
Continuity: from the Eastern Roman Empire to the Ottoman Empire

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In memory Paul Lemerle¹

Abstract: *The foundations of the ideology of Hellenic Turkism were laid by the famous Greek philosopher of the 15th century George of Trebizond. Noting the importance for the Intermediate region of the main cultural factor - the coexistence and interdependence of Hellenism and Turkism, dating back to the eleventh century - he created a draft of the Turkish-Greek political union. The day after the entry of Mehmet II the Conqueror (Fatih) to Constantinople, George of Trebizond² sent him two letters urging the Sultan to create a "two-headed" Turkish-Greek state. And already in July 1453, less than two months after the fall of the great city, he prepared a study "On the Truth of Christian Beliefs", which he also passed on to the Conqueror. It argued that Islam and Christianity do not have fundamental distinctions and that it is in the interests of the ruler to unite both religions under one scepter on the basis of equality. And although Mehmed II, being a worthy emperor of the Intermediate region and possessing an open and highly inclined to synthesis mind, could not literally follow the proposals of the philosopher from Trebizond. He agreed with the main idea and granted privileges to the Orthodox Church, which from the very beginning laid the foundation of the joint Turkish Hellenic domination, which continued to expand until the XIX century.*

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Geographically Byzantium and Ottoman Empire, this is one region that turned out to be a bridge between the East and the West and connected their features. D. Kitsikis called it the "Intermediate Region". "Being on the border between East and West, the empire for eleven centuries not only managed to withstand the blows that came down ... then one or the other,

¹ Paul Lemerle (22 April 1903 – 17 July 1989) was a French Byzantinist and the founding president of the International Association of Byzantine Studies (AIEB).

² John Monfasani, ed., *Collectanea Trapezuntiana. Texts, Documents, and Bibliographies of George of Trebizond*, Binghamton, NY: RSA, 1984.

but also managed to fulfill both its historical and educational mission towards them”, writes Paul Lemerle about Byzantium¹.

“The Ottoman Empire at the height of the glory managed to create a unique system of equilibrium and synthesis, from which emerged an original society: neither Christian nor Muslim, but basically Ottoman ... It perfectly performed the role of the center of the region, which is an intermediate link between the West and the East” wrote Kitsikis. The book of the famous Byzantinist, professor of the Practical School of Higher Studies, the Sorbonne and the College de France Paul Lemerle (1903-1989) was written at a time when many Western scholars saw in the Byzantine Empire only a “decadent degrading” continuation of the Roman Empire. Even Voltaire called the Byzantine history “ridiculous” and “unworthy”: “This is an unworthy collection of lofty phrases and descriptions of miracles. It shames the human mind just as the Greek Empire shamed the earth”. Paul Lemerle argues that Byzantium is not a “pale relic of the Roman Empire”, but an independent state that is able to adapt to new trends and develop. For the reference point was taken May 11 330 - the day when the Emperor Constantine founded in place of the old Byzantium colony a new capital, naming it in honor of himself.

The “finishing” date of the study was May 29, 1453 when Constantinople was occupied by the Turks, in battle with whom the last Byzantine emperor perished. In the interval, there were many names and events: “Constantine Christian and Eastern monarchy”, “From Constantine to Justinian. Struggle against heretics and barbarians (337-518)”, “Age of dynasty of Palaeologue and the fall of the Byzantine Empire (1261-1453)”. One of the reasons for the death of Byzantium was the religious confrontation between East and West. However, in the fall of the empire there was “merit” not only of its main enemies - the Turks. The alternative for Latin and Greeks under the banner of Christianity could be an alternative to Byzantium, but “Better turban than tiara!” such words are attributed to the last *megas doux* of the Byzantine Empire Loukas Notaras. And the poet Petrarca wrote: “The Turks are enemies, but the schismatic Greeks are worse than the enemies”. And yet Byzantium did not crumble to the historical dust.

¹ In fact, this is not one book, but two: a study of the Frenchman Paul Lemerle devoted to Byzantium, the Greek Dimitris Kitsikis - her heiress of the Ottoman Empire.

It the successor to the Ottoman Empire, which is often and mistake called Turkish. For the role of the “third Rome” there were other contenders - for example, Moscow. But if the Russian rulers justified the “hereditary right” ideologically, the Ottoman dynasty “had quite tangible political and geographical arguments. There was also continuity in the field of culture, religion, political order”. In the mass consciousness, the Ottoman Empire has long been associated with the “prison of nations” but D. Kitsikis shows that it is not worthwhile to trust historical dogma: “The empires by definition are a multinational entity”. He insists that the “formula of necessary tolerance” was also characteristic of the Ottoman state. Until 1839 there was no official language there, and Turkish was generally considered a “ignoble” language of peasants and commoners, it was even forbidden to translate the Arabic text of the Koran. Aristocracy preferred the Arab, the bourgeoisie and the traders - the Greek. Hegel wrote: “The Persians conquered many nations, but they respected their peculiarities: hence, their kingdom can be likened to an empire”.

Over time, Turks and Greeks separated themselves from the Empire, subjugating other nations. And the Greeks strove for equality between the Turks and the Greeks, but did not want to extend this principle to the Bulgarians and Serbs. It took about 200 years for the transition from the principality of the nomad Turks, founded by Osman in 1280, to the empire of the Intermediate Region by Mehmed II, which it became in 1461, immediately after the fall of the last Byzantine bastion, the Trebizond Empire, and also for the Ottomans to continue the Byzantine policy¹.

But already at the end of the first century, the restructuring of the empire by the Byzantine pattern, conducted by Bayazid I and the rulers of the interregnum period (1402-1413), advanced so far that the Greek language became the language of the Ottoman administration, and the intervention of the Sultans was required to restore balance and prevent the assimilation of the Turks by the Greeks.

Already in the VII century Arabs from the Umayyad caliphate used Greek as their official language. Father of the Greek Orthodox Church, Saint John of Damascus² born in Damascus in the middle of the VII century, faithfully served his Muslim masters, and the Byzantine emperor Leo III the

¹ **Joseph Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall** Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches, Bd 1-10, Pest, 1827-35

² Daniel J. Sahas (ed.), John of Damascus on Islam: The "Heresy of the Ishmaelites", (Leiden: Brill, 1972)

Isaurian¹ (717-741) permitted the construction of a mosque for the Muslim community of Constantinople. The Turkic Danishmend² dynasty of Cappadocia (1078-1178) also used the Greek as the official language. Mehmed I (1413-1421) replaced Greek - the language of the administration - with Turkish and Persian.

