

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

U.S. Foreign Relations with the Middle East and North Africa: A Bibliography. Supplement 1998. By Sanford Silverburg and Bernard Reich. Scarecrow Area Bibliographies; 19. Lanham, Maryland & London: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1999. Pp. xxiv, 518. Author and Subject indexes. ISBN: 0-81083-615-7; \$95 (Cloth : alk. paper)

In this volume, Sanford Silverburg and Bernard Reich update and expand their 1994 work entitled *U.S. Foreign Relations with the Middle East and North Africa: A Bibliography*. They include over 4,500 entries based on the compilation of 3,500 discrete sources. The authors have chosen to use only Western sources, in large part American, but do not explain why. In view of the September 11 events it is clear that it may be necessary to update this updated volume with many more international sources.

This bibliographical work, however, is an excellent reference tool for researchers doing work on the subject of US foreign relations with the Middle East and North Africa. It covers quite comprehensively a wide variety of US sources, such as: congressional hearings on numerous relevant topics, US Department of State reports on the region, unpublished masters and doctoral dissertations, Internet sources on federal government source materials, national archival materials, Library of Congress microformatted sources, references to videotaped programs, Congressional Research Service reports, in addition to the books and journal articles covering the topic.

The introduction to the bibliography is of particular interest as it guides the researcher to resources that could be used in addition to those covered specifically by this work. For example, the authors mention a computer laser-optical disk, *Declassified Documents Reference System: Index and Abstracts* (Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media, n.d.); the *Presidential Directives on National Security from Truman to Clinton*, which is a collection of 2,100 documents on 441 microfiches with one volume printed index (Alexandria, VA: Chadwyck-Healey, 1994); and the CD-ROM in full-text (ASCII) format, which provides "a verbatim account of every official U.S. government event" (p. xv), which is produced by University Microfilms International and the Federal News Service, beginning in 1994.

Silverburg and Reich's bibliography is carefully organized alphabetically by subject, as for example "Human Rights, by country name such as "Algeria," by personal name, such as "Bush, George W." It also has complex headings such as: "Bush, George W.—Persian Gulf," where sources other than those to be found under Persian Gulf by itself are located. The inclusion of some headings is puzzling, for example, "Carpets" and "Literature," each of which cites only one entry that does not seem relevant to the subject matter of the book. Curiously, under the subject heading "Orientalism," Edward Said's work is not even mentioned.

There is also a lack of balance in the coverage of certain issues. For example, the section covering the "Persian Gulf War" takes up 120 pages (pp. 262-381) out of the total of 518, or almost a quarter of the whole bibliography, whereas the "Peace Process" is covered in ten pages (pp. 234-244). "Peacekeeping" has two entries, and "Peacekeeping—Sinai" has only one entry.

Extremely helpful are the author and subject indexes at the end of the bibliography. As sources on the same subject may fall under different sub-headings, it is important to be able to consult the index to find them. The indexes are equally useful for locating authors whose works fall into different categories and are easily tracked down via the index. There are, however, inexplicable lacunæ: I could not find the works of I. William Zartman, for instance, or those of Adeed Dawisha, or even one of the many directly relevant articles by Fuad Ajami, among other names I expected to come across in the index but did not. The decision not to include these and a number of other authors' publications in the bibliography, especially as these scholars continued publishing after 1994—when Silverburg's and Reich's first bibliography came out, is questionable.

Notwithstanding these few omissions, this is a very helpful bibliography that will be frequently consulted by researchers in the years to come.

MARY-JANE DEEB

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

al-Riwāyah al-ʿArabīyah : Bībliyūjrafīyā wa-madkhal naqdī (1865–1995)= Arabic novel : Bibliography and critical introduction (1865–1995).
By Ḥamdī al-Sakkūt. al-Qāhirah : Qism al-Nashr bi-al-Jāmiʿah al-Amrīkīyah, 2000. 6 v. (Pp. xi, 3784, 165) ; 23 cm. \$US150.00. ISBN: 9774245024 (Perfectbound)

This six volume reference work consists of:

Volume 1, Introduction to the Arabic novel in Arabic and English, the novel in Egypt, the novel in the Arab East (Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Jordan, Iraq) the novel in North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya).

Volumes 2–3, the novels arranged alphabetically by title with criticism citations.

Volumes 4–5, general criticism, novelists alphabetically giving titles of their works and citation to the sequential number for the full citations in volumes 2–3, a chronological listing of titles.

Volume 6, remainder of the chronological listing, and a geographical listing of the titles, bibliography.

Upon first examining this work I felt a familiarity with it. When I read the introduction and saw Sakkut's reference to the late Dr. Marsden Jones, I knew why. Dr. Jones was forming such a project in his mind in the 1960's when I studied with him at AUC. I am so pleased to see the concept at long last come to completion in this work.

