

Yayın Değerlendirme / Book Reviews

Ötüken'den Kırım'a Türk Dünyası Kültür Tarihi / Turkish World Cultural History from Ötüken to Crimea. Ed. Ahmet Kanlıdere and İlyas Kemaloğlu, Ötüken Press, 2021.*

Başak Kuzakçı**

The book titled “Turkish World Cultural History from Ötüken to Crimea” was prepared in the editorial of Ahmet Kanlıdere and İlyas Kemaloğlu who have international works in the field of Turkish cultural and political history. The study is composed of 18 chapters, including the “Introduction Part”. The book has 541 pages in total, including the contributors’ chapter, information on the index and authors. The book is designed to compile information about the cultural history of the Turkish World until now, to make disclaimers where necessary, and to replicate the literature from the past about the history of the current Turkish World with the current writing. The statement by the editors, “All the topics we can address under the culture roof are the common value of all Turks that spread across the wide geography” can be considered as the main reason for the approach to cultural history.

The chapters of the book were written by academics who contributed to the field in the international arena and produced original knowledge. It is understood from the short description about the authors in the title “Contributors” at the end of the work. The authors of chapters have compiled an up-to-date and holistic text on the subjects, they have dealt with by correct-

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ing the erroneous information in the historiography by combining the old and new literature about the period studied.

In the book, which examines the historical process in cultural history perspective from the Asian Hun State, which is considered to have been founded in 209 BC, to the sociological and economic transformation of the Turks under the USSR's roof in the 20th century, it is necessary to determine certain common themes, since the state organizations established in quite different time periods and different historical geographies are the subjects. Although a complete unity of style and approach is not expected in the editorial work, the perspective of cultural history is presented in a conceptual framework by the editors in the introduction of the work, and in the world historiography in the 20th century -Turkish historiography is still seen outside the aforesaid trend- explaining the concept developed about cultural history, which has a serious place, the borders drawn, and the elements evaluated under the umbrella of cultural history will certainly serve as an important guide for the readers. The writers of the book state that there is no editorial interference in the content of the articles, but only in terms of form such as spelling and annotation association. Also, the emergence of a basic methodological/theoretical approach contributes to the acquisition of the book as a handbook of the cultural history of the Turkish World and to the emergence of monographs on cultural history.

The "Introduction" chapter was written by Ahmet Kanlıdere, who evaluated the works prepared in general on the history of Central Asia, the main geographical centre of the Turkish World (pp. 15-37). This chapter is also considered as the first part of the book. The introduction is very important in terms of presenting the main works on Central Asian Turkish history and culture, explaining their characteristics, and presenting a kind of inventory of the knowledge that has been revealed until today, in other words, the historiographic balance sheet of Central Asian Turkish history.

The second part of the History of the Turkish Cultural World from Ötüken to the Crimea is divided into "Asian Huns, White Huns/Hephthalites, and Tabghach", the earliest state formations of Central Asia, taking into account the chronology (pp. 39-59). This chapter was written by Tilla Deniz Baykuzu, one of the distinguished experts in the history of the Asian Hun State. Firstly, the different uses of the name Hun in Chinese, Indian, and

Roman sources are mentioned, and the political history of the Asian Hun Empire is introduced (209 BC-216 AD). Baykuzu, preferring a detailed narrative about the Hun state organization, revealed the titles of the rulers, the administrative hierarchy, the administrative system based on functional separation, the periodically primogeniture succession system (seniority) or the merit-based succession system during the enthronement, and finally the functions of the congress in the state administration. The “animal style” seen in the Hun ornamental arts and the “Pazyryk Carpet” found in the Pazyryk kurgan is expressed as the basic cultural products of the Hun art or the earliest Turkish culture. The perspective presented on the earliest history of the Turks also explains the course of the Turkish cultural history in the later periods. Acculturation, cultural interaction, and dominant cultural structure can be mentioned among the main characteristics of the cultural history of the Turkish World.

