as a whole. Seen through the eyes of powerful yogis, Mughal armies, European travelers, and Rajput painters, the Himalayas continued to represent an idea expressed in visual and literary form while also functioning as a place that actively shaped broader transregional histories.

If there is any flaw to this book, it is its vast ambition. The chapters are peppered with questions that are not only complex but also sometimes unanswerable, given the fragmented nature of the textual and material evidence. Chanchani endeavors to bring together wide-ranging, and occasionally unwieldy, lines of inquiry that include political and religious histories, narratives of mobility and transmission, and changes in ecology and the natural environment. However, the questions are always engaging, and, more often than not, Chanchani is successful in interweaving them, so that each strand adds yet another rich layer to his argument.

As a whole, the book stands as a model of clarity, accessibility, and erudition that should be of enormous value to specialist readers invested in ecology, pilgrimage, mobility, and the rethinking of frontier histories, as well as to a more general audience. It also will serve as an indispensable resource for future research on the Himalayas. In addition to a rich body of photographs and original drawings, a useful appendix provides the most comprehensive listing of temple sites in the region available to date.

TAMARA I. SEARS
Rutgers University

Notes

Nina Macarag

Çemberlitas Hamami in Istanbul: The Biographical Memoir of a Turkish Bath

Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019, 392 pp., 4 tables, 41 color and 51 b/w illus. $91 (cloth), ISBN 9781474434102

*Çemberlitas Hamami in Istanbul* traces the history of an Ottoman public bath (hamam) across nearly five centuries, beginning with its construction in 1583 and continuing into the present. In this innovative and wide-ranging work, Nina Macarag addresses not only this specific building still in operation today but also topics as diverse as public bath construction from the Roman period onward, the function and use of public baths in the Ottoman Empire, and social life in Istanbul over the centuries. The last of these topics is treated throughout the book in chronological fashion, from the social functions of urban charitable foundations in the early modern period to eighteenth-century social unrest, nineteenth-century modernization efforts, twentieth-century urban renewal, and, finally, twenty-first-century concerns such as heritage preservation, digital platforms, and tourist mind-sets. Throughout, Macarag writes in an accessible, engaging manner, and her erudition on all topics related to the bath is impressive.

Çemberlitas Hamami is located on the Divan Yolu, the main thoroughfare between Hagia Sophia and the covered bazaar in Istanbul, and shares the name of its neighborhood: Çemberlitas (the Column with Rings), the Turkish name given to the Column of Constantine located there. The hamam was built as part of a large charitable foundation sponsored by Nurbanu Sultan, the mother of the Ottoman sultan Murad III (r. 1574–95) and wife of Selim II (r. 1566–74). The bath’s main purpose was to generate revenue to maintain the mosque complex in Üsküdar, now known as the Atik Valide Camii (Old Queen Mother’s Mosque), which was the heart of the queen mother’s foundation. Çemberlitas Hamami still functions today, unlike the three other hamams elsewhere in the city that were once part of the endowment but have since been reduced to storage facilities or industrial workshops.

Macarag’s book is organized chronologically as a life story or memoir, each chapter opening with a playful summary written in the language of an early modern Ottoman biographical account. While these summaries are entertaining, the book’s overall structure is the more important contribution. Unlike most art and architectural historical accounts, which focus on construction phases or initial periods of use, Macarag’s study carries the monument’s story into the present, considering changes in use, physical appearance, and meaning over time. While this hamam (as the author admits) is not the most important or famous of its kind, its resilience over the centuries affords a unique opportunity for an investigation of the bathing and social experiences of everyday Ottomans (22–23). In her introduction, Macarag spends much energy in defending her use of a biographical memoir format to examine an inanimate monument, but the book attests to the value of such an approach. The emphasis throughout on the ways in which the hamam has been experienced by its clients, founders, employees, and owners sets this book apart from other studies of Ottoman architecture. Despite Macarag’s inclusion of detailed accounts of the building’s appearance over the centuries, it is clear that her primary interest lies in the experiences that architecture creates for its users.

The book’s first chapter, “Ancestry,” describes the life of Nurbanu Sultan, emphasizing her disputed origins in Venetian-controlled Corfu, her political acumen, and her extraordinary wealth and power. Nurbanu Sultan was the first bearer of the title valide sultan (queen mother), which appears to have been invented specifically for her. Macarag turns her attention to Sinan, chief imperial Ottoman architect for more than forty years, who supervised the imperial corps of architects during the years of Çemberlitas Hamami’s construction. After careful consideration of Sinan’s possible role in the project, and despite the design’s similarity to his oeuvre from this period, Macarag concludes that the building was the work of his apprentice, Sedefkâr Mehmed Ağa (she creates some confusion by titling this section “The Architect: Sinan”). The rest of the chapter is devoted to a careful discussion of the history of public baths and the lineage of Çemberlitas Hamami, from “ancient Greek baths to Roman thermae, Byzantine baths, early Arab-Islamic, Perso-Islamic, Seljuk, and finally Ottoman hamams” (32).

