

WRITING HISTORY  
AT THE OTTOMAN COURT  
*Editing the Past, Fashioning the Future*

Edited by H. Erdem Çıpa and Emine Fetvacı

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# 7 The Challenge of Periodization

## *New Patterns in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Historiography*

Hakan T. Karateke

OTTOMAN HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS and historiographical practices simultaneously underwent significant changes in the nineteenth century. This essay, conceived as the first in a series on new developments in Ottoman historiography during that century, concentrates on changes to Ottoman models of periodization for world history and aims to demonstrate that Ottoman historical consciousness entered a novel phase during the late nineteenth century. According to this new tripartite periodization model, world history was divided into “Ancient,” “Medieval,” and “New” periods, a departure from pre-nineteenth-century world histories, in which accounts of various dynasties had been given in roughly chronological fashion, with loose geographical groupings.

The choice of a new model for periodizing world history was a manifestation of a changing worldview, an indication of where the Ottomans located themselves in the emerging world civilization of the nineteenth century. Although that project was spearheaded by contemporary western European ideals, members of the Ottoman elite no doubt considered themselves a part of it. Moreover, the idea of a world civilization that was shared by, and common to, all leading nations of the world facilitated the appropriation of non-Ottoman models in many spheres, including historical periodization.

This essay investigates eight historians who published world histories or grappled with the topic of periodization in works written in the second half of the nineteenth century. Although their models seem largely similar, the small innovations introduced by each historian provide extraordinary insights into the nature of their concerns. Because the tripartite periodization model found resonance, was adopted with few alterations by later historians, and became the standard version taught in schools of the Turkish Republic, the variations that these historians proposed now seem all the more valuable historically. The model’s later modifications, moreover, dominated and shaped Turkish historical consciousness in the twentieth century.

A number of reasons for such a development of a revised periodization model present themselves. One is the new source material that Ottoman historians began to appreciate and utilize in the nineteenth century. Sources doubtless have an effect on

one's conception of historical periodization, but accepting a particular periodization of world history is a larger intellectual commitment than a mere replication of a European model. I consider the Ottomans' new periodization models to be a result of, and a vehicle for, a new notion of "universalism" in Ottoman historical consciousness. This new universalism was connected to the aforementioned idea of an emerging world civilization, and many Ottoman intellectuals regarded nineteenth-century modernization attempts as a step toward a common universal civilization project. The concept of westernization had not yet taken on negative connotations for non-Europeans, and hopes were high. Influenced by, and in negotiation with, the findings of the emerging professional discipline of history in Europe, the Ottomans felt the need for a "scientific" periodization that covered the entire known history of the world.<sup>1</sup>

Before the nineteenth century, Ottoman world histories had utilized a structure relating the rise and fall of individual dynasties in chronological order, with some geographical grouping. The loss of prestige of the monarchy as a form of government, and of individual dynasties as legitimate sovereigns, during the nineteenth century must have made the move away from historiographical practices closely associated with them natural and easy, rendering the models traditionally preferred in Ottoman court historiography obsolete. The Ottoman intellectual mind also gradually dispensed with its faith in the linearity and singularity of Ottoman history, and the centrality of Ottoman achievement to world history became an assumption fewer historians accepted as easily as their predecessors.

The tripartite division of world history and its later variations were adopted from European historiography. Several concepts of periodization based on Christian understandings of history and of the universe had been in use in Europe since the Middle Ages (e.g., the Four Kingdoms model or the Six Ages model). Christoph Cellarius's (d. 1707) tripartite model, dating from the late seventeenth century, is generally considered to be the first "secular" periodization of world history.<sup>2</sup> The Ottomans seem to have found it attractive only when it made its way into "scientific" nineteenth-century historiography. Oddly, the Ottoman mind had not been unfamiliar with tripartite taxonomies but classified many notions, including the histories of states, into three. Following the Ibn Khaldūnian scheme, for example, the historian Na'īmā (d. 1716) viewed the rise, maturity, and decline of states as a reflection of the stages of a person's life.<sup>3</sup>

My goal is not to examine the validity or suitability of the tripartite periodization of world history, or to evaluate the dates and events taken as turning points in this division, but to consider the ways in which Ottoman historians and intellectuals presented and discussed this proposition. I would like to gauge, in light of these developments in history-writing in the Ottoman Empire, in which ways the Ottoman intellectual mind was ripe for, and receptive to, a new conceptualization of history.

Apart from Ahmed Cevdet's (d. 1895) intelligent remarks quoted below, contemporary voices critical of the tripartite model are absent from this essay. This absence

does not mean that resistance to the concept did not exist. The fact that I have not found any such criticism may be due to my inability to locate it, or to critics' reluctance to commit their opinions to paper. It is possible that there were intellectuals who found the new model unattractive, but there seems to have been no grave cultural conflict that would have caused its rejection. The view that many found the tripartite model practical is bolstered by the fact that most of the world histories composed during this time were for instructional purposes.

I will briefly discuss the structure and contents of a few pre-nineteenth-century universal histories as a point of departure for comparison with the new paradigms of the nineteenth century. The few histories cited here constitute a mere fraction of the total production of such works.<sup>4</sup> This discussion is not an extensive analysis of pre-nineteenth-century periodization models but an opportunity to establish that the later structures had indeed a novel character.

### Periodization Models before the Nineteenth Century

Ottoman historiography traditionally considered itself and its major topic, the Ottoman dynasty, as a chapter of Islamic history. The narratives of pre-nineteenth-century universal histories began with the Creation, usually jumped to the rise of Islam, explored individual Islamic dynasties, and concluded with a considerably more detailed narration of the history of the Ottoman dynasty. Non-Islamic history generally featured only modestly in any Ottoman universal history, within particular contexts defined by time and space. Ottoman authors commonly consulted earlier sources—such as al-Ya'qūbī (d. after 905), al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), al-Mas'ūdī (d. 956), Ibn Athīr (d. 1233), and Rashīduddīn (d. 1318)—for pre-Ottoman world history.<sup>5</sup> Their periodization scheme was thus based partially on the organizational schemes of these earlier models.

These prestigious pre-Ottoman world histories had some similarities in terms of their divisions of world history. However, based on whether the authors belonged to the Arabic or Persian cultural traditions, or simply as a result of their political orientations, they recounted recent and contemporary events in different ways. Rashīduddīn's *Jāmi' ul-Tawārīkh*, for instance, is a good example of an informative treatment of the Ilkhans by an insider who held administrative offices as high as grand vizier at the Ilkhanid court. Religious loyalties also made a difference when the author wrote in the Sunni or Shi'i tradition, evidenced, for example, by extra emphasis on the history of twelve imams by authors with Shi'i tendencies. These histories' cosmology derived from Islamic as well as biblical (or Islamicized biblical) traditions. The Old Testament was a common source for pre-Ottoman and Ottoman historians, and al-Ya'qūbī, for example, is known to have used apocryphal Psalms as well.<sup>6</sup>

A world history generally commenced with the creation of the light (*nūr*) of the Prophet Muhammad, angels, and souls, before continuing with the creation of the material world (although this arrangement differed slightly from work to work). Geographical data based on a few traditions (such as Ptolemaic or Iranian) was occasionally

included in descriptions of the creation of the earth, the seas, the climes, and creatures. Tales of prophets would be told according to Islamic lore. A history of ancient nations was generally included in a section on the pre-Islamic era, incorporating basic information on the kings of ancient Mesopotamia, Persia, Israel, Greece, Rome, China, Byzantium, or Egypt.

Many of the prestigious histories written in Arabic or Persian were used extensively by Ottoman historians, especially by the more ambitious. Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī (d. 1600), for example, praises al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Athīr, the latter for his extensive treatment of pre-Islamic and early Islamic history. He cites Ibn Athīr as a “historian without equal” (*müverriḥ-i bī-naẓīr*), praising the historian’s detailed exposition of various peoples, events of ancient times, geographical knowledge, and “even” his case-by-case investigation of wonders and oddities.<sup>7</sup>

One implication of surveying world history before the rise of Islam in a cursory manner and exploring events thereafter in much more detail was that history could be presented as a divine plan. This approach originated in the medieval period but lived on in the Christian as well as the Islamic world into the early modern period. According to this view, it was mankind’s task, and that of historians as their competent representatives, to try to discern God’s plan for the universe and derive lessons from the past based on interpretation. This theme often surfaces in the introductory sections of Ottoman historical works, in which the author philosophizes about the uses and benefits of history. A related concept was the advance (although not necessarily “progress”) of history toward its inevitable destination: the end of the world, or Judgment Day. The Eternal Ottoman State (*devlet-i ebed-müddet*) was implicitly considered the final phase of Islamic history.

