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V. J. Parry

Excerpt

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INTRODUCTION

IN terms of the history of Europe, the Ottoman presence is at once intimate and alien. The intimacy is a direct result of Ottoman military power. But the alienness is in a way more curious. At a very basic level the history of the Ottoman Empire was made up from the same ingredients as that of Europe: in each case a Christian Roman empire had fallen prey to a barbarian conquest. And yet the outcome of the demise of the eastern empire at the hands of the Turks was very different indeed from that of the demise of the western empire at the hands of the Germans.

In the first place, the degree of continuity in the Roman imperial tradition was vastly less. The Goths initially preserved the Roman empire they conquered, the Franks eventually restored it; not so the Turks. It was true of course that the Turks in effect reconstituted the original territories of the eastern empire to a degree unknown since Justinian. And with the territory they inherited also the name: in one widespread usage the Ottomans were identified as *Rum*—that is, etymologically, as Romans.¹ It is thus not altogether surprising to encounter a fifteenth-century Byzantine scholar who acclaims Mehmed II as the legitimate Roman emperor (p. 41), and even a toying with the notion of Ottoman descent from one of the Byzantine imperial families. Yet this sense of an Ottoman inheritance of the Byzantine tradition was still-born: the Ottomans in the event inherited from the Byzantines little more than the site for their empire.² When the Ottomans went in search of an imperial precedent for the extent of their empire, they picked not the Roman Justinian but the Macedonian Alexander; just as when they went in search of an imperial precedent for justice, they picked not the Roman Marcus Aurelius but the Persian Anushirvan. There was in fifteenth-century Europe a ‘Holy Roman Empire of the German nation’; but there was no ‘Holy Roman Empire of the Turkish nation’ in the contemporary Middle East.

In the second place, the degree of continuity in the history of the barbarian conquerors was much less than in Europe: the Turkic tribesmen whose conquest of Byzantine Anatolia was eventually to issue in the

¹ This usage appears, for example, in Ottoman documents with reference to the heartlands of the empire, and in Arabic chronicles, especially those of Syria and Arabia; it was even picked up by the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean. It goes back to the sultanate of *Rum* established in the aftermath of the Turkic conquest of Anatolia in the eleventh century.

² For the Byzantine heritage of the Ottomans, see S. Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1971), chapter 7.

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Excerpt

[More information](#)

A HISTORY OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Ottoman Empire passed on only the vestiges of a political tradition from their barbarian past. And this seems much more paradoxical. The Turcization of Anatolia in the aftermath of the invasion was quite as impressive as the Germanization of Europe; and if the Ottomans were identified in one usage as 'Romans', in another equally well-established one they were 'Turks',¹ an identification reinforced by the fact that their primary literary language was Turkish throughout. And yet 'Turks' in standard Ottoman usage came to refer not to the Ottoman proprietors of the state, but to the Anatolian tribesmen who had to be kept out of it. Not only was there no Ottoman Holy Roman Empire; there was no Turkish nation to have one.

It is worth emphasizing this point by taking it a little further afield. The Mongol invaders of the Islamic world in the thirteenth century, in contrast to the Turkic invaders of the eleventh, did to some extent leave a barbarian political tradition behind them. Most strikingly, they established in certain areas the notions of the exclusive right to rule of members of a royal lineage, the Chingizids, and of the supremacy of an ethnic Mongol law, the Yasa. This tradition was accessible to the Ottomans in two ways. In the first place, it was rapidly Turcized: a Mongol tradition short of Mongols was appropriated by Turks short of tradition. In the second place, the tradition was politically well within the Ottoman field of vision: to take the most striking, though not the most important example, the Crimea was ruled by Chingizid monarchs in accordance with a Mongol law. It is not therefore surprising that the Ottomans came under the influence of the Mongol heritage. In particular, there appears in the fifteenth century an Ottoman calque on Chingizid descent in the form of a fabricated genealogy for the ruling dynasty going back to the Turkic tribes of Central Asia.² Yet in the event very little came of this Mongol fallout at the level of political values. The Central Asian genealogy of the Ottoman sultans lived on, but it did so more as antiquarianism than as legitimacy; just as the memory of the Mongol Yasa lived on not as a sanction for Ottoman administrative law but merely as a foil to demonstrate its superiority.³ The Turkish conquest of the eastern Roman empire thus issued in no real tradition of barbarian kingship and barbarian law of the kind so prominent in the history of post-Roman Europe.⁴

The cause of this muting of both the imperial and the barbarian traditions whose collision was to issue in the Ottoman Empire is not of course far to

¹ The Ottomans were 'Turks' to most outsiders (the Balkan and European Christians, the North African Muslims), and terms suggestive of a Turkish ethnicity can be found in Ottoman sources.

