modern, democratic government is largely consistent with it. And on and on. We might wonder whether such contortions are likely to pay off in the long run: history shows that real reformations involve not so much reshaping the faith as learning when to ignore it. But as long as the people of the Muslim world are caught between the dual yearnings for more Islam and more freedom, Baker's New Islamists may offer the best hope of achieving both.

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NAVEED S. SHEIKH, *The New Politics of Islam: Pan-Islamic Foreign Policy in a World of States* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003). Pp. 218. \$75.00 cloth.

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This book is an attempt to fill the gap in the study of foreign policy of Muslim states in general and of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in particular. The understudied nature of the OIC, especially by Western social scientists, is hard to explain given the organization's symbolic importance in the Muslim world and the potential theoretical and practical implications for social sciences and international relations theory. Naveed Sheikh's book is a study of the OIC based on case studies of Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Pakistan. In its five chapters, the author seeks to bridge the ideational-material dialectic by integrating the factuality of the post-Westphalian nation-state system with Islam's normative and ideational content (pp. 1–2). Sheikh's overriding argument is that Islam informs the foreign policy of Muslim nation-states, but these states also use Islam to justify and rationalize their own policymaking.

Sheikh states two goals for his book: (1) to undo the semantics of civilizational categories and (2) to think and ponder on the praxis of Islamic nation-states. To achieve these goals, the author embarks on a critique of Orientalism as a research program in chapter 1 and undertakes the three case studies in chapter 3. In documented and intellectually powerful ways, Sheikh exposes Western modernity for its self-centeredness and its love of centralization of power. Modernity's self-legitimizing arguments that everything that is not Western and not secular is not modern are rendered impoverished and haughty.

Starting from the premise that understanding classical Islamic political thought is necessary, but not sufficient, to understand and explain contemporary politics in Muslim states, the second chapter examines Muslim responses to the dissolution of the caliphate, both in classical (post-Abbasid) and modern (post-Ottoman) times. Sheikh analyzes the ideational imperative of Islamic unity as embodied in the concepts of *tawḥīd* and *umma* against the contextual and situational constraints. He rightly distinguishes between the concept of theological unity and the plurality of manifestations in the phenomenal world, something that is frequently lost on contemporary Islamists. Sheikh criticizes the pan-Islamism of al-Afghani and Abduh for the lack of political structure, in spite of their affirmation of the ideational (unity) structure. Struggle for liberation from the colonial yoke has, paradoxically, turned the state into an Islamic category: "for contemporary Islam, an (ex post facto) 'Islamized' territorial world order *coexists* with the ideological transnationalism of classical *siyar*" (p. 32). The result is the institutionalization of nationalism and secularism as embodied in the concepts of *qawm* and *dawla*, which superseded the notions of *umma* and *dīn*.

The OIC—or, as it is known among some Muslims for its habitual ineffectiveness in solving problems, "Oh, I see!"—came as the final nail in the coffin of pan-Arab secularism, as Saudi

Arabia sought to restore its role in the Arab world, aided by Pakistan, Iran, and Morocco. The coffin was, of course, provided earlier by the crushing Israeli victory in the Six Day War in 1967. Another impetus for the creation of the OIC came in the wake of an attempt by an Australian messianic Christian to burn al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem in August 1969. The normative ideals of Islamic unity also served as a counterbalance to Gamal Abdel Nasser's revolutionary pan-Arabism and Ba'athist nationalist radicalism. Yet in spite of the rhetorical adherence to the ideational imperative of unity, the OIC accepted state-centric realism as an operative principle. This is further augmented by the fact that the charter of the OIC does not contain the word "unity" but, instead, talks about "consolidat[ing] cooperation" and "solidarity" (p. 38). Yet cooperation does not seem to include a political dimension, a glaring and telling omission indeed. Once again, the ideals of unity and the reality of *étatisme* found their interesting synthesis in the OIC.

Sheikh's selection of case studies within the OIC is well justified. Major findings in chapter 3 include the exposition of the OIC's Janus-like policies—pious normative language and interest-based nation-state considerations—and what Sheikh calls a "triangle of neutralization." This refers to "a tripartite relationship which is aimed at counterpoising the interest-expansion of other states while still upholding the masquerade of Islamic internationalism within the OIC" (p. 100). The Saudis adopt a reactive strategy and focus on economic transnational Islamic community; the Iranians espouse activism based on an understanding of *umma* as a political community; and the Pakistanis assume a defensive stance and primarily look at the international Islamic community as security-oriented. Each state thus infuses its own national interest into the OIC's body, which amounts to neutralization of the other two states. End results are often the paralysis and ineffectiveness that is habitually associated with the OIC.

Chapters 4 and 5 are a discussion of what the study means for international relations theory, social science, and humanities by focusing on self-identity in foreign policy. Sheikh discusses international relations theories—different variants of realism, rationalism/liberalism, constructivism, the English school—in a masterly way, but he does not commit himself to any single approach. This is due to these theories' partial inapplicability to Sheikh's subject matter and not because of the author's hesitancy. His conclusion is that pan-Islamism, of which the OIC is a contemporary embodiment, is better understood as a role in international relations than as an operative rule of international politics.

The book is well researched. The author is at ease with both classical and modern Islamic thought and shows a command of international relations theories. Some may find Sheikh's language bombastic at times. I find it often humorous. The chapter with case studies can be used in undergraduate classes on international organizations, while the theoretical chapters will definitely make for an interesting debate in graduate seminars on international relations. In short, this is an extremely intelligent and timely book.

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AMIN SAIKAL, *Islam and the West: Conflict or Cooperation?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). Pp. 288. \$75.00 cloth, \$30.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY ABBAS KADHIM, Department of Near Eastern Studies, University of California, Berkeley; e-mail: abbaskadhim@hotmail.com

In this welcome addition to the literature addressing the tension between what he calls "the domain of Islam" and the West, especially the United States, Amin Saikal attempts to answer three essential questions. "What has gone wrong in both historical and contemporary

terms? To what extent do Muslims bear responsibility and in what ways has Western, and more specifically US, policy behavior contributed to diluting the relations between the two sides? What is the way forward to repair the damage by building the necessary bridges of understanding and promoting a more peaceful coexistence between the two entities, as an important foundation for generating a lasting, stable and equitable world order?" (pp. 2–3).

The book contains five chapters and a conclusion. In addition to events of 11 September 2001 and its repercussions, the author highlights in the first chapter the wrong assumption in the West regarding the genesis of terrorism: that poverty, lack of education, and social deprivation are the roots of violence and terrorism. The profile of the perpetrators of the deadliest events on American soil presented a strong alternative assumption, the author argues. The "combination of religious extremism, wealth and political causes" has proved to be more lethal, but it received no adequate attention prior to 11 September (p. 8). The profile of a terrorist presents a wealthy and well-educated man who can fly a commercial plane.

According to Saikal, another misguided attitude that the U.S. government embraced concerned the type of regimes in the world. It did not matter whether a given government was democratic or oppressive, or what type of human-rights record it has had, "as long as it was prepared to side with the USA in its hour of need" (p. 11).

In the second chapter, the author focuses on the concept of coexistence between Islam and Christianity as an alternative to theories focusing on the "clash of civilization." He presents the history of peaceful and positive relations Muslims and Christians enjoyed for centuries. These relations, he maintains, were altered by Western colonization of Arab and Muslim lands. This invasion was met by movements of Islamic revival and secular nationalism. However, Saikal correctly notes that hostility toward the West "had more political and nationalist than religious bases" (p. 40).

The third chapter highlights American involvement in the Middle East, which helped the latter in its struggle against European hegemonic powers but soon turned into a challenge. The Middle East was caught in the crossfire of the Cold War, the author argues, and had to befriend "either Godless Soviet socialism or American anti-Soviet benevolent hegemonism" (p. 42). The U.S. attitude, he notes, was clear-cut: it was not important what kind of a regime existed in any given country; Washington "embraced it as long as it was anti-communist and sided with the USA" (p. 49).

The fourth chapter provides the "great issues" through case studies of the most important countries in the Middle East, where events helped shape the relationship between the Muslim world and the West. Saikal surveys the recent history of the years leading to the Iranian Revolution and the experience of the Islamic Republic (during and after the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini), the Palestinian problem, and Afghanistan. While Iraq was mentioned in more than one chapter, this part of the book could certainly have been more helpful if Saikal had discussed the Iraqi problem fully here. The main theme in this chapter is the failure of U.S. foreign policy, which often sides with the wrong allies or fails to acquire the mere appearance of impartiality, to say the least. At certain times, the United States helped create and nurture its own enemies in the process of trying to score some short-term victories in the context of the Cold War, as happened in Afghanistan.

In the fifth chapter and the conclusion, Saikal presents a theoretical discourse on Islam and democracy and the democratization trends in certain countries, such as Iran, Algeria, and Egypt. He argues that "it is possible to achieve liberty—in terms of lessening the state's grip over society—without first having Western-type democratic institutions in place. However, the achievement of liberty could well open the way for democracy" (p. 128). In terms of how to proceed, Saikal highlights the problem of the U.S.-led war on terror. "The USA and its allies," he notes, "have primarily focused on symptoms of terrorism rather than its root causes" (p. 129). He suggests that the best way out of the current tensions is

returning to the era of coexistence rather than fostering the belief in an impending “clash of civilizations.”

The author provides an elaborate and very useful bibliography, which would have been even more valuable if it contained any literature in Middle Eastern languages. With only one book in Persian and a handful of works translated into English, the presentation of the Muslim argument is essentially either the author’s own or secondhand reporting. Nevertheless, the book remains an excellent contribution to the field. It provides important literature for academics, policymakers, and the general audience in both the West and the Muslim world.