Nevertheless, the Sultans and their viziers continued to use Greek as the language of international communication. On this occasion it is interesting to note that the Ottomans corresponded with the Italians not in Latin, but in Greek. Many official letters of sultans, various statesmen and dignitaries of Porta have survived. There is no doubt that they were written by people for whom the Greek language was not native, therefore it is deeply mistaken to consider them translations performed by Greek secretaries. In particular, we have the firms of Mehmed II and treaties in Greek, which he signed with Venice.

Among the numerous documents of Bayazid II (1481-1512) in Greek, one can single out his letter to the Venetian doge of April 7, 1503, which begins with the words: “Soultan Baye-zit Theot chariti Basileus kai Autokrator (ton Romaion) amphoteron ton epeiron Asias te Europes kai ton hexes ... esteilan antropous ton eis ten Poll ... En Konstantinoupolei, meni Apriliou Z“, which means: “Sultan Bayazid, God's mercy Vasilev (king) and autocrat (emperor) of the two continents of Asia and Europe and the rest of the world ... They sent some of their people to the City (eis ten Poly-Istanbul) ... Written in Constantinople this month April 7th” The above text is interesting in that it shows some future Turkish borrowings from the Greek, such as the Turkish union “de”-”and”, which comes from the Greek “te” (Asias te Europes), or the word “Istanbul” (“eis ten Poll” - in the City, in Greek it is pronounced “istinbo-li”), although the official name “Konstanti-noupolis” is used equally, followed by the date. Further, the sultan wears exactly the same title as the Byzantine emperors, whose heir he considers himself, namely Basileus kai Autokratar, which means “king and emperor” (Romans).

And finally, after the Greeks, who since ancient times called the western coast of the Aegean Sea Europe, and the East by Asia, thereby emphasizing the central position of the Aegean Sea in the Intermediate Region, and after the Byzantines, who named the Asian part of the

¹ A. A. Vasiliev (1956), *The Iconoclastic Edict of the Caliph Yazid II*, A. D. 721, pp. 25-26

² Christian Elements in the Identity of the Anatolian Turkmens (12th-13th Centuries), Rustam Shukurov, *Cristianità d'occidente e cristianità d'oriente (secoli VI-XI)*, CISAM. Spoleto, 2004), 707-64

Anatolian Greek word, Turkish language turned into Anadolu (Anatolia) and meant “East”, the Ottomans use the same geographic approach to the two constituent parts of the empire - Rumelia (Europe) and Anatolia (Asia), and also use the notion of a universal empire, indicating “kai ton hexes”, which means: “and the rest of the world”.

It is clear that the Turks, descendants of the nomads, urgently needed the administrative language of a highly organized state, be it Persian, Arabic or Greek. The conquered empire before the incorporation of the Arab countries in 1517 was mainly Byzantine. Consequently, the threat of assimilation came primarily from the Greek language; moreover, it was a language of religion, distinct from the religion of the Turks.

In this respect, the historical parallel with the period of the Manchu dynasty (1644-1911) in China is interesting. The Manchurs, like the Ottoman Turks, were part of a large Turkic-Mongolian family (uniting the Turks, Mongols and Tungus), which at various times created empires on the Eurasian continent. Finished in the middle of the XVII century the process of continuity with respect to the traditions of the Chinese empire, they assimilated to such an extent with the Chinese, thereby transferring the spirit of their nomadic people that in the 20th century. the Chinese nationalists threw them out, squeezing everything they could; their historical homeland Manchuria received the name of Northeast China, and language and culture to this day remain for the Chinese people not only object of contempt, but also of this ethnocide. The relatives of the Manchurs- the Ottoman Turks living on the other side of the continent, managed to avoid such a fate.

The origin of the Ottoman Turks should be sought in the heroic era of the Oghuz Turks - in the VIII century AD. From the middle of X century they began to be called Turkmen (Turkoman). Like all the Turkic-Mongolian tribes, from the Oguzes in the west to the Manchurs in the east, they professed Tengrism¹. In the IX and X centuries the Oghuz Turks migrated to the west and settled in Transoxitania (Oks - the ancient name of the Amu Darya river) - the between of the Syr Darya and the Amu Darya, east of the Caspian Sea, on lands that were under the supreme authority of the Arab Caliphs of Baghdad but directly ruled by the Iranian Samanid dynasty.

There they came under the influence of Islam. However, what kind of Islam was it? It should not be forgotten that the Oghuz Turks who professed shamanism did not contact the Sunni Arabs, but with the Shia Iranians, and then with the Orthodox Greeks. To be more precise, the Oguz Turks got acquainted with Islam thanks to the Iranian Shiite dynasty of the Buyids

¹ Namatov „Cult of Heaven: Tengri“

also known as Buwaihids¹ (932-1055), founded by Ebu Sudzha Buweich. This dynasty in 945, took possession of Baghdad, established custody of the Sunni caliph and created a great Iranian empire. On the other hand, it was in this dynasty that the ancestor of the Seljuqis, Tugrul-bey (Togrul Bek), conquered Baghdad in 1055.

However, for reasons of political timeliness, and also to weaken the positions of its competitors from the Buyids dynasty and usurp their influence on the Sunni Caliph, Tugrulbey decided to defend Sunnism. Since that time, Sunnism has become a political religion of the Seljuk Turks and later Ottomans, while the people retain their power of Alawism. At the end of the XI century, and not in the XIII century, as was supposed earlier after the victory of the Turks in the battle with the Byzantines in 1071 for the fortress of Manzikert² the ancestors of the Ottomans settled in Western Anatolia.

Professor Carole Hillenbrand wrote: “Turks ruled the Middle East for a millennium and Eastern Europe for many centuries and it is an undoubted fact that they moulded the lands under their dominion. It is therefore something of a paradox that the history of Turkey and aspects of the identity and role of the Turks, both as Muslims and as an ethnic group, still remain little known in the west and undervalued in the Arabic and Persian-speaking worlds”³.

