

The third and final part of the book inspects Ibn Taymiyya's application of his methodology. Chapter 9 concentrates on the effect of time on God's states (*ahwāl*) and actions (*af'āl*). Chapter 10 thereafter scrutinizes the divine attributes of justice (*ʿadl*), speech (*kalām*), exaltation above His throne (*istiwāʾ*), and immanence (*maʿiyya*), with chapter 11 concluding a perception of a dynamic and ever-changing deity whose attributes are temporal at times.

Emphasizing the intellectual developments that Ibn Taymiyya stimulated in his doctrine, the book seems cautious – perhaps overly cautious – in depicting the scholar's stance using the term “traditionalistic” (pp. 60–61). To the best of this reviewer's knowledge, this designation indicates a spectrum of approaches declaring an adherence to the Islamic scriptures. Moreover, traditionalism is relevant to Ibn Taymiyya's ideological commitment to the *salaf* (pious ancestors), as well as to his practical method of corroborating arguments with accumulative evidence from the Islamic scriptures. Both aspects are intrinsic foundations of the Taymiyyan methodology and vital for its understanding, together with his inventive rationality. That said, the book will be helpful to researchers and students of Islamic theology and intellectual history, and it is also beneficial to readers interested in the history of ideas. Notable is Suleiman's decision to publish the book in German, perhaps to signal to the young field of Islamic theological studies in German and European universities. The field was established to foster a devotional scholarship of Islam and the training of Islamic educators. Against the backdrop of current academic discussions on this still-emerging discipline, the significance of studies such as the book under review is clearer than ever.

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PHILIPP WIRTZ:

*Depicting the Late Ottoman Empire in Turkish Autobiographies: Images of a Past World.*

(Life Narratives of the Ottoman Realm: Individual and Empire in the Near East.) ix, 175 pp. London and New York: Routledge, 2017. ISBN 978 0 36788177 1.

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This book is a revised version of Philipp Wirtz's 2013 PhD thesis submitted to the history department of SOAS University of London. In this clearly written and concise work, Wirtz attempts to analyse how the Ottoman Empire's final decades are remembered and described in post-Ottoman autobiographical narratives written primarily in the cultural context of the Turkish Republic, which sought to present itself as a complete break from its predecessor. To this end, Wirtz brings together and examines 17 autobiographies penned by an array of authors who were born and raised in the late Ottoman period and later became renowned writers, journalists, soldiers, and politicians. Wirtz's focus lies on the ways in which these figures from different socio-cultural backgrounds made sense of their “Ottoman years” of childhood and youth that saw numerous catastrophic events, the First World War included, overshadowing personal lives.

In addition to the introduction and conclusion, Wirtz's book consists of six chapters. The first seeks an answer to why people write down their life stories, and it focuses on the forewords and introductory parts of the autobiographies. Wirtz identifies three main motives for securing one's life story in writing. First, the urge to bear witness to past experiences for the benefit or entertainment of future generations. Second, the desire to preserve or re-evolve the scenes, persons or events the authors cherished in their past, i.e. nostalgia. Finally, the wish to correct current views of the past, circumvent the "narrative monopoly" established by the republican regime over writing about the past, and criticize the present through the lens of the past.

In the second chapter, Wirtz is concerned with the personal origins, family backgrounds, and earliest memories of autobiographers, and explores how they used these points to connect themselves to a locality, a national/ethnic group or a historical heritage, all of which constituted significant markers in personal lives in Ottoman times. The third chapter examines how childhoods were spent in the final decades of the Ottoman Empire and engages with the presentation of childhood memories in post-Ottoman autobiographical narratives. In the following chapter, Wirtz turns his attention to educational experiences and analyses how schools and schooling were contextualized as part of the "past world" in which the authors grew up. Considering that the majority of the writers Wirtz examines are men and women of letters, this chapter is essential in learning how the formation of an intellectual was shaped in the late Ottoman Empire.

