




Delyan Rusev (Sofia)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3732-6659>

## IMAGINING ONE'S OWN INFIDEL: BALKAN *DHIMMĪ* CHRISTIANS IN OTTOMAN HISTORICAL WRITING UNTIL 1600\*

**Abstract.** Non-Muslim *dhimmi*s, i.e. Christians and Jews, were an integral part of Ottoman society but left a negligible – and so far, largely neglected – trace in Ottoman (Muslim) historical writing of the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries. While seeking to explain this phenomenon, the present paper analyzes the few identified historical accounts of Balkan Christians in the light of their authors' personal backgrounds, ideological positions, and narrative strategies. It argues that there was no real historiographic discourse on the role of local Christians in the formation and functioning of the Ottoman state and society. Historians' occasional interest in the topic was based on subjective factors such as greater access to relevant information or a penchant for thematic experimentation, with only a couple of accounts serving more pronounced didactic or ideological goals. The narratives primarily concern the utility and involvement of militarized Christian groups such as *voynuqs* and *martoloses* in Ottoman warfare, but some more abstract as well as visual representations are also discussed in the paper.

**Keywords:** Balkan Christians, *dhimmi*s, Ottoman historical writing, Ottoman warfare, *voynuqs*, *martoloses*

### 1. Introduction

The debate on the role of non-Muslim peoples and institutions in the rise of the Ottoman Empire is at least as old as modern Ottoman studies and has been without doubt shaped by the predominant or competing trends in historiography, politics, and ideology. In the early twentieth century, Herbert Gibbons

---

\* The research underlying this paper was carried out within the project *Imagining One's Own Infidel: Ottoman Muslim Accounts of Balkan Non-Muslims, 15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> Century* (2021–2022) under the Advanced Academia Platform of the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia and the Program for Scholarships

stressed on Byzantine-Ottoman continuity and the contribution of ex-Christian converts, before next generation scholars like Mehmed Fuad Köprülü and Paul Wittek shifted the focus towards Turkic and Islamic traditions in Ottoman state building, respectively<sup>1</sup>. While more recent research has hardly reached a consensus, it is by now safe to argue that Turco-Mongol (Seljuk as well as Ilkhanid) and Muslim legacies were central to the formation of the Ottoman state and its ideology, but its great political success from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries owed much to its ability to exploit local traditions and resources in the form of demography, knowhow, legitimation strategies, etc.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, explorations into the “image of the other” in the Ottoman context have accumulated a significant body of literature themselves, but have been largely confined to the mutual perceptions of “external others” by focusing on foreigners’ views of the “Ottomans” and vice versa<sup>3</sup>. The rare exceptions include some studies on the attitudes of the

---

and Academic Exchange for Young Bulgarian Scholars and Activities of the Bulgarian Diaspora in the Humanities and Social Sciences, funded by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science and the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation. Part of the results were presented at the 25<sup>th</sup> Symposium of the CIÉPO in Tirana with the financial support of the European Union-NextGenerationEU, through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria, project No BG-RRP-2.004-0008. Terms and phrases originally in the Arabic script are transliterated according to the system of *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, THREE for Persian, with Ottoman Turkish quotations adapted to Turkish phonetics.

<sup>1</sup> See the discussion in C. KAFADAR, *Between Two Worlds. The Construction of the Ottoman State*, Berkley 1995, Chapter 1 (p. 29–59).

<sup>2</sup> See, among others, H. İNALCIK, *Ottoman Methods of Conquest*, StI 2, 1954, p. 103–129; IDEM, *The Problem of the Relationship between Byzantine and Ottoman Taxation*, [in:] *Akten des XI. Internationalen Byzantinistenkongresses, München 1958*, ed. F. DÖLGER, H.G. BECK, München 1960, p. 237–242; B. СВЕТКОВА, *Influence exercée par certaines institutions de Byzance et des Balkans du Moyen Age sur le système féodal ottoman*, ВВг 1, 1962, p. 237–257; С.Ф. ОРЕШКОВА, *Византия и Османская империя: проблемы преемственности*, [in:] *Византия между Западом и Востоком. Опыт исторической характеристики*, ed. Г.Г. ЛИТАВРИН, Санкт-Петербург 1999, p. 478–494; H. LOWRY, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, Albany 2003; L.T. DARLING, *The Development of Ottoman Governmental Institutions in the Fourteenth Century. A Reconstruction*, [in:] *Living in the Ottoman Ecumenical Community. Essays in Honour of Suraiya Faroqhi*, ed. M. KOLLER, V. COSTANTINI, Leiden 2008 [= ОЕИ, 39], p. 15–34; D.A. КОРОВЕИНИКОВ, *How ‘Byzantine’ were the early Ottomans? Bithynia in ca. 1290–1450*, [in:] *Османский мир и османистика. Сборник статей к 100-летию со дня рождения А.С. Тверитиновой (1910–1973)*, ed. И.В. ЗАЙЦЕВ, С.Ф. ОРЕШКОВА, Москва 2010, p. 215–239; D. KOŁODZIEJCZYK, *Khan, Caliph, Tsar and Imperator: the Multiple Identities of the Ottoman Sultan*, [in:] *Universal Empire. A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History*, ed. P.F. BANG, D. KOŁODZIEJCZYK, Cambridge 2012, p. 175–193.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*, ed. B. GUTHMÜLLER, W. KÜHLMANN, Tübingen 2000; A. PIPPIDI, *Visions of the Ottoman World in Renaissance Europe*, London 2012; B. LEWIS, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, New York 1982; S. FARQOHİ, *The Ottoman Empire and the World around it*, London 2004, esp. chap. 8, p. 179–210; M. KALICIN, *The Image of the “Other” in 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> Century Ottoman Narrative Literature*, EB 30.1, 1994, p. 22–27; М. ЙОНОВ, *Европа отново открива българите: XV–XVIII век*, София 1980. See also *European Perception of the Ottomans*, ed. I. BELLER-HANN, K. FLEET, special issue of JMS 5.2, 1995.

Empire's Christian subjects towards the state and the "Turks"<sup>4</sup> as well as on particular authors – most notably, the famous seventeenth-century traveler Evliyā Chelebi<sup>5</sup> – and aspects such as the notion of *alterophobia* within Ottoman society<sup>6</sup>.

Even more limited is research specifically focused on the image of local non-Muslims in Ottoman historical writing, once again dealing with particular historians or events<sup>7</sup>. Indeed, on the face of it, such an image was almost non-existent in fifteenth and sixteenth-century historiography. This fact, while worth of an explanation itself, makes it possible to provide a relatively comprehensive overview of the few relevant accounts. The focus on historical writing, on the other hand, is aimed at revealing how varying authors conceptualized the place of non-Muslims in Ottoman society and their role in Ottoman history. The paper thus seeks answers to the following research questions, among others: How did Ottoman historical narratives portray Balkan Christians, and why did some historians pay more attention to this topic than others? How and why did their attitudes towards the sociopolitical roles of *dhimmīs* differ, and can we identify particular patterns and trends? What do we learn from this evidence about the functioning of Ottoman society and Christian-Muslim relations?

Methodologically, the first step is the text-critical survey of the available evidence, which allows for subjecting it to both synchronic and diachronic analysis, i.e. the collation of independent contemporary accounts of one and the same event and tracking the developments of particular accounts over time, respectively<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> I. DUJČEV, *La conquête turque et la prise de Constantinople dans la littérature slave contemporaine*, Bsl 14, 1953, p. 14–54; 16.2, 1955, p. 318–329; 17.2, 1956, p. 276–340; V. KACUNOV, *On the Ethnic Self-Consciousness of the Bulgarians during the 15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> Century*, BHR 24.2, 1996, p. 3–24, see esp. p. 18–23; R. GRADEVA, *Turks and Bulgarians, Fourteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, JMS 5.2, 1995, p. 173–187; IDEM, *Turks in Eighteenth-Century Bulgarian Literature: Historical Roots of Present-Day Attitudes in Bulgaria*, ELe 1.2, 1996, p. 421–426; P. ГРАДЕВА, *Турците в българската книжнина, XV–XVIII век*, [in:] *Балкански идентичности в българската култура от модерната епоха*, vol. I, ed. H. АРЕТОВ, Н. ЧЕРНОКОЖЕВ, София 2001, p. 112–134; K. RETROVSZKY, *Geschichte schreiben im osmanischen Südosteuropa. Eine Kulturgeschichte orthodoxer Historiographie des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, Wiesbaden 2014, p. 116–170; K. NIKOLOVSKA, *Tsar or Son of Perdition. South Slavic Representations of Ottoman Imperial Authority in Church Slavonic Paratextual Accounts (1466–1710)*, RESEE 54.1–4, 2016, p. 71–86.

<sup>5</sup> S. FAROQHI, *Istanbul and Crete in the Mid-1600s: Evliya Çelebi's Discourse on Non-Muslims*, MHJ 22.2, 2019, p. 321–342.

<sup>6</sup> *Disliking Others. Loathing, Hostility, and Distrust in Premodern Ottoman Lands*, ed. H.T. KARATEKE, H.E. ÇİPA, H. ANETSHOFER, Boston 2018.

<sup>7</sup> J. SCHMIDT, *Pure Water for Thirsty Muslims. A Study of Muṣṭafā 'Āli of Gallipoli's Künhü l-aḥbār*, Leiden 1991, p. 138–142. On relevant research concerning the events of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, see fn. 123–124 below.

<sup>8</sup> The text-critical analysis of Ottoman historical writings, particularly those of the fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries, is unthinkable without due consideration of the critical editions and studies published by a generation of scholars between roughly the 1920s and the 1950s. For a key recapitulation, reconsideration, and upgrade of their work, see V.L. MÉNAGE, *A Survey of the Early*

Whether accounts were unique to a particular work or became part of a textual tradition, each version is explored against the background of its specific historical context and authorship. The historians are viewed, in the first place, as individuals with particular educational, career, and social backgrounds as well as, respectively, as representatives of different professional, political, and social groups with their collective views on state, authority, and social order. Thus, although the factual substance of the narratives cannot be left out of consideration, the focus here rather falls on their intended messages or the sociopolitical views that they reflect. These are evaluated against the background of the authors' narrative strategies and, more broadly, of their positions within the ideological spectrum of Ottoman society. In this regard, the study draws on a number of in-depth intellectual biographies of influential Ottoman historians from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries like 'Āshīqpaşazāde, İdrīs Bitlīsī, and Muştafā 'Ālī<sup>9</sup>. A useful theoretical template is provided by the concepts of *Lebenswelt* – i.e. “lifeworld” or, broadly speaking, the realm of lived experience of a particular group defining the stock of knowledge and the interpretative patterns of its members – as well as “collective identity” and “mentality” as applied by Şevket Küçüküşeyin to narratives of the self and the other (Christians included) in late Seljuk, İlkhānid, and early Ottoman Anatolia<sup>10</sup>.

A few remarks are due here on the thematic confines of the current study. Despite some welcome recent arguments for a more inclusive understanding of “Ottoman historiography” that would also accommodate non-Muslim historical accounts composed in the Empire<sup>11</sup>, the very conception of this research limits its focus to the works of Muslim authors. Meanwhile, the notion of “historiography” – difficult as it is to apply it to pre-modern realities in any strictly defined manner – is taken here in its narrow sense excluding related genres such as hagiography and popular tales (*menāqīb*) despite their obvious intertextuality with some historical narratives (*tevārīkh*). The study still covers a wide range of works

---

*Ottoman Histories, with Studies on their Textual Problems and their Sources*, vol. I–II, PhD diss., Univ. of London, 1961.

<sup>9</sup> C. FLEISCHER, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire. The Historian Mustafa Āli (1541–1600)*, Princeton 1986; C. MARKIEWICZ, *The Crisis of Kingship in Late Medieval Islam. Persian Emigres and the Making of Ottoman Sovereignty*, Cambridge 2019; L. ÖZDEMİR, *Ottoman History through the Eyes of Aşıkpaşazade*, Istanbul 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Ş. KÜÇÜKHÜSEYİN, *Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung im Prozess kultureller Transformation. Anatolische Quellen über Muslime, Christen und Türken (13.–15. Jahrhundert)*, Wien 2011 [= SKAW.PHK, 825], esp. p. 11–43, 381–411. A similar approach based on the concept of “interpretative communities” has been applied by T. Krstić in her study of narratives of conversion in the Ottoman setting: T. KRSTIĆ, *Contested Conversions to Islam. Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, Stanford, CA 2011, p. 27–28 and *passim*.

<sup>11</sup> B. TEZCAN, *Ottoman Historical Writing*, [in:] *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, vol. III, 1400–1800, ed. J. REBASA *et al.*, New York 2012, p. 192–211; A. KALDELLIS, *A New Herodotos. Laonikos Chalkokondyles on the Ottoman Empire, the Fall of Byzantium, and the Emergence of the West*, Washington, D.C. 2014 [= Suppl. to DOML, 33–34], p. 126–147.

in Ottoman Turkish and Persian such as universal and dynastic histories as well as “holy war accounts” (*ghazavātnāmes*) dealing with the reigns or military campaigns of particular rulers<sup>12</sup>. The choice of narratives is determined by the identified accounts of Balkan Christians, which may admittedly not exhaust all the available material<sup>13</sup>. Nevertheless, in terms of their authors’ backgrounds, perspectives, and positions vis-à-vis the court, they are diverse enough to be considered representative for the attitudes of a significant portion of Ottoman Muslim society or at least – as far as the relationship between text and audience is not always obvious – of its literate elite.

Finally, it should be noted that the more numerous occasions when non-Muslims appear in accounts of Ottoman conquests in the Balkans generally remain outside of the scope of the study<sup>14</sup>. In such a context, it is usually difficult to differentiate between the position of “infidels” as belonging to the Abode of War (*dār al-ḥarb*) or the Abode of Islam (*dār al-islām*). The focus here falls on those who ultimately became part of the latter. In order to understand the social and political roles attributed to them in historical narratives, it is necessary to first outline their formal status within the Ottoman state and, hence, the norms that shaped the partially shared *Lebenswelt* of Ottoman Muslims and Christians.

<sup>12</sup> Arabic was rarely used in Ottoman historical writing of this period, especially when it comes to Ottoman history per se. The works of Qaramānī Mehmed Pasha (d. 886/1481) and Muṣṭafā Jenābī (d. 999/1590–1591) are noteworthy exceptions.

<sup>13</sup> Already in 1927, Franz Babinger listed more than one hundred (Muslim) “historians of the Ottomans” who wrote in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries: F. BABINGER, *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke*, Leipzig 1927. I am far from having examined all these historical writings – many of them still unpublished or only known by their titles – and I may have overlooked some relevant evidence in the texts that I have studied (some of them also available in manuscript only). Some subperiods like the mid-sixteenth century – with notable historians such as Maṭrāqchī Naṣūḥ (d. 971/1564), Jelālzāde Muṣṭafā (d. 975/1567), and Ramaḏānzāde (d. 979/1571) – and geographies like the Southern Balkans are hardly represented in the accounts discussed here.

<sup>14</sup> For relevant studies touching upon some aspects of *imagology*, see, e.g., P. WITTEK, *The Taking of the Aydos Castle: A Ghazi Legend and its Transformation*, [in:] *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of Hamilton A.R. Gibb*, ed. G. MAKDISI, Leiden 1965, p. 662–672; M. KALICIN, *The Image of the “Other”...*; C. KAFADAR, *Between Two Worlds...*; K. MOUTAFOVA, *On the Problem of the Ottoman Methods of Conquest (According to Neṣri and Sultan Murad’s Gazavatname)*, EB 31.2, 1995, p. 64–81; H. ÇOLAK, *Tekfur, fasiliyus and kayser: Disdain, Negligence and Appropriation of Byzantine Imperial Titulature in the Ottoman World*, [in:] *Frontiers of the Ottoman Imagination. Studies in Honour of Rhoads Murphey*, ed. M. HADJIANASTASIS, Leiden 2015, p. 5–28; A. GHEORGHE, *Zerstörung und Umwandlung von Kirchen zu Moscheen in der frühosmanischen Geschichtsschreibung (XV. Jh.). Eine selective Quellenevaluation*, REcS 8.2, 2016, p. 271–307; В. ОБРЕШКОВ, *Ранните османски хроники. Културно-исторически коментар (Ахмети, Шюкруллах, Оруч, Ашиќпаишазаде, Анонимните хроники)*, София 2009; ИДЕМ, *Анонимният каталонски автор и неговата Història de Jacob Xalabín (История на Якуб Челеби)*, София 2022, p. 168–201 (and other works cited there regarding the Battle of Kosovo in 1389); Д. РУСЕВ, *Сведенията на Енвери за Кера Тамара и хронологията на нейния брак с Мурад I*, BMD 12, 2021, p. 67–107.

## 2. Non-Muslims in Ottoman society: Legal framework and administrative practice

The coordinates of non-Muslims' place in Ottoman society were set in the main pillars of the Ottoman legal system: Islamic and dynastic law (*sharī'a* and *qānūn*). The difficult coexistence of these two major sources of legal norms, the latter of which was meant to compliment the former but often circumvented or confronted it, is not a subject of the present study but should be kept in mind<sup>15</sup>. Put simply, *sharī'a* regulates the status of non-Muslims under Muslim rule via the concept of *dhimma* meaning "treaty" or "obligation" and, more specifically, the ruler's obligation to grant protection to non-Muslim "people of the Book", i.e. Christians and Jews, who have voluntarily submitted to him. They thus become "protected people" (*ahl al-dhimma* or *dhimmis*) in return for their obedience, obligation to pay a poll-tax (*jizya* or *kharāj*), and compliance with a number of restrictions<sup>16</sup>.

Practices uncovered by or deviating from the *sharī'a* norms were in part legalized in the *qānūn*, which showed greater sensitivity towards local customs and the needs of the day<sup>17</sup>. The first Ottoman law codes (*qānūnnāmes*) composed between the mid-fifteenth and mid-sixteenth centuries were rather inconsistent in their terminology regarding the status of different social groups. In *qānūn* usage, the term *re'āyā* (lit. "flock") came to increasingly denote the regular tax-payers as opposed to the privileged *askerī* class of state officials and paid military<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., U. HEYD, *Studies in Old Ottoman Criminal Law*, ed. V.L. MÉNAGE, Oxford 1973, p. 180sqq; R. РЕПР, *Qānūn and Sharī'a in the Ottoman Context*, [in:] *Islamic Law. Social and Historical Contexts*, ed. A. AL-AZIMEH, London 1988, p. 124–145; C. FLEISCHER, *Bureaucrat...*, p. 261–267; C. IMBER, *Ebu's-su'ud. The Islamic Legal Tradition*, Edinburgh 1997, p. 24–62; S. BUZOV, *The Lawgiver and his Lawmakers: The Role of Legal Discourse in the Change of Ottoman Imperial Culture*, PhD diss., Univ. of Chicago, 2005. M. SARIYANNIS, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought up to the Early Nineteenth Century*, with a chapter by E.E.T. АТИЯС, Leiden 2019 [= HOS.NME, 125], p. 100–123.