Professor Michael Cook argues that the Turks accepted Islam through the Iranians before they became Shiites. Islam came to Iran together with the Arab conquerors in the VII century. By the end of the XI century, the majority of Iranians became Muslims (they accepted Islam). Until the 16th century, most of Iran's population was Sunni.

As a result, the Turkish religion actually arose - Alawism, which is a synthesis of Turkic Shamanism-Tengri, Shiism and Orthodox Christianity⁴.

¹ C.E. Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties*, (Columbia University Press, 1996), 154.

Grousset, René (2002). *The Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia*. trans. Naomi Walford. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

² Dirimtekin, F. (1936), *Malazgirt meydan muharebesi* İstanbul. Perk, K. (1947), *Alparslan ve Malazgirt meydan muharebesi* , İstanbul. Eyice, S. (1971) *Malazgirt savaşını kaybeden 4.Romanos Diogenes 1068-1071* , Ankara.

³ Carole Hillenbrand. *Turkish myth and Muslim symbol: the Battle of Manzikert*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2007, 320 pp

⁴ Namatov. *Cult of Heaven Tengri*

Until recently, historians have ignored this religion, which still holds a third of the inhabitants of Turkey.

According to the estimates of the Alawites themselves, their number is 22 million people (with a total population of 65 million). It is interesting to note that, like in the case of the Turkish language, which managed to survive, despite the strong pressure of the civilized languages of the great empires of the Persian-Greco-Arab region.

For 200 years, until the rule of Osman, these Turkic peoples served the one who paid more. The social organization of Oguzes was subject to the common traditions of nomadism. They lived in tents. At the head of the tribes was the elected great khan, assisted by noble aristocrats and princes - bei, as well as their wives. Oguz ladies had a "white face", that is, they had the privilege not to be exposed to sunlight. As in all nomadic societies, women enjoyed freedom, rode horses and practiced martial arts: they fired from onions, fenced, and mastered the skills of fighting. Sometimes, husbands prayed that their newborn baby would turn out to be a girl. Families were monogamous; they ate horsemeat, drank wine and koumiss - a drink from mare's milk. To such a society belonged Osman I - the founder of the Osman dynasty, the leader of the tribe who lived two steps from Constantinople

Concerned first of all about how to provide his fellow tribesmen with good pastures and rich prey, Osman I was *primus inter pares*¹ in the Council of Beys. The court etiquette was regulated by the simplest rules. The only and main difference of Osman was that he was the military leader, who headed the alliance of the tribes. His nomadic government was constantly in the saddle. Each tribe had autonomy and judged according to its own customs. The Ottoman leader acted only as an arbiter.

Although the Ottomans and considered themselves *gazi*, Muslim law meant less to them than the customary laws of the tribes. The tribute from the conquered peoples was divided equally among the beys, the leader of the tribe could additionally take only one-fifth of all the military booty.

Osman I and Orhan wore the title of Bey or Emir. But after size in 1326 Bursa Orhan began to mint coins, and this indicated that from now on he considers himself an independent ruler, not connected, even nominally, with the Mongol dynasty of Ilkhans Khulaguids. In addition, public Friday prayers were pronounced only in the name of Orhan. He began to claim the title of Sultan.

¹ First among equals

However, even Murad I in the first half of his reign was still called Bey. But with the increase of his power the Sultan's title accepted by him began to be recognized more and more. He even forced to call himself a Hyudavendshar (monarch), that is, made it clear that he claims the empire.

In 1395 Bayazid unsuccessfully sought from the Cairo Caliph from the Abbasid dynasty an official recognition of the title of Sultan of Romans (Byzantines) - Sultan ar-Rum. As for Tamerlane, who considered himself the heir of the old Mongolian territories in Anatolia, who in 1402 defeated and captured Murad I in the Battle of Ankara, he recognized only the title of Bey for the latter. Ottomans became legitimate successors to Byzantium only after they took possession of Constantinople.

George of Trebizond, who expressed this truth, having written to Mehmed II: "No one doubts that you are rightfully the emperor of the Romans. Since, in reality, the emperor is the one who legitimately owns the throne of the empire." Contrary to the unorthodox tradition of the Turkic peoples Sunni Islam in the interests of the state became the official religion. However, tolerance for the "people of the Book" (Christians and Jews) is preserved.

The Law of the Intermediate Region continued to recognize various denominations, but on the condition that people who hold other than state religious views pay a special tax. In Muslim countries it was called jizya. In Byzantium, a non-Christian nation was subject to a similar per capita tax (kefalion).

In Siberia, conquered by Russia in the 17th century, non-Christians paid tax on furs. After the conversion to Christianity, they were exempt from tax, which the Moscow state did not like. Similarly, the conversion of non-Muslims to Islam significantly reduced the revenues of the Ottoman state. Because of the rapid pace of restructuring of the Ottoman Empire in the Byzantine manner in the XIV century it is extremely difficult to distinguish between the actual Byzantine contribution and the contribution of the Arab and Persian countries, and finally, to guess that the true Turkish has survived in this synthesis. Even before the conquests of Alexander the Great, the intermediate region, from the Adriatic Sea to the Indus, was an area of a single civilization.

Political, social and religious structures, established by the Arabs from the VII century AD in the provinces captured by the Byzantine Greeks and Persians, were very similar to the structures of Byzantium and Sassanid Iran. When in the XI century came the Turks, they also joined in this world of a single civilization. It was strengthened by very close ties established between people, despite the multilingualism of the world around them. For

example, many dishes of the famous Turkish cuisine since antiquity have in reality Hellenic, Eastern Mediterranean origin.

It is enough to listen to religious music - Byzantine, and then Ottoman - to experience the shock of their similarity, as close as between Greek and Turkish folk music. However, this fact is confirmed by the musicologists. We can assume that the complex poetic dimensions of Anatolian folklore and any of the associated musical cultures of the Balkans are a legacy of Greek antiquity, simply we can not say where the Greeks began to use the musical size transformed by the Turks in an asymmetric structure: in academic or folk music.

