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Suraiya Faruqi

THE OTTOMAN AND MUGHAL EMPIRES

Social History in the Early Modern World

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The Ottoman and Mughal Empires

The Ottoman and Mughal Empires
*Social History in the Early
Modern World*

Suraiya Faroqhi

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To the memory of Nandita Prasad Saha (1960–2013)

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Acknowledgements

It is not easy to envisage a complex society such as the Ottoman from the vantage point of another polity, with which the viewer/author is but moderately familiar, as is true in my case where the Mughal world is at issue. The idea germinated during a series of introductory courses on Mughal history that I taught at Istanbul Bilgi University from 2014 onward. When in front of the class, I found that the best way of making the topic meaningful to the students (and to myself as well) was to step back and look at the manner in which the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire approached a given problem, which albeit in a different shape, existed in the Mughal world as well. It was even more exciting to find that certain fundamental rules, with which Ottomanist historians are quite familiar, such as for instance the notion that the holders of tax assignments were responsible for law and order in the districts assigned to them, was not as central an issue in Mughal India, as it was in Ottoman history. The constant change from the familiar to the unfamiliar and back again, was one of the more stimulating experiences associated first with the classes that I taught and later with the writing of this book.

When preparing a study with a comparative slant, any author will accumulate even more debts than when he/she stays in his/her field of expertise. Afraid of omitting people whose aid has been crucial, I will proceed chronologically. Thus, for the beginning of this venture, I owe a debt of gratitude to Mustafa Erdem Kabadayı, now of Koç University, Istanbul, who in 2011 encouraged me to send a paper proposal to the congress of the Association of Indian Labour Historians of 2012. In this context, many thanks are due to Prabhu Mohapatra, Chitra Joshi and Rana Bihal, not only for graciously accepting an outsider at the congress that they had organized with admirable dedication, but for getting me in touch with Indian colleagues interested in the Mughal world as well. Moreover, in that same spring of 2012, Prabhu Mohapatra invited me to Delhi University, Vijaya Ramaswamy Krishnan to Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), and Najaf Haider to Aligarh Muslim University, where he introduced me to Irfan Habib and Shireen Moosvi. Furthermore, Sabyasachi Bhattacharya was kind enough to include an article of mine in the selection of congress papers that he made into an edited volume.¹ I have always felt that by this gesture, my colleagues showed their appreciation of the fact that from one sub-field of history to another, the struggles of working people had and have a good deal in common.

On this same occasion, I first met Bidisha Dhar, then a doctoral candidate waiting to defend her thesis on the embroiderers of Lucknow and now a faculty member at the University of Tripura; we have been friends ever since. In 2014, together with Tilottama Mukherjee, she arranged an encounter with students at Jadavpur University in Kolkata: It was impressive to see that the students continued to ask questions about Ottoman history until their professor decided that we must vacate the classroom. On that occasion, Lakshmi Subramanian invited me to the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences,

housed in a building previously the home of Jadunath Sarkar, one of the great pioneers in modern-style historiography on the Mughals and their opponents.

As for the Istanbul side of the enterprise: By the spring of 2014, as noted I was bold enough to teach an introductory course on Mughal history to MA students at Istanbul Bilgi University, who patiently tolerated a professor who admittedly knew very little about the subject she had set out to teach. On the other hand, the experience of learning together was quite special, with students contributing articles they had located on the internet. I continue to cherish this memory.

Moreover, Aydın Uğur, then Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Istanbul Bilgi University, was willing to support a – for Istanbul – unprecedented venture: In the autumn of 2014, the university hosted a colloquium, which allowed Ottomanist and Indianist historians to get acquainted with each other. Thus, over twenty years after a group of scholars under the aegis of Tosun Arıcanlı had made a first attempt at getting a dialogue started we were able to repeat the venture, albeit on a far more modest scale. In the fall of 2015, the series of encounters proceeded at JNU in Delhi, with Ottomanists participating due to a generous travel grant from Istanbul Bilgi University. Moreover, when I became an emerita in the summer of 2017, this university hosted another Ottoman–Mughal conference, this time on historiography, so-to-say, as a retirement gift. For this gesture, I thank Bülent Bilmez and Gülhan Balsoy, past and present chairpersons, as well as Başak Tuğ, Murat Dağlı and for recent support, Mustafa Akay. Tunahan Durmaz has been of great help in the preparation of the Index.

