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DURABLE EMPIRE: STATE VIRTUOSITY AND SOCIAL ACCOMMODATION IN THE OTTOMAN MEDITERRANEAN

Subjects of the sultan: culture and daily life in the Ottoman empire. By Suraiya Faroqhi. London: I. B. Tauris, 2000. Pp. x + 358. ISBN 1-86064-289-6. £35.00.

The Ottoman empire and early modern Europe. By Daniel Goffman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Pp. xvi + 273. ISBN 0-5214-59087. £15.99.

A shared world: Christians and Muslims in the early modern Mediterranean. By Molly Greene. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000. Pp. xiv + 228. ISBN 0-619-00898-1. $29.50.

Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab world: the roots of sectarianism. By Bruce Masters. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pp. xiv + 222. ISBN 0-521-803330. £48.00.

Consumption studies and the history of the Ottoman empire, 1560–1922: an introduction. Edited by Donald Quataert. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000. Pp. vii + 358. ISBN 0-7914-4431-7. $25.50.

The Ottoman empire, 1700–1922. Second edition. By Donald Quataert. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pp. xxii + 212. ISBN 0-521-839106. £40.00.

Since Edward Said first launched his devastating critique of western scholarship on the Islamic world, it has been almost impossible to think of Orientalism as anything other than a euphemism for the systematic distortion of an exotic Other. That imaginings of a fanciful 'Orient' are now recognized as providing acute expositions of western pathologies, of references to deep-seated desires and anxieties so disturbing that they only reveal themselves in alterities, goes some way towards explaining the sheer bulk of interdisciplinary publications that have been directly inspired by Said's *Orientalism*.[1] As reflexive phenomena, however, such publications have even less to say about the real 'Orient'. Rather, the historical reconstruction of Orientalism's ostensible subject has been left to a separate and less conspicuous stream of scholarship that is characterized by painstaking archival research.

Although it receives scant attention in *Orientalism*, the Ottoman empire, which is the book's chief historical setting, has been a major beneficiary of this drive to reconstruct a 'real' Orient. A sizeable cohort of scholars in Turkey, Germany, Britain, and the United States, armed with Ottoman Turkish and other relevant languages, has been rediscovering a far more ingenious and multifaceted polity than hitherto imagined, even amongst those who have long since dispatched 'Oriental Despotism', 'Asiatic Mode of Production', and other dated concepts to the intellectual dustbin.[2] Put simply, the new line

[1] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978).

[2] The text most often cited as betraying the hallmarks of Orientalism is the first volume of H. A. R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic society and the west: a study of the impact of Western civilization on Moslem culture in the near east* (London, 1950).

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goes something as follows: from the foundation of the House of Osman in 1299/1300 through to its dissolution in 1922, the Ottomans showed remarkable resourcefulness and dexterity to remain the most formidable military power of the early modern period, and to persist as a 'Great Power', albeit in name only, from the nineteenth century through to the end of the First World War. Students of state formation, especially, have shown interest in the empire's durability, which has been hitherto taken for granted.[3] Whereas historians were previously preoccupied with describing the empire's inexorable rise and protracted decline, now they are more interested in how the Ottomans managed to maintain sovereignty over one of the most contested territorial zones in world history for so long. What mechanisms were deployed to effect control over the crossroads of three continents? Why were the Ottoman Turks the only Central Asian pastoralists to create a durable empire? Why was this the only Islamic empire to survive well into the modern age?

Explaining the empire's durability has entailed a more searching appraisal of how it worked, in all its complexity, as well as greater appreciation for how that complexity changed over time. Looking back over the House of Osman's 622-year history, one can see many Ottoman empires, each adapting to altering international contexts, and each responding to very different kinds of domestic challenges. Getting to know this 'real' and ever-changing entity, however, has required wholesale revision of conventional interpretive frameworks and the assumptions built into the causal plots of conventional narratives. Thus, the course of Ottoman history begins to seem less deterministic if one resists reading the political narrative against upward and downward gradients.

More importantly, whereas historians were hitherto content to explain early Ottoman successes by concentrating on Ottoman attributes (e.g. military prowess, craft guilds, dervish religious syncretism), recent historiography has evinced the far greater importance of objective geopolitical conditions, and how the Ottomans engaged with the broader Mediterranean, European, and Islamic worlds. To explain the dynamics of early Ottoman expansion, for example, scholars focused on the unique qualities of the conquering tribesmen and their undying commitment to holy war (*gaza*). Now, the imperative is to look for multiple roots and influences that reflected the heterogeneous cultural contexts that the early Ottomans inhabited. As Cemal Kafadar's seminal *Between two worlds* (1995) demonstrated, commitment to *gaza* did not preclude the consolidation of political power via interaction, co-operation and intermarriage with the Byzantines and other infidels. Such practicality and amenability was typical of pastoral peoples, particularly those living in frontier zones like medieval Anatolia, but it was especially true of the Ottomans, who ruled the physical frontier of Islam and Christendom longest, and who were even more deeply implicated in cultures that conflicted and melded.[4] To expand and consolidate power over the Christian states of the Balkans, the Ottomans needed much more than brute military force. Imperial expansion in the fourteenth century also involved negotiating alliances and

[3] Among the leading studies of Ottoman state formation that come from historical sociology and state formation analysis, more broadly, are: Karen Barkey, *Bandits and bureaucrats: the Ottoman route to state centralization* (Ithaca, 1997); Ariel Salzmann, 'An *ancien regime* revisited: privatization and political economy in the eighteenth century Ottoman empire', *Politics and society*, 21 (1993), pp. 393–423; Ariel Salzmann, *Tocqueville in the Ottoman empire: rival paths to the modern state* (Amsterdam, 2003).

