

## English Abstracts

# **How Did the Ottomans Become Ottoman? The Construction of an Imperial Brand Name**

**Roni Zirinski**

Many hypotheses have been proposed in scholarly literature about how and why a small political entity became the vast Ottoman Empire. This article suggests that one of the reasons for this success was in the marketing choice of the name Osman as the brand name for the emerging empire. This name, which was also the name of the third caliph of Islam, ‘Uthman b. ‘Affan (644-656), was adopted sometime during the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and dominated Ottoman historical writing in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It conveyed many symbolic meanings that became well integrated into the rhetoric of the mounting Sunni-Shi‘ite (Ottoman-Safavid) confrontation, and the rhetoric of the intra-Sunni (Ottoman-Mamluk) struggle for hegemony.

This article suggests, for the first time, that the name of the Ottoman state stems from the anti-Shi‘ite composition of al-Jahiz (776-868/9), *Al-‘Uthmaniyya*, and as such should be seen as a reaction to the 10<sup>th</sup> Century Shi‘ites’ choice of “Fatimid” as their imperial name. The astute use of the religious and historical connotations in the name ‘Uthman helped define the boundaries of Ottoman consciousness, shape Ottoman struggles and decisions, and outline the empire’s borders in later centuries.

# **Architecture and Participation in Civic Life: Rabin Square, Tel Aviv**

**Tali Hatuka**

This paper presents an interdisciplinary framework for the study of relationships between architecture and participation in civic life. It examines the formal attributes of a public place — Rabin Square, Tel Aviv — and its use for civil practices. The paper demonstrates the ways in which, over several decades, architectural intervention in the square and socio-political processes taking place in Israel have led to the ossification of patterns of civil assembly. Those patterns, in turn, create an illusion of active participation in democratic life.

# **The Dictator and His Town: Aspects in the Planning and Development of Tikrit under Saddam Hussein**

**Ronen Zeidel**

Town planning often involves the transformation of politics into the visual sphere. This is especially true in dictatorships such as Baathist Iraq, where the dictator is strongly engaged in planning. In most cases the dictatorial regime either chooses an already established urban center to become his showcase or constructs a brand new center, in which his architectural vision can be fully expressed. The Iraqi case is somewhat different, since the Baathist regime developed two showcases: Baghdad and Tikrit. While the choice of Baghdad seems natural, the choice of Tikrit requires some explanation. The transformation of Tikrit — an off-the tourist-track provincial town lacking major attractions — into a secondary showcase can only be understood in the light of Saddam's personality cult and his intricate relationship with his townsmen.

# **From *Polis* to *Madina*: Urban Change in Late Antique and Early Islamic Syria**

**Hugh Kennedy**

The development from the Middle Eastern *polis* of antiquity to the *madina* of Islam was a long process of evolution and adaptation to new life-styles, new attitudes towards public law and administration, different aesthetic values, commercial pressures and cultural forces. Traditions of urban life continued without interruption or decay following the appearance of Islam. Yet, the built environment of late-antique cities has gone through a profound and lasting transformation. Theatres, agoras and monumental buildings disappeared; broad colonnaded streets became narrow winding alleys; the design and scale of bathhouses changed considerably. Mosques appeared and took over the functions of the agora, the church and the other classical public buildings as centers of religious, political and social life.

## **Impressions from the Field Sketches of a Historical Study and Anthropological Fieldwork in and around Wadi ‘Ara at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century**

**Kobi Peled**

This paper sketches the reflections of a historian with a keen interest in ethnography upon his fieldwork in Arab settlements in the Wadi ‘Ara region. He reflects upon his feelings during visits to the private homes of his informants: friendship, intimacy and distance. Apparently, the encounter with “the other” may teach the researcher an interesting lesson about himself, providing a new, more self-conscious perspective, which may become part of his scholarly work and enrich it with new and fruitful insights.