



# Freemasonry in the Ottoman Empire: A History of the Fraternity and its Influence in Syria and the Levant (Library of Ottoman Studies)

By Dorothe Sommer

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The network of freemasons and Masonic lodges in the Middle East is an opaque and mysterious one, and is all too often seen – within the area – as a vanguard for Western purposes of regional domination. But here, Dorothe Sommer explains how freemasonry in Greater Syria at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century actually developed a life of its own, promoting local and regional identities. She stresses that during the rule of the Ottoman Empire, freemasonry was actually one of the first institutions in what is now Syria and Lebanon which overcame religious and sectarian divisions. Indeed, the lodges attracted more participants – such as the Trad Family, the Jurji Yanni Yaziji Family, Hassan Bayhum, Alexander Barroudi and Khaireddeen Abdulwahab – than any other society or fraternity.

Freemasonry in the Ottoman Empire analyses the social and cultural structures of the Masonic network of lodges and their interconnections at a pivotal juncture in the history of the Ottoman Empire, making it invaluable for researchers of the history of the Middle East.

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*By Dorothe Sommer*

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About the Author

Dorothe Sommer teaches at The Centre for Research into Freemasonry and Fraternalism at The University of Sheffield, UK. She holds a PhD in History from Leiden University.

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