

For historians of science, the edited volumes by Little and by Albarella will be very useful in capturing the development of interest trajectories and trends in the discipline in the late 1990s. These two books will also be of obvious interest to those interested in contemporary issues in public and environmental archaeology. For the mainstream

discipline, however, Dincauze's volume may become better known. It is a highly useful reference book (and possible textbook), which many archaeologists may keep on a shelf over their desk to grab from time to time for a quick refresher on fuzzily remembered class work on a broad range of environmental methods and topics.

## Arab and Muslim America: Emergent Scholarship, New Visibility, Conspicuous Gap in Academe

**Arab Detroit: From Margin to Mainstream.** Nabeel Abraham and Andrew Shryock, eds. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000. 629 pp.

**Family and Gender among American Muslims: Issues Facing Middle Eastern Immigrants and Their Descendants.** Barbara C. Aswad and Barbara Bilgé, eds. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996. 327 pp.

**Arabs in America: Building a New Future.** Michael W. Suleiman, ed. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999. 355 pp.

**Without Forgetting the Imam.** Linda S. Walbridge. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997. 242 pp.

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Like the complex relationship the Middle and Islamic East has with the United States, the world of Arab and Muslim Americans is one fraught with friction, tension, confusion, and inconsistency. This is especially true since the September 11 attacks on the Twin Towers in New York. Arab and Muslim Americans had already been suffering from racism and discrimination not unlike some other ethnic/racial groups in the United States (e.g., African Americans, Japanese Americans). The problem has become deeper and the relationship more complex. Arab and Muslim Americans comprise a significant ethnic and religious group that has grown into a population exceeding ten million, is well organized and quite active in U.S. public and political life, and is now directly related to the United States' most volatile area of foreign policy. Yet, conspicuously, there is not one studies program or center (plans are considered at the Dearborn campus of the University of Michigan) dedicated to the study of, research on, or the teaching about Arab and Muslim Americans. This bias extends to scholars of the same origin, especially in the social sciences, few of whom hold positions in Islamic and Middle East Studies, contrary to the nationwide initiative to recruit African Americans for African American Studies, Jews for Jewish Studies, and Asians for Asian and Asian American Studies. Ironically, Jews tend to be recruited

(without scrutiny for possible bias against Arabs and Muslims) to teach Middle East and Islamic Studies. You will not find many, if any, Muslim scholars occupying Jewish Chairs in Jewish Studies.

From the Arab perspective there is a problem even at the elemental level of demography and with how Arabs are classified in this country. Because they first immigrated to the United States in the 1800s when many Arab countries were under the Ottoman Empire, Arabs were classified as "Ottoman" or "Turkish," which Arab American activists now see as the reason the community is consistently undercounted.

Just as there is no Arab American Studies in academe, there is no box on the census forms for Arab Americans in the ethnicity section, as there is for Asians or Hispanics, for example. Instead, Arab Americans tend to check the box for white or other. In my own fieldwork in Los Angeles, I came across young Lebanese Arabs who selected the box for Asian, arguing that technically their country of origin is on the Asian continent. Officials questioned their choice on the basis of appearance—Arabs do not look "Asian." Unlike Hispanics, Blacks, Asians, and Native Americans, who have their own "boxes," Arab Americans are absent on record as an autonomous ethnic group, but are persistently treated as a minority. Still, Arabs and Muslims have successfully adapted and as a group have gradually mainstreamed in U.S. society and politics. The 1960s saw the beginning of a national Arab professional-based activism (Arab American University Graduates [AAUG], among others); the 1980s witnessed Arab activism in the area of civil rights and lobbying (American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee [ADC], and Arab-American Institute [AAI]); and in the 1990s, Islamic American activism (Muslim Public Affairs Committee [MPAC], and Council on American-Islamic Relations [CAIR], and others) began. Islamic organizations proved to be more effective at serving Muslims' interests and mobilizing their support for political lobbying than attempts by secular Arab organizations for Arab Americans.

