

THE HISTORIOGRAPHIC PROBLEM IN THE RENAISSANCE

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ABSTRACT

THE HISTORIOGRAPHIC PROBLEM IN THE RENAISSANCE

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This thesis aims to analyze some characteristics of history writing in the Renaissance era as an overlooked concept of the subject. In the literature, the period is perceived either in too romantic or too critical perspectives. The former side views the era as the emergent movement of modern European culture, without analyzing its Medieval characteristics. On the other hand, the latter side tends to underestimate the significant features of this era, mostly because of romantic perspective's effect. Nevertheless, neither side pays enough attention to the factors related to history writing in the era. In that context, this thesis aims, first, to depict the characteristics of history writing within the Renaissance; second, to have a balanced view on two perspectives and to give an account on the value of the Renaissance as a historical subject. For that aim, the main features of Renaissance historiography and potential breaking points in the era will be analyzed in detail. Then, two significant scholars from two different sides, Jacob Burckhardt and Peter Burke, and their studies on the Renaissance will be elaborated.

Keywords: The Renaissance, Historiography, Jacob Burckhardt, Peter Burke, Humanism

ÖZ

RÖNESANS'TA TARİHSEL METODOLOJİ SORUNSALI

VATAN DEMİRKAN, Pelin

Yüksek Lisans, Tarih Bölümü

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Bu tez, Rönesans dönemi içerisindeki tarihsel yöntemin belli başlı özelliklerini analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Literatürde bu dönem, genel olarak ya çok romantik ya da çok eleştirel perspektifler üzerinden değerlendirilmiştir. İlk taraf, bu dönemin Orta Çağ'a ait özelliklerini dikkate almaksızın, Rönesans'ı modern Avrupa kültürünü oluşturan bir hareket olarak algılamaktadır. Öte yandan, özellikle ilk tarafın fazla romantik yaklaşımının bir sonucu olarak, ikinci taraf bu dönemin önemli özelliklerine yeterli dikkati vermeme eğilimindedir. Ancak, her iki taraf da bu dönemin tarihyazımı kapsamındaki özelliklerine gerekli dikkati vermemiştir. Bu bağlamda, bu tez ilk olarak Rönesans'taki tarihsel yöntemin özelliklerini tespit etmeyi, ikinci olarak bu temelde döneme dair bahsi geçen iki yaklaşım arasında dengeli bir tutum izlemeyi ve Rönesans'ın tarihsel bir araştırma konusu olarak önemini tespit etmeyi hedeflemektedir. Bu hedef doğrultusunda, Rönesans tarihyazımının ana özellikleri ve bu özelliklerle ilişki potansiyeli taşıyan üç kırılma noktası detaylı bir şekilde analiz edilecektir. Sonrasında, farklı perspektiflere sahip iki önemli tarihçinin, Jacob Burckhardt ve Peter Burke'ün Rönesans üzerine çalışmaları üzerinde durulacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rönesans, Tarihyazımı, Jacob Burckhardt, Peter Burke,
Hümanizma

To my beloved father

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The notion of “Renaissance”, as it is well-known, means *rinascita* or re-born in literal sense. This meaning has dual aspects in historical understanding: First, it gives reference to the past that was forgotten; second, it shows that there is a perspective-shift towards the future. By the term “past” it is actually stated that Ancient Greece and the re-discovery of its culture and its adaptation into different aspects of social life. Indeed, the discussions and developments of such topics as philosophy, politics, ethics, aesthetics, literature, painting, sculpture, architecture, rhetoric and so on were directly adapted from their ancient counterparts. This adaptation was the basis of intellectual movements and the new works that were produced in the Renaissance era. For that reason, the Renaissance, on the one hand, was a movement that was nourished by the antiquity and the past, the humanistic characteristics of which were to be re-created. By the perspective-shift towards the future, on the other hand, the thesis refers to the radical changes in the Renaissance which opened the ways towards modernity. These changes can mainly be related to the understanding of “Humanism”, a notion which was brought about by the Renaissance.

Despite the common misconception, the term Humanism does not mean “love for humankind” in that context. Rather, it refers to a shift in method for producing and spreading knowledge. Before Humanism, the main method was “Scholasticism”

which preferred analyzing certain statements or aphorisms and comparing them with each other without giving importance to the whole texts. For that method, the fields such as medicine, law and theology were more at the forefront. However, Humanism as a method puts more focus on analyzing the whole texts rather than certain statements of them. The humanistic method aims to understand the general context and synthesizes different ideas on that basis. As its name suggests, it puts individual at the center of its analysis, so the disciplines such as rhetoric, politics, ethics, poetry¹ etc. are the main fields that Humanist method prevailed.² The popular conception of the Renaissance tends to focus on its future-oriented perspective and its linkage to modernity, as different studies have shown.³ However, as a consequence of this focus, the impact of the antiquity on the Renaissance might be overlooked.

One of the overlooked aspects of the Renaissance is the changes within the discipline of history and historiography. These changes are given under three main points. These are the notion of “historical continuity”, “the impact of language” and “study of the past”. In this regard, the Renaissance had a primal version of the idea of “historical continuity” which were represented in the writings of Petrarch, as will be discussed in detail below. The idea of continuity is distinct from what we understand by the term today; nevertheless, it has certain touching points with it. It can be defined as perceiving the past under certain periodization, and establishing relationships between the social characteristics of the given period and specific

¹ The term “Humanities”, which refers to the group of academic disciplines that were mentioned above, actually comes from such an understanding of science as well.

² Judith Coffin, & Robert Stacey. *Western Civilizations: Their History & Their Culture, Vol. II.* (New York: Norton, 2009).

³ Anthony Molho,. «The Italian Renaissance, Made in USA.» in *Imagined Histories: American Historians Interpret the Past* Gordon S. Wood & Anthony Molho (Eds.), (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 263-294.

historical facts of the period. However, in today's historiography, this idea is generally understood under the label of "historical continuity and change" and looks at the historical issues in a more dynamic sense by focusing on the items that remained same or differentiated. For that reason, Petrarch's conceptualization can be read as the primal version of this notion. Another theme, which has a relationship with the Renaissance, is the impact of language and it is widely known by the works of Lorenzo Valla. He produced significant works in linguistics and has shown crucial relationships between the language structure of the text and its historical period. The most influential instance of this point is how he had shown *Donatio Constantini*, a historical document that was supposedly written in the 4th century, was actually written in the 8th century. The last related theme to the Renaissance is the study of the past, in the context of Machiavelli's and Guiccardini's writings. In their writings, especially as a result of the traumatic consequences of wars and social changes, the past started to be seen totally apart from the present.⁴ In the beginning of the Renaissance era, historians were mainly interested in past events so that the present Italian city-state regimes could be legitimized. However, especially the Habsburg-Valois Wars put the idea that the old social life of city-states could never be retrieved. This change of perspective brought the focus on the reasons why the governance of Italian city-states failed by that time, as a result of which a more analytical approach was able to be seen in their historical writings.⁵ This feature of the Renaissance was not caught by most scholars of the time since many studies

⁴ William J. Bouwsma, «Three Types of Historiography in Post-Renaissance Italy.» *History and Theory*, Vol. 4, No.3, (1965), pp. 303-314.

⁵ Jacques Bos, «Framing a New Mode of Historical Experience: The Renaissance Historiography of Machiavelli and Guicciardini» in *The Making of the Humanities: Volume 1- Early Modern Europe* Jaap Maat, Thijs Weststeijn Rens Bod (eds.), (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), pp. 351-365.

focused on historical events and impact of the Renaissance on cultural or political aspects, rather than its academic implementations. The influence of Florence, in this paradigm shift, was especially apparent because of its impact on the emergence and continuation of the Renaissance period. The fact that these characteristics of the Renaissance was underestimated in most of the studies of the Renaissance is the main problem that was taken into account in this thesis.

Looking at the bigger picture, scholars from different eras and their attitudes towards the significance of the Renaissance as a compositor of modernity have been varied in time. A number of studies tend to see the Renaissance as an important factor for facilitating modernity. The most known two instances of this departure is none other than Jacob Burckhardt⁶, who was a historian of the 19th century, and Peter Burke⁷ who produced his works in the 20th century. Burckhardt indicates that the Renaissance is a significant period not only because of its revival of the antiquity but also because it combines this revival with the “Italian spirit”. To put it in more concrete terms, the Renaissance enabled the dominant Italian culture to find its basis on ancient values, which then transformed them into the bases of modern values and spread towards Europe⁸. In that context, the Renaissance is a crucial era because it is where the notion of modernity and modern values emerged. Burke, on the other hand, argues against Burckhardt’s formulation and claims that the relationship between the Renaissance and modernity is no more than a myth. He denies that there is hardly any significant evidence to establish parallels between these two notions

⁶ Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy: an Essay* (London: Phaidon, 1965).

⁷ Peter Burke, *The Italian Renaissance : Culture and Society in Italy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999).

⁸Burckhardt, , pp. 104-105.

and therefore, argues that the period mentioned does not possess any value in historical understanding. In that sense, the secondary problem of this thesis is the value of the Renaissance as a historical period. This problem is aimed to be examined under the conceptualizations of Burckhardt and Burke. In the examination process, this thesis takes the position that even though the Renaissance has crucial touching points on the rise of modernity, criticisms of Burke should also be taken into account. For that reason, in order to have a proper image about the relationship between the Renaissance and modernity, Burke's criticisms on this relationship will be taken into detail and be used to reach a synthesis.

Therefore, this thesis has two aims. The first, and the main aim, is to analyze one of the underappreciated aspects of the Renaissance. This aspect is the changes within understanding history and practice of history writing, it will be argued. The secondary issue, the sub-problem of the main aim, is depicting the value of the Renaissance as a historical period. Until a certain point in the Renaissance, the study of the past used to be seen as the tool for justifying the present political spectrum. The rhetoric was more dominant as a related field for historical studies, and the usage of resources was not strictly credible in many cases. However, as a consequence of the events that will be elaborated below in detail, this understanding was shifted with the Renaissance. Rather than being used as a tool for the present political spectrum, the discipline of history started to be utilized for the analysis of the past political events. Here, the notion of the past loses its practical usage in the sense of justification. Rather, it started to be seen as an object that would enable to learn from the mistakes of the past so that current system could be enriched. This attitude brought about a sense of objectivity and rationality, and made it closer to

political science than rhetoric. These developments were related to the influence of change in perceiving the historical periods in history writing and reading process. In this regard, this thesis attempts to show this role of the Renaissance which was hitherto overlooked or was not appreciated enough in other studies related to the Renaissance era. In other words, the main goal of this study is to put emphasis on the effects of the Renaissance's understanding of history on theoretical approaches towards history writing and how these approaches were differed in relation to historical events that occurred in that period.

In that context, this thesis will consist of two main chapters. In the first chapter, the shifts in history and historiography within the Renaissance will be analyzed. Here, a general socio-political picture of Italian city-states in the Renaissance will be given as a beginning point. Later, the examination of Humanist movement and its relationship to the Renaissance will be given in detail. This movement is crucial in that it defines the main characteristics of intellectual changes in the Renaissance period. For that reason, the changes of perceiving history in the Renaissance era is strongly tied to this movement. Then, vital figures in Humanism and how they perceived the discipline of history and history writing will be analyzed, together with significant socio-political changes. Later, the chapter will be concluded with the impact of Italian Wars on history writing with the examples of Machiavelli and Guiccardini.

The second chapter will be on the value of the Renaissance with the analyses of Burckhardt and Burke. To put it differently, in this chapter, the value of the Renaissance as a historical period will be examined as a sub-problem of the first chapter. After evaluating the views of Burckhardt and Burke, the interpretation of

this issue with reference to the themes in the first chapter will be given. It will be defended that the Renaissance, both as a historical period and as an aggregation of intellectual standpoints, has experienced perspective-shifts in understanding the course of history and historiography. The main conclusion will be that despite the superficial popular perspectives towards the Renaissance, this period consists of much more intellectual developments than it is appreciated. In the aftermath of this debate, the methodological approach that was adopted in this thesis will be given briefly. For that purpose, the main characteristics and ideas of the Annales School will be given, together with the Carr-Jenkins debate on the nature and definition of history. Here, this thesis embarks on “social history” and its analytical understanding in the issue of historical methodology.

CHAPTER 2

ROLE OF THE RENAISSANCE IN HISTORIOGRAPHY

2.1 Aim of the Chapter

In the literature, the studies concerning Renaissance do not focus most of the time on the emergence of features, which could be interpreted as important progress in understanding historiography, in this period. There are certain studies that show the emergence and development of historiography in the Renaissance; nevertheless, the Renaissance literature tend to focus on the other aspects of this period such as the rise and re-discovery of classical civilizations of Greece and Rome, the changes in reason and rationality, the new methods in art and architecture and so on. As crucial as these characteristics of the Renaissance might be, there still remains a need for further examination of this relationship between the Renaissance thought and significant changes in historiography. In this chapter of the thesis, then, the main aim will be to establish this relationship on a concrete sense. Accordingly, it will be argued that there are three breaking points in the Renaissance history of thought, which may have affected changes within history writing. These elements are mainly related to the rising education program of the era, which is known as “Humanism”. However, these breaking points were not excluded to the Humanist program and in the aftermath of Humanism, a period which could be labelled as “Post-Humanism”, another breaking point for the mentioned formation occurred.

In that context, the chapter begins with a brief elaboration of political conditions in the Italian peninsula during the Renaissance period. Then, the emergence of Humanism and its prominent figures concerning historical understanding and historiography are examined with relation to their historical positions. After elaborating these figures in detail, post-humanist writers Machiavelli and Guiccardini and their differential take in history-writing will be examined. Lastly, the chapter will be concluded with a brief summary of the main points and explaining the breaking points for possible changes in history writing within the Renaissance period.

2.2 Political and Economic Environment in Italy During the Renaissance

In the 15th century, there were dominant city-states in Italian peninsula such as Venice, Genova, Milano, Florence and the Papal State. In this era, these city-states attempted to establish dominance over one another through consistent conflicts led by the mercenaries.⁹ These conflicts, even though they could evolve into violent collusions from time to time, were mostly occurred in a rather soft tone. The only common enemy for these states was the reality of the Ottoman Empire, which even attempted to conquer the Italian peninsula with attack on Otranto in 1480 but could not be realized because of surprised death of Mehmet II.¹⁰ Nevertheless, as soon as the Ottoman threat disappears, these states continue their competition and conflict with each other, with a balance policy where different states can establish alliances against the other. The conflicts among the Italian city-states continued since each of them relied only on mercenaries, however the conflicts did not transform into big

⁹ Halil İnalçık, *Rönesans Avrupası: Türkiye'nin Batı Medeniyetiyle Özdeşleşme Süreci*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2011), pp. 51-52.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 26.

wars –until 1492 Italian Wars- which made it easier for the emergence of the Renaissance movement and *Studios Humanitatis* method in this period of time.¹¹ Furthermore, in Italian city-states, intense economic and cultural relationships were established with Eastern states which also developed the origin of the Renaissance.¹²

Briefly speaking, the Papal state, as a consequence of its conflicts and loss with European states in the 14th century, lost its worldly authority and shifted its focus on Italian peninsula solely. In this regard, especially towards the second half of the 15th century, the state had transformed into a principdom in practice rather than a religious institution.¹³ The Napoli Kingdom, after the death of its significant leader Alphonse in 1458, started to lose its strength and had to deal with the continuous disturbances in the era.¹⁴ In the northern states, economy started to grow further and especially Florence, as it will be examined in more detail below, became a central commercial point not only for Italy but for the whole Europe with the impact of the rise of banking system.¹⁵ Venice and Genova, however, suffered the consequences of the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans with undergoing negative impacts on their commercial traits in Mediterranean and Black Sea regions, where their tax responsibility grew and had to continue their traits under the threat of a new conflict by the Ottomans. As a consequence, these city-states suffered economically and therefore, Venice could catch the Renaissance movement only in the 16th century.¹⁶

¹¹ *Ibid*, pp. 52-55.

¹² Oral Sander. *Siyasi Tarih: İlkçağlardan 1918'e*. (Ankara: İmge Yayınevi, 1989). pp. 62-63.

¹³ İnalçık, *Rönesans Avrupası...* pp. 13-29.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁵ Wallace K. Ferguson, "Recent Trends in Economic Historiography of the Renaissance", *Studies in the Renaissance*. Vol. 7. (1960). p.16.

¹⁶ İnalçık, *Rönesans Avrupası...* p. 67.

Within this frame, Florence came into the foreground of the picture with its economic and cultural dominance over the other city-states in the 15th century. Following the end of the 14th century, the city started to become a popular place for artistic and economic advancements, most of which related to the enactments of the Medici family. This family first showed its impact in Cimpi revolts in 1378 by Silvestre de Medici, who supported the public in the revolts; however, the regime broke down in 1382 and an oligarchy was established in Florence.¹⁷ In 1434, Cosimo de Medici became the head of government and transformed the regime into a republic again, while in practice the city was ruled as a principedom.¹⁸ The Medici family, until forcefully dethroned from their position by the public in 1494 with the beginning of Italian Wars, remained in power and invested a great deal on the cultural hegemony of Florence to be remained. Most of the power of this family came from its immense wealth, which was related to the Medici Bank, the dominant firm of the 15th century Florence.¹⁹ This bank was effective in creating a Florentine international money-market and having a monopoly over it, so that the Medici family was able to speculate its movement and sometimes even manipulate it.²⁰ The most famous figure of this family was Lorenzo de Medici, who put a great deal of effort not only in culturally strengthening the city but also in having a balance in the Italian League, a league that was established for the defense against external threats to Italian peninsula.²¹ In this regard, together with the economic and cultural dominance

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 34.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p.35

¹⁹ Richard A. Goldthwaite, "The Medici Bank and the World of Florentine Capitalism", *Past & Present*. No. 114 (1987), p. 6.

²⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 6-7.

²¹ Riccardo Fubini, "The Italian League and the Policy of Balance of Power at the Accession of Lorenzo de' Medici", *The Journal of Modern History*. Vol. 67, (1995). pp. 167-186.

of Florence, the Medici family also attempted to establish a balance among Italian city-states so that internal conflicts could remain under a limited level.

The *Humanist* method was born under these circumstances in the beginning of the 14th century. This method emerged as a counter-view against Scholasticism under the impact of Petrarch, who is considered as the founding figure of Humanist method.²² In contrast to Scholasticism, which mainly focuses on the disciplines such as theology, law, ethics and specifically on certain sentences of a given text rather than analyzing it in full context,²³ the Humanist method focuses on the whole text and its context, and mainly stresses on the disciplines such as rhetoric, political science, art, philology and so on.²⁴ In that context, *Humanitas* was understood as a philosophical enlightenment and Greek studies were seen as the main tools for such a goal.²⁵ In addition to Petrarch, the movement had significant figures such as Coluccio Salutati, Leonardo Bruni and Lorenzo Valla.

The main reason why Petrarch was considered to be the first humanist figure lies in his ideal of recreating the Roman life and art style in a contemporary way.²⁶ In that sense, he represents the first step toward the adaptation of antiquity and ancient thinking into the current, colorless artistic tendencies and disciplines. This first step was more related to literature and works of poets. A similar detection could be made for Boccaccio as well, who produced works in examination of old mythology and literature with an emphasis on the Latin language.²⁷ As the studies went into deeper,

²² Carol E. Quillen, "A Tradition Invented: Petrarch, Augustine, and the Language of Humanism", *Journal of the History of Ideas*. Vol. 53 No. 2 (1992), pp. 179-207.

²³ Felix Hope, "Scholasticism", *Philosophy*, Vol. 11 No. 44 (1936), pp.445-465.

²⁴ Judith Coffin & Robert Stacey, *Western Civilizations...* p. 375.

