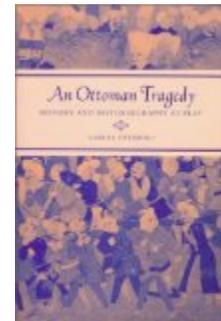




**Gabriel Piterberg.** *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003. xv + 256 pp. \$60.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-520-23836-7.

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Published on H-Turk (April, 2006)



## Osman II and the Cultural History of Ottoman Historiography

Gabriel Piterberg's study of the historiography of the downfall of Osman II in 1622 is designed to open new perspectives in Ottoman studies on several levels: as a cultural study of Ottoman historiography in the seventeenth century, a sophisticated discussion of the concept of state, and a thorough critique of theoretical debates and studies in the field. Tired by the fetishism of archival documents and positivist readings of chronicles, Piterberg pleads for the linguistic turn in Ottoman studies as a way to a cultural turn. He argues that Ottoman historiographical treatment of a specific event in a sequence of historical works indicates a "battle over the boundaries of knowledge of the Ottoman state and Ottoman identity," up to the emergence of a "state narrative," concomitant to the 'reification' of the Ottoman state in the course of the seventeenth century (p. 54 and passim).

The book is carefully structured. Chapter 1 outlines the events, from the first accession of Mustafa I, Osman's predecessor and successor, in November 1617 to the assassination of Osman, on May 20, 1622. He shows how disgust towards fratricide and a particular power constellation in the harem contributed to Mustafa's survival after being deposed, and also weakened Osman's backing. Osman's lack of political experience led to an increasing alienation of all crucial would-be supporters, first and foremost the standing army, the kul. Mounting political crisis led him to conceive a plan to move the capital to Bursa, Damascus, or even Cairo, and to get rid of the unreliable kul. Rumors of this plan led to an escalation of the crisis, to the re-enthronement of Mustafa, and ulti-

mately to Osman's assassination.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of Ottoman historiography from the beginning to the seventeenth century. Largely inspired by Kafadar, Piterberg argues that historiography was "conflictual and deeply ingrained in the politics and ideological accents of its time" (p. 30) so that it became intertwined with the history of the Ottoman state. Drawing on Fleischer and Woodhead, Piterberg maintains that it was increasingly the scribal service from which the "typical" Ottoman historian emerged, one who aimed at providing reliable records of events (often based on documents) in an ambitiously literary form. It is worth noting, however, that Ottoman high prose culminated in the seventeenth century in works written by 'ulema, such as Ahizade, Nergisi, Veysi, and Karachelebizade, rather than works by bureaucrats. On the other hand, to state that the Ottoman world chronicle of the late sixteenth and the seventeenth century was written in high prose or Persian is misleading, as it takes into account only the works studied by Fleischer and Woodhead, but neglects other works e.g., by Jenabi, Karamani, Koja Huseyn, and Katib Chelebi, written in Arabic, and/or simple Turkish prose (p. 38).

On the other hand, the sociology of Ottoman historiography proposed here is based on a specific selection of authors. True, most of the authors studied by Piterberg were bureaucrats (the social distinction between kul and bureaucrat being less clear than is often suggested in the book), namely (in chronolog-

ical order) Huseyn Tugi, Hasanbeyzade, Pechevi, Kâtip Chelebi, and Na'ima (and others). However, this leaves out contemporary historians of 'ulema background, such as Sa'deddin, Karachelebizade 'Abdulaziz, Sharihulmenarzade, 'Isazade, Huseyn Hezarfenn, and Muneccimbashi.[1] In particular, Bostanzade Yahya, another member of the 'ulema, who dedicated a work specifically to the downfall of Osman II, is not referred to in this book.[2] It remains to be seen if the far-reaching conclusions arrived at here hold for 'ulema historians.

Chapter 3 introduces the theoretical framework, which is primarily inspired by Foucault's concept of discourse and Hayden White's theory of historical narrative. Piterberg argues that White's theory, designed for modern European historiography, can be applied to Ottoman historiography with certain modifications. He is particularly interested in the unity of form and content, the notion of chronology as a code, and the formation of discourse from competing narratives. These three elements guide his analysis of Ottoman chronicles in later chapters. In addition, he uses the post-structuralist critique of speech act theory and Ricoeur's separation between speech and writing to suggest a twofold reading of his fundamental text, Tugi's work, as speech and written text.

