increased political strength. At the same time, however, Shankland argues that the turn of these people toward political Islam should be seen only as one among various approaches adopted in the modernization process (p. 130). There are still major groups in Turkey that counterbalance the Islamic revival. The majority of young people and women, especially in the cities, and the unorthodox Islamic Alevi minority (approximately twenty percent of the population, p. 136) are mentioned as important social groups in opposition to political Islam. Here, Shankland emphasizes the socially heterogeneous character of Turkey. Political Islam should thus be considered “as only one of a multiplicity of developing lifestyles in Turkey” (p. 94).

In the Introduction and in the chapter “Religion and the State,” Shankland presents a general historical outline and an introduction to the subject, discussing the main historical developments throughout the Republican period. In the chapters “The Organisation of Belief” and “Tariqats, Belief and the State,” he examines institutions that have played important roles in the process of the re-introduction of religion. These institutions include trusts, associations, the Directorate of Religious Affairs, and the imam-hatip schools (schools at the lycée level that offer primarily religious subjects, such as studies of the Koran and Arabic, in their curricula—they were closed in 1999 with the introduction of eight years’ obligatory secular education). Sufi orders, such as the Mevlevi and the Nurcu movement, the latter one of the most successful Islamic revivalist movements, are presented. The historical backgrounds of these movements, as well as their present functions, in particular their relations with active political parties, are given. A point underlined by Shankland is that in spite of the official ban on such religious groups, their existence has come to be accepted by the state, which has not pursued a rigorous fight against them. The resurgence of Islam, thus, has not occurred without the state’s knowledge.

In the chapters “Political Islam: The Rise of Erbakan” and “Erbakan: Fall and Reaction,” this resurgence, as expressed in the Welfare Party and its leader Necmettin Erbakan, is more closely studied. These chapters are mainly factual presentations of political developments from the 1970s onward. Finally, in the last chapter, “The Emergence of the Alevis,” Shankland gives a general overview of Alevi culture and beliefs. This account is limited. It is, for example, a highly questionable approach to treat the Alevis as a homogenous group since from a political point of view, there exist immense differences between Turkish and Kurdish Alevis. Shankland acknowledges the limitations of his study—which he was continuing at the time of writing—and pleads for indulgence of his decision to include this chapter, since he sees this unorthodox Islamic group as constituting a counter-movement against resurgent political Islam. A comprehensive understanding of orthodox, political Islam in Turkey, therefore, requires inclusion of the Alevis (p. 12).

In general, the book is primarily oriented toward an audience unfamiliar with modern Turkish history and, therefore, is of an introductory and general nature. This is perhaps inevitable given the long period investigated. Various aspects of Islam in different historical contexts are discussed. In this sense, Shankland’s book offers a good overview of and introduction to the question of religion in Turkey. Shankland’s extensive use of secondary sources is supplemented by the use of oral narratives from his own field research. Quotations of these oral narratives are included arbitrarily, however, with the result that some of them appear as single-case stories the importance of which to the general conclusions is disputable. The reader is left with unanswered questions such as by whom, where, and when the primary material used in the work was gathered. Answers to these questions and more detailed information on the field research undertaken and used in the work would have helped to highlight the importance of these sources for this study.


The role of religious ideology in the constitution of the Ottoman state has been a privileged subject of investigation at least since Paul Wittek expounded his “gazi thesis” two generations ago. Ahmet Yaşar Ocaik, who is perhaps best known to the occidental readership through his work on the Selçuk-era Baba Resul revolt and the Ottoman-era heterodox sufis and Kızılbaş movements, remains one of a few historians to approach questions of religious orthodoxy and deviance less as geopolitical or theological concerns than as aspects of shifting social power and changing mentalities within Islamic societies. Osmanli Toplumunda Zindiklar ve Mülhüdler, in this sense, is the culmination of much of Ocaik’s previous work. As such, it seeks to provide a comprehensive look at religious heterodoxy in the Ottoman Empire as an urban, intellectual, anti-centrist societal movement. This book should be of interest and importance not only to the Ottomanist, but to anyone concerned with heresy in Islamic history. For this reason, it may be useful to provide here a somewhat detailed summary.

The work comprises five chapters which treat, in turn, the nature of official Ottoman religious ideology; the socio-ideological roots of anti-conformist intellectuals; the case of Bedreddin Simaveni; heretics among
formed parallel with and largely in reaction to the heretical currents in early Islam.