The continuity of the Byzantine-Ottoman cultural space is especially acute in Istanbul, when you see the Cathedral of St. Sophia, built in the 6th century, and the Sultan Ahmed mosque erected in the XVII century, which unquestionably testifies to the influence, through 11 centuries, of the Byzantine architecture on the Ottoman. These highly creative continuity and synthesis are embodied in the personality of the greatest Ottoman architect Sinan, born in 1491 or 1492, and died as a result of an accident in office in 1588 at the age of 97 years.

A Greek from Anatolia (a native of Kayseri, Cappadocia) and an Orthodox Christian by birth - however, his brother remained a Christian all his life, - he received Greek education, but at the age of 21 asked permission to join the Janissary corps. He was accepted, despite the age limit (usually juniors were recruited by boys under 18), and, consequently, he became an unorthodox Muslim and Bektashi.

The Greek-Turkish synthesis realized in the person of Sinan –a religious and cultural turned him into a real Ottomans. Europeans, as successors to the Western Roman Empire, accepted the Western Roman civilization, improved it and created a new Western civilization. Muslim Arabs, for their part, became heirs of the Eastern Roman civilization. Prototypes of Arab architecture are of Byzantine origin. Ottoman architecture is a mixture of these two civilizations¹. In the East there was music by the ruling classes. Al-Farabi² borrowed it from the Byzantines and adapted it for the Arabs. But, spreading among the Arab, Persian and Turkish nobility, this music never penetrated into the lower social strata.

But he did not take into account the fact that the interpenetration of Orthodox Christianity and Islam occurred primarily at the level of the

¹ Gülru Necipoğlu The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire (2005, 2011)

² João Silva de Sousa A “Hispania e o Islão na Idade Média”

people, not the elite, and through the mystical unorthodox Islam. Greeks and Turks revered the same saints. St. George incarnated in Khidr, St. Theodore in Elias, St. Nicholas in Sary-Saltuk and St. Haralampiy in Haji Bektashi¹. The Turks accepted baptism², remaining Muslims, performed the ritual of sacrifice of animals (kurban), as did the ancient Greeks, Jews and Orthodox Christians. The Dervishes of the Order of the Bektashi practiced the semblance of communion with wine. Among the numerous forms of influence of the Muslim religion on Orthodox Christianity, one can mention the movement of iconoclasm, which unfolded in Byzantium in the VIII century.³

Christians opposed the cult of sacred images, began to break the icons, considering them the object of idolatry. The Greek emperor Constantine V achieved official condemnation of any images in the church building. As a result, a compromise was reached, which today is a characteristic feature of the Eastern Christian church, which resolves icons, but not sculptures.

This statement is incorrect: nowhere in the basic dogmatic monuments that set forth the Orthodox doctrine of icon-worship, there are no oppositions of sculptural and pictorial images. The first is simply much less common in the Orthodox Church. And in Islam, the image of a saint is forbidden by tradition, however, quite flexible and not always respected. Like Orthodox Christians, Muslims are particularly negative about sculpture. Folklore Turkish traditions spread throughout the Ottoman Empire and mixed with the traditions of other peoples of the region. So, Turkish dances of “karshimat” and “cifte telli” are performed in Greece, and Greek dances of “sirto” and “chorus” are popular in Turkey. As for the famous shadow theater “Karagoz”, regardless of its vague origin, it remains the best example of Ottoman folklore proper. “Karagyoz” found its real face in the XVII century and still pleases the audience in Athens, as well as in Bursa or Istanbul. In vain, modern nationalists try to appropriate this phenomenon exclusively to themselves and thus take it away from the sole

¹ Inalcik H. The Otoman Empire..., p. 104—105. Shaw S. History..., p. 23, 26.

Uzunçarşılı, İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, İsmail Hakkı Osmanlı devleti merkez..., s. 223.

² Baptism was often taken because of the belief that a baptized child would grow up healthy, and did not mean a conversion to Christianity.

Крещение часто принималось из-за поверья, будто крещеный ребенок вырастет здоровым, и не означало перехода в христианство.

³ Namatov Cult of Heaven: Tengri

legitimate owner - the Ottoman Empire.¹ The same can be said about the famous Ottoman wit, the son of Imam Khoja Nasreddin, who was born probably in the second half of the 14th century. in the Anatolian village of Horto, near Sivikhisar, west of Ankara. This was the era when Tamerlane (Timur), the defender of the Anatolian Shiites and Alawites, defeated Bayazid I under Ankara, who was increasingly rebuilt in a Byzantine-Christian manner and had long since abandoned the tradition of Gazi. Thus, the battle of Ankara (1402) marks the time of the weakest influence of Sunnism in this region.

According some researchers Alavism is a phenomenon of Greco-Turkish synthesis. Turkish historians have paid too much attention to the shamanistic sources of the people's religion of the Turks. According **Michael Cook** without denying this fact - Alavism is by definition a product of the synthesis of Turkic Samanism, Shiism and Orthodox Christianity - one can not fail to note the enormous influence on Alavism of Eastern Christianity and, consequently, the Greek civilization of Anatolia and Rumelia.² It was formed at the time of the appearance of Christianity, because the Orthodox Greeks themselves were for the most part the heirs of the folk traditions of the Hellenistic civilization of the Eastern Mediterranean, which existed before the birth of Jesus Christ.

Thrace, has survived to this day in Eastern Macedonia in the form of Christian holidays anastenaria, accompanied by the dancing of believers barefoot on hot coals. In the foundation of Orthodox and Alawite mysticism lies the significance attributed to the personality of God, the face of God, the faces of His prophets and saints depicted in icons, which contradicts the faceless pantheism.

A special role is assigned to the heart as a physical (and not symbolic) center of the soul, since the brain is identified only with the mental center, and therefore has a secondary meaning. Divine love, whose central organ is the heart, is the essence of the general approach of Orthodox Christianity and Alavism. When Orthodox Christians, entering the janissary corps, became bektashi, it seemed to them that they did not change religion. In any case, for them such a procedure did not mean referring to Islam. This is the main reason for the success of the Bektashi movement among Orthodox

¹ Hermann Reich in the book "Der Mimus", published in Berlin in 1903, supported the thesis about the influence on the „Karagoz“ Byzantine theater. [Герман Райх в книге «Der Mimus», опубликованной в Берлине в 1903 г., поддержал тезис о влиянии на «Карагёз» византийского театра.](#)

² Michael Cook

Christians in the Balkans. Thus, there was no “Islamization” of the Balkans, rather, their „alavitization“ occurred. Along with the mystical orders that followed the Islamic orthodoxy there were other- unorthodox.

