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The *Heşt Bihişt* of Idris Bidlisi: the reign of Bayezid II

(1481-1512)

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Abstract of thesis

Idris Bidlisi’s *Heşt Bihişt* is a history of the Ottoman empire written in Persian at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Although considered one of the most important historical works of its time, the work remains to date unedited and scarcely studied. The present work aims to make at least a part of *Heşt Bihişt* available to modern scholarship, with particular focus on the times of the author’s patron, the Ottoman sultan Bayezid II (1481-1512). The summarised translation (chapter VII) of the eighth ‘Book’ of *Heşt Bihişt*, devoted to Bayezid II’s reign, provides the basis for further discussions on several issues relating to the period, including an investigation of the author’s personal approach to his subject.

The thesis begins with an outline of the historical background of the reign of Bayezid II (chapter I), followed by a brief account of the development of Ottoman historiography up to the appearance of *Heşt Bihişt* (chapter II). The author, Idris Bidlisi, and *Heşt Bihişt* itself are then introduced (chapters III and IV). The focus is subsequently turned to the reign of Bayezid II, with particular attention to two major issues of the period. The first relates to the civil strife between the new sultan and his brother Cem over succession to the throne, a series of events which marked the first two years of Bayezid II’s reign and had a significant effect on the Ottoman empire’s domestic and international politics for the next thirteen years until Cem’s death in 1495 (chapter V). The second analytical chapter investigates the phenomenon of the Ottoman navy in the times of Bayezid II, under whose care the empire’s naval forces were significantly expanded and upgraded, for the first time in Ottoman history achieving predominance in sea over their Christian counterparts (chapter VI). In the study of both these themes information and the results of modern scholarship are juxtaposed to the material found in *Heşt Bihişt*, in an attempt to look into the historical knowledge of the period and disclose the chronicle’s usefulness and contribution to modern research.
Acknowledgements

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Note on transliteration

The transliteration system adopted by The International Journal of Middle East Studies has been followed in this work. For the most common terms or titles, such as 'grand vezir' of 'Janissary', and whenever a widely-known version of a placename exists in the English language, it has been preferred. Also, many of the most uncommon placenames that appear in the translation, have been identified in other works of Ottoman history, mainly S. Tansel’s *Sultan II Bayezit'in Siyasi Hayati* (Istanbul 1966) and İ.H. Uzunçarşılı’s *Osmanlı Tarihi* (Ankara 1949). Their versions have been adopted in the translation, for the easier identification of the place in question, even if they appear slightly different in the original text of *Heşt Bihişt*. For example, the pass Azvad, in Anatolia, is mentioned thus, although in *Heşt Bihişt* it appears as اژواد.
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Preface

The end of the fifteenth century was a significant period in the development of Ottoman historiography. A large number of chronicles were written at the request of Bayezid II (1481-1512) with the result that this sultan's reign is generally considered as signifying the beginning of official, or government-supported, Ottoman historical writing. Along with the increase in the number of historical works, during that period Ottoman historiography also reached a higher level of maturity and sophistication, both linguistically and ideologically. As research techniques and methodological approaches developed during the twentieth century, bringing the study of Muslim, and Ottoman in particular, historiography up to date with other fields of historical research, a large number of Ottoman historical works were published and became the subject of further studies.

Yet, despite the widespread acknowledgment of its potential interest and importance, Idris Bidlisi's Heşt Bihişt has remained relatively unstudied. Although some general historical works have consulted it and made use of its information, Heşt Bihişt only appears as part of studies on broader themes. Almost no studies devoted specifically to it exist, aside from a handful of isolated articles, and certainly none of them focusing on the work as a whole.¹ There seems to be no apparent reason for this neglect, except for the language in which the chronicle was written. Its elaborate form of high Persian is not only discouraging, but it also automatically places the work on the margins of Ottoman historiography, by definition written in Turkish. Indeed, although a substantial number of works on Ottoman history were written in Persian and Arabic, the number of those published to date is comparatively much smaller than works in Turkish.

The present work has a dual aim: to provide a comprehensive introduction to Idris Bidlisi's Heşt Bihişt, and to contribute to the study of the reign of Bayezid II. By focusing on Bidlisi's account of Bayezid II's reign, another view of this period is brought to light, a view that illustrates largely the ideological tendencies inside the Ottoman court. Furthermore, several notable issues from Bayezid II's time are being readdressed here, using their description by Bidlisi as the starting point for a more in-depth discussion and study of them.

¹ For the limited number of monographs on Heşt Bihişt see below (Chapter IV, The impact of Heşt Bihişt).
This work is divided into two major parts, the first one consisting of six analytical chapters, and the second of a summarised translation of the eighth chapter, or Book, of *Heşt Bihisht*, dealing with the reign of Bayezid II, Bidlisi's patron. Thus from the two-volume chronicle, covering the reigns of the first eight Ottoman sultans, only the final chapter is addressed here. From the onset the considerable length of *Heşt Bihisht*, which inhibits a thorough study of the entire text, made imperative the need to limit the scope of the present work. The eighth Book was chosen primarily due to Bidlisi's chronological and geographical proximity to the events he records in this section. In fact, Bidlisi was physically present in Ottoman lands only during the last six years of the entire period covered in the chronicle.

Today Bayezid II's thirty-year long reign remains little studied in comparison to the massive body of research dedicated to the other sultans of the so-called classical period of the Ottoman empire, in particular Bayezid II's father, Meşmed the Conqueror, and grandson, Süleyman the Magnificent. Despite this fact, however, due to an abundance of contemporary sources and modern studies, we have come to know a lot of the bare facts of history, often in great detail. Thus it can safely be said that in their majority the events of Bayezid II's reign, their dates, names of participants and similar details are relatively well known to us. The present work's attention is drawn, therefore, not only to the events themselves, but also to a more elusive side of the historical reality of the times. A principal intention of this study is to view *Heşt Bihisht* not merely as a chronicle which contains useful information about the past, but also as a historical phenomenon with its own value and individuality. By looking into the image that Ottoman historians give of their distant and recent past, and the ways in which they chose to present and record it, it is hoped that our understanding of the political thinking of the time can be enriched.

The first two chapters of this work, a fundamental presentation of the main events of Bayezid II's reign and the most prominent political and social circumstances under which *Heşt Bihisht* was written, provide a basic framework for our understanding of the period and the significance of *Heşt Bihisht*'s appearance in the course of the development of Ottoman historiography. At the same time, a glimpse at Ottoman historical thinking and consciousness is attempted. Although no definite answers can ever be given to questions of this nature, an attempt is nevertheless made to develop a better understanding of the government's interests and its expectations from the historical works produced at the sultan's command. An attempt is also made to gain an insight into the motivations and concerns that drove historians to compose their works; their principal philosophical and theoretical views; their understanding of the political
reality around them; their awareness of the role their works were required to play; and their willingness - or not - to conform to the government's needs.

The two following chapters concentrate and bring to light all the available information on Idris Bidlisi and Heşt Bihişt. It is hoped that Bidlisi's personal history; his cultural and social background; his interests and qualifications as well as the events related with the composition of Heşt Bihişt, combined with a thorough study of the text itself, will provide some answers to the above questions, applied specifically to Bidlisi and Heşt Bihişt.

Finally, some of the above observations are put to the test through the detailed study of two specific topics concerning the reign of Bayezid II. These two topics, selected from the plethora of events and themes offered for study in the eighth Book, were chosen for their lasting importance. Bayezid II's suppression of the rebellion of his brother Cem, which had led to a civil war regretted by all; and the novel success of the Ottoman navy, confirmed through a series of victorious campaigns against the infidels, constitute two of the most notable issues of Bayezid II's reign. Their importance is not only acknowledged by modern scholars, as significant stages in Ottoman history as a whole, but they were also issues that Bayezid II's contemporaries themselves understood as major current affairs.

The analysis of both topics begins with a thorough presentation of the events as they are known today through the accumulated studies of modern research. Thus the information provided in Heşt Bihişt can be evaluated better, through a comparison between the fullest possible view of the events and Bidlisi's account. The two versions, complemented by an investigation of Bidlisi's sources for each individual subject, enable us to define more clearly Heşt Bihişt's contribution to our knowledge of the past, and at the same time assess with more certainty its place and importance within the body of Ottoman historiography, an issue which has so far been viewed with some uncertainty and speculation. This is followed by a general discussion of various aspects related to the two main topics under study. Discussion revolves around their place in the history of the Ottomans, their particular importance for Bayezid II's reign and their impact on the empire's relations with neighbouring states.

Finally, the focus is once again turned to an investigation of Bidlisi's approach and presentation of the themes in question. The manner in which he handles and approaches each topic, and the major and recurring ideological patterns, through which his narrative progresses, serve as clues to our understanding of the author's historical
and political thinking. Through these observations emerges the image of a historian who, although a newcomer to Ottoman lands, was fully aware of the tradition and requirements of historiography, as well as the political role it was called to play under Bayezid II.

The second part of this work consists of the summarised translation of the eighth Book of Ḥeṣṭ Biḥiṣṭ. As the main interest and nature of the present study are primarily historical, sections that do not deal directly with historical events, such as the long introductory praise to Bayezid II, or an entire destin describing royal festivities, are not translated. On the other hand, the last section of the Book, referring to the lives and careers of the empire’s statesmen and ‘ulema; and the duties of the various groups in the palace service, are included in the translation. Although the information in this section does not deal with purely historical events, its interest for the cultural life of the court is undeniable. Especially as one of the interests in the present study has been to trace Bidlisi’s personal presence in the historical narrative, his opinions and descriptions of his contemporary statesmen are obviously of particular interest. Bidlisi’s political allies and enemies become clear, for example, through some particularly unfavourable descriptions. In addition, several interesting observations can be made on Bidlisi’s comments on distinction in office and promotion, and of course this section provides valuable information on the lives and careers of the most important men in Bayezid II’s time.

As with all examples of Muslim literary historiography of the same period, Bidlisi’s highly sophisticated language renders a word-for-word translation meaningless. In an effort to produce an uncomplicated, straightforward translation, the author’s elaborate expression through repetitions or elaborate adjectives and metaphors, and complicated construction through series of intertwined sentences, are therefore summarised. Even if it was possible to reproduce this style in a translation, the numerous Koranic and other literary quotations, elaborate descriptions and long passages of praise throughout the text would distract the reader’s attention from the flow of narrative. On the other hand, the detail in the representation of several kinds of passages, such as the description of battles, or praise to the sultan and his statesmen, might appear uneven throughout the translation. Although an effort has been made not to leave out any specific information provided in the text, the presence of long descriptions of buildings or nature, for example, is simply mentioned in brackets.

Naturally, the present work can by no means provide an exhaustive presentation of Ḥeṣṭ Biḥiṣṭ. Even less, it does not claim to be a thorough study of Bayezid II’s reign.
It merely aims at partially fulfilling the need for the study of primary sources and providing an introduction to this interesting work of Ottoman historiography. *Hest Bihišt* is a vast pool of information that can further the study of numerous other subjects of great interest to the Ottoman historian, but the chronicle's contribution to our knowledge of the past, even in regard to the period and issues already addressed here, can only be evaluated after the study of the entire work. It is hoped, however, that this initial presentation of Bidlisi and his work will suffice to open the way to further studies of *Hest Bihišt*. 
Bayezid II

(picture from Lewis B.(ed.), Islam and the Arab World)
CHAPTER I

A historical background to Bayezid II's reign

For a long time the established perception of Bayezid II's reign (1481-1512) was that of a stagnant and insignificant period of Ottoman history, while Bayezid II himself was described as a weak and unworthy ruler, an insignificant interval in the course of a series of able and glorious sultans. Since the late 1930s, however, when scholars like Sydney Nettleton Fisher began to question such assessments, the common evaluation of this period has been changing towards a recognition of the crucial and beneficial role of Bayezid II's consolidating management for the course of Ottoman history. Admittedly, the relatively small number of major campaigns and territorial gains under this sultan do indeed present limited material for the history of battles and conquest, especially as this period appears even more strikingly uneventful compared to the reigns of such exceptional rulers as Bayezid II's father Mehmed II (1444-1446 and 1451-1481), or his son Selim I (1512-1520) and grandson Süleyman I (1520-1566). The critical importance of Bayezid II's reign, however, is better understood through the study of issues other than warfare and territorial expansion. Despite that, Bayezid II's reign still occupies much less space in modern general Ottoman

3 Fisher S.N., The Foreign Relations of Turkey, 1481-1512, Urbana, 1948, p. 5. This work is a revised edition of the author's doctoral thesis at the University of Illinois, submitted in 1935 under the title Sultan Bayezid II and the Foreign Relations of Turkey.
4 This is particularly demonstrated in studies of the economic and social history of the sixteenth century. The works of leading scholars such as O.L. Barkan, H. İnalçık and R. Mantran are very valuable for the study of the period of Bayezid II. For an outline of post-war studies on this field see İnalçık H., "Ottoman Social and Economic History: A Review", in Papers Presented to the First International Congress on the Social and Economic History of Turkey, Ankara, July 11-13 1977, Ankara 1980, pp. 1-8.
Mehmed II spent most of his reign waging war and expanding the Ottoman domains, so that Bayezid II took over from his father an empire that extended over a vast area and professed its rights to the glory of the Byzantine heritage as well as claiming precedence over the Muslim world. Towards the west, apart from the impressive conquest of Constantinople, a number of islands as well as large provinces of the Greek mainland had been seized from their previous Italian or Byzantine lords, while Mehmed II's capture of Negreponte from the Venetians in 1470 secured Ottoman dominance in the Aegean, thus preparing the way for Bayezid II's drive towards the Adriatic 30 years later. In the north, a large part of Serbia, almost up to Belgrade, had come into Ottoman hands and the co-operation of the Bosnian lords was largely secured. Almost three quarters of the Black Sea coasts were under Ottoman control, either through direct conquest, as in the case of Amastris, the Turkish emirate of Kastamonu, the Greek 'empire' of Trebizond and Kaffa; or through the vassalage of the Tatars of the Crimea. Finally in the southeast the province of Karaman, although not entirely subdued, had mostly been placed under central Ottoman control. Mehmed II had been a strong and active ruler, who expanded the empire's domains significantly and set solid foundations for its internal organisation. His incessant campaigning and autocratic rule, however, had exhausted the state financially and had created numerous sources of discontent in society. The importance and necessity of Bayezid II's peaceful respite in the process of Ottoman expansion becomes even more evident in view of the strained state the Ottoman empire had reached after the Conqueror's intensive warfare.

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6 See below (Chapter II, Ottoman historiography up to Bayezid II).

The death of Mehmed II and Cem’s revolt (1481-2)\(^8\)

When Meḥmed II died in May 1481, a fierce fraternal war began between his two heirs, Bayezid and Cem. With the support of the Janissaries and many other state officials according to Ottoman practice no heir to the throne had been appointed. As two of his sons were alive, Bayezid and Cem, the new ruler was to be determined by the 'will of God' in what seemed to be a race over which of the two princes would arrive first in the capital. In fact, the future of both brothers was largely dependent on the support of the various social groups of the Ottoman askeri class. The plans of Cem’s supporters to bring about his enthronement were ruined by the intervention of Bayezid’s men and the Janissaries, for the most part supporters of Bayezid, rioted in Istanbul. Peace was restored when Bayezid II’s eleven year-old son, Korkud, was placed temporarily on the throne, until eventually Bayezid arrived in the capital and was declared sultan on 22 May 1481.

During the following two years Cem attempted twice to take hold of the throne, or at least gain control of part of the empire’s domains. Both times he was defeated by the sultan’s army, at first in a battle outside Yeni Şehir in 22 Rabi‘ II 886/22 June 1481, after which Cem fled to Cairo. Although the next year he returned, reinforced by the support of Karamanoğlu Kasım Beğ, Cem was again unsuccessful. This time Cem fled to Rhodes (July 1482), where the grand master of the Knights of Rhodes, Pierre d’Aubusson, received him with promises of Christian assistance for his cause.

Cem remained in Europe for over twelve years until the end of his life in 1495, practically a prisoner in the hands of the Knights of Rhodes and later on of the Pope, to whom he was handed over in 1489. He died, in unspecified circumstances, while in the hands of the king of France, Charles VIII, to whose charge he had been given only a few weeks earlier. His body was returned to Bayezid II in 1499 and was eventually buried in Bursa among other members of the Ottoman family. During all these years Cem was repeatedly used by his captors as a powerful political tool against the Ottoman sultan, and became one of the most crucial objects of diplomatic negotiations between Europe and the Ottoman sultan.\(^9\)

As a result of Cem’s threat and the empire’s inherent political tensions Bayezid II’s position was particularly fragile during the first months of his reign. Only after the

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\(^8\) The events of the civil strife between the two princes and the subsequent adventures of Cem are discussed in detail in Chapter V. In Heṣt Bihiṣṭ these events are described in folios 523a-537a. All folio references to Heṣt Bihiṣṭ are made to the Ms Orient 3179 manuscript of the National Library in Berlin.

\(^9\) See below (Chapter V, The effects of Cem’s revolt: B).
immediate danger of another attack by Cem was somewhat reduced was Bayezid II in
the position to assert his autonomy as ruler, and by November 1482 the sultan had
managed to free himself from the threat of the most prominent figures of the old
regime. The first successful step was the elimination of Gedik Ahmed Paşa, one of the
most influential statesmen in the court. His dismissal and execution was soon
followed by the dismissal of the grand vezir İshak Paşa and the beğerbeği of Anadolu
Sinan Paşa, both men who had played a determining role in bringing about Bayezid
II’s enthronement but had since proved too powerful and undermined the sultan’s
authority.

Moldavia (1484-5)

As soon as internal peace was established and no imminent danger from Cem’s
guardians seemed in view, Bayezid II ordered preparations for a major campaign
against the Christians. The target of this campaign was the few strongholds on the
coast of the Black Sea which were still not under Ottoman control. The voyvoda of
Moldavia Stephen cel Mare ('The Great') (1457-1504), had had a long history of
opposition to Melệm II, in whose times most of the Black Sea littoral became
Ottoman. Bayezid II’s forces moved from land and sea towards the Black Sea and,
with the aid of Wallachian vassal troops, Kilia was captured on 15 July 1484. Soon
after, on 9 August, Akkerman, surrounded by Ottoman and Tatar forces, surrendered
to the sultan without a battle. The strategic and financial benefits of these conquests
were obvious, as after that the Ottomans controlled the entire Black Sea and the trade
to Europe through the Danube and the Dniester, as well as having secured overland
communication with the Crimean peninsula.

In the following years Stephen, with some assistance from Poland, tried to retake Kilia
and Akkerman. His attempts were not met with success, although he effected some
victories over the Ottoman frontier forces. In 1487 he again paid to Bayezid II the

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10 For the various conflicting groups within the askeri class and the measures Bayezid II took in
order to pacify them and gain their support and loyalty see below (Chapter II, Historiography under
Bayezid II).
11 For Gedik Ahmed Paşa see İnalçık H., “Ahmad Pasha Gedik”, E.I.(2), pp. 292-293; Fisher,
Foreign Relations, pp. 24-25.
12 For the first attempt of the sultan to remove Gedik Ahmed Paşa from office soon after his
enthronement, and the successful removal of the three statesmen in 1482 see below (Chapter V,
Bidlisî’s political and ideological approaches).
13 The conquests of Kilia and Akkerman in Heşt Bihişt are described in folios 539b-543b.
14 For Stephen’s reign and his encounters with the Ottomans see Sugar P., Southeastern Europe
under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804, Seattle 1977, pp. 15 ff.
15 Heşt Bihişt, folio 540a.
16 Heşt Bihişt, folio 544b.
tribute that was demanded of him, while a separate peace treaty was made between Poland and the Ottomans in 1489.

War with the Mamluks (1485-1491)\(^1\)

Ottoman - Mamluk relations had generally been strained over minor incidents since 863/1463,\(^1\) and the situation was further aggravated after the Ottomans came into direct contact with Mamluk lands after Meḥmed II's annexation of Karaman (1468). The two states competed with one another over attracting under their own influence the various tribes of southern Anatolia and northern Syria. This rivalry was fuelled and amply utilised by the local emirs, who sided with one or the other major power according to opportunity with the ultimate aim of maintaining a higher degree of autonomy for themselves.\(^1\) The situation deteriorated even more after Meḥmed II's death, when the Mamluk sultan Kaitbey sided with Cem during the strife for the Ottoman throne.\(^2\) A long and eventually unresolved war began in 890/1485.

At first the Ottomans occupied Adana, Tarsus and parts of the surrounding areas, but by the end of the season the Mamluks had defeated the Ottoman forces near Adana and had recovered their lost towns. In 1487 a large Ottoman army moved toward Aleppo, but as the Mamluk troops had withdrawn, proceeded to subdue the Turkoman tribes Ṭurğudlu and Varsaḳ. In the following year the ruler of Elbistan, Alaeddin Meḥmed Zulkadr -initially an Ottoman ally - sided with the Mamluks, upon which his brother Şah Budak Beğ sought Ottoman support to regain the throne of Elbistan, from which he had been removed in 1467. In 1488 the Ottoman army again occupied Adana and Tarsus, as well as several other fortresses in the area, such as Anavarza, Sis and the Kozan region.\(^2\) Adana and Tarsus were once again recovered by the Mamluks the following year, and Bayezid II tried to settle the conflict between the two Zulkadr brothers, Alaeddin Meḥmed and Şah Budak. The Ottoman troops were routed, however, and in 1490 Alaeddin Meḥmed's forces entered Ottoman territories and sacked Kayseri. In the end a treaty was signed in 1491, confirming Mamluk occupation of Cilicia and leaving the borders practically no different from what they had been before the war. Both sides had by then reasons to terminate hostilities, Kaitbey to relieve his state from the

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\(^1\) For the account of the Ottoman - Mamluk war in Heşt Bihişṭ, see folios 546a-554a.


\(^3\) Fisher, Foreign Relations, pp. 35-36.

\(^4\) For Kaitbey’s later efforts, during the war with the Ottomans, to gain Cem’s supervision from the Knights of Rhodes see below (Chapter V, The effects of Cem’s revolt: B).

\(^5\) Pitcher, Historical Geography, p. 83.
serious economic strain of financing this war and Bayezid II preferring to concentrate his attention on Hungary, after the death of Matthias Korvinus in April 1490.

Hungary and Poland

The Ottoman - Hungarian border had been the scene of gaza raids during the first years of Bayezid II's reign (1481-1483). Several expeditions were organised by both sides, and the Hungarian king Matthias Korvinus (1458-1490) did not hide his intentions to take advantage of the political instability in the Ottoman state. Aside from endeavouring to gain the supervision of Cem, he also produced another pretender to the Ottoman throne, a man also called Bayezid who claimed to be Mehmed II's brother. None of these attempts achieved, however, tangible results and since neither of the two rulers was willing to start a war at that stage a treaty for five years was signed in 1483. When Matthias Korvinus died without an heir Bayezid II saw an opportunity to take advantage of the interregnum in Hungary. Ottoman troops were sent against Belgrade with the hope of taking it. When this failed, the majority of the hostilities continued in the form of intensive raids in Transylvania, Croatia and Carinthia during the following years. Eventually in 1494 a truce for three years was signed.

Immediately thereafter conflict with Poland began. The king of Poland, Jan Olbrecht (1492-1501), allied with Venice and the Hungarian king, Ladislas VII (1490-1516), against the Ottomans. Soon after that, however Ladislas VII withdrew from the agreement. Poland, wanting to gain access to the Black Sea, which was blocked by the Ottomans, tried to subject Moldavia. They were repelled by joint Moldavian and Ottoman forces, who forced them to retreat (1497). In the next year the Ottomans carried out more raids into Poland, with varying success. Eventually Jan Olbrecht signed a peace treaty with Moldavia in spring 1501 and with the Ottomans in autumn of the same year.

Venice - Morea (1499-1503)

Hostilities with Poland were settled in time to allow Bayezid II the freedom to attend to the major campaign against the Venetian lands in the Morea, which had just been launched in June of the same year. Although the majority of the Peloponnesian

22 Fisher, Foreign Relations, p. 32.
24 These raiding expeditions are described in great detail in Heşt Bihiş, folios 560a-564a.
mainland had been conquered under Mehmed II, Venice still had control of several important ports on the peninsula's western coastline. Rivalry with Venice had existed since the time of Mehmed II, and relations between the two states were further strained by a series of frontier incidents in the Morea, Albania and Dalmatia as well as the activity of pirates from both sides against merchant ships on the Mediterranean trade routes. In addition, for the sake of peace within the empire, a major campaign against the Christian world seemed to have become inevitable. Especially after Cem's death in 1495, the sultan had no way of resisting the pressure of the warlike elements among his statesmen. It is certain, nonetheless, that the campaign was long prepared for: work on the enlargement and re-organisation of the Ottoman fleet had been going on for several years, and it seems that at last the sultan felt ready to put his fleet to the test against the, so far, undisputed naval master of the Eastern Mediterranean.

In early summer 1499 Ottoman forces were sent to raid the regions of the Venetian northern borders, while the fleet and a large army under the sultan's own leadership headed towards the Morea. The sultan's army besieged Lepanto and, with the assistance of the fleet, occupied it in August 1499. In the next year the Ottomans took Modon and soon thereafter Koron and Navarino surrendered to the sultan, while raids continued in the Venetian lands in Albania and Dalmatia. In December 1500 Venice, with the help of a small Spanish squadron, seized the island of Cephalonia in retaliation for the loss of its lands in the Morea. The war continued less intensively in 1501, when in the summer the Ottoman governor of Elbasan took Durazzo and in October of the same year Venice, with French assistance this time, made an unsuccessful attempt to take Midilli. In 1502 small incidents of random warfare occurred, but it was obvious that both sides were ready for peace. Venice was facing severe economic problems and found it increasingly difficult to finance a war and Bayezid II's attention turned towards the ominous rise of the Safavids in Eastern Anatolia. Negotiations for peace began in December 1502 and a treaty was finalised in August 1503, with the Ottomans as the indisputable victors not only in terms of territorial gains, but also having asserted their place as one of the most powerful naval forces in the Mediterranean.

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25 See below (Chapter VI, The second Ottoman-Venetian war).
26 The events of the second Ottoman-Venetian war are described in detail in Chapter VI. In Heşt Bihşî, folios 568a-589a and 590b-593b.
27 Heşt Bihşî, folios 590b-592a.
The end of the war with Venice also marked the end of Bayezid II's campaigning. Diplomatic relations with the empire's Christian neighbours and the Mamluks were kept peaceful until his death, while in the remaining years of his reign the sultan concentrated on the empire's economic and administrative organisation and the defusing of the menacing internal and external tensions that threatened his state.

The rise of the Safavids

Developments on the Ottoman eastern borders were indeed serious reason for concern. Since the death of Uzun Hasan in 1478 the Akkoyunlu state had been under serious strain due to dynastic conflicts among his sons, a situation that deteriorated even further after the death of Ya'kub Beg (1478-1490). This instability proved very advantageous for the leaders of the Safavid order, which had abandoned its originally purely religious character and had begun to assume a political and militant character since the middle of the fifteenth century. During the second half of the fifteenth century the following and power of the Safavid leaders spread continuously, mainly among the Turkoman population of Iran and eastern Anatolia. The order's increasing power through its participation in the troubled Akkoyunlu politics soon alarmed the state's rulers, who thereafter attempted to restrain its growth. In 905/1499 Şah Isma'îl's authority began to expand from Gilan, where the leaders of the order had taken refuge after their persecution by the Akkoyunlu ruler Rüstem. In the next year Şah Isma'îl's forces defeated and killed the Şah of Şirvan and occupied his territory. The decisive change for the Safavids, however, came in 907/1501-2 when Şah Isma'îl defeated the Akkoyunlu ruler Alvand Mirza, took his capital Tabriz and proclaimed himself Şah and founder of the Safavid state. The expansion of the Safavids continued during the following years, until by 914/1508 Şah Isma'îl had the whole of Iran under his control.

Bayezid II could not afford to ignore these developments on his eastern borders. Not only was he worried as a Sunni ruler in view of the rise of a dynasty supporting Shi'ite beliefs, but the Safavid movement posed a significant threat to the political stability of the entire southeastern Anatolian region. A large number of Şah Isma'îl's followers were Ottoman subjects as well as members of the Turkoman tribes living in the areas disputed between the Ottomans and the Mamluks. The appeal of the Safavid teachings aggravated the already rebellious tendencies of Ottoman subjects residing in

the area, and their congregation around Şah Isma'il enhanced their claim.\textsuperscript{31} Furthermore, Şah Isma'il's teachings were very appealing to the Janissaries and the sipahis of the Ottoman army, a fact which threatened the unity of the empire and undermined the army's effectiveness against the Safavids.\textsuperscript{32} At the same time the Ottomans were faced with a delicate situation, as any interference in the Taurus area endangered the possibility of a Mamluk reaction or even an alliance between the Mamluks and the Safavids against the Ottomans over the Taurus area.\textsuperscript{33}

From around 1505 Şehzade Selim led numerous raids into Safavid territory with his personal army from Trebizond, but the official policy of Bayezid II once again kept a rather tolerant attitude towards Şah Isma'il, while trying to keep the Anatolian population under control. The activities of Şah Isma'il, however, were a definite threat to the Ottomans, despite a superficial display of good-will towards them. Although when pressed Şah Isma'il professed his wish for peaceful relations with both the Ottomans and the Mamluks, his conduct towards the Ottoman sultan was often barely respectful. Admittedly, Safavid forces only led a few minor expeditions into Ottoman territory,\textsuperscript{34} but on the other hand Şah Isma'il repeatedly tried to incite trouble and take advantage of the political discord in the Ottoman empire for his own benefit.\textsuperscript{35}

\textbf{The revolt of Şah Kuli}

In 1511 a large group of Safavid adherents under the leadership of Şah Kuli broke out in revolt in the area of Tekke. Joined by many Turkoman leaders from Karaman, the revolt grew and spread rapidly throughout the Ottoman lands. The rebels attacked Konya and defeated the imperial army in Afyonkarahisar, plundered Kütahya and began to advance towards Bursa.\textsuperscript{36} A large force of Janissaries and sipahis was sent to repel them, under the leadership of the grand vezir. Although the army's efficiency was seriously reduced by lack of unity, in a battle near Kayseri in June 917/1511 Şah Kuli was killed and a group of his adherents took refuge in Tabriz. At that time Şah Isma'il had been occupied in a war on his eastern borders with the Uzbek Han of Transoxiana since the previous year and, reluctant to provoke the Ottoman sultan's

\textsuperscript{31} The involvement of Anatolian Turkoman tribes in religio-political revolts goes back to their first Turkish arrival in Anatolia. See Köprüllü M.F., \textit{Islam in Anatolia after the Turkish Invasion: (prolegomena)}, transl. by G. Leiser, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press 1933.


\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 64.

\textsuperscript{34} There seem to have been at least two incidents when Safavid forces openly crossed over the Ottoman border, probably in 1505 and 1507, Pitcher, \textit{Historical Geography}, p. 101.

\textsuperscript{35} For Şah Isma'il's anti-Ottoman tactics see Allouche, \textit{Ottoman - Safavid Conflict}, pp. 89-99.

\textsuperscript{36} Fisher, \textit{Foreign Relations}, p. 97.
open anger, not only denied all responsibility for that revolt, but actively punished some of the movement's leaders.37

For the Ottomans, however, this incident was a harsh reminder of the seriousness of the area's tumultuous politics, and the sultan's moderate attitude towards the Safavids was used as another argument in favour of those who resented the sultan's peaceful policies and wished his fall.38 In fact Bayezid II, by then 63 years old, was in no position to organise any more effective measures to defuse the tensions in the area, as in the meantime the Ottoman state was once again on the verge of civil war.

Fraternal strife among Bayezid II's sons39

This time competition began while the sultan was still alive, a sign - and result - of Bayezid II’s moderate rule. Although political opposition against the sultan might have been temporarily subdued after Cem's death, the sultan's adversaries soon replaced their leader with one or another prince. By 1511 three of Bayezid II's sons were alive: Korkud, Ahmed and Selim40 who, according to Ottoman practices, were appointed as governors in the provinces. Despite his past temporary enthronement after Mehmed II's death, the chances of Korkud gaining the throne were few, due to lack of support from either the state officials or the Janissaries. The two main rivals were Ahmed, based in Amasya, and Selim, based in Trebizond. Ahmed enjoyed his father's preference as well as that of a large group of court officials, and especially the grand vezir 'Ali Paşa. On the other hand, Selim with his warlike character was favoured by the Janissaries, the support of whom had proved such a decisive factor in Bayezid II's enthronement 30 years earlier. Selim also enjoyed the support of the Tatar Han Mengli Giray.41

The two brothers became involved in a series of political intrigues and armed incidents, each trying to undermine the other in their father's eyes, and at the same time force Bayezid II, who was old and growing weaker, to abdicate in their favour.

38 One of the strongest criticisms of şeyhâde Selim against his father, and a justification in the eyes of his own supporters for his attempts to overthrow his father, was Bayezid II’s inability to deal effectively with the Safavids. See Inalcik H., “Selim I”, E.I.2, pp. 127-131 (here 127).
39 These events were added to Heşt Bilhišt several years after its initial presentation to Bayezid II. They form the work's epilogue as an eulogy to Selim I, under whom Bīdīlī's political career flourished. See below (Chapter III).
40 Bayezid II had had fifteen daughters and eight sons altogether. His sons were 'Abdullah (d. 1483), Ahmed (d. 1513), Şehingah (d. 1511), Alemşah (d. 1510), Mehmed (d. 1507), Maḥmūd (d. 1507), Korkud (d. 1513) and Selim (r. 1512-1520), Alderson A.D., *The Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty*, Oxford 1956, chart at the end.
In 1511 Selim, after much pressure on Bayezid II, managed to be appointed governor of Semendire in the European provinces, a location more advantageous in case of need to rush to the capital. In the end, Selim managed to take advantage of the political disarray caused by the revolts in eastern Anatolia. Decisively affected by the rumour that Ahmed had allied with Şah Isma‘il, Bayezid II was forced to withdraw from the throne and succumbed to the Janissaries’ demand that Selim be placed in charge and lead them against Ahmed. Selim was declared sultan in Şafar 918/April 1512, while Bayezid withdrew and retired to his town of birth, Dimetoka, on the way to which he died on 10 Rabi‘ I 918/26 May 1512.42

Reforms and developments under Bayezid II

Bayezid II was certainly not the forceful sovereign who would keep the state in control under a tight rein. His moderate approach to ruling made it imperative that effective administration and government would be based on political stability and harmony, so that his own intervention would be less demanded. As a result, progress under Bayezid II was of a different nature from under his predecessor, a process moving distinctly more slowly, and with a tendency towards development more into depth and consolidation. Peace with neighbouring states in both the west and the east was carefully kept, sometimes even at the empire’s cost; it was in fact this preference for peace, the main point for which Bayezid II was criticised, that provided the basis upon which the state flourished. Mehmed II’s policies had overstrained the state’s resources in almost every aspect, and throughout Bayezid II’s reign his different approach to state management was consciously performed and emphasised. Especially at the beginning of his reign the initial measures taken by the new sultan, clearly a reaction to Mehmed II’s policies, proved very effective in gaining popularity for Bayezid II and helping to secure his authority. Later on, however, when Bayezid II felt more secure in his position and sensed the state once again receptive to changes, he reinstated some of the measures first introduced by his father.43 In many cases the political stability under Bayezid II was the decisive factor that allowed the changes initiated by Mehmed II to be firmly established, and subsequently reach their full potential.

The empire’s economy saw a spectacular improvement and stabilisation, so much that at the end of his reign the State Treasury was full and the empire’s population enjoyed greater prosperity and safety.44 Peace with neighbouring states had a significant effect

44 McCarthy, *The Ottoman Turks*, pp. 79-80.
on the development of international trade, encouraged by smooth diplomatic relations and further enhanced by the sultan's strategic conquests. Internal economy and trade were also greatly enhanced by the improvement and safeguarding of communications both within and outside the empire's domains. Aside from the political stability which rendered travelling safer, methodical state policy employing the institution of vakfs aimed at the construction of bridges, the improvement of roads and the development of the necessary infrastructure in a number of cities situated on trade routes. In addition, taxation and the defter system were organised and became more effective, while the regular extraction of several cash taxes and occasional duties secured the means to financing military campaigns without the need for harsh last-minute measures. Reorganisations in the army were also significant. During the war with the Mamluks a process of improvements in the empire's land and naval forces began. The troops' artillery was upgraded, closer co-operation of the different types of forces was established, while the large-scale expansion, manning and equipping of the Ottoman navy succeeded in making the Ottoman empire among the strongest naval powers of the Eastern Mediterranean.

Legislation and education also received the particular attention of the sultan. Mehmed II was the first Ottoman sultan to issue kanunnames, that is law-codes dealing with a wide variety of issues, from penal law and taxation to administration and court protocol. Under Bayezid II kanunnames continued to be produced with constant additions and amendments on the previous texts and it was under this sultan that their production was first closely combined with the organisation of the taxation system, with a kanunname adjoined in each defter relating to a particular area. Bayezid II's reign is perhaps mostly known as a period of revival for religious studies and legislation in accordance with the Islamic religious law (ṣerī'ā). This was one of the most prominent policies adopted in opposition to Mehmed II's overdependency on secular laws deriving from the sultan's will (örf), which had caused the alienation and

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45 Both the conquests in the Black Sea and the Morea were chosen among other reasons for their significant importance in the empire's trade. Cf. Brummett P., *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery*, New York 1994, pp. 175-181.
46 Under Bayezid II the Ottomans made conscious efforts to protect both the sea-trade routes in the Mediterranean and some of the main caravan routes from India, which affected Ottoman trade.
48 Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 77.
49 Fisher, *Foreign Relations*, p. 38. For the development of the navy see below (Chapter VI, The navy under Bayezid II).
51 Bidlisi repeatedly stresses the fact that decisions and actions were made in accordance with the ṣerī'ā.
discontent of the 'ulema. In addition, a great number of mosques and medreses were built and religious sciences were developed, although other sciences such as philosophy and the natural sciences diminished due to the dominance of a highly religious atmosphere. Historiography also flourished and for the first time the foundations were set for a systematic development of court historiography.
CHAPTER II

An outline of Ottoman historiography

Ottoman historiography up to Bayezid II

The ways in which a society views and records its past are intrinsically related to that society’s present, as each historian is a product of his times. In that sense, a combined and complementary observation of the historiographical tradition and the political and social conditions, within which historical works were conceived and produced, can contribute to a better understanding of both a work itself and the interrelation between the author, his times and his work. It is considered that in the course of Ottoman history it was the uncertain and turbulent socio-political conditions following the defeat of Bayezid I (1389-1402) in Ankara (1402) that stimulated people to record their history in writing, while the systematic production of historical works really began to develop after the death of Mehemmed II.

During the fourteenth century the Ottomans appear to have been no different from any other emirate in the broader geographical and cultural area of the Anatolian peninsula, which was characterised by a scarcity of historiographical activity. The only works of a partially historical nature to survive from that period are the various epic poems written in the religio-heroic, menakibname style, a form of literature very popular in that period. Such poems, composed in simple Turkish or Persian language, described the exploits of the first Ottoman heroes along with various traditional and legendary personalities, mixing lively narrations of real events with typical patterns of imaginary folk-tales. They were usually recited by professional storytellers, in any place where

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53 Ibid., p. 93.
there could be a favourable audience, often in front of a gathering of soldiers. Indeed, their main objective was the entertainment of an audience and the celebration of the adventures of leading war personalities, while the involvement of a historical conscience as we view it today was only indirect.

It follows then, that accuracy in the recording of events would not always be a major concern, as the storyteller felt free - if not compelled - to improvise and enrich his narration with personal embellishments. In addition, as their content was limited to the description of a specific event or the exploits of one person, whether this was the sultan or a famous warrior, the gazavatnames and menakibnames by definition viewed the events they described as independent incidents, without any attempt to understand or place them within a larger historical framework. The simple, direct, oral style of these epics points to the nomadic-akritic character of the first Ottomans. In that early period warfare was a vital source of the wealth, glory, and political power of the members of the Ottoman family and their ruling class, as well as being the lifestyle of a large proportion of society. The special value of the gazavatnames and menakibnames lies, thus, in their illustration of the language, lifestyle, interests and set of values of the social group that at the time comprised the immediate environment of the sultan.

Considering the confusion and mobility of post-Seljuk Anatolian society, when the Ottomans were just one emirate among others more or less equal and population movements from one emirate to another were a frequent phenomenon, it is not surprising that the sense of identity to inspire a systematic recording of one’s exploits, as a unity and in distinction to others, did not develop. The literary production, or the lack of it, of the Ottomans about their own history illustrates the relatively underdeveloped awareness they had of themselves as a unity eligible to comprise the object of a separate history. The conditions for such a sentiment of self-definition appeared in the wake of the turbulent events at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century. The dramatic rise and fall of Bayezid I’s empire at the end of the fourteenth century generated a sentiment of individuality and distinctiveness, and subsequently, after the empire’s destruction by the Mongols in 1402 and the following decade of fraternal strife between Bayezid I’s descendants, the even stronger urge to understand, explain and justify the adventures and actions of the Ottoman dynasty.55

As a result of this tempestuous period a number of works were produced, in all of which the effort to record and analyse the recent past is evident enough to allow us to consider it as one of the main motivations for their composition. The earliest identified works surviving today are Aḥmedī’s Ḯskendername and Yahiṣī Fakih’s menakibname.56 Aḥmedī’s Ḯskendername is a long work in verse, parts of which constitute an account of world history. The last chapter of this section refers to the Ottomans and was written around the end of the fourteenth century. It was dedicated to Bayezid I’s son, Süleyman (1403-1410), and was revised numerous times in the following decade by the author himself. Yahiṣī Fakih’s menakibname, which only survives through excerpts reproduced in Ṭṣikpaṣazade’s history, is thought to have been written under Meḥmed I (1413-1421),57 that is immediately after the restoration of political stability in the empire. Evidence also points to the existence of another, earlier chronicle covering events up to 1399, which again does not survive in its original form but is believed to have been used by Aḥmedī and later on by several fifteenth-century historians, such as Şükru’lullah, Ruhi and Neṣri.58 There follows the chapter on the Ottomans in ‘Abdu’l-vasi Çelebi’s Halilname,59 written in 1414, which deals with the strife among Bayezid I’s descendants, until the re-establishment of stability in the Ottoman lands.

Despite the active cultural life during the reign of Murad II (1421-1444 and 1446-1451),60 only a few historical works were produced during the next four decades. A chronicle, presumably from the first years of this sultan’s reign, can be detected through later works,61 but practically the only substantial sample of historical records relating to Ottoman history can be found in the chronological lists, or takvims, which were produced annually at the ruler’s request. These works, written in Persian or Turkish, were lists of short entries on past events, sometimes with nothing more than


57 Ṭṣikpaṣazade only mentions that it was up to Bayezid I’s reign, without specifying an exact date. See İnalçek, “Ottoman Historiography”, p. 152.

58 Ibid., pp. 159-162; Ménage, “Beginnings of Ottoman Historiography”, p. 170.


a mention of the date of a battle or a major event, including natural phenomena. They were actually parts of astrological texts, either compiled for a ruler or in popular versions, which were to be used as the basis for the prediction of the future. Their annalistic sections began with brief lists of events, usually since the beginning of the world, and as entries approached their compilation's present time they became increasingly more detailed. Each year a new calendar was produced, copying that of the previous year and enriched with additions for the last year's events, and the older one was withdrawn. Although the works' general aim was not historical, their annalistic sections are essentially such, and thus later historians have broadly used them as a source of information. Such calendars, belonging to an early type of Muslim astronomy, had been popular among the Turks of Anatolia since earlier times. It is not clear when such works began to be compiled in Ottoman lands; the oldest copies surviving today were written for Murad II, the earliest dated 849/1421, but obviously based on earlier compilations.

The only purely historical works found under Murad II were produced by two members of the Yazıcı family, Yazıcızade ‘Ali’s Seljukname and Yazıcızade Meḥmed’s Muḥammediye, a long didactic poem with an epilogue which, among other items, contains panegyrics of Murad II and Meḥmed II. Although it is always possible that missing chronicles from that period might be discovered, evidence so far displays a relative lack of interest in the production of indigenous works on Ottoman history under Murad II. Considering especially that cultural and literary pursuits were not neglected by the sultan, this scarcity suggests even more that the previous examples of historical writing were largely the result of the upheavals of recent times, while the urge for the production of historical works had not yet attained a strong foundation in society. It also seems to suggest that the ruling class, without an urgent demand for self-definition and justification as the Ottoman state became again stronger and more stable, did not feel particularly inclined to request specially the output of historical accounts.

The conquest of Constantinople at the beginning of Meḥmed II’s reign effected a considerable transformation in the Ottoman state. On the ideological level the Ottomans became the heirs of the Byzantine heritage, a fact which further enhanced the sultan's

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64 See idem, “Murad II”, p. 614. The Muḥammediye was completed in 853/1449, after the first period of Meḥmed II’s sultanate. See Babinger F., “Yazidioghlu”, E.I(1), pp. 1171-1172.
arguments as claimant for hegemony in the Muslim world; the Ottomans were then faced with the challenge of according with the requirements of this illustrious setting.

Cultural life at the sultan’s court thrived under Mehmed II’s generous patronage. The sultan’s interest, however, was more directed towards the formation of an imperial image for himself and his state, rather than history itself. It was principally mainstream literature that was favoured among the Ottoman intellectual élite, with a growing preference for more sophisticated literary forms, especially for works written in Persian, the language of ‘high literature’ in the fifteenth century Muslim world. Mehmed II himself appreciated high literature and he certainly did not underestimate its value as a manifestation of the new imperial outlook he intended for the Ottoman state. During his reign a large number of panegyrical and other works of praise were produced by poets, many of them writing in Persian, who often came from abroad seeking the sultan’s favour and patronage. Biographical compilations mention several names of poets who composed such poems in the style of a şahname, such as Kaşifi, Hamidi, Mu’ali and Şehdi. Among these literary activities, the usefulness of historiography in the pursuit of his political ambitions does not seem to have been acknowledged by the Conqueror. Only a few historical works were composed during his reign, none of them commissioned by the sultan. They were general histories, composed at the authors’ own initiative or commissioned by leading individuals who were motivated by personal interest and not as part of a state policy, as was the case of the grand vezir Maḥmud Paşa (d. 897/1474).

Three historical works survive from the Conqueror’s time. Şükru’llah’s Behjet al-tevarih written in Persian, and Enveri’s Düsturname in Turkish, like Aḥmedi’s Iskendernname are universal histories which append a final section on the Ottomans. The third one, written in Arabic by Mehmed II’s last grand vezir Karamani Mehmed Paşa, is a short history divided in two volumes, the first covering the reigns of the Ottoman sultans up to Murad II and the second devoted to that of Mehmed II. For the first time the work’s subject-matter is indicative of the author’s interest in writing an exclusive account of Ottoman history with a focus on the present and the immediate past. The work, however, is still in fact little more than a brief list of events copied from other works with only a few personal additions.

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65 For Mehmed II’s patronage of poets etc. see idem, Mehmed the Conqueror and his time, Princeton University Press 1978, pp. 469 ff.
66 İnalcık, “Ottoman Historiography”, p. 163.
Historiography under Bayezid II

The production of historical works under conscious dynastic patronage can be said to actually begin under Bayezid II,\(^{68}\) a fact quantitatively manifested in the considerable boost in the number of historical works produced by the end of the first five years after Bayezid II's accession to the throne. The tradition of Muslim historiography; the preceding development of literature in the Ottoman courts and the sultans' interest in patronage of the arts; and the evolution of the first Ottoman indigenous historical writings constitute the cultural foundation upon which this first appearance of court historiography under Bayezid II was based and was allowed to develop.

The growing demand among the intellectual élite for historical works written in a more literary style continued to encourage the production of şahnames and elaborate gazavatnames. Works written in the şahname style are those of Kivami, Sarica Kemal, Firdevsi, Safa'i, Seba'i and Suzi Çelebi, narrating the gazaš of the Conqueror and several heroes who lived during the reign of Bayezid II and participated in the major campaigns against the Christian lands. Among the products of the first period of historiographical output under Bayezid II we find a number of such elaborate gazavatnames, fetnames and şahnames, alongside general histories of the House of Oğman (Tevarih-i Al-i Oğman) in straightforward Turkish.\(^{69}\)

The development of the Ottoman empire as a political unity and the particular needs of the times, combined with Bayezid II's personal interest and patronage of belles lettres, were equally decisive factors for the subsequent steps in the development of Ottoman historiography, namely the acknowledgement of its potential and its application in the service of the sultan's political objectives at that particular time. Of course literate men with an interest in history had not been wanting in the past. The number of histories that appeared only a few years after Meḥmed II's death, written by people who obviously lived through his rule, could certainly not have occurred without a background. The fact that for the first time the interest in viewing the history of the Ottoman dynasty as a self-contained unity appears at the end of Meḥmed II's reign constitutes a significant development in Ottoman self-perception is reflected in historical works of the times. Prior to that date the majority of the histories produced by Ottomans treated Ottoman history as merely a chapter, and usually among the humblest ones, of universal Muslim histories. It seems, however, that without the

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\(^{69}\) İnalcık, "Ottoman Historiography", p. 165.
sultan's explicit encouragement, men with historical interests kept their reflections to the personal level, and composed or sketched their works in private. Both Aşıkpaşazade and Neşri, for example, had been collecting the material for their histories throughout their lives, but only came round to completing and publicising their work at the instigation of Bayezid II.\textsuperscript{70}

One of the main values of history in fifteenth century thought was its use in assisting the rulers to govern.\textsuperscript{71} This didactic aim, which was already fully developed in the old Islamic literary genre of \textit{Mirrors for Princes}, was certainly among the motives that inspired these historians to compile their chronicles. Furthermore, the fact that these works were produced at the special demand of the sultan automatically resulted in their author's praising their patron and ingratiating themselves in his eyes. As a result, all histories that belong to this group are filled with the concept of unquestionable obedience and loyalty to the person of the sultan, along with "proofs" for the superiority of Bayezid II's rulership.\textsuperscript{72} A closer look at the conflicting sources of power among the complex Ottoman society, and particularly its ruling élite, will disclose some of the political considerations Bayezid II and the historians of the time sought to address through the medium of court historiography.

We have seen that at the beginning of his reign the new sultan was compelled to work hard in order to establish his authority, which was particularly vulnerable due to the political instability at the time of his accession to the throne. Tensions had been rising within Ottoman society as a result of the autocratic conduct and the harsh economic and political measures of Meḥmed II\textsuperscript{73} and the fragility of Bayezid II's position was further enhanced by the disintegrating effect of Cem's challenge, in both the international and the domestic fields.\textsuperscript{74} Both by natural disposition and by political exigency Bayezid II's rule was a definite and determined reaction to Meḥmed II's policies. The key points of his political programme can be seen in the striking contrast between the Conqueror's intensive campaigning and his son's peaceful conduct; the immediate abolition of the harshest socio-economic measures of Meḥmed II, and the


\textsuperscript{71} \textit{Idem}, "Beginnings of Ottoman Historiography", pp. 177-178.

\textsuperscript{72} See, for example, the introduction of Tursun Beg, in İnalçık H., "Tursun Beg, Historian of Meḥmed the Conqueror's Time", \textit{Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes} 69 (1977), p. 66.


\textsuperscript{74} See also below (Chapter V, The effects of Cem's revolt: A and B).
life-long endeavours of Bayezid II to reorganise the state's law system to one more in compliance with the "eri'a.\textsuperscript{75}

During Mehmed II's reign discontent with the sultan's autocratic policies was felt among many within the ruling class. One of the ways their opinions found expression was through literature.\textsuperscript{76} At the same time, the historians who answered Bayezid II's request for the writing of a dynastic history would not fail to praise their patron and celebrate the new sultan's political orientations. Aşıkpaşaşade, for example, who wrote his history at the end of his life under Bayezid II, but largely relying on his personal experiences from his service under both Mehmed II and Murad II, does not hesitate to express his, often severe, opinions and criticisms of various statesmen mentioned in his account. His comments are thought to represent not only his personal views, but the majority of the social class in which he belonged, that is the dervish-"ulema community.\textsuperscript{77}

At the same time, Cem's threatening presence in Europe had serious repercussions in the field of internal politics. The existence of a focal point around which endemic sources of opposition to central government could gather and organise strengthened and hardened their cause, while it obstructed, or at least seriously slowed down, the firm establishment of Bayezid II's authority. Conversely, along with the majority of the people who suffered during the civil war and were anxious that it might re-occur, many historians expressed their pro-Bayezid II sentiments in their histories and tried with their works to contribute to the stability of the empire. Tursun Beğ, for example, explicitly expresses his wishes that Bayezid II should remain securely on the throne.\textsuperscript{78}

Antagonism against Bayezid II from individual statesmen came from two sides: from those who were on Cem's side and threatened Bayezid II's rule by their opposition and their potential in organising and supporting rebellions, and from his own men who had initially helped him with their influence but soon began to undermine his independence. Although Bayezid II had the support of the Janissaries, he was practically at their mercy. The Janissary leaders, in particular, were among those who had brought Bayezid II to the throne, but their undoubted influence needed to be either regulated or diminished, if Bayezid II was to rule as an independent sovereign. It was


\textsuperscript{76} See İnalci̇k, "Mehmed II", p. 978-981.

\textsuperscript{77} Idem, "How to Read 'Ashik Pasha-zade", pp. 139-156.

\textsuperscript{78} İnalci̇k H. & Murphey R., The History of Mehmed the Conqueror by Tursun Beg, Minneapolis and Chicago 1978, pp. 17-18.
obvious that in the first couple of years this was not feasible, and it was a difficult struggle until Bayezid II managed to gain control.79

Gaining and securing the support of opposing social groups became, thus, one of Bayezid II's immediate objectives. The most numerous and influential social group deeply dissatisfied with Mehmed II and decidedly on Cem's side in the competition between the two şehzades, were the 'ulema. These included not only administrators who resided and served in the capital, but also the large ranks of educated men who held the numerous humble yet influential positions at all levels of the administrative mechanism throughout the empire. Social order in the provinces depended on the cooperation of the local population and the government's ability to keep under centrally regulated control any potential sources of trouble. In all parts of the empire, from small townships to big cities, there would be a part of the army, either a small garrison or a more substantial force, as well as a team of lower ranking 'ulema whose loyalty to the sultan was essential in keeping the area in order. Along with the 'ulema sided many dervish sects, whose economic interests were based on the vakıf system which provided their means of livelihood. The influence of the numerous sufi orders throughout the empire was immense, and for that reason sultans had always been careful to keep on good terms with them, or to eliminate those who opposed their rule. They were, moreover, seriously affected by Mehmed II's economic reforms at the end of his reign.80 In this case Bayezid II's encouragement of literary and religious sciences was only part of the measures aiming at the reinstatement of the good-will of this large and powerful social class.

Opposition was also directed against Bayezid II from the warlike elements of the government. Adherents of the 'old regime', they believed in the Conqueror's expansionism and criticised Bayezid II for his peaceful and conciliatory attitude. They also sided with Cem's supporters, as Mehmed II's younger son had the reputation of being inclined to - and capable of - continuing his father's policies. Here again historians who wrote for Bayezid II felt compelled to answer these criticisms. Although Bayezid II wanted to keep his forces ready and available for the possibility of an attack by the Christian forces led by Cem, it soon became obvious that campaigns could not be altogether avoided. The campaign to Moldavia (1484-5), the first major expedition of Bayezid II, was evidently the only way to defuse the tensions induced by the army's prolonged inactivity. It was also a great victory and a valuable

79 See also below (Chapter V, The effects of Cem's revolt: A).
80 For the attitude of the sufi orders towards Mehmed II's economic measures and Bayezid II's reforms see İnalçık, "How to Read 'Ashik Pasha-zade", pp. 145-147.
addition to the empire's domains. Of the histories written under Bayezid II, a large number were composed during the first five years from his accession to the throne and they end with the description and celebration of these successful campaigns. Historians took the opportunity to celebrate these victories and at the same time emphasise the sultan's worth in military activities and his gazi spirit. Above all, the manner in which these victories are presented, as an achievement that no previous sultan, Meḥmed II in particular, had managed in the past, clearly illustrates the authors' intention to exalt Bayezid II. For example, both Tursun Beğ and Meḥmed Konevi stress the fact that Meḥmed II had been unable to conquer Kilia and Akkerman.81

On an more abstract level, historical works reflected to a certain extent the latest ideological developments in Ottoman society regarding the status and nature of their state. Since the reign of Murad II ideas of the Ottoman dynasty's right to precedence in the Muslim world had began to develop. These claims, born of the consciousness of the state's growth in size and power, accelerated under Meḥmed II with the conquest of Constantinople, a victory which indeed added unparalleled prestige to the Ottoman dynasty and established the state's imperial status.82

Within their own territories, Ottoman authority needed to be reasserted in a number of regions which had been occupied by force. The rapid conquests of Meḥmed II had not been supported by any cultural or ideological foundations in the newly conquered areas, a matter that was addressed by Bayezid II, who was more concerned with their assimilation for the sake of political stability within his empire. The Ottomans were in need of a means to carry through to these populations the message that their dynasty did indeed have the right to govern and possess their lands.83 There were also several communities in Anatolia, for example in the areas of Karaman or the eastern and southern provinces of the empire, which had a long history of antagonism against control of the Ottoman government. They too needed to be reached and made to succumb to Bayezid II's authority so that they would at least offer him their obedience, if not their loyalty.84

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81 Idem, "Ottoman Historiography", p. 164.
83 For suggestions of other ideological formulations to address non-Turkish Muslim groups of subjects see Imber, "Ideals and Legitimation", p. 138.
84 Naturally these traditions were merely a subtle ideological formulation among other, more forceful methods employed by the government in the pursuit of this objective. In fact, central authorities resorted to a large variety of measures, adjusted to the particular requirements of the populations in
By the time of Bayezid II the superiority of the Ottoman dynasty was mainly promoted by two principal concepts: the Ottoman dynasty's hereditary and lawful right to rule, and their God-given privilege to lead the other Muslim nations based on their outstanding activities in conducting gaza. Since about the mid-fifteenth century, a genealogy based on the old Turkish epic traditions began to form, tracing the origins of the Ottoman dynasty back to the Oğuz Turks. In fact, two different lines of genealogy began to be formed in the middle of the fourteenth century, both trying to prove Osmanlı's lineage with two different branches of the Oğuz Turks.85 These, enhanced by another tradition which presented Osmanlı and his father Ertuğrul as being nominated legal heirs of the Seljuks, aimed at legitimising Ottoman claims to rule over all other Turkish dynasties in Anatolia.86 Other legendary tales, such as the famous dream of Osmanlı, in which God sent a message to him that he would lead the world in gaza,87 promoted the idea that the Ottomans' right to rule was sanctioned by both God's will as well as being in agreement with the ancient Turkish customs and laws about succession and rulership. These ideas were carefully combined with present-day Ottoman military achievements and all campaigns were celebrated as gazas and widely publicised to the Muslim world.88

Furthermore, in different times during the development of their state the Ottomans found themselves challenged by other old or powerful dynasties, such as the Timurids and the Karamanids and, particularly in the last third of the fifteenth century, by the Mamluk and the Iranian states. The old territorial rivalry with the Mamluks was rekindled during the fraternal strife between Bayezid II and Cem, when the Mamluk sultan offered support and hospitality to the fleeing prince.89 These events, fuelled by several other incidents, led to the two powers' open opposition a few years later. Especially during the six-year war between the two states, the Ottomans did all they could to present themselves as superior to their opponents in every possible way, in

question. An interesting example can be seen in the attempts to eliminate, by absorption or forced settlement, the nomadic populations of eastern Anatolia, investigated by Lindner R.P., Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia, Bloomington 1983.

86 Imber, "Ideals and Legitimation", p. 146.
87 Kafadar, Between Two Worlds, pp. 8-10 and 29-30.
88 The old practice of promptly compiling fetnames and dispatching them to Muslim and Christian rulers continued regularly in Bayezid II's time. Several such documents as well as gazavatnames were composed about Ottoman victorious campaigns under Bayezid II, such as Firdevsi's Kutbname and Safayi's Gazavat-i Bahriye and Fethname-i İnebahti ve Modon, about the Ottoman victories in Midilli and Morea respectively. Another two gazavatnames, about Daud Paşa and Mihaloğlu Ali Beg's exploits, do not survive today.
89 See below (Chapter V, The effects of Cem's revolt: B).
particular in the cultural and religious fields. Although in military terms the Ottoman army was rather superior to the Mamluks, the latter were still held in high esteem, as sovereigns of the two Holy cities, Mecca and Medina. The control of the Hijaz, apart from the considerable economic advantages it entailed, in the eyes of the Muslim community signified their rulers' precedence among all other states, a role that was becoming increasingly more important in Ottoman self-perception.90

The commission of Idris Bidlisi's and Kemalpaşazade's histories (1501-2)

The production of historical works slowed down considerably after this first outburst, even though some already completed histories were reworked in the following years.91 No major new projects were commissioned for a while, however, until about fifteen years later when another two general histories were ordered by Bayezid II, this time from Idris Bidlisi and shortly afterwards from Kemalpaşazade, at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Regarding the commission of Heşt Bihişt Bidlisi mentions in the work's introduction:

Sultan Bayezid ordered that a history of this great dynasty from its beginning to the year of 710 up to the present year of 908 should be written in a style favoured by the distinguished as well as by ordinary people with the correction and elucidation of the accounts concerning this dynasty. It is true that there are in Turkish a number of works on the subject but their stories lack elegance in style and truth on the events.92

The timing of the rekindling of sultan's interest in historiography is again noteworthy: during the years that had elapsed considerable changes had occurred in both domestic and international power balances, changes which had subsequently altered the empire's political concerns. The first major development was that Bayezid II was finally free from the need to remain on peaceful terms with the Christian world, having assured firm control of his power after a long and gradual process finalised by the abolition of Cem's threat with the latter's death in 1495. Expeditions towards the west had increased, with favourable results for the Ottomans. The expansion of the Ottoman navy and its victories against the Venetians not only brought territorial gains to the empire, but elevated Ottoman international status among the leading maritime powers in the eastern Mediterranean. Commercial and financial benefits followed.

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90 It was in view of this idea that later on the Ottomans readily helped the Mamluks against the Portuguese, thus showing their maritime superiority and assuming the role of the leaders of gaza and the helpers of any Muslim state in need -especially as this state was their main rival to that claim. The same idea was again propagated with Bayezid II's generous help to the Muslims of Spain. See also below (Chapter IV, Bidlisi's political and theoretical approach).


92 Translation by İnalcık, “Ottoman Historiography”, p. 166.
In the meantime, events on the southern Anatolian borders defined Bayezid II's antagonistic relations with his Muslim neighbours. Although after the treaty of 1491 peace with the Mamluks was restored, diplomatic and ideological competition between the two states did not cease. Thus the Ottomans continued their efforts to prove themselves superior in any possible aspect, especially in military and religious matters, while the need to present the Ottoman sultan as the most powerful, pious and gifted Muslim leader became even more urgent in view of the dangerous growth of the Safavids. It was obvious that the Safavids would soon come to challenge the Ottomans themselves, as they did not hide their aspirations of forming a state that would encompass all the regions where Şah Isma‘il’s following spread. Although these territorial claims of the Safavids had not yet been expressed in an openly aggressive manner, for a while the popularity of Şah Isma‘il’s socio-religious teachings among the tribal and sufi elements in the Ottoman provinces of eastern Anatolia had caused serious turbulence in the empire's social order.

