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Volume 1

Edited by Kate Fleet

Excerpt

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I

Introduction

KATE FLEET

This first volume of *The Cambridge History of Turkey* considers the transition period from the arrival of the Turks in Anatolia to the collapse of the Byzantine Empire and the creation of an Ottoman Empire with its imperial capital of Istanbul. The first four chapters examine various aspects of the political history of the period: the history of Byzantium, the Mongol period in Anatolia, the Turkish advance into Europe and the rise of the Turkish states, including that of the Ottomans. The following four chapters deal with various aspects of the social and economic life of the period, focusing on the military, the economy, art and architecture, and the cultural and religious milieu of this world of transition from Byzantium to Ottoman Empire.

The defeat in August 1071 of the Byzantine emperor Romanos Diogenes by the Turkomans at the battle of Malazgirt (Manzikert) is taken as a turning point in the history of Anatolia and the Byzantine Empire. From this time the Byzantines were unable to stem the flow of the Turks into Anatolia and the slow process of Turkification had begun. But it was not a battle of conquest, as both Julian Chrysostomides (p. 10) and Ahmet Yaşar Ocak (p. 356) point out in this volume. The Seljuk ruler Alp Arslan was intending not to conquer Anatolia, but rather to move against Syria and Egypt. This was not the first Turkish appearance in the region and Byzantine Anatolia had already been weakened before the battle of Malazgirt by many years of Turkoman raiding.

In the same way as 1071 has become a seminal (and useful) date for historians, so too has the date of 1453 when the Byzantine capital, Constantinople, fell to the Ottoman ruler Mehmed II and the Byzantine Empire ceased to exist. This date has been taken to symbolise the beginning of the imperial power of the Ottoman Empire, the creation of an imperial capital and the commencement of true Ottoman might. It was not, of course, quite like that. The Byzantine Empire had been crumbling slowly for a considerable period well before 1453, and by that date had been reduced merely to the capital and a small strip of territory around it. The city had undergone Ottoman sieges before, under

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Bayezid I in the 1390s and again under Murad II in 1422. Its conquest, however, created shockwaves across the western world. Many believed it presaged the arrival of the Turks in Rome itself, and the extirpation of the Christian faith. For the Ottomans, the capture of the capital of the Byzantine Empire was symbolically significant. Further, the location of the city, controlling the crossing between east and west, and the waterway between north and south, between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, made it economically and strategically important for a state which had territory in both Asia and Europe. Its fall did not, however, represent any sudden or dramatic departure from Turkish policy but was a continuation in the development of the Ottoman state in line with the fall of Byzantine cities before it, such as Thessalonike in 1430.

Both 1071 and 1453, therefore, are dates whose significance as crucial moments in history is overlapped. They are, however, convenient signifiers of periods of change and transformation in directions of events in history and as such make useful starting and end points for this volume.

One date that is largely ignored by the periodisation of this volume is the turn of the fourteenth century, taken as the notional starting point of the Ottoman state. This has certain advantages. It does not overplay history in favour of the ultimate winners, the Ottomans, and thus tries to avoid seeing history backwards when outcomes are known. The Ottomans tend to dominate studies of the later part of this period, as a result of the fact that they came out on top. But, as Rudi Paul Lindner points out, there was no way that this could have been foreseen in 1300 (Lindner, p. 102), or, one might add, in 1402 after the devastating defeat at the battle of Ankara when Ottoman forces were crushed by Timur and the Ottoman state plunged into a period of internecine warfare. The ignoring of 1300 as a turning point date also allows a greater appreciation of this period as one of slow transformation marked by fluidity and fusion rather than in stark terms of collisions and sudden change. This is a period in which the region passes from an Orthodox, Byzantine empire to an Ottoman, Muslim one. It is characterised by gradual assimilation, adaptation and absorption and is marked by a high degree of flexibility and fusion of cultures. Such fusion is evident in the intellectual world of the period, the literature, art and architecture, and in the make-up of the Turkish states.