Chapter 4 then proceeds to a reading of Huseyn Tugi's account as speech. It is preserved in a number of manuscripts, four of which are available in print, in the original Ottoman Turkish or as translation.[3] These texts show considerable differences, to the degree that the identity of two of them has not always been noted. Piterberg, who mentions only two of those printed editions (Iz and Sertoglu), maintains that yet another text, preserved in a manuscript in Vienna, constitutes the version which was delivered as an oral address, and is also the text that was used by subsequent historians, like Hasanbeyzade and Katib Chelebi. The argument for this selection, together with a discussion of the transmission of Tugi's work, is missing in the book, the reader is referred instead to the author's unpublished dissertation (given the crucial nature of this discussion it is hoped that it will be published separately). Since much of Piterberg's subsequent assertion hinges on the reading of this text, rather than of any other of the known versions, knowing the reasons for his choice is essential. While it is safe to assume that Tugi's text was read aloud in gatherings, just like many other Ottoman chronicles, further evidence for its oral character as advanced by Piterberg is not convincing. That the wording of documents quoted varies between texts may indicate that there was an oral infor-

mant involved, rather than prove the oral character of the texts as such. The predilection for direct and unadorned speech is also found in other texts, such as Na'ima,[4] as are digressions and the standard phrase with which authors return to their main text. The rather simple poems in Tugi's work do not, in my opinion, warrant the assumption that he deliberately opted for a simple style, but was capable of more complex writing (p. 75). On the other hand, question-and-answer sequences, which underline the oral component of Ashikpashazade's chronicle, are not found in Tugi.

Guided by Hayden White, Piterberg is particularly interested in the ordering of Tugi's account, which starts with the culmination of events in May 1622, and provides additional information in a series of digressions from the chronology. He distinguishes between a latent and a manifest layer of meaning, finding that Tugi's account not only takes the kul's point of view but also presents events in a way that exonerates the kul from the accusation that they were actually responsible for them. Piterberg suggests that the kul's and Tugi's position was that "the padishah's venture had to be spoiled for considerations that went far beyond the kul's interest and concerned the well-being of the state as a whole" (p. 87). In other words, he implicitly attributes to the kul a claim to a right to resist. But criticism of an unjust ruler does not necessarily justify the rebellion against him, certainly not within the realm of Ottoman and Islamic political and historical thought, which clearly informs all historians under discussion. To postulate such a notion would require more substantiation, and more context, than provided here. Rather, the opposition to Osman's pilgrimage plans from the 'ulema as well as the version of Mahmud Efendi's dream interpretation as given in the Dresden ms. of Tugi seem intended to prevent unrest, not to justify it.

In Chapter 5 Piterberg presents the two alternative narratives which will end up forming the discourse, i.e., Hasanbeyzade and Pechevi. He argues that Hasanbeyzade incorporated Tugi's text more or less in toto, but did not disclose the source deliberately.[5] Tezcan has pointed out that Piterberg's selection of manuscripts of Hasanbeyzade is problematic, and specifically that in the text, which Piterberg uses, the section from Tugi is a later addition. Instead, according to Tezcan, Hasanbeyzade did not know of Tugi's work.[6] Thus Piterberg's further interpretation has to be read with reservations. According to him Katib Chelebi then used both Hasanbeyzade and his source, as well as Pechevi. Despite his preference for Pechevi in other instances, however, Katib Chelebi quotes him here primarily to dismiss his argument. This

is significant, because Pechevi, who had independent informants at court, displays sympathies towards the protagonists that are very different from Tugi's.