During Bayezid II's reign, diplomatic relations between the two states were rare, sometimes openly insulting, and definitely indicative of the competition between the two states. In general, however, Bayezid II again maintained a rather tolerant and peaceful attitude towards Şah Isma‘il. Although it was obvious that only the violent suppression of riots would secure Ottoman dominion over these areas, Bayezid II was reluctant to take such harsh steps, due to the delicate conditions in this troubled area. Instead, the government adopted a series of preventive measures that aimed at weakening the troublesome elements and maintaining order in the region. Historiography was expected to strengthen Ottoman claims for predominance in the Muslim world, and thus arose the need for new works which would support this idea.

The particulars of the commission of Bidlisi's and Kemalpaşazade's chronicles deserve special attention, as they are manifestations of yet another step in the development of Ottoman court historiography under Bayezid II: we have seen that at the beginning of his reign, the histories written were composed as a response to the sultan's wishes. From what can be deduced from the compilers' introductions, however, it seems that the order was made generally without a particular author in mind. By contrast, the chronicles written by Bidlisi and Kemalpaşazade seem to have been the first court histories to be specifically commissioned by the sultan from

94 See above (Chapter I, The rise of the Safavids).
famous 'ulema. Naturally histories ordered by individual patrons and with specific requirements along with the order, or the utilisation of literature in general and historiography in particular by rulers as a tool for their political propaganda was by no means a novelty. This practice, however, does not seem to have been applied so far in the Ottoman state, at least not as personal commissions by the sultan to famous münis, with such specific demands about the work’s sophistication in language as in the case of Heşt Bihišt. Bidlisi’s history was expected to elevate Ottoman esteem, and Bayezid II in particular, above all other Muslim rulers of the present as well as the past, a task to be achieved not only by its contents but just as much by its elaborate language that was deliberately intended to add importance and glamour to the dynasty whose deeds were described. These changes, inspired by the maturity of Ottoman imperial self-perception and dictated by political demands, mark a turning point in the concept of the utility of court historiography in the Ottoman empire.

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CHAPTER III

Idris Bidlisi's life and works

Information about the early years of the author of *Hešt Bihišt* is scarce. Idris Bidlisi's full name, Mevlana Hakim al-Din Idris b. Mevlana Husam al-Din 'Ali al-Bidlisi, suggests that his origins were in Bitlis. His father, Mevlana Husam al-Din 'Ali, belonged to the order of şeyh Omar Yasır, a renowned şeyh also from Bitlis. It is possible that Idris was also a member of the same order. His father served as a münşi at the Akkoyunlu court, first in Amid (Diyarbekir) and later on, when in 1469 Uzun Hasan transferred the Akkoyunlu capital to Tabriz, Bidlisi's family also moved there. Mevlana Husam al-Din 'Ali died in 900/1495 in Tabriz and is buried there. Bidlisi's date of birth is not established, but can be estimated in the late 1450's, as according to his own information, at the time of his family's transfer to Tabriz he was still a child.
Another issue that remains unanswered regards Bidlisi's origins. While several scholars accept that he was probably of Kurdish origin, Bayrakdar argues the validity of this assumption, suggesting instead that he was a Turk. In fact all arguments are based on rather circumstantial evidence, and no concrete documentation can support either option with certainty. Equally little is known about the places where Bidlisi received his education, or the identity of any of his teachers. His biographers do not provide any explicit information, and Bidlisi himself only mentions that he received his first education from his own father. We may assume, however, that he would have had the usual education a learned Muslim would obtain in order to enter the circles of the ruling class. This would include religious studies, literature, calligraphy, as well as horseriding and some basic knowledge of warfare. In his works Bidlisi displays a thorough knowledge of Persian and Arabic and a skill in calligraphy, prose and verse writing.

Bidlisi began his career at the court of the Akkoyunlu dynasty in the service of Ya'kub Beg (883/1478-896/1490), of whom he became a close companion. The exact date of his first appointment in the court is not known, although it probably came at a relatively early age, considering that his father had already been serving at the palace. Certainly by 890/1485 he was already a member of Ya'kub Beg's court, as can be determined by a letter of congratulation to Bayezid II for the successful Ottoman campaigns of the same year, written by Bidlisi in the name of Ya'kub Beg as a reply to a fethname sent to the Akkoyunlu sultan. Bidlisi initially held the position of münși, but later on was promoted to the posts of divan kâtibi and nişancı. For the ten years following Ya'kub Beg's death Bidlisi remained in the service of his descendants, Sultan Rüstem and Alvand Beg. During that stage of his life and career Bidlisi must have been among the higher-ranking officials and policy-makers of the Akkoyunlu state. He remained in Tabriz until the fall of the city to the Safavids in 907/1501 and the collapse of the Akkoyunlu dynasty, having been actively in their service for at least seventeen years.

101 See, for example Ménage, “Bidlisi”, p. 1207; Fleischer, “Bedlisi”, p. 75.
102 Bayrakdar, Bitlisli İdris, pp. 2-3.
103 İdris Bidlisi, Tercüme ve Tefsir-i Hadis-i Erba'în, Fatih Kütüphanesi No.791/1, folio 3a as mentioned in Bayrakdar, Bitlisli İdris, p. 5.
106 The texts of both this fethname and Bidlisi's own reply are reproduced in Heşt Bihişt, folios 541a-543b.
107 Şerefeddin el-Bidlisi, Scheref-nameh, p. 342.
Bidlisi then fled to the Ottoman empire and sought refuge with Bayezid II. He was certainly not the first, nor the last political or literary personality to have found support and patronage from neighbouring rulers, the Ottomans in particular, and Bayezid II, true to his interest in the patronage of the arts and literature as well as his claim to provide help and refuge to all Muslims in need, readily accepted Bidlisi in his court and assigned a monthly allowance to his support. The Ottoman sultan was certainly not unfamiliar with Bidlisi’s fame as a great münşi, and soon after his arrival in the Ottoman capital Bidlisi received the commission for the composition of Heşt Bihişt, in 908/1502, and was allotted lands in the town of Dupniçe (Köstendil) and an annual income for this service. Bidlisi is said to have spent a long time there while he was composing his work.

Bidlisi is not reported to have held any other post during the time he was writing Heşt Bihişt, or been assigned any political responsibilities under Bayezid II. Although apparently Ibrahim Gülşen relates that Bidlisi was Bayezid II’s muvakki, that is the sultan’s seal bearer, this appointment seems unlikely considering that none of his other biographers mention it, and that Bidlisi is not known to have been on particularly close terms with this sultan. He certainly did, however, make the acquaintance of several other statesmen at Bayezid II’s court, for example Koca Muşatafa Paşa, who is believed to have been one of Bidlisi’s main oral sources for Heşt Bihişt. Indeed, the close connection between the two men is pointed out by a number of indications: apart from a lively report of Muşatafa Paşa’s mission to Rome that obviously carries traces of personal experiences, Bidlisi describes in great detail the feast that was held on the occasion of the completion of Muşatafa Paşa’s vakf in Istanbul. It is very likely that Bidlisi himself was present in that feast, as he was also commissioned with the writing of the inscription placed at the gate of the same mosque.

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110 For members of the Akkoyunlu dynasty and ruling élite to be found later in Ottoman service see Gökbelğin T., “XVI. Asır Bağlannda Osmanlı Devleti Hizmetindeki Akkoyunlu Ümerası”, Türkiyat Mecmuası IX (1951), pp. 35-46. For the patronage of Ottoman sultans to ‘ulema from the Persian lands see Babinger, Mehmed the Conqueror, pp. 467ff.

111 Taşköprüzade, Şakaik al Nu’maniyya, p. 327.


113 Gülşen, Menâkıb-i İbrahîmî Gîlşenî, (ed. T.Yazıcı), Ankara 1982, pp. 80-81 and 353, as mentioned in Bayrakdar, Bitlisli Idris, p. 7. See also Woods, The Aqquyunlu, p. 34.

114 See below (Chapter IV, Bidlisi’s sources).


116 Heşt Bihişt, folios 614b-615a.

117 Bidlisi mentions the existence of this inscription, without, however, making a reference to himself, Heşt Bihişt, folio 615a. A photograph of this inscription is given in Bayrakdar, Bitlisli Idris, p. 98, pl. VI.
Bidlisi wrote the major part of Heşt Bihişt within a period of four years. The main text of the work, lacking introduction and epilogue, seems to have been partially circulated in 912/1506-7, when a copy of it at that stage was presented to the sultan. According to the prerequisites of its commission Heşt Bihişt was expected to create an image of the Ottoman dynasty which would satisfy the government’s current political needs in both fields of domestic and external politics. Yet while still at this unfinished stage Heşt Bihişt became the object of criticisms which questioned its compliance with the requirements laid upon it. As a result the rewards promised to Bidlisi upon the completion of Heşt Bihişt were not delivered.\textsuperscript{118}

These events are described in a letter Bidlisi sent to Bayezid II from Mecca (1511-12), in which he voices his complaints about his unfair treatment.\textsuperscript{119} In it we are informed that although he had presented Bayezid with a draft copy of Heşt Bihişt in which he praised both the Ottoman dynasty and the state’s officials, he received neither the payment agreed, nor the honours he had expected. For that he blamed some of the sultan’s courtiers, whom he does not name, as the sultan had apparently issued a firman ordering the payment of what was due to him. Bidlisi also declares his intention to expose these injustices in the hatime of Heşt Bihişt, which he was planning on composing in the near future. Indeed, in a special section in the hatime which he calls şikayetname, Bidlisi carries out his threat. In this eight-page long section he expresses his intention to describe the injustices he was faced with during a time of weakness, and continues with an elaborate presentation of his misfortunes and adventures.\textsuperscript{120}

During the years that followed the initial presentation of Heşt Bihişt to Bayezid II Bidlisi remained in Ottoman lands, probably in his estates in Kostendil. The only positive information about him for that period is that he suffered a severe illness and that he had tried unsuccessfully to gain permission to go on the Pilgrimage.\textsuperscript{121} It is most likely that a number of his works, which are known to have been produced in the reign of Bayezid II, were written during these years.\textsuperscript{122} Bidlisi was only given leave to depart in Rabi‘ II 917/July 1511, after the death of the grand vezir Hadım ‘Ali Paşa,

\begin{footnotes}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[118] Heşt Bihişt, folios 638a-638b.
\item[120] Heşt Bihişt, folios 637b-641a.
\item[121] The letter with which he asks for permission to leave is found in the archives of the Topkapi Saray, No. E 3156, as mentioned in Ménage, “Bidlisi”, p. 1208. These facts are also mentioned in Heşt Bihişt, folio 639a.
\item[122] See the list of his works below.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotes}
who seems to have been his chief enemy. Even after that, however, Bidlisi points out that hostility against him did not cease: soon after his departure, which according to his own words was not celebrated as was suitable for a learned man of his importance, he was also deprived of the 'ikta and the timar granted to him.

After a month-long trip by sea Bidlisi arrived in Iskenderiyye and then travelled to Cairo, where the Mamluk sultan, Kanșuh al-Ghuri, accepted him with great reverence. He remained in Cairo for a while, apparently in the company of several 'ulema residing in the Mamluk capital. One of them especially, the mystic and poet Ibrahim Gülşeni, had been an old acquaintance of Bidlisi's since the time they were both in the service of the Akkoyunlu sultan Ya'kub Beg. Gülşeni, who at that time resided in Cairo under the patronage of Kanșuh al-Ghuri, is said to have helped Bidlisi during this period. It is possible that the great respect with which Selim I and his troops treated Gülşeni after the Ottoman conquest of Egypt was to a large extent due to Bidlisi's encouragement and recommendation.

Bidlisi departed for Mecca accompanied by his own cousin, who was serving as the emir-i hac (leader of the pilgrimage). He remained in Mecca for about a year, during which time he reworked and completed Heşt Bihişt. In the letter he wrote to Bayezid II, mentioned above, we also read that he had asked for permission for his family to join him, but that he was in doubt this would be granted. Furthermore, in the seventh volume of Heşt Bihişt Bidlisi mentions his longing to return to Istanbul but that his hopes of returning to Ottoman lands were faint. In the meantime, it appears that after the news about Bidlisi's fall out of favour with the sultan had been circulated, Şah Isma'il attempted to attract Bidlisi to his own court. He ordered one of his 'ulema, Mevlana Kemaleddin Tabib Şirazi, to write a letter to Bidlisi and offer him a position in his service. Bidlisi, however, declined the offer. All the above indications suggest that he probably was prepared to settle in Mecca or somewhere else

125 Bayrakdar, Bitlisli Idris, p. 8.
126 Yazyici, “Gulshani”, p. 1136.
127 Şükru M., Osmanlı Devletinin Kuruluşu, Ankara 1934, p. 10. Bidlisi describes in length his arrival in Mecca and the visit to the Ka'ba in the şikayetname, Heşt Bihişt, folio 640a.
128 Heşt Bihişt, folio 640b.
130 Serefeddin el-Bidlisi, Scheref-nameh, p. 343. Bidlisi's anti-Safavid sentiments and regrets for the political developments that led to the destruction of the Akkoyunlu state are expressed in Heşt Bihişt, folio 523a. See also Woods, The Aqquyunlu, pp. 179-180.
in the Mamluk state, a plan, however, which did not need be realised after Selim I’s accession to the throne.

Shortly after his enthronement, and while Bidlisi was still in Mecca, Selim I issued a firman and sent some money to Bidlisi, inviting him back to Istanbul.131 The fact that the new sultan reinstated Bidlisi in Istanbul so soon after his accession to the throne suggests that şehzade Selim and Bidlisi had been personally acquainted prior to that date. Although there is no concrete evidence to trace this acquaintance, the hostility of the grand vezir Hadim ‘Ali Paşa, who during the fraternal strife for the throne had been one of the most ardent advocates of şehzade Ahmed, could be explained by the broader conflict among the statesmen in support of one or the other of Bayezid II’s sons. Gladly fulfilling Selim I’s request, Bidlisi travelled to Damascus by land with the intention to return to Cairo and from there proceed to Istanbul by sea. While in Damascus, however, it appears that he was informed of a plague epidemic in the Mamluk capital, which forced him to remain in Damascus and then travel by sea from Aleppo to Istanbul. The date of his arrival to Istanbul is reported to have been within the year 1512.132

Throughout Selim I’s reign Bidlisi remained a close and trusted companion of the sultan. During the campaign against Şah Isma’il Bidlisi used to ride next to the sultan together with other esteemed ‘ulema, namely the poet Ca’fer and Selim I’s laла (tutor) Halimi Çelebi.133 As this was a privilege usually granted to the sultan’s close friends, it is another indication of the high esteem in which Selim I held our historian. Bidlisi’s career at the Ottoman court reached its peak in the service of this sultan. After the battle of Çaldıran (2 Receb 920/23 August 1514)134, Bidlisi became of great service to the Ottomans in carrying out negotiations with the Kurdish Beğs of the area of Diyarbekir. Most of them were Sunni, and the annexation of this region to the Ottoman empire, as well as of the Kurdish forces against the Safavids was a significant asset to the Ottoman cause. Bidlisi’s knowledge of the language and manners of the Kurdish tribes, certainly enhanced by his past prestige in these areas since his service under the Akkoyunlu, made him the ideal personality to carry out the negotiations and greatly contributed to the peaceful incorporation of Kurdistan into the Ottoman state.135

131 Heşt Bihişt, folio 640b.
132 Bayrakdar, Bitlisli Idris, p. 9.
Bidlisi remained in that area for almost two years, organising the incorporation and administration of the Kurdish tribes and the resistance against the Safavids with great success. When, in October 1515, Şah Isma'il sent to Diyarbekir Kara Han, the brother of its former governor, Bidlisi was sent with ten thousand men\textsuperscript{136} to assist the beşlerbeği of Diyarbekir, Bıyıklı Mehmêd Paşa.\textsuperscript{137} During that time Selim I's respect and confidence were once again demonstrated by the fact that Bidlisi was given full authority to organise the newly acquired areas. Selim I provided Bidlisi with blank documents, which he was given absolute freedom to fill himself, including leave to appoint as governor whomever he thought suitable.\textsuperscript{138} In doing so, and wisely not attempting to impose full Ottoman control, Bidlisi arranged that the land would be divided into twenty four parts, only eleven of these being under full Ottoman authority. The rest were to remain either completely autonomous under Kurdish chieftains, or under loose Ottoman supervision but still governed by native families.\textsuperscript{139} The results of this process were highly satisfactory for both the Ottomans and the Kurdish Beğs, whose territories were organised in a manner most considerate to their customs and autonomy.

Bidlisi was highly rewarded for his services with lands in the area of Diyarbekir and many gifts from the sultan.\textsuperscript{140} A list of these rewards can be found in the translation of the \textit{firman} Selim I sent to Bidlisi, dated 15 Şevval 921/23 November 1515. In addition, in the next year Bidlisi was the first man to occupy the newly introduced post of \textit{kaçi 'asker} of the Arab provinces.\textsuperscript{141} After the completion of his mission Bidlisi accompanied Selim I on his campaign to Egypt in 1516-17. He was at the sultan's side during the battles in Merc Dabuk and Ridaniye\textsuperscript{142} and once again he served as Selim I's advisor for the organisation of the administration of the new conquests. In this capacity he is said to have warned the sultan of some injustices committed by the Ottoman officials.\textsuperscript{143} On his way back to Istanbul, Selim I appointed Bidlisi's son, Abu'l-Fazl Mehmêd Efendi, \textit{kaçi} of Tripoli.\textsuperscript{144} Bidlisi's son had a significant political

\textsuperscript{136} Or five thousand, according to some sources, see Bayrakdar, \textit{Bitlisi İdris}, p. 10.


\textsuperscript{138} One such \textit{firman} is quoted by Sa'deddin, as mentioned in Ménage, "Bidlisi", p. 1207.

\textsuperscript{139} Parry, "The Reign of Bayezid II", pp. 71-72.

\textsuperscript{140} Bayrakdar, \textit{Bitlisi İdris}, pp. 90-91, with a reference to Sa'deddin, \textit{Tac al-tevarih}, pp. 271-272, from where the document is extracted.

\textsuperscript{141} Sûreyya, \textit{Sicil-i Osmanî}, p. 309; Bayrakdar, \textit{Bitlisi İdris}, p. 10.

\textsuperscript{142} Bayrakdar, \textit{Bitlisi İdris}, p. 10.

\textsuperscript{143} Fleischer, "Bedlisi", p. 76.

\textsuperscript{144} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 76.
career under sultan Süleyman I, reaching the position of başdeftedar.\textsuperscript{145} He was also the builder of the Defterdar Camisi.\textsuperscript{146}

Selim I died on 8 Şevval 926/21 September 1520,\textsuperscript{147} and during the next few months Bidlisi seems to have been out of office. He continued, however, to offer his services to Selim I's successor, Süleyman I. Obviously in an attempt to help a man who must have been among his old acquaintances, Bidlisi wrote a petition to the new sultan regarding the services of Tokatlu Rüstem Beğ, one of the former Beğs of the Akkoyunlu.\textsuperscript{148} Rüstem Beğ had been among Selim I's scouts in the past, and possessed a thorough knowledge of Kurdistan and the eastern regions of the Ottoman empire. Bidlisi recommends Rüstem Beğ's assistance and guidance on the occasion of another campaign in these areas, once again revealing his own anti-Safavid feelings.\textsuperscript{149} Bidlisi died in Istanbul soon after Selim I, in Zilhicce 926-November-December 1520.\textsuperscript{150} He is buried at Eyyub, near the İdris-Köşkü, in the mosque founded by his wife, Zeyneb Hatun.\textsuperscript{151}

Bidlisi wrote a large number of works, a list of which discloses that his interests included theology, philosophy, politics, as well as medicine and the natural sciences. Bursa Mehmed Tahir mentions a number of Bidlisi's works,\textsuperscript{152} but the most thorough list of his works is found in Bayrakdar's study on Bidlisi.\textsuperscript{153} The majority of the information provided here is extracted from these two works, where further references on the manuscripts and their location can be found. The works are given here in their possible chronological order.

\begin{itemize}
\item \section{1. \textit{Resāla Jazā'ī (1)}} probably Bidlisi's first work. It is a travel-book in Persian, written while Bidlisi was in the service of the Akkoyunlu Ya'qub Beğ, to whom the work is dedicated.\textsuperscript{154}
\end{itemize}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{145} Bayrakdar, \textit{Bitlisli İdris}, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{146} Mustakimzade, \textit{Tuhfet-i Hattatin}, p. 111.
\textsuperscript{147} İnalçık, "Selim I", p. 130.
\textsuperscript{148} Certainly a petition written after Selim I's death, as Bidlisi's patron is referred to as سليم خان مرحم و مغفور سلطان.
\textsuperscript{149} This letter is reproduced in its original form in Uzunçarşılı, \textit{Osmanlı Tarihi}, vol. II, pl. XXI.
\textsuperscript{150} For a discussion on the various contradicting dates regarding Bidlisi's death see Bayrakdar, \textit{Bitlisli İdris}, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{151} Taşköprüzade, \textit{Şakaik al Nu‘maniyya}, p. 328.
\textsuperscript{152} Bursali, \textit{Osmanlı Mu‘ellifleri}, pp. 7-8.
\textsuperscript{153} Bayrakdar, \textit{Bitlisli İdris}, pp. 31-52.
\textsuperscript{154} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 48.
\end{flushleft}
a four-volume work on cosmology, astronomy and meteorology, written in the last years of Ya’kub Beg’s reign. Its date of composition is estimated at around 1488-1490, and the work is again dedicated to Ya’kub Beg.\footnote{155}

\(\text{3)\, a work on } \text{fikh} \text{ in Persian prose and verse. It was written in 908/1502 and dedicated to Bayezid II.}\footnote{156}

\(\text{4)\, heşte beşte, begun in 908/1502.}\)

\(\text{5-6)\, Sherh Hadis-i Erba’in (Tercüme ve Tefsir-i Hadis-i Erba’in and Tercüme ve Nazım-i Hadis-i Erba‘in), two works in Persian, with a translation and commentary on the “Forty Hadith”. Both were written during Bayezid II’s reign.}\footnote{157}

\(\text{7)\, Muraṭ al-jamal, a work on politics and morals written in Persian under Bayezid II, probably between 1508-1510.}\footnote{158}

\(\text{8)\, a commentary on Kadi Beyzavi’s (d.1286) ‘Aṣār al-ta’awul. It is written in Arabic and was dedicated to Bayezid II.}\footnote{159}

\(\text{9)\, Sherh al-‘asār al-sūm from Sherh ‘asār al-‘aradān, a work on } \text{fikh} \text{ in Arabic. It was written in 917/1511 while Bidlisi was in Mecca, and is dedicated to the Mamluk sultan Kanṣūh al-Ghuri.}\footnote{160}

\(\text{10)\, Resale el-‘a‘ay wa ‘umma‘ wa ‘a‘idh, a work about the plague and the defences against it, written in Arabic around 1512. It is also known under the title } \text{Risale fi'l-Ta‘un ve Cevazi’l-Firar anhu}, \text{previously thought to be a separate work. A Turkish translation is said to have been produced by Bidlisi Meḥmed Şalih Efendi, during the reign of Maḥmud I (1730-1754).}\footnote{161}

\(\text{11)\, a commentary on Şeyh Maḥmud Şabistari’s (1250-1321) Ma‘ārif al-‘iyān, a commentary on Şeyh Maḥmud Şabistari’s (1250-1321) \text{‘} \text{Risale fi’l-Ta‘un ve Cevazi’l-Firar anhu, previously thought to be a separate work. A Turkish translation is said to have been produced by Bidlisi Meḥmed Şalih Efendi, during the reign of Maḥmud I (1730-1754).}\footnote{161}

\(\text{12)\, The work was planned while Bidlisi was in Mecca, and is dedicated to Selim I, therefore its date of composition can be estimated around 1512-1514.}\footnote{163}

\footnotesize
a work on taşavvuf dedicated to Selim I. It was written in Persian around 1515.164

a work in Persian on the nature of philosophy. Its exact date of composition is not known.165

a Persian translation of Damiri’s (d.808/1406) ترجمه حيوت الحيوان. The translation of the Egyptian scholar’s work was made at the order of Selim I after the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517.166

a work on philosophy. The date of its composition is not determined.167

a work on politics and morals similar to Mir’atü ’l-Jemal. It was written in Persian during the end of Selim I’s reign and dedicated to Süleyman I.168

There are also a number of works known to have been written by Bidlisi, or to be attributed to him, which are now lost.

attributed to Bidlisi by Bursali Mehummed Tahir.169 It is supposed to be a commentary on the works of Nasireddin Tusi ترجمه الكلام and of Seyyid Şerif Cürcani حاشية تجريد.

a work in Arabic.171

a work on taşavvuf, probably in Arabic.172

attributed to Bidlisi by İ.H. Uzunçarşılı.173

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164 Ibid., pp. 34-35 and 51.
165 Ibid., p. 34.
166 Ibid., p. 32.
167 Ibid., p. 33.
168 Ibid., p. 37. This work has been the subject of a Ph.D. thesis by Tavakkoli Hasan, İdris Bidlisi’nin Kânûn-i Şâhansâhi’sinin Tenkidî Neşri ve Türkçeye Tercümesi, İstanbul Universitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Bölümü, İstanbul 1974, mentioned by Bayrakdar. I have not been able to consult this thesis.
169 Bursali, Osmanlı Mu’ellifleri, p. 7.
170 Bayrakdar, Bitlisli İdris, p. 33.
171 Ibid., p. 34.
172 Ibid., p. 34.
173 Ibid., p. 35.
attributed to Bursa Meḥmed Tahir. Its title indicates that it is a commentary on Ibn al-Arabi’s (1165-1240) Fussūs al-ḥukm, probably in Arabic.\(^{174}\)

a commentary on Qasida al-ḥurūbī by Ibn al-Fariz el-Miṣri (1182-1235).\(^{175}\)

in Persian, its existence is mentioned by Bidlisi himself in his "Qānūn ẖoshnāh.\(^{176}\)

Bursa Meḥmed Tahir attributes to Bidlisi another work, Ḫurūb Manṣūma ẖālaḵ Rāz, which was in fact written by Bidlisi’s father, Husam al-Dīn ‘Alī al-Bidlisi.\(^{177}\)

Bidlisi also wrote a large number of poems. Finally, at the request of Selim I Bidlisi began writing a Selimname, another work of historical content, on his new patron’s reign. According to his own information in the introduction of the work, Bidlisi collected the material for it while he followed Selim I in his campaigns. He also informs us that at the same time three other ‘ulema were occupied with a similar task: ‘Abdu’r-Rahim ‘Abbasi, Ḵāz ‘Abdu’l-Kabir Laṭifi and Mevlana Muḥammed Ada’i ẖirāzī. The Selimname is a long work in Persian prose and verse, of around 80,000 couplets, which had remained unfinished at the time of Bidlisi’s death in 1520. It consists of two kism on Selim I’s early life, a eulogy to his moral and literary qualities; and an account of his reign.\(^{178}\) Later on, at the request of Suleyman I, Bidlisi’s son, Abu’l-Faẓl Meḥmed Efendi, edited and completed his father’s Selimname. In a preface of his own, found at the second kism of the work, Abu’l-Faẓl Meḥmed Efendi explains that after his father died the Selimname was scattered and partly lost. The task of collecting the missing material and its reconstruction, with additions of Bidlisi’s son wherever he thought necessary, was completed after the death of sultan Suleyman I in 1566.\(^{179}\)

\(^{174}\) Ibid., p. 35.
\(^{175}\) Ibid., p. 35.
\(^{176}\) Ibid., p. 39.
\(^{177}\) Ibid., p. 36.
\(^{178}\) See Babinger, Die Geschichtschreiber, pp. 95-97. Some passages from the Selimname were translated by Massé H. in "Selim Ier en Syrie, d’après le Selim-namé" in Mélanges Syriens offerts à M. René Dussaud, Paris 1939, ii, pp. 779-782, as mentioned in Menage, "Bidlisi", p. 1208.
CHAPTER IV

The Heşt Bihişt

Despite the great length of the work, over six hundred folios, Heşt Bihişt was produced in a relatively short time. Bidlisi himself claims that he completed his task within two years and six months, although it is likely that this claim is slightly exaggerated. It is more probable that the composition of the work took around four years, as the contents of the text itself disclose. Bidlisi is known to have arrived in Istanbul sometime before 908/1502-3, and according to his own information the sultan ordered him to write Heşt Bihişt shortly thereafter. Assuming that he commenced working on it immediately, the thirty-month period of its composition would suggest that Heşt Bihişt should have been completed no later than sometime in 911/1505-6. The narration, however, extends up to 912/1506-7, during which year the appointment of several statesmen is recorded, such as the appointment of Yunus Ağa in charge of the Janissaries and of Firuz Beğ as governor of Bosnia, after the death of İskender Paşa. The major part of Heşt Bihişt was, therefore, composed between the years 908/1502-3 and 912/1506-7.

Contents and structure of Heşt Bihişt

Bidlisi chose the title Heşt Bihişt (The Eight Paradises) for his chronicle, a title with a long tradition in Persian literature. With reference to the fact that Bayezid II was the eighth sultan of the Ottoman dynasty, the work was divided in eight Books each one devoted to the reign of one ruler. Each Book begins with one or more introductory sections in verse, called tali‘a (بَطْلَیّة) and Mukaddime (مقدمة), terms borrowed from military organisation. The main historical narrative is then given in a number of destans (دِسْتَان). As a rule in the tali‘a and mukaddime Bidlisi discusses general

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180 See Şükrü, “Heşt Bihişt”, p. 133.
181 Heşt Bihişt, folio 623b.
182 Heşt Bihişt, folios 610b and 629a.
issues, mainly related to the virtues of the sultan, whose reign is described, and the
events surrounding his enthronement. The destans contain descriptions of major
events and the campaigns and conquests made under the sultan in question. Each
section usually begins with a short introductory passage of general -moral or
theoretical- discussion, often rather loosely related to the main subject. The beginning
of the narration proper in each section is then marked with the word القصة. The
organisation and contents of each Book is as follows:183

Introduction: one tali’a in two parts, the first discussing the science of History and the
second pronouncing the superiority of the Ottoman dynasty.

Book I (Oşman, to 1326): one tali’a on the origins and the genealogy of the Ottomans
and two mukaddime on their early wars and their connection to the Seljuk dynasty,
and an account of Oşman’s enthronement. The second mukaddime also includes a
report on contemporary sovereigns. There follow thirteen to fifteen destan (the
number varies in different manuscripts), six of which describe Oşman’s campaigns
and conquests before his enthronement, and the rest the campaigns after that date. The
first Book ends with an epilogue (hatime) about Oşman’s death.184

Book II (Orhan, 1326-1360): one tali’a about the transfer of sovereignty and two
mukaddime on the qualities and virtues of Orhan, as well as a report on his accession
to the throne. An account of contemporary sovereigns is also included. There are
eighteen destan on the campaigns and conquests during Orhan’s reign.

Book III (Murad I, 1360-1389): one tali’a and two mukaddime with contents similar
to the previous chapter and eighteen destan on Murad I’s campaigns and conquests.

Book IV (Bayezid I, 1389-1402): two mukaddime and sixteen destan. It seems that
the fourteenth destan of this Book, planned to record the accounts of 798-800/1396-8
was never written, as it either appears only as a heading, or is entirely omitted by the
copyists.185

Book V (Meḥmed I, 1413-1421): one mukaddime, twenty eight destan, one hatime.

183 Given in Rieu, Persian Manuscripts, pp. 217-218. For a more analytical description of the
contents of each section in the first two Books see Şükrü, “Heşt Bihiṭ”, pp. 139-141.
184 For a more detailed description of the contents of the first two Books see ibid., p. 139. On the
issue of the origins of the Ottoman dynasty Bidlisi follows Ruhi. See İnalcık, “Ottoman
Historiography”, pp. 166-167.
185 See also the descriptions of individual copies in Şükrü, “Heşt Bihiṭ”, pp. 131-137.
Book VI (Murad II, 1421-1444 and 1446-1451): two mukaddime, twenty four destans.

Book VII (Mehmed II, 1444-1446 and 1451-1481): two tali’as on Mehmed II’s accession to the throne and a report on contemporary sovereigns and learned men, one kalb (قلب) on the sultan’s virtues and qualities, his power and armies, and his building activity. There follow two jenah (جناء) on Mehmed II’s children and his vezirs and generals, and twenty nine destans describing his campaigns and conquests. As in the following Book, campaigns are divided into those directed against Muslims or infidels, grouped in seven for the right (MEM) and twenty two for the left (MEM) wing (مشهرة) respectively.186

The Introduction and the first six Books are almost equal in length to the last two Books and the hatime.187 It is obvious that, as the narrative approaches Bidlisi’s own time, the length of the accounts and the variety of issues discussed are increased, a fact which is also reflected in the more complicated structure of the last two Books. A closer look at Book VIII will disclose even more the chapter’s rather complex structure of sections and their sub-divisions.

Book VIII (Bayezid II, 1481-1512):

[497b-503a] mukaddime on Bayezid II’s power and excellence, the ability of his statesmen, the order of his kingdom, the feebleness of rebellions and the strength of the army, especially in regard with wars against the kingdoms of the West. Divided into eight latife (لطيفة), on the virtues of the sultan [499a-503a].

[503a-518b] tali’a, divided in two kism (قسم).

[503a-513b] first kism on the holy virtues and divine qualities of the sultan, divided into two nev’ ( نوع) on a sultan’s essential qualities. The first nev’ on the generous qualities and actions of the sultan is divided into two rükn (ركن), each containing a number of für’ (فرع). The second nev’ is divided into two rükn on the sultan’s moral virtues, with three fer’ (فرع).

[513b-518b] the second kism is a lengthy report on some of Bayezid II’s pious foundations.

186 All these terms also derive from military terminology.
187 293 and 245folios respectively in the London copy, 356 and 286 in the Berlin copy.

[523a] kalb on Bayezid II’s accession to the throne, divided into two ba‘is (بعث).

[528a-599a] first ba‘is about the conquests and gazas of the sultan, consisting of eight destan of the right wing on the wars against Muslims, and of ten destan of the left wing on the campaigns against infidels.

[528b-533b] first destan (right) on the events of the first year of Bayezid II’s conflict with Cem.

[533b-537a] second destan (right) about Cem’s return to Kaşar and the continuation of civil strife until Cem’s death.

[537a-539b] third destan (right) on the appointment and dismissal of several statesmen.

[539b-543b] first destan (left) on the conquest of Kilia and Akkerman.

[543b-546a] second destan (left) on the gazas of Malkoçoğlu Bali Beg and Mihaloğlu İskender Beg, and some events in Anatolia during the years 889-891/1484-1486.

[546a-554a] fourth to sixth destans (right) on the war with the Mamluks.

[554a-568a] third to sixth destans (left) on the events and campaigns against Hungary and Poland.

[568a-593b] seventh to tenth destans (left) on the war with Venice, up to the relief of Midilli from a combined Venetian - French attack, including the suppression of a revolt in Kaşar - seventh destan (right) - that took place during the sultan’s campaign in Modon.

[593b-599a] eighth destan (right) on the celebrations for the circumcision of the sons of şeyhade Mahmud.

[599a- 631b] second ba‘is divided in two jenah, again arranged in right (يمنى) and left (يسرى). The right jenah [599a-607a] on Bayezid II’s sons, is sub-divided into two destans, consisting of five and two guftar (کفتار) respectively, on various events related to the princes. The left jenah [607a-629a] on the great men and the officials of the state is divided in six šnuf (صنف).
First sinif on the sultan’s vezirs. Includes two guftar on the post of the vezir, for the previous holders of the post and the ones currently appointed at the time of writing, and one destan on ‘Alaeddin ‘Ali Paşa, Muṣṭafa Paşa and Yaḥya Paşa, whom he calls the Triad (اقنوم).

Second sinif on the emir ül-‘ümerra of Rumili and of Anadolu, divided in one guftar for each, with an appendix (تذ يپئل) for the current holders of the post.

Third sinif on the kazı ‘askers, including one destan on the nature and importance of the post and two guftar on the previous and current kazı ‘askers.

Fourth sinif on the defterdars of the state including only one destan.

Fifth sinif on the nişancıs of the state.

Sixth sinif in two saff (صف). The first one divided in two kism on the army commanders and the servants of the Imperial Household, and the second on the governors of Bosnia.

Epilogue (hatime): account of Selim I’s accession, Bidlisi’s şikayetname and an eulogy for Selim I.
مقدمه

طیعه

قسم نوع

رگن رگن رگن رگن

فرع فرع فرع فرع

البه حکایت القصه

قلب

بعد

جناح

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The manuscripts of *Heşt Bihişt*

The most extensive studies on the manuscripts of *Heşt Bihişt* and their location are those by F. Babinger, C.A. Storey and M. Şükrü. The descriptions and discussion on the dating, condition and usefulness of several manuscripts given by M. Şükrü are particularly useful. Brief descriptions and references to *Heşt Bihişt* can also be found in several individual catalogues of the libraries that hold copies of the work. None of the above studies, however, provides the full list of all surviving manuscripts of *Heşt Bihişt*. The following catalogue is a compilation of the information found in the three works mentioned above, with the complete list of copies of *Heşt Bihişt* known to exist today.

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189 *Ibid.*, pp. 132-133 suggests that a manuscript, with the number 3197 in the same library, is an autograph, possibly even Bidlisi’s own draft copy, as can be assumed by the numerous corrections in the text. Storey, *Persian Literature*, p. 413, mentions Şükrü’s comment in relation to this manuscript. It is not clear whether they both refer to the same copy with a mistake in the first digit, or there is another copy of *Heşt Bihişt* in the same library, apart from the three listed above.

190 According to Storey, *Persian Literature*, p. 413. Part of it was possibly written by Bidlisi himself, see Şükrü, "*Heşt Bihişt*", pp. 132-133.
10.  3539  I  10th/16th cent.
11.  3540  I-III  10th/16th cent.
12.  3541  mukaddime, I-VI  11th/17th cent.\(^ {191} \)
13.  3542  I-V  10th/16th cent.
14.  3543  IV-VI  10th/16th cent.
15.  Revan Köşkü  1514  mukaddime, I-VI  ca. 1000/1591-2
16.  1515 (1)  mukaddime, I-VI  964/1557
17.  1515 (2)  VIII  11th/17th cent.
18.  1516  I-VII  ca. 1000/1591-2
19.  Halis Efendi  2785  VII  1104/1692
20.  3364  967-8/1560-1
22.  637  VIII, hatime  10th/16th cent.
23.  888  I-V  10th/16th cent.
24.  Umumiye  5161/2  VII  1065/1655
25.  Lala İsmail (Hamidiye)  397\(^ {192} \)  VII  1079/1668
26.  'Atif Efendi  1946  mukaddime, I-VIII  1098/1687
27.  1947  VI-VII  11th/17th cent.
28.  1948  VII  11th/17th cent.
29.  Ali Emiri Efendi  800-7  COMPLETE  1114/1702
30.  Ahmed III  2914

Outside Turkey

31. Bankipur (Or.Pub.Lib.)  vi 532-4  autograph (?)
33. Tehran (Majlis)  276  1080-8/1669-77
34. Mashhad  iii  defective at both ends

\(^ {191} \) According to Storey, Persian Literature, p. 414. Şükrü, “Heşt Bihişt”, p. 133 notes that the introduction is an autograph.
\(^ {192} \) Storey, Persian Literature, p. 415 refers to this manuscript with the number 379.
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193 In Fihrist i kutub i Kitáb-khánah i mubárákah i Ástán i quds i Fídawi, Mashhad 1926, p. 105, as mentioned in Storey, Persian Literature, p. 415.
195 Described in Dorn B., Die Sammlung von morganländischen Handschriften, welche die Kaiserliche Öffentliche Bibliothek zu St. Petersburg im Jahre 1864 von Hrn v. Chanykov erworben hat, St. Petersburg 1865, as mentioned in Storey, Persian Literature, p. 415.
196 In Salemann C. & Rosen V., Indices alphabetici codicum manuscriptorum persicorum turcicorum arabicorum qui in Bibliotheca Imperialis Literarum Universitatis Petropolitanae adservantur, St. Petersburg 1888, p. 50, as mentioned in Storey, Persian Literature, p. 415.
197 In Mélanges Asiatiques vi, St Petersburg 1873, p. 124 as mentioned in Storey, Persian Literature, p. 415.
198 Mélanges Asiatiques vi, St Petersburg 1873, p. 731 as mentioned in Storey, Persian Literature, p. 415.
199 In Flügel G., Die arabischen, persischen und türkischen Handschriften der Kaiserlich-Königlichen Hofbibliothek zu Wien, Vienna 1865-7, as mentioned in Storey, Persian Literature, p. 415.
201 For a description of this manuscript see Şükrü, “Heşt Bihîş”, p. 136.
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Copies of ‘Abdu’l-Baki Sa’di’s Turkish translation

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Manuscripts used in this study

Two manuscripts have been used in the present study, chosen for their accessibility as well as their legibility and good condition. The first one, which constitutes the primary manuscript of the translation, is Ms Orient 3179 of the National Library in Berlin. It is in very good condition, and has been pointed out by Şükrü as one among the best texts to work with. Due to its legibility and good appearance, references to the text in the present study are made according to this manuscript. Giese’s study on the similarities between Aşıkpaşazade’s history and the Heşt Bihişt also makes his references to the same manuscript.

The text is written in a clear and neat nesh, which greatly contributes to its accurate perusal. Each page contains 23 lines with well-defined margins. Quotations in Arabic are marked with a line above them, while passages that were missed out by mistake are added at the side margins. The first word of the following folio is also noted at the bottom margin of each verso. Page numbers are not marked by the copyist, but folios

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202 Described in *ibid.*, p. 138.
203 Numbers 44 and 52 in the catalogue above.
204 Şükrü, “Heşt Bihişt”, p. 135.
have been numbered in European digits on the recto of each folio. At the end of each Book are mentioned the work’s title and Idris Bidlisi’s name as its author. The last colophon, following the hatime gives the copyist’s name, (vİÖ ZÖ ğHİGİ) and the date of the copy’s completion: 11 Rabi‘ I 968/1560-61. The same person, Muḥammed b. Bilal, was also the copyist of several other works written by Bidlisi, found in the Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi Esad Efendi.

The second copy used in the present study is the two-volume manuscript 7646-7 of the British Museum in London. It is written in a clear nestalik although many of the diacritical characters are omitted. Each page contains 31 lines and section headings are marked with the use of larger script in red ink. There is no page numbering or any other markings outside the text’s rather loose margins. The copy is dated 988/1580.

The actual text is remarkably similar in the two copies. Although there are some small differences, for example in the spelling of proper names, there are no contradictions of any essential manner in terms of the content. The London copy tends to often omit short passages and words of praise, such as parts of verses or literary repetitions, and the classification of the interpolated passages is frequently different, the terms Ğ=Ğ, ţe_u and ĈǦê are used interchangeably within the two texts. Verses of the author himself, however, marked Ģğiş are respected by both copyists and always marked as such.

Bidlisi’s sources

As Heşt Bihišt was personally commissioned by the sultan, it seems reasonable that Bidlisi would have access to the majority of the recently produced historical works, which he was expected to surpass in both linguistic expertise and historical accuracy. It is also very likely that he would have access to many of the sources used by these works as well. Indeed, Heşt Bihišt enjoys the reputation of being one of the most detailed historical works up to its time, which could only be achieved after a thorough study and utilisation of previous chronicles. As is characteristic for historians of his time, however, Bidlisi rarely names his sources, whether written or oral. Although an exhaustive comparison of Heşt Bihišt with existing material in order to identify which passages derive from previous works is a task outside the scope of the present thesis, a general discussion on Bidlisi’s sources is useful.

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206 Heşt Bihišt, folio 642a.
207 These works are bound in one volume, catalogued under the number 1888 and dated 952/1546, as seen in the individual entries of each work in Bayrakdar, Bitlisli Idris, pp. 33 ff.
208 Turan Ş., Tevarih-i Al-i Osman, VII. Defter, Ankara 1957, p. LXVI.
Şükrü’s detailed study of the first two Books of *Heşt Bihişt* lists a number of works which Bidlisi consulted, including Turkish, Arabic, Persian and perhaps Greek works as well as a number of oral accounts. Further studies on early Ottoman historiography also confirm that among the main histories used for the composition of the bulk of *Heşt Bihişt* were those of Neşri, Aşıkpaşazade, Ruhi or one of his sources, and at least one of the *Tevarih-i Al-i Oşman*. It is also possible that Bidlisi had access to some sources also used by Tursun Beğ, for although the latter’s history itself was apparently not consulted, some personal accounts are common in both works.

Reports in the seventh and eighth Books in particular are often marked with Bidlisi’s personal approach and understanding, which he could not have avoided acquiring through his personal contact with the people and the politics of the time. Furthermore, as many of the histories upon which *Heşt Bihişt* was based end their account at a date earlier than the work’s completion, in 912/1506-7, the recording of subsequent events must have relied predominantly on individual accounts, such as *gazavatnames* or *fethnames*, possibly complemented by first-hand information from participants in the campaigns. Certainly enough works were produced on the specific events of the sultan’s major campaigns, such as Safa’i’s *Gazavat-i Bahriye*, on the exploits of Kemal Re’is, and *Fethname-i İnebahî ve Modon*; and Firdevsi’s *Ku‘bîname* on the naval expedition in Midilli. At the beginning of the description of the conquest of Modon and Koron, for example, Bidlisi specifically states that his information derives from at least one other account without, however, naming any specifically:

The royal mandates announcing the sultan’s conquest record that it occurred in 906 (1500-1). After the conquest of Lepanto the sultan returned to Edirne, where he spent the winter and made preparations for the *gaza*.

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209 See the quotations regarding the first two Books given in Şükrü, “*Heşt Bihişt*”, p. 143; for Bidlisi’s sources on particular events in the seventh Book see also Turan, *Tevarih-i Al-i Oşman*, p. LXVI.

210 Menage, *Neshri’s History*, p. 50, n.2.

211 Giese, *Die Textrezensionen*, pp. 1 ff.

212 İnalçık, “Murad II”, p. 615; *idem*, “Mehmed the Conqueror (1432-1481) and his Time”, *Speculum* XXXV (1960), pp. 409-410.

213 Şükrü, “*Heşt Bihişt*”, pp. 147ff.


215 Aşıkpaşazade’s history covers up to 1484-5, Neşri’s up to 1495 and Ruhi’s before 1503. For the completion date of several other works written under Bayezid II see *ibid*., p. 165.

216 See below (Chapter VI, Bidlisi’s sources and the place of *Heşt Bihişt* ...).

217 *Heşt Bihişt*, folio 577b.
There are several passages in *Hest Bihišt* which are clearly based on some *gazaname*, such as the descriptions of the *gazas* of Malkoçoğlu Bali Beg and Mihoçlu İskender Beg218 or the account of an incident from Hamza Bali Beg’s *gazas* in Bosnia, which Bidlisi identifies as part of a *gazavatname* he does not name.219 We also notice in *Hest Bihišt* the use of other individual sources in the description of certain events. For instance, after his own account of the conquests of Kilia and Akkerman, Bidlisi includes the entire text of the *fethname* written for the same occasion by Hoca Seydi Muhammed Münşi Şirazi, and the reply to it, written by Bidlisi himself.220

Vague references to eye-witnesses and oral accounts, apparently used in conjunction with written accounts, occasionally appear in the account of some campaigns.221 For instance, when introducing the description of a campaign to Hungary under the command of Ya’kub Paşa, Bidlisi states: “These events have been described and verified by fellow soldiers, who were present on the campaign.”222 In this case, as nothing more specific is said, one can only speculate about the identity of Bidlisi’s informants. A personal account can also be detected in the description of Muştafa Paşa’s mission to Rome, in 1489-90, although it is nowhere explicitly stated that this information comes from an oral source. The possibility of this assumption is enforced by the great likelihood of a personal acquaintance between Bidlisi and Muştafa Paşa, as mentioned above.223

Some official documents seem to have also been among possible sources of information for Bidlisi. One such case seems to be indicated by the financial data on a number of *vakıfs*, endowed not only by the sultan but also by various state officials.224 The detailed manner of this information suggests that Bidlisi had access to some type of financial registers related to the institutions, possibly even the *vakıfnames* of the endowments in question themselves. Furthermore, the following passage, dating from the first years during which *Hest Bihišt* was composed, indicates another possible oral source, most likely from a state official, who was up to date with developments in administrative matters. At the same time, such detailed logistics suggests that either Bidlisi himself, or his informant had some kind of access

218 *Hest Bihišt*, folios 543b ff.
219 *Hest Bihišt*, folios 616a-616b.
220 *Hest Bihišt*, folios 541a-543b. See also Chapter III.
221 For oral accounts in the first Book see Şükrü, “Hest Bihišt”, p. 144.
222 *Hest Bihišt*, folio 557a.
223 See Chapter III.
224 *Hest Bihišt*, folios 512a-518b (of Bayezid II), 609a-b (of Daud Paşa), 613a-b (of Alaeddin ‘Ali Paşa), 614b (of Muştafa Paşa).
to official financial records:

In 909 (1503-4) the sultan arranged various affairs according to the şeri‘a, such as the expeditions and equipment of the army, and important issues concerning the kingdom and religion. The allowances of governors and the ‘ulema, who were important members of the sultan’s court, were around 7,600,000 Ottoman akçe, which equals 2,150,000 silver coins struck with the stamp of Rum. This sum of money was donated by the sultan along with valuable goods, slaves, horses and mules, and various foods and other victuals, which were given for charity. In this manner every year some of that amount will be spent in a virtuous way for the rank of the distinguished ‘ulema, the educated and the virtuous men of the times, and for other learned and religious men.225

Audience intended and circulation of the work

In the introduction to his chronicle Bidlisi states that stylistically he modelled Heşt Bihişt on the works of Juvayni, Vaşṣaf, Mu‘îneddin Yazdi and Şarafeddin Yazdi.226 The chronicles of these authors were the finest examples of the most elaborately written historical works in the tradition of Persian historiography. Their language, which had developed from the ornate language of the chancery, had elevated historical writing from a simple and straightforward recording of the past to the level of high literature. This style was widely emulated thereafter and by the end of the fifteenth century it enjoyed great popularity among the literary circles of the Muslim world. The organisation of the material and a work’s linguistic sophistication and elegance of expression was considered to add value and importance to the work as well as its subject-matter.227

It was undoubtedly for this reason that Bayezid II specifically demanded Heşt Bihişt to be written in this type of language. As a result Bidlisi’s rhetoric was so elaborate and heavily embroidered with Arabic words and complicated sentences, that only the educated would be capable of not only appreciating, but even merely understanding it.228 Naturally, the main aim of Bidlisi would be Bayezid II’s satisfaction at the work’s perusal. Beyond the sultan, however, an interesting question arises: to whom was Heşt Bihişt, this chronicle so highly politically and ideologically charged, addressed, and who was therefore the target of the author’s - and his sponsor’s - ideological influence.

225 Heşt Bihişt, folio 513a-513b.
226 Rieu, Persian Manuscripts, p. 217.
It is clear that the recipients of this work would be the well educated, while the frequent Arabic proverbs, verses, extracts from the Koran and the hadith confirm that the work was written exclusively for Muslims. Bidlisi himself, in fact, mentions that Ḥeṣṭ Bihiṣṭ “has gained appreciation and fame among all the learned men of the kingdom”, and that while he was in Mecca he had encountered several other men who acquired copies of it. The target of the work, therefore, could be the rulers, ulema or statesmen of other Muslim states, as well as members of the ruling class within the Ottoman empire itself. In fact the contents of the work and the issues it addresses at various points reveal an interest in fulfilling Ottoman political needs in both fields.

There can be no doubt that Ḥeṣṭ Bihiṣṭ was commissioned with the intention of producing a chronicle, the magnificence of which would serve the sultan’s aims in external politics. The splendor of the Ottoman dynasty needed to be manifested as much in the courts of the empire’s adversaries, primarily the Safavids, as to those of every Muslim sovereign with whom the sultan had diplomatic relations. Indeed, again as Bidlisi states, very soon after the work’s initial presentation to Bayezid II, a copy of its seventh Book was sent to the Tatar Han Mengli Giray. The speed with which the copy was dispatched confirms the government’s concern for the publicity of Ḥeṣṭ Bihiṣṭ to neighbouring courts. Indeed, Mengli Giray, an Ottoman vassal, and his environment are a good example of the type of Ḥeṣṭ Bihiṣṭ’s intended audience.

As mentioned before, Ḥeṣṭ Bihiṣṭ appeared precisely at the turning point in the development of Ottoman historiography, when the central government acknowledged the ideological power of historical works in the formation of politics and began to actively take advantage of this power. Indeed, the contents of the Ḥeṣṭ Bihiṣṭ, addressing a wide variety of the most critical issues in Ottoman internal politics under Bayezid II, disclose the author’s awareness of addressing an audience with a close understanding of and interest in the current political scene.

Bidlisi’s political and theoretical approach

There is no doubt that Bidlisi intended to fulfill Bayezid II’s expectations, especially as one of the consequences of his status as a newcomer to the Ottoman court meant that the lack of family alliances and placed him in a position especially dependent on his patron, the sultan. Although at the time Ḥeṣṭ Bihiṣṭ was commissioned Bidlisi had only recently arrived in the Ottoman lands, he would not have been entirely unfamiliar

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229 Mentioned in Bidlisi’s letter to Bayezid II, see above (Chapter III, n. 119).
230 In the same letter to Bayezid II, previous note.
231 See above (Chapter II).
with either Ottoman politics or the main expectations from court historiography. As an active political figure in a neighbouring state, Bidlisi would certainly have been informed of the major political events and developments in Ottoman domains, while the possibilities of court historiography’s services to the needs of central government was not a novel concept in the Akkoyunlu court. A tradition of court historiography at the service of the sultan began at around 875/1469-70 with Abu Bakr Tihrani’s *Kitāb-i Diyarbakriyya*, written for Uzun Hasan and Sultan Halil.\(^{232}\) The aim of official histories written during that period disclose their authors’ intention to support and legitimise Akkoyunlu authority through the establishment of genealogy, and deal with matters of political propaganda and dynastic legitimation similar to those in the time of Bayezid II.\(^{233}\)

First and foremost, however, *Heşt Bihişt* was a court chronicle avowedly belonging to the literary tradition of Islamic Persian historiography, a tradition that inevitably defined the work’s principal philosophy and aims. For most historians of the time, history had a strong didactic role in the service of the rulers, who by the lessons of the past could benefit in the better administration of their kingdoms.\(^{234}\) A lot of the main principles of the political theory behind historiography are influenced, thus, by the related literary genre of *Mirrors for Princes* and the political theory that had developed in it. Bidlisi was no exception, as can be seen from the structure of *Heşt Bihişt* and the range of political views expressed in it. Bidlisi’s political approach is manifested in both the theoretical sections of the text and in their application to the current political realities, throughout the text.

According to Muslim political ideals, the king is all-powerful, the shadow of God on earth. As God’s will is manifest in all events of this world, the ruler’s authority emanates from God’s grace upon him for his excellent qualities. Obedience to the king is, therefore, rendered unquestionable and rebellion against his person is considered a great sin, as it is in effect an action against the will of God. The most important of a ruler’s qualities is justice (عدالت), which is mainly understood as the ability to maintain order and harmony in the society. This is necessary so that the şeri‘a and the customs of Islam can be allowed to flourish freely and the state will be prosperous. The king needs to inspire awe and use punishment to enforce order and to fight against

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\(^{234}\) For the early developments of this concept in Persian historiography see Meisami J. S., *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century*, Edinburgh 1999, pp. 6-7.
oppression and tyranny. For the effective application of the above, the wise choice of able and upright statesmen is strongly required, while the army is beyond doubt the sultan’s most important instrument. Special attention is also given to the idea that respect must be shown to the ‘ulema, as their advice is vital for the correct and smooth practice of Islam within the state.

The eighth Book, by the nature of its content, is the main section of Heşt Bihişt in which Bayezid II’s policies are systematically promoted, while the universal superiority of the Ottoman dynasty is shown to culminate with Bayezid II’s excellence. As is the general format of every Book in Heşt Bihişt, the mukaddime and the greater part of the tali’a are entirely devoted to an elaborate presentation of the sultan’s virtues. Bayezid II is praised both as a person, focusing on a wide range of his natural qualities that justify God’s choice, as well as an able and competent ruler who enjoys military expertise and great skills of command and administration in both the domestic and international sphere. Bayezid II’s natural virtues include justice, courage (شجاعت), and benevolence (صفوت), manliness (جوامردی), honesty (عقّد) and God’s grace, which is manifested by both events in the visible world and the occult sciences. Not surprisingly, Bayezid II is illustrated to possess in abundance, in fact surpassing all his predecessors, all the essential qualities of an ideal ruler:

With the aid of divine guidance and generosity, this noble sultan possesses all the natural qualities associated with government, justice and the grace of laudable qualities and excellencies and all four pillars, which are the foundations of virtuous qualities, that is justice, courage, lawfulness and authority, which have been mentioned before. Both as a whole and as regards each individual attribute, in comparison with preceding sultans, this sultan is the most liberal, magnanimous and generous. Of all the relevant actions and signs in the world, of all the rulers of all times, perhaps this sultan is the most blessed. But the evident proof for the superiority of these praises and qualities over all other virtues are his actions, and his consideration for the prosperity of the people in his care.

Bayezid II is, thus, undoubtedly chosen and guided by God, and throughout the text his actions and decisions, the outcome of battles or the appointment of the sultan’s men are invariably proclaimed to have occurred with divine guidance (تورقیه بزادانی) or assistance (تعاونی). The following passage affirms Bayezid II’s divine right to rule in reference to what was perhaps the most crucial incident in his reign, the conflict with Cem, by endowing Bayezid II with the fundamental principles of ideal sovereignty in the most concrete manner:

235 Heşt Bihişt, folios 497b-518b.
236 Cf. also the similar approach in Tursun, İnalçık & Murphey, Tursun Beg, pp. 20-22.
237 Heşt Bihişt, folios 512a-512b.
Perhaps because the foundation of his state was strengthened by manifestations of care for the believers, the desire for conformity with the šeri‘a and his superiority of intellect, the fact that he arrived first to attain his right and kingdom found approval with divine guidance.238

Among the traditional requirements of ideal sovereignty, and an important feature of Bayezid II’s image, is his exceptional religious authority and pious rule.239 As has been mentioned previously, the promotion of policies in agreement with the šeri‘a was an especially important concern during Bayezid II’s reign. It is, thus, not surprising that it is so frequently stressed in Heşt Bihişt. Furthermore, Bayezid II is carefully portrayed as the most powerful Muslim ruler of his time, the protector of the faith (پانئ؛ پادشاه اسلام). This concept, mostly aiming to support Ottoman claims for religious predominance in the Muslim world and directed mainly to other Muslim rulers, is supported by frequent references to the sultan as “Imam and the caliph of the time”.240 It is also more specifically promoted in the account of the conquest of the Venetian ports in Morea, an event which provided Bidlisi with an excellent opportunity to point out Bayezid II’s active support of Muslims outside the Ottoman lands.241

Bayezid II’s generosity and charitable activity (اعتناء و صدقات), also ranking highly among the ideal ruler’s fundamental qualities, are exhibited with the description of some of the numerous vakfs endowed by the sultan, in the final section of the ṭali‘a:242

In times of fear and misfortunes, when the fundamental principles of kindness and mercy and the lights of Muslim compassion are extinguished from the minds of the Arab and Persian kings, the good works of this sultan of the mucahids benefit all the empire’s people, infidels and Muslims alike. The sultan’s generosity is clearly displayed through his care for the foundation of welfare buildings and the building of imarets and compounds of schools and bridges in the memalik of Rum.243

Although the larger part of this section is dedicated to the external description of the main buildings, the sultan’s providence for the population and the promotion of commerce and the safety of communications are also pointed out:

238 Heşt Bihişt, folio 529b.
240 Heşt Bihişt, folio 534a.
241 See below (Chapter VI, Bidlisi’s historical, political and ideological approaches).
242 For several other vakfs established by Bayezid II, not mentioned in Heşt Bihişt, see Baltaci C., XV-XVI Asılar Osmanlı Medreseleri, Istanbul 1976, pp. 163-164.
243 Heşt Bihişt, folio 514a.
Bridges are made by order of the sultan as pious foundations. Their maintenance and repairs are included in the endowment. One can travel from the provinces of Rum towards the vilayet of Ōsmancık through a river known as Kızıl Irmak. It is a passage for caravans and merchants from all over the world, especially from Syria and Iraq. The bridge built there is an indication of magnanimity and care for the trade between great cities. The sultan ordered the construction of that bridge in order to help people.244

Bayezid II’s worthiness as a military commander, who is equal and even superior to his predecessors, both Ottoman and Muslim in general, is also especially stressed wherever fitting. As already mentioned, this approach was widely adopted in the descriptions of the conquests of Kilia and Akkerman by historians writing in the early years of Bayezid II’s reign. In Heşt Bihişt Bidlisi repeats this idea in the account of the sultan’s victory in the Morea, in special reference to the magnificence of the Ottoman navy under Bayezid II.245

The concept of *gaza*, and the Ottoman dynasty’s fervent support of war against the infidels, is another of the most consistently recurring themes in Heşt Bihişt. Although in modern scholarship opinions about the role of a *gaza* ideology among the early Ottomans differ,246 it is generally accepted that by the end of the fifteenth century the political benefits of promoting the image of military campaigns as officially sanctioned *gazas* were fully understood and exploited by the central government.247 Bayezid II is, thus, shown to either order or support and encourage all *gaza* expeditions undertaken, while his army is generally described as God’s brave and pious instrument. Furthermore, remarks such as “God willing, this glorious and pious sultan of the Ottoman House, the refuge of religion, will destroy the infidels every time they oppress the people of Islam”248 make clear that all *gaza* expeditions are effectively carried out in the sultan’s name. Throughout the kalb of the eighth Book, where the military exploits under Bayezid II are narrated, perhaps the most common description of the sultan is as the ‘sultan of the mujahids’ (سلطان مجدد). As for the army itself, it is referred to as ‘the troops of Islam’ (سلاطین اسلام), soldiers are

244 *Heşt Bihişt*, folio 518a.
245 *Heşt Bihişt*, folio 569b. See below, (Chapter VI, Bidlisi’s historical, political and ideological approaches
246 The basis of this discourse was set with P. Wittek’s theory presented in Wittek, *The Rise*, a theory which initially had a great impact in the field of Ottoman studies and later on became the subject of opposition and criticism by a number of scholars. Other works in this long debate on the ideological origins of the Ottoman empire include Imber C., *The Ottoman Empire*, 1300-1481, Istanbul 1990; Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans*; Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*. For the earlier theories on the formation of the Ottoman empire see Köprülü M.F., *Les Origines de l’Empire Ottoman*, Philadelphia 1978 (first edition 1935).
248 In reference to the consistent *gaza* expeditions against Hungary and Poland, *Heşt Bihişt*, folio 560a.
stereotypically referred to as *mucahids* or *gazis*, and those who fell in the battle are invariably celebrated for becoming martyrs (الشهداء).