[4] Cemal Kafadar, *Between two worlds: the construction of the Ottoman state* (Berkeley, 1995); cf. Paul Wittek, *The rise of the Ottoman empire: studies on the history of Turkey, 13th–15th centuries* (London, 2006); Mehmet Fuad Köprülü, *The origins of the Ottoman empire* (Albany, NY, 1991).

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deftly dividing enemies with Byzantine-style diplomatic skills. The Turkoman warrior as single-minded religious fanatic is too one-dimensional a figure to have managed the multifarious challenges of such a confluent territorial juncture.

In short, Kafadar's thesis reflects a more generic movement in Ottoman historiography to rethink the consequences of narrative sequences that accord uncritically with a rise/decline trajectory, and that appreciates the extent to which the Ottomans were implicated in wider historical contexts, including cultural ones. After all, Ottomans functioned in a world defined by cultural and religious pluralities, and if there was indeed a particular attribute that set the Ottomans apart, it was, as Daniel Goffman asserts, their extraordinary ability to manage such pluralities (p. 92). The books discussed below allude to a far more resourceful polity that was a master of metamorphosis, having transformed from a warrior tribal unit, whose seat of government was the *gazi*'s saddle,[5] to an imperial autocracy that dominated the Mediterranean world during the early modern period, through to the constitutional state that, in different circumstances, might have survived well into the twentieth century.

I

There was talk of decline even before the great Süleyman's passing in 1566. Fittingly, the great conqueror died in battle, during the siege of Szigetvar in southern Hungary, but the last decade of his reign was an otherwise undistinguished postscript, living as he did a semi-recluse, having effectively delegated power to his female relatives, particularly his controversial concubine-cum-wife, Hürrem (Roxolana). A succession of critics in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries argued that the ruling order had lost its way because of this failure of leadership, from which followed the corruption of the empire's principal institutions, economic difficulties, ruinous wars, and other emasculating factors.[6] The systems upon which Ottoman greatness was based, and which were in their fullest bloom under Süleyman – absolutism, the timar system, the devshirme, unigeniture – were progressively debased. As Goffman points out in his lively and evocative study, historians since have maintained the view that the empire never recovered, even if they have argued the case differently. The key problem, Goffman implies, is historiographical. Until recently, the reign of Süleyman, or more accurately, an overly idealized version of the first 'magnificent' thirty years, has exercised a form of tyranny over Ottoman historiography. 'Golden ageism', as another critic has aptly put it, has rendered the 365 years that followed as a malingering afterthought, while Süleyman's reign, the empire's apogee, has been made to look inertly ideal, and therefore ahistorical.[7]

The first half of Goffman's *The Ottoman empire and early modern Europe* lays bare the foibles of traditional Ottoman historiography, from which he proceeds to recast the historical empire in light of revisionist critiques. Goffman undertakes the challenge with great clarity, within a mere 127 pages. As a sophisticated, yet accessible, introduction, it can be recommended to specialists and students alike, but it is not a full account. Colin Imber's much more detailed, but equally clear, introduction is a perfect companion. It is also inspired by revisionist trends, but is not much interested in historiographical

[5] Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman empire and modern Turkey*, I (Cambridge, 2002), p. 22.

[6] See Gabriel Piterberg, *An Ottoman tragedy: history and historiography at play* (Berkeley, 2003).

[7] Leslie Peirce, 'Changing perceptions of the Ottoman empire: the early centuries' *Mediterranean History Review*, 19 (2004), pp. 6–28 at pp. 22–3.

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reportage.[8] Where Goffman is focused on the bigger picture, Imber works more closely with the elements that gave substance to that picture. Together, these complementary books represent the new and essential starting point for early Ottoman studies.

Because of its broader focus, Goffman's is the better starting point. If revisionist criticism has made traditional perspectives of Ottoman historical development untenable, Goffman posits an alternative reading that gives coherence not merely to the first 300 years, but also to the entire career of the Ottoman state. The 'systems' that constituted the classical state did indeed make it the world's greatest power. Of much greater significance, in terms of the empire's place in world history, was its ability to invent such systems in the first place, and then to redesign and unmake them when necessity required. Where the Ottomans appear to have been exceptional, and what appears to be the theme running through their long history, was their 'responsive plasticity' (p. 11). Goffman builds on Kafadar's argument that the resourcefulness of the early Ottomans can be explained by the fact that they occupied the 'middle ground' between the Islamic and Christian worlds, where wars punctuated 'decades of coexistence, identity switching and "engendering"' (p. 30).[9] When it came to establishing imperial authority over newly conquered territories, for example, the Ottomans did not impose Sharia Law *tout court*, as might be expected by an Islamic empire, but accorded status to hosts of indigenous legal traditions. Such 'latitudinarianism', which was 'derived largely from the religious and cultural syncretism that had characterised Anatolian marches during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries', and which was also applied in dealings with heterodox movements within Sunni Islam, was a vital means of securing the acquiescence of, and indeed for establishing moral authority over, the empire's diverse subject population (p. 73). This practical approach to state–society relations, especially in accommodating non-Muslims, was maintained until the Balkan Wars of 1912–13.

