recensions by the author who kept reworking his text. Luke Yarbrough skilfully navigates this difficult manuscript tradition and establishes a convincing text, closely aligned with that of the Tunis manuscript most likely copied in the late Mamluk period. The orthography is standardized to Classical Arabic, which is current practice and makes for a smoother read. However, I wonder whether we should move towards editorial practices that are more faithful to the orthographic varieties present in the manuscript cultures we are working on. The critical apparatus is, seemingly in line with the series' policy, minimal, which does indeed make for a smoother read and a clearer page layout. The full critical apparatus is meant to be published on the series' website, but at the time of writing this review (June 2017) this was not available. While I see the rationale for "outsourcing" this material it seems to be quite risky to put such essential material into a rather unstable format.

The translation gives the reader a very good sense of the different linguistic levels the author employed in the course of his text. It reads smoothly (at least to a non-native speaker) and the text can very well be employed for teaching purposes. There are some minor publishing decisions which are regrettable, most notably not reproducing at least some folia of the manuscripts and the absence of an Arabic index. However, these are compensated by some very helpful supporting materials, such as the wonderful map of Ayyubid Cairo. Overall Luke Yarbrough is to be congratulated for a very fine piece of philological scholarship combining first-class edition with a wonderful translation.

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NADIA ATIA:
World War I in Mesopotamia: The British and the Ottomans in Iraq.
xii, 264 pp. London: I.B. Tauris, 2016. £69. ISBN 978 1 78453 146 1.
doi:10.1017/S0041977X17000866

Supported by diverse literary, archival, visual and oral English-language sources, in *World War I in Mesopotamia* Nadia Atia provides a novel approach to cultural history. She tracks the changing British perceptions of Iraq from 1907 to 1921, wherein the war served as the tipping point. Atia recounts the (in)famous military campaign – the Siege of Kut in 1916, while situating this military narrative within a larger discussion, that of clashing empires, the psychological nature of perceptions, and the mysterious and motivating power of prestige. Though this work is geographically concerned with Iraq, Atia's broader questions engage with Britain and "empire".

The chapters are chronological, and Atia indicates changing British perceptions of Iraq: from Orientalist tropes of the exotic; to wartime impressions of a forgotten front in a hellish landscape; to the transfigured skylines as the proof of modernity. Chapter 1 covers the immediate pre-war period. Chapter 2 focuses on the Mesopotamian campaign's early years, 1914–16, including the Siege of Kut. Chapter 3 follows the immediate aftermath of the siege. Chapter 4 encompasses the occupation of Baghdad until the war's end, 1916–18, and the subsequent British modernization of Iraq. Chapter 5 narrates Britain's decision making for the Mandate of Iraq, especially following the Revolt of 1920.

It is not difficult for Atia to convince her readers that British perceptions of Iraq changed before and after the war. Perceptions of a place can, and often do, change

because of traumatic exchanges and occupation. More interesting, however, and somewhat more difficult to achieve is when she examines prestige in general, and "British prestige in the East" more specifically.

Prestige is introduced in the context of the British public indignantly processing the Siege of Kut. Created in August 1916, the Mesopotamian Commission's objective was to inquire into the conduct of the Mesopotamian front and appease the public, demanding answers and accountability. The Commission's report was published in June 1917, and prestige is absent from the findings.

Yet Atia asserts that the Mesopotamian Commission archives emphasize "the preservation of British prestige in the East" (p. 127). Defined as a conjuring trick, and power based on reputation and racial hierarchy, prestige could keep the empire afloat. Through a Saidian lens, Atia argues that to wield prestige was to impress and master the "Oriental mind". Therefore, she writes, "one of the reasons for the continued escalation of operations in Mesopotamia was the belief that any cessation in activity would be perceived as weakness by both Arabs and Indians" (p. 132). In this manner, she examines the Mesopotamian campaign with British decision-makers' eyes towards India, and not towards Istanbul, the Ottoman capital. In the midst of fighting a world war, Britain continued to think about preserving the future of its empire in India and extending it to include Iraq.

Related to prestige is the matter of racial discourse. Atia explains that British officials believed in racialized hierarchies so that they could justify prestige. These British perceptions of race and biological inferiority are manifest throughout the book. On the one hand, Atia devotes pages to detailing the ways in which the "Arabs" as a homogenous group were perceived as thieving, treacherous and duplicitous; on the other, she demonstrates the British misperceptions of the Indian troops who fought under General Townshend. The Sixth (Poona) Division was held in suspicion with regard to their loyalty. The British servicemen did not care to know if these Indian servicemen were Muslim or not. They conflated religion, ethnicity and loyalty.