As for myself, I got a further opportunity to establish connections with historians of the Mughal world, when the Centre for Historical Studies at JNU invited me and in addition, made me a fellow at the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute for Advanced Studies (JNIAS). Thus, I could teach a course on Ottoman social history during the fall (monsoon) semester of 2016. My thanks go to G. J. V. Prasad for the invitation to JNIAS and above all to Vijaya Ramaswamy and Najaf Haider for first inviting me and then coaching a newcomer in the academic customs and etiquette of an unfamiliar institution. In this context, I very much appreciate Professor Haider's co-teaching my course on Ottoman social history and handling the bureaucracy involved in recording student grades. Furthermore, listening to the various people speaking at JNU events was an amazing experience. Especially instructive was a lecture by Prachi Deshpande on the guru of Shivaji (d. 1680), the long-time opponent of Aurangzeb; and when attending a lecture by Romila Thapar, I became aware of Nandita Prasad Sahai, by that time unfortunately deceased, whose work has been a constant source of inspiration for the present study. In addition, my students were most impressive. For the most part, they had done their readings when they came to class; and two of them graciously helped me get to Jaipur when everything was in turmoil because of the 'demonetization', put differently the sudden lack of the paper money most often used in Indian everyday life (November 2016). In addition, I am grateful to Jiyoti Atwal, Nonica Datta and Sunil Kumar for their friendship and to Muzaffar Alam, Pius Malekandathil, Ranabir Chakravarty and once again Najaf Haider for supplying publications that I would not have found otherwise.

Apart from the scholarly interchanges at these different venues, it was a very special experience to see Fatehpur Sikri and the palaces of Agra Fort, as well as the Taj Mahal

and Akbar's mausoleum in Sikandra. In Delhi, the Red Fort, Purana Kila and the eighteenth-century mausoleum of Safdār Jang (1754) gave me an idea of what Mughal (and Shēr Shāh's) buildings looked like, before and after the time of Akbar and Jahāngir. I will never forget how Arif Bilgin (Sakarya University, Turkey), after attending a colloquium at JNU, with me braved the autumn pollution of Delhi to visit the mausoleum of Safdār Jang and the Red Fort. Without these encounters with people and monuments, I could not possibly have undertaken this project.

As for their reading of various chapters and comments on the same, I am most grateful to Elif Akçetin, Shadab Bano, Giancarlo Casale, Rishad Chowdry, Lester Crook, Stephen Dale, Richard Eaton, Jane Hathaway, A. Azfar Moin, Harbans Mukhia, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, in addition to the author(s) of the anonymous comments received through the publisher I. B. Tauris. My special thanks go to Giancarlo Casale, Lester Crook, Richard Eaton, and Jane Hathaway for their patience in reading the entire manuscript.

In addition, Ibn Haldun University, where I now teach, allowed me a lot of free time for writing this book. For this gift of quality time, a rare generosity these days, I thank my department chair, Halil Berktaş, as well as my other colleagues in the History Department. Of course, none of these generous people is in any way responsible for the errors and imperfections that doubtless remain.

Suraiya Farooqi
Istanbul, September 2018.

A Note on Spelling and Transliteration

I have spelled terms and names from Ottoman Turkish according to the rules of modern Turkish; however, first names appear as 'Ahmed' or 'Mehmed' rather than as 'Ahmet' or 'Mehmet'. Words commonly used in English appear in English spelling. For Persian terms and names, I have employed the transliteration used by the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, leaving out diacritical marks except those denoting long vowels: 'ā', 'ī', 'ō' and 'ū'. The names of dynasties (Bahmanis, Mamluks, Safavids, Sharifs and others) appear without any diacritical marks. The spelling of Hindi personal names follows that of the secondary sources in which I have found them.