Resourcefulness was vital in creating and sustaining such a massive imperial entity. When dealing with non-Muslim subjects, the complex array of communal interests, regional legal traditions, and foreign commercial interests, the Ottoman disposition was to seek an accommodation. When it came to institutions and recruitment procedures, the Ottomans were committed to their structures only insofar as they remained practical, hence even during Süleyman's reign, it was an order 'governed by exceptions' (p. 91). The softness or porousness of categories and boundaries is the other leitmotif of Goffman's history. Particularly evocative are the vignettes from the pseudo-biography of one 'Kubad', an early seventeenth-century Circassian slave who later became an imperial envoy. In a matter-of-fact way, Kubad describes how Selim II's grand vizier, Sökköllü Mustafa Pasha, who had grown up a Christian in Bosnia, was rumoured to have maintained financial ties with his Christian relatives, and was often spotted praying in Istanbul's chief Greek church when his brother, a Christian prelate, happened to be visiting (pp. 55–6). The culture that produced something as arbitrary as regal fratricide was also a sanctuary to victims of religious persecution, most famously Sephardic Jewry. Sixteenth-century Germans associated the Turks with the devil, but they could also, as

[8] Colin Imber, *The Ottoman empire, 1300–1600* (London, 2002), begins with a very useful chronology of events, followed by in-depth discussions of the empire's key institutions.

[9] Goffman also draws inspiration from Richard White's work on the American colonial frontier, where memories of 'rivers of blood' have similarly supplanted and obliterated a history of fluid intercultural relations; see Richard White, *The middle ground: Indians, empires, and republics in the Great Lakes region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge, 1989).

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Luther conceded, 'actually want the Turk to come and rule because they think our German people are wild and uncivilized' (p. 110).

The first half of Goffman's book shows how this accommodating and permeable empire was quintessentially 'Mediterranean' in nature, and yet how this Islamic polity was also quite European. Although the Muslim and Christian halves of the Mediterranean seemed to live in a constant state of hostility through the early modern period – the Battle of Lepanto (1571) being regarded by contemporaries as a clash of civilizations – it was business as usual most of the time, for merchant communities on all sides of the Mediterranean (p. 17). In the second half of the book, which deals with Ottoman–European relations, Goffman shows that commercial and diplomatic links become increasingly more entangled over time to the point where the Ottomans were deemed part of Europe (p. 222). The emphasis on connectivity corroborates much recent scholarship stressing the unity of the Mediterranean world that was defined by interaction across cultural boundaries.[10] Istanbul, Izmir, Salonica and other cosmopolitan centres were full of westerners who called these cities home, and could (and did) report back with authoritative representations of 'the Orient' (p. 186).[11] Venetians and Ottomans knew each other quite well. Andrea Gritti, a Venetian nobleman who lived in Istanbul for many years, had four children with his Ottoman concubine, one of whom led an Ottoman army against Hungary (p. 139). There is nothing too exotic about the milieu that Goffman recounts. Kubad often revelled with foreigners in the taverns of Istanbul's Fener district, including subjects of Elizabeth I (p. 57). While in Venice, he availed himself of the city's excellent selection of wines, but he yearned for the comforts of cushioned divans – the Venetians sat on stiffly upright wooden chairs – and coffee, for the Italians had not, as yet, caught on (pp. 133–4).

The new Ottoman empire conceived by revisionist historiography is not adequately understood via the medium of *l'histoire événementielle*. Goffman's main achievement is to render this more complex entity in an accessible and evocative way, this 'world governed by exceptions', where form and reality often failed to correspond. This is a lucid appraisal of an enormously powerful polity that abounded with grey areas and contradictions. The transference of power from the sultan to the harem, for example, opened government to a larger pool of talent just when the challenges faced by government became ever more complicated (p. 124).[12] Such changes should only look retrogressive, Goffman claims acerbically, to those who assume that the Ottoman state could only thrive if it was 'centralized, despotic and aggressively expanding' (p. 64). After Süleyman, the empire did not so much decline as adapt in ways that made it stronger while geopolitical competition became ever more fierce.

[10] See Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The corrupting sea: a study of Mediterranean history* (Oxford, 2000); W. V. Harris, ed., *Rethinking the Mediterranean* (Oxford, 2005); David Abulafia, ed., *The Mediterranean in history* (London, 2004), as well as recent issues of *Mediterranean Historical Review*, especially 18 (2003). This literature represents a belated response to Fernand Braudel's classic, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world in the age of Philip II* (London, 1972), which for most of the second half of the twentieth century attracted enormous praise but hardly anything in terms of emulation, except among historians of the Indian Ocean and south-east Asia. See, for example, K. N. Chaudhuri, *Asia before Europe: economy and civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge, 1990), and Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the age of commerce, 1450–1680* (2 vols., New Haven, 1988–93).

[11] Cf. Said, *Orientalism*.

[12] On this topic, Goffman relies on the path-breaking study of Leslie Peirce, *The imperial harem: women and sovereignty in the Ottoman empire* (New York, 1993).

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II

Goffman's picture of the Ottoman Empire is necessarily built upon monographs such as Molly Greene's *A shared world: Christians and Muslims in the early modern Mediterranean*, a nuanced, ground-level study of this world of cultural conflict and convergence. Greene's study of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Crete, and specifically the transition from Venetian to Ottoman rule in 1669, provides a vivid illustration of how one small, but strategically significant, outpost in the Mediterranean experienced such a profound political rupture, but where the ruptures were not as deep at other levels.