²⁵ İnalçık, *Rönesans Avrupası...*, pp. 55-67.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 59.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 59.

the Humanist figures started to analyze Ancient Greek texts as well. As a consequence of meetings concerning the unification of Catholic and Orthodox Churches, first in Florence then in other Italian city-states, Manuel Chrysoloras (d. 1415) came as an educator and his influence resulted in the popularization of Ancient Greek texts. Florence's public administrator Coluccio Salutati had a significant role here, in convincing both the political institutions of Florence and Chrysoloras himself in coming to Italy and giving lectures for Ancient Greek texts. For the philosophical impact of Humanism, the figures such as Plethon and Bessarion had utmost importance because of their introduction of Platonic political philosophy into Italian intellectual circles. Scholastic philosophy was shaped specifically by Aristotelian philosophy as a result of St. Aquinas' reading.²⁸ In this regard, these figures played a significant role in the spread of Plato's philosophical ideas among the Humanists, especially as a consequence of founding of the first Academia in Rome by Bessarion.²⁹ Considering the field of philology, the main figure among the Humanists was Lorenzo Valla who founded the modern linguistics of Latin and proved that *Donatio Constantini* (the Donation of Constantine), a text which indicated that Emperor Constantine supposedly transferred his authority over to Rome papacy, was not written in the 4th century but in the 8th century, based on the linguistic features of the text.³⁰

These features were the general picture concerning Italian peninsula and the birth of Humanist program towards the end of the 14th century and throughout the 15th century. In the following sub-topics of this chapter, the details over the

²⁸ Frederick Copleston, *Thomas Aquinas* (London: Search Press, 1976), pp. 9-10.

²⁹ İnalçık, *Rönesans Avrupası...*, p. 60.

³⁰ Peter Mack, *Renaissance Argument: Valla and Agricola in the Traditions of Rhetoric and Dialectic* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), p. 23

Humanist method, its main differences from Scholasticism and its prominent figures will be elaborated in more detail. The figures for these parts will be those who played significant roles in the establishment of basic elements concerning modern historiography. In addition, these figures' historical understandings and their historiographical components will be examined as well, so that the ways in which Humanism affected the changes in historiography could be understood in a clear and founded way.

2.3 The Humanist Method and Its Characteristics

Unlike the general perspective, the notion of Humanism does not refer to any philosophical stand which concerns the “love for humanity as a whole”. Rather, it refers to the educational program and disciplinary attitude that emerged as the criticism towards the scholastic method.³¹ Even though the method in itself had philosophical tendencies, it was not a philosophical movement. As Kristeller puts it, “...the Italian humanists on the whole were neither good nor bad philosophers, but no philosophers at all”.³² This point is vital for understanding the concept of humanism properly and for not confusing the prominent Humanist writers as strong philosophical figures.

In this regard, the main difference between Humanist and Scholastic methods lies in the disciplines they prioritized over. The Scholastic method was more interested in the absolute truth –which would also support the authority of the Catholic Church- and as a result of this interest, together with the philosophical account of St. Thomas Aquinas, utilized the disciplines such as theology, logic,

³¹ Coffin & Stacey, *Western Civilization...* p. 375.

³² Paul Oskar Kristeller, “Humanism and Scholasticism in Italian Renaissance”, *Byzantion*. Vol. 17 (1944), p. 354.

medicine, law and so on.³³ However, considering the 14th century Italian city-states, these disciplines and the notion of the absolute truth did not have much impact upon the individuals among dominant class as they do not have much practical usage. For instance, the absolute truth of Pythagorean theorem does not have any analogy or usage in debates over political stance, mainly because there are no such truths in political debates and decision-making process.³⁴ On this basis, together with the beginning of classical texts' rediscovery, the disciplines such as rhetoric, moral and political philosophy, literature and poems, grammar and harmony gained more importance for educational programs.³⁵ The classical texts had their roots in Ancient Greek and Roman civilizations where the concrete usage of these disciplines are seen clearly. The early Humanists such as Petrarch, Salutati or Bruni were especially influenced by the rhetorical texts of *Cicero* where he embodied a synthesis of art of eloquence and ethical considerations.³⁶ The advance in these fields simply meant a betterment of their experiences in political arena where they convince and lead others in specific actions, concerning the moral integration of their city-states.³⁷ In this regard, while the absolute truth of scholastic method did not mean much to their practical needs in social life, the rise of the humanist program made them gain an advantage over the political spectrum.³⁸ Below, more detail will be given over the relationship between the rise of humanism and its usage in governance, which was not only limited to republican city states such as Florence and Venice but also in other princedoms of Renaissance Italy. In that context, it could be argued that

³³ Hope, "Scholasticism", pp. 445-465.

³⁴ Charles G. Nauert, *Avrupa'da Hümanizma ve Rönesans Kültürü*, Trans. by Bahar Tırnakçı (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2011), pp. 19-22.

³⁵ Coffin & Stacey, *Western Civilization...*, pp. 376-377.

³⁶ Nauert, *Avrupa'da Hümanizma...*, p. 31

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 20.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 21.

Humanism owes its rise to the practical benefits of historical conditions in the social environments of Italian city-states.

It is important to note, however, that the rise of Humanism and Renaissance does not mean a purely enlightening re-born of humanity from the darkest ages where the eyes of humanity were completely shut down. Even though most of the early Humanists saw themselves as distinct from their contemporary era which was filled with ignorance, it is stated that most of the common understandings that were attached to Renaissance were apparent in the middle ages as well, especially in regions over the North of the Alps.³⁹ In that context, seeing the rise of Humanism as a breaking point that shined over the middle ages is a superficial perspective that was rightfully criticized by many Middle Age historians.⁴⁰ This point will be elaborated more in detail in the 3rd chapter of this thesis, where the false conceptualization of Renaissance as an era and its impact upon the studies over this historical object will be analyzed.

Despite the misconception of the significance, the era and rise of a new methodological understanding had its own vital points that brought about new perspectives in many aspects that affected the intellectual life. As it was noted before, the rise of Humanism can be related back to the famous poet Petrarch and his criticism of Scholastic attitudes. In the following sub-topics of this chapter, starting with Petrarch, the prominent Humanists will be analyzed in detail and their importance over the course of Renaissance will be explained. Understanding their main ideas is crucial for the purposes of this thesis in the sense that these ideas form

³⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 3-4.

⁴⁰ Lynn Thorndike, "Renaissance or Prenaissance", *Journal of the History of Ideas*. Vol. 4 (1943), pp. 65-74.

the breaking points for the emergence of the perspective changes that possibly have a role to affect history writing understanding in the Renaissance, which is the main argument of this thesis. In this regard, with each sub-topic of this chapter, the relations of the Renaissance personalities to these significant breaking points will be explained and will be kept in mind.

2.4 Petrarch, the Shift in Historical Understanding and the Emergence of Humanism

Considering the birth of Humanism in Europe, Petrarch can be seen as the founding figure of this movement. He put forward the significant criticisms towards the Scholastic program and effectively shared many classical texts that were forgotten in time. He was especially under the influence of the writings of Cicero, whose writings he saw as a perfect combination of decision-making in ethics and politics on the one hand, and the artistic usage of rhetoric on the other. He adored the classical Roman civilization in relation to its Republican characteristic, and was quite fond of the ancient age specifically.⁴¹

It is observed that beginning with Petrarch, the Scholastic attitude of prioritizing a specific part of a text and utilization of that part out of the context started to be left out. The alternative method that the Humanist program suggested was returning to the original text in whole, so that the context of the texture could be understood in more detail and its syntheses could be understood within its scope of the context.⁴² This attitude is one of the main differential characteristics of the Humanist program from that of Scholasticism, on the basis of which early Humanist writers accused the Scholastic method for lacking any strong principles in their

⁴¹ Nauert, *Avrupa'da Hümanizma...*, pp. 23-25.

⁴² Judith & Stacey, *Western Civilization*, pp. 375-377.

textual analyses.⁴³ On this basis, Petrarch did not only produce effective work in the rediscovery of classical texts but also in attempting to solve the main problems he faces with in these texts.⁴⁴ One of these problems was whether to choose a contemplative life spent on being a good Christian or to choose an active life, inspired by Cicero's rhetoric and activating the idealized concept of the "citizen" as the term was used in its classical sense.⁴⁵

However, the most influential impact of Petrarch on the birth of Humanism lies in his historical understanding. With his conceptualization, the first reasonable breakpoint of perspective change towards history writing in the Renaissance also becomes actualized. This understanding is the "historical continuity", which categorizes historical eras into different ages and analyzes each of them within their own historical reality and conditions.⁴⁶ Petrarch makes this distinction by dividing historical eras into three: the Ancient age where the classical values were embraced in social and political life which was an enlightened era, the middle ages where the values of the past were forgotten and humanity was imprisoned into a darkness and lastly a reborn era for which the Humanist analysts were seen as the main trigger.⁴⁷ Even though this categorization consists of the superficiality that was mentioned above, the idea was revolutionary in that it brought about the concern to analyze the texts and ideas with reference to their historical conditions and realities. To put differently, the ideas and insights of the past were not abstracted from the reality as a result of which they were born. This concern brings the betterment of historical analyses and historical documents in that they were understood in a deeper sense,

⁴³ Nauert, *Avrupa'da Hümanizma...*, p. 25.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 30.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 30-31.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 26.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 26-27.

and makes anachronism, a concern for the analyst who examines the specific idea, text or the information. In a fictional dialogue against St. Augustin, he writes from St. Augustin's side describing his method of history which shows the concern for seeing the general picture in Petrarch's perspective:

“And in pursuit of this end, putting your hand to yet greater tasks, you entered on writing a history from the time of King Romulus to that of the Emperor Titus, an enormous undertaking that would swallow up an immensity of time and labor.”⁴⁸

The same concern may also be observed in one of his poems:

“Of several Countreyes, and of differing speech.
One of a thousand were not known to me,
Yet might those few make a large History.”⁴⁹

In this regard, by bringing this concern into the main picture, Petrarch brings about one of the potential changing factors towards historiographical understanding in the Renaissance. Even though his conceptualization of “historical continuity” was deeply different from the modern meaning of the term⁵⁰, it is important that he may have been put forward the primal version of this notion. As it was examined over the debates of history-writing in the first chapter of this thesis, analyzing a text or an idea with reference to its historical reality is a crucial process for the historian in knowledge-deriving process. In this regard, the historian is responsible for establishing the connection between their object of inquiry -historical evidence or document- and the conditions that these documents were established. For that reason, having been contend with only citing what documents states and having no place for

⁴⁸ Francesco Petrarca, *Petrarch's Secret or the Soul's Conflict with Passion: Three Dialogues between Himself and St. Augustine*. Trans. by William H. Drapper. (London: Chatto & Windus, 1911). p.170

⁴⁹ Francesco Petrarca, “The Triumph of Love” Trans. by Anna Hume. *Petrarch in English*. Ed. by Christopher Ricks. (New York: Penguin Books, 2005). p. 10.

⁵⁰ In modern usage, this term is usually understood together with the notion of “change”. The conflict between these two terms is used to understand the internal social dynamics in most of today's historical studies.

analyses of its structural position would result in a deficient historical work. Based on this reasoning, an analytical approach towards history writing was defended by Petrarch.

As for the impact of Petrarch, in addition to his contribution of possibly having been one of the first people to put forward the importance of this aspect, he does not only make the first breakpoint in changes towards approaching history writing, but he also shaped the main features of Humanism by his emphasis upon the effects of historical conditions upon social ideas and works. Before, it was mentioned that because of its impractical feature, the “absolute truth” of certain disciplines did not have much interest of young individuals who searched for participating in political decision-making mechanisms of the republics. The statement that historical conditions affect the ideas relates to the debates within rhetoric, politics, moral philosophy as well. In that sense, this attitude actually strengthens the intellectual relativistic tendency of the Humanists against the absolute-truth concern of Scholastics.⁵¹ In that context, it could be argued the main attitude of the Humanists were shaped by Petrarch’s historical understanding and idea of “historical continuity”. For that reason, this attitude affects the nucleus of both changes in Renaissance historiography and main characteristics of the Humanist method. To put differently, this attitude is crucial for this thesis in following way: Since the main idea of this thesis was that the Renaissance era has reasonable points which possibly started the gradual change of perspective in history writing within the Renaissance, the rise of Humanism and Petrarch’s historical understanding may be understood as constituting the first impact point in this regard. Therefore, Humanism, first with

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 27.

Petrarch, forms an important step towards the shift in historiography in the Renaissance. However, the impact of Humanism to historiography should not be read as limited with this point. As Humanism spread wider, new conditions for new reasonable breaking points in the Renaissance's historical understanding started to be evaluated. These conditions basically include issues such as linguistic analysis, which critically focuses on the grammatical structure of the text, and historical examination which started to see the past as a distinct concept to the present. For that reason, the analysis of Humanism will continue with detail in following sub-topics of this chapter.

The impact of Petrarch was strong among intellectual environment of Renaissance Italy and it encountered serious criticisms from Scholastic circles as well as many influenced followers. However, in the aftermath of Petrarch's death, Humanism was ready to spread not only among Republic of Florence but also other city-states of Italy under the influence of Italian notary and politician Salutati. By the time of Salutati's death, Republic of Florence had already established its cultural hegemony through the spread of Humanism as an educational program and method, which will be analyzed in following sub-topic of this chapter. Petrarch's historical understanding, on the other hand, will be revisited again in examination of Humanism's and Renaissance's significant role in historiography debates.

2.5 Salutati, Rise of Florence Cultural Hegemony and Dominance of Humanism

It was indicated that in the emergence of Humanism, a synthesis between the profession in the art of rhetoric and having a profound understanding of virtue -i.e. moral understanding- was considered one of the most important points in this new education program. In this regard, Salutati represented this understanding of

Humanism in his role as the prime administrator of Florence. In addition to his public role, he provided an environment for the young Humanist writers to bush out. Although there were supporters of Petrarch's ideas among different city-states in Italy in that time, Salutati's efforts enabled Florence to establish its cultural hegemony over Italian Peninsula through Humanist method.⁵²

One of the most significant contributions of Salutati was to bring Byzantine Ancient Age specialist Manuel Chrysoloras to Florence to educate the young masses on Greek language and culture.⁵³ As a consequence of these efforts, the Greek resources could be analyzed in more detail which also helped to better understand the famous writers of Roman culture.⁵⁴ To put differently, the young Humanists of the time were able to read and interpret the ancient texts in their original language, and adapt them into the issues of contemporary life. Salutati saw the connection between ancient Greek and Roman texts and his vision helped to grow next generation of Humanists. In that sense, he made Florence a popular city-state for those who are interested in understanding and interpreting the classical texts by the education provided by Chrysoloras, who later gave lectures in different cities of Italy and in Paris which grew the curiosity and interest towards Greek culture and classical texts.⁵⁵

Similar to Petrarch, Salutati also took an interest in the conflict to choose between contemplative and active life. Nevertheless, as a public officer, it was not

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 35.

⁵³ Ronald G. Witt, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients: The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni*, (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 292-337.

⁵⁴ Nauert, *Avrupa'da Hümanizma...*, p. 36.

⁵⁵ Federica Ciccolella, "The Greek Donatus and the Study of Greek in the Renaissance", *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*. Vol. 12 No. 1 (2005), pp. 1-24.

hard for him to make a decision on that account.⁵⁶ Influenced by the people of Rome, especially of Cicero, he represented the “ideal man” that came into being by the Humanist impact. This ideal man included the responsibility of a father and a family man, who uses the rhetoric in his speeches and utilizes strong strategies in political decision-making based on clever judgements.⁵⁷ In other words, he drew the image of practical characteristics of the Humanist methodology in that he really used this new perspective in order to gain more success in political and daily life. In that sense, for the purposes of this thesis, his most significant contributions can be said as follows: First, his role in the spread of Humanist understanding through enabling the classical texts in Italy and making the Florence as the cultural dominant city-state in the process; and second, showing the practical side of the Humanist methodology and its concretization for those to follow. In this regard, both his efforts and the image he gave as a public figure resulted in the increase of interest towards Humanism and raising new, vital Humanist figures.

What follows next is the examination of the importance of governance for the spread of Humanism and its relation to the republican ideals. These points are important for the purposes of this thesis in the context that they clarify the basic aspect of Humanism. These basic aspects will be related to other breaking-points of Humanism towards historiography in following sub-topics of this chapter.

2.6 Importance of Governance for Humanism and Bruni’s Defense of Republicanism

In the previous parts of this chapter, it is explained that the Humanist method owed its rising popularity to its practical usage in the political environment of Italian

⁵⁶ Nauert, *Avrupa’da Hümanizma...* p. 37.

⁵⁷ Ronald G. Witt, *In the Footsteps...* pp. 323-337.

city-states. In that sense, it was not surprising that famous humanists either came from rich aristocrat families or from those who worked their way upward in social hierarchy within the public institutions.⁵⁸ For that reason, it is seen with later studies that Burckhardt's finding that the Humanists were not much interested in personal profits from political institutions and rather they focused on their own studies does not reflect the true condition of these individuals.⁵⁹ On the contrary, nearly most of them took an interest in real politics and a few of those who fit more to Burckhardt's description were most of the time criticized for not representing the ideal Humanist image.⁶⁰ This situation is also related to external threat, such as Visconti of Milan's declaration of war against Florence. In such events, the need for a strong leader to collaborate and mobilize the public grows even further, for which the disciplines of Humanism play a significant role. Here, against the "tyranny" of Milan, the republican values of Florence became a distinguishing point. In that account, the republican values were used for the mobilization of the masses and strengthening the republican values, for which the Humanists came up with the notion of "civic humanism".⁶¹ With this influence, the republican values were used for the legitimacy of the regime and social integrity on the one hand, and transformed the humanist method into a political ideal for politicization on the other.⁶² In this regard, Salutati could be said to be successful in establishing a connection between civil

⁵⁸ Nauert, *Avrupa'da HUMANİZMA...* p. 40.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 40.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 38-40.

⁶¹ Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny*, (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1955), pp. 88-97.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 92

understandings of Rome republic and Republic of Florence while utilizing the Humanist method in the process.⁶³

Following Salutati, Leonardo Bruni took the notion and elaborated it into a further meaning. This elaboration was realized with reference to Petrarch's notion of "historical continuity". In that sense, with a romantic interpretation of classical texts, Bruni believed that the "pure" republican environment of Ancient Greek and Rome owed their success to the free speech of their citizens which culminated their thoughts and interacted with each other on different accounts.⁶⁴ Since the mission of the current era, Renaissance, was to enable the rebirth of these civilizations, this mission could be achieved by the integration of "civic humanism" into the public life.⁶⁵ Bruni's ideas are put into words in his quotation from Giano della Bella in a public conservation:

"...But a good citizen... puts aside his own interests when his country needs his advice, and he does not cut down his public statements to suit his private convenience...It seems to me that the liberty of the people consists in two things: its laws and its courts. Whenever the power of these two things prevails in the city over the power of any individual citizen, then liberty is preserved."⁶⁶

Therefore, with the influence of the Roman Republic, Bruni provides a sense of citizenship that is based on the rule of law and equality before law. In this regard, Bruni produced a synthesis of Petrarch's idea of historical continuity and Salutati's civic humanism notions. This point is vital because concerning Petrarch's historical understanding, Bruni utilizes the focus on analysis with reference to historical

⁶³ Nauert, *Avrupa'da Hümanizma...* p. 42.

⁶⁴ Gary Lanziti, "Leonardo Bruni, the Medici, and the Florentine Histories", *Journal of the History of Ideas*. Vol. 69. No. 1 (2008), p. 3.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p. 3.

⁶⁶ Leonardo Bruni, *History of the Florentine People*. (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001). p. 363.

conditions to his current political environment and comes up with a rhetoric for the issues the city faced with. Even though it may be thought that these city-states did not implement full democracy, it should be remembered that a republican regime is not equal to a democracy and the fact that vanishing of the Medici family, the politically and economically dominant family of Florentine Republic in the 15th century, was implemented by the people of Florence. This fact shows that even a practical principedom was based on partial approval of the people in that era.⁶⁷

Despite these facts, however, it should be noted that humanism was popular not only in republican states but also in principedoms as well. The practical conclusions that are drawn from classical texts and Humanist disciplines such as rhetoric, ethics, grammar and literature were also practical for the purposes of princes in other city-states. Indeed, this benefit was one of the reasons why this new method and education program spread over all the Italy in that period. The fathers from dominant classes wished for their sons to have the most practical education for their practical needs; therefore, the humanist program was charming for these people as well.⁶⁸

Nevertheless, Bruni, together with Salutati, helped the adaptation of Humanism into the elite culture of high social classes of Renaissance through the political characterization of this program.⁶⁹ It also represented the concretization of Petrarch's historical understanding for current conditions, which was another significant method that was used considering the time period. In this regard, Bruni's work shows its importance not only in its integration of the term civic humanism, but

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 45.

