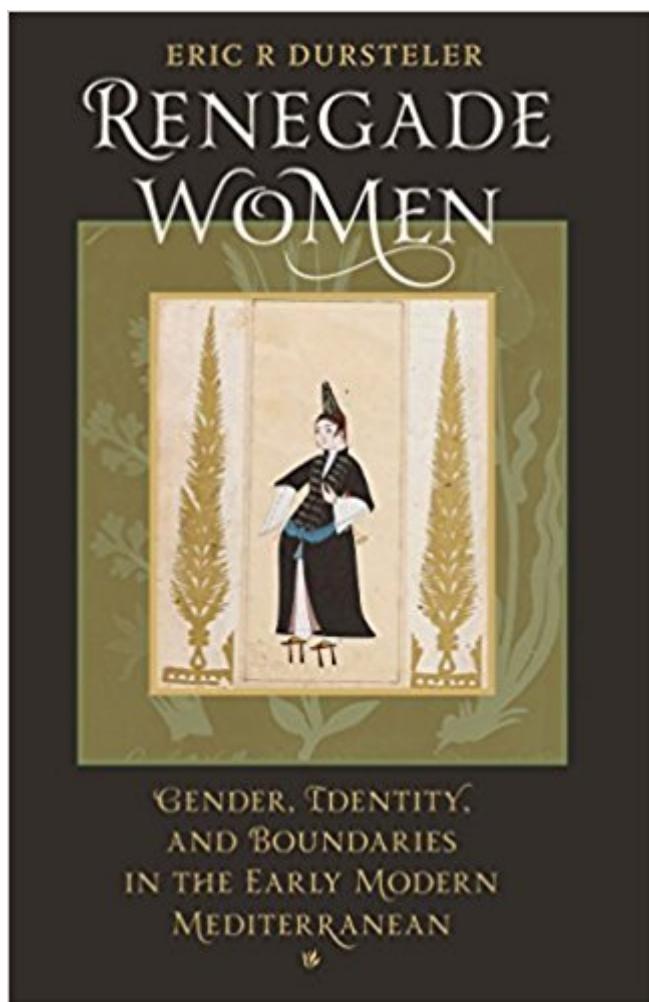


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# Renegade Women: Gender, Identity, And Boundaries In The Early Modern Mediterranean



## Synopsis

This book uses the stories of early modern women in the Mediterranean who left their birthplaces, families, and religions to reveal the complex space women of the period occupied socially and politically. In the narrow sense, the word "renegade" as used in the early modern Mediterranean referred to a Christian who had abandoned his or her religion to become a Muslim. With *Renegade Women*, Eric R Dursteler deftly redefines and broadens the term to include anyone who crossed the era's and region's religious, political, social, and gender boundaries. Drawing on archival research, he relates three tales of women whose lives afford great insight into both the specific experiences and condition of females in, and the broader cultural and societal practices and mores of, the early Mediterranean. Through Beatrice Michiel of Venice, who fled an overbearing husband to join her renegade brother in Constantinople and took the name Fatima Hatun, Dursteler discusses how women could convert and relocate in order to raise their personal and familial status. In the parallel tales of the Christian Elena Civalelli and the Muslim Mihale Aitorović, who both entered a Venetian convent to avoid unwanted, arranged marriages, he finds courageous young women who used the frontier between Ottoman and Venetian states to exercise a surprising degree of agency over their lives. And in the actions of four Muslim women of the Greek island of Milos—Aiss, her sisters Emin and Catig, and their mother, Maria—who together left their home for Corfu and converted from Islam to Christianity to escape Aiss's emotionally and financially neglectful husband, Dursteler unveils how a woman's attempt to control her own life ignited an international firestorm that threatened Venetian-Ottoman relations. A truly fascinating narrative of female instrumentality, *Renegade Women* illuminates the nexus of identity and conversion in the early modern Mediterranean through global and local lenses. Scholars of the period will find this to be a richly informative and thoroughly engrossing read.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A gem. Beautifully written, creatively crafted, and thoroughly researched, this is an erudite book, written with verve. It brings to life the richness and vitality of Mediterranean societies in early modern times. It also highlights the lack of historical grounding of some recent popular views about the alleged religious and cultural differences that separate Christian from Islamic societies." (Judith C. Brown, author of *Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy*) "Dursteler's book narrates the lives of early modern women who used the religious, cultural, and political boundaries of the early modern Mediterranean to shape the course of their own lives. Dursteler has skillfully teased these women's stories from slender archival evidence and has elegantly placed their experiences in a wider context. These fascinating stories are a wonderful introduction to the way gender, religion, and geography intersected in the eastern Mediterranean, and the book will work particularly well in the classroom as a way to begin discussions of the malleability of religious and gender identities in the early modern world." (Monique O'Connell, author of *Men of Empire: Power and Negotiation in Venice's Maritime State*) "Intriguing." (Choice) "[*Renegade Women*] is of tremendous interest to scholars investigating the roles of and opportunities available to women in the early modern period." (Ambereen Dadabhoy *Sixteenth Century Journal*) "The virtues of this intelligent, wide-ranging study are many, and the overarching one is Dursteler's skillful blending of detailed narratives of individual lives with thoughtful, informed accounts of the major cultural and political currents that formed the framework not only of those lives but also of relations between the Venetian and Ottoman empires." (Stanley Chojnacki *Journal of Modern History*)

Eric R Dursteler is a professor of history at Brigham Young University and the author of *Venetians in Constantinople*, also published by Johns Hopkins.

Ok read

Interesting but written in a pretty academic way.

I found this book highly interesting and easy to read. The book explores different conversion stories

and how women were not merely property, but active participants in their lives. The book is well written and engaging.

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