The Palace and the Coffeehouse:
The Power of Place in Ottoman History, 1300-1800

A Part II Special Subject
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The Topkapi Palace in Istanbul was the seat of the Ottoman sultan and the centre of one of the largest and most powerful empires in early modern Eurasia. The coffeehouse, a sixteenth-century Ottoman invention, was the seat of the urban classes and the centre of city life from Belgrade to Baghdad. Different as these two institutions were in their character and clientele, they were neck and neck when it came to their influence on Ottoman politics, society, and culture.

This paper examines the power of place in Ottoman history from 1300-1800. Each week introduces students to a new space and to the opportunities or challenges it presented. Many of these spaces will lead us to consider the nature of imperial rule, from the contested frontier zone from which the Ottoman polity emerged; to the capital city that buttressed its imperial claims; to the seas and deserts that continually tested its sovereignty. Other spaces will allow us to consider key social and cultural issues, including the visibility of women, the acceptability of homosexual relations, and the experiences of minority groups like Christians and Jews. Throughout, students will be asked to reflect on the ways in which 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 organized chronologically. After an introductory class devoted to 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 different forms of spatial organization 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 emphasize the ways in which spaces interacted with social hierarchies, whether to undergird 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. We will also experiment with digital mapping and visualization techniques, reflecting on the benefits and limits of these new technologies.

The paper will be taught through weekly two-hour seminars, with one class held in the Fitzwilliam Museum. There will be a film screening in the Michaelmas Term. Participants are not expected to have any background in Ottoman history.
Course Overview

Michaelmas Term: Chronologies

Introduction
1) Introduction: Space and Place in Historical Study

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 Northern 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 of Money: The Circulation of Objects (*held at the Fitzwilliam Museum)

Sacred Geographies
3) The Hajj Pilgrimage: Sacred and Imperial
4) The Power of the Sufi Shrine

Living Together
5) Multiconfessional Spaces: Thessaloniki, 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

• Aksan and Goffman, eds. The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire (2007).
• Faroqhi, S. Approaching Ottoman History: An Introduction to the Sources (1999).
• Finkel, C. Osman’s Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1923 (2005).
• *Howard, D. A History of the Ottoman Empire (2016).
• *Imber, C. The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power (2002).
• McCarthy, J. The Ottoman Turks: An Introductory History to 1923 (1997).

*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 Encyclopedia of Islam, vols 2 & 3 (scholarly entries on themes, concepts and people, accessible through the university library website)
• The Ottoman History Podcast (interviews with scholars on their work)
Michaelmas Term

Introduction

1) Introduction:
Space and Place in Historical Study

Guiding questions:

• What are the different approaches scholars have used to study space & place?
• What are the difficulties of studying place from a historical perspective?
• What are the uses of space in early modern history?

Required Readings:

• Leif Jerram, ‘Space: A Useless Category for Historical Analysis?’, History and Theory, 52 (2013): 400–419.

Additional Readings:

• Denis Cosgrove, Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape (1994).
• Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, tr. Sheridan (1977), esp. ch. 3.
• Michel Foucault, ‘Of Other Spaces’, Diacritics (1986).
• Ian Gregory, A Place in History: A Guide to Using GIS in Historical Research (2002), available here: http://hds.essex.ac.uk/g2gp/gis/index.asp
• Simon Gunn, ‘The Spatial Turn: Changing Histories of Space and Place’, in Gunn and Morris (eds), Identities in Space: Contested Territories in the Western City since 1850 (2001)
• Phil Hubbard and Rob Kitchin (eds), Key Thinkers on Space and Place (2011)
• Keith Lilley, ‘GIS, Spatial Technologies and Digital Mapping’, Research Methods for History, ed Simon Gunn
• Christopher Tilley, The Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments (1994)
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):


Background readings:

- Cemal Kafadar, Between Two Worlds, chs 2 & 3.

Additional readings:

- Linda Darling, ‘Reformulating the Gazi Narrative: When was the Ottoman State a Gazi State?’, Turcica 43 (2011): 13-53.
- Lewis and Holt (eds), Historians of the Middle East (1962), chapters by Inalcik & Menage.


