



Black Eunuchs of the Ottoman Empire: Networks of Power in the Court of the Sultan

By George Junne

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At the height of the Ottoman Empire, black eunuchs - rare, castrated slaves imported from Africa - became a key part of court politics. Unlike white eunuchs, who were only permitted outside the palace, black eunuchs had access to the harem - the Sultan's inner court. The Chief Black Eunuch, appointed personally by the Sultan, had both the ear of the leader of a vast Islamic Empire and held power over a network of spies and informers, including eunuchs and slaves throughout Constantinople and beyond. The story of these remarkable individuals, who rose from difficult beginnings to become amongst the most powerful people in the Ottoman Empire, is rarely told. George Junne places their stories in the context of the wider history of African slavery, and places them at the centre of Ottoman history. The Black Eunuchs of the Ottoman Empire marks a new direction in the study of courtly politics and power in Constantinople

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Dr. George Junne, Jr. is a professor in Africana Studies at the University of North Carolina. He is also treasurer of the National Association for Ethnic Studies (NAES) and a former editor for the Western Social Science Association (WSSA) journal. He is the author of *Blacks in the American West and Beyond-America, Canada, and Mexico: A Selectively Annotated Bibliography* (2000). He has lectured at Bogazici University for many years, and is an expert on the role and history of black slaves and eunuchs.

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