Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman

Kaya Şahin’s book offers a revisionist reading of Ottoman history during the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent (1520–66). By examining the life and works of a bureaucrat, Celalzade Mustafa, Şahin moves beyond traditional, teleological approaches and argues that the empire was built as part of the Eurasian momentum of empire building and demonstrates the imperial vision of sixteenth-century Ottomans. This unique study shows that, in contrast with many Eurocentric views, the Ottomans were active players in European politics, with an imperial culture in direct competition with that of the Habsburgs and the Safavids. Indeed, this book explains Ottoman empire building with reference to the larger Eurasian context, from Tudor England to Mughal India, contextualizing such issues as state formation, imperial policy, and empire building in the period more generally. Şahin’s work also devotes significant attention to the often-ignored religious dimension of the Ottoman–Safavid struggle, showing how the rivalry redefined Sunni and Shiite Islam, laying the foundations for today’s religious tensions.

Kaya Şahin is Assistant Professor of History at Indiana University, Bloomington. His research and writing have been supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Newberry Library, and the Social Science Research Council.
Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman

Narrating the Sixteenth-Century
Ottoman World

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As a political science major at Boğaziçi University, my curiosity about Ottoman history was initially spurred by debates around the transition from the empire to the republic. I was fortunate enough to take Ottoman language lessons with Metin Berke and Yücel Demirel, who instilled in me a more holistic view of Ottoman history and culture. At Sabancı University, Metin Kunt, Hülya Canbakal, and Tülay Artan, with their focus on early modern Ottoman history, were the best teachers I could hope to find at a critical juncture in my academic formation. I should also mention, among my first and formative influences, Halil Berktay’s lectures and conversations on historiography and comparative history.

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The following abbreviations are used throughout the book:

BOA: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri
BSOAS: Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
JTS: Journal of Turkish Studies. Türklik Bilgisi Araştırmaları
KK: Kamil Kepeci
IJMES: International Journal of Middle East Studies
IJTS: International Journal of Turkish Studies
IrSt: Iranian Studies
IA: İslam Ansiklopedisi
JEMH: Journal of Early Modern History
SK: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi
SIsl: Studia Islamica
TDVİA: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi
TSAB: Turkish Studies Association Bulletin
TSMA: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi
TSMK: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi
TTYY: Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar
WZKM: Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes

Quotes from Celalzade Mustafa’s works and titles of Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, and Persian works are fully transliterated through a slightly modified version of the IJMES transliteration system. (After their first mention, titles of Mustafa’s works are repeated in a shortened form and without any special characters.) Excerpts from Mustafa’s writings are shortened as much as possible; the longer versions can be found in my dissertation.
With the exception of the index, Ottoman Turkish words are provided in the modern Turkish orthography in the text, in italics; the ‘ayn and hamza are marked with an apostrophe. For Arabic and Persian personal names, a simplified version of the *IJMES* transliteration system, without the diacritical signs, is utilized. For Ottoman personal and geographical names, the modern Turkish orthography is adopted, except when there is an English equivalent for the latter: hence, for instance, Istanbul instead of ˙Istanbul, Aleppo instead of Halep, Rhodes instead of Rodos, and Belgrade instead of Belgrad. Long vowel markers (â, ì) are minimally used. Whenever possible, Anglicized versions of Ottoman, Arabic, and Persian words are used as they appear in the Merriam-Webster dictionary: Sharia, waqf, vizier, Sunni, Shiite, and so forth, the exceptions being madrasa instead of madrassa, and Quran instead of Koran.

Although the original sources discussed here use the *Hicri* calendar, which is based on the lunar year and begins at 622 CE (the date of Muhammad’s exodus from Mecca to Medina), the dates are given in Common Era throughout the book. The original *Hicri* dates are provided in my dissertation.

For a Turkish pronunciation guide, the readers are kindly referred to a webpage by Erika H. Gilson:

MAP 2. The Ottoman and Safavid worlds in the sixteenth century (Massumeh Farhad and Serpil Bağcı, eds., Falnama: The Book of Omens [London: Thames & Hudson, 2009]).
Map 2 (continued)
Celalzade Mustafa’s tomb, from M. Şinasi Acar, Únlü Hattatların Mezarları: Gelimli Gidimli Dünyan (İstanbul: Gözen, 2004), 26. The epitaph is by his acquaintance Deli Kadi.