

THE CAMBRIDGE
HISTORY OF

TURKEY

VOLUME 2

The Ottoman Empire
as a World Power,
1453–1603

EDITED BY
SURAIYA N. FAROQHI
KATE FLEET

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF
TURKEY

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With the conquest of Constantinople and the extinguishing of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, the Ottoman Empire moved into a new phase of expansion during which it emerged in the sixteenth century as a dominant political player on the world scene. With territory stretching around the Mediterranean from the Adriatic Sea to Morocco, and from the Caucasus to the Caspian Sea, the Ottomans reached the apogee of their military might in a period seen by many later Ottomans, and much later historians, as a golden age in which the state was strong, the sultan's might unquestionable, and intellectual life and the arts flourishing.

Volume 2 of *The Cambridge History of Turkey* examines this period from the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 to the accession of Ahmed I in 1603. The essays, written by leading scholars in the field, assess the considerable expansion of Ottoman power and the effervescence of the Ottoman intellectual and cultural world through literature, art and architecture. They also investigate the challenges that faced the Ottoman state, particularly in the later period, as the empire experienced economic crises, revolts and long, drawn-out wars.

SURAIYA N. FAROQHI is Professor of History at Istanbul Bilgi University. Her publications include *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It* (2004); *The Ottoman Empire: A Short History* (2008); *Artisans of Empire: Crafts and Craftspeople under the Ottomans* (2009); and, as editor, *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume 3: The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603–1839* (2006).

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THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF

TURKEY

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The Cambridge History of Turkey represents a monumental enterprise. The History, comprising four volumes, covers the period from the end of the eleventh century, with the arrival of the Turks in Anatolia, through the emergence of the early Ottoman state, and its development into a powerful empire in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, encompassing a massive territory from the borders of Iran in the east, to Hungary in the west, and North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula in the south. The last volume covers its destruction in the aftermath of the First World War, and the history of the modern state of Turkey which arose from the ashes of empire. Chapters from an international team of contributors reflect the very significant advances that have taken place in Ottoman history and Turkish studies in recent years.

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Istanbul Bilgi University

KATE FLEET

University of Cambridge



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Contributors

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Chronology

1444–6, 1451–81

1451	Mehmed II Fatih Campaign against Karaman
1453	Ottoman conquest of Constantinople
1454–5	Ottoman campaigns in Serbia
1455	Fall of the Genoese settlements of Old and New Phokaea
1456	Conquest of Lemnos and Enez
1456	Unsuccessful Ottoman siege of Belgrade
1456	Capture of Athens
1457	Death of George Branković
1457	Papal fleet active in the Aegean
1459	Conquest of Serbia
1459	Fall of Genoese colony of Amasra
1460	Ottoman conquest of the Peloponnese
1461	Conquest of Sinop
1461	Ottoman capture of the Byzantine empire of Trebizond (Trabzon)
1462	Submission of Wallachia
1462	Conquest of Lesbos (Midilli)
1463	Conquest of Bosnia
1463–79	Ottoman–Venetian war
1466	Conquest of Herzegovina
1468	Death of George Kastriote (Scanderbeg)
1468, 1469	Campaigns against Karaman
1470	Conquest of Negroponte
1471, 1472	Campaigns against Karaman
1473	Ottoman defeat of Uzun Hasan at the battle of Otlukbeli (Başkent)
1474	End of the principality of Karaman
1475	Ottoman conquest of Caffa (Kefe) and Tana (Azov) Submission of Crimea
1476	Ottoman conquest of Wallachia
1480	Unsuccessful Ottoman siege of Rhodes
1480	Ottoman conquest of Otranto

Chronology

1481–1512

1481	Ottoman withdrawal from Otranto
1482	Flight of Cem to the Hospitallers
1484	Ottoman conquest of Kilia and Akkerman
1485–91	Ottoman–Mamluk war
1495	Death of Cem
1497	Consolidation of Ottoman control of Moldavia
1499–1503	Ottoman–Venetian war
1500	Modon conquered
1500	Conquest of Coron
1501	Ottoman conquest of Durrës (Durazzo)
1501	Isma‘il’s conquest of Tabriz
1508	Isma‘il’s conquest of Baghdad
1511	Şah Kulu revolt

Bayezid II

1512–20

1514	Ottoman defeat of Shah Isma‘il at the battle of Çaldıran
1516	Ottoman conquest of Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem
1517	Ottoman conquest of Egypt and destruction of the Mamluk sultanate
1517	Ottoman victory over the Portuguese off Jeddah

Selim I

1520–66

1521	Ottoman conquest of Belgrade
1522	Ottoman conquest of Rhodes
1524	Revolt of Ahmed Paşa, governor of Egypt
1526	Ottoman victory at the battle of Mohács
1526	Ottoman conquest of Zabid and Aden
1526	Revolt in Anatolia
1528	Revolt of Kalender in Anatolia
1529	Unsuccessful Ottoman siege of Vienna
1534	Ottoman conquest of Tabriz and Baghdad
1535	Habsburg capture of Tunis
1536	Ottoman–French alliance
1537–40	Ottoman–Venetian war
1537	Unsuccessful Ottoman attack on Corfu
1538	Ottoman conquest of Naxos, Andros, Paros and Santorini
1538	Ottoman defeat of the naval forces of the Holy League at the battle of Prevesa
1538	Ottoman campaign to Diu, India
1540	Establishment of the Ottoman beylerbeylik of Yemen
1541	Unsuccessful Habsburg attack on Algiers
1541	Ottoman conquest of Buda
1541	Portuguese campaign against the Ottomans in the Red Sea
1543	Renewal of the Ottoman–French alliance
1543–4	Ottoman navy wintered off Toulon

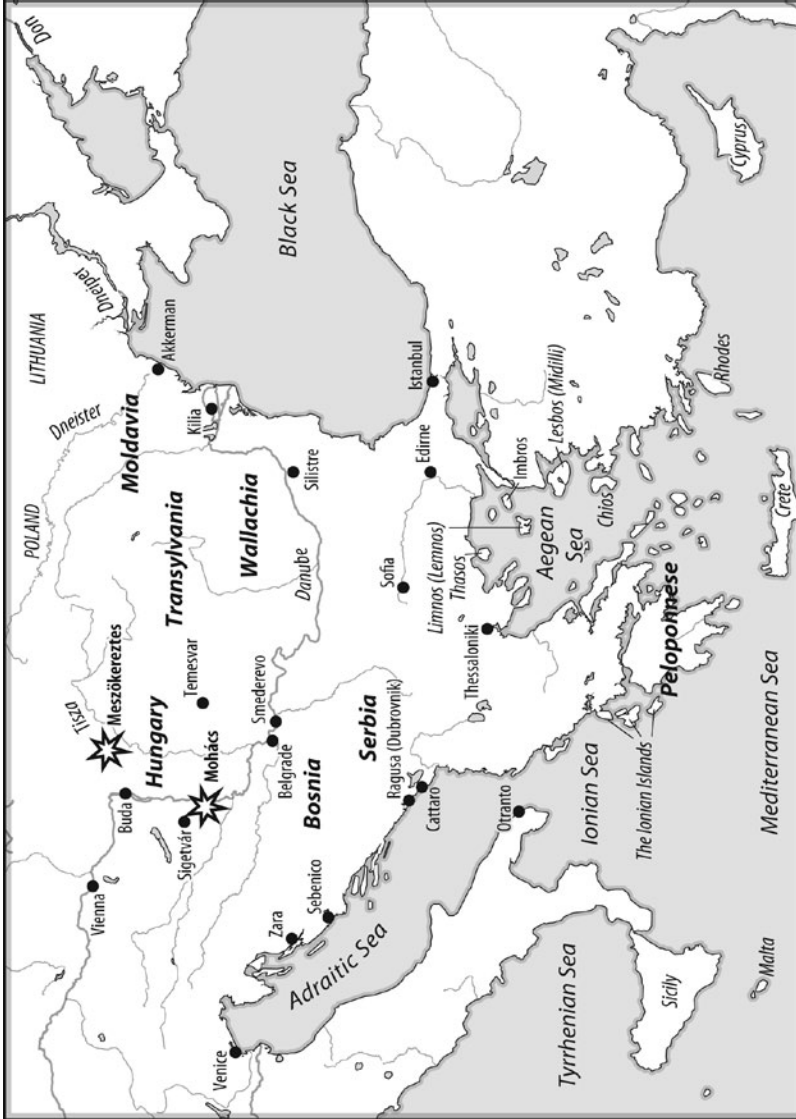
Süleyman I

Chronology

1546	Ottoman conquest of Basra
1547	Ottoman–Habsburg peace
1549	Ottoman conquest of Van
1551	Ottoman conquest of Tripoli
1551	Ottoman–French alliance
1552	Incorporation of Temesvar under direct Ottoman control
1552	Ottoman campaign in the Persian Gulf
1553	Death of Şehzade Mustafa
1553–5	Ottoman–Safavid war
1554–5	Ottoman conquest of Ethiopia
1555	Peace of Amasya
1559	Defeat of Şehzade Bayezid
1562	Death of Şehzade Bayezid
1562	Ottoman–Habsburg treaty
1565	Unsuccessful Ottoman siege of Malta
1566	Ottoman conquest of Chios
1566–74	Selim II
1567	Suppression of revolt in Iraq
1568	Ottoman–Habsburg treaty
1569	Ottoman grant of capitulations to the French
1569	Ottoman expedition against Russia, siege of Astrakhan
1569–71	Ottoman campaign in Yemen
1570–3	Ottoman–Venetian war
1570	Ottoman conquest of Nicosia
1571	Ottoman conquest of Famagusta
1571	Ottoman defeat at the battle of Lepanto by the naval forces of the Holy League
1574	Ottoman conquest of Tunis
1574–95	Murad III
1578–90	Ottoman–Safavid war; annexation of Azerbaijan
1580	Ottoman–English capitulations
1583	Battle of Meşale
1585	Ottoman conquest of Tabriz
1593–1606	Ottoman–Habsburg war
1595–1603	Mehmed III
1596 (before and after)	Military (Celali) rebellions in Anatolia
1596	Battle of Meşö-Keresztes
1600	Ottoman conquest of Kanizsa
1603–39	Ottoman–Safavid wars
1606	Peace of Zsitvatorok

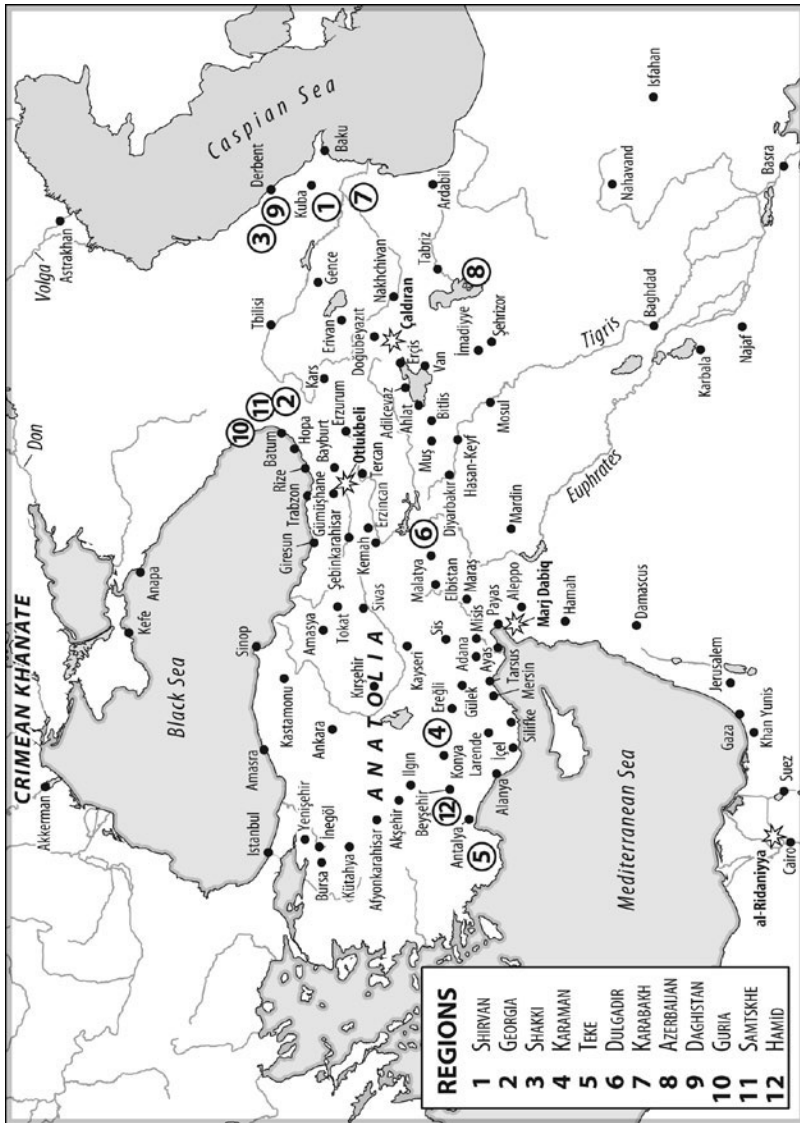
A note on transliteration

Ottoman Turkish has been transliterated using modern Turkish orthography, and diacritical marking of long vowels has not been used for Arabic and Persian terms or names. Names have been given in their Turkish form except when in common usage in English. Where figures are more familiar under a different form, both forms are given.



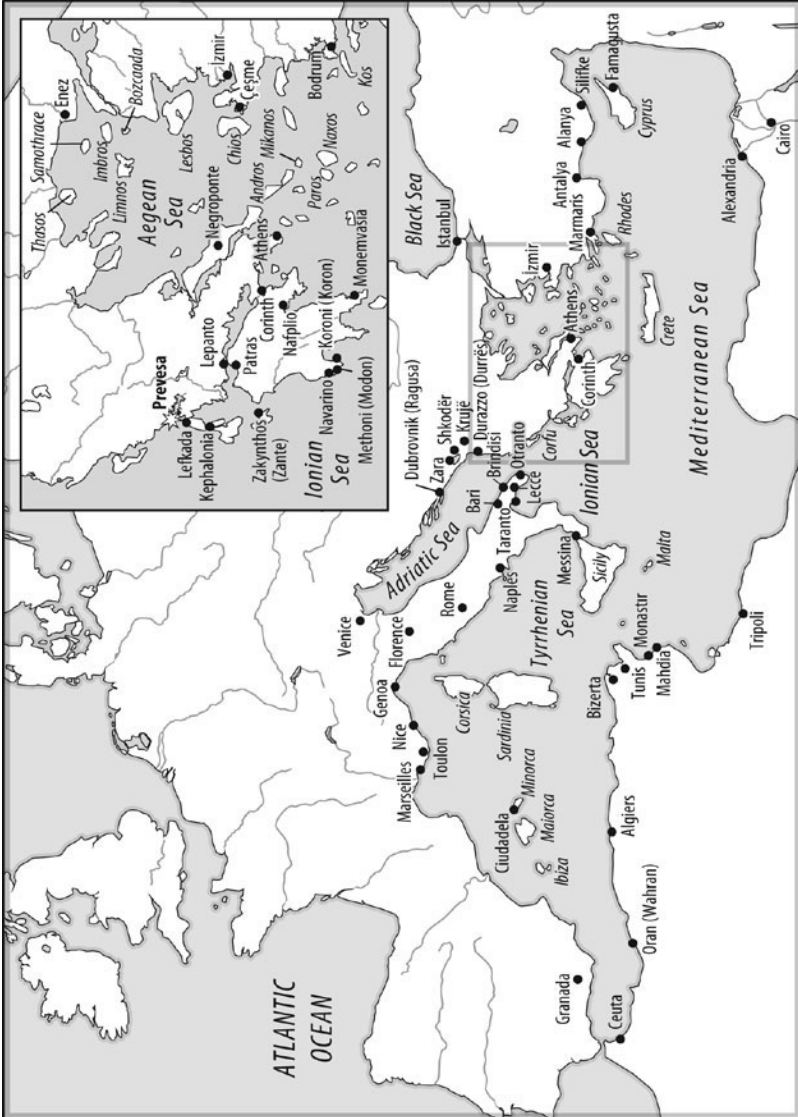
★ battle

I Ottoman expansion in Europe.

