

a long tradition of discriminating not only against the Alevis and the Roma but also against Muslims. In chapter 13, Şentürk examines religious liberty in Islamic jurisprudence and underlines the “inviolability” of religious freedom in Islam (p. 290). He asserts that as a result of the effective implementation of human rights legislation as part of Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic communities in the past (e.g., Andalusia and the Ottoman Empire) provided greater freedom and autonomy for religion.

In the final component of the book, Seiple and Hoover assess “the contested relationship between freedom of religion and security” (p. 316). They argue that prioritizing security over religious liberty failed to promote stabil-

ity because religious freedom “is foundational for sustainable security” (p.318), rather than an obstacle. Thus, the violation of religious liberty in the name of security generates major security problems (p. 320).

*The Future of Religious Freedom* is an exceptional collection that covers a broad spectrum of issues and challenges pertaining to religious freedom across the globe. It provides comprehensive theoretical and empirical insights and analyses on religious freedom. This is a significant contribution to the studies of religious freedom within the global context. I would strongly recommend this well-edited book not only to academics and students, but also to politicians and policy-makers.

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## The Seljuks of Anatolia

### Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East

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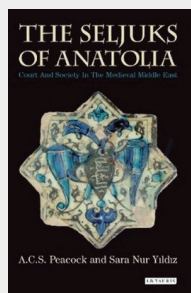
By A.C.S. Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız  
London : I. B. Tauris, 2013, 308 pages, ISBN 9781848858879.

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Reviewed by Valerie Behiery

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THE RECENT BOOK edited by A.C.S. Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız, *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East*, demonstrates how a cognizance of historiography affords the ability to reexamine a historical period. The book, which emerged out of a workshop held in Istanbul in 2009, reinvestigates the study of the Seljuk Empire. Its authors, in order to compensate for the paucity of Muslim sources on medieval Anatolia, draw from a number of “untapped” sources such as Greek and Armenian texts, epigraphy, poetry and letters sent to the court.



More significantly, they employ innovative frameworks that test standard perceptions of the Sultanate of Rūm (c. 1081 -1308) and emphasize its religious, cultural, and linguistic diversity. Thus, while the cited aim of the book is to “explore how court and society interacted and shaped one [an]other,” moving “beyond the more purely political history that has dominated to date” (p. 4), its larger purpose of questioning entrenched views of the Seljuk dynasty and medieval Anatolia, and the methods that it uses to offer up new avenues of research make this book a benchmark in the field.

Due to the book's ambitious intent, a good introduction is critical, which Peacock and Yıldız deliver. The two medievalists succeed in outlining, for specialists and non-specialists alike, the study of Seljuk history and the caveats inherent in the field, from the lack of sources to political strife among competing dynasties or heirs. They are especially keen in rejecting the nationalist perspective that continues to underwrite modern scholarship. For example, they challenge what they see as Claude Cahen and Osman Turan's conflation of the borders of Seljuk Anatolia with those of modern Turkey, and widely-held views about the dynasty's close ties and direct historical relationship with both the neighbouring Great Seljuks and the Ottomans. In short, the introduction – and indeed the book as a whole – posits the discontinuities of history, not to prohibit any notion of a historically-forged Turkish cultural imaginary, but rather to examine the Anatolian Seljuk dynasty on its own terms.

The Seljuks of Anatolia are structured around three loosely conceived themes, namely the dynastic identity and the Great Seljuk inheritance, the royal household, and the role of Sufis at court and in society. The first section consists of four chapters. Oya Pancaroğlu's article examines the architectural inscriptions found on buildings commissioned by Sayf al-Dīn Shāhanshāh (r. c.1171-96) of the Diviğri branch of the Mengüjekid dynasty, for which no textual sources exist and "whose existence is known solely from numismatic and architectural-epigraphic evidence" (p. 27). Considering the inscriptions as public declarations of the ruler's legitimacy, she confirms both that the Seljuk's hegemony in Anatolia was not undisputed and that material culture can help fill the many gaps in medieval Anatolian history. Dimitri Korobinikov probes the titulature of the leaders of the Seljuks of