In Chapter 6 Piterberg goes on to argue that Katib Chelebi's version is the "decisive interpretive junction in seventeenth-century Ottoman historiography" (p. 114), which ultimately leads to the "sealing" of the record of the event in what Piterberg calls the "state narrative." This latter characterization seems to be based on the fact that the last author in the chain of transmission, Na'ima, was appointed as state historian (*vekayi'nuvis*), but without explicit evidence that the text itself shows a specific "state" perspective. Katib Chelebi largely adopted Tugi's version of the story, while dismissing Pechevi's causal explanations as insufficient (rather than invalid, as Piterberg seems to suggest). Whereas Tugi began with the main event and inserted previous causes as digressions, Katib Chelebi returned to chronological order. According to Piterberg, much of Tugi's implicit advocacy for the kul was eliminated by virtue of this reordering.

This is even more explicit in a fictitious argument that is found briefly in Katib Chelebi, and more elaborately in Na'ima (Fezleke, 2, pp. 13-4, Na'ima, 2, pp. 232-3), which is not discussed in this chapter. On the other hand, having employed Hayden White's theory of latent meaning (going back to Freud) in his reading of Tugi and Katib Chelebi, Piterberg at the end of the chapter concedes that it is impossible to ascertain whether Katib Chelebi intended to produce the meaning that he did (p. 132). In this case, it is equally impossible to know if this meaning was recognized by any of his contemporary readers. Meaning, after all, is not an objective fact, but constructed by the recipient of the text. A meaning that possibly went unnoticed by authors and readers at the time and is only uncovered with the help of Freudian psychology is, I believe, of little relevance to the study of seventeenth-century discourse.

In the last two chapters, Piterberg turns to the state. Chapter 7 reviews a number of theoretical approaches to the state, from Hegel and Marx to Timothy Mitchell. Piterberg here inserts a short, but illuminating discussion of Jack Goldstone's comparison between England, China, and the Ottoman Empire in terms of socio-economic transformation in the first half of the seventeenth century, pointing to some interesting symmetries. Where Goldstone misses a counterpart to the Academy and the Puritan movements respectively, Piterberg proposes to look at Ottoman advice literature as a corresponding puritan discourse. As he breaks the discussion off, announc-

ing that he would pursue this idea further elsewhere, I would rather suggest to focus on the Kadizadeli movement which flourished right in this period and has already been compared to the Puritans.[7]

Among Ottomanist concepts of the state Piterberg rightly criticizes the way in which scholars in the wake of Inalcik have uncritically viewed the state as endowed with autonomous agency. Studies that show the transformation of the state, and the shift of power from the dynasty to dignitaries' households (Kunt, Hathaway), are adduced to support his central argument that in the seventeenth century state and dynastic household became "less coterminous," while households became an essential part of a "more tightly knitted imperial space" (p. 150). He sees here a process of "centripetal decentralization" (Salzmann), while rightly refuting Barkey's endowing the state with autonomy and intentionality. Piterberg concludes that the state should be understood as a "constructed reification," which is a helpful concept. However, his assertion that the Ottomans themselves "constructed the state as an autonomous and abstract agency, by writing it" leaves out the complexities of Ottoman political discourse (p. 161). I do not see Piterberg addressing the implications of the term *devlet*, a word which is conspicuously absent from the quotes from his sources. Vatin and Veinstein, in a study, which is almost exclusively based on a broad critical reading of Ottoman chronicles, have recently argued that the state was constructed as embodied in the members of the dynasty only (and thus disappeared at the death of the sultan, giving rise to all kinds of uncertainties).[8] Katib Chelebi, on the other hand, writes: "The term *devlet*, which means kingdom or sultanate, by a kind of custom denotes the association of humans.... The body of human society is composed of four members, and its reins—by means of the notables who are the natural powers and senses—are given to the sultan, who represents the rational soul. These four members are the 'ulema, the army, the merchants, and the flock." [9] This means that Katib Chelebi includes all of human society in his understanding of *devlet*, thus denying the very distinction between state and society which according to Piterberg indicates the reification of the state. I will return to the concept of the state below.