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JERRY M. LONG, *Saddam’s War of Words: Politics, Religion, and the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004). Pp. 285. \$55.00 cloth, \$22.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY MARY ANN TÉTREAULT, Department of Political Science, Trinity University, San Antonio, Tex.; e-mail: moontyger@earthlink.net

This fascinating book explains why the first President Bush’s great and speedy victory over Iraq in 1991 so unexpectedly turned into an electoral defeat for him in 1992, an undermining of his sanctions regime throughout the 1990s, and an unexpectedly difficult war in Iraq launched by his son in 2003. Jerry Long argues in his book that Saddam approached this conflict in a comprehensive way, looking not only at the nuts and bolts of men and weapons but also seeking allegiance at home and among Arabs and Muslims abroad to shore up the legitimacy of his position. Thus, Saddam’s war was rhetorical as much as it was material. Long’s analysis parallels an underappreciated 1992 work by Jean Edward Smith, *George Bush’s War*, which follows the twists and turns of White House words and actions from the invasion of Kuwait to the U.S.-led coalition’s attack on Iraq. Smith’s work was easier. The U.S. president essentially made up his mind to fight Iraq the day after the invasion of Kuwait. While he avoided telling the truth about his plans, the image of the conflict he projected throughout was consistent, summed up in his often repeated phrase, “This [the seizure of Kuwait] will not stand.”

Saddam’s reasons for invading Kuwait were probably more complicated than Bush’s reasons for opposing him. It is not entirely clear that Saddam even intended to remain in Kuwait before he was personally challenged by Bush the day after the invasion, eliciting the hostile response that King Hussein and others had predicted and had hoped to avoid when they got Bush to agree to give them forty-eight hours to arrive at an “Arab solution.” But Bush went back on his word, shamed into taking a tougher stand by Margaret Thatcher’s insistent trumpeting for firmness at their meeting in Aspen, Colorado, on 3 August. After that, opinions hardened rapidly in foreign ministries across the globe—not least in Washington and Baghdad.

It is how the attitudes hardened in the Arab world that is the focal point of Long’s book. Despite support for Saddam’s move on the “Arab street” in Jordan, Palestine, Yemen, and most of North Africa, average citizens in Egypt and other Gulf states tended to oppose the Iraqi invasion, as did the leaders of a majority of Arab states. They disagreed with Iraq not just because of all the diplomatic pressure exerted by United States but because they saw Saddam’s move as dishonorable and as inviting external intervention into their region (pp. 24–25). The split was reflected on 3 August in fourteen “yes” votes on an Arab League resolution condemning the Iraqi aggression (out of the remaining seven members, five abstained, one walked out, and the last—Iraq—not surprisingly, rejected it). But the Arab League’s resolution carried a second message. It “categorically rejected any foreign intervention” (p. 25). This reflected Arab anxieties that the Iraqi invasion had shattered Arab unity, and that U.S. intervention in a now fragmented region would marginalize Arab states individually and collectively.

Saddam responded by initiating a discourse that tapped into common tropes. He compared his situation to that of Palestine, both attacked by outsiders. He presented himself as the only Arab leader with the courage to “confront the Israelis on behalf of the Palestinians” (p. 30). He also mobilized popular resentment of Kuwaiti wealth and revulsion at the thought of foreign desecration of the sanctity of Islam’s holiest places. And as the forces amassed against him grew larger, his “rhetoric found an increasingly receptive audience” (p. 31).

Long argues that Saddam’s war of words was designed to evoke deep cultural beliefs that he had called on during his long war with Iran, as well. It combined tropes from Islam with images from Muslim history and evocations of Arab nationalism. In doing so, it tapped into the deepest feelings of Arabs across the political spectrum, joining the languages of religion and nationalism that, as Long demonstrates, have important rhetorical similarities. As a result, “people in the region had two ways of rendering the same events. . . . The arrival of Western forces could be narrated as the arrival of either the imperialists or the *kafirun*” (p. 167). Saddam was “bilingual” (p. 169). He could speak to multiple constituencies using words that moved even those who opposed his actions because he appealed to their deepest fears.

Although so many opposed Saddam at the start—including Palestinians such as Hanan Ashrawi, who remarked, “We do not condemn occupation in one area and condone it in another. . . . We do not have . . . double standards” (p. 175)—by the end of the shooting war, Saddam’s moral position had risen. Despite his massive defeat on the battlefield, Long argues, Saddam won the war to shape popular understanding of its meaning. This was the result not only of his rhetoric but also of what actually happened: Western military forces did stay; the Iraqi people were bombed and starved for years afterward as the result of a poorly thought out and implemented sanctions regime; and populations were alienated from their leaders by the evidence of their senses, that *isti‘amār*, imperialism, had returned to the Middle East.

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C. R. PENNELL, *Morocco from Empire to Independence* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003). Pp. 240. \$19.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY JEROME B. BOOKIN-WEINER, Vice President for Academic Affairs, The Scholar Ship, Baltimore Md.; e-mail: jbookinweiner@aol.com

Morocco from Empire to Independence is part of a series of “short histories” published by Oneworld. Like the others in the series, this book is written by a respected scholar who specializes in the country and region—in this case, C. R. Pennell of the University of Melbourne. Pennell has published widely on Moroccan history in the modern period, including a recent 442-page volume on Morocco since 1830. In this book he condenses that period into a mere 74 pages and spends the remaining 114 pages of text covering the time from Morocco’s first suspected inhabitants (the “pebble people” between 125,000 and 75,000 B.C.) to the early 19th century. The volume concludes with an excellent 15-page section of recommended further reading. For students and the educated general reader, this is the most valuable part of the book.

As one might suspect from the foregoing, this is not a scholarly work per se. It is a work intended for a general audience but solidly rooted in scholarship—both the author’s and the scholarship of others. As George Joffé of the Royal Institute of International Affairs notes in an endorsement on the back cover, this book “has the great advantage of being accessible to the non-specialist reader.” That is its audience. However, because the format compelled the author to cram so much into the roughly 200 pages (one suspects that was a page limit imposed by the publisher), it is sometimes a bit difficult to follow.

Particularly in the early chapters the years whiz by so quickly that it is difficult to keep track of who is who and what the relationships are among the various actors in the dramas of the Almoravids, Almohads, and Merinids. What also gets lost in the process is a clear understanding of the ideological, theological, and dynastic ambitions and conflicts among the various contending groups. A chronology, a dynastic tree or two, and maps that are easier to relate to the text would have been helpful in these sections (and, indeed, throughout the book).

Because of the brevity of the work it is not surprising that, to cover all the ground and provide the reader with some understanding of the forces at work in Moroccan history, many parts of the social and economic context, while not entirely ignored, do not receive the in-depth treatment they need to focus on events. Thus, the tribal base of Moroccan society is briefly treated but not related back to events as clearly as it might have been throughout the narrative. Indeed, the book would have benefited from a chapter on the geographic, social, religious, and economic bases of Morocco early on that the reader could refer to as the story of Morocco's unique history unfolded in the succeeding pages.

Again, one wonders if this was a constraint imposed by the publisher, and there is a hint that it was in the Preface, where the author states, "So it has not been possible to write even a short history of Morocco in terms of the last two hundred years" (p. xiii). He goes on to add later in the Preface that the book "is a very broad canvas, and its aim is to explain in the most general terms the way in which Arab and Islam, Berber and European cultures are mixed, and how a dynastic system has survived in a postcolonial state. Obviously a great deal has had to be omitted, partly because of space" (p. xiv).

Nevertheless, all of the major themes in the grand sweep of Moroccan history are included. Some get lost in the rather stodgy style of the text, but all are there. The one Pennell hits the hardest is the importance of religion in Moroccan political life, particularly the importance of sharifian descent and the sultan's (later king's) dual role as a secular and a religious figure from the 16th century to the present day.

Does this book make a contribution to scholarship? No. That was not its intent. Does it make a contribution to the literature? Definitely. For all its flaws—flaws of omission primarily driven by brevity—this book is very useful in two contexts. It is an excellent introduction to Moroccan history for the educated traveler who wants to understand Morocco before going there, and it is a useful tool for students in introductory courses on the Middle East and Africa that rarely give sufficient attention to the Maghrib in general or Morocco in particular. In the latter context, the superb and detailed section on further reading is an extremely valuable tool. In it Pennell has demonstrated an ability to home in on valuable and accessible works that can be used to pursue particular interests piqued by his text while at the same time making annotative comments of great value to scholars of the Middle East who are not Moroccanists but are interested in deepening their knowledge of the kingdom.

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MOSHE GERSHOVICH, *French Military Rule in Morocco: Colonialism and Its Consequences, History and Society in the Islamic World* (London: Frank Cass, 2000). Pp. 255.

REVIEWED BY DANIEL J. SCHROETER, Department of History, University of California, Irvine; e-mail: djschroe@uci.edu

Morocco under French colonial rule has been the subject of a number of books in recent years, especially centered on the imposing first resident-general, Marshal Lyautey. The architect of the colonial Moroccan state, Lyautey was also influential throughout the French empire. With the voluminous work of Daniel Rivet, two books by William A. Hoisington, Jr., the older

but still useful book by Robin Bidwell, and other general and more specialized studies, I was surprised to discover how many new insights Moshe Gershovich's book offers. None of the previous studies has so comprehensively explored the military aspects of the French administration for the entire length of the Protectorate. He convincingly argues how the actual "pacification" of Morocco, which was accomplished only in the south of the country in the 1930s, helped create the framework for the postindependence Moroccan state.

