Helen Pfeifer (hp379)

Ottoman sultans often formulated their imperial claims in spatial terms: they referred to their empire as ‘the well-protected domains’ (memalik-i mahruse) and styled themselves sovereigns ‘of the two seas and the two continents’. Yet this imperial vision represents only one of many ways in which Ottoman lands were understood in the early modern period: princesses, peasants, and travelers described the worlds they inhabited very differently. This paper examines the Ottoman empire as it was organised and experienced by various groups in the period 1300-1800, showing how changes in the use and meaning of certain spaces reflected, or even produced, changes in social, economic and political relations. It shows that physical space was not just a neutral backdrop to historical events, but helped shape the possibilities of historical actors and the relations between them.

The Michaelmas term is organised chronologically. After an introductory class devoted to the theoretical underpinnings of the so-called ‘spatial turn’, the remaining seven sessions will examine key spaces in which political and social relations were negotiated as the empire evolved from a minor frontier polity into a world power.

In the Lent term, we will move on to examine various forms of spatial organisation within and across Ottoman lands. Some sessions will focus on the connective tissue of empire, whether made of paper or stone; others will focus on sacred geographies; still others will emphasise the ways in spaces interacted with social hierarchies, whether to undergird them or to challenge them.

The course will necessarily be interdisciplinary. Written sources will include not just histories and treatises, but legal documents, legends, and poems (mostly in translation). Many other sources will include little text: participants will often have to rely on photographs, architectural plans, and miniature paintings to reconstruct particular places. In the bibliography below, the approximate page number of primary source readings for a given week is provided in parentheses (usually less than 100 pages). ‘Guiding questions’ indicate avenues of discussion and possible exam questions.

The paper will be taught through weekly two-hour seminars, with one class held in the Fitzwilliam Museum and one in the University Library. There will be a film screening in the Michaelmas Term.
Course Overview

*Michaelmas Term: Chronologies*

Introduction
1) Introduction: Space and Place in History

Beginnings (14-15th c)
2) The Frontier: Ottoman Origins Between Central Asia and Byzantium
3) The Caravanserai: Conquest and Incorporation in Southeastern Europe
4) The Capital: The Conversion of Istanbul

Imperial Heights (16th c)
5) The Palace: Politics and Performance
   *Film screening: ‘The Magnificent Century’*
6) The Provinces: Providing for the Poor in Ottoman Jerusalem

Reconfigurations (17-18th c)
7) The Borderlands: War and Peace on the Habsburg Frontier
8) The Courtroom: Islamic Law between Center and Province

*Lent Term: Connective Tissue*

Imperial Networks
1) Sinews of Empire: Roads and Way-Stations
2) The World Made by Trade: The Circulation of Objects (*held at the Fitzwilliam*)

Sacred Geographies
3) The Hajj Pilgrimage: Sacred and Imperial (*held at the UL*)
4) The Power of the Sufi Shrine

Living Together
5) Multiconfessional Spaces: Salonica, Greek City of Jews
6) Spaces of Sociability: Salons and Coffeehouses

Imperial Limits
7) The Seas: Uncertain Sovereignty in the Mediterranean
8) The World Beyond: An Ottoman Traveler in India

*Easter Term: Revision*
1. Revision (gobbets)
2. Revision (gobbets)
3. Revision (gobbets)
4. Revision (general)

Bibliography

Introductions & Overviews

- Faroqhi, S. *Approaching Ottoman History: An Introduction to the Sources* (1999).

*recommended as a starting point.

For Reference

- Agoston & Masters, *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire* (short articles on various topics written by specialists)
- *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, esp. vols 1&2 (longer articles on key themes, e.g. economy, arts, literature, etc.)
- Inalcik and Quataert. *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914* (1994).
- Pitcher, D. *An historical geography of the Ottoman Empire from earliest times to the end of the sixteenth century* (for historical maps)

Online Resources

- Archnet.org (entries on various buildings in the Islamic world, with photographs, architectural plans and scholarly articles)
- The Ottoman History Podcast (interviews with scholars on their work)
- *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, vols 2 & 3 (scholarly entries on themes, concepts and people, accessible through the university library website)
Michaelmas Term

Introduction

1) Introduction:
   Space and Place in History

Required Readings:


Additional Readings:


Beginnings (14th-15th c)

2) The Frontier:
   Ottoman Origins between Central Asia and Byzantium
Guiding questions:

- To what extent did cultures mix and mingle on the medieval Anatolian frontier?
- How useful are Ottoman legends in reconstructing the culture of the frontier?