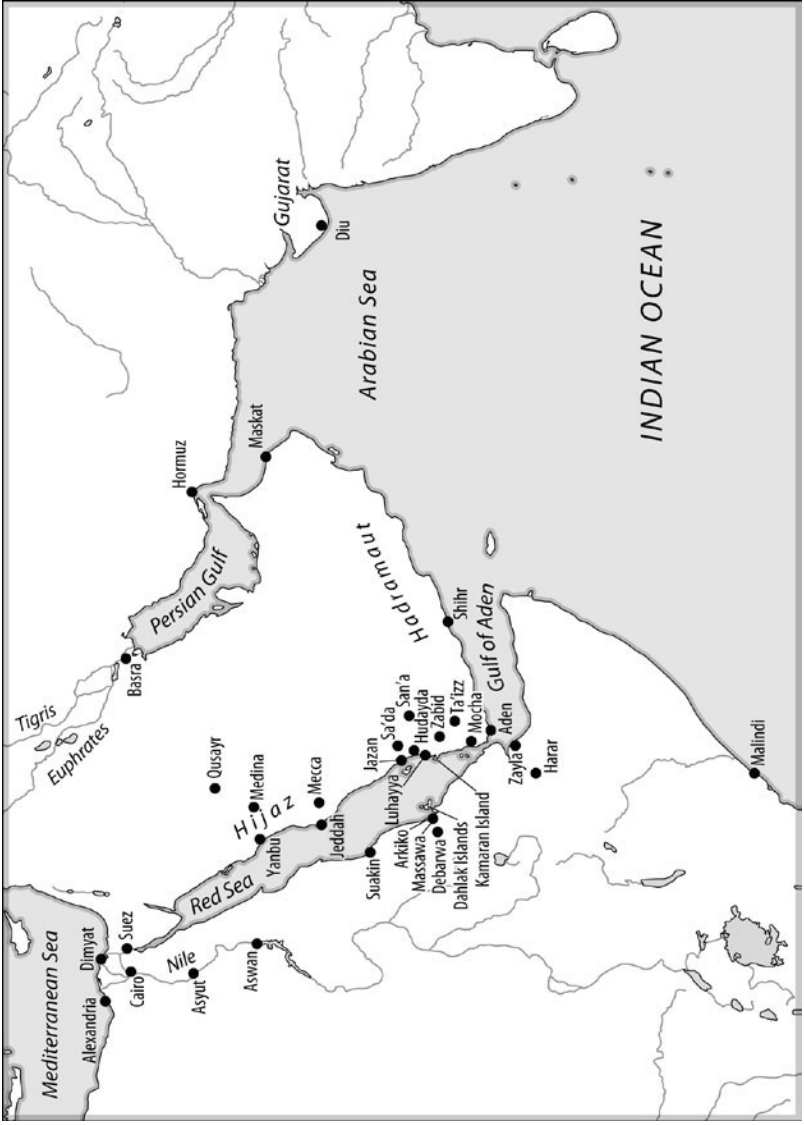


★ battle

II Ottoman expansion in the East.



III Ottoman expansion in the Mediterranean.



IV Ottoman expansion in the Red Sea.

Introduction

SURAIYA N. FAROQHI

Of the Ottoman Empire we can say what Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805) once wrote about the seventeenth-century military commander and entrepreneur Albrecht von Wallenstein (in Czech, Albrecht Václav Eusebius z Valdštejna, 1583–1634). According to Schiller’s verse, the favour and hate of [conflicting] parties had caused confusion, producing a highly variable image of Wallenstein’s character in history. Put differently, it was the diverging perspectives of the beholders that gave rise to this instability. Admittedly, being a poet, Schiller made his point far more concisely than the present author is able to do.¹

In certain traditions of historiography in the Balkans and elsewhere as well, denigrating the Ottoman Empire and making it responsible for all manner of “backwardness” is still widespread, although challenges to this view have been mounting during the last 30 years. On the other hand, romanticising the images of Mehmed the Conqueror (r. 1451–81) or Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520–66) is also quite a popular enterprise: witness the statue of Mehmed II in downtown Istanbul – a new one is in the planning stage – and the double monument to Zrínyi Miklós and Sultan Süleyman in a park of Szigetvar, Hungary.

To claim “objectivity” means to deceive oneself and others, but the authors of the present volume, whatever their views, have all clearly tried to distinguish the points made by the primary sources from the interpretations that they propose as historians of the twenty-first century. Readers will notice that in spite of wide areas of consensus on certain topics specialists do not necessarily agree, and indeed it has been a major concern of the present editors to demonstrate the variety of approaches current among Ottomanist historians.

1 ‘Von der Parteien Hass und Gunst verwirrt, schwankt sein Charakterbild in der Geschichte’. See *Wallensteins Lager*, Prologue, in Friedrich Schiller, *Sämtliche Werke*, 3 vols. (Munich, 1962), vol. 2, pp. 270–5 (Internet version).

Paradoxically, this book, the second of the four-volume series *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, is the last to appear in print. While nobody had planned such an outcome, it is perhaps appropriate, for we will be dealing with what an eminent Ottomanist historian has called the “classical age”, a period of significance if ever there was one. Thus we are in the happy position of presenting, at the end of our project, what many readers will consider the most interesting part of our story.² Certainly most contributors to this series believe that it is a mistake to subsume everything that happened after 1600 under the blanket term “decline”. Yet during the period between the 1450s and 1600, more than before or afterwards, the Ottoman elite and its subjects made their mark in a variety of different fields, achievements which the contributors to this volume will discuss.

Ottoman writing about the Ottoman world

To the historian, sources are primordial, and the period between the mid-fifteenth and the early seventeenth century is special not only because of the significance of the events that occurred and the more long-term processes that played themselves out but also because for the first time Ottoman sources become reasonably abundant. Under the early sultans, before the reign of Mehmed the Conqueror, both Ottoman chronicles and archival documents were extremely rare. As a result, we can approach the image of Ottoman history as it may have appeared to contemporaries of Sultan Murad I (r. 1362–89) or Bayezid I (r. 1389–1402) only in an indirect fashion: by the study of buildings and inscriptions, which, however, survive in their original shapes only in exceptional cases, or by a careful analysis of later narrative and documentary sources.

With the 1450s, however, matters begin to change: there survives the work of an Ottoman author who has written about the battle for Constantinople, and we also possess fragments of a tax register of newly conquered Istanbul (1455). When Mehmed II finally incorporated the Karaman principality into his domain, his officials produced a careful list of the pious foundations of Konya, including the rich and precious library of Sadreddin-i Konevi (1207–74), son-in-law to the mystic Muhyi al-Din Ibn ‘Arabi (1165–1240) and an important intellectual figure in his own right. Moreover, under the Conqueror’s son Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512), we encounter what may well have been the first

2 Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300–1600*, trans. Norman Itzkowitz and Colin Imber (London, 1973). This work has been reprinted several times.

dissenting voices from the Ottoman world that have come down to us, in the shape of certain anonymous texts describing the calamities that had befallen pre-Islamic Constantinople. Probably this fifteenth-century Cassandra, if indeed the author was a single person, intended to warn Bayezid II against making this accursed site into the seat of his sultanate.³

About the background of this author – or these authors – we know nothing. But they were by no means the only writers active at this time, for Mehmed the Conqueror and Bayezid II sponsored scholarly and literary activity, filling the palace libraries with books and sending largesse to poets. Certain works produced by these men – and women, for a few female poets were also active – have survived, and after 1520, when Süleyman the Lawgiver, also known as the Magnificent, had ascended the throne, the number of works preserved increased exponentially. During the second half of the sixteenth century, Ottoman divan poetry developed its own special character and was no longer just an offshoot of the Iranian tradition, Timurid style. An encyclopaedia of Ottoman poets, which contained short biographies and poetry samples, also appeared for the first time in 1538; afterwards the genre became popular, and some of these texts had claims to literary merit.

During the same period, Ottoman chronicles, which before 1450 had mostly consisted of brief sketches, emerged as a genre in their own right. One of the most interesting is surely the collection of heroic stories put together by Aşıkpaşazade, the descendant of a line of dervish *şeyhs* and authors from Central Anatolia. An old man in the 1470s and 1480s, he celebrated the conquests of the sultans from Osman I (d. ca. 1324) and Orhan (r. ca. 1324–62) down to his contemporary Mehmed the Conqueror. The works of Aşıkpaşazade and his colleagues have caused some disagreement among modern scholars. Very few historians have accepted the legends recounted in them just as they stand, but there is a real dispute between people who prefer to ignore these tales as so many meaningless inventions and those who ever since the days of Fuat Köprülü have tried to interpret them with the help of the social anthropology and literary theories current in the researchers' own

3 Halil Inalcik and Rhoads Murphey, *Tursun Bey's History of Mehmed the Conqueror* (Chicago and Minneapolis, 1978); Halil Inalcik, 'Ottoman Galata 1453–1553', in *Première rencontre internationale sur l'empire Ottoman et la Turquie moderne: Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 18–22 janvier 1985*, ed. Edhem Eldem (Istanbul and Paris, 1991), pp. 17–116; Halil Inalcik, 'The Ottoman Survey of İstanbul, 1455', 1453, *İstanbul Kültür ve Sanat Dergisi* 3 (2008), 19–27; Feridun Nafiz Uzluk, *Fatih Devrinde Karaman Eyaleti Vakıfları Fihristi* (Ankara, 1958); Stéphane Yérasimos, *La fondation de Constantinople et de Sainte-Sophie dans les traditions turques: légendes d'empire* (Istanbul and Paris, 1990).

time.⁴ Whichever approach a given historian may favour, it is quite obvious that sixteenth-century authors tried hard to collect information about the earlier years of the Ottoman principality yet had a great deal of trouble in doing so. One of them, the chancery head (*nişancı*) Feridun Ahmed (d. 1583), apparently was so frustrated at not being able to find any documents issued by the earliest Ottoman sultans that he simply invented them; his deception was only discovered in the early twentieth century and has much damaged the reputation of his otherwise very valuable writings.⁵

In the sixteenth century, a number of high officials wrote historical works which are of special interest because these men had access not only to oral information current in the palaces of sultans and *vezirs* but also to archival documents. Thus Celalzade Mustafa (ca. 1490–1567), another head of the sixteenth-century Ottoman chancery, produced what is still regarded as the standard Ottoman source on Süleyman the Magnificent.⁶ Slightly later, the historian and litterateur Mustafa Ali (1541–1600) set the standard that many chroniclers working in the sultans' realm were to follow down to the 1800s. But as the author could not know about his posthumous fame, he spent much of his energy during his later years lamenting the injustices of a system that had failed to promote him according to his merits.⁷

Ottoman officials and literary men – who often played both roles simultaneously – from the late fifteenth century onwards also created a novel language. While the grammatical base remained Turkish, authors of the time imported Arabic and especially Persian words, and to some extent Persian grammatical constructions as well, to the point that in some works only the sentence endings indicate that we are not dealing with a Persian text. Unintelligible to the uninitiated, this language served only in written and not in oral communication. While it has fallen from favour during the last 150 years, and certain authors of earlier periods also preferred to write in a language closer to educated speech, the historian does need to keep in mind that many sophisticated subjects of the Ottoman sultans regarded this hybrid language as a major cultural achievement.

4 Fuat Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatı'nda İlk Mutasavvıflar*, 2nd ed. (Ankara, 1966); Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1995).

5 Mükrimin Halil [Yinanç], 'Feridün Beg Münshe'âtı', in *Tarih-i Osmani Encümeni Mecmuası*, XI–XIII, 771336–9/1920–3, pp. 161–8, XIV n.s. 1 (78) (1340/1924), 37–46, XIV n.s. 2 (79) (1340/1924), 95–104, XIV n.s. 4 (81), 216–26.

6 [Koca Nişancı], *Geschichte Süleyman Kânûnîs von 1520 bis 1556 oder Tabakat ül-Memalik ve Derecat ül-Mesalik von Celalzade Mustafâ genannt Koca Nişancı*, facsimile edition with introduction by Petra Kappert (Wiesbaden, 1981).

7 Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafâ Âli (1541–1600)* (Princeton, N.J., 1986).

Furthermore, the sixteenth century was the period in which Ottoman geographers came into their own: Piri Reis (ca. 1465–1554/55) produced two world maps remarkable for the accuracy with which he had calculated the distances between continents. Dealing with realms closer to home, this scholarly admiral produced a collection of maps showing the Mediterranean, and especially its eastern sections, which by his time were a possession of the sultans. The author had intended his work as a handbook for sailors; however, many scribes rather seem to have produced richly decorated copies meant for the libraries of Ottoman gentlemen.⁸ Piri Reis's work thus served as a vehicle of elite geographical education as well.

Quantitatively speaking, however, the sultans' administration was the greatest producer of written texts. The activities of this bureaucracy, which had begun in the mid-1400s but gathered speed a century later, necessitated the institution of government archives, which are still our major source in spite of losses due to accidents, neglect and also malice aforethought. Especially the great tax registers of this period, which contain the names of taxpayers and the dues payable by villagers and townsmen while listing also pious foundations and their beneficiaries, allow us to write social histories at least of certain towns and regions. Or, to be exact, this enterprise becomes fruitful if we can compare the information contained in the tax registers with documents recorded by the scribes of urban judges, for since the late fifteenth century in the Bursa case and since the 1500s in many other Ottoman towns, a number of scribes recorded not only court cases but also sultanic commands emanating from Istanbul. In addition, these men served as notaries. Since having one's writing preserved was very much an elite privilege, even with this material at hand we cannot claim to write "history from below". But at least these works do convey an image of society as it appeared to Ottoman elites.

The taxpaying subjects: Peasants and nomads

Like the governing classes of other empires from the Ancient Near East to the nineteenth century, the Ottoman elite drew its resources largely from peasant taxes. The vast majority of the Ottoman population in the Balkans as well as Anatolia and the Arab provinces tilled the land; in certain regions, such as the dry steppe of Inner Anatolia and Syria, nomads and semi-nomads also were common. Due to the population increase which occurred in the entire

⁸ Svat Soucek, *Piri Reis and Turkish Mapmaking after Columbus: The Khalili Portolan Atlas* (London, 1992).

