

TEACHING MODERN SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN HISTORY
Alternative Educational Materials

The Ottoman Empire

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CDRSEE Rapporteur to the Board for the Joint History Project: Costa Carras

Executive Director: Nenad Sebek

Director of Programmes: Corinna Noack-Aetopoulos

CDRSEE Project Team: George Georgoudis, Biljana Meshkovska, Antonis Hadjiyannakis, Jennifer Antoniadis and Louise Kallora-Stimpson

English Language Proofreader: Jenny Demetriou

Graphic Designer: Anagramma Graphic Designs, Kallidromiou str., 10683, Athens, Greece

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Krispou 9, Ano Poli, 546 34 Thessaloniki, Greece

Tel: +30 2310 960820-1 Fax: +30 2310 960822

email: info@cdrsee.org web: www.cdrsee.org

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TEACHING MODERN SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN HISTORY
Alternative Educational Materials

WORKBOOK 1

The Ottoman Empire

Edited by

BOGDAN MURGESCU AND HALIL BERKTAY

Series editor

CHRISTINA KOULOURI

SECOND EDITION

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Preface to the Second Edition

The board of directors of the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe (CDRSEE) would like to express deep gratitude to the many people whose hard work has made it possible for these History Workbooks to be completed and by the time of publication of this second English edition to have appeared already in no less than eight other languages, seven from within our region – but also in Japanese.

An outstanding contribution has been made by Prof. Christina Koulouri (General Coordinator and Series Editor) without whose hard work, expertise, capacity for coordination and leadership, and personal compassion it would have been impossible to complete the project. The tireless efforts and dedication of the six Editors of the four workbooks, Prof. Halil Berktaş and Prof. Bogdan Murgescu (The Ottoman Empire), Dr. Mirela Luminita Murgescu (Nations and States in Southeast Europe), Prof. Valery Kolev and Prof. Koulouri (the Balkan Wars) and Mr. Kresimir Erdelja (World War II), despite many obstacles over the two and a half years it took to prepare them, have resulted in the Workbooks that you have now before you. The Board is most grateful to all of them for their warm collaboration and tireless efforts.

Apart from the Editors, we would like to acknowledge the contributors of the materials included in these workbooks – fourteen individuals from eleven Southeast European countries. We thank them warmly for the hours spent in their national archives, libraries and personal collections to deliver the texts and visuals included here. A great debt of thanks is also due to the history teachers who participated in the evaluation workshops to assess and criticise the Workbooks during their creation. We would like also to mention the members of the CDRSEE's History Education Committee who have been involved in the project since its initiation in 1998.

Prof. Robert Stradling, Prof. Maria Todorova, Prof. Peter Vodopivec and Ivan Vejvoda reviewed and commented extensively on the content of all four Workbooks as Readers, thus making an important contribution to their soundness and balance.

Additionally, many thanks to the CDRSEE staff, who believed in, contributed to and supported the whole endeavour from its introduction to its realisation. It was inevitable that such an effort as ours would raise objections in every country where the Workbooks have been introduced and particular thanks are owed to Board Members in particular countries, to Christina Koulouri and to Nenad Sebek who have worked tirelessly to remove or reduce any misunderstandings and to make it possible for these Workbooks to become accepted as auxiliary teaching material in secondary schools.

Above all, thanks must go to the teachers of Southeast Europe who have taken part in the project, contributed to it, assessed it and continue to develop it. Their dedication and courage are essential to the ongoing success of the JHP. To date the Workbooks have been produced in seven regional languages and a large number of meetings for teacher training have already been successfully organised and implemented in no fewer than six countries of the region up to October 2008.

The positive response to the Center's efforts by teachers and students alike suggests both that the Workbooks themselves have something valuable to offer in the preparation of future historians, not to say future citizens, and that Southeast Europe, contrary to the ironic comments and cynical actions of some outside agents and observers, is in many ways more in tune with the needs of the years to come than many other more self-satisfied regions. The Center's Joint History Project is far less an implied criticism of history teaching in Southeast Europe, than a positive response to the challenges faced by most regions of the world in the determination that better teaching of regional history will provide hope for a better future.

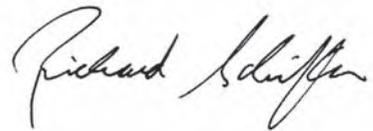


COSTA CARRAS

Rapporteur to the Board of Directors for the Joint History Project

Preface to the Second Edition

The Board of Directors wishes to thank and particularly recognise the contribution of Costa Carras. It was his inspiration that caused this project to come into being in the first place and it was his commitment and indefatigable energy that made this path-breaking work possible, enlisting many of those who made the contributions set forth in these Prefaces. We are truly indebted to him for overseeing the Project and acting as Reader on behalf of the Board.



RICHARD SCHIFTER
Chair of the Board of Directors of the CDRSEE (2001-2006)



DR ERHARD BUSEK
Chair of the Board of Directors of the CDRSEE (2006-current)

Presentation of the project

The development of alternative educational material for the teaching of history in Southeast Europe is an ambitious and challenging venture given that the interpretation of the collective past and the content of history, as it is taught in schools, cause heated disputes, not only between neighbouring countries but also within the same country.

Nevertheless, the need for such a publication has become patently obvious through all research projects which have attempted, over the last decade, to analyse school textbooks and curricula along with the views of educators and that of the public opinion in the countries of Southeast Europe.

The History Education Committee of the Centre for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe (CDRSEE) began work on the Joint History Project in 1999. After organising two series of workshops and presenting two publications (*Teaching the History of South Eastern Europe and Clio in the Balkans. The Politics of History Education*), the Committee was able to identify the specific deficiencies of historical education, the differing characteristics of educational systems, the role of central administrations, educators' wishes and the scope for innovative initiatives.

The decision was then made to go beyond identifying problems and reviewing the current situation, and to formulate a positive proposal on the teaching of history, which would be a product of the collective knowledge, not of a small group of historians, but of the broad network of individuals who had contributed to the first two phases of the Joint History Project. Apart from the co-ordinators, who were responsible for structuring each book and making the final choice of documentation, there were one or two contributors from each country who selected the documentation (texts and images) according to the guidelines decided upon in the initial planning of the books. Moreover, the books which are presented here in their final form, were first reviewed and evaluated in a draft form by educators at special meetings held in 2004, so as to assess the acceptance of the educational material by history teachers themselves. Finally, the material was reviewed by five readers: Costa Carras, Robert Stradling, Maria Todorova, Peter Vodopivec, and Ivan Vejvoda. We obtained valuable input from the contributions they were able to provide us with on various aspects of the history of Southeast Europe and on educational issues.

The design of the project was based on the following factors:

1. the different curricula and the ethnocentric bias of the teaching of history which are common in all countries;
2. the fact that changes in history textbooks in most countries of Southeast Europe depend upon the ministries of education, which exercise a tight control over the content of school curricula and books;
3. the desire of educators to renew their teaching with aids to which they would have easy access;
4. the view that it is not possible to compile a uniform, homogenising history of Southeast Europe in a single textbook which could be used in all countries.

For all these reasons, we thought it best to put together thematic books (workbooks) with textual and visual documentation, which would function as complements to the existing textbooks. Hence, these workbooks do not aim to replace history textbooks currently used in classrooms nor do they aspire to provide a cohesive narrative of the history of Southeast Europe from the 14th century to date. They do, however, have cognitive and

moral aims, and they suggest methods and tools for the teaching of history. They propose to rewrite history through **a lesson of method rather than content**.

Aims and choices

The starting point for determining the general and specific aims of this educational material and the final choices of subjects and sources, was a realistic assessment of the condition of history teaching and a visionary concept of innovation. Our proposals are based on recent scholarship in the field of history, and on similar projects for the reformation of history teaching, mainly in Europe.

Thus, two major changes are proposed:

Change in the historiographical approach

- National history to be taught in schools should not be nationalistic history. Taking as a given fact that the dominant form of history in schools is national history and that the history of neighbouring peoples is also taught from an ethnocentric viewpoint, we do not propose to replace national history but rather to change the way it is taught.
- The regional history of Southeast Europe cannot be seen as self-contained, but **as part of European and world history**. This means also that the notion of the “peculiar” historical evolution of the Balkans is rejected from the outset as stereotypical and biased.
- The history of each nation separately, and of the region as a whole, is not treated as a continuous, homogeneous and harmonious process. The divisions, conflicts and different perspectives are emphasised to the same degree as the common, unifying elements. Instead of trying to paint a false picture of harmony, we prefer to indicate ways **to teach about differences and conflicts**.

Change in the educational approach

- We are taught history in order to learn of and understand our past. If the collective subject of national history taught in school is considered to be the nation, an attempt is made to make it understood that the nation should not be seen as the only possible identification. Students are called upon to look beyond the nation, to identify with broader or narrower entities and to acknowledge several identities which complement one another. Male or female identity, local identity, the identity of the fan of a football club, or the European identity, can be projected as examples of identities which can coexist without, of course, being of equal importance for the individual who holds them. Students are thus invited to enhance their self-knowledge by opening-up the horizons of the past beyond the boundaries of political geography.
- **The development of critical thought** is another major goal of history teaching. This goal can be achieved most effectively with the use of testimonies presenting different versions of the same event, their presence alone undermining the certainty of a unique and exclusive truth.
- Working with historical evidence aims to provide an **insight into the historian’s work**. It is important for students to realise that a historical document may be subject to different interpretations, but this does not mean that it is always deliberately distorted or misused.
- Through the teaching of history, students must acquire the ability to evaluate human acts and **make moral judgements**. The development of critical thinking cannot stop merely at raising doubts; it must help to mould responsible citizens with moral values, able to resist any attempt to manipulate them.

A major consideration taken in the designing of this project was that all peoples of Southeast Europe be able to recognise themselves in these workbooks. To this end, two requirements were necessary:

- a) the compatibility of the content of the workbooks with the current curricula and textbooks;
- b) the balanced presence and equal representation of all countries of Southeast Europe.

In the interests of **compatibility**, four subject areas of modern history were selected which are included in all the school curricula of the region:

- The Ottoman Empire
- Nations and States
- The Balkan Wars
- World War II

In order to achieve a certain **balance**, we requested historical evidence from eleven countries without using the criterion of each country's 'contribution' to the history of the region, hence without applying any evaluative yardstick. Obviously, however, the relative presence of each country varies depending on the subject of the book. For instance, it was natural for Slovenia to feature more prominently in the book on World War II than in the book on the Balkan Wars. Other imbalances are also due to the readiness of those asked to search for sources for each country and to the degree to which historical research is developed. Some countries have better organised archives, systematic publications of documents and access to a much greater variety of sources. Consequently, there were obstacles which, despite our initial intentions, had an inevitable effect on the final balance of documents.

Four topics, one concept

If the geographical scope of the four books is Southeast Europe, from Slovenia to Cyprus, their chronological scope is the period from the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans to this day. The subjects we selected cover this span entirely and are complementary to each other. While there is a clear chronological sequence from each book to the next, there are some overlaps as well.

Workbook 1 – The Ottoman Empire and **Workbook 2 – Nations and States in Southeast Europe**, cover long periods of time from the 14th to the early 19th century and from the late 18th to the late 20th century, respectively. **Workbook 3 – The Balkan Wars** and **Workbook 4 – The Second World War**, cover shorter periods and include two major armed conflicts in the region. In terms of scope, Workbook 1 and Workbook 3 are more about regional history whereas the other two, Workbook 2 and Workbook 4, belong mainly to European and world history, even if they focus again on Southeast Europe.

We have not excluded **political and diplomatic history**. On the contrary, two of the Workbooks have war as their main subject. This choice was based on the fact that wars constitute an important element of the teaching of history in all Balkan countries, and on our belief that keeping silent on past conflicts is not the most appropriate way to promote future peace. For the peoples of Southeast Europe, wars make up a sizeable part of their joint historical experience, and it would be a mistake to leave them out of a project aimed at promoting their collective self-knowledge.

Whether in its true, tragic aspect or in its idealised, heroic image, war was indeed a core event in the 20th century and haunted the memories of all generations, monuments, ceremonies, anniversaries and cemeteries strengthen and perpetuate these memories. Its presence has been equally important in historiography. In traditional, event-based historiography, war organises historical time, while monopolising the narrative. Most turning points in history refer to either political or war events. Moreover, the entire 20th century can be divided into periods through a string of wars – the Balkan Wars, World War I, the inter-war years, World War II, the Post-war era, the Cold War, and the wars in Yugoslavia.

Suppression was once seen by some as a suitable policy for a pacifist education: history would not teach about wars, nor would it advance heroic military models, and would focus instead on everyday life and on economic, social and cultural history. But how can one teach about the 20th century, or earlier centuries without referring to war? And could it be that the teaching of an everyday life outside political events, ideological conflicts and social divisions ultimately perpetuates existing stereotypes? Indeed, the policy of teaching only about everyday life and culture leaves sensitive issues open to interpretations which students will seek – and find – outside the school. Nevertheless, the teaching of history is supposed to shield them against such stereotypical interpretations of the past, which have largely to do with political and social conflicts.

The solution to this lies in a fresh approach. It is possible for war to be taught without being glorified and without tedious details, numbers and dates. War can be taught as part of a common human experience, in the trenches and behind the lines, through the eyes of children, through hunger, poverty, uprooting, survival strategies and moral dilemmas. It is this approach that we opted for in compiling these Workbooks.

At the same time, we attempted to give a voice to history's silent participants, such as **women and children**, who are traditionally absent from school textbooks. If we did not reach the proportion we would have liked to reach, it is because both women and children only hold a marginal place in the dominant and accessible sources.

The protagonists in these workbooks are both the "great men", those known even outside the context of their national history, and the simple, anonymous people from every corner of Southeast Europe, those who are, after all, the "inhabitants of history". If we were to remove the names of people and places from the texts, in some instances we would not be sure as to what country or what people they refer to. Such a classroom exercise, would demonstrate **the commonality of many experiences** irrespective of national divisions and political borders.

We have attempted to show not just the negative, but also the positive aspects of a historical experience, the ones found in human moments of friendship, solidarity and joy. Thus in WB3 and WB4, we included special chapters on acts of humanity and solidarity in times of war, conflict, hatred and selfish self-preservation. At the same time, however, we have tried to incorporate the negative aspects into the self-image of the peoples of Southeast Europe. Indeed, perhaps the most difficult challenge is **to reconcile ourselves with the negative, dark sides of our history**.

The wars in Yugoslavia during the 1990s brought back into Western accounts many negative stereotypes about the 'Balkan peculiarity'. This series of Workbooks on the recent history of Southeast Europe provides a partial answer to such stereotypes. This answer, however, is not based on any attempt to prove the "value" of the region. We believe that the knowledge contained in these Workbooks is sufficient to shed light on these prejudices and to contribute to a European self-awareness which will encompass, through a comparative reading, this part of the continent as well.

Finally, we opted for a 'traditional' printed edition. Also projecting a '**traditional**' image is the predominance of text versus illustrations, which may make these books appear less attractive and somewhat cumbersome. Nevertheless, it is harder to read a text written in an unfamiliar language than it is to 'read' a picture from a country whose language one does not speak. In other words, the main communication problem between history teachers in Southeast European countries is the linguistic barrier. Translation abolishes these barriers and enables us to listen to the voice of the others. Moreover, the most important aspect of being conservative is not related to the medium. It is obvious that a CD-ROM may be used as traditionally as a printed book, while the Internet contains questionable information which distorts historical facts and reproduces stereotypes and facile simplifications.

Structure and usage

As already mentioned, the four books complement one another, but each of them is self-contained and can therefore be used on its own.

The general structure of the publication is as follows:

- **General Introduction**, written by the general co-ordinator, presenting the overall concept of the Workbooks and offering methodological instructions to teachers. The General Introduction is included only in Workbook 1;
- **Chronology (Table of events);**
- **Introduction**, different for each workbook, written by the respective co-ordinator(s) and presenting the specific theme of each workbook (basic definition; points of debate; new perspectives);
- Four to six chapters (**thematic sections**) with a varying number of sub-chapters. Each chapter opens with a short introduction and comprises both texts and visuals, introduced or accompanied by explanatory notes while specific questions follow each text.
- **References**, which in fact, constitute a selected bibliography common for all countries.
- **Maps**, two or three for each Workbook.

In selecting documentation, we adopted the principle that any relic of the past can be seen as a historical source. Hence we tried to include a wide variety of texts and visuals so as to cover economic, social, cultural and political aspects of historical experience and make possible multiple associations. We developed a uniform model for the presentation of texts in all the workbooks, according to which each text has a title and is followed by an explanatory note and questions. Additionally, in several cases there are general questions at the end of each chapter. The questions are meant as an aid to history teachers, who can use them as they are or as a basis for new questions. They can also select texts horizontally, from two or three workbooks, as is sometimes indicated by questions which refer to other workbooks.

In practice, it is difficult for history teachers in one country to contextualize evidence from another country, since this presupposes knowledge they did not receive during their formal training. This is why we tried to give as much information as possible for each text, but without substituting for the teacher's initiative. Teachers can use the texts in two ways:

1. as insights into **the outlook of others** on an event which they themselves and their students know through an ethnocentric reading, and
2. as indications of the **common feelings and experiences** among people from different national or ethnic groups on a controversial issue.

The provision of knowledge per se is enough to undermine stereotypes. Prejudice and stereotypes are nurtured by ignorance, and this can be seen in the image we have of neighbouring peoples or of whole periods of our history. Silence can prove to be the strongest ally of stereotypes. Hence one of the objectives of the workbooks is a cognitive one: to provide information about the historical developments in Southeast Europe and also to generate questions. The books are not closed and final; they aim to encourage further research, critique and dialogue.

The users of these workbooks can be mainly students in the higher grades of secondary education, 15-18 years old, for whom this educational material was designed, but also university students in both Southeast and Western Europe. As our work on the books progressed, we realised the interest such a publication would have for Western historians, who do not have the necessary tools to study the history of the region. A collection of sources from all countries of Southeast Europe in English would be useful to a Western academic public which knows the history of the Balkans almost exclusively from secondary bibliographical sources.

Four stops in the journey from the 14th century to date

We decided to devote the first Workbook to the Ottoman Empire because, while this period forms a major part of the common historical experience of the peoples of Southeast Europe, it has been rejected by its descen-

dants as a part of their collective past. Although it is taught in all countries, the perspective is always ethnocentric – from each narrator’s point of view. Thus knowledge of this great empire which dominated Southeast Europe and the East Mediterranean for many centuries is erratic and biased. The views on the Ottoman Empire waver between progress and retrogression, multi-cultural heaven and oppression, liberation and disaster. These clashing interpretations are also reflected in Western historiography on the specific historical period.

Presenting the Ottoman Empire as a common historical background does not mean that we project it as a “golden era” of harmonious coexistence of the Balkan peoples. As previously mentioned, the common historical experience includes both clash and coexistence. Moreover, the Ottoman Empire was not a static and uniform entity. As with other multi-ethnic and multi-religious empires, it was marked by internal contrasts and clashes and evolved over time, going through phases of advance and crisis. Finally, a deeper knowledge of this Empire helps to subvert a widespread stereotype in both Western and Christian Southeast Europe about its cultural “backwardness”.

Our starting point was the 14th century, when the Ottomans first appeared in the region and began to conquer the Balkans. We decided that Workbook 1 should end with the early 19th century. Although this is obviously not the end of the Ottoman Empire, it coincides with the manifestation of the national movements which led to the creation of the Balkan states in the 19th and 20th centuries. The gradual collapse of empires and the establishment of national states upon their ruins is the subject of the next Workbook, which partly overlaps with the first one since it starts from the 18th century. Another part of the presentation of the Ottoman Empire is in the Workbook which covers the Balkan Wars. In this way, we have encouraged users to make horizontal connections between the Workbooks.

Workbook 2, on “**Nations and States in Southeast Europe**”, deals with a highly sensitive and controversial issue. From the national movements against the Ottoman Empire to the wars in Yugoslavia, the conflicts among the nations in the region have been crucial to its historical evolution. Even today, news about more or less “hot” incidents, opinion polls but also some aspects of history teaching confirm the survival of national passions. Clearly, a subject with such a central position in the modern history of the region can not be excluded. Another dilemma concerned the cut-off point: should we stop at the end of the Great War or go beyond World War II? There were strong arguments against including the 1990s in this book, but in the end we decided that it was necessary to include this recent phase of nationalist movements and conflicts so as to achieve a fuller understanding of the present. After all, some national states in the region were only created during this last phase.

Aside from individual thematic categories, Workbook 2 follows a mainly chronological approach so as not to end up as a theoretical exercise on nationalism and in order to demonstrate: 1) the evolution of the definition of a nation, 2) the geographic and chronological span of nationalist movements and hence the differences among them, and 3) the different phases in the formation of national states in Southeast Europe. More than all the other Workbooks, Workbook 2 lends itself to multi-perspective teaching because it touches upon the essence of national self-definition and deconstructs the notion of national uniqueness and authenticity. The greatest contribution of Workbook 2 is that it historicises the nation, clearing it from the unhistorical images of continuity and unity. At the same time, it incorporates the history of Southeast Europe into European and world history, since the national state is central in modern and contemporary world history.

Workbook 3 (**Balkan Wars**) could be part of Workbook 2 or even of Workbook 1, since it presents a decisive moment in the formation of many of the national states in the Balkans and in the final collapse of the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, however, it was entirely a “Balkan event” which, despite its outcome, was seen as proof of the Balkan peoples’ ability to determine their own destiny, without intervention from Europe’s “great powers”. It also demonstrated the relative significance of religion in nationalist conflicts: if, in the First Balkan War, there was a coalition of Christian States against the Muslim Ottoman Empire, in the second one the opponents were clearly not defined by religious faith.

Workbook 3 is the shortest of the four, since it deals with the events of only two years (although it includes a

few documents from earlier and later times). It is, just as Workbook 4, an example of short-time history in which we attempt to highlight, aside from political and military events (which are covered in the school textbooks in any case), the diverse facets of war as an experience. At the same time, it provides knowledge on an incident in regional history which was presented through Western eyes as confirmation of the region's "peculiarity" as to the violence of its conflicts. It is no accident that this same view and the import of the term "Balkan Wars" were renewed with the wars in Yugoslavia during the 1990s. International public opinion was left with the impression that bloodshed and nationalist hatred are endemic to the Balkan Peninsula. For this reason it might be useful to make, in the classroom, a comparison with the Great War which followed immediately afterwards and which truly changed the definition of war.

The last book, Workbook 4, covers a major event of world history, consequently (1) incorporating regional history into a global context, and (2) reaching the moral objectives of history teaching. Indeed, if history is taught in order to mould democratic citizens, **the Second World War** provides some of the best lessons. Of course, the countries of Southeast Europe did not escape the dark side of this "total war", as is shown in the documentation. At the same time, however, the history of this part of Europe gives us the opportunity of providing students with lessons in humanism and moral values through:

1. **The struggle against fascism.** We thought that we should emphasise, for educational reasons, the resistance to totalitarian ideology and the brutality of Nazism, mainly through the resistance movements which were organised in the Balkan countries on a more or less massive scale. The short stories of a collective vision amidst the greatest crisis of Western civilisation provide students with standards of behaviour and help them to morally evaluate human actions.
2. **Solidarity despite religious, political and national differences.** It is worth highlighting individual or collective acts of aiding fellow human beings during a war, at a time of harsh moral dilemmas and of a struggle for survival.

On one hand, although World War II represents quite an exceptional event, the experience of suffering in war became quite commonplace. The total devastation of cities and the slaughtering of civilians almost abolished the distinction between the front line and the rear. War became more familiar and accepted as a "natural" part of political and social life. Workbook 4 demonstrates the common experiences of Southeast, Central and Western Europe and puts in perspective the "peculiarity" of Balkan "brutality".

On the other hand, the temporal proximity of the subject of Workbook 4 increases the risk of divisive readings and interpretations. The time after World War II was equally painful for certain Southeast European countries, so that the interpretation of the War is tainted by post-war experience. Given the complexity and the international scope of subsequent developments, we opted to end Workbook 4 at the time of Liberation which was different for each country. In this way, we retain the optimism from the collapse of the Nazi nightmare, without going into the direct and indirect consequences for post-war societies in West and East Europe alike. Moreover, in the Cold War era, countries in the region followed different courses and ended up belonging to both East and West Europe (in cold-war terms).

Teaching methods

It is not clear whether these four Workbooks will be widely used in classrooms. There were a series of limitations which had to be taken into account when preparing these books:

1. The limited time for history teaching in the curriculum, which restricts the teachers' potential for innovation,
2. Students' interest in the subject of history has been constantly declining in favour of other, more modern and attractive subjects such as new technologies, and

3. The inadequate in-service training for teachers to renew their knowledge and acquire the skills necessary for the use of alternative educational material. As a result, it is hard to assess the extent to which the aims of history teaching as set out in the curricula are attained in practice.

The methods which history teachers can use for teaching these four books are many and varied, and some of them are obviously used already in day-to-day teaching. Questions like those included after each source and for most of the sub-chapters constitute the first step towards more advanced methods such as simulations, role playing, essays, and active learning. Some subjects offer more opportunities for independent learning where the teacher can combine the methods of oral history, films and documentaries. In each case, the Workbooks provide the means for a critical approach to school textbooks and the potential for generating new knowledge through rational and critical research. The success of this venture depends almost entirely on the initiative, resourcefulness and methodical approach of educators.

However, the critical approach to the textbook should not be misunderstood. Textbooks vary in quality and are no less “authentic” than a source book. It must be made clear from the outset that our decision to present a collection of documents rather than a historiographical work in no way suggests that we accept the objectivity or the authenticity of the sources; our aim is simply to demonstrate the variety of interpretations and viewpoints projected by the sources themselves. This is, in other words, an application of the comparative method and the multiperspective approach. Finally, we are fully aware that our selection cannot be random: it reflects specific views and interpretations, as we have tried to make clear in the introductory texts.

These remarks apply to both texts and images. Images are obviously more attractive to young people, and help one to “imagine” the past more vividly. We do know, however, that images can lie; too, hence they should be approached as critically as texts. The “reading” of images, as that of texts, presupposes the knowledge of the context (social, cultural, etc.) in which they were produced. We have tried to give information on the images included in the Workbooks, although in most cases their interest lies in combination with the texts contained in the same chapter. Since the Workbooks cover seven centuries of history, the images we included are of widely different kinds and therefore require different methods of analysis. We tried to use a broad range of illustrations: photographs, posters, caricatures, lithographs, paintings, manuscript illuminations, adverts, postcards, stamps, bank notes, etc. Our criterion, aside from some inevitable aesthetic preferences, was to construct mental pictures using visual evidence. For instance, the images of social types in the Ottoman Empire help us to reconstruct or simply discover the “different”. Let us here recall that the “different” is not necessarily identified with the “other”; cultural difference, due to the passage of time or even between contemporaries, and does not always mean conflict.

Concluding remarks

The books in this series are a synthesis of intense discussions and arguments but also a pleasant surprise in the way a historian’s work can abolish boundaries. There is currently in the Balkans a critical mass of history teachers interested in their work and ready for change. Our initiative is addressed to these very teachers who seek means and guidance. These people can act as multipliers of a renewal in historical teaching, currently in an indisputable crisis in all European societies. The greatest adversary to this venture will not be of a political or ideological nature but one of apathy and indifference.

Our challenge, therefore, is to awaken in students the interest in learning about the region in which their country lies, and to furnish the means to understand the complexity of the present. This project is not a mere scientific exercise; it has to do with the challenge faced by the countries of Southeast Europe in relation with their joint future.

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Introduction

The Ottoman Empire was one of the major political forces which shaped the history of South Eastern Europe over a very long period of time. In fact, from the 14th century up until the beginning of the 20th century, the Ottoman State was the largest political organisation in this region.

This, however, is not the only reason for studying Ottoman history in South Eastern Europe. The Ottoman Empire is important in the collective self-definition of the South East European nations. The struggle against the Ottomans was an important argument for the affiliation of these nations to Christian Europe. Furthermore, Ottoman domination was often considered to be responsible for the economic backwardness and political havoc which, to this day, still plagues many South East European countries. This having been said, it is not our intention here to argue either in favour of or against Ottoman responsibility for these phenomena. We believe that by examining various sources from the Ottoman period and our common history, we will be able to judge these matters, as well as many others, independently.

There is another reason for re-examining Ottoman history. Over the last few decades, Ottoman studies have been one of the most dynamic fields of historical scholarship, not only in Turkey and other South East European countries, but also in Western Europe, the United States and even Japan. Historians have recently been given access to various new sources which have enabled them to bring up new issues with the help of old and new methods. Our interpretation of Ottoman history, therefore, is now richer, more detailed and better balanced. In addition, many of the facts previously taken for granted have been questioned and/or refuted by more recent studies.

It is often argued that the Ottoman Empire was a Turkish State. True, the founders of the Ottoman State and dynasty were of Turkish origin, but with its conquests, the Ottoman State eventually encompassed a large number of peoples of different religious beliefs, speaking various languages. Moreover, during most of its history, the Ottoman ruling class was ethnically very composite. In fact, from the “classical age” of Mehmed II and Süleyman until the upsurge of nationalism in the 19th century, the members of the Ottoman ruling class regarded the label “Turks” as synonymous with the rude and illiterate peasants from Asia Minor, with whom they hoped to have as little in common as possible. Accordingly, Ottoman officials and intellectuals never called their State “Turkish”; they named it “devlet-i aliye” (“the high state”) or “devlet-i ali-Osman” (“the state of the house of Osman”). Loyalty to the dynasty was, as in most medieval and early modern states, more important than any ethnic affiliation.

“Ottoman despotism” has also been challenged in more recent historical research. The most serious argument brought against this concept was that it didn’t acknowledge change. Ottoman society changed a lot during its long existence. It is true that, at least during the so-called “classical age”, the Sultans exerted enormous powers, and pretended to have complete control over their dominions. Yet, such a huge empire, which extended over three continents, was never easy to control, especially given the limited technical means of the late medieval and early modern world. Even the celebrated *timar-system*, which allowed the Sultans to control the most important part of their army, was, in reality, only a particular device, commonly used in mature agricultural societies of a significant area and population, in order to achieve, on a local scale, what could not be achieved (given the low level of monetisation, pre-industrial transport and communication technology) over the country as a whole, that is, to spread the ruling elite over the earth and the peasants so as to maintain law and order and to transfer surplus from the direct producers to themselves. Neither the Sultan’s control over the

timars, nor their monopoly on firearms (the Ottoman Empire can be regarded as a “gunpowder empire” as can several other major states during the early modern era), persisted beyond the crisis of the late 16th century.

Furthermore, although the Sultans claimed that their authority was absolute, as did most other “absolute” rulers in Asia, Europe and in other parts of the world, they had to consider the limitations derived from God’s Sacred Law - in the Ottoman case, from the *sharia*. The Sultans often overturned this limitation with the help of the *şeyh-ül-Islam*, but in resorting to this, they made it evident that their powers were not without limitations. To put it more bluntly, the “despotic” power of the Ottoman Sultans depended upon God in theory, and, in practice, upon human circumstances.

The opposition between the societies and populations of South Eastern Europe and the conquering/oppressing Ottomans has been central in most of our national historical narratives. It is clear that many conflicts and much cruelty occurred, both during the conquest, as well as during the long Ottoman rule. However, conflict does not play the biggest role in the entire history of South Eastern Europe during the 14th-20th centuries. In fact, as in many other societies ruled by large supra-national and multi-confessional empires, people not only resisted, but also searched for ways to adjust to situations, and sought a better fate for themselves and for the communities to which they belonged. Sometimes, this involved “negotiating” with the rulers, even actively cooperating with them in order to obtain some individual or collective privileges. It could also mean submission to the authorities or, on the contrary, it could mean choosing between one and another form of passive or active resistance. Yet, this also meant that everyday life was often more important than “political” issues. Recent research has provided significant insights into the practical aspects of life in South Eastern Europe during the Ottoman rule, illuminating the patterns common with other regions during the same eras, the elements common to all South Eastern Europe and the specific features of particular areas.

Under the comparative scrutiny of recent scholarship, the historical “exceptionalism” of South Eastern Europe under Ottoman rule gradually fades away. Similarities with other regions and with our own society make it familiar to us. Of course, differences still persist, and are outlined by the insights of recent research, but they never reach the point of turning the history of South Eastern Europe under the Ottoman Empire into an exotic garden. These differences only help us obtain a better understanding of the complexity of past and present societies, which is, in fact, one of the central missions of historical knowledge everywhere.

This Workbook attempts to provide teachers, pupils and scholars, with the opportunity to take a new look into the history of South East Europe during the Ottoman rule. In order to avoid overlapping with the second Workbook of this project, which is devoted to Nations and States in South East Europe, the last century of the existence of the Ottoman Empire has not been included in this Workbook. For this reason, this Workbook ends with the late 18th century, including only a few sources from the early 19th century. Even with this limitation, it was practically impossible to illustrate, given the restricted number of pages, all aspects and details of five centuries of late medieval and early modern South East European history. Priorities and choices had to be set. Some aspects, although important, had to be either omitted or only briefly mentioned. In our selection of sources, we relied on our contributors and tried to provide a balanced picture, both geographically and thematically. Nevertheless, we are conscious that some readers and/or users of this Workbook might feel that they would have liked to include other texts or visuals. Nevertheless, we hope we have achieved our aims of encouraging teachers, pupils and also professional historians to perceive the diversity and the complexities of South East European history during the rule of the Ottoman Empire, in a new light.

Chronology

Ottoman Sultans	Political processes	Political and military events	Territorial changes	Society and Culture	Major events outside the Ottoman Empire
Osman I (1281-1324)	ca. 1300-1345 – initial Ottoman expansion in north-western Asia Minor, at the expense of the Byzantine Empire; during this period, the Ottoman emirate is in competition	1302 – victory of Osman over the Byzantines at Bapheon.			1307 – demise of the Seljukid Sultanate of Rum; the Turkish principalities of Asia Minor become direct vassals of the Mongol (Ilchanid) state in Persia.
Orhan (1324-1362)	with other Turkish principalities in Asia Minor; gradual co-opting of the Muslim scholars (<i>ulema</i>) into the Ottoman political system.		1326 – conquest of Brusa (Bursa), followed by Nicaea (Iznik, 1331) and Nicomedia (Izmit, 1337).	Reshaping of Byzantine into Ottoman (predominantly Muslim) towns; the process gradually extended into Asia Minor and the Balkans during the 14 th -15 th c.	1335 – dissolution of the Ilchanid Empire; the Ottoman principality (emirate) becomes independent.
				1339 – Orhaniye, Bursa – first T-plan mosque.	1337-1453 – Hundred Years War between France and England.
		1345 – first Ottoman military involvement in Europe aiding the future Byzantine Emperor (1347-1354) John VI Kantakuzenos.	1345 – conquest of the emirate Karesi, including the eastern shore of the Dardanelles.		1341-1354 – civil war in Byzantium.
				1346-1347 – Black Death arrives in South East Europe from Caffa and affects large parts of the region.	1345-1353 – huge plague epidemic (Black Death) in Asia, Europe and Northern Africa.

Ottoman Sultans	Political processes	Political and military events	Territorial changes	Society and Culture	Major events outside the Ottoman Empire
	1354-1402 – Ottoman expansion in South East Europe; during this period, Turkish frontier warlords often acting on their own behalf, being only gradually integrated into the Ottoman political system; the Ottomans combine various political mechanisms of expansion:		1354 – conquest of Gallipoli.		1355 – death of Stefan Dushan (1331-1355); decline of Serbia.
Murad I (1362-1389)			1361-1369 – conquest of Thrace, including Edirne.		
		1371 – Ottoman victory at Chirmen over the Serbs	1370s-1380s- conquest of Macedonia and of parts of Greece and Albania.	1378-1391 – Yezil Cami, Iznik.	1370-1405 – rule of Timur Lenk.
Bayezid I (1389-1402)	agreements with existing South East European states (which are accepted as tributaries), marriage alliances, outright annexation and distribution of fiefs (timars) to their own warriors; colonisation of Turks from Asia. Minor etc. In the 1390s Bayezid forces the pace of imperial integration, generating increasing resentment among the Turks of Asia Minor.	1389 – first battle of Kosovo; the Ottomans defeat a Balkan coalition lead by the Serbian Prince Lazar; Serbia becomes tributary of the Ottoman State.	1390-1391 – first Ottoman annexation of the Turkish principalities in south-western Asia Minor (Saruhan, Aydin, Mentese etc.).		1385 – union between Poland and Lithuania.
		1396 – battle of Nicopolis; Bayezid I defeats a crusader army lead by Sigismund of Luxemburg, king of Hungary.	1396 – through the annexation of Vidin, the incorporation of Bulgaria into the Ottoman dominions is completed.		
			1397-1398 – Bayezid I completes the conquest of most of Asia Minor.		
1402-1413 Inter-reign civil war between the sons of Bayezid I		1402 – battle of Ankara; Bayezid I defeated and taken prisoner by Timur Lenk.	1402 – Timur reestablishes several Turkish principalities in Asia Minor.	1403-1414 Eski Cami, Edirne.	
Mehmed I (1413-1421)	Careful recovery and rebuilding of the Ottoman state; renewed, but prudent expansion	1419-1420 – Ottoman campaigns on the Lower Danube; Wallachia becomes tributary.	1419-1420 – conquest of Dobrudja, Giurgiu and Turnu.	1416 – rebellion of sheik Bedreddin; defeated by Mehmed I.	