A handful of histories penned from the fifteenth century on mark the emergence of Ottoman historiography. Şükrullāh (d. 1488), a member of the ulema class during Murad II’s (r. 1421–1444 and 1446–1451) and Mehmed II’s (r. 1444–1446 and 1451–1481) reigns, composed *Bahjat al-Tavārikh* (Splendor of Histories, ca. 1458) in Persian. *Bahjat*, a rather concise world history that was to become a prestigious source for later historians,<sup>8</sup> consisted of thirteen chapters and covered a period from the Creation to Mehmed II’s enthronement in 1451. Şükrullāh claims in the introduction that his book would be a valuable source not only for history but for other sciences, such as astronomy, mathematics, or medicine, as well. The work begins with the creation of the universe, offers an Islamic cosmology, and explores the origins of some ancient peoples. After the second chapter, which depicts the history of the prophets according to Islamic lore, chapters 3 through 9 detail subjects in Islamic history centered around the Prophet, such as his genealogy, family, and companions. Chapters 8 and 9 also offer an excursus on the imams and notable sheikhs in Islamic history. An additional short chapter is on the “Most Significant Greek Philosophers,” and chapter 11—“Kings of the Infidels and the Believers”—details the pre-Islamic Persian kings to the Sassanids. Şükrullāh again turns to Islamic history proper in chapter 12, which covers the

Umayyad, Abbasid, Fatimid, and Seljuk dynasties. Finally, the last chapter, which is also rather short, tells of the Ottomans up to the reign of Mehmed II.<sup>9</sup>

Although *Künhü'l-Aḥbār* (Essence of History), by Muṣṭafā 'Āli of Gallipoli (d. 1600), was published in five volumes in 1872, the author divided the book into four *rükns*, or pillars. 'Āli describes the first pillar as covering the period from the creation of the Light of Muhammad to the time of Adam. This section focuses on cosmology and the Creation; provides geographical information on the seas, islands, and climes; mentions some ancient nations; tells of the Flood; and records some tales of the prophets. The second pillar continues with stories of prophets and of Muhammad's life, gives an account of the rise of Islam and early Islamic history, and ends with a section about the Persian kings and Ptolemies. The third pillar is on Islamic dynasties that ruled in such locations as Egypt, Syria, and Anatolia. The Umayyads and Abbasids are treated in detail. After exploring certain smaller dynasties of the Islamic world and the characteristics of some European peoples, 'Āli ends this pillar with the Timurids and the Anatolian Seljuks, reserving the last and longest pillar for the history of the Ottoman dynasty.<sup>10</sup>

Ḳaraçelebizāde 'Abdül'azīz (d. 1658), born into a long-established ulema family, climbed the ladder of the ulema hierarchy, reaching the top and becoming *sheikhulislam* in 1651. His world history, *Ravzatü'l-Ebrār* (The Garden of the Pious), includes an informative and original section on recent Ottoman history and rather lengthy sections on the Mamluks and Safavids, which together compose more than half of the book. His treatment of pre-Ottoman times, however, is an uninspired and abridged replication of earlier world histories. The book is divided into four chapters (plus two appendices), the first of which covers the prophets mentioned in the Qur'an; the second, the life and achievements of the Prophet Muhammad; the third, pre-Ottoman Islamic dynasties; and the final and the longest chapter, the history of the Ottoman dynasty.<sup>11</sup>

Müneccimbaşı Aḥmed (d. 1702), a polymath of the late seventeenth century, was appointed chief astronomer in 1667 and held that office for twenty years. In addition to works in various other disciplines, he composed a massive world history in Arabic, entitled *Jāmi' al-Duwal* (A Compendium of States). Müneccimbaşı's history is divided into two main sections, the first of which concerns the Creation, the stories of prophets, and, in a much longer part, the vita of Prophet Muhammad. The second section is again divided into two parts: the first treats the dynasties and people that existed before Islam; the second, those that came after Islam. This section begins with a detailed account of the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties. Müneccimbaşı then conducts something of a regional survey, within which he pursues a chronological treatment of the dynasties by centuries (*qarn*). As the title suggests, his exploration of individual dynasties is extensive: he not only includes numerous smaller Islamic dynasties but also incorporates the histories of European dynasties—Austrian, Spanish, English, Russian—up to his own time (despite the fact that he discusses them under the title “Dynasties before Islam”). Ancient dynasties and peoples, such as the Persians, Greeks, and Copts, had traditionally been mentioned in some detail in

world histories since al-Ya'qūbī. Reporting on contemporary non-Islamic dynasties, particularly European examples, however, was a novelty. Mūneccimbaşı was curious and studious enough to expand his list of dynasties and nations by consulting European sources and is known to have used a chronicle published in 1532 (in German) by Johannes Carion, who was an astronomer at the court of Brandenburg.<sup>12</sup> To recount the more recent history of certain European dynasties, however, Mūneccimbaşı must have utilized other sources.<sup>13</sup>

The last example I would like to mention is *Gülşen-i Ma'ārif* (The Rose Garden of Knowledge) by Ferā'izāde Meḥmed Sa'īd (d. 1835). Sa'īd was from Bursa and apparently lived there throughout his life, as the preacher at the Emir Sultan Mosque. He submitted his manuscript to Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808–1839) and received encouragement and authorization to publish his work at the imperial press.<sup>14</sup> *Gülşen-i Ma'ārif* is rather less innovative as a world history than other contemporaneous examples. Quite religious in its tone, the two-volume work starts with sections on the qualities of God, the angels, and holy books, and then continues with biographies of the prophets. After recounting the prophets' lives through Muhammad and his age, Meḥmed Sa'īd turns back in time for a chronological digression about the ancient kings of Persia. The narrative then continues with the history of Islamic lands, by dynasty, and a detailed account of Ottoman history, which comprises three-fourths of the book. Although *Gülşen-i Ma'ārif* seems to be designed as a world history, the author's main objective was clearly arriving at Ottoman history as quickly as possible.<sup>15</sup>

Ottoman historians' concept of the periodization of world history was partially inherited from pre-Ottoman Muslim historians and partially shaped by what they regarded as decisive events of more recent history. The initial period began with the Creation and lasted until the next significant event in history: the Deluge. The prophets, for example, were usually classified as coming before or after the Deluge. Ancient nations of the antediluvian era also found some mention. 'Ālī, for one, surmises that before the Deluge people understood the descent of Adam to earth as the beginning of history. However, the historian reasons, because all of the documentation pertaining to the pre-Deluge era vanished in that catastrophe, the people living thereafter had to take the Deluge as the start of history.<sup>16</sup> Noah was occasionally mentioned by his epithet, the "second Adam" (*Ādem-i s̄anī*), which indicates the understanding that a completely new era had begun with him.<sup>17</sup>

The post-Deluge era stretched to the emergence of the Prophet Muhammad, or, more precisely, to his departure from Mecca to Medina (i.e., the Hegira). More pedantic historians broke down the period from Adam to Muhammad, which was believed to have lasted approximately six thousand years, into several eras: from Adam to the Deluge (2,256 years), from the Deluge to Abraham (1,079 years), from Abraham to Moses (565 years), from Moses to Suleiman (536 years), from Suleiman to Alexander the Great (770 years), from Alexander to Jesus (369 years), and from Jesus to Muhammad (550 years).<sup>18</sup>

While a proper chronology of events was considered one of the requirements of a good history, one did not need to seek hard evidence or documents to rectify the chronology of prehistoric events and people; this standard narrative relied heavily on Islamized biblical lore. Pre-Islamic Persian and Arabic history was also recounted, the degree of detail dependent on the historian's affiliation and prospects. The post-Hegira period was treated exclusively according to rulers or dynasties. A further topical classification might also be used to arrange the massive amount of material covered, such as "the dynasties of North Africa" or "the dynasties of India." When more recent events were recounted, some historians shifted to a detailed annalistic narrative. These latter annals were predominantly focused on wars, conquests, and political developments in the periods in question, again grouped by the reigns of individual sultans.

The post-Hegira period had one additional significant landmark for early Ottoman historians, whose first works date from the fifteenth century: the Mongol takeover of Baghdad and the fall of the Caliphate in 1258. The political and social transformations of the post-Mongol period must have given rise to an awareness of living in a different era than before.<sup>19</sup>

Muṣṭafā 'Ālī's survey of historical events from different traditions, which he presents as epochal frontiers in history, gives us insight into his understanding of historical periodization. He mentions such events as the Pharaoh throwing Abraham into the fire, the Exodus, the first construction of the Ka'aba, Alexander the Great's era (Romans and Greeks), the "Year of the Elephant" (ca. 570, Quraish tribe), and the reign of Kawadh I (d. 531), father of Anushirwan the Just (Persians). Finally, the Prophet Muhammad's departure from Mecca to Medina is mentioned as the first important political act of the budding Islamic state. This date was then taken as the "beginning of history," says 'Ālī, and was used until his time.<sup>20</sup>

Only a few decades after the publication of *Gülşen-i Ma'ārif* (1836), probably the last world history in the "old" tradition, a number of historians introduced an alternative periodization model for world history to the Ottoman intellectual public (initially through educational material): the tripartite division of world history. Although a dialogue continued for some time as to which events to accept as turning points in this tripartite division, the new model quickly found resonance.

## New Periodization Models in the Later Nineteenth Century

### *Aḥmed Vefîk: Hikmet-i Tārîḥ (The Philosophy of History), 1863*

One of the first to "officially" introduce a periodization model unfamiliar to the Ottoman tradition was the curiously erudite figure of Aḥmed Vefîk (d. 1891). Born to a family of interpreters for the imperial court, Vefîk was profoundly educated, especially in languages. In addition to perfecting his Arabic and Persian, he trained in Italian, Latin, and ancient Greek. Furthermore, he is said to have had substantial knowledge in Russian, German, Chagatai, and Hebrew. He was likely most skilled in French:

having attended high school for six years in Paris, he was apparently able to converse in French like a native.

Ahmed Vefik was appointed an official in the Department of Translation (*Tercüme Odası*) and served as a mediator in several foreign missions for the Ottoman state for more than three decades. He was one of the forty elected members of the Academy of Sciences (*Encümen-i Dâniş*), founded in 1851, the majority of whose activities concerned commissioning histories or translations from French, mostly on historical subjects.<sup>21</sup> For instance, Ahmed Cevdet's twelve-volume Ottoman history, covering the years 1774–1826, was commissioned by the Academy of Sciences. Works on specialized topics in history, such as *Histoire naturelle* by Georges Louis Leclerc (Comte de Buffon, d. 1788), or on recent history (e.g., a book on the Napoleonic Wars) were among the books that the Academy supported. The Academy's activities over its short (about ten-year) life lead us to believe that “modern” historical approaches were strongly endorsed by the institution.

Ahmed Vefik did not become prolific until the 1860s. In 1863 he offered a series of lectures, entitled *Hikmet-i Tarih* (The Philosophy of History), at the newly founded University (*Dârül-fünûn*). The lectures were one hour long, delivered twice a week, and continued only for a few weeks. Still, their introductory section, which was printed in the daily newspaper *Taşvîr-i Efkar* the same month and appeared later as a separate booklet of forty-four pages,<sup>22</sup> has much to offer, particularly in terms of Vefik's ideas about the periodization of world history. Lectures on such a subject were a novelty, as Ottoman education traditionally did not include any courses on the instruction of “history” per se.<sup>23</sup> The booklet gives one the impression that the lectures were designed as a class on “world civilization,” rather than the philosophy of history, as scholars would characterize it today.