Not surprisingly, war against Muslims is viewed differently. Where *gaza* does not necessarily require any excuse other than a Muslim's duty and is celebrated as an act of heroism and piety, war against fellow-Muslims is subject to a more thorough justification. The most common explanation in such cases is the standard reason of rebellion against the sultan, instigated by actions of the state’s subjects, or even by neighbouring populations that cause trouble at the borders of the empire. The idea of rebellion is, thus, extended to any territorial dispute within or along the borders of the Ottoman domains.249 Discussions on rebellion, its prevention and the necessity of its suppression were common political considerations of the time, and they were certainly intensified by the circumstances during Bayezid II’s reign. Bidlisi subscribes to these common ideas about the inexcusable act of rebellion against the sultan. Hostilities against other Muslims, which could otherwise be considered impermissible, are explained as such:

> It is the duty of the rulers and their worthy advisors to protect the kingdom from the destructive effects of rebellions. Although one is supposed to help the weak and one’s fellow Muslims, if they break into rebellion against the sultan’s authority, the destruction of fellow Muslims is justified.250

The blame is invariably placed on the enemies, their folly or any other provocation against the sultan. This was easily applied to cases such as the various revolts in Karaman. The justification of war with the Mamluks, however, had been the object of long debates among the ‘ulema, and thus required a more thorough explanation. As the main reasons for the initiation of a large-scale conflict with the Mamluks are given the numerous past incidents of conflicts and disorder in domains, in which the Ottomans had a long-established right to rule, as well as the petition for Bayezid II’s help from Alaeddevlet Beğ Zulkadr, an Ottoman vassal; a diplomatic incident that revealed disrespect towards the Ottomans; and of course the Mamluk support for Cem Sultan.251

The question of whether the sultan should lead in person a campaign against Egypt was disputed between the ‘ulema. The Ottoman sultans have ruled in Rum for about two

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249 See, for example, Bidlisi’s mention of the justification by the ‘ulema for the war with the Mamluks, *Heşt Bihişt*, folio 553a.
250 *Heşt Bihişt*, folio 533b. For this idea in other historians, see Imber, "Ideals and Legitimation", p. 145.
251 *Heşt Bihişt*, folios 546b-547a.
hundred years and from there they have conducted continuously the *gaza* against the lands of the infidels, for the benefit of Islam. According to the laws of Islam, this opposition and animosity that has arisen with the lords of Egypt and Syria, which causes great turbulence throughout the lands of Islam, is absolutely unworthy of such pious dynasties and *mucahid*ds, and against the will of God. The *mutfis*’ great intellect, however, reached the decision that the reason for this animosity was due to the support of the sultan of Egypt for Cem Çelebi and their failure to send ambassadors of honour.252

The sultan’s especially successful providence for his subjects, by safeguarding internal peace is stressed alongside his effectiveness in providing security from rebellions and trouble from the neighbouring states. To a large extent the success of these efforts lies in the ruler’s sensible government, which in turn largely depends on the careful appointment of able governors, especially in the empire’s borders.253 Bidlisi does not fail to praise Bayezid II’s insight and ability in the judgment of characters and the choice of his statesmen:

The sultan’s insight is like the sunlight, and he could tell truth from lies and fallacies and distinguish the good servants. Even if their appearance looked weak at first, the sultan would know what their potential would be after a good training. Whoever was chosen would then be in his favour, he would be promoted and have a good destiny.254

In fact, the section on the sultan’s statesmen, devoted to the presentation of the most outstanding personalities in Ottoman politics under Bayezid II, is given in a manner that epitomises the basic requirements that the sultan’s men ought to possess. Bidlisi discloses that the main reasons for distinction and appointment to high posts include intimacy with the sultan, bravery in *gaza*, a good education and a number of personal virtues, loyalty to the sultan’s person being the most important among them. This idea of loyalty is particularly stressed in reference to the statesmen who supported Bayezid II during his conflict with Cem.255 Other qualities of a worthy statesman include high moral virtue; sagacity and superior intellect; bravery, especially in *gaza*; successful service in their entrusted post; sound judgment and good advice; and generosity in the endowment of pious foundations. Conversely, among the main shortcomings of a statesman are arrogance, tyranny and negligence in the care of the affairs of the pious.256

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252 *Hest Bihiş*, folio 553a.
253 *Hest Bihiş*, folio 612b.
254 *Hest Bihiş*, folio 617b.
255 See, for example, Daud Paşa’s case, *Hest Bihiş*, folio 609a.
256 See, for example, the case of Bidlisi’s main enemy in the court, Hadım’Alaeddin ‘Ali Paşa, *Hest Bihiş*, folio 612b.
In the same section Bidlisi once again takes the opportunity to put forward the image of the Ottoman state as a well-oiled machine, which works efficiently with the help of faithful and able men working in unison. In conformity with this image, information which might suggest an inconsistency in this picture of harmony, is sometimes omitted in this section. Announcements of dismissal from a post, for example, are rarely accompanied by the reasons that instigated them, unless they aim to serve as a warning against disobedience towards the sultan, as in the case of Gedik Ahmed Paşa. Even in this case, however, Bidlisi does not make any mention of suspicions of Ahmed Paşa’s support to Cem. In fact, not surprisingly, the existence of such a tendency among Bayezid II’s statesmen is mentioned nowhere.

The impact of Heşt Bihişt

Today Bidlisi’s greatest claim for recognition lies undoubtedly in the fact that he is the author of Heşt Bihişt. Although certainly after, and perhaps even during, its composition Bidlisi wrote a number of other works, which he dedicated to Bayezid II, Heşt Bihişt was his most famous and politically charged work. It also played a significant role in Bidlisi’s personal life and that of his family, as his fame and fortune in the Ottoman empire was closely connected with its progress. Aside from the considerable honour and fortune of the sultan’s personal commission, the task secured for the newly arrived münşi a position among the Ottoman ‘ülema and provided him with greater means of support than the initial monthly allowance he was granted. Later on, however, the work served as a weapon in the political intrigues at the court, exploited by both Bidlisi’s adversaries to undermine his position and by Bidlisi himself, when he made use of Heşt Bihişt and the power of historiography for his own defence and justification, in the work’s hatime.

Although Bidlisi’s political position improved considerably after Selim I’s enthronement, it can not be determined whether, or how much, the criticisms and the events that followed the presentation of Heşt Bihişt to Bayezid II affected the overall reputation and popularity of the work in the long run. Today, as seen from the above catalogue of existing manuscripts, there are at least sixty two identified copies of Heşt Bihişt in libraries around the world. It is a number large enough to indicate that the work was widely circulated and held in esteem. Furthermore, the fact that the production dates of these copies span over the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries

257 For the same idea see below (Chapter V, Bidlisi’s political and ideological approaches).
258 For the development of this issue in Heşt Bihişt see folios 532b, 534b and 536a.
in more or less equal numbers\(^{259}\) suggests that the interest in *Heşt Bihişt*, and therefore the chronicle's influence in the thought and historical writing of the times remained relatively consistent for about two hundred years.

According to the criteria of appreciation of historical works at the time, a chronicle was viewed equally as a work of literary art and as a source of information for the past. It was the author's style; his theoretical approach and presentation; and the linguistic and cultural sophistication of the work that largely determined a work's fame and recognition.\(^{260}\) This seems to have been one of the contributing factors for the esteem with which *Heşt Bihişt* was received as well. Indeed, *Heşt Bihişt* seems to be praised for its literary proficiency more than for anything else. References and comments about the work in later chronicles and biographers' entries on Bidlisi express in great length their admiration for the author's expertise in verse and prose.\(^{261}\) On the other hand, the same refinement of language in *Heşt Bihişt* often proved difficult to read. Muştafa 'Ali, the author of *Künk ül-ahbar*, for example, although in general he praises *Heşt Bihişt* highly, finds the complex rhetoric of Bidlisi the only impediment of the work.\(^{262}\) The Turkish translation (1146/1733-34) of 'Abdu'l-Bâkî Sa'di discloses both the ongoing interest in *Heşt Bihişt* into the eighteenth century, and at the same time a realisation of the need for its translation into a more approachable Turkish. Although language is by far *Heşt Bihişt*'s most celebrated asset, Bidlisi is also valued for his historical intellect: Sa'eddin describes *Heşt Bihişt* as "a detailed and worthy history written in Persian in a new way"\(^{263}\) and Muştafa 'Ali considers it to be the first of the scholarly Ottoman histories which "combined the highest historical acumen with the best of learned literary style".\(^{264}\)

As a source used by later historians, *Heşt Bihişt* has had a fair share in later historiography. Chronologically the first work closely related to *Heşt Bihişt* is Kemalpaşazade's *Tevarih-i Al-i Osmanlı*. The connection between the two works begins with their parallel commission, which also laid out the same general guidelines and linguistic requirements for both authors.\(^{265}\) The two works are also very similar in terms of size, context and the amount of information they include. Several further structural and general similarities between the two works had even led to the

\(^{259}\) Out of the copies which have a definite date, twenty one were produced in the sixteenth and twenty four in the seventeenth century.


\(^{261}\) For Bidlisi's biographers see Chapter III, n. 97.


misconception of believing Kemalpaşazade’s chronicle to be a mere translation of *Hestruct Bihişt* in Ottoman Turkish.266 In the introduction of his edition of Kemalpaşazade’s seventh *Defter*, on the reign of Meşmed II, Ş. Turan examines the possibility of a cooperation between the two authors in the composition of their chronicles. Finally concluding against the idea, Turan nevertheless points out that there are indeed close similarities in the account of events, but not in the insights and reasoning behind the narrative, establishing thus the autonomy of *Tevarih-i Al-i Osmanlı* and its individual value as a historical source.267 Only a thorough comparative study of the entire texts of both works, however, will fully disclose the component correspondence between the two works.

*Hestruct Bihişt* has also been used as a source for Bihişti’s *Tarih*,268 Hoca Hüseyn’s *Beda’i’ ül-weqa’i*,269 Muştafa ‘Ali’s *Künh ül-ahbar*,270 Sa’deddin’s *Tac al-tevarih*,271 Solakzade Meşmed’s *Tarih*,272 Karaçelebizada ‘Abdu’l-Aziz Efendi273 and Müneccimbaşi Ahmed’s *Camii’ al-duval*.274 To some *Hestruct Bihişt* served not only as a source of historical information, but also as a model for the structure and organisation of the material. The overall structure of *Hestruct Bihişt*, for example, namely its division in eight chapters, or Books, each devoted to one sultan from Osmanlı to Bayezid II, is encountered in a number of later Ottoman chronicles starting from those of Kemalpaşazade and Bihişti. Hoca Hüseyn also mentions that it was *Hestruct Bihişt* that he imitated in this inclusion of the rulers of states neighbouring the Ottoman empire, wherever there was a connection with Ottoman history.275

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266 See Babinger, *Die Geschichtschreiber*, p. 48; Ménage, “Bidliş”, p. 1208; Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, p. 239.
273 Turan, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osmanlı*, p. XCII.
274 Şikri, “*Hestruct Bihişt*”, p. 155. The work was better known from its Turkish translation of the Arabic original, under the title *Saha’if al-ahbar*, see Kramers J.H., “Münedjimbashi”, E.I.(2), pp. 572-573.
275 Tveritinova, "Qoğa Hüsejn", p. 3.
In modern Ottoman scholarship *Heşt Bihişt* enjoys the reputation of an important work, the further study of which is imperative, although some doubts have been expressed about the overall value of the work from the point of view of an original and insightful historical approach:

Yet for all his faults of method Nesri is a true historian, for he possessed the historian's fundamental virtue, the desire to establish the truth of events. It is doubtful whether the same can be said of Idris Bidlisi, whose *Haşît Bihişt*, modelled on the histories of Vaşşâf and Juvayni was written at the command of Bayezid II avowedly in order to glorify the deeds of the Ottoman House. Here and there, it is true, Idris has preserved information which he culled from earlier sources now lost, but it is probable that a thorough analysis of the contents of his history (a task long overdue) would show that it has been much overrated as a historical source, and that when the rhetoric is stripped off the basic narrative is little more than a repetition of the story told by Nesri, with some additional distortions caused by attempts to harmonize conflicting traditions.

In fact, this criticism might indeed not be inaccurate for the greater part of the chronicle, as *Heşt Bihişt*'s importance and originality of account is mainly concentrated in the last two Books. This, however, does not devalue the importance of the work as a literary and historical phenomenon on its own, the study of which can offer interesting information on and insights into the society, culture and ways of thinking in Bidlisi's time.

Undoubtedly the work's length and its linguistic difficulties must have contributed towards the lack of a full edition of the work so far. Indeed, it was not only Mustafa 'Ali' who found Bidlisi's language prohibiting; modern researchers also criticise the work for its sophisticated and complicated rhetoric. Apart from Ménage's remark, quoted above, Şükrü also comments on the difficulties that Bidlisi's intricate language creates for the researcher.

Although general studies focusing on *Heşt Bihişt* itself are still needed, several scholars have used parts of the text to complement their research on particular subjects. *Heşt Bihişt* is greatly valued for its account of events and people of the reigns of Mehmed II and Bayezid II. In an article complementing Babinger's extensive work on Mehmed II, for the compilation of which *Heşt Bihişt* was not consulted, İnalcık

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279 Şükrü, "Heşt Bihişt", p. 131.
280 Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror*. 

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points out the usefulness of the chronicle for the general history of that period. Conversely, for his comprehensive work on the reign of Bayezid II, Tansel repeatedly consulted *Heşt Bihişt* for its historical information in combination with other contemporary and later sources. The two final sections of the seventh and eighth Books, describing the organisation of the army under Mehmed II, and that of the palace officers and 'ulema during Bayezid II's reign, are also of special interest. Useful information from the chronicle appears in Uzunçarşılı's and von Hammer's general histories of the Ottomans. *Heşt Bihişt* has also been cited in reference to more specific issues, such as the struggle between Bayezid II and Cem, as well as several events in Anatolia. Finally, Bidlisi's account is considered among the most useful contemporary narratives for the later history of the Akkoyunlu dynasty.

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282 Tansel, *Sultan II Bayezit*.
286 See idem, “Mehmed the Conqueror”, p. 409.
Sample from *Heşt Bihişt* (Ms Orient 3179 of the National Library in Berlin)
Sample from Heyt Bihiyt (7646-7 of the British Museum in London)
CHAPTER V

Civil strife between Bayezid II and Cem in *Heşt Bihişt*

One of the most notable issues of Bayezid II's times is the intricate circumstances of his accession to the throne and the civil strife between him and his brother Cem. The death of a ruler and the change of the head of state always causes a significant disturbance in political life, even if the transition is made in a smooth and uncomplicated manner. Mehmed II's death was an event of particular importance itself, given the powerful and groundbreaking effect this sultan had on the foundations of the Ottoman state and its relations with the western world. Bayezid II's reign was marked from its outset by the danger posed by Cem, initially in the form of rebellion, and later on by the threat of his return with the formidable backing of Christian forces. This situation continued to affect Ottoman political life for almost half the duration of Bayezid II's reign, only to be resolved after Cem's death in 1495.

This chapter, as well as the following one, focus on the study of two significant issues of Bayezid II's reign and their treatment in *Heşt Bihişt*. The study of each topic begins with the description of the events as we know them today through the combined study of various sources. Care has been taken to list all events known to us, while Bidlisi's account is incorporated into this narration, pointed out either in the text.

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itself or in the footnotes. Special emphasis is placed on Bidlisi’s own version of events, wherever there are differences among sources. Bidlisi’s omissions are also pointed out. An attempt is, therefore, made to review each topic, and then to evaluate the contribution of Bidlisi’s account through its contrast with our overall knowledge of the events.

In the present chapter this is followed by a discussion of the importance of Cem’s revolt for Bayezid II’s reign, focusing on the political and cultural significance of his unusually long captivity in Europe. Discussion then turns to Bidlisi’s political and ideological treatment of his topic. This section complements the previous, more general study of the same subject discussed in Chapter IV, focusing here on the particular ways that Bidlisi applies, consciously or not, the principles of Muslim political thought to this particular topic. Finally, an examination of the possible sources Bidlisi might have used for the composition of this section, and the impact of Heşt Bihişt in the works of later Ottoman historians and modern researchers, aim once again at the evaluation of our chronicle as a historical source.

Ottoman customs of succession

At the time Bayezid II came to power, Ottoman customs of succession were principally based on the ancient Turkish nomadic traditions. According to these traditions, succession to the throne was not indisputably passed on to the first-born son of a deceased ruler, but gaining control of power was ultimately a question of merit and ability. As soon as they reached the age of about ten years, the young princes were sent as governors to various sancaks in the provinces, where they were trained in the art of government. They resided in palaces surrounded by tutors, advisers and an entire household of secretaries and servants as well as a small army, in a world that resembled life at the capital. While their father was alive all şehzades had an equal right to succession, which would only be determined after the sultan’s demise. In practice, it was almost certain that the first of the deceased sultan’s heirs to arrive in the capital would become ruler. By taking control of the Treasury and gaining the acknowledgment of the army, the new sultan would thus practically eliminate the chance of opposition from his rival siblings. Upon that issue, Bidlisi, in conformity with the philosophical ideas of the time, stresses that the result of this contest for succession is only pre-determined according to God’s wishes:

289 Cf. İnalçık H., “Padişah”, İ.A., pp. 491-495 (here p. 494); See also Kafadar, Between Two Worlds, pp. 136-138.
The manner of succession and the struggle among the contestants, occurring according to God’s wishes, have been agreed upon by God’s people and the customs of the Turks. They are obeyed as an order and are as follows: whoever has the strength and personal ability to reach the throne will be secured in the place, and the winner of this race for the kingdom will be determined by his skill in haste. The prerequisites of felicity, which lie in agility, lofty assistance and prosperity, are therefore a question of divine agreement in the battlefield of demand for the inheritance of kingship.290

Certainly the practical aim of such a system was to ensure that the most able ruler should occupy the throne, and that his worth must be proven to his subjects. Ideally, this would secure the best leadership for the state, as well as the ruler’s acknowledgment and loyalty of the subjects. In reality, however, this method of succession proved to be the cause of numerous rebellions and threats to the sultan’s authority, led by various pretenders to the throne. In an attempt to avoid such rebellions, from the time of Bayezid I began the practice of the new sultan executing his brothers as soon as he took power. Although Mehmed II institutionalised this practice by including it in one of his kanunnames,291 this was obviously not sufficient to prevent yet another rebellion, as the events that followed his own death proved. The duration of the conflict between Bayezid II and Cem, unprecedented in Ottoman history, was another manifestation of the system’s shortcomings.

Mehmed II’s death and the competition between his two sons

Mehmed II died in May 1481 on the way to a major military campaign.292 To avoid anarchy, the grand vezir Karamani Mehmed Paşa concealed the sultan’s death and secretly carried his body back to Istanbul.293 The vezir also drove the acem oğlan out of the city, on the pretext of repairing a bridge and digging a ditch, thus reducing the number of troops inside the capital. At the same time, messages were sent to Bayezid and Cem, the two surviving sons of Mehmed II, to notify them of their father’s death.294 A çavuş of the palace, Keklik Muştafa, was sent to Bayezid in Amasya, where Mehmed II’s elder son was serving as governor. Cem, at the time governor of...

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290 Heşti Bihisht, folio 529a.
294 Mehmed II had had another son, Muştafa Han, who had died in 1474. See the genealogical table in Uzunçarşı, Osmanlı Tarihi, vol. II, p. 688.
Karaman, based in Konya,\(^{295}\) was to be notified by two personal slaves of Karamani Mehemed Paşa, who was in favour of Cem. The grand vezir’s hope was that, as Amasya was further from Istanbul, the younger of Mehemed II’s sons would arrive in the capital first and assume power.

This plan, however, was ruined when the beğlerbeği of Anadolu, Sinan Paşa, arrested the messengers destined for Cem, on their way to Konya.\(^{296}\) The Janissaries were then informed of the sultan’s death and, out of control, managed to re-enter the city. They killed the grand vezir in his house and probably at the same time Iacopo, the Jewish doctor of Mehméd II, who was held responsible for the sultan’s death. These men were the most powerful supporters Cem had in the capital, but Karamani Mehemed Paşa was very unpopular among many in the army. The Janissaries then roamed the streets of Istanbul shouting “Long live Bayezid” and looted some shops in the Christian and Jewish districts of the city.\(^{297}\)

The situation would have turned into a dangerous state of anarchy in the capital, had İshak Paşa, the vezir who had been left in charge of Istanbul by Mehméd II, not managed to subdue the Janissaries - but only after he had promised them high rewards in Bayezid’s name. It was probably also at İshak Paşa’s suggestion\(^{298}\) that Bayezid’s son Korkud was raised to the throne, to fill in the vacuum of power until his father’s arrival. At that moment İshak Paşa’s intervention proved crucial for the final outcome, as at the same time a son of Cem, Oğuz Han, was also present at the palace in Istanbul. Oğuz Han could equally have been chosen to fulfill the same role for his own father’s benefit, if Cem’s supporters had been in control.

Probably the two şehzades had long been preparing for this occasion. Removed from the main scene of events, the potential heirs knew that their chances for success lay in their connections and allies in the capital and the administrative network of the empire. In the competition between the two brothers while their father was still alive, Bayezid had certainly the advantage. Twelve years older than Cem, he had had a long time to prepare for the time of the final contest, by building up a network of men partial to himself throughout the Ottoman lands and out-maneuvering his brother’s supporters.\(^{299}\) As Bidlisi states, by the time of Mehméd II’s death

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\(^{295}\) At about the age of ten, Cem had first been appointed governor of Kastamonu. After the death of his brother, Mustafa, Cem succeeded him in the position of the governor of Karaman, which was based in Konya. See Baysun, “Cem”, p. 70.

\(^{296}\) Uzunçarşı, Osmanlı Tarihi, vol. II, p. 156.

\(^{297}\) See Tekindağ, “İI Bayezid’in Tahta Çıkışı”, pp. 88-89 and the references given.

\(^{298}\) DaLezze, p. 119, as quoted in Tekindağ, “İI Bayezid’in Tahta Çıkışı”, pp. 89-90, n. 25.

\(^{299}\) Baysun, “Cem”, pp. 70.
His elder brother had assigned so many of his own deputies and servants from his household in the whole kingdom, that Cem was deprived of any hope, and his few friends at the palace had been oppressed and frustrated.300

Indeed, several important statesmen were related to Bayezid by marriage, men who perhaps owed him their positions and were aware that the best way to keep them and continue benefiting by this relation was to ensure that Bayezid was raised to the throne. Bayezid had the support of the beşerbeği of Rumili, Hersekoğlu Ahmed Paşa, the beşerbeği of Anadolu, Sinan Paşa and the ağa of the Janissaries, Kasım, all related to the şehzade by marriage. Others among Bayezid’s supporters were the Janissary leader Rüstem Paşa, and İshak Paşa, the governor of Istanbul at the time of Mehmed II’s death. In addition, Bayezid had eight sons, in whose best interest it was obviously to assist their father in his claim for the throne.301 Apart from the crucial intervention of Korkud’s presence in Istanbul, which secured Bayezid’s position until his own arrival, another of his sons, Abdullah, who was at that time governor of Manisa, provided military help to his father.302

On the other hand, Cem was supposed to be the favourite candidate of their father.303 Cem’s name was mentioned in one of his father’s kanunnames, something which was seen as an indication that Mehmed II intended him to be the successor to the throne.304 Reported to have been of a bold and energetic character, unlike Bayezid who was more peaceful and intellectual, Cem seemed the most likely heir to continue his father’s policies of war and territorial expansion.305 Several years earlier, in 878/1473, at the age of eleven, Cem had become the centre of an incident against Mehmed II’s authority. While the sultan was on a campaign against Uzun Hasan, accompanied by his two elder sons Bayezid and Muṣṭafa, a group of statesmen remaining in Istanbul attempted to overthrow Mehmed II. When rumours were heard that the Ottoman army had been defeated by the Akkoyunlu, Cem was proclaimed sultan by these men. Although the rebellion was fiercely suppressed by Mehmed II upon his return, the young prince himself was not considered responsible for it.306 Cem’s rights to the throne were equal to those of Bayezid, although Cem argued that his claim was stronger, having been born while Mehmed II was already sultan, unlike Bayezid who

300 Heşt Bihişt, folio 530a.
301 On Bayezid II’s sons see above (Chapter I, n. 40).
302 See Heşt Bihişt, folio 530b.
303 Thuasne, Djem Sultan, p. 31.
304 Ertaylan, Sultan Cem, p. 77.
305 Fisher, Foreign Relations, p. 16.
306 Babinger, Mehmed the Conqueror, p. 313; Eyice, “Sultan Cem’in Portreleri” p. 4.
was born in 1447 or 1448. It is also likely that among the reasons for which Mehmed II showed preference to his younger son towards the end of his reign was fear of Bayezid’s growing power, which was partly the reason behind the bad relations between the Conqueror and his elder son.

Cem’s supporters were mainly concentrated around the area of Karaman, where the şehzade served as governor and enjoyed great popularity. Among his supporters were his lala Gedik Ahmed Pasha, Frenk Suleyman, Hafizbade Nasuh, Defterdar Ahmed, Sofu Huseyn and Cesnigirbasi Illyas Sirmerd Ağa. Also Karamanoğlu Kasım Beğ, whose cooperation would later prove crucial to the development of events, is said to have become acquainted with Cem several years earlier during a hunting expedition. Furthermore, throughout the empire there were several centrifugal groups, which, largely motivated by the idea of opposition against the central government, sided with Cem as soon as he set off against his brother. Discontented with the control imposed on them, they sought to improve their condition by backing a pretender to the throne, who would obviously reward them after he had gained power.

Cem’s supporters in Istanbul came mainly from the class of the ‘ulema. Apart from Karamani Mehmed Pasha, among the statesmen who were situated in Istanbul after Mehmed II’s death and in a position to assist Cem’s case in the race to the capital was the kazi ‘asker Manisali Çelebi. However, as the most influential group in the struggle for succession proved to be the Janissary corps, Cem’s adherents were overpowered in their attempt to help him to the throne. After Bayezid II’s establishment as sultan, those who remained on Cem’s side were aware of doing so in the form of rebellion.

Bidlisi’s description of the actual events during the first few days after Mehmed II’s demise is rather brief. The role of Karamani Mehmed Pasha and the riots of the Janissaries are entirely omitted, as is any reference to the general disorder that ravaged the capital. The only incident mentioned in Hesht Bihişt is Korkud’s enthronement, and this is explicitly explained on the grounds that the young prince’s temporary placement upon the Ottoman throne was decided by “devoted statesmen, especially vezir Iskak Pasha” in order to secure the state from the enemies, who might want to take

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307 Thuasne, Djem Sultan, p. 31. For Bayezid II’s date of birth see Parry, “Bayezid II”, p. 1119, where it is also mentioned that some sources suggest that Bayezid II might have been born in 856/1452 or 857/1453. This seems unlikely, however, in the light of Cem’s arguments.
308 Baysun, “Cem”, p. 70.
advantage of the absence of a sultan. The identity of such enemies is not specified. Bidlisi does not elaborate on the serious internal conflict within the ruling class, which is generally presented as united and loyal, eagerly awaiting the outcome of the race between the two sons of the sultan, but barely having any decisive input in the situation themselves. This was undoubtedly intended to keep intact the image of unity and authority in the empire’s administrative machine.

Bayezid II’s enthronement and Cem’s opposition

As soon as Bayezid was informed of his father’s death he hurried to the capital, where he arrived in eight or nine days. Accompanied by his own troops, consisting of 4,000 men, he reached Üsküdar where the army leaders went forth and received him formally. The scene of this entrance to Istanbul through Üsküdar, where Janissaries, state officials and a large crowd had gathered on the shores and aboard numerous boats to see the new sultan, is elaborately described in many sources. On the one hand there were cheers of salutation, and on the other the Janissaries asked for the money promised to them by İshak Paşa, and that Hamza Beyzade Müştafa Paşa should return to Amasya immediately. They also demanded the new sultan’s pardon for the death of Karamani Mehmed Paşa. Their requests were granted, a fact which has been pointed out as the first manifestation of the feeble control Bayezid II had over the Janissaries. Finally Bayezid reached the palace, where the day after (22 May 1481) he officially took over the sultanate from his son Korkud and was declared sultan. On the same day, Meḥmed II’s funeral was held. The new sultan showed great reverence for his father’s body, carrying the coffin on his own shoulders, an action which was promptly imitated by other statesmen. With this deed, Bayezid II began his career as the sultan with a public manifestation of his noble and affectionate personality, an image which he maintained and cultivated throughout his reign.

Not surprisingly, Cem was dissatisfied with the developments. The detention of the messengers dispatched to him had deprived him of his chance of the throne, but he

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310 Heşti Bihat, folio 526a.
311 Sources do not agree on the exact date of Bayezid’s arrival outside the walls of Istanbul. For the various possibilities see Tekindag, “II Bayezid’in Tahta Çıkışı”, p. 90 and n. 27; Fisher, Foreign Relations, p. 18 and n. 36.
313 Uzunçarşı, Osmanlı Tarihi, vol. II, p. 157 suggests that İshak Paşa was threatened by the arrival of Müştafa Paşa, one of Bayezid’s close companions, and the prince’s preference for him, and feared the competition for the position of grand vezir. Indeed, after Müştafa Paşa was thus removed, İshak was appointed grand vezir.
315 Heşti Bihat, folio 528b.
was not prepared to accept this as the final outcome while he still felt strong enough to move against his brother. In addition, the law in Meşmed II’s kanunname was now in Bayezid II’s favour, and Cem had much more to lose than the kingdom unless he managed to reverse the situation. He may have been driven by ambition and a feeling of obtaining what was his own right, but admittedly there would have been very little he could achieve without the encouragement and military support of his allies.

After the belated announcement of his father’s death and Bayezid II’s enthronement, Cem hastily gathered an army, consisting of Karamanians and members of several other nomadic tribes of that area such as the Türğud and the Varsak, sipahis from Anadolu and dervishes, and headed towards Bursa. Around 1,000 men under one of his close companions, Gedik Naşuğ Beğ, approached the city, but the citizens of Bursa were initially reluctant to receive them, and Cem’s forces remained outside the city walls. Bayezid II sent 2,000 Janissaries, under the command of Ayas Paşa, to repel his brother’s army. Soon they, also, reached Bursa and the two sides struggled to enter the city and defend themselves from inside its walls. The people of Bursa were however, even more reluctant to accept the Janissaries in their city, terrified by them after their recent bad conduct in Istanbul, and they eventually opened their gates to Cem. Ayas Paşa and his men were captured by Cem’s forces and were held inside the city.

Three days after this victory Cem himself arrived in Bursa, where he immediately struck coins in his name and had his name mentioned in the hübe, thus executing the two symbolic actions that acknowledge a sovereign’s domination over a city. This was of great significance, as by this proclamation of himself as sultan in the first Ottoman capital Cem seemed to enforce even more his equal rights as heir of Meşmed II. Given his popularity among the people of Anatolia, his chances of success certainly seemed to rise after this turn of events. During the short time, only eighteen days, that Cem remained in Bursa as sultan, a large number of followers from the environs of Bursa came to his support.

Thereupon Bayezid II set off from Istanbul in person to face his brother, and at the same time his men endeavored to corrupt Cem’s allies. Agents sent by the emir ül-

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317 Heşt Bihist, folio 530a.
319 Ertaylan, Sultan Cem, p. 93.
320 Heşt Bihist, folio 530a.
'üméra of Anadolu approached Aştinoğlu Ya'kub Beğ, Cem’s lala, and managed to gain his cooperation with promises in the name of Bayezid II and, according to Bidlisi, a sum of 100,000 akçe. Aştinoğlu Ya’kub Beğ agreed to persuade Cem to fight the sultan’s forces instead of retreating.

When he was informed that Bayezid II was moving towards Bursa with a large army, Cem sent his own envoys to propose an agreement. The committee consisted of Selçuk Hatun, an aunt of Meḥmed II, along with Mevlana Ayas, one of the mollas of Rum, Şükruhoğlu Ahmed Çelebi and Hamdi Çelebi, who were all highly esteemed members of the ‘ulema. Selçuk Hatun, who was a lady of considerable influence, advocated Cem’s offer that the empire could be divided between the two brothers, with Bayezid II keeping the European provinces and Cem those of Anadolu. Bayezid II refused this offer on the grounds that sovereignty cannot be divided. His answer is reputed to have been the Arabic proverb: “لا حام بين الملوك”, “there is no place in kingship for the claims of kinship”.

As an agreement seemed impossible, Cem initially thought of retreating to Karaman. Aştinoğlu Ya’kub Beğ, however, keeping his promise to Bayezid II’s men, managed to persuade Cem to stay and fight against his brother. One part of Cem’s forces was thus sent to Iznik, under the command of Gedik Naṣūh Beğ, while Cem himself marched towards the area outside Yeni Şehir and prepared to face the sultan’s forces. The troops of the beğlerbeği of Anadolu, Sinan Paşa, approached Gedik Naṣūh Beğ near Dikili Taş, until the latter was obliged to retreat to a nearby pass, called Azvad. Joined by the sultan’s forces, Sinan Paşa routed Naṣūh Beğ’s men and destroyed his camp in Azvad.

The following morning, on 22 Rabi‘ II, Cem’s scattered men reassembled near Yeni Şehir, where a battle began at dawn. On the bank of the river Gök-su the army of Sinan Paşa captured Özguroğlu Meḥmed Çelebi and some of his men, while the rest of Cem’s troops fled for their lives. At noon Gedik Ahmed Paşa, who had been summoned from Otranto by Bayezid II as soon as he was proclaimed sultan, arrived at the battlefield. He paid his respects to the new sultan and joined his forces to those fighting against Cem. Gedik Ahmed Paşa’s alliance became a decisive factor in the outcome of the battle, not only for the considerable addition to Bayezid II’s army.

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323 Heşt Bihişt, folio 530b; Thusatne, Djem Sultan, p. 35.
324 Heşt Bihişt, folio 530b.
325 Bidlisi only mentions Mevlana Ayas and Selçuk Hatun. Heşt Bihişt, folio 530b.
326 Heşt Bihişt, folio 530b.
327 Heşt Bihişt, folio 531a; Baysun, “Cem”, p. 71.
Ahmed Pasha had been one of Cem’s tutors, and his siding with the sultan was a particularly heavy blow to the morale of Cem’s men, who were counting on his support. Some Anatolian troops began to scatter from Cem’s army as soon as Bayezid II moved against them.

Aştinoğlu Ya’kub Beg persuaded Cem to give him some men to guard one side of the river, but as soon as they approached Bayezid II’s army they joined the enemy. At that point, the Janissaries under Ayas Pasha, who were kept prisoner in Yeni Şehir, saw the advance of their side, broke free and began to fight Cem from the rear. Finally, the men of Karamanoğlu and the Varsak Turkomans began to flee as well, and Cem was abandoned from all sides. He fled the battlefield, while many of his personal servants fell into the hands of Bayezid II. Those of them who were Cem’s blood relatives were executed by the sultan. Cem rushed towards Konya, which he reached in five days. Bayezid II’s troops remained in the area of Yeni Şehir for one more day, and then, led by Gedik Ahmed Pasha, they pursued Cem without hurry.

In Heşt Bihişt the account of Bayezid II’s arrival in the capital and his enthronement is rather brief and stereotypical. The description of the procession of the sultan’s forces towards the palace is simply followed by a long poem in praise of the glories of the throne to which Bayezid II ascended. Conversely, the battles and politics of the armed struggle between the two princes are covered in great detail. An interesting observation on Bidlisi’s report is the information of Aştinoğlu Ya’kub Beg’s corruption by Bayezid II’s men. The incident is presented in a way that does not lay any accusation of treachery on Ya’kub Beg. On the contrary, his actions seem to have been considered as an act of loyalty to the true sultan. The incident is also given in detail, and in a rather personal narrative tone, that suggests that Bidlisi might have been acquainted with someone involved in the negotiations.

Cem’s flight to Egypt and the events of the winter of 1481-2

On the way to Konya Cem had to cross a pass, called Derbend-i Ermeni, which was two days journey from Yeni Şehir. In that pass a group of bandits attacked the şehzade, robbing and wounding him. With reference to this incident, Bidlisi records the following:

328 Heşt Bihişt, folios 531a-531b.
329 Heşt Bihişt, folio 531b.
330 Heşt Bihişt, folio 532a.
332 Heşt Bihişt, folio 528a.
333 Heşt Bihişt, folio 530b.
When the sultan, who was pursuing Cem Çelebi, arrived in Derbend-i Ermeni, these fearless Turkomans approached the sultan and told him of their deed, in expectation of some rewards. They brought forward some of their loot as proof and requested exemption from extra taxes (Tekalif-i Divaniye), and expected to be congratulated on their achievement by the equatable sultan. Their rudeness and vulgarity in front of the padişahzade and their proud petitions for such an unjust use of their superiority were not left unpunished. At first the sultan verified who those rude and bold men were, and to their whole group he said: 'The dispute for our father's throne is between the two of us; and you, who are re'aya and subjects, have showed such dishonor to your padişahzade that it is considered a rebellion'. To chastise their wickedness, the sultan ordered them to be raised on large poles with sharp tops upon the road, so that they would serve as an example.\footnote{Heşt Bihist, folios 532a-532b.}

Cem stopped in Konya long enough to gather his family,\footnote{His mother, his wives, two daughters and his younger son Murad.} some belongings and a group of servants,\footnote{Fisher, Foreign Relations, p. 23, n. 28 suggests they were 300, while Baysun, "Cem", p. 72 mentions they were only 40. Bidlis does not mention a number.} and decided to seek refuge at the Mamluk court in Cairo. Gedik Ahmed Paşa gave up Cem's pursuit at Ereğli, the borders of the Ottoman lands, without managing to catch him. Bayezid II had arranged with the Zulकadr Beğ Alaeddevlet to arrest Cem when the latter would pass through his lands, but although Alaeddevlet agreed to it, Cem managed to cross through Syria to Egypt without trouble.\footnote{Ibid., p. 72. An extensive description of Cem's route through Mamluk lands and his reception in Cairo is given in Har-el S., Struggle for Domination in the Middle East: the Ottoman-Mamluk War (1485-91), Leiden 1995, pp. 106-107.}

Bayezid II returned to Istanbul after appointing his own son 'Abdullah governor of Konya, with four sancaks of soldiers in his service, to ensure that no more trouble would arise in Cem's former territory, in which he was still very popular.\footnote{Cf. Baysun, "Cem", p. 72, where he describes the grief of both Cem and the population at his departure.} Gedik Ahmed Paşa, after his failure to capture Cem, was recalled to Istanbul, where he was imprisoned on the assumption that he had betrayed the sultan and acted in favour of Cem. Later, with great pressure from the army, among whom Ahmed Paşa was extremely popular, he was released from prison. After a humble public apology to the sultan he was reinstated in his position as vezir and was promptly sent to Karaman, where his expert military command was needed to suppress a revolt led by Kasım Beğ Karamanoğlu.\footnote{Fisher, Foreign Relations, p. 25.}

Soon after his arrival in Cairo, Cem began once again to negotiate with Bayezid II. He spent the winter of 1481-2 performing the pilgrimage to Mecca, during which time his hopes for another chance to gain the sultanate seem to have been rekindled. After his
return to Cairo, Cem refused another offer of settlement suggested by Bayezid II, which had been arranged in the meantime, with Kaitbey's mediation. Cem remained steadfast in his request for a division of the Ottoman lands, while Bayezid II suggested that if Cem abandoned his claim to the sultanate and retired to Jerusalem the sultan would give him a pension of 1,000,000 akçe a year.340

Cem's persistence was certainly fuelled by the entreaties of various Anatolian commanders, who during the winter had been congregating around Karamanoğlu Kasım Beğ. After the latter's revolt in Karaman was suppressed, Kasım Beğ spent the following months gathering men to withstand another attack, this time on the pretext of supporting Cem's claim for the throne. He was joined by the governor of Ankara, Trabzonlu Mehmed Ağa, and several men who had fled from the army of Gedik Ahmed Paşa and were eager to offer their services to Cem. Kasım Beğ encouraged Cem from Anatolia not to give up hope, and in order to prove the wide support that the şehzade would enjoy in Anatolia Kasım Beğ forwarded to Cem several letters, allegedly written by Ottoman notables who promised their assistance if he returned to march against Bayezid II. It is questionable how many of these pledges of alliance were genuine, especially one among them, which was supposed to be from Gedik Ahmed Paşa himself. They were enough, however, to persuade Cem to return to Anatolia.341

Cem, therefore, asked permission from Kaitbey to leave Cairo and return to Anatolia. The Mamluk sultan's response was cautious, but he eventually consented to Cem's request. It is clear that Kaitbey was hoping to benefit from the instability this would cause in the Ottoman domains, even if Cem was not successful in attaining the throne. On the other hand, Kaitbey was not willing to provoke Bayezid II openly, by providing any substantial military help to his brother. Eventually, the assistance Cem received from the Mamluk sultan seems to have been only financial, despite his expectations of more.342

Bidlisi covers these events in somewhat less detail than Cem's actions in Anatolia the previous year. He mentions neither the agreement between Bayezid II and Zulkadr Beğ Alaeddavlvet to arrest Cem on the way to Egypt, nor the second attempt at an agreement between the two brothers. This is not surprising, as both incidents were part of the

340 For more details on these negotiations see Thuasne, pp. 48-51; Ertaylan, Sultan Cem, pp. 116-120. The letters through which some of these negotiations were carried out have been preserved in Feridun Beğ, Minşeat al-Selatin, 2 vols, Istanbul 1274-75/1857-59, pp. 290-291.
342 Cf. Fisher, “Civil Strife”, p. 462. The extent of Mamluk assistance to Cem at that time is not clear. For the various reports on the issue see Har-el, Struggle for Domination, pp. 110-111.
extensive diplomatic activity of Bayezid II regarding his brother, which was largely conducted in great secrecy. Bidlisi does mention, however, the numerous letters sent to Cem by Çarmanoğlu Kasım Beg, while the account of Kasım Beg's revolt in Çarman, and its rather inefficient suppression by Gedik Ahmed Paşa and Hadim 'Ali Paşa, is recorded in great detail.343

Cem’s second attempt to gain the throne and his escape to Rhodes

In the spring of 1482 Cem once again entered the Ottoman domains. He initially headed towards Aleppo, where he was joined by a group of deserters from the troops of Gedik Ahmed Paşa, and then moved on to Adana, where Kasım Beg was waiting. The two men agreed that if Cem became sultan he would hand Çarman over to Kasım Beg, and in return the latter would be loyal to Cem for the rest of his life.344 Gedik Ahmed Paşa and şeyzade 'Abdullah attacked Trabzonlu Mehmed Ağa, who was on his way to join Cem. At the same time Cem’s and Kasım Beg’s joint forces began to besiege Konya, but were unable to capture it due to the resistance of Hadim 'Ali Paşa.

After ten days of siege345 news arrived that the sultan’s army had taken Ankara. As this city was Mehmed Ağa’s base and his family resided there, Mehmed Ağa abandoned the siege of Konya and, with 1,000 mounted soldiers, rushed to rescue his family. He was engaged in a short battle with the beylerbeği of Little Rum, Süleyman Paşa, in the valley of Çubuk near Ankara. Mehmed Ağa was killed and his army was scattered.

Cem and Kasım Beg proceeded to Ankara with their own forces, but when they arrived at the scene they saw that nothing was left of Mehmed Ağa’s troops. The camp’s low morale deteriorated even further by the news that Bayezid II’s army was approaching. They retreated to Akşehir and from there on to Aksaray, which they besieged for a few days without success. When İskender Paşa, whom Bayezid II had sent after them, reached Aksaray he realised that Cem’s army had been disbanded and the men had taken refuge in the surrounding mountains.346 Cem and Kasım Beğ withdrew to Taşlıli with the remainder of their army, while the sultan proceeded with his forces to Ereğli. Another offer of negotiation was made by Bayezid II at this point, but again no agreement was reached.347

343 Heşt Bihişt, folios 532b-533b.
344 Baysun, “Cem”, p. 72.
345 Heşt Bihişt, folio 534b.
346 Heşt Bihişt, folio 535b.
347 Baysun, “Cem”, p. 73.
Cem then began to organise his escape from Anatolia. The option to return to Egypt was ruled out, due to the Mamluk sultan’s reluctance to risk offending the Ottoman sultan any further. Cem’s own thoughts were to seek refuge with the Akkoyunlu sultan, but Kasım Beğ suggested that he could return to Rumili by sea and fight Bayezid II once more. Consequently, one of Cem’s trusted men, Frenk Süleyman, was sent to the grand master of the Knights of Rhodes, Pierre d’Aubusson, to negotiate a possible retreat to their island. The beğerbeği of Anadolu, Hersekoğlu Ahmed Paşa, was sent after Cem to prevent his escape, but he was unable to catch the fleeing prince, who on the 15th of July 1482 boarded a ship at the harbour of Korycos (Kerkü) and fled to Rhodes.348

When Cem arrived at Rhodes, d’Aubusson sent letters to the Pope and several other rulers in Europe, urging them to join forces for a crusade. The main argument of his entreaties was that they had to exploit the fortunate timing of events, and organise a crusade which would expel the Ottomans from Europe; that Christianity had just gained an excellent advantage against the Muslims, when the Ottoman empire was already weakened by civil war; and that Cem Çelebi had willingly taken refuge in Rhodes and sought the alliance of Christianity, and in the case of his gaining the throne his promises of land rewards to those who assisted him were more than generous.349 Several Christian states responded to d’Aubusson’s entreaties with noncommittal offers of a joint attack against the sultan. In practice, however, nothing concrete was organised, as political conflicts among the European powers hindered the chances of their cooperation.350

In the meantime, Cem’s presence in Rhodes caused conflicting sentiments among the members of the Order. Rhodes was vulnerable to a potential siege, or in fact any pressure from the Ottomans. At the same time d’Aubusson, aware of the political fragmentation of Christian Europe and the frail chances of cooperation among its conflicting states in a common cause, had also entered into negotiations with Bayezid II. Eventually, giving up the hope of a crusade, d’Aubusson signed a peace treaty with the Ottoman sultan in 1482. Several ambassadors were exchanged between the two courts, and a secret agreement regarding Cem Çelebi was reached on 7 December 1482.351 Its main point was that Cem should remain on the island, prevented from

349 Thuasne, Djem Sultan, pp. 67-70.
350 For the turbulent political situation in Europe at that time, and the numerous unsuccessful plans for a crusade against Bayezid II see Setton, Papacy and the Levant, chapter 13, pp. 381-416 passim.
351 Thuasne, Djem Sultan, pp. 81-87.
attacking Ottoman lands while in the care of d’Aubusson. On his side, Bayezid II
would pay the grand master a sum of 40,000 ducats.352

After long discussions on the subject, d’Aubusson decided to send Cem to the Order’s
estates in France, where he could be guarded with greater safety. This was viewed
with alarm by Bayezid II, who in the following years was forced to go to great lengths
in order to be kept informed of Cem’s state and to ensure that his brother remained
confined. The transportation to France was presented to Cem as part of a plan,
according to which the Christian forces would assist him to return to Rumili through
Hungary and claim the throne once more, and Cem is said to have agreed to it
willingly. This, however, was never realised. Instead, Cem spent about seven years
being frequently and secretly transferred from one castle to another, as the Order had
to ensure that his location remained unknown so that any attempts of organising his
escape, whether from outside or on Cem’s own initiative, would be prevented.353 In
the meantime, Pierre d’Aubusson skilfully tried to make the most of his advantageous
position as Cem’s guardian.

In Heşt Bihişt the description of the above period is very detailed regarding events in
Anatolia, but from Cem’s flight to Rhodes onwards information is limited. The
statement of Cem’s departure for Rhodes is followed by the report about two other
protagonists of the events, the luck of  Kara manoğlu Kasım Beğ and the sultan’s
settlement of his differences with Gedik Ahmed Paşa. The description of this period in
Heşt Bihişt focuses on developments in the Ottoman domains, while on the issue of
Cem Bidlisi briefly relates the sultan’s diplomatic dealings with the rulers in charge of
Cem’s custody, initially Pierre d’Aubusson, and later on the Pope. Bidlisi’s insightful
evaluation of the political and diplomatic situation and the negotiations around Cem
probably derives from Muştafa Paşa.354

Cem’s status among the Christians, as an honoured but still forcibly secluded guest, is
briefly but accurately described by Bidlisi, who mentions that “The captive prince of
Islam found great safety near the governor of Rhodes” who “did not let him go
anywhere outside”.355 There is, however, no reference at all to Cem’s constant
transportations by the Order, and from Bidlisi’s account it could be assumed that

352 Or 45,000, according to some sources. Cf. Fisher, Foreign Relations, p. 29 and n. 7.
353 For Cem’s transportations see Ménage V.L., “The Mission of an Ottoman Secret Agent in France
355 Heşt Bihişt, folio 536a.
during all this time Cem remained on Rhodes.\textsuperscript{356} It is obvious that Cem’s removal from Rhodes and his movements in France were a fact not known to many in the empire, even after Cem’s death. This can be attributed to both the secrecy practiced by the Knights’ men, who moved Cem swiftly and covertly, and to Bayezid II’s best interest in keeping anything related to his brother concealed from public knowledge.

Cem’s confinement and death in Europe

During the next seven years the most powerful European states were in constant diplomatic negotiations, in competition over Cem’s supervision. The Mamluk sultan also wished to recover Cem’s guardianship. Eventually, the Knights of Rhodes felt that Bayezid II’s pressure upon them had become more than they were able to endure, and they gave in to Pope Innocent VIII’s requests to acquire Cem’s supervision. On 10 Rabi’ I 894/13 March 1489 Cem, with a small retinue of attendants and guardians, was put on a ship and transported to Rome.\textsuperscript{357}

The Pope also kept Cem in strict confinement. As soon as Bayezid II was informed of the developments and his brother’s new location, he sent Muşafa Paşa to Rome, in order to verify the truth of this intelligence. Muşafa Paşa made an agreement with the Pope, establishing friendly relations between him and the sultan, and ensuring that Cem would not be allowed to attack the Ottoman lands as long as he was in the Pope’s care.\textsuperscript{358} Even after Innocent VIII’s death (1492), his successor Alexander VI (1492-1503) kept this agreement with the sultan. In 1494, however, the King of France, Charles VIII (1483-1498), began to put pressure on the Pope to hand Cem over to him. After having gained great power from his conquests in Italy, Charles VIII wanted to march against Naples, and at the same time was making plans for a crusade against Bayezid II.\textsuperscript{359} The Pope, unable to resist Charles VIII’s forceful demands, who entered Rome in late 1494, was eventually compelled to surrender Cem to him, in January 1495.

Charles VIII took the şehzade with him on his march towards Naples, but on the way there Cem fell ill and died, on 29 Cemazi I 900/25 February 1495. There are several

\textsuperscript{356} Heşt Bihişt, folio 536a.
\textsuperscript{357} Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Tarihi, vol. II, p. 166.
\textsuperscript{358} Heşt Bihişt, folio 536b.
\textsuperscript{359} Charles VIII wrote a letter to all the Christian world inviting them to prepare for a crusade. Cf. Fisher, Foreign Relations, p. 48 and n. 132.
different opinions about the cause of Cem’s sudden death. Many sources maintain that he was poisoned, probably from a shaving razor, but the mastermind behind the barber under suspicion is not certain. Bidlisi claims that it was the Pope, who wanted to avenge Cem’s forceful extraction from his hands. It is also a valid assumption, however, that it was Bayezid II himself who ordered his brother’s death, especially given that the Pope would have little to benefit from Cem’s death. On the contrary, Bayezid II had undoubtedly a lot to gain from his brother’s death, and several similar plots had been organised in the past. It is impossible to estimate how many attempts against Cem’s life had been unsuccessful until 1495, as naturally arrangements for such an undertaking would be covered with utmost secrecy.

When the news of Cem’s death reached Bayezid II, the sultan immediately sent agents to Europe to confirm it, and asked for his brother’s body to be sent to him, so that he could arrange for it a burial worthy of an Ottoman prince. Although most certainly relieved at this information, Bayezid II showed all the appropriate honours to his brother. Certainly also aiming at making it known to everyone that Cem was dead, the sultan ordered a period of mourning throughout the empire, as befitting the event of the death of any member of the royal family. Cem’s body, however, continued to be a source of pressure which the king of France put on Bayezid II, although admittedly smaller. Five thousand ducats were asked for the body, without which it would not be delivered. After long delays and disputes over the issue, Cem’s coffin was taken to Gallipoli in April 1499; over four years after his death, Cem was buried in Bursa in the türbe of Murad II.

Bidlisi’s report on Cem’s fate after his passing into the Pope’s care is rather more detailed than the rest of his account about Cem in Europe. This is due to the valuable information provided from Müstafâ Paşa’s mission to Rome. The lively account of Müstafâ Paşa’s trip contains interesting material about the diplomatic arrangements between Bayezid II and the Pope, as well as a personal view of the conditions of Cem’s confinement near the Pope:

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360 See Baysun, “Cem”, p. 78.
361 Hest Bihist, folio 537a.
362 See for example the unsuccessful attempt of a man named Macrino, who, in 1489, had been bribed by secret agents of the sultan to poison the fountain from where water for the Pope and Cem was taken. Thuasne, Djem Sultan, pp. 261-263, 268-270; Setton, Papacy and the Levant, pp. 411-412.
363 Fisher, Foreign Relations, pp. 49.
364 Thuasne, Djem Sultan, pp. 384-387.
365 For a list of European sources, which cover Cem’s stay in Rome see İnalçık, “A Case Study”, p. 220, n. 45.
He (Mustafa Paşa) requested an interview with Cem Çelebi, to confirm his life and state, and after he received permission he met with him at the place where he was confined, in a manner as if he was free. He heard a story of peculiar captivity, separation and sorrow from Cem Çelebi, who asked for pity and forgiveness from his older brother and sultan of the Muslims.366

Bidlisi also mentions the pressure Charles VIII exerted on the Pope, as well as his plans to march against the Ottomans:

As the Pope could not withstand the power and the armies of the king of France, Cem Çelebi was removed from the Pope’s hands by force and violence and they turned him into a tool for their vicious plans against the lands of Islam.367

The date of Cem’s burial in Bursa is mistakenly given by Bidlisi as 897/1491-2, a date when in fact Cem was still alive.368 There is no mention of the delays and further negotiations Bayezid II had to endure before he finally acquired Cem’s body. Instead, Bidlisi merely states that “The kings of the Franks treated Cem Sultan’s coffin with all respect and reverence and placed it in a mosque before sending it to his ancestral mausoleum.”369 Once again, Bidlisi avoids reference to any delays or pressures related to the return of Cem’s coffin, that would suggest Bayezid II’s diplomatic vulnerability. Bidlisi ends the section devoted to Cem with the feelings of relief and peace that followed the closure of this long period of insecurity:

After the arrival of the şehzade’s coffin those who had their minds on rebellion became loyal, the kings of the states of Islam and the infidels who were leaders of rebellion showed compliance and support, and the army and people on the borders of Islam found peace of mind.370

The effects of Cem’s revolt

A. Internal politics

The turbulent events related to the determination of Meḥmed II’s successor turned into a major factor of instability for the Ottoman state. For fourteen years after Meḥmed II’s death (1481-1495), Ottoman politics were largely dependent upon Cem’s situation,
both on the domestic political scene and in the empire's international relations. Although in practice Cem's efforts to seize power failed, the threat of what he symbolised was impossible to ignore. His claim to the throne gave hope to many insurgent elements in the empire, who saw in him a valuable leader, around whom they could convene and pursue their own aspirations for autonomy or personal merit. These groups were equally, if not more, motivated by their discontent against the official authority of the state, as by any feelings of alliance towards Cem. In practice the sultan's standing army easily repelled these badly organised revolts against his authority, as the local troops in support of Cem were hardly able to match the overpowering might of the Janissaries. The very fact of Cem's relative success, however, was itself an indication of the menacing tensions on the Ottoman political scene.

The deep division within the class of the askeri, manifested in their fervent support of the two şehzades, was the inevitable result of a competition which had long been building up in the previous years. During his reign Mehmed II had managed to keep the various groups of his statesmen under as firm control as it was possible for one single man by relying heavily on the concept of "divide and rule". This, however, only intensified the discontent and competition of the various social groups and individuals in the empire's ruling class, and it was inevitable that the tensions would surface in full as soon as Mehmed II's powerful rule was removed.

The empire's administrative machine was a highly complex and competitive environment, in the centre of which stood the sultan.371 Officials of all ranks and capacities sought support from other members, forming groups of men held together above all by common interests. There were, therefore, several smaller groups within each class, whose members struggled among themselves for political predominance and influence over the sultan and formed alliances with other individuals according to their own personal interests and opportunity for advancement. It would not, therefore, be entirely accurate to describe this division as a purely social one, in terms of well-defined parties of devşirme-origin statesmen versus the 'ulema, as the situation has often been described.372 Certainly Bayezid II's active plan, while his father was still

371 The parameters of personal promotion and appointment, and the nature and importance of the sultan's role as the centre of the Ottoman administrative mechanism are outlined in Inalcık H., "Decision Making in the Ottoman State", Decision Making and Change in the Ottoman Empire (ed. C.E. Farah), Missouri State University Press 1993, pp. 9-18.

372 Several modern scholars have based their observations on the model of Ottoman administration created by Lybyer A.H., The Government of the Ottoman Empire in the Time of Suleiman the Magnificent, (Harvard Historical Studies, Vol. XVIII), Cambridge, Mass. 1913, pp. 36ff., where the idea of a distinct conflict of interests between the Ruling Institution and the Moslem Institution was
alive, to build up a network of individual political allies and the further incorporation of their spheres of influence into his own paid off when the need arose.

On the other hand, the fact that Bayezid II undoubtedly owed his accession to the throne to the support of those state officials who had sided with him after Mehmed II’s death proved to be a drawback in the long run, due to the instability of his position. The statesmen in favour of Bayezid II, many of whom were products of the devşirme, remained on his side because of the personal benefits they hoped to acquire on the occasion of his accession to the throne, while the feeling of esprit de corps in their alliances was again largely based on the same principle - the importance of patronage for personal advancement. After his enthronement, however, Bayezid II’s power remained greatly dependent on the assistance of these men, in order to secure his authority and defy any opposition to his person. This had the double effect of increasing his supporters’ influence, who naturally took advantage of their power, while opposition movements were stronger and more threatening than usual due to their congregating around Cem.

A group with paramount political influence was the Janissary corps. The number and importance of the Janissaries had been increasing gradually under the previous sultans and their definitive intervention in Bayezid II’s succession clearly showed the extent of their power in decision-making in major political matters and over the sultan himself. Bayezid II’s indulgent attitude towards them, forced by the circumstances, set a pattern for the relationship between the sultan and his standing army, which seriously undermined his authority and in the long run proved a significant burden on the imperial Treasury. It is most likely that the extremity of the initial situation would have eventually settled down, had Cem been entirely eliminated. The prolonged instability of Ottoman political life, however, hindered Bayezid II from taking strict measures against any powerful political unit within his state, including measures towards the effective control of the Janissaries. Bayezid II’s position became even more delicate by the fact that as a consequence of Cem’s presence in Europe the sultan was practically unable to undertake any serious military campaign, which would occupy the majority of his forces and thus weaken his defences against a possible joint attack from the Christian forces, inspired and led by Cem. This became a major reason for discontent among the Janissaries, who, left inactive in the capital and deprived of their main source of wealth, were gradually growing more restless and troublesome.

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featuring. See also Fisher, "Civil Strife", pp. 449-466, where the author explains the struggle between Bayezid II and Cem on the basis of this model.
Furthermore, there were many among the empire's statesmen who opposed Bayezid II's pacific policies and would have preferred a continuation of Mehmed II's warlike rule. These men tended to join the ranks of Cem's supporters, as the younger prince was reputed to have been more energetic and war-like than his elder brother. Bayezid II was never able to eliminate all of Cem's supporters in the empire, even long after the latter's departure to Europe. Many remained loyal to the younger prince, waiting for him to return and ready to assist him in any future attempt to claim the throne. As long as Cem was alive, the possibility of revolts instigated by his return continued to feed the hopes of his adherents and threaten the empire with another outburst of civil war.

Bayezid II's task in keeping control of the empire's reins of power in his own hands was, therefore, an exceptionally delicate and difficult matter that required balancing the threats of Cem's adherents and the harassment of his own influential supporters. It was perhaps just as difficult to subdue the extreme influence of those men who had played the key roles in his own accession. His first attempt to dispense with Gedik Ahmed Paşa, after the battle of Yeni Şehir, is the most characteristic indication of the difficulties Bayezid II encountered in this process. Although the dismissal of state officials as a form of chastisement was not unusual, the court and army's reaction to that of Gedik Ahmed Paşa was a serious blow to the new sultan's authority. It was obvious that at that early stage Bayezid II did not yet enjoy the obedience and sincere loyalty of the officials or the troops. It was only after Cem had been in the hands of the Knights of Rhodes for a few months, in November 1482, that Bayezid II's command proved secure enough to withstand a second and final confrontation with Gedik Ahmed Paşa. The vezir was executed, and although this brought about another angry reaction among some troops, their uprising was easily repressed. Soon after this personal victory, Bayezid II dismissed Ishak and Sinan Paşa from their offices as grand vezir and beşlerbeği of Anadolu respectively, obviously for similar reasons.

Conversely, one of the positive effects of the enforced military inactivity, caused by the constant state of alert in which the state remained due to Cem's threat, was the significant economic and administrative development of the empire, which is characteristic of Bayezid II's reign. In his effort to strengthen his own position, Bayezid II addressed many of the issues which had been widely known sources of discontent among the Ottoman subjects under Mehmed II. Bayezid II concentrated on domestic affairs, following policies intended to ease the tensions inside the empire, an
approach which in turn resulted in an economic and social prosperity which would not have been achieved otherwise. 373

As mentioned before, many of Cem's followers were members of the 'ulema, and therefore theirs was a group, the support of which Bayezid II would have to win. One of the first measures undertaken by Bayezid II was the immediate return of the vakf properties to their owners which had been confiscated by Mehmed II a few years prior to his death. This act certainly increased the new sultan's popularity among the 'ulema as well as all the statesmen and dervish orders who had been disaffected by Mehmed II's measures. 374 Another example of Bayezid II's special care to please the 'ulema was his care to protect the city of Bursa, one of the most important 'ulema centres, from the destructive might of the Janissaries who wished to pillage the city as punishment for its support of Cem after the battle of Yeni Şehir. 375 In fact Bayezid II's political orientations proved to be much in conformity with the interests of the 'ulema, and in the long run this class benefited greatly from Bayezid II's protection of education and belles lettres, as well as from his belief in rulership in agreement with the şeri'a.