<sup>16</sup> *EF*, s.v. "Dhimma" (C. САХЕН). On theoretical as well as practical applications of the *dhimma* concept in the Ottoman dominions and the Balkans in particular, see, e.g., С. ИВАНОВА, *Преди да се роди българският милет*, [in:] *Държава и църква – църква и държава в българската история. Сб. по случай 135-годишнината от учредяването на Българската екзархия*, ed. Г. ГАНЕВ, Г. БАКАЛОВ, И. ТОДЕВ, София 2006, p. 142–146; К. МУТАФОВА, *Религия и идентичност (християнство и ислям) по българските земи в османската документация от XV–XVIII век*, Велико Търново 2022, p. 31–41 and *passim*; R. GRADEVA, *Rumeli under the Ottomans, 15<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Institutions and Communities*, Istanbul 2004, esp. studies nos. 6, 9, and 11 published there; IDEM, *On Zimmas and Church Buildings: Four Cases from Rumeli*, [in:] *The Ottoman Empire: Myths, Realities and 'Black Holes'. Contributions in Honour of Colin Imber*, ed. E. KERMELI, O. ÖZEL, Istanbul 2006, p. 203–237.

<sup>17</sup> In addition to the works cited in fn. 16 above, see *EF*, s.v. "Qānūn" (Y. LINANT DE BELLEFONDS, C. САХЕН, H. İNALCIK); A. AKGÜNDÜZ, *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri Ve Hukukî Tahlilleri*, vol. I, Istanbul 1990, § 4–7; H. İNALCIK, *Suleiman the Lawgiver and Ottoman Law*, [in:] IDEM, *The Ottoman Empire. Conquest, Organization and Economy. Collected Studies*, London 1978, pt. VII, p. 105–138.

<sup>18</sup> *EF*, s.v. "Ra'iyā" (C.E. BOSWORTH, S. FAROQHİ); Ы. КАБРДА, *Рая*, ИИД 14–15, 1937, p. 172–185. In some sources, the term *re'āyā* is more specifically applied to the rural taxpaying population

The *re'āyā* category included the majority of the Muslim and nearly all non-Muslim Ottoman subjects. As the latter's tax status differed from that of the Muslim *re'āyā* on a number of points, they had to be referred to with another common term. In *qānūn*, this was very rarely *dhimmī* and most often *kāfir* ("unbeliever", plural *kūffār*), sometimes accompanied by or replaced with the term *kharājgüzār* (*kharāj*-payers) in order to differentiate them from non-Ottoman "infidels" dwelling in the Empire<sup>19</sup>. *Qānūnnāmes* also referred to some partly or entirely non-Muslim groups with specific lifestyle or state duties by means of their ethnic or occupational designations: e.g., the confessionally mixed Roma (*qıptī*, *chingene*) and the Christian *voynuqs* with military functions<sup>20</sup>.

Coupled with the legal restrictions on non-Muslims and their generally higher tax burden as compared to the Muslim *re'āyā*, the use of the pejorative term *kāfir* in legal documents clearly emphasizes their inferior status and the state's conception of them as its "not-entirely-own" subjects – a sense of alienation that was arguably shared by many non-Muslims with regard to the state itself<sup>21</sup>. On the other hand, the legal usage of the term *dhimmī* in the *shari'a* sphere also implied their unequal social position but brought to the fore their right to royal protection, which was embedded in the very concept of *re'āyā* as well. These theoretical considerations had profound practical implications in the judicial sphere and were undoubtedly kept in mind by Ottoman historians who were often eager to engage in discussions on the nature of royal authority and state-subject relations.

Other generic terms such as *naṣrānī* (Pl. *naṣārā*), *gebr* (Pl. *gebrān*), and *mesīhī* are also occasionally encountered in different kinds of official Ottoman documents as referring to Orthodox Christians, but they seem to have had less of a footing within the Ottoman legal system<sup>22</sup>. They are also rarely found in historical writings, especially with respect to Ottoman Christians<sup>23</sup>. As to the famous *millet* system, the

---

as opposed to the "townspeople" (*shehirlü*). On later changes in the meaning of *re'āyā*, which became increasingly limited to the non-Muslim Ottoman subjects, see *ibidem* as well as A. ΦΟΤΙĆ, *Tracing the Origin of a New Meaning of the Term Re'āyā in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Balkans*, *Balc* 48, 2017, p. 55–66.

<sup>19</sup> On the meanings and development of the term *kāfir*, see *EP*, s.v. "Kāfir" (W. BJÖRCKMAN). On the uses of the terms *dhimmī* and *kāfir* in Ottoman fiscal-administrative and legal documents, sometimes alongside each other, see K. МУТАФОВА, *Религија и идентичност...*, p. 66–67, 69–70.

<sup>20</sup> A. АКГÜNDÜZ, *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri...*, vol. I, p. 146 and *passim*.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. the works cited in fn. 5 above.

<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., P. KONORTAS, *From Tā'ife to Millet: Ottoman Terms for the Ottoman Greek Orthodox Community*, [in:] *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism. Politics, Economy, and Society in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. D. GONDICAS, Ch. ISSAWI, Princeton, NJ 1999, p. 173; С. ИВАНОВА, *Преду да се поди...*, p. 153, 156. *Naṣārā* seems to appear often in documents related to the administration of the Eastern Orthodox Church, while *gebr(ān)* is more commonly encountered in tax registers, see K. МУТАФОВА, *Религија и идентичност...*, p. 57, 66–67, 69–70. On the origins of those terms, see *EP*, s.v. "Naṣārā" (J.M. FIEY), including an explanation of *mesīhī*; *EP*, s.v. "Gabr" (A. BAUSANI).

<sup>23</sup> The Koranic term *naṣārā* is sometimes to be found in Ottoman historical accounts of Christians in the pre-Ottoman era, which were largely based on earlier Arabic and Persian literature: see, e.g.,

chronology of its formation and the specifics of its functioning remain a subject of debate, but it is safe to say that, prior to the Tanzimat reforms of the nineteenth century, it was rather loosely institutionalized and hardly centralized. The same goes for the *rûm millet* conceived as the community of all Orthodox Christians in the Empire. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Christian as well as Muslim groups of various types – e.g., professional, religious, or ethnic – were usually referred to as *jemâ'ats* or *tâ'ifes* (lit. “groups”, “bands”, “communities”, “peoples”). Ethnonyms also appear in pre-modern Ottoman archival practice more often than it is generally believed, either in combination with the term *tâ'ife* or alongside personal names, despite the fact that ethnicity had no particular bearing on the legal status of the Ottoman subjects<sup>24</sup>.

Albeit rather limited, such uses can be encountered in historical narratives, too. Thus, Kemâlpashazâde (d. 940/1534) incorporated in his history of the Ottoman dynasty a lengthy excursus on pre-Ottoman Rumeli tracing the deeds of “the sovereign sultans of the Bulgarian people” (*selâṭîn-i takht-nishîn-i tâ'ife-yi bulghâr*), and then he readily used ethnic designations when referring to the Balkan states and peoples facing the conqueror<sup>25</sup>. Muṣṭafâ 'Âlî's (d. 1008/1600) famous universal history includes accounts of the “historical communities” (*ümem-i mâḍiye*), where Romans (*ümmet-i rûm*) and Christians (*naṣārâ*) are featured alongside Armenians, Bulgarians, Wallachians, Transylvanians, Moldavians, Greeks, and others; he further provides quasi-ethnographic and rather stereotypical descriptions of various groups (alternatively termed *tâ'ife*, *jins*, or *millet*) of Christians under Ottoman rule who are equally defined along either geographic or ethnic

---

the passages from Muṣṭafâ 'Âlî cited below (fn. 27). For an exceptional usage referring to Ottoman Christians, see fn. 50 below.

<sup>24</sup> For recent reviews of the scholarly debate on the *millet* system and its applicability to pre-nineteenth-century realities, see T. ΠΑΠΑΔΕΜΕΤΡΙΟΥ, *Render under the Sultan. Power, Authority, and the Greek Orthodox Church in the Early Ottoman Centuries*, Oxford 2015, p. 19–62; К. МУТАФОВА, *Религия и идентичност...*, p. 41–65. On uses of the terms *tâ'ife* and *jemâ'at* see, e.g., P. ΚΟΝΟΡΤΑΣ, *From Tâ'ife to Millet...*, p. 171–172; С. ИВАНОВА, *Преди да се роди...*, p. 146–155 and *passim*. Svetlana Ivanova has proposed the concept of “proto-*millet* structures” as an umbrella term for those similar but varying and decentralized structures shaping the social life and organization of Ottoman non-Muslims prior to the Tanzimat reforms. She also provides numerous references to the use of ethnonyms in Ottoman administrative practice of that time and argues that before the emergence of the broader *rûm millet* the term *rûm* was usually applied to Greek or Greek-speaking communities in an ethnic/cultural sense (*ibidem*, p. 150–152, 155–160). Cf. К. МУТАФОВА, *Религия и идентичност...*, p. 70–79, 216–220. Ethnicity could serve as an official marker of legal status in the specific case of the Roma and some minorities whose ethnic confines largely coincided with their confessional and/or professional profiles (e.g., Jews and Armenians in the Balkans): С. ИВАНОВА, *Преди да се роди...*, p. 146–150.

<sup>25</sup> D. RUSEV, *Kemâlpashazâde's History of Medieval Bulgaria: A Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Recension of the Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle (Tale of the Prophet Isaiah)*, [in:] *Laudator temporis acti. Studia in memoriam Ioannis A. Božilov*, vol. I, ed. I. A. BILIARSKY, Sofia 2018, p. 435–510; KEMALPAŞAZÂDE, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, vol. III, ed. A. SATUN, Istanbul 2014, *passim*.



lines<sup>26</sup>. These accounts and others of the like deserve a separate study with a focus on identities and identity formation in the premodern Ottoman setting – not least because, as clearly stated by ‘Āli, a large share of the Muslim Rūmī elite in the Empire traced its origins back to such Christian communities<sup>27</sup>. The following discussion, on the other hand, is concerned with the sociopolitical roles of these communities as viewed by Ottoman historians, and less so with the matters of ethnic identity and Islamization.

### 3. Non-Muslims and Sultanic Order

As outlined by Linda Darling, the so-called Circle of Justice postulating the interrelation between just rulership, faithful subjects, and strong political power, formed a central discourse in Middle Eastern political theory ever since Antiquity and was firmly incorporated in its Islamic reformulations<sup>28</sup>. It was a major topic for Ottoman men of letters and featured – explicitly or implicitly – in various historical narratives. These were, however, hardly identical in their ideological outlook. Historians projected their own ideas of political justice on the Ottoman past in order to promote their views on contemporary authority and society. Ottoman non-Muslims were rarely referred to in this context, but two examples will be given here to illustrate the diverging perspectives of authors with differing narrative strategies, social backgrounds, and intended readerships.

In a recension of the so called *Anonymous Chronicles of the Ottoman Dynasty* (*Tevārikh-i āl-i ‘Othmān*) composed in the reign of Bāyezīd II (1481–1512), a number of politically charged interpolations were made to the original narrative of fourteenth-century events, which had been compiled in the early 1420s and served as a basis for all works of the popular tradition in early Ottoman historiography<sup>29</sup>. One of these passages was inserted after an account of how Murād I’s (1362–1389) famous commander Evrenos Beg conquered several fortresses in Southern Thrace whose (Christian) population was obliged to pay *kharāj*. The anonymous late fifteenth-century redactor added:

At that [i.e. Murād’s] time, the *kharāj* was small. They took so much as not to offend the infidels (*kāfirler*). They did not take that much as to make them sell or pawn their clothes or oxen, their sons and daughters. Padishahs were not avaricious in those times. Whatever came in their hands, they gave it back to the stouthearted. They did not know what is a treasury. It was only when Khayreddīn Pasha came to the Porte that the padishahs surrounded

<sup>26</sup> J. SCHMIDT, *Pure Water...*, p. 138–144.

<sup>27</sup> C. FLEISCHER, *Bureaucrat...*, p. 254–255. The place of converts in the formation of Ottoman Rūmī identity has been studied in greater detail by T. KRSTIĆ, *Contested Conversions...*, esp. p. 1–25, 51–74.

<sup>28</sup> L. T. DARLING, *A History of Social Justice and Political Power in the Middle East. The Circle of Justice from Mesopotamia to Globalization*, London 2013.

<sup>29</sup> V. L. MÉNAGE, *A Survey...*, p. 183–202.

themselves with greedy scholars (*dānishmendler*). They left piety aside and went along with the fatwa saying that treasury is necessary to those who are padishahs. [...] Greed and oppression became manifest<sup>30</sup>.

It is evident that rather than a historical account, this text is a pronounced critique of the author's own time. The works of the popular tradition were not intended for the court but meant for wider dissemination. They idealized the distant past by presenting the first Ottoman rulers as modest and generous leaders, first among equals in a frontier society engaged in holy war (*ghazā*<sup>3</sup>, pl. *ghazavāt*) against the infidels. This image was contrasted with the process of imperial building, centralization, and bureaucratization of the state, which culminated under Mehmed II and his successors, the codification of the *qānūn* being one of its significant landmarks. As the quoted passage clearly shows, the culprits were the religious scholars and learned administrators – the use of the Persian term *dānishmed* laying the accent on the strong Ilkhanid influence on Ottoman state building – who introduced features of the sedentary state such as the central treasury (or in another passage, the tithe on war bounty)<sup>31</sup>. As pointed out by Marinos Sariyannis with respect to 'Āshīqpaşazāde, another representative of the popular tradition of early Ottoman historical writing, in his political terminology “justice is meant, in a sense, as synonymous with generosity and in contrast with greed” – a view differing from both contemporary and later more sophisticated conceptions circulating among learned Muslims<sup>32</sup>. In this context, the local *kharāj*-liable “infidels” in the Balkans were conceived by the anonymous author of the above-quoted excerpt as fellow victims of the “greedy” administrators who abused both the *sharī'a* and, above all, the egalitarian ethos of Turco-nomadic society. The purely informative aspect of the implicit suggestion that non-Muslims found it hard to cover their poll-tax at the time of writing is also valuable, since it is generally difficult to establish the real bearing of this tribute on the *dhimmīs*' economic situation in the fifteenth century. It is usually believed to have become a significant burden in later times when it contributed to increased Islamization<sup>33</sup>.

A different perspective on royal justice was put forward by Seyyid Loqmān, the official historiographer (*shehnāmeji*) at the Ottoman court in the late sixteenth century, in his lavishly illustrated work *Hünernāme*, the “Book of Talents” or “Book of Merits”, completed in the 1580s. The work contains short biographies of Ottoman rulers with a focus on their qualities, hobbies, characters, etc.<sup>34</sup> When

<sup>30</sup> *Die altosmanischen anonymen Chroniken*, T. I, *Text und Variantenverzeichnis*, ed. F. GIESE, Breslau 1922, p. 25; *Anonim Osmanlı Kroniği*, ed. N. ÖZTÜRK, Istanbul 2015, p. 28–29.

<sup>31</sup> See C. KAFADAR, *Between Two Worlds...*, p. 95–97, 110–113.

<sup>32</sup> M. SARIYANNIS, *A History...*, p. 37.

<sup>33</sup> See, e.g., E. РАДУШЕВ, *Помаците. Християнство и ислям в Западните Родопи с долината на р. Места, XV – 30-те г. на XVIII в.*, vol. I, София 2005, p. 47–49, p. 80–84, and *passim*.

<sup>34</sup> For a general description of the *Hünernāme*, see TDV *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, s.v. “Hünernāme” (Z.T. ERTUĞ). I have consulted a copy of the first part of the work's sole manuscript: *Топкапи Сарayı*

recounting a military campaign of Sultan Mehmed I (1413–1421), Seyyid Loqmān digresses on an anecdotal story that transpired while the army, on its way to Wallachia, was stationed near the “big village of Ūrūsjuq” (i.e. Ruschuk, the present-day town of Ruse) on the Danube. As noted by the author, the place was “close to the frontiers of Islam” (*hudūd-i islāma qarīb*) but within the “Abode of Islam” (*dār al-islām dākhilinde*) and had been given as a source of revenue (*tīmār*) to one of the frontier *ghāzīs*. However, some brigands (*eshqiyā*) from the imperial army assaulted the local *re'āyā* and stole the honey from a couple of their hives. The sultan, who was hunting in the vicinity, heard of the incident and ordered an investigation. He then gathered the army and a local woman identified a certain soldier called Qarapıyıqlu as the ringleader of the perpetrators. The defendant denied the allegation but was found out through a clever device: The sultan ordered the execution of those who would be found to have been stung by bees and Qarapıyıqlu started looking at himself in panic. Ultimately, he was punished and had to pay double the price of the stolen honey. Seyyid Loqmān concludes the episode with praise for the sultan's justice (*'adālet*)<sup>35</sup>.

The confessional profile of the *re'āyā* involved in the incident is not directly mentioned in the text, but its setting in the predominantly Christian Balkans, at “the frontiers of Islam”, is indicative. Indeed, the accompanying miniature is more explicit. It depicts the final scene in much detail, with an evidently non-Muslim settlement (ostensibly Ruschuk) in the background, and the distressed local woman in the center, accompanied by her daughter and a man in Christian priestly attire<sup>36</sup>. In terms of the narrative, and for that matter visual, strategy of the story, the participation of Christian *re'āyā* comes to reinforce the notion that the sultan's benevolence and care are due to all his subjects, including *dhimmīs*, and that he would even side with them at the expense of his Muslim soldiers if the latter transgress law and order. At the time when Seyyid Loqmān was composing the *Hünernāme*, political justice was a hot topic in the context of perceived political decline in the post-Süleymānic era. Ottoman literati like the bureaucrat historian Muştafā 'Āli were promoting royal justice as the main pillar of statehood and a remedy for what they saw as widespread social, political, and moral corruption<sup>37</sup>.

---

*Müzesi Kütüphanesi*, Hazine 1523 (cetera: SEYYİD LOQMĀN, *Hünernāme*). On Ottoman *shehnāmejis* and Seyyid Loqmān in particular, see C. WOODHEAD, *An Experiment in Official Historiography: The Post of Şehnāmecı in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1555–1605*, WZKM 75, 1983, p. 157–182; IDEM, *Reading Ottoman Şehnames: Official Historiography in the Late Sixteenth Century*, StI 104/105, 2007, p. 67–80; E. FETVACI, *The Office of Ottoman Court Historian*, [in:] *Studies on Istanbul and Beyond. The Freely Papers*, vol. I, ed. R. OUSTERHOUT, Philadelphia 2007, p. 7–21.

<sup>35</sup> SEYYİD LOQMĀN, *Hünernāme*, fol. 119v–120v. See also the commentary by F. ÇAĞMAN, *Sultan Sencer ve Yaşlı Kadın Minyatürlerinin İkonografisi*, [in:] *Sanat Tarihinde İkonografik Araştırmalar. Güner İnal'a Armağan*, Ankara 1993, p. 105–106.

<sup>36</sup> SEYYİD LOQMĀN, *Hünernāme*, fol. 121r.

<sup>37</sup> See C. FLEISCHER, *Bureaucrat...*, p. 293–307 and *passim*; L.T. DARLING, *A History of Social Justice...*, p. 144–148; M. SARIYANNIS, *A History...*, chap. 4 and 5 and the studies cited there.

In some respects, this discourse was similar to that of the anonymous fifteenth-century author discussed above but had a broader appeal and greater historical relevance against the background of the state's lagging expansion and increasing financial difficulties. As an official historian, Seyyid Loqmān – whose style was ridiculed by his contemporary and rival 'Āli<sup>38</sup> – was not in a position to expose deficiencies in the imperial order of his time. Yet, in view of his intended courtly audience, anecdotes like the one summarized above can be read as projections of ideal rulership and, thus, as pieces of political advice.

