

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Children of Gebelaawi (*Awlād ḥāratinā*). By Naguib Mahfouz, trans. Philip Stewart. Revised augmented edition. Pueblo, CO: Passaggiata Press, 1997. Pp. xxv, 497. US\$12.00 (paperback).

Children of Gebelaawi (*Awlād ḥāratinā*) is Naguib Mahfouz's most controversial work. Set on the edge of real Cairo, it relates in a simple, parable-like language the history of an isolated alley (*ḥārah*) through several generations. The hero of each generation struggles to restore the rights of the alley's poor and oppressed inhabitants to the estate (*waqf*) set up by their ancestor, the powerful and enigmatic Gebelaawi. In order to accomplish this mission, he must battle the tyrants who control the estate and their thugs or "strongmen" (*futūwah*), sadistic protection-racketeers with colorful gangster-like names such as Guzzler, Bruiser, etc.

On closer examination, we see that *Children of Gebelaawi* is an allegorical tale. The heroes of the first four episodes relive the lives of the prophets Adam, Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad, and the protagonist of the fifth represents modern man who relies on science and technology to destroy the alley's oppressors.

Many scholars of Arabic literature maintain that *Children of Gebelaawi* established Mahfouz's greatness as a writer. With the writing of this novel, Mahfouz broke free of the constraints and began his period of experimentation.

Children of Gebelaawi was first published in serialized form in the Egyptian newspaper *al-Ahrām* (September 21 to December 25, 1959). Before the complete serialized version of the novel had appeared, conservative Muslims, led by members of the Mosque-University al-Azhar, condemned the work as blasphemous and demanded that it be banned. This group of Muslims felt that Mahfouz's depiction of the prophets—in particular that of Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets—as ordinary, flawed men who frequently drank alcohol and smoked hashish, was highly irreverent and that the death of the patriarch Gebelaawi symbolized the "death of God." They later went so far as to maintain that Mahfouz had written an "anti-*Qur'ān*," as indicated by the fact that the number of chapters found in *Children of Gebelaawi* (114) equaled the number of the sūras of the *Holy Qur'ān*.

Mahfouz disputed all four charges, claiming that his novel was a "deeply religious work" and that the patriarch Gebelaawi represented not the true

transcendent God, but a “certain idea of God that men have made.” He later told Dr. Philip Stewart, the translator of this controversial work, that when he finished writing *Children of Gebelaawi*, he felt that he had found his faith.

The serialization of *Children of Gebelaawi* in *al-Ahrām* was carried through to the final installment as a result of President Abdul-Nasser’s personal support. After the last chapter was printed, however, the publication of this work in book form was prohibited. *Children of Gebelaawi* was eventually published in Beirut (Dār al-Ādāb, 1967).

Stewart first translated this controversial novel in 1962 as a “scholarly exercise.” His translation was published in 1981 by Three Continents Press in the United States and by Heinemann Educational Books in the United Kingdom. When Stewart discovered that there were significant discrepancies between the version serialized in *al-Ahrām* and the one published in book form in Beirut, he made a detailed comparison of the two versions and revised his translation.

The Passeggiata Press edition is the product of Stewart’s detailed comparison. In the introduction to this edition, Stewart discusses the discrepancies between the two Arabic texts and explains why both texts were indispensable for making the revised translation. He includes several pages from the two Arabic versions to illustrate the nature of the discrepancies.

Reset with wider margins and larger print, the Passeggiata Press edition of *Children of Gebelaawi* is aimed at the general reader with little to no prior knowledge of the Arab world. In his introduction, Stewart also provides a summary of the history of the book and the controversy surrounding it. Having worked closely with Mahfouz to translate *Children of Gebelaawi*, Stewart is able to offer the reader some keen insights on a novel that has so many dimensions it defies a unilateral interpretation.

The Passeggiata Press revised augmented edition would be a welcome addition to any library. Readers unfamiliar with the Arab world and its literature will find in Stewart’s introduction the necessary cultural, literary and linguistic background for appreciating *Children of Gebelaawi*. They will also get a feel for the rhythm of Mahfouz’s prose from Stewart’s sensitive translation. Students and scholars of Arabic literature will discover new information about the translation of this well-known novel. It is worth pointing out that the Passeggiata edition is the only version—in any language—that takes into account both the original sources. There is no critical edition of the Arabic, and unless the original manuscript surfaces (*al-Ahrām* never returned the manuscript to Mahfouz), Mahfouz’s exact

intentions will have to be deduced from a comparison of the two versions.

It is unfortunate that this revised and augmented English edition does not display Stewart's name in a prominent place. In today's literary world where translators are becoming more visible, it is surprising and somewhat disappointing that the reader must look to the publication information printed on the back of the title page to identify the "T" of the "Translator's Introduction." It would also have been useful for those readers interested in translation to learn something about Stewart's background.

This small criticism aside, the Passeggiata Press edition of *Children of Gebelaawi* gives the reader the opportunity to discover or learn more about one of the masterpieces of modern Arabic literature.

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Muslim Women Throughout the World: A Bibliography. By Michelle R. Kimball and Barbara R. Von Schlegell. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Pub., 1997. Pp. ix, 309. US\$75.00 (ISBN 1-55587-680-3 Hardback).