In Chapter 8 Piterberg ties the ends of his arguments together, in order to show that "the unfolding of the historiographical discourse simultaneously surrenders the discursive struggle and the fact of reification." He exemplifies this first on the basis of diverging representations of Abaza Mehmed Pasha, the governor of Erzurum, who justified his oppression of the janissaries as a pun-

ishment for their murder of the sultan. In a period in which “bandits [emerged] as a social category” this representation as rebel or as loyalist governor by Tugi and Pechevi respectively illustrates the discursive competition about redrawing the borders of the state. As an explanation why Tugi’s perspective ultimately dominated, Piterberg draws on a term coined by Kafadar, who described the Ottoman conceptual distinction of core land vs. frontier as a “schizoid mental topography.” Piterberg finds such a dichotomous mental map to be part of an Ottoman *longue duree*, manifested in the distinction between Rumelia and Anatolia, and corresponding ethnic solidarities in the Ottoman elite (as observed by Kunt). As a result, partisanship emerged along a divide between “Easterners” and “Westerners,” with the latter winning the day. To argue this, however, he has to count Na’ima, a third-generation Aleppan, among the Westerners, together with Tugi and Hasanbeyzade, while Pechevi, whose *nisba* points to Hungary, represents the Easterner, probably on the basis of his service in Anatolia.

It is in the epilogue that Piterberg demonstrates the cultural potential of his study. After a discussion of the term *haile* (to be taken up below), he uses Walter Andrews’s concept of the “ecology of the song” to demonstrate how the assumed speech situation of Tugi’s address to the kul mirrors the poetical situation of the party of the initiated inside, and the ignorant orthodox critic outside the precinct of the group. Piterberg finally argues that the “crossing into Anatolia” which he identifies as the essential phrase, can be understood as a synecdoche underlying the whole Ottoman discourse around the downfall of Osman II. While it is less convincing in the light of the objections raised above, his suggestion to look for other instances of crossings as part of Ottoman mythical narratives might open new perspectives. The crossing of the Euphrates, in which—according to Ashikpashazade—Osman I’s grandfather Suleymanshah lost his life, might lend itself to it more than the passage into Rumelia. I leave it to future studies to explore the potential implications of the fact that in that case death occurred as the tribe was about to leave Anatolia.

The outcome of Piterberg’s study for our understanding of the Ottoman state is largely limited to the theoretical concept of the state as a discursively constructed and contested field. I have noted above why I do not share his contention that the reification of the state is found in the writings of Ottoman historians of the period. This is not the place to advance an alternative theory of the Ottoman state, but I would like to point out a specific problem,

which is inherent in the “field” metaphor, and elsewhere in Piterberg’s rhetoric of the “boundaries of the state.” Piterberg has well demonstrated that Abaza Mehmed Pasha is depicted sometimes as a rebel, sometimes as an Ottoman governor, depending (in his terms) on whether he is written as “within the state,” or “without.” Equally, he mentions the *celalis* as a social category, subsequently included within the state as *sekban* troops. These categories of governor and rebel are used as though mutually exclusive, thus reemphasizing a rigid dichotomy (although he notes at some point that the state’s boundaries are rendered porous by the rise of provincial households). I venture that this dichotomy does not do justice to the social facts of the seventeenth century, since Piterberg, just like Barkey, runs up against the problem of the seemingly inconsequent pardoning of rebels and their co-optation by “the state” (in their terms). Instead, I suggest considering the terms *’asi* and *celali* as descriptions of a particular state of relations between the central government and one of its servants, or the armed part of the peasantry, respectively. Just as a disobedient governor remains a governor,[10] armed parts of the peasantry can be construed as bandits, rebels, or mercenaries, depending on the political constellation, without them substantially changing their activities (the fact that the bandit, just like the heretic, is constructed by the authorities he opposes certainly needs to be taken more seriously). It is remarkable that neither Barkey nor Piterberg seem to be aware of the extensive literature on banditry and militias (like the *derbendci*) in the Ottoman Balkans, which provides numerous examples and approaches of interest for the Anatolian case (speaking of “schizoid mental topographies”!).[11] In short, I suggest that terms such as *’asi* and *celali* were shaped by the perspective of the central government, and were situational, i.e., depending on how governors (who increasingly have their own power basis) and their retinue constantly renegotiate their relation with the dynastic household.

