

with the Ottoman past, and although its ideal of tracing the rational evolution of Ottoman/Turkish architecture into modernism has remained unfulfilled, and although recent Turkish architecture has, by and large, failed to establish meaningful continuities with the Ottoman architectural heritage, its rejection of the deadening effect of pastiche still raises questions of substance.

One useful result of these papers is that although the arguments they expound were often immoderate, implausible and sometimes quite frankly bogus, the views of the architects and art-historians in the *Usûl-i Mi'mârî-i 'Osmânî* published in 1873 are remarkable for their broad-mindedness and common sense. It is also salutary to be reminded that when it came to extravagant ideas, as often as not the Turkish nationalists of the early Republic were merely parroting those of foreign scholars.

Some of the contributors to this volume evidently think of themselves as 'post-modernists'. This is not to the reader's advantage. Scare quotes are over-used (a catching habit), presumably to indicate that many of their claims are figurative rather than literal. Another, more deleterious feature is their frequent failure to write clearly, with excessive use of technical jargon and a bizarre vocabulary of neologisms, not a few of them, in my view, malapropisms—monolithic if not immaculate (?); epitome (?acme); urbanity (?); inhabitation (habituation); innocuous (innocent); panacea (antidote); systemic (systematic); self-reflexivity (self-reflectiveness?); counterfactual (counter-intuitive—or just contrary to the facts). Most of the contributors have shown themselves capable of writing a clear sentence in other contexts: is this misuse of language part of the credentials of the post-modernist?

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THE TURKIC SPEAKING PEOPLES: 2,000 YEARS OF ART AND CULTURE FROM INNER ASIA TO THE BALKANS. Edited by ERGUN ÇAĞATAY and DOĞAN KUBAN. pp. 495. Munich, Berlin, London and New York, Prestel and The Hague, Prince Claus Fund Library, 2006.
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The Republic of Turkey has undergone enormous transformations in the last decade as part of its intensified relationship with the European Union. This process, which culminated in the beginning of accession talks in 2005, consolidated Turkish democracy, improved Turkey's human rights record, established respect for the rule of law and limited the military's influence over elected politicians. As a matter of fact, Turks and foreign observers alike are stunned by the magnitude of recent change, particularly when the achievements of the last decade are set against the dismal record of the 1990s.

Yet, seen from the perspective of the *longue durée*, the rapidity of reforms and the capability of Turkish institutions and citizens for adaptation to a new reality appear as part of a long-established tradition. This volume is a welcome contribution especially because it draws our attention to this neglected tradition, that is, the adaptability of the Turkic speaking peoples to the challenges of essentially new environments after their initial contacts with neighbouring civilisations. Those civilisations were many: the Chinese and the Achaemenids at the very beginning gave way to the Indian and Sasanian influence later on, which were then complemented by the Arab-Islamic, Persian, Byzantine, Slavic and finally the Western/European civilisations. What makes this book really valuable is that it makes the story of all those diverse encounters accessible in a single volume. The editors, Ergun Çağatay, an award-winning photographer, and Doğan Kuban, a renowned historian of architecture, should be commended for bringing more than 30 scholars together and nurturing this decade-long project to fruition in spite of all financial and infrastructural problems. The book is lavishly illustrated with hundreds of colour pictures by Çağatay, many of them taken in the 1990s, reflecting the pristine beauty of Inner Asia and

its peoples right after the downfall of the Soviet regime and before they were once more caught in the throes of change, this time at the hands of their new, authoritarian leaders.

However, those who might want to purchase this volume with the expectation to add one more item to their collection of coffee table books must be forewarned. The nearly 500 pages of this big tome are filled with dense academic writing. Indeed, so much information is crammed into several chapters (for example, those by Talat Tekin, Hansgerd Göckenjan, Peter B. Golden, Omeljan Pritsak and Ahmet Yaşar Ocak) that the text does not flow and is intelligible only to those who are already initiates to the field of Turcology.

The title of the book is an important statement in itself, considering the fact that the very name of the people(s) in question is a matter of controversy among Turcologists today. In a recent study *The Turks in World History*, (New York, 2005), Carter Vaughn Findley used both “Turkish” and “Turkic” together, conceding and discussing the ideological implications of both terms. On the other hand, David J. Roxburgh employed the term “Turks” in his erudite companion *Turks: A Journey of a Thousand Years, 600–1600 AD*, (London, 2005) to an exhibition at London’s Royal Academy of Art (22 January–12 April 2005). Therefore, should we call these peoples “Turks”, following the majority of Turcologists in Turkey and some others in the non-Turkish academia? Should we refer to them as Turkic peoples? Or else, should we rather regard them as a language community and introduce the term Turkic speaking peoples? All three positions are actually emblematic of different scientific paradigms in the field of Turcology and the editors of the volume seem to subscribe to the latter view. The subject matter of the book, as Lars Johanson pertinently puts it, is the imaginary land of *Turcia*, corresponding to a vast area inhabited by peoples speaking Turkic languages, regardless of whether they are the rulers of those lands or not. Their aggregate number amounts to 135 to 140 million people according to Talat Tekin (p.31), including the 3,000-strong Karaim from Lithuania and the 60 million Turks of the Republic of Turkey. Defining the subject matter on the basis of language affinity—rather than ethnicity, for example—is very refreshing and must be explored further.¹

All the contributors to this volume basically summarise the state of the art in their particular fields of expertise. However, a number of articles excel beyond the requirements of an introductory handbook. In addition to Lars Johanson’s on *Turcia*, Robert L. Cranfield’s chapter on Turco-Persian contacts, İsenbike Togan’s on flexibility in the political culture, Uli Schamiloglu’s on national identity, Charles Perry and Tuğrul Şavkay’s on culinary cultures, and Roberte Hamayon’s on shamanism are particularly thought-provoking. Doğan Kuban invites readers to pay more attention to the enigmatic Great Mosque of Divriği and the adjacent medieval hospital in Anatolia. Filiz Çağman describes the cultural milieu that produced two highly mysterious picture albums, preserved in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library and attributed to a certain Mehmed Siyah Kalem—Mehmed the Black Pen. The final chapter by Çiğdem Balım Harding is a testimony to the continuing mobility of the Turkic speaking peoples and gives information on the Turkish Diaspora in Europe.

Taking into consideration its breadth and scope, this book is certainly recommended reading not only for the lay reader, but also for students of this field. Even Turcologists might want to dig into certain chapters for newly mined information on tissues connecting the Turkic speaking peoples with their neighbours in a distant corner of *Turcia*.

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¹ A similar language history approach, albeit at a more general level, can be found in Nicholas Ostler’s *Empires of the Word: A Language History of the World* (London, 2006). Ostler’s work, however, says disappointingly little about Turkish.