This one volume bibliography offers an important new reference tool for scholars of the fast growing fields of women and gender issues, particularly as they relate to Muslim women. In over 2900 entries, the compilers have concentrated their efforts on scholarly material published since 1980 and up to 1995, though some notable works of prior years are given. Titles include journals and monographs. Pertinent chapters of listed collected works are entered individually in the bibliography. A handful of United Nations documents and fiction titles are also included. Entries are ordered alphabetically, exactly as originally cited, by the author's last name or publishing body, and numbered for index retrieval. A work by multiple authors is listed only under the first name cited. Names originally written in non-Roman script are entered as published. Here Nawal Sa'dawi is listed under El Saadawi. Nearly all of the entries are in English, though a limited number of citations are in other languages, primarily French.

The bibliography begins with a section of 53 annotated works determined on the basis of a national survey of scholars. Their recommended books and articles compiled into a core list of references on Muslim women have been carefully chosen to represent the many dimensions of Muslim women's lives and the conditions affecting them. The authors view this collection as a helpful source for educators selecting readings in the area of gender and Islamic issues. These entries are contained in the main bibliography as well.

One of the volume's unique strengths is its geographical breadth. Not only are the expected works on women in the Middle East and countries with predominant Muslim populations referenced, but also those which inform on Muslim women in all parts of the world. This distinction sets the work apart from other recent bibliographies on Muslim women such as Makar's *New Voices for Women in the Middle East* (1996). Citations of works referring to countries with relatively small numbers of Muslims, such as the United States, the Netherlands and France are thus included.

The most significant feature of this work is its 34-page index. Because the entries are listed alphabetically by author in the main bibliography, the index serves as the sole means to locate the numbered articles by content and geographical location. Author entries are not contained in the index. The index is organized by main topic with keyword(s) and phrase entries listed beneath. Effective use of the index requires cross checking under related topics. An entry for "employment in Egypt," for example, that also includes content on Jordan and Sudan, is found by checking the primary subject, "employment" not "Egypt." While it was obviously an enormous undertaking to index this number of citations, the result is a somewhat unwieldy tool. Beneath major topical headings, the subheadings and numerical entries are given in paragraph form, creating a physical layout that is daunting in some instances. The indentation for "Islam" continues uninterrupted for nearly four columns, and the numeric entries extend for twelve lines under the subheading "women's status in." Giving the subheadings individual lines would make the index easier to read.

There is no doubt that this bibliography represents a valuable contribution to the collection of reference aids in the area of gender studies in Islam. The work fulfills its purpose of assisting users to "understand the complex historical and social factors that influence the formation of gender identities in the Muslim world" as the compilers explain in their preface. Its focus on geographic comprehensiveness, recent publication dates and the provision of a core list of resources is commendable. The main concern is the over-reliance on the index to locate entries by subject and place. General regional or topical divisions could have lessened the dependence on indexing for retrieval and the possibility of overlooking applicable resources altogether.

KRISTEN KERN

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Behind Closed Doors: Women's oral narratives in Tunis. By Monia Hejaiej. New Brunswick, NJ : Rutgers University Press, ©1996. Pp. xi, 369 Hardcover, \$50.00, ISBN 0-8135-2376-1; Paper, \$17.95, ISBN 0-8135-2377-X

This book includes a study of women's oral narratives in Tunis as well as a large number of stories collected by the author. Monia Hejaiej, herself a Tunisian, obtained her doctorate at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, and teaches literature at the University of Tunis. Consequently, she has the facility to combine knowledge of the indigenous language, dialects, habits, and family connections with the methods of scholarly research, with special reference to women's studies and folklore. This combination made it easier for her to locate highly creative female storytellers, gain their trust, be able to fully grasp language nuances, make comparisons between the tellers and the stories, translate, and analyze what she heard.

Hejaiej met with three Bledi women—indigenous Muslim Arab towns women of the traditional elite of Tunis, well versed with what is regarded as proper customs and behavior. A detailed background of each of the storytellers is provided, including their set of beliefs and level of religiosity. Although the stories are conveyed in translation, the author examines linguistic issues related to storytelling. Thus, the elaborate introductions to the story are explained, and an example is produced in transliteration and translation. Repeated key expressions are also examined, as well as the issue of the language of the storyteller in general: While the stories were usually told in the local dialect, sometimes the women started in literary Arabic, in order to impress the researcher, especially because the sessions were recorded, and the narrators knew that the material would serve a scholarly study. Nonetheless, once they got fully involved in the narration, the women usually returned to the vernacular. The translations occasionally include Arabic words as well as explanatory remarks by the narrator (such as, this is the way it was in the past, but now it is different).

The main body of the introduction deals with the world of storytelling and the unique place of female oral narratives in it. The seclusion of women was not only physical, but also spiritual. One expression of this was social meetings of women of all ages, during which they conversed, did their handicrafts, and entertained each other in various art forms: storytelling, singing, and dancing. Stories told by women were meant to be heard only by other women (and little boys who might accompany them). In addition to entertaining, stories (as well as songs) served for expressing women's views about their lives, status, and relations with men. Opinions and criticism

which are hard to find elsewhere appear in these female narratives, many of which praise the wisdom of women and mockingly criticize the behavior and intelligence of men. Most of the stories deal with love, interpersonal relations, especially between men and women and between generations.