Throughout the book Piterberg engages with earlier scholarship on Ottoman history, and ultimately sets out to propose new perspectives and approaches for the field. However, in forcefully criticizing older “Orientalists” he seems to have only a limited segment of that field in view, as in his bibliography the entire literature which he uses for more than mining for factual information is in English. The rest of the field of Ottoman studies has disappeared behind the language barrier, without even an acknowledgment of its existence, not to mention a discussion. The infamous “decline paradigm,” which he presents as still dominating Ottoman studies, has not

seriously been supported by more than a generation of scholars, since the seventies. (On the other hand, Piterberg seems not to be concerned with the fact that the notion of decline originates from some of the Ottoman historians he is writing about.)

Furthermore, although I wholeheartedly agree with Piterberg's rejection of document fetishism, a reading of chronicles only as repositories of factual information, and orientalist reductionism,[12] I am troubled by the number of inaccuracies in the book, which as a whole jeopardize his argument for the significance of the *vak'a-i haile*, for his plea for new perspectives in Ottoman studies, and for a linguistic turn in particular.

His assertion that the chronicler Ashikpashazade "threw in his lot" with Mehmed Chelebi during the interregnum 1403-1413, seems unlikely, since the chronicler, writing in the 1480s, can only have been a teenager at that time (p. 32). "Nizam-i alem," world order, is not a metaphor (p. 146). Several arguments are based on extensive interpretations of individual phrases, at odds with Ottoman grammar and usage. Piterberg's treatment of the phrase that inspired the title "An Ottoman Tragedy" may serve as an example. The downfall of Osman II is recorded by Katib Chelebi (and by Na'ima) as *vak'a-i haile-i Osmaniye*. Piterberg notices, correctly, that *haile* assumes the meaning of "tragedy" only in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century (he has a point in stating that the incident has certain tragic elements). Prior to the nineteenth century the word is, as he demonstrates, only used as an adjective, meaning "terrible, frightful." Still, throughout the book, Piterberg refers to the incident as "The Haile-i Osmaniye," regardless of the fact that such a phrase would be either anachronistic (*haile* as noun, meaning tragedy), or grammatically wrong (*haile* as adjective without a noun as a referent). Moreover, "Osmaniye" does not necessarily have to mean "Ottoman." Thus, the *vak'a-i haile-i Osmaniye* most likely is not a "strange, or terrible, Ottoman event" but "the terrible event that befell Osman" II (p. 188).

In passing, Piterberg suggests that the use of *haile* for "tragedy" might have been introduced into Turkish by poet and playwright Abdülhak Hamid Tarhan. He refers to a poem by Abdülhak Hamid discussed by Alessio Bombaci, stating that the title is "Haile," and criticizes Bombaci for taking too much liberty when translating this title as "alcove." However, Bombaci cites the poem as *Hajle* (Hag'le in his transliteration) which means just that.[13] The word *haile*, which has no relation to the content of the poem, is nowhere to be found (unless it comes from

another text which is not referenced). True, this instance is hardly relevant for the argument of the book, but is puzzling nonetheless.

Piterberg attributes particular meaning to the fact that a particular action is expressed not "in the 'normal' active or passive voice" but in the causative form (p. 95). It should be clear that the causative in Turkish is a form just as normal as any, and moreover, is not an alternative to active or passive voice, but compatible with either of them.

Piterberg translates the phrase *muttefikan hucum ettiler* as "they assaulted ... in agreement" (p. 130, from Na'ima, 2, p. 252), and goes on to speculate that this agreement might be a scheme of the kul together with Mere Huseyn Pasha, the grand vizier. However, none of this is in the text, and becomes even less likely when one translates, idiomatically more correctly, "the sipahis and janissaries launched a joint assault."

Presumably the translation of *caiz degildir* as "not obligatory" is due to a simple confusion of texts (p. 75, after the Vienna ms., unavailable to me). Piterberg contrasts this with the wording of the Dresden ms., translating "not permitted", where the text in fact has *farz degildir*. However, it makes a difference if one translates *padisahi kul taifesine dusman edip Anadolu semtine gitmek istedigine sebeb olanlar* as "what the causes were for the enmity between the padishah and the kul corps, and for his wanting to go in the direction of Anatolia" (p. 82) or, correctly, as "those [persons] who caused the enmity between the padishah and the kul, and made him want to go in the direction of Anatolia." The difference between naming an abstract cause, or naming morally responsible persons, is significant in the context of Ottoman political-historical discourse, and is by no means negligible.

