connection between the railway policies of Ottoman bureaucrats in the post-Tanzimat period and German ideals of the national economy.

While all of the book's chapters are highly informative, it should be noted that readers expecting a comprehensive debate about the socioeconomic processes lying behind railway architecture are likely to be disappointed. While it is true that, especially in Chapters 5 and 8, the study deliberately discusses both the labor dynamics at railway worksites and the changing substructures of Rumelian, Anatolian, and Mesopotamian towns during the railway era, the book nevertheless contains only very limited discussion of the day-to-day politics of workers, locals, and middle-ranking officers regarding the laying of track, a process that to a large extent created the localized railway objects. The main reason behind such a limitation is the undue emphasis placed by Christensen on the ideas and tactics of engineer-archaeologists, along with the near absence of laborers' own voices. Despite this shortcoming, the book adopts an innovative approach that does not simply rely on the diplomatic metanarratives of Ottoman railway history, but rather sheds light on the geopolitical, economic, and cultural dimensions of Ottoman railways via an interdisciplinary reading of maps, train stations, and topographical surveys.

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Muzaffer Özgüleş. *The Women Who Built the Ottoman World: Female Patronage and the Architectural Legacy of Gülnuş Sultan*. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2017, xxvi + 307 pages.

Why does Ottoman women's patronage matter? Muzaffer Özgüleş's recent book engages with this question by focusing on the building activities of Gülnuş Emetullah Sultan (d. 1715), the *haseki* of Sultan Mehmed IV (r. 1648–1687) and the mother of Sultan Mustafa II (r. 1695–1703) and Sultan Ahmed III (r. 1703–1730). Utilizing a plethora of archival sources—from endowment deeds to letters and from engravings to other visual materials—Özgüleş makes a detailed analysis of Gülnuş Sultan's architectural patronage and aspires to correct the historical record, which has largely neglected the life and work of this significant royal figure. The book not only inquires how Gülnuş Sultan used architecture as a tool of politics, self-representation, and visibility, but also

investigates her contribution to the stylistic parameters of Ottoman architecture. By presenting the scale and scope of Gülnuş Sultan's architectural repertoire alongside that of other royal women, Özgüleş attempts to challenge the male-dominated narratives of architectural history.

The book's first chapter outlines Gülnuş Sultan's life, beginning with her capture in Rethymno, Crete in 1646. In this section, Özgüleş briefly addresses notable political events from the mid-17th to the early 18th centuries, a turbulent period in the history of the Ottoman Empire, in order to allow a better understanding of the background against which Gülnuş Sultan's patronage occurred and the kind of architectural expression that she preferred. Özgüleş also points out the unconventional nature of the relationship between Gülnuş Sultan and Mehmed IV: she accompanied the sultan not only on hunting parties, but even on military expeditions, including those that took place in the Balkans. In this, Özgüleş belies the mainstream view that pictures royal women remaining behind the closed doors of the Ottoman harem, and thus he also manages here to revisit the conventional exotic depictions of harem women in the Ottoman Empire.

While the book is intended primarily as a monograph on Gülnuş Sultan, Özgüleş also analyzes the patronage of her female predecessors and successors. In this way, he reveals the foundation of the legacy that Gülnuş Sultan inherited (p. 38) while also investigating her influence on future generations. To this end, Özgüleş charts the patterns of Ottoman women's patronage and inquires how building activities interacted with the shifting political realities of the Ottoman state. Although he confirms that female charity of this type had indeed existed since the early years of the empire, Özgüleş limits his analysis in this chapter to the activities of royal women from the time of Hürrem Sultan (also known as Roxelana, d. 1558) to that of Turhan Sultan (d. 1683). Many royal women of this era were more active in state affairs than their predecessors had been, a phenomenon that Özgüleş relates to the "sedentarization of the sultanate," a term borrowed from Leslie P. Peirce.[1] In line with this, Hürrem Sultan's insistence on staying in the capital rather than going to a province with her prince not only marked a new period in Ottoman politics and the harem, but also transformed the modalities of architectural patronage (p. 45). From this point onward, the buildings commissioned by royal women were no longer confined to provincial centers, but were erected in the capital of İstanbul as well. In a similar vein, the eighth chapter of Özgüleş's book deals with the building activities of post-Gülnuş *valide sultan*s and *hasekis* from Saliha Sultan (d. 1739) to Rahime Perestü Sultan (d. 1904). In the context of the increasing

1 Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 168.

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influence of Westernization and political instabilities, this later period witnessed the incorporation of new architectural styles ranging from Gothic to Indian, as well as the rise of new types of building and novel methods of legitimization. Özgüleş states that this was "an evolution absent of a linear change [*sic*]" (p. 203), since what proved decisive in the scale and extent of building activities during this era were not simply political and economic developments, but also the status of women, the length of their reign, and established practices of affiliation. Although Özgüleş here emphasizes how he intends to make a vertical rather than a lateral comparison, his analysis could have been enriched by drawing parallels and contrasts with Gülnuş Sultan's European contemporaries.