Since the stories were told in secluded gatherings, the narrators felt free to express their opinions on a wide range of issues. The different backgrounds and characters of the narrators are well reflected in the stories: One of them is more conservative and judgmental of the moral behavior of women; another presents lively, sexual women in a favorable light; while the third offers at times rebellious remarks about the position of women. These differences become most clear when one compares different versions of the same story. This comparison would have been easier if the stories had been listed in full. As it is, only the names of the narrators appear in the table of contents. Thus, the stories can be read on several levels. One could read them for sheer fun, and they are very entertaining (maybe less for men). One can learn much about social, economic, and cultural beliefs and practices in Tunis and its surroundings, among the Bledi population and the Bedouins. Additionally, they offer a unique opportunity to learn about women's views regarding their lot.

A major difficulty when studying women's lives in the Middle East and North Africa is the fact that most of the information available comes from men's points of view, even when so-called objective description is provided. Female narratives and poetry are important sources of women's perspective, for which Hejaiej's book is an important contribution.

RACHEL SIMON

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Decision-making for Automation: Hebrew and Arabic script materials in the automated library. By Elizabeth Vernon. Occasional Papers, no. 205. Urbana-Champaign: Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1996. Pp. 91. Bibliography. \$10.00 + \$3.00 shipping & handling.

This slim volume is aimed primarily at those librarians charged with deciding how their libraries will handle the electronic cataloging of Hebrew and Arabic scripts. Ms. Vernon, Judaica technical services librarian in the Judaica Division, Area Studies Department of Harvard College Library, is well-qualified to undertake the treatment of such an arcane topic.

Decision-making sets out to examine the full range of issues bearing on a library's selection of an electronic catalog system when its collection contains a substantial number of items in Hebrew and Arabic. The matter of romanization is taken up first as this subject is seen to be at the crux of the entire decision-making process. Vernon discusses the consequences implicit in deciding to automate and the impact of those consequences upon both cataloger and reader.

In a discussion of the relative merits and disadvantages of electronically creating romanized bibliographic records as opposed to original or dual (i.e. English and Arabic or Hebrew) language records, arguments against and in support of all three options are presented and discussed in some detail. Is the extra time necessary to create a dual-language record worth the effort? What type of record best serves the library's users? If romanized records are to be produced, what transliteration system should a library use? This is followed by a survey of the various romanization standards (ISO, ALA/LC, etc.) employed by the larger research libraries of the United States and various European and Middle Eastern countries. Of particular interest is the description of the problems arising from the use of an English or American romanization system in countries where Latin letters have different linguistic values.

A review of the various bibliographic utilities in use and their capacities to handle Hebrew and Arabic script is then presented. Drawing on the experience of Middle Eastern librarians throughout the United States, Europe and the Middle East, Vernon has provided us with assessments of the various systems from libraries which have instituted them and have installed the electronic machinery to manipulate the resultant records. This history, presented via numerous personal letters to the author, quotations from articles in the professional literature and a variety of technical sources, provides a concise yet comprehensive overview of the state of automation in the field. The range of automation-decision experiences recounted in these pages by Middle East librarians from Europe, Asia and North America constitutes a valuable record of librarians' attempts—successful to varying degrees—to grapple with the problem of non-Latin scripts in an electronic environment.

Vernon then addresses the issue of Arabic and Hebrew name and subject authority control and how the decision to romanize or not to romanize affects authority records. The author concludes with an overview of the future of multiscript cataloging and the role of a unified code—the unicode standard—shared by all computer manufacturers in this process. The book is rounded out with several appendices containing statistics and exam-

ples of electronically-produced bibliographic records. There is an extensive bibliography, covering nearly six pages, which lists much of the important professional writing on Hebrew and Arabic cataloging done over the past ten years.

As an analysis of the state of electronic cataloging in the field of Arabic and Hebrew librarianship, *Decision-making for Automation* is a very useful work. Several studies on electronic cataloging of non-Roman alphabets in general exist—most notably, perhaps, James Agenbroad's *Nonromanization* (Washington, 1992). Vernon's monograph, however, is unique in its focus on electronic cataloging of Hebrew and Arabic materials. Librarians who find themselves in the position of having to make a decision about automating such records, or who have colleagues who must make these decisions, will profit from reading this work.

Decision-making for Automation is not an easy read for anyone not intimately involved—on either a professional or emotional level—with cataloging. The book is well-written (the only criticism one might level is that for grammatical sticklers there is a surfeit of split infinitives of the “to boldly go” variety) but this is a technical work and the prose is matter-of-fact. Well-organized in structure and presentation of its arguments, it provides much valuable information for those who must decide which direction their electronic non-Roman cataloging operation is to take and what computer system is to be their vehicle.

