

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Newspapers and Periodicals of Jordan in the Press Archive of the Moshe Dayan Center. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1996 (47 p.)

Newspapers and Periodicals of Syria in the Press Archive of the Moshe Dayan Center. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1997 (47 p.)

Newspapers and Periodicals of Iraq in the Press Archive of the Moshe Dayan Center. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1998 (65 p.)

The Press Archive of the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, has an extensive collection of post-1950 Middle Eastern press: dailies, weeklies, monthlies, periodicals, and annuals from all the Arab countries, Iran and Turkey (the preface does not mention Israel). The archive is unique in that it includes a wide selection from all Middle Eastern countries and is easily accessible to researchers from Israel and abroad. It thus enables one to study almost all Middle Eastern periodical literature in one location. With the difficulties of accessing official state archives in most Middle Eastern countries, especially for the post-1950 period, the press remains an invaluable source for research, and relevant research aids are most welcome.

The three catalogues were compiled by Haim Gal, the curator of the press archive, and appear as part of the Teaching and Research Aids Series.

These and forthcoming catalogues[†] intend to facilitate research in the archives by providing access to scholars in advance of site visits to the contents of the archives. Each catalogue is divided into two lists: the first includes newspapers and periodicals published in the specific country, while the second includes periodicals about that country published elsewhere, including in other Arab countries. The information is arranged in five columns: name, transliteration, frequency, years, and comments. Certain official publications are not included here but are listed in the *Catalogue of periodicals in the Moshe Dayan Center Library* (Tel Aviv, 1996).

Even the lists by themselves are interesting, insofar as they indicate the volume of publication, some major topical divisions, and geographic distribution abroad.

[†] Editor's note: *Newspapers and Periodicals of Egypt in the Press Archive of the Moshe Dayan Center*. Tel Aviv, 2000. 109 p. has been released.

The catalogue on Jordan includes about 270 Arabic language and 9 foreign language publications published in Jordan and 20 Arabic and four foreign language publications published abroad. For Syria: about 140 Arabic and 16 foreign language publications published in Syria and eleven Arabic and two foreign language publications published abroad. For Iraq: about 270 Arabic and Kurdish and 34 foreign language publications published in Iraq and 83 Arabic and Kurdish and 22 foreign language publications published abroad.

All lists start with the Arabic-script publications arranged alphabetically in Arabic, followed by titles in Roman script. The latter appear in the "Transliteration" column, although in fact this is not the transliterated form of the name, but the name itself. The transliterated forms appear without diacritics. The frequency is indicated when it was known, but changes in frequencies, so common in periodicals, are not mentioned. "Years" indicates the holdings in the archive. It would have been more useful to state as well the full publication history of the item (though this might require more research). The holdings of most items are between one and three years. It is not clearly noted if the holdings comprise the full run of the title or only the issues which the archive managed to acquire. The "Comments" column occasionally states the place of publication or first year of publication and the availability of microform copies. It would have been more useful to provide fuller publication information: place of publication, editor, publishing organization, and characteristics (e.g., political, social, cultural, recreational, etc.). Each catalogue ends with a list of publications on that country published by the Moshe Dayan Center.

The aforementioned remarks notwithstanding, these are very useful catalogues, indicating the richness of the press as a source for research and its accessibility through the press archive of the Moshe Dayan Center.

RACHEL SIMON

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Handbook of Political Science Research on the Middle East and North Africa. Ed. Bernard Reich. Westport, CT & London: Greenwood Press, 1998. Pp. viii, 392. Index ISBN 0-313-27372-3 (Hardcover)

This handbook surveys the literature on political themes relating to the Middle East and North Africa during the post World War II period. It has specific chapters on each state (excluding the Sudan but including the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1967), as well as chapters on international

relations and on political economics. Each chapter includes analysis and a list of publications, mainly in English and some in French (for the Maghrebi countries). Name and subject indexes are included as are notes about the editor and contributors, but there are no maps.

