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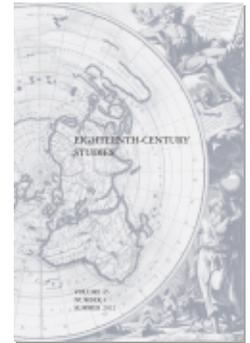
*Crime & Punishment in Istanbul, 1700-1800* (review)

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(Review)

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Fariba Zarinebaf, *Crime & Punishment in Istanbul, 1700–1800*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2010. Pp. xiii, 287. \$22.95 paper.

Historians of the Ottoman Empire often characterize the eighteenth century as a period of transition between the early modern and the modern periods. This is especially true of those who write about the empire's capital and its largest city, Istanbul. Fariba Zarinebaf has chosen to discuss crime and punishment in the city over the course of the eighteenth century to illustrate how Istanbul's underworld and the state's attempts to control it changed as Ottoman society began to show signs of tentative modernity. Along the way, through the use of extensive comparative examples the author seeks to establish that the transition from the old order to the new was not so different from that occurring in Mediterranean Europe, especially in France. Relying on a growing body of literature on crime and punishment in the provincial centers of the Ottoman Empire, she also draws interesting contrasts between the ways in which justice was administered in the capital and in the provinces. In short, there is much in this work that historians of both early modern Europe and the Ottoman Empire will find interesting and instructive.

Istanbul was perhaps the most cosmopolitan seaport on the Mediterranean in the eighteenth century. Within it lived a diverse population drawn from the myriad ethnic and religious communities of the Ottoman Empire, with each religious community subject to its own laws and courts. Zarinebaf is particularly adept at delineating the city's complex social structure, highlighting the creation of the underclass that provided most of the perpetrators of breaches of law and order. Due to the diversity of religious communities, and the presence of a large number of resident Europeans and their protégées who in most cases were exempt from Islamic legal traditions, there were multiple layers of legal systems in operation as well as several different arms of law enforcement. Overseeing all were the representatives of the sultan. One of this work's strengths is its discussion of the major role those at the imperial court played in maintaining order and dispensing justice, which was often accomplished in ways that did not conform to Islamic legal traditions. The Ottoman state allowed Muslim legal scholars to set the boundaries of morality for society, but it generally chose to punish violations of that code in its own way.

With justice and punishment being dispensed by various bodies in Istanbul, the paper trail left in Ottoman archival collections is diverse, ranging from the records of the Islamic courts to police reports and the registers for the imperial galleys, on which many of those convicted were condemned to serve. Zarinebaf is to be commended for consulting a wide-ranging variety of sources in order to provide a guide to the complexities of the systems that governed and sought to control social order in Istanbul. There are sufficient details in some of the galley registers for the author to present intriguing, if brief, glimpses of the Ottoman underworld. In other examples, however, the laconic nature of the sources compels her to provide her own suppositions about the circumstances of a particular case, which may or may not be valid. As a result, the narratives of crimes and punishment are at times uneven.

Although I learned much from this work, the organization the author employs in setting out her discussion detracts from the story she tells. Crime is reduced to a typology in which various categories of offenses—e.g., crimes against

property, prostitution and vice, violence and homicide—are each given a chapter, with a few examples from across the century to illustrate each particular crime. Having discussed those types of crimes, the author then offers chapters on the multiple legal systems present in the city and methods of punishment. The presentation would have been more satisfying if the discussions of justice and punishment had come first, illustrated by embedded examples of various crimes and the punishment meted out to the wrongdoers. The narrative is also hurt by editing that left many typographical errors, and infelicitous sentences such as “The Qur’anic punishment of amputation functioned as a deterrent and not as a destroyer in most cases” (74).

A fuller discussion of Ottoman notions of evidence and justice would have improved this work, but it should be read by everyone interested in crime and its punishment in eighteenth-century Istanbul. The evidence presented here by Zarinebaf is fascinating. In digging these nuggets out of the archives, she has performed a great service for all those curious about everyday life in eighteenth-century Istanbul. Lastly, anyone reading this book will come away satisfied with the author’s contention that Istanbul in the eighteenth century had much more in common with contemporary megacities in Western Europe than it did with Max Weber’s idealized paradigm of the “Islamic city.”

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Barbara Skinner, *The Western Front of the Eastern Church: Uniate and Orthodox Conflict in 18th-Century Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009). Pp. ix + 295, maps. \$42.00.

After Catherine II and her Habsburg and Prussian counterparts divided the lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, she found herself in possession of territories settled not as much by fellow Orthodox as by alien Uniates—the followers of a church that combined the Orthodox rituals and calendar with Catholic dogma and subordination to the pope. In *The Western Front of the Eastern Church*, Barbara Skinner explores the complex history of the Uniate and Orthodox churches in the Ruthenian (Ukrainian and Belarusian) palatinates of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which were incorporated into the Russian empire during the partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793, and 1795. Going beyond the theme of hostile relations between the two churches, the author skillfully incorporates into her narrative the abundant social conflicts, rebellions, Polish and Russian military interventions, and violence in the Ruthenian palatinates at the time of the partitions. This impressive and informative research proposes a new look at the history of the two churches in the region and links it to political instability, shifting borders, and the changing loyalties of local inhabitants.

Even though it focuses on the eighteenth century—specifically, on the reigns of Catherine II in the Russian empire and Stanislaw Poniatowski in the Commonwealth (roughly the early 1760s to late 1790s)—Skinner’s narrative depicts the history of the Uniate church into the early 1800s. Founded by the Union of Brest in 1596, this church was a response of the clergy of the Ruthenian palatinates to religious reforms and confessionalization in both the Commonwealth