

■ Preface to the *EJOS* Edition ■

Sydney Nettleton Fisher's *The Foreign Relations of Turkey 1481-1512* is the first publication in a new *EJOS* series which will be entirely devoted to one subject: *Ottomans and Venetians during the Reign of Sultan Bayezid II (1481-1512)*. This series of publications brings together a number of previously published works and new publications. Fisher's study, the first in this *EJOS* series, was originally published in 1948 and has since then become one of the most widely used works for the study of the period of Bayezid II. It is no exaggeration to say that it has become one of the classics of Ottoman history and together with Selâhattin Tansel's *Sultan II. Bâyezit'in siyasî hayatı* (İstanbul 1966) is still one of the few studies entirely devoted to the reign of Bayezid II.

Fisher's work deals with the foreign policy of Bayezid II and in a number of chapters (IV, and especially V and VI) focuses on Ottoman-Venetian relations. The chapters V and VI stand out because of the primary source material used by Fisher to describe the events leading to the Ottoman-Venetian war of 1499-1503, the war itself and the subsequent peace negotiations between the two parties. Fisher's main source for these events was the Venetian Marino Sanuto's *I Diarii*. Fisher was, in fact, the first historian of Ottoman-Venetian relations to make *systematic* use of this invaluable source. His use of Sanuto greatly contributes to the classic status of *The Foreign Relations of Turkey 1481-1512*, and gives it considerable scientific value.

Because Fisher's work is not as widely and easily available as one might wish - especially outside the U.S.A - *EJOS* has decided to publish the study again, this time in an electronic format on the Internet in order to provide world-wide on-line access to the full text. We would like to thank the University of Illinois Press for their permission for this *EJOS* edition.

The text of the *EJOS* edition is the same as that of the original 1948 edition. No textual changes whatsoever have been made. A few evident typographical mistakes have been corrected. Some minor changes have been made in the footnotes and bibliography: the letter ʿayn is indicated with ʿ, s-hatchek has been changed in 'ş' (in Neşri, ʿAşiqpaşazade, and Paşa) and diacritical lines above the vowels which indicate long vowels in Ottoman-Turkish have been removed because of the limitations of the font *EJOS* uses. However, both in number and character these changes are of minor importance and as such no significant alterations have been made. The original index of the

Fisher

1948 edition has been eliminated and will be replaced by a joint index to all the publications which are part of the project: *Ottomans and Venetians during the Reign of Sultan Bayezid II (1481-1512)*.

Hans Theunissen (Utrecht, August 2000)

■ Preface ■

Machiavelli is reported to have thought that "a second ruler like Bayezid would have rendered the Ottoman power innocuous to Europe," and Sir Edward Creasy summarized these years of Ottoman history as the "feeble and inglorious reign" of Bayezid II. It has been the custom of historians to dispose of Bayezid as one of the "slothful sultans" of the Ottoman line, although Professor Schevill some years ago questioned this viewpoint and indicated that perhaps Bayezid II recognized the need of consolidating the empire his father had shaped.

Seven sultans of the Ottoman dynasty ruled the Turks preceding the accession of Bayezid II. All of these seven had been men of outstanding ability, each apparently abler and more successful than his predecessor, and the seventh with his dramatic conquest of Constantinople and his forceful and dashing personality was so outstanding that any to come after could hardly be other than anticlimactic. The sixteenth century, however, seemed more exciting and more colorful than the fifteenth. Gold from the new world poured into the old, affecting the Ottoman Empire as much as any. The Mamluk power in Egypt without the revenue from the transit trade fell easier to the Turks, who then proceeded to subject most of the Balkans and the Near East to their rule. Little notice, therefore, was given to what happened between the first flush of the Ottoman empire under Mehmed the Conquerer and the full flowering under Selim the Grim and Suleiman the Magnificent.

Consequently the present study was undertaken to fill in the gaps for that period of Ottoman history coinciding with the discovery of America, the rounding of Africa, and the birth of the modern national European states; the study was also undertaken with the thought that the history of a period or a people can often be best understood by seeking out second-rate figures.

