

Introduction

In around the year 732/1332, the Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta visited Anatolia, or Rum, as it was known to Muslims after its Romano-Byzantine heritage. It was, Ibn Battuta said, ‘the finest region of the world, where God has gathered diverse fair points; its people are the most handsome in appearance, the cleanest in clothes, their food is the most delicious and they are the most solicitous of God’s people’. The Maghrebi was particularly impressed by the Islamic piety he found there, despite the substantial Christian population he also noted:

All the people of this land follow the lawschool of the imam Abu Hanifa, may God be pleased with him, and uphold the *sunna*. There is no Qadari, Shi’i (*rāfiḍī*), Mu‘tazili, Khariji or innovator (*mubtadi*) among them, and that is a virtue with which God has singled them out; however, they do consume hashish without considering anything wrong with it.¹

This impression of Anatolian Muslims’ unwavering devotion to Sunnism is reinforced by an anecdote Ibn Battuta recounts concerning his visit to Sinop on the Black Sea coast. When the locals saw him pray with hands downturned, not realising this was also a custom of the Sunni Maliki law school that predominated in Ibn Battuta’s homeland, they accused him of Shiism, whose adherents some of

¹ Ibn Battuta, *Rihla*, ed. Kamal al-Bustani (Beirut, 1992), 283–4; translations are my own, but see also the English translation by Gibb: *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa A.D. 1325–1354. Translated with Revisions and Notes from the Arabic Text Edited by C. Defrémery and B. R. Sanguinetti by H. A. R. Gibb* (Cambridge, 1962), II, 416–17 (henceforth, trans. Gibb). Ibn Battuta refers to the early Islamic groups whose names became synonymous with heresy in the eyes of later Sunnis: the Qadaris asserted human free will and rejected predestination; the Mu‘tazilis were rationalists who upheld the created nature of the Qur’an and the Kharijis rejected the arbitration between ‘Ali b. Abi Talib and his Umayyad opponents after the battle of Siffin in 657.

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them had witnessed praying in the same fashion in Iraq and the Hijaz. Ibn Battuta was only saved from the accusation when the local sultan tested him by sending him a rabbit, forbidden to Shiites, which the Maghrebi traveller devoured, satisfying the doubters of his orthodoxy.² Allusions to this commitment of rulers in Anatolia to upholding Sunni piety recur frequently in his account of his travels, which, owing to the region's highly politically fragmented environment in this period, took Ibn Battuta into the presence of numerous different sultans, amirs, and governors. These are regularly depicted as enjoying a close relationship with the various religious officials who frequented their courts, such as *faqīhs* (specialists in Islamic jurisprudence), *khaṭīb*s (preachers) and *qurrā'* (Qur'an reciters).³

Ibn Battuta was a learned qadi, and his account of his travels was doubtless influenced by his own pious agenda of seeking out the blessings of holy men and spiritual benefits, in common with most travellers from the pre-modern Islamic world who have left written records.⁴ Nonetheless, even if influenced by this pious perspective, his account stands in striking contrast to the consensus of modern scholarship, which has often seen medieval Anatolia as a barely Islamised frontier region, a 'Wild West',⁵ characterised, in the words of one scholar, by 'the absence of a state that was interested in rigorously defining and strictly enforcing an orthodoxy'.⁶ Islam in medieval Anatolia is often described as 'syncretic' or 'heterodox', and even the Sunni piety that Ibn Battuta identified is often argued to represent a considerably broader tent than it became at a later date, incorporating elements redolent of Shiism or indeed 'heterodoxy'.⁷ Certainly, Anatolia was distinguished from other parts of the Middle East by its late incorporation into the Muslim world, which was effected only in the wake of the invasions of the Turks

² Ibn Battuta, *Rihla*, 320; trans. Gibb, 468.