This work is promoted by the press as a reference work, and it certainly lives up to this billing in its content. At first, the organization of the listing is a bit disconcerting. The main listing of the novels covered (in volumes 2–3) is by title and not by author then title, as one might initially expect. The entries are also given sequential numbers. These numbers are used throughout the remainder of the work to refer the reader back to this section, which is where the only full publication information is recorded.

Dr. Sakkut is known for his earlier work, and particularly relevant is his reworked thesis from the University of Cambridge—*The Egyptian Novel and its main trends, 1913–1952*, which was also published by the AUC Press. The current work is much expanded in scope and a more significant contribution. His introduction is a very good overview of the development of the Arabic novel. This alone would be useful as a text in a modern Arabic literature course. The excellent English translation by Roger Monroe of the Introduction could be used by itself for teaching Arabic literature in English. In fact, I wish to encourage the AUC Press to consider issuing the introduction as a separate publication for just that purpose.

As to the reference nature of the publication there is no doubt. The format of the publication, however, is problematic. There are, very likely, technical reasons that the AUC Press has chosen to issue this work unbound. But, for my library and I assume other libraries, it should have been bound. Unfortunately, the gutter is too narrow for a good after-market binding. This is not due to the density type on each page. In fact, the format has left vast areas of white space on most of the pages. Much of it is in the redundant sections organized chronologically, geographically, etc. In my mind this could have been handled more economically in a standard index format. Given the current fascination with digital data, it might have been better, in fact, to create all of the indexes electronically and include them on an accompanying CD-ROM. This could have kept the basic publication down to a 2–3 volume size.

I am also disappointed in the format chosen for the bibliographic presentation. In all of the citations for critical works there are no page number citations for the specific critical work. Thus, the Roger Allen review of *The Harafish* by Najib Mahfuz is cited as being in *World Literature Today*, Vol. 68, and the reader is left to find that it is located in issue 1 (of 4) and on which page it begins.

This said though I would still recommend that any library supporting an Arabic literature teaching program or collection should want a copy of this work. Dr. Sakkut has done a great job and is a credit to AUC.

JOHN EILTS

STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Encyclopedia of Fruit Trees and Edible Flowering Plants in Egypt and the Subtropics. By Alfred G. Bircher and Warda H. Bircher. Cairo; New York : The American University in Cairo Press, 2000. Pp. xxvii, 568. \$49.50 (Hardbound) ISBN: 977-424-592-X

The concept for this book began in the late 19th century, when its first author, by profession the manager of a gypsum factory in Giza Province, Egypt, but also an amateur botanist and plant collector, became interested in the possibility of introducing new economically profitable plants to Egypt. To accomplish this, he established his private research station in al-Saff, where he grew and experimented with numerous introduced plants. Alfred Bircher long intended to publish a book on his work, but numerous problems, including the two world wars, intervened, so his work remained

unfinished and unpublished by the time of his death in 1958. The work was eventually completed by his daughter, Warda H. Bircher.

After a brief introduction on the general principles of plant introduction and culture, comes the main body of the work, "Description of genera and species." The entries are listed under their Latin names, alphabetically by genus and species. Each entry generally includes a brief description of the plant, mention of its locale of origin, and a description of what it is used for. When common names are provided, they are usually in English, occasionally Spanish. A few, far too few, of the entries are accompanied by line drawings of the plant. This descriptive section is followed by the "Analytical index of genera," which is actually a listing of the genera according to use. Finally, there is a listing of the common names, with corresponding Latin names.

The book lacks a bibliography because, as W. Bircher states, "many excellent lists of references on the subject can be found in various recent publications." (p. xi) However, the bibliography of a scholarly work is more than "a list of references" for the reader; it also serves to authenticate and give credibility to the author's work. Surely this large compilation did not arise solely from the Birchers' original research. They must have had sources, and these sources ought to have been documented.

The plants described in this book are native to diverse places around the world. Very few are native to the Middle East. Despite the reference to Egypt in the title, this book has very little to do with Egypt, other than the fact that the authors supposedly grew these plants in their garden there. Although the book grew out of A. Bircher's interest in introducing new plants, no mention is made regarding how well the plants actually did in Egypt, or whether they have any economic potential there.

The book therefore has little relevance to Middle East collections. It would make a useful, though not indispensable, addition to libraries with holdings in general botany or ethnobotany.

CATHERINE A. ROCKWELL

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

The Arabian Diaries, 1913-1914. By Gertrude Bell, edited by Rosemary O'Brien. Syracuse, NY : Syracuse University Press, 2000. Pp. xv, 258. Photographs, map, glossary, bibliography, index. ISBN: 0-8156-0672-9

The main contribution of this book consists of publication of the diaries of Gertrude Bell written from November 1913 to May 1914 during her expedition from Damascus through the Arabian desert and Baghdad and back

to Damascus. Rosemary O'Brien, a journalist and editor, edited the diaries which are kept at the Robinson Library of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. O'Brien has added an introduction, which provides a short description of Bell's life, her expedition, and the unique structure of these diaries. Also included are Ibrahim's notebook (about which, see below), glossary, bibliography and index.

