contexts. The author also counterbalances the architect’s received image with an analysis of the remarkable court façade of the Church of the Sorbonne, the first example in France of a classical pedimented portico supported on freestanding columns. Similar innovations include the first French appearance of a hemispherical dome supported on a drum—also at the Sorbonne—and the use of “false” or square domes, most famously in the Pavilion de l’Horloge. In all of these cases, new forms are naturalized, so to speak; they are adapted seamlessly to a French building tradition in a way that disguises their real novelty. The false dome is a perfect example: it quickly became a symbol of the monarchy itself and was used as such well into the nineteenth century.

The third section consists of a numbered catalog of sixty projects arranged in chronological order, with a documented construction history in each entry. There are also two additional catalogs of problematic attributions and of works that can be definitely rejected. The author is nothing if not thorough, as each entry is a model of scholarly detective work. Indeed, Gady’s ability to adduce precisely the records needed entirely masks how difficult it is to do research in French archives. This section will be an essential reference for decades to come, as dependable as it is easily consulted.

In the context of the study as a whole, however, the choice of relegating the detailed description of the buildings themselves to a separate catalog has some distinct drawbacks. In the first place, it means that each project is discussed and illustrated in at least three different places, continually forcing the reader to search for passages and illustrations in different parts of the book. A more serious consequence is that the formal analysis of motifs in the second part is separated in each case from any discussion of the circumstances that shaped the process of design, including the nature of the site, the patron’s desires and resources, and the requirements of the commission. As a result, the second part often reads as a confusing rush of plans, facades, and details, while the catalog sometimes suffers from a lack of comparative material.

In one sense, the book’s organization is original and inventive. It offers three different styles of narrative—three different ways of doing architectural history. Yet, in each there is a deliberate narrowness to the way the inquiry is framed. Interpretation is kept to a strict minimum, and there is little in the way of methodological reflection. The job Gady has set himself is not to change how we see the field but simply to fill the blank spaces in what we already know. Most frustrating is that there is little attempt to reconstruct the potential reception of the work. Only a few tantalizing pages, for example, treat Cardinal Richelieu himself. His extensive building program must certainly have entailed some appreciation of architecture and its role as representational display, but this viewpoint is minimized. Such an account need not reduce the buildings to the status of a political instrument, even if that is what they were. One would have also welcomed a fuller explanation of Lemercier’s relationship with François Sublet de Noyers and his attitude towards the minister’s purist architectural vision, especially in light of its influence in the second half of the century. Ultimately, the lack of contextualization leads the author to take the same critical stance that has always dogged Lemercier’s historical image, namely, to judge his achievement in comparison to Mansart or Le Vau, using criteria that are themselves dehistoricized. The odd result is that after five hundred pages, the architect’s reputation comes out only marginally better for it.

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Notes
1. Elie Brackenhofer, for example, visiting from Strasbourg soon after the building’s completion in 1644, was stunned by the opulent interiors. The window panes, he recounted, were set in silver mullions and the hearths of the fireplaces flagged in rare marbles and alabaster. The rooms were covered in decorative paintings and carved panels. The shutters were gilded “so that even on the exterior, one is dazzled by the brilliance of the gold.” Brackenhofer, Voyage en France, 1643–1644, trans. Henry Lehr (Nancy, 1925), 219–12, esp. 229.
3. Drawing of château and gardens at Montjeu, Burgundy, Archives nationales, N III Saône-et-Loire 32.
4. See, for example, the catalog of the recent major exhibition: Hilliard Todd Goldfarb, ed., Richelieu: Art and Power (Montreal, 2002).

Heghnar Watenpaugh
The Image of an Ottoman City: Imperial Architecture and Urban Experience in Aleppo in the 16th and 17th Centuries

Yasser Elsheshtawy, editor
Planning Middle Eastern Cities: An Urban Kaleidoscope in a Globalizing World

As any traveler will attest, cities, like people, have distinct characters and often seem to fall comfortably into families. While often easy to recognize members of a family, it can be difficult to explain precisely what differentiates one family from another. The desire to discover the key to difference provides both comfort, through the affirmation of shared identity, and threat, through the revelation of irrevocable differences. Although addressing different places and eras with very different approaches, Heghnar Watenpaugh’s The Image of an Ottoman City: Imperial Architecture and Urban Experience in Aleppo in the 16th and 17th Centuries—which won the SAH Spiro Kostof Award in 2006—and Yasser Elsheshtawy’s edited volume, Planning Middle Eastern Cities: An Urban Kaleidoscope in a Globalizing World, both focus on the problem of identity. Examining a historical context, Watenpaugh asks what made an Ottoman city Ottoman, while Elsheshtawy asks, in part, what makes an Arab city Arab.

