FROM THE STEPPES TO THE HAGIA SOPHIA:

A SELECT HISTORIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF EARLY OTTOMAN CULTURE

BY

CHRISTOPHER LLEWELLYN SANDERSON

(16083246)

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DECLARATION

Full name:	Christopher Llewellyn Sanderson
Student Number:	16083246
Degree/Qualification:	MSocSci (Masters)
Title of thesis:	From the Steppes to the Hagia Sophia: A select historiographical study of Early Ottoman Culture

I declare that this thesis is my own original work. Where secondary material is used, this has been carefully acknowledged and referenced in accordance with university requirements.

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Abstract

From the Steppes to the Hagia Sophia: A select Historiographical Study of early Ottoman culture, is a literary analysis of the historiography covering the cultural practices of the Ottoman state and its people between 1299 and 1566. In particular, it examines the way in which academic studies of this period of Ottoman history have been divided between West-centric and East-centric views of the state's cultural foundation. This research examines how two foundational histories, Herbert Gibbon's *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire: A History of the Osmanlis Up to the Death of Bayezid I* in the 1910s and Paul Wittek's proposition of *Ghazi thesis* in the 1930s have influenced the historiography of the early Ottomans. In understanding two polarised historiographical approaches to Ottoman history, this research seeks to tease out the place of Oghuz Turkic culture in the Ottoman heritage. Finally, this research also discusses the role that the modern state of Türkiye, its ideologies, and its scholars, have had on this academic debate. This dissertation argues that the role of Oghuz culture in discussions of early Ottoman culture has been severely neglected despite its important contributions to the early Ottoman state. It is further argued that this neglect is owed to both the preoccupation with Byzantine and Medieval Islamic cultures as the main cultural contributors to early Ottoman culture in the historiography, as well as to the influence of modern Turkish politics and ideology on Ottoman studies.

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Dissertation Topic

Since the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople and the subsequent dissolution of the Byzantine Roman Empire in 1453, and even more so since the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire itself following the First World War, historians have been concerned with pinning down the nature and impact of the Ottoman Empire. This line of inquiry spans the length of the Ottoman state's existence, from its heights at the end of the 1600s, to the subsequent centuries of its gradual decline. However, one period of Ottoman history that draws more debate than most, is the periods of its founding and early success. On one end of the debate, historians such as Herbert Gibbons have argued that the Ottoman state simply inherited control of and maintained many of the Byzantine Roman systems that were already in place in the regions they conquered. However, others, such as the author of the *Ghazi thesis,* Paul Wittek, argue that the Ottoman state existed and thrived through a series of distinctly Islamic traditions of holy war and power structures. While these two differing viewpoints are nearly a century old at this point, consensus on this topic remains elusive, and the academic community still regularly grapples with the topic of whether the early and mid-Ottoman Empire was more Western, or Eastern in its character, structures, and organisation.

However, an element that is often overlooked in this debate pertains much more to the roots of the Ottoman Empire in Central Asia. The Oghuz Turks, the ancestors to the Ottomans, had, like other groups belonging to the Turkic linguistic family, originated as nomadic pastoralists from the Steppes of Central and East Asia. These people had their own rich and varied histories distinct from the legacy of Rome, or the teachings of Islam. These histories range from the Huns who had invaded the Roman Empire centuries before, and the Khazar Khaganate which spanned across the Western Eurasian Steppe, to the Seljuks who had directly preceded the Ottomans. The Turkic-speaking groups, and the other Steppe-dwelling societies they were related to, had a long and detailed history that was entrenched within their own unique cultural structures and traditions. These traditions arguably would not simply disappear from a culture upon the adoption of a new religion, or the inheritance of a crumbling empire, and as such,

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would surely have permeated into the structures and hierarchies of the budding empire and its ruling elite.

 Although these questions of culture and heritage often take a back seat in the discussion of the empire, they are no less important in understanding the complex and varied systems comprising the Ottoman state, and how its power structures, and governance, worked. As such, the topic warrants exploration and investigation of precisely how much traditional Turkic culture permeated into the structures of the Ottoman state, especially during its transition to being a multi-cultural empire between the reigns of Mehmed II and Suleiman I. This period is marked as one of the debated 'Golden Ages' of the Ottoman Empire, and as such, it acted as a time of significant development and consolidation of its structure and imperial culture. In this instance, a Golden Age, as it relates to a state, empire, or civilizational culture, signals a peak in its development and power relative to other states, reaching the height of civilizational glory. This glory can take a variety of forms, but usually manifests in either its geopolitical positioning, economic and military strength, as well as the maturity of its artistic and cultural expressions, though any combination of the aforementioned is possible. The primary point here is that a Golden Age speaks to the consolidation of the empire, and in the case of this Ottoman Golden Age, it would thus directly refer to a consolidation of the Byzantine, Islamic and Turkic elements within its culture and the structures of its governance. Prior to Mehmed II's reign, the Ottoman state existed in a state of flux and internal turmoil as it sought to establish itself in the mid to late Medieval World of Eastern Europe and the Middle East, while after the reign of Suleiman, the Ottoman state entered a state of stagnation, followed by a protracted dissolution.

This research aims to engage with Ottoman historiography of the twentieth century covering this period of the golden age, exploring the arguments made by both the predominantly West- and East-centric approaches to the genesis of the Ottoman state.[1] While evaluating these two sides of the argument, this research assesses the degree and significance which is accorded the role of Oghuz Turkic culture in relation to the Ottoman state and culture. The Ottoman state is well established as being one of multiple cultural origins, and while the literature is polarised with regard to whether the greater influence was exerted by either the East or West, it ignores

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[1] The terms West- and East-centric literature are used here as broad and generalized categories to cluster historical scholarship in terms of the geographical locus of scholars but more importantly in terms of scholarly emphases on either the Western (Byzantine) or Eastern (Islamic) influences on Ottoman society and culture. These are by no means definitive or even neat categories but are used here for ease of writing and clarity.

other cultural influences including that of Central Asian Steppe peoples. As such, this research also aims to highlight the role of Oghuz culture in the formation of the Ottoman state as well, and the extent to which this is acknowledged in Ottoman historiography.

Research Questions and Rationale

As an extended review of Ottoman historiography, this research explores how the study of the early Ottoman state has been a debate of polarised views since its very inception as a topic, while also asking how this divided space has approached the role of Oghuz Turkic culture in influencing and shaping the Ottoman state, specifically in the period between 1453 and 1566. In doing so, the research also engages with changing trends in Ottoman historiography. The research therefore also assesses and explores the possible neglect of discussions pertaining to the influence of Oghuz Turkic groups and cultures in Ottoman historiography. This investigation takes place in the context of a polarised scholarship that has primarily focused on either East-orientated, Medieval Islamic or Western European, Byzantine influences as the most significant and visible elements of Ottoman culture. This research does not negate the role of Byzantine and Islamic cultures as influences but instead investigates the place of Oghuz Turkic influences in this polarity and understanding why this has not been done previously. In view of this, the research argues that an intricate, varied mix of Islamic, Byzantine and Oghuz Turkic influences all comprised the Ottoman political culture.

This research, as with most works which engage with the question of culture, uses Edward Tylor's definition of culture as, 'The complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.'[2] However, Tylor's definition of culture from 1871 on its own is insufficient in a modern context, both in its ability to keep the approach relevant, as well as its ability to allow for an investigation of nuance in the discussion. For this reason, this research adopts a definition, using Tylor's foundation, which is combined with the works of Stuart Hall[3] and Clifford Geertz,[4] to define culture as a fluid, practised system of usually coherent signals and behaviours that, while expressed internally and individually, are understood and exist as public

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[2] E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, pp. 1 – 3.
[3] J. Clarke, 'Conjunctures, crises, and cultures: Valuing Stuart Hall'. *Focaal – Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology* 70(1), 2014, pp. 113 – 122.
[4] C. Geertz, *Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture.*

actions. Thus, we keep the essentials of Tylor's definition which includes aspects such as belief, laws and customs, while opening the discussion up to how it is displayed, interpreted and changed as a part of the society. This definition also allows for the inclusion of religion as an aspect of culture, a point which was introduced by Geertz and which will be crucial when discussing Ottoman society.[5]

There is significant academic debate on what precisely constitutes Turkic culture. This debate is informed by possible political agendas and contending interests which have tended to focus on a common root language as the common cultural denominator, and on the basis of this, incorporates disparate groups into a single ethnic entity.[6] What can be defined as Turkic relates to a group of similar languages which originate from the Eurasian Steppe, and which characterised different nomadic groups who inhabited the region historically. Generally, all these groups of people shared a way of life in this region which set them apart from the settled societies of Europe and Asia. It was their shared language group which distinguished them from other nomadic groups, such as the Mongols. Oghuz Turkic, then, describes a group who originally found themselves on the Eurasian Steppe, living a nomadic pastoralist lifestyle, and who spoke a specific Turkic language which differentiated them from others in the region. While this description may not be the best to differentiate the Oghuz from other Turkic groups, it is easiest understood in this study in comparison to the cultures being analysed. On the one hand is Byzantine culture, which represents the Greek, Eastern Orthodox divergence of classical Roman Culture.[7] On the other hand is Medieval Islamic culture, which is used to describe the shared cultural practices between the Arab and Iranian groups of the Middle East who defined themselves through their adherence to the teachings of Islam.[8] Compared to both of these cultures which originate from settled societies and emphasise their ethnicity and faith, Oghuz Turkic culture is significantly distinct.

The examples above reflect the cultural hybridity that was arguably one of the distinctive features of the Ottomans, incorporating Byzantine, Islamic and other Steppe nomadic and shamanic elements, such as those of the Mongols and Tatars. This point stands in conflict with much of the historical debate around the culture of the Ottoman Empire, as the arguments for either Byzantine or Medieval Islamic culture tend to be essentialist, where little room exists for

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[5] C. Geertz 'Religion as a cultural system,' *in* C. Geertz, (ed.) *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays.*

[6] A. Kadioğlu, 'The paradox of Turkish nationalism and the construction of an official identity', *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(2), 1996, pp. 177 – 193.

[7] W. Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, pp. 126 – 135.

[8] J. P. Berkey, *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 200 – 1800*, pp. 178 – 183.

an argument of a combination of the two, and more influences. Cemal Kafadar challenges this idea directly and indirectly in his work,[9] as he highlights both the city that is now Istanbul and the Ottoman Empire in general, as a point of convergence for the cultures of Europe, Africa and the East. This view has become more attractive over the recent decades because it allows for the organic growth and development of cultural identity within the Ottoman state, as well as making room for the complexities of that culture when compared to the somewhat reductionist and essentialist arguments arising from the works of Paul Wittek, Herbert Gibbons and Mehmet Köprülü. For those reasons, this research will be approaching the discussion of Oghuz Turkic culture as an aspect of Ottoman culture which was culturally hybrid.

Another definition which has been important to this study is that of Orientalism. When discussing Ottoman historiography, it has been important to engage the biases and influences on various sources, especially as they pertain to what position the Ottomans held in the world. Though there are some dissenting views on this, the Ottomans have traditionally fallen outside the scope of the Western world, and as such, have been subjected to Orientalist interpretations, which this study either points out explicitly, or through discussions of eurocentrism. Edward W. Said's classic text *Orientalism*,[10] remains seminal to discussions of the regions of the Middle East, Asia, and North Africa in the European imaginary and European exceptionalism. They are usually generalised through reductionist viewpoints. Orientalism, therefore, posits the 'Orient' as the world outside of Europe and the West, where all states, entities, religions and actors therein are conflated and dismissed simply as the opposite of what the 'Occident,' or West, represent. To this end, the Orient becomes a static, backward and underdeveloped region that is implied to be the inferior of the Occident. Thus, where eurocentrism is mentioned in this study, it is in reference to this notion of Occidental superiority which stems from Orientalism. It is important to note, however, that Orientalism not only affects West-centric sources which are heavily in favour of Western influence, but also East-centric sources which generalise the East as a singular entity. Further, it is important to note that while Orientalism is a long-standing issue in many sources, the Orientalism which affects sources from the late 20th century is different from that which affects the European sources of the 15th century, due to different defining characteristics of the 'Orient' throughout history.

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[9] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 172 – 173.
[10] E. W. Said, 'Orientalism Reconsidered'. *Cultural Critique* 1(1), 1985, pp. 89 – 107.

The first and primary research objective of this study explores the specific role of Oghuz Turkic influence on the Ottoman state, and through the lens of a historiographical review, intends to understand its role and possible neglect in the scholarship. In the context of the polarised scholarship, specific elements of the Ottoman political structure, its civil administration, and its military composition have been disregarded, despite being crucial elements of the Ottoman state and its identity. Examples such as the House of Osman having distinct, often fratricidal, succession practices, civil administration being dependant on tribal beys, and the use of overwhelming cavalry and ranged elements within military engagements all show distinct Central Asian Turkic influence on Ottoman practices, yet are rarely addressed or given thought to in the established scholarship.

The most obvious secondary research objective from there would be to then analyse the confluence of Turkic and established Byzantine and Islamic cultures in the Ottoman state. Aside from having an influence of its own, the Turkic heritage of the Ottomans would have mixed with the Eastern Roman structure left by the state they conquered, and the Arabic and Iranian influences of the greater Muslim world of the time, again, with respect to Ottoman leadership, civil administration, and military practices. Examples such as the role of the Ottoman Harem showed a clear departure from the Harem of previous Islamic states, and the Byzantine bureaucracy and provincial systems all shifted to accommodate much of the nomadic Turkic populations of Anatolia within the Ottoman state. These are indicators of this influence and merger of the settled Byzantine and medieval Islamic cultures, and the traditional Steppe nomadic cultures brought by the Turkic people, and illustrate that this aspect deserves analysis as well.

The hypothesis of this research based on the literature consulted points to specific, but neglected instances within the historiography where Turkic cultural practices, beliefs and ethics were key in the development of Ottoman culture. Some of the examples of this Turkic influence can be seen in the case of the fratricidal succession practices within the House of Osman, or the reverence and caution with which the Ottomans interacted with nomadic Turkmen leaders. These examples also extend to how the Ottomans developed their culture based on the foundations of other cultures, as is seen by the similarity in purpose and designation of Ottoman

Sanjaks[11] in comparison to Byzantine *Thémata*,[12] and many more instances beyond that. While the prominence of these practices in Ottoman culture is debatable, they are present in several of the aspects of the culture that had the greatest effect on the direction and management of the empire. However, they are often overshadowed by the impact Byzantine culture had on the physical structure and mechanisms of the empire, and the Medieval Islamic culture which dictated the structure and conduct of the Ottoman court in most cases. As such, the place where aspects of Turkic culture would then have been seen more prominently would be in the personal actions and views of prominent individuals within the empire. This is particularly the case with the ruling House of Osman and other societal elites, and how they interacted with each other as well as the power structures of their state.

Further, the hypothesis points to a fragmented historiographic overview of the topic which places the majority of its focus on traditional cultural centres in the West and East, leading to a neglect of Turkic traditions within the Ottoman state. In particular, the dominance of eurocentric histories which began in the 19th century is likely to have led to a neglect in the analysis of any cultural influences outside of the West and East, which only worsened following the First World War. This neglect can also be seen as different nationalist movements began to rise throughout the Islamic world and the Middle East in opposition to the Ottoman state, effectively drowning Turkic voices because of their links to the Ottoman imperialist past. With the nationalistic rise of the Republic of Türkiye added to this set of views, it is easy to understand how Turkic identity within the Ottoman state was overlooked in lieu of developing a new national identity separate from the Ottomans. Türkiye's own historic focus worked to differentiate itself from the Ottoman state it exited from, rather than highlighting its ties with other Turkic peoples both within and outside of the new modern state. As such, the argument can be made that directing future resources towards filling any historiographical gaps will create a better understanding of the influence of Turkic culture on the Ottoman Empire.

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[11] Sanjaks were an administrative division of territory within the Ottoman Empire. They were the subdivisions of larger Eyalets, the primary administrative division of territory, until they were abolished in favour of the Vilayets in 1861.

[12] Thémata, or Theme in English, were the primary administrative division of territory within the middle Byzantine Empire following significant instability brought on by the conquests of the Rashidun Caliphate in the 600s CE.

Literature Review

Discussing the exact cultural and ethnic origins of the Ottoman state is no simple task, as navigating the literature surrounding the topic itself is fraught with challenges unique to Ottoman historiography. The peoples who came to inhabit the empire, and who came to be identified as 'Ottomans,' have genetic, linguistic, and cultural ancestry which stretches back thousands of years and has been spread over thousands of kilometres in various directions. Yet academia has usually pointed to two forebear states as the primary contributors to Ottoman identity: The Byzantine Roman Empire, and the Seljuk Sultanate of Rúm. While no argument places this cultural heritage solely on one state or another, as previously mentioned, most studies do tend to favour one entity over the other in how much they contributed to what the Ottomans would become. As previously stated, these two sides generally align themselves as either West-centric, in a tradition started by the work of British historian Herbert Gibbons,[13] or as East-centric, which has some of its origins in the work of the Austrian historian Paul Wittek.[14] Gibbons' arguments described the Ottomans as an outside group who came to inherit the infrastructure and culture that the Byzantines left behind, while the East-centric camp takes the view that the adherence to Islam, antagonism with Europe, and Persian political and linguistic styles brought over from the Seljuks are far more prevalent. Aside from the obvious external academic interests that engage both of these camps of thought, there is also the added factor brought by Turkish historiography. At the same time that both Gibbons and Wittek were laying the foundations for the polarised historiography of the early Ottoman state, the modern Turkish state had begun emerging from the empire's ashes and sought to capture the history of the empire in such a fashion as to both preserve its prestige, yet distance the new Türkiye from the pitfalls of its predecessor.

One point which is important to note early in this study is how the East-centric camp has subsequently distanced and redefined itself from some of Paul Wittek's points made in the *Ghazi thesis*.[15] While this was one of the foundational works in establishing the Ottomans as an Eastern power in opposition to Europe, much of it was established with Orientalist and Islamophobic overtones. As such, Wittek's work was established more as a case for continued

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[13] H. A. Gibbons, *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire: A History of the Osmalins up to the death of Bayezid I 1300 – 1403.*

[14] P. Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire: Studies in the History of Turkey, thirteenth – fifteenth centuries.*

[15] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State,* pp. 55 – 58.

antagonism between the West and Islam than as an unbiased analysis of how Islam defined the early Ottomans which it did by explaining that Ottoman expansion was as a result of a constant drive to engage in holy war against Christendom, and to persecute Christians. Even scholars who would support the premise of the *Ghazi thesis* attempt to ground the idea in the established conflict between Christendom and the Middle East following the Crusades. Wittek's arguments are, in contrast, often reductive, and ignore the nuance and complexity in the relations between Medieval Europe and the Middle East.[16] This is not to say that there aren't more reactionary elements within the academic discourse who still hold to Wittek's points, but that these elements are understood as being precisely that; extreme. While Islam remains a defining point in the discussion of the Ottoman origins, and rightfully so, it is done from a point of view which explores it as part of their heritage from the Seljuks, and how it influenced their actions as a frontier beylik on the borders of the Byzantine Empire.

Conversely, while Wittek's work has been largely dissected and diffused as part of the East-centric discourse, the foundation of the West-centric camp in the work of Herbert Gibbons has generally been left unchanged.[17] While it is understood that the work is now largely outdated since it was written in the early 1910's, the core of its arguments remain as the premise for how West-centric academia has grown in the century since its publication. The arguments which Gibbons originally put forward as to the Ottoman state being the 'Third Rome,'[18] have remained foundational to the literature upholding this claim which has succeeded it.[19] With the Byzantines, as the Eastern, Greek Orthodox continuation of the original Roman Empire, being held as the 'Second Rome,' it follows that much of the West-centric scholarship on the Ottomans would see their inheritance of Byzantine lands, infrastructure, systems, and peoples as a solid argument for their place as the successors of Rome. While there are several other states which have been argued as the 'Third Rome,' primary among these being Russia due to its primacy within the Orthodox world, the Ottoman state is probably the most likely spiritual

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[16] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State,* pp. 95 – 98.

[17] H. İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire.* University of Cambridge Press, Cambridge. 1990.

[18] The 'Third Rome' is an academic accolade usually given to a state or entity which is believed to have succeeded as the third steward of Roman ideals, philosophy and culture. F. A. Ergul, 'The Ottoman identity: Turkish, Muslim or Rum?', *Middle Eastern Studies* 48(4), 2012, pp. 632 – 634.

[19] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State,* pp. 55 – 58.

successor of the Byzantines, with many points in its favour despite its differences with the Byzantine state.[20]

Early Turkish historians, as a group operating on either side of this divide, generally worked to emphasise the Turkish nature of the Ottoman state. This was done while also placing emphasis on the innovations that they brought to both Europe and the Middle East through the advent of gunpowder in warfare, and a unified Eurasian economy that the Ottoman state facilitated and managed. Certain Turkish historians of this period, such as Mehmet Fuat Köprülü,[21] framed their arguments as direct responses to, and rebuttals of the external narratives being imposed on Ottoman historiography by European writers. Köprülü's work in particular is a direct response to Gibbons, which weighs the latter's arguments of the empire's Byzantine foundations against the foundations established by the Seljuk Empire of Iran and the Sultanate of Rúm. While these two states are generally used as points in favour of the East-centric view of the empire's cultural roots, Köprülü's work also firmly emphasises them as Turkic precursor states, with a focus on the shared Oghuz heritage that they and the Ottomans had. This emphasis clearly stems from Köprülü's ties to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk at the founding of the modern Turkish state, as well as his political office in Atatürk's government, thus showing distinct elements of Kemalist ideology.[22] Despite these political undertones, however, Köprülü's work stands as seminal to the understanding of early Turkish academia, and his studies of the Ottomans, even at the time, are lauded by the international community.

As was typical of the historiography of the early 20th century, many of these early sources were framed as studies of geo-political entities, and as such, these early works did little to discuss the role of the Oghuz Turkmen tribes in Anatolia. The Turkmen are, for the most part, relegated to being a group for anthropological study, or at most, political actors in Ottoman history, rather than as cultural influencers. While this issue is addressed later when historians begin placing more importance on the cultural elements of historiography, it does mean that gaps exist in the foundational literature which established this academic debate. This means that the literature produced thereafter based on those pre-established arguments benefitted from a solid grounding in the established academic engagement with Ottoman studies. It also means that

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[20] C. Kafadar, 'A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum', *Muqarnas* 24(1), 2007, pp. 13 – 14.
[21] M. F. Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire.*
[22] A. Kadioğlu, 'The paradox of Turkish nationalism and the construction of an official identity', *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(2), 1996, pp. 177 – 193.

efforts to diverge from those arguments, or fill the gaps between them, likely struggled to do so. Though the image of the Oghuz Turkmen was quickly shifted from the narrative of them being warlike and barbarous zealots,[23] the shift did little to flesh out their identity in the absence of that description. It is also argued that as the 20th century continued, more emphasis was placed on the study of the later Ottoman state and its interactions with Europe, while the study of the early Ottoman state was somewhat neglected as a result.[24]

Despite this argument, the two different camps of the debate established earlier did see development in the nuance with which their views on the early Ottomans were discussed. Still, however, they remained divided along lines which primarily concerned themselves with the politics of Christendom and Islam, to the neglect of other cultural influences. In the East-centric view, the Oghuz Turkmen tribes were incorporated as yet another part of the greater 'Islamic heritage' of the Ottoman state, while the West-centric camp usually ignored them all together as a negligible factor when compared to the enormity of the inherited Byzantine state. Both also seemed to overlook the lack of consensus regarding the unified nature of Oghuz, and Turkic, groups in general, as well as the uncertainty pertaining to the prevalence of Islam amongst these groups. This also came at a time when Turkish historians became the primary source of literature pertaining to Ottoman studies, and specifically the historiography of the early Ottoman state. Of the mid to late-20th-century historians who dealt with this topic, there were few whose works both addressed this divide within the academic space, as well as navigated it in an attempt to challenge misconceptions that the divide had created.

These polarised arguments were shaped by their contexts; ideological, political, scholarly and cultural shifts in discourses were important influences. Both Gibbons and Wittek were heavily influenced by many of the imperialistic, eurocentric views of early 20th-century Europe, which had long established the Ottoman state as both antagonistic to Europe's history, as well as being unoriginal in its foundations.[25] Wittek's works in particular are also noted for the growing influence of fascistic ideologies emerging from Central Europe, which placed external states in a notably antagonistic position when compared to those of other national identities.[26] Greater

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[23] P. Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire: Studies in the History of Turkey, thirteenth – fifteenth centuries*.

[24] L. P. Peirce, 'Changing Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire: The Early Centuries', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19(1), 2004, pp 6 – 22.

[25] L. P. Peirce, 'Changing Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire: The Early Centuries', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19(1), 2004, pp 6 – 22.

[26] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State,* pp. 50 – 58.

pseudoscientific discussions of race also played a role, both in the negativity shown to the Turks by European scholars, as well as in how Turkish literature tried to establish the Turkic-speaking groups as one of the distinct races of the world.[27] These narratives would only begin to be challenged, and thus shift in the post-colonial era, as states outside of the Global North began challenging its hegemony over historiography. These post-colonial challenges were particularly salient in understanding the shift away from Wittek's Ghazi thesis. Where previously Wittek had framed the Ottomans as the enemy of the West, post-coloniality sought to shift the narrative to one where the Ottomans were represented as champions of the East. At the same time, similar efforts were made to soften Gibbons' imperialist views with regard to the Ottoman's Byzantine heritage, though the argument remains, that contemporary West-centric Ottoman historiography still suffers from eurocentrism. Added to this, both works are orientalist in their framing of the Ottomans, as well as reductive in their interpretations, thus placing the Ottomans and the regions under their administration into an overly generalised, stagnant position as the primary, if not only, representation of the Islamic world.

This point on orientalism is important to understanding not only Gibbons and Wittek, but also several of the other sources in this discussion. While its presence as a viewpoint is most blatant in the earlier works on the Ottomans, it has still had an enormous effect on more contemporary works in both West- and East-centric camps which express simplistic and often generalised understandings of the Ottomans and their role as part of the Eastern and Islamic world. Thus, the seminal work of post-colonial scholar Edward W. Said provides the framework for understanding Orientalism, its foundations, and how it has affected discussions of the world outside of the West, especially with regards to the Middle East, Asia, and North Africa both historically and in the modern age.[28] This understanding, along with the discussion on Orientalism in Ottoman literature provided by historian Suraiya N. Faroqhi,[29] provide both a basis for the evaluation of sources used in this dissertation and a means by which the polarised Ottoman scholarship could be understood.

The importance of Faroqhi's work extends beyond the discussion of Orientalism, however. As suggested by the title, *Approaching Ottoman History: An Introduction to the Sources* serves as

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[27] A. Kadıoğlu, 'The paradox of Turkish nationalism and the construction of an official identity', *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(2), 1996, pp. 177 – 193.
[28] E. W. Said, 'Orientalism Reconsidered'. *Cultural Critique* 1(1), 1985, pp. 89 – 107.
[29] S. N. Faroqhi, *Approaching Ottoman History: An Introduction to the Sources*, 15 – 17.

an introduction to the literature on Ottoman Historiography.[30] However, rather than serving as a definitive literature review on the available scholarship, it is rather posited as a manual on how to work with and understand both primary and secondary sources on Ottoman history. For this reason, Faroqhi's work is important for understanding the different influences and biases which are present in the literature, including the benefits and constraints which they present. While not necessarily crucial to this study, Faroqhi's manual is still immensely beneficial in how it provides a concise reference to consult when working with the myriad of different sources on this topic.

One historian whose work is crucial to this research is Halil İnalcık. Born right at the very end of the Ottoman Empire and raised in the extremely nationalist setting of the new Türkiye, Halil İnalcık is credited as being the first to apply the lenses of social and economic analysis to studies of the Ottoman Empire. Added to this, his literature is also some of the first to place importance on the Oghuz Turkmen tribes within Anatolia as crucial actors in the shaping and expansion of the early Ottoman state. For these insights, and his continued efforts to work against external characterisations of the Ottomans, he the attention of Mehmet Fuat Köprülü. As a respected academic in Türkiye, Köprülü facilitated İnalcık's rise as an academic in the Ottoman historical field, thus facilitating his global recognition. As a result, İnalcık's work benefited from working directly off the earlier works of Köprülü, Wittek and others, whom he had the chance of meeting and learning from face to face. In particular, İnalcık's work on the position of the Oghuz Turkmen tribes, and their interaction with the Ottoman state, as well as his commentary on other sources and academics, plays a vital role in the discussions within this study.[31]

Following on from İnalcık, another influential Turkish historian whose work is vital to this study is a former student of İnalcık, Cemal Kafadar. Unlike İnalcık who retired in the early 2000s, Kafader has had the opportunity to interact with a Turkish academic space not only impacted by the Kemalist sentiments of the early Turkish Republic, but also the Neo-Ottomanist sentiments of modern Türkiye. In particular, his work *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*,[32] presents many of the arguments made in Ottoman historiography over the previous century, while adding further depth to them as well. Kafadar's

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[30] S. N. Faroqhi, *Approaching Ottoman History: An Introduction to the Sources*, pp. 21 – 25.

[31] H. İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*.

[32] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State.*

unique contribution is in how his work champions the idea of 'cultural hybridity,' which is a key theme within this particular study as well. On the one hand, the work describes the Ottoman Empire as a melting pot of cultures and traditions, out of which unique cultural identities that would have otherwise not come into being, were able to form. His discussions of some of the cultural changes within the empire, such as Mehmed's mass resettlement of Turks, Byzantines and Jews following his capture of Constantinople, and how these actions deviated from the traditional interests and views of his Turkman vassals.[33] This information gives us key evidence as to the place that specific Turkic traditions had in governance prior to and following this event.

Kafader's contribution to this study extends to his discussion of specific hybrid cultural identities within the Ottoman state, such as the *Rūmī*.[34] His discussion on the matter, in this instance, is done in conjunction with the works of Turkish historian Feride Asli Ergul and Russian historian Dimitri Korobeinkov. Both academics contribute unique views on the different aspects of the *Rūmī* identity and its origins. As a cultural identity intrinsically tied with the Ottoman state, and the Oghuz Turkmen, the study of this identity and how it emerged is vital to this dissertation. This is because it provides a very specific understanding of Ottoman cultural identity not often discussed outside the polarised lenses of the East- and West-centric debate. This is especially owed to the fact that the *Rūmī* identity was not only a product of the empire, but was also one which was distinctly not the culture of the ruling Ottoman military elite or Oghuz Turkmen tribes either. Considering how discussions of Ottoman culture are usually dominated by analysis of pre-existing Byzantine or Medieval Islamic groups, or with the culture of the ruling dynasty, the *Rūmī* identity provides a uniquely distinct, though not fully understood, point to analyse for this study. Ergul's work in this matter largely supports Kafader's findings, while also focusing the discussion on how Turks who identified as *Rūmī* framed themselves in relation to the rest of the cultures within the empire and the rest of the Muslim world.[35] Korobeinkov, on the other hand, discusses the roots of the *Rūmī* identity as

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[33] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 172 – 173.

[34] C. Kafadar, 'A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum', *Muqarnas* 24(1), 2007, pp. 7 – 25.

[35] F. A. Ergul, "The Ottoman identity: Turkish, Muslim or Rum?", *Middle Eastern Studies* 48(4), 2012, pp. 629-645.

an originally Anatolian Greek group that rural Turkmen came to be adopted into, thus causing a shift in their identity.[36]

However, the Ottomans and Seljuks, as well as the Oghuz in general, exist as part of the greater topic of Turkic peoples and histories. While this conception of Turkic speaking groups as an ethnicity has been seen as problematic to their study in recent years, it is nonetheless important to understand that it has also dictated the nature of how they have been studied and understood prior to this point. As such, this study has to engage with the history of the Turkic-speaking world as an ethnic group as well, in order to be as thorough as possible. To this end, the works of one of the foremost experts on Turkic peoples, Peter Benjamin Golden, form a crucial part of their discussion in this study.[37] Throughout the late 20th and early 21st centuries, Golden produced numerous studies on the Turkic-speaking groups of history. His numerous works detail their histories, cultures, beliefs, and mythologies as they're best understood by us today. As this study seeks to understand precisely who the Oghuz Turks were in order to best illuminate the evidence of their influence on Ottoman culture, understanding the historical background of this group, and their ancestors, is vital. However, the interaction with Golden's work is done with the understanding that it was produced during a time when the Turks were conceptualised as an ethnic identity, rather than the idea of them as a group of primarily linguistically linked peoples today.

To provide a substantive sounding board to Golden's work, several different historians covering the same topics during similar points in history are also consulted. One of the individuals whose work acts in this capacity is that of Carter V. Findley, who also covers the history of Turkic speaking groups in his work *The Turks in World History*.[38] Findley's work not only corroborates many of the points found in Golden's studies, but also expands the discussion to the role of religion, and in particular, Islam, in certain Turkic groups. Following a similar line of discussion is the work of Andrew C. S. Peacock,[39] who specifically explores the Ottoman forebear state of the Seljuk Empire of Iran. As the formation of the Seljuk Empire represents a crucial point in the history of the Oghuz tribes, his work is vital in understanding

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[36] D. A. Korobeninkov, 'How 'Byzantine' Were the Early Ottomans? Bithynia in ca. 1290 – 1450.', *in* I. V. Zaitsev and S. F. Oreshkov (eds.) *The Ottoman World and Ottoman Studies*, pp. 215 - 239.
[37] P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East.*
[38] C. V. Findley, *The Turks in World History.*
[39] A. C. S. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire.*

how the Seljuks functioned, what their relationship was like with Islam, and how this impacted the formation of the Ottoman state later in history.

The actual history of the early Ottoman state, therefore, is the next point that this study has to elucidate. In order to do this, the works of two prominent Ottoman historians are also consulted. The first is the work of Heath W. Lowry. [40] This work discusses and elaborates on many of the arguments made not only in the older literature, but in many of the debates featured in the more modern literature as well. His primary argument places emphasis on the Seljuk style of governance with definite Byzantine Christian influences as the best explanation of how the early Ottoman state was formed and operated. Alongside him, working within the same historical period is historian Colin Imber.[41] Imber's work specifically engages with founding Ottoman figures, such as Osman, and how they influenced later trends in Ottoman historiography. Both historians also provide in-depth discussions regarding the nature of the polarised academic discussion on this topic, as well as the history of the discourse itself. They are also both noted for their staunch opposition to Wittek's *Ghazi thesis*, which helps establish what side of the debate they fall into.

Another requirement of this study is developing a historical overview of the Oghuz Turks as a group, both to understand the development of their culture, and how they came to be an integral part of Anatolian politics. The two pieces of literature chosen for this purpose are Claus Schönig's *Observations on the Oghuz Immigration to Anatolia*,[42] and Scott Levi's chapter 'Turks and Tajiks in Central Asian History,' in the book *Everyday Life in Central Asia: Past and Present*,[43] which both discuss Oghuz history throughout their time in Transoxiana, Iran, and Anatolia. The latter provides an excellent overview of the history of Turkic-speaking groups in the region, as well as the defining split between the Oghuz Turks and other similar groups such as the Cumans, Tajiks and Kazars. The former, as the name would suggest, provides historical insights into the Oghuz migration from Transoxiana and Iran into Anatolia, where they became a prominent force in the region for centuries to come. Both texts provide

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[40] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State.*
[41] C. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300 – 1650: The Structure of Power.*
[42] C. Schönig, 'Some Observations on the Oghuz Immigration to Anatolia'. *Türk Dilleri Araştirmalari* 21(2), 2011, pp, 183 – 204.
[43] S. Levi, 'Turks and Tajiks in Central Asian History', *in* J. Sahadeo, and R. Zanca, (eds.) *Everyday Life in Central Asia: Past and Present*.

some information on the Oghuz Turks and their culture with a historical foundation, which provides context to the role they played in founding the Ottoman state.