In his introduction Bernard Reich surveys the development of the terms “Middle East” and “Near East” and their fluctuating geographical coverage and explains the reasons for inclusion and exclusion of various countries in this handbook. There follow short surveys on the nature and focus of political research in the region, some observations on Middle East politics, and agendas for future research. The editor’s introduction is followed by chapters dealing with individual countries, each of which includes a survey of research and main publications on internal politics and foreign policies, suggestions for future research, and a list of major publications. The handbook concludes with similarly structured thematic chapters on Middle East international relations and on the political economy of the Middle East. The collection includes a very useful appendix on reference works for Middle East politics, economics, and society, which, in addition to major reference works, includes a list with contact information on major research centers and institutes in the Middle East arranged alphabetically by country (some entries include e-mail addresses and websites).

This is a well organized and very useful work. In addition to the information supplied by the contributors who are experts in their fields, suggestions for further research in neglected areas and topics point to numerous interesting subjects, especially on internal politics and on social issues.

RACHEL SIMON

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

The Kin Who Count: Family and Society in Ottoman Aleppo, 1770–1840.

By Margaret L. Meriwether. Austin, TX : University of Texas Press, 1999.
Pp. 278. Bibliography, index. ISBN: 0292752237/0292752245. \$45/\$22.

Some years ago researchers of Middle East history, especially social historians, began to mine the treasure trove of religious court records. Margaret L. Meriwether’s *The Kin Who Count* is another fine addition to that distinguished body of work. Although not a substitute for contemporaneous vital records and firsthand accounts, these legal records can provide a wealth of information to the researcher. The author points out that while there are many “literary and archival sources” for the region, they do not really enlighten us much about families in this period. The exception, along with

fatāwa, are these court records. “The value of the Islamic court archives for family history lies in the nature of Islamic law and the institutionalization of the legal and judicial system under the Ottomans . . . Family law is minutely detailed and explicit on the rights and obligations of family members with regard to marriage and divorce, inheritance, custody . . . , and relationships between spouses.” All family matters could and did come into the courts and got recorded; and exact kinship relationships were also recorded. (p. 12)

In pursuing her research on families in late 18th and early 19th century Aleppo, Meriwether (Professor of History at Denison University) has built her case using records of the *Mahkama Shar’iyya* (her transliteration) of Aleppo. Additionally, she brings into her research the work of other scholars working on related social, political, and economic topics in other areas of the contemporaneous Ottoman Empire or other time periods. References to the work of such scholars as Abraham Marcus, Bruce Masters, Judith Tucker, Beshara Doumani, Linda Schilcher, Kenneth Cuno, and Haim Gerber, among others, help to put the Aleppo of this period in the broad context of the region and help to define how it was similar or different from other places in the Ottoman Empire.

The study focuses on Aleppo’s “elite” (‘*ulamā*, *ashrāf*, ‘*askarī*, *aghawāt*, and merchants). As a means of further control, the author used only those records which refer to families with surnames. The author has three points of focus: the household; marriage; and inheritance. These, in turn, lead to three “themes”: Family and law; Family and the gender system; composition of “the family” (i.e., which kin actually counted as “family”).

The introduction and chapter one lay the groundwork in terms of methodology, intention, and historical background. Thereafter the chapters cover the three foci: one on Family and Household; one on “Marriage Bond and Marriage Partners”; and two on inheritance (traditional inheritance and *waqf*). The book includes extensive footnotes and a solid bibliography. There are two appendices: a table of the 104 notable Aleppine families included in the study, giving their elite status (e.g., ‘*Ulamā*) and their years of residence in the city; and genealogical charts of ten of the families. The *IJMES* transliteration scheme is used. The index is quite good, but non-Middle East specialists may have some problems as many subjects appear, as Arabic terms without cross references (two exceptions are: *ʿayān*, see Notables, and *iltizām*, see Tax farming). However, this is not a major drawback.

The author found in the course of her research that many of the old cherished notions about Middle Eastern families are just that—*notions*. For example, while extended and large patriarchal and patrilineal families, paternal cousin marriage, easy divorce, polygyny, etc., might, at best, be the ideal, they were by no means commonplace. In fact, many of these “ideals” were the minority pattern. Complex households may have been the desired pattern of the society, but many factors mitigated against this happening. Looming particularly large were factors such as early mortality (long life spans for adults were unusual and many children never made it to adulthood) and the larger political and economic scene. The author also found that individuals were not always in the same type of household throughout their lives; that often a person might experience several family structures within his or her lifetime (e.g., an extended family at one point, a small nuclear household at another).

