

conquest of the country in the 1830s and 1840s (Chapter 9), and the establishment of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen in 1967 (Chapter 10). Although all of these regional chapters have a major crisis as their vantage point, they also explore their broader contexts and often trace the conflicts back to the 19th century, offering a general overview of European imperialism in the wider Middle East.

Particularly thought-provoking is the epilogue, which discusses the question raised in the subtitle of the book: the imperial legacy in the Middle East. Although Hardy argues that British and French imperialism, including many of the boundaries, legal and cultural, which it established, did indeed significantly contribute to today's political ruptures, rivalries, and conflicts in the Middle East, he dismisses calls to blame Western imperialism for all of the region's current ills, warning against a paternalistic view of the region's populations as "passive victims of Western" imperialism (p. 205), instead emphasizing their agency.

The major strengths of the book are its vivid narrative and the centrality it gives to individuals and personal stories (the book also includes a *dramatis personae*). Hardy has a gift for portraying characters, skillfully sketching major figures (and some lesser known political actors). The book thereby provides lively insights into individual experiences of the complex processes of decolonization and anti-imperial resistance in the region. And yet Hardy manages to abstain from romanticizing the story, and leaves no doubt that the story of European imperialism was first and foremost a story of racism, exploitation, and violence.

A weakness of the book is its focus on elites—on political leaders. More could have been said on the history of the Middle East's anticolonial struggle from below. Moreover, it draws almost exclusively on English language literature and sources, such as memoirs, letters, and travelogues. The book's main focus is the Arab Middle East; and the author refuses to use the term "Persian Gulf," which he calls "Gulf" (while he keeps other historical oceanic names), a common feature of histories influenced, consciously or not, by radical Arab ethno-nationalism, which seeks to roll back the Persian influence in the Middle East and eradicate its presence in the region from the historical record.

The Poisoned Well is a popular history and provides neither any new information nor radically innovative interpretations of modern Middle Eastern history. It also lacks historiographical references and broader conceptual reflections. As a textbook, however, it will be of use. In contrast to other major textbooks on the history of the region, which often cover a vast amount of ground, its focus on selected major anticolonial crises makes it attractive and easy to approach for students; it may be assigned together with the Elizabeth Monroe classic *Britain's Moment in the Middle East* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Press, 1963). Overall, *The Poisoned Well* provides a well-written and colorful account of the Middle East in the age of decolonization.

BANU TURNAOĞLU, *The Formation of Turkish Republicanism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2017). Pp. 314. \$39.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780691172743

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In this carefully researched book, Banu Turnaoğlu seeks to shed light on the challenges of the Turkish republican state by tracing the origins and the evolution of the republican

ideas in the late Ottoman period. In doing so Turnaoğlu joins a recent trend in Turkish historiography that focuses on continuities between the late Ottoman and early republican periods, highlighting the legacies of the Ottoman era. Whether it is the culture of reading (Benjamin Fortna) or the notion of *vatan* (fatherland) (Behlül Özkan), historians are increasingly crossing the empire/republic political divide in their research and paying closer attention to Ottoman legacies on the republic.

One of Turnaoğlu's main arguments is that the republican ideal—broadly defined—had a long history in the Ottoman era, originating in the Tanzimat period, evolving through the Young Ottoman and Young Turk debates, intensifying in the aftermath of the 1908 revolution and during the decade of the wars, and culminating in the Turkish Republic in 1923. She reminds the reader emphatically that the republican ideal did not suddenly emerge in 1923. Nor was radical republicanism the only type of republicanism debated by the Ottoman intellectuals. Turnaoğlu argues that what happened in the post-1922 Kemalist period was the victory of radical republicanism (in the tradition of radical French republicanism) over liberal and Islamic strands of republicanism. Between 1922 and 1924, “radical republicans crushed all contesting and rival political viewpoints” (p. 11).