Ottoman Sultans	Political processes	Political and military events	Territorial changes	Society and Culture	Major events outside the Ottoman Empire
Murad II (1421-1451, with an interruption 1444-1446)	both in the Balkans and in Western Asia Minor.		1425 – 1428 – final annexation of south-western Asia Minor (principalities of Aydın, Menteşe, Teke, Germiyan etc.).	1421-1437 Muradiye Complex in Bursa, decorated by potters from Tabriz.	1439 – at the council of Florence, the Byzantine Emperor John VIII, agrees to the Union of the Orthodox Church with Rome, in exchange of an anti-Ottoman crusade.
			1430 – final Ottoman conquest of Thessaloniki.		
			1439 – first Ottoman conquest of Serbia.		
	Under the impact of the Hungarian use of artillery, the Ottomans begin the eclectic adoption of firearms.	1443 – Hungarian campaign into the Balkans; successful Albanian rebellion lead by Skanderbeg (George Kastrioti).	1443 – Ottomans surrender Serbia and Albania.		
		1444 – new Hungarian campaign into the Balkans, defeated at Varna.			
		1448 – second battle of Kosovo; Ottoman victory over the Hungarian army lead by Janos Hunyadi			
Mehmed II (1444-1446, 1451-1481)	Full organisation of the Ottoman state as an empire ('the classical age'); establishment of the Palace structure and of a clear hierarchical social. order; partial		1453 – conquest of Constantinople.	Constantinople is transformed into the Ottoman capital – Istanbul; Hagia Sophia is transformed into a mosque. construction of the Topkapı Palace	1453 – end of the Hundred Years War; French victory.
		1456 – Ottoman defeat at Belgrade, against János Hunyadi.	1455-1456 – Moldavia becomes tributary.		1455 – Gutenberg prints the Bible.

Ottoman Sultans	Political processes	Political and military events	Territorial changes	Society and Culture	Major events outside the Ottoman Empire	
	<p>decapitation and disempowerment of the old, founding nobility, with the help of the <i>kapikulu</i> (sultan's slaves, converts); registration of most of the land as state property, distributed as fiefs (timars); effective use of the first generation of firearms (the Ottoman Empire as 'gunpowder empire')</p>		<p>1459 – final annexation of Serbia.</p>	<p>(until 1478), of the covered market (<i>bedestan</i>), and of several mosques (among which Fatih Cami – 1463-1470).</p>		
			<p>1460 – conquest of the Duchy of Athens as of the Despotate of Mistra and most of the Morea</p>			
			<p>1461 – conquest of the Byzantine Empire of Trebizond.</p>	<p>1454 – Patriarch Gennadius establishes the Patriarchal Academy in Constantinople.</p>		
		<p>1463-1479 – Ottoman-Venetian war.</p>	<p>1463 – conquest of most of Bosnia.</p>			<p>1462-1505 – rule of Ivan III in Muscovy; incorporation of various Russian principalities and independence of Russia from the Golden Horde (1480).</p>
			<p>1468 – conquest of Karaman (Asia Minor).</p>			
			<p>1473 – Ottoman victory over Uzun Hasan at Otlukbeli; consolidation of Ottoman rule in Anatolia.</p>	<p>1470 – conquest of Negroponte (Euboea).</p>		
			<p>1475 – battle of Vaslui; Ottoman defeat against Stephen the Great, Prince of Moldavia (1457-1504).</p>	<p>1475 – Ottoman conquest of Caffa (Genoese colony in Crimea); the Tatar Khanate of Crimea becomes vassal of the Ottoman Empire.</p>		<p>1476 – the first Greek book printed in Milan (Constantinos Lascaris, <i>Επιτομή των οκτώ του λόγου μερών</i>).</p>
			<p>1479 – conquest of most of Albania.</p>	<p>1469-1492 – rule of Lorenzo di Medici in Florence; zenith of the Renaissance.</p>		
		<p>1480 – Ottoman conquest of Otranto (southern Italy); surrendered 1481.</p>				

Ottoman Sultans	Political processes	Political and military events	Territorial changes	Society and Culture	Major events outside the Ottoman Empire
Bayezid II (1481-1512)	Policy of appeasing the internal tensions caused by the 'despotism' of Mehmed II, while preserving the basic centralising achievements.	1499-1503 – Ottoman-Venetian war.	1483 – conquest of Herzegovina.		
			1484 – conquest of Chilia and Cetatea Albă (Akkerman); Moldavia loses access to the Black Sea.	1492 – expulsion of Sephardi Jews from Spain; a large part of them are welcomed and settled in the Ottoman Empire;	1489 – Cyprus becomes a Venetian territory.
			Conquest of Venetian strongholds in continental Greece and Albania.	1493 – first Jewish printing press in Istanbul, established by Sephardi Jews coming from Spain;	1492 – Columbus discovers America.
				1493 – first Slavonic printing press in South East Europe at Cetinje (under Venetian influence); in the 16 th century Slavonic printing spread to Wallachia (1508), Bosnia, Serbia and Transylvania, but most presses only functioned for short periods of time.	1494 – French campaign into Italy; beginning of the Italian wars.
			1499-1540 – conquest of Lika and parts of Dalmatia.	1505 – mosque of Bayezid II in Istanbul.	1497-1498 – Vasco da Gama discovers the sea route from Portugal to India.
Selim I (1512-1520)	Energetic repression of internal pro-Persian subversion in Anatolia, and significant expansion in the Near East, which significantly increased the Muslim component of the Ottoman Empire.	1514 – battle of Çaldıran; major Ottoman victory over Persia.	1514-1515 – incorporation of eastern Asia Minor.		
		1516 – battle of Mardj Dabik; major Ottoman victory over the Mamluks.	1516-1517 – conquest of Syria, Palestine and Egypt; Ottoman protection over Mekka and Medina.		1517 – "95 theses" of Martin Luther in Wittenberg, Germany; beginning of the Reformation.

Ottoman Sultans	Political processes	Political and military events	Territorial changes	Society and Culture	Major events outside the Ottoman Empire
			1519 – Algiers recognises Ottoman suzerainty.		1519 – Charles V is elected Roman-German Emperor; having also been King of Spain since 1516, he combines his considerable powers and consolidates them under the Hapsburg dynasty, and becomes a major rival of the Ottomans.
Süleyman I ‘the Lawgiver’ (1520-1566)	Zenith of Ottoman power; expansion both in Europe and in Asia, combining military power with extensive diplomatic activity; systematisation of Ottoman law and administration.		1521 – conquest of Belgrade	1526 – Piri Reis (1465-1554) writes <i>Kitab-i Bahriye (Book of the Sea)</i> , where he summarises the maritime experience of his age; in 1513 he had also produced a detailed maritime map, in which he also included the Americas.	1519-1522 – first voyage around the world, started by Magellan.
			1522 – conquest of Rhodos.		1526 – beginning of the Mughal Empire in India.
		1526 – battle of Mohács; major victory over Hungary.			
		1529 – beginning of Ottoman-Habsburg conflict in Hungary; first Ottoman siege of Vienna, failed.	1534-1535 – conquest of Iraq.		
		1538 – successful Ottoman campaign in Moldavia.	1538 – annexation of Bender (Tighina).		1538 – Sinan (better known as Mimar Sinan, 1490-1588) becomes imperial architect; zenith of Ottoman architecture.
	1541 – new campaign of Süleyman in Hungary.	1541 – annexation of central Hungary (Buda province); Transylvania becomes a tributary principality.		1543 – Copernicus publishes <i>De revolutionibus orbium coelestium</i> .	
					1545-1563 Council of Trento; the Catholic Reformation.

Ottoman Sultans	Political processes	Political and military events	Territorial changes	Society and Culture	Major events outside the Ottoman Empire
		1555 – Ottoman-Persian peace at Amasya; the eastern frontier of the Ottoman Empire stabilises.	1551-1552 – annexation of the Banat.	Mid-16 th century – extension of the Reformation to Hungary and Transylvania; the Transylvanian Saxons adopt Lutheranism, while large numbers of Hungarians adopt Calvinism.	1551-1556 – Russian annexation of the Tatar khanates of Kazan and Astrahan.
			1550-1557 – Suleymaniye mosque in Istanbul, built by Mimar Sinan.	1555 – religious peace of Augsburg in the German Empire.	
			1555 – first book printed in the Albanian language (in Italy): <i>Meshari</i> [The Service Book] by Dom Gjon Buzuku.	1556 – abdication of Charles V; division of the Habsburg domain between the Spanish and the Austrian lines.	
			1566 – Ottoman annexation of Chios.	1557 – restoration of the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate of Peć.	1562-1598 – religious wars in France.
Selim II (1566-1574) 'the Drunk'		1571 – the Ottoman fleet is defeated by a fleet of the Holy League at Lepanto.	1570-1571 – conquest of Cyprus.	1567 – first Armenian printing press in Istanbul.	1566 – beginning of the anti-Spanish revolution in the Low Countries.
			1569-1575 – Selimiye mosque in Edirne, designed by Mimar Sinan.		
Murad III (1574-1595)	Financial crisis, devaluation of the <i>akçe</i> and inflation.	1578-1590 – exhaustive war with Persia.	Conquest of Azerbaijan and of several Persian provinces.	1580 – destruction of the astronomical observatory in Istanbul on the Sultan's orders, following objections by religious leaders	
					1587-1629 – rule of Abbas I in Persia; zenith of Safavid power.

Ottoman Sultans	Political processes	Political and military events	Territorial changes	Society and Culture	Major events outside the Ottoman Empire
	Severe internal crisis in the Ottoman Empire; the long wars with the Habsburgs and with Persia having caused financial difficulties and the decline of the traditional military organisation, especially of the sipahi troops; gradual shift of the Ottoman Empire towards the use of mercenaries (<i>levend</i>) and towards the extension of tax-farming (<i>iltizam</i>).	1593-1606 – exhaustive war with the Holy League led by the Austrian Habsburgs; anti-Ottoman rebellion of the Romanian Principalities (1594)		1583-1586 Muradiye complex in Manisa.	1588 – defeat of the Spanish armada by the English fleet.
Mehmed III (1595-1603)				1596-1609 – Jelali rebellions in Asia Minor.	1598 – Edict of Nantes, granting tolerance to the French Calvinists.
Ahmed I (1603-1617)		1602-1612 – war with Persia.	Ottomans lose the conquests of 1578-1590; first major territorial losses of the Ottoman Empire	1609-1616 – Sultan Ahmed Cami (Blue Mosque) in Istanbul	1603 – death of Elizabeth I (1558-1603); James Stuart, King of Scotland, becomes King of England as well, thus unifying both kingdoms.
		1606 – peace treaty at Zsitvatorok with the Austrian Habsburgs			1613 – establishment of the Romanov dynasty in Russia
Mustafa I (1617-1618)					
Osman II (1618-1622)	Attempts at internal reforms generate a rebellion of the janissaries; the sultan is deposed and killed.	1620-1634 – war with Poland-Lithuania for the control over Moldavia.			1618-1648 – Thirty Years War.
Mustafa I (1622-1623)					
Murad IV (1623-1640)	Harsh policy to restore law and order.	1623-1639 – war with Persia; after initial defeats against Abbas I, the expeditions of Murad IV and the peace treaty of Kasr-ı Şirin (1639) restore the frontiers of 1555 and 1612.		1627 – Greek printing house established in Istanbul by the patriarch Cyril Lukaris; closed by the Ottomans after the execution of the Patriarch (1638).	
				1635 – Revan Kiosk, in the Topkapi Palace.	
Ibrahim I (1640-1648) 'the Mad'		1645-1669 – exhaustive war with Venice.	Conquest of Crete (finalised only in 1669).		1640 – beginning of the English Civil War between King and Parliament.

Ottoman Sultans	Political processes	Political and military events	Territorial changes	Society and Culture	Major events outside the Ottoman Empire
Mehmed IV (1648-1687)	After several years of internal turmoil, the Grand Viziers of the Köprülü family succeed in strengthening the office of the Grand Vizirate, to restore internal order and to resume external expansion.	1656 – Mehmed Köprülü pasha is nominated Grand Vizier, and obtains full powers to govern the Empire.		1648-1657 – the famous Ottoman geographer and historian Katip Çelebi (1609-1657) writes his geographical treatise <i>Cihannüma</i> .	1648 – Cossack rebellion in Ukraine led by Bogdan Khmelnytsky; crisis of Poland-Lithuania.
		1661 – Fazıl Ahmed Köprülü pasha succeeds his father as Grand Vizier (1661-1676).		1665-1666 – the messianic movement of Sabbatai Zevi.	1655-1660 – first Nordic War.
		1672-1676 – war with Poland-Lithuania.	Conquest of Podolia.	1667 – major earthquake, which severely affects Ragusa.	
		1683 – second Ottoman siege of Vienna; the Ottomans are defeated at Vienna by an Austrian-Polish army.			
		1684 – formation of the Holy League (Austria, Poland-Lithuania, Venice, Papal State, and from 1686 Russia).	1686-1687 – Austrian troops conquer Hungary and Transylvania.		
				1685 – revocation of the edict of Nantes in France.	
				1687 – Isaac Newton, <i>Philosophiae naturalis principia mathematica</i> .	
Süleyman II (1687-1691)	Major monetary and fiscal reforms restored Ottoman finances so as to face the challenge of war.		1688-1690 – temporary Austrian occupation of Belgrade and other parts of Serbia.	1690 – First Great Serbian migration from southern Serbia and Kosovo to Slavonia and Hungary, following the Ottoman re-conquest of Belgrade.	1688 – Glorious Revolution in England, which becomes a parliamentary monarchy.

Ottoman Sultans	Political processes	Political and military events	Territorial changes	Society and Culture	Major events outside the Ottoman Empire
					1689 – beginning of personal rule of Peter I (1682-1725) in Russia.
Ahmed II (1691-1695)				1694 – Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu establishes the Greek Princely Academy in Bucharest; in the 18 th century a similar institution was created in Iași (Moldavia).	
Mustafa II (1695-1703)	1695 – reorganisation of the tax farming system, with the introduction of life term tax farms (known as <i>malikane</i>); the new system strengthens the power base of notable (<i>ayan</i>) families in the provinces, who accumulate large hereditary holdings.	1697 – defeat in the battle of Zenta against the Austrians.			
		1699 – peace of Karlowitz.	Loss of Hungary (including Slavonia) and Transylvania to the Habsburgs, Morea, Lika and smaller Dalmatian territories to Venice, Podolia to Poland and Azov to Russia.	ca. 1700 – Dimitrie Cantemir (1673-1723), himself a composer, writes a treatise on Ottoman music including a notated collection of 353 instrumental pieces.	1700-1721- Great Nordic War; major Russian victory over Sweden at Poltava (1709)
Ahmed III (1703-1730)		1710-1711 – war with Russia.	Recovery of Azov.		1701-1714 – War of Spanish Succession.
	So-called “age of the tulips”, featuring cultural renovation and attempts both at internal reform and at opening to the West, promoted by the Grand Vizir Ibrahim Pasha Nevshahirli (1718-1730) but ended by a Janissary rebellion which forced his	1715-1718 – war with Venice and Austria; Ottoman defeat sealed by the peace treaty of Passarowitz	1715 – conquest of Morea from the Venetians 1716-1718 – the Banat, northern Serbia and Oltenia (western Wallachia) are surrendered to the Austrians	1720 – <i>Surname-i Vehbi</i> , account of the festivities of the circumcision of the Sultan’s sons, written by the poet Vehbi and illustrated with 137 miniatures by Levni (1673-1736).	

Ottoman Sultans	Political processes	Political and military events	Territorial changes	Society and Culture	Major events outside the Ottoman Empire
	abdication and that of the Sultan.		1722-1725 – conquest of Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Shirvan following the chaos in Persia.	1727 – first Ottoman printing press established in Istanbul by Ibrahim Müteferrika; closed on his death, in 1745.	1722 – Afghan invasion of Persia; collapse of Safavid rule.
			1730 – loss of Azerbaijan and Shirvan to Nadir.	1728 – fountain of Ahmed III (outside Topkapi Palace).	1726-1730 – restoration of Persian power by Nadir (Shah 1736-1747).
Mahmud I (1730-1754)	Politics of careful reforms, particularly in artillery (activity of French expert Comte de Bonneval) and in urban development (building of more than 60 public fountains in Istanbul).	1730-1736 – war with Persia.	Loss of Georgia.		1733-1738 – War of Polish Succession.
		1736-1739 – war with Russia and Austria, ended through the peace Treaty of Belgrade.	Oltenia is restored to Wallachia and northern Serbia to the Ottoman Empire; Russia regains Azov.	Second Serbian migration to the Banat and to Hungary.	
		1743-1746 – war with Persia.		1746 – Prince Constantin Mavrocordat abolishes serfdom in Wallachia; in 1749 he undertakes a similar reform in Moldavia.	1740-1786 – rule of Frederic II in Prussia. 1740-1748 – War of Austrian Succession. 1748 – Montesquieu, <i>L'esprit des lois</i> . 1751–1780 – the <i>Encyclopédie</i> published in Paris, in 35 volumes; major achievement of the European Enlightenment.
Osman III (1754-1757)					1756-1763 – Seven Years War.
Mustafa III (1757-1774)	After a long period of peace and efforts to keep a distance from European conflicts, the Ottoman Empire	1768-1774 – Ottoman-Russian war; the Russian armies occupy Crimea, Moldavia		1766-1767 – the Ottoman authorities discontinue Ochrid Archbishopric, Patriarchate of Peć	1762-1796 – rule of Catherine II in Russia.

Ottoman Sultans	Political processes	Political and military events	Territorial changes	Society and Culture	Major events outside the Ottoman Empire
	descends into war with Russia, which exposes all its accumulated weaknesses, and which opens a phase of accelerated decline; there is a rise in the power of the <i>ayan</i> (local notables) and a gradual dissolution of the authority of the central government in most of the provinces.	and Wallachia; a Russian fleet defeats the Ottomans in the Aegean and fosters rebellions in Greece and in the Levant. 1774 – peace treaty of Küçük Kajnarca; Russia reinforces its positions on the northern shores of the Black Sea and becomes protector of the Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman Empire.	1774 – Crimea ends being an Ottoman vassal-state.	and Patriarchate of Constantinople; the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople exerts ecclesiastic authority over all Orthodox Ottoman subjects in Europe.	1772 – first division of Poland.
Abdulhamid I (1774-1789)	Attempts to re-establish the Ottoman military power with the help of Western (particularly French) experts; yet, the war of 1787-1792 proves these attempts unsuccessful.		1775 – Ottomans surrender Bukovina (north western Moldavia) to Austria. 1783 – Russian annexation of Crimea.	1784 – reopening of the Turkish printing press in Istanbul.	1775-1783 – American War of Independence. 1780-1790 – rule of Joseph II in Austria. 1787 – Constitution of the United States of America.
Selim III (1789-1807)	Attempts at military, financial, administrative and political reform (the 'new order' – <i>nizam-i cedit</i>); finally fails because of the internal turmoil and the conservative opposition of the Janissaries; zenith of the power of the <i>ayan</i> in the provinces.	1787-1792 – war with Russia and Austria; severe. Ottoman defeats; the French revolution and the Polish problem save the Ottoman Empire from major territorial losses. 1798-1799 – French campaign to Egypt and Syria.	1788-1792 – Russian annexation of the Edisan with Otchakov.		1789 – beginning of the French Revolution. 1793, 1795 – second and third (final) division of Poland.

The Ottoman expansion in South East Europe

The Ottoman expansion started around 1300 in north-western Asia Minor, and continued until the late 17th century, the last significant conquest being Podolia (at that time, a province of Poland-Lithuania, now part of the Ukraine) in 1672. Expansion turned a small chiefdom of semi-nomadic pastoralists into a bureaucratic world-empire extended over three continents.

Most of South East Europe was conquered in the 14th-15th centuries, but some regions were either conquered later (e.g. Slavonia, Banat, Cyprus and Crete), or remained free from Ottoman rule (e.g. Corfu, Slovenia, parts of Dalmatia, Croatia and Slovenia). For the people in the region, the Ottoman conquest was a major event. It shaped their lives both in the short-term and in the long run. Historians have expressed various and sometimes conflicting opinions on this issue. Most of them have taken a nation-centred perspective, although the people of the late Middle Ages rarely perceived the world along ethnic lines. These historians have presented these conquests as a series of heroic military accomplishments, with their people fighting valiantly against irreducible enemies. For them, the Ottoman conquest was either a catastrophe for their people and/or for European civilisation, or, on the contrary, a beneficial establishment of Ottoman peace. For other historians, the real nature of the conquest process was more complex. Ethnic, religious and ethical divides were often hazy. Major campaigns combined with petty warfare. At a local level, motivations and perceptions diverged extensively from the clear-cut divides conceived by modern historians. Securing collaborators was often as important as the actual fighting. Heroism and dedication to various ideals were part of life, as were also cruelty, suffering and cheating.

Please note that this chapter of our Workbook does not aim to document in detail the process of the Ottoman conquest and/or the resistance of various people against it. It simply provides pupils with a limited number of sources in order to enable them to get a better look at the complexity of this process and the ways the people of that time lived and perceived the events.

Ia. The first phases of the Ottoman State in Anatolia

I-1. Orhan's marriage to the daughter of the *tekvour*¹ of Yar Hisar

Part 13

This part tells us of the bride they took, who was the daughter of the *tekvour* of Yar Hisar; who they gave her to, and what became of her.

Osman Gazi² gave her to his son Orhan Gazi³.

1 Written also as *tekfur*; meaning a small Christian ruler in Asia Minor, whose territory was incorporated into the Ottoman domains.

2 Osman I – founder of the Ottoman State; ruled from about 1281 to about 1324.

3 Orhan – Ottoman ruler from 1324 to 1362.

Her name was Ülüler Hatun. And Orhan had by then become a young brave man. [...] And when they captured these four castles [Bilecik, Yar Hisar, İnegöl, Aya Nikola], they brought justice and equity to that province. And all [the people of its] villages returned and settled down where they belonged. They began to have a better life; it seems, than under the infidels. For, upon hearing of how well off these infidels now were, people from other provinces began to arrive. Well, Osman Gazi wanted to have a wedding in order to give Ülüler Hatun in marriage to his son Orhan Gazi. And so he did. Ülüler Hatun is that lady who has a *tekke* [dervish lodge] right by the citadel of Bursa, near the Kapluca [hot springs] gate. And she it was

who also built the bridge over Ülüfer creek. And it is that bridge that has given its name to the creek. And both Murad Khan Gazi⁴ and Süleyman Paşa⁵ are her sons. Both were fathered by Orhan Gazi. When the lady passed away, she was buried together with Orhan Gazi inside the citadel of Bursa.

Aşıkpaşa-zâde, p.102.



The chronicle of Aşıkpaşa-zâde is one of the first Ottoman dynastic chronicles, but was written in the 15th century, i.e. with more than a century's distance from the events it narrates.



Why did Orhan Gazi marry the tekvour's daughter? Why did his father make a decision about the marriage? Imagine yourself in Orhan's position.

According to Aşıkpaşa-zâde, what were the most important qualities for an Ottoman lady to have?

I-2. The capture of Karaca Hisar, and the first reading of the *hutbe* in Osman Gazi's name

Part 14

This part tells us how Osman Gazi came to have Friday prayers in his own name, and how it came to pass in the city.

When he captured Karaca Hisar, [many of] the houses in the city were left empty. And many people came from the Germiyan province and other provinces. They asked Osman Gazi to provide them with homes. So Osman Gazi gave homes to them. And it wasn't long before the city began to flourish. And they converted its numerous churches into mosques. And they even set up a market. And these people [*kavim*, also: tribe] agreed among themselves to perform Friday prayers, and to even ask for a *kadı*. There was a saintly man by the name of Dursun Fakı. And it was he who was serving as *imam* for the tribe. It was to him that they spoke their mind. Then he came

⁴ Murad I – Ottoman ruler (1362-1389).

⁵ Süleyman Paşa, oldest son of Orhan; led the Ottomans to their first raids in the Balkan Peninsula and conquered Gallipoli (1354); died in 1357.

forth. He spoke to Osman Gazi's father-in-law Ede Bali. But before he had finished, Osman Gazi came up. He asked. He understood what they wanted. Osman Gazi spoke up: "Whatever you have that needs to be done, do it," he said. Dursun Fakı spoke: "O my khan! We need the Sultan's permission⁶," he said. Osman Gazi spoke: "It was with my very own sword that I captured this city. What did the Sultan have to do with it, that I should have to ask his permission? The same Allah who granted him his Sultanate, has granted me my *gaza* and my khanate," he said. "And if it is for [the favour of] this banner that he would taunt me, well I myself have upheld my banner in fighting against the infidels," he said. "And if he should tell me that he is from the House of the Seljuks [*Âl-i Salçukvan*], I would say that I myself am the son of Gök Alp. And if he should claim to have arrived in these parts before us, it was my grandfather Süleymanşah who arrived before him," he said. And so it was that those people [or: that tribe] were persuaded. He gave the title of *kadı* and the right to preach to Dursun Fakı. The Friday *hutbe* was first read at Karaca Hisar. There it was that they performed their *bayram* prayers.

Aşıkpaşa-zâde, pp.102-103.



In Islamic political tradition, reading the Friday *hutbe* in the name of the ruler is a prerogative of sovereignty (independent rule). The 15th century chronicle distorts the historical reality of the early 14th century; in fact, the Seljuk Sultanate was ended by the Mongols in 1307, before any attempt by Osman to assert his sovereignty. Moreover, after 1307, Osman and later his son, Orhan, paid tribute to the Mongol Ilkhanate of *Persia* until its demise in the late 1330s.



What strategies did Osman use in order to enlarge his power base?

What information do the two texts provide about the ethnic and religious structure of north-western Anatolia on the verge of the Ottoman conquest?

⁶ The permission of the Seljuk Sultan of Konya (Iconion), who was formally the overlord of border warlords like Osman.

Ib. The first phases of the Ottoman conquest of the Balkan Peninsula

I-3. The contradictions between Christian states in the Balkans and their role in facilitating the Ottoman expansion

Only Amurat⁷ survived, who was young and unruly and strongly opposed the Bulgarians. He wanted the Greeks to let him through, but was stopped by numerous ships and boats, which Kantakuzin⁸ kept and supported very well in order to have the Gallipoli ford. Amurat, as we said, was forced to cross the sea. And when Kantakuzin saw that he could not feed the soldiers on the boats, because there was shortage of bread and pork and the treasury itself was getting emptier with every new day, ducats and silver becoming scarce, he sent envoys to Turnovo, to the Bulgarian Tsar Alexander⁹ asking for help to feed his navy so they could guard the ford. However, upon hearing this, the Bulgarians sneered and derided the Greeks by not only insulting them, but also insulting their wives and mothers using swear words, thus sending them back. On hearing this, Kantakuzin fell into a deep sorrow and sent envoys to the Serbian rulers: Urosh, despot Uglesha and King Vulkashin, to seek help for his naval army. They, too, on hearing this, sneered and derided the Greeks by not only insulting them, but by also insulting their wives and mothers using swear words, and sent them back empty-handed. On hearing this, Kantakuzin, not knowing what to do, fell into a deep sorrow. Kantakuzin then sent envoys to both the Bulgarian Tsars and the Serbian rulers telling them: "You did not wish to help us, and so you will regret this". However they did not heed his words and answered thus: "When the Turks get to us, we shall defend ourselves." Kantakuzin then made an agreement with Amurat; they exchanged vows and letters, which have been kept to this day, that the Turks shall never in any way harm

⁷ Bulgarian form for Murad I (1362-1389).

⁸ John VI Kantakuzenos, Byzantine Emperor 1341-1354; forced to abdicate, he became a monk and proved to be one of the most important late Byzantine scholars.

⁹ Ivan Alexander (1331-1371).

Greeks either in Romania¹⁰, or in Macedonia. The Turks vowed to keep their promise and Kantakuzin let the Turks pass Gallipoli.

Georgieva, Kitanov, pp.4-6.



The anonymous author of the 16th century Bulgarian Chronicle has only vague and inaccurate knowledge of the mid 14th century historical facts. In fact, John Kantakuzenos had called the Ottomans led by Süleyman, Orhan's son and Murad's older brother, in order to help him in the civil war against Emperor John V Paleologus (1341-1391). At that time, the Serbs were led by Stephan IV Dushan (1331-1355), who used the Byzantine civil war in order to conquer Byzantine territories for himself.



Do the factual inaccuracies of the anonymous Bulgarian Chronicle undermine the credibility of its general idea? Did the author make these factual inaccuracies on purpose in order to convey a 'message'?

I-4. Ferman of Murad I attributing the right to rule the territory of southern Macedonia to Evrenos Bey (1386)

The Sublime Imperial sign orders the following:

To His dignity, to the shelter of the domain, the foundation of the province, the pride among the noble conquerors, the commander of the warrior-soldiers of the faith and to the exterminator of the unfaithful ones and of the Pagans, to the Gazi Hadji Evrenos Bey – may his happiness last forever! – who passed through the province of Rumelia together with my brother and master, Gazi Suleyman, and conquered lands. For His services, I attribute to him: the town of Gjumurgina, then the town of Seres all the way to Bitola, Biglishte and Hrupishte, which could be considered one sanjak (with an income of ten times a hundred thousand akçe¹¹), all that he earned by his sword.

¹⁰ In the Middle Ages, this meant the territory of the Byzantine Empire, not present-day geographical Romania.

¹¹ Akçe (asper) – small silver Ottoman coin. It was the most

And I appointed you General Commander over these lands, over the fighters of the faith and the soldiers, and ordered you to be a true master. But make sure you are not tainted by vanity and say: "I opened up and conquered these parts of Rumelia", Remain conscious of the fact that the land is first owned by God, and then by the Prophet. And under the commandment of God almighty, the Prophet and his acceptor, it was given to you.

Odrani, vol. I, pp.187-189.



Evrenos was one of the first leaders of the *akinci* (irregular cavalry fighting for prey). The ferman of 1386 was part of Murad I's systematic effort to integrate the warlords, who often acted independently in the first phases of Ottoman expansion, into the state system.



How did Murad I try to secure the submission and loyalty of Evrenos Bey?

I-5. The role of local / native collaborators in the Ottoman expansion into the Balkans

According to accepted tradition [*rivayet iderler kî*], the climes held by Sosmanoz¹², son of Aleksenderos, fell on the Edirne side of the river Danube [Tuna]. On the outskirts of Wallachia [*Eflâk*], what lay on the far side of the Danube was Wallachia and what lay on this side was the land of Sosmanoz. And it was truly a fair and wealthy province. It supplied honey, butter and sheep to the whole world. With all kinds of produce and revenue, and compared with all the other provinces, it enjoyed everything in excess. And its strong castles numbered more than forty. [...]

This is the story of the arrival of Ali Paşa¹³ in the vicinity of the fortress of Provadiya [*Piravadi*]

commonly-used coin and money of account during the 14th-17th centuries.

¹² Ivan Shishman, Bulgarian ruler [*Tsar*] of Tîrnovo (1371-1395), son of Ivan Alexander (1331-1371).

¹³ Ali Paşa Çandarlızade, son of Halil Hayreddin Paşa, be-

It is told that, Ali Paşa having raised and gathered his soldiers, moved from Edirne to arrive at Aydos. The constable [*subaşı*] of Provadiya, a certain Hüseyin Beğ, who was actually an infidel, but was renowned for his generosity, met and welcomed the paşa and gave him his hospitality. The paşa then crossed Kamcı creek and arrived at Çeneke [Çenge] castle; where he rested for the day. The next day, he descended into the vicinity of Provadiya. He picked a thousand fighters to accompany Yahşi Beğ, son of Temur-taş, sending him off to Provadiya with the words: "Try and see if you can come up with some kind of trick to capture Provadiya, will you?" So Yahşi Beğ got on the move, and arrived outside Provadiya. They made as if to camp nearby. It was winter. It was snowing. Hüseyin Beğ taking pity on the horses which he wanted to shelter from the cold, and not knowing why they had come, placed them in Taş-hisar [i.e. Stone Keep]. Upon having entered Taş-hisar, they covertly broke into the castle's tower at night, thereby capturing the castle and sending a certain Murad to the paşa with the good news. The next day the paşa himself got on the move, arriving at Provadiya, entering the castle and garrisoning it, while the müezzins cried a call to prayers and led in worship. And the paşa, having armed and outfitted the castle, came and camped at Vençen [Vefçen, Wefdjen]. Watching his arrival, the people in the castle brought him the keys to the stronghold. Subsequently, the keys to Madara and Şumnu, too, were brought and surrendered. Then the paşa went and entered Şumnu castle, reinforcing the fortifications.

Neşrî, pp.245-247.



The Ottoman chronicle of the early 16th century tries to highlight the merits of the Ottoman conquerors, and avoids insisting on their bargaining with the local lords in eastern Bulgaria. Nevertheless, instances of their cooperation are easily found in the source.

came, like his father, a military judge, an army commander, and then Grand Vizier from 1389 to his death in 1407. He displayed remarkable administrative, diplomatic and military skills, serving three rulers successfully: Murad I, Bayezid I, and Süleyman Çelebi.

? What happened to the Christian constable of Piravadi after the Ottoman conquest? What does the name “Hüseyin Beğ” suggest?

Was Hüseyin Beğ a traitor or a victim of a “trick”? Was he generous, corrupt or tender-hearted (having taken pity on the horses), or all of the above?

Compare the acts of Ali Paşa and those of Hüseyin Beğ. Who was more skilful as a politician-warrior? In what way do the personal characteristics (of the protagonists) lend colour to the historical events?

► **v1. Bayezid I coming to rescue the besieged Nicopolis on the night before the battle with the Crusaders (1396) – Ottoman miniature (c. 1584)**



Lewis, p.292.

? Why have the Christians been painted, dressed in 16th century clothes? Find another item in the miniature, which was not used by the Ottomans in the 14th century.

How is the Sultan represented in relation to the other characters, e.g. the Christians? Why are the figures so large in relation to the landscape and the buildings?

I-6. 14th century explanations of the Ottoman success over the Christians

A. GREGORY PALAMAS (1354)

Some of them [Turks] have approached me, have begun the discussions and, in order to compensate for the weakness of their argumentation, presented [our] captivity as a sign of our religion’s lack of foundation.

Because these impious people, hated by God and infamous, boast about being victorious over the *Romaioi*¹⁴, because of their love of God; they do not know that this world below dwells in sin and that most of it belongs to those who oppress their neighbours with weapons. Therefore, until the time of Constantine, who truly ruled in the love of God, the idolaters had almost ruled the whole world. Even after him, for a very long time, others did not differ at all, or only very little, from them.

Phillipidis-Braat, pp.140-143.

Key Gregory Palamas (1296-1359; sanctified 1368) was one of the leading Orthodox theologians of the 14th century. He defended and theorised hesychasm, and also became archbishop of Thessaloniki. In 1354, he was captured by the Ottomans, and spent one year in captivity, before being ransomed by the Serbs. This passage originates from a letter written to his congregation in Thessaloniki, in which he recollects his fate during captivity.

¹⁴ ‘Romaioi’ was the name for their people and their Empire and they have been known in historiography as ‘Byzantines’ since the mid-sixteenth century.

B. HANS SCHILTBERGER (1396)

Unbelievers say that they have conquered the Christian lands neither because of their own might and wisdom, nor their own sacredness and humbleness, but due to the sinfulness, viciousness and haughtiness spread among the Christians. That is why God Almighty had preordained them to conquer Christian lands and to conquer more and more, because the Christians did not conform their legislation to the laws, both clerical and secular – and with their laws they only sought for profit and benefits, the rich oppressed the poor with their court manners, did not help the poor neither with property nor with giving them justice, and they also did not obey the rules of the religion which the Messiah had left them.

The misfortunes and calamities that happen to them, have all been preordained by God because of their injustice and viciousness.

Schiltberger, p.133.



