Plague and Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean World

The Ottoman Experience, 1347–1600

NÜKHET VARLIK

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Plague and Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean World

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This is the first systematic scholarly study of the Ottoman experience of plague during the Black Death pandemic and the centuries that followed. Using a wealth of archival and narrative sources, including medical treatises, hagiographies, and travelers' accounts, as well as recent scientific research, Nükhet Varlık demonstrates how plague interacted with the environmental, social, and political structures of the Ottoman Empire from the late medieval through the early modern era. The book argues that the empire's growth transformed the epidemiological patterns of plague by bringing diverse ecological zones into interaction and by intensifying the mobilities of exchange among both human and nonhuman agents. Varlık maintains that persistent plagues elicited new forms of cultural imagination and expression as well as a new body of knowledge about the disease. In turn, this new consciousness sharpened the Ottoman administrative response to the plague, while contributing to the makings of an early modern state.

Nükhet Varlık is Assistant Professor of History at Rutgers University–Newark. She is the author of several articles and is currently editing a collection of essays titled *Plague and Contagion in the Islamic Mediterranean*. She is the recipient of an NEH Fellowship by the American Research Institute in Turkey, a Senior Fellowship from Koç University's Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations, and a Turkish Cultural Foundation Post-Doctoral Fellowship.

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