


*On Earth or in Poems* is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of al-Andalus and its enduring hold on the imagination of Arab and Muslim artists and thinkers in the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and beyond. One great benefit of this text is Calderwood's eschewing the methodological nationalism that marks most scholarship on al-Andalus (including the work of this reviewer). Instead, he traces themes that cut across national borders to suggest pan-regional and, one could argue, global imagined communities for whom al-Andalus has been, and often remains, a touchstone of authenticity, a well-spring of inspiration, and a beacon of hope for possible futures. It is hard to find fault in such a magnificent text. At times, I yearned for more quotidian texture to augment the rich textual explications. I also yearned for a separate bibliography rather than having to dive into the ample notes! Ultimately, one hopes that the numerous and important portals opened by Calderwood onto diverse Andalusí worlds will inspire continued work in the varied contexts in which the afterlives of al-Andalus resonate.

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## The Accidental Palace: The Making of Yıldız in Nineteenth-Century Istanbul

**Deniz Türker (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2023). Pp. 272. \$114.95 hardcover. ISBN: 9780271093918**

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In *The Accidental Palace*, Deniz Türker proposes the first comprehensive study of the vast Yıldız Palace complex in Istanbul. Located in the Beşiktaş neighborhood, the site is hidden behind forbidding walls, and only partially accessible. As the author poignantly notes: "One scurries along beside its boundary walls, always fearing that one is trespassing in an area belonging to a governmental body; more often than not, guards appear to confirm that suspicion" (p. 18). Given access limits, Türker's task was not an easy one, yet she paints a detailed picture of a site that has not previously received much scholarly attention. This is also the first monograph in English on an Ottoman palace since Gülru Necipoğlu's study of Topkapı Palace.

Türker situates her work within two broad bodies of literature. The first are historical studies of the 19th-century Ottoman Empire, on Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909) and his downfall at the hands of the Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakkî, often referred to as the Young Turks). The second body of literature is concerned with Istanbul in the late 18th to early 20th century, a period that saw incisive changes with the construction of palaces such as Yıldız and Dolmabahçe, the involvement of new, post-Tanzimat elites in shaping Ottoman visual culture, and the creation of residential neighborhoods with European-style apartment buildings. Within these two broader contexts, Türker examines the history of the palace from 1795 to 1909.

Chapter 1 discusses Yıldız during Abdülhamid II's long reign, beginning with its end in 1909 when representatives of the Young Turks took over the site, inventoried its contents, and partially opened it to the public. Türker offers a critical assessment of texts written about the palace at this time, which are, as she notes, rife with fantasy based in the deposed sultan's negative image. Türker examines the site's longtime use as an imperial retreat



centered on a mansion at the top of the sloping site. Pertevniyal Valide Sultan (d. 1883), the mother of Sultan Abdülaziz (r. 1861–76), was the primary occupant of the Mabeyn Kiosk, a structure that under Abdülhamid II became the center of the administrative (*selamlık*) section of the estate, reflecting earlier administrative reforms begun under Mahmud II (r. 1808–39). Further administrative structures were located nearby. Members of these offices were given apartments (*daires*) within the complex, keeping them close by. Further apartments, designated to host Arab and Kurdish notables who were de facto hostages, rather than guests, were housed in the Çifte Saraylar in Nişantaşı, considered an extension of Yıldız's residential compound. Nearly lost in this vast array of material is the construction of a railway line within Yıldız's park, a project that Türker aptly, if too briefly, connects to the Ottoman Empire's larger railway projects, and related entanglements with the German Empire.

Chapter 2 examines the patronage of Ottoman queen mothers (*valide sultan*) and princesses, focusing on rural retreats and farms in the larger area around Yıldız, beginning with a waterfront mansion at Çırağan in the mid-17th century. Of particular importance are the ways in which Ottoman princesses were allocated income, providing them with extensive agency beyond the confines of the Ottoman household or their arranged marriages to dignitaries. Under Selim III (r. 1789–1807), the *valide sultan* reemerged as a prominent member of the household, and Yıldız Kiosk was designed for his mother, Mihrişah Sultan, marking the beginning of construction at this site. The remainder of the chapter discusses the residences of queen mothers near Yıldız, and other rural sites such as Çamlıca on the Asian shore. A focal point is the patronage of Bezm-i Alem, the mother of Sultan Abdülmecid (r. 1839–61), which included fountains around the Yıldız site. Toward the end of the chapter, the tomb complex of Yahya Efendi, a 16th-century Sufi scholar, appears as a spiritual node neighboring Yıldız that made the site particularly appealing to female patrons, and was part of Bezm-i Alem's patronage in the area. The chapter closes with Abdülhamid II's choice of Yıldız as his primary palace, and his appointment of Perestu, his foster mother, as *valide sultan*.

