

Discovering the Ottomans

Douglas Brookes

Tuesdays, 1-3 p.m., Jan. 23 through Feb. 27

Magnes Museum

“Discovering the Ottomans” introduces the Ottoman Empire to the interested learner. We begin with an overview of this vast empire, which ruled not only Turkey but most of the Middle East and the Balkans from the 1400s to the 1920s. Then we discover aspects of Ottoman culture, in order to gain an idea of life in this great state that straddled three continents: Europe, Asia, and Africa.

There are no required texts, but suggested readings for those interested in learning more about the subject at hand are listed under each weekly topic.

1. The Ottoman Empire: Beginnings & Expansion

- a. Anatolia’s gift: the empire that lasted 700 years
- b. Master on three continents
- c. Further reading: Faroqhi, Suraiya. *The Ottoman Empire: A Short History*.

2. The Ottoman Empire: Consolidation & Transformation

- a. How to rule a vast empire
- b. How to deal with Christian Europe
- c. Hmm, is it too late to reform?
- d. Further reading: McCarthy, Justin. *The Ottoman Turks: an Introductory History to 1923*

3. Religion & Culture

- a. Muslims, Christians, and Jews
 - i. Islam in the quintessential Muslim empire
 - ii. Peoples of the Book: the Christian and Jewish minorities
- b. Women and Families
 - i. Major events in an Ottoman family, from birth to death
- c. Further reading:
 - i. Braude, Benjamin and Bernard Lewis (eds.). *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*
 - ii. Davis, Fanny. *The Ottoman Lady: A Social History from 1718 to 1918*.

4. Slavery & Power

- a. Ottoman society – who stood where?
- b. Top of the top: the Imperial Family
- c. The harem – what was it?
- d. Slaves and eunuchs – who were they?
- e. Further reading: Brookes, Douglas Scott. *The Concubine, the Princess, and the Teacher: Voices from the Ottoman Harem*.

5. Language & Literature

- a. The dilemma: what *was* the Ottoman language?
- b. Literature: poets rule
- c. Further reading: Andrews, Walter. *Ottoman Lyric Poetry*.

6. Music & Architecture

- a. The Classical Ottoman song
- b. The Classical Ottoman building
 - i. If we were to make a typical Ottoman building, how would it look?
- c. Further reading: Kuban, Doğan. *Ottoman Architecture*.