

I.B. TAURIS

**A Social
and
Political
History**

Women in the Ottoman Empire

SURAIYA FAROQHI



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It is an often ignored but fundamental fact that in the Ottoman world, as in most empires, there were 'first-class' and 'second class' subjects. Among the townspeople, peasants and nomads subject to the sultans, who might be Muslims or non-Muslims, adult Muslim males were first-class subjects and all others, including Muslim boys and women, were of the second class. As for the female members of the elite, while less privileged than the males, in some respects their life chances might be better than those of ordinary women. Even so, they shared the risks of pregnancy, childbirth and epidemic diseases with townswomen of the subject class and to a certain extent, with village women as well. Thus, the study of Ottoman women is indispensable for understanding Ottoman society in general.

In this book, the agency of women from a diverse range of class, religious, ethnic, and geographic backgrounds is, for the first time, woven into the social and political history of the Ottoman Empire, from the early-modern period to its dissolution in 1918. Suraiya Faroqhi charts the history of elite and non-elite women in thematic chapters concentrating on urban women, family life, work, slavery, education and survival in times of war. In the process the book introduces readers to the key sources, primary and secondary, necessary to reconstruct and understand the ways that females navigated social, legal and economic constraints, through the central prisms of family relations, work and charity. The first introductory social history of women in the Ottoman Empire, and including a timeline and extended further reading section, this book will be essential reading for scholars and students of Ottoman history and the history of women in the Middle East.

'This book is a unique product of Suraiya Faroqhi's decades of experience. On the one hand, it provides a striking overview of the body of Ottoman/Middle Eastern women's studies, and on the other, it enriches the field with a touch that embraces the cultural, religious, social, and ethnic diversity of the empire. The book is an ideal introduction for newcomers to the field and a source of pride for experienced researchers, reflecting the existing scholarship.'

YAHYA ARAZ, DOKUZ EYLÜL
UNIVERSITY, TURKEY

'A remarkable book that masterfully traces the changes in the condition féminine during the early modern and modern periods. With a tremendous command of primary sources and the secondary literature, Faroqhi covers all the themes in the field by providing a fascinating panorama of the history of Ottoman women through the perspective of women's agency.'

BETÜL IPSIRLI ARGIT, MARMARA
UNIVERSITY, TURKEY

SURAIYA FAROQHI FBA is currently teaching at Ibn Haldun University, Turkey. She has previously held positions at Istanbul Bilgi University, Turkey, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Germany, and the Middle East Technical University, Turkey. A leading expert on the social history of the Ottoman Empire, her books include *Subjects of the Sultan* (I.B.Tauris, 2000), *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It* (I.B.Tauris, 2003), *Artisans of Empire* (I.B.Tauris, 2009), *A Cultural History of the Ottomans* (I.B.Tauris, 2016) and *The Ottoman and Mughal Empires* (I.B.Tauris, 2019).

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