Finally, in practice, the widespread fear of a recurrence of civil strife worked to an extent in favour of Bayezid II. Once upon the throne, Bayezid II was the official head of the state, to whom all subjects owed their respect and allegiance, while the disastrous effects of civil war were a serious factor inhibiting open opposition with the sultan. Certainly there must have been others, aside from Gedik Ahmed Paşa, who felt it was their duty to offer their services, even if not their loyalty, to the new sultan for the sake of peace and unity in the country. The historians of the early years of Bayezid II's reign display their strong feelings in this respect. 376

B. External politics

By the time Cem crossed the Ottoman frontier, seeking refuge and assistance against Bayezid II from an external power, the struggle between the two brothers ceased to be an internal, civil affair, and escalated to the level of international politics. Cem's first alliance with the sultan of Egypt broadened the conflict of the two princes, although at that initial stage Kaitbey's rather moderate conduct prevented the situation from amounting to any major external peril for the Ottoman state. The support Cem found in

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373 See above (Chapter I, Reforms and developments under Bayezid II).
376 Cf. Inalcık & Murphey, Tursun Beg, p. 17.
Cairo, however, provided him with the necessary time to regather his forces and return to challenge his brother the following year. Naturally, this act of the Mamluk sultan was viewed with great displeasure at the Ottoman court and contributed greatly to the deterioration of the relations between the two states. Indeed, when Bidlisi lists the reasons that led to the Ottoman-Mamluk war under Bayezid II, he claims that:

When the late sultan (Mehmed II) died and the present sultan ascended on his father's throne, his brother Cem Çelebi, who followed the misjudged path of desiring to oppose the sultan, at first left his lands and took flight to Egypt and Syria and for the second time he led his rebellion and claimed the kingdom of Rum. These uprisings in these lands took place with the consent of the sultan of Egypt. If he had kept the peace and remained good, Cem Çelebi would never have dared or been able to repeat his irreverent revolution and after his pilgrimage he would not have marched against the kingdom of his father and the sultanate of his elder brother.377

Cem's alliance with 'the infidels' was even more regrettable for the Ottomans. Bidlisi also expresses this opinion, which must have been shared by many among the Muslims:

(Cem) headed towards the island of Rhodes, where he sought refuge, selling out to the infidels both Islam and the nobility of his position as a prince. Although the defeat of the enemy was a reason for rejoicing, the sultan of the faithful found the fact that his brother had joined the contemptible infidels deplorable.378

Aside from religious disgrace, Cem's action gave Europe and Christianity a significant advantage and the power to interfere in Ottoman politics. Admittedly, the phenomenon of an Ottoman pretender's request for assistance from Christian rulers had not been unique to that date. History had already presented several examples of similar alliances, and such opportunities had always been utilised by Ottoman foes to undermine the stability of the state to their own advantage.379 The majority of previous such incidents, however, had been more or less isolated cases of asylum, or short-lived alliances of an Ottoman pretender, who employed the military assistance of some neighbouring ruler for a specific attack against the current sultan. In Cem's case, however, such an attack never did take place in the end. Instead, the unusually long period of thirteen years of insecurity, and the instability that resulted from it was

377 Hest Bihišt, folio 546b.
378 Hest Bihišt, folio 535b.
379 For similar incidents of exile of royal family members or state officials seeking asylum at the Mamluk court, or Mamluks escaping to the Ottoman court see Har-el, Struggle for Domination, pp. 105-106 and further references given there.
eventually more destructive for the Ottoman empire’s relations with its Christian adversaries.

First and foremost, an observation immediately obvious to all was the great opportunity afforded to Christendom to unite forces and, on the pretext of assistance to Cem, to lead a major campaign which would defeat Bayezid II, reduce the Ottoman domains and place Cem on the throne of this smaller and weaker state. The idea of a crusade against the Turks was, of course, an old aspiration of Christian nations, and discussions about a crusade were still very much alive among the Christian peoples. The unexpected development of Cem's alliance gave new impetus to such plans. During Cem's presence in Europe mobilisation for a crusade was repeatedly utilised as an intimidating manoeuvre against Bayezid II whenever any of the Christian states mostly in danger of an Ottoman offensive felt threatened, and they ensured these plans were made known to the sultan. This scheme, of course, did not pass unnoticed by the sultan and Ottoman political observers. Bidlisi sums up these activities of the Christian states with the acknowledgment that:

The kings of the infidels for many years wished secretly in their hearts to cause vexation and misfortunes for the sultans of the Ottoman dynasty. (...) There were many sovereigns of the Franks, who wanted to bring Cem Celebi near them as a weapon and a security for their own lands, and at times to use him as an opportunity to cause revolts and conflicts in the lands of the sultan.380

Plans for a crusade were repeatedly made in the following years, but none of them was realised.381 The truth was that by the end of the fifteenth century the states of Europe were too preoccupied with internal politics and competition amongst themselves to organise a crusade, and too financially strained to fund one. This was not yet apparent, however, to Bayezid II, who was restrained from any openly offensive activities against those who held his brother in their hands. Even the mere threat of such an enterprise often proved effective. Indeed, as long as Cem was alive and in Christian hands, Bayezid II felt compelled to keep peace at all costs on the empire’s north-western borders. Diplomatic negotiations revolved, thus, around a certain pattern: Bayezid II was striving to ensure that Cem would remain a hostage in the hands of Cem’s guardians, while they entered all negotiations with the knowledge that they could always press their demands by using the threat of a crusade led by Cem.

380 Heşt Bihişt, folio 536a.
381 Setton gives a thorough description of the political situation in Europe and the intricate diplomatic negotiations revolving around Cem, in Papacy and the Levant, chapters 13-14, pp. 381-448. See also Thussne, Djem Sultan, passim; Tansel S., “Yeni Vesikalar karşısında Sultan İkinci Bayezid hakkında bazı Mütalâalar”, Belleten XXVII (1963), pp. 185-236.
Peace-making diplomatic arrangements were under way between Bayezid II and Pierre d’Aubusson even before the latter’s agreeing to give shelter to Cem. Although it is likely that the Ottoman forces would have defeated the Knights of Rhodes in an open conflict, Bayezid II opted to maintain a friendly agreement with them. This remained the general position he kept in all his dealings with the West throughout the thirteen-year period of Cem’s presence in Christian lands. This state of affairs was, certainly, a significant change in the balance of Europe’s relations with the Ottomans, especially after Mehmed II’s previous aggressive conduct. As it was, however, in all sides’ best interest to be on good terms with the Ottomans, Bayezid II’s assertive peacemaking was met with agreement. By 1483, therefore, peace treaties had been signed between the Ottomans and Rhodes, Venice and Hungary, and all other rulers had equally confirmed their goodwill towards the sultan.

From then on Bayezid II’s main concern in his external policies was to keep the delicate balance with his neighbours by fending off their diplomatic pressures and threats, while at the same time securing that they remained apprehensive of the Ottoman rage by strengthening his navy, enlarging his army and conducting threatening gazas on the borders of his empire. Even the concept of a crusade against Ottoman lands was counterbalanced by a perhaps far-fetched threat from Bayezid II, the possibility of making peace with the Mamluk sultan Kaitbey and the organizing of a joint invasion to Europe by the Muslim forces. The truth was that Europe greatly feared the possibility of Bayezid II’s invasion of their lands, perhaps even at the invitation of one of the petty Christian rulers, as much as Bayezid II himself was apprehensive of a potential joint attack against himself.

Cem and his moves played the central part in this diplomatic chess-game. He became the object of negotiations, threats and demands to such extent that it seemed as if any development in the field of international politics depended upon what became of him. Above all, his supervision became an issue of intensive diplomatic negotiations among the Christians themselves. As Bidlisi points out, the prince’s presence in their lands was the best guarantee of keeping Bayezid II out of them, while the economic and commercial advantages of enjoying Bayezid II’s cooperation and good will were also considerable. To this must be added the not inconsiderable amount of the 40,000 ducats, which Bayezid II paid annually to Cem’s guardians. There was a

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382 Thuasne, Djem Sultan, pp. 216-223.
large number of European rulers, therefore, who struggled to take Cem into their hands regardless of their intentions, or ability, to lead a campaign for his sake. At some point or another France, Hungary, Venice, Naples and the Pope tried to get hold of Cem. It soon became evident that the Knights of Rhodes would be incapable of withstanding Bayezid II's pressures had Cem remained on the island; hence his initial transportation to French territory and his constant relocations thereafter. The decision to convey the şehzade to Rome was taken after numerous pressures from all sides upon d'Aubusson, and again Cem's forceful seizure by the king of France in 1495 was the outcome of long and fierce debates and controversies over the matter.385

Also interested in acquiring Cem was the Mamluk sultan Ҡaitbey, who had certainly regretted his decision to grant permission to Cem to leave Cairo in 1482.386 Especially during the Ottoman-Mamluk war (1485-91), Ҡaitbey repeatedly urged the Knights to hand the şehzade over to him and the Christians to join him in an attack against the Ottomans on several fronts.387 Cem's mother and wife still lived in Ҡaitbey's lands. Furthermore, as a Muslim Ҡaitbey had more chances of enjoying Cem's willing cooperation, who might perhaps attempt another claim to the throne without seeking for Christian help against fellow-Muslims. Cem himself, who generally refused the idea of leading a crusade,388 had also expressed the wish to be allowed to return to Egypt, where he could join his family.389 An Egyptian ambassador was still present at the Vatican during Cem's arrival in the city in 1489, to continue negotiations. The possibility of taking hold of the şehzade, however, was definitively lost for Ҡaitbey after Cem's move to Rome.

As Cem was among the most valuable determinants of international political life, anything concerning the şehzade was a matter of utmost secrecy. His guardians kept his position secret for the protection of their hostage, while Bayezid II was naturally interested in his brother's movements, as well as his health and mental state. Lack of unity among the Christian states was a favourable reality for the sultan's aims. Some Christian rulers, to keep on good terms with the sultan, obliged him by providing information on Cem's whereabouts. Venice, especially, kept a close eye and notified Bayezid II of his brother's transportations while the latter was in France,390 the time

386 Cf. Ibn Iyas's statement, that "letting him (Cem) depart from Egypt was a mistake", quoted in Har-el, Struggle for Domination, p. 112.
387 Thuasne, Djem Sultan, pp. 133-135.
389 Uzunçarşı, Osmanlı Tarihi, vol. II, p. 166. For correspondence between Cem and his mother in Cairo see Har-el, Struggle for Domination, pp. 120-121.
during which Bayezid II seems to have been most uncertain of the developments regarding Cem.

As a result of this uncertainty, during that period a much larger than usual number of Ottoman spies were sent to Europe, and especially to France. The mission of these men was primarily to locate the şehzade so that they would keep the sultan informed of his brother's health and whereabouts. Among them, at least some were also assigned with the mission of assassinating Cem. The sultan's official ambassadors were usually also entrusted with the task of attempting a personal meeting with Cem, as in Muștafa Paşa's case. Those bold men faced numerous adventures during their travels, as their reports reveal. Their trips were usually long and adventurous, even more so in the cases of the secret agents who travelled under cover. On many occasions it required a lot of determination to bring their mission to a success due to the numerous obstacles and setbacks these men encountered. Some were more successful than others; in all cases, however, their missions were only accomplished with the assistance of a wide network of local allies, who provided the Ottoman agents with money, guides and a wide variety of further connections which enabled them to operate in the foreign lands.

On his side, Bayezid II was well aware that his brother would be a much greater danger in the hands of a powerful ruler. As long as Cem was held by d'Aubusson, whose weight in European politics was of minor significance, the sultan knew that his pressures would be more effective. Thus he made all efforts to prevent any transportation of his brother that would increase the chances of an attack on the Ottoman lands. As the Pope was much more powerful and influential among the Christian rulers, and therefore more capable of achieving the organisation of a crusade, the news of Cem's delivery to Rome was received with great displeasure and anxiety at the Ottoman court. Cem's transportation to Rome was initially interpreted as an indication of the organisation of a crusade. Negotiations started again immediately, and it was then that Muștafa Paşa, one of Bayezid II's most intimate associates, travelled to Rome to arrange the renewal of the conditions of the şehzade's confinement. Bidlisi states:

392 For a list of the various reports that have been edited and studied by modern scholars see below, n. 445.
393 Cf. Hest Bihişt, folio 536a.
394 İnalçık, “A Case Study”, pp. 210-211.
As the distance between Rome and the lands of Islam is about two months' journey by
land and sea, which would be an impediment for the news of Cem's life or death to
reach the sultan, and the merciful sultan needed clear information about this issue, he
sent Muştafa Paşa to confirm the state of these affairs.395

After Muştafa Paşa's visit, it became rather obvious to the sultan that a European
campaign against Ottoman lands was unfeasible for the time being, and Bayezid II was
much reassured by the Pope's willingness to cooperate on the issue of Cem.396

Throughout all these negotiations Bayezid II employed a combination of threats and
promises, carried out by the numerous ambassadors he dispatched to European courts.
His envoys were provided with money, valuable gifts and generous offers, which
were to accompany the sultan's diplomatic demands. During all this time an especially
large number of famous religious relics was given by Bayezid II to several European
courts. Towards the end of his life Mehmed II is said to have been an enthusiastic
collector of Christian relics, which he used as means of placating the Christians in his
diplomatic negotiations with them. His father's collection proved very useful to
Bayezid II in his own reign.397

Amid these complex diplomatic intrigues stood Cem. Initially his hopes and chances
for a third attempt to win the throne were high, and it is certain that plans were made in
that direction both at his end in Rhodes, and among his supporters in the Ottoman
lands. It was obvious, however, that this could only be achieved with the aid of the
Christians. While he was still in Rhodes, Cem signed an agreement with d'Aubusson,
which outlined the terms of their alliance and the rewards to the Order, in case of
Cem's victory.398 At that stage there seemed to be no reason for Cem to doubt the
feasibility of his plans.

Even for a while after he was first taken to France, Cem remained hopeful. Although
at times frustrated by his restraint, he was not much subdued in his attempts to take
action against his brother. In time, however, Cem could not help but realise his real
place in the political terrain of international relations. Although it is not likely that he
would have the chance to comprehend the importance attributed to him by the Christian
rulers, he was certainly aware of his own limited possibilities for independent

395 Hest Bihişt, folio 536b.
396 Fisher, Foreign Relations, p. 40. For suspicions of a secret agenda in Muştafa Paşa's meetings
with the Pope see İnal, "A Case Study", p. 215.
397 Babinger, Mehmed the Conqueror, p. 411.
398 Dated 22 August 1482. For the terms and significance of this agreement see Setton, Papacy and
the Levant, pp. 383-384.
action. It gradually became clear that he was more of a prisoner than a prince on his way to the throne and, along with his despair, Cem’s offers and promises to those from whom he sought assistance became progressively more lavish. Whilst to d’Aubusson, in 1482, Cem had promised to return all the islands his father had conquered from the Christians, to the Pope in 1489 he vowed the whole of the Ottoman lands in Europe, even Constantinople. In general, however, although he is said to have often been frustrated, melancholic and certainly regretful of his position, Cem bore his confinement with the royal dignity befitting an Ottoman prince.

Even after his demise, Cem did not cease to serve as a means of applying diplomatic pressure on Bayezid II. In reality, when Charles VIII’s chances of leading a campaign against the Ottomans with Cem at its head were eliminated, he practically abandoned all his plans for an attack against Bayezid II. His own position would weaken, though, had the sultan known that. While Bayezid II did not feel certain of his brother’s death he would remain cautious in his political dealings, and Charles VIII was hoping to hold on to the advantage of Cem’s supervision for as long as possible. He tried, therefore, to keep the sultan in doubt about his brother’s state by refusing to send Cem’s body to the sultan, as was requested of him.

Indeed, it seems that the sultan remained unsure of his brother’s death for several months. Bidlisi’s statement that “the sultan sent agents to the borders with the lands of the Franks, to verify this report”, shows that certainly at first the news was received in Istanbul with distrust. These agents, to whom Bidlisi refers, might be the Ottoman ambassadors sent to Naples to bring the sehizade’s body back as soon as the news was heard in the palace. These men, however, were imprisoned and 500 ducats were requested for the coffin by its keepers. For several years after Cem’s death Bayezid II was denied his brother’s body, which was also claimed by the Pope, obviously in an attempt to prolong the admittedly much reduced political advantage of

399 Cf. Eyice, “Sultan Cem’in Portreleri” pp. 10-11, where two extracts from Cem’s poems are quoted.
401 Cem’s initial encounter with the Pope upon his arrival in Rome, and his communication with the Pontiff soon after, was an exquisite manifestation of royal pride and dignity, despite his position. For a detailed description see Setton, *Papacy and the Levant*, p. 407.
403 *Ibid.*, p. 491. suggests, based on a report by Sagundino, that even by the middle of May 1495 Bayezid II was still not absolutely sure of Cem’s death.
404 *Hepiş Bihisht*, folio 537a.
405 Fisher, *Foreign Relations*, p. 49.
Cem’s possession. Surely enough, after the end of Cem’s threat to the unity and safety of the Ottoman lands, Bayezid II’s foreign policy became distinctly more aggressive.

C. Cultural contacts

Cem’s prolonged residence in Europe had an indirect, cultural effect on the interaction between the Christian and the Muslim world. In the form of Cem’s small retinue, a Muslim enclave lived and travelled as a unit in Christian lands, a rare phenomenon at that time. This gave the chance to each side to observe closely the life and manners of the other. The impact of this co-existence can be traced though a number of examples, which reveal the curiosity and amazement of either side at the other.

Although the interest of the Christian world in the manners of the Muslims was not new, Cem - or Zizim, as he was commonly referred to - attracted the curiosity of the West in a special way. Not only was he an important Muslim prince held in European lands, but also the son of the legendary Conqueror of Constantinople, whose reputation was great throughout the Christian world. For most of the time Cem was watched by his guardians, but he was certainly incorporated into the life of the courts where he resided. The description of Cem’s visit to the church in Bourganeuf, outside which Burak Re'is was able to see him, suggests that public appearances of Cem and his retinue were not uncommon. On that occasion Cem was accompanied by five other men dressed in Turkish clothes, but no evidence is given for the number of his guardians, who must have certainly been there as well. Later on, under Pope Alexander VI, Cem would often be seen riding with the Pope’s sons.

Cem himself had a great interest in philosophy and poetry, an occupation which gave him comfort during the long years of his life in Europe. He is known to have always engaged in literary and philosophical discussions in the castles and courts in which he was kept. It is not surprising, therefore, that as a sign of respect to this important political and literary figure a luxurious copy of Francesco Berlinghieri’s Geographia, initially dedicated to Mehmed II, was sent to Cem in Savoy. Furthermore, Cem and his companions became the object of curiosity and a source of

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410 Eyice, “Sultan Cem’in Portreleri” p. 13 and n. 17.
411 For Cem’s works, especially his two *divans* written in Persian and Turkish, see Ertaylan, *Sultan Cem*, pp. 240-241.
inspiration for the artists at the courts of France and the Pope. The şehzade’s life and
the story of his extraordinary captivity stirred the imagination of novelists and were
made the subject of several literary works since. Cem’s romantic affair with
Philippine-Hélène, the daughter of the lord in one of the castles in which he was kept
for a while, naturally attracted special attention. In addition, Cem’s image has been included in several paintings of the time, which
must be explained equally by the artists’ interest in Cem himself and the fascination of
the Christian world at the Turkish ways of the time. Several paintings include men
dressed in Turkish dress, many of them believed to depict Cem himself. Likewise,
it has been suggested that a musical piece might have been composed in reference to
Cem, based on the miniature painting of a man in turban and Turkish clothes at the
beginning of the manuscript of a Mass. Although much of the above is speculation,
the plethora of images of men in turbans appearing in works of art of the time is an
undeniable fact, indicating that the artistic world of the time, if not in direct contact
with Cem, was certainly aware of and inspired by his presence in their world.

For the Ottomans, however, and the Muslim world in general, Europe and the ways of
the ‘infidels’ had so far been met with relative indifference. Although the Ottomans
came into frequent contact with the Christian people under their rule, their knowledge
of Catholicism or the life and manners of the West was limited, largely based on
hearsay descriptions by seamen and merchants or information included in the various
gazavatname. During their residence in France and Italy, Cem and his companions
had in turn the chance to observe life in Europe, and the impact of some of the cultural
differences between the two worlds is reflected in the Vaki‘at -i Sultan Cem. Apart
from being the most detailed historical source on Cem’s life in Europe, it is also one of
the few accounts of the Western lands written by a Muslim. The work, partly a
concealed account of the life and manners of the ‘infidels’ incorporated in the
biography of the Ottoman prince, is considered among the first works of this nature
produced by an Ottoman.

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413 For a number of romances, dating from the seventeenth century onwards, inspired by this story
see Eyice, “Sultan Cem’in Portreleri” pp. 8-9, n. 17.
414 See Lewis B., Islam and the West, Oxford 1993, pp. 72ff.
415 See Eyice, “Sultan Cem’in Portreleri” pp. 16ff.
418 For the Vaki‘at see below.
419 Lewis, Muslim Discovery, p. 125.
Bidlisi’s political and ideological approaches

Bidlisi’s consciousness of the political role of his chronicle could not be more acute in any other section of the history of the Ottoman House than this one which deals with the controversial occurrence of his patron’s enthronement. Aware that his account was intended to address educated Muslims as much within the empire as in the rest of the Muslim world, the necessity of conforming with what was the official tendency of justification for the sultan’s authority was of crucial importance for the reception of both the work and the author. Indeed, regardless of the reasons behind his political opponents’ attack, the criticisms made against Heşt Bihişt were of an ideological-political nature. For the type of the officially sanctioned historiography that Heşt Bihişt was intended to be, conformity with the prominent ideological tendencies of the government was not merely a personal choice of the author, but a political exigency.

In this section Bidlisi seems to achieve a fine balance between fulfilling the requirements of Muslim historiographical tradition and political thought, and meeting the current political needs of the Ottoman government. First and foremost, of course, Bidlisi’s approach is an expression of the philosophical ideals of his time regarding the concept of pre-determination of events according to God’s unquestionable will. Indeed, Bidlisi stresses on more than one occasion that the events as they happened were manifestations of God’s will. As mentioned above, it was essentially God Himself who bestowed upon Bayezid II the gift of rulership, and the inevitability of this outcome was only unsuccessfully challenged by Cem’s rebellion. All incidents leading to Bayezid II’s victory over his brother are, thus, stamped with the confirmation of divine will:

Şehzade Cem Sultan was ruler of the lands of Karaman. He led an unprecedented opposition against the sultan. The sultan, however, was supported by the aid of God and numerous troops of allies and assistants. (...) The fact that he arrived first to attain his right and kingdom found approval with divine guidance.

At the same time, Bidlisi adds a pragmatic edge to his historical theory, one that is more in tune with the reality of the times and the sultan’s particular political needs. He repeatedly stresses that Bayezid II’s succession was sanctioned by the support of the state officials and the army. As well as paying tribute to those who contributed to

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420 For the criticisms on Heşt Bihişt see above, (“H.B.” chapter).
421 See above (Chapter III).
422 Heşt Bihişt, folio 529b. Bayezid II’s victories in military confrontations with his brother are usually accompanied with a reference to God’s wish.
423 Heşt Bihişt, folios 524b-525a, 526b, 529b.
the development of the events, Bidlisi strives to create the unmistakable image of a sultan who enjoys the approval and loyalty of his servants. Similarly, the right to sovereignty of the House of Osmans and the sultan’s religious supremacy are also shown to be formally acknowledged by the ‘ulema, a statement of particular importance in view of the widespread support of this social class for Cem:

The ‘ulema preached that the position of the imam of Islam is securely preserved under the sultan and by the hereditary rights of the ruling family, which have been confirmed by the verdict of fetvas and the religious sciences, it is established that the seat of the sultanate should not be left void of a heir or be passed to anyone else after the determination of the heir to the throne.424

Nonetheless, Bayezid II’s success is virtually not questioned in terms of worldly matters, but is accepted that his enthronement was determined by divine will. As this divine will was based on a sultan’s moral virtues, it was essential that Bayezid II would be portrayed in a way which would leave the reader in no doubt that God’s will was indeed justified. This is achieved not only through lengthy passages of praise to Bayezid II’s exceptional qualities, intended to prove that he possessed all the necessary virtues an ideal ruler must have,425 but also with the help of a careful demonstration of these virtues in practice, throughout the unfolding of the events. Bidlisi’s narration, thus, sketches the person of his patron as an upright, generous and kind-hearted man, with a high sense of nobility and piety, who enjoys the respect and loyalty of his servants as much as God’s blessing.

Bidlisi takes every opportunity to stress the sultan’s nobility of character and his gentle generosity. Aside from a wide and eloquent use of a variety of adjectives, the text is often elaborated by references to the sultan’s thoughts and personal feelings that are meant to reveal his inner qualities. Bayezid II’s kind heart is firstly expressed in reference to his love for his father:

In the meantime, when the sultan heard the news of his father’s death his kind heart was deeply saddened. For some days he mourned for the loss of his father and ordered a few days of mourning for the kingdom.426

This image was also enhanced in practice by Bayezid II’s actions during Mehmed II’s funeral in Istanbul,427 something on which, for unknown reasons, Bidlisi does not

424 Heşt Bihişt, folio 526b.
425 Heşt Bihişt, folios 523b-524b. See also above (Chapter IV, Bidlisi’s political and theoretical approach).
426 Heşt Bihişt, folio 526b.
427 Mentioned above (same Chapter, Bayezid II’s enthronement and Cem’s opposition).
elaborate in his narrative. This public manifestation of filial love must have been of special importance, as in reality the relationship between father and son had been strained for a long time. Mehmed II’s preference for Cem must have been widely known among the statesmen, and it has even been suggested that the campaign during which Mehmed II died was headed against Bayezid, as the Conqueror was getting anxious about his son’s increasing power; another theory suggests that Mehmed II’s death might have been due to poisoning instigated by Bayezid.

The same attitude is manifest on several occasions in the sultan’s dealings with Cem. Bayezid II maintained a peaceful demeanour towards his brother, despite his legal right to execute him according to both Law and custom. Instead, he repeatedly offered Cem the option of retiring and accepting a pension throughout his lifetime, although this could simply be an excuse for Bayezid II to avoid a war and then arrange for the death of his brother in a less obvious way, once he was firmly established on the throne. Nevertheless, on more than one occasion Bidlisi stresses the sultan’s amiable feelings towards his rebellious brother. Bayezid II’s response to the Turkomans who attacked Cem on his flight to Konya is the most characteristic example of the sultan’s respect and care towards his brother. This incident reveals Bayezid II’s nobility of character, and at the same time it is made clear that, although Bayezid II himself was pursuing Cem with his army, any subject who fails to show the appropriate reverence to a member of the royal family will be considered a rebel and will be punished accordingly.

Regarding the lamentable reality of the civil war, Bidlisi explains it on the grounds of the old Turkish customs of succession. Bidlisi explicitly states that Cem had equal rights to succession. Here once again reality and divine determination are merged, as the uncertainty of the outcome and its dependence on the successful candidate’s skill in haste - enforced by “the sharpness of his sword and the severity of his arm” - are proclaimed to be in agreement with God’s will. Cem’s actions might have been rebellious, but they were still legitimate, justified by custom and tradition. Although Bidlisi, along with other contemporary Ottoman historians, condemns civil strife and points out the dangers it carries for the state’s peace and unity, he does not deny Cem the right to claim the throne. Ultimately, though, Bayezid II’s actions and firm position

429 On this issue see Tekindag, “Fatih’in ölümü”, pp. 97ff.
430 *Heşt Bihışt*, folio 530a.
431 *Heşt Bihışt*, folio 529a.
are fully and undeniably justified, because “As there is only one God, there can be only one ruler”.432

Cem is generally portrayed with forbearance, and is always treated with honour, an approach which indicates the author’s effort to relate the events with as much respect for the royal family as possible.433 Bidlisi attributes Cem’s rebellious attitude largely to the instigation of his supporters, Kasım Beg and “all those deceitful emirs and notables, such as the governor of Ankara Mehmed Ağa, and others who took part in rebellious battles with the desire for high offices”.434 as well as his “youthful folly” among “the recorded reasons for Cem Sultan’s exit from Karaman”. Cem’s life and confinement in Europe are treated with kindly consideration. Through Muştafa Paşa’s report Cem’s sorrows, regret and wishes for forgiveness436 contribute to this image of dignity and helplessness. Cem’s initial move to an alliance with the infidels, however, is reproached on the grounds of religious treachery.437

In general, however, Bidlisi consistently avoids specific references to any of the political incidents that challenged Bayezid II’s authority. Although in reality the question of succession to the throne went far beyond a personal struggle between Mehmed II’s two surviving şehzades, Bidlisi does not comment on the social currents dominating Ottoman political life at the period. There is no doubt that Bidlisi’s decision to leave out such issues was a deliberate one. Even though he was not present during the time they occurred, and therefore it would have been impossible for him to assess and understand the political tensions of Ottoman society, he was certainly aware of major events which are omitted in Heşt Bihişt. Such an example of omission is the riot of the Janissaries in Istanbul immediately after Mehmed II’s death, an incident which is mentioned in the chronicles that Bidlisi used as sources for his own work.438

Accordingly, the few references to the career and in particular the imprisonment and execution of Gedik Ahmed Paşa439 serve as another chance to display Bayezid II’s forgiving nature, but also his severity of punishment when needed. In addition, by

432 Heşt Bihişt, folio 530b.
433 The same attitude is also apparent in the Vaki‘at -i Sultan Cem, whose anonymous author shows respect and refrains from any negative criticism of Bayezid II. Cf. İnalçık, “A Case Study”, p. 217 n. 2.
434 Heşt Bihişt, folio 534b.
435 Heşt Bihişt, folios 529b-530a, 534a.
436 Heşt Bihişt, folio 536b.
437 Heşt Bihişt, folio 535b.
438 It is mentioned, for example, in Neşri Mehmed, Neşri Tarihi, (ed. M.A. Köymen), Ankara 1984, p. 206.
439 For Gedik Ahmed Paşa’s career see İnalçık, “Ahmad Pasha Gedik”, pp. 292-293.
pointing out Ahmed Paşa’s defects, Bidlisi presents all events in a manner that promotes the ideals of exemplar statesmen and the need for absolute obedience to the sultan. Bidlisi explains the Paşa’s first imprisonment and release on the grounds of mere arrogance:

He was appointed grand vezir but he soon became very arrogant about his power, and began to follow the sultan’s orders according to his own opinion. The sultan was displeased by Ahmed Paşa’s conduct and ordered his imprisonment. Ahmed Paşa was abandoned there for a while, until Ishak Paşa, a respected man whose advice was valued, interceded and asked the sultan’s pardon for Ahmed Paşa. The sultan pardoned Ahmed Paşa’s past offences, released him from prison and restored him to the position of vezir.440

As for his execution, Bidlisi gives the following reasons for it:

The sultan intended to deal with the actions of some disloyal and insincere men. Ahmed Paşa Gedik had performed acts of mutiny and disobedience to the sultan’s orders. The flight of army commanders to the line of the enemies revealed the hypocrisy in his heart, and the execution of Muṣṭafa Paşa b. Hamza Beğ was proof of Ahmed Paşa’s corruption and obstinacy. So Ahmed Paşa was stripped of his riches and position and was brought to the ground, so that he would serve as an example for other powerful infidel men, who might show arrogance in the sultan’s court.441

Another point worth mentioning concerns Bidlisi’s comments on the negotiations between the sultan and the grand master, as in it one can detect the sultan’s official policy on the issue. Bayezid II’s compromising policy and willingness to pay any sum to a Christian ruler was met with great disapproval by some vezirs and seen as an act of submission unworthy of the powerful Ottoman sultan.442 In general, Bidlisi gives an unfavourable impression of the grand master, revealing that the amount Bayezid II agreed to pay was intended as a stipend for the şehzade’s living expenses, but that d’Aubesson kept the money for himself and only a small part of it was spent on Cem.443 Bidlisi’s account would thus seem to be a response to the accusations against the sultan: the tributary nature of the sum paid to the grand master is lightened, while Bayezid II is practically absolved from either the suggestion that he paid a Christian ruler for his brother’s confinement, or from maintaining a subordinate role in the negotiations.

In conclusion, it can be said that in this, perhaps the most delicate chapter of his work, Bidlisi approaches the subject of revolt led by a member of the Ottoman family in a

440 Heşt Bihışt, folio 532b.
441 Heşt Bihışt, folio 536a.
442 Fisher, Foreign Relations, p. 29.
443 Heşt Bihışt, folio 536a.
remarkable way. Apart from the masterful application of all the common principles of Muslim historiography of the time apparent throughout the work, perhaps the most interesting angle in Bidlisi’s perspective is his exceptional praise of the members of the Ottoman dynasty, whether in power or against the established authority of the sultan. In an ingenious manner Bidlisi manages to relate the story of civil war and at the same time keep intact the image of nobility and the right for rulership of the House of Osmanlı, to which the loyalty of the subjects is not to be questioned nor weakened.

The place of Heşt Bihişti in contemporary sources and modern research in relation to Cem’s revolt

The prolonged fraternal struggle for power, and the captivity of an Ottoman prince at the courts of Europe, was admittedly a peculiar phenomenon for its times as well as one of major political importance that involved many states. As a result a large variety of source material was produced and carefully preserved, thus shedding light on a different side of events according to the type and origin of each source. This abundant material has enabled scholars of European as well as Ottoman history to study several aspects of this matter in detail. Cem’s affair is, thus, one of the most thoroughly studied issues of Bayezid II’s reign.

The considerations and actions of the Ottoman government are demonstrated in abundant archive material, such as letters, treatises and official reports. A large number of letters related to the issue has survived, from those exchanged between Bayezid II and Cem, to the official correspondence between the Ottoman sultan and the rulers, both Christian and Muslim, who were or wished to become involved in Cem’s supervision. Of particular interest, for the personal comments and political assessments they include, are the reports of the numerous ambassadors to and from the Ottoman court, who had been dispatched throughout the 13 year-long period of Cem’s presence in Europe. To these official exchanges between states should be added the reports of the numerous spies, sent by the sultan into Christian lands. Those who survived the dangers of the trip gave their reports to the sultan after their return from

their mission.\footnote{See Turan Ş., “Barak Reis’in şehzade Cem mes’lesiyle ilgili olarak Savoie’ya gönderilmesi”, Belleten XXVI (1962), pp. 539-555; Ménage, “The Mission”, pp. 112-132; İnalçık, “A Case Study”, pp. 209-230.} Finally, abundant information on the endless diplomatic exchanges around Cem’s person is found in the diplomatic records and letters, which were exchanged between the various Christian rulers.\footnote{Numerous references to source material on the negotiations among Christian rulers can be found in Setton, Papacy and the Levant, pp. 381ff; for communications between the Mamluks and the Europeans see Har-el, Struggle for Domination, pp. 115-121.}

There are also a number of narrative sources that contribute to our knowledge of the events, as well as the political concerns of all sides related to Cem. As he was of such importance for political developments in Europe as well as among the Ottomans, most chronicles of the history of the late fifteenth century, both Muslim and Christian, make a reference to Cem’s revolt. Contemporary Ottoman sources focus more on the events in Anatolia and the issue of civil war, while their information on Cem’s life in Europe is minimal.\footnote{Apart from the already studied sources, there are at least three more unedited historical works about Bayezid II and Cem, mentioned in İnalçık, “A Case Study”, p. 217, n. 1.}

This gap in the knowledge of Cem’s life in Europe is covered in detail by three Ottoman works which were written by Cem’s companions, and are specifically devoted to him. Beyati’s \textit{Cam-i Cem Ayn}, was written at the prince’s order in Cairo. It is a genealogy and short history of the Ottoman dynasty that also includes an elaborate description of the ceremonies conducted on the occasion of Cem’s pilgrimage.\footnote{See Babinger, \textit{Die Geschichtschreiber}, p. 31. The work has been edited in Beyati Mahmudoğlu Hasan, \textit{Jami Jem-øyin}, (ed. F. Kirizoğlu), Osmanlı Tarihleri 1 (Istanbul 1949), pp. 373-403.} The \textit{Vaki’at -i Sultan Cem},\footnote{The work had been edited by Arif M., “Vaki’at -i Sultan Cem”, Supplement to Tarih-i Osmani Encümeni Mecmuası, parts 22-25, Istanbul 1330/1911-12 and Vatin, \textit{Sultan Djem}. Also, for a discussion of the author’s intentions and motivation for the composition of this work see idem, “A propos de l’exotisme dans les \textit{Vaki’at-i Sultan Cem}: le regard porté sur l’Europe occidentale à la fin du XVe siècle par un Turc Ottoman” Journal Asiatique 272 (1984), pp. 237-248.} a biography of the şehzade, was written in 920/1514. Although the author does not record his name, it is believed that he was Haydar Beğ, one of Cem’s companions who remained near him throughout almost all the years of his exile.\footnote{See the discussion around the author’s identity in İnalçık, “A Case Study”, p. 217, n. 2.} It is the most reliable and valuable source on Cem’s life in Europe. Another biography of Cem, written by Sa’dullah b. Mustafa, or Cem Sa’disi, is known to have existed but no copy of it is found today.\footnote{Babinger, \textit{Die Geschichtschreiber}, p. 32.} Finally, the \textit{Gurbetname-i Sultan Cem} was produced under sultan Süleyman I (1520-1566). It is
practically a copy of the *Vaki'at*, with the further addition of a lengthy, and imaginary, religious debate between Cem and the Pope.452

Cem’s revolt as part of the political developments in Anatolia is mentioned in the historical works of the other Muslim states of the time, such as in Mamluk and Akkoyunlu sources.453 These sources are, however, generally brief and include little substantial information. Much more useful for Cem’s issue among the non-Ottoman sources are several European works, which reflect the reactions and aspirations of the Christian world in relation with the political unrest in the Ottoman domains, and provide abundant material on the diplomatic activity in the West.454

Among this wealth of sources, the position of *Heşt Bihişt* is prominent. Bidlisi was among the first historians who wrote after Cem’s death, as the majority of the Ottoman chronicles written under Bayezid II were completed before 1495.455 They leave, therefore, the account of Cem open and incomplete, while their knowledge of Cem’s position in Europe is very limited. Uruç, for example, mentions that “Finally Cem was defeated and he fled and travelled across the sea into the lands of the Franks. In the lands of the Franks the accursed Frank put him in custody and one does not know where he has remained. He has disappeared”,456 while Neşri simply states that “Poor Cem boarded a ship and went out to sea; where he went it is a mystery; after this event nothing has been heard”.457 Although not an eye-witness, Bidlisi was present at the Ottoman court shortly after the conclusion of the events, while in his capacity as an appointed historian of the court he certainly had access to first-hand information and the chance of personal acquaintance with various state officials who took an active part in the events. Furthermore, as he was writing after Cem’s death, and thus recorded the entire story in retrospect, Bidlisi’s account is not only more complete, but his approach is inevitably different from all other chronicles written at the beginning of Bayezid II’s reign.

453 For Mamluk chronicles covering the same period see Har-el, *Struggle for Domination*, pp. 17-19 and 23-24.
454 The works of Setton, *Papacy and the Levant*, and Fisher, *Foreign Relations*, which are largely based on western sources for their accounts on Cem provide a vast list of references to source material related to all aspects dealing with the issue.
455 See above (Chapter II, Historiography under Bayezid II).
For the greater part of this section Bidlisi focuses on the events in Anatolia, namely the first two years of the civil strife. As a historian of the Ottoman court, it is not surprising that the conflict between two princes within the lands of the state would be of more interest for Bidlisi than the complicated and geographically distant political and diplomatic intrigues revolving around the defeated party, regardless of how much this may have affected in practice the empire's political life. Heşt Bihişt also includes, however, the unique information and valuable insights of Muştafa Paşa from his trip to Rome.

Heşt Bihişt is, therefore, a most valuable Ottoman source on the issue of Cem. This was recognised by later Ottoman historians: Heşt Bihişt is one of the two main sources Sa'deddin used for his account of Cem’s history and was also thoroughly used by Muştafa ‘Ali.458 Through these two works information from Bidlisi’s account appeared in modern research even independently from the study of Heşt Bihişt itself.459 Information directly drawn from Heşt Bihişt can be found in Tansel’s and Ertaylan’s works on Bayezid II and Cem;460 in the general histories of Hammer and Uzunçarşılı;461 as well as Tekindağ’s article about the initial events of Bayezid II’s enthronement.462 Finally, İnalcık provides a summarised translation of Heşt Bihişt’s section on Cem’s wanderings after he took refuge in Rhodes.463 The passage made available by İnalcık, however, covers less than one tenth of what Bidlisi devotes on the entire issue of Cem.464

The comparison of Bidlisi’s account with what modern research has gathered about the development of the events as they are known through the entire body of sources relating to Cem, shows that Heşt Bihişt covers the issue with considerable accuracy and breadth. Aside from the mere facts, however, Bidlisi’s report is in itself a statement and a model for the political and ideological considerations of late fifteenth century political life. The manner in which this delicate issue of fraternal strife is delivered outlines the author’s position and ideological framework of his chronicle. His position is expressed not only through the various general remarks and theoretical justifications which abundantly elaborate the text, but also through the narration of the

459 For an analysis of the sources used by the major scholars in their research about Cem see ibid., p. 217, n. 1.
460 Tansel, Sultan II Bayezit and Ertaylan, Sultan Cem.
461 Hammer-Purgstall, Histoire, vol. IV and Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Tarihi, vol. II.
463 İnalcık, “A Case Study”.
464 Corresponds with folios 536a (line 20)-537a (line 17) of the Berlin copy.
events itself, where omissions or points of focus are understood only when contrasted to the fuller story.
A possible portrait of Cem (Detail from Pinturicchio’s 1493-4 fresco of the Disputation of St. Catherine on the end wall of the Sala dei Santi in the Appartamento Borgia at the Vatican Palace) (picture from Kiang, “Josquin Desprez”)
The war with Venice and the development of the Ottoman navy under Bayezid II in Heşt Bihişt

The last major military operation of Bayezid II’s reign was the second Ottoman-Venetian war (1499-1503).465 The sultan aimed at the completion of the conquest of the Morea, which had begun under Meḥmed II. By the time of Bayezid II most of the Peloponnese had been lost to the Ottomans, leaving under Venetian control only a few fortified ports, all of vital importance to Venice’s maritime predominance in the eastern Mediterranean. It was inevitable, therefore, that the war would develop as a series of Ottoman attacks, largely dependent on the support of a war fleet, aiming at the conquest of these strategic ports. Although the Venetian fleet had a long tradition of successes to justify her confidence in the event of any serious confrontation at sea, the Ottomans had only begun to upgrade and enlarge their naval forces in earnest under Meḥmed II. By the end of the fifteenth century, however, the time seemed ripe for the sultan to put these improvements to the test. The outcome was a significant overall victory for Bayezid II and the Ottoman navy: apart from the considerable political, economic and military benefits of the new acquisitions at the end of the war, the repeated victories over not merely Venetian, but also joined Christian fleets, elevated the Ottomans among the leading naval powers of the time, a position which they were to retain practically unchallenged for the following century.466


Bayezid II’s naval plans consolidated his father’s ambitions for domination in both land and sea and made possible the Ottoman maritime triumphs of the sixteenth century under his own successors, Selim I and Süleyman I.\(^{467}\) The importance of Bayezid II’s naval build-up for the Ottoman empire has since been recognised by even the most reluctant scholars to attribute any significance to Bayezid II as a ruler. Even E.S. Creasy, for example, who claims that “Had Bajazet been succeeded on the Turkish throne by princes of a character like his own, there seems little doubt that the decline of the Ottoman power would have been accelerated by many years” cannot but acknowledge this sultan’s contribution in naval matters: “The epoch of Bajazet II is brighter in the history of the Turkish navy than in that of the Ottoman armies.”\(^{468}\)

Under Bayezid II the navy’s growth in size was accompanied by an increased understanding of its fighting potential and military importance. At the same time the unprecedented successes over Venice had a significant effect on the rise of Ottoman confidence concerning their naval forces and their status among the other maritime powers in the area. Bidlisi’s account of the events of the Ottoman-Venetian war illustrate, and perhaps intended even to shape, this confidence through epic descriptions of sea-battles and his praise of the Ottoman navy.

In this chapter a brief review of the development of the Ottoman navy is given first, in order to place the state and military role of the naval forces under Bayezid II into their historical perspective. The achievement of Mehmed II and Bayezid II in elevating the status of their fleet to that of a leading world power is even more significant when seen in view of the humble position the Ottomans had previously held at sea. The events of the war with Venice are then described in detail, as an essential part of our evaluation of \textit{Heşt Bihişt}. The main narration of the events, employing the findings of a wide variety of modern research on the subject, attempts to provide a fuller account of the development of the war. At the same time, references to Bidlisi’s own version of events aim at pointing out the author’s input, different versions and omissions from the bigger picture as we know it today. In the subsequent discussion of the author’s approaches to his subject, it is shown that to a large extent these differences and omissions in Bidlisi’s account help us understand his overall attitude and ideological position as a historian at the sultan’s court. Several aspects of Bidlisi’s account of the

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Ottoman-Venetian war are discussed in this section, focusing on naval matters and Bidlisi’s ideological treatment of his topic. Like the previous chapter this one also ends with a discussion on the sources related to our topic available today, and the place of Heş Bihişt among them.

The Ottoman navy up to Bayezid II’s time

Information about Ottoman naval activities goes back to as early as the 1330’s. The second ruler of the Ottoman dynasty, Orhan Gazi (1326-1360), is reported to have been in possession of at least 36 vessels, the type of which is not specified.469 It is also reported that in 1346, the military assistance sent by Orhan to John Cantacuzenus included 30 galleys.470 This seems to have been the average size of the Ottoman naval forces until the annexation of the emirate of Karesi, which was the first case of a series of Ottoman incorporations of conquered states’ naval units into their own.471 The conquest of Gallipoli, again during the reign of Orhan,472 apart from providing the Ottomans with a base on the European side of the Straits, supplied the sultan with the essential infrastructure for the organisation of a sizeable fleet. The town’s strategic location and long tradition as a major base of the Byzantine navy guaranteed that the Ottomans would take advantage of its shipyard and other existing facilities.

For at least thirty years, however, although the importance of Gallipoli as a military but mainly as a commercial base increased, the formation of a strong war fleet did not become a priority for the Ottomans. The small frontier emirate of Osmanlı was engaged exclusively in ground warfare, a field in which they were already experts and from which they derived their success. Land warfare was sufficient for attracting new recruits, retaining territorial gains and establishing political control over them during these early stages, while naval expeditions were purposely avoided, due to lack of experience and organisation. The only naval activities conducted by Ottomans were occasional, small-scale piratical attacks against Christian merchant ships, cautiously operated within a safe distance from the Straits, and certainly out of sight of any sizeable Christian fleet. From a military point of view, the fleet’s duties were confined to the transportation and supervision of the land troops traversing to Rumili with the intention of raiding. In fact, Ottoman maritime ambitions did not go further than

470 Imber, Ottoman Empire, p. 23.
471 The emirate of Karesi took place sometime between 1346 and 1348. See Zachariadou, “Orhan”, p. 176; Imber, Ottoman Empire, p. 22.
472 The date of the conquest of Gallipoli is estimated between 1354 or 1355, see Charanis P., “Les Bocoxüt Xqoxut comme Source Historique” Byzantion XIII (1938), pp. 335-362 (here pp. 347-349).
maintaining control of the Straits and imposing a due on any ship that passed through.\footnote{İnalcık H., “Gelibolu”, E.I.(2), p. 984; Pryor, Geography, Technology, and War, p. 177.}

During the greater part of the fourteenth century although the Ottomans did not engage much in sea operations, various other emirates conducted gaza at sea. These emirates had emerged in the eastern and southern coasts of Anatolia and had taken over the experience, traditions and able crews of the Greek populations residing in the area.\footnote{Wittek, The Rise, pp. 35 ff; Pryor, Geography, Technology, and War, pp. 166-173.}

After the Byzantine navy was dismantled in 1284 due to the state’s economic shortage, the Greek populations of the Anatolian coast were left unemployed and were eventually compelled to cooperate with the Muslims. Although a large number of these able seamen turned to piracy, their unquestionable experience and skill in seafaring were also employed in the organisation of the regular fleets of the new rulers of western Anatolia. At first the emirate of Menteşe, and later on that of Aydın under the famous Umur Paşa, dominated the rest in conducting privateering war against the Christians and conveying the raiding forces of the gazis to the coasts and islands of the eastern Mediterranean.\footnote{For the emirates of Menteşe and Aydın see İnalcık H., “The Rise of the Turcoman Maritime Principalities in Anatolia, Byzantium, and Crusades”, Byzantinische Forschungen IX (1985), pp. 179-217; Zachariadou E.A., Trade and Crusade, Venetian Crete and the Emirates of Menteshe and Aydın (1300-1415), Venice 1983.}

In general, however, the leaders of these emirates were not interested in permanent conquest, but in gaza. Their ships were entrusted with the transportation of gazi warriors to areas that they were to pillage, while the annexation of the lands under attack to their own was not among the campaigns’ objectives.\footnote{Pryor, Geography, Technology, and War, p. 170.} Along the same lines, piracy in open sea was also common, as it was considered another way of acquiring booty. Such attacks were again only directed against small units of Christian merchant ships, which were in general inadequately armed. Although in certain cases the fleet of Umur Paşa is reported to have numbered up to 350 vessels, it is assumed that an armada of this size must have included reinforcements from other emirates specially assembled for a particular campaign.\footnote{İnalcık, “Maritime Principalities”, p. 205.}

Bayezid I (1389-1402) was the first Ottoman sultan to show any interest in the formation of a stronger fleet, which could be useful to his expansive policies. As he gradually conquered the littoral emirates and united them under his rule,\footnote{The emirates of Saruhan, Aydın and Menteşe were all annexed in 1390, Zachariadou, “Othmânlı”, p. 193.} the state’s
growth in size and power inevitably altered the Ottoman scope and targets. Possession of a fleet became a necessity for the preservation, administration and economic control of the extended Ottoman lands, now spreading in both continents. The Ottomans, as their conquered subjects had done before them, took advantage of the existing naval resources and incorporated the small fleets of the annexed emirates into their own state fleet.

Bayezid I’s defeat at the battle of Ankara in 1402 brought to an abrupt end the sultan’s grandiose designs. After the turbulent period of the interregnum and the state’s reconstruction, the Ottoman navy limited its activities to small-scale auxiliary operations, which continued in more or less the same manner until the reign of Mehmed II. It soon became apparent, however, that the young sultan’s ambitions for a world-dominating empire could not be realised without the substantial reorganization of his navy. For both economic and military purposes, Mehmed II needed a solid fleet, capable of confronting the Christian states and promoting his expansionist policies. The Catalans, the Knights of Rhodes, Genoa and Florence, with Venice indisputably in the first place among them, dominated the profitable maritime trade through their superior fleets and the control of a long series of possessions along the eastern Mediterranean coastline and islands. These Christian strongholds also provided easy access to shelter and reinforcements for Christian pirates, who ravaged almost uncontrollably Ottoman ships and territories. Mehmed II’s plans for expansion towards the west were, thus, seriously obstructed by the Christian control of these numerous islands and coastal fortresses, which remained impregnable to a siege carried out only by land. Kritovoulos explains the sultan’s motivations to build up his fleet as follows:

... the Sultan gave orders that triremes should be built everywhere along his shore, knowing that the domination of the sea was essential to him and his rule, especially for expeditions to far countries. For he knew that in his approaching undertakings naval operations would be of the first importance.
He also learned by diligent search and consideration of the history of kings who had the greatest power, that operations by sea had the greatest chance of success and brought the most fame, and that it was on the sea that those kings had accomplished the greatest things. For this reason he decided to secure control of the sea for himself, because when

\[479\] For the Ottoman naval campaigns up to Mehmed II see Pryor, Geography, Technology, and War, pp. 173-176.
\[480\] Immediately after the conquest of Constantinople Mehmed II took action in order to turn his new capital into a major political and economic centre. For the measures he enforced towards the reconstruction of the city’s buildings and its repopulation with artisans, craftsmen and merchants from all Ottoman domains, see Inalcik, “The policy of Mehmed II in Istanbul”, pp. 231-249.
\[481\] For more details on the ports and islands under the control of the various Christian powers, see Ashtor E., Levant Trade in the Latter Middle Ages, Princeton 1983.
land and sea are both under one control, they quickly bring that control to its highest pitch. 482

[...] Then he gave orders that, in addition to the existing ships, a large number of others should speedily be built and many sailors selected from all his domains for this purpose and set aside for this work alone. He did this because he saw that sea-power was a great thing, that the navy of the Italians was large and that they dominated the sea and ruled all the islands in the Aegean, and that to no small extent they injured his own coastlands, both Asiatic and European - especially the navy of the Venetians. Hence he determined to prevent this by every means and to be the powerful master of the entire sea if he could, or at least to prevent them from harming his possessions. For this purpose he got together as quickly as possible a great fleet, and began to gain control of the sea. 483

Thus for the first time special effort was made to construct a navy equal in size, if not in competence, with the Ottoman army. Preparations for the siege of Constantinople included a systematic enlargement of the fleet, which on the date of the campaign numbered between 100 and 400 vessels. 484 The success of the siege was a major, but still initial step towards Mehmed II’s ambition of becoming the “sultan of the two continents and the two seas”. Thereafter, commercial agreements with the West and a carefully calculated plan of expansion became Mehmed II’s ongoing considerations throughout the rest of his reign. His plan of expansion involved the incorporation into the Ottoman lands of major ports along the Mediterranean trade routes and at the same time the reduction of the commercial and naval control of his competitors, the various Christian naval powers and especially Venice. 485

The fleet’s poor performance during the siege of Constantinople, however, had also made clear that there was still great need for improvement where the crews’ ability was concerned. 486 Christian reports on the Ottoman navy point out the inefficiency of its crews as compared to their own, and evaluate its competence in sea warfare to a proportion of four or five Turkish galleys to one Christian. 487 While lack of ability to

483 Kritovoulos, Mehmed the Conqueror, p. 186.
484 Reports concerning the fleet’s size vary dramatically in this occasion, as much among the chroniclers’ accounts, as among the hypotheses of modern scholars. Cf. Babinger, Mehmed the Conqueror, p. 84; Pryor, Geography, Technology, and War, p. 179; Runciman S., The Fall of Constantinople, Cambridge 1969, pp. 75-76.
485 For Mehmed II’s conquests of lands previously in the hands of the Genoese and the Gattilusi family see Pryor, Geography, Technology, and War, p. 178.
486 An eloquent description of the Ottoman fleet’s failure to prevent help from reaching the defenders of Constantinople by sea, despite the tight blockade of the port’s mouth is given by Kritovoulos, Mehmed the Conqueror, pp. 53-55.
487 See, for example, the comments of the Genoese Jacopo de Promontorio, in Governo ed entrate del Gran Turco, published by Babinger F., “Die Aufzeichnungen des Genuesen Jacopo de Promontorio-de Campis über den Osmanenstaat um 1475”, in Sitzungsberichte der bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, philos.-hist. Klasse (Munich, 1950), as mentioned in idem, Mehmed the Conqueror, pp. 449-500. The same opinion was shared by a Venetian merchant, see Pryor, Geography, Technology and War, p. 176.
confront openly the Christians at sea remained obvious to both sides, the sultan made sure to compensate for the navy’s weaknesses by investing in its size.

This strategy proved indeed successful a few years later, during the conquest of Negroponte in 1470. The Ottoman ships facilitated the army’s transportation from the mainland to the island, and its blockading of the strait protected the besiegers from an assault of the Venetian fleet. The Venetian armada, overwhelmed by the colossal size and heavy fortification of the Ottoman fleet, would not attack until reinforcements arrived. Help, however, never reached them and eventually the sultan’s large army took Negroponte after a siege that lasted almost a month. During the Conqueror’s reign the fleet continued to participate in several campaigns. This was always done, however, in cooperation with land troops, as under Meq. med the navy was still not regarded as an independent military unit. Transportation of soldiers and munitions, and the blockading of the sea-route to the besieged target remained the principal functions of the fleet, while its formidable size each time was mainly intended for the opponent’s intimidation, in the hope of avoiding an encounter with the enemy.

The navy under Bayezid II

At the end of Meq. med II’s reign Jacopo de Promontorio estimated the size of the Ottoman fleet at around “500 large vessels, including numerous galleys”. It is most likely that this number referred to the total of the vessels recruited especially for a particular campaign, rather than the actual size of the standing fleet which Bayezid II took over upon his succession to the throne. Furthermore, the real power of a fleet was in the number of galleys it contained, as the light ships and cargo vessels did little to contribute in a battle. It is, therefore, impossible to estimate with accuracy the actual fighting ability of Bayezid II’s naval forces at the beginning of his reign, as de Promontorio does not specify the number of galleys in them. The total amount is, nevertheless, a considerably high number for the standards of the time. In 1480, for example, the state fleet of the Knights of Rhodes, one of the major naval powers in the Mediterranean in that period, consisted of only four galleys, although a larger number of vessels could be gathered relatively quickly in case of need.

488 The size of the Ottoman armada, numbering up to 300 or 450 ships, of which 108 were large galleys, is reported with awe by all observers. See Babinger, Mehmed the Conqueror, p. 280.
489 Ibid., p. 449.
490 Ibid., pp. 449-500.
Bidlisi refrains altogether from defining the size of the Ottoman standing fleet. He remarks, however, that at the beginning of Bayezid II's reign it was the largest among those of both the Christian and Muslim rulers. To stress the fighting ability of the sultan's naval forces, Bidlisi also praises the crew's dexterity and skill, in particular their competence in warfare at sea and the use of firearms and cannon:

When this sultan ascended to the throne with prosperous divine guidance, the world-conquering armaments on both land and sea had reached such a stage that the numbers of his land army resembled the size of the troops of Solomon and the victorious army of Alexander, and the power of his servants and army at sea, compared to the maritime works and acts of all rulers, infidel or Muslim, is the most destructive. Because his heavenly ships are so many, on the surface of the sea they resemble the fixed and moving stars. The organization of the artillery of these heavenly ships and the mass of their sailors are distinguished, strong and powerful. Concerning the skilful knowledge of warfare and the use of cannon and firearms of his servants in these days they were stronger and larger in number than the experts, the infidels and idolaters, and in the heat of a battle as regards mangonels and arms they are more severe and vehement than the blazing fire of the cannon.491

A battle fleet of this size was certainly a strong weapon in the hands of Bayezid II, a weapon, however, which he seems to have been reluctant or unable to use in full while his brother was still alive. The intelligence of Ottoman naval preparations always alarmed the Christian states of Europe greatly and whenever works at the sultan's shipyards appeared to be more intensive, all naval powers of the Mediterranean feared the possibility of being the target of an Ottoman attack. As long as Cem was in the hands of the Christians, therefore, the threat of a crusade in his name was invariably used to keep the sultan at bay. Up to 1485, therefore, Bayezid II had been compelled at least twice to halt works at his shipyards after pressures from Pierre d'Aubusson, and to assure the grand master that the Ottoman navy would not attack the Christians.492

Bayezid II's first conscious effort to increase the efficiency of the navy and alter its function from mere auxiliary to the army began during the Ottoman - Mamluk war (1485-1491). Ottoman vessels were previously employed in the campaign of 1484 against Moldavia, but the fleet's role had remained secondary. Ships were mainly used to assist the transportation and passage of the cannons, ammunition and victuals of the empire's land forces up the river Danube. Out of the 100 ships, which constituted the Ottoman armada during that campaign, the majority of them were cargo vessels and

491 Hest Bihist, folio 569b.
492 Thuasne, Djem Sultan, p. 135.
only a small number of galleys were included. As soon as the war with the Mamluks began, however, naval construction and crews recruitment were set in action and were further intensified at the beginning of 892/1487. As part of a major plan of improvements in the empire's armament and military organisation, new warships were built and substantial changes were made in the command of the army.

During an expedition to Cilicia in the following year, 893/1488, a heavily manned and armed fleet of 80 to 100 ships, led by Hersekoğlu Ahmed Paşa, was entrusted with an independent military role. The navy was sent to the Cilician coast in order to block the way of the Mamluk forces, which were heading north to face the Ottoman army. Ahmed Paşa also raided the ports of Ayas and Tripoli, aiming to prevent the Mamluks from acquiring resources in case they decided to transport troops by sea. Despite the unfortunate end to this enterprise, due to a severe storm that shattered the majority of the Ottoman ships and forced the rest of the fleet to leave for the open sea, the significance of the operation remains in the fact that for the first time the fleet was not used simply as a transportation unit, but had its own agenda, operating in conjunction with the army by providing substantial military assistance to it.

The second Ottoman-Venetian war (1499-1503)

In 1499, Bidlisi informs us, the vezirs in the divan decided upon a gaza expedition against Lepanto and the Venetian possessions on the Morean coast. The growing tensions in the political scene within the empire had in fact made such a decision an imperative political move. Demands for a major military operation had increased considerably after Cem's death in 1495, once the high potential of a Christian coalition under Cem's command was removed and there was no longer any apparent obstacle in organising a campaign, which would occupy the empire's full army. Especially after the return of Cem's body to Ottoman lands, early in 1499, and while developments in Europe occupied the attention of the Christian states and of Venice in particular, the time seemed ripe for a major Ottoman attack against the infidels. Another pressing reason for a campaign was the prolonged inactivity of the Janissaries, which had made them restless and eager for the wealth and action of war. A dispute between them and

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494 Harley, Struggle for Domination, p. 147.
495 Described in Heşti Birhis, folios 549a-549b. See also Harley, Struggle for Domination, pp. 171ff.
496 These events in Heşti Birhis are described in destans seven to ten, folios 568a-589a and 590b-593b.
497 Heşti Birhis, folio 569a.
498 Lane, "Naval Actions", p. 148.
the sipahis of the palace in the summer of 1496 had almost turned into a riot, in which not even the sultan dared to intervene. This situation continued to strengthen the voices of those officials in the sultan’s environment, who did not agree with his peaceful policies and urged him to reinstate the aggressive activities of his father.499

The Venetian possessions in the Morea were chosen as the target of the gazis for a number of reasons.500 First and foremost, the main idea underlying all others was the continuation of Mehmed II’s design to attain supremacy at sea. As mentioned above, one of Mehmed II’s main goals had been to reduce Venetian domination in the Mediterranean. He aimed to achieve that with military operations against Venetian strongholds along the trade routes, as well as the reduction of Venice’s commercial activities in his lands.501 Mehmed II had indeed conquered most of the Peloponnesian mainland, except for a number of ports along the coast, which remained under Venetian control. The benefits of the possession of ports such as Lepanto or Navarino (Zonchio) gave a strong advantage to Venice either in peaceful times as trade centers or as potential military bases in case of war. Especially Modon, on the southwestern tip of the Morea, was the most valuable possession Venice had left in the area and a major station for her merchant ships.502 The acquisition of these ports on the coast of the Morea would, therefore, not only benefit the Ottoman economic and military status, but equally, if not more importantly, it would weaken Venice’s position in the Archipelago.

