



	<p><i>Conflict and Cooperation: Christian-Muslim Relations in Contemporary Egypt</i>, by Peter Makari—This book considers the role of governmental and nongovernmental actors in conflict resolution and the promotion of positive Christian-Muslim relations in Egypt. He maintains that, prevailing opinions notwithstanding, the last quarter-century has witnessed a high level of interreligious cooperation and tolerance. Relying heavily on Arabic sources, Makari examines the rhetoric and actions of official governmental and religious institutions, as well as civil society actors. Combining empirical research with an informed theoretical perspective, this work offers a perspective seldom available to the English reader on questions of tolerance, citizenship, and civil society in this part of the Arab world.</p>
	<p><i>Political Islam, Citizenship, and Minorities: The Future of Arab Christians in the Islamic Middle East</i>, by Andrea Zaki Stephanous—Stephanous is the General Director of the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services in Cairo, Egypt, and in this volume, has made a major contribution on the interaction between Arab Christians and Islam, particularly in Egypt and Lebanon. Beginning with an excellent historical roadmap of political Islam, Stephanous explores positions and critiques within Islam, and continues by engaging the question of minorities and specifically Christians. In the second half, he examines Coptic and Maronite identity and political participation before concluding with a proposal for dynamic citizenship, which goes beyond political citizenship and involves pluralistic identity. Stephanous’ book is packed with insightful information, theoretical (and theological) discussion, and hope for the future.</p>
	<p><i>Christians in Egypt: Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant Communities Past and Present</i>, by Otto Meinardus—The late Otto Meinardus is best known for his insightful and informative efforts presenting Egyptian and Eastern Christianity to a wide audience. <i>Christians in Egypt</i>, the third in the Meinardus trilogy on Egyptian Christianity, all published by the American University in Cairo Press, continues that effort.</p>
	<p><i>American Evangelicals in Egypt</i>, by Heather Sharkey—Despite a perhaps too heavy link between missionary presence and US diplomatic missions, this book traces the changing course of mission history in Egypt, primarily of the Presbyterian experience. It is helpful to understand some of the theory and the paradigms Sharkey utilizes, as it is applicable in other contexts. This book also is enlightening in that many of the same kinds of issues mission boards face today have existed over the course of time.</p>



	<p><i>A Vision of Hope</i>, by David W. Virtue—This is a biography of the Rev. Dr. Samuel Habib, an Egyptian Presbyterian minister who helped establish the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services. Habib’s life was inspiring and CEOSS’s contributions to Egyptian society are indeed significant. Virtue writes Habib’s story, which offers insight into the country, society, and the church in Egypt.</p>
	<p><i>The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak</i>, by P.J. Vatikiotis—This book, while published in 1986, is a classic volume, one that is detailed in its scope and depth. Examining social, economic, and political history, Prof. Vatikiotis covers the period from the early 18th century to the first years of the Mubarak presidency with a smooth style and with intelligent insight.</p>
	<p><i>The Struggle for Egypt</i>, by Stephen A. Cook—The jacket cover shows Tahrir Square during the 2011 “revolution” but the content of Cook’s text explores the players who have been engaged in attempting to set the public discourse and political direction in Egypt for the last century. In light of the historical study, Tahrir 2011 was not as unexpected as it might have been portrayed. Examining social movements and actors over the course of 100-plus years, and especially since 1952, Cook’s book is illuminating and very helpful.</p>
	<p><i>Liberation Square: Inside the Egyptian Revolution and the Rebirth of a Nation</i>, by Ashraf Khalil—This chronicle of the days of the Jan. 25-Feb. 11, 2011 “revolution” in Egypt helps the reader get a flavor of the mood. Khalil, a journalist, shares his observations and analysis of the prevailing context leading up to Jan. 25, stories of the 18 days, and some insight into the changes that took place as a result. He conveys the thoughts of Egyptians, and shares the seriousness—and humor—of the times.</p>
	<p><i>Egypt on the Brink: From Nasser to Mubarak</i>, by Tarek Osman—Osman’s book is a perceptive and well-written book about the development of Egyptian politics and society over the course of the last 60 years. It could have been entitled, “The Fall of Egypt” as it traces the decline in Egyptian influence in the region and the downturn of the Egyptian economy and political scene over the last century, with sharp analysis. Osman’s book takes the reader up to the edge of the 2011 revolution and is extremely helpful in understanding the factors which led to it. Osman’s analysis will require some time to determine its accuracy, as changes take place.</p>
	<p><i>Egyptian Politics: The Dynamics of Authoritarian Rule</i>, by Mayo Kassem—This scholarly examination of Egypt since 1952 contributes to the discourse on stability in the Middle East. The role of the ruling party and its impact on civil society is an aspect that can help illuminate Egypt’s present, and the possibilities for the future.</p>



