

respects, this of course echoes discussions of Persian and Sanskrit as multibranching conduits of high culture and cosmopolitanism. Given how integral long-distance links were to these processes, we might soon see this growing interest in Arabic sources extend also to medieval and early modern Iran and Central Asia. Chapter 4 in White's book, on the composition of Arabic poetry in Mashhad, is already pioneeringly leading in that direction.

Another way in which this book refines our understanding of the effects of seventeenth-century mobility and migration is by paying attention to local levels of literary and social interaction, in addition to the transregional patterns. White shows that the migrant poets who are the subject of his study not only engaged with globalizing idioms, a corpus of classical texts, and overseas networks, but equally addressed local audiences and created literary communities that were specific to their time and place. Cosmopolitan literary production, in other words, also reflected localizing tendencies and multiplicity. More specifically, poets used "emulative intertextuality" in various forms to construct connections with the canon, with transregionally circulating pieces, and with artistic interlocutors in their immediate environs. This point is elaborately illustrated through a close reading of early modern poetry produced in Hyderabad, Sanaa, Mashhad, Kabul and Isfahan.

Further commendable features of this monograph are the many translated extracts of poetry that support its arguments, and its considerable attention to India's Deccan region (another trend that is gaining pace). But most admirable is its extensive bibliography of unpublished works that remain in manuscript, many written by unfamiliar names. As such, each chapter starts by tracing the biographies of its key figures, which makes the reader appreciate their backgrounds, migratory journeys, and social connections in relation to their literary production. It also brings out the relevance of poets who fell through the cracks of history for understanding the globalizing dynamics of early modern literature. White's methodology reminds us of the fact that the publication and celebration of an early modern work today does not necessarily reflect how it was valued by contemporaries. The conclusion further rightly points to the role that the colonial removal of manuscripts and modern nationalisms played in the neglect of some works and the foregrounding of others. Our own scholarly community will without doubt find this an inspiring study to emulate and build upon.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X24000053

Deniz Türker: *The Accidental Palace. The Making of Yıldız in Nineteenth-Century Istanbul*

xix, 251 pp. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2023. ISBN 978 027109391 8.

Caroline Finkel

Independent Scholar, London, UK

Email: caroline@finkel.info

A visit to Yıldız Palace today is a somewhat dispiriting experience. The coherence of the whole has long been lost: some buildings serve as government offices, as they did in the



late nineteenth century, or as museums, but much of the palace's former grounds is parcelled out. With talk of the site becoming the latest of the president's Istanbul residences, the threat of effective privatization of the remainder looms. A notable virtue of Deniz Türker's book is that it enables us to capture some of the former magic of Yıldız, a place first conceived of as a retreat for the mothers of sultans.

The history of Yıldız has often been one of sultans escaping the constraints of public life, and in particular of Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909) attempting to secrete himself far from the assassin's bullet: Türker's fascinating and richly illustrated study tells a more complex story. Her wide-ranging research into visual and written sources establishes that a pavilion – a belvedere – first appeared here in 1795, built by Selim III for his mother. Soon, the hilltop became a suburban estate, accessible from the palaces on the Bosphorus shore below. Mahmud II (r. 1808–39) practised archery at Yıldız, but it was his consort, Bezm-i Alem, who re-emphasized the distaff connection, once she became co-ruler with her son Abdülmecid, Mahmud's successor. Famous for her public endowments, Bezm-i Alem built an open air mosque here, and a second pavilion. Her patronage provided Yıldız with a farm, an orchard and garden complex, and chalets, cottages, and French-style urban mansions. Contemporary records show that the orchards produced a remarkable 581 different kinds of fruit.

The image of the Ottoman nineteenth century as an era of gloom and dysfunction is belied by events at Yıldız. In 1835, a Bavarian landscape gardener named Christian Sester arrived, and worked first at Çırağan, Mahmud's European-style Bosphorus shore palace where he built grottoes and planted exotic species, then at Yıldız. In the hands of Bezm-i Alem and Abdülmecid, the valley and long slope behind Mahmud's European-style Çırağan, became a grand Romantic park. The visionary remaking of the landscape continued once Abdülaziz (r. 1861–76) was on the throne, and his mother and co-ruler, Pertevniyal, became Sester's patron.

