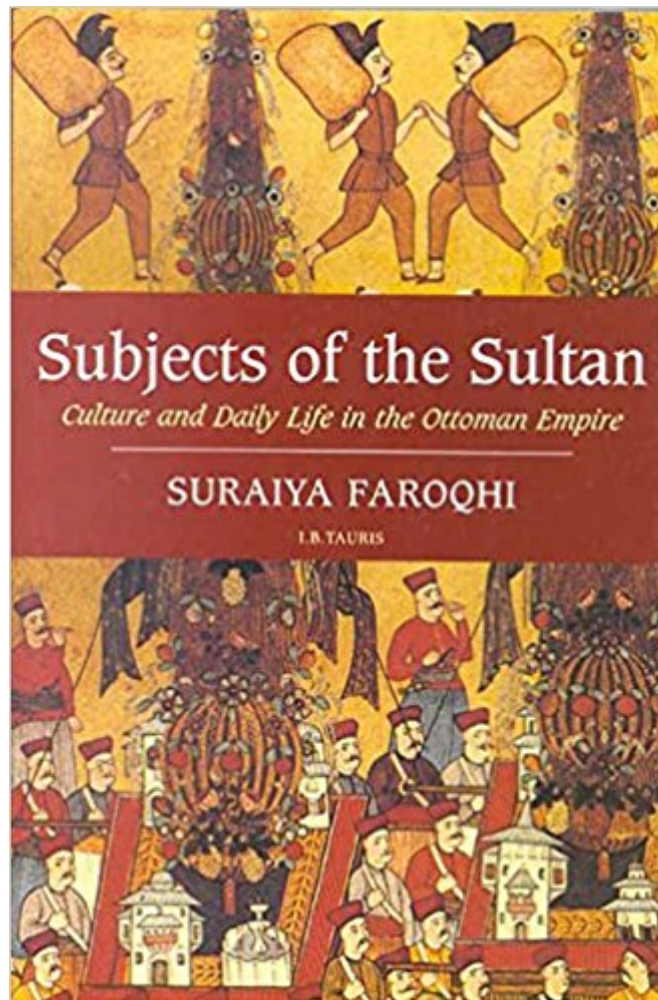




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Subjects Of The Sultan: Culture And Daily Life In The Ottoman Empire



Synopsis

To date no book has explored the day-to-day life of the common people during the centuries of Ottoman rule. Suraiya Faroqhi here explores the urban world of the Ottoman lands from the Middle Ages to the early twentieth century. She describes the social significance of the popular arts and crafts of the period and examines the interaction among the diverse populations and classes of the Empire. She also brings to life the banalities associated with everyday life, such as bathing, the market, loving and grieving--all explored for the first time.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE '[Faroghi] has produced here an impressive and thoughtful study of Ottoman social culture which is witnessed by her acknowledgement of the work of well-respected scholars, the inclusion of a chronology which usefully highlights relevant cultural events, and a superb bibliography of English, French, German and Turkish publications...a stimulating read.'-Jennifer M Scarce, University of Dundee

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF TURKISH STUDIES 'One of the most prolific of present-day Ottoman historians...her forte is her complete ease in using the Ottoman archives not only to capture and retell the stories buried in the records but also to weave some sense of the ordinary and extraordinary aspects of a distant empire into a story that is accessible to a literate audience.'-Virginia H. Askan, McMaster University

MESA BULLETIN '...interesting and erudite...stimulating...This book is highly suitable as a text for courses in Ottoman history or Middle Eastern cultural history. The prose is clear and accessible, and the presentation not overly complex or obscure. Its mixture of broad analysis and striking detail make it an attractive initiation for undergraduates into debates about Ottoman cultural history. Graduate

students, too, would benefit from a close reading of the text, which is studded with off-hand questions and asides that could easily launch entire dissertations. Her command of the historical literature and ability to identify potential lines of research are truly impressive. For anyone seeking a well-informed overview of Ottoman cultural history, Faroqhi's book will stand out as a valuable guide.'-James Grehan, Portland State University

Text: English (translation) Original Language: German --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

What is supposed to be a comprehensive review of the lives of laymen and ordinary people in the realm of the Ottoman Empire turns out to be a review of a few sources on the subject. The main two sources are the account of an Ottoman traveller and the more recent account of the wife of a foreign ambassador. Through these we get a glimpse into the food, the clothing, the social habits, power structures and some economics of the average John Doe living in Istanbul and other cities and towns in what is today Turkey. If you are looking for a breadth that includes the Balkans, the Levant, Egypt, Hijaz or other provinces of the Ottoman Empire, you will be dissatisfied. If you are looking for depth and conclusive information about any of the topics you will also find nothing: this is rather a series of interpretations / clues and other hypotheses around the information coming from those few manuscripts. Despite all of that, it remains a worthwhile attempt at dwelling into the unknown: the non-political and non-military history...

While the material detailed in Subjects of the Sultan admittedly has narrow appeal (those with an interest in the social history of the Ottoman Empire are few and far between), it really is an excellent resource and a top-shelf social history. Initially I was dismayed in reading Faroqhi's introduction in which she writes that the focus of the book primarily is on "the practice and reception of certain arts ... in particular architecture and the decorative arts" as the subtitle "culture and daily life in the Ottoman Empire" was what drew me to the book. And while a good portion of the book does discuss art and architecture, there is much on Ottoman society as well. The first third of the book discusses Ottoman society, particularly the religious divisions within the empire (not just Christian / Muslim, but especially sunni / shi'ii), and the political and economic divide between reaya (subjects) and askeri (servants of the sultan). Her insights on these divisions within the empire are much more nuanced than I have read in previous books on the subject, giving a richer, fuller understanding of the peoples of this part of the world. The chapter on women in the Ottoman empire was particularly

engaging, as Faroqhi discussed a wide variety of issues from legal rights, education and marriage to the economic position of women and their role as patrons of the arts. These sections alone were worth the price of the book. In spite of the subtitle, the focus primarily is on art and architecture: its function in both an official and social capacity, which was of less interest personally and professionally. Still, this is a veritable gold-mine of detail and information historiographically as well as from a social history standpoint on the peoples of the Ottoman empire.

Interesting perspective.

Scientific History book in simple English, nicely written, broad entities', detailed resources'. Interesting and fun read about the Cultural differences during the Ottoman empire and factors influencing it. There's also stories of real people representing these periods with the appropriate references.

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