Required readings (ca 80 pp):

- Ahmedi, Tâce’d-din İbrâhîm bin Hîzîr Ahmedî: History of the Kings of the Ottoman Lineage and Their Holy Raids Against the Infidels (20pp).
- Secondary reading: Kafadar, C, Between Two Worlds, chs 2 & 3.

Additional readings:

- Krstic, Contested Conversions to Islam (2011), intro.
- Lewis and Holt (eds). Historians of the Middle East (1962), contributions by Inalcik and Menage.
- Wittek, P. The Rise of the Ottoman Empire (1938).
- Zachariadou, E (ed). The Ottoman Emirate, 1300-1389 (1993), esp. contributions by Imber, Inalcik, Oikonomides.

3) The Caravanserai:
Conquest and Incorporation in Southeastern Europe

Guiding questions:

• What accounts for the success of the Ottomans in establishing their presence in Christian lands?
• How did the Ottomans make their power felt in the regions they conquered?

Required readings (ca. 105pp)

• Dossier of early Ottoman building projects in the Balkans (35pp)
• Cadastral survey of 1490 from the Island of Lemnos (70 pp)

Additional readings:

• Argo, “The Ottoman Balkan City: The Periphery as Center in Punitive Spectacle,” in Secondary Cities and Urban Networking, ed Hall.
• Kiel, M. Art and Society of Bulgaria during the Turkish period
• Kolovos, Sariyannis, Anastopoulos, ‘The Ottoman Empire and the Greek Lands’, in Ottoman Architecture in Greece ed Brouskari, trans., Fowden.
• Lowry, H. The Shaping of the Ottoman Balkans
• Lowry, H. Sixteenth Century Peasant Realities
• Necipoglu, Nevra, ‘Byzantine Monasatries and Monastic Property in Thessalonike and Constantinople during the Period of Ottoman Conquests’, Journal of Ottoman Studies
4) The Capital:
The Conversion of Istanbul

Guiding questions:

• How did the Ottomans manage the Christian and imperial heritage of Constantinople?

Required readings (ca 70 pp):

• Maps and images of Ottoman Constantinople (10 pp)
• Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks*, Margoulias (tr.) (15 pp)
• Kritovoulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, Riggs (tr.) (15pp)
• Tursun Bey, *The History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, Murphey & Inalcik (tr.) (30pp)

Additional readings:

• Babinger, F. *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time* (1992).
• Boyar & Fleet. *A Social History of Istanbul*, esp ch. 1.
• Emiralioglu, P. *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, ch 2.

Imperial Heights (16th c)

5) The Palace:
Politics and Performance
Guiding questions:

- How did Ottoman sultans use the palace to project imperial power?
- What role did female members of the imperial household play?
- How reliable is the perspective of foreigners as a source for Ottoman history?

Required readings (ca 75 pp)

- The Topkapi Palace (maps, images and illustrations) (20pp)

Additional readings:

- Fleischer, C. Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600) (1986).
- Imber, C. The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power (2002), chs. 2 & 4.

6) The Provinces:
Providing for the Poor in Ottoman Jerusalem
Guiding questions:

• How did Islamic endowments shape imperial, urban, and social space?
• How did the Ottoman dynasty make itself felt in distant provinces?
• To what extent could elite women help to shape the Ottoman built environment?

Required readings (ca 28pp):

• The 1552 endowment deed of Haseki Sultan (24pp)
• A 1555 report on the soup kitchen (4 pp)

Additional readings:

• Singer, A. ‘Uniformity and diversity in the Food Served at Ottoman imarets’, I. Türk Mutfak Kültürü Sempozyumu, Bilgin and Samanci, eds, 171-86.

Reconfigurations (17-18th c)

7) The Borderlands:
War and Peace on the Habsburg Frontier
Guiding questions:

- How porous was the Ottoman-Habsburg border?
- To what extent was early modern warfare an opportunity for cross-cultural encounter?

Required readings (36 pp).

- The 1680 Ottoman and Polish protocols of demarcation, in *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations (15th-18th Century)*, ed. Kołodziejczyk (17pp).
- The Ottoman document of the 1699 agreement of Karlowitz, in *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations (15th-18th Century)*, ed. Kołodziejczyk (6 pp).