³ In Eğirdir and Birgi, the sultans had a *faqīh* sitting at his side when he received Ibn Battuta (*Rihla*, 288, 301; trans. Gibb, 423, 441); in Ladhiq (Denizli), the sultan sends the *wā'iz* as his emissary to meet Ibn Battuta (*Rihla*, 291; trans. Gibb, 427); in Milas and Kastamonu the sultan is described as having *faqīhs* as his companions at the *majlis* (*Rihla*, 293, 317; trans. Gibb, 429, 463). In Girdebolu, he met an immigrant scholar from Damascus who served as the local sultan's '*faqīh* and *khaṭīb*' (*Rihla*, 310; trans. Gibb, 460).

⁴ On the role of piety in Ibn Battuta's travels see David Waines, *The Odyssey of Ibn Battuta: Uncommon Tales of a Medieval Adventurer* (London, 2012); Ian Richard Netton, 'Myth, Miracle and Magic in the *Rihla* of Ibn Battuta', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 29 (1984): 131–40.

⁵ For the notion of Anatolia as a 'Wild West' see, with further references, Charles Melville, 'Anatolia under the Mongols', in *The Cambridge History of Turkey, vol. 1: Byzantium to Turkey*, ed. Kate Fleet (Cambridge, 2009), 52.

⁶ Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley, 1995), 76.

⁷ Claude Cahen, 'Le problème du Shi'isme dans l'Asie Mineure turque préottomane', in *Le Shi'isme Imamite: Colloque de Strasbourg (6–9 mai 1968)* (Paris, 1970), 115–29; Rıza Yıldırım, 'Sunni Orthodox vs Shi'ite Heterodox? A Reappraisal of Islamic Piety in Medieval Anatolia', in A. C. S. Peacock, Bruno De Nicola and Sara Nur Yıldız (eds), *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia* (Farnham, 2015), 287–307.

in the eleventh century, after which a number of Muslim Turkish states emerged in the peninsula, most prominently the Seljuqs of Rum (r. 463/1071–708/1308). Yet despite the advent of Muslim rulers, it is likely that even in Ibn Battuta's time Christians made up a much larger proportion of the population of Anatolia than most other parts of the Middle East, notwithstanding the survival of substantial Christian communities in Egypt and Syria. Although we have no reliable statistical information, such are the hints given by contemporary sources. Travelling through Anatolia in 1253, shortly after the region had come under the control of the Mongols who had recently invaded much of the Middle East, the friar William of Rubruck, an emissary to the Great Khan Möngke, calculated that only one in ten of the population was Muslim.⁸ Indeed, even at the end of the fourteenth century, there were some Christians who abandoned Byzantine territory to take refuge in Muslim-ruled Anatolia.⁹ Nonetheless, there is much evidence that by the time Ibn Battuta visited in the fourteenth century, Christians were increasingly converting to Islam or otherwise fleeing Muslim rule.¹⁰ While recent scholarship has affirmed that the Orthodox Church in Muslim Anatolia remained vital, albeit in difficult circumstances and perforce in collaboration with the new Turkish rulers, this does not change the fact that a wealth of evidence attests the decline in numbers of its adherents.¹¹ Conversion is often explained by the activities of Sufi holy men, who, operating outside the framework of formal religion, are said to have been able to appeal both to Anatolia's Turkish nomadic population and to its Christians by providing forms of syncretism between Islam and their previous beliefs while claiming to offer direct communication with the

⁸ *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke, 1253–1255*, trans. Peter Jackson (London, 1990), 276.

⁹ Elizabeth Zachariadou, 'Notes sur la population de l'Asie Mineure turque au XIV siècle', *Byzantinische Forschungen* 12 (1987): 221–31, esp. 229–31.

¹⁰ Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, *Islam in Anatolia after the Turkish Invasion* (Salt Lake City, 1993), 31; Speros Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley, 1971), 288–350, esp. 291; Speros Vryonis, 'Nomadization and Islamization in Asia Minor', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 29 (1975): 64–5; Dimitri Korobeinikov, 'Orthodox Communities in Eastern Anatolia in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries, I. The Two Patriarchates: Constantinople and Antioch', *al-Masāq* 15 (2003): 197–214; Dimitri Korobeinikov, 'Orthodox Communities in Eastern Anatolia in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries, Part 2. The Time of Troubles', *al-Masāq* 17 (2005): 1–29; A. C. S. Peacock, 'Islamisation in Medieval Anatolia', in A. C. S. Peacock (ed.), *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives from History* (Edinburgh, 2017), 134–55, with further references.