• Elizabeth Zachariadou, (ed), *The Ottoman Emirate, 1300-1389* (1993), esp. chapters 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?

Primary sources (ca. 105pp):

- Tax register of 1490 from the Island of Lemnos (70 pp)

Background readings:

- Suraiya Faroqhi, *Approaching Ottoman History: An Introduction to the Sources*, pp 82-93.

Additional readings:

- Bistra Cvetkova, ‘Early Ottoman tahrir defters as a source for studies on the history of Bulgaria and the Balkans’, *Archivum Ottomanicum* 8: 133–39
- Machiel Kiel, *Art and Society of Bulgaria during the Turkish Period*
• Nevra Necipoglu, ‘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:

• What were the strategies by which Mehmed II went about securing and appropriating the city after the 1453 conquest?
• How did the Ottomans treat the Christian and imperial heritage of Constantinople?

Primary sources (35pp):

• Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks*, tr. Margoulias, 220-241
• Kritovoulos, *The History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, tr. Riggs, 3-6, 9-19, 93-95, 139-141, 147-149, 177

Background reading:


Additional readings:

• Ebru Boyar & Kate Fleet, *A Social History of Istanbul*, esp ch. 1.
• Pinar Emirlioğlu, *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?

Primary sources (ca 75 pp):

• Robert Withers, A Description of the Grand Signor’s Seraglio, or Turkish Emperours Court (1650), 1-49.

Additional readings:

• Colin Imber, The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power (2002), chs. 2 & 4.
• Suraiya Faroqhi, Another Mirror for Princes: The Public Image of the Sultans and its Reception (2009), chs 2-3.
• Cornell Fleischer, Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600) (1986).
• Kaya Şahin, Empire and Power in the Age of Süleyman (2013).
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 did elite women help to shape the Ottoman built environment?

Primary sources (ca 28pp):

- The 1552 endowment deed of Haseki Sultan
- A 1555 report on the soup kitchen

Background reading:


Additional readings:

- Sylvia Sellers-Garcia, Distance and Documents at the Spanish Empire’s Periphery (2014), intro.
- Amy Singer, ‘Uniformity and Diversity in the Food Served at Ottoman Imarets’, I. Türk Mutfak Kültürü Sempozyumu, Bilgin and Samancı, eds, 171-86.
Reconfigurations (17-18th c)

7) The Borderlands: War and Peace on the Northern Frontier

Guiding questions:

- How porous were Ottoman borders?
- To what extent was early modern warfare an opportunity for cross-cultural encounter?

Primary sources (ca 50 pp):

- Evliya Çelebi, An Ottoman Traveller: Selections from the Book of Travels of Evliya Çelebi, Dankoff & Kim (ed & tr), 218-231
- The 1680 Ottoman and Polish protocols of demarcation and the Ottoman document of the 1699 agreement of Karlowitz, in Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations (15th-18th Century), ed. Kołodziejczyk

Background readings:


Additional readings:

- Palmira Brummett, Mapping the Ottomans: Sovereignty, Territory, and Identity in the Early Modern Mediterranean, ch. 3.
- Suraiya Faroqhi, A Cultural History of the Ottomans (2016), ch. 5.
- Colin Imber, The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power (2002), ch. 7.
• Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations (15th-18th Century), parts I and II.
• Rhoads Murphey, Ottoman Warfare 1500-1700 (1999).
• Mark Stein, Guarding the Frontier: Ottoman Border Forts and Garrisons in Europe (2007).
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?

Primary sources (19pp):
• Court records from 18th-c Kastamonu and Sofia
• Additional data on Kastamonu court records (users of the court, types of disputes, court fees)

Background reading:

Additional readings:
• James Baldwin, Islamic Law and Empire in Ottoman Cairo (2016).
• Boğacı Ergene, Local Court, Provincial Society, and Justice in the Ottoman Empire (2003), esp. chs. 3&4.
• Colin Imber, The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power (2002), ch. 6.
• Leslie Peirce, Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab (2003).
**Lent term**

**Imperial Networks**

9) 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?