Gertrude Lowthian Bell (1868–1926), a university-educated single Englishwoman of a well-to-do family, first got interested in the Middle East in 1892 when she visited Iran where a family relative served as a diplomat. From then on her life became strongly connected with the region.

She started traveling in the Middle East, participating in archeological expeditions, and writing books about her experiences. Her involvement culminated in November 1915 when she joined the Arab Bureau in Cairo, followed in March 1916 with her joining the staff of Sir Percy Z. Cox in Baghdad as the Oriental Secretary, a position she held until her death. During the last decade of her life she was deeply involved in shaping the British policy towards the Middle East, and especially regarding the future of Iraq.

The 1913–1914 Arabian diaries are not only the result of her habit of chronicling each day's events but also of her love affair with a married man, Charles (Dick) Doughty-Wylie, whom she first met in 1906 in Konia, where he served as the British military vice-consul. Bell and Doughty-Wylie renewed their acquaintance in early 1913 when he returned alone to London to await another assignment. They became drawn to each other and fell in love which was expressed only spiritually in talks, letters and yearnings. In this regard, the diaries are especially significant. In addition to a regular diary, Bell composed a diary in the form of letters for Doughty-Wylie, in which she wrote the day's events, including her thoughts and feelings regarding her expedition and him. Thus, the reader gets two versions of the expedition: a sketchy, brief notes on places, people, and events and a parallel report, which is more descriptive, analytical, thoughtful, and personal. The Doughty-Wylie Diaries appear on pp. 43–133, and the more conventional diaries appear in Appendix A (pp. 137–243). While the conventional diaries are much more detailed, one should read both versions to get Bell's full analysis. Moreover, the Doughty-Wylie Diaries provide a better understanding of Bell's personality, feelings, sexuality, sense of humor, and interpersonal relations with the Arabs she traveled with and met during the expedition. Thus, in addition to the bare facts of a difficult expedition, one also gets a clearer view of a unique woman who had great influence over British policy in the Middle East and especially in Iraq following World War

I. Bell was also an avid photographer, and the book includes several of her photographs of her crew and the people she met during the expedition.

O'Brien had added a few notes to the diaries, as well as a glossary of Arabic and Turkish terms used in the diaries (pp. 249–251). She usually keeps Bell's transcription of Arabic terms and place-names, though in some cases she adds the more common Western form of the name. Appendix B (pp. 245–247) includes Ibrahim's Daftar: a translation of a notebook containing a chronology of the Rashid dynasty for the years 1834–1911. The conventional diary entry for February 26, 1914 (p. 198) mentions this notebook, though no further reference to it is clearly made. This is one of the places where an editor's note could have been very helpful. The index is very short, does not include all the persons and places mentioned and does not cover the whole text. Thus, and because of the structure of the diaries, it is difficult to find specific events, people, and places.

The publication of Bell's diaries is an important contribution to our knowledge of the landscape and human condition in the region through which she traveled. As a woman, Bell could have an insight to women's conditions and well as men's life, and she provides detailed information regarding her conversations, impressions, and views. The diaries provide invaluable information and analysis on the part of the British military on the eve of World War I regarding the territory and its people. *The Arabian Diaries* is appropriate for collections of the modern Middle East and women's studies.

RACHEL SIMON

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

A Vision of the Middle East: An Intellectual Biography of Albert Hourani.
By Abdulaziz A. Al-Sudairi. Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies London
: In association with I.B. Tauris New York, 2000. Pp. 221, Bibl, index.
\$35.00. ISBN: 186064581X (Hardcover)

This is the first of no doubt many biographies on the rich intellectual life of Albert Habib Hourani (1915–93). The hybrid product of the United Kingdom, by birth, and the Arab world of his ancestors, Hourani dedicated his life to the pursuit and imparting of knowledge. In his eulogy for Hourani, Edward Roger Owen, Harvard University A. J. Meyer Professor of Middle Eastern History, who also wrote the preface, pointed out that Hourani's approach was "to concentrate on the peoples of the Middle East, on their communities, and most of all on their cities, on their intricate relations

of power and influence mediated by a vibrant, often stormy, but always exciting current of ideas.” From his reports during the Second World War, to writings on Palestine and on the Arab world, from policy analysis to scholarship during a “half century of brilliant academic work,” Hourani’s work has left an indelible legacy on the discipline of Middle Eastern studies.

A Vision of the Middle East is Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al-Sudairi’s first book. It is the revised edition of his 1994 Doctoral Dissertation at The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at The Johns Hopkins University. The aim of the book is to highlight and illuminate Hourani’s scholarly legacy and political endeavors for Middle East research, scholarship, and education.