This was a world of intellectual mobility, dynamism and cosmopolitanism, as is clearly to be seen in Ahmet Yaşar Ocak's discussion of the intellectual and cultural aspects of the period (chapter 9). Intellectuals and ideas were drawn from outside the region into the courts of the new Turkish states. What was to develop from this fusion of Central Asian, Middle Eastern and Byzantine elements was a distinctly Turkish intellectual world expressed in a Turkish

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which was to become the Ottoman language of the empire. ‘The intellectual world of medieval Turkey’, as Ocak notes, ‘created the bases of the intellectual performance of the Ottoman Empire for centuries to come’ (Ocak, p. 422).

Such fusion of diverse elements is reflected also in art and architecture, the fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth being a period of significant transformation in Turkish art and architecture which shows the continuation of Rum Seljuk influences in central and eastern Anatolia while, particularly in western Anatolia, there was a considerable departure from tradition, drawing on diverse sources including late Byzantine, Timurid and Mamluk art (Crane, p. 266). But there was also a mix, with Seljuk-influenced buildings appearing in the west and innovative ones being built in the central regions (Crane, p. 279).

This amalgamation of different influences is clearly evident in the make-up of Ottoman society. As Pál Fodor demonstrates, the early Ottoman military organisation was an amalgam of Turkoman, Seljuk, Ilkhanid and Byzantine elements (p. 192), with a considerable contribution from the Byzantines, the Venetians and the Genoese to the development of the Ottoman navy (Fodor, p. 224). Despite the general view that the Turks were not seafarers, they in fact took early, and successfully, to the water.

Flexibility and the ability to adopt, absorb and use outside sources was a significant factor in Turkish success, particular in that of the Ottomans. One of the elements accounting for the Ottomans’ development of ‘one of the best war machines of the age’ was that ‘they had the necessary ability and readiness to accommodate foreign technologies and experts and to take part in international trade and transfer of knowledge and weapons’ (Fodor, p. 226). This ability to utilise foreigners and benefit from outside expertise is also evident in Turkish economic practice (Fleet, p. 258)

One of the problems facing research on the economy, and indeed on most aspects of the period, is the lack of sources (Ocak, p. 353, Fleet, pp. 228–9). This has resulted in a dearth of research in many areas, or the establishment of views which need to be reassessed. Thus, for example, the idea that the Turks lacked economic motivation or acumen, although now firmly under attack, has yet finally to be put to rest. Historians have often portrayed the period from 1071 to the fall of Constantinople as one of destruction. It is certainly the case that there was much devastation inflicted on the region by a variety of forces: the crusaders, the Turkomans, the Mongols, the Mamluks and Timur. But this does not mean, and could not logically mean for Anatolia over the whole four-hundred-year period, blanket and continuous devastation. The Mongols, as Charles Melville points out, have often come out of the history of Anatolia

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rather badly (Melville, p. 51). Either overlooked in a seamless progression from Seljuk to Ottoman, or viewed as a brief preamble to Ottoman history, they have frequently failed to feature large for historians of Turkish Anatolia. For historians of the Ilkhans, their Anatolian phase has often not featured at all. As Melville argues, there needs to be more work on assessing the Mongol contribution to the history of Anatolia, and on what impact Mongol practices had on the development of Turkish, in particular Ottoman, government, on the extent to which the Ilkhans simply adopted the Seljuk practices they found in place and what elements they introduced from their steppe background. Ilkhan financial practices did affect the development of administration under the Ottomans who adopted accounting methods from them and imitated their coins.

