

*Dombey and Son*, Sydney emerges as a distinctive personality. When a toddler he accompanied his family on a seaside holiday and was observed “casting a faraway look over the ocean” (164). He was promptly nicknamed “Ocean Spectre.” Dickens thought the boy “an odd child” but one with “a great deal of originality and character” (167). Despite his beloved public persona, Dickens was a “quixotic” father, prone to depression, distraction, and strange practical jokes (165). Among the latter was the suggestion that three-year-old Sydney walk down to the train station to see if an expected guest had arrived. The boy went some distance before the family retrieved him.

The woefully undersized Sydney went to naval school to become a midshipman at the tender age of 12. He genuinely wanted to join the navy, so his father helped arrange it. Two years later Sydney departed on the steam frigate HMS *Orlando*. Dickens senior quipped that the lad boarded with a sea chest “in which he could easily have stowed himself and a wife and family of his own proportions” (174). The boy appears to have been well-liked by his shipmates who, inspired by the 1861 publication of *Great Expectations*, good-naturedly nicknamed him “Little Expectations” (176). Unfortunately, the moniker proved apt. Sydney drank and ran up gambling debts to such an extent that his father despaired and actually wished him dead. At only 25, Sydney obliged, the cause “general debility” according to an official report. His body was “committed to the Indian Ocean” (184). Brendon makes it clear that a sailor’s life made harsh emotional as well as physical demands, and Sydney, alas, was poorly prepared to meet them.

*Children at Sea* is a heartbreaking read. One is thankful to live in a modern society that no longer condones enslavement of children or routinely sends them to sea as convicts or naval officers. At the same time, one marvels at the determination of the human spirit, nowhere as manifest as in the life of Joseph Emidy, to endure and achieve some measure not simply of survival but triumph.

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**Kâtip Çelebi. Svatopluk Soucek (ed.). *The History of the Maritime Wars of the Turks*. Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, [www.markuswiener.com](http://www.markuswiener.com), 2012. 184 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography. US \$97.49, paper; ISBN 978-1-55876-548-1.**

The objective of Svatopluk Soucek, the modern editor, and the publishers of this work is to introduce a classic text of Turkish maritime history and its author to a general English-speaking audience. At the time of its writing in the seventeenth century, it was intended to exhort the leaders of the Empire how to

best take advantage of geography and naval technology to compete with rivals like Venice, the Holy Roman Empire, Spain and Portugal. The title of the book is taken from the title of the 1831 translation by John Mitchell of Kâtip Çelebi's *Tuhfet ül-Kibar fi Esfar il-Bihar*. An alternative title, *Gift to the Great Ones on the Subject of Maritime Campaigns*, indicates the purpose in galvanizing the leadership of the Empire by imparting an interest in geography and naval warfare as the critical element in creating success in military campaigns.

The book itself is a many-layered bibliographic puzzle. An expansive preface explains the tortuous history of its production and presentation for English-speaking readers and prepares them for the hard work ahead required to understand the original text at the centre of the book. That text is a facsimile of the 1968 Johnson Reprint facsimile of a translation by John Mitchell of the first chapters of Kâtip Çelebi's *Tuhfet ül-Kibar fi Esfar il-Bihar*, printed in London in 1831 by the Oriental Translation Fund as a fragment of the classic history of the maritime wars of the period during expansion of the Ottoman Turkish Empire. The complexity of the process as well as the collection of documents assembled to create this book has left us with as many questions as answers.

The author of the brilliantly translated central text, Kâtip Çelebi, is the "quintessential Ottoman intellectual, whose erudition spanned the entire range of Muslim learning: theology, law, history, and literature" (1). Unlike contemporaries, he was interested in the world outside the confines of the Empire and saw gaining a deep knowledge of geography and cartography as tools for competing with naval rivals of the time. He takes every opportunity to promote and celebrate the Muslim faith, which he believed to be the true religion, in a way that today would be considered fanatical, but this is not inconsistent with the ethos of the times, that is, about the end of the Hundred Years' War.

The modern editor also introduces problems with scholarship created by archaic language and transliteration at the junction of Turkish and Western languages, based on the Roman alphabet. This confusion occurs most often in the variable spelling of place names, which remains a problem in dealing with the text. Along with geographical terms are general terms (Porte, divan) and naval terms, like vessel-types (kalyon and sandal) that badly need a glossary. What makes this author especially fascinating is that he was a "landlubber and library researcher" rather than a practitioner of naval warfare.