Hans Schiltberger participated in the Crusade of 1396 and was captured in the battle of Nicopolis. His “travel notes” are one of the first Western sources on the Ottomans.



Compare the moral rationalisations of the Ottoman success in texts I–3 and I–6. What do you think of the logical-theological scheme described in these sources? Could it be relevant to our time?

I–7. Christian timar-holders in the province of Arvanid, Albania (1431/1432)

153 – Timar held by Petro, who appears to have been a relative by marriage of the scribe Yorgi, which is why he came to take a timar. Under our [deceased?] Sultan¹⁵ it was Ömer of Saruhan who [first?] used to eat it¹⁶. Under our Sultan¹⁷ it was given to the present holder, who holds a charter by our Sultan. Lagos

15 Mehmed I (1403-1421).

16 Here meaning “to benefit from it”.

17 Murad II (1421-1451).

village, 6 households, 1 widow. [Expected] revenue: 531 [akches].

İnalçık 1987, p.59.



In the early phases of their rule, the Ottomans tried to secure the cooperation of at least a part of the local nobility. Therefore, they integrated higher noblemen as vassals, sometimes demanding that they send their sons as hostages to the Sultan's court (as was the case of the famous Skanderbeg, known by the name Gjergj Kastrioti, son of Gjon Kastrioti, Lord of Middle Albania). At the same time, as documented in this register, they granted smaller timars to Christian members of the lesser nobility. The situation later changed, when Ottoman rule was stabilised, and timars were only granted to Muslims.



Notice the fact that the text documents a Christian replacing a Muslim as timar-holder. How can you explain this change? What other form of collaboration is documented in this source?

I–8. Serbian despot as Ottoman vassal (1432)

After the town of Kruševac, I crossed the Morava River on a ferry and entered the country of the despot of Rascia or Serbia. And what is situated on the other side of the river is the Turk's, and what is situated on this side of the river belongs to the said despot, who pays tax amounting to 50,000 gold coins [*ducats*] per year for it. [...]

I arrived at a town called Nicodem (Necudim), a town resembling a village, in a very nice and good countryside. And the said despot or Rascia¹⁸ lived in the said town because it was situated near very nice woods and rivers, suitable for game hunting and for hunting with falcons. We found the said ruler in the field, on the way to hunting with falcons on the river, together with his three sons and about fifty horsemen, as well as one Turk who came to ask, on behalf

18 Djurađ Branković, Serbian Despot 1427-1456. He built the fortress of Smederevo on the Danube as a new capital of Serbia and tried, under difficult circumstances, to keep the balance between two neighbouring powers, the Kingdom of Hungary and the Ottoman Empire.

of the Great Turk, to send him his son and his men to the army, as it was customary. In addition to the tax that he paid, he was obliged, upon the Turk's request, to send his second son together with 800 or 1000 horsemen. He also gave him one of his daughters as a wife¹⁹, yet, nevertheless, there remained the fear that the entire country would be taken away from him. I was told that some people mentioned this to the Turk, who responded that that way he received more horsemen than if the country had been in his hands, because then, had that been the case, he would have had to give it to his slave, and he would have had nothing.

De la Broquiere, pp.129, 131.



Bertrandon de la Broquiere was a nobleman from Burgundy who travelled extensively in Eastern Europe and in the Near East. Serbia was an Ottoman vassal-state during most of the period between 1389 and 1459.



How did the Ottomans secure the loyalty of their Serbian vassal? What were the advantages of this arrangement for each side?

I-9. The fall of Novo Brdo (1455)

From there, the Emperor²⁰ left in 1455 and besieged a city called Novo Brdo, i.e. Silver and Gold Mountain. He seized it with an agreement in which he promised the citizens that he would leave them on their homesteads and that he would not take away their young women and small children. And when the city surrendered, the Emperor ordered that all gates save one be closed. When the Turks entered the city, they ordered all the heads of the families to come out through the gate with their whole family, leaving all their possessions in the houses. They did so, one by one. And the Emperor, standing in front of the gate, made a selection, ordering male children to one side, female children to the other.

¹⁹ Djuradj's daughter Mara became one of the wives of Murad II (1421-1451).

²⁰ Mehmed II (1444-1446; 1451-1481).

The men were taken to the trench and the women to the fourth side. Then he ordered that all prominent people among them be slain. The others were free to return to the city and no one was prohibited from being on their estate. He selected a total of 320 young men and 704 women. He distributed all the women among the infidels, and took the young men for himself as Janissaries and sent them to Anatolia, across the sea where they were to be kept.

I, the person writing this, also lived in the city of Novo Brdo and was taken away along with my two brothers.

Mihailović, pp.132-133.



Konstantin Mihailović, born about 1435 near the city of Novo Brdo in Kosovo, was taken to Asia Minor as a prisoner together with other young Serbian boys. He served then in the Janissary corps and became an officer. Later on, he fled to Poland where he served in the King's court and died after 1501. His memoirs, written between 1497 and 1501, were published for the first time in Prague in 1565 under the title *The Turkish History or Chronicle*.



Assess the reliability of the agreement between Mehmed II and the people of Novo Brdo. Did the local population have a better option?

Consider the special fate of the narrator. What feelings does he express about the event he describes?

I-10. Turkish destruction in Slovenia – letter of the Habsburg governor of Carniola (1491)

In my entire life, I have never seen so much woe as I have seen in this country. As far as I can see, as far as I can send my attendants and still see them return, they are reporting that [the Turks] are all around above Šmarje: in Turjak, Čušperk, Dobropolje, Nadlišek, Karnek, Žužemberk, Suha krajina, Ribnica and Kočevje. In these districts they have burned everything and, there is no doubt, took the inhabitants and cattle. [...] poor people had barely gathered in the harvest and were just ready to start the threshing. Grain, hay and strewing, all is burned so that [...] they don't have anything to eat.

Concerning the other Turks, they are camping with main troops near Bela cerkev. By burning and robbing, they are doing such damage that it is sad to even write about it. Šentjernej in the field, Hmeljnik, Novo mesto, Prežek, Kostanjevica, Otočec and Mehovo, all these districts have been burned and devastated. [...] The whole country, from the districts to Ljubljana, is burnt and devastated. We are expecting them here any moment. Let God with his grace avert them!

Gestrin, Kos, Melik, pp.51-52.



What were the direct and the indirect consequences of the Ottoman raid in Slovenia? Assess which of them was more harmful to the local population.

► **v2. The Ottoman army winning the battle of Mohacs (1526) - Ottoman miniature (c. 1588)**



Lewis, p.285.



How are the Hungarians represented? Identify Süleyman I. Compare this representation of the Sultan with the image v1. How are the Janissary troops armed?

► **v3. Captured inhabitants of Belgrade (1521)**



Samardžić, pp.128-129.



Does the drawing reflect the feelings of the prisoners? Write a short description of the situation in response to the picture. Compare your own text with text I-11.

I-11. Christian prisoners in Bosnia (1530)

First of all, Lower Bosnia is very mountainous, with large forests all around and, apart from a small amount of land; it is poorly cultivated simply because the Croats and others often ravage it. While it was owned by Christians, the authorities didn't allow it to be cultivated. But since the Turks conquered it, the great part of Lower Bosnia has been cultivated. [...]

That very night, a few hours after us, the Turks came to the village of Kruscica [Middle Bosnia] where we were spending the night. They were leading about twenty poor and miserable Christian children, boys and girls, whom they had captured seven days earlier. During the night, before our departure,

they gave them to Usref-Bey, Pasha of Vrhbosna²¹ (as many as belonged to him). Oh, miserable slavery of Babylon! [...]

How many times have we been looking at them, standing in front of us with their hands crushed, their eyes glancing towards the sky, sighing, and not allowed to talk to us? When one of them found himself alone with us, he would say: "How we were looking forward to be freed by Christ's help! We would gladly move into your country, out of this tyranny. We have lost hope after seeing that even you bow to the Turkish Emperor and ask him for peace".

We replied with compassion and comforted them with the hope of a better fate. Please, God, make all those whose hearts can't be touched by Turkish violence, see it! Then they would really have

pity over those people whom we consider truthful Christians and who, in spite of indescribable misfortune and great violence, have remained loyal to their Christian faith.

Kuripesic, pp.17-23.



Benedikt Kuripesic travelled through Bosnia and other Ottoman provinces to Istanbul as the translator to a Habsburg embassy.



What were the economic effects of the Ottoman conquest in Lower Bosnia? Compare this situation with the devastation in Slovenia. Try to figure out the causes of these differences.

Ic. The fall of Constantinople/the conquest of Istanbul (1453)

I-12. A Byzantine perspective on the fall of Constantinople – George Sphrantzes

On April 4 of the same year [1453], the Sultan returned and laid siege to the City with all sorts of engines and stratagems by land and sea. He surrounded the entire 18 miles of the City with 400 small and large vessels from the sea and with 200,000 men on the land. In spite of the great size of our City, our defenders amounted to 4,773 Greeks, as well as about 200 foreigners.

[...] On Tuesday May 29 [1453], early in the day, the Sultan took possession of our City; at this time of capture my late master and Emperor, Lord Constantine²², was killed.

[...] I was taken prisoner and suffered the evils of wretched slavery. Finally I was ransomed on September 1, 6962 [1453], and left for Mistra²³. My wife and children had passed into the possession of some el-

derly Turks, who did not treat them badly. Then they were sold to the Sultan's *Mirahor*²⁴, who amassed a great fortune by selling many other beautiful noble ladies.

[...] Perhaps one would like to know of the Emperor's preparations before the siege, while the Sultan was gathering his forces, and of the aid that we received from the Christians abroad.

No aid whatsoever was dispatched by other Christians [...]

The Emperor consented to have the Pope's name commemorated in our services by necessity, as we hoped to receive some aid [...]. Six months later we had received as much aid from Rome as had been sent to us by the Sultan of Cairo.

Sphrantzes, pp.69-72.



Georgios Sphrantzes was a late Byzantine high dignitary, and was, for a time, Chancellor. After being ransomed, he became a monk and wrote a chronicle, which is one of the main sources on the fall of Constantinople. In his effort to justify the late Byzantine

²¹ Vrhbosna was a medieval city (*civitas Vrhbosna*) in the region of Sarajevo.

²² Constantine XI Paleologus, last Byzantine Emperor (1449-1453).

²³ Mistras was the capital of the Byzantine Principality of Morea, which was occupied by the Ottomans only in 1460.

²⁴ Ottoman dignitary, Master of the Imperial Stable.

policies, Sphrantzes blames the Catholics for not having helped Byzantium, omitting the fact that after the religious union of Florence (1439), the Pope had managed to organise several crusader expeditions against the Ottomans. However, it is true that after the crushing defeats of Varna (1444) and Kosovo (1448), the efforts to oust the Ottomans from Europe and to rescue Byzantium were discontinued, and in the moment of the final Ottoman assault, Constantinople received only very little help.



What was the fate of the Byzantine survivors after the fall of Constantinople? Did slavery eliminate the benefits of coming from a noble and rich family?

Do you think that another policy might have saved Constantinople from Ottoman conquest?

I–13. The repopulation of Istanbul under Mehmed II

The newly-arrived people were given houses. Istanbul began to prosper. Then they made these people liable to a *mukataa*²⁵. This was difficult for them to accept. They said “You exiled us from our place/property [*mülk*]. Did you bring us to pay rent for these houses of infidels?”. Some fled, leaving their wives and children. Sultan Mehmed had a slave named Kula Şahin, who he inherited from his father and who had once been a Vizier. He said “My majestic Sultan! Your ancestors have conquered so many places. They never installed a *mukataa*. It is becoming of you not to install one”. The Sultan heeded these words. He cancelled the *mukataa*. He issued an edict saying that whoever was given a house should keep it as his property. They gave documents to people to the effect that the houses were their property. The city began to prosper once more. People began to build mosques, complexes, and houses. The city began to develop. Then the Sultan had a Vizier who was an infidel’s son. He became very close to the Sultan. The old infidels of Istanbul were the friends

²⁵ Generally, *mukataa* means farm tax. In this particular case, it means that these colonists had to pay rent for the houses they had moved to.

of this Vizier’s father. They entered his presence saying “Hey! What are you doing? These Turks made this city prosperous once again. Where is your zeal? They captured the country which belonged to your father and us. They own and use it before our very eyes. Now, you are a companion of the Sultan. Do something to prevent these people from developing the city. The city should be in our hands as was the case before”. The Vizier said “let us institute the *mukataa* once more. These people should abstain from building properties. The city should remain in a ruined state. It should be in the hands of our people”. This Vizier influenced the Sultan’s heart. The *mukataa* was re-instituted. One of these conspiring infidels was given a pseudo-Muslim slave as companion. They kept the records in accordance with whatever this conspiring infidel said.

Question: Who is this Vizier?

Answer: He is Mehmed Paşa, the Greek²⁶. Later on, the Sultan had him strangled as if he were a dog.

Aşıkpaşa-zâde, p.193.



After conquering Constantinople in 1453, Mehmed II tried to rebuild it in order to have a capital city worthy of his empire. His urban development scheme included the Topkapı Palace, several mosques and various other public buildings. A major aspect was the repopulation of the city. In order to achieve this goal, he combined the forced colonisation of townspeople from the territories he conquered and the attraction of voluntary colonists from the whole empire. The chronicle of Aşıkpaşa-zâde describes some of the tensions generated by this policy and also reflects the resentment of the Turkish aristocracy against the rise of dignitaries selected from slaves (*ku*) of the Sultan, often Christians recently converted to Islam.

²⁶ Mehmed Paşa was Grand Vizier from 1467 to 1470. ‘Rum’ was the original Turkish work for ‘Greek’.

Id. Population and religion changes

I-14. Forced transfer of population [*sürgün*] from Asia Minor to the Balkans (late 14th century)

According to tradition, there were nomadic households [*göçer evler*] in the province of Saruhan²⁷, which were used to the winter in the plain of Menemen. A salt monopoly was in force in those climes. They did not abide by this monopoly. Word was sent to the Sultan. Bayezid Han²⁸ then sent word to his son Ertuğrul, telling him to bring all nomadic households in the plain of Menemen firmly under control and to have his servants [*kul, kullar*] escort all of them to the plain of Filibe [Plovdiv]. Ertuğrul, abiding strictly by his father's orders, sent without fail, all the nomadic households to the plain of Filibe. They brought them there and made them settle around Filibe. Today they inhabit most of the land around Filibe.

Neşrî, p.339.



Did the Turkish nomads from Menemen have any choice about moving to the Balkans?

What do you think were the consequences of the Ottoman conquest for the Turkish population of Anatolia?

I-15. Ottoman promises made for Bosnian peasants – letter of King Stjepan Tomasevic (1461-1463) to Pope Pius II

The Turks have built several fortresses in my kingdom and are very kind to the country folk. They promise freedom to every peasant who converts to Islam. The simple peasant mind cannot see through such shrewd cunning and believes that this freedom will last forever.

Andrić, p.15.

²⁷ Province in Western Asia Minor. In the 14th century it had been a separate Turkish principality incorporated by the Ottomans in 1390, at the beginning of Bayezid's rule.

²⁸ Bayezid I 'the Thunderbolt' (1389-1402).

I-16. Ioasaph, Orthodox bishop of Vidin, about enforced and voluntary Islamisation (15th century)

Oh, the shame! Many went over to the disgraceful faith of Mohammad: some taken by fear, others softened by flattery or won over by material gain and still others joined the enemies lured into their foolishness by letters and cunning.

Bulgarska, p. 206.

I-17. Kadi registration of the conversion to Islam of a young boy without a father (1636)

Zimmi Totodori, youth of about 10 years old, from Orta Koy village of Lefkoşa *kaza* [said]: Now I have left the false religion and have been honoured with Islam. He takes the name Mustafa.

Jennings 1993, p.139.



Generally, people were nominated in the registers with their given name and their father's name ("X son of Y"). The fact that, in the case of Totodori, there is no mention of his father indicates that he was probably an illegitimate child.

I-18. Petition of a young man wanting to convert to Islam (1712)

Your Majesty, my great and graceful Sultan! I wish you health!

I, Your slave, am a poor man from the region of Russe. In my native place I felt the wish in myself to become a Muslim and therefore I came to You. My plea is to be granted the honour, in Your personal presence, to accept the faith of Islam. Be so good as to give me a change of clothes and something to live by. I kindly ask for your order. The order is in the power of Your Majesty, my brilliant Sultan.

Your slave Abdullah.

Osmanski, p.160.



List the possible motives of Christians to convert to Islam in the Ottoman Empire. Look also at texts III-13 and IV-30.

Do you think the similarities between the two religions may have facilitated the conversions?

Connect this to the source of God's punishment

of the Christians. Could it be possible that the sense of guilt and God's punishment facilitated the conversions?

What were the overall effects of the Ottoman conquest on the ethnic and religious structure of South East Europe?

The Institutions of the Ottoman Empire

The process of conquest changed the nature of the Ottoman state-formation. What had begun as a tribal chiefdom ended up as a world-empire. From an Ottoman perspective, larger territories required new ways and means to control, administer and exploit them. These ways and means were inspired mainly by the Islamic political tradition, transmitted by the *ulema* (Muslim scholars and legal experts), but also by Mongol and Byzantine practices and by practical experience.

In many ways, the Ottoman State and its institutions were hybrid entities. A strong allegiance to Islam was combined with the need to integrate various non-Muslim subjects and to cooperate with their religious leaders in order to secure the smooth functioning of the Ottoman domain. The ideology of the supreme power of the Sultan contrasted with the limited practical capacity of the central power to permeate space and social structures. In spite of the imprecise and changing nature of succession rules, the dynasty of Osman remained unchallenged for more than six centuries. The divide between a private and a public sphere was crucial in the organisation of the Ottoman palace. The military system combined medieval features (warriors fighting for religious ideals, for booty or for revenues assigned to them through a fief-system designed to make use of insufficiently mobile economic resources) with early modern features (a cash-based, salaried standing army; quite significantly, this army merged the medieval Islamic institution of slave guards of the monarch with an original system of recruitment [*devshirme*], which turned young non-Muslim subjects into a privileged social group, proud of their special *kapıkulu*²⁹ [slaves of the (Imperial) Gate] status). In the provinces, the authority of the military governors was balanced by the concrete administration of judges [*kadı*], recruited among the *ulema*, and by the practical self-government of many local communities. The establishment of common institutions throughout the empire did not put an end to provincial differences and particularities. Direct Ottoman rule co-existed with the institution of Christian vassal-states. For some of these States, the tribute-paying status proved to be only a preliminary phase before their full annexation, while for others, it proved to be a lasting solution.

The Ottoman Empire was an Islamic State. Thus, it relied heavily on Muslim Law (*Sharia*). Based on the Koran and on the Tradition (*sunna*, composed from stories which recollected the way the Prophet Muhammad had acted on various occasions), Muslim Law had been developed during the Middle Ages and also later by various scholars (*ulema*). Although this continuous reinterpretation conferred to the *Sharia* some adaptability, the Ottomans preferred to add to it laws and regulations edicted directly by the Sultan, on the basis of his sovereign power. Unlike modern law, these laws and regulations, forming Sultan Law (*kanun*, word originating from the Greek *kanon*), did not come in the form of systematic deductions from higher principles. Instead they were mostly compilations and reformulations of customary law, as a result of which they also incorporated pre-Ottoman provincial customs. Although, theoretically, the power of the Ottoman Sultan was undisputed, the Sultan Law was supposed to conform to the higher principles of the *Sharia*, and the most high-ranking Muslim scholar in the Empire, the *şeyh-ül-Islam*, had to certify this conformity for each law, regulation or order of the Sultan.

Although the official ideology insisted on political stability and tradition, the Ottoman political system was not, in fact, immune to changes in time. The nature of this change is highly controversial. Some historians consider that the changes which occurred mainly after the end of 16th century represented a decline from the

²⁹ *Kapıkulu* literally means "slaves of the (Imperial) Gate". This included not only the Janissaries, but also other 'six regiments' of *kapıkulu* troops and the various personnel in the Palace.

almost perfect organisation of the so-called “classical age”. Others argue that the changes represented an adaptation to the challenges of the early modern age, and were comparable to modern state-formation in other parts of Europe or Asia. Unfortunately, the limits of this Teaching Pack do not allow us to shed light on all aspects of Ottoman political change. It is nevertheless important to remember that the Ottoman institutions were not static, but dynamic entities.

The sources included in this chapter provide glimpses into the complex nature of Ottoman political institutions. Generally, the sources present differing and even conflicting perspectives on the same issue. They are intended to enhance the ability of pupils to analyse the complex nature of political rule.

Ila. The Sultan and the Palace

II-1. Title used by Süleyman in his correspondence with Ferdinand I (1562)

The Padishah and Sultan of the White [Mediterranean] Sea and the Black Sea, of Ka’aba the Esteemed and Medina the Illuminated, of Jerusalem the Sacred, of the Throne of Egypt, the most precious of our era, of the provinces of Yemen and Aden and San’a, of Baghdad the Abode of Peace, and Basra, and Lahsa, of the cities of Anushirvan³⁰, of the lands of Algiers and Azerbaijan, of the land of the Golden Horde and the land of Tartary, of Diyarbekir and Kurdistan and Luristan, and of all Rumelia and Anatolia and Karamania and Wallachia and Moldavia and Hungary, and apart from these, of many other great and esteemed countries and lands [...]

Bayerle, pp.46-47.



Locate the territories listed in the title of Süleyman on the map. Find out which is missing.

What message does a ruler send out by using such a title?

II-2. The qualities of the ideal ruler as represented in a poem dedicated by Celâlzâde to Sultan Selim II (1566-1574)

He who desires to be a good King
Should have a stone for a pillow

³⁰ The old Persian capital of Ctesiphon, in present-day Iraq.

Let him give up his comfort, let him give up drinking
Let him have no friendship with the undeserving

May the ignorant be away from him
As they say, children have little wisdom

Those who are enamoured of the state
Those who are masters of the high shrine

They should risk their head and their life
They should be eager to fight at any given time

[...]
If and when you are the Sultan of the world, clean
and complete
Never send a smile to the face of the effeminate

Lend an ear to a truthful word if you are intelligent
Receive and accept it if you are really modest
[ehl-i dil]

A real man is one whose views are ripe and
moderate
There is no jealousy, revenge or fury in his heart

Let the good-doer fear God, our deity, all the time
Let his eyes see the difference between the head
and the tail

May he forgive the mistake and blunder or simple
fail
May he see God Almighty in his readiness every-
where

Let him not to be a miser, let him not to be greedy
Let him be merciful even to an offending party

May he always hand out justice in line with the
Sharia

May he know the truth [or: God; *Hak*], may he dispel
tyranny

A man without knowledge is no real man indeed
There is no real blood in the veins of the stupid [...]

If it were not for the body of Sultan Selim,
This generous King, this source of happiness

The enemy would have occupied the country from
one end to the other
God would not have helped us, he would not have
granted us conquest either.

Celâlîzâde, pp.77-78.



Advice to the ruler was a literary genre used extensively in the medieval and early modern world. Displaying the image of the ideal ruler was a means to create a framework of ideological expectations limiting the behaviour of theoretically sovereign monarchs. This becomes particularly obvious if we consider that this poem was dedicated to Selim II, a drunkard who rarely cared about state affairs.



Summarize the qualities assigned by Celâlîzâde to the ideal ruler. Which do you consider to be the most important?

Considering what you know about the real Selim II, try to figure out what the intention of the poet was and what he really thought. Was he being ironic (because the quoted features of an ideal ruler are almost saint-like) or narrow-minded in his devotion?

II-3. Mixed attitudes towards the imperial fratricide – the chronicle of Mehmed Neshri about the execution of Mustafa the Little (1422)

His³¹ kid brother, known as Mustafa the Little, whose

³¹ Murad II (1421-1451).

father³² had given him the land Hamid³³ and who had been adopted by the Princes from Germiyan³⁴, was provoked by some ill-fated people. The Princes Germiyan and Karaman³⁵ gave him soldiers and he marched against Bursa. [...] When Sultan Murad was sent the news, his generals sent a message to Şarabdar İlyas³⁶ informing him that the Sultan had appointed him Governor General of Anatolia. They even sent him a diploma. They told him to divert the boy until their arrival. Şarabdar İlyas opted for treason, accepted their message and stayed put [...]. Sultan Murad rode in great urgency and reached İznik on the ninth day after having left Edirne. [...] While a battle was going on, İlyas Bey grabbed the boy from the saddle of his horse. The boy said “Hey tutor [*İala*] why do you keep me like that?”. İlyas said “I am going to take you to your brother, Murad Han”. Mustafa the Little said “You are a cruel traitor. Do not take me to my brother. He is going to kill me”. İlyas Bey did not seem to hear him, he bowed his head and turned the boy in. The Chief Constable Mezid Bey took the boy, made him sit on a great war drum and kissed him respectfully. Then he took him to Murad Han. Murad Han immediately told them to finish his business. They took the boy from Mezid, there was a big fig tree just outside İznik, and under this tree they drowned him in water. After they implemented this order, they sent him to Bursa to be buried next to his father. The townsfolk of Bursa met them. They took the corpse and buried it in accordance with the religious law. Then they questioned Şarabdar İlyas: “Why did you do that?” He replied: “In appearance, I am a traitor. In reality, I did the right thing. If I had allowed them, these two armies would have fought and harmed this country. Personal harm is to be preferred to a general one. It is also an old custom. It was not I who did it”. After this, he had no prestige left among the lords.

Neşrî, II, pp.567-573.

³² Mehmed I (1403-1421).

³³ Ottoman province in southern Asia Minor.

³⁴ Principality, then Ottoman province in central Asia Minor.

³⁵ Turkish principality in southern Asia Minor, the main Anatolian rival of the Ottomans up to its annexation in 1468.

³⁶ Tutor of Mustafa the Little.



Neshri wrote his chronicle in the late 15th century, during the reign of Bayezid II (1481-1512), when the practice of imperial fratricide had been transformed into a legal requirement by Mehmed II, who demanded that each Sultan kill his brethren during his accession to the throne in order to secure the internal peace of the empire. Neshri's narrative about the killing of Mustafa the Little, presents both the official argument and the fact that a significant part of Ottoman society disapproved of this practice. This disapproval finally led

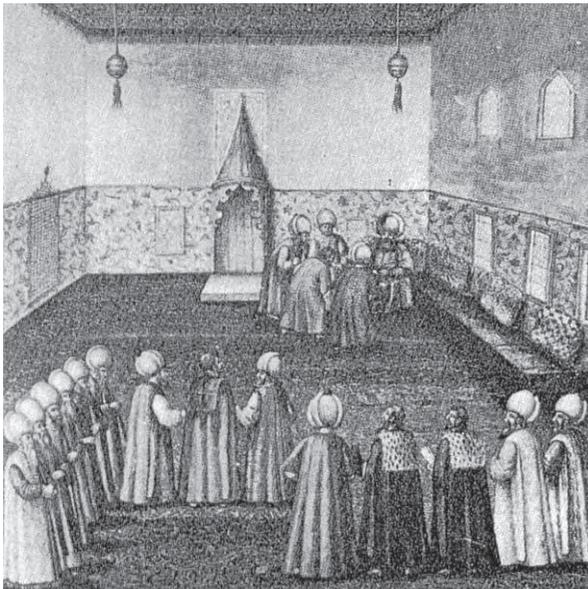
to the abandonment of imperial fratricide at the beginning of the 17th century (the last documented case being the accession to the throne of Mehmed III in 1595).



Try to figure out why the executioners chose this particular way of killing the young Prince.

Besides the quoted justification of Şarabdar İlyas, are there indications of any other possible motives for his conduct in the text?

v4. Imperial ambassador in audience with the Ottoman Sultan



Inalcik 1973, ill.12.



What kind of information regarding 17th century Ottoman history and civilisation does this image provide us with? Make a list with all the information you can get from the image and then exchange it with a colleague and check the results.

Find an image of an audience with ambassadors at a Western European court (17th century). Compare the images and consider, in particular, the receiving ceremonial, the attitude of the monarch, and the behaviour of the ambassadors and the gestures of the represented figures.

v5. The plan of the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul



Inalcik 1973, ill.3.

Scheme 1: The Palace and Ottoman Central Administration

A. Inner Palace (<i>Enderun</i>) ³⁷	B. Outer Palace (<i>Birun</i>)	C. Imperial Council (<i>divan</i>)
<p>Major divisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ Harem ✿ Privy Chamber (<i>has oda</i>) ✿ Campaign Chamber (<i>seferli oda</i>) ✿ Private Treasury (<i>hazine</i>) ✿ Larder (<i>kiler</i>) <p>Major dignitaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ Aga of the Gate (<i>Kapı agası</i>) ✿ Aga of the Girls (<i>Kızlar agası</i>) ✿ Head of the Privy Chamber (<i>Has oda başı</i>) ✿ Weapons Bearer (<i>Silahdar</i>) ✿ Private Treasurer (<i>Hazinedar</i>) ✿ Cloth Bearer (<i>Çuhadar</i>) ✿ Stirrup Bearer (<i>Rikabdar</i>) 	<p>Major divisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ Palace Troops (<i>kapıkulu</i>)³⁸ ✿ Imperial Kitchen ✿ Imperial Stables <p>Major dignitaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ Aga of the Janissaries ✿ Master of the Standard (<i>Mir alem</i>) ✿ Master of the Stable (<i>Mirahûr</i>) ✿ Head Gatekeeper (<i>Kapıcı başı</i>) ✿ Head of the Imperial Envoys (<i>Çavuş başı</i>) ✿ Head Gardener (<i>Bostancı başı</i>) ✿ Head Falconer (<i>Çakırçı başı</i>) 	<p>Standing members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ Grand Vizier (<i>vizir-i azam</i>) ✿ Viziers³⁹ ✿ Military Judges (<i>kadi'asker</i>) of Anatolia and of Rumelia ✿ Chancellor (<i>nişancı</i>) ✿ Head Treasurer (<i>baş defterdar</i>) ✿ Admiral (<i>kapudan paşa</i>) ✿ Head Clerk (<i>reis-ül-kitab</i>)



Compare the plan of the Palace with the scheme above. Try to identify some of the major services and explain why they are located in these particular areas.

II–4. Accession of Mustafa I to the throne (1617)

23 Zilka'de 1026 [24 November 1617]. When, in accordance with the will of God, the eternal and om-

³⁷ Personal services of the Sultan. Generally located in the Third Court of the Imperial Palace. Besides women, the people serving in the Inner Palace were either young boys (*içoğlan*, pages) or eunuchs.

³⁸ Besides the Janissaries, the *kapıkulu* troops were also comprised of six other elite units.

³⁹ High dignitaries appointed as members of the Imperial Council. Their number varied in time from four to more than ten. The Governor-General (*beylerbeyi*) of Rumelia, and occasionally other Governor Generals, also took part in the Imperial Councils.

nipresent Sultan Ahmed Han departed from ruling over this world, his own Princes were still very young. His brother Sultan Mustafa, on the other hand, had reached adolescence. As a result, he was enthroned on the date indicated above.

But the Viziers, commanders, sheikhs, scholars and other grandees were hesitant about paying homage to the new ruler. Mustafa Aga, the *aga* of the Gate of Felicity [*Darüssaade aghası*], who had wielded great influence in affairs of the state at the time of Sultan Ahmed Han, was once more not lacking in giving to each his due, raising his voice to tell the chief jurisconsult [*sheyh-ül-Islam*] Esat Efendi and the deputy Grand Vizier [*sadaret kaymakamı*] Sofu Mehmed Paşa that Sultan Mustafa Han was not sound of mind and reason, and that his thoughts and acts were not to be trusted. It was maintained, however, that if such a Prince in his young manhood were to be passed over in favour of putting a child on the throne, it would be impossible to prevent popular rumours and gossip, and that there would be many drawbacks to this. It was also said that, in any case, in these times it was Sultan Mustafa who

had a rightful claim to the throne in terms of dynastic descent and that, if this were to be denied, it would incur a strong reaction from the people. It was further argued that his mental disorder was probably the result of his having been imprisoned and not allowed to speak to anyone for a long time, and that if he were to be in contact with people for some time, his mind and reason might be restored. This was how Sultan Mustafa came to be accepted as *padishah* of necessity.

Peçevi, p.337.



The chronicle of Peçevi does not disclose the specific interests of the various political factions, but is valuable for its “public” arguments inside the Ottoman political leadership. Nevertheless, Mustafa I ruled only for a few months. He was replaced in 1618 by his nephew Osman II (1618-1622). After the death of Osman II, killed during a Janissary rebellion, Mustafa I was again brought to the throne for a few months, and removed in favour of Murad IV (1623-1640).



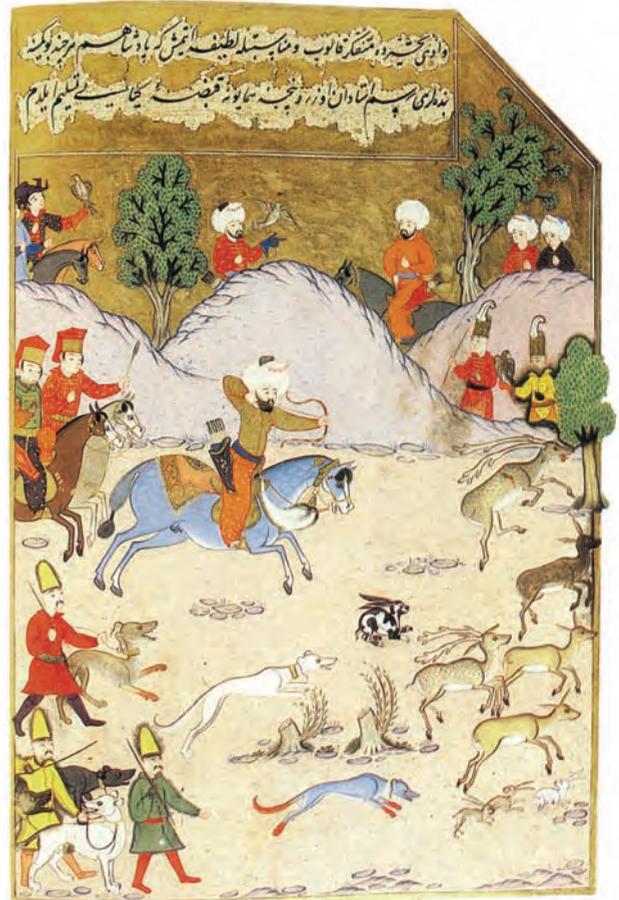
Build up an argument against the accession of Mustafa I.

► **v6. Imperial feast on campaign**



Hegy, Zimanyi, colour ill. 40.

► **v7. Sultan Bayezid II (1481-1512) hunting near Filibe [Plovdiv]**



Hegy, Zimanyi, colour ill. 38.

IIb. The devshirme system

II-5. The devshirme system⁴⁰ described by an ex-Janissary

Whenever they invade a country and conquer the people, the royal scribe immediately comes after them and takes all the boys for Janissaries. He gives five gold coins (*ducats*) for each boy and sends them across the sea to Anatolia, where they are kept. About two thousand such boys are taken away. And if he does not manage to get enough boys from the adversaries, then all the young Christian boys in his country are taken away from each village, setting a quota for each village to get the full number. The boys taken away from his country are called *çilik*. They may leave their property upon their death to whomever they want. But those taken from enemies are called *pencik*. After their death, they may not leave anything and all their property is handed over to the Emperor. However, if someone deserves to be liberated due to good behaviour, then he may freely dispose of his property after his death.

Mihailović, pp.164-165.

40 Original Ottoman system for the recruitment of manpower into the Sultan's service, starting during the 14th century. The system basically consisted of a centrally coordinated levy of young boys from the rural non-Muslim (Christian) subjects of the Ottoman state. These youngsters were then acculturated; i.e. converted to Islam, taught Turkish and trained for various branches of the state service. Most of them were assigned to the *kapıkulu* troops, particularly the Janissaries, but some of them were also selected for service in the Inner or the Outer Palace. During the 15th-16th centuries, a large and often dominant part of the Ottoman political-military elite consisted of former *devshirme*, which was also a means of upward social mobility. Due to increased pressure from the Muslim subjects of the sultan to gain access to military and political careers, the devshirme system was gradually discontinued during the 17th century.

II-6. Christian criticism of the devshirme system in the Life of Georgi Novi of Sofia (1539)

This happened during the reign of the ungodly, unrighteous and vile Turkish King Selim⁴¹. Secretly, with cunning, during the third year of his reign, he sent his messengers and clerks to all of the districts of his many kingdoms and ordered them to go with soldiers to the areas in which there were Christian homes. And if they found three sons in the home of a Christian, they took two of them for the King, leaving the third to his parents. But if a Christian had only one son, they took him with violence for their King. They did all this in obedience with the King's orders; they circumcised them according to the ungodly Sara-cene (Muslim) religion and taught them the deceitful book of Imam. After this, the King gave the order to train them all in military skills – combat instruction and horseriding. The King granted them great honours when they reached maturity and called them Janissaries. And they were so blinded that they behaved disgracefully to even their own parents – their own mother and father – they started killing the Christians in a despicable manner, and in this way, they were worse than the Saracene lot.