Sester's approach to gardening was philosophical, and attuned to the political inclinations of the Ottoman royals at this time. Once the janissaries, ultimate symbol of the *ancien régime*, had been expunged (in 1826) and the age of reform was underway, the dynasty sought a new imperial image. Eschewing French formality in garden design, which smacked of authoritarianism, the more liberal rule that the empire now aspired to was to be exemplified in the English garden – conspicuously titivated, yet emphasizing untouched nature. Sester was joined by other German gardeners, who fostered his legacy after his death in 1866. Abdülhamid's reign brought change in the corps of gardeners: he employed men from Kastamonu (in northern Anatolia) and Albania, and French experts now replaced German. Needless to say, Istanbul's elite competed to outdo one another in innovation and ambition in the garden arts.

It was a short step from the rustic landscape Yıldız had become, to the “Alpine” aesthetic that Abdülhamid embraced, with wooden structures in the Ottoman vernacular echoing the “country cottages” popular in highland sanctuaries elsewhere. This was “a homier, more light-hearted, more picturesque idiom” than that of Abdülaziz's grandiose, neoclassical Mabeyn Pavilion. The “lifestyle publications” of the time made international architectural taste and design accessible: the history of prefabricated buildings predated Abdülhamid, but they caught his interest. His most visible essay into this technology was his state-of-the-art Yıldız hospital for war veterans, which was possibly locally made. The hugely damaging 1894 earthquake underlined the appeal of light, prefab, structures – again, like the craze for gardening, inventively detailed, portable, buildings found wide favour.

Abdülhamid made of Yıldız a palatial complex, albeit one where he could indulge his simple tastes, outdoors as much as possible. The photograph albums he commissioned to showcase the empire are famous, but Türker has located a hitherto unknown album by an

unnamed photographer, dating from 1905, with 64 images of the imperial sites of Istanbul. The early 1890s had seen the renovation of these sites, as Abdülhamid impressed on the public mind the achievements of his forebears and his own unbreakable link to a glorious past.

The images in the album relating to Yıldız document the end stages of its transformation from garden retreat to the heart of the empire's administration. Hedges, walls and fences are often seen in the photographs, and Türker suggests they symbolize the status and virtue inherent in social order, and act as metaphors for the boundary between man-made and natural terrain, between civilization and rusticity.

By contrast with the mood of restfulness pervading much nature photography, the album induces the feeling of the effort of movement between the sites depicted – including those where Abdülhamid stayed in his early years. As Türker writes: “Almost every image in the album is framed to elicit a jolt in the armchair traveller”. She detects an appeal to female sensibility, and opines: “This entire album could be assessed as a depiction of one of the Friday-afternoon outings of the Sultan's harem ...”. Türker proposes that the architecture embodied in its images is closely tied to Abdülhamid's biography and to his own particular connection to his surroundings.

The contribution of Türker's book to landscape history generally, as well as to our understanding of the changing face of Istanbul, is immeasurable. She explores to effect the interplay between the personal taste of the sultans of the Ottoman nineteenth century and their imperial and political vision, humanizing them, and giving the royal women, and their gardeners, who all stamped their mark on Yıldız, their place as historical actors. Abdülhamid II has fared better of late in the public mind: here he is revealed as being as innovative as many another landowner seeking to transform his built and natural environment. The Ottoman idiom was specific, but cultural trends were international, and those at the apex of society, here as elsewhere, were receptive to the zeitgeist, and indulged their whims in creative and enriching ways.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X2400003X

Mun'im A. Sirry: *The Qur'an with Cross-References*

ix, 683 pp. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2022. ISBN 978 3 11077915 8.

Walid A. Saleh

University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

Email: walid.saleh@utoronto.ca

Reference works on the Quran have proliferated recently, a reflection of the seriousness with which academia views the field of Quranic studies. These reference works are invariably produced by single authors, but it is not clear what merit many of them have when they are produced hastily and claim universal coverage of the Quran. They run the danger of being either premature (such works are usually the culmination of a life of engagement with a particular text), or worse redundant since they do not improve on older reference works. We are at an interesting moment in Quranic studies when individual scholars are trying to replicate reference works produced for the Hebrew Bible and New Testament, reference works that are the result of collaborative work by a multitude of scholars.