It should be noted that this was not simply a literary fiction. The right of all Ottoman subjects, including the non-Muslim *re'āyā*, to appeal directly to the sultan was a central tenet of his image and was regularly (if not always effectively) practiced, especially when local authorities could not solve a problem or created the problem themselves<sup>39</sup>. In 1657, for example, an imperial order was recorded in the court register of the same town of Ruschuk following a petition from the Christian and Muslim inhabitants of a nearby village, who complained of unlawful treatment by the local tax officials (including inflated taxation on beehives). The sultan ordered that “no *aqche* should be taken beyond what is specified by law”, but there was, unfortunately, no historian to record the further development of the case<sup>40</sup>.

#### 4. Balkan Christians as servitors of the State

As mentioned, some *re'āyā* groups enjoyed certain tax alleviations in return for specific services to the state. Some of them, and those performing military or court duties in particular, enjoyed the greatest “visibility” in Ottoman historical writing among Christian subjects in general – in figurative as well as literal terms. The *Hünernāme*, for instance, contains a series of miniatures depicting various Ottoman sultans in hunting scenes. Falconers feature prominently in these images, and it is noteworthy that some of them wear typical Muslim attire while others have distinctive hats with four dangling ends<sup>41</sup>. As a number of existing falconer (*doghanji*) registers from the fifteenth and sixteenth-century Balkans show that both local Muslims and Christians were engaged in this profession in its various

<sup>38</sup> C. FLEISCHER, *Bureaucrat...*, p. 105, 249.

<sup>39</sup> See, e.g., H. İNALCIK, *Şikayet Hakkı: 'Arz-ı Hâl ve 'Arz-ı Mağzar'lar*, OArA 7–8, 1988, p. 33–54; E. GARA, *Popular Protest and the Limitations of Sultanic Justice*, [in:] *Popular Protest and Political Participation in the Ottoman Empire. Studies in Honor of Suraiya Faroqhi*, ed. IDEM, M.E. KABADAYI, C.K. NEUMANN, Istanbul 2011, p. 89–104, and the works cited there, esp. in fn. 3.

<sup>40</sup> *Турски извори за историята на правото в българските земи*, vol. II, ed. Б. ЦВЕТКОВА, София 1971, p. 134. The confessional profile of the villagers is not stated explicitly but can be deduced from the taxes mentioned.

<sup>41</sup> See, e.g., SEYYİD LOQMĀN, *Hünernāme*, fol. 105r, 116r, 182v, 207v.

specializations, it is very likely that the curious hat depicted in the miniatures is indeed meant to indicate “non-Muslimness”<sup>42</sup>. A further argument in this regard can be found in the accounts of European travelers in the Balkans. Thus, when passing through the “Bulgarian village called Belitsa (*Welicze*) where, however, only Serbians (*ratzen*) live now”, that is, in the mid-1550s, Hans Dernschwam noted that the hats of local men were “split both at the front and back side”<sup>43</sup>. Just when Seyyid Loqmān was completing the *Hünernāme* in the 1580s, Salomon Schweiger composed a narrative of his own travel from Vienna to Constantinople and Jerusalem a few years earlier and adorned it with a large number of self-made illustrations. One of them shows a Bulgarian couple, with the man wearing nearly the same type of hat as those painted by the Ottoman miniaturists<sup>44</sup>. A very similar “ridiculous” hat (*une espece de bonnet qui est ridicule*) of a Bulgarian man is also depicted in the travel account of Louis Deshayes, baron de Courmenin (d. 1632), tracing his journey to the Levant in 1621 and published three years later<sup>45</sup>. It is difficult to say whether this was a common headgear for Balkan Christians or a sign of a particular social position. The latter is not impossible as many villagers along the Diagonal Road and other main routes of the Empire had the duty to guard the roads and passes, and thus a special *derbendji* status similar to that of *doghanjis*<sup>46</sup>. Be that as it may, there is enough evidence to suggest that portraying Christian servants of the sultan was not a taboo and might have even served to demonstrate his supra-confessional authority.

<sup>42</sup> On falconers in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century Balkans, with a focus on Ottoman Bulgaria, see К. Йорданов, *Организационно устройство на соколарската институция, числен състав и географско разпределение на соколарите от Централните Балкани през XV–XVI в.*, ИП 72.1–2, 2016, p. 227–289; ИДЕМ, *Войнуците от имперските конюшни в османската провинция Румелия (XV – първите десетилетия на XVIII век)*, София 2023, p. 405–411. For the significance of clothing as a marker of social and confessional differentiation in the Ottoman context, see S. IVANOVA, *Masquerade – Imperial Preludes*, EB 39.1, 1994, p. 28–36, and p. 29–30 on hats in particular.

<sup>43</sup> *Hans Dernschwam's Tagebuch einer Reise nach Konstantinopel und Kleinasien (1553/1555)*, ed. F. BABINGER, München 1923, p. 14.

<sup>44</sup> S. SCHWEIGER, *Eine neue Reiß Beschreibung auß Teutschland Nach Constantinopel und Jerusalem*, Nürnberg 1639, p. 42. The work was composed in the 1580s but first published in 1608.

<sup>45</sup> L. D. DE COURMENIN, *Voyage de Levant. Fait par le commandement du Roy en l'année 1621*, Paris 1624, p. 73–74. The image is also reproduced with an attribution to Edward Brown in К. Йорданов, *Щрихи върху ежедневието на дербентджийското и войнушкото население през XVI–XVII век*, ИИИ 36, 2021, p. 51.

<sup>46</sup> On *derbendji* settlements along the Belgrade–Constantinople road, their status and residents, see О. ЗИРОЈЕВИЋ, *Цариградски друм од Београда до Софије (1459–1683)*, Београд 1970, p. 96–110; К. Йорданов, *Щрихи върху ежедневието...*, p. 37, 40–54.

#### 4.1. Origin and functions of the *voynuqs*

Another hunting scene in a miniature from an unidentified work, but certainly in the same Ottoman courtly style of the late sixteenth century, depicts a groom with the very same four-pointed hat<sup>47</sup>. It is well-known that the main servants in the royal stables by that time were the Christian *voynuqs* from the Balkans – another distinct category some of whose members had been utilized as auxiliary and even regular troops in earlier times. Indeed, Tūrsūn Beg, who accompanied the Ottoman army that conquered Sinope and Trebizond in 1461 as a scribe of the Imperial Divan, writes in his later *History of the Conqueror* that a *voynuq* company (*tā'ife-yi voynū[q]*) participated in this campaign<sup>48</sup>. An account of the formation of the *voynuq* corps circulated in several Ottoman histories from the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, but its original and most detailed version comes from the monumental work *The Eight Paradises* (*Hasht bihisht*) composed in Persian by Idrīs Bitlīsī in 1502–1506 and revised in the next decade. *The Eight Paradises* was commissioned by Bāyezīd II and traces the dynastic history, with a separate book dedicated to each of the eight Ottoman rulers until that time, in the most ornate style of Ilkhanid and Timurid court historiography<sup>49</sup>. The *voynuqs* appear for the first time in the third book, on the reign of Murād I, in a chapter dealing with the Bulgarian tsar Ivan Shishman's submission to Ottoman suzerainty and the military reforms introduced by the new commander-in-chief of Rumeli Timūrtash:

First, he [i.e. Timūrtash] ordered the formation of a large army in the province of Rumeli from among the infidels (*az miyān-i kuffār*) of those lands as it was of great necessity to the campaigns of the sultans. Thus was created the military unit, which is now known as the “*voynuq* army” (*lashkar-i voynuq*). This corps is [made of] protected people (*ahl-i dhemmet*, i.e. *dhimmīs*) who live within the Abode of Islam. They were engaged in soldiery and military operations from olden times, before the appearance [in these lands] of the people of faith (*millat-i imān*, i.e. the Muslims), and now they have already established themselves in the same category as the Islamic army by virtue of their martial disposition and valor. This is why the submissiveness of subjects and servants (*madhallat-i ra'iyatī va maḥkūmī*) is very difficult for their temperament [to accept]. This community (*jemā'at*) being soldiers is very useful for opposing and resisting the [foreign] infidels. This *voynuq* troop (*tāyfa-yi voynuq*) is engaged in guarding some buildings and equipment of the padishah such as the warehouses, the arsenals, the imperial stables, and the like. As this innovation found approval in the time of Timūrtash's office, ever since [his time] that entire group (*tāyfa*), from the whole province of Rumeli, is listed in a register, and they are exempted from the agricultural tithe (*'ushr-i zirā'at*) in lieu of a remuneration and a compensation for their service<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> E. BINNEY, *Turkish Miniature Paintings and Manuscripts from the Collection of Edwin Binney*, <sup>3</sup>New York 1973, p. 46–47.

<sup>48</sup> TURSUN BEG, *The History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, ed. H. INALCIK, R. MURPHEY, Minneapolis 1978 (cetera: TURSUN BEG), p. 91v–92r.

<sup>49</sup> On Bitlīsī and his oeuvre, see in detail C. MARKIEWICZ, *The Crisis of Kingship...*

<sup>50</sup> IDRĪS BITLĪSĪ, *Hasht bihisht*, MS Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi 3209 (cetera: IDRĪS BITLĪSĪ), fol. 143r. In a section of the seventh book of *The Eight Paradises* (on Mehmed II) dealing with

This lengthy quotation is vindicated by the impressive detail and objectivity of Bitlīsī's account. To begin with, it is worth asking what was his source of information, considering that no earlier history of the Ottomans (or any other known narrative source, for that matter) deals with the establishment and the nature of the *voynuq* corps. The author's biography and some additional evidence from *The Eight Paradises* may provide a well-grounded answer. In 1502, Bitlīsī fled to the Ottoman lands from Tabriz, where he had served as a state secretary of the Aqqoyunlu before the dissolution of that tribal confederation and the advent of the Shiite Safavids. In the first years of his immigration, he found himself in an unsatisfying position at the periphery of the Ottoman court and some of his early works testify to his grievance. It was reinforced by the fact that he had to settle in the provincial city of Sofia that was, in his bitter words, "at the extremity of the lands of Rūm"<sup>51</sup>. However, some passages in *The Eight Paradises* – which he started composing at the time in hope of career promotion – suggest that he gradually developed an affection for this region<sup>52</sup>. He also seems to have benefited from local oral history, with his legendary account of the Ottoman conquest of Sofia one of several examples in this regard<sup>53</sup>. The passage quoted above is most probably also based on Bitlīsī's own observations, considering that the wider region of Sofia had one of the greatest concentrations of *voynuq* population in the Balkans<sup>54</sup>. This may also explain his uncharacteristic interest in and positive attitude towards the corps as well as the relatively precise data he provides about its taxation privileges. As a *ze'āmet* holder who had to take care of collecting his revenue in the town of Dupnitsa, he may well have witnessed some of the registrations of the local *voynuqs* who had to be distinguished from the ordinary *re'āyā* providing his income<sup>55</sup>.

It is impossible to verify Bitlīsī's statement about the time and circumstances of the *voynuqs*' incorporation in the Ottoman army, but given that they were

---

various detachments of the Ottoman army (*ibidem*, fol. 364r–364v), Bitlīsī once again discusses the *voynuqs* (*qavm-i voynuq*) with a focus on their functions as auxiliaries (*anşār-i lashkar-i islām*). Here, Bitlīsī explicitly describes them as Christian *dhimmīs* (*az naşārā-yi ahl-i dhemmet*) and reiterates his evaluation of their great worth in the wars with the foreign (*harbi*) infidels. This latter passage is partly reproduced in the original Persian in H. İNALCIK, *Stefan Duşan'dan Osmanlı İmparatorluğuna. XV. Asırda Rumeli'de Hristiyan Sipâhiler ve Menşeleri*, [in:] IDEM, *Fatih Devri Üzerinde Tetkikler ve Vesikalar*, vol. I, Ankara 1954, p. 177; for a full yet loose Turkish translation of the passage, see İDRİS-İ BİTLİSİ, *Heşt Behişt. VII. Ketibe: Fatih Sultan Mehmed Devri, 1451–1481*, trans. M.İ. YILDIRIM, Ankara 2019 (cetera: İDRİS BİTLİSİ/YILDIRIM), p. 52.

<sup>51</sup> C. MARKIEWICZ, *The Crisis of Kingship...*, p. 25–65, 75.

<sup>52</sup> İDRİS BİTLİSİ, fol. 139r, 149v–150r. Bitlīsī describes the "paradisiacal" nature of Sofia, comparing it to Tabriz.

<sup>53</sup> İDRİS BİTLİSİ, fol. 150r. For a survey of Bitlīsī's chronology and sources of information on the reign of Murād I, see Д. РУСЕВ, *Сведенията на Енвери...*, p. 88–95.

<sup>54</sup> See K. ЙОРДАНОВ, *Войнуците...*, p. 159–199.

<sup>55</sup> For Bitlīsī's *zeamet* in Dupnitsa, see the evidence given in the biographical lexicon of 'Āshīq Chelebi: 'ĀŞIK ÇELEBİ, *Meşâ'irü'ş-Şu'arâ*, vol. I, ed. F. KILIÇ, Istanbul 2010, p. 297–298.

indeed heirs of the pre-Ottoman military establishment in the Balkans, this could have surely happened in the reign of Murād I and under the guidance of his commander Timūrtash Pasha<sup>56</sup>. The historian's account of their tax status is largely corroborated by numerous archival documents, and he rightfully noted the duality in the *voynuq* duties, although there were actually two types of *voynuqs* who performed actual military service (the so-called *jebelü*) and auxiliary tasks (including work at the imperial stables), respectively<sup>57</sup>. The terms that Bitlisi uses to describe the *voynuqs* as a distinct entity – namely, *tā'ife*, *jemā'at*, and *qavm* – are equally noteworthy. As mentioned, the former two terms were utilized by Ottoman administrators and historians alike to refer to groups of various kinds, including ethnic communities; the term *qavm* could be used along the same lines but had the primary meanings of “people”, “nation”, or “tribe”. Although Bitlisi himself seems to have conceived the *voynuqs* as merely a professional group, such a terminological ambiguity was typical of Ottoman realities where some communal names that had or would receive ethnic connotations (e.g., Vlach and Yörük) were used in administrative practice to denote multiethnic groups with a shared legal and/or professional status<sup>58</sup>. This may be one of the reasons why, in the seventeenth century, Evliyā Chelebi considered the *voynuqs* as one of the “Christian peoples” (*qavm-i naşārālar*; elsewhere he uses the terms *millet*, *tā'ife*, and *qabile*, “tribe”) having a particular post-Deluge descent and speaking a specific language

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Y. ERCAN, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Bulgarlar ve Voynuklar*, Ankara 1989, p. 2–8. Y. Ercan's attempt to search for a specific year of the formation of the corps as well as his use of the Ottoman historical narratives to this end, without regard for the genealogy of their accounts and the logic behind the (largely incorrect) chronological data they provide, is questionable at best. So is also his hypothesis that the Ottoman historians may have drawn their information on the *voynuqs*' emergence from one of Süleymān I's *qānūnnāmes*, which also attributes the establishment of the corps to Timūrtash Pasha in the reign of Murād I (*ibidem*, p. 7). In fact, the *qānūnnāme* postdates Bitlisi's account and may be based on it. Krastyo Yordanov also accepts that the *voynuq* corps was likely founded on the advice of the *beglerbeg* Timūrtash Pasha in 1376/1377: К. ЙОРДАНОВ, *Войнуците...*, p. 35–36, 46, 57. Yet, Timūrtash was actually not appointed *beglerbeg* before the death of Lālā Shāhīn in the early 1380s (see Д. РУСЕВ, *Сведенията на Енвери...*, p. 90–93). For the pre-Ottoman basis of the Balkan *voynuqs*, see К. ЙОРДАНОВ, *Войнуците...*, p. 36–50.

<sup>57</sup> К. ЙОРДАНОВ, *Войнуците...*, p. 62–70 as well as p. 371–392 on the *voynuqs*' tax status; cf. Y. ERCAN, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Bulgarlar...*, p. 10–14, 38–42, 75–92.

<sup>58</sup> See, e.g., A. KALIONSKI, *Yürüks in the Ottoman Balkans*, Sofia 2020; V. KURSAR, *Being an Ottoman Vlach: On Vlach Identity (Ies), Role and Status in Western Parts of the Ottoman Balkans (15<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, OTAUMD 34, 2013, p. 115–161. V. KURSAR (*ibidem*, p. 143–144) argues that *voynuqs* and *martoloses* were largely overlapping with Vlach communities and may have been military organizations of Vlach origin. This observation seems to be relevant mainly to the situation in the Western Balkans, however. In present-day Bulgaria, where the majority of the *voynuqs* of the Imperial Stables were located, such a relationship was less evident (e.g., in organizational terminology and occasional Vlach names: see A. KALIONSKI, *Yürüks...*, p. 116). In general, these *voynuqs* lived intermixed with the sedentary Bulgarian population and showed no signs of alterity other than their state duties and tax status. See also Y. ERCAN, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Bulgarlar...*, p. 42–43; К. ЙОРДАНОВ, *Войнуците...*, p. 38–40, 423–428 and *passim*.



belonging to the “Latin” (i.e., in Evliyā’s usage, Slavic) linguistic family alongside the tongues of Croats, Bosnians, Serbs, Bulgarians, and others from beyond the Ottoman borders<sup>59</sup>.

Bitlisi’s statement that the *voynuqs* had “established themselves in the same category as the Islamic army” can be read as an acknowledgement of their ‘*askerī*’ status which is indeed confirmed in extant *qānūnnāmes*, although it contradicts the *sharī‘a*<sup>60</sup>. His concern with this contradiction, or perhaps the lack of it, shows through his statement that the utilization of the *voynuqs* was seen by Ottoman sultans as advisable from both religious and temporal points of view (*ṣalāh-i dīnī va dunyevī*)<sup>61</sup>. The military involvement of *dhimmīs* is among the *qānūn*-regulated practices that circumvent Islamic law and this may be one of the reasons why most Ottoman historians avoided the topic. Moreover, it also went against the predominant tendency of both court-centered and popular histories to present the dynastic history as a continuous performance of *ghazavāt*, or holy wars, in which the “infidels” could only be enemies or vassal contingents at best. It thus took a foreigner whose conception of Ottoman history was strongly linked to military affairs – he calls each separate book of *The Eight Paradises* a “squadron” (*katība*) – and who had on-the-ground experience to acknowledge the significance of Balkan Christians for Ottoman warfare and the rise of the Ottoman state itself<sup>62</sup>. Not that Bitlisi can be accused of lesser Islamic piety as compared to his Ottoman colleagues, and *ghazā’* is a central feature of his narrative, too. Yet, his greater allegiance to the Perso-Mongol historiographic tradition, his professional background in bureaucracy rather than religious scholarship, and his self-confidence may have made him more open to thematic experimentation.

It is perhaps no coincidence that Idrīs Bitlisi’s work did not receive the reception he had hoped for after its initial presentation at the court. The short passage on *voynuqs* was certainly not the reason, but it cannot be deemed unrelated either. *The Eight Paradises* was criticized by some high-ranking officials both for its extremely ornate style untypical of earlier Ottoman historiography as well as

<sup>59</sup> Evliyā Chelebi discusses these traits of the *voynuqs* in various sections of this ten-volume travel account; see, e.g.: EVLİYÂ ÇELEBİ B. DERVİŞ MEHEMMED ZİLLÎ, *Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, vol. III, ed. S.A. KAHRAMAN, Y. DAĞLI, Istanbul 1999, p. 206, 212, 219; vol. V, ed. Y. DAĞLI, S.A. KAHRAMAN, İ. SEZGİN, Istanbul 2001, p. 72, 240; vol. VII, ed. Y. DAĞLI, S.A. KAHRAMAN, R. DANKOFF, Istanbul 2003, p. 256, etc.