In a period of rapid evolution in library electronic systems, particularly insofar as such changes affect the technical services function of the library, the useful life of this book may be short lived. The prospect of web-based cataloging for small and medium-sized academic and public libraries for their European language collections will soon no doubt be an option also for those institutions which catalog materials in non-Latin alphabets. Some members of RILIN are already undertaking such efforts. At that point, a library's choice of an electronic bibliographic system may well depend less on its ability to handle locally generated non-Roman scripts or diacritical marks and more on the ability of its software to handle records containing such features obtained from a shared, centralized cataloging source.

Come what may, two things about Vernon's monograph should make it appeal to a wider audience. First, it raises the right questions that catalogers of any non-Roman script language ought to address when they undertake to automate their bibliographic records. The considerations addressed by the author are therefore useful to a wider range of catalogers than the book's title might suggest. Second, *Decision-making for Automation* casts

light on the Eurocentric nature of romanization. It reminds those of us who create romanized records that we are making a cultural decision, a value judgment, that influences how we and others experience the world. This is one contribution of Vernon's that certainly will endure.

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Baku Documents: Union catalogue of Persian, Azerbaijani, Ottoman Turkish and Arabic serials and newspapers in the libraries of the Republic of Azerbaijan. By Touraj Atabaki and Solmaz Rustamova-Towhidi. London; New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 1995. Pp. xiv, 332.

Baku Documents is an alphabetical list of serial titles published in Middle Eastern languages which are available in the libraries of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The book introduces a total of 1,040 serial titles, numbered consecutively. Entries include information about the language of the serial, date, place and frequency of the publication, specialization, publisher, and editor. This is followed by the names of holding libraries in abbreviated form. A complete list of the holding libraries and their full names are listed at the beginning of the book under "Location Key."

Serials are listed in their original languages, followed by Roman transliteration based on the system used by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*; Azerbaijani titles, however, are transliterated according to the new Roman alphabet, adopted by the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1992.

In the introduction, the authors enumerate the earliest serials that were published in Middle Eastern languages. They also mention the earliest titles in non-Middle Eastern languages that were published in those countries.

Serials that were published in the Middle East influenced societies and increased peoples' demand for government reforms. Governments that opposed any change and were not open to reforms, suspended publication of such newspapers. Government restrictions forced authors and intellectuals to publish their newspapers outside their country, and then to smuggle copies into the country. The collection of these publications was risky and difficult. As a result of government restrictions, a number of Middle Eastern publications can not be found in Middle Eastern libraries. During the late 19th century, the Republic of Azerbaijan collected such materials, and as a result, some can be found only there.

The index provides access to documents by language, place of publication, and subject of the document (if known). However, the index lists only the

city of publication and does not include the country. This makes it difficult for individuals interested in documents published in a specific country.

Baku Documents is a useful reference tool in the hands of scholars and librarians in providing basic bibliographic information on Middle Eastern newspapers and serial titles.

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Index Islamicus: Supplement 1665-1980, part 2. W.H. Behn. Biobibliographical supplement to *Index Islamicus, 1665-1980* ; vol. 2. Millersville, Pa.: Adiyok, 1996. Pp. xv, 214. Subject, author indexes.

This newest addition to the premier index for Middle East and Islamic studies opens on a somber note: the author's announcement that this is his last bibliographic volume (he is continuing to work on a biographical volume). He has offered to pass his files along to a new compiler, but it is hard to imagine anyone who could fill Behn's position with the same energy, dedication, and acerbic observations.

Little really needs to be said about this particular volume. It follows the well-established pattern of Behn's earlier one. Some four thousand article citations are listed by subject; a list of new sources and subject and author indexes are complemented by the end-paper maps. Whatever the merits or disadvantages of this arrangement, which have been discussed by other reviewers, users at least need not confront a new system and can move seamlessly between the volumes.

In a time when the large bibliographical project is less and less the province of the individual, we are certainly impressed that the major indexes for this field are still being produced on shoestring budgets by devoted scholars working alone or with little help. There would appear to be an infinite number of works that can be cited on these topics, and it requires only (!) the time and patience to scan hundreds and thousands of volumes (in many languages) of journals that may not always seem to be very relevant to the Middle East. Even with the use of indexes, annual or cumulative, examining 246 volumes of the *Atlantic Monthly* represents a staggering investment of time.

Since the advent of computers, CD-ROMS, and the Internet, electronic products have offered the researcher ways to spend less time with bibliographical sources while multiplying the number of ways to search. Even librarians now secretly groan at the thought of having to consult an annual

or multi-volume print work. I confess I no longer get quite the same secret satisfaction from watching a student's jaw drop when I explain that it will be necessary to look through all the volumes of *Turkologischer Anzeiger* or *Middle East: Abstracts and Index*, because too often I have to sit down and systematically search through all those volumes too. We have been waiting with growing impatience for these and other indexes to take the plunge into the high-tech world. Must we wait much longer? And must we have such access to only part of what is used and viewed as a whole? The many manifestations of the *Index Islamicus* by its different compilers constitutes a magnificent source for undergraduates, faculty members, graduate students, and interested lay persons; in libraries all the volumes sit together on the same shelf in spite of differing call numbers, main entries, and titles in the catalog. They should all become one unified whole in the electronic world, and that as soon as possible.

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Bihzad : Master of Persian painting. Ebadaollah Bahari. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996. Pp. 272, xiii, 70 color, & 48 black & white illustrations, bibliography ("References"), and index. Hard cover price US\$75.00.

