This book, *Ottoman Maritime Transportation and Navy* (Komatsu, *Ottoman Maritime Transportation and Navy*) is a highly original work and an excellent contribution to the understanding of the late Ottoman Empire. Komatsu Kaori, currently associate professor at Tsukuba University, has already published a number of articles in Japanese on the later years of the Ottoman Navy and maritime transportation. This book, based on her PhD dissertation, deals with the promotion of the national steam shipping industry in the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century Ottoman Empire. The principal focus of this book is on the state-owned shipping enterprise administered by the Ottoman Navy, known as İdare-i Mahsusa during the reign of Abdülhamid II (Hamidian Period, 1876-1909). The author bases her arguments on the exhaustive use of archival sources in the Historical Archives of the Maritime Museum (Deniz Müzesi Tarih Arşivi) and the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives, both situated in Istanbul. In contrast to the latter, which attracts a lot of foreign researchers nowadays, the former archives are much less frequented in spite of the richness of their collection. Komatsu's use of hitherto unstudied archival documents has helped her explore the intricacies of the Ottoman administration of maritime transportation and brings originality and richness to her work. This book consists of four chapters, as well as a short introduction and conclusion, a postscript, a bibliography and an index. It has extensive footnotes at the end of each section.

Komatsu first of all underlines the important role of the shipping industry in the expansion of the capitalist world economy after the emergence of the steamship. To survive in the world system, the Ottoman Empire had no choice but to seek modernization of...
the domestic shipping industry and protect it from foreign capital. The Ottoman case is unique in that the Navy directly administered the shipping enterprise.

Chapter 1 deals with the formative period of the Ottoman state-owned shipping enterprise. After the first appearance of the steamship in Ottoman seas in 1827-28, the Ottoman government started a regular steamship service in the Marmara sea and the Bosphorus by utilizing the steamships from the Imperial Dockyards (Tersane-i Âmire) in the 1840s. The state's steamship service had expanded to the provinces by the 1850s, while the service in the Bosphorus had been taken over by the Şirket-i Hayriye, the first Ottoman stock company established in 1851. The state shipping administration was placed under the supervision of the Navy under the name “Fevâ'id-i Osmaniyye” in the mid-1860s and “İdare-i Aziziye” in 1871. Komatsu points out that the later problems of the state shipping enterprise had already been visible during the formative period, namely the financial crisis, inadequate maintenance of the ships, maladministration by the Navy, conflicts between the Navy and the Ministry of Trade and Public Works, and abortive attempts at privatization.

Chapter 2 traces the administration of the İdare-i Mahsusa, which succeeded the İdare-i Aziziye during the Hamidian period. Komatsu's argument here is that the Ottoman policy of promoting the shipping industry through the state's direct administration of the national flag carrier turned out to be a failure. Examination of the ships owned by the İdare-i Mahsusa shows that even though it purchased many new ships, the actual number of serviceable ships did not increase during the age of rapid growth of the world steamship industry. Because of this, İdare-i Mahsusa failed to compete with foreign steamship companies in domestic maritime transportation. Then the author goes on to analyze the financial problem of the enterprise. She points out two main reasons of the İdare-i Mahsusa's financial crisis: the lack of knowledge of maritime business on the part of the Naval Ministry, who had made an unplanned purchase of ships, and the İdare-i Mahsusa's obligatory services for military and official purposes (for pilgrims and immigrants), which were unprofitable and even unpaid.

There were several attempts or plans to privatize the İdare-i Mahsusa during the Hamidian period, all of which ended in failure. The reason behind this was a conflict between the Navy and the Ministry of Trade and Public Works, each of which had opposing interests and ideas. The former gave priority to the İdare-i Mahsusa's contribution to the state's interests and security, namely its role in the postal service, the transportation of official documents and especially the military service, while the latter emphasized the development of the Ottoman shipping industry as a whole. In 1880 the Navy took over direct administration of the İdare-i Mahsusa, which naturally did not bring an end to the
problems.

