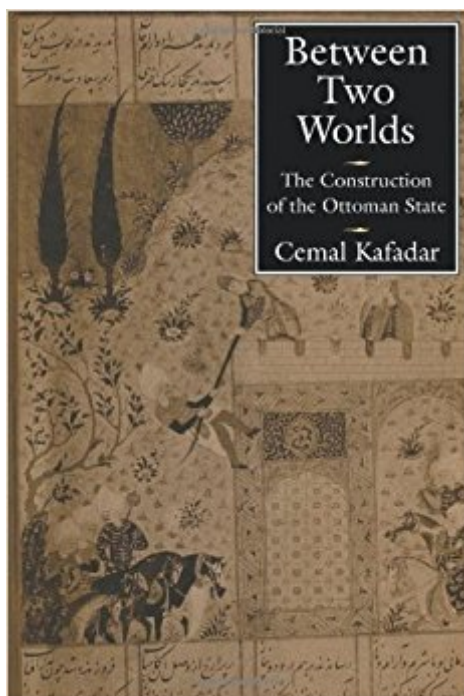


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Between Two Worlds: The Construction Of The Ottoman State



Synopsis

Cemal Kafadar offers a much more subtle and complex interpretation of the early Ottoman period than that provided by other historians. His careful analysis of medieval as well as modern historiography from the perspective of a cultural historian demonstrates how ethnic, tribal, linguistic, religious, and political affiliations were all at play in the struggle for power in Anatolia and the Balkans during the late Middle Ages. This highly original look at the rise of the Ottoman empire—the longest-lived political entity in human history—shows the transformation of a tiny frontier enterprise into a centralized imperial state that saw itself as both leader of the world's Muslims and heir to the Eastern Roman Empire.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Kafadar contributes a distinguished addition to Ottoman studies with this thoughtful and thought-provoking discussion of the pioneer phase of Ottoman state building between the late 13th century and 1453. . . . It is a measure of the breadth and seriousness of his approach that his reflections on history, nationalism, and historic folk memory acquire an immediate relevance in the present context of the enormities occurring in those Balkan lands that were once among the Ottomans' oldest territorial acquisitions."--"Choice

Cemal Kafadar is Associate Professor of History at Harvard University.

This was a difficult read. I did not realize that Turic tribes created turkey and Ottoman Empire. As the author states much more study is required to appreciate the 600 yer reign of Ottomans.

Reading this book requires quite a background on the theses of the foundation of the Ottoman Empire. The author questions the accounts about the nature of the early Ottoman state. Did it consist of tribal Turks (extension of Seljuks) with the purpose of propagating Islam as asserted by Koprulu or were they heterodox gazis cooperating with Christian Byzantine locals as asserted by Wittek? Or were they just plunderers as claimed by a couple of Greek historians? Kafadar is very analytical. It is quite stimulating to read his logical deductions where historical data are not available. He seems to reach a synthesis closer to Wittek but not quite Wittek though. It seems more like Lindner who revised Wittek's argument in 1980's. Kafadar further discusses how the centralization of the Ottoman administration during the early 15th century eliminated the gaza spirit over time. The book is analytic and presents interesting facts and possibilities such as the real name (or the second name) of Osman. The only drag is the abbreviations. For example, the author uses Apz for Asikpasazade or OE for Ottoman Empire throughout the text. It is very well worth reading if you are interested in the nature of early Ottomans.

Reading Kafadar's book is not only reading a history of the Ottoman Empire, but it is remembering the complexity of history. Kafadar's book analyses the forces at play, their effects, and their results on the creation of the Ottoman Empire. The questions Kafadar asks in this book are not only very important to uncover the often misunderstood beginnings of the Ottoman's; but it also addresses "the myths of creation" about the Ottoman Empire, which were to serve political purposes. Last but not least Kafadar's style is very powerful and capable of working on such a problematic period and yet make the reader flow through his arguments so easily. I can recommend this book to all interested in the Ottoman Empire, the Middle East and generally in great historical analysis, do not shy away from it because it is not a popular historical account.

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