In the third part of the work, keeping the chronological perspective, “Gök Turks” is examined in the context of cultural history by Ahmet Taşağıl who is expertise in Gök Turks studies (pp. 61-79). Taşağıl wrote the chapter directly based on the Chinese sources of the period, the Chinese Annals, which contain records about the Gök Turks. Presenting the administration order revealed by the Gök Turk Empire as the model of the Turkish Government understanding that extends to the present day, Taşağıl highlights the political culture in question within the cultural heritage of the Gök Turks. The clan system, on which the Gök Turks were based, continued with some nuances in the later stages of Turkish history and reached today’s cultural geography of the Turkish World. Taşağıl presented the Gök Turks political culture with all its elements by presenting detailed data on the administration model and administrative system of Gök Turks, the function of the toy, the structure of the government, the legal system, and the situation of the foreigners under the Gök Turks administration.

The fourth chapter of the book is devoted to “Uighurs” and the chapter was written by Ayşe Melek Özyetgin (pp. 81-104). After briefly summarizing the Uighur political history on the main points of distinction, Özyetgin identified the prominent features of Uighur culture. After emphasizing the influence they gained in China and the Mongol Empire because of the Silk Road trade under the control of the Uighurs between the 10 to 13th cen-

turies, the development of Uighur cities of the Silk Road such as Turfan, Bishbalik, Kashgar, and Khotan owing to the large incomes obtained from the trade and the contributions of the emerging cultural values to the Turkish culture are stated. Özyetgin mainly emphasized the development of the Uighur language and its contributions to Turkish culture.

The fifth chapter of the book is about “Kyrgyz, Turgish, Qarluqs and Oghuz” who played an important role in the long historical process in Central Asia (pp. 105-136). In the chapter written by Hayrettin İhsan Erkoç, foremost of all, the historical process of each group has briefly explained, and then their contributions to Turkish culture are discussed. Oghuzs, who affected the flow of Turkish history and contributed greatly to the development of Turkish World culture, is another clan system examined in the chapter.

In the sixth chapter of the work, under the title “Turks in Eastern Europe”, Umut Üren examined Turkish groups settled in the north of the Black Sea, such as the European Huns, Siberians, Avars, Bulgarians, Khazars, Cumans, Pechenegs/Patzinaks, with a holistic approach based on geography (pp. 137-164). After giving general information about the political history of the tribes that he dealt with in his departmental planning, Üren explains their cultural history and their contributions to Turkish culture. Evaluating the process of adopting the semi-sedentary lifestyle of the European Huns, the author emphasizes the commercial ties between Rome and the Huns and the cultural influence process caused by this. Among the most important representatives of the Turkish World culture in the Eastern European geography, the Danube Bulgarians were emphasized. Another state that made significant contributions to the cultural history of the Turkic World, examined in the chapter, is the Khazars. The obvious Turkish Khaganate influences in the Caspian administrative and military order are revealed in terms of title and hierarchy. The Pechenegs, Uz and Cuman-Kipchak groups, which settled in the north of the Black Sea, continued their existence within the framework of tribal organizations. Especially the geography where Cuman-Kipchaks lived was named as “Dasht-i Kipchak/Steppe of Kipchak” because of their effectiveness. The north of the Black Sea, more generally, Eastern Europe, is one of the cultural borders of the cultural geography of the Turkish World and in this respect; it is the area of acculturation.

The seventh chapter of the book is devoted to the “First Muslim Turkish States (Khanates)” based on the Turkish Khanate (Karakhanids, (pp. 766-1212), the Ghaznavids and the İlteber of Idil-Bulgarian (pp. 165-204). The chapter was written by Ömer Soner Hunkan. After a brief explanation of the political history of the states he dealt with, Hunkan focused on the cultural products they produced and their contributions to the culture of the Turkish World. Hunkan explained the prominent elements in the Karakhanid social and political culture, in which the nomadic lifestyle was dominant, based on the information in *Dîvânu Lüğâtî't-Türk*. Hunkan states that the Karakhanids' combination of the architectural and aesthetic culture brought by the Turks from Central Asia with the Islamic understanding as their main cultural contribution. The contribution of the Ghaznavids to the subject of culture and civilization is explained as bringing Islam to North India and laying the groundwork for new cultural fusion in this region. Another political organization discussed in the chapter is İlteber of Idil Bulgar. Hunkan clearly expressed the contributions of these structures to the culture of the Turkish World, based on the political, literary, architectural, aesthetic and religious culture products of the First Muslim Turkish political organizations.