When discussing topics such as Turkic mythology and its role in shaping Oghuz culture, there are few English sources outside of P. B Golden. As such, it has been difficult to cross-check many of the points made in Golden's works, or to find further information on topics he does not discuss in depth.[44] This is why the work of Éva Kincses-Nagy is so vital to this study, given its ability to provide alternate or corroborating information on Turkic mythology. Further, it also discusses how the Oghuz, and subsequently, Seljuks and Ottomans, interacted with Turkic mythology, and the role it played in their worldview.[45] As Turkic mythology is so poorly understood by many, and the sources which do discuss it are so few and far between, Kincses-Nagy's discussion on the sources of Turkic myth, and the figures mentioned within, play an incredibly important role in understanding the topic. This point is particularly important when discussing matters of Ottoman legitimacy, as well as the worldview of the Oghuz Turkmen. It also, subsequently, provides background for how these figures are used in modern Turkish politics, which influences many different aspects of this study.

On the topic of modern Turkish politics, several sources on topics relating to modern Türkiye were also consulted as part of this research. As Turkish academia is one of, if not the, primary source for most Ottoman historiography, understanding the modern context of Türkiye and the prevalent ideologies are crucial to understanding many of the sentiments influencing Ottoman studies. To provide an overview of the general history of the modern state, historians Erik Zürcher[46] and Stanford J. Shaw[47] are consulted, while various other articles discussing the specifics of the different Turkish ideologies and how they present both in the Turkish public and in Turkish academia are used. The works of Ayşe Kadıoğlu,[48] Yağmur Karakaya,[49] Metin Heper,[50] and others, illuminate the Turkish ideological landscape, and with this in mind, the

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[44] P. B. Golden, 'The Ethnogonic Tales of the Türks', *The Medieval History Journal* 21(1), 2018. pp. 291 – 327.

[45] É, Kincses-Nagy, 'The Islamization of the Legend of the Turks: The Case of *Oghuznāma*,' *Studia Uralo-Altica* 53(1) 2020, pp. 125 – 136.

[46] E. J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*.

[47] S. J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*.

[48] A. Kadioğlu, 'The paradox of Turkish nationalism and the construction of an official identity', *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(2), 1996, pp. 177 – 193.

[49] Y. Karakaya, 'Between neo-Ottomanism and Ottomania: navigating state-led and popular culture representations of the past', *New perspectives on Turkey* 56(1), 2017, pp. 37 – 41.

[50] M. Heper, 'Kemalism/Atatürkism.', *The Routledge handbook of modern Turkey* 1(1), 2012, pp, 143 – 144.

rest of the study can be conducted with a clear understanding as to precisely how these different biases and interpretations have affected the historiography.

Another important article on this topic was written by historian Gábor Ágoston. This article takes an in-depth look at the rise of the 'Classical Centralised Ottoman Government' following the fall of Constantinople, and how it differs from both the Ottoman and Byzantine governments.[51] This work specifically looks at the governmental, bureaucratic and infrastructure changes during this period, as well as detailing the processes of taxation, levying armies and establishment of vassals. The article is crucial from the point of view of analysing how the empire changed during this period to the point where it differed significantly from previous Islamic or Byzantine systems. For this point, it provides an argument as to how these differences could be accounted for through Turkic influence. It is also one of few works which specifically discusses the systems that the Ottomans put in place to manage nomadic Turkmen vassals. These latter elements in particular would show the degree of understanding that the Ottomans still retained of their nomadic past, especially in so far as protocol and cultural sensitivity toward the Turkmen beys was concerned.

Other Turkish historians who discuss various aspects pertaining to Oghuz Turkic culture, and the Turkmen in Anatolia's history, are F. Esin Özalp[52] and İlan Şahin.[53] In particular, they provide some of the few sources which directly engage with the Oghuz outside of their relationship as Ottoman or Seljuk vassals, which is necessary for this study's ability to construct ideas about Oghuz culture which can be identified in the rest of the literature surrounding this topic. Other key supporting works extend to discussions of some of the most notable Ottoman leaders during the time focus of this study. Some of these works are provided by Güneş Işıksel[54] and Andre Clot,[55] whose works detail much of the life and actions of the Ottoman sultan Suleiman I and John Freely[56] detail the same aspects with regard to Mehmed II. As Ottoman culture came into its own as a recognisable entity under these two leaders, this study's ability to understand them and their actions historically is vital to being able to discuss

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[51] G, Agoston, "A flexible empire: authority and its limits on the Ottoman frontiers", *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 9(2), 2003, pp. 15-32.
[52] F. E. Özalp, *A historical and semantical study of Turkmens and Turkmen Tribes.*
[53] I. Şahin, *Osmanlı Döneminde Konar-Göçerler/Nomads in the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 227 – 252.
[54] G. Işıksel, 'Suleiman the Magnificent', *in* G. Martel (ed.) *The Encyclopaedia of Diplomacy*.
[55] A. Clot, *Suleiman the Magnificent*.
[56] J. Freely, *The Grand Turk*.

their contributions to that culture. These works also help highlight how the divided scholarship has perceived these figures historically.

Finally, but certainly not least in this study, are the works of renowned historian Leslie Peirce. To start, her most notable work, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire,* provides perhaps the most detailed insight into the gendered aspects of Ottoman culture.[57] In particular, it provides us with the capacity to compare and contrast the roles of women within the Ottoman power structures with women acting in similar positions throughout both Europe and the Middle East historically. This comparative approach firstly signals that women in the Ottoman ruling class were not unique in the positions they occupied, and secondly it reflects points of continuity and breaks with the larger world surrounding the Ottomans. The hope is that, in doing this, the influences of Turkic culture in how the House of Osman operates can be extrapolated. Aside from this, Peirce is also responsible for writing one of the most recent and critical articles discussing the academic field of early Ottoman studies.[58] In the article, not only does she provide insight into the contemporary health of the debate, but also gives some well-argued criticism for how it has been conducted over the decades in a way few other academics do.

As noted previously, when discussing the history of a culture, or cultural identities, it is also important to work with a framework which clearly identifies what culture means in the study. As mentioned, while it would be simple to turn to the work of Edward Tylor for a simple definition of the term, that definition does not fully encompass the complexity of culture as we understand it in our modern context. For that reason, the definition of culture used in this work is built from a combination of Tylor's original definition and those discussed by contemporary anthropologists. Clifford Geertz's study in this field looks at how culture is approached in academia, with his work *Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture* specifically analysing how culture has been studied historically in the anthropological field, and the failings of how prescriptive it can be.[59] The work analyses how small subset studies are often incorrectly applied to whole groups, in an attempt to forgo the complexity and enormity of cultures and their deviations, while subsequent studies usually re-tread the same

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[57] L. P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire.*
[58] L. P. Peirce, 'Changing Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire: The Early Centuries', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19(1), 2004, pp 6 – 22.
[59] C. Geertz, *Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture.*

ground, rather than continuing to escalate their investigations. This work, which argues in favour of broader studies of culture, working with looser frames for cultural signifiers rather than strict categories and correlations, provides a framework for deconstructing the current essentialist arguments for Ottoman culture. As such, this work provides direction on how to investigate Turkic culture as an aspect of Ottoman culture, without necessarily requiring a focused study of a single, isolated Ottoman system or practice. This is all before even discussing his work *Religion as a Cultural System*, which discusses the various ways in which Religion, and the practice thereof, is both the product of culture and an influence on it at the same time. This study is of enormous benefit when discussing the possible roles Tengrism, Islam, and Byzantine Orthodox Christianity, had on shaping Ottoman culture.[60]

Alongside Geertz, the study also looks at the work of the late Stuart Hall. As is pointed out in an article written after his passing, Hall had been an important proponent of understanding how class, hierarchy, politics and hegemony were not fixed entities which negotiated with one another in cultural systems, but rather that they were far more fluid and as dependent on the cultural systems they existed in.[61] This insight in particular would be very important in a discussion of the Ottoman social and dynastic structures, from which we get much of our information on Ottoman culture. Alongside this are also his views on how cultural research should be conducted, with a focus on how interdisciplinary approaches should emphasise the use of supple theory which is not dogmatic in its description of culture. He believed that interdisciplinary studies should rather be suggestive and created through a variety of complimentary and collaborative studies. Once again, this particular point works well with the discussion of Kafadar's cultural hybridity of the Ottoman Empire and allows for a study of sources from a variety of bases.

There are, of course, sources which do not feature in this literature review that are also used within this study. However, what this overview of the primary literature does is explain and highlight key aspects which each source and academic provides to this study. While no one source is all-encompassing, they all fill in vital gaps and information in the literature to create as complete an understanding of the topic, and the academic debate surrounding it, as possible. They either do this by forming part of the divided literature discussed in this study, or analysing

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[60] C. Geertz 'Religion as a cultural system,' *in* C. Geertz, (ed.) *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays.*
[61] J. Clarke, 'Conjunctures, crises, and cultures: Valuing Stuart Hill'. *Focaal – Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology* 70(1), 2014, pp. 113 – 122.

that division while providing their own views on the matter. There are also other sources on this topic which were not included in this study, either due to the constraints of availability due to the Covid-19 pandemic, or because more contemporary and well-cited works were available.

Methodology

This study is a qualitative content analysis of the existing historiographical literary sources pertaining to the previously stated time period and context. This content analysis explores the polarised academic debate surrounding the cultural origins of the Ottoman state. It also investigates how this debate has approached the topic of Oghuz Turkic culture in the existing historiographic literature pertaining to the culture of the Ottoman state. It also proposes approaches to addressing possible gaps in the literature surrounding this topic. In particular, this methodology is used in the pursuit of creating an understanding as to what is and is not known about the cultural composition of the Ottoman state. Specifically, this is done with respect to Ottoman culture observed from its foundation in 1299 to the height of its power in 1566. It also elucidates the relationship between the Ottoman state and its Oghuz Turkic roots as the topic is discussed in the sources. With this established, and based on the preliminary findings, it also explains why any gaps in this understanding may exist, as well as how they can be addressed. This is done with the intention to add to the academic debate on the topic in such a way that facilitates better and more holistic discussion, in the hopes of attaining a better understanding of the topic as a whole.

To this end, this research will make use of an extensive list of secondary sources and literature, given that it is primarily a historiographical review of the topic. As such, both the early scholarship on these topics, as well as more modern sources, will be analysed to provide a holistic understanding of the Ottoman state. It will also explain where the possible gaps neglecting Oghuz Turkic influence may have begun in this scholarship, if any exist, as well as how those possible gaps have been addressed or continued to be neglected over the course of time. For this, the early sources provide the basis upon which later discussions and debates are based. Though these sources are limited in their applicability to the current state of the scholarship, they have been instrumental in establishing the tradition of a polarized and limited historiographic space around this topic. The primary material for this study, as such, comes from the much more detailed and expansive sources which arise later to the 20th and early 21st centuries. These sources work off the foundation set by the earlier works and provide far more

detailed and balanced analyses of the topic through the introduction of new evidence, and re-examination of the older works. This analysis focuses primarily on the representation of Oghuz Turkic culture in the literature, both in so far as it is, and is not, discussed.

It is once again reiterated that this research is predominantly an extended literature review, intended to evaluate existing literature, their different arguments, and their role in shaping discourses of the Ottoman Empire and its nomadic Oghuz Turkic roots. There are thus minimal ethical implications since the study does not engage with oral histories or interviews. The researcher is mindful of the broader ethical implications of academic honesty and integrity, as well as the consequences of plagiarism and dishonesty. As such, the researcher undertakes to fully cite all sources and references which form part of the research, and to only submit original and credible work.

Chapter Outline

This first chapter of the dissertation is a revised version of the original research proposal, including a revised introduction, re-examined research aims, an overview of the literature, and a comprehensive list of key concepts and methodologies.

The second chapter of the dissertation is a historiographical overview of the Oghuz Turks, their origins, and their development as a group until the founding of the Ottoman state. This is done in order to provide a background and foundation for understanding the primary cultural influence. This discussion highlights key elements of the Oghuz whilst detailing the history of their migration across Eurasian Steppes, through Transoxiana and Iran, before finally ending in Anatolia. These key elements include, but are not limited to, their political structures and organisation, their beliefs, their origins, and what is known of their culture and mythology. Analysis of these specific elements helps to not only establish the context which led to the rise of the House of Osman, and thus the Ottomans, but also makes it easier to track the developments of these specifically Oghuz practices in later stages of their history.

Chapter three of the dissertation is an in-depth historiographical overview of the Ottoman state itself, from its founding until the end of the suggested 'Golden Age' following the death of Suleiman I in 1566. This analysis continues the observed development of the Oghuz Turkic

cultural systems established in the previous chapter, while also introducing the gradual influence brought by the other two primary cultural contributors to the Ottoman Empire, the Byzantine Roman and Medieval Islamic cultures. This overview begins with the rise of the House of Osman and the establishment of the Ottoman beylik in Anatolia, as the very historical point from which a specifically Ottoman culture becomes notable. It then includes a special focus on the period prior to and following Mehmed II's conquest and capture of Constantinople, as the point where the Ottoman state transitioned into being an empire. It then discusses the way in which the culture and behaviour of the empire begin to change under Suleiman's reign, becoming a distinct entity. It finally ends with a discussion of some of the broader perceptions of the empire and its cultural preoccupations following Suleiman's death. In this way, this chapter covers the pivotal eras in which what would become Ottoman culture is formed from its various influences, while also seeing the apex of the state's development before the beginning of its gradual decline.

The fourth chapter of the dissertation is dedicated entirely to the discussion of Ottoman historiography in the modern state of Türkiye. This is done with the intention of not only explaining many of the ideological influences which affect Turkish Ottoman scholarship, but also how precisely these ideologies shape the common conceptions and general views of the Ottomans. As such, it analyses the two main ideologies of Kemalism and Neo-Ottomanism, including elements of their origins, defining characteristics, and general effects on academia. This then leads to a discussion of their presence in modern Turkish society and how that in turn affects public understanding and views of the Ottomans and studies of them in Türkiye, both positively and negatively. This last aspect will specifically include an analysis of various points in Turkish society and life where misconceptions of the Ottomans are most prevalent, such as in popular media and national narratives, and how they are brought about by these ideologies.

Chapter five is dedicated to the elements of Oghuz Turkic culture which can be observed in Ottoman culture during this study's chosen time period. Following the discussions in the previous three chapters, elements of Oghuz Turkic culture in the Ottoman Empire will have been highlighted, either through its mention or absence in the literature. The examination in this chapter, therefore, seeks to explain these practices in terms of how culture has been defined in this study, whilst also accounting for how these practices have been approached and understood historically. It also explains why there may be some gaps in understanding certain practices, as well as how possible misconceptions of these practices may exist due to the

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polarised academic debate surrounding this topic. It accomplishes these aims by first looking at how Oghuz culture was seen and expressed in the practices of the House of Osman and the Ottoman ruling elite, and then by looking at how it was expressed within the general population. This approach has been taken in line with the established definition of culture which does not analyse practices in a vacuum, but in relation to other practices and the society and hierarchy, they exist within. This chapter ends with a discussion on why these elements of Oghuz culture are not given greater attention in the wider discourse surrounding the early Ottoman state.

With the sixth and final chapter, the dissertation concludes by using evidence from the previous chapters to point out any clear gaps which exist in the dichotomous literature on the culture of the Ottoman Empire pertaining to its Oghuz roots. From there, it explains why these gaps may exist, and to which side or aspect of the debate the existence of these potential gaps may be attributed. It is further discussed how much Ottoman historiography potentially suffers from these gaps, as well as how it has led to many further misconceptions to this day. It also makes a final argument for a more balanced discussion on the cultural influences of the Ottoman state, while encouraging the view of the Ottoman Empire as a meeting point of cultures and groups, rather than as an entity to be owned by one specific study of history or another.

At the end of the dissertation is a collection of three maps. The first map outlines the migration of Turkic-speaking groups from the Eastern Steppe through the region of Transoxiana and into Iran and Anatolia. The second is a detailed map of the Ottoman provinces of Anatolia and Rumelia, including their cities and boundaries. The final map is of the Levant, Egypt, and the Arabian Peninsula, which highlights the territories under Ottoman control in the east. These maps have not been used as sources and are provided as reference points for the reader.

Chapter Two:
From the Altai to Anatolia

The Origins of the Oghuz

The origins of the Oghuz Turks, the ethnic forebears of the modern Turkish peoples of Anatolia, is believed to be rooted in the proto-Turkic, proto-Mongolian and Tungistic peoples who inhabited the region of the Eastern Eurasian Steppe and Manchuria in the millennia BCE. It is here that these early societies developed the distinctive lifestyles and languages which defined them culturally throughout the passage of time, as they would go on to spread across the vastness of Eurasia. Among these groups were believed to be the earliest Turkic societies, which are identified by the literature as the precursors to the numerous groups, clans, tribes, khaganates, and peoples who fall under the Turkic linguistic and cultural umbrella. While some of these groups loom large in the histories of the region, such as the Khazars of the Ukrainian Steppe, or the Göktürks and Uyghurs of the East, it is arguable that few have had as profound an effect on the shape of the modern world as the Oghuz Turks. These distinctive Turkic peoples would be the group whose tribes would later found the ruling dynasties of both the Seljuk Sultanates of Persia and Anatolia, as well as the later Ottoman state.[62]

This grand description of the Turks as a historical collection of ethnically and culturally similar peoples is not without its problems and controversy, however. Indeed, much of the modern discussion surrounding the Turks has been heavily influenced by the nationalist projects undertaken by Kemal Atatürk during the early 20th century, which sought to establish the different Turkic groups throughout history as a historically similar, homogenous entity. While applauded at the time, modern scholars have argued that this narrative, which placed Türkiye as guardians of Turkic peoples across the world through fraternal bonds, created oversimplified and often problematic understandings of what were and are likely disparate groups with only loose historical association.[63] One of the only points of commonality that these groups truly shared are the loose links to the proto-Turkic language, which itself is a deviation from the

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[62] P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East,* pp. 205 – 207.

[63] A. Kadioğlu, 'The paradox of Turkish nationalism and the construction of an official identity', *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(2), 1996, pp. 177 – 193.

greater Altaic language group that is only vaguely understood to this day.[64] As such, modern scholars, especially those outside of Turkish academia, caution against the view of the Turkic ancestral tree as anything other than loosely connected branches with circumstantial bonds at best. While much of the discussion of the Oghuz works within a framework that establishes them as a prominent and defining core of the 'Turkic' people, that understanding is one subject to substantial criticism.[65]

Despite this uncertainty around the very nature of 'Turks' as a historical, cultural and ethnic grouping, the Oghuz Turks and their culture remain at the heart of understanding the early Ottoman state, and the foundations upon which it was built. Though how much of that cultural heritage is applicable to the concept of the greater Turkic identity is in question, it is still necessary to understand and discuss in order to flesh out Oghuz culture itself prior to the rise of the House of Osman. As such, this chapter focuses on the literature surrounding the origins of the Oghuz Turks who found the Ottoman state. The mythological and ancient underpinnings of Turkic society, analysing the role of the Seljuks as a forebear state, and discussing the migration of the Oghuz into Anatolia following the Battle of Manzikert, are key focus areas in the scholarship and this discussion.

World of the Early Eastern Eurasian Steppe

As established earlier, the Oghuz Turks are believed to find their ancestry in the proto-Turkic and proto-Mongolian groups who inhabited the area between the Altai Mountains and Manchuria in Eastern Asia.[66] However, as was also established, this link is far from being a clear and traceable one, as it relies heavily on the study of linguistics in the absence of archaeological or historical data. Added to that, whatever linguistic evidence does exist is not entirely certain either. Debate rages on whether the proto-Turkic, proto-Mongolic and Tungusic groups, which the Altaic language groups split into, begin as the same peoples, or simply share a common region and external linguistic source.[67] As such, while genetic studies place common

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[64] S. Georg, P. A. Michalove, A. M. Ramer & P. J. Sidwell, 'Telling general linguists about Altaic,' Journal of Linguistics 35(1), 1999, pp. 65 – 98.

[65] A. Kadıoğlu, 'The paradox of Turkish nationalism and the construction of an official identity', *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(2), 1996, pp. 185 – 187.

[66] P. B. Golden, & C. Hriban, *Studies on the Peoples and Cultures of the Eurasian Steppes*, pp. 99 - 111.

[67] S. Georg, P. A. Michalove, A. M. Ramer & P. J. Sidwell, 'Telling general linguists about Altaic,' Journal of Linguistics 35(1), 1999, pp. 65 – 98.

ancestry within this area of the world, the precise nature of the cultural divisions, how they came about and their early significance remains elusive to modern academia. This confusion extends to the eventual split within the proto-Turkic group later on, as the different strains of the Turkic language branch out of the region. While 'Turkic' groups took their languages as far west as the Carpathian Mountains, there is little evidence claiming that these groups shared anything more than a common linguistic foundation. This is a view which runs counter to the narrative developed in the early 20th century in Türkiye,[68] which often maintains in its literature that there were strong ties between all the Turkic-speaking groups who emerged from the Altai Mountains, and even with the Mongol and Tungusic groups who shared the region as well.

As far as the linguistic evidence can be discussed, it depicts a common language group associated with a society of people who, due to their description in ancient sources and efforts of modern political ideologies, came to be defined by the ethnonym 'Turk.'[69] However, as mentioned, the descriptor of ethnonym can be misleading in this case, as while there is tangential DNA and historiographical evidence linking the groups who are described as 'Turks,' the primary evidence linking them is their language. As previously mentioned, and discussed, the issue with this is that languages, while a part of a culture, can be easily adapted and transplanted into groups with little to no actual or substantial ethnic or cultural links to other users of that language.[70] With this point aside, the common 'family tree' of Turkic peoples that is built by the study of the evolution of Turkic languages points to a group of people on the Eastern Eurasian Steppe known as the Tiele as the first recorded Turkic-speaking peoples.[71] This group existed as part of the greater Xiongnu Confederacy, which incorporated numerous Steppe peoples of the East, and itself was of unknown or questionable ethnic and cultural makeup and origin.[72] Through this, the Turkic language appears to have expanded, until groups who spoke Turkic languages comprised a large portion of the next Steppe confederation, known as the Rouran Khaganate. Through the Rouran, various words of East Asian origin, such as the title of Khagan itself, entered as part of the Turkic vocabulary, and a part of the known Turkic culture, as the aforementioned title became a key symbol of power

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[68] A. Kadioğlu, 'The paradox of Turkish nationalism and the construction of an official identity', *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(2), 1996, pp. 177 – 193.

[69] P. B. Golden, 'The Ethnogonic Tales of the Türks', *The Medieval History Journal* 21(1), 2018. pp. 291 – 327.

[70] D. W. Anthony, *The Horse, the Wheel, and Language: How Bronze Age Raiders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World,* pp. 208 – 213.

[71] C. Fangyi, 'The research on the identification between Tiele (鐵勒) and the Oғuric Tribes', *in* T. T. Allsen, P. B. Golden, R. K. Kovalev and A. P. Martinez (eds.), *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi,* pp. 81 – 113.

[72] N. Ishjatms, 'Nomads in Eastern Central Asia', *History of civilizations of Central Asia*, 2(1), 1996, p. 166.

among Turkic-speaking groups.[73] The final step in this early linguistic evolution is with the first confederation that was led by Turkic-speaking, and Turkic-identifying, people; the Göktürks. It is proposed that the power and prevalence of the Göktürks allowed for the eventual 'explosion' of Turkic-speaking people into world history, as its disintegration is argued to have facilitated the mass migration of numerous, distinct Turkic-speaking groups across Eurasia.[74] However, once again, there is precious little evidence within the literature for what, beyond their language, is culturally common across these different groups and societies.

What is common in the literature discussing these groups, however, is the argument for how these groups were organised at a societal level. Like most groups which originate from the Eurasian Steppe, it is believed that the proto-Turkic people and their ancestors practised nomadic pastoralism and built their lifestyles and societies around that practice. It is a common lifestyle that is believed to have existed on the Eurasian Steppe for thousands of years, which the literature highlights as a binding factor between the proto-Turks and the first Oghuz Turks, as well as other groups such as the Mongols, Scythians, and many more.[75] It is believed that due to the region's climate, groups were required to constantly move between grazing areas in order to maintain their livestock and, by that very nature, their existence. The grazing sites of the Steppe, due to its vast and arid expanses, were few and far between as estuaries were usually seasonal, and lay between the extreme heats of the Gobi Desert to the south, and freezing colds of the Siberian Taiga to the north. In such an area, the only reliable source of food came from foraged vegetation, and the dairy products they could produce from livestock, which would be supplemented with game meat caught during their migrations.[76] Due to the difficult nature of this lifestyle, these early groups would not flourish in this region without two key societal shifts that distinguished Steppe nomadic pastoralism from other similar societies. First among these shifts, according to the literature, is the domestication of the Przewalski Horse in around 4800 BCE,[77] which caused the mass adoption of the creature by these societies. This event was coupled with the horse itself, and the practice of its domestication, rapidly spreading east and southwards from the Western Steppe. The second shift would be the invention of the composite

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[73] A. Vovin. 'Once again on the etymology of the title Qayan', *Studia Eytmologica Cracoviensia* 12(1), 2007, pp. 177 – 187.

[74] C. V. Findley, *The Turks in World History,* pp. 42 – 47.

[75] P. B. Golden, *Studies on the Peoples and Cultures of the Eurasian Steppes*, pp. 48 - 63.

[76] P. B. Golden, *Studies on the Peoples and Cultures of the Eurasian Steppes*, pp. 65 - 82.

[77] D. W. Anthony, *The Horse, the Wheel, and Language: How Bronze-Age Raiders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World,* pp. 208 – 213.

bow in the Ancient Near East in around 3000 BCE, which provided these, now highly mobile groups, with a tool to hunt, herd and combat rival groups more effectively.[78]

The combination of horse and bow became the defining characteristic of Steppe peoples, as they developed their societies around using both tools to effectively traverse the expanses of their environment in a manner which allowed them to expand and flourish in the absence of a settled, agrarian lifestyle and culture. In many ways, the combination of speed and range allowed Steppe societies to outclass the rudimentary militaries of early settled societies, and as such, during times of hardship in the region, these Steppe societies could very effectively shift to raiding their settled neighbours for the supplies that they lacked.[79] It is primarily through actions like these that scholars argue the Steppe societies were even able to enter recorded history, as settled societies documented their often-hostile interactions with these groups. In the West, societies of the Ancient Near East and Europe recorded barbaric destruction wrought by societies like the Scythians and Sarmatians, while in the East, the Ancient Chinese sources recorded both amicable and hostile interactions with groups such as the Xiongnu Confederacy, the Rouran Khaganate, and the alleged forebear state to most other Turkic groups, the Göktürks.[80] The important aspect to highlight with these groups is that they were described and understood in these ways primarily due to their friction with settled societies, whose descriptions of these peoples would go unverified for centuries as the Steppe societies seldom recorded their own histories. Thus, the prevailing image of raiding, nomadic groups of horse archers which colours most of what we know of these groups during this time is one provided by a biased lens. Further, it is a lens which itself seldomly provides further discussion of the cultural practices and ethnic makeup of these groups beyond their role in the perceived hostility. Even the more detailed Chinese records, which sought to further differentiate the groups linguistically, only ever managed to do so in a superficial manner.[81]

This is not to say that every aspect of early Steppe history comes from external sources looking in on these nomadic societies. As some of these groups grew to great prominence, they were able to enlist the skills of those within their domains to record their history as they understood

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[78] K. C. Randall, *Origins and Comparative Performance of the Composite* Bow, pp. 60 - 63.

[79] D. W. Anthony, *The Horse, the Wheel, and Language: How Bronze Age Raiders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World,* pp. 234 – 237.

[80] C. V. Findley, *The Turks in World History,* pp. 44 – 46

[81] C. Fangyi, 'The research on the identification between Tiele (鐵勒) and the Oγuric Tribes', *in* T. T. Allsen, P. B. Golden, R. K. Kovalev and A. P. Martinez (eds.), *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi,* pp. 81 – 113.

it, but through the languages and writings of settled societies. This is the case seen with the works of the Persian scholar Rashid al-Din in the early 14th century, who had been employed by the Mongol ruler of the Ilkhanate, Ghazan Khan.[82] By working with Rashid al-Din, the Mongols were able to create a written record of various oral accounts of mythology and history shared by the Mongols and Turks for the first time. This would create the basis for much of what is known to this day of these early societies and how they understood the world. For the various Turkic-speaking groups, these histories form part of the collection of legends and myths known as the *Oghuznāma*.[83] Though not a single, cohesive work, the *Oghuznāma* forms the basis of what is recorded and understood of early Turkic history and belief after much of this knowledge was lost over centuries. This erasure of earlier Turkic identity is often attributed to the issues which plague oral tradition, as well as the gradual adoption of Islam by most Turkic-speaking groups which migrated west from the Altai mountains. It is for this reason that this most precious collection of information is also treated with some degree of scepticism by historians, as much of what is claimed to be Turkic is adapted from the Mongol legends which were recorded. While the legends may have been similar, the record of these legends was still skewed by the Mongol patronage behind their recording, as well as the medieval Persian and Islamic lenses through which Rashid al-Din saw the world when he created his *Jāmiʿ al-Tawārīkh*.[84]

To add further complexity to our understanding of Turkic mythology and Turkic origins, many of the stories that Rashid al-Din recorded were themselves accounts given by scholars from other settled societies. Though corroborated by the oral traditions of the Mongols and Turks, these legends are nonetheless still difficult to interpret with any great degree of certainty. Two of the legends most important to the constructed identity of the Turks, and specifically to the Oghuz, are the legends of the *Ergenekon* and of *Oghuz Khan*. The first of these is the Turko-Mongolian foundation myth,[85] while the other pertains to the first great Turkic leader, who supposedly established the Turkic peoples as a great force within the world.[86] Both of these myths from the *Oghuznāma* suffer from the aforementioned issues of authenticity which make

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[82] É, Kincses-Nagy, 'The Islamization of the Legend of the Turks: The Case of *Oghuznāma*,' *Studia Uralo-Altica* 53(1), 2020, pp. 125 – 136.

[83] É, Kincses-Nagy, 'The Islamization of the Legend of the Turks: The Case of *Oghuznāma*,' *Studia Uralo-Altica* 53(1), 2020, pp. 125 – 136.

[84] H. C. Güzel, C. Oguz, O. Karatay and M. Ocak, *The Turks: Early Ages*, pp. 75 – 77.

[85] H. C. Güzel, C. Oguz, O. Karatay and M. Ocak, *The Turks: Early Ages*, pp. 75 – 77.

[86] P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East,* pp. 205 – 207.

them difficult to link directly to the Turkic peoples in a substantial way. The myth of the *Ergenekon* was constructed by Rashid al-Din through two separate accounts, known as the Wolf Tales, given to him by Chinese sources. It is one of the only sources which features the mythical she-wolf known as Asena. Yet, despite the ambiguity of its origin, as well as the clearly borrowed and reinterpreted aspects shared with the Mongol myth and its figure of Borte-Chino, Asena has featured with disproportionate prominence in Turkish literature discussing the unique cultural heritage of the Oghuz Turks. Oghuz Khan, on the other hand, only seems to become particularly important as a part of Oghuz cultural heritage when various Seljuk and later Ottoman leaders sought to establish their legitimacy as rulers of the various Oghuz tribes in their territories.[87] Both myths and their relationship with Turkic peoples, and the Oghuz in particular, are muddied by both the manner in which they were first recorded, and how they were used in later records of Oghuz history to legitimise various regimes.

How these different myths play into one another is not particularly clear, and as far as modern literature discussing Turkic mythology goes, it is usually only ever written in Turkish. However, what is understood and what is likely to be an important part of this study further on, is how it establishes the legitimacy of different Oghuz Turkic rulers through their direct descent from these events.[88] As is described in the *Jāmiʿ al-Tawārīkh,* and other *Oghuznāma* such as the *Selçukname* written by the Seljuks when they took power in Iran, and the *Book of Dede Korkut,* the Turks are directly descended from their deity, be it *Tengri,* or *Allah,* following the conversion of many Turks to Islam. This descent comes from the legend of the *Ergenekon* wherein the deity, in the form of a boy who is wounded from a battle, is nursed back to health by, and mates with, the she-wolf, possibly Asena, who gives birth to the first Turks.[89] Among those is Oghuz Khan, who eventually leads the Turkic peoples out of the mythical Ergenekon valley which had trapped them, and into the world where he would establish the first Turkic Khaganate. Each Turkic-speaking tribe who held to this mythology traced their lineage to these figures. The Oghuz Turks, as will be discussed later, structured their societies and tribes around the bloodlines of Oghuz Khan and his descendants.[90] Whether true or not, it seems that the

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[87] H. Ogasawara, 'The Biblical Origin of the Ottoman Dynasty in the 15th and 16th century', *Bulletin of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan* 51(1), 2008. pp. 110 – 139.

[88] H. Ogasawara, 'The Biblical Origin of the Ottoman Dynasty in the 15th and 16th century', *Bulletin of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan* 51(1), pp. 110 – 139.

[89] É, Kincses-Nagy, 'The Islamization of the Legend of the Turks: The Case of *Oghuznāma*,' *Studia Uralo-Altica* 53(1), 2020, pp. 125 – 136.

[90] É, Kincses-Nagy, 'The Islamization of the Legend of the Turks: The Case of *Oghuznāma*,' *Studia Uralo-Altica* 53(1) 2020, pp. 125 – 136.

legitimacy of Turkic rulers often relied on their ability to draw their lineage directly to this divine bloodline in some way.

The final aspect of early Turkic history for which we have evidence, and one of the few aspects that are attested to by early Turkic speaking groups in their own writing, is their Tengrist belief system. While this shamanic faith of the Steppe was first officially recorded in Chinese chronicles in around the 4th century BCE,[91] it is inscriptions from the Orkhon Valley that were made during the time of the Göktürks, that give historians one of the most tangible pieces of early Turkic and Steppe religion. Specifically, these inscriptions mention the chief sky deity of their religion, *Tengri*, and the shamanistic practices which form part of the worship of that deity.[92] Further, as Tengrism was the religion of the Mongols during their conquests in the 11th century, it provides one of the few substantive links between the early Turks and the Mongols aside from shared lifestyles. Unlike the recorded Turkic myths of the *Oghuznāma*, of which only vague links are made in the Orkhon Valley inscriptions, belief in Tengri and adherence to shamanic belief similar to what would be seen later with the Mongols, is one of the few credible aspects of Göktürk culture that historians have to work with.[93] This also links these beliefs to the earlier Chinese chronicles, which describe the faith followed by those groups within the earlier Xiongnu Confederacy. As such, this religion is afforded a degree of historical staying power in the literature when discussing the nomadic groups of the Eastern Steppe. As such, it allows for the proposition that it was the most likely religion followed by other Turkic-speaking groups who would go on to migrate westward prior to their conversion to other faiths, such as Judaism in the case of the Khazars, Christianity in the case of the Bolgars, and Islam for many other groups, including the Oghuz. Thus, for a definition of culture that includes religion and belief in its composition, this forms one of the few notable aspects of pre-Seljuk Oghuz culture aside from their lifestyle.[94]

As is evident, even the very earliest aspects of who the Oghuz were, and the culture they grew from, is not especially well understood to this day. For the most part, the discussions of the origins of the Turkic-speaking peoples and the groups they would diverge to become are fragmented ones. The academic narratives of these groups are split through studies of

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[91] E. Dallos, 'A Possible Source of 'Tengrism',' *Studia Uralo-Altica* 53(1), 2020, pp. 67 – 72.
[92] C. V. Findley, *The Turks in World History,* pp. 42 – 47.
[93] P. B. Golden, 'The Ethnogonic Tales of the Türks', *The Medieval History Journal* 21(1), 2018. pp. 291 – 327.
[94] C. Geertz 'Religion as a cultural system,' *in* C. Geertz, (ed.) *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays.*

linguistics, anthropology, and the ancient historiography of external societies. Yet, the only way in which the discussion of these early groups is at all influenced by the general split which affects Ottoman historiography is in the overbearing narrative of a Turkic fraternity. Even then, this viewpoint that was established by Turkish nationalism in the early 20th century is itself challenged in modern literature. For this reason, this early image of what we know of the Oghuz, though limited, provides a foundation by which they can be compared as they enter the contested realm of early medieval history.