Rather, Greene refers to the persistence of a Mediterranean 'ancien regime', by which she means the modes of exchange and interaction that characterized the Mediterranean made famous by Fernand Braudel. *A shared world* fits comfortably within Braudel's paradigm, which 'has no unity other than that created by the movement of men, the relationships they imply, and the routes they follow'.[13] Despite the island's incorporation into *dar ül'Islam* in 1669, the introduction of Ottoman rule, and the conversion of a sizeable proportion of the population, we find that a typically (though not exclusively) 'Mediterranean' society persisted, where 'personal ties and conversion blurred the lines among Latin, Orthodox and Muslim communities', and where hybrid identities were common (p. 205). In such a world, strangers were those who assumed such a world of cultural confluence was strange. Things only changed when the French, who began to assert their naval and commercial ascendancy in the region after the Venetian-Ottoman War of 1714–18, insisted on defining boundaries. The Crete described in French documentation consisted of 'well-defined groups: Jews, Turks, and Greeks' (p. 205). In her concluding section, Greene further posits that under French influence 'boundaries between East and West … began to acquire a solidity that they previously lacked' (p. 205). It would have been interesting to speculate, as has been done in a study of inter-communal relations in mid nineteenth-century Lebanon, how the hardening of categories in this period foreshadowed the rise of 'communalist' conflict on Crete through the nineteenth century: the island was (arguably) one of the few Ottoman outposts where sectarianism degenerated into decades of communal violence.[14]

The details of *A shared world* overturn many standard assumptions. Whereas Greek nationalist historiography has insisted that Crete reverted to a 'primitive' economic mode with the Ottoman conquest (p. 155), as made apparent by the sudden death of Cretan literary production, Greene shows that local Cretans had already been breaking Venetian domination of external commerce, and that they were ready to fill any vacuum left by their departing suzerains. In any case, it is now well established among scholars that Ottoman rule *was* conducive to commerce.[15] The most striking, yet plausible, claim of Greene's study is that following centuries of Roman Catholic domination, Christian Orthodoxy on Crete was saved by the Ottoman conquest. The Venetians were keen not to incite

[13] Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world in the age of Philip II*, i, p. 276.

[14] Cf. Usama Makdisi, *The culture of sectarianism: community, history, and violence in nineteenth-century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley, 2000). For the rise of communalism on Cyprus, see Paschalis Kitromilides, 'The dialectic of intolerance', *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, 6 (1979), pp. 5–30.

[15] Cf. Traian Stoianovich, 'The conquering Orthodox merchant', *Journal of Economic History*, 20 (1960), pp. 234–313. See also the chapters on trade in Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert, eds., *Social and economic history of the Ottoman empire, 1300–1914* (Cambridge, 1994). For a case study of economic regression in the wake of Ottoman rule, see Michael R. Palairet, *The Balkan economies c. 1800–1914: evolution without development* (Cambridge, 1997).

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sectarian tensions, so they encouraged Orthodox and Latin parishioners to attend each other's churches and, as one Venetian put it in 1639, to be united 'in love and peace' (p. 176). Such sentiments, however, were based on surreptitious motivations. Since the Venetians were determined to 'Catholicize' the population by allowing no Greek bishops to take residence on the island, this meant that there was no Orthodox ecclesiastical elite to challenge Venetian authority, and no local mechanism to ordain Orthodox priests.

Especially striking is Greene's exposition of identity formation following prolonged war between Venice and the Ottomans (1645–69 and 1684–99), and how Islam embedded itself within the Cretan cultural landscape. In urban centres such as Candia, Muslims quickly became the predominant element, although Islamicization did not really see the creation of two separate communities. Kinship ties and obligations were maintained, inter-marriage was not uncommon, as were business partnerships and friendships (p. 109). Rather, Muslims and Christians regarded the line between Cretans and non-Cretans as the more salient boundary.

Greene claims that this complex confessional transition was typical of the eastern Mediterranean, where, as an increasing number of studies are beginning to show, identity categories were often unstable.[16] One would have liked, however, more analytical elaboration of this and many other important claims. The archival detail presented here works against the grain of standard views on East–West relations at many levels, but Greene is happy to let her research do most of the talking. For example, more detailed analysis of what Greene means by an '*ancien regime*' which would inevitably have required some engagement with the issue of modernity and its emergence. Greene regards her Mediterranean paradigm an alternative to Pirenne's conflictual and Braudel's unified models, and yet to the naked eye her research accords so much with the latter – no shame in that! If the eastern Mediterranean had its own unity, what was it? How different was the western half?

III

After reading Greene and Goffman, *homo Ottomanicus* does not look much different to the other 'ants or frogs' living about the Mediterranean marsh. There was enough common ground for all confessional groups to facilitate frequent border crossings from the very beginnings of Ottoman history, and over time, as the traffic of armies, goods, ideas, and people between Europe and the empire became more intense, the latter became ever more familiar. In *Subjects of the sultan*, Suraiya Faroqhi reminds us that during the early modern era, Ottomans 'took for granted that they possessed cultural superiority along with the true religion, and that they therefore considered it unnecessary or even unhealthy to take a close interest in the "unbelievers" and their sciences and arts'. In practice, however, they behaved differently (p. 279).

[16] See Kafadar, *Between two worlds*; E. A. Zachariadou, 'Religious dialogue between Byzantines and Turks during the Ottoman expansion', in *Religionsprache im Mittelalter* (Weisbaden, 1992), and, by the same author, 'Co-existence and religion', *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 15 (1997); Makdisi, *Culture of sectarianism*; D. Shankland, ed., *Archaeology, anthropology and heritage in the Balkans and Anatolia*, 1 (Istanbul, 2003); René Hirschon, ed., *Crossing the Aegean: an appraisal of the 1923 compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey* (New York, 2003); and M. Mazower, *Salonica: city of ghosts* (London, 2004).