<sup>60</sup> H. İNALCIK, *Stefan Dušan’dan...*, p. 175; Y. ERCAN, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Bulgarlar...*, p. 8–10. Y. Ercan argues that the *voynuqs* maintained their ‘*askerī*’ status throughout the existence of the corps, but he also quotes an official document referring to the *voynuqs* of the Imperial Stables as *re ‘âyâ* (*ibidem*, p. 38). It is possible that the ‘*askerī*’ status was more pertinent to the *jebelü voynuqs* before their gradual transformation into auxiliary troops or ordinary *re ‘âyâ* since the reign of Süleymân I; cf. H. İNALCIK, *Stefan Dušan’dan...*, p. 176; K. ЁРДАНОВ, *Войнуците...*, p. 50–61.

<sup>61</sup> IDRİS BITLİSİ, fol. 364r–364v; H. İNALCIK, *Stefan Dušan’dan...*, p. 177.

<sup>62</sup> As will be shown below, other Ottoman historians mentioned the participation of Ottoman Christians in military campaigns, yet only in passing.

for some content-related peculiarities such as its excurses on the rulers of Iran contemporary to each Ottoman sultan<sup>63</sup>. Apparently, Bitlīsī's approach to historical writing was not (yet) suited to the "mentality" of the Ottoman ruling elite in the early sixteenth century and, hence, to the narrative of Ottoman history that this elite expected. More than two centuries earlier, another representative of high Persianate culture and historiography, Ibn Bibī, had his pretentious history of the Seljuks rewritten in a more straightforward summary form following similar accusations of prolixity at the waning Seljuk court. This has been recently interpreted as an example of how current literary tastes – and, thus, group identities or mentalities – could impose themselves on authors' personal mindsets and concepts<sup>64</sup>. In contrast, Bitlīsī himself, and the wave of Persian émigrés to the Ottoman domains of which he was a part, played an instrumental role in shaping the nascent Ottoman imperial culture, and it is no surprise that *The Eight Paradises* ultimately found its due appreciation and became a standard source for later Ottoman historians<sup>65</sup>. This fact shows that, under particular circumstances, individual (historiographic) attitudes could be transformative on a collective (political and ideological) level. It also provides us with the rare opportunity to trace how an account of Ottoman non-Muslims was reproduced and reshaped over time.

A comparison with *The Crown of Histories* (*Tāj üt-tevārikh*), a well-known history of the Ottomans composed by the madrasa professor, sultan's advisor, and *sheykh ül-islām* Khoja Sa'eddīn (d. 1008/1599), is indicative that the stylistic and informative influence of Bitlīsī's work – well evident in Sa'eddīn's Turkish prose – did not necessarily go hand-in-hand with conceptual imitation. Sa'eddīn closely follows Bitlīsī's exposition of Murād I's reign in a summary form and mentions the *voynuq* corps (*voynuq 'askerī*) among the military innovations of Tīmūrtash Beg, yet without much of the detail and enthusiasm of the Persian original. He passes over in silence the *voynuqs'* origin, qualities, and, most notably, their non-Muslimness as he only writes that the corps was founded "to take care of the provisions in the case of military campaigns as well as to cater for the [imperial] horses and mules"<sup>66</sup>. By the late sixteenth century, the former Christian soldiers had indeed been largely limited to the role of imperial grooms, but

<sup>63</sup> C. MARKIEWICZ, *The Crisis of Kingship...*, p. 230–234.

<sup>64</sup> Ş. KÜÇÜKHÜSEYİN, *Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung...*, p. 28–30, 143–145.

<sup>65</sup> C. MARKIEWICZ, *The Crisis of Kingship...*, p. 20, 238–239 and *passim*.

<sup>66</sup> KHOJA SA'EDDĪN, *Tāj üt-tevārikh*, vol. I, Istanbul 1279/1862–1863 (cetera: KHOJA SA'EDDĪN), p. 94. A recension of this work from the late 16<sup>th</sup> or the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. possibly contemporary to the author, which partly deviates from the printed version (itself based on two Istanbul MSS of the same period) is kept at the Bulgarian National Library in Sofia (OR 546). The only difference in the passage under consideration here concerns the spelling of the word *voynuq*, which is interestingly given as *voyniq* in the Sofia MS (fol. 54v) – a form closer to the original Slavic pronunciation. For a description of the Sofia MS, see И. ТАТАРЛЪ, *Османски извори за походите на Владислав III Ягело и Ян Хуниади (1443–1444)*, [in:] *Варна 1444. Сборник от изследвания и документи в чест на 525-та годишнина от битката край гр. Варна*, ed. Д. АНГЕЛОВ *et al.*, София 1969, p. 440–441.

Sa‘deddīn’s revision of the account cannot be simply understood as a summary-cum-actualization of the information in his main source. Non-Muslims’ contribution to and necessity for Ottoman expansion, well-formulated by Bitlisī, was incompatible with Sa‘deddīn’s highly ideologized image of early Ottoman history, conceived as a culmination of the Islamic struggle against the infidels in strict adherence to the *sharī‘a* norms<sup>67</sup>. As he was, on the other hand, eager to produce a factually sound narrative of the past<sup>68</sup>, he was apparently unwilling to entirely omit the account of the *voynuqs*, so he kept it in a “harmless” form. This is one of many examples that the popularity of *The Eight Paradises* did not entail a corresponding change of mentality in all sections of the elite<sup>69</sup>.

With the risk of transcending the chronological confines of this study, it is worth looking at even later versions of Bitlisī’s account of the *voynuqs*, which differed from Sa‘deddīn’s approach. As late as the 1730s, ‘Abdūlbāqī Sa‘dī completed an Ottoman Turkish rendering of *The Eight Paradises* on the commission of Sultan Maḥmūd I (1730–1754). Conceived as a translation of Bitlisī’s Persian text, Sa‘dī’s work was supposed to follow closely the latter but did in fact omit significant portions of it, which were for the most part rhetorical digressions but sometimes contained factual information as well. Nonetheless, the passage on the *voynuqs* is almost verbally reproduced while maintaining even most of the vocabulary of the original narrative<sup>70</sup>. In between the times and approaches of Khoja Sa‘deddīn and ‘Abdūlbāqī Sa‘dī comes the work of the Bosnia-born state secretary Koja Hüseyn (d. after 1056/1646–1647) who, after his retirement in the 1640s, wrote a universal history titled *Astonishing Events (Bedāyi‘ ul-veqāyi‘)* and complimented it with a second volume dedicated to the Ottoman past until 1520. While Sa‘deddīn’s *The Crown of Histories* had become very popular itself and was certainly known to Hüseyn, he chose as his main source *The Eight Paradises* of Idrīs Bitlisī, and this is clearly evident in the passage on *voynuqs*, which he too borrowed from the latter<sup>71</sup>. Unlike Sa‘deddīn’s truncated version or Sa‘dī’s nearly verbatim reproduction

<sup>67</sup> See other relevant observations in M. КАЛИЦИН, *Корона на историите на Ходжа Садеддин*, Велико Търново 2000, p. 17, 34–36.

<sup>68</sup> M. КАЛИЦИН, *Корона на историите...*, p. 18.

<sup>69</sup> For a similar example of selective use of Bitlisī’s work by Sa‘deddīn with respect to another non-Sharia-compliant practice, the “child levy” (*devshirme*), see V.L. MÉNAGE, *Sidelights on the devshirme from Idrīs and Sa‘duddīn*, BSOAS 18.1, 1956, p. 181–183.

<sup>70</sup> İDRIS-I BITLİSİ, *Heşt Bihîşt*, vol. I, ed. M. KARATAŞ, S. KAYA, Y. BAŞ, Ankara 2008, p. 344. The only noticeable difference is Sa‘dī’s avoidance of the term *dhimmī* in relation to the *voynuqs*, but it would be overdone to search for a specific agenda behind that single, if significant omission. Like Bitlisī, he explicitly states that these soldiers were recruited “from among the infidels of Rumeli” (*Rūmeli küffārının beyninde*) and applies to them the multifaceted term *tā‘ife*.

<sup>71</sup> For the passage, see the facsimile published in ХЮСЕЙН, *Беда‘у‘ ул- века‘у‘ (Удивительные события)*, vol. I, ed. А. С. ТВЕРИТИНОВА, Москва 1961, fol. 69v. For Hüseyn’s reliance on Sa‘deddīn and especially Bitlisī, see *ibidem*, p. 12–13. See *ibidem*, p. 6–11 for biographical data on Hüseyn, his historical work, and the specifics of its sole preserved manuscript.

of the account, that of Hüseyn is a thoughtful Turkish paraphrase of the original Persian text with elements of factual refinement. The author spared Bitlîsî's explicit praise for the *voynuqs* but kept the substance: they used to be soldiers "in the times of infidel rule" (*küffâr hükümeti zamânında*) and due to their military stature, they were now more privileged than the other non-Muslim "protected people" (*sâ'ir ehl-i dhimmetden mümtâz*); they took part in military campaigns, but in times of peace they served in the Imperial Stables. Of particular interest is the precise account that the members of that *tâ'ife* own estates called *bâshtina* and are exempted not only from the tithe on their agricultural production, but from some extraordinary taxes (*tekâlif-i 'örfiyye*), too – an addition to the original narrative that demonstrates Hüseyn's professional familiarity with the Ottoman financial and administrative system as well as his attentive approach to historical writing, reaching beyond simple compilation of earlier sources.

It is thus obvious that later versions of Bitlîsî's account of the *voynuqs* hardly followed a linear development. The evidence discussed so far suggests that his recognition of local Christians' contribution to Ottoman warfare was less readily accepted by sixteenth-century Ottoman intellectuals than it was by later generations. However, such a chronological distinction between historiographic attitudes towards a particular topic may be partly misleading. While historians were surely men of their own time and projected a particular collective identity, the latter was certainly not all-encompassing, even if we only consider the level of the learned class. In other words, the views of Sa'deddin and Hüseyn cannot be taken as representative for the *whole* Ottoman elite in the late sixteenth and the mid-seventeenth centuries, respectively. Self-evident as it is, this inference gains further strength when we compare contemporary accounts of one and the same event, as will be done below.

#### 4.2. The "useful" *martoloses* in action

The utility of the *dhimmîs* to the Ottoman military and their usual loyalty are also attested in a number of fifteenth-century historiographic references to another militarized group of Ottoman subjects, which was at the time almost exclusively composed of Christians – the *martoloses*. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they were mostly enlisted from among the population of the frontier zones (*serhad*) and had to perform a variety of tasks in return for tax exemption: maintaining and guarding the frontier fortresses, making small-scale attacks on foreign territory to disrupt enemy defenses and gather intelligence, etc. The origin of this military structure is obscure, but the evidently Greek etymology of the term *martolos* (likely from *armatolos*, "armed man") suggests that it was related to and probably inherited from earlier Byzantine practice<sup>72</sup>. While the *martolos* institution is

<sup>72</sup> The theories about the etymology of the term and the origins of the institution are summarized in М. ВАСИЉ, *Мартолоси у југословенским земљама под турском владавином*, Бања Лука 2005,

mainly attested in the European provinces of the empire since the first half of the fifteenth century, it may have its origins in the context of early Ottoman expansion in Anatolia, when the emerging principality was confronted with the local Byzantine *akritai* – frontier warriors with very similar functions to those of the *martoloses*. Indeed, the fifteenth-century historian ‘Āshīqpašazāde, who relies here on a now lost narrative of early Ottoman history by Yakhshī Faqīh, reports how “a *martaloz* [sic] of Othmān Ghāzī by the name of Araṭūn” revealed to the “warriors of faith” (*ghāzīler*) the ambush of the “infidels” (*kāfirler*) near İnegöl<sup>73</sup>. The author does not dwell on the role of a Christian for the Muslim military enterprise in what he depicts as a holy war under Ottoman leadership, and the non-Muslimness of that *martolos* is only implied by his uncharacteristic name as well as by his familiarity with the local geography and the enemy.

The *martoloses* were particularly important for Ottoman expansion in the predominantly Christian Balkans, and this is well attested by ‘Āshīqpašazāde. The “useful” or “capable” (*yarar*) *martoloses* are featured, without further comment, in his story of the first Ottoman conquests in Europe when they spied the Byzantine governor of Qonurhişār and thus helped the Ottoman prince Süleymān Pasha (d. 1357) capture him and, consequently, his fortress<sup>74</sup>. In another episode that the author arguably recounts from his own participation in the second Battle of Kosovo in 1448, a *martolos* called Toĝhan was able to infiltrate among the Christian army and reveal its composition to the Ottomans before the fight<sup>75</sup>.

p. 24–45. See further E. RADUSHEV, *Ottoman Border Periphery (Serhad) in the Nikopol Vilayet, First Half of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century*, EB 31.3–4, 1995, p. 140–160; TDV *İslām Ansiklopedisi*, s.v. “Martolos” (A. ÖZCAN); A. KAYAPINAR, *Les filorici dans la région timoko-danubienne à l’époque ottomane (XV<sup>e</sup>–XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, [in:] *Enjeux politiques, économiques et militaires en Mer Noire (XIV<sup>e</sup>–XXI<sup>e</sup> siècles). Études à la mémoire de Mihail Guboglu*, ed. F. BILICI, I. CÂNDEA, A. POPESCU, Braïla 2007, p. 262–267; IDEM, *Le sancak ottoman de Vidin du XV<sup>e</sup> à la fin du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Istanbul 2011, p. 225–229; К. ЁОРДАНОВ, *Војнуциме...*, p. 399–405.

<sup>73</sup> *Die altosmanische Chronik des ‘Āshīqpašazāde*, ed. F. GIESE, Osnabrück 1972 (cetera: ‘ĀSHIQPAŠAZĀDE/GIESE), p. 9; *Āshīqpašazāde Tarihi*, ed. N. ÖZTÜRK, Istanbul 2013 (cetera: ‘ĀSHIQPAŠAZĀDE/ÖZTÜRK), p. 10. Cf. M. ВАСИВ, *Мартолоци...*, p. 42, 47–49, who considers the term *martolos* in this account either anachronistic or related to its use in a Byzantine setting, and not yet as an Ottoman institution such as it became in the fifteenth century.

<sup>74</sup> ‘ĀSHIQPAŠAZĀDE/GIESE, p. 46 (here: *martolozlar*); ‘ĀSHIQPAŠAZĀDE/ÖZTÜRK, p. 69 (*martalozlar*).

<sup>75</sup> ‘ĀSHIQPAŠAZĀDE/GIESE, p. 124; ‘ĀSHIQPAŠAZĀDE/ÖZTÜRK, p. 179. The Turkish name of this personage raises some questions because even in the sixteenth century, when Muslims began to appear in the *martolos* ranks more often, they were mostly converts to Islam: M. ВАСИВ, *Мартолоци...*, p. 268–290. Toĝhan may have been a *martolos* commander, although these were also mainly Christians in the fifteenth century: *ibidem*, p. 290–292. There were, however, cases in which Christian soldiers in the Ottoman army bore Turkish names, such as the one recorded as the “infidel (*kāfir*) Timūrtash” in a *tīmār* register from Thessaly dated 859/1454–1455: see H. İNALCIK, *Stefan Dušan’ dan...*, p. 146 (n. 46), 169 (n. 124). It is possible that in such cases a process of Turkification preceded the Islamization of the person as suggested by Metin Kunt, although the evidence is too scarce

Ṭoĝhan reported that the Christians were led by the Ottoman archenemy Hunyadi János (*Yanqo Khūnyād*) who is denigratingly referred to elsewhere in the text – in a speech attributed to the Rumelian commander-in-chief Qula Shāhīn – as a *martolos* (*martaloz*)<sup>76</sup>. This account suggests that the term was informally used as a pejorative for Christian soldiers, which also hints that their presence in the Ottoman ranks may have caused some dissatisfaction among their Muslim counterparts. Indeed, *voynuqs*, *martoloses*, Christian cavalymen (*sipāhīs*) and raiders (*aqm̄jis*) formed a significant part of the Ottoman army in the fifteenth century and the expected tensions that this situation produced left a trace in other contemporary sources. A case in point is the vita of the soldier George from Sofia who was killed for his faith in a military camp near Edirne in 1437<sup>77</sup>.

Around the time of St. George's martyrdom, 'Āshīqpashazāde entered the retinue of Ishāq Beg of Üsküp (Skopje) whose frontier domains (*uj*) had a significant presence of Christian *sipāhīs* even two decades later<sup>78</sup>. As a scion of a famous Sufi family and himself a dervish, the historian was supposed to preach among the Muslim soldiers and provide religious justification for the campaigns of the sultan and his frontier lords like Ishāq Beg<sup>79</sup>. It can be argued that his first-hand experience on the battlefields yielded a half-hearted recognition of *martoloses'* utility while his intellectual background kept him silent about their religious profile and non-Muslims' role in Ottoman warfare in general. In comparison, the contemporary *Anonymous Chronicles* and that of Ūrūj b. 'Ādil, which share much of the narrative of fourteenth-century events with 'Āshīqpashazāde and are considered part of the same popular tradition of early Ottoman historical writing, completely disregard the military involvement of local Christians with the exception of converts. On the other hand, 'Āshīqpashazāde's work was also one of the main sources for Neshrī, who composed his universal history for the court and made some significant

---

for general conclusions: see M. KUNT, *Transformation of Zimmī into Askerī*, [in:] *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, vol. I, *The Central Lands*, ed. B. BRAUDE, B. LEWIS, Teaneck, NJ 1982, p. 59–60.

<sup>76</sup> 'ĀSHIQPASHAZĀDE/GIESE, p. 117; 'ĀSHIQPASHAZĀDE/ÖZTÜRK, p. 170.

<sup>77</sup> See T. KRSTIĆ, *Contested Conversions...*, p. 56; K. ЙОРДАНОВ, *Војнуците...*, p. 161–163. On the significant Christian participation in the Ottoman military of the time, see H. İNALCIK, *Stefan Dušan'dan...*; E. RADUSHEV, *Ottoman Border Periphery...*; H. LOWRY, *The Nature...*, p. 48–54; M. ВАСИЛЬ, *Мартолоси...*, p. 56–65.

<sup>78</sup> 'ĀSHIQPASHAZĀDE/GIESE, p. 114–115; 'ĀSHIQPASHAZĀDE/ÖZTÜRK, p. 167–168. On Christian *sipāhīs* in the region at the time of Ishāq Beg's son 'Isā Beg, see H. İNALCIK, *Stefan Dušan'dan...*, p. 149–151; H. ŠABANOVIĆ, *Krajište Isa-bega Ishakovića. Zbirni katastarski popis iz 1455. godine*, Sarajevo 1964.

<sup>79</sup> On 'Āshīqpashazāde's lineage and his legitimizing role as well as that of his ancestors, both biological and spiritual, vis-à-vis the Ottoman dynasty, see H. İNALCIK, *How to Read 'Āshīk Pasha-Zāde's History*, [in:] *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of Professor V.L. Ménage*, ed. C. HEYWOOD, C. IMBER, Istanbul 1994, p. 139–141, 147–156; L. ÖZDEMİR, *Ottoman History...*, p. 161–168.

ideological interventions to the original narrative but kept all the *martolos*-related accounts in almost verbatim form<sup>80</sup>.