Gershovich has important things to say not only about the entire French colonial experience in Morocco, but also about France's overseas empire, the subject of the first chapter. Colonial intervention in Morocco took shape against the background of France's imperial strategy in Algeria and Tunisia, Indochina, sub-Saharan Africa, and elsewhere in the French empire. Indigenous Moroccan troops were employed in the conquest of Morocco but also served the French army in Europe and elsewhere in the overseas empire. France's reliance on its colonial armies was typical of this period of European expansion, though it was not as specific to the French as Gershovich suggests, especially considering the British employment of colonial troops. The book's discussion of the role of Moroccan troops contributes to a growing literature on the global impact of troops from colonized peoples in the waning days of empire and the period of decolonization.

Chapter 2 focuses on the erosion of Moroccan sovereignty in the precolonial period. The political turmoil in the first decade of the 20th century, coupled with France's growing military involvement in Morocco, set the stage for the establishment of the French Protectorate in 1912. Gershovich shows in the following two chapters how Lyautey's policy evolved during his tenure as resident-general in Morocco (1912–25). He arrived in Morocco with the concept of indirect rule, the ideology behind establishing a "protectorate" in Morocco, but what this meant in terms of Morocco's political future was ambiguous. It is clear that Lyautey, in light of his monarchist and aristocratic tendencies, saw in the preservation of the indigenous elite and the sharifian dynasty, though subservient to the French, a strategic alliance. Lyautey sought a compliant monarch and quickly pressured Sultan 'Abd al-Hafiz to abdicate, foisting Mawlay al-Yusuf, a more passive monarch, into his place.

Whether by circumstance or design—and perhaps against Lyautey's intentions—the French military and civilian officials soon undermined any pretense of indirect rule as the practical realities of ruling Morocco unfolded in the first years of the Protectorate. While Lyautey may have desired to see the Moroccan governing authorities (Makhzan) become an effective public service, minimizing the need and expense of direct French intervention, increasingly the Makhzan's real power was reduced and made subordinate to French officials. For similarly practical reasons, the French did confer authority to the "great *qā'id*s," especially the powerful Si Thami Glawi. In exchange for equipment and recognition of their status that predated the Protectorate, the *qā'id*s at times maintained ruthless authority and control over vast regions in the south that the French were still unable to penetrate.

Even if France wanted to rapidly "pacify" all of Morocco, Gershovich demonstrates how the distinctive methods of colonial warfare, especially as it applied to Morocco, preferred whenever possible "political" over "military" penetration, attempting to accommodate dissident tribesmen to colonial rule by selectively distributing benefits such as medical treatment. Military concerns in Europe took precedence over the colonies, which put constraints on metropole involvement. Some of the most interesting parts of the book analyze, against the background of political events in France and Europe, the complicated negotiations and conflicts among the military in Morocco, Lyautey, and France over the implementation of military rule in Morocco. To minimize expense and spare French lives, Lyautey deployed, whenever possible, local, irregular levies, incorporated into auxiliary and regular formations (the *groupe mobile*). Lyautey's famed "peaceful penetration" was, as Gershovich demonstrates, a complicated affair, which in reality was very costly both in terms of expense and loss of life. Increasingly it was the Moroccan recruits rather than the French who were fighting the Moroccan resistance.

It took France more than two decades to subdue the “dissident” regions of Morocco, where the French military suffered a number of major setbacks. The abandonment of the Tafilalet in 1918 signaled a strategy to divide Morocco between regions classified as “useful” under direct rule and “nonuseful” areas that would not require direct control. The illusion that Morocco had been pacified, in accordance with this new division, was challenged by the Rif war in 1925.

Gershovich covers familiar ground on the French conquest of Morocco but succeeds in retelling the story through new analytical lenses. New ground is broken, however, in his discussion of the Moroccan soldiers who fought for the French, the focus of chapter 6. The establishment of the Protectorate led to the disbanding of the ineffective sharifian army and the creation of the new Moroccan Auxiliary Troops, who soon embarked to Europe to fight on the German front during World War I. Thousands of Moroccan troops fought on the front line in France during World War II, and Moroccan regiments continued to serve the French military overseas in Madagascar and Indochina. One of the most fascinating discussions is on the mixed *goums*, the small irregular units of North African troops led by a small contingent of French personnel. These Moroccan soldiers, increasingly drawn from Berbers of the Atlas, played a significant role in the last stage of Morocco’s “pacification” and continued to serve the French in the countryside until the last days of colonial rule. The growing defection of these seemingly loyal Berber *goumiers* to the resistance hastened the decision of France to end its effort to control Morocco militarily, leading to political compromise and Moroccan independence in 1956.

This discussion of Moroccan soldiers in the French military complicates the picture of the colonizer and colonized. One of the lasting effects of French colonialism was the military legacy of Moroccans in French uniforms. A military academy for Moroccan officer cadets, established in Meknes in 1919, remained a central institution in independent Morocco. And despite their service to the French (or, rather, because of it), many soldiers were integrated into the Moroccan armed forces. Indeed, as Gershovich argues, the royal family depended on them to establish its hegemony: “devoid of nationalist credibility, they became dependent upon the patronage of the king to shield them from the mistrust and envy of nationalist-oriented colleagues and rivals” (p. 214). Gershovich convincingly argues that the submission of former dissident tribes to French rule contributed to the creation of a cohesive postcolonial national entity.

Gershovich has amassed considerable evidence in support of his thesis, culling from the major colonial and Protectorate archives. Missing somewhat from the picture is the Moroccan side of the story of resistance to French military rule. As the author is well aware, this can probably be told only through unpublished writings and oral testimonies located throughout the Moroccan countryside. We learn from Philip Khoury’s foreword to the book that Gershovich’s current research seeks to recover the voices of Moroccan veterans of the French military in Morocco. Such a study would add to the picture already so well portrayed in this informative book.

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MICHAEL DUMPER, *The Politics of Sacred Space: The Old City of Jerusalem in the Middle East Conflict* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002). Pp. 181. \$19.95.

REVIEWED BY RONALD R. STOCKTON, Professor of Political Science, University of Michigan, Dearborn; e-mail: rstockt@umich.edu

Let’s start with a conclusion: this is a good book. It is filled with useful facts, revealing anecdotes, and insightful nuance. It is rich in detail, with excerpts from historical documents

and discussions of significant events in the struggle for Jerusalem and its "sacred space." Both undergraduates and professors could learn from it.

The central theme is that of a "holy site." This concept has popular and religious meanings but is in fact a technical term that originated in the 1700s as the Ottomans attempted to stabilize the Christian communities of Jerusalem and fend off European countries claiming to defend them. The Turks defined certain sites as protected and placed them under the authority of local religious leaders. These accumulated agreements (called collectively the "Status Quo") were written into treaties and international conventions. In the 20th century, the list grew to include Islamic and Jewish sites as well as additional Christian ones. Central to the agreements were the four quarters of the Old City: Armenian, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim.

Dumper's emphasis is on events after 1967, when the Israelis took over the Old City and threatened the Status Quo as they tried to consolidate their control and expand their space. The first attacks came from the government itself: the destruction of the 135-home Magharib neighborhood to create open space around the Western Wall and the expropriation of twenty-nine acres of the Muslim Quarter to double the size of the Jewish Quarter. A second type of attack was from settler groups, some of which look forward to the destruction of the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa mosque and the construction of the Third Temple. Their typical *modus operandi* is to seize a piece of property in one of the non-Jewish quarters, often using a front group for a questionable purchase. They then occupy the site, with a force of chanting, armed settlers expelling the residents. According to a 1993 Israeli commission that was not happy with what it had discovered, takeovers often have covert government encouragement and funding. Once the takeover occurs, government security forces step in to secure order. The settlers stay in possession while the courts try to determine the facts. Typically, they never get around to making a determination. Palestinians and Jordanians have made sales to Israelis a capital offense.

One valuable aspect of the book is its thorough discussions of specific incidents and the groups involved in them. Readers who have heard of these events but are not sure of the details will appreciate this. Examples include the takeovers of the Dayr al-Sultan (1970) and St. John's Hospice (1990), the shootings in the Haram (1990), the opening of the Hasmonean Tunnel (1996), and the massacre in Hebron's Ibrahimi Mosque (1994). Each incident shows a pattern of encroachment that threatens a community and puts it on edge so that future incidents are read in ominous ways.

Dumper examines these issues from three levels: the international, the religious establishments, and intracommunal relations. Innovation and evolution are constant themes. Consider the case of the Muslim authorities who were cut off from their administrative supervisors in Jordan after 1967. Seeing the danger of falling under the control of the Israeli Ministry of Religion, the chief qadi issued a fatwa saying that in the absence of Islamic rulers, Muslims were obligated to create a regulatory authority to manage their affairs. They established a twenty-five-person council of shaykhs, family leaders, and notables with an executive council. The existence of this council and its ability to draw money and support from benefactors in other lands strengthened the ability of Muslim authorities to resist encroachment. Similarly, the Christian denominations have sometimes moved beyond traditional rivalries to defend their rights. Christian leaders were stunned to learn during the Camp David negotiations of a proposal to transfer the Armenian Quarter to Israel. Their joint statement reflected a united front among denominations that more frequently compete than cooperate. For their part, Jewish settlers have been very successful at mobilizing political and financial support from evangelical and Jewish supporters overseas (often with U.S. tax subsidies).

Regarding possible solutions, Dumper worries that he might "run the risk of affirming and contributing" to an Israeli position when he says that internationalization, extraterritoriality, and shared administration by a religious council are no longer viable options (p. 7). "It would

take enormous political will on the part of an Israeli government to reverse the gains made by the settlers in taking over properties throughout the Old City." He summarizes various positions and then suggests a complex plan of phased agreements and leasebacks in which "sovereignty or jurisdictions will be ceded in stages to one party over an agreed period of time," but "the land is retained by lease for a given period" (p. 167). This would be hard to arrange and would be fraught with danger.