The first chapter begins with a survey of the three principal sources of Ottoman political ideology: Turkic-Mongol notions of universal empire, the Umayyad-Abbasid doctrine of universal caliphate, and the Roman-Byzantine concept of imperium. The weight of their respective influence is a classic subject of Ottomanist debate, but Ocak, the 1970s Strasbourg graduate, is interested primarily in the link between the ideology of the pre-modern state and the mentalité of its individual pillars. The unrefined "Turkish Islam" espoused by the Ottomans while still at the stage of a frontier bilique hardly allowed for sophisticated distinctions between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. In the fully-developed imperial ideology-cum-mentality, however, which equated the dynasty's fortune (devlet) with a universal mandate from God (div), what did the pursuit of zandaka by some individuals signify?

The author proceeds to analyze the constituent elements of what he terms "official Ottoman ideology." Ottoman political absolutism, which is made perfect with Fatih Mehmed's conquest of Constantinople in 1453, is characterized by the central dominance of the dynastic house, whose collective endurance (bekâ) is more important than the lives of its individual members; by its quality as a universal order (nizam-i alem) and authority by divine mandate (sultanat-i seniye); and by its clear structural separation from the non-enfranchised subject class, the ceajja. This secular ideal is complemented by, and indeed fuses with, the most highly evolved religious devletism in Islamic history. From its original ideological commitment to holy war (jaza) to the appropriation of the protectorship of the Holy Places and the caliphate following the defeat of the Mamluks, Ottoman statehood was to be identified with the cause of Islam. A turning point, Ocak argues, is reached in the early sixteenth century, when, in light of its war with Shi'ite Iran, the Ottoman Empire also begins to perceive itself as the guarantor of orthodoxy against intra-Islamic sedition.

This official ideological structure rests, in turn, on a highly developed state religious bureaucracy. By gradually engaging the ulema in a pattern of state service and state patronage, a process seen to have culminated with the institution of the Şeyhülislâm as the top religio-judicial functionary in the late sixteenth century, the Ottomans could build an ideology that equated their being with Islam itself. Yet the Islamic quality of this official ideology was not so much an end in itself as a medium of achieving the degree of centralized social control that was the hallmark of Ottoman power in the early modern period.

The theme of the ulema's co-option by the state is resumed in the next chapter, where the author explores the social and ideological background of zandaka and milhibs in Ottoman society. In contrast to the Shi'ite
clerical hierarchy, the scholars of Sunni Islam were not possessed of any particular spiritual authority, and a Sunni clerical class developed only over time and incidentally to their specialization in religious and legal learning. A scholar's prestige even depended in large measure on his particular spiritual authority, and a Sunni clerical class developed only under the highly centralized Ottoman system. A scholar's career depended not on the quality of his learning, but on his clerical hierarchy, the scholars of Sunni Islam were not possessed of any reiteration by numerous Turkish historians, was an excessive concentration on such administrative disciplines as fiqh and kalâm, and a critical decline in the natural and philosophical sciences. Were those decreed officially as zindis and mâlıkids, the author asks (p. 119), truly adversaries of the Ottoman state, or merely in search of an alternative to the slow ossification of Sunni learning?

Turning next to the high sufi milieu as a breeding ground for heresy, Ocak provides a summary history of key tarikas and their role in the development of Ottoman society. (It is only regrettable that Ahmet Karamustafa's findings on the largely middle-class social backgrounds of Ottoman-era charismatic sufiis have not been integrated into this section.) Whereas numerous pantheist and Melâmi currents participated in the rise of the early beylicate, these, too, came under increasing state control and surveillance in the course of the fifteenth century. In particular, the Anatolian Bayramis and Halveti orders were likely to foster zanduha movements, the reason being found in their doctrinal structure, Wâhidat al-wujûd, or the monity of existence, was of course a leitmotif of all Ottoman sufism. The Bayramis and Halvetis, however, tended toward an outright materialist, pantheist interpretation that, combined with their doctrinal content, the reader must assume, was not their respective doctrinal source, the strong undercurrent of Hurufi thought in Ottoman popular sufism. Yet, a biography composed by his own grandson claims he never sought to revolt against Ottoman rule, the respect afforded him at his trial further belying an incrimination for heresy.