Like the already discussed account of the *voynuqs* by Idris Bitlisi demonstrates, court-related historians seem to have been more open to the recognition of Christian contributions to Ottoman expansion, but their attitudes were also determined by their personal backgrounds and the sources of information to which they had access. This is evident in an episode recounted by a number of authors with some differences in detail. In 1464, Hunyadi's son and then king of Hungary Matthias Corvinus (1458–1490) attacked Bosnia, which had been conquered by Mehmed II the previous year, and laid siege to the important fortress of Zvornik on the Drina River. The sultan sent his grand vizier Maḥmūd Pasha Angelović (d. 1474) to relieve the town, but he struggled to get there on time due to the difficult mountainous terrain. He then came up with a stratagem. Neshrī reports how the pasha sent forward “a man” (*bir ādam*) to encourage the defendants and tell them that the grand vizier is approaching, followed by the sultan. The message was also made known to the Hungarians who were struck by fear, and when they saw the Ottoman vanguard approaching, they retreated in panic and were then pursued and heavily defeated<sup>81</sup>. Neshrī borrowed this account from a chronicle of unknown authorship completed in 1484, the so-called *Oxford Anonymous*, where the person who was sent to deliver the message is described as “well-informed” (*ṣāhib-i vuqūf*)<sup>82</sup>. Enverī, who completed his rhymed universal history, the *Düstürnâme* (*Book of the Vizier*), one year after the events, recounts them in a chapter on the exploits of his patron, the grand vizier Maḥmūd Pasha himself, and writes that the messengers he sent to the besieged fortress were actually *martoloses* (*mārtolozlar*)<sup>83</sup>. Probably due to the stylistic limitations of his rhymed narrative, Enverī says nothing about the origin or confession of the *martoloses* and just mentions the term for this one and only time in his work. Ṭürsün Beg, however, who was also a protégé of Maḥmūd Pasha and was again accompanying the Ottoman army on that occasion, adds in his *History of the Conqueror* that the grand vizier sought specifically for “an infidel *martolos* who is a skillful and experienced messenger faster than the wind”. When such a person was found, he and his companion, who was chosen from

<sup>80</sup> MEVLÂNÂ MEHMED NEŞRİ, *Cihânnümâ. Osmanlı Tarihi (1288–1485)*, ed. N. ÖZTÜRK, Istanbul 2013 (cetera: NESHİRİ), p. 37, 77, 266, 274.

<sup>81</sup> NESHİRİ, p. 310–311. For a general reconstruction of the events, see T. STAVRIDES, *The Sultan of Vizirs. The Life and Times of the Ottoman Grand Vizir Mahmud Pasha Angelović (1453–1474)*, Leiden 2001, p. 157–160.

<sup>82</sup> H.E. CENGİZ, Y. YÜCEL, *Rûhî Târîhi*, Bgr 14.18, 1992, p. 459; D. KASTRITSIS, *An Early Ottoman History. The Oxford Anonymous Chronicle (Bodleian Marsh 313). Historical Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, Liverpool 2017 [= TTB, 5], p. 196.

<sup>83</sup> *Düsturname-i Enverî*, ed. M. HALİL, Istanbul 1928, p. 106; *Düstürnâme-i Enverî (19–22. Kitaplar)*, ed. N. ÖZTÜRK, Istanbul 2012, p. 60.

among the grand vizier's slaves (*qul*), were promised "good *tīmārs*", i.e. sources of annual revenue, if they were to succeed in the dangerous task, which they did<sup>84</sup>.

It is also worth looking at the portrayal of these events in later historical works. The next-generation historians Idrīs Bitlīsī and Kemālpashazāde, both writing on the commission of Sultan Bāyezīd II, clearly followed Ṭürsün Beg's account with some minor changes. Bitlīsī notes that those summoned by Maḥmūd Pasha belonged to "the rank of *martoloses* and spies" (*jamā 'at-i martolosān va jāsūsān*) but, for some reason, he does not explicitly refer to them as Christians or "infidels" and says nothing about the *tīmārs*<sup>85</sup>. Lexical similarity suggests that the late-sixteenth-century historians Khoja Sa' daddīn and Muṣṭafā 'Ālī have both used Bitlīsī as a main source in this case. Consequently, the involvement of Christians in the events remains obscure from their accounts, with Sa' daddīn even omitting the term *martolos* itself<sup>86</sup>. In contrast, Kemālpashazāde has kept Ṭürsün's description of the man performing the mission as an "unbeliever" (*kāfir*) and even added a short clarification of who were the *martoloses*: a "group" or "people" (*tā'ife*) who had come (to the Ottomans), running away from the Hungarians (or Hungary: *Engürūs*)<sup>87</sup>.

Kemālpashazāde's statement is probably deduced from some other relevant passages in Ṭürsün Beg's work. The first one refers to the "famous *martolos* infidels of cursed nature, who had come to friction with the Turks on many occasions", among the defendants of the Serbian capital city of Smederevo (Semendere) during its siege by Maḥmūd Pasha's forces in 1458<sup>88</sup>. A little later in the same campaign, however, the grand vizier – notably, a convert born in a Christian aristocratic family in Serbia – employed some "old cunning *martolos* infidels" (*eski qurnaz martolos kāfirler*) for reconnaissance tasks against the Hungarians at the Sava river, once again offering them *tīmārs* as a reward<sup>89</sup>. There is a good reason to believe Ṭürsün in this case, too, for he personally served as the financial agent (*emīn*) in charge of the campaign and was likely tasked with allotting the *tīmārs*<sup>90</sup>. Taken in their entirety, his references to the *martoloses* create an image very similar to that of the Anatolian *akritai*: a militarized Christian frontier population that was engaged in thwarting the Ottoman advance, but some of its members were prone to offering their experience and good knowledge of the local geography to the conquerors in return for remuneration (in the form of *tīmārs*) and entry into the Ottoman

<sup>84</sup> TURSUN BEG, fol. 119a–119b.

<sup>85</sup> IDRİS BITLİSİ, fol. 446v; IDRİS BITLİSİ/YILDIRIM, p. 180–181.

<sup>86</sup> KHOJA SA' DEDDİN, p. 506–507; GELIBOLULU MUSTAFA 'ĀLİ EFENDİ, *Kitābū't-Tāriḥ-i Kūnhū'l-Aḥbār*, ed. A. UĞUR *et al.*, Kayseri 1997, p. 633–634.

<sup>87</sup> İBN KEMAL, *Tevāriḥ-i Āl-i Osman*, vol. VII (tenkidli transkripsiyon), ed. Ş. TURAN, Ankara 1957 (cetera: İBN KEMAL, vol. VII), p. 258.

<sup>88</sup> TURSUN BEG, fol. 79a.

<sup>89</sup> TURSUN BEG, fol. 81b.

<sup>90</sup> TURSUN BEG, p. 42.



military class. The contemporary archival sources confirm this situation as well as Kemālpashazāde's report that many *martoloses* had come from Hungary and other Christian territories along the expanding Ottoman frontiers. A register for the Sanjak of Vidin from 1454–1455 features no less than five Christian *tīmār*-holders who had “fled from Hungary”, while in another register from ca. 1479, we find the *martolos* Dragan to receive a *tīmār* after “coming from the Wallachian lands”<sup>91</sup>.

#### 4.3. Balkan Christians as ‘*askerī*

To be sure, *tīmārs* were reserved for the most distinguished among the *martoloses* and their leaders, while the majority were closer to a *re ‘āyā* status, but the question remains of why historians with a background in religious scholarship such as Ṭürsün Beg and the future *sheykh ül-islām* Kemālpashazāde were not averse to revealing the practice of Christians joining the Ottoman military class (‘*askerī*) in contradiction with the *sharī‘a* norms. We should of course not disregard the authors’ effort to reproduce historical facts objectively, particularly when they had first-hand knowledge of the events like in the case of Ṭürsün Beg or, for that matter, his contemporary dervish-historian ‘*Āshīqshazāde*<sup>92</sup>. However, their conceptions of Ottoman statehood were quite different. Those of Ṭürsün Beg and Kemālpashazāde were based on a particular understanding of law and justice, which made them significantly more inclusive.

Ṭürsün was among the first Ottoman scholars to incorporate in his work more complex discourses on kingship and society derived from the Perso-Islamic philosophical tradition and *The Nasirean Ethics* (*Ahlāk-i Nāşiri*) by Nāşir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) in particular. The elaborate introduction to his *History of the Conqueror* represents a piece of political advice with a focus on the desirable virtues of the ruler who is viewed as the mainstay of statehood. An outstanding topic in this text is the sultan’s commitment to justice (‘*adl*), while Ṭürsün also stresses

<sup>91</sup> Д. Боянич-Лукач, *Видин и Видинският санджак през 15–16 век. Документи от архивите на Цариград и Анкара*, ed. В. МУТАФЧИЕВА, М. Стайнова, София 1975, p. 64 (nr. 33), 67 (nr. 52), 71 (nr. 74), 73 (nr. 89), 86 (nr. 170); *Турски извори за българската история*, серия XV–XVI [в.], vol. II, ed. Н. ТОДОРОВ, Б. НЕДКОВ, София 1966, p. 374. For evidence from the Western Balkans, see М. ВАСИЉ, *Мартолоси...*

<sup>92</sup> In addition to the evidence quoted above, ‘*Āshīqshazāde* also recounts how the Christian lord of Enez (Dorino Gattiluso) submitted to Mehmed II “between 857 and 858” (i.e. the winter of 1453/1454; actually, the incident took place in early 1456) and was given, together with his soldiers, “nice revenues and good *tīmārs*” (‘*ĀSHIQSHAZĀDE/GIESE*, p. 136; ‘*ĀSHIQSHAZĀDE/ÖZTÜRK*, p. 196). Despite the wrong dating and some imprecise details, this account is corroborated by the sultan’s Greek biographer Kritobulos who was involved in the events. He adds that Gattiluso’s estate (“some villages [...] for a living”) was located in the region of Zichna and that he fled to the Latin possessions in the Aegean shortly thereafter: KRITOVoulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, trans. C.T. RIGGS, Princeton, NJ 1954, p. 109–111; C. IMBER, *The Ottoman Empire 1300–1481*, Istanbul 1990, p. 165–166.

on the importance of gratitude (*shükür*) for the power given to the ruler by God, one of its manifestations being “just law” (*qānūn-i ‘adl*) as a means of respite for those suffering oppression (*bīmār-i zulm*)<sup>93</sup>. These ideas were further developed within the context of dynastic history in Kemālpashazāde’s own historical work whose first, eight-volume part was presented to Bāyezīd II towards the end of his reign. In Kemālpashazāde’s view, one of the main factors for the superiority of the Ottomans over previous and contemporary dynasties was the obedience of both the *re‘āyā* and the *‘askerī* to Ottoman royal order (*emr-i emāret*) and the sultan’s decree (*fermān-i sulṭāna iṭā‘at*)<sup>94</sup>. What is meant thereby is undoubtedly *qānūn*, dynastic law. That these historians acknowledged its centrality to Ottoman statehood is no surprise. The first *qānūnnāmes* were promulgated in the 1470s and the 1480s, when Tūrsūn Beg commenced his work, while Kemālpashazāde is credited with composing at least one *qānūnnāme* himself, for the province of Karaman in 1518<sup>95</sup>. He also played a role in Ottoman attempts to reconcile *qānūn* and *sharī‘a* in his later capacity as the empire’s chief mufti, or *sheykh ül-islām* (1526–1534), with some of his fatwas referring to both Islamic and dynastic law or even implying the latter’s precedence<sup>96</sup>. Unlike the more strictly *sharī‘a*-minded Khoja Sa‘deddīn, sixteenth-century historians of the bureaucratic mold like his contemporary Muṣṭafā ‘Āli developed what Cornell Fleischer aptly termed *qānūn*-consciousness and placed the increasing digressions from the “old” dynastic law – i.e. the authoritative *qānūnnāmes* issued until the time of Süleymān the Lawgiver, 1520–1566 – at the heart of their discussions of perceived decline in Ottoman politics and society<sup>97</sup>.

It should be noted that *tīmār* grants to non-Muslims were not explicitly regulated in the extant *qānūnnāmes*, but they were not forbidden either and were certainly considered to be in the realm of uncodified *qānūn* as a product of custom and state necessity<sup>98</sup>. After all, the *berāts* (diplomas) of the *tīmār* holders,

<sup>93</sup> TURSUN BEG, fol. 20b, p. 21–24. See also M. SARIYANNIS, *A History...*, p. 68–70.

<sup>94</sup> İBN-İ KEMAL, *Tevârih-i Āl-i Osman*, vol. I, ed. Ş. TURAN, Ankara 1970 (cetera: İBN KEMAL, vol. I), p. 18–19.

<sup>95</sup> A. AKGÜNDÜZ, *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri Ve Hukukî Tahlilleri*, vol. III, Istanbul 1991, p. 306–311; cf. R. REPP, *The Müfti of Istanbul. A Study in the Development of the Ottoman Learned Hierarchy*, London 1986, p. 231.

<sup>96</sup> U. HEYD, *Studies...*, p. 183–192; R. REPP, *Qānūn and Sharī‘a...*, p. 134; C. IMBER, *Ebu’s-su‘ud...*, p. 120–122; A. İNANIR, *Şeyhülislām İbn Kemal’in Fetvaları Işığında Kanûnî Devrinde Osmanlı’da Hukukî Hayat*, Istanbul 2011, p. 22–29; E. ÖKTEN, *Ottoman Society and State in the Light of the Fatwas of İbn Kemal*, MA Thesis, Bilkent University 1996, p. 80–90. Cf. also S. BUZOV, *The Lawgiver...*, p. 77–78, where Kemālpashazāde’s approach to (*qānūn*-regulated) land law is compared with that of Ebu’s-Su‘ūd. Kemālpashazāde’s reasoning that state ownership of the land is legitimate since “it is not known in what way it [i.e. the land] was taken or surrendered during the conquest” is particularly striking against the background of the numerous pages that he dedicated to Ottoman conquests in his own historical oeuvre.

<sup>97</sup> C. FLEISCHER, *Bureaucrat...*, p. 191–200.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 198: “Imperial custom, as *kanun*, had prescriptive force even when unwritten...”

regardless of their religion, were issued by the same authority that promulgated *qānūn* – the sultan. Thus, while Christian *‘askerī* feature on the pages of Ottoman historical writings far more rarely than on those of the *tīmār* registers, and hence in real practice, occasional historiographic references to their role in Ottoman expansion are surely based on an understanding of their legality within dynastic law. The customary nature of the phenomenon is underlined by the requirement that ordinary Christian *re‘āyā* could not become *tīmār* holders and the latter had to be either military men “of old” themselves, i.e. members of the pre-Ottoman military class in a particular region, or descendants of such people – a requirement that, alongside Islamization, gradually led to the almost complete extinction of this social group in the Balkans (unlike in the newly conquered Hungary) by the sixteenth century<sup>99</sup>.

This brings us to another factor in Ottoman superiority according to Kemāl-pashazāde’s schema, namely the “lands of Rūm”, i.e. the Balkans and Anatolia, as a geographical-cum-political stage of the dynasty, which had not yet expanded its authority over parts of Central Europe and the Arab lands by the time he completed the first version of his *Histories* in 1510. The “Roman Abode of War” (*dār al-ḥarb-i rūmī*) not only gave legitimacy to Ottoman state building through the plentiful opportunities for waging holy war against the unbelievers that it offered, but it also provided the dynasty with all kinds of riches, both natural and demographic, including “a greater army and more abundant slaves (*qul*) and servants (*nöker*) than other lands [could furnish]”<sup>100</sup>. Indeed, Christian and Muslim servants (*nöker*, *khidhmetkār*) of ordinary *sipāhīs* (cavalrymen), military commanders, and especially of semi-autonomous frontier begs such as the Ishāqoghlu s of Üsküp are commonly encountered in the extant fifteenth-century registers, often becoming *tīmār* holders themselves. The same goes for the numerous slaves (*qul*, *gulām*), the difference being that they were mainly acquired by their masters on military campaigns or slave markets and had to convert to Islam before being manumitted and given their own source of revenue. The servants, on the other hand, seem to have been local freemen who sought entry into the *‘askerī* class through their service to the begs and could maintain their faith<sup>101</sup>. Of course, the term *qul* came

<sup>99</sup> H. İNALCIK, *Ottoman Methods...*, p. 113–116; IDEM, *Stefan Dušan’dan...*, p. 166–170.

<sup>100</sup> İBN KEMAL, vol. I, p. 17, 19–22.

<sup>101</sup> H. İNALCIK, *Stefan Dušan’dan...*, p. 145–146, 149–150, 159–160; IDEM, *Ottoman Methods...*, p. 120–122. The semantics of the different terms is not always clear due to the limited context. H. İnalçık has proposed that in the register for Arvanid (Albania) from 835/1431, the terms *nöker* and *gulām* were synonymous, but the presence of a Christian *tīmār* holder who was a *nöker* of another Christian (judging by the non-Muslim names) suggests that a servant of a local nobleman is meant here, i.e. what is more commonly described in other registers as *khidhmetkār*: see H. İNALCIK, *Hicri 835 Tarihli Süret-i Defter-i Sancak-i Arvanid*, <sup>2</sup>Ankara 1987, p. 86. The largest number of *khidhmetkār*s, including many Christians, is to be found in the 1455 register for the *uj* (frontier province) of Ishāqoghlu ‘İsā Beg in present-day Northern Macedonia and Kosovo, see H. ŠABANOVIĆ, *Krajište Isa-bega...*, *passim*. See also M. KUNT, *Transformation of Zimmī...*, p. 62, according to whom

to be increasingly associated with a particular category of Muslim officials and soldiers with a convert background who became a significant if not the dominant part of the imperial elite<sup>102</sup>. Some Ottoman historians discussed this process as well as the related practices of the *penjik* and (more rarely) the *devshirme*, but their views thereof remain beyond the scope of the present paper<sup>103</sup>.

## 5. Balkan Christians siding with the enemy

While *dhimmīs* were an indispensable part of early Ottoman military and, especially in the sixteenth century, an increasing source of new Muslims including janissaries and state officials, they could occasionally become disobedient as well. Such was the case during the crusading campaign led by the Polish-Hungarian King Władysław (1434/1440–1444) in 1443. The most detailed Ottoman account of these events is provided by a *ghazavātnāme* titled *The Holy Wars of Sultan Murād Son of Sultan Mehmed Khan* and composed shortly after the crusades of 1443–1444 by an unknown author who drew on his own and/or others' eyewitness evidence. It is only preserved in a later, slightly defective manuscript of an uncertain date, which contains some (arguably minor) interventions to the original text not earlier than the late sixteenth century<sup>104</sup>. The narrative is very lively, abounds of direct speech and colloquial vocabulary, and regularly jumps from the Muslim to the Christian camp and back – a feature that is rather uncharacteristic of early Ottoman historical writing and certainly had the dual purpose to enhance the literary value of the text as well as its claim to historical reliability. This is evident in a passage which traces the interactions between the crusaders and the local Christians in the region between Niš and Sofia in 1443 and is particularly relevant to the present study. One of the leading figures in the crusading army, the abovementioned Hungarian general Hunyadi János (Yanko in the Ottoman text), recommends the following:

“The best thing to do now is to send letters to all the priests (*pāpāslar*) who are round about, and get them to help us and bring us food. This is what the King [Władysław] did. He wrote letters to the priests and to people who worshipped idols and the cross to the effect that, on the instructions of the Pope of Rome (*Rīm papā*), if anyone refused to bring him assistance, he would kill them and take their wives and daughters prisoner. However, anyone who offered to help, by bringing and selling provisions or by acting as guides, would escape these

“it seems by the mid-sixteenth century the distinction between “slave” and “servant” was obscure and perhaps totally irrelevant” in the big households of Ottoman courtiers (often with *qul* background themselves). See also V.L. MÉNAGE, *Some Notes on the Devshirme*, BSOAS 29.1, 1966, p. 66–67.