The sources and methodology of Ottoman historiography may well have been under discussion for some time. A reworking of periodization of world history, however, was apparently suggested only with *Hikmet-i Tarih*. Vefik not only proposes an adjusted periodization of the totality of world history but also discusses new types of sources and methodology for history-writing.<sup>24</sup>

Ahmed Vefik sees the arrival of the Prophet Muhammad as the most important landmark in the history of mankind. He justifies his choice of Prophet Muhammad's advent as a dividing line as follows: while the Arabs were a weak Bedouin tribe, prior to the Prophet's time, they managed to conquer the most fertile grounds of the world, and this conquest proved revolutionary for all nations. Except for China, he says, all parts of the world were affected by the coming of the Prophet Muhammad. Because all of the nations extant during Vefik's time had come into existence after that momentous event, world history should be divided into two major parts. He classifies the fifty-six centuries from the Creation to the Hegira as the longer first period (*cüz-i 'azîm*) and the thirteen centuries after the Prophet as the second. He labels the former the “Ancient Ages” (*ezmine-i muqaddime*), and the latter the “Modern Ages” (*ezmine-i müte'ahhire*).<sup>25</sup>

From time to time, Aḥmed Vefiḳ explains, the conditions of the world and of nations were transformed by “great events”; thus, it is necessary to subcategorize each of these two periods into four subsections, to which Vefiḳ attributes the following anthropomorphic designations:<sup>26</sup>

First era: The Period of Childhood (*faşl-ı evvel-i şebâbî*)

Second era: The Period of Growth (*faşl-ı şânî-i nemevî*)

Third era: The Period of Maturation (*faşl-ı şâlis-i istivâ*)

Fourth era: The Period of Descent (*faşl-ı râbî-i inḫiṭâî*)

However—and perhaps the note taker or editor is at fault—there seems to be a grave confusion in Aḥmed Vefiḳ’s booklet. While at the outset he clearly discusses a division of world history into two periods, with the Hegira as the threshold, a few pages later his detailed list of events lays out a tripartite classification. Oddly, Vefiḳ does not address this discrepancy: he merely mentions that “some history books label this period the ‘Middle Ages’ and the subsequent one as ‘Modern Ages’” and continues to list the events of these two periods.<sup>27</sup>

Aḥmed Vefiḳ does not claim that he is designing a new periodization model “from scratch.” It is clear that he is quoting from “some histories” (*ba’zî tevâriḥ*) and relying on “scholars” (*erbâb-ı fenn*), whom he does not specify by title or name. He imports and domesticates models that were in circulation in nineteenth-century European historiography by inserting events pertinent to Islamic and Ottoman history in the Middle and Modern Ages sections. Vefiḳ seems to be adamant about the importance of the Prophet’s advent for world history and the Hegira as the dividing line in his (earlier) bipartite periodization. (This insistence readily reminds one of the birth of Christ as the point of departure for Christian calendars. He integrates the Hegira into a “scientific” periodization of world history, although Christ’s birth was not included in European historiography.)<sup>28</sup>

*Aḥmed Ḥilmî (trans.): Târîḥ-i ‘Umûmî (A World History), 1866–1878*

Although Aḥmed Vefiḳ’s lectures and booklet may have had little effect, the following decade saw a lively discussion, as several additional translated works containing similar periodizations of world history were published. One of them was an adaptation of a “world history” by William Chambers (d. 1883)—a popular Scottish author and publisher of periodicals and encyclopedias—translated by Aḥmed Ḥilmî (d. 1878), an assistant clerk at the Translation Office. Apparently published with the encouragement of Minister of Education Kemal Efendi, between 1866 and 1878, this six-volume incomplete edition was the first translated universal history in Ottoman Turkish. While Aḥmed Ḥilmî mentions Chambers’s name in the introduction, from which of his works Ḥilmî rendered the first two volumes of the book remains unclear.<sup>29</sup>

The first volume, which contains numerous illustrations of the remains of ancient cultures, begins with the ancient Egyptians and continues with the Phoenicians,

Assyrians, and Lydians. The second volume includes the ancient civilizations of the Iranians, Romans, Greeks, European and African nations, Scythians, Hindus, and Chinese. Hilmî concludes the second volume by reflecting that ancient history is largely based on tales and legendary accounts.<sup>30</sup> His tone makes clear that he views the “Ancient Ages” as times when common people suffered under absolute sovereigns, who ruled with injustice and coercion. Hilmî delivers the good news, though, that in the upcoming volumes the history of mankind will progress significantly. The sixth volume<sup>31</sup> recounts the Islamic history of the Middle Ages and ends with the fall of the Caliphate in Baghdad in 1258. The method of the book is noticeably different in this latter volume, which recounts the history of Islamic dynasties chronologically and with separate sections devoted to individual rulers. This volume does not seem to be a translation of Chambers’s work but an adaptation from earlier chronicles available in the Ottoman realm. The translation project must have come to an end with Hilmî’s death in 1878.

At the time, it was quite common for translators to intervene with, occasionally question, and even alter original works. Not surprisingly, then, Hilmî engages in a dialogue with Chambers’s model of periodization: he employs Chambers’s tripartite division without criticism, but considers the events Chambers chose to mark the beginnings and ends of those eras problematic. Hilmî mentions that one variant of periodization, conceivably the Ottoman example, divides history into the Ancient Ages (*ezmine-i müteḳaddime*, from the creation of Adam to the departure of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina, i.e., the Hegira), the Middle Ages (*ezmine-i mütevassıta*, from the Hegira to the conquest of Constantinople), and the Modern Ages (*ezmine-i müte’ahḫire*, from the conquest of Constantinople to the translator’s time). However, as Hilmî mentions in passing, Chambers’s original work suggests different events for these divisions: the “creation of Adam,” the fall of the Roman Empire, and the discovery of the New World.<sup>32</sup>

*Meḫmed ‘Āṭıf: Hülāṣatü’t-Tevārîḫ*  
(*A Summary of Histories*), 1872–1873

Another world history, penned by Meḫmed Āṭıf of Candia (d. 1908 or 1909), appeared in 1872–1873. A civil servant by profession, the author apparently designed *Hülāṣatü’t-Tevārîḫ* (*A Summary of Histories*) to comprise at least four volumes, only two of which appeared. Āṭıf is not shy about invoking the ambition of his undertaking, namely his plans to write “a perfect universal history with no equal to date” (*mişli nā-mevcūd bir târiḫ-i mükemmel-i ‘umūmî*). Āṭıf’s confidence in his ability to produce a heretofore-unrivaled history is intriguing. His introduction suggests that what distinguishes his project might be the “new method” (*uşûl-i cedîd*) in which he claims to be writing the book: Āṭıf asserts that he compiled and translated his book from well-known Arabic, French, and Greek histories, due to a lack of histories written in the “new method” in Turkish. Unfortunately, he does not elaborate; however, it is conceivable that he is

referring to the book's content: a new periodization model, the variety of civilizations covered, and presenting events' causal relationships.

Meḥmed 'Āṭıf also speculates about the model of tripartite periodization of world history used by European historians. The conventional division in Europe, he explains, offers the following historical eras, defined by specific events: Initial Ages (*ḳurūn-ı ūlā*), from the Creation to the fall of the Western Roman Empire; Middle Ages (*ḳurūn-ı vusṭā*), from the fall of the Western Roman Empire to the conquest of Constantinople by the Muslims; and Modern Ages (*ḳurūn-ı ahire*), the period after the conquest of Constantinople. However, because "it would be more suitable for the glorious nation of Islam" (*millet-i celile-i İslāmiyyece daha münāsib olduğundan*), he chose to replace the fall of the Western Roman Empire with the Hegira as the event marking the beginning of the Middle Ages.<sup>33</sup> 'Āṭıf does not otherwise alter the original periodization model; he also uses the Hegira calendar throughout the book. Hence, for example, the creation of Adam is dated 5,585 years before the Hegira.<sup>34</sup>

'Āṭıf also explores the subdivisions that European historians utilize, as well as shorter periods.<sup>35</sup> The book then continues with a long section on approximately twenty Greek, Roman, and Jewish historians, such as Herodotus, Thucydides, Plutarch, and Josephus (Yosef ben Matiyahu), introducing each with a paragraph. Meḥmed 'Āṭıf's work resembles a somewhat detached compilation of sections from various sources. A chapter on "Tales of the Prophets" in the Islamic tradition is inserted into an otherwise largely Eurocentric narrative of pre-historic and ancient ages. Biblical stories on the Kingdom of Israel, Kingdom of Judah, and the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem are followed by accounts of the Assyrians, Phoenicians, Lydians, Egyptians, and Sassanians. No further volumes to this world history appeared, and the work remains incomplete.

### *Süleymān Hüsni: Tārīḥ-i 'Ālem, I: Ḳurūn-ı Ūlā* (*A History of the World: The Initial Ages*), 1876

A few years after Meḥmed 'Āṭıf's universal history, Süleymān Hüsni Pasha (d. 1892) published *Tārīḥ-i 'Ālem* (A History of the World), designed as a textbook for military high schools. The author, himself the director of the Military Academy (*mekātib-i askeriyye nāzırı*), would also become an able commander during the Ottomans' war with Russia, which began a few months after the book's publication.<sup>36</sup> Hüsni mentions that the textbook used in military schools (Hilmī's translation of Chambers) was a direct translation of European books, a fact that motivated him to compose *Tārīḥ-i 'Ālem*. The author leaves no doubt that he does not approve of the previous textbook's approach, which he describes as "contrary to Islamic principles and national values and the moral code."<sup>37</sup> He further notes that the textbook remained incomplete, in that only a few parts of the Ancient Ages section were translated. Süleymān Hüsni used a number of recent universal histories in French in addition to Arabic and Ottoman sources, all of which he lists at the beginning of his volume. He then compiles

information from a variety of primary and secondary sources and develops a narrative that he characterizes as compatible with Islamic and Ottoman values.