⁶⁸ Judith Coffin & Robert Stacey, *Western Civilizations...* p. 377.

⁶⁹ Nauert, *Avrupa'da Hümanizma...* p. 47.

also in its advancement in Petrarch's historical perspective. As it was indicated before, this perspective can be considered as a probable catalyzer for the changes in the Renaissance history writing and is a consequence of the Humanist program. In the following sub-topic, the second breaking point in the possible perspective-change of historiography in Renaissance will be given by analyzing Valla's critical historical analysis methods. Then, these breaking points will be re-evaluated together to clarify any potential misconception towards the terms.

2.7 Valla's Critical Historical Analysis

Even though the studies of philology and language are among those disciplines that gained importance with the emergence of Humanism, heretofore their impact was not the main focus of the discussion. The main reason behind this lies in the impact of Lorenzo Valla, who raised this discipline at another level within the Humanist movement. In fact, Valla's contributions to language studies did not only remain within literature and Latin language but also significantly affected the historical approach of the Humanists as well. Indeed, his approach towards historical documents constitutes the second breaking point of the Humanist movement for the possible contribution to the development of a new historiographical perspective in the Renaissance.

Despite their broad study methods, most of the early Humanists were too *naïve* in questioning whether the texts or documents they examine reflect the truth or not.⁷⁰ In fact, in most of the texts, there were many deficient or additional parts that

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 51.

contradicted with the original texts. So much so that, the falsely attributed texts to Aristotle, which contained great deal of contradictions with the main texts, are today comprised with reference to a person referred as “Pseudo-Aristotle”.⁷¹ Therefore, the Humanists needed to have an interest in not only discovering classical texts but also in depicting their characteristics of truth. Among them, Lorenzo Valla came into foreground by his significant detection in language analysis. Valla came up with the idea that language is a human artifice; in other words, it is a product not of the material world but of human intelligence.⁷² This significant detection results in the awareness that the language style and grammatical structures of the texts are open to changes throughout different time periods, as they are the product of human activity and they are not in stable, absolute forms. With such awareness, Valla was able to show the originating period of examined texts based on their language usage and sentence structures. In other words, Valla’s linguistic method of analysis, in addition to laying the foundation of modern linguistics, brings a suspicion towards the early accepted and trusted historical documents and brought them into table in order for them to be accepted as reflection of truth or not.

The most famous example for this method is how Valla showed the *Donatio Constantini* (the Donation of Constantine) was a pseudo-document, based on the linguistic and historical criteria. According to the mentioned document, the Byzantine Emperor Constantine -who became the first Christian Byzantine emperor- supposedly gave his world authority to the current Pope, Sylvester I, and recorded the transfer of authority in the mentioned document.⁷³ Needless to say, the document

⁷¹ Bernard Weinberg, “From Aristotle to Pseudo-Aristotle”, *Comparative Literature*. Vol. 5, No. 2. (1953), pp. 97-98.

⁷² Nauert, *Avrupa’da Hümanizma...* p. 52.

⁷³ İnalçık, *Rönesans Avrupası...* p.62.

was used by the Papacy for the claim of worldly authority over Christian states and their political dominion. Even though there were those who were suspicious of the document, Valla was the first person to show a detailed critical analysis of the document and thus proving that the document was written in the 8th century, not in the 4th century as it was claimed.⁷⁴ This critical analysis was distinguished into two aspects: historical and linguistics. For the historical analysis, Valla puts forward the question that Constantine was not a political leader who was ready to give his authority so easily, according to the trusted historical documents. The same situation applies to the Pope Sylvester I who had no interest in earthly authority because the ecclesiastical institution of the time was not same as the current Papal State and he would deny such authority even if it was given. Provided that Valla's first historical aspect was ignored, there still remains a question of historical evidences that show the remarks of Sylvester I's political authority.⁷⁵ If he was given such authority, there had to be any type of historical evidence that would prove this political authority such as a coin in his name, political decrees that were approved by him and so on.⁷⁶ After depicting the contradictions of the text, Valla describes this situation as follows:

“What of something much more absurd: would the nature of things allow someone to talk about Constantinople as one of the patriarchal sees, when it was then neither patriarchal nor a see, nor a Christian city, nor was it so called, nor was it yet founded, nor was the foundation envisioned?”⁷⁷

In fact, his criticism of the document's historical text is given in the following passage:

⁷⁴ Nauert, *Avrupa'da Hürmanizma...* p. 54.

⁷⁵ Peter Mack, *Renaissance Argument...* p. 23.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p.23.

⁷⁷ Lorenzo Valla, *On the Donation of Constantine*. Trans. by G.W. Bowersock (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007). p. 75

“No one knows the name of the man who wrote this in the decrees, and he is the only one who says it. No one knows the name of the man who wrote the history, and he is the only one brought forward as a witness, and falsely too.”⁷⁸

As for the linguistics analysis of Valla, the document showed crucial language usages that were not apparent in the 4th century Latin language. The new capital of Byzantine is referred as “Constantinople” which was not used until the death of Constantin, and used a classical Latin that were not used in the 4th century Byzantine official documents.⁷⁹ Here, through a synthesis of historical and linguistic criticisms, Valla showed that the famous document was not valid and was formed in the 8th century, way later than it was claimed to be constituted, in order for the Papacy to gain more authority over political dominion of Christian states.⁸⁰

Valla’s critical analysis is vital for the context of historiography because of its awareness and critical perspective towards the historical document it analyzes. In this regard, Valla’s analysis utilizes the Petrarch’s idea of historical continuity with the idea that the language is a human construct and documents from different periods of time show the language structure and vocabulary of their time. With such attitude, he brings not only an advancement in the Petrarch’s idea and first crucial point, but also an occurrence of a second breaking point, which is related to have a critical perspective towards historical documents by the historian. The documents may not reflect the truth most of the time, and they need to be analyzed in relation to other documents and historical evidences. In that sense, in relation to the main argument of this thesis, it is implied here that Valla’s historical and linguistic method shows a

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p. 59.

⁷⁹ Nauert, *Avrupa’da Hümanizma...* pp.54-55.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p. 55.

second path through which historical perspective and attitude towards history writing in the Renaissance era may have experienced a shift and renewal.

In order to have a better and clearer understanding of the emergence and development of the Humanist method and its relation to the main aim of the thesis - that is, showing the potential changes in the Renaissance historiography- the significant representatives of this movement are explained in their chronological order. However, it is necessary to sum up the main importance of the Humanist method for showing the value of Renaissance era, which is the secondary problem of this thesis, in the context of possible changes within historical methodology. In the following sub-topic, the significance of this movement will be elaborated briefly and the Humanists' account in this issue will be concluded.

2.8 Significance of Humanism in Historiography

The main aim of this thesis was to show that, firstly, the era of Renaissance has certain breaking points of probable changes in historiography. Secondly, after showing these breaking-points, the conceptualization of this era and where the value of the Renaissance lies will be examined. Based on Burke-Burckhardt debate, it will be argued that the value of Renaissance is not understood accurately by many scholars. In the literature, most of the studies concerning Renaissance either claim that this period had no significance whatsoever or that this era has much more significance than it is given. Based on these accounts, there seems to be a lack of middle ground, which will be attempted to be solved in detail within the 3rd chapter of this thesis.

For the first aim of this thesis, the role of Humanism in historiography constitutes the first half of the argument. Accordingly, there are two main features of the Humanist program that could be considered to have affected the historical understanding and analysis in the Renaissance. The first of these features is Petrarch's idea of historical continuity, which puts forward the idea that the past could be categorized into different stages, and each stage should be examined in accordance with their own conditions. This idea is substantial, in the sense that it brings the focus towards the circumstances of a given period when a historical evidence is analyzed. Based on this focus, the relation between the time period, its general structure and the evidence could be understood in more detail and as a result may give the insight to the historian. In this regard, the causal relationships could be established with more accuracy and the studies could get closer to reflecting the reality behind the historical evidence. The second breaking point is Valla's idea that language is a construct of human interaction and does not belong to the materials of nature in itself. This idea, synthesizing with the historical continuity idea of Petrarch, brought the fact that the language structure of a historical document gives clues to the historians about document's historical period. Therefore, when analyzing a historical text, a historian should be able to detect whether it fits to the historical period it is claimed to be, and compare other documents in the relevant period for cross-check.

Both of these points have one thing in common: the historian, or researcher, is not given a passive role in his/her study. When they are faced with a possible historical evidence, a historian should be able to classify the document into the time periods and should examine the conditions of that period and locality. Also, in order

to have a knowledge over the credibility of the source, the language structure of the document and its relation to the other historical evidences should be examined. In none of these processes the historian can accept the document as it is and be content with merely narrating the information given in the documents. In other words, one way or another, the active participation of historian in deriving knowledge from historical documents and sharing related insights is necessary. It is in this sense that the Humanist method can be claimed to have produced some characteristics of analytical understanding in the Renaissance history writing. However, the potential changes of the Renaissance historiography were not limited with the prominent figures of the Humanist program. Especially with the traumatic effects of 1492 Italian Wars, the perspective towards past and history writing experienced changes as well. The prominent figures in the aftermath of these wars are Niccolò Machiavelli and Francesco Guicciardini, who are to be examined in the following sub-topic of this chapter.

2.9 Machiavelli and Guiccardini's Historical Understandings

Most of the Humanist historians, as it was indicated before, were mainly interested in the Humanist program's practical usage in their daily and political life. This usage brought a historical understanding that the study of the past is used to legitimize the current political system; so much so that, Salutati and Bruni put forward the concept of "civic humanism" in order to mobilize the masses into political conjuncture through the usage of humanist program.⁸¹ This perspective slightly differed with Machiavelli and Guiccardini, mainly as a result of the

⁸¹ Bos, *Framing a New Mode...* p. 353.

traumatic impacts of 1492 Italian Wars.⁸² These wars continued until 1515 and then sparkled again through different stages. In the 1520s, the old Italian city-state life was completely changed and historians such as Machiavelli and Guiccardini saw their past as something that is completely lost and irretrievable.⁸³

As a consequence of their loss, the historical understanding of the early Humanists changed with these two figures as well. History, or the study of the past, now was not seen as something that was used to praise the present political environment and regime. Rather, the past included the mistakes of Italian rulers and people which resulted in the catastrophic wars that produced traumatic impacts upon the Italian city-states.⁸⁴ One of the crucial aspects here is that these catastrophic consequences were not linked simply to French invasion; instead, the failure of unity and internal disturbances of Italian cities were given as the primary cause of these results by Machiavelli and Guiccardini. To put differently, the main reason for the loss of war and internal conflicts were found in the politics of Italy, and not in somewhere else. This point shows the shift of perspective in history writing, since it was common to show less interest in the mistakes and more on the success in official history documentation. Besides, now that the understanding and aim of the history is changed, the importance of rhetoric and poetics are decreased as well. These disciplines, as a part of their practicality, were used in promoting “civic humanism” and mobilizing the masses into approving the present regime.⁸⁵ They were also related to the epic narration of past events, so that an appeal to emotion would increase the historical document that was produced. However, now with the changes

⁸² Felix Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guiccardini: Politics and History in Sixteenth-Century Florence*. (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 203-206.

⁸³ Bos, *Framing a New Mode...* p. 360.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 360.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p. 360.

in the social structure, the aim of the history became the depiction of the mistakes so that they would not be repeated in the future.⁸⁶ As a result, the fields such political science and political philosophy gained significance in historiography in the place of poetics and rhetoric, so that an objective analysis of the political decision-making mechanisms could be implemented and the errors of the past could be depicted.⁸⁷ Either way, the notion of past becomes something totally distinct from the present with the changes in Machiavelli's and Guiccardini's historiographic approaches. Here, it could be observed that the historical continuity idea of Petrarch grows stronger and becomes more rigid than it was first proposed. When the notion was put forward by Petrarch, his main goal was to differentiate the "dark" Middle Ages from his own current life. This goal was related to praising his own time and establishing linkages with the antiquity which was seen as the idol, positive period for Humanists. However, now with Machiavelli's and Guiccardini's traumatic experiences, the past era became totally disconnected to the present; in other words, the idea of historical continuity became stronger and the differences between different periods of time were started to be seen more easily.

Machiavelli and Guiccardini, in this regard, may seem as the "conscious critics" of humanist traditions even though they were influenced by them to a certain extent.⁸⁸ They wrote in Italian rather than in Latin, which also shows their perspective change as a consequence of the Italian Wars,⁸⁹ and advanced both the classical and vernacular methods of historiography.⁹⁰ The changes that they brought

⁸⁶ Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini...* p. 207.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 207.

⁸⁸ Mark Philips, "Machiavelli, Guicciardini, and the Tradition of Vernacular Historiography in Florence" *The American Historical Review*. Vol. 84, No. 1. (1979), p. 87.

⁸⁹ Bos, *Framing a New Mode...* p. 360.

⁹⁰ Philips, "Machiavelli, Guicciardini..." p. 86.

about in historical understanding brings the third breaking point for the possible change of perspective in the Renaissance historiography: *Interpreting the past as a distinct era from the present and analyzing the events of the period as objective as possible*. In the context of Machiavelli, this concern becomes even more apparent because he took a role in politics before the chaos of the war spread over. It could be argued that, just like accusing the Italian officials for the disasters in Italy, Machiavelli blames himself for his own mistakes during his time of official duty.⁹¹ This is a crucial point because it brings a type of consciousness to history writing that stands critical of the current time and the recent past. He finishes his book on Florentine history with following quotes, which shows both his pessimism and the distance he places between contemporary and past Italy:⁹²

[Lorenzo de Medici's] survivors were unable either to satisfy or strain the ambition of Lodovico Sforza, tutor to the duke of Milan; and hence, soon after the death of Lorenzo, those evil plants began to germinate, which in a little time ruined Italy, and continue to keep her in desolation.⁹³

A similar attitude is seen in Guiccardini as well. He also sees the circumstances of the past as completely lost and finds guilty those who were active in the politics and brought the end of Italy, in his understanding.⁹⁴ This break point is also seen in their change of attitude in historiography as well, since they broke the main linkages to 14th-15th century Humanists, their disciplines and methods. One aspect of this is the usage of Italian rather than Latin, as the classical Latin meant the revival of antiquity for Humanists whereas Machiavelli and Guiccardini neither need such bonds with the past, nor do they have the desire to appraise the present with

⁹¹ Bos, *Framing a New Mode...* p. 356.

⁹² *Ibid*, pp. 356-357.

⁹³ Niccolò Machiavelli, *History of Florence and of the Affairs of Italy: From the Earliest Times to the Death of Lorenzo the Magnificent*, (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University), p. 424.

⁹⁴ Bos, *Framing a New Mode...* pp. 356-357.

using the past anymore.⁹⁵ In that context, the study of history is not a tool for the personal profits of the historian anymore. Rather, the derived insight from the past could only have a cumulated value for every person who takes an interest in that insight. Therefore, historical evidences and documents cannot be used by the historian for the purpose of praising the current system. Such attitude in history writing would not produce valuable works in the “scientific” sense of historiography.

Under the light of this picture, then, three breaking points in Renaissance concerning historiography will be summed up in following sub-chapter, and the reason why this era is valuable concerning the emergence of modern understanding towards historiography will be re-evaluated in a clear sense.

⁹⁵ *Ibid,*

2.10 Summary of the Chapter

The main argument of this chapter was that the Renaissance era, as a consequence of certain cultural and political structural conditions, produced three overlooked breaking points that enabled the probable changes in its attitude towards history writing. In that context, there are given three reasonable causal links that sparkled in this process:

1. Petrarch's idea of *historical continuity*
2. Valla's conceptualization of *language as human construct*
3. Machiavelli's and Guiccardini's *objective historical understanding*

In that sense, with the idea of historical continuity, a historical consciousness that categorizes different periods of time into distinct groups came into being. The significance of this thought lies in that it produced a focus upon the different characteristics of different periods of time, and analyzing the object of inquiry in relation to the conditions that those objects belong to. This idea was developed even further with Valla's critical historical analysis, where he recognized that the language is an artifice of human interaction and does not have a stable, monotonous structure in itself. It develops through time; therefore, the different periods of time produce different structure and vocabulary for language. Based on this reasoning, the historian should examine the philological characteristics of a given text and interpretation of these features should not be left out in an analysis. In fact, the lack of such analysis could result in referencing a fake document which was not verified neither by other current documents or the vocabulary of the claimed time, similar to *Donatio Constantini*. Finally, with Machiavelli and Guiccardini, the Renaissance historiography took a turn and cut loose the study of past from praising the current

system. With this change of perspective, it could be claimed that a more objective method towards history and analysis of different aspects within past events came into the picture in the Renaissance history writing. Therefore, the history writing was now seen valuable not because of its pragmatic purpose in daily political life but rather because of its possible mirroring the details of previous experiences in time. Each of these new perspectives constitute another potential shift in the Renaissance historiography, which were not hitherto apparent. However, it should be noted that the emergence of this possible perspective shift could not have occurred instantly. Rather, it was the consequence of gradual process in regards to the Renaissance historiography.

In the following, and the final chapter of this thesis, it will be argued that based on this main problem, Renaissance as a period has a historical value that differs it from other periods. This argumentation will be made in accordance with Burke-Burckhardt debate, on whether Renaissance was a significant historical period and if yes, where its value lies. Since this problem will be evaluated on the basis of the main question, this debate will constitute the secondary concern of this thesis.

CHAPTER 3

THE HISTORIOGRAPHIC PROBLEM IN THE RENAISSANCE AND THE PERSPECTIVES OF BURCKHARDT & BURKE

3.1 Aim of the Chapter

The studies over the Renaissance actually begun in the era itself, as it was examined in previous chapter of this thesis. However, the detailed and more instructive works on the Renaissance started to sparkle especially in 19th century. The crucial figure of this century, whose name still has significance in studies over the Renaissance, was Jacob Burckhardt. Burckhardt constituted the first comprehensive study of the Renaissance within the discipline of “cultural history”. In doing so, Burckhardt evaluated that the Renaissance gave birth to the culture that would later evolve into modern European culture.

This statement of Burckhardt, together with his whole study, maintained its popularity for a serious period of time despite certain critical evaluations. In that sense, more than a century after the work of Burckhardt was published, the British historian Peter Burke produced his works on the same topic. In his works, Burke contrasts the many aspects of Burckhardt’s analysis of the Renaissance and develops his own examination on the basis of a much different methodology. In that context, he represents nearly a direct opposite perspective for the study of the Renaissance.

In this chapter of thesis, keeping in mind the characterization of the Renaissance in the previous chapter, the analysis of this era by these two vital figures will be examined. The main problem of this chapter is the depiction of Renaissance's value as a historical era and the question of to what extent this value is understood accurately. It is possible to see this period as the emergence of many characteristics that were attributed to modernity, or as the rebirth of the classical civilization and its integration into the Western social life. This view was particularly popular among academic circles towards the end of the 19th century. However, this view was challenged in the 20th century, because it overlooks many points about the Renaissance and its position in Middle Ages. This challenging view attempts to show that many features of the Renaissance, which were thought to be originated in this era, were already apparent in the Middle Ages. In this regard, this perspective claims, adapting the attitude of Humanists in ignoring the previous era with such prejudices would not bring a proper understanding of the era. In fact, as a result of the romanticized conception of the Renaissance, a part of this view took the idea that the Renaissance, as an era, had nothing special or valuable in itself and it is confronted in history only because of perceiving it as an idealized, romantic period. In that context, this chapter of the thesis aims to establish a balanced ground between two perspectives, by stating where the value of the Renaissance lies on the one hand, and showing the points that should not be considered as exclusive to this era on the other. In order to establish it on a more concrete sense, in addition to Burckhardt who represents the view that sees the Renaissance as the essence of the modernity and modern culture, Peter Burke and his analysis on the issue will be examined in this chapter. After their examination, a critical evaluation of their views and of the problem concerning the Renaissance will be given.