Chapter 3 discusses the shaping of landscape at Yıldız during the reigns of Mahmud II and Abdülmecid, focusing on head gardener Christian Sester, who was appointed in 1835, having worked as a gardener in his native Bavaria, and the Rhineland. In Istanbul, Sester designed gardens but also field hospitals during a cholera outbreak, and repairs to Istanbul's water supply in the Belgrade Forest. Much of his landscaping work under Mahmud II concentrated on the hillside behind the Çırağan Palace, thus indelibly shaping the site that would become Yıldız. Then, the chapter turns to several of Sester's successors, one of whom, Frenchman Charles Henry, moved to the Khedive's palace in Cairo after his appointment in Istanbul ended with Abdülhamid II's deposition in 1909.

Chapter 4 discusses the "Alpine appearance" (p. 121) of Yıldız, beginning with the fact that, topographically, it is recorded as a mountain in sources of the period studied in the book. Part of this mountainous landscape comprised wooden cottages built during Abdülhamid II's reign. While some were based roughly on Swiss mountain chalets (the French term Ottomanized as *şāle*), others followed models of cottages from French and British publications. The multiplication of such structures across Yıldız, Türker argues, reflected a change in Ottoman royal family life, from the large harem to nuclear families centered around a married couple and their children. Prebuilt structures featuring a similar aesthetic were also set up for members of the Ottoman capitals elites. Chapter 5 addresses one of the many photographic albums produced during Abdülhamid II's reign, this one a souvenir collection of images of Ottoman palaces taken in 1905, thirty of them showing Yıldız. While it adds to the book a discussion of Ottoman photographic practices, and the wider circulation of albums created under Abdülhamid II's reign, this chapter might have worked better as a standalone journal article.


The book's compelling title remains largely unexplained, except for a brief phrase: "Yıldız in its earliest instantiation was not conceived as a palace—it became so, accidentally" (p. 2). The term "accidental" does not appear again, and one can only wonder how the title aligns

with Abdülhamid II's purposeful modeling of Yıldız. Unfortunately, circuitous arches of argument appear throughout the book, making the central arguments hard to follow, especially as side-narratives abound. Some newer literature, while included in the bibliography, is not discussed in the text. Like all titles in the Buildings, Landscapes, and Societies series, the book is beautifully designed and richly illustrated. Some of the images, such as historical photographs and pages of 19th-century magazines, should have been reproduced at a larger size to increase legibility. Additional photographs of the site's present state would have been desirable, but given access limitations, this may not have been possible. Türker has written an expansive study, at times making the reader wish some of the materials had been kept for separate articles so that topics that are only touched upon—such as the management of infectious disease; infrastructure projects; gender relations; the aesthetics of landscape; ties to Iran and Egypt—could have been more fully explored.

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## Jewish Muslims: How Christians Imagined Islam as the Enemy

**David M. Freidenreich (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2022). Pp. 314. \$29.95 hardcover. ISBN: 9780520344716**

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David Freidenreich is a leading scholar of medieval history who has crafted ground-breaking work on the formation and tenor of Western canon law on subjects pertaining to the relations between Christians (a term Western sources used specifically for the papal flock) and others. In the intriguingly titled and exceptionally well-written *Jewish Muslims*, Freidenreich takes the reader on a rewarding journey through a broad range of material to explain how and why medieval Christians portrayed Muslims as Jewish. The author does well to emphasize that the book is not about Jews or Muslims but about what Christians wrote about Jews and Muslims in works aimed at fellow Christians. There is no work that completely exhausts the possibilities it raises, of course, and therefore it is worth highlighting both some of *Jewish Muslims'* salient accomplishments and areas worthy of further exploration.

Freidenreich has produced a comprehensive, yet clear and concise introduction that offers accurate summaries of each chapter: this makes an extended overview of content and arguments unnecessary. The Introduction explains the book's key concepts, including "antisemitism" and "anti-Judaism," through clear and accessible prose. When it comes to "Jewish Muslims," the point is that discourses pretend to describe, but in reality construct, their object in ways that establish differences, belonging, and stairsteps of power and authority. Why did medieval Western Christians frequently and authoritatively portray Muslims as Jewish? "1) to explain Muslims in biblical terms; 2) to justify military and political assaults against Muslims on theological grounds; and, especially, 3) to motivate self-differentiation through the cultivation of proper Christian characteristics" (p. 6). How rhetorical analogies work is something *Jewish Muslims* explains time and again in a minimalist but effective manner that greatly enhances the book's suitability for the classroom (frequent restatements of main points that are kept short and to the point, so they never feel overdriven).