Mediterranean world during the 1500s, a certain number of former nomads settled down, and the Ottoman administration, which generally preferred villagers because they were better taxpayers and did not pose any military threat, was more than eager to record them as settled folk. In reality, people in some regions seem to have had a foot in both worlds: peasants pastured their animals on summer pastures, where they might move with their entire households for the duration, while certain Anatolian nomads practiced small-scale agriculture in their winter quarters. Presumably such people could be villagers or nomads according to circumstances, especially if they had relatives among the migrant population.

About the lives of Ottoman villagers we know very little, as the tax registers of the time only record the names of adult men and the villages or tribal units to which they belonged. Due to the lack of surnames, we cannot say anything about the number of families that remained on a given site for generations compared to those who left and settled elsewhere. Certainly the Ottoman administration ordered peasants to stay put unless they could get permission from their local administrators to move away, or unless the sultan decided on wholesale resettlement of certain groups of the population to consolidate new conquests. But the government's power of enforcement in the more outlying regions must surely have been limited.

Yields from dry-field agriculture tended to be low, and villagers were vulnerable to droughts, which were especially disastrous during the 1590s. At least in Anatolia, where navigable rivers were few, the authorities probably could enforce the rule that every administrative district should only feed the local town, and any reserves should be at the disposal of armies that might cross the area on their way to the front. The only exception was the coastal regions, from which the owners of surpluses could export grain. Down to the mid-1500s, the sultans in peacetime permitted sales to Venice, but once the population increase of the sixteenth century had become obvious, they strictly forbade such exportation. However, since merchants from outside the realm often paid better prices, there always was a certain amount of smuggling not only of grain but also of raw materials such as cotton.

Trade and artisan production

At the same time, urbanisation was an ongoing process: cities such as Bursa, Aleppo, Damascus and Cairo expanded in the sixteenth century as the population gradually recovered from the plague epidemics of the 1300s and 1400s.

Istanbul newly emerged as a major centre with a population of several hundred thousand in the sixteenth century. Inter-empire trade focused on these cities: although the Genoese withdrew from the eastern Mediterranean during the reign of Mehmed the Conqueror, Florentines and especially Venetians frequented Istanbul and Bursa, while Muslim, Christian and Jewish subjects of the sultan all traded in Venice. French commerce by contrast remained limited: the often discussed *ahidname* (capitulations) of 1536 remained a draft and were never implemented, and while the sultan did grant such a document to the king of France in 1569, the French civil wars of the period prevented merchants from making full use of them. By contrast, during the last quarter of the sixteenth century, English merchants began to import woollen cloth into Ottoman ports and exported Iranian raw silk that they purchased in the same venues.⁹

However, the Ottomans traded with Eastern as well as Western countries. Iran was a major source of raw silk, converted into cloth by weavers in Bursa and Istanbul; however, Selim I briefly interrupted the trade in the early 1500s when he attempted to reduce the revenues of his Safavid rival by declaring an embargo on silk.¹⁰ Spices from India and South-east Asia found avid consumers in the Ottoman Empire, too, with pepper a special favourite. Moreover, in this period the products of certain manufacturers found outlets beyond the borders of the empire, traders from Poland and Venice for instance purchasing camlets in Ankara.¹¹ During the years covered by this volume, for a brief period it seemed as if members of the Ottoman elite might find the gains from interregional and inter-empire trade so attractive that they would be willing to allow long-distance traders a certain amount of leeway and loosen the constraints of the “command economy”. Attractive possibilities opened up especially in Aleppo and Cairo, where traders with India typically established their businesses.¹² However, around 1600, economic and financial difficulties, doubtless in part due to war on both the western and eastern fronts, tended to make life far more difficult for aspiring merchants.

9 Gilles Veinstein, ‘Les capitulations franco-ottomanes de 1536 sont-elles encore controversables?’, in *Living in the Ottoman Ecumenical Community: Essays in Honor of Suraiya Faroqhi*, ed. Vera Costantini and Markus Koller (Leiden, 2008), pp. 71–88; Susan Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey, 1578–1582* (London and Oxford, 1977).

10 Fahri Dalsar, *Türk Sanayi ve Ticaret Tarihinde Bursa’da İpekçilik* (Istanbul, 1960).

11 Özer Ergenç, ‘1600–1615 Yılları Arasında Ankara İktisadi Tarihine Ait Araştırmalar’, in *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi Semineri, Metinler-Tartışmalar, 8–10 Haziran 1973*, ed. Osman Okyar and Ünal Nalbantoğlu (Ankara, 1975), pp. 145–68.

12 Nelly Hanna, *Making Big Money in 1600: The Life and Times of Isma’il Abu Taqiyya, Egyptian Merchant* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1998).

Florescence of the arts

In art and architecture as well, it is the period covered by this volume that stands out, for the 1400s and 1500s were the time when Mehmed the Conqueror, Bayezid II, Süleyman the Magnificent and Selim II (r. 1566–75) had great foundation complexes built, usually in Istanbul but sometimes also in cities like Damascus or Edirne. Moreover, *vezirs* also founded more modest but still impressive complexes, and by the second half of the sixteenth century there came the time when female members of the Ottoman dynasty were able to sponsor major charities as well. The town of Üsküdar, opposite Istanbul on the other side of the Bosphorus, owed its growth and development at least in part to the religious and charitable constructions of Süleyman's daughter Mihrimah (d. 1578) and the latter's sister-in-law Nurbanu (ca. 1530–83), mother of Murad III (r. 1574–95). Although claiming to be of noble Venetian descent, Nurbanu had entered the imperial harem as a slave; yet, contrary to Ottoman dynastic tradition, she ultimately became the lawful wedded wife of Selim II and used her position to become a major patroness.¹³

In many of these projects, the architect Sinan (ca. 1490–1588) had a hand, either because he had designed them and later supervised their construction on site or because he approved – and perhaps revised – the projects of his students. While Sinan outlived Sultan Süleyman by over 20 years and his relationship to this ruler had often been tense, in death the two were united: as a gesture unique in the history of Ottoman building, Sinan's mausoleum was set close to an outer wall of the Süleymaniye complex.¹⁴

While architecture was the art form for which the Ottoman world has become famous, the history of miniature painting was also significant, albeit much shorter; to a very significant extent, major achievements occurred during the period under review. As for the potters of İznik (Nicaea), in the period covered by our volume, they produced splendid examples of faience as decorative panels for mosques and palaces but also as tableware for the well-to-do.¹⁵

13 Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York and Oxford, 1993); Leslie Peirce, 'Gender and Sexual Propriety in Ottoman Royal Women's Patronage', in *Women, Patronage and Self-representation in Islamic Societies*, ed. D. Fairchild Ruggles (Albany, N.Y., 2000), pp. 53–68; Amy Singer, *Constructing Ottoman Beneficence: An Imperial Soup Kitchen in Jerusalem* (Albany, N.Y., 2002); Maria Pia Pedani, 'Safiye's Household and Venetian Diplomacy', *Turcica* 32 (2000), 9–32; Benjamin Arbel, 'Nurbanu Sultan (c. 1530–1583): A Venetian Sultana?' *Turcica* 24 (1992), 241–59.

14 Aptullah Kuran, *Sinan, the Grand Old Master of Ottoman Architecture* (Washington, D. C., and Istanbul, 1987); Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (London, 2005).

15 Nurhan Atasoy and Julian Raby, *Iznik: The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey*, ed. Yanni Petsopoulos (Istanbul and London, 1989).

While today's connoisseurs have learned to appreciate the art of the painter Levni (d. 1730) and eighteenth-century architecture as well, it remains true that some of the most memorable items that a visitor to Istanbul will retain are the work of artists and architects who flourished in the sixteenth century.

Military and political successes

For us denizens of the 2000s, the Ottoman legacy in art and architecture tends to take centre stage. But for contemporaries both within and outside the sultans' realm, the rapid expansion of the latter was far more important. Reactions varied according to time, place and the social position of the people concerned. As a result, contemporary texts reflect fear and rejection, but also acceptance and even anticipation.¹⁶

Our period begins with the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople and the small principalities into which the Byzantine Empire had split after the "Latin" campaign of 1204, also known as the Fourth Crusade. Venice had become a major power in the eastern Mediterranean due to its territorial acquisitions upon that occasion, which for about half a century even included a share of formerly Byzantine Constantinople. However, in the reign of Mehmed II, Venice lost Euboa (Negroponte) as well as the ports which the Signoria had held on the Peloponnese. In the early 1500s, when Venice and the Ottoman Empire were once again at war, the terrified inhabitants of the lagoon could see the smoke rising from villages in Friuli, in today's north-eastern Italy, which had been burned by the advance guards of Sultan Bayezid's army.¹⁷

With the occupation of Akkerman and Kilia (1484), today in Ukraine, the Black Sea became an Ottoman lake, closed to Genoese and Venetian merchants. As for the hanate of Crimea, in 1475 Mehmed the Conqueror made it into a dependent principality. While the established dynasty remained in place, the sultan could now depose a *han* and place one of the latter's relatives on the throne. This arrangement remained in place until the late eighteenth century.

In the Balkans, Mehmed the Conqueror repressed the uprising of Skanderbeg (1405–68) in Albania.¹⁸ At the same time, the Bosnian kingdom

16 Nevra Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins: Politics and Society in the Late Empire* (Cambridge, 2009).

17 Maria Pia Pedani, 'Turkish Raids in Friuli at the End of the Fifteenth Century', in *Acta Viennensia Ottomanica, Akten des 13. CIEPO-Symposiums vom 21 bis 25. September 1998*, ed. Markus Köhbach, Gisela Prochaska-Eisl and Claudia Romer (Vienna, 1999), pp. 287–91.

18 One of the most recent additions to the long bibliography on this subject is Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Skanderbeg: Der neue Alexander auf dem Balkan* (Ratisbon, 2009).

also came to an end, and Saraybosna (Sarajevo), previously an insignificant village, became an important Islamic town and a showcase of Ottoman power. In 1480, the forces of Mehmed II also took Otranto in southern Italy; probably it was due only to the Conqueror's death the next year and the long, drawn-out struggle for the throne between his sons Bayezid and Cem that the Ottomans attempted no further Italian campaigns.

With the – not altogether peaceful – accession of Selim I (r. 1512–20), the empire expanded to the east and south. In a campaign against the newly formed polity of the Safavids, whose founder Shah Isma'il I (r. 1501–24) had taken over the defunct empire of the Akkoyunlu, Sultan Selim conquered eastern Anatolia, including the cities of Erzurum and Erzincan in 1514. In 1516–17, there followed a victorious campaign against the Mamluk sultanate of Syria and Egypt, which Selim I incorporated into his territory as a set of directly ruled provinces. Given the dependence of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina on Egyptian food supplies, the *şerif* of Mecca voluntarily submitted to the Ottoman ruler. From 1517 to the end of the empire, the *şerifs* were to form a subordinate princely dynasty.

With the conquest of the Mamluk Empire, the character and composition of the Ottoman polity changed dramatically. Until 1517, it had been first a principality and then a regional empire on the margins of the Islamic world, albeit with considerable prestige for having conquered Constantinople. But with the acquisition of Egypt, Syria and – after a campaign in 1533–4 – Iraq as well, the sultans no longer governed a largely non-Muslim population but controlled the historic heartlands of the Islamic world, which had been largely Muslim for centuries. In addition, the Ottoman rulers became the protectors of the pilgrimage to Mecca, an essential requirement for all Muslims who can afford the expense. But at the same time the sultans also came under considerable pressure to legitimise their rule, for now they needed to compete, in terms of “magnificence” and good government, with the Mamluk sultans, who after all had been the only rulers capable of keeping the Mongol armies at bay.¹⁹ As the Mamluk sultans were Sunni Muslims, scholar officials called upon to legitimise the Ottoman conquest in religious terms were in a delicate position, and it is impossible to say how many people were willing to accept Sultan Selim's claim that the Mamluks had deserved deposition because of the support they had given to the “heretic” Shah Isma'il. Be that as it may, throughout the sixteenth century, Istanbul's control over Cairo, Aleppo, Damascus and Mecca remained on the whole quite solid.

¹⁹ Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt's Adjustment to Ottoman Rule: Institutions, Waqf and Architecture in Cairo, 16th and 17th Centuries* (Leiden, 1994).

By contrast, Sultan Selim's defeat of Shah Isma'il in 1514 meant not the end but the beginning of a long series of Ottoman–Iranian confrontations. While the armies of the sultans repeatedly conquered the long-standing Safavid capital of Tabriz, causing the shahs to move their royal seat to Qazvin, and at the very end of our period even to Isfahan, Ottoman conquests in the Caucasus and Azerbaijan proved to be quite ephemeral. In addition, the conflict between sultans and shahs had a significant religious component, and in the 1500s both sides began to define their Islamic character in opposition to that of their respective opponent. The early Ottoman sultans had accommodated quite a few holy men, seemingly without worrying very much about whether the practices of these personages were acceptable to religious scholars. But from the time of Bayezid II, sometimes called “the Pious” or even “the Saintly”, Ottoman sultans began to define their role as defenders of Sunni right belief vis-à-vis the “heretic” shahs of Iran. Under Bayezid's successors Selim and Süleyman, this tendency was even more marked. In similar fashion, the shahs of Iran and the religious scholars working in the realm of the latter regarded their polity as representing the pure community of the Prophet's descendants. They upheld this claim even though, especially under Shah Isma'il I, the warriors that had brought him to power and venerated him as their almost-divine leader espoused a set of syncretistic beliefs that did not endear them to Shi'ite men of religion. Both Ottoman and Safavid religious scholars upon occasion declared that their opponents had lost any claim to being regarded as Muslims.

Further Ottoman expansion took place in conflict not with Muslim but with Christian powers. During the years preceding the conquest of Egypt, the Mamluk sultans, who did not possess a navy, had asked for Ottoman support against the Portuguese, who threatened the Red Sea and thereby Mecca and Medina. The resulting disputes between the two sultanates contributed to the deterioration of relations that led to the war of 1516–17. Once the Mamluk Empire had become part of the Ottoman domain, the protection of the two holy cities against Portuguese attack became a major responsibility of the sultans. In addition, the latter also were concerned about keeping Muslim maritime traffic through the Indian Ocean viable, so as to ensure that spices reached the Ottoman realm and customs officials could collect dues from this valuable commodity just like their Mamluk predecessors had done.²⁰

20 Giancarlo Casale, ‘The Ottoman Administration of the Spice Trade in the Sixteenth-Century Red Sea and Persian Gulf’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 49, 2 (May 2006), 170–98.

