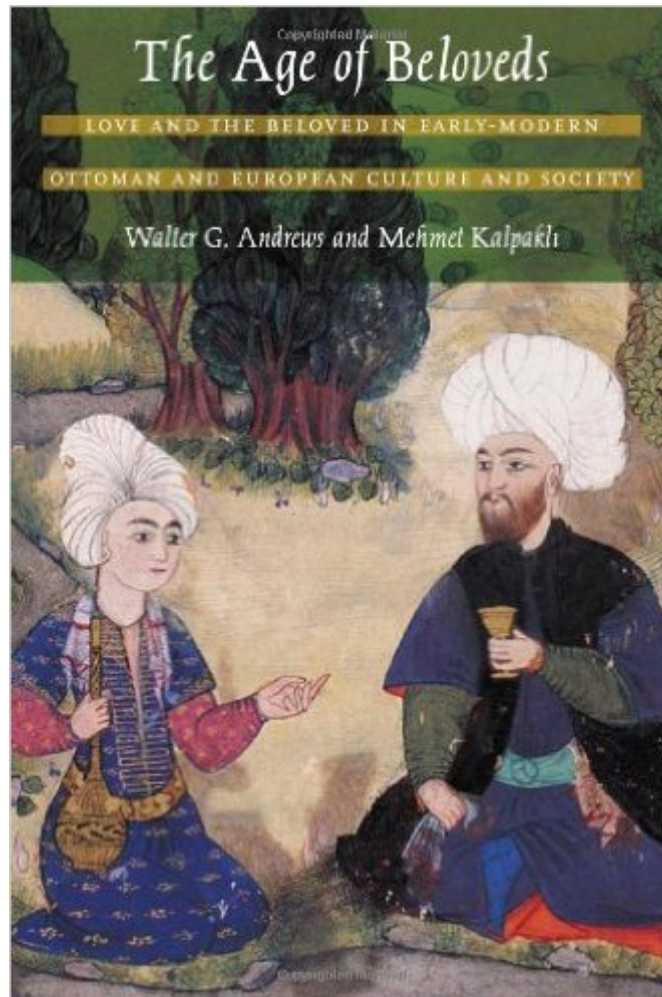


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The Age Of Beloveds: Love And The Beloved In Early-Modern Ottoman And European Culture And Society



Synopsis

The Age of Beloveds offers a rich introduction to early modern Ottoman culture through a study of its beautiful lyric love poetry. At the same time, it suggests provocative cross-cultural parallels in the sociology and spirituality of love in Europe "from Istanbul to London" during the long sixteenth century. Walter G. Andrews and Mehmet Kalpakli provide a generous sampling of translations of Ottoman poems, many of which have never appeared in English, along with informative and inspired close readings. The authors explain that the flourishing of Ottoman power and culture during the "Turkish Renaissance" manifested itself, to some degree, as an "age of beloveds," in which young men became the focal points for the desire and attention of powerful officeholders and artists as well as the inspiration for a rich literature of love. The authors show that the "age of beloveds" was not just an Ottoman, eastern European, or Islamic phenomenon. It extended into western Europe as well, pervading the cultures of Venice, Florence, Rome, and London during the same period. Andrews and Kalpakli contend that in an age dominated by absolute rulers and troubled by war, cultural change, and religious upheaval, the attachments of dependent courtiers and the longings of anxious commoners aroused an intense interest in love and the beloved. The Age of Beloveds reveals new commonalities in the cultural history of two worlds long seen as radically different.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The authors of this magnificent book deserve the greatest praise for daring -- and yes, "daring" is

the correct word -- to write this book on a very controversial subject in the midst of an extended period of moral panic in the West. Since practically nobody in the West has even the slightest knowledge of, or curiosity about, Turkish love-poetry written prior to 1800, this book has probably gone largely unnoticed and unread, and has therefore gone uncondemned by moralistic pundits. It is true that the authors have played it a bit safe by giving a genuflection before the altar of right-mindedness, saying in so many words (I paraphrase), "Well, yes, this whole book is about the very abomination of desolation, and of course we don't approve of what these beastly poets were up to, but we took it into our heads to write at length about it anyway." And goody for them for doing so!

I can't stop reading this book, it's amazing the insight into the Ottoman's views on love, passion, lust, and sexuality. It's incredibly risqué, but it's rather intriguing.

Very well done. A profound challenge to western heterocentric assumptions regarding sexuality, morality and spirituality.

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