BOOK REVIEWS

DOI: 10.1017.S0020743804361076


REVIEWED BY JANIS NIEHOFF-PANAGIOTIDIS, Freiburg, Germany

In the last decades, the historiography of the Crusades has witnessed a shift of perspectives from military and political aspects to cultural contacts and the Crusader states as “multi-cultural societies.” This is the background of Johannes Pahlitzsch’s excellent work. The author’s primary interest is the Greek Orthodox (Melkite) community in the Holy Land between the end of the 11th and the middle of the 13th century.

Pahlitzsch is conscious of the fact that his sources do not permit a continuous narration, even though the range of sources he uses—narrative and documentary evidence, religious texts, and, to a lesser degree, scholarly works—is broad. His task is a difficult one. There is the problem of treating well-known polemics surrounding the Crusades, and it is one of the merits of this book that Pahlitzsch undertakes this successfully. Another prerequisite for any successful piece of scholarship involves using Arabic, Greek, and Syriac, as his work is situated in Near Eastern, Medieval, Byzantine, and Oriental Christian studies.

Providing a reasonably exact definition of the Melkites is not an easy task. By the 8th century, the former Byzantine ruling class in the Near East was becoming rapidly Arabized. Contacts between secular power and the spiritual leaders in the patriarchates now under Muslim control (Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem) may have been loose at times, but they never ceased. Under Muslim and Crusader supremacy, Greek-speaking and Arabic-speaking groups were treated as one community—the ahl al-dhimma, or “Rum.”

Pahlitzsch’s first chapter deals with the relationship between the Latin and the Orthodox churches before the First Crusade. In treating the relationship between Orthodox and Catholics in the hotly contested area of Southern Italy during the Norman occupation, Pahlitzsch rightly insists that the question of the Azyma was not merely an ecclesiastical oddity but a crucial problem bound up with everyday experience. In examining relations between Byzantium and the Latin West, Pahlitzsch concludes that the year 1054 was less important than one might think. He shows that the synod of 1089 was as vital for the ecclesiological conception of the Byzantines as the reform under Gregory VII was for the further alienation of the churches. As for the situation of the Orthodox church in Palestine during the 11th century, Pahlitzsch rightly rejects the traditional view of widespread Turkish atrocities allegedly committed while trying to stop pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. In his exemplary treatment of Patriarch Symeon II, he correctly stresses the strong imperial influence of the Greek hierarchy in Jerusalem.

In Chapter 2, Pahlitzsch summarizes current views on the genesis of the First Crusade and concludes that the Crusades were the result of Western developments, the driving factor being church reform. Later events were the result of the growing importance of military achievements during the conquest of the Holy Land, which minimized the role of the pope and Byzantium. By the same token, the role of Adhemar of Le Puy’s death is put into perspective, and the common
anti-Byzantine bias among the Crusaders and their historians is stressed and explained by cultural differences. Pahlitzsch’s analysis of these anti-Byzantine distortions in the early accounts of the Crusades is one of the best parts of the book.

In Chapter 3, his central section, Pahlitzsch tells the story of the Melkite church of Jerusalem under Latin rule (1099–1187). He tries to establish a coherent succession of the patriarchs, who were based in Constantinople after 1106–1107. John VIII is dealt with in connection with a very complicated text—the peri metatheseon. Pahlitzsch then tries to establish a historical framework surrounding the treatise “On the Azymes” by the same John. It is impressive that Pahlitzsch can extract a historical setting from lofty theological arguments. He then deals with the subsequent patriarchs, the most prominent being Leontios II (1176–85), who is considered a saint. Pahlitzsch gleans important information from his bios, although he overestimates the extent to which historical information can be extrapolated from this source.

Pahlitzsch then illustrates how the Crusaders’ dominance reversed the conditions under which the Orthodox community lived: formerly the most powerful Christian minority under Muslim rule, they ended up, in contrast to the Armenians and the Monophysite Jacobites, in a low social position. Because the Crusaders retained the ahl al-dhimma system when dealing with their Orthodox subjects, conditions for the Byzantine Orthodox in terra sancta are to a large extent reminiscent of the conditions that the Melkites experienced under the later Ottoman system. To unearth the inner structure of the Melkite community, Pahlitzsch analyzes a unique document: a deed of sale written in Arabic from the year 1169. His analysis has many merits but is not free of errors. The name of the scribe after ana in the first line is clearly to be read as mkhly, which is the modern Greek Mikhali (instead of the classical Mikhail). Contrary to Pahlitzsch’s opinion, the Greek signature shows that the scribe was not fully competent in Greek. However, Pahlitzsch is obviously right in assuming a high degree of Arabization among the Melkites, as even the legal framework of the deed shows.

In a following section, Pahlitzsch argues that the Melkites maintained their identity in part, an identity expressed in their liturgy, their Greek–Arabic diglossia, and their cultural orientation, which differed from that of Byzantine Greeks. This is the case after 1204, when Byzantine civilization was decentralized. In fact, with help of the sources we are able to trace a process of Byzantinization, due in part to imperial policy. However, this process had its limits: analysis of sources indicates that the Jerusalem Orthodox did not participate in the “Comnenian Renaissance” of the 12th century but were content with their own liturgical and patristic books.

Chapter 4 centers on the consequences of the Ayyubid reconquista: the re-Islamization of Jerusalem and the re-establishment of the former dhimmî system, as well as restoration of the Orthodox community to its privileged position and ongoing Hellenization.

The final chapter examines the Latin interregnum following Frederick II’s Crusade of 1228–29. Pahlitzsch’s argument—that little changed for the Melkites—is plausible. He draws on ecclesiastic texts: primarily a Christian–Arabic homiliary containing the sermons of an Athanasios of Jerusalem, whom Pahlitzsch identifies, perhaps mistakenly, as Athanasios II (1231–44). Nevertheless, his characterization of Christian–Arabic literature as “Byzantine” and his attempt to identify the position of this homiliary within the framework of Byzantine tradition is nothing short of excellent.

Pahlitzsch’s primary objective in this book is to show that the Melkite community survived the Crusader period in the Holy Land better than the communis opinio in former research has it. He partly achieves this by proving that no actual de-Hellenization took place. This excellent and stimulating work also sheds light on the far-reaching Arabic acculturation that this group underwent. This by no means contradicts the several waves of Byzantinization. Already at the beginning of the period in question it caused a cultural estrangement between both worlds, which a common faith was no longer able to bridge. In the long run, everyday practice counted more than shared Christian religion. So in the end, the Muslim–Orthodox symbiosis in Palestine turned out
to be stronger than the common Christian roots in Late Antiquity. This is certainly not the only, but it is quite an important, conclusion of an outstanding book.

DOI: 10.1017.S0020743804361088


REVIEWED BY EVE M. TROUTT POWELL, Department of History, University of Georgia, Athens

This fascinating book explores the relationship between Egypt and Ethiopia from early history through the end of the 20th century. By focusing on the significance of the Nile to both of these countries, this study reveals a rare sensitivity to the force of geography on cultural relations. Haggai Erlich offers rich insights into how Ethiopia and Egypt saw each other bilaterally and how each related to Africa and the Middle East in general. For those looking for historical works that explore the often ignored intertwining of African and Middle Eastern history, this work will provide a great deal of information.

Erlich traces several important themes through this history, the most important being that, as he writes, “this is a story of mutual dependence, but it is also a story of broken eye contact.” Egypt and Ethiopia had been in close contact with each other since ancient times, and the foundation of the Coptic church tied the two countries together with spiritual bonds. Co-believers, however, did not view the Nile with the same eyes. Because the Nile originated in Ethiopia, Egyptians in the 5th and 6th centuries were often suspicious that their neighbors could and would threaten the flow of the Nile. However, Ethiopians were concerned that the Nile could carry Egyptian aggression on boats. The idea of Egypt’s heralded historic rights to the great river implied a threat to these Ethiopians. Because of the river’s mythic powers, each country became that much more powerful in the other’s eyes.

This introduces a second and equally important theme of the book: the creation of each other into the “other.” As Erlich describes it, this otherness did not begin with Islam’s increasing influence in northern and eastern Africa but was certainly exacerbated by it, especially during medieval times. Even though parts of contested territories such as Eritrea gained Muslim inhabitants, Ethiopia’s emperors increasingly saw themselves as warriors for the Coptic faith, wary of Egyptian Islamic encroachment. Erlich also traces how medieval Egyptian Muslims framed Ethiopia in Islamic history, sometimes praising the Ethiopian negus for his support of the ansār of the Prophet Muhammad and at other times criticizing Ethiopia for persecution of the region’s Muslims.

The increasing consciousness about things “Oriental” and things “African” during the 19th century further elucidates and complicates these themes. Muhammad ‘Ali’s irrigation projects in Egypt were perceived as deeply menacing in Ethiopia. The Khedive Ismail took it even further with his emphasis on Egyptian territorial expansion in Sudan and Ethiopia. The emperors of Ethiopia—Menelik, then Yohannes IV—met these challenges by building up their armies and defeating Ismail’s soldiers in 1876. The loss of the Ethiopian wars never healed among many soldiers in the Egyptian army, and this sore point was raised during the Urabi rebellion. It is very interesting how during these years Egyptians were encouraged not to identify with Sub-Saharan Africa. As Erlich shows, this question of cultural identity was not easy for the Ethiopians, many of whom still saw themselves as part of the East, not of Africa. Despite these wars, there remained the great link of the Coptic church and the fact that the abuna, or head of the Ethiopian church, was always picked from Egyptian priests.

Here lies one of the few weaknesses of this otherwise thorough work—the lack of discussion of the role slavery played in the relationship between Egypt and Ethiopia, particularly during the
19th century. Erlich writes with great care about constructions of racial identity that this reviewer thinks could only have been strengthened with an exploration of what slavery did to African or racial identity among both Ethiopians and Egyptians. Nor is it ever quite clear how Erlich defines “African-ness.” This oversight may have come about because Erlich creates a dialogue in each chapter between Ethiopian and Egyptian authors and texts, a discussion in which slaves are rarely, if ever, authors themselves. It is only in this chapter that this reliance on written texts results in omission; it works extremely well in the other chapters.

The finest example of this type of narration occurs in Erlich’s discussion of the late 20th century and his juxtaposition of Gamal Abdel Nasser and Haile Selassie. Erlich presents a fascinating portrait of the cultural voyages made by the Ethiopian emperor. The chapters on this ruler provide one of the most interesting biographies of Haile Selassie this reader has seen and gracefully relate how he tried to negotiate not only with Nasser himself, but also with the symbolism the Egyptian president used so strategically.

In a political world where it is becoming incumbent on those who teach African or Middle Eastern or religious history to renegotiate the boundaries of the areas we explore, this book would make an excellent addition to the syllabi. Clearly and elegantly written, it offers a crucial view into history usually glimpsed only by historians of the Middle East.

DOI: 10.1017.S002074380436109X


REVIEWED BY DAVID COMMINS, Department of History, Dickinson College, Carlisle, Penn.

The Saudi historian Uwaidah Al Juhany argues that Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab’s mission, which he calls the Salaﬁ reform movement, represents the culmination of long-term historical trends in Najd. He develops this argument from a resourceful reading of primary sources that he discusses in the Introduction. From the pre-Saudi era, he draws on four rather sketchy chronicles and *fatwa* collections. From the richer record of the Saudi era, he uses chronicles, genealogies, biographical dictionaries, works by Arab writers from neighboring regions, European travelers’ reports, and Najdi popular poetry. The chronicles tell us about such natural phenomena as rainy years, periods of drought, famines, locust plagues, and epidemics. Al Juhany posits a correlation between these phenomena and population movements (nomadic tribes entering and leaving Najd), conflicts between nomadic tribes (over scarce grazing lands during drought or because of immigration), and the sedentarization of tribal groups in abandoned and new settlements. It is logical to posit some kind of relationship between ecology and population dynamics, but the sources are too thin to reach firm conclusions. At one point we read that drought forced nomads to settle down as cultivators (p. 88), but we later learn that droughts caused cultivators to abandon their settlements (p. 94).

Al Juhany’s thesis does not rest on a specific definition of nature’s effects on population. Rather, it depends on accepting the idea that Najdi oasis settlements underwent a period of social and political stress caused by an increase in the sedentary population. The sources provide two supporting indications for that idea. First, they report the revival of abandoned settlements and the creation of entirely new ones. Second, they report a growing incidence of conflict within them, and that implies that an increasing number of townsmen were competing for scarce resources. One of the book’s strengths is its discussion of social structure in the settlements. Their inhabitants fell into three distinct status groups: tribal, non-tribal (*khadiri*), and slave. The precise origin of non-tribal townsmen is unclear. Al Juhany cites local views that they may have been the offspring of
freed slaves or descendants of nomads who had been settled for so long that they lost track of their tribal ancestry. Each town was further divided between chiefly lineages and “neighbors” (jīrān) who lived under the chiefs’ protection. The muscle for the chiefs came from retinues of slaves and retainers (fidawiyyūn). Power struggles took place within and among chiefly lineages for political supremacy, which carried with it control over revenues from taxes on agriculture and trade.