From the South-east Asian and Indian perspective as well, the Portuguese appeared as a major threat. Especially the princes of Aceh on northern Sumatra sought and obtained Ottoman aid against their Christian enemies, in the form of guns and gunners. However, the Ottoman navy was unable to make decisive conquests in the Indian Ocean region and in the second half of the sixteenth century largely withdrew from the scene. However, once again in the context of this Ottoman–Portuguese conflict, the sultans’ forces in eastern Africa established the province of Habeş, which was the responsibility of the governors of Jeddah.²¹ Presumably holding this province also permitted Ottoman governors to tax the local slave trade.

In the western Mediterranean and North Africa, freebooters who were Ottoman subjects and later on official representatives of the empire confronted the Spanish attempt to take the struggle against Muslim princes into Africa after the emirate of Granada had fallen in 1492. Hayreddin (ca. 1466–1546), known in European sources and also in modern Turkish as Barbarossa or Barbaros, together with his brother, had been leading troops that he had brought from the sultans’ domains, in addition to local warriors, in the fight against the Spaniards. His stronghold was Algiers, which first came to prominence at this time. In 1519, Hayreddin submitted to Sultan Selim, later becoming Sultan Süleyman’s governor in North Africa and ultimately the grand admiral of the Ottoman navy, which he led to victory over a combined Christian fleet at Prevesa in 1538.

In Tunis, the confrontation with Spanish power represented by Charles V (1500–58) was even more direct: after Hayreddin had taken the city from a local ruler in 1534, the latter persuaded Charles V to reinstate him, promising to become his vassal. As a result, between 1535 and the Ottoman conquest of 1574, Tunis was a Spanish possession. In the mid-1500s, the sultans also acquired Tripoli in North Africa and thus controlled the entire southern Mediterranean littoral all the way to the Moroccan border. However, as these provinces were accessible from Istanbul only by ship, already by the late 1500s local garrisons and sea captains came to run Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli more or less autonomously. However, these military men always declared their allegiance to the sultan and found acceptance in Istanbul.²²

Furthermore, the Ottomans took the dismantling of what remained of the Venetian trade empire yet one step further when in the 1570s the *vezir* Lala Mustafa Paşa conquered Cyprus. Thereafter Venice controlled no more than

²¹ Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Güney Siyaseti, Habeş Eyaleti* (Istanbul, 1974).

²² Soumaya Louhichi, *Das Verhältnis zwischen der osmanischen Zentralgewalt und der Provinz Tunesien: Versuch einer zusammenhängenden Deutung der osmanischen Herrschaft in Tunesien während des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts* (Saarbrücken, 2008).

a stretch of Dalmatian coastline and the island of Crete, which the Ottomans were to take in the mid-1600s, shortly after the end of the period that concerns us here.

Given this record of almost constant expansion, Ottoman sultans and *vezirs* of the time placed only limited importance on established borders. Certainly they occasionally agreed on such delimitations, for instance in negotiations with Venice or the king of Poland.²³ However, according to Islamic law, Muslim rulers could make treaties with “unbelievers” for only a limited time, and thus such border agreements also were temporary. Once a major prize such as Constantinople was in the sultans’ hands, the next “Kızıl elma” (“red apple”), the term that Ottoman authors sometimes used for projected conquests, might be Rome or Vienna. Only after 1606, when even a long and exhausting war against the Habsburgs had only led to minor gains, do we encounter a border that both sides recognised, albeit with a great deal of raiding even in peacetime, for almost 60 years.

Ordinary people: The struggle for survival

For sultans and *vezirs* of the period, war was legitimate in religious terms because in this way they expanded the rule of Sunni Islam; it was also of practical importance because warfare kept the soldiers busy at the frontiers, where hopefully they would acquire booty and not challenge the central government. Nobody has recorded the opinions of artisans, merchants, peasants, slaves and women of all social groups on these matters, and it is a truism yet bears repeating that the mass of sources which we do possess were written by a small number of elite men.

However, we should at least briefly refer to the costs of war and conquest. To begin with an example beyond the Ottoman borders, campaigns against the Safavids and the earthquakes so frequent in this part of the world combined to destroy most of the historical monuments that in the time of the Ilkhanids and Akkoyunlu had adorned the city of Tabriz. As for Ottoman territories, already in the time of Mehmed the Conqueror, armies did not finance themselves and taxes increased accordingly.²⁴ Even though quite a few

23 Maria Pia Pedani (ed.), *Inventory of the Lettere e Scritture Turchesche in the Venetian State Archives, Based on the Materials Compiled by Alessio Bombaci* (Leiden, 2010), p. 5; Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations (15th–18th Century): An Annotated Edition of ‘Ahdnames and Other Documents’* (Leiden, 2000).

24 Heath Lowry, ‘Changes in Fifteenth-Century Ottoman Peasant Taxation: The Case Study of Radilifo (Radolibos)’, in *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society*, ed. Anthony Bryer and Heath Lowry (Birmingham and Washington, D. C., 1986), pp. 23–38.

border fighters subsisted largely on booty and – if they were lucky – ransom, the famously efficient Ottoman supply system needed large deliveries of grain and other foodstuffs, and these had to come from the sultans' subjects. Draught animals and camels being expensive to feed and breed, when the army demanded that these animals be used to supply the soldiers on campaign, peasants and townsmen must have suffered severely, particularly since many of these creatures probably perished while providing campaign services. We may also conjecture that the *avarız*, which implied not only cash payments but also deliveries in kind and corvée, for instance in building and repairing fortifications, must have made survival in wartime difficult for Ottoman subjects. This observation especially applies to the late 1500s, when the *avarız*, originally demanded only in wartime, became an annual tax. In addition, the Ottoman government often forced its subjects to migrate in order to secure control of newly conquered territories or enhance the capital city of Istanbul, which in 1453 was but a shadow of its former self. We know more about the migrations that resulted from the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus in 1570–3: the composition of the local population changed significantly as large numbers of enslaved captives were taken away from the island and immigrants from Anatolia were brought in to fill the gaps, often against their will.²⁵

Ottoman commanders routinely drafted artisans, who had to show up in the camp with their tools and materials ready for service. If they adhered to sultanic law, these craftsmen made very small profits, and outfitting one of their number to follow the army must have been a major sacrifice, to say nothing of the risk to the family of the mobilised artisan: what happened to his wife and children if he succumbed to illness while in the army camp or was taken prisoner?

Other Ottoman subjects also risked captivity; while it is well known that the sultans and their subjects enslaved their prisoners, we read less often about the fates of Ottoman subjects taken in wartime or else by pirates, even in times of peace.²⁶ Yet such captives were numerous: a historian working on early modern Italy has estimated that there were over ten thousand Muslim slaves in Italy, and the overwhelming majority had started life as Ottoman subjects. When the sultans and Venice were at war, their number should have

25 Vera Costantini, 'Destini di guerra. L'inventario ottomano dei prigionieri di Nicosia (settembre 1570)', *Studi Veneziani* n. s. 45 (2003), 229–41; Şenol Çelik, 'Türk Fethi Sonrasında Kıbrıs Adasına Yönelik İşkân Çalışmaları', in *Kaf Dağının Ötesine Varmak: Festschrift in Honor of Günay Kut. Essays Presented by Her Colleagues and Students*, ed. Zehra Toska, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 2003), vol. 1, pp. 263–304 (*Journal of Turkish Studies* 27:1–3).

26 Nicolas Vatin, 'Une affaire interne: le sort et la libération de personnes de condition libre illégalement retenues en esclavage', *Turcica* 33 (2001), 149–90.

been even greater, for the Venetian government only held Ottoman prisoners as long as hostilities continued. At the conclusion of peace, the Signoria normally sent these men home, apart from those considered too dangerous, who were quietly executed.²⁷ In addition, the knights of Malta, who considered themselves permanently at war with the sultan, took numerous prisoners; many of them wound up rowing the galleys of the order or those of the pope. By the early 1500s, the kingdom of Naples had become a Spanish possession, and given the Ottoman–Spanish conflict, quite a few Ottoman subjects must have rowed on Spanish galleys as well. In the second half of the sixteenth century, moreover, the Austrian Habsburgs sponsored a pirate community established in Senj (today in Croatia) on a cliff overlooking the Adriatic. These Uskoks, who also claimed to be permanently at war with the sultan preyed on peaceful Ottoman merchants on their way to Venice. As the complaints surviving in the Venetian archives amply testify, there were numerous victims, to say nothing of the material damage.²⁸

On the land borders of the empire as well, Ottoman subjects, belligerents or not, risked captivity and enslavement. Given pay that was typically in arrears on the Hungarian frontier, both sides had established a peculiar form of “violent business”: captives that were able to find ransom money could avoid enslavement, but securing the money was a risky as well as a costly affair.²⁹ In a cash-poor environment, material goods, including valuable textiles, might make up part of the ransom; presumably the Ottoman captives who needed to supply these goods turned to traders who could find them in Istanbul or elsewhere in the Ottoman core lands. It is not easy to imagine the cost and effort involved in such transactions, but they all feature among the costs of war, paid by military men and especially by members of the Ottoman subject population.

Conclusion

Many if not most of the questions concerning the costs of war and expansion which easily occur to present-day historians and their readers still are impossible to answer, for even if we contextualise our sources and use them creatively, we cannot produce documentary evidence which just is not there.

27 Salvatore Bono, *Schiavi musulmani nell' Italia moderna, Galeotti, vu' cumprà, domestici* (Naples, 1999).

28 İdris Bostan, *Adriyatik'te Korsanlık – Osmanlılar, Uskoklar, Venedikliler, 1575–1620* (Istanbul, 2009).

29 Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor (eds.), *Ransom Slavery along the Ottoman Borders (Early Fifteenth–Early Eighteenth Centuries)* (Leiden, 2007).

However, there is some hope for the future: once archaeology and the attendant scientific discipline now known as archaeometry become better known among Ottomanists, we will be able to say something about health and nutrition, the age at death or the continuities and discontinuities of rural settlement and link these matters to the economic conjunctures determined by warfare and peace.

Needless to say, in many cases archaeology is also our only hope of accessing the general layouts of Ottoman building complexes, of which only scanty remainders have survived to our day. Salvage excavations of Istanbul sites in preparation for the underground railway have already yielded a mass of material for archaeological investigation.³⁰ We hope that these finds will encourage further studies on Ottoman society and its links to the material environment.

³⁰ *From Byzantium to Istanbul: 8000 Years of a Capital*, exhibition catalogue, coordinated by Koray Durak (Istanbul, 2010).

PART I

★

AN EXPANDING EMPIRE

The Ottomans, 1451–1603: A political history introduction

KATE FLEET

The period from the second accession of Mehmed II in 1451 to the accession of Ahmed III in 1603 was one in which the Ottoman Empire was to reach the limits of its territorial expansion, stretching from Iran in the east to Hungary in the west, from the Crimea in the north to the borders of Morocco in the south. The empire truly became a world power, one of the major players in the politics of Europe (see Brummett, [Chapter 3](#), this volume) and a dominant naval power in the Mediterranean (see Fleet, [Chapter 5](#), this volume). With the conquest of Egypt and Syria, the Ottomans took control of the Red Sea and entered the Indian Ocean, where they clashed with the Portuguese for control of the lucrative trade routes from the east (see Özbaran, [Chapter 6](#), this volume). From the early sixteenth century onwards, the Ottomans were constantly challenged by the Safavid state of Iran, which effectively undermined the Ottomans' ability to control their territory and secure the loyalty of their population in eastern Anatolia, and with whom warfare was particularly exacting as, after the calamity of Çaldıran in 1514, they avoided direct military confrontation, preferring retreat and scorched-earth tactics. Ottoman victories against the Safavids were thus often pyrrhic ones (see Boyar, [Chapter 4](#), this volume).

The reigns of Mehmed II, Bayezid II and Selim I and the first half of the reign of Süleyman I represent a period of rapid conquest with an expanding state pursuing generally lucrative wars. By the middle of the sixteenth century, however, warfare had become more demanding and less rewarding, and the state became increasingly faced with the need to secure borders rather than extend them. The period was thus one in which the empire, as Géza Dávid ([Chapter 9](#), this volume) notes, “reached the apogee of its military potential” but also one in which its effective military strength, although still formidable, began to decline. In part as a result of the greater military demands of warfare towards the end of the sixteenth century, and the increasing failure of military campaigns to produce lucrative returns, the empire faced, from the

mid-sixteenth century onwards, and particularly from the 1580s, increasing financial difficulties, the influx of silver from the New World, the difficulty of stabilising the currency and chronic financial deficits (for the economy of the period, see Çizakça, [Chapter 8](#), this volume).

The period was also one of great transformation, in which the makeup of the population changed dramatically (Faroqhi, [Chapter 11](#), this volume), and, in the words of Gilles Veinstein ([Chapter 10](#), this volume), the sultan “unambiguously appeared as the champion of Sunni Islam”. These were transformations to which, “despite its apparent conservatism”, the government of the empire responded (Imber, [Chapter 7](#), this volume), and the legal and administrative innovations of this period “provided the solid foundation to Ottoman government which allowed the Empire, first to absorb and stabilise the territories conquered during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and later to survive the multiple political, fiscal and social crises which were to beset it in the decades after the 1580s”.

An age for Çiğdem Kafescioğlu ([Chapter 13](#), this volume), unified by “visual articulations of an imperial identity, as well as its dynamic encounters and reformulations beyond the imperial locus”, the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries also constituted, in the words of Selim Kuru ([Chapter 14](#), this volume), “the moment of origin of a literary tradition” which saw “the creation of a distinct written language of Anatolian Turkish, the appearance of new forms, genres and themes based on this language, the development of a literary archive and literary tools that defined norms and conventions, and finally the genesis of a biographical and an autobiographical tradition that made models available for literary production”. It was in this period, too, that “Ottoman intellectual life gain[ed] breadth and splendour as well as regularity and order” (Hagen, [Chapter 12](#), this volume), with the birth of “a new, coherent system of knowledge production and dissemination” and an Ottoman canon of knowledge, which, Gottfried Hagen argues, “fully deserves to be called classical in itself”.

While thus an intellectually productive period and often regarded as a golden age, and certainly one which Ottomans from the late sixteenth century on held up as the epitome of excellence, an age to which return would secure escape from all the ills of the modern declining and decadent world, the period was not one of consistent splendour. The first years of Süleyman’s rule continued the expansion and triumph of the previous decades. He took Rhodes, marched successfully into Hungary and reached the gates of Vienna in 1529. The latter part of his reign, however, was less triumphal, and the campaigns against the Safavids and the Habsburgs both showed the limits of

Ottoman military ability. Süleyman’s final campaign, in which he died while besieging Szigetvar, has been described as “a foolish venture”.¹

Any attempt to divide the long sixteenth century, which can be taken to have run from 1453, with the conquest of Constantinople, to 1606 and the treaty of Zsitvatorok which ended the long war with Hungary, is dependent, not surprisingly, on what one is focusing on, as Palmira Brummett shows in her discussion of periodisation (Brummett, [Chapter 3](#), this volume). In the Mediterranean, 1574 can be taken as the date marking the turn from an aggressive to a defensive policy, although the seeds of this change can perhaps be seen in the Ottoman failure to take Malta in 1565 (Fleet, [Chapter 5](#), this volume). When looking at the campaigns against the Safavids, the second campaign of 1548 was much more defensive than offensive (Boyar, [Chapter 4](#), this volume), and, in Europe, the campaigns against the Habsburgs took on a defensive quality from the 1550s and were not the success of the campaigns earlier in Süleyman’s reign. In economic terms, the problems facing the state were clear from the 1580s, but the seeds of economic concern were evident in the middle of the century, when campaigns began to be less productive, or even, Akdağ has argued, in the early decades of the 1500s.² The middle of the sixteenth century thus can be seen in many ways as marking a shift in fortune. Indeed, Colin Imber ([Chapter 7](#), this volume) divides the period into two, the first period running from 1453 to about 1540 and the second from about 1540 to 1603, arguing that before around 1540 the Ottoman government had to deal with problems “attendant on conquest” but that from the mid-sixteenth century the problems it faced were “those of how to maintain intact vastly expanded territories within stable borders, and how to manage periods of prolonged and no longer profitable warfare”.