Georgieva, Tzanev, pp.126-127.



Compare the indications of sources II-5 and II-6 on the number of youngsters involved in the devshirme system, taking into account that during the period described by the two sources, the Christian population of South East Europe under Ottoman rule numbered at least four million people. Argue why one of the sources distorts the magnitude of the phenomenon.

What were the advantages of the devshirme system for the Ottoman State?

Was there any advantage for a non-Muslim boy to be included in the devshirme?

41 Selim I (1512-1520).

► v8. Children being registered as devshirme



? What kind of information does this picture provide? Who are the characters represented and how are they arranged? Can you work out the meaning of their gestures? Why do you think that there are so many women represented in the visual?

Hegy, Zimanyi, colour ill. 41.

II-7. Lutfi Pasha recollects his career from the time he was levied through the devshirme system

The writer of the treatise is the weakest of God's slaves, Lutfi pasha, son of Abdulmuîn. Through the bounty of the sultans, I, this humble one, was brought up in the Inner Palace from the time of the late Sultan Bâyezid⁴² (whose abode is Paradise). At the threshold of this Ottoman dynasty, I was well disposed towards them for God's sake, and while I was in the Inner Palace, I studied many kinds of science. On the accession of [...] Sultan Selim⁴³, I left the post of custodian of the sultan's outer garments [*çuhadâr*] and entered the Outside Service as a courtier [*müteferrika*] with 50 akçes daily. Then the posts of gate-keeper [*kapıcı*], master of the standard [*mîrâlem*], governor [*sancakbeyi*] of Kastamanu, governor-general [*beylerbeyi*] of Karaman and Ankara and, finally, in the time of our Sultan Süleymân⁴⁴, the posts of vizier and grand vizier were bestowed on me. When I, this humble and imperfect one, left the Palace, I consorted with many scholars [*ulema*], poets and men of culture and sought to the utmost of my abilities to refine my character with the acquisition of the sciences.

Inalcik 1973, p.84



Lutfi Pasha (ca. 1488-1563) was Grand Vizier in 1539-1541. Born in Albania, he was levied through the devshirme system. The successive positions he held in the Sultan's service are typical of the career path of the Sultan's slaves in the 15th-16th centuries (an early career in the Inner Palace allowed one to occupy good positions in the Outer Palace, and then to be sent directly as Governor to the provinces, which was generally a pre-condition for being appointed as Vizier in the Imperial Council). Although Lutfi's personal achievement is outstanding, we should not forget the fact that from the reign of Mehmed II to the end of the 16th century, most of the Grand Viziers were recruited from former devshirme-recruited slaves. Lutfi Pasha is exceptional with respect to his cultural inclinations and to the fact that, after resigning from the position of Grand Vizier, he became a major

42 Bayezid II (1481-1512).

43 Selim I (1512-1520).

44 Süleymân I (1520-1566).

political writer. His narrative is also relevant for the conversion issue: at a certain moment, after the levy of the young Lutfi, his father apparently also converted to Islam.



Look at Scheme 1 and locate the positions held by Lutfi in the Ottoman Central Administration, before being sent to rule various provinces.

What does the case of Lutfi illustrate about Ottoman social mobility? Do you think we can generalise his case?

► v9. Aga of the Janissaries



Hegy, Zimanyi, colour ill. 43.



Describe the dress of the characters. Do you think that clothing played a special social role in the Ottoman Empire?

IIc. The timar system

II-8. Ottoman rules regulating the distribution of timars

The revenues these provide are termed “the fruits of war” [*mâl-i mukatele*]. This means that such income has been granted in return for fighting against the enemy. [...]

In the case of *timars*, [...] [these] are of two kinds. One is termed ‘referred-and-approved’ [*tezkirelü*], and the other is termed ‘unreferred’ [*tezkiresüz*]. There is a usage behind these terms of ‘referred-and-approved’ and ‘unreferred’: there being a certain size [or amount] that each and every Governor-General [*beylerbey*] may grant on the basis of his own charter [*berat*], above which he writes a certification [*tezkire*] of referral, with the charter then being issued at the Imperial Court [Istanbul], these designations of ‘referred-and-approved’ and ‘unreferred’ have arisen.

Hezarfen, p.139.



Which kind of timar was bigger: the ‘referred-and-approved’ or the ‘unreferred’? Argue in favour of your choice.

II-9. List of revenues to be collected as timar by a sipahi

Forty male heads of peasant households [*kırk nefer reaya*], and three holdings [*zemin*], and the village of Ardiç Ağıl, the registered revenues of which comprise its collections of grain tithe [*öşür*], fodder tax [*salâriyye*], wheat tax [*resm-i gendüm*], land tax [*resmi çift*], the land tax for peasants having small plots [*resm-i bennâk*], the dues for landless bachelors [*resm-i cebe = resm-i caba*] as well as vineyard tithes [*öşür-i bağ*], which come to five thousand akçe all told, as written down in the Comprehensive Book [*defter-i mufassal*] in the personal hand of the surveyor, and with the Abridged Book [*defter-i icmâl*] indicating three thousand akçe of this amount to be allocated elsewhere...

Barkan, pp.771-772.



Why did the state register in detail the revenues of the timar-holders?

II-10. Re-appointment for a medium-to-large timar-holder

Mustafa bin Ahmed *çavuş*, who was dismissed from a 15,100 akçe *timar* in Kayseri: is now given the following: 1600 akçe *timar* at Endirlik and other villages of Cebel Erciş district [*nahiye*]; 2000 akçe *timar* at Gaziler hamlet [*mezra'a*] and other places of the Koramaz district, formerly held by the late Abdul-Kerim; 2000 akçe *timar* from the revenues [*mahsul*] of the *boza*-works [*boza hane*] in the city of Kayseri, which belonged to Abdul-Kerim; 800 akçe *timar* at a village of the Kenar-ı ırmak district; 3000 akçe *timar* at İstefana and other villages of Cebel Erciş; and several other small holdings etc; to total 15,100 akçe.

Jennings 1972, p.212.



Argue why the sources of revenue included in the larger timar are scattered?

II-11. Rulings on timar-holders not going on campaign (1635)

2500 akçe *timar* at Kostere district [*nahiye*] is vacant [*mahlûl*] because Süleyman did not go on the Revan [Erivan] campaign this year. He missed both his duty [*hidmet*, *hizmet*] and the inspection [*yoklama*]. On account of a laudatory letter from the Niğde banner-commander [*alaybey*] Musa, it was given to Mahmud, who had a nomination decree [*berat*] for a 3000 akçe *timar*. A certificate [*tezkere*] was sent to the Karaman Governor-General [*beylerbey*] Ibrahim bey to complete the timar.

Derviş Mehmed, who possessed [was the *mutasarrif* for] a 3000 akçe *timar* at Sahra district, did not go to Erivan. Mahmud *çavuş* took possession of his *timar*, but then he did not help during the campaign so the *timar* is vacant again. It is given to Hamze, transferred [*tahvil*] from Mehmed, in accor-

dance with a certificate of the Karaman Governor-General Hasan. [dated] 1 Zil-kade 1025 from Ereğli.

Jennings 1972, p.212.



In the late 16th century and in the 17th century, wars against Austria and Iran became more difficult, and the huge distances implied that the timar-holders often didn't have enough time to return to collect their revenues and to keep control of their fiefs. Therefore, many timar-holders did not go to war, which, according to the rules, led the authorities to withdraw the timars and to punish the disobedient.



What means were used to ensure that the timar-holders would serve as expected?

Compare the Ottoman timar system with the feudal system.



Describe the weapons and the equipment of the Sipahi.

Compare this image with images of other European cavalries of the 16th century. Compare and contrast.

If we had not provided an explanation for the image, what would you have thought of it? What helps you label these men as Ottoman soldiers?

► v10. Armed sipahi



Inalcik 1973, ill.25.

IId. Ideology of protecting the subjects and practices of justice administration

II-12. Recommendations of Murad I when nominating Evrenos Bey as Governor (1386)

[...] Take and remember this advice:

You must know that the places of the province Rumelia⁴⁵ are far from each other. For their government, the satisfaction of their needs and the maintenance of order, you will surely need many people of sword and pen. Ensure that you do not reach for the fortune of your people. [...] The one who closes

⁴⁵ Literally "land of the Greeks" (*Rum ili*). In Ottoman texts of the 14th-15th centuries, this name designated the European part of the Ottoman Empire, ruled by a Governor-General (*beylerbeyi*). After the 16th century conquests, the Ottomans also organised other administrative units in Europe, but the province of Rumelia continued to include most of the Balkan Peninsula.

his eyes for the faith on this world forgets the fear of God. Do not interfere with these matters. Do not rely on anybody, and do not open up to anyone. Many can be seen fasting during the day and up on their feet during the night, even though they bow down to idols. Beware of such people. Do not get fooled by external appearances...

And when you would like to put somebody in your place, do not rely on what you know of him from before. He might have changed, because the body of the son of man changes from one condition to another... According to this, turn both your eye and ear to the man you authorise for a job. See if his actual state corresponds to the previous one, and measure his words according to this. Let no one be offended.

Listen too to this advice:

If the deputies that you appoint in the interior of the land are diligent, the condition of the subjects [*reaya*] will be good [...]. Order everybody to consider the Moslems in his parts, as his brothers. And let them hold the subjects lightly. Let there be no harm done on them and no interference. Let them remember that there will be a day when the lists of deeds done in the past will fall like snow, judgment day. Let them care about poverty. Let them prepare for life. The poor are dear to God. He will take on himself the poverty of the poor ones. He will not look at those who have a worldly fortune...

Be especially respectful in regard to the famous, among the learned ones Elvana Fekiha – may his knowledge increase! – who has been appointed as Sheikh-ul-Islam of all Rumelia. And take care of your priests, the heirs of the Prophet's descendents. Give them full love and mercy, respect them and protect them...

Open the door for rewards and gifts to the spahis. Beware of giving away and of keeping tight. Do not get in the way of the spahis' appointments; don't accept anything from them in return for their condition. Do not show power when taking. Work carefully. Do not praise your bravery and courage, but keep your sword sharp. Feed your horse. Do not stop showing your wealth and giving gifts. Also do not get upset if the income of the land you took by your sword makes you say: "They are not enough for my expenses!" In case of need, write to us here. We will not restrain ourselves from giving what we have here. As much as possible will be sent. [...]

Written in the blessed month of Sheval, in the year 788 [1386].

Odbrani, I, pp.187-189.



What is the hidden meaning of the advice: "feed your horse"? What role does religion play in Murad's recommendations?

Whom is Evrenos supposed to fear and why?

What do you think about the Sultan's advice? Was it of practical use in the life of an Ottoman governor?

Which of the general recommendations might also be helpful in a pupil's life today?

II-13. Ferman of Mehmed I issued in favour of the monks from Margarit monastery in the region of Serres (1419)

This is the Emperor's will and the reason for giving out this happy order – let God Almighty allow it to last until the end of time – it is the following:

My deceased grandfather and father had deigned to give out orders concerning the owners of the sacred document, the monks from Margarit monastery. They had been declared unquestionable and their real estate, consisting of vineyards, water mills, vakifs, including villages, lands, orchards and houses, were exempted [from taxes]. The houses and sheep of the subjects [*reaya*] in Zuhna had also been exempted from taxes.

So, according to their orders, I also declared their property unquestionable and gave out this sacred order. All the monks are exempted from the *harac* [lump tax for the community]. They are allowed to own the above-mentioned estates as they did in the past. On the whole, this order should be applied to everything they owned during My grandfather and My father's time including what they own today.

Nobody is allowed in their way, to oppose them or to disturb them; changes are not allowed either. They [the monks] are exempted from being couriers, from doing statute labour and from all additional taxes.

Todorova, p.49.



Discuss why the monks of Margarit asked for a new privilege from Mehmed I, even though they already benefited from past privileges from Murad I and Bayezid I.

II-14. Ruling of the kadi in a conflict between a Christian and a Janissary (Sofia, 1618)

This is to certify that the non-Muslim Iliya, inhabitant of the town of Sofia, Banishor neighbourhood [*mahalle*], appeared before the shariat court and gave a subpoena to the Janissary Osman beşe, who was living in the same neighbourhood. In his presence, he declared:

“This man, Osman beşe, keeps my wife Petkana in his house and does not want to give her back to me although I have asked him to. He also tries to persuade her to get a divorce. In this way he has been hiding her in his house without marrying her. I plead to the court to question the defendant on this matter and to take note of his answers.”

After this Iliya’s declaration, the above-mentioned Osman was asked by the court [to give his opinion about the claim]. In his answer, he confessed that the claimant was telling the truth, brought the above-mentioned non-Muslim Petkana to the court and gave her back to her husband Iliya.

Turski Izvori, 2, p.119.



What can you conclude about the position of women in this society? Why didn’t they ask Petkana about the case? What do you think she would have said had she been asked to choose?

Was the theory of protecting the subjects [reaya] mere rhetoric?

II-15. Ruling of the kadi in a conflict between a Muslim and a Christian (Vidin, 1700)

Ivan, son of Nikola from the town of Vidin, in the neighbourhood of Karaman, appeared before the holy court in the presence of the barber Usta Yumer, son of Ali. He brought a lawsuit against him for the following reason:

Ivan had inherited a vineyard of $\frac{3}{4}$ acres in the area of Kozlovets, bordering the vineyards of Manush, Yovan the baker, Nikola and the state road. The above-mentioned Yumer has misappropriated it.

During the interrogations, Yumer declared that some time ago, he had bought the vineyard in question, for 15 gurush⁴⁶ from a state employee as ownerless property. After the death of its former owner,

⁴⁶ Gurush – Ottoman name for large silver coins (thalers). After having used gurush issued in various European countries, the Ottomans began to issue their own gurush in the late 17th century, and it became a money of account, equal to 40 para and 120 akçe.

Ivan Simitchiyata, who died without leaving any heirs, the vineyard became state property.

Nikola objected that what Yumer had said was not true and he called two witnesses, who confirmed that the vineyard really belonged to him.

After that, the court asked the defendant to call witnesses who would confirm his testimony, and fixed him a deadline. As Yumer was not able to find such witnesses within the fixed time, the court suggested that he declare under oath that he had really bought the vineyard as ownerless property. Yumer agreed and took an oath in the name of God. On this basis, the Court forbade Ivan to continue any legal proceedings on the vineyard.

Georgieva, Tzanev, p.293.



If you had been the kadi, what would your decision in this case have been?

Did the kadi really believe Yumer’s oath or was it a set-up? What do you know about the practice of oaths in medieval justice?

Did the kadi courts always favour the Muslims against the non-Muslim subjects [reaya]?

Did the kadi courts always provide a fair system of justice? Defend your opinion using the sources above.

II-16. The community of the island of Myconos decides to get rid of the kadi (1710)

1710, September 9, Myconos

We, the undersigned of the community of Myconos, having seen the woes and turmoil our island has suffered from the esteemed master judge who seeks all kinds of ways to blame us, and in view of all this slander and the things he hopes to do to us, we have come together, old and young, clergy and people, along with the entire flock of the church of Our Holy Mother of God, protector of this island, and have deemed it justifiable to send away the above judge in order to put an end to the scandals and trouble. We, the entire community, promise that, should anyone suffer on account of this judge, we will defend and support him in any court. To substantiate this, we will sign our names below.

[Signatures]

Zerlentou, pp.67-68.



Assess the risks faced by the Myconos community when rising against the kadi. What was the opinion of the people of Myconos?

II-17. Sentence against *kocabaşı* Todoraki from Samakocuk (1762)

Ruling for the deputy judge [*naib*] of the district [*nahiye*] of Midye:

Hacı İbrahim having presented himself, and turning out to have the right to collect the poll-tax [*cizye*] for Istanbul and its surrounding subordinate districts, has related how, the district of Midye being part of those subordinate districts, in the village of Samakocuk that is part of Midye district, a certain non-Muslim subject [*zimmi*] by the name of Todoraki, who is the *kocabaşı* for the rightfully protected [non-Muslim] subjects [*reaya*] of the village, gathering more than a hundred and fifty subject men around himself, and saying : “we the subjects of Samako[cuk], are not to be served poll-tax [*cizye*] collection notices, we will not allow you to set foot in our village”, has manifested stubborn opposition, the said Todoraki going so far as to hit the guards accompanying the aforementioned complainant, and persisting in sedition, thereby causing state revenues to be fractionally and incompletely collected. He [Hacı İbrahim], has asked me to issue my Imperial order sentencing the aforementioned subject [*zimmi*] to rowing in the galleys until such time as he should correct himself. Now let this be my written order, that if he should again try to obstruct the said subjects’ payment of their poll-taxes as required by the Holy Law [*shari’a*], let him be forcibly brought to my Imperial Court [i.e. Istanbul] in order to be set to rowing in the galleys for the purpose of ensuring his proper chastisement.

Kal’a, p.177.



Notice that the tax-farmer didn’t complain to the kadi, but directly to the Imperial Council in Istanbul.



What forms of resistance did the people of Samakocuk use against the tax collectors? What was the attitude of the Sultan? Does the sentence leave any opportunities for Todoraki to escape?

II-18. Ottoman charter protecting Bosnian monasteries (1785)

Bujruntija [type of Ottoman charter] of the Pasha

To you, judges from the region of Bosnia, to you, commanders, and to you, tax gatherers: it should be known that the fraternities of three monasteries [Kresevo, Fojnica and Kraljeva Sutjeska] are free of any kind of public tax through the power of this charter and noble fermans that they already have in their possession. You should never allow anyone to mistreat them or disturb them with requests for taxes anywhere, be it in their monasteries or in villages of the region of Bosnia or on the streets and roads. In general, you should never allow anything that is against this charter and other noble fermans. You will protect and defend them in each and every case. You will act according to the contents of this charter [*bujuruldija*] and you will ensure that you do nothing against this charter. These are my orders.

Benic, p.303.



During the late 18th century, when central authority was less effective in the provinces, the subjects often asked for special charters delivered by the provincial authorities.



Compare the extent of the privileges granted in II-13 and II-18.

Ile. Provinces and vassal-states

II–19. Stipulations regarding the status of Ragusa reiterated in an *ahidname* issued by Murad III (1575)

[...] Formerly, because of the obedience, submission, devotion and integrity, shown by the Beys and Rectors of Dubrovnik [Ragusa] in the time of my late glorious forefathers – may God illuminate their proofs [of greatness] – a Charter was given to them.

[...]

They shall send every year, in accordance with the old custom, the twelve thousand five hundred gold coins [*filori*], which they have sent with their envoys in the past to our Court, the seat of glory.

More tribute [*harac*] than the aforementioned 12,500 gold coins shall not be demanded. By my governors [*sancakbeyi*], officers [*subaşı*], fief-holders and, in short, all those who are in the shadow of my power, no harm whatsoever shall be inflicted on their country, dominions, their castles and themselves.

In the same way as their city and country were formerly in safety and protection, so they shall be in safety and protection again.

From the neighbouring countries [everyone], whether foe or friend, whether by land or by sea, may come to their city and go; nobody shall forbid this or interfere.

Their merchants may trade in my [Divinely-] protected Possessions; they may come and go.

Nobody shall interfere with their belongings, beasts and other goods, or cause inconvenience.

Nor shall they demand tax [*bâc*] on the roads.

Biegman, pp.56-57.



What are the obligations of tributary Ragusa? What do you think about the special stipulations regarding trade and merchants? Argue whether they were beneficial for the Ragusans only, or for the Ottomans as well.

47 In the Ottoman practice, an *ahidname* was a charter granted by the sultan to a non-Muslim state with which he had made peace. Such *ahidname* were granted not only to “classic” vassal-states, but also to Venice, Poland etc. For a long time, the

II–20. *Ahidname*⁴⁷ of Ahmed I for Transylvania (1614)

I hereby promise and swear [...] for as long as:

the above-mentioned Prince [*bey*], captains and the other dignitaries from Upper Hungary, are subjects to my Gate of Felicity, from the bottom of their heart, with faith and honour, are friends of my friends and enemies of my enemies; and being in union and agreement with the above-mentioned Bethlen Gabriel⁴⁸, they will endeavour to move off and destroy the enemy who would rise, from any side, against the land of Transylvania, and, for them to prove that they are faithful and in submission, they will send this year, by their own will and everybody’s union, their gifts [*peşkeş*] to my imperial Gate, in accordance with the production and the possibilities of their country.

Then I, in turn, will defend them in any way I can from their enemies. Whenever they may be in need of my help and support, all fortresses and cities, as well as all the territories in their possession, will still remain, from now on, in their hands, and absolutely nobody, no Governor-General [*beylerbey*] or Governor [*bey*] in my command, nor my Commander-in-Chief [*serasker*], will interfere.

And, without altering and changing, in any way, the rite, order, the rules and the religion, as well as the customs they practice for centuries, by letting them be, nobody shall do anything but let them live peacefully under the shadow of justice.

[...] And concerning the country mentioned, we will not ask for taxes higher than they were until now.

Gemil, p.165.



What were the obligations of a vassal-state? Comment on the provision “friends of my friends and enemies of my enemies”.

Ottomans were reluctant to adopt the practice of formal bilateral treaties, issued and signed by both concluding parts. Nevertheless, the provisions of the *ahidname* were generally negotiated by the parties before the issue of the formal document.

48 Prince of Transylvania (1613-1629).

II–21. The autonomy of Moldavia (1716)

The Moldavian Princes were deprived of their right to declare war, make peace, sign treaties and send messengers to the Princes in the neighbouring countries with matters concerning state business. However, they were given their entire freedom and almost the same power they used to have to make laws, to punish the inhabitants, to raise people to the title of boyar⁴⁹ or take their dignity away from them, to impose taxes and even to designate bishops, and other things of the same sort. And this power, the Prince has, extends not only over the dignitaries and citizens of Moldavia, but also over the Turkish merchants and other persons of all conditions, as long as they are in his territory. Their lives are in his hands [...]. All civil and military dignitaries are at his mercy. He gives to the ones dear to himself. He takes from the ones he dislikes. And in this act of giving, the Prince does not have to take into consideration any rule [...]. The Prince has the same power not only over the lower-ranked clergymen, but also over the metropolitan, the bishops, the archimandrites, the abbots [*egumens*] and all members of the church, if they have been unjust, or have done something that could cause damage to the people, or have plotted against the Prince or the state, in which case the Prince can, without any problem and without the consent of the Patriarch in Constantinople, remove them from their seat and their rank in church and also from the priesthood, and even, if the situation calls for it, to punish them with death [...]. Nevertheless, he was not given the same great power over the goods of the inhabitants. It is true that, no matter how high the taxes that he imposed on the country were, nobody could oppose or disobey his orders without being in danger of losing their head. In turn, however, he is obliged by the Ottoman court to report on what he has raised. It is so that, although nobody could judge him, unless he is denounced to the Grand Vizier for shedding the blood of the innocent, he is in greater danger if the entire country complains of high taxes. If he is found

49 'Boyar' meant both nobleman and office-holder.

guilty of this, he is usually punished with exile or with the confiscation of his possessions since only rebellion or the refusal to pay the annual tribute draws on Princes the death penalty. But this prohibition does not have enough power for the people to uphold it. As a matter of fact, if the Prince has tamed the Vizier, as well as the deputy [*kethüda*], the treasurer [*defterdar*] and others who have a special influence on the Emperor, with gifts, he does not have to fear the complaints of the boyars or even of the whole country, since there is no way that a defender, with his hands full of gifts, cannot successfully sustain himself at the Turkish court. Therefore, no matter how hard the Turks' tyranny would be for Moldavia, its Prince can nonetheless do, without fearing anything, whatever he pleases, for no civilian will defy his will without being punished.

Cantemir 1973, pp.127–128.



Dimitrie Cantemir (1673-1723) ruled twice as Prince of Moldavia (1693; 1710-1711), and was forced to flee to Russia after failing in his rebellion against the Ottomans in 1711. Having spent most of his youth in Istanbul, he became one of the leading European scholars on the Ottoman Empire and wrote, among other works, a history of the Ottoman Empire and a treatise on the Muslim religion. His "Description of Moldavia" was written in Latin for a Western audience.



Does Dimitrie Cantemir approve of or criticize the extension of the internal powers of the Moldavian Princes?

Assess the advantages/disadvantages of living in a vassal state instead of a 'normal' Ottoman province for the population of these territories. Try to outline the specific implications for the various social groups.

II–22. French traveller Flachet about the special position of the Wallachian Princes (1741)

I noticed something in Bucharest that seemed very odd to me. Although the Sultan disposes of this

principality at his mercy, the Turks do not have any mosques there and are not under the authority of the Prince. They only recognise the authority of the Sultan's "resident", who is the only one with the right to punish them. However, it is different with the Romanians, Greeks and other Christian people: the voyvoda or "hospodar" of Wallachia can dispose despotically of their life and fortune if his measures and decisions are not impeded by the Sultan, because he totally depends on the latter. Each time he is late with the tribute he owes to the Porte or does not fulfil his duties to the Porte, he has to be prepared to be dethroned and is sometimes in danger of losing his head. He is more a viceroy than a ruler. The voyvoda

Constantin [Mavrocordat]⁵⁰ deserved a better fate; all countries would have been very happy to have him as their ruler.

Călători, IX, p.257.



What were the restrictions for the Ottomans in the vassal-states?

Compare the sources in this section with source I–8.

⁵⁰ Constantin Mavrocordat (b.1711, d.1769) was one of the most outstanding representatives of the Constantinople-based Orthodox elite of Greek culture, the so-called 'Phanariots' of the 18th century. Between 1730 and 1769, he reigned six times in Wallachia and four times in Moldavia. Extremely cultivated, he abolished serfdom and also undertook various other reforms in the spirit of enlightened absolutism.

Scheme 2: Typology of territorial Ottoman rule (16th century)**A. "Core" Ottoman provinces** (*eyalet*; also called *liva* or *vilayet*)

- ❁ ruled by a Governor-General called *beylerbeyi*.
- ❁ generally divided into several *sancaks* (ruled by governors called *sancakbeyi*), formed of several *kaza* (ruled by *kadi*).
- ❁ most of the land was distributed through the fief-system (*timar*)
- ❁ examples: Anatolia, Rumelia, Buda, Cyprus etc.
- ❁ special situation: small regions and communities which enjoyed special privileges or local autonomy (examples: monasteries from Athos and Sinai; several mountain or island communities in Montenegro, Albania, Greece etc.)

B. "Second belt" Ottoman provinces

- ❁ generally *eyalets* ruled by Governor-Generals nominated by the Sultan.
- ❁ most of these provinces were organised according to special financial regulations (*salyane* system; only partially or not at all integrated in the fief-system).
- ❁ examples: Egypt, Bagdad, Basra, Tunisia, Yemen etc.
- ❁ special situation: seldom at *eyelet* level, and more often at *sancak* level, some of these provinces were ruled by hereditary governors (examples: Lahsa; Adana under the Ramazan-oğullari family; several Kurdish *sancaks*; Vidin under the Mihaloğlu family in the 15th-16th centuries etc.)

C. Muslim vassal-states

- ❁ states which recognised the Ottoman suzerainty, but maintained their traditional organisation; nevertheless, the Sultan interfered in the nomination of their rulers
- ❁ generally had strong political, military and/or symbolic significance for the Ottoman Empire, and received various forms of Ottoman financial support.
- ❁ examples: Khanate of Crimea, Sharifate of Mecca etc.
- ❁ special situation: Persia also paid a tribute in the period 1590-1603, but was not enduringly an Ottoman vassal-state.

D. Christian vassal-states

- ❁ states which recognised the Ottoman suzerainty, paid a lump sum as tribute to the Sultan, had to align with Ottoman policy, but maintained their autonomy and traditional Christian institutions (no Muslim/Ottoman law).
- ❁ examples: Ragusa, Wallachia, Moldavia, Transylvania, Georgia, Chios (up to 1566) etc.
- ❁ special situation: some Christian states paid tribute either for just a part of their territories (e.g. Venice for Cyprus 1517-1570; the Habsburgs for Upper Hungary 1533-1593) or as 'protection money' in order not to be raided (e.g. Poland-Lithuania to the Khanate of Crimea and occasionally also to the Ottomans), but maintained their political independence.

Religious institutions, communities and practices

The Ottoman Empire encompassed many people of different religions. Allegiance to Islam was crucial for the legitimacy of both the Sultan and the Ottoman elites, but equally important was the need to find ways to integrate non-Muslim subjects. Besides, religious diversity was significantly higher in South East Europe than in the Middle Eastern or African Ottoman provinces.

This chapter tries to reconstruct the central role of religion in the life of the peoples of South East Europe during Ottoman rule. Religion was crucial in political terms. The divide between Muslim and non-Muslim was paramount in the Ottoman social structure, and the non-Muslim subjects were further segregated along religious lines into an Orthodox, a Jewish and an Armenian community [millet]. Religious institutions were crucial in articulating the interests and needs of these communities. The Orthodox Church enjoyed a special relationship with the Ottoman authorities, but religious leaders of other denominations also cooperated with the Ottoman State. Yet, for most people, religion was less an issue of politics and institutions, and more an issue of faith and communication with God. Religious practices were a central part of life for most people, and the sources included in this chapter try to shed light on some of these practices.

A large number of sources tackle the very controversial issue of Ottoman religious “tolerance”. Many historians have insisted on the Muslim nature of the Ottoman Empire and on the fact that it oppressed Christians on religious grounds. Other historians have argued that, at the same time as religious wars waged in Europe and non-Christians were forced either to convert or to emigrate, the Ottomans were much more tolerant. They allowed non-Muslim subjects to keep their religion and even welcomed religious refugees. While both these opinions contain elements of truth, they also bear clear ideological implications, and excessively simplify historical evidence. The sources included in the final section of this chapter aim to help pupils grasp the complexity of religious co-existence and discrimination in the Ottoman South East Europe, and to put them in comparative perspective.

IIIa. The Muslims

III-1. Inscription over the portal of the Suleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul (mid-16th century)

[Sultan Süleyman] has drawn near to God, the Lord of Majesty and Omnipotence

the Creator of the World of Dominion and Sovereignty,

[Sultan Süleyman] who is His slave, made mighty with Divine Power,

the Caliph, resplendent with Divine Glory,

Who performs the Command of the Hidden

Book

and executes its Decrees in (all) regions of the inhabited quarter:

Conqueror of the Lands of the Orient and the Occident

with the Help of Almighty God and His Victorious Army,

Possessor of the Kingdom of the World, Shadow of God over all Peoples,

Sultan of the Sultan of the Arabs and the Persians,

Promulgator of Sultanic Laws [kanun],

Tenth of the Ottoman Khaqans,

Sultan son of the Sultan, Sultan Süleyman Khan

[...] May the line of his Sultanate endure until the End of the Line of the Ages!

Imber, p.75.



Explain the apparent relationship between God and the Ottoman ruler. Was the ruler (and many other rulers who have claimed to be related to God) a true believer or was he trying to manipulate his subjects? What was the role of the ulema in this case?

III-2. Dimitrie Cantemir on the Muslim prayers

Muhammad ordered public and private prayers five times in the 24 hours [of the day] [...].

They take great care about four things when they perform their prayers: 1. To clean themselves; 2. To say their prayers within the ordered limits of time, because if they are finished before or after the right time, they believe that they will have been said in vain and will be unpleasant to God; 3. To make sure that the place is clean, and, if they have any doubts about the cleanliness of the place, put under their feet either a small carpet or their scarf; 4. To direct their faces to the north-south line which they call *kibla* and which they say aims at the temple in Mecca. [...].

The prayers consist of much bowing, kneeling, touching the soil with one's forehead, rising up and praying. [...]

In the big mosques [*cami*], people do not give their place to anyone, not even to the Sultan. Everyone remains unmoving and untroubled in the place he has initially occupied. And, before the prayers have finished, it is forbidden to speak a single word or to move (O, good Lord, how much more pious they are in this respect than the Christians, and with more zeal in honouring God!), and even to spit or to cough unless the need forces you, and when you spit, you shall use a handkerchief, because it is considered improper to spit or to blow one's nose in a clean place.

On Fridays, which, in the dialect of the *Kuran* is

called *cuma* (which means gathering or reunion day), after the noon prayers in the big mosques (which they call *selatin*), the preachers provide teaching for two or three hours. They explain the text of the *Kuran* on a theme previously chosen. To this they add, speaking beautifully, something moralizing according to the circumstances, and embellish it with figures, tropes and metaphors and other rhetorical images. In times of peace, they add something about the fulfilment of justice, about the care of state administration, about the grace of God and about the prevention of the moves and intention of the enemies. And, if it is in, or just prior to a time of war and campaign, the Sultan orders the preachers to speak more often, showing the people and convincing them that the war against the enemies is waged upon for the order of God and his Prophet, and not for worldly riches, or for special gains, fame and human praise, but only for the expansion of the faith, for the glory of God and for the benefit of the whole Muslim people and others.

Cantemir 1987, pp.289-295.



This fragment originates from Cantemir's treatise on the Muslim religion, written during his exile in Russia (1711-1723). He uses the extensive knowledge of Ottoman society he acquired during the two and more decades he spent in Istanbul before 1710.



What rules did a Muslim have to observe during prayers?

Find an argument supporting the 'democratic' nature of the community of Muslim believers (*umma*).

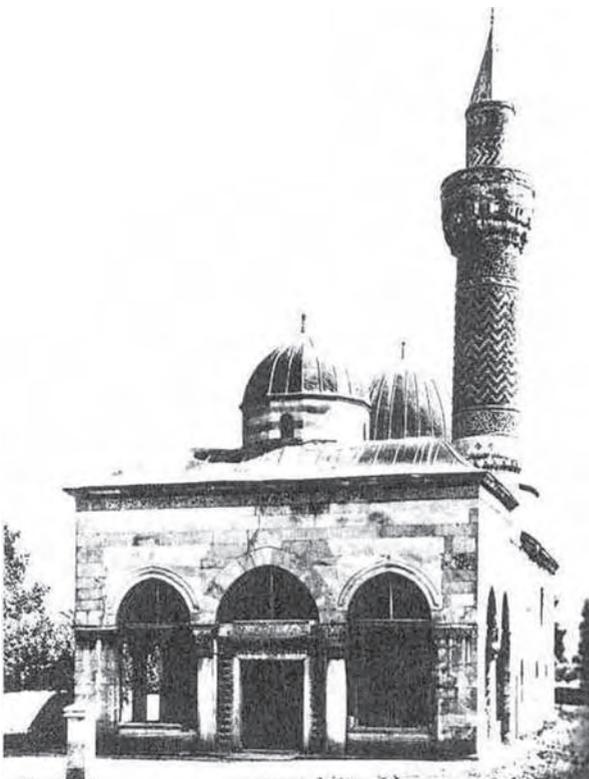
Was the political interference in the religious service justified? Put forward arguments in favour and against this interference. Find examples for such interference in other societies. Does such interference take place in your society?

► **v11. Süleymaniye (Süleyman's mosque) in Istanbul (1550-1557)**



Photograph by Helen Philon

► **v12. 14th century mosque in Iznik (Nicaea)**



Lewis, p.294.



Compare the two mosques. If you had not been provided with chronological indications, how would you have found out which one was older?

III-3. Muslim rationalising the relation between Allah and the rain (1779)

There was no rain for three or four months, so there were massive prayers for rain (such prayers are called *dova*) everywhere in mosques in Sarajevo. But everything has its own reason for Allah does not change His decisions and the high spiritual world is connected with ours. If rain should fall, there is a cause for it, known to astronomers, and prayers for rain are only a symbol of obedience and service to God and not a key reason for rain. If every prayer were to be granted, then the world would collapse, and the secrets would not be revealed to us. But, when the time of rain comes close and someone prays, and the prayer is granted, the person who prayed is called a good man. I, sinful pauper, have heard about one month ago from one astronomer that in one month (which means now) the composition of the constellations will arrive and that the "gate will be open", which means that rain will fall. This was the case. So, some ignorant people started to jump to conclusions, which is all right, but not important, because it will be what Allah wants, no matter whether we want it or not.

Bašeskija, p.235.