Duly recognizing his debt toward Michel Balivet and others, Ocak makes a complex and intriguing case for the confessional nature of Bedreddin's quest on the basis of the religious syncretism prevalent in Rumelian and western Anatolian society at the time. The mass basis of his support in these areas adhered to various, in practice no longer quite distinguishable, heterodoxies such as Kalender sufism and Bogomilism, for which a messianic Hurufism could serve as an ideal common rallying point. Their respective doctrinal content, the reader must assume, was not as important as the fact that the adversities suffered by the common folk during the post-Timur period left them all receptive to any chiliastically tinged message of hope. It is doubtful that Bedreddin envisaged either a Selcuk dynastic restoration in his own name or a socialist utopia. The fact that he seems to have genuinely conceived of himself as a messianic renewer, a sâhib al-zuhûr or sâhib al-kharâj, must be understood in terms of the religio-political language specific to the time and context of the Timurid conquests.
Chapter Four deals with zandaq and ilkad, or behavior deemed to be such, among the high ulama. The limited and essentially polemical nature of the Ottoman sources does not allow for a quantitative assessment, but the essence of known cases suggests that religious heterodoxy was a widespread and variegated phenomenon within Istanbulite academia. Molla Lutfi, a towering figure at the court of Bayezid II (r. 1488-1512), was the most prominent individual to be condemned and executed for zandaqa in the fifteenth century. Universally reviled among his jealous and insecure colleagues, Molla Lutfi was accused of immorality, stealing books entrusted to his care, declaring prayer to be inefficient, and beguiling the masses. Ocak, on the basis of an obscure treatise on books entrusted to his care, declaring prayer to be inefficient, and beguiling the masses. Ocak, on the basis of an obscure treatise on wrongly attributed to Molla Lutfi's leading adversaries in the past, argues that there may have been some substance to the accusations, at least insofar as Molla Lutfi displayed philosophical proclivities. Even contemporary observers agreed, however, that the trial was entirely sham; moreover, Ocak explains, Molla Lutfi was never offered the chance to recant as stipulated under Hanefi law.

A secretive Jesus-devotion, or Hubneshilik, at least according to the English ambassador Paul Rycaut, also was endemic in palace circles. Its most famous exponent, Molla Kabız, was executed in 1527, but not before outperforming and embarrassing the kazaskers in a theological debate at his first trial. Even after a furious vezir ordered a retrial, where he was in turn refuted by the superior talents of Ibn Kemal, Molla Kabız would not recant and willingly died for his conviction of Jesus' superiority. As other authors have remarked, the Jesus-cult was likely of eastern origin and ultimately grounded in Hurufism, as well. The Ottoman sources refer to other, more obscure examples of Muslim scholars with an abnormal interest in Christian or Jewish scripture. True, most reported sightings of crypto-Christians or of outright materialist atheists (musirran) stem from such interested western observers as Rycaut or Guillaume Postel, but their frequent recurrence underlines the pervasiveness of heterodox thought in the Ottoman capital.

The final chapter discusses pantheist anarchism in the Ottoman Empire. Its adepts belonged overwhelmingly to the Bayrami sufi order, which perpetuated the world-renouncing asceticism of the Khurasanian Melâmiye in Anatolia. The movement was primarily rural or village-based at first and closely associated, much like the more secular fütüvet league, with the lower trade guilds. In the interest of dissipulating their extreme pantheist doctrine (wahdat al-mawjûd), Bayrami adepts infiltrated more licit tarikas rather than incorporate their own. They nevertheless maintained a secretive organizational structure centered on a succession of qutb-mahâlis, or messianic epiphanies. Representing not just spiritual, but also worldly authority, this qutb-messianism (again of Hurufi inspiration) constituted a direct attack on Ottoman legitimacy and, in consequence, the Ottomans subjected its followers to severe persecution. The author reconstructs the biographies of nearly a dozen sixteenth-century Bayrami, Hamzavi, and Gülşenî şeyhs, marshaling not only the details of their lives and indictments, but also the largely idealized stories (menakbshnanes) passed down by their adepts following their deaths. Perhaps the most prominent of these figures was the youthful Bayrami leader Oğlan Şeyh İsmail-i Maşâki, executed in 1538 after moving the order to Istanbul and abandoning the principle of quietism against the advice of his father. Using the şeriat court record of his trial and a treatise by the presiding judge, Ebussuud Efendi (d. 1574), as well as a newly-discovered Bayrami account of the şeyh's life, Ocak neatly analyzes the societal dynamic of his heresy and its persecution in the imperial capital. Despite the mitigation efforts of Ebussuud, whose own father was close to Melâmi circles, Oğlan Şeyh's profession of a materialist, brazenly antinomian pantheism was incontrovertible. The Bayramis' cry of Allah'tm!, its shade of meaning slipping from "My God!" to "I am God!" had to be an intolerable subversion of public law and order in Istanbul.

Did all these movements represent a single, unified kârşi düşünce, or counter-ideology, to the central authority? In conclusion, the author points out that while Ottoman zandaqa first arose in the context of the political power vacuum of the early fifteenth century, it reached its peak during the sultanate of Suleyman the Magnificent (1520-1566). Members of both the aleva and the sufi elite sometimes manifested their opposition to the ever more intrusive presence of the state by adopting an anarchic, pantheist counter-ideology, grounded in rational philosophy for the former and in mysticism for the latter. The intellectual content of these movements was not new, but rather evolved from the old tradition of oppositional thought in Islamic history. The influence of Hurufism was decisive, and continues to be so in contemporary Alevism. The government viewed these heterodox currents above all as a threat to its ideological hegemony, and fought them through the discourse of religious orthodoxy. More than a sectarian or spiritual phenomenon, these movements were a reaction to the political and social upheaval of the fifteenth and especially sixteenth centuries, and expressed themselves in the same religious language employed by the central Ottoman authority.