Geographical names that have become current in English appear in English spelling. All other terms follow the *Collins World Atlas: Reference edition* (2017).

Figures

All photographs have been taken by the author

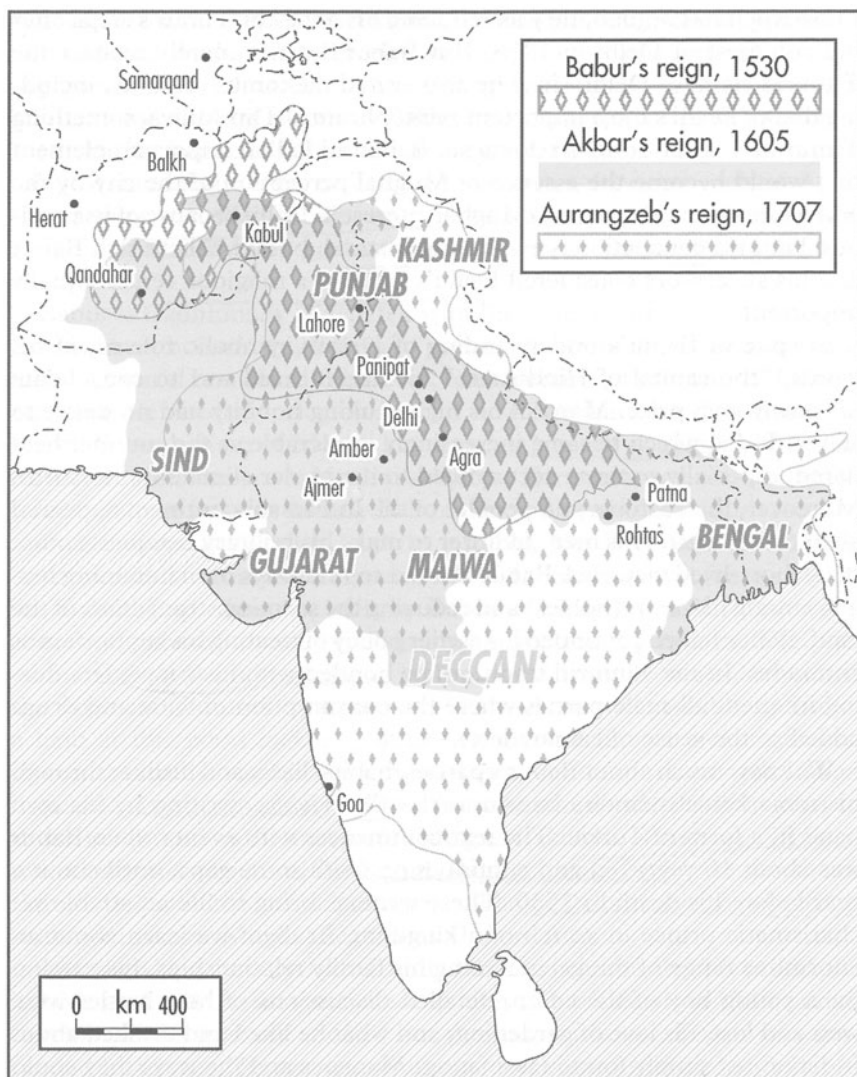
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13. **Towns needed ample water supplies,** with monumental structures marking their existence in both the Ottoman and the Mughal realms.