The attribution of a cohesive iden-
ity to these cities is fraught with problems rooted in age-old definitions of the Islamic city. In attempting to create a scholarly category, commentators have tended to define cities solely in terms of religious and cultural traits rather than changing economic and political events, resulting in a frozen image of the timeless Middle Eastern city. In order to avoid this fallacy, The Image of an Ottoman City and Planning Middle Eastern Cities examine specific examples and offer far more nuanced understandings of urban structures, past and present, than previous studies.

Both books begin by rejecting a binary approach to the city, which contrasts a pristine origin—the Mamluk tradition on the one hand and the Islamic city on the other—with a period of deflation by the Ottomans or by modernity. The authors locate the problem in Western scholarship geared toward the revelation and restoration of a virginal state against later predations. Yet, sorting out the essentialisms of identity is a valiant but difficult endeavor. When does urban change indicate imperial identity politics or simply a pragmatic response to urban growth and renewal? When is a particular characteristic of a city “Islamic” or “modern” rather than Arab? One pitfall in taking apart generalizations is the risk of creating new ones; both works astutely avoid this problem.

A primary theme of Watenpaugh’s work is “Ottomanization” of the city, a term that seems to suggest a programmatic system of urban development similar to that of a modern empire with an active, conscious, and centralized agency. However, as described in the book, the processes of change over the course of several centuries seem as much a product of economic interests and gradual urban renovation as an actual program of using visual signs to consciously engender a changing urban identity. Watenpaugh’s work often wavers between these two positions, representing change alternately as an act of imperial agency (as in a modern empire) and as an effect of economic policy (as in a premodern empire). An active engagement with this difference would have provided a fascinating investigation of the concept of empire as an agent of change and an evaluation of the identity of the Ottoman Empire as straddling the ancient and modern periods.

Perhaps most fascinating about a city like Aleppo is its development of a unique, layered character, which has defined a local urban culture that was always determined elsewhere—first in Ayyubid Damascus, then in Mamluk Cairo, and finally in Ottoman Constantinople. Although not fully examined, this context provides the underpinnings for a fascinating approach to the idea of the local acting in confluence with an imperial agency. Watenpaugh argues in favor of agency as a partial corrective to the colonial historiography of Jean Sauvaget, who asserted in 1941 that the disparate patronage of monuments in Aleppo could not be interpreted as a type of urban planning. Watenpaugh rightly critiques this interpretation as casting “Islamic civilization as intuitive rather than rational” (54). Yet, her own argument is uneven, in part because she does not differentiate between a rational urban policy, in which the Ottomans clearly engaged, and a utilization of visual signs as a trope of imperial identity. This lack of analytical precision projects tropes of imperial identity from the modern period onto earlier imperial practices.

As Watenpaugh explains, after its 1516 conquest by the Ottomans, Aleppo changed slowly. It retained the architectural character of the Ayyubid-period minaret in the citadel and only incorporated Ottoman-style mosques thirty years after the conquest. While epigraphic changes on the citadel indicated shifts in ownership, these modifications functioned more as historical markers characteristic of all Ottoman renovation projects rather than as advertisements of imperial might per se. Watenpaugh insists that “in the provinces, the presence of features from various traditions in almost every single Ottoman monument questions the assumption of distinct and separate artistic traditions” (43). If this is the case, then how can one differentiate between urban processes of change indicating Ottomanization and those that simply indicate the accommodation of changing urban and economic needs?

Watenpaugh responds to this challenge by examining signs of identity in the city through careful analysis of the skyline, epigraphy, and changing urban use. She points out that some buildings incorporated “local” visual elements associated with Mamluk architecture, which “makes the filiation of particular forms a thorny issue, and suggests instead a visual conversation between the center and the periphery” (67). If such a conversation was taking place, then did it affect architecture in the imperial capital or elsewhere? Watenpaugh engages these issues as questions and problems raised in earlier literature and, in doing so, often retains the intellectual structures within which these problems are based. The discussion of the Ottoman or Mamluk character of structures, rooted largely in formal analysis, might have benefited from a wider variety of critical approaches. For example, a deconstructionist approach might enable an escape from the binary of local/imperial, treating the difficulty of stylistic analysis less as a problem than as a solution that unsettles such a binary opposition. She might also have engaged in a more semological approach and considered how styles function as signs, both historically and in the modern period. After all, what looks distinctly Ottoman today may, in the sixteenth century, have looked contemporary or fashionable. Without addressing the theoretical issues surrounding the semiology of style, it is difficult to read urban change as an agent of cultural imperialism. Although Watenpaugh describes urban growth from the perspective of an architectural historian and therefore focuses on the visual aspects of change, the changes she describes were primarily rooted in economic policy; they formed part of the process of developing the city as an economic center, one that happened to use Ottoman architectural practices over a period of time rather than mainly as an intrusion of imperial identity onto a resistant local culture.
Those chapters that veer away from stylistic analysis are the most powerful and subtly argued. In particular, Watenpaugh’s analysis of local agency in extra-urban development by dervish lodges, and their subsequent incorporation into the Ottoman political and urban order, provides an excellent corrective to the centrally based model of Ottoman development, where development in the provinces is seen as emanating from the imperial center. Similarly, her discussion of the adoption of Mamluk-style feline carvings on the exterior of a commercial structure, the Khan al-Wazir, provides an insightful example of the deliberate use of signifying architectural elements, where the active adoption of a form serves as a clear indication of a conscious visual agency while highlighting the complex relationship between architecture and identity indicated through the numerous examples in the work. As Watenpaugh points out, such examples suggest that Mamluk structures were “seen with new, post-sixteenth century eyes” (208). Thus, Watenpaugh indicates a far more nuanced understanding of Mamluk as well as Ottoman identity in Aleppo as visual meanings shifted over time. This understanding is borne out in the epilogue, which compares the complex use of signs in Aleppo to the eclectic historicism of Ottoman architectural decisions in the capitol, finally allowing a departure from the paradigms of periphery and center, local and foreign that make earlier portions of the book problematic.