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Faroqhi's social history of artistic production during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries adds considerable weight to this claim. Focusing on urban Anatolia, she shows how high art and popular culture influenced each other, and how these cultures were affected by influences transmitted from abroad. By the eighteenth century, European fashions were particularly telling among non-Muslim elites, some of whom were greatly inspired by the Enlightenment and were beginning to form national identities.[17] Faroqhi's more important claim, however, is that Muslims, too, were receptive to transnational cultural trends, and that they also developed a political consciousness that aspired to a participatory political order. The reform movement of the nineteenth century, which transformed the empire into something akin to a modern state, was driven by a Muslim cosmopolitan culture that emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Published originally in 1995 under the title *Kultur und Alltag im osmanischen Reich*, the book alludes to the emergence of an Ottoman public sphere that has since been corroborated by historians dealing with the contemporaneous rise of other non-European reading publics in Asia and Africa.[18] Subjectivities become more apparent in Ottoman art forms from the second half of the seventeenth century. Reading and writing was becoming part of the habitus of middle- and upper-class life, as witnessed by the growth of autobiographical writing and the use of personal diaries. The growth of interest in private matters was also driven by indigenous factors, especially dervish *tekke* (convents), whose accessible libraries 'gave a certain number of people the means to express themselves in a socially acceptable manner' (p. 203). More research is needed to discern the full significance of the rise of literacy and reading cultures, but the indications are that the Ottomans were already in the process of breaking down their own *ancien régime* well before the French Revolution. When it came to the advent of the modern world, Ottomans, much as the rest of the non-European world, were present at its making.

The rise of Ottoman modernity, however, is one of many subjects covered in Faroqhi's dazzling, but unwieldy, book. What makes this particular tome valuable is not so much its theses, but its breadth of detail and learning. Next to Halil Inalcik, Faroqhi is probably the most distinguished Ottoman scholar of recent times, renowned for her unrivalled expertise in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and for her Herculean publication record.[19] In *Subjects of the sultan*, Faroqhi draws on her immense learning to provide a highly illuminating survey of Ottoman culture, that looks at the formal and social institutions that catered to

[17] On Balkan elites and the impact of the Enlightenment, see Paschalis Kitromilides, *The Enlightenment as social criticism* (Princeton, NJ, 1992); idem, *Enlightenment, nationalism, Orthodoxy: studies in the culture and political thought of south-eastern Europe* (London, 1994).

[18] C. A. Bayly, *The birth of the modern world, 1780–1914: global connections and comparisons* (Oxford, 2003).

[19] Her other books include: *Der Bektaschi-Orden in Anatolien: (vom späten fünfzehnten Jahrhundert bis 1826)* (Vienna, 1981); *Town, country and regional organization in Ottoman Anatolia (16–17 cent.)* (Berlin, 1981); *Making a living in the Ottoman lands, 1480 to 1820* (Istanbul, 1995); *Towns and townsmen of Ottoman Anatolia: trade, crafts, and food production in an urban setting, 1520–1650* (Cambridge, 1984); *Peasants, dervishes, and traders in the Ottoman empire* (London, 1986); *Men of modest substance: house owners and house property in seventeenth-century Ankara and Kayseri* (Cambridge, 1987); *Pilgrims and sultans: the Hajj under the Ottomans, 1517–1683* (London, 1994); *Coping with the state: political conflict and crime in the Ottoman empire, 1550–1720* (Istanbul, 1995); *Approaching Ottoman history: an introduction to the sources* (Cambridge, 1999); *The Ottoman empire and the world around it* (London, 2005); and *The Cambridge history of modern Turkey*, III: *The later Ottoman empire, 1603–1869* (Cambridge, forthcoming). She has also co-edited *New approaches to the state and peasant in Ottoman history* (London, 1993) (with Halil Berktay); *Crafts and craftsmen of the Middle East* (London, 2001) (with Sadok Boubaker and Randi Deguilhem), and *The Ottomans and the Balkans: a discussion of historiography* (Amsterdam, 2002) (with Fikret Adanir).

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the artisans, architects, cooks, scribes, and other creative artists. The reader learns of the building materials typical of Istanbul, Egyptian, and central Anatolian housing (p. 127); the social world of elite women and their picnics, favoured conversation topics, and sweets (p. 107); the role of dervishes, priests, and merchants in transmitting ideas (pp. 188–90); the culture of book production and the political issues related to printing (pp. 94–5); and the impact of tomatoes and chocolate on emergent bourgeois eating tastes (p. 269). There is much about what Anatolian Muslims preferred to eat and drink, on religious festivals and imperial spectacles. Faroqhi is keen to explore the significance pageants, carnivals, fireworks, processions, and the particular roles played by crowds, artists, and the ruler himself.

This book is bursting with ideas and titbits. Readers will find discussion on heterodox religious movements such as the Bektashi, and the reasons why Turkish historiography until recently has ignored Ottoman religions. Chapter 8 offers a tour of towns that functioned without municipal laws and civic administration (p. 147), and reveals how residents liked blind alleys because they allowed better monitoring of neighbourhood traffic. We learn much about the architectural styles in vogue in seventeenth-century Ankara, Kayseri, Istanbul, and Cairo, how the floor plans of upper-class Ottoman homes provide insights into upper-class private life, how they preferred few apertures so that few could look in from the streets, and how they enjoyed courtyards with ornately landscaped gardens. More fascinating still are domestic material objects, such as the *sofra* on which families ate, the pottery cups with which coffee was consumed, utensils, the fact that cupboards tended to be built-in, and that Ottomans preferred carpets with abstract designs rather than depictions of animals and flora as did Indians and Persians.