Ebadollah Bahari has spent many years studying Persian painting and has written several articles on the subject. The book under review is his first book-length work. A forward by Annemarie Schimmel, a leading authority on Islamic civilization in India and the Persian-speaking lands is followed by a preface, acknowledgments, chronology, and a map of Iran and surrounding lands. The subject of the work under review, Kamal al-Din Bihzad (1460–1535), is widely acknowledged to be the greatest Persian painter. Bihzad flourished during the golden age of artistic achievements in the later Timurid and early Safavid periods working first in Hirat and then in Tabriz. To date there was no book devoted to the life and works of this remarkable artist. In chapter II, Bahari places the beginning of Bihzad's work in the cultural and intellectual context of Hirat, as he takes the reader through the blossoming of Bihzad's style in the years 1488–1535. In the third chapter, he details the artist's work in Tabriz under the Safavid patronage during the period 1510–1535. A description of Bihzad's contemporaries and pupils follows in the fifth chapter, and Bahari examines his subject's legacy in chapter seven. Appendix I deals with Bihzad's petition to Shah Ismail, and the second appendix examines the controversy regarding the identity of an artist using different names in different paintings.

The quality of the illustrations, both color and black and white, is very good, and the notes describing them are informative. Bahari has succeeded in the difficult job of locating, classifying, and critically examining them in an admirable way. Bihzad is a household name not merely in the Islamic art circles, but also among common people of Iran, the Indian Subcontinent, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. Given the high esteem in which Bihzad is held, it is surprising that only in the closing decade of the twentieth century are we beginning to see a blossoming interest in and serious study of all of the artist's known works. Bihzad had the good fortune to be born in Hirat when it was at the zenith of its cultural achievement. He was blessed by the lavish material and intellectual patronage of Sultan Husayn Bayqara and his minister, Ali Sher Nawai respectively. Political upheavals of the time did not prevent him from finding patronage in the Safavid court of Tabriz. His was a fortune only rarely blessed.

Bahari examines the roots of Persian painting and, in particular, Bihzad's style. In a number of cases he has corrected dates of works attributed to the artist. Bahari does far more than just locating, chronologically ordering, and stylistically classifying the artist's work. Bahari provides a lucid explanation of Bihzad's work in the context of literary and sufi texts. Bihzad belonged to the Naqshbandi order of sufis common in the Persian and Indian worlds. Bahari's efforts pay off when he is able to relate Bihzad's paintings to the stories and themes they portray and thus allow the readers (particularly Western audiences) to appreciate Bihzad's work. His success could only have been achieved by a native scholar equally at home in his own cultural milieu, yet also skilled in interpreting it to those unfamiliar with it.

Quality illustrations, a concise map, and a good index enhance the worth of the book. Occasional inconsistencies can be fixed in a revised edition, e.g., *Tuhfat al-Ahrar* occurs on p. 244 but reappears as *Raudat'ul Muhibbin* on the following page.

Libraries with holdings of Islamic art will find this book indispensable. Other libraries, with general art collections, might also consider acquiring the book.

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Building a Palestinian State: The Incomplete revolution. By Glenn E. Robinson. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997. Pp. 200 + notes + Index. ISBN 0-253-21082-8 (Pb)

There are two themes discussed in this book, which presumably can be interrelated: state-building and completing a revolution. Robinson, who is well versed in Middle Eastern politics as a professor at the Naval Postgraduate School and a Research Fellow at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of California at Berkeley, expends considerable effort introducing the concept of Palestinian institutionalization, a development in its society which is designed to build a modern state. The reader, however, can never be sure exactly what factors control the social revolution, beyond the notion that there is a new social structure in Palestine. Three issues are claimed to frame the exposition of theory and thought: The first one was, in fact, preceded by the title and content of Ted Robert Gurr's book, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton University Press, 1970). A second is to determine what has sustained Palestinian "revolutionary" collective action in view of the overriding power displayed by Israel as a belligerent occupant. Lastly, how does the revolutionary process affect a political entity in the process of becoming a state?

Traditional Palestinian society, that is the social structure that existed prominently during the period of Ottoman Turkish administration, with notable families and clans from Jerusalem in positions of preeminence, is no longer in place. While any kind of real political authority among the Palestinians was gone soon after 1948, their power remained by virtue of ethnic culture within the larger community. Hence Palestinian politics in the post-Oslo period has undergone a tremendous amount of alteration, which has affected the state-building process (assuming, of course, we know what that is). Along with the political transformation of a Palestinian entity there has been a shift in the allocation of prominence within Palestinian society, as there has been an observable shift in the locus of elites. At some point in time in the post-1948 period, Palestinian society was no longer dominated by those Jerusalem-based family elites who could trace their lineage to the Prophet. Instead, education and more economic opportunities have become available to more people than just the upper crust, and thus conditions for a new social structure were created.

The creation of a professional middle class accompanies the social transformation which Robinson describes in detail. Although Palestinian society was generally agriculturally-based in contrast to the urban social elites, the changes that have occurred have not totally marginalized city dwellers.