In order to draw out “an assessment of his contributions” and to frame his “broader intellectual setting,” Al-Sudairi relies on primary published and unpublished material; on work read by Hourani and the work produced by his students; on interviews with Hourani and many who are familiar with his work; on secondary and archival research; and on juxtaposing his work with others in the same field. In six short chapters, Al-Sudairi weaves together themes from Hourani’s work: the “Islamic city” as the basis of political order, the power and role of notables, Ottoman and Islamic influence on Arab societies, Arab nationalism and its limits, and the loss of Palestine. He begins by expostulating on Hourani’s early influences and events that contributed to the evolution and development of his ideas, conceptions, and writings on the Arab world, and ends by eloquently presenting Hourani as an intellectual mediator between the Arab World and the West.

Apart from pointing out the significance of Hourani’s legacy, Al-Sudairi also points out areas of Arab political history into which Hourani did not delve. Nevertheless, Al-Sudairi argues, Hourani’s scant attention to the Arabian Peninsula, his limited attention to the post-1973 era of oil wealth, and his imbalanced attention between studying Arab societies and Arab states, detracts little from the “power and the integrity of Hourani’s legacy.”

The book benefits from its meticulous organization—a short glossary of terms, a list of interviews, and an exhaustive bibliography of Hourani’s published works, including reviews. Al-Sudairi hopes his work will fill a gap in the literature on modern Middle East studies. Students will find this book a welcome introductory resource.

FADI H. DAGHER

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

I Saw Ramallah. By Mourid Barghouti. Translated by Ahdaf Soueif. With a Foreword by Edward W. Said. New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2000. Pp. 148 \$19.95 ISBN: 9774244990 (Hardcover)

I Saw Ramallah is an autobiographical memoir written in lyrical prose. It first appeared in Arabic, *Ra'aytu Rām Allāh* (Cairo, 1997), and won the 1997 Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature. The award, established in 1996 by the American University in Cairo Press, is named for Egypt's 1988 Nobel laureate. Mourid Barghouti is a Palestinian poet who describes himself as having been "struck by displacement on Monday June 5, 1967." He has published books in Beirut, Amman, and Cairo since 1972. His most recent work includes *al-Nās fī Laylīhim* (1999), *al-ʿmāl al-Shīrīyah* (1997), and *Mantiq al-Kkā'ināt: shīr* (1996). Excerpts of his poetic oeuvre are scattered throughout the narrative.

The book traces Barghouti's return journey to Ramallah—"Ramallah of the cypress and the pine trees"—up to Deir Ghassaneh where he was born (1944), and back. It tells the story of his, as he put it in a November 5, 2000, book launch, "racing footsteps on the cobblestones of displacement heading to my home place," crossing "a bridge no longer than a few meters of wood and thirty years of exile." Barghouti's account begins at the bridge with a different name to many people, where he confirms his doubts of the bizarre peace deal: "The gates of exile were opened to us from a strange direction!" He steps onto Palestinian soil only to feel himself an exile in his homeland, "a feeling of security refuses to become complete."

His journey is as oppressive, as it progresses across geographical space, as it is depressing, as it moves across time. The memory of where he grew up, where his extended family has lived for centuries, becomes enmeshed with the harsh personal reality of an exile who has lived in thirty homes in thirty years, and with the plight of the Palestinians.

Because of his refugee status he, his wife, novelist, critic, and Ain Shams University Faculty of Arts professor Radwa Ashour, and their son Tamim, a budding poet in his own right, (*Mījāma: Ash-ār bi-al-ʿāmmīyah al-Filastīnīyah* (1999), have lived, and are still living, the lives of exiles. They suffer the humiliation of statelessness, of living apart, of witnessing the confiscation of land and the building of settlements; the process Hanan Ashrawi describes in *This Side of Peace* (1995) as Israel's creation of facts on the ground. Perhaps worst of all, they suffer the pain of Palestine, ignored by many, and appropriated by others. For all that, Barghouti presents Palestinian dispossession and suffering with a stark absence of bitterness.

Perhaps the most striking feature of *I Saw Ramallah* is its sense of moderation, tolerance, and modesty. Barghouti resists sliding down the easy slope of self-indulgence in rosy romanticism or deluded nostalgia about his native land before the occupation. Rather he engages in self-criticism, undermining as he does the oft-used cliché, which would have Muslims incapable of scrutinizing their own past.

The book was translated by Ahdaf Soueif, author of *Aisha* (1983) which was shortlisted for The Guardian Fiction Award, *In the Eye of the Sun* (1992), *Sandpiper* (1996) a collection of short stories which she translated into Arabic *Zīmat al-Ḥayāh* and won the 1997 Cairo International Book-fair award for Best Short Stories of the Year, *Mukhtārāt min Aʿmāl Ahdāf Suwayf* (1998), and *The Map of Love* (2000), which was short-listed for the 1999 Booker Prize. Soueif, who sometimes assumes her husband's last name, the poet and biographer Ian Hamilton, is associated with Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, London (<http://www.al-furqan.com>). She has a doctorate in Literary Stylistics and has drawn both praise and criticism for introducing gender politics to the Arab literary scene.