Additional readings:

- Faroqhi, S. *A Cultural History of the Ottomans* (2016), ch. 5.
- Gerelyes & Kovacs. *Archaeology of the Ottoman Period in Hungary*
- Imber, C. *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power* (2002), ch. 7.
8) The Courtroom:
Islamic Law between Center and Province

Guiding questions:

• Was the Islamic court an instrument of central control or a reflection of local social practice?
• To what extent did the Islamic court act to reproduce existing relations of power?
• How Islamic was the Islamic court?

Required readings (16pp):

• The court in 18th-c Kastamonu (from Ergene, Local Court) o Transcripts of court cases (5 pp) o Users of the court (4pp)
  o Classification of court documents (2 pp)
  o Types of disputes (2 pp) o Court Fees (3pp)

Additional readings:

• Ergene, B. Local Court, Provincial Society, and Justice in the Ottoman Empire (2003), esp. chs. 3&4.
• Imber, C. The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power (2002), ch. 6.
• Peirce, L. Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab (2003).
Lent term

Imperial Networks

1) Sinews of Empire: 
Roads and Way-Stations

Guiding questions:

- Why were roads such an opportunity, both for the Ottomans and their detractors?
- How did representations of space buttress Ottoman imperial claims?

Required readings (ca 40 pp):

- Imperial edicts on Bedouins and fortresses in Palestine, in Ottoman Documents on Palestine, 1552-1615, tr. Heyd (15pp)
- Matrakçı Nasuh, Description of the Way-Stations on Sultan Süleyman’s Iraqi Campaign ed. Yurdaydın (20 pp)
- Secondary reading: Emiraliağlu, Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire, ch 1.

Additional readings:

- Benton, L. A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400-1900 (2010), ch. 1 (for comparison).
- Demetriades, ‘Vakıfs along the Via Egnatia’, The Via Egnatia under Ottoman Rule, 1380-1699, ed. Zachariadou
2) The World Made by Trade: The Circulation of Things

*This week’s class will be held in the Fitzwilliam Museum*

**Guiding questions:**

- To what extent did the circulation of goods help to make Ottoman lands feel like a unified space?

**Required readings:**

- Ottoman coins in the collection of the Fitzwilliam Museum (please examine online in advance of the class)
- Imperial ciphers, robes, and books.

**Additional readings:**

- Faroqhi, S. *Artisans of Empire: Crafts and Craftspeople under the Ottomans* (2009), ch. 5.
5.  

Sacred Geographies

3) The Hajj Pilgrimage: Sacred and Imperial

*Class will be held at the Cambridge University Library*

Guiding questions:

• To what extent did the Ottoman ruling elite manage to coopt the Hajj pilgrimage for its own ends?  
• Was the Hajj an imperial or a trans-imperial practice?

Required readings (47 pp):

• Nabi, *Tuhfetu’l Haramayn*, tr. Coşkun (portions on Cairo and on the Holy Cities) (167-194) (27pp)  
• Depictions of the Haramayn in Jazuli’s *Dala’il al-Khayrat* (Rare Books, Cambridge University Library) (5pp)  
• Objects associated with the Ottoman Hajj (zamzam water flask; qibla indicators; Meccan tiles; Hajj certificates) in *Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam* ed. Porter (15pp)  
• Faroqhi, S. *Pilgrims and Sultans: The Hajj under the Ottomans*, ch. 1

Additional readings:


4) The Power of the Sufi Shrine

Guiding questions:

• Why did Sufi shrines have so powerful a role in Ottoman history?
• Which social and political groups did shrines help to empower?

Required readings (ca 30 pp):

• The Hacı Bektaş shrine (photographs; architectural plan; inscriptions; miniature painting; objects donated)

Additional readings:

• Barkey, K. ‘Religious Pluralism, Shared Sacred Sites, and the Ottoman Empire,’, Choreographies of Shared Sacred Sites
• Yürekli, Z. Architecture and Hagiography: The Politics of Bektashi Shrines in the Classical Age (2012), intro, chs. 3-4
Living Together

5) Multiconfessional Spaces:
Salonica, Greek City of Jews

Guiding questions:

• How Ottoman were the Sephardic Jews in the Ottoman Empire?
• How did religious coexistence function in early modern Ottoman cities?