The beginning of the first volume lists the second volume, which would have been on the Middle Ages, as under preparation, but it seems to have never appeared. Hüsni discusses the reasons he titled his work *Tārīḥ-i 'Ālem* instead of *Tārīḥ-i 'Umūmī* (General History): he viewed *Tārīḥ-i 'Ālem*, *Tārīḥ-i 'Umūmī*, and *Tārīḥ-i Ḥuṣūṣī* (Particular History) as subdivisions of political history (*Tārīḥ-i Siyāsī*). In explaining his choice of the title, Hüsni provides a definition of the former two: *Tārīḥ-i 'Ālem* narrates the events that happened from the time of the Creation, through the emergence of nations and states, to his own time. Although some historians would consider his account *Tārīḥ-i 'Umūmī*, the latter would be, for Hüsni, a full account of all of the events that took place during a specific period of time or in the course of a political rule.

Süleymān Hüsni can be credited with some originality. In addition to his idiosyncratic definition of the generic term *Tārīḥ-i 'Umūmī* as an account of world history, he lists somewhat unusual events as governing the tripartite division that he appropriates without comment. As far as I can detect, he is the only historian to take the rise of the Ottomans (ca. 1300) as the beginning of the Modern Age and the destruction of the Janissary corps as its end.<sup>38</sup>

Some topics, although identical in subject to the age-old tradition, were handled completely differently by Hüsni. For example, although he begins his book with the Creation, nothing he tells in this section resembles traditional cosmologies of pre-nineteenth-century Ottoman historiography; instead, Hüsni's Creation story builds on the latest scientific explanations in Europe. He describes a gas-liquid mass that cooled and turned into the earth over time and the elements that emerged. He covers the appearance of plants, mountain chains, animals, and, finally, humankind. Oddly, he also lists, clearly translating from European sources, the prehistoric period (Stone Age, Bronze Age) in a section just before his tripartite division of world history, the first part of which he wishes to call ancient history (*tārīḥ-i kadīm*). Biblical traditions predictably dominate the narrative's earlier portion; however, Hüsni conspicuously cuts short the stories of the prophets. The book is further divided into thirteen chapters, each of which treats a separate people, starting with the ancient Egyptians and continuing to the Arabs of the pre-Islamic era.<sup>39</sup>

### *Rıf'at Efendi: Naḳdüt-Tevārīḥ (A Review of Histories), 1879*

In the 1870s, Aḥmed Rıf'at (Yağlıkçızade, d. 1895), who served as a mid-level government official in Izmir, Crete, and Salonica, was working on his massive encyclopedic work, *Luḡāt-i Tārīḥiyye ve Coğrāfiyye (A Historical and Geographical Dictionary)*, which would appear a few years after *Naḳdüt-Tevārīḥ*. He informs the reader that the volume emerged as a byproduct of his studies on *Luḡāt*.

*Naḳdüt-Tevārīḥ* is not a history per se but a chronological table of events from Adam to the year 1879. The work is interesting in that the blurb at the beginning of the

book presents it as having been compiled in the “brand new style” (*tarz-ı nevîn*). While chronological tables are rare in Ottoman historiography, and none had been authored in the nineteenth century, the promotional language may be the publisher’s commercial presentation, for the author himself does not discuss a “new method” and gives credit to another Ottoman historian, who, he says, inspired him to undertake this work.<sup>40</sup> The historian to whom he refers is Kâtib Çelebî (d. 1657), whose chronology, *Takvîmü’t-Tevârîh*, had found wide popularity due to its clear layout. Rif’at’s contribution, in his words, is that he tracked down many events that do not appear in Kâtib Çelebî’s work, notably some Islamic as well as non-Islamic (*ecnebi*, “foreign”) historical events of the Ancient Ages.

Ahmed Rif’at elaborates on his dating system in the introduction to the book. He does not take the birth of Christ as the beginning of the calendar, as European (*ecnebi*) historians do, with the expressed intention of avoiding the trouble of reckoning forward and backward from that event.<sup>41</sup> Otherwise, he argues, it would have been suitable to take it as a turning point on the grounds that the events after Christ were recorded much more precisely than those before his birth. Therefore, although Rif’at does not offer a separate periodization model in *Naqdü’t-Tevârîh*, he has a loose idea of the division of historical eras, based on the argument that historical accuracy is dependent on sources. A work such as *Naqdü’t-Tevârîh* further demonstrates that, in Rif’at’s mind, the focal point of world history was not an event in Islamic and Ottoman history. Rif’at begins with the creation of Adam, marked as year zero; continues until the year 5595, at which point he begins providing the Christian calendar alongside it; then continues until the year 6215, when he switches to the Islamic and Gregorian calendars. The count from the Creation is not included thereafter.

### *Meḥmed Murād: Tārîḥ-i ‘Umûmî (A World History), 1880–1882*

Meḥmed Murād (d. 1917) taught courses in world history and geography at the School for Civil Servants (*Mekteb-i Mülkiyye*) from the time the school was restructured in 1877. Based on his lectures at the *Mekteb*, he composed a six-volume *Tārîḥ-i ‘Umûmî* (A World History), the first edition of which was published between 1880 and 1882. The book enjoyed huge popularity and reached its third edition by 1910. It was also one of the rare world histories that was completed during the period under consideration. Murād planned to write an even longer, twelve-volume history of the Ottoman Empire, which remained unfinished but became quite popular nevertheless.<sup>42</sup>

Murād states that his world history project is an ambitious one. He mentions that his lectures had been approaching the matter in a completely new method, which no Ottoman historian had used before (*henüz lisânımızda yazılmamış bir tarzda*).<sup>43</sup> Despite his claims, the novelty of Murād’s work, compared to the treatments of world history mentioned above, is not immediately apparent. According to Murād, there are two kinds of history: *Tārîḥ-i ‘Umûmî* (A World History) is the general treatment of world history, whereas *Tārîḥ-i Huşûşî* (Particular History) is a subdivision of the

former, such as the history of a region or a country. He is to be credited for mentioning, possibly for the first time in Ottoman historiography, a variety of sources and auxiliary sciences that should be used in constructing a historical narrative, such as historical linguistics (*fenn-i elsine*), geology (*fenn-i tabakatu'l-'arz*), court records (*maḥkeme i'lāmātı*), and oral histories (*āşār-ı menķūle*).<sup>44</sup>

Murād begins his book with the narration of sacred history (*tārīḫ-i muḳaddes*), which he describes as events after the Creation for which no source exists other than sacred texts, especially the Old Testament.<sup>45</sup> Although he largely did not relate the stories of the prophets according to Islamic lore, Murād might have followed contemporaneous European historiography in creating a pre-history that heavily relied on biblical tradition. He also seems ambivalent about what to relate regarding the story of the Creation, as he briefly mentions that “according to the sacred texts” the universe was created in seven days but also mentions an account of earth’s formation based on “the scientists’ claims.”<sup>46</sup>

As for his views on historical periodization, Murād does not differ much from the aforementioned history-writers. He chooses the Hegira as the beginning of the calendar, informing his readers of the traditions that take different important events to mark the start of their calendars. Among his examples are the Creation, the birth of the Christ, the founding of Rome, and the start of the ancient Olympic games.<sup>47</sup> By the time Murād wrote his book, the tripartite division of world history had already become a familiar model among Ottoman historians. So, he, too, uses it without further comment. The events he takes for his periodization are no different than those in one of the models circulating in Europe at the time: Ancient Ages (*ezmine-i müteḳaddime*), from Adam to the fall of the Western Roman Empire; Middle Ages (*ezmine-i mütevassıta*), from the fall of the Western Roman Empire to the conquest of Constantinople; and Modern Ages (*ḳurūn-ı cedide* or *ezmine-i müte'ahḫire*), from the conquest of Constantinople to modern times.<sup>48</sup>

### *Aḫmed Midḫat: Mufaşşal Tārīḫ-i Ḳurūn-ı Cedide* (*A Complete History of the Modern Ages*, 1885–1888)

Aḫmed Midḫat (d. 1912) was a journalist who also published several popular history books, translated or adapted from French or composed by Midḫat himself. With his accessible, didactic style and wide readership, he is generally considered to have had substantial influence on the general reading public. He published a bulky *Mufaşşal Tārīḫ-i Ḳurūn-ı Cedide* (*A Complete History of the Modern Ages*) first in his own newspaper, *Tercümān-ı Aḫvāl*, and later in book format. This unfinished three-volume work has an odd arrangement in that hundreds of long notes, which do not necessarily have direct relevance to the main text, run parallel to it and literally comprise one-half of the book. The main text recounts the rise of the Ottomans and the Byzantine Empire—from its break with the Roman Empire to the Latin invasion of Constantinople (395–1204)—and offers a survey of European nations and their state of affairs at the time of the conquest of Constantinople. Furthermore, Midḫat provides a history of

Istanbul as well as a narrative of the siege and the Byzantine intellectuals who fled to Europe after the fall of the city.<sup>49</sup>

Midḥat is critical of earlier Ottoman historians because of their failure to treat non-Islamic civilizations. He had also undertaken the initiative of printing—first in his newspaper and then in more than a dozen volumes—a series of histories titled *Kā'ināt* (The Universe) from 1871 to 1881. The first part (Europe) of that series includes histories of modern European nations published in several volumes; the second part (Asia) offers only one volume, devoted to the Ottoman Empire. Midḥat's volumes represented the rise of a new concept of universalism that did not see the history of the Ottoman Empire as a chapter within Islamic history.