² See P. Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1938), chapter 1.

³ Contrast the statements of Tursun Beg and Huseyn Hezarfenn cited in U. Heyd, *Studies in Old Ottoman Criminal Law*, ed. V. L. Ménage (Oxford, 1973), pp. 169–70.

⁴ Contrast equally the marked sense of their barbarian ethnicity and heritage retained by the Manchu conquerors of China, whose tradition was even more of a calque on the Mongol tradition than was that of the Turks.

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Excerpt

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

seek. Both the eastern and the western Roman empires had converted to Christianity before falling victim to barbarian conquest. But whereas the sharpest break in the subsequent religious history of Europe was a Reformation which took place *within* Christianity long after the barbarians had settled down, in the eastern empire Christianity was displaced by a rival faith, and one which the barbarians themselves brought with them. The Turkic invasion of Anatolia in the eleventh century and the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in the fifteenth brought to completion the assault of Islam on the eastern Roman empire initiated by the Arabs in the seventh. Now Islam was a religion of a very different stamp from Christianity. Doctrinally it represented a far more intransigent form of their shared Judaic monotheism; and politically it spread primarily as a result of the efforts not of missionaries but of conquerors. The result was a faith a good deal less disposed to accommodate and perpetuate the cultures it encountered than was Christianity. Hence the drastic discontinuity in the Byzantine imperial tradition brought about by the linking of barbarian invasion with Islam. The Turks could not simply settle down as the eastern Slavs of the Byzantine world, a military menace but eventually a cultural province in the manner of the Bulgars.¹ But it is equally this domineering character of Islam that explains the striking etiolation, alongside the tradition of the conquered empire, of the tradition of the conquering barbarians themselves.

The corollary of this was that the constitutive role of religion in the Ottoman polity was out of all proportion to its role in Europe. In Europe it was the Romans and the Germans who provided the substantive components of the 'Holy Roman Empire of the German nation'; the holiness was adjectival. In the Ottoman case, by contrast, it was religion which provided the key term in one of the commonest designations of the empire, 'the lands of Islam'. If Byzantium provided little more than a site and the Turks little more than a language, it was Islam which gave the venture its meaning.

Initially the embodiment of this meaning in concrete reality was an uncomplicated one. The empire began as a *ghazi* state, an organization of warriors engaged in the sacred struggle with the infidel; and Islam provided direct and emphatic scriptural sanction for this military enterprise, as Christianity did not do even for so godly an institution as the New Model Army.² But the Ottoman polity evolved by virtue of its very success in this Islamic task from an organisation of *ghazis* into a slave army backed by a fiscal bureaucracy; and as the balance shifted from the conquest of infidels to the administration of subjects, the relationship of the

¹ Cf. the eventual division of the Byzantine heritage: the Ottomans took the territory, but it was the Slavs who got the imperial tradition.

² Or to take an even closer parallel, there was no Ottoman equivalent to the devious casuistries and painful public debates that arose from the Spanish conquest of infidels in the New World, for all that Sulaiman the Magnificent had as tender a religious conscience as Philip II.

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Excerpt

[More information](#)

A HISTORY OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Ottoman state to its Islamic legitimation lost its initial clarity.¹ At first sight this is surprising. By the mid-sixteenth century the Ottomans had reconstituted the political unity of the Islamic world more effectively than anyone since the ninth century: the Ottoman Empire was in a very concrete sense *the* Islamic state of its day. But this concrete sense was not in fact a deeply normative one; and it is striking how the Ottomans, in referring to their political reunification of the Middle East, tend to cite as precedent not the early rulers of Islam whose heirs they might have claimed to be, but rather Alexander the Great, who for all his role as a cosmopolitan symbol of political adventure left no heirs outside Hellenistic history and the tribal chiefs of the Pamirs.