Chapter 2, on Çemberlitas Hamami’s “family,” analyzes the Atik Valide endowment. Macarag considers the endowment alongside other charitable foundations that
spearheaded Istanbul’s urban growth after the city’s fifteenth-century conquest by the Ottomans, and she underlines the importance of the services provided by such foundations in the lives of their neighborhoods. The chapter is peppered with remarkable information, such as the fact that Istanbul had more than three thousand endowments by the end of the sixteenth century. Macaraig also makes the important point that such foundations operated through extensive economic networks that helped weave together the different parts of the empire. Çemberlitas Hamamı was a small component of a substantial endowment that included income-generating properties both inside and outside the city, intended to bring material and spiritual blessings to the queen mother and her descendants and beneficiaries. Also in this chapter, Macaraig examines the historical experiences of various individuals at the Çemberlitas Hamamı complex, from the faithful praying in the mosque to the madrasa students who resided there to the sick and weary travelers who received care at the hospital, all thanks to the endowment deed.

In the next chapter, “From Birth to Breadwinner,” Macaraig provides a detailed description of Çemberlitas Hamamı’s construction as well as bathhouse operations, discussing the various mechanics involved in an Ottoman bathhouse, from the bringing of water to the production of steam. She also addresses economic considerations throughout the bathhouse system, from the employees and their guilds to the bathers, owners, and operators.

Chapter 4, “Impressions and Identities,” provides an excellent discussion of how early modern Ottoman social life centered on the hamam. Macaraig explains the requirements for bodily cleanliness in Islam, noting that the greater ablation, which was “required after sexual activity, menstruation, childbirth, touching a dead body and before Friday prayers, the two major Muslim holidays, and departure on the pilgrimage to Mecca, consists of a careful scrubbing and rinsing of the entire body” (117). This meant that every male and female Muslim visited the bathhouse at least once a week. The chapter provides a fascinating view of the hamam’s role in social life. Macaraig describes, for example, the ritual bathhouse visit of a newborn with its mother on the fortieth day of life, as well as the uses of hamsams by non-Muslims, issues of class and ethnic differences in the use of hamsams, and the effects of these differences on bathhouse design. She also considers carnal desires that have been projected onto hamsams in literature and art by both Ottomans and foreigners, and analyzes the role of hamsams in the prevention and treatment of diseases.

Chapter 5, “In Sickness and in Health,” focuses on the various renovations to Çemberlitas Hamamı over the years, with particular attention to eighteenth-century interventions. Macaraig considers how repairs were funded and explains how mone
tary support for architectural renovation and preservation was originally built into the endowment system. She also discusses the 1768 imperial edict that forbade the building of new bathhouses in the city—because of the strain these institutions placed on urban water and fuel supplies—but stated that existing facilities should be subject to careful upkeep.

The next chapter, titled “Old Age,” moves into the nineteenth century, as Macaraig shows how endowed properties in the empire passed slowly into private hands, while both urban modernization efforts and major fires had deleterious effects on bath buildings. In 1868, Çemberlitas Hamamı was partially demolished to make way for the enlargement of the Divan Yolu. The damage caused to the southwest corner of the women’s dressing room at that time led to the closure of the women’s section until 2011. In this chapter, Macaraig also examines bathhouses as emblems of Ottoman heritage. She discusses the hamam built for the Ottoman display at the 1867 World’s Fair in Paris, which was presented to fairgoers as a symbol of Ottoman identity. She also considers the fate of hamsams during the early Turkish Republic’s modernization campaigns and its efforts to distance itself from the Ottoman past.

In her final chapter, “Second Spring,” Macaraig examines the rise of the hamam as a tourist attraction beginning in the nineteenth century and suggests that this revived popularity has led some locals to appreciate the hamam anew. This chapter is concerned above all with the experiences of those who use the hamam, including its managers and employees.

In her epilogue, Macaraig emphasizes the need for scholars to provide different narratives of the hamam and to address its shifting symbolism and meaning for visitors and passersby alike. Her fascinating study underscores this last point by focusing on the different audiences who have encountered the hamam over the centuries. A rich account of the social lives of Ottoman bathhouses, this book is an indispensable and exciting new addition to the literature.

EMINE FETVACI
Boston University

Mohammad Gharipour, ed.

Gardens of Renaissance Europe and the Islamic Empires: Encounters and Confluences
University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017, 272 pp., 55 color and 67 b/w illus. $94.95 (cloth), ISBN 9780271077796

This edited volume from Mohammad Gharipour presents research on cross-cultural influences in garden design between Renaissance-era Europe and three Islamic empires: Mughal, Safavid, and Ottoman. It begins with a prologue by D. Fairchild Ruggles that summarizes relevant work on Islamic garden traditions, including themes of poetry and metaphor, form and typology, agricultural production, environmental concerns, and gardens as agents for cultural production. The book concludes with an epilogue in which Anatole Tchikine asks whether the term “global Renaissance” allows for new perspectives on the study and comparative understanding of gardens produced by European and Islamic rulers. Between prologue and epilogue are eight essays. In comparison to Renaissance gardens of Italy, France, England, and Portugal, two of the essays explore Ottoman gardens, four look at Mughal gardens, one examines the Safavid gardens established by Shah Abbas in and around the city of Isfahan, and another considers varied gardens of Islamic geography.

The book’s first essay, “Embracing the Other: Venetian Garden Design, Early Modern Travelers, and the Islamic Landscape,” by Christopher Pastore, documents the travel of several Venetians who went east from the later fifteenth through the late seventeenth centuries. Pastore discusses