Soueif herself attempted a similar journey late last year, sending dispatches of her encounters to *The Guardian* newspaper. Her experiences of the restrictions suffered by Palestinians under occupation or within Israel are similar to Barghouti's, or Edward Said's before them: experiences that evoke an oppressed humanity.

Mourid Barghouti's book is all the more poignant at a time when Ramallah has been under siege and *al-Intifāḍah* has become associated in the mainstream West with "violence" against Israeli security. As if in response, Barghouti calmly narrates and contextualizes the impact of decades of unfairness and injustice upon the Palestinian people. In his foreword Edward Said describes *I Saw Ramallah* as "one of the finest existential accounts of Palestinian displacement that we now have." The content is as accessible to the layperson as it is a must to researchers.

FADI H. DAGHER

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

The Situe Stories. By Frances Khirallah Noble. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000. Pp. xi, 182. ISBN: 0-8156-0657-5 (alk. paper)

The Situe Stories offer eleven engaging narrative interpretations of the Arab American, specifically Lebanese Christian, experience of assimilating into the United States. Noble, who writes from an intimate understanding

of her subject, has tied these tales together in a unique way thematically. Each of these family-centered stories includes the character of a "situe," [= *sittī*] the Arabic word used in Lebanon for grandmother, or aunt in some cases.

The first and final stories serve as bookends for the collection both in time and central character. The opening tale takes place in Lebanon at the beginning of the 20th century and relates the early life and emigration of a young woman named Hasna. Hasna, who is saved by her situe from a grave illness that leaves her bald, grows up longing to join her older brothers in America. The story ends as Hasna, now blond-headed and no longer bald due perhaps to the constant therapeutic ministrations of her grandmother in babyhood, departs for the new world along with her beloved horse. Hasna's situe stays behind with her mother. Yet her situe is connected to Hasna by an "invisible thread" which allows her to sense every turn of her granddaughter's journey. It is a metaphor perhaps for the cultural and emotional ties that connect family members dispersed across oceans and time.

The last of the collection's stories finds Hasna in the present day at the end of her life. She has by now become old, widowed, a situe herself. Living alone in her southern California bungalow, she finds consolation from the lonely boredom of her life in alcohol, knowing that her Americanized children will come and eventually move her into a dreaded rest home with strangers.

The situes in these stories illustrate the variety of roles assumed by these women in their new homeland. Situe is represented in some of the tales as a steady presence in the background, a symbol of cultural and family traditions, someone to be cared for. We read of situe the chaperone who accompanies her daughters and grandchildren on a summer vacation to the mountains of California. Although her family takes advantage of resort activities, situe never leaves the vicinity of the cabin, supposedly because of her heart, as she manages, however, to keep it spotlessly clean and swept. There is Lena's mother-in-law "who lived and moved in their house like a shadow," while her son Mansour becomes a bookie in order to provide Lena with the comfortable Americanized life she covets and his daughter Linda with the surgery she needs. There is situe who insists on taping a medal of St. Jude, Patron Saint of Desperate Causes, on a new grandchild's navel, the traditional way to ensure a flattened outcome. Situe in another story takes on the role of family protector, who offers sanctuary to her granddaughter and her war-protestor boyfriend while she denies their presence to the inquiring police. Situe also represents women who ensure economic

success for their families through their business acumen and domestic art skills.

The tales each strive to illustrate the assimilation of Christian Arabs into American life from the perspective of the women they portray. Genevieve, who works in the same shoe factory as her father, secretly marries the son of the Italian neighbor, not the Syrian man her mother prefers. Esene learns English from her husband to the shock of her in-laws. (Another) Hasna comes out of a stifling retirement and capably and efficiently stocks and opens a store for her retarded yet beautiful son, as she had for her daughters. That he unexpectedly dies only offers her the additional opportunity of preparing for an ornate funeral as well as an opening.

Written in a lively personable style, many of the stories' characters remain unforgettable in the often poignant descriptions of the challenges they faced coming from a cultural framework that is inevitably changed by interactions with American traditions and values. This work is appropriate for general collections as well as those that feature Arab American and feminist literature.

KRISTEN KERN

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Mandate Days: British Lives in Palestine 1918-1948. By A. J. Sherman. Baltimore & London. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. Pp. 264. Includes bibliographical references, illustrations and index. \$17.95. ISBN: 0500251169 (Paperback)

Mandate Days: British Lives in Palestine 1918-1948 is an enjoyable and learned read. The book covers the years of the British Mandate in Palestine from the last days of the First World War, through the era of the British administration under the League of Nations Mandate, to the British withdrawal and the slapdashed handover of Palestine to the United Nations. Although there have been numerous works written on Jewish and Palestinian relations, this work is unique as it views the history of this region by examining the professional and personal lives of British military and civil personnel, their families, and other British civilians who served and worked in Palestine under the League of Nations Mandate, an era that many historians tend to cover only marginally.