At the same time, between Mevlevi¹ and Bektashi there could be no serious differences, for in the representation of all Sufis the heart was central. The only difference was that Maulana Jalaleddin Rumi turned to the nobility, and Haji Bektashi - to the masses. However, thanks to the virgin system, Bektashism penetrated both the upper strata of society and the Sultan's palace.

For example, Kayserili Daud was a great Turkish mystic, an associate of Orhan Gazi, who died in Iznik in 1350. As a Sufi, he was by definition an unorthodox Muslim. But his answer was this: to come to God, it is necessary to follow the path and the prophets (an-biya) and the saints (al-avliyya). There is sanctity given and holiness acquired, for the mystic, through his efforts, can become a saint.

For Kayseri Davud, who headed the first Ottoman University, created in Iznik by Orhan Ghazi, the sign of absolute holiness was Jesus Christ (Isa), and the sign of limited holiness is the mystic Ibn al-Arabi (1165-1240). For Shiites, the sign of absolute holiness is usually Ali, and the sign of limited holiness is the Mahdi, the 12th hidden imam, although his personality is determined differently depending on the variety of Shiism. As for Ali, he said: “I was a saint when Adam was between water and clay”.²

In the XVI century it was in the Ottoman state that was fighting against Shiite Iran that a myth arose about sensible law-abiding Sunni Sufis, such as the members of the Mevlevi order. They seemed to oppose the unorthodox Sufi Alawis, like the Bektashi, although in reality, the Turkish mystical thought was distinguished by the lack of orthodoxy, whether it be

¹ Mevlevi, or Mauliavia - Sufi order, known in Europe as the Order of „dancing dervishes“. The name comes from „Mevlevi“ - “our lord“: this is the name of the founder of the order, the poet Sufi Jalaleddin Rumi (1207-1273).

² That is, when Adam was not yet created. *То есть когда Адам еще не был создан.*

the teachings of Haji Bektashi, Yunus Emre or Rumi, and was closely related to the Orthodox Christian mysticism of Mount Athos monks¹.

A characteristic feature of the development of religious relations in the Ottoman state of the first two centuries of its existence was that the most active in the country was at that time not the orthodox Islam, but the Dervish and similar religious organizations and fraternities.

The first Ottoman rulers widely practiced granting lands to various, often far from Sunni orthodoxy dervish organizations. Significant land was transferred to their management and individual bei-conquerors, operating in the Balkan Peninsula.

Dervishes of different Islamic trends, establishing their monasteries (tekke and zaviye), played a significant role in the Ottoman colonization of the Balkans, mastered many areas strategically important both for the continuation of the conquests and for strengthening the Ottoman power. They also built and later maintained numerous caravanserais serving the trade routes, in particular the famous Constantinople road linking the Balkans with Central Europe.

Among the Dervish organizations there were those who professed a militant Islam, ie, they strove for the general conversion of the Christian population into Islam and the conversion of churches into mosques. Such sentiments were manifested in the actions of the local Ottoman administration.

However, such aspirations were not always welcomed by orthodox Sunni theologians, who had a significant influence at the court of Ottoman sultans. The interests of the state required not mass Islamization of the local population, but its subordination and higher taxation than Muslims.

On the other hand, Greek-Turkish mysticism has always remained fundamentally revolutionary, and the next official point of view allows us to imagine the fear that it inspired conservatives. Franz Babinger² believes

¹This opinion is not confirmed in the historical evidence of the era. *Это мнение не находит подтверждения в исторических свидетельствах эпохи.*

²Franz Babinger Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke. Leipzig, 1927
Mehmed der Eroberer und seine Zeit. Weltenstürmer einer Zeitenwende. München, 1953

that the Bektashi and the Mevlevi have the same characteristics. In fact, this statement contradicts the truth, since both of these brotherhoods have stood up against each other throughout the history of the Ottomans. In truth, Mevlevi are strict orthodox and enjoy the support of law-abiding layers of the population.

Thus the Byzantine character of Ottoman society was more clearly manifested among the people, and not the ruling class, as evidenced by recent studies. Passing to a settled way of life, the Ottomans adopted the palace ceremonial and the practice of administering the Byzantines (XIV century), assigning them simply Muslim names. Thus, contrary to the opinion of Ziya Gökalp, the Byzantine character of Ottoman society was more vividly manifested among the people, and not the ruling class, as confirmed by recent studies. Passing to a settled way of life, the Ottomans adopted the palace ceremonial and the practice of administering the Byzantines (XIV century), assigning them simply Muslim names

A great influence on the Ottoman court of that time was rendered by Byzantine women, as a rule, Orthodox Christian women. They played an important role already in the Sultanate of Rûm of the Seljuks¹ and in the Turkic principalities of Anatolia. The constant and massive nature of their presence does not allow us to speak of them as a superficial phenomenon. For example, Izeddin Keikavus II was the Seljuk Sultan of Rum, who ascended the throne in Konya in 1246, was the son of a Greek woman, his uncles was ruled by his maternal uncle Kiri (Krios) Kedid and Kir Hai, also Greeks

Their commitment to Christianity was so strong that it led to the division of the court into Muslims and Christians. Under the influence of Byzantine traditions Izeddin was baptized into Orthodoxy and maintained close ties with the Greek spiritual hierarchs. The wife of Orhan I Theodore, the daughter of the Byzantine Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos, not only did not convert to Islam after her wedding (1345), but also actively supported the Christians in the Ottoman court.

