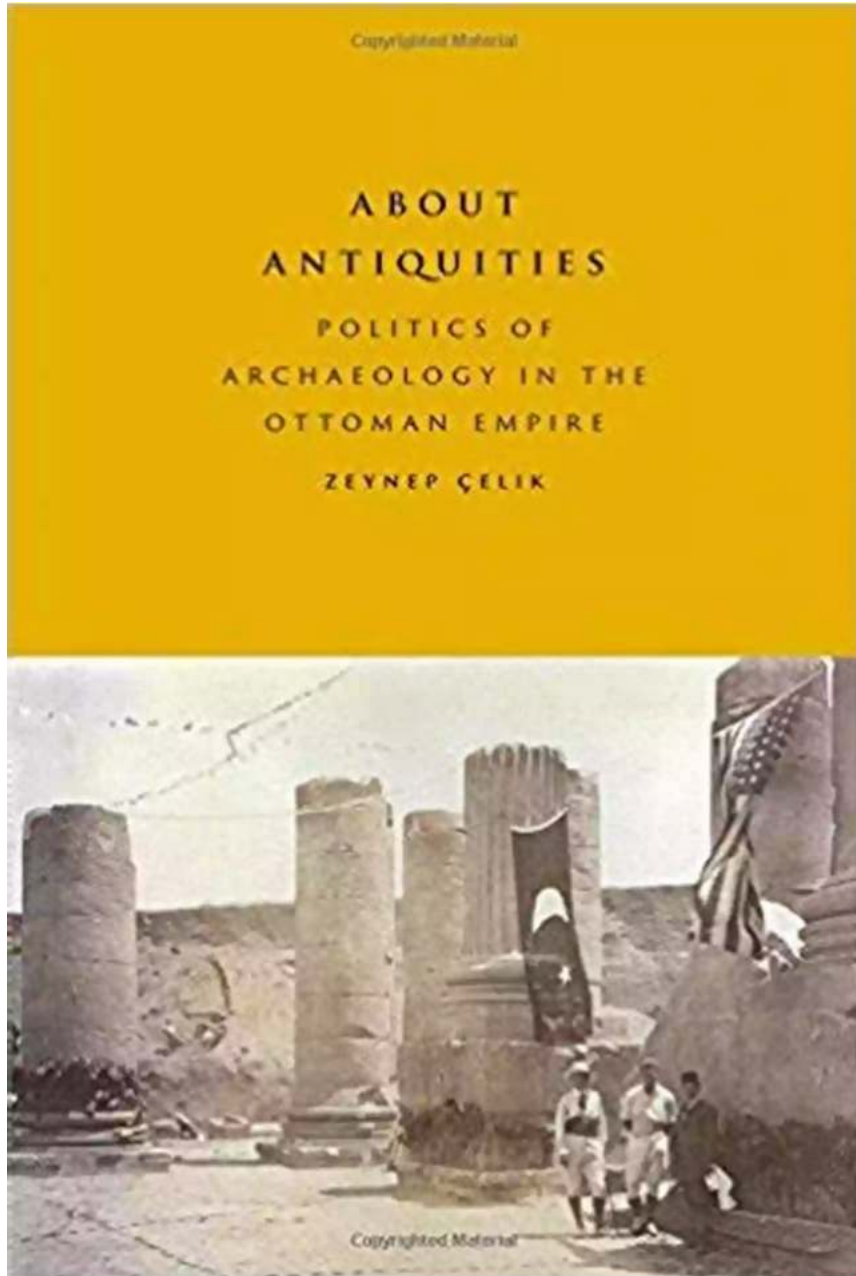


The Untold Stories: Politics of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire

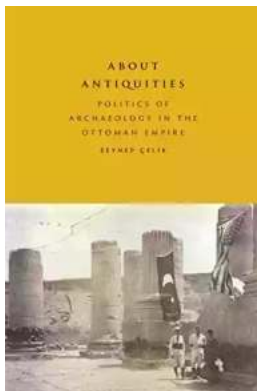


Exploring the world of archaeology takes us on a captivating journey through time, unearthing ancient civilizations and giving us a glimpse into their past. One such era that holds a multitude of hidden stories is the Ottoman Empire. However, behind the excavations and discoveries lies a sinister undercurrent –

the politics of archaeology. Join us as we delve into the intricate web of power, history, and the preservation of knowledge during the reign of the Ottomans.

The Nexus of Politics and Archaeology

In the Ottoman Empire, archaeology was not merely an academic pursuit or a means of increasing historical knowledge. It was intertwined with political ambitions, national identity, and cultural heritage. Ottoman rulers recognized the importance of archaeological discoveries in asserting their dominance and validating their rule.



About Antiquities: Politics of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire by Nigel McCrery (Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 43457 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 283 pages



With power concentrated in Istanbul, the capital of the empire, the Ottoman sultans actively promoted archaeological exploration. The discoveries made by Ottoman archaeologists were utilized to project a glorified image of the empire's past, highlighting prestigious achievements and establishing a historical connection to their land.

Imperial Agencies and Archaeological Expeditions

The Sublime Porte, the central government of the Ottoman Empire, established various imperial agencies to oversee archaeological expeditions. The Imperial Museum (later known as the Istanbul Archaeology Museums) played a significant role in these endeavors. Under the patronage of Sultan Abdulhamid II, the museum became a focal point for both Turkish and foreign archaeologists.

Archaeologists, supported by the empire, embarked on expeditions to regions within the Ottoman territories. However, these endeavors were directed and controlled by the central authorities. The empire sought to regulate and manipulate the narratives that emerged from these excavations, ensuring they aligned with their political agenda.

