

tacit understanding that they, not their young sons, were the actual governors, must have meant something for the populace as well.

And, as Havlioglu makes clear, Mihri Hatun wasn't *just* a woman. She was the daughter of an important kadi and the granddaughter of a Sufi master. She had the benefit of private tutoring and was, for a while at least, the protégé of a crown prince, had an impressive network of friends and suitors in high-places and was financially well-off. In that sense the book could initiate a fresh debate about this specific social group: elite women who were not part of the royal household but found ways to bring their full powers to the fore in the male-dominated environment of the Ottoman center.

The book is not devoid of errors. It could have benefitted from better editing. In some cases, there are glaring mistakes and typos (On page 46, to give one example, the same poem by Zati and its allusion to Mihri is mentioned twice on the same page). I also found it awkward to have to assemble Mihri's life story piecemeal from several chapters rather than having it presented up-front. But these are minor annoyances. *Mihri Hatun* is a very good book about a fascinating protagonist. It adds to our knowledge of early modern Ottoman poetry, of the patronage system that underlay the literary production of the time, and of women in the classical period. It is well written, accessible even to those who are not experts on literary criticism, and could be a welcome addition to advanced courses on women and literature in the early modern Islamic world.

TOBIAS P. GRAF, *The Sultan's Renegades: Christian-European Converts to Islam and the Making of the Ottoman Elite, 1575–1610* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). Pp. 283. \$99.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780198791430

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doi:10.1017/S0020743818001022

Since the publication in 1989 of Bartolomé and Lucile Bennassar's pioneering work, *Les chrétiens d'Allah: L'histoire extraordinaire des renégats, XVIe-XVIIe siècles* (Paris: Perrin), a rich body of scholarship has developed on renegades—Christians who converted to Islam, voluntarily or not. The renegade phenomenon peaked in the period 1500 to 1650, when their numbers reached perhaps into the hundreds of thousands. In his fine new book, *The Sultan's Renegades*, Tobias P. Graf proposes an original and important contribution to this literature that provides new insights into both renegades and the early modern Ottoman Empire. As he notes, the scholarship on renegades has been largely produced from the perspective of Christian Europe and the place these figures occupied in the imagination, fears, and dreams of the societies they left behind. With some exceptions, much less attention has been devoted to their position and experience in the Ottoman world they embraced. Graf suggests that Ottomanists' relative silence, despite the renegades' central role during the empire's first several centuries, is partly due to contemporary Ottoman indifference to the backgrounds of the sultans' servants, and to the related paucity of treatments of them in the imperial documentary record. I disagree with Graf's assertion that origin mattered little to the Ottomans, which strikes me as an uncritical embrace of the hoary early modern myth perpetuated by generations of subsequent scholars, and which, I might add, his book in fact convincingly undercuts. He is

spot on, however, in arguing for the need to locate renegades' lives within their Ottoman context.

The challenge of situating renegades in their Ottoman setting, as Graf points out, is at least in part one of sources. With several exceptions, his book is based almost entirely on non-Ottoman archival and printed primary sources, which are used to recreate the experiences of a sample of 137 Christian renegades from Europe in the years between 1580 and 1610. The attempt to craft a fundamentally Ottoman story with largely non-Ottoman sources is problematic, but as preeminent Ottomanists such as Cemal Kafadar and Suraiya Faroqhi have noted, certain aspects of Ottoman history cannot be told except through recourse to the more narrative details that can often only be gleaned from European sources. Indeed, as Graf himself contends, the binary division of source material into categories of insider and outsider is deeply flawed, and elides the richly entangled, transcultural reality of the early modern Mediterranean world broadly, and the Ottoman Empire specifically. One of Graf's contributions is his use of the more underutilized archives of Vienna, in contrast to those of Spain and Italy, which have previously been the basis of much scholarship on the renegades. This provides perspective that both reaffirms and fleshes out our knowledge of their experience. Archival and printed primary sources are supplemented by Graf's encyclopedic knowledge of the secondary literature, which he employs to great effect.

The book is organized into five compact chapters. The first provides an overview of the evolution of the Ottoman administrative elite, including the role of the *devshirme* in providing a continuous supply of manpower. This terrain will be well known to scholars familiar with the rich body of scholarship on the early modern Ottoman state.