	<p><i>Egypt: The Moment of Change</i>, edited by Rabab el-Mahdi and Philip Marfleet—This is a compact but wide-ranging compilation of chapters addressing the major issues in Egypt leading up to the 2011 revolution. Published in 2009, the authors of the contributions provide well-documented studies of economic, social, and political factors that suggest change would come soon. Anticipatory of the revolution, this book is essential to understand the plural motivations of the many segments of society that participated in the protests, and the areas where change is required. This is among the best books available in English to comprehend the dynamics at play.</p>
	<p><i>The Autumn of Dictatorship: Fiscal Crisis and Political Change in Egypt under Mubarak</i>, by Samer Soliman—This book, previously published in French, and in Egypt in Arabic, is a rigorous analysis of Egypt’s political economy, and the failure of the Mubarak regime to gain control over finances. Soliman argues that this failure is a potentially major detriment to the regime continuing to hold onto power. (The book was originally published in 2006, but the English version has a forward and postscript that reflect the events of 2011 in Egypt.) Distinguishing between the regime and institutions of the state, and incorporating vast economic data, Soliman—a member of Egypt’s opposition and a professor at the American University in Cairo—makes a strong case that change must take place. He offers indications of those changes, so the coming period will tell if they are heeded.</p>
	<p><i>On the State of Egypt</i>, by Alaa al-Aswany—Aswany is best known as a novelist, but this book is a collection of columns he has contributed to two Egyptian newspapers over the past few years. The columns help the reader understand the context in Egypt in that period, and are courageously written. Aswany discusses issues of corruption, policy brutality, religion and its place in society, (false) piety, and the question of Egyptian Christians, among others. As a Muslim, it is important for his voice to be amplified, and this book is a vehicle for that. He is a critique of the former regime, and concludes many of his columns with the sentence, “Democracy is the solution.”</p>
	<p><i>Egypt, the Arabs, and the World</i>, by Hani Shukrallah—In a collection of columns written between 1995 and early 2011 organized thematically, Shukrallah, an Egyptian journalist, weighs in on a variety of topics, including the so-called “clash of civilizations,” Islamic activism, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Arab politics, and the situation in Egypt as it has evolved, culminating with the 2011 Tahrir demonstrations. Shukrallah’s observations and thoughts are insightful and sharp; they are helpful to get a sense of the view from Cairo.</p>