Al Juhany suggests that as the settled population increased, so did the number of religious specialists (ulema). Najdi sources from the 17th and early 18th centuries identify more ulema than for the earlier period, and they give the impression that the number of towns with religious judges increased from three or four to a dozen or so. The author emphasizes three characteristics of the ulema. First, study under Hanbali authorities in Damascus and Cairo distinguished the most respected scholars. Second, they specialized in jurisprudence (fiqh) because the settlements needed their expertise in Islamic law to resolve disputes. Third, the majority of ulema came from a handful of lineages with scholarly reputations. One of those lineages was Al Musharraf, the clan of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. To Al Juhany it makes sense that the solution to turmoil in the oasis settlements should come from a member of the estate that possessed the cultural resource—religious knowledge—to diagnose and treat society’s social ills. In this reading, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab understood that the remedy was a revival of true Islam and that accomplishing this required a powerful political authority; therefore his mission developed an alliance with al-Dir‘iyya’s ruler, Muhammad ibn Saud. In essence, this is a secular rendering of a common Saudi historical narrative that portrays Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab as a heroic figure who rescued Arabia not only from the social and political turmoil we find here but also from religious and moral degeneration.

The internal coherence of Al Juhany’s argument is elegant. To put it simply, ecological factors precipitated demographic changes, and the growth of towns ushered forth both political stresses and the cultural resources—the ulema—to resolve them. The sources may not bear the full weight of this argument, but this book should spur historians to explore it further. In other respects, Al Juhany’s monograph makes a significant contribution to historical scholarship on Arabia. Readers will appreciate the thumbnail accounts of tribes and towns and the maps of mountain ranges, plateaus, wadis, and sub-regions with their primary settlements. There is also a chapter that gives an overview of the region’s history from the early Islamic period to the 15th century. The book is based on the author’s 1983 doctoral dissertation for the University of Washington, and the text could have used some polish to eliminate repetition, update the bibliography (including the multivolume Khizanat al-tawarikh al-najdiyya edited by Abdallah al-Bassam), and correct misprints on the maps. On page 25, the map reads “Mufud” instead of Nufud; on page 28, the map reads “Al-Nihmal” instead of al-Mihmal; on page 32, the map reads “Muraymilah” and “Manfubah” instead of Huraymilah and Manfuhah. Readers unfamiliar with the subject will find it difficult to get through sections packed with the names of tribes and towns, but it is an essential work for scholars of Arabia and an accessible one for graduate and serious upper-level undergraduate students.

DOI: 10.1017.S0020743804361106

REVIEWED BY ISRAEL GERSHONI, Department of Middle Eastern and African History, Tel Aviv University

How did the first relationships between modern Egypt and Western scholarly knowledge on ancient pharaonic and Greco-Roman Egypt form? Who were the European agents of the rediscovery of
ancient and classical Egypt? What was the connection between the accumulation of Western knowledge and the spread of imperialism? What constituted the relations between the cultural and the political? How did the recovered pharaonic past trickle down to the Egyptian consciousness and help to shape a new Egyptian national identity? Until now, answers to these important questions have been incomplete and fragmented. Donald Reid’s book is the first systematic attempt to answer them comprehensively. In time, Reid covers the late 18th century through World War I. In space, he navigates among a large variety of actors, initiatives, projects, forces, disciplines, and institutions involved in both Europe and Egypt in creating and reinforcing this history. Doing so, he is able to paint a rich and broad picture of the developments and patterns of these inter-cultural contacts.

Exhausting archival and other printed and published sources from both Egypt and Europe, Reid focuses on the way in which Western scholarly knowledge and the European rediscovery of ancient Egypt have been appropriated and employed by Egyptians. Indeed, the most important accomplishment of this work is Reid’s writing of modern Egyptians into this history; he gives voice to their developing interest over this long century in the pharaonic, classical, and Islamic histories of Egypt. Reid’s extraordinary knowledge of both European Egyptomania and the modes of its reception in Egypt enable him to reconstruct for the reader an original and fascinating account of the production and dissemination of Western knowledge, and its local reproduction, assimilation, or rejection in a lucid, accurate, and authoritative way. The work reconstructs four distinct but inter-related facets of the rediscovery and production of knowledge of Egyptian histories and the beginnings of its transmission from Western to Egyptian control. These four dimensions are connected to the rediscovery and refinement of four cultural heritages that shaped historical Egypt: the pharaonic, the Greco-Roman, the Arab Islamic, and, to a lesser degree, the Coptic Christian legacy. Reid recovers the interactions and mutual feedbacks between Western scholars and imperialists, and Egyptians in the disciplines and institutions of Egyptology, classical studies, Arab Islamic archeology and art, and Coptic studies. Although these four heritages do not exhaust the rich stores of Egyptian civilization over its long history, Reid clearly shows that they were the most relevant—both for Europeans, who used them as a standard of comparison and reassessment of their own neo-classical, secular, modern culture, and for modern Egyptians in their search for a new national identity.

The first processes Reid examines, which form a major part of the book, are those of the rediscovery of ancient Egypt. Here, European Egyptologists played the major role, particularly in the disciplines of archaeology, philology, and museumology. Reid interweaves his analysis of the formation of an objective, universal scholarly body of knowledge, and popular European fascination with the grandeur of the pharaonic civilization, with contested imperialist interests and impulses. Integrated into his systematic discussion of the thoughts and actions of Europeans such as Mariette, Lepsius, and Maspero, the first initiators of Egyptology expeditions that made pharaonic Egypt accessible to popular audiences, is a no less comprehensive examination of the pioneering local reproducers of this knowledge, such as Rifa‘a al-Tahtawi, Yusuf Hekekyan, ‘Ali Mubarak, Mahmoud al-Falaki, and Ahmad Kamal. These latter agents of transmission represent for Reid a commitment to use the new knowledge accumulated through Egyptology studies to promote the interests of the Egyptian state and to aid in the construction of a distinctive national identity. The culmination of these processes of rediscovery was the opening of the Egyptian Museum in 1902. As Reid writes, the building’s façade “froze in stone an Orientalist and imperialist epogee.” Very few Egyptians could read the Latin inscriptions on the façade honoring the European founding fathers of Egyptology, and even fewer could understand the fine print of this imperial message. Nevertheless, the museum became fertile ground for the fusion between growing European Egyptological knowledge and local, Egyptian understanding of ancient Egypt, as well as a major agent for instilling pharaonic consciousness in the local culture. The second process Reid considers is the rediscovery of Egypt’s Greco-Roman heritage and its transformation into a cultural asset accessible to modern Egyptians. Here also, the initiative
originated in European interests. Through the influence of Cromer and the activities of European notables and professionals working through the newly formed Alexandria municipality, the Greco-Roman museum was established in Alexandria in 1892. Khedive Abbas II’s inauguration of the museum demonstrated his own interest in the project, and Reid traces the gradual development over the coming decades of the beginnings of Egyptian interest in this classical heritage and its institutionalization in modern Egyptian culture. Among the contributions to this development were al-Falaki’s pioneering excavation and mapping work of Alexandria; Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid’s translation of Aristotle’s works; and, to a greater extent, Taha Husayn’s expertise in Greco-Roman history.

Another process Reid identifies and analyzes is the growth of interest in the cultural and artistic Arab Islamic heritage of Egypt. Here, interest did not emerge from a search for putative ancestors of Western civilization but “from fascination with an exotic ‘Oriental other’ against which Christendom and Europe had defined themselves.” What began as a project of European Orientalists (prominent among them Franz and Herz) that was backed by Khedive Tawfiq came to be reigned over by ‘Ali Bahgat, a founding father of Islamic archaeology in Egypt and the director of the first excavations of al-Fustat. The opening in 1903 of the Museum of Arab (Islamic) Art, together with the Khedivial Library, in its new home in a neo-Islamic style building in Bab al-Khalq, institutionalized the production and circulation of an Arab Islamic body of historical knowledge. The scholar Ahmad Zaki represents a later, more mature stage in the process of local appropriation of recovered Arab Islamic culture and its dissemination among the educated strata.

Finally, Reid turns to the process of the emergence of Coptic studies. Although European scholars were the first contributors to a body of knowledge about the ancient Copts, it was Marcus Simaika who founded the Coptic Museum in 1908. Reid shows how Simaika diligently worked to encourage a modern Coptic renaissance. Under the aura of the “modern sons of the pharaohs,” he and other Copts incessantly worked to transmit renewed Coptic knowledge as national knowledge designed to appeal to all Egyptians.

If there is one point of criticism regarding Reid’s work, it is that he does not always make clear to the reader what the specific relations were between the reclamation of these cultural legacies and their contribution to the molding of modern Egyptian national identity. Reid states that one of the aims of his work is to show “how archaeology affected the ongoing construction of Egyptian national identity.” His Egyptian protagonists are defined as “mostly Egyptian nationalists,” while the Europeans are “mostly imperialists.” However, al-Tahtawi, Hekekyan, Mubarak, al-Falaki, Bahgat, and even Kamal and Samaika were not strictly “nationalists.” They served the interests and strategies of the khedivial state, not of Egyptian nationalism. The distinctive pharaonic (and Greco-Roman, Arab Islamic, and Coptic) knowledge they disseminated and conventionalized was often designed to lend further legitimacy to the dynastic state. Therefore, to examine them, important as they were, as producers of a new national identity is to reconstruct only part of the story. Regarding the process of transmission of Egyptological (classical or Arab Islamic) knowledge in Egypt and its specific role in shaping national identity, we should look at nationalism and the genuine nationalists themselves. It would be more fruitful to focus on the thought and activity of figures such as Mustafa Kamil, Muhammad Farid, and Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid. Here, it seems, a systematic study of nationalist publications, periodicals, ideologies, propaganda, and voices is in order to understand better the extent and modes by which this emergent nationalist discourse appropriated and assimilated (or rejected) Egyptological, classical, and Islamic knowledge and how these bodies of knowledge were applied to help produce a new national identity. This process does not receive adequate attention in Reid’s work, leaving one with the sense of a missing link in the connection between archaeology and the construction of modern Egyptian identity.

This point notwithstanding, Reid provides an impressive scholarly accomplishment that clearly enriches the study of modern Egypt. It is an asset that no one interested in the evolution of modern Egyptian culture should ignore.
Our knowledge of Ottoman social history has made great strides over the past quarter-century, and in most of this scholarship, urban history has led the way. Ottoman Syria has proved a particularly fertile field for investigation because of its unusually high rate of urbanization—upward of 15 to 20 percent of the total population—which made it one of the most urbanized regions in the Ottoman Empire. The scholarship has definitely had its preferences. Most authors, following the path of least resistance, have turned their attention to Aleppo and Damascus, the two biggest towns, which produced the overwhelming share of literary, legal, and administrative documents and have largely shaped our image of urban life. Yet in point of fact, most townspeople lived in the more numerous small towns (in the range of 10,000–30,000 inhabitants) such as Tripoli, Homs, Acre, Nablus, and Jerusalem, which despite their modest size are really more representative of the urban experience.

James Reilly’s fine study of Ottoman Hama, his small town of choice, advances our effort to create a more comprehensive view of urban life in Syria.

From the outset, Reilly’s work takes a frankly local perspective, relying almost exclusively on local sources. Hama has bequeathed little of its literary and religious output and appears infrequently in travelers’ accounts; moreover, European consular reports are not really abundant until the final decades of Ottoman rule. The bulk of his material must therefore come from the records of the Islamic courts, which have been so essential in the writing of other urban histories. His strategy, which aims at breadth of coverage, is to sample three volumes of cases from widely spaced points in time (1727–34, 1788–1800, 1849–52).

Reilly presents Hama as a “microcosm” of trends found elsewhere in late Ottoman Syria and sounds familiar themes from the historical literature. He finds broad similarities in social and economic structure, such as the near-universal practice of monogamy, the importance of craft corporations, and the adaptability of local industry in the face of international competition in the 19th century. Occupying center stage through most of the book are the urban notables, a small clique of wily and resilient families who stood at the summit of local society. They held property throughout the city; managed large pious foundations; engaged in money-lending; and enjoyed multiple links with merchants and artisans, who actively sought their protection and mediation. Most critical to the notables’ success was domination of the surrounding hinterland, which in the 18th century was achieved mostly through the purchase of lucrative tax farms. In the aftermath of mid-19th-century land reform, they patiently exploited the new laws and accumulated the large estates for which they were later remembered (and reviled). As Reilly shows, their power went largely unchallenged. Peasants hardly ever brought lawsuits to the courthouse, which was tacitly recognized as the notables’ domain. All these developments, he stresses, were not a feature of “traditional” society—an image so frequently associated with Hama—but an outgrowth of late Ottoman history.

In placing the accent on similarities to other Syrian towns, Reilly has less to say about the distinctive features of Hama and, more generally, of small-scale urbanism. This is surprising because he is certainly aware of these questions and scatters a number of tantalizing hints throughout the book. He notes that, in contrast to Aleppo and Damascus, in Hama very few women owned commercial property. He further finds, in a partial parallel to Nablus (as studied by Beshara Doumani), that women who belonged to the “elite”—(that is, military and administrative households—are curiously absent from the property records of the shari’a court. The latter observation rests on a refinement of the well-known “politics of notables.” Borrowing from Julia Clancy-Smith, he
breaks down the urban leadership into “elite” and “notable” families, arguing that each group drew on fundamentally different sources of wealth and authority. “Elite” families such as the ‘Azms originated outside the city and owed their position primarily to the Ottoman state, which appointed them to tax farms and other offices deep in the city’s hinterland. “Notables” such as the Kaylanis and ‘Alwanis represented leading ulema, Sufis, and ashrāf, who tended to own property near the city and enjoy a certain prestige and moral suasion among local townspeople. This subtle division of turf is quite interesting because it is not so visible in Aleppo and Damascus. In the case of Hama, one wonders whether it might help to explain the pronounced continuity and stability of local politics. The city suffered little of the factional violence that racked Aleppo and Damascus for much of the 18th and early 19th centuries.