¹¹ Johannes Pahlitzsch, 'The Greek Orthodox Communities of Nicaea and Ephesus under Turkish Rule in the Fourteenth Century: A New Reading of Old Sources', in Peacock, De Nicola and Yıldız (eds), *Islam and Christianity*, 147–64; Tom Papademetriou, *Render Unto the Sultan: Power, Authority, and the Greek Orthodox Church in the Early Ottoman Centuries* (Oxford, 2015), chapter 2.

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divine, in contrast to the legalistic religiosity of the educated ‘ulama’.¹² Ibn Battuta’s reference to hashish may allude to such Sufis, some of whom regularly used the drug in their rituals.¹³

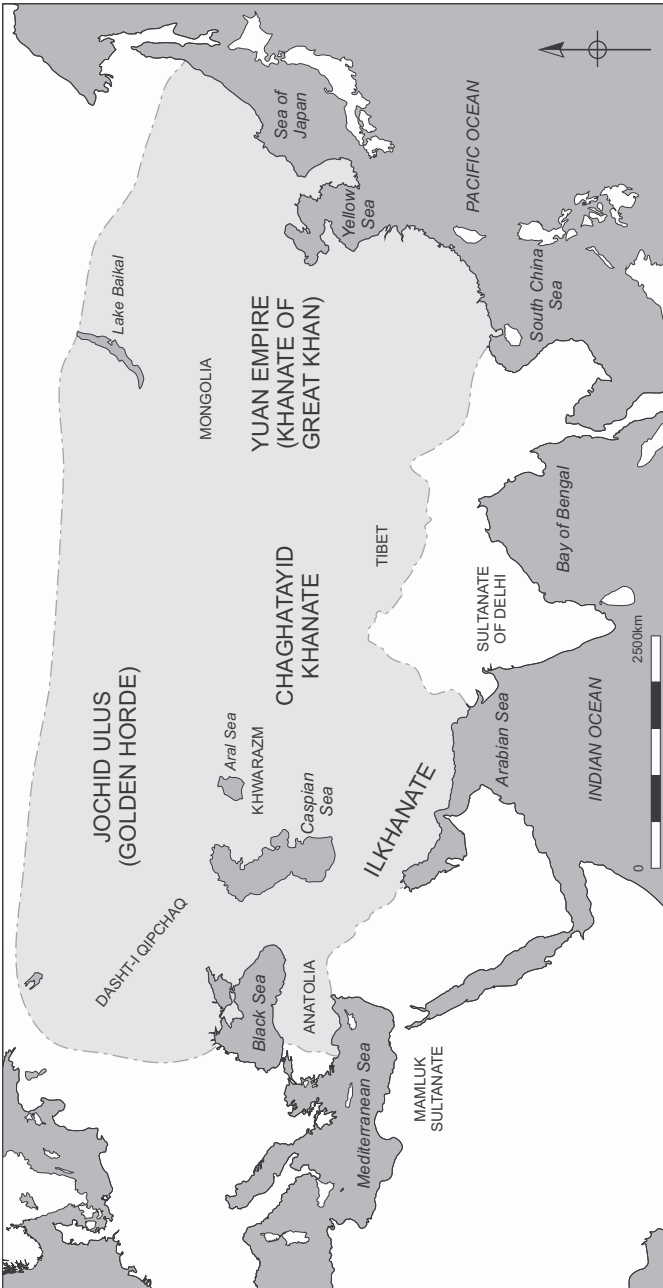
To what then were Christians converting? To an almost unimpeachable ‘orthodox’ Sunnism, as described by Ibn Battuta, or to the ‘heterodox’ and ‘syncretic’ Islam propounded by much modern scholarship? As we shall discuss, recent research has underlined that all of these categories are problematic. The task of this book is to attain a more sophisticated understanding of the characteristics of Islam in Anatolia during the crucial period of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, when not only were increasing numbers of Christians embracing Islam, but Islamic society and culture in the peninsula were themselves undergoing profound changes. The invasions of the pagan Mongols in the early to mid-thirteenth century precipitated political, social and religious transformation across the Middle East and Central Asia. Lands that had long been Muslim for the first time came under the control of a non-Muslim empire, the centre of which was located thousands of miles to the east at the imperial capital of Qaraqorum in Mongolia, and in which Muslims initially lost the privileged status to which they had been accustomed (Map 1).