Mula Mustafa Bašeskija (1731/1732-1809) spent his whole life in Sarajevo. He was an imam and hatib at the Buzadji haji-Hasan's mosque. Later on, he worked as a scribe (*katib*). Mula Mustafa left a chronicle, an excellent source for the history of the political and everyday life in Sarajevo, Bosnia and neighbouring countries. This text also shows that, in line with the European intellectuals of the 18th century, he was quite critical of the current superstitions. However, this critical attitude did not lead him to question the almightiness of Allah.



What does Mula Mustafa Bašeskija really believe? Does rain have natural or divine causes?

► **v13. Ornamental Koranic inscriptions inside the Eski Cami in Edirne (15th century)**



Hegyi, Zimanyi, colour ill. 90.

► **v14. Turkish lady riding a camel on the pilgrimage to Mekka**



Hegyi, Zimanyi, colour ill. 62.

III-4. Muslim heterodoxy – Bektaşî jokes

A Muslim scholar [hoca] was preaching in a mosque, describing the powers and attributes of God.

– “Allah is neither on the earth nor in the sky, neither to the right nor to the left, and neither above nor in the ocean. In short, he does not have any spatial manifestation, but exists only in the hearts of believers” he said, whereupon a Bektaşî, who was in the audience, could not restrain himself any longer and retorted:

– “O you members of the Community, I plead for your consideration. When I said the other day, that “Allah is not here,” you muttered that I had “turned unbeliever,” whereas, now that the Hoca effendi is saying that Allah does not exist, no one is saying a word.”

A Bektaşî was asked the following: “Why is the world so full of hills and slopes, rocks and mountains? Why is it not flat and smooth everywhere?” “Oh come on, what would you expect of a place that took only six days to create?” was his reply.

Dursun, p.78

 The Bektaşî was a religious brotherhood which claimed to follow the example of Hacı Bektaş Veli, a famous 13th century mystical dervish. While officially closely connected to the Ottoman authorities, and highly influential among the Janissaries, the Bektaşî practiced a mystical (*sufî*) form of Islam, sometimes closer to Shiism than to the official Sunnism of the Ottoman Empire. The Bektaşîs came to represent a particular kind of irreverence for social hierarchies, as well as for conventional rites and rituals – all embodied in innumerable jokes revolving around an archetype of a mostly anonymous Bektaşî *baba* (literally: “father” or “padre”), or sometimes a *dede* (literally: “uncle” or “grandfather”) who is recognized as one of the greatest figures in Turkish humour. As with many other elements of oral tradition, Bektaşî jokes are not easily datable, bearing witness to layer upon layer of social memory.

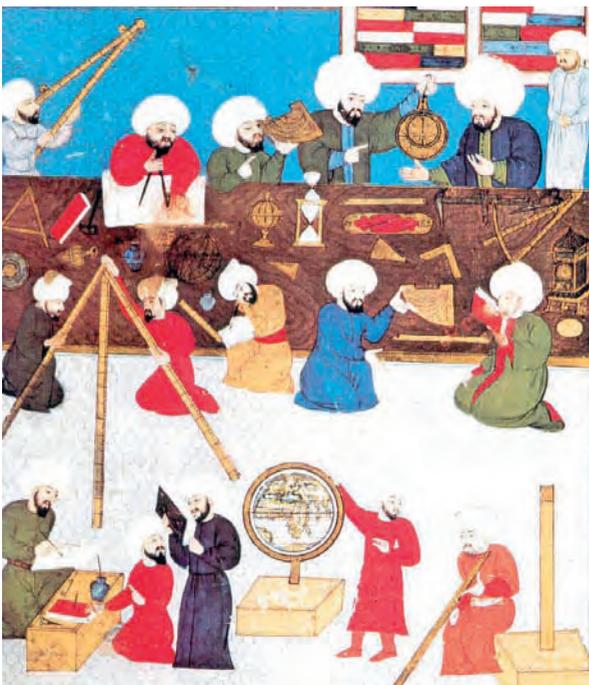


What do you think of these jokes? Did they help mobilise the people against the religious establishment, or were they simply relatively harmless statements of noncompliant individuals?

Do you know of any other forms of religious heterodoxy in South Eastern Europe?

Can mysticism become subversive to official religious institutions?

► v15. Astronomic observatory in Istanbul (c.1580)



Lewis, p.200.



Which of the scientific instruments do you recognise? How many of them do we still use today? Why are only men depicted in the image? Why are all of them bearded? Was it a fashion, a professional requirement or a social sign? Do you think there is a definite reason, or is it simply due to the imagination of the painter? What is your impression of the map represented in the image?

► v16. Popular hero Nasreddin Hoca



Hegy, Zimanyi, colour ill. 75.



Do you know any stories about Nasreddin Hoca? How is he presented in these anecdotes?

How popular are stories about Nasreddin Hoca in your own country? When were his stories first published in your language? Ask your friends or family members what they know about Nasreddin Hoca.

IIIb. The Christians

III-5. Election of Gennadios Scholarios as the first Orthodox Patriarch after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople (1453)

On the third day after the fall of our city, the sultan celebrated his victory with a great, joyful triumph [...]

He issued orders for the election of a patriarch, according to custom and protocol, as our patriarch had passed away sometime earlier. The high clerics who happened to be present and the very few members of the church and of the lay population designated the scholar George Scholarios, and elected him patriarch under the name Gennadios. [...] Our custom and traditional ceremony prescribed that the Christian emperor should present the newly elected patriarch with a golden crook. Thus this rascal of a sultan tried to pass himself off as the emperor of our City by imitating our Christian emperors: he invited Gennadios to dine and converse with him, receiving him with great honours. They spoke at length and the sultan promised the world to him. When the time came for Gennadios to leave, he was presented with that expensive crook and was asked to accept it.

Melissenos, p.133-135.



Before the conquest of Constantinople, Scholarios had been one of the leaders of the Orthodox opposition against the Union of Florence (1439), where the Byzantine Emperor John VIII had decided to subordinate the Orthodox Church to the Pope in exchange for Catholic help against the Ottomans.



What were the interests of Mehmed II in establishing Gennadios as Patriarch?

► v17. Ottoman silver bowl with a Greek inscription, used for Orthodox rituals (16th century)



Benaki Museum, Athens.

III-6. The French traveller Pierre Lescalopier about the St. Sava Monastery in Serbia (1574)

On the twenty first [of March] we arrived in Uvac, a small Turkish town. From there we saw the St. Sava monastery, a monastery of Serbian monks. They were dressed in black, spoke Slavonic and lived by the Greek rites. They brought us a large arm bone of St. Sava to kiss. They claimed to have his whole body. We saw Jews and Turks kissing this bone with the same respect as Christians and giving more donations to charity. These monks pay tax [*harač*] to the Sultan. Our courier [*čauš*] told us that a Turk who came one day to collect the tax did something evil to the monks and dropped dead at the monastery doors. They gave us oil and leek soup to eat, as well as some fish and whole-grain bread.

Samardžić, p.135.



What forms of piety prevailed among the Orthodox? Were they specific only to the Orthodox population?

Why did the believers of the other religions respect the Serbian Orthodox relic? (This is the area where the religions intermingle). What is the reason for this? Do you know of any similar examples from another part of Europe/world or from another era?

III-7. Paul of Aleppo about the Moldavian churches (mid-17th century)

His [former Prince Stephen the Great] palaces, bath, gardens and the big high church with its soaring high domes are in Vaslui. All around this church are vaults and semi-circular arches, and inside there are paintings and icons of all the saints. At the door, over the lower wall, the last judgement is painted in gold and lapis lazuli, with Moses leading Ana and Caiapha along with all the other Jews to our God. These paintings are ugly. They are followed by paintings of another kind; paintings of Turks wearing white turbans on their heads, big velvet gowns of different colours, with long hanging sleeves, woollen yellow veils, and dervishes being chased and mocked by devils. Satan is in front wearing a hat on his head. One of the devils is mocking him and is shown snatching his hat off his head. This is how the entire interior is painted.

The architecture is beautiful. On the calotte of the central dome is the face of our Lord Jesus Christ [...]. Outside the church's gate hangs a big bell.

The churches in this country consist of three parts: the first part is outside with a door, and is reserved for women; the second part is divided by a wall and a door, and is reserved for the believers; and the third part, also divided by a wall and a door, is reserved for the Prince and his court.

Călători, VI, p.29.



What role did the church paintings of the Turks in Moldavia play in religious life? How could

such paintings have existed in a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire? Is this an example of Ottoman religious tolerance?

Compare the hierarchical structure of the interior of the Moldavian churches with the situation in the Muslim mosques described in source III-2.

► v18. Voroneț monastery in Moldavia (built 1488, external frescoes from 1547-1550)



<http://www.users.cloud9.net/~romania/vor/Voronet.html>

► v19. Last supper scene - fresco from Stavronikita Monastery, Athos (1546)



Koliopoulos-Chassiotis, p.169.

III-8. Kosmas the Aitolian calling on Christians to educate their children

And you, parents, give your children a Christian education, teach them to read and write. Do what you have to do to set up a school, find a teacher and pay him to teach your children for it is a grave sin to leave them blind and illiterate; let not your sole concern be to leave them riches and property so that they can eat and drink after your death and remember you. It would be better to leave them poor and educated rather than rich and illiterate.

Menounos, p.173.



Kosmas the Aitolian (1714-1779) was a revivalist missionary, particularly active in Western Greece and Albania, but also connected to Athos. His appeals to combine education with Orthodox piety and religious practices are typical of an early brand of South East European enlightenment.



Do you agree with the statements of Kosmas the Aitolian (especially the last one)? Why does he think that education is of such importance?

Discuss whether such an attitude furthered social progress.

III-9. Kiril Pejčinović about tensions between Orthodox villagers and priests (1816)

I see them in some villages, may God protect me, it is very rough! I can't call them Christians or infidels. They eat and drink on Good Friday and Good Saturday, during the Great Fasting [...], commit sins, curse, beat each other, and on Easter day wait for the Holy Communion [Eucharist]. And the poor priest [who] has eight villages to attend, does not know where to go first. He runs from one village to another, with another man carrying the Holy Mysteries for him.

I even feel sorry for the poor Christians, because they wait for the priest until noon to bring the Eucharist. So they shout: "The priest is late, was it this or was it that?!" Others say: "Let's beat him so that he is not late again!" And those of them who are chor-

badjis, a bit richer, they say: "Not that way, if we beat him the zabit will punish us, but rather – gathered as we are now – let us first go and bring a ram (sheep) to the aga or the Pasha, then beat up the priest and kick him out, and find another one, even if he lives further away". Yet another richer peasant [kmet] says about the other priest: "That one too takes big contributions, forget it. This one comes late but takes less. He also sings for free and waits for the money for years. While the other priest collects his reward from Turks if you don't pay to him".

So one person says this, another says something else, [...] they all profane against the priest who is their spiritual mentor, who baptised them in the name of the Holy Trinity and married them, will bury them and who is their father and more than a parent to them. They don't fast, they speak profanities against the priest and wait for the Eucharist until noon. And I, the sinful and undignified Kiril, who is more sinful than all of them and who committed a sin by accusing them, so I, the sinner, saw them talking like that, saw it and did not like it, so I told them: "Why do we Christians wait until noon? Why don't we just cut bread, pour wine on the bread and not wait for the priest? They tell me: "What the priest brings us is not bread and wine, but the blood of Christ. That's why we wait until noon, for we have heard from the elders that, without it, one can't be alive." And I tell them: "Who tells you this, the priest?" He says to me: "The priest has not told us anything so far. Such words never left his mouth. He prefers rather to come with us to a wedding, to a picnic, to dances, hunting, to a party, to buy and sell something. As for teaching, we don't ask for it nor does he offer to teach himself." So I, the sinner, saw that the guilt was on both sides: on the Christian side because they do not ask the priest, and on the priest's side because he does not teach them anything, not even the little he may know. I see he does not care for the duty he took upon himself and which hangs around his neck."

Odbrani, II, pp.14-16.



Describe the religious feelings of the peasants. What did they believe in? In what way did their religion differ from the official religion? What were the reasons for their religious particulari-

ties? (Poverty, lack of education, a deeper consideration for religious matters?).

Why were the peasants critical of their priests? Was their position justified? Argue in favour of both sides.

IIIc. The Jews

III-10. Letter of Isaac Tzarfati, Rabbi of Edirne (Adrianople), to the Jews in Central Europe (mid-15th century)

My brothers and my masters, having prayed to God to grant you peace, I wish to relate to you the circumstances under which the young Rabbi Zalman and his companion Rabbi David Cohen came to me. They recounted to me all the ordeals, harsher than death, which our brothers, the sons of Israel who live in Germany, have undergone and still endure; the decisions taken against them, the martyrs, the expulsions, which take place every day and compel them to wander from country to country, from town to town, endlessly, without any place accepting them [...]

When they arrived here in Turkey, a land on which the wrath of God has not weighed heavily, when they saw the peace, the tranquillity and the abundance which holds sway in these lands and when they saw that the distance between Turkey and Jerusalem is short, and may be traversed overland, they were overcome with great joy and they said: without any doubt if the Jews who live in Germany knew a tenth of the blessings which God has bestowed on His people of Israel in this land, neither snow nor rain, neither day nor night, would be of consequence until they had journeyed here.

They have asked me to write to the exiles, to the Jewish communities which reside in Germany, in the towns of Swabia, of the Rhineland, of Styria, of Moravia and of Hungary, to inform them how agreeable this country is. [...] When I realised that their desires were disinterested, I decided to acquiesce in their entreaties, for I would like to give Israel the opportunity of acquiring its just deserts...

Shaw, pp.31-32.



Anti-Jewish persecutions intensified after the Black Death epidemics of the mid-14th century not only in Germany, but in most Western and Central Europe. Combining religious prejudice, economic competition and social exclusion. These persecutions compelled a significant number of Jews to seek refuge in safer and generally less densely populated countries such as Poland, Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire.



Could any country in the world be as perfect as the text describes? Are the advantages of living in the Ottoman Empire, as described, fair and truthful? Are there possible disadvantages missing? Why was the writer trying to persuade Jews to move to the Ottoman Empire?

III-11. Elijah Capsali about the prosperity of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire under Mehmed II

In the first year of the Sultan Mehmed, King of Turkey [...], the Lord aroused the spirit of the king [...], and his voice passed throughout his kingdom and also by proclamation saying:

'This is the word of Mehmed, King of Turkey, the Lord God of Heaven gave me a kingdom in the land and commanded me to number his people the seed of Abraham his servant, the sons of Jacob his chosen ones, and to give them sustenance in the land and to provide a safe haven for them. Let each one with his God come to Constantinople the seat of my kingdom and sit under his vine and under his fig tree with his gold and silver, property and cattle, settle in the land and trade and become part of it.'

The Jews gathered together from all the cities of Turkey both near and far, each man came from his

home; and the community gathered in the thousands and ten thousands and God assisted them from heaven while the king gave them good properties and houses full of goods. The Jews dwelled there according to their families and multiplied exceedingly [...]

Because the Jews feared the Lord, He gave them prosperity and in the place wherein formerly in the days of the Byzantine king there were only two or three congregations, the Jews multiplied and increased and became greater in number than forty congregations, and the land did not let them settle together because their property was so great. The congregations of Constantinople were praiseworthy. Torah and wealth and honour increased among the congregations. In the congregations they praised the Lord, the fountain of Israel, the doer of great wonders. They opened their mouth in song to heaven and blessed the Lord, all the servants of the Lord who stand in the house of the Lord in the night seasons.

Shaw, pp.30-31.



It is obvious that Elijah Capsali, writing in the 16th century about events which had happened in the second half of the 15th century, is less interested in historical accuracy than in reinforcing the traditional Jewish morality. Therefore, his text abounds in paraphrases from the Old Testament (e.g. Genesis 13:6, 34:10; Exodus 1:7, 1:21; Psalms 68:27, 134:1 etc.).



What were the intentions of the writer? What was he trying to achieve by writing this document? In what way did he try to make a connection between the two religions? Find out what is special about the role of Abraham in Islam and Judaism.

What elements lend weight to the argument that the speech attributed by Elijah Capsali to Mehmed II is historically inaccurate?

III-12. Jewish revivalism: the case of Sabbatai Zevi (1666)

[...] we proceed to the next [year – 1666] wherein we are to present you with a short narrative of Sabatai Sevi, the Jews' pretended Messiah, who first appeared at Smyrna, and there gave out he was their Messiah, relating the Greatness of their approaching Kingdom, the strong hand whereby God was about to deliver them, and gather them from all the parts of the World. He was a broker's son, born at Smyrna, a notable proficient in the Hebrew and Arabick [sic] tongues, but being banished for a Tumult in the Synagogue, he wandered up and down Greece for a time, and going at length to Jerusalem, he there met with one Nathan a cunning sophist; who, taking upon him to be Sabatai's prophet, he was so bold as to predict, that one year from the 27th of Kislau, the Messiah should appear before the Grand Signior⁵¹ to prepare for his reception. When he arrived at Smyrna, and took the title of Messiah openly upon him, he put forth his declaration to all the nations of the Jews to that purpose: But [...] some of his own nation opposed him as an impostor, yet he carried his point and then declared he was called by God to visit Constantinople, where the greatest part of his work was to be accomplished. But the vizier⁵², upon his arrival, thought fit to clap him up in a loathsome prison, from whence he removed him afterwards to the Dardanelles; whither the Jews, from diverse remoter parts, flocked to him in great numbers, and where he had time to compose his new method and worship. For the Jews now dotting more and more upon him, and of whose madness the Grand Signior by this time having received diverse information, ordered that he was to be brought before him, and the Sultan not going to be put off without a miracle, proposed that Sabatai should be stripped naked, and set as a mark to his dexterous archers, and if the arrows pierced not his body, then he would believe him to be the Messiah, but Sabatai declining

⁵¹ Term used by Europeans to designate the Ottoman sultan, at that time Mehmed IV (1648-1687).

⁵² Fazil Ahmed Köprülü Pasha, Grand Vizier 1661-1676.

the trial, was necessitated to turn Mahometan to save his Life. However most of the Jews affirming it was not so, but that his Shadow only remained on Earth, and walked with a white head, and in a Mahometan habit, while his Body and Soul were taken up into Heaven, there to reside till the time appointed for the accomplishment of these wonders; the Cochams⁵³ of Constantinople condemned this belief as damnable, and enjoined them to return to their ancient worship, upon pain of excommunication.

Jones, II, pp.175-176.



What was the motivation of Sabbatai Zevi? Did he really believe that he was a Messiah? Comment upon the end of his "career". Why did he convert to Islam?

Why did the Jews follow Sabbatai Zevi? Was such a movement specific only to the Jews? Do you know of any similar messianic movements in the history of your people?

Assess the way the Sultan handled the case of Sabbatai Zevi. What was his goal? Was he successful?

► **v20. Jewish doctor – French engraving (1568)**



Nicolay, p.182.



Why do you think that the French engraver/traveller considered it important to represent a Jewish doctor? Were there also doctors from other ethnic or religious backgrounds in the Ottoman Empire?

Is there any connection between the clothes of the Jewish doctor and the inferior status of non-Muslims, as seen also in texts III-19 and III-20?

III d. Religious co-existence and discrimination

III-13. Religious dialogue during the captivity of Gregory Palamas (1354)

He [the imam] began saying that they [the Muslims] accept all the Prophets, Christ and the four books

⁵³ Term used to designate the elders of a Jewish community.

descended from God⁵⁴, one of which is the Gospel of Christ. And, in ending, he said: [...] "And you, why do you not accept our Prophet and do not believe in his Book which has also descended from heaven?" I an-

⁵⁴ The Pentateuch, the Psalms, the New Testament and the Koran.

swered him: "You, as well as we, have a custom [...] to accept and to adopt nothing as true without testimonies [...]. Christ, besides the many great miracles he has accomplished, had also been testified for, by Moses himself and by the other prophets and he is the only one, in all of eternity, to be proclaimed, even by you, the Word of God; and the only one in all of eternity to be born of a virgin. The only one, in all of eternity, to have risen to heaven and to have remained immortal. We hope that he will come back to judge the living and the resuscitated dead. I only say about him what you Turks already admit. Therefore, we believe in Christ and in his Gospel. Concerning Mehomet, however, he has not been testified for by the prophets and has not accomplished anything extraordinary or memorable that should make us believe in him. That's why we don't believe in him and neither in the book from him".

The Imam [tassiman] was troubled by these words, but defended himself by saying: "In the gospels there were things said about Mehomet and you have cut this testimony. And besides, starting from the depth of the Orient, he has come to the west as a victor, as you can see" [...].

"[...] It is true that Mehomet, starting from the Levant, advanced as a victor to the Ponant; but this had been done through warfare, swords, pillages, oppressions and killings. Nothing of which originates from God, who is good [...]. Did Alexander not start from the west to finally make the entire Orient his subject? In other times, many others have launched their expeditions and have dominated the whole universe. However, nobody gave up his soul, as you have to Mehomet. And besides, he [Mehomet], although using force at the same time as recommending enjoyment, captured only a part of the universe. The teachings of Christ, on the contrary, by rejecting almost all of the sweet things of life, has embraced all the extremities of the universe and has ruled in the middle of those who fight him, and this without using any violence, always ending victorious over the violence opposed to him, and hence has defeated the world.

The Christians there, sensing the rage rising in the Turks, made a sign for me to abandon this

speech. But I, still wanting to bring serenity, said to them with a light smile: "If we agreed with each other, we would share the same dogma. Let the understanding understand the purport of what has been said". And then one of them said: "There will come a time when we shall all agree".

Phillipidis-Braat, pp.154-157, 160-161.



During his captivity under the Ottomans (1354-1355), Gregory Palamas (for details see the explanatory note in text I-6) had several theological discussions with Muslims and Jews, one with Orhan's nephew Ismael and one with scholars sent by Orhan himself. In a letter to his congregation in Thessaloniki, he also recollects another discussion with a Muslim imam in the neighbourhood of Nicaea. Although Palamas is adamant in displaying his own arguments, his narrative also includes many of the Muslim arguments against the Christian faith and testifies to the complexity of religious relationships in the territories conquered by the Ottomans.



What do you think of the eagerness of the Ottoman Turks to discuss religious issues with their prisoner?

What do you think of the arguments displayed in these discussions? Could such arguments explain, in part, the conversions to Islam which occurred after the Ottoman conquest?

III-14. Co-existence of various religious communities in Ottoman towns (ca. 1660)

[Belgrade]

On the banks of the river Sava there are three Gypsy [*Kıbtî*] neighbourhoods [*mahalle*], and on the banks of the river Danube there are three neighbourhoods of Greek [*Rum*] unbelievers, as well as Serbs and Bulgarians (also living in three neighbourhoods). Right by the fortress is a neighbourhood of Jews, those belonging to the seven communities known as the Karaim Jews. There is also a neighbourhood of Armenian unbelievers, but there are

no Frankish⁵⁵ or Hungarian neighbourhoods, nor any bailos or consuls of theirs. All the rest are Muslim neighbourhoods, so the families of the followers of Muhammad possess all the best, most spacious and airiest areas, located on the high or middle ground of the city.

[...] There are a total of two hundred and seventeen⁵⁶ mosques [mihrab], but [only] the Sultan's mosques from which the special call for Friday prayers are proclaimed, as well as the vizieral mosques and the mosques of the local gentry and notables are described [below].

[...] There are nine churches or monasteries, all told, where they conduct their evil rites. There are temples for the Greek, the Armenian, the Serb, the Bulgarian, and the Jews, but no houses of idolatry for the Franks or the Hungarians.

[...]

[Sarajevo]

Churches - Every church is small, there are no churches with bells. The churches of the Serbian and Latin Christians are in good condition. The Franks and the Greeks also perform their religious rituals in these churches. There is also one Jewish synagogue.

Evliya Çelebi, pp.195-198.



Compare Evliya Celebi's assessment of the Christian churches in Sarajevo with the description of the Moldavian churches by Paul of Aleppo (this chapter, source III-7).

III-15. Relations between Orthodox, Catholics and Lutherans in Bulgaria and Wallachia (1581)

The following was noted by the apostolic visitor in conclusion to hearing a few Catholic merchants

⁵⁵ Common Ottoman name for people coming from Western Europe, including Catholics and Protestants.

⁵⁶ Like many numbers in Evliya Celebi's narrative, this figure is certainly exaggerated.

speaking of the condition of the Catholics in Bulgaria and Wallachia.

The visit of Silistra and Provadia, allowed by our ruler by means of the letters by the highly praised monsignor, [cardinal] of Como on March 11, 1581. On the day of December 5, Ragusan merchants [...], who live in a place on the Danube called Silistra near the locals of Deristor, two days away from Varna, have introduced themselves. The land is called Dobrogea, in old times it was called Moesia. The languages spoken are Bulgarian and Illyric. [It is] ruled by the Sultan on the other side of the river, and in front of the land in question, lies Wallachia, tributary to the Turks. The above-mentioned Bulgarians are Orthodox; they have churches, priests and bishops. They said there are only 10 Catholic families [which are] of Ragusan nationality. They do not have churches or diligent priests, but they have brought with them from Ragusa, together with those from Provadia, which is two days away from Silistra, a man called father Nicolo Godini of Antivari. A man of great humanity; he officiates here for six months, with an income of 100 thalers⁵⁷ a year.

They ask if they are allowed to go to the Orthodox churches to pray and honour their sacraments with their devotion; if they are allowed to receive the holy sacrament of baptism and of penance when dying, from the Orthodox priest. They also ask permission for a young Catholic man who had been living with a young Orthodox girl, promising to marry her and have her children, to withdraw his promise with a clear conscience. They also said that, when going over the Danube towards Transylvania, they discovered many Lutherans of German nationality in Wallachia who would always try to talk about their faith and give free books on their perverted faith [...]. Silistra [is] at a distance of two days from Provadia and [lies] on the Danube. There are 1,500 houses of Christians and Pagans there. There are eight Catholic houses which house 40 persons, all of them Ragusan merchants. At this moment, they have brother Celestino as chaplain, with a salary of 2,000 *akçe* a year. They are good Christians [even

⁵⁷ Big silver coins coming from Central or Western Europe.

though] they do not have a church. Mass is served in a room. They were promised to be allowed to build a small house that would be their church. Apart from the chaplain, they do not have another sacerdotal official. The chaplain has been in service here for three years and everybody speaks well of him. He is here for six months, and the other six months of the year, he is in Târgoviște, at the monastery.

Călători, II, p.504.



What questions did the Catholics in Bulgaria and Wallachia ask the apostolic visitor? What kind of practical difficulties do these questions raise? Try to figure out what the apostolic visitor might have answered.

III-16. Fetva of Ebu's-su'ud on Muslim Shiites (mid-16th century)

Question: Is it licit, according to the Holy Law [shari'a], to fight the followers of the Safavids⁵⁸? Is the person who kills them a holy warrior, and is the person who dies at their hands a martyr?

Answer: yes, it is a great holy war and a glorious martyrdom.

Question: Assuming that it is licit to fight them, is this justified simply because of their rebellion and enmity against the [Ottoman] Sultan of the People of Islam, because they drew the swords against the troops of Islam?

Answer: They are rebels and, from many points of view, infidels.

Imber, p.86.



Ebu's-su'ud (c.1490-1574) was a scholar widely respected by Süleyman. He held the office of chief jurisconsult [*şeyh-ül-Islam*] for almost three decades. His rulings [*fetva*] exerted a lasting influence on Ottoman society.

⁵⁸ The Safavid dynasty ruled Persia from 1502 to 1736, imposing a radical Shiite version of Islam which, in the 16th century, was extremely appealing to many Ottoman subjects from Anatolia.



What do these rulings reveal about the limits of Muslim solidarity?

Compare the attitude of the Ottomans towards the Muslim Shiites with the 16th century wars between the Catholics and Protestants.

III-17. Imperial order preventing "Frankish" proselytism among the Armenians in Eastern Anatolia (1722)

The Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul and its dependencies, called Ohannes, have petitioned my Imperial Residence for the issuance of my orders to prevent the Frankish rite heresy which is current among the Armenians of Erzurum, Diyarbakir and Tokat. Things are about to calm down and get organized. However, some Frankish priests disguised as medical doctors, or something else, reside there and mix with the rich people and the notables. Unawares, the notables take them for physicians and help them in all their endeavours. Thus, according to the Patriarch, the Frankish priests work incessantly to provoke the local Armenians and pervert them in converting them to the Frankish rite. He petitioned that the Franks not be allowed to reside there as physicians or anything else. Also, the poor subjects should be protected against their provocation and should be left alone. Therefore the Imperial Ferman is issued in line with his petition.

BOA, CA 3126.



What do you think of the fact that both the Armenian Patriarch Ohannes and the Sultan labelled all Westerners "Franks", and did not bother with the various denominations covered by "Frankish rite heresy"?

III-18. Ottoman authorities in Bosnia arbitrate between Orthodox and Catholics (1760)

After that, we examined this extremely difficult situation and finally sent the word of our arrival to the

vice-Pasha [kehaya bey] through an agent. He gave permission for our visit, so our dean and new guardian from Fojnica Monastery left for his house. His last words were: "If you want to win this lawsuit, you must, first of all, pour twenty bags of money into the state treasury"; (that is around 2,600 Venetian gold coins).

So, we saw that our efforts would collapse unconditionally if we didn't give him this excessive amount of money.

Consequently, before facing our opponents in the court of law, we met the Pasha and the vice-Pasha. Out of necessity, we promised to give them whatever it took to calm them down and to get their protection. On the other hand, Greek⁵⁹ leaders offered a big amount of money (much bigger than ours) to the same Pasha to pass judgment under conditions of their ferman [Ottoman charter]. In view of the fact that we didn't have enough money, we have taken a credit from the state treasury.

First of all, the judge read the documents of our opponents and examined their essence. After that, the judge asked the Greek Metropolitan (he was there together with the Patriarch) to say what he really wanted through this lawsuit. He responded: "I demand that these fraternities be obedient and obey all that is written in this charter [ferman], issued by our exalted Sultan, and all that is being said now." Then the judge asked us: "What do you cite as a reason for disobedience to your opponents?" Our dean responded: "It has been almost three hundred years since the exalted Sultan Mehmed conquered Bosnia and we have never had anything in common with the Greeks, because they have one religion and we another. This can clearly be seen in this hatti-sherif [another kind of Ottoman charter] and in other documents and charters issued by merciful Sultans. From that moment onwards we have always had the freedom to practice our Latin religion".

Having heard this, the judge issued the verdict immediately: "The Patriarch and the Metropolitan do not have any rights over you, fraternities and Roman Catholics. They should not and dare not de-

mand any money tax or anything else from you, because the ferman cannot be higher than the hatti-sherif".

And so this trial came to an end. The Metropolitan went away in shame (God wanted it that way). O Brother, you just can't do business with the Turks without money!

Benic, pp.187-190.



Compare this text with the previous source on the Frankish rite heresy: in both cases the Ottoman authorities barely understood the particulars of the Christian faith. Do you think they had similar difficulties in distinguishing between the different branches of Islam? (The same question can be asked of the sensitivity of the Christian authorities towards the inter-Muslim divisions).

What were the relations between the two Christian churches in Bosnia? Whom did they respect more: the Ottoman authorities or the "related" Christian Churches?

What are the writer's objections against the Ottoman authorities and the Orthodox Church?

III-19. Imperial restrictions for non-Muslims (1631)

According to the Holy Law [*shari'a*] and the Law, the Christians [*kafir*] must be recognisable by their clothes and appearance as being inferior. They are not allowed to ride horses, wear clothes made of silk and satin or to put on sable coats and hats. Their wives are not allowed to wear clothes similar to those of the Muslim women or to put on yashmaks made of Persian cloth. Still, for some time now, this law has not been obeyed and, with the permission of the judges, the Christians and Jews have started going out dressed in expensive luxurious clothes.

As for their wives, they do not step down off the pavement to give way to the Muslim women they meet at the market. On the whole, both men and women wear much better clothes than the Muslims. This shows that they do not consider themselves inferior. Thus, it is absolutely essential that these or-

59 Orthodox.

ders be announced once again to ensure that they are obeyed.

Georgieva, Tzanev, p.121.



Why were the restrictions for non-Muslims so harsh? Why didn't the Christians obey them? Do you think that such restrictions could be fully enforced in mixed religious environments?

III-20. Execution of an Orthodox wearing improper clothes (1785/1789)

Likewise, in the aforementioned month [Muharrem] on the 21st day, when our glorious master [Sultan Abdulhamid I] was travelling incognito he saw a Greek infidel. The Greek wore yellow shoes, a kaf-tan of flowery design, a long gown and a fur-striped coat as well as a shawl. He [the Sultan] called the executioner. The Greek was about to be hanged, but the Sultan ordered his decapitation instead.

Taylesanizade, p.419.



Compare texts III-19 and III-20. What were the crimes of the Greek who was executed?

III-21. Imperial order about a church built without permission in Stanimaka, near Plovdiv (1624)

The Governor of the vakif village Stanimaka informs us in his letter that the Christians in this village have built a big new church, decorated with marble and other materials, against the Holy Law.

The Governor has tried to answer to the complaints of the Muslims without any success and he is now asking for a royal order to be issued in order to destroy the church in question. The destruction will satisfy the prescriptions of the religious laws of the country.

So, I order that on receiving this, you should investigate the matter and see to the destruction of

the newly-built church as long as it is really a new one and not one that has existed for a long time. I also order that you not allow anyone to protest or to disobey the Holy Law and My Sultan's order.

Georgieva, Tzanev, pp.120-121.



What were the arguments used to destroy the church in Stanimaka?

III-22. Christian intolerance against people living as inter-faith couples (Cyprus, 1636)

Milu, son of Andoni of the village Çeliye in the district of Tuzla, says: "Up until now, like my ancestors, I have belonged to the Christian group [*millet*]. I have not become a Muslim. I am an infidel [*kafire*]. When I wished to perform our false rites at the church, the monks, who were our priests, prevented me from entering saying, "You married a Muslim". It is probable that when I perish they will not bury me in accordance with infidel rites. I want a memorandum showing that I am an infidel!"

Jennings 1993, p.142.



Why did the Christian monks prevent Milu from entering the church and refused the sacraments to him?

What do you think were the reasons for this attitude? Were they justified? Take into consideration the fact that Muslim Law prohibited a Muslim woman from marrying a non-Muslim man, while Orthodox canon law only denies communion to an Orthodox Christian who marries a non-Christian.

III-23. Religious regulations in Transylvania (1653)

[Part I, title I]

Article 2. The four official religions, according to the regular decisions of the country, should, from now on, be maintained forever as official. The offi-

cial religions are as follows: reformed Evangelic (in vulgar language - Calvinist), Lutheran or Augustan, Roman-Catholic, Unitarian or Antitrinitarian. From now on, they are to be granted free practice in their accustomed places in accordance with the laws of the country [...].

Article 3. Besides the four official religions, in matters of faith and of religion, no private people of any social status and no assembly should dare or make any renovation or separation, under the penalty of infidelity [...].

Article 4. Judaism, starting with old times, not only has it not been counted among the four official religions, but it has also has been forbidden by the public laws of the country under the sanction of severe punishment. Those who have been found guilty of it, have been punished according to the law. It is hereby decided for them to be forever punished as were those before them [...].

Article 8. It has been decided that no one is to be allowed to force a community, the serfs, the people in his house or anybody under their command to join his religion, by means of violence or threat with violence, and neither should the landlord of another faith occupy the village or the city church, introduce or impose priests of another religion, or allow priests of his religion to officiate holy mass on any occasion: under penalty of 200 florins⁶⁰ [...]

[Title 8]

Article 1. [...] the Wallachian people have not been counted in this country, neither among the privileged estates, nor among the religions. Those who have not been counted among the official religions [...] are tolerated [...] for the advantage of the country.

Constituțiile, pp.47, 49, 50, 58.

⁶⁰ Originally a gold coin issued in the kingdom of Hungary after the model of Florentine coins. However, the text does not refer to this particular gold coin, but only to the current monetary unit in the kingdom of Hungary and in the principality of Transylvania at the time.



The Approved Constitutions (Constitutiones Approbatae) were enacted by the Diet of the Principality of Transylvania during the reign of George Rakoczy II (1648-1660). In fact, they systematized regulations enforced in the principality of Transylvania since the 16th century, and sometimes even earlier. Note that discrimination affected not only smaller minorities, but also the Orthodox Wallachians, who formed the majority of the population in the principality of Transylvania.



Was there religious freedom for all inhabitants of Transylvania? Argue both in favour and against the religious settlement that existed in 17th century Transylvania.