The second part of the book, made up of five chapters, provides the reader with a detailed account of Gülnuş Sultan's building activities. Investigating how Gülnuş Sultan exercised her patronage together with the historical aspects lying behind this patronage activity, Özgüleş uses a variety of primary and secondary sources to discuss in detail building and repair processes, the extent of Gülnuş Sultan's agency, her financial means, and architectural and stylistic parameters. Each chapter in this part of the book corresponds to a certain stage in Gülnuş Sultan's building activities. Chapter 3 focuses on three church-to-mosque conversions in three frontier towns: Kamianets-Podilskyi, Chios, and Oran. The analysis here is significant inasmuch as it demonstrates Ottoman attempts to prove the supremacy of Islam over Catholic Christendom, as well as examining women's symbolic role in religious patronage and the politics of the frontiers. Chapter 4 explores building and repair activities in Mecca in the late 17th century and on the Hajj pilgrimage route in the early 18th century. Here, besides providing abundant details concerning the soup kitchen and hospital that were built in Mecca during this time—as well as the bridges and pavements that were constructed and repaired near İznik at around the same time—Özgüleş also reveals how Gülnuş Sultan's "charity network" extended as far as Jeddah and Egypt (p. 88). He shows how, through her endowments, she aimed to help the poor and attempted to provide pilgrims with a more comfortable pilgrimage experience, in addition to thus publicly confirming her image as a pious and generous sultana. Chapter 5 delves into the construction process of the Galata New Mosque in a predominantly Christian neighborhood. The mosque—the only imperial mosque in the district—replaced the San Francesco Church, which had been left in ruins following fires and an earthquake in the 17th century. This chapter contributes to the literature on urban memory by providing details concerning a significant building that no longer stands today, while also discussing the Islamization process of a previously Christian space and providing hints about the demographic and architectural transformation of the Galata district between the 17th and early

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20th centuries. Chapter 6 complements this account by addressing one particular philanthropic preoccupation of Gülnuş Sultan; namely, the large-scale network of waterworks, fountains, and their accompanying waterways in Galata and Edirne. By showing the sultana's efforts to bring potable water to Galata, for instance, Özgüleş inquires into how this process interacted with the reconfiguration of existing spatial relations as analyzed in the previous chapter. Finally, Chapter 7 concludes the second part of the book by focusing on the construction process of Yeni Valide Complex in Üsküdar, which according to Özgüleş was Gülnuş Sultan's *magnum opus*. Here, the author examines the novelties introduced by this complex and the consequent stylistic changes that it encouraged in 18th-century Ottoman architecture. Overall, in tracing the marks of the structures commissioned by Gülnuş Sultan, this second part of the book reestablishes the significance of the buildings examined, in addition to making an important contribution to the urban history of İstanbul. This part of the book also breaks new ground for discussions of women's agency in this period by demonstrating Gülnuş Sultan's own active involvement in construction processes.

Chapter 9 makes use of both qualitative and quantitative evaluation in order to seek out elements of continuity and change between the construction activities of Gülnuş Sultan and those of other royal women, based on such parameters as building type, building size, cost, location, architectural style, and the symbolic meanings attached to structures. Focusing on these comparisons, Özgüleş questions what it is that makes Gülnuş Sultan so unique and explores the changes "wrought by her activities over the Empire's *longue durée*." (p. 205). He concludes that Gülnuş's architectural legacy was one of the most extensive of all Ottoman royal women, and reflected the architectural transition from the classical Ottoman to the high baroque Ottoman style (p. 230).

Over the past couple of decades, Ottoman studies have witnessed a growing interest in Ottoman royal women and in the way that they represented themselves through architectural patronage. Offering a complex narrative based on a variety of primary and secondary sources, Özgüleş's monograph contributes to the field by contradicting conventionalist and orientalist perspectives on the Ottoman harem. The book inquires into the intersection between gender and architectural patronage on the one hand and architectural patronage and self-representation on the other. However, while locating a female actor at the center of the analysis is undoubtedly valuable, the gender approach of the study remains limited insofar as the details pertaining to architecture ultimately overshadow the matter of how the whole story of Gülnuş Sultan relates to transformations in gender relations and the public-private divide in Ottoman society. Although Özgüleş does reflect on how women's patronage creates an opportunity for them to become visible in the public sphere, the book

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does not include a well- grounded theoretical discussion and analysis pertaining to the public-private divide. As a result, the question of exactly how women's public appearance in this particular manner interacted with the ambiguities of this binary remains open for further exploration.

Another drawback of the book is its lack of critical engagement with the "sultanate of women" thesis. Throughout the book, Özgüleş reiterates the need to include Gülnuş Sultan into this periodization, which emphasizes women's increasing participation in the political affairs of the empire during the 16th and 17th centuries. Though widely used in both popular and scholarly literature, the term nevertheless has sexist connotations in that accounts of this period "have tended to represent the influence of the harem as an illegitimate usurpation of power that resulted from a weakening of the moral fiber and institutional integrity of Ottoman society."[2] While it is quite likely that the main purpose behind Özgüleş's overemphasis on Gülnuş Sultan's exclusion from accounts of this period is simply to indicate a significant gap in the literature, even so, a relevant critical evaluation is called for in order to be able to maintain some distance from the common usage of the term.

In sum, Özgüleş's study is well researched and well organized, and may pique the interest of scholars and students of urban history, architectural history, and gender history. By focusing on women's active role in construction processes, the book not only shed lights on the strategies and aims of female Ottoman patrons, but also presents a challenge to the male-dominated narratives of architectural history. Furthermore, the book also encourages the reader to become more aware of the traces left by female patrons on the built environment of the Ottoman Empire.

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2 Ibid., viii.

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