There are several reasons why these two scholars were chosen and not someone else. The first and obvious reason is the fact that these two figures, based on more than 100 years of time difference between them, are opposite to each other in nearly every aspect in their analyses of the Renaissance. This difference is something to be gained from, as it would show how different evaluations could be made for the Renaissance. Secondly, both figures are among the most recognized scholars when the subject of the Renaissance history is considered, and each represents his position in a comprehensive way. Lastly, as it will be argued throughout this chapter, each of the figure has something to add in understanding the Renaissance in a detailed way. On the basis of their studies, it is aimed to show the realistic value of the Renaissance, in relation to the changes in its dominant perspectives towards historiography. Therefore, firstly Burckhardt's, then Burke's studies will be examined. Then, these works will be evaluated and integrated into the main argument of this thesis, which is the characteristics of the Renaissance history writing.

3.2 Burckhardt's Analysis of Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy

Jacob Burckhardt was one of the most crucial figures in Renaissance history studies and he lived in Switzerland of 19th century. As a consequence of his time period, he observed different political and ideological movements, which also affected his perspective towards history and social sciences. In this period, the movements such as romanticism, German idealism, and liberal individualism had a crucial effect on intellectual life. This was the consequence of political disturbances of modern Europe, where the idea of progress resulted in bourgeois materialism and industrial mechanization, which was the main concern for many intellectuals that

observed their contemporary period.⁹⁶ As a consequence of these movements, there were different tendencies within European intellectual life. One aspect of it was aiming to change the socio-political structure of dominant states, especially based on economic conjuncture, while the other aspect was overwhelmed by present conditions. The latter created an ideal past and felt a sense of longing in their experience of political disturbances in their current period. In this ideal past, the era they chose was “Renaissance”, as its aesthetic and intellectual awakening enabled a Romantic escape for these intellectual figures.⁹⁷

In this environment, Burckhardt was affected by this Romantic movement in his youth. Even though in time his views shifted into classicism, the influence of this Romantic era left certain traces in his historical studies concerning Renaissance to a certain extent. Since he took an interest in the subject of Middle Ages in the beginning of his academic career, this interest also shaped his Renaissance studies in later years. In this regard, the critical evaluations of Burckhardt’s famous work *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, especially in the 1940s and the 1950s focused on his lack of concern on Middle Ages. Accordingly, these critics were stating that Burckhardt was not aware about the certain activities, which were attributed to the Renaissance, were already apparent in Middle Ages; however, these critics apply more to Burckhardt’s early followers rather than himself.⁹⁸ In fact, Burckhardt was aware of this situation and he even talked in a conference about his drawbacks on using the term “Renaissance”, because it implies an absence of activity throughout the whole Middle Ages, an implication he knew was not accurate based

⁹⁶ Wallace K. Ferguson, “Jacob Burckhardt’s Interpretation of the Renaissance”, *Bulletin of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America*. Vol. 1 No. 2. (1943), p. 274.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 274-275.

⁹⁸ Nauert, *Avrupa’da Hümanizma...* pp. 3-5.

on his past studies.⁹⁹ In the context of Renaissance, he describes the “revival” of classical culture as follows:

“But the resuscitation of antiquity took a different form in Italy from that which it assumed in the North... in Italy the sympathies both of the learned and of the people were naturally engaged on the side of antiquity as a whole, which stood to them as a symbol of past greatness.”¹⁰⁰

Before getting into the details of his conceptualization of Renaissance, it is important to briefly examine Burckhardt’s methodological approaches in history writing. With the impacts and developments of the modernist idea of progressiveness, Rankean positivism, together with a “tyranny” of political history, was dominant in history writing approaches.¹⁰¹ According to this dominant point of view, historians were content with simply recording the “facts” and describing the “events” in a narrative style.¹⁰² In this regard, keeping the socio-political circumstances in mind, Burckhardt attempts to examine the cultural environment in his historical study. The concern to understand mainly cultural aspects brings about an emphasis on social evidence and writings rather than focusing solely on political documents. This point is vital in that Burckhardt, in the sense of historiography, produces an alternative approach to the dominant positivist understanding and the first prominent example of *Kulturgeschichte* –cultural history- in his era.¹⁰³ In other words, Burckhardt differs from the dominant method of narrative history with shifting his focus towards the social aspects of his object of inquiry and puts

⁹⁹ Hans Baron, “Burckhardt's 'Civilization of the Renaissance' A Century after its Publication”, *Renaissance News*. Vol. 13. No. 3. (1960), pp. 207-208.

¹⁰⁰ Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of Renaissance in Italy*. Trans. by S.G.C. Middlemore (London: Penguin Books, 1990), p. 121.

¹⁰¹ Roberta Garnier, “Jacob Burckhardt as a Theorist of Modernity: Reading The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy”, *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 8. No. 1. (1990), p. 49.

¹⁰² Ferguson, *Recent Trends...* p. 278.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, p. 278.

emphasis on the “mentality of people and the spirit of the age”.¹⁰⁴ To do so, he attempts to follow an inductive method which analyzes mass of details and brings them together in order to see the big picture of his inquiry.¹⁰⁵ In order to understand this mentality and spirit, he rather focuses on the perspective that was reflected in a social document. Here, this perspective has more priority over the accuracy of that reflection: "If a recounted action did not in reality happen or did not happen so, yet the point of view which set it forth as having happened in such a way has its value because of the typical quality of the account".¹⁰⁶ This aspect of his methodology will be evaluated in more detail towards the end of this sub-topic of the chapter.

Burckhardt produces his famous work *The Civilization of Renaissance in Italy* on this methodological basis. He establishes the causal relationship between the political environment and the emergence and spread of Renaissance ideas in Italy while analyzing the mentality of people with an emphasis on their cultural activities. The main thesis of the book could be summarized as follows: the culture of modern European civilization, as a result of specific social conditions, emerged in Italy with the rise of Renaissance culture. This birth was related to the Renaissance on several bases, two of which were prominent: the constitution of modern type of state activities and the conceptualization of the term “individual” in a distinct sense.

The rise of the modern type of state is examined in the first part of the book, where he describes the state governance as a “work of art”. Accordingly, the city-states of Italy during the Renaissance, had gained their modern characteristics

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p. 279.

¹⁰⁵ Garnier, “Jacob Burkhardt as a Theorist...” p. 49.

¹⁰⁶ As cited in Ferguson, *Recent Trends...* p. 280.

through the focus on calculability and reflection,¹⁰⁷ which are stated by him as follows:

In [Italian city-states], for the first time we detect the modern political spirit of Europe, surrendered freely to its own instincts, often displaying the worst features of an unbridled egotism, outraging every right, and killing every germ of a healthier culture. But, wherever this vicious tendency is overcome or in any way compensated, a new fact appears in history – the state as the outcome of reflection and calculation, the state as a work of art.¹⁰⁸

Here, the main difference between the Italian city-states and those of European states lies in the consequences of the conflict between the Papal State and Emperor Hohenstaufen created a political vacuum,¹⁰⁹ as a result of which the Italian princes gained an authority equal to feudal lords but the city-states lacked the potential unity that European feudal states actualized in later periods.¹¹⁰ In that context, each city-state, whether they are republican or despotic, gained the ability to act in accordance with a sense of calculability which rationalizes their stances and this ability provides the basis of the modern type of European state mechanism, Burckhardt claims. Another significant tool by which the modern European culture emerged is “the rise of individualism”. By this term, Burckhardt means the formation of the notion of individual in a specific definition that is totally independent from any type of community. He describes this difference as follows:

Man was conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family or corporation –only through some general category. In Italy this veil first melted into air; an objective treatment and consideration of the state and of all the things of this world became possible. The subjective side at the same time asserted itself with corresponding emphasis; man became a spiritual individual, and recognized himself as such.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Ferguson, *Recent Trends...* . p. 282.

¹⁰⁸ Burckhardt, *The Civilization of Renaissance...* p. 20.

¹⁰⁹ Garnier, “Jacob Burkhardt as a Theorist...” p. 54.

¹¹⁰ Burckhardt, *The Civilization of Renaissance...* p. 20.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 98.

In that sense, according to Burckhardt, the concept of the individual that has independence from their communal bonds and has an identity itself was born with the Renaissance. This idea of the individual brings about a sense of self-reflection and self-awareness as well. With the emergence of the idea of personality, the subjects were able to focus on themselves and question their own characteristics. Accordingly, as a result of this self-reflection ability, the idea of self-improvement also came into being.¹¹² This point is significant in its connection to possibility of having a role in ruling position within the city-states. Even though Burckhardt accepts that the Renaissance was not a populist movement and resulted in the emergence of distinction between cultivated and uncultivated classes of Europe, he held the belief that in the case of Italy this distinction remained superficial, considering even the poorest had access to the poems of Tasso.¹¹³ This increased emphasis on personality also affected the view towards the political systems, since the people realized the traditional systems are the products of other personalities as well, which enabled questioning the political system and created a legitimacy issue for modern state, which was also apparent in European states of Burckhardt's time.¹¹⁴

All in all, the reason why Burckhardt gives importance to the concept of the individual is because this term came together with a consciousness in the Renaissance, which enabled the basic elements of modern European civilized culture to emerge. However, since he saw the Renaissance as a transition phase, this individualism also created different social attitudes. These attitudes include the increase in crimes, the search for fame and increasing importance of ridicule and wit.

¹¹² Garnier, "Jacob Burkhardt as a Theorist..." p. 50.

¹¹³ Burckhardt, *The Civilization of Renaissance...* p. 121.

¹¹⁴ Garnier, "Jacob Burkhardt as a Theorist..." p. 51.

These attitudes also, to a certain extent, is related to what Burckhardt calls “excessive individualism”, which is a natural consequence of the birth of the term “personality”. In this regard, this term brings both positive and negative aspects of modern culture with itself, which is something to be accepted for Burckhardt. He states the situation with the following sentences: “The fundamental vice of [Italian] character was at the same time a condition of its greatness, namely, excessive individualism... In face of all objective facts, of laws and restraints of whatever kind, he retains the feeling of his own sovereignty, and in each single instance forms his decision independently, according as honor or interest, passion or calculation, revenge or renunciation, gain the upper hand in his own mind.”¹¹⁵ Therefore, the increase of crime and emergence of mafia relations are related to this excessive individualism in the context that, utilizing the illegitimacy of state authorities, a family-like ties are established so that the personal identity can be satisfied through egotism.¹¹⁶ In fact, the crime and search for fame were sometimes relevant in that there were people who committed crimes, so their names could be known through their crimes and their personal identity could be recognized.¹¹⁷

The role of ridicule and wit is apparent, Burckhardt claims, especially in the writings of the Humanists, in the sense that the wit could be implemented only in the presence of the idea of personality, without which there cannot be the subject and object of the wit. As he stresses out:

But wit could not be an independent element in life till its appropriate victim, the developed individual with personal pretensions, had appeared. Its weapons were then by no means limited to the tongue and the pen, but included tricks and practical

¹¹⁵ Burckhardt, *The Civilization of Renaissance...* p. 289.

¹¹⁶ Garnier, “Jacob Burkhardt as a Theorist...” p. 55.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 50.

jokes – the so-called burle and beffe – which form a chief subject of many collections of novels.¹¹⁸

One last significant part of Burckhardt's examination of the Renaissance is his perspective towards the "revival" of classical antiquity with the Renaissance era and Humanist movement. Burckhardt did not see the revival of classical antiquity and ancient texts as the core characteristics of the Renaissance.¹¹⁹ Rather, this revival was helpful in the era and provided to be a guide for the Italian people, who were simply actualizing the existent potential that came into being by integration of social conditions in Italy: "...[I]t was not the revival of antiquity alone, but its union with the genius of the Italian people, which achieved the conquest of the Western world...[the Renaissance culture] needed a guide, and found one in the ancient civilization, with its wealth of truth and knowledge in every spiritual interest."¹²⁰

Having an analysis of Burckhardt's ideas, there are several points that are vital in his analysis of the Renaissance. Firstly, considering the main argument of this thesis, Burckhardt was not able to perceive the impact of the Renaissance in historiography and history writing. On the contrary, he does not find any crucial shift in historiography in his analysis of the Humanists. This perspective is related to the "superficial" comparisons of chronicles and individual coloring of historical events which made the credit of these studies questionable.¹²¹ Although he provides accurate criticism of Humanists' historical studies, it was indicated in the second chapter of this thesis that the birth of concepts such as historical continuity, language as an artifact and break of past from present through Machiavelli and Guiccardini are

¹¹⁸ Burckhardt, *The Civilization of Renaissance...* p. 110.

¹¹⁹ Baron, "Burckhardt's `Civilization of the Renaissance...'" p. 214.

¹²⁰ Burckhardt, *The Civilization of Renaissance...* pp. 120-123.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, p. 160.

vital changes that were brought about by these Humanist figures. In this regard, Burckhardt's study could be criticized in the sense that he failed to detect the changes within Humanists' methodological understandings on the issue of history writing. Secondly, he accepts the idea that the information and knowledge were valuable for the Humanists not only for understanding the classical works better but also for their utility in practical, daily concerns.¹²² However, he does not capture the "ideal humanist figure" who is not only interested in theoretical work but also sets an example as a family man, shines with his judgement on political matters and sets out a satisfactory performance in his administrative works. Burckhardt saw the humanist as single men who spend most of their time in reading texts, whereas in reality most of them had children and carried out significant administrative work in governments.¹²³ Lastly, as it was indicated above, Burckhardt does not analyze the credibility of the documents he finds in detail, because he sees the way of description in these documents valuable for historical purposes as well. In other words, even if the events or the emergence of events in a given text is not historically accurate, the false narration also tells something about the historical position of the writer and so on. This attitude of Burckhardt seems dangerous because it may result in false conclusions on historical events. The danger lies in the transmission of false information through the work of historian, which would affect the other studies in relevant fields and as a result, miscomprehension of the subject might be realized. In fact, this point is one of the most crucial critics that Burke put forwards in Burckhardt's analysis of the Renaissance, which will be examined in detail within the following sub-topic of this chapter.

¹²² *Ibid*, p. 102.

¹²³ Nauert, *Avrupa'da Hümanizma...* p. 37.

Keeping these critical points in mind, Burckhardt also provided significant changes within the conceptualization of the Renaissance and historiography in general. First and foremost, he established the field of cultural history with his studies and with a different point of view. This renewal was crucial at a time when the Rankean positivist understanding of history was dominant and the discipline of history was understood to be nothing more than a narration of political events. Burckhardt brought a focus to other social aspects in his historical studies such as the social conditions, the cultural background and so on. In that context, he provides an alternative to the dominant positivist method in history writing with his emphasis on the culture and cultural history. Besides, he helped understand the Renaissance not only as an era in which crucial innovations in the works of art was realized but also significant socio-political and cultural changes were implemented as well. In this regard, with a basis on the political circumstances of the era, he draws attention to the other aspects of the era and how these aspects were important in understanding the basics of modern European culture.

In the aims of this thesis and of this chapter, Burckhardt represents the part which defends the idea that the Renaissance, as an era, was valuable in itself and for understanding the political-cultural systems of the contemporary time. In the following sub-topic of this chapter, the views of Peter Burke will be given as a representative of the view which sees the importance of the Renaissance as an era with a skeptic outlook. In this regard, his criticism of the value attributed to this era will be given with his own analysis of the Renaissance. Based on the views of these two opposite perspectives, the value of the Renaissance as a historical era will be depicted, with the emphasis on its perspective in historiography and history writing.

3.3 Burke and His Critical Evaluation of the Renaissance

Peter Burke, who produced most of his crucial works on the Renaissance in a period between the 1960s and the 1990s, naturally provided a quite different approach to the concept than Burckhardt. The differences are mainly related to the more than 100 years that lies between Burckhardt and Burke. As it was explained in the first chapter of this thesis, 100 years of period includes crucial changes in methodological approaches towards history writing on the one hand, and significant breaking points in socio-political conditions of the Western world on the other. Burckhardt had lived as a 19th century Swiss where he experienced rather a dull life in which he observed the actions and developments of modern Europe. The Renaissance and study of Italian works of art in that period meant an escape for him, Burke states.¹²⁴ However, Burke produced his works after the world political structures were changed altogether and considering the disciplines such as cultural history and history of art, his works were published after the rise of cultural politics which increased the focus on the relationship between these two notions. In that sense, the huge differences between studies of these two figures are based on two sharp points: First, their methodological perspective towards historical issues differ significantly from each other. Burckhardt shows influences from Hegel's ideas on history and begins with ideas on Renaissance and develops his analysis further from these ideas through analyzing the daily life in the second step; however, Burke attempts to provide a balanced approach that concerns the relationships between the material and idealistic conditions of the issue, while keeping a social historical

¹²⁴ Peter Burke, *The Renaissance*. (London: Macmillian Press, 1987), p. 3.

understanding in mind.¹²⁵ Second, Burke was able to interpret the deficiencies of Burckhardt's conceptualization of the Renaissance not only because of his time period's effects on his academic perspective but also because of many critical evaluations of Burckhardt's work. In this regard, Burke's analysis of the Renaissance attempts to produce a study of the object that could benefit from Burckhardt's –or any other significant study in the literature- but also could fill the gaps in these studies, based on the methodological perspective that he adopted.¹²⁶

The main concern of Burke in his study of Renaissance is to avoid misunderstanding and misjudgments towards the issue that seems to be left in the studies, the ideas that he labels as “myths” of the Renaissance.¹²⁷ Rather, he aims to analyze this era with depicting its true value, without any false or overestimated comprehension of the object in any means. The essential point of these myths is actually the belief that the Renaissance, as an era and as a movement, represents a complete break from the Middle Ages and means the total acceptance of classical antiquity, especially the antiquity of Rome.¹²⁸ Not surprisingly, this myth was dominant especially those who are among the figures of this era. The first crucial mistake of Burckhardt, Burke claims, is that he did not critically evaluate this mythical approach of the Renaissance figures and he accepted their statements as correct without deeply questioning them.¹²⁹ As it was indicated in the previous sub-topic of this chapter, there were many points on which the important figures of the Renaissance actually continue certain characteristics of medieval understanding and

¹²⁵ Peter Burke, *The Italian Renaissance: Culture and Society in Italy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 3-4.

¹²⁶ Peter Burke, “The Renaissance, Individualism and the Portrait”, *History of European Ideas*, Vol. 21. No. 3. (1995), p. 394.

¹²⁷ Burke, *The Renaissance*. pp. 1-2.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 2.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 3.

it would be an overstatement to perceive this era as a complete shift in the periodization of the history. Burke points out that this misperception was related to the low effect of gothic style in contrast to its popularity in other countries of Europe, as a result of which innovations and adaptation of more classical techniques in art was implemented.¹³⁰ Here, most of the scholars provides three main characteristics that give distinguishing character of the Renaissance, all of which Burke were criticized by Burke: Realism, Individualism and Secularism.¹³¹ Each notion has different problematic characteristics, considering Burckhardt's claim that each of them makes the distinction of the Renaissance from the Middle Age and constitute the emergence of modern European culture. The first notion, Realism, has ambiguity which makes it difficult for it to be put forward as a characteristics of the Renaissance. In order to solve this problem, Burke provides three definition of Realism: Domestic, Deceptive and Expressive.¹³² Domestic Realism means the selection of minor items of daily life within the work of art and not focusing entirely on major objects whereas Deceptive Realism means the style through which the work of art creates an illusion that it provides a real view rather than an imitation of reality, which differs from Expressive Realism that is defined as the manipulation of outer reality so that the internal reality could be described in a more accurate sense.¹³³ Here, there is a question of which type of these Realisms are more related to the Renaissance. Burke's analysis on this account will be given in below with its detail; for the moment, it is sufficient to keep in mind that this attribution to the Renaissance by previous scholars was provided in an unclear sense. As for

¹³⁰ Burke, *The Italian Renaissance*. p. 17.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, p. 17.