More research is also needed on the organisation and functioning of the *medreses*, research into which is only in its initial phase (Ocak, p. 412), on Shi'ism in Anatolia and on the role of conversion and apostasy, an area in which emotive rather than objective history has been influential (Ocak, p. 403). The Turkish presence in Europe is another area where emotive response has far too often warped historical analysis. Despite the attitude that the Turks 'came last and consequently, when the nation-states were set up, had to go first' (Kiel, p. 138), Machiel Kiel demonstrates that contacts between the various Turkic peoples and the Balkans go back at least as far as the settlement of the Slavs (Kiel, p. 138). It is odd that the Ottomans, who were established on European soil from the mid-fourteenth century, should have been so vehemently rejected as a European power when, in Kiel's estimation, 'the land to the East of the line from Nikopol (Nikopolis, Niğbolu) on the Danube to Kavala on the Aegean, and most of the southern half of Macedonia was, until 1912, at least as "Turkish" as most of Anatolia' (Kiel, p. 156). Destruction of Ottoman monuments in the Balkans has been a concrete expression of the rewriting of the history of the region in the twentieth century which has so coloured and distorted research.

The history of this period has frequently been viewed through the mirror of the modern age. The rise of Turkish power in Anatolia and the Balkans has been interpreted by many historians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries under the all-powerful shadow of the nation-state which has so often sought to model history in its own image. British historians have been befogged by the miasma of philhellenism, Balkan historians intellectually trammelled by the Ottoman yoke which for many lay heavily across both their lands and their mental outlooks, Turkish historians ensnared in the requirements of 'Turkishness'. On many occasions views have been adopted 'as the result either of conscious

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prejudice or of innocent superficiality of conviction', in Ahmet Yaşar Ocak's phrase, referring specifically to the assessment of the Turks who arrived in Anatolia as primitive, adopted by older-generation western historians (Ocak, p. 400). It is to be hoped that this volume will contribute to a clearer conception of the period and that it will encourage the conduct of research outside the constriction of the political requirements of any particular age.

The period 1071–1453, thus, is one in which much stays the same, much changes slowly, and much emerges new from a chrysalis-like fusion of cultures. By 1453 the world of Anatolia and much of the Balkans had become a Turkish, Muslim one, and the world of Byzantium was gone.

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The Byzantine Empire from the eleventh to the fifteenth century

JULIAN CHRYSOSTOMIDES

The defeat of the Byzantine army by the Seljuk Turks at the battle of Malazgirt (Manzikert) in 1071 ushered in a period of military decline, which, despite its fluctuations, culminated with the capture of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453. This event brought to an end an empire, which, despite the ethnic, linguistic and religious varieties existing within its borders, in essence had maintained its Graeco-Roman and Christian culture and tradition.¹

Originally the eastern half (*pars orientalis*) of the Roman Empire, Byzantium had throughout its existence to defend its territories against forces that rose in the east, west and north. As a result of the migrations of the Germanic tribes, the western half was lost to the empire by the end of the fifth century, despite the subsequent attempts by Justinian I (527–65) to re-conquer these territories. Yet, as long as the empire held on to Asia Minor, its wealthiest province after Egypt in terms of men and resources, it had the possibility of reasserting itself, first against the Persians and later against the Arabs, despite the loss of North Africa, Egypt, Syria and Palestine.

The migrations of various tribes from Asia brought additional pressure to bear on the empire's northern frontiers. Of these, the most serious in this period were those of the Slavs, the Bulgars of Turkic origin, and the half-Slavicised Sarmatian peoples, namely the Serbs and Croats. Slav pressure on the northern frontier was resolved by a political decision. Unable militarily to contain them beyond the Danube frontier and put an end to their attacks, the Byzantines settled the Slavs in depopulated areas of the empire, including Asia Minor,² as they did with the Armenians.³ Both these solutions proved to be

1 For the ethnography of Byzantine Asia Minor, see S. Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley, Calif., 1971), pp. 42–68.

2 P. Lemerle, 'Invasions et migrations dans les Balkans depuis la fin de l'époque romaine jusqu'au VIIIe siècle', *Revue Historique* 211–12 (1954), 265–308.

3 P. Charanis, 'Ethnic Changes in the Byzantine Empire in the Seventh Century', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 13 (1959), 25–44.

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economically and militarily to the empire's advantage. On the other hand, the defeat of the Avars in Pannonia by Charlemagne's son Pippin in 796 made it possible for the Bulgars to move westward and become a major threat to the empire.