<sup>102</sup> For a short outline of this much studied process, see *EP*, s.v. “*Ghulām*, iv. – Ottoman Empire” (H. İNALCIK).

<sup>103</sup> See, e.g., the works cited in fn. 28 and 70 above.

<sup>104</sup> *Gazavât-ı Sultân Murâd b. Mehmed Hân. İzladi ve Varna Savaşları (1443–1444) Üzerinde Anonim Gazavâtnâme*, ed. H. İNALCIK, M. OĞUZ, <sup>2</sup>Ankara 1989 (cetera: *Gazavât-ı Sultân Murâd*), p. VII–VIII.

perils. Matreman Yandulus would be pleased with them, and Narnur would bring joy to their spirits. He wrote a great deal of such nonsense and despatched the letters. Most of the people (*re`āyā*) in fact submitted to these accursed men. Some began to bring provisions to sell. Some mounted their horses and acted as guides. In short, that year they paid their jizya to the infidels (*küffār*) who are as low as the dust, and many of the subject infidels (*re`āyādan bir vāfir kāfir*) mounted their horses and joined Yanko's army. Now Yanko thought to himself: 'It really is excellent that these people have mounted their horses and come to us. I will immediately form them into a contingent and send them ahead of us. If the Turks attack us they will make an excellent shield.' He gave the command and the infidel subjects (*re`āyā kāfirī*) set off as a contingent. That day they crossed the Dragoman Pass and entered the plain of Sofia<sup>105</sup>.

The quoted passage is important for a number of reasons. First, it projects a sense of (feigned) familiarity with the religious beliefs and hierarchy of the Christians. *Mātermān Yandūlūs* is a distorted name of a Christian saint or rather the Holy Trinity, which appears throughout the narrative in different spellings, whereas *Nārnūr* is how the Christians called God according to the author, who seems to thus imply their idolatry through the Arabic meanings of the composite words *nār* (fire) and *nūr* (light)<sup>106</sup>. The Pope plays an important role in *The Holy Wars* as a distant puppet master of the crusaders and, for that matter, a head of all Christianity, which may be a reflection of the unionist attempts led by Emperor John VIII Palaeologus (1425–1448) and Pope Eugene IV (1431–1447)<sup>107</sup>. Although, on a political level, the Ottomans were well aware and made good use of the long-standing animosity between the two Churches and the widespread antiunionist sentiments in the East, however, the anonymous chronicler apparently paid little attention to the confessional differences among the Christians. It should be noted that the crusading army itself was hardly homogeneous in confessional terms, especially in 1443 when it also included a Serbian contingent under Despot George Branković. Moreover, there was apparently some on-site collaboration between the crusaders and the Orthodox clergy. When the crusaders entered Sofia, which had been reportedly burnt down by the retreating Ottoman forces, they are said to have “brought the metropolitan bishop (*vlādīqa medropolīdī*) and, appointing him their priest, recited a lot of nonsense as their infidel rites required”<sup>108</sup>. There is no doubt that the local Orthodox bishop is meant here, and it is noteworthy that he is

<sup>105</sup> *Gazavāt-ı Sultân Murâd*, p. 16–17, fol. 14v–15r. I reproduce here the English translation by Colin Imber, to which I have added the original terms in the brackets: C. IMBER, *The Crusade of Varna, 1443–1445*, Aldershot 2006, p. 56.

<sup>106</sup> C. IMBER, *The Crusade...*, p. 43, n. 12, 13. The term *Mātermān* seems to be derived from the Greek address to God as “Our Father”, *Pater emōn* (Πάτερ ἡμῶν): see Γ. ΑἸΒΑΛΗ, Ε. ΖΑΧΑΡΙΑΔΟΥ, Α. ΞΑΝΘΥΝΑΚΗΣ, *Το χρονικό των ουγγροτουρκικών πολέμων (1443–1444)*, Ηράκλειο 2005, p. 80–81. I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for this reference.

<sup>107</sup> On the ideological role of the Pope in the narrative, see also N. ΑΝΤΩΝ, *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century and its Relation to the Development of Ottoman Dynastic Legitimacy, Self-Image and the Ottoman Consolidation of Authority*, [in:] *The Crusade in the Fifteenth Century. Converging and Competing Cultures*, ed. N. HOUSLEY, London 2016, p. 20–22.

<sup>108</sup> *Gazavāt-ı Sultân Murâd*, p. 17, fol. 15v; C. IMBER, *The Crusade...*, p. 57.

referred to with both the Greek (*medropolīd*) and the Slavic (*vlādīqa*) form of the title, with the latter being used alone later in the text<sup>109</sup>. Along with some other words of Slavic and Hungarian origin dispersed in the Turkish text<sup>110</sup>, this observation invites some considerations about the possible convert-background of the author or – given his confused knowledge of Christian beliefs – of his hypothetical informer(s).

Returning to the passage quoted above, it should be noted that the image of Ottoman and foreign Christians is not entirely indiscriminate. The chronicler may have disregarded their confessional differences but not their sociopolitical status. Although he applies the same term for both groups of “infidels” (*küffār*, *kāfir*), he clearly distinguishes between them by additionally referring to the locals as *re ‘āyā*, i.e. Ottoman tax-paying subjects. Moreover, he implies a level of mistrust between the crusaders and the locals despite the latter’s willing support of the campaign. In his message to the Orthodox priests, the King is supposed to have used the carrot and stick approach, and Hunyadi was later ready to utilize the local contingents as a “shield” – a statement likely meant to demonstrate the crusaders’ cynical attitude towards the Eastern Orthodox under Muslim rule as opposed to their purported aim to fight for the salvation of Christendom. The evidence from earlier crusades, the writings of many western chroniclers and travelers about the “schismatics” as well as the strong anti-Catholic sentiments evident in late medieval Orthodox literature and practice all add credence to *The Holy Wars*’ representation of these relations<sup>111</sup>. However, it rather serves a rhetorical function to underline the negative image of the invaders and Hunyadi in particular, the ultimate evil figure of the narrative. The local Christians’ enthusiasm and support for the crusaders during the campaign of 1443 is well attested in contemporary documents including letters written by Hunyadi himself, who also entered Bulgarian folklore in a positive light<sup>112</sup>. *The Holy Wars* provides the most detailed account

<sup>109</sup> In the sole MS (*Gazavât-ı Sultân Murâd*, fol. 15v), the word *vlādīqa* does not stay before the word *medropolīdī* but is added beneath it. It may have not been meant as an addition but as a clarification of the Greek term. Given that on later occasions the text refers to that Bishop as *vlādīqa* only, it is likely that this is one of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century scribe’s manipulations of the original text, which must have used only *medropolīd* instead.

<sup>110</sup> See the dictionary of uncommon words in the text in *Gazavât-ı Sultân Murâd*, p. 114.

<sup>111</sup> For a recent study of mediaeval Slavic anti-Catholic literature with references to the abundant research on the relations between the Eastern Orthodox and Catholic worlds following the Great Schism of 1054, see А. НИКОЛОВ, *Между Рим и Константинопол. Из антикатолическата литература в България и славянския православен свят (XI–XVII в.)*, София 2016, and esp. chap. 3 on the 15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

<sup>112</sup> H. KOLAROV, *Die Teilnahme der Bulgaren am „Langen Feldzug“ des Königs Wladislaw III. Jagiello von 1443–1444*, BHR 1.1, 1973, p. 65–71; Б. ЦВЕТКОВА, *Паметна битка на народите (Европейският югоизток и османското завоевание – края на XIV и първата половина на XV в.)*, <sup>2</sup>Варна 1979, p. 268–269; В. ГЮЗЕЛЕВ, „Дългият поход“ на полско-унгарския крал Владислав III Ягело от 1443–1444 г. и българите, [in:] *Извори за кръстоносните походи от 1443–1444 година в българските земи*, ed. ИДЕМ, София 2019, p. 280–281.

of the *re'āyā's* involvement, as biased and rhetorical as it is. The anonymous author's statement that they submitted the equivalent of their poll-tax (*jizya*) to the invading "infidels" ought not to be understood literally, but rather as a testament to the violation of their status of "protected people" (*dhimmīs*) for which they owed the *jizya* as well as obedience to the sultan. Indeed, according to *The Holy Wars*, they were severely punished for this violation. This is what happened when the Pasha of Sofia entered the city after the crusaders had left it:

When he arrived, he knocked down the church door and either cut off the heads or gouged out the eyes of the priests, monks and infidels who were inside. They cut off the head of the dog called the Bishop (*vlādīqa*), put it in a bag and turned to go. They handed the heads of the Bishop and of a few important men to a courier, who carried them to the Sultan. As soon as the Padishah saw the heads, he knew that all the subjects had given their allegiance to the infidels (*jūmle re'āyā küffāra taptı*). He straightaway gave the order that whoever so wished could go and cut off the head of anyone they captured, whether voynuk or subject (*eğer voynuq ve eğer re'āyā*), who had supplied provisions to the infidels, seize their property and take their women and children prisoner. [...] Whenever they reached a village, they slaughtered the men and took the women and children prisoner. They plundered the provisions in their stores and seized their property and sustenance. [...] The subjects of Sofia and Radomir were crushed beneath the horses' hooves, and whoever presented the Padishah with a head received a bonus of five gold florins<sup>113</sup>.

Given the archival evidence demonstrating a relatively dense Christian population in a stable network of settlements around Sofia one or two years after the events<sup>114</sup>, the graphic violence displayed in this passage may be somewhat exaggerated by the chronicler in order to emphasize the consequences of *dhimmī* disobedience or rather to satisfy his Muslim readership's expectations thereof. It is also important to note his mention of *voynuqs* among those liable to retribution. It comes to support the logical assumption that the local contingents in the crusading army were mostly made of *voynuqs* with military experience who were, as mentioned, well-represented in the region of Sofia. The pass-guarding *derbendjis*, who are attested in numerous settlements along the Diagonal Route (Belgrade–Sofia–Istanbul) and especially in mountainous areas, may have also played an important role in guiding the Christian troops. Of particular interest is the fact that this author, too, seems to consider the *voynuqs* in a different category than the ordinary *re'āyā*, although by mentioning the two social groups alongside each other he may have simply tried to highlight the unruliness of the former. It may even have been what the sultan did say in fact. In any case, *The Holy Wars* implicitly recognizes the importance of the Balkan Christians for military encounters on Ottoman territory

<sup>113</sup> *Gazavât-ı Sultân Murâd*, p. 17–18, fol. 15v–16r. Translation by C. IMBER, *The Crusade...*, p. 57 (original terms added).

<sup>114</sup> Ц. ГЕОРГИЕВА, *Пространство и пространства на българите XV–XVII век*, София 1999, p. 94–96.

and their extremely negative image in this text is not just a generic trope, but also a reflection of Ottoman resentment at their actions. Such resentment would have been particularly strong with regard to the *voynuqs* and other groups of supposedly “privileged” status who were expected to fight the Ottoman enemies and not to join them.

A similar case occurred two decades later, during the already discussed Hungarian attempts to take the fortress of Zvornik after its recent conquest by Mehmed II. Although, as was shown, the Christian *martoloses* were instrumental in relieving the siege, other, seemingly larger local communities aided the Hungarians. The eyewitness Tursun Beg reports that in order to prevent Ottoman reinforcements reaching the besieged town, “the Vlach people who are the infidels’ woodsmen (*tā’ife-yi eflāq ki kāfirin chutaghudır*), having become hostile and disobedient, had blockaded the mountain pass so no bird could fly by”<sup>115</sup>. Given the common historiographic usage of the term *eflāq* as referring to Wallachia in a geographical and political sense, Tursun’s wording is rather ambiguous in this case, but the Vlachs’ description as “disobedient” (*’āq*) and *chutaq* – which seems to be used here in its original meaning of “mountain-dweller” without its secondary pejorative connotations – suggests that he meant the population of the local mountains who had already become Ottoman subjects. To be sure, this is what Kemālpashazāde understood from Tursun’s account for he calls the Vlachs “the infidels of those lands” who “grew in strength by asking the Hungarians for help, having found a window of opportunity to oppose the people of Islam...”<sup>116</sup>. Neither Tursun Beg nor Kemālpashazāde – or, for that matter, Idris Bitlisi, who also paraphrased Tursun Beg’s account but left aside all characterizations of the Vlachs except for “infidels” (*kuffār*)<sup>117</sup> – found it necessary to provide any particular commentary on the actions of the local population besides their qualification as an act of disobedience.

It is also worth reminding that these historians contended themselves with only reporting the *martoloses*’ support for Maḥmūd Pasha’s troops during the same events without any notable discussion. It thus seems that the varying allegiance of Balkan Christians in the fifteenth century was seen, to some extent, as a natural behavior that was to be expected. However, such an inference is at odds with the acrimonious reaction of the anonymous author of the *ghazavātnāme* to the *re’āyā*’s support for the crusaders in 1443. Apart from personal and generic specifics – with the *ghazavātnāme* providing a more detailed, vivid, and polemic account of a single military operation – the difference in approach may be due to the fact that the area of Zvornik had become Ottoman possession only a few years prior to the campaign of 1464 and the loyalties of the local population were still a matter of dispute.

<sup>115</sup> TURSUN BEG, fol. 118b.

<sup>116</sup> İBN KEMAL, vol. VII, p. 257.

<sup>117</sup> İDRİS BITLİSİ, fol. 445v; İDRİS BITLİSİ/YILDIRIM, p. 180.



Kemālpashazāde's insightful remark that the Vlachs' actions were due to them "having found a window of opportunity to oppose the people of Islam" goes a long way to explain why Ottoman accounts of military collaboration between local and foreign "infidels" were rare – there were simply not too many "windows of opportunity" for such collaboration between the mid-fifteenth and the late sixteenth centuries. The same can be said of the actions of the *voynuqs* and the ordinary *re'āyā* during the Crusades of 1443–1444. Judging by Idrīs Bitlīsī's early-1500s image of the *voynuqs* as important and reliable soldiers as well as by the longevity of the corps, it is safe to say that their disobedience half a century earlier was rather an exception caused by the palpable opportunity for restoration of Christian statehood in the Central and Eastern Balkans. When speaking of the same region, the next such opportunity would not come until the late sixteenth century. But while the reactions of the Christian *re'āyā* were equally varied, their reflection in Ottoman historical writing were rather muted.

## 6. Turning a blind eye on the Christian *re'āyā*

The sixteenth century saw significant changes in the social structure of Ottoman Christian society. The old Balkan aristocracy, and Christian *sipāhīs* in particular, almost entirely left the historical scene (with the exception of higher Church circles), and militarized groups such as *voynuqs* and *martoloses* had some of their earlier privileges abolished, their functions limited to inner-imperial duties, and their status largely reduced to that of ordinary *re'āyā* with some tax exemptions. Against this background, the Ottoman historians' usual selectiveness and laconicism when discussing the contribution of Christian detachments to Ottoman warfare seems to become even more conspicuous when it comes to the involvement of the ordinary Christian *re'āyā* in military encounters. A case in point is the Long War against the Habsburgs (1593–1606) and their allies, including the Wallachian voivode Michael the Brave (1593–1601) whose forces made several significant incursions to the south of the Danube, causing wholesale destruction along the way. Notably, archival evidence shows that the Christian inhabitants of Silistra put up strong resistance against the Wallachian troops besieging the city in 1595, which earned them some tax exemptions throughout the next century<sup>118</sup>. The first couple of years of the war occupy the last pages of Muṣṭafā 'Ālī's *The Essence of Histories* (*Kūnh ūl-akhbār*) but his account thereof is rather concise, and he fails to note the events around Silistra altogether. Of greatest interest in this regard is the narrative of 'Ālī's contemporary Muṣṭafā Selānikī – likely a native of Thessalonica (Selānik) who wrote a detailed history of the imperial affairs between 1563 and

<sup>118</sup> С. ПЪРВЕВА, *Създаване и запазване на колективната памет за военни конфликти в османската погранична периферия: битките на Михайл Витязул с Османската империя по време на войната със Свещената лига (1593–1606)*, ИП 71.3–4, 2015, p. 15–16.

1600. Selānikī vaguely hints at the involvement of the local population (*vilāyet khalqī*) in the Ottoman countermeasures at Silistra, but his wording rather denotes the local Muslims and, moreover, he describes the subsequent confrontation along the lines of holy war in the name of Islam (*jihād*)<sup>119</sup>. Given his apparent access to the imperial archives and high officials, lack of knowledge is not a credible explanation for his silence. It was rather Selānikī's presupposed conception of the events that shaped his narrative strategy and denied his explicit acknowledgement of Christians fighting on the Ottoman side.

The historian, however, is somewhat more precise when reporting that during Michael the Brave's next largescale attack in Rumeli in 1598 his army included "renegades, Hungarians, Austrians, Croats, Bulgarians, Serbs, and Greeks"<sup>120</sup>. The original lands of the latter three communities were at the time all within the Ottoman domains. Their representatives in Michael's army must have been soldiers with an immigrant background given that the participation of Bulgarians and other Balkan peoples in the Wallachian, Transylvanian, and Habsburg armies during the war is well attested in a number of contemporary Christian sources<sup>121</sup>. Selānikī's account may also have some relation to the broad anti-Ottoman conspiracy of local Bulgarian notables, Ragusan tradesmen, and (primarily Greek) Church officials in Ottoman Bulgaria, which culminated in the so-called Tarnovo Uprising amid Michael's campaign in 1598<sup>122</sup>. Be that as it may, the enumeration of various subject peoples – notably, in ethnic rather than religious terms – as participants in the enemy forces implies the mass disobedience of Balkan Christians during the war, while also highlighting Selānikī's reluctance to elaborate on the topic. The reasons may lie in the chronicle-like structure of his work – although he was not averse to expressing his own opinion – as well as in the clandestine nature of the conspirators' activities, with the resulting uprising being less documented and perhaps not particularly noteworthy.

In many ways, Selānikī's approach resembles that of late-seventeenth-century Ottoman bureaucrat historians such as Silāhdār Meḥmed Agha and Defterdār Şarı Meḥmed Pasha reporting on the war of 1683–1699, when the deep penetration of Holy League forces in Ottoman territory provoked equally varied responses by

<sup>119</sup> SELĀNİKĪ MUSTAFA EFENDĪ, *Tarih-i Selānikī*, vol. II, ed. M. İPŞİRLİ, <sup>2</sup>Ankara 1999 (cetera: SELĀNİKĪ), p. 452–453.

<sup>120</sup> SELĀNİKĪ, p. 782: *Mihal leşkerinün ekseri mürtedd ve Macar ve Nemçe ve Hırvad ve Bulgar ve Sırf ve Rumdur*. (The edition's transcription has been preserved). Selānikī notes a similar composition of the Habsburg army itself when describing earlier events at the beginning of the war; see SELĀNİKĪ, vol. I, p. 370, s. a. 1002.