Kâtip Çelebi writes that "This Epitome then consists of an Introduction, two parts, and a Conclusion" (46). As an epitome, he considers it only an outline or summary of all things he wishes to impart. The modern editor points out in his preface that the book consists of "the first two thirds of the text; a summary of the chapters that constitute the missing third; a translation of

the missing third”; and summaries of other documents all done by himself. Despite confusion at every turn in the history of transmission, what emerges is a wonder of concise writing that transmits the essentials of information and excitement.

The text opens with a geography lesson aimed at the political leadership: “Be it known, that to those engaged in the affairs of state, no science is so necessary as that of geography” (47). The original text included maps to illustrate the globe, the major seas, and a commentary on sea- and landmarks along the most travelled coasts, culminating with their perennial rival, Venice. The descriptions go beyond geography and sailing directions to include brief, informative notes on culture, religion, and social structure.

Kâtip Çelebi writes at a time when everything for the Empire is in the balance. On the state of the wars, he writes of the principal islands in the Mediterranean: “At present they are all, except for Cyprus and Rhodes, in the possession of the Infidels; and the subjugation of Candia [Crete] has not been fully accomplished” (55).

The book at its simplest level is fast-moving adventure story. It is a breathtaking lesson in the geography and history of that period in which the Ottoman Turks swept past Constantinople and, using newly-acquired techniques of naval warfare, extended their power throughout the centre of the world. It is a history from the conquest of Constantinople in the mid-fifteenth century to the campaign to wrest Candia (Crete) from Venice in the mid-seventeenth century.

The theatre in which events occurred includes the Mediterranean Sea, made familiar in classical mythology and history, and the Black Sea. By virtue of Turkey’s commanding location between East and West, Turkish ships mounted voyages of discovery and conquest in the Red and Arabian Seas.

Çelebi sets the siege of Constantinople as the real beginning of the Ottoman Turks as a maritime nation. He describes ships of the fleet “by a novel and surprising contrivance of raising weights, they lifted them out of the water, and placing them on oiled rollers, thus carried them over the land, and again lowered them into the sea” (57). Every campaign thereafter is described in a few sentences or paragraphs. Engagements are outlined in spare but dramatic language which covers leading actors, numbers and types of vessels and warriors, also including fortifications, weapons, and tactics. He describes the mechanics of warfare, the role of morale, religious fervour, and political and diplomatic rules under which events occur, especially those involved in surrender. Plunder serves as a motivator, occasionally dominating a situation. He even depicts the arms-race between Venice and Turkey, competing to build the largest vessel carrying the biggest guns and the most warriors.

A picture emerges of the author as an even-handed historian who records reverses and disasters as well as victories. Through the virtuosity of the fragment of text written by Kâtip Çelebi and translated by John Mitchell, the objective is attained: the reader receives a concise, colourful geography and history lesson about Ottoman expansion and a general understanding of the importance of sea-power. The work presents the maritime history of the Ottoman Empire with wide-ranging advice that applies today.

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**Geirr H. Haarr. *No Room For Mistakes. British And Allied Submarine Warfare 1939-1940.* Barnsley, S. Yorks: Seaforth Publishing, [www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk), 2015. xiii+450 pp., illustrations, tables, charts, appendices, notes, references, index. U.K. £35.00; (£11.99 from Naval & Military Press, Uckfield, Sussex), cloth; ISBN 978-1-184832-206-6.**

Now that we have available probably 1,000 books on all phases of the Battle of the Atlantic, more first rate volumes are appearing on the finer details, assessments of strategy, preparedness, endings, and beginnings. This excellent major volume by talented Norwegian author Geirr Haarr, like his earlier ones on the Norwegian war, is a worthy addition to any collection on submarine warfare. It is a detailed examination of the first year and a half of the Second World War, predominately by the Royal Navy (RN), but with sections on the early contribution to the struggle by Polish, Dutch, and French submarines (s/m). Brief references to the navies' positions when the war began helps establish context.

For researchers, Haarr's appendices will prove helpful: named boats by flotilla number and locations, the 20 s/m lost (16 RN, 2 Dutch, 1 Polish, 1 French) just in those 16 months; ships attacked, and minefields laid by Allied submarines. The multitude of photographs are of excellent quality, and frequent sub-headings are useful. The sharp learning experiences in the northern North Sea, in the Danish straits, and the Baltic that Haarr recounts make sober reading. The first RN s/m losses were that of HMS *Oxley*, sunk in error by fellow boat HMS *Triton* off Norway on 10 September 1939, and HMS *Seahorse* lost to a mine off Denmark in January 1940. In fact, as an example of both his extensive research throughout the volume and of the general hazards of submarining is his first 22-page description of the loss of HMS *Thetis* in June 1939 during acceptance trials off Liverpool. As his title states (quoted from Admiral Sir Max Horton, Commander-in-Chief of the western approaches) there was "No room for mistakes."