The Arab pressure brought to bear on the eastern frontier led to the reorganisation of the provinces, known as the 'theme system', which involved settling troops (*themes*) in districts under the administration and the supreme authority of a *strategos* (general), who combined both military and civil authority and was directly responsible to the emperor. This system, which was developed and extended to territories as they were reincorporated within the frontiers of the empire, not only played a part in the recruitment of a loyal army but in addition protected the existence of a free peasantry which contributed both militarily and economically, and enabled the empire to ward off its enemies both in the Balkans and in the east.⁴ Similarly, the problems created in the north, first by the migratory Slav and later Bulgar peoples, were checked to some extent by the use of military force coupled with diplomacy entailing both religious and cultural influence.

By the eighth century the Byzantine Empire had successfully defended Constantinople against the Arabs and the Slavs, and consolidated its rule in Asia Minor. By the middle of the ninth century it had made such a remarkable recovery that it was able to take the offensive in all directions, in the west, in the Balkans and in the east. Following a series of military victories, the Byzantines began by the tenth century to penetrate well into Arab territory, thus initiating a period of expansion on all fronts, including the recapture of the islands of Crete (961) and Cyprus (965). These military achievements reached their apogee in the reign of Basil II (976–1025). In southern Italy, Calabria and Apulia were once more under the firm control of the empire, while in the north, with the conquest of Bulgaria, its frontiers extended to the Danube and the Drava. In the east, with the annexation of Ani and later of Vaspurkan, ceded to the empire by its king who was unable to defend his lands against the incursions of the Turks, the empire's frontiers extended eastward of Lake Van and beyond the Euphrates.⁵ At the close of Basil II's reign in 1025 the Byzantine

4 P. Lemerle, *The Agrarian History of Byzantium from the Origins to the Twelfth Century* (Galway, 1979).

5 For the social problems created by this expansion, see G. Dagron, 'Minorités ethniques et religieuses dans l'Orient byzantin à la fin du Xe et au XIe siècle: l'immigration syrienne', *Travaux et Mémoires* 6 (1976), 177–216; N. Oikonomides, 'L'organisation de la frontière orientale de Byzance aux Xe–XIe siècles et le Taktikon de l'Escorial', in *XIVe Congrès international des études byzantines: rapports*, II (Bucharest, 1974), pp. 285–302; S. Der Nersessian, 'The Kingdom of Cilician Armenia', in *A History of the Crusades*, vol. II, ed. K. M. Setton (Madison, 1969), pp. 630–59.

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Empire had emerged as the dominant power in the eastern Mediterranean, and succeeded in drawing within its sphere of influence the Slavs of the Balkans and Russia.

These achievements could not have been accomplished without a degree of continuity in the policies of the emperors who had ruled the empire during this period, nor without a well-structured political, military and economic organisation. The years that immediately followed Basil II's death were not entirely devoid of success, but as time went on the lack of a leadership capable of assessing and responding to military and social problems aggravated the situation. The position deteriorated further with the clash between the civil aristocracy in the court of Constantinople and the large landowners of Asia Minor who had provided military leadership but had also profited economically from the eastern expansion. Their drive to absorb both the land and the free small landholders after Basil II's death remained unchecked. In addition, the centralisation initiated under Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–55) weakened both the military and naval structures of the empire, for these changes not only affected the economic welfare of the state owing to the loss of revenue from taxation, but also deprived the state of its soldiers.⁶

In addition to the internal difficulties, the empire had as a result of its expansion to face new forces along its frontiers. The most formidable of these were the Normans in the west, the Pechenegs in the north and the Seljuks in the east, the last two being of Turkic origin. The Pechenegs were not unknown to the Byzantines, for they had succeeded in establishing a working relation with them for a long time and used them to control the Russians, Magyars and Bulgars, as becomes clear from the advice given by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos (905–59) to his son Romanos:

So long as the emperor of the Romans is at peace with the Pechenegs, neither Russians nor Turks can come upon the Roman dominions by force of arms, nor can they exact from the Romans large and inflated sums in money and goods for the price of peace . . . To the Bulgarians also the emperor of the Romans will appear more formidable, and can impose on them the need for tranquillity, if he is at peace with the Pechenegs.⁷

This situation was fundamentally altered after Basil II's death (1025). The annexation of Bulgaria exposed the empire to the Pecheneg raids, which

6 P. Charanis, 'Economic Factors in the Decline of the Byzantine Empire', *The Journal of Economic History* 13 (1953), 412–24.