One of the chief virtues of Reilly’s book is that it helps to lay the groundwork for precisely the kind of comparative thinking that is so needed in Ottoman studies. He addresses key debates in urban history and adds to our knowledge of an overlooked city. His research is careful and detailed, and his presentation is clear and accessible. His book is recommended for all students of Ottoman and Syrian history and to anyone who has an interest in Middle Eastern towns.

DOI: 10.1017.S002074380436112X


REVIEWED BY ZACH LEVEY, Division of International Relations, University of Haifa

This book examines the views of David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s first prime minister and defense minister, regarding Israel and Arab–Israeli relations from 1948 to 1956. It constitutes a recent addition to the growing body of literature on Israel, its foreign policy, and the Arab–Israeli conflict during the first years of statehood. Shalom treats the period between the first two Arab–Israeli wars in thematic rather than chronological fashion, but the title of the book is somewhat misleading. Ben-Gurion is at the center of this work, but the author devotes much attention to the views of his chief political rival, Moshe Sharett, who was prime minister from the end of 1953 to late 1955 and foreign minister from 1948 until June 1956, when Ben-Gurion forced him to resign.

Shalom’s principal method is that of frequent quotations followed by a few paragraphs of analysis. The text includes more than 300 direct quotations, and many of them are quite lengthy. Yet in some sections, such as that dealing with Israel’s policy of retaliation (pp. 122–31), Ben-Gurion is quoted only briefly, while the views of Sharett, Chief-of-Staff Moshe Dayan, and Pinchas Lavon (defense minister under Sharett) seem to hold sway. Moreover, Shalom’s treatment of events of this six-year period is somewhat eclectic. Thus, he writes about Israel’s December 1955 retaliatory raid against Syria but nowhere mentions the February 1955 Gaza raid against Egypt that marked Ben-Gurion’s return as defense minister to Sharett’s government. Yet that operation marked a historical turning point on the way to the 1956 war.

The issues to which Shalom devotes most of his attention are the borders that resulted from the 1948–49 confrontation, the armistice agreements that regulated the territorial status quo, and Ben-Gurion’s approach to both the prospects for and possible ramifications of peace treaties with the Arab states. The author emphasizes that while Ben-Gurion held complex views of his country’s salient concerns, pragmatism was his lodestar when dealing with those issues. Nevertheless, the focus is on Ben-Gurion’s worldview rather than the policies that he pursued. In other words, this book is primarily about what Ben-Gurion said (or wrote), and not what he did.

Ben-Gurion was pessimistic regarding the chances of peace with the “Arab world,” because both the norms of Arab society and the character of its leadership militated against accommodation
with the Jewish state. He rejected the premise of Yitzhak Tabenkin, the Israeli socialist leader, who viewed the exploited classes in the Arab countries as potential allies in making peace. In Ben-Gurion’s eyes, Arab mobilization in the war of 1948 was sufficient proof that all social strata in the Arab states were united in their desire to drive Israel into the sea. In a speech in January 1951, Ben-Gurion acknowledged that the possibility of an accord existed. But he insisted that were this to come about, it would be a “cold peace,” and not reconciliation.

According to Ben-Gurion, a great gulf separated Israel from the Arab states; “we live in the twentieth century, they in the fifteenth” (p. 20). But Shalom deals only briefly with Ben-Gurion’s views regarding the political, social, and ideological nature of Arab society. He analyzes in greater depth the Israeli leader’s writings and speeches on refugees, borders, territory, and the day-to-day challenges with which Israel dealt as it attempted, from the end of the first Arab–Israeli war until the Suez–Sinai confrontation of 1956, to maintain security at a “tolerable” level in the face of increasing violence on its borders. The author quotes Ben-Gurion’s candid appraisal of the Palestinian plight. In 1952, he told his party (Mapai) that “between six and eight hundred thousand refugees fester on the borders, whose fields, homes, and villages have been expropriated. . . . [I]t amazes me that there are so few cases of infiltration, shooting and killing” (p. 12). Yet, by mid-1953, the situation on the borders had deteriorated sharply. Ben-Gurion expressed deep concern about the readiness of Israeli society to face another round of armed conflict with the Arab states, which he assumed would learn from past mistakes on the military plane. He acknowledged that Israel maintained a military advantage over its adversaries but noted the extraordinary burden that the flood of Jewish immigrants, including hundreds of thousands of refugees from the Arab countries, placed on the new state.

Ben-Gurion’s view of the boundaries of the Jewish state was complex. He considered the Jewish right to the Land of Israel the ultimate moral consideration, proclaiming, “nothing can override that” (p. 12). Yet, he rejected any rigid concept of “historical borders” that would prevent an Israeli government from working toward peace through territorial compromise. Borders, he said, were “dynamic parameters dependent on changing circumstances.” This dynamism could facilitate a solution to the Palestinian refugee problem and thus the Arab–Israeli conflict, so long as it was not forced on Israel by the Great Powers and provided it could be accomplished vis-à-vis “authentic” Arab leaders who were themselves not dependent on colonial powers (p. 32). Thus, Ben-Gurion considered Jordan an “artificial” entity created and supported by Britain. He placed a far higher premium on the stability that would come of a peace agreement with Egypt.

A brief note regarding the author’s sources is warranted. The bibliography is rather limited when one considers the growing volume of literature on Israel and the Arab–Israeli conflict during the period covered in this book. At the same time, as the Oxford historian Avi Shlaim points out in the Foreword, Shalom has conducted extensive archival research and documents his work with great care. For that reason, it is surprising that he does not list the archives among the resources on which he has drawn. These include the Israel State Archives as well as those of the Israel Defense Forces, the Israeli Labor Party, the Knesset, the Ben-Gurion Heritage Institute, and others.

Shalom’s book is not a history of the years 1948–56, and he is careful to point out that that is not his purpose. Nevertheless, his work will be useful to both beginning and advanced scholars who seek a source that makes accessible the thoughts, speeches, and writings of Ben-Gurion, Sharett, and other Israeli leaders on major issues that marked that period.

REVIEWED BY JOHN CALVERT, Department of History, Creighton University, Omaha, Neb.

Among the books that students of modern Middle Eastern history and culture were expected to read a quarter-century ago were several that chronicled the evolution of secular modes of politics and identity in the region. Albert Hourani’s Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age (1962), Niyazi Berkes’s The Development of Secularism in Turkey (1964), and Sylvia Haim’s Arab Nationalism: An Anthology (1962) analyzed the slow yet inexorable transformation from traditional, religion-based states and societies to modern secular ones. Based ultimately on the school of modernization theory inspired by Weber and Tonnies, these works were concerned with radical breaks with the past and with the appearance of new ways of thought, which, their authors assumed, would endure. Hourani’s book in particular inspired the writing of a number of studies of individual reformers, many of them disciples of the influential Muhammad Abduh. Yet as we know, secular thought, whether of the liberal or illiberal variety, has not fared well in the Middle East. Since the Iranian Revolution of 1978–79, if not before, it has been under siege by Islamism, which seeks to reinvest the institutions of state and society with religious values. Hourani’s book may still enjoy the status of classic in the field of Middle Eastern studies, but works that attempt to explain the processes by which Islam has come to be interpreted as ideology have overtaken it.

It is therefore a pleasant surprise to come across Nazik Saba Yared’s Secularism and the Arab World. A novelist and scholar of Arabic literature, Yared wants to remind us of the contributions made by the pioneering Christian and Muslim secularists of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The legacy of these writers, she opines, is not dead but simply obscured by the countervailing discourses of Islamism. It can be discerned not only in the works of many contemporary Arab authors but also in the political and legal institutions of most Arab states. Although Yared does not state explicitly in this book what her hopes for the Arab world are, it would appear from the careful and respectful way she treats the thought of these writers that she is desirous of a future in which many (though certainly not all) of their themes are developed.

Like Hourani, Yared focuses almost exclusively on writers from Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon, “since they formed the bulk of secular thinkers and influenced those in other Arab countries” (p. 10). Thus, while mindful of intellectual developments in the Maghrib and Iraq, she passes over these as derivative of the Egyptian and Syrian experience. Many of the figures covered will likewise be familiar to readers of the earlier works on the subject. Writers such as Butrus al-Bustani, ‘Abd al-Rahman Kawakibi, Shibli Shummayyil, Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, Adib Ishaq, and Taha Husayn are examined in their efforts to constrain a regime of truth centered in the religious institution. The aim of these thinkers was to foster national progress by opening space in their societies for arts and sciences free of the cramping influence of scripture. Like the European Enlightenment philosophes that inspired them, they sought to limit religion to metaphysical concerns and encourage the application of reason to the workings of government and society. Whether Christian, such as Farah Antun, or Muslim, such as Qasim Amin, all were vehemently anti-clerical, viewing the religious establishment as propagating medieval-style superstition, backwardness, and fanaticism. Taha Husayn’s scathing attack on the “doctors of religion” in his childhood autobiography al-Ayyam exemplifies the anti-clericalism of the reformers. All were also eminently concerned with the status of women in society. Here their prescriptions were often muddied by the residual influences of the patriarchal, theocratic system. Some, however, articulated relatively radical views of gender relations. Yared recounts the exceptional views of the Lebanese Druze writer Nazira Zayn al-Din, who went as far as to challenge Qur’anic verses that in her mind discriminated against women.
According to Nazira, such verses were linked to the time and place in which they were revealed and were not to be taken as immutable truths. It is not surprising that Nazira was an early champion of the right of women to interpret the Qur’an and hadith. Nationalism was another element that bound these thinkers, the ethno-linguistic community attaining in their minds pre-eminence over the traditional community of faith.

Yared points out that, despite common features, the thought of the Arab secularists was often tinged by difference, especially between Christian and Muslim writers. Whereas Christians could be unflinching in their assessment of religion (al-Shummayil’s critique veered toward outright atheism), Muslims, especially those belonging to the first generation of reformers, were careful to justify their demands for change with reference to the Qur’an, linking modern legislative and constitutional principles with traditional Islamic principles—for example, equating shāri’a (consultation) with parliamentary representation. Although Muslim secularists were keen to criticize the misrepresentation of Islam by the ulama, they never rejected the notion of divine truth outright. Even Taha Husayn questioned only the veracity of certain historical events mentioned in the Qur’an, not the validity of religion itself. Yared follows Hourani in suggesting that Husayn’s respectful attitude toward Islam, strong in his later years, may have been a concession to the deep religious nature of Egyptian public opinion, which he was attempting to influence.

This is a well-written, carefully researched book. The copious notes contain references to the most important reformist texts of the period. The material is organized thematically, with individual chapters devoted to topics such as the separation of spiritual and temporal powers, government and law, and the role of the individual. This arrangement makes it difficult to follow individual thinkers but it allows for the explication of major trends. What one will not find in this book is much discussion of the political, economic, and social contexts in which secularism emerged. Nor will one find discussion of the means by which the intelligentsia and state elites internalized the ideal of secularism within the more general context of European hegemony. Yared does provide a chapter on historical and social background, but it is descriptive rather than analytical. Nevertheless, Secularism and the Arab World serves to remind us of the heritage of Arab secular thought and of those who uphold its ideals today.

DOI: 10.1017.S0020743804361143

KAMRAN ASDAR ALI, Planning the Family in Egypt: New Bodies, New Selves, Modern Middle Eastern Series, no. 21 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002). Pp. 245. $55.00 cloth, $22.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY HANAN KHOLOUSSY, Department of History/Middle Eastern Studies, New York University

As scholars have recently underscored the efficacy in using the family as a lens for studying Middle Eastern societies, Kamran Asdar Ali’s Planning the Family in Egypt: New Bodies, New Selves is a timely and most welcome addition. Ali, a Pakistani doctor and anthropologist, uses contemporary Egypt as a case study to demonstrate how family-planning programs attempt not only to reduce unwieldy populations but also to turn those populations into individual, decision-making citizens for the state’s benefit. Yet this is not a top-down narrative, for Ali is also interested in highlighting the varied responses of Egyptian citizens to family-planning initiatives and how their reactions are shaped by their individual perceptions.

The book is divided into three parts. In the Introduction and first part of the book, which includes a chapter on the history of Egyptian family-planning programs and another on the recent re-orientation in policies that allows for individual consent and choice, Ali demonstrates his
excellent grasp of theory from a variety of disciplines. He engages with many of the arguments that dominate recent debates in anthropology, demography, history, and women’s and gender studies to situate his own theoretical departures. He views his greatest contribution as extending beyond Lila Abu-Lughod’s formulation of three zones of theorizing within Middle Eastern anthropology (segmentation, harem, and Islam) by locating the production of knowledge in the construction of new subjects. Family-planning programs such as Egypt’s allow Ali to investigate the construction, but not necessarily the implementation, of new bodies, new selves, and new notions of individuality.

Based on fieldwork conducted in urban and rural Egypt in the early 1990s and a variety of sources including survey reports, family-planning campaigns, counseling sessions, and oral interviews, the second part of the book (chaps. 3–6) focuses on the lived experiences of poor women whose bodies family-planning programs seek to control. The Foucauldian influence on Ali’s work is clear as examples of power—as well as resistance—dominate this section. Because Egyptian women are viewed as politically and socially weaker than men, they represent the “backwardness” of the masses, and thus are the principal targets of contraceptive campaigns. Although little emphasis is placed on men’s contraception, Ali argues that family-planning programs cannot be understood solely through the construction of individual choice for women. Thus, he devotes Chapter 6 to examining notions of male virility and potency and how the bodies of men are conceptualized in family-planning discourse. The third part of the book, which includes a chapter on secular women’s groups and another chapter on Islamist organizations, contrasts competing socio-political discourses on population policy in an effort to emphasize the larger context of family-planning choices. Ali contends that women’s groups mobilize arguments about reproductive rights to hold the state responsible for providing safe and affordable health services for women. Islamists, by contrast, offer an alternative view of the family and nation, challenging the morality of the state in promulgating family planning.

