



# **Moroccan Islam: Tradition and Society in a Pilgrimage Center (Modern Middle East (Paperback))**

*Dale F. Eickelman*

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This book is one of the first comprehensive studies of Islam as locally understood in the Middle East. Specifically, it is concerned with the prevalent North African belief that certain men, called marabouts, have a special relation to God that enables them to serve as intermediaries and to influence the well-being of their clients and kin. Dale F. Eickelman examines the Moroccan pilgrimage center of Boujad and unpublished Moroccan and French archival materials related to it to show how popular Islam has been modified by its adherents to accommodate new social and economic realities. In the course of his analysis he demonstrates the necessary interrelationship between social history and the anthropological study of symbolism.

Eickelman begins with an outline of the early development of Islam in Morocco, emphasizing the "maraboutic crisis" of the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries. He also examines the history and social characteristics of the Sherqawi religious lodge, on which the study focuses, in preprotectorate Morocco. In the central portion of the book, he analyzes the economic activities and social institutions of Boujad and its rural hinterland, as well as some basic assumptions the townspeople and tribesmen make about the social order. Finally, there is an intensive discussion of maraboutism as a phenomenon and the changing local character of Islam in Morocco.

In focusing on the "folk" level of Islam, rather than on "high culture" tradition, the author has made possible a more general interpretation of Moroccan society that is in contrast with earlier accounts that postulated a marked discontinuity between tribe and town, past and present.

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