The eighth chapter of the book is about the “Great Seljuk Empire” and the chapter was written by Sadi Kucur (pp. 205-228). Kucur emphasizes the cultural and political transformation of the Oghuzs, who were included in the settled culture circle of Khorasan and Iran, from the steppe culture in the Central Asian geography, in the cultural history of the Great Seljuk Empire. The Great Seljuk Empire, inheriting the Byzantine political culture and bureaucracy through Sasanian, Islamic States and Anatolia, built a world-wide state, in a way, a classical medieval empire. Nizamiye Madrasahs were determined as the main factor or institution that influenced the Seljuk cultural life. The exceptional aspect of the cultural heritage of the Great Seljuk Empire is that it sets an example for the Ottoman Empire, which inherited its legacy by presenting a classical medieval empire model with its cosmopolitan character, bureaucratic traditions, land regime, law and education system.

In the ninth chapter of the work, the subject of the “State of the Khwarazmshahs”, which was established in the centre of Khwarazm and expanded

to Transoxiana, Khorasan, Azerbaijan, and Iraq, was written by Gülseren Azar Nasırabdı (pp. 229-249). By emphasizing the importance given by the Khwarazm-shahs to the construction of the madrasa and library, their contributions within the circle of Turkish-Islamic civilization were sought especially in these two activities. The great cultural tradition revealed by the Khwarazm-shahs in the field of science and architecture was nourished by the fertile lands and strong trade networks of the Khwarazm geography, where they dominated.

In the tenth chapter of the work, under the title of “Central Asia in the Time of the Mongols”, the cultural life in Central Asia during the period of the Mongol Empire founded by Cengiz Khan and one of its parts, the Cengiz Khanate, in other words, as of the 13th century and the first half of the 14th century, is discussed (pp. 251-272). In the chapter he wrote, Muhammed Bilal Çelik counted the khan and congress-based organization of the Mongols and the bureaucracy, mostly composed of Turks, among the main elements of Mongolian political culture. He even stated that the political structure was called the “Turkish-Mongolian Empire” by some historians in the literature due to the intense Turkish influence in the military, administrative and diplomatic fields. It is stated by Çelik that the Mongol expansionism caused great harm to the existing cultural geographies and rich cultural accumulation rather than the cultural contribution in the initial period. However, it was added that this approach was abandoned at the end of the 13th century, when the administrative regime became relatively settled, and the Silk Road, which was under the rule of Mongolian Chaghatay, was added. As a matter of fact, from the beginning of the 14th century, the Chaghatay Khanate became a part of the cultural geography of the Turkish World by being included in the strong Turkish-Islamic cultural circle. The transformation of the Chaghatay Khanate is remarkable in terms of showing the strength of the Turkish cultural accumulation in Turkestan or Central Asia and its resistance against great destruction.

In the eleventh chapter of the book, the subject of the “Golden Horde State”, which was founded as one of the parts of the Great Mongolian Empire, was established in the centre of the Idil-Ural area called Dasht-i Kipchak (Steppe of Kipchak) (pp. 273-291). The chapter based on Russian sources was written by İlyas Kemaloğlu, who made original and valuable contributions to

the literature on the Golden Horde and the geography of Russia in general. After presenting the political history of Golden Horde State in a very concise manner, he dealt with the cultural developments, which is the main subject of the chapter. The administrative structure of Golden Horde State, its bureaucratic institutions, the function of the congress, the administrative model based on the tribal chiefs, the administrative weakness created by the fact that the Chinggis Khan lineage was seen as the determining factor in the selection of Khan are the main issues evaluated in this regard. The politics of religious tolerance comes first among the features highlighted by Kemaloğlu regarding the political culture of Golden Horde. During the reign of Berke Khan, the first Muslim ruler of Golden Horde, the construction of an Orthodox Patriarchate in the capital Palace was allowed within the framework of this policy of tolerance. Golden Horde State has left deep traces in the cultural geography of the Turkish World with its political-cultural heritage, perspective of urbanism, and commercial culture.

