

*Grecs: Littérature et Civilization Néohellénique* by Alexis Politis and Martin Luther by Matei Cazacu. Indeed, if one is left wanting for anything in terms of content, it would be for a bit more detail and a wider range of options within some of the bibliographies, to include both old and new scholarship, specifically for some of the more in-depth entries. This, however, is a very minor point, reflective of this volume's ability to inspire a thirst for further reading into the topics of its articles, and indeed, the majority of the bibliographic lists provide very helpful jumping-off points to swim off into the wide waters of Ottoman scholarship.

The wealth of information contained in this *dictionnaire*, and the clarity and depth of the entries, makes this a truly exciting book to explore, and will be something that students (assuming, of course, that their French is *à la hauteur*) will value as a resource. As well as the large number of entries covering a superb range of subjects, the 75-page index is in itself a valuable resource for navigating the volume's contents and exploring different topics and themes. What articles might be missing will only be discovered by those looking for something specific, but readers would be hard-pressed to find a subject that is not touched upon in some way. The content of the individual entries in terms of style, structure, analysis, and bibliography vary almost by author, but this is important as an indicator of how multifaceted studies on the Ottoman Empire are depending on discipline, research expertise, and methodological approach. As the editors themselves noted in their introduction (p. 8), "Sometimes, different perspectives may arise between two articles. Rather than being a flaw, one should see this as a boon; Ottoman history is vibrant, animated by 'schools' and by researchers who collaborate and debate". More than this, the *dictionnaire* is important as a showcase that such collaborations and debates are and should be conducted outside of the anglophone hegemony.

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AHMET ERSOY:

*Architecture and the Late Ottoman Historical Imaginary: Reconfiguring the Architectural Past in a Modernizing Empire.*

(Studies in Art Historiography.) xvii, 313 pp. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2015. ISBN 978 1 4724 3139 4.

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*Architecture and the Late Ottoman Historical Imaginary* is a book on another book. Ahmet Ersoy rigorously analyses not only the content of *Usul-i Mi'mari-i 'Osmani* (The Fundamentals of Ottoman Architecture, 1873), but also the context of its production, its multiple authors and renderers, as well as its impact on the future of Ottoman architecture. Through *Usul*, Ersoy discusses the Orientalist turn in late nineteenth-century Ottoman visual culture and architecture from what he calls a "post-Saidian" perspective, eschewing established scholarship that views this stylistic shift as a self-degrading and declining episode of Ottoman history. Instead, Ersoy argues that *Usul's* authors embraced Orientalizing and de-Orientalizing gestures simultaneously, which helped them establish a "uniquely critical yet nonantagonistic participative stance toward the Western scholarly establishment" (p. 184). Written for the Vienna World Exhibition of 1873, *Usul* openly and extensively used the formal and decorative vocabulary of European Orientalism on the one hand to "gain appeal and presence in the universal arena" (p. 219); on the other hand, however,

this strategic Orientalism now refashioned as cultural difference in the context of global capitalism was accompanied by historiographical gestures that defied some of the most stereotypical narratives of European art-historical scholarship. *Usul* depicted Ottoman architecture as an autonomous and historically rooted tradition with rational principles, which was capable of regenerating itself and making its own history, unlike the European Orientalist depictions of “non-Western” arts as frozen conventions that were unable to change and progress.

In the first chapter, Ersoy gives a detailed account of the 1873 Vienna World Exhibition, discussing such large events as the new arena of global competition and commercialism of the nineteenth century, while identifying Vienna and Istanbul as two peripheral players in this establishment. Ersoy reviews the site plan and pavilions of the exhibition, the Ottoman Empire’s participation policies in such art events, and particularly its “effort to promote the idea of local difference . . . as a distinct, superior and better-evolved product of Islamic tradition” (p. 54) compared to its rivals such as Egypt. This chapter also discusses *Elbise*, another major book written for the Vienna exhibition, which portrayed the diverse costumes of multiple ethnic groups and disappearing cultures of the Ottoman provinces. Both books, in Ersoy’s view, demonstrated that exoticism “was keenly embraced and accommodated by westernized Ottoman elites as a primary instrument of nativist cultural resistance and imperial self-fashioning” (p. 73).