Indeed, organizational efforts have produced interest groups based in major urban centers. Additionally, Robinson shows that the more important vehicle for the portrayed transformation is the *Intifada*, which was a collective political action incited clearly from below. The *Intifada*, as a popular uprising, served as a motivator to create institutions at a local level to include Islamic organizations, especially in the post-Oslo era. New political elites through the process of education in newly established institutions of higher learning tend to be predisposed to political participation and collective political action, thereby supplanting and marginalizing traditional elites. Robinson then provides an explanation for the emergence of a new social system and the resulting political reverberations.

Not only is a social restructuring, accompanied by the reawakening of the latent nationalistic sentiment on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in evidence, but also the development of a professional middle class is examined in some detail. It is noted, further, that change has occurred not only among Muslims, but also among Palestinian Christians. A case study of the village of Bayt Sahur is provided.

Interestingly, Robinson treats the Islamic movements of Hamas as an organization operating in parallel to the more secular oriented groups associated with the PLO. Here is a theme that is certainly worthy of additional comparative political treatment. A general accounting for political developments after the Oslo Agreement, which can easily be integrated with other views presented elsewhere in different contexts, follows.

The use of the term and concept of revolution in the book's title is probably unnecessary, since the idea is never fully accounted for or developed. There is also a potential error here in employing a comparative political approach to explain a contemporary problem or issue. The alacrity of the change, which is most likely related to the dynamic of the phenomenon under study, is observable but may not yet be necessarily well-studied. As much as many would like to understand—and preferably now—what is really occurring in Palestinian politics, it may be better to merely observe the percolation. In the 1980s there was a spate of works on comparative political development, much of which remains gathering dust. There will now, probably and understandably be similar attention given over to the efforts of the Palestine National Authority. For the most part, *Building a Palestinian State*, is a harbinger for other studies. One chapter had already been published in a scholarly journal and, without doubt, this book will be a part of a larger collection of political works that will sit next to Hillel Frisch's *Countdown to Statehood: Palestinian State Formation in the*

West Bank and Gaza (SUNY Press, 1998). The book, in fact, is a reasonably well-researched effort with many interviews on the ground but with no bibliography, which unfortunately detracts from the overall utility.

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Mawsūat Miṣr al-Ḥadīthah [Raʾīs al-Taḥrīr Samīr Sarḥān]. [Cairo]: al-Hayʾah al-Miṣrīyah al-ʿĀmmah lil-Kitāb; Chicago: World Book, ©1996. 10 v. : col. ill., col. maps. ISBN 0716699508 [In Arabic]

This publication does itself and its readers a disservice with the misleading title, rendered in English, “Encyclopedia of modern Egypt.” This raises expectations that it is a comprehensive work, and it certainly is not that. The word “survey” better describes it, and excuses a lot of its brevity and frequent superficiality. Furthermore, the word “modern” leads one to expect coverage of at least post-revolutionary, if not post-Napoleonic, Egypt, but despite brief historical surveys, it concentrates on the Mubarak era. A better title would have been “*Mashʿ Miṣr Mubārak*” (Survey of Mubarak’s Egypt).

One must also bear in mind that it originated essentially from the Egyptian government, through al-Hayʾah al-Miṣrīyah al-ʿĀmmah lil-Kitāb, and as such it has a “chamber of commerce” feel-good quality to it, accentuating the positive and downplaying, or ignoring outright, the negative. It promotes government achievements, and Husni Mubarak appears *ad nauseum* in the photos. All in all, though, if one accepts it for what it is, it can be seen to have some useful and interesting features.

Physically, it is very nice. It is printed on thick, semi-glossy paper, and has a good, sturdy, hard-cover binding. The type is clear, and it has beautiful, clear, color illustrations and photographs. In short, it is of much higher quality than most of the books that we get from Egypt, conspicuously because it was not actually printed there. One of its publishers is World Book of Chicago, and the encyclopedia itself was printed in Singapore.

It consists of 10 volumes, each covering a specific topic in about 160 pages. I could not find anyone actually named as an author, but each volume has an editor. Most are university professors, along with a few other professionals and ministry employees. Despite the presence of an editor-in-chief, the quality of information varies considerably from one volume to the next.

Volume 1, “*al-Hukūmah wa-al-nizām al-siyāsī*,” consists of an adequate historical and organizational survey. There is even a section listing and describing opposition parties, included, perhaps, to show how democratic and open the Egyptian political system is. The section on foreign policy exists primarily to showcase Mubarak with foreign leaders.

Volumes 2 and 3, “*al-Iqtisād*” and “*al-Bvāh al-jūghrāfīyah*,” are two of the better volumes. They contain a lot of useful, if brief, information and statistical tables. Vol. 3 in particular has a wealth of color maps and charts, and not a single picture of Mubarak that I could find.

Volume 4, “*al-Taḥīm*,” is also useful as a survey. It covers foreign and private institutions, as well as the expected government ones.

Volume 5, “*al-Ṣināah*,” has some useful historical and statistical information, but for the most part it touts government achievements. About a third of the volume is devoted to the achievements of the new industrial cities.

Volume 6, “*al-Zirāah*,” is adequate as a biological survey. It has good descriptions of many crops and types of livestock, but it is short on economic production statistics. It mentions, but does not elaborate on, the many social and economic problems inherent in agricultural development, and discussion of the impact of the High Dam is given no more than a page.