III-24. Anti-Jewish conclusion of the Ston bishopric synod in Ragusa (1685)

Devil's limbs, those who crucified Christ, enemies of the Christian name, robbers, those who bewitch, those who suck civilised human blood as a venomous snakes, they started gathering in this bishopric a couple of years ago. We humbly pray for God's justice to destroy them all, as being a just judge out of celestial clouds. We command all the people under our care not to share a flat with Jews in their houses, neither to serve them without our written permission, all that under the threat of being excommunicated. My sons avoid even talking to them except for trading purposes or having necessary unavoidable contacts. Be aware that they're the enemies of the Christ's cross and you, being Christ's limbs, push away the Devil's limbs.

Stulli, p.31.



What were the accusations against the Jews? What restrictions did the bishops try to enforce?

III-25. Privilege for a Jew in Ragusa (1735)

[...] Simon, the son of Vital Vitali, is a real and truth-

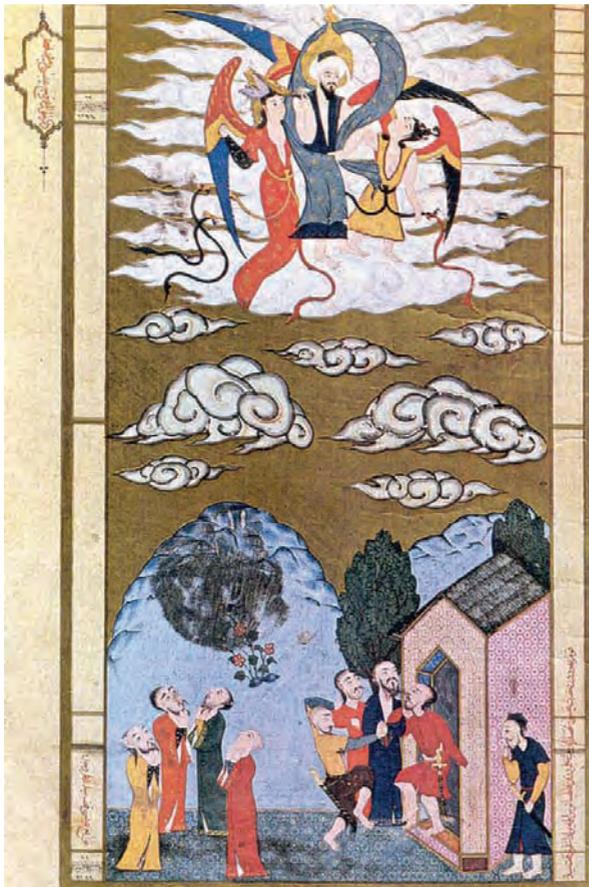
ful subject of this Republic and therefore he has all the privileges and graces of all our other subjects. We wish him to enjoy all the grace that our subjects enjoy in the entire world.

Stulli, p.41.



Compare this privilege with those of source III-24. What could have been the reasons for the different attitudes of the civil authorities?

► **v21. Ottoman miniature of the Ascension of Christ (1583)**



And, p.54.



How is Christ represented in this Ottoman miniature? Why? Have you ever seen Christian representations of the Ascension? What do you think?

III-26. Martyrdom of St. Kyranna in Thessaloniki (1751)

This is what the Janissaries did during the day. During the night, the jailer would hang her up from her armpits even though her hands were already chained. He would pick up a piece of wood at hand and hit her mercilessly until he was tired, and they would leave her hanging in the cold of winter, as it was winter then. One Christian who saw this, waited for the right moment and when he understood that the jailer's fit of anger had passed, went and talked to him and got permission to take her down. The Saint woman had such patience, tranquillity and silence that it seemed as if she were not the one suffering. Her whole spirit and concentration were in the heavens. There were other Christians held in the prison, Jews and some Turkish women on account of dishonourable acts, and they too accused the jailer of a lack of mercy, and of lacking the fear of God, because he was torturing a woman who had done him no wrong. That Christian never stopped reminding the prison guard of God's judgment (since he was not shy towards him) [...]. He spoke in order to appease him and make him stop causing suffering to the Saint Woman. But Satan had turned his heart to stone and no matter how much they begged him, he tortured her even more. The Janissaries, who used to torture her on a number of occasions, tried hard to get her to eat so she would not die. Sometimes they gave her raisins, sometimes dates. The Saint however would refuse to eat, so they tried to open her mouth by force but were unable to do so.

Synaxaristis, pp.336-337.



Kyranna, a young girl from a village called Avussoka, near Thessaloniki, defied the attempts of an Ottoman Janissary to seduce her. In order to break her resistance, the Janissary had her imprisoned and tortured. After a hunger strike, she died in Thessaloniki prison on February 28.



Would Kyranna, as a Christian, have been more exposed to the abuse of the Janissary than a Muslim girl?

Why do you think that the fellow prisoners tried to help Kyranna? Were the religious differences impedi-

ments in this respect? Do you know of any other examples of human solidarity across religious boundaries?

Why did Kyranna choose to undertake the hunger strike?



Overall questions on chapter III d

Comment on the combination of religious tolerance and discrimination in the early modern world. Compare the situations in the Ottoman Empire, in Transylvania and in Ragusa. How do these situations compare with the modern world?

Social types and daily life

Ottoman ideology defined social status groups according to their relationship with the state. The basic divide was between the ruling groups and the “flock” (*re’aya*) of common subjects. The ruling groups included the military (*askeri*), the scholars (*ulema*) and the scribes (*katib*). All these served the Sultan through their specific activities, and were therefore exempt from paying taxes. They were generally Muslim, but there are documented instances of some of the military and scribes being non-Muslim. The “flock” encompassed most of the population, Muslims and non-Muslims, villagers as well as townspeople. Their basic common feature was that they were supposed to pay taxes.

Actual social stratification was more complex. Religious and professional divides, location and ethnicity, as well as gender, age and unequal distribution of wealth shaped differences inside the various status groups. The description of Ottoman social types, although unable to deliver a complete picture, provides us with a glimpse into this diversity.

The main aim of this chapter is not to describe a static social stratification, but to shed light on aspects of daily life and human interaction. Special attention has been assigned to the particular forms of interaction in border areas, combining cruel fighting with shared common habits and helping one another. The final section has been dedicated to the role of women. During those times, women represented, as is the case today, half of the population. However, both in Muslim and non-Muslim social settings, women were considered to be subordinate to men and generally excluded from the public sphere. Therefore, sources on the history of women are sparser than their true historical importance. In reality, it was women who bore the children and educated them, and most households were practically run by women. The sources included in this chapter document both the discrimination against women and the methods used by women to empower themselves.

IVa. Elites and commoners

IV-1. The contempt of the Ottoman elite towards the Turkish peasants

One day two Turks were talking to each other using improper language in their conversation:

One of them asks: “what happens if you become a lord?

You become a great man among the people.

What would you eat most at your meals, o brother?
Soup, delicious meats or chicken?”

The other says: “I would eat soft bread and fresh onions. This is the best”.

“What about you? What would you prefer if you became a lord?
When you have the opportunity”.

He says: “What is there to eat? You did not leave anything for me.
No other food is better than what you preferred”.

These Turkish people are strange,
They fail to differentiate between good and bad.

Their mouths don’t appreciate good taste,
Their talk is not worthy to repeat.

Güvahi, pp.167-168.



Pendname was a popular old Persian literature collection, rewritten and enriched by Gühavi in the first half of the 16th century, using new literary material. The text illustrates the fact that the members of the Ottoman elites used the term 'Turks' not for themselves, but for the 'uncivilised' Anatolian peasants.



What are the arguments of the poet against the "Turkish people"? Do you know of any similar examples of elite contempt towards common people from your own history?

Ottoman social types

► v22. Akıncı



Inalcik 1973, ill.26.

Akıncı: "Raider", irregular cavalry volunteer of either Turkish or non-Turkish origin, who raided enemy territory for booty. The *akıncı* were crucial to the Ottoman expansion during the 14th-16th centuries. In South East Europe, four main groups of *akıncı* were established, with hereditary leaders from the lines of the Mihaloğlu, Malkoçoğlu, Turahanoğlu and Evrenosoğlu.

► v23. Sipahi



Hegy, Zimanyi, p.55, ill.51

Sipahi: "Cavalryman", who fought in the Ottoman army in exchange for a revenue-bringing fief (*timar* or *zeamet*). Generally, *sipahi* were recruited from the sons of military; yet, the Sultan could also grant fiefs to other people who distinguished themselves in service. The *sipahi* served in provincial units led by the local governors, usually from April to October, and then returned to their fiefs in order to collect the revenues assigned to them.

► v24. Janissary



Nicolay, p.159.

Janissary: "Soldier in the new army", an elite standing infantry unit founded in the 14th century. The Janissaries were recruited until the 17th century from prisoners-of-war or through the Collection (*devshirme*) of non-Muslim boys from the Ottoman provinces. Converted to Islam, they were considered slaves of the Sultan, but received regular wages. They served either in the capital or in campaigns led by the Sultan. During the 16th-19th centuries, their number increased, they were located not only in Istanbul, but also in provincial towns. They became involved in business and handicrafts, married and transferred their property and status to their offspring.

► v25. Soldiers in Albania – drawing by Jean-Baptiste Hilaire (1809)



Levend: "Paid soldier", hired either by the state or by provincial governors for specific campaigns. Recruited from various social backgrounds, the *levend* used fire-arms extensively and became crucial in the 17th-18th centuries, proving to be militarily more effective than the obsolete sipahi and Janissary troops. Sometimes, the *levend* joined private armies and marauded the Ottoman provinces.

► v26. Şeyh-ül-Islam



Hegyí, Zimanyi, p.39, ill.31.

'Alim: "Scholar"; pl. *ulema*. The *ulema* were Muslim men, educated in religious schools (*medrese*). After

graduating, they could become leaders of public ritual prayers in mosques (*imam*), teachers (*hoca*), *medrese*-professors (*müderis*), judges (*kadi*) or juris-consults (*müfti*). The highest positions reserved for Ottoman *ulema* were that of military judge (*kadi-*

asker) of Rumelia or Anatolia and chief jurisconsult of the Empire (*sheyh-ül-Islam*), but the *ulema* could also be appointed to other offices, including that of Grand-Vizier.

► v27. High-ranking Ottoman scribe



Hegyi, Zimanyi, colour ill. 121.

Katib: “Scribe”, member of the Ottoman bureaucracy. Recruited from various social backgrounds, they served first as apprentices and then as clerks in the imperial chancellery and in financial offices. Less than a hundred up to the mid-16th century, they

increased in numbers afterwards, due to the expansion of both central and provincial bureaucratic offices. Although rarely appointed to high dignities, the *katib* were extremely influential.

► v28. Arab merchant



Nicolay, p.223.

► v29. Ragusan merchant



Nicolay, p.242.

Merchant: Learning their trade either from their families or by serving senior merchants, Ottoman merchants engaged both in long-distance trade and in retail trade. During business journeys, the wives managed the households. Although officially considered common subjects (*reaya*), merchants distinguished themselves through their wealth, high living standards, extensive knowledge, experience and abilities. Both Muslim and non-Muslim merchants often supported religious institutions and the development of culture.

► v30. Ottoman tailor



Hegyi, Zimanyi, colour ill. 133.

Craftsman: While in the countryside, some peasants also engaged in handicrafts. A huge variety of specialised craftsmen earned their living in Ottoman cities. Gradually, the craftsmen who owned their own workshops organised themselves into guilds (*sınif*, pl. *esnaf*), which regulated access to the profession, production and distribution. Generally, in order to become a master (*usta*), one had to be an apprentice (*çırak*) first and then an aid (*kalfa*).

► v31. Shepherd



Hegy, Zimanyi, colour ill. 130.

Peasant: Most Ottoman peasants, both Muslim and Christian, earned their living combining agriculture with animal breeding. They enjoyed free possession of their households and of mobile property, but they had to comply with the rules enforced by the village community, the fief-holder and the state. Peasant life was strained by the need to pay taxes and by the instability of their insecure livelihoods. Although free to appeal to the kadi courts, most peasants preferred to settle their disputes with the help of the village elders and priests.

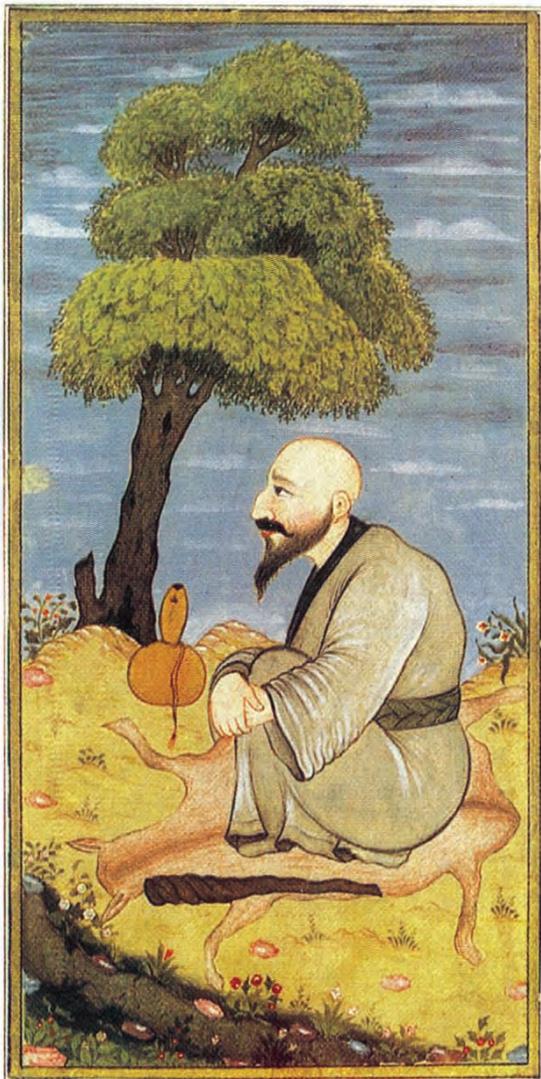
► v32. Fisherman



Hegy, Zimanyi, colour ill. 138.

Seaman: The Ottomans used a large variety of oared and sailing ships, both for war and for trade or fishing. Most Ottoman seamen came from the islands or from coastal regions with a maritime tradition, and worked for wages paid either by the ship-owners or by the navy. Foreigners were also welcome. Oared ships also used slaves and convicts, and in the case of war, the authorities even levied oarsmen from landlocked provinces. Ottoman seamen navigated extensively in the Mediterranean, as well as in the Black Sea and in the Red Sea. They even sailed to Indonesia and to Eastern Africa, but were generally not very successful in the Indian Ocean.

► **v33. Dervish**



Hegyi, Zimanyi, colour ill. 69.

Dervish: An initiated member of a Muslim religious confraternity (*sufi* order). In order to become a dervish, a Muslim had first to submit to an initiation process, which included mystical exercises and ascetic meditation. Dervishes could either live in communities, or travel and perform their religious practices in both the countryside and in the cities. People generally believed that dervish practices were instrumental in allowing the power of Heaven to come to the Earth. Dervishes were highly influential in Muslim society, contributed significantly to Ottoman po-

etry, music and dance, but sometimes also proved to be vocal critics of the Ottoman authorities.

► **v34. Armenian monk**



Hegyi, Zimanyi, colour ill. 74.

Monk: Orthodox or Catholic Christian, who decided 'to abandon the world' and to live according to the example of Christ. In order to become a monk, one had first to be a novice in a monastery, and then to take an oath of obedience, poverty and chastity. Generally monks lived in monasteries, but some could also isolate themselves in remote areas. Most monks were male, but monasteries for women also existed. Besides contemplation and prayer, monks also engaged in running the monasteries and participated in cultural activities.

► v35. The Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople



Asdrachas, ill.3.

Priest: Man ordained to perform the divine service in Christian communities. According to religious regulations, priests had to know the Bible and to be ordained by a bishop, but in more isolated village communities these requirements were not always fulfilled. Priests were considered to be mediators between the faithful and God. They celebrated the liturgy in their parishes, and provided the sacraments to the faithful. They were highly influential and often acted as intermediaries between their communities and the Ottoman authorities. Catholic priests were bound to celibacy, while Orthodox priests were allowed to marry.

► v36. Grand Rabbi of Istanbul (late 18th century)



Juhasz, p.124.

Rabbi: "Master" or "teacher", title of respect for a Jewish teacher or specialist of the religious law. Generally, a Rabbi acted also as minister in a synagogue and provided spiritual guidance to his community. Highly educated, Rabbis were the main contributors to Jewish culture. They were also the intermediaries in the relationship between the Ottoman authorities and the Jewish communities.

► **v37. 18th century Christian nobleman**



Istoria, vol.11, p.137.

Christian nobleman: As they expanded, especially over the 15th and 16th centuries, the Ottomans largely removed the hereditary upper nobilities of the lands they conquered, thereby leaving the lesser nobles without leadership. In the long run, however, they depended on them and other local elites to “know the land” and govern it, so many Christian notables (*kocabaşı* or *archontes*) acquired a quasi-noble status. A special situation existed in the Romanian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, where the *boyars* preserved their social status during the whole period of Ottoman suzerainty. The boyar rank was initially connected to descent and land property; nevertheless, the Princes also granted estates and boyar ranks for distinguished military and civilian service. The revenues of the boyars came from both the dues and duties of the dependent peasants on their estates and from state

offices. In the 16th century, an increasing number of Christians from the Ottoman territories entered the service of the Wallachian and Moldavian Princes, acquired estates, and became boyars. The local reactions, which stressed the quality of the “lands people” (*pământean*), proved to be futile. In the mid-18th century, Constantin Mavrocordat established several sub-categories of boyars, and linked these ranks to the fulfilment of state offices.

► **v38. A famous ayan: Ali Pasha of Janina (1741-1822) – painting by Louis Dupré (1819)**



Istoria, vol.12, p.72.

Ayan: “Notable”, wealthy individual granted semi-official governmental status in order to help with the collection of taxes in an administrative unit. Mainly Muslim, the ayan leased the taxes from the state on a long-term or life-long basis, and then used his position to bring the tax-paying subjects into debt bondage. Recognised officially in the 18th century, the ayan amassed significant fortunes from usury and trade, organised private armies and gained political control in the provinces. Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) succeeded in ending the power of the ayan.

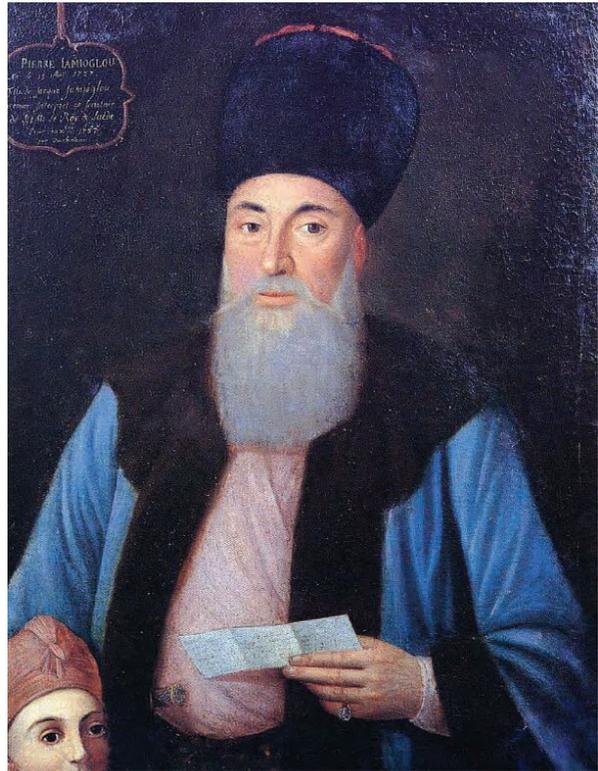
► v39. Ottoman money-changer



Hegy, Zimanyi, colour ill. 140.

Sarraf: “Money-changer”. In major Ottoman cities, professional money-changers, either Muslim, Orthodox, Jewish, Armenian or Catholic, earned their living by taking advantage of the use of a huge variety of silver, gold and copper coins. They also provided credit on interest, and were often accused of ‘usury’. Rich *sarrafs* were sometimes also engaged in backing tax-farming activities, and exerted significant economic and political influence.

► v40. A dragoman: Pierre Yamoglu, interpreter for the French embassy (1787)



Hitzel, no.59.

Dragoman: “Translator”, Turkish *tercüman*. Language barriers generated the need for interpreters in communication between Ottoman authorities and foreigners. Mostly of non-Muslim origin, the interpreters could be hired either by the Ottoman state, or by foreign ambassadors, merchants and travellers. In the late 17th century, the interpreters were included in the Ottoman bureaucratic system. The highest-ranking positions were interpreter of the Imperial Council and interpreter of the fleet. Up until the early 19th century, the Ottomans appointed to these positions were generally Orthodox subjects from the Istanbul quarter of Phanar.

▶ v41. Swedish ambassador (1788)



Theolin, p.60.

Ambassador: Starting with Venice in the 15th century, major Christian powers sent standing ambassadors to Istanbul, with the dual mission of representing them in relations with the Sultan and reporting on various political issues. Some Western ambassadors came to Istanbul for a limited number of years, while others did not know in advance how long their mission would be. Mostly of noble origin, the ambassadors were assigned official residences, and enjoyed the protection of the Sultan and specified stipends. Rarely knowing Turkish, Persian or Arab, the ambassadors relied on interpreters in communicating with the authorities and locals. Often supervised by Ottoman agents, they generally preferred to socialise with the employees of the embassy, Christian merchants and with their ambassador colleagues.

▶ v42. Galley-slave carrying his water ration



Hegyi, Zimanyi, p.74, ill.83.

Slave: In the Ottoman Empire, there were a large variety of slaves, men and women, white and black, local or 'imported', used for domestic service or for various economic activities. As in many Muslim societies, the practice of voluntarily freeing one's slaves was quite widespread. Freedom was also granted when a slave converted to Islam. The slaves (*kul*) of the Sultan, who served either in the Palace, in the army or in the administration, were special cases. In the 15th-17th centuries, some of the most able Ottoman statesmen, including numerous Grand Viziers, benefited from this status in their career.



If you lived in the Ottoman Empire, what social type would you have preferred to be? Explain your choice.

IVb. Life in the village

IV–2. Regulation on rural self-government in the province of Vidin (1587)

The village headmen [*knez*] and the elders [*primikure*] are obliged to help the officials with collecting the different taxes.

The headmen and the elders have the obligation to find and bring back the subjects [*reaya*] who have fled from their villages.

For their service, the headmen and the elders are exempt from paying the various taxes, such as *harac*, *ispence*, sheep tax, a tenth-part tax on the cereals produced on their family fields, a tenth-part tax on the must, other taxes and all the extraordinary and common taxes.

[...]

If any of the above-mentioned people dies, his service should be passed onto one of his sons eligible for it.

So long as the above-mentioned people serve the tax collecting officials well and efficiently, the governors [bey] shall not oppress them and are not allowed to send them to war against their will.

Georgieva, Tzanev, p.151.



Why did the Ottoman authorities allow a certain degree of self-government in the villages?

IV–3. The peasant's obligation to cultivate his holding (land code of Karaman, 1525)

Any subject [*raiyyet*] cultivating the equivalent of a full holding [*bir çiftlik yer*] must sow it with four *mudd*⁶¹ of seed grain, measured by the Bursa *mudd*. Let fifty *akçe* be taken from him any year when he should leave it unsown. But if he should sow one

⁶¹ Name of a group of Ottoman units of capacity of Byzantine origin. As can be seen in the text, the exact magnitude of the *mudd* varied throughout the empire.

mudd measured by the Karaman *mudd*, let twenty-five *akçe* be taken, and don't interfere with him otherwise. And if a subject should suffer some kind of catastrophe and be thereby left incapable of continuing and hence quit his holding, his *sipahi* should give his holding to somebody else, and demand from him only a cottar's dues [*resm-i bennâk*] not a full holding payment [*resm-i çift*].

Barkan, pp.751-752.



Why did the Ottoman authorities care whether the land was cultivated or not? What means did they use to coerce the peasants?

► v43. Bulgarian house from Trjavna (18th century)



IV-4. Bulgarian houses near Russe described by the French traveller Pierre Lescalopier (1574)

On the 13 [June] we slept in Katselo, the last mountain of Bulgaria and then, through rough country roads, we reached Rustsi, a town on the bank of the Danube near Wallachia.

On the 14 June we gave our horses a rest as they were exhausted from going through the mountains, forests and the awful roads in Bulgaria - so sparsely populated, that very often both we and our horses had to spend the night in the open air. Their houses have only one floor. They only have a basement surrounded by logs and poles fixed into the ground, interwoven with thin sticks like the wedges in the Picardie⁶². The walls are coated with earth, and mixed with broken straw. The houses are six feet tall and are covered with straw; there is a hole in the roof to let the smoke of the hearth, which is in the middle of the place, escape. The people, together with all their livestock, live under the same roof, and being unable to bear the dirt and the awful smell, we often spent the night under a tree.

Georgieva, Kitanov, p.133.



What was Lescalopier's experience of the Bulgarian countryside, particularly the living conditions? What can you conclude about the living standards in his homeland? What was his attitude towards the people of rural Bulgaria?

IV-5. Description of people and their clothing near Plovdiv (1553-1555)

Early in the morning of 14 July, we left Philipopol [ancient name of Plovdiv] and at about four o'clock, after having lunch, we reached a village called Vetren in Bulgarian and Hisardgic in Turkish. It is a big Bulgarian village. They have two priests and there aren't any Turks in the vicinity. The people are good-looking and strong and in many houses one could buy wine, new wine. Everybody was selling round loaves of bread, hay, yogurt, curds, meat, as well as pears.

62 Province in northern France.

Bulgarians are not allowed to wear nice clothes; they are all dressed in grey and white hooded cloaks, they have neither shoes, nor boots, and only wear sandals made of raw oxen skin and knee-length stockings. Their pointed hats are made of white felt or white or brown broadcloth. The men do not wear overcoats and go out short-sleeved both in summer and winter. Their hair is not cut as short as that of the Turks and they have long locks hanging from the back of their heads, which is a sign that they are not Turks. The only weapons carried are big heavy clubs.

Vazvazova-Karateodorova, p.211.



What influences of Ottoman dominion on the life of the Bulgarian villagers are mentioned in the text?

IV-6. Food and drink in Albania (ca. 1810)

The principal food of these people is wheaten or barley bread, or cakes of boiled or roasted maize, cheese made of goats'-milk, rice mixed with butter, eggs, dried fish, olives and vegetables. On holidays kids [probably meaning lambs in this context] and sheep are killed, as well as fowls, of which there are plenty everywhere; but the proportion of animal food is considerably less than that of the other part of their diet. They drink wine, both Mahometans and Christians, as also an ardent spirit extracted from grape-husks and barley, called rackee, not unlike whisky. It is but seldom that they spare any milk from their cheeses. Indeed, cold water is what they chiefly drink, and of this they take large draughts, even in the heats of summer, and during the most violent exercise, without experiencing any inconvenience from the indulgence. Coffee is to be met with in many houses, and now and then the rossoglios of Italy, and the liqueurs made in Kephalonias and Corfu.

Broughton, pp.130-131.



Compare the descriptions of food from the 16th century and the early 19th century. What differences do you perceive?

► v44. Room in Arbanassi (18th century)



IV-7. Travelling through Bulgarian villages (1761)

We started towards *Karabunari* at eight in the morning. On the way, we came across a large and long forest. First, we met the guard from *Faki*, and then the one from *Karabunari*. Somewhere in front of the village there was a well and close to it a roofed stand which people use for praying, as a shelter from rain and even as a place to spend the night. On our way there, there was a lot of mud so our journey took us five hours, instead of the usual four.

Karabunari is quite a large village with about five to six hundred Turkish and Bulgarian houses. It lies in a nice flat valley covered with grass and flowers. Small rivers cut through it. The valley seems to be about half a mile wide and a couple of miles long, situated between top of the mountain on one side

and rolling hillsides on the other. On our arrival we were given a house to stay in, close to the Christian house in which variola appeared; we were told that there was variola in a couple of places. The village "*corbadzija*", the name used for the Janissary leader, but usually given to the head of the village as in this case, gave us his house. It was the best house in the village, usually not rented to anyone. They assured us that there was no variola in it. At any rate, we found it better to put up tents outside the village, to be more certain. We crossed over the bridge and put up tents in the valley by the hill slopes, which were quite low. When you climb up those hills, you get the most beautiful view you can imagine: high up on one side you can see the village, flocks of sheep, and on the other, another large valley spreads with a row of charming hills. We had only just put up our tents when it started to rain heavily. When it stopped,

some people came from the village to amuse us and to get a tip by playing wild songs. .

[...]

Dobral is a small Bulgarian village with about 60 houses, situated in a quite large valley among the mountains in which the range of Balkan, i. e. *Emo*, starts. [...] His Excellency stayed in a new Bulgarian house which had only one large clean room. The rest found the best accommodation they could in other small Bulgarian houses. Shortly after our arrival, a couple of girls came to dance and sing in front of the Ambassador's door. They repeated their national dance several times and in the end they would throw a handkerchief, first to His Excellency and then to some people from the escort in order to get a few coins. We had a walk through the place even though it wasn't particularly pretty, looking for the facilities

which could make our departure the next day possible, but we couldn't reach a conclusion.

The next day, the realization of our plan seemed even more difficult because all the men from the village ran away, taking their oxen which we were supposed to take in exchange, with them. After numerous serious threats, all of the difficulties were overcome. We forced the oxen-driven carts from *Karnabata* to go ahead and found six pairs of oxen for our two carts in the surrounding countryside."

Boskovic, pp.40-41, 51.



What were the relationship between the Balkan peasants and the foreign travellers?

What constraints of peasant life are mentioned in the source?

► v45. Women washing outside the house (Larissa, early 19th century)



Istoria, vol.11, p.165.

► **v46. Men and women, from the island of Paros, playing musical instruments and dancing**



Istoria, vol.11, p.288.

IV–8. Roads and letters in Ottoman Albania (ca. 1900)

Broken and hazardous as was the route I happened to be following, it was the highway across Albania, running from Macedonia to Durazzo on the coast; and along it, though now deserted, a mighty army of long dead and forgotten had travelled in the story of over twenty centuries.

The Turks had done nothing to improve this road. It was just as Nature and the Romans had left it. At one place we seemed to make a sharp drop amongst black rocks. The winding, zigzagging track had been worn for so many hundreds of years that

IVc. Life in towns

IV–9. Description of Belgrade (1660)

[...] Inside this great city, there are a total of one hundred and sixty palaces belonging to Viziers, their deputies, or other notables. (The entire city comprises seventeen thousand rooms since, in every house, five to ten rooms have been registered.) [...]

Apart from these, all households, whether rich or poor, inhabit large or small buildings of stone

a channel was cut out of the rock, which was knee-deep when walking.

[...]

It led also to a bridge, built by the Romans, well arched, and as serviceable today as it was when they used it.

I saw a number of these Roman bridges in Albania. Some were as useful as ever they were; some were in part decayed, with slabs and boulders gone into the stream; others had broken in twain. But I never saw a bridge that the Turks had repaired.

[...]

There is no regular trade or any other communication from Elbasan. I wanted to dispatch letters. I was also told that about once a week the post went to Monastir, but it did not go unless there were plenty of letters to take; whilst the Durazzo route, which was much the quicker way to get a letter to England if it could be started on its way at once, was more uncertain because the conveyance was more haphazard, and no one could say within a couple of months when letters would be dispatched.

Fraser, pp.242, 251-252.



Why were the roads so bad in Albania? Does this apply to the whole Ottoman Empire, or only to the marginal territories?

Why did the Western travellers always emphasise the bad infrastructure of the Ottoman Empire countryside? Was the writer an adventurous traveller or a member of the "civilised" world?

construction [*kârgir*] with both a ground and an upper floor, with roofs covered in tiles – beautiful houses with tall upper-storey kiosks and oriels, surrounded by paved gardens or vineyards. As they are all built in rows, one above the other, all their windows and balconies overlook the Danube, the Sava or the Zemun Field. They are all highly decorated houses with elegant chimneys and two-winged portals.

[Inns – caravan-seray]

There are six such [inns] that harbour coming and going travellers. [Chief] among them is the caravanserai of the martyred [ṣehîd] Sokollu Mehmed Pasha⁶³, inside the Great Market, a stone or brick [kârgir] building with one hundred and sixty rooms on its ground and second floors, camel sheds and stables as well as a *harem* section [for women]. It is a fortress-like caravanserai with an iron gate, outside which its gate-keepers and night watchmen first beat drums before closing the gate every night and [then] opening it [in the morning]....

[Markets]

There is a total of three thousand seven hundred shops in the imperial market-place, but more splendid than the rest, is the covered market [bezzâzistân] in the Women's Market [Avrat bâzâr]. Although it is not a stone building with domes and iron portals, it is nevertheless a marvellous regal market that has become the most famous of all under the name of the beautiful market [...].

And in the Long Market [Uzun çârsû], there are to be found all manners of craftsmen, it being a great thoroughfare that stretches for three thousand steps all the way from the Kapucu mosque to the Fish Market. Here, one can find all the most precious goods of the lands of India, the Indus, Yemen, Belh and Bukhara along with those of Arabia and Persia, all of which are to be found in this long market without having to beg or to pay too much for them.

The Market of the Cauldron-Makers [Kazançılar çârsûsî], the Fish Market and the Central Square [Ortabâzâr], the Market of Bayram Beg together with its soup kitchen and coffee-houses and the Little Market are also splendid market places.

All the markets and market-places, as well as all

63 Mehmed Pasha Sokollu. Born in 1505 in Sokol (Bosnia), he was recruited into the Ottoman military through the *devsirme* (child-tribute) and had a brilliant career, rising to the office of Grand Vizier, which he occupied for 14 years under three Sultans (1565-1579). Even before becoming Grand-Vizier, he lobbied successfully for the establishment of the Serbian Patriarchate in Peč in 1557. The quality of "martyr" was recognized to him for being assassinated in dubious circumstances in 1579.

the main streets of the various neighbourhoods of this city, are paved with round, white cobblestones in a fish-bone pattern.

[Dressing of people]

All the notables are clothed in sable furs, satin and watered silk. People of moderate substance are clothed in ordinary broadcloth and fox-lined furs. The poor, too, wear garments of broadcloth and outer robes [kaftan] of twilled cotton. All the peasants [reâyâ] are clothed in serge [ṣayak] and coarse woollens [aba] in red and white, with Bosniac kalpaks on their heads.

[...] They mostly wear dustcoats of broadcloth and flat-topped *terpush* skullcap and veils, wrapped around them in a chaste manner.

[Languages]

Although the natives of Belgrade are converts to Islam [potur], they nevertheless know the Serbian language, the Bulgarian language and the Latin language and even the idioms of the Bosniac language [...].

All their subject peasants [reaya], as well as their free men [beraya], are Serbian infidels, including all the Sirem cart-drivers. Their language is akin to [that of] the Bulgar, the Latin and the Bosniac, though it also contains segments of various other languages; nevertheless, they are still part of the Christian nation, their book being the Bible, which they have translated into their own language. Many of them know the Croatian language, the French [Gallic], language, the Slovenian language and the Italian language, for these Serbian infidels are an ancient nation whose origins go back all the way to Ays⁶⁴, so they have a respectable and reliable history for the Serbs and the Latins. Nevertheless, their arithmetic still resembles the Bosniac language [...].

[Trade]

Goods from Egypt, Damascus, Tripoli, Sidon, Beirut, Acre, Izmir, Arabia, Persia and India are brought in

64 Figure in the Arabic mythology regarded as the ancestor of the Slavs.

with carts and camels, some five to six thousand camel-loads and cart-loads being brought in from all [these] countries every year, being unpacked and then packed again in this city, with loads going to and coming from all Hungarian, Polish, Czech, Swedish, Austrian, Bosnian, Venetian and Spanish provinces, for this city is the Egypt of Rumelia and all its people are calculating tradesmen. Many thousands of its population have come from other lands and settled here because it is a city of abundance.

[...] When the Danube river freezes, ten hand spans thick in winter, many hundreds of thousands of carts and sleds cross over on the ice sheet without having to pay tolls [*bâc*] or market dues [*bâzâr harcı*], with both subject peasants [*reaya*] and free men [*beraya*] bringing their goods, so that there is much buying and selling, and the city of Belgrade enjoys a great abundance, and the poor profit from this opportunity to grow prosperous.

[Feasts]

It is in such times that all the people of Belgrade, in their stove-heated rooms, organise big feasts for each other comprising forty or fifty different dishes and ten kinds of sweets and honey-and-almond cakes along with ten varieties of stewed-and-cooled fruit drinks [*hoşâb, hoşaf*], calling on each other in huge crowds to drink and enjoy themselves. And, if even one of those ten varieties of confectionery or stewed fruit drinks should happen to be missing, the host is called upon to host yet another feast. This shows how far fun and enjoyment goes in this affluent city.