Through a comprehensive reading of primary sources, including Young Ottoman and Young Turk writings in books, magazines, and newspapers as well as the original writings of French philosophers such as Rousseau, Turnaoğlu convincingly demonstrates how republican ideas entered the Ottoman intellectual world and how they evolved in dialogue with the French political thought and practice. The intellectual debt the Turkish republic owes to French republicanism and to the 19th- and early-20th-century Ottoman political thought has in fact been recognized by scholars for some time. To give one specific example, in a recent work on Atatürk, George Gawrych readily acknowledges the influence on Mustafa Kemal, of both Namık Kemal and Rousseau. Scholars such as Şerif Mardin, Erik Zürcher, and Şükrü Hanioglu have written in some detail on the legacies of Ottoman political thought. In a multivolume series on political thought in modern Turkey, İletişim Yayınları dedicated a separate volume to the legacies of the Tanzimat and Meşrutiyet. Some of these works are in Turkish, some are a little outdated. Others focus on one specific period or specific intellectual. Turnaoğlu's unique contribution lies in her careful and comprehensive rereading of Young Ottoman and Young Turk writings, with republicanism in mind, allowing her to document in detail the evolution of late Ottoman political ideas from the early 19th century to the early 1920s. Taking republicanism as the central question, she is able to demonstrate divergent visions among Ottoman intellectuals regarding a republican model, including conservative, liberal, Islamist, and radical positions. In doing so, she wants to acknowledge the contributions of a wide range of Young Ottoman and Young Turk intellectuals to the making of the Turkish Republic. An undercurrent throughout the book is a desire to shift the focus away from the leadership of the early republic to the sphere of intellectuals and ideas.

The book is organized chronologically and consists of an introduction, nine main chapters, and a concluding chapter. Turnaoğlu writes in a clear and reader-friendly style, which makes the book stand out as an accessible intellectual history—not an insignificant matter given that some of the available works in Ottoman intellectual history are so detailed and written in a way largely inaccessible to a general reader. The dramatis

personae at the beginning of the book on the important intellectuals and statesmen discussed is a useful addition for the nonspecialist reader. Chapter 1 provides background to the Ottoman political thought in the classical period. Chapter 2 considers the age of Selim and the initial Ottoman responses to the French Revolution. Chapters 3 through 6 explore the Tanzimat period and Young Ottoman political thought as well as the ideas of the Young Turks and the Young Turk Revolution. The subsequent chapters focus on the war years, the abolition of the monarchy, and the proclamation of the republic. The conclusion seems intended to offer a brief overview of how the new state's radical republicanism translated into policy. Turnaoğlu is at her best when discussing ideas and ideology leading up to the Republic. In the conclusion she moves into the sphere of Republican politics and policies, less familiar territory for the author. This section would have benefited from some familiarity with recent historiography, or alternatively the policy discussion could have been skipped altogether.

Young Ottomans such as Namık Kemal advocated certain republican ideals, but under constitutional monarchy. Only a small group of radicals publishing in the journal *İnkılap* (Radical Reform) advocated a republican government based on equality, secular values, and confidence in human rationality and progress. They believed this new political order would be created through a revolution. According to Turnaoğlu it was this strand of Young Ottoman thought that served as a precursor to the Kemalist republicanism.

The Young Turks provided both new ideas and a model for revolutionary action. The “positivist Parisian Young Turks” such as Ahmed Rıza defended core republican ideas such as liberty, equality, justice and fraternity, but without promoting a republican government. Turnaoğlu calls their ideology “republicanism without a republic.” Their main contribution to the 1920s republicanism was their espousal of positivism and secularism. Inspired by French republican ideals, Ahmed Rıza advocated a separation between the private and public spheres and the removal of religion entirely from the public sphere. Similarly, leaders of the 1908 Young Turk Revolution did not see themselves as republicans, but by way of example they made a revolution a real possibility for the post-1922 leadership. (And, of course, most of the founding leaders of the republic themselves had been members of the CUP.) Discussing 1908 as a revolution inevitably raises the question of whether this was a true revolution. Turnaoğlu writes those involved in it considered it an *inkilāb* (radical transformation) rather than a *thawra* (revolt) (p. 120). Some Young Turks apparently compared their *inkilāb* to the great American and French revolutions. In the post-1922 period too there was a sense that the Turkish revolution (*Türk İnkilābı*) was truly revolutionary, even though the republican leaders took pains to distinguish it from the violent revolutions (*ihtilal*) such as the Bolshevik and French revolutions. Interestingly, the old vs. new binaries of the 1920s and 1930s also originated in the aftermath of 1908, initially used to contrast the new Young Turk regime with the old Hamidian regime.

