
Rudi Matthee
The author probes the question of the existence and nature of a civil society in 17th century Istanbul and Isfahan through the prism of contemporaneous Western perspectives on the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Iran with their focus on despotic and oppressive governments. These same sources, however, also suggest the limited reach of rulers, and they reveal the existence of a lively “public sphere”, of which the court itself was part inasmuch as it was, at least in the Iranian case, public spectacle. Focusing on Iran, the author concludes that, within limits set by time and place, and with the understanding that institutions like guilds and madrasas were hardly autonomous bodies, an overarching sense of urban community did exist in early modern times.
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Thèmes : 4.2.1. Safavides et Qâjârs

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