

Billaud moves fluidly between examples from different ethnic groups (Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek), without providing meaningful information on demographics or expressing much appreciation of cultural differences. To a specialist, this is a bit surprising and for non-specialists it could result in confusion and misinterpretations. Lastly, the historical overview could be much stronger, as Billaud's effort to simplify the story ends up distorting important parts of the narrative. Despite these drawbacks, Billaud's work represents a significant and illuminating contribution to both gender studies and the historiography of postwar Afghanistan. ✂

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PATRICIA BLESSING. *Rebuilding Anatolia after the Mongol Conquest: Islamic Architecture in the Lands of Rūm, 1240–1330.* Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2014. xxiv + 240 pages, acknowledgements, list of abbreviations, note on transliteration, maps, footnotes, illustrations, plates, bibliography, index. Cloth US\$117.00 ISBN 978-1-4724-2406-8.

In this book, Patricia Blessing takes up historical themes as diverse as politics, trade networks, religious scholarship, patterns of patronage, the organization of craft workshops, and the emergence of a uniquely Anatolian expression of Islam. Across four case studies in as many chapters, she combines historical background with the formal description and analysis of specific buildings. The result is a richly textured exploration of a historical moment through its materialized form, offering important insights to scholars of history and architecture alike.

In Blessing's first two chapters, she traces the private patronage of Saljūq and Ilkhānid administrators in Konya and Sivas after 1243 to show how this patronage tracked broader political changes. In Konya, private commissions brought monumental architecture out from the urban core, which had received the bulk of earlier royal Saljūq attention. In the absence of the Saljūq court, and at a distance from the Ilkhānid, these buildings also helped establish Sufi communities as foci of Anatolian Islamic society.

The rise of the Ilkhānate, meanwhile, had a significant impact in Sivas, the new regional capital under the Mongols, where three major madrasas were built in one year (AH 670/1271-2 CE). Taken together, these madrasas show

how early Ilkhānid administrative involvement (led by Shams al-Dīn Juvaynī) and the continued legacy of the Saljūq state (represented by Ṣāhib ‘Aṭā Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Alī) helped generate a local hybrid decorative style translating the plastic motifs of Iranian stucco into the soft local limestone. While this discussion raises questions about the identity and availability of craftsmen, Blessing avoids crediting stylistic continuity to the activity of individual workshops. Instead, she sees the emergence of a “regional vocabulary” (103) in response to specific political, economic, and material circumstances.

Blessing’s third case study, Erzerum, neatly builds on the first two. Even more so than Sivas, the situation of Erzerum changed with the shift of political gravity to Azerbaijan, and the city saw a spate of madrasa construction after Ghazan Khan’s conversion to Islam in 1295. As in Sivas, the materials and decorations used in Erzerum look to nearby regions, only here influence comes more from Armenia than the Ilkhānid capital region. As in chapter 1, Blessing discusses the location of these buildings within the urban fabric of Erzerum, emphasizing their effect on the human experience. She further discusses the role of endowments (*waqf*) in the social lives of buildings by comparing several examples of surviving *waqf* inscriptions in Erzerum with the preeminent extant *waqf* document from the period, that of the *rab ‘-i rashīdī* of Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb in Tabriz.

The fourth and final chapter simultaneously sits outside the rest of the book and ties it together. Chapter 4 focuses on a series of minor foundations along Anatolian trade routes to show how patronage and workshop activity became increasingly localized in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century. It seems natural to set this after the other three chapters, since the buildings treated here date generally later than those of the other chapters. However, the historical overview that occupies the first half of Chapter Four includes two discussions that help illuminate the entire book: first, that Ilkhānid involvement in the region changed in response to both Mamlūk intervention and persistent economic troubles in Tabriz and, second, that Saljūq patronage of caravanserai networks (which the Ilkhāns discontinued) had begun to demonstrate a uniform imperial Saljūq style, suggesting that the Mongol invasion interrupted a regional process of political and cultural integration.

Each of Blessing’s chapters is extensively illustrated with photos and plan drawings. The choice of images for the ten color plates is not always apparent. Chapters 1 and 3 include very clear schematic maps of Konya and Erzerum that locate the buildings under discussion in relation to one another and to the broader urban geography. These help substantiate Blessing’s arguments about how location affects the political and social role of these buildings.

Blessing's choice to reproduce an older map for chapter 2 misses the chance to draw the book more tightly together with a uniform mapping convention and discussion of urban fabric.

Blessing makes a compelling case for Islamic architecture in Mongol Anatolia neither as a simple extension of Saljūq practice nor a prelude to Ottoman forms, but as a reflection of specific political, social, and technological circumstances. This contributes to a growing consensus that the Ilkhānid period was more an inflection point than a disturbance in an otherwise "normal" development in history and in art. We are left wondering about the first syllable of the title, which obscures the book's overall contribution, namely that the Mongol period was one of *building* Anatolian urban, artistic, and social forms. ✂

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THORSTEN BOTZ-BORNSTEIN AND NOREEN ABDULLAH-KHAN. *The Veil in Kuwait: Gender, Fashion, Identity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. ix +74, appendix: questionnaires, bibliography, index. Cloth US\$70. ISBN 978-1-137-48741-4.

Although the cover blurb of *The Veil in Kuwait* suggests Thorsten Botz-Bornstein and Noreen Abdullah-Khan will take on the phenomenon on re-veiling in Kuwait, the text deals mostly with attitudes towards veiling more broadly by students at the Gulf University of Science and Technology (GUST). The authors argue that the respondents viewed hijab as a religious duty, but also experienced pressures between conforming to the modesty demanded by hijab and remaining fashionable. The authors argue that unlike other areas in the Middle East where hijab has become secularized in order to conform to fashionability, in Kuwait it retains its religious importance and the students struggle with the contradictions. Although brief and occasionally poorly grounded in literature, this book is nonetheless an important contribution. It will benefit historians, political scientists, anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists of Middle East Studies or other fields including fashion, identity, and performativity studies and deserves to be read.

The authors distributed an anonymous, online survey in April 2013 and received 1662 responses, a response rate of 53%, 1236 from female students