Contributing to the manifestation of the idea of universalism was the periodization of world history, which Midḥat discusses in detail in his introduction to the first volume. “Is the division of history into periods arbitrary?” reads his title to the introduction. Midḥat is quite convinced that the tripartite division of world history is an absolute fact. According to him, “this division is not something subjective or an arbitrary choice of historians. All the historians (*cumhūr-i müverrihîn*) agree on it.”<sup>50</sup> Several mentions of “the historians” in his introduction, no doubt, refer to European historiographical production. Furthermore, “the unanimous agreement of the historians on the periodization of history,” he declares, “grants almost a scientific nature (*fenniyyet*) to it. It is necessary to regard this structure as immutable (*lā-yatağayyer*).”<sup>51</sup>

However, Midḥat's presentation of the tripartite division as widely recognized among historians is only the first leg of his argument. He also considers this division natural. He argues that the earlier ages, for which there is little historical evidence, were the “obscure ages” (e.g., *zulmet-i mechūliyyet*), and that, accordingly, one should label the later periods, for which historical documentation does exist, as the “illuminated ages” (e.g., *kısm-ı münevver*). Because humankind did not leap from “Bedouinism” (a concept frequently used in opposition to “civilization” in the second half of the nineteenth century) to “civilization” at once, there should also be a period of transition. Therefore, according to Midḥat, a tripartite division can only be natural (*inķisām-ı ṭabīī*). The fact that the three periods are not divided evenly in terms of their span also supports his argument. The events he takes for his tripartite periodization are no different than those in one of the contemporaneous European models: Ancient Ages (*ezmine-i müteḳaddime*), from Adam to the fall of the Western Roman Empire; Middle Ages (*ezmine-i mütevassıta*), from the fall of the Western Roman Empire to the conquest of Constantinople; and Modern Ages (*ezmine-i müte'ahḫire*), from the conquest of Constantinople to modern times.<sup>52</sup>

Midḥat also offers his opinions as to which calendar to use for dating historical events. In a lengthy discussion, he objects to using the Hegira and the lunar calendar and defends the birth of Christ as the landmark for year zero in the solar calendar. This section must be a response to Meḥmed Murād's popular *Tārīḫ-i 'Umūmī*, which

had appeared only a few years before and utilized the Islamic calendar for all of world history. Ahmed Midhat's justification seems to be based on practicality. Because of the ten days of difference between the two calendars, he argues, using the lunar calendar as opposed to the solar calendar is problematic.<sup>53</sup> If "we" accepted the birth of Christ as the start of the calendar, "we would neither be isolated from all the historians, nor would we have to alter the historical periodization which has been recognized by all."<sup>54</sup>

*Ahmed Cevdet: A Response to Ahmed Midhat, 1886*

Ahmed Midhat sent a copy of the first few fascicles of his *Mufaşşal Tarih-i Kurûn-ı Cedide* (Complete History of the Modern Ages), along with a very humble letter, to Ahmed Cevdet (d. 1895), the "grand historian" of the late nineteenth century. In the letter, Midhat expresses great admiration for Cevdet's historianship, especially for rescuing "(Ottoman) historiography" (*fenn-i târih*) from mere tale-telling in favor of critical historianship through his opus magnum. The book to which he alludes is of course the *Tarih-i Devlet-i Aliyye* (History of the Ottoman Empire), a twelve-volume work that covers the empire from 1774 to 1826. Cevdet may have been regarded as somewhat out of fashion by the new generation of history-writers in the 1880s, but apparently some still considered his blessings important and prestigious.

In his response, dated May 1886, Cevdet thanks Midhat for his kind words and notes that he does not deem himself worthy of the exaggerated praises. He states that he read and studied Midhat's book and offers some critical remarks on a few points, all of which pertain to the introductory section. As becomes clear from the tone of his polite, yet skeptical, response, Cevdet found the author's arguments naive, if not outright ignorant.

After a rather detailed and learned account of the emergence and use of the Julian and Gregorian calendars, Cevdet alludes to Midhat's confusing the tripartite periodization with the Christian calendar, starting at Christ's birth. The latter was considered appropriate in Europe because of Christ's centrality to that culture. Accordingly, taking the Hegira for the start of the calendar would only be natural for Muslims. According to Cevdet, the difference between lunar and solar years is a non-issue. The period before the fifth century is also "quite obscure" in terms of historical knowledge; thus, Christ's birth was not considered the beginning of the Middle Ages.<sup>55</sup> He also does not consider the fall of the Western Roman Empire an event that had an important impact on world history: it may well have been a dramatic event for Europe but was not significant to world history in general (*'ale'l-'umûm târih-i 'âlem için*).

Cevdet does not object to Midhat's logical division of history into periods on the basis of the abundance of sound documentation. He has a modified model to offer, however: he divides history into two periods, Ancient and Modern, and proposes to regard the rise of Islam as the dividing line. He argues that the period from Adam to the rise of Islam is not sufficiently documented, and that the histories written before

then were merely unreliable stories (*ķuru ĥikāye*). According to Cevdet, it was only after the rise of Islam that historians examined the veracity of historical narration.

Before he finishes his letter—with the wise statement that all periodization is after all speculative (*bu miřilli taķsımler umūr-ı i'tibāriyyedendir*), thus once again rejecting Midĥat's Eurocentric division of world history as an absolute truth—Cevdet makes one further, curious point. He proposes dividing the Modern Age into two sections, with the invention of the printing press as the dividing line. This logic is again in accordance with his division of world history into two periods, based on the availability of information about the period in question.<sup>56</sup>

## Conclusion

Ottoman historiography traditionally took the Creation as the beginning of history and considered the lands and peoples that were under the influence of, or in direct contact with, Islamic states. The two historical turning points thereafter were the Flood and Prophet Muhammad's appearance. The first event was regarded as a logical second dawn of world history. As for the latter, it certainly was Islam centered, but because the message of the Prophet was regarded as universal, it was also seen as a landmark for world history. This model was gradually abandoned in the second half of the nineteenth century and a new scheme was adopted.

Another, albeit less common, scheme was to treat history after the rise of Islam by centuries. Müneccimbaşı, as we have seen above, chose to list the Islamic dynasties chronologically, grouped by centuries, after narrating the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties in detail. Although dividing Islamic history into centuries was an approach that developed within the Islamic tradition, it became only somewhat popular. This division is usually understood to have risen from the concept that Islamic tradition expected a religious regeneration under the leadership of a spiritual (and/or political) ruler every hundred years after Hegira. Some nineteenth-century history-writers also experimented with this scheme with regards to Ottoman history. Aĥmed Vefik, for example, grouped Ottoman sultans under centuries in his textbook *Fezleke-i Tārīĥ-i 'Ořmānī* (A Résumé of Ottoman History, 1869). Aĥmed Cevdet, too, made use of the scheme in his *Tārīĥ*'s second edition (1884–1886).<sup>57</sup>

The shift from a long-established periodization scheme to a new model occurred as a result of several factors, among which new approaches to sources feature prominently. Changes in mentality and worldview do not occur over short periods of time, a statement especially valid for historical consciousness. In fact, emerging approaches to historical sources are evident before the period this essay focuses on, notably with řānizāde Meĥmed, a court annalist who composed his history in the early 1820s. řānizāde introduces and praises unusual sources for Ottoman historians as solid evidence that cannot be dismissed in historical writing: archeological finds (such as the Egyptian pyramids), statues, drawings, and inscriptions.<sup>58</sup>

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, most Ottoman historians came to approach historical sources with a positivist perspective. A narrative of pre-historic times based on sacred texts gradually became impossible to substantiate. Consequently, the new qualification of sources led to a detachment of “sacred history” from the “history of civilizations,” which would be the first step in completely removing such accounts as the stories of prophets from world histories,<sup>59</sup> as they came to be seen as stories without proper historical documentation.

A general disapproval of the traditional methodology of imperial annalists had already been on the rise in the 1840s. Although such criticism was not about periodization models per se, the general attitude can certainly be taken as evidence that the Ottoman intellectual mind was ripe for questioning long-established historical methods and patterns and apparently receptive to new ones. Criticism centered around the fact that the annalists recorded events in chronological order without seeking to elucidate any causal relationship between them, and that they were writing to justify the actions of powerful statesmen. Even an appointed imperial annalist, Recâî Mehmed (d. 1874), found the tradition problematic by the late 1840s, as becomes clear from a petition he submitted to the grand vizier; he considered the unilateral nature of the sources to be the primary shortcoming of the annals written by his predecessors.<sup>60</sup>

Although Ottoman historians did not make use of the new types of sources directly, appreciation for them led to an admiration of historiography that utilized them extensively. Eventually, a periodization that partitioned all known history of the world in three main periods was adopted by Ottoman intellectuals who aspired to replicate a “scientific” historiography that became professionalized first in German academia and then in other places in Europe during the nineteenth century. The new historiography, an important component of which was the tripartite division, was accordingly labeled the “new method” (*uṣūl-i cedīd*) by several history-writers of the later nineteenth century.<sup>61</sup> It seems that the tripartite division as a format was imported rather mechanically and presented as absolute fact. No doubt it would have been impossible for Ottoman intellectuals to invent a much altered periodization scheme when European historiography made use of an overwhelming body of sources and auxiliary sciences. Ottoman scholarship had made no original contribution to non-Ottoman historiography by this time. Hence, major events that mark turning points in the European scheme were simply replaced with those from Islamic and Ottoman history. There seems to be a consensus that the scarcity or abundance of sources for each of these periods was the justification for the tripartite division.

Still, the ready acceptance of the tripartite division of history in the Ottoman intellectual milieu must be considered within the framework of Ottoman intellectual history and the emergence of a new notion of universalism. The new universalists did not consider Ottoman history the final phase of Islamic and world history, nor did they consider the world to be deteriorating toward its inevitable destruction, that is,

Judgment Day. The idea that by every lived day the world was approaching its cataclysmic end is deeply rooted in Christian and Islamic belief systems and can also be traced to Ancient Greek thought. History was now viewed as an optimistic story of progress—much in line with contemporary European views of history. Aḥmed Midḥat, for example, describes history as “the account of the progress of humankind and civilization.” A progressive story of world history logically required a division that developed from old (ancient) to new (modern). The scheme that had partitioned Islamic history into centuries, as we have seen above, viewed Islamic history as a linear story, but not a progressive one.