While the above summary cannot do full justice to the intricate arguments of this book, three points may be singled out here for criticism. On a purely technical level, the author does not clearly delineate his definition of dualism and dualist heresies. He ascribes dualist leanings to the likes of Bayşar b. Burd (d. ca. 783) (p. 31) and Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Zakariyya al-Razi (ca. 865-ca. 925) (p. 46), it would seem, solely for...
their coupling of faith with ratio, without indicating whether they in fact subscribed to a twin cosmogony of good and evil. Elsewhere, when discussing the movements inspired by Bedreddin or Hamza Bali, the author presents messianism as an inherent feature of dualist sects. Though this was generally true for Ismaili (and sometimes true for Nusayri) Shi‘ism, it is not clear why there should be a necessary link. Of the European examples Ocak cites, Catharism certainly was dualist and connected with Bogomilism, but it neither sparked messianic movements nor, much less, was it present in western Anatolia, the Aegean, or the Balkans (cf. p. 183). Waldensians, on the other hand, did at times exhibit messianic tendencies; however, they were nothing if not vehemently anti-dualist (cf. p. 292).

Another question concerns Ocak's concept of "official ideology." The book's great credit lies in the way it shows how heresy in the Ottoman period evolved diachronically, in reciprocity with and in reaction to the ideology defended by the state. However, the argument can be turned around to show that orthodox ideology is every bit as much the product, created in time, of its heretical mirror-image.8 The author states as much himself in his discussion of zandaka and orthodoxy under the "Abbasids, but then portrays a rigid and unchanging Sunnism as the "official ideology" of the Ottomans over a period of 300 years. It remains to be investigated whether individuals such as Oğlan Seyh were executed in the sixteenth century because their claims to be the mahdi were an affront to staid Sunni orthodoxy, or because they fact rivaled the sultan's own messianic pretensions.

Finally, the author takes care to show the intellectual and historical continuity of Ottoman with ‘Abbasid-era zandaka thought. From a social history point of view, however, Ottoman society's most immediate predecessor, in terms of its early modern military and bureaucratic system, its economy and infrastructure, and its reliance on Islamic juridication and political symbolism, is Mamluk society. Not surprisingly, cases of zandaka or the persecution of leading jurists by jealous colleagues are absolutely legion in Mamluk history,9 and these precedents would have had at least as much bearing on the problem of zandikis and mülhidis in Ottoman society as the thought of Ibn al-Rawandi. Furthermore, as parts of the Ottoman Empire, Egypt and Syria remained as susceptible to heretical activity and its official repression as the Rumelian and Anatolian provinces; one need recall only the persecution of Twelver Shi‘ite ulla as the execution of Yaḥya b. ʿIṣa al-Karaki of al-Salt, convicted in 1610 on the basis of his treatises on zandaka.10

These comments, however, do not so much reflect actual shortcomings as they pay tribute to the book's wealth of information and novelty of interpretation, which leave the reader eager for yet more. The author has again contributed much original research, several key documents being published or translated for the first time in the appendix. Above all, Zandiklar ve Mülhidler turns to full profit Ocak's impressive command of the often extremely disparate Turkish, Arabic, and Persian source materials, as well as his critical dialogue with both contemporary Turkish and Orientalist literature. Professor Ocak has provided a masterful and provocative synthesis of the social history of heresy in Ottoman society, which will not soon see its like. This particular series of the Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı is devoted mainly to producing high-quality translations of the most prominent works of recent western Ottomanist scholarship. It is perhaps time to turn the tables and make a translation of this important work available to the English-language reader.

STEFAN WINTER. UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO


The tradition of writing biography in Ottoman history has been limited to a few works. The present study by Ali Akyıldız is a preliminary attempt at filling this gap by focusing on a neglected area of Ottoman historiography, that is, the lives of Ottoman princesses. This large lacuna in historical scholarship has been due partly to the absence of autobiographical information on the lives of individual rulers and their families during the pre-modern era, although archival sources and historical narratives abound on the public achievements of Ottoman sultans and their consorts. Fortunately, there are more biographical sources available on the members of the Ottoman dynasty and ruling class during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.11 Despite the existence of more biographies and memoirs

11For the reign of Abdülmecid I and the harem, see The Imperial Harem of the Sultans:...