Chapter 5 is one of the most striking, and investigates how late Ottoman lives with differing ethnic and religious origins were affected by political upheaval, conflict and violence that left their mark on the last two decades of the empire, such as the Constitutional Revolution of 1908, the Balkan Wars of 1912–13, and the World War of 1914–18. Besides examining the experiences of passive observers of these events, such as children, this chapter also deals with the reminiscences of those who actively participated in the Ottoman war effort and were concerned with the wider political implications of the war and its results. Thus, Wirtz not only provides valuable insights into the effects of these turbulent years on the individual lives of ordinary people but also seeks to shed light on how the experiences of upheaval, war and loss were kept in Ottoman and Turkish public consciousness. Lastly, in chapter 6, Wirtz highlights a specialized context, that of post-Ottoman autobiography penned by Turkish and non-Turkish authors, in English, for Western audiences. This chapter considers the ways in which "Ottoman worlds" were presented to a readership that was not personally familiar with the general setting and cultural context.

Wirtz's work offers ample information about various aspects of late Ottoman social and cultural life. Through the eyes of first-hand witnesses of the period, the book provides a detailed account of late Ottoman everyday practices, childhood culture, schools and education, celebrations and ceremonies, sports, and other pastimes. However, it barely discusses how the autobiographies, as alternative historical accounts, circumvented the Kemalist "narrative monopoly" on the recent past. Although Wirtz considers this point among the foremost motives of autobiography writing, and frequently underlines that some texts he examined were mostly written as forms of "anti-narratives" or "counter-histories" intended to balance the official discourse, he does not adequately explain how the authors of these accounts reversed the so-called narrative monopoly, intervened in contemporary debates via their autobiographies, and criticized the present through the lens of the past.

To be sure, this situation largely stems from the temporal scope of Wirtz's book, which covers the period from the 1880s to the end of the First World War. Nonetheless, the inclusion of such a discussion by expanding the scope of the work to include the Turkish War of Independence of 1919–22 might have enabled Wirtz

to provide deeper insights into the points mentioned earlier. This criticism notwithstanding, Philipp Wirtz's *Depicting the Late Ottoman Empire in Turkish Autobiographies: Images of a Past World* helps broaden our understanding of late Ottoman social history, popular and intellectual perceptions of the late Ottoman Empire in republican Turkey, and the connections between these two periods. Considering the growing literature on those issues, recently with Christine M. Philliou's *Turkey: A Past against History* and Nicholas L. Danforth's forthcoming *The Remaking of Republican Turkey: Memory and Modernity since the Fall of the Ottoman Empire*, one should say that Wirtz's book offers us an exciting and valuable introduction to that field.

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V.L. MÉNAGE (edited with additions by COLIN IMBER):

*Ottoman Historical Documents: The Institutions of an Empire.*

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The present work possesses a long history. It began life as a series of translations of (mainly) Ottoman historical documents, dating (again, mainly) from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, which were made with great care by the late Professor V. L. (Vic) Ménage (1920–2015) for a course on ‘Ottoman Institutions’, which he delivered at SOAS. On retirement (in 1983) he gave the typescript to the present reviewer, with instructions to “do whatever you like with it”. Characteristically, and modestly, Ménage did not suggest its publication, but the potential of the collection for teaching and study purposes was manifest, and the original intention which the other Colin and I formed was that he and I, together with Dr (later Professor) Michael Ursinus, should jointly edit and publish it as a collection of “Ottoman Historical Documents”. It was a noble plan, but one which in the circumstances of those times seemed destined never to come to fruition.

Decades later, as Colin Imber writes in his Preface, an impetus to publication was provided by a Manchester colleague, who recognized the importance of the collection not only for Ottoman historians, but equally for historians of late medieval and early modern Europe. Push, as it were, came to shove, and thanks to a team of willing helpers, enumerated by Imber in his Preface, and to the willing support of Edinburgh University Press, Ménage's impeccable translations, now supported by Imber's insightful editorial apparatus, have finally been made available to a new generation of students and readers.

Ménage's translations were originally intended as a teaching aid; his commentaries, now lost, were delivered in a classroom setting. The present work, divided into ten chapters which correspond to the ten-week teaching term then current, harks back to its SOAS origins. The chapters are topical rather than chronological in their sequence, and the translated extracts from Ottoman documents and chronicles, and other sources, are presented as what used to be termed “gobbets”, or short and significant extracts inviting commentary.

To take an example Chapter I, entitled by its editor “The Dynasty: Legitimation and Titulature”, compresses into 12 pages no fewer than 22 “gobbets”, beginning