	<p><i>Egypt in the Era of Hosni Mubarak</i>, by Galal Amin—In this perceptive and insightful book, Amin does more than characterize Mubarak’s era, but rather compares Mubarak’s presidency with that of Sadat and Nasser before him. Clearly, Amin is sympathetic to Nasser more than either of Sadat and Mubarak, but his approach, as an economist and as a social commentator, provide helpful perspective on the post-1952 revolution. Mubarak’s terms have been characterized less by ideology and more by the imperative of maintaining power, according to Amin. This book, like others he has written, is enhanced by personal anecdotes.</p>
	<p><i>Whatever Happened to the Egyptians?</i> and <i>Whatever Else Happened to the Egyptians?</i>, by Galal Amin—Amin is an Egyptian economist, but these two short books give the reader a sense of the changes in Egypt in various fields, including religion, dress, economy, culture, technology, and more importantly, their impact on society. Amin is a serious, but entertaining writer who offers important insights on cultural shifts that, while reflecting on Egypt, offer a recognizable lament for readers in other places as well.</p>
	<p><i>Colonizing Egypt</i>, by Timothy Mitchell—This book takes a post-modernist approach to examining interaction with Egypt. It is described as “a study of the emergence of modern modes of government in the colonial period and an exploration of the forms of reason, power and knowledge that define the experience of modernity.” Complex but worth the effort, this book is Mitchell’s first. He is an eminent scholar of the Middle East.</p>
	<p><i>Sadat and After: Struggles for Egypt’s Political Soul</i>, by Raymond William Baker—In Baker’s fascinating and highly readable case studies about Egypt, he demonstrates life in civil society, political parties, governmental ties with big business, and religious opposition. The models are relevant and helpful in understanding political structure.</p>
	<p><i>Inside Egypt: The Land of the Pharaohs on the Brink of a Revolution</i>, by John R. Bradley—This book is a harsh appraisal of many aspects of Egypt, and caused a stir in Egypt. The author goes back and forth between anecdotal and investigative writing, but can’t seem to decide which he prefers. Some of the information an insight is quite helpful, yet the tone is quite negative. This book should not be one’s only background reading on Egypt. [Only his subtitle predicted a revolution; he didn’t make a strong case for it within.]</p>
	<p><i>Egypt, Islam, and Democracy: Critical Essays</i>, by Saad Eddin Ibrahim—This collection of scholarly articles written by one of Egypt’s outspoken social and political critics is a helpful perspective on issues that are current. Ibrahim was among the first to publish a sociological analysis of Egypt’s Islamic groups, and that is the opening article in this collection. His articles are insightful and valuable, especially in the current context of change.</p>



	<p><i>Islam Without Fear: Egypt and the New Islamists</i>, by Raymond William Baker—Baker gives voice to Egyptian Muslim thinkers who are carving a way forward that is different than the more extreme versions of political Islam. He offers portraits of several important figures in Egypt today.</p>
	<p><i>An Islam of Her Own</i>, by Sherine Hafez—A book that is intellectually rigorous and empirically grounded, Hafez’s study of Muslim women’s community development work sets out to de-gender what she calls “Islamic activism.” In doing so, Hafez sheds a bright light on the kind of volunteer and non-profit work that is being carried out by faith-based groups in Egypt to provide social services. This exploration is challenging to common paradigms on Muslim women, and quite accessible.</p>
	<p><i>The Challenge of Political Islam: Non-Muslims and the Egyptian State</i>, by Rachel M. Scott—It is often said that Egypt is a bellwether for the Arab world. If that is the case, then this book will have implications well beyond Egypt. In Scott’s well-written and –researched book, she presents the theoretical aspects of the political place of non-Muslims, especially focusing on the so-called Wasatiyya movement, or moderate Muslims. The debate centers on individual or communal rights, and the distinction is important. Is Egypt headed toward a more secular model, or a more religiously identified rule of law? Scott’s presentation and analysis is exceptional, and important.</p>
	<p><i>Christians versus Muslims in Modern Egypt: The Century-long Struggle for Coptic Equality</i>, by S.S. Hasan—Hasan writes an engaging history of Christian-Muslim relations in Egypt, focusing particularly on the Coptic Orthodox Church and the reform movement with it. This contribution is useful for a study of the 20th century development of the Church and of interfaith relations in Egypt.</p>
	<p><i>Between Religion and Politics</i>, by Nathan Brown and Amr Hamzawy—The emergence of Islamic groups and parties on the Middle East’s political scene has been a cause of concern. Brown and Hamzawy analyze this emergence, focusing on the development of such groups’ participation, their contexts, their platforms, and outlook. Each chapter deals with a different country in the region, including Egypt and the Muslim Brotherhood, Palestine and Hamas, and several others (Algeria, Morocco, Kuwait, Yemen, and Jordan). This book represents sound academic research and writing. (Interestingly, Hamzawy was elected to the Egyptian parliament from a Cairo district in December, 2011.)</p>