Rise of the Oghuz

The word 'Oghuz' has recorded use with different Turkic groups as far back as the 8th century CE, with varying meanings and interpretations. It was first mentioned in the Orkhon inscriptions, though not as a specific group of peoples, but rather to designate a confederation of different Turkic-speaking clans known as the *Toquz Oghuz*.[95] Around the same time, it also became a defining part of another Turkic-speaking people, who are believed to have used it to highlight their relation to the mythical figure of Oghuz Khan. While it is the latter group, the Oghuz Turks, who are the primary focus of this study, it is worth noting the varied use of the word 'Oghuz' among Turkic-speaking groups of the time.[96] As is the case with the Toquz Oghuz, the word is shown to be an indicator of union or familial bonds, which will later be important in the discussion of how the Oghuz Turks are described to hold tribal and familial bonds in high regard. For now, however, the literature suggests that the descent from Oghuz Khan is the more likely reason for this Turkic-speaking society taking the specific name they do when they established themselves as a distinctive group in the mid to late 8th century CE.[97]

This group which laid claim to territory around the Aral-Caspian Depression initially played a relatively minor role historically, being caught between the much larger Khanates of the Khazars in the west and Uyghurs in the east.[98] Due to this position, they often found themselves the subject of raids and subjugation by either power, while other Turkic-speaking groups, such

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[95] P. B. Golden, 'The Ethnogonic Tales of the Türks', *The Medieval History Journal* 21(1), 2018. pp. 291 – 327.
[96] P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East,* pp. 205 – 207.
[97] É, Kincses-Nagy, 'The Islamization of the Legend of the Turks: The Case of *Oghuznāma*,' *Studia Uralo-Altica* 53(1) 2020, pp. 125 – 136.
[98] P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East,* pp. 161 – 162.

as Karluks, Kimeks, Kipchak and Yemeks, moved through and often raided the Oghuz territory with relative impunity. These factors added to the difficult living conditions facilitated by the arid, desert landscape of the Aral-Caspian Depression, which left the fledgling Oghuz state incredibly unstable and fractious. Early on in its history, the Oghuz Yabgu state, as it was recorded, saw the tribes which comprised it begin to split off and go their separate ways, and it is in this disunity between the Oghuz tribes that they would leave their mark on history.[99] In this way, the Oghuz state of the early medieval period found its importance less in its own geopolitical role, but rather in its role as the facilitator for the formation of a common Oghuz Turkic ethnic group, and culture. The changes in geopolitical history itself, it is argued by historians, come from the specifically named groups which branch out from the Oghuz state. These named groups are in reference to the 24 distinct tribes of the Oghuz state who took their names and claimed their linages from the heirs of Oghuz Khan himself.[100] The first of these 24 Oghuz tribes to migrate, as recorded by Rashid al-Din's *Jāmiʿ al-Tawārīkh,* were the *Pecheneg*, whose migration westward played a role in facilitating the decline of the Khazars in the Western Steppe.[101] However, the more important of these groups for the purposes of this study would be the *Kınık* and the *Kayı*, who would in varying stages begin moving south into the regions of Transoxiana and the Iranian plateau. While they were not the only Oghuz tribes to move south into these Muslim-dominated regions, they were the ones who rose to the greatest prominence within the historically Islamic world. The prominence of these two tribes is posed as the possible reason why the other Oghuz tribes, such as the *Döğer* and *Bayat* who also move into this same region, are neglected in the historiography of the Oghuz.

This move of the Oghuz tribes southward was led by two *Kınık* chieftains, Tuqaq and Seljuk beg,[102] of whom the latter would lend his name to the dynasty which dominated the Iranian plateau during the 11th and 12th centuries.[103] While the circumstances which caused this migration are not well known, most sources believe that irreconcilable differences between Seljuk and the leader of the Oghuz state caused the *Kınık* to leave the Oghuz state. These

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[99] P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East,* pp. 205 – 207.

[100] F. E. Özalp, *A historical and semantical study of Turkmens and Turkmen Tribes,* pp. 26 – 30.

[101] A. V. Marey, 'Socio-political Structure of the Pecheneg', *Theories of Social Evolution* 1(1), 2000, pp. 450 – 452.

[102] Beg, and the later Turkish variation, Bey, is the title equivalent to Chieftain in Oghuz Turkic. This title is used in the Turkic languages as far back as the Orkhon Inscriptions from the 8th century. P. B. Golden, 'The Ethnogonic Tales of the Türks', *The Medieval History Journal* 21(1), 2018. pp. 291 – 327.

[103] A. C. S. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, pp. 29 – 30.

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differences were only exacerbated by the conversion of Seljuk and his men from Tengrism to Islam in 985/6 CE. This event, which took place in the crossroad town of Jand in Transoxiana, is the point for which Seljuk himself is known in history, and which begins the tradition of depicting the Oghuz as a predominantly Muslim people.[104] However, the reasons for this conversion are unknown, as few sources remain of Seljuk and his endeavours. It is with this event that one of the first splits occur in the discussion surrounding the Oghuz, as differently aligned schools of scholarship champion different points for Seljuk's conversion, as well as the nature of the effect it may have had on the other Turkic peoples who followed him. On one side of the argument, it is argued that Islam provided a pragmatic umbrella for Seljuk and his followers to pursue holy war in their own interests,[105] as is suggested by some scholars. On the other side of the argument, those academics who are more favourably inclined to the view of the Oghuz as an eastern people argue that the conversion came about through the deeper theological and spiritual convictions of Seljuk himself.[106] Further division and doubt are placed on just how many of his followers also converted. More modern scholarship on the topic argues that the conversion itself initially only represented the views of Seljuk and his family, while the majority of the Oghuz people would only come to adopt Islam slowly over the following centuries.[107] What none of the literature seems to be able to engage with, however, is what Seljuk's previous Tengrist faith seemed to lack which made Islam appealing. There is little discussion on how the Seljuk Dynasty's Oghuz culture was structured previously and what the conversion to Islam facilitated, beyond simply an introduction into the Muslim world.

What is relatively well documented with this migration is how the Oghuz groups who moved into these areas of Khwarezm and Transoxiana adapted in relation to the existing Iranian populations of these regions. Unlike the vast regions of the Eurasian Steppe, these new areas which the Oghuz moved into were much more arid and mountainous, potentially forcing a shift from horses to goats, sheep and cattle as the primary livestock of Oghuz tribes, though horses remained a key part of their lifestyle. This preservation of their mounted heritage extended to the education of tribe members in horse and mounted archery riding from a young age, which

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[104] A. C. S. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, pp. 29 – 30.
[105] C. V. Findley, *The Turks in World History,* pp. 60 – 63.
[106] P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East,* pp. 205 – 207.
[107] N. Morton, 'The Saljuq Turks' Conversion to Islam: The Crusading Sources', *Al-Masāq: Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* 27(2), 2015, pp. 109 – 118.

was prevalent among both the men and women of these tribes.[108] Another aspect of Oghuz life at this time pertains to the fertility of these regions, which was concentrated to specific estuaries originating from the Pamir-Alay mountains in the east and running to the Caspian or Aral seas in the west. This limited the usable land available to all populations in the region and forced the Oghuz into more semi-nomadic lifestyles. As such, constant contact, mixing and friction would have existed between the Oghuz and the settled Iranian peoples of the region. It is due to this constant contact that the Oghuz groups gained the name 'Turkmen' from the Tajik populations in order to differentiate the horse nomads from themselves, as the Turkic population's East Asian features were gradually replaced by ones more akin to their new Iranian neighbours.[109] Added to this, their new home placed them along one of the key routes of the Silkroad, facilitating their own involvement with the trade between the East and West. It is from this interaction that the Oghuz Turkmen developed many of their distinctive textile patterns and motifs that defined their artisans,[110] as well as developed their distinctive cuisine which incorporated some of the spices which were traded within the region.

The Oghuz place, as a power in the Islamic world would only follow after the passing of Seljuk beg, as his grandsons, Tughril and Chaghri, made their way into the region of Khorasan on the Iranian Plateau. Their actions, and their masterful leadership of their Turkmen horse archers, would unseat the Ghaznavids and Samanids as the ruling elite of the region and see themselves installed as the leaders of their own, unique Islamic state.[111] It is with these conquests, as well as the subsequent blessing given to them by the Abbasid Caliph, al-Qāʾim bi-amri 'llāh, that the East-centric literature begins to classify the Oghuz as a primarily, if not wholly, Islamic, Eastern people.[112] While this may be true in respect of the Seljuk dynasty, and the *Kınık* military elite who supported the regime, it seems that this may not necessarily be true for the vast majority of the different Oghuz Turkmen who began to flood into the region. While it is true that the Seljuk court adopted Persian as the official court language, as was the custom, and became patrons of Iranian-style architecture, art, and bureaucratic systems, the Turkmen themselves were not a wholly unified group that could be so easily classified and understood.

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[108] P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East,* pp. 50, 219.

[109] J. Y. Lee and S. Kuang, 'A comparative Analysis of Chinese Historical Sources and Y-DNA Studies with regard to the Early and Medieval Turkic Peoples', *Inner Asia* 19(2), 2017, pp. 197 – 239.

[110] C. V. Findley, *The Turks in World History,* pp. 103 – 107.

[111] C. V. Findley, *The Turks in World History,* pp. 71 – 72.

[112] A. C. S. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, pp. 42 – 43.

Certainly, as was discussed earlier, there is intense debate as to the nature of the Oghuz conversion to Islam throughout the medieval era. Understanding this, and that culture is not only represented by how it is observed in the ruling elite, but also throughout the hierarchy of society, it would be a mistake to assume that the Oghuz Turkmen as a whole would be classified as Muslims, let alone primarily Eastern in their orientation, during this time.[113] However, the conflict in the literature between older, traditional scholarship which is pro-Eastern, and more modern literature which challenges this narrative, has not reached any consensus, and so questions surrounding the Persian influences on Oghuz culture and belief remain unanswered.

Where this characterisation is better suited, as was mentioned, is with the ruling and military elite of the *Kınık* and potentially that of other Oghuz leaders. As mentioned above, the way in which the rituals of Seljuk rulers and their Oghuz courtiers changed is far better documented, and in this way, can still provide valuable information. Foremost among this is the adherence to Sunni Islam, in opposition to the Twelver Shia Buyids with whom the Seljuks found themselves in conflict within the region.[114] This Islamic belief was likely inherited from the Ghaznavids that they unseated, including the Hanafi Sunni branch of Islam followed by Tughril and Chaghri. This specific belief system would become a key aspect not only of the Seljuk dynasty in Persia, but also in Anatolia later, as would the tradition of its spread through Sufist interpretations and madrasas.[115] This adherence to Islam is only further reinforced by Chaghri's undertaking of the Hajj, and the adoption of the Islamic title of Sultan by Tughril and subsequent Seljuk rulers instead of the Turkic titles of khan or beg.[116] Another key title that the Seljuks also took as part of their Iranian realm was that of Shahanshah, which Persian rulers had used since the time of the Achaemenids of the classical era. Alongside this, as mentioned, the court adopted Persian as the language of politics, along with the Arabic script that the Iranians had adapted in previous centuries.[117] As rulers of Iran, historians argue that it only made sense that the Seljuks would adopt the aspects of Iranian culture which supported them, and the tools they needed to govern in the style of Islamic leaders.

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[113] N. Morton, 'The Saljuq Turks' Conversion to Islam: The Crusading Sources', *Al-Masāq: Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* 27(2), 2015, pp. 109 – 118.

[114] A. C. S. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, pp. 42 – 43.

[115] A. C. S. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, pp. 306 – 310.

[116] A. C. S. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, pp. 306 – 310.

[117] C. V. Findley, *The Turks in World History,* pp. 71 – 72.

The one tradition among the Seljuks which sources do define as distinct from Islamic practice, and as being related to the later Ottomans, pertained to succession. In keeping with Oghuz Turkic traditions, the Seljuks initially maintained the tradition wherein brothers would act as co-rulers of their people, as is seen in the case of Tughril and Chaghri.[118] While Tughril would be the one to ultimately take the title of Sultan of the Seljuks, the brothers operated as equals in most cases, and after Tughril's passing in 1063, Chaghri's children would inherit the throne. Alp Arslan would succeed Tughril in a relatively bloodless succession, with his brothers forming the core of his military and political elite. While this practice would break down following Arslan's death in 1073, as different members of the Seljuk family would begin to try to claim their place on the throne through violent uprisings, it nonetheless stood out in the greater Islamic world at the time. Usually, Sunni Islamic succession follows an agnatic system wherein those related to the deceased through the male lineage inherited based on seniority, with fixed, subordinate positions provided to other qualifying heirs.[119] The Oghuz system, while still primarily agnatic, seems to emphasise the familial bonds between sons, and places equal responsibility for the entire inheritance on each of them, rather than dividing it between them. The introduction of substantial power and titles to the question of inheritance, however, seems to have been the cause for the breakdown in this system when we observe the battle for succession which transpired between Arslan's elected successor, Malik-Shah, and Arslan's brother, Qavurt.[120] As we will see later, it is this combination of power politics, and the Oghuz tradition of each male heir holding an equal right to inherit, which later gave rise to the Ottoman's fratricidal succession system.

The Turkification of Anatolia

The Seljuks would continue to play a role in spreading the Oghuz tribes, which would ultimately reach further than the extents of their empire, and long outlive it as well. Key to this legacy is what some historians refer to as the 'Turkification' of Anatolia, though that concept is not without its own issues.[121] Prior to the pivotal battle between the Byzantines and Seljuks at Manzikert in 1071, Anatolia was a vastly different place. Having been one of the most crucial and longest-standing parts of the slowly decaying Eastern Roman, or Byzantine, Empire,

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[118] P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East,* p. 220.
[119] A. C. S. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, pp. 44 – 45.
[120] A. C. S. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, pp. 44 – 45.
[121] C. Hillenbrand, *Turkish Myth and Muslim Symbol: The Battle of Manzikert,* pp. 14 – 16.

Anatolia was a vast agrarian region that was home to many different peoples and cultures.[122] At its core, Anatolia was Greek in its identity, and was host to many of the most important sites in the Orthodox Church, which dictated much of this outward image of the region. However, the region was also a crucial bridging point between Europe and Asia, and so was also home to many other cultures. Among these were other classically Byzantine and Orthodox groups such as, Armenians, Assyrians, Georgians, and others, who enjoyed protection in Byzantine lands from the issues which plagued the Caucuses and formerly Christian Levant. However, the groups who resided in the region extended to include Arab and Persian merchants, Bulgarians, Slavs, and other Turkic-speaking peoples. These other Turkic groups in particular, which included the previously mentioned Oghuz Pechenegs, and non-Oghuz groups like the Cumans, Khazars, and Kipchaks, are poorly understood by historians to this day.[123] While the Byzantines had a long history of conflict with these groups, they also had a history of employing them as mercenaries and paying them with land to settle and use within the empire. As such, the scale of these Turkic groups prior to 1071 is not clear, however, the role they played is, and adds to Anatolia's complex historical political landscape.[124]

Outside of Anatolia, the Seljuk Empire provided a haven for different Turkic groups to move into the Middle East through Iran, and as such, its lands would serve as staging grounds for Turkic raids and invasions of other territories, independent of Seljuk influence or orders. This would be the case with the other prominent tribe of the Oghuz, the *Kayı*, who, along with other Turkic groups, regularly raided Byzantine lands with near impunity, only to fan the flames of discontent between the Byzantines and Seljuks who held an uneasy truce prior to Manzikert.[125] The leadership of the *Kayı* at this stage is disputed and plays into the later debate surrounding the ancestry and lineage of the Ottomans themselves. Some sources state one of Alp Arslan's cousins, Qutalmish, or his son, Suleiman ibn Qutalmish, led the *Kayı*, despite being of the Seljuk dynasty and therefore belonging to the *Kınık* tribe. Regardless of the question of leadership, these raids formed part of the gradual migration of many Oghuz tribes into Anatolia, which had been described by the Turks themselves as being similar to their homelands on the

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[122] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State,* pp. 50 – 58.

[123] P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East,* pp. 276 – 278.

[124] P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East,* pp. 276 – 278.

[125] C. Hillenbrand, *Turkish Myth and Muslim Symbol: The Battle of Manzikert,* pp. 6 – 7.

Eurasian Steppe, but also as being more temperate and fertile.[126] In this way, it contrasted with the arid deserts of Transoxiana, and the mountainous regions of Iran, making it an ideal land for them. Further, the region was incredibly wealthy, making it only more attractive as a destination for Turks looking for plunder and slaves.

The aggression and instability along the Byzantine and Seljuk border culminated in the aforementioned battle of Manzikert in 1071, where both states threw enormous manpower into an attempt at a decisive result.[127] Alp Arslan, the Seljuk Sultan, used the superior manoeuvrability of his Turkmen forces to soundly defeat the entire Byzantine army, but instead of pressing to claim more territory, he established a concrete truce with the Byzantine Emperor, Romanos IV, which solidified the border between the two states. However, in a twist of fate which immediately followed the battle, both signatories to the truce would be dead within a year. This left the truce without anyone to enforce it, and as such left the door wide open for external forces to move into an Anatolia that no longer had a ruler or a substantial army to defend it. Into this political vacuum, several opportunistic leaders, including Suleiman ibn Qutalmish, made their move to plunder and capture territory in the region. As a member of the Seljuk Dynasty, Suleiman likely adhered to Sunni Islam, and used his faith as justification for his conflicts against the Christian Byzantines in their land. This conquest of Byzantine Anatolia eventually culminated in Suleiman being declared Sultan of Rúm, the name given by the Islamic and Turkic world to the territory of the Eastern Romans, by both the Seljuk Sultan and Abbasid Caliph.[128] What is uncertain again in these discussions is the prevalence of Islam among the Turkmen groups who followed Suleiman into Anatolia, nor their number. East-centric sources have traditionally painted this as a gradual move by Turkic groups into the region, but under the banner of Islam and in the effort to convert the region,[129] while West-centric sources have conversely argued that many of these groups were still primarily Tengrist, or simply opportunistic,[130] while also traditionally arguing that the Turks arrived in enormous numbers.[131] Mixed interpretations of both also exist, with ideas that the notion of Islamic

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[126] C. V. Findley, *The Turks in World History,* pp. 75 – 77.

[127] C. Hillenbrand, *Turkish Myth and Muslim Symbol: The Battle of Manzikert,* pp. 14 – 16.

[128] F. A. Ergul, 'The Ottoman identity: Turkish, Muslim or Rum?', *Middle Eastern Studies* 48(4), 2012, pp. 632 – 634.

[129] M. F. Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 42 – 50.

[130] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State,* pp. 7 – 8.

[131] P. Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire: Studies in the History of Turkey, thirteenth – fifteenth centuries.*

Ghazw, or holy wars, drew substantial groups of Turkic migrants into Anatolia, or that the change in religion, and population, were both long and drawn-out processes.[132]

What is better understood is that this process did introduce Turkic-speaking peoples, and primarily the Oghuz Turkmen tribes, as a permanent fixture which changed Anatolia's cultural, economic, and political landscape. Though the Seljuks of Rúm would establish themselves as the rulers of the region, their role would usually be simply to provide legitimacy and rights to the various Turkic begs who roamed across Anatolia itself. As the further influx of Turkic groups entered the region, the traditionally Byzantine populations found themselves pushed out of the rural farmland and into the cities for protection guaranteed to them by their Byzantine rulers. This protection, as time progressed, became ever more tenuous as Byzantium's ability to keep contact with these cities dwindled and Turkic control of the countryside increased. With time, only the coastal cities could be guaranteed Byzantine safeguard, and even after that, only those on the westernmost edge of Anatolia, in the closest proximity to Constantinople itself, would defy Turkic rule. All the while, those who fell outside the Byzantine sphere of protection were increasingly forced to seek protection from the Seljuks of Rúm through fealty and conversion to Islam. Those who refused, or failed to do so, ran the risk of being subjected to sieges, looting, pillaging, destruction and enslavement by Turkmen groups who were given free rein to deal with Christian settlements as they wished. This process concentrated much of the Byzantine culture of the region, as well as its wealth, into the coastal cities and the west, while also leaving these cities increasingly dependent on guarantees from the Seljuks of Rúm to trade for their supplies and safety. Into this space came various Turkmen elites and their retainers, who transplanted themselves into the hierarchies and societies of these cities as their new rulers, while becoming subjected to the cultural hybridisation which naturally follows such a high concentration of people.[133]

Outside the walls of Anatolia's cities, the landscape is described to have become nearly unrecognisable when compared to its Byzantine past. Where the countryside had once been host to sprawling farmland and agriculture, those structures had been abandoned and removed in favour of hilly plains that the Turkmen tribes could better use for herding their livestock and

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[132] A. C. S. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, pp. 38 – 41.
[133] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 172 – 173.

training their horses.[134] The combination of mountains, sloping plains and mixtures of seasonal and perennial rivers made the landscape ideal for the seasonal lifestyle that the Turkmen settled into, as they sheltered during the winters in the highlands, and resumed their nomadic pursuits across their designated lands, known as beyliks,[135] in the summers. While the greater Anatolian frontier of the Turkmen was known as the *uc*,[136] the beyliks therein were specifically designated to different tribes and groups. Ruled by a Turkic beg, which later becomes bey, these regions were designated and granted by the Sultans of Rúm, both as a means of ensuring there were no disputes between different Turkmen tribes over the territory they could use, but also as enforcement of Seljuk authority and legitimacy over these groups. With the Seljuks as the arbiters of the law, they both guaranteed their own power through the loyalty of those who accepted the authority of their laws, while also using the military power this afforded them to enforce that same law on other beys who needed Seljuk permission to lawfully dwell within their realm. The Seljuks would, however, only really have any real direct authority over their capital, the old Byzantine city of Iconium, later renamed to Konya, and the surrounding lands. Within the beyliks themselves, the Turkic beys could exercise their authority as they saw fit, but that authority required them to swear ultimate fealty to the Seljuks of Rúm and abide by their laws. Generally, these simply meant a seasonal tithe that was to be paid to the Sultan and to not pillage cities that had his protection. The cities in question were only those which had adopted the Seljuks as their rulers and converted to Islam as part of that process, which left raiding and pillaging along the Byzantine frontier, and the sacking of Christian cities, as prime targets for those more opportunistic beys and their warriors, regardless of which religion they followed.[137]

Because of these two contrasting experiences, Anatolia remained in a state of upheaval for many centuries following this initial wave of migration, which had seen not only the arrival of the Oghuz Turkmen and other Turkic-speaking groups, and but also of other opportunistic

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[134] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State.* State University of New York Press, New York. 2003. pp. 50 – 58.

[135] Beylik refers to a region ruled by a Turkman beg or bey, which were usually comparable in size to European duchies or small kingdoms at their largest extent. H. İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 14 – 18.

[136] D. A. Korobeninkov, 'How 'Byzantine' Were the Early Ottomans? Bithynia in ca. 1290 – 1450.', *in* I. V. Zaitsev and S. F. Oreshkov (eds.) *The Ottoman World and Ottoman Studies*, pp. 215 - 239.

[137] I. Şahin, *Osmanlı Döneminde Konar-Göçerler/Nomads in the Ottoman Empire.* Eren Yayincilik, Istanbul. 2006, pp. 227 – 252.

settlers such as the Kurds.[138] This cultural upheaval was made no easier by the coming of the Crusades, which further inflamed religious tensions in the region, and then the rise of the Mongol Empire in the East, which saw an even greater influx of groups fleeing them enter into Anatolia. While the Seljuks of Rúm managed to weather both of these storms, the advent of these conflicts meant that they never managed to exercise stable control over Anatolia, and their authority only seems to have loosely bound the nomadic Turkmen and settled city vassals together within the state.[139] It is for this reason that much of the activity and change within the region would be brought about by elements external to the state itself.

Sufi madrasas established themselves across the region and were the centres primarily responsible for educating most of both the urban and the nomadic populations in Muslim teachings. Among these Sufis, the Dervish of Konya would come to hold one of the most powerful positions within the region as the source of Islamic legitimacy and held that power long after the decline of the Seljuks.[140] Further, while the language and practices of the court of the Sultanate retained the Persian influences they had inherited from the greater Seljuk state, Greek would remain the *lingua franca* of the urban centres, while Oghuz Turkic stayed the language of both the nomadic and newly settled Turkic populations.[141] Over time, this lack of control only proved to unravel the Sultanate of Rúm faster and faster, until it could barely maintain authority over the beyliks under its rule once Mongol suzerainty had ceased in the late 13th century.

However, it is perhaps because of this limited authority over the region that Anatolia could grow into the distinctive cultural space that it was at the start of the 14th century when the Ottoman beylik was established. By this time, much of the Anatolian population had become part of a mixed identity known as the *Mixouaruaroi* by the Byzantines.[142] This population further distinguished the look and ethnicity of the Oghuz Turkmen of Anatolia from their Central and East Asian roots, as the formerly Byzantine populations mixed with the distinctly

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[138] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State.* State University of New York Press, New York. 2003. pp. 50 – 58.

[139] I. Şahin, *Osmanlı Döneminde Konar-Göçerler/Nomads in the Ottoman Empire.* Eren Yayincilik, Istanbul. 2006. pp. 227 – 252.

[140] H. Pfeifer, 'A New Hadith Cultuer? Arab Scholars and Ottoman Sunnitization in the Sixteenth century', *in* T. Krstić and D. Terzioğlu (eds.), *Historicising Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450 - c. 1750,* pp. 41 – 46.

[141] D. A. Korobeninkov, 'How 'Byzantine' Were the Early Ottomans? Bithynia in ca. 1290 – 1450.', *in* I. V. Zaitsev and S. F. Oreshkov (eds.) *The Ottoman World and Ottoman Studies*, pp. 215 - 239.

[142] H. J. Magoulias, *Doukas: The Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks,* pp. 272 – 273.

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eastern Turkmen, often through force. The children of this union, the *Mixouaruaroi,* would usually be Muslim themselves if their fathers were, thus playing a crucial part in the slow erasure of Christianity from Anatolia. Aside from the physical changes, the Turks also found their lifestyles changing. While a significant portion kept to their old traditions and remained nomadic Turkmen, others settled in the cities where they became artisans and scholars, while even more others settled outside the cities in rural Anatolia.[143] With the plains being the domain of the Turkmen, rural Turks, who mixed and assimilated into the existing Greek farming communities, helped shift Anatolia's agricultural production to the coastal plains, while reforming the grape and olive culture of the region alongside the new livestock brought by the Turkmen. Economically, the region also settled again, as different beys allowed trade between Europe and Asia to move through their land unhindered once again after this exchange was disrupted during the upheaval.[144] The beys themselves would often be more likely to lend their services to the Byzantines as well as other rulers in the Middle East for profit than cause further upheaval in Anatolia itself. As the passage of time pushed further, the region settled itself into a new normal, outside of excessive, direct rule from the Seljuks, or Byzantium.[145]

As observed, the historiography on the origins of the Oghuz Turks focuses on their ethnic, linguistic and cultural origins from the Eastern Eurasian Steppe, where they developed a unique nomadic pastoralist lifestyle that would be a defining feature of their society throughout the ages. It also focuses on their migration through the regions of Transoxiana, Iran, and Anatolia, and how these regions, their climates, and their politics, influenced the Oghuz tribes' lifestyles, ethnic identity, and belief systems. This focus extends to how this migration created a unique Oghuz ruling culture among the Seljuks, who used their mounted Oghuz Turkmen to their military advantage, and practised a unique form of agnatic succession. They also adopted Persian Islamic traditions into their court. The historiography also focuses on the specifics of the Oghuz migration into Anatolia, and how this led to fundamental changes in the region. In particular, it focuses on the political systems which were established by the nomadic Turkmen tribes, and how those who left those tribes assimilated into the other cultures and structures of the region. Finally, it introduces various East-centric arguments that claim the Ottomans' Oghuz heritage as an Eastern one. All of these points are vital for understanding the Oghuz as a society and culture prior to the rise of the Ottoman state in the next chapter.

[143] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State,* pp. 50 – 58.
[144] C. V. Findley, *The Turks in World History,* pp. 103 – 107.
[145] I. Şahin, *Osmanlı Döneminde Konar-Göçerler/Nomads in the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 227 – 252.

Chapter Three:
Rise of the Sublime Ottoman State

The Empire of Two Worlds

In the imagination of many, the Ottoman state looms large as a monolithic entity in the late medieval and early modern history of Europe and the Middle East. To Christendom, they were the great enemy, camped outside the gates where they hounded Europe for centuries until they could finally turn the tide. To the Muslim world, they stood as the greatest unifying entity since the heights of the Abbasid Caliphate and made Islam a force to be reckoned with in an era dominated by European exploration and colonisation. For these reasons, it is hard for many to understand the effect that chance, or sheer luck, had in raising the Ottomans to the heights that it did. Indeed, for many academics, and especially those within Türkiye, the notion that the Ottomans were anything but destined to rise runs counter to all their teleological inclinations.[146] A small, and in many ways rather insignificant, beylik on the borders of the Byzantine Empire simply did not have the historical backing that many believe that it did to change the face of world history in the way that it did. This alone has had a significant impact on the historiography of the Ottomans, and colours much of how these early centuries of their history are discussed.

Further, as discussed earlier, it is not simply what the Ottomans represented in their time that makes them the subject of fascination in history, but also the very real implications that they have as a political tool today as well. To many in Türkiye, the Ottoman state not only represents their past as a people, but their legitimacy as a prominent nation in the politics of Europe and the Middle East to this very day.[147] It presents the Turks not only as a people constantly existing at the periphery of eurocentric history, as so many other Turkic states had throughout time, but as a force which Europe could not ignore, and which nearly brought them to their knees on several occasions. Indeed, many interpret its adoption as a Byzantine successor in the eyes of West-centric academics as precisely that, forcing the usually dismissive Western world to bring the Ottomans into their history by twisting the interpretation of their fundamental views in

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[146] A. Kadıoğlu, 'The paradox of Turkish nationalism and the construction of an official identity', *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(2), 1996, pp. 190 – 192.
[147] Y. Karakaya, 'Between neo-Ottomanism and Ottomania: navigating state-led and popular culture representations of the past', *New perspectives on Turkey* 56(1), 2017, pp. 37 – 41.

order to accept the Ottomans as a European power.[148] At the same time, they are championed by an academic world keen to challenge the hegemony of eurocentric history through the prominence and power of the Ottomans as a force from the Islamic world. In many ways, this point simply serves as the same argument as before, but now from the East-centric academic camp who are argued to be unable to accept the Ottomans as being a product of both worlds, but whose structure was intrinsically shaped by the Byzantine systems they inherited, rather than the Muslim world.[149] Faraghi summarises this categorisation well through the constant fixation by both West- and East-centric camps to downplay the other side's respective cultural influence on the Ottomans, or selectively playing up the Ottomans as antagonists to Europe. She furthers this point by emphasising the glorification of Ottoman victory in all spheres of Turkish historiography, while other aspects tend to be neglected.[150]

Both arguments hold varying degrees of validity, and it is because of those arguments that the historiography of the early Ottoman state has been split between them since the inception of Ottoman studies. As such, and as argued at the beginning of this study, it is vital to understand these arguments and the points they raise with regard to how the Ottoman state was founded and grew in order to best evaluate it, and the role that the Ottoman Oghuz heritage plays in this process. For that reason, this chapter serves both as a study of the historical events which led to the founding of the Ottoman state and its growth into a multi-continental empire, as well as a study of the historiography surrounding these events. In particular, it aims to highlight the primary arguments made by both the East-centric and West-centric camps of Ottoman historiography, and how they approach the topic of Ottoman and Oghuz culture. This analysis spans the time from the founding of the Ottoman beylik in 1299 until the death of Suleiman I in 1566, at the height of its 'Golden Age.'

The Foundations of the House of Osman

Discussing Osman is no easy feat for any historian, Turkish or not, owing to the almost non-existent primary sources from this time which cover the topic in any number of ways. No written sources remain which discuss who he was, where he came from and what he had done to warrant being elected the bey of a territory at the periphery of Turkic Anatolia. As such,

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[148] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State.* pp. 5 – 6.
[149] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State,* pp. 9 – 11.
[150] S. N. Faroqhi, *Approaching Ottoman History: An Introduction to the Sources*, pp. 7 – 11.

historians are forced to wade through the myth and legend surrounding the Ottoman patriarch established by Ottoman chroniclers centuries after the fact in order to gleam any real sense of the man. Even then, many of these Ottoman chronicles are accepted by all sides of the historiographical debate as existing with the sole intent of legitimising later Ottoman leaders. The historian Colin Imber famously described Osman's life, and the study thereof, as a "black hole" into which many scholars of the early Ottomans are sucked into,[151] with little hope of ever returning with anything of substance or fact. What little is actually known of Osman is that he was the leader of an Oghuz Turkmen tribe which settled in the region of Bithynia, Western Anatolia, and on the edge of Byzantine controlled territory, sometime at the end of the 13th century. Beyond that, nearly everything else known about Osman and his life is argued to be products of political historical revision, either from the Ottoman state itself, or subsequently from Türkiye. As such, the actual details pertaining to Osman and what is known about his rule cannot give us much understanding of the Turks and their cultural foundations at this time. What can be discussed, however, is the historiography surrounding him.

To begin with, Osman's very name stands at the centre of some disagreement in academia. Osman, as it is argued, is not a traditional Oghuz name, but rather is the Arabisation of the Turkic name of Atman/Ataman. Certainly, contemporary Byzantine sources which detail the names of Turkmen corroborate this theory, recording the Turkic name of Atouman. The debate itself exists as to why his name changed, with historians such as Kafader arguing that Osman likely accepted the change in an effort to elevate his standing as a Muslim leader, if not as a part of his very conversion to Islam.[152] This argument forms a further part of the larger debate as to whether or not the Turkmen of this time, and specifically the Ottomans, were already a homogenous Islamic people as many other sources describe them to be. This argument also runs counter to the narrative created by Ottoman chroniclers in the 15th century, who describe the lineage of the house of Osman as being one of devout Muslims going all the way back to Osman's father Ertuğrul, and even further.[153] This narrative of the House of Osman being a devoutly Islamic family forms part of the core arguments for the Ottoman cultural foundation being Eastern, and is supported by popular belief in Türkiye itself, despite the challenges to this narrative. It is made only more complex by the myth of Osman's Dream, in which the

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[151] C. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300 – 1650: The Structure of Power,* pp. 20 – 21.
[152] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 205 – 207.
[153] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 203 – 213.

almost pre-ordained destiny of the Ottomans is established in the name of Islam.[154] The legend itself is only physically recorded in the 19th century, and based on second-hand research done by Orientalist historians at that, but is held by many of the East-centric sources as vital to understanding the mentality of the early Ottomans as a deeply Islamic people. Once again, these arguments in accepting Osman's dream as part of Ottoman historiography are met with the same criticism of the written legend clearly forming part of the efforts of Ottoman chroniclers to legitimise the House of Osman in the Islamic world.[155]

The question of legitimacy is also one which plagues Osman and his heirs, with little actual knowledge on the matter existing in written records. As stated before, Osman is stated to be the son of a Turkic bey by the name of Ertuğrul, who is described as being responsible for leading the *Kayı* tribe into Anatolia in order to flee Mongol aggression.[156] This is despite other sources, discussed in the previous chapter, which had already established the *Kayı* as being one of the many Turkmen tribes who entered Anatolia following the Battle of Manzikert, centuries before the conquests of Temüjin and the Mongols in the early 1200s.[157] Further, as will be explored in greater depth later, the *Kayı* branch of the Oghuz Turkmen of this time already existed as multiple tribes under multiple leaders, again running counter to the narrative of Ertuğrul as their sole leader prior to Osman. Two other beyliks of the time, the Isfendiyarids and Chobanids, both also claimed *Kayı* ancestry, and were notable rivals of the Ottomans.[158] This link to the *Kayı*, which itself is questionable, seems to have been made by later Ottoman chroniclers to legitimise the House of Osman as the rulers of the Anatolian Turkmen, while also giving them Abrahamic ancestry to legitimise their place as Caliphs later. While the East-centric literature sees these points as the Ottoman concern with their standing as part of the Islamic world, their detractors argue that this simply further highlights the more opportunistic nature that characterised the early Ottoman state, which, they argue, was not all that concerned with the ideals of Islamic rule and virtue.