The core of the problem lay in the fact that the Islamic tradition, for reasons arising from the history of its formation, was unsuited to the legitimation of the settled, bureaucratic government of a territorial state. It could aptly legitimate a *ghazi* state, but the Ottoman state soon passed beyond this; it could aptly legitimate the mobilization of tribesmen to conquer a settled state, but that role was arrogated in the Ottoman context by their greatest Muslim enemies, the Safavids. The problems of religious conscience which Philip II experienced in respect of the relations of his state to the infidels he conquered, Sulaiman the Magnificent experienced in respect of the faithful he ruled.

The tension between the Ottoman polity and its Islamic political values is particularly apparent in three areas. The first is the claim of the Ottoman sultans to be caliphs.² The ruler of the early Islamic polity was neither a king nor an emperor, neither a Theodoric nor a Charlemagne, but a caliph: the occupant, that is, of an intrinsically religious office. With the demise of caliphal power from the ninth century on, effective rule passed into the hands of potentates who lacked this religious legitimation—to employ a term which became common usage, they were merely sultans. But when the Mongols in the thirteenth century brought to an end even the nominal existence of the caliphate, there was a natural tendency for the sultans of the Islamic world to seek to elevate their status by debasing the caliphal title; it thus became normal for any Islamic ruler of any significance to make some gesture in the direction of caliphal status, and the Ottomans were no exception to the general scramble. But the trouble was that the caliphate was more than a mere honorific to grace the titulature of existing rulers. In particular, one of its more inconvenient requirements was descent from Quraysh, the Arab tribe into which the Muslim Prophet had been born. In this situation there were only two coherent courses for

¹ Compare the venture of Ahmad Grañ, a *ghazi* who in the sixteenth century initiated an abortive Islamic conquest of Christian Ethiopia. Here as in the early Ottoman context we encounter the title 'Commander of the Faithful' as the highest dignity that could be won in Holy War; but Ahmad, unlike the Ottomans, had the moral good luck that his conquest issued in no enduring state organization.

² See H. A. R. Gibb, 'Luṭfī Paşa on the Ottoman Caliphate', in *Oriens* (1962); also the comments of H. İnalcık in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, 1, 320–3.

Cambridge University Press

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V. J. Parry

Excerpt

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

the Ottomans to take. They could have adopted a Qurashi genealogy in the manner of the contemporary rulers of the Yemen or Morocco; or they could have rejected the genealogical criterion altogether in the manner of the contemporary heretics of Oman. But having adopted a Turkic tribal descent, they could hardly rewrite their genealogy; and having adopted orthodox Islam with its clear emphasis on Qurashi descent, they could hardly rewrite the criterion. There was one man, Lutfi Pasha, who in a pamphlet written in 1554 was unwise enough to confront this intractable issue. It is characteristic that he should have been a well-intentioned amateur—a retired Grand Vizier rather than the Grand Mufti—and unsurprising that the result should have been embarrassed and unpersuasive.¹ It was as if the legitimacy of the rule of Philip II had been open to question on the ground that he was not descended from the House of David; and conversely, it was this embarrassment which the Ottomans would have been spared had their religious culture permitted them to be the heirs of Byzantium in the manner of the Tsars, or barbarian kings in the manner of the Chingizids.

The second area of tension was the relative status of the Holy Law of Islam, the *Shari'a*, and the administrative law of the state, the *Kanun*.² Just as the Islamic polity was to be headed by an intrinsically religious ruler, so also it was to be ruled in accordance with an intrinsically religious law. But just as the Ottoman rulers were in fact sultans, for all their pretensions to the caliphate, so also their administrative code was in fact a law of their own making, for all their deference to the *Shari'a*. Given this fundamental tension between *Kanun* and *Shari'a*, the Ottomans could either avoid the issue and save face, or face up to it and choose. As might be expected, they did their best to take the first course. Hence denials of the incompatibility of the two laws, attempts to subsume the *Kanun* under the marginal religious recognition of the category of custom, and so forth.³ But we also find less evasive responses to the tension. Given their religious values, the Ottomans could hardly choose the *Kanun* to the exclusion of the *Shari'a*: that response came only in the twentieth century, by which time the *Kanun* in question was no longer Ottoman but Swiss. But they could and did on occasion choose the *Shari'a* to the exclusion of *Kanun*. Thus in the field of criminal law, the insistence of one sixteenth-century writer that the way to suppress crime is actually to apply the *Shari'a* finds concrete embodiment in the insistence of a sultanic decree of 1696 that no penalties be inflicted other than those prescribed by God and the Prophet;

¹ Particularly striking is the *risqué* use which Lutfi Pasha makes of Shiism: on the one hand he invokes as orthodox the Shiite tradition that one who dies without knowing the *imam* (i.e. caliph) of the age in effect dies a pagan; and on the other he attempts to dismiss the orthodox requirement of Qurashi descent as Shiite heresy.

