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Book Review

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Ottoman History Through The Eyes of Aşıkpaşazade

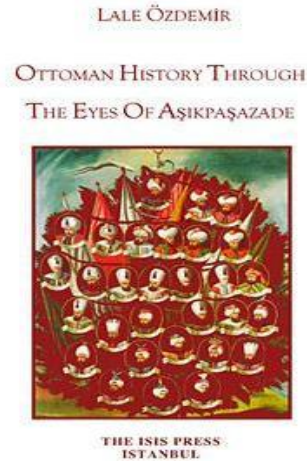
by Lale Özdemir

Turkey, 2013

184 pages

ISBN 9789754284959

Ottoman History Through The Eyes of Aşıkpaşazade is a re-examination of fifteenth-century Ottoman historiography with reference to the place and importance of the dervish and writer Aşıkpaşazade (c.1400-after 1484), who authored the History of the Ottoman Dynasty. The author describes how Aşıkpaşazade's History of the Ottoman Dynasty was aneulogising account of the Ottoman rulers that portrayed them as ghazis and being beyond reproach morally. Ottoman History Through The Eyes of Aşıkpaşazade is written with two interlinked pivotal aims in mind. The author's first aim is to assess the value of Aşıkpaşazade's history within the context of the historiography of the period. The second aim of the author is to determine whether Aşıkpaşazade should be used as a source to shed light on the ideological theories of modern scholarship. The author clearly and in a detailed fashion assesses the contribution of Aşıkpaşazade to fifteenth-century historiography and argues that Aşıkpaşazade's History of the Ottoman Dynasty does not lend itself to strict historical analysis because it is a source of a literary genre that was written with aneulogising function in mind. The author demonstrates how Aşıkpaşazade did not receive the recognition he deserved historiographically because a later writer Neşri relied heavily on Aşıkpaşazade without citing Aşıkpaşazade's History of the Ottoman Dynasty as a source and it is Neşri who has been used as amore mainstream source for fifteenth-century Ottoman historiography in comparison to Aşıkpaşazade. In relation to the second aim of Ottoman History Through The Eyes of Aşıkpaşazade the author sets out to answer the question of whether Aşıkpaşazade should be used as a source to shed light on the ideological theories of modern scholarship. The author argues throughout the book that Aşıkpaşazade has been used selectively by modern scholarship to either prove or refute an ideological claim regarding the Ottomans. The author



demonstrates with textual examples from Aşıkpaşazade how this is particularly true of modern scholarship's aim to usually disprove the late Paul Wittek's theory that the early Ottomans expanded their territories in the name of Islam as ghazis. The author takes the view that Aşıkpaşazade should not be used as source to shed light on modern theories regarding the use of the Ottomans because this misses the point of the substance of Aşıkpaşazade's history. According to Özdemir it was completely normal that Aşıkpaşazade should go to great lengths to present the Ottomans as champions of the faith as himself was a dervish-ghazi who took part in the military campaigns of the period. Aşıkpaşazade's history comprised of chapters that narrate how a particular ruler conquered lands within the context of ghaza. Overall Ottoman History Through The Eyes of Aşıkpaşazade provides a fresh approach to the study of Aşıkpaşazade and his place within fifteenth-century Ottoman historiography and clearly demonstrates that the attitudes of Aşıkpaşazade himself are not only worthy of further examination but generally speaking dispel some of the theories previously put forward on Aşıkpaşazade.