It is with these different arguments as to the Ottoman, and by that same token their Oghuz Turkic, origins and legitimacy that the foundation for the arguments for the Ottomans as a state

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[154] C. Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1923,* p. 111.
[155] M. F. Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 72 – 74.
[156] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 110 – 113.
[157] C. V. Findley, *The Turks in World History,* pp. 75 – 77.
[158] P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East*, pp. 362 – 363.

primarily rooted in Medieval Islamic culture and tradition are made. As noted from the discussion on Osman, as well as discussions in the previous chapter, this East-centric scholarship places greater focus on how the Ottomans, or rather the Oghuz Turkmen, came to be in Anatolia, as well as the eastern orientated structures which facilitated their rise. Thus, their heritage from both the Seljuk Empire of Persia, and the later Seljuk Sultanate of Rúm, play much larger roles in the East-centric definition of the early Ottomans.[159] Both of these were states which rose to great prominence with Turkic leadership, and their actions helped establish large populations of nomadic Turkmen in Anatolia since the Battle of Manzikert. Indeed, the Ottoman beylik and the *Kayı* tribes that followed the forebears of Osman initially owed fealty to the Seljuks of Rúm, who themselves were the continuation of the greater Seljuk dynasty that had ruled over much of Iran. As such, this side of the debate argues that while settling in Anatolia after expelling Byzantine control no doubt left some Byzantine cultural obstacles for the Seljuks of Rúm to overcome and integrate, they took the majority of their political style, language, and the practices of Islam from Persia. Like the Seljuks of Rúm, the Ottomans were an opportunistic breakaway state which, they argue, took the basis of their identity from the Turkic ruled state they broke away from, rather from the residual elements of the group they conquered.[160] Naturally, this viewpoint is contested by those who view the Ottomans as finding most of their foundation in the Byzantine state and the West, while both seem to disregard the historic trends in which nomadic tribes, like the Turkmen, Mongols and many before, adopt various elements of all the societies around them when they become settled entities.

This discussion only moves further away from the actual identity of the Ottomans themselves in this early period as they begin to expand and conquer new territory. Under the rule of Osman's son, Orhan, and his son after him, Murad, the border polity which was the Ottoman beylik expanded to encompass not only much of western Anatolia, but also territory across the Dardanelles and into the region of Europe known as Thrace, which the Ottomans would name Rumelia.[161] The name Rumelia itself comes from the Ottoman recognition that the lands they were now governing had belonged, historically, to the Roman Empire, or more specifically, the Eastern Roman Empire which historians identify as the Byzantines. This recognition of

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[159] M. F. Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire,* pp, 42 – 51.
[160] M. F. Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire,* p. 109.
[161] H. A. Gibbons, *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire: A History of the Osmalins up to the death of Bayezid I 1300 – 1403,* pp. 110 – 114.

Rome as a notable entity dates back to the Seljuks, who named Anatolia under the Byzantines as *Rúm,* which then lent its name to the Seljuk state which ruled the region, the Sultanate of Rúm.[162] In this way, the Ottomans seem to have placed some acknowledgement that they were inheriting the lands, structures, and in many ways, the systems, of the Byzantines, and it is this inheritance that is key to many of the arguments which believe the Ottoman cultural genesis as being a primarily Western one.

As the Ottoman state grew and expanded from a regional entity into a multi-continental empire, shifting away from its primarily nomadic pastoralist roots and into a settled state with some nomadic denizens, it came to encompass many areas which were once important to the old Roman world. This statement not only applies to the 'core' regions of Europe and Anatolia, where the long-lasting legacy of the Byzantines was most prevalent, but also across North Africa and the Levant, where structures and symbols of Roman rule still remained.[163] In some way, every one of the regions that the Ottomans came to control held a legacy which they adapted to and integrated into. Byzantine architecture remained a large part of this physical legacy, as the Ottomans took control of one Byzantine city after another. The motif of domed buildings built with Roman bricks, bronze detailing, and the lavish turquoise tiling and mosaics remained nearly completely intact as Byzantine architecture shifted into Ottoman architecture, with the Persian influences taking only a supporting role in the hybridisation.[164] This style of blending, with the Byzantine style being at the core, and Persian influences being secondary, applies to their adoption of systems and government as well. The early Sanjaks of the Ottomans shows distinct similarity to the unique Byzantine *Themata* feudal styles,[165] which allowed for relatively decentralised leadership over culturally distinct areas and regions in the empire. This also kept regional recruitment divided, so that support could still be drawn from areas where loyalty could be assured in the case of cultural unrest or civil strife, such as with cases of conflicted succession which plagued both the Ottomans and the Byzantines.[166]

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[162] C. Kafadar, 'A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum', *Muqarnas* 24(1), 2007, pp. 17 – 20.

[163] H. A. Gibbons, *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire: A History of the Osmalins up to the death of Bayezid I 1300 – 1403,* pp. 110 – 114.

[164] C. V. Findley, *The Turks in World History*, pp. 110 – 116.

[165] S. J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey,* pp. 35 – 37.

[166] S. J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey,* pp. 35 – 37.

These points where specifically applicable once Murad took the Byzantine city of Adrianople in Thrace, which he proceeded to rename Edirne and establish as the new capital of his Sultanate. Despite their origins as Turkmen beys, the Ottomans seem to have moved away from the nomadic lifestyle and structure of the Turkmen tribes as quickly as possible. Under Osman, his family and the military elite who served him moved themselves into the city of Söğüt, previously the Byzantine city of *Thêbásion*, thus establishing themselves among the settled, urban Turk population and outside of the nomadic tribal Turkmen structures they began with. This distance grew further over time, as, with Edirne, the Ottoman capital now no longer resided in Anatolia. Instead, the new capital, and focus of Ottoman attention, now resided in the new Ottoman province of Rumelia, far away from the politics which dictated power in their homeland. While the reasons for this are difficult to specify, many in the West-centric camp of literature point to the better development and infrastructure of Byzantine cities in Europe, while also highlighting the volatile nature that sometimes formed a part of the politics with the Turkmen tribes.[167] The latter point is only reinforced when Murad's uncle, Alaeddin, assists his nephew's reign through the development of specific military reforms.[168] As part of these reforms, the Ottoman army, which had largely been comprised of volunteer ghazi warriors and vassal Turkmen, was transformed into a standing force with two new elements; the Sipahi, and the Janissaries. The former were a formalised unit of noble Turkmen cavalry who owed their allegiance and land to the Ottoman sultan, while the latter were a group of enslaved and indoctrinated Christian children taken from throughout Rumelia adopted Islam and were utterly devoted to the sultan. While the Janissaries later become a problem to Ottoman bureaucracy, they initially appear, as pointed out by West-centric historians, to have been established as a counterforce should the Anatolian Turkmen revolt against the Ottomans at any point.[169]

It is also at this time that the Ottoman role in the greater religious politics of the region became important as well. As an openly Sunni Islamic state at this time, their presence in the Balkans was seen as a serious threat to Christian states in their immediate vicinity. While the argument of whether Ottoman expansion into Europe was religiously motivated, or instead simply opportunistic, is heavily debated by either side of the academic divide, the Kingdoms of Europe almost certainly saw Ottoman expansion as a religious threat.[170] To that end, the Byzantines,

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[167] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State,* pp. 9 – 11.
[168] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 111 – 113.
[169] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 112 – 120.
[170] H. A. Gibbons, *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire: A History of the Osmalins up to the death of Bayezid I 1300 – 1403,* pp. 171 – 178.

in league with the Papacy and nearby Orthodox and Catholic Kingdoms, participated in several different coalitions and raised crusading forces with the intention of expelling the Ottomans from Europe. However, time and again the Europeans were defeated by the Ottomans, which only encouraged their further expansion into the region. In this respect, both camps of the debate have their own explanation for the continued interest the Ottomans showed in Europe. On the part of the East-centric academics, many argue that it was due to Europe being the crusading, aggressor continent which was the fundamental enemy to the Muslim people of the time.[171] The West-centric academic camp, conversely, argues that further expansion into the rest of the Middle East was simply not desirable at the time, whereas Europe could play a vital role in establishing the Ottomans as a sizable geo-political actor.[172] Regardless of the arguments, from the first Battle of Kosovo, to Nicopolis, to Varna and the second Battle of Kosovo, the Ottomans defeated their European rivals repeatedly, despite noteworthy leadership and overwhelming odds at times. These battles in particular play into the narrative of Ottoman, as well as Turkish, exceptionalism which is often present in Turkish academia and literature on this topic. These victories over Christendom remain crucial points in the national identities of both the Turks as well as peoples of the Balkans to this very day, though for different reasons.[173]

East-centric academics emphasise the role of Islamic beliefs and motivations in the expansion of this state during this period. Scholars emphasise how important the reputation and idea of being a devout warrior of Islam was to early Ottoman leaders, partially shown in how Ghazi would form a part of their official title.[174] While Maturidi philosophy held that piety, not faith, was increased through the actions of a Muslim, piety was key in how Ottoman leaders believed they should define themselves. Not only did this justify conquest against the Christian Byzantines, but also Ottoman moves against other beyliks and Muslim leaders seen as decadent or unworthy.[175] This argument of piety extends just as much to the Ghazi warriors themselves as well as their leaders. While the promise of loot and slaves presented a great deal of motivation, it could be done with impunity as part of the greater struggle for Islam. This came

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[171] H. A. Gibbons, *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire: A History of the Osmalins up to the death of Bayezid I 1300 – 1403,* pp. 171 – 178.

[172] S. J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey,* pp. 35 – 37.

[173] H. Pfeifer, 'A New Hadith Cultuer? Arab Scholars and Ottoman Sunnitization in the Sixteenth century', *in* T. Krstić and D. Terzioğlu (eds.), *Historicising Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450 - c. 1750,* pp. 47 – 52.

[174] D. A. Korobeninkov, 'How 'Byzantine' Were the Early Ottomans? Bithynia in ca. 1290 – 1450.', *in* I. V. Zaitsev and S. F. Oreshkov (eds.) *The Ottoman World and Ottoman Studies*, pp. 215 - 239.

[175] M. F. Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 80 – 108.

at no less pertinent a time than it did, as the Turks and the rest of the Muslim world had suffered dearly from centuries of crusades from the west, and the Mongol invasion from the east. Scholars also point to the prevalence of Christians being taken as slaves, as well as the conversions of Christians, during these conquests, to emphasise their religious nature, placing it as one of the most important factors which facilitated this early expansion.

The one exception to this preoccupation with Europe comes during the time of Murad's successor, Bayezid, who, following the first Battle of Kosovo, attempted to focus his attention on unifying Anatolia. While initially successful in conquering other smaller beyliks through political *fatwas*[176] or incorporating their land through strategic marriages, his success halted with the Beylik of Karaman, which had allied itself with the rising Timurid Empire.[177] The Karamanids themselves hailed from the Oghuz *Afshar* tribe, whose success in Anatolia is often cited as a challenge to the common narratives of *Kayı* and *Kınık* supremacy in the history of the region, which remains a part of the common conceptions of Ottoman success. While Bayezid took time after this stalemate to refocus his efforts on Europe, the Karamanids, and their ally, Timur, began to view Ottoman expansion with unease. As such, Timur eventually led his Turko-Mongol armies against the Ottomans in the dawning years of the 15th century, with the ultimate result being the Battle of Ankara in 1402. This battle saw Bayezid and his army outnumbered, outmatched, and ultimately undone by Timur, despite Bayezid's history as a competent military commander.[178] While Timurid suzerainty over the Ottomans only lasted for a very brief period following the battle, the main importance that this conflict had on Ottoman history would be in how it caused the Ottoman Interregnum. Given that Bayezid eventually died in Timurid captivity, there was no clear heir to the Ottoman throne, and the succession practices of the Oghuz would once again come into play.[179]

As was discussed with regard to the Seljuks, fraternal ties appear to have had significant importance in how leadership roles were decided in Oghuz tradition. This is one of the few practices discussed in the early Ottoman Empire that neither of the academic camps of West-

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[176] Fatwas are legal rulings on Islamic law passed by qualified Islamic jurists or scholars in response to questions or accusations made by private individuals. They were a common form of *casus beli* between Muslim rulers. H. Pfeifer, 'A New Hadith Cultuer? Arab Scholars and Ottoman Sunnitization in the Sixteenth century', *in* T. Krstić and D. Terzioğlu (eds.), *Historicising Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450 - c. 1750,* pp. 47 – 52.
[177] P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East*, p. 363.
[178] S. J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey,* pp. 35 – 37.
[179] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 112 – 120.

centric nor East-centric scholarship lay any claim to. As was also alluded to, the longer the Seljuk throne had stood, and the more power and land that it accumulated, the more intense the competition became as to who would be the primary successor to the throne.[180] In the case of the Seljuks, this notably played out with Qavurt, Alp Arslan's brother, challenging Arslan's designated heir, Malik-Shah, for the throne, rather than following the supportive tradition that had existed before this. With no legal tradition to dictate who the primary heir should be, and what appears to be an absence of adherence to Sunni Islam's succession laws, matters of succession in these courts became a violent competition between all eligible heirs due to their equal right to inherit the throne. Though there is no evidence this was the practice of the Turkmen tribes who inhabited Anatolia, there is evidence that this practice of fratricide sometimes took place in the loftier courts of the Sultanate of Rúm. By the time the Ottomans came to power, this fratricidal practice had become a custom, with both Murad and Beyazid murdering their brothers at the time of their accession to the throne in order to avoid a possible power struggle. Traditionally, through the practice of *Sanjak-bey,*[181] which will be detailed later, the favoured heir of the Sultan would usually be as close as possible to the Sultan so that he could be the first to stake his claim for power upon the sultan's death, severely undermining any chance their rivals may have had to seize the throne. In the case of Bayezid's death, however, none of his children were able to take control of the subjugated Ottoman state. While Timur supposedly confirmed Bayezid's youngest son, Mehmed, as Sultan, the Turco-Mongol warlord's authority quickly dissipated following his own death in 1405, leaving the Ottoman state split between Bayezid's four sons.[182]

While the Ottoman Interregnum was ultimately won by Mehmed in the end, the conflict itself was incredibly bloody, and once again threatened to collapse the fledgling empire in its tracks. Once again, issues of Ottoman legitimacy proved to be a problem and formed the basis for the uprising led by the Sufi agitator Sheikh Bedreddin against the Ottomans in 1416.[183] In question was not only Mehmed's place as the successor to the throne, but also his legitimacy as a Muslim ruler, as well as authority over the Turkmen tribes. This period in particular is used to reinforce the points made by West-centric academics that Anatolia was unstable and undesirable when

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[180] P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East,* p. 220.

[181] Translating to 'Governor/Lord of a *sanjak'*, an administrative area of the Empire. H. İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 14 – 18.

[182] S. J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey,* pp. 36 – 39.

[183] C. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300 – 1650: The Structure of Power,* pp. 20 – 21.

compared to Europe. These points are usually argued alongside the notion that the early Ottoman sultans were usually forced to be far more pragmatic as rulers, rather than keep with the teachings and ideologies of Islam as some East-centric scholars claim. The use of the Janissaries to handle these issues only further emphasised their role as a force used to police the traditional Anatolian groups in the eyes of these same academics. While the rule of Mehmed's successor, Murad II, saw a return to greater focus on Europe, after the subjugation of the Karamanids, the interregnum laid the foundations for the reputation that the Janissaries would obtain in the eyes of most historians as kingmakers, and as a distinctly anti-Turkmen force.[184]

Kayser-i Rûm

The crucial element which transformed the Ottoman state from a regional sultanate into a proper empire was its conquest and complete absorption of the one which had preceded it, the Byzantine Empire. Though it had long been reduced to a withered husk of its former self by the 1400s, its capital, and the crowning jewel in its imperial hegemony, Constantinople, still stood tall. Over the centuries it sat as the most desirable city in both Europe and the Middle East, and over these centuries it had withstood countless sieges by outside forces who had tried to take it from the remnants of the old Roman Empire. With the exception of its sacking in 1204 at the hands of the Fourth Crusade,[185] which had been a subversion from within the city, it had never succumbed to the assaults of the world around it, and no matter how bedraggled the Byzantines were, it remained a shining star of trade, culture and faith in the Christian world. It is for these reasons that scholars argue that it remained both the ultimate prize for the Ottoman sultans, as well as the ever-present thorn in their side.

Muslim leaders had long coveted the city over the centuries for its position as the gateway between Europe and the East, as well as the possible importance placed on the city by the Prophet Muhammad himself.[186] From the view of the Ottomans, Bayezid was far from the first Muslim ruler to attempt to besiege the city, as the Rashidun and Umayyad Caliphates had attempted the same feat centuries prior, to little success. Yet it is with Bayezid, and his

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[184] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 112 – 120.

[185] R. Crowley, *Constantinople: The Last Great Siege 1453,* p. 191.

[186] M. S. Küçükaşçı, 'The Conquest Hadith and the Muslim Sieges of Constantinople', *in* C. Yılmaz (ed.), *History of Istanbul: From Antiquity to the 21st century,* pp. 1, 8 – 10.

successors, that the city becomes a fixation for the Ottoman sultans during their reigns which lasted long after their capture of the city in 1453. Why this is the case is up to the speculation of academics in both camps of the cultural divide. Some West-centric historians pointing to the city's historical significance, and the legacy of the Romans which the Ottomans may have wished to imitate.[187] Meanwhile, East-centric scholars focus their arguments on the so called 'Conquest Hadith' as a religious imperative for the city's capture. This Hadith is supposed to have been, "Verily, you shall conquer Constantinople. What a wonderful army will that army be, and what a wonderful commander will that conqueror be," which Mehmed II is supposed to have taken to heart.[188] Regardless of these arguments, however, both sides recognise the immense economic and cultural power that the city represented, as well as it being the final territory needed to properly bond the provinces of Anatolia and Rumelia together as a singular Ottoman Empire. Whether these were also the considerations of Mehmed II, the successor to Murad II, is uncertain. What we do know is that Mehmed is well documented, throughout his life, as having been fixated on the idea of the city and its capture as the crowning achievement of his life, and of his House.[189]

However, Mehmed's ambitions began in much more unlikely circumstances. The tradition of *Sanjak-bey*,[190] which had previously been mentioned, was practised by the Ottomans as a means of preparing the heirs to the throne for their eventual position as Sultan. To do this, when the princes were old enough, they were sent, along with their mothers, to a Sanjak, or regional territory within Ottoman lands, to govern. Usually, this territory would be in Anatolia, supposedly to allow the children to get the best grasp of their cultural roots by interacting with the political balance between urban Turk cities and nomadic Turkmen tribes. There are very few recorded points in time where there had been an exception to this rule, however, this was not the case with Mehmed II. He, like all other Ottoman princes before him, served as Sanjak Bey in Anatolia, first to the Sanjak of Amasya, and then the Sanjak of Manisa. Where Mehmed's experience as an Ottoman prince differs, however, was where his father, Murad II, made the unprecedented move to abdicate the throne in 1444, electing Mehmed to succeed

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[187] H. İnalcık, 'The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population of Istanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City', *Dumbarton Oak Papers* 24(1), 1970, pp. 232 – 233.

[188] In the context of the Hadith, 'you' refers to the Muslim faithful. As Hadiths are a collection of recorded sayings from the Prophet Muhammad outside of the Quran, they play a vital role in Islamic tradition and education. M. S. Küçükaşçı, 'The Conquest Hadith and the Muslim Sieges of Constantinople', *in* C. Yılmaz (ed.), *History of Istanbul: From Antiquity to the 21st century,* pp. 1, 8 – 10.

[189] J. Freely, *The Grand Turk*, pp. 40 – 47.

[190] J. Freely, *The Grand Turk*, pp. 28 – 32.

him.[191] Why Murad did this is not well understood, though some, and especially East-centric scholars, point to the idea that he was possibly trying to live his life more in line with the Sufist traditions and ideals of Islam that had been taught to him.[192] Whatever the reason may have been, it placed the young Mehmed under immense pressure, with growing discontent among the Janissaries and another European crusader army at the Ottoman's doorstep. As such, two years into his rule, Mehmed is replaced by Murad as Sultan in 1446, either due to direct instruction by Mehmed, or through court intrigue to see the young Sultan removed in favour of returning his father. During this time Murad would completed some of his most popular feats as a sultan, such as defeating the Christians yet again at the Second Battle of Kosovo. These events appear to have severely strained the relationship between Mehmed and his father, with some academics arguing that it left him with feelings of inferiority and inadequacy which ultimately pushed him in his ambitious conquest of Constantinople following his father's death in 1451.[193]

While the events leading up to and detailing the 1453 siege have filled the pages of hundreds of books over the years, it is the effects which these events had which are important to understand the fascination with them in the literature. To begin with, the siege was the first historical mass use of cannons, or gunpowder in general,[194] in Europe and the Middle East. The use of cannons, alongside the effective deployment of the professional Ottoman army and navy, was heralded as revolutionary for their time, and the spark which took Europe and the Middle East into the modern era of warfare. While neither side of the academic debate takes the advent of gunpowder as a point for their arguments directly, it is one which has different interpretations within Turkish literature.[195] For some, it is a sign of immense technological progress which set the Ottomans above the rest of the world, feeding yet again into notions of Ottoman and Turkish exceptionalism. In the same way, it is also used as a means of criticising the later Ottoman Empire, which had stagnated technologically and failed to keep up with the West as it stayed locked in its traditional ways. Similar remarks are also used with regard to the Ottoman navy, which was the product of dedicated manufacture and modernisation in shipbuilding for the

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[191] J. Freely, *The Grand Turk*, pp. 28 – 32.
[192] C. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300 – 1650: The Structure of Power,* pp. 98 – 100.
[193] J. Freely, *The Grand Turk*, pp. 28 – 32.
[194] H. J. Magoulias, *Doukas: The Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks,* p. 200.
[195] A. Kadioğlu, 'The paradox of Turkish nationalism and the construction of an official identity', *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(2), 1996, pp. 177 – 193.

time, and how the later empire failed to meet the standards it had set during this time.[196] It is also used to highlight the economic and commercial connections the Ottoman state had, which allowed it to use this invention of the Far East in such an effective, and revolutionary manner.

Where the discussion becomes more divisive is with how the siege itself unfolded and is interpreted by historians. Beginning with how the siege started and how that followed through to its conclusion, proponents for an East-centric view of the empire point to several points that distinguished the Ottomans as a distinctly Eastern, Islamic army. Elements such as the army arriving outside the walls on the 2nd of April, the Day before Easter, to shake the defenders of Constantinople psychologically, or the terms of surrender which Mehmed issued in accordance with Islamic Law, are all pointed to as points which specifically argue for Mehmed's Muslim ideals driving his actions when besieging the city.[197] These arguments are usually dismissed as superficial, or for having equal counterarguments, such as Mehmed not initiating the siege over Easter out of respect, and allowing terms for Constantinople to surrender peacefully under the same auspices.[198] Where the arguments become harder to counter, or dismiss, is in the effects that were felt after the siege. As part of the city's refusal to surrender, and the Byzantine Emperor, Constantine XI, not abdicating, Mehmed's soldiers were promised three uninterrupted days to loot, sack and plunder the city and its people, in keeping with the traditions of the time. These three days would have an irreversible effect on the population and cultural composition of the city, as, while still wealthy, much of the city's material wealth had already been lost back in 1204 when the Fourth Crusade sacked and took the city.[199] Thus, the primary wealth to be had from the city was its citizenry, most of whom were taken as slaves to be sold, exchanged, or used, while specific portions of the population, such as the young, the elderly, and women, were stripped, marched and ridiculed through the streets and churches, and then raped repeatedly.[200] While this level of destruction was common among all armies of the time, this particular sacking placed the city's long-established Byzantine population well and truly into the minority, and ravaged its remaining Christian treasures and monuments.

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[196] H. J. Magoulias, *Doukas: The Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks,* p. 199.
[197] H. J. Magoulias, *Doukas: The Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks,* pp. 209 – 210.
[198] H. A. Gibbons, *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire: A History of the Osmalins up to the death of Bayezid I 1300 – 1403,* pp. 171 – 178.
[199] R. Crowley, *Constantinople: The Last Great Siege 1453,* p. 191.
[200] J. Freely, *The Grand Turk*, pp. 70 – 71.

In the specific case of monuments, Constantinople's fall cannot be discussed without examining its effect on its most recognisable landmark; the Hagia Sophia. This building had once been the largest in the world, and prior to the conquest, was the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, the highest office in the Orthodox Christian world. It was one of the most recognisable, and oldest, holy buildings in the entirety of Christendom, and as such, its subjugation proved to be the ultimate display of Mehmed's accomplishment.[201] After the looting and subjugation of the city had taken place, he walked up the steps of the Hagia Sophia and declared it a mosque, before inviting his generals and advisors to undertake Friday prayer in the building.[202] This action, along with his redesignation of other temples and sites throughout the city, is one which many historians hold as the most symbolic expression of what they believe were Mehmed's obvious Muslim inclinations and beliefs. For those reasons, it is one of the primary points which East-centric historians use to highlight the Islamic nature of the Ottomans, especially at this point in which the empire itself truly comes into being.[203] It is also an event with immense political power in modern Türkiye, both since the foundation of the modern state and in more recent times. As the city transitioned to being part of that new modern state after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the mosque was redesignated as a museum by Mustafa Kamal Atatürk, in a show of secular understanding of the building's place as a heritage site for both Christians and Muslims.[204] The symbol of the Hagia Sophia had long existed as a prominent part of Hellenic national identity as well, and so the move was widely applauded in the wake of Türkiye's refusal to commit to making the entire city an international zone. It is for this same reason that the Hagia Sophia's redesignation as a mosque under Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has been so controversial.[205] This same academic approach has also given rise to one of the most notable misconceptions with regard to Mehmed's conquest of the city, and that pertains to its name. Officially, the city remained Constantinople in official correspondences within the Ottoman state throughout its existence, and it was only with the rise of the Turkish Republic in the 1920s that the city's unofficial Turkish name, Istanbul, replaced Constantinople.[206]

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[201] J. Freely, *The Grand Turk*, pp. 72 – 75.
[202] J. Freely, *The Grand Turk*, pp. 72 – 75.
[203] H. İnalcık, 'The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population of Istanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City', *Dumbarton Oak Papers* 24(1), 1970, pp. 232 – 233.
[204] S. J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey,* p. 342.
[205] Y. Karakaya, 'Between neo-Ottomanism and Ottomania: navigating state-led and popular culture representations of the past', *New perspectives on Turkey* 56(1), 2017, pp. 37 – 41.
[206] H. İnalcık, 'The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population of Istanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City', *Dumbarton Oak Papers* 24(1), 1970, pp. 232 – 233.

This event is not without its arguments for the western-centric academic viewpoint, however, as while Mehmed's conquest came with several fundamental changes for the city, it also came with permutations which preserved aspects of the city's previous identity. While much of the city's population was replaced by incoming settlers from throughout the rest of the empire, the Greek population which survived the three days of looting were granted Mehmed's personal guarantee of safety, both for themselves, and their property. He also permitted the continuation of the Greek Orthodox church and the rights of the Greek citizenry when he installed Gennadius II as the new Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. Mehmed also ensured that the Patriarchate would remain in Constantinople by granting them leave to use the Church of the Holy Apostles as its new seat. In return, Gennadius recognised Mehmed as the rightful ruler of Constantinople, and as such, Caesar of the Roman Empire, translated into Turkish as *Qayser* or *Kayser-i Rûm*.[207] This move in particular is of immense importance to the Western viewpoint, which champions the idea of the Ottomans being a Roman successor state. As such, the recognition of a historically Western, Roman title as part of Mehmed's identity works to deepen those arguments. Whether symbolic or not, the recognition that this title carried power shows that the Ottomans viewed the legacy of Rome with reverence and respect, while also recognising how their position afforded them some of the same recognition the Romans had received. This argument also gets even more interesting when discussed in conjunction with the *Rūmī,* a population within the Ottoman state who identified themselves directly as denizens of what was a Roman territory.

For the most part, the contingent parts of the empire maintained their ethnic identities, with Serbs, Croats, Vlachs and Bulgars from Europe, and Arabs, Persians, Kurds and Copts from the Middle East. It was those groups which generally associated themselves closely with the Ottoman state, and had been a part of it the longest, that shared their ethnic identity with it to a degree; the Greeks, and the Anatolian Turks.[208] As previously discussed by Kafadar[209] and Ergul,[210] this term applied broadly to a population with Turkic origins who resided primarily

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[207] H. İnalcık, 'The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population of Istanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City', *Dumbarton Oak Papers* 24(1), 1970, pp. 232 – 233.

[208] C. Kafadar, 'A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum', *Muqarnas* 24(1), 2007, pp. 13 – 14.

[209] C. Kafadar, 'A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum', *Muqarnas* 24(1), 2007, pp. 13 – 14.

[210] F. A. Ergul, 'The Ottoman identity: Turkish, Muslim or Rum?', *Middle Eastern Studies* 48(4), 2012, pp. 632 – 634.

within the settled, urban and rural spaces away from the nomadic lifestyles of their forefathers. The name itself, however, specifically signified a degree of relationship and identity brought by residing in the territories of the former Byzantine Roman empire. Yet, while this is the common definition for this term in and around the time following the conquest of Constantinople, prior to this, the term seems to apply more to the Greek settled populations residing in Ottoman Anatolia, not Turkic ones. Whether this change comes about due to the continued melding of cultures and societies within Anatolia, or due to a cultural shift that occurs when the Byzantine Empire and its successor states dissipate is unclear and is only further complicated the more it is explored. For instance, across the Dardanelles in Europe, the Greek population only ever went by the identity of *Romaioi*, denoting their heritage as inhabitants of the former Roman Empire, but it remains uncertain whether the Greek population of Anatolia during this time ever went by a similar identity. The two Greek populations certainly distinguished themselves as different from one another as far back as the 1200s, but whether this is simply due to the differences in their own Greek heritage, or due to the influences of living alongside the Turks for the span of time that they did, is unclear. It is also not entirely clear whether '*Rūmī*' during this time prior to Mehmed's conquests simply referred to the agrarian Greek populations,[211] who, living outside the urban centres, had a greater degree of contact with the Turkmen, or whether it applied to those living in the urban centres and still considered themselves Byzantine until the fall of Constantinople.

This question of ethnic identity has been one which has been used on either side of the debate on the Ottoman cultural origins. On the one hand, while the nomadic pastoralist Turkmen continued to define themselves as such, much of the upper strata of the Ottomans grew from the urban and settled Turkic populations, with a few exceptions. This population, at some point, considered themselves '*Rūmī*' and defined themselves in relation to the Roman Empire. Alongside the Greek '*Romaioi*,' this population appears to have defined themselves by the associations of where they lived to what was formerly Roman, lending further evidence to the Ottomans finding the core of their original identity from the Byzantines. However, it is argued conversely that '*Rūmī*' can just as easily be explained as simply having been a locational identity, rather than having any cultural ties to what was considered Roman.[212] As is further

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[211] D. A. Korobeninkov, 'How 'Byzantine' Were the Early Ottomans? Bithynia in ca. 1290 – 1450.', *in* I. V. Zaitsev and S. F. Oreshkov (eds.) *The Ottoman World and Ottoman Studies*, pp. 215 – 239.
[212] F. A. Ergul, 'The Ottoman identity: Turkish, Muslim or Rum?', *Middle Eastern Studies* 48(4), 2012, pp. 632 – 634.

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discussed by Kafadar and Ergul, much of the outside Muslim world used *Rūmī* as a title given specifically to Muslim Turks of the Ottoman state, further cementing it as a positional name rather than a chosen identity. This argument is made no easier when the preceding Sultanate of Rúm is discussed, as the debate remains whether the inclusion of 'Rúm' in its title signifies greater ties between its identity and that of the Romans, or is once again, simply positional in nature.[213]

The role of this Roman identifying population forms part of the greater desire by the Ottomans, as portrayed by West-centric scholars, to portray themselves as legitimate Roman successors. As mentioned previously, one of the more solid arguments points to the importance of the title 'Caeser' that the Ottoman Sultans took following the conquest of Constantinople. It is not understood whether Mehmed II claiming this title following his capture of the old Byzantine capital is yet another aspect which was 'read in' to the history by early modern Ottoman chroniclers, or something which Mehmed did indeed claim following his conquest.[214] What is understood is that it shows a significant degree of reverence for the weight which Rome and the claim to it had historically held and does show a very direct desire to adopt the identity of the Empire. At the time Mehmed II took this title, he had claimed the last territories, institutions and peoples of the old Byzantine state, and was likely aware of how he needed to placate and assimilate them into his new state. This particularly can be seen with the election of Gennadius II as the new Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, and the active role he took in resettling and rebuilding the properties and holdings of Greeks and other Europeans within the city following the looting of the Ottoman army.[215] As the scholars argue, there seemed to be an understanding of the responsibility he now held to this population and territory which considered itself Roman. There are further arguments to this end, which claim a degree of comparison of aspects of Turkic and Greco-Roman mythology. In some of these, it is proposed that some Ottomans sought to highlight the similarities between the Turkic origin myth with Asena, and that of Romulus and Remus, as well as establishing Rome as one of the great realms conquered by Oghuz Khan's descendants, but these claims are far harder to verify.[216]

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[213] D. A. Korobeninkov, 'How 'Byzantine' Were the Early Ottomans? Bithynia in ca. 1290 – 1450.', *in* I. V. Zaitsev and S. F. Oreshkov (eds.) *The Ottoman World and Ottoman Studies*, pp. 215 – 239.

[214] H. İnalcık, 'The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population of Istanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City', *Dumbarton Oak Papers* 24(1), 1970, pp. 232 – 233.

[215] H. İnalcık, 'The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population of Istanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City', *Dumbarton Oak Papers* 24(1), 1970, pp. 232 – 233.

[216] É, Kincses-Nagy, 'The Islamization of the Legend of the Turks: The Case of *Oghuznāma*,' *Studia Uralo-Altica* 53(1), 2020, pp. 125 – 136.

All these different arguments and points regarding the empire around Mehmed's time lend themselves to describing him not only as a conqueror but also as a preserver, though the former title has had longer popularity through eurocentric historiography.[217] This attitude of Mehmed as a preserver doesn't change outside of the conquest of Constantinople however, and is rather emblematic of the position that the Ottomans settled into over the course of history as they straddled the lines of conquest and cultural acceptance. Not long after the city's capture, Mehmed undertook large-scale restoration and repair projects, which would both see the promotion of the Ottoman state as an Eastern, military entity through the construction of barracks for the Janissary Corps and cannon foundries, as well as the establishment of hospitals and the restoration of churches which are argued as pursuits in favour of the city's western population.[218] Warehouses and harbours were also built to facilitate trade, while Genoese and Greek citizens who had fled Galata, and the city in general, were permitted safe return, regardless of their religion.[219] Even following on to the rule of Bayezid II, Mehmed's successor, the city grew ever more cosmopolitan as Sephardi Jews and Andalusian Muslims were evacuated and resettled in Constantinople, as well as other areas throughout the empire, following the Alhambra Decree which expelled them from Spain and Portugal.[220] These new immigrants were not only given safe passage but were also protected from extortion when they arrived, and went on to play vital roles in developing the empire. Bayezid II also played a notable in bolstering the Ottoman Navy, which then challenged Venice for control of the Mediterranean as well as facilitating the trade which travelled through the Ottoman territories.[221] Evidence for arguments made by both West-centric and East-centric sources is plenty immediately following this period and would remain so throughout the rest of the new Ottoman 'Golden Age.'