Here are some examples of what the author found did happen and matter. Maternal relationships were very important (especially brothers and sisters) and not disregarded in favor of exclusive paternal relationships. Guardianship of minor children often went to widows or maternal kin. Families found legal ways to keep their patrimonies undivided for years or even decades; a death did not necessarily lead to the immediate division and dispersal of property. Inheritance rarely extended beyond close kin (children, parents, spouses, siblings, aunts and uncles, and first cousins). Women frequently found ways to protect themselves against divorce or the taking of other wives. In fact, most men had only one wife and families tended to be small. Women were often heads of household and many people spent most of their adult lives unmarried. Women often founded *waqf* (although these were usually smaller than those established by men); this was often a way for women to take care of other women and minor children. Women often served as *mutawallī*. Marriages were more likely to be made outside of the family than within it.

In conclusion, *The Kin Who Count* is heartily recommended as another fine example of social-historical scholarship using court documents. The work is well organized and methodical, but certainly not dry. It is not overloaded with jargon, either Arabic/Islamic terms or social science terminology. This work will be useful to the Middle East specialist as well as non-Middle East oriented social scientists and historians (with the one caveat regarding terms in the index). It is an excellent example of the

importance that primary source legal documents can play in research and for furthering our understanding of the social history of the early modern Middle East.

MERYLE GASTON

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Strategic Geography and the Changing Middle East. By Geoffrey Kemp and Robert E. Harkavy. Washington, D.C. : Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, in cooperation with Brookings Institution Press, ©1997. Pp. 493 p. : maps.

The breakup of the Soviet Union allowed the establishment of new links between the newly independent states of the Caucasus and Central Asia, and the countries of the Middle East. This region at the confluence of three continents has immense underground energy resources, and these links may have great economic significance; however, they may also contain the seeds of future political instabilities and military conflicts. The present volume sets out to be a comprehensive review of the geopolitics of what the authors call the “Greater Middle East” in the post-USSR and post-Gulf War period.

Collaborating here for the first time are two authors well known for their work in separate but complementary areas. Geoffrey Kemp, Director of Regional Strategic Programs at the Nixon Center for Peace and Freedom, was a Special Assistant to President Reagan for National Security Affairs and then the Director of the Middle East Arms Control Project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He is the author and editor of books on nuclear weapons in the Middle East and US policy toward the Middle East and South Asia. Robert E. Harkavy served with the US Atomic Energy Commission and the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and is now a Professor of Political Science at Pennsylvania State University. He has authored and edited books on the arms trade, overseas bases of the superpowers, nuclear proliferation, and wars and national security policies of Third World countries.

The authors are two prominent academics who were also high-ranking policy advisors in or close to the US government. Based on work at world-class libraries and research institutions, as well as privileged personal contacts, the text is abundantly documented with hundreds of citations from books, journal and newspaper articles, ephemeral “gray literature” (unpublished Los Alamos National Laboratory reports, a brochure about a prototype electric vehicle, etc.) and even footnotes based on a “private

communication” with a prominent author (p. 436) and a conversation with an unnamed physicist (p. 455). The authors were, to some extent, actors in certain of the events they are covering, and they have a privileged, insider’s look at their topic. This is the unique significance of the title under review.

Part One presents an overview of “Geography and History.” In Part Two, the authors study both the ending of the Cold War and the continuing regional conflicts in the Middle East and the Caspian Basin. Part Three, “Military Operations and Planning,” draws lessons from recent wars in the Greater Middle East, especially in the light of the “Revolution in Military Affairs”. Part Four is a delineation of the fundamental duality of the authors’ thesis: the role of increasingly destructive military conflicts in the region, on the one hand, and the search for cooperative regional prosperity, on the other.

