

For example, starting on page 157, Meskoob writes passionately of the chaos, depravity, hypocrisy, and brutality of Hafez's time. Brothers turned on brothers, wives and husbands on each other, and no one's life was secure. Partisans of rival warlords battled in the streets of Shiraz, and gangs from rival neighborhoods—backed by high-ranking officials—slaughtered each other.

The author has skillfully woven Hafez's lyrics into his narrative of those brutal years, as if the beauty of the poetry could somehow lessen the many evils visited upon Iranians at that time. The style challenges both the translator and the reader. The translator unpacks the references with footnotes supplying the source of the reference and lines in English of the poetry used. To find the original, however, the reader must refer to Hafez's *divan*.

For example, Meskoob talks about the poet's sufferings during the reign of the harsh, fanatic Mobarez al-Din Mohammad Mozaffar (r. 1335–1358). He overthrew the hedonistic, self-indulgent Abu Eshaq Inju and was in turn overthrown by his own son, the poetry-loving Shah Shoja'. Hafez refers to Mobarez al-Din as "*Mohtaseb*," or censor. At one point, he refers to pale, aged wine as *bim-e-mohtaseb dideh* (gone pale out of fear of the *mohtaseb*). Many of his verses mourn the loss of wine, music, and pleasure and the victory of fanaticism and hypocrisy. Meskoob (p. 161) writes:

That prince [Mobarez al-Din] was an authoritarian hypocrite and one who killed with ease, who used religious law as a pretext for persecution and bloodshed. The poet remembers "pleasurable wine, the breeze soaked in roses, the music of the harp" and the friendship of the companion that are hidden under a heavy, grim-faced sky, like hiding "a wine-cup in the sleeve."

A footnote refers us to ghazal 41 and the couplet "Hide the wine cup in your patched sleeve / As from the mouth of the jug, the times are spilling blood" (p. 268). We end our search in the *divan* with the treasure of the original.

در آستین مرقع پیاله پنهان کن
که همچو چشم صراحی زمانه خون ریز است

So our path to delight is long and sometimes difficult. The reader will need patience. But, like Meskoob's excursion through Hafez's *Ku-ye-Dust* (the alley [or neighborhood] of the friend), the trip is well-worth the effort.

MURAT R. ŞIVILOĞLU, *The Emergence of Public Opinion: State and Society in the Late Ottoman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018). Pp. 319. \$84.40 cloth. ISBN: 9781107190924

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Since the English translation in 1989 of Jürgen Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, originally published in 1962, there has been a flurry of work on the historical emergence of public sphere and public opinion. It is in the public sphere where an alternative domain of politics came into being and ideas were shaped into the public opinion that served as the ultimate tribunal to which political actors were compelled to appeal. Some of these studies assume the perpetual existence of public

opinion in any society in history, which governments had tacitly taken into account in politics without acknowledging its formal existence. Others see it as a modern phenomenon, whose origins are found in capitalism, rising literacy, and bureaucratic transformations since the 18th century.

Offering the first full account on the history of the idea of public opinion in the Ottoman Empire, Murat Şiviloğlu, in his *The Emergence of Public Opinion*, places the idea unequivocally in the latter. He does not look for the roots of public opinion in prominent public places of sociability in Ottoman society such as coffeehouses, public baths, or dervish lodges, but in the house gatherings of the elites, secretive masonic lodges, scientific and literary societies, and newspapers. In doing so, he thoroughly follows Habermas's arguments, and provides a narrative illustrating the Ottoman experience towards the formation of public opinion in the 19th century that mirrored those in Western Europe. The historiographical challenge, however, is obvious here. Habermas underlines the uniqueness of the Western European experience that cannot be generalized to other historical geographies. A civil society separate from the state, the Enlightenment, and capitalism, among others, were prerequisites for their historical development. The Ottoman Empire, Şiviloğlu argues, despite not having these historical conditions, and following a different historical trajectory, "still managed to create a realm of social life where public opinion could be formed" (p. 15).