There is creative speculation in the book regarding the waves of Muslim pilgrims who would make Jerusalem a haj stop after a settlement. This would be a windfall for the economy but would put exceptional demands on tourist and religious facilities. It would probably require limits both on numbers (such as Saudi Arabia has) and on access to sites (such as Jerusalem had during the celebrations of 2000).

The book is filled with references, informative footnotes, hard-to-find data, citations from primary documents, and personal communications. There are nine tables and four maps. A map that included all mentioned sites would have been helpful.

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YOAV GELBER, *Israeli–Jordanian Dialogue, 1948–1953: Cooperation, Conspiracy, or Collusion?* (Brighton: Sussex University Press, 2004). Pp. 366. \$75.00.

REVIEWED BY MIRIAM JOYCE, Department of History and Political Science, Purdue University Calumet, Hammond, Ind.; e-mail: mjoyce@calumet.purdue.edu

Using a wide range of unpublished Israeli and British documents supplemented with published memoirs, diaries, and material from the foreign relations of the United States, Yoav Gelber denies that Jordan's King Abdullah and Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion had a secret understanding to divide Palestine between them. He disagrees with the earlier work by Professor Avi Shlaim, who concluded there was collusion between King Abdullah and the Israeli government. According to Gelber, Shlaim's work was influenced by a discredited source, Israel Ber, a senior member of the Israeli army's general staff who was later convicted of spying for the Soviet Union (p. 2). Which of the two scholars will win the debate remains an open question.

Territorial expansion had long been a Hashemite dream. According to Gelber, King Abdullah's desire to annex the West Bank preceded the United Nations' 1947 partition plan. Furthermore, Israel's preference for the enlargement of Jordan rather than establishment of an independent Palestinian state resulted from the absence of a Palestinian leader willing to accept Israel's existence (p. 128). Hence, high-level secret negotiations were held between Israel and Jordan, discussions that considered a possible peace treaty or, at least, a nonaggression pact. Abdullah appeared willing to make peace with Israel; however, his prudent ministers feared assassination and were concerned that they would be labeled traitors and that Jordan would be expelled from the Arab League. In addition, the future of Jerusalem was a sensitive issue. Although both Israel and Jordan were united in their opposition to the internationalization of the holy city, they did not achieve agreement. Meeting at the king's Shuneh Palace on 24 January 1950, the Israelis demanded control of the Old City's Jewish Quarter and the Wailing Wall. In response, the Jordanians asked for Arab neighborhoods in West Jerusalem. The Israelis said no. However, they appeared willing to finance housing projects in East Jerusalem by providing compensation to former Arab residents of West Jerusalem (p. 139).

A February 1951 excerpt from Ben-Gurion's diary suggests that the Israeli leader then considered attempting an agreement with Egypt first (p. 198). The king was distressed by

his failure to achieve agreement with Israel. In June 1951, he told the visiting chairman of the Palestine Conciliation Commission, "I also know that my people distrust me because of my peace efforts. Despite all that, I know that I could get peace settled if I only had some encouragement and could get reasonable concession from Israel" (p. 205). The king continued to make efforts to achieve agreement until his assassination in July 1951. After Abdullah's murder, Amman was occupied with the issue of succession: the mental illness of Abdullah's son Talal and the youth of his grandson, soon to be King Hussein. According to Gelber, "The death of Abdullah thus marked the end of an epoch" (p. 209).

Relations between Israel and Jordan deteriorated as a result of Israeli retaliation against those Arabs who crossed the border into Israel. Infiltration had been a long-standing problem. Some farmers crossed to visit their lands that were now in Israel; others crossed to engage in criminal activity. Pressed by Washington and London, in June 1953 Israel and Jordan signed a new agreement to end infiltration. Infiltration continued, however, and in October 1953 Israeli forces, including a unit under the command of Ariel Sharon, attacked the West Bank village of Qibya. Israelis demolished houses and inflicted heavy casualties on Qibya's inhabitants, further widening the gulf between the two countries.

It is likely that debate over the relationship between King Abdullah and Israel will continue. One hopes that, in the future, scholars will be able to use additional unpublished American archival sources and, most important, Jordanian archival sources. Meanwhile, Gelber's sources are appropriate, and he uses them well. This book is a fine contribution to the literature. Although too dense for undergraduates, it will be very useful to experienced scholars working on the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

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EYTAN BENTSUR, *Making Peace: A First-Hand Account of the Arab-Israeli Peace Process* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 2001). Pp. 289. \$68.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY KENNETH W. STEIN, Department of History, Emory University, Atlanta; e-mail: kstein@emory.edu

When Eytan Benstur started this book, he was near the end of serving as deputy director-general of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The book itself is a readable and fascinating account of his involvement in the unfolding of the two years of Israeli-American discussions that led to the convocation of the October–November 1991 Madrid Middle East Peace Conference (MMEPC) and his assessment of the two years of negotiations that followed. One-third of the book is an appendix of the speeches delivered at the conference. For Bentsur, the conference was "a major historic breakthrough... a watershed event, the most significant foreign policy development since the (1979) peace agreement with Egypt, an auspicious turning point in the history of the Arab-Israeli dispute" (pp. vii, 157, 172). Given Bentsur's quarter-century experience in the Israeli Foreign Ministry, his book is a satisfying appetizer but serves no main course.

The conference and the negotiating processes designed for its aftermath aimed at achieving the elusive comprehensive peace that Jimmy Carter had sought in the late 1970s. The MMEPC was based on "a fresh political conception"—namely, a dual-track approach to resolving outstanding issues, first through bilateral talks between Israel and its neighbors, and second and simultaneously multilateral discussions among Arab states, Israel, and other countries interested in tackling broader issues such as refugees, regional economic development, security, water availability, and the environment. Bentsur's excitement and delight in participating in

this process carry throughout the book, in large measure because the dual negotiating levels succeeded to one degree or another, but also because it was Bentsur's original idea, proposed to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, that this two-track initiative be designed and implemented. To Baker Bentsur gives enormous credit for cobbling together the Madrid summit and for pushing forward the dual-track approach, in effect extracting positive results from Bentsur's idea. While the Madrid framework for negotiations on two levels was overtaken by the Oslo process—the U.S.–PLO negotiating track, interrupted by the second intifada—it introduced into the negotiating calculus the active participation of the international community, with the “Road Map” in 2002 and the Arab League Summit resolutions of 2003 as main focal points for resolving most Palestinian–Israeli differences.

If anything, Bentsur's book is short on perspective and comparative analyses. He tells us little about the failed Arab–Israeli conferences that came earlier in the century—the 1939 London Conference, the 1949 Lausanne Conference, the 1973 Geneva Conference, and the aborted 1977 effort under Carter's initiative. With his Israeli Foreign Ministry experience stretching back to the early 1970s, Bentsur's views on what he witnessed—who did what, to whom, and when—would have been illuminating. Having worked for more than half of Israel's governments since its establishment, he could have revealed more. Perhaps his stalwart professional demeanor prevented a tastier and meatier book. His summary of his time as consul of Israel in Los Angeles is revealing but too brief. We still need to know how Israeli representatives seek and work connections to promote Israel. He could have given us examples, reasons, and insights into many of the bureaucratic skirmishes within the Israeli Foreign Ministry. To have learned about how Golda Meir froze out Foreign Minister Abba Eban in favor of Israeli Ambassador Simcha Dinitz after the 1973 war would not be a kiss-and-tell-all story but would remind us that Israeli foreign policy rests in the prime minister's office and not the Foreign Ministry compound or office building. Particularly tasty from Bentsur would have been his personal assessments comparing the periods after the 1973 war and the Gulf War. He was one of the only diplomats, Israeli or otherwise, who attended both Middle East peace conferences.

Bentsur's renditions are too sparse, too careful, too coiffed. Therein is the conclusion. Presidents, kings, generals, secretaries of state, defense ministers, national security advisers, and those engaged in Arab–Israeli negotiations write memoirs, most of them detailed but rarely self-deprecating. Unfortunately, longtime civil servants in Arab, Israeli, and American foreign ministries rarely write their memoirs. These are the folks who learn to take notes at important meetings while downing lunch simultaneously. They draft the memos, write the cables, and mostly forget little. They have a limited number of axes to grind and usually serve and survive a variety of political masters. Where else but in a memoir by a civil servant such as Bentsur would we candidly learn about Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's outlook, which was “riddled with doubt, suspicion, and even dread concerning what the future might bring. . . . [T]he prevailing desire was nothing more than to get the Madrid Conference over and done with” (p. 121).

The knowledge of diplomatic historians and those interested in contemporary policymaking would be enhanced by more memoirs. Unfortunately, Israel's long-serving civil servants Epi Evron and Hanan Bar-On and Egypt's Tahsin Bashir died before putting their incredible memories to paper. Likewise, a memoir from the recently departed Joe Sisco, who served so ably during the Kissinger shuttle missions of the 1970s, would have revealed that he was the author of U.N. Security Council Resolution 338; he defined the term “negotiations between the parties.” Perhaps it is not too late to cajole Daniel Kurtzer, Nabil Arabi, and Michael Shilo to write their memoirs, for each toiled for decades in the American, Egyptian, and Israeli foreign ministries, respectively.