Evliya Çelebi, pp.195-200.



Evliya Çelebi's travel account is one of the master-pieces of Ottoman literature of the 17th century. However, one has to be aware of the fact that Evliya tends to over-exaggerate in order to outline the fabulous features of the various regions he visits. His figures are almost always grossly exaggerated, but his account is valuable for revealing the composite and complex pattern of town life.



Try to separate fact from fiction in Çelebi's text. What was the role of Çelebi's character and disposition in his portrayal of Belgrade? Try to alter two or three points of his enrapturing description with more realistic remarks.

To what degree were the towns ethnically homogeneous?

What were the advantages of the townspeople compared with the villagers?

► v47. Turk riding with huge corbs for keeping fresh fruit and vegetables



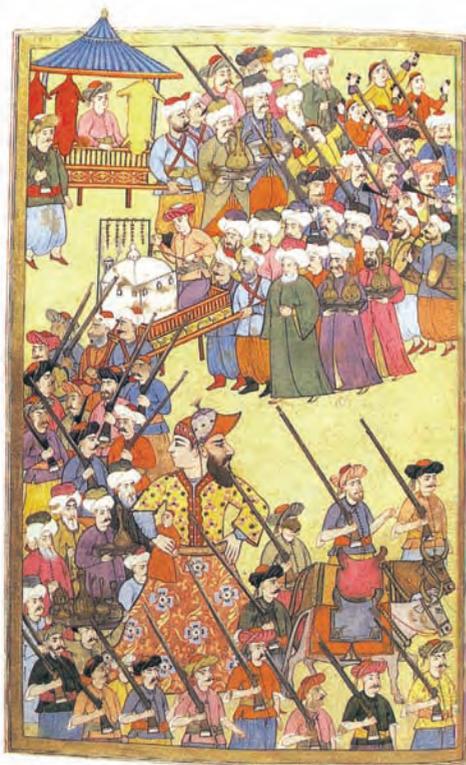
Hegyi, Zimanyi, p.155, ill.162.

IV–10. The residence of the Wallachian Prince Constantin Mavrocordat described by the French traveller Flachet (mid-18th century)

I went to the leisure palace of the Prince, which, like the Prince's [city] palace, still reminds one of its main purposes. They used to be monasteries, somewhat beautified by his predecessor Princes. Most of our

second-hand private residences are far better looking, and there are none in our country where the furniture is worse than here. I have followed the Dâmbovița river downstream, a river that flows very fast and never dries up. There are many mills along it. Their machinery is not of any particular interest. I only talk about them because they have given Mr. Andronachi the opportunity, when he showed me the ones at the gates of the palaces, to tell me that the gardens were in very poor shape, that all the artesian wells were broken and that nobody in the country dared to mend them, even though the Prince would have paid any price they would have asked for it. I told them that I would give them the plan of a pump that would, not only start the artesian wells, but also bring running water into every room [...]. The Prince seemed very content with this and assured me that he would order someone to build it for him as soon as possible [...].

► **v48. Procession of the bakers in Istanbul (1720)**



Hegy, Zimanyi, colour ill. 158.

Just by seeing what his residence looked like, I got an excellent impression of his valour; however, I was able also to treasure his intelligence and heart. I was able to discover the artist and the man of good taste everywhere. His book collection was rich and exquisite. He owned valuable paintings, wonderful sculptures, many different kinds of devices and the parts of very unusual mechanisms brought by him from Germany or England. I think he deserves my praise by saying that he was a savant without pre-conceived ideas and completely impartial. He could speak all the European languages and was familiar with the most important writers whom he tried to get to know as well as possible. I was astonished by the progress he had done with science.

Călători, IX, p.256.



Why does the author contrast criticism of the poor infrastructure with praises of the qualities of the Wallachian Prince? Was Flachet surprised by his host's sophistication? Why? For more background information on Constantin Mavrocordat, turn to text II–22, particularly footnote 50.

IV–11. Charter of the guild of grocers in Moschopolis (1779)

First, we shall build love among us as the foundation for defeating all enemies; **second**, masters shall be exceptionally honoured as they are in charge of the younger, and anyone who disobeys the masters' orders shall be expelled from the guild as harmful and detrimental; [...] **seven**, any brother who is unjustly treated, insulted or discredited shall not have to seek revenge elsewhere but will only to come before the guild and the appropriate punishment shall be dispensed; **eight**, if anyone is found swearing at his elders or insulting the honourable people who visit the market shall be bastinadoed in the market stocks and thus brought to heel; **nine**, when summoned by a master, subordinates must stop every other task and follow him, also when a brother dies we must all attend the burial; **ten**, any member

found fraternising with a Turk, for the sake of salted fish, beans or any other thing, shall be expelled from the guild; **eleven**, the shops are closed on Sundays, but one is permitted to stand outside the door and if anyone comes looking for something he may give it to him; also, those with their own shops have no right to put their things in other places [...].

Bees, pp.527-528.



What were the main goals of the grocers? By what means did they intend to achieve these goals? Were the people of Moschopolis different in these respects from artisans in Western Europe?

IV-12. Apprentice contract in the island of Skyros (1793)

This letter is to certify that Constantis Aistratitis agrees with Mastroyirakis to have his nephew Stamatias work for him for two years without pay. Mastroyirakis will teach him his trade and provide food, clothes and shoes. At the end of the two years, he will become an assistant, will earn wages and be provided with tools. If Mastroyirakis sends the lad away he will pay thirty *gurush* per year, whereas should the child leave before the end of the two years, he will claim nothing from Mastroyirakis, whereas the latter can even get back any clothes he may have made for him. The present document was drafted before reliable witnesses

1793 May 1

And should another craftsman entice the lad away, he shall pay eighty *gurush* to Mastroyirakis.

Papayannis, son of Christofis, witness

Yorghis Mikaros, witness

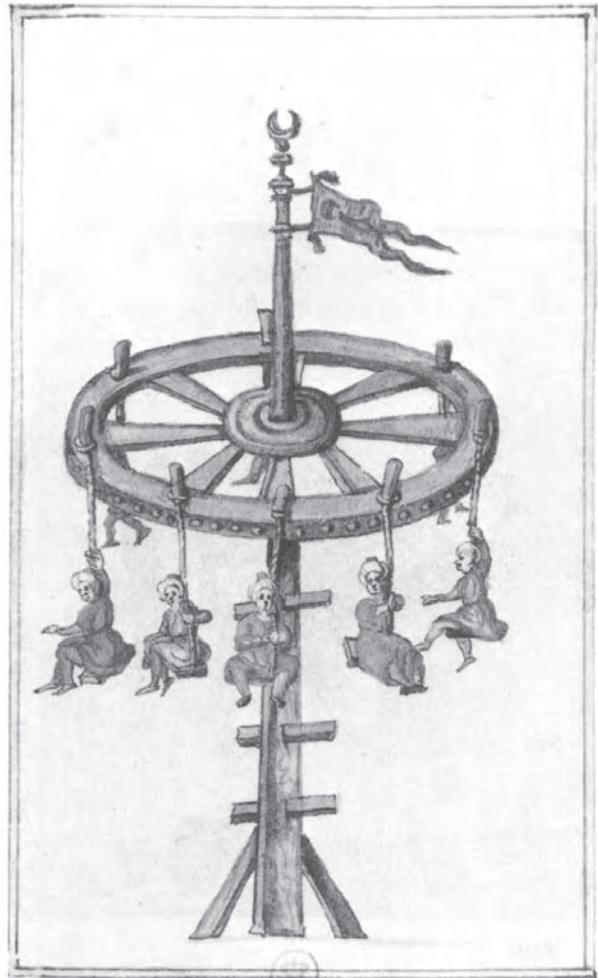
Papa-loannis, son of Angelis, I witness"

Antoniadi, p.176.



What do you think of this contract? Was it fair for all parties? Do you think that Stamatias should have been asked his opinion on this issue?

► v49. Ottoman children on a merry-go-round during the Bayram festivities



Hegyí, Zimanyi, p.149, ill.154.

IV-13. Fetva of Ebu's-Su'ud on the imperial ban of coffee-houses (3rd quarter of the 16th century)

Question: The Sultan, the Refuge of religion, has, on many occasions, banned coffee-houses. However, a group of ruffians take no notice, but keep coffee-houses for a living. In order to draw the crowds, they take on unbearded apprentices, and have instruments of entertainment ready, as well as games such as chess and backgammon. The city's rakes, rogues and vagabond boys gather there to consume opium and hashish. On top of this, they drink coffee and,

when they are high, engage in games, false sciences and neglect the prescribed prayers. In the law, what should happen to a judge who is able to prevent the said coffee-sellers and drinkers, but does not do so?

Answer: Those who perpetrate these ugly deeds should be prevented and deterred by severe chastisement and long imprisonment. Judges who neglect to deter them should be dismissed.

Imber, pp.93-94.



Coffee came to the Ottoman Empire from Eastern Africa in the mid-16th century. In the 16th-17th centuries, the Ottoman authorities banned coffee consumption several times, but without a lasting success.



What were Ebu's-Su'ud arguments against the coffee-houses?

What were the wishes of Ebu's-Su'ud and what was the reality of life in a big city?

IV-14. Tavern song from Senj⁶⁵

Everybody sings in the town of Senj
 But not the mother of Luka Desancic
 Walking sadly through the streets of Senj
 She's entering every tavern [*mehana*]
 And taverns are full of people
 In one of them she found Ive Senjanin
 Together with thirty men
 Drinking wine and singing.
 Weeps mother of Luka Desancic
 And enters and says
 'God bless you, captain of Senj!'
 'God willing, my elderly lady
 Mother of my blood-brother, Luka Desancic!'
 He pours a glass of wine
 And hands it to her saying
 'Drink that wine, my old lady!'

Mijatovic 1974, pp.39-40.

⁶⁵ Senj was a town on the Croatian coast which was under Habsburg rule and served also as basis for Uskok pirates.



Taking into account that the *mehane* was usually a place of male sociability, try to figure out why the men of Senj agreed to drink wine with the mother of Luka Desancic. Was it because she was old, or because she was the mother of their companion?

What do you think about such tavern songs as instruments to praise a certain way of life?

IV-15. Evliya Çelebi writing about the Belgrade *baklava* (1660)

Above all, most famous in both the lands of Rum and the lands of Arabia and Persia, is Belgrade's *baklava*, which, for banquets on the occasion of regal festivals, is made as large as a cartwheel from a thousand starch wafers [*güllâç*] and dough prepared with pure white flour, butter and almonds, and baked in an underground oven [*tennur*]. It is so big that it will not fit into the [usual sort of] oven and each one is capable of feeding more than three hundred people. It is big, thick and delicious, but if you should drop a single *akche* coin on it, it will sink into the *baklava*. That is the high grade of *baklava* they have. And the sweetened rice dish [*zerde*] that they have, cooked with almonds and cinnamon and cloves and saffron, is also so delicious that there is nothing equal to it anywhere [...]

Evliya Çelebi, p.199.



Have you ever tasted *baklava*? Is it common in your community? Does it differ from that described by Evliya?

IV-16. Menu of Shevki Mula Mustafa (Sarajevo, 2nd half of the 18th century)

Me, poor scribe Shevki Mula Mustafa [...] one night, after having dinner with my family, I started thinking of what I would do and whether I would have anything to eat the next day. I was not a rich man, our winter stores have been used up and I had no money. In this deliberation, this did not allow me to

sleep, I relied on God who was providing for me and for my family until now. That happened at the end of January [Erbeyin], when the day was the shortest and the Sun was in solstice. And indeed, the following days when I came home, I had for dinner: the first night guzelma pie and tutmaç, the second night dairy products [*mandra*], the third night hot helva and millet with honey, the fourth night broken wheat soup [*bulgur çorba*] and kidney kebab, the fifth night tripe [*şirden*], cheese and bread, the sixth night tripe [*şirden*], cheese and bread,

the seventh night guzelma pie, soup and borek pie, the eighth night kebab and cabbage soup the ninth night dried curds-and-flour soup [*tarhana çorba*], the tenth night kebab with hot corn and the eleventh night kebab with jarina soup, and so on.

Başeskija, p.54.



What Ottoman dishes are still cooked in your country? Which did you eat recently?

IVd. Living on the edge of various borders

IV-17. Ottoman deli warriors described by the French traveller Nicolas de Nicolay (1551)

Deli are adventurers, like light cavalry, whose trade is to seek adventure in the most dangerous places where they have the opportunity to demonstrate their courage and bravery through their war exploits. That is why they gladly follow the Sultan's army, without any pay (similarly as the *akinci*), yet most of them are fed and provided for on the expense of Pashas, General-Governors [*beglierbeis*] and Governors [*sangiaques*], each of whom has a certain number of the most brave and valiant in his retinue. They live in the areas of Bosnia and Serbia which, on the one hand, border Greece and, on the other, Hungary and Austria. Today they are called Serbs or Croats, but they are true Illyrians⁶⁶. [...] The Turks call them *dellys* [*deli*], which means crazy brave men. However, they refer to themselves as *zataznici* [*zatočnici*] which, in their language means: those who challenge people [...].

The first delly I saw was in Adrianople [Edirne] [...]. He looked like this: the lower part of his kaftan and his long baggy trousers, called *chalvar* by the Turks, were made of a young bear's skin, with the hairy side

outwards. Under the *chalvar*, he wore shoes or short boots made of yellow *safian*, pointed at the top and very high at the back, with cleated soles and surrounded by a long wide spur. On his head, he wore a hat like those of Polish horsemen or Georgians, which falls onto one shoulder. It was made of spotted leopard's skin. The *deli* fastened on the forehead part, a wide eagle's wing to make him look frightening. Two other wings were fastened with gilded nuts onto his shield, which he wore on the side, hanging on the belt. On his arm were a sword [*cimeterre*] and a dagger, while in the right arm he held a club [*busdegan*], i.e. a mace [...].

A few days later, when he left Adrianople [...] I saw him riding a beautiful Turkish horse, covered with the whole hide of a big lion [...]. His club hung from the saddle and, in his right hand, he carried a long lance [...].

In addition, I was curious to ask him with the help of a translator [*dragoman*], to which people he belonged and which religion he practiced. He responded wisely, letting me know that he was a Serb by nationality [...]. As for his faith, he said that when he is with the Turks, he pretends to adhere to their laws, because he is Christian both by birth, by heart and by his own choice. And to convince me of this, he recited the Sunday Prayer, Virgin Mary's Prayer and the Symbol of Faith in both Greek and in Slavonic..

Nicolay, pp.226-227.

⁶⁶ The Illyrians were an ancient population in the Western Balkans. Linking people to the ancient inhabitants of the provinces they lived in, was a common feature of Renaissance writings.

► **v50. Ottoman deli warrior (16th century)**



Nicolay, p.228.



Compare the description with the image and make a list of the features of a deli warrior. Why did he fight in the Ottoman army if he were Christian? Are the deli warriors comparable to the “dogs of war” of all times? Find an example from another time and place.

IV-18. The institution of blood-brotherhood on the Bosnian border (1660)

[...] the day before yesterday the Muslim army [...] carried off lots of war booty in front of the town of Split. However, on their way back, they were ambushed on the mountain of Prolog and in its pass. The two sides clashed [...].

When all our horsemen and foot-soldiers, jumping like roe-deer over steep rocky ground, arrived at the battlefield, and when the infidels saw us, they attacked as a crowd of pigs.

[...] [the Muslim army won an overwhelming victory]

[...] a thousand and sixty enemies’ heads were cut, seven hundred and four prisoners were taken. [...] On our side seventy heroes died a martyr’s death...

[...]

A border-line warrior [*gazi*] had hidden a Christian bandit in some fell. When that hero and the infidel whom he was hiding were reported to the Pasha, the Pasha got angry and ordered:

– “Bring me that man and the prisoner he was hiding immediately”.

When both men arrived at the execution site and when the Pasha ordered:

– “Headsman, quick!” The hero then bent around his prisoner’s neck. Yelling and crying, he said:

– “Aman, Great Vizier, this prisoner and I became blood-brothers on the battlefield, we are brothers in faith. If you kill him, he’ll go to heaven with my faith and that will do great harm to me; and if I die, this prisoner’s faith, as he is my blood-brother, will stay with me so we’ll both go to hell. I’m at a loss again”.

He lay down on his prisoner and didn’t want to get up. When the brave Pasha asked:

– “Hey, *gazi*, what’s wrong with this man?”

The border warrior [*serhat gazi*] answered:

“When they are at this border-line area, our heroes are taken into Christian slavery and, on that occasion, they eat and drink at the table, they become blood-brothers with the Christians and make an oath of fidelity. The Christian swears to the Muslim to deliver him from the infidel slavery and the Muslim gives his faith to the Christian saying: “If you’re taken into our slavery, I’ll deliver you from the Turks”. So they give their oaths [*ahd-ü eman*] to each other by saying: “Your faith is my faith and my faith is yours”. “Is it?” “Yes, it is”. Then they lick each other’s blood. So, a Muslim and Christian become blood-brothers. This man saved that Muslim. Now, this infidel, in the hands of those people, is a prisoner. If his blood-brother hides him and saves him, he has fulfilled his given word and faith. Then he would take his faith from him and give his back. If this Christian were killed now, he would go to

heaven and the Muslim would go to hell with the faith of the infidel. Although it is not written, either in Muslim or in the Christian holy book, it is quite usual at this border-line”.

When they told the Pasha all this, he said:

– “Set them both free”.

Both men took to their heels and disappeared. However, we all remained astounded by this conversation.

Evlia 1996, pp.145-148.



Do you consider such blood-brotherhood to be an intelligent scheme for survival in a border area, or as a traitorous way to fraternise with the enemy?

IV–19. Ottoman request for a Ragusan doctor (1684)

Be greeted, honoured and proud, our brave and worthy friends, you the Prince and the beys of Ragusa, from the captain of Gabela and Neretva and other agas of Gabela. Our old Abaz-aga Sagravic is sick, he has wind and is swelling below his waist. There is no artisan here who can discover what illness it is and who could treat him successfully; so by this letter we’re graciously asking you to send us Doctor Nikola Boljahnac from Ston.

Miovic-Peric, p.285.



In what ways did living in the frontier area blur religious and political differences? Should the Ragusan doctor have gone to cure the Ottoman aga?

IV–20. The letter of Simun Kozic Benja, Bishop of Modrus, to Pope Leo X (1516)

[...] be aware, your Holiness, that we are pressed down by all misery from all sides. [...] Our people are forced to make some sort of alliance or peace with the Turks and pay them tribute. [...]

And please hear of our excuse in the case of extreme distress. Take a good look at our just matter; accept our requests, almighty God, holy Trinity, holy Faith, for whom we have kept our irreproachable

loyalty intact up to now, in the most difficult pursuits and anxiety. All hearts are open to you and everyone’s secret desires are not hidden from you. You’ve seen the misery of your people and you know that we can’t keep up any more in front of the enemy’s face. In the end, accepting no blame, I’ll openly say: I’m afraid, dear Father, that our poor compatriots, due to poverty and despair, may be forced to fight alongside the Turks, and rob other Christians.

Gliga, pp.84-85.



What was the greatest danger expressed in the letter of the Bishop of Modrus? What prevails in his letter: the concern for the salvation of his compatriots, or the danger for Christians outside Croatia?

IV–21. Fran Krsto Frankopan’s letter to Gaspar Colnic (1670)

Best regards to you, captain headman Colnic! Thank God our men arrived and that they are well equipped. I received a letter from the principal [Zrinski] to go there and prepare the rebellion. I’ll be working day and night to enable the rebellion to start as quickly as possible. My men and I are ready, and I can hardly wait to see our caps mingle with the turbans. I swear to God, the Austrian military [*krilaki*] will be blown away. [...]. This time we’ll decide how and when to strike, and if necessary, I’ll visit the Bosnian Pasha myself, to determine the matter and agree upon the beginning of the action. In God I trust that it will succeed by striking the enemy right on his head, and not letting the Germans [*Plunderhosens* (German) = “broad trousers”] come to their senses. If the principal listens to me, [...] everything will be fine and I’ll bear the burden because I know how to deal with the Germans.

Mijatovic 1999, p.90.



This letter relates to the so-called ‘Zrinski conspiracy’. Peter Zrinski and Fran Krsto Frankopan were important Croatian noblemen, who held key positions in Habsburg-ruled Croatia in the 1660s. Although both had previously fought valiantly against the

Ottomans, they became dissatisfied with the Habsburg plans to strengthen absolutism at the expense of the privileged estates, and planned to overthrow the Habsburg rule with the help of either France or the Ottomans. Executed as conspirators in 1671, Zrinski and Frankopan were celebrated later as early fighters for Croatian and/or Hungarian independence.



Assess the policies followed by Frankopan, taking into account that only a couple of years before the letter to Colni, he had written the following in a poem: "Come on beloved brothers, on your feet/ We have to trample down the horns of the Turkish moon/ For the Christian faith, for the sake of chivalry/ For the sake of the world and our honour/ Do not find life so precious".

IV-22. Song about Croats raiding Kladusa

Tadija Senjanin begins to talk:

"There were many and many great heroes
And now there are only fifty left
Come on brothers, to the flat town of Kladusa
To rob the tower of Orus
Let Turkish Janissaries see
What the sirdars of Kotari are like!
What they said, they didn't deny
So they went to the flat town of Kladusa
All the way to the tower of Captain Orus.
They robbed, carried away goods out of the white tower
They chased away Turkish boys and girls
They did violence all over Kladusa
They drove fat oxen in front of them
They drove away many Turkish horses
And went back to Ravni Kotari
They were celebrating for a month
But they could celebrate the whole year
So many treasures had they taken".

Mijatovic 1974, p.102.



Compare the Croatian raid on Ottoman Kladusa with the Ottoman raids described in source I-10. Did the Christians behave better than the Muslims?

IV-23. Marko Kraljevic drinks wine during Ramadan

The Sultan Suleman decreed these laws:
No man shall drink wine during Ramadan.
No man shall wear a coat that's coloured green.
No man shall bear a sword of tempered steel.
No man shall take a Turkish maid to dance.
Marko danced with all the Turkish maidens.
Marko bore a fine-tempered sabre.
Marko wore a coat of bright green colour.
Marko drank a lot of wine during Ramadan-
And even forced the pious Muslim priests
And saintly hadjis too, to drink with him!
[...]

When Sultan Suleman heard this report
He called two messengers, and told them to say
To Marko Kraljevich that "I, Sultan
Suleman, summon Marko to my court!"

[...]

Sultan Suleman addressed him gravely:
"Marko Kraljevich, my son, you know well
That I have decreed these stern commandments
[...]

Now certain honest men speak ill of you.
They say you flout my every ordinance"
[...]

And Marko Kraljevich then answered him:
"O my dear Father, Sultan Suleman!
If I drink wine in Ramadan, my faith
Allows me: I am not a Mussulman.
And if I urge your priests, and hadjis too,
To drink with me, that is because I hate
Sober fellows staring when I'm drinking-
My home is no tavern: let them stay away!
And if I wear a green coat, that's because
I am a young man and it suits me well.
And if I bear a finely tempered sword,
It is my own, with honest money bought.
And if I like to dance with Turkish girls-
I am not married. O Sultan! You too
Were once a young man, free of cares and wives!
And if I push my cap back, that's because
It makes my face hot, talking to a King.

As for why I keep my sword free in its sheath-

I fear that there might be some argument!
But, if anyone should start a quarrel
It will go hard for him who's nearest me!"

The Serbian, pp.209-215.



Why did the Sultan decree the prohibitions? Did religious motivations prevail, or was it mainly an attempt by state authorities to censure unbound individuals?

What was the attitude of the ballad hero towards the Sultan's authority? What does this reveal about the legitimacy of the rulers?

Ive. Glimpses into the lives of women

IV-25. 'Royal' marriage in the 15th century

[...] Sultan Murat⁶⁷ assembled the army with which he intended to conquer the entire Despot's land [*Las-vilayeti*]. Hearing this, [despot] Djuradj Branković⁶⁸ [*Vlk-oglu*] sent emissaries again. He sent them with innumerable gifts and a message: "The dowry (*ceiz*) of my daughter is ready. Send a man, take your woman slave."

The Pashas told the Sultan: "The offer should be accepted". (...) From Skopje they sent Ishak-bey's wife [...] they went straight to Smederevo. Branković sent wives of non-Muslim aristocracy to meet them and organised an unusual welcome. With great respect, they escorted them to Smederevo [...]. They made a list of the young woman's dowry. They gave the list to Uzbek aga. The story goes that, on that occasion, Branković said: "I did not give the dowry to my daughter; I gave it to the Emperor. If he likes (wants), he may give it to this slave of his. If not, he can give it to any other woman slave."

To cut a long story short, they took the girl to Edirne. The Emperor did not organise a wedding for her saying: "Why make a wedding for the daughter of an infidel's spahi?"

Elezović, p.18.

67 Murad II (1421-1451).

68 See text I-8, particularly footnote 18.

IV-24. Christian influence on Muslim Albanians (ca. 1900)

His Christian neighbours influence the Muslim Albanian. He drinks wine, and is particularly fond of beer – I was able to get bottled lager from Munich – and he swears by the Virgin.

Fraser, p.258.



How did Christians and Muslims influence one another? Find other examples of mutual influence.



Why were dynastic marriages used in connecting states? What choices did a Princess have in this context? Were women 'used'?

How does the Ottoman chronicler see Murad's marriage with Mara? What kind of mentality is disclosed by this source?

IV-26. Albanian women (ca. 1810)

I feel no great inclination to speak of the morals of the Albanians. Their women, who are almost all without education and speak no other than their native tongue, are considered as their cattle, and are used as such, (but being the very superior sort), obliged to labour, and often punished with blows. They have, in truth, rather a contempt and even aversion for their females, and there is nothing in any of their occasional inclinations, which can be said to partake of what we call the tender passion. Yet all of them get married who can, as it is a sign of wealth, and as they wish to have a domestic slave. Besides, as in most parts of the country the females are not nearly so numerous as the other sex, the bride often does not bring a portion to her husband, but the man to his wife, and he is obliged to get together about a thousand gurush [*piasters*] before he can expect to be married.

Broughton, p. 136.



For what reasons were the women mentioned in this source treated so badly? What is the opinion of the writer? Try to figure out what his notion of marriage is?

IV-27. Solidarity between Christian women – martyrdom of St. Filotheia (1589)

During those times [...], the women prisoners who were in Athens came from various places. Words cannot describe dear departed Filotheia and the extent of her sympathy and her charity as well as the temptations and the dangers that she suffered for the salvation and recovery of those enslaved women. [...] Four of the captured women have heard the reputation of the Saint woman and when they found the chance they escaped from their masters, who were pushing them to change their faith, and went to find her. She, with her usual concern and kindness, welcomed them and taught them how to obtain courage and face the dangers as well as to not lament their slavery. She also tried, for a long time, to send them back to their homes. When the masters of those women found out what was happening, they went to her house and took her forcefully and brought her in front of the Muslim governor, who put her in jail. The charismatic woman, who at that moment was also a pitiful woman, was ready to sacrifice herself instead of betraying those begging women and to prove in practice what the voice of the Gospel says.

Synaxaristis, pp.325-326.



On February 19, Filotheia died from the wounds inflicted on her. She was sanctified and became one of the spiritual patrons of Athens.



What were the motives of Filotheia? Was her action a crime according to Ottoman laws?

► v51. Lady of Athens (1648)



Asdrachas, ill.71.

IV-28. Charter of the women's guild of soap-makers in Trikki, Thessaly (1738)

The women of the guild of soap makers - Stamoulo, Vassiliki, Margarona, Archonto, Veneto, Angelo, Pagona, Triantafyllia, Chaido and Ekaterina - presented themselves in front of my humble self as chairman and the honourable clerics and dignitaries of our Metropolis of Trikke, and declared that it was an old custom that no men would be involved in this guild or practice this art. Thus, they unanimously agreed and begged us to ratify this agreement and enter it in the sacred codex; and should, sometime in the future, one of them wish to enrol in the guild a daughter or daughter-in-law so as to work in soap she would have to pay five gurush to the guild, as well as pay the other guilds. If any of the women should die, no one shall be permitted to take the tools of the trade which can only be dispensed by the women of the guild. If any outsider attempts to practice the

trade without the permission of these women, in violation of this agreement and of the decree of the Church, they shall be liable to punishment by both the Church and the Turkish authorities and made to pay ten guruh to the guild and fifteen guruh to the Church. We designate this guild as free of men, and it shall be under the care and assistance of the clerics and dignitaries. Whereupon this document was drafted, confirmed by my humble self and witnessed by the honourable clerics and dignitaries of our Metropolis of Trikke and entered in the sacred codex: 1738, July 27.

Giannoulis, p.45.



What mechanisms did the women of Trikki create in order to protect their interests?

IV-29. Divorce in a village near Sofia (1550)

This is to certify in the kadi register that the non-Muslim Peyo, son of Radul, living in the village of Birimirche, a neighbourhood of Sofia, appeared before the shari'a court in the presence of his wife Stoyana, daughter of Nikola, and made the following declaration at his own will:

"I grant a divorce to the above-mentioned Stoyana according to our false custom⁶⁹; from today onwards, she is divorced." After he made this declaration, it was confirmed by the above-mentioned Stoyana, the defendant and recorded at her request.

[...]

Witnesses: Haidar bey; elhac Ali, son of Suleyman, subpoena deliverer; Seid Kasum, son of Seid Mehmed mutevelli; translator: Sinan, son of Abdullah, etc.

Turski Izvori, 2, p.104.



This case is special because the divorce was legalised by the (Muslim) kadi court. In most cases, divorces between Christians were pronounced only by the Christian religious courts.

⁶⁹ Here, this means: according to Christian custom.



Why do you think that Peyo and Stoyana wanted their divorce to be officiated by the kadi court as well as the Christian ones?

► v52. Turkish woman with children (1568)



Nicolay, p.142.

IV-30. Kadi registration of the case of a Cypriot woman obtaining a divorce by converting to Islam (1609)

Husna, daughter of Murad, Armenian wife, says before her husband Mergeri, son of Kuluk, Armenian: "He always treats me cruelly. I do not want him." He denies it. Then Husna is honoured with Islam. After she takes the name 'Ayşe', her husband is invited to Islam, but he does not accept, so 'Ayşe's' separation is ordered.

Jennings 1993, p.141.



Do you think that Husna's conversion was sincere, or just a means to escape a cruel husband?

► **v53. Mountain maid of northern Albania (early 19th century)**



Hegy, Zimanyi, p.149, ill.149.

IV-31. Kadi registration of the divorce of a Muslim man from a Christian woman (1610)

Yusuf, son of Mehmed from Lefkoşa, says before his wife Meryem, daughter of Ilyas, non-Muslim subject [*zimmiye*]: “My wife Meryem is an infidel [*kafire*]. When I invited her to Islam, she did not agree, so I divorced her three times. I am divorced. She is a divorcée”.

Jennings 1993, p.141.



Muslim law allowed a Muslim man to marry a non-Muslim woman, who was allowed to keep her own religion. In this particular case, Yusuf used the religious difference as an additional argument in order to justify the divorce. Note also the very simple procedure of a Muslim divorce.



Was a Muslim divorce easier than a Christian one?

► **v54. Turkish woman in street clothes – French drawing (c. 1630)**



Analyse the way these women are dressed. What are the specific Ottoman elements? Find other pictures featuring women from other parts of Europe in the same period. Compare the way they are dressed.

IV-32. Adultery of a Janissary with a Muslim woman in Istanbul (1591)

It is impossible for me to avoid narrating the story of a Turkish lady who had an affair with our Janissary Mustafa. She was young and her face was quite pretty. Mustafa invited her for entertainment one afternoon and I supplied him with candies and the

best wine. For me, the wine was an especially good one because it was from Bohemia. The lady had a very old husband who had little confidence in her. She did not know how otherwise to reach the place of assignation - in good time that is - at the agreed moment just before sunset (our sergeant usually went out for his prayers at this time). So, she told her husband she was going to the bath. She took also her two maid-servants, who carried her clothes, as usual, in big tubs made of copper covered with carpets, and who were walking just behind her and passing in front of our building. The beautiful women's public bath was not far away. Ruka - the wife of the Turkish Sultan - had the bath built and entry was forbidden to men on penalty of death. The lady, while she was walking and passing by our building, notified the Janissary that she would come to the assignation. The distrustful husband was walking just a little behind her and when she entered the public bath, he stayed opposite it and waited for her. But who is able to foil the wile of a woman? She passed by our house in a green dress, but in the public bath she had changed into the other clothes that she had brought with her and, leaving her maid-servants there, she went out and met the Janissary wearing a red dress. He welcomed her and greeted her in his apartment, he entertained her excellently and after dinner, he let her go out again from the back door. She went to the public bath for a second time, washed and went back to her house with her husband. I cannot admire the wile of the woman to the degree it deserves, and many times the Janissary and I used to laugh when we recalled it.

Mitrowitz, pp.107-108.



Wenceslas Wratilaw von Mitrowitz accompanied the Austrian ambassador to Istanbul in 1591 and proved to be a sensitive observer of Ottoman society.



What was the author's attitude towards adultery?

IV-33. Comments of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu about the Ottoman women (1717)

I never saw in my life so many fine heads of hair. I have counted a hundred and ten of these tresses of one lady, all natural. But, it must be owned that every beauty is more common here than with us. It is surprising to see a young woman that is not very handsome. They have naturally the most beautiful complexions in the world and generally large black eyes. I can assure you with great truth that the court of England, through I believe it the fairest in Christendom, cannot show so many beauties as are under our protection here. They generally shape their eyebrows and both Greeks and Turks have a custom of putting round their eyes on the inside a black tincture that, at a distance, or by candlelight, adds very much to the blackness of them. I fancy many of our ladies would be overjoyed to know this secret [...]

As their morality or good conduct, I can say, like Harlequin, that it is just as it is with you, and the Turkish ladies don't commit one sin the less for not being Christians. Now that I am a little acquainted with their ways I cannot forbear admiring either the exemplary discretion or extreme stupidity of all the writers that have given accounts of them. It is very easy to see they have more liberty than we have, no woman, of what rank so ever being permitted to go in the streets without two muslins, one that covers her face all but her eyes and another that hides the whole dress of her head, and hangs half way down her back and their shapes are also wholly concealed by a thing they call a *ferace*, which no woman of any sort appears without. [...] In winter it is of cloth and in summer plain stuff or silk. You may guess then how effectually this disguises them, that there is no distinguishing the great lady from her slave and it is impossible for the most jealous husband to know his wife when he meets her, and no man dare either touch or follow a woman in the street.

This perpetual masquerade gives them entire liberty of following their inclinations without danger of discovery. [...] Neither have they much to apprehend from the resentment to their husbands, those ladies that are rich having all their money in

their own hands, which they take with them upon a divorce with an addition which he is obliged to give them. [...] It is true, their law permits them four wives, but there is no instance of a man of quality that makes use of this liberty, or of a woman of rank that would suffer it. When a husband happens to be inconstant, as those things will happen, he keeps the mistress in a house apart and visits her as privately as he can, just as it is with you. [...]

Thus you see, dear sister, the manners of mankind do not differ so widely as our voyage writers would make us to believe.

Montagu, pp.70-72.



Lady Montagu was the wife of the British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. Her letters demonstrate not only literary talent, but also sharpness and insider knowledge on Ottoman society.



Taking into account the narrative of Mitrovic (source IV-32), assess whether Lady Montagu was correct about the advantages of Muslim dressing for adulterous women.

Why did Lady Montagu compare the situation of Ottoman women with that of British women favourably? Was it done in a spirit of contradiction, or did she also have valid arguments?

Outline the differences between the positions of the various women in the Ottoman Empire. What were the main causes for these differences? Religion? Social status? Individual behaviour?

Elements of crisis

Many historians agree that in the late 16th century, the Ottoman Empire started to decline and that this decline lasted for more than three centuries, until the final demise of the Empire in the early 20th century. Others disagree, and place the beginning of the decline either in 1683, when the second Ottoman siege of Vienna failed, and the Empire began to lose wars and territories in Europe, or in the early 19th century, when the Ottoman Empire was economically and politically incorporated into a Western-dominated world-system. The theme of Ottoman decline, although largely developed in 20th century historical studies, is not an entirely new construction. The same theme frequently appears in writings of the 16th-17th century, when Ottoman scholars argued that the 'good old order' of the 'golden age' of Süleyman I (1520-1566) had been ruined by disorder and corruption. Historians have recently de-constructed this image, exposing it as an ideological tool in Ottoman elite struggles. Recent studies also demonstrate that the Ottoman Empire had succeeded in overcoming the crisis of the late 16th and early 17th century through a process of modernisation, monetisation and bureaucratisation, which were, in fact, similar to the evolutions of the most significant European and Asian monarchies of early modern times. Thus, they substantiate the argument that the 17th-18th centuries were not a period of continuous decline, but a period of complex modernisation, and in many respects, even a period of growth and development.