The author of this work, A. J. Sherman, was born in Palestine during the British Mandate. He holds degrees from Columbia College; Harvard Law School; Columbia University; St. Anthony's College, University of Oxford;

and Yeshiva University. A former investment banker, Dr. Sherman has been a fellow at St. Anthony's College, Oxford and has taught at Yale University, New York University, and Middlebury College. He also serves on the boards of trustees of several foundations and trusts

This work accomplishes its objective by providing a fresh view of the history of Palestine under the mandate in several ways. The author has clearly researched this subject by using the professional and personal papers of numerous individuals who served in Palestine under the Mandate. The author accurately and poignantly describes the events that affected everyone professionally and personally who served during the era of the mandate from the ruling Governor-Generals of Palestine to the mid-level colonial office administrators, the commissioned and non-commissioned officers, and the soldiers of the British Military. Among the topics that are explored from the British point of view is the frustration of those charged with maintaining order at all levels and governing the fragile state of affairs between Jews and Arabs, while dealing with the numerous policy changes from various quarters of the British Government, which were often influenced by outside interests. Perhaps what is most eye-catching are the descriptions by the British of Jews and Arabs, their professional relationships, personal friendships and acquaintances at all levels of society and, at the same time, their overt and covert prejudices. The book also touches on the subject of the various social, political and economic rifts among the various groups of Jewish settlers that settled in Palestine during the Mandate.

The text itself is well organized into five chapters by time period. References to other published works and the collections of manuscripts that were consulted for this book are accurately cited. A very useful tool that is included among the appendices of this text is a section entitled, "Who Was Who." The author has done a commendable job of providing a biographical sketch of the major individuals mentioned in the book, including works that they themselves have written. This resource will prove invaluable for any student, scholar or bibliographer who wishes to explore this era of history in depth from the British point of view. The technical quality of this book (printing, binding, etc.) is what one would expect from any book published by a major University Press in the United States. Lastly, the book is well indexed.

This book, without question, should be included in any library that collects in the areas of Middle East Studies, Modern Jewish History or British History.

PETER L. KRAUS

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

Missing Persians: Discovering Voices in Iranian Cultural History. By Nasrin Rahimieh. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2001. Pp. 191. Bibl, index. \$17.95 ISBN: 0815628374 (Paperback : alk. paper)

Nasrin Rahimieh is associate dean of Humanities and professor at the Department of Comparative Literature, Religion, Film/Media Studies at the University of Alberta, Canada. She has previously published *Oriental Responses to the West: Comparative Essays in Select Writers from the Muslim World* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), and a number of articles and chapters in books. *Missing Persians* is part of the Syracuse University Press's Gender, Culture, and Politics in the Middle East series.

This book, argues Rahimieh, is about “Persian travelers, renegades, converts, and transcultural migrants.” It is cast as an exposition on how to read literary history in a different way by employing “writing that refuses to fit into existing definitions and generic criteria.” Freeing herself of the “tradition of scholarship that replicates the belief that cultural history is written by larger than life figures,” Nasrin Rahimieh embarks upon a journey to record the life histories of five “less important characters” or “smaller units of identity, the life at the center of the Persian stories of encounter with the West.”

Rahimieh begins with a reading of *Don Juan of Persia: A Shi'ah Catholic 1560–1604* by and about Uruch Beg, a secretary in an embassy sent by Safavid King, Shāh ‘Abbās I, to Europe in 1599, in order to seek alliance against the Ottomans. This work, based on the Spanish translation by Licentiate Alfonso Remon, resists categorization as a cultural product. Rather it is presented as a cultural hybrid best situated “at the crossroads of seventeenth century Persian and Spanish cultures, best seen as a phenomenon of ‘contact zone.’” The contact zones between self and other emerge, again, in the second and third readings: *Safar Nāmih-i Shikāgū* (1982) is a travelogue by Ḥājī Mirzā Muḥammad ‘Alī Mu‘īn al-Salṭanah, consisting mainly of the diary he kept while traveling in Europe and North America in 1893; and *Sharḥ-i Zindigānī-yi Man* (Description of my Life: A Social and Administrative History of the Qajar Era, 1982) by ‘Abd Allāh Mustawfī, another diplomat posted to St. Peterburg in 1904. The fourth reading is of *The Memoirs of Tāj al-Salṭanah* (1914), the daughter of the Qajar king Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, who never traveled to Europe and rather relied on readings, including her father’s diaries of his travels, and “traversed the borders of her homeland in her imagination.” The readings end with *Persia is My Heart* (1953) co-published by Najmeh Najafi and Helen Hinckley. The last two readings delve into the role of women at the crossroads of nations and identities.