Memoirs like Bentsur's are useful, but we need more of them that illuminate nuance. Knowing the meaning of a term in its original historical context provides insight into what

any set of drafters intended. Knowing original intention helps restrain the urge to interpret history via today's avant-garde political theme. What did the drafters of Security Council Resolution 242 mean by "withdrawal" as compared with the various meanings placed on the term over time by Menachem Begin, Yitzhak Shamir, Yasir Arafat, and Shaykh Yasin? Of course, even when sharp and astute memoirs are written, they are not always read by those who should read them. What would have been different about handling Iraq in the postwar phase if Paul Bremer had read and implemented the warnings about ethnic groups so explicit in Gertrude Bell's letters of fourscore years ago?

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REBECCA B. KOOK, *The Logic of Democratic Exclusion: African-Americans in the United States and Palestinian Citizens in Israel* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2002). Pp. 231. \$75.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY MARTIN EDELMAN, Department of Political Science, Rockefeller College, University at Albany, State University of New York, Albany, N.Y.; e-mail: me354@albany.edu

This is an intriguing and interesting book. Its interest is inherent in the subject matter: how two contemporary democracies deal with the status and rights of conspicuous minorities. The intriguing aspects revolve around the author's thesis—that is, that membership in a democracy is inherently exclusionary, and national/ethnic/racial exclusion is a tacit requirement for successful democratic regimes.

This argument, of course, contradicts the central thrust of democratic theory that all human beings are inherently worthy of equal treatment and respect. Rebecca Kook argues that while *citizenship* in a democratic society is usually attainable by universal criteria, *membership* in such nations—the ability to participate in the full array of rights and benefits—is available only to certain citizens of the polity (p. 5). The reason that democracies promote particularistic collective national identities is to maintain stability.

Stability, in turn, requires a democracy to promote a shared national identity to facilitate collective action. Without such a national identity, the state would be unable to mobilize its citizens in times of peril and to overcome their free-rider, self-serving propensities in times of normalcy. A distinct national identity is also essential in any democracy, Kook argues, to provide the basis for the distribution of public goods and services. How else are limits and boundaries to be imposed on the otherwise universalistic values of democratic theories? As a result, each democracy uses a variety of symbolic methods to create and inculcate a distinct national identity, to define the people who are really entitled to full participatory membership.

Within this theoretical framework, Kook provides a clear, concise account of the exclusion of African Americans from membership in the United States and Palestinians from membership in Israel. Although blacks were legally granted citizenship in the wake of the U.S. Civil War (1861–65), they were excluded from the public goods and benefits enjoyed by white Americans for more than a century. The civil rights movement was successful, Kook argues, not primarily for the moral values embedded in democratic theory. Rather, African Americans were granted membership in American society because of the increased economic integration of the country, the increased importance of the black vote in the western and northern states, the Cold War competition with the Soviet Union for support in nonwhite Third World countries, and the willingness of African Americans to disrupt the established order to end their exclusion. The need to preserve, and perhaps advance, basic institutions convinced American economic and political elites to accord African Americans full membership.

In Israel, Palestinians were excluded from the emerging national identity by the Zionists seeking to recreate a Jewish state in the ancient homeland. After a dispersion that had lasted almost 2,000 years, Jews had to learn to think of themselves as a distinct people entitled to their own place in the international system. The drive to create a strong national identity was reinforced by the need to husband scarce resources to integrate waves of Jewish immigrants from disparate cultures, to develop the country, and, most of all, to defend the new nation from surrounding Arab forces. Thus, while Palestinian Israelis are legally entitled to all the rights of citizenship, they plainly do not enjoy full participatory membership in Israeli society.

As with any work of this size, especially one developed from a dissertation, important questions remain. To what extent does the legal basis of citizenship in each democracy facilitate or burden membership in its society? In the United States, citizenship has always been premised on individualistic criteria. In Israel, citizenship for Jews is based on that ethnic or national identity; only for the 20 percent of the population who are not Jewish do other, individualistic criteria apply. (The same issues are raised in other "ethnic" democracies such as Germany.) Was it therefore easier to incorporate African Americans? Who can forget how civil rights leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., or political leaders such as President Lyndon B. Johnson used the individualist/universalistic symbols of American citizenship? In contrast, all the national symbols of Israeli society are deliberately based on Jewish traditions. Will the desire to preserve the *Jewish* state—including most recently Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan for the Gaza Strip—prove an insuperable obstacle for a more inclusive polity?

However, those same particularistic ethnic and national symbols have made it easier for Israeli leaders to mobilize support in times of crisis, while American leaders are always struggling to create a sense of common, shared membership. Finally, to what extent is the exclusionary nature of *membership* in Israeli democracy related to the fact that the country has never been accepted by the bulk of the Arab world? The legitimacy of the United States, Kook's other case study, has not been in doubt for more two centuries. Do those existential facts reduce the utility of any comparison of these particular democracies?

Yet those questions emerge because Kook decided to make the comparison. None is meant to detract from the important contribution that Kook has made to the burgeoning dialogue on the nature of citizenship in general and the character it has taken in the United States and Israel.

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NADEYA SAYED ALI MOHAMMED, *Population and Development of the Arab Gulf States: The Case of Bahrain, Oman and Kuwait* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2003). Pp. 201. \$99.95 Cloth.

REVIEWED BY JAMIL JREISAT, Department of Government and International Affairs, University of South Florida, Tampa; e-mail: jreisat@cas.usf.edu

This book is a welcome addition to demographic analysis in the Arab Gulf states of Bahrain, Kuwait, and Oman, a subject that remains underdeveloped—even neglected—in research. It is not easy to gather reliable information on these countries because they have only recently commenced data collection and census taking. As the author points out, demographic data in the Gulf countries is "either incomplete, irregular or full of gaps, and can rarely be checked for accuracy" (p. xv). Nevertheless, she seems to have managed to produce a credible analysis based on available data.

While the states of Bahrain, Oman, and Kuwait are the focus of the study, the analysis often is extended to other Gulf countries (Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates), as

well. This is warranted due to the fact that the entire Gulf region is unique in many respects. The countries are almost totally dependent on oil revenue. Moreover, except for Saudi Arabia, they are ministates in geography and in population. Furthermore, all these states are ruled by traditional families with hereditary succession and authoritarian systems of governance.

The chapter on employment indicates a curious demographic reality of the Gulf states. Few countries in the world rely as heavily on foreign labor and immigrant workers as these societies do. The high concentration of nonnational labor is formidable, reaching 80 percent in Bahrain, 60 percent in Kuwait, 55 percent in Qatar, and an average of 47 percent in Saudi Arabia. The implication of this fact for the social and economic growth of these countries is profound. Sayed Ali Mohammed indicates that discovery of oil in the 1950s prompted a large influx of workers from around the world. Whereas foreign workers provided human capital for the development of the Gulf states, such employment has also had serious social, economic, and political consequences that reach beyond infrastructure construction and economic growth.

Clearly, the book recognizes and underlines many demographic anomalies in these ministates. Reliance on foreign labor creates serious cultural impediments for current and future development. Nationals of these states have become a privileged and pampered superclass, enjoying the largesse of oil revenues and anxiously guarding various archaic public policies that perpetuate their political dominance and economic benefits. One remarkable example is policies on citizenship. It is extremely difficult for a nonnational in these countries to become a citizen. Even children of noncitizens born and raised in these countries, who have known no other country of residence in their entire life, are rarely granted citizenship. Furthermore, reliance on foreign labor contributes to a condition of inequality for women in the employment domain and creates numerous legal issues. While the study recognizes some of these problems, it offers little by way of a blueprint for reform.

Noteworthy, as the book indicates, is the politicization of importing and hiring foreign labor in the Gulf countries. Disagreement with the political stance of the governments of the imported workers often results in massive terminations and hiring bans on their citizens, causing enormous human-rights issues. The worst example is the treatment accorded to Palestinian and Jordanian workers in Kuwait in the aftermath of the 1990 Gulf War. Currently, these Gulf countries have increased their hiring of Asian workers (from Pakistan, India, the Philippines, and Thailand) not only because of their willingness to accept low wages and to do menial labor, but also because they are deemed "safe" politically for Gulf regimes.

Linkages between demographic factors and various aspects of the economic, political, and social characteristics of these countries are often implied or specifically recognized in the book. The author emphasizes such factors as the high birthrate and the dramatic improvement in the mortality rate in these countries and how they translate into citizens' increasing demands for employment and educational opportunities. This trend, along with the states' heavy reliance on an exhaustible product (oil) generating unstable revenue, is increasingly a matter of concern if these countries are to sustain expected or necessary socioeconomic development in the future. Alas, the analysis presented offers tenuous conclusions as remedies or public-policy alternatives.

While the book provides a large number of statistical tables and demographic projections, the data are often not that current. Most tables provide information that is more than ten years old. Still, the main weakness of this study is its lack of serious attention to public-policy recommendations for reform. The strategic issues seem buried in the analysis; the effects of type of governance are rarely brought out, despite their dominant influence on all aspects of public policy. While the author emphasizes the need for rational population management, the issues involved go far beyond questions of fertility and population growth. The public policies of these countries seem intended to preserve the current privileges for citizens, subsidize their needs, and support in perpetuity their dependence on huge numbers

of foreign servants. These servants are relegated to doing the hard work, thus maintaining the special privileges of the few and reducing the need for women to be equal participants in the employment field.

Population and Development of the Arab Gulf States represents a serious jump in scholarly interest in the demography of the Gulf states. However, the scholarly community ought to continue exploring the major political and economic considerations related to demographic data.