In close to 500 pages, the authors draw on a wealth of data in support of their analysis. Numerous terms from the field of contemporary strategic and military studies, including many acronyms (ASE, COIN, HET vs. HEMTT, LIC, SPOT, etc.) are defined, explained and largely well-indexed. The book is illustrated with 36 maps and numerous charts and tables. Most of the maps are of a schematic nature (only international boundaries represented), reflecting and emphasizing the authors’ abstractions. Given their significance (the map designer receives special mention in the Preface), it would probably have been recommendable to present a list of maps.

The volume is supplemented with five fairly substantial appendices. Although the authors present them as quasi-independent mini-essays, some or all of these could have been integrated into the main text. The first, “Alternatives to Persian Gulf and Caspian Basin Oil” is a consideration aimed at reducing the industrialized world’s dependence on the region, and it dwells on “Oil From Other Regions,” as well as “Alternatives to Oil”—electric vehicles, ethanol, methanol, the flywheel, etc. The third, “India’s Energy Needs,” and the fourth, “The Status of Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Weapons Programs in the Greater Middle East,” are speculative discussions on the two central theses of the treatise—peaceful development based on mutual dependence versus increasingly more destructive and uncontrollable technologies of destruction. The last appendix, “Future Greater Middle East War Scenarios,” to the extent it talks about wars between India and Pakistan, may be considered to have had predictive power in presaging recently renewed tensions over Kashmir.

The ambitious nature of the project might have left the authors (and the presumed proofreaders) unable to prevent certain errors and tendentious statements from creeping in: it is embarrassing for a book on the Middle East to claim, "Arabs and Moors having reached . . . the gates of Vienna in the seventeenth century" (p. 6), and it is also questionable whether the Russian legionnaires in the Caucasus were indeed consistently backing the Armenian side in the Karabagh conflict (p. 192). The fairly substantial index (over 30 pages) has several errors and oversights.

The Gulf War occupies a prominent place in the discussion of numerous theoretical issues. It is hoped that a future revision would also touch upon more recent conflicts, such as NATO's war against Yugoslavia, Russia's Chechnya offensive, etc. Such revisions would also be expected to revisit the necessarily speculative discourse appearing in this first edition as either accurate or as over-speculative.

The book should be of interest to libraries with collections in Middle Eastern Studies, Political Science and International Studies. In fact, research libraries and policy think tanks in the thirty-plus countries covered by this study ought to acquire this book as a record of what a superpower knows and thinks about the economic and strategic significance of their country in the context of their larger neighborhood and from the perspective of US global interests. Curiously, the outer binding of the reviewer's copy cracked after only a few hours of perusal. (If this is typical of the entire print-run, it does not bode well for the intended heavy use in college and university libraries.)

ARED MISIRLIYAN

ARTURUS TRANSLATION SERVICES (MONTREAL)

Western Representations of the Muslim Woman: From Termagant to Odalisque. By Mohja Kahf. Austin : University of Texas Press, 1999. Pp. 207. Includes bibliographical references and index. ISBN 0-292-74336-X, \$35.00 (hardcover) ISBN 0-292-74337-8, \$16.95 (paperback)

Mohja Kahf, Assistant Professor of English and Middle Eastern studies at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, examines in this study the changing image of the Muslim woman in Western literature. Combining examples and analysis, the study covers medieval chansons, Renaissance drama, Enlightenment prose, and romantic poetry of the early nineteenth

century. Kahf shows how politics and social norms in Europe influenced cultural images. Although not examining all the Muslim female characters in Western literature, Kahf analyses the most important examples and studies the common features in these representations. The bibliography includes numerous literary works and studies.

The main medieval literary work examined is *La chanson de Roland*. It includes one of the earliest portrayals of Muslim women in Western literature, Queen Bramimonde, the wife of the Muslim king of Spain, who killed Roland, the nephew of Charlemagne in 778. As Muslim, she is described as assertive and loud, deeply involved in the competition between Islam and Christianity. When she became Christian, she also changed her name and her character into feminine passivity. Contrary to the tense military conflict in the earlier periods, the Renaissance witnessed more commercial relations with the Muslim world, viewing the Ottoman empire as a world power. This brought about a gradual change in attitude towards Muslims in life and in literature. Thus, issues of theology are not discussed, and a general sense of equality is quite common. Gradually, however, authors used the Muslim world when they wanted to refer to issues relating to their own environment which they were careful not to explore directly but only metaphorically. Kahf explores these changing attitudes to the Muslim world and especially to the Muslim woman through detailed examination of works such as Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, and Racine's *Bajazet*. The change in balance between Europe and the Muslim world in the eighteenth century in favor of the former had its implications on descriptions of the latter.

