

Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Extraterritorial Dreams. European Citizenship, Sephardi Jews, and the Ottoman Twentieth Century*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), pp. 240.

by Alyssa Reiman

In *Extraterritorial Dreams: European Citizenship, Sephardi Jews, and the Ottoman Twentieth Century*, Sarah Abrevaya Stein considers the complexity of modern European citizenship through the lens of Ottoman Jewish protégés, “legal misfits” who defied systematic categorization. In the early twentieth century, Jews inherited, claimed, ignored, or lost their protected status as a result of the migrations, wars, border changes, and shifts in political regimes that accompanied the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire and the turmoil of World War I. In turn, European powers and those in their employ were compelled to reconsider centuries-old relationships of protection and the value or vulnerabilities they represented. Through stories that span Paris to Alexandria to Shanghai, Stein reconstructs the experiences of and debates over extraterritoriality in the early twentieth century, demonstrating that “citizenship [was] a spectrum” rather than a well-defined individual identity (p. 9).

Stein integrates European history with the history of the Mediterranean, complementing a growing body of historical research on citizenship and legal pluralism in the Mediterranean. Through consular and police records, community archives, family collections, and newspaper articles, Stein shows how legal categories such as protégé, citizen, subject, and foreign national were unclear and unstable. Even as passport regimes solidified in the twentieth century, discrepancies were rampant between legal definitions and the ways they took shape in local interactions and daily life.

As Stein points out, extraterritoriality was “a layered matter that was always in the process of accruing sediment from the various social, legal, and political contexts” (p. 100). The practical meaning of protected status was negotiated by European powers as they tried to wield influence in the Mediterranean; by ordinary people as they went about their everyday lives; and by local officials and consuls as they administered changing national policies based on their own personal judgement or inclination. In tracing transnational stories of Ottoman Jewish protégés, Stein emphasizes the extent to which protection was a local affair; local officials or consuls, some of them themselves Ottoman Jews, could turn protection into citizenship or strip it away entirely.

One of Stein's central arguments is that the history of Jewish citizenship must be pursued beyond the context of Jewish emancipation. Stein contends that focusing on Jews in the Mediterranean and their extraterritoriality illuminates the difference between citizenship as something to be granted to Jewish individuals by states and the "subtle degrees of belonging an individual could occupy" (p. 9). Ottoman Jewish protégés could claim a range of papers and positions in their daily lives in the Mediterranean and in Europe – their legal identities were amorphous and flexible.

Protected status was a dynamic entity shaped by perception and perspective. Ottoman Jews who sought or wished to retain protection could strategically explore local opportunities and interactions, exploit legal loopholes, or invoke creative origin stories that connected them to historic Sephardi communities in Bayonne in France or Livorno in Italy. However, just as Jews could parlay protégé status into citizenship, economic advantages, or a measure of physical security, their protected status could also expire, be revoked, be ignored, or disappear altogether. And while seeking out or making use of protégé status was often strategically advantageous, it could also possess value of a purely emotional kind; some Ottoman-born Jews chose to hold on to foreign protected status even when it was no longer practical, or even dangerous.

Stein mines her sources for the voices of ordinary men and women as they negotiated their legal, economic, and social prospects. In doing so, she seeks to uncover the agency of the individual in the history of modern citizenship. She pays close attention to how gender and class shaped the possibilities and limits of protégé status; Jewish women were often dependent on their husbands or fathers for their legal status, while those who were wealthy could use their identification with a certain economic class to assert legal claims or affiliations. Even so, there was no one single experience of extraterritoriality, as Stein illustrates through stories of individuals such as Esther Algrante, who was able to register on her own as a Portuguese protégé after divorcing her husband, and Amélie Nahon, who was born in Haifa, worked as a teacher for the Alliance Israélite Universelle, registered as a French protégé based on her family's origins in Algeria, held Ottoman legal papers, and found herself a refugee in Egypt during World War I.

The breadth of Stein's research, which encompasses sources from twenty-one archives in seven countries, is truly impressive. Each chapter shifts geographically and chronologically to examine a specific episode in the breaking apart or

reconfiguring of protected status in the early twentieth century. The first chapter is set in Salonica during the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), as Portugal sought to extend protégé status to Jews in order to expand its commercial and cultural foothold in the Mediterranean and as Jews debated the uncertain value of this protection during the tumultuous transition from Ottoman to Greek rule. The second chapter addresses the expulsion of Jews holding European papers from Ottoman Palestine and Syria during the First World War, and the ways both states and refugees wrangled over what “protection” entailed during wartime. Chapter 3 takes up a new legal category created by the British and the French for Ottoman-born Jews during World War I even as there was less space for the legal incoherence of protection in European national policies. Stein’s fourth chapter studies the litany of court cases that followed the death of Silas Aaron Haroon, a Baghdad-born, British-protected subject in Shanghai, and the quest for legal clarity over what it meant to be a protected person in the British Empire. The volume’s four chapters are bracketed by an introduction and conclusion that capture the multivalent implications of extraterritoriality. The introduction discusses recent decisions by the Spanish and Portuguese governments to grant citizenship to Jewish descendants of those expelled from the Iberian Peninsula in the fifteenth century, while the conclusion elaborates on the dangers of extraterritoriality as the system closed in on many Ottoman Jews during World War II.

In her study of the experiences of Jewish protégés, Stein mentions, but does not develop the itineraries and claims made by non-Jewish protégés in the Mediterranean Basin and in Europe. However, this certainly does not take away from the remarkable achievements of *Extraterritorial Dreams*, which offers a rich, well-researched, and multi-dimensional examination of extraterritoriality. In weaving together state policies, local decisions, family journeys, and individual jockeying, Stein captures the ways amorphous legal identities presented both opportunities and dangers, extraterritorial dreams and extraterritorial nightmares. *Extraterritorial Dreams* is an important contribution to Jewish, European, and Mediterranean history, exploring a dizzying range of individual experiences and illuminating the complexity of belonging, foreignness, and citizenship in the modern world.

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