ZEYNEP ÇELIK, *Empire, Architecture, and the City: French–Ottoman Encounters, 1830–1914*, Studies in Modernity and National Identity (Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 2008). Pp. 368. $60.00 cloth.

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Too often, scholars of 19th-century European colonialism in the Middle East and North Africa write as though the architecture and urbanism Europeans developed there had been built in territories without their own long-standing histories of design and urbanization. In this, they echo, albeit inadvertently, the European colonizers themselves, who downplayed local achievements—including the most recent ones of the dwindling Ottoman sultanate—in order to promote their own. Zeynep Çelik's new book aims to redress this lacuna by making the point that despite their downslide the Ottomans undertook numerous modernization projects and that these projects were both contemporaneous with and comparable to French colonial ones in Arab territories between 1830 and 1914. The author of works on 19th-century Istanbul, colonial and postcolonial Algiers, and the architectural depiction of the Islamic world in European exhibitions, Çelik is uniquely qualified to write this book on "the construction of public space in the French and Ottoman empires" (p. 3). Hers is a point that needs to be made, and this useful volume is richly descriptive, particularly in its treasure trove of period images, many of which were reproduced in color. Visual culture is a mainstay of the book and, in a sense, provides its framework. The illustrations inform the textual description and analysis that follow them on a journey through the most tangible artifacts of modernity imposed by government: roads, railroads, and train stations; river transport and ports; the creation of wider urban streets, open spaces including public parks, and new cities and quarters; monuments and memorials; clock towers; barracks, hospitals, and schools; and finally, ceremonies and public rituals that necessitated and celebrated the new public spaces.

Though her ultimate point is worth making, Çelik does not quite work through its implication regarding the status of the Ottoman Empire in relation to France. The book argues against the routine, starkly asymmetrical view of 19th-century Ottomans as having emulated France (and with it, the presumption that all modernization projects originated in the West) and for, instead, a merely somewhat asymmetrical image of "a two-way street between the French and Ottoman empires, if not with the same intensity of traffic in each direction" (p. 5). However, to wholly justify this attenuation, Çelik would need to reconcile it with the Ottomans' financial indebtedness to the French and the fact that, in many instances, they do appear to have imitated them. There is, in other words, some basis for assuming that the French exercised a certain hegemony over the Ottomans—as when, at the risk of undermining her own position, Çelik portrays French companies fighting among themselves over spheres of investment in the Ottoman world.

The book also raises possible debate by only taking into account French and Ottoman modernization projects in some areas, namely, those with "shared language (Arabic) and religion" (p. 4)—with the striking exclusion, however, of Egypt. Although the rationale for the book's scope is that by the 19th century, these areas had all been shaped by several centuries of Ottoman governance, it raises unanswered questions concerning local points of view and agency: did the common use of Arabic and the predominance of Islam affect the new constructions' designs, and would the foreign builders' projects have been formulated differently in settings without these traits? The comparability of the areas taken into account is therefore important only insofar as the French and the Ottomans were working in places

where these things were, from their respective points of view (and overlooking differences of ethnicity, religion, dialect, etc.), similar. Although Çelik discusses whether Ottoman projects can be considered "colonial" on a par with European ones—and concludes they should not—the overall shift of perspective performed in this book is one from a vertical view of France dominating the Ottomans to a more nuanced hierarchy: the Ottomans had been the primary shapers of Arab territories until they were joined by the French, who then outpaced them with respect to the implementations of modernity.

These framing problems aside, Çelik is at her best teasing out meaningful instances of French and Ottoman architectural and urban works responding to one another. *Empire, Architecture, and the City* provides original documentation of conjunctures that have much to tell us about parallel and mutually influential developments in French and Ottoman modernity. I sort these conjunctures into three broad types. The first is juxtaposition: the discussion of how inserting a statue of France's duc d'Orléans in Algiers' Place d'Armes altered the stature of the preexisting el-Djedid mosque (p. 118) is a good example of a structure's importance being diminished even if it is left intact and the new hierarchical relations such a change represents materially. The second is shared orientation: Çelik's analysis of French and Ottoman memorial monuments (pp. 132–46) reveals a convergence of purposes and symbolic vocabulary although with some notable differences. In the same vein, one of the most successful parts of the book shows attempts on the part of designers in both empires to incorporate pre-Islamic and Islamic architecture in new formal syntheses (pp. 203–15). The third and final type consists of direct and indirect influences across a wide web of locations: whereby, for instance, a French manual on the design of military barracks played a direct part in shaping the design of Turkish barracks (pp. 163–64) or the Ottoman alterations to Damascus made it "more European" (pp. 100–101).

In the end, the book's examination of concurrent modernization agendas confirms just how pervasive ideas of the modern were and the impact they had on a large part of the Arab world. Although it refers to it, the book does not address the sophisticated comparative and theoretical scholarship on colonialism, architecture, and modernity (particularly French and British) that precedes it. Scholars from those areas will be drawn to its fascinating materials, finding examples of, or challenges to, their own lines of investigation. Yet the book is even likelier to speak to a broader audience, who will discover provocative materials and fields of inquiry. As in her earlier works, Çelik has the great merit of introducing to nonspecialists the importance of architecture and urban spaces to our grasp of history.

ʿABD ALLAH SALIH AL-ʿUTHAYMIN, *Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab: The Man and His Works*, Library of Middle East History (Londonk: I. B. Tauris, 2009). Pp. 240. $85.00 cloth.

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Demand for books about Saudi Arabia and its distinctive religious tradition grew as a result of the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States. In addition to new monographs, the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives has sponsored publication of doctoral dissertations on Saudi history, first Uwaidah Al Juhany's *Najd Before the Salafi Reform Movement* (University of Washington, 1983) and now ʿAbd Allah al-ʿUthaymin's *Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab* (University of Edinburgh, 1972). Given this book's vintage, its approach to