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BEATRICE NICOLINI, *Makran, Oman, and Zanzibar: Three-Terminal Cultural Corridor in the Western Indian Ocean (1799–1856)*, trans. Penelope-Jane Watson, Islam in Africa Series, vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2004). Pp. 191. \$112.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY PATRICIA RISSO, Department of History, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque; e-mail: prisso@unm.edu

Beatrice Nicolini is assistant professor of the history and institutions of Africa, Faculty of Political Sciences, at Italy's Catholic University of Milan. The premise of her work is that during the first half of the 19th century, Makran, Oman, and Zanzibar constituted a "complex and interwoven system connecting merchandise, people and cultures" (p. 4). This system substantially occurred under the aegis of Sa'id ibn Sultan Al Bu Sa'idi (d. 1856), the famous regional ruler who moved both his political and economic bases from Muscat in Oman to Zanzibar during the 1830s and '40s. The inclusion of not so obvious Makran—roughly, coastal Baluchistan, currently divided between Pakistan and Iran—is intriguing. Nicolini stresses that Arab princes in both Oman and East Africa availed themselves of Baluchi slave and mercenary soldiers.

Also important in part 1 is a discussion of identity in coastal East Africa, the geographic linchpin of the study. Nicolini draws on a wealth of knowledge about eastern Africa to advance the broad scholarly debate about Swahili identity and distinctiveness. The diplomacy of Nicolini's coverage is exemplified by a linguistic observation: "Swahili is a Bantu language, and the term itself a Bantu word, but it derives also from the Arabic sahil, sawahil, belonging to the coasts" (p. 56). A wonderful example of Swahili distinctiveness is domestic architecture: in urban settings, the large, square stone dwellings of cosmopolitan Muslim merchants were equipped with bathing facilities, unlike Middle Eastern or North African towns that typically had *public* baths (pp. 67–68).

In part 2, Nicolini delves further into the archives, especially the English East India Company records, where she has found unused or underused documents. Part 2 has three chapters, plus a short conclusion. Chapter 4 covers the British obsession with the security of communication lines connecting India and London. Chapter 6 (skipping chapter 5 for the moment) discusses the not very effective Moresby Treaty of 1822 between Sa'id ibn Sultan and British India with regard to the abolition of the slave trade. The chapter also details Sa'id's efforts to placate and convince the British that the ancient custom of slavery was not damaging but, instead, essential to the collective well-being of local society (p. 146). This last chapter also introduces the United States' commercial interests in Zanzibar.

Chapter 5, covering the Swahili coast and particularly Zanzibar, is the heart of the book. Here Nicolini gives effective agency to Swahilis, hinterland Africans, Indians, Baluchis, and Arabs, even though the region was by then coming within the grasp of British dominance. The author describes Swahili slave society in considerable detail and traces a sequence of

interrelated changes. Britain's initial attempts to restrict slave trading meant a reduced supply of African slaves. This happened just as the ivory market was growing, requiring laborers. Sa'id ibn Sultan was at that time eliciting heavy investments from merchants of Sind and Kutch to begin his clove plantations in Zanzibar, a labor-intensive project. These situations led to an increased reliance on Baluchi slaves.

Since European perceptions of Sa'id ibn Sultan are an explicit focus of the book, I was surprised by the absence of Sa'id's daughter, Salme. She married a European, took the name Emily Reute, lived as a widow in Germany, and wrote a book about growing up in Zanzibar. Her choices in life suggest types of European-Zanzabari contact beyond diplomatic notes and commercial wrangling.

The inevitable problem with including a large geographic or temporal expanse in a study of this kind is the invitation to specialists of the various subregions to quibble. My quibble has to do with the internal history of Oman and not so much with Europeans. In addition to the *pull toward* fertile, well-positioned Zanzibar, I (selfishly) would have liked more attention to the *push from* Oman. Sa'id chose to be an urban merchant prince, forsaking the tribal or religious (Ibadi Islamic) legitimacy of Oman's interior. The Muhawwidun, or Wahhabis, from central Arabia repeatedly threatened southeastern Arabia and, indirectly, the maritime health of Oman. Sa'id may have had as much reason to leave Muscat as he had to choose Zanzibar.

The book's apparatus (including a confusing bibliography and indexes that are too brief) is a bit disappointing and not up to Brill's past standards. In the important introductory pages, in the first twenty-five pages of the text, and again in parts of chapter 5, there is a problem with translation that overlaps with a problem of editing, which occasionally threatens to obscure the author's meaning.

This book should be of interest to all scholars working on the littorals of the western Indian Ocean, particularly those who appreciate a broad geopolitical context. Nicolini's approach is interdisciplinary and successfully so. The portions directly concerned with the Swahili coast are richest in detail and analysis.

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MOHAMAD TAVAKOLI-TARGHI, *Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and Historiography*, St. Antony's Series (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001). Pp. 232. \$60.00.

REVIEWED BY MARILYN BOOTH, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; e-mail: mbooth@uiuc.edu

Refashioning Iran offers a counterexample to history writing that starts and ends at the borders of the nation-state by approaching the formation of modern Iran as a process of boundary creation that effaces "homeless texts" that themselves contributed to "the hybridization of cultures and the invention of national selves" (p. x). Looking in on Iranian modernity from different vantage points, Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi clears space for a different history by arguing that a Eurocentric-normative focus on nationalist Iranian historiography colluded with Orientalist scholarship, measuring "progress" by how well Iran followed a European narrative and dismissing the prenationalist period as one of "decay."

As familiar as this may sound, the author's rerouting of historical narrative through border territories is fascinating. The standard histories ignored 18th- and 19th-century Persianate appropriations of European texts, a creative reworking that sought to sustain local discourses of scientific modernity. Local scholars fashioned heterotopias; following Foucault, Tavakoli-Targhi glosses heterotopias as "counter-sites" in which intellectuals could produce alternative

narratives for the future—not impossible utopias, but practical other-spaces. Particularly intriguing is his focus on 17th–19th-century Persian-language texts in India, a site for producing “Persian-ness” often contested by intellectuals based in the Persian heartlands who claimed to be the sole legitimate practitioners of Persian literary excellence. Yet these writings are crucial, Tavakoli-Targhi argues, both for understanding the linguistic-cultural underpinnings of nationalist activism and for evaluating the impact of Orientalism, whose scholars and critics both ignored or misrecognized the contribution of “local scholars” to European productions of “the Orient.” Tavakoli-Targhi traces these effects in lively detail and with judicious quotations from Persian texts—travel books, scientific treatises, textual criticism, newspaper essays, and translations of European philosophers—the sorts of texts that, the British Orientalist James Fraser exclaimed, “I never expected to find in Khorasan” (p. 15). Orientalism itself, Tavakoli-Targhi demonstrates, was the outcome of hybridization, but the local producers of this knowledge were made invisible by the European scholars who sought their help.

Intellectual curiosity and intellectual labors traveled in both directions, and the author builds on critiques of both Orientalist scholarship and histories of Orientalism by sketching a “Persianate Europology” in which scholar-travelers such as Mirza P’tisam al-Din (in England in 1766–69) memorialized their voyages for a curious public and then fed their musings “back” to an equally curious audience in Europe when some of these Persian texts were translated into English. “The anxiety and the desire to represent and narrate alterity were reciprocal amongst Asians and Europeans” (p. 36). As travelers (or “voy[ag]eurs” as Tavakoli-Targhi labels them) “consumed” local sceneries, the locals (whether in London or in Khorasan) consumed *them*.

Persianate writers’ knowledge of Europe, in turn, made possible a complex discourse on the European Other which helped to define “vernacular modernities” through parallelism and contrast. For anyone writing on postcolonial constructions of “Westernness,” this study’s emphasis on the work these constructions *did* is instructive. Tavakoli-Targhi moves beyond familiar notions of “the West” as either adversary or teacher, noting that intellectuals exploited the possible exemplarity of Europe to separate themselves from Arabic Islamicate identities and to formulate an “Iranness” that emphasized Iran’s pre-Islamic narratives of creation and kingship. Mimicry thus became a local strategy to contest other, hegemonizing “local identities.” As this Iran-centric identity became more salient—Tavakoli-Targhi notes its dissemination through, for example, the spread of pre-Islamic given names, seen no longer as Zoroastrian but rather as Iranian—the cultural and kinship ties with the Indian subcontinent, as well as those with Arab territories to the west, were suppressed.

But what about possible new channels of contact? Shifts and maneuvers that Tavakoli-Targhi traces among the late-19th-century Iranian intelligentsia were also occurring among Arab intellectuals; to what extent were Iranian thinkers aware of this, and did it matter to them? Certain activist intellectuals—think of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani—traversed and, indeed, helped to create many of these scenes of ferment. If Persian/ate intelligentsias were rhetorically dismissive and critical of the Islamicate Arab impact on Iran historically, was this complicated by a recognition that many 19th-century Arabs were fellow travelers on the road to a desired, nation-centered future?

The production of gendered images of social difference was central to the discursive use—them dialogue that generated this productive mimicry. One chapter is devoted to the question of how Persian travelers’ recorded reactions to European women, whether singularly or in the aggregate, shaped and registered their outlooks on European societies and signaled contrary formulations of Iran’s future. Later in the book, the author returns to gendered discursive formations to suggest that contesting notions of political authority drew on “patriotic” or “matriotic” visions of the nation, producing, as a corollary, the gendered subjects of modernity that by now are such familiar characters in academic postcolonial studies. Tavakoli-Targhi deftly interweaves gender with other markers of specific being-in-the-world. Yet here his claims for the material impact of discursive formations seem least convincing, perhaps because

they are so very large. If newspapers depicted Iran as a wounded or terminally ill 6,000-year-old mother, contesting the Shah–Father of officialdom’s paternalistic discourse, did this gender juggling really shape Iranians’ sense of how to envision a constitutionalist future? To what extent did familial emotions become transposed onto a nationalist template? And if Iranian modernity did offer an “inside–outside” gendering of space markedly different from that of Bengali modernity (as conceptualized by Partha Chatterjee and R. Radhakrishnan in particular), allowing a stronger public presence for Iranian women and demanding an emphasis on girls’ schooling, then why in fact were the contours and outcomes of gender debates in 19th-century Bengal as similar as they were in terms of girls’ schooling, debates on purdah, and the like? I ask these questions in the spirit of shared endeavors, for the issue of discourse’s material authority is a constant and troublesome one, likely an unanswerable question about particularities of reception that nevertheless must be kept constantly in mind.