Four sets of actors appear throughout Ali’s narrative: the Egyptian state, often represented through President Husni Mubarak’s rhetoric blaming the masses for draining the state’s infrastructure; the international (read, Western) agencies that fund family-planning programs; the local non-government organizations (NGOs) that mediate between the former two; and the Egyptian poor, mostly women, the intended targets of all of the above. Ali skillfully describes the perceptions, roles, and objectives of these various actors. However, he ascribes agency only to the international organizations and individual Egyptians. According to Ali, it is international agencies such as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the single largest donor to Egypt’s family-planning program, that largely dictate the agenda of population control. As a promoter of an orthodox demographic theory that views population growth in underdeveloped countries as an impediment to modernization, USAID correlates low living standards in poor countries to high birthrates and seeks to isolate the poor as individuals who would act rationally if given contraceptives. Although Ali acknowledges that the Egyptian state resisted this demographic approach until the 1980s, ultimately it was forced to succumb when USAID threatened to stop funding. The reader, however, is left to wonder why the state resisted and how it articulated family-planning policies before the 1980s. Unfortunately, Ali reduces this more interesting story to a single paragraph. Similarly, Ali argues that while the mediating role of NGOs are often portrayed as crucial in pressuring governments to adhere to international standards, local Egyptian NGOs also succumb to USAID, which almost exclusively funds those NGOs that endorse its policies.

Ali’s sympathy ultimately lies with the Egyptian poor, who hold the real agency in his story. Although international donors affect the Egyptian state’s family-planning programs, and local NGOs help these donors shape people’s ideas and behavior, they often fail in their attempts to persuade poor women of the benefits of family planning. Rather, Ali critiques their imposition of individuality on these women, many of whom see their bodies as part of a broader social world and whose contraceptive choices are influenced by a variety of factors that family-planning policy does not take into consideration.
Because racist and classist population-control advocacy that blames the poor rather than the state for social ills is not limited to USAID in Egypt, it would have been useful if Ali had more systematically situated the Egyptian case in an international context and drawn comparisons with other population-control movements that seek to limit the growth of minorities and the poor in “Third World” nations, and even within Western nations, to demonstrate how the Egyptian case is unique. My only major criticism of this well-documented and theoretically informed study, however, is perhaps an unfair one to make of an anthropologist seeking to locate the production of knowledge in the present. Because Ali is quick to draw linear comparisons between the late-19th–early-20th-century Egyptian colony and the current Egyptian nation-state, his approach often lacks historicity. For example, Ali frequently compares contemporary debates on women, motherhood, and domesticity among today’s Egyptian elites with late-19th-century reformers, claiming that the only major difference is that the latter sought only to improve their own class, while the former seeks to do so for the masses. The present Egyptian state is also portrayed as derivative throughout his work. Ali views the current regime and its elites as not only wholeheartedly appropriating Western discourses on modernity and population control but replicating the colonial discourses of their predecessors, albeit with minor differences. In a study that is otherwise so nuanced, this rather linear narrative of the state and its elites is a bit frustrating. Despite this minor misgiving, however, Ali has produced an extraordinary and much needed case study on reproduction, sexuality, and gender in the Middle East. Replete with extensive footnotes and a rich bibliography and index, this book is an invaluable new addition to the field. It is a useful contribution to senior undergraduate and graduate courses on gender and anthropology, and, one hopes, to other disciplines beyond the field of Middle Eastern studies.

DOI: 10.1017.S0020743804361155

JAMILA BARGACH, Orphans of Islam: Family, Abandonment, and Secret Adoption in Morocco (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002). Pp. 310. $75.00 cloth, $29.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY MAHASIN SALEH, Graduate School of Social Work, University of Houston

In this largely urban ethnography, Bargach, a native Moroccan and cultural anthropologist, unfolds the stories and status of orphans, illegitimacy, abandonment, and adoptions—secret and customary—in everyday Moroccan society. The voices of the children, mothers, and adoptive families and individuals are the heart and highlight of the book. Her ongoing critique exposes and posits that systemic societal change, education, and tolerance are necessary to alleviate dysfunction and suffering of the stigmatized and victimized and to decrease high abandonment rates. She “assesses how a social problem is construed and lived” (p. 8) and “tracks the birth of a problem and articulation of this awareness . . . undermining, the long-running creed in Morocco that abandoned children is [sic] an insignificant problem” (p. 16). In endeavoring to inform and educate readers about the plight of these women and children, she feels that her book is both “constructive and responsible,” even though it may garner possible criticism from both the East and the West. If readers find the book accessible, one hopes that the discussion of this once taboo subject will continue to raise awareness, educate, spark scholarship, open dialogue, advance media and public discourse, and bring about constructive criticism leading to eventual change.

Some of Bargach’s multifold aims include focusing on kafala, or adoption mediated by the state, and secret adoptions and their ramifications—an expansive task. Bargach justifies the organization of the text through the metaphor of the complex arabesque pattern. Some may see this as an attempt to explain a sometimes difficult to follow writing style. Nevertheless, these social issues are not linear but multicausal and complexly related. Her work is crucial, given the paucity of scholarship in
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English on Islamic adoption and the non-existent ethnographic literature about Moroccan adoption and illegitimacy. Amira al-Azhary Sonbol’s “Adoption in Islamic Society: A Historical Survey” in *Children in the Muslim Middle East*, edited by Elizabeth Fernea (1995), is essentially the only other piece in this area. It would have been helpful, however, to add a reference list to the voluminous notes section, improving organization and accessibility.

Beginning with an Introduction, Bargach’s book is divided into three sections, with a postface. It is based on her doctoral dissertation, which she completed at Rice University in 1998. Mohamed Nabili’s stunning and fitting artwork dons the cover of the book. He is an artist who also works for the cause of abandoned children. The first section delves deeply into legal and theological interpretations of adoption, illegitimacy, and their related issues, as she traces the history of adoption within the context of Islam and discusses current Moroccan family law, or *al-Moudawana*, and its various aspects and detriments. Along the way she defines the genealogies and etymologies of Arabic words surrounding Moroccan adoption and its kindred discourses in a rich manner, establishing important cultural-linguistic foundations. Bargach revisits Arabic linguistic detail both with classical and Moroccan colloquial Arabic in other sections of the book. Colloquially, she explains that orphans on the streets are called “children of sin” or “children of adultery” (p. 170) and elucidates how this stigma plays out in society. Though insightful, her linguistic detail is deep and could make the work less accessible to those who are not familiar with the Arabic language and root system.

Covering legal, religious, cultural, historic, and political discourses, Bargach explains that she writes to a wide audience. The book could have broad appeal to social scientists articulate in Middle Eastern studies. Those in disciplines most likely to pick up the book would include social workers and social work educators, anthropologists, women’s studies scholars and feminists, filmmakers, sociologists, religious studies scholars, and political scientists. Because of her rich and interesting methodological approach based on thirty months of fieldwork, it may be a useful supplementary reading for graduate students studying ethnography. She gained entry to a range of ministries and NGOs, as well as to a hidden population. Methodologically, she takes a wide systemic approach, although she does not interview abandoning fathers because this is not her purpose. In the future, examining paternity and accountability issues seems logical to understand and articulate this aspect of the problem and seek possible solutions.

The access Bargach gained is also evident in the book’s second and third parts, despite her American research affiliation. In Part 2 “Rootless Lives and Bloodless Ties: Bastards, Secret Adoptions, and Some Other Cultural Dialectics,” she explores issues of naming the illegitimate and adopted and issues of motherhood while further relating heartfelt, striking narratives of “the social hypocrisy and the branding of the victim” (p. 135). The final section, “Nothing above Family to Reflect on Marginality,” deals with adoption in public space, including media, radio, film, as well as the role of social workers and civil society. Obviously, these sections will draw even more discipline-specific readers.

Her insightful reflexivity and vantage point, rarely seen in Western society, reminds one that she is a cultural anthropologist. Current research in adoption attachment and lactation issues could be a valuable tool in further interpretation of the situation and future education. Her book is a vital pioneering foundation that could continue to affect social change. I hope that she will continue and others will build and apply this information, bringing society to a higher level and these victims of society closer to social justice and to the basic human dignity of belonging and connection that every person deserves.
Obituaries say as much about the living as they do about the dead, as Mushira Eid’s analysis of newspaper death notices in 20th-century Egypt, Iran, and the United States reveals. This unique study combines Eid’s fascination with obituaries, which she began reading as a young adult in Cairo, and her interest in the relationship between language and gender inequity. Eid begins with the accepted socio-linguistic premise that there is a relationship between the “linguistic behavior” of individuals and the cultural context in which that behavior takes place. Obituaries provide a singular opportunity to examine how societal perceptions of individual identity are shaped in language because, although they are statements designed to present the most pertinent facts about individual identity, they are always written by others who wish to shape the identity of the deceased according to specific conventions.

Eid inquires more specifically into the potential correlations between gender, and especially feminine identity in the language of obituaries and gender identity in society. Based on a stringent empirical analysis of obituaries written by family members (rather than newspaper staff writers), Eid concludes that obituary writers tend to reproduce objective gender inequities in their representations of deceased female relatives. To arrive at this conclusion, Eid examined the presence of three linguistic variables: proper names, titles (such as “Mrs.” or “effendi”), and occupation at ten-year intervals from 1938 to 1988 in al-Ahram (Egypt), Ettela’at (Iran), and the New York Times. These data were then measured against three independent variables: time, sex, and culture (American, Egyptian, or Iranian). The data are provocative. If you were an Egyptian woman who died in 1938, you would have been identified not by name but by your relationship, such as wife or mother, to those left behind (whose names and titles would be fully spelled out). An American woman who died in 1938 could expect to be identified by name, because the American newspaper organized obituaries alphabetically (last name first). If, as an Iranian woman, you died that same year, you had some chance of being identified by your first name. However, Eid notes, conclusive evidence about women’s identification in Iran is difficult to come by in 1938 simply because there are so few obituaries about women. This is in part a function of the relative recency of Ettela’at (founded in 1926) compared with al-Ahram (1875) and the New York Times (1851).

One of Eid’s most prominent themes relates to the notion of obituaries as a form of public space. The linguistic signs denoting the social roles and titles, of men and women in obituaries may correlate to their actual roles, titles, and occupations in their respective periods and cultures. Eid maps the boundaries of obituary space by measuring the number of lines allotted to the obituaries of men and women, respectively, in the three newspapers and in the amount of space accorded obituaries altogether in each newspaper over time. Her “space-sharing model” of obituaries provides the possibility of conceptualizing relationships between actual and linguistic space. Eid’s analytical tools allow her to measure and compare the allotment of this conceptual space in precise percentages. In this model, obituaries—like the world of the lives they commemorate—have only a finite amount of room. Thus, the appearance of some names or titles necessarily reflects the exclusion of others. It is in this context that the fact that women’s obituaries in the Iranian, Egyptian, and American newspapers are consistently briefer than those of men becomes significant. Some of her data give credence to the hypothesis that obituaries are a form of public space whose distribution is controlled by men. New ways of identifying individuals in obituaries tend to be established first for men, and then extended to women.
The empirical basis on which the study rests should make Eid’s data intriguing to anyone who investigates culture, language, and gender in the Middle East. It is certainly an important addition to the field of obituary studies and offers new information about relationships between the rise of print culture and other cultural phenomena in all three societies. As a form of paid advertising, obituaries tell us something about newspapers’ readership and how readers incorporate newspapers into cultural rituals such as death practices.

However, for the reader (like me) who is not trained in the statistical methods used by Eid, the presentation of the book’s information may be a challenge. The bulk of the text is devoted to exposition of the statistical results of Eid’s analyses. The already complex matrix on which the study depends— with its three newspapers, six time periods, and multiple independent and linguistic variables—and the necessity of demonstrating the data’s statistical significance results in dry prose in which salient conclusions can seem lost. This is unfortunate, because Eid’s ruminations on the relationship between culture and obituaries are consistently provocative. Why, for example, is the identification of men in the al-Ahram obituaries by religious title (e.g., hajj) so much higher in 1968, than in 1988 when, Eid notes, political Islam is on the rise? She posits that the association between politics (rather than private observance) and religion may in the context of state opposition make “families fear public identification with religious affiliation.” Throughout, Eid provides a wealth of intriguing material about the role of newspaper obituaries in ritualizing death.

DOI: 10.1017.S0020743804361178

MASOUD KAZEMZADEH, Islamic Fundamentalism, Feminism, and Gender Inequality in Iran under Khomeini (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2002). Pp. 164. $35.00 paper.

REVIEWED BY SANAM VAKIL, Middle East Studies Department, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, Washington, D.C.

The role of women in post–Revolutionary Iran has been a widely contested topic. Many have argued that the revolution was a liberating force for Iranian women as they fought side by side with men to achieve the goals of their struggle. Moreover, some have reasoned that the mandatory imposition of the hijab (head scarf) has enabled women to take on more relevance through the amorphous, a-sexual nature of their garb. However, Masoud Kazemzadeh argues the opposite, declaring women to be among the major losers of the revolution. Going beyond the findings of other scholars, Kazemzadeh does not assign absolute blame to Islamic ideology for the declining role of women. In fact, his findings debunk the causal relationship between Islam and anti-feminist policies. Instead, Kazemzadeh deems Islam to be a “contributing factor” to gender inequality where the patriarchy in Islamic countries in general and in Iran in particular has used and abused the tenets of Islam to perpetuate such inequities. Ultimately, he lays blame not with Islam but with Islamic fundamentalists who have manipulated the religion to pursue their own misogynist policies.

