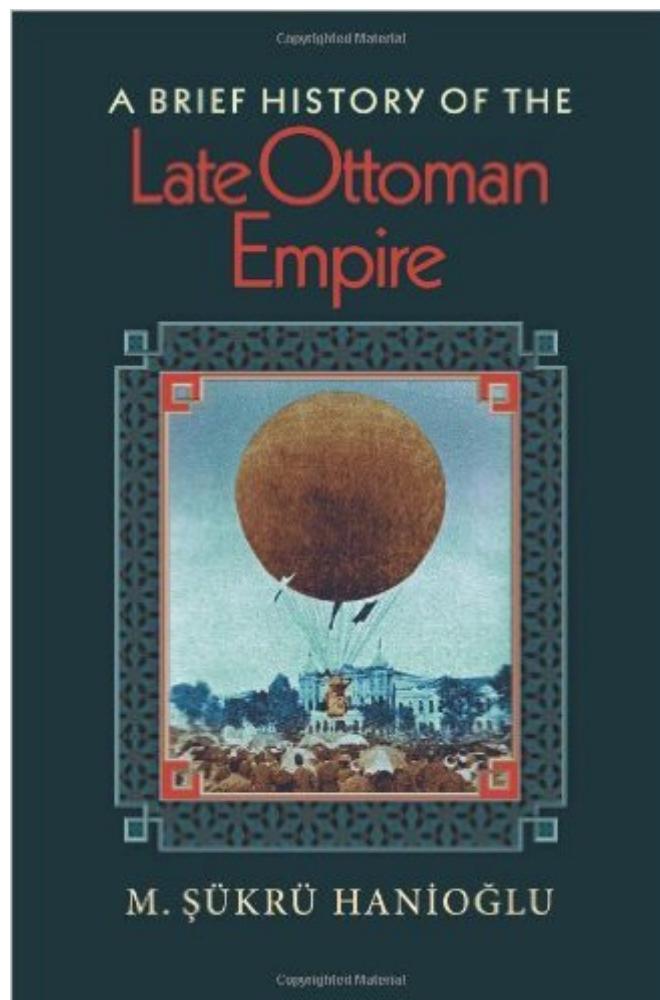


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A Brief History Of The Late Ottoman Empire



Synopsis

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire straddled three continents and encompassed extraordinary ethnic and cultural diversity among the estimated thirty million people living within its borders. It was perhaps the most cosmopolitan state in the world--and possibly the most volatile. A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire now gives scholars and general readers a concise history of the late empire between 1789 and 1918, turbulent years marked by incredible social change. Moving past standard treatments of the subject, M. Sâkrâ Hanioglu emphasizes broad historical trends and processes more than single events. He examines the imperial struggle to centralize amid powerful opposition from local rulers, nationalist and other groups, and foreign powers. He looks closely at the socioeconomic changes this struggle wrought and addresses the Ottoman response to the challenges of modernity. Hanioglu shows how this history is not only essential to comprehending modern Turkey, but is integral to the histories of Europe and the world. He brings Ottoman society marvelously to life in all its facets--cultural, diplomatic, intellectual, literary, military, and political--and he mines imperial archives and other documents from the period to describe it as it actually was, not as it has been portrayed in postimperial nationalist narratives. A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire is a must-read for anyone seeking to understand the legacy left in this empire's ruins--a legacy the world still grapples with today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

An astonishingly well written informative book. Hanioglu gives us an inside view of the tensions between the centralized power of the Sultanate and that of the periphery. Superficially there was

one law and one template for governance however large distances, poor lines of communication, local politics and customs lead to vast differences in implementation. In most cases, after the local warlords had taken their cut, taxation remittances flowed from the periphery to the centre - the exception being the region of Mecca where tribute flowed the other way in order to maintain the support of the Sherifians and confer legitimacy on the Sultan as Calif as he was not a descendant of Mohammed. Militarily from the late 1700s on Turkey had done poorly in its military engagements with Russia and turned towards Europe both for allies and for guidance in modernizing its armed forces. These changes are resented by the Janissaries and Sultan Selim III is slain in a coup in 1807. Selim's cousin Mahmud II is installed as his replacement and he manages a conservative rule for the next 3 decades. In this period there is also an interesting description of British ambassador Stratford Canning from 1810 to 1858, known as "the little Sultan", who was said to have wielded more influence than most Grand Viziers and foreign ministers. In Egypt Mehmed Ali (an Albanian) amasses a large army and suppresses a Wahabist revolt in Arabia (1811-18) and the Greek rebellion (1824-27) and establishes a powerbase, nominally subservient to the empire. In 1832 he pushes further east into Palestine and Mahmud resorts to an alliance both with Russia to restore the status quo in return a promise to close the Bosphorus to Russia's adversaries in the event of war.

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