

Fariba Zarinebaf. *Mediterranean Encounters. Trade and Pluralism in Early Modern Galata.* Oakland, CA: University of California Press. 2018.
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In 1972, in the foreword to the English edition of *The Mediterranean*, Fernand Braudel reaffirmed his view of the early modern Mediterranean as its own unique cultural zone, developed in part through the confluence of the three Abrahamic faiths, when he stated: 'I retain the firm conviction that the Turkish Mediterranean lived and breathed with the same spirit as the Christian, and that the whole sea shared a common destiny.' He further noted that 'we historians of the West...can glimpse the Turkish world from the outside only. The secret, or some of the secrets, lie hidden in the vast archives of Istanbul'.¹ Fariba Zarinebaf belongs to that generation of scholars after Braudel who took up the mantle and have pored through the vast Ottoman archives to bring these hidden 'secrets' to bear. In *Mediterranean Encounters: Trade and Pluralism in Early Modern Galata*, Zarinebaf offers a multi-layered history of Galata – a Mediterranean and Black Sea port and multicultural borough of Istanbul – from its medieval Byzantine roots to the late 18th century. While Zarinebaf focuses on Galata and its unique place in Ottoman history, she places Galata at the heart of a trade network linking Venice and Marseille and uses this story to paint a broader picture of the early modern Mediterranean as a site of multi-cultural exchanges. Zarinebaf illustrates how the pluralism found in such port cities was not always without tensions borne out along religious and cultural lines, and that the free trade agreements which facilitated such pluralism during the early modern period were bilateral and could be suspended in times of war and conflict.

Richly detailed and supported by extensive archival evidence, *Mediterranean Encounters* is a much needed response to the absence of detailed scholarship on Galata, which has all too often been summarised as a former Genoese colony and European port city, without further inquiry into the ramifications behind such a strong European presence in the heart of the Ottoman capital. Zarinebaf also takes issue with the long-held belief among Ottoman economic and political historians that *abdnames/capitulations* were colonialist tools that disadvantaged the Ottomans and led to economic decline. Instead she argues that the Ottomans relied on a combination of protectionist and free-trade policies, and that *abdnames* were an established legal mechanism pre-dating the Ottomans that facilitated open zones of trade and aided disputes between signatory nations.

1 Braudel, Fernand. 1995. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II. Volume 1.* Berkeley: University of California Press. 13.

In the 18th century these *abdnames* became unilateral and thus less susceptible to changes to the Ottoman throne or to the state of peace.

The book is well-organised and divided into three parts that further divide into thematic chapters. The chapters loosely alternate between the two main threads in the book, namely the political and economic narrative, which compares various *abdnames* and economic decisions conducted at the imperial level, and the narrative of cultural history that explores legal pluralism and the lived experiences of Ottomans, both Muslim and non-Muslim, and Europeans within shared spaces facilitated by these trade agreements. In Part I, she sets up the context for the remainder of the book by tracing Galata's fascinating history from its Byzantine and Genoese roots to its Ottoman conquest and subsequent transformation, but Zarinebaf emphasises how much of its old urban fabric was purposefully left intact while still carving out space for Muslims and Marrano Jews. She then expands the tale to the outlying neighbourhood of Pera to chart the rise of the French and their eventual emergence as the main Ottoman trading partner. Thematic subsections such as 'Conversion of Latin Churches', 'Creation of Muslim Spaces', and 'The Red Light District' offer glimpses into life in a district composed of Greeks, Muslims, Catholics/Latins, Armenians and Jews.

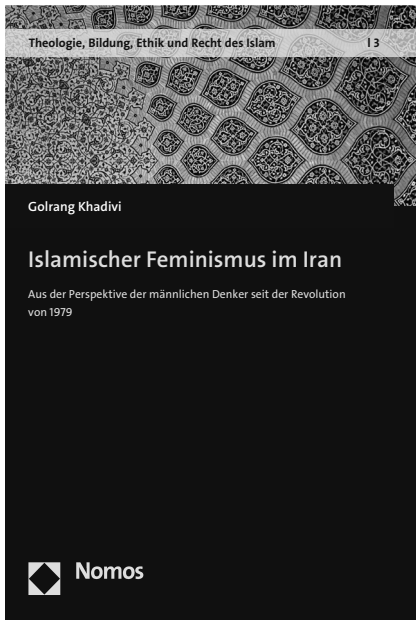
In Part II, Zarinebaf explores the legal and diplomatic setting by studying the history of *abdnames* and the role they played in negotiating trade agreements. She begins by correcting the mistranslation *capitulation* and argues that this term has a separate history in Western legal thought, and that Muslim bureaucrats never used the term. Instead, she demonstrates that *abdnames* were not an Ottoman invention but rather date to the tenth century when Medieval Muslim states granted *abdnames* to Italian city-states to promote trade and forge alliances. Zarinebaf continues with a history of *abdnames* up to the mid-17th century when she argues a notable change appears. The *abdnames* of 1673 and 1740 in particular reflected this change towards unilateral agreements that were forged after the major wars of the 17th century and the economic crises fuelled by growing piracy.

In Part III, Zarinebaf merges the themes presented throughout the book to explore how the legal frameworks for trade and diplomacy created by the *abdnames* were actually implemented in light of Galata's history as a pluralistic space. She explores the impacts on commercial, legal and cultural encounters between Ottomans and Europeans, with an emphasis on the French presence in Galata. She also uncovers important evidence regarding the experiences of Muslim merchants in Marseille, who were previously thought not to have been very involved in European port cities due to their seeming absence from the archive. Court records, legal disputes and conflicts over sexual misconduct reveal the tensions in areas where the *abdnames* offered no clear guidance. For example, while the Ottoman state discouraged interfaith marriage – including between European Catholics and Ottoman Greeks i.e. Orthodox – the French *abdnames* did not clarify the status of such spouses and whether or not they were granted protections. Ottoman viziers passed edicts attempting to claim these European husbands of Ottoman wives as their own subjects, and thus liable to a higher poll tax, much to the protest of the French ambassadors. Zarinebaf concludes by not-

ing that the pluralism seen in Ottoman ports did not develop into a cosmopolitan consciousness for the population as a whole. It could be fragile and subject to political and economic crises, like the *abduanes* of the 16th and early 17th centuries. Zarinebaf concludes her revealing and engaging study with a brief epilogue on how the French Revolution and Napoleon's invasion ended the long peace, the protections of the *abduanes* and the dominance of French-Ottoman trade.

This scholarly work is best suited for those already familiar with Ottoman history, in particular economic historians, and those wishing to better understand Ottoman and European engagement in the Mediterranean setting.

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