² See H. İnalcık, 'Suleiman the Lawgiver and Ottoman Law', in *Archivum Ottomanicum* (1969), and Heyd, *Studies in Old Ottoman Criminal Law*, pp. 167–207.

³ In criminal law the standard move is to play up the discretionary power vested in the ruler under the *Shari'a*; in fiscal law there is a similar attempt to append the *Kanun* to a marginal category of the Holy Law.

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Excerpt

[More information](#)

A HISTORY OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

while in the field of fiscal law, we have the bizarre spectacle of the Ottoman conquerors of Crete setting about the recreation of the system of taxation they believed to have been that of the earliest Islamic conquests. In each case, religious fundamentalism is associated with an explicit condemnation of the traditional rulings of the *Kanun*. It was as if canon law, or even the law of Moses, had been the only accredited law of medieval Europe; and similarly, it was this embarrassment which the Ottomans would have avoided had their religious culture permitted them to dignify their *Kanun* as Roman Law, somewhat in the manner of the aspiring despots of contemporary Europe, or as Turkic tribal law, in the manner of the Yasa of the Chingizids.

The third area of tension was the position of the Islamic scholars, the *'ulema*, within the state.¹ On the one hand the Islamic tradition demanded of its scholars a moral purity untainted by involvement in the corrupting milieu of political power; but on the other, the Ottoman state was unusual in Islamic history in the extent to which it integrated its religious scholars into the apparatus of the state through a system of colleges and career opportunities created and regulated by the state itself. The resulting tension between an ethic of purity and the complications of office appears most clearly in the case of the Grand Mufti. A sort of institutionalized religious conscience of the empire, the contradictory requirements of his role could be brought into some kind of balance only by playing it with an element of almost ritual intransigence: if the intransigence ceased to be merely ritual, the Mufti stood to lose his job, while if the ritual ceased to be intransigent, he stood to lose his integrity.

In sum, the legitimacy force of Islam in the Ottoman polity was a distinctly ambivalent one. Islam provided a clear terminal value for the Ottoman polity in the shape of the Holy War against the infidel, and in consequence it provided also a fairly persuasive instrumental status for the concrete machinery of the state as a means to victory in this struggle. But it was a legitimacy that was very much one of achievement rather than ascription: Islam conferred little intrinsic legitimacy on the structure of the state. Powerfully focused on the battlefields of Europe in the good times, the meaning of the Ottoman polity tended to evaporate in the internal disarray of the bad times which followed.²

This analysis of what the Islamic character of the Ottoman state meant for its political values can be restated in terms bearing more closely on the realities of political power.³ To put it negatively, the striking thing about

¹ See R. Repp, 'Some Observations on the Development of the Ottoman Learned Hierarchy', in N. R. Keddie (ed.), *Scholars, Saints, and Sufis* (Berkeley, 1972).

² Contrast the abundance of profane meaning in the internal bickerings of European countries in the same period, with their estates, ancient constitutions, common and Roman lawyers etc.

³ For an illuminating presentation of the Ottoman (and Islamic) pattern in a rich comparative perspective, see P. Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London, 1974).

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V. J. Parry

Excerpt

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

the Ottoman Empire is the relative absence of those accredited structures which in post-feudal Europe so densely populate the social and political space between the state and its subjects. Two closely related aspects of this contrast are particularly noteworthy. The first is the absence of 'nations' in the Ottoman context. Absorption into the Ottoman Empire was very much more likely than absorption into a European state to strip a subject people of its traditional political structures. The Hungarians under Habsburg rule remained a nation throughout: the residue of their medieval polity was entrenched in institutions of unquestionable legitimacy and elaborately articulated in terms of history and law; and if the Czechs failed to do the same, it was their intransigence in a religious conflict which led to the political catastrophe. But in Ottoman Anatolia, by contrast, the survival of the pre-Ottoman polities was literally nominal.¹ The second aspect of the contrast is the lack of an Ottoman aristocracy. Where Europe made a fundamental social distinction between noble and commoner, the Ottomans made a fundamental political distinction between members and non-members of the state apparatus. There was of course present in the state a subordinate category of rural feof-holders, the *Sipahis*; and they would clearly have provided the natural locus for the evolution from aristocracy of service to aristocracy of blood had the category itself existed. But the *Sipahis* were no more an Ottoman gentry than Abaza Mehmed Pasha, the most outstanding representative of provincial hostility to the Janissaries, was an Ottoman archduke (pp. 142–3). The obverse of all this was of course that feature of the Ottoman polity of which the Janissaries are the prime example, the role of slaves in constituting the military and administrative backbone of the state. This system was not in any intrinsic way Islamic; but it was characteristically Muslim both by association—it is virtually unknown in non-Muslim societies²—and by genesis—it had developed in the ninth century precisely in response to the failure of Islamic society to domesticate the category of aristocracy.