There was also a political aspect to the idea of a progressive history. As mentioned, Aḥmed Ḥilmî explains at length—in an afterword to his discussion of the Ancient Ages—that the common people were oppressed and treated with injustice by absolute monarchs. Whatever the rulers proclaimed was taken as law, he laments. Ancient history can be characterized, in his words, by plundering, execution, injustice, and transgression—acts that conflicted with ideals such as “justice and humanity” (*ḥakḳaniyyet ve insāniyyet*).<sup>62</sup> Yet, the history of the Ancient Ages also proved that people in a state of savagery constantly strived to transform themselves into a state of civilization.<sup>63</sup> Surely, the monarchy’s decline in popularity during the nineteenth century, and the growing admiration for popular participation in government, was the backdrop of such statements. History-writing was, as always, a medium that was used to reflect political views.

Another development that facilitated the rise of the “new method” in historiography was the democratization of historical writing in the Ottoman lands. Due to the educational policies of the nineteenth century and increasing printing opportunities, there was a rapid growth in the number of histories, the variety of subjects they covered, and the methodologies utilized. With new histories emerging in parallel, the city of Istanbul, the imperial court, and the central bureaucracy ceased to be the only centers of historical production. The professional background of history-writers changed, as well. In addition to historians from scribal careers, or those with close connections to the court, now freelance history-writers, modernizing military officers, and journalists (a new profession) composed or translated popular works or textbooks. The ulema, traditionally a prolific group in all kinds of writing activities, did not compose or translate any works in subjects under consideration here.

The tripartite division remained the only scheme used in modern Turkish historiography and had a great impact on Turkish historical consciousness throughout the twentieth century. Its adoption in the late nineteenth century was the result of an effort to integrate Ottoman-Turkish historiography with a tradition that claimed to have divided world history into periods “scientifically.” Whether prompted by current historiographical outlooks on world history or by nationalistic incentives, many modern historians highlight the Eurocentric nature of the scheme and question the validity of such a model for world history.<sup>64</sup>

## Appendix: Books Examined in This Essay

Historian	Work	Composed or Published	Period Covered
Şükru'llāh (d. 1488)	<i>Bahjat al-Tawārikh</i>	late 1450s	from the Creation to the 1450s
Muştafā 'Alī (d. 1600)	<i>Kūnhül-Aḥbār</i>	1590s	from the Creation to the late 1500s
Ḳaraçelebizāde 'Abdül'azīz (d. 1658)	<i>Ravzatü'l-Ebrār</i>	1648	from the Creation to 1646
Müneccimbaşı Aḥmed (d. 1702)	<i>Jāmi' al-Duwal</i>	1672	from the Creation to 1672
Ferā'izzāde Meḥmed Sa'īd (d. 1835)	<i>Gülşen-i Ma'ārif</i>	completed 1834 published 1836	from Adam to 1774
Aḥmed Vefīk (d. 1891)	<i>Ḥikmet-i Tārīḥ</i>	lectures delivered at the University in March 1863	from the Creation to the Modern Ages
Aḥmed İhilmī (d. 1878)	<i>Tārīḥ-i 'Umūmī</i> , 6 vols. (at least the first two volumes translated from William Chambers)	1866–1878	from the Ancient Ages to the Middle Ages (incomplete)
Meḥmed Ātıf (d. 1908 or 1909)	<i>Ḥulāşatü't-Tevārīḥ</i>	1872–1873	from the Creation to Ancient Greece (incomplete)
Süleymān Ḥüsnī (d. 1892)	<i>Tārīḥ-i 'Alemler</i> , 1: <i>Ḳurūn-ı Ulā</i>	1876	from the Creation to the Hegira (incomplete)
Rıf'at Efendi (d. 1895)	<i>Naḳdü't-Tevārīḥ</i>	1879	from the Creation to 1879
Meḥmed Murād (d. 1917)	<i>Tārīḥ-i 'Umūmī</i>	1880–1882	from the Creation to modern times
Aḥmed Midḥat (d. 1912)	<i>Mufaşşal Tārīḥ-i Ḳurūn-ı Cedide</i> , 3 vols.	1885–1888	begins with the rise of the Ottomans
Aḥmed Cevdet (d. 1895)	Included in the <i>Tezākir</i>	letter written in 1886	a critique of Aḥmed Midḥat's <i>Mufaşşal Ḳurūn-ı Cedide Tārīḥi</i>

## Notes

1. I have placed the adjective “scientific” in quotation marks because, while modern historians appreciate the limited validity (or invalidity) of all-encompassing historical models, the periodization scheme under consideration was accepted and promoted by members of the newly professional discipline of history in Europe, who conferred to it the illusion of scientific authority. A survey of developments in European historiography in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can be found in

Georg Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover, N.H.: Wesleyan University Press, 1997).

2. For an overview of European periodizations of world history, see William A. Green, "Periodization in European and World History," *Journal of World History* 3, no. 1 (1992): 13–53, 16 ff.

3. *Na'imā Tārīhi* (Istanbul, 1281–1283/1864–1866), I, 26 f., quoted in Gottfried Hagen, "Afterword," in Robert Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality: The World of Evliya Çelebi* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 242.

4. Franz Babinger, *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke* (Leipzig: Otto Harrasowitz, 1927) lists at least a dozen universal histories alone for the sixteenth century.

5. An overview of various forms of early Islamic history-writing can be found in Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 1968). Also see the individual articles for the abovementioned historians in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. For an evaluation and translation of chapters on non-Islamic history by these authors, see Karl Jahn, ed., *Die Frankengeschichte des Rašīd ad-dīn* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1977); Karl Jahn, ed., *Die Indiangeschichte des Rašīd ad-Dīn: Einleitung, vollständige Übersetzung, Kommentar und 80 Texttafeln* (The Hague: Mouton, 1965); and other studies by Jahn. For al-Ya'qūbī, see Aḥmad ibn Abī Ya'qūb Ya'qūbī, *Ibn-Wādhīh qui dicitur al-Ja'qūbī historiae*, ed. M. Th. Houtsma (Leiden: Brill, 1883), part 1: Pre-Islamic History.

6. Camilla Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible, from Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 117–120.

7. Muştafā 'Āli, *Künhül-Aḥbār* (Istanbul: Taḳvīmḥāne-i Āmire, 1861), 1:262.

8. Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Muştafā 'Āli (1541–1600)* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), 240.

9. Şükrullāh, *Bahjat al-Tavārikh* (Splendor of Histories), composed ca. 1458. *Chapter 1 (bāb)*: Creation of the universe and creatures (in two versions), sky, stars, constellations, four elements, nature, people who live in the seven climes. Creation of the souls and bodies of humankind. Characteristics of humankind. Creation of the simple and complex limbs of humans. Earth. Seven seas. Seven climes. Inhabitants of the earth. China and Chinese people. The nine Turkish tribes. Greeks. Arabs. Hindus and Sinds. Abyssinians. Tekrur (Sudanese). People whose character does not conform to that of a human being. *Chapter 2*: History of the prophets mentioned in the Qur'an: Adam, Seth, Idris, Noah, Hud, Salih, Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, David, Suleiman, Jesus. *Chapter 3*: The genealogy of the Prophet Muhammad. Quraish Tribe. Sons of Hashim. *Chapter 4*: Birth of the Prophet Muhammad in seven subsections (*faşl*). (1) Amina's pregnancy. (2) The miracles of the Prophet as recorded in the six reliable hadith collections. (3) The Prophet's battles. (4) His army. (5) His slaves. (6) His scribes and other servants. (7) His weapons. *Chapter 5*: (1) His wives. (2) His children. (3) His uncles and cousins. (4) His aunts. *Chapter 6*: The ten companions of the Prophet. Their genealogies, how long they lived. *Chapter 7*: (1) The rest of the companions of the Prophet. (2) The companions and the sequence of their death. (3) Those who memorized the Qur'an and those who were experts of law. (4) Those companions who transmitted sayings of the Prophet. *Chapter 8*: Imams: (1) Imams of the four schools of jurisprudence. (2) Six imams who compiled the sayings of the Prophet. (3) Eight imams whose fatwas are recognized. *Chapter 9*: Sheikhs. *Chapter 10*: Most significant philosophers of the Greeks and other people. *Chapter 11*: Kings of the infidels and the believers: (1) First dynasty of the Persian kings. (2) Kayanids. (3) Ashkanids (Parthia). (4) Sassanids. *Chapter 12*: Umayyads, Abbasids, Fatimids, Seljuks. *Chapter 13*: Ottomans until Sultan Mehmed II.

10. Muştafā 'Āli, *Künhül-Aḥbār* (Essence of Histories), composed 1590s. *Pillar 1*: The reason for composing the book. Layout of the book. General introduction. Benefits of historiography. The Creation: (several different traditions). The Prophet's light, this world and other world. The Throne. The *lawh*, that is, the tablet on which the predestination is inscribed, the throne of God. Skies and earth. Angels, jinns, Satan. Paradise and Hell. The Kaaba. The wonders of creation. Sun and moon,

rainbows, clouds, thunders, and so forth. Beasts. Sea creatures. Geography: the seas, islands, climes, countries. Ancient nations, their religion and customs. Syrians/Sabeans, Copts, Persians, Arabs, “Romans,” Armenians, Russians, Khazars, Bulgars, Tatars, Circassians, Wallachians, Transylvanians, Moldavians, Jews, Greeks, Christians. Languages. Notes on historiography. Number of prophets. The descents of Gabriel. History of jinns and the Devil. The prophets before the Deluge: Adam, Seth, Idris, Noah. The Deluge. The sons of Noah (Sam, Japheth), and their descendants. The prophets after the Deluge: Hud, Salih, Alexander Dhulqarneyn, Abraham, Lot, Ismael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph. Construction of Mecca. The non-Muslim postdiluvian kings: ancient Egypt, Coptic kings, Babylon. *Pillar 2*: The prophets (continued): Joseph, Job, Shuayb, Moses, Jonah, David, Suleiman, Zacharia, John, Jesus. Prophet Muhammad. His genealogy, miracles, night journey to the heavens, his slaves, and so forth. The four rightly guided Caliphs. The ten companions of the Prophet who were promised Paradise. Companions of the Prophet. The imams of the four schools of law. Experts of the Prophet’s sayings. Those who memorized the Qur’an. Ḥasan and Ḥussain, the grandsons of the Prophet. The twelve imams. The Mahdi. The Persian kings and Ptolemies. The first dynasty, Kayanids, Ashkanids, Sassanids, Ptolemies. *Pillar 3*: The dynasties of North Africa, Egypt, and Syria: Tulunids, Ikhshidids, Fatimids, Ayyubids, Mamluks. The Circassian Mamluks. Caliphate until the fall of Baghdad: Umayyads, Abbasids. The dynasties of central and eastern Islamic world I: Timurids, Safavids, Shaybanids, Aqqoyunlu, Qaraqoyunlu, Dulkadrids, sultans of Hind, Gujarat, Jawnpur, Sind, Mazandaran, Turkomans, and so forth. The dynasties of central and eastern Islamic world II: Samanids, Danishmendids, Khwarazm Shahs, Ilkhanids, Mongols, Giray Khans, and so on. Two dynasties of the central and northwestern Islamic world: Timurids, Anatolian Seljuks. *Pillar 4*: Contemporary Islamic rulers and infidel rulers, indicating their relations with the Ottomans. The character of Albanians, Franks, Hungarians, Germans, and so forth, as state officials. Notes on physiognomy. The Ottomans: their genealogy, battles, important events, lists of scholars, and so on. A detailed account of Ottoman history until the 1590s classified according to the reigns of the sultans.