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BERNARD HOURCADE, *Iran: Nouvelles identités d'une république*, Asie Plurielle (Paris: Editions Belin, 2002). Pp. 223. €18 paper.

REVIEWED BY KAVEH EHSANI, Department of Political Science, University of Illinois, Chicago; e-mail: kehsani@uic.edu

This is the best general introductory volume on contemporary Iran that I have read. The range and relevance of issues covered by the book is impressive without being convoluted, and the lucid prose and masterly synthesis never befuddles the reader. For nonspecialist readers who seek to understand the dynamics of contemporary Iranian society but feel intimidated by the complexities of its recent history, or are aggravated by the repetitive and often superficial musings of the existing journalistic and academic literature, no better single volume can be recommended. However, this slim book is beneficial not only to the general reader or the undergraduate student. Virtually every page has an insightful comment or a critical bit of new information to excite even specialists who are well familiar with the author’s previous work or with the current state of development of Iranian society.

This is in large part due to the author’s experience and deep familiarity with contemporary Iran. Bernard Hourcade headed the French research institute in Tehran (IFRI) during the difficult years of the revolution, the Iran–Iraq War, and the postwar reconstruction, from 1978 to 1993. He regularly visits and is currently in the process of issuing an updated version of his excellent *Atlas d’Iran*, initially published in 2000 (previously reviewed by this reviewer for *Iranian Studies*), and an even more original and critically important *Atlas de Téhéran*, to be published in the near future.

Hourcade’s intimate familiarity with the difficult complexities of Iran’s postrevolutionary history serves him well in this volume, which covers an impressive range of subjects in a very accessible manner. Various chapters deal with the impact of Iran’s physical geography on its history and social culture: the historic roots of Iran’s penchant for insularity and its sense of exceptionalism, the making of the modern state, the paradoxical impact of oil revenues in shaping political culture, the rise of new elites and middle classes after the Iran–Iraq War and the revolution, and so on.

The focus of this book is postrevolutionary Iran. The book’s subtitle, “The New Identities of a Republic,” captures Hourcade’s thrust: the Islamic Republic is not a democracy yet, but it is a functioning republic, where regular elections shape the political landscape, and the entire population has entered the mainstream of the political and social life. The revolution was a rupture that transformed all aspects of social life—mental, material, and institutional—and led

to the rise of new social actors. These new social actors include women and young people but also provincial populations, ethnic and religious minorities, new middle classes, and new political elites. The political Islam that mobilized the population in 1979 was an innovative use of religion by a popular movement that was profoundly nationalist and antiimperialist. After twenty-five years of turbulent history, the republic populated by the “sons and daughters of Khomeini” has become what is fundamentally a “post-Islamist society.” This post-Islamist Iran is now seeking to settle into a domestic political equilibrium, however difficult, and to integrate and reassert its place in its geographic neighborhood.

Within the English-language academic and journalistic literature, the Iranian revolution is generally theorized as either a revolt of traditionalist Islam ending in a “theocracy” of clerical rule, a backlash against a too rapid authoritarian modernization that proved indigestible for a still “traditional” society, or a consequence of the discrepancy between a rapidly developing economy and a rigid political superstructure. Hourcade offers an alternative and, in my opinion, more convincing argument that sees the 1979 revolution as a rupture aimed at creating a modern and mass-based polity by a rebellious population that was already “modernized” (the literate and the urbanized) and was resolved to enter the mainstream of its national history, from which it was being systematically excluded by the course of development adopted by its political elites. From this perspective, the history of postrevolutionary Iran is written as if the whole population had a role in it, and not simply the new Khomeinist ruling elites or a putatively homogeneous “clerical class.” What is of real value is that Hourcade makes this argument by empirically analyzing, in a brief but still substantial manner, the concrete institutional, cultural, and material transformations that Iranian society has undergone.

Hourcade emphasizes the tremendous cost borne by the whole Iranian population during these very difficult, and often violent and oppressive, twenty-five years. His analyses of the changes in power relations between the provinces and the capital, the shifting politics of ethnicity and cultural identity, and the changing institution of the family and gender roles are illuminating. The scrutiny of the increasing role of university education, and of accumulation of cultural capital as a general strategy of upward mobility pursued by new middle classes, whether secular or close to the regime, is excellent and could have been written only by someone intimately familiar with the troubled history of the subject. The same can be said about his analysis of the horrendous costs of the “cultural revolution” of 1981–83 and of the subsequent educational strategies of the Islamic Republic.

The book does have a number of minor shortcomings. The bibliography is inadequate for anyone wishing to pursue serious further readings, especially by specific topics covered in the book. The list of websites specializing in Iran is a welcome addition, but it is outdated and has surprising omissions. These and other minor flaws notwithstanding, this is an excellent volume on Iran that can greatly benefit students, interested scholars, journalists, and—dare I add in the present highly disturbing geopolitical situation?—American policymakers.

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TOUFIC K. GASPARD, *A Political Economy of Lebanon, 1948–2002: The Limits of Laissez-Faire* (Leiden: Brill, 2004). Pp. 311. \$134 cloth.

REVIEWED BY ALI A. BOLBOL, Economic Policy Institute, Arab Monetary Fund, Abu Dhabi; e-mail: epidivision@amfad.org.ae

This is an engaging book from an economist who has observed his country’s economy from the inside as an official at Banque du Liban (Central Bank of Lebanon) and from the outside as an economist at—of all places, given his aversion to the Washington consensus—the

International Monetary Fund. The book is not so much a political economy of Lebanon as a heterodox analysis of the Lebanese economy, especially during 1948–74. It is well grounded in theory and rests on an extensive, though sometimes tenuous, reading of the empirical evidence.

The book opens with a theoretical chapter that may seem superfluous to readers who are not interested or schooled in “capital controversies.” The chapter reviews the major schools of thought (although it skirts several). Gaspard stresses a post-Keynesian thesis that policy matters and that *laissez-faire* can be trusted neither to promote capitalism nor to deliver economic growth.

In his first four chapters, Gaspard aims to shatter common myths about Lebanon—that it was an oasis of prosperity, the “Switzerland of the Middle East.” In conveying his thesis, Gaspard sometimes adopts hard interpretations and relies on incomplete arguments. He notes that Lebanon missed several historic opportunities to industrialize. The first, in the second half of the 19th century, proved too fragile, based as it was singularly and inflexibly on the silk industry. The second missed opportunity, between 1926 and 1944 and driven by infrastructure developments (by the French), tariff protection, and expenditures by the Allied forces, was more viable. However, it did not prove long lasting because by 1948 Lebanon’s political class had opted for *laissez-faire* and what Carolyn Gates called “merchant republic.” Unfortunately, Gaspard fails to address political-economy arguments behind decisions to make Lebanon a center of commerce and finance.

If industrialization as an engine of growth was not given the needed priority, how did the country fare without it? Gaspard belittles the 3.3 percent growth in per capita income during 1948–74 and its consequences for development. But this is a decent rate, especially given Lebanon’s high starting income. It is hard to believe that such growth kept illiteracy rates stubbornly at 30 percent, and it is hard not to believe that poverty rates were reduced, given that the ratio of average to subsistence wages increased from 75 to 115 percent. It is true that income distribution remained unequal, but market economies do not redistribute income. However, the author is surely right when he says that certain groups and regions remained outside the development chain, and a more activist policy should have provided better opportunities to the “neglected”—something that no doubt would have improved social peace in the country.

Gaspard correctly identifies early spurts of growth with industrialization and capitalism as the system to facilitate this process. In this respect, he argues that the country was neither industrialist nor capitalist. But having lost as an interest group to banks and the merchant class, industrialists had to operate against considerable odds—at least, at the policy level. It is a mark of relative achievement that industry increased its share of output and employment from 9 to 17 percent, and its efficiency (or total factor productivity) improved annually from 0.3 percent to more than 1 percent. More interesting is that industry’s rate of profit averaged 33 percent against a national average of 22 percent, yet its rate of accumulation was a modest 30 percent. As for capitalism, Lebanon had a mixed record on the two requirements that would foster its growth: prevalence of waged labor and accumulation on an extended scale. Waged labor did increase from 43 to 55 percent during the period, but the national rate of accumulation stood at 30 percent; close to 70 percent of profits were in dividends and free capital. This surely does not square well with the presumed fame of Lebanese entrepreneurship. Answers to questions regarding the Lebanese system of ownership of capital and the incentives to use it would have enriched the analysis in the book considerably.

The penultimate chapter, “From Crisis to Reconstruction” (it might have been titled “From Crisis to Crisis”), contains a fascinating account of the disutility of the Lebanese banking system. The system contributed to the country’s development but lived opulently off its misery. Banks financed less than a third of investment, started the monetary crisis in 1987 by speculating heavily against the Lebanese pound, and collected more than \$9 billion in excessive interest on the public debt between 1993 and 2002. The last figure is more than half the

\$16 billion in corrupt expenditures that the government spent during the period—expenditures that, not surprisingly, equal the country's current external debt. This sadly represents the triumph of rentierism and finance capital during the reconstruction period, and it could also explain the retreat in growth (at 3.1%) and the reversal in the contribution of industry to output (at 13%). It no doubt represents a third missed opportunity.