For the purposes of a general overview therefore, this chapter will take the period in two parts, the first, from 1451 to the mid-sixteenth century, in which the empire was on the rise, becoming a world power, conquering and dealing with the effects of success, and the second period, the mid-sixteenth century to 1603, in which the empire had rather to deal with the consequences of its earlier successes, to fight to defend rather than conquer, to establish, and keep, frontiers, and to grapple with the economic and social effects of a decline in conquest and of the impact of the outside world. However one divides the period, it is important to remember that although it is commonly

¹ Alan Fisher, ‘The Life and Family of Süleyman I’, in *Süleymân the Second and His Time*, ed. Halil İnalçık and Cemal Kafadar (Istanbul, 1993), p. 14.

² Mustafa Akdağ, *Türkiye’nin İktisadî ve İçtimai Tarihi* (Istanbul, 2010), pp. 687–8; Mustafa Akdağ, *Türk Halkının Dirlik ve Düzenlik Kavgası Celali İsyanları* (Ankara, 1999), p. 123.

called the classical age, it does not contain the cohesion or continuity that such an epithet implies but is far more complex, shifting and fluid.

1451 to the mid-sixteenth century

Mehmed II (r. 1444–1446, 1451–1481)

In February 1451, Mehmed II ascended the throne for the second time, for he had occupied it briefly, and unsuccessfully, between 1444 and 1446, after his father's abdication. His second reign was to be a very different affair and was to see considerable expansion of Ottoman territory, the conquest of Constantinople and the end of the Byzantine Empire, the rising power of the Ottomans as a naval force in the Aegean and the landing of Ottoman troops in southern Italy with Gedik Ahmed Paşa's capture of Otranto in 1480. One of the best known of Ottoman sultans, Mehmed II ran his state both effectively and firmly, indeed with a firmness which was to leave his successor, Bayezid II, certain difficulties as he faced discontent over his father's fiscal and land policies and found himself forced to backpeddle somewhat over the more unpopular of Mehmed's methods.

In the first couple of years of his reign, Mehmed stabilised his position, having perhaps learned from his previous experience on the throne, and his initial actions were peaceful and reassuring. Constantine XI, the Byzantine emperor who had received the throne, a rather poisoned chalice, in 1448, was assured of continued Ottoman friendship; the emissary from Venice was well received, as were the various representatives of the Latin-held Aegean islands. Mehmed made treaties with John Hunyadi of Transylvania and George Branković of Serbia and established cordial relations with the representatives from Wallachia. The loathed grand *vezir* Çandarlı Halil, who had apparently been instrumental in his removal from the throne in 1446, remained in place.

Other areas required a more forceful approach, and in autumn 1452 Mehmed despatched a force to the Peloponnese (the Morea, Mora) under Turahan against Constantine XI's obstreperous brothers, the despots Thomas and Demetrios. To the east, in Anatolia, Mehmed faced a far more annoying problem, that of Karaman, the unruly and powerful Turkish state centred on Konya. On his accession, İbrahim, the ruler of Karaman, instigated uprisings in the regions of Menteşe, Aydın and Germiyan, in western Anatolia, while he himself attacked Antalya on the southern coast. Initially unsuccessful, Mehmed then defeated İbrahim, forcing him to sue for peace. With Karaman now back under control, and having secured peaceful relations with

his neighbours in the west, Mehmed was free to turn his attention to the conquest of the Byzantine capital, Constantinople, an ambition which occupied his every moment and “never left his tongue”.³ The motivation for the conquest was both strategic and economic,⁴ and after the fall of the city, “an island in the midst of an Ottoman ocean”,⁵ in May 1453, he invested much time and energy in restoring the prosperity of his new capital. He began the building of a great imperial palace, Topkapı, which was to be the palace of the sultans until it was replaced by Dolmabahçe in the nineteenth century. Mehmed also divested himself of his grand *vezir*, Çandarlı Halil, whom he executed in 1453 after the capture of Constantinople, which Çandarlı Halil had opposed, replacing him with Zaganos Paşa, who had not. Istanbul would remain the capital of the empire until the creation of the Turkish Republic in 1923.

From his new capital, Mehmed turned his attention to the west, where a string of military expeditions would lead to the conquest of Serbia, the Peloponnese, Bosnia, where King Stefan Tomašević was defeated in 1463, Herzegovina and much of Albania. In 1462, the revolt of Vlad III Drakul, the *voyvoda* of Wallachia who had come to power in 1456 and had switched allegiance to the Hungarians, was put down, Vlad being replaced by his brother Radu, and the vassal status of Wallachia was restored. Moldavia, too, was a vassal state, though not always an obedient one.

Mehmed’s main enemy in Rumeli, the European section of Ottoman territory, was Hungary, with whom the initial bone of contention was Serbia. In 1454 and 1455, Mehmed campaigned there, taking in 1455 the important region of Novo Brdo, whose rich silver mines made it a prime target. By the summer of that year, George Branković, the despot of Serbia, was forced to come to an arrangement with Mehmed under which he paid tribute and ceded Novo Brdo. Mehmed’s siege of Belgrade the following year, however, was unsuccessful.

In December 1456, several months after the abortive siege of Belgrade, the elderly George Branković died. His son and successor, Lazar, died shortly afterwards, in January 1458, without leaving a male heir, a situation which resulted in a succession problem. Two factions emerged, one pro-Hungarian

3 Tursun Bey, *The History of Mehmed the Conqueror by Tursun Beg*, ed. Halil İncalık and Rhoads Murphey (Minneapolis and Chicago, 1978), fol. 31a.

4 Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 6–27.

5 Julian Chrysostomides, ‘The Byzantine Empire from the Eleventh to the Fifteenth Century’, in *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. 1: *From Byzantium to Turkey*, ed. Kate Fleet (Cambridge, 2008), p. 33.

and one pro-Ottoman. The latter was headed by Mikhail Angelović, the brother of the grand *vezir* Mahmud Paşa, who had replaced Zaganos Paşa in 1457. In March 1458, Mahmud Paşa marched towards Smederevo (Semendire), but a revolt there in the same month saw the fall of Angelović and the rise of the pro-Hungarian faction. Mahmud Paşa decided against a long siege of Smederevo but forced the surrender of Golubać (Golubats) on the Danube in summer 1458 by cutting off its water supply. With Hungarian backing, the despotate of Serbia went to Stefan Tomašević, the son of the king of Bosnia, who, in return, recognised Hungarian sovereignty. He ascended the throne in March 1459 and the following month married Jelena, the daughter of the now dead Lazar Branković, George Branković's son and heir, thus giving his position legitimacy. This was not a situation which Mehmed was likely to find acceptable. Smederevo fell to the Ottomans in June 1459, "as crushing a blow to the spirits of the Hungarians as the loss of Constantinople had been" according to Pope Pius II.⁶ Stefan Tomašević fled, and Serbia became an Ottoman province.

At the beginning of Mehmed's reign, the Peloponnese was under the somewhat ineffective control of the Byzantine despots Thomas, based at Patras, and Demetrios, at Mistra. In 1453, there had been revolts against them during which both the despots and the rebels had appealed to the Ottomans for help. Mehmed backed the despots, despatching a force into the Peloponnese at the end of 1453. Putting down the revolt, he re-established the despots, who, already tribute-paying, were now obliged to pay a higher tribute to Istanbul for their positions.

The Ottoman policy of conquest was what a later European observer was to call "progression by degrees",⁷ whereby Mehmed, as had his predecessors, advanced by stages, first through vassalage and then, when the moment was right, to outright conquest. Here, for the moment, the Byzantine despots remained in place, as did, for example, the various Latin rulers in the Aegean islands or the *voyvoda* of Wallachia. In 1458, however, Mehmed, most unwilling to see any Latin power extending control in the region, invaded the Peloponnese, taking much of the region, including Corinth and Athens. While Demetrios was prepared to accept the loss of territory and to seek accommodation with the Ottomans, his brother Thomas was not. After launching an attack on Patras, Thomas then turned his attention to his brother, who

6 Quoted in John Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1987), p. 575.

7 Castlemaine, Earl of, *An Account of the Present War between the Venetians and Turk; with the State of Candie (in a Letter to the King of Venice)* (London, 1666), p. 75.

promptly appealed to Mehmed for help. Realising at this point the danger of the situation, the brothers patched up their relations, but only temporarily, for by the end of 1459 they were once again fighting each other. As the Peloponnese spiralled into anarchy, the Ottomans moved in and Mehmed conquered it in 1460.

Farther to the west, Mehmed sought control of Albania, then under the rule of the wily and efficient Scanderbeg (George Kastriote). Conquest here would give him an outlet to the Adriatic and position him very close to Italy. For the same reasons, Ottoman success in Albania was extremely unwelcome to Venice, positioned at the top of the Adriatic, a sea which they regarded as their own domain. Despite Mehmed's tactics of "terror and deportation",⁸ Scanderbeg survived undefeated until he died in January 1468, leaving Krujë to Venice and Albania disunited. Several years later, in 1474, Mehmed initiated a campaign against Venetian possessions in Albania, but his assault on Shkodër (Scutari) failed.

By this time, the Ottomans were at war with Venice, war having broken out in 1463. In its relations with the Ottoman state, Venice had always sought to balance with difficulty on a tightrope suspended between commercial realism and political expediency. Its ability to forestall conflict, however, was limited, as both sides were in direct competition for economic and strategic control in the eastern Mediterranean. Mehmed's conquests in the Aegean early in his reign were not encouraging signs for Venice. With the Ottomans now threatening the Venetians in the Aegean, in the Peloponnese, where its possessions of Coron and Modon were surrounded by a sea of Ottoman territory, and in Albania, war became inevitable. In 1464, the Venetians pillaged the island of Lesbos but failed to take it; they did, however, capture Lemnos and Imbros. As a result of the devastating plundering of the Ottoman port of Enez by Nicolò da Canale, Mehmed launched an attack on Venetian-held Negroponte (Euboea), an essential possession for Venetian commerce, and captured it in 1470. In 1477, the Ottomans laid siege to Lepanto (Navpaktos, İnebahtı) and to Krujë, which fell the following year, as did Zhabljak, Drisht (Drivasto) and Lezhë (Alessio). The war came to an end in 1479 when Venice sued for peace. It had not been a good war for Venice, which now lost Shkodër, Lemnos and lands in the Peloponnese and was forced to pay an annual sum of 10,000 *florins*.

Mehmed's success in the west was mirrored by his progress in the east, where he extended his control along the southern shores of the Black Sea,

8 Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300–1481* (Istanbul, 1990), p. 195.

taking the Genoese trading colony of Amasra in 1459 and Sinop in 1461. Trabzon (Trebizond), the last remaining Byzantine state, tributary to the Ottomans since 1456, fell in 1461. With almost the entire Black Sea coast of Anatolia under his control, Mehmed now shifted his sights across the water, and in 1475 he despatched a fleet under Gedik Ahmed Paşa, which took the major Genoese trading settlement of Caffa (Feodosiya, Kefe) in the Crimea. The han of the Crimea, Mengli Girey, who had called on Ottoman support in a family feud, was restored to his position, but as an Ottoman vassal. Mehmed's dominant position in the Black Sea was thus confirmed.

While Mehmed controlled much of northern Anatolia, his position in the southeast was less secure, for here he was faced with two powerful enemies, the Akkoyunlu under Uzun Hasan, who had built up a powerful state in south-eastern Anatolia, Iraq and Iran, and the Mamluks, who either controlled or were influential in areas of Anatolia bordering their own state in Syria and Egypt. The bone of contention between Mehmed and the Mamluk sultan Quaytbay was the state of Dulğadir, which both sought to control by backing various contenders for the throne, and that between Mehmed and Uzun Hasan was the state of Karaman, centred round Konya. In 1465, Mehmed removed İshak, the ruler of Karaman, who had come to the throne the year before with Akkoyunlu backing, replacing him with Pir Ahmed, whose mother was Mehmed's aunt. In 1468, after Pir Ahmed had failed to provide troops for an Ottoman campaign, Mehmed attacked Karaman, occupied much of its territory, and put in his son Mustafa as governor. The position was by no means secure, however, and it was only after Uzun Hasan was crushingly defeated at the battle of Otlukbeli, near Başkent, in August 1473 that Ottoman control was assured. With the campaign the following year under Gedik Ahmed Paşa, now grand *vezir*, the state of Karaman was extinguished.

At the end of his reign, Mehmed undertook two naval campaigns. In 1480, Mesih Paşa attacked Rhodes, the Hospitaller stronghold which lay on the route between Egypt and Istanbul, but was unsuccessful and withdrew after a long and gruelling siege. Mehmed's other naval campaign that year, however, was a triumph. Ottoman forces under Gedik Ahmed Paşa, who had taken the islands of Levkas, Cephalonia and Zante the year before, sailed across the Adriatic from Albania and took Otranto in southern Italy. The Ottomans now had a base on Italian soil and seemed poised for expansion across the peninsula.

In 1481, Mehmed set out eastwards on yet another campaign, possibly directed against the Mamluks, on which, shortly after its departure from Istanbul, he died.

Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512)

Bayezid II was credited with being a very different man from his father, peace-loving and religiously inclined. Not a man of action for Marino Sanudo,⁹ he had, according to Alvixe Sagudino, a peaceful nature.¹⁰ This may, however, have owed more to political necessity than to natural inclination: for almost half his reign, he was to be handicapped by the existence of his brother Cem.

On his death, Mehmed had left two sons, Cem, the younger, favoured by the grand *vezir* Nişancı Mehmed Paşa and, according to some, his father, and Bayezid, the older, who was reputed to have loathed his father and was favoured by the janissaries. While Bayezid emerged successfully onto the throne, Cem proclaimed himself sultan in Bursa. Defeated by Bayezid's forces at Yenişehir in June 1481, he fled to the Mamluks. The following year he reappeared in Anatolia but was once more forced to flee, this time into the willing arms of the grand master of the Hospitallers, who welcomed him "with joy"¹¹ and promptly whisked him off to the distant, and safer, France. For the rest of his life, Cem remained a useful hostage, first in the hands of the Hospitallers and then of the popes Innocent VIII and his successor, Alexander VI, until he was handed over in January 1495 to the French king Charles VIII on his way to Naples to begin his anti-Ottoman crusade. A month later, Cem was dead (his body finally returned to Bayezid in 1499), and the crusade foundered.