11. *Ḳaraçelebizâde ‘Abdül’azîz, Ravzatü’l-Ebrâr* (The Garden of the Pious), composed 1648. Chapters: the Prophets (Adam, Seth, Idris, Noah, etc.) (pp. 4–99); Prophet Muhammad, his family, wars, and so forth (pp. 99–126); the four rightly guided Caliphs (pp. 127–141); the rise and fall of the Islamic dynasties: Umayyads, Qaramatians, Ghaznavids, Buyids, Khwarezmian dynasty, Crusades, Ghurids, Abbasids, Seljuks, Karaman, Hulagu (pp. 141–275); the rise of the Ottomans (pp. 275–288); the fall of the Mamluks (pp. 288–319); Safavids (Kızılbaş) (pp. 319–338); a detailed account of Ottoman history (later sections recount contemporary history) (pp. 338–628).

12. Albert Dietrich, “A propos d’un précis d’histoire gréco-romaine dans la chronique universelle arabe de Müneccimbaşı,” *V. Congrès international d’arabisants et d’islamistes: 31 août –septembre 1970, Bruxelles* (Bruxelles: Centre pour l’Étude des Problèmes du Monde Musulman Contemporain, 1971), 175–188.

13. For example, see the passage in which he narrates the Spanish kings until 1681, that is, the date that section was composed (mentioning the reigning Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I); cf. Müneccimbaşı Aḥmed, *Jamī’ al-Duwal*, Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul. Esad Efendi 2101, fol. 136a. Partially condensed contents: sources, calendars. *Book 1. The Creation, Prophets*: The Creation. Prophet Adam and his descendants. Twenty-four other prophets. Prophets sent to the Israelites. Dynasties in the Arabian Peninsula before Islam. The origins of the tribe Quraish. History of Mecca. Birth of the Prophet Muhammad. His early childhood in Mecca. The four rightly guided Caliphs. *Book 2: 2a. Dynasties and Peoples before Islam*: The first dynasty (Pishdadiyan). Dynasties in ancient Syria. Ghassanids, Persians, Greeks, Amalekites, Copts, Hindus, Turks, Tatars, Turkoman tribes. Chinese, Bulgars, Russians, Georgians. Franks, English, Spaniards. History of the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, and the Adriatic Sea. Sassanids. Ad, Tamud, and so forth. Ghassanids and ancient Arabian tribes. Byzantines. Austrians. Spaniards. Armenians. Egyptian history

before and after the Deluge. The tribes after the Deluge and the descendants of Israelites. Tribes in Mesopotamia. Rulers of India and China. 2b. *Dynasties and Peoples after Islam*: Umayyads. Andalusian Umayyads. Abbasids. Aghlabids. Tahirids. Samanids. Rulers of Kirman. Gurgan, Kharezm, Simjurids, Ghaznawids. Tulunids. Hamdanids. Ihshidids. Basra, Wasit emirate. [From here a division according to centuries commences:] (Rulers in Gilan and Ruyan) Dabuyid dynasty, and so on. Rustamids. Idrisites. Daylamites, emirates in Sicily. North Africa. Ismailites. Buyids. Shaddadids. Seljuks. Danishmend. Emirs of Khuzistan, Khorasan. Kara Khitay. Almoravids, Almohads. Lurs, Kurds. Ghurids. Ayyubids. Circassians of Egypt. Sharifs of Makka and Madina. Principalities in the Persian Gulf. Mongols. Chagatais. Descendants of Genghis Khan. Chobanids, Ilkhanids, Jalayirids. Princes of Khorasan. Muzaffirids of Iran. Ahmarids of Andalusia. Marinids of North Africa. Zaydi sharifs of Yemen. Zaydi imams of Yemen. Rulers of the Island Hurmuz. Qaramanids. Principalities in Anatolia (Isfendiyar, Pervane, Aydın, Kermiyan, Menteşe, Hamid, Teke, Qarasi, Canik, Qadı Burhaneddin). Timurids. The emirates in India. Bahmanids. The emirates in Kashgar. Kashmir. Qaraqoyunlu. Aqqoyunlu. Dulqadrids. Banu Ramadan. Rulers of Shirvan. Safavids. Zaydis in Yemen. Sharifs of North Africa. [Ottomans:] Beginnings of the Ottomans: Ertugrul Gazi. Osman Gazi . . . a detailed history of individual sultans until the accession to the throne of Mehmed IV.

14. Abdülkadir Özcan, "Feraizade Mehmed Said," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 12 (1995), 366–67.

15. Ferâizizâde Meḫmed Sa'îd, *Gülşen-i Ma'ârif* (The Rose Garden of Knowledge), published 1836. *Volume 1*: Articles of faith in Sunni Islam (p. 2); angels (pp. 4–6); holy books (pp. 6–7); the rest of the articles of faith (p. 8); prophets: Adam, Seth, Idris, Noah, Hud, Salih, Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Suleiman, Jesus (pp. 9–63); life of the Prophet Muhammad (pp. 63–136); companions of the Prophet (pp. 136–175); the imams, sheikhs (pp. 176–223); Pihdadidiyan, Kayanids, Sassanids, Ashkanids, Umayyads, Abbasids, Samanids, Seljuks, rulers of Khwarezm, Khorasan, Kuhistan, and so forth. Turkish, Circassian, Genghisid, Timurid, Turkoman rulers (pp. 223–411); detailed account of Ottoman history (pp. 411–847). *Volume 2*: Detailed account of Ottoman history (pp. 850–1693).

16. Muştafâ 'Âli, *Künhül-Aḥbâr*, 1:260.

17. For example, Ḳaraçelebizâde 'Abdül'azîz, *Ravzatü'l-Ebrâr* (Cairo: Maḥba'a-i Bulâk, 1832), 12; and Aḫmed Vefîk, *Hikmet-i Târîḫ* (Istanbul, 1886), 29.

18. Muştafâ 'Âli, *Künhül-Aḥbâr*, 1:261.

19. Fleischer details the topic in his *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire*, 273 ff. Adshead characterizes the Mongol conquests under Genghis Khan and his successors as a massive explosion that "started" history and affected even those parts of the world that were not physically penetrated by the Mongols. See Samuel Adrian M. Adshead, *Central Asia in World History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 53.

20. Muştafâ 'Âli, *Künhül-Aḥbâr*, I, 260–261.

21. For some of the activities and publications of the Academy of Sciences, see Ahmet Karaçavuş, "Tanzimat Dönemi Osmanlı Bilim Cemiyetleri" (PhD diss., Ankara University, 2006), 112 ff., esp. 172 ff. Cf. Kenan Akyüz, *Encümen-i Dâniş* (Ankara: [Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Yayınları], 1975). See also Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *XIX. Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, ed. Abdullah Uçman (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2006), 139–141.

22. The booklet ends abruptly in the middle of a sentence, with a catchword for the next page, which might indicate that more was typeset but not printed. The reason why the booklet remained incomplete cannot be determined.

23. Somel disputes the assertion that history as a course was instructed as early as 1839 at schools, or even later during the 1850s. See Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839–1908: Islamization, Autocracy, and Discipline* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 194.

24. Oğuzhan Alpaslan, "A. Vefik Paşa ve Çağdaş Dönem ilk Osmanlı Tarih Metodolojisi Kitabı *Hikmet-i Tarih*," *Muhafazakâr Düşünce* 2, no. 7 (2006): 197–218; cf. Tahir Nakıp, *Osmanlı Devletinde Geç Dönem Tarih-i Umumiler* (MA thesis, Marmara University, 2006), 26 ff.

25. Aḥmed Vefik, *Hikmet-i Tarih*, 7–8.

26. *Ibid.*, 8.

27. *Ibid.*, 13.

28. What follows is Aḥmed Vefik's periodization of world history: *Ancient Ages* (*ezmine-i müteḳaddime*; or, alternatively, *ezmine-i ḳadime*): First era (*faşl*): 2550 years (Adam sent to earth; the Deluge; histories composed in Greece; end of the Assyrian Empire); Second era: 440 years (rise of the Achaemenid [Persian] Empire; Alexander halts the Persians); Third era: 300 years (founding of Rome; death of Alexander; birth of Christ); Fourth era: 622 years (fall of the Western Roman Empire; barbarian tribes invade Europe; Hegira). *Middle Ages* (*ezmine-i mütevassıta*): First era: two centuries (Islam spreads in Turkistan, Hindustan, and Europe; barbarian tribes in Europe); Second era: three centuries (the Caliphate splits in two; influence of the popes increases; rise of feudal lords); Third era: two centuries (Crusades; Genghis Khan; Holy Roman Empire); Fourth era: two centuries (Timur; advance of the Ottomans and Genoese; Renaissance and Reformation in Europe; invention of gunpowder and firearms). *Modern Ages* (*ezmine-i cedide* or *mu'ahḫara*): First era (conquest of Constantinople; discovery of the New World); Second era: 170 years (rise of Shi'ites in the East and Protestants in the West; rise of the Ottomans and Spain); Third era: 135 years (Mongol invasion of China; power of Hindustan, France, Netherlands, and Russia increases); Fourth era: 40 years (French Republic; Napoleonic Wars; founding of the United States; British naval power increases; the "Auspicious Event" [Abolition of the Janissary corps]).