7 Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. and tr. Gy. Moravcsik and R. H. J. Jenkins (Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, 1967), pp. 50–3, lines 4–5.

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left devastation in their wake.⁸ Despite periodic agreements, such accords did not last long and the Pechenegs remained a constant threat. Far more destructive, however, proved to be the Uzes, another nomadic Turkic tribe which crossed the Danube in 1065 and reached Thessalonike, penetrating into Greece, ravaging the countryside and killing the inhabitants.⁹ In Asia Minor a new foe appeared on the scene, the Seljuk Turks, who proved to be even more formidable. The annexation of Armenia during the reigns of Basil II and Constantine IX Monomachos exposed the empire to Seljuk incursions.¹⁰ These coincided with the social and economic changes taking place within the empire that were to affect its military potential. Michael Psellos's discerning remark, put in the mouth of Isakios I Komnenos, that 'imperialist policy . . . could not be effected without much expenditure of money and men, as well as sufficient reserve' was confirmed by subsequent events,¹¹ for Constantine IX's decision to disband the thematic armies of Iberia and Mesopotamia, and to impose taxation in place of military service, forced large sections of the population to desert to the enemy.¹² The running down of the theme system in this particular case was not a one-off decision but a policy which was applied to the rest of the empire and resulted in the undermining of the social and economic structures upon which its military and naval strength was based.¹³ The resulting vacuum in the defence sector was filled by the large-scale recruitment of foreign mercenaries, with specific taxes being raised for this purpose.¹⁴ These measures not only were a drain on the treasury, but also aggravated the situation by provoking armed rebellions at a time when cities and countryside were devastated by enemy attacks.¹⁵

8 John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. I. Thurn (Berlin and New York, 1973), p. 373 § 2.

9 Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. with Spanish tr., I. Pérez Martín (Madrid, 2002), p. 63.

10 For the question of the rise of the Seljuk Turks, see C. Cahen, 'La première pénétration turque en Asie Mineure', *Byzantion* 18 (1948), 15; P. Wittek, 'Deux chapitres de l'histoire des Turcs de Roum', *Byzantion* 11 (1936), 285–302.

11 Michael Psellos, *Chronographie*, vol. II, ed. and tr. E. Renauld. (Paris, 1926), p. 114; English tr. E. R. A. Sewter, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* (London, 1966), p. 306.

12 Kekaumenos, *Strategicon*, ed. B. Wassiliewsky and V. Jernstedt (St Petersburg, 1896; repr. 1965), p. 18; Attaleiates, *Historia*, p. 34; Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, p. 476 § 29; Michael Glykas, *Annales*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1836), p. 598; Joannes Zonaras, *Epitome Historiarum*, vol. III, ed. T. Büttner-Wöbst (Bonn, 1897), p. 647; H. Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la mer. La marine de guerre. La politique et les institutions maritimes de Byzance aux VIIe–XVe siècles* (Paris, 1966), pp. 146–7.

13 Ahrweiler, *Mer*, pp. 151, 159–63.

14 P. Lemerle, André Guillou and Nicolas Svoronos (eds.), *Actes de Lavra. Edition diplomatique*, vol. I: *Des origines à 1240* (Paris, 1970), part 2, no. 33, p. 198, lines 81–3: εἰσπράξεως βασιλέως, πῶς ἢ Σαρακηνῶν ἢ Φράγγων ἢ ἑτέρων τινῶν ἔθνικῶν καὶ Ῥωμαίων; P. Lemerle, *Cinq études sur le XIe siècle byzantin* (Paris, 1977), p. 271.