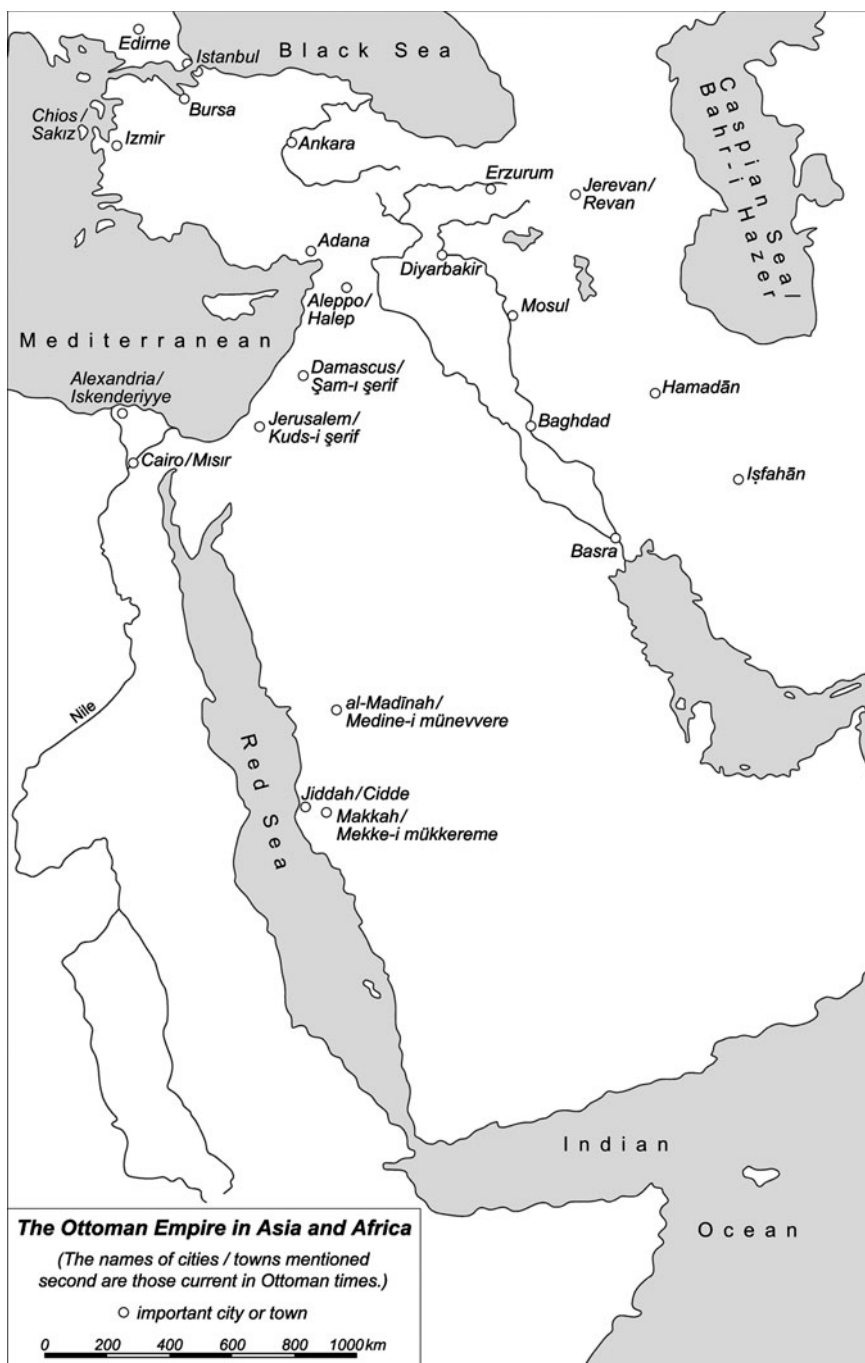
(a) Aqueduct passing through the Thracian town of Kavala in Northern Greece, ascribed to Sultan Süleyman's one-time friend and grand vizier Makbul ve Maktul İbrâhim Paşa (aka Pargalı, d. 1536), who did in fact establish a pious foundation in this town. The recent rediscovery of İbrâhim Paşa's grave has made this long-deceased dignitary once again newsworthy. (b) A *bauli* or underground water source, with an access way embellished by elaborate architecture and once frequent in Northern India. Today, these structures only function as 'touristic' sites and therefore their conservation can be difficult. This *bauli* is part of the Bara Imambara in Lucknow, opened in 1784 and despite its late date, chosen for its good state of preservation. (c) The public fountain of Emin Efendi in Samakov/Bulgaria; the donor was the head of the sultan's kitchen, who probably had some connection to this small town. Built around 1660, the fountain has no inscription but shows signs of later restoration. As the construction of (nearly) cubic buildings to house fountains is an eighteenth-century fashion, perhaps the present shape of the fountain is due to a later restoration. Note the arrangement for watering animals and the attached birdhouse. Compare: (Machiel Kiel, 'Samakov', *Diyânet İşleri İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/samakov>, accessed on 19 September 2018)