In the end, any book on Lebanon's political economy has to wrestle with issues of governance and the institutional capability of the state. Lebanon is an extremely difficult country to govern, and badly governed countries rarely produce sound economies. Its segmented politics, largely a product of the confessional system, is a recipe for corruption and, ultimately, government failure. The only bright spot in the sad history of attempts to establish a semblance of government accountability was during the presidency of Fuad Chehab (1958–64). But this attempt fizzled, undermined by internal fissures and regional pressures that still preclude a strong central state. Perhaps prophetically, the architects of the republic in the late 1940s knew that and deferred instead to the market as the agency for economic and social organization. But markets also fail, and they tend to reproduce any initial distribution of resources and not to guarantee structural transformation—to the dismay of those who are left out and their prospects for a better economy. As a result, Lebanon remains between a rock and a hard place, between government failure and market failure.

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CHRISTIANE BIRD, *A Thousand Sighs, a Thousand Revolts: Journeys through Kurdistan* (New York: Ballentine, 2004). Pp. 427. \$25.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY TRACI PRICE FAHIMI, Department of Political Science, Irvine Valley College, Irvine, Calif.; e-mail: tfahimi@ivc.edu

Bird has written a well-researched and engaging account of the Kurds, a people who figure prominently in the milieu of current politics in Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Syria. The strength of the book is the way Bird weaves together several strands of thought: her own insightful perceptions, questions, and reactions; an astute account of Kurdish culture past and present; and Kurdish political history. Historical accounts, folktales, music, dance, first-person experiences, and introspective analysis build on a sound base of research to paint the most complete and engaging picture of the contemporary Kurdish experience to date.

The intrepid Bird spends most of her time among the Kurds of Iraq and deftly paints a picture of their culture and politics. Bird deserves praise for the honesty and wide range of her inquiry, which encompasses both Kermanji- and Sorani-speaking regions, KDP- and PUK-controlled zones, and the Yezidi Kurdish religious minority and the Assyrian Christian community. She does not flinch from discussing the (at times) acrimonious relations among these groups or from describing the authoritarian tendencies of the main Kurdish political parties. Her trenchant critique of the oil-for-food program and the "culture of dependency" it created in the Kurdish quasi-state from 1997 to 2003 is a view that deserves much wider discussion. Since her three-month visit occurred prior to the United States invasion of Iraq, she focused on the Kurdish-controlled regions and excluded Kirkuk, a contested city between Kurds and Arabs, and its Turkman minority.

Sections on Iran, Turkey, and Syria are shorter than one would hope but nevertheless match the Iraq chapters in the rich tapestry of personal observation woven with history, folklore, and social commentary. While most of Bird's observations about politics, history, and society are spot on, her frequent references to "democracy" in Turkey beg for a definitional starting point that makes a clear distinction between electoral democracy and liberal democracy. Syrian

Kurds would be the first to disagree with her observation that their oppression has been somewhat less odious than that suffered by Kurds in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran.

Because she is neither a historian nor a social scientist, Bird raises more questions than she can provide answers to, but to her credit the questions are excellent ones that suggest areas of study for an area specialist. How has modernization affected gender relations among the Kurds? How can one account for the upsurge of interest in Islam among Kurdish youth? How much permanent social and economic change can be managed by the state (top-down) versus emanating from individual choices and adaptations (bottom-up)?

As Bird herself states, this book is not primarily about politics or history. It is a finely wrought traveler's tale that documents her own process of discovery about a people she knew little about before undertaking her journey into Kurdistan. With skill and clarity she documents the complexity of the Kurdish experience—its struggles with tradition and modernity; the various competing tribal, religious, and national identities Kurds face; fraught gender relations and generation gaps. While the scholar will wish for traditional footnotes and a more systematic analysis of the many important questions Bird addresses, there is nevertheless ample insight in this volume to engage academic and lay readers.

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FRANÇOIS GEORGEON, *Abdülhamid II: Le sultan calife* (Paris: Fayard, 2003). Pp. 528. €25.00.

REVIEWED BY SELIM DERINGIL, Department of History, Bogazici University, Istanbul; e-mail: deringil@boun.edu.tr

Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909) is without doubt one of the most controversial and enigmatic figures of the Ottoman 19th century. The “Red Sultan” for some, the “Grand Ruler” for others, he is clearly the “Last Sultan” who ruled as well as reigned. His successors, Mehmet V and Vahdettin, were nothing more than figureheads who had only symbolic power during the Young Turk era and World War I. The thirty-three years of Abdülhamid II's reign remain the most critical period in recent history, not only for Turkey, but for most of the successor states.

François Georgeon has finally given us an admirable biography that combines the life story of the man with the history of his era. If one remembers that the last biography of Abdülhamid was published in 1958 (Joan Haslip's *The Sultan*), one appreciates that this book is long overdue. Starting with the sultan's childhood, a subject doomed to the twilight zone of rumor and hearsay because of the notorious lack of hard data on the private lives of Ottoman rulers, the writer manages to give us a book of rare quality.

One cannot think of Abdülhamid without his “foil,” Midhat Paşa, the great reformer and the sultan's archrival. Paşa, usually considered the paragon of democracy and liberalism, appears here in a different light. Vain and imperious, he was outmaneuvered by the sultan, who managed to make him appear as the primary bulwark against reforms demanded by the foreign powers. Thus, the last of the Tanzimat liberals was dispensed with, and the stage was set for the era of personal rule, or “Hamidian despotism,” as it came to be known. Nevertheless, Georgeon shows us that “despotism” is not as straightforward as it may seem.

Abdülhamid could move only within very precise parameters and always found himself hemmed in by foreign ambassadors, lack of money, the influence and power of the local notables and shaykhs, and, indeed, public opinion. Even though a “despot” is not commonly associated with concern for public opinion, there is no doubt that he could not have moved against the men of the Tanzimat if they had not been discredited by the disastrous war of 1877–78, the flood of Muslim refugees from lost lands in the Balkans, and, above all, the growing resentment on the part of the Muslim lower classes regarding what they saw as non-Muslim

insolence. All the same, harassed by overbearing diplomats and militant nationalists and deprived of his most lucrative revenues by the Public Debt Commission, Abdülhamid managed to survive and lay the basis of a modern state. Georgeon draws a very vivid picture of the “*système hamidienne*,” an elusive creature consisting of a blend of time-honored Ottoman methods such as threats and flattery and internal exile with modern education, statistics, railways, and the first modern fire brigade. State primary schools appear in mountains and deserts; a railway carries pilgrims to the Hijaz; and a whole generation that will ultimately depose him and go on to form the leadership cadres of the Turkish Republic as well as Arab states are trained in his Military Academy and School of Civil Service.

Above all, the author shows us that Abdülhamid and his empire remained masters of their own fate. The Ottoman Empire remained a unique phenomenon, an Islamic great power in a world dominated by ever more arrogant and predatory Christian imperialists and colonialists. Georgeon makes the very astute observation that the French ambassador to Istanbul, Paul Cambon, “could not have been more wrong” when he said that Abdülhamid was a “fanatic by conviction.” Georgeon points out that the sultan acted “in keeping with totally rational aims” (p. 444).

In all works dealing with the Ottoman Empire’s last century, one subject serves to define the “color” of the writer: the Armenian crisis. Overall, Georgeon’s treatment of this question is admirably measured and free of value judgments. He makes it very clear that the Armenian revolutionary committees had an agenda that was patterned on “the Bulgarian model”—that is, regional autonomy leading to eventual independence, a situation that the Ottomans could never accept. He also points out that the Armenian revolutionaries did not shrink from causing provocations that they knew would result in the slaughter of their innocent brethren. Neither does he shrink from a frank and cool-headed assessment of questions concerning Abdülhamid’s personal complicity in the horrendous massacres of Armenians between 1894 and 1896. In one sense, such a radical measure would go against the grain of the sultan’s habitually cautious policies of not wanting to provoke the Great Powers. Although the official position was that the massacres were a result of “spontaneous popular outrage” that the authorities could not control, Georgeon traces the singularly coordinated timing of the outbreaks of anti-Armenian violence. He also notes that Abdülhamid “wanted to teach the Armenians a lesson” (pp. 287–88) and that he was singularly reluctant to use the army against Muslims.

This book is very well written and covers most of the past and recent literature on the topic. In such a thorough survey of the sources it is all the more surprising to find some striking lacunae. In the chapter “La Politique du Califat,” there is no mention of Abdülhamid’s obsession with preventing the acquisition of property in the Hijaz by non-Ottoman Muslims. Fearing that British Indian, French Algerian, or Dutch Javanese Muslims would accumulate strategic properties and would thus serve as a fifth column for the Western imperialists, the Ottoman authorities were given strict instructions to prevent such an eventuality. Since Georgeon does not fail to mention that the British were attempting to delegitimize Abdülhamid’s caliphate by pushing the “Arab Caliphate” policy, this gap in the story is all the more surprising. Another key omission in the chapter is the attempt made by the Ottomans to prevent the giving of ostentatious gifts by rival Muslim rulers that could rival their prestige. More striking is the fact that Georgeon makes no mention of the very matrix of Ottoman claims to the caliphate: the espousal of the Hanafi *mezheb*, the branch of Islamic jurisprudence that allows a non-Arab to become caliph.

Despite these important omissions, Georgeon has signed his name to a remarkable achievement: a book that stands to become the seminal work on the man and his time. One wishes that it will one day be translated into English. It will almost surely be translated into Turkish. Another felicitous aspect of the book is that it can be read by “general readers” as well as scholars. Some good things are worth waiting for.