While Day's conceptual framework lacks clarity and precision, his detailed history of the past two decades is well worth reading for professionals, scholars, undergraduate and graduate students, and the general public.

THOMAS KUEHN, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference: Ottoman Rule in Yemen, 1849–1919* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011). Pp. 314. $166 cloth.

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL CHRISTOPHER LOW, Department of History, Columbia University, New York, N.Y.; e-mail: mcl2156@columbia.edu
doi:10.1017/S002074381300144X

Aside from the works of Caesar Farah and Isa Blumi, late Ottoman Yemen has garnered little attention. Given this dearth of scholarship, the publication of any new research is immediately useful. However, Thomas Kuehn's challenging new book does much more than shed new light on a neglected corner of the empire. This study of Ottoman rule in Yemen between the reoccupation of the Red Sea coast in 1849 and the end of World War I challenges our most basic assumptions about the Tanzimat reform project and its articulation on the empire's peripheries. It also takes on an even bigger question: did the Ottomans practice colonialism in Yemen?

Kuehn sets Ottoman expansion in Yemen between 1849 and 1875 against the backdrop of a wider interimperial scramble for strategic position in the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa (Chapter 2). Similar to Meiji Japan's defensive expansion in Korea and Taiwan, the Ottoman reconquest of Yemen was meant to ward off European encroachment on the Red Sea and the Muslim holy places. As Kuehn argues, Ottoman ethnographic and historical representations of Yemenis as "backward" and in need of Istanbul's civilizing influence closely mirror European knowledge production in colonial settings (Chapter 3). Ottoman officials argued that the "customs and dispositions" (*ʿadat ve emzice*) of the locals rendered Yemen unfit for full incorporation into the imperial system, as imagined by the universalizing ideology of the Tanzimat. Having ruled out normal methods of administration, Kuehn asserts, Ottoman bureaucrats attempted to articulate a new form of provincial governance, partly based on pre-Tanzimat practices, which tolerated various measures of decentralization and local autonomy, and on European forms of indirect rule.

Kuehn describes this hybrid brand of provincial administration as "colonial Ottomanism." While clearly arguing that there was a colonial element to Ottoman rule in Yemen, he is also careful to tease out its ambivalent and contradictory nature. Building on the work of Partha Chatterjee, Kuehn describes the gap between Tanzimat ideals and Yemeni particularities as the "politics of difference." As he cautions, however, colonial Ottomanism was distinct from European colonialism in that it never produced dual structures of governance and separate codes of law, nor did it mobilize discourses of race or sexual segregation in order to uphold a stark dichotomy between colonizing citizens of the metropole and colonized subjects of the periphery. Rather, for Kuehn, colonial Ottomanism implied a "hierarchy of subjects" that marked Yemenis as "Ottomans of a lesser kind." Thus, while "the absence of censuses, cadastral surveys, land registration, conscription, and the *nizamiye* court system meant that the local people were clearly outside what, from the government's perspective constituted the realm of *civilized* Ottoman subjects," provincial administration in Yemen, at least initially, imagined the narrowing and eventual erasure of this presumed civilizational gulf (p. 135).

Kuehn argues that even as early as the mid-1870s, however, Ottoman officials began to abandon more optimistic visions of gradual incorporation and to elaborate a new mode of

https://doi.org/10.1017/S002074381300144X Published online by Cambridge University Press

administration emphasizing differentiation (Chapter 4). This change produced a greater reliance on local shaykhs and sayyids as revenue collectors and power brokers as well as a greater degree of legal pluralism in order to appease local preferences for shariʿa courts and resistance to the state's *nizamiye* system. Another manifestation of this experimental strategy was the recruitment of a native Hamidiye corps outfitted in "indigenous" uniforms modeled after British India's "native troops" (pp. 116–25). However, these changes only "institutionalized and reproduced perceived cultural hierarchies," further "distancing local peoples from their conquerors" (p. 6). Ultimately, these policies accentuated the inherent contradictions between the goals of Tanzimat-style centralization and the alien nature of the Ottomans' emerging quasi-colonial approach to Yemen.

In his final two chapters, Kuehn traces how repeated uprisings under the banner of the Zaydi Imamate between 1891 and 1911 challenged the legitimacy of the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph and helped to enshrine sectarian affiliation as the primary lens through which Ottoman officials viewed the Yemeni highlands. In October 1911, the Daʿan Agreement ending the conflict between the Ottoman state and Imam Yahya ushered in the final iteration of the province's politics of difference. The agreement crystallized the sectarian order, dividing Yemen into a Sunni south, exclusively under Ottoman authority, and an Ottoman-Imamic condominium in the highland north. The agreement confirmed Imam Yahya's communal and juridical authority, but stopped short of recognizing him as an autonomous ruler. Nevertheless, Ottoman recognition ultimately furnished Imam Yahya with the power base from which to forge a post-Ottoman state.

