



Beyond the Exotic: Women's Histories in Islamic Societies (Gender, Culture, and Politics in the Middle East)

By Amira Sonbol



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This volume introduces new sources for the study of the past and present life of Muslim women that challenge paradigms about the ways in which "they" have been studied in the past. Most research has treated stereotypical images of Muslim women's outward manifestations, such as veiling, as passive and oppressive. Women were depicted as different. Exoticizing (orientalizing) Muslim women or Islamic society in general has meant that "they" are dealt with outside of general women's history and thus have little to contribute to the writing of world history or to the life of their sisters worldwide. By approaching widely used sources with different questions and methodologies, and by using new or little-used research (with much primary research), this book redresses these deficiencies. Amira El-Azhary Sonbol and the contributors deconstruct the past and offer fresh new perspectives. Authors revisit and reevaluate scripture and scriptural interpretation; church records involving non-Muslim women of the Arab world; archival court records dating from the present back to the Ottoman period; and the oral and material culture and its written record, including art and architecture, oral history, textbooks, sufi practices, and the politics of dress.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Amira El-Azhary Sonbol is associate professor of Islamic history, law, and society at Georgetown University. She is author of *Women of Jordan: Islam, Labor, and the Law*; *The New Mamluks: Egyptian Society and Modern Feudalism*; and *The Creation of the Medical Profession in Egypt, 1800-1922*, and editor of *Women, the Family, and Divorce Laws in Islamic History*, each published by Syracuse University Press.

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