Rūm to show that they buttressed their political capital through their claimed association with the Great Seljuks and the wider Iranian tradition of rulership, rather than through any symbolic genealogy with Byzantium as is often stated. Moreover, he claims that the designation of the dynasty as the 'Sultanate of Rūm' dates only from the Ilkhanid period and that it was neither "the official name of the Seljuk state" (p. 70) nor an ideological descriptor, but rather a geographical one. Next, Yıldız revisits Muhammad b. 'Alī Rāwandī's *Rāhat al-sudūr wa-āyāt al-surūr*. Rather than the usual focus on the factual aspects of the Persian historian's text, she turns her attention to a *qasīda* that extols the virtues of sultan Ghiyāth-al-Dīn Kaykhusraw I (r. 1192-6, 1205-11) and claims that Rāwandī sought employment specifically as a *nadīm* at the Anatolian Seljuk court (p. 93). Shedding light on the role of the 'boon companion' at the Seljuk court, Yıldız also illustrates that a careful rereading of known sources can generate new conclusions.

The two essays addressing the royal household are undoubtedly the most relevant to current scholarship in their emphasis on cross-culturality and gender. Rustam Shukurov, noting the many Christian women at the Seljuk court cited in Muslim and Christian sources, proposes that many Seljuk princes, because they had openly practising Greek Christian mothers or wives, possessed a plural cultural, linguistic and even religious identity. Contemporary historians have discussed the 'permeability' of borders between Byzantium and Seljuk Anatolia, but Shukurov situates it as an internal phenomenon manifested in the very biculturalism of Seljuk identity. In his chapter on "Ismat al-Dunyā wa'l-Dīn," Scott Redford attempts to understand the occlusion of the cousin and wife of Seljuk sultan 'Alā al-Dīn Kayqubād I from Ibn Bibī's

al-Awāmir al-‘alā’iya fi ‘l-umūr ‘alā’iya, the principal source for the history of the Anatolian Seljuk dynasty. Analyzing the inscriptions on buildings that the royal woman commissioned, he argues that both the confident epigraphic self-representation and the excision from the chronicles relate to intra-Seljuk rivalry. ‘Ismat al-Dunyā wa’l-Dīn’s brother, who was captured and likely killed by ‘Alā al-Dīn Kayqubād I (1219-37), had set up a rival Seljuk dynasty at Erzurum. Redford’s excitement transpires throughout the text, proving that historical writing can be more than just informative.

The last section discusses the role of Sufis in medieval Anatolia, which, unlike the rest of the Muslim world, had neither a substantial class of ‘ulamā’ nor a concomitant tradition of biographical dictionaries. The first two chapters suggest that the relationship between the Seljuk rulers and Sufis was more extensive than previously thought, therefore challenging the assumed separation between political and religious life in medieval Anatolia. Yıldız and Haşim Şahin address the relationship between two key religious figures, Majd al-Dīn Ishāq and Ibn ‘Arabī, as well as their ties to

the Seljuk sultans. Peacock does much the same in his chapter on Jalāl l-Dīn Rūmī and his son Sultān Walad. While Yıldız and Şahin highlight the role that Sufis played in conferring political legitimacy upon Seljuk rulers, Peacock suggests that holy men were also seen as providing them with actual spiritual power and blessing. Finally, Rachel Goshgarian articulates how Muslim futuwwa texts written in Anatolia influenced similar texts composed for the Christian Armenian community of Erzincan, thereby underlining the multiculturalism of medieval Anatolia.

Gary Leiser, known for his translation of the works of Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, penned the short conclusion. Reiterating that further research is needed to better understand the social, religious and economic history of the Seljuks, he lists many questions and sources –particularly waqf documents– that remain unexplored. *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East* would be useful not only for Islamic historians and medievalists more generally, but also for scholars of different periods, regions and disciplines because its strength lies as much in method as it does in fact.