Beneath such instances of inaccuracy there seems to be a larger problem. The corpus of texts analyzed here is an extremely small section of Ottoman literary production of the period, and Piterberg hardly ever ventures beyond it. This does not only raise the question of whether his findings will hold up in the light of other sources. More importantly, everybody who has learned Ottoman knows to what degree Ottoman vocabulary is loaded with implicit meanings and associations which are not necessarily given in the dictionaries, but are fully understood only by those familiar with the broader cultural context. Thus the phrase *mazlum-i bi-gunah*, which is used several times for Osman's brother (Tugi) as well as for Osman himself (e.g., Na'ima, 2, p. 231), evokes the vast discourse of justice and oppression (*'adl vs. zulum*),

ethics of rule, and ultimately royal legitimacy. Justice is also at the heart of the kul's complaints against Osman II. None of this is taken up by Piterberg.[14]

Closer to his argument, consider the following phrase with which Katib Chelebi and after him Na'ima begin their accounts of the *vak'a-i haile: cun bu alem-i esbabda her seyin sebebi mukadder ve musebbibu l-esbab bir yuzden tasarrufunu izhar etdigi mukarrerdur bu vak'anin dahi esbab-i mute'addidesi tedric ile subut bulub vaktinde vak'a dahi zuhura geldi*. [15] It can be translated as: "Since it has been ordained that in this world of [secondary] causes [16] everything has to have a [secondary] cause, and since he who makes [secondary] causes take effect [i.e., God] certainly displays his power in one way, the various [secondary] causes of this incident, too, became manifest one by one, until, in its time, the incident itself took place." This sentence holds the key to the problem of the relation between divine preordainment, worldly causality, and human agency in the understanding of Ottoman historians. [17] According to Piterberg, "the human factor and what is divinely designed simply coexist," with no indication that their coexistence might be problematic (p. 89). He overlooks that the quoted phrase is informed by the pertinent theological and philosophical debates about free will, predestination, and determinism; moreover, it also harks back to another, more explicit text, in which none other than Katib Chelebi explains how it is incumbent upon man to actively prepare for causes, but it is up to divine will to actually will create the causal link and let the result of the cause come into being. In addition, God will directly interfere to support the just and punish the unjust. [18] Piterberg's suggestion, that for Katib Chelebi "astrological causation was supplementary, rather than contradictory," to worldly causes therefore misses the point, also because for a scholar like Katib Chelebi there was no astrological causation: astrology is only a way to gain insight into what is divinely preordained (p. 124). [19] Worldly causality and predestination/divine causation do not simply coexist in Ottoman thought, but are actually related to each other as in a complex concept, as the outcome of a theological-philosophical debate. Piterberg's caution not to measure what he reads in the text by modern notions of logic and rationality thus appears unwarranted, and even condescending.

For similar reasons, several of Piterberg's interpretations of events and accounts, which he seems to take for granted, seem questionable to me, or in need of further supporting arguments. Thus, although certainly a harsh critique, I find Na'ima's characterization of Osman

II by no means the condemnation Piterberg makes out of it. Rather, Na'ima acknowledges human weaknesses in the face of a task that is generally recognized as requiring almost superhuman qualities. Nor is Osman's fateful dream to be understood in the sense that Osman's reign had "failed both spiritually [whatever that may mean] and materially," or that God had rejected Osman as the spiritual imam and political leader (pp. 86-90 passim). There is no point in pondering what the dream "really meant." The two conflicting interpretations found in the sources, by Osman's teacher Omer Efendi and Sheyh Mahmud Uskudari clearly show that the meaning is determined by context and by the interests of the interpreters. To some, the dream criticizes Osman's lack of personal piety in abandoning the plan for the pilgrimage, to others it predicts his downfall. This is a truly tragic aspect of the plot: either the sultan will forfeit salvation for abandoning the pilgrimage, or he will be overthrown because of the rebellion his plans cause. In this sense the dream can be said to mirror the clash of two principles of seventeenth-century Ottoman legitimacy, the sultan's personal piety, and justice in the sense of taking care of the needs of his subjects at all times.