These developments are generally regarded as having strengthened the hand of non-Muslims and Shiites, the former in the short and the latter in the long term.¹⁴ The Mongols’ capture of Baghdad in 656/1258 and killing of the Abbasid Caliph is thought to have created a void of political legitimacy in the Islamic world. In the absence of the divinely ordained institution of the Caliphate as the ultimate, if theoretical, source of political authority, Sunni Muslims had to find new ways of structuring society and politics. This may account for the increasing importance of Sufism, which offered a hierarchy of authority that could, in part, fill the void left by the disappearance of the Caliphal order, and

¹² See for example Vryonis, *Decline*, 363–96; Michel Balivet, *Romanie byzantine et Pays de Rûm turc* (Istanbul, 1994), 21–5, 147–8. On Sufism in general useful introductions are Ahmet Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period* (Edinburgh, 2006); Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History* (Oxford, 2012).

¹³ In general on hashish in the pre-modern Islamic world see Franz Rosenthal, *The Herb: Hashish versus Medieval Muslim Society* (Leiden, 1971), esp. 182–9, and for a medieval Anatolian polemic against its use see Bruno De Nicola, ‘The *Fuṣṭāṭ al-‘Adāla*: A Unique Manuscript on the Religious Landscape of Medieval Anatolia’, in A. C. S. Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız (eds), *Islamic Literature and Intellectual Life in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Anatolia* (Würzburg, 2016), 58, 63–4.

¹⁴ A. Bausani, ‘Religion under the Mongols’, in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5, ed. J. A. Boyle, *The Saljuq and Mongol Periods* (Cambridge, 1968), 538–44; Marshall S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. II, *The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods* (Chicago, 1974), 437–500.



MAP 1 The Mongol Empire, c. 1260

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Sufis came to play an increasingly important political role.¹⁵ These dislocations, while especially intense within the Ilkhanid lands, were by no means restricted to them, and a comparable search for new forms of political legitimacy and societal order can be observed in the Ilkhans' great rivals, the Mamluk sultanate of Egypt and Syria.¹⁶

In around 1260, the Mongol empire ceased to be a unitary state controlled by a single ruler, the Great Khan, from Qaraqorum, and instead was divided into four principal successor states, the Yüan dynasty in China and Mongolia, the Chaghatayids in Central Asia, the Golden Horde in the South Russian steppe and the Ilkhanate of Iran.¹⁷ It was this latter state, founded by Hülegü, grandson of Chinggis Khan, and taking its name from the title *ilkhān* assumed by its rulers, that dominated Anatolia for most of the period (Map 2).

To assert their legitimacy, the rulers of all these Mongol successor states stressed their descent from Chinggis Khan, the great conqueror who was regarded by Mongols (and some non-Mongols) as possessing more or less divine status. A distinctive political culture developed in the Ilkhanate. The Ilkhans came to view themselves as inheritors not just of the legacy of Chinggis but also that of ancient Iran,¹⁸ while after converting to Islam in 694/1295, the Ilkhan Ghazan started to employ simultaneously a vocabulary of Islamic kingship, describing himself as *pādshāh-i Islām*, 'king of Islam'.¹⁹ This model of political legitimacy that drew on steppe, Iranian and, from the end of the thirteenth century, Islamic elements accrued prestige to the Ilkhans, which enabled them to exert a broader cultural and political influence.