The war of 1463-1479 had been the inevitable culmination of Ottoman-Venetian competition during Mehmed II’s reign. Even after the peace treaty of 1479, however, the situation between the two states was never entirely settled. Throughout the intervening period between the two wars both sides committed numerous violations of peace on land and sea. The main causes of friction revolved around a series of frontier incidents and the continuous activity of pirates, which threatened seriously the Mediterranean trade during that period.503 The official position of the states towards piracy was to suppress it and preserve the peace on the sea trade routes as much as possible, although in reality piratical activities were tolerated or even actively

500 For a discussion on Bidlisi’s recorded reasons for this war see below in this chapter (Bidlisi’s approaches).
502 Lane, “Naval Actions”, p. 164.
503 For the dangers of maritime trade of the times, caused by piratical activities see Pryor, Geography, Technology, and War, pp. 183-187; Brummett, Ottoman Seapower, pp. 101ff.
encouraged.\textsuperscript{504} When complaints of the other side became too pressing, governments invariably maintained that such incidents were neither ordered nor encouraged, and promises of compensation and punishment of the offenders were given to the victims of piratical assaults. A letter sent from Bayezid II to Venice in July 1486 gives an idea of the way these frequent incidents were dealt with.\textsuperscript{505}

The situation became more serious in the summer of 1496, when Ottoman forces attacked Cattaro, a Venetian possession on the eastern shore of Montenegro. The controversy over its control did not reach a final solution at the time, and the incident exacerbated the uncertainty and suspicion between the two states.\textsuperscript{506} A series of similar conflicts in the course of the following two years maintained the tension and provided Bayezid II with additional motivation for initiating the campaign against Venice.\textsuperscript{507}

Finally, Venetian support to Ottoman enemies had repeatedly provoked Bayezid II’s discontent. During the war with Hungary and Poland, Venice provided help to the Christians, as she did with Jan Kastriota in Albania.\textsuperscript{508} In addition, during the war with the Mamluks, Ah\textsuperscript{med} Pa\textsuperscript{sa} Herseko\textsuperscript{glu} had asked permission from Venice to stop at Cyprus with the Ottoman fleet. Venice, afraid that the Ottomans would attack Cyprus itself, refused Ah\textsuperscript{med} Pa\textsuperscript{sa}'s request, an action that was interpreted by the sultan as Venetian support for the Mamluks.\textsuperscript{509} Finally, when in February 1499 Venice signed a treaty of alliance with the king of France, Louis XII, all the rest of the eastern Mediterranean states felt seriously threatened, while Bayezid II himself believed that the two states had allied in order to move against him. His distrust was further fuelled by the complaints and fears of the kings of Milan, Florence, Naples, the Pope, and even of the German emperor, whose envoys to the sultan all encouraged Bayezid II to attack Venice.\textsuperscript{510}

\textsuperscript{504} Pryor, \textit{Geography, Technology, and War}, p. 186.
\textsuperscript{505} Presented as one of five letters sent from Bayezid II to Venice, published by M\textsuperscript{é}likoff I., “Bayezid II et Venice. Cinq Lettres Imp\textsuperscript{ériales} (Name-i H\textsuperscript{ü}mayun) provenant de l’ Archivio di Stato di Venezia”, \textit{Turcica} I (1969), pp. 123-149.
\textsuperscript{506} There are two different accounts concerning this incident. See Fisher, \textit{Foreign Relations}, p. 53, n. 19.
\textsuperscript{507} See for example \textit{ibid.}, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{508} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{509} Uzun\textsuperscript{ç}ar\textsuperscript{s}li, \textit{Osmanli Tarihi}, vol. II, p. 207. See also Har-el, \textit{Struggle for Domination}, pp. 159-162.
\textsuperscript{510} Setton, \textit{Papacy and the Levant}, p. 508.
As soon as the decision to launch the campaign was made, the Ottoman army began to gather and aknc̤ce were sent to a series of raids along the empire’s borders, especially on the Venetian northern mainland. A large fleet was also assembled in Gallipoli under the general command of Daud Paşa Sani. On 20 Şevval 904/31 May 1499 Daud Paşa was ordered to lead the fleet to Morea, where in about a month’s time it was to meet the land forces, led by the sultan himself. The fleet’s destination, and the target of the campaign, were kept concealed even from the Ottoman crews. When the fleet reached the eastern coast of the Morea Greek renegades from the Ottoman ships were unable to inform the Venetian admiral Grimani, sent by Venice to repel the Ottomans, where the Ottoman fleet was bound for. The Christians were still unsure whether the Ottomans were heading against Corfu or Lepanto, and the matter became clear only after the sultan’s army reached Lepanto by land.

According to Bidlisi the Ottoman armada consisted of about 300 ships, while the Venetian fleet is reported to have numbered about 150 vessels. Western reports, which generally tend to be more moderate, estimate the total of Bayezid II’s fleet at around 260 vessels and that of Venice at 123 vessels at the beginning of the campaign. Although the Venetian forces were clearly outnumbered, the Ottoman fleet consisted of fewer heavy vessels, which limited its fighting ability. Antonio Grimani, the general commander of the Venetian armada, appeared confident of his ability to gain a victory.

The two armadas first met at the end of July 1499, as the Ottoman fleet was approaching Modon. The Ottomans continued to proceed cautiously northwards, avoiding any confrontation with the Venetian ships, which approached them from the west and followed a parallel route. Unfavorable wind compelled the Ottomans to pause on the small harbour of an island outside Modon, where they were blocked for about eight days by the Venetians patrolling outside the harbour. The local population

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511 Fisher, Foreign Relations, p. 70. Bidlisi mentions that raids were carried out by Bali Beğ Malkoçoğlu against Poland, the Şakaliba (شکالیبا) and the Rus (روس), Heş Bihişt, folio 570b.
512 Heş Bihişt, folio 571a. The copy at the London British Museum mentions the 8th of Şevval 904 as the date of the campaign’s commencement.
513 Lane, “Naval Actions”, p. 149.
514 Heş Bihişt, folios 571b, 578b.
515 Heş Bihişt, folio 572a.
516 Lane, “Naval Actions”, p. 152.
517 Ibid., p. 150.
518 Ibid., p. 150 and p. 169 n. 20. Bidlisi claims that the Ottomans remained stationary for twenty days, Heş Bihişt, folio 571b.
from the coast prevented the Ottomans from resupplying on land, a fact that strained the provisions of the ships and consequently affected the morale of the Ottoman crews. As soon as the sultan, already at Lepanto, was informed of this situation, he sent Ahmed Paşa Hersekoğlu to the shore in order to assist the fleet to resupply and relieve them from their sick. Many of the crew, however, mainly of Greek origin, are said to have deserted the Ottoman fleet at that point.

When the wind changed, the Venetians were compelled to withdraw their blockade and the Ottomans began once again to make their way to the north, following the western coastline of the Morea. It seemed clear that a sea-battle would be inevitable if the Ottomans were to be prevented from reaching Lepanto. At last, on the 12th of August, the Venetians attacked the Ottoman fleet as it was reaching outside the Gulf of Navarino, led by Burak Re‘is’s kuke. A sea-battle followed then, during which poor organisation among the Venetian commanders resulted in most of their ships remaining inactive. The most dramatic incident of the battle occurred when Andrea Loredan, the Venetian commander of a large round ship, attacked Burak Re‘is’s kuke under the impression that it was that of Kemal Re‘is. Bidlisi gives a lively description of what followed:

The infidels thought that the ship of Burak Re‘is was that of Kemal. Out of the infidels’ vessels, two large kuke carrying 2,000 men and ammunition, a mauna with 1,000 men, a barça -which is a small kuke - and two galleons -which are small maunas- with 300 and 400 men each, came forward and began firing with their cannon. The infidels approached the ship of Burak Re‘is, on which Kemal Beğ, the governor of Yeni Şehir, was army leader and its commander was Kara Hasan, a brave man with great experience in seafare. When the infidels reached Burak’s ship they threw iron claws and hooks and bound themselves with chains to the sides of the Muslims’ vessel. Thus the battle of cannon and tufeks turned into a battle of arms and swords, and everyone was fighting with their enemy on board the ship. Burak then decided wisely to throw white naphtha at the two ships of the infidels that were tied to his own, and set them on fire. The enemies’ two vessels, and all their men and everything on them were consumed in fire, but as his ship was tied to those of the infidels with iron claws it also caught fire. Everyone on those two Italian ships and on the one Muslim one was consumed in fire before the eyes of all observers.

Meanwhile, Muştafa Paşa was laying siege to Lepanto with the troops of Rumili. The town, however, was strong and as long as the way from the sea was open its defenders were able to maintain resistance. Eventually, despite some further incidents

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519 Heşt Bihišt, folio 572a.
520 Lane, “Naval Actions”, p. 152. Bidlisi does not mention anything about this.
521 A few years earlier Loredan had tried to capture Kemal Re‘is without success, ibid., p. 152.
522 Heşt Bihišt, folios 572c-573a.
between the two fleets the Ottoman armada reached Lepanto a few days later.\textsuperscript{523} The inhabitants of the castle, realising that all hope was lost without the possibility of help from the sea, and threatened by the sultan’s heavy artillery delivered by the fleet, surrendered to the Ottomans (Muharrem 905/August 1499).\textsuperscript{524} Soon after the fall of Lepanto the campaign came to a close for that year, and Bayezid II organised the defence and administration of the city before returning with his army to Edirne.\textsuperscript{525} Both fleets had suffered damages, which required preparations before a new expedition was attempted.\textsuperscript{526}

The siege of Lepanto was a characteristic example of a joint siege by land and sea, where the importance of both the fleet and the army was equally essential for the success of the operation.\textsuperscript{527} The main role of the navy had been once again the transportation of artillery for the army’s siege of the city, as well as the obstruction of any aid to the besieged by sea. The importance of this assistance, however, was crucial for the success of the campaign, which explains the insistence of the Venetian efforts on destroying the Ottoman fleet. Indeed, Venice’s failure to prevent them from reaching Lepanto led to the surrender of the city.

For the Ottomans this campaign had been a significant victory in more than one way. Bayezid II’s first and foremost aim was fulfilled and the important port of Lepanto became part of the Ottoman domains. Furthermore, the campaign had been a major victory for the fleet, which not only fulfilled its mission successfully, but it also withstood and defeated the repeated Venetian assaults. This victory was, therefore, a justification of Bayezid II’s intensive expansion of his navy, and a considerable boost of the crews’ confidence. Conversely, although the loss of some of her most important ports in the eastern Mediterranean reduced Venice’s power at sea, the fleet’s inability to destroy the Ottoman armada did not affect seriously Venice’s self-confidence for her mastery at sea. The Venetians perceived the failure of their fleet more as “a victory missed”, rather than a defeat; the inherent problems of disunion and bad organisation,

\textsuperscript{523} Another encounter, which ended in the loss of three Ottoman kadirgas, is described in \textit{Heşt Bihişt}, folios 573a-574a.

\textsuperscript{524} Sources mention several different dates for the surrender of Lepanto, varying from 20-23 Muharrem 905/27-30 August 1499, see Tansel, \textit{Sultan II Bayezit}, p. 197, n. 124. Bidlisi, followed by Sa’eddin, only mentions the month and the year, \textit{Heşt Bihişt}, folio 574a.

\textsuperscript{525} \textit{Heşt Bihişt}, folio 574a.

\textsuperscript{526} Lane, “Naval Actions”, p. 162.

\textsuperscript{527} For the advantages and practices of fleet-supported sieges see Guilmartin J.F., \textit{Gunpowder and Galleys: Changing Technology and Mediterranean Warfare at Sea in the Sixteenth Century}, Cambridge 1974, pp. 77-78.
however, that lay behind the ineffectiveness of their armada had a much more demoralising effect on the crews.528

**Negotiations and war preparations during the winter of 1499-1500**

Before his departure for the capital at the end of the campaign Bayezid II gave orders for the construction of two citadels on the two sides of the mouth of the canal leading to Lepanto. These two citadels were rapidly built, in order to secure Ottoman control over the Morea and protect the newly conquered Lepanto from Venetian retaliation.529 In addition, the ships that had participated in the campaign were to stay in Lepanto for winter repairs, while new ships were commissioned to be built in nearby Prevesa and Valona. The fleet's presence in the area provided additional protection to Lepanto and at the same time it was a clear indication that the sultan was not willing to stop there, as far as Morea was concerned. The Venetians were certainly not pleased by the fact that throughout the winter a large Ottoman naval force remained in the Ionian Sea, an area that they considered under their control.530

During the winter of 1499-1500 Venice was already eager to make peace with Bayezid II, but the sultan's demands to the Venetian ambassador dispatched to Istanbul for that purpose were extremely high. The sultan stated that he was very willing to make peace with Venice, provided that Nauplio, Monemvasia, Modon and Koron were surrendered to him, and he further demanded that an annual tribute of 10,000 ducats be paid to him. He also made it clear that he intended to "make the sea the border between the Ottomans and Venice".531 It is obvious, thus, that the recent victory of the Ottoman forces had only strengthened Bayezid II's determination to complete the occupation of the Morea. This is also clearly stated in *Hep Bihišt*:

> Although the conquest of Lepanto was a significant conquest of the lands of the infidels, it was only the beginning of the sultan's original wish, which was to campaign to all the lands of Morea and make gaza against all its prominent strongholds. He therefore ordered a campaign against the strong castles of Modon and Koron and other illustrious castles. The memleket of Morea is situated in a peninsula, and although the ancestors of the sultan had subjugated (other) fortresses and cities, its great cities and castles, such as Modon and Koron, were still under the infidels and comprised a strong weapon in the hands of Venice.532

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528 See Lane, "Naval Actions", p. 153.
529 *Hep Bihišt*, folios 574a-574b.
530 Lane, "Naval Actions", p. 162.
531 Declared by the Paas who negotiated with the Venetian ambassador, as mentioned in Setton, *Papacy and the Levant*, p. 520.
532 *Hep Bihišt*, folio 577b.
Meanwhile, Venice was also in active search of allies and assistance from fellow-Christian states. Help was sought mainly from France and Hungary, as well as from the Pope and the king of Poland. France offered some assistance, while the Pope raised some funds and made several moderate attempts to organise a crusade. In the end, however, little actual support arrived in time to aid Venice effectively. Venice’s best hope for support came from Hungary. The Senate was pressing the Hungarian king to declare war on the Ottomans, which he eventually did, despite his initial hesitations. Bidlisi, who displays an informed knowledge of the general trends of European diplomacy during that period, mentions that:

The doge of Venice, the richest of the rulers among the Franks, sent messages to all the Christian rulers to ask for help, from the kings of Hungary and of Germany and Austria, who are among the greater rulers of this area. The doge wished Hungary and Austria to attack Bosnia, so that perhaps this would distract the sultan and make him withdraw from besieging Lepanto. When the sultan realised these corrupt thoughts of the infidels, he acted immediately and sent İskender Paşa to retaliate for these evils caused by the infidels. İskender Paşa headed toward the borders and attacked the infidels. When the winter was over the sultan prepared to march against Modon and Koron, but he received the news that the kings of the Franks, and especially the ruler of Venice exchanged envoys with one another and had agreed with the kings of Hungary, Poland and the Chekhs that: “Although the sultan conquered Lepanto, we have blocked the Muslim ships and they are finding great difficulties getting out. An attack against the lands of Rumili through the mountains by the kings of Hungary and Poland and the Chekhs will give the Christians the opportunity to subjugate the lands of Islam. With innumerable ships from the fleets of the kings of the Franks we can subjugate the entire coast of Rumili.” Many envoys were dispatched during these negotiations and they were given much money. After that they communicated with the Pope, who is the leader of the Christian kings and they inform him of every order they give. The Pope consented to their evil plans.

Although the king of Hungary had also tried to serve as mediator for a peace treaty between Venice and the Ottomans, neither side seemed willing to give in to the demands of the other. In any case, it was evident that neither relied on the possibility of making peace, as arrangements for the next season were zealously carried out in both states. Extensive military preparations were carried out throughout the Rumelian lands of the Ottoman domains, while ships were repaired and new ones were made in Lepanto, Prevesa Valona and Gallipoli. Venice was also enlarging her fleet, despite the serious financial difficulties and the significant shortage of men for recruitment. At the same time units of her forces did everything they could to

533 Fisher, Foreign Relations, pp. 73-74. See also Heş Bihiş, folios 575b-576a.
534 Heş Bihiş, folios 564b-565a.
535 Heş Bihiş, folios 575b-576a.
537 Ibid., p. 71; Lane, “Naval Actions”, p. 162.
538 Ibid., p. 163.
obstruct Ottoman naval preparations. Some Venetian ships attacked the shipyard in Prevesa and set on fire the ships under construction there. A part of the Venetian land forces also occupied a small castle in that area, but a more serious attempt to compensate for the loss of Lepanto by taking Cephalonia, then under Ottoman control, was unsuccessful.

The conquests of Modon, Koron and Navarino (August 1500)

The role of the navy proved once again definitive for the success of Bayezid II’s operations in the following year. When spring came the sultan led the Ottoman army towards the south of Morea (Ramadan 905/April 1500). At the same time the ships which had remained in Lepanto moved to the south, while the main part of the fleet set off from Gallipoli to join the rest of the Ottoman forces. Bidlisi does not seem to have been particularly well informed of, or concerned with, the accurate number of the fleet of either side. Whereas the differences between Heşti Bihışt and the Venetian observers on the fleet’s size of the previous year were insignificant, Bidlisi’s estimate for the ships participating in that year’s campaign is very exaggerated. The commander of the Venetian fleet reported an Ottoman armada of 230 vessels against his own 77, while Bidlisi claims that the Ottomans had sent 600 ships to that campaign and that “the kings of the Franks had sent 300 vessels to assist the king of Venice.”

In the waters outside Navarino the Ottoman armada fended off a Venetian attempt to block their way, and thus achieved another great victory against the fleet of the Christians. The Ottomans then proceeded to Modon and blocked the town by sea. Meanwhile, the siege of Modon by land was proving lengthy and testing for the Ottoman army. The city was well fortified and equipped, while many of the Ottoman troops were not enthusiastic over this campaign. The severe heat and impregnability of the castle discouraged the Ottomans, who were ready to give up. At that point, however, four Venetian vessels managed to go past the Ottoman blockade of the harbour and reach the coast of Modon, bringing much-needed supplies and aid to the
besieged. Although this was in fact a failure of the Ottoman fleet, which was expected to prevent help from reaching Modon by sea, the turn of events ended up favourable for the Ottomans.\textsuperscript{547} The inhabitants of Modon rushed to the coast to unload the vessels, leaving the walls of the city almost unattended. Immediately the Ottoman army took the opportunity to enter Modon over the walls, almost without resistance from its people. Once they discovered this, the inhabitants tried to repel the Ottomans, but by that time the entire army had entered the city. A long battle followed within the city walls, which lasted the whole day and destroyed much of the city.\textsuperscript{548}

The Ottoman forces, under the command of Hadım ‘Ali Paşa, proceeded to Navarino and Koron. Both cities surrendered to the Ottomans as soon as they were informed of the fall of Modon and the fate of its inhabitants.\textsuperscript{549} An attempt to take Nauplio, the last important Venetian holding in the Morea, was left incomplete. The city was well fortified and its inhabitants kept up resistance until a strong wind forced the Ottoman ships to withdraw; soon after the army also abandoned the siege.\textsuperscript{550} On its way to Gallipoli, however, the Ottoman fleet attacked and took the island of Aegina.\textsuperscript{551} The reason for this hasty withdrawal from the Morea was the sultan’s need to attend to other pressing issues, namely Hungary’s declaration of war and a rebellion in Karaman.\textsuperscript{552} During the following winter Hadım ‘Ali Paşa remained in the Morea to consolidate its occupation, and with the help of a small naval force under Kemal Re’is he managed to rescue Navarino from a Venetian attempt to recover the city.\textsuperscript{553}

Final skirmishes (1500-1502)

Venetian efforts to recover or compensate for her losses continued throughout the winter of 1500-1501. In December 1500 a joint Venetian and Spanish fleet attacked Cephalonia, and after a long siege they managed to take the castle of Saint George and the Ottoman garrison surrendered.\textsuperscript{554} The island, apart from its strategic location, was

\textsuperscript{547} Not surprisingly, Bidlisi attributes this turn of events to God’s intervention, \textit{Heşî Bihişî folio 583a}.
\textsuperscript{548} Tansel, \textit{Sultan II Bayezit}, pp. 211-212. In \textit{Heşî Bihişî, folios 582b-584a}.
\textsuperscript{551} Tansel, \textit{Sultan II Bayezit}, p. 213.
\textsuperscript{552} Fisher, \textit{Foreign Relations}, pp. 76-77. The revolt in Karaman is described in a separate \textit{destan} in \textit{Heşî Bihişî, folios 589a-590b}.
\textsuperscript{553} \textit{Heşî Bihişî, folios 587b-588a}.
\textsuperscript{554} Setton, \textit{Papacy and the Levant}, p. 523.
a particularly valuable source of timber and therefore a significant conquest for Venice, which constantly suffered from lack of natural resources for her fleet.\textsuperscript{555} The Venetian fleet also recovered Aegina, plundered Midilli,\textsuperscript{556} and managed to inflict some damage on some Ottoman ships near Negroponte.\textsuperscript{557} In July 1501 a Spanish force raided Çeşme, on the coast of Asia Minor.\textsuperscript{558} Bidlisi does not mention any of these Christian assaults.

Negotiations for peace were once again under way in the beginning of 1501, but at the same time the construction of new galleys continued in Ottoman shipyards.\textsuperscript{559} The sultan’s fleet, however, did not return to the Morea the following spring, as Venice feared. Bayezid II’s attention was occupied by the Hungarian and Polish attacks and the more serious troubles in Anatolia, caused by the Karamanians and the Safavids. Another significant Ottoman conquest was achieved, however, in the summer of 1501. Ottoman akncis under Iskender Paşa, who had been raiding the Dalmatian coast consistently during the war with Venice,\textsuperscript{560} seized Durazzo, an important Venetian possession on the Dalmatian coast.\textsuperscript{561} Despite its advantageous location and strong fortifications, the defence and provisions of this castle had been neglected in the preceding years.\textsuperscript{562} Although its conquest was not the result of an organised campaign by the sultan’s standing army, it was nonetheless an annexation of notable economic advantages for the Ottomans and a significant contribution to Bayezid II’s aims for maritime supremacy.

In the following October a fleet of Venetian and French vessels attacked Midilli and besieged the city for twenty days.\textsuperscript{563} The news alarmed Bayezid II, due to the island’s proximity to the Anatolian coast,\textsuperscript{564} and Ottoman reinforcements from Istanbul were sent hastily to Midilli. The troops of yehzade Korkud, then governor of Manisa,\textsuperscript{565} and the sancakbegi of Karesi, Firuz Beg,\textsuperscript{566} eventually relieved the siege and forced the Christian forces to depart. Finally, only a few months before the negotiations for

\textsuperscript{555} Fisher, \textit{Foreign Relations}, p. 78.
\textsuperscript{556} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 78.
\textsuperscript{557} Tansel, \textit{Sultan II Bayezit}, p. 214.
\textsuperscript{558} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 217.
\textsuperscript{559} Fisher, \textit{Foreign Relations}, pp. 78-79.
\textsuperscript{560} See Tansel, \textit{Sultan II Bayezit}, p. 165.
\textsuperscript{561} \textit{Heşt Bihist}, folios 590b-592a.
\textsuperscript{562} Fisher, \textit{Foreign Relations}, p. 80.
\textsuperscript{563} \textit{Heşt Bihist}, folio 592b. A day to day description of the military operations is given in Vatin, “Siège de Mytilène”, pp. 443-451.
\textsuperscript{564} Tansel, \textit{Sultan II Bayezit}, p. 218.
\textsuperscript{565} \textit{Heşt Bihist}, folio 592b.
\textsuperscript{566} Vatin, “Siège de Mytilène”, p. 442.
the peace treaty were finalised, another allied fleet of Venetian and papal vessels carried out attacks in Meğri and Salonica and managed to seize Lefkas (Santa Maura), in 30 August 1502. Among the terms of the peace treaty, however, determined in December of the same year, was included that Lefkas would be returned to the Ottomans.

The peace signed between the Ottomans and Venice in 1503 was significant not only for the Ottoman empire but also had a great impact on the entire Mediterranean world. Bayezid II’s main objectives for entering this war were triumphantely successful: the main ports of the Morea were annexed to the darü'l-Islam and Venice’s power in the eastern Mediterranean was considerably reduced. Tax revenues and custom fees from the newly acquired lands, combined with a solid control of commercial activities in the eastern Mediterranean, would be a significant economic benefit for the sultan’s Treasury. Furthermore, this change in the balance of power was a major reversal in the Mediterranean status quo, since for the first time it was a Muslim state that was in control. It is considered that the loss of her possessions in the Morea constituted a turning point for the decline of Venice’s maritime empire, while after the conclusion of the war Ottoman domination in the eastern Mediterranean was widely acknowledged by the entire Christian world.

Bidlisi’s account

The account of the second Ottoman-Venetian war in Heşt Bihişt covers a fair number of the total incidents that took place during that four-year long period. The major Ottoman conquests and victories, namely the subjugation of Lepanto, Modon, Navarino and Koron, Durazzo, and the relief of Midilli, are described in great detail as the central topics of a destan. Bidlisi’s reports are well informed and often contain rare information on the activities of the akıncı and the empire’s standing army. The predominantly naval character of this war is also reflected in Bidlisi’s focus: the majority of his heroic narratives concentrate on the adventures of the Ottoman fleet and include lengthy descriptions of several sea battles.

Bidlisi focuses, naturally, almost exclusively on Ottoman activities and victories, while most of the Venetian actions are hardly mentioned. Minor incidents and some Venetian assaults may be incorporated in the narrative, still seen through the Ottoman viewpoint and usually as an opportunity for the author to stress another triumph of the Ottoman

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567 Tansel, Sultan II Bayezit, p. 222.
forces. Also many secondary events, such as the Ottoman attacks against Nauplio and Monemvasia, are missing in Heşt Bihişt. In general, incidents where the Ottoman forces were unsuccessful or defeated are simply not mentioned. Bidlisi, for example, omits entirely the Venetian conquests of Cephalonia, or of Lefkas later on. In fact, his only reference to Cephalonia is limited to a description of the first failed Venetian attempt to take the island in the winter of 1499-1500, while Lefkas is nowhere mentioned in Heşt Bihişt.

On the other hand, Bidlisi reports the Venetian conquest of the small castle of Rakya, in the region of Prevesa. He gives a lively description of the role and bravery of Muştafa Beğ, the governor of Prevesa, who tried to repel the Venetians without success, including some detailed information on the artillery with which Muştafa Beğ equipped his ships at Prevesa. It seems possible, therefore, that Muştafa Beğ was himself Bidlisi’s source of information, and the incident was incorporated in the narrative as a tribute to him, while the loss of the minor castle of Rakya was a rather insignificant setback for the Ottomans. The majority of Bidlisi’s omissions must, therefore, be explained more as deliberate choices, dictated by the political nature of his chronicle, rather than due to the author’s ignorance or negligence.

Apart from the mere description of events, however, Bidlisi provides a fair amount of information on the composition and organisation of the empire’s naval forces. In brief, he begins by praising the formidable size of the sultan’s fleet, its advanced equipment and skill of the sailors. This is followed by a presentation of the various types of ships used “in the sea of the Franks and Rum”. The author’s attention concentrates primarily on a detailed description of the two kuke, which were built especially for the campaign of Lepanto, including information on the personnel employed in their construction and the ships’ cost.

As mentioned previously, shipbuilding activities were carried out at various sites throughout Bayezid II’s reign, even though a campaign might not have been in sight. Venice was particularly anxious about developments in Ottoman naval preparations and kept a close eye on their military arrangements through a highly organised intelligence network. Venice was once again seriously worried by preparations in May 1496, as Alvise Sagudino’s report from Istanbul reveals. On that date Sagudino witnessed a fleet of over two hundred fifty ships, including one

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570 *Heşt Bihişt*, folios 574b-575a. See also Tansel, *Sultan II Bayezit*, p. 203.
571 *Heşt Bihişt*, folios 569b-570a.
572 See also Imber, “Navy of Süleyman”, pp. 235ff.
hundred galleys and several galleons.\textsuperscript{573} It is likely, however, that the intensive shipbuilding and munitions production reported during the summer of 1498 in Ottoman ports of the Adriatic and the Aegean might have been carried out with the campaign against the Morea already in mind.\textsuperscript{574} Bidlisi claims that the preparations for the war against Venice lasted two years:

When the sultan decided to make a campaign for the conquest of the lands of the Christians, within two years he built a great fleet and equipped it with thousands of cannon, defence equipment and tufeks, arms and mangonels large as mountains, instruments and tools for conquering castles. He also equipped them with commanders of the land and sea, and numerous troops to be sent for a gaza campaign.\textsuperscript{575}

At the end of the fifteenth century a substantial number of the specialised technicians employed in all kinds of the military industry were foreigners.\textsuperscript{576} In naval preparations and shipbuilding in particular, the master shipwrights were usually Italians or Greeks, who offered their services and technological expertise to the sultan.\textsuperscript{577} The presence of these Europeans in the sultan's service enabled the Ottomans to keep pace with and elaborate on technological developments in Europe, ensuring that Ottoman ships were matching the latest developments in European shipbuilding. The Ottomans also made sure to keep up with progress by reproducing and improving newer models of ships that fell into their hands, even though the quality of the products might not have been always equal to Christian vessels for other reasons.\textsuperscript{578}

Kâtib Celebi mentions a certain shipwright named Iani, who was in charge of the construction of the two kuke built for the campaign of 1499.\textsuperscript{579} This man is said to have received his education in Venice. Another renowned shipwright of the period was a man of Italian origin, Andrea Dere. He was in the sultan's service from at least 1503 to 1507, and had closely cooperated with the general commander of the fleet, Daud

\textsuperscript{575} Heş Bihişti, folio 570b.
\textsuperscript{577} Imber, "Navy of Süleyman", p. 242.
\textsuperscript{578} Cf. Bayezid II's order to make fifty new galleys based on a captured Venetian galley in 1500, mentioned in Fisher, \textit{Foreign Relations}, p. 78. For reasons for the poorer quality of Ottoman vessels compared to Christian ones see Imber, "Navy of Süleyman", p. 225.
\textsuperscript{579} Haji Khalifeh, \textit{The History of the Maritime Wars of the Turks}, (tr. J. Mitchell), London 1831, p. 20.
Paşa. Although Bidlisi does not mention anyone by name, he states explicitly the presence of foreigners in charge of the empire’s shipyards:

When the sultan decided to conquer this castle and its environs, in order to equip and prepare his ships, and get ready for his opposition to the enemies, some bold Franks, skilled workmen and masters, knowledgeable in arms and armoury, prepared the sultan’s ships and fitted them with cannon and war machines. And he ordered all those in his service who were skilled in marvellous and extraordinary crafts to assemble and build them.

With reference to the rest of the workers employed in the shipyards Bidlisi reports that “The men working on their construction, in all important posts, were all personal slaves of the sultan who had been working as specialised salaried carpenters and ironsmiths”. By this Bidlisi must refer to the azebs employed in the imperial shipbuilding sites, who were recruited from the ranks of the acem oğlan.

The main problem faced by all Mediterranean maritime states lay in the acquisition of crews for the warships: experienced sailors and oarsmen were scarce, and their recruitment and payment were troublesome and costly. The Ottomans, however, seemed to be in a better position than their opponents due to the empire’s vast resources of manpower. Initially Ottoman crews were of a variety of origins among the empire’s domains. During the campaign in Morea, however, a large number of the Greeks recruited are reported to have escaped their posts and attempted to aid the Venetians. This recurring tendency of disloyalty from Christian sailors and oarsmen seems to have been the main reason that Greek crews were gradually replaced by azebs from Asia Minor, especially in times of war.

For the command of the ships the state resorted largely to those corsairs willing to serve the government. Ships constructed at the imperial shipyards were placed under the command of various corsairs specially recruited for a particular campaign, while a small part of the vessels included in an armada belonged to corsairs who joined the sultan’s armada in their own vessels. It is impossible to estimate, however, how many

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581 *Hest Bihišt, folio* 569b.
582 *Hest Bihišt, folio* 569b.
584 For the practical as well as the financial difficulties encountered by various Mediterranean states in their efforts to man and maintain their fleets see Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower*, p. 214, note 5. For Venice’s shortages in manpower during the war see Lane, “Naval Actions”, pp. 159-162.
of the roughly 300 vessels reported in the armadas participating in the two campaigns to Morea belonged previously to corsairs and how many of them were constructed by the state. Kemal Re'is and Burak Re’is were appointed captains of the two new kuke built in Istanbul to lead the fleet. The two men had already been employed previously in the empire’s fleet and had participated in the expedition of 1488 against the Mamluks, mentioned above.587 Bidlisi also mentions the names of two other captains participating in the campaign of Lepanto, Rüstem and Isfendiyar.588 In some cases, such as that of Kemal Re’is, these men would be appointed permanently to the sultan’s service. Many of these experienced seamen, however, were engaged temporarily and tended to return to privateering after the end of a campaign. Such was the case of Kara Durmuş, for example. Although Kara Durmuş participated in the war against Venice in 1505 he was pursued by Kemal Re’is, who was acting in the name of the Ottoman navy, and executed for his piratical activity against merchant ships.589

Although the command of the warships was entrusted to skilled sailors, without whose services the navy would be inoperable, the position of the general commander of the fleet was not seen as one that necessarily required its holder to be a seaman. Mainly considered as an administrative post, the commander of the fleet held the title of sancakbeği of Gallipoli, who was also “in charge of the ships, the Straits and the naval forces”.590 Along with his general administrative duties as the governor of any province, the sancakbeği of Gallipoli was thus also in charge of the preparations, equipment and organisation of the naval forces before a campaign.591

Bidlisi mentions that Daud Paşa Sani was nişancı before he was placed in charge of the fleet, and that he was “an old servant of the sultan and had been worthy and superior with great knowledge and bravery in all sorts of posts that he had held.”593 Neither Daud Paşa nor Ahmed Paşa Hersekoğlu, to whom Bayezid II entrusted the leadership of the naval forces during major campaigns, had any previous experience or
training in matters of the sea.\textsuperscript{594} They had both acquired their position mainly for political reasons, after having gained recognition as army leaders in land operations. This practice proved to be a considerable detriment to the efficiency of the fleet in later times and was criticised by both the ex-corsairs in the fleet and some political thinkers and historians.\textsuperscript{595} At the time of Bayezid II, however, this did not appear yet to be an issue of criticism. Daud Paşa remained in his position, while the unfortunate incident of Hersekoğlu Ahmed Paşa’s appointment as head of the fleet did not cause considerable damage to his career, or his popularity among the army and the sultan’s favour.

Finally, the small section in which Bidlisi describes several types of ships, which were constructed during his time, requires some special attention. At the end of the fifteenth and during the sixteenth century shipbuilding technology was advancing rapidly throughout the world, as the great explorations and the wealth they brought gave a considerable boost to naval developments and operations. Types of vessels were constantly improved and modified according to the particular needs of the seas in which they would travel, new ones were invented, and inevitably along with all these changes the names and uses of the various vessel types changed as well. Historians of the times rarely included descriptions of various types of vessels, and were generally unaware, indifferent or simply unable to follow the changes. As a result, there is great confusion about the type of vessels corresponding to a name at different points in history.\textsuperscript{596}

The description of the two \textit{kuke} made for the campaign to Morea is, therefore, perhaps the most interesting contribution of Bidlisi’s account on the Ottoman navy. Although the word is the Turkish version of the Italian \textit{cocca} or \textit{cucca}, or \textit{cog} in English, a term used for large sailing ships, the \textit{kuke} is often described as a rowing vessel by modern scholars.\textsuperscript{597} The two \textit{kuke} built in 1499, in particular, are believed to have been rowing vessels with sails, based on a description by Kâtib Çelebi:

\textsuperscript{595} Imber, “Navy of Süleyman”, pp. 226-227.
\textsuperscript{596} For the confusion about various terms used by the Ottomans, in relation to their western origins, see Soucek S., “Certain Types of Ships in Ottoman-Turkish Terminology”, Turcica VII (1975), pp. 233-249.
\textsuperscript{597} See, for example Kahane H. & R. & Tietze A., \textit{The Lingua Franca in the Levant: Turkish Nautical Terms of Italian and Greek Origin}, Urbana 1958, p. 171.
He built two immense kokas, the length of each being seventy cubits and the breadth thirty cubits. The masts were of several trees joined together, and in the middle measured four cubits in circumference. The maintop was capable of holding forty men in armour, who might hence discharge their arrows and muskets. The builders and other labourers employed were servants of the Sultan; and the building materials being all the productions of the Ottoman empire, were valued at twenty thousand florins. According to the statements of several respectable historians, the builder of these vessels was one Iani, who having seen ship-building at Venice, had there learned the art. These vessels had two decks, the one like that of a galleon, and the other like that of a mavuna (trireme); and on the side of each of these, according to custom, were two port-holes, in which immense guns were placed. Along the upper deck was a netting, under which on both sides were four-and-twenty oars, each pulled by nine men. The sterns were like those of a galleon, and from them boats were suspended. Each of these ships contained two thousand soldiers and sailors.598

Although Kâtîb Çelebi’s description was written about a century and a half later, his opinion was generally accepted for lack of another, contemporary account.599 The existence of oars in this type of ship seems, however, an arbitrary addition of Kâtîb Çelebi. Svat Soucek, who questioned the existence of oars in this vessel, challenged this definition for the type of ship the term kuke refers to. Soucek based his arguments on a description given by Sa’ddeddin and the observation that vessels like that were not constructed at that time in Venice, where the shipwright of the two kuke is reported to have acquired his training.600 Bidlisi’s description is, therefore, particularly valuable, as it was written so close to the ships’ construction that it is even possible that the author had been able to see the surviving vessel with his own eyes. It also confirms that the two kuke built in 1499 were indeed merely large sailing boats.601

Bidlisi states explicitly that “The type called barça is a small kuke”;602 the definition of barças as large sailing ships without oars, widely used by the Venetians and the Ottomans from the end of the fifteenth century onwards for military purposes, is generally accepted without contest.603 Bidlisi’s description of the two ships, which is largely similar to that of Kâtîb Çelebi with the exception of any mention of oars, is as follows:

Two large ships were constructed, which are known as kuke in Greek and Italian terminology, each of them is the size of a mountain when on the sea. While they were being built on land, the invaluable wood and iron for their tools, their nails and their anchors were brought from the regions and the mines near Istanbul. The men working on their construction, in all important posts, were all personal slaves of the sultan who

598 Haji Khalifeh, Maritime Wars, pp. 19-20.
599 Imber, “Navy of Süleyman”, p. 213.
601 For a possible explanation of Kâtîb Çelebi’s inconsistency see Soucek, “Certain Types of Ships”, p. 240, n. 21.
602 Heşt Bihişt, folio 570b.
had been working as specialised salaried carpenters and ironsmiths. The ships cost 24,000 golden coins each. This fakir has been informed of the following measurements: the size of the ship was 70 cubits long and 35 cubits wide, and the height of its central mast was around 70 feet. Their masts were thick and upright, made from enormous trees bound together so that they looked like a minaret. The perimeter of each of them was 4 cubits. Their top was made like the gallery of a minaret, and was wide enough for three people. The ships were filled with cannonballs and gunpowder for going to battle with the enemies. The quarters for residence of the gazis and mucahids were hidden below the surface of the water and were about 20 feet high. Its capacity in soldiers, including their weapons, artillery and victuals was for 1,000 men. It carries all the mucahids to every direction of the world to fight.604

All descriptions referring to the type kuke invariably mention their colossal, “mountain-like” size,605 and the two kuke in question, apparently the largest ones in their time, must have certainly attracted the interest of the people and raised numerous discussions. The impression these two ships must have made is manifest in Bidlisi’s continued discussion about the vessels, where he enumerates their advantages and drawbacks. He states that these vessels can carry a large number of soldiers and are heavily fortified, prepared for sea-battle. They have two advantages over all other types, “those of speed and accuracy of shots”. He points out, however, that despite their large size, there still is not enough space in them to carry large quantities of water, which limits their ability for long-distance journeys.606 Bidlisi’s comments, although mentioned in reference to the kuke, applied in fact for all warships used in fifteenth and sixteenth century Mediterranean warfare. It is evident, therefore, that Bidlisi - and his contemporaries - were well aware and conscious of the prominent characteristics of Mediterranean ships, and the limitations these enforced on the conduct of maritime warfare.607

Bidlisi’s historical, political and ideological approaches

The events described in Bidlisi’s account of the Ottoman-Venetian war constitute a standard type of subject matter in chronicles belonging to the medieval Muslim historiographical tradition. Through Bidlisi’s account one can, therefore, detect and identify several of the dominant characteristics of this tradition. One such common trait pertains to a fragmented, non-linear view of history, where events are listed as a series of unrelated incidents with little effort on the part of the author to understand or

604 Heşti Bihişt, folios 569b-570a.
605 Kahane & Tietze, Lingua Franca, pp. 171ff.
606 Heşti Bihişt, folio 570a.
607 For modern scholars’ analysis of the vessels used and the characteristics of a Mediterranean style of sea warfare see Guilmartin, Gunpowder and Galleys, pp. 57ff.
establish a broader framework for them.\textsuperscript{608} Although some signs of deviation from this attitude into a more comprehensive and insightful treatment of the events can be seen among some historians of Bayezid II's time, Bidlisi's account remains a typical example of Muslim historiography in this respect.\textsuperscript{609} This approach in \textit{Heşt Bihişt} is manifest in both the structure of the narrative and the manner in which events are recorded.

The war is not, in fact, given as a unified phenomenon with a beginning and an end, but simply as a series of campaigns against the Christians, the case of Venice simply following those against Hungary and Poland. The various stages of the war are divided into separate \textit{destans}, each devoted to a campaign leading to an Ottoman conquest, or, as in the case of the tenth \textit{destan},\textsuperscript{610} an Ottoman triumph against a major attack of the infidels. \textit{Destans} are primarily arranged geographically, then listed in chronological order. Contemporary events in Hungary and Poland, for example, are recorded in previous \textit{destans}, with only some reference to the political connection behind the Hungarian attacks.\textsuperscript{611} The \textit{destan} describing the suppression of the Karamanian revolt, interjected between the succession of events on the Venetian front, breaks even more the continuity of the narrative.

Perhaps this view of historical continuity is also the reason why Bidlisi explains Bayezid II's offensive against Venice simply by the standardised reasons of \textit{gaza}, territorial expansion and Venetian collaboration with the enemies of the Ottomans.\textsuperscript{612} There seems to be no effort to connect Bayezid II's actions with any past events or circumstances, which would explain the war within its broader historical setting. There is no mention, for example, of the tension built up by frontier incidents or the corsairs' activities, nor of the Venetian alliance with France, despite the fact that they constitute a sounder explanation for declaring war, and it would be unlikely that Bidlisi was unaware of them. Similarly, there is no reference or any otherwise indication in \textit{Heşt Bihişt} to the conclusion of the war and the signing of a peace treaty by the two states.

Bidlisi's political and ideological considerations in this section conform to the same principles that have been outlined above for the entire chronicle.\textsuperscript{613} Furthermore, in this section Bidlisi takes advantage of the spectacular successes of the Ottoman navy in

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{608} Cf. Rosenthal F., \textit{A History of Muslim Historiography}, Leiden 1968, chapter three, pp. 66-100.
  \item \textsuperscript{609} Cf. Ménage, "Beginnings of Ottoman Historiography", p. 177.
  \item \textsuperscript{610} On the Christians' siege of Midilli, \textit{Heşt Bihişt}, folios 592a-593b.
  \item \textsuperscript{611} See \textit{Heşt Bihişt}, folios 564b-565a.
  \item \textsuperscript{612} \textit{Heşt Bihişt}, folios 569a-569b.
  \item \textsuperscript{613} See above (Chapter IV, Bidlisi's political and theoretical approach).
\end{itemize}
order to review and enhance several of the main issues of political propaganda regularly addressed throughout *Heşt Bihişt*. For example, it has already been mentioned that one of the main concerns of the chroniclers writing for Bayezid II was to exalt the sultan’s military superiority. An important feature in this attempt was to point out Bayezid II’s success where his predecessors had failed. As Melmed II had failed to take Lepanto twice, in 1462 and 1477, Bayezid II’s victory offered naturally an excellent opportunity to emphasise this idea once more. Similarly, for the conquest of Modon Bidlisi remarks:

The *memleket* of Morea is situated in a peninsula, and although the ancestors of the sultan had subjugated [other] various fortresses and towns, its great towns and castles, such as Modon and Koron, were still in the hands of Venice and comprised a strong weapon in her hands. The town of Modon is protected by fortified lands and surrounded by a strong wall from all directions. Whenever the Muslims were to appear before their walls, these infidels who were always negligent and drowsy, did not notice the approach of the Muslims because they were protected by their strong fortification. For that reason the Muslim sultans have not managed so far to reach is walls or subjugate it, and it was considered impregnable.

The reason for the inability of previous sultans to occupy these fortified ports was, Bidlisi explains, the lack of a strong navy that could face the formidable Venetian fleets. He points out, thus, that Bayezid II’s victories were not only unprecedented in Ottoman history, but were largely attributed to the contribution of the newly strengthened Ottoman fleet. The sultan’s attention to the expansion of his naval forces is, thus, celebrated as a major military achievement:

The lands up to the north-eastern coast of Morea had gradually become Ottoman domains, but Lepanto and the surrounding area have not yet been conquered, because one cannot order the conquest of this fort unless one has a strong fleet to withstand the innumerable ships of the Franks. Help from Venice arrives at this castle by sea in six days and thus only a siege of these castles, which lie isolated in open areas, is prevented. Former sultans did not take measures to create a navy strong enough to face the Franks, who are very experienced in seafare.

Another recurring theme in Bidlisi’s account is praise of the skill and efficiency of the Christian crews, and the excellence of their ships and weapons. A common pattern of heroic narrative, this insistence on the superiority of the enemy, ultimately serves to enhance the pride and confidence in the achievements of the Ottoman navy:

614 Pitcher, *Historical Geography*, p. 87.
615 *Heşt Bihişt*, folio 569b.
616 *Heşt Bihişt*, folio 578a.
617 *Heşt Bihişt*, folios 569a-569b.
It is acknowledged that the navy of the Franks is invincible on the surface of the sea and on the coasts, and no one can match them in sea-battles in the use of cannons and firearms. Their numerous troops are fast and destructive as thunderbolts. Their men fight like sea-monsters and they are experts in the use of war-machines, cannons and firearms during the battle. They are quick travellers and able navigators, so they travel fast and confidently, and they are so competent that they can measure distances on the surface of the sea at a glance. In addition, their vessels are large and fast, numerous and powerful. The mouth of every cannon on board their war ships is so wide that it seems that the earth could be used as cannonball. In every ship they have numerous weapons of all sizes and ammunition arranged so that at the moment of battle they shoot uncountable cannonballs and arrows. Nobody can escape their destructive and well-aiming shots.\(^{618}\)

This pride was, in fact, not unjustified. Regardless of both contemporary and current assessments that the Ottoman naval successes were mainly due to their fleet’s numerical superiority, the Ottoman crews had certainly accomplished what was expected of them. The fleet had successfully provided transportation for troops to the warfront, it generally managed to prevent the Christians from relieving the besieged in amphibious sieges, and even its failure to do so in the case of Modon had turned out to be the fortunate coincidence that led to the city’s conquest.

Most of all, however, practically for the first time, Ottoman sailors had proved capable of facing the Venetians in confrontations at sea.\(^{619}\) This was certainly a source of insecurity on the side of the Ottomans, as opposed to the Venetian confidence in their own skill. Indeed, as mentioned above, the failure of the Venetian fleet to protect Lepanto did not alarm Venice seriously at first. Conversely, the same success had a tremendous effect on the Ottomans, who could not take naval victories for granted. It was important, therefore, to point out the psychological impact of the fleet’s success. Along with the sentiments of pride in the success of the Ottoman fleet, Bidlisi also celebrates the demoralising effect the loss of Lepanto had for the Christians: “The echo of this victory broke the spirit of all the infidels.”\(^{620}\)

This Ottoman self-assurance is also manifest in reference to the conquest of Durazzo.\(^{621}\) Once again the author points out that this fortified port remained impregnable because of the lack of a fleet, while a joint attack was considered the only way to take the castle. Similar conquests had been achieved in the last few years, however, adds Bidlisi, a fact which implies that the success of another attempt to take Durazzo was not considered impossible any longer - even though in the end the castle was taken by storm, without the assistance of a fleet. Bidlisi’s remarks illustrate, thus,

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\(^{618}\) Heşti Bihişt, folio 578a. See also folios 569b, 572a, 573b.

\(^{619}\) Pryor, Geography, Technology, and War, pp. 177 and 181.

\(^{620}\) Heşti Bihişt, folio 574a.

\(^{621}\) Heşti Bihişt, folios 590b-592a.
how much the recent successes in the Morea had inspired the Ottomans with a solid confidence in their supremacy at sea, and the strength and capabilities of their navy:

Durazzo was one of the greatest cities of the infidels and heavily fortified. In that matter it was considered as a second Istanbul. It lay by the sea and was a great settlement and port through which most of the ships of the Franks passed. Most of the time these ships were merchant-ships. The Ottoman sultans, who had marched against Albania, were not able to subjugate this castle because it lay on the coast of the sea of the Franks and its conquest was impossible without a joint attack of a large fleet able to face the numerous fleet of the Franks. In the time of Bayezid II, however, great successes were achieved at sea, such as the conquests of Modon, Koron, Lepanto and other castles. The subjugation of this city and castle could not be imagined without the attack of the sultan’s numerous fleet.622

Finally, Bidlisi does not fail to stress the impact of the Ottoman successes for the entire Muslim world. This significant series of victories over the infidels was naturally an excellent opportunity for the Ottomans to celebrate their stature as the “champions of gaza”, a position which they had been vying for since the time of Mehmed II.623 Bidlisi repeatedly mentions, thus, the idea of war against the infidels, prominent throughout Heşti Bihiş, which is emphasised here by the remark that the Ottomans carried out the gaza by sea as well as by land.624 Furthermore, Bayezid II and his successors showed an active interest in the support of Muslim communities in distress from the Indian Ocean to the Western Mediterranean. During the fifteenth century, as the Muslim states of Spain were gradually being lost to the Christians and especially after the fall of Granada in 1492, the Muslim population of these areas suffered severe oppressions and persecutions. Under the pressure of enforced conversion to Christianity, the local Muslims appealed for help to the Mamluk sultan Kaitbey and soon after to Bayezid II.625 Although not much substantial help could be provided, the fate of their co-religionists in Spain remained among the concerns of the Ottoman sultans. Bidlisi makes a special reference to this issue, while at the same time he highlights another side of Bayezid II’s role as the refuge of all Muslims:

Finally, this vilayer is near the lands of the west, and the kings of Farankistan always use these sea-routes for maritime trade and travelling. In those times when most of the lands in North Africa were taken from the hands of the Muslims by the infidels, and all the scattered men of the west - and especially the area of Andalus - were asking for

622 Heşti Bihiş, folio 591a.
623 See İnalci, “Paşşah”, pp. 491-495.
624 See for example Heşti Bihiş, folios 569a, 573a, 577b.
refuge from the sultan of the mucahids, Morea became the first place where those Muslims could be free from the infidels and find refuge in Muslim lands. The people of those countries rejoiced for this conquest of the Paşa.\textsuperscript{626}

Similarly, another angle of the same role as protectors of the Muslim community can be seen in the Ottoman support for the Mamluks against the Portuguese. The appearance of the Portuguese on the western coasts of India in 1496-7 had quickly become a major obstacle to the continuation of the maritime trade through the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, both exclusively in Muslim hands up to that date. In addition, the Portuguese also put a considerable strain on the safe conduct of the pilgrimage caravans from the sub-continent to the Holy cities.\textsuperscript{627} Bayezid II supported the Mamluk navy with supplies and ammunition and a part of his naval forces were also sent to the Red Sea.\textsuperscript{628}

Bidlisi’s sources and the place of \textit{Heş Bihişt} in contemporary sources and modern research

Bidlisi arrived at the Ottoman capital around the time when negotiations for the peace treaty were being finalised and events were coming to a close. This practically brought the description of the war with Venice into the sphere of current affairs, rather than the history of past events. \textit{Heş Bihişt} was, therefore, one of the first histories written on the issue. As a result, the number of sources, from which he could obtain information for his own account, was very specific. The earlier chronicles of Bayezid II’s time were already completed before that date, and only a few other Ottoman chronicles were composed at relatively the same time as \textit{Heş Bihişt}. Some of them, such as Kemalpaşazade’s \textit{Tevarih-i Al-i Oşman} or Bihiş’ti’s history, were completed after \textit{Heş Bihişt}. Other historical narratives describing these events, which might have served as Bidlisi’s sources, include Safa’i’s \textit{Tarih-i Feth-i Aynabahit ve Moton},\textsuperscript{629} and Firdevsi’s \textit{Kitbnname} on the naval expedition in Midilli.\textsuperscript{630}

\textsuperscript{626} \textit{Heş Bihişt}, folio 589a.


\textsuperscript{629} A manuscript of this work exists in Topkapı Kütüphanesi, Ms R. 1271. Extracts from Safa’i’s account and the \textit{Tarih}, along with illustrations from the latter manuscript, are published in Esin E., “İkinci Bayezid’in H. 904-906/1498-1500 Yillarda Adalar Denizi’ne Seferi (Inebahit/Aynabahit, Moton, Koron, Avarın’ın Fethi)”, Erdem I/3 (1985), pp. 789-799. For Safa’i see Babinger, \textit{Die Geschichtsschreiber}, p. 49, where he mentions, however, that there is no surviving copy of the work.

\textsuperscript{630} Babinger, \textit{Die Geschichtsschreiber}, pp. 32-33.
Bidlisi himself makes several references to other reports on which he states that he based his account, even though he does not identify any by name. A type of source to which Bidlisi had certainly access were the various gazavatnames and fethnames written for the occasion. These works were usually composed soon after the conquests took place, and were thus available to Bidlisi and the other chroniclers of the time. Several fethnames are known to exist today from that period. The texts of two such fethnames and other correspondence related to them can be found in Feridun Beğ’s collection of documents.631 Another one, addressed to the Mamluk sultan, is published by G. Vajda, who also mentions the possible existence of several more, written for various Christian rulers.632 It is very likely that Bidlisi consulted the fethname composed for the benefit of şehzade Ahmed, as is revealed from some information, which is common in it and Heşt Bihişt. The conquests of the minor Venetian castles Vatika and Asopos after the subjugation of Navarino and Koran are only mentioned in this particular work.633 The fethname composed for the Mamluk sultan, in 906/1500, has also been identified as one of Bidlisi’s main sources. All the information given in this fethname is also mentioned in Heşt Bihişt, sometimes even with the use of identical expressions and metaphors.634

Finally, it can safely be said that much of Bidlisi’s information must have been acquired or confirmed through his personal contacts with participants in both the military operations and the political decision-making of the government, possibly even with key figures involved in the negotiations with the Venetian ambassadors. Such personal impressions embellishing the narration can be detected in several places throughout this section. Bidlisi’s explanation of the political situation in Europe, for example, or his remarks on the drawbacks and advantages of the sailing ships are almost reminiscent of everyday discussions at the palace.

Apart from these accounts, the second Ottoman-Venetian war, which involved not only Venice and the Ottomans but also several Christian powers, was naturally recorded extensively in narrative sources as well as through a wide range of primary source material relevant to the development of the events. From the Ottoman side such source material ranges from financial registers to diplomatic and official reports on military activities,635 while the considerable importance of the second Ottoman-

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631 Feridun Beğ, Münşeat, pp. 337-345.
635 Some of this material has been published by various scholars, such as Gökbilgin, “Registre de Dépenses”, pp. 80-87 and Vatin, “Siège de Mytilène”, pp. 437-461.
Venetian war for Europe guaranteed that every aspect of the conflict between the two states was also extensively covered and commented on by Western observers. As a result, modern research has at its disposal abundant documentary material, as well as narrative accounts that follow the events closely.

Among this multitude of sources, *Heş Bihişt* constitutes an interesting contribution to our knowledge of the events. A lot of Bidlisi’s information and comments was already common knowledge through Sa’deddin’s history. In addition, S. Tansel has used extensively *Heş Bihişt* in his history of Bayezid II’s reign and therefore has brought to light all the noteworthy data provided by Bidlisi.636 On the other hand, the campaigns of the war with Venice are chronologically the last major events described in *Heş Bihişt*. This proximity of the author to the developments not only enhances the work’s reliability as a historical source, but also makes Bidlisi’s report an excellent manifestation of the spirit of the period. His personal points of view, ideological approaches, or simply what issues the author considered necessary or worth mentioning, provide us with a rare and individual glimpse of the concerns and interests of early sixteenth-century political thinking.

636 Tansel, *Sultan II Bayezit*. 
CHAPTER VII

Summarised translation of Heşt Bihiş't's eighth Book

Additional report on the generous qualities and charitable works of the sultan

[512a] Complete description of the virtues that assist the sultan's work, chastity and courage, which are the attributes of munificence, generosity and manliness. With the aid of divine guidance and generosity, this noble sultan possesses all the natural qualities associated with government, justice and the grace of laudable qualities and excellencies and all four pillars, which are the foundations of virtuous qualities, that is justice, courage, lawfulness and authority, which have been mentioned before. Both as a whole and as regards each individual attribute, in comparison with preceding sultans, this sultan is the most liberal, magnanimous and generous. Of all the relevant actions and signs in the world, of all the rulers of all times, perhaps this sultan is the most blessed. But the evident proof for the superiority of these praises and qualities over all other virtues are his actions, and his consideration for the prosperity of the people in his care.

[513a] In 909 (1503-4) the sultan arranged various affairs according to the şeri'a, such as the expeditions and equipment of the army, and important issues concerning the kingdom and religion. The allowances of governors and the 'ulema, who were important members of the sultan's court, were around 7,600,000 Ottoman akçe, which equals 2,150,000 silver coins struck with the stamp of Rum. [513b] This sum of money was donated by the sultan along with valuable goods, slaves, horses and mules, and various foods and other victuals, which were given for charity. In this manner every year some of that amount will be spent in a virtuous way for the rank of
the distinguished 'ulema, the educated and the virtuous men of the times, and for other learned and religious men.

SECOND KISM

Report on pious foundations (mosques and charitable institutions)

Description of the sultan’s pious works, and expenditure on places of worship and mosques for the welfare of the people in the memalik of Rum. He did that with the agreement of all the nations and religions of the empire and in accordance with humanity by giving donations to works of charity. [514a] In times of fear and misfortunes, when the fundamental principles of kindness and mercy and the lights of Muslim compassion are extinguished from the minds of the Arab and Persian kings, the good works of this sultan of the mucahid benefit all the empire’s people, infidels and Muslims alike. The sultan’s generosity is clearly displayed through his care for the foundation of welfare buildings and the building of imarets and compounds of schools and bridges in the memalik of Rum.

Report on the pious foundations in Istanbul

These were erected in one place and all together, from 903 (1497-8) up to the end of 911 (1506). In the centre of an area confined by walls within the city, he created a great cami’, a medrese, a darü‘l-zaife and a mektephane complete with all their adjoining buildings. [514b] This generous sultan, who at that time intended to rebuild religious buildings, ordered the building of a new mosque in the capital. The beauty of the mosque reflects the sultan’s virtues. (Description of the mosque). [516a] The sultan, wishing to perpetuate himself built a mescid and an aramgâh for the pious. The salaries, income and expenditure in these foundations are specified and fixed as follows:

Preacher: 35 akçe daily.

Prayer leaders: 2 persons, 16 akçe daily.

Reciters of the Koran: 15 persons, 60 akçe daily.

Callers to prayer: 4 persons, 32 akçe daily.
Care takers: 4 persons, 24 akçe daily.

Footmen: 6 persons, 24 akçe daily.

Lamp-lighters and other servants: 30 akçe daily.

The expenses at the darü‘l-zaife are as follows:

Victuals: 900,000 akçe per year.

Expenses for workmen and servants, such as cooks, fire-wood collectors, water-carriers, footmen and others: 120 akçe daily.

The şeyh of the zaviye: 20 akçe daily.

Each day for the famous medrese, expenses are estimated as follows:

Müderris: 50 akçe daily.

Students: 40 akçe.

Servants, such as doorkeepers, care takers and footmen: 20 akçe.

So many vakfs were made, that every year they produced surplus income 300,000 akçe, which was returned to the vakf Treasury, so that if any endowment was in need, money from this Treasury would be paid immediately. The majority of the expenses were for restorations and the maintenance of the buildings of these charitable foundations and for the servants and workers, who are the sultan’s personal slaves, every year 200,160 akçe were spent.

Report on the pious foundations in Edirne

It consists of a mescid cami’, a medrese, a darü‘ş-şifâ, a hammam, a high bridge and a zaviye, a ribat and a darü‘l-zaife, which embrace every aspect of pious deeds and charity. It is considered one of the wonders of pious foundations and constructions, it has no other equal in the world and looks like a fortified castle. It constitutes an excellent collection of buildings founded outside the city of Edirne, in which the class of the ‘ulema perfects its education. [516b] In this compound there is a lofty mescid cami’, a medrese for the fostering of education, a darü‘ş-şifâ to invite and relieve the sores of the poor, a zaviye and a maṭ‘am full of various dishes and 151
heavenly foods, a pleasant hammam, and a ribat, which looks like an Arab dwelling and its stables and yards are in the service of the travellers. There is also a bridge which connects this compound with the town of Edirne, as it is situated on the bank of a river, so that the water near it makes it resemble Paradise. The marketplace and shops, and the houses and orchards of the area which surround this fortified compound have been restored anew. (Description of the buildings in the compound). [517a] These buildings are dedicated to the service of travellers and the poor, and in each foundation intelligent servants have been appointed, who attend to the lawful expenditure of these profitable institutions.

The mescid cami' is organised as follows:

Preacher: 30 akçe daily.

Prayer leaders: 2 persons, 16 akçe daily.

Reciters of the Koran: 10 persons, 60 akçe daily.

Reciters at ceremonies: 12 akçe.

Callers to prayer: 4 persons, 24 akçe.

Care takers and footmen: 30 akçe daily.

Expenses of the medrese:

Müderris: 50 akçe daily.

Students: 40 akçe daily.

Servants and care takers: 20 akçe daily.

For the zaviye and darü'l-zaife the daily expenses are collectively as follows:

Şeyh of the zaviye: 20 akçe.

Nakib: 10 akçe daily.

Expenses for victuals and other: 2,000 akçe daily.

Servants and workmen: 120 akçe daily.

Expenses for the stables: 200 akçe daily.
Expenses of the daru'ṣ-sifā:

Surgeon: 10 akçe daily.

Food and water for the sick: 22 akçe daily.

Servants and workmen: 30 akçe daily.

Drinks for the road, cooking and meals: 20 akçe.

The sum kept at the Treasury of the vakf after all profits and expenses is 300,200 akçe.