However, this period in Ottoman history still has very specific events and individuals who are crucial in understanding Ottoman culture and how it consolidated. While the arguments of West-centric and East-centric scholars shift their focuses following Mehmed II's conquests to the preoccupations of the empire's interests, rather than the founding entities which seemed to

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[217] H. İnalcık, 'The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population of Istanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City', *Dumbarton Oak Papers* 24(1), 1970, pp. 232 – 233.
[218] J. Freely, *The Grand Turk*, pp. 80 – 83.
[219] S. J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey,* pp. 60 – 62.
[220] R. Gottheil, M. Kayserling & J. Jacobs, 'Spain', *in* I. Singer & C. Adler (eds.), *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, p.460.
[221] S. J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey,* pp. 71 – 74.

have informed its actions, the arguments also become much more nuanced, and less diametrically opposed to one another. This approach is one which became more common in the later 20th century as post-colonial narratives, and the perspectives of global history, began playing greater roles in the historiography. All the same, they still dominate the discussion of the state over purposeful interrogation of Ottoman actors and events outside of these lenses, and so still form the basis for the literature on the topic. Where Osman and his immediate heirs had set the initial tone of the Ottoman state, under Mehmed II and Bayezid II, that state would go through a seminal, bloody transition into an empire, and it went be through their heirs that the new tone established in that transition would be realised.[222]

The Great Power of Europe and the East

The shift which had begun to take place within both the House of Osman and the empire as a whole did not mean that they had escaped the peculiarities of their past. In terms of succession, fratricide was still the most common practice. Mehmed II still ordered his infant brother Hasan be strangled upon his succession to the throne, whilst later also having to fight against his second cousin Orhan who had joined the Byzantines in hopes of defeating and overthrowing him as Sultan.[223] Bayezid II also faced succession issues when his father died suddenly in 1481, and he had to use his influence to prevent Cem, his brother and the favourite heir of his father, from succeeding before him. To do this, Bayezid is likely to have bribed the Janissaries to bar Cem from reaching the capital before Bayezid, and then employed them yet again in a brief military campaign against Cem and his supporters.[224] This would not be the first or the last time that the Janissaries were used in the political machinations of Ottoman princes. Indeed, as succession gradually became a bloodless affair in the Ottoman court, the role of the Janissaries in choosing the next sultan arguably only increased.

The next point in time where these issues became a notable issue for the empire was with the ascension to the throne of Selim I in 1512. Like his father before him, Selim was not the favourite to succeed to the throne, and as such had to rely on other means to ensure his place as Sultan after his father. In poor health by the dawn of the 1500s, Bayezid had begun to show

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[222] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 112 – 120.
[223] J. Freely, *The Grand Turk*, pp. 38 – 43.
[224] J. Freely, *The Grand Turk*, pp. 305– 308.

clear favour for his eldest son, Ahmet, to succeed him.[225] Sensing this shift, both sons began to make demands of their father with regard to the Sanjaks they were to govern, with Ahmet managing to have Selim's son, Suleiman, stationed in Kaffa, Crimea, to Selim's outrage of Selim. In response, Bayezid moved Selim from Trebizond to Serbia, as one of the few princes to ever govern outside of the traditionally Turkic lands of Anatolia.[226] This move still left Selim far from the Ottoman court, and his outrage resulted in him publicly revolting against Bayezid and Ahmet. Despite suffering an initial loss, Selim successfully rallied the Janissaries against his father, resulting in Bayezid's deposition and exile, while his brothers and their children were executed.[227] These violent, fratricidal struggles which had become commonplace within the empire had also started to garner it an unfavourable reputation from the rest of the world. While the practice would be outlawed in the 17th century in favour of agnatic seniority, like much of Europe, the Ottomans continued to suffer from external perceptions of their past succession practices until the fall of the empire. Further, the continued role the Janissaries played in power brokering within the empire only worked to worsen the already bloodstained Ottoman reputation, and remains an element of the Ottoman legacy which shape the common perception of Ottoman history to this day.[228]

Selim's reign would also be marked by a distinct focus on the east of the empire, and a return to many of the militaristic pursuits of the empire following a relatively peaceful reign under Bayezid II. With this consolidation of the empire, the academic narrative shifted toward what interested the empire, rather than what they could be classified as. As such, the narrative surrounding much of Selim's reign, though East-centric, focuses primarily on the reasons why Selim chose to dedicate his efforts to expanding this region of the empire, rather than on the cultural identity of the Ottomans. The same can be said for the West-centric narrative, which highlights Bayezid's, and later Suleiman's, efforts in the western portion of the empire, as well as its exploits in Europe.[229] While this discourse is one which grows out of the aforementioned division between East and West with regards to the empire's foundations, these arguments are distinct in that they deal with the Ottomans as a fully realised state of their own. This lead the scholarship to look at their behaviours and mannerisms with regards to the greater world that they are a part of. As such, while this academic discourse is still discussed along the lines of

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[225] J. Freely, *The Grand Turk*, pp. 306– 309.
[226] A. Clot, *Suleiman the Magnificent*, p. 9
[227] J. Freely, *The Grand Turk*, pp. 306– 309.
[228] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 112 – 120.
[229] S. J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey,* pp. 71 – 74.

East and West, elements of the previous discourses are not always relevant, or they only play a supporting role rather than a primary one in these discussions. Thus, while this literature is still vital in understanding how perceptions of the early Ottoman state were shaped, these arguments do not tend to be as diametrically opposed as the previous ones were, and should be understood with that in mind.

The two great events of Selim's reign are his conflicts with both Safavid Iran and Mameluke Egypt; the latter resulted in Ottoman territory in the east nearly tripling in size. To start with the conflict with the Safavids, the roots of the war are found with Selim's bloody succession struggle against his father and brother Ahmet. While nearly all of Ahmet's children had been captured and executed by order of Selim, Şehzade Murad, Ahmet's only surviving heir, fled to the Safavids in search of sanctuary and aid against Selim.[230] While initially hesitant, the founder of the Safavid dynasty and its ruler, Shah Ismail I, took this as an opportunity to use the prince's influence to garner support from the local Turkmen tribes of Anatolia against Selim. It is believed that Ismail hoped that this would help support his own invasion of Ottoman territory in the Caucuses and Eastern Anatolia. The Safavids were, themselves, a Turkic-speaking dynasty with ties to the Turkmen and Kurds of Anatolia, but unlike the Ottomans, followed the Twelver sect of Shi'a Islam.[231] As such, they stood in direct opposition to the Sunni Ottomans, despite the similarities in both dynasties' origins. What Ismail had failed to account for when challenging the Ottomans was the professionalism that had been developed within the Ottoman military, as well as the extent to which they had integrated gunpowder into their combat doctrine. As such, while Ismail's Turkmen were an even match for those serving Selim, they were handily defeated due to the superiority of the Ottoman firepower at the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514. This defeat left the Safavid capital of Tabriz wide open to Ottoman looting and is often cited as being responsible for pushing the Safavids to adopt gunpowder into their own military doctrines.[232]

Like the Siege of Constantinople, elements within Turkish academia who hold the view that Ottoman success rests with the state's adoption of revolutionary technologies such as gunpowder, and not their adherence to tradition, see the Ottoman war with the Safavids and

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[230] J. Freely, *The Grand Turk*, pp. 306– 309.

[231] P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East*, pp. 372 – 374.

[232] P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East*, p. 375.

Battle of Chaldiran as vindication of their viewpoint. To them, it exemplifies the edge that gunpowder afforded the Ottomans against the more traditional elements, such as Turkmen cavalry, which they view as outdated and of less importance in discussions around Ottoman success. Others also take the victory against the Safavids as another example of Ottoman exceptionalism, wherein the conflict between two great, Turkic powers, the Ottomans were clearly superior.[233] Similarly, these events are discussed in terms of establishing the Ottomans as the premier Islamic power in the Muslim world. While the rivalry between the Ottomans and Safavids continued for centuries, the Ottomans would always be framed by historians as the preeminent power in the Middle East, and the ones dictating the course of Muslim history. The conflicts which ensued between the two, therefore, would not be viewed in nuanced terms as to the specifics of the politics between the two states, but rather as the Ottomans exerting their dominance and ability to dictate the nature of the region.[234] In this way, this war, and the wars which followed, played directly into the hands of the academics who view the Ottoman Empire as a state most preoccupied with its activities in the East rather than the West.

The subsequent conquest of the Mameluke Sultanate of Egypt by Selim would only provide further material for the East-centric academic camp. Unlike the Safavids, the Mamelukes were a much older state which had been in relative decline for quite some time prior to the Ottoman conquest. A few decades before Selim, his grandfather, Mehmed II, had intended to turn his attention toward toppling the Mamelukes, but died before he could realise this ambition.[235] As such, historians argue that there was an expectation that with Selim's outward push for conquest, he felt compelled to complete Mehmed's final ambition. This ambition, as it was phrased, facilitated the Ottomans taking control of some of the most vital territories in the entirety of the Middle East. Economically, their seizure of the Levant and Egypt proved to be vitally important in controlling all trade that entered the Mediterranean from the East, thus enabling them to monopolise the trade of spices and silks which entered Europe.[236] What was possibly even more important to Ottoman ambitions than the economics was that they came into possession of the three holiest cities in Islam; Jerusalem, Mecca and Medina. Further to this point, the Mamelukes had long been the captors of the Abbasid Caliphs, who had been

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[233] Y. Karakaya, 'Between neo-Ottomanism and Ottomania: navigating state-led and popular culture representations of the past', *New perspectives on Turkey* 56(1), 2017, pp. 37 – 41.
[234] P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East*, p. 375.
[235] C. Y. Muslu, *The Ottomans and the Mamluks,* pp. 176 – 177.
[236] C. Y. Muslu, *The Ottomans and the Mamluks,* pp. 176 – 178.

held in Cairo to legitimise Mameluke rule over the region. As such, with the Ottoman conquest of these regions, they not only became the most important state in the Islamic world, but they also paved the way for later Ottoman Sultans to re-establish the Sunni Caliphate with themselves as the Caliphs, and therefore the *de facto* heads of the Muslim world.[237]

It is important to note that it is with the conquests of Selim that elements of the East-centric literature split in their opinions and arguments. Where the Ottomans had occupied the position of being the champions of the East until this point, their conquest and hegemony over eastern lands where Turks were not the dominant ethnic group becomes a contentious matter. Many earlier works on the Ottomans took the Orientalist stance which grouped all the denizens of the empire's eastern territory, especially the Muslim population, together despite their differences.[238] However, the reality of the situation places the Ottomans as a Turkish elite ruling over a primarily Arab world, which would steadily feel further disenfranchised as time progressed. This is seen in the way the dissolution of the Abbasid Caliphate and then establishment of the Ottoman Caliphate centuries later was handled. Much of the Sunni Arab population would be outraged by this, as the title of Caliph, and the bloodline of the Prophet Muhammad, were seen as being inseparable from the Arab people.[239] It is for this reason that much of the Arab population of the empire simply disregarded the religious power of the Ottomans. This, along with other grievances, would play crucial roles in fuelling Arab Nationalism and resistance to the Ottomans in these regions for centuries. As such, elements of the East-centric literature take a stance at this point which is quick to establish the Ottomans as imperialist occupiers throughout much of the East, even if it is still intrinsically Eastern in its characteristics.[240]

However, despite these crowning achievements, it was Suleiman, not Selim, whose reign serves as the pinnacle of the early Ottoman state for the purposes of this study. Much like the rule of Mehmed II, Suleiman's rule became a central focus for most of the historiography of the empire during the period of its consolidation. The reasons for this are both the enormous wealth in sources discussing Suleiman in comparison to previous Ottoman sultans, and the widespread impact his actions had on Europe and the Middle East. For these reasons, it is no

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[237] C. Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1923,* p. 111.
[238] E. W. Said, 'Orientalism Reconsidered'. *Cultural Critique* 1(1), 1985, pp. 89 – 107.
[239] M. Kramer, 'Arab Nationalism: Mistaken Identity', *Daedalus* 122(3), 1993, pp. 177 – 180.
[240] S. N. Faroqhi, *Approaching Ottoman History: An Introduction to the Sources*, pp. 14 – 18.

surprise that Suleiman's early life is as well documented as it is. From the very beginning, he appears to have been groomed for the throne, and had repeatedly been shown to be his father's favoured heir. As mentioned previously, Suleiman would also play an important role in his father's violent challenge for the throne in 1512, when Suleiman was only 18, making him an integral part of Selim's reign as well. Indeed, as a result of this ordeal, Suleiman became the first Ottoman prince to have experience as Sanjak-bey of sanjaks across all regions of the empire. Suleiman ruled over sanjaks in Anatolia, Crimea, and Rumelia, with the latter being the result of Selim assigning him to the old Ottoman capital of Edirne following his 1512 struggle for the throne. This was the first great change in how Suleiman's life broke from the tradition of previous Ottoman princes, given that they were usually only ever allowed to govern in Anatolia in order to teach them a greater respect for the Turkic and Islamic roots of their empire.[241] This much more diversified experience in governance was only the first break in tradition associated with Suleiman's rule, but certainly not the last, with him also making the notable decision to not engage in the practice of ritual fratricide upon his succession to the throne as well.[242] To that end, Suleiman's brother Üveys was spared by him, despite the fact that even though Üveys had a much lower claim to the throne as he was born after his mother had left the Imperial Harem, he still posed a threat to Suleiman's rule through traditional Oghuz concepts of inheritance. However, Suleiman's judgement in this regard proved prudent, as by keeping Üveys in the bureaucracy of the empire's furthest regions until his eventual death at the hands of rebels in Ta'izz, Suleiman never had to worry about his brother rising against him.[243]

Suleiman's reign also saw a significant deviation in the Ottoman traditions of the Imperial Harem, especially in his relationship with Hurrem Sultan that would begin the period of Ottoman history known as the Sultanate of Women.[244] Until the rule of Suleiman, the House of Osman kept with the marital traditions of many other Islamic courts of the age by engaging in the strict exclusion of women from the court. Instead, the mothers, sisters, daughters, wives, and concubines of the Ottoman dynasty resided in the harem and were kept out of the direct political running of the empire. As Ottoman sultans were generally encouraged to be active military leaders, and to concern themselves with matters of state and religion, a great deal of

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[241] A. Clot, *Suleiman the Magnificent*, p. 9
[242] C. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300 – 1650: The Structure of Power,* pp. 103 – 104.
[243] C. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300 – 1650: The Structure of Power,* pp. 103 – 104.
[244] L. P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire,* p. vii.

importance was placed on keeping the matters of succession separate from the sultan.[245] Further, to reduce the power any one consort could wield, concubines were traditionally limited to having only one son with the sultan, and being forced to follow that son to the region he would govern once he reached the appropriate age as part of the Sanjak-bey practice. This practice kept the concubines and consorts in isolation from the rest of the court, but also made them heavily invested in the success of their sons.[246] The only woman of the harem who had any real power would be the *Valide* Sultan, the mother of the reigning Sultan, who could exercise immense influence over her son and dictate who was or was not suitable to be part of the Sultan's harem. As such, most consorts aspired to this position, but were forced to hedge their bets on a single son.

Initially, it seemed that Suleiman's reign was set to follow this tradition. Prior to his ascension, Suleiman had fathered a son by a concubine named Mahidevran, and upon his ascension to the throne, would lose two other sons by other concubines. This placed Mahidevran in the prime position to groom her son, Mustafa as Suleiman's eldest son, for the throne and to aspire to the position of Valide Sultan.[247] However, shortly after his ascension, Sulieman's mother and current Valide Sultan, Hafsa, selected a Ruthenian slave who had been captured by Crimean Tatars as a gift for her son and to stay in his harem. While her Christian name is speculated to have either been Anastasia or Aleksandra, she would become famously known as 'Hurrem', an apparent moniker to her cheerful and bright disposition.[248] Hurrem very quickly rose to prominence within Suleiman's harem and became one of the few consorts with whom the rule of 'one son per concubine' was flaunted. Hurrem bore Suleiman six children in quick succession over the next six years, including no less than five sons. This monumental rise in power culminated in the formal marriage between Hurrem and Suleiman, which broke completely from the Islamic tradition and gave a woman of slave origins the unprecedented power of being second to only the Sultan himself.[249] She would also go on to be the first woman to remain at court even after her sons reached the age where they would be sent to govern elsewhere in the empire; a privilege which Mahidevran, mother of Suleiman's eldest son, did not share. Hurrem would break tradition further as she was permitted to live side by side with Suleiman in the Topkapi Palace, away from the harem and all the other women of the Ottoman

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[245] L. P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 18 – 21.
[246] L. P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 22 – 25, 42 – 44.
[247] L. P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 55 – 56.
[248] A. Clot, *Suleiman the Magnificent*, p. 10.
[249] L. P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 61 – 62.

court.[250] Unlike any consort before her in the empire, she also played a significant role in the governance of the empire, being one of the primary advisors to her husband and later her son, Sultan Selim II. She would also act on behalf of both Suleiman and Selim II in matters of the state, exemplified by her being in correspondence with many foreign heads of state, such as Sigismund of Poland and others.[251]

These deviations in the traditions previously held by the House of Osman show a conscious effort on Suleiman's part to address some of what he had possibly perceived as the detrimental succession practices of Ottoman rule. While official legal reform of these practices would only come centuries after Suleiman's reign, they nonetheless played an important role in setting the precedent within the ruling dynasty for generally more peaceful transitions of power. This would, however, not be his only engagement with how matters were dealt with during his reign. Indeed, in Western historiography, Suleiman is known by a moniker aside from 'the Magnificent,' and that is as, 'the Lawgiver.' Western historians argue here that, in the style of Justinian nearly a millennia before him, Suleiman had sought to collect all the laws, decrees and judgements that had been made by his predecessors and officially codify them.[252] While much of the empire's legal system was governed by Shari'ah, in accordance with the divine laws of Islam, several points surrounding the tenure and handling of land, territory, taxation, and criminal procedure, fell within the realm of *Kanuns* which were the sole remit of the Sultan. Many of these decrees appear to have taken their structure and precedence from earlier Byzantine laws, but had not been codified since Osman, and in many places were either in conflict with one another, or duplicitous. As such, Suleiman set to work resolving these conflicts, while also updating them to better suit the scale and diverse nature of the empire. This process of committing the royal decrees into writing formed the basis of what became the *kanun-i Osmani,* the legal text which would serve the empire for the next three centuries.[253] These laws were enacted with significant input from the imams and muftis of Suleiman's court, who during this time had been educated to a comparative university level of education at madrassas throughout the empire. Key points which were codified with this law related to the handling of crimes and criminals within the empire; specific crimes were redesignated as finable offences, and fewer were given sentences of capital punishment. In general, the laws

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[250] L. P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 61 – 62.
[251] L. P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 64 – 65.
[252] A. Clot, *Suleiman the Magnificent*, p. 11.
[253] A. Clot, *Suleiman the Magnificent*, p. 21.

appear to have placed greater emphasis on monetary resolutions to disputes, be they legal, commercial issues, or land issues, and emphasised a position whereby citizens were not permanently excluded from society on these grounds.[254] Some of these laws went to the particular benefit of the burgeoning Jewish community of the empire, which still faced varying degrees of persecution both in the European and Asian portions of the empire.

Suleiman's contribution to Ottoman arts reflects his contribution to the Ottoman legal system in that, under his rule, the cultural motifs of the Ottoman state ceased to be defined by their similarities and influences from other cultures, and instead as their own entity. As part of his legal reforms, Suleiman created a structured system by which craftsmen, artists and other professions could be guaranteed employment and regulated pay, while their skill and progression in their fields could also be registered and advertised. Further, many artistic societies were administrated directly by the Ottoman court, which, combined with the regulated conditions, attracted interest from both within and outside of the empire.[255] As such, Suleiman was able to commission several works of expressly Ottoman art and literature, while also funding several renovation and building projects throughout the empire. In particular, this led to the movement away from Persian being the language used by the Ottoman court for writing and poetry, and instead encouraged Oghuz Turkish as the preferred language, though written in the Persian script. The same effect was felt in the style of architecture, as the combination of Byzantine and Persian took on a uniquely Ottoman aesthetic, and began being expressed as such. Many of these projects were directed at servicing the Muslim population of the empire, as mosques were constructed throughout Rumelia, while existing Muslim holy sites such as the Dome of the Rock and Ka'aba were restored and renovated.[256] These building projects in particular are points which East-centric historians use to emphasise the importance of Islam and the East in Suleiman's attention and time.

From Suleiman's passing in 1566 onward the Ottoman state transitioned from one that was in its ascendency, to one of constant defence, embroiled in cultural turmoil. In many of the traditional histories of the West, the end of Suleiman's reign marks the end of the Ottoman 'Golden Age,' and signifies the beginning of its gradual decline. Modern historiography,

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[254] A. Clot, *Suleiman the Magnificent*, p. 21.
[255] A. Clot, *Suleiman the Magnificent*, p. 21.
[256] S. Yalman, 'The Age of Süleyman "the Magnificent" (r. 1520 – 1566)' *in* L. Komaroff (ed.), *Hilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, p. 1.

however, points to this period simply as a point of divergence from the policies of the past, as the empire focused more on maintaining and consolidating its power, as well as dealing with various problems from within. In the coming centuries, the Ottoman state tried to walk a fine line between being true to its Turkic ancestry and position in the Islamic world, and trying to modernise and innovate alongside the various states of Europe. While this balancing act does not necessarily establish modernisation as 'Un-Ottoman' it does put it into a position where the fluctuations caused in its cultural composition were more the result of the socio-economic and geo-political factors surrounding the empire rather than being a primary product of its expansion and development. For that very reason, this study does not extend to the later empire, but instead focuses on the cultural manifestations and interpretations which can be observed during the aforementioned and detailed period of time.

Academic Debate around the Nature of the Ottoman State

By the time of Suliman's death in 1566, it is perhaps surprising to note that despite how substantially the empire had grown in the two-and-a-half centuries since its founding by Osman, the Ottomans were still political and social outsiders in the regions they ruled. As a state, the Ottomans would be represented in the greater geopolitical space by their ethnicity and religion. This is why much of the world simply referred to them as the 'Turks' for the majority of their history, even though they corresponded and interacted officially as the Ottoman Porte, or the Sublime State of Osman.[257] This is also despite, and also partially because of, the long history of different Turkic-speaking groups being independent actors throughout Medieval Eastern Europe and the Middle East. On the part of Eastern Europe, earlier nomadic groups, such as the Bulgars, Magyars and Avars, had centuries to mix and settle alongside the other ethnicities of Europe before becoming an accepted part of the region's population. Other nomadic groups who came into Europe later, and as such did not become a part of Europe's cultural landscape, such as the Cumans, Kipchaks and Pechenegs, were often simply referred to by the blanket term of 'Turk' by many within Europe. In such a climate, a Turkic group who both followed a religion other than Christianity and who did not assimilate into the regional culture in any way would exist in the European consciousness simply as Turks. On the other hand, while the Middle East had a long and successful history of Turkic-speaking groups rising to prominence and power, they still occupied a more basic, militaristic space

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[257] M. F. Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 4 – 9.

within the consciousness of the Islamic world.[258] This is especially true when contrasted with Arab and Iranian groups, who appear to have held a long disregard for the Turks, and would be one of the key factors that would eventually lead to the dissolution of the Ottomans outside of Anatolia in the early 20th century.[259] This element of alienation is important when discussing the developments in Turkish academia in the 20th century, but for now, it is mainly important in order to understand where they stood in these worlds which considered them outsiders.

This does not mean that the Ottomans of this period were not in a position of immense power, indeed, far from it. By this time, the Ottomans had moved from being a frontier state in Anatolia to an empire spanning multiple continents. They were a dominant power in both Eastern Europe and the Middle East and held control of three of the holiest cities and sites of the Abrahamic religions, as well as the seat of the Orthodox Church and Sunni Caliphate.[260] Adding to this, they also held a monopoly of the Silkroad trade entering the Mediterranean and vital control over the Black Sea Slave Trade, giving them enormous economic power. Further, they were also at the forefront militarily, and had combined the traditional levy and cavalry elements of the Medieval military system with professional army elements and gunpowder artillery of the new modern age. Even though they did not necessarily classify as a Superpower, the Ottoman state was in the ascendency in all three of these areas, and Constantinople, the capital of this behemoth state, reflected all three of these elements.[261] Ottoman administration had set the city on a path to becoming the most populous and diverse urban centre of the world, which it had not been since the times of Justinian and the Romans. All the while they remained surrounded geographically by weaker and smaller states who did not have the wherewithal on their own to stand against the Ottomans for centuries to come. It is for this reason that much of the primary academic debate about the Ottoman sphere of influence and interests analyses the state as it stands in 1566.

With this background discussion on the Ottomans in mind, the discussion of which political sphere occupied the Ottomans more is much easier to tackle. Starting with the West-centric camp again, the academic line of thinking follows on from aspects of both previous camps of scholarship, where a combined sense of belonging to a Western identity, as well as the draw of

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[258] C. V. Findley, *The Turks in World History,* pp. 75 – 77.
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[260] C. Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1923,* p. 111.
[261] H. A. Gibbons, *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire: A History of the Osmalins up to the death of Bayezid I 1300 – 1403,* pp. 232 – 234.

a continuous push against the Christian world, saw the Ottomans occupy most of their time with their activities in Europe.[262] This is a school of thought that is popular with scholars who argue that the upsets faced by the Ottomans against the Austrians and Russians in the 17th and 18th centuries were continuations of the status quo in so far as how the Ottomans had been conducting themselves throughout the modern era. Usually, these arguments draw their foundations from the immense time and resources that the Ottomans vested in their campaigns in Eastern Europe prior to Mehmed II, with the emphasis being on the continued defeats of Christian coalitions by the Ottomans and their push through the Balkans to Vienna.[263] They also analyse the special place that Rumelia held as part of the empire. The sons of the Sultan were almost never sent to be governors of any territories in Rumelia, while, conversely, the capital resided in Rumelia for the majority of Ottoman history, be it Edirne or Constantinople itself.

The reasons as to why Rumelia seemed to preoccupy Ottoman politics are many, however, it is generally accepted that this is mostly owed to the fact that Rumelia was the more religiously unstable of the two regions that the Ottomans governed. Externally, it was surrounded either by hostile Christian nations, Hungary, Venice and the Holy Roman Empire, or their often less than reliable tributary buffer states, such as Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania. These different states would usually enter into some degree of collusion between themselves in an effort to reclaim Christian territory in the Balkans.[264] This Christian territory too was part of what added to Rumelian instability, as the large Christian populations often posed a threat if not handled correctly. In many ways, the development of the Janissary Corps was not only a means of sourcing soldiers who would be loyal to the Sultan in the face of a rebellion by the Anatolian beys, but was also a means of keeping the Christian population controlled and deprived of fighting men.[265] This Christian population would also be the reason behind Rumelia being a hub for resettling Muslims within the empire, as it was fertile ground for the project of Islamisation of the local populations, such as was done in Bosnia. In general, Europe simply presented easier land to conquer on account of a casus belli against opposing religions being far easier to push than against other Muslim states. Added to this, Rumelia also held great importance economically due to it being a direct path into Europe itself. By the time of their

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[262] H. J. Magoulias, *Doukas: The Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks,* pp. 184 – 185.
[263] A. Clot, *Suleiman the Magnificent*, pp. 9 – 11.
[264] H. J. Magoulias, *Doukas: The Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks,* pp. 184 – 185.
[265] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 111 – 113.

capture, both Edirne and later Constantinople were far more intrinsically linked with the economics of the region and located closer to the regular source of political opportunity. Many of the intellectual and cultural hubs of the Middle East had suffered at the hands of the Mongols,[266] Timurids and the Black Death, while Europe's Renaissance had provided positive knock-on effects to the Ottomans in Rumelia. By many accounts, the Ottomans were well justified in focusing their efforts on Europe.

This is not, however, to say that the converse arguments for the Ottomans having the East as their crowning jewel aren't compelling either. This line of inquiry also ties elements of the discussion around the origins of the Ottomans together and is beneficial in understanding some of the decisions made by the later Ottomans in how they conceived of their place on the world stage in the 18th century.[267] While arguments pointing to the restoration of the old Roman borders aren't the most compelling, the nature of the territories that the Ottomans governed in the East, as well as their long rivalry with the Safavids, and their financial endeavours with the Mughals, establish the Ottomans as a part of the greater Islamic world at the time. These East-centric views argue that the Ottoman state was asserting its authority over other elements of the greater Islamic world, while also contending with the greater philosophy and ideology surrounding that world. They focus on the social order that Selim's reign had established, and what Suleiman would come to inherit, as the empire took control of some of the Muslim world's most important centres, such as Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem, Cairo, and Baghdad.[268] This region also held the majority of the Ottoman economic power, with Mesopotamia and the Nile being the empire's agricultural breadbasket, while the ports along the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf saw the influx of the majority of the goods that the Ottomans traded to the West.

These points, religious and economic, often led to the argument of the eastern provinces being the empire's silent foundation, as while they usually go unnoticed in most of the greater academic debates, they formed the core of the Ottoman support base. The most obvious of these is on the economic front, wherein their control of the western Silkroad led to a monopoly of trade from the East entering Europe. While this was a factor in what would push the Iberian Kingdoms, and later most of Europe, to seek alternative routes to the East, it initially placed

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[266] H. Pfeifer, 'A New Hadith Cultuer? Arab Scholars and Ottoman Sunnitization in the Sixteenth century', *in* T. Krstić and D. Terzioğlu (eds.), *Historicising Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450 - c. 1750,* pp. 47 – 52.

[267] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State.* State University of New York Press, New York. 2003. pp. 50 – 58.

[268] H. İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 20 – 21.

the Ottomans in a dominant financial situation as they taxed these trade routes accordingly.[269] Further, their control over the Black Sea Slave Trade, as well as their involvement in the Indian Ocean Slave Trade, only added to their economic diversity. This was not to say that this region was without its share of military and political importance, as the majority of their effective Turkmen cavalry originated from Anatolia, the Caucuses and upper Syria, while the aristocracy placed great importance in princes governing *sanjaks* within Anatolia to keep them in touch with where they came from. However, the greater asset to the empire, militarily and politically, came from their control of the religious sites of this region. As discussed earlier, while the title of 'Caliph' only seems to have been used in relation to the Ottoman Sultans in the 18th century, the Ottomans did immediately inherit and make use of their position as the 'Guardians of the Two Mosques,'[270] which gave them immense importance throughout the Islamic world. Despite any contention with their Turkic heritage, they attracted the attention and affection of Sunni Muslims throughout the world, granting them political prestige as well as a constant influx of manpower. All this, aside from the Ottoman-Safavid conflicts, lend themselves to the argument for the East being the stable backbone of the Ottoman state, and taking the prime position as the region most crucial to the empire.

Unlike the discourse around the cultural composition of the early Ottomans, however, there seems to be a greater appetite for overlap and nuance between these two academic arguments. Where the discussion around the cultural origins of the Ottomans seems to demand that, while there can be a mix of both sides, there must be one primary cultural forbear for the Ottomans, with the other being secondary. However, on the matter of which region of the empire was more important, there appears to be an acceptance that there was likely an ebb and flow as to which region garnered more attention, depending on a variety of different factors. Though there are elements of the earlier scholarship which believe that there were static policies for each region of the empire, it is now generally accepted that these policies were constantly changing to adapt to the realities which faced the administration.[271] This fluctuation in interest is the most widely accepted argument, as it emphasises the change in Ottoman attention to these regions depending on varying, changing factors, such as the political turmoil or stability of the regions, who was Sultan and what their ambitions were, and what external pressures were at

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[269] H. İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 20 – 21.
[270] L. P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire,* p. 5.
[271] S. N. Faroqhi, *Approaching Ottoman History: An Introduction to the Sources*, pp. 7 – 12.

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play.[272] While there are still some arguments that lean more one way than the other, generally, the empire is argued to exist in a state where all previous points are possible at once. A state of adaptability and flexibility is believed to have afforded the Ottomans the capacity to shift attention as and when it was needed, and this flexibility is one afforded by the empire's diversity and positioning. This flexibility is best exemplified in the reign of Suleiman, who devoted his time and efforts to different sides of his empire depending on where it was needed and where the opportunity presented itself.[273]

It is for this reason that a significant portion of the scholarship on this period of the Ottoman state refers to it as a hybrid of East and West, without necessarily belonging to or being completely alien to either.[274] These factors are what allowed Constantinople in particular to become the hub that it was for people of varying origins and creeds. Thus, the culture of the empire, and those within it, entered a state of fluctuation as well. Constantinople drew merchants and artisans from across Europe and the East, while it also became a home for a closely related urban Turk and Greek population. It also came to accommodate a sizable refugee population of Jews and Muslims from across the Mediterranean and was a site of great interest to later travellers. All of these different factors and peoples of varying origins allowed the city to become a melting pot of peoples and cultures. It is in this context that the idea of 'cultural hybridisation' really takes form. While previously it applied to a Turkic population primarily taking on the cultural practices of the settled Greeks in the areas they now occupied, in the context of the empire as an established state, it refers to multitudes of different groups all influencing and being influenced by each other.

As discussed in this chapter, the historiography of the early Ottoman empire largely concerns itself with mythologising its early leaders, on whom few primary sources exist, and the glorification of its great state-builders, Mehmed II and Suleiman. In the case of the state's founding, the historiography goes to great lengths to try and read in motivations for the actions of early Ottoman leaders which align with either the East- or West-centric view of the empire. This is, as mentioned, despite the ambiguity caused by the lack of sources on this specific time period. Then, as pertains to the lives and actions of Mehmed II and Bayezid II, the historiography continues to interpret these points through the previously mentioned lenses and

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[272] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 40 – 45.
[273] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, pp. 5 – 6.
[274] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 40 – 45.

arguments. Mehmed II in particular becomes a seminal figure in the arguments for ascribing either Byzantine or Medieval Islamic cultural overtones to the fledgeling empire, as his actions can be interpreted as being in favour of either argument. Mehmed II's reign is where the scholarship stops arguing about the empire's cultural origins and its political fixations. This is due to how historians use this period of the empire's history as a point of focus for the Ottoman state as geo-political actor in and of itself, rather than as the product of others. This shift comes in part as a product of the late 20th century, where more nuanced views, and less ideological contestation, become more prevalent in the academic space. This argument is only furthered as more Turkish historians begin to contribute to Ottoman historiography, eliminating aspects of eurocentric or post-colonial bias. Thus, following Suleiman's death in 1566, these arguments are discussed in their entirety to detail the overview they portray of the empire. This is the last point in concluding the historiographic coverage of the early Ottoman state.

Chapter Four:
Ottoman Historiographical Trends in Türkiye

The Sins of the Father

Though discourse surrounding the Ottoman Empire has been the focus of extensive scholarly interest since its collapse in the early 20th century, there are few regions of the world that have produced as much, and as in-depth, work on the Ottoman state as that of the Republic of Türkiye. However, this is hardly a shock or surprise, given the way that the histories of the two states are so intrinsically intertwined with one another. Türkiye is the most notable successor to the old Ottoman state, not only in its occupation of territories and habitation of peoples who were once core to the old empire, but also as the spiritual successor to many of the concepts and ideas which were once foundational elements of the Ottomans as well.[275] In many ways, Türkiye represents the ultimate culmination of the different forces which had attempted to reform the old Ottoman state and bring it into the modern world as a democratic, multicultural entity straddling the line of politics between the West and the East.

However, Türkiye's direct heritage from the Ottoman state means that, often, the scholarship pertaining to the forebear state has uniquely Turkish viewpoints and peculiarities. While the biases with which Ottoman historiography is treated by external observers, such as Europe or other countries of the Middle East, are well known, the biases of Turkish academics, which can favour either West- or East-centric viewpoints in their work, provide their own particular lens on how the old empire is discussed. The internal politics within the new Turkish Republic, as well as the differing views on the role and nature of the old Ottoman state in the creation of that modern republic, result in a specific approach to Ottoman historiography that provides its own unique set of challenges which exist outside the already mentioned academic polarity. This approach can fit into either of those two camps, while also shaping the narrative pertaining to the Ottomans in a significant way due to the enormous turnover of literature that Türkiye produces on the topic. To say that the Western and Eastern debate shapes the discussion on the nature of early Ottoman culture, but that Turkish academia dictates the landscape in which that debate takes place, would not be an understatement.