The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to the American Council of Learned Societies for two grants-in-aid, one in 1935 and the other in 1938, for the study of the Turkish language, which study made possible the use of certain Turkish sources for this period.

Dr. Paul Wittek of the University of London, England, has been exceedingly generous in giving his time and rendering invaluable assistance not only in the study of the Turkish language as used by the fifteenth and sixteenth century Ottoman chroniclers but also in the study of the origins and the development of the Ottoman state.

Fisher

To Professor Emeritus Albert Howe Lybyer of the University of Illinois the author is especially grateful. The study was first suggested by Professor Lybyer in 1933, and under his wise and friendly direction it was first written as a doctoral dissertation, submitted in 1935. Since then, a great deal of material has been investigated and added, and the monograph as presented here is the product of this later research and of several revisions of the original manuscript.

The author is thankful for the continued encouragement and tolerance given by the several members of his family throughout the preparation of this book.

Sydney Nettleton Fisher

Columbus, Ohio.

■ Chapter I ■

■ Introduction ■

The Battle of Manzikert in 1071 was a calamitous affair for Romanos IV, Diogenes, Emperor of Constantinople, but for Alp Arslan and his Turkish company it was a victory so decisive that nearly all of Asia Minor was opened to them immediately. Though the control over this region by these Seljuk Turks was new, their knowledge of this part of the world had been considerable for many years.¹ Along the frontier facing Byzantium had developed quasi-independent states, the objectives of which were to protect the urban centers of Islam, to harass the Byzantine empire continuously, and to extend the Moslem faith and the lands of the Abbassid caliphs. Many, though not all, of the leaders and soldiers of these frontier states were Turks who, after 1071, found it easy to expand their possessions in Asia Minor. Some, indeed, moved on to the advanced frontier and formed new marches against the enemy.²

Meanwhile the Seljuk princes who had led in the invasion of Asia Minor and their descendents slowly came to the realization that this was a permanent acquisition and a desirable productive region rather than just a valuable steppingstone to something greater in the older Moslem world. At the moment when this new attitude was recognized the Seljuk princes began to establish an empire with Konya as its center.³ They incorporated most of the autonomous little states of Asia Minor into a Seljuk empire and were instituting a stable civilization when the Mongol invasion of the thirteenth century destroyed most of the existing unity.

During the flourishing years of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the government, religious circles, and cultured society of the Seljuk empire came to be filled with ambitious individuals from the older Moslem centers. It was they who organized the state and its government, who planned and built the splendid Seljuk mosques and schools, who wrote the poetry and chronicles of the empire,

¹ Turkish soldiers were employed in Baghdad in the ninth century, and during the tenth and eleventh centuries Turkish tribesmen in considerable numbers fought and settled in the neighborhood of Malatya and Diarbekir (P. Wittek, "Deux chapitres de l'histoire des Turcs de Roum", in *Byzantion*, XI, 293). Before the battle of Manzikert, Turks had raided as far west as Konya (P. Wittek, *The rise of the Ottoman empire*, p. 19).

² The Danishmend emirate around Amasya was perhaps the outstanding example.

³ Cl. Cahen, "La campagne de Mantzikert d'après les sources musulmanes", in *Byzantion*, IX, 613-642; Wittek, "Deux chapitres", pp. 296-297.

and who, in short, civilized the area.⁴ But every move which increased the power and size of the state and centralized its government was strongly contested by all the frontier groups which, heretofore, had been largely independent. As the spirit of these border states was never destroyed completely, new frontier states and principalities emerged quite naturally, following the disorganization brought to Asia Minor by the Mongols and by those fleeing from this Asiatic Horde.⁵ One of the many new states appearing at this time was led by a certain Osman, who became the eponymous hero of the Ottoman Turks.

Since the date of this study lies in a period when the Ottoman empire was not fully matured and was still inchoate in character, it is profitable to view the qualities of the institutions in the early state in order to understand better the struggles and the policies which dominated the later age under consideration here.