Report on the pious foundations in Amasya

They consist of a cami’, a medrese, an ‘imaret, a ribaṭ, a mektephane, a daru’l-zaife and a zaviye. Among the great charitable deeds of the sultan there is a compound outside the city of Amasya, which used to be the former residence of the sultan and it was from there that the sultan ascended the throne of his father. The sultan’s character is generous by nature; he gave his old residence plenty of love and affection and ordered the repair of many mansions. [517b] The sultan ordered that a compound of charitable institutions be founded in the town of Amasya next to the river, for the service of the locals and the travellers. (Description of each building in the compound).

Report on the great bridges

[518a] Bridges are made by order of the sultan as pious foundations. Their maintenance and repairs are included in the endowment. One can travel from the provinces of Rum towards the vilayet of Oşmancık through a river known as Kızıl Irmak. It is a passage for caravans and merchants from all over the world, especially from Syria and Irak. The bridge built there is an indication of magnanimity and care for the trade between great cities. The sultan ordered the construction of that bridge in order to help people. Other bridges, all similar and equal, have been built by the sultan, and all cost equally one million akçe.

The second bridge is situated on the great river Şakarya. It is built on the public road which is used every day by Arab and Persian merchants and travellers, and its income
is spent on the sick. (Description of the bridge). [518b] 50,000,000 akçe from the imperial Treasury were spent on the wages on builders and other necessary expenses.

The third bridge is situated in Saruhanili. (Description of the bridge). It cost 8,000,000 akçe. The bridge in the sultan’s vakf in Edirne cost 10,000,000 akçe. There are many other pious foundations established by the sultan in many other towns to testify to the sultan’s generosity, which are all too many to be mentioned one by one here.

Report on contemporary kings

Report on the kings contemporary to the sultan of the faithful in the lands of Iran. In the introduction of the seventh book and in the history of the sixth sultan, the appearance and dominance of Hasan Beğ Bayanduri in the lands of Iran in 871 (1466-7) and the nature of Hasan Beğ’s defeat and humiliation and the death of his son Zeynal Beğ have been described, as mentioned in the eighteenth story of the account of the conquests of sultan Meḥmed II. In 882 (1477-8) Hasan Beğ left the battlefield with his army defeated and his heart broken. A series of misfortunes and consecutive calamities followed and he returned to Azerbaycan horror-struck and chased after by the swords of his pursuers. Day after day he was met by vile misfortunes and a rebellion against his authority.

[519a] The dispute for succession among his sons was widespread. Hasan Beğ, apart from for the son who was killed in the battle against Meḥmed Fatih, had six more sons. The oldest of them, Sultan Halil, was the governor of Fars. After him came Uğurlu Muḥammed, who was governor of Isfahan and part of İrak. After him came Maḳṣud Beğ, who was governor of Baghdad, after him Ya’mu Beğ and Yusuf Beğ, and after them Mesih Beğ. At that time they were young boys. Sultan Halil, Sultan Ya’mu and Yusuf Beğ were sons of the same mother. She was respected and powerful and she wished Sultan Halil to be established on the throne of the empire. On the other hand, Uğurlu Muḥammed was a man known to all for his courage and bravery and many of the governors and the commanders of the army were his supporters. Preferences were, therefore, divided between Sultan Halil and Uğurlu Muḥammed. Even though they came from a different mother, Maḳṣud Beğ and Mesih Beğ promised their support to Uğurlu Muḥammed, out of opposition against Sultan Halil. Sultan Halil’s mother and the mothers of Uğurlu Muḥammed and Maḳṣud Beğ were all rivals in the acquisition of power. For that reason, when it was heard that Hasan Beğ was returning to his kingdom after the war in Rum, and his arrival was
expected any day, Sultan Halil’s mother sent her son from Shiraz to his father’s capital in the palace of Tabriz.

Consequently, Uğurlu Muḥammed, out of rage and jealousy for this preference, went against Shiraz, intending to occupy the province of Fars. The opposition to his father, who favoured Sultan Halil, became apparent. Their father was obliged to set off from Tabriz to Shiraz, in order to help and support Sultan Halil and confront the rebellion against his power. Uğurlu Muḥammed was defeated and planned to go to Baghdad via Huzistan. He went to Diyarbekir, where various governors and army commanders from İrak, Azerbaycan and Diyarbekir, comrades in the rebellion against the king, showed up. Hasan Beg returned to his capital and dispatched his troops to Diyarbekir and the borders to repel Uğurlu Muḥammed. Uğurlu Muḥammed escaped to Rum and took refuge with sultan Mehmed II, who gave him shelter and sent him to a residence on the border of Sivas. When later on the news of the sickness and weakness of his father Hasan Beg arrived, the sultan promised Uğurlu Muḥammed the kingdom of Fars as well as abundant help and money. When news of the death of his father, as a result of his sickness, reached him on the border of Sivas, Uğurlu Muḥammed consulted the sultan and an army was gathered in the area of Erzincan. The news of Hasan Beg’s death, however, was false rumours and Sultan Halil was the heir apparent to the seat of sovereignty in Tabriz. [519b] His father was still alive and sent a large group of great commanders against Uğurlu Muḥammed. They came to battle with Uğurlu Muḥammed and he was killed. As a result, the position of heir apparent and the throne were confirmed upon Sultan Halil.

Two months later Hasan Beg died, due to a chronic illness. Immediately Sultan Halil sat on his father’s throne. He ordered the execution of Maḳṣud Beg, the governor of Baghdad, who at the time had been imprisoned by their father as a result of an agreement he had made with Uğurlu Muḥammed. He also sent his young brothers Yaʿḳub Beg and Yusuf Beg to Diyarbekir, accompanied by their mother as a guardian. He appointed Yaʿḳub Beg governor of this province along with the two army officers who had agreed to assassinate Uğurlu Muḥammed Beg: Bayandur Beg, one of the sons of Hasan Beg’s paternal uncle, and Süleyman Beg, who was atabeg at Sultan Yaʿḳub’s court. They were ordered to go to Diyarbekir as Sultan Yaʿḳub’s guardians. Sultan Halil’s corrupt manners and tyranny, however, were unpopular with the population and the army and consequently every day some of the sons of his paternal uncles in the provinces of İrak and Fars wished to take the power.
Within six months Sultan Halil and his men were faced with the rebellion of Cahangir Beg. The army generals conspired with two guardians of Sultan Ya'kub, who was only fourteen years of age but his justice and bravery were acknowledged among his men. They were determined to overthrow Sultan Halil and place Sultan Ya'kub on the throne in Azerbaijan. Although the army of Azerbaijan was not even one tenth of Sultan Halil’s army, their efforts were successful, thanks to divine guidance. When Sultan Halil in Iraq heard the news about his brother’s revolt, he hurried to confront Ya'kub Beg in the area of Khoy and Salmas. In the beginning Ya'kub Beg’s army was weak and was partly defeated, when suddenly Sultan Halil was left with a small number of his men in the midst of the enemies’ retreating army. The commander of Ya'kub Beg’s forces, Bayandur Beg, moved against Sultan Halil, and some of Ya'kub Beg’s soldiers cut off his head. With God’s help, thus, Sultan Ya'kub took hold of Tabriz and the throne of Iran came into his hands.

[520a] In the meantime, the sultan of Egypt, Kaitbey Çerkesi, who wished to subdue the region of Diyarbekir, sent the army of Egypt and Syria there, under the command of Taş Beg, the great Secretary of State. Sultan Ya'kub also sent Bayandur Beg and his army from Azerbaijan to repel them. Although the army of Egypt and Syria was larger in number and they wished to take control of the whole province of Diyarbekir, with God’s intervention the army of Sultan Ya'kub defeated the forces of Egypt and Syria. The lords of Damascus, Aleppo, Tripoli and other cities, and many great generals were taken prisoners and Taş Beg, who was the leader of the rebellion, was immediately executed. The rest of the generals were spared their lives and were transferred to the court of Sultan Ya'kub in captivity. After negotiations with the sultan of Egypt they were all released.

Sultan Ya'kub’s authority was strengthened and confirmed day by day. With justice he issued religious and secular laws, and all the Arab and Persian lords and governors sought his friendship and goodwill by letters and ambassadors. Likewise he wanted peace with all the lords and kings of his times, especially with the sultan of the faithful (the Ottoman sultan). The enthronement of the Ottoman sultan on 886 (1481) was contemporary to Sultan Ya'kub’s reign, who ascended to the throne of Iran in 884 (1479-80). His reign was blessed with justice and peace among his lords, and his brothers and their children. Sultan Ya'kub had three sons, Mirza Baysungur, Sultan Hasan and Sultan Murad. He entrusted the administration of Fars and Shiraz to his elder son, Mirza Baysungur, and next to him in the administration of Shiraz he appointed Sufi Halil, as his atabeg. In 896 (1490-1) in the winter resort of Karabağ, in the provinces subject to Sultan Ya'kub, some people were afflicted with a disease.
Forty days later, after many had been claimed by death, the rest made haste to the capital for safety. Eighteen days before Sultan Ya’kub’s own death his brother Mirza Yusuf and their mother died from the same disease.

[S520b] Sultan Ya’kub had many brothers and nephews who survived him. From among the governors only Sufi Halil was present at the court at the time of his death. Apart from his sons, however, his brothers and nephews Mirza ‘Ali, b. Sultan Halil, Mahmud Beg b. Uğurlu Muhammed, Rüstem Mirza b. Maşud Beğ, and other members of his family such as the children of Cahangir Beğ, the older brother of Hasan Beğ, and other paternal uncles were at the court when Sultan Ya’kub died. On the day of his death, his heir Baysungur Mirza became sultan. When, two or three days later, Baysungur Mirza, at the age of twelve, fell ill all the great emirs and the sons of Sultan Ya’kub agreed upon appointing his brother Mesih Beğ as the sultan. Baysungur Mirza and Sufi Halil Beğ, however began fighting with them and managed to defeat them. Mesih Beğ and the commanders of his party were executed. Some generals, however, escaped and taking Mahmud Beğ b. Uğurlu Muhammed, with them fled to Irak. Şah ‘Ali Beğ Purnak, who had been a powerful emir under Sultan Ya’kub and for a long time served as governor of Baghdad, allied with Mahmud Beğ Uğurlu against Sufi Halil. Sufi Halil rushed against them, however, and defeated them outside Diyarbekir.

While Sufi Halil was thus occupied, Süleyman Beğ, Sultan Ya’kub’s former atabeg and governor of Diyarbekir and Kurdistan, allied with several of the emirs of Diyarbekir and Azerbaycan. Sufi Halil rushed against him near the area of Van. [S521a] After a long conflict that lasted nearly a month, a great number of Sufi Halil’s men deserted his ranks and joined Süleyman Beğ. Sufi Halil began to retreat towards Tabriz but Süleyman Beğ pursued him. They became engaged in a great battle near Şahrevan. Some of Baysungur Mirza’s men withdrew from aiding Sufi Halil, and his troops were entirely routed. Şehzade Baysungur was captured by Süleyman Beğ’s men. Süleyman Beğ immediately placed şehzade Baysungur on the throne and the notables of the empire accepted his authority. When he had established his power, however, he became tyrannical and dismissed a large number of great emirs from their positions. Consequently, eight months later the majority of the chiefs turned against him.

In the winter of 895 (1489-90) the emirs of Karabag placed Ibrahim Sultan b. Halil Beğ b. Muhammed Beğ b. Osman Beğ Bayanduri at the head of their army, and proclaimed Rüstem Mirza b. Maşud Beğ b. Hasan Beğ sultan in his absence. When
Sufi Halil was defeated, Rüstem Mirza had been imprisoned at the castle of Alincak. The emirs gained the alliance of the governor of Alincak, Saydi ‘Ali Beğ Purnak, and were gradually joined by several emirs from Tabriz. Süleyman Beğ, realising their intentions to drive him and Baysungur Mirza out, fled to Diyarbekir. Mirza Baysungur and his brother, Sultan Murad, took refuge with their maternal grandfather, the governor of Şirvan, emir Şirvanşah. Immediately Rüstem Mirza went to Tabriz and took possession of the throne and treasury of Sultan Ya'kub. He went out against Baysungur Mirza on the borders with Şirvan. Emir Şirvanşah came out to protect his daughter’s sons and confront the army of Rüstem Beğ. As the kingdom of Şirvan was strong and victory over them would not be easy, peace was made and it was agreed that some of the provinces bordering Şirvan, such as Karabağ, Gance and Barda’, would be left and Rüstem Mirza would be established on the throne of the empire. Rüstem Mirza left Karabağ and Mirza Baysungur went to the provinces mentioned and made another attempt to gain power.

[521b] During the following month Rüstem Mirza and Saydi ‘Ali Beğ Purnak suppressed a number of revolts in the kingdom, and Baysungur Mirza was killed. Rüstem Mirza remained on the throne for six years, but after that the state was divided between two leaders, none of whom was able or was assisted by any advisor able to restore the state. Some emirs, therefore, sent for Ahmed Han, b. Uğurlu Muhammed b. Sultan Hasan, who lived under the Ottoman sultan since his father was killed in Erzincan and was renowned for his qualities. The Ottoman sultan did not wish to get involved in a war with his neighbours and kept stalling with his support, so Ahmed Han fled from Istanbul. By sea he went to Erzincan and soon most emirs and commanders joined him. Rüstem Sultan had no sympathies or supporters among the Turkish emirs, and himself was incapacitated through drunkenness. When he moved against the usurper most of his men deserted him. He went up to the bridge Çoban Köprüsü on the river Aras, near the castle Aynak. [522a] They saw the rebels’ army but they could not cross the river Aras, and every day more men would flee from the army of Rüstem, until the experienced commanders Ibrahim Sultan, ‘Ali Ru’s and many soldiers also joined Ahmed Han. Rüstem then fled to Georgia with the remainders of his troops. Ahmed Han became sultan, but three months later Rüstem Mirza reappeared from Georgia.

Ahmed Han became sultan and attended to the affairs of the state with consideration and justice. In a battle, once more at the banks of Aras, Rüstem Mirza was captured and executed, while Ahmed Han secured his position and continued to govern and legislate with justice. Although Ibrahim Sultan, due to his friendship with Rüstem
Mirza, was a threat of treachery against the sultanate, he had the support of several emirs, so he was eventually spared and sent away to the province of Kirman. While there, Ibrahim Sultan soon allied with the emirs of Shiraz, and proclaimed Sultan Murad b. Sultan Ya’kub sultan in his absence. Sultan Murad by that time was at the side of his mother’s father, Emir Şirvanşah. Ahmed Han immediately went to repel Ibrahim Sultan and his allies.

[522b] The two sides met in battle in the area of Isfahan, and although Ahmed Han’s army outnumbered the rebels’ troops, on the day of the battle some of his commanders failed to do their duty. (Description of the battle). Ahmed Han was killed in the battle and Yusuf Beg b. Hasan Sultan’s two sons, Alvand Mirza and Muhammed Mirza, who were in Ahmed Han’s service, fled to Azerbaycan and Yazd respectively. Sultan Murad b. Sultan Ya’kub was proclaimed sultan, but in reality it was Ibrahim who held the power, as Sultan Murad was still at the side of Emir Şirvanşah. All the emirs, however, did not see Sultan Murad as worthy of being sultan and sent for Alvand Mirza. He captured Sultan Murad, defeated his forces and took hold of the throne. However, Muhammed Mirza wished to assume power and moved against his brother. Alvand Mirza was defeated and fled to Karabag, while Muhammed Mirza went to Tabriz. He did not succeed in holding the power, however, as he was very young and did not have able advisors at his side. When Ahmed Beg Gorul, Ibrahim Sultan’s brother, released Sultan Murad from his prison in Raband and started a rebellion in Fars and Irak, Muhammed Mirza left Erzincan and headed towards Irak to confront him. [523a] Alvand Mirza took advantage of his absence and went to Tabriz, while Muhammed Mirza was facing Sultan Murad in Isfahan. Muhammed Mirza was killed, Sultan Murad took control of Fars and Alvand Mirza of Erzincan.

As both these princes were very young, their advisors and the various emirs used them as a means to gain power for themselves, and they humbled and oppressed the entire kingdom of Irak, Fars and Azerbaycan. These men, who led numerous revolts in pursuit of their own desires for power, oppressed the kingdom and its prosperous cities such as Shiraz, Kirman and Yazd. Until, after such tyranny and turmoil, God’s vengeance fell upon this abusive group, in 906 (1500 -1). At once all this kingdom of tyranny and corruption was destroyed.

The report on the kings of Horasan in those times has been described in the seventh Book of the present work. After the death of sultan Abu Se’id, Sultan Huseyn Baykara became king of Horasan. His reign coincided with the beginning of the present sultan’s reign (Bayezid II) and continued until 912 (1506-7). When he died of
a natural death, opposition and conflict among his many sons did not determine a ruler and their kingdom also suffered in ways similar to the kingdom of the Bayanduris.

**MAIN PART (KALB)**

*Description of the enthronement of the current sultan.*

[523b] When Bayezid b. Meḥmed b. Murad became sultan, he sat on the throne after his father’s death and took over endless territories. He was informed of Meḥmed II’s death and the state officials of his father congratulated him on becoming the new sultan. He sent messages to inform all his domains of the fact. [524a-b] (Praise to Bayezid’s person as the ruler, the glory and firmness of the state, as well as his virtues and governing abilities, as they are manifested in times of war and peace and rebellion.) With the help of his worthy servants the state prospers under his rule. [525a] He had the full support of the people and the statesmen, who made haste to inform him and set him upon the throne. He was crowned and the news was spread that Bayezid was the sultan.

(القصة) Here will be given the true account of the issue, which has provoked double-tongued descriptions. (Praise to the Ottoman dynasty, the palace and the ruling class).

[525b] When the sultan died the present sultan, who was a rightful heir to the throne, was serving as governor in Amasya and was not present in the capital. On the eighth of Rabi’ I 886 (7 May 1481) suddenly messengers were sent to the north and east of the empire and it became known that the glorious sultan was dead and the throne was vacant. [526a] Everyone’s eyes were eagerly turned to the arrival of the sultan’s successor to see who would become the heir to the throne. Only the first to arrive would be their master, whom they would serve and obey. When the prosperous şehzade and successor to the sultanate, with the help of God, would arrive in the palace, he would take hold of the power and the state’s affairs.

In order to secure the kingdom the devoted statesmen, especially vezir İshak Paşa, decided to fill the empty throne with a representative of the şehzade until his arrival, so that the anxiety and disorder during those few days of a sultan’s absence, which could raise thoughts of rebellion, would be avoided. Thus is explained the double account of the succession over a few days, when the sultan’s son was placed on the throne to secure his father’s position. [526b] In the meantime, when the sultan heard the news of his father’s death his kind heart was deeply saddened. For some days he
mourned for the loss of his father and ordered a few days of mourning for the kingdom. The 'ulema preached that the position of the imam of Islam is securely preserved under the sultan and by the hereditary rights of the ruling family, which have been confirmed by the verdict of fetvas and the religious sciences, it is established that the seat of the sultanate should not be left void of a heir or be passed to anyone else after the determination of the heir to the throne.

[527a] The sultan set off from Amasya towards Istanbul with a retinue of about four thousand horsemen from his own army. He reached the shores of the capital and set his banners of victory outside the city. The news of the new successor’s arrival was heard among the population in and out of the city; all those in mourning and commiseration became eye-witnesses to his arrival; all the leaders of the army went forth to meet and accept him as king. As he was going through the passage of the sea, where ships and tanks of water lay, apart from the generals 100,000 eyes had gathered by the sea to salute the sultan and every one of his ships was also there on the shore with their crews wishing to observe the sultan’s passage. He crossed Üsküdar and entered Constantinople to establish himself on the throne. [527b-528a] He proceeded to the city before the eyes of a great number of spectators, including idolaters, the army, the Janissaries, the personal slaves of the palace and other excellent men. (Description of Bayezid’s procession through the city and his enthronement).

First destan (right)

[528b] After the sultan was established on his father’s throne he faced the rebellion of his younger brother Cem Sultan, who left Karaman with the wish to become king. [529a] Narration about the victory of the sultan over his brother Cem Celebi, until he was established as ruler, after Cem’s rebellion for the succession. This issue is always subject to verifcation, and this is full proof that both according to widespread opinion and the royal mandates about succession and dignity, the future is not pre-determined. In the preserved tables of mankind the customs have been written down and have thus become firm and permanent knowledge. God’s will is manifested in the events of this world. Those sovereigns who follow the right path and whose orders are always in conformity with the laws have a firm and divine reign. The manner of succession and the struggle among the contestants, occurring according to God’s wishes, have been agreed upon by God’s people and the customs of the Turks. They are obeyed as an order and are as follows: whoever has the strength and personal ability to reach the
throne will be secured in the place, and the winner of this race for the kingdom will be determined by his skill in haste. The prerequisites of felicity, which lie in agility, lofty assistance and prosperity, are therefore a question of divine agreement in the battlefield of demand for the inheritance of kingship. [529b] The struggle in order to reside on the paternal throne results in the involvement of the whole population. No one remained in the righteous path in this strife between the insolent and destructive royal troops and there was unprecedented unrest and homelessness for the royalty. Even the hottest struggle is not like the strife for the crown of the sultanate.

Events relating to the establishment of the current sultan on the throne at the time of sultan Meḥmed’s death after thirty years of rule. Opposition over succession and inheritance arose among wise men and ignorant ones, among those rightly guided and those confused. The sultan left two descendants and successors. The current sultan was at that time in Little Rum at the throne of Amasya and was a designated heir to the throne. At the same time, şehzade Cem Sultan was ruler of the lands of Kašarman. He led an unprecedented opposition against the sultan. The sultan, however, was supported by the aid of God and numerous troops of allies and assistants. Perhaps because the foundation of his state was strengthened by manifestations of care for the believers, the desire for conformity with the şeri‘a and his superiority of intellect, the fact that he arrived first to attain his right and kingdom found approval with divine guidance. Every notable of the army, who believed that the right to rule belonged only to the designated heir, declared their fidelity to the rule of this successor.

Cem Sultan, however, became intoxicated by his own self-interest and the proud drunkenness of his youth made him wish to be king and take possession of his father’s place and wealth. Carelessly he wanted to share the throne. Some mischievous rebels, a group of fools, spread the word about these unfading desires of Cem. [530a] Little by little they encouraged him to go against his brother, as he was equal in his rights to succession. His elder brother had assigned so many of his own deputies and servants from his household in the whole kingdom, that Cem was deprived of any hope, and his few friends at the palace had been oppressed and frustrated. These are, therefore, the recorded reasons for Cem Sultan’s exit from Kašarman, and his departure to Bursa, with the help of some old friends of his family, especially the governors and army of the Karamanis and some skilled Turkish warriors.

637 Rûmiye-i Şuğra.
such as the Turgud and others like them. He decided to go against the sultan and take his place.

When the sultan in Constantinople heard about Cem Çelebi’s intentions, he immediately sent Ayas Paşa, an old and respected servant, with two thousand Janissaries and other soldiers to defend Bursa. Admittedly when Ayas Paşa arrived in Bursa and camped in the area of Kaplica, the Janissaries wished to enter the city. From the opposite side, Naşuh Beğ, who was one of Cem Sultan’s personal servants, set off towards Bursa with the Karamanis. The people of Bursa were terrified by the dreadful reputation the Janissaries had acquired during the interregnum in Istanbul and they saw danger in their co-operation with Ayas Paşa. Both sides intended to enter the city and defend their position from inside, so they began fighting over who would enter it first. The citizens were afraid of the Janissaries and were naturally partial to the army of their opponents. Ayas Paşa did not get the chance to enter the city and was captured by the enemies in battle. The army leaders, and especially those of the Janissaries, after their general’s being captured were routed and scattered. Two or three days later Cem sultan arrived in Bursa and saw that his army had been successful. He was encouraged by this first success and thought he would manage to become sultan. Out of necessity, the people of Bursa supported Cem Sultan and accepted him in their city, which they put at his disposal. Stopping in the city for eighteen days, Cem ordered coins to be struck and his name to be mentioned in the hüftbe.

When the sultan was informed of the situation between the two armies, he hastily moved to deal with the revolt. He crossed the Straits and his faithful governors joined him with their troops. [530b] Some of the sultan’s men made a secret agreement with Ya’kub Beğ Aştinoğlu, one of Cem’s lofty men. With the promise of the position of emir ül-‘ümera of Anadolu and the amount of about 100,000 akçe they presented their thoughts to Ya’kub Beğ and won his support. Ya’kub Beğ agreed to persuade Cem Sultan to fight in Yeni Şehir and not flee to Karaman. When the news that the sultan was coming against him reached Cem Çelebi, he sent a great lady, Selçuk Hatun, who was a maternal sister of the deceased sultan Murad - and that made her an aunt of the sultan’s father - along with Mevlana Ayas, who was one of the elderly and respectable Mollas of Rum, as deputies to the sultan. They requested that Rumili, the seat of the empire’s capital, remained under Bayezid, and Anadolu would be given to Cem, who had an equal right to inheritance. The sultan was infuriated by this request. As there is only one God, there can be only one ruler. Bayezid’s answer was “there is no blood
relationship among kings”. Selçuk Hatun was sent back with all the proper honours, and the result of the delegation was that the sultan decided to drive away his enemy.

At that time şehzade Sultan ‘Abdullah was still in charge of the memleket of Manisa, where he had been appointed by the sultan’s father. When he heard that Cem Sultan was on his way to Bursa he gathered the army of Saruhanlı, to assist the sultan’s forces in Bursa. On the way he was informed of Ayas Paşa’s being captured and Cem’s establishment in Bursa, so he was compelled to change his plan and head to his father via Gallipoli, from where he rushed to Istanbul to offer his services to the sultan. By the time ‘Abdullah arrived in Istanbul the vanguard of the sultan’s troops had already crossed the sea. He followed the sultan’s forces and reached Nikomedia.

Cem Çelebi had gathered some scattered troops in Bursa, came outside Yeni Şehir and sent Gedik Naşuḫ to İznil at the head of his troops. [531a] The sultan appointed the emir ul-‘ūmera of Anadolu, Sinan Paşa, commander of a force sent to meet Gedik Naşuḫ’s army. In Dikili Taş Sinan Paşa routed the forces of Gedik Naşuḫ, who retreated to Azvad, a pass near İznil. The sultan’s forces pursued Gedik Naşuḫ and took vengeance upon them. In the morning the scattered enemies fled to Yeni Şehir and the sultan crossed the passage. In a battle near Yeni Şehir, Sinan Paşa captured Özgüroğlu Meḥmed Çelebi, who was in charge of the remainders of the opponents’ army, as well as most of his men, while others abandoned the battlefield.

At that point came the good news of the arrival of Gedik Ahmed Paşa, who had been in the lands of the Franks on a campaign to the memleket of Apulia. Indeed this was a good omen for victory. [531b] The next day Ahmed Paşa Gedik paid his respects to the sultan and joined the imperial troops. When the sultan’s troops reached the bank of Yeni Şehir the Anatolian commanders of the opponents once again fled before such a great and destructive army. The scattered pieces of their army gathered in one place and Aştinoğlu Yaḳub Beg kept the promise he had given to the sultan’s deputies and persuaded Cem Çelebi to send him first across the river against the sultan’s forces. When he joined the sultan’s forces, Cem Çelebi’s men began to scatter and only few remained behind. In addition, the Anatolian troops who had been forced to join Cem Çelebi fled little by little and in the confusion they joined the sultan’s army. [532a] As soon as Ayas Paşa and the Janissaries, who had been defeated in Bursa and were kept by Cem Sultan’s men in Yeni Şehir, realised that their enemies were being defeated, they broke free and joined the sultan on the battlefield.
Consequently Cem Sultan’s troops, most of whom were Karamanis and Varsak Turkomans, began to flee to save their own lives. Many of Cem Celebi’s personal men were captured and were brought before the sultan. According to the rules of the times, those related by blood to Cem Celebi were executed. There was great joy among the sultan’s army, who remained in place for one more day to rest. The sultan’s brother was reported to have fled the day of his defeat. He was planning to go to Derbend-i Ermeni, which is a two full days’ journey, and from there to Konya in another three days. He left behind all his property and equipment. But when he reached Derbend-i Ermeni, some twenty five Turkomans and peasants attacked Cem Celebi, robbed him of his horses and money, and wounded him. When the sultan, who was pursuing Cem Celebi, arrived in Derbend-i Ermeni, these fearless Turkomans approached the sultan and told him of their deed, in expectation of some rewards. They brought forward some of their loot as proof and requested exemption from extra taxes (Tekâlif-i Divaniye), and expected to be congratulated on their achievement by the equitable sultan. Their rudeness and vulgarity in front of the padişahzade and their proud petitions for such an unjust use of their superiority were not left unpunished. At first the sultan verified who those rude and bold men were, and to their whole group he said: ‘The dispute for our father’s throne is between the two of us; and you, who are re’aya and subjects, have showed such dishonor to your padişahzade that it is considered a rebellion’. [532b] To chastise their wickedness, the sultan ordered them to be raised on large poles with sharp tops upon the road, so that they would serve as an example.

Cem Celebi fled with some of his personal servants from Konya towards the Syrian borders. The sultan bestowed the memalik of Karaman on his eldest son Sultan ‘Abdullah, left Gedik Ahmed Pasa in Eregli to pursue Cem Celebi and he himself returned to Istanbul. After it was confirmed that Cem Celebi had arrived in Egypt Ahmed Pasa returned to the capital in order to attend to the organization of the state. He was appointed grand vezir but he soon became very arrogant about his power, and began to follow the sultan’s orders according to his own opinion. The sultan was displeased by Ahmed Pasa’s conduct and ordered his imprisonment. Ahmed Pasa was abandoned there for a while, until Ishak Pasa, a respected man whose advice was valued, interceded and asked the sultan’s pardon for Ahmed Pasa. The sultan pardoned Ahmed Pasa’s past offences, released him from prison and restored him to the position of vezir.

At that time news arrived of Kasim Beg b. Karaman, who had earlier fled to Iran. Kasim Beg became a subject of Ya’kub Bayanduri as he did with his father Hasan
As he wanted to take control of Karaman, he asked for permission from Ya'kub Beg and he headed towards the border with Taşili. All the lords of the Varsak, the Turğud, and other Turkomans gathered around Kasım Beg and headed towards Larende. From there they moved with an army to Konya. [533a] When Kasım Beg Karamanoğlu went against Konya, 'Ali Paşa, who was şeyhâde 'Abdullah’s commander in Karaman and is currently the grand vezir, defended the city. As the army of the enemies was twice as large, however, the şeyhâde with his army, and Gedik Aḥmed Paşa with numerous Janissaries and silahdar from Anadolu, rushed to support Konya.

When Kasım Beg Karamanî heard of Ahmed Paşa’s approach he withdrew to Taşili, from where, pursued by Aḥmed Paşa, he retreated towards Taşus and the borders of Syria. Aḥmed Paşa left ‘Ali Paşa at the fortress of Mut with only a small army for its defence and went to Silifke. When Kasım Beg was informed of it, and being a day’s journey ahead of Aḥmed Paşa, he saw the opportunity to strike at the fortress, and ordered all his army to pass through the mountainous area and attack ‘Ali Paşa. ‘Ali Paşa fought fiercely and when Aḥmed Paşa heard of the incident, he rushed upon the enemies. A ferocious battle in the mountains lasted all day, and when night fell the two armies retired to their camps waiting for the next day to conclude the battle. Kasım Beğ, however, realising that he would be unable to confront the sultan’s organized army, decided to flee in secret to Taşus. [533b] The following morning Aḥmed Paşa discovered their departure and pursued them, but they could not catch up with Kasım Beğ’s men, as they had travelled throughout the night. So Aḥmed Paşa once again headed towards Silifke, on the way destroying the castle of Ilmas and distributing its provisions to his army. He joined ‘Ali Paşa and provided him with many men and provisions from Ilmas, and then he proceeded to Larende, where he intended to spend the winter. From there he apologised to the capital for his lack of success and reported that he would remain in the area to resume the actions against Kasım Beğ in spring. During that winter peace was kept in that area, as no one attempted a rebellion out of fear for Aḥmed Paşa’s presence.

Second destan (right)

Account of Cem Sultan’s return from Egypt, the sultan’s second expedition to Karaman in order to suppress Cem Çelebi, and the latter’s defeat and unsuccessful efforts. It is the duty of the rulers and their worthy advisors to protect the kingdom from the destructive effects of rebellions. Although one is supposed to help the weak
and one’s fellow Muslims, if they break into rebellion against the sultan’s authority, 
the destruction of fellow Muslims is justified. [534a] Description of the controversy 
between the compassionate sultan and his younger brother, who in his youthful folly 
had a desire for partnership in authority that led him to rebellion. The first attempt at 
gaining power left him dissatisfied in all respects. God-sent chastisement came upon 
him and led him to destruction. After he left the Ottoman domains he went to the 
kingdom of Egypt and Syria, where he was shown mercy and given help at a time 
when he was injured and without friends.

Evidence about Cem’s desire to return and claim his father’s throne. In 888 
(1483), after Cem returned to Egypt from the pilgrimage, he asked help from the 
sultan Kaitbey Çerkesi. He got permission to leave and went first to Karaman, where 
he made an alliance with the scattered forces there, who are enemies of the Ottoman 
dynasty. The reason for their actions, however, was the one already mentioned: when 
Ahmed Paşa Gedik resisted Kasım Beğ Karamanî in Larende, the latter made an 
agreement with the absent Cem Çelebi [534b] that he would offer his support and 
army to Cem’s claims for the sultanate. In return Cem, according to the customs of 
their fathers and ancestors, would give tax exemption to Kasım Paşa and all those 
deceitful emirs and notables, such as the governor of Ankara Meḥmed Ağa, and others 
who took part in rebellious battles with the desire for high offices. They sent many 
letters to Cem Sultan regarding his establishment in power and rebellion in the 
memalik of Rum, and they made agreements in his absence. When Cem went to 
Aleppo with the help of these rebels, the abovementioned Meḥmed Ağa, along with 
men who had abandoned the troops of Ahmed Paşa and had allied with him, rushed 
there in order to meet Cem Çelebi and join his rebellion.

When this news reached the sultan, he was exasperated with Ahmed Paşa’s unworthy 
actions. He thought that Ahmed Paşa was weak and negligent for having let these men 
escape from his camp. At once Ahmed Paşa was ordered to join the main army of 
Rumili and Anadolu, which was heading towards the capital. The sultan left the capital 
and went to Bursa, and they all came to his service. Regarding some state affairs, the 
vezir Kasım Paşa was dismissed from his office and Mesih Paşa was made vezir. 
After Ahmed Paşa’s return from the borders of Karaman the grand vezir İshak Paşa 
and his son-in-law Ahmed Paşa Gedik allied against the vezir Muṣṭafa Paşa b. Hızır 
Beğ. They accused him to the sultan and managed to have him dismissed and arrested. 
A few days later he was sentenced to death, but this unfair execution and fraud was at 
last punished by the just and virtuous sultan, and as soon as the opportunity came after 
these events Ahmed Paşa was killed and İshak Paşa was dismissed.
When the army was assembled, the news came of the arrival of Cem Sultan in Konya. Then followed the news that ‘Ali Paşa, who was emir ül-ümema of Karaman, was trying to defend Konya, which was besieged by Cem Çelebi’s commander, Mehmed Ağa, governor of Ankara. ‘Ali Paşa and the sultan’s servants were fighting every day in support of the state’s forces. After Konya had been under siege for about ten days, the enemies heard that the sultan’s troops were approaching. Mehmed Ağa was informed that his family and associates, who were in Ankara, had been taken to Constantinople by the sultan and were kept captive there. Because Ankara had been the centre of his government, [535a] Mehmed Ağa left Konya with 1,000 mounted soldiers to relieve his family. By the time Mehmed Ağa got there, however, his men had already left a few days earlier.

Suddenly the news came that Süleyman Paşa, who was emir ül-ümema of Little Rum, was coming with his army to Ankara, to repel Mehmed Ağa. They began fighting, during which Mehmed Ağa’s horse fell, his men fled and he was beheaded. Messages were sent to the sultan, to inform him of this victory. When Cem Çelebi and Kasım Beğ heard about this defeat, Kasım Beğ decided to attack the army of Rumili to avenge Mehmed Ağa’s death. They rushed to his scattered army and ammunition in Ankara. The morning they arrived there, they did not see the remainder of the army, and faced great distress in view of the low morale, due to the information that the sultan’s army was approaching. Consequently, the way God wanted it, the sultan’s enemies left the battlefield in Ankara merely at the announcement of his arrival, and everyone, afraid of having Mehmed Ağa’s end, sought refuge. Many went to Akşehir. The sultan sent İskender Paşa after them, who pursued them as far as Aksaray. When he saw no sign of the enemy there, he was convinced that Cem Çelebi feared the sultan’s advance and had fled, and the majority of his scattered men took refuge in any castle in the area bordering with Syria. When İskender Paşa went after them in these castles, they fled and hid in the mountains, throwing their weapons behind them.

When subsequently the sultan reached Ereğli, İskender Paşa paid his respects to the sultan and informed him of the condition of the enemies. [535b] When they heard of the sultan’s arrival in Ereğli, Cem Çelebi and Kasım Beğ Karamanoğlu with some of their men withdrew to the castle of Ilmas in Taşili, disunited and agitated in every way. Cem Çelebi headed for the sea of the Franks, and Kasım Beğ Karamani gave up opposition to the sultan. Ahmed Paşa Hersekoğlu, who was then emir ül-ümema of Anadolu, was sent to the shore in pursuit of Cem Çelebi, who fled on a ship. He headed towards the island of Rhodes, where he sought refuge, selling out to the infidels both Islam and the nobility of his position as a prince. Although the defeat of
the enemy was a reason for rejoicing, the sultan of the faithful found the fact that his brother had joined the contemptible infidels deplorable. After Cem Sultan's withdrawal, Kasım Beg gave up hope of gaining power. He send a messenger to the palace, expressing with humbleness his regret for his actions against the sultan and requesting to be allotted the vilayet of İç-ili in Karaman, declaring his loyalty for the future. Before such humility, the merciful sultan spared Kasım Beg, gave him İç-ili as a livelihood and settled the affairs at this frontier.

The sultan camped for a few days at Larende, establishing peace and organising the administration of the area, and afterwards he returned to the capital. [536a] From there he set off towards the borders with the lands of the infidels, to attend to some troublesome affairs there and to repel the actions of some hypocrites in Edirne. The sultan intended to deal with the actions of some disloyal and insincere men. Ahmed Paşa Gedik had performed acts of mutiny and disobedience to the sultan's orders. The flight of army commanders to the line of the enemies revealed the hypocrisy in his heart, and the execution of Muştafa Paşa b. Hamza Beg638 was proof of Ahmed Paşa's corruption and obstinacy. So Ahmed Paşa was stripped of his riches and position and was brought to the ground, so that he would serve as an example for other powerful infidel men, who might show arrogance in the sultan's court.

In the end, concerning the issue of Cem Sultan, after his defeat and escape he went to the kingdoms of the infidels, where the governor of the island of Rhodes gave him shelter for a few years and did not let him go anywhere outside. The kings of the infidels for many years wished secretly in their hearts to cause vexation and misfortunes for the sultans of the Ottoman dynasty. The captive prince of Islam found great safety near the governor of Rhodes, and they considered the presence of the broken and impoverished Cem in their court as a way to dispute for power. During the time of Cem’s captivity, the merciful sultan sent every year a large sum of money in gold coins for Cem Çelebi’s living expenses, unaware of the fact that the base governor of Rhodes spent this money himself and presented very little of it to Cem Çelebi.

As the governor of Rhodes was not very important among the great kings of the Franks, there were many sovereigns of the Franks who wanted to bring Cem Çelebi near them as a weapon and security for their own lands, and at times to use him as an opportunity to cause revolts and conflicts in the lands of the sultan. So, out of necessity, the governor of Rhodes sent Cem over to the grand Pope, who is the priest

638 Mentioned above as Muştafa Paşa b. Hızır Beg
of all the kings of the Franks, and at the same time he is both the padişah and imam of the Christians. He kept Cem in the great city known as Rim, and did not allow any Christian or Muslim to come into contact with him. After communications with the sultan, the Pope said that there could be an agreement between the kingdoms of the Franks and the lands of Islam. As the distance between Rome and the lands of Islam is about two months’ journey by land and sea, which would be an impediment for the news of Cem’s life or death to reach the sultan, and the merciful sultan needed clear information about this issue, he sent Muştafa Paşa to confirm the state of these affairs. Muştafa Paşa at the moment is an eminent vezir and at that time he was head chamberlain at the palace and a very trusted man of the sultan.

He went to Rome on a very dangerous trip by sea and land. He requested an interview with Cem Çelebi, to confirm his life and state, and after he received permission he met with him at the place where he was confined, in a manner as if he was free. He heard a story of peculiar captivity, separation and sorrow from Cem Çelebi, who asked for pity and forgiveness from his older brother and sultan of the Muslims. After this exciting conversation, Muştafa Paşa presented to the Pope the tasks for which he was appointed and they made agreements and pacts of friendship and fidelity, which are respected in the Christian religion. A great issue which was agreed upon was that as long as Bayezid II and the Pope were alive Cem Çelebi would not be allowed to leave these lands and his place of guardianship to attack the lands of the Muslims. The Pope was enjoined to preserve this agreement, on condition that the sultan on his side during that period would honour the agreements with the Pope. After that Muştafa Paşa was given leave to depart.

Indeed, for a while this agreement was kept, until the king of France, who was a great and powerful ruler among the kings of the Franks, requested Cem Çelebi from the Pope, wishing to invade the lands of Islam. Although the king of France had been crowned by the hand of the Pope and was therefore subordinate to him, he had so much power among the states of the Franks that many other rulers were part of his kingdom. The Pope refused the king of France’s petitions, and this increased the intensity of the confrontation between the two of them. Thereupon the king of France made a pact with other rulers of the Franks and raised an army against the city of Rome, which is the equivalent of the Ka’ba for the Franks. They harassed the Pope with rough messages that his main duty was to lead religious and national affairs, and that the supervision of the Muslim prince and his guardianship according to the

639 i.e. Rome.
agreements with the sultan was contrary to his position. As the Pope could not withstand the power and the armies of the king of France, Cem Çelebi was removed from the Pope’s hands by force and violence and they turned him into a tool for their vicious plans against the lands of Islam.

The Pope wished to avenge this disregard for his power. It is thus reported that he ordered some person to enter the service of Cem Çelebi as his barber and kill him with a poisoned razor. The day he was injured with this poisoned razor Cem Çelebi, who was of a healthy complexion, developed a deadly illness. This is the way Cem Çelebi died near the king of France. He took his thoughts and hostility against the people of Islam to the grave. When the news of Cem Sultan’s death reached the lands of Rum, the sultan sent agents to the borders with the lands of the Franks, to verify this report. The kings of the Franks treated Cem Sultan’s coffin with all respect and reverence and placed it in a mosque before sending it to his ancestral mausoleum. In 897 (1492) he was brought to Rumili. Through Gellibolu he was taken to Bursa, his final destination and ancestral burial-place. After the arrival of the şehzade’s coffin those who had their minds on rebellion became loyal, the kings of the states of Islam and the infidels who were leaders of rebellion showed compliance and support, and the army and people on the borders of Islam found peace of mind.

Third destan (right)

Description of the sultan’s attention to the administration of the borders of the lands of Islam, the building of castles and the foundation of buildings, the dismissal and appointment of some statesmen and his desire to travel to the lands of Rumili and the mountains of Sofia with peaceful intentions, in order to hunt. In times of leisure there is a respite from the worries and cares about friends and enemies.

[537b] The sultan with his associates spent the winter of 889 (1484) in Edirne and with the punishment of Ahmed Paşa Gedik problems in the administration of the state and religion had been settled. Although the sultan was full of peaceful intentions to depart for Sofia, through the beautiful mountains and meadows of Kostendil and Rumili, he was compelled to attend to the corrupt thoughts of some of his administrators. [538a] When he wished to leave Edirne he made changes among all his generals and army commanders and his vezirs and statesmen. Daud Paşa therefore who was one of the vezirs in the divan, and Ahmed Paşa Hersekoğlu, who was the

640 Cem died in 1495.
emir ül-‘üméra of Anadolu, were removed from their office, and at once they fell from their esteemed and powerful positions. The apparent reason for their punishment was that the subaşı of Edirne came to a disagreement with all the leaders of the Janissaries. This foolish disagreement became a great battle, out of anger and solidarity, and some foolish Janissaries struck a blow at the subaşı and killed him by accident. This deviation from the laws of the sultan was blamed upon the defective advice of the vezirs, and thus this failure was the reason for their dismissal.

After that the sultan went to Sofia and the emirs and armies of all areas were assembled in the imperial headquarters. The sultan led the army in person to the borders of Islam, where he needed to attend to the oppressions which the infidels had committed during the time of confusion after his father’s death. On both sides of the river Tuna, which is adjacent to the lands of the abominable infidels of Hungary, there are many areas where castles need to be repaired, for the administration of the borders and the safety of the subjects, and in order to renew the cihad of some past army leaders against the contemptible infidels. The borders of the sultan’s lands lie from the town Filibe up to the summer-quarters of Sarıyar and the mountains of Rumili and the surroundings of Sofia. In these times of leisure some riders and small forces were sent to the area, as it is near the borders with the lands of the infidels, so that the news of the sultan’s arrival and his peaceful army would confirm his grandeur in the minds of any evil persons who might wish to revolt.

All the kings of Hungary, Boğdan, Wallachia and other countries of the infidels, fearing the sultan’s attack, sent envoys and certificates of peace and reverence to him. After the treaties and agreements were confirmed with the kings of the infidels and the payment of the harac and cizye was fixed, they were given permission to return to their countries and the sultan set off again for his winter quarters. When the winter came to the mountains and plains, the sultan departed for Edirne. He camped in the plains near Filibe and planned to hunt on the way.

[539a] The sultan also restored to high position some statesmen who had been dismissed while he was in Edirne. He therefore gave the position of vezir to Daud Paşa. Mehməd Paşa b. Hızır Beğ, who used to be emir ül-‘üméra in Rumili, was made vezir, and the post of emir ül-‘üméra of Rumili was given to İskender Paşa. Ahmed Paşa Hersekoğlu was restored to his former position, that of the emir ül-‘üméra of Anadolu. Aside from these affairs of the state, the family of the sultan was blessed by the arrival of şehzade Şehinşah’s son. There was great joy over the matter, although ties of family are not always tight, for example Kasım Beğ Karamanoğlu,
who cut off his alliance and rebelled against the Muslims. In any case, often during these years all the events related to his brother turned out according to the sultan's wishes, and all his desires came true with God's help. After the news of the şehzade’s escape from Karaman, şehzade Sultan 'Abdullah became the sultan’s representative. All these events took place in 889 (1484).

First destan (left)

Description of the reasons for which the sultan of the mucahids set out for gaza against Kilia and Akkerman in the lands of Boğdan, and the string of events that led to the conquest of these two inaccessible castles. At the beginning of 889 (1484) the sultan gathered a large army after a long period of inactivity and disappointment for the soldiers, before they withered and decayed. (Praise for the army). In spring, after the sultan went to the summer palace in Edirne he renewed the gaza against the vilayet of Kara Boğdan and turned his attention towards the towns and castles of Kilia and Akkerman for the expansion of the lands of Islam and the passage of merchants and caravans of Kaffa and Crimea through the open lands of the Tatars. The revenues from these two towns and strong fortresses, which lay in the lands of the infidels, come from the passage of travellers and merchants through these districts, and if any enemies of religion and the sultan had the intention of attacking the lands of Islam from that direction, they always crossed the river through there and they entered and damaged the lands of Islam. In the past, during the times of change of rulers and discord, groups of troublemakers and highway-robbers used to come from these areas. They would plunder and carry off the brothers and properties of the Muslims and then they withdrew to the castles mentioned above. Many times the former sultans wished to subdue these castles, so the sultan decided to march against them.

He set off from Edirne through the vilayet of Dobruca, while the Circassian çavuşes surrounded these castles from the north. In 10 Cemazi' II the armies of Anadolu and Rumili first came before the castle of Kilia and attacked it from all sides. (Description of the siege). They besieged the castle and when the deputy of the sultan was certain that the inhabitants were in such distress that they would be compelled to surrender, according to the Koran and for the best interest of the population, the weak and feeble among the inhabitants were given aman. Their lives were spared and everyone was assured of their houses and exercise of their trade. Nine days passed from the first attack until the day of its subjugation and after that the sultan marched
against Akkerman. In Kilia he appointed a kazi, a governor and a garrison for its
defence and for repairs to the castle.

In the meantime, from the family of Cengiz Han and the Ilhanis, the sultan Mengli
Giray Han, who was a descendant of Cuḫi Han, came to pay his respects to the sultan
and consolidate the Muslim institutions. He brought fifty thousand riders from the
gazis of the Tatars of Turkestan to join the sultan’s army. The animosity between the
two was ended, and the two armies became one. After that they all set off towards
Akkerman, and in the same manner Kudum Han, the governor of Wallachia who was
a vassal of the sultan and paid the harac, gave one thousand men for the sultan’s army
as a token of his obedience.

[541a] The inhabitants of Akkerman, who had heard the news of the conquest of
Kilia were afraid of fighting such a powerful army, and rightly realised that there was
no other way out for them except submitting so they asked for aman. The bloodshed
was prevented with a treaty of covenant, submission and safety. A kazi and a
governor were appointed for the defence of the castle, and in appreciation of such a
surrender all the legitimate spoils and money were used for charity. The sultan allotted
his share of the one fifth of the spoils for the repairs of pious works in Edirne. The
ruler of that memleket, Ċara Bogdan, weakened and impoverished, was forced to
make a treaty of subjugation and these two memlekets and their fortresses passed into
the hands of the sultan’s deputies like other parts of his land, and he agreed to pay
annual tributes to the sultan.

After these were arranged according to his wishes, the sultan returned to the capital,
leaving Mengli Giray Han with a garrison in Akkerman, and honoured him with the
golden crown of Skopje and excellent robes of honour etc. The sultan gave great
honours to all his servants, as well as horses and embroidered clothes from the lands
of the West. He parted from the great Han and he sent fetname with the good news
to the kingdoms of Islam. In order to emphasise the friendship and goodwill between
himself (Bayezid II) and the eminent Bayanduri lord Sultan Ya’kub, a fetname was
sent to the latter written by Hoca Seydi Muḥammed Münshi Şirazi. As a reply to this a
letter of congratulation was sent to Bayezid II from Sultan Ya’kub’s court. In reference
to these happy days these original texts are presented here. (The texts of the fetname
and the reply to it are quoted).
Account of various events that took place between 889 (1484) and the end of 891 (1486), report of the gazas of vezir ‘Ali Paşa against the infidels of Boğdan, the gazas of Bali Beg Malkoçoğlu and Iskender Beg Mihaloğlu, and the defeat of some emirs on the borders of Damascus. In 889 (1484) the sultan spent the winter in Edirne, where he took care of many affairs of the state. Many ambassadors of Muslim and infidel sovereigns and great kings came to the Sublime Porte to pay their respects and put forward their petitions. First came an envoy on behalf of the eminent ruler of the lands of India and China, sultan Muhammed Şah, in order to strengthen the sincere friendship between the former sultan and these exalted sovereigns. He congratulated the sultan on his accession to his father’s throne and brought extraordinary presents from the lands of India. Another envoy arrived from the sultan of Egypt, who is one of the great men, and another from the kral of Hungary, who is very respected among the infidels. They showed their reverence and honour according to the laws and customs of the former sultans regarding the envoys of the infidels and the Muslims. However, there were some past perplexities between the Ottoman sultan and the sultan of Egypt, in particular the support to Cem and some trouble on the borders between the two kingdoms. For that reason, the Egyptian ambassador made a pact of friendship, and the esteemed vezirs of the sultan’s divan exchanged some words of friendship and showed him reverence equal to that shown to the envoy of the kral of Hungary.

In the meantime came the news of a rebellion led by the governor of Kara Boğdan, who broke the agreements, gathered an army and tried to recapture Kilia and Akkerman. ‘Ali Paşa, who at that time was emir ül-‘ümera of Rumili, marched hastily against Boğdan at the head of the army of Rumili. They crossed the great river Tuna, and the veli of Wallachia, which is between the lands of the infidels on the borders of the domains of Islam. He had long been one of the mucahids, and was appointed as a guide through the lands of the infidels. When they reached the vilayet of Boğdan, and this area has a long history of enmity against the sultan of the Muslims, ‘Ali Paşa and his army ravaged and plundered it. This large army gathered lots of spoils, and ‘Ali Paşa was nowhere resisted. Although in the times of the previous sultan these accursed infidels had wished to destroy the Muslim army, this time they were hiding in the mountains and never appeared to fight them on any battlefield. When the Muslim soldiers gathered enough booty, they asked for permission from their commanders to return.
At that time, as a result of the accumulation of vexations and oppressions, the dispute between the Ottoman sultan and the sultan of Egypt, Khairbey, had become more serious. [545a] As the dispute was over the borders of the two states, the sultan sent the emir ül-‘ümra of Anadolu, Hersekoğlu Ahmed Paşa, with the troops of Anadolu and the emir ül-‘ümra of Karaman, Karagöz Paşa, to Adana and Tarsus on the borders of Rum and Syria to support the defenders of these castles. At the same time the sultan dismissed Mehemmed Paşa b. Hızir Beg from his position as vezir of the divan on account of apostasy, and replaced him with Ibrahim Paşa, who by that time was Kazı ‘asker.

In the beginning of 891 (1486) more news arrived that the governor of Bogdan was besieging Akkerman with a great army. The besieged put their faith in God’s help and held up resistance. They came out of the castle, defeated the enemies and took much of their equipment. When the sultan was informed of this boldness by the governor of Bogdan, he sent to the borders Malkoçoğlu Bali Beg, who was governor of Silistre. The entire army of the gazis of Rumili was also sent hurriedly across the river Tuna to repel the infidels and raid their lands. As soon as the governor of Bogdan was informed of their arrival, he sent envoys to the kings of Hungary and Poland, asking for their help. [545b] They sent cavalry and foot soldiers to assist them, and they attacked the forces of Malkoçoğlu, when they entered Bogdan.

After a few days they reached a town called (?) and immediately began to plunder it. They acquired lots of spoils and slaves and then they crossed a great river known as Prut and raided that area. After they gathered enough booty they left Bogdan, and Malkoçoğlu Beg remained by the river Prut with only a few soldiers. It seems that as they were separated from the main army they were not so vigilant, so the infidels attacked them and a great and bloody battle followed. Some of Malkoçoğlu Beg’s men were killed and he himself drew his sword and fought among the infidels. As they were outnumbered the infidels pursued them and many Muslims were killed. When night fell there was a break in the fighting, but the following day some gazis who had been separated and had been collecting booty came to join them. [546a] During the night the infidels fled the battlefield. In the morning some gazis wanted to pursue them, but many had fled to return to more secure areas. 1500 infidels and 15 mucahids died in this campaign. After that the victorious gazis returned to their homelands with many spoils and on the banks of the river Tuna Malkoçoğlu Beg gave one fifth of the spoils to the sultan.
Description of the reasons for the enmity and conflicts between some deputies of the Ottoman sultan and the sultan of Egypt, and an account of some events of the struggle between the two parties, when Hersekoğlu Ahmed Paşa was sent to war against the emir kabir of Egypt, Uzbeg, and was taken captive. [546b] From these diverse events some were related to the competition with the ruler of Egypt, who at that time was Kaitbey Çerkesi. The initial reasons of these events, during which many men lost their lives in the battlefield, and of the conflict between these two states was that the late sultan Meḥmed II during the end of his life wished to subjugate some Arab cities. This was going on for a long time, and in these times all the lands of Egypt and Syria were under the great sultan, and therefore many of his companions were situated in Ereğli and Antakya on the borders of Rum and Syria.

When the late sultan (Meḥmed II) died and the present sultan ascended on his father’s throne, his brother Cem Çelebi, who followed the misjudged path of desiring to oppose the sultan, at first left his lands and took flight to Egypt and Syria and for the second time he led his rebellion and claimed the kingdom of Rum. These uprisings in these lands took place with the consent of the sultan of Egypt. If he had kept the peace and remained good, Cem Çelebi would never have dared or been able to repeat his irreverent revolution and after his pilgrimage he would not have marched against the kingdom of his father and the sultanate of his elder brother.

Another reason concerns the ruler of India, sultan Muḥammad Šah. He had send his grand vezir to the Ottoman sultan with presents, but while he was crossing Egypt the presents were taken from him in a manner that was disrespectful towards both the Ottomans and India.

[547a] Another reason is because the commanders of Syria and Aleppo were constantly giving trouble to Alaeddinvel Beğ Zulqadr, who had pledged allegiance to the Ottoman sultan. Alaeddinvel asked for help and the sultan sent Ya’kub Paşa and his entire army to repel the Syrians. When the sultan’s troops joined those of Zulqadr, on the first day of the campaign they routed entirely the army of the Syrians, and many of them were killed, including the na’ib of Aleppo. As a result, the defeated army had a great desire to retaliate. Four to five thousand personal soldiers of the Egyptian sultan came for help to the Syrian troops. The sultan’s army had gained confidence from their first victory and they pursued them. The following day they met up with the
Egyptians, who were ready to fight. The mucahids and the army of Zulkadr were forced to fight again, but as they were scattered they were defeated. Zulkadr's men fled back to their lands and many of his men as well as many mucahids were killed.

The sultan ordered the taking by force of Adana and Tarus, which at that time were under the control of the sultan of Egypt. The sultan of Egypt feared that the sultan of the mucahids was reviving the wishes of his father and that he intended to punish their support for Cem Celebi. For that reason he sent to Adana and Tarus the emir kabir of Egypt, Uzbeg, with the emirs of Damascus and Aleppo and other Syrian commanders, in order to protect these areas from the Ottomans. Musa Beg and Ferhad Beg, who were sent to attack the area and were repelled by the emirs of Egypt and Syria, were both killed. In retaliation the sultan sent to Adana and Tarus Ahmed Pasa Hersekoğlu, who was emir ül-ümema of Anadolu, with the entire army of these regions. [547b] Mehmed Pasa b. Hisir Beg and Karagöz Beg, the emir ül-ümema of Karaman, were sent to assist him.

Mehmed Pasa was of a higher rank than Ahmed Pasa Hersekoğlu, but the sultan had showed preference to the latter and had placed the army under his command. The emir kabir Uzbeg, and the emirs of Syria and Aleppo, were sent to confront them. During this encounter Mehmed Pasa and Karagöz Beg, out of envy for Ahmed Pasa plotted against him, so Ahmed Pasa was wounded and taken captive while these two commanders did not come forward to fight. As a result the army was defeated and many commanders by the side of Ahmed Pasa were captured, while the emir kabir of Egypt and the emirs of Syria kept control of Adana and Tarus. When the sultan was informed of this news, he punished those who defied his authority and rewarded the loyal emirs and commanders. Karagöz Beg was punished appropriately and Mehmed Pasa was removed from his post, and every emir who sided with them was also punished severely.

Once more the sultan sent the grand vezir Daud Pasa with many Janissaries, all the governors of Anadolu with their armies and even some of Rumili, especially the emir ül-ümema of Rumili, 'Ali Pasa. Daud Pasa arrived at the region of Uç Kapılı and Aladağ. [548a] Alaeddinkeyet Beg Zulkadr also arrived there, and after he paid his respects a council meeting was held, in which it was considered inadvisable that the sultan's army should enter the lands of Syria. As one of the oldest enemies of this state was Turgudoğlu, who was the reason of the troubles between the two sides and defended the mountainous area of Taşili, it was decided that all the emirs, and especially Alaeddinkeyet Beg, should march against Turgudoğlu. 'Ali Pasa headed
towards Ṭarsus with the army of Rumili, the army of Anadolu went to an area known as (؟) (يورت أولاش), and Daud Paşa with the sultan’s troops and the Janissaries went through the Bolkar mountains, surrounding thus from every direction these fortified lands which served as refuge to the enemies. The Varsak emirs and lords in the area submitted to the Ottomans, and Ṭurğudolu escaped to Syria. After these rebels were subdued there was peace and order on our borders. Daud Paşa gave permission to the army to return to their bases, and he himself returned to the capital, to the summer quarters of Vize in the nahiye of Istanbul. By that time the pious foundations which the sultan had founded in Edirne were completed. The sultan attended to the aid for the ‘ulema and the poor and the sick, who rejoiced at the completion of these charitable foundations. (Information on the organisation of the medrese and cami, and their personnel).

Fifth destan (right)

[548b] Account of the reasons for the vezir ‘Ali Paşa’s campaign against Egypt and Syria, the renovation and repair of some castles on the borders with the Arab lands and some fierce battles between the two sides.

In 893 (1487-8) the vezir ‘Ali Paşa, who had participated in the earlier events in Egypt and had gained great power from them, was placed in charge of the campaign against the sultan of Egypt. The sultan of Egypt had repeatedly opposed the Ottoman sultan’s authority over the lands of Syria, which had always belonged to the kings of Rum, and the sultan sent the army of the mucahids to enter these lands, to free them from the Circassians and place them under the light of his authority.

[549a] At first ‘Ali Paşa was sent to repair some castles and fortifications in the lands between Rum and Syria. All the commanders of the forces of Anadolu and the army of Karaman were under his command, the entire cavalry forces (bölük), as well as some emirs of Rumili, famous for their loyalty. He set off for this campaign on Tuesday 3 Rabi’ II 893 (17 March 1488). He went from Istanbul to the area of Karaman and proceeded to Ereğli, which is on the borders of Karaman and Syria. He moved on to Adana, where he repaired a castle which is the furthermost fort on that border, and reinforced Ṭarsus. They annexed peacefully the castles of Anavarza and Küre, and in the castle of Ayas they drove away its defenders Umur Paşa, and from there they moved on and subjugated the rest of the castles in the area. They also took the castles of Namrun and Melvane near the Bolkar mountains and appointed governors in all of
them. Halil Paşa, the emir ül-'ümera of Rumili was sent to conquer Sis, and 'Ali Paşa also marched there with a numerous army. They took Sis with the help of cannons and firearms, and the commander of the castle Sibay Beğ, who is today a mamluk of the emir of Syria, was imprisoned along with 2,000 men and taken to Istanbul. All fortifications of the area of Adana were repaired, until on the first of Ramadan of the same year all the emirs and commanders of Egypt and Syria who had gathered to confront 'Ali Paşa crossed the Başras mountains.

The army of the emir kabir, who is the second sultan (sani sultan), had joined great emirs and commanders of Egypt and Syria, such as the emirs of Damascus and Aleppo; Timurtaş the grand master of the armour (emir-i silah), who is the third sultan; Kanştuh Hamsami'a the grand master of the stables (emir-i ahor), who is the fourth sultan, and is an emir of a Thousand, the greatest emirs, and various other commanders of a Thousand, and the na'ibs of Tripoli, Şafed and Ramla and the commanders of the Syrian Turkomans and other Turkoman emirs, such as the Ramadanoğlu and the Türgudoğlu. An order was given to Ahmed Paşa Hersekoğlu, who was governor of Gallipoli, and in charge of the ships, the Straits and the naval forces, to move to the shore by sea and reach the Başras mountains, where he was to block the entrance of the enemies. Indeed, in that place where the army of the Egyptians would cross was the pass of the Başras mountain, but nobody dared to cross, afraid of the cannon and firearms of Ahmed Paşa’s ships.