The mothers of Murad I and Bayazid I were Greek and Orthodox Christian. Murad I also married Orthodox Christian women - the Bulgarian

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¹ The Sultanate of Rûm was a Turko-Persian Sunni Muslim state, established in the parts of Anatolia which had been conquered from the Byzantine Empire by the Seljuk Empire which was established by Seljuk Turks. The name Rûm reflects the Arabic name of Anatolia, الرُّومُ ar-Rûm, a loan from Greek Ρῶμοί "Romans".

princess Tamara and the Byzantine princess Elena. Bayazid I married Maria Despina, daughter of the Serbian prince Lazarus I. These women were not alone in their religious preferences. They invited advisers, Orthodox Christians, and eventually determined the life of the Ottoman monarchs.

Note also that in the XIII century the Sultan of the Seljukid dynasty and the Byzantine emperor had the same emblem - a two-headed eagle, and it is for certain unknown who borrowed it from someone. In any case, the Nicene emperor, the Byzantine Theodore II Doukas Lascaris (1254-1258) used this emblem during the battle with the Franks that seized Constantinople.

The same applies to the legend of the "Red Apple" (Turkish: Kizil Elma, in Greek: Kokkini Milia): in Constantinople there was a large equestrian sculpture from the bronze of Justinian I (ruled in 527-565.) in the left hand of the Byzantine emperor was a power (a ball with a cross), the right he pointed to the east.

In the XIV century the ball fell, which was interpreted by the Byzantines - who nicknamed it a golden apple (or red apple) - as a bad omen: the Greeks will lose power and it will pass to the Turks. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, this legend was overgrown with details: as if the last emperor of Constantinople, who died in battle on its walls, would rise to drive the Turks to the red apple tree and destroy them there.

According to the Tunisian historian Ibn Khaldun¹(1332-1406), according to Muslim legend, going back to the Prophet himself, the one who defeats the Byzantine emperor and gives his riches to the glory of the Lord will become the Messiah (Mahdi) the day he conquers Constantinople. Mehmed II knew this legend and dreamed of becoming a Mahdi. He also knew that for Muslims the desired Constantinople is the same red apple (Kizil Elma). Thus, the Greeks and Turks fought for primacy in one area of civilization, using the same symbols.²

By the beginning of the XV century Ottoman power in the Balkans was already relatively strong, which determined the fate of the Ottoman state in the period of those complex tests that the hordes of the Central Asian

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² The same emblem of the Turks and Greeks in the XIX century. became a symbol of the Greek anti-Turkish nationalist movement "Megali Idea" (Great Idea). [Пикантно, что одинаковая эмблема турок и греков в XIX в. стала символом греческого антитурецкого националистического движения «Мегали Идэа» \(Великая Идея\).](#)

conqueror Timur (1370-1405) had inflicted on him as a result of the invasion of Asia Minor. In the Battle of Ankara (1402) Timur defeated Sultan Bayazid. The single Ottoman state disintegrated. However, even during this period the Balkan possessions remained under the rule of the Turks: a strong social and political base of their power was already laid down here.¹

Timur restored the independence of the Anatolian Beylik, and actually divided the Ottoman possessions between Bayazid's four sons. The army of Timur by fire and sword passed Asia Minor, devastating entire areas, destroying many cities, capturing or killing thousands of residents. In the west of the peninsula, Timur reclaimed from the knights of Rhodes, Izmir, but did not touch the other possessions of the Christian states and the Balkan possessions of the Ottoman sultans². After in March 1403 the army of Timur left Asia Minor, between the Ottoman princes, the sons of Bayazid, a struggle for power broke out. At first, Suleiman, who received his father's European possessions, was nominated from Timur, then in 1410 he was overthrown by Musa's brother, who remained on the throne in Edirne for three years, and finally, in 1413, Mehmed I was established (1413-1421)³.

It is significant that the struggle was for the establishment of the dominance of one or another applicant primarily in the European regions of the Ottoman state. The duration and perseverance of the intra-dynastic struggle is explained by the fact that social contradictions have worsened in the state. Challenging each other's Ottoman throne, the sons of Bayazid⁴ relied on certain groups of Ottoman society, using their contradictions, in fact objectively acted as supporters of one or another path of feudalization of Ottoman society.

Suleiman initially relied on large border beys who had unlimited power in their European possessions, then, sensing their strength, tried using the Janissary Corps and the troops of Christian vassal principalities, to get rid of excessive guardianship of the warlords. However, having lost their

¹ Gustav Roloff: Die Schlacht bei Angora (1402). (Heinrich von Sybel: Historische Zeitschrift, Cilt 161, Dergi 2, Oldenbourg, Münih 1940, sayfa 254-256)

² Bury, J. B. (1923). The Cambridge Medieval History. vol. 4. Tanner, J. R., Previt -Orton, C. W., Brooke, Z. N. (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. s. 562.

³ .Prawdın, Michael, and G rard Chaliand, The Mongol Empire, (Transaction Publishers, 2006), 495.

⁴ Prawdın, Michael, and G rard Chaliand, The Mongol Empire, (Transaction Publishers, 2006), 495.

support, first of all support of one of the most powerful families of that time - Chandarli, Suleiman could not resist the onslaught of Musa's brother. Musa came to power as a continuer of the “holy war”. It is known that Suleiman in 1403 concluded an agreement with the Byzantine emperor, the Serbian despot, Genoa, Venice and the Knights of Rhodes, buying their neutrality by some concessions, returning, for example, Byzantium of Thessalonica.¹

Musa acted under the banner of “fighting the infidels”, but sought to themselves allies and among the Christian states, supported, in particular, contacts with the Wallachian ruler Mircea Stary.

In the Balkans Musa relied primarily on the Akynji and their beys. His first action after the approval in Edirne was the appointment of governor general (beylerbey) one of members of a well-known family by Michal-oglu. In the previous period of the development of the Ottoman state, there was a rivalry between the border beys and the central administration, of which the former beylerbeys were representatives.

Musa tried to appoint Michal-oglu to the post in the central administration to mitigate these differences. Michal-oglu and appointed by Musa kadiasker² Sheikh Bedreddin began to pay timars to the closest to them Akinji.