	<p><i>Nationalism and Minority Identities in Islamic Societies</i>, Maya Shatzmiller, ed.—This collection of academic papers is of special value for its focus on minorities, variously defined. Three articles focus on the Copts of Egypt, and other articles focus on the Christians in Pakistan; the Kurds of Iraq and Turkey; and the Berbers of Morocco and Algeria.</p>
	<p><i>Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and the Pharaoh</i>, by Gilles Kepel—A magisterial work on the history of extremist Muslim thought and action in Egypt. Kepel wrote this book after spending much time in Egypt and becoming very familiar with his subject.</p>
	<p><i>Kidnapping in Milan: The CIA on Trial</i>, by Steve Hendricks—This book reads like a great novel, but is non-fiction. Hendricks has done a fine job of putting many pieces together in this account of the CIA’s work—in cooperation with and independently of Italian authorities—to take into custody a suspected leader in a cell of terrorists in Milan. This book is about the US, Italy, and Egypt. At some points, it is graphic, but in that is accurate.</p>
	<p><i>Taxi</i>, by Khaled al-Khamissi—This book is a very quick read, but extremely insightful. It is a set of almost 60 conversations with taxi drivers in Cairo, all in the course of normal taxi rides. Each one gives a sense of some aspect of current life in Egypt, though the eyes of literally the “man in the street.” Issues of economics and politics, religion and even a few good jokes are included. The translation is quite good and the content is even better. “You can’t make this stuff up” would be an appropriate description.</p>
	<p><i>Hold On To Your Veil, Fatima!</i>, by Sanna Negus—This is a smart and thoughtful treatment of social and political issues in Egypt over the past few years. Negus is a Finnish journalist who have lived in Egypt for years and clearly has a command of Arabic. The book is less formal than an academic book, but immensely readable and very informative, as it deals with the important history, as well as popular issues. Chapters deal with political Islam, Christians in Egypt, the veil, feminist movements, the role of the military, and culture and the arts. This book is a must-read for those interested in contemporary life in Egypt.</p>



	<p><i>Playing Cards in Cairo: Mint Tea, Tarneeb, and Tales of the City</i>, by Hugh Miles—Miles is a British journalist who lives in Cairo. This book, with his courtship of an Egyptian young woman as the background, touches on cultural facets of Egyptian society from the perspectives of Miles himself and his Egyptian friends, through their conversations. A book that reads like a novel, concludes with a fairly strong assessment of Islam.</p>
	<p><i>I Want To Get Married</i>, by Ghada Abd al-Aal—In this example of new Arabic writing, abd al-Aal is a blogger who recounts in witty and sharp terms the culture of getting married in Egypt, and the encounters with possible grooms her family and family’s friends arrange for her to meet. Blunt and observant, the blog on which this book was based is very popular, and the idea has been adopted into a TV series. This book is enjoyable and insightful.</p>
	<p><i>Accommodating Protest: Working Women, the New Veiling, and Change in Cairo</i>, by Arlene Elowe MacLeod—This book “explores the subculture framing the behavior of lower-middle-class women in Cairo and evaluates their constraints and opportunities in a rapidly changing city. MacLeod examines the conflicting ideologies of the lower middle class, where economic pressures compel women to enter the workplace, even as traditional values encourage them to stay home as wives and mothers” (from the book jacket).</p>
	<p><i>A Border Passage: From Cairo to America—A Woman’s Journey</i>, by Leila Ahmed—In this reflective memoir, Prof. Ahmed delves into the complex interrelationship of politics, history, identity, and the plural roles of women in both Egypt and the US. Ahmed’s writing is smooth, and her perspectives acute as she explores many issues through the lens of autobiography.</p>
	<p><i>Understanding Cairo: The Logic of a City out of Control</i>, by David Sims—In a rigorous presentation of Cairo’s growth and geography in the last four decades, Sims has done a masterful job to present the city as an exceptional case of urban logic. While Cairo is often included in studies of the global south, Sims argues that the city is in fact one that follows its own logic, often in spite of deliberate policies of the Mubarak regime to address problems and issues. This book is an important urban study of the largest city in Africa.</p>
	<p><i>Cairo: The City Victorious</i>, by Max Rodenbeck—The city of a thousand minarets, Cairo is a city of infinite stories. Rodenbeck has lived there before and during his career as a correspondent for <i>The Economist</i>, and tells the history of the city, which stands for the country, in a fashion that is intense and very informative. The book requires the reader’s attention, but that is not hard to give. From the Pharaohs to the late 1990s, Rodenbeck relates the sights, sounds, and stories of this, the largest city in</p>