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[275] S. J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey,* pp. 340 – 341.

As such, it is important for this research to also examine these different elements of modern Turkish Ottoman scholarship, and how they affect the discussion surrounding Ottoman historiography, as well as how the Oghuz Turks are understood within that discussion. This is by no means an extensive discussion of the different ideologies that exist in the Turkish academic space, but rather an analysis of the ones which can be argued as having played the most important roles in modern Turkish scholarship pertaining to the Ottomans. To this end, two primary ideologies, Kemalism and Neo-Ottomanism, will both be discussed with respect to their historical roots within both the old Ottoman state and Türkiye itself, as well as how these ideologies are explained, and present themselves. This discussion will then naturally lead to an overview of how they manifest both in the academic debate today, as well as in the greater narratives surrounding the Ottomans in Turkish society, with the intention of showing how deeply these ideas affect the modern discourse of the topic.

Atatürk's Dream

The first of the two ideologies, and by far the one with the oldest hold on Türkiye, is that of Kemalism. Named after the republic's founder and first president, Mustafa Kamal, who was bestowed with the moniker 'Atatürk' for his efforts, it is an ideology and political philosophy which embodies the ideals that he championed during the Turkish War of Independence fought between 1919 and 1923.[276] However, much of the great appeal behind Kemalism, and why his ideas had such a strong pull within the region of the Ottoman state which would become Türkiye, comes from the ideology's roots in previous popular movements which had attempted to modernise and reform the Ottoman state prior to its dissolution. These movements date back to the Tanzimat reforms which the Ottomans implemented throughout the 19th century. These reforms were made by the Ottomans, under pressure from its population, in an attempt to rapidly industrialise the empire, and modernise its bureaucracy and government, in order to revive the state and keep it competitive with the European empires of the age. Several groups, such as the Young Ottomans and Young Turks, however, were dissatisfied with the slow pace of what they viewed as largely ineffectual changes to this system.[277] The Young Turks in particular championed ideas of democracy, a modernised market economy, and a move toward

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[276] M. Heper, 'Kemalism/Atatürkism.' *The Routledge handbook of modern Turkey* 1(1), 2012, pp, 139 – 141.
[277] S. J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey,* pp. 332 – 334.

a secular state based on the French ideals of *Laïcité*.[278] This culminated in the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, which forced the government to return to multi-party politics and reform the constitution it had established during the Tanzimat period between 1839 and 1876, after which it was suspended.

However, it would be due to the ultimate failure, of these promised reforms, to materialise, as well as the heavy cost that the Ottomans incurred during the First World War, which would ultimately see these same principles championed by Atatürk in his war of Turkish Independence. In this case though, rather than reforming the existing Ottoman state, which was then already in the process of conceding territory to the Allied Powers at the expense of its peoples, Atatürk instead believed that the only way the Turkish people, and nation, would see these reforms was as a new state.[279] This idea of Turkish nationalism would become a defining part of Kemalism, as it directly rejected the notion of the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic Ottoman state as well as any notions of Ottoman nationalism, which had been championed by the Young Ottomans. It is also these notions of Turkish nationalism, which based itself more on the common Turkish language than specifics of ethnic and cultural identity, which would become core to the greater academic project that Atatürk's government sparked. As discussed much earlier, much of the modern academic discussion surrounding the Turkic-speaking peoples describes them as groups who all belong to a greater fraternity and family of Turkic peoples, despite modern evidence only highlighting the linguistic similarities.[280] This narrative was sparked by this project initiated by Atatürk and his government, which attempted to establish the Turks as another of the great, general ethnic forebear groups of world history, in order to boost national perceptions and belief in the new Turkish national identity. This same belief would also be the primary factor behind Türkiye's later approach as the 'big brother' of all Turkic peoples in the world, which has informed their foreign policy that lends direct military, economic, and political aid to other Turkic groups throughout the modern world.

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[278] Laïcité is the French concept of state secularism, where the actions and views of the government are required to be strictly removed from any religious beliefs or convictions. M. Heper, 'Kemalism/Atatürkism.' *The Routledge handbook of modern Turkey* 1(1), 2012, pp, 143 – 145.

[279] A. Kadioğlu, 'The paradox of Turkish nationalism and the construction of an official identity', *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(2), 1996, pp. 185 – 187.

[280] A. Kadioğlu, 'The paradox of Turkish nationalism and the construction of an official identity', *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(2), 1996, pp. 177 – 193.

The next significant issue which Atatürk sought to remedy in the new Turkish Republic pertained to what he and others viewed as the overreach of religion in the running and structure of the Ottoman state. For several centuries by this point, the Ottoman Sultan had not only accepted his role as the 'Guardian of the two Mosques,' but also officially adopted the title of Caliph of Sunni Islam, which made his position as head of state not only protected by its monarchical laws, but by its religious ones as well.[281] Further, it had invested religious figures with significant power in the bureaucracy of the government, while it also enshrined madrasas as the primary medium of education throughout the empire. As previously mentioned, Atatürk's government addressed this issue by taking an official secularist stance, similar to the French idea of Laïcité, in which religion was strictly prohibited from playing any role in the governance of the country, and the civic exemptions which it enjoyed were nearly completely curbed. Of the policies which came out of Kemalism, this is probably the most controversial given the significant Muslim population within the country, and how it effectively dissolved the Caliphate, which served Sunni Muslims across the world, as well as the Ottoman monarchy. The effect of this on the academic field is varied but has historically provided a backdrop wherein academics have had a chance to take a more nuanced view of the role religion played in the formation and development of the Ottoman state. It has also, however, fuelled views which place religion at the heart of the degradation of the Ottoman state.[282]

That last aspect itself feeds into another one of Kemalism's lasting effects on the discussion of the Ottoman state within Türkiye itself, and that is the stagnation it suffered. The reasons why the ideology of the independence movement would lead to negative reflections of the Ottoman state, especially in its later years, are obvious. However, these reasons are also conflicting in their presentation due to perceptions of the role that the Ottomans played in establishing the Turks as a force within the world.[283] This leads to a position wherein the early Ottoman state is given special attention in academia, as the foundation for, and champion of, the greater Turkic world, while the later years of the Ottoman state are criticised for their inability to modernise, and their isolationist approaches to Western developments. As such, the result is both a glorification of the Ottoman state as a multi-continental world power, as well as a distinctly West-centric in their tone in Kemalist Ottoman historiography. Technological

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[281] M. Heper, 'Kemalism/Atatürkism.' *The Routledge handbook of modern Turkey* 1(1), 2012, pp, 143 – 145.

[282] S. J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey,* pp. vii – ix.

[283] A. Kadioğlu, 'The paradox of Turkish nationalism and the construction of an official identity', *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(2), 1996, pp. 185 – 187.

progress in particular receives immense attention, leading to arguments which place the unique nature of the Ottoman cavalry second to their innovative use of gunpowder and the establishment of a regular, standing army as foundations for their success.[284] It also means that the later Ottoman state often gets reflected as isolationist, and that its inability to innovate and adopt several economic and political developments popular in Europe are seen as having been key to its eventual demise. What is no doubt evident as a weakness to this viewpoint is its neglect of external factors on both the early success of the Ottomans, as well as their collapse, especially with respect to the role that European states played in undermining Ottoman authority and control over the 18th, 19th and early 20th Centuries.[285]

All of these different viewpoints create a particularly complex lens which has, over the course of the 20th century, coloured the way in which the formation of the early Ottoman state, as well as its subsequent rise, has been understood. Starting first with the effects of Turkish nationalism on the understanding of Turkic-speaking peoples as a whole, it has built up a particular image of the Ottomans as the champions of a proposed greater Turkic world. It builds the view that Anatolia was a haven not only for the Oghuz Turkmen, but for other Turkic-speaking groups as well, and that Ottoman political interactions with other Turkic groups, such as the Crimean Tatars, Bulgarian Turks and Turkmen of Iran and Azerbaijan, were ones of benevolent intent.[286] With the Crimean Tatars in particular, it paints the Ottomans as their protectors, first from the Golden Horde of the Mongols, and later from Russia, rather than allowing for a more complex discussion of the nature of Ottoman suzerainty. It also portrays the Ottomans in a manner that places them as the defining Turkic state, which often ignores the role of other Turkic peoples in the leadership of other states of the time, such as the Safavid, Afsharid and Qajar dynasties of Iran, or the Mughals of India, and the Mamelukes of Egypt and the Levant.[287] This is not even to mention many of the practical issues which follow the nationalist fervour of the Turkish language, which pushed Turkish academics to publish much of their work exclusively in Turkish, with only a few also publishing in English.[288] Added to this, these publications used the new Turkish alphabet, based on Latin characters, which makes translation

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[284] Y. Çolak, 'Ottomanism vs. Kemalism: Collective memory and cultural pluralism in 1990s Turkey', *Middle Eastern Studies* 42(2), 2006, pp. 588 – 591.
[285] S. J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey,* pp. vii – ix.
[286] A. Kadioğlu, 'The paradox of Turkish nationalism and the construction of an official identity', *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(2), 1996, pp. 177 – 193.
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[288] A. Kadioğlu, 'The paradox of Turkish nationalism and the construction of an official identity', *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(2), 1996, pp. 185 – 187.

of original Turkish sources from the Ottoman period, written in Arabic script, a multi-layered, difficult process.[289] The ultimate result of all this makes access to history pertaining to the early Ottoman state a massive mountain riddled with conflations and generalisations for non-Turkish academics to climb.

Following on from those points, the next issues which arise relate to how Kemalism's focus on the progress within the Ottoman state, and specifically its role as one of the 'Gunpowder Empires' of history, has caused relative neglect of early Ottoman historiography. Considering that this fixation on the innovations of the Ottomans, and how their introduction of mass cannon artillery as part of the already sophisticated professional military force of the Janissaries, plays both into elements of Turkish nationalist pride and early views on modernisation. It is easy to see how more traditionalist military elements prior to this fail to make the historiographical cut.[290] Prior to the siege of Constantinople in 1453, the defining feature of the Ottoman military had been their ability to use their infantry to tie up enemy armies, while their Turkmen cavalry, exemplified by the Sipahi, used mobility and range to break those armies down. While devastating in their own respect, and almost certainly the backbone upon which most of the Ottoman military conquests were built, they were also a traditional element that they had inherited from the Seljuks, and the rest of their Steppe heritage before that.[291] In many ways, the Oghuz Turkmen begs of Anatolia themselves, as well as their pastoralist lifestyles and their more militaristic interpretation of Islamic Ghazw holy wars, were extensions of that old, traditionalist aspect of the Ottomans which Kemalism rejected. Thus, in the eyes of academics whose works were influenced by this ideology, these elements represented everything that led to the downfall of the Ottomans. Instead, it was Rumelia, gunpowder, professional, new-model armies, and the city of Constantinople which represented the forward-thinking, cosmopolitan, innovative Ottoman state which had the chance of really making a name for the Turkish people of the world, and so much more of their focus was placed on that aspect of the early Ottoman Empire, above all other aspects. As such, coverage of the traditional elements of the empire, of which the Oghuz Turkmen and their culture are one, suffered from academic neglect. This

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[289] A. Kadioğlu, 'The paradox of Turkish nationalism and the construction of an official identity', *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(2), 1996, pp. 177 – 193.

[290] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 111 – 113.

[291] H. İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire.* University of Cambridge Press, Cambridge. 1990.

would also feed into the glorification of Ottoman success which defines much of Turkish historiography today.[292]

The New Hegemons of Eurasia

The next trope that needs addressing, and perhaps the one most representative of Türkiye's place in the world today, is that of Neo-Ottomanism. Unlike Kemalism, which derived itself directly from the philosophies and ideologies which informed Atatürk's vision for the then-new, modern Turkish state, Neo-Ottomanism's development as an ideology has been more fluid. The ideology itself is argued to have developed both as a response to some of the perceived failings of Kemalism, and also as a reflection of both unresolved sentiments from the transition out of the Ottoman state at the end of the 20th century, and in response to many of the challenges that Türkiye faces in the 21st century.[293] Given these ties with the country's trajectory today, it is often associated with Türkiye's current, long-serving president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, as well as his party, the Justice and Development Party, or APK. However, both have denied the ideology being core to their political philosophy, owing to the negative connotations associated with Ottomanism in Türkiye's history.[294] The older ideology of Ottomanism came from the Young Ottoman movement of the late 19th century, who, like the Young Turks, pushed for further modernisation of the empire's bureaucracy and economy, but also enshrined the place of Islam within the state, and the primacy of the Ottomans as hegemons over the regions they controlled outside of Anatolia and Thrace. However, as discussed, it was Kemalism that won out and was adopted by the revolutionary elements that eventually led to the formation of Türkiye and the dissolution of the Ottoman state.[295] Neo-Ottomanism, therefore, places various elements of Türkiye's Ottoman heritage as sacred to its identity, and in opposition to Kemalism, promotes the role of Islam in Türkiye, as well as Türkiye's role in presiding over former Ottoman territories and states.

Unlike Kemalism, Neo-Ottomanism places an immense weight on tradition as a means of reinvigorating the Turkish state and people through a glorification of their history. This position

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[292] S. N. Faroqhi, *Approaching Ottoman History: An Introduction to the Sources*, pp. 163 – 167.

[293] Y. Karakaya, 'Between neo-Ottomanism and Ottomania: navigating state-led and popular culture representations of the past', *New perspectives on Turkey* 56(1), 2017, pp. 37 – 41.

[294] Y. Çolak, 'Ottomanism vs. Kemalism: Collective memory and cultural pluralism in 1990s Turkey', *Middle Eastern Studies* 42(2), 2006, pp. 588 – 591.

[295] S. J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey,* pp. 340 – 341.

is no better exemplified than in the APK government's recent rejection of Kemalism's *Laïcité* approach to religion within the state.[296] Though the secularisation of the state by Atatürk had been intended as a way of decluttering the government's structure and bureaucracy, as well as removing obstacles in the way of Türkiye's modernisation, it had left much of the population feeling alienated due to their religious beliefs. This was especially so as, for centuries prior, the Ottoman Empire had sat at the heart of the Sunni Islamic world. As such, the move toward secularism wasn't simply seen as an insult to the Muslim population, but an attack on their very identity and pride. It is for this reason that Türkiye's history for the rest of the 20th century would be marked by internal struggles against various religiously aligned groups, usually ending with military coups that disbanded the government before it could give any religious concessions and erode the Kemalist vision for the state. Thus, with the rise of Neo-Ottomanism, these disillusioned groups believe they have found a place within Türkiye once more. This also means that, in the academic space, there are growing viewpoints which highlight, and even to some extent, overstate the degree to which Islam played a role in the foundation of the Ottoman state. Where previously pinning the rapid expansion of the Ottomans on religiously motivated holy war had been the remit of politically motivated critics from outside Türkiye, such as Paul Wittek, these arguments have been given new life through the view that the Turkmen's faith in Islam was what made the Ottomans, and by extension, Turkish people, successful.[297] Where modernisation was used by Kemalist historians to the point that the glorification of Ottoman success became a staple of Turkish historiography, religion was used to the exact same effect by Neo-Ottomanist scholars.[298]

On this point of Ottoman, and by association Turkish, exceptionalism, Neo-Ottomanism actually builds off of the nationalist foundations established by Kemalism over the past century. However, where Kemalism used it to build the sense of where the people of Türkiye sat in the greater world of Turkic peoples, Neo-Ottomanism takes this one step further by positing that Türkiye should sit not only as hegemons and guardians of the Turkic world, but of all the states and nations which were once a part of the Ottoman Empire.[299] This revisionist position has, so far, been exemplified most in Türkiye's more active role in the politics of the Middle East, such

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[296] E. J. Zürcher, Turkey: A Modern History, pp. 362 – 367.
[297] Y. Karakaya, 'Between neo-Ottomanism and Ottomania: navigating state-led and popular culture representations of the past', *New perspectives on Turkey* 56(1), 2017, pp. 37 – 41.
[298] S. N. Faroqhi, *Approaching Ottoman History: An Introduction to the Sources*, pp. 163 – 167.
[299] Y. Karakaya, 'Between neo-Ottomanism and Ottomania: navigating state-led and popular culture representations of the past', *New perspectives on Turkey* 56(1), 2017, pp. 37 – 41.

as its military involvement in Syria, but also through its attempts to insert itself into the ongoing struggle in power dynamics between Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Israel, walking a tight line where it attempts to exert its own power by brokering between and within these nations in the region.[300] This approach to the politics of the region has only intensified more recently through Erdoğan using his personal relationship with Vladimir Putin, and Türkiye's position as the gateway to the Black Sea, a NATO member state, as well as a part of the European Union Customs Union, in an attempt to facilitate communication between the hostile factions of the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine. This sense of Türkiye's place as the mediator between hostile groups within its sphere of influence is extended in different ways in how the Ottoman state is discussed. First is the move away from a wholly West-centric stance, placing Ottoman success within its own agency, and its position as a bridge between Europe and Asia, rather than only through its innovation. However, unlike Kemalism, the notions of Turkish exceptionalism that Neo-Ottomanism fosters leads to a rejection of the role that other groups within the state played in its success, but rather, directs focus to the different internal, nationalist struggles which arose within its borders during the latter decades of the empire. In particular, it describes the different groups within the empire's borders as living in relative harmony, and that unrest only began when it was fomented by European powers, such as Russia and Austria in the Balkans, or France and Britain in the Middle East.

This idea that the empire was brought down by external forces working away at the integrity of the state is one which is shared by the modern Turkish state as well and has only worsened as Neo-Ottomanism has gained further traction, and it manifests itself in Türkiye's approach to minority groups within its borders. Historically, Türkiye has struggled with its past and the treatment of minority groups within its borders, especially Atatürk's role in what are sometimes referred to as the 'Late Ottoman Genocides,' wherein tens of thousands of Armenians, Greeks and Assyrians were killed or deported as part of the unravelling of the late Ottoman state.[301] Populations which had long existed within the empire since the conquest of Anatolia from Byzantine hands were either branded as sympathisers to the Allied Powers during the First World War, or terrorists working against the new Türkiye in the period immediately thereafter, resulting in their mass slaughter. While evidence to prove these genocides is immense,

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[300] A. Kadioğlu, 'The paradox of Turkish nationalism and the construction of an official identity', *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(2), 1996, pp. 190 – 192.
[301] D. J. Schaller and J. Zimmerer, 'Late Ottoman genocides: the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and Young Turkish population and extermination policies', *Journal of Genocide Research* 10(1), 2008 pp. 7 – 14.

historically, the Kemalist governments of Türkiye have denied the events as genocides, or their involvement with them. This ambivalence and denial have more recently, however, been inflamed by Neo-Ottomanist viewpoints which support the narrative that these non-Turkish groups actively worked to undermine the state, as the different nationalist movements of the Middle East and Caucuses are seen to have done in the early 20th century. It is a hostility which extends to Türkiye's current largest minority, the Kurds, with whom they have fought for years.[302] This in particular proves to be a point of contention in the historiography, as while evidence points to the fact that the Kurds moved into Anatolia around the same time, if not before, the Turks did after the Battle of Manzikert, their very existence in history is rejected by some Turkish historians.[303]

As such, Neo-Ottomanism itself provides a counter lens to Kemalism, but one which itself is also steeped with its own problematic approaches which leave glaring holes in the historiography of the Ottoman state, regardless of what era of Ottoman history is being discussed. In the case of the early Ottoman state, the issue of Neo-Ottomanism's view of Ottoman and Turkish exceptionalism makes it extremely difficult to analyse the effects of other cultures within the Ottoman state. Starting all the way at the beginning with the arrival of Oghuz Turkmen tribes into Anatolia, very little discussion is given in some literature to the presence of both the pre-existing Byzantine cultures, as well as the other, non-Oghuz groups which also took the opportunity to settle in the region, like the aforementioned Kurds.[304] Where this proves to be a problem is that, while many elements of Oghuz life in Anatolia have the chance to be elucidated, those changes in the society which are observed when some Turks began to settle alongside the existing Byzantine groups get little to no attention. This is particularly problematic when one tries to understand the spread of Islam through Anatolia, as well as the development of an urban Turk population who were the result of intermingling between the groups.[305] For this same reason, there is little room to explain the complexities of the politics of Anatolia during this time, where the Seljuk Sultanate of Rúm was a centralised, Persian-style court which ruled over both Byzantine urban cities as well as nomadic, tribal Turkmen groups. This issue only extends over the course of the rest of early Ottoman history. In the case of the Balkans, and the specific recruitment policy which meant that Janissaries

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[302] E. J. Zürcher, Turkey: A Modern History, pp. 265 – 267.
[303] E. J. Zürcher, Turkey: A Modern History, pp. 265 – 267.
[304] P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East,* p. 224.
[305] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 111 – 113.

could only be built up from Christian regions, their education and rearing as Muslims is what sits at the centre of the discussion, rather than the counterbalancing role they were supposed to play against the Turkmen of Anatolia.[306] In discussions of the Ottoman conflicts with the Safavids and Mamelukes, they are described as wars to assert dominance and control over Turkic populations, without any mention of conflicting beliefs, economic interests, or opportunism.[307] Simply put, it encourages discourse of the Oghuz Turks, most certainly, but without the space for nuance.

Another aspect where this discussion is hindered is with respect to the role of religion in the Ottoman state. Where Kemalism pushed Islam to the margins in discussions of Ottoman politics, and the development of the state, Neo-Ottomanism almost overstates its importance. As an ideology which classifies the Turkish people as a Muslim nation, it provides very little room for the actions or beliefs of their ancestors to be anything but Islamic.[308] In this way, Neo-Ottomanism almost supports the disputed myth that the conversion of the Oghuz Turks and their leaders was widespread, making Islam an intrinsic part of the Oghuz culture. While it is true that by the time of Osman, many of the Turkmen were Muslims, debate still exists as to whether all of them were, and how deeply they believed in their faith.[309] Further, it reinforces myths of the *Ghazi thesis* by playing up the role of Christian subjugation in Osman's conquests, despite the evidence for opportunism and inclusion of Christian mercenaries and volunteers in Osman's forces. Further, the Turkmen would regularly lend their service in support of Christian groups throughout their history where it suited their personal interests, however, Neo-Ottomanism leads to a reading of these sources where these actions were always done with the intention of getting ahead of those same Christian groups in the end. In the case of Mehmed II's conquest of Constantinople, the lengths to which Mehmed himself went in order to balance the interests of his soldiers and the new Turkish settlers in the city with those of the remaining and pre-existing Greeks are either ignored in some sources or rephrased in a manner which portrays those actions as Mehmed lauding his victory over the vanquished Greeks. Once again, the space for nuance is lost in the discussion, and in an attempt to display the primacy of the Turks and their faith, vilifies them unintentionally as tyrants.

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[306] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 167 – 171.

[307] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State,* pp. 9 – 11.

[308] M. F. Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 71 – 72.

[309] N. Morton, 'The Saljuq Turks' Conversion to Islam: The Crusading Sources', *Al-Masāq: Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* 27(2), 2015, pp. 109 – 118.

Modern Türkiye

Türkiye as a nation stands at a crossroads in the modern world. Like the Ottomans before them, the Byzantines before them, and the states of the classical era before even them, they occupy a crucial location which allows them to have an almost disproportionate say in the politics and economics of both Europe and Asia, while neither being wholly within or outside the sphere of either continent's power.[310] It is the linchpin which holds the economy of the Black Sea in balance, while also being the only truly viable land route between the West and the East outside of the politically dubious Russian Federation. It is a country represented by its enormous Sunni Muslim population, but also one which holds and maintains the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church in Istanbul with pride and has built a history of secularism until recently.[311] It is many things, while also not allowing itself to be specifically defined as one thing or the other, and this leaves it torn within itself, being both bold and confident as it faces the greater world, but deeply divided within. While the division is perhaps best exemplified by the division between the two aforementioned ideologies present throughout its society, they are by no means the only divisions which exist within. They are simply the easiest to identify and the most useful as lenses with which to observe how modern Türkiye views its own historical links with the Ottoman state.

As previously mentioned, one of the great academic projects initiated by Atatürk was the establishment of the concept of a greater 'Turkic' people in world history. This project of Turkic identity-building, as previously discussed, succeeded in shaping the academic understanding of different Turkic speaking groups throughout the 20th century until recently, but it also had a profound effect on how people of Turkic descent, both within and outside of Türkiye, viewed themselves in relation to each other, and the world.[312] Whether this idea of a greater, genetically linked people known as 'Turks' due to their shared language has truth to it or not, Turkic people, and many other groups in the world, have had their view of history shaped by this idea. All too often, many groups in history who emerged from the Eurasian Steppe, and had little to no information recorded about their culture or language, are labelled as being of Turkic origin today, despite the dubious implications this has on the actual

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[310] E. J. Zürcher, Turkey: A Modern History, pp. 338 – 340.

[311] Y. Karakaya, 'Between neo-Ottomanism and Ottomania: navigating state-led and popular culture representations of the past', *New perspectives on Turkey* 56(1), 2017, pp. 37 – 41.

[312] Y. Çolak, 'Ottomanism vs. Kemalism: Collective memory and cultural pluralism in 1990s Turkey', *Middle Eastern Studies* 42(2), 2006, pp. 588 – 591.

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understanding of the histories of these groups. Entities such as the Xiongnu, the Huns, the Scythians, and so many more have been incorporated as part of the greater 'Turkic' family of cultures and nations, even though these entities predate the first written Turkic languages and are often separated by enormous gaps in time and location. Türkiye hosts a monument to Turkishness in the city of Kayseri, where the bust of the legendary Xiongnu leader Modu Chanyu is displayed with pride. This is despite the only real link between the fabled leader and any Turkic-speaking people being the Tiele, a group who formed only a fraction of the societies that were part of Modu's tribal confederation.[313] Perhaps even more egregious is the manner in which some historians and people incorporate groups whose culture is known to be historically distinct from the Turkic-speaking peoples as part of this 'family tree.' The Magyar, the ethnic forbearers of the people of modern Hungary, and a people whose history, culture and language are Uralic, not Turkic, are one of these very groups. Another group are the Mongols, who themselves have a long and rich history of their own, which, in Türkiye, is often overshadowed as they are classed as 'close cousins to' or 'basically' Turkic.[314]

Conversely, and in perhaps a perverse twist of fate, it is the groups with whom the modern people of Türkiye are probably most closely related that they share the bitterest rivalries. While both the modern nations of Türkiye and Greece have histories which position them in diametrically opposed positions, especially following tensions caused by World War One, the Turkish War of Independence, and the Invasion of Cyprus, they are perhaps the closest to one another ethnically and culturally.[315] Centuries of cohabiting the same areas of Anatolia and Rumelia brought urban as well as rural Greeks and Turks close enough that they were often mistaken for one another, as they developed almost identical cuisines, cultural dresses, textiles, and languages that loan from each other. Though the roots of their cultures are different, the empire brought them together as a community until religion and nationalistic ideas forced them apart once more. It is these nationalistic underpinnings, both within Turkish and Hellenic nationalism, and especially in Neo-Ottomanism, which continue to incite conflict between these peoples. A similar enough issue exists between the Turks and the Kurds, who, while not a Turkic-speaking people, share a common history in their occupation of Anatolia following

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[313] C. Fangyi, 'The research on the identification between Tiele (鐵勒) and the Oγuric Tribes', *in* T. T. Allsen, P. B. Golden, R. K. Kovalev and A. P. Martinez (eds.), *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi,* pp. 81 – 113.

[314] S. Georg, P. A. Michalove, A. M. Ramer & P. J. Sidwell, 'Telling general linguists about Altaic,' Journal of Linguistics 35(1), 1999, pp. 65 – 98.

[315] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 92 – 98.

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Manzikert, and a common religion in Sunni Islam.[316] However, due to the disputed nature of Kurdistan's recognition across the different states that comprise it, as well as the historical tension between the Ottomans and other Iranian-speaking peoples, the Kurds have existed as outsiders in both Ottoman and Turkish historiography. Recognition of the Kurds, and their place alongside the Turks historically, is a line that the APK government, and Erdoğan, cannot take.

An interesting point which arises with Kemalism's conception of Turkish nationalism, and which appears to have been sustained with Neo-Ottomanism is the use of figures from Turkic mythology in supporting the new nationalist identity. While the mythology of Oghuz Khan was an important part of establishing the House of Osman as legitimate rulers over the Oghuz Turkmen, it was Asena, as the mother to all Turkic peoples, who enjoyed the majority of the focus in the modern Turkish landscape.[317] This focus and attention began with Atatürk's drive to provide a unifying framework to the different Turkic-speaking peoples, as mentioned above and emphasised the mythological she-wolf as a symbol of that shared ancestry. The symbol of Asena remains embossed on Ataturk's personal theatre stage which he constructed in Ankara, as an entity emphasising Turkic mythology as part of the modern Turkish dedication to the arts and culture.[318] The symbol has seen widespread use in different displays of Turkish national identity since the beginning of the 20th century, despite the ambiguity and vagueness of the *Ergenekon* founding myth. This is especially difficult for many in the English-speaking sphere of academia to understand, given that many of the sources on this mythology are printed almost exclusively in Turkish. Another key point mentioned earlier which is heavily associated with Turkish nationalism, regardless of what ideology encourages it, is the glorification of Ottoman victory and success. Though Kemalist and Neo-Ottomanist scholars appeal to different reasons for this, the fixation of Turkish historiography on Ottoman military victories and glory, both in the academic space as well as in Turkish society, remains a defining feature of the Turkish narrative around the Ottomans.[319]

Aside from the points of nationalism, Türkiye's relationship with religion, and specifically Sunni Islam, has also been a tool in shaping the public perception of the nation's history, and

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[316] E. J. Zürcher, Turkey: A Modern History, pp. 338 – 340.

[317] P. B. Golden, 'The Ethnogonic Tales of the Türks', *The Medieval History Journal* 21(1), 2018, pp. 291 – 327.

[318] M. N. Arman, 'The Sources of Banality in Transforming Turkish Nationalism', *CEU Political Science Journal* 2(2), 2007, pp 133 – 151.

[319] S. N. Faroqhi, *Approaching Ottoman History: An Introduction to the Sources*, pp. 163 – 167.

what bound the Ottoman state, as well as the Oghuz Turkic tribes before them, together. With Neo-Ottomanist support for the reestablishment of Islam as a force within Türkiye, many of the aspects of the country which had embraced the Kemalist secularist approach to the state came into contention with elements which claimed to be in support of Türkiye's Islamic past through the Ottomans.[320] One of the key examples of this pertains to the monument of the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, which had been changed from being a mosque to a secular museum under Atatürk's government, and then redesignated as a mosque nearly a century later under Erdoğan. This redesignation sparked widespread condemnation and outrage, both from the international community, but specifically from the Orthodox and Greek communities who pointed to their shared heritage of the site, while Erdoğan exclaimed that the monument had been given to the Turkish people as a 'gift' by Mehmed II.[321] In a similar fashion, the view of Istanbul itself as a point of pride established through Mehmed's conquest was given new life, with regular citations of the Conquest Hadith by members of the APK when discussing the city and Hagia Sophia.[322] This in particular ignores much of the politics as well as the different ethical context of the 15th century when the Hagia Sophia was made a mosque by Mehmed, and how it played a part in balancing the interests of what was then the new Turkish population settling in Constantinople, and the pre-existing Byzantine population still there.[323] A similar argument can be made for the complexities involved when Atatürk made the mosque a secular museum and pushed for it to be a world heritage site, despite denying Constantinople, which he renamed Istanbul, the same international ownership or status during the Turkish War of Independence.[324]

A similar issue arises with the portrayal of the Ottomans, and other Turkic peoples, in Türkiye's media. While the Turkish film and television industry has a long history of recounting Ottoman history through entertainment dramas, the series *Diriliş: Ertuğrul* which premiered in 2014 and ran for five seasons, draws particular attention for its portrayal of the father of Osman, Ertuğrul, as well as that of the Oghuz Turks of the *Kayı* tribe.[325] Primary in this controversy is how the

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[320] Y. Karakaya, 'Between neo-Ottomanism and Ottomania: navigating state-led and popular culture representations of the past', *New perspectives on Turkey* 56(1), 2017, pp. 37 – 41.

[321] E. J. Zürcher, Turkey: A Modern History, pp. 338 – 340.

[322] M. S. Küçükaşçı, 'The Conquest Hadith and the Muslim Sieges of Constantinople', *in* C. Yılmaz (ed.), *History of Istanbul: From Antiquity to the 21st century,* pp. 1, 8 – 10.

[323] H. İnalcık, 'The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population of Istanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City', *Dumbarton Oak Papers* 24(1), 1970, pp. 232 – 233.

[324] S. J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey,* p. 342.

[325] I. Şahin, *Osmanlı Döneminde Konar-Göçerler/Nomads in the Ottoman Empire.* Eren Yayincilik, Istanbul. 2006, pp. 227 – 252.

show's airing on the national broadcasting network of Türkiye coincided with Erdoğan's political agenda in amending the nation's constitution in order to change the government from a parliamentary system to that of a presidential one, effectively bestowing more power to Erdoğan. Not only did the national broadcaster run adverts for the referendum on behalf of Erdoğan's APK party at the same time as the popular show, but it also licensed various props and music used in the show to be used as part of that same political ad campaign, emphasising Erdoğan's proposed similarity and political lineage to the popular leaders of Türkiye's past.[326] Once again, these actions in particular speak to the glorification of the Ottoman state's military might in Turkish society.[327]

Aside from the overt political message, the series itself promotes specific historical inaccuracies and interpretations of Ertuğrul and the *Kayı* which support the Neo-Ottomanist viewpoint, especially as it pertains to Islam. As previously discussed, the prevalence of Islam amongst Turkmen tribes remains a heavily debated topic, as does their role within the power structures of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rúm, yet the series portrays the *Kayı*, and the Oghuz as a whole, as a people who are deeply concerned with the nature of Islam and the state of the Islamic world.[328] Ertuğrul, portrayed as the leader of the *Kayı*, expresses himself as a devout Muslim who receives an education in his faith from the historical Sufi, Ibn ʿArabī, despite little being known about Ertuğrul's faith, and the two almost certainly not meeting historically.[329] It also promotes notions of *Kayı* primacy within the Anatolian world, where the reality is that the region was dominated by many Turkmen tribes and many different *Kayı* tribes as a subset of that. Finally, it plays up the antagonism with Europe through conflicts with Crusading Orders, such as the Knights Templar, when the historical time period itself was one of decline in Crusader and European presence in the region, as the Mongol threat loomed much larger.[330] However, these points reinforce the Turkmen, and early Ottomans, as devout people of exceptional quality, marked by destiny, and so fits with the populist viewpoint facilitated by Neo-Ottomanism. It is due to this show's popularity across the Middle East, and specifically in nations such as Pakistan, that the misconceptions it portrays of the Ottoman state have a degree of global prevalence.

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[326] J. Carney, 'Resur(e)recting as Spectacular Hero', *Review of Middle East Studies* 52(1), 2018, pp. 93 – 114.
[327] S. N. Faroqhi, *Approaching Ottoman History: An Introduction to the Sources*, pp. 163 – 167.
[328] J. Carney, 'Resur(e)recting as Spectacular Hero', *Review of Middle East Studies* 52(1), 2018, pp. 93 – 114.
[329] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 71 – 74.
[330] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* p. 25.

It is easy to understand, given the dominance of both of these ideologies within the modern Turkish state, how very little room has been left for the facilitation of Ottoman historiography through different lenses and epistemologies. Neo-Ottomanism manages to facilitate an academic landscape wherein nuance in the discussion of the Ottomans is nearly unthinkable, while historically, Kemalism has fuelled the Turkish Government's erasure of dissenting ideological views.[331] This is most prominently seen in the outright hostility that fascistic or communist parties faced during the 20th century, either resulting in their banning or outright slaughter by the army.[332] If those measures weren't enough historically, the army took matters into their own hands to reset the nation and its politics through either explicit or implicit *coup d'états* that purged anything threatening the Kemalist regime, with the only exception being Erdoğan's survival of the 2016 coup attempt through his popularity and hold over the state. Very few external ideologies, as a result, have had the chance to take hold in both Turkish academia and the public, with notable exceptions being those of feminism and ultranationalism.