For the first 15 years of his reign, Bayezid's political horizon was circumscribed by Cem's captivity, and his relations with the states to the west were initially more cautious and less aggressive than those of his father. While Mehmed seemed poised for expansion in Italy, one of Bayezid's first acts as sultan was to withdraw Ottoman forces from southern Italy, leaving the small Ottoman garrison in Otranto to its fate. In November 1481, he made a truce with the Hospitallers, and in 1485 presented the grand master with the hand of John the Baptist and assured him that the Ottoman fleet would not sail out into the Mediterranean. In January 1482, he confirmed the peace with Venice, renewed in 1485, and in 1483 made a five-year treaty with Matthias Corvinus of Hungary, which was then extended to 1491.

Although cautious, Bayezid was not completely inactive. In 1484, he set out against the important commercial cities of Kilia, "Moldavia's gateway to the

⁹ Marino Sanudo, *I diarii di Marino Sanudo*, 25 vols. (Bologna, 1969–70), vol. 1, p. 823.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 398.

¹¹ *Vakıat-ı Sultan Cem*, in Nicolas Vatin, *Sultan Djem: Un prince ottoman dans l'Europe du xve siècle d'après deux sources contemporaines: Vâkı'ât-ı Sultân Cem*, *Œuvres de Guillaume Caoursin* (Ankara, 1997), p. 145.

Black Sea",¹² and Akkerman (Cetatea Alba), at the mouth of the Dniester on the Black Sea coast. Kilia surrendered in July, and Akkerman, where Ottoman forces were joined by the Crimean han, Mengli Giray, fell in August. These losses were keenly felt by the ruler of Moldavia, Stefan III, who, however, was forced to flee before an Ottoman army under Hadım Ali Paşa which advanced into Moldavia in July 1485, and took refuge with the Polish king Kazimierz IV. After another failed attempt to retake Kilia and Akkerman, which prompted another Ottoman strike, this time under Malkoçoğlu Bali Bey, Stefan submitted, paying an annual tribute until his death in 1504. With the conquest of Akkerman and the submission of Moldavia and the Crimean hanate, Poland opted for peaceful relations with its Ottoman neighbour, signing a peace in March 1489, renewed in 1492 by Kazimierz's son and successor Jan Olbracht, and renewed again in 1494 for three years.

In 1490, the Hungarian king Matthias Corvinus died, resulting in a dispute among the Hungarians over the choice of a new king. This dissension was viewed as an opportunity by the Ottomans, and in spring 1492 Bayezid set out on campaign. The succession dispute was, however, settled by the selection of the son of the king of Poland as the new king of Hungary, and Bayezid turned his attention instead to Albania, where he took various castles in Venetian hands. At the same time, raids were conducted against Hungary and Transylvania. Peace was restored in 1495 for three years, when Charles VIII's advance, accompanied by Cem, seemed threatening.

Although Bayezid did conduct some campaigns in the west, his most serious encounter in the first years of his reign was in the east. Here he had the perennial problem of controlling the territories in Anatolia, where he was faced with unruly Turcomans, the vacillating allegiance of the state of Dulğadir, the smouldering disloyalty of members of the Karaman dynasty and the dangerous presence of the Mamluk state, which offered a refuge to opponents of the Ottoman sultan, Cem having fled to Egypt in 1481. In 1485, war with the Mamluks broke out, and in May Karagöz Paşa, the *beylerbeyi* of Karaman, captured Tarsus and Adana, prompting the Mamluk sultan to despatch a force which inflicted a major defeat on the Ottoman army in spring 1486, in which the *beylerbeyi* of Anatolia, Hersekzade Ahmed Paşa, was captured. In response, the grand *vezir* Davud Paşa repelled the Mamluks and then moved against the Turgutoğulları and Varsak Turcomans. The following year, in August 1488, a large Ottoman force under Ali Paşa suffered a humiliating

¹² İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi, II. Cilt, İstanbul'un Fethinden Kanuni Sultan Süleyman'ın Ölümüne Kadar* (Ankara, 2006), p. 182.

defeat at the hands of the Mamluks at Ağa Çayırı, near Adana, and Alaüddevele, the ruler of Dulgadir, calculating that the Ottomans were not the force to ally with, now defected to the Mamluks. Bayezid transferred his support to Alaüddevele's brother, Şahbudak, who took refuge at the Ottoman court. In 1489, supported by Ottoman troops, Şahbudak attempted to take the throne but was defeated, captured and despatched to Cairo. In 1490, Alaüddevele, supported by Mamluk forces, attacked and besieged Kayseri but was unable to take it, contenting himself with extensive ravaging of the region instead. Bayezid began to prepare a large army to march into Anatolia.

By this time, both sides were running out of steam, both ground down by an inconclusive war in which the Mamluks, though victorious, were unable to achieve a decisive victory or to profit from their successes in a conflict which was costing them dearly. For the Ottomans, peace was attractive, both because of the losses they were sustaining and because of the opportunity which had presented itself in Hungary with the death of Matthias Corvinus. Peace was therefore concluded in May 1491, with the Ottomans giving up claims to Çukurova (Cilicia) and losing Tarsus and Adana.

For the rest of Bayezid's reign, Ottoman–Mamluk relations improved. When Bayezid's son Korkud fled to Cairo in 1509, Qansuh al-Ghuri, who had come to the throne in 1501, was very careful in his handling of the situation, eventually sending Korkud back to Istanbul. By this time, the Mamluks had their own problems and were in need of Ottoman help rather than enmity. As the sixteenth-century historian Abdüssamed Diyarbekri expressed it, "there is a famous saying that to speak you need lips, and so to fight you need arms and munitions suitable for your enemy".¹³ For this the Mamluks turned to the Ottomans, who contributed towards the construction of a Mamluk navy in the Red Sea for operations against the Portuguese.

Shortly after the end of the war with the Mamluks and immediately after the peace concluded with Hungary, Cem died and the political game changed. Bayezid was at last free to pursue a more aggressive policy in the west. His target was Venice. In May 1499, the Ottoman fleet set sail from Istanbul under Davud Paşa, thought by many, including the Venetians, who were presumably misled by Bayezid's letter assuring them that the "good peace" between them would be maintained,¹⁴ to be headed for Rhodes, Corfu or Apulia. In fact, the target was Lepanto, which fell to Bayezid in August. The next to fall were Modon (Methone), taken by siege, Navarino (Navarin) and Coron (Korone),

¹³ Abdüssamed Diyarbekri, *Tarih*, in Benjamin Lellouch, *Les Ottomans en Égypte: Historiens et conquérants au XVIe siècle* (Paris and Louvain, 2006), p. 294.

¹⁴ Sanudo, *Diarii*, vol. 2, p. 702.

which surrendered shortly afterwards. Durrës (Durazzo) fell in 1501. By 1502, Venice, having sued unsuccessfully for peace in 1500, had had enough. Under the peace concluded in May 1503, Venice lost Modon, Coron, Lepanto, Durrës and Lefkas. It was a singular success for Bayezid. The Ottomans now dominated the eastern Mediterranean, their position as a significant naval power was established, and their control of the commerce of the region assured. With the conclusion of the war with Venice, Vladislas II, king of Bohemia and Hungary and son of the Polish king Kazimierz IV, concluded a seven-year treaty with Bayezid in February 1503, to be renewed in 1510 and 1511.

While the beginning of the sixteenth century saw Ottoman victory over Venice, it also saw the rise to power of a very threatening new state, that of the Safavids in Iran. In spring 1501, Shah Isma‘il I, who had come to the head of the Safavi order in 1494, captured Tabriz and made it his capital. In 1508, he took Baghdad. The state Isma‘il founded rested to a great extent on the support of the Turcoman tribes in Anatolia, over whom the Ottomans struggled to impose their authority. The Varsaklar and the Turgutoğulları, for example, had supported Cem and in 1500 backed a claimant to descent from the Karamanoğulları in a revolt which was only put down with difficulty by the grand *vezir* Mesih Paşa in 1501. In 1511, a serious revolt broke out in Teke in south-western Anatolia led by Şah Kulu, whose allegiance lay with the Safavids. He took Antalya, marched on Kütahya, defeating the troops of the *beylerbeyi* Karagöz Paşa en route, and reached Bursa. The Ottoman army under the grand *vezir* Hadım Ali Paşa and Şehzade Ahmed forced Şah Kulu into retreat. Shortly afterwards, both Hadım Ali Paşa and Şah Kulu lost their lives in an encounter near Sivas. Now leaderless, the followers of Şah Kulu fled into Iran.

By this time, the Ottoman Empire was embroiled in a power struggle between Bayezid's three sons: Ahmed, the eldest and apparently Bayezid's choice, Korkud, and the youngest, Selim. This instability within the Ottoman Empire was clearly advantageous to Shah Isma‘il, who, at the beginning of 1512, instigated another rebellion, supported by Ahmed's son, Murad. Selim, backed by the janissaries, emerged victorious from the succession struggle, and Bayezid was forced to abdicate, dying shortly afterwards on his way into exile in Dimoteka (Didymoteichon).

Selim I (r. 1512–1520)

Having come to the throne in a power struggle, Selim's first move as sultan was to eliminate his brothers. Korkud was disposed of in 1512 and Ahmed, after defeat in battle at Yenişehir, in 1513. Selim's reign, one of rapid expansion

in which the territory of the empire was to double, was dominated by conflict with the Safavids and the Mamluks. His first target was the Safavids. Announcing, according to the contemporary Arab chronicler Ibn Iyas, that “nothing could deter him from wiping off Ismā’īl Shah from the face of the earth”,¹⁵ Selim marched against him and in August 1514 inflicted a crushing defeat on Isma’īl’s forces at the battle of Çaldıran, to the north-east of Lake Van. As the shah fled, the Ottomans moved on to take Tabriz. Conquest was a comparatively easy matter. To keep possession of the city, however, was not, and shortly afterwards Selim withdrew to winter in Amasya. This set the pattern for future Ottoman–Safavid encounters, in which the Safavids, having learnt the bitter lesson of Çaldıran, avoided direct confrontation with Ottoman forces, choosing instead to employ scorched-earth tactics which left the Ottomans without supplies in enemy terrain. Ottoman advance and victory were thus generally followed by retreat and Safavid return, and it was to become increasingly difficult later on in the century to turn conquest into permanent control.

For the moment, however, the Safavids had been satisfactorily dealt with at Çaldıran, and Selim now turned his attention to south-eastern Anatolia. In November 1514, he appointed as governor of Kayseri Şehsuvaroğlu Ali, nephew of Alaüddevlé, the ruler of Dulğadir, and sent him off to raid into his uncle’s territories, Alaüddevlé having failed to provide whole-hearted support to the Ottomans at the time of Çaldıran. In June 1515, the grand *vezir* Sinan Paşa defeated and killed Alaüddevlé and his four sons in battle, and Dulğadir was put under Şehsuvaroğlu Ali, who ruled as an Ottoman vassal. Selim also actively sought the alliance of Kurdish lords disgruntled with the Safavid shah, and by 1516 Ottoman forces under Mehmed Paşa, the governor of Erzincan, had driven the Safavids out of south-eastern Anatolia. The Ottomans now controlled Urfa, Mardin and Mosul.

The other factor undermining Ottoman authority in south-eastern Anatolia was the Mamluks, who regarded Dulğadir as their own domain. In 1516, Selim set off on campaign against them, careful to conceal its true target and to persuade the Mamluks that the destination was Iran. That the campaign was in fact aimed at the Mamluks became clear with the Ottoman arrest and humiliation of an envoy from Qansuh al-Ghawri and the conquest of Malatya. Advancing into Syria, the Ottomans defeated the Mamluks in August 1516 at Marj Dabiq, near Aleppo, a catastrophe such as “to turn an

¹⁵ Ibn Iyas, *An Account of the Ottoman Conquest of Egypt in the Year A.H. 922 (A.D. 1516)*, trans. W. H. Salmon (London, 1921), p. 33.

infant's hair white, and to melt iron in its fury".¹⁶ With Qansuh al-Ghawri dead and the Mamluks put to flight, Selim entered Aleppo unopposed. By September, he was in Damascus. Advancing into Egypt, a logistically challenging operation, he defeated the Mamluks under the new sultan Tumanbay at al-Raydaniyya in January 1517 in an encounter at which the grand *vezir* Sinan Paşa was killed. Despite continued resistance, Tumanbay was eventually defeated, captured and executed in Cairo in April. The Mamluk sultanate was at an end. The conquest brought religious prestige, the Ottoman sultan now master of Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem, and great economic gain, the region being both productive in its own right and a major, lucrative transit market for luxury goods, in particular spices, from the east. The way was now open for Ottoman expansion into the Red Sea and beyond into the Indian Ocean, leading to an inevitable clash with the Portuguese for control of trade routes.

Süleyman I (r. 1520–1566)

Süleyman began his reign at breakneck speed, putting down revolts in Egypt and Anatolia, capturing Rhodes and invading Hungary three times, all in the first decade of his rule.

Although Selim had taken Egypt and Syria, the territory was not entirely secure. On Selim's death, the governor of Syria, Janbirdi al-Ghazali, revolted and declared himself sultan at the beginning of 1521. Further unrest occurred on the death of Khayrbay, the governor of Egypt, in 1522, to be followed by a serious rebellion in 1524 when the new governor of Egypt, Ahmed Paşa, revolted and proclaimed himself sultan. After the elimination of Ahmed Paşa, Süleyman despatched İbrahim Paşa, his grand *vezir* and brother-in-law, who left Istanbul in September 1524, reaching Cairo at the beginning of April 1525, where he stayed until June, establishing Ottoman authority.

While Egypt and Syria were being brought under control, Süleyman himself set off in 1521 on a campaign against Hungary during which he took Belgrade, thus opening up Hungary to further Ottoman penetration. The following year he took Rhodes, and the Hospitallers were expelled to the west. Four years later, Süleyman again invaded Hungary, defeated and killed Lajos II, king of Hungary and Bohemia, at the battle of Mohács at the end of August, and in September entered the Hungarian capital, Buda. Further Ottoman advance was prevented by a serious rebellion which broke out in Anatolia, forcing Süleyman to withdraw from the west in order to deal with it.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

With Süleyman engaged in his eastern territories, the Hungarians occupied themselves with the succession to the Hungarian throne, for King Lajos had died at Mohács without leaving an heir. Lajos's wife was Maria, the sister of the Habsburg Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor and king of Spain, while his brother-in-law twice over was Maria's other brother, Ferdinand, the archduke of Austria, who had married Lajos's sister Anna. The Hungarian estates elected John (János) Szápolyai as king in November 1526, and he was crowned at Székesfehérvár. Ferdinand, however, laid claim to Hungary and Bohemia through his wife and had himself elected in December and crowned the following year. Fleeing to the Polish border, Szápolyai appealed to the Ottomans. Süleyman backed John Szápolyai, and Ferdinand occupied Buda.

