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Sephardic Jewry and Mizrahi Jews: Volume XXII (Studies in Contemporary Jewry)

Peter Y. Medding

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Sephardic Jewry and Mizrahi Jews: Volume XXII (Studies in Contemporary Jewry) Peter Y. Medding Volume XXII of the distinguished annual *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* explores the major and rapid changes experienced by a population known variously as "Sephardim," "Oriental" Jews and "Mizrahim" over the last fifty years. Although Sephardim are popularly believed to have originated in Spain or Portugal, the majority of Mizrahi Jews today are actually the descendants of Jews from Muslim and Arab countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia. They constitute a growing proportion of Israeli Jewry and continue to revitalize Jewish culture in places as varied as France, Latin America, and the United States.

Sephardic Jewry and Mizrahi Jews offers a collection of new scholarship on the issues of self-definition and identity facing Sephardic Jewry. The essays draw on a variety of disciplines--demography, history, political science, sociology, religious and gender studies, anthropology, and literature. Contributors explore the issues surrounding the emergence and increasingly wide usage of "Mizrahi" in place of "Sephardic," as well as the invigoration of Sephardic Judaism. They look at the evolution of Sephardic politics in Israel through the dramatic rise and continuing influence of the Shas political party and its spiritual leader, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef. Other contributors examine the variegated nature of Mizrahi immigration to Israel, fictional portraits of female Mizrahi immigrants to Israel in the 1940s and 1950s, contemporary Mizrahi Israel feminism, modern Arab historiography's portrayal of Jews of Muslim lands, and the changing Sephardic halakhic tradition.

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