Kazemzadeh’s work is concise, structured, and methodological. He clearly establishes the direction and goals of his inquiry, never once veering off the track. Moreover, he steers the reader, although often cursorily, not only through Khomeini’s anti-feminist policies but also through the various theories of gender relations pursued by Iranian political parties and through an analysis of the role of women in Islam. Perhaps as a result of focusing on the period from February 1979 to June 1981, this work can seem scanty, as the reader often needs more analysis or an expanded time frame of reference. His use of sources and research is thorough and clear, as is Kazemzadeh’s audience—undergraduates—as they would benefit most from the review of history, methodology, and the evolution of gender relations in Iran.
Most interesting to the reader is how Kazemzadeh’s argument is systematically unveiled to arrive at his conclusion. Initially, he reveals how Khomeini institutionalized gender inequality in the Iranian political, economic, and cultural spheres. Both through de jure and de facto execution, Khomeini sought to protect the patriarchy. Using diversity of tactics ranging from revoking gender protection in the workplace to withdrawing social services and nullifying the family-protection laws, Khomeini and his supporters forced women out of the public sphere and back into their “natural” role of motherhood. Moreover, all previous gains with regards to polygyny, divorce, hijab, sigheh, and education were ultimately reversed. Women were relegated to a subordinate position in society.

From there, Kazemzadeh shows that feminism was a prevailing concern among the divergent political parties contesting power during the 1979–84 period. That gender issues were included in the political debate exposes, according to Kazemzadeh, the reluctance of women to accept Khomeini’s anti-feminist, fundamentalist policies. He ascribes the failure of feminists to resist fundamentalist goals to their weakness relative to the powerful Islamist forces in the government. Here again, Kazemzadeh’s restricted time frame of analysis constrains his argument. It would be useful for the reader to be updated on the current status and agenda of the women’s movement in Iran, not only to support his case but also to provide the reader with a frame of reference on the evolution of the feminist struggle. Ultimately, though, Kazemzadeh illustrates that Islam is not a “necessary condition” for anti-feminism, rather, Khomeini’s political decisions are responsible for propagating such gender discrimination.

Finally, Kazemzadeh returns to his examination of Khomeini’s manipulation of Islam as a means of enabling an anti-feminist agenda. Having reinterpreted the Qur’an and hadith to redress the gender issue, Islamic fundamentalists have often appropriated what Kazemzadeh refers to as the patriarchal and puritanical nature of Islam and exaggerated it for their own end. He clearly connects the fundamentalist agenda with regard to women to specific passages in the Qur’an. However, to counter the fundamentalist misreading, Kazemzadeh has revisited the issue of sexual Puritanism within Islam and Shi’ism to prove that Islamic fundamentalists have drawn such conservative conclusions from their independent interpretations, not from actual doctrinal policies. Here he reveals that Islam can be used as a “contributing factor” to gender inequality. Despite such a finding, what is most important to note is that Islam has been used to facilitate gender discrimination and has eased the success of Khomeini and his fundamentalist disciples in repressing women in Iran. As suggested by Kazemzadeh, “Islamic fundamentalists . . . pick and chose from the rich, variegated and contradictory values in Islam whatever suits their interests. This of course is nothing new. In the past 1400 years, Islam has been used to provide justifications for slavery, pre-capitalist mercantile economy, landed property, capitalism, socialism, communism, feminism and anti-feminism” (p. 100).

In spite of this structured analysis, Kazemzadeh diverges by concluding with policy implications. His prescriptions that Muslim women need to strive not only for gender equality but also for secularization of politics and, to that end, achieve such a polity through “do[ing] what the Europeans did: to start a new Enlightenment” (p. 106) is again too cursory and reductionist. Instead, he should encourage women to arm themselves with their own theological arguments to lobby against the religious distortions of the fundamentalists and prove that, in fact, other interpretations of Islam can be used to promote gender equality. Moreover, by expanding the time span of his focus to the present, he could show how the issue of gender inequality is being addressed in Iran’s contemporary society, as undoubtedly some gains have been made in twenty years. Ultimately, Kazemzadeh’s contribution is an elucidation of the misuse of Islam by Islamic fundamentalists, such as Khomeini, to advance anti-feminist ambitions.
Sibel Bozdoğan’s much awaited book *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* is the first in a promising series published by the University of Washington Press dedicated to exploring the relationship between modernity and nationalism in, preferably though not exclusively, “non-Western” regions, with a special emphasis on cross-disciplinary knowledge. In the absence of even a single English book on Turkish architectural culture in the first half of the 20th century (despite some valuable articles collected in books and printed in journals), the contribution of Bozdoğan’s book to English-speaking scholarship is self-evident. Bernd Nicolai’s *Moderne und Exil* (Berlin: Verlag für Bauwesen, 1998; in German) also recently explored the same period, with a similar emphasis on the relationship between architecture and official nationalist politics, but this work concentrated on the influence of German-speaking architects in the country. Bozdoğan has chosen a much broader scope and audience. For some, the writer’s ambition to speak to the expectations of a multiple audience that includes non-architects, as well as to contribute to the state of scholarly research while simultaneously covering an enormous amount of material unusual for introductory surveys, may seem to limit the book’s focus. Yet this is a challenge Bozdoğan consciously chooses to take on to make the case for the relevance of her topic and historical material to much broader audiences working in cultural studies and in architectural theory, as well as in European architectural history.

Chapters of the book contain overarching information on various architectural topics, including the formal and contextual characters of institutional, recreational, governmental, and residential buildings; architectural education; administrative and legal adjustments in the profession; ideas and ideologies discussed in professional and popular journals and in literary works; official, professional, and popular receptions of modernism in architecture; the role of technological and scientific developments on architecture; and so on. The main thesis that connects these diverse issues demonstrates the strong link between the development of architectural modernism in Turkey and the nation-building policies of Kemalism. Bozdoğan argues that modernization came to Turkey through the top-down political steps of the official nationalist elite, who related to architecture and town planning as an effective mechanism in realizing their “civilizing mission.” Educating the masses in the city and the countryside in modern school buildings and people’s houses; showing the nation how to live in modern garden cities, model villages, and “cubic houses”; telling them how to play sports in modern stadiums and how to spend their recreational time in modern parks; teaching women how to modernize and rationalize their households—these are some of the issues the book handles to demonstrate the multiple ways that symbols of modernity can be disseminated to a whole nation by using the tropes of architecture. The professional architects of the time were also enthusiastic about taking part in this process as civilizing agents. Bozdoğan demonstrates that most Turkish architects fully embraced the modernizing, Westernizing, and nationalizing tendencies of the official elite, disagreeing with the political authorities only on minor issues concerning the nationality of the authors and their right to build the stone documents for the revolution. So did most of the foreign architects in the country, according to the book, among whose ranks were some of the most critical and anti–Nazi intellectuals of Weimar Germany, including B. Taut, M. Schutte-Lihotzky, and E. Reuter, not to mention literary figures such as E. Auerbach. The book does not stress the voice of an opponent or perhaps even a third group that did not totally agree
either with the Kemalist authority or its possible counter-movements. This should underscore both the credibility of the Kemalist project among the professional elite of the time and the difficulty of raising alternative voices.

Among the most decisive arguments Bozdoğan constructs in the book is the representational nature of modern architecture in Turkey: “in the absence of the industrial and socioeconomic conditions within which modernism emerged in the West, what republican architects imported from Europe remained, in essence, ‘a style.’ . . . [M]odern architecture in Turkey was a contrived representation of a desired but non-existent modernity, not the natural outcome of the country’s transformation into a modern society by its own internal dynamics.” (pp. 296–97). What had to be represented through architecture, then? “If fascination with the technological and industrial icons of modernity constituted the futuristic and utopian dimension of the Kemalist revolution, equally important was an archaic dimension through which Kemalism sought to legitimize the idea of a unified Turkish nation” (p. 241). The issue for the architects thus, was to create the formal expressions of both of these aspirations, whose simultaneous emphasis on futurist elements and memory usually acted in tension. Throughout the book, Bozdoğan shows how Turkish architects, intellectuals, and historians negotiated between and reconciled the expressions of the “modern” (simultaneously perceived as the “Western”) and “national” by asserting the “Turkishness” of the European-inspired “cubic architecture,” the “modernness” of Turkish vernacular architecture, or the “timelessness” and “universality” of European Classical architecture. Such an explanation also allows the writer to go beyond the established historiography of Turkish architectural modernism that explained historical change in relation to stylistic shifts from one decade to another and that treated the “national” and the “international” styles as a binary opposition. The book benefits from being an inclusive synthesis of previous and recent scholarship, including references to Ph.D. studies and even unpublished papers. The writer has chosen extensive and creative primary sources to demonstrate her thesis, including professional, official, and popular magazines, albeit not the official documents from the state archives that could have also been relevant to the topic. The book also contributes to the history of modern architecture in Turkey by bringing together unexplored subjects and documents such as visions of houses in popular magazines, factories, and international fairs.

There is no doubt that Bozdoğan’s book is a comprehensive source for those who are interested in architectural theory and history, cultural and social studies, and the complex modes of relations between modernity and nationalism. It also stands as an exemplary work for readers concerned with the methodological questions of a scholarship that cross disciplinary boundaries.

DOI: 10.1017.S0020743804361192


REVIEWED BY MICHELLE HARTMAN, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal

Dalya Cohen-Mor’s A Matter of Fate explores how the concept of fate, broadly defined, is inscribed in Arabic literary texts to show how “fate” is a central part of Arab culture, society, and thought. The study carefully marshals literary and other evidence to show that fate thoroughly infuses all that is “Arab,” leading to the conclusion that it defines Arabic culture and literature. Cohen-Mor writes, “The only outlook that is genuinely Arabian and that distinctly typifies the Arab world as a culture area is the belief in divine predestination” (p. 240). She then attributes the problems Arabs face today to this belief and specifically asserts that fatalism provides fertile ground for “Islamic fundamentalism” (pp. xvii–xviii, 162, 243, 248–50, 255).
To arrive at these conclusions, Cohen-Mor discusses one topic related to “fate” in each of seven chapters after examining the notion in some detail in Chapter 1. Coupled with the Introduction, this first chapter clearly demonstrates two of this book’s more problematic underlying assumptions, revealing its limitations as a contribution to the study of modern Arabic literature. The first, which is stated explicitly, is that there is an “Arab world,” which is linked to an Arab worldview, culture, character, and mind (p. xv). The second is that literary works by Arabs will reflect this reality faithfully, and therefore that literature can act as an explanatory tool in understanding this putatively alien society. Her Introduction claims that “[t]he West feels an urgent need to know the forces that shape the Arabs’ worldview and motivate their actions and reactions. In cross-cultural communications, especially between nations that sometimes find themselves at loggerheads, literature can be an invaluable aid” (p. xv).

As this quotation shows, the definition of terms in the introduction (pp. xviii–xix) is extremely limited and tenuous. Who are “the Arabs”? What is the “West”? Are the West and the Arab world “nations”? These questions are never answered. Even more problematic is the frequent conflation of Arabs with Muslims and Islam, which are used simply as interchangeable categories. For example, she locates the belief in fate at times in Islam and at others in pre–Islamic Arabian poetry or Arab culture and thought, without drawing out how these things interact with and relate to each other. If the notion of fate is related to predestination in Islam, how then does it infuse the thought of the Christian protagonist in Samira Azzam’s short story “Fate” as shestands at the church door contemplating her upcoming marriage?

These problems are reinforced in the remaining seven identically structured chapters. She begins each by defining a topic (among others, time, character, custom, gender, and class and capital) framed by condensed versions of theories by well-known thinkers (Freud, Marx, etc.). She then moves on to show how each is manifest in the “Arab world” through definitions of Arabic terms, proverbs, and sociological and at times literary studies, among other works. She continues by relating fate to each topic in a range of Arabic fiction and poetry. Finally, each chapter closes with two translated short stories, two authors’ biographies, and a short discussion. These readable translations are a positive contribution this book will make to the field. Sixteen male and female writers from seven countries are represented, several of whom are not well known to English readers (Layla Bin Mami, Habib Jamati, and Mubarak Rabi). Though the other writers have appeared in English translation (for example, Mahfouz, Kanafani, and Sa’dawi), most of these stories have not been published in translation.

Though one can appreciate her sustained study of a wide range of literary works, Cohen-Mor’s use of sources to support her arguments is problematic. To give one example, relying on proverbs to illustrate a certain worldview when one can almost always find a contradictory proverb to prove the reverse is a questionable project. Given the breadth of source material, it is also puzzling that, although the bibliography duly notes many classic and important studies of Arabic literature, the work does not show familiarity with many debates and issues surrounding modern Arabic literature and draws sparingly on recent literary studies.

The book’s contribution to scholarship on Arabic literature is therefore doubtful, and the works to which Cohen-Mor refers readers “for further reading” shows that it is also of limited benefit to students. For example, she favors studies written in Arabic and relatively obscure works in English, neglecting many interesting and relatively accessible books in English. Together with the organizational principle of including the translated stories at the end of each chapter, this omission reveals the major problem with Cohen-Mor’s project. Rather than moving from an analysis of Arabic literary texts to examining how a diverse range of writers and texts portray, inscribe, support, challenge, and investigate issues related to “fate,” the author chooses literary texts that she interprets in one- to two-page discussions to argue that they all embody Arab fatalism. Indeed, the author is so bent on proving that fatalism is an essential and pervasive element of Arab society that, in providing such a diverse range of complex and interesting literary examples, she undermines her own argument.
Cohen-Mor does deal with this apparent contradiction in her conclusion by pointing to a dichotomy between the Arab masses, who she claims maintain a fatalistic value orientation (pp. 243, 247–48) and Arab intellectuals, who have begun to overcome this and become “modern” through contact with the West (p. 248). Her concluding sections on the connection between fatalism and fundamentalism then make a somewhat bizarre departure from the rest of the book. Cohen-Mor veers into a discussion of “peaceful solutions” in Arabic literature, then relations between Israelis and Arabs (p. 255), and finally to a discussion of Israeli literature and Palestinian authors who write in Hebrew, whose activity she questionably asserts “parallels that of Jewish writers in Arabic” (p. 256). She claims that these two latter groups are significant because “there is a process of humanization as well as integration in recognizing each other’s languages” (p. 256). The merits of this particular argument aside, the discussion has no organic connection to the rest of the book.