<sup>121</sup> М. ЙОНОВ, *Засилване на освободителното движение в края на XVI в. Първо търновско въстание*, [in:] *История на България*, vol. IV, *Българският народ под османско владичество (от XV до началото на XVIII в.)*, ed. Х. ГАНДЕВ *et al.*, София 1983, p. 196–197.

<sup>122</sup> On the conspiracy and the uprising, see Н. МИЛЕВ, *Един неиздаден документ за българската история (1597 год.)*, ИИД 4, 1915, p. 89–99; М. ЙОНОВ, *Засилване на освободителното движение...*, p. 186–196.

the local Christians. These authors similarly showed greater sensitivity towards the actions of Balkan non-Muslims who joined the Habsburg troops or aided them with revolts and *haydut* raids in the Ottoman rear<sup>123</sup>. Yet, they ignored or treated more vaguely some occasions when the local population hardly viewed the coreligionist (but confessionally different) invaders as liberators and tried to protect itself against them with all available means, effectively supporting the Ottoman cause. Thus, in 1689, a Habsburg vanguard was attacked “with sticks and slings” by the inhabitants of Dragoman, a Christian *derbendji* settlement in the same region between Sofia and Niš whose population, notably, had sided with the crusaders two centuries and a half earlier. In contrast to the detailed account of the *ghazavātnāme*, however, Silāhdār simply described them as *re'āyā*, without specifying their religious profile, while Defterdār failed to note their involvement altogether and accentuated on the heroics of the Muslim army<sup>124</sup>.

## 7. Conclusion

Selānikī's attenuated attention to the historical role of Balkan Christians in the late sixteenth century is in fact representative of the historiographic norm. Thus, the large majority of fifteenth-centuries Ottoman historians ignored the *dhimmi* involvement in the Crusades of 1443–1444, with the *ghazavātnāme*'s anonymous author being clearly the exception that proves the rule<sup>125</sup>. Tūrsūn Beg's accounts of *martoloses*, Vlachs, and *voynuqs* as well as Idrīs Bitlīsī's positive depiction of the latter resulted, in the first place, from the greater access of these writers to relevant information due to their professional and/or geographical positions. Because of the significant popularity that their works gained among subsequent generations, their accounts became part of the tradition but, more often than not, later

<sup>123</sup> See Д. БОЈАНИЋ-ЛУКАЧ, *Нова видувања за Карпошевото востание*, [in:] *Австро-турската војна 1683–1699 со посебен осврт на Карпошевото востание во Македонија*, ed. А. СТОЈАНОВСКИ *et al.*, Скопје 1997, p. 13–51; D. IVANOVA, *The Impact of the 1683–1699 War on the Ottoman Rear: The Story of Silāhdār Mehmed Ağa about the Haydut Raid on Kyustendil in 1689/90*, [in:] *Empires and Peninsulas. Southeastern Europe between Karlowitz and the Peace of Adrianople, 1699–1829*, ed. P. MITEV, I. PARVEV, M. BARANOVA, V. RACHEVA, Berlin 2010, p. 217–229; IDEM, *Ottoman Subjects, Habsburg Allies. The Reaya of the Chiprovtsi Region (Northwestern Bulgaria) on the Front Line, 1688–1690*, [in:] *The Treaties of Carlowitz (1699). Antecedents, Course and Consequences*, ed. C. HEYWOOD, I. PARVEV, Leiden 2019, p. 110–130.

<sup>124</sup> Дж. ИВАНОВА, *Театри на войната – сражения и историография (османски историци за участието на раята на Драгоман във войната между Свещената лига и Османската империя 1863–1699)*, [in:] *Из живота на европейските провинции на Османската империя през XV–XIX век. Сборник изследвания в памет на проф. д. и. н. Елена Грозданова*, ed. О. ТОДОРОВА, С. ПЪРВЕВА, София 2016, p. 389–405.

<sup>125</sup> See И. ТАТАРЛЪ, *Османски извори...*; Б. ЦВЕТКОВА, *Обзор на основните османски източници от XV в. за походите на Владислав Варненчик и Ян Хуниади през 1443/1444 г.*, [in:] *Варна 1444. Сборник от изследвания и документи в чест на 525-та годишнина от битката край гр. Варна*, ed. Д. АНГЕЛОВ *et al.*, София 1969, p. 168–192, esp. p. 175.

historians stripped them of important details instead of elaborating on the topic of Ottoman Christians – an approach particularly evident in Khoja Sa‘deddīn’s selective usage of Bitlīsī’s *The Eight Paradises*.

Besides the quality of personal observations and access to sources, other factors shaping historiographic attitudes – in general terms as well as with respect to *dhimmīs* in particular – were the specific ideological position of each author and, hence, his narrative goals and strategy. These were usually premised on authors’ personal backgrounds and aims as much as on some more abstract concerns with the didactic power of historical writing. Background and aims could sometimes come to friction as it is once again most visible from Bitlīsī’s case. As an immigrant scholar, he did his best to penetrate the courtly circles by following the established models of high Persian historiography, but his experimental approach came a step too far for his contemporary Ottoman audience. Recognition of his work would come belatedly, but he bequeathed to us the most explicit accounts of previously unpopular or even taboo topics such as the *voynuqs*’ utility and the *devshirme*.

Considering the limited place of the subject under consideration here in pre-modern Ottoman historiography, it is risky to locate the isolated accounts firmly within the major ideological streams that shaped this large body of literature. Still, it is possible to distinguish some general trends and patterns. In the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, authors who were commissioned by the ruling elite or sought its patronage were more open to a recognition, hesitant as it was, of non-Muslim contributions to the Ottoman cause as compared to the representatives of the popular tradition. Such a distinction is reflective of the tension between the process of empire building, which entailed greater involvement of Christians and especially converts in the military and governmental spheres, and the anti-imperial sentiments of the old frontier aristocracy, which gained expression in the popular tales of early Ottoman history and some hagiographic narratives. Historians related to the court like Tūrsūn Beg and Kemālpashazāde were also less hesitant to write about *qānūn*-related practices like the admission of *dhimmīs* to the privileged *‘askerī* class (by granting them *tīmārs*). Kemālpashazāde’s work is particularly noteworthy with its discourse on the centrality of the lands of Rūm – with their largely Christian demographic potential – to the Ottoman enterprise. In later decades, such considerations would become deeply rooted in the oeuvre of bureaucrat historians like Muṣṭafā ‘Āli who, unsurprisingly, indicated his allegiance to the same historiographic tradition<sup>126</sup>. In contrast, his contemporary *sheykh ūl-islām* Khoja Sa‘deddīn, who had access to roughly the same sources, diligently avoided or veiled the topic of *dhimmī* involvement in Ottoman politics and higher society out of concerns for the conformity of such practices with the *sharī‘a*. With the tendency towards Sunnitization and greater adherence to Islamic piety in the

<sup>126</sup> C. FLEISCHER, *Bureaucrat...*, p. 248.

Ottoman public sphere culminating in the seventeenth century, it is appealing to hypothesize that Sa‘deddīn’s approach would become dominant in historical writing. Muṣṭafā Selānikī’s comparatively greater focus on the anti-Ottoman actions of the Balkan peoples is another indication thereof. Further research into that period could prove or disprove this hypothesis, but Koja Hüseyn’s willing reproduction of the Bitlisi’s account of the *voynuqs* in the 1640s is a red lamp indicating that historiographic attitudes remained varied and subjective.

In general, despite the variety of approaches, there is enough evidence or, indeed, enough lack of it to conclude that Ottoman Christians were a minor and occasional topic in Ottoman historical writing of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The few relevant accounts are understandably focused on military affairs, particularly in the first half of that period when *dhimmīs* had a greater role in Ottoman warfare. The few exceptions to that military-centrism were rather anecdotal or purely visual. They served to support some more general didactic or ideological aims of the respective narratives, and the authors’ ideals of just rulership in particular. Sporadic references to priests and bishops only come to underline the historiographic obscurity of such a major structure of the Christian community like its Church organization – an Ottoman institution per se that operated in accordance with Islamic law. In other words, there was no real historiographic discourse on non-Muslims’ place in Ottoman society. Does this recapitulation tell us something about the functioning of Ottoman society itself? When searching for the answer, the historians’ reluctance to engage with this subject should be neither neglected nor overstated. It is indicative of the mentality of a Muslim elite, which – and some sections of it more than others – was not at ease with its largely Christian surroundings and sought to limit the latter’s standing in its own historical memory. On the other hand, sources of other kinds reveal much greater interaction between Muslims and Christians on both the political and everyday levels, i.e. a largely shared *Lebenswelt*. Was Ottoman historical writing, then, detached from reality? It is perhaps better said that it created selective images of reality, much like the national historiographies of the modern age. It does, however, contain original pieces of information that can help us reconstruct premodern identities in the Ottoman domains – a potential that has not yet been sufficiently utilized.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- AİBALĒ G., ZACHARIADOU E., XANTHYNAKĒS A., *To chroniko tōn oungrotoyrikōn polemōn (1443–1444)*, Ērackleio 2005.
- AKGÜNDÜZ A., *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri Ve Hukukî Tahlilleri*, vol. I, Istanbul 1990.
- AKGÜNDÜZ A., *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri Ve Hukukî Tahlilleri*, vol. III, Istanbul 1991.
- Anonim Osmanlı Kroniği*, ed. N. ÖZTÜRK, Istanbul 2015.
- ‘ÂŞIK ÇELEBİ, *Meşâ’irü’ş-Şu‘arâ*, vol. I, ed. F. KILIÇ, Istanbul 2010.
- Âşikpaşazâde Tarihi*, ed. N. ÖZTÜRK, Istanbul 2013.
- BOJANIČ-LUKAČ D., *Vidin i Vidinskijat sandžak prez 15–16 vek. Dokumenti ot arhivite na Carigrad i Ankara*, ed. V. MUTAFČIEVA, M. STAJNOVA, Sofija 1975.
- CENGİZ H.E., YÜCEL Y., *Rûhî Târîhi*, “Belgeler” 14.18, 1992, p. 359–472.
- CHJUSEJN, *Beda’i’ul-veka’i’ (Udivitel’nye sobytija)*, vol. I, ed. A.S. TVERITINOVA, Moskva 1961.
- DE COURMENIN L.D., *Voiage de Levant. Fait par le commandement du Roy en l’année 1621*, Paris 1624.
- Die altosmanische Chronik des ‘Âşikpaşazâde*, ed. F. GIESE, Osnabrück 1972.
- Die altosmanischen anonymen Chroniken*, T. I, *Text und Variantenverzeichnis*, ed. F. GIESE, Breslau 1922.
- Düsturname-i Enverî*, ed. M. HALİL, Istanbul 1928.
- Düstürnâme-i Enverî (19–22. Kitaplar)*, ed. N. ÖZTÜRK, Istanbul 2012.
- EVLİYÂ ÇELEBİ B. DERVİŞ MEHEMMED ZİLLÎ, *Evlîyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, vol. III, ed. S.A. KAHRAMAN, Y. DAĞLI, Istanbul 1999; vol. V, ed. Y. DAĞLI, S.A. KAHRAMAN, İ. SEZGİN, Istanbul 2001; vol. VII, ed. Y. DAĞLI, S.A. KAHRAMAN, R. DANKOFF, Istanbul 2003.
- Gazavât-ı Sultân Murâd b. Mehemmed Hân. İzladi ve Varna Savaşları (1443–1444) Üzerinde Anonim Gazavât-nâme*, ed. H. İNALCIK, M. OĞUZ, <sup>2</sup>Ankara 1989.
- GELIBOLULU MUSTAFA ‘ÂLÎ EFENDİ, *Kitâbü’t-Târîh-i Kühnü’l-Ahbâr*, ed. A. UĞUR *et al.*, Kayseri 1997.
- Hans Dernschwam’s Tagebuch einer Reise nach Konstantinopel und Kleinasien (1553/1555)*, ed. F. BÄNGER, München 1923.
- İBN KEMAL, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, vol. VII (tenkidli transkripsiyon), ed. Ş. TURAN, Ankara 1957.
- İBN-I KEMAL, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, vol. I, ed. Ş. TURAN, Ankara 1970.
- İDRİS BITLİSİ, *Hasht bihisht*, MS İstanbul, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi 3209.
- İDRİS-I BITLİSİ, *Heşt Behişt. VII. Ketîbe: Fatih Sultan Mehmed Devri, 1451–1481*, trans. M.İ. YILDIRIM, Ankara 2019.
- İDRİS-I BITLİSİ, *Heşt Bihîşt*, vol. I, ed. M. KARATAŞ, S. KAYA, Y. BAŞ, Ankara 2008.
- İNALCIK H., *Hicrî 835 Tarihli Sûret-i Defter-i Sancak-i Arvanid*, <sup>2</sup>Ankara 1987.
- İNANIR A., *Şeyhülislâm İbn Kemal’in Fetvaları Işığında Kanûnî Devrinde Osmanlı’da Hukukî Hayat*, Istanbul 2011.
- KALICIN M., *Korona na istoriite na Hodža Sadeddin*, Veliko Târnovo 2000.
- KASTRITSIS D., *An Early Ottoman History. The Oxford Anonymous Chronicle (Bodleian Marsh 313). Historical Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, Liverpool 2017 [= Translated Texts for Byzantinists, 5].

- KEMALPAŞAZÂDE, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, vol. III, ed. A. SATUN, Istanbul 2014.
- KHOJA SA' DEDDÎN, *Tâj üt-tevârih*, vol. I, Istanbul 1279/1862–1863.
- KRITOVOULOS, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, trans. C.T. RIGGS, Princeton, NJ 1954.
- MEVLÂNÂ MEHMED NEŞRİ, *Cihânnümâ. Osmanlı Tarihi (1288–1485)*, ed. N. ÖZTÜRK, Istanbul 2013.
- SCHWEIGGER S., *Eine neue Reiß Beschreibung auß Teutschland Nach Constantinopel und Jerusalem*, Nürnberg 1639.
- SELÂNIKÎ MUSTAFA EFENDİ, *Tarih-i Selânikî*, vol. I–II, ed. M. İPŞIRLI, <sup>2</sup>Ankara 1999.
- SEYYİD LOQMÂN, *Hünernâme*, MS Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Hazine 1523.
- ŠABANOVIĆ H., *Krajište Isa-bega Ishakovića. Zbirni katastarski popis iz 1455. godine*, Sarajevo 1964.
- TATARLÂ I., *Osmanski izvori za pohodite na Vladislav III Jagelo i Jan Huniadi (1443–1444)*, [in:] *Varna 1444. Sbornik ot izsledvanija i dokumenti v čest na 525-ta godišnina ot bitkata kraj gr. Varna*, ed. D. ANGELOV et al., Sofija 1969, p. 367–539.
- Turski izvori za bălgarskata istorija, 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> century series*, vol. II, ed. N. TODOROV, B. NEDKOV, Sofija 1966.
- Turski izvori za istorijata na pravoto v bălgarskite zemi*, vol. II, ed. B. CVETKOVA, Sofija 1971.
- TURSUN BEG, *The History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, ed. H. INALCIK, R. MURPHEY, Minneapolis 1978.

## Secondary Literature

- ANTOV N., *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century and its Relation to the Development of Ottoman Dynastic Legitimacy, Self-Image and the Ottoman Consolidation of Authority*, [in:] *The Crusade in the Fifteenth Century. Converging and Competing Cultures*, ed. N. HOUSLEY, London 2016, p. 15–33.
- BABINGER F., *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke*, Leipzig 1927.
- BAUSANI A., *Gabr*, [in:] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. II, ed. B. LEWIS et al., <sup>2</sup>Leiden 1991, p. 970–971.
- BINNEY E., *Turkish Miniature Paintings and Manuscripts from the Collection of Edwin Binney*, <sup>3</sup>New York 1973.
- BJÖRKMAN W., *Kâfir*, [in:] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. IV, ed. E. VAN DONZEL et al., <sup>2</sup>Leiden 1997, p. 407–409.
- BOJANIĆ-LUKAČ D., *Nova viduvanja za Karpoševoto vostanie*, [in:] *Avstro-turskata vojna 1683–1699 so poseben osvrt na Karpoševoto vostanie vo Makedonija*, ed. A. STOJANOVSKI et al., Skopje 1997, p. 13–51.
- BOSWORTH C.E., FAROQHI S., *Ra'iyya*, [in:] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. VIII, ed. C.E. BOSWORTH et al., <sup>2</sup>Leiden 1995, p. 403–406.
- BUZOV S., *The Lawgiver and his Lawmakers: The Role of Legal Discourse in the Change of Ottoman Imperial Culture*, PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2005.
- CAHEN C., *Dhimmā*, [in:] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. II, ed. B. LEWIS et al., <sup>2</sup>Leiden 1991, p. 227–231.
- CVETKOVA B., *Influence exercée par certaines institutions de Byzance et des Balkans du Moyen Age sur le système féodal ottoman*, “Byzantinobulgarica” 1, 1962, p. 237–257.
- CVETKOVA B., *Obzor na osnovnite osmanski iztočnici ot XV v. za pohodite na Vladislav Varnenčik i Jan Huniadi prez 1443/1444 g.*, [in:] *Varna 1444. Sbornik ot izsledvanija i dokumenti v čest na 525-ta godišnina ot bitkata kraj gr. Varna*, ed. D. ANGELOV et al., Sofija 1969, p. 168–192.
- CVETKOVA B., *Pametna bitka na narodite (Evropejskijat jugoiztok i osmanskoto zavoevanie – kraja na XIV i pŕvata polovina na XV v.)*, <sup>2</sup>Varna 1979.