¹³² *Ibid*, p. 20.

¹³³ *Ibid*, p. 20.

individualism, it was stated in previous sub-topic of this chapter that the notion of individualism was very essential to Burckhardt's perception of the Renaissance in its role for the emergence of modern European culture. Burke criticizes Burckhardt's usage of this notion on two accounts. First, Burckhardt apparently uses this notion as a "blanket term" which comprises diverse notions such as self-consciousness, self-assertiveness, self-reliance and so on within same definition; and second, there seems parallel definitions of individualism that appeared within different countries in the medieval eras whereas the "collective identities" of the individuals are still observed in Renaissance Italy.¹³⁴ His analysis of the notion will also be given in following paragraph together with the issue of Realism, in the context of the Renaissance. Lastly, even though the adaptation of secularism is seen as one of the most essential features of the Renaissance, Burke points out that "... the proportion of Italian paintings that were secular in subject rose from about 5 percent in the 1420s to about 20 percent in the 1520s. In this case, 'secularization' only means that the minority of secular pictures grew somewhat larger".¹³⁵ In this regard, despite the common understanding, Burke shows that the secularization was not as dominant as it was thought to be. Therefore, the importance of secularism in the Renaissance is that it was relatively new and one of the distinguishing characteristics of the era from the Middle Ages, rather than its domination.¹³⁶ In addition to these points regarding the deficiencies of past studies on the Renaissance by several scholars, Burke saw in Burckhardt's analysis that his study also lacked the influence of economics. In fact, Burke states that Burckhardt himself accepts this deficiency of his work in later

¹³⁴ Burke, "The Renaissance, Individualism..." pp. 393-394.

¹³⁵ Burke, *The Italian Renaissance...* p. 23.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 24.

years.¹³⁷ In that context, even though Burckhardt puts forward the concepts such as the state, culture and religion in his analysis of the circumstances within Italian city-states which enabled the emergence of the Renaissance, there seems to be a lack of description of economic conditions which have vital effects on the emergence of this movement in Italy.¹³⁸ The acceptance of this deficiency was stated by Burckhardt himself in a letter he sent to one of his students as well.¹³⁹ Also, Burke points out that Burckhardt, like most of the other historians in his time, saw the Renaissance as a singular event and did not realize that there were other similar movements to the Italian Renaissance.¹⁴⁰ As it is well-known today that the notion of “Renaissance” does not only imply the movement that emerged in Italy between 14th and 16th centuries but also relates the movements in the Middle Ages, within the Byzantine Empire or the Islamic world.¹⁴¹ However, Burckhardt did not see any attempt similar to what was implemented in Italy, as a result of which he saw the movement as singular and unique in itself, Burke claims.¹⁴²

What, then, is the accurate conceptualization of the Renaissance according to Burke? Above, the uncertain usage of “Realism” was explained and it was indicated that Burke provides three possible definitions of the term in order to understand its relevance to the Renaissance. He indicates that the problem with Expressive Realism is that this attitude is not limited to the Renaissance and it could be observed in all periods of time, a work of art is considered.¹⁴³ In that sense, recalling his definition of Renaissance as a series of innovations, the most prominent type of Realism seems

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 32.

¹³⁸ Burke, *The Renaissance*. p. 23.

¹³⁹ Burke, *The Italian Renaissance...* p. 32.

¹⁴⁰ Burke, *The Renaissance...* pp. 4-5.

¹⁴¹ Peter Burke et al., “The Global Renaissance”, *Journal of World History*. Vol. 28. No. 1 (2017), p.2.

¹⁴² Burke, *The Renaissance...* pp. 4-5.

¹⁴³ Burke, *The Italian Renaissance...* p. 20.

to be the domestic realism of background, with which minor objects and elements are started to be seen within paintings and sculpture. However, it is important to keep in mind that these characteristics was seen in texts and epic poems of the previous period and had its originality more in the technical arts. Burke also gives a solution to the characteristics of individualism with following way: The individualism and the idea of individual actually co-existed with the collective identities and there was not any dominance over these two terms to each other; in Burke's words, "There seems to have been a kind of coexistence between a realistic (individual-centered) and a symbolic (or type-centered) mentality... whether to describe the Renaissance in terms of realism or symbolism, is a false dilemma, like the choice between individualism and collective identity."¹⁴⁴ It is also important in his analysis that Burke realizes the innovations in human studies were more original than in technical arts.¹⁴⁵ In technical arts, the imitation of classical models and developing them was the main method. The focus on human studies resulted in the emergence of Humanism, the effects of which were explained in detail within second chapter of this thesis. The vital point about his conceptualization of the Renaissance is that he does not put aside the era altogether; he simply aims to depict the real historical value of the object. In this picture, he sees that the Renaissance era can mostly be characterized by its attempt to adapt the classical values, not only in art but also in social institutions. Nevertheless, the social structure is dramatically different from the longed, ancient Roman society, which makes this idea a "myth" in itself, even though this myth was lived in the dreams of some from that period.¹⁴⁶ In fact, not realizing this myth results in interesting conclusions such as adapting the early

¹⁴⁴ Burke, "The Renaissance, Individualism..." p. 398.

¹⁴⁵ Burke, *The Renaissance*. p. 12.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 16.

medieval values by misunderstanding them as classical values and while condemning the late medieval culture, adapting certain implementation that belong to the culture without noticing which period of culture these implementations belong to.¹⁴⁷

Burke's analysis is significant in many aspects. First of all, he provides an analysis of the Renaissance that does not depend on the mystification of the notion. Rather than an idealized version of the era, he attempts to perceive the characteristics of the Renaissance with integrating the social structure and social relationships. In this regard, Burke does not examine the work and ideas of Renaissance figures in themselves; on the contrary, he accepts that their socio-economic position was dependent on the ruling class and they were not entirely free in producing their works of arts.¹⁴⁸ In doing so, he does not deny the significance of the era; he only attempts to understand this significance in accurately positing the notion. He clarifies this dichotomy as following:

Was there a Renaissance at all? If we describe the 'Renaissance' in purple and gold, as an isolated cultural miracle, or as the sudden emergence of modernity, my own answer would be 'no'. If, however, the term is used, without prejudice to the achievements of the Middle Ages, or those of the world beyond Europe, to refer to a particular cluster of changes in Western Culture, then it may be regarded as an organizing concept which still has its uses.¹⁴⁹

In this picture, it is safe to say that the main claim of this thesis stands closer to Burke's analysis of the Renaissance, both in methodology it adopts and in conclusions he drew. In the following sub-topic of this chapter, based on the elements of Burckhardt's and Burke's studies, it will be discussed where this thesis' analysis of the Renaissance stands and how it is helpful to depict the value of the

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 18-19.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 2

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 5.

Renaissance. Before getting into detail, it is sufficient to say that choosing these two figures for a historical object that possess an enormous literature is not accidental. Burckhardt's work on the one hand represents a romantic ideal of the concept; on the other, it helps to conceptualize the cultural components of a given historical object which creates an eye-widening path in historiography considering his time. Burke, standing in an opposite direction to that romantic ideal, represents the analytical perspective's conclusions on the issue. In that sense, a detailed understanding of these two contrary views shows that they both have something to offer to the issue when they both are examined critically.

3.4 Discussion on the Historiographic Problem of the Renaissance

As it was examined in detail above, Burckhardt saw the Renaissance as the beginning of modernity and civilized European culture. The essence of his idea was based on the emergence of individualism in the Renaissance, a sense of individualism that was absent in the Middle Ages and constitutes the core of modernity. Burke's examination, on the other hand, puts light on the Burckhardt's analysis and clarifies the romantic tendencies as a result of which it overlooks the main features of this era and its relation to the Middle Ages. Here, even though Burckhardt was less responsible for this conceptualization of the Renaissance than his followers and to a certain extent he was aware of the continuation of medieval characteristics in this era; it could be still stated that his conceptualization gives way to this type of interpretation.

In the place of this romantic reading, Burke provides an analytical framework through which the reality concerning the Renaissance could be evaluated in a more proper sense. Indeed, Burke benefits from the adventure of debates within historical

methodology and owes much to the ideas of the Annales School in approaching this subject. In that context, the value of Burckhardt can be seen in his challenge against the dominant methodological approaches of his time. In other words, his idea of a social and cultural history in a way lays the foundation that later will be transformed into the analytical method of history in a much more appropriate way. Burke, then, succeeds in depicting the value of the Renaissance by putting his glasses of analytical perspective and reading the Renaissance through them.

Despite these facts, Burke does not approach this issue with keeping the notion of historiography in mind, i.e. the impact of the Renaissance on historiography. He is rather interested in the place of Renaissance specifically within the developments in arts; to put differently, in fields such as painting, sculpture and architecture. Together with that, he also questions the changes within the study of humanities that were improved under the influence of the Humanists, and attempts to examine the relationship between these fields and the disciplines of art, in the meantime keeping the social structure and social relationships in mind. Nevertheless, he does not see any important changes in historiography within the Renaissance even though he sees the field of history as one of the disciplines that diversified humanists, which is an accurate fixation to a certain extent. He explains the conflicts and contradictions within humanists' history writing as following:

One area in which the ambiguities and conflicts inherent in the humanist position became manifest was the writing of history... [Bruni and Valla] were among the historians who wanted to write about the recent Italian past while following the model of Livy's history of Rome, including the model of Livy's language. Yet their subject-matter made this impossible... It was not possible to pour all the new material into the classical [mold].¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ *ibid*, p. 19.

The accuracy of this point lies in that it relates to the content of historical work of the humanists. Their attempt to imitate the ancient models in a way that they could be surpassed in time, naturally, affects the works they produce within the field of history as well. As a consequence, they suffer in their content because of this aim. However, as contradictory the content of their historical works may seem, what was original about their ideas lies in their methods and approaches towards their historical works. As it was explained in the second chapter of this thesis, the Renaissance historiography had certain changes such as the idea of historical continuity, artificiality of language and break of the present from the past. Ironically, these changes resulted in rather contradictory attitude that Burke gives the example of. To put it more concretely, on the basis of historical continuation idea, these figures “avoided” the Middle Ages and saw themselves connected to the antiquity, the historical period that they share much lesser than they suppose, with their “medieval” mentality.

The main claim of this thesis, then, is that the Renaissance’s historiography was mostly overlooked in related studies and its possible changes has a crucial position for depicting its historical value. To put it more concretely, it is claimed that changes in perceiving historical analysis within the Renaissance period is not appreciated enough in most of the Renaissance studies. This change was realized within the theoretical framework on approaching history and historiographical texts, which consists of several points. First, with the Renaissance, the idea for historical continuation may be thought as having been come into the foreground, which had brought the categorization of different historical periods and analyzing the products of these periods in relation to their current artificial and natural systems. Second,

with the Renaissance, the idea of language as a human artifice became integrated into history writing through the use of grammatical and linguistic analysis within historical evidence, which gives a more critical role for the historians in their studies. Lastly, as a consequence of certain abovementioned events in the Italian peninsula, history writing gained significant elements from political science and the “study of past” lost its connection to the legitimacy of the present. Appreciating these points, it is claimed, reflects another dimension of the Renaissance. This reflection is beneficial in positing value of the Renaissance on a realistic ground. In other words, this thesis argues that the Renaissance was neither a period full of magnificence nor a period that is totally deprived from any historical significance at all. It had its crucial characteristics in relation to the time era –which is late medieval– and geography – Italian peninsula– it belonged. The changes in the Renaissance historiography, in this regard, could be seen as one of the aspects that constitutes one of the Renaissance’s important characteristics. For that reason, the main problem of this thesis, the possible changes within the Renaissance historiography; and the secondary concern of this thesis, which is to depict the historical value of the Renaissance, are interlinked with each other on that ground.

For the aims and concerns of this thesis, the debate over historiography and historical methodology has a central role. In order to understand the main methodological attitude that was adopted in this thesis, further evaluation on the history writing seems necessary. For that reason, firstly the Annales School and analytical approach with the concern of “history” will be examined in the following sub-chapter. The basic elements of this approach is embarked on this thesis; therefore, this sub-chapter aims to explain the methodological approach of this thesis

concerning its main and secondary problems. Following the Annales School, the debates over the definition of the term “history” and the purpose of history will be evaluated on the basis of Carr-Jenkins debate. These two figures represent opposite approaches towards the notion and the definition of history; therefore, their arguments and where this thesis stands in the debate will be briefly given.

3.5 Annales School and Social History

In the beginning of 20th century, the dominant idea in history writing was the positivist approach of Ranke. Accordingly, Ranke believed that a historical work must rely on official historical documents and cannot consist of any other document and interpretation. In that sense, the role of historian is to simply narrate the historical events of a specific subject. The historian has no place to use his/her interpretation in the process, as it would endanger the objectivity of history writing. History is a science and like any other scientific field, it needs to show the causality between subjects.¹⁵¹ For that reason, the source is the most vital concept for the historian, who otherwise would be acting in spite of the scientific spirit. In this regard, the political events and official sources are the primary concern for historians because they are the scientific tools that historians could use and can put the objective causal relationships and conclusions.¹⁵² However, with the influence of world wars and intellectual diversity of the 20th century, this positivistic attitude of Ranke soon lost its popularity and replaced by alternative, analytical approaches in history writing.

¹⁵¹ Felix Gilbert, «Historiography: What Ranke Meant» *The American Scholar*, 1987: 393-397.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

In the aftermath of the First World War, two historians, Mark Bloch and Lucien Febvre, came together and started to publish the journal called *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*. As such, the methodological approach called the “Annales School” begun its first activities. In that sense, these two figures argued against the positivist understanding of Ranke’s narrative history writing. Instead, they put the individual at the center of history writing by following “a problem-oriented analytical history” approach so that an inter-disciplinary character could be gained.¹⁵³ Accordingly, the historian should not only give a narrative set of events but also should have a critical perspective in understanding certain evidence so that new historical conclusions could be drawn. The basis of this perspective is to put “...the whole range of human activities in the place of a mainly political history”.¹⁵⁴ Following these principles, they believed, would enable an inter-disciplinary history-writing so that historian’s work would include the necessary details that could be overlooked when focusing solely on official resources and political history. In the words of Lucien Febvre himself, “Historians, be geographers. Be jurists too, and sociologists, and psychologists”.¹⁵⁵ The main problem with official resources is that these documents are formed in accordance with current ideological perspective of relevant state.¹⁵⁶ In this regard, historians cannot obtain desired objectivity from these resources despite what Ranke as a positivist historian claimed.

Burke categorizes the periods of Annales School into three parts. The first part is the emergent period between 1929 and 1945, in which Bloch and Febvre put

¹⁵³ Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution: The Annales School 1929-1989*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), p.2

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p.2

¹⁵⁵ Lucien Febvre, *Combats pour l'histoire* (New York: Pocket Books, 1995).

¹⁵⁶ Ceren Yeğen, «Annales Okulu, Mark Bloch ve "Tarih Savunusu: Veya Tarihçilik Mesleği" Yapıtı Üzerinden Bloch'un Tarih Anlayışı», *Abant Kültürel Araştırmalar Dergisi (AKAR)*, 2016: 25-39. p.26

forward the essential ideas of the Annales history-writing. The second part is the post-Second World War period where the Annales approach transformed into a “school” by putting forward distinctive concepts and methods with the influence of Fernand Braudel.¹⁵⁷ The third and the last part is the period in the aftermath of 1968 and the New Social Movements. In this last period, this approach begun to lose its distinctiveness and became more fragmented and divided, including opposite methodological followers within itself. The differentiation of these three parts is vital for the aims of this thesis, which attempts to analyze the methodological approaches behind Renaissance history-writing and depict their efficiency towards grasping the significance of Renaissance as a historical era. Since these three periods of Annales school include different perspectives in history-writing, each of them reflects different potential strengths and weaknesses in understanding the importance of Renaissance. In order to show these potential strength and weakness points, each of these periods will be elaborated in detail.

The first period begins with publication of *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*. In 1928, Bloch and Febvre came together and put forward an alternative historical methodology to that of positivist narrative history under the new journal they started printing. Bloch and Febvre were not satisfied merely with official resources as they are the products of superstructure. To put differently, official state resources are based on the acceptance of dominant ideology and oversees the reality of other social dimensions. However, Ranke’s positivist narrative history takes other types of sources out of consideration as they do not provide the “scientific

¹⁵⁷ Burke, p.2

objectivity”.¹⁵⁸ Here, Bloch and Febvre prioritize the notion of “social history”, which takes the social products of individuals at the center of their historical analyses. It is vital for a historian to read the resources always with a critical perspective and these resources should be considered under the conditions of their time. This could be achieved by analyzing the language structures of society, comparison of different aspect of societies in a given time period and by an integrative historical understanding which adapts different disciplines together.¹⁵⁹ Besides, the main subject of history is the individual who can be understood only with reference to the social reality s/he lives in. This reality, as it was noted, cannot be grasped efficiently on the basis of mere events. It is necessary to examine the organizational and social structures and their relationship with each other.¹⁶⁰ The first period of Annales School, in this regard, is significant in that it put forward the general frame of Annales methodology with significant examples such as Bloch’s *The King’s Touch and Feudal Society* or Febvre’s *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: The Religion of Rabelais*. However, as a result of rigidity, especially of Bloch, over certain issues such as dismissal of handwriting resources altogether prevented it from having the huge impact that later Fernand Braudel realized.

Braudel represented the second -and brightest- period of the Annales School. In this period, Annales’ principles became wide-known and its foundation became stronger. Although having a similar core for historical methodology with his predecessors Bloch and especially Febvre, he developed a more detailed understanding in history writing. The most important difference was his

¹⁵⁸ Gilbert, p.393.

¹⁵⁹ Yeğen, p.26

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p.26

conceptualization of “time”. In that sense, time is categorized through three ways: “Geographic Time”, “Social Time” and “Individual Time”.¹⁶¹ Each perspective within these dimensions may affect the flow of time. For instance, time is not same for a military officer in war, who perceives everything in a rapid pace, and his family member who waits for him, for whom the time passes pretty slowly. These different dimensions and perspectives of time, altogether, constitute history.¹⁶² Reading the history of civilizations through these dimensions results in the analyses of what Braudel calls “structure”. The structure of a civilization is constituted as a consequence of cultural movements, which come and go one after another and collide into conflict with each other.¹⁶³ The history of civilizations, then, formed as the rise and fall of these cultural movements in Braudel’s understanding.¹⁶⁴ In this regard, structure is the main determinant of the civilization and affects every aspect of it. Therefore, the history of the organization could be understood in full-scope only in reference to the structure of it. This brings to Braudel’s critic of event-based historical understanding, as these events are meaningful in the context of the structure. Historical analysis starts from short period of time and continues towards long-period with that perspective in mind.¹⁶⁵ This is an additional point to Bloch and Febvre in their criticism of historical positivism, because a typical positivist would suggest that such interpretations towards events and re-organizing them with reference to an abstract concept such as “structure” would be against objectivity. Here, Braudel shows that this lack of perspective disables historical positivism from producing historical work in its full potential by only looking at small details of it.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid* p.28

¹⁶² Burke, p.3

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, p.3

¹⁶⁴ Yeğen, p.29

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p.29

All in all, Braudel brought advancement in Annales School's core theoretical framework. His doctoral thesis *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*¹⁶⁶ put the Annales School's methodological approach in a popularized context for academic circles and history-writing debates.¹⁶⁷ In the third period following Braudel, a more disintegrated and fragmented period begins and this movement starts to lose its originality slowly.

The third period of Annales School was active in the periods beginning from the end of the 1960s. Unlike the first two periods, there were no any dominant figure in this era which makes it harder to explicate the main features of historians in this era.¹⁶⁸ As a consequence of the 1968 movements, the history writing in this period was highly influenced by the new social movements and identity politics. With these movements, the minor political issues such as women rights, environmentalism, gay liberation which later develops under LGBTIQ+ movement, animal rights and so on emerged as a separate issue in themselves.¹⁶⁹ In other words, all these movements acted independently from each other and raised their voice towards political changes specifically to their own issues.¹⁷⁰ This brought the difference in perspective towards the issue of substructure and superstructure. In previous stages, the figures of Annales School tend to think of substructure, which represents the economic dimension, as determinant of superstructure, which is represented by non-economic reflections of the society such as culture, politics and so on. However, with the rise

¹⁶⁶ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (California: University of California Press, 1996).