Chapter 2 explores the act of conversion itself as both a religious, but even more, a social and cultural transformation. Though he does not delve directly into it, Graf's understanding of conversion aligns with a rich body of recent work by sociologists of religion. He argues that the contemporary notion of "turning Turk" is apropos, as the transformation (or "Ottomanization" as he terms it) of external markers such as clothing, name, foodways, and foreskin, was perhaps more consequential than the actual act of conversion.

Conversion as socialization rather than spiritual awakening is at the core of the third chapter, which draws on the fascinating case of Ladislaus Mörth, a member of the household of the Habsburg ambassador to Istanbul in 1593, to provide a window into institutional efforts to assert power and discipline individuals who came to be under Ottoman jurisdiction. Such attempts at confessionalization often flew in the face of the Mediterranean's widespread "religious indifferentism," as Graf labels it, the widely held view that all faiths would eventually lead their followers to God. The chapter concludes with a useful comparison of notions of conversion, and the tricky place that sincerity occupies in it. From a Muslim perspective, conversion was a beginning, rather than an end, in contrast to Christian views which generally saw it as the culmination of a process.

Chapter 4 examines the ways in which renegades were incorporated into the Ottoman elite and ruling apparatus. Drawing on the example of the noted Genoese/Messinese renegade, *Ciğalazade Yusuf Sinan Paşa*, Graf argues that renegades' integration paralleled in many ways the experiences of boys recruited through the *devshirme*, indeed the distinction between them was "virtually meaningless." Drawing on the work of Jane Hathaway

and others, he emphasizes the decisive role that patronage networks centered in elite Ottoman households played in renegades' careers. He also builds on Metin Kunt's foundational work on ethnic/regional *cins* networks among renegades and devshirme recruits, and their central importance for political advancement, even suggesting that at least in the late 16th century, an Italian *cins* network, centered around Cığalazade and several influential Venetian renegades, may have existed.

After examining the ways in which renegades were assimilated into Ottoman society, in the final chapter Graf circles around to resituate them into their transcultural contexts, and shows the ways in which they retained important ties to the places and cultures of their birth, as well as their families and other networks. Here again he uses the Cigala family as his case study, and suggests that their navigation of the various political poles of the early modern Mediterranean may well evidence a transimperial family strategy.

The Sultan's Renegades is a welcome addition to the scholarship on renegades, the Mediterranean, and the Ottoman Empire in the early modern era. Placing renegades in their Ottoman context is an important corrective, and Graf does this convincingly. Much of what he argues draws on previously published works and interpretations, many of which will be familiar to scholars in the field. Indeed, if anything, I came away from reading the book wanting to have a better sense of the Viennese archival material that makes its most sustained appearance in Chapters 3 and 4, but is much more in the background among the secondary literature and published sources that dominate the other chapters. A final note, unrelated to Graf's scholarship and certainly beyond his control, is the distressingly poor print quality of the book. The type is so light that it appears more like a photocopy than a printed work. This is no doubt a byproduct of some cost-cutting measure at the press, which has become a recurring issue with academic books of recent vintage. I will begrudgingly accept reduced publication standards from lesser presses, but not from Cambridge University Press, and not at a ninety-nine dollar retail price.

FEBE ARMANIOS, *Coptic Christianity in Ottoman Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015). Pp. 272. \$31.95 paper. ISBN: 9780190247225

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doi:10.1017/S0020743818000983

Coptic Christianity in Ottoman Egypt stands out among fewer than a dozen monographs that tackle the communal ethos and social history of Egypt's Copts, remaining the sole comprehensive assessment of the Coptic community in the Ottoman period. A prominent voice in a growing field of scholarship on Copts in early and late modernity, Febe Armanios establishes her rightful place as a leading scholar whose expertise covers the yawning gap between late antiquity and the contemporary period. In this book, Armanios excavates previously untapped sources, piecing together a myriad of primary sources from chronicles and travel narratives to hagiographic martyrologies and sermons. Stylistically, her study strikes an enviable balance between elegance and clarity, offering an indispensable primer for navigating a relatively understudied terrain with pleasure and ease.

In the face of scarce and fragmentary sources, Armanios's resourcefulness and inventive spirit win the day. Her approach appeals to religious traditions, those of Coptic Orthodox