Anatolia was certainly affected by the broader developments in Middle Eastern society and politics precipitated by Mongol domination, which was established in

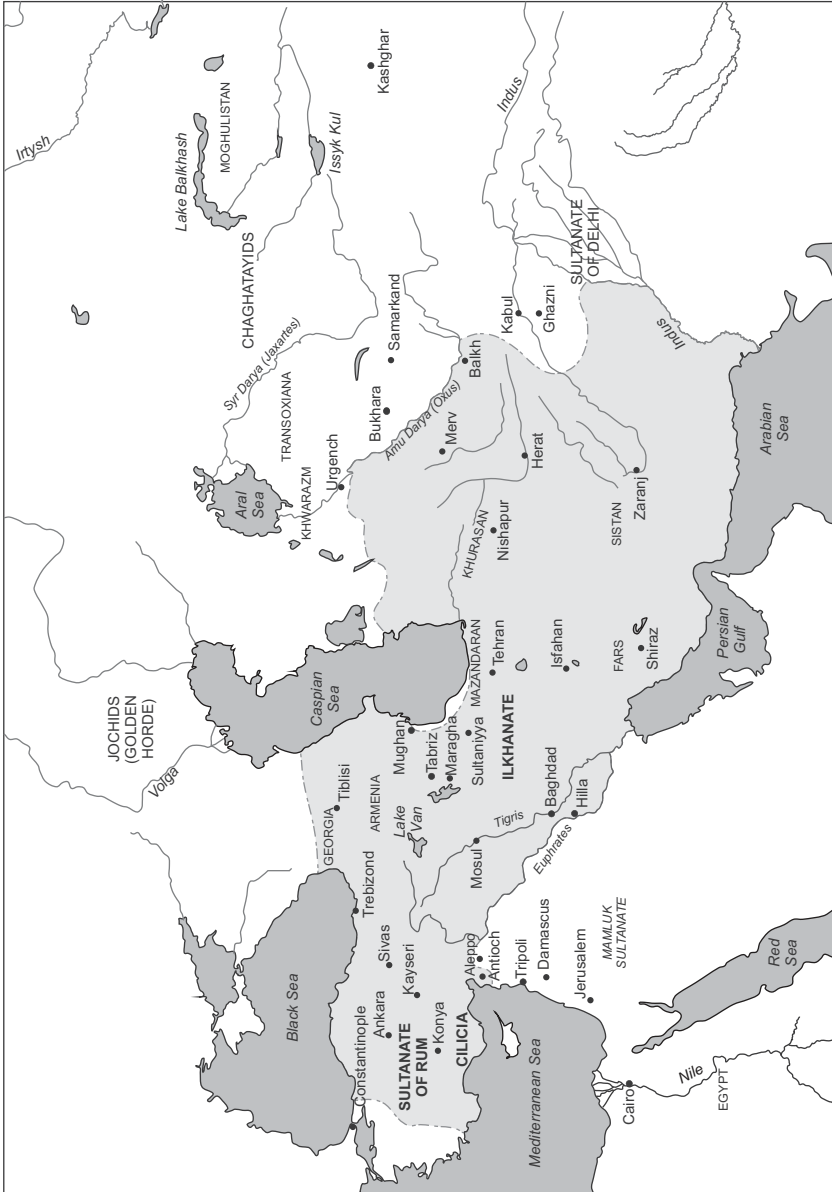
¹⁵ See the references in n. 14 and Lawrence G. Potter, 'Sufis and Sultans in Post-Mongol Iran', *Iranian Studies* 27 (1994): 77–102; Ovamir Anjum, 'Mystical Authority and Governmentality in Islam', in John Curry and Eric Ohlander (eds), *Sufism and Society: Arrangements of the Mystical in the Muslim World* (London, 2011), 71–93.

¹⁶ For a study of some of the political aspects of this search for legitimacy see Anne Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge, 2008); for an introduction to scholarship on the religious environment in the Mamluk lands see Richard McGregor, 'The Problem of Sufism', *Mamluk Studies Review* 13 (2009): 69–83.

¹⁷ On this process see Peter Jackson, 'The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire', *Central Asiatic Journal* 22 (1978): 186–244; David Morgan, 'The Decline and Fall of the Mongol Empire', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 3rd series, 19 (2009): 427–37.

¹⁸ Bert Fragner, 'Ilkhanid Rule and Its Contribution to Iranian Political Culture', in Linda Komaroff (ed.), *Beyond the Legacy of Gengis Khan* (Leiden, 2006), 68–80.