The struggle with the Habsburgs, with Ferdinand for control of Hungary and Charles in the western Mediterranean, dominated much of Süleyman's reign and resulted in a series of anti-Habsburg Ottoman–French alliances, the first of which was signed in 1536. The Ottomans became intricately involved in European politics, well informed about the complex web of matrimonial and political alliances and acting as astute puppet masters or shrewd and calculating allies, sought after by the major powers of the day. The next Ottoman campaign to Hungary, the third in less than a decade, began in 1529 in response to Ferdinand's occupation of Buda and removal of the newly elected Hungarian king, John Szápolyai. Süleyman reoccupied Buda in September and re-established Szápolyai back on the throne. He then moved on to lay siege to Vienna before withdrawing, unsuccessful, in mid-October. Undaunted by his earlier failure, Ferdinand again attacked Buda in 1530, without success, but did manage to occupy the western part of the kingdom of Hungary, prompting yet another Ottoman–Hungarian campaign. The sultan left Istanbul in April 1532, but the campaign did not achieve any notable success. In June 1533, an agreement was reached under which Szápolyai remained in place but the kingdom was divided between him and Ferdinand, both of whom ruled as Ottoman vassals. This opportune truce left Süleyman free to deal with the east.

Several years later, Süleyman was back campaigning in the west. In 1538, he removed Petru Rareș, the *voyvoda* of Moldavia, suspected of entering into relations with the Habsburgs, and annexed south-east Moldavia. Two years later, the situation in Hungary deteriorated when, in July 1540, Szápolyai died. Under the terms of an agreement between Szápolyai and Ferdinand concluded in 1538, the pact of Nagyvárad (Grosswardein, Oradea), one of whose architects was George Martinuzzi, then bishop of Nagyvárad, John Szápolyai, who was in a weak position sandwiched between the Ottomans on the one

hand and the Habsburgs on the other, or “between the victim and the knife”,¹⁷ had agreed that on his death his lands would pass to Ferdinand. One year later, Szápolyai married Isabella, daughter of King Sigismund of Poland, and, at the time of his death in 1540, had an infant son, John Sigismund (János Zsigmond Szápolyai). Süleyman recognised John Sigismund as king of Hungary, John paying tribute to Istanbul. Ferdinand, in pursuit of his claims to Hungary, attacked. Süleyman invaded Hungary in summer 1541 and took Buda. John Sigismund was despatched to Transylvania with George Martinuzzi as regent. In 1542, Ferdinand launched yet another attack on Buda, and the following year Süleyman marched again into Hungary, taking Esztergom (Gran) and Székesfehérvár. There were further conquests under the *beylerbeyi* of Buda in 1544. By now peace was becoming an attractive option to both Ferdinand and Charles, who sued for peace in 1545. An agreement was concluded in 1547 under which Ferdinand paid tribute for the Hungarian lands he held. Once again, this peace was opportune for the Ottomans, for Süleyman was again faced with problems in the east.

As was the case with all sultans, Süleyman’s expansion was conducted on a see-saw swaying between the eastern and western sections of his large empire. This was a situation which the western states were keen to exploit, seeking alliances with powers such as Uzun Hasan or the Safavids, who could be encouraged into joint military action aimed at crushing the Ottomans between two fronts, a policy which in fact never effectively materialised. For the Ottomans, the regions to the east were in many ways far more threatening than their enemies to the west ever were. The Safavids and the unruly and largely uncontrollable Anatolian Turcomans not merely threatened the Ottomans militarily but also challenged Ottoman political and religious legitimacy and forced the Ottomans constantly onto the back foot. In comparison to the dangerous and undermining influence of the Safavids, the encounter with the west was much more straightforward, devoid as it was of any challenge to the legitimacy of Ottoman existence.

In 1526, Süleyman had been forced to cut short his campaigning in the west because of a rebellion in Anatolia. In 1533, too, having settled the situation in the west with the signing of a truce in that year, he again turned towards the east and to the Safavids. In 1524, Shah Isma‘il had died. His successor was his very young son Tahmasp, the first years of whose reign were very unstable. Regardless of any internal upheavals, Safavid influence in Anatolia

¹⁷ Kenneth Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571)*, 4 vols. (Philadelphia, 1976–84), vol. 3, p. 434.

continued. In 1526, a serious revolt had broken out in Anatolia, followed by a major rebellion under Kalenderoğlu. Both were thought to have been instigated or encouraged by the Safavids. Having been unable to benefit directly from the defection of the Safavid governor of Baghdad in 1528 or that of the Safavid governor of Azerbaijan two years later, due to the Hungarian campaign, Süleyman now, in 1533, launched a campaign against Iran. The following year, in July 1534, the grand *vezir*, İbrahim Paşa, occupied the Safavid capital Tabriz, which offered no resistance, and at the end of November the sultan entered Baghdad. Once again, the problem for the Ottomans was less the taking of Tabriz than the holding of it, and, in 1535, they again withdrew from the Safavid capital. The campaign had, however, led to the formation of the new province of Erzurum and the conquest of Iraq, a conquest which gave the Ottomans an outlet onto the Persian Gulf, an asset with considerable commercial advantages.

It was also a conquest which created a further area of conflict with the Portuguese, who were out to control the entrance to and exit from the Red Sea and to redirect the lucrative trade from the east round the Cape of Good Hope off southern Africa and away from the traditional route through Egypt and Syria to the ports of the Mediterranean. In the Persian Gulf, they controlled Hormuz, captured in 1515, Maskat and Bahrain. In 1538, an expedition was sent from Suez under Hadım Süleyman Paşa, the *beylerbeyi* of Egypt, against the Portuguese. In August, Hadım Süleyman Paşa took Aden and then set sail across the Indian Ocean. In September, together with forces of Gujarat, he tried to take Diu, but abandoned the siege in November and withdrew to Yemen, where he concentrated on organising Ottoman administration. The Portuguese attack on Suez in 1541 was unsuccessful. Five years later, the Ottomans conquered Basra, and in 1552 Piri Reis took Muscat from the Portuguese and laid siege, unsuccessfully, to Hormuz. On the African coast of the Red Sea, the Ottomans, who already held Sawakin, occupied Massawa and conquered Ethiopia in 1554–5.

While Süleyman had been occupied with the Safavids, Charles V had been busy in the western Mediterranean and in 1535 had captured Tunis, a conquest which was most advantageous for Habsburg prestige and strategically annoying for the Ottomans. The Ottomans had, at least nominally, controlled Algiers and Tunis since 1519, when Hayreddin, known as Barbarossa in the west, had submitted to Selim I. In 1533, realising the need to improve his navy, Süleyman had summoned Hayreddin from the Maghreb and made him admiral of the Ottoman fleet. Hayreddin promptly set about business, raiding the Italian coastline in 1537 and attacking Corfu. With the Ottomans now

at war with Venice, he took the Venetian islands of Naxos, Andros, Paros and Santorini in 1538 and, in the same year, defeated the forces of the Holy League of Venice, Pope Paul III, Charles V and Ferdinand of Austria in the famous battle of Prevesa. In 1540, the war with Venice ended, yet another triumph for the Ottomans and a costly failure for Venice, which this time lost Monemvasia and Nafplio (Nauplia, Napoli di Romania) and ceded the Aegean islands it had lost to Hayreddin as well as paying a considerable indemnity.

In 1541, Charles V attacked Algiers, this time with less success, for almost his entire fleet was wiped out in a dramatic storm, a disaster which encouraged François I and Süleyman into another alliance, concluded in 1543. As a result of this alliance, Hayreddin took part in an attack on Nice in 1543 and wintered his fleet in 1543–4 at Toulon, a city “without parallel among the Franks” according to an anonymous sixteenth-century Ottoman account of Hayreddin’s exploits.¹⁸ In 1550, Charles V’s admiral Andrea Doria attacked Mahdia and Monastir on the North African coast, and, in the following year, Jerba, prompting an unsuccessful Ottoman attack on Malta. In 1551, Ottoman forces scored a significant victory with the capture of Tripoli, held by the Hospitallers since 1530. In the same year, they concluded another alliance with the French and, in 1555, conducted a joint naval attack on Naples. In 1556, they took the Spanish fortress of Wahran (Oran), west of Algiers, and Bizerta, near Tunis, in 1557. Malta, however, continued to elude them, and despite bitter fighting they failed to capture the island in 1565, though they did take the Genoese island of Chios in the following year.

The mid-sixteenth century to 1603

Süleyman I (r. 1520–1566)

While the first part of Süleyman’s reign was marked by military success, both in the west against the Habsburgs and in the east against the Safavids, the latter part of his reign was less spectacular; his successes declined and campaigns resulted in less conquest, less booty and more expense.

In 1548, Süleyman was once more campaigning against Shah Tahmasp, whose brother, Alkas Mirza, had revolted against him and fled the year before to Istanbul. Once again the Ottomans occupied Tabriz, and once again,

¹⁸ From an anonymous account of Hayreddin’s voyage, in J. Deny and J. Laroche, ‘L’expédition en Provence de l’armée de mer du sultan Suleyman sous le commandement de l’amiral Hayreddin Pacha dit Barberousse (1543–1544)’, *Turcica* 1 (1969), 161–211 at p. 171. Laroche dates the manuscript to the second half of the sixteenth or perhaps the beginning of the seventeenth century (p. 163).

following a by now familiar pattern, they withdrew. Having wintered in Aleppo, Süleyman took Van, which he had taken in 1534 but lost to the Safavids in 1535, in August 1549. Stymied by the Safavid scorched-earth tactics and frustrated by Tahmasp's persistent refusal to come out and fight, Süleyman withdrew in December 1549 without a great deal achieved. Two years later, the Safavids laid waste to the region around the northern shores of Lake Van and defeated the troops of İskender Paşa, the *beylerbeyi* of Erzurum. Süleyman ordered the grand *vezir*, Rüstem Paşa, and Mehmed Sokollu, the *beylerbeyi* of Rumeli, to recover the lost territory. The campaign was planned for 1552, but before it could occur a crisis broke out between Süleyman and his son Mustafa.

While the Safavids were raiding round Lake Van, intrigues erupted over the Transylvanian throne. Martinuzzi, hostile to Isabella and her minister Peter Petrović, who were "thorns in Martinuzzi's flesh",¹⁹ was in contact with Ferdinand but anxious not to have a total break with Süleyman, at least not until he could be sure of Habsburg backing. Isabella, whose hostility to Martinuzzi stemmed from the agreement of 1538 which excluded her son's accession, turned, if somewhat indecisively, to the Ottomans. In July 1551, Martinuzzi forced Isabella to accept the treaty of Alba Iulia under which, in accordance with the 1538 treaty and acting on behalf of her son, Isabella gave up the throne of Transylvania, which then went to Ferdinand. Throughout this period, Martinuzzi was in communication with both Ferdinand and Süleyman, a dangerous double game which was likely to win him no friends. Indeed, Sokollu Mehmed Paşa described him in August 1551 as "mendacious".²⁰ Isabella, who heartily detested him, even suspected that he had personal ambitions to be king of Hungary, while Ferdinand's commander Giovan Battista Castaldo, also no fan of Martinuzzi's, was convinced that he was out for the rule of Transylvania. Süleyman was distinctly annoyed by the treaty of Alba Iulia, and Ottoman troops under Sokollu Mehmed Paşa advanced into Hungary in autumn 1551, took Lippa (Lipova), and laid siege to Temesvár (Timișoara) in October. By December, however, Lippa was under siege by Castaldo and Martinuzzi. By this time, Castaldo's mistrust of Martinuzzi was total and, with Ferdinand, too, wanting him removed, Castaldo had him murdered at the end of December. Fighting continued in 1552. The Ottomans took Temesvár and re-occupied Lippa in spring 1552, and in August inflicted a major defeat on Ferdinand's forces. In September, they took the fortress of

¹⁹ Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, vol. 4, p. 566.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 568.

Szolnok but failed to take Eger (Erlau). Ferdinand continued to pursue his claims to Transylvania until, with the Ottoman siege of Szigetvár in 1556, he was finally forced to abandon them. John Sigismund and Isabella were put back on the throne. Although the struggle between Ferdinand and Süleyman continued until 1562, there was no real change in the situation, for Ferdinand did not have the means to conduct a sustained offensive and Süleyman could not do so because of the situation with the Safavids and a dangerous conflict among his sons.

Süleyman's eldest son, Mustafa, held the *sancak* of Amasya. Strongly opposed by Hürrem Sultan, Süleyman's extremely influential wife, who wanted the succession for one of her own sons, and by Rüstem Paşa, married to her daughter Mihrimah and grand *vezir* almost without interruption from 1544 until his death in 1561, Mustafa set out to build up his own power base and to garner support. His success fed into Süleyman's suspicion of him, encouraged by Hürrem Sultan and Rüstem Paşa. His concern was heightened by the discontent among the soldiers when, in 1552, Rüstem Paşa set out with the army for a campaign against the Safavids. Claiming that the sultan was too old for active military service, the soldiers muttered ominously about the need to put a young and vigorous sultan on the throne. Forced to assume command of the army himself, Süleyman set out in August 1553, summoning Mustafa to join him. When Mustafa appeared before him in October near Ereğli, he was instantly put to death. Mustafa's execution, described by the Habsburg ambassador Busbecq as a "somewhat precipitate action",²¹ produced a very hostile reaction, forcing Süleyman to remove Rüstem Paşa, seen as being behind the execution, from his position as grand *vezir*.

With Mustafa removed, Süleyman pursued his campaign, destroying Persian border defences, particularly at Erivan (Yerevan) and Nakhchivan, and devastating the rich lands round Karabakh. Süleyman could not get at the Safavid army, which retreated, leaving him with only one option, that of destroying the forward zone which Safavid forces used for raids into Anatolia. Süleyman then withdrew to Erzurum. In September, he agreed to a truce with the shah, and a formal peace, the peace of Amasya, was signed in May 1555. Under this treaty, Süleyman abandoned all claim to Tabriz, Erivan and Nakhchivan but kept Iraq and regions in eastern Anatolia. The frontier between the two states was now, at least theoretically, fixed.

21 Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, trans. Edward S. Forster (Oxford, 1927), p. 65.

No sooner had the situation with the Safavids been stabilised than a second succession struggle broke out between Süleyman's two remaining sons, Selim, the elder, and Bayezid. After a period of jostling in which the brothers intrigued against each other and tracked each other's moves by means of spies,²² Bayezid, not disposed to wait for his father's death before making his move, went into open revolt, thus propelling his father into backing his non-revolting son, Selim. Defeated in battle near Konya in 1559, Bayezid fled to Iran. In an earlier period, the arrival of such an advantageous hostage might have led to open conflict, but the situation had now changed and neither Tahmasp nor Süleyman were keen to go to war over the issue. Instead, in 1562, after much diplomatic to and fro, money changed hands, the treaty of Amasya was renewed and Tahmasp handed Bayezid over to Ottoman officials, who promptly strangled him.

In the same year, Süleyman signed an agreement with Ferdinand, in essence a renewal of that of 1547. By this time, the international scene had changed, for in 1559 Philip II, who had become king of Spain on his father Charles V's abdication in 1556 though not Holy Roman Emperor, and the French king Henri II had signed the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, which signalled the end of the period of Ottoman–French political alliance.

