(c. 1570). The examination of these maps and works shows, she argues, "the Ottoman court's rising awareness of the expanding world… [and]… the centrality of the Mediterranean in the Ottoman world order." (p. 112). The fourth chapter is an examination of the works on the geographies that can be considered the Ottoman peripheries or beyond the Ottoman world. As the Ottoman elite recognized very early the remoteness of the Indian world, their vision did not go beyond minor adventures, which was also reflected in the works of Seydi Ali Reis who treated the Indian Ocean and India as less well-known region. In addition, an anonymous translation of a book on the new world, entitled *Tarih-i Hind-i Garbi*, represents, according to the author "the pinnacle of the Ottomans' geographical and political interests in the New World" and attempts "to transmit the latest geographical and political knowledge about the region to the Ottoman court." (p. 139). The epilogue surveys geographical works produced within the Ottoman world beyond the sixteenth century.

The book includes twelve figures of maps from the works examined and four plates reproduced from Lokman's *Şahanşah-name*, Matrakçı Nasuh's *Beyan-ı Menazil-i Sefer-i Irakeyn*, *Walters Sea Atlas* and the anomymous Ottoman Portolan Chart. Primary audience of the book seems to be (not ordinary reader but rather) professional Ottoman historians, Mediterranean historians, and those who are interested in the history of geographical and cartographical knowledge.

Ali Yaycioglu. *Partners of the Empire: The Crisis of the Ottoman Order in the Age of Revolutions*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016. xii+347 pages.

Hümeyra Bostan
İstanbul Şehir University
humeyrabostan@sehir.edu.tr
ORCID: 0000-0003-1630-9283
DOI: 10.20519/divan.335625

In *Partners of the Empire*, Ali Yaycıoğlu provides an account of Ottoman crisis and reform efforts for a stable order during the late eighteenth and

early nineteenth centuries. The central aim of the book is to emphasize the active participation of provincial notables, the *ayan*, and their determining role in the processes of crisis and reform. He investigates the provincial notables as important actors with their leadership claims, economic potential and threats of rebellion and, the ways the Ottoman government dealt with their power. Several studies have already attempted to explore the role of local notables in the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century; *Partners of the Empire* is distinguished from these with its consideration of provincial notables as "partners" of the Ottoman government.

Yaycıoğlu opens the book with the confession that he thought the eighteenth century was "one of the least studied" periods of Ottoman history. This idea, shared by many, probably stems from historians' failure to construct a framework that gives meaning to the different trends and rapid changes that marked the period. *Partners of the Empire* invalidates this idea by building a meaningful and coherent account, based on the findings of scores of studies and available sources on the eighteenth century.

A forceful introduction sets up the broader framework of the Age of Revolutions in North America, Britain, France, Haiti, Russia, and Iran. The author points out the significance of a wide array of themes in this regard. These range from military-fiscal reforms, wealth accumulation, order, and violence to negotiations with provincial notables, institutional transformations, and the origins of authoritarianism and democracy. Notwithstanding the broad spectrum of themes and multiple levels of analysis in the book, the author never loses his focus and succeeds in connecting the Ottoman Empire to the world around it by showing its convergences and divergences from Europe.

Yaycıoğlu engages Stanford Shaw's *Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire under Selim III, 1789-1807* (1971), which espouses the fixed framework of rise, decline, and fall. Since the publication of Shaw's work, historians have moved to treat the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries "not in terms of structural decline, but rather in terms of [crisis and] transformation" (p. 11). Yaycıoğlu also links his book with two recent studies: Baki Tezcan's *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (2010) and Karen Barkey's *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (2008), both of which argue that there was a profound political and social transformation in the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While Tezcan and Barkey conceive the post-transformative era as more or less integrated and coherent, Yaycıoğlu considers it as a dynamic period, marked with challenges, resistances, and multiple trials.

The main argument Yaycıoğlu advances is that during the Age of Revolutions, the Ottoman Empire "tested shifting from a vertical to a horizontal state, and from a volatile hierarchical order to a stable order of partnership and participation" (p. 9). A vertical state is a polity in which a powerful, hierarchically structured and highly centralized ruling elite ruled over the population, while a horizontal state implies a partnership between rulers and the ruled, where the state is open to initiatives from below. The author argues that during the late eighteenth century, the Ottoman Empire experimented with a horizontal order based on partnership, a top-down order revolving around the military-bureaucratic hierarchy, and a bottom-up order that addressed public opinion. These orders reflected the aristocratic, monarchic, and democratic forms of political organization, respectively. According to Yaycıoğlu, these tests resulted in a partnership between the central administration and provincial elites in 1808.

The book consists of an introduction, five chapters, and a conclusion. Chapter 1, "Empire: Order, Crisis, and Reform, 1700-1806," establishes the context in which the crisis broke out and reform, attempts took place. The author presents the networks of administrative organs, provincial magnates, financial interest groups, and, most importantly, the janissaries. All of these networks contributed to the shaping of the nature of the crisis (the lack of qualified military men, fiscal problems especially as a result of Russo-Ottoman war and security issues) and the New Order (*Nizam-ı Cedid*) reform agenda pursued by Selim III (r. 1789-1807). Stressing the parallels between Ottoman reforms and the reform projects carried out by Peter the Great (r. 1682-1725) in Russia and by Louis XVI (r. 1774-1791) in France, Yaycıoğlu argues that the Ottoman experience of crisis and reform was no different from that of other polities in the Age of Revolutions.