The second chapter turns attention to the large and diverse team that produced *Usul*, which allows the portrayal of a rich account of the Ottoman intelligentsia. These artists and bureaucrats included the director of the Ottoman commission Ibrahim Edhem Paşa, exhibition commissioner and prominent painter Osman Hamdi Bey, Marie de Launay who authored the original French text, Montani Efendi who provided the technical documents, Eugène Maillard and Bagoş Şaşıyan who executed the drawings, and Mehmed Şevki Efendi who wrote the Introduction. Giving a detailed interpretation of each individual, Ersoy demonstrates how *Usul*’s ambiguous complexity was a direct result of its team members’ diverse backgrounds, disunited intellectual and artistic positions, and cosmopolitan inclinations.

In the third chapter, Ersoy carries out the textual and visual analysis of *Usul* as the first book on the history of Ottoman architecture from the Ottoman viewpoint, during a time when art history as a discipline was simultaneously being constructed in Europe using Orientalist prejudgements for Islamic art. In *Usul*’s account, “the development of the Ottoman style” involved three formative stages, moving from modest beginnings to classical heights during the sixteenth century, from stagnation to decline in the eighteenth century, and finally to breakdown in the early nineteenth century, from where it was now reawakening. By delineating its chronological progression, the *Usul* team was seeking to give credibility to an authentic Ottoman style, which was previously dismissed in European accounts as an insensible fusion of Islamic and Byzantine artistic traditions.

In writing the history of the Ottoman style and its new revival, *Usul* also construed itself as a manifesto of the “Ottoman Renaissance” during the Abdülaziz era. The fourth chapter looks closely at *Usul*’s possible long-term impact on the architectural practice of the late Tanzimat period, explaining the eclectic and Orientalist turns during this time in relation to the book’s strategic essentialisms. Many important buildings including the Hamidiye Mosque and Çırağan Palace become the subject of a new-found appreciation. In Ersoy’s words: “It is my contention that what the authors of the *Usul* called ‘Ottoman Renaissance’ was a conscious and modern investment in history that was resonant with the complex intellectual proclivities of the late Ottoman cultural milieu . . . [and] commensurate

with other revivalist movements in modern Europe” (p. 199). This Ottoman Orientalism, however, was often left between the unresolved contradictions of the dynastic, Islamic and cosmopolitan definitions of identity.

Ersoy’s paradigm-turning discussion of late Tanzimat architecture notwithstanding, one nonetheless expects a more critical discussion of the outcomes and consequences of *Usul’s* strategic self-Orientalizing gestures, and hence the balancing of the argument with a “Saidian” perspective. For example, one of the major criticisms of Orientalism is its poor scholarship caused by, among other things, the lack of sufficient time and appropriate engagement (see for example Mark Crinson’s critique of Owen Jones’ *Grammar of Ornament*, a book Ersoy compares to *Usul*). Similarly, *Usul’s* speedy production in a year, its reconciliatory gestures to survive the capitalist competitiveness, and the most likely fact that none of its team members had formal architectural training raise doubts about its scholarly credibility and hence its long-lasting impact, which could be handled more critically in this book. Similarly, Ersoy’s book would have benefitted from engaging more with the rich theoretical discussions offered recently by scholars working on similar issues in Turkish and other Asian modernisms. That said, *Architecture and the Late Ottoman Historical Imaginary* presents one of the most nuanced and sophisticated discussions of the principal but complex phenomena including Orientalism, revivalism, cosmopolitan identity and cultural difference, written by a scholar who is admirably competent in both the Ottoman and the European architecture of the nineteenth century.

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HANS-LUKAS KIESER, KEREM ÖKTEM and MAURUS REINKOWSKI (eds):

*World War I and the End of the Ottomans: From the Balkan Wars to the Armenian Genocide.*

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The imbalance in the scholarship on the First World War in the Middle East is a strange phenomenon. In the last century, there have been many books on T.E. Lawrence, the Gallipoli campaign, and the highly politicized Armenian Genocide, but other aspects of the war have been written about only intermittently. This has changed in the last decade or so, with the publication of numerous empirically impressive studies that seek to tell the broader story of the war in the region. Although books from the previous era of scholarship continue to proliferate (particularly books on Lawrence), it is this other literature that is beginning to garner its fair share of attention.

The edited volume *World War I and the End of the Ottomans: From the Balkan Wars to the Armenian Genocide* is firmly grounded in this new wave of scholarship. The editors, Hans-Lukas Kieser, Kerem Öktem and Maurus Reinkowski, have collected a coherent group of essays from top scholars in this field. The broader argument and primary organizing principle of the volume, as laid out in the editors’ introduction to the book, is that the final moment of “Ottoman cataclysm”, meaning the moment at which the pluralist Ottoman imperial project ceased to be viable, began with the First Balkan War and culminated in the Armenian Genocide (essentially 1912–15). Communal bonds were broken beyond repair during this short time