

# Book Reviews

## Living in the Ottoman Ecumenical Community: Essays in Honour of Suraiya Faroqhi

Edited by *Vera Costantini and Markus Koller*

Leiden: EJ Brill, 2008, 504 pp., ISBN 978 90 04 16575 5.

This volume is composed of twenty-four essays by many prominent figures in Ottoman studies in Europe as well as North America, with topics spanning from the fourteenth to the twentieth century, and an approach that poses the Ottoman Empire as a state and society with porous rather than fixed boundaries. The ambitious scope and intriguing framework of this collected volume are of course a fitting reflection of Suraiya Faroqhi's own varied and extensive body of work (and the volume ends with a helpful inventory of Professor Faroqhi's many publications, which include eight books and over 150 articles). As the editors point out in the introduction to the volume, it was Professor Faroqhi who proposed an alternative narrative for Ottoman history to replace the Decline paradigm, offering phases of expansion, crisis, and contraction. This volume goes a step further, paying tribute to her by posing a vision of an "ecumenical" Ottoman Empire with multiple connections—economic, social, and political—to communities, regions, and activities outside the physical boundaries of the state.

The book is divided into four sections: the first, 'Istanbul—activities of different ecumenical communities in the Ottoman capital,' includes contributions that span

early Ottoman governmental institutions (Linda Darling), an analysis of social status among Istanbul's Jewish community in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries using evidence from Jewish cemeteries in the city (Minna Rozen), and a study of the Istanbul fur market in the eighteenth century that takes the reader into Russia and Ukraine and back to the Ottoman capital (Markus Koller). Overall the reader gets a sense of Istanbul both as a fixed center of power and place of residence as well as a city that was connected to a wide range of other economies and states.

The second section, entitled, "Economic cross-border ecumenical communities in the provinces of the empire," takes the reader from Temesvar (Geza David) to Bulgaria (Meriman Ersoy-Hacisalihoglu and Stoyanka Kenderova) and out to the Black Sea coastal town of Zonguldak (Donald Quataert) for a consideration of unpaid coal miners in the twentieth century. Here we are offered connections from such diverse Ottoman provinces not only back to the imperial center of Istanbul but to nineteenth-century Paris expositions which featured Bulgarian artisanal goods. Again, the many dimensions of Professor Faroqhi's research shine through this array of contributions.

The third section, “Social and religious ecumenical communities in the Ottoman periphery,” departs even further afield, with contributions on Japanese Muslim pilgrims to Mecca in the twentieth century (Selcuk Esenbel), two different lenses on Ottoman Bosnia (one on the nineteenth-century travelogue of Croat Matija Mazuranic by Tatjana Paic-Vukic and Ekrem Causevic and one on life in Sarajevo in the eighteenth century based on Mulla Mustafa’s *mecmua*, by Kerima Filan), a treatment of Greek Orthodox priests in Serres and Crete in the seventeenth century (Elizabeth Zachariadou), a study by Machiel Kiel that chronicles the evolution of Konjic (Konice, Belgradcik), and a study of continuity and change following the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus by Vera Costantini. From these radically different case studies we begin to understand the myriad connections enjoyed and negotiated by Ottoman subjects through the ages. Such connections take us far beyond the Mediterranean, and even beyond the lifespan of the empire, to inter-war Japan.

Finally, Part Four, “The Mediterranean—ecumenical communities between political powers,” takes us back to territory that is seemingly more familiar, but several contributions offer a new twist. Fariba Zarinebaf’s “On the edge of empires: Dubrovnik and Anavarin between Istanbul and Venice,” for instance, combines two case studies of localities that “shared a unique past under Byzantine, Venetian, and Ottoman rules.” She finds that despite this common blending of political influences, Dubrovnik enjoyed a very different trajectory from the Morea by dint of its establishment as an autonomous principality. This placed Dubrovnik (Ragusa) in a unique position with regard not only

to politics but economic, social, and demographical horizons. The Morea, in contrast, was absorbed into Ottoman administration proper and thus became subject to a very different political structure and economic world. Ariel Salzman’s article, which ends the volume, is entitled, “The moral economies of the pre-modern Mediterranean: Preliminaries for the study of cross-cultural migration during the long sixteenth century.” Here, Salzman offers a wide-ranging analysis that synthesizes ideas from Braudel and Pirenne on the early modern Mediterranean with contemporary scholar-ideologues such as Samuel Huntington and the classic British historian E.P. Thompson in an attempt to reconcile concepts of fixed religious identity on the one hand and seemingly constant migration in the Mediterranean in the long sixteenth century on the other.

All in all, this is an impressive collection of studies which owe a debt to Professor Farroqhi not only for their scope and variety as mentioned above, but for their consistent reliance on archival materials drawn from Ottoman archives in Istanbul, former Ottoman provinces, and manuscript collections as far away as Stuttgart, Germany. Perhaps the one ecumenical community that is not dealt with explicitly but should be is precisely this ecumenical world of Ottoman archives. Mirroring the historical actors under study in these essays who were connected to so many communities in so many ways are the Ottoman archives—as voluminous as the Basbakanlik Arsivleri are, they share connections with documents and archives in multiple regions and states outside of Turkey, and even outside of former Ottoman lands.

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