Chapter 2, "The Notables: Governance, Power, and Wealth," depicts how the provincial notables (both Muslim *ayan* and Christian *kocabaşı*) consolidated their power as administrative, fiscal, and military entrepreneurs and how they replaced and marginalized the servants or bureaucrats of the sultan through deals and negotiations with the central authority. This, he argues, effectively transformed the nature of the Ottoman administrative system. Considering some representative examples of important regional notables as Çapanoğlus, Ali Paşa of Ioannina and Tirsinikli İsmail of Ruse, he explores this transformation through the lens of the formation of their dynasties, the geographical distribution of their power, the different types of enterprises in which they were involved, and problems relating to their accumulation and transfer of wealth. He also links the transformation of the class of local notables with the monetization of the economy, which he characterizes as the "monetization of governance."

Chapter 3, "Communities: Collective Action, Leadership, and Politics," examines the functions of provincial notables and their election and dismissal based on unanimous consensus (*ittifak-ârâ*). The chapter then deals with how communal representation was transformed into more formal electoral processes based on majority rule (*ekseriyet-ârâ*) after the reforms between 1838 and 1870. Although the author might consider the formal provincial organization to be beyond the scope of the book, the reader would have benefitted from a description of the role and function of the "marginalized" formal government officers in the provinces who served alongside the notables. This would have clarified the tension between the formal and informal representatives of the provincial communities, especially in cases where the notables did not hold official positions.

Chapter 4, "Crisis: Riots, Conspiracies, and Revolutions, 1806-1808," is a novel account of the momentous two years from 1806 to 1808, covering the Edirne incident, the rise of Bayraktar (Alemdar) Mustafa, the British siege of Istanbul, the rise and fall of the New Order, the coup of the so-called Rusçuk yârânı, the fall of Bayraktar, and the rise of Mahmud II. The author purposefully avoids the dominant dichotomies of old vs. new, conservatism vs. Westernization, center vs. periphery, and the state vs. its opponents. Instead, he considers the roles played by multiple actors, depicts different interest groups competing or negotiating for or against reform, and argues that these complex and multi-layered events cannot be explained by simplified dichotomies. For example, a political coalition between the elites of the New Order and a group of provincial notables during this two-year period resulted in the restoration of reform projects and the preparation of a document called the Deed of Alliance.

In the chapter 5, "Settlement: The Deed of Alliance and the Empire of Trust (1808)," the author discusses the attempt to settle the crisis with the Deed of Alliance (*Sened-i İttifak*) signed after an assembly of the military, bureaucratic, and learned elite of the central Ottoman administration and the provincial notables in 1808. The chapter includes an English translation of the deed's original text. The author critically and thoroughly comments on each individual article of the deed. Here, Yaycıoğlu analyzes the textual meaning and place of the deed in the longer time span. He interprets the deed neither as a late Magna Carta representing a stage in the progressive development of constitutionalism nor as a sign of political centralization. Instead, he writes, "in contrast with top-down or bottom-up constitutional documents of the time, the Deed of Alliance envisioned a horizontal partnership of elites, whose safety was mutually guaranteed, with full liability" (p. 236). The book's main argument essentially lies here. The author holds that the empire tested different methods and ways of transforming the

state, the result of which was a partnership of imperial elites guaranteed by the sultan. The title of the book derives from this "partnership between central and provincial elites."

Partnership was a significant method of governance during the period under consideration in the book. However, one may question the suitability of identifying provincial notables as "partners" of the Ottoman government. Certain usages in the Deed of Alliance may support this view, but the priority given to the sultan in the text, the indifference of provincial notables who were not signatories, and the ineffectiveness of the alliance may undermine the "horizontality" argument.

Despite its dense and multi-faceted content, the book reads smoothly and is well organized. However, including appendices with translations of key archival documents would have enriched the book by giving readers a taste of the language of negotiation. Additionally, the author's choice of the name "Mustafa Bayraktar" for a figure, who has mostly been identified as Alemdar Mustafa or Bayraktar Mustafa in the literature might be confusing to readers. Lastly, half of the conclusion deals with the collective activism triggered by nationalist movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although one may consider these processes contingent on one another, this part appears overstretching the main argument of the book.

Partners of the Empire offers a solid research and an insightful analysis of crisis and reform in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries. It is also a valuable contribution to debates about the link between decentralization and decline. Yaycıoğlu takes revisionist historians' work a step further and shows how the center of the "decentralized" state operated. He describes new patterns in the diffusion of political power from the center to the periphery and how multiple actors from above and below shaped the nature of reform attempts. The book also shows that all groups agreed upon the need for reform, but differed in their approaches; hence, the interaction of their differences defined the nature of the Ottoman transformation in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.