The book offers a chronological narrative of this formation in three successive parts: first, the state-making processes under Selim III (r. 1789–1807) and Mahmud II (r. 1808–1839) that created the conditions for the emergence of an Ottoman public; second, the emergence of a bureaucratic public space as the transitional period with the Tanzimat reforms from the 1840s to the 1860s; and finally the large scale realization of an Ottoman public from the 1860s onwards, culminating in the deposition of Sultan Abdülaziz in 1876.

Şiviloğlu argues that the Ottoman public was not created, as was the case in Western Europe, "out of a clear delineation between the state and society, but rather out of their union" (p. 15). The foundations of this union were laid earlier during the reigns of Selim III and Mahmud II, and in particular in the latter's decisive move towards the elimination of the provincial notables in the countryside, and the janissaries in the center who had dominated the Ottoman polity for nearly two centuries. Mahmud II succeeded in mobilizing popular support in both cases. In the elimination of provincial notables, many of whom were lifetime tax farmers, the introduction of the hugely successful *eshām* (shares) system proved to be instrumental, a method of internal borrowing that was introduced during the fiscal crisis following the defeat by Russia in the 1770s to raise revenues as well as to break the financial monopoly of tax farmers. This first instance of the Ottomans "going public-minded," created mutual dependence and "a new reciprocal awareness between the state and the society" (p. 32). In purging powerful tax farmers, it also secured support from the people who feared the return of their monopolistic practices. Similarly, people lent support to the destruction of the janissaries, who had increasingly assumed "representative publicness" and significant economic roles in the traditional guild system, in order to eliminate their monopolistic tendencies. In accounting the elimination of provincial notables and the destruction of janissaries, Şiviloğlu's desire to see the seeds of liberalism as a barrier to despotism and the people's clear choice for it is obvious.

The removal of the provincial notables and the janissaries through a "public alliance" created the conditions for the implementation of reforms, while "imperial subjects were brought into a new and less segregated type of public" (p. 42). The reforms that were

made in the name of restoring the ailing empire, he argues, provided legal equality based on imperial citizenship among people of different religions and laid the foundations of a “cultural public sphere.” They led to the expansion of state bureaucracy, or as he put it, a “bureaucratic public space,” in which a new cohort of elites established new forms of solidarity and sociability in secret organizations such as freemasonry, but more importantly in house gatherings (*meclis*). Regardless of the differences with respect to the composition of their participants—conservative by the bureaucratic elites, oppositionary by radical intellectuals, and poetic by poets and the men of letters, these house gatherings allowed their members to freely engage in debates (*münâzara*) in political, social, and cultural matters and to offer critical judgments. Thus, Şiviloğlu argues, they resembled the salons in 18th century France by suspending social distinctions, requiring polite conversation, and culturally assimilating new members.

The expansion of the critical discourse in the bureaucratic public space was accompanied by the changing reading habits of the Ottoman elite. By examining 200 probate inventories of the Ottoman ruling elite, Şiviloğlu demonstrates the markedly increasing diversity and scope, including a fair amount of European literature, in the books possessed by the Ottoman elites from the mid-19th century on, suggesting a clear transformation in perceptions of the outside world.

This bureaucratic public space was a transitional period before the large-scale realization of an Ottoman public. As state education and public schooling flourished and consequently literacy rates increased, the central role of the critical debates in house gatherings was gradually replaced by the proliferation of newspapers in the 1860s that assumed increasingly critical stances towards the government and by new types of literary and scientific societies that were more inclusive and politicized, thus shifting the relationship between state and society “from collaboration to confrontation” (p. 173). Şiviloğlu discusses the role of newspapers in expanding the sphere for public discussions and serving as a vehicle for shaping the public opinion in the context of Namık Kemal, the preeminent public intellectual of the 1860s and the 1870s who turned “the nascent idea of public opinion into a powerful rhetorical and discursive tool through his writings” (p. 213). Şiviloğlu ends his book by offering a fresh reading of events leading to the deposition of Sultan Abdülaziz in May 1876, demonstrating the transformation of public opinion from its meager origins into the ultimate source of authority in less than half a century. Arguing against the commonly held view that Abdülaziz’s deposition was a *coup d’état* orchestrated by high-ranking military and bureaucratic elite, Şiviloğlu illustrates that the driving force behind it was the public opinion that grew increasingly hostile towards the Sultan and his grand vizier Mahmud Nedim Pasha.