At certain points, however, one is left wondering how all this detail hangs together. It is a book replete with analytical insights, but the overall effect is a pointillist survey that requires the reader to bring the entire project into focus. Given the lack of research in cultural topics, Faroqhi's synthetic discussion is predictably patchy. The author herself notes her study may seem premature, yet so rich is this text, in detail and intellectual reflection, that one would much prefer to have it rather than not have it. Hopefully, *Subjects of the sultan* will re-appear in a series of updated editions.

IV

For decades, economic historians such as Halil Inalcik, Suraiya Faroqhi, and Donald Quataert produced the most innovative and theoretically informed work on the Ottoman empire.[20] Through close investigation of such dry topics as land tenure systems, fluctuating population levels, agricultural output, manufacturing, labour structures, and external trade, these scholars revealed an empire that actively participated in the making, as opposed to being a passive victim, of an increasingly dynamic global economic order.[21]

[20] See n. 10. Halil Inalcik, *The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman empire: essays on economy and society* (Bloomington, IN, 1993); idem, *Studies in Ottoman social and economic history* (London, 1985); Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman population, 1830–1914* (Madison, WI, 1985); Huri Islamoglu-Inan, ed., *The Ottoman empire and the world economy* (Cambridge, 1987); Donald Quataert, *Social disintegration and popular resistance in the Ottoman empire, 1882–1908* (Albany, NY, 1983); idem, *Ottoman manufacturing in the age of the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge, 1993); idem, *Manufacturing in the Ottoman empire and Turkey, 1500–1950* (Albany, NY, 1994): Sevket Pamuk, *The Ottoman empire and European capitalism, 1820–1913* (Cambridge, 1987).

[21] Eric Wolf, *Europe and the people without history* (Berkeley, 1982); Kenneth Pomeranz, *The great divergence* (Princeton, NJ, 2000); Robert B. Marks, *The origins of the modern world: a global and ecological narrative* (Lanham, 2002); Bayly, *Birth of the modern world.*

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More recently, Quataert, Faroqhi, and a younger crop of historians have been trying to re-direct attention from production to consumption, and therefore follow in the tracks of European and North American scholarship on 'cultures of consumption', and cultural history more broadly. *Consumption studies and the history of the Ottoman empire, 1560–1922* looks squarely at local demand and changing tastes, as well as the mundane aspects of everyday life related to market exchanges. In doing so, the book provides a wonderfully nuanced reading of Ottoman economic and social life, and demonstrates the significance of subject matter that earlier economic historians either overlooked or dismissed as unimportant.

It is not just micro-historians and ethnographers who can illuminate our understanding of the world by observing trifles.[22] Ariel Salzmann's excellent chapter on the symbolic and commercial significance of the tulip, not merely within the Ottoman world but at a cross-hemispheric level, conveys the growth of global commercial exchanges from the mid-sixteenth century while at the same time providing a unique insight to aesthetic tastes of Ottoman elites. The value of her piece is to demonstrate very clearly the 'marked convergence of commodity circuits and interlocking consumer patterns' (p. 97). More wide-ranging is Tulay Artan's detailed investigation of elite Ottoman food consumption in the eighteenth century. This chapter, by far the longest, is a mine of interesting detail on Ottoman eating tastes (p. 112). Tulay identifies the eighteenth century as a period in which elites, once content with very simply prepared meals that reflected a pastoralist legacy, became increasingly accustomed to sophisticated cuisine that began to resemble its present-day Turkish equivalent. Along with other Eurasian cultures, the Ottomans produced and consumed fashions that spoke to, and reinvigorated, societal cultural norms and social hierarchies. If Ottoman elites expressed their status through holding massive feasts consisting of simple fare, by the eighteenth century elite status was marked by high cuisine.

Charlotte Jirousek's chapter seeks to convey the interdependence of the cultural and the economic through her study of changing clothing styles. She traces the transition from relatively stable clothing regimes before 1700, which were stipulated by sumptuary laws, to the onset of mass fashion in the eighteenth century. The transition was not possible without a general increase in the scale of textile production and distribution after 1700. Equally important, however, was the role of demand generated by the rise of an Ottoman commercial bourgeoisie, by a new disposition among families to generate disposable income, and by the growing symbolic significance of western goods and attire. As happened slightly earlier in western Europe, textile industries played their role in conditioning demand through more sophisticated merchandising and marketing strategies. Planned obsolescence, for example, was a means by which producers ensured constant demand, which at the same time served the needs of economic elites seeking to shore up their social ascendancy by keeping abreast of the latest high fashions.

Any volume on Ottoman economic life must inevitably account for the growth of western influence, and the extent to which the penetration of European capital, goods, and symbols affected Ottoman everyday practices and outlooks. Elizabeth Frierson's chapter promises to deploy the key analytical insights of Victoria de Grazia and Michel de Certeau,[23] particularly the latter's formulation that consumption actually constitutes a form of resistance that undermines the power of the market (p. 245), in order to explain the

[22] Edward Muir, 'Introduction: observing trifles', in Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero, eds., *Microhistory and the lost peoples of Europe* (Baltimore, 1991), p. vii.

[23] Michel de Certeau, *The practice of everyday life* (Berkeley, 1984); Victoria de Grazia, ed., *The sex of things: gender and consumption in historical perspective* (Berkeley, 1996).

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nature of Ottoman consumer culture in the late nineteenth century. Although theory and content are not interfused to much effect, Frierson vividly conveys the rise of women's participation in an expanding public sphere and the pertinence of 'capitalist exchange networks'. Her study of the nascent Istanbul women's press reveals that women, as readers, writers, and shoppers, participated in the broader push to forge an exclusively Muslim Ottoman national identity through the promotion of local Muslim production, although the same press continued to advertise foreign goods and target non-Muslim customers.