- ÇAĞMAN F., *Sultan Sencer ve Yaşlı Kadın Minyatürlerinin İkonografisi*, [in:] *Sanat Tarihinde İkonografik Araştırmalar*. Güner İnal'a Armağan, Ankara 1993, p. 87–116.
- ÇOLAK H., *Tekfur, fasiliyus and kayser: Disdain, Negligence and Appropriation of Byzantine Imperial Titulature in the Ottoman World*, [in:] *Frontiers of the Ottoman Imagination. Studies in Honour of Rhoads Murphy*, ed. M. HADJIANASTASIS, Leiden 2015, p. 5–28.
- DARLING L.T., *A History of Social Justice and Political Power in the Middle East. The Circle of Justice from Mesopotamia to Globalization*, London 2013, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203096857>
- DARLING L.T., *The Development of Ottoman Governmental Institutions in the Fourteenth Century. A Reconstruction*, [in:] *Living in the Ottoman Ecumenical Community. Essays in Honour of Suraiya Faroqhi*, ed. M. KOLLER, V. COSTANTINI, Leiden 2008 [= *The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage*, 39], p. 15–34, <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004165755.i-496.11>
- Disliking Others. Loathing, Hostility, and Distrust in Premodern Ottoman Lands*, ed. H.T. KARATEKE, H.E. ÇIPA, H. ANETSHOFER, Boston 2018.
- DUJČEV I., *La conquête turque et la prise de Constantinople dans la littérature slave contemporaine*, “Byzantinoslavica” 14, 1953, p. 14–54; 16.2, 1955, p. 318–329; 17.2, 1956, p. 276–340.
- ERCAN Y., *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Bulgarlar ve Voynuklar*, Ankara 1989.
- ERTUĞ Z.T., *Hünernâme*, [in:] *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. XVIII, İstanbul 1998, p. 484–485.
- Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*, ed. B. GUTHMÜLLER, W. KÜHLMANN, Tübingen 2000.
- European Perception of the Ottomans*, ed. I. BELLER-HANN, K. FLEET, special issue of “*Journal of Mediterranean Studies*” 5.2, 1995.
- FAROQHI S., *Istanbul and Crete in the Mid-1600s: Evliya Çelebi's Discourse on Non-Muslims*, “*The Medieval History Journal*” 22.2, 2019, p. 321–342, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0971945819871154>
- FAROQHI S., *The Ottoman Empire and the World around it*, London 2004.
- FETVACI E., *The Office of Ottoman Court Historian*, [in:] *Studies on Istanbul and Beyond. The Freely Papers*, vol. I, ed. R. OUSTERHOUT, Philadelphia 2007, p. 7–21.
- FIERY J.M., *Naşārā*, [in:] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. VII, ed. C.E. BOSWORTH *et al.*, <sup>2</sup>Leiden 1993, p. 970–973.
- FLEISCHER C., *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire. The Historian Mustafa Âli (1541–1600)*, Princeton 1986, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400854219>
- FOTIĆ A., *Tracing the Origin of a New Meaning of the Term Re'āyā in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Balkans*, “*Balkanica*” 48, 2017, p. 55–66, <https://doi.org/10.2298/BALC1748055F>
- GARA E., *Popular Protest and the Limitations of Sultanic Justice*, [in:] *Popular Protest and Political Participation in the Ottoman Empire. Studies in Honor of Suraiya Faroqhi*, ed. E. GARA, M.E. KABADAYI, C.K. NEUMANN, İstanbul 2011, p. 89–104.
- GEORGIEVA C., *Prostranstvo i prostranstva na bälgarite XV–XVII vek*, Sofija 1999.
- GHEORGHE A., *Zerstörung und Umwandlung von Kirchen zu Moscheen in der frühosmanischen Geschichtsschreibung (XV. Jh.). Eine selective Quellenevaluation*, “*Review of Ecumenical Studies*” 8.2, 2016, p. 271–307, <https://doi.org/10.1515/ress-2016-0021>
- GJUZELEV V., „*Dälğijat pohod*” na polsko-ungarskija kral Vladislav III Jagelo ot 1443–1444 g. i bälgarite, [in:] *Izvori za krästonosnite pohodi ot 1443–1444 godina v bälgarskite zemä*, ed. V. GJUZELEV, Sofija 2019, p. 273–285.
- GRADEVA R., *On Zimmis and Church Buildings: Four Cases from Rumeli*, [in:] *The Ottoman Empire: Myths, Realities and 'Black Holes'. Contributions in Honour of Colin Imber*, ed. E. KERMELI, O. ÖZEL, İstanbul 2006, p. 203–237, <https://doi.org/10.31826/9781463225940-015>



- GRADEVA R., *Rumeli under the Ottomans, 15<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Institutions and Communities*, Istanbul 2004.
- GRADEVA R., *Turcite v bälgarskata knižnina, XV–XVIII vek*, [in:] *Balkanski identičnosti v bälgarskata kultura ot modernata epoha*, vol. I, ed. N. ARETOV, N. ČERNOKOŽEV, Sofija 2001, p. 112–134.
- GRADEVA R., *Turks and Bulgarians, Fourteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, “Journal of Mediterranean Studies” 5.2, 1995, p. 173–187.
- GRADEVA R., *Turks in Eighteenth-Century Bulgarian Literature: Historical Roots of Present-Day Attitudes in Bulgaria*, “The European Legacy” 1.2, 1996, p. 421–426, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10848779608579432>
- HEYD U., *Studies in Old Ottoman Criminal Law*, ed. V.L. MÉNAGE, Oxford 1973.
- IMBER C., *Ebu 's-su 'ud. The Islamic Legal Tradition*, Edinburgh 1997.
- IMBER C., *The Crusade of Varna, 1443–1445*, Aldershot 2006.
- IMBER C., *The Ottoman Empire 1300–1481*, Istanbul 1990.
- İNALCIK H., *Ghulām, iv. – Ottoman Empire*, [in:] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. II, ed. B. LEWIS et al., <sup>2</sup>Leiden 1991, p. 1085–1091.
- İNALCIK H., *How to Read 'Āshık Pasha-Zāde's History*, [in:] *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of Professor V.L. Ménage*, ed. C. HEYWOOD, C. IMBER, Istanbul 1994, p. 139–156, <https://doi.org/10.31826/9781463231729-012>
- İNALCIK H., *Ottoman Methods of Conquest*, “Studia Islamica” 2, 1954, p. 103–129, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1595144>
- İNALCIK H., *Stefan Dušan'dan Osmanlı İmperatorluğuna. XV. Asırda Rumeli'de Hıristiyan Sipâhiler ve Menşeleri*, [in:] H. İNALCIK, *Fatih Devri Üzerinde Tetkikler ve Vesikalar*, vol. I, Ankara 1954, p. 137–184.
- İNALCIK H., *Suleiman the Lawgiver and Ottoman Law*, [in:] H. İNALCIK, *The Ottoman Empire. Conquest, Organization and Economy. Collected Studies*, London 1978, pt. VII, p. 105–138.
- İNALCIK H., *Şikayet Hakkı: 'Arz-ı Hâl ve 'Arz-ı Mağzar'lar*, “Osmanlı Araştırmaları” 7–8, 1988, p. 33–54.
- İNALCIK H., *The Problem of the Relationship between Byzantine and Ottoman Taxation*, [in:] *Akten des XI. Internationalen Byzantinistenkongresses, München 1958*, ed. F. DÖLGER, H.G. BECK, München 1960, p. 237–242.
- IVANOVA D., *Ottoman Subjects, Habsburg Allies. The Reaya of the Chiprovtsi Region (Northwestern Bulgaria) on the Front Line, 1688–1690*, [in:] *The Treaties of Carlowitz (1699). Antecedents, Course and Consequences*, ed. C. HEYWOOD, I. PARVEV, Leiden 2019, p. 110–130, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004414280\\_008](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004414280_008)
- IVANOVA D., *Teatri na vojnata – sraženija i istoriografija (osmanski istorici za učastieto na rajata na Dragoman vāv vojnata meždu Sveštenata liga i Osmanskata imperija 1863–1699)*, [in:] *Iz žīvota na evropejskite provincii na Osmanskata imperija prez XV–XIX vek. Sbornik izsledvanija v pamet na prof. d. i. n. Elena Grozdanova*, ed. O. TODOROVA, S. PÄRVEVA, Sofija 2016, p. 389–405.
- IVANOVA D., *The Impact of the 1683–1699 War on the Ottoman Rear: The Story of Silāhdar Mehmed Ağa about the Haydut Raid on Kyustendil in 1689/90*, [in:] *Empires and Peninsulas. Southeastern Europe between Karlowitz and the Peace of Adrianople, 1699–1829*, ed. P. MITEV, I. PARVEV, M. BARAMOVA, V. RACHEVA, Berlin 2010, p. 217–229.
- IVANOVA S., *Masquerade – Imperial Preludes*, “Études balkaniques” 39.1, 1994, p. 28–36.

- IVANOVA S., *Predi da se rodi bälgarskijat millet*, [in:] *Däržava i cärkva – cärkva i däržava v bälgarskata istorija. Sb. po slučaj 135-godišnjinata ot učredžavaneto na Bälgarskata ekzarhija*, ed. G. GANEV, G. BAKALOV, I. TODEV, Sofija 2006, p. 135–184.
- JONOV M., *Evropa otnovo otkriva bälgarite: XV–XVIII vek*, Sofija 1980.
- JONOV M., *Zasilvane na osvoboditelnoto dviženie v kraja na XVI v. Pärvo tärnovsko västanie*, [in:] *Istoriija na Bälgarija*, vol. IV, *Bälgarskijat narod pod osmansko vladičestvo (ot XV do načaloto na XVIII v.)*, ed. H. GANDEV et al., Sofija 1983, p. 181–202.
- JORDANOV K., *Organizacionno ustrojstvo na sokolarskata institucija, čislen sästav i geografsko razpredelenie na sokolarite ot Centralnite Balkani prez XV–XVI v.*, “Исторически преглед” / “Istoričeski pregled” 72.1–2, 2016, p. 227–289.
- JORDANOV K., *Štrih i värh u ežednevieto na derbentdžijskoto i vojnuškoto naselenie prez XVI–XVII vek*, “Известия на Института за исторически изследвания” / “Izvestija na Institutata za istoričeski izsledvanija” 36, 2021, p. 31–76.
- JORDANOV K., *Vojnucite ot imperskite konjušni v osmanskata provincija Rumelija (XV – pärvite desetiletija na XVIII vek)*, Sofija 2023.
- KABRDA J., *Raja*, “Известия на историческото дружество” / “Izvestija na istoričeskoto družestvo” 14–15, 1937, p. 172–185.
- KACUNOV V., *On the Ethnic Self-Consciousness of the Bulgarians during the 15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> Century*, “Bulgarian Historical Review” 24.2, 1996, p. 3–24.
- KAFADAR C., *Between Two Worlds. The Construction of the Ottoman State*, Berkley 1995, <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520918054>
- KALDELLIS A., *A New Herodotos. Laonikos Chalkokondyles on the Ottoman Empire, the Fall of Byzantium, and the Emergence of the West*, Washington, D.C. 2014 [= Supplement to Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 33–34].
- KALICIN M., *The Image of the “Other” in 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> Century Ottoman Narrative Literature*, “Études balkaniques” 30.1, 1994, p. 22–27.
- KALIONSKI A., *Yürüks in the Ottoman Balkans*, Sofia 2020.
- KAYAPINAR A., *Le sancak ottoman de Vidin du XV<sup>e</sup> à la fin du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Istanbul 2011.
- KAYAPINAR A., *Les florici dans la région timoko-danubienne à l’époque ottomane (XV<sup>e</sup>–XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, [in:] *Enjeux politiques, économiques et militaires en Mer Noire (XIV<sup>e</sup>–XX<sup>e</sup> siècles). Études à la mémoire de Mihail Guboglu*, ed. F. BILICI, I. CÂNDEA, A. POPESCU, Braïla 2007, p. 243–288.
- KOLAROV H., *Die Teilnahme der Bulgaren am „Langen Feldzug“ des Königs Wladislaw III. Jagiello von 1443–1444*, “Bulgarian Historical Review” 1.1, 1973, p. 65–71.
- KOŁODZIEJCZYK D., *Khan, Caliph, Tsar and Emperor: the Multiple Identities of the Ottoman Sultan*, [in:] *Universal Empire. A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History*, ed. P.F. BANG, D. KOŁODZIEJCZYK, Cambridge 2012, p. 175–193, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139136952.009>
- KONORTAS P., *From Tä’ife to Millet: Ottoman Terms for the Ottoman Greek Orthodox Community*, [in:] *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism. Politics, Economy, and Society in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. D. GONDICAS, Ch. ISSAWI, Princeton, NJ 1999, p. 169–179.
- KOROBEGINOV D.A., *How ‘Byzantine’ were the early Ottomans? Bithynia in ca. 1290–1450*, [in:] *Osmaniskij mir i osmanistika. Sbornik statej k 100-letiju so dnja roždenija A.S. Tveritinoj (1910–1973)*, ed. I.V. ZAJCEV, S.F. OREŠKOVA, Moskva 2010, p. 215–239.

- KRSTIĆ T., *Contested Conversions to Islam. Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, Stanford, CA 2011, <https://doi.org/10.11126/stanford/9780804773171.001.0001>
- KUNT M., *Transformation of Zimmi into Askeri*, [in:] *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, vol. I, *The Central Lands*, ed. B. BRAUDE, B. LEWIS, Teaneck, NJ 1982, p. 55–67.
- KURSAR V., *Being an Ottoman Vlach: On Vlach Identity (Ies), Role and Status in Western Parts of the Ottoman Balkans (15<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, “Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi” 34, 2013, p. 115–161, [https://doi.org/10.1501/OTAM\\_0000000627](https://doi.org/10.1501/OTAM_0000000627)
- KÜÇÜKHÜSEYİN Ş., *Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung im Prozess kultureller Transformation. Anatolische Quellen über Muslime, Christen und Türken (13.–15. Jahrhundert)*, Wien 2011 [= Sitzungsberichte der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien, Philosophisch-historische Klasse 825].
- LEWIS B., *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, New York 1982.
- LINANT DE BELLEFONDS Y., CAHEN C., İNALCIK H., *Kānūn*, [in:] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. IV, ed. E. VAN DONZEL *et al.*, <sup>2</sup>Leiden 1997, p. 556–562.
- LOWRY H., *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, Albany 2003, <https://doi.org/10.1353/book4635>
- MARKIEWICZ C., *The Crisis of Kingship in Late Medieval Islam. Persian Emigres and the Making of Ottoman Sovereignty*, Cambridge 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108684842>
- MÉNAGE V.L., *A Survey of the Early Ottoman Histories, with Studies on their Textual Problems and their Sources*, vol. I–II, PhD diss., University of London, 1961.
- MÉNAGE V.L., *Sidelights on the devshirme from Idrīs and Sa‘duddīn*, “Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London” 18.1, 1956, p. 181–183, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0041977X0012227X>
- MÉNAGE V.L., *Some Notes on the Devshirme*, “Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London” 29.1, 1966, p. 64–78, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0041977X0006081X>
- MILEV N., *Edin neizdaden dokument za bālgarskata istorija (1597 god.)*, “Известия на историческото дружество” / “Izvestija na istoričeskoto družestvo” 4, 1915, p. 89–99.
- MOUTAFOVA K., *On the Problem of the Ottoman Methods of Conquest (According to Neşri and Sultan Murad’s Gazavatname)*, “Études balkaniques” 31.2, 1995, p. 64–81.
- MUTAČIEVA V., *Kategoriite zavisimo naselenie v našite zemi pod turska vlast prez XV–XVI v.*, [in:] V. MUTAČIEVA, *Osmanska socialno-ikonomičeska istorija*, Sofija 1993, p. 258–289.
- MUTAFOVA K., *Religija i identičnost (hristijanstvo i isljam) po bālgarskite zemi v osmanskata dokumentacija ot XV–XVIII vek*, Veliko Tārnovo 2022.
- NIKOLOV A., *Meždu Rim i Konstantinopol. Iz antikatoličeskata literatura v Bālgarija i slavjanskija pravoslaven svjat (XI–XVII v.)*, Sofija 2016.
- NIKOLOVSKA K., *Tsar or Son of Perdition. South Slavic Representations of Ottoman Imperial Authority in Church Slavonic Paratextual Accounts (1466–1710)*, “Revue des études sud-est européennes” 54.1–4, 2016, p. 71–86.
- OBREŠKOV V., *Anonimnijat katalonski avtor i negovata Història de Jacob Xalabín (Istorija na Jakub Čelebi)*, Sofija 2022.
- OBREŠKOV V., *Rannite osmanski hroniki. Kulturno-istoričeski komentar (Ahmedi, Šjukrullah, Oruč, Ašākpāšazade, Anonimnite hroniki)*, Sofija 2009.

- ÖKTEN E., *Ottoman Society and State in the Light of the Fatwas of İbn Kemal*, MA Thesis, Bilkent University 1996.
- OREŠKOVA S.F., *Vizantija i Osmanskaja imperija: problemi preemstvennosti*, [in:] *Vizantija između Zapadom i Vostokom. Opyt istoričeskoj karakteristiki*, ed. G.G. LITAVRIN, Sankt-Peterburg 1999, p. 478–494.
- ÖZCAN A., *Martolos*, [in:] *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. XXVIII, Ankara 2003, p. 64–66.
- ÖZDEMİR L., *Ottoman History through the Eyes of Aşıkpaşazade*, Istanbul 2013.
- PAPADEMETRIOU T., *Render under the Sultan. Power, Authority, and the Greek Orthodox Church in the Early Ottoman Centuries*, Oxford 2015, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198717898.001.0001>
- PÄRVEVA S., *Sāzđavane i zapazvane na kolektivnata pamet za voenni konflikti v osmanskata pogranična periferija: bitkite na Mihaj Viťjazul s Osmanskata imperija po vreme na vojnata sās Sveštenata liga (1593–1606)*, “Исторически преглед” / “Istoričeski pregled” 71.3–4, 2015, p. 5–35.
- PETROVSZKY K., *Geschichte schreiben im osmanischen Südosteuropa. Eine Kulturgeschichte orthodoxer Historiographie des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, Wiesbaden 2014.
- PIPPIDI A., *Visions of the Ottoman World in Renaissance Europe*, London 2012, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199327836.001.0001>
- RADUSHEV E., *Ottoman Border Periphery (Serhad) in the Nikopol Vilayet, First Half of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century*, “Études balkaniques” 31.3–4, 1995, p. 140–160.
- RADUŠEV E., *Pomacite. Hristijanstvo i isljam v Zapadnite Rodopi s dolinata na r. Mesta, XV – 30-te g. na XVIII v.*, vol. I, Sofija 2005.
- REPP R., *Qānūn and Sharī‘a in the Ottoman Context*, [in:] *Islamic Law. Social and Historical Contexts*, ed. A. AL-AZIMEH, London 1988, p. 124–145.
- REPP R., *The Müfti of Istanbul. A Study in the Development of the Ottoman Learned Hierarchy*, London 1986.
- RUSEV D., *Kemālpaşazāde’s History of Medieval Bulgaria: A Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Recension of the Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle (Tale of the Prophet Isaiah)*, [in:] *Laudator temporis acti. Studia in memoriam Ioannis A. Božilov*, vol. I, ed. I.A. BILJARSKY, Sofia 2018, p. 435–510.
- RUSEV D., *Svedenijata na Enveri za Kera Tamara i hronologijata na nejnija brak s Murad I*, “Bulgaria Mediaevalis” 12, 2021, p. 67–107.
- SARIYANNIS M., *A History of Ottoman Political Thought up to the Early Nineteenth Century*, with a chapter by E.E.T. ATİYAS, Leiden 2019 [= Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1, The Near and Middle East, 125].
- SCHMIDT J., *Pure Water for Thirsty Muslims. A Study of Muştafā ‘Ālī of Gallipoli’s Kühnü l-aḥbār*, Leiden 1991.
- STAVRIDES T., *The Sultan of Vezirs. The Life and Times of the Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelović (1453–1474)*, Leiden 2001, <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004492332>
- TEZCAN B., *Ottoman Historical Writing*, [in:] *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, vol. III, 1400–1800, ed. J. REBASA et al., New York 2012, p. 192–211, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:osobl/9780199219179.003.0010>
- VASIĆ M., *Martolosi u jugoslovenskim zemljama pod turskom vladavinom*, Banja Luka 2005.
- WITTEK P., *The Taking of the Aydos Castle: A Ghazi Legend and its Transformation*, [in:] *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of Hamilton A.R. Gibb*, ed. G. MAKDISI, Leiden 1965, p. 662–672, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004619159\\_053](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004619159_053)

WOODHEAD C., *An Experiment in Official Historiography: The Post of Şehnāmeçi in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1555–1605*, "Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes" 75, 1983, p. 157–182.

WOODHEAD C., *Reading Ottoman Şehnames: Official Historiography in the Late Sixteenth Century*, "Studia Islamica" 104/105, 2007, p. 67–80.

ZIROJEVIĆ O., *Carigradski drum od Beograda do Sofije (1459–1683)*, Beograd 1970.

**Delyan Rusev**

Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski

Faculty of History

15 Tzar Osvoboditel Blvd.

1504 Sofia, Bulgaria

dirusev@uni-sofia.bg