and in its effort to present garden traditions not as culturally isolated phenomena but as important parts of cross-cultural discourses.

That said, while the volume’s stated aim is to explore “transcontinental mutual influences” (xiv) in garden design, alluding to a “reciprocal flow of ideas and concepts” (xiii) within the framework of a “global Renaissance” (xiii), most of the essays review this flow as one-directional, mainly considering the impacts of Islamic gardens on European ones. All of the authors vividly re-create the historical settings wherein Venetians, Stuart-era English intellectuals, French humanists, and Portuguese viceroys, among others, examined Islamic garden traditions and, frequently, documented them in travel accounts. As many of the essays show, Renaissance-era Europeans sought to translate and adapt what they learned from their travels and their reading. Despite the “striking parallels” (91) and “analogous approaches” (121) discussed, the essays focus primarily on European impressions and/or translations of Islamic garden forms, traditions, and ideas, paying little attention to what Islamic designers might have learned and adapted from Europe. Readers may thus be left with the impression that Islamic cultures failed to grow from this cross-cultural engagement, or that builders and maintainers of Islamic gardens operated within static and fixed traditions. The book’s historiographical classification of Islamic cultures into three imperial periods underscores this shortcoming, suggesting a conventional understanding of the Islamic world, and this reliance on standardized taxonomy risks undermining the volume’s purpose.

Still, the challenging nature of this research and its goal of opening up new horizons in cross-cultural garden studies is laudable and highly valuable, and the book’s limitations may be viewed as offering ideas for future research. The editor has brought together the work of scholars whose novel approaches raise new questions, paving the way for alternative, complex, and layered garden histories, histories that go beyond the limitations posed by current disciplinary boundaries and cultural constraints.

B. DENİZ ÇALIŞ KURAL
Istanbul Bilgi University

Chanchal B. Dadlani
From Stone to Paper: Architecture as History in the Late Mughal Empire
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Chanchal B. Dadlani has produced the first full-length book on late Mughal architecture, a topic often dismissed in older scholarship and in popular literature as essentially unworthy of study. Her richly illustrated volume From Stone to Paper, full of reproductions in superb color, provides deep insights into this period, making us rethink our understandings of the later Mughals and of how Mughal architecture came to be defined. As Dadlani says in her conclusion, “This book has centered on the fundamental question of how the concept of Mughal architecture emerged over the course of the long eighteenth century” (175). An evaluation of its contents provides a response to that question.

In the book’s introduction, “The Mughal Eighteenth Century,” Dadlani argues that it was during this fraught period that the architectural style now called Mughal emerged. It was the result of architects and patrons looking to the past—that is, to the seventeenth century—for a new architectural style appropriate for their own present. She suggests that this process was ongoing throughout the long eighteenth century, although her book’s final three chapters make clear that it continued into the mid-nineteenth century, when the Mughal Empire dissolved. In the rest of the introduction Dadlani discusses trends in scholarship on late Mughal architecture as well as the wide variety of sources she used in her study.

Chapter 1, “Between Experimentation and Regulation: The Foundations of an Eighteenth-Century Style,” focuses on architecture built during the late seventeenth century under Mughal emperors Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707). Here Dadlani introduces the concept of istiqbal, a recognition of existing masterpieces along with a desire to refine them, suggested initially by literary scholar Paul Losensky to describe the composition of Persian poetry. Applying this poetic concept to architecture is both innovative and appropriate. Dadlani argues that the visual past was reorganized for Aurangzeb’s present. She analyzes architecture constructed under this Mughal ruler in a particularly productive manner, suggesting that while he is usually seen as having been disinterested in or even hostile to culture, he never banned the arts as is commonly believed. Dadlani posits that Aurangzeb used and enhanced the balanced and harmonious architectural style introduced by his father, Shah Jahan, builder of the Taj Mahal, to contradict the widespread perception of his own rule as illegitimate. We might wonder if this visual ploy was successful, for the Badshahi Masjid (Badshahi Mosque) in Lahore was Aurangzeb’s only truly accessible project. The Moti Masjid in the Delhi Mughal palace and the tomb in Aurangabad, both discussed here in detail, were more private structures.

Chapter 2 surveys the urban landscape of eighteenth-century Mughal Delhi. This is not a study of individual structures or an attempt to bring new ones to light but an overview of how mosques, tombs, garden estates, and shrines marked key places in the city. Focusing on major sites such as the Sufi shrines of Bakhtiyar Kaki and Nizam al-Din Auliya, as well as the Fakhr al-Masjid (Pride of the Mosques), built by a noblewoman, Dadlani discusses how the city was transformed throughout the century, especially with the loss of access to the important shrine of Mu’in al-Din Chishti in Ajmer. This is not the first exploration of this material, but it fits well with the author’s overall argument. In addition to the built environment, Dadlani examines the writings of Dargah Quli Khan, a visitor to Delhi who wrote an engaging memoir of his time there, to enhance our understanding of the city and how its significant locales were used by the public, both elite and common.