The parts of chapters that utilize near-contemporary popular British novels are extremely commendable in formulating the British perceptions of Iraq. The ordinary nature of popular literature makes it an excellent source to see if an idea had taken hold, and to what extent it was widespread. Atia analyses *The Navy in Mesopotamia* and *The Gates of Kut*, both written in 1917, in one of the sections about race. The British soldiers featured in these novels dress as Arabs to advance the plotline, even convincing their fellow servicemen. Atia argues that the narrativized duplicity and distrust, which British servicemen believed characterized Iraqi Arabs and tribesmen, is "personified in the Arab who is not an Arab" (p. 95). In the stories, the act of "becoming" an Arab gives the particular British soldiers power over their fooled colleagues. However, real Iraqi Arabs cannot replicate this hierarchy (p. 97). Atia's analysis of these novels in particular – novels that are not just topically relevant, but were also well-received at the time – advocates for including literary perspectives on genres often dominated by War Office files.

The standard canon of the British in Iraq are Bell, Cox and Wilson. To these, Atia adds new voices from memoirs and diaries of servicemen and nurses who fought and worked in Iraq during the war. These new voices account for class differences and include more women, like the nurses Eunice Winifred Lemere-Goff and Mary Ann Brown. Atia remarks that Lemere-Goff and Brown would probably not have been able to travel outside of Britain otherwise, due to their station. Therefore, contained in their descriptions of horrid Arabs and the heat, is something of a liberating adventure. Atia skilfully demonstrates that perceptions are

not monolithic and to assess evolving British perceptions necessitates more inclusion. Thus, more broadly, examining perceptions will continue to create diversity in voices and methodologies.

While Atia has given space to the public and brought literature into the fold, her terminology undermines these contributions to changing British perceptions of Iraq. Atia calls the particular region "Mesopotamia" throughout, and, at times, refers to its inhabitants as "Mesopotamians" (p. 57). These terms are British perceptions already. Although this project is a study of British perceptions of the region, and not of Ottoman–Iraqi perceptions, to call the region Mesopotamia uncritically, because the sources do, obfuscates some of her overall objectives.

World War I in Mesopotamia carefully reflects upon the perceptions of Britain's waning imperial structure and all of those involved in defending it. Atia smartly contributes to the critique of this imperial structure and the inclusion of more voices in piecing together the edges of the war.

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MUSTAPHA SHEIKH:
Ottoman Puritanism and Its Discontents: Aḥmad al-Rūmī al-Āqḥiṣārī and the Qāḍīzādelis.
(Oxford Theology and Religion Monographs.) ix, 191 pp. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. £65. ISBN 978 0 198 79076 1.
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Scholarly interest in Ottoman intellectual life has been thriving over the last decade, and Mustapha Sheikh's book is another welcome contribution to the subject. While publications about the Kadızadelis – an activist movement which opposed innovation and especially practices of the Khalveti order of dervishes, and which dominated Istanbul life throughout much of the seventeenth century – have been abundant the last decades, he proposes to search this still largely unexplored subject from a new angle, namely the works of Ahmed al-Rumi Akhisari (d. 1632), a hitherto little-known exponent of Kadızadeli ideas.

Sheikh begins, in the first chapter, with a review of the Kadızadeli movement and especially of its first period, dominated by Mehmed Kadızade (d. 1636); he also surveys the relevant scholarly literature, noting that, just like the surviving Ottoman sources it uses, it generally has "a clear bias against the movement and its programme for reform". The second chapter deals with the figure who in fact lies at the centre of Sheikh's book, Ahmed Akhisari, a contemporary of Kadızade who is loosely connected with the movement, as many of his treatises take sides with the Kadızadelis in most of the issues that they had raised. Following explicitly the lines of Yahya Michot's research, Sheikh analyses Akhisari's work and shows how he was heavily influenced by Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) and other Hanbali sources. The analysis continues in the following chapter, which focuses on Akhisari's ideological associations with the Nakshbandi order; Sheikh shows ingeniously the affinities of Akhisari's thought with Nakshbandi beliefs (whereas on the contrary, Akhisari's attacks against "people of the retreat", *khalwa*, seem to repudiate later claims that he belonged to the Khalveti order). In the fourth chapter, Sheikh proceeds to investigate Akhisari's opposition to innovation (*bid'a*), a