[549b] As God wanted it, however, in the midst of these events suddenly there was a severe storm and the whole fleet was scattered. There were strong winds from the south, so that the fleet was compelled to return to Rum as the crews were unable to move towards the south. The enemies managed to pass and they camped by the bank of the river Ceyhan, and after they crossed without delay Karaca İrmak they reached the battlefield. On the 8th of Ramadan they reached a place near Adana on the side of Tarşus known as Ağ'a Çayırrı, where the two armies faced one another. In the ranks of the sultan’s mucahids were 'Ali Paşa, at the head of the cavalry and the Janissaries, Kızıl Ahmed Beğ b. İsfendiyar, Umur Beğ Durhanoğlu and Mahmut Beğ Mustanşar, who were great emirs, famous for their bravery. There were also emirs of the forces of Anadolu and Karaman, especially Sinan Beğ and Ya'kub Paşa, the emir ül-'ümera of Karaman, Suleyman Beğ and Ahmed Paşa Velieddinoğlu. In the vanguard was

İskender Beg, a personal slave of the sultan, and the sons of Evrenos Beg, especially Isä Beg and Süleymen Beg, and of the forces of Rumili Hüseyn Beg.

In the ranks of the army of Egypt and Syria were the emir kabir Uzbeg with the personal forces of the sultan of Egypt, the emirs of Damascus with the Turkomans and the Circassians of Syria, the emirs of Aleppo and some surrounding areas, as well as Timurtaş and the na‘ib of Aleppo with four thousand select bodyguards (haşsakiya) of the sultan of Egypt. [550a-551a] The enemies attacked the armies of Anadolu and Karahan with such force that Isä Beg Evrenosoglu and his brother Süleymen Beg were killed. The emir ül-'üméra of Karahan, Ya'kuş Paşa was routed. The right wing of the Rumelian army went in their aid, but they were routed by the forces of Timurtaş, the Turgudoglu and the Ramağanoğlu and cut off from any help. The two central parts of the two armies under ‘Ali Paşa and Uzbeg fought one another. Yahya Paşa came to their aid. Eventually Uzbeg retreated and crossed the river.

When ‘Ali Paşa returned to their own camp, he found out that the forces of Anadolu and Karahan had fled, that the survivors from Hersekoğlu Ahmed Paşa’s ships had been routed and captured and his own troops were anxious he agreed with the other commanders that the same night they would withdraw. In the night the army crossed the river and decided to move to Adana, where they would organise their defence. In the morning the Egyptians saw that the army of the faithful had moved. They first thought that the Ottomans were preparing to ambush them, so they sent forth some of Turgudoğlu’s men, who knew the area well. In fact, when ‘Ali Paşa was leaving there were some men of the Varsak tribe, who reported that to the Egyptian forces, but when they crossed the river and arrived at the Ottoman camp they found it deserted. The next day they proceeded to Adana, and began to besiege the castle with cannon. ‘Ali Paşa defended the castle for a long time, but suddenly the supplies of gunpowder caught fire and exploded in the castle. The governor of Adana was killed, and a few days later the defenders of the castle were forced to give in.

‘Ali Paşa was allowed to go to Ereğli, from where he informed the sultan of the situation. Soon after his return he received an order from the sultan: Karagöz Beg; the governor of Kayseri, Sinan Beg; the governor of Karesi, Ishak the son of the kral of Bosnia; İskender Çelebi b. Karaca Paşa; and the governor of (? (كتغری), Çakiri Sinan Beg, and all the other deserters were to be taken prisoner by ‘Ali Paşa and taken to the capital. They were carried there with their men, about 200 all together, and kept in Yenihisar. Karagöz Beg, the governor of Karahan, was executed and the others were pardoned, but for a long time they were removed from their high offices.
Sixth destan (right)

Description of the attempts of the Egyptians and the Syrians to enter Kaşraman due to the betrayal of Alaeddinvel Beg Zulkadr. [551b] The conflicts of the sultan of the mucahid̊s with other kings at the beginning of his reign inspired some hypocrites to cause trouble, and the controversy with the sultan of Egypt and Syria prolonged this trouble on the Muslim lands next to the sultan’s domains and divided the Muslim people. The sultan is just and respects the şeri‘a, but he raises his ever-victorious banners against whoever defies his power.

[552a] During the conflict between the sultan of the mucahid̊s and the army of Egypt and Syria, Alaeddinvel Zulkadr Beg, who had been fostered by this dynasty became two-faced, although for years he had been under the care of the former sultan (Meḥmed II), and received assistance against his older brother, Şah Budak Beg, so that he could be established on the throne of Zulkadr. The present sultan, who at that time was governor of Little Rum and Amasya was sent to assist Alaeddinvel with all his forces. The sultan’s troops, therefore, regarded him as a solid and loyal ally and considered his lands a refuge. For a few years, however, and in every past controversy with the army of Egypt and Syria he had been unreliable. When the sultan was informed of this situation, he appointed Alaeddinvel’s brother Şah Budak, who at that time was in Ottoman lands, to punish him. Miḥaloloğlu İskender Beg, Meḥmed Paşa b. Hızır Beg and several other commanders were ordered to assist him. Maḥmud Beg Mustanṣar, the emir ul-‘ümara of Kaşraman, was also ordered to offer his support without delay if Şah Budak Beg asked for help.

When Şah Budak arrived there, he first went against Şahruh, Alaeddinvel’s son. [552b] He captured and blinded him, but his enemy was reinforced by the emirs of Egypt. Şah Budak asked for help from Maḥmud Beg Mustanṣar, who gathered his army and marched to Niğde. A message was sent to Maḥmud Beg, asking for his help, but Alaeddinvel captured the messenger and sent a false message instead, telling Maḥmud Beg that his assistance is not needed. The troops of Kaşraman withdrew, therefore, and Alaeddinvel attacked and routed Şah Budak, who was left without assistance. Miḥaloloğlu İskender Beg was captured and sent to the sultan of Egypt in chains. Encouraged by this success, Alaeddinvel’s forces and the army of Egypt besieged Kayseri, which was an Ottoman possession on the borders of the Zulkadr lands. Hersekoğlu Aḥmed Paşa was sent to defend the city, but on the way, via
Karahisar, he was informed that the enemies had lifted the siege and had gone to Niğde and plundered the lands of Karaman.

When the sultan was informed of it he sent forces to repel the enemies and led them himself. His presence was a special sign of punishment, recommended by the fetvas against the rebellion of the king of Egypt and Syria. At that time an esteemed Molla, known as Molla ‘Arab, arrived from Syria. [553a] His origin was from Syria, but for years he had lived in Rum. The question of whether the sultan should lead in person a campaign against Egypt was disputed between the ‘ulema. The Ottoman sultans have ruled in Rum for about two hundred years and from there they have conducted continuously the gaza against the lands of the infidels, for the benefit of Islam. According to the laws of Islam, this opposition and animosity that has arisen with the lords of Egypt and Syria, which causes great turbulence throughout the lands of Islam, is absolutely unworthy of such pious dynasties and mucahids, and against the will of God. The müftis’ great intellect, however, reached the decision that the reason for this animosity was due to the support of the sultan of Egypt for Cem Çelebi and their failure to send ambassadors of honour. Now, after ambassadors and presents of goodwill have been exchanged, the Egyptian sultan desires peace. [553b] Molla ‘Arab was sent to his native lands to attend to the negotiations. The peace proceedings were further facilitated by the mediation of an ambassador of the padişah of Tunis, Osman Tunisi.

Another inducement for peace was that in the midst of these events, when the forces of Egypt were besieging Kayseri, in 895 (1489-90) there was a great storm in Istanbul. A lightening struck an old church near At Meydani, which contained gunpowder and other ammunition. There was a great explosion which was heard in a wide area, and a fire that lasted until the next afternoon. Four mahalles, containing about two thousand houses, were destroyed. The people of Istanbul witnessed the greatest earthquake of the time and many people were killed. [554a] Furthermore, before these events took place, the emir kabir Uzbeg had gone to Adana and besieged it, after the departure of ‘Ali Paşa and the Ottoman army. Suddenly the ammunition warehouse caught fire, and the governor of the castle and all who were defending it were killed. The castle was left unattended and thus fell in the hands of the besiegers.

Molla ‘Arab and some statesmen, who wanted peace to be made, pointed out these facts to the sultan as arguments. It was decided that firstly the army, which had gone to Karaman, was to be recalled and the men at the borders would be informed of the peace. In the midst of these negotiations came the news that three days earlier the army
of Egypt and Syria had attacked Niğde and killed some deputies and other men who resisted them. After that they plundered the area outside the city and then hurriedly returned to their lands. These are the reasons for which the sultan delayed his departure, in his effort to make peace, and put an end to the prolonged hostility and military confrontations. The sultan of Egypt was also willing to make peace, so they came to an agreement in 897 (1491-2).

**Third destan (left)**

Description of the gazas against some Albanian regions which were disobedient and did not pay their taxes and report of the booty the mucahids brought back.

[554b] In 897 (1491-2) came the good news that Yanko, the kral of Hungary, who had been hostile against the Muslims for years, had died leaving no heirs. There was no way in the manners of the infidels to resolve the situation, so some chiefs of the infidels, known as ban, that is ruler, made an agreement and put on the throne a son of the king of Poland. Some of the bans were not consulted, however. They disputed this decision and a great strife began among the notables.

In the meantime, Süleyman Paşa was governor on the borders with Hungary and vali of Semendire. He made a friendly agreement with the governor of Belgrade, that as the kingdom of Hungary was left without a king he would now become a vassal of the Muslim sultan. The castle of Belgrade was the key to the conquest of Hungary. [555a] The two governors would join forces, and as he himself had other regions from the lands of Islam under his command, the governor of Belgrade would be the guide of the sultan’s army in the Hungarian lands and would subjugate the entire country to the sultan. The governor of Belgrade agreed that when the sultan would march in person to the area, he himself would also surrender the castle to the sultan.

As the conquest of this fortress would be a step towards the subjugation of Hungary, the sultan summoned his whole army, and on 8 Cemazi‘ II they set off against the infidels. Although the sultan’s plan was to move against Belgrade, if the governor of Belgrade would not keep his word, and any difficulties arose in carrying out this plan, the troops were ordered to raid Albania.

The sultan ordered the governor of Gallipoli, Sinan Paşa, to head towards Albania with 300 ships loaded with war provisions. The sultan led the army towards Sofia. He was informed that the rulers of Hungary, hearing of the sultan’s arrival, wished to withdraw the agreement which the governor of Belgrade had made with the sultan’s
deputies. The new kral of Hungary send an envoy to the sultan, to pay his respects and renew the former agreements with the Ottoman palace. As the possibility of taking Belgrade was gone, the sultan followed his other plan to go against Albania. He headed towards Albania via Manastir. They camped at the *vilayet* of Tepelen, where they spent the month of Ramađan, and afterwards the army of the *mucahids* moved on with the intention to subjugate and plunder the lands of the infidels. Daud Paşa was sent with the Janissaries to take some strongholds in that hard and mountainous area. [555b] The army of Daud Paşa and the Janissaries, who were mostly foot soldiers, marched through the mountains. The infidels in that area are disobedient. The *mucahids* gathered about 1,500 prisoners. It was heard that among the prisoners was the son of the governor of Albania, but none of the prisoners would point him out. As a result of their stubbornness it was ordered that all prisoners, and among them this eminent prince, would be severely punished and would be guarded in chains. One fifth of the prisoners and the rest of the booty were given to the sultan. When the summer was near they returned to the capital.

*Fourth destan (left)*

[556a] Description of the *gazas* of the governor of Bosnia Ya'küb Paşa against the great lords of Hungary, and the opposition of Derencil.

(القمة) Events that took place in 898 (1492-3) about the miraculous *gazas* of Ya'küb Paşa, governor of Bosnia, who guarded the borders with the lands of Hungary and the Franks and Austria with great courage. The sultan ordered the governor of Semendire ‘Ali Beğ Mihal to initiate the *gaza* and march against Hungary. So he gathered the troops and *akıncıs* of Rumili and with about 20,000 men ‘Ali Beğ crossed the river Tuna. [556b] He raided and devastated some regions and the *mucahids* gathered great amounts of booty. When the kral of Hungary was informed of this he gathered a great army and sent it to repel the *gazis*. As the *gazis* were heavily loaded with goods and riches, they were routed. Many *gazis* fled, including several famous commanders, but many were killed or taken prisoner and all the booty the *mucahids* had gathered went back to the hands of the infidels.

The kral of Hungary and his emirs rejoiced at this success and immediately set out for revenge against the lands of Islam. The commanders who had taken part in that victory, such as Derencil, who was the nephew of the kral, prepared to attack the Muslims once again. A council was held by all the bans. In it it was said that
“according to the ways of the Muslim troops, raids were carried out through the borders with both Semendire and Bosnia. It is therefore prudent that we also make an assault against the border of Bosnia. If the Muslim forces are in our lands, we will confront them in the same manner, but if they are not there we will raid and plunder their borders and gather plenty of booty”. With these thoughts they sent envoys to the Franks and Austria asking for help from their neighbours and co-religionists. They sent many forces for the sake of religion and they set off for Bosnia. The army of the infidels consisted of 12,000 iron-clad mounted soldiers from Hungary. (Description of their formidable appearance). The king of Austria sent to them six thousand mounted soldiers, the Pope of Rome sent two thousand crusaders and the kings of the Franks also sent six thousand superior soldiers, who were excellent swordsmen. As a result, about forty thousand mounted soldiers reached Derencil, and seven bans of Croatia joined in with their forces.

At that time the governor of Bosnia was Ya'kub Paşa. The vilayet of Croatia, which is situated between Bosnia and Hungary, and its governor Kir Karli controls several castles. As it lies between the lands of the infidels and of Islam, sometimes he submits to the sultan of Islam and sometimes to the kral of Hungary. [557a] At that time they had turned against Ya'kub Paşa's rule and did not pay the harac and necessary tribute. Therefore Ya'kub Paşa took permission from the sultan’s deputy to lead a gaza against them. He set off against Kir Karli. In Croatia there was another ban called Kir Enca, who due to his bravery had under his control several other bans of Hungary. He began an opposition against the sultan of Islam and took some castles from Kir Karli, who was on the side of the kral of Hungary. Kir Karli complained to the kral, who sent Derencil with a great army to Bosnia to assist him. Kir Enca then sided with the sultan of Islam and submitted to him with his castles. The kral ordered Derencil to raid a castle of Kir Enca. As someone in the sultan’s service was under attack, Ya'kub Paşa was asked for assistance. Derencil’s forces were much larger than those of the mucahids, but they relied on God’s assistance.

At first the Ottoman army turned to the fortress Yayca and its surroundings, which they plundered and devastated. These events have been described and verified by fellow soldiers, who were present on the campaign. When the people of Yayca saw that the army of the mucahids had overrun their entire memleket and their governor, who was a Hungarian nobleman, sent a monk with many gifts and money to Ya'kub Paşa, in order to bring forward their petitions. [557b] They asked that he would not harm them or plunder the city if they surrender and give him anything he might ask. Ya'kub Paşa’s answer was as follows: “It is heard that the governor of this memleket
has come at the request of the kral to oppose the people of Islam in this area, to devastate the lands of Bosnia and kill the governor of Bosnia. Now that we have come outside his door he makes promises and sends an envoy, and the power of his hand has not been tested once with these *mucahids*. The monk passed on this message to the castle’s governor. He gathered his army and made an exit, but withdrew and turned back. Ya’kub Paşa went to meet him with his horsemen, but the infidels were scared by the formidable number of the Muslim army and re-entered the fortress.

When it was clear that he had gained the victory, Ya’kub Paşa turned against Derencil and others of these seven bans. He headed towards the castle (?), in the Hungarian lands. They crossed a great river known as Ona and reached a *vilayet* called Slovenia. They raided and plundered this entire *memleket*. From there they went against the lands of the king of Austria, whose army had allied with Derencil. They reached a castle called (?) (قارول) and a great river called (?) (انه كورچ), which no Muslim had so far crossed and nobody knew what it looked like. They went to the *vilayet* of (?) (تورتانان), in which even the oldest men had only seen Muslims in drawings and heard about them in stories. They sacked this region for about 15 days and gathered lots of booty. After that they went to a *vilayet*, which belonged to Derencil and was the base of his government, set fire to it and gathered even more booty. [558a] In this area was a great monastery, which the *mucahids* plundered, and they killed or enslaved all its inhabitants.

In the meantime Derencil besieged the castles of Kir Enca. When Ya’kub Paşa was informed that many of Kir Enca’s castles were close to surrender, he immediately went to join all the men who were divided in Kir Enca’s castles. When Ya’kub Paşa reached the pass known as Sadar their way was blocked by cut trees and stones and they were surrounded by the enemies. In the evening Derencil held an assembly with the other chiefs, in which it was assumed that in the case of a battle with Ya’kub Paşa it is certain that they would be defeated, as after all this booty that the *mucahids* had collected they would have been exhausted and short of ammunition. When Derencil was informed of Ya’kub Paşa’s arrival with his victorious *mucahids* and their booty, he was confused. [558b] He encouraged his men, telling them that although the *mucahids* had accumulated lots of booty, they did not have enough ammunition to face the enemy, and that in their enemies’ army there were many prisoners who could not fight, but they could be defeated just as the men of ‘Ali Beğ Mihal were. But he did not know that the *mucahids* would never let go of their weapons, as they knew that they would not be able to escape or be rescued in the midst of the lands of the infidels.
In the morning Ya'kub Paşa arranged his troops for battle and encouraged his soldiers before the numerous forces of the enemy. [559a] In this confrontation between the pious and the infidels there were some peculiar signs: first three large birds like eagles with iron claws appeared in the sky above the troops of the Muslims, flying from side to side, and seven others, with the same appearance, above the troops of the infidels. Before the battle these two groups of birds attacked one another. The three eagles of the Muslims prevailed over those of the infidels. They pursued the birds on the side of the enemies with such force that all the seven birds were forced away. For everyone who saw it the message was clear. The Muslims were very encouraged by it and went against the enemies with courage. A fierce and bloody battle followed, which lasted the whole day.

[559b] Derencil was captured, and he was taken before Ya'kub Paşa. They wanted to confirm his identity, but every time the Paşa asked him if he was Derencil, he would not acknowledge it. The ingenious Paşa then brought before him the executioner and said that since he was not Derencil they would execute him. One of Ya'kub Paşa’s men, whose origins were from the memleket of Derencil identified him, and he himself afraid that he would be executed confirmed it. Derencil was to be sent to the sultan, as a present and evidence of the conquest. Ya'kub Paşa ordered that Derencil be placed on a horse and joined him in counting the dead and survivors of his army. (Description of the procedure and Derencil’s grief). After that they sent messages of the good news of this victory to the sultan. Derencil and other captive lords were given to the sultan as a present and were sent along with the one fifth of the booty which belongs to the sultan. Everyone who had shown bravery on the battlefield was reported to the sultan, and along with all the details of this victory many rich gifts were sent to the sultan. [560a] The booty was divided and the Paşa increased the soldiers’ salary and provisions.

*Fifth destan (left)*

Description of the intention of the king of Poland to invade the sultan’s lands out of religious zeal against the Muslims, the appointment of Bali Beğ Malkoçoğlu and some other warriors to make *gaza* against the king of Poland, and the victory of Islam with God’s help. God willing, this glorious and pious sultan of the Ottoman House, the refuge of religion, will destroy the infidels every time they oppress the people of Islam. There was information that troops and infantrymen from the lands of the infidels, coming from northern Şakaliba, which is the greater area of Poland and the
kingdoms of the Chekhs, Hungary, Italy and Austria, constantly disturbed the borders with the sultan’s domains.

In 902 (1496-7), the king of Poland, which is one of the large kingdoms of the Šakaliba that lies in the north and its military power is up to 100,000 men or even more, suddenly decided to expand his great power and lead a campaign against the lands of Islam. The distance from his palace to the sultan’s borders is over a month’s journey long. He set off with his army, intending to plunder and ravage, kill and enslave in the lands of the Muslims. [560b] He wished to pass through the lands of Boğdan, who was an old vassal of the Ottomans. As soon as he reached the borders of Boğdan the kral of Poland wished to make an agreement with Boğdan based on their common religion and neighbourliness. Boğdan was a very canny man, and knew that the kral of Poland was insincere, but realised that it would be in his best interest to be on friendly terms with the kral of Poland and allow him to pass through his lands. But he also was aware that as his lands lay near the Muslims, they would attack the Polish within his domain and this would entirely destroy it.

In any case, he appeared to be friendly towards the kral of Poland and informed him of the terrifying conduct of the Muslims, and stories from battles between the Muslims and the Hungarians and the Franks. He also informed him that the distance between his lands and the borders of Islam was very long and through great rivers and thick forests. After his numerous army had crossed them most of the forces would be weakened by such difficulties. Immediately Boğdan informed the emirs at the Muslim borders about it and asked for help from the Ottomans, so that some gazi would come and turn the Polish army away from his lands. At the same time, Boğdan wrote a letter to the Polish kral, informing him that the vanguard of the Muslim troops had crossed Tuna and had arrived in his vilayet and countless more were to come, and asked for the kral’s help of about 5-6,000 men. The kral sent him 5,000 men. Then the governor of Boğdan dressed 3-4,000 of his men like Muslims and joined about 600 mucahids. They crossed the river Tuna and hid in a pass between the mountains. [561a] When the Polish forces approached, the hidden soldiers appeared and attacked them. The troops of Boğdan and the mucahids pursued the Polish army and killed most of them. Only one thousand survived out of the five thousand. They rushed to the kral’s side and informed him that the army of the mucahids was arriving. The kral then, unable to face the entire Ottoman army, hastily abandoned the area and returned to his kingdom. It is reported that the Polish troops left behind twenty thousand ammunition carts, which the soldiers of Boğdan and the mucahids plundered after their departure. Gifts were sent to the sultan from the spoils.

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[561b] After that great victory, the sultan rewarded Bali Beğ Malkoçoğlu for his bravery, placed him in charge of the gaziş and the akınceş of Rumili and ordered to raid and plunder the kingdom of Poland. From the vilayet of Silistre they crossed the river Tuna and reached the vilayet of Boğdan. With the help of local guides they reached the borders of that vilayet, to a great river called Turla. They had to make a bridge in order to cross it and after that they marched for another eight days before they reached the borders of Poland. He placed his elder son, ‘Ali Beğ, in charge of the rearguard and his youngest son, Tur ‘Ali Beğ, in charge of the vanguard. Although there were altogether many great conquests during this campaign, eight major conquests and illustrious events of subjugating important towns and fortresses will be recorded here.

First conquest: At first they came across a grand fort and settlement known as Kakova. It lay next to the river. The inhabitants guarded the walls and the strong bridge of the river with large cannon so the gaziş could not cross it. They found a spot where they could swim across the river, and soon they all swam across. They attacked those who guarded the bridge and thus they managed to conquer the fort. They sacked it for a day and killed all the elders, powerful men and the soldiers, and spared the weak, the women and the young, because they still had a long and dangerous way ahead. But from the two men, who were in charge of the city, one was killed in the battle and the other they took prisoner. After that they set fire to the castle and moved on.

[562a] Second conquest: The gaziş went on for a few days passing through prosperous areas but no considerable towns. Then they arrived in a valley with a lake, cultivated fields and a few towns. When the king of Poland was informed of the arrival of the mucahidş he had sent 500 men to each of these towns, to protect them from the troops of the Muslims. The gaziş, who did not expect any opposition, immediately attacked the first town, conquered it and killed many men. After that they attacked another town, bigger than the first. This one was protected by the water of the lake and resisted more, but the Muslims’ guides led them across a bridge and they attacked it. As it was a large and rich city, many inhabitants came out to repel the gaziş. The brave mucahidş, however, fought with them in and out of the walls and conquered it. They killed the soldiers, notables and able men, and they sacked and lit fires in the city.

642 i.e. Dniester
Third conquest: After that they reached a fort and town called Glagori and another fort known as (?) (κλαγόρι). The inhabitants of those two, having heard of the power of the gazis, were afraid that the gazis would take their castles too and were deserting them with all their belongings and families. The gazis, however, met them on the way. They killed all their elders, enslaved their youths, and plundered and destroyed the buildings of the town.

Fourth conquest: They then reached the summer quarters of the king, called (?) (λίκλον). This city was full of gardens, and all the notables and high officials lived and kept their properties there. As soon as they heard of the approach of the army of Islam, fearing for their lives and properties, they began to flee towards the mountains taking along all their families and property. Some of these filthy infidels were still in the city collecting their properties, or were still on the open land on the way to the mountains, when suddenly the gazis fell upon them. (Description). The gazis gathered great amounts of booty and then set the city, which was largely made of wood, on fire. They had gathered so much booty and slaves in that city, that some were concerned that they would not be able to carry any more. They were worried about their return. The son of Malkoç Beğ, a great gazi leader, who had shown excellence in many gazas, suggested that when they went to another one or two other important cities or passes the king might try to avenge them. Thus, as the troops of the gazis planned to attack more regions, they lightened their loads.

Fifth conquest: Thereafter they went to a mountainous area with villages, settlements and many trees and after passing that they reached an open area where there was a beautiful city through which a great river run. There was also a great bridge leading to the city, which was well guarded by numerous horsemen and footsoldiers. [563a] Innumerable cannon and firearms by the river banks prevented the mucahids from crossing the river. Once again the gazis crossed this great river in any way they could, they attacked the infidels, and scattered and killed them all. Then they burned the city to the ground and after taking the booty they moved on to a nearby city.

Sixth conquest: The army of the Muslims moved on to a city called Radimin. They spent the night in that area, and in the morning they realised it would not be easy to subdue, so they marched on. They reached a city surrounded by cultivated fields. The gazis stopped in that quiet area and (Bali Beğ) gave permission to plunder for booty. He sent his son Tur 'Ali Beğ in one direction, the emirzade Bali Beğ b. Yahya Paşa,

643 Klebanya?
who was a great warrior, in another, and he went in another direction with the rest of the gazis. Tur ‘Ali Beğ first arrived at a town called Prevorsk, where they killed and enslaved the infidels, they plundered the city and set it on fire. Two or three days later he returned to his father’s camp with innumerable spoils. Bali Beğ b. Yahya Paşa also went to a prosperous city. His gazis plundered and captured the entire population and took the notables of the infidels through the fire of hell. Four days later he returned to the camp, loaded with booty.

Seventh conquest: Once they were all gathered together again, the mucahids marched on for two more days and were once again spread in another area for plunder. Malkoç Beğ sent the gazis to one direction with one of his commanders, Hasan Ağa. They reached a field, where they came across 700 cattle, which they took along with them. After a few days they went back to join the other mucahids.

[563b] Eighth conquest: The gazis thought that more booty would be very difficult to carry and make transport through the lands of the enemies dangerous and decided to make their way back. There was a report of two dangers lying on the way: the first was a big river, and the king had burned the bridge that crossed it. Further down there was an inaccessible passage through the mountains, which had been blocked with trees at the kral’s order. Malkoçoğlu Beğ sent Hasan Ağa ahead to the bridge, with supplies to repair it. Thus they crossed the river headed towards the pass. Although they found the entrance and exit of the pass blocked with timber, they managed to cross it, and having escaped these dangers they moved on. After that they went through some beautiful fields until they came before some forces of the kral of Poland. The gazis fought with them and defeated them, and after this victory they led a great gaza in that area. Malkoç Beğ sent Muṣafar Beğ b. Kasım Beğ with 500 men to plunder the area. He left the main troops and twice he had to fight with the infidels. In both cases, with God’s help, he came out victorious. He reached an open area with some cities, and a great river. 1,500 infidels guarded its bridge. The 500 came into battle with them, they defeated the infidels and moved on to other areas.

[564a] They reached a town called Jaroslav with a great monastery, which was fortified and the population with their properties had taken refuge in it. The gazis attacked it and managed to conquer it, they killed all the nobles in it and took lots of booty. Then they rejoined their companions and, having escaped all dangers, they went back to the sultan’s domains. Although they had gathered plenty of spoils they had to make haste so they lightened their burdens considerably, but still lots of booty remained in their hands. In Kilia, near the river Tuna, Malkoç Beğ surrendered one
fifth of the booty as the sultan’s share and from there the soldiers returned to their homelands.

**Sixth destan (left)**

Description of the appointment of İskender Paşa in the lands of Bosnia for the protection of this border against the kings of Hungary and the Franks, and İskender Paşa’s gaza and raiding expedition against the lands of the Franks. The definition of the borders between the infidels and Islam is always subject to the confirmation of the sword. At all times the servants of the pious sultans, show great courage in the protection of the borders of Islam. The appointment of warriors as governors for the defence and administration of these areas is necessary. [564b] Sometimes the merciful sultan is able to keep under firm control the parts of his kingdom, and his subjects are obedient and loyal, and sometimes his orders have to be forced upon them. Therefore all rulers appoint strong leaders and commanders on the borders.

In 904 (1498-9) İskender Paşa was appointed vezir of the divan. At that time the sultan wanted to make a gaza against the lands of some kings of the Franks, and especially the forts of Lepanto, Modon and Koron. The memleket of Bosnia is situated on the borders between the kingdoms of the infidels and the lands of Islam, bordering with Hungary, Austria and Italy, and has always suffered from the attempts of the infidels to enter the lands of Islam through it. So the sultan decided to lead a gaza in Farankistan, in particular the vilayet of Lepanto. In the sultan’s environment it was certain that this able emir should be appointed to oversee the borders of Islam, on account of the sharpness of his sword and the manifestations of his abilities as a great army leader of his time. In addition, during the reign of Mehmed II he had been administrator of this area for a long time and had led many gazas into the lands of the infidels. So after removing Yahya Paşa from the post of governor of that memleket, the sultan appointed İskender Paşa to it again.

The sultan wanted to lead a gaza against Lepanto, which had not been conquered yet. The doge of Venice, the richest of the rulers among the Franks, sent messages to all the Christian rulers to ask for help, from the kings of Hungary and of Germany and Austria, who are among the greater rulers of this area. The doge wished Hungary and Austria to attack Bosnia, so that perhaps this would distract the sultan and make him withdraw from besieging Lepanto. [565a] When the sultan realised these corrupt thoughts of the infidels, he acted immediately and sent İskender Paşa to retaliate for
these evils caused by the infidels. İskender Paşa headed toward the borders and attacked the infidels. From the borders of Bosnia he turned to the vilayet of Zadine, which was a Venetian possession and the closest to the lands of Islam of all the regions of the Franks. They moved extremely fast through the lands of the infidels, covering the distance of five days’ travel in just one day, so that the infidels were taken by surprise and could not resist them. The next day they devastated and burned the lands of the infidels, destroying all their livelihood, plundering and taking the infidels through the sword. Then, without delay, they returned to their homelands, rich in booty.

In the meantime the sultan’s army was on their way to Lepanto, but had not yet arrived. İskender Paşa sent some envoys to these forces, bringing presents from the gaza to the sultan. The sultan then ordered an end to that expedition and rewarded the Paşa. But as the army had reached Lepanto, the sultan once again ordered the Paşa to raid the lands of the Franks and distract the Venetians. [565b] İskender Paşa with 5,000 men went through Bosnia to Austria, which they raided for about twenty days. They reached a great town near a river. When the weak-hearted infidels saw the powerful troops of Islam they were terrified. The notables of the town were withdrawn in the castle, but before the grandeur of the army they surrendered. They offered many goods to the mucahids for their stay, who then crossed the river without opposition.

They marched for another ten days in that prosperous region, full of strong cities and cultivated areas. (Description). In any city where the infidels tried to resist them and fight them, the mucahids fought with great courage and thus gathered innumerable booty and burned down their cities. They reached a large river called Dolina, where seven tributaries joined. [566a] Once they had crossed all seven tributaries, they found themselves opposite the city of Venice, which lies in the north of the lands of the Franks and is the residence of their ruler. As the sultan intended to attack Lepanto, he sent İskender Paşa to raid and plunder the areas close to the Venetian ruler’s residence, to distract his attention.

After numerous successful raids in the area, they returned to the river. The infidels had gathered there and were blocking the way of the mucahids, who were so loaded with booty that crossing the river was very dangerous. In addition, there was information that a great number of soldiers, sent by the ruler of that area, had gathered at the river banks, had blocked every possible passage through which the mucahids might cross, and they were ready for battle. [566b] However, the Paşa gathered all
the prisoners in front of him and selected all the elders and those over the age of twenty. About 3,000 men were brought forward. After many threats and plenty of valuable advice the soldiers managed to get out of this difficult situation by the river دوبلينته. After that they went on, gathering booty and attacking every town they came across, burning down and subjecting them and filling the hearts of the infidels with fear.

Loaded with spoils they reached the river آک Șu.645 The infidels who were guarding it heard about the victories of the gazis. When the gazis went against them like wild beasts the infidels did not see any other better way of saving their lives but fleeing; therefore the troops of the Muslims crossed without being harmed. After that the army was free from trouble for eight days, during which they looted the region by the river. Then they went through the vilayet of (?), which was subject to the Franks across the border. The gazis had noticed there was much wealth in that area, so they sent 1,000 horsemen, who raided it and enslaved the population. [567a] As a result this three-month campaign was successful in all divine and worldly matters, it satisfied the sultan and gained great fame, glory and wealth for the mucahids. One fifth of the booty, the sultan’s share, was sent to him.

Appendix: When Îskender Paşa was governor of Bosnia there was always trouble with the conquest of the towns of the infidels and the repelling of the damage the local tribes caused. Between Bosnia and Hungary there is a castle and fortress called Yayca. It is a tall and broad fort and a very good guarding-spot, as it is situated on the borders and is the protector of the lands of Hungary against the Muslim troops entering the country. The previous sultan had equipped a large army and had managed to subjugate it, but by the time the present sultan came to power it once again belonged to the king of Hungary. The sultan had suggested that during Îskender Paşa’s governorship the conquest of this castle should be made final.

On the order of the king of Hungary, every year a great commander would go to that castle with a great army to make arrangements for its supplies and provisions. There is no other town or settlement in the area around that castle for about eight days’ journey, nor any other refuge, except for one other fortress, called Lofca. [567b] Also most of the attacks of the Muslim army and their plunder had taken place in that area for a long time, and these towns have been the objects of many battles. Hungary has not so far given much help to those two forts, which suffer the most of the attacks, but instead if

645 i.e. Tagliamento.
ever the Muslims enter their territory and attack the castle of Lofca, for example, they just depopulate the area and thus facilitate the conquest of the castle of Yayca.

So in 907 (1501-2) the Paşa gathered 1,000 horsemen and 2,000 footsoldiers and sent them to conquer Lofca under the command of his own son, Muşafa Beğ. This castle is a fort, of the kind where the fortification of each house is connected to that of the next house, the foundations and stones are closely joined, and the city walls are elevated with blocks of wood, and around them are two deep moats. The emirzade set off for the conquest of the town with his brave soldiers. They besieged the castle from morning till night, until the mucahids entered its walls, the town was conquered and its people were humbled. [568a] The emirzade enslaved many infidels and beheaded all the notables and the monks of the castle. According to the customs of the gaza they were arranged in a line and raised on poles.

After that they proceeded to a nearby fort called Brustza, which they conquered in a day. After gaining lots of riches, fame and rewards they concluded this campaign and went back. In addition to that victory, when in 908 (1502-3) the king of Hungary sent some troops to Yayca with supplies and provisions according to their custom, some messengers in İskender Paşa’s service sent news to him. The Paşa again sent his son with 400 horsemen, to attack these troops. They covered a five days’ journey from the borders of Bosnia in only one day. These brave gazis routed the infidels, they killed many of them and transported many spoils to their day camp. After that the emirzade ordered their return. Their bravery will remain famous among the bravest holy warriors.

Seventh destan (left)

Description of the sultan’s campaign by land and sea against Lepanto and the possessions of the Italians, the victory of the warriors of Islam at sea and the sultan’s conquests. [568b] (Discussion of the concept of gaza against the infidels, which is a duty of all Muslims). When the sultan’s divan met, a unanimous decision was made for a gaza against Lepanto by both land and sea.

The sultan wished to complete the conquest of the lands of Morea. In order to achieve his plan the subjugation of the castle of Lepanto was necessary, because these two memleket, Morea and Lepanto, were Venetian possessions. Over that side the sea of the Franks reaches the coast of Rumili, and thus both those two provinces lie in the west of the lands of Islam in Rumili. The kings of the Franks, and especially of
Venice, from the north-western border of this coastline to their original departure point is a six days' journey. Venice borders Hungary in the north and the south-western border of Italy is on the sea of (?) until it reaches the lands of the west.

The reason, which prevents the conquest of Modon and Koron in the Morea, and from there the conquest of Lepanto, is that Morea lies in an isolated spot, surrounded by the sea of the Franks. But on the side of Rumili and the lands of Islam, at about the equivalent of a farsah, between the two strips of water which surround Morea lies a mountainous area. When the infidels ruled the Morea this piece of land used to be fortified from one shore to the other. [569b] The lands up to the north-eastern coast of Morea had gradually become Ottoman domains, but Lepanto and the surrounding area have not yet been conquered, because one cannot order the conquest of this fort unless one has a strong fleet to withstand the innumerable ships of the Franks. Help from Venice arrives at this castle by sea in six days and thus only a siege of these castles, which lie isolated in open areas, is prevented. Former sultans did not take measures to create a navy strong enough to face the Franks, who are very experienced in seafare.

When this sultan ascended to the throne with prosperous divine guidance, the world-conquering armaments on both land and sea had reached such a stage that the numbers of his land army resembled the size of the troops of Solomon and the victorious army of Alexander, and the power of his servants and army at sea, compared to the maritime works and acts of all rulers, infidel or Muslim, is the most destructive. Because his heavenly ships are so many, on the surface of the sea they resemble the fixed and moving stars. The organization of the artillery of these heavenly ships and the mass of their sailors are distinguished, strong and powerful. Concerning the skilful knowledge of warfare and the use of cannon and firearms of his servants in these days they were stronger and larger in number than the experts, the infidels and idolaters, and in the heat of a battle as regards mangonels and arms they are more severe and vehement than the blazing fire of the cannon.

So, when the sultan decided to conquer this castle and its environs, in order to equip and prepare his ships, and get ready for his opposition to the enemies, some bold Franks, skilled workmen and masters, knowledgeable in arms and armoury, prepared the sultan’s ships and fitted them with cannon and war machines. And he ordered all those in his service who were skilled in marvellous and extraordinary crafts to assemble and build them. In Istanbul some ships as large as mountains were constructed from new and old vessels with the intention of gaza. Two large ships were
constructed, which are known as *kuke* in Greek and Italian terminology, each of them is the size of a mountain when on the sea. While they were being built on land, the invaluable wood and iron for their tools, their nails and their anchors were brought from the regions and the mines near Istanbul. The men working on their construction, in all important posts, were all personal slaves of the sultan who had been working as specialised salaried carpenters and ironsmiths. The ships cost 24,000 golden coins each.

[570a] This fakir has been informed of the following measurements: the size of the ship was 70 cubits long and 35 cubits wide, and the height of its central mast was around 70 feet. Their masts were thick and upright, made from enormous trees bound together so that they looked like a minaret. The perimeter of each of them was 4 cubits. Their top was made like the gallery of a minaret, and was wide enough for three people. The ships were filled with cannonballs and gunpowder for going to battle with the enemies. The quarters for residence of the *gazis* and *mucahids* were hidden below the surface of the water and were about 20 feet high. Its capacity in soldiers, including their weapons, artillery and victuals was for 1,000 men. It carries all the *mucahids* to every direction of the world to fight. Even though each of these ships is high as a mountain, after travelling on the sea for some days, there is a time limit, when it must leave the sea, as thirst afflicts all the men aboard. The types of ships used in the sea of the Franks and Rum, according to many, are the fastest and best of all carriers; the skill of the Franks and Greeks is the greatest of all sailors; and they say that the *kuke* is the greatest of all other ships. In comparison with the *mauna*, the *kadriga* or the *galleon*, the *kuke* is most destructive for its accuracy of shots. Its cannon is always firmly fixed.

Each of these vessels is a battle-ship. The type of ship called *mauna* is like a spacious and tall fort on the sea. It has sails and looks like a giant. It is always used for transportation of victuals. It carries the baggage of the travellers, but it is very slow. [570b] The type of ship called *kadriga* moves by oars and has no sails, but it is the fastest of all kinds of vessels. In attack and retreat it is very obedient, and it is so fast that it always arrives first when in haste and is superior to the sailboats in speed. It is always praised by all great sailors of our times. The type called *barça* is a small *kuke* and it is based on it as regards the way it looks and the way it travels. The type called *galleon* is based on the *mauna* and is used in the same way. It is the smallest of all types of ships. When the sultan decided to make a campaign for the conquest of the lands of the Christians, within two years he built a great fleet and equipped it with thousands of cannon, defence equipment and *tufeks*, arms and mangonels large as
mountains, instruments and tools for conquering castles. He also equipped them with commanders of the land and sea, and numerous troops to be sent for a gaza campaign.

At that time, for a second time a gaza was ordered and once again Bali Beğ Malkoçoğlu was sent against Poland, the Şakaliba, and the Rus. He gathered 50,000 men from all directions and they set off with him on a one-month march. They plundered and destroyed some towns and vilayets of the infidels and gathered innumerable spoils, slaves and animals. On their way back, they came across some uncultivated wasteland near a river. The troops were tired, it was the beginning of winter, and the large number of captives and cattle became a burden. The captives and the cattle were more than the soldiers, who were tired and weak, and they suffered great misfortunes.

[571a] On the first day of the year 904 (1498-9) the sultan gathered his forces and on 20 Şevval of the same year the sultan marched from Istanbul to Edirne and ordered the campaign to begin. Daud Paşa Sani was then the commander of the fleet and had been in charge of the ships and the equipping of the sea troops. There were many other commanders of ships and seamen and great voyagers, especially Re'is Kemal, Rüstem and Isfendiyar, Re'is Burak and other brave captains. 1,000 men were allocated in each ship, along with canon, tufeks, victuals and instruments of war. Other esteemed army men and commanders were appointed to the other 300 ships, which were provisioned in the same manner with these two ships, and they were all sent to Gallipoli. From there they set off towards Morea and arranged to meet there in a month’s time, when it was estimated that the army would arrive there by land. [571b]

In this way they would besiege the fort of Lepanto from both land and sea.

When the kings of the Franks, and especially the sovereign of Lepanto, who was the ruler of Venice, heard about this campaign of the sultan, they gathered a large army and a heavily equipped strong fleet. Because the Franks had a large army, immense wealth and manpower, and they had great confidence in the grandeur and excellence of their men in seafare, they hurried to the gulf of Lepanto and with religious zeal they went to repel the sultan’s gaziis.

When they saw the fleet of the Muslims approaching the memleket of Morea, the Franks appeared with their enormous ships to confront the Muslim navy. Suddenly there was a strong wind, against the fleet of the Muslims but suiting the wishes of their enemies, and the ships of the Muslims were forced to anchor at a harbour opposite the town of Modon. Due to the strong wind they were compelled to stay there for almost

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twenty days. From the side of the sea the *mucahid* were blocked by the ships of the Franks, who, aided by the wind, were in better battle position. On the other side, the people of the castle of Modon, which lies near the shore, and the entire population of the coast attacked the ships of the Muslims, until they ran out of food and drink, not having any way of going ashore. The crew of the 300 Turkish vessels went through such hardship, also due to the high waves, that they did not see any way of escape.

[572a] In secret they sent a message to the sultan’s deputy who was at the fort of Lepanto about the difficult situation they were in. At that time the sultan was camping in Çatalca, near Lepanto. He immediately sent Ahmed Paşa Hersekoğlu, who rushed through a mountainous road to assist them. When he reached the shore the wind again changed and started blowing from the shore, which helped the soldiers both in and out of the sea. Ahmed Paşa went on board with some soldiers and offered them help. He sent their equipment and sick to the royal camp through Morea, while the vessels sailed off towards Lepanto and the cargo vessels were to follow along the coastline.

While the fleet of the Muslims was thus blocked in the gulf, the Franks had gathered about 150 ships that looked like castles at the mouth of the gulf and the open sea around it. Every ship had 1,000 armed men and 500 sailors, which were heavily equipped with many cannon and firearms and ready for battle. So, in each vessel - smaller in every aspect - were arranged about twenty large incendiary pots, which they arranged five leagues away from us. The vessels of the Muslims were also equipped with cannon and firearms, but as the ships of the Franks travel everywhere and as most of the Franks are sea-men they are very fast. In addition, in a short while they had gathered and had blocked the passage of the Muslims from all directions. They had arranged their cannon and incendiary pots before the ships of the Muslims in their expert manner.

The Muslims entrusted themselves to God and bid farewell to their comrades certain they would have no escape. Everyone knew there was great danger of dying as a martyr but their faith in God gave them hope. Eventually, when the Muslim fleet exited the gulf, the vessels entrusted by Re’is Kemal to Burak braced themselves and headed towards the enemies. As these Muslim ships are made to travel with the wind, they have plenty of provisions, cannon and firearms, and had great chances for their cannonballs to confront the enormous ships of the infidels. [572b] (Description of the formidable appearance and power of the infidels’ ships).
That day a hot and bloody battle began on the sea, where fire and blood mixed with water. The infidels thought that the ship of Burâk Re’îs was that of Kemal. Out of the infidels’ vessels, two large kuke carrying 2,000 men and ammunition, a mauna with 1,000 men, a barça - which is a small kuke - and two galleons - which are small maunas- with 300 and 400 men each, came forward and began firing with their cannon. The infidels approached the ship of Burâk Re’îs, on which Kemal Beğ, the governor of Yeni Şehir, was army leader and its commander was Kara Hasan, a brave man with great experience in seafare. When the infidels reached Burâk’s ship they threw iron claws and hooks and bound themselves with chains to the sides of the Muslims’ vessel. Thus the battle of cannon and tufeks turned into a battle of arms and swords, and everyone was fighting with their enemy on board the ship. Burâk then decided wisely to throw white naphtha at the two ships of the infidels that were tied to his own, and set them on fire. The enemies’ two vessels, and all their men and everything on them were consumed in fire, but as his ship was tied to those of the infidels with iron claws it also caught fire. Everyone on those two Italian ships and on the one Muslim one was consumed in fire before the eyes of all observers.

Also a mauna and a barça of the Franks, which had come to assist the Franks, suffered so many blows from cannonballs, that everyone in both ships was killed. After this victory of the Muslims, another Venetian galleon was destroyed and all its men were taken prisoners, and 350 infidels fell into the sea. Burâk Re’îs, Kemal Beğ, Kara Hasan and the crew of that kuke all became martyrs. 700 men of the Muslims’ side, who had fallen into the sea, managed to get on board other ships with the help of their comrades. Also about 1,000 Franks, who jumped into the sea from the flaming vessels, were gathered by the Muslims and executed in retaliation. During the confusion of the battle the fleet of the Muslims took the opportunity to move on. Ahmed Paşa Hersekoğlu, Daud Paşa and the commanders of the other vessels, with God’s help, moved on from this difficult situation and the Franks, who wished to cut off the way of the Muslims, lost all hope of succeeding. The mucahids went out to the open sea and reached the coast of Lepanto.

From the time he had arrived in the area, the sultan was camping near the fort of Lepanto. As the summer weather was very hot there, he had appointed his eminent vezir Muştafa Paşa to besiege Lepanto by land. But the Muslim fleet did not arrive for another month, during which it was going through what has been described above, and the infidels inside the castle were informed of that. Once again the fleet of the enemy cut off the Muslim ships as they were going from the open sea into the Gulf of
Lepanto and the Venetian forces were out to fight and kill. The Muslims once again entrusted themselves to God and prepared to fight the *cihad*. Both sides began to attack one another with cannon and firearms and they fell upon the Venetian forces with great vehemence.

[573b] For a while both sides fired and were hit by cannonballs and some ships were sunk from both sides. The *gazis* were motivated by the courage one finds in difficult situations and their desire to eradicate those against Islam. But although the fleet of the Muslims was larger than that of the infidels, the ships of the Muslims were inferior to those of the Franks in size and strength. The Franks, however, shot many cannonballs against the Muslims with great haste, and their boats were so tall that many of the cannonballs they fired against the *gazis* went above the ships and did not harm them, and with God’s aid many of the blows of the infidels were lost. On the contrary, the cannonballs of the Muslims, shot from below upwards, were penetrating and effective. In the heat of the battle, the mingling of the two armies seemed as a conflict between dragons of the seas. Suddenly three Muslim *adrigas* with about 1,000 men each were surrounded by the infidels. They fought until night with axes and swords. At one point some brave *mucahids* crossed to the ships of the Franks and routed several of their men, before the infidels defeated them and so they became martyrs. The three *adrigas* stayed out in the sea until the next morning, but the infidels did not take possession of the vessels. Thus on the following morning the bodies of about 1,000 *gazis* from these ships reached the other Muslim ships and were saved from the unclean hands of the infidels. [574a] When night fell the Muslim fleet headed towards Lepanto to meet the army.

After two or three days’ journey the ships reached the castle and the good news of their arrival was hastily sent to the sultan. The defenders of the castle were hoping for the arrival and aid of the infidels’ fleet and were ready to rejoice when they saw these vessels passing through the opening. When they saw that the Muslims were arriving they immediately lost all hope, seeing that they were surrounded by the Muslims from both land and sea. In the hope of salvaging their lives and properties they humbled themselves and begged for mercy. Muṣṭafa Paşa was placed in charge. This conquest took place in Muharrem 905 (August 1499). The echo of this victory broke the spirit of all the infidels.

The sultan, after organizing the affairs of the *memleket* and the administration of the borders of Islam, and of the conquered city and castle according to the *ṣeri‘a*, gave permission to the army to return to their homelands and the imperial army headed back
to Edirne. The sultan saw it was evident that it would be easy to defend and protect Lepanto from the wicked infidels with naval forces which would guard the northern coast of Morea, which lies south-east of Lepanto, if two fortresses were built opposite to one another in the place through which the ships going to Lepanto would pass. The two fortresses were to be armed with cannon facing the coast in the direction of the Franks and in each side, so that the guardians of these fortresses would watch over the ships that come from the sea of the Franks. [574b] If the Franks intended to take their army there by sea they would have no chance of crossing the straits, and it would be like one having to go through Gallipoli in order to get to Istanbul. In order to complete the arrangements for the organisation of the area, the sultan ordered Muştafa Paşa, who was the conqueror of the castle, to repair the two fortresses in cooperation with Sinan Paşa, who was the emir ül-ümera of Anadolu. An army was sent immediately to the two fortresses, their defence and watch were organised and all the coastal memaliks and vilayets of Rumili, which were near Morea and Lepanto, were enclosed in the lands of Islam and all their inhabitants were secured.

The sultan also thought that his fleet, which had gone through such a difficult and troublesome campaign, had suffered many and diverse damages and were in need of being armed with cannon and firearms, should not go back. He arranged therefore that the ships would remain through the winter in Lepanto and some emirs and troops were appointed to oversee the repairs. Daud Paşa Sani, who had been the commander of the fleet, was left in the same position, and all others who administered similar affairs were under his command. The governor of Prevesa, Muştafa Beğ, who was one of the personal slaves of the sultan and esteemed for his bravery, generosity and piety, was ordered to supervise the construction and equipping of 40 new ships. It was arranged that at the beginning of spring those vessels would head towards Morea and they would wage gaza against Modon, Koron and other forts of the area.

In the middle of the winter Muştafa Beğ had twenty ships completed and another twenty almost finished. But suddenly one night some Venetian vessels came secretly and set them on fire. [575a] This trick of the infidels burned the entire shipyard and most of the ships in it. The Ottomans sent out their vessels with great care, loaded with cannon, weapons and ammunition and on the sultan’s order they headed toward Modon and Koron. There was a report from that area, that during the winter the Venetian forces were constantly causing trouble to the Ottomans in retaliation for the subjugation of Lepanto. Suddenly some fully armed ships of the infidels turned against the castle and region of Rakya in Rumili, which was part of the darü'l-Islam and lies in the area of the vilayet governed by the abovementioned Muştafa Beğ, and
after they landed they started to besiege them. The people there were negligent and unarmed and when the siege started they sent messages to the Ottoman emirs and governors in the neighbourhood and informed them of their condition.

Many commanders of the area were negligent, but Muştafa Beğ gathered his army and went there. By the time he arrived, however, the walls of the castle were full of holes from the blows of the cannonballs, and the Muslims had been taken prisoner. Muştafa Beğ and his brave men rushed upon the infidels, who had taken the castle and were fortified within it. They went into the castle against the cannon and the tufeks of the Franks and fought against them. Because the abovementioned emir had been trained as a commander of the sultan of the mucahids and was an excellent warrior, in this siege he displayed such great courage that it would take many pages to describe. He and his men fought with the infidels for a while at the edge of the castle, until the emir’s brother was killed and his nephew was injured by a cannonball. Muştafa Beğ’s horse was also hit by a cannonball and he was wounded in the thigh, but God’s grace protected him and he was not injured seriously. When the fight was transferred outside the fort, Muştafa Beğ was not prepared for the heavy artillery of the infidels, so he withdrew to the sultan’s ships waiting for him and went back. [575b] He sent a report to the sultan about the situation and returned with the ships. He equipped those twenty maunas with great warriors and artillery and fitted each ship with excellent cannon.

From all the reports about the troublesome activities of the Venetians during the winter it is known that after the victorious troops of the sultan left Lepanto, these infidels were infuriated; by sea they sent an army equipped with cannon and firearms and set off to subjugate the island of Cephalonia, an Ottoman possession opposite Morea. This island, lying outside the shores of Lepanto, was close to the kingdom of the Franks, and sending aid there with many ships and especially during that winter was not easy. Consequently the Franks besieged the island for about three months with innumerable cannon and its inhabitants deserted the castle, which was surrounded by mountains. Its defenders, however, and especially the castle’s governor, were very devoted and maintained the defence, although the fortifications were destroyed. The governor’s daughter is reported to have been so brave, that she killed twelve infidels single-handedly in a battle. Although they were in great need every day they continued fighting until the provisions of the Franks were finished and they were compelled to withdraw, giving up hope of taking the castle.
When the winter was over the sultan prepared to march against Modon and Koron, but he received the news that the kings of the Franks, and especially the ruler of Venice exchanged envoys with one another and had agreed with the krals of Hungary, Poland and the Chekhs that: “Although the sultan conquered Lepanto, we have blocked the Muslim ships and they are finding great difficulties getting out. An attack against the lands of Rumili through the mountains by the kings of Hungary and Poland and the Chekhs will give the Christians the opportunity to subjugate the lands of Islam. [576a] With innumerable ships from the fleets of the kings of the Franks we can subjugate the entire coast of Rumili.” Many envoys were dispatched during these negotiations and they were given much money. After that they communicated with the Pope, who is the leader of the Christian kings and they inform him of every order they give. The Pope consented to their evil plans.

The sultan, however, was informed of these plans of the infidels and at the beginning of 907 (1501) he set off for gaza against the castles of the Franks. He gave orders to the commander generals of the ships in Lepanto, especially Daud Paşa and Muṣṭaфа Beğ, to proceed with their vessels towards Modon and Koron. Ya’ḳub Paşa vezir, Giovan Beğ, İshak Beğ Maṭrakçı and Bıyıklı Maḥmud Beğ were appointed as their assistants, along with about 3,000 piyade and azebs, so that the Franks, despite their joint forces, would not be able to confront them. Although there were some small incidents with the infidels, due to the grandeur of the Muslim commanders and their superiority in number, the Ottoman forces travelled to the castle of Modon without trouble.

Eighth destan (left)

Description of the sultan’s conquest of the castles of the Franks in the Morea, especially Modon and Koron, and the subjugation of Navarino, Vatika and Asopos. [576b-577a] (The author’s kaşida on the description of the Morea and the sultan’s conquests).

[577b] (القصة) The royal mandates announcing the sultan’s conquest record that it occurred in 906 (1500-1). After the conquest of Lepanto the sultan returned to Edirne, where he spent the winter and made preparations for the gaza. Although the conquest of Lepanto was a significant conquest of the lands of the infidels, it was only the beginning of the sultan’s original wish, which was to campaign to all the lands of
Morea and make *gaza* against all its prominent strongholds. He therefore ordered a campaign against the strong castles of Modon and Koron and other illustrious castles. The *memleket* of Morea is situated in a peninsula, and although the ancestors of the sultan had subjugated (other) fortresses and cities, its great cities and castles, such as Modon and Koron, were still under the infidels and comprised a strong weapon in the hands of Venice. [578a] The town of Modon is protected by fortified lands and surrounded by a strong wall from all directions. Whenever the Muslims would appear before their walls, these infidels who were always negligent and drowsy, did not notice the approach of the Muslims because they were protected by their strong fortification. For that reason Muslim sultans have not managed so far to reach its walls or subjugate it, and it was considered impregnable. Whenever the Muslims tried to conquer any possessions of the infidels, large battleships full of numerous men and arms would be sent from all the kingdoms of the Franks and would repel the Muslims.

It is acknowledged that the navy of the Franks is invincible on the surface of the sea and on the coasts, and no one can match them in sea-battles in the use of cannons and firearms. Their numerous troops are fast and destructive as thunderbolts. Their men fight like sea-monsters and they are experts in the use of war-machines, cannons and firearms during the battle. They are quick travellers and able navigators, so they travel fast and confidently, and they are so competent that they can measure distances on the surface of the sea at a glance. In addition, their vessels are large and fast, numerous and powerful. The mouth of every cannon on board their war ships is so wide that it seems that the earth could be used as cannonball. In every ship they have numerous weapons of all sizes and ammunition arranged so that at the moment of battle they shoot uncountable cannonballs and arrows. Nobody can escape their destructive and well-aiming shots. For that reason Modon and Koron and some other coastal forts and towns have never been captured by any of the ancestors of the sultan.

In times of trouble and interregnum these enemies of religion from the lands of the west cause problems in the lands of Islam which lie next to their *vilayet*, and they seize and rob them. [578b] The sultan, whose magnificence spreads over the four directions and the two seas, that is the sea of the north and the sea of the Franks, raised the banners of Islam in ships filled with sailors, artillery and a large army. He sent them on *cihad* against those seaborn *memleket*ts, aiming at the conquest of a number of castles and some mighty vessels. (Praise for the magnificence of the sultan’s fleet and the power of its ships).
That winter, while the sultan was in Edirne, the 300 vessels, which had taken part in the campaign of Lepanto, remained in Lepanto. [579a] When spring came the sultan from Edirne ordered the launching of this campaign on 8 Rama9an of the same year. He sent the troops to the borders of the Morea and at the same time the fleet set off from Gallipoli to assist the army, which was marching towards some strongholds by the sea. [579b] The land forces and the navy surrounded the castle and city of Modon. In the meantime the kings of the Franks had sent 300 formidable battle-ships to assist the king of Venice and oppose the Muslims. These ships and the people of the castle fired against the fleet of the Muslims from both land and sea. (Poetic description of the sea-battle). The infidels suffered many losses, and the sea was filled with the bodies of their dead and with blocks of wood from their shattered ships. So the infidels were defeated and due to opposing winds they were forced to withdraw.

[580a] The news of the Muslim victory over the infidels was spread and celebrated. During this battle the Muslims captured four maunas of the infidels with well-aimed hooks. They boarded the ships and fought the infidels with their swords. More than 500 men were on board each ship, which were also loaded with great amounts of war supplies. After this defeat many of the Franks in the besieged castle of Modon began to lose hope. However, the castle of Modon is well-fortified on the side of the land, and it is also surrounded by the sea. On the side of the mainland there are three deep moats and strong walls. [580b] The infidels are very skilled in the operation of cannon and firearms. Also, the inhabitants of the castle have always the possibility of receiving help from the king of the Franks, and that their fleet will fight the ships of the Muslims. So day and night they never give up the fight and they constantly resist the Muslims before their walls.

The sultan ordered his forces to surround the castle from land and sea. They placed cannons, incendiary pots and mangonels opposite the walls, which they began to strike with great force. [581a] They besieged the castle for forty days and nights, but it was so strong and high, and the heat was so great, that the bravery of the Muslims was not enough. It was well into spring and the climate in that coastal area is so warm that the spring flowers bloom in the middle of the winter. The sultan saw the difficulties caused by the extreme heat during that time of the year. [581b-582a] The troops were getting excessively hot and thirsty, and this situation affected the Muslims’ camp. It is said that the temper of the troops became rebellious and the soldiers suffered extreme hardships. As the soldiers began to rebel and became unable to fight due to the heat, the benevolent sultan was considering withdrawing and he ordered a council to be assembled. As the morale of the troops was broken, insisting
upon subjugating the castle was not advisable. The sultan prayed for the conquest of the castle. (The author’s poem relating the sultan’s prayers).

[582b] The prayers of the sultan for the conquest of the castle were heard, and God’s wrath fell upon the infidels. The infidels were rejoicing, thinking that the siege was coming to its end. At first their joy filled the hearts of the Muslims with disappointment, but in the end it became the reason that led to the conquest of the castle. This strange victory happened as follows: When the sultan had ordered the army to attack the walls of Modon with cannonballs and besieging weapons, the walls had begun to break down and were full of holes. The infidels were compelled to ask for help from the king of Venice, and requested arms and ammunition. So, the governor of Venice sent four sailing ships full of soldiers and supplies. These volunteers were commissioned to get past the ships of the Muslims in every way they could and enter the castle and not to turn away from their aim before the weapons of the enemies.

[583a] The type of these four vessels is the fastest among all ships. Thus these infidels ignored the danger of being killed by the mucahids and did not allow it to distract them from their mission. The four ships suddenly managed to get past the 600 vessels of the Muslims, and before they managed to stop them they had entered the port. The defenders of the castle rejoiced at the arrival of this help in men, supplies and instruments of war. Immediately they set fire to their own ships, out of fear of the Muslims. This new development gave great hope to the defendants against the mucahids. The sultan intended to punish those who were responsible for the defence of his ships, but thanks to his great clemency he did not. Although this new situation seemed to bring more difficulties to the sultan’s army, by God’s will everyone in the castle rushed to the coast and hastily carried the reinforcements into the castle, fearing the Muslim army. Because on the side of the land they were protected by the moats and high fortifications, they left the defence of that side unattended.

[583b] When the mucahids heard the good news that the Franks had set fire to their own ships, they saw it as a sign for the conquest and victory of Islam. While the infidels were busy by the sea, the gazis took the opportunity and approached to enter the castle from the land. Some commanders, such as Sinan Paşa, the emir ül-‘ümera of Anadolu, thought that they could make a breach in the wall where it was not defended and enter the castle. After receiving permission, they crossed the deep moats without any obstruction from the infidels, climbed up the high walls and entered the castle.
When the *mucahids* saw this they all rushed to the walls. There was no restraint in the victory and accumulation of booty.