The aftermath of September 11 brought about a climate of fear, bigotry, intimidation, violation of civil liberties, and suspicion. This negative climate affected Arab

and Muslim Americans in particular—a situation worsened by the absence of adequate education about them. This environment tacitly encouraged the official and public targeting of Muslims. According to a study, “Stereotypes and Civil Liberties” (2002) released by the Washington-based advocacy organization, CAIR. Muslim Americans are facing very serious discrimination in the form of ethnic and religious profiling, detentions, and interrogations. Muslims have charged, according to the study, that “the U.S. government’s actions violated the First and Fourth amendments to the U.S. Constitution because they included ethnically- and religiously-based interrogations, detentions, raids, and closures of charities” (p. 1). It states that

the daily experiences of Muslims in schools, workplaces, public areas, and airports have often included incidents in which they were singled out, denied religious accommodation and otherwise discriminated against by reason of actual or perceived religion and ethnicity. In the past year CAIR received 1,516 complaints . . . a three-fold increase over the previous year . . . [about people] subjected to incidents of bias-motivated harassment and violence . . . including several murders. [p. 1]

In this atmosphere some Arab Americans are quite comfortable with checking the box for white, fearing that a separate classification of Arab or Muslim could be a government attempt to identify them for profiling purposes. Reminiscent of pre-Holocaust Jewish fears in Europe, there is a general reluctance to being classified or numbered, for fear of possible abuse by government or law enforcement agencies. Even those who had actively sought a separate classification for Arab Americans, because of benefits such as producing research data or accessing social and economic services, now fear that in the present political climate adding an Arab American category on any government form would pose a potential threat and be used in the current campaigns to round them up. Tensions rise as the multiple-pronged conflict in the Middle East intensifies. Arab and Muslim Americans directly experience these conflicts in their lives.

All four works in this review essay were published before September 11. They attest to a gradually growing scholarship and to a rich archival record of Muslim and Arab American contributions and activities that go back to the 1800s. Few mainstream publishers undertake Arab American projects. It is notable that Temple University Press and Wayne State University Press each published two of the four works under review. These books show that the story of Arabs and Muslims in the United States is a rich, nuanced, and dynamic narrative ready to be told in proper academic contexts. I hope that this review will begin the process of correcting the unjustified neglect in anthropology and the bias in academe toward this ethnic and religious group.

One of the four books, *Without Forgetting the Imam*, is an ethnography by late anthropologist Linda Walbridge. It is based on four years of fieldwork among Shi’ite Lebanese

immigrants. She explores the process of adaptation by the Lebanese Shi’a Muslims living for over three decades in Dearborn, Michigan. Walbridge contributes a sound and detailed ethnography of their religious life and their struggle between tradition and accommodation. Her remarkable rapport with the community is evident in the intimate details about their private lives usually closed to outsiders.

The book is divided into an introduction (“On Entering Dearborn”) and four chapters (“The Shadow of the Past,” “The Life of the Mosques,” “Islam in the Town,” and “Gathering Strength: The Emergence of American Shi’ism”). Walbridge provides empirical details that demonstrate the connection of Arab Americans with their homeland and their new home. She also makes use of interspersed comparative observations, where relevant, to the Irish Catholic and Polish immigrants to the United States. By making comparisons between the case of Shi’a Muslim immigrants and these two groups, Walbridge demonstrates the power and value of ethnography to empirically reveal both differences and shared experiences. She successfully contextualizes Muslim life in the larger immigrant fabric while portraying its unique cultural manifestations. This ethnography places Muslim immigrants in the center of immigrant community studies in the United States and will be of value to those interested in ethnic, religious, Islamic, American, immigration, or gender studies, as well as to anthropologists and sociologists across subdisciplines.

Barbara Aswad is the single most prolific anthropologist specializing on Arab America. Aswad’s work legitimized the study of Arab Americans as a field of empirical scholarship and her mentorship has produced generations of anthropologists (of which Walbridge is one) specializing in Arab and Muslim America, particularly in Dearborn, turning it into the most anthropologically studied community of Arab Americans.

In *Family & Gender among American Muslims*, Barbara Aswad and Barbara Bilgé state several objectives: (1) to illuminate the diversity of family life within and between Muslim communities in various parts of the United States; (2) to help meet the need expressed by human-service professionals and educators for increased information about the cultural traditions and values of their Muslim patients, clients, students, and neighbors; and (3) to rectify some of the negative stereotypes of Middle Easterners in general and Muslims in particular, which have intensified dramatically in the U.S. media because of escalating political conflict involving the United States in this region since World War II (p. 1).