¹⁶⁷ H. R. Trevor-Roper, «Fernand Braudel, the Annales and the Mediterranean» *The Journal of Modern History*, 1972: 468-479.

¹⁶⁸ Burke, p.3

¹⁶⁹ Feride Acar, Hasan Faruk Uslu, *Siyaset Sosyolojisi: Temel Yaklaşımlar - Yeni Tartışmalar*, (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2021).

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

of new social movements and identity politics, the general idea shifted towards superstructure (culture, ideology, politics etc.) and the working subject of Annales School was affected as well. These topics include issues such as “the notion of childhood, historical psychology, fears in dominant culture” and so on.¹⁷¹ This shift is also vital in that the structuralist tendencies of former figures, especially that of Braudel, was replaced by post-structuralism of third-generation figures, which brought atomization and differentiation of perspective towards history-writing.¹⁷² This feature can be read as another reason for the disintegration process occurred in the third generation of Annales School. For that reason, the third generation could not have the impact that former ones, especially second period, had upon the history writing and understanding of social history.

The Annales School brought vital changes for history writing in many aspects. They brought the notion of “social history” into foreground, utilized social resources as new indicators for historical pictures that were drawn in their works. Their analytical understanding shattered the Rankean historical positivism which put the historian in a passive role, and replaced it with a more coherent attitude that stems from an interdisciplinary character. These characteristics of their methodological attitude also increases the credibility and epistemic value of their work.

Having acknowledged these points, the Annales school also had certain deficiencies which brought certain criticisms towards their method. The first of these was the absence of their works in the English speaking scholarly circles, which made

¹⁷¹ Yeğen, p. 30

¹⁷² H. L. Wesseling, «The Annales School and the Writing of Contemporary History» *Review*, (1979), pp. 185-194

it difficult for them to spread globally. As a consequence of producing their basic works only in French, the impact of the Annales School was realized with delay, and made it hard for the academic world to fully grasp their understanding.¹⁷³ Secondly, although their strong criticism of official resources widened new opportunities for history writing, it also narrowed down their studies in the sense that they discarded these resources altogether. Even though they have rightful claims in their distrust towards these resources, they miss the possible insights from official documents towards political process by paying no attention to them because of their subjectivity.¹⁷⁴ Thirdly, they get criticized by their relatively less usage of the term “narrative”.¹⁷⁵ This criticism comes from Ricoeur with pointing out the weakness of “narrative” in the Annales school, claiming that -especially Braudel- does not put a clear definition for the notion.¹⁷⁶ In this regard, Ricoeur mainly criticizes the Annales School for the “eclipse of narrative” and disregarding the narrative history altogether.¹⁷⁷ As a thinker that aims to show the role of narrative as an explanatory tool for thought and actions of the past, Ricoeur blames the Annales School for cutting one strong bridge in history writing.¹⁷⁸ As a consequence of this deficiency, the notion of time also becomes ambiguous as it is deprived of a defined framework and a reference point; for instance, Braudel speaks of the distinction of short-long time and the distinction of slow-fast time together. In this example, the term time is understood with reference to movements rather than periods, and it is not certain under which criteria these distinctions are made or even differentiated over one

¹⁷³ Didem Delice. “Annales Okulu ve Ricoeur'un "Anlatı" Bağlamında Annales Okulu Eleştirisi” in *History Studies*. Vol. 3/2 No. 7. (2011). p.118.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p. 118.

¹⁷⁵ Yeğen, p.32.

¹⁷⁶ Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, (California: University of California Press, 1990).

¹⁷⁷ Delice, p.118.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p.120.

another.¹⁷⁹ It could be interpreted that this criticism is also related to the second one. Finally, Ricoeur criticizes the “Marxist ideological sociology” of the Annales school because such attitudes creates “alienation, differentiation and distance” in historical study.¹⁸⁰ For that reason, the method of the Annales School may “silence” those who started to raise their voice once again after a period of suppression.¹⁸¹

Based on this framework, it could be argued that the core of Annales School needs to be integrated into contemporary debates in history writing. The weakest point of the school can be shown as the disintegration process in the third period, which deprived of the unity of the methodological approach. This disintegration brought about the aversion from political and ideological issues altogether, which is a dramatically different attitude from the original perspective of the Annales School.¹⁸² For that reason, the impact of the Annales School in contemporary history writing remained limited.¹⁸³ Contemporary history writing -which focuses on the periods mainly after the late 19th century- on the other hand, laid its basis on the subjects such as diplomacy, politics, war, ideology and so on.¹⁸⁴ In this regard, the return to the core of the Annales School -as in the first two periods- and integrate it into the contemporary historical approach is suggested to be a better guide for history writing. On the one hand, the political, ideological or economic movements of historical periods become more clear with the social aspects of it. To put differently, this attitude helps the historian answer questions such as how the people from their society were affected by changes, which segment were positive towards shifts and

¹⁷⁹ Yeğen, p.32

¹⁸⁰ Delice, p.118

¹⁸¹ Ricoeur, 1990.

¹⁸² Wesseling, 1979.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.* p. 188.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p. 188.

which were not and so on. On the other hand, keeping touch with political and ideological analyses help historical study stay on track. For the general picture to be drawn, the framework of the social life in a specific period needs to be understood by historian. This is one of the main reasons why an interdisciplinary approach is needed: the historian can use political science and economics for the analysis of political structure while adapting sociology and psychology for structure's impacts upon social agents and can establish the relationship between them.

The methodological approach of the Annales School, then, is considered as a key for historiographic view in understanding the appropriate value of Renaissance as an era on the one hand, and the Renaissance's role in history writing and historical methodology on the other. For the former, the core of the Annales School shows both the importance of social resources from Renaissance, which were tremendous in number and each showed different aspect of the mentioned period. Each artist, politician or religious official contribute to the whole picture with their official decrees, few sentences of their diaries or small details in their pictures. This methodological approach enables historian to value these small details and bring them together with a unitary, scientific attitude. Also, this attitude helps the depiction of the possible changes within the field of historiography and history writing within the Renaissance. In the previous chapters of this thesis, it was attempted to be shown that the period of Renaissance could be understood as it is; it is neither a fairy tale about the birth of human rights and wisdom out of nowhere, nor a speculative historical object that is used with overrated attention. For the latter, the approach of the Annales School in history writing could put light on how different social and political environment affected the notion of history and history writing was shifted in

the Renaissance, especially between humanist writers and figures such as Machiavelli and Guiccardini. This shift was related to the tremendous political and social changes, as it was evaluated in the previous chapters of this thesis. All in all, Annales School has brought vital changes in history writing with its emphasis on social resources and social history, the role of the historian and so on. Even though it underwent the disintegration process and lost its effect overtime, the core elements of it still may help build a general perspective towards historical studies and history writing itself.

3.6 Carr-Jenkins Debate on the Nature of History

Burckhardt once said that “[h]istory is the record of what one age finds worthy of note in another.”¹⁸⁵ This could be accepted as a proof that for decades, scholars have been trying to understand what history actually is and to make a clear definition for it as much as possible (which is nearly impossible in practice). Since the world always has a change in itself, “history” has been also changing and historians should move with the times in order to catch “the past” to examine. In this regard, this part of the chapter will try to elaborate how Carr’s and Jenkins’ understandings of history differentiate.

To begin with, history is something that we live with every day. It has been happening for centuries, still happens and will continue to happen every single day and everywhere in the world. History is like a chain of events which spreads over time. Carr attempts to construct the notion of history by explaining how historians examine the words of “fact”, “event”, “past” and so on. The main question is whether history is a science or not and the answer lies in the causes of a historical

¹⁸⁵ Jacob Burckhardt, *Judgements on History and Historians*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. 158

event, understanding history as a process and as a growing field. This brings about the fact that the notion of history is mostly interpreted from the current standpoint. For that reason, there is no one true history; rather, it's all based on historians' interpretation.

In his book "What is History?" Carr begins by remarking what history is, which is defined as nothing but facts.¹⁸⁶ According to him, the historian should get the fact right first, and then interpret it. For that reason, he states that "history means interpretation."¹⁸⁷ Also, the facts are not, and also cannot be, in a pure form. They have been reflected in the mind of another person before they are reached by the readers. A historian has to understand the time and conditions of the event that s/he writes about; to understand the past, it is necessary to know about today and the future. Therefore, history is described as a continuous process of interaction between the historian and the facts that s/he chooses, like a never-ending story between the past and the present.¹⁸⁸ On this basis, Carr argues that history is a social science. History does not have strict rules in similar ways to numeric sciences does. Such attitude shows Carr's position against positivist perspective of history which sees it is necessary to bring same methods of natural sciences to social sciences and, therefore, history needs to be implemented via certain rules where historians' position is to simply record events and phenomena while not putting their interpretations whatsoever. In this regard, it can be said that Carr provides a strong opposition to Rankean historical positivism. Although Rankean historical positivism lost its popularity today because of its lack of strong analytical attitude of historical writing, Carr's position against the positivist perspective shows a crucial criticism

¹⁸⁶ E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), pp. 8-9.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 23.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 16

considering the fact that in the era when his book was published, such positivist understanding was the dominant methodology in social sciences. Therefore, in place of positivism, Carr puts the idea that in order to close the gap between the scientists and historians, positing social sciences as a distinct scientific field has vital importance, for which the historians should give every effort to do so. Finally, Carr examines the relationship between the causes and history. He says “the study of history is the study of causes”.¹⁸⁹ Since history comprises of the questions and their answers, there are also causes and their effects. It is obvious that an event comes after a cause and it goes like a chain. All in all, the main idea of Carr is that a historian should be open-minded and interrogator. They should consider all the sides of the facts before saying “true” or not. In that aspect, Carr’s book still broadens the horizons of the new historians and continues to be relevant about framing the basis of historiography.

As it was indicated, Carr’s opinions on methodology were significant in that they have shown strong criticism against the back-then dominant view of positivism. The basis of his new ideas seems to resemble those of Weber. As it was noted before, Weber put the notion of ‘interpretation’ at the center of his world-view, claiming that each individual’s perspective shaped differently from each other by one way or another, hence each different events and phenomena should be understood with interpretation of social scientists in the process. The difference is that Weber relied on what he called ‘ideal types’ in the process, whereas Carr does not seem to using that term. Weber’s influence on Carr, in that context, seems to be in mixture with the modernist idea that, borrowing Reinhold’s terminology, the social scientist is the

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p. 53.

vanguard for the enlightenment of the masses and s/he should implement his/her researches under such consciousness.¹⁹⁰ This mixture of ideas resulted in a debate over Carr's theoretical position in methodology, as to whether he is a 'traditional realist' or he is a follower of the critical theory in history in relation to his anti-positivist epistemology and leaning on a sense of Western Marxism.¹⁹¹ Before coming to Jenkins' ideas, it should be noted that his criticism on Carr's views will mainly be on the point of the mission he gave to the historians. This criticism is based on postmodern reading of history, a trend which in Jenkins' writing time was in rapid increase. Therefore, he attempts to show mainly epistemological errors in giving such missions to historians, which is explained as follows.

In that context, general ideas of Jenkins can be divided into two parts: First, the distinction between "history" and "the past" with the focus on general issues of this distinction; second, the construction of the term "truth". Jenkins claims that "history" and "the past" are different from each other, even though history is touching to the past.¹⁹² The past becomes history only when historians deal with it. In other words; while people are reading a historical book, they do not go to the past in reality - they are only facing with the history. Lee points out that are three problematic issues about the relationship between history and the past: epistemology, methodology and ideology.¹⁹³ The issue of epistemology is the most problematic one because of several reasons. Firstly, the past is limitless; so no one can really reflect it.

¹⁹⁰ K.L. Reinhold, "Thoughts on Enlightenment", in *What is Enlightenment: Eighteenth Century Answers and Twenty Century Questions*. edited by James Schmidt. (California: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 65-78.

¹⁹¹ Milan Babik, "Realism as Critical Theory: The International Thought of E. H. Carr" in *International Studies Review* Vol. 15 No. 4, (2013), pp. 491-501.

¹⁹² Keith Jenkins, *Re-thinking History*, (London: Routledge, 1991), p. xiii.

¹⁹³ Peter Lee, "On Being the Very Model of a Modern Post-Modernist (a case of PM tensions?)", *Teaching History* No. 78. (1995), p. 31.

Therefore, what historians say is not equal to the past itself. Secondly, there is not a total bench mark of an expression covering the whole past. What people have is just the examples created by the previous historians, so their expressions are accepted as true or not by comparing them with the old ones. Thirdly, history is subjective; even if it seems to be objectively true. People always look at history from someone's aspect, which belongs to the one who wrote about that historical issue. Lastly, history is interpreted with modern concepts. For that reason, people sometimes can exaggerate or change while gathering different opinions together. So in short, epistemology shows that the past cannot be really known in detail; it is impossible.¹⁹⁴

For the second issue, methodology, it cannot be said that there are certain rules or ways about it. There are various aspects in order to examine the past and there is not any consensus that can be reached about which one is the best and should be used for all the time. On that account, methodology does not bring humanity to the path of truth, since there is not a single truth. In that context, Jenkins implements his postmodern ideas on the issue of methodology in the same way he does to that of epistemology.¹⁹⁵ Finally, history is a concept basically; so it has an ideology in itself. In detail, history is not for itself; it is for others – who aims to write it. That's why it always includes any kinds of ideology, because a person who has countless thoughts in his/her mind is engaging with it. Therefore, the claims of objectivity of history would only serve to those who wish to adapt history to their ideological preferences, which is a crucial impact on the 'scientific' claims of these historians.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ Jenkins, *Re-thinking History*, p. 89.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 14.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 17.

As of second part of his general ideas, Jenkins firstly questions the concept of “truth”. He puts forward the idea that it is not possible to reach the truth in any epistemological, methodological, ideological and practical way. Nevertheless, people still try to work on that concept because this notion is the tool to give a shape of history; to make new interpretations, to edit them and also to have an end if necessary. In relation to this opinion, he attempts to answer whether there are facts in history or not. Even though there are some certain instances of facts like the history of WWI or the date of 1789 and so on, the role of historians is not limited with facts. They do not only explain what happened; they also explain why and how it happened.¹⁹⁷ The main tool for such explanation is the concept of “empathy”, which differentiates Jenkins’ idea of historiography from other historians. He states that to develop an active empathy is nearly impossible; in other words, it is not achievable (or reachable). Since there is no complete interpretation of the past and also because the interpretations about the past are constituted in today; it is a slender chance that a historian can get rid of his/her own past, in order to reach the other one’s with the same conditions.¹⁹⁸ Therefore, it is very difficult for a historian to avoid from all the thoughts in his/her mind and develop empathy, since the main point is already problematic. Despite all of these, the historians still have empathy because of the pressures originating from schooling, the academy and the matter of ideology. In short, the people in the past were very different from today in terms of the meanings that they gave to the world. And there is no answer to the question of what kind of people the historians should choose while developing empathy. That is why it is better to cope with the historians’ minds in order to understand their mentality rather

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 23.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 23.

than the people in the past. Terminally, although the concepts like “reason” and “change” are very crucial and frequently used by historians, it is suspicious to say that they make a “good” use of those concepts. Also, there are uncertainties about what kind of causal perspective historians should have while examining an issue or how far historians should go back while searching a reason.¹⁹⁹

All in all, looking at an atomistic point of view on knowledge and history, Jenkins criticizes the different approaches’ lack of appreciating the uniqueness of each individuals’ experience, which also includes historians, and ignoring such reality would only result in an activity that would prefer comfortable interpretations on events and phenomena rather than the realistic perspective and outcome, which is possible only through postmodern way of thinking. Therefore, the historians and their methodology should always have primacy over the uniqueness of their perspective, which makes it impossible to have empathy or complete understanding towards the history, so these types of understandings should be away from historical researches as much as possible.²⁰⁰

To conclude, it can be said that both Carr and Jenkins have solid ground on their arguments on certain parts; they briefly say that an event can be labeled as “history” only if it is possible to ascribe a meaning to them. Jenkins can be found a little bit clearer about it because of his distinction between “history” and “the past”. Nevertheless, Carr wrote in his work that, "the function of the historian is ... to master and understand it (the past) as the key to the understanding of the present".²⁰¹ The main difference between them is that Carr defends the idea that it is possible for

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 72.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p. 83.

²⁰¹ Carr, *What is History?* p. 26.

history to be objective, whereas Jenkins supports a subjective view on history. It affects historian's interests, benefits and ideologies but s/he still tries to be as objective as possible. However, even if it was possible for the historian to not care about all the thoughts and beliefs that s/he possesses, the total objectivity still would not be possible because it could not be known whether the sources are objective or not. So, it can be said that an absolute objectiveness is impossible. Approaching the events in the past with today's conditions is incorrect and the historian should consider that period's conditions; in other words, s/he should develop 'empathy' even though to what extent s/he may succeed it is not certain. To briefly evaluate their views in a critical perspective, it could be said that Carr depends way too much on the so-called 'facts', whereas Jenkins does neither provide any solutions nor possible paths for historians. For the former, Carr's traditional tendencies leads him to the idea that history could be seen as the aggregation of objective facts which are open to the historians on certain ways and it is their mission to find and distribute these facts to the people. What is fallible here is the fact that Carr does not seem to give a sufficient reasoning for the possibility of objectivity in history. It is not clear how historians reach to the facts through interpretation, how such interpretation is reached and so on. On the other hand, Jenkins' account of history does not lead the audience to any path for scientific researches in history in any manner. On the contrary, he constantly denies any possible ways of dealing with these issues, and leaves the reader only with the questions and no answers in his radical subjectivism. Therefore, what should be searched, in that context, is a balanced view between Carr and Jenkins in which neither such closeness to the possibility of knowledge nor the impact of subjects in history-writing shall be ignored. It is possible, indeed, to appreciate both the necessity of considering every type of cause and effect in certain

events and misleading of subjective thinking on the one hand, and openness for different methods in the search for 'facts' in history as a social science, on the other.

3.7 Summary of the Chapter

To sum up, one of the most crucial deficiencies of Burckhardt analysis of the Renaissance is establishing a relationship between the whole European culture and this era. Despite the significance of his famous work, which still has a lot to offer in grasping the important characteristics of this era, he did not succeed in escaping from romantic veil of his era in his study. Burke's analysis points out the "myths" of the Renaissance, and attempts at producing a more analytical perspective of the issue. This thesis, then, in its essence, aims to provide one aspect of the Renaissance that actually affected one of the "modern" characteristics by its influence on history writing, on which account it may seem in a similar context to Burckhardt to a certain extent. However, this aim is not independent from avoiding the mentioned "myths" over the object, which are indeed quite dominant over the literature, and this claim is not in any way implies "the birth of modern historiography in the Renaissance". To put it differently, this thesis argues that one of the crucial characteristics of the Renaissance was that the era experienced certain breaking points that possibly resulted in the shifts in the understanding of historiography. This shift is something that could be adapted into the debates over the value of the Renaissance, as it was overlooked mostly in the literature and was not appreciated enough within these debates. In the further studies, the more critical evaluations and more certain analyses could be implemented on the issue. In that context, it is possible to continue this study with more concrete examples and debates, especially with the resources of "social history" and the adaptation of analytical approaches towards history writing.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, the main problem was to determine the factors that possibly have a relationship with the perspective towards historiography and history writing in the Renaissance era. As a secondary issue to this main concern, the value of the Renaissance as a historical era and debates over this concept were attempted to be examined, with reference to the methodological attitude of this thesis.