Şiviloğlu sets himself an arduous task: while grappling with as abstract and ambiguous a notion as public opinion, his account had to deal with a large part of 19th-century Ottoman intellectual history. As its nearly-60-page-long bibliography testifies, the book is based on excellent research, incorporating a substantial amount of scholarly literature from Europe to China, and using an impressive array of primary sources. Examining hundreds of official archival documents, 200 probate inventories, nearly all 19th century Ottoman chronicles, a significant number of contemporary books and essays by Ottoman authors, a fair amount of European travel accounts, several Ottoman newspaper collections, and even numerous novels is no easy feat, especially considering how little work has been done in transliterating and editing these primary sources.

Based on this extensive research, Şiviloğlu mainly succeeds in offering a coherent and seamless narrative. But his narrative at times is too coherent to be convincing. Despite his insistence that the emergence of the public and public opinion were not mere repetitions of Western practices but the result of the dramatic changes the Ottoman Empire underwent throughout the 19th century with a different historical trajectory than that of Western Europe, it is hard to miss how much the development of Ottoman public and public opinion mirrored the experiences of Western European societies as recounted by Habermas, such as, among others, an incipient liberal public finance in the late 18th century, house gatherings as the sites of polite conversation and exchange of critical ideas among participants whose social privileges were suspended, and ever expanding public with soaring literacy rates and print circulation numbers of newspapers. In other words, Şiviloğlu's Ottoman public seems as idealized, and at times even fictional, as that of Habermas whose historical reality does not always stand up for empirical scrutiny. Also, the emphatic tone pervading the book certainly contributes to this idealized depiction. Considering that the field suffers from insufficient research and lack of conceptualization, a cautious reader, may find unsettling such statements as "for the first time in its half-millennium history, people came to believe that such a venture, a multicultural Ottoman society, was possible" (p. 19), or steamboats "became more influential than any coffeehouse or social club that existed during that era" (p. 209).

Şiviloğlu's exclusive focus is on Turkish-speaking Muslims. The "counterpublics" formed by non-Muslims who constituted nearly half of Istanbul's population are beyond the scope of the book, due to, as he put it, "lack of necessary linguistic skills." Further, the book is centered on Istanbul; such important political and cultural centers of the Ottoman Arab world as Alexandria, Cairo, Damascus, and Beirut, as well as Salonica that grew into one of the most cosmopolitan intellectual centers of the 19th century are barely mentioned. It is, of course, too much to ask of a single monograph to include all the cultural and linguistic elements of the empire into its narrative, and yet, some excellent monographs have been published in the past two decades that deal with the burgeoning literary and cultural life in and between those important centers, and it is unfortunate that most of this literature has been left out in the book's extensive bibliography.

Despite the reservations that may be raised, Şiviloğlu should be commended for undertaking the ambitious and difficult task of offering a multilayered narrative through excellent research. After all, it is such new conceptual formulations and contentious narratives that will provoke and improve the scholarly public.

AMIR A. AFKHAMİ, *A Modern Contagion: Imperialism and Public Health in Iran's Age of Cholera* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019). Pp. 296. \$54.95 cloth. ISBN: 9781421427218

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Historians of epidemic diseases continue to add new dimensions to our understanding of the past. In *A Modern Contagion*, Amir A. Afkhami effectively and efficiently contributes to this historiographical development through an examination of the role of disease