These paragraphs show Cohen-Mor struggling to find a positive note on which to end a study that devotes 256 pages to persuading the reader that the Arab world is mired in a fatalism that imbues every aspect of society. Her final sentences read, “Fatalism will inevitably give way to a new value orientation. Modern Arabic literature displays the myriad ways in which the Arabs can take their fate into their own hands” (p. 257). Despite the book’s arguments, her literary examples show that they already have.

DOI: 10.1017.S0020743804361209


REVIEWED BY EVELYNE ACCAD, French Department, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana

Michelle Hartman, professor of Arabic language and literature at the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University, has provided a very interesting reading of the rescriptings, within their multiple contexts, of three religious figures—Joseph, Jesus, and Job—in secular literary works by three Lebanese women authors: Andrée Chedid’s La femme de Job (Job’s Wife), written in French; Huda Barakat’s Hajar al-dahik (The Stone of Laughter), written in Arabic; and Najwa Barakat’s Hayat wa-alam Hamad ibn Silana (The Passion of Hamad Ibn Silana), also written in Arabic. The aim is to explore how religious figures and tales from the past are rewritten in today’s world, thus bringing out a diversity of meanings that can give us essential messages about the society, gender, community, and nation from which they emerged. The originality of Hartman’s theoretical approach is her use of the concepts of métissage and border spaces.

The work is organized into two main parts. The first part deals with theoretical and methodological considerations and is divided into three chapters dealing with: (1) reading literature in contexts to show the multiplicity of Lebanese identities linked to language and multi-confessionalism and emphasizing the importance of hybridity in a society in which conflicting elements often co-exist; (2) methodological explorations that define the place in which Hartman’s theoretical approach fits within the overall critical approaches in the field of Middle Eastern literature, from early scholars such as von Grunebaum to more recent ones such as Malti-Douglas, thus enabling Hartman to see métissage (as defined by Lionnet), which is central to her critical approach in that she combines elements from many locations; and (3) religious rescripting in secular literary works, which provides fascinating references to authors such as Mahmoud Darwish, who uses images of Christ and crucifixion in his poetry, and Assia Djebar’s Loin de Médine (Far from Medina), who rewrites women into the life of the Prophet, underlining their contribution and giving them their due importance.
Part 2 deals with texts and contexts, and like part 1, it is organized into three chapters. The first chapter analyzes Chedid’s novel and brings in interesting insights on the pacifist spirit of Job’s wife: her strong criticism of war and destruction; her forceful opinions on religion and God, with all their ramifications on philosophical and theological concerns; her feminist message, which accepts the complexity and complications of women’s roles and lives rather than serves a prescriptive message to advocate social change. But I do not agree with Hartman’s claim at the beginning of the chapter that Chedid is rarely defined or identified as a feminist. I, for one, have always seen the feminist message in Chedid’s works and have analyzed it as such in many of my readings, teachings, and writings on her. Like Hartman, I find the approach of métissage to be extremely relevant when dealing with Chedid’s work.

The second chapter of Part 2 examines Najwa Barakat’s novel and the use of manipulations and confusions of gender roles and identity, particularly as this pertains to Jesus. Hartman sees this as a strategy on the author’s part in the construction of gender roles. For example Jesus’s feminine characteristics subvert the traditional views we have of him and allow a transformation of society through the challenge of conventions, hierarchies, and norms.

The third chapter deals with Huda Barakat’s acclaimed first novel, investigating the intertextual character of Joseph/Yusuf found in the Bible and the Qur’an. Joseph is a figure that all three monotheistic religions love and admire, and he has been the subject of many interpretations in sacred, literary, and popular traditions. In her novel, Barakat sets the context for Joseph’s story within the Lebanese civil war. Hartman quotes at great length Samira Aghacy’s analysis of this novel, which she sees as an indictment of the civil war while distancing herself from Aghacy in proposing métissage, in the bisexual protagonist, as a possible negotiation of the war’s woes.

Some of the conclusions that Hartman draws from her study of the three novels and their multidimensional contexts are that the inter-textuality is always complex and that the works under discussion, while paying homage to the traditional figures, also challenge them. The three novelists use the religious figures to strengthen their own messages, which, for all three, are about social transformation. They all advocate tolerance and pluralism and demonstrate how fixed identities can lead to war and violence.

I found Hartman’s work very thorough and important for the fields of women’s literature and studies, Arabic and Arab Islamic literature, Francophone literature and studies, Lebanese literature, religious studies, and cultural studies. I would use it as background reading for my classes and have already recommended it to several libraries in the United States and in Lebanon.

DOI: 10.1017.S0020743804361210


REVIEWED BY Z. PAMELA KARIMI, Department of Architecture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.

In his welcome analysis of the formation of mosques in the United States over the past five decades, Akel Ismail Kahera reaches beyond the specific history he has written to explore the links between Islamic thought and Islamic architecture. In addition, Kahera’s book can be considered a contribution to comparative research on Islamic and Western architecture.

Following a remarkable Introduction, Chapter 1 examines spatial characteristics of American mosques, relying on the author’s notion of “spatial sunnah,” which is analogous to the major spatial configurations of the Prophet’s mosque built at Madinah in 622. In Chapter 2, Kahera looks for an “aesthetic autonomy” for the mosque in North America as he examines the visual affinities
between the American mosques (from the avant-garde design of the Islamic Cultural Center in New York City to the traditional-looking Islamic Cultural Center of Washington, D.C.) and those from Islamic lands. The third chapter considers the relevance of culture and identity to the making of the American mosque as a place for Muslim public gathering. In this chapter, Kahera also devotes a section to an aspect of Islamic architecture that has been largely neglected by most scholars: issues of gender.

One might assume from the title that Kahera’s analysis owes much to Jacques Derrida’s philosophy of deconstruction. However, in this book deconstruction refers to the concepts of subject and object introduced in the 13th-century by Ibn ‘Arabi. Indeed, in all three chapters, Kahera bases his analyses on the key elements of traditional Islamic thought as found in the hadith literature, Qur’anic texts, Sunni Islamic law, and medieval Islamic philosophy.

Diverging from the dichotomy of subject and object (as advanced by Hegel), Derrida rejected the subordination of art to any form of logocentrism, thus reinforcing the instability of binary oppositions. To Ibn ‘Arabi, however, the dichotomy of subject–object conjures up the antithesis of the two in which subject and object will merge into one. This idea “allows for the possibility that beauty—aside from being one of the attributes of God (al-Jamāl)—also expresses qualities of created existence” (p. 12). Correspondingly, “Ibn ‘Arabi considers the architect(s) . . . authorized agent of creativity” (p. 12). According to Kahera, this interpretation originates in tawḥīd, “which considers the human being an authority figure . . . blessed by . . . Allah” (p. 12). Moreover, “tawḥīd affects the use of imagery . . . in religious aesthetics” (p. 146) and gives birth to harmony and stability. Kahera’s use of Ibn ‘Arabi’s “theory of deconstruction” contributes to three debates about American mosques—first, “a careful analysis of . . . design”; second, “an interpretation of the semantics of the term ‘masjid’”; and third, “a critique of space, gender, and aesthetics” (p. 21).

Although he seeks to bridge the gap that divides conceptions of space—as they relate to philosophy and other realms of thought—in Islam from the West, Kahera tends to belittle Western contributions. For example, he emphasizes that it is important to avoid “meaningless and obvious generalities” (p. 25) in describing the mosque, yet he alludes to Western endeavors in just such terms: “in the West beauty is commonly trivialized, reduced to decoration, or equated with the insipidities of bad taste” (p. 13). Further, while emphasizing that his use of deconstruction is “significantly unrelated to Derrida’s philosophy” (p. 1), the author’s argument would have been stronger had he fully addressed the advocates of the Derrida’s notion of deconstruction in relation to Ibn ‘Arabi’s philosophy.

In search of a genuine visual expression for the contemporary American mosque, Kahera makes a distinction between Islamic aesthetics and those of the West. He maintains that there are two unique orders that shape the structural patterns in the mosques: “first, their essence . . . (bāṭinī), and second, their external appearance (zāhirī)” (p. 77). This notion introduces his discussion of classic binary oppositions between the body and the soul and ultimately conveys the importance of both in Islamic architecture—a belief central to Ibn ‘Arabi’s philosophy.

According to Kahera, René Descartes’s “Cogito ergo sum suggests that thinking . . . [is] the real substance of being, but it also celebrates the separation of the mind from the body and . . . activities of being” (p. 116). Kahera argues that “this Cartesian maxim . . . adopted in the West . . . is related to the crisis of architecture, which is . . . also a human crisis” (p. 116). By relying mainly on the 17th-century views of Descartes, Kahera neglects classic studies of corporeality established by Plato and Aristotle, as well as contemporary trends in Western philosophy—in particular, feminist theory and deconstruction—which have also influenced Western architectural design.

In Chapter 3, Kahera discusses the history of the position of women in the mosque. This section needs to be expanded to incorporate the diverse narrative of women from various Islamic countries. Kahera’s examples from Egypt and Saudi Arabia provide an incomplete picture of women’s access to the mosque in Islamic societies. In both Chapter 3 and the Conclusion, Kahera offers considerable
analyses of Muslim gathering in American mosques, but he makes little reference to the bigoted attitudes that Muslims have often faced.

Aside from these concerns, the book provides an excellent study of the historical elements of mosques and their influence on all types of contemporary American mosques. Although some of the discussion tends at times to be overly generalized, Kahera’s attempt to trace the key elements of contemporary Western theory, such as semiotics, representation, power, and subjectivity, to Islamic (mostly Sunni) cultural, legal, and religious patterns is a worthy contribution to the study of Islamic architecture, material culture, and religion in America.

DOI: 10.1017.S0020743804361222


REVIEWED BY KIRK J. BEATTIE, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Simmons College, Boston.

Jon Alterman seeks to demonstrate that the Cold War prism through which most scholars have examined Egyptian–American relations during the 1952–56 period has produced a somewhat “distorted” view of that relationship. Those efforts, he feels, have placed too great an emphasis on how and why cooperation failed in the area of military-strategic affairs, a failure that led Egypt’s leaders to build a closer strategic relationship with the Soviet Union. Alterman argues that such studies give short shrift to serious efforts by Egyptian and American officials to establish an enduring relationship built on economic assistance and presents his own study as one designed to record those efforts and highlight their significance. Thus, regarding the heavily studied Aswan High Dam project, and in presenting his principal thesis, Alterman asserts that “[t]he traditional explanation for the cancellation of High Dam funding is that the United States had lost patience with Gamal Abdel Nasser and that he was finally being punished for his recklessness and adventurism in foreign policy. A more careful study of the history of the Egyptian–American relationship creates a fascinating picture of missed messages and mutual frustrations. It suggests that the relationship was in some ways a victim of its context: uncertainty on both sides about how to promote economic development, uncertainty over the roles that Egypt and the United States would each play in the post-colonial world, and the intervention of third countries—the UK, the USSR, and Israel—into that relationship” (p. xix).

Alterman begins his study with a brief yet insightful review of how contemporary thought in developmental economics affected key figures in Egypt in the early 1950s. He neatly contextualizes Egypt’s economic decision-makers, convincingly demonstrating that, far from being “babes in the woods,” they were well-informed and heavily influenced by Western economic orthodoxy, United Nations studies, and American development success stories such as the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Next, Alterman launches into his investigation of U.S. government assistance to Egypt. He follows a chronological path, focusing in fine detail on the full gamut of U.S. economic aid programs, from small “chicken aid” (poultry development) assistance to the prospective mother of all aid packages, funding for the Aswan High Dam. Particularly interesting is Alterman’s discussion of the Egyptian–American Rural Improvement Service (EARIS) program, agreed to in March 1953, whose principal objectives were land reclamation and a significant expansion of an ongoing Rural Social Center program. The latter program’s goal was to provide special educational, vocational training, and health services to raise the quality of village life for peasants throughout Egypt. Here Alterman does an excellent job of depicting the tug-of-war between American and Egyptian officials over the EARIS program, as well as of describing how EARIS’s “bottom-up” developmental approach inspired rival “top-down” programs, such as the Liberation Province
land-reclamation scheme and the Combined Centers rural-development program. Although Egyptians involved with EARIS deemed it, in retrospect, a success, some American counterparts were vexed to the point of a revolt. Mutual perceptions of heavy-handedness and an obvious values-based divergence in how peasants were to benefit hampered collaboration, although EARIS limped along for most of the time until joint cooperation was terminated in 1963. Alterman’s coverage of EARIS’s challenges will undoubtedly strike chords familiar to many involved in U.S. Agency of International Development work in Egypt in recent decades and offers important lessons to bilateral assistance workers in general.