The warlike frontiersman living on the confines of the weakened Abbassid empire and the disrupted Seljuk empire was called by the Moslems a ghazi, and hence his state is referred to as a ghazi state. Literally *ghazi* means a raider but, as used commonly by the Arabs and the Turks, it came to signify anyone who fought against the enemies of Islam.⁶ Actually the ghazis of Asia Minor lived almost entirely from forays into the Byzantine empire and accepted in their ranks not only Turks and Arabs but Greeks, Armenians, and renegades from many different countries. Their civilization, if it may be so termed, was in a constant state of flux and the only permanent characteristic was that of raids and change. Skill and bravery in battle were the highest attributes. Theology, especially orthodoxy, learning, conservatism, domesticity, and distinguished ancestry were held in little esteem. It was loyalty to the group and to the individual ghazi within the group which united them. War, raiding, and movement were the natural life of a ghazi, and when he became surrounded by a stabilized and civilized society he knew not how to live and promptly rebelled.

Osman, the first of the Osmanli, or Ottoman, dynasty, was a ghazi and a leader of ghazis.⁷ He gathered about him warriors who under his leadership proved to be a constant threat to peaceful conditions along the confines of the Byzantine empire. Under his successors, Orkhan and Murad I, the ghazi activities continued and much of the Balkan peninsula was overrun and held by them. From the names of leading ghazis, such as Evrenos and Mikhaloglu, it is evident that several, if not many, of the ghazis were of Christian origin.⁸ In the fourteenth century, therefore, in this dawning Ottoman empire, it should be

⁴ Wittek, *The rise of the Ottoman empire*, pp. 16-32. Undoubtedly many of these cultured administrators were trained in the schools of Baghdad (B. Miller, *The palace school of Muhammad the conqueror*, pp. 12-20; 193, n. 12).

⁵ In Western Anatolia the leading new emirates besides the Ottoman were Mentеше, Aydin, Sarukhan, Karasi, Tekke, Jandar, Hamid, Kermian, Ghazi Chelebi, and Karaman.

⁶ The poet Ahmedi at the end of the fourteenth century declared, "A *Ghazi* is the instrument of the religion of Allah, a servant of God who purifies the earth from the filth of polytheism... ; the *Ghazi* is the sword of God, he is the protector and the refuge of the believers. If he becomes a martyr in the ways of God, do not believe that he has died - he lives in beatitude with Allah, he has eternal life" (Wittek, *The rise of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 14).

⁷ Orkhan, son of Osman, is called "Sultan, son of the sultan of the *ghazis*, *ghazi*, son of a *ghazi*, marquis of the horizons, hero of the world" (Wittek, "Deux chapitres", p. 305).

⁸ Mikhaloglu would be "the Michaelsons". For Evrenos see J. H. Mordtmann, "Ewrenos", in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, II, 34-35.

emphasized that the ghazi force was the power which created and led the state and that this force was ghazi, not Turkish, in character.

These ghazis, in the period when the Ottoman state was spreading out over the Balkans, can be separated into two categories.⁹ One, undoubtedly truer to the original idea, was composed of the raiders who were almost continuously engaged in raiding and who were not dependent on the personal leadership of the Ottoman emir. The other division contained all of the ghazis who were directly under the emir, thus becoming *his* dependable soldiers. This force was augmented by captives of war, each of whom would fight for his captor, whether he be the emir or some important ghazi. These were the new soldiers called janissaries. Thus, the Ottoman forces had an almost inexhaustible supply of man power, for each new conquest added fighting men to the ranks and a new area from which to draw. This personal ghazi, or janissary, army was perhaps the most important development in the fourteenth century for it permitted the Ottomans to carry on official raids and real organized war. Toward the end of the century under Bayezid I, first of his line to take the title sultan, conquests of the older Moslem states and the adoption by him of many ways common to Balkan aristocracy alienated many of the ghazis, who after Timur's victory at Ankara in 1402 and the following general disruption, seized the opportunity to redirect the energies of the state to former ghazi practices.¹⁰

