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Spies, Scandals and Sultans: Istanbul in the Twilight of the Ottoman Empire

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Spies, Scandals, and Sultans is the first English translation of a fascinating and acidly critical portrait of the Ottoman capital of Istanbul during the days of the Sultan Abd al-Hamid. This is the first time that the text, written by an Egyptian journalist and politician, has been available since 1896. Originally published as a series of newspaper articles in the mid-1890s, and then as a book entitled *Ma Hunalik*, the text was ordered to be banned and burned by the Sultan's representatives in Cairo. The ban was carried out, but a few copies survived, one of which has been used for this translation. The text of the Arabic original is prefaced with an extensive introduction in which the author's life is discussed and the highly controversial contents of the book are contextualized and evaluated for their accuracy against other contemporary accounts of life in the Ottoman capital.

Spies, Scandals, and Sultans presents a highly critical view of the Ottoman government in Istanbul during the 1890s, with reference to earlier eras in Ottoman history. It is an Egyptian perspective of the Ottoman administration in one of its most problematic periods and is highly critical of every aspect of life in the capital city?not least, the elaborate spy system. *Spies, Scandals, and Sultans* takes on the theme of modernization and the role of more traditional values, including Islamic ones, in the process of setting the goals for a modern Middle Eastern state?a process that was to come to fruition after World War One in the creation of the modern state of Turkey.

This first English translation should arouse intense interest among historians of the Ottoman Empire and Egypt, as well as those who study modernization in the Middle East and the status of Islam within both traditional and modernizing societies in the region. *Spies, Scandals, and Sultans* has a great deal to say about the processes of decline and the causes for it, and the ever increasing role of European nations in the establishment o

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