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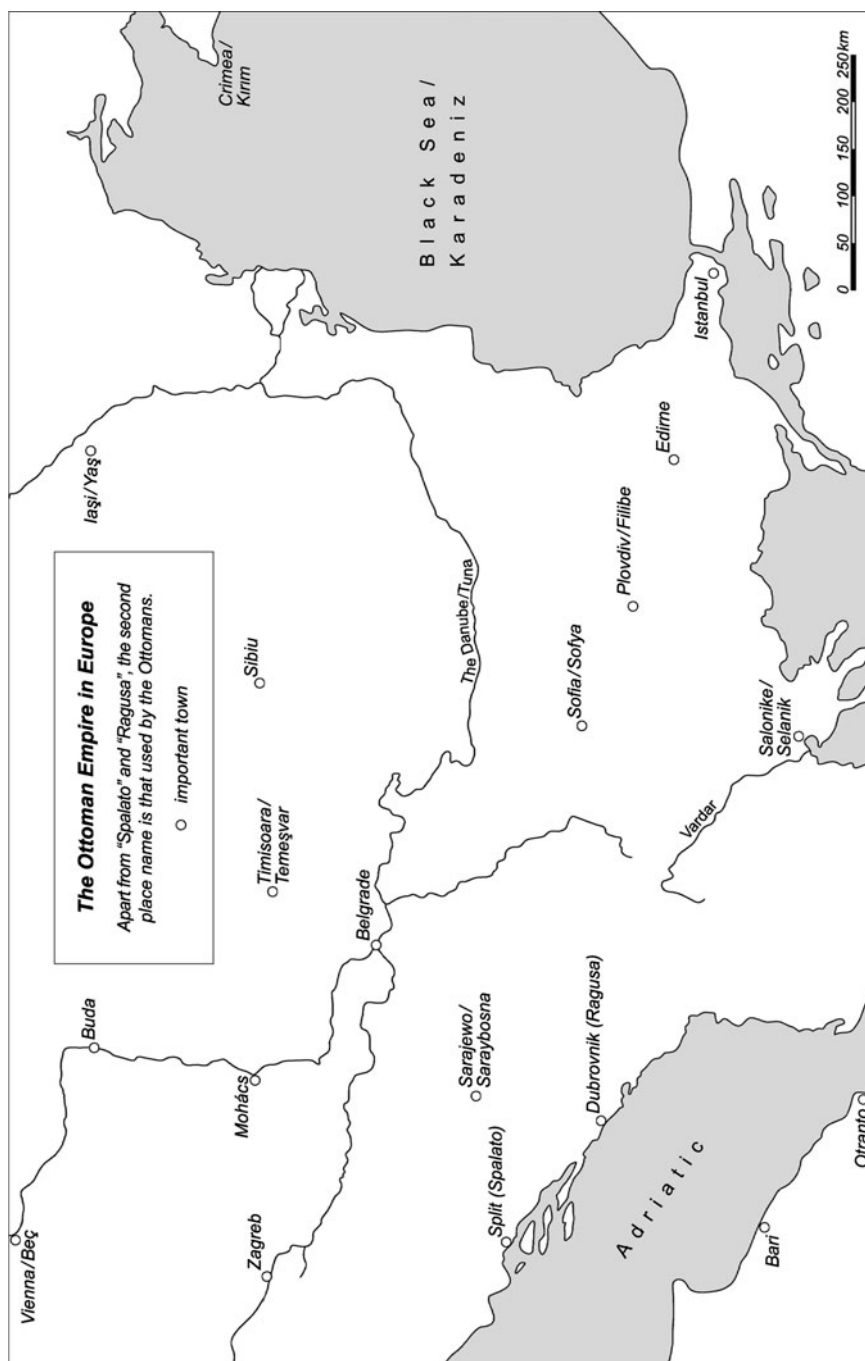
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Map 1 Map of India, reproduced from Catherine B. Asher, Cynthia Talbot, *India before Europe* (Cambridge, 2006) p. 117. © Cambridge University Press 2006, reproduced with permission



