
There are not many books on children in the Middle East. To remedy this, Fernea (Univ. of Texas, Austin) brings together 36 autobiographical notes from men and women of Middle Eastern origins, representing eight ethnic groups in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Palestine, Israel, Iran, Tunisia, Morocco, Kuwait, and Sudan. Authors were asked to write about their childhood as they wished, thus producing a variety of styles and topical coverage. All contributions reconstruct the childhood experiences of a generation of well-educated and successful men and women who were either educated in the West or had close contact with it (a third have had some connection with author's institution). They all have witnessed the transitions of their native countries to modern societies over the past century. The century-long coverage and prominent roles of some of the subjects result in historical documentation of key events, helpful to both general readers and historians. Fernea's periodization and introduction to each period help to contextualize these autobiographies. Though not as representative as it could have been, this is an excellent collection by a scholar who has spent her lifetime learning about women and children in the Middle East. -- A. Mahdi, Ohio Wesleyan University