In the wake of these astonishing successes of Osman, Orkhan, and Murad I, many men - Arabs, Syrians, Persians, Iraqis, and Seljuk Turks - flocked to the new centers to establish a Moslem civilization. Teachers, jurists, theologians, and dervishes wanted to share in the acquired wealth and hoped there would be places for them in the conquered lands.¹¹ Bursa (Brusa), the first important residence of the Ottomans, rapidly developed into a moslem center with many mosques and schools.¹² It was this learned group, the *ulema*,¹³ which greatly helped to administer and to retain what the ghazis had won. The *ulema* represented a more settled and civilized society than the ghazis and because of this difference it should be easy to understand the scorn, contempt, and jealousy each had for the other.

Within the Ottoman state, besides the ghazis and *ulema*, there were two other important groups, the sipahis and the *akbis*. There were two types of the former. In one class, a sipahi was a feudal lord who possessed a fief from the sultan and who would be called upon for service if needed;¹⁴ in the other, a sipahi of the court was a soldier in the standing cavalry of the sultan. Most of the sipahis were or had been ghazis and most of the land assigned to them had been won by the sword and it could be passed on to sons. Later, of course, when many of the soldiers of the state technically were slaves, fiefs were supposed to

⁹ Wittek, *The rise of the Ottoman empire*, p. 45.

¹⁰ Wittek, "De la défaite d'Ankara à la prise de Constantinople (un demi siècle d'histoire ottomane), in *Revue des études Islamiques* (1938), pp. 15-28.

¹¹ Wittek, *The rise of the Ottoman empire*, pp. 42-43.

¹² Brusa came to be called *dar al-ulema*, the city of theologians.

¹³ The word *ulema* means learned men and doctors of the canon law of Islam.

¹⁴ The giving of fiefs to warriors was customary at the time of the Seljuks (Wittek, *The rise of the Ottoman empire*, p. 19). These sipahis usually came to war mounted.

return to the sultan, but actually many did not and these were left to sons.¹⁵ Thus a new aristocracy, or gentry, was developed.

An *akhi*, however, was not a fighting man but an artisan.¹⁶ It is not exactly known what connections the *akhis* had with the ghazis. Nevertheless, from descriptions of them it can be seen that there were several artisan fraternities, corporations, or guilds, which cooperated with the ghazis and always played an integral part in the productive life of the cities and towns of Asia Minor.¹⁷

After the defeat at the Battle of Ankara in 1402 the Ottoman state ceased to exist. All the Anatolian emirates which had been acquired by Bayezid I were restored by Timur to their previous rulers; yet the sons of Bayezid I salvaged something: Isa held Bursa; Mehmed, Amasya; and Suleiman, all the European territory of his father.¹⁸ Nevertheless, within ten years, Mehmed had defeated his brothers and reunited the family possessions. Following this, Mehmed I, Murad II, and Mehmed II more gradually, but more securely, bound together under them nearly all the emirates and Turkish tribes of western Asia Minor. These three were considered great ghazi sultans. Mehmed I and Murad II were reared at Amasya, one of the oldest ghazi centers in Asia Minor,¹⁹ and in their lives they followed the *futuwwa*,²⁰ which was a set of chivalric rules that guided many ghazis. They supported and directed the raids and campaigns in Europe, and Mehmed II, by capturing Constantinople, came to be looked upon as the greatest of all ghazis. They did not neglect, however, the problem of the Asiatic provinces. Whereas Bayezid I had conquered these areas and had come to live and act as the successor of the Byzantine and Balkan rulers, Mehmed I and Murad II married Turkish ladies and thoroughly identified themselves with the Turkish people.²¹ Thus, through marriage and a more tempered pressure, they regained control of western Anatolia. It was during the reign of Murad II that the Osmanli began to trace their ancestry back to the Turkish Oghuz tribe and

¹⁵ Junis Bey and Alvise Gritti, "Pamphlet", in A. H. Lybyer, *The government of the Ottoman empire in the time of Suleiman the magnificent*, p. 271.