Map 2a The Ottoman Empire in Asia and Africa



Map 2b The Ottoman Empire in Europe

Introduction

In the present work, we attempt a confrontation of the societies governed by the Ottoman and Mughal (in Turkish usage: Baburi) empires of the sixteenth, seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Differently expressed, we survey the social – and to a lesser extent economic and political – features shared by the two empires, and at least as importantly, we highlight the differences.

There are good reasons for bringing together the two societies; for only by comparing a given empire with others of a similar type, will we see what is specific about the polity of our concern. Otherwise, at least when dealing with the Ottomans, we easily succumb to the temptation of viewing the political, religious or artistic activities and attitudes widespread in Istanbul or Cairo as typical of all major Islamic empires. Certainly, this temptation is less relevant to historians of South Asia. In this case, too, however, by avoiding comparison, we risk ignoring the range of options from which rulers, elites and artists of the 1500s to 1700s might choose, and the more limited possibilities available to members of the subject populations. In this manner, we hope to promote a wider vision of human life and historical possibilities.

While the subject populations are our chief concern, we cannot approach the lives of these people without examining the writings produced by the officials running the two empires. For the curation of the vast majority of surviving sources is the work of serving or former office-holders, who – like all authors – have brought their own concerns and assumptions to bear on the documents or chronicles produced. After all, in both the Ottoman and the Mughal worlds, even activities seemingly remote from official preoccupations, such as poetry, were often a means of gaining recognition at the court of a sovereign. In turn, such appreciation could influence the progress of an official career.¹ Therefore, to our misfortune, we can never approach Ottoman or Mughal subjects in a direct fashion; for the most part, we can only access their reflections in a – seriously distorting – mirror.

Moreover, early modern Ottoman and Mughal sources depict the relevant societies as consisting almost exclusively of males; and this pre-selection very much limits our vision. Given the silence of the sources, women of necessity remain in the background of our analysis; for despite all the efforts to locate sources, which historians have made – and continue to make – women have entered into Ottoman and Mughal writings only under special circumstances. We will include them wherever possible.

In this situation, when aiming for a study of ‘ordinary people’ we need to adopt an indirect approach, adjusting our focus toward the interface between the Ottoman and

Mughal governing apparatuses on the one hand, and on the other, the taxpaying subjects in town and country.

Given this game of mirrors, the present effort at confrontation and/or comparison, which seems quite straightforward at first glance, is in reality, much more complicated than it appears. As Jeroen Duindam has said, in a different context, apparent similarities may hide underlying differences and immediately visible differences disguise underlying similarities.² Even a rapid glance will show that this statement is valid for the Ottoman and Mughal settings. A large tax grant to a high-level Ottoman dignitary (*a has*) somewhat resembles the *jagīr* that rewarded the commanders and administrators serving the Mughal emperor. At the same time, Mughal officials did not much emphasize the notion that the emperor was the ultimate owner of all agricultural lands, an understanding fundamental to the Ottomans' official conception of tenure. Despite this difference, however, neither Mughal nor Ottoman peasants owned their farms in the sense that they could handle them according to their personal preferences, including the abandonment of cultivation. However, it seems that insulated by their castes and clans, Mughal peasants were less dependent on the *jagīrdār* receiving their dues than was true of their Ottoman counterparts (see Chapter 8).