Who are these Arab and Muslim Americans? Aswad and Bilgé give a brief but valuable summary of their immigration history to the United States, dividing it into early and later migrations (pp. 5–7). The remainder of the volume is divided into three parts. The first section, “Values, Structures, and Variation in Muslim Families,” has eight chapters. It “consists of essays that discuss family structures

and roles; religious and social values . . . and changing gender relations as families adapt to life" in the United States (p. 9). Yvonne Haddad and Jane Smith address Muslims' concerns to preserve Islamic values; Louise Cainkar writes on immigrant Palestinian women; Bilge looks at the intermarriage of Turkish men with U.S. women; Arlene Dallalfar writes on the economic role of Iranian women in Los Angeles; Nimat Hafez Barazangi explores the identity of U.S.-born Arabs; and, in this volume, Walbridge's contribution is on the *mut'a* form of temporary marriage among Shi'ite Muslims. Others cover cases of immigrants from Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The second section "Practical Issues for Families," is divided into six articles and focuses largely on Dearborn, Michigan, which has the largest Arab American community center (ACCESS) in the United States. These chapters address problems encountered by social workers, health professionals, and teachers. The third section, "Immigrants' Life Stories," "contains descriptions of the lives of individuals" (p. 9)—voices that demonstrate the richness and diversity of their life in the United States. Most essays are original and are based on research by authors from anthropology, history, sociology, nursing, social work, and education.

Michael Suleiman, a political scientist, casts his net broadly in his edited book, *Arabs in America* by covering a wide range of subjects from legal matters to issues about political activism, health, and youth. His introduction is like almost all publications on Arab Americans. It begins with a variant history of Arab immigration to the United States. Following this, he divides the volume into six parts consisting of 20 chapters, most of which are by academic scholars, six of whom are anthropologists. Others are from the fields of sociology, history, dance, law, political science, business management, and demography.

Part 1, "Profiles of Specific Communities," contains three chapters, one by May Seikaly on Palestinians in Detroit, and another by Walbridge on Shi'a Muslims. The second chapter is by Richard Antoun on Jordanian Migrants in Texas and Ohio (extending his longitudinal study on rural Jordanians by following their migrations to Europe and the United States). Part 2 covers specific laws and issues of discrimination as they relate to and affect Arab Americans. Part 3 is on Arab American youth and the family and consists of two sociological studies on Arab Canadians and one on the ethnic identity of Arabs in Dearborn, Michigan. Part 4 covers a relatively neglected sphere, namely health and welfare issues with specific reference to Detroit and Chicago by Rosina Hassoun, Aswad and Cainkar. Hassoun's study on health is rigorous and has comparative insights, relating health issues to nutrition and changes in diet and lifestyle. For example she finds that "a sampling of Arab and Chaldean foods shows that they are generally nutritionally well balanced. The original . . . diet . . . is moderately high in salt, high in fats, high in vitamin C and phosphorus, and relatively high in calories . . . [I]f one takes this basic diet, adds more fats, sweets, red meat, and

popular American junk food (i.e., what happens to the Arab-American diet over time) and decreases activity levels, the new diet and exercise habits become very unhealthy" (p. 166). Part 5, "Political Activism," includes chapters on community activism in Detroit, political challenges to Zionism, and a valuable chapter on demography that deals with U.S. classification of race as it pertains to Arabs and their formal categorization. Part 6, the final section, deals with Arab identity and ethnicity issues of assimilation, integration, identity negotiation, and mainstream perceptions in chapters by Suad Joseph, Lori Anne Salem, Ibrahim Hayati, Therèse Saliba, and Lisa Suhair Majaj.

*Arab Detroit*, by anthropologists Nabeel Abraham and Andrew Shryock, is the most recently published in this group of books. It contains a collection of "voices" by undergraduate and graduate students, professionals, administrators, teachers, and activists interspersed with scholarly chapters by Alixa Naff, Abraham, Walbridge, Richard R. Jones, Anne Rasmussen, and Shryock. It begins with a section by the editors, "On Margins and Mainstreams," in which Abraham and Shryock explore the immigration process in terms of a transitional phase through which Arab immigrants move between margin and mainstream. This framework "manages to capture the mood of Arab Detroit" (p. 15), one that portrays Arab Detroit as existing "on the margin" and "in the mainstream" at the same time that margins and mainstreams exist as "overlapping imaginative zones, each with its own relationship to Arab and American things" (p. 16). Arab Detroiters enter these zones relatively and situationally against the backdrop of *Amreeka* and their Arabness, some leaping "from margin to mainstream (and back again) . . . as though in the twinkling of an eye" (p. 17).