15 In 1054 Artze, a major commercial centre, was razed to the ground by Ertuğrul; Attaleiates, *Historia*, p. 148; Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, pp. 451–3; Matthew of Edessa,

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In 1068, during the minority of Michael VII Doukas, the son of Constantine X Doukas (1059–67), Romanos Diogenes, a professional soldier, was chosen as emperor. The need for a military man to counter enemy attacks was apparent at least to the dowager empress, Eudocia, whose choice he was.¹⁶ The newly appointed emperor, a member of the military party, hurriedly collected a motley army, mainly consisting of Pechenegs, Uzes, Normans and Franks, each contingent obeying the orders of its own leader. At a crucial stage he split his forces, sending a contingent of his most experienced soldiers to invest Chliat (Ahlat) on Lake Van.¹⁷ But above all, it was the betrayal of Andronikos Doukas, Michael's cousin and son of the caesar, John Doukas, who spread false rumours during the engagement that Diogenes had been defeated, which undermined the whole venture. This led to a large section of the Uzes changing sides and joining their fellow Turks,¹⁸ while the Franks, under Roussel of Bailleul, and the Armenians, resentful of Byzantine religious pressure, fled the camp. Andronikos Doukas, most probably with a view to ousting Diogenes, withdrew from the battlefield and headed with his army to Constantinople.¹⁹ The result was the Byzantine defeat and the capture of Diogenes. The Turkish sultan, Alp Arslan (1063–72), seems at this stage not to have been interested in proceeding with the conquest of Anatolia, his main concern being to move his forces against Syria and Egypt.²⁰ He therefore treated Diogenes honourably and agreed to release him on condition that the Byzantines paid an annual tribute and provided military help.²¹ But the powers in Constantinople, primarily John Doukas, rejected the agreement, the empress was removed to a nunnery and Michael VII was proclaimed sole emperor (1071–8).²² In response, Diogenes sought Alp Arslan's help to regain his throne. Defeated,

The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa, tr. A. E. Dostourian (New York and London, 1993), pp. 76–7; Vryonis, *Decline*, pp. 85–96.

¹⁶ Psellos, *Chronographie*, II, pp. 155–6 (Sewter, pp. 348–9).

¹⁷ Attaleiates, *Historia*, p. 112; Vryonis, *Decline*, pp. 98–103, cf. C. Cahen 'La campagne de Mantzikert d'après les sources musulmanes', *Byzantion* 9 (1934), 629–631. Cf. Vryonis's important critique of Cahen's article on his interpretation of Byzantine sources, *Decline*, pp. 100–1 n. 109. Contrary to the Muslim sources, Skylitzes states that the Byzantine army was ill equipped: *Continuatus*, ed. E. T. Tsolakes, 'Η συνέχεια τῆς Χρονογραφίας τοῦ Ἰωάννου Σκυλίτζη (Thessalonike, 1968), pp. 125 ff.

¹⁸ Attaleiates, *Historia*, pp. 117–18, states that he personally administered the oath κατὰ τὸ πᾶτριον to the Uzes who had remained loyal.

¹⁹ Attaleiates, *Historia*, pp. 120–1; Zonaras, *Epitome Historiarum*, p. 701; B. Leib, 'Jean Doukas, César et moine, son jeu politique à Byzance de 1067 à 1081', *Mélanges P. Peeters*, vol. II, *Analecta Bollandiana* 68 (1950), pp. 163–80.

²⁰ Cahen, 'La campagne de Mantzikert', p. 623.

²¹ Attaleiates, *Historia*, pp. 122–3; Zonaras, *Epitome Historiarum*, pp. 702–3; cf. Psellos, *Chronographie*, II, vii, p. 164 (Sewter, pp. 357–8).

²² Attaleiates, *Historia*, p. 125; Zonaras, *Epitome Historiarum*, p. 704.