¹⁶ Wittek, *The rise of the Ottoman empire*, p. 42.

¹⁷ For the importance of the *akhis*, consult W. L. Langer and R. P. Blake, "The rise of the Ottoman Turks and its historical background", in *The American Historical Review*, XXXVII, 468-505; Wittek, *The rise of the Ottoman empire*, pp. 42, 44.

¹⁸ Wittek, "De la défaite d'Ankara", pp. 16-17.

¹⁹ Before the Seljuk state determined upon Konya for the capital, the Danishmends had established Amasya as their chief city. Later, when the Seljuk empire disintegrated, a Danishmend state was reconstructed at Amasya. One of the prime characteristics of the Danishmend mode of life was the ghazi organization. The Danishmends claimed the famous Ghazi Seyyid Battal as a member of their family (Wittek, *The rise of the Ottoman empire*, p. 20).

²⁰ The *futuwwa* was a set of canon rules to govern a virtuous life. Several corporations based their rules on the *futuwwa*, and at the end of the fifteenth century four corporations still remained - *ghazi*, *akhi*, *abdal*, and *baji* (ʿAṣiqpaşazade, *Tarikh-i* [F. Giese ed.], pp. 201, 213). The chivalrous rules placed the "obligation of mutual fidelity" on both follower and leader. There was a kind of investiture ceremony, using a war club, sword, and drinking cup (Wittek, *The rise of the Ottoman empire*, pp. 38-40; C. van Arendonk, "Futuwa", in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, II, 123-124). Some of these ceremonies still existed in the late fifteenth century, for Jem, during the winter of 1481-1482, took part in such a ceremony on his trip to Mecca (Hasan ibn Mahmud Beyati, *Jam-i Jem ayin* [ʿAli Amiri, ed.]).

²¹ Mehmed I married a daughter of the house of Sulqadr and Murad II, a daughter of the emir of Jandar (Wittek, "De la défaite d'Ankara," p. 27).

to think of the history of the dynasty.²² Mehmed II, after the conquest of Constantinople, became the heir of the Byzantine emperors, and the chief task of establishing the Ottoman empire fell to him. He tried by the use of the *‘ulema*, the sipahis, and the janissaries to weld the Balkan districts and the Anatolian provinces into an empire, but it was not an easy task.²³ When he died in 1481 the work had not been completed, though under his strong hand the fissures in the structure were hardly apparent.

At the time of Mehmed's death in 1481 the Ottoman empire lay astride the Straits between Europe and Asia, controlling the lands on all sides from the Taurus Mountains and the Euphrates to the Danube and the Dalmatian coast. Nearly all of Greece was hers, and the Black Sea, except for a bit of the north shore, was a Turkish lake. A foothold in southern Italy had been won at Otranto, and the Knights at Rhodes were apprehensive about their position. Government in the Crimea and around the Sea of Azov was guided by the Ottoman sultan.

The inhabitants of the Ottoman empire were less unified and less homogeneous than would be indicated by the structure of the state. Throughout European Turkey there were the same peoples and groups which had lived there before their conquest. In Asia Minor there were Greeks and Armenians, Persians, Arabs, Syrians, and Turks. Some were semi-nomadic; others were warriors, settled farmers and artisans, mystic dervishes, and proud urbane gentlemen. The Ottoman family by the use of force, patronage, and fiefs was developing a loyalty to itself, but it was far from being perfected enough to survive any great temptation. There were still many descendants and satellites of former princes, living within and outside the empire and longing for a return to former glories. Given an opportunity which promised a chance of success, they would eagerly support any movement to weaken the power of Ottoman rule.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

²³ One of Mehmed's grand vizirs was Karamani Mehmed Pasha, who was trained by the *‘ulema* (F. Babinger, "Karamani Mehmed Pasha," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, II, 745-746). For Mehmed's great work in building a civil corps of administrators, see Miller, *The Palace School*, pp. 20-44.