In her readings, Rahimieh seeks to bring to light some of the complexities she asserts have gone missing from the “ever-changing patterns of the Persian discourses of identity.” She reads these narratives of encounter with the West in order to “investigate the multiple forms of self-expression that emerges in liminal spaces;” the contact zones and gray areas that are not unfamiliar to Rahimieh. Her readings are motivated partly by personal urge to gain a greater understanding of her own trans-cultural journey, which is grounded in her “parents’ dual tradition of compulsive shuttling between language and cultural affiliations, on the one hand, and embracing Persian national identity, on the other.” Since childhood, Rahimieh longed to embrace otherness and has since carved out for herself “a different form of hyphenated, albeit more communal, identity.”

In addition, these characters “have in common a preoccupation with self-definition” as they embark on actual or metaphorical journeys. Although they “relate self to the broader units of community and nation”—as opposed to the western confessional or biographical mode of self-representation—Rahimieh argues that her way of reading provides a means of learning from these encounters about “the narrating self and its struggle with conflicting cultural archives.” She posits that these “manifestations of the self,” these “missing” Persians’ stories are fully deserving of a place within Persian cultural history.

The readings give substance to the exhilaration, fear, and indifference of the encounters between self and other, recalling Montesquieu’s Persian travelers in *Persian Letters*, except that these “missing” Persians are not fictional characters. The travelers’ encounter between self and other sometimes helps to reinforce ethnocentrism and nationalism, and at other times triggers a re-examination of the notion of “home.” In the end, however, Rahimieh warns that not even her approach will be able to “construct a definitive truth of the self, for self-discovery and self-construction are complex processes that will always leave traces of concealment and disavowal.”

FADI H. DAGHER

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

Make a Shield from Wisdom: Selected Verses from Nāṣir-i Khusraw's Dīvān. Translated and Introduced by Annemarie Schimmel. Revised ed. London, New York : I.B. Tauris ; London : Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2001. vii, 103 pp. ISBN: 1860647251

The Persian philosopher Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. after 1072 C.E.) is probably better known for his travelogue (*Safarnāmah*) of the Islamic world of the eleventh century, a masterpiece of classical Persian prose literature, than for his poetry. Schimmel's comment, "It is amazing that a poet in the middle of the eleventh century should have possessed such an enormous technical skill" (p. 10), is absolutely justified by its high quality. Nāṣir-i Khusraw was a precursor to such major Ghaznavid poets as Sanā'ī and Mas'ūd-i Sa'd-i Salmān, whom he certainly influenced, but since his poetry is almost entirely dedicated to the Isma'ili cause, the formal aspects of his craft are often marginalized. In addition, his poems are of an ethical and philosophical nature and his language heavy; thus they are strikingly different from the easy lyricism of later Sufi verse and not easily accessible to readers. It is not surprising but certainly regrettable that there is not a single detailed study in English on this poet's sizeable body of poetry.¹

This book provides a brief biography of the largely mysterious figure of Nāṣir-i Khusraw as passed down in Persian textual sources, while the major portion of it is devoted to translations and an exegesis of selected verses of the poet.

Actually very little is known about Nāṣir-i Khusraw's life, and the only contemporary references are his own autobiographical statements scattered throughout his poetry. Originally from a village near Marv in Khurasan, he was employed as a functionary in the service of the Seljuq prince Chaghri Beg until he embarked on a journey through the Islamic lands that included an extended stay in Fatimid Cairo. This was a turning point in his life, when he was assigned the responsibility of the province of Khurasan by the Isma'ili caliph. After his return from his travels, Nāṣir-i Khusraw retired to the remote town of Yumgan in Badakhshan province (in present-day Tajikistan, where Isma'ilis are still to be found). Away from the urban centers and courtly circles, he wrote powerful poetry, mostly employing the *qaṣīdah* form. Unlike other poets of his time, Nāṣir-i Khusraw did not write amorous or laudatory verse, but rather devoted himself as a propagandist of Isma'ili doctrine and eulogized the prophet, Imam 'Alī, or reviled the

¹ Recently another general work on this poet has been published also by Tauris: Alice C. Hunsberger's *The Ruby of Badakhshan: A Portrait of the Persian Poet, Traveller and Philosopher* (2000).

people of his times who had fallen away from true Islam. Representative poems from the poet's *dīvān* are translated here, including the well-known "confessional ode" that includes autobiographical information. Schimmel's translations are sometimes stilted, but translating this difficult and dense poetry is no easy task. Short explanations that explain a particular point or allusion could have followed rather than preceded the translations. Although the book is a brief introduction to Nāṣir-i Khusraw's life and works, there is much to be learned from Schimmel's systematic exploration of the various themes and images that can only be the result of a careful perusal of the poet's *dīvān*. The multiple references and connections made to the larger world of Persian and Islamic philosophy and poetry render this work a truly scholarly achievement which should provide the basis for more detailed studies on Nāṣir-i Khusraw's poetry. The book includes a short bibliography and index.