[584a] When the infidels realised their negligence they tried to repel the Muslims. They rushed to guard the breaches in the walls and stop the *mucahids* from entering, and they began fighting against them within the city. There was a fierce battle inside the castle that lasted the whole day. The infidels defended their city with great force, but the sultan also sent little by little all his forces into the castle. The infidels took refuge in the houses and buildings in various parts of the city and fought the *gazis* from there. [584b] During the night the infidels hid in their houses, where they kept war supplies, naphtha, nitre and firearms. The infidels had used the naphtha and nitre to repel the *gazis*, and as many buildings were built with wood there were great fires throughout, which destroyed most of the city. In the morning the sultan gave again the order to attack and complete the conquest. Afterwards all the inhabitants were gathered in one place and many of them were executed, and the *gazis* gathered great amounts of booty and prisoners. [585a] After the *gazis* gathered innumerable booty, riches and slaves, they returned to their camp. The fires within the city were still burning after six days and had destroyed it almost entirely.

After the *gazis* left the town, the sultan gave order that whoever of the infidels wished to convert to Islam could come forward; they would be accepted and their lives would be spared. A group of them appeared and the sultan gave them his protection. [585b] After that, with an unforgiving severity of punishment the sultan ordered all the infidels to be taken to the seaside and beheaded in retaliation for the Muslims killed during this campaign. Then the sultan ordered that the fires, which were still burning, should be extinguished, and he attended to the repair of the city and its buildings. He appointed the emir ül-ʿümëra, Sinan Paşa, with an army of ğureba as the city’s guardians and the forces of Anadolu made the necessary repairs to its walls. After exhibiting his absolute authority the sultan showed benevolence and erased the signs of destruction. The city was given to the Muslims for residence and the corrupt *zimmis* were pardoned and allowed to return to their places.

These events coincided with the arrival of two captured Hungarian spies. The king of Hungary, who wished to help the Franks, had sent two of his spies to the lands of the Muslims, to inform him of the situation. The governor of Semendire, Aḥmed Beğ Evrenosoğlu, had captured them and sent them to the sultan. These two spies were brought before the city and the remainder of the infidels, so that they would witness the defeat and subjugation of the city. Then they were sent back to Aḥmed Beğ, so that
they would return to the kral of Hungary and relate all they had seen. On the fifth day after the conquest, which was a Friday, the sultan ordered the Muslims to assemble in Modon. Several churches and monasteries of the city were changed into mosques, and one great church was made the *mescid cami*.


[586b] After Modon was conquered and organised, the sultan’s attention turned to the expansion of the lands of Islam and the subjugation of some other castles near Modon. This task was entrusted to ‘Ali Paşa, who preferred first to march towards Koron, despite the suggestions of some others to head to Navarino. He marched with some victorious troops to the walls of that city, and sent messages to its people, asking them to surrender, and as is customary, promising them kind treatment if they yielded. When the city’s rulers learned about the conquest of Modon, they were very afraid. They gave up immediately without resistance, accepted the Muslims’ *aman* and requested that after the submission of their castle they would be allowed to leave the city with their families and properties and return to Farankistan. As this was in agreement with the manner of peaceful acquisition according to religion, their request was granted and they were left to return to their country.

After the news of this conquest was heard, the sultan ordered ‘Ali Paşa to subjugate Koron. The commander of the fleet, Daud Paşa, and vezir Ya’kub Paşa were sent by sea to assist ‘Ali Paşa. The forces of Islam proceeded to Koron from both sides.

[587a] Once again according to the ways of religion ‘Ali Paşa invited the people of Koron to surrender. After some consideration, and knowing about the events in Modon, they sent a message to the sultan’s deputy saying that they trusted his word and they would surrender willingly. In addition, as these infidels were so terrified of the Muslim army they made sure that whoever wished would be allowed to leave, and go by sea to Farankistan with their families and properties. As ‘Ali Paşa wished to subjugate the area entirely, and the exit of these infidels would facilitate it, he let them go. [587b] After the Paşa attended to the necessary arrangements in the city, he returned to the sultan’s service, who rewarded him and his other commanders.

As the principal castles of the Morea had come under the sultan’s authority the thoughts of the *mucahids* were turned to their countries and they wished this difficult campaign to come to an end. The sultan, therefore, decided to return and sent ‘Ali Paşa
with some forces to capture a few other forts which were left in the area, placing the entire region under his capable care. During the winter ‘Ali Paşa remained in the area, in order to take some minor forts and towns, and because the kings of the infidels, especially of Venice, were thinking of numerous ways of retaliating and resisting. Indeed, in the castle of Navarino some infidels who had made a treaty and resided there in peace, were in secret communication with the enemies of religion. They agreed with the kings of the Franks that if they would send ships with an army and ammunition to an agreed place near the castle, the people of the castle would assist them.

[588a] At first some ships with many troops arrived and appeared before the defenders of the castle. They went to the governor of the castle pretending they were bringing him presents, but they had their weapons hidden and thus tricked him, so that the army of the Franks entered the castle without him noticing. They killed the governor and attacked the unaware garrison, and fortified themselves at the top of the fort until the army of the Franks came to relieve them. When the Paşa heard of this he immediately asked for help from some other nearby Muslim forts and concentrated all his attention in order to retake the castle, which was part of the lands of Islam. He also informed the capital and asked for three ships to come to his aid. The sultan sent Kemal Re’is with three ships full of mucahids. The courageous Paşa headed towards the castle with the forces of the Morea by land, so that the Muslim forces would surround the castle from both land and sea, and they would attack it from three sides. In the beginning the Muslims from the port managed to penetrate the infidels’ fleet and capture eight of their vessels. Thus they blocked the way to the castle by sea for the Franks. By holding firmly on the land front, they isolated the defenders of the castle in just one day and they went in by climbing up its walls. They captured about 3,000 infidels, who were all executed in retaliation, and the castle was plundered. The Paşa ordered the repair and reinforcement of the castle’s walls and rewarded those who had performed well in the battle.

In 907 (1501-2) the Paşa decided to subjugate the castles Vatika and Asopos. He first went to Vatika. [588b] Again he invited its people to surrender and promised that they would be granted istimalet. The infidels, however, relying upon the fortifications of their castle, refused his offer. An attack was, therefore, ordered. Many mucahids fell on the first day of this difficult battle, and many others were injured, but nobody showed their great fear before the infidels. When they seized the main castle and killed all the infidels in it, some of the remainder of the defenders’ army fled to the top of the castle, climbing up hanging ropes. The Paşa made an agreement for the
surrender of the castle without further opposition, and the infidels within the castle were given *aman* and were allowed to flee to Farankistan. The gazis gathered so much booty that the sultan’s share of 1/5 of the prisoners came to 400 men, who were sent to him as an announcement for their victory.

After organising the repair of this city’s buildings, the Paşa set off for Asopos. They surrounded the castle and prepared for battle, but the inhabitants knew they weren’t strong enough to repel the *mucahids* and surrendered. The local population were granted *aman* and were given permission to retire. [589a] When the conquest of all the major castles and regions in Morea was consolidated the Paşa took care that the area would be repaired and repopulated and established many welfare foundations throughout it. Finally, this vilayet is near the lands of the west, and the kings of Farankistan always use these sea-routes for maritime trade and travelling. In those times when most of the lands in North Africa were taken from the hands of the Muslims by the infidels, and all the scattered men of the west - and especially the area of Andalus - were asking for refuge from the sultan of the *mucahids*, Morea became the first place where those Muslims could be free from the infidels and find refuge in Muslim lands. The people of those countries rejoiced for this conquest of the Paşa.

*Seventh destan (right)*

Description of some events in Karaman, that occurred during the sultan’s campaign in Modon, and of the suppression of the enemies and the repair of some castles in this area by the grand vezir, Mesih Paşa.

(القصة) While the sultan was occupied in Rumili for the period of two years with the conquests of Lepanto, Modon, Koron, and other castles, some trouble arose. [589b] Some malicious individuals decided to lead a revolt in the vilayet of Karaman. In order to cause trouble they made up trifling rumours. A man of unknown lineage and upbringing by the name of Ibrahim, who lived under the Persian kings, claimed descent from the family of Karaman. As the Bayanduri family had become extinct from that area and had moved to the lands of the Arabs and Syria, some ignoble descendants of this family, allied with Ibrahim. Some men from Taşili, remnants of the ancient mischief-makers of Karaman also allied with him and they brought him to Taşili with the intention of starting a revolt there. All these corrupt men had the
common wish to make Ibrahim their leader. Finding no opposition in Larende they went to that area and oppressed its population.

As soon as he was informed of this, şeyzade Sultan Muḥammed immediately gathered his personal troops along with some forces from Karaman and rushed against these corrupt men. They marched to the mountainous area of Taşili, but the rebels had already left that area. When şeyzade Sultan Ahmed Han was informed of this, he also gathered his own troops and immediately went to Karaman to repel the state’s enemies. Alaeddinler at’ Zulkad’ı’s only son, Şahruh Beg, was also sent with a few thousand men to assist the şeyzades. [590a] When this group of corrupt men were informed of the approach of Sultan Ahmed and his troops they fled their camp, entered the mountainous area of Taşili and set fire to it. As it was the end of autumn, the mountains were full of fallen leaves and snow, it was very cold and there was no way for the army to pass them. Thus Sultan Ahmed decided to return to Amasya and wait for spring before he returned to gain control of these border areas. He also sent şeyzade Muḥammed back to his lands and sent a message to the sultan.

As the sultan had by then returned to Edirne, he did not delay in dealing with this rebellion, but he sent the grand vezir Mesli Paşa with the forces of Anadolu and forces from Karaman, along with some silahdar and ‘ulufeceyan, 3,000 Janissaries and 4,000 men from the Arab forces. Mesli Paşa left Istanbul in Ramādan 907 (March 1502). When he reached Karaman at first he asked for help from şeyzade Sultan Şehinşah, and along with his personal forces they marched to Larende. Sultan Şehinşah and his personal army remained in Larende, and in order to guard this pass in the middle of Taşili they built a great fort there, to assist Mesli Paşa’s return. The army was then divided in three parts. One part was sent against the descendants of Karaman, while another one was sent to the borders of Taşili to prevent them from escaping that area. Also several of the rebels, such as some commanders of the Varsak and other tribes, deserted their own side and asked for pardon, afraid of the vezir’s numerous forces. [590b] The Varsak commanders, therefore, promised to drive out of their lands this enemy of the state and asked again for the sultan’s protection and favour. Mesli Paşa accepted their apologies and gave them pardon. The leader of the rebellion was expelled from these lands, and confused he reached the borders of Syria. He went to Aleppo, where he was taken prisoner by order of the sultan of Egypt, out of loyalty to the sultan of the muçahids. After that his name was never heard of again, and he never managed to raise his head in rebellion again. After these affairs were settled and the enemy of the state was entirely repelled, the grand vezir and the army returned to the capital.
Description of the conquest of the fortress and town of Durazzo, one of the greatest towns of the Franks. Here will be described how the swords and spears of the gazis appeared in those lands, and how the Muslim warriors day and night spread Islam to the lands of the infidels.

In 908 (1502-3) the governor of Elbasan was Mehmed Beg b. Isa Beg gazi. This vilayet was adjacent to the castle of Durazzo, which was one of the greatest cities of the infidels and heavily fortified. In that matter it was considered as a second Istanbul. It lay by the sea and was a great settlement and port through which most of the ships of the Franks passed. Most of the time these ships were merchant-ships. The Ottoman sultans, who had marched against Albania, were not able to subjugate this castle because it lay on the coast of the sea of the Franks and its conquest was impossible without a joint attack of a large fleet able to face the numerous fleet of the Franks. In the time of Bayezid II, however, great successes were achieved at sea, such as the conquests of Modon, Koron, Lepanto and other castles. The subjugation of this city and castle could not be imagined without the attack of the sultan's numerous fleet.

However, Mehmed Beg b. Isa Beg returned to the area of Elbasan and revived the cihad against them. Durazzo was surrounded by the lands of Islam, as most of Albania had been subdued by the father of the before mentioned, Isa Beg, and his grandfather, Ishak Beg. So the abovementioned emir constantly had in mind to conquer neighbouring Durazzo and attacked it with his warriors. Indeed, from the reports of the informers and the spies of the Christians it became known that the garrison of the castle, was always negligent. Having confidence in their strength and safety, those who were appointed to its defence were not expecting a war and would not be able to defend the city. Mehmed Beg saw the opportunity to gather booty.

After a council with some other emirs and governors of the area they agreed to raid this neglected stronghold. They gathered some brave warriors and hid them, and they themselves headed towards the castle with just a few mucahids, much fewer than the infidels. The infidels then thought that the mucahids were only a small force, and without much regard they rushed out of the castle to fight the Muslims. They began pursuing the Muslim forces, but suddenly the hidden forces of the gazis appeared at the foot of the walls and cut off the way to the infidels who were trying to return to the
castle. When the infidels realised that they tried to withdraw, but the mucahids attacked them and thus took the opportunity to enter through the strong gates of the castle. Thus the Muslims were both in and out of the castle and the defenders were defeated. These mucahids, with good guidance and correct advice, managed to subject a castle that before then had been invincible to the attacks of the Muslims. The mucahids gathered plenty of booty, informed the sultan of these events and sent to him the keys of the city.

The sultan issued a firman about the organisation of this great castle. As this old stronghold was largely deserted by its inhabitants and there was much damage, up to one third of the original wall, he ordered the army to fortify it. They were divided into several groups, strengthened its fortifications, and left out the rest of the houses so that whoever of the re'aya wanted could live in them. Thus the city was divided into three parts by walls, which separated the inhabited areas from the old foundations. Many people came to settle there from the memalik of Rumili. In addition, 1,000,000 akçe from the sultan’s Treasury were spent on wages for the workers and now the town is inhabited by many re'aya and citizens from various places.

*Tenth destan (left)*

[592a] Description of the intention of the Franks to attack with their enormous ships and conquer the island of Midilli from the lands of Islam, the battle with the Muslims and how the nephew of the king of France was killed in it and the retreat of the defeated commanders of Venice.

(القصة) In Rabi’ I 907 (September-October 1501) the king of Venice allied with the king of France, which is a great kingdom of the Franks and dominates the other kingdoms. These two infidel rulers possess great wealth, army and fleets. They were infuriated by the conquest of Lepanto, Modon and Koron and with religious bigotry they agreed to take revenge. As all the conquered lands were formerly Venetian possessions, the king of France promised that he would send to Venice great sums of money and every kind of help and manpower to assist her, and they prepared a campaign in which they would combine forces and expenses. [592b] According to this plan, two hundred vessels, armed and fully equipped for war with men, cannons and tufeks, set out to sea. The nephew of the king of France was in charge of this fleet. They made an agreement of friendship with other kings and rulers of the infidels,
and set off with the intention to conquer the island of Midilli, which is now part of the lands of Islam.

The infidels sent ashore Midilli about 60,000 men and suddenly began to bombard the castle from all sides. For twenty days they continued to fire against the walls of the castle, which, hit by so many bullets and cannonballs, began to break down. Every day, when night fell, the population little by little abandoned the castle. When this became known, șehzade Sultan Korkud was in Manisa, and the defence of the island was under his care. He sent 800 of his men to aid the castle, and the governor of Karesi, which is opposite to Midilli, also rushed there with some forces. As the castle was surrounded with infidels, however, and most of the island’s settlements were occupied by the Christian forces, it was difficult for the Muslim army to get ashore. However, small vessels came to the shore of Ayazmand and helped the șehzade’s gazis to cross and get to the island in every way they could. From hidden places and with the help of the people they managed to enter the castle.

The infidels were surprised to see the Muslim army suddenly appearing by the castle, and the two armies began fighting. [593a] Many Muslims were killed, but others despite their many injuries managed to get to the foot of the castle to safety. Every day they renewed the fight with the infidels. When the sultan was informed of this, he sent many ships to their assistance. The vezir Ahmed Paşa Hersekoğlu was at the head of the army, and Sinan Paşa, the emir ül-ümera of Anadolu, was in charge of the fleet, which was ordered to transfer the army of Anadolu to Ayazmand, which is half a day’s distance from Midilli. When the Turkish forces arrived they saw the difficult situation in which the Muslims had been, and that a large part of the wall had been destroyed by the cannon-balls and parts of the city were levelled.

On the following morning the Franks made another assault and attacked the Muslims through the breaches of the wall. The commander of the army of the Franks, who was the king of France’s nephew and new to military affairs, depending on their power and the weakness of the defenders of the castle, led the troops and tried to enter the castle through one of the breaches. However, one of the mucahids who happened to be there killed him by cutting off his head. [593b] The French army took the body of their leader and returned to their homeland. The Venetians, who had put much effort into this campaign and counted on the cooperation of the French, saw their plan breaking down and their troops got scared and confused. Upon the news of the approach of the Muslim army, the army of the infidels scattered to save themselves. The French troops got separated from the Venetians and the leaders of both groups boarded their ships
and went straight to their countries. This good news of the Muslim victory was spread everywhere. The news also reached Sinan Paşa, the emir ül-ümera who was heading towards Midilli with the troops of western Anadolu, along with the order to strengthen the fortification of the castle. The war supplies deserted by the infidels were collected for the defence of the castle and thus avenged the death of some Muslims.

Left junah

Actions, education and life of the state
officials

[607a] The presentation of the qualities, training and classification of the pillars of the sultan’s state and the conditions of their appointment, dismissal, death and succession to their posts, from the beginning of this reign. [607b] The sultan’s orders, commands and prohibitions are considered as the utmost manifestations of his everlasting power and royalty, which can be seen in his vigilance and attention. A ruler’s eminence is manifested and supported by the skill and eminence of his loyal servants.

In Rabi‘ I 887 (April-May 1482), the first year of this sultan’s reign, in the manner of the Eastern sovereigns this sultan donated robes of honour to each of his men and they were promoted to high positions. [608a] Loyal personal slaves, true friends and intimate companions were all very skilful. All the men appointed by his father and holding established positions, who had always showed good-will and were well-wishing assistants to the Muslim state, were respected, and each of them was appointed to one of the affairs of the state or religion and placed in high positions of merit and authority. All statesmen were, in sum, divided into six categories (sinif), dealing with the most important affairs of the state.

First sinif: it is divided in two sections (guftar). In the first one are listed former vezirs, who have been removed from the position, either by death or dismissal, and in the second are listed those currently holding the post. The first vezir and pillar of this state’s assistants, who was one of the most worthy servants among the men in the sultan’s court, İshak Paşa, was among the personal servants and a falconer of sultan Murad. During both that sultan’s and Meḥmed II’s reigns he was constantly appointed to various offices. At the time of the present sultan’s enthronement, of all the old and renewed notables he was the best in office, life and position. His intellect and counsel
was more than all the young and old during these two reigns. Finally his good attendance to the welfare of religion and the world reached its end. Because of his guardianship of Constantinople in the manner that has been described before concerning the sultan’s enthronement, he kept his post of knowledge and goodwill, so the sultan made him grand vezir. He remained in this post until 888 (1483). When he grew old and feeble the sultan removed him from the position of vezir and he retired to Salonica, where he remained inactive until his death.

Another vezir was Muştafa Paşa b. Hamza Beğ, who had reached high posts under the former sultan. The current sultan also showed him great preference and entrusted to him the post of vezir at the beginning of his reign. But the duration of his office lasted less than a year, until his death.

Another eminent vezir was Ayas Paşa, who was one of the sultan’s servants. Before the sultan’s enthronement he was a vezir and he remained in his previous post after the succession. The first time Cem Sultan went against his brother, Ayas Paşa was placed in charge of the vanguard of the sultan’s army in Bursa, where he died bravely in the battle. His time as vezir lasted less than six months.

Another vezir and courageous general was Aḥmed Paşa Gedik, who reached his high position from among the group of the sultan’s personal slaves. He was greatly successful in his conquests of the lands of the infidels and the Muslims and he was always placed in charge of the forces of Rum. He had been sent by the seventh sultan (i.e. Mehmed II) to Apulia in the lands of the Franks, at the time of his death. Many castles and towns of these lands submitted to Islam. When he heard the news of the sultan’s death and the succession to the throne with the help of God he left the borders and went to offer his services to the sultan. When the sultan confronted his brother Cem Sultan, Aḥmed Paşa was sent to the battle, and in 886 (1481-2) he was entrusted with the high position of vezir.

Another vezir was Kasım Paşa, who was a virtuous lord and wise counselor. He was one of the former sultan’s teachers. At the time of the present sultan he was appointed vezir. Of all the vezirs of his time he was renowned for his virtues and qualities and he was often a model among his colleagues for his pious way of life and he was highly esteemed by the men of faith. From 887 (1482-3) until recently he remained in this position until his death.

His successor was another vezir who was distinguished in the battles against the infidels, Daud Paşa, one of the loyal servants and personal servants of Mehmed II. At
the time of the sultan’s succession to the throne he held the post of the emir ül-tümera of Anadolu. During the days of the succession he gave a manifestation of his loyalty. In the initial stages of the succession of this sultan, during the race between the two princes, Daud Paşa’s worthy services were undeniable, and as a result of these manifestations of bravery and loyalty in every way to the sultan’s service he was promoted to high positions, in view of his sedateness, wisdom and lawfulness. In 887 (1482-3) he was made vezir and shortly thereafter he became grand vezir. He participated in the conquests which have already been mentioned above, and in all the works and issues of his high post he excelled with his virtues and qualities. For fifteen years he was the first among all statesmen, and on the 24th Recep 902 (18 March 1498) he was dismissed and retired to Dimetoka, where he died on the 4th Rabi’ I 904 (20 October 1498). During his lifetime the world benefited from his just rule so much, that his son, Muştafa Beş, was married into the family of the sultan. He always attended to the rebellions and troubles on the frontiers of the lands of Islam led by the infidels, and the high care of management and order within the kingdom. No other vezir of the Ottoman dynasty has been so able, and no other vezir or emir has been so powerful and wealthy as he was. After his demise, thus, his property passed on to his heirs. The total of his inheritance amounted to five hundred thousand akçe, of which for each thousand akçe, twenty akçe were the partition of inheritance. And these are apart from property and slaves and interior possessions, which comprise the inheritance that is counted separately. This property was dedicated to charitable works in Istanbul. There was a mescid, a medrese, an ‘imaret, ribâf and hankâh and a mektephane, [609b] in which the hâfitz received daily twelve akçe, the imam ten, each hafiz twenty, the mu‘arrif five and each of the two mûezzin twelve. In the medrese each teacher received daily forty akçe, each of the servants five, and each of the sixteen students received thirty two akçe and two meals. Every day the total of the expenditure of the zavîye for victuals and other expenses was approximately twenty two akçe.

Another vezir was Mesîh Paşa, who was one of the slaves who were educated under Meşmed II and held a high place among the sultan’s men. As he was a loyal servant and possessed many qualities he advanced to high positions. The sultan made him a vezir, and at the time of the succession he was entrusted with the government and superintendence of the borders. In 889 (1484), after the dismissal of Kasım Paşa, Mesîh Paşa was appointed vezir in his place. He was sent to the borders with the infidels where he continually attended to the study of religious sciences and led a life devoted to divine worship. After he returned to the palace he was appointed grand
vezir, in which position he remained until Cemazi’ I 907 (November - December 1501), when, while he was on his way to the kazı of Galata there was an accidental explosion at the imperial tophane. Mesih Paşa was injured by a blazing cannonball that fell upon him and died two days later. The kazı of Galata, who was standing next to the vezir, died instantly.

[610a] Another vezir was Mehmed Paşa b. Hzir Beğ, who during the first years of the sultan’s reign was veli and governor of Hungary and for some time was the overseer of some vilayet in Rumili. In 888 (1483) he was made vezir and remained in that position for two years until 890 (1485), when he was made lala of the young şehzade Aḥmed Han. Mehmed Paşa spent the rest of his life as vezir and lala of the şehzade until his death in 904 (1498-9). As works of charity he left a medrese and a hanlâh in Amasya, and his son, as his successor, is in the service of this dynasty.

Another vezir was Ahmed Paşa Fenari. When his country was conquered in the times of Mehmed II, he left and remained hiding for a while in India. The current sultan after his enthronement ordered that Ahmed Paşa would be allowed to return to his country. He travelled through Persia and Azerbaycan and returned to the sultan’s service. As the Fenari family had long been established, he was first appointed to the position of nişancı in 888 (1483). In 890 (1485) he was made vezir in the place of Mesih Paşa, but in Rabi’ II 892 (March-April 1486) he was removed from the post of vezir and until the end of his life he remained inactive in Bursa.

Another vezir was a lofty Mevîlana coming from an old educated and important family, Ibrahim Paşa b. Halil Paşa. He was from the Çandarlı family, which has been in the service of the Ottomans since their beginning, and has held high offices of all kinds in the government. There have, thus, been many references to them in these eight books, and this Ibrahim Paşa served the sultan while he was in Amasya. When he moved to the capital and took the throne, the sultan made Ibrahim Paşa a vezir and appointed him as lala of şehzade Aḥmed Han. [610b] In 892 (1486-7) he was appointed kazı ‘asker and later on, in Şafer of the same year he became vezir, until he advanced to the position of grand vezir. He died in the campaign to Lepanto, in 905 (1499). He established many charitable foundations, the best of which are a camî and a medrese in Istanbul.

Another vezir was ‘Alaeddin ‘Ali Paşa, who used to be emir ül-‘üméra of Rumili, and at the end of Rabi’ II 892 (March-April 1486) was appointed vezir in the place of Ahmed Paşa Fenari. Until 903 (1497-8) he had a permanent place near the sultan, but
in that year he was removed from the position of vezir and was appointed governor of some towns and areas in the Morea, and since then he has remained in that position.

Another vezir, distinguished among the mucahids, was İskender Paşa, who was among the chosen men of Meḥmed II. At the time of the death of that sultan he was governor of Bosnia. Due to his courageous service under the present sultan in 894 (1489) he advanced to the position of vezir, and in this position he attended to his duties with excellence, and some of his achievements about his gazas and bravery have been recorded in the stories of the sultan’s conquests. He remained a vezir until 901 (1491). The sultan, after removing him from the office of vezir, sent him to attend to affairs in the memleket of Bosnia in 904 (1498-9), where he remained until the end of his life in 912 (1506-7). Among the virtuous works that he has left behind to perpetuate his name, is his own son Muṣṭafa Beğ, who has shown that he inherited his father’s bravery in gaza. [611a] His boldness and gazas have been recorded in the Persian and Turkish languages.

Another vezir was Ahmed Paşa Hersekoğlu, who originates from the family of the governors of Hersek (Erzegovina). In his youth he abandoned his nation and ancestors and joined Islam, and thus he reached high positions in the palace of Islam. Sultan Meḥmed II had great respect for him. His power among all the statesmen was great and because of his virtuous and great mind and his many graces in various arts of singing and others related to it, and due to his beauties and graces, day by day he was advancing to higher posts, so that at the time of the sultan’s death he was emir ül-'ümera of Anadolu and related to the current sultan by marriage. As a result of his position, when the sultan set off to the capital Ahmed Paşa supported him. After his enthronement the sultan re-established Ahmed Paşa as emir ül-'ümera and commander of the army for his ability in command. He is therefore mentioned in the previous descriptions of the conquests and wars. In 902 (1496-7) he entered a string of placements as grand vezir. For seven years he held the keys to the government of the state and the treasury with his righteousness and wise advice, and for three years he alone was the grand vezir, until there was trouble among the ships of the Franks and he was sent to protect the coasts of Rum from them, and he was sent to the Straits and Gallipoli. As he was considered among the greatest men he was entrusted with the command of the fleet in order to take care of the affairs in Gallipoli. He was involved in a series of conflicts with the kings and rulers of the Franks.

Another brave and loyal servant was Ya’kub Paşa, who was an old intimate of the sultan. For his distinctions in the battlefield he was promoted, and in 899 (1493-4) he
was made emir ül-"ümera and beğerbeği of Rumili. [611b] He was a worthy servant and was distinguished in the gaza among all Muslims. For his past conquests and his assistance to the sultan he was raised to the position of vezir in 903 (1498). He remained in that post for a bit over four years, but due to injuries he suffered in the joints and muscles, he withdrew from the divan and settled in retirement in Salonica.

Another vezir was Daud Paşa, who was one of the personal servants of sultan Meḥmed II. His education was a step to divine favour, and due to his intimacy he inherited and retained the right to serve the present sultan. Being an excellent servant, he remained in his former position until he was appointed nişancı in 899 (1484). In 893 (1487) he was promoted for his high ability and knowledge to the position of commander of the drums and flags. In Muharrem 908 (June-July 1502) the sultan promoted him in his absence from the governorship of Nicopolis in Wallachia, to the position of vezir. He remained in that position for three years, until he fell on the battlefield, in 911 (1505-6).

Second guftar: Report on the state officials and the high vezirs who are currently holding the post. The men of the Triad, and all those in charge of the state’s affairs. The first of the three men of the ‘holy Trinity’ is 'Alaeddin 'Ali Paşa, who used to be a personal servant of the present sultan. [612a] At the beginning he served as a close servant of the sultan before his accession to the throne. For his loyalty he was promoted as head of the troops, so at the beginning of this reign he was emir ül-"ümera of the memleket of Karaman, and for his bravery while in this position he was further promoted as commander and governor in Semendire and defender of the Hungarian borders. He became renowned for his bravery during that time and as a result he was promoted to emir ül-"ümera and beğerbeği of Rumili. While in this post he was successfully in charge of all matters small and large, friendly and hostile. When the sultan ascertained that this was a servant with sound judgement and worthy of great dignities, he bestowed on him the high post of vezir in the divan. Because of his great sagacity he was able to be in charge of everything, so in 892 (1486) he was appointed vezir, in charge of the affairs of state and economy. Indeed, in those days of his vezirate the fame of the excellencies of this vezir reached the remotest parts of the Arab and Persian world. Every man of education entered his service with the hope of glory and all eloquent men praised his works and virtues. [612b] He remained vezir from Rabi‘ II 892 (March-April 1486) until Zilkâde 903 (July-August 1498). In that year he was dismissed for various internal and external reasons, and he was entrusted with the governing of some towns and regions until 904 (1498-9), when the sultan set off for the gaza against Lepanto, Modon and Koron, as has been described above. The
conquest of these castles was facilitated and made possible by this vezir. The administration and government of the conquered cities and castles, and the passes and fortresses of Koron, Modon and several other regions in Morea were entrusted to ‘Ali Paşa. Indeed in the period of seven years, sometimes with kindness and favour and sometimes with punishment and severity, he governed peacefully. His domains prospered and the great kings of the Franks were forced into submission to the sultan, and therefore this region was rendered secure from the danger of rebellions. The sultan showed great reverence to him for his good advice, which he often asked. In 912 (1506-7) he was summoned in order to attend to the organisation of some important state affairs. [613a] When he arrived at the palace and appeared before the sultan he was entrusted with the position of the grand vezir. He erected a mosque in the capital, on which great amounts were spent, but it has not yet been completed. No other buildings as beautiful as the zaviye, hankâh and medrese which are to be adjoined to it can be found. [613b] In the medrese the salary of the teacher is forty akçe, for each of its twenty students two akçe, for the preacher and the prayer leader twenty akçe, the reciter of the Koran and the reciter at ceremonies five akçe each. And the rest of the expenses for the servants and the victuals are similar. In addition two more mosques in the capital have been repaired and a preacher, a prayer leader and a reciter of the Koran have been appointed in each. Numerous other charitable foundations he has endowed in other cities give hope that he will rise even higher in rank, esteem and education, because while he was vezir he showed negligence in the care of a multitude of affairs concerning the pious, and he needed to expand his greatness and the favours of the sultan. He tormented those in need with his crooked disposition and his roughness. But the army’s preference balances his wickedness and crimes.

The second of the three men of the Triad is Muştafa Paşa. He was gifted with excellent virtues as a sultan’s servant and was distinguished among the other servants. He kept close connections with learned men, and was exceptional in the establishment of pious foundations along with his attendance to important affairs of the state. From the beginning of his service in the various posts of the state he spent his income on the restoration and care of charitable foundations. [614a] His power is still increasing due to his virtues and his occupation with every kind of service. After he was brought to serve at the palace he was sent by the sultan to his brother Cem Sultan with a message for the great kings of the infidels. During this trip, which was full of dangers at sea and all kinds of enemies, he made agreements and conditions with the kings of the Franks. He returned from such dangers having arranged everything according to the wishes of the sultan. Consequently in Zil'kade 903 (June-July 1498) the sultan
appointed him emir ül-'üméra of Rumili. During this office his virtues and many manifestations of his merit were noticed by the sultan, so in Cemazi’ II 907 (December 1501-January 1502) he was made vezir. His excellent service in that post brought about his promotion to grand vezir. He erected charitable buildings in the capital, which included a mescid cami’ and a medrese with a zaviye and a ribat for the service of the people. [614b] One of the dervishes of the order was placed at the head of these institutions. The needs of the dervishes are taken care of in the medrese and the zaviye. The salary of the tutor is fifty akçe and for its twenty rooms each student receives two akçe for their food. The şeyh of the hançâh receives twenty akçe for two meals, and for all the poor and the passing travellers every day. The preachers receive all together 12 akçe and the prayer leaders 10 akçe for the five daily prayers, and the caller to prayer and the reciter of the Koran each receive food enough to be full. When all these buildings were completed and their incomes and expences arranged, the sultan gave honours to the vezir for his compassion. Upon his arrival at the monastery at the time of its customary festivals, the sultan gave numerous rich gifts. (Description of the gifts offered and the rest of the ceremonies on the occasion). [615a] The date of these buildings’ completion and the name of its founder the vezir were written down in an inscription placed at the entrance.

The third of the three men of the Triad is Yahya Paşa, who was one of Mehmed II’s slaves. During his training he was appointed to high positions. At the time of Mehmed II’s death he was serving in the lands of Rumili. His virtues and benefits increased, and he was distinguished in the battlefields of cihad. While he was governor in these lands, he showed great service and bravery and abilities as an army commander, and he was braver than all his equals, and day by day he was raised in the sultan’s esteem. [615b] In 893 (1487) he was appointed emir ül-‘üméra of Rumili. In 899 (1493-4) the sultan sent him to the significant frontier region of Bosnia, to protect the empire’s borders and resist the sinful. There again he distinguished himself in the battlefields of cihad, so that in 908 (1502-3) the sultan summoned him and sent him to suppress a rebellion in the lands of Iran and the frontier regions of Rum. He was made emir ül-‘üméra of Anadolu and he strengthened Islam by suppressing the great rebellions on the borders with Iran. The subjects and troops were in awe of him. When the post of the emir ül-‘üméra of Rumili was left vacant in 909 (1503-4) after the death of the son-in-law of the sultan, Sinan Paşa, Yahya Paşa was privileged by affiliation with the sultan’s family by marriage, and he was appointed to that position. The army was improved by his presence. He bestowed a charitable foundation, a beautiful mescid cami’ with an ‘imaret and a ribat in Skopje. All his descendants are brave cavaliers
and are all appointed as commanders in regions where their courage is needed. [616a]

As proof of his bravery the following story will be given, from the gazas in Bosnia. At that time there was a governor of great virtues known as Ḥamza Bali Beg. He fought against the infidels and carried out the gaza in Bosnia and against the coward kral of Hungary and even Russia, and all men in the lands of the Franks feared him.

One day during a short break from warfare the news came from the borders that an army of infidels, altogether ten thousand men, were besieging the castle (؟) (عُزْرَيْن). The commander of the gazis was anxious about repelling them. Ḥamza Beg kept asking his father for permission to come with him with his four hundred men. At the time he was fourteen years old. This brave man opened a breach in the wall. His father told him: ‘Your eyes have seen the brightness of the state and religion; you are fourteen years old, you haven’t seen any battles.’ He replied ‘Do not say I am too young. Although the army of the enemies is large, it is enough for me that God will be on our side.’ When he saw the braveness of his son he prayed that he would be safe. After he received his permission, his son went himself to his troops. He sent men to find out about the condition of the enemies. The news came that they were all off guard and that they were all very drunk. [616b] So he gathered 400 men in the castle, secured it from being entered by the enemies, and then attacked them with great bravery. He pursued the enemies to their castle, where there was a fierce battle and the castle was set on fire. Eventually they defeated the enemies and gathered lots of booty.

Second ṣinif of the men of state. The emir ül-‘ümera and the beğerbeği of the sultan’s provinces, from the beginning of this reign. It is divided in two guftar.

First guftar: Report on those who used to be emir ül-‘ümera but now have died or have been dismissed. In 887 (1482), in the high post of Rumili the greatest of all emirs and vezirs was Yahya Paşa, a report about whom has already been given. Meḥmed II made him emir ül-‘ümera and by order of the present sultan his appointment was reconfirmed. In 887 Yahya Paşa was dismissed and the position was first entrusted to Daud Paşa, and after the execution of Gedik Aḥmed Paşa, who was grand vezir, the position of the vezir was given to Daud Paşa. Meḥmed Paşa b. Hızır Paşa, who was governor of Semendire, was appointed emir ül-‘ümera of Rumili. In 888 (1483) the beforementioned Meḥmed Paşa was promoted to vezir and the position of emir ül-‘ümera of Rumili was given to İskender Paşa, who was one of the sultan’s personal servants.
Halil Paşa remained in that office until the battle between Rum and Syria, when he showed total inefficiency and indifference and the sultan had him dismissed and replaced by Yahya Paşa, in 893 (1488). Six years had passed since his first appointment. He was removed from that post due to some matters of rebellion against the sultan. The position was then given to Ya'kub Paşa, who has been mentioned previously. In 903 (1497-8) Ya'kub Paşa was promoted to vezir of the divan, and the position of emir ül-'üméra was given to Muṣṭafa Paşa, who is now an eminent vezir. He remained in that position for four years, until 907 (1501-2), when Muṣṭafa Paşa was made vezir and Sinan Paşa, who was beğerbeği of Anadolu, was made emir ül-'üméra. [617a] Sinan Paşa remained in that position for two years, but the position became vacant when he developed a fatal disease. So in 909 (1503-4) Yahya Paşa, who at that time was emir ül-'üméra of Anadolu, was made emir ül-'üméra of Rumili in his absence. It was the fifth time he was appointed to that position. Two years later, in 911 (1505-6) he was made vezir, a post which he still holds today.

Appendix: Report on the present emir ül-'üméra of Rumili, that is the illustrious emir Ḥasan Paşa, who like the beforementioned emir was educated as one of the sultan’s servants. He was wise and knowledgeable in religious issues and the sultan took advice from him on these matters and every day the sultan’s esteem became greater for him. Subsequently the sultan gave him hope and high promises for promotions. According to recruitment and vacancies the just sultan first made him emir of memaliks and vilayets and from every position he promoted him quickly, so that he fulfilled his promises. So the sultan, in the beginning of his reign made him from emir of Karaman, emir ül-'üméra of Anadolu and in a short while he promoted him from that post as well. In Şafer 911 (July 1505) he was made emir ül-'üméra of the capital and the memalik of Rumili, and he was in charge of the troops of the mucahids. His hard work had gathered for him all the ingredients of happiness, as that post was the most distinguished of all, and along with his magnificence and wealth his fame also increased.

[617b] Second guftar: Report on the emir ül-'üméra of the provinces and army of Anadolu, from the beginning of the reign until the present time. When the imperial throne was passed on in succession everyone who had hopes of acquiring a post or remaining in their place rushed to the palace. At that time, that is 886 (1481), emir ül-'üméra of Anadolu was the late Sinan Paşa, by appointment of sultan Meḥmed II. As he was related to the current sultan by marriage, he was very loyal to him. At the beginning of this reign he was left in that position, but in 889 (1484) by the sultan’s order he was appointed in Gallipoli, as governor of the thoroughfares and the ships,
and emir ül-'ümera of Anadolu became Ahmed Paşa Hersekoğlu. When Ahmed Paşa, was caught prisoner in the battle between the troops of Rumili and Syria in 891 (1486), Sinan Paşa was again placed in the same post. When Ahmed Paşa, after peace was made with the sultan of Egypt, was released from captivity and returned, rushing back to offer his services to the sultan's court in 894 (1489), according to the previous order they gave the post of emir ül-'ümera of Anadolu to Ahmed Paşa and Sinan Paşa again was sent to Gallipoli, until 907 (1501-2), when he was transferred and promoted to the position of emir ül-'ümera of Rumili. Yahya Paşa, who became related to the sultan by marriage, was made emir ül-'ümera of Anadolu. In Receb 909 (December 1503) Sinan Paşa passed away and Yahya Paşa was promoted from emir ül-'ümera of Anadolu to that of Rumili, and Hasan Paşa, who is now emir ül-'ümera of Rumili, was given the other post.

Appendix: Report on the appointment of the emir ül-'ümera of Anadolu to the noble emir Karagöz Paşa. The sultan's insight is like the sunlight, and he could tell truth from lies and fallacies and distinguish the good servants. Even if their appearance looked weak at first, the sultan would know what their potential would be after a good training. Whoever was chosen would then be in his favour, he would be promoted and have a good destiny. Therefore, the sultan saw in the agreeable appearance of Karagöz Paşa his joyful nature. By means of his skilful nature among the servants he reached great intimacy with the sultan, and several times with his talents he passed all the tests in all aspects and was raised above his equals. [618a] In 907 (1501-2) he was placed in charge of the Janissaries, where he served with rectitude and worthiness, and in 908 (1502-3) he was sent as governor to Kastamonu. In 911 (1505-6), when Hasan Paşa was promoted from emir ül-'ümera of Anadolu to the imperial divan, Karagöz Paşa was appointed emir ül-'ümera of Anadolu in his absence.

Third sınıf: Report on the kazi 'askers and the judges of the sultan from among the educated servants of the court. Thanks to God that from the beginning of the Ottoman dynasty the laws are in the hands of virtuous men who legislate in accordance to the şeri‘a and the Koran for all matters of the state in government and the economy and they are in charge of the people of the şeri‘a and the nation (millet). Consequently all affairs of war and authority and all orders about mankind were arranged according to the obligatory signs, because the kazi 'askers and the 'ulema act in accordance to the şeri‘a. All important affairs of the state regarding the differences between infidels and the Muslims at the high divan are dependent upon the knowledge of the kazi 'asker. Thus government is regulated by the wisdom of the kâzis and the müftis. This class is preferred for high offices among all the men of office.
**First guftar:** about some kazi and 'ulema who held office in the sultan’s divan and now, by death or dismissal are no longer in their position. When the previous sultan died, the kazi 'asker of Rumili was Mevlana Muşlieddin, known as Kestelli. He was the author of many works, which are very famous among the 'ulema of Rum, and the current sultan confirmed his position according to his father’s orders. For a while he remained in that position, and in 890 (1485) he was removed and was charged with the writing of the scrolls of the imperial orders. Until the time of his death in 901 (1495-6) he remained out of office.

After him, the kazi 'asker of Anadolu was Mevlana Muhammed Şamşunlu, who was an expert in religious studies. He served that post with justice until his death. When Mevlana Muşlieddin Kestelli was removed from kazi 'asker of Rumili, he was succeeded by Ibrahim Paşa b. Halil Paşa, who became kazi 'asker of Rumili according to inheritance and because he truly deserved the position, and also because for a while before the enthronement he had been in the service of Mehmed II and had been educated under him. In 891 (1486) the sultan, according to the ancestral laws, promoted Ibrahim Paşa as a result of his good advice and loyal service and placed him in the high post of vezir. Mevlana Vildan was appointed to the position of kazi 'asker of Rumili, which had thus been vacated. In Rabi’ I 893 (January-February 1488) Mevlana Vildan died and ‘Alaeddin ‘Ali Çelebi Fenari, who at the time of the previous sultan for a long while had held high positions as a governor and was very close to the sultan. He had served in both positions of kazi 'asker of Anadolu and kazi 'asker of Rumili. At the time of the present sultan, in Zilhicce 888 (January 1484) he had been appointed kazi 'asker of Anadolu. When Ibrahim Paşa was promoted to vezir the position of kazi 'asker of Rumili was entrusted to ‘Ali Çelebi, and Mevlana Vildan was put in his old place as kazi 'asker of Anadolu, until Rabi’ I 893 (January-February 1488), when ‘Ali Çelebi was removed from Rumili and was sent to Bursa as a teacher where he was paid a high salary in that post, and until the end of his life he remained secluded and out of office. Mevlana Vildan replaced him, but he did not live long. The post of kazi 'asker of Rumili was transferred to Mevlana ‘Ali Fenari, who was called Fenari ‘Alisi, and before that he was kazi 'asker of Anadolu. When he was promoted to Rumili, his position in Anadolu was given to Mevlana Muşlieddin, known as Hacıhasanoğlu. [619a] When Fenari ‘Alisi died, in 897 (1491-2), Hacıhasanoğlu was placed in his position in Rumili. He was above all his predecessors in that post, and he served from 893 (1487-8) until 911 (1505-6). In 897 (1491-2) he took over the post of kazi 'asker of Anadolu from Mevlana Fenari ‘Alisi, who was promoted to the post of Rumili. He remained in that post until Rabi’ I 907 (September-October 1501).
Of all the great ‘ulema and knowledgeable governors since the beginning of the world one of the most famous for his knowledge in those days was Mevlana Ahmed Gûrani, who in the time of sultan Murad had been tutor and Hoca of sultan Mehmed gažî, and until the end of his long life he continued to serve him. After the demise of the sultan Mehmed II, he served the present sultan and his name was among those of the excellent ministers of the state. He was respected for the seventy years that he served Islam under the sultans, always spreading the knowledge of the learned. He died in 895 (1489-90).

[619b] Another man of knowledge and excellence in the sultan’s service was Mevlana Bedreddin Hoca. He was of Kurdish origin and had held the position of the sultan’s tutor and Hoca. He was distinguished among the ‘ulema and he died in 903 (1497-8).

Another famous governor, and a master of the sciences of Abu ‘Ali Sina, was Mevlana Kutbeddin Ahmed b. Hakim Re‘is, who used to be an intimate friend and companion of the late sultan Abu Se‘id Timuri. After that sultan’s death and the destruction of his state in Persia he came to the lands of Rum along with others and he continued to serve the present sultan. He died in Istanbul in 903 (1497-1498).

Another glorious man was the famous Mevlana Ataullah Kirmani, who was an expert in mathematics and astronomy. Because of his excellency in these sciences he was among the privileged companions of the sultan from the beginning of this reign until 905 (1499-1500). He died in Istanbul in that year.

Second guftar: About the men who hold currently the position of kâzi ‘asker. Because under this sultan of the mucahids legal decisions and the attendance of the orders of religion are always entrusted to the men of law and faith, they always try to appoint as governors of Islam and the Muslims one of the men learned in religion, and also to train others in the same skills and knowledge. After a thorough search in the lands of Rum and among the group of the educated, the sultan became so well acquainted with them, that when the time to select he chose very loyal and knowledgeable men. One of them was exceptional. [620a] When the glorious ‘Abdu’r-Rahman was appointed to the post of kâzi and governor in Edirne the sultan issued an order with which he summoned him. He promoted him because he was great and worthy. In the beginning he was kâzi ‘asker of Anadolu and the post of Rumili, which was of higher rank was given to Hacîhasanoğlu, who had precedence because of his age and he had been in office before him. But the attention of the sultan
increased due to his excellence so the sultan put him through tests, in which he showed signs of excellence in matters of law and justice, and as he passed all the tests he was appointed to that position. The more power he got, however, the more he changed and developed a characteristic which I wish no human being would have. He became oppressive and abused his power and he called this dignity. He therefore dishonoured the people who deserved to be respected and day by day he enjoyed his abusive power, and had no mercy or kindness for any one. [620b] He thought that kindness and forgiveness were defects and weakness of character; according to his own statement kindness is weakness of the spiritual powers and a disease of the heart. For him it was as if although his name was ‘Abdu’r-Raḥman, he was neither merciful nor compassionate because no other creature, dead or alive, has seen compassion from him. Some evidence to support that complaint will be given in the epilogue of this work and as proof to that the testimony of just notables will be brought. Our words are not enough. He was entrusted with the position of kāzi ʿasker of Rumili and the government of the capital in Rabi‘ I 911 (August 1505), according to his merit, when Hacihasanoğlu died. His previous position, of kāzi ʿasker of Anadolu, according to the demands of the Ottoman law was given to the kāzi of Bursa, the eminent and respected MevLANa, the kāzi Bedreddin Maḥmud.

Fourth  sınıf: Report on the overseers of the accounts of the kingdom and the finances of the government, the demands of the laws and the sultan’s affairs. [621a] The sultan needs men with sound minds to occupy the posts of the state's government. A part of the wise men of the state are representatives of the imperial army and government and another part are the learned men who are ministers of the secretaries who issue the documents. This second part is comprised by men who possess knowledge and wisdom. There is one high group of the men of authority and government and one of the most ignoble and weak subjects of the kingdom, and the equilibrium between power and weakness and the passing of judgment between the base and the noble is expected to come from that group of the virtuous and knowledgeable men. So, according to the laws and canons of the Ottoman dynasty, this group of the sultan’s ministers are called defterdar and knowledgeable men are appointed in it. In 886 (1481) the great MevLANA Muḥiʾeddin Muḥammed, known as Lais Çelebi, was appointed as defterdar for the memalik of Rumili. In 887 (1482) he was removed from that office and was replaced by Ahmed Çelebi Falsufoğlu. In 891 (1486) he was dismissed and defterdar and deputy of the sultan in Rumili became Muṣṭafa Çelebi, known as Çendereciogenesis. He remained in that office for a while where he demonstrated his qualities in the management of the sultan's finances. He died a
natural death in 900 (1494-5), and after him once again Lais Çelebi was placed in the abovementioned post. In 905 (1499-1500) the sultan removed him from that office, and the great ‘Alaeddin ‘Ali Çelebi, b. Ra‘nus Paşa was appointed defterdar and governor of the imperial divan. In 907 (1501-2), due to a quarrel with some jealous men of the divan, he was dismissed from that post and withdrew from the world in search of divine tranquillity. After him Hüseyin Çelebi, one of the sons of Mevlana Yeşên, was placed in that office, and after he made a mistake they removed him and once again Lais Çelebi was appointed, in 908 (1502-3). Approximately two years later he was again removed, the sultan was angered and disappointed with him, and his name was deleted from the people of the divan. [621b] He was a müderris in Bursa, but as he was grieved by his dismissal he withdrew from that post as well. At that time the post in Rumili was considered as a promotion from that of Anadolu. But when Lais Çelebi was dismissed from the post of Rumili there was a need for qualified men for the overseeing of the sultan’s administration and finances. There were two worthy men, one of which was appointed in Rumili, and the other in Anadolu. They were both very worthy in their positions and served with great righteousness. Kasım Çelebi and Pir Mehmed Çelebi, known as Cemaleddinoglu. [622a] As Kasım Çelebi was previously serving in Anadolu, the sultan placed him in Rumili and Pir Mehmed Çelebi was appointed in Anadolu, because while previously he served as a kazi, information about his virtues had reached the sultan, and while he was still young the sultan’s favour was directed upon him and he was appointed and promoted to all sorts of posts.

Fifth sıııf: Report on the men in the imperial chancery. In all the dynasties of the Muslim world the person in charge of the chancery was one of the sultans’ personal slaves and his intimate companion and had control of the issuing of orders. Consequently in this dynasty, this post of drawing the sultan’s tugra, which is commonly known as nişancıgâri, is entrusted to one of the noble men, appointed as a personal slave and intimate companion of the sultan. It is a post of high dignity in the divan and a source of promotion to positions of command and government. So at the beginning of this reign Kasım Paşa was nişancı, and in 8[ ]64 he was made vezir in the divan and he was succeeded by Sinan Çelebi. In 880 (1475-6), when Ahmed Paşa Fenari returned from India, the sultan made him nişancı. In 890 (1485) Ahmed Paşa was promoted to vezir and the eminent Ahmed Çelebi was made nişancı. After he died he was replaced by Daud Paşa Sanî, who was an old servant of the sultan and had been worthy and superior with great knowledge and bravery in all sorts of posts that

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he had held. In 904 (1498-9) this post was entrusted to him and when Daud Paşa was made governor of Gallipoli and general commander of the fleet, the sultan ordered that in the post of nişancı should be appointed someone from the learned men, who would be eloquent and well literate. This group was thus invested with the authority of this eminent post. [622b] Ca'fer Çelebi was appointed nişancı.

Sixth şinif: Report on the personal servants of the sultan. There are two ranks (şaff) in this category. The first consists of the group of the personal servants who reside in the palace and serve at all times. This rank has two divisions (kism), one of the army commanders and one of the overseers of the personal quarters of the sultan. In the second şaff belong some old servants who had served in the court and with their wisdom and manliness reached posts in the government of the provinces. [623a] In the previous book about the reign of sultan Meḥmed II there was a description of the titles and manners of the ranks of troops under the Ottoman dynasty. Now some exceptional individuals, who in their times were models of authority and have been appointed in many posts of service, will be described. The story of the formation of this group of the sultanic court under the Ottoman dynasty, of the servants at the divan is as follows: A group of permanent slaves are present with their commanders whenever they need to accompany the sultan. Their leaders take action in their special position in the right and left, according to requirement. This group is divided in two categories (şinif). The first şinif is further divided in three groups (taife). The first taife consists of the Janissaries, the second of the sipahi-oğlan and the third of the 'ulufeciyan and the ğureba. Each have their own commander and are organised according to the kanuns regarding their number and size.

[623b] First şaff: Report about a commander of the Janissaries and his dependants. In 912 (1506-7) Yunus Ağa, one exceptional servant and intimate friend of the sultan, who from his early youth was distinguished and had close relations with the court, was promoted to a worthy position. After his training at first he served for a while as head-chamberlain. From that post he gained more attention and on the abovementioned date he was entrusted with the command of the sultan's army, the Janissaries. Indeed he served with great virtues and conforming with the sultan's laws in the administration and management of these troops, which numbered up to 12,000 men. When the abovementioned person was still in the service of the permanent slaves of the sultan, the great Muṣṭaфа Paşa gave a feast for the completion of his 'imaret, cami' and medrese, and invited the sultan. All the great men, the personal servants of the sultan and the officers of the imperial stirrup who accompanied the sultan paid attention to the gold and silver scattered at their feet, but Yunus Ağa stood erect at the
head of the procession; he refused to bend down for the petty money and with firmness and diligence he did not turn from his duty. The sultan noticed his independent and solid nature, and his disregard for worldly goods. He had a testing discussion with him about the other emirs and vezirs who went after money and silks. His answers were correct and well aimed and as a result the abovementioned emir was granted distinguished favours. [624a] The sultan promoted him to posts and rewarded him with 100,000 pure silver dirhams and other favours. Later on he was considered for other positions.

The second taife of the commanders of the right wing of the army consists firstly of the sipahi-oğlan. The commanders of this respectable group are always selected from among the best personal slaves of the sultan. As this position is a very high one it leads on to the great posts and the government of provinces; whoever reaches that rank, according to custom will attain great powers and majesty. Every servant who possesses this office moves on to other positions and increases the reputation and fortune of the government. The second group are the ‘ulufeciyar. This is a group of soldiers whose provisions are in the form of daily and monthly wages and most of the time their commanders and generals are two of the sultan’s esteemed special servants. Their line of promotion is similar to that of the sipahi-oğlan. The taife of the commanders and generals of the left wing of the army is divided in three groups: the silahdar, the garib ayakdiyan and the çavuşes. Everyone in this rank are commanders and generals and therefore have been mentioned before, in the seventh book. Every one of these positions is a beginning for promotion for their commanders.

The second division of the personal slaves of the sultan in the imperial household, who are servants of a privileged rank. This taife is also divided in two groups. All the men in charge of the servants of the court of the first group, who are adjacent to the sultan’s private court have been trained to be leaders of every established division of power in distinguished positions. In this group there are six sub-groups (taife), each of them entrusted with a great service. The first one, and the first commander, is that of the standard bearer. The second is the head-chamberlain and doorkeeper of the palace’s gates. The third is the master of the stables, and of the horses, camels, mules etc. The fourth are the tasters of the sultan’s foods. The fifth is the master of the hunt and of the animals and birds used for it. The sixth is the chief of the armourers.

The standard bearer: the sultan’s fiği is always important for the troops, both on the battlefield and in peace. [624b] In imitation of the Prophet’s army and his rules, who said to ‘Ali “whomsoever you trust you should choose them as your standard
bearers”, the post of the standard bearer is highly esteemed. The members of the imperial band are also under his charge. As any one of the personal slaves of the sultan can be appointed to that post and move on to the government of provinces, this position is considered as a certain step for promotion.

The head chamberlain: he is the doorkeeper of the sultan’s private apartments and the sultan’s permanent guardian, and defender of the concealed apartments. So the sultans of this dynasty have appointed four hundred men to guard the gates and make the chiefs of this corps among their most intimate and wise servants. As this position has many duties, two chiefs are appointed, one on the right and one on the left.

The master of the stables, the trained horses and transport animals and their auxiliaries: great attention is paid to the good training of horsemen, as the sultans use horses for all the important matters and the transportation of all necessary apparatus for the cihad, and everything that counts is resolved on horseback and entrusted to horsemen. This post is a stepping stone for higher positions near the sultan. There are two thousand men in his service for the feeding of the horses. After the Janissaries this is the largest corps. As the master of the stables is of the highest rank among all other servants in the household, so the person who administers the profits and income of these combatants, the arpa emini (intendant of the forage for the stables), is above all other clerks in the Treasury.

The tasters of the sultan’s foods and the masters of the victuals: The sultan’s table demands excellent foods as it is a sign of their fortune. In addition, the food should be of good quality and not extravagant. The sultan appoints some trustworthy men at the head of all the talented workers in the kitchen, and according to the laws, one out of this group who is especially reliable is appointed as the master of the imperial tasters for the sultan’s table. Every day the sultan takes his food from this man’s hand, in whom he has absolute trust.

The master of the hunt: hunting has been one of the most estimable institution for Arab and Persian kings. The master of the hunt holds a noble post and has many commanders and hunting animals in his charge. Among all the esteemed hunting animals for the sultan the most distinguished division is that of the hunting birds, which are the most beautiful falcons. Anyone who has been caretaker of the birds can earn the sultan’s attention and thus be promoted to posts of governors in the provinces. The corps in charge of the hunt employs about 3-4,000 men. Their master is known as çakirci başı and is above all other emirs of the hunt in rank. After him
comes the master of the hunt who is known as şahancı başı, and after him comes the emir şekâr başı. This group of hunters is mostly in Rum. There are also many caretakers of wild beasts of the desert, such as cheetahs and dogs. Under the late sultan Bayezid Yıldırım 12,000 such dogs and their expenses were very high, but now there are only 3,000 and the daily cost for every dog, including the salary and the food of the dog-keepers, is about 3,000 akçe. The commanders in this group are men from among the sultan’s slaves and can be appointed to positions in the divan and as Janissary chiefs. There are about 3-4,000 men in that service who are selected from the sultan’s servants.

[626a] Those in charge of the arsenal and the sultan’s armourers, their commanders and auxiliaries: the sultans of the mucahids rely on the experience of that group for the exercise of the imperial laws. During campaigns about 800 camels are used for the transportation of the sultan’s arsenal, and this arsenal is separate from those of the vezirs, the emirs, the commanders of the army, the timariote sipâhis and some infidel kings and their troops. So, as the service and organisation of this group amounts to about three thousand workers and slaves, their chief is one of the notable servants of the sultan.

The second group of the servants of the imperial household and the sultan’s grand personal slaves. In the sultan’s palace are three kinds of servants and for each of them there is a chief. The first is the door-keeper of the sultan’s private apartments and the harem in the palace, known as kâpi ağası, the second is the treasurer and overseer of the sultan’s Treasury, and the third one is the master of the imperial kitchens.

The sultan’s personal treasurer: he is in charge of the organisation of the exceptional wealth in the sultan’s Treasury. Although every year there are many expenses, because of personal rectitude and justice the imperial wealth is always flourishing and the Treasurers’ esteem is great. [626b] He has about two hundred of the sultan’s servants under him and he is known as hazinedar başı. All the statesmen of the empire and the learned men in all fields are answerable to him.

The chamberlain of the sultan’s private apartments: he is known as kâpi ağası. He is in charge of about fifty men who guard the doors between the outer palace, and the harem and the sultan’s private quarters. The majority of the men in that group are powerful eunuchs of the palace and trusted servants and all the men of the state, from the grand vezir to the emirs and the high ministers, if there is an important affair that needs to be attended to all these dignitaries refer to the kâpi ağası.
The supervisor of the imperial storehouses for the royal kitchens: he is in charge of the administration of the income and expenses of the household, and the care of the food and drink and anything related to them. The position of the master of the kitchen, known as kilerdari, is given to the most trustworthy servants and all those under his command care for all the delicacies there might be a need for. He is in charge of about two hundred servants in the kitchen, as well as various workers in the palace, such as footmen, workers, gardeners etc.

[627a] Second saff: Report about the grand servants of the sultan who govern the state’s provinces. All the members of this group are presently away from the capital in the provinces of the borders, being in charge of their government and the command of the army. This group is very powerful and numerous, and everyone is entitled to the description of their qualities, but because it would be too long to present them all only some special ones will be presented. Report about the governors of Bosnia. When the exemplar Firuz Beğ was appointed to posts near the sultan his excellent qualities became apparent and attracted the attention of the sultan. Every servant of the sultan must obey his sovereign, and this must precede all other qualities of any statesman. Some Christian governors have shown the desire to follow this upright way. [627b] When Firuz Beğ served near the sultan he gained approval and became very intimate with the glory of the state because for a long time he served in the imperial stirrup. He was very beautiful in appearance and his face was always expressive of his good thoughts. He was very attentive in the palace and had a great desire for promotion. He was obedient and righteous, and disclosed a special purity of mind and good advice in financial matters that attracted the sultan’s attention. For a while he served at the Treasury and afterwards he was repeatedly promoted to governor positions, and his power increased. The noble sultan Mehmed II subjugated Albania, as is described at the end of the seventh book of this work. In 900 (1494-5) the current sultan wished the government of this province and its castles to be entrusted to one of his deputies who has proved worthy in the protection of the frontiers and the expansion of the lands of Islam, in making easy the lives of the Muslims, in the application of the laws, the perpetuation of holy war and the enforcement of religion. [628b] The discerning sultan considered Firuz Beğ suitable above all other statesmen for that position, certain that his excellent service in the Treasury is a proof of his abilities in government and army command. So the sultan placed him in charge of this frontier province in İskenderiye. As this is one of the greatest castles of the infidels and its lands lie on the boundaries with the lands of the infidels, its subjects are rebellious people and there is always need for fighting. All the time most of the infidels in the area need to be

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managed with the sword. In 912 (1506-7) the governor of Bosnia İskender Paşa died suddenly and Firuz Beğ replaced him. [629a] It is known that the province of Bosnia is situated between the provinces of Islam and the great kingdoms of the Franks. Hungary and Șakaliba are four or five days’ journey away and because of this proximity the governor of Bosnia is constantly engaged in war with the infidels. They are always looking for an opportunity to attack, but this emir brought peace to the minds of the commanders who reside in this fearful province.
MAP XVI

THE CONQUESTS
OF MEHMET II
AND BAYEZID II
(to the peace of Buda)
1451-1503

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Abbreviations


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