The main focus and strength of chapter 3, “‘The Last Flicker in the Lamp of Mughal Architecture’: Transforming the Imperial Capital,” concerns the growth of Shia structures in Mughal Delhi. Although the Shia–Sunni divide was not overwhelmingly significant in Mughal India, it was not until the eighteenth century that a Shia political presence was seen in northern India, most notably in Awadh, a rich swath of land to the east of Delhi, between the rivers Ganges and Jumna (Yamuna), and still further east in Bengal. Awadh’s Mughal governor, Safdar Jang, a Shia, was increasingly
independent, although he served as a Mughal noble. An analysis of the tomb of Safdar Jang (1753–54), the first significant Shia structure built in Delhi, and its nearby Shia shrines forms the bulk of this chapter. Dadlani depicts the tomb as a link between an imperial Mughal seventeenth-century past and Lucknow’s Bara Imambara (ca. 1784), built specially for Shia rituals during Muharram by the rulers of Awadh. Safdar Jang’s successors, the rulers of Awadh, saw themselves as the cultural heirs to the Mughal throne, albeit in Shia, not Sunni, terms.

Chapter 4, “Codifying Mughal Architecture on Paper,” turns from a discussion of built architecture to illustrations of buildings in a volume known as the Palais Indiens. This is a collection of large-scale architectural drawings rendered on gridlocked paper, commissioned from Indian artists by Jean-Baptiste Gentil, a French military officer in the court of Awadh. These drawings were part of a larger collection that focused on Mughal and Awadhi history and served as a visual link between the Mughals, to whom Gentil’s wife was related, and Awadh, in whose court the Frenchman served. In their day, the drawings of the Palais Indiens were highly original, for they represented one of the earliest systematic depictions of Indian architecture. Although the drawings left India by 1772, Dadlani contends that they served as both precedent and impetus for the flood of amateur and professional architectural renderings that followed.

“Mughal Architecture between Manuscript and Print Culture,” chapter 5, presents a convincing and exciting discussion of an early nineteenth-century manuscript, one that copied a seventeenth-century history of Shah Jahan but with the innovative introduction of illustrations of Mughal architecture. Dadlani argues that this manuscript was a way for the Mughal ruler to link his reign, which occurred during a turbulent period in Delhi’s history, with a glorious past. Although the text was in Persian, the audience was not the Mughal elite; rather, the work was aimed at British officials, who (mostly) could not read that language but could grasp the significance of the buildings depicted—many of them still being used by the Mughals. Dadlani further claims that these illustrations constituted the first text on Indian architecture, made well before the work of Ram Raz (1790–1830), the establishment of the Archaeological Survey of India, or the writings of James Fergusson (1808–86), which were among the earliest on Indian architecture. This point might be contested by those who recognize the innumerable sastras (treatises) on architecture, but Dadlani’s argument is worthy of consideration and challenges us to rethink how we view the historiography of Indian art history. The manuscript was followed by printed texts with lithographed architectural illustrations that made Mughal architecture more generally accessible, if only to an elite audience. Dadlani here finalizes her argument that Mughal architecture as a concept evolved throughout the eighteenth and into the early nineteenth century. The illustration of Mughal architecture, she says, was by then the equivalent of written histories.

Dadlani’s brief conclusion reminds the reader that her entire text focuses on how the concept of Mughal architecture emerged in the late Mughal period. In her view, this was an issue of legitimacy and heritage, where builders drew on the classical forms of seventeenth-century structures and recast them to serve as eighteenth- and nineteenth-century reminders of a glorious past. Among the many artists, Indian and international, who drew these structures, and among the architects, again Indian and international, who used them as a basis for their own creations, the concept was well understood. Dadlani has produced an intriguing volume that will surely generate considerable interest.

CATHERINE B. ASHER
University of Minnesota

Jiat-Hwee Chang and Imran bin Tajudeen, eds.
Southeast Asia’s Modern Architecture: Questions of Translation, Epistemology and Power

This is an interesting and timely volume, not only for the contents of its individual chapters but also for the ways in which the editors, and a majority of the contributing authors, either contest the meaning of modern architecture in Southeast Asia or propose its reframing. Like many edited books developed from conferences or symposia, Southeast Asia’s Modern Architecture bears traces of the effort involved in massaging diverse topics, agendas, and approaches into a coherent narrative. Nevertheless, the book convincingly argues that the architecture of Southeast Asia must be seen within contemporary social, cultural, and political contexts, and that architecture is critical to interdisciplinary debates about the region’s development.

Editors Jiat-Hwee Chang and Imran bin Tajudeen begin the book with an introductory chapter, in which they explain that scholarship on Southeast Asia’s modern architecture has tended to be either divided along national lines or presented in the form of grand, totalizing regional theories and themes. They state their ambition to steer a course between these tendencies and to reframe the terms modern and architecture within grounded but intraregional social and political contexts. The chapters are divided into three sections—reflecting the “translation, epistemology, and power” of the book’s subtitle—and framed according to three periods of history as well as “sociocultural formation” and “conditions of architectural production” (7–8). Collectively, they represent a diverse range of subject matter.

The book covers a lot of conceptual and geographical territory. The editors’ effort to frame all of this in their introduction is assisted by Anoma Pieris’s chapter, which surveys a range of positions on architectural and modernist subjectivities. Pieris interrogates the domination of statist or nationally based narratives, the way that “postcolonial geopolitical borders are seen as normative,” and the tendency for local architectural academics and professionals to hold essentialist positions (140). Pieris also interrogates current counternarratives to Western hegemony, noting that the Asia-centricity of “Asia as method”—despite its usefulness as an “analytical counterpoint” to European domination—tends toward an East Asia-centricity (152).

The book’s other chapters all treat more specific and nationally situated subjects within varying temporal frameworks. H. Hazel Hahn’s essay on Rabindranath Tagore’s visit to French Indochina in 1929 seems at first tangential to the subject of modern architecture, although Tagore’s story reveals valuable perspectives on modernity within an early twentieth-century colonial context. Among other things, Hahn