

informed by imagination and oriented toward “becoming,” but actually carrying it out in the very act of writing these meditations.

—Morgan Davis

1. A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 24:25.

Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East, edited by Donna Lee Bowen and Evelyn A. Early, 2d ed. (Indiana University Press, 2001)

In the second edition of *Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East*, Donna Lee Bowen and Evelyn A. Early have reintroduced this often confusing region in a clear and concise manner. Rather than seeking to describe every aspect of every country in the Middle East, Bowen and Early have included essays that focus on the everyday activities of the Muslim people of the region. This approach works well in introducing the reader to the struggles, feelings, and daily routine of the inhabitants of this area.

The book is presented in much the same way as the first edition, divided into five sections: generations and life passages; gender relations; home, community, and work; popular expression of religion; and performance and entertainment. While the book retains the successful format of the first edition, it introduces twenty-three new narratives, stories, and studies. Each essay and section contributes to the weaving of a tapestry that reflects the realities of Middle Eastern societies. To complement the articles and to give relevant background, Bowen and Early have written an informative introduction to each section as well as comments that precede each individual piece.

Given the size and disparities of the Middle East, the authors have done well

in choosing articles that have salience in countries outside of the essays' immediate subject matter. Although all but three of the articles deal with specific countries and not the region as a whole, the ideas and insights that they present are often applicable to other areas of the Middle East. For example, the essay by Diane Singerman, “Networks, Jobs, and Everyday Life in Cairo,” highlights the important role played by formal and informal networks in gaining employment in the face of a large bureaucracy and a dearth of jobs. While the article deals exclusively with Egypt, family, social, and political networks also have a significant role in much of the rest of the Middle East.

Among my favorite articles are Brian Barber's “Politics, Politics, and More Politics: Youth Life Experiences in the Gaza Strip,” Jon W. Anderson's “Internet Islam: New Media of the Islamic Reformation,” and an article that was included in the first edition, Michael E. Jansen's “An American Woman on the Hajj.” Each of these essays deals with issues that are important yet often overlooked or misunderstood by the Western reader.

Barber's article describes the intense politicalization that has occurred in Gaza and its impact on the Palestinian youth's perceived realities and hopes for the future. Anderson looks at the way in which a new technology, the Internet, has been effectively used to further Islamic discourse and what effect this might have on Islam. Jansen's piece is a personal narrative of the pilgrimage to Mecca.

As indicated in the title of the book, the essays are about the *Muslim Middle East*. Perhaps one of the most unique attributes of the Middle East is the impact religion has on the culture, identity, and politics of the region. The book contains many articles that effectively describe the extent that Islam influences and permeates the everyday life of the modern Middle Easterner. “Young Women's Sexuality in Tunisia: The Health Consequences of Misinformation among University Stu-

dents” demonstrates the conflict of conscience that occurs as the changing morals of modernity react with Islamic cultural and religious traditions. The essay “Inside the Islamic Reformation” deals with how education and the mass media have precipitated an ongoing reinterpretation of Islam.

In light of recent world events, this book could not have come at a more appropriate time. Now, more than ever, it is important that the English-speaking world has access to a work that can help increase mutual understanding and respect between the West and the Muslim Middle East. In the editors’ own words, “The best way to combat stereotypes is to meet others on a person-to-person basis” (xi).

—Steven Bitner

The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature, edited and translated by Tarif Khalidi (Harvard University Press, 2001)

Although in Islam Jesus is not the divine being revered by Christians, he is often seen as a prophet second in importance only to Muhammad. He was held in particular esteem by Islamic ascetics and mystics and, one hadith states, by Muhammad himself (60). Accordingly, over the centuries Islamic scholars recorded many sayings attributed to Jesus, often couching them in brief stories. Al-Ghazali, for example, cites forty-seven sayings. Now 303 of the scattered post-Qur’anic references have been compiled into what their editor, Tarif Khalidi, calls “the Muslim gospel” (3).

Many of these sayings represent a Jesus familiar to readers of the Gospels, recasting, paralleling, or echoing New Testament material. One recurrent modification is the addition of an explicit moral where the biblical text is silent. These morals may take a somewhat unexpected, yet bracing, twist. For example, the recast text, “Look at the birds. . . . They neither reap nor plough,

and God provides for them” is interpreted as “Strive for the sake of God and not for the sake of your bellies. . . . Beware the excesses of the world” (60).

In the “Muslim gospel,” Jesus is not perfect, although, as a prophet, he is still a worker of miracles. He is beset with self-doubt, struggles with anger, dreads the Hour (Judgment Day), complains of helplessness, is admonished by God, and occasionally is bested in holiness by his cousin John and an anonymous “old man.”

Understandably, in these sayings Jesus is Islamized. The mosque replaces the temple. Jesus cites the Qur’an, and as a Muslim prophet, he performs Muslim ablutions and prayers and is spared crucifixion. His contemporaries symbolically pay homage to the future Muhammad. Straying ‘*ulama*’ (religious scholars) receive the stinging rebukes reserved in the Gospels for the scribes and Pharisees, while Jesus attires himself in the *midra’a*, a garment preferred by Islamic ascetics and Sufis.

Poignant lessons for the modern situation abound. The Muslim Jesus teaches that pride and fanaticism arouse anger, a sin. Our real enemies are Satan and the enticements and distractions of the world. Mercy should be extended to all the “people of [one’s] race,” who, Jesus tells an interlocutor, are “all the children of Adam” (79). “He who prays for those who treat him badly defeats Satan,” he reminds us (170).

Readers will quickly find favorite sayings. Some I appreciate for their wryness: “A pig [unclean animal] passed by Jesus. Jesus said, ‘Pass in peace.’ He was asked, ‘Spirit of God, how can you say this to a pig?’ Jesus replied, ‘I hate to accustom my tongue to evil’” (123). As a teacher, I am humbled by the teachings on the responsibility of scholarship: To the question “Who is the most seditious of men?” Jesus replied, “The scholar who is in error. If a scholar errs, a host of people will fall into error because of him” (61).

—Doris R. Dant