Shifting registers, Watenpaugh’s final chapter examines representations of architecture rather than architecture itself. The texts, particularly the illustrated manuscript of Matrakçı Nasuh and the travelogue of Evliya Çelebi, both by writers based in Constantinople, bolster the argument of Ottomanization more effectively than do the buildings. Watenpaugh’s critical approach to the texts is particularly illuminating in its careful and cogent analysis of the elision of non-Muslim monuments in the depiction of cities in the empire.

The Image of the Ottoman City makes impressive use of a broad array of sources of many types and in multiple languages, including the visual, possibly the most difficult to decode since we can never be entirely sure with built forms how they were read in the past as conveyors of meaning. Primary source materials are difficult to acquire and provide such diverse types of information that organizing them into coherent arguments takes immense dedication, as can be sensed in this work. While some of the detail provided for each institution can be excessive to the point of detracting from the overall argument, such detail will no doubt be of use to scholars studying the particularities of architecture in Aleppo. For a broader audience interested in Ottoman studies or the history of urbanism, the book provides rare insight into the ever-changing role of Ottoman institutions in urban development beyond the classical, centrally based model. Particularly the later chapters and the elegantly written epilogue provide a subtle solution to the underlying question of “what made an Ottoman City an Ottoman City?” (234): “This was, perhaps, ultimately, the image of the Ottoman city: a city where formal diversity was embraced, and where distinct architectural idioms were mobilized to stand, in tandem, as memorials to a society ruled by the House of Osman” (241).

While Watenpaugh defines the Islamic city in historical terms, complicating its development across time, Yasser Elsheshtawy’s Planning Middle Eastern Cities adopts a socially conscious Islamic approach and uses history to understand contemporary planning issues. Elsheshtawy provides a clear frame for his edited volume, using a series of questions to guide his contributors’ examinations from an overview of the colonial period toward an exploration of the effects of globalization, which he describes not as an exogenous process but as one “activated from the inside by local actors” (18). The book successfully takes Arab cities out of their Islamic frames and considers them in a global context. In doing so, the cities’ diversity emerges. Aside from the fact that the local populations mostly speak Arabic, the cities appear to share little in terms of a preexisting “Arab” identity; their histories are marked less by their Arab character than by the confluence of their local and global historical circumstances. Thus, Sana’a in Yemen and Dubai in the Gulf reflect their histories as places largely excluded until recently from global forces; Algiers, Tunis, and Baghdad reveal histories as provincial Ottoman cities that were extensively reconfigured during the colonial period; and Cairo stands out as maintaining a powerful Mamluk character despite the predations of its British colonial reconstructions. These cities have different local relationships to colonialism, postcolonial nationalism, and globalization, although in some cases the relationships have parallels in non-Arab cities with similar histories and economies.

At the same time, Elsheshtawy acknowledges a contemporary commonality by providing an alternate, proactive model for the Islamic city, one rooted not in specific histories but in Islamic religious laws based on the egalitarian use of resources. However, this model remains a fantasy of future alternative development and, as subsequent chapters discuss, does not apply very much to the cities’ present condition.

The book provides a summary of the modern urban histories of diverse cities that are seldom considered historically. The chapters concentrate on specific moments, particularly the colonial and postcolonial nationalist periods; however, only the chapters on Cairo, Tunis, and Dubai connect the complex economic forces of globalization with the contemporary physical development—or lack thereof—of local sites. Elsewhere in the book, globalization is treated as an exogenous force, not (as the introduction suggests) as one of many economic and political forces driving internal development and urban thinking.