According to the legend, Ertogrul, the leader of a small group of nomads from the kaya tribe, received from the Seljuk sultan Alaeddin Kay-Kubad I (1219-1236) a frontier uc.³

Information about the initial stages of the history of the Ottoman Beylik is legendary. It is only certain that in 1289 Osman captured from Byzantium a small town called Karadzhisar, whose population fled before the arrival of the Turks. The city was again populated by people from the Beylik Hermian and other areas of Anatolia. The local Christian church was converted into a mosque, where the Khutba (Friday prayer) was first recited

¹ Shaw S. History of the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey. Cambridge, 1916, v. 1, p. 17.

² Inalcik H. The Ottoman Empire. The Classical Age 1300—1600. London; New York, 1973, p. 104.

³ Uc is the frontier territory given to the heads of individual tribes by the Seljukids and passed down by inheritance. the rulers could roam with their tribe, collect tribute from the subservient settled population, expand their holdings towards neighboring states.

with the mention of the name of Osman¹ In 1299 Osman's beylik completely got rid of the supremacy of the Seljuk sultans, although he continued to recognize the political power of Ilkhan and pay them a small tribute.

In military operations against Byzantium, Osman, and then his successors, directed their efforts against its Asian territories, while the rulers of other borderline beyliks who had a navy made raids mainly on the coastal areas of the Balkan Peninsula. These raids caused active counterstrikes by Byzantium, in which, as was, for example, the crusade against Izmir, other European countries took part.

In the small Byzantine regions of Asia, after the transfer of the capital of the empire from Nicaea to Constantinople, the population declined significantly, the economic importance of these territories fell, the attention of the government to the defense of the borders weakened.

Michael VIII Paleologue, in order to increase the resources of the imperial treasury, abolished the tax privileges granted to the militarily conscript peasants who had previously guarded the borders. The emperors tried to overcome the desolation of the border areas by distributing land to individual Turkic tribes who migrated from the Balkans².

All this, of course, made it easier for the Ottoman Beylik to expand its territories at the expense of Byzantium. Already Osman prepared a springboard for the conquest of the Byzantine city of Prusa, which was taken by his son Orhan in 1326 and, after being renamed Bursa, later became the capital of the Beylik. In the following years, the Ottoman Turks, having seized the cities of Nicaea (Iznik, 1330) and Nicomedia (Izmid, 1337), came to the shores of the Sea of Marmara.

By this time, significant changes are also taking place in the internal structure of the beylik. Osman and his tribe led a semi-nomadic way of life. Having conquered new territories, Bey begins to give his entourage land in „feeding“. These „feedings“ or awards (timars) Osman handed out exclusively for military service.

Timariot was given the right to collect taxes previously determined by the taxes from the land plot granted to him (and at first, sometimes also from non-agrarian objects, for example in the city with artisans living there, benches of the city bazaar, etc.) and spend them on their personal needs and

¹ D. Kitsikis L'Empire ottoman – Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1985.

² D. Kitsikis L'Empire ottoman – Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1985.

military equipment, so that at the request of Bey, marching as a soldier-cavalryman (sipahi). With the preservation of this condition, the thymariot could transfer the timar to his heirs.

Already under Osman, there was a certain gradation between the awards: the private soldiers were given separate villages, the sons of Bey and his entourage - whole regions, which indicated the process of social stratification in the Beylik.

The “war for faith” (gazavat), in the name of which a significant mass of Gazi gathered in the borderlands with the Byzantine Beylik, actually became a war for new lands necessary for the feudalizing nomadic nobility to establish their own power and increase their material prosperity.

After Osman's death, his son Orhan became a behem (1324-1360, according to other sources, 1326-1362), and his elder brother Alaeddin served under him as a vizier¹. The first Ottoman rulers were but tribal leaders, backed by the power of the nomad militia, to which was joined by soldiers who came from other principalities (the Bailiks), and numerous dervishes. The Ottoman Bey was considered the first among equals. He as a military commander relied on 1/5 of the extraction.²

At the initiative of Alaeddin, a regular army consisting of two infantry and cavalry troops began to be formed in the beylike, which, however, did not mean abandoning tribal militias and irregular units. In the infantry, along with militia infantrymen (Azaps), was created a special military formation-Yaya. (the infantry for salaries)

It was composed of young Turks who received salaries from the treasury during their participation in hostilities; in peacetime they worked on the land plots granted to them, exempted from paying taxes to the treasury of the beylik. In the cavalry, volunteer squads from Anatolia were widely used, attracted by the prospect of capturing military trophies or obtaining Timar. They were called akynji (akyn-raid).

The units of Akynji united 10, 100, 1000 soldiers. Each cavalryman usually had two horses with him (one for himself, the other for possible mining), he was armed with a sword, a curved Turkish saber and shield.

¹ D. Kitsikis L'Empire ottoman – Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1985.

² Uzunçarşılı, İsmail Hakkı Osmanlı devletinin teşkilatından kapikulu ocakları. Ankara, 1943—1944, c. 1—2.

Akynji is the most typical figure of the Ottoman army of the first period of conquest.

Alaeddin and Orkhan established the Musselem (regular cavalry) in addition to akynji. They, like Yaya (the infantry for salaries) received salaries during the period of military operations and a tax-exempt piece of land that was processed in peacetime.

The creation of parts of the Yaya (the infantry for salaries) and the Musselem (regular cavalry), besides the military one, also had a great social significance. Through this category of the military, a certain part of the Ottoman semi-nomadic society passed to a settled agricultural way of life, receiving at first certain privileges (in the form of salaries and tax exemptions), placing them in more favorable conditions than the rest-primarily local, pre-Turkish - peasants.

As the cavalymen participated in the military operations and the Timariots, however at first their number was insignificant. In the XIV century the Ottoman army was reorganized after the Byzantine pattern: a settled way of life demanded a new army instead of the disorderly cavalry of the nomad Turks, who thought only of looting for the sake of faith.

Orkhan created the infantry with a regular salary, yaya, and regular cavalry, mu-selle. Since at that time there was no need to accept Islam, in order to enter the service of the Ottomans, Christians in the new army soon formed the majority.

As for the nomadic riders, they were no longer called the noble name of Gazi, replacing the less enjoyable words with akinji (robber) or deli (mad fanatic), and sent to the border as a shock detachment. Murad I freed the state treasury from paying military salaries, now the military leaders received the Timars, as well as the governor of the conquered province.