While Tugi struggles to exonerate the kul as tools in God's hands in punishing Osman II (poem in Dresden ms., Iz, "Eski duzyazinin gelisimi," p. 140), later historians can judge with the benefit of hindsight. Ultimately, their criticism is based on the fact that Osman's politics led to the uprising of the kul—this is the unspoken premise of their argument, but this is by no means to say that the kul were right to rebel. Piterberg's assertion that "moving into Anatolia" was considered detrimental as such, because there is no explicit argument otherwise (p. 179), neglects how cultural consensus can dispose of explicit explanations, a point he is well aware of in other instances.

In the end, despite the claims to the contrary, the corpus analyzed in the book remains largely deprived of its literary and intellectual context. Piterberg repeats Abou-El-Haj's suggestion that Na'ima's use of the "biological metaphor" of the human body for the state is indicative of a new self-consciousness of the bureaucracy in Na'ima's time. Broader study of the context would have shown that Na'ima took the metaphor from Katib Chelebi's *Dusturu'l-'amel*, from where it can be traced back to Kinalizade 'Ali's *Ahlak-i 'Ala'i*, written in the sixteenth century. [20]

Beyond the study of social origins of Ottoman historiographers, the social context or *Sitz im Leben* of his-

toriography too, is largely absent. The question, why and for whom Ottoman chronicles were written, is never seriously raised. For instance, the title of some versions of Tugi's work, *'Ibretnuma*, suggests that history was studied as a series of political lessons, or examples. Piterberg's suggestion that Katib Chelebi's phrase *vak'a-i haile* could have been inspired by a similar term used by Sa'deddin in his *Tacu't-tevarih* seems to miss the realities of the time: given the breadth of Katib Chelebi's education, who was, after all, probably the most avid reader of his time, the search for the source of such an inconspicuous phrase is pointless.

The writing of cultural history requires an effort to attain the "fusion of horizons," as Gadamer described the process of hermeneutical understanding (Piterberg, p. 60). I have pointed out some individual instances of hermeneutical problems above. Moreover, all that Piterberg uses to trace the horizon of his five authors is a very small corpus of texts (in addition to the fact that some of these texts may not be what he takes them for). To take the "fusion of horizons" seriously, however, requires a broader approach to seventeenth-century intellectual life, which is much more complex and variegated than this segment. As a result, one can question if the findings about Ottoman historiographical discourse presented here are really the most pertinent ones, or if other leads in his corpus would have been more illuminating. While the underlying motivation and approach of this book have much potential to enrich the field, a broader and more solid empirical foundation is needed to make them fruitful.

#### Notes

[1]. Piterberg seems unaware of Rhoads Murphy, "Ottoman Historical Writing in the Seventeenth-Century: A Survey of the General Development of the Genre After the Reign of Sultan Ahmed I (1603-1617)," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 13 (1993-4): pp. 277-311.

[2]. Baki Tezcan, "The 1622 Military Rebellion in Istanbul," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 8, nos. 1-2 (2002): pp. 25-43.

[3]. Midhat Sertoglu, "Tugi Tarihi," *Belleten* 43 (1947): pp. 490-514; Fahir Iz, "Eski duzyazinin gelismisi: XVII yuzyilda halk dili ile yazilmis bir tarih kitabi-Huseyin Tugi: Vak'a-i Sultan Osman Han," *Turk Dili Arastirmalari Yilligi Belleten* (1967): pp. 119-155; Danon, "Contributions a l'histoire des sultans Osman II et Mouctafa I," *Journal Asiatique* 11e serie, 14 (1919): pp. 69-139, 243-310; Galland, *La Mort de sultan Osman ou le retablissement de*

*Mustapha sur le throsne. Traduit d'un manuscrit turc, de la Bibliotheque du Roy* (Paris, 1678). All older texts are mentioned by Iz.

[4]. Na'ima's quotes of direct speech provided numerous examples of "vulgar Ottoman" for Erich Prokosch, *Studien zur Grammatik des Osmanisch-Tuerkischen unter besonderer Beruecksichtigung des Vulgarosmanischen* (Freiburg: Klaus Schwarz, 1980).

[5]. The circumstances under which historians indicate their sources deserve a separate study. Transparency as a scholarly virtue is certainly only one possible reason. For a study of how one Ottoman author, namely Katib Chelebi, selected, indicated, and criticized his sources, see Gottfried Hagen, *Ein osmanischer Geograph bei der Arbeit: Entstehung und Gedankenwelt von Katib Celebis Gihannnuma* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2003), pp. 291-307. Piterberg has only speculations to offer (see also p. 119).

[6]. Tezcan, "1622 Military Rebellion," pp. 31-32.

[7]. Ahmed Yasar Ocak, "XVII. yuzyilda Osmanli Imperatorlugunda dinde tasfiye (Puritanizm) tesebbuslerine bir bakis: Kadizadeliler hareketi," *Turk Kulturu Arastirmalari* 17-21, nos. 1-2 (1979-83): pp. 208-225. Kadizade Efendi was even marginally involved in the events of 1622.

[8]. Nicolas Vatin and Gilles Veinstein, *Le Serail ebranle. Essai sur les morts, depositions et avenements des sultans ottomans XIVE-XIXe siecle* (Paris: Fayard, 2003).

[9]. *Dusturu'l'amel*, printed as a supplement to 'Ayn 'Ali, *Kavanin-i Al-i Osman*, (Istanbul, 1280/1863-4), pp. 119-40, 122.

[10]. I do not see any evidence that the noun *'isyan*, corresponding to *'asi*, should denote an "official rebellion" or coup d'etat against the ruling dynasty, as Piterberg suggests.

[11]. An excellent overview is Fikret Adanir, "Heiduckentum und osmanische Herrschaft. Sozialgeschichtliche Aspekte der Diskussion um das fruehneuzeitliche Raeuberwesen in Suedosteuropa," *Suedost-Forschungen* 41 (1982): pp. 43-116. A useful array of sources has been published in Aleksandar Matkovski, *Turski izvori za ajdutsvoto i aramistvoto vo Makedonija*, 4 vols. (Skopje, 1961-1980), covering the years 1620 to 1810.

[12]. I can not help noting, though, that reading intellectuals like Pechevi, Katib Chelebi, and Na'ima pri-

marily as representatives of group interests, is a form of reductionism, too, albeit a common one.

[13]. Alessio Bombaci, *Storia della Letteratura Turca* (Firenze: Sansoni, Milano: Edizione Accademia, 1969), p. 433.

[14]. See for instance Bogac Ergene, "On Ottoman Justice: Interpretations in Conflict (1600/1800)," *Islamic Law and Society* 8, no. 1 (2001): pp. 52-87.

[15]. Here taken from Na'ima, 2, p. 209 because of the numerous typographical errors in Fezleke, 2, p. 9).

[16]. I translate *sebeb* as "secondary cause" (*Mit-telsursache*) in keeping with the theological argument that such causes are not causing anything by themselves, but only through the will of God, who is the primary "causator" (*musebbib*).

[17]. It also provides an explanation for why Katib Chelebi, in contrast to his source Tugi, then goes on to enumerate those causes in chronological order, a problem Piterberg discusses at length.

[18]. *Tuhfetu l-kibar*, Istanbul 1913, p. 164; for a German translation of this crucial passage and a detailed interpretation see Hagen, "Ein osmanischer Geograph," pp. 338-339, 375-378.

[19]. See his discussion of astrology in *Keshfu'z-zunun*, and Hagen "Ein osmanischer Geograph," pp. 386-389.

[20]. See Gottfried Hagen: "Legitimacy and World Order" in M. Reinkowski and H. Karateke, eds., *Legitimizing the Order. The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2004), pp. 63-64.

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**Citation:** Gottfried Hagen. Review of Piterberg, Gabriel, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play*. H-Turk, H-Net Reviews. April, 2006.

**URL:** <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=11651>

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