In the twelfth chapter of the book, Kazan Khanate, Kasım/Qasim Khanate, Astrakhan Khanate, and Sibir Khanate, emerged in the lands of the Golden Horde State, which was dissolved in the last quarter of the 15th century, under the title of “Heirs of the Golden Horde: Turkish-Tatar Khanates” examined by Serkan Acar in the context of cultural history (pp. 293-317). After a short explanation of the political history of each khanate, Acar explained the economic, administrative structures, and cultural life of the khanates. In general terms, the economy of the khanates in Golden Horde geography is based on agriculture, animal husbandry and trade. Emphasis on the economic structure of the khanates comes to the fore in the content of the chapter, within the framework of this chapter, the fur trade, the Siberian trade connection, more generally, the role of the khanates in the northern trade and economic culture are discussed.

In the thirteenth chapter of the book, on “Crimean Khanate” and its cultural history (pp. 319-340) was written by Alper Başer. The author firstly gave information about the historical background by addressing the geography of Crimea and the transformation of the political structure in the region during the collapse of the Golden Horde State. After the conflict of the cliques struggling to dominate the Crimean Khanate, which dates back to the last quarter of the 15th century, was expressed in general terms, the pro-

cess of the Crimean Khanate's subordination to the Ottoman Empire after 1475 and the strengthening of the mentioned nationality were mentioned. The author examined the cultural history of the Crimean Khanate based on social and architectural structure. After stating the social status of the Khan family -Girays-, the social structure of the Crimean Khanate, which was shaped based on class/stratum, was depicted in the form of a social pyramid from top to bottom. The author emphasized the density of these groups in the cities of Crimea, especially the origins of the Jews under the aegis of the Crimean Khanate, and the religious division among the Jews of the region. Within the framework of cultural history, the author has examined the architectural works produced within the Crimean Khanate and the architectural understandings they reflect. Madrasahs, Gözleve Mosque built by Sinan, Hansaray are the main building groups discussed in this chapter. As the author emphasized, despite the Russian occupation and destruction, many structures belonging to the Khanate period have survived to the present day, and they reveal the contributions to Golden Horde and the Crimean Khanate to the culture of the Turkish World.

In the fourteenth chapter of the work, written by Azmi Özcan, the subject of "The Turkish States in India" (pp. 341-353) was discussed. . Özcan explained the political and cultural origins of the Turkish presence in India on the axis of the Delhi Turkish Sultanate and the Mughals. In accordance with the main theme of the book, Özcan focused heavily on the administrative, architectural and cultural traces of the Turkish states established in India in this geography. The success of the Turkish states founded in India in managing the geography of India, where many local languages are spoken, and there are quite different religions and origins, under a central state is explained by the establishment of land law on the throne of certain pedestals and the presence of administrative councils assisting the sultan in the central administration. The greatest linguistic heritage left by the Delhi Turkish Sultanate in the geography of India is the Urdu Language, which emerged as a result of the eclecticism of Turkish, Persian and Indian, or Urdu, which is spoken by Muslims in India today. In addition, examples of Turkish-Islamic traditions that emerged in Delhi and its surroundings in the field of architectural and architectural decoration, combined with local architectural styles such as red stonework, were evaluated as outstanding examples of cultural encounters. Delhi, on the political and cultural heri-

tage of the Turkish Sultanate, evaluated in detail the understanding and the cultural policy followed in the Mughal State, which was built in 1526. The chapter in question is remarkable in that it reveals the enriching function of cultural interaction and the combination of religious, political, aesthetic, and social origin elements in the cultural history of the Turkish World.