In the context of world history: Empire building by Mughals and Ottomans

The present enterprise is part of a broader concern with the history of empires, which has interested historians of Europe for many centuries already. There is an extensive literature attempting to gauge the impact of the Roman Empire on medieval but also on nineteenth- or twentieth-century Europe, a concern apparent already in the 1700s if not earlier and continuing down to the present day.³

Other historians have approached empire studies in a comparative mode. Thus, a historian of the Roman Empire set out to show that this polity was not in any way a precursor of nineteenth-century style modernity, in the sense that some of his colleagues liked to maintain. Basing his comparison on an impressive array of secondary studies concerning the Mughal Empire, Peter Bang presented the Roman polity as a social, political, and economic formation very much in line with the world empires that emerged all over Eurasia from the third century BCE down to the 1800s.⁴ In the view of the present author, the Ottoman Empire would have served Bang's purposes just as well or even better, as for several centuries the sultans ruled the eastern section of the Roman world and thus dealt with similar geographical and environmental constraints. However, Bang may have wanted to show that the parallels highlighted were *not* the result of similar physical environments and perhaps even long-term political traditions. While the Roman and Mughal empires were distant from one another in terms of geography and political culture, the constraints of empire building and maintenance of rule in environments of limited wealth and slow communications might result in rather similar formations. Traditions and ideologies were perhaps less determinant than material constraints.

In a different vein, scholars working in the Ottoman world of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries – Kâtib Çelebi (1609–57) is a prime example – have studied Islamic

empires and dynasties. At the same time, few Ottoman Muslim intellectual figures working before the 1850s have shown a sustained interest in the Roman, Chinese, Japanese and other empires outside of the Muslim world. As an exception, we may refer to the conquests of Alexander, the Macedonian king (356–23 BC) in the Greek world and the Achaemenid Empire, whom authors working in Islamic contexts seem to have regarded as an ‘honorary Muslim’. Probably, it is not by chance that one of the first authors to write about the Ottoman sultans framed his account with stories about Alexander.⁵

In the world of today, the rise and dissolution of major empires during the last century or so has caused historians to review similar polities, which flourished in the past. Thought-provoking examples include the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the ‘peace to end all peace’ that followed it.⁶ In particular, the wars, massacres and expulsions accompanying and following the last years of the Ottoman Empire have become the subject of much research and controversy. In addition, historians have studied the fall of the Tsarist Empire, its re-emergence under Soviet rule and its dissolution in the 1990s, or else the disappearance of the British Empire in the decade after World War II, to say nothing of the challenges to the American informal empire that we are currently witnessing. On the Indian side, domination by the British Empire and the violence that accompanied it, but also the hostilities among the ‘successor states’ of India and Pakistan have encouraged historians to take a closer look at the past: To what extent did the legacies of Mughal and British domination determine the paths taken by India and Pakistan?⁷ Quite often, researchers will violently disagree about the after-effects of polities passed into history some decades or centuries ago. In these choices, allegiance to a given nation state may be important but other considerations come into play as well. Whatever the situation, historical and/or archaeological research is the precondition *sine qua non* for any sensible discussion.

When surveying current debates about royal rule, we find that Jeroen Duindam’s recent study of ruling dynasties active between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries CE has foregrounded the Ottoman and Mughal rulers quite prominently. In Duindam’s analysis, these monarchs take their places beside the emperors and shoguns of Japan, the Ming and Qing emperors of China, the Austrian Habsburgs, Louis XIV of France (r. 1643–1715), and a variety of Sub-Saharan African kingdoms.⁸ Other dynasties enter the scene on an *ad hoc* basis. Duindam’s study is particularly relevant for our project because this author does his best to avoid grand narratives such as ‘the rise of the West’ or ‘the great divergence’, which in the opinion of the present author, historians should sidestep, at least for the time being. Duindam also treats religion and culture as factors among others, instead of making them into prime movers, in the fashion that was widespread in the mid-1900s and which once again, many authors prefer today.