¹⁹ Charles Melville, 'Padshah-i Islam: The Conversion of Sultan Mahmud Ghazan Khan', *Pembroke Papers* 1 (1990): 159–77; for a recent study of the political implications of the conversion see Jonathan Brack, 'Mediating Sacred Kingship: Conversion and Sovereignty in Mongol Iran', unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2016.



MAP 2 The Ilkhanate

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the peninsula after the Seljuqs' defeat at the Battle of Köseadağ near Sivas in 641/1243. However, it also experienced some distinct consequences. Mongol hegemony opened the way for a new political dispensation in Anatolia, even if the Seljuqs nominally retained the position of sultan until the early fourteenth century, although without being able to exercise effective power. The Mongols asserted suzerainty over all the Seljuq lands (as they did, in theory, over the entire world). In practice, this claim was contested by the numerous Turkmen lords, such as those encountered by Ibn Battuta, who first emerged as major political forces in the Mongol period, and who, with the decline of the Ilkhanate in the 1330s, became ever more powerful. The most successful of these Turkmen lords were the Ottomans, who expanded from a small base in north-western Anatolia to establish a great empire that absorbed its Turkmen rivals and both Christian and Muslim neighbours, lasting, in one form or another, until the First World War.

These political changes were accompanied by equally dramatic cultural ones. Towards the end of the thirteenth century, Turkish emerged as a literary medium, supplementing and eventually superseding Persian as the main literary and textual vehicle of Anatolian Muslims. This facilitated the composition and circulation of basic manuals of the faith as well as a pious literature that addressed the concerns of a recently converted or converting population, in contrast to the situation at the height of Seljuq rule in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries when almost all literary works seem to have been destined for a limited courtly or elite audience. From the mid-thirteenth century the religious, social and literary landscape was transformed by the spread of Sufism, which penetrated society from artisans' guilds to the ruling elites, and introduced novel ways of conceptualising not just man's relationship to God but also temporal power and authority, which became increasingly intertwined with Sufis' spiritual claims. Konya, the old Seljuq capital, was fast becoming a major scholarly centre to which men migrated from other parts of the Islamic world to study Sufi thought, as well as to seek professional advancement. It was under Mongol rule that figures such as the major Sufi writers Jalal al-Din Rumi (d. 672/1273), his son Sultan Walad (d. 712/1312) and the leading interpreter of Ibn 'Arabi, Sadr al-Din al-Qunawi (d. 672/1273), were active, as well as some of the earliest Turkish poets in Anatolia, such as Gülşehri (d. after 718/1318) and Aşık Paşa (d. 732/1332). Mongol domination thus facilitated the integration of Anatolia into the broader Muslim world, through the activities of migrant scholars, Sufis and litterateurs, all of whose presence becomes increasingly marked from the second half of the thirteenth century.

One of the aims of this book is to demonstrate how Mongol domination thus played an integral part in the process of Islamisation in Anatolia, but one which has not yet received due attention from scholarship. By Islamisation I mean not

simply conversion to Islam, but the processes by which Islam permeated politics, society and culture more generally.²⁰ In most other regions of the Middle East, this process had taken place at a much earlier date, primarily the Umayyad and early Abbasid periods, and is thus often attested only by later Islamic sources. In Anatolia, however, we have a large body of contemporary texts in Arabic, Persian and Turkish. To date, this literature has been little studied and remains mainly unpublished, as will be discussed at more length in due course, but it can serve as a valuable first-hand source for understanding these religious and cultural transformations, forming a unique window into the process of Islamisation as it happened. Beyond the intrinsic interest of deepening our understanding of the evolution of Muslim society in Anatolia, this book thus also aims to enhance our understanding more generally both of processes of Islamisation and the consequences of Mongol hegemony in the Middle East.²¹ I hope also to address some of the issues highlighted by Ibn Battuta's account, shedding light on the relationship between political power and religion, and assessing the effect of the political convulsions of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries on the social and religious structures of the Muslim community in Anatolia. I concentrate on the crucial period of cultural transformation and Mongol political and cultural dominance from c. 641/1243 to 783/1381, the former date marking the Mongol victory over the Seljuqs at the Battle of Köseadağ, which established their dominance over Anatolia, and the latter marking the demise of the last Mongol successor state in the peninsula, the Eretnids (c. 735/1335–783/1381). However, these dates offer only a rough framework: the pace of cultural and religious change, while certainly connected to broader political developments, is necessarily slower, so we will have cause on occasion both to look back and forward beyond these dates. This book will give particular attention to Central Anatolia. Its towns such as Konya, Kayseri and Sivas had been the cultural centre of Muslim Anatolia since the coming of the Turks and remained the heartland of the Seljuq sultans, the Ilkhanid governors of Anatolia and the Eretnids. It is also by far the best attested region in the historical