**Primary sources (ca 80 pp):**

- Matrakçî Nasuh, *Description of the Way-Stations on Sultan Süleyman’s Iraqi Campaign* ed. Yurdaydın

**Background reading:**


**Additional readings:**

- Demetriades, ‘Vakifs along the Via Egnatia’, *The Via Egnatia under Ottoman Rule, 1380-1699*, ed. Zachariadou
- Pinar Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, ch 1.

• *Murphey, Ottoman Warfare, ch. 4.

10) The World of Money: The Circulation of Things

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

Guiding questions:

- To what extent did the circulation of coins help to make Ottoman lands feel like a unified space?
- How, and how well, did the Ottoman monetary system function?

Primary sources (20 pp):

- Ottoman coins in the collection of the Fitzwilliam Museum (please examine online in advance of the class)
- Feel free to do additional research on the Fitzwilliam website here

Secondary reading:


Additional readings:

- Cüneyt Ölçer, Nakışlı Osmanlı Mangırları [Decorated Ottoman Manghirs] (1975) - organised by city and then by sultan (for dated coins)
- Şevket Pamuk, ‘Prices in the Ottoman Empire, 1469-1914’.
- Nuri Pere, Osmanlılar'da Madeni Paralar [Coins of the Ottoman Empire] english summary and transliterations of the coins of Mehmed II, Selim I, Mehmed III
- Sultan, Coins of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic: A Detailed Catalogue of the Jem Sultan Collection (1977).
Sacred Geographies

11) The Hajj Pilgrimage: Sacred and Imperial

Guiding questions:

• What were the practices that contributed to the construction of the sacred geography in and around Mecca and Medina?
• How did texts/objects/images help to shape pilgrims’ experiences of the holy sites?
• How Ottoman was the Ottoman Hajj?

Primary sources (67 pp):

• Nabi, Tuhfetu’l Haramayn, tr. Coşkun (172-192)
• Objects associated with the Ottoman Hajj in Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam ed. Porter

Background reading

• Suraiya Faroqhi, Pilgrims and Sultans: The Hajj under the Ottomans (1994) (read whatever bits most interest you).

Additional readings:

• Emine Bilirgen, “Precious objects in the imperial treasury related with Sacred Places,” in Imperial Surr, ed Nevzat Bayhan, 2008
• Andrew Petersen, The Medieval and Ottoman Hajj Route in Jordan: An Archaeological and Historical Study (2012).
• Giorgio Riello, ‘The Material Culture of Walking: Spaces of Methodologies in the late Eighteenth Century’, in Everyday Objects, ed Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson
• Shalem, ‘The Four Faces of the Ka’ba in Mecca’, Architecture and Pilgrimage, 1000-1500
The Power of the Sufi Shrine

Guiding questions:

- Why did Sufi shrines play so powerful a role in Ottoman history?
- Which social and political groups did shrines help to empower?
- How do Sufi shrines help us to understand the way in which ‘religion happened materially’ in the Ottoman Empire?

Primary sources (16pp):

- The Hacı Bektaş shrine (photographs; architectural plan; inscriptions)

Background reading:


Additional reading:

• Ahmet Karamustafa, God’s unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle period 1200–1550 (1994).
Living Together

13) Multiconfessional Spaces:
Thessaloniki, Greek City of Jews

Guiding questions:

• How did religious coexistence function in early modern Ottoman cities?
• How and to what extent were Ottoman Jews incorporated into the broader Jewish diaspora?

Required readings (45 pp):

• Samuel de Medina, responsa (1580s), *Jewish Life in Turkey as Reflected in the Sixteenth Century in the Legal Writings of Samuel de Medina*, Goodblatt (ed and trans): responsa nrs: 1, 2, 3, 9, 11, 13.

Background reading:

• Mazower, M, *Salonica: City of Ghosts*, part I.

Additional reading:

• Aron Rodrigue & Nancy Reynolds, ‘Difference and Tolerance in the Ottoman Empire’, online interview.
14) Spaces of Sociability: Salons and Coffeehouses

Guiding questions:

• To what extent did coffeehouses transform Ottoman society and politics?
• Can we speak of an early modern Ottoman ‘public sphere’?
• How did different spaces enable different forms of homosocial or homosexual behavior?
• How, if at all, can historians use poetry as a source for studying Ottoman history?