Instead, Duindam concentrates on similarities and differences in the political field, apparent when examining the tension between the person of the emperor/sultan/king or other royal on the one hand and the demands of his – or more rarely her – office on the other. In his second chapter, Duindam studies the position of the ruler among members of his extended family, including the question of succession, together with the problems that this event has always entailed.⁹ A third chapter deals with royal courts. But for our purposes, the most relevant part of the discussion comes at the end; for in the fourth and last chapter, Duindam deals with the ‘interface’ between the ruler

and those sections of the subject population about whom the author has found evidence. A similar problematic inspires the present study.

To take up a formulation of Farhat Hasan, we regard the Ottoman and Mughal governing apparatuses as engaged in constant conflicts with a broad range of social groups. Some of the latter were insiders to the ruling elites at various levels, while others remained (more or less) outside of these charmed circles.¹⁰ Therefore, the interface between the governing apparatuses and the societies they attempted to control is necessarily fuzzy, as some social actors claimed positions of authority, with others sharply contesting this claim. Moreover, power balances were constantly shifting, so that a person or group of actors, whom we may call small-scale rural power-holders, might within a few decades emerge as kingmakers or even kings. However, problems of this type are common to all social historians of early modern empires.

In the Ottoman world, the theoretical distinction between the servitors of the sultans (*askeri*) and the taxpaying subjects (*reaya*) was clear-cut, but due to the incessant struggles that Farhat Hasan refers to, realities on the ground were often unclear. In the Mughal orbit, the interface between members of the governing apparatus and the subject populations is even more difficult to analyse because representatives of the central government intersected with caste and community leaders in a variety of ways.

Questions of time and place

We begin with a clarification of terminology. While calling both the Ottoman and the Mughal realms 'empires', we reserve the term 'emperor' for the Mughal monarch and refer to the Ottoman rulers as 'sultans'. If one assumes that 'sultan' designates a regional power while the Ottoman monarch obviously was a ruler of far higher status, this terminology is open to challenge. On the other hand, it has the advantage that, at a glance, the reader knows to whom we are referring. From another perspective, the term 'Mughal' is problematic, as it invites confusion between Mughals and Mongols.¹¹ However, as 'Mughal' is so widespread, especially in Indian historiography, presumably this risk is not too great. As for the alternative term 'Timurid' it is mainly familiar to scholars while the other alternative, namely 'Baburi' is only in use among Turkish speakers. With respect to geography, we follow Indian custom and sometimes call the space occupied by today's India, Pakistan and Bangladesh 'the subcontinent' for short, with South Asia being an alternative designation.

Ottoman history programs in Turkey often consider the period between the late 1400s and early to mid-1800s as the 'modern' age, with many specialists preferring the term 'early modern'. While – as in other historiographies – there are ongoing disputes among Indian historians about periodization, many scholars – and university programs as well – distinguish between four periods, called ancient, medieval, modern and contemporary. Seemingly, many historians regard the founding of the Delhi sultanate in the late twelfth century CE as an acceptable beginning for a new period, which the historian may call medieval.¹² During this period immigration into India was significant, with Central Asian Turks an important component of the migrant population, and specifically of the ruling group. In addition, newcomers arrived from

Iran and today's Afghanistan in the 1200s, often as refugees from Mongol attacks. At times, the Delhi sultanate's power reached far into the south, temporarily incorporating a large part of Peninsular India as well.

Some historians regard the years around 1500 as the beginning of a new period: Thus, Sanjay Subrahmanyam uses the expression 'early modern' for the years from about 1500 into the eighteenth century.¹³ Catherine Asher and Cynthia Talbot have used the same term in their history of Mughal and non-Mughal India. These two authors stress that they focus on 'India before Europe', and thus not on European interventions