Because Alterman is both thorough and accurate, he ends up demonstrating the extent to which military-strategic factors consistently trumped concerns about economic collaboration. To prove this point, one can begin by noting that American assistance to Egypt by summer 1955 amounted to $40 million in development assistance funds and some tens of millions in additional PL480 money. Compare this, as does Alterman, with the annual $220 million in combined economic and military aid that Turkey was receiving from the United States as the Americans built their bulwark against the Soviet Union during this period. Providing commentary from a U.S. team’s 1955 evaluation of EARIS and economic aid to Egypt, Alterman notes how, “[o]verall, the team expressed the belief that many of the problems in the Egyptian aid program were far bigger than the aid program itself” (p. 91). These problems included U.S. cotton policy; Israeli intransigence in Gaza; Egypt’s spurning the Baghdad Pact; and Sudanese–Egyptian difficulties over Nile water rights. As the same report stated, “These four factors outweigh all others in determining Egypt’s attitude toward the US and, indirectly, the extent to which Egypt is willing to accept US counsel and guidance in solving her economic problems” (p. 91).

Nowhere was the primacy of “high politics” and geo-strategic considerations in greater evidence than in deliberations over the Aswan High Dam. As Alterman himself again correctly concludes, “Throughout the 1950s, the High Dam project never really ceased to be an economic project for the Egyptians. However, in high-level discussions in the U.S. Department of State and among the National Security Council, it was never anything but political. While Egypt’s leaders continued to view the High Dam as a key to the economic future of Egypt, Secretary of State Dulles and his subordinates in the Department of State regarded it as a mere bargaining chip for regional peace” (p. 129). In brief, one can conclude that earlier studies’ emphasis on military-strategic affairs was well placed, but Alterman’s study does represent a highly useful addition to that work—one that leaves us with a more robust and nuanced picture of the politics of that period.

Alterman has left few stones unturned in his research. He has made skillful use of secondary resources in Arabic and English. He also succeeded in gaining access to previously closed records from the Egyptian Embassy in Washington, D.C., and examining untouched files from American bureaucratic agencies, including those of the Foreign Operations Mission in Cairo. He supplemented this resource base through personal interviews with a range of Egyptians and Americans with special knowledge of the 1950s aid programs. Last but not least, he very carefully mined the diplomatic cables between Cairo and Washington for the period under study.

The fruits of Alterman’s laudatory research effort have been presented in a highly engaging, generally balanced, and informative manner. The book will undoubtedly prove of greatest interest to post-graduate, graduate, and advanced undergraduate students specializing in Middle East politics, economics, and history. But there are also important lessons here for anyone engaged in studying the trials and tribulations of aid projects between more and less economically developed countries.

REVIEWED BY AHMET SÖZEN, Department of International Relations, University of Bahcesehir, Istanbul

The Cyprus conflict has been on the international agenda for almost half a century. It entered the international spotlight as an issue of decolonization in the 1950s; was transformed into an ethnic conflict in the 1960s; and further metamorphosed into a dangerous regional conflict between two NATO allies—namely, Turkey and Greece. The United Nations has been involved with the Cyprus issue since 1964, and since the 1990s a wide range of countries and international organizations (such as the European Union) have offered to help in disentangling this protracted conflict. The latest U.N. effort was in March 2003, when Secretary-General Kofi Annan put his prestige behind the peace talks taking place in the Hague. Alas, his efforts proved as futile as the numerous other peace plans for Cyprus that have been put on the table since the 1960s.

The literature on the Cyprus conflict can be broadly placed in two categories: impartial works and partisan writings. The latter constitute the major bulk of the literature, as we have been inundated with books supporting either the Greek or the Turkish views. Clement Dodd’s Storm Clouds over Cyprus is one of those rare dispassionate works that provides a well-balanced and judicious account of this long-drawn-out conflict. The author makes several accurate diagnoses, which are critical in understanding the nature of the non-solution(s) presented so far. He writes, “The UN Security Council began to try to solve the problem soon after it virtually created it in March 1964, with Resolution 186, which led to the recognition of the wholly Greek Cypriot government as the Government of the Republic of Cyprus” (p. 24). Dodd continues, “The UN Security Council seeks to act as an honest broker in the Cyprus dispute, but it cannot properly fulfill such a role because of its recognition of one side as illegal. Any arbiter in a dispute must be, and be seen to be, impartial, but unfortunately this the UN cannot be. It cannot accept the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot contention that under the terms of the 1960 treaties establishing the Republic of Cyprus the Greek Cypriot Government is plainly illegal” (p. 38).

According to the author, the involvement of the European Union in the Cyprus conflict in the 1990s further complicated the situation and tilted the balance in favor of the Greek Cypriots. The European Union’s decision to admit Cyprus as a member, regardless of whether a solution is found to the conflict, will have many negative repercussions for all parties involved. Such a move will result in the worsening of relations between Turkey and the European Union, as well as those between Turkey and Greece, and will further isolate the Turkish Cypriots from the international community, resulting in the permanent division of the island.

As a man intimately familiar with the fundamental issues and nuances of the Cyprus conflict, Dodd presents his arguments in a clear and compact fashion. In eighty-four pages he manages to touch on every crucial point surrounding this quarrel. For example, he does a nice job of explaining the partisan writings and “conflicting readings of history” promoted by each side (pp. 20–23). He then proceeds to analyze the federation and confederation models that are often presented as the pillars of any possible solution (pp. 25–28). Further, Dodd provides a clear description and an objective explanation of the legal issues pertaining to Cyprus’s accession to the European Union (pp. 42–46). This part is particularly useful for those who are new to the Cyprus issue, as it forces the reader to contemplate whether the European Union is a catalyst or a debilitating factor in mediating a solution to the discord. In the thirty-six–page appendix that follows, Dodd provides the reader with such important documents as a previous U.N. peace plan, Security Council resolutions, and the position papers of the disputants.
In all, this book is an invaluable source for all those who need to understand the essentials of the Cyprus conflict. However, because the conflict is like a moving target, the work needs constant updating to remain relevant. One would hope that if there is to be a third edition, the author will include the latest developments, such as the European Union’s Copenhagen summit in December 2002, the Cyprus meeting in The Hague in March 2003, and, most important, the signing of the European Union accession treaty by the (Greek) Republic of Cyprus in April 2003, which modified some of the essentials of the Cyprus conflict. A new edition would also benefit from an index and the addition of more sources in support of the arguments made and the further readings that are suggested by the author.

DOI: 10.1017.S0020743804361246

REVIEWED BY ARASH ABIZADEH, Department of Political Science, McGill University, Montreal

It is entirely natural that writers in the Middle East should have been prompted to respond to Darwin’s momentous 1859 book, The Origin of the Species. Evolution and Bahá’í Belief will interest readers of this journal because it is the first scholarly book-length treatment of one such response; that of the Bahá’í leader, Abdu’l-Baha (1844–1921).

One of the main difficulties faced by the reader of Abdu’l-Baha’s writings on evolution is that, although some passages claim that “man” did not always exist and only gradually evolved to his present form, other passages state that man has always existed, in perfected form, and was always distinct from animals. In Part 1 of the book, Keven Brown intelligently tackles this difficulty with the aid of two sets of analytical tools. First, he looks to the Middle Eastern reception of Darwin and distinguishes two camps: Darwinians who believed that one species can transmute into another, and essentialists who believed in the originality of species. Brown’s first thesis is that, although Abdu’l-Baha was an essentialist, he also believed in “evolution” within each species. Thus, while apparently rejecting inter-species transmutation, he advocated “parallel evolution” and rejected essentialist doctrines of special creation.

The second context is the Greco-Islamic philosophical tradition, whose vocabulary Abdu’l-Baha deployed. Brown explores this context to suggest that Abdu’l-Baha sometimes used “species” (naw’, māḥīyāt) differently from the Darwinians: whereas for the latter “species” is always a theoretical category used to classify populations, for the former “species” usually refers to a metaphysical essence akin to a Platonic form posited by God. So Brown’s second thesis is that Abdu’l-Baha’s essentialism (and rejection of transmutation) reflects his belief that each biological species corresponds to such a divinely posited “species essence.” The species essence of man always existed (metaphysically), but its physical existence was actualized only through a teleologically directed process of intra-species evolution.

In other words, what motivates Abdu’l-Baha’s reticence toward Darwinism are the theory’s potentially “materialist” implications. This yields Brown’s key hermeneutical thesis: Abdu’l-Baha’s primary concern was not biological theory per se but the philosophical implications of Darwinism. That is, Abdu’l-Baha sought to assimilate the scientific evidence for evolution into a worldview that still allowed God a continuous role in the physical universe.

The trouble, of course, is that the scientific evidence also speaks in favor of transmutation and, correspondingly, of human descent from animals. Brown seeks to address these problems, too, although the effort sometimes spawns some of the essay’s murkier passages. (He claims, for example,
that “as a physical process, parallel evolution appears no different than Darwinian evolution” [p. 101], which requires ignoring the question of common descent.) But Brown’s hermeneutical thesis yields a potentially fruitful answer: if Abdu’l-Baha’s biological views were wholly secondary to his philosophical views, and if the scientific evidence in favor of transmutation had been decisive, then, Brown implies, Abdu’l-Baha might have been willing to grant transmutation, but only if it could be reconciled with his teleological essentialism. Brown accordingly looks for tentative textual evidence for such a reconciliation (pp. 109–10).

Brown’s reading is greatly enriched by his attention to the dual context of 19th-century evolutionary debates and of Greco-Islamic philosophy. But he does miss another crucial element: Abdu’l-Baha was, above all, a disciple of Baha’u’llah. The failure to treat this context is rather surprising, particularly because even Abdu’l-Baha’s reception of the Greco-Islamic apparatus is mediated through Baha’u’llah’s corpus. This clearly has bearing on Brown’s hermeneutical thesis (that Abdu’l-Baha’s biological views were secondary to his philosophical views). Brown tends to gloss “philosophical” here as ontological. But it has been argued, for instance, that Baha’u’llah deployed neo–Platonist categories not to endorse any particular ontology, but to advance his theological ethics. If Abdu’l-Baha did the same and deployed Greco-Islamic metaphysical vocabulary in a primarily ethical (rather than ontological) language game, then Brown’s reading of Abdu’l-Baha’s views on evolution might require modification. I am not endorsing this reading; my point is that however we read Baha’u’llah, it is significant for interpreting Abdu’l-Baha’s views on evolution.

This lacuna is remedied somewhat in Part 2 of the book, by Eberhard von Kitzing. Von Kitzing rounds out the book with a critical exposition of current cosmological and evolutionary theories (and attempts to correlate them with Abdu’l-Baha’s thought for a primarily Baha’i audience), but he also makes an important contribution to interpreting Abdu’l-Baha’s text. In light of the Baha’i context—Baha’u’llah’s writings and Abdu’l-Baha’s role as leader of the Baha’i community—von Kitzing extends Brown’s hermeneutical thesis. He suggests that Abdu’l-Baha was using biological examples from the science of his time to convey spiritual truths and, as such, his biological pronouncements should not be read literally but as pedagogically convenient analogies (pp. 213–15).

Von Kitzing then applies this hermeneutical strategy to Abdu’l-Baha’s analogy between the ontogenetic development of a human embryo and the phylogenetic evolution of the species. Disagreeing with Brown, he argues that Abdu’l-Baha’s purpose was to demonstrate the compatibility of essentialism with evolution, but not to endorse parallel evolution. It seems to me that the success of this conclusion depends on how one takes it. If the point is the hermeneutical one that when Abdu’l-Baha apparently endorses parallel evolution he is not in fact committed to endorsing it (or any other particular biological theory, for that matter), because it is just a convenient pedagogical device, the argument seems plausible. But if the point is that Abdu’l-Baha’s words, even if taken literally, do not endorse parallel evolution at all (p. 232), then his argument strikes me as unpersuasive.

Criticisms notwithstanding, this is a pioneering book on Abdu’l-Baha’s views on evolution. Scholars of the Middle East (and beyond) interested in turn-of-the-century debates about evolution will find it indispensable.

DOI: 10.1017.S0020743804361258


REVIEWED BY MATTHIJS VAN DEN BOS, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Why should a discourse influential among Alevi religious communities sanctify Kemalism, the Turkish state’s militantly secular ideology? Markus Dressler draws on this paradox to organize his
monograph on the Alevi religion. The fact that Kemalist regimes have not reciprocated the Alevi’s adoration or even treated them very equitably reinforces the riddle.

Alevism, applicable to some 20% of Turkish citizens, is a 20th-century concept. Alevilik also is a reconstruction of the Kızılbaş-tradition (Kızılbaşlık)—an enduring “peripheral” worldview and ethos among Anatolian communities from the early 13th century. The Alevi sanctification of Kemalism, Dressler says, can be sufficiently explained only in respect to Kızılbaşlık. Thus, both traditions and new definitions define his focus.

The Alevi–Kızılbaş nexus works on three inter-connected levels as an explanation of Kemalism’s religious sanctification. The exaltation of Atatürk reflects on Turkish religious-political discourse and the centrality-of-identity questions of nation and Islam therein; certain esoteric Alevi religious conceptions elucidate it in history of ideas terms, and both Alevi and the author’s own reconstructions of Kızılbaşlık define an encompassing set of dispositions.

Long-term Alevi dispositions, including thought patterns, refer chiefly to “charisma orientation” and a basic outlook breaking down into esoteric notions, chiliasm, as well as latent Mahdi expectations, which emerged through a series of grand rebellions against Sejluk and Osman governments between the 13th and 16th centuries. The 1240 Babaı revolution marks their beginning, and the revolt of Kalender Celebi in 1527 marks their ending.