This combination of the absence of nations and aristocracy on the one hand with the prominence of slaves on the other meant that the Ottoman state was in a sense the only serious attempt at an absolute monarchy in Europe. Everywhere in Christian Europe the state accepted aristocracy

¹ There were of course at all times client states of the Ottoman Empire; the most interesting case is perhaps the Crimea, inasmuch as it retained from its Mongol heritages a real dynastic and aristocratic legitimacy. But in general the status of these states is well expressed in Sulaiman's observations on Hungary (p. 92).

² There is one noteworthy parallel in European history: the Teutonic Order in Prussia presents significant structural analogies to both the great Islamic slave states, the Ottoman Empire and the Mamluk regime of late medieval Egypt. As in both, we have a military and administrative apparatus renewed in each generation by the recruitment of outsiders. As in the Mamluk case, the Knights chose their ruler from among themselves. As in the Ottoman case, there was an enduring tension between this state of outsiders and the local and more or less hereditary feof-holders. But if the structures are similar the cultural background is quite different.

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Excerpt

[More information](#)

A HISTORY OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

as a fact of life. It was in the relationship between the two that the changes were rung: compare Poland, where the organized power of the aristocracy virtually absorbed that of the state, with Prussia, where the organized power of the state virtually absorbed that of the aristocracy. Only one European country, and that the most marginal, presents a closer parallel with the Ottoman system: if the Poland of Henry of Anjou was a country where the aristocracy nearly ate the state, the Russia of Ivan the Terrible was the one European country where the state nearly ate the aristocracy. The curious experiment through which this attempt was made—the creation of a ruling institution at once delinquent and quasi-monastic—is a venture that can in some ways be compared with the Ottoman slave state.¹ And yet even in Russia aristocracy proved to be a fact of life: Ivan himself abolished his new order, and its long-term effect was not to destroy the category of aristocracy but simply to replace one aristocracy by another.

This static picture has significant dynamic implications. In the first place, the combination of a society with few socially entrenched bulwarks against the state and of a political elite with little real linkage to local society made for a markedly unstable relationship between the two: if central control of the military and administrative machine were allowed to slip, the apparatus collapsed onto the society it ruled in a fashion which combined minimum central control with maximum local irresponsibility. In the second place, the instrumental status of the internal structures of the empire rendered the will to exercise this control more than usually contingent: the Ottoman state was not built to cultivate its own garden, and if was failing to engross the gardens of others, it was more than likely to let its own go to seed. The alternations between order and disorder in Ottoman history illustrate both these points. First, the great succession crises of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries show how readily chaos could break out even at the best of times—just as the careers of the great ‘strong men’ of the seventeenth century show how chaos could be brought to heel even at the worst of times. Secondly, the contrast between the occasionally disrupted order of the earlier period and the occasionally interrupted disorder of the later period points to a basic long-term change: after the late sixteenth century, the maintenance of central power no longer ensured dramatic rewards in terms of imperial expansion (p. 96)—whereas it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that it became clear that the absence of central control meant dramatic penalties in terms of imperial contraction. The despotism which was the terror of the infidel

¹ But note that whereas in the case of the Teutonic Order the analogy lies in the structure of the institution and not in its relationship to the cultural background, in the Russian case it is rather the other way round. Russia in this period is in some ways suggestive of an Islamic society *manqué*. Politically, Muscovite Russia had taken shape as an autocracy against which the society possessed few legitimate defences; culturally, the Russians stood heirs to a Byzantine tradition arbitrarily shorn of its Hellenism; nationally, they were a people unusual even at the time in the extent to which they had vested their identity in their religion. It is hard to avoid a sense that what an obscurantist Christianity did for the Russians, Islam could have done better.