Volume 7, “*al-Ilām*,” is a good survey of the government’s activities in the area of mass media, but it seems to completely ignore anything non-governmental. I saw no mention of the lively independent political press, and not a hint of censorship policies and measures.

Volumes 8 and 9 are the poorest, in my opinion. The former, “*al-Thaqāfah*,” deceives itself by imagining it could cover, even as the briefest of surveys, all of Egyptian culture and art in a mere 157 pages. The first third of the book is taken up with discussion of government programs and sponsorship of the arts, leaving less than 100 pages in which to cover literature, cinema, theater, music, the visual arts, and folk arts. Needless to say, it fails miserably. Among its many shortcomings is the fact that it omits any reference to numerous prominent Egyptian artists and musicians, including, to my amazement, the renowned Umm Kulthūm.

As for vol. 9, “*al-Mujtamaʿ al-Miṣrī*,” it has a sugar-coated “tourism brochure” quality to it. Apart from a brief historical survey, it consists mostly of delightful exposés of social customs and photographs of largely staged cultural and folk events. I could find no mention of the serious social and religious problems and conflicts gripping Egypt today.

The final volume, “*al-Āthār*,” is a good survey of archeological sites, with refreshingly little government self-promotion.

The work unfortunately has neither a comprehensive index nor individual ones at the end of each volume. One can generally find what one wants (assuming it is there to begin with) through the tables of contents, but an index would have been helpful. And despite the scholarly credentials of most of the editors, only four of the volumes (2, 3, 4, and 9) have bibliographical references.

This work is not scholarly by any stretch of the imagination, and it would probably get little use in libraries that cater primarily to serious researchers. However, I think it has a place in comprehensive Middle East reference collections that cater to a wide range of patrons, or in a specifically undergraduate collection. It does contain much useful, if selective, information that the non-specialist or undergraduate can tap into without feeling overwhelmed.

CATHERINE ROCKWELL

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

The Succession to Muhammad : A Study of the early Caliphate. By Wilferd Madelung. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Pp. xviii, 413. Includes bibliography and index. ISBN 0-521-56181-7 (hardback)

The initial intent of the author of this book was to re-analyze the “nature of the caliphate at its foundation” (p. xi). This he does to some extent, but the book ends up as a largely straightforward chronological narrative of events from the death of Muḥammad to the death of Marwān in 685. The author relies extensively on early Arabic sources, which he critically analyzes. Occasionally, he critiques the works and conclusions of later Western scholars. His own opinions are generally not in doubt. He concludes that the Prophet had “presumably hoped for a successor from his family” (p. 18)—if not ‘Alī himself, than at least a close relative from the Banū Hāshim. His distaste for Muaṣāwiyah, who in his opinion did the most to change the entire tenor of Islamic society and its leadership, is evident.

In addition to events, the author analyzes in detail personalities and the personal and political conflicts and motivations behind those events. He also digresses at times to provide detailed information about the complex blood and marital relationships between the numerous players.

The work consists of a brief introduction, in which the author lays the theoretical groundwork for his book along with his justification for it. This

is followed by four main chapters, each devoted to one of the Rightly Guided caliphs, and a conclusion which covers events following the death of ‘Alī. The book concludes with seven “excursuses,” which deal with a number of interesting details, from the burial of Muhammad to the marriages and children of al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī, whom he vigorously defends against charges that he was a womanizer and “habitual divorcer.” (p. 387). The book includes an extensive bibliography and an index of proper names, which is inadequate in that it makes no effort to link names of persons to the events in which they played a part.

This review may have given the impression that the book is Shī‘ite in nature, but this is not so. The author carefully presents all sides of the issues, Sunnī, Shī‘ite, and secular historical, and draws his conclusions on the basis of his scholarly critique of the sources. The reader may not always agree with these conclusions; nevertheless the objective and scholarly manner in which they are presented could only invite serious debate of a similar nature.

The question of the succession to Muḥammad will doubtless always remain a matter of religious faith or scholarly interpretation. This book is an invaluable contribution to the latter. Hardly an introductory text, its wealth of detail makes it a gold mine of information and food for thought for the serious scholar. It is a must for any serious Middle East/Islamic collection.

CATHERINE ROCKWELL

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The History of Jerusalem : The Early Muslim period 638–1099. Edited by Joshua Praver, Haggai Ben-Shammai. Jerusalem : Yad Izhak ben Zvi; New York: New York University Press, 1996. Pp. xvii, 443. Includes bibliographical references and index. \$75 (hardcover)

The book’s primary focus is the history of the more than four and a half centuries of Muslim hegemony of Jerusalem. It is organized in thirteen chapters and written by several scholars. The work more than meets its stated objective of “incorporating themes and disciplines of the widest possible scope” (p. xii).

As the first of a projected three volume set, this book covers such diverse topics as Jerusalem’s political and social history, the art and architecture of the time, coins, Jerusalem and literature, and how Jerusalem was viewed by the three monotheistic religions and its importance to them.