The Timariots had to feed, train and supply soldiers to the Sultan. Without participation of the troops, consisting mainly of Orthodox Christians, the conquest would hardly have been successful and the Byzantine heritage would hardly have passed to the Ottomans. Christian commanders were pro-arians, owners of Byzantine flaxes, called debates. Having joined the ranks of the Ottoman army, they retained their lords in the form of timars. The founder of one of the oldest and most influential families of the Ottoman aristocracy, the Mihaloglu family, was the Byzantine feudal baron, Kyos Michal (Michael Bey), who converted to

Islam and joined Osman I. In its essence, the thymar looked like a Pronoia¹ and was rooted in the old system of land use of the Seljukids – Iqta².

Nevertheless, the gradual weakening of the central power in Byzantium was accompanied by the intensification of the power of the agricultural aristocracy, and during the Crusades its position was further consolidated under the influence of Western feudalism. As a result, the debate from the category of the right to use has become a property category. However, the Sultan strictly controlled the Timars. Thus, during the reign of the Ottomans, central power was restored on both sides of the Aegean Sea.

The system of taxation of landowners the Ottomans borrowed directly from Byzantium. There the land tax - Zevgarion³ was calculated on the basis of the area of the land allotment, processed by a pair of oxen harnessed to the plow. Moreover, the Timars were distributed not in the border areas, but in the safe internal regions of Rumelia. All the layers of the Ottoman tribal army: Yaya, Musellem, Akinji whose interests were affected by the creation of the Janissary Corps and the Sipahian cavalry, were grouped around Musa.⁴ However, if the taxation system remained the same, then its application was different. Having restored the power of the state, the Ottoman Empire reduced abuses of feudal lords and, accordingly, eased the tax burden of the peasants. The Byzantine philosopher from Mystra Georgy Gemist Plephon (about 1355-1452) foresaw that the greed of the landowners would play into the hands of the Turkish conquerors. In particular, already at the decline of Byzantium taxes in the form of excavations left a variety of loopholes for abuse. The duration of workings in favor of the landowner in some regions was two days a week. The tax policy of the Ottomans was aimed at reducing the workings (hangar); the state sought to centralize, and for each province, tax rates and a clear list of works that the peasants must carry out for the tamariots were established.

¹ The system of the Timars inherited many features of the Byzantine Pronoia and appeared under the Sultan Orhan I (1326-1359), who awarded the awards of distinguished warriors. The Timariots retained their military importance until the middle of the 17th century, but their titles were abolished much later. The Timariots united in regiments (tour alay) and divisions (sanjaks, literally - banners). General leadership of the army carried out beylerbey.

² Iqta' (Arabic: اقطاع) was an Islamic practice of tax farming that became common in Muslim Asia during the Buyid dynasty. Osman Turan, "İktâ", İslam Ansiklopedisi, Cilt: 5/2, İstanbul 1993, s. 949-959.

³ Zevgarion (from the Greek zevgos) - a pair of oxen.

⁴ Werner E., Markov W. Geschichte der Tiirken von den Anfängen bis zu Gegenwart. Berlin, 1978, S. 15—17.

In spite of the beneficial actions for the popular masses that followed the centralization of the Ottomans, preserving the system of the Pronar-Timars promoted only the strengthening of the power of the nobility, which from the Byzantine Empire was transformed into the Ottoman one. This new nobility has so increased the area of its landed estates, that its incomes have surpassed the monarch's income. In addition, the soldiers more willingly obeyed those who paid salaries, that is, the Timarriots, and not the ruler. As a result, during the XIV century the Turkic nobility of Anatolia settled on these timars and turned into a powerful force. Her most influential representative Chandarli received the post of Grand Vizier. At first, the Ottoman ruler tried to find a counterbalance, giving out timars to the Orthodox Christian elite. But the common class interests turned all noble people, Christians and Muslims, into opponents of the absolute power of the Sultan. Already in the XIV century the tendency of inheritance of timars was shown. In the law of 1375, the sons of the Timariots were given the right to take possession of the Timars. Thus, the fundamental doctrine of the Ottoman state was undermined, according to which all the wealth of the country belongs exclusively to the monarch. Then Murad I decided to use his privilege to collect a fifth of the booty (pencil) to keep the elite corps, called "Porta slaves", (kapikullari) loyal to him.

Taking a model of the Seljuk system for ghouls ("young foreigners"), he gave it the form of devshirme ("recruitment of young men"), and Bayazid I turned it into an institution for the systematic recruitment of boys from the families of Orthodox Christians (which did not apply to other Christians, Muslims and Jews), the best of whom entered the service in the palace or in the army. Under Moore de II and Mehmet II, this system has become ubiquitous. The new army of "slaves of Porta" consisted of infantry - janissaries (from the Yenicherry - a new soldier) and cavalry - sipahi. In the next century, the soldiers of the new army received the Timars from Murad II, but eventually came under the control of the nobility. Thus, yaya (the infantry for salaries) and the mussel (regular cavalry) were pushed into the background.

Soon a conflict erupted between the military nobility of the Timorites and the "slaves of Porta", which ended in the victory of the elite corps after the capture of Constantinople in 1453, during the reign of Mehmed II. Since then, the government and the army have passed into the hands of the kapilullari. Numerous confiscations in their favor of the Timars and other possessions weakened the power of the nobility. The great Vezirs, descendants of the devshirma, who were devoted to the sultan, were endowed with absolute power, as well as with thimaras and incomes, which made them the richest people after the ruler. The Prime Minister became the

second person in the system of the Ottoman absolute monarchy. In the history of the Byzantine Empire, there were many usurpers.

From 324 to 1453, that is, over 1129 years, 14 ruling dynasties were replaced. In the history of the Ottoman Empire there was not a single family that usurped the throne - in power for 644 years there was a single dynasty. The exception was a period of 11 years, from 1402 to 1413, during which the empire and the imperial power were divided between several contenders, but it was a struggle between the brothers. At the basis of such astonishing stability of the central power, preserved despite all crises and revolutions, lay the system that triumphed during the reign of Mehmet the Conqueror and died only after three centuries of gradual decline that began in the 16th century.