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 argumentation.

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.

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Notes


Nina Macarraig

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

Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019, 392 pp., 4 tables, 41 color and 81 b&w illus. $91 (cloth), ISBN 9781474434102

Çağrırlıtaş 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 Macarraig 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, Macarraig writes in an accessible, engaging manner, and her erudition on all topics related to the bath is impressive.

Çağrırlıtaş 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: Çağrırlıtaş Hamami. Macarraig considers the endowment but has since been reduced to storage facilities or industrial workshops. Despite Macarraig’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. Macarraig next 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 Çağrırlıtaş 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, Macarraig concludes that the building was the work of his apprentice, Sedefkâr Mehmed Ağâ (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 Çağrırlıtaş Hamami, from “ancient Greek baths to Roman thermae, Byzantine baths, early Arab-Islamic, Perso-Islamic, Seljuk, and finally Ottoman hamams” (32).

Chapter 2, on Çağrırlıtaş Hamami’s “family,” analyzes the Atik Valide endowment. Macarraig considers the endowment alongside other charitable foundations that initial periods of use, Macarraig’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, Macarraig expends 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 Macarraig’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.

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Chapter 2, on Çağrırlıtaş Hamami’s “family,” analyzes the Atik Valide endowment. Macarraig 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 impor-
tance of the services provided by such
foundations in the lives of their neighbor-
hoods. The chapter is peppered with rem-
arkable information, such as the fact
that Istanbul had more than three thousand
endowments by the end of the sixteenth
century. Macaraig also makes the impor-
tant point that such foundations operated
through extensive economic networks that
helped weave together the different parts
of the empire. Çemberlitaş Hamami was a
small component of a substantial endow-
ment that included income-generating
properties both inside and outside the city,
tended to bring material and spiritual
blessings to the queen mother and her de-
cendants and beneficiaries. Also in this
chapter, Macaraig examines the historical
experiences of various individuals at the
Çemberlitaş Hamami complex, from the
faithful praying in the mosque to the ma-
drassa students who resided there to the
sick and weary travelers who received care
at the hospital, all thanks to the endow-
ment deed.

In the next chapter, “From Birth to Breadwinner,” Macaraig provides a detailed
description of Çemberlitaş Hamami’s con-
struction as well as bathhouse operations,
discussing the various mechanics involved
in an Ottoman bathhouse, from the bring-
ing 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 Identi-
ties,” 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 care-
ful 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 so-
cial 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 hamams by non-Muslims, is-
ues of class and ethnic differences in the
use of hamams, and the effects of these
differences on bathhouse design. She also
considers how carnal desires have been
projected onto hamams in literature and art
by both Ottomans and foreigners, and ana-
lyzes the role of hamams in the prevention
and treatment of diseases.

Chapter 5, “In Sickness and in Health,”
focuses on the various renovations to Çem-
berlitaş Hamami over the years, with par-
ticular attention to eighteenth-century
interventions. Macaraig considers how re-
pairs 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, Çem-
berlitaş Hamami was partially demol-
ished 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 clo-
sing of the women’s section until 2011.
In this chapter Macaraig also examines
bathhouses as emblems of Ottoman heri-
tage. She discusses the hamam built for
the Ottoman display at the 1867 World’s
Fair in Paris, which was presented to fair-
goers as a symbol of Ottoman identity.
She also considers the fate of hamams
during the early Turkish Republic’s mod-
ernization 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 fascinat-
ing 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 addi-
tion to the literature.

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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 be-
tween Renaissance-era Europe and three
Islamic empires: Mughal, Safavid, and
Ottoman. It begins with a prologue by D.
Fairchild Ruggles that summarizes rele-
vant work on Islamic garden traditions,
including themes of poetry and metaphor,
form and typology, agricultural produc-
tion, 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 per-
spectives on the study and comparative un-
derstanding of gardens produced by
European and Islamic rulers. Between pro-
logue 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 Travellers, and the Islamic Lan-
dscape,” by Christopher Pastore, documents
the travel of several Venetians who went
east from the later fifteenth through the late
seventeenth centuries. Pastore discusses