The editors conceptualize the process structurally instead of the more common framing of the Arab American experience in terms of celebration and exclusion. They observe that as Arabs assert their ethnic identity as their way to resist mainstreaming, they are in fact "Americanizing" and mainstreaming. The editors' use of "Americanizing" is ambiguous and can be provocative since it implies more than becoming part of the sociopolitical U.S. landscape. Observations made elsewhere in the section suggest that the authors may be confusing two usages of "Americanizing," suggesting that assimilation and integration are one and the same. This dual usage glosses over nuances, shades of concerns, and choices expressed in the other volumes under review. When the editors write that "learning to speak about and for themselves is how Arab Detroiters, *as individuals*, enter the American mainstream" (p. 28), the stress biases meaning toward assimilation and adoption of American ideals and premises, which goes beyond a process of mainstreaming. The other works show the concern and effort among immigrants to preserve their identity and *select* among U.S. qualities. The mainstream is not that rigid.

As an example, Yvonne Haddad and Jane C. Smith (Aswad and Bilgé, pp. 19–40) describe conscious efforts to

select among U.S. ideals and practices. We learn that, in general, Arab and Muslim Americans celebrate the holidays of Memorial Day and the Fourth of July with the U.S. mainstream. Some other groups do not. As I observed in Los Angeles, many Orthodox Jewish Americans, for instance, tend not to celebrate these holidays. However, Muslims find some mainstream activities questionable when they foster a "sense of self-centeredness in children" (p. 31). For example, they may see the celebration of birthdays as creating "an exaggerated sense of personal importance" (p. 31). Also, they fully appreciate the birth of Jesus from Mary, both of whom are highly venerated in Islam, but they object to the "extreme commercialization of Christmas in the United States" (p. 32). This corrupts the higher ideals surrounding Jesus, who is considered a prophet in Islam. They do not want their children to experience a commercialization of Christian religious ideals, and, hence, of values, which are integral to Islam. There is also concern about identity. A young Muslim American mother lucidly articulates the danger of interaction with the mainstream leading to a "loss of Muslim identity": "As long as . . . [it] . . . is not in conflict with Islamic values or ways, it is permissible" (p. 19). They see *integration* as different from total *assimilation* and that the former should be within the premise of preserving "our Islamic identity" (p. 19).

If we remain with the mainstreaming sense of "Americanizing," the point by Abraham and Shryock is conceptually very interesting, even though it appears to restate the obvious—that by becoming "Arab American," Arabs are joining the U.S. mainstream. This is developed later in Shryock's chapter, "Family Resemblances: Kinship and Community in Arab Detroit" where he discusses how the core identity of Arabs defined by family and kinship is transcended, but not erased, by the new identity of Arab American. The editors claim that the "mix of evocative and explanatory genres actually creates a fuller, livelier image of Arab Detroit" (pp. 27–28). Yet there are problems with leaving the "voices" of activists, poets, social workers, and others, without scholarly interpretation, such as when some observations are unempirically generalized or when outright errors are made. For example, in the contribution by a Chaldean describing his life experiences, we encounter generalized observations about the entire Middle East (p. 216). In another contribution the author Hayan Charara ethnocentrically and wrongly oversimplifies by equating *halal* with *kosher* (p. 416).

These volumes all refreshingly penetrate Arab life at the grassroots level to reveal the complexity and diversity of their struggles as an ethnic group. Despite the diverse contributions in the various works described here, there is remarkable overlap of contributors and research areas, revealing a concentration among a core group of scholars specializing in Arab and Muslim American Studies. The existence of such a core group of scholars and a sustained scholarship (as the valuable bibliographies in all four books reveal) suggests that there is a degree of scholarly maturation that not only calls for but is able to support the next step—the formation of university centers to house, develop, and foster the teaching of Arab and Muslim American Studies.

The blurb on the book jacket of *Arab Detroit* expresses what was until recently an accepted fact, namely that despite the "complex and rich world the Arabic-speaking immigrants have created [this group remained] barely visible on the landscape of ethnic America." Interestingly this observation was made before the attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., on September 11, 2001. I say this is no more the case. Almost overnight Arabs and Muslims have become the most visible, the most targeted, and the least understood ethnic group in America. Public interest in Arab and Muslim Americans and Islam has exponentially multiplied since those attacks.

It is time for academe to look seriously into the educational gap in its curriculum. American and Ethnic Studies centers must include Arab and Muslim Americans. The U.S. public was confronted with a major global crisis on September 11, but was armed with little or no education that would have enabled the public to comprehend the factors leading to it or the implications of the U.S. government's response to the crisis. Students in U.S. educational institutions are entitled to learn about the entire fabric of U.S. ethnic diversity, particularly in the context of current global landscapes. This is most relevant today as the United States passes through a major crisis of insecurity. These four works are part of an emergent scholarship legitimately seeking a home in academic institutions.

#### REFERENCES CITED

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