Jerusalem has always had a turbulent history, and this book shows us that this tumult was as evident during the Muslim period as it is now. Prior to the Muslims ruling Jerusalem, the Persians briefly conquered the city, and tried to make it an extension of their kingdom. During the early part of the Muslim rule, Jerusalem saw stability, tremendous growth in population and infrastructure, and architecture, as evident by the erection of the Dome of the Rock. Later, Jerusalem saw its share of conflicts as internal strife struck the Muslim world. However, each of the reigning Muslim tribes, such as the 'Abbasids and Fatimids, left their indelible mark on the city.

This period also helped define how the three religions to whom Jerusalem is sacred: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, interact with each other. Chapters act as windows into the lives of each of these different communities, showing not only the sociological aspects of the period, but also their literary output. Some deal with the Jewish communities as a whole, including the Karaites, while other chapters discuss the Christian and Muslim communities', and how Jerusalem is viewed in their sacred literatures.

Although this volume is a translation, it does not distract from the content, but rather enhances it. The text flows smoothly from one article to the next, the romanization of both Arabic and Hebrew words is consistent throughout, the illustrations, some of which are colored, have been carefully chosen, and the bibliographic references greatly expand on the text.

As each author explores a different aspect of life during that time period, they make us realize that Jerusalem's history is still a great influence on the Middle East now as it was then.

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Syrians: a travelogue, 1992-1994. By Laurence Deonna, translated by Christopher Snow. Pueblo, Colorado: Passaggiata Press, 1996. Pp. 110: ill. (some color), map.

This is a collection of travel impressions and interviews conducted in Syria over three years by a Swiss woman journalist. Laurence Deonna, a native and a resident of Geneva, has written from Arab and Muslim lands (Yemen, Egypt, Iran and the Central Asian Republics) since the 1970s. She is well known as a lecturer in Western Europe and the Middle East. The English-language reader will find similarities here to Deonna's earlier translated collection, *The War With Two Voices : Testimonies by women*

from *Egypt and Israel* (Wash., DC: Three Continents Press, 1989) in terms of the issues covered as well as the hybrid interview-and-impressions style.

The present volume was originally published, as were the author's other works, in French (*Syriens et Syriennes, 1992–1994*. Geneva : Editions Zoé, 1995), and it was well-received by *Le Monde diplomatique* (Dec. 1995), which said it presented “a decidedly different, heart-warming view of Syria and her people.” The quality paperback has fifty photographs taken by the author, some of which are in color (including desert nomads in traditional costumes and a double-page spread of Aleppo's renowned red peppers at harvest time). While the printer's limitations may have made it necessary to reproduce only a portion of the photos in color, it is not clear why certain of the photos have their captions on the same page whereas other captions had to be on preceding or following pages. Also, the outline map of Syria would have been more informative had it shown more of the topographic features.

The interviews are the most interesting part of this attractive paperback. There are encounters with nationally and internationally significant names : Syrian Orthodox Archbishop Mattar Rohom, Minister of Defense Moustafa Tlass, playwright Farhan Bulbul, actor Talal Nasreddine, playwright and film director Dered Laham, cartoonist Ali Farzat, head of the Jewish community Dr. Hasbani, and architect and preservation activist Nadia Rusht. Deonna's ability to elicit candid comments from men and women alike will remind some readers of Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci's interviews with Arab leaders two decades earlier. However, in contrast to Fallaci's longer, in-depth conversations, Deonna's interviews are short and anecdotal. This may have been due to an original serialization of the book, although there is no explicit statement to this effect, or it may be the author's preferred style. The result is that the book has value in complementing other sources on the subject, but this is not enough in itself. Indeed, the introduction states that certain parts of the country were excluded and that the book makes no claim to being exhaustive.

Just as significant as the individual interviews, Deonna describes several important communities. Given Syria's great importance in early Christianity, it will be a revelation to some readers that as communities and as individuals the numerically few Christian Syrians are still quite prominent. Apart from Aleppo, where commercial life has been traditionally dominated by various Christian denominations, there is a chapter on the little known but regionally important Syrian Orthodox town of Hasakah in the North-East. The centuries-old delicate balance between Christian townspeople and Muslim nomads emerges repeatedly in Deonna's observations

on Hasakah and the nearby Assyrian village of Tell Hermes in statements which would not be considered politically correct in North America. In view of hostilities with Israel, it is of particular interest to read about the few thousand remaining Jews, who represent one of the oldest communities, but many of whom would likely have emigrated by the time the book saw the light of day. Deonna meets traditional, tolerant Muslims and, in contrast, proponents of a stricter Islamic lifestyle. The latter wish to mold society to their preference, and their presence in most towns and cities is difficult to ignore. These are perhaps the most striking members of para-military youth groups, whom the secular regime uses to keep the fundamentalists in check.

As a journalistic report on the current mood of the land, this is a readable and informative book. Although a bibliography of the dozen or so titles referred to in the text would have been helpful, and credit might have been given for certain illustrations which are not the work of the author (such as the 1969 photo on p. 107 and political cartoons signed by Ali Farzat), these are minor detractions from a handsome volume which presents to a North American readership a significant European writer on the Middle East. The book should be of interest to libraries with collections in Middle Eastern Studies, Anthropology, Journalism, and Women's Studies.

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