The Zaydi insurgencies ultimately led Ottoman authorities to acknowledge the limits of Tanzimat-style Ottomanism, forcing them to admit the *de facto* colonial status of the province. According to Kuehn, Ottoman readings of British indirect rule inspired a debate on how best to "repackage and rehabilitate" older forms of autonomy that "had served the Ottomans well in the past" but had subsequently been blamed for "furthering the empire's disintegration" (p. 252). Ottoman administrators compared Yemen with models of indirect rule in British Aden, Sudan, and India as well as Italian Eritrea. While never formally declaring Yemen a colony, they conceded that "exceptional" (*müstesna*) provinces like Yemen and Trablusgarb (Tripolitania) should adopt "certain administrative techniques" used in European colonies (pp. 213–14). On several occasions Kuehn makes fleeting references to similarities between Yemen and other semiautonomous, non-Tanzimat-compliant provinces like the Hijaz, İşkodra, and Trablusgarb, but he never fully draws out the comparison. A more sustained discussion of how Ottoman administrators viewed this category would have been a welcome addition.

This is a clearly written and painstakingly researched work, which would be noteworthy for its brute archival and empirical force alone. The author should be applauded for the book's imaginative conceptual engagement with works of comparative empire, South Asian history, and postcolonial studies, especially given the fact that the field of Ottoman studies has generally responded lethargically to wider theoretical trends. Kuehn joins Selim Deringil, Ussama Makdisi, Christine Philliou, and others engaged in a critical revision of the Tanzimat and Hamidian eras. Although some may find the author's definition of colonial Ottomanism too messy, the success of this book should not hinge on how cleverly the author borrows and manipulates theoretical terminology. He avoids forcing his conclusions to neatly align with theory and seems very much aware of the limits of the comparisons. In short, this book makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of Ottoman Yemen's place in the wider colonial world. While the publisher's prohibitive price tag will likely discourage its use for teaching purposes, this is a must-read for scholars of the late Ottoman period and deserves a spot on graduate-level syllabi. Likewise, for scholars of modern Yemen, this book sets up a dynamic dialogue with John M. Willis's parallel work, *Unmaking North and South: Cartographies of*

https://doi.org/10.1017/S002074381300144X Published online by Cambridge University Press

the Yemeni Past (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), positioning the Yemeni south within British India's system of princely states.

ERVAND ABRAHAMIAN, *The Coup: 1953, the CIA, and the Roots of Modern U.S.–Iranian Relations* (New York: New Press, 2012). Pp. 304. $26.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY MALCOLM BYRNE, National Security Archive, George Washington University, Washington, D.C.; e-mail: mbyrne@gwu.edu
doi:10.1017/S0020743813001451

Sixty years after the coup d'état that changed the course of Iranian history, it is remarkable how little consensus exists about fundamental aspects of the episode. What were the motivations of the United States and Britain in ousting Muhammad Mosaddeq? What was the relative importance of Iranian and foreign actors? How much responsibility does Mosaddeq bear for his own predicament?

The latest book on the subject, by historian Ervand Abrahamian, takes on some of these basic questions. Unlike the trend in other recent accounts, he does not question the assertion that the Americans and the British, and more particularly their intelligence as well as diplomatic services, played a central role in the course of events. In fact, he takes aim at the two allies with both barrels, charging not only that they spearheaded the August 1953 operation, but also that they did so out of crass imperial self-interest rather than larger geopolitical concerns. He reproaches contemporaneous U.S. and British officials and subsequent historians alike for misconstruing the root causes of the crisis and for blaming the victims instead of the villains.

Abrahamian's aim is to challenge the "conventional wisdom" about the events of 1951–53 in two broad areas. One relates to the oil negotiations, which broke down in early 1953, paving the way for the U.S. and British decision to oust Mosaddeq. Abrahamian disagrees with three commonly held assumptions on this subject: that the British acted in good faith, that the United States was an honest broker, and that the talks failed only because of Mossadeq's "intransigence" (p. 2). The other area concerns the motives for the coup. Abrahamian rejects the view that it was about protecting Iran from communism. Instead, he argues that it was entirely about the control of oil—a byproduct not of the Cold War but of the "conflict between imperialism and nationalism" (pp. 3–4).

Abrahamian attacks the subject with conviction and even a certain degree of indignation, laying out example after example of the shameful attitudes of British and U.S. officials toward Iranians, and Mosaddeq in particular. Although this is not news, the sheer quantity of the evidence is jarring.

The bulk of the book recounts the history and politics of oil in Iran, from the discovery of petroleum in 1908 through the nationalization period and the multilateral negotiations that followed—all vital context for the main event. The coup itself is covered in less space than the previous two parts on oil and the negotiations, though this does not represent a problem. Abrahamian's treatment of all three areas is engaging and informative, and the coup section is one of the best available summaries of the subject.

Abrahamian makes a strong case for some of his main arguments. It is hard to disagree with the assertion that the British were hell-bent on retaining their hugely important assets in Iran. His most compelling point is that a negotiated deal was impossible because the British were never going to allow genuine control of the oil industry to pass to Iran, and Mosaddeq was equally determined to fight for that right. It was a classic "economic clash between

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