Thus, the Orient is described in effeminate terms in general, and Muslim women are viewed as odalisques inhabiting the imagined closed harem. Among the works examined for the eighteenth century are Defoe's *Roxana* and works by Rousseau.

Kahf shows that it was less actual changes in the position of women under Islam that shaped the representation of the Muslim woman in European literature than mainly European attitudes towards the Muslim world combined with Western views on gender. This book adds an important dimension to the study of Western attitudes towards the Muslim world by making extensive use of literary sources. It shows how literary criticism and gender studies can contribute to the history of ideas and politics. Thus, while Western literary sources are extremely important for the study of Western ideas and attitudes, they should be treated very carefully as a source for

the study of the Muslim world in general and the Muslim woman in particular. While Western literature may have some accurate descriptions of the Muslim woman, it is often more reflective of the Western view of the "Other" than an authentic portrayal of it.

RACHEL SIMON

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Women in the Middle East and North Africa. By Guity Nashat and Judith E. Tucker. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999. Pp. lxi, 160. Maps, sources, index. ISBN 0-253-33478-0; \$29.95 (Cloth) ISBN 0-253-21264-2; \$11.95 (Paper)

This study is one of four which appear in the series: "Restoring Women to History." The other three deal with women in Asia, in Latin America and the Caribbean, and in Sub-Saharan Africa. The general introduction to the series is followed by Nashat's and Tucker's introduction and their surveys of the subject arranged in two chronological parts: up to the nineteenth century and from the nineteenth century onward. The bibliographical sources are similarly arranged. The book includes a glossary, a chronology, maps, and an index.

The series is edited by Cheryl Johnson-Odim of Loyola University and Margaret Strobel of the University of Illinois at Chicago who wrote the introduction to the series which appears in each volume: "Conceptualizing the History of Women in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa." While making each volume self-sustained, the repetition of the general introduction takes away precious space from the specific subject of each book. The authors of this volume state: "We have not paid particular attention to non-Muslim women in the region. We have reason to believe that the lives of non-Muslims, including women, were not very different from those of Muslims. . . . in the final analysis it was probably class rather than religion that was more significant as far as womens roles were concerned". (p. 3) While this might be the case, it requires research and documentary support, and in the mean time follows the usual trend of referring to a region, but in fact focusing on the majority and ignoring the minorities.

The first part of the book is on "Women in the Middle East 8,000 B.C.E.–C.E. 1800" by Guity Nashat, professor of Middle Eastern history at the University of Illinois at Chicago, who is an expert on modern Iran. As the title indicates, this survey focuses on the Middle East and hardly deals with

North Africa—even Egypt is scarcely mentioned. While it is true that there are not many sources for the earlier periods, and one should not expect an expert on modern Iran to be familiar with such a broad subject, chronologically and geographically. Thus, the user is ill-served, and the general editors of the series should have divided the task among additional scholars. Even though it is stated that “Little reference will be made to the role of women in Egypt before Islam; the development of women’s role in pre-Islamic Egypt did not directly influence similar development in the Middle East” (p. 7), this is still an omission for a volume dealing with the Middle East and North Africa, even if ancient Egypt is discussed in the volume dealing with sub-Saharan Africa. The examination of the early period is based on archeological findings supplemented by prehistoric legends, myths, poems, laws, and religious beliefs mostly from Mesopotamia. Other rich literary sources, including the Bible, are almost ignored. The examination is deficient in its neglect of the long period between the ancient period and the eve of Islam. Thus, foreign empires which ruled the region for a long period of time, like Rome and Byzantium, and had much influence on the status of women, are lightly touched upon. This part shows how changes in overall lifestyles and economics, like the move from a nomadic to settled and urban society, had greatly influenced the position of women, and these changes were not necessarily a result of changes in religious beliefs. This is a difficult chapter to write, as it must examine such a long period which underwent numerous radical changes. Thus, while the omissions are still troubling, Nashat offers a stimulating overall analysis which can serve as a basis for better understanding and further research.