A more evocative piece on the increasingly pronounced role of the market in everyday life, and its impact on cultural identities in particular, is Madeline Zilfi's chapter on eighteenth-century Istanbul. Zilfi is interested in changing meanings of difference within the city's bustling neighbourhoods, where the intensification of commodity exchange, the growth of consumer culture, and an increasingly pronounced European presence was effecting new forms of co-operation and conflict across cultural divides. Zilfi tries to illustrate these profound changes through two, albeit brief, micro-studies, each dealing with incidents involving legal transgressions, and each of which give insight into changing social norms. The first deals with a slave girl who murdered her mistress in 1762, and follows with a excursus of the role of women as agents in a vibrant trade. The case clearly illustrates a rarely countenanced aspect of the 'distributional encounters', but does so without identifying changing symbolic boundaries. By contrast, her second, much longer, case-study does by focusing on the period 1754–74, during which time Sultan Osman II and then Mustafa III sought to enforce sartorial codes through a welter of decrees, and by personally monitoring public standards. Cheaper European goods were beginning to have an impact on urban attire, particularly among the more moderately wealthy subjects who could now buy hitherto-unaffordable fabrics (p. 300). In 1758, Mustafa III wandered the streets of Istanbul in disguise, searching for transgressors, and caught a non-Muslim beggar in upper-class Muslim attire, who was later executed. This small incident took place in a period when the greater availability of goods, and the greater propensity of urban Ottomans to contravene sumptuary laws, especially in private, brought shrill complaints from many who equated the flouting of sumptuary standards with moral decline.

V

Until recently, narratives of late Ottoman history suffered from the distorting effects of 'declinism'. The nineteenth century and the years leading to imperial dissolution in 1922 were read as an inexorable slide towards disaster. Current scholarship has shown that we attain a much better understanding of the empire's condition and prospects if we avoid reading developments from the perspective of 1922, but obtuse notions born of hindsight are devilishly difficult to divest. The mere fact that many of the more publicized 'ethnic conflicts' have occurred in former Ottoman territories (Israel-Palestine, Lebanon, Cyprus, Bosnia, Kosovo) seem to confirm that this empire, like that of Tsarist Russia and Habsburg Austria, was always vulnerable to the destabilizing effects of 'ancient hatreds'.[24] The possession of large and potentially disloyal minorities, each harbouring visions of national self-determination at Ottoman expense, was assumed to be a fatal flaw. Certainly, the Armenian Genocide of 1915 was an attempt by the government in power to expunge this

[24] See Mark von Hagen and Karen Barkey, eds., *After empire: multiethnic societies and nation-building* (Boulder, 1997).

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weakness. While the rest of the world was distracted by war, an attempt was made to engineer a culturally homogeneous state.[25]

In *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab world*, Bruce Masters undermines this deterministic view with his learned survey of religious communities in the Arab-speaking territories, especially Syria. This was not a world especially receptive to secessionist ideas, despite being inundated with missionaries and other westerners. Masters confirms that western influence did indeed play a great part in the sectarian tensions that erupted in Lebanon and Syria in 1860. Muslims throughout the empire were indignant that Ottoman Christian merchants benefited disproportionately from external trade, as commercial intermediaries of western interests, and as recipients of western protection. They also resented the loss of status vis-à-vis religious minorities as threatened by the Tanzimat reforms. In order to arrest the empire's declining power, the Ottoman state pushed political reforms that included the establishment of equal rights for all its subjects. At a deeper level, Masters notes the socially disruptive impact of global economic integration, how the 'empire's increasingly dependent economic relationship with Europe undermined the regime's political stability by creating competition between social groups that previously had cooperated in loosely defined power coalitions' (p. 131).

Critically, the events of 1860 did not produce further significant communal outbursts, as confessional communities among the Arab-speaking provinces worked out new forms of co-operation, most notably by endorsing a common Arab identity (p. 172). Early manifestations of Arab consciousness did not, however, threaten Ottoman sovereignty. On the contrary, the new spirit of co-operation among Muslims, Christians, and Jews under the rubric of Arabism harmonized nicely with Istanbul's efforts during the Tanzimat period, and later under the Young Turks, to promote Ottoman patriotism, or Ottomanism. In effect, the Ottoman Near East represented at least one zone where emergent nationalisms appeared to be strengthening a 'traditional' empire (p. 178). Only after the cataclysmic impact of the 1914–18 war, and during the European mandates, did Arab nationalism drive the creation of new nation-states.

Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab world is a richly detailed discussion of a knotty cultural landscape that bewildered the official in Istanbul as much as it did the curious westerner. Its coverage of relations among Christian groups in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Syria, especially Aleppo, of which Masters is a renowned expert, is particularly illuminating. Less so is Chapter 5, the book's linchpin, in which the author narrates the tragic sectarian explosions of the mid-nineteenth century. Complex causative factors are momentarily sidelined in favour of a simple line that Muslim anger towards Christian upstarts led to massacres. The impression here is that sectarianism generated violence, but as Ussama Makdisi's study of Mount Lebanon shows, to understand the tragedy of 1860 one must discard 'the notion of the pure communal actor' and discern the factors that appeared to create such actors.[26] Makdisi focuses on how competing groups interpreted and deployed sectarianism during the power struggles on Mount Lebanon, following the withdrawal of Egyptian dominion, the impact of the Tanzimat reforms of

[25] The best discussion on the topic is now Donald Bloxham, *The great game of genocide: imperialism, nationalism, and the destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford, 2005).