This vision does not exclude the presence of numerous elements of crisis. People living in the Ottoman Empire were, like their counterparts throughout the whole early modern world, submitted to various severe constraints and pressures. First of all, physical survival was often difficult. Crops were vulnerable to natural disasters. Fires destroyed both accumulated wealth and basic existential prerequisites, sudden diseases hit people lacking the knowledge and the means necessary to cure them. Taxation was a serious challenge for most households. External warfare became more expensive and debilitated the Ottoman finances. In order to boost revenues, the authorities either increased taxes or devalued the currency, yet these means did not suffice to balance the budget. Sale of offices and outright bribery were means to attract private capital in the functioning of the state, but also generated a nexus of irregular connections, which allowed small groups of officials and intermediaries to drain resources from both the state and the tax-payers.

This chapter documents both the unfolding of various crises, and the efforts to design acceptable solutions for them. Restoring the good old order was one option, seeking ways out of the Ottoman system, another. The sources outline the variety of concrete answers to the challenges of the various crises, and also the serious consequences of some of the answers to them.

Va. 'Natural' Disasters

V-1. Famine in Istanbul (1758)

In this year, people converged in Istanbul as there was famine in most areas. Therefore, famine came into existence in the capital and bread began to be in short supply. A few hundred men would swarm in front of every bakery. They would lay their hands

on half-baked bread loaves. Old people, women and the subjects [*raiyye*] would go hungry. [...] For this reason, people began to buy rice in great quantities. There appeared a scarcity in rice, too. Considering that the fasting month was approaching and that Muslims should not suffer, an order was brought about in the month of Şaban, introducing a quota

of two *okka*⁷⁰ of rice per person. However, in the last day of Şaban, a few hundred wicked women massed in the storehouse of a *zimmi*⁷¹ rice merchant. One of those women unsheathed a big knife and attacked the *zimmi*. The *zimmi* ran away and they looted the rice. The commander of the Janissaries, Nalband Mehmed Pasha, upon hearing of the incident, went to the area to prevent the looting. Let alone stopping the looting, they cursed him and dishonoured him. The commander, therefore, sent his courier Kuzucu Mehmed aga to the Grand Vizier. The aforementioned Kuzucu Mehmed reported: "When I reached him and told him everything, he was in the midst of listening to some musicians. He was not disturbed. He simply told me to take the steward of the Janissaries to the place in question. I took him to the place. The women saw him and dispersed". After this scandal, the commander of the Janissaries was dismissed and the steward of the Janissaries [...] was appointed commander of the Janissaries the following day.. Thanks to strong winds, two days later vessels laden with rice arrived, and rice was available again.

Şemdanizâde, pp.16-17.



The provisioning of a very large city like Istanbul depended on the crops of various provinces. In spite of the efforts of the Ottoman authorities, moments of death and panic could not be avoided, and led to price increases and to popular disorder, which could also become politically disruptive. Famine riots, often led by women, were common not only in the Ottoman Empire, but also in early modern Western Europe.



Describe the economic and psychological mechanisms for coping in times of scarcity in Istanbul.

Why were women the main actors of the famine riot? Would the crowd have plundered the storehouse of a Muslim rice merchant? Would the authorities have reacted more strongly?

70 Ottoman measure, weighing about 1,283 kg.

71 Non-Muslim subject.

V-2. Earthquake in Istanbul (1766)

[...] on the third day which was the 12th of Zilhicce and 14th of May, Thursday [...], half an hour after sunrise, a great earthquake suddenly occurred. Due to its force, people lost all hope and remained motionless. All the buildings, people and animals were destroyed. Those who survived repented for their sins and renewed their faith. After four minutes, the quake subsided. Istanbul was in dust and smoke. After the smoke disappeared, it was found out that the Mosque of the Conqueror had totally collapsed. The mosque of Sultan Bayezid and that of Mihrimah were heavily damaged. The Inn of the Sugar-sellers, the praying area [*Dua Meydanı*] in the covered bazaar as well as the market of hat-makers and the Bezzazistan area were damaged. The Old Palace, the walls of Istanbul, the [citadel of the] Seven Towers, the Vizier Hani, the Slave Market, other brick and stone inns and mosques and some wooden houses were damaged. Some buildings in Galata and Üsküdar were damaged. Even the ostensibly intact buildings suffered damage that only became apparent later on. The New Palace, too, suffered from damages in its structure and walls. It was found that 4,000 people died. Indeed, as Istanbul is shaped like a triangle, there will be no escaping earthquake and fire.

Şemdanizâde, pp.85-86.



Why did the mosques suffer more damage than other buildings in Istanbul?

V-3. Plague in Bucharest (1813)

In the month of October, death took the stronghold by means never seen anywhere before. The city seemed to burst, and people ran wherever their feet would take them. The place was deserted. But what was there to see? Wherever you turned, you would hear: "Away, on the side, here come the sextons with the dead", eight of them, or even ten, the dead, one on top of the other, followed by a party of people in rags and crying children. And they would carry them all through the slums, until they could not help them

in any way any more and they would lie dead on the streets until the sextons would come with their hearses and take them away. As for us, the living, we would consider ourselves already dead and would walk around in a daze. Then they started to bury one another in their gardens until these got full. There where it (the disease) spread, only one or two out of ten people would still be alive, and in some other places, not even one would survive. And, how many, one could see walking, some who had survived the disease, others from the host. Priests died in their churches. Others ran away. Holy churches would remain without anyone to officiate and it broke one's heart to see them like this. The slums went empty. And death was horribly present everywhere, from August to January. Then, from January, it slowed down. The owners of the big houses did not get away from it either, except for maybe the important boyars, who locked themselves inside their courtyards and were guarded by an army. As for here, in

Bucharest, how should I put it, there were people to bury the dead, even if sometimes the dogs ate some of the bodies in the gardens, which, out of fear, had not been buried deep enough. In the villages, but also outside them, both the inhabitants of the cities and the peasants were eaten by dogs, because nobody was there to bury them [...]. And, in hospitals, they would build up piles of 100 naked bodies, young men and women, children, old people, rich people, poor people, and these bodies would all swell up. Then they would dig ditches and throw them in, one on top of another, the Gypsy, the boyar, the Jew and the Armenian, without treating anyone differently.

Corfus, pp.340–341.



What national, religious and social differences counted in such an extreme situation? What was it like being a "living-dead" in the plagued city? In which ways did 'disasters' push aside humanity?

Vb. The political crisis in Istanbul

V-4. Solutions for the crisis of the Ottoman State in the memoir of Koçi-bey (ca. 1630)

I have penned this treatise and submitted it to the exalted, majestic Sultan, so that he should be informed of the reasons of the tribulations and changes of this world and he should, by God's grace, find cures for them. In this way, the Sultan can rectify things. Let it be known first that the basis of order in the realm and in the people is the observation of the religious rules and of the religious law, the Şeriat. Secondly, the Sultan should treat kindly and observe the rights of all the classes, the scholars who take care of the affairs of the subjects who were entrusted by God and of the warriors who offer their lives in the path of war [*gaza*]. He should, however, punish and treat the unworthy ones badly. Likewise, he should observe and uphold the laws of the late Sultans that are in circulation. It is hoped that, in this way, things will improve and be ordered and the state's prestige will be renewed. Order belongs to the Sultan.

Koçi Bey, p.19.



During the second half of the 16th and the 17th century, a large corpus of Ottoman political literature emerged which described the symptoms of political crisis and tried to suggest improvements. Most of this advice nevertheless focused on measures aimed at restoring the 'good old times', and were of little practical relevance.



Did the advice of Koçi Bey correlate with the concrete causes of the crisis, or was it more general? What advice might have been more effective?

V-5. The envoys of the Moldavian Prince Constantin Mavrocordat argue over the need to bribe numerous people in Istanbul (1741)

Your Highness, you scold us for the gifts given, but we could not have succeeded in anything without giving them. It is, in any case, not right not to give any gifts either, since times are such that both the

end of the Christian cause, the above-mentioned Archbishop sent his cousin Georgi Peyachevich with Bulgarian troops to Karansebesh and Siklover to meet General Veterani. On his way there [Peyachevich] joined the Serb army and [together] with the Wallahians they took Orshova and decapitated almost all the Turks.

But when, in 1688, the above-mentioned Georgi together with his Bulgarian troops, the four captains of Kopilovetz, the four of Chiprovetz and others, together with Chaki's [hussars] wanted to cut up the battle torch of Tyokyoli⁷³ (and destroy it), they were betrayed by a deserter, and thousands of Bulgarians were killed in the bloody battle, which started suddenly near Kulovitza and in which they were totally defeated. After the battle, the remains (of the troops) withdrew to Chiprovetz and for a while successfully defended the town against Tyokyoli, unwilling to surrender it, although he [Tyokyoli], using the fact that he was a Christian, [tried] to lure them by promising them dignity and wealth in Transylvania. Finally, the town was taken by assault and conquered by the Turkish and Tartar hordes arriving there, and everything around it was ruined and burned, and the people killed. It is rumoured that the enormous wealth, laid up over many years and increased during the long peaceful period, was carried away on more than 100 carts. But none of the Christians there could save anything apart from their lives and only a few of them were able to do so under difficult circumstances.

Spisarevska, pp.201-202.



After the Ottoman defeat before Vienna (1683), the Habsburg armies occupied Buda (1686) and Belgrade (1688), creating the impression that the collapse of the Ottoman rule in South East Europe was imminent. The Catholic community around Chiprovetz in Bulgaria tried to take advantage of the advance of the Habsburg troops, but the rebellion failed and the community was destroyed with the survivors escaping to Wallachia and Transylvania.

73 Imre Thököly, leader of the anti-Habsburg resistance to the Hungarian nobility. With his troops (*kurucz*), he fought on the side of the Ottomans in the war of 1683-1699.



Why did the Bulgarians rebel?
Why did Thököly and his Christian troops repress the Bulgarian uprising?

V-9. Serbians flee fearing Ottoman reprisals (1690) – the testimony of Atanasije Djakon (Deacon) Srbin

And Serbs boarded the ships [...]. There were over ten thousand ships and they all fled upstream on the Danube river and arrived in the city of Buda, which is under the [Habsburg] Emperor's rule. Thus, the Lord unleashed, on Serbian land, the three wounds of which David received only one in his city: first death, then again sword and death in water, slavery and severe hunger, so that the Serbian people had no other choice but to eat dog meat and the flesh of dead persons who had died of hunger. All this happened in my time and my eyes have seen the bodies of dead Serbian people all over the streets of Belgrade. Its villages and roads were littered with the dead who had not been buried. Those, still alive, had no appearance at all, nor human beauty. They were dark from hunger and their faces were like "Ethiopian" faces and so they died, and less than one tenth of them survived.

Agapova-Ilić, pp.134-135.



Like the Catholic Bulgarians from Chiprovetz, many Orthodox Serbs cooperated with the Habsburgs in 1688-1689. Yet, in 1690, the Ottomans once again gained the upper hand and re-conquered Belgrade. Under these circumstances, a large number of Orthodox Serbs fled and were settled with significant privileges in the Habsburg-controlled territories (Slavonia and Hungary).



Try to distinguish the Biblical references from the narrative of Atanasije Srbin. What remains as indubitable historical fact?

Porte of the Grand Vizier and the ones around him are extremely greedy and everybody, even the least important of them, are like beasts. When they ask for something, they first do it gently, then, they start cursing, using their power and threatening, so that one cannot do otherwise. There is no monarchy in the Empire, as there used to be during the reign of Ibrahim-Pasha⁷². After the Grand Vizier, each high official from the Outer Service is like an independent Vizier. The head of the couriers [Chausb-basha] is as powerful as the deputy of the Grand Vizier [*kethüda*] and the head clerk [*reis*] is quite the same. Those following the Great Vizier are beasts along with the ones on the outside: Haiati is, as you know him, his deputy does not encounter any difficulties in speaking directly to the aga of the Girls [*darisadet*], the former scribe [*jazegî*], Ali-efendi speaks in his place and

everything lies in his hands; Esad-molla is candidate to the office of *mufti*, Pirizade is an intimate counselor, Cara Halif Efendizade is highly esteemed, Amegi has a lot of power and is more familiar with the Grand Vizier than Chisrieli with the aga of the Girls. We now leave aside those of smaller importance like Chauszade, Sachir-bei and some others who, if not bought, sting like wasps and open mortal wounds.

Murgescu, pp.165-166.



Compare and contrast the recommendations of Koci Bey and the realities described by the Moldavian envoys?

Were the acts of bribery simple accidents or an accepted part of the system? Was not giving bribes an option? At what cost?

Vc. Wars, rebellions and human turmoil

V-6. Villagers fleeing to towns (1665)

The inhabitants of the villages Kokre and Godjakovo from the Prilep district [*kaza*] went to the shari'a court together with the voyvoda Ibrahim, voyvoda of the Prilep estate [*has*], one of the estates of my Grand Vizier [...] and announced that the villages of the mentioned estate were free and that nobody should interfere there. However, the Governor-General [*beylerbeyî*], the Governor [*sancakbeyî*] and other officials together with many people and horsemen stay there and, besides having food such as sheep, lambs, honey, oil and other products for free, they also bother them by asking money for undue taxes [*tekalif-i shaka*] even though they do not have an honest order for doing so. Because of this, the subjects [*reaya*] from the villages of Veprchani, Peshtani, Dunje and Kalen from the mentioned estate, who had settled there a long time ago, fled the villages in 1662, 1663 and 1664, and settled in the towns and villages of our district [*kaza*]. The men-

tioned voyvoda went to them and, since the runaway subjects did not want to return, he sent a report in which he asked for an honest order.

This order has therefore been written, on the condition, further on, that the subjects are not disturbed with requests for undue taxes without honest order. The subjects who ran away from the mentioned villages and are noted in the registers [*defter*] of the estate, have to move back to the old villages and resettle there again.

Odbrani, I, pp.282-283.



Why did the villagers flee their village? How did the officials react? Was their reaction adequate?

V-7. Rebellion of Mehmed aga Boyaji-oglu in Cyprus (ca.1680)

[...] a narrative of the revolt of the famous Mehmed aga Boyaji-oglu, which appears to have happened about 1680. This narrative I get directly from that

72 Ibrahim Pasha Nevshehirli, Grand Vizier in 1718-1730.

worthy gentleman, Monsieur Benoît Astier, Consul of France, who has, up to this present year 1788, presided in a highly becoming manner over the honourable guild of French merchants in Cyprus [...] his statement in his own words: 'I learnt something from popular tradition, and I also obtained excellent information from the lips of an aged Turk of 97, and from a Greek almost as old, who had both been eye-witnesses of a rebellion which occurred in this island about eighty years ago, and lasted seven whole years. Cyprus was then, like Rhodes and the islands of the [Aegean] Archipelago, under the rule of the Ottoman admiral [*Kapudan pasha*]. The yearly tax [*harac*] due to the Porte was collected by a special collector [*haracci*]; the *ma'ishet* was collected on behalf the admiral; and the tax in kind [*nuzul*] was assigned for the maintenance of the governor sent by that officer [the admiral] [...]

The agas of Levkosia who farmed these imposts, sometimes one sometimes another of them, fell to rivalry and quarrelling; then they took up arms and attacked one another, until Mehmed aga Boyaji-oglu got the mastery over them all, was proclaimed leader, and stood out as a rebel for seven years. He paid every year to the collector sent by the Porte the appointed tax, which the collectors had hitherto to beg for, and used to keep for their own ends. He appointed in all the districts [*kazilik*] men devoted to himself, who were the administrators. The Porte, learning that this Boyaji-oglu had thrown off all pretence of subjection, sent to Cyprus, Cholak Mehmed Pasha with a force to restore order. They received them at Levkosia, but after a few months' space, when he tried to assert his authority over the said Boyaji-oglu, the rebel compelled him to leave Levkosia, and to retire to the estate [*chiftlik*] of Qubat-oglu, where he lived as a neat-herd, every care being taken to prevent news of his present condition reaching the ministry. Yet not long after news did reach them, and forthwith Chifut-oglu Ahmed Pasha was ordered to cross from Caramania to Cyprus, with an armed force to release Cholak Mehmed Pasha, and to wipe out the rebel chief.

Ahmed Pasha crossed accordingly, landed at Acanthou, and marched straight to Kythraia, to seize

at once on the mills, so that no corn might be ground, and he could stop the supplies of Levkosia, the rebels' stronghold. There he stayed for two months, and Cholak Mehmed came to meet him. [...]

The city then found itself without bread, and the pasha, knowing that he had help at hand, though no one dared to declare himself on account of the rebel, proposed to Boyaji-oglu to allow him to withdraw, sending him a passport as a safe-conduct. The rebel, seeing that the pasha had the stronger party with the city, left it by night with one company of trusty guards, and marched first to Levkara, and then to Levka, where the deputy [*kehaya*] of the pasha surprised him, killed twenty-eight of his en, and took thirty-two others prisoners. [...] Pursued on all sides by the pasha's troops, he made for Ammochostos in all secrecy, hoping to fortify himself there, but before he arrived they had shut the gates, and the pasha's force routed the few soldiers left to him. He fled with six men only to Pyla, then to Larnaca, intending to go to Lemesos, but he was caught in the district of Koilanon and carried to Levkosia, where the pasha hanged him by night, and on the morrow he was exposed with his followers, who were hung up alive, on hooks through their chins. And thus, after a lapse of seven years, ended this rebellion. All his followers and several rebel leaders were caught and put to death.

Luke, pp.32-35.



What options did people have when they rebelled in the Ottoman Empire? What would you have done in their place?

Compare the fate of the different rebels in the Ottoman Empire? How feasible was it to negotiate with the authorities?

V-8. Report to the Pope about the Chiprovtsi rebellion (1688)

The following is said about the [Catholic] Archbishop of Bulgaria, Joan Stefan Knezhevich and Georgi Peyachevich:

After being persuaded and encouraged in a personal letter by Emperor Leopold to help the happy

V-10. Moldavian uprising against the Ottomans (1711)

And then Prince Dumitrașco [*Dumitrașco-vodă*] called his boyars, as many as had remained with him, that is: Nicolai Costin the Chancellor [*logofăt*], Ioan Sturdza, the magistrate [*vornic*], Lordachi Ruset, the magistrate, and Ilie Catargiu, the treasurer [*vistiernic*], and told them that he had called the Russians, and that they were already crossing the river Prut at Zagarance.

And then all the boyars, on hearing this, rejoiced and answered joyfully to the Prince [*vodă*] saying: "It was a good thing to do, your Highness, because we were afraid you would go to the Turks, and we were planning, if you went to the Turks, to leave you and bow in front of the Russians". And they were glad. Only Lordachi Ruset, the magistrate, said: "You've acted in a hurry, your Highness, by calling the Russians. You should have waited, your Highness, to see how their power really fares".

Prince Dumitrașco answered with these words: "There was no more time left for me to wait, I was afraid the Turks would get me. Also, many of you have deserted me already and you don't share the same thoughts and faith as me".

And then, Prince Dumitrașco mounted his horse and went to meet the Russians at the river Prut [...].

Then the Moldavians, as soon as they saw the Russians, being accustomed to plunder, started, some with, and some without order, to do so, when seeing that the situation was heating up, to slay the Turks and take others as prisoners, some to lași, and others to some other boroughs, wherever they would find them, all over the country. And they would strip them of their money, of their treasures, of their horses, clothes, oxen, sheep, of the honey and the wax and of everything else they would find. And the groceries were emptied into the streets, so that even children could take their fill. And all the old women had enough raisins, figs and peanuts. And the Turks, whom they did not slay, were taken naked, as slaves, to the Prince. Some of them happened to be hidden by their friends, if they could get to their friends. And afterwards, the Turks hidden

by their friends were of great use to those who had given them shelter.

Neculce, pp.540-542.



The Ottoman-Russian war of 1710-1711 generated hopes among the Orthodox in South East Europe that Peter the Great (1682-1725), who had defeated Sweden in 1709, would be able to free them from Ottoman rule. The Moldavian Prince, Dimitrie Cantemir (1693; 1710-1711), joined the Russians but could not prevent their ultimate defeat in the battle of Stănilești (1711).



Were the boyars totally obedient towards the Prince, or did they have their own political agenda? Compare this source with source II-21.

What were the reasons for the anti-Turkish violence at the peak of the uprising? Did all Christian Moldavians approve of the violence? What may have been the motives of the helpers?

V-11. Diary of a Habsburg officer describing the siege of Dubica (1788)

The extension of the battle for Dubica on the 22nd of August was even harder. Loudon⁷⁴ was surprised by the tough resistance of Dubica's defenders, so he ordered the city to be burned down. At 11 o'clock, murderous cannon fire started implying conflagration in the city. Already, after the extinguishing of the fire by the defenders, 24 people sneaked up to ramparts of the city with the mission of throwing an inflammable mass on wooden beams over the ramparts, but the defenders noticed and drove them away. The throwing of inflammable objects continued on the 23rd of August. To disturb the defenders in their attempts to extinguish the fires, strong cannon fire was set. Dubica's fortress burned all night long between the 23rd and the 24th of August and the cannon fire was unstoppable. And then, on the 25th of August, two batteries, with three cannons each, were placed near the city walls. Fire was concentrated on the city's en-

74 The Commander of the Habsburg army.

trance and the cannonade resulted in the demolition of Dubica's fortress. But even then, the besieged did not give up the fight. The siege continued on the 26th of August but, from the remains of the fortress, defenders responded with gun and cannon-fire. The attackers opened full barrage fire. And then, at around eight o'clock in the morning, the fire from the fortress was silenced. At around nine o'clock, one man from the fortress came to the Austrian headquarters to talk. He asked for a cease-fire, which the Austrian side agreed to. In the name of the garrison's crew, he proposed to give up the fortress in return for the permission for the defenders to go free. The Austrian side did not agree, they asked for an unconditional surrender. Then he begged for a three-hour period to discuss the situation with the crew, and permission for this was granted. After three hours of discussion the Ottoman commander [bey] arrived with eight companions, and the official surrender of the fortress was complete.

Dubica's fortress or, better said, 'Dubica's pile of rocks' was finally overcome and fell into the hands of the Austrian army.

Sljivo, pp.91-92.



Did the Ottomans fight well at Dubica? Why did they still surrender?

V-12. Insecurity when travelling in Albania (ca. 1900)

There was a moment of excitement. We were on a patch of level country, when suddenly round the back of a wood wheeled half a dozen Albanians armed to the teeth. The advance guard pulled rein, swung round their horses, unslung their rifles, and stood in their stirrups ready for eventualities. I confess that, as these hills men came dashing along, my hand wandered to my hip pocket where my revolver was carried. The soldiers spread as though to be ready to open fire. But the Albanians, warlike though they appeared, had no warlike intentions.

They rather enjoyed the fright of the Turks, of whom, however, they took no notice, although they gave me a smile and a salute as they rode by.

Fraser, pp.237-38.



Was the widespread possession of arms beneficial for the development of South-East Europe at the beginning of the 20th century? Argue both in favour and against this idea.

V-13. Raid of Topal Ibrahim in Kazanlik (1809)

There was a raid on the outlaws [*daglii*] in the town of Kazanlik⁷⁵ in April 1809, under the leadership of Topal [=limp] Ibrahim who, on his entering the town [...], summoned the district notable [*ayan*] and the mayor [*muhtar*] of the subjects [*reaya*] to tell him how many taxes the town pays and to whom. [...]. Then Topal Ibrahim told them that he would not destroy the town or set it on fire if they collected the same amount of taxes for him and sent an express messenger to Istanbul to intercede for a ferman with Sultan Mahmud, so that he, Topal Ibrahim, would collect the taxes for the following ten years.

[...] But, after taking the money, Topal Ibrahim told the mayor Stoyan Nikolov: "I give you this letter (it was open) to Mustafa Bairaktar, who is now Vizier in Istanbul and if, in 40 days, you don't bring me the ferman, I will burn the town to ashes. Until then, I will be staying here with my people and will be waiting for the deadline; meanwhile you must order your people to feed us pies and chicken. I hope you've understood".

[...] On the day the term given was over, Topal Ibrahim, furious that the mayor had lied to him, went out alone and speared Hristo Tomov in the street. This was taken as a sign to start killing the Christians, who had locked themselves inside their houses.

Stambolski, pp.28-30.

75 Town in the Balkan Mountains, in Central Bulgaria.



During the first decades of the 19th century, several military leaders, some of them who acted as tax-collectors as well, brought the Ottoman provinces under their control, taking advantage of the fact that the central power, weakened by the war with Russia and by the Janissary rebellions in Istanbul, was unable to assert its prominence. It is ironic that Mustafa Bairaktar, who had started as such an *ayan* in northern Bulgaria and had become Grand Vizier (1808), had already been killed in Istanbul in November 1808, i.e. five months before Topal Ibrahim sent the mayor of Kazanlik to him.



Explain the quasi-legal method of robbing used by Topal Ibrahim? Why didn't he simply attack and rob the town? Was he an ordinary bandit or a man with political ambitions? What were the distinctions between local strongmen and outlaws?

V-14. Combination of catastrophes in the narrative of the Bulgarian teacher Todor from Pirdop, near Sofia (1815-1826)

Let everybody reading this or listening to this, be aware of and wonder about what God showed with His rage in our times - something that has never happened since the creation of this world. In 1814, God sent a punishment or plague from east to west and half the people died. There had been plague epidemics before, but they had never taken so many lives. From then on, until 1820, during the reign of the damned Sultan Mahmud⁷⁶, God gave us peace [...]. And in March 1821, there came a devil from Yalina called Ali Pasha, who rebelled against the Sultan. The Sultan recruited an army of about 500,000

to fight him, but they could not defeat him as his fortress was very strong. The Sultan's army stayed there for a long time and burned many villages and towns, captured and killed many Christians, which resulted in an increase in the price of flour to 60 *gurush a kile*⁷⁷. This resulted in a disastrous famine among the poor people. After that, on 25 March, there came another devil to Wallachia – Vlah Bey⁷⁸, who summoned an army and went rioting and looting the villages. Then, from all parts of European Turkey [Rumelia], armies came to fight him and they fought a lot. They burned many villages along the Danube, captured and killed the people.

Then the damned Sultan gave an order and Patriarch Grigoriy Nepitash was dragged out of the church during the service and hanged on the second day of Easter. Many people died on this day, some were hanged, others were slain: 21 bishops, coadjutors, monks, priests and deacons. Then they started killing the Christians. Only God knows how many Christians were killed. A few Bulgarians, many Greeks and Albanians [*Arnauts*] were all killed in Istanbul. Women and children were drowned in the sea.

Then an army left Istanbul and went to Morea, where they killed many people from the villages. The citizens of Morea ran to the sea and barricaded themselves on an island, but many of them [...] were killed there.

Georgieva, Tzanev, pp.356-357.



Assess the explanation provided by Todor from Pirdop for the various disasters in the early 19th century. Do you agree with it?

⁷⁷ Ottoman unit of capacity, varying locally in the range of 25-400 l.

⁷⁸ Literally "Wallachian prince"; it is unclear whether it relates to Alexander Ypsilanti, son of a former Wallachian prince, who led the Greek uprising against the Turks, or to Tudor Vladimirescu (1780-1821), leader of the Wallachian revolution in 1821.

⁷⁶ Mahmud II (1808-1839).

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Coordinators

General Coordinator

Christina Koulouri, Chair of the History Education Committee of the CDRSEE, is a Professor of Modern History at the University of the Peloponnese (Greece). Born in 1962 in Athens, she obtained her PhD at the Paris I – Pantheon Sorbonne in January 1990. In 1994, she received the Award “Nicolas Svoronos” for historical research and published works. She was a member of the project group of the Council of Europe on “Learning and Teaching the History of Europe of the 20th century” (1996-2000). She was a member of Scientific Committees for the authorization of history textbooks in Greek secondary schools. She is also the author of several books and articles on the teaching of history, the history of historiography, textbooks, national memory and national identity and the history of sports. Her main publications include: *Dimensions idéologiques de l'historicité en Grèce (1834–1914)*. *Les manuels scolaires d'histoire et de géographie*, Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 1991; *Sport et société bourgeoise. Les associations sportives en Grèce 1870-1922*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2000; *Clio in the Balkans. The Politics of History Education*, Thessaloniki, CDRSEE, 2002 (editor); *Athens, Olympic City, 1896-1906*, Athens, IOA, 2004 (editor)

Workbook 1 – Ottoman Empire

Halil Berktaş, Historian, is currently an Associate Professor and programme convenor for History at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of Sabanci University (Istanbul, Turkey). He was born in 1947. He holds a BA in Economics from Yale University (1968) and a Phd in History from the University of Birmingham. He has worked at the Faculty of Political Science of Ankara University, the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, and Bogazici University in Istanbul. He has visited several foreign universities: the British Council Fellowship, Wolfson European Studies and the Center for Middle East Studies; NEXUS Senior Fellow, Center for Advanced Studies in Sofia (Bulgaria), 2002-2003. He is Vice-Chairperson of the History Education Committee of the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe (Thessaloniki, Greece); a founding member and former Vice-President of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly (Turkey). He is also a member of the editorial advisory boards for: the Journal of Peasant Studies, the Journal of Agrarian Change, the Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies. His main publications (in Turkish) include: “Republican Ideology and the (historian) Fuat Koprulu”; “From Tribe to Feudalism”, “The closing of an Era” and (in English): “New approaches to State and Peasant in Ottoman History (1991, co-edited with Suraya Faroqhi). His current research interests are: Historiography, comparative approaches to Balkan Nationalisms, the initial construction and the Kemalist redefinition of Turkish national memory amidst the nation-building traumas and ethnic cleansings of the early 20th Century.

Bogdan Murgescu, born in 1963, is a Professor of History at the Bucharest University. He was been a Roman Herzog Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in Berlin (1998-2000) and Visiting Professor at the University of Pittsburgh (2002) and the Central European University, Budapest (2004). He is currently the Director of the Center for Administrative, Cultural and Economic Studies of the University of Bucharest, Vice-President of the Romanian Society for Historical Sciences, and national coordinator of the Romanian history competition MY HISTORY - EUSTORY. He has published numerous academic studies and several books on the history of Romania, on Ottoman-Romanian relations, on the economic and social history of the 15th-20th centuries and on recent historiography. He has also coordinated eight volumes, among which *Romania and Europe. Modernisation as Temptation, Modernisation as Threat* (Bucureşti, 2000), *Istoria României în texte* [Romanian History in Texts] (Bucureşti, 2001) and *Revoluția română din decembrie 1989: istorie și memorie* [The Romanian Revolution of December 1989: History and Memory] (Iași, 2007).

Workbook 2 – Nations and States in Southeast Europe

Mirela-Luminița Murgescu is a Professor at the Faculty of History at the University of Bucharest. She has participated in

several international projects in the fields of textbook analysis, nationalism, social and cultural history. She acquired a Mellon Fellowship and a DAAD Fellowship in 2000, a Korber Senior Fellowship, Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen, in Vienna in 2006, and participated in various research stages at the MSH in Paris (2003, 2004, 2005). Besides numerous academic studies and book chapters, she has edited six volumes and also published *Între "bunul creștin" și "bravul român". Rolul școlii primare în construirea identității naționale românești (1831-1878)* [Between the "Good Christian" and the "Brave Romanian". The part of elementary school in constructing the Romanian national identity (1831-1878)], Iași, 1999 and *Istoria din ghiozdan. Memorie și manuale școlare în România anilor 1990* [History from the school bag. Memory and schoolbooks in Romania during the 1990s], București, 2004; *Rumänische Historiographie und Geschichtsbilder (Innensicht)*, in Thede Kahl, Michael Metzeltin, Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu (hrsg.), "Rumänien". Sonderband der "Österreichischen Osthefte", Wien, LIT Verlag, 2006, pp.313-325.

Workbook 3 – Balkan Wars

Valery Kamenov Kolev, was born in 1960 in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. He received an M.A. in History and a M.A in English in 1986 at Sofia University. He has taught Modern Bulgarian history (1878-1944) at Sofia University since 1988 and at the National Academy of Fine Arts in Sofia since 1999. He received his Ph.D. in History in 2001. He is a member of the Editorial Board of "Minalo", a historical magazine, since 1994. He is a member of the Curriculum committees in history and in civic education at the Ministry of Education and Science. He is the co-author of a History textbook for the 10th grade. His main fields of interest are: state and local government, political and social life, and foreign policy.

Workbook 4 – World War II

Krešimir Erdelja was born in 1968 in Zagreb, Croatia. He studied History and Geography in Zagreb University from where he graduated and wrote the thesis: "Relation of the Independent State of Croatia towards writers and literature". He works as a history teacher in a primary school in Zagreb. He has been involved in history textbook writing. Together with Igor Stojaković, he is the author of several history textbooks, readers and workbooks for the 7th and 8th grade of Primary School and the 1st grade of Secondary School.

Contributors

Boro BRONZA,
History researcher, Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Helian DEMIRI,
Lecturer at the Aleksander Xhuvant University, Albania.

Ljupka HRISTOVA,
History teacher, FYR of Macedonia.

Nikola JORDANOVSKI,
Phd Candidate at the Graduate School for Social Research, Warsaw, born in the FYR of Macedonia.

Niyazi Mustafa KIZILYUREK,
Associate Professor at the University of Cyprus, Turkish Studies Department.

Angelos KYRIAKOUDIS,
History teacher, Cyprus.

Florin POPOVICI,
Brasov Country Division of the National Archives, PhD candidate at the History Institute of Bucharest, Romania.

Bozo REPE,
Professor in the Department of History, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Milan RISTOVIC,
Professor, Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Belgrade and Head of the Society for Social History, Serbia and Montenegro.

Araks SAHINER,
PhD in History, Head of the Social Science Department at
MEF Schools, Turkey.

Andrei SORA,
Editor of Historical Journals, Bucharest, Romania.

Vladimir Georgiev STANEV,
PhD candidate at the University of Sofia, Department of

History, and History teacher at the Mathematics School in
Sofia, Bulgaria.

Igor STOJAKOVIC,
History teacher and co-writer of history textbooks for pri-
mary schools, Zagreb, Croatia.

Lina VENTURA,
Associate Professor in the Social and Educational Policy
Department, University of the Peloponnese, Greece.

List of History Teachers

Kresimir Alajbeg, Zagreb

Arzu Aydin, Istanbul

Marilena Bercea, Bucharest

Hristo Berov, Sofia

Radu Cerkez, Bucharest

Emina Dautovic, Bucharest

Bojana Dujkovic, Banja Luka

Irena Lilkova Garkova, Plovdiv

Entela Jorgii, Tirana

Alma Kasaruho, Tirana

Hayrettin Kaya, Istanbul

Yordanka Hristova Karageurova, Sofia

Snjezana Koren, Zagreb

Davor Koznjak, Zagreb

Eliza Kyriakou, Nicosia

Angelos Kyriakoudes, Limassol

Maria Kyriazi, Thessaloniki

Anastasia Kyrkini-Koutoula, Athens

Margita Madunic, Zagreb

Codruta Matei, Bucharest

Valentina Maver, Ljubljana

Mire Mladenovski, Skopje

Nada Molerovik, Skopje

Sorin Oane, Ramnicu – Valcea

Nuket Oren, Istanbul

Valentin Maxim Oros, Cluj

Mutlu Ozturk, Istanbul

Adrian Papajani, Tirana

Maria Philipidou, Paphos

Nicu Pohoata, Bucharest

Jelka Razpotnik, Ljubljana

Vassiliki Sakka, Athens

Ljupka Smilanovska, Skopje

Nevenka Sres, Ljubljana

Angela Toader, Bucharest

Elvan Tongal, Istanbul

Fatmirishe Xemali, Tirana

Nenad Zarkovic, Belgrade

Maria Zografaki, Xanthi

MAP 2: THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND EUROPE (1600)



THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE CIRCA YEAR 1600

France	Independent state	Sofya ■	City	c.	County	Notes: All Ottoman eyalets are written in upper case. For dependent states, the outline color indicates the overlordship.
Lebanon	Dependent state	Mantova □	City-state	d.	Duchy	
Hungary	Division of a state	Monferrat □	Dependent city-state	gd	Grand Duchy	
EYALET	Province	Spoleto □	City-province	K.	Kingdom	
Banu Sellab	People	S. Saruhan	Sanjak	E.	Eyalet	



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CENTER FOR DEMOCRACY AND RECONCILIATION IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE
Krispou 9, Ano Poli
GR- 54634, Thessaloniki
Greece

