The Secret World of God: Aesthetics, Relationships, and the Conversion of ‘Frances’ from Shi’a Islam to Christianity

Duane Alexander Miller

Abstract

On a relatively sunny, summer morning (for Scotland) I met with Frances at a coffee shop in what I will call Castle City. We had met through a mutual acquaintance at a university and the local Episcopal parish. She is a slight woman possessing a strong if introspective personality and at ease with words that made conversation enjoyable. She looks completely at home in the UK (and this would also have been the case 100 years ago) reminding us that the nation’s name Iran is related to the English word Aryan. I do not claim that this is a complete picture of her conversion, which as with many conversions out of Islam—whether to Christianity, atheism, or humanism—took place over many years and I try to give due weight to the various phases in this complex process. Moreover, it must be noted that this is the account of a diaspora conversion, because many of the key events took place outside of Iran.

The First World War in the Middle East is an accessibly written military and social history of the clash of world empires in the Dardanelles, Egypt and Palestine, Mesopotamia, Persia and the Caucasus. Coates Ulrichsen demonstrates how wartime exigencies shaped the parameters of the modern Middle East, and describes and assesses the major campaigns against the Ottoman Empire and Germany involving British and imperial troops from the French and Russian Empires, as well as their Arab and Armenian allies. This skillfully written text presents the full sweep of Ottoman history from its beginnings on the Byzantine frontier in about 1300, through its development as an empire, to its late eighteenth-century confrontation with a rapidly modernizing Europe.