The final chapters of the book turn to the war years and the creation of a secular republic through an intense power struggle during and after the War of Independence. Here Turnaoğlu follows current scholarly wisdom that the war years were tremendously important in bringing closure to alternatives (such as Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism) and for the emergence of a solidaristic secular nationalism (led by Ziya Gökalp), which replaced liberal notions of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Here Turnaoğlu highlights that the emergence of a secular republic occurred at the culmination of a power struggle between

radical republicans led by Mustafa Kemal and an opposition based on ideological (including liberal, socialist, conservative, and Islamist) and personal rivalries. She refers to the opening of the National Assembly and the establishment of the principle of national sovereignty in the new 1921 Basic Law as “rebirth of radical republicanism.” She notes that the notion of national sovereignty, like so many other aspects of post-1922 republicanism, had already been espoused by the late Ottoman intellectuals, especially by the radical Young Ottomans. (She mentions an interesting 1914 letter from Şeyhülislam Mustafa Hayri as an example of how the idea of a republican state was on the minds of at least some Ottoman intellectuals and officials, even though there was no open debate in the Ottoman press on republic as an alternative form of government for the Ottoman state. It would have been interesting to have seen further evidence of Ottoman officials expressing support for a republican government, especially prior to the defeat in 1918.) It was, ultimately, the defeat in World War I that created the political context within which radical republican ideas resurfaced as a political project.

Turnaoğlu closes *The Formation of Turkish Republicanism* with a brief overview of state policies during the consolidation of the republican regime under the authoritarian rule of the Republican People’s Party. While the final chapters depart from the rest of the book by engaging in a discussion of politics and policies—which have been dealt with much more extensively by other scholars—overall Turnaoğlu does a fine job of tracing the evolution of different strands of republican ideas in late Ottoman political thought. When engaging extant scholarship it is not always clear how her interpretation differs from previous works, but ultimately the book’s contribution lies in its comprehensive treatment of late Ottoman ideas surrounding republican ideals rather than offering an entirely new perspective or interpretation. By doing so the book promises to serve as a useful reference for graduate students in Turkish and Ottoman history for many years to come.

MUSTAPHA SHEIKH, *Ottoman Puritanism and Its Discontents: Ahmad al-Rumi al-Aqhisari and the Qadizadelis*, Oxford Theology and Religion Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). Pp. 256. \$95.00. ISBN: 9780198790761

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Mustapha Sheikh’s *Ottoman Puritanism and Its Discontents* is a provocative intervention in the historiographical debates regarding the origins, motivations, and legacies of the Qadizadelis (Kadizadelis), 17th-century puritanical activists associated with the teachings of the zealous Istanbul preacher, Qadizade Mehmed (d.1635). Sheikh’s point of entry is the writings of Ahmad al-Rumi al-Aqhisari (d. ca. 1632), a prolific but unacknowledged partisan in the debates over controversial religious and social practices of the time. Such practices—including supererogatory prayers, mystical (Sufi) dancing and audible meditation, visitation of graves in the expectation of divine intercession, and other usages unknown at the time of the Prophet Muhammad—were the targets of Qadizadeli polemic and, after the mid-17th century, violence. Indeed, it is Sheikh’s contention that far from being irrelevant to the Qadizadelis, al-Aqhisari’s views opposing