

To add your own version of the truth as the truth is a procedure I, for one, do not accept.

In the remaining space I will survey just a few of the papers in the book, those more relevant to the aforementioned discussion of the *qadi*.

In Chapter 3 Brigitte Marino deals with the problem relating to the division of an estate between three heirs, when it becomes apparent that the deceased had, before his death, sold half a house to his wife, and the other heirs tried to challenge this transaction. They failed in this, and the author suggests the interpretation that they succeed because they come better prepared with the right documentation and witnesses. This is clearly an example of a straightforward approach, without searching to find fault with the work of the *qadi*.

In Chapter 5 Charles Wilkins studies the role of witnesses in the workings of the *qadi* court of late eighteenth-century Aleppo, where court employees such as bailiffs, and others, fulfilled their roles and then went on to serve as *shuhud al-hal*, court witnesses. The author is led to conclude that the *shuhud* in Aleppo were not like those of seventeenth-century Kayseri, people who happened to be in court on the day of the trial, but rather, like the *shuhud* of Ayntab, who were among the notables of the town, who may well have controlled the court as well.

In Chapter 6, Stefan Knost discusses the usual question of whether the *qadi* operated rationally and by the law, or whether actors working behind the scenes swayed him in this or that direction. The discussion is on a *waqf* in late eighteenth-century Aleppo, which had been a *waqf* in favour of a *takiyya* since time immemorial. Three people challenge that assumption and claim that the famous Uzun Hasan has dedicated this *waqf* to their family. The *qadi* decides in favour of the *takiyya*, eliciting from the writer the comment that perhaps in the psychology of the city dwellers, public *waqfs* enjoyed an advantage over private ones (a hint that the *qadi* here did not enforce the law faithfully). But the old custom was of sacred legitimacy in Ottoman law. Was this the source of the *qadi*'s decision?

In Chapter 8 Christian Sassmannshausen discusses the complex issue of a conflict within a notable family of late Ottoman Tripoli over the possessions of a family member who was considered mentally challenged and incapable of taking care of his own interests. That member hence needed a guardian to look after his affairs. In the case under review, the *qadi* was not of the opinion that the "natural" family member in line for the job was the most appropriate, and opted to nominate someone else. Hence, a series of legal conflicts arose that lasted for years, which gave an opportunity for the writer to offer several statements on the procedure of the *qadi* court, and the role of the *qadi* in relations between the law and society. As someone with experience of the seventeenth-century *sijill*, I am struck by the extraordinary length of nineteenth-century legal cases, a point deserving further study.

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FRANÇOIS GEORGEON, NICOLAS VATIN and GILLES VEINSTEIN (eds):

Dictionnaire de l'Empire Ottoman.

1332 pp. Paris: Librairies Fayard, 2015. €170. ISBN 978 2 213 62681 9.

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This exceptional work of collaborative scholarship provides a fascinating and insightful view into the state of Ottoman studies, and asserts the continuing

importance of francophone scholarship in a field that seems often thoroughly dominated by *les Anglo-Saxon(ne)s*. Compiled under the direction of three of the most notable French Ottomanists and Turkicists – François Georgeon, Nicolas Vatin and the late Gilles Veinstein – this formidable volume brings together 177 scholars from across the world, from all different generations, to provide important snapshots into the state of scholarship on a wide variety of subjects. As the introduction notes, this dictionary aims to add to and update the seminal *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman* edited by Robert Mantran and published in 1989. It also takes its place alongside other dictionary projects, notably those of Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Masters (*Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, 2009) and Selçuk Akşın Somel (*A–Z of the Ottoman Empire*, 2003 and *Historical Dictionary of the Ottoman Empire*, 2012). It also follows in a tradition of earlier Ottoman dictionaries, notably geographic ones, such as the *Dictionnaire Géographique de l'Empire Ottoman* (1873) of the former Russian consul in Izmir, C. Mostras, and the globally focused *Kamusü'l-a'lâm* of Şemseddin Sami (1889–98). It is honest in that it does not hope nor try to cover everything, and what is covered must necessarily be succinct.

Reviewing a historical dictionary is not an easy task, and the few words I can use here cannot do justice to the depth and scale of the work that has gone into producing this volume. Just a cursory flick through its pages is enough to keep one detained for a good while, and the disjointed experience of shifting from one space, time, individual, theme, or idea to another is perhaps as authentic an experience of the complexity of the Ottoman state and its various histories that one can get. Indeed, there is something quite refreshing in spending some time reading about a discrete subject, to then be suddenly transported to a quite different topic altogether, often in a rather different style of writing and historical focus. Permit me to take you on such a journey. My copy of this book opens quite randomly to the article on *Papier* (François Déroche), where we learn much about the history, connectivity, and materiality of paper and its production from the fifteenth into the nineteenth century. A star next to *Fatwa* catches my eye, and I move to Colin Imber's masterful exposition on the form and purpose of *fetava* in the Ottoman context in the early modern period. Below this, I find Nicolas Vatin's fascinating discussion on *Fauconnerie* that considers the centrality of this activity to palace life and function within state–province relations, in part linked to the *timar* system. Jumping over to *Timar*, a double contribution sees Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr consider their development as a military fief, followed by Michael Ursinus taking the story further by evaluating the system's evolutions and mutations from the sixteenth to twentieth centuries. This is followed by one of a number of entries that will be of great use to students of all levels, Nicolas Vatin's guided tour through the often confusing maze of *Titres Usuels*.

I could go on and, indeed, over the past few months have spent many an hour taking such journeys through this text. There are some real gems in here, such as Paul Dumont's contribution on *Tourisme*, Faruk Bilici's discussion of the *Köprülü* family, and Robert Dankoff's excellent overview of *Evliya Çelebi*. Many of the entries that were the most enjoyable to read were those that may not (depending on one's usual area of research, of course) often present themselves in one's line-of-sight, so that I learned much and was encouraged to read more by, for instance, Işık Tamdoğan's piece on the *Lutte*, Olivier Schmitt on *Skanderbeg*, and Nedim Gürsel's little entry on *Kaygusuz Abdal*. The themes covered are not only pretty comprehensive within the Ottoman world, but do a good job of providing wider contexts, with entries on most of the relevant European states (although there are some notable absences; for instance, there is an entry for *Allemagne* by Dorothée Guillemarre but none on Prussia), and other ideas and figures such as

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,