[26] Makdisi, *Culture of sectarianism*, p. 60. The Subaltern Studies movement has done most to problematize communalism as a social concept. See, especially, Ashis Nandy, 'Telling the story of conflicts in South Asia: interim report on a personal search for defining myths', in Jamal Malik and Helmut Reifeld, eds., *Religious pluralism in South Asia and Europe* (New Delhi, 2005), pp. 298–317.

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1856, and western influence (diplomatic, commercial, missionary, etc.), each of which had disrupted the traditional power structures. If sectarianism was a form of knowledge deployed to meet political ends, then the roots of discord must be sought in the contexts in which sectarian discourses were interpreted and manipulated.

VI

Masters's otherwise fine book shows that communal relations were, at best, a marginal causal factor in the empire's demise. Nor, one assumes, would Donald Quataert stand by the title of his earliest book, which referred to the late Ottoman empire as being in the throes of 'social disintegration', if his admirably lucid survey *The Ottoman empire, 1700–1922* is anything to go by.[27] Sectarianism did rise in the nineteenth century, but whilst each incident was symptomatic of the empire's struggles with economic and social changes affecting the entire globe, they did not appear to form part of a causal plot that culminated in genocide in 1915 (p. 174). There was no seamless thread connecting the sectarian outbursts from the atrocities committed against Muslims in the Peloponnese in the 1820s through to the last expulsions of the Greeks from Anatolia in 1923–4. The idea that the empire was festering with ancient hatreds in the nineteenth century is undermined by popular memory that often painted a more convivial portrait.[28] For the most part, Ottoman cities and villages were places where confessions did not live in segregated quarters (pp. 180–1), and where Muslims, Jews, and Christians mingled socially (p. 176).

Quataert's book provides the best, all-round picture of the late Ottoman world to date. Although the focus is on the modern period, the early part of the book offers a historical narrative that begins with the foundation of the House of Osman. What distinguishes this textbook account from the rest, however, are the chapters that survey economic life, government, society and popular culture, and inter-communal relations during the empire's last century.[29] In each of these chapters, Quataert's Ottomans are shown to be resourceful and dynamic, not unlike the Ottomans portrayed by Kafadar and Goffman. And yet, the challenges of the modern era, especially mounting geopolitical pressures, did appear to test the limits of Ottoman virtuosity. As with Meiji Japan, the Ottoman empire struggled to emulate powerful entities that were constantly threatening its very existence. Although not nearly as successful as the Meiji, the empire did, in the end, manage another metamorphosis in becoming a sovereign, Turkish nation-state in 1922. Before Atatürk saved the Ottoman empire by ending it, Ottoman society already possessed many of the hallmarks of modernity. The bourgeoisie read satirical newspapers and magazines,[30] enrolled children in secular educational institutions,[31] were particularly keen on family photographic portraiture, rode bicycles, watched moving pictures, passed the time in

[27] See Quataert, *Social disintegration and popular resistance*.

[28] See also Hirschon, ed., *Crossing the Aegean*.

[29] Cf. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman empire*; Bernard Lewis, *The emergence of modern Turkey* (3rd edn, Oxford, 2001); M. E. Yapp, *The making of the modern Near East, 1792–1923* (London, 1897); Erik Jan Zurcher, *Turkey: a modern history* (3rd edn, London, 2004).

[30] Palmira Brummet, *Image and imperialism in the Ottoman revolutionary press, 1908–1911* (Albany, NY, 2000).

[31] Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial classroom: Islam, the state, and education in the late Ottoman empire* (Oxford, 2002).

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Parisian-like cafes, and participated in organized sports.[32] At the beginning of the twentieth century, it was cosmopolitan urban centres such as Beirut, Izmir, Haifa, Salonika, and Istanbul itself, whose streets were teeming with peoples who could converse in many languages, and where street advertisements were written in a variety of different scripts, that were the authentic face of Ottoman modernity. Quataert's synthesis of recent scholarship, and its judicious selection of illustrations and captions, does give the reader a sense of burgeoning multiethnic order.

Where the book disappoints somewhat, as does late Ottoman historiography in general, is its treatment of the last decade, and especially the First World War.[33] The Ottoman 'homefront' remains *terra incognita*, a situation that contrasts radically with the historiographies of the other wartime combatants. What of the wartime economy? How did Ottoman society cope with Total War? Why was there not a Russian-style revolution in Istanbul? Why were the Ottomans the last of the Central Powers to surrender? This absence no doubt reflects a gap in the historiography, and the much too sensitive nature of the condition of minorities during the war. Now reissued in a slightly longer second edition, Quataert's text nevertheless succeeds in offering a general readership a balanced, accessible, and wide-ranging account of a plural society, one that lends weight to a growing consensus among scholars that the eclipse of some empires by the nation-state was not necessarily a case of good prevailing over evil.

UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES NICHOLAS DOUMANIS

[32] Portraits of cosmopolitan life of Ottoman port cities can be found in Philip Mansell, *Constantinople: city of the world's desire* (London, 1995), and the relevant essays in Leila Tarazi and C. A. Bayly, eds., *Modernity and culture: from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean* (New York, 2002). For the transition from multicultural to monocultural city, see Mazower, *Salonica*.

[33] On the Ottomans and the First World War, see A. L. Macfie, *The end of the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1923* (London, 1998), but there is nothing on the empire that can provide the kind of wide-ranging survey as can be found, for example, in Roger Chickering, *Imperial Germany and the Great War, 1914–1918* (2nd edn, Cambridge, 2004), and Leonard V. Smith, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, and Annette Becker, *France and the Great War, 1914–1918* (Cambridge, 2003), or Trevor Wilson, *The myriad faces of war: Britain and the Great War, 1914–1918* (Cambridge, 1986).

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