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V. J. Parry

Excerpt

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

and the chaos which was the terror of the servants of God were thus but two sides of the same coin.

There is however one very striking achievement of the Ottoman state even in disarray: the longevity of the imperial framework is a phenomenon more European than Islamic. There was no radical discontinuity in the history of the Ottoman state between the early fifteenth century, when it was temporarily put out of action by Timur, and the early nineteenth century, when it blew up its own Janissaries in the hope of avoiding such a fate at the hands of its modern enemies.¹ At the centre, the Ottoman order withstood both external assault and internal subversion (the dynasty did not succumb to the ambitions of mayors of the palace, as did the 'Abbasids, nor did it suffer displacement by its own slave soldiers, as did the Ayyubids). Equally it displayed a comparable durability in the provinces. The pattern of Ottoman provincial history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was one of unstable adventures in the gathering and dissipation of local power, but it is strikingly lacking in examples of successful secession: if the state had lost the will or the way to impose centralized order on its provinces, it still retained a spoiling power in virtue of which it could prevent the consolidation of emergent patterns of localized order.² The Ottoman Empire of the nineteenth century may have been the 'Sick Man of Europe'; but it was a sickness that few other Islamic states would have survived to endure. And in so far as an explanation of this longevity can be sought in the terms of the analysis set out above, it has to be found in the otherwise much etiolated heritages of Byzantium and the steppes. On the one hand the Ottoman Empire was in an obvious way the first Islamic state with a plausible imperial site; and on the other, it was in a more elusive way the leading beneficiary of that reinforcement of the dynastic and institutional structures of profane power that was the gift to Islamic history of the Turks and Mongols.³

¹ For an Ottoman sultan who seems to have entertained the notion of doing something of the kind two hundred years earlier, see p. 138.

² For a clear presentation of this point in one provincial context, see S. Shamir, 'As'ad Pasha al-'Azam and Ottoman rule in Damascus (1743–58)', in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (1963). Egypt is to some extent an exception.

³ Cf. the suggestive comments of B. Lewis, 'The Mongols, the Turks and the Muslim Polity', in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (1968), reprinted in his *Islam in History* (London, 1973).

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V. J. Parry

Excerpt

[More information](#)

I

THE RISE OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

IN the second half of the seventh/thirteenth century, as the Seljuk state fell apart, a number of principalities (*beyliks*) of a new kind came into being in the western marches of Anatolia. They were in territory conquered as a result of holy wars (sing., *ghazā*) waged against Byzantium, and hence are known as *ghāzī* states. The Ottoman principality was one of these. It was destined within a century to unite Anatolia and the Balkans under its sovereignty, and to develop into an Islamic empire. Let us now examine as a whole the formation of these *ghāzī* principalities. The emergence of the Ottoman state can be understood only in the context of the general history of the marches.

THE EMERGENCE OF TURCOMAN BORDER PRINCIPALITIES
IN WESTERN ANATOLIA

When the state of the Anatolian Seljuks developed into a fully formed Islamic sultanate, three areas came to be designated as marches *par excellence*, and attracted settlements of Muslim *ghāzīs*. In the south, facing Cilicia (Chukurova) the 'realm of the Lord of the Coasts' was centred round 'Alā'iyya and Antalya and directed against Lesser Armenia and the kingdom of Cyprus. In the north, on the borders of the Byzantine empire of Trebizond and along the shores of the Black Sea, the Muslim marches consisted of two parts, the eastern, centred round Simere, Samsun and Bafra, and the western centred round Kastamonu and Sinop. Finally, the western marches, whose principal cities were Kastamonu, Karahışār-i Devle (Afyonkarahisar), Kütahya and Denizli lay along the Byzantine frontier from the area of Kastamonu to the gulf of Makri in the south.

It appears that in each of these three areas of the marches the Seljuk state was represented by a governor-general known as commander (*emīr*) of the marches. These powerful *emīrs* who represented the central authority, generally kept their positions in their families as a hereditary dignity. The post of commander of the western marches on the Byzantine frontier came to be the most important of all. This position was given in 659/1261 to Nuşrat al-Dīn Ḥasan and Tāj al-Dīn Ḥusayn, the sons of the powerful Seljuk *vezīr* Fakhr al-Dīn 'Alī. We know that this