The Struggle for National Identity

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, nationalist movements emerged within the diverse Ottoman Empire. Archaeology became a tool for these factions to intertwine their aspirations for independence and the resurrection of past glories.

During this period, archaeological discoveries rose in prominence. Uncovering ancient sites and artifacts served as evidence of the empire's past greatness, fueling the nationalist sentiment. Archaeological interpretations were shaped to validate nationalist claims, with particular focus on ancient civilizations residing on Ottoman lands.

The Influence of European Powers

The late 19th century witnessed intensified European involvement in archaeological excavations within the Ottoman Empire. European powers, such as France, Germany, and Britain, established their own archaeological missions. These expeditions often faced tense political climates, mirroring the power struggles of the era.

While the European missions aimed to enhance archaeological knowledge, their presence also exerted a significant influence on the Empire's political landscape. Diplomatic maneuverings and the acquisition of rare artifacts become intertwined with wider political agendas. European dominance over archaeological knowledge further marginalized the narratives the Ottoman Empire sought to promote.

The Legacy of Politics in Ottoman Archaeology

Despite the inherent political challenges, Ottoman archaeology managed to make significant contributions to the field. Many important discoveries were made under the Empire's patronage, especially during the reign of Abdulhamid II.

However, the politics of archaeology under the Ottoman rule also had a long-lasting impact. The control of historical narratives, the manipulation of archaeological findings, and the competition for national identity all played a role in shaping the understanding of the past. Today, historians and archaeologists are still uncovering the hidden layers and attempting to separate the politics from the truth.

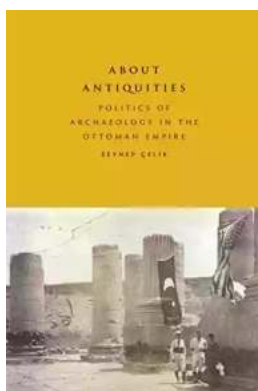
Unveiling the Secrets of the Past

The politics of archaeology in the Ottoman Empire remind us that history is not always objective or divorced from power struggles. With each excavation, we see the interplay between politics, culture, and the preservation of knowledge.

As the sands of time continue to shift, the stories buried beneath them offer us a valuable opportunity to reevaluate our understanding of the past. By critically examining the politics of archaeology, we can strive for a more accurate representation of history – one that is not clouded by political agendas but rooted in the pursuit of knowledge and shared human heritage.

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Antiquities have been pawns in empire-building and global rivalries; power struggles; assertions of national and cultural identities; and cross-cultural exchanges, cooperation, abuses, and misunderstandings—all with the underlying element of financial gain. Indeed, “who owns antiquity?” is a contentious question in many of today’s international conflicts.

About Antiquities offers an interdisciplinary study of the relationship between archaeology and empire-building around the turn of the twentieth century. Starting

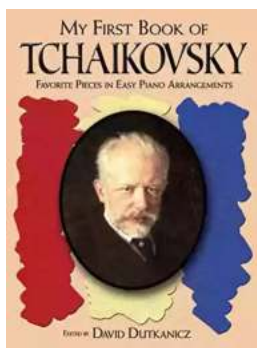
at Istanbul and focusing on antiquities from the Ottoman territories, Zeynep Çelik examines the popular discourse surrounding claims to the past in London, Paris, Berlin, and New York. She compares and contrasts the experiences of two museums—Istanbul’s Imperial Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art—that aspired to emulate European collections and gain the prestige and power of owning the material fragments of ancient history. Going beyond institutions, Çelik also unravels the complicated interactions among individuals—Westerners, Ottoman decision makers and officials, and local laborers—and their competing stakes in antiquities from such legendary sites as Ephesus, Pergamon, and Babylon.

Recovering perspectives that have been lost in histories of archaeology, particularly those of the excavation laborers whose voices have never been heard, *About Antiquities* provides important historical context for current controversies surrounding nation-building and the ownership of the past.



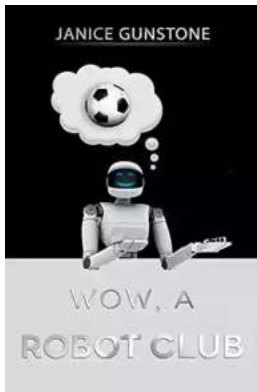
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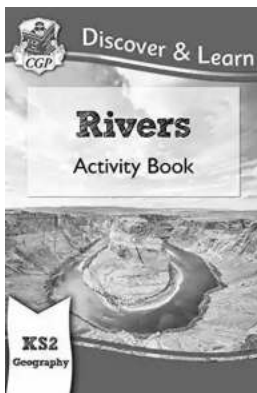
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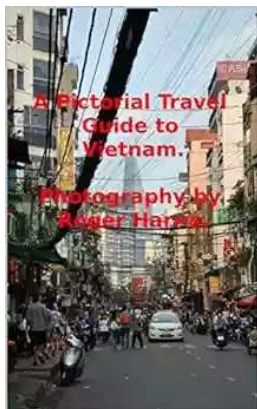
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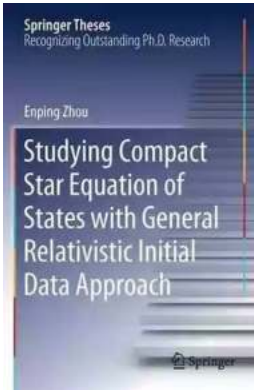
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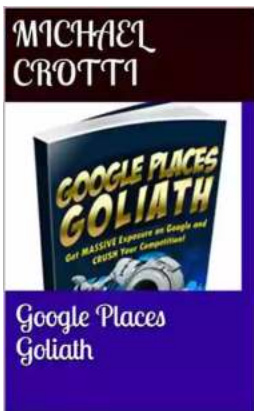
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