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Travellers from Europe in the Ottoman and Safavid Empires, 16th–17th Centuries

Seeking, Transforming, Discarding Knowledge

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Variorum Collected Studies

This collection of Sonja Brentjes's articles deals with travels, encounters and the exchange of knowledge in the Mediterranean and Western Asia during the 16th and 17th centuries, focusing on three historiographical concerns. The first is how we should understand the relationship between Christian and Muslim societies, in the period between the translations from Arabic into Latin (10th–13th centuries) and before the Napoleonic invasion of Ottoman Egypt (1798). The second concern is the "Western" discourse about the decline or even disappearance of the sciences in late medieval and early modern Islamic societies and, third, the construction of Western Asian natures and cultures in Catholic and Protestant books, maps and pictures. The articles discuss institutional and personal relationships, describe how Catholic or Protestant travellers learned about and accessed Muslim scholarly literature, and uncover contradictory modes of reporting, evaluating or eradicating the visited cultures and their knowledge.

Contents: Preface; Introduction; The interests of the Republic of Letters in the Middle East, 1550–1700; On the relation between the Ottoman empire and the West European Republic of Letters (17th–18th centuries); The presence of ancient secular and religious texts in the unpublished and printed writings of Pietro della Valle (1586–1652); Pietro della Valle's Latin Geography of Safavid Iran (1624–1628): introduction (with Volkmar Schüller); Early modern Western European travellers in the Middle East and their reports about the sciences; Pride and prejudice: the invention of a 'historiography of science' in the Ottoman and Safavid empires by European travellers and writers of the 16th and 17th centuries; Peiresc's interests in the Middle East and Northern Africa in respect to geography and cartography; Astronomy a temptation? On early modern encounters across the Mediterranean sea; Index. Includes 2 b&w illustrations

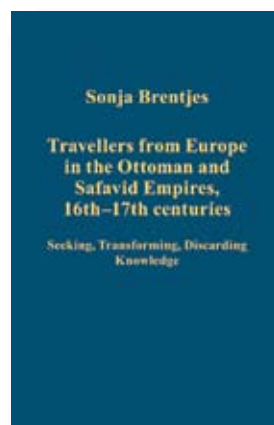
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October 2010
352 pages
Hardback
978-1-4094-0533-7
£70.00

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