Required readings (45 pp):

• Samuel Usque, *Samuel Usque’s Consultation for the Tribulations of Israel*, Cohen (ed & tr) (20 pp)
• The Responsa of Samuel de Medina, *Jewish life in Turkey as reflected in the sixteenth century in the legal Writings of Samuel de Medina* Goodblatt (ed and trans) (20pp) • Staroulakis, *Cookbook of the Jews of Greece* (5pp)
• Mazower, M, *Salonica: City of Ghosts*, part I.

Additional readings:

• Braude, B. ‘Venture and faith in the Commercial life of the Ottoman Balkans, 1500-1650’ *International History Review* (1985)
• Delibasi, ‘The Via Egnatia and Selanik in the 16th Century’ in *The Via Egnatia*
• Hacker, ‘Jewish autonomy in the Ottoman empire: its scope and limits. Jewish courts from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, in A Levy, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*
• Hacker, ‘The intellectual activity of the jews in the ottoman empire during the 16-17 in Twersky and Septimus, *Jewish thought in the seventeenth century*
• Levy, A, ed. *Jews, Turks, Ottomans: A Shared History, Fifteenth Through the Twentieth Century*, part I
• Lowry, ‘Portrait of a City: the Population and Topography of Ottoman Selanik in the Year 1478’, *Diptycha*
• Rodrigue & Reynolds, ‘Difference and Tolerance in the Ottoman Empire’, online interview.
• Rozen, ‘Individual and Community in the Jewish Society of the Ottoman Empire: Salinica in the sixteenth century in Levy, *The Jews*
6) Spaces of Sociability: Salons and Coffeehouses

Guiding questions:

• Can we speak of an early modern Ottoman ‘public sphere’?
• How can we use prescriptive literature to shed light on actual practices?

Required readings (ca 25pp):

• Badr al-Din al-Ghazi, *The Treatise on Table Manners* (10pp)
• Jean de Thevenot, ‘Eating and Drinking’, *Travels into the Levant* (5pp).
• Ottoman poems from Andrews & Kalpakli, tr. *Ottoman Lyric Poetry* (5pp)
• Mustafa Ali, *Description of Cairo* (5pp)
• Secondary reading: Andrews & Kalpakli, *The Age of the Beloveds*, esp. intro

Additional readings:

• Ertuğ, Zeynep Tarım. ‘Entertaining the Sultan: Meclis festive gatherings in the Ottoman Palace’, *Celebration, Entertainment and Theater in the Ottoman World*, ed Faroqhi and Öztürkmen, 124-44.

**Imperial Limits**

7) The Seas: Uncertain Sovereignty in the Mediterranean

*Guiding questions:*

• How did (and didn’t) Ottoman sovereignty work in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Mediterranean?
• How was imperial power at sea different from imperial power on land?

*Required readings (ca 55 pp):*

• Ottoman maps of the Mediterranean (5 pp)
• Joseph Pitts, *A True and Faithful Account of the Religion and Manners of the Mohammetans* (25pp)

*Additional readings:*

• Benton, L. *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 14001900* (2010), ch. 3.
• Brummett, P. *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery* (1994).
• Emiralioglu, P. *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, ch 2.
• Faroqhi, S. ‘Ottoman views on corsairs and piracy in the Adriatic’ in *Another Mirror for Princes* (2008).
• Fleet, K. ‘Ottoman Expansion in the Mediterranean,” in The Cambridge History of Turkey, 141-172.


• Imber, C. The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power (2002), ch. 8.


• Pinto, K. ‘The Maps are the Message: Mehmet II’s Patronage of an “Ottoman Cluster”’, Imago Mundi, 63 (2011).


8) The World Beyond:
An Ottoman Traveler in India

Guiding questions:

• How did Muslims understand the lands beyond the confines of the empire?
• To what extent can we speak of an early modern ‘Islamic world’?

Required readings (ca 75pp).

• Seyyidi Ali Reis, The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Sidi Ali Reës in India, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Persia, during the Years 1553–1556, tr. Vámbéry (1899).


Additional readings:


• Casale, G. The Ottoman Age of Exploration (2010).
• Euben, R. *Journeys to the Other Shore: Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge* (2006).
• Touati, H. *Islam and Travel in the Middle Ages*, tr. Cochrane (2010).