Both of these exceptions play very different roles within Turkish society, but both have their roots in the Kemalist foundations of Türkiye following its founding. In the case of feminism, it rose off of the back of the secularist stance of Atatürk's government, which wished to bring women into the workplace as part of the modernisation effort within Türkiye,[333] which itself was a stance in opposition to the traditionalist Sunni approach that had existed. However, since then, feminism has flourished in Türkiye off the back of its secularist approach and has generally allowed for many in-depth studies of the role of women not only in the Ottoman state as a whole, but also prior to its establishment, and into the very inner workings of the house of Osman.[334] Conversely, the ultranationalist sentiments within Türkiye have found themselves less involved in academia as they have in the conflicts they face. Represented most prominently by the organisation known as the Grey Wolves, these ideological elements have put a hyper-focus on the ideas of a greater Turkic world brought through Kemalism, as well as Turkish exceptionalism championed by Neo-Ottomanism, with devastating consequences.[335] Indeed, their name has been derived from the figure of she-wolf Asena, and the Turks' shared

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[331] E. J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, pp. 284 – 292.

[332] E. J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, pp. 290 – 295.

[333] C. Diner and S. Toktaş, 'Waves of feminism in Turkey: Kemalist, Islamist and Kurdish women's movements in an era of globalisation', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 12(1), 2010, pp. 41 – 57.

[334] C. Diner and S. Toktaş, 'Waves of feminism in Turkey: Kemalist, Islamist and Kurdish women's movements in an era of globalisation', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 12(1), 2010, pp. 41 – 57.

[335] Y. Karakaya, 'Between neo-Ottomanism and Ottomania: navigating state-led and popular culture representations of the past', *New perspectives on Turkey* 56(1), 2017, pp. 37 – 41.

mythological origins, with the intention of appealing to Turkish nationalist sentiments. Though condemned as terrorists by many, their ties with the government, and the support they receive from elements of the Turkish public, have sustained them as an ongoing force in politics not only in Türkiye, but throughout regions host to Turkic-speaking groups. In this way, they bear some responsibility for supporting the idea of the Turkic people as a singular entity throughout history.[336]

As is no doubt evident, the politics of Türkiye have played a long and defining role in dictating its approach to its own past, especially where it pertains to the Ottoman state, while that same history has itself had immense power in dictating those very same politics. For these very reasons, it is understandable just how much of Ottoman historiography has been influenced by this constantly changing, and often conflicted, ideological landscape. While many notable Turkish academics have tried to keep their work independent of personal and national biased, the deep ties between Türkiye and its Ottoman forebears have meant that the wealth of Ottoman historiography it has produced has been unquestionably influenced by the prominent ideologies of the 20th and 21st centuries. This in turn leads to a trickle-down effect whereby the public perceptions of those same histories are also shaped by these ideologies, and common misconceptions, controversial concepts, and political propaganda, become part of the generally accepted narrative of the Ottomans. This statement is true not only in Türkiye itself, but throughout the world, especially in nations with significant Turkic populations, or those who have historically had ties to the old Ottoman state and its successors. As such, it is vital to keep these factors in mind when analysing the Ottomans, so that the influence of these ideologies and concepts can be identified and understood in how significantly they impact any understanding reached about the Ottomans, the House of Osman, and the Oghuz Turks as a people.

As this discussion highlights, the effects of Turkish politics have had a notable impact on Turkish Ottoman historiography over the course of the past century. This is due in part both to the inescapable ties between the Ottoman and Turkish state, as well as the prominence of ideologies such as Kemalism and Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish politics and academia. As discussed, Kemalism has its roots in the Turkish independence struggle of the early 20th century

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[336] A. Kadıoğlu, 'The paradox of Turkish nationalism and the construction of an official identity', *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(2), 1996, pp. 190 – 192.

which sought a complete break from the Ottoman past. It is for this reason that its views on the state are shaped both by elements of the Ottoman state that were viewed as problematic by the Turkish independence movement, as well as the elements both states shared due to the Ottoman role in Turkish heritage. Neo-Ottomanism is rooted in the more contemporary struggles of 21st-century Türkiye, and how Kemalism had failed to address those issues. Thus, it follows that Ottoman historiography which had been influenced by Neo-Ottomanism would reject aspects of Kemalist viewpoints, placing greater emphasis on religion, and on the role of the Ottomans as arbiters of the Middle East. These views and their prevalence in both politics and academia, therefore, have a trickledown effect to broader Turkish society, as was discussed. Ideologies and their effects on Ottoman historiography were discussed with respect to how they facilitated various misconceptions of Ottoman and Turkish history, or how they fuelled prejudices, which are observed not only in Türkiye itself but in nations which are historically linked with the Ottoman state. As such, these points have a notable impact on the understanding of Ottoman historiography, and how the role of Oghuz Turks and their culture is discussed in that historiography.

Chapter Five:
The place of Oghuz Turkic culture in the Early Ottoman state

An Empire Divided

The historiography of the Ottoman state, despite having the ancestry of its ruling house rooted in the Central Asian Steppes has been dominated by the discourses of Europe, the Middle East, and modern Turkish nationalism of its 20th-century successor. Not only is it apparent in the sources themselves, where the Ottoman forebears exist in near obscurity until the rise of Osman in the 14th century, but also in the trajectory of the research surrounding it, which remains preoccupied with what the region gave to its nomadic settlers, rather than what they brought with them. While the disparity between East-centric and West-centric literature has been clearly established at this point, the discussion of the role Oghuz Turkic traditions played in the formation of Ottoman culture has not been. This is due to the simple lack of discussion of this point in both academic camps. However, there is still some information in the sources, and as such, this chapter focuses on what the literature does discuss.

The cultural practices that are discussed in the extant scholarship are evaluated in reference to the definition of culture as established in the first chapter. As such, these practices must be manifested as either beliefs, customs, practices, or laws which are either expressed directly through documentation or indirectly as observed behaviour. They will also have to display interactions between the formal and informal hierarchies within Ottoman society.[337] The chapter also considers the elements of change and adaptation, both across geographical distances and time, as best as possible given the scope and limitations of this research. The intention behind this approach to understanding the culture is to give as accurate a representation of the place Oghuz Turkic practices really had in the Ottoman state, as a living experience rather than as a singular stated observation.[338] These criteria are by no means easy to apply, given the lack of discussion in the source material, but are necessary in order to create as accurate a representation as can possibly be gleaned from the available sources as they are

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[337] J. Clarke, 'Conjunctures, crises, and cultures: Valuing Stuart Hill'. *Focaal – Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology* 70(1), 2014, pp. 113 – 122.

[338] C. Geertz, *Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture.*

understood. As such, the deductions made by this study are likely to be subject to change should more or better sources come to light in the future.

With this premise in mind, this specific chapter of the study is dedicated to the application of these criteria with respect to two distinctive aspects of Ottoman society discussed in the literature during the time between its founding and its peak at the end of the reign of Suleiman. The first aspect of Ottoman society to be discussed is the culture of the House of Osman, and the Ottoman aristocracy, while the second aspect considers the population of the Ottoman state as a whole. The former element has the most available sources, which makes it easier to identify specific cultural traits and practices, while the latter requires a broader analysis of scattered, fragmentary sources. The analyses of both aspects pay attention to the specific areas in which the existing scholarship is either hindered by the current discourse around the Ottoman state, or simply non-existent, contributing to a more directed discussion of these issues at the end of this section.

The House of Osman and Ottoman Aristocracy

The House of Osman and the upper classes of Ottoman society are the first and, in many ways, most straightforward groups to analyse culturally during this time, due to their popularity in both West-centric and East-centric literature. Unlike the rest of the population of the Ottoman state, who generally favoured linguistic and ethnic identifiers, the Ottoman aristocracy was the only group during this period who self-identified as being 'Of the House of Osman,' or 'Ottoman.'[339] Due to their close ties with, and investment in the state and royal dynasty itself, it is easy to understand why this group chose to closely align their identity with these entities. It is by no means a practice unique to the ruling elite of the Ottoman state and is seen throughout history, particularly in regions or states where governance is dominated by a singular ruling dynasty or clan. In particular, it is a trend closely associated with many Muslim states of the time, such as the Seljuks, Safavids, Umayyad, Abbasids and others, where political elites identified directly with their rulers, rather than necessarily with the geographical territory or realm they ruled over. What this means for this aspect of the study is that there is already a discernible, identifiable 'Ottoman' cultural identity which exists within the literature

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[339] C. Kafadar, 'A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum', *Muqarnas* 24(1), 2007, pp. 13 – 14.

discussing this time period. However, with respect to the definition of culture that this study is applying, this identified upper-class group is insufficient to study on its own. If culture is displayed through the interplay of power dynamics within a hierarchy, then both the upper and lower strata of the society need to be discussed. As such, the Ottoman aristocracy, while it can be studied in separation, must be analysed in relation to the rest of the population of the Ottoman state in order to fully understand their cultural identities and practices. However, as mentioned previously, the practices of the ruling elite have received significant scholarly attention in both the West-centric and East-centric historiographical spectrum of the literature when compared to that of the population at large.[340] It is for these two reasons that the analysis starts here, where specific practices and attitudes pertaining to heritage, succession, and other actions, can be analysed in both how they were expressed in law and experienced.

The final point to consider here is that many of these practices and observations have been influenced, in one way or another, by either Western or Islamic cultural norms that the Ottomans inherited and came into contact with. As stated previously, both the passage of time and the geo-political position the Ottomans found themselves in placed them in a situation where these two cultural influences would inevitably be the primary impact on how the early Ottomans, and especially their ruling elite, conducted themselves.[341] Both camps of literature tend to focus on the elements that support their argument, to the neglect of the points made from the opposite side as well as other, unrelated or seemingly unimportant points. It is for these reasons that, where the literature on these topics is discussed, much of what they say about the influence of Oghuz Turkic culture, or what is a practice wholly unique to the Ottomans, is inferred rather than clearly stated. The difference between the two is poorly discussed, and again, not the primary focus of either camp, so both inherited Oghuz practices and culturally unique Ottoman practices may be discussed interchangeably. This is not done to simplify the differences between the two, but out of the necessity created by the neglect covering either as practices separate from the East-West literature split. Further, while Oghuz culture is an independent variable, with some Islamic influence at this time, Ottoman culture is a hybrid which would certainly have drawn from its Oghuz roots, directly or indirectly. As

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[340] F. A. Ergul, "The Ottoman identity: Turkish, Muslim or Rum?", *Middle Eastern Studies* 48(4), 2012, pp. 632 – 634.
[341] F. A. Ergul, "The Ottoman identity: Turkish, Muslim or Rum?", *Middle Eastern Studies* 48(4), 2012, pp. 632 – 634.

such, discussing them together, in absence of clear divisions, is the most logical path forward in this case.[342]

To start, one of the areas where the influence of Oghuz culture and heritage plays a very clear role is in the discussion of how the House of Osman approached its lineage. For the Ottoman sultans, their lineage wasn't just a matter of royal pedigree or historical interest, but of cultural and political legitimacy. While most accounts point to an initially ambivalent House of Osman, which was contented to rule through a 'might makes right' attitude, their view seems to have changed in the mid-15th century, as Ottoman chroniclers began to make serious efforts in their works to explain the lineages of the House of Osman.[343] In particular, they painted Osman as the foremost leader of the *Kayı* tribe in Anatolia at the time of his rise, even though other prominent contemporary beyliks, such as the Isfendiyarids and Chobanids, also claimed *Kayı* heritage. Different scholars from both the West-centric and East-centric scholarly traditions argue that this claim to Oghuz Turkic royalty was likely made with the aim of solidifying Mehmed II's claim on Anatolia, and the groups of Turkmen cavalries it gave him access to.[344] This point seems particularly pertinent in the context of a divided Anatolia, and where the Isfendiyarids still held significant power, as it gave Mehmed legitimacy. This point only becomes more pertinent to the discussion as modern West-centric and East-centric sources cast serious doubt onto whether the House of Osman was of *Kayı* origin at all, while elements of the Turkish literature tend to still support these claims.[345]

This appeal to various sources of authority only intensifies the further back the proposed lineage of Osman goes. Not only do Ottoman sources tie Osman directly to the *Kayı* tribe, fabricating him as the leader of that very tribe in its entirety, but they also attempted to give him legitimacy by tying his ancestry to the Seljuks of Rúm, and the greater Seljuk Empire. Though not as universal a claim, Osman is also claimed by many to be a descendant of Suleiman ibn Qutalmish, the offshoot member of the greater Seljuk dynasty who led the Turks, and specifically the *Kayı* tribe, into Anatolia following the battle of Manzikert.[346] Though Osman and Ertuğrul are often claimed, as beys, to have been granted their territory by the

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[342] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 103 – 115.
[343] M. F. Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 72 – 74.
[344] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 110 – 113.
[345] M. F. Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 72 – 74.
[346] P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East,* p. 224.

Seljuks, this lineage grants the Ottomans another strong claim over Anatolia and the Turks who resided therein. This claim also had the ancillary effect of tying the Ottomans to both the old Seljuk Empire, as well as to the Oghuz Tribe of the *Kınık*. Each layer of this lineage, fabricated or not, worked to build the Ottomans as the legitimate successors of previous Oghuz groups, their realms, and their peoples. This escalation goes so high in some cases as to draw a direct line between Osman and the mythological founder of the Turks, Oghuz Khagan himself, and even further back to biblical figures such as Noah.[347] While these claims are almost universally regarded as fabrication in the literature produced outside of Türkiye, there remains a fervent core of Turkish literature which holds these Ottoman chronologies as legitimate. This is despite the many publications which exist emphasising that Ottoman chroniclers almost universally served to legitimise the actions of the house of Osman, rather than capture Ottoman history with any degree of accuracy.[348] Regardless of their legitimacy, however, these claims emphasise the importance that the Ottomans began placing on their relationship with the Oghuz Turks of their state, with whom they shared a common ancestry. Leader of the *Kayı* or not, Osman was a bey of Oghuz ethnic origin, and even a century and a half after Osman moved into the style of a settled, sedentary leader, his descendants recognised the value in maintaining ties with their nomadic Oghuz Turkmen population.[349] In this way, the discussion of Ottoman lineage and heritage is of a cultural relationship between two levels of the social hierarchy, and the writing of these histories is a corporeal device used to cement this relationship.

Following on with the discussion analysing the relationship between the House of Osman and their Turkmen groups, the next element looks at succession. In particular, the best place to see this extension of the relationship between the two groups is to see how Ottoman princes were deployed when they came of age. During this time, these princes would be sent to different provinces throughout Anatolia where they would be given the title, and execute the responsibilities, of *Sanjak-bey*.[350] In this position, they would be the direct governors of these *Sanjaks* until the death of the Sultan, or reassignment elsewhere. Though there are a few exceptions, these posts were almost always in Anatolia, and never in Rumelia. It is largely believed by all camps of literature that Anatolia was chosen for the princes in order to keep

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[347] H. Ogasawara, 'The Biblical Origin of the Ottoman Dynasty in the 15th and 16th century', *Bulletin of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan* 51(1), pp. 110 – 139.

[348] S. N. Faroqhi, *Approaching Ottoman History: An Introduction to the Sources*, pp. 156 – 160.

[349] I. Şahin, *Osmanlı Döneminde Konar-Göçerler/Nomads in the Ottoman Empire.* Eren Yayincilik, Istanbul. 2006. pp. 227 – 252.

[350] H. İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire,* pp. *14 – 18.*

them in close contact with the various nomadic Turkmen groups, as well as the largest centres of urban Turks, so that they could be acquainted with the traditions and practices of their Turkic roots. Unlike Rumelia, where the majority of the local sanjaks and beyliks operated in a simple feudal manner, Anatolia needed to be managed both with regard to its settled aristocracy as well as the various nomadic groups and their respective, separate power structures. These nomadic Turkmen formed a crucial part of the Ottoman military machine through the supply of its core cavalry elements and held immense power with regard to the stability of Anatolia as a whole.[351] For this reason, the Ottomans believed it crucial to maintain ties with these groups and have a degree of direct oversight as to their activities. Once again, it is only the predominantly Turkish literature which emphasises this practice as not only politically practical but intrinsically intertwined with the culture. While once again not necessarily Oghuz itself, this practice nonetheless places a great deal of importance on these more traditional groups, and engagement with and understanding of their practices becomes integral to the Ottoman military and political culture.

At some point in time, the Sultan's reign would end, and the different princes and relations of the late Sultan who were scattered throughout different regions or parts of the administration would enter into a generally fatal competition for the throne.[352] The Ottoman fratricidal succession races are one of the best-known and unique aspects of their cultural proclivities. As a male-dominated, open succession system, Ottoman princes would need to capitalise on their time as governors to garner political and military favour so their claim would be supported when the time came to make their move to become sultan. While the Sultan could show favouritism to the son he preferred, the only real benefit which could be given to a potential successor was proximity. As such, being close to the capital, or nearest to the Sultan, at the time of his death, would afford the nearest son a time advantage in declaring himself Sultan and moving to eliminate his rivals. Turkish and many East-centric sources emphasise that this system was, in many ways, a formalisation of the practice that had existed before in the Sultanate of Rúm, and which had seemingly originated back in the Seljuk Empire with Alp Arslan's swift contestation of the throne and succession.[353] Unlike much of Europe which practised male primogeniture, and other parts of the Islamic world which practised a myriad of

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[351] I. Şahin, *Osmanlı Döneminde Konar-Göçerler/Nomads in the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 227 – 252.
[352] C. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300 – 1650: The Structure of Power,* pp. 98 – 100.
[353] A. C. S. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, pp. 44 – 45.

systems, such as confederate partition, or elective succession, the Ottomans were the only ones who had a formalised struggle for power as part of their cultural system.

While it is difficult to point to any specific codification of Ottoman fratricide, the historical documentation of it being practised with almost ritual adherence from the 14th to the 16th century gives it clear credence as a cultural practice of the House of Osman, and possibly throughout the Ottoman aristocracy.[354] It is also clearly linked to the succession practices of the Seljuks of Rúm and Persia before them, if not as refined a practice in those instances, making it a traceable Oghuz Turkic practice. If anything, the argument of the East-centric literature is that the practice itself, prior to the change in succession laws in the late 1500s, was the final stage of the evolution of this practice. Where in previous Oghuz dynasties it resembled a more general, opportunistic power grab, by the time of the Ottomans, this succession practice had become an activity with generally understood parameters. This is not to discount the occasions where there were breaks in tradition, such as the cases of Selim I, and Suleiman's conflict with his own children, who attempted to contest the throne before the death of the Sultan, or Mehmed II, whose father attempted to abdicate in his favour initially. However, in the majority of cases, the literature describes events where Ottoman princes would generally either need to prove themselves militarily against their brothers with an equal claim, as seen in the case of Mehmed I, or where they would carry out a mass execution of their brothers once they took power to prevent possible insurrection in future, as had occurred several times prior.[355] This case is one of a cultural practice which has clear lines of inheritance from the Ottoman Oghuz past, and which also displays aspects of growth and evolution from its initial iterations. It is also given legitimacy through the various parts of Ottoman society who engaged with and endorsed it, such as the Ottoman court vizirs, wives of the Sultan, and military factions and Turkmen beys who supported respective princes.

The rest of the specifically 'Ottoman' practices from this point are ones whose origin is of a much more difficult nature to ascertain, and which certainly display the influence of other cultures. This isn't unexpected, however, given the number of arguments which point to the cultural hybridity within Ottoman society, and the hybridised nature of Ottoman culture itself. Though not a universally accepted point, as discussed in previous chapters and through other

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[354] C. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300 – 1650: The Structure of Power,* pp. 102 – 105.
[355] C. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300 – 1650: The Structure of Power,* p. 98.

points, it is a point which has gained more traction in recent years. In particular, this concept of hybridity, and many of the remaining practices, originate more from the East-centric literature rather than the West-centric, or Turkish camps. The view is that through this cultural hybridity, multiple cultural sources combine in various ways to create a new and unique culture, while still holding many indicators from their precursor cultures.[356] For this study, one of the simpler examples is the Girding of the Sword of Osman. This practice also ties into the rituals surrounding Ottoman succession, which had to be completed following the Sultan's ascension to the throne. Though equivocal to coronation ceremonies in the West, this specific practice appears to take its origins from the practice of *Bay'ah* in the medieval Islamic world.[357] However, the specific instrument used here is the historical Sword of Osman, which is presented to the new Sultan by a Dervish from Konya. These final aspects are what make it unique to the Ottomans, and where there is arguable Oghuz Turkic influence. With the symbol of office being a sword, it implies that the primary role of the office is as a warrior first, and its bestowal onto the new sultan by a Dervish from Konya denotes a symbolic granting of this role of a warrior in the name of Islam itself, but through an Islamic figure specifically from the old capital of the Sultanate of Rúm.[358] This can be interpreted yet again as an acknowledgement and deference to the former Oghuz state for legitimacy, while the remaining aspects tie Islam and Muslim succession with a specific interpretation of a Turkic Ghazi warlord.

Following on from this, another point where the social and political practices of the House of Osman deviate from their other cultural influences is in the role of women in the state. The literature argues that, prior to the Ottomans, the Abbasids had left a long-established legacy of the roles women could play within Islamic society, in which many of the freedoms and involvement with the community they had enjoyed during Umayyad rule were curbed.[359] These established norms would seemingly be relaxed, especially within the Sultanate of Rúm, but even more particularly in the case of the Ottomans. This situation owed itself to the primacy of Qanun law within the Ottoman state at the time, instead of Sharia. While women still faced significant restrictions in the realms of politics and business, they enjoyed far more

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[356] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 103 – 115.

[357] Bay'ah refers to the Islamic practice of professing their spiritual allegiance as a Muslim before a spiritual authority within the Muslim community. L. A. Caruso, *Bay'a: Succession, Allegiance, and Rituals of Legitimisation in the Islamic World*, pp. 36 – 38.

[358] H. Pfeifer, 'A New Hadith Cultuer? Arab Scholars and Ottoman Sunnitization in the Sixteenth century', *in* T. Krstić and D. Terzioğlu (eds.), *Historicising Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450 - c. 1750,* pp. 41 – 46.

[359] L. P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 21 – 23.

comparative social and legal freedoms. Indeed, with respect to the House of Osman, women even had the liberty to involve themselves significantly in politics, which is a point often overlooked in West-centric and Turkish literature. While the political power of women from the House of Osman would only reach its greatest heights following the time period this study focuses on, they still played significant roles in determining future sultans.[360] As they would be sent with their respective sons to the sanjaks they would govern, they had a vested interest in their sons' political careers and success, and as such, exercised the influence they had to maximise their son's chances of becoming the next sultan. A prime example of this can be seen in how the power politics between the wives of Suleiman played out to the point where Hurrem would attain near equal rank with Suleiman as Valide Sultan, and her children, rather than Suleiman's other, older sons, would take precedence as his preferred successors.[361]

There are two respective points here where the Ottomans deviate from the established norms of medieval Islamic culture that they adopted. The first, and the one which has been highlighted the most so far, is with respect to the role of women within the royal house, and how they could exercise their power when compared to their counterparts in both the Middle East and Europe. Throughout history, Turkic societies, and many others with their origins from the Steppe, have traditionally allowed women more significant autonomy within society, and made them integral to the function of that society.[362] While this is still largely dulled down with regards to the Ottomans, the women of the house of Osman were still given greater leeway than their counterparts in other societies and were crucial to the process of preparing Ottoman princes for leadership and the challenges that entailed. The second, broader deviation made by the Ottomans, was their preference for Qanun over Sharia in their application of the law. This preference appears to be rooted in the rule of Turkic and Mongol dynasties in the Middle East, as their administrations regularly encountered issues which were not explicitly covered by Sharia, and so seemed to require the leaders of these societies to dictate their own resolutions to these issues into law.[363] Though generally restricted to financial and criminal matters, they would see significant development under both Mehmed II and Suleiman in the Ottoman

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[360] L. P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 22 – 25, 42 – 44.

[361] L. P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 61 – 62.

[362] L. P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 16 – 18.

[363] N. Al-Tikriti, 'A Contrarian Voice: Şehzāde Ḳorḳud's (d. 919/1513) Writings on Kalām and the Early Articulation of Ottoman Sunnism', *in* T. Krstić and D. Terzioğlu (eds.), *Historicising Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450 - c. 1750,* pp. 88 – 91.

Empire, leading to further development regarding property rights.[364] Whilst also not explicit, this is another small continuation of the preferences expressed by Turkic populations as part of Ottoman conduct, and as such, another cultural marker.

In different ways, each of these practices that the House of Osman observed contributed to its success as a ruling dynasty and of the state it governed. Its succession practices in particular prevented the empire from splintering upon the death of the Sultan, while its competitive aspects ensured that only the most prepared and cunning candidate would succeed to the throne. In an effort to remain as close to the Sultan's side as possible for when that time would come, the princes were almost always experienced military commanders and savvy politicians, which only helped ensured the success of the state during this time. Further, they would all have opportunities to build relationships with the Turkmen tribes of Anatolia during their times as *Sanjak-bey,* who at this time supplied the traditional cavalry which sat at the core of Ottoman military success. Even the simpler practices such as Girding of the Sword of Osman reinforced the militaristic role of the Sultan, while the greater liberties which the women of the Ottoman court ensured that they too could wield immense power as political actors, often to the further benefit of the Ottoman state. In these ways, the distinctly Oghuz elements of the ruling family played an intrinsic role in establishing the Ottomans both as a world power, and as the massive multi-cultural society it became.

The general population of the Ottoman State

The second, and by far the more difficult group to analyse from the sources, is the general populace of the Ottoman province of Anatolia. Unlike the Ottoman aristocracy and House of Osman, who, owing to their standing within society, had the historical spotlight fixed squarely on them, the populations of the Ottoman state itself have far fewer specifics written on them to work from. The reasons for this, aside from not being the ruling class, are many, but one of the most important for this study is the simple fact that there is no one single population for the literature to focus on, but multiple. Even from the very beginning, the Ottoman state differed from many of the smaller principalities of Europe and the Middle East in the myriad of different homogenous and hostile cultural and ethnic groups that dwelt within their borders. As a frontier state at the edge of a landmass undergoing constant political upheaval and population

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[364] A. Clot, *Suleiman the Magnificent*, p. 21.

migration, the Ottoman beylik was home to not only Turks, but to Greeks, Arabs, Assyrians, Kurds, Persians, Armenians, and many others who had either been left behind by the slowly decaying Byzantine Empire, or who had came to this very region in search of opportunity and plunder.[365] Added to this, the Ottoman state sat at the crossroads between the Christian and Islamic worlds at a time when the recurring threat of crusades had dissipated and left the Byzantine state fractured and in decline. Anatolia was a region ripe with opportunity, but the realisation of that possibility would be borne out at the expense of every one of these groups in some way, Christian or Muslim, local or migrant. As such, the divided literature had no shortage of West-centric or East-centric groups to focus on individually, which is an approach that comes at the expense of the discussion which looks at these groups as part of a greater whole.

It is also not even as if the Turkic groups themselves were easy to isolate, or even necessarily the majority in this region. While over the past century the notions of Turkic and Ottoman exceptionalism, stemming from both Kemalism and Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish literature, have coloured the history of the Ottomans in that light, groups within the Ottoman beylik, and other Turkic groups throughout Anatolia, remained ethnically and culturally mixed from the very beginning.[366] As mentioned before, despite being a disruptive element upon their arrival, the Turks were already migrating into a region that had been populated and repopulated with other cultural groups for millennia prior to that. Adding to this, the Turks would not be the only group migrating into the region, with a minority of Arabs and Iranians, as well as a substantial Kurdish population, joining them following Manzikert. On top of this, the Turks were not even wholly Oghuz, as other Turkic groups, be they Cuman, Kipchak, Khazar, or Tatar, having themselves either already been present in the region or migrating with the Oghuz. This issue even boils down further to the *Kayı* not being the only Tribe of Oghuz moving into the region, and the Ottomans not being the only beylik formed from the *Kayı* tribe. Put simply, the 'Turkification of Anatolia' was nothing short of a cultural free for all, instead of the definitive singular cultural injection that is often described in several sources which attempt to place the primary focus of the discussion either on the ongoing East/West divide, or on the primacy of the Ottomans.[367] The reality, however, appears to be more suggestive that the Ottomans simply

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[365] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, pp. 45 – 58.
[366] D. A. Korobeninkov, 'How 'Byzantine' Were the Early Ottomans? Bithynia in ca. 1290 – 1450.', *in* I. V. Zaitsev and S. F. Oreshkov (eds.) *The Ottoman World and Ottoman Studies*, pp. 215 - 239.
[367] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State,* pp. 5 – 14.

managed, through a great deal of chance or historical contingency, to rise to primacy in Anatolia.

Even if the assumption is made that the other Turkic groups within Anatolia gradually assimilated into being part of the greater Oghuz group, the scholarship on this topic is still left with several developments which make singling out a 'Turkish' group difficult. Key among these is the cross-pollination which is recorded to have taken place between the arriving Turks and the groups already present. The *Mixouaruaroi* mentioned earlier seemed to be the product of this mixing, though how significant that population became is unknown.[368] Most arguments made by non-Turkish historians, however, indicate this mixing to have been significant enough to make Anatolian Turks ethnically distinctive from other Turkic groups in both the rest of the Middle East and those in Central Asia. Aside from this, we know that a significant enough portion of this population chose to abandon the nomadic lifestyle of their Turkic ancestors in favour of more sedentary pursuits, either in the urban centres or in the rural, agricultural regions. However, we also know that a not insignificant population retained their nomadic lifestyle to split Anatolia's administration, and continued providing the native cavalry expertise that was used in the Ottoman military.[369] This population split among the Turks created three general groups that this study can focus on: the two sedentary Turkic populations, one as part of the rural peasantry, and the other as part of the urban population, and then the nomadic traditionalists, known broadly as Turkmen in the sources. The line between these groups, especially the sedentary groups, is not always very well defined but will be sufficient for the purposes of this study.

The first group, which was arguably affected the most by the effects of cultural hybridisation, and who are the subject of great conjecture between West-centric and East-centric historians, were the urban Turks. Following the battle of Manzikert, most of the original Byzantine populations of Anatolia migrated out of the rural lands of the region toward the urban centres, fleeing the horse nomads and fearing religious persecution, slavery, and death.[370] While the cities themselves would gradually be abandoned by the greater Byzantine administration, the initial Turk beys who took control of these regions would permit the cities to continue

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[368] H. J. Magoulias, *Doukas: The Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks,* pp. 272 – 273.
[369] H. İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 20 – 21.
[370] P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East,* p. 224.

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unmolested provided they swore fealty, converted to Islam and paid continuous tribute to the beys. As such, when elements of the Turkish aristocracy began moving into these urban centres with their retainers and respective religious educators, they would immediately become part of a rapid cultural hybridisation.[371] On one hand, the Turks migrating into these urban centres were completely immersed in this hyper-concentration of Byzantine culture, while at the same time, were responsible for the mass conversion of these groups to Islam, by choice or by force. The establishment of Sufist centres in Anatolian cities played a key role in this conversion process, where Sufis worked to convince the native Christian populations of the similarities between Islam and Christianity.[372] For this reason, the urban centres which acquiesced to the Turks would likely have converted in a manner which allowed the rest of the Byzantine culture to remain intact, and so posed a significant influence on the new urban Turks. Those cities which chose to resist in the hope of returning to Byzantine rule, however, were often sacked with their monasteries and churches razed to the ground and their population forced into slavery, erasing the Byzantine influence.

It is here that we have what many believe to be the origin of the '*Rūmī*' cultural identity, though some scholars disagree. Nonetheless, most scholars on both West-centric and East-centric sides believe this to be the origin point for this hybrid culture within the Ottoman state, where Turkish speaking, Muslim citizens emulated the cultural behaviours of the Greek *Romaioi*, whom themselves had, in turn, either converted to Islam or worked out means and ways of remaining Christian while still operating without severe persecution. This latter group of Greeks were most common during the period when the Ottoman state moved from being a frontier entity to a settled, bureaucratic system with room for compromise within its population, especially after the conquest of further Christian territory. In this context, it is argued by both sides that a separation existed between the Turkish *Rūmī* culture, and that of the Greek *Romaioi*, especially religiously, but also that their similarities generally outweighed those differences. [373] As such, most of the different cultural markers which arise out of this specific section of the population do not hold significant, if any, distinctive Turkic features. The Ottoman architecture distinct to the empire is primarily a marrying of the Byzantine style with Iranian Islamic accents, with other artisanal endeavours such as pottery, art, weaving, and smithing following

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[371] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 103 – 115.
[372] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State,* pp. 50 – 58.
[373] C. Kafadar, 'A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum', *Muqarnas* 24(1), 2007, pp. 14 – 15.

a similar trend.[374] The only points wherein elements of distinctive Turkic culture come in with these pursuits is with artistic motifs, most prominently seen in rugs and carpets, which still bore certain Central Asian styles, but are often heavily influenced by Byzantine or Persian elements.[375] The only real Turkish marker which remained distinct was the language, which was often used interchangeably with Greek for commerce, and was still written in Arabic and Persian script which didn't fully capture its linguistic nuance. As such, the urban space appears to be where Oghuz traditions had the least presence, as they were essentially drowned out by the stronger, more concentrated and established Byzantine cultures, with Iranian Islamic accents due to religious and geo-political influence.[376]

While the name 'Turk' in the sources applies to anyone of Turkic ethnic origins and was widely applied to all parts of the Turkic population of Anatolia and the Ottoman state, the name 'Turkman,' as previously explained, is applied specifically to those Turks who form part of these nomadic groups which engaged in seasonal pastoralism in Anatolia, with some Turkish arguments emphasising its Oghuz origin.[377] Turkish arguments place these traditional, tribal groups at the core of the Turkic migration into Anatolia. Beginning prior to the Battle of Manzikert, groups of Turkmen raided the border territories of the Byzantine Empire from Seljuk lands, plundering loot and taking Christians as slaves, before eventually incurring the ire of the Byzantines. It is as such no surprise that while the terms of peace between the Byzantines and Seljuks were still fresh, the Turkmen resumed their raiding and began probing deeper into Anatolian land.[378] Here they found suitable plains and grassland for their livestock, and so settled into a seasonal cycle of moving between pastures and raiding Christian territory. Though not formally united, most of the Turkmen groups swore fealty to the Sultanate of Rúm, who in turn granted them leave to migrate across Anatolia freely, administer their tribes and livestock as they saw fit, and plunder Christian settlements. This latter activity cemented the antagonistic relationship that the Turkmen tribes would foster with many of the urban centres of the region, as the Christian groups of Anatolia were under constant threat of Turkmen raids. Thus, while many Turks would leave the Turkmen tribes to settle in the cities and countryside,

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[374] C. V. Findley, *The Turks in World History,* pp. 103 – 107.
[375] C. V. Findley, *The Turks in World History,* pp. 103 – 107.
[376] D. A. Korobeninkov, 'How 'Byzantine' Were the Early Ottomans? Bithynia in ca. 1290 – 1450.', *in* I. V. Zaitsev and S. F. Oreshkov (eds.) *The Ottoman World and Ottoman Studies*, pp. 215 - 239.
[377] I. Şahin, *Osmanlı Döneminde Konar-Göçerler/Nomads in the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 227 – 252.
[378] I. Şahin, *Osmanlı Döneminde Konar-Göçerler/Nomads in the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 227 – 252.

the view of the Turks remained coloured by the Turkmen who were either the harsh enforcers of the new Islamic status quo in Anatolia, or simply marauding bands at a baser level.[379]

The Turkmen themselves did little to challenge this view that they had fostered, however. They remained a culturally homogenous and isolated people throughout history and well into the modern era, with little to no cross-pollination with the other groups of Anatolia. For this reason, they are seen by most historians as the group within the Ottoman state to have preserved more Oghuz Turkic cultural practices than any other, as they themselves were essentially Oghuz Turks, with few, if any, deviations from their ancestors.[380] In this way, the Turkmen are presented as the counterexample to the cultural erosion and contamination seen with the urban Turk population. The only real change that the Turkmen would undergo as they migrated into Anatolia was adapting to the land itself, which provided newfound stability to their pastoralist lifestyles in the form of seasonal pastoralism. Unlike life on the Eurasian Steppe, which saw nomadic groups constantly on the move for pastures, Anatolia facilitated renewable pasture lands, where the Turkmen tribes could graze in the summer, and then migrate toward the mountains to wait out the winter. It is these reasons, historians on all sides argue, that allowed the Turkmen to maintain their characteristic horse-archer identity, which both made them an asset to the Ottomans as well as a potential threat to the stability of the region. As stated previously, the legitimacy of the Ottoman Sultans to the Turkmen tribes was important as it kept them under control, and so maintaining a link to them, no matter how far removed the House of Osman became culturally, was crucial. There are several instances throughout Ottoman history where the loyalty of Turkmen tribes had come into question, facilitating much of the conflict the Ottomans faced in the east with other Anatolian beyliks, or the Safavids.[381] In this way, the Turkmen and their military importance feature as a key component in keeping the Ottomans engaged with their Oghuz roots on a political level, facilitated by the hierarchy and power balance between both groups.