The peace signed between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs in 1562 was not destined to last long, for in 1564 Ferdinand, Holy Roman Emperor since 1558, died and hostilities broke out between his son and successor, the new emperor Maximilian II, and John Sigismund of Transylvania. In 1566, an elderly and infirm Süleyman set out on what was to be his final campaign. The Ottoman army encamped before Szigetvár, where, two days before its fall, Süleyman died.

Selim II (r. 1566–1574)

Selim II, Süleyman's only surviving son, was faced in the first years of his reign by a war and two rebellions. The war, that with Hungary during which his father had died, was brought to a conclusion in 1568 by an eight-year peace treaty with the emperor Maximilian under which Maximilian agreed to pay an annual tribute of 30,000 *ducats*. The revolts were in the south of his territories, one among the Arabs in Iraq under Ibn 'Ulayyan, which resulted in the cutting of communications between Baghdad and Basra, and the other, the Zaydi revolt in Yemen, which had resulted in the loss of Ottoman control of the province and of the entrance to the Red Sea. The revolt of the Arabs was

22 Şerafettin Turan, *Kanuni Süleyman Dönemi Taht Kavgaları* (Ankara, 1997), p. 54.

put down in 1567 by a river campaign, and Yemen was brought back under Ottoman control after a difficult campaign between 1569 and 1571 under the command of Sinan Paşa, the *beylerbeyi* of Egypt.

The great military success of Selim's reign took place in the Mediterranean with the conquest of the Venetian island of Cyprus, whose loss was officially recognised by Venice under the treaty of 1573, and the capture of La Goletta and Tunis in 1574. Cyprus was one of the only two island strongholds left to Venice in the eastern Mediterranean. Strategically located on the route between Egypt and Istanbul and in the midst of Ottoman territory, its conquest by the Ottomans was only a matter of time. Selim, supported by Piyale Paşa and Lala Mustafa Paşa but opposed by the grand *vezir* Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, decided on an attack, despite the existing peace with Venice. Nicosia fell in 1570, Famagusta in 1571. The Ottoman assault provoked a response from the Holy League, whose naval force encountered the Ottoman fleet in the famous battle of Lepanto. A resounding defeat for the Ottomans, who lost most of their ships and the majority of their commanders, the battle was noisily heralded as a great victory by the European states. It was not, however, the crushing blow the West would have wished, and a new, large Ottoman fleet was constructed in time to sail out into the Mediterranean the next spring. In summer 1574, an Ottoman naval expedition under Kılıç Ali Paşa and Koca Sinan Paşa captured La Goletta and Tunis. Much of the North African coast to the east of Wahran was now under Ottoman control.

One of the interesting, if unsuccessful, projects of Selim's reign was the planned construction of two canals, one to link Suez to the Mediterranean and one to connect the Don with the Volga. In both cases, the aim was to facilitate Ottoman military operations. The Suez-Mediterranean canal, ordered by Sokollu Mehmed Paşa in 1568, was to facilitate Ottoman operations in Yemen and against the Portuguese, for the canal would have allowed the transportation of men and munitions directly from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. The Don-Volga canal would have given direct access from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea and facilitated the movement of men and munitions into the Caucasus and northern Iran. In the end, neither of these constructions was successful, though concerted work on the Don-Volga canal, whose attempted construction was prompted by the Russian occupation of Astrakhan, was begun in August 1569. However, cold weather and the failure of Ottoman forces under Kasım Paşa to take Astrakhan forced the Ottomans to abandon the canal after only one-third of it had been excavated.

Murad III (r. 1574–1595)

By the time of Murad III's reign, the strains in the economic fabric of the state were becoming apparent. From the 1580s onwards, the empire suffered the effects of severe inflation, and the constant warfare of the period drained the state's resources. Lawlessness and brigandage increased, and the deficit in the treasury became chronic. The response of the government was to debase the coinage. In 1589, the janissaries, who, as the contemporary historian Selaniki noted, were given to getting what they wanted,²³ revolted when they received their pay in the new, debased currency, and in 1592 the *sipahis* of the Porte rebelled because their pay was not issued to them in full. Later, in 1603, there would be a more serious revolt of the *sipahis* of the Porte, which was crushed by the janissaries.

One of the factors contributing to the economic difficulties was the long war with Iran, which was to dominate most of Murad III's reign, breaking out in 1578 and ending in 1590. The opportunity for an Ottoman attack was provided by the descent of the Safavid state into intertribal and internecine feuding following the death of Shah Tahmasp in 1576 and the Uzbek invasion from the east which this instability provoked. Claiming that continued Safavid propaganda activities within Ottoman territories and the defection to the Safavids of Kurdish leaders on the Ottoman frontier constituted a breach of the Amasya treaty of 1555, Murad declared war in 1578. The Ottoman army under Lala Mustafa Paşa set out to subjugate Georgia and conquer Shirvan. In August, Ottoman forces occupied Tbilisi and had, by the end of the year, taken Shirvan. As always, however, the problem that faced the Ottomans in their campaigns against the Safavids was less conquest than retention, and on this occasion, too, although they had conquered the region, they had problems holding it. In 1578–9, Lala Mustafa Paşa withdrew, with great difficulty, to Erzurum. For the next couple of years, the Ottoman position was under severe pressure from Safavid counter-attacks, but with the major Ottoman victory at the battle of Meşale, the situation improved. In 1583, Ferhad Paşa occupied Erivan, followed two years later by Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa's occupation of Tabriz. By 1587, Georgia had become effectively an Ottoman dependency.

In the same year, the Safavid ruler Khudabanda had been forced to abdicate, and was succeeded by Shah Abbas I (1587–1629). Abbas soon found himself

²³ Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selaniki*, ed. Mehmet İpşirli, 2 vols. (Ankara, 1999), vol. 1, p. 60.

facing war on two fronts, the Ottomans on one side and the Uzbeks, who invaded from the east, took Herat in 1589 and advanced to Mashhad, on the other. Threatened also by internal strife, Abbas was forced to sue for peace with the Ottomans. Under the treaty concluded between them in 1590, the Ottomans retained their conquests in Azerbaijan and the Caucasus, together with Luhristan, Nihavend, and Shehrizor in western Iran. These territorial gains were only temporary, however, for between 1603 and 1606 Abbas was to take them all back.

No sooner had Murad emerged from war with the Safavids than he plunged into one with the Habsburgs. Although officially at peace since 1568, there had been much tension, with raiding and counter-raiding in the border zones between Ottoman and Habsburg territory, and in 1593 war with Hungary broke out. Although initially successful, Koca Sinan Paşa capturing Veszprem and Paluta in 1593, the campaign was soon struggling. The Ottoman conquest in 1594 of Tata and Győr (Yanık), whose fall was more down to luck than military ability, Peçevi describing the conquest of Győr as “nothing other than a miracle”,²⁴ were more important for boosting morale than symbolic of any effective Ottoman victory. In 1595, the situation deteriorated even further with the defection of Stephen Bathori, king of Transylvania, who transferred his allegiance to the Habsburgs, and the revolt of the *voyvodas* of Moldavia and Wallachia. Defeated by both Wallachian and Moldavian forces, and struggling to defeat the *voyvoda* Michael of Wallachia, the Ottomans lost Esztergom to the Habsburgs in August 1595.

Mehmed III (r. 1595–1603)

By this time, Mehmed III had come to the throne, in the midst of a Hungarian campaign that was going badly. In response to the deteriorating situation, the new sultan himself set out for Hungary in 1596 at the head of the army. In October, he took Eger, and in the same month the Ottomans, rather fortuitously, won a major victory at the battle of Mező-Keresztes, to the west of the Tisza River, when the Ottoman troops, who had initially fled, returned to the attack against Austrian forces distracted by plundering the Ottoman encampment. The campaign in the following year under Satırcı Mehmed Paşa did not, however, meet with success, and in 1598 Habsburg forces besieged Buda, though unsuccessfully. In 1600, Ottoman fortunes changed when Mehmed Paşa, the governor-general of Buda, captured Kanizsa in south-western Hungary, a rather fortuitous conquest which owed much to the descent of

24 Peçevi, *Peçevi Tarihi*, ed. Bekir Sıtkı Baykal, 2 vols. (Ankara, 1982), vol. 2, p. 142.

an all-enveloping mist.²⁵ In reply, the Austrians laid siege, unsuccessfully, to Kanizsa in 1601, but did take Pest, opposite Buda, in 1602 and laid siege to Buda, but were repelled by Lala Mehmed Paşa, who later re-conquered Pest. This war eventually ended inconclusively in 1606 with the conclusion of the peace of Zsitvatorok during the reign of Mehmed's successor, Ahmed I (r. 1603–17).

The increasing economic difficulties of the later sixteenth century contributed to a wave of social unrest which was expressed in a series of revolts, known as the *celali* revolts, which broke out in Anatolia in 1596. *Sipahis* dispossessed after their poor performance at the battle of Mezö-Keresztes and landless or dispossessed peasants gathered under the leadership of Kara Yazıcı, who, in 1596, defeated the *beylerbeyi* of Karaman, sent by Mehmed III to put down the rebellion. Having failed to crush Kara Yazıcı militarily, Mehmed changed tactics, making him governor first of Amasya and then Çorum. This new position made no difference, for Kara Yazıcı continued to plunder Anatolia as he had before. He was finally defeated by Sokollu Mehmed Paşa's son Hasan Paşa in 1601 and died the following year.

Kara Yazıcı's death did not, however, mean the end of the revolt, for command of the rebellion was taken up by his brother Deli Hasan, who killed Hasan Paşa at Tokat in 1602 before defeating an Ottoman force in August and besieging Ankara. Mehmed's response to Deli Hasan was the same as it had been to his brother, and Hasan was made *beylerbeyi* of Bosnia. His departure from Anatolia did not result in the end of the revolts, which continued on into the reign of Mehmed's successor, Ahmed I.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Ottoman state had reached its territorial limits and had established itself as a world power. It was now, however, faced with economic challenges with the influx of silver from the new world and the difficulties of maintaining the value of its currency, a warfare which was less for lucrative conquest than expensive defence, new commercial competitors in the form of the Dutch and the English, who were to dominate maritime trade, and an increasing wave of smouldering social discontent, which exploded in the violent and uncontrollable *celali* rebellions.

25 Ibid., p. 220.

Ottoman expansion in Europe, ca. 1453–1606

PALMIRA BRUMMETT

The Ottoman Empire is often imagined in terms of major conquests and major reigns, those that are expansive.¹ Thus, the sixteenth century, in the context of Ottoman “activity” in Europe, tends to be framed by the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and by the conclusion of the “long” Ottoman–Habsburg war of 1593–1606, respectively, or by the reigns of Mehmed II (r. 1444–6, 1451–81) and Murad III (r. 1574–95), with that of Süleyman the Lawgiver (1520–66) as a focal point of consolidation and triumph. The sixteenth century is also circumscribed by the emergence of the Shi’ite Shah Isma‘il Safavi in Iran in 1501 and by the launching of the “long” Ottoman war of 1603–18 against the Safavid regime. That state problematised Ottoman expansion in Europe through the creation of an aggressive enemy on the Ottoman eastern borders, one which actively recruited Ottoman subordinates, especially in the mountainous areas of eastern Anatolia, fought the Ottomans for control of Iraq and the outlets to the Persian Gulf, and rhetorically challenged the sultans’ claims to sacred hegemony in the Islamic world. The existence of a powerful Muslim challenger in Iran meant that Ottoman military investment in Europe was always subject to the demands of the eastern frontier. Another important idea affecting the conceptualisation of the sixteenth century is the notion of a resurgence and re-configuration of European powers in the Mediterranean associated with the Christian forces’ victory at the naval battle of Lepanto in 1571 and the emergence of the English as a rising commercial force in the Levant. That re-configuration in the last three decades of the century presented both limitations and opportunities for the Ottomans. While such periods and events suggest an outline of Ottoman expansion in Europe, as with all such historical markers, they do not suffice to convey the continuities, processes and universal rhetorics which transcend the constraints of reigns, state-formation, battles and periods of war.

1 Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert (eds.), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914*, vol. 1: 1300–1600 (Cambridge, 1994), pp. xv–xvii.

In many ways, the long sixteenth century (the time period comprising roughly the years 1453 to 1606) is the century in which the Ottoman polity and its governing classes articulated the state as empire. It is the period in which the Ottomans secured and developed two imperial capitals, Constantinople and Cairo, symbolising their power in the west (Rum) and in the east, an arena which encompassed the three holy Islamic cities, Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. Each of these “ends” of empire is associated with a series of trading spheres over which the Ottomans achieved dominance, as well as with a series of rich, taxable lands. The Ottomans, in this era, defined themselves militarily and ideologically in confrontation with the Catholic Habsburg Empire to the north and west and the Shi’ite Muslim Safavid Empire to the east. This was the century of the Muslim millennium, a millennium which for Sultan Süleyman certified his own long reign as the embodiment of Islamic kingly and spiritual might.² In the Afro/Asian sphere, the conquest of Cairo and its attendant territories gave the Ottomans control over the access points to the eastern trade and avenues for sea-borne incursions into the Indian Ocean. In Europe, the conquest of Constantinople and the development of expansive Ottoman territories (and claims), along with expansive military and commercial agendas, meant that the Ottomans became invested in a complex set of political, economic and religious relationships. The nature of those relationships changed significantly over the course of the century, one in which European familiarity with the Ottomans broadened significantly. At the beginning of the period, the captivity of Cem Sultan, Sultan Bayezid II’s (r. 1481–1512) brother and a pretender to the throne, under various Christian powers, and the Ottoman attempts to retrieve him, signified an extended endeavour by rulers on both sides of the European frontier to assess the relative power of their rivals.³ By the end of the period under consideration here, that understanding of relative power was well advanced; it was embodied in a set of treaty agreements, tested in warfare, and enhanced through the activities of a vast network of commercial, political and intellectual intermediaries.⁴

2 Cornell Fleischer, ‘Shadows of Shadows: Prophecy in Politics in 1530s Istanbul’, *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 13, 1–2 (2007), 51–62; see also Norman Housley, ‘The Eschatological Imperative: Messianism and Holy War in Europe, 1250–1556’, in Norman Housley, *Crusading and Warfare in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Aldershot, 2001), sec. III, pp. 123–50.

3 Nicolas Vatin, *Sultan Djem: Un prince ottoman dans l’Europe du xve siècle d’après deux sources contemporaines: Vâkı’ât-ı Sultân Cem, Œuvres de Guillaume Caoursin* (Ankara, 1997).

4 Jan Schmidt, ‘French-Ottoman Relations in the Early Modern Period and the John Rylands Library MSS Turkish 45 & 46’, in Jan Schmidt, *The Joys of Philology: Studies in Ottoman Literature, History and Orientalism (1500–1923)*, vol. II: *Orientalists, Travellers and Merchants in the Ottoman Empire, Political Relations between Europe and the Porte* (Istanbul, 2002), pp. 375–436 at p. 419; Alexander De Groot, ‘The Historical Development of the Capitulatory Regime in the Ottoman Middle East from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries’, in *The Ottoman*