In keeping with the socially conscious theme of the introduction, globalization can be interpreted as the reflection of colonial patterns of pasting local signs of identity onto Western urban forms and of creating Orientalist
fantasies of the East. However, contemporary globalization patterns differ from colonial urban interventions in their complete exclusion of the poor and even the middle class, reflecting the increasing disparities of wealth caused by present-day global economies. Although the cities considered here, including Algiers, Sana’a, Tunis, and Cairo, may not show readily apparent signs of globalization, they are also part of this global disparity of wealth, a point that the book implies but could have explored more effectively through an analytical epilogue drawing the diverse articles together.

The essays collected by Elsheshtawy raise as many questions as they answer, but this is also a strength of the book, which provides insight into places often grounded in an idealized past, both in their architecture and their architectural history. By more than simply reflecting on globalization, the book marks an increasingly global analysis of world cities, one which invites comparison not simply within regions, as suggested by the “Arab” city label, but also across diverse measures of commonality, including postcolonial experience, participation in the global economy, development models, and varying relationships to a changing environment. As such, Planning Middle Eastern Cities makes a valuable contribution to discussions about the necessities and pitfalls of urban planning in a global era.

WENDY SHAW
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Michael W. Fazio and Patrick A. Snadon
The Domestic Architecture of Benjamin Henry Latrobe

One does not know quite what to expect when traveling carefully down the rutted driveway that runs towards Hammerwood in East Sussex. After a while, the trees part to reveal a muddle of a sandstone building with dominant late nineteenth-century fenestration and outbuildings in various states of repair. The owner’s tour of the house is low key but passionate. After years of neglect, including a period of ownership in the 1970s by the pop group Led Zeppelin, the house has been rescued from dereliction and is still being restored. Only after walking around to the garden front does one see the splendid formal composition of the main house flanked by two pavilions: one of the boldest and most progressive Greek Revival structures of its date in Britain. Constructed in the early 1790s, this is the first built masterpiece of Benjamin Henry Latrobe (1764–1820), the celebrated neoclassicist architect of the United States Capitol and Baltimore Cathedral, arguably the two finest buildings of their time in North America.

In England, Hammerwood and its sister house by Latrobe, three miles away at Ashdown, are relatively little known. Ashdown House, also of the early 1790s, is now a preparatory school, with all the institutional character and scruffy ad hoc additions that this usage brings, but it is no less remarkable in its setting and certainly no less unexpected than Hammerwood. A crisp sandstone villa perched on high ground, it has a central, south-facing entry portico that takes the form of an embedded circular Greek temple. Inside, the portico contains a ring of elegant Ionic columns and a coffered ceiling and leads into a handsome staircase hall with chaste Greek plasterwork detailing. Looking at the old Tudor stone house demoted by Latrobe into a service wing, it is not hard to imagine what a revelation the construction of this addition must have been. Yet until now, both of these houses have been little published or discussed. Latrobe left England for America in 1795, where his later and more imposing public works justifiably are much better known.

A substantial new book by Michael Fazio and Patrick Snadon intends to set the record straight by examining all the known domestic works of Latrobe, starting with the handful of early houses erected in England and followed by those constructed across America. Plans and photographs are generously included, many in color. Where buildings have been lost—alas, often the case in America—carefully researched archival photographs and computer reconstructions are used. One author, Fazio, is an architect, and the other, Snadon, is an interior designer; both have been trained as architectural historians and have been deeply involved in the repair and restoration of Latrobe buildings. Consequently, throughout this book there is a sense that they have grasped their subject and understood not just the outside architectural historical influences affecting Latrobe but also his architectural design processes. Proof of this design understanding appears in the spread across pages 536–37 that shows at a glance the diagrammatic plans of all of the houses categorized into four main design groupings.

The book starts with an exploration of Latrobe’s origins before moving into case studies of the various key houses of his career. A complete catalog of the domestic works comes at the end. Benjamin Latrobe was born in England and had a somewhat varied upbringing, ultimately resisting his father’s urges to study at a Moravian seminary. He embarked on a successful grand tour of Europe and, like so many of his contemporaries, saw first hand the ancient temples of Paestum and Rome that would have a profound influence on his later work, as would Parisian hôtels. Latrobe apparently translated books on Frederick the Great and on the Danish Revolution, and he wrote a volume on the African explorer James Bruce before settling down in London to work for the great engineer James Smear. Latrobe always saw himself as an engineer as well as an architect, a point he would later stress in the United States, where he felt his professional stature was not recognized: “I believe I am the first who, in our country, has endeavoured to place the profession of Architect and Civil Engineer on that footing of respectability which it occupies in Europe. But I have not so far succeeded as to make it an eligible profession for one who has the education and feelings of a gentleman” (4). By and large,