



Plague, Quarantines and Geopolitics in the Ottoman Empire

By Birsen Bulmus

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Did you know that many of the greatest and most colourful Ottoman statesmen and literary figures from the 15th to the early 20th century considered plague as a grave threat to their empire? And did you know that many Ottomans applauded the establishment of a quarantine against the disease in 1838 as a tool to resist British and French political and commercial penetration? Or that later Ottoman sanitation effort to prevent urban outbreaks would help engender the Arab revolt against the empire in 1916? Birsen Bulmus explores these facts in an engaging study of Ottoman plague treatise writers throughout their almost 600-year struggle with this epidemic disease. Along the way, she addresses the political, economic and social consequences of the methods they used to combat it.

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Plague, Quarantines and Geopolitics in the Ottoman Empire By Birsen Bulmus Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #5111816 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Edinburgh University Press
- Published on: 2012-04-04
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 6.30" h x .70" w x 9.30" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 208 pages

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Review

"One of the great strengths of the book is its effort to show the overlap between Ottoman and early modern European responses to the plague. Bulmus is able to point to striking similarities between Ottoman and European references to cabbalistic, talismanic, and astrological understandings of plague."-- Michael Christopher Low, Columbia University, *Review of Middle East Studies*

About the Author

Birsen Bulmus is Assistant Professor at the Appalachian State University

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