Primary sources (ca 25pp):

• Jean de Thevenot, ‘Eating and Drinking’, Travels into the Levant, chs. 24-5.

Secondary readings:


Additional readings:

• Zeynep Tarım Ertuğ, ‘Entertaining the Sultan: Meclis festive gatherings in the Ottoman Palace’, Celebration, Entertainment and Theater in the Ottoman World, ed Faroqui and Öztürkmen, 124-44.
• Suraiya Faroqui, A Cultural History of the Ottomans (2016), ch. 6.
• Ralph Hattox, Coffee and Coffehouses (1985).
• Ekrem İşın, 'Coffeehouses as Places of Conversation', The Illuminated Table, the Propserous House eds Neumann and Faroqi (2003).
Imperial Limits

15) 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):

• Katib Çelebi, trans James Mitchell, The History of the Maritime Wars of the Turks, preface, intro, ch 2
• Joseph Pitts, A True and Faithful Account of the Religion and Manners of the Mohammetans, chs 1-2

Secondary reading:

• Joshua White, Piracy and Law in the Ottoman Mediterranean (2017), intro.

Additional reading:

• Fernand Braudel, The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II vol. 1, Part II, ‘Seas and Coasts’
• Lauren Benton, A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400-1900 (2010), ch. 3.
• Palmira Brummett, Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery (1994).
• Giancarlo Casale, The Ottoman Age of Exploration (2004).
• Pinar Emirlioğlu, Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire, ch 2.
• Suraiya Faroqhi, ‘Ottoman views on corsairs and piracy in the Adriatic’ in Another Mirror for Princes (2008).
• Kate Fleet, ‘Ottoman Expansion in the Mediterranean,” in The Cambridge History of Turkey, 141-172.
• Antonis Hadjikyriacou, ‘The Ottomanization of Cyprus: Towards a Spatial Imagination Beyond the Centre-Province Binary’, Journal of Mediterranean Studies (2016)
• Gottfried Hagen, 'Katib Çelebi', Historians of the Ottoman Empire, https://ottomanhistorians.uchicago.edu/en/historian/katib-celebi
• Colin Imber, The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power (2002), ch. 8.
• Karen Pinto, ‘The Maps are the Message: Mehmet II’s Patronage of an “Ottoman Cluster”’, Imago Mundi, 63 (2011).
• Svat Soucek, ‘Preface’, The History of the Maritime Wars of the Turks.
• Joshua White, ‘Shifting Winds: Piracy, Diplomacy, and Trade in the Ottoman Mediterranean, 1624-26’ The Well-Connected Domains, eds Firges et al.
The World Beyond: An Ottoman Traveler in India

Guiding questions:

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

Primary source (40 pp):


Background reading:

• Pınar Emiralioğlu, Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire (2014), ch 4.

Additional readings:

• Palmira Brummett, 'Imagining the Early Modern Ottoman Space, from World History to Piri Reis’ in Aksan & Goffman, eds, The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire (2007), pp. 15-58.
• Giancarlo Casale, The Ottoman Age of Exploration (2010).
• Dale Eickelman and James Piscatorl (eds), Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, Migration and the Religious imagination (1990).
• Halil İnalcık, ‘The India Trade’, A Social and Economic History of the Ottoman Empire, vol 1, eds İnalcık and Donald Quataert, 315-363.
• Roxanne Euben, Journeys to the Other Shore: Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge (2006).
• Salih Özbaran, The Ottoman Response to European Expansion: Studies on Ottoman-
Portuguese Relations in the Indian Ocean and Ottoman Administration in the Arab Lands
during the Sixteenth Century (1994).
chs. 5-7.
• Sanjay Subrahmanyam, ‘Waiting for the Simorgh: Comparisons, Connections, and the
‘Early Modern’”, in Sven Trakulhun and Ralph Weber (eds), Delimiting Modernities:
• Sanjay Subrahmanyam, ‘Connected Histories: Notes Towards a Reconfiguration of
• Henri Touati, Islam and Travel in the Middle Ages, tr. Cochrane (2010).