²⁰ For a discussion of Islamisation as a concept see A. C. S. Peacock, 'Introduction: Comparative Perspectives on Islamisation', in Peacock (ed.), *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives*, 1–22.

²¹ The term Middle East of course a neologism, invented in the nineteenth century; no comparable term is found in pre-modern sources, which merely differentiate between the *dār al-ḥarb* (the abode of war, the non-Muslim world) and the *dār al-Islām* (the Muslim world). Nonetheless, by the period covered by this book the Islamic world encompassed a vast geographical area stretching from Mali to Sumatra, much of which had no contact with Anatolia. For this reason, although rejected by some modern scholarship, it seems useful to retain the term Middle East to describe the neighbouring, mainly Muslim-dominated regions with which Anatolia was in close contact, such as Egypt, Syria and Iran.

sources, most of which were produced there, a fact reflected in the coverage of this book too. Beyond, in the peripheries and coastal areas, the courts of the Turkmen chiefs produced no chronicles in our period, and our understanding of these polities is often limited; nonetheless, some played an important role in the patronage of literary texts and thus the broader cultural transformations of the period. Of course, this is not to say that literary texts are the sole possible source for interpreting the transformations of the Mongol period. Art history, epigraphy and material culture might all serve the historian, but this book deliberately limits itself largely to the textual sources as these are perhaps the least exploited, and, in tracing the changes in intellectual and literary history that are the book's focus, the most relevant. Nonetheless, occasionally I will refer to epigraphic and architectural evidence where this seems relevant to my argument, but limitations of space have constrained me from exploiting such sources more fully.

The significance of the book's argument that Mongol role played a crucial role in the Islamisation of Anatolia is severalfold. First, it draws attention to the importance of this era in the history of Anatolia, which has received very little scholarly attention, and brings a new understanding to the consequences of the Mongol conquests in a specific region. Secondly, it sheds light on the development and spread of Islam in this region against the broader political and intellectual background, based on contemporary Muslim sources. Thirdly, it obliges us to revise the scholarly consensus, discussed further later, that it was the high Ottoman period of the sixteenth century that saw the initiation of a process described as 'Sunнитisation' whereby, backed by the might of the state, a distinctively Sunni religiosity was increasingly propagated. Rather, we can see that many elements of this Sunnitisation must be traced back to the consequences of Mongol rule.

HISTORIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES ON ANATOLIA IN THE PERIOD OF MONGOL DOMINATION

Until recently, scholarship both inside and outside Turkey has tended to view Anatolian history as a neat sequence of Turkish dynasties leading from the Seljuqs (r. 463/1071–708/1308) to the Ottomans (r. 699/1299–1923) and thus ultimately to the Turkish Republic.²² Lately, however, aspects of medieval Anatolia have attracted increasingly scholarly attention in their own right rather than as merely a

²² Two well-known examples that illustrate this tendency in their titles are the standard surveys of the period in Turkish and English: Osman Turan, *Selçuklular Zamanında Türkiye: Siyasî tarih Alp Arslan'dan Osman Gazi'ye (1071–1318)* (Istanbul, 1971); Claude Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey: General Survey of the Material and Spiritual Culture and History c. 1071–1330* (London, 1968), revised version published as Claude Cahen, *La Turquie pré-ottomane* (Istanbul, 1988).