In the fifteenth chapter of the work, a geographically based perceptive was followed, as in the Indian part, and the cultural history of the Turkish communities that established a state or settled in Iran was analysed with a holistic approach by Gülay Karadağ Çınar under the title of “Iranian Turks” (pp. 355-403). Iran has become one of the important parts of the Turkish cultural geography, centred in Khorasan, as a transit route from Turkestan to Anatolia and exposed to intense Turkish immigration and settlement before Anatolia. By excluding the Great Seljuk State, which was established directly in Iran, Çınar includes the states established by the Oghuz tribes defined under the name of ‘Turkman’ in Iran, and the Ilkhanate State, which took the Turkmen under their rule and acted as a catalyst for Turkish-Mongol cultural interaction. After the Ilkhanid political history is summarized until the dissolution of the central authority at the beginning of the fourteenth century and the period when the administration was shared among Turkmen groups, the cultural influences of the Ilkhanids on Iran and the Turkish groups inhabited in Iran were discussed. Turkmen state organizations such as Aq-Qoyunlu and Qara-Qoyunlu, the Safavid Dynasty, which was transformed from sheikh to shah with the support of Turkmen, and after the collapse of the Safavid Dynasty, the administrations of dynasties of various Turkish tribes such as Avshar and Qajar/Kadjar in Iran were generally and widely examined on a historical frame. In this context, cultural history was taken within the framework of religious life, political culture, administrative structure, and mentality.

The sixteenth chapter of the work is devoted to the “Timurids” (pp. 405-423). In the chapter written by Hayrunnisa Alan, only the cultural products created by the Timurid Dynasty, the elements of the Timurid political culture, and the social texture and administrative order in the geography they dominated, were focused on in accordance with the spirit of the book. Analysing the administrative, financial, and military system of the Timurids in the context of political culture, Alan emphasized their ability to combine

the nomadic tradition with the settled urban culture. The cultural values produced by the Timurid Dynasty, which enriched the Turkish-Islamic civilization thanks to the scholars and craftsmen they gathered under their patronage, spread to almost the entire Asian geography and Anatolian lands under the Ottoman rule. Urbanization and architectural achievements were leading of the contributions of the Timurid Dynasty to civilization. In this context, Alan points out that the developments in literary, architecture, fine arts and political culture in the Timurid period represent a high level in the cultural history of the Turkish World.

In the seventeenth chapter of the book, the khanates, which was formed during the decline of the Timurid and Golden Horde central states, was studied by Mehmet Alpargu under the title of “Turkestan Khanates” (pp. 424-454). Bukhara, Khiva, Yarkand, Kokand, Kazakh Khanate, Nogai Horde/Orda and the nomadic Uzbek political formations were first discussed in this section with their short political histories from their establishment to their collapse. Thus, a holistic background was determined about the geographical and administrative structure of the khanates. Alpargu preferred a monolith approach to the cultural history of the khanates, emphasizing certain common features. The strong cultural environment, which developed based on two cities, created and sustainable the booty income of the khanates from military expedition. The main financing of the madrasa and caravanserai construction activities was provided by the contraband of war. Khanates, which were built in the centres of the Turkic World geography, contributed to the continuity of cultural development by maintaining the preservation of Turkish-Islamic cultural artifacts and the patronage of scholars and craftsmen with the tradition they inherited from the Timurids. Alpargu revealed the contributions of the khanates to the culture of the Turkish World on the basis of common elements and cultural products, in a broad political history background.

The eighteenth chapter, the last part of the study, was written by Ahmet Kanlıdere who has examined the political, social, and cultural transformations of the cultural geography of the Turkish World, excluding the Ottoman geography, in modern times, under the title of “Cultural and Social Transformation in Idil-Ural and Central Asia (1800-1991)” (pp. 455-500). Kanlıdere analyzed the transformations in question primarily through two

major regions: Crimea, Kazan, Caucasus (Idil-Ural area), and Turkestan geography. The framework drawn by Kanlıdere on the transformations in the Idil-Ural area reveals that the developments in the context of innovation or improvement in the Idil-Ural area in the modern period were developed with a focus on the clergy and their strong effects on society. In the world of Idil-Ural and Turkestan, answers were produced against modernity on the basis of religion, as Kanlıdere revealed. In the modern period that started in the 19th century in the cultural geography of the Turkish World, the strong existence of a religion-based social structure and cultural texture in a traditional or reformist line was revealed by Kanlıdere. The last part of the chapter includes an in-depth analysis to explain the construction and shaping process of political culture in the cultural history of the Turkish World.

