This distinguished series seeks to develop scholarship on the transnational connections of societies and peoples in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; provide a forum in which work on transnational history from different periods, subjects, and regions of the world can be brought together in fruitful connection; and explore the theoretical and methodological links between transnational and other related approaches such as comparative history and world history.

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AT THE TURN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
Renée Worringer
Ottomans Imagining Japan

East, Middle East, and Non-Western Modernity at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

Renée Worringer
To my “wolf pack,” then and now: Spock, Sulu, Arrow and Gem, all of whom taught me about partnership in work and play. And to the “pack leader,” Stephen, for his quiet patience when I often lost mine in this endeavor.
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I claim sole responsibility for any shortcomings in this final product that has lingered on my hard drive for too long.
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Archival Abbreviations

**Ottoman Prime Ministry Archives**

- Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BBA)
- Meclis-ı Vukela (MV)
- Dâhiliye Mütenevvia (DH.MTV)
- Bâb-ı Âli Evrâk Odası (BEO)

**Yıldız Palace Papers**

- Yıldız Evrâki (Y)
- Sadrâzam Kâmil Paşa (Y. Kâmil Paşa)
- Yıldız Sadâret, Resmî Mârûzât (YA.RES)
- Yıldız Sadâret, Hususi Mârûzât (YA.HUS)
- Yıldız Mütenevvi Mârûzât (Y.MTV)

**Ottoman Foreign Ministry**

- Hâriciye Nezâretî (HR)
- Mütenevvia (HR.MTV)
- Hukuk Müşavirliği, İstişare Odası (HR.HMŞ.İŞO)

**Maritime Museum Archives**

- Deniz Müzesi Arşivi (DMA)
- D.(defter no.)/S.(sayfa no.)
- Mektübi Bölümü I (MEK I)
- Mektübi Bölümü (IIMEK II)
- Mektübi Bölümü III (MEK III)
- Şûrâ-yi Bahriye Bölümü (ŞUB)
- Muhâsebe Bölümü (MUH)
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In this amply documented study of Ottoman responses to the rise of Japan at the turn of the twentieth century, Renée Worringer shows how our understanding of international history may be broadened in a transnational history framework in multiple ways.

First, although both the Ottoman Empire and Japan were players in the geopolitics of international relations—indeed, Japan’s war with Russia during 1904–1905 was clearly understood in those terms by all segments of the Ottoman population—they were also emerging “modern nations,” and how a people, a government, or a society contrives to establish a modern nation is an enduring transnational question. Europe and North America served as models, but many in the Middle East saw Japan’s example as an important and encouraging precedent. What attracted them to the Japanese nation was, the book shows, its non-Western identity, which seemed satisfy their quest for “non-Western modernity,” that is, the establishment of a modern nation that did not merely copy a Western model.

In this connection, Turks, Egyptians, Syrians, and others who constituted the broad Ottoman Empire were particularly interested in Japan’s cultural heritage as well as its racial identity that set it apart from the modern West. This theme is pursued throughout the book. How races and civilizations develop and interact with one another is a key theme of transnational history, and in the early twentieth century both Ottomans and Japanese were keenly aware of the prevailing “race science” and the hierarchic view of human history that put all non-white people below the white race, and all non-Western civilizations below the West. How the majority of humankind, who after all were non-white and non-Western, sought to acquire an alternative understanding of the world is one of the issues historians have been investigating for some time, and this book adds significantly to the literature.

The author also repeatedly shows that the Ottoman Empire was not a monolithic entity and consisted of a multiplicity of faiths, ideologies, classes, and political groups. Though the ruling elite, above all the Sultan, sought to perpetuate the status quo, others such as the Young Turks were eager to displace the existing political arrangements with an alternative system, while still others, especially non-Turkish Muslims and other minorities, had their own agendas. Each had a different understanding of what was happening in East Asia and sought to make use of it to argue for its relevance to what it was seeking to accomplish. These kaleidoscopic perspectives on the relationship between developments in East Asia and the Middle East can best be understood as another transnational theme worthy of investigation.

Above all, the book helps us understand the rise of “political Islam,” a transnational phenomenon that daily catches our attention. Although the
movement for a pan-Islamic nation, even a pan-Islamic empire, had arisen before the twentieth century, there was an important connection between the rise of Japan, a modern state under the emperor that seemed to retain its traditional civilization, and the struggles by Turks, Arabs, and others in the region to establish a national community that likewise revered its tradition and developed an identity of its own quite apart from the modern European model of nationhood. (Some believed, as the author notes, that in Japan even educated women retained their loyalty to traditional practices at home, a fitting example for a modern Islamic nation in which female domesticity would be retained.)

Readers will learn much from these and many other insights that inform this volume. It makes a welcome new addition to the Palgrave Macmillan Transnational History Series that seeks to promote a fresh understanding of the past in a cross-border, trans-regional framework.

**Akira Iriye**

**Rana Mitter**