Finally, there were the Turks who settled in the rural areas. These Turks were responsible for straddling the line between both previous groups, as they were integral to the urban economy and its food supply, as well as being the group in the most regular contact and interaction with

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[379] D. A. Korobeninkov, 'How 'Byzantine' Were the Early Ottomans? Bithynia in ca. 1290 – 1450.', *in* I. V. Zaitsev and S. F. Oreshkov (eds.) *The Ottoman World and Ottoman Studies*, pp. 215 - 239.
[380] I. Şahin, *Osmanlı Döneminde Konar-Göçerler/Nomads in the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 227 – 252.
[381] C. V. Findley, The Turks in World History, pp. 110 – 116.

the Turkmen groups. For centuries, the Byzantines had shaped Anatolia into a predominantly rural, agrarian space with wide, open plains used to cultivate grains and cereals.[382] This changed with the arrival of the Turks, who seized most of the heartland areas for pastoralism, pushing farmers toward the coasts and mountains. While initially, cultivation in Anatolia suffered due to the rapid change in farming practices, it gradually returned and grew into a balanced mix of pastoralism and agriculture. While the Turkmen took most of the open pastureland for their herds, farmers began adopting other domesticated livestock into their cultivation alongside the Turkmen, while also growing seasonal crops and goods. Many Turkmen, especially elders, the young, and women, integrated with these farming communities when they could not keep up with the nomadic lifestyle, leading to a moderate mix within these communities.[383] Unlike the cities, the cultural make-up of these farming communities quickly became homogenous but also differed from the Turkmen in the distinct Greek influences that came with the shift to settled, agrarian life. They would also be in close contact with both groups, as they were the primary food producers for the cities, and traded food and livestock with the Turkmen in the off-season, whilst also acting as the middlemen in trade between the cities and the nomads.[384]

Culturally, it is argued these communities were unique in their combination of both the more traditional elements of Turkic society with the more basic elements that had been left by the Byzantines. As tends to be the case in rural areas, the practices which remained were displayed in more foundational terms, and their blend took place as a matter of practicality. Local religious deviations, Christian or Pagan, were generally incorporated easily with Sufist interpretations of Islam, while their distance from civic centres saw Turkish as the more practical language over Greek or Persian.[385] Little, if anything, existed outside the practicality of the rural, agrarian lifestyles that they led, and so naturally, their greatest contributions culturally were through those pursuits. Working with the coastal plains and harsh, hilly extremes of Anatolia forced these farmers toward certain foods and crops which they could produce reliably and in an economically viable quantity, so the culinary tastes of the region shifted to adapt to this. First, and perhaps foremost, was the swell in livestock such as goats and sheep available. Where previously most meats in Byzantine territory had been exclusive

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[382] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, pp. 95 – 102.
[383] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State,* pp. 95 – 102.
[384] D. A. Korobeninkov, 'How 'Byzantine' Were the Early Ottomans? Bithynia in ca. 1290 – 1450.', *in* I. V. Zaitsev and S. F. Oreshkov (eds.) *The Ottoman World and Ottoman Studies*, pp. 215 - 239.
[385] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State,* pp. 131 – 140.

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for the upper classes, the introduction of livestock by the Turkmen, and their translation into the rural Anatolian setting made meat, and lamb in particular, more accessible.[386] At the same time, more grains entered the Turkish diet, especially through flatbreads, along with the combination of Anatolia's olive and grape cultures. Added to this, the Turkic history of contact with the spice markets of Central Asia played a large role in defining the cuisine too, especially following the monopolisation of trade from the East once the Ottomans captured Constantinople and the Eastern Mediterranean.[387] This change in diet, and especially the introduction of livestock foods, spices, and flatbreads, are very tangible Oghuz influences on the culture that were made prevalent due to the Turkish rural populations.

Each of these different groups within the cultural patchwork of Anatolia played a different role in the establishment and success of the Ottoman state. From its inception as a frontier state, the Turkmen tribes who insisted on maintaining their traditional lifestyles played a pivotal role in the military success of the early Ottoman conquests. Without the agile nature of Ottoman cavalry, it is often argued that the Ottomans would not have had the enormous success they did when faced with the larger, heavier and slower armies of Europe. Against the Christian coalitions which sought time and again to reclaim the territory which the Ottomans had conquered, Ottoman cavalry served as a near unbeatable counter. However, in the discussion of how Oghuz culture contributed to the success of the Ottoman state, the Turkmen are rarely overlooked. As such, the Turkmen usually get the most credit as the Oghuz cultural group who brought success to the Ottomans, whereas the settled and rural Turkish populations played a more subtle but no less important role. The settled Turks, though subjected to the greatest effects of cultural hybridisation, were responsible for producing works of art, crafts and architecture which have had the longest effect on defining Ottoman culture. The rural Turkish populations, meanwhile, were responsible for defining and enforcing the cuisine culture of the region which served as the heartland of the Ottoman state.

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[386] R. Laudan, *Cuisine and Empire: Cooking in World History,* pp. 155 – 159.
[387] H. İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 20 – 21.

The Silent Forebears of Ottoman Culture

As is evident from the above arguments, Ottoman culture, especially among its ruling elite and the populations of Anatolia, draws significantly from the Oghuz Turkmen who founded the dynasty and state. Indeed, it only makes sense that they would be, yet the historiography around this topic, as has been clearly established by this point, has not always taken this view. This is despite the House of Osman having some of its most notable practices and traditions, such as the entire field of Ottoman succession, being either heavily influenced by uniquely Oghuz traditions or being blatantly unchanged in its underpinning philosophies. Further, actions that were taken by the Ottoman ruling elite throughout history show a recognition of the role Oghuz Turkmen tribes played in consolidating their power, and how they were required to relate to these groups in order to receive their support. Ottoman ancestry and lineage in particular would be regularly amended and re-examined throughout Ottoman history in an attempt to establish their legitimacy over the groups they governed, through historical claims, and divine lineage. Regardless of which aspect of the ruling dynasty is analysed, elements of Oghuz heritage, or Oghuz influence, are prevalent throughout, even in the smallest of details.

Where this discussion is perhaps more understandably complex is when the greater Ottoman population is taken into account. When dealing with an empire which spanned multiple continents and ruled over vastly different peoples, it is much harder to interrogate the elements of a specific culture's influence on everything. However, with this being said, a portion of the empire which very clearly did show these influences was Anatolia and the populations which resided therein. Though how the populations of this region experienced this influence was far from uniform, each one somehow reflected a distinctive element brought through Oghuz culture or presence. This can be seen from the very smallest scale, as the composition of urban centres changed to reflect the influx of new Turk settlers and artisans into their trades, to the largest scale, where the presence of Turkmen tribes fundamentally altered population distributions and compositions, while also redesignating how the landscape was used for agriculture and pastoralism. All the while the Oghuz Turks intermingled and mixed with the other cultures of the region, forcibly or not, to create different hybrid identities that would have otherwise not existed. As all of these different groups comprised the Ottoman empire, especially in its earliest years, they all contributed to the greater concept of what Ottoman culture was, and in so doing, brought the aspects of their cultures which had been affected

directly or indirectly by the Oghuz. This is only further emphasised when the fact that the Oghuz Turkmen themselves remained an intrinsic part of the empire is highlighted.

This chapter's primary focus has been an analysis of traces of Oghuz Turkic culture in Ottoman culture which have been discussed in the historiography. The chapter has also considered gaps and the possible reasons for these gaps in the historiography. Traces of Oghuz cultural practices are discernible amongst both the ruling elite of the House of Osman as well as the general populace of Ottoman Anatolia. The primary highlights in the historiography of the House of Osman pertained to the influence of Oghuz traditions on Ottoman succession practices, and how the Ottomans focused their efforts on portraying themselves as legitimate leaders of the Oghuz Turkmen. As for the historiography of the Ottoman population of Anatolia, the findings were distributed across the urban, rural and nomadic sectors of society from a range of disparate and scattered sources. Urban Turks created hybridised identities, while still expressing their Oghuz heritage in their crafts, while rural Turks assimilated into pre-existing farming communities where they brought the livestock of the Oghuz Turkmen into the cuisine of Anatolian culture. The final group, the nomadic Turkmen tribes, are also discussed as the most direct contributors to Oghuz presence and influence in the Ottoman state, owing to the fact that they retained more significant elements of Oghuz cultural heritage.

Chapter Six:
Conclusion

Oghuz Culture and its neglect in Academia

This research has been a discussion of early Ottoman culture, and the early Ottoman state in general, and how the historiography on that culture has been split between East- and West-centric arguments since the beginning of this field of study. As this dissertation discusses, it found its roots in the works of early 20th-century historians Paul Wittek[388] and Herbert Gibbon,[389] whose works have provided the foundation for the East-centric and West-centric discussions respectively. As they were primarily concerned with how to characterise the rise and development of the early Ottoman state, they sought to root its identity in two possible forebear states which were argued to be the basis of early Ottoman culture. For the East-centric discussion, this cultural foundation was found in the Seljuk states of Iran and Rúm, and particularly in their identity as Medieval Islamic entities.[390] In contrast, the West-centric camp has argued that early Ottoman culture is primarily derived from the Byzantine state which the Ottomans gradually conquered, thus emphasising the Eastern Roman cultural aspects of the Ottomans.[391] This research highlights that neither of these scholarly camps gave specific nor credible attention to the ethnic origins of the Ottomans as an Oghuz Turkic people, and where they were acknowledged, it was in a way which co-opted them for either argument, rather than recognising them as a cultural foundation for the Ottomans in their own right.

Both Gibbons and Wittek wrote their foundational works on Ottoman history during the early 20th century, when notions of European intellectual superiority, and the exoticism of the East, were rife in academia. Their histories of the Ottoman Empire sought to portray it in terms of the greater narratives of history being produced at that time, which analysed the perceived ascendency of Europe, and the role of the Ottomans in grand narratives of empires and civilisations. For Gibbons, the Ottomans contributed to Medieval European history by being a

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[388] P. Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire: Studies in the History of Turkey, thirteenth – fifteenth centuries.*
[389] H. A. Gibbons, *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire: A History of the Osmalins up to the death of Bayezid I 1300 – 1403.*
[390] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, pp. 95 – 98.
[391] C. Kafadar, 'A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum', *Muqarnas* 24(1), 2007, pp. 13 – 14.

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European state built off the remnants of the Byzantines. For Wittek, the Ottomans were the antagonists of the Medieval era who sought to bring Christendom down in the name of Islam. Both arguments, as the dissertation has discussed, had their roots in eurocentrism and orientalism, which placed Europe at the heart of the discussion of the Ottoman state, rather than accepting nuance in its position. These two views were in opposition to one another, yes, but they both agreed that the only way that the Ottoman state could be understood or be considered historically relevant was on the basis of its relationship with European culture or religion. Wittek's work represented the historical Christian-Islamic antagonism but inflected through the prism of the 20th century tension in Central following the First World War. This was despite the fact that Wittek worked closely with Turkish scholars, like Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, on their own literature,[392] and despite the fact that he was persecuted by Nazi Germany for his works, forcing him to flee to England. As for Gibbons' work, it framed itself more along the lines of a study of the late Roman Empire rather than specifically of the Ottomans in many ways.

This study has also worked with a specific historical range, discussing literature focused on the early Ottoman state following the founding of the Ottoman beylic until the death of Suleiman I in 1566. This period, therefore, provides three distinctive periods of Ottoman history which can be discussed, while also avoiding the changes in Ottoman culture and identity which arose after the 17th century. The first of these periods is from 1299 until 1451 when the Ottoman state existed as an entity on the frontier between the Byzantines and the Seljuks of Rúm, where their earliest expressions of themselves as a state are identified and discussed. The next of these periods covers the reigns of Mehmed II and Bayezid II, who ruled during a time when the state cemented itself as a significant power in both Europe and the Middle East. As such, this early foundation of the state as an empire puts many of the Ottoman practices of the time in sharp focus, being defined as inherently Ottoman, and not in some way the result of their regional position and identity. The last period covers the reign of Selim I and Suleiman I, during which time the empire reached its greatest extent, and incorporated enormous territory in Europe and the Middle East.[393] This was when Ottoman culture began to consolidate and gained a distinctive, imperial identity.

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[392] M. F. Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire,* pp. xi – xiv.
[393] H. İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 20 – 35.

Of the first period, the research specifically engaged with the dubious historiographic narratives surrounding the lives, lineages and actions of Osman and his successors. Most prevalent in these narratives and misconceptions of the early Ottomans were their Oghuz heritage and their historical adherence to Islam. Osman's Oghuz roots in particular raise questions of authenticity in the absence of a historical record. Halil İnalcık, Feride Asli Ergul and Colin Imber discuss how later Ottoman historians, despite the lack of sources on Osman, attempted to cement him as the true leader of the *Kayı* and a devout Muslim.[394] It is also highlighted in the study that these claims likely continue to persist today due to their political utility with Turkish nationalists who liken themselves and their piety to Osman, and scholars of the East-centric camp who situate their arguments for Ottoman expansion through holy war against Christendom. These misconceptions also probably persist due to their portrayal in popular media such as *Diriliş: Ertuğrul*, which garnered critical acclaim and widespread popularity, including in countries such as Pakistan. Much like the Ottoman scholars who used Osman's relative obscurity in the sources to legitimise the Ottoman regime, modern academics, politicians, and entertainers use that same obscurity to their own ends.

Of the three previously mentioned periods of Ottoman history, it is the second, which primarily deals with the reign of Mehmed II, that most of the historiography focuses on. In particular, Mehmed's conquest and capture of Constantinople serves as a crucial point in arguments made by both the East- and West-centric camps as well as the political ideologies of Türkiye. Cemal Kafadar is noted to specifically speak to these different points in his arguments for cultural hybridity.[395] While Kafader notes this event as a point which truly brought the different cultures of the Ottoman state together to form a uniquely Ottoman culture, other academics from the polarised scholarship have argued that it shows the dominance of their preferred cultural lens over the other. For the East-centric camp, the conquest itself and Mehmed's proposed attitude towards it embodies the distinctly Islamic character of the Ottomans, especially when the conversion of the Hagia Sophia is included in these considerations. For the West-centric camp, however, it is Mehmet's decision to preserve the Ecumenical Patriarchate, resettle Byzantine peoples, and adopt the title of *Kayser-i Rûm* which cements the arguments for the Ottomans consciously choosing to be a Roman successor state. The research also notes the political power that this event has had in modern Türkiye, as the Hagia Sophia's designation as a museum in

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[394] M. F. Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 72 – 74.

[395] C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State,* pp. 103 – 115.

the early 20th century had worked in support of Kemalist ideals, and its redesignation as a mosque more recently has supported Neo-Ottomanist ideals. It is for this reason that this study spends most of its time on these events, as they have had an enormous role in dictating the key points of foci in the historiography.

The final period discussed in this dissertation saw a departure from the previous historiographical approaches. Following Mehmed II and Bayezid II's reign, the Ottoman state is treated as a fully formed entity in the historiography, rather than as a state under the influence of other states and their cultures. The historiography of this period, as pointed out by Lowry, Kafader and Pierce, is written by the previous East- and West-centric camps as if their arguments had been won. For the East-centric camp, the Ottomans who occupied all of the holiest sites in Islam during Suleiman's reign basically represent the Islamic world because of this.[396] As discussed earlier, when these East-centric views are broken down, the question of the Ottoman Islamic heritage simply doesn't feature as it is already a foregone conclusion. The same is arguably applicable to the West-centric camp, which sees the Ottomans as another Roman state that used an old Roman capital and held many previous Roman lands.[397] The formal religion and practices of the Ottomans matters less to the West-centric debate than does their continued use of previously Byzantine cities, infrastructure, and bureaucratic systems. In this way, the historiography of this period reflects precisely how and when the scholarship considered Ottoman culture to be its own, distinct, and unique identity.[398]

This dissertation, as mentioned, also discusses at length the influence that the modern Republic of Türkiye has had on Ottoman historiography. As Türkiye is the primary successor to the Ottoman state following its dissolution in the 20th century, this dissertation argues that Türkiye's political and academic fields have had an enormous impact on how Ottoman history is interpreted and understood. These political influences begin prior to the dissolution of the empire, where sentiments and ideologies which opposed Ottoman bureaucracy from within would form the basis of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's new governmental policies. Their foundation on the ideas of Turkish nationalism, Secularism, Progress and Modernisation, embodied in the ideology of Kemalism, would have a significant effect on how the Ottoman state was

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[396] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State,* 46 – 58.

[397] C. Kafadar, 'A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum', *Muqarnas* 24(1), 2007, pp. 13 – 14.

[398] L. P. Peirce, 'Changing Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire: The Early Centuries', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19(1), 2004, pp 6 – 22.

interpreted.[399] This would later be countered with the populist rise of a counter ideology in Türkiye by the name of Neo-Ottomanism, which was embodied in the government and policies of Türkiye's current president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.[400] This ideology would disregard the earlier stance of secularism, while also pushing Turkish nationalism to an extreme of Turkish and Ottoman exceptionalism, which once again affected how certain Turkish academics had interpreted the actions and culture of their Ottoman forebears.

The study then focuses precisely on how these different ideologies have influenced Ottoman historiography, as well as public perceptions of the Ottomans. Unlike the East- and West-centric academic camps which find their origins in European academia, Turkish academics often find themselves in one camp or the other, while usually also showing the distinctive influence that these ideologies have on their writing. Kemalist views tend to be more dismissive of the religious elements at play in the early Ottoman state, while also highlighting their technological and logistical prowess when compared to the later state. However, the biggest influence of Kemalism on Ottoman historiography is likely how it has resulted in the modern conception of Turkish-speaking groups as belonging to one cultural and ethnic family, despite the issues with this concept. The study argues that Neo-Ottomanism, however, has instead been instrumental in creating historiographical narratives of Ottoman supremacy and exceptionalism, which placed them as the 'rightful' hegemons of Eastern Europe and the Middle East. It has also led to an overemphasised view of the role Islam played in the Ottoman state's founding and motivations, while often neglecting the contributions of other cultures and societies within the empire. These views are all shared to varying degrees amongst the greater Turkish society, who show adherence to these ideas of Türkiye being the protector of other Turkic peoples, or of their national heritage being one which is distinctly Islamic and imperialistic.[401]

This discussion of the effects that Türkiye and its politics have had on the historiography are vital to understanding the role Turkish historians have played in both challenging and reinforcing the pre-existing polarised debates. For the past century, Turkish historians have

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[399] A. Kadioğlu, 'The paradox of Turkish nationalism and the construction of an official identity', *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(2), 1996, pp. 177 – 193.
[400] Y. Karakaya, 'Between neo-Ottomanism and Ottomania: navigating state-led and popular culture representations of the past', *New perspectives on Turkey* 56(1), 2017, pp. 37 – 41.
[401] Y. Karakaya, 'Between neo-Ottomanism and Ottomania: navigating state-led and popular culture representations of the past', *New perspectives on Turkey* 56(1), 2017, pp. 37 – 41.

been some of the few working with Ottoman history who have had access to both Ottoman archival sources and the means to translate them, which has placed them in a prime position to challenge the historiography established outside of Türkiye. Indeed, as is evident through the quantity of Turkish historians featured in this research, they have played a pivotal role in introducing overlooked cultural influences, like those of the Oghuz Turks, into the Ottoman historiographic debate. However, for several reasons, these works have not managed to successfully challenge the dominant East- and West-centric viewpoints and of these reasons, the politics of Türkiye is the most significant. As discussed by Kafader and others, the majority of Turkish literature usually doesn't support nuanced views, but rather falls into either the East- or West-centric camps.[402] Kemalism's effect on underplaying the role of religion in the Ottoman state, as well as its focus on Ottoman technological innovation and the state's interactions with its Byzantine populations has historically lent Kemalist histories to supporting West-centric historiographical narratives. Neo-Ottomanism's supportive view of Islam as a part of Turkish heritage, and its encouragement of Türkiye arbitrating over the affairs of the Middle East lend themselves, conversely, to supporting East-centric narratives which emphasise these points in the historiography of the Ottomans. With these in mind, the research argues that those who championed nuanced views which were distinct from either side were drowned out by the enormity of the existing debate. Indeed, it is only worsened when coupled with the knowledge that nationalistic sentiments still ensure that much of the Turkish scholarship is only published in Turkish, while Ottoman archives in Türkiye remain largely closed off to outside academics.

Distinct Oghuz Turkic cultural traces have been identified as notable practices and observed traditions which had been otherwise ignored by the East- and West-centric culture debates, either for not forming part of the cultural discussion they focused on or being generally neglected for their complexity. In particular, two different sections of Ottoman society were analysed for their cultural practices and identities. The first of these, and the only ones who considered themselves 'Ottoman' were the ruling elite and members of the House of Osman.[403] However, as the definition of culture that this study uses requires practices to be observed throughout all levels of the social structure, the ruling elite could not be analysed on their own.

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[402] C. Kafadar, 'A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum', *Muqarnas* 24(1), 2007, pp. 138 – 145.
[403] C. Kafadar, 'A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum', *Muqarnas* 24(1), 2007, pp. 13 – 14.

As such, this study included an analysis of Ottoman Anatolia's population as the next section of the discussion of Oghuz traditions forming part of or influencing Ottoman culture.

The first of these sections, the ruling elite, and House of Osman, was the section with the most specific practices to analyse. As academic discussions of states have generally focused on their ruling classes historically, it is unsurprising that the activities of the House of Osman were recorded in the most detail. This part of the research focused on how the ruling dynasty of the Ottomans consciously attempted to construct their lineages and ancestry in order to legitimise themselves to their nomadic Turkmen vassals. While questions remain as to how notable the House of Osman's own Oghuz heritage was, the house clearly displayed a recognition of the importance of being perceived as the descendants of Oghuz Turkmen rulers.[404] This point is backed up further by the Ottomans' fratricidal succession practices, which had been established as part of their Oghuz heritage. As the Oghuz placed importance on brothers having equal rights to inherit, this practice developed from the Seljuks into the form where Ottoman princes would regularly struggle violently against one another for the throne. Other aspects that either were clearly Oghuz or Oghuz-influenced included the greater liberty accorded to the role of women in Ottoman society and court life, the importance of Ottoman princes learning from their Turkmen vassals in Anatolia, and several others. It is evident from here that not only were the Ottomans aware of their Oghuz roots, and felt the need to reinforce them, but these roots also played a substantial part in how the House of Osman functioned.

The population of Anatolia under the Ottomans can be broken down into three broad groups, each with its own distinctive identity which had some degree of Oghuz heritage.[405] The first of these three was the urban Turk populations, who had moved into the cities following Anatolia's conquest. These groups were subjected to substantial Byzantine cultural pressure, which resulted in them forming part of the hybrid, cosmopolitan culture which prevailed in the city. These urban Turks were usually artisans, and their heritage usually showed in their crafts. The next broad group were the nomadic Turkmen, who had not integrated with the pre-existing populations of Anatolia and remained true to their way of life. Of all the groups, this group retained most of its Oghuz identity and made it core to who they were and the function they served in the state. It was this group which regularly had to be managed by the House of Osman,

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[404] M. F. Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 72 – 74.
[405] H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State,* pp. 55 – 67.

and whose cavalry was vital to Ottoman military endeavours.[406] The final broad population group were the rural Turk populations, who had left their nomadic lifestyle but not settled in the cities. This group would meld with the pre-existing Byzantine rural populations and would work together with them to adapt Anatolia's agricultural landscape to the realities of the nomadic pastoralism of the Turkmen tribes. This group would be particularly significant in defining Anatolia's unique cuisine, which they brought Oghuz influences into.

This is arguably the major gap in Ottoman historiography, while the century-old East- and West-centric views remain dominant in the discussion. Leslie Peirce posits two primary arguments for this neglect.[407] The first of these arguments examines how the primary contributors to early Ottoman historiography in the 21st century outside of Türkiye are the Balkan and Middle Eastern states. As is argued, it is these former regions of the Ottoman state, who do not have many direct ties to the Oghuz Turkic past of the Ottomans, who continue to lend their support to the prevailing narratives. With regards to the Balkans, efforts to establish nationalist identities rooted in their history prior to Soviet dominance focus on the influence the Ottomans had on these regions, and how it compared to Byzantine dominance before. As such, the main cultural link between these Balkan states and the Ottomans prior to Ottoman conquest was their shared Byzantine heritage, and it is this West-centric link which Balkan scholarship focuses on. The same argument is made for former Ottoman territories in the Middle East, who only shared Medieval Islamic cultural links with their Ottoman sovereigns. As such, Middle Eastern scholarship tends to focus on the discussion of the Ottomans as actors in the Medieval Islamic world they shared, making them generally East-centric. The only states which share common Turkic cultural interests with Türkiye are generally Central Asian ones, whose own history generally does not overlap with Ottoman history. As such, Central Asian historiography is primarily a space concerned with the Soviet era.

Peirce's second argument for the neglect of nuanced views in early Ottoman historiography is the same which argues that early Ottoman historiography has been neglected in general, in favour of the modern preoccupation with late Ottoman historiography.[408] The field of early Ottoman studies is generally believed to have been the most popular during the early 20th

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[406] H. İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire,* pp. 22 – 35.
[407] L. P. Peirce, 'Changing Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire: The Early Centuries', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19(1), 2004, pp. 6 – 22.
[408] L. P. Peirce, 'Changing Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire: The Early Centuries', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19(1), 2004, pp. 6 – 22.

century, during the times which saw Gibbons, Wittek, and Köprülü establish the foundations for the historiographic field. Yet despite this initial interest, the growing anti-colonial movements shifted their focus toward the creation of new national identities. As such, the post-colonial and post-Soviet world of the late 20th century emphasised historiography which established these new, independent states more prominently. In order to do this, they established their roots in the slow disintegration and division of the Ottoman Empire during the 19th and 20th centuries, and as such, focused most of modern Ottoman studies on this period. It has only really been due to the rise of Neo-Ottomanism in Türkiye, and its exertion of itself on the international stage, that interest has once again arisen in the historiography of the early Ottoman state which Erdoğan has used to justify this approach to global politics. The caveat to this recent spike in interest is that it is only really seen within the Turkish academic space, while the rest of the discussion continues to be focused primarily on the late Ottoman Empire.

As such this research concludes by arguing that while there have been conscious efforts on the parts of some historians mentioned in this study to balance the discourse, the historiography of the early Ottoman state and its culture remains a divided field of study. While much of the original, foundational literature has largely been addressed today, the core of their arguments, and how they divide the study of Ottoman culture as being a product of either the West or the East, remains largely intact.[409] As such, the discussion of how Oghuz culture contributed to the formation of the early Ottoman state and its culture is still largely neglected, despite it clearly having played a significant role. This neglect is in many ways owed not only to the continued entrenchment of the polarised debate surrounding the Ottoman state's cultural origins, but also to how the study and discussion of the topic is heavily politicised in Türkiye. Different Turkish ideologies and politicians find the actions of Ottoman rulers too politically useful to allow the narrative to be a neutral one. While Oghuz culture is mentioned by many Turkish scholars, especially in East-centric arguments, it is usually misappropriated as the culture of a predominantly Muslim people, which the evidence does not support very strongly. The political usefulness of this misconception, however, remains too powerful for substantial change to occur within Turkish narratives. Similarly, outside of the spaces of Turkish scholarship, the discussion of the Oghuz remains largely non-existent, despite their influence being seen throughout all aspects and levels of Ottoman society. Not only was Oghuz culture an

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[409] L. P. Peirce, 'Changing Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire: The Early Centuries', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19(1), 2004, pp. 6 – 22.
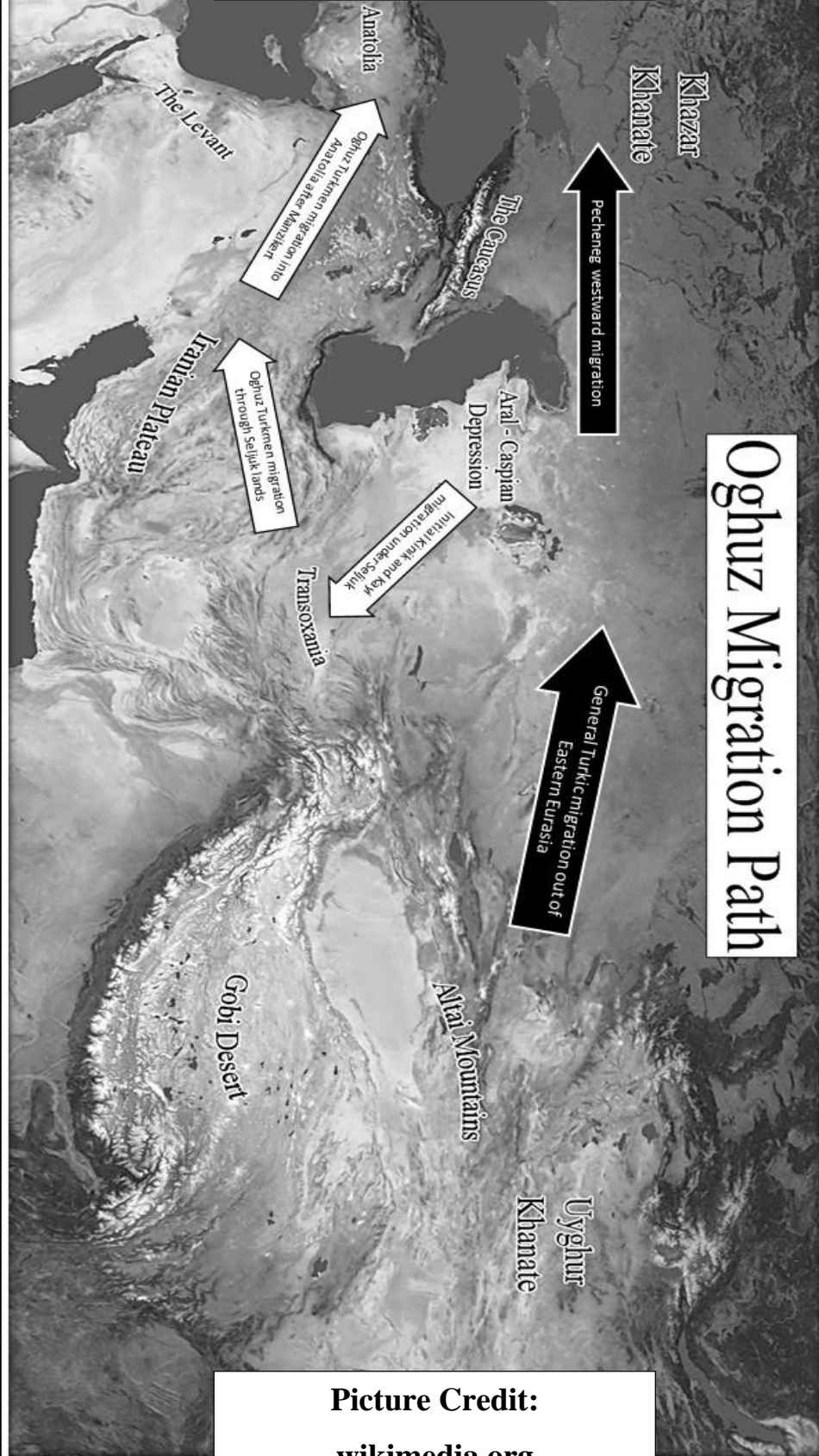
instrumental part of how the House of Osman conducted itself, but it also played an enormous role in shaping the different identities of Ottoman Anatolia which can still be seen in various characteristics of modern Türkiye.[410] Yet interest in them as a group to study simply does not compete when compared to the pre-existing East- and West-centric arguments, which have adapted to the modern discourses by taking on a largely post-colonial stance. Former Ottoman territories continue to discuss their own statehood with respect to the early Ottoman state as well as their own shared cultural heritage with that state, to the neglect of other influences and groups which do not share these foundations.

As such, this research argues that continued attention to this field by different scholars remains crucial, lest historiography on the early Ottoman state continues to suffer due to its neglect. Discussion of Oghuz influences on early Ottoman culture remains one of the best ways to explore cultural hybridisation within the state, yet how this process affected all cultural groups in the Ottoman state has not been a substantial focus in scholarship. Current discourses surrounding the origins of Balkan and Middle Eastern identities in the Ottoman Empire have as much to gain through exploring their cultural mixing within the Ottoman state as they do in exploring their shared cultural links with it.[411]

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[410] D. A. Korobeninkov, 'How 'Byzantine' Were the Early Ottomans? Bithynia in ca. 1290 – 1450.', *in* I. V. Zaitsev and S. F. Oreshkov (eds.) *The Ottoman World and Ottoman Studies*, pp. 215 - 239.
[411] L. P. Peirce, 'Changing Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire: The Early Centuries', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19(1), 2004, pp. 6 – 22.

Map One:

The Oghuz Migration Path

Oghuz Migration Path

- Anatolia
- The Levant
- The Caucasus
- Khazar Khanate
- Iranian Plateau
- Aral - Caspian Depression
- Transoxania
- Gobi Desert
- Altai Mountains
- Uyghur Khanate

Oghuz Turkmen migration into Anatolia after Manzikert

Oghuz Turkmen migration through Seljuk lands

Pecheneg westward migration

Initial kinik and kayi migration under Seljuk

General Turkic migration out of Eastern Eurasia

Picture Credit:

wikimedia.org

Map Two:

The Ottoman provinces of Rumelia and Anatolia

Picture Credit:

Cyowari

Map Three:

The Ottoman Levant, Egypt, and Arabian Peninsula

OTTOMAN EMPIRE

ANATOLIA EYALET

KARAMAN EYALET

Bursa

İzmir

Adalia

Konya

Karaman

Adana

EYALET OF CYPRUS

Nicosia

Famagusta

LEVAN-TINE SEA

Alexandria

Rosetta

Tanta

Damietta

Manṣoura

El-Mahalla El-Kubra

Cairo

Faiyūm

EYALET OF EGYPT

Minya

Asyut

Esna

Qena

Qus

Aswan

El Qoseir

Beirut

Tripoli

Acre

Jaffa

Gaza

Jerusalem

Amman

Aqaba

Damascus

Hama

Homs

Aleppo

Antakya

Raqqa

Deir ez-Zor

Hadisa

DAMASCUS EYALET

TRIPOLI EYALET

ALEPPO EYALET

AR-RAQQAH EYALET

EYALET

Tikrit

Samarra

Baghdad

Hillah

Najaf

BAGHDAD EYALET

Basra

BASRA EYALET

KHUZESTAN

Ahvaz

Ramhormoz

Al Wajh

RED SEA

Medina

Mecca

SHARIFATE OF MECCA

Jeddah

HABESH EYALET

Suakin

Massawa

Hodeida

Sana'a

Taiz

Mocha

Aden

YEMEN EYALET

AL-HASA EYALET

Al-Hasa

PERSIAN GULF

FUNJ

Picture Credit:

Cyowari

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