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Douglas A. Howard
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A History of the Ottoman Empire

Covering the full history of the Ottoman Empire, from its genesis in post-Mongol Eurasia to its dissolution after the Great War in Europe, this book takes a holistic approach, considering the Ottoman worldview – what it was, how it came together, and how it fell apart. Douglas A. Howard stresses the crucial role of the Ottoman sultans and their extended household; discusses the evolution of the empire's fiscal model; and analyzes favorite works of Ottoman literature; emphasizing spirituality, the awareness of space and time, and emotions, migration, violence, disease, and disaster. Following how people spent their time, their attitudes towards authority, how they made their money, and their sense of humor and sense of beauty, this illustrated textbook is an essential resource for graduate, and advanced undergraduate, courses on the history of the Ottoman Empire, the Middle East, Islamic history, and the history of early modern Europe. The book includes over eighty illustrations, maps and textboxes.

Douglas A. Howard is Professor of History at Calvin College, where he has taught since 1988. He is the author of *The History of Turkey* (2nd ed., 2016), and has published articles on Ottoman military and literary history in journals such as *Acta Orientalia*, *Archivum Ottomanicum*, *Fides et Historia*, *Journal of Asian History*, and *Journal of Turkish Studies*. He is also a former editor of *The Turkish Studies Association Bulletin*.

Advanced Praise

“At last – a survey of Ottoman history that covers the entire 600-plus years of the empire’s history, written by a true expert with command of both primary and secondary sources, yet designed as an accessible textbook. In lucid, often lively, prose, Douglas Howard treats not only the Ottoman Empire’s political history but social, economic, religious, and intellectual developments, as well, incorporating imperial capital and provinces, elites and commoners, dispassionate analysis and telling anecdotes. The maps, illustrations, lists of rulers, and “box” features make this book particularly user-friendly. This is the Ottoman history textbook many of us have been waiting for.”

Jane Hathaway, Professor of History, Ohio State University

“Using “ruins” as a metaphor, Doug Howard takes us on a fascinating journey through the political, spiritual and literary world of the Ottomans, heirs to ancient civilizations and steeped in the sense of the divine. Amply illustrated with maps and photographs, many taken by the author, this compelling narrative should become a classroom standard.”

Virginia Aksan, Chair of History, McMaster University

“Douglas Howard’s scholarly and engaging history presents the sprawling Ottoman Empire in all its complexity. Of particular value is his use of the voices of Ottoman poets and chroniclers to detail the religious rhetorics and spiritual sensibilities that animated the Ottoman imperial imagination.”

Palmira Brummett, Professor Emeritus, Brown University

“Howard’s *The History of the Ottoman Empire* offers an innovative approach that should appeal to general as well as academic audiences. Its unique organization, with each chapter taking up one century by the Islamic calendar, places emphasis on the shifting temperament of the times. Intertwined with the usual politics, economy, and war are spiritual concerns, poetic sensibilities, and off-beat stories of individuals.”

**Leslie P. Peirce, Professor of History, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies,
New York University**

“This is a beautiful book, not just a history of the Ottoman Empire from beginning to end, but a history of the Ottomans themselves. Without omitting political chronology, institutional evolution, or socio-economic developments, Howard humanizes the Ottomans by foregrounding issues of culture, religion, and identity. He makes them accessible to students and general readers, providing generous translations from Ottoman texts, illustrations, maps, and references. Based on Ottoman sources and a wide selection of recent scholarly research, the book counters stereotypes about terrible Turks, harems, forced conversion, and decline, and introduces a cast of famous and lesser-known characters, their deeds and motivations. It doesn’t do everything—military buffs and gender historians, for instance, will be disappointed—but what it does, it does superbly well. At last we have a history of the Ottoman Empire than can be assigned in the classroom without apology or regret.”

Linda Darling, Professor of History, University of Arizona

“Professor Howard has produced a most profound study of the development and dismemberment of the Ottoman enterprise. His book combines great learning with remarkable insight. Unlike so much academic prose, it is well and clearly written, and the work also displays a rare humility. The book is as much new research as it is a synthesis of what scholars have retrieved. I shall require this book of students: it is a great book from a great scholar.”

Rudi Lindner, Professor of History, University of Michigan

“Douglas Howard’s book provides a fluent narrative of Ottoman history imbued with often-neglected cultural, social, intellectual, spatial, and architectural references. It is a long-awaited textbook on Ottoman history from the genesis of the empire to its demise with abundant primary sources and updated scholarly input of the last three decades. Uniquely crafted by one of the most erudite voices of modern Ottoman history, Howard’s book will be a great toolbox for undergraduate and graduate students and for those of us who teach Ottoman history for years to come.”

Vefa Erginbas, Assistant Professor, Providence College

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To my father, Frank Alton Howard, and
to the memory of my mother, Theodora A. Christacopulos Howard.
Many a book I borrowed from your shelves.




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The maps that appear in the book were all created by Jason Van Horn and Caitlin Strikwerda of Calvin's geography department. Victoria Seaburg of Calvin's office of instructional graphics carefully edited many of the images for publication. And since, while Calvin College has an excellent library it does not have very many books in Turkish, the unflappable professionalism of interlibrary loan librarian Kathy Struck was vital. A grant from the

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Walter Andrews's work, in *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song* (1985), and in his conference papers and collaborative translations since then, convincingly put poetry at the center of any discussion of Ottoman culture. Ariel Salzman's reinterpretation of the Ottoman fiscal model in her doctoral dissertation, and in her article "An Ancien Régime Revisited: 'Privatization' and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire" (1993), broke down the oversimplified centralization vs. decentralization dichotomy.

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