The second part, on women in the Middle East and North Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is by Judith E. Tucker, professor of history at Georgetown University, an expert on gender issues among Arab women, especially in Egypt, Syria, and Palestine. Although this part covers a shorter period, it stretches over a larger region which witnessed drastic changes during this period and has been the subject of numerous studies in several disciplines. Tucker shows how changes brought on by economics and politics from external and internal sources coupled with social and cultural developments influenced the status of women, though developments were uneven in various parts of the region. While a growing number of women receive formal education and enter the job market, their position in the economic system is far from sure. Although many women participated actively in national liberation movements, once independence was gained their contribution did not translate into formal political power.

Tucker composes a strongly integrated chapter, based on her own extensive research and that of many others, and shows how developments in one field influence another.

Comparing developments across the region one can better understand general trends and the uniqueness of specific societies, thus raising numerous questions for further research.

RACHEL SIMON

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Modern Arabic Literature: A Bibliography. By Ragai N. Makar. Scarecrow Area Bibliographies ; 17. Lanham, Md. : Scarecrow Press, 1998. Pp. xiii, 255. ISBN: 0810835398

The need for a current comprehensive bibliography of modern Arabic literature has been addressed capably with the publication of Makar's *Modern Arabic Literature: A Bibliography*. Particularly since the Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to Naguib Mahfouz in 1988, interest in works originating in the Middle East has accelerated in the West. Makar, formerly head of the Aziz S. Atiya Library for Middle East Studies at the University of Utah, includes entries he has collected from journals, monographs, chapters, and dissertations. By "modern" he prefers the literature of the twentieth century; the great majority of the citations are dated no earlier than 1960 and are intended for scholars who read English, primarily, or French or Arabic.

Makar has organized the bibliography's 2546 citations under 27 major subject categories listed alphabetically in the table of contents. Within each category, entries are presented in alphabetical order by title or the main author's last name. Co-authors and translators are not cross-referenced in the bibliography itself or in the author index placed at end of the bibliographic entries. Citations are presented in standard bibliographic format. The Library of Congress transliteration scheme is employed throughout for names and Arabic titles, except in cases where names have been otherwise established. Parenthesized English translations of titles are also provided as needed.

For the first, and largest, topical category of Arabic literature—history and criticism, nearly 400 entries are provided. Literary genres generally have separately listed categories for texts (anthologies and individual poems for poetry) and for study and criticism. Also given individual headings are the narrower categories of ballad, comedy, Islamic literature, prisoners' writings, proverbs, and theater studies. Translated texts in English by well

known authors are listed here, supplied with the original titles' transliterations. Presumably, this arrangement simplifies identifying and securing an Arabic original of the work. A unique feature of the bibliography is the provision of special geographic categories, including the literatures of the Mahjar and North African writers. The citations noted under these categories contain a mix of texts and critical pieces. Missing is a description clarifying what exact geographic areas these terms cover. The prominence of Palestinian literature within the overall scope of Arabic literature is reflected in its allocation of categories for both texts and history and criticism. Israeli Arabic literature represented under a separate heading.

One of the areas that Makar makes particular reference to in his introduction is feminist literature. He remarks that the literature of Arab women authors includes a message related to women's socio-political rights and goes on to note the increase in number of women writers and professionals arising from the educational and professional opportunities afforded women in the Middle East. Citations for feminist literature must be gleaned, though, from other category listings since there is not a bibliographic section devoted especially to this acknowledged body of work.

The challenge of preparing a bibliography devoted to a rapidly growing literature lies not only in deciding what to include, but what, as a result of unavoidable culling, will be excluded. A complete compendium of currently published poetry, as an example, would require a volume all of its own, and be incomplete the moment the ink is dry. A research tool taking a longer view might offer a list of publishing sources, such as literary journals, translation institutes, and publishing houses that produce current literary works, so that readers could continue their research beyond the limits of this work. In addition, while many high profile, and prolific, authors in the field have been included in the bibliography, for some of the authors, such as Issa Boullata and Adnan Haydar, the entries included might best be considered as representative samples of their work rather than the total sum of their contributions to Arabic literature.