SUNIL SHARMA

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Bring Down the Walls: Lebanon's Postwar Challenge. By Carole H. Dagher. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000. Pp. 248. Bibliography, Index. \$39.95. ISBN: 0312229208 (cloth)

Carole H. Dagher is a journalist and political analyst of the Middle East who works with major Lebanese daily newspapers and television stations. She has previously published two books on the region in French, *Ces Hommes qui font la Paix* (Paris, Beirut: Editions L'Harmattan et FMA, 1995) and *Les Paris du Général* (Beirut, Paris: Editions Fiches du Monde Arabe-FMA, 1992). The volume reviewed, her latest book, came together during her sojourn as an International Visiting Fellow (1999) at the Woodstock Theological Center. Among the many she acknowledges for their support and guidance is John L. Esposito, who also wrote the foreword. Esposito is an established scholar on Islam and the Middle East, the Founding Director of the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, and the Vice-Chair of The Center for the Study of Islam & Democracy, Georgetown University.

Bring Down the Walls is mainly a journalistic account written from a generally Christian and, particularly, Maronite perspective, reflected by the referenced sources, on Lebanese inter-communal coexistence. Divided into three parts with thirteen chapters and an introduction and a conclusion, the book covers the history of confessionalism and its effects on the

Lebanese mosaic, the Ta'if Accords and the subsequent Lebanese malaise, the post-war traditional as well as shifting points of friction and agreement, the difficulty in devising a national educational program, the building and solidifying of civic society, the military integrationist effort, the concerns of the Eastern Church, the difficulty with resettlement of refugees, the role and influence of Patriarch Mar Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir in national and regional political and religious affairs, the national political arena and the influence of regional powers, the effects of the Middle East peace process on Lebanon and vice versa, among others.

The sections dealing with the Synod on Lebanon held at the Vatican (Nov.-Dec. 1995) and the role and influence played by the Vatican and the papal nuncio in Lebanese inter-communal coexistence, as well as the Pope John Paul II 1997 visit, are the most cohesive. They represent the crux of the book's thesis. In March 1996, Dagher received an award from the Maronite Church, represented by Patriarch Sfeir, for her coverage and analysis of the Synod. The Pope's message inspired the title of this book, which underscores the need for inter-community reconciliation and dialogue between Christians and Muslims, as well as within their respective denominations. He called on Maronites to build bridges of communication and identify with their Arab identity. Dagher employs the Pope's message to argue for the importance of the Maronite community in, and to, the Arab world. She also points to, and argues for, coexistence, which invalidates Samuel Huntington's controversial postulation of the "Clash of Civilization," and return Lebanon to what Esposito refers to in the foreword as a celebrated multi-religious and multi-lingual country.

From the perspective of the 1975-1990 civil strife in which the Maronite militias took to arms, at least initially, in order to maintain Maronite hegemony over Lebanon, Dagher's attempt at elaborating on their stance in the 1990's in print is a positive development. Although there are many quotes, the flow of the argument is not diminished. However, for 220 pages, the wide coverage stretches the argument thin and suffers from a few sweeping generalizations such as Lebanon is "the only place in the world where ideas do make a difference," (p. 7) and hypotheticals such as "it's been said" (p. 55), "the Lebanese media wondered" (p. 149), etc. Dagher employs large amounts of statistical data to support her argument. The sources range from well-documented reports and publications to "very well-informed sources." (p. 72) Some of her arguments are based on—"rather plausible" (p. 71)—population numbers, yet the last Lebanese census was conducted in 1932.

Pointing out that there is no alternative to dialogue based on tolerance and respect of difference among the Lebanese communities is the strength of

this book. A broader inclusion of views and a more encompassing discussion and analysis could have made the argument even stronger. The importance of the re-evaluation of entrenched attitudes in this regard is exemplified in the author's own short comings. For example, Dagher could be forgiving of Muslims for their limited enthusiasm for the Synod—a Christian meeting with a theme “Christ is our hope” (p. 103)—the result of which, the Apostolic Exhortations, were symbolically handed by the Pope to the Maronite Patriarch (not a representative of government or all the religious communities) during a public ceremony (p. 191). Or, pointing out Israeli disinterest in, and destabilization of, religious coexistence in Lebanon is legitimate; blaming Israel (pp. 87 & 147) for the regrettable actions of the Christian militias during the war is to point explicitly to societal amnesia, reinforced by the implicit Maronite insecurity theme running throughout the book. These attitudes fall short of self-criticism of which Dagher claims Christians pride themselves of over Muslims. The book points to similar attitudes, which Dagher argues contribute nothing to bringing down walls and complicate the challenges of post war inter-communal reconciliation that much further.

FADI H. DAGHER

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER
