

RESEÑAS

HÜSEYİN SERDAR TABAKOĞLU, *Akdeniz'de Savaş: Osmanlı-İspanya Mücadelesi*, İstanbul, Kronik Yayınları, 2019, 349 págs.

In the last three decades, comparative historiography has gained importance, which is a turning point in the Ottoman historiography. In this way, scholars started to elude the archaic Rankean penchant that is so dry wording for readers. Hence, novel, and systematic studies are initiated by systemized texts, concepts, and documents rather than listing a plethora of documents and historical information like an inventory register. By reducing a rigid methodology, studies will be more well-rounded.

The Mediterranean witnessed an immense struggle between the Spanish and Ottoman empires in the 16th century. At that time two empires aimed to rule the sea by using not only the military instruments such as galleys but also the intelligence or disinformations, which can be called espionage. In order to produce an extensive dissertation of this issue, it must be done “a puzzle” by researching archives of foreign countries, put another way, utilize from different sources or documents that is the only way to study and to get a grip on Ottoman-Spain relations.

In the study, Hüseyin Serdar Tabakoğlu scrutinizes not only the Ottoman naval history through wars and organizations of two empires but also compare features of Ottoman part with Spanish archival documents. In other words, H. S. Tabakoğlu's concern is not merely with the organizations of shipyards of two empires but rather with the comparing of them. Originally, this study evolves from his dissertation; however, while publishing his book, some chapters were omitted and reorganizing in order to focus the main issue that is the nautical adventures of the two powers in the period of 1560-1574. To refrain from a monotonous and a unilateral text, H. S. Tabakoğlu ameliorates his study, by using Spanish archival documents and also Spanish primary source of this matter.

The book consists of the introduction, five chapters and conclusion part. In the introduction section, H. S. Tabakoğlu mentions sources about the issue and talked about the comparative method used. The first chapter is devoted to Ottoman and Spanish shipyards and their administration. In this way, the reader is prepared for the following sections, as this chapter has a role of a “*narrative hooks*” which is a substantial role to engage and prepare readers to continue reading, in the words of John W. Creswell. The most significant point of this chapter is the “Mahanian theory”. H. S. Tabakoğlu states that as it approached by John Francis Guilmartin (JR.) concepts of “sea control” implying extermination of ships in the battle is not a logical way because of the intrinsic restriction of galley, namely mobility problems, for the 16th century. From this point of view, it can be said that the Mahanian theory is not appropriate for the early modern world, so it is a type of anachronism; however, H. S. Tabakoğlu does not totally oppose this theory. In his opinion, it will provide a standpoint to comprehend some points regarding “sea power”, yet he recommends a prudent way.

The second chapter, which is the most significant part of the study to be alloted fleet powers of two states. It is an issue that has not been studied so far, especially from a comparative perspective. Furthermore, third chapter, which is devoted to the fleets of the two powers should be approached with this part. In this part, the researcher sheds light on the technical concerns by analogizing two empires' galleys and their source of energy power namely their oarsmen and sailors. Furthermore, H. S. Tabakoğlu contrasts some attributes of two power such as supplies and military formations and tactics. It is the most prominent result of this comparison that the administration of navy of Spain was not as fast as that the Ottomans. The researcher come to the conclusion by comparing not only the armings of them, but also the supplying of crews.

The fourth chapter approaches the sea power of Ottomans and Phillip II in the light of wars and strategies at the sea. In this section, readers would comprehend that both Ottoman and Spanish strategy was to enhance their fleets not only in quantitative terms but also in qualitative aspects. The autor claims that after the Battle of Djerba in 1560, Phillip II accelerated his potency so much that because he wanted to be the most powerful sea power in the Mediterranean by surpassing the Ottomans. In other words, the Spanish naval strategy was coping with the Ottomans by building an enormous navy. It is the main argument of him, and has a key role that is supported in the following parts.

The last chapter, which consists of a sizeable amount of archival documents from Spain, is dedicated to the Battle of Lepanto, which was the consequence of the Spanish seapower policy since it seems fairly clear that this war was the most striking naval battle of this merciless rivalry between of the two powers. The key role of this battle could be comprehended from the Spanish records and correspondences at this conflict. The most intriguing point was maybe the fact that Spanish grand admirals did not forget the Battle of Preveza of 1538, and they always evoked this undesired memory during the pre-war term. Then, the Battle of Lepanto, which was the last major confrontation between Ottoman and Spanish empires, was approached. H. S. Tabakoğlu has contended that even if the Battle of Lepanto would be a victory for the Spanish sea power, it was not actually the case as Ottomans, in the post-war period, perplexed them by rebuilding a new and immense fleet. According to his perspective, it is quite obvious that despite the Battle Lepanto was a defeat for Ottomans, the battle itself was far from disrupting Ottoman sea power; however, even if Ottomans re-built a new fleet, they had lost a sizeable number of experienced sailors and their reputation. On the other part, as considering the other part, that is to say, Spanish part, after the Battle of Lepanto, they were not willing to maintain the same intention, which was called "the program of galley build" because of fiscal depressions and conundrums. In this reason, Spain turned her attention to a new way that is the Atlantic Ocean. At the end of the narrative, the struggle of two powers ended with a truce in 1581.

The conflict between Spain and the Ottoman was not seemed only in the military field and also seem in the field of diplomatic relations. Starting from this point of view, the book does not only discuss the above mentioned points but also indicates some substantial point, for an instance the grand admiral of Phillip II claimed that the most significant advantage of the Ottomans' power that they had a province under the heel of grand admiral (kapudan pasha). He indicated "grand admiral province" (Kapudan Paşa Eyaleti). After then the period of the king as mentioned above, Sicily was devoted as

a province Spanish grand admirals (capitán general de la mar). From this point on, the book demonstrates that empires had a mutual affection between of them.

As a conclusion, Hüseyin Serdar Tabakoğlu deals with Ottoman-Spain rivalry in the Mediterranean by covering the period between 1560-1574 via writing an exhaustive work, which is contained not only naval battles, and also organization structure of the two docks by the light of records of the archives and primary sources. Moreover, the researcher clarifies comparative results end of each chapter. In this way, the reader falls into place information. Finally, the book is supported by different kinds of visual materials like maps and pictures. Hüseyin Serdar Tabakoğlu's study is a valuable and original contribution for not only the Mediterranean history of early modern time but also the military history of that episode.

HASAN SAYBIR
Hacettepe Üniversitesi (Ankara)