Although this is not an annotated bibliography, some indication of introductory resources in the various subject categories would have been useful for scholars new to the field. Without doubt, however, Makar has made an important contribution to the study and accessibility of modern Arabic literature with this manageably-sized and nicely-bound bibliography. It deserves a place in all academic and public libraries holding even limited collections of Arabic literature.

KRISTEN KERN

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

In the Dragons Claws: The Story of Rostam & Esfandiyar from the Persian Book of Kings. Translated and introduced by Jerome W. Clinton. Washington, D.C. : Mage, 1999. Pp. 141. ISBN: 0934211558 (\$17.95 paperback)/0934211566

The dragon referred to in the title of this work is fate, a central concept in Iranian mythology and culture, of which one of the greatest repositories of stories is Ferdawsi's *Shahnāmeḥ* or "Book of Kings." This Persian epic, written in the ninth/tenth centuries, is an amalgamation of mythical, legendary, and historical stories. Of the innumerable heroic tales in the *Shahnāmeḥ*, three stand out prominently and have a universal appeal, not only because they can be read on their own but also owing to their exceptional literary quality. Two of the three, the story of Sohrāb and Rostam and the legend of *Siyāvash* had already been translated into English by Jerome W. Clinton and Dick Davis respectively. Now, the third and, in the translators words "the most powerful of the three," has also been translated by Jerome Clinton into English blank verse.

In this work, the Persian hero and champion Rostam, who figures in several episodes in the *Shahnāmeḥ* and like Hercules takes part in an almost endless saga of exploits, is pitted against Esfandiyār, the son of the king of Iran. At the time of his encounter with Esfandiyār, Rostam is over five hundred years old and resting on the laurels conferred upon him for his famous deeds and service rendered to generations of Iranian rulers. Esfandiyār is not a villain but a pawn in the crafty machinations of his ungrateful father, Goshtāsp, who tricks him into going to bring back Rostam to court in fetters in order to pay obeisance to himself, the king. Much of the straightforward plot is taken up by exchanges between Esfandiyār and Rostam, as well as other minor characters, who discuss issues of fate, moral rectitude, and kingly conduct, all major concerns of ancient and medieval Iranian courtly culture. Scenes of battle take second place in this minimalist work that is hauntingly complex in the depiction of a violent encounter between two good men who are caught up in the machinations of humans and fate. Like the other two heroic stories mentioned above, this one too has a tragic ending.

This book, which belongs in every academic library, can equally be used in a survey course on Persian literature in translation or read on its own by someone who wants an introduction to classical Persian literature. The brief introduction provides the appropriate historical and literary context for the story and a summary of its plot. The "Translators Afterword" contains bibliographical references to other general works in English on the *Shahnāmeḥ*

as an epic, and for Persianists, there are references to the various translations and editions of the *Shahnāmeḥ* with explanations about how they have been utilized for this translation. A useful aspect of the translation is that important words and references from Iranian mythology and culture (e.g., *pahlavān*, *div*, *dehqān*) have been transliterated and glossed at the bottom of the page. Also, felicitously, the transliteration system used for proper names and Persian words is not the Library of Congress one but a simpler and more phonetic system that, as it is explained in a table, reflects the modern pronunciation of Iranian Persian. Other aids are two genealogical tables of the characters peopling this tale and an annotated list of geographical names that occur therein.

This work is a most welcome addition to the too small corpus of existing translations into English of episodes from the *Shahnāmeḥ* and of classical Persian *belles lettres* in general. Jerome Clinton should be lauded for his efforts in producing an extremely readable, accurate, and elegant rendition of an important Iranian saga that captures the beauty and flow of the original language. To make this edition of greater value to students and specialists of Persian literature, a parallel Persian text, as with the *Tragedy of Sohrab and Rostam*, could have accompanied the translation.

SUNIL SHARMA

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