29. Aḥmed Ḥilmi, *Tarih-i 'Umumi*, (Istanbul: Maṭba'a-i 'amire, 1866–1878), 1:4.

30. *Ibid.*, 2:334 ff.

31. I was not able to locate the third, fourth, and fifth volumes of this work.

32. William Chambers vs. Aḥmed Ḥilmi: Ancient Ages (from Adam to the fall of the Roman Empire) vs. *Ezmine-i müteḳaddime* (from Adam to the Hegira); Middle Ages (from the fall of the Roman Empire to the discovery of the New World) vs. *Ezmine-i mütevassıta* (from the Hegira to the conquest of Constantinople); Modern Ages (from the discovery of the New World to author's time) vs. *Ezmine-i müte'ahḫire* (from the conquest of Constantinople to translator's time).

33. Meḫmed 'Ātif, *Ḥulāṣatü't-Tevārîḫ* (Istanbul: Muḫibb Maṭba'ası, 1872 or 1873), 3.

34. "European historians" vs. Meḫmed 'Ātif: Initial Ages (from the Creation to the fall of the Western Roman Empire) vs. *Ḳurün-i ülā* (from the Creation to the Hegira); Middle Ages (from fall of the Western Roman Empire to the conquest of Constantinople) vs. *Ḳurün-i vusṭā* (from the Hegira to the conquest of Constantinople); Later Ages (from the conquest of Constantinople to author's time) vs. *Ḳurün-i ahire* (from the conquest of Constantinople to the translator's time).

35. For example: Initial Ages (*ḳurün-i ülā*): (1) Primary times (*ezmine-i evveliyye*): twenty-five centuries (events before the Deluge); (2) Mythical times (*ezmine-i esâḫiriyye*): seventeen centuries (from the establishment of historical states to the founding of Rome); (3) Historical times (*ezmine-i târihiyye*): thirteen centuries (from the founding of Rome to the collapse of the Western Roman Empire).

36. The date 27 May 1876, which is recorded at the end of the book, must be the day on which the book went to press. However, the introduction includes a tribute to Murad V (p. 5), who would be enthroned on May 30 and rule as sultan until August 31, 1876. The introduction must have been adjusted after May 30.

37. Süleymân Ḥüsni, *Tarih-i 'Alemler*, 1: *Ḳurün-i Ülā* (Istanbul: Mekteb-i Fünün-i Ḥarbiyye Maṭba'ası, 1876), 2.

38. Initial Ages (*ḳurün-i ülā* or *tarih-i ḳadim*) (from Adam to the Hegira); Middle Ages (*ḳurün-i vusṭā*) (from the Hegira to the appearance of the Ottoman dynasty [ca. 1300]); Modern Ages (*ḳurün-i*

*aḥîre* or *ḡurûn-ı cedîde*) (from the appearance of the Ottoman dynasty to the founding of the “Nizam-ı Cedid” and the destruction of the Janissary corps [1826]); Contemporary times (*târîḡ-i aṣr*) (from the destruction of the Janissary corps to the author’s time).

39. Süleymân Hüsni’s division of pre-historic times, which differs somewhat from Meḡmed ‘Âṭıf’s model, is as follows: Ancient History (*târîḡ-i ḡadîm*): (1) Primary times (*ezmine-i evveliyye*): (a) the era of Adam (*aḡd-i Âdem*) (events before the Flood), (b) the era of Noah (*aḡd-i Nûḡ*) (until the establishment of the historical states); (2) Mythical times (*ezmine-i esâtiriyye*) (from the establishment of historical states to the founding of Rome); (3) Historical times (*ezmine-i târiḡiyye*) (from the founding of Rome to the Hegira).

40. Rifat Efendi, *Naḡdû’t-Tevârîḡ* (Istanbul: Yahyâ Efendi Maṭba’ası, 1879), 2.

41. *Ibid.*, 3.

42. Christoph Herzog, *Geschichte und Ideologie: Meḡmed Murâd und Celal Nuri über die historischen Ursachen des osmanischen Niedergangs* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 1996).

43. Meḡmed Murâd, *Târîḡ-i ‘Umûmî* (Istanbul: Maḡmûd Bey Maṭba’ası, 1880–1882), 1:2–3.

44. *Ibid.*, 1:7.

45. *Ibid.*, 1: 14.

46. *Ibid.*, 1: 10–11.

47. *Ibid.*, 1: 9.

48. Initial Ages (*ḡurûn-ı ûlâ* or *ezmine-i müteḡaddime*) (from the Creation to the fall of the Western Roman Empire); Middle Ages (*ḡurûn-ı vusṭâ* or *ezmine-i mütevassıṭa*) (from the fall of the Western Roman Empire to the conquest of Constantinople); Modern Ages (*ḡurûn-ı cedîde* or *ezmine-i müte’ahḡire*) (from the conquest of Constantinople to modern times).

49. On Aḡmed Midḡat’s treatment of Byzantine history, see Michael Ursinus, “Byzantine History in Late Ottoman Turkish Historiography,” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 10 (1986): 211–222.

50. Aḡmed Midḡat, *Mufaṣṣal Târîḡ-i ḡurûn-ı Cedîde* (Istanbul, 1885–1888), 1:7.

51. *Ibid.*, 1: 9.

52. Ancient Ages (*ezmine-i müteḡaddime* or *ḡurûn-ı ḡadîme*) (from Adam to the fall of the Western Roman Empire); Middle Ages (*ezmine-i mütevassıṭa* or *ḡurûn-ı vusṭâ*) (from the fall of the Western Roman Empire to the conquest of Constantinople); Modern Ages (*ezmine-i müte’ahḡire* or *ḡurûn-ı cedîde*) (from the conquest of Constantinople to modern times).

53. Midḡat cites a “witty” observation that the difference would create confusion in that both calendars would have the same date after centuries; Aḡmed Midḡat, *Mufaṣṣal Târîḡ-i ḡurûn-ı Cedîde* 1: 8. That would be the year 20,875 in the Gregorian calendar.

54. Aḡmed Midḡat, *Mufaṣṣal Târîḡ-i ḡurûn-ı Cedîde* 1:8–9: “Cumḡûr-ı müverriḡinden ayrılmamıṣ ve târiḡiñ cümle nezdinde maḡbûl taḡsîmât-ı esâsiyyesini . . .”

55. Aḡmed Cevdet, *Tezâkir 40-Tetimme*, ed. Cavid Baysun (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1991), 242.

56. Ancient Ages (*târîḡ-i atîḡ*) (from Adam to the rise of Islam); Modern Ages (*aṣr-ı cedîd*) (from the rise of Islam to modern times, divided into two at the invention of the printing press).

57. Cf. Christoph Neumann, *Das indirekte Argument: ein Plädoyer für die Tanẓimât vermittels der Historie. Die geschichtliche Bedeutung von Aḡmed Cevdet Paṣas Ta’riḡ* (Münster: Lit, 1994), 105–106.

58. Şânîzâde Meḡmed Atâ’ullah Efendi, *Şânîzâde Târîḡi*, ed. Ziya Yılmaz (Istanbul: Çamlıca, 2008), 1:15 ff.

59. Several of the authors mentioned here discuss the separation of “sacred history” (*muḡaddes*) and “general history” (*âmm*) (the latter also appearing as “history of civilization,” *târîḡ-i temeddûn*); for example, cf. Aḡmed Hîlmî, *Târîḡ-i ‘Umûmî*, 2:334; Süleymân Hüsni, *Târîḡ-i Âlem*, 1: *ḡurûn-ı Ulâ*, 2, et. al.

60. Recorded in Meḡmed Cemâleddîn, *‘Oṣmânlı Târîḡ ve Müverriḡleri: Âyîne-i Zurefâ* (Istanbul: İkdâm, 1896–1897), 105–111. See Cemal Kafadar and Hakan Karateke, “Late Ottoman and Early

Republican Turkish Historiography,” *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, Volume 4: 1800–1945, ed. Stuart Macintyre et. al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 559–577.

61. The term *uşûl-i cedîd* was in circulation with respect to educational policies in the 1870s. The reflection in historiography can rightly be seen as a response to that policy. See Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire*, 169 ff.

62. Aḥmed Hilmî, *Târîḫ-i ‘Umûmî*, 2:339.

63. Aḥmed Hilmî, *Târîḫ-i ‘Umûmî*, 2:337: “Tevârîḫ-i kadîme işbât eder ki hâl-i vahşiyetden çıkan milletlerde müşâhede eyledigimiz teraḫḫî gibi milel-i kadîme daḫi vahşiyet hâlinde bulduḫları zamânlarda medeniyyet-i hâlete teraḫḫî eylemege sa’y ederler imiş”; see also: Meḫmed Murâd, *Târîḫ-i ‘Umûmî*, I, 4: “Evlâd-i beşeriñ hâl-i vahşet ve bedeviyetden çıkıp bugünkü ‘umrân ve medeniyyet hâline gelinceye kadar teşâdüf eylediği ahvâl.”

64. For a critical assessment of Eurocentric periodization of world history from an Islamic viewpoint, see Khalid Blankinship, “Islam and World History: Towards a New Periodization,” *American Journal of Islamic Social Science* 8, no. 3 (1991), 423–439. For a rather blunt criticism of the Christian and Eurocentric nature of the tripartite periodization model, see Necmettin Alkan, “Tarihin Çağlara Ayrılmasında ‘Üç’lü Sistem ve ‘Avrupa Merkezci’ Tarih Kurgusu,” *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 2, no. 9 (2009): 23–42.