The Safavid tarikat, whose shaikhs had provided leadership for the 16th-century Kızılbaş revolutions (among then Celebi’s), had by then evolved into the Iranian dynasty. Military defeats suffered by the Ottomans subsequently contributed to the abrogation of the Safavid dynasty’s relations with the Anatolian Kızılbaş. The latter retreated into quietism, which only 20th-century Alevi activism and support of Atatürk’s revolution would alter.

The history-of-ideas dimension mainly consists of bâttiniyya themes: a duality of bâtin and zâhir that, for instance, allows for a conception of Alevism as liberation from the shari’a. Faced with a powerful Islamist movement, this esoterism spurs Alevi to opt for a secular model of society. And beyond that, Alevi Mahdi imagery of Atatürk projects him as harbinger of justice, ending Osman tyranny (p. 228), in bâtin’s victory over the zâhir (p. 258).

Finally, the sanctification of Kemalism also emerges from within the Turkish discursive universe, which revolves around questions of national identity and political Islam. Consciousness of Kemalism as a bulwark against the threat of political Islam obviously does not come across in anti-state, Kurdish nationalist Alevism. But it does in all other Alevi sub-discourses discerned by the author—pro-state Turkish national; social revolutionary and state critical; and religious traditional varieties. Beyond these common traits, the pro-state Turkish national discourse sanctifies Kemalism, which allows Alevi to retain Kemalism while relating anew to Alevi religion—the late 1980s saw Alevism’s markedly religious revival.

Dressler arranges his reconstruction of the Alevi’s long-term dispositions and thought patterns using concepts that generally derive from anthropology, sociology, and social history. The Alevi “longue durée” (Braudel) is conceived of in “worldview” and “ethos” dimensions (Geertz), the latter of which, in the Kızılbaş case, comes to the fore in “charisma loyalty” (Charismaloyalität) that contrasts “scripture loyalty” (Schriftloyalität)—terms that correspond to Weber’s Gesetzes- und Gesinnungsethik. The ideal types are stated to depend on literacy levels (Goody): they are correlated with “economic and life-form,” and finally subsumed within an overarching dichotomy of “center” (sedentary life-form, literacy, scriptural loyalty, and “periphery”; nomadic life-form, illiteracy, charismatic loyalty).

Though thorough, the work also contains certain unbalances. The author’s dichotomous continuities perhaps do not flout his own objections to essentialism, but they do not fuel much consideration of contingencies in shaping Alevism, either. The fact that discourses are more central to this study than modern actors is a token of this. “Situational” analysis here refers to political macro structures rather than to micro contexts of (discursive) interaction. Finally, more than fifty pages on Turkish
Die alevitische Religion is well edited nonetheless, except for details, such as a footnote accompanying “social boundaries” that contains a mere reference to—and no account at all of—Simmel’s, Barth’s, and Obersi’s theories (p. 176), and a reference to the anthropologist Ernest Gellner as a “renowned orientalist” (p. 242). Incongruities such as “Wafāiya” (p. 36, n. 78) in the main text versus “Wafā’iyya” in the index and typos and misspellings such as *Centres d’Etudes Supérieurs* under *Shī‘isme imâmī* (bibliography) remain exceptional.

The author’s extensive use of Turkish magazine and newspaper sources adds ethnographic value to a fairly comprehensive bibliography and handy index. Strangely, Dressler fails to discuss how his study improves on or adds to acclaimed monographs on Alevism, such as Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi’s *Die Kızılbaş/Aleviten. Untersuchungen über eine esoterische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Anatolien* (1988) and Karin Vorhoff’s *Zwischen Glaube, Nation und neuer Gemeinschaft: Alevitische Identität in der Türkei der Gegenwart* (1995). One might mention in his place that in addition to Vorhoff’s study, *Die alevitische Religion* also contains a well-developed argument about a religious and ethnic minority’s “secular Islam,” or religious sanctification of secularism. This interesting aspect renders the book broadly relevant to Islamic studies and social science, beyond the interest it is likely to rouse among students of Alevism and of Turkey.

DOI: 10.1017.S002074380436126X


REVIEWED BY MARIAN PAULES, Department of Political Science, Queens University of Charlotte, Charlotte, N.C.

In the Preface, Fereydoun Hoveyda tells us that many readers consider this study of militant Islamic fundamentalism “a prescient book.” Published before the 11 September terrorist attacks on America, the book predicts future violence directed against the West and its Muslim allies by terrorist groups and their sponsors. Hoveyda’s main thesis is that in the 12th century, Muslim religious authorities began to condemn the intellectual achievements of Islamic civilization and discourage scientific research and curiosity. The mainstream clerical leadership’s espousal of a doctrinaire interpretation of sacred Islamic texts encouraged fanaticism and intolerance. This inflexible attitude paved the way for the first wave of militant Islamic fundamentalism, which swept through the Middle East and North Africa, precipitating a steady decline in learning and resulting in the present underdevelopment and weakness of the Muslim world. The newest wave of militancy, triggered by Khomeini’s successful revolution against the Shah of Iran in 1979, is another drastic step backward—one that threatens Muslim countries much more than it does the West, because it prevents the Muslim world’s transformation into modern democratic states.

Hoveyda makes a compelling case for paying closer attention to militant fundamentalist ideology, which, he claims, is “the most important dimension” of an effective strategy for eliminating terrorism. However, in his zeal to demonstrate Khomeini’s influence on virtually all terrorist groups, he drastically oversimplifies the complex phenomenon he seeks to explain. Despite his prescience, he minimizes the risks posed by the Taliban, which “should not be exaggerated” because “the Taliban are at odds with Iran’s fundamentalists and other Islamic militants…in my opinion, they do not constitute, at least for the time being, a perilous challenge to Western countries.” Also, his charge that “Khomeini’s demise has not basically changed the picture” is strangely unobservant,
given the lively debate raging in Iran over the meaning of Khomeini’s central premise: rule by an Islamic jurist. Another peculiar assertion is that “Khomeini’s grand design seems to be progressing toward its final goal.” He provides no evidence to support this notion, which flies in the face of recent developments in Iran and the region as a whole. Moreover, it ignores the competing visions and agendas within Shi’ism itself and the significant differences among Sunnis, Shi’is, Arabs, Persian, Kurds, Turks, and so on.

Hoveyda’s analysis reduces a complex web of regional and local forces to a single cause and seems policy-blind. There is virtually no mention of the Shah’s abuses or societal conditions at the time of the revolution, and he minimizes the important ways in which colonialism fostered radical Islamic ideology. The Middle East was subjected to continuous foreign interference, the siphoning off of its resources, and Western support for fundamentalist groups as bulwarks against nationalists and communists. Hoveyda cites all of these injustices and interventions but does not adequately relate them to Islamic militancy. Although he asserts, “[R]eform cannot take root in the absence of a democratic atmosphere, which was not allowed to flourish by the modernizers, he still insists that the main obstacle to development is the militants’ “mind-set and that of their co-religionists.” This mind set, in addition to the “ominous lesson” of the Iranian Revolution, means “fundamentalism will win if it is not stopped.” The way to stop it is for “Muslim intellectuals alone” to “provide the basic cultural effort,” because “they have failed to create a modern Islamic symbolism and insisted on maintaining age-old traditions, methods of thinking, and ways of life.”

As the former Iranian ambassador to the United Nations under the Shah (1971–78), Hoveyda puts excessive emphasis on Khomeini’s ideological control and strategic reach. This perhaps is understandable. His early chapters on the linkages and divisions among various fundamentalist and secular nationalist thinkers provide interesting insights into the psychological responses to Western-imposed notions of modernity. He also makes a good case for the continuity of a distinct strain of militant Islamic thought, which he traces throughout the centuries. The most eloquent and compelling section of the book describes how secular leaders imported only the material side of modernity, without generating the democratic debate that would help people absorb the new elements being introduced: “people did not know the how and why of the changes. They could not effectively discuss, complain, approve, or reject. They had to bow to the will of the authorities.” The resulting “split identity” led to the malaise of these “semi-modernized societies.” The most interesting points concern the widespread feeling that one cannot modernize without incurring damnation, because when religion is isolated from a social system devoted to technical and scientific progress, “it seems you are killing God…[P]eople feel they have to be either fundamentalist or atheist.” Many other religions and societies have faced this same agonizing dilemma.

Although the book contains thought-provoking material for undergraduates as well as the general public, it is disorganized chronologically and conceptually. The same points and illustrations are reiterated, and names are reintroduced as though they are being mentioned for the first time. Although highly derivative, the book includes interesting insights from an eclectic array of scholars and should stimulate lively classroom and seminar discussions.

DOI: 10.1017.S0020743804361271

REVIEWED BY AYKAN ERDEMIR, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

How does one represent the diversity of Muslim communities in Europe while also highlighting the commonalities brought about by Islam? Philip Lewis attempts to answer this question through
a case study of South Asian Muslims in Bradford, Britain. Despite the book’s limited focus on Bradford, Lewis not only contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Muslim experiences in Britain but also brings valuable insights into appreciating the diversity of Islam across Europe.

The book was originally written in the immediate aftermath of the *Satanic Verses* controversy. Lewis was worried at the time that “the habit of describing British Muslims as ‘fundamentalist’” (p. 5) was obscuring and misrepresenting the diversity and dynamism of Muslim communities. Through an empirical study of Bradford’s Muslims, the author was hoping to challenge the ongoing demonization of Muslims in Britain. The revised edition of the book, which has a fifteen-page postscript covering the developments of the past decade, appeared shortly after the summer 2001 riots in Britain and the events of 11 September. The continuing dehumanization of Muslim groups and individuals and the undiminishing popularity of the term “fundamentalist” in the media and among policy circles make Lewis’s study relevant once again. As the author states in the Preface to the revised edition, his main goal is simply to contribute to an informed understanding of British Muslims.

*Islamic Britain* is based on the author’s Ph.D. thesis and ongoing engagement with different Muslim groups. Lewis studied in Pakistan for six years and worked in Bradford for ten years. He is currently the adviser to the Bishop of Bradford on interfaith issues. Lewis’s long years of participant observation has provided him with a detailed and intimate grasp of the inner workings of South Asian Muslim life in Bradford. His hands-on knowledge enables him to present a more informed reading of the data he gathered from archival research, interviews, and observation. Moreover, Lewis’s long-term exposure to the intricacies of religious life at Bradford allows him to identify continuities and discontinuities in a rapidly changing field.

After presenting a brief history of Muslims in Britain in Chapter 1, the author proceeds to discuss South Asia’s Islamic traditions—namely, the Deobandis, Tablighi Jama’at, the Barelwis, and the Jama‘at-i Islami—and their responses to colonialism and modernity in South Asia. Chapter 3, titled “Bradford: Britain’s ‘Islamabad,’” introduces readers to the research site with the help of informative maps that show the distribution of mosques belonging to different sects and the regional groups controlling mosque committees. Through his holistic perspective, Lewis aims to complement anthropological monographs that are often limited to certain ethnic groups or city quarters. Chapter 4 offers an impressive account of the Islamic organizational life in Bradford. One of the interesting findings is that in Bradford Islamic traditions tend to “maintain strong links with their parent organizations in South Asia” (p. 112). In the next chapter the author provides a sympathetic portrayal of the South Asian ulema. In addition to pointing out the cultural and linguistic marginality of religious scholars and functionaries, Lewis also presents a vivid description of the economic hardships they endure. Chapter 6 has a historical account of the transformation of the Bradford Council for Mosques. The author also draws attention to the growing public role of Muslim businesspeople and politicians vis-à-vis the Council for Mosques. The predicament of Muslim youth in handling their multiple identities in Britain is discussed in Chapter 7. Here Lewis is particularly attentive to the struggles of Muslim women, who are increasingly visible in the public domain. The few interviews presented by the author give an intimate portrayal of women’s multiple and changing identities. In the Conclusion, after praising the Muslims’ successful use of local organizations to influence local governments, Lewis identifies the development of inclusive national organizations as the main challenge facing Muslims, because the Parliament has become the main arena to push for Muslim demands.

*Islamic Britain* deserves praise for presenting a multi-layered account of Bradford’s Muslim communities through various disciplinary lenses, ranging from history to anthropology. An interdisciplinary approach is particularly apt in demonstrating that neither Islam nor the Muslim community in Britain is monolithic. When it comes to discovering “the commonalities across ethnic boundaries generated by belonging to a shared religious tradition” (p. 7), Lewis identifies the religious studies perspective as being the dominant lens. The data on “shared religious tradition”
(p. 7) uniting various Muslim communities in Britain are not as comprehensive as the abundant examples illustrating the diversity of Muslim communities in Bradford. Although Lewis is quite successful in demonstrating the commonalities among various Muslims of South Asian origin in Bradford, he fails to present significant material on other Muslim groups, which make up 20 percent of British Muslims. In the absence of such data, it is not clear whether the commonalities he is referring to stem from “shared religious tradition” of Islam or from South Asian culture.

Although the book benefits immensely from Lewis’s anthropological sensibilities, there is a conspicuous absence of reflexivity. The author refrains from discussing his ongoing involvement with the Muslims of Bradford and its significance in the nature of the data he collected. Moreover, Lewis fails to acknowledge his subjective and normative position even when he is judgmental in condemning a Muslim scholar as “a writer and polemicist who contributes nothing to a serious Islamic engagement with modern science or non–Islamic religious traditions” (p. 194).

Islamic Britain would be of interest to academics, intellectuals, and policy-makers. Although this informative book, which contains a short glossary of Islamic terms, is also accessible to undergraduates, the details and minutiae on Bradford could be confusing for non-specialists. The spelling mistakes are distracting (pp. 35, 157), and the endnotes are not practical, especially in the absence of a bibliography. The detailed index, however, is handy both for students and scholars.