In Chapter 3 the author examines the conditions of the Ottoman Navy during the Hamidian period and its relation with the İdare-i Mahsusa. The Ottoman Navy had grown out of use by the end of the century. This has been usually attributed to Sultan Abdülhamid's policy of "blockading the fleet," originating from his fear of a naval coup. Komatsu, however, demonstrates that the Sultan, the Sublime Porte and the Navy all agreed on the need for the reinforcement of the naval forces and that the many projects of reform were planned during the first twenty years of Abdülhamid's reign. But most of these plans did not materialize mainly because of the financial crises of Ottoman states. During these difficult years for the Navy, its control over the İdare-i Mahsusa was crucial for its survival, especially because the İdare-i Mahsusa could absorb the Navy's excess personnel. But the Navy's influence over the personnel of the İdare-i Mahsusa and its administration with little thought of profit hindered the latter's development. The sole contribution of the Navy was, Komatsu argues, that it prevented the Ottoman national flag carrier from passing into foreign hands.

Chapter 4 is concerned with the Second Constitutional Period, which was marked by a decline in the power of the Navy. During the first years, privatization of the İdare-i Mahsusa came to the fore again on the initiative of the Ministry of Trade and Public Works led by Armenian ministers. But this project ended in a deadlock once again and the enterprise was reorganized into the Osmanlı Seyr-i Sefâ'în İdaresi under the Navy in 1910. This organization was then taken over by the Ottoman Army in 1913, when the Ottomans became involved in successive wars.

In the concluding chapter, the author gives an overview of late Ottoman maritime transportation. She argues that the important role played by the Navy was the most outstanding characteristic of the Ottoman shipping industry. According to her, it derived from a blurred differentiation between the military and the industrial sectors, and between the military and the private sectors in the Ottoman state. She also discusses the major conflict among the Ottoman elite about how to promote the national flag carrier. On the one side were advocates of privatization, mostly composed of non-Muslim economic bureaucrats and capitalists, who gained power after the Tanzimat reforms, and on the other side were adherents of the state management, mostly traditional Muslim elite officers, bureaucrats and traders. In contrast to the latter, who gave priority to the interest of the military and state, and were strictly opposed to the penetration of foreign capital, the former party attached weight to economic and social benefit, advocating economic liberalism. Komatsu concludes that historical circumstances did not permit them to fulfill their policy and that the Ottoman government inclined more and more toward military- and state-centered eco-
nomic policies, which tried to promote and protect the Turkish-Muslim capital at the cost of the non-Muslim capital.

Komatsu’s book should be highly appreciated not only for her achievement in unearthing the hitherto unknown sides of Ottoman history through an exhaustive exploration of archival sources, but also for her detailed analysis of late Ottoman decision making processes. Indeed, the Ottoman government was not monolithic at all, but this reality has tended to be neglected and “the Ottoman center” has been often identified with the Sultan himself or the Palace for the Hamidian Period, and with the Committee of Union and Progress, for the Young Turk Period. Komatsu carefully examines the roles played by the Ottoman policy makers such as the Sultan, the Sublime Porte, the Finance Ministry, the Navy, and the Ministry of Trade and Public Works in the decision making process of the Ottoman government. Only this kind of approach could make clear why and how a certain policy was adopted and carried out by the Ottoman Empire. In the introduction of this book, the author places her own work in the recent trend in Ottoman socio-economic history, which focuses on the Ottoman incorporation into the world economy and on the continuity from the Empire to the Turkish Republic. But in fact her main argument is that the success or failure of the Ottoman national shipping enterprise was mainly conditioned by competition with foreign capital, conflict among the policy makers, and the financial crisis, which reminds us of Engin Akarh’s well-known dissertation, “The Problems of External Pressures, Power Struggles, and Budgetary Deficits in Ottoman Politics under Abdülhamid II (Princeton University, 1976).” Komatsu’s work is a fine analysis of late Ottoman politics and can be better appreciated in this context. In this light her emphasis on the continuity between the Empire and the Republic somewhat blurs the very characteristic of the Ottoman shipping enterprise, namely its imperial dimension. Ships of the İdare-i Mahsusa were sailing as far as Beirut, Tripoli of Libya and Jidda, as part of the “domestic” lines. As she points out in her book, extension of the lines to remote regions was important to draw allegiance of the peoples there to the empire, and one of the major official services of the state shipping enterprise was transportation of troops to various remote lands for the purpose of defense from foreign invasion as well as the subjugation of rebels.

I hope the author will in the near future publish this work in English or Turkish to make it accessible to students around the world. Without doubt it will make a great contribution to the international academia of Ottoman studies.

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