Cultural history, which is the general concept of the work, was systematized in the 19th century, in the period when all the objects, institutions and traditions put forward by societies with a general definition of economic, social and cultural, related to social theory, took the place of political and military issues in historiography, and these turned into the object of study of history. The process that emerged in historiography after the second half of the 19th century led to the emergence of a total understanding of socio-economic, social and cultural fields.¹

Determining the boundaries of cultural history and clarifying its themes is a very difficult task due to the ambiguity of the concept, and it cannot be said that there is a consensus on this issue in historiography. The object of study of cultural history may seem almost limitless, but the methodological approach to the object of study includes the study within the boundaries of cultural history. The point where cultural history differs should be sought in the emphasis on symbols and symbolism. Symbols and mentality defined as cultural patterns correspond in art and literature creations. As a matter of fact, cultural history cannot be based only on a morphological, abstract approach; the individual and the production are the main subject of cultural history.²

Regarding the history of cultural history in a sense outlined above, it is seen that the approach, which is put forward by the study we evaluated, the construction style of the chapters of the book, the quality of the subjects; in general terms, the content and methodology are in accordance with the

theory of cultural history. At the same time, considering the imagery of culture, it is obvious that there is a lack of visual materials in the work or that the mentioned geographies need to be supported with maps.

The Cultural History of the Turkish World from Ötüken to Crimea has features that approach a holistic study of world history in terms of the wide historical time span and huge geographical area it covers. Of course, no theory and model will unite world history under a single roof, however, the work we have dealt with by going beyond the Eurocentric point of view reveals the historical developments in a significant part of the world by taking into account the historical process, the “long-term/longe durée”³, which is widely accepted in historical methodology, with the work of the Annales Ecole and especially Fernand Braudel. The book, which is examined with a general evaluation, has the characteristics of cultural history in terms of structure, methodology, and construction style. Within the framework of political history, it is seen as a holistic cultural history of the Turkish World, in which social and economic factors are also discussed in this context.

The evaluation of culture and cultural production in Turkish historiography has generally been seen as the field of art history or cultural anthropology. However, culture is too complicated to be the subject of only these fields and is a very important element of the historical process. Contrary to the general trend in the Turkish history literature, the main theme and goal of the Cultural History of the Turkish World from Ötüken to the Crimea is to determine the cultural history and the effects, places, and characteristics of the states in terms of the cultural history of the Turkish World. The exceptional feature of Turkish historiography is that it deals with the cultural boundaries of the cultural history of the Turkish World, the centres of cultural encounter, and the history of establishment, development and rise of Turkish-Islamic culture from politics to daily life, from architecture to literature, with a holistic approach. The political structures that were formed in the Turkish World apart from the Ottoman geography were examined by the leading experts in that field. Thus, the composition of the current literature and past knowledge on the subjects has been provided, and this approach has greatly increased the scientific value and quality of the study. In addition, the authors of the section presenting their investigations on the

principles of cultural history methodology ensured the preservation of the main frame of the work and the holistic approach to cultural history.

Notes

- 1 Burke, Peter. *What is Cultural History*. Second Edition, Polity Press, 2008, pp. 6-27.
- 2 Webster, Gary. "Culture History: A Culture-Historical Approach." *Handbook of Archaeological Theory*, ed. R. Alexander Bentley (et.aliae), Altamira Press, 2008, pp. 11-27; Burke, Peter. *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*. Reaktion Books, 2001, pp. 178-189.
- 3 Braudel, Fernand. *La Méditerranée et le monde Méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*. Armand Colin, 1949, pp.69-74; Lee, Richard E. "Lessons of the Longue Durée: The Legacy of Fernand Braudel." *Historia Crítica*, no. 69, 2018, pp. 69-77.