	<p>Africa in a thoroughly pleasurable and challenging way.</p>
	<p><i>Egypt's Culture Wars</i>, by Samia Mehrez—This book is an excellent introduction into contemporary Arabic literature (especially Egyptian) and window into the world of culture in Egypt in the dawn of the 21st century. Mehrez is not a disinterested observer, but rather an active participant as a professor of Arabic literature at the American University in Cairo. She herself has been a party to a battle in the war she presents. The war has been much larger, however, especially in literature, but also in other areas.</p>
	<p><i>The Cairo Trilogy</i>, by Naguib Mahfouz —A remarkable story, told over generations of a family in three novels, which gives an insightful perspective on historical and social aspects of 20th century Egypt. Mahfouz, of course, won the Nobel Prize for Literature.</p>
	<p><i>Before the Throne</i>, by Naguib Mahfouz—In brevity and in profundity, the Egyptian Nobel Laureate has written a remarkable book in which a long line of Egyptian leaders stand before the throne at the day of judgment. From the Pharaohs to Sadat, each is presented before trial at the gates of the afterlife, and their accomplishments weighed. This book is a mixture of Machiavellian discourse on leadership, of theology and what it takes to gain entry (as well as the complicating factor of multiple religious systems over the course of Egyptian history), and of insight into Mahfouz's perspectives on these topics. It is a slim volume, and each “trial” is handled deftly.</p>
	<p><i>Karnak Café</i>, by Naguib Mahfouz—Mahfouz is the Nobel laureate and this short story, divided into chapters corresponding with the various characters' narratives of the same events, is up to the author's reputation. The story is about four young people who meet regularly at the café until they are taken for interrogation. How they, and the café, are impacted is the denouement.</p>
	<p><i>The Yacoubian Building</i>, by Alaa al-Aswany—Touted as Egypt's next Mahfouz, Aswany's first major novel is rife with intrigue and is surprisingly revealing of issues facing Egypt today. Told through a narrative of characters who all live in the same apartment building in Cairo, the reader gets to know the characters and what they represent. This novel caused a stir in Egypt, and was made into a major film. Aswany's contribution is important.</p>



	<p><i>Chicago</i>, by Alaa al-Aswany—Aswany’s second novel, <i>Chicago</i> is about Egypt, through the perspective of Egyptians living and studying in the US. Building on the success of <i>The Yacoubian Building</i>, Aswany’s prose is addictive. He identifies generational and social divides in Egypt, as they are manifest through these characters.</p>
	<p><i>Friendly Fire</i>, by Alaa al-Aswany—This collection of short stories, and one novella, transcends the conditions in Egypt, touching the human condition. The situation in Egypt is the setting, and you will learn quite a bit about Egyptian society through these stories. Al-Aswany’s introduction is also informative as to the reality writers face. This book is timely in the wake of the major protests taking place in Egypt in early 2011.</p>
	<p><i>The Pistachio Seller</i>, by Reem Bassiouney—A novella, this story set in the 1990s in Egypt is of love and of politics. The basic story of Ashraf and his relationships is an allegory for the complexity of international relations, including the colonial relationships that have persisted for Egypt and the Middle East. It is also a story of economics that the impact of sudden change in financial power. The question of identity is also central to this book. Ashraf, Lubna, and Wafaa are well-developed characters that require alertness on the part of the reader to follow the various levels of the themes.</p>
	<p><i>Zaat</i>, by Sonallah Ibrahim—In this highly allegorical novel, Ibrahim tackles issues of corruption, religion, and bureaucratic run-around in Egypt during the Mubarak presidency. The protagonist is Zaat, an Egyptian woman dealing with her husband and family, her neighbors and colleagues, and her job. Every other chapter is about her struggles and experiences, interrupted by chapters that simply set the context by reproducing headlines and news items from the Egyptian press. Ibrahim is a strong critic of the regime, and this book is surprisingly blunt.</p>
	<p><i>The Committee</i>, by Sonallah Ibrahim—Kafkaesque in its presentation, the story is allegorical on many levels: Egyptian and Middle Eastern politics and regimes, conspiracy theory groups, even theological in one interpretation. This story of a man who is summoned to meet the committee (who is it? what does it want with him?) is gripping in its simplicity and stimulating in its profundity.</p>