For the understanding of historiography in the Renaissance, this thesis puts forward three possible breaking points in the evolution of history writing methods within the Renaissance, which were overlooked in the Renaissance studies. These breaking points are; the idea of historical continuity, the conceptualization of language as a human artifice, and the division of past from the present in history. With the idea of historical continuity, the emphasis on historical periods as distinct stages came into the foreground and each component started to be analyzed within the reality of their era. In relation to this point, grasping the language as a human artifice gave the idea that in each historical period, the structure of the language differs and it could be used in the validity of the giving texts as well. Lastly, with the division of the study of history from the legitimization of the current system, the historical studies are started to be implemented with the concern of examining the past periods and their conditions, rather than the practical conclusions that can be

drawn from them so that the contemporary systems could be praised in exchange for benefits other than simple knowledge. These breaking points, as it was indicated, are the consequence of the works of the Humanist scholars of the 14th-15th centuries such as Petrarch or Valla, together with those of the significant political writers of the 16th century, Machiavelli and Guiccardini. Even though the importance of these points are put forward in the literature by scholars such as Charles G. Nauert²⁰² and Jacques Bos²⁰³, these breaking points are not included within a single text with all of their relationships to each other. As it can be seen, the consciousness over these points constitutes the basic characteristics of the Renaissance history writing point of view.

As a secondary problem to the issue of history writing and historiographical understanding of the Renaissance, this thesis aimed to validate this era with accuracy, mainly because the Renaissance as an era is either perceived too romantically and over-valued or criticized strictly because of its non-uniqueness as an era.²⁰⁴ For that validation, two sharply-distinct yet respected scholars for the issue, namely Jacob Burckhardt and Peter Burke were examined and their views were attempted to be evaluated critically. In this regard, Burckhardt saw the value of the Renaissance in the emergence of a modern, civilized European culture. With the notion of individualism, which he thought came into being as a consequence of the

²⁰² The first two breaking points are mentioned in Nauert's book concerning the Renaissance and Humanism movement, which was referenced in many parts during the thesis. See. Charles G. Nauert, *Avrupa'da Hümanizma ve Rönesans Kültürü*. Translated by Bahar Tırnakçı. (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2011).

²⁰³ Bos draws attention to the role of Machiavelli and Guiccardini in the distinction from the past and present in the course of history writing, as a consequence of the traumas created by Italian Wars. See. Jacques Bos, «Framing a New Mode of Historical Experience: The Renaissance Historiography of Machiavelli and Guiccardini» in *The Making of the Humanities: Volume 1- Early Modern Europe* Jaap Maat, Thijs Weststeijn Rens Bod (eds.), (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), pp. 351-365.

²⁰⁴ Nevertheless, it could be argued that the critical views emerged as a consequence of the first group who did not pay detailed attention to the fact that many "revolutionary" characteristics that were attributed to the Renaissance was apparent in the Middle Ages as well.

Renaissance, the foundation of modern European civilization was formed. In that context, Burckhardt argues, the Renaissance can be seen as the starting point of modernity, which can be seen in the many social elements of the era such as the importance of ridicule and wit, the rise of curiosity over the fame and, in the context of excessive individualism, the rise of crime with family-like organizations which was later labelled as mafia. For the rise of the individualism and the emergence of the modernity, Burckhardt did not see the revival of the antiquity as an essential characteristics of the Renaissance and argued that the even though it had positive impacts upon the era, the revival of the classical culture was not as vital as it was thought to be for the Renaissance. On the other hand, Burke attempts to understand the value of the Renaissance without the mystification of the term and with analyzing the social structure of the period, aims to analyze the era in terms of the cluster of changes that it brought. Unlike Burckhardt, he does not see the Renaissance as the emergence of modernity in itself, as it possesses many characteristics of the Middle Ages and the prominent figures of the era were closer to the late Middle Ages than early Medieval thinking even though they were not aware of it. In this regard, the significance of the era lies in the attempt of adaptation of classical values not only in technical arts but also in the fields concerning the human activity, i.e. the social structure. This is why the era was characterized by the imitations of the classical works and only after having understood them perfectly, the artists and scholars may aim to surpass them in their own way. Of course, this concern was also related to their socio-economic reality and most of the figures were not completely free in their choice of work or production process. In this picture, Burckhardt's perception that the Renaissance created the notions such as Realism, Individualism or Secularism out of nothing does not reflect the truth since the characteristics of these concepts

were apparent in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance may be thought at most to take the significance of these terms one step further. Even though with his demystification of the concept, Burke's analytical approach seems stronger in validating the value of the Renaissance in comparison with that of Burckhardt, he misses the changes in the historiography with the impact of the Renaissance, a point that was also missed by Burckhardt himself. In that sense, this thesis argues that the Renaissance has an original value in itself and its features concerning the history writing methodology. These features may be related to the era's strong renewals in the institutions concerning human activity, a point that was emphasized by Burke.

On this basis, this thesis attempted to answer the main and secondary questions on the basis of an analytical methodology, for which the Annales School's methodological perspective had contribution. In this regard, the Annales School in the 20th century emerged under an intellectual environment where these two views clashed with each other. On the one hand, there was a materialistic point of view which aims to take the concrete conditions of the object and produce the work; on the other hand, there was a view that criticizes historical works for their "scientific" concerns which does not give the subject –i.e. historian– enough attention. Even though the Annales School was divided into three periods, it balances the concern of both sides by taking an analytical approach in historical methodology. The representatives of the first period, Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch, put forward the idea of "social history" which takes the elements of both sides in a balanced way. Accordingly, they claimed that the positivist understanding of history, especially in the way it was represented by Ranke, did not see the possible errors in the official documents as these documents belong to the superstructure and they may not reflect

the social dimensions of the reality they were produced in. For that reason, in addition to these documents, the historical evidence that belong to lower social groups should be taken into consideration as well, since they may reflect the deeper side of the object. In doing so, history cannot attain enough information based solely on itself; the analysis needs to be interdisciplinary and take into account the fields such as sociology, political science and economics.

With this concern, while adapting a critical view of the positivist tendencies in history writing, they also came up with an analytical approach that takes other disciplines into account in order to examine the material conditions of the given historical period. The foundation these figures provided was taken a step further by Fernand Braudel, who represents the second period of the school, especially with his popular work *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. With this work, the notions such as “geography” and “time” came into the foreground in historical methodology debates. In this regard, Braudel takes the different perspectives of social agents into account as different geographical and cultural impacts on understanding of time. This focus results in the analysis of historical understanding as well, since these agents perceive time in accordance with their circumstances and the documents they leave behind are produced on the basis of their perception. Even though the third and last period of the Annales School is fragmented into different perspectives, their attribution to historiography debates left behind significant elements for modern analytical history writing view.

Lastly, on the basis discussions concerning historical methodology, the debate over the definition of the term “history” by two opposite views in the modern context between Carr and Jenkins is given as a further study. E.H. Carr, puts forward

ideas that are similar to those of the Annales School in the sense that while accepting the impossibility of objectivity, history is still concerned with the facts that are presented. For that reason, before historian puts his/her interpretation into the examination process, he/she should first attempt to grasp which kind of facts are given in a historical document and should question whether they are accurate or not. This questioning requires an understanding of the general structure of the historical period as well, since the accuracy of the given facts can be evaluated in reference to these structural realities of the era. Only after these questionings are made, the interpretation of the facts can be made, which is an essential step in historical study. On this basis, Carr argues that history is about the causal relationships of the past and it is historian's duty to grasp these causalities. In this regard, Carr gives the historian a specific mission in his/her study. Jenkins, however, puts forward a postmodern critic of this idea by stating that there cannot be any mission giving to the historian. The so-called "facts" of the past are not retrievable as they are, in a sense, "corrupted" by the interpretation of whoever produced the historical documents that are to be analyzed. In other words, the historical evidence already comprises the reflection of the person who generated the evidence. In that sense, Jenkins defends the idea that in history, there are more than one, single truth and all these truths reflect another part of the reality. For that reason, history and the past are different concepts from each other despite they are related in some ways, and there cannot be any defined role of the historian as this role would include the contemporary ideological tendencies that historian possess, and these tendencies will also be shifted in different conditions. The Carr-Jenkins debate is valuable, in that context, because they represent modern attitudes and the interpretation of cumulated ideas in the course of methodological debates over historiography and philosophy of history. To

put differently, while Carr provides a version of a modern, analytical approach towards history writing, Jenkins puts light on the issue by adapting the postmodern reading of history writing.

In conclusion, this thesis aims to contribute to the literature over the Renaissance with reference to its perspective on history writing and characteristics of historical methodology, a point that was not focused in most of the contemporary studies in history writing. The most focus on the relationship between the Renaissance and the changes in historiography is seen in the work of Charles G. Nauert; however, his work does not put much emphasis on the effect of Machiavelli's and Guiccardini's differentiated understandings of history, compared with the early Humanist figures. In that context, two of the most prominent scholars in the Renaissance study from two distinct perspectives, namely Burckhardt and Burke, miss this point as a consequence of their focus on different characteristics of the era. Therefore, this thesis claims that the era's ideas concerning history writing is an original feature of the Renaissance and both studies concerning the historical methodology debates and analyses about the Renaissance should have these characteristics of the era in mind. In the future studies, the different dimensions of Renaissance historiography may be brought to light with its relation and causation to distinctive aspects of the issue.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKE ÖZET

Rönesans çalışmaları, genel kapsamda, döneme dair belli başlı noktalara odaklanmaktadır. Bu noktaların çoğunlukla, Rönesans ile modernite kavramının ilişkisi, Rönesans döneminin sanat akımları ve yeni sanat üretimi biçimlerinin gelişmelerine ilişkin etkisi gibi hususlar çerçevesinde oluşturulduğu gözlemlenmektedir. Bu kapsamda, Rönesans dönemini kendi içerisinde bir dönem olarak, özellikle geç Orta Çağ dönemi ile olan ilişkisi ve dönemin Avrupa karakteristiğinden bağımsız bir bağlamda ele alma veya Rönesans'ın tek başına bir değeri olmadığı ve abartılmış bir kavram olduğu gibi iki farklı birbirine zıt fikrinsel eğilimin Rönesans çalışmalarında baskın hâle gelmiş olduğu söylenebilir. Bu kapsamda, bu tezin Rönesans dönemi çalışmalarına ilişkin, literatüre katmayı hedeflediği iki amaç bulunmaktadır. Bu amaçların ilki ve tezin birincil amacı olarak ifade edilebilecek hedefi, Rönesans dönemindeki tarih yazımı ve tarihsel yöntemle ilişkin genel özelliklerinin tespiti olarak ifade edilebilir. Bu amacın arkasında, Rönesans'ta tarih bilimine atfedilen önem ve özellikle Hümanist eğitim programı çerçevesinde tarihin konumlandırılması Rönesans çalışmalarında öne çıkan konular olsa da tarih yazımı ve Hümanistlerin tarihsel yöntem yaklaşımlarının geri planda kaldığı ve yeterince odağa sahip olmadığı iddiası yatmaktadır. Bu anlamda, Rönesans'taki tarihsel yöntem yaklaşımıyla ilişkisi olduğu ifade edilebilecek olan üç adet kırılma noktası olduğu düşüncesi bulunmaktadır. İlgili kırılım noktaları

çerçevesinde, Rönesans dönemindeki tarihyazımı ve tarihsel yönetim anlayışlarının temel özelliklerinin anlaşılabilirliği düşünülmektedir. Bu noktaların detaylı bir şekilde ele alınarak incelenmesi adına, öncelikle Rönesans'ın ortaya çıkmış olduğu dönemde İtalya şehir devletlerinin genel siyasi durumu incelenmiş, ardından Hümanizm olarak adlandırılan eğitim programının ortaya çıkışı ve öne çıkan Hümanist figürlerin düşünceleri ele alınmıştır. Bu temel üzerinde, ilgili kırılma noktalarının özellikleri detaylandırılarak hangi bağlamlarda önem arz ettikleri incelenmiştir. Ayrıca, bu kırılma noktalarının dayandığı Hümanizma programının amacı ve temel özellikleri de inceleme kapsamına alınmıştır. Bunun yanı sıra tezin ikincil sorunsalı, Rönesans döneminin tarihsel bir konu olarak tarih çalışmalarında sahip olduğu değerin, literatürdeki tartışmalar göz önünde bulundurularak oturduğu düzlemin tespit edilmesidir. Bu değerin tespit edilmesi bağlamında, Rönesans'ın tarihsel bir çalışma alanı olarak sahip olduğu özelliklerin dışında özellikler üzerinden kendisine bir değer atfedilme veya tarihsel bir değeri olmayan ve tamamen abartılmış bir dönem olduğu gibi iki farklı zıt kutbun var olduğu söylenebilir. Bu sorunsal kapsamı içerisinde tezin temel iddiası, Rönesans'ın tarihsel bir dönem olarak iki kutbun arasında bir perspektifle algılanabileceği ve bu şekilde değerlendirilebileceği görüşüdür. Diğer bir deyişle, Rönesans'ı tamamen önemsiz ve herhangi bir etkiye sahip olmayan bir dönem olarak ele almak, önemli bir tarihsel potansiyeli göz ardı etmek ve belli başlı tarihsel analizlerin eksik kalmasına neden olmak gibi tehlikeleri barındırmaktadır. Öte yandan, Rönesans'ın sahip olduğu özelliklerin dışında özellikler üzerinden tanımlanması ve bu tanımlamalar bağlamında değerinin tespit edilmeye çalışılmasıysa Rönesans kavramının ve döneminin gerçek değerinin farkına varılmasına engel oluşturmaktadır. Bu tanımlamalardan en öne çıkanlarından birisi, Rönesans'ın Orta Çağ dönemi ve karakteristiğinden tamamen kopuk, yepyeni bir

dönem olarak ele alınması ve geç Orta Çağ karakteristikleriyle ilişkisinin yeterince irdelenmemesi olarak gösterilebilir. Bu kapsamda, ikinci sorunsalın ele alınışı çerçevesinde Rönesans'a yönelik iki farklı perspektiften bakan tarihçilerin, Jacob Burckhardt ile Peter Burke'ün, Rönesans kavramını ele alışları ve ilgili kavramı nasıl bir noktaya yerleştirdikleri incelenmiştir. Bu incelemelerin ardından, tez kapsamında bir sentez ortaya koyularak ve Rönesans'ın tarihyazımına ilişkin özellikleri göz önünde bulundurularak ikincil soru cevaplandırılmaya çalışılmıştır. Birincil ve ikincil soruların cevaplandırılmalarının ardından, tez kapsamında benimsenen yöntemsel yaklaşımın anlaşılabilmesi adına, analitik tarihyazımı yönteminin ve düşüncesinin ortaya çıkışında çok önemli etkilere sahip olan Annales Okulu'nun yöntemsel özellikleri, farklı dönemleri de göz önünde bulundurularak ele alınmıştır. Annales Okulu'nun ortaya sunmuş olduğu yöntemsel çerçeve temelinde, E.H. Carr ile Keith Jenkins arasındaki tarih biliminin nasıl tanımlanabileceğine yönelik tartışma ele alınmış ve ilgili soruya ilişkin tezin kendi cevabı verilmeye çalışılmıştır.

Bu çerçevede, Rönesans döneminde tarihyazımındaki değişimleri ve genel karakteristikleri belirleyen temel hareket, bir eğitim programı olarak ortaya çıkmış olan ve kısa zamanda ülke çapında popüler hâle gelen "Hümanizma" olarak verilebilir. Bu doğrultuda Hümanizma, özellikle çağın üniversitelerinde hâkim olan ve tıp, mantık, hukuk gibi disiplinler odaklı oluşturulan Skolastik eğitim müfredatına karşı bir alternatif olarak çıkmış bir eğitim programı olarak tanımlanabilir. Bu çerçevede Skolastik müfredat içerisine giren disiplinler yerine Hümanizma çerçevesinde dilbilimi, retorik, tarih, armoni ve ahlak felsefesi gibi alanlar daha ön plana çıkmıştır. Bu disiplinlerin bu kadar yaygınlaşmasının temelindeyse, 14. ile 16. yüzyıllar arasındaki İtalya şehir devletlerindeki siyasi konjonktürde bu disiplinlerin çok daha pratik özelliklere sahip olması olarak verilebilir. Bu bakımdan, özellikle

retorik, dilbilimi ve tarih gibi disiplinler, siyasi alanda rol alan veya alma potansiyeli gösteren bireylerin karşılaştıkları deneyimlere hazırlanması ve kendi meşruiyetlerini sağlama veya pozisyonlarını sağlama alma konusunda ciddi öneme sahiplerdi. Bu çerçevede, bu hareketin yayılmasıyla ve özellikle Salutati gibi Hümanist eğitim müfredatıyla yetişen siyasetçilerin İtalya şehir devletlerinde aktif rol oynamasıyla, programın öne çıkan disiplinlerinden olan tarih ve tarihyazımında da çeşitli gelişmelerin gerçekleştiği öne sürülebilir.

Bu gelişmelerden ilki, Hümanizmanın yayılmasında da etkili olmuş olan Petrarch tarafından oluşturulan bir kırılım noktasında yatmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, daha önce yazılmış olan tarih konulu eserlerden farklı olarak Petrarch, kendi dönemiyle önceki dönemleri birbirinden ayırarak farklı özelliklere sahip oldukları düşüncesiyle eserlerini ortaya koymuştur. Bu düşüncesinin temelinde Rönesans dönemini, geri ve karanlık çağlara ait olarak gördüğü Orta Çağ'dan ayrı tutmak ve iki dönemi kendi özellikleri çerçevesinde değerlendirmek yatmaktadır. Bu bakımdan, Petrarch'ın yaklaşımının temelinde Rönesans'ın Orta Çağ'a ait özelliklerini görmemesi ve daha yüzeysel bir bakış açısıyla ortaya atması durumlarının bulunduğu gözlemlenmektedir. Bununla birlikte, ortaya atmış olduğu yaklaşımla tarihe yaklaşımda çok önemli bir kırılım yaratmıştır. Bu kırılımla birlikte, geçmişi bir bütün olarak değil, belli koşullar çerçevesinde gruplandırarak ve dönemlere ayırarak incelemeye yönelik bir bilinç oluşmuştur. Bu bağlamda, Petrarch'ın yaklaşımıyla birlikte, her dönemi ve dönemin koşullarını kendi içerisinde değerlendirme ve bu çerçevede tarihsel analiz yönteminin ortaya çıktığı söylenebilir. Ancak bu kavram, Petrarch'ın ortaya attığı hâliyle kavramın ilkel bir versiyonunu oluşturmaktadır. Detaylandırmak gerekirse modern tarih yöntemi tartışmaları içerisinde “tarihsel devamlılık” kavramı, “değişim” kavramıyla birlikte ele alınmaktadır. Bu çerçevede

tarihsel devamlılık ile tarihsel deęişim arasındaki ikilem, bu kavramlar arasındaki gerilim ve çeşitli sosyal koşullar içerisinde hangi kavramın daha ön plana çıktığı gibi hususlar değerlendirmeye alınmaktadır. Petrarch'ın ortaya attığı haliyle ise bu kavram tamamen dönem kategorizasyonu için kullanıldığından modern anlamındaki kullanımından çok daha yüzeysel bir düzlemde ele alındığı ifade edilebilir.

Petrarch sonrasında tarihyazımında ikinci kırılımı ise Lorenzo Valla'nın yarattığı söylenebilir. Buna göre Valla, dil kavramının bir insan yaratımı olduğunu ve bunun bir döneme atfedilen eserleri de etkilediğini tespit ederek dilbilimde ve tarihsel araştırmalarda ciddi bir deęişim yaratmıştır. Bu yaklaşımıyla Valla, sözde İmparator Konstantin tarafından oluşturulduğu ve Kilise'ye dünyevi yetkiler tanımlayan *Donatio Konstantini* (Konstantin'in Baęışı) isimli düzmece belge içerisindeki cümle yapılarını ve kullanılan kelime yapılarını inceleyerek, belgenin iddia edildiği gibi 4. yüzyıl içerisinde deęil 8. yüzyılın sonlarına doğru oluşturulmuş olduğunu ispatlamıştır. Üstelik bu analizinde sadece dilbilimsel bulgulara başvurmamış, İmparator Konstantin ve dönemin Papası I. Sylvester'a dair tarihsel bulgular çerçevesinde de ilgili belgenin geçerli olmadığını göstermiştir. Bu kapsamda, Valla bir yandan Petrarch'ın tarihi dönemlere göre ayırma düşüncesini etkin bir şekilde analizinde kullanırken, dięer yanda Rönesans'taki tarihyazımı için önemli bir kırılma noktası yaratmıştır. Bu şekilde Valla ile birlikte, Rönesans tarihyazımı içerisinde ele alınan belgelerin doğruluğunun belgedeki dil yapısının incelenmesi, ilgili döneme ilişkin dięer tarihsel belgelerle çapraz kontrolü gibi noktalar üzerinden teyit edilmesi bilincinin gelmiş olması önemli bir noktayı oluşturmaktadır. Bu noktanın önemi, Valla öncesindeki Hümanistlerin inceledikleri tarihsel belgelerin kontrolünü detaylı bir şekilde ele almadıkları hususu göz önünde bulundurulduğunda ön plana çıkmaktadır.

Rönesans dönemindeki tarihyazımına yönelik üçüncü kırılma noktasıysa 1492-1495 yıllarında başlayan İtalyan Savaşları'nın yarattığı sarsıntı sonucunda siyasi pozisyonlarını kaybeden ve geçmişle yaşanan dönem arasındaki zihinsel bağlantıyı tarihe yaklaşımlarında koparmış olan Machiavelli ile Guiccardini tarafından yaratılmıştır. Bu anlamda, Hümanizma düşünürlerinin tarihe yaklaşımlarında, geçmişe ve özellikle antik döneme yönelik çalışmalar sonucunda elde edilen bulguları güncel siyasi ve sosyal yapının güzellemesi ve rejime yönelik meşruiyet yaratılması gözlemlenmektedir. Machiavelli ile Guiccardini ise yaşanmış olan savaşlar sonucunda güncel dönemin güzellemesinden ziyade geçmişte yapılan siyasi hataları ve bu hataların nasıl düzeltilebileceği gibi hususlara odaklanmışlardır. Bu çerçevede, bir yandan geçmişe daha nesnel ve analitik bir yaklaşım sergilerlerken, diğer yandan geçmişle güncel durum arasındaki sıkı bağlantıyı kopararak tarihin daha temellendirilmiş bir disiplin anlayışıyla algılanmasının önünü açmışlardır. Bununla birlikte, Petrarch'ın ortaya atmış olduğu ilk kırılım noktasını daha da güçlendirdikleri ve tarihyazımındaki dönemlere yönelik analitik yaklaşımın kapsamını genişlettikleri iddia edilebilir. Yine bu noktayla, daha öncesinde Rönesans tarihyazımı için öne çıkan retorik, armoni gibi disiplinlerin arka planda kalması ve siyaset bilimi-ahlak felsefesi gibi disiplinlerin tarihsel yöntemde daha önem taşıyan bir noktaya gelmesi yönünde etkili olduğu ifade edilebilir. Tarih disiplini içerisinde günümüz ile geçmiş arasındaki bağlantı koparılmadan önce, retorik ve armoni gibi alanlar güncel siyasi düzlemin meşruluğunu sağlamak kapsamında önemli bir yere sahipti. Bu bağlantının koparılmasıyla birlikteyse ilgili tarihsel dönemlerin daha detaylı bir şekilde analiz edilebilmesi adına daha kapsamlı bir siyaset bilimi anlayışının ihtiyaç duyulmaya başlaması arasında bir korelasyon bulunduğu ifade edilebilir.

Bu çerçevede, tarihyazımı tartışmaları ve bu tartışmaların kuramsal çerçevesi incelendiğinde, bu kırılma noktalarıyla Rönesans'taki tarih yöntemine yönelik genel perspektif arasındaki olası ilişki daha net bir şekilde görülmektedir. Bu çerçevede, tezin ikincil sorunsalı kapsamında, “bu özelliklerin Rönesans'ın tarihsel bir dönem olarak konumunu ve değerini nasıl etkilemektedir” sorusu sorularak bu sorunun cevabı verilmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu soruyu daha temellendirilmiş bir cevap verilebilmek için, literatürde Rönesans'ın nasıl farklı şekillerde ele alındığı incelenmiş ve iki farklı perspektiften iki tarihçi, Jacob Burckhardt ve Peter Burke'ün Rönesans'a yönelik çalışmaları incelenmiştir.

Bu bağlamda, Rönesans'a yönelik çalışmaların iki farklı perspektifte algılandığı belirtilebilir. Bu perspektiflerden ilki, çok daha romantik bir düzlemde yaklaşarak Rönesans'ı modern Avrupa kültürünün başlangıç unsuru olarak okuma eğilimindedir. Özellikle ünlü tarihçi Jacob Burckhardt ile özdeşleştirilen bu perspektif, daha sonrasında Orta Çağ uzmanı tarihçiler tarafından geniş bir şekilde eleştirilmiştir. Bunun temelinde, Rönesans'a atfedilen birçok özelliğin geç Orta Çağ döneminde bulunması ve İtalyan Rönesans hareketinin özel olarak algılanmasına karşın çeşitli bölge ve tarih dönemlerinde farklı türlerden Rönesans hareketlerinin yaşanmış olması yatmaktadır. Bu bağlamda bakan ikinci perspektif, Rönesans'ı bir tarihi dönem olarak daha eleştirel bir gözle incelemekte, yer yer Rönesans'ın düşünüldüğü kadar özel bir tarihi dönem olmadığı yorumunu ortaya koyabilmektedir. Bu perspektife daha yakın duran Peter Burke, Rönesans'ın bir dönem olarak üzerine çalışma ve tartışma bakımından değerli bulunduğunu kabul etmekle birlikte, bunu döneme ve dönemin Orta Çağ'a ait özelliklerini göz ardı etmeden gerçekleştirme niyetindedir.

Bu bağlamda, Burckhardt'ın Rönesans'ı modern Avrupa kültürünün temeli olarak görmesinde ana neden, birey kavramının tam anlamıyla bu dönemde ortaya çıktığını düşünmesidir. Ona göre, herhangi bir topluluğa bağlı olmaksızın, tikel anlamıyla bireyin kendini tanımlayabildiği, diğer bir deyişle içinde bulunduğu bütün örgütlenmeden bağımsız olarak kendisini bir varlık olarak gördüğü ilk dönem Rönesans dönemidir. Bu birey kavramının ortaya çıkışıyla şöhret isteği, mizah ve ironi gibi kavramların ortaya çıktığı görülmektedir. Şöhret isteğinde gözlemlenen olgu, yeni kavranmaya başlanan birey olgusunun etkisiyle, başkaları tarafından da kendisinin tikel bir varlık olarak tanımlanmasının sağlanmasıdır. Mizah ile ironiyse, bireyin görevli olduğu kurumdan bağımsız olarak algılanabilmesi sayesinde, eylemi gerçekleştiren birey özelinde şaka yapma aktivitesini mümkün kılmıştır. Birey kavramı modern Avrupa kültürünün özünü oluşturması açısından önemli olmakla birlikte, bu kavramın uç şekilde anlaşıldığı aşırı durumlardan kaynaklı olarak suç artışlarının da gözlemlendiğini belirten Burckhardt, bütün koşullar göz önünde bulundurulduğunda bu durumun kabul edilebilir olduğunu belirtir.

Burckhardt'tan yaklaşık 100 yıl sonra Rönesans konusunda eser veren Peter Burke ise yukarıda bahsedilen, Burckhardt'ın temel anlayışına zıt olarak Rönesans'ı inceleyen bakış açısıyla konuya yaklaşmaktadır. Rönesans'a yönelik çalışmalarında dönemin önemini kabul eden Burke, bu önemin seviyesinin doğru bir şekilde tespit edilmesinin gereksinimine parmak basar. Burckhardt'ın iddia ettiği türden bir Realizm veya bireyciliğin Rönesans dönemine düşünüldüğü kadar hâkim olmadığını belirten Burke, günlük hayatta daha küçük nesnelere temsil edilmeye başlandığı türden bir Realizmin Rönesans ile güç kazandığını ifade eder. Ancak bu türden bir sanat anlayışının Rönesans dönemine has olmadığını ve ilgili dönemden önce de – Rönesans dönemindeki kadar baskın olmamakla birlikte– var olduğunu hatırlatır.

Yine birey kavramının ortaya çıkışını özellikle olarak Rönesans'a bağlamanın tam olarak gerçeği yansıtmayacağını belirten Burke, Rönesans içerisinde bireysel kimliğin "kolektif kimlikler" ile karşılıklı olarak bulunduğu ve iki kavramdan herhangi birisinin diğeri üzerinde bir hâkimiyeti olmadığını belirtir. Bunlarla birlikte, Rönesans'ın teknik sanat çalışmalarından çok beşeri disiplinlerde orijinalliğe sahip olduğunu belirten Burke, teknik sanatlarda (resim, mimari, şiir gibi) daha çok Antik dönem eserlerinin taklidi üzerinden üretimin gerçekleştiğini ve ancak ilgili eserin taklidi konusunda ustaca bir seviyeye gelindikten sonra ilgili eseri geçme çabasına girilebildiğinden bahseder.

Bu kapsamda, iki tarihçinin de döneme yönelik çalışmalarında, Rönesans'taki tarihyazımına çok önem verilmez. Aksine, iki yazar için de bu dönem içerisinde tarihyazımına yönelik gerçekleştirilen çabaların genel anlamda önemsiz olduğunu ve ciddi bir etken bırakmadığını belirtirler. Bu açıdan bakıldığında, bu tez ana olarak Rönesans'ın tarihsel yöneteme bakışının önemli belli başlı özelliklerini barındırdığını, bu özelliklerinse Rönesans'a yönelik tarih araştırmaları içerisinde gerekli odağa sahip olmadığını ve arka planda kaldığını iddia etmektedir. Somut bir bakış açısından, Rönesans döneminin tarihyazımı konusunda yaratmış olduğu üç farklı kırılma noktası, Rönesans içerisindeki tarihyazımı perspektifi kapsamında, önemli düşünsel değişimlerle ilişkili olduğu ifade edilebilir. Bu bağlamda, Rönesans'a yaklaşım hususunda Burke'ün genel anlayışına yakın bir noktada durulmakla birlikte, dönemin önemli unsurlarından birisinin literatürde yeterli odağa sahip olmaması ve bu odağın oluşturulması, bu tezin temel amacını oluşturmaktadır.

Bu tezin yöntemsel olarak benimsediği bakış açısını anlamada önemli bir unsur, tarihsel yöntem tartışmaları çerçevesinde önemli bir yere sahip olan Annales Okulu ve ortaya attığı düşünceler yer almaktadır. 20. yüzyılın başlarına gelindiğinde,

farklı fikirlerin birbirleriyle çarpıştığı ve özellikle dünya savaşlarının etkisiyle toplumsal anlamda çeşitli dalgalanmaların yaşanmakta olduğu gözlemlenmektedir. Bu koşullar içerisinde, analitik tarih yaklaşımını daha da ön plana alan ve bu yaklaşımı “sosyal tarih” perspektifiyle birlikte şekillendiren Annales Okulu ortaya çıkmıştır. Temelde üç nesle ayırarak incelenebilecek olan bu ekolün ilk dönemi, özellikle Lucien Febvre ve Mark Bloch öncülüğünde geçmiştir. Bu isimler, tarihsel yaklaşımlarından bir yandan sosyal yapılara ve bu yapıların tarihsel olgularla ilişkisini incelerken, bir yandan da tarihi sadece devlet eliyle yapılan tarihçilik olarak değil aynı zamanda sosyal belgeleri ve aktörleri de ele alan bir yöntemsel yaklaşımla hareket etmişlerdir. Bu yaklaşımlarının temelinde, resmi evraklar temelde üstyapıya ait olduğu için, sadece bu belgelerin incelenmesinin altyapıya dair bilgileri barındırmadığından sınırlı olacağı düşüncesi bulunmaktadır. Öte yandan, önceden yeterli önem atfedilmemiş olan toplumun daha alt tabakalarında bulunan insanlar tarafından oluşturulmuş belgeler, resmi tarih belgelerinde bulunmayan bilgilerin aktarılabilmesi açısından önemli bir potansiyele sahip olarak görülmektedir. Bu sebeple, analitik ve eleştirel yöntemler temelinde, tarihsel yaklaşımın toplumun alt kesimlerini de kapsayacak şekilde bir “sosyal tarih” anlayışıyla hareket edilmesi, Febvre ve Bloch’un tarihyazımına kattıkları en önemli noktalar olarak ele alınabilir. Bütün farklı pencereleri açık tutabilmek adına, tarihsel çalışmanın olabildiğince diğer disiplinlerden faydalanması gerektiği vurgulanmaktadır. Bu açıdan, tarihsel bir çalışma aynı zamanda siyaset bilimi, sosyoloji, ekonomi, psikoloji gibi disiplinlerle de ilişkili bir şekilde oluşturulmalıdır. Öte yandan, ikinci dönemin temsilcisi olan Fernand Braudel, yapı kavramını tarihsel yöntemin merkezine yerleştirerek sosyal yapıların, tarihsel nesnelerin “zaman” ve “mekân” terimlerini kavrayışlarıyla ilişkisini ortaya koyar. Bu kapsamda Braudel, içinde bulunulan mekâna yönelik

özelliklerin sosyal yapıları nasıl etkilediği ve bunun zaman anlayışını, dolayısıyla da tarihe bakış açısına yönelik değişimlerini ele alarak, Bloch ve Febvre'in öne sürmüş oldukları yöntemsel çerçeveyi sağlam bir temel üzerinden genişletmiştir. Bu ekolün üçüncü dönemi daha parçalı bir anlayışı temsil etmekle birlikte, özünde analitik yaklaşımı koruduğu ifade edilebilir.

Tarihsel yönetime yönelik fikirlerden bu tez kapsamında önem arz eden diğer tema, E.H. Carr ve Keith Jenkins'in tarih kavramının tanımına ve tarih araştırmasının yöntemine yönelik tartışmalarıdır. Bu bağlamda, Carr modern ve analitik bir perspektiften bakarak tarih disiplinin olgularla ilgilendiğini ve tarihçinin kendi yorumunu katmadan önce, bu olguları ele alması gerektiğini belirtir. Diğer bir deyişle, daha önceden bahsedilmiş olan tamamen tarafsız ve nesnel bir bilgi edinim sürecinin tarih disiplini içerisinde mümkün olmadığını kabul etmesine karşın, Carr tarihçinin birinci görevinin araştırma nesnesine dair olguları edinerek ilgili olguları eleştirel süzgeçten geçirmek ve tasnif etmekte yattığını belirtir. Tarihçinin kendi yorumunu ve analizini sürece katmasıysa eleştirel süzgeçten geçirilmiş olan olgular üzerinden gerçekleştirilmelidir Carr'a göre. Keith Jenkins ise Carr'ın bu yaklaşımını, elde edilen olguların da nesnel bir çerçevede oluşturulmuş olmadıkları için geçerliliğini yitirmekle eleştirir. Bu kapsamda, tarihçinin elde etmiş olduğu belgelerden çıkarılan bilgiler, o belgeleri ilk oluşturmuş olan özne veya öznel tarafından oluşturulma süreci sırasında nesnelliğini kaybetmişlerdi. Bunun nedeni, ilgili öznelerin toplumdaki konumlarına göre aktarılacak bilgilerin seçimini yapması, bunun yanında edinebildikleri bilgi bütünlüğü yine buldukları konumla sınırlı olduğu için eksik aktarımlara açık olmasıdır. Bu sebeple, tarihçinin kendi yorumunu katmadan önce elde edeceği olguların kendisini daha nesnel ve gerçekçi bir analize yöneltmesi aslında bir yanılsamadan ibarettir. Bu bağlamda Jenkins, tarihsel

arařtırmada herhangi bir türden nesnellik kaygısının tarihçeyi sonuca götürmekten ziyade tarihinin önünü tıkkayacağını iddia eder.

Özetle, tezin bir ana problemi ve bu problem kapsamında ele aldığı bir ikincil problemi bulunmaktadır. Ana problem, Rönesans dönemi içerisindeki tarih disiplinine yaklaşım şekli ve bu yaklaşımla ilişkisi olabilecek potansiyelli belli başlı kırılım noktalarının anlaşılmasıdır. Rönesans'a yönelik literatür içerisinde yer alan çalışmaların büyük kısmında, bu noktaların yeterince ele alınmadığı ve Rönesans kavramının anlaşılmasında bir eksikliğe neden olduğu görülmektedir. Bu kırılım noktaları; tarihsel devamlılık fikrinin ortaya atılması, dilin bir insan yapımı olduğu ve bu sebeple tarihsel belgelerde bir inceleme aracına dönüşebileceği bilincinin oluşması, son olarak tarihyazımında geçmiş ile günümüz arasındaki bağlantının tamamen kopararak birbirlerinden bağımsız iki terim olarak ele alınmaya başlanmasıdır. Bu noktalardan ilki Petrarch tarafından öne sürülmüş olup, modern anlamdaki “tarihsel devamlılık ve değişim” ifadesinin çok daha ilkel ve modern tanımından farklı bir anlayışını temsil etmektedir. İkinci kırılım noktası Lorenzo Valla tarafından sunulmuş ve özellikle ünlü *Donatio Constantini* (Konstantin'in Bağışı) isimli belgenin iddia edildiği gibi 4. yüzyıl değil 8. yüzyılda yazıldığını ispatlamasıyla en somut örneğini vermiştir. Üçüncü ve son noktaysa Machiavelli ile Guiccardini tarafından ortaya atılmış olup özellikle İtalya Savaşları sonucunda oluşan travma ve geçmişin artık geri dönülemez bir noktada bulunması nedeniyle, geleceğe ilişkin dersler çıkarılabilmek için bir amaca sahip olabileceği düşüncesiyle incelenmesini sağlar. Bu noktalar kapsamında, Rönesans dönemi içerisindeki tarihsel yöntemin öne çıkan özelliklerinin daha iyi anlaşılabilmesi söylenebilir. Ana problemle ilişkili ikinci sorunsalsa Rönesans döneminin tarihsel bir konu olarak değerinin tespit edilebilmesidir. Bu sorunsal kapsamında, Rönesans hakkında ciddi

çalışmalar ortaya koymuş olan Jacob Burckhardt ile Peter Burke'ün araştırmaları incelenmiştir. Burckhardt, Rönesans kavramını temelde modernizmin başlangıç unsuru olarak ele almış, Rönesans dönemi içerisinde özellikle birey kavramının gelişimine katkı sağlayan unsurları, modern Avrupa kültürünün oluşumunun temel ögesi olarak gören bir perspektifle incelemiştir. Kendisinden 100 yıl sonra ve çok daha analitik bir yaklaşımla döneme ilişkin incelemesini yapan Peter Burke ise Rönesans'ın değerinin belli başlı sanatsal gelişimlerde yattığını ve bu değerini tespit edilmesinde herhangi bir yüzeysel parlatmadan ziyade Rönesans'ın geç Orta Çağ dönemiyle ilişkisinin ve bu dönemden aldığı özelliklerin farkına varılabilmesinde yatmak olduğunu ifade eder. Bu görüşler çerçevesinde bu tez, Rönesans'ın tarihsel yöntem yaklaşımları ve tarihyazımına ilişkin perspektifleri göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, bu özelliklerin dönemi anlamada önemli bir yer tuttuğunu ifade eder. Bu önemin anlaşılmasındaysa, romantik bir kavramsallaştırmadan ziyade Burke'ün söylediği gibi, Rönesans'ın döneme ait özelliklerinin göz önünde bulundurulmasıyla yapılacak analizlerin tarih disiplini içerisinde daha güçlü bir şekilde ön plana çıkacağı düşünülmektedir. Bu bağlamda Rönesans'ın, tamamen önemsiz ve herhangi bir etkisi olmayan bir dönem olarak ele alınmaması gerektiği savunulmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, dönemin kendisine ait özelliklerinin tespit edilmesi ve ilgili tarihsel süreçlerden bağımsız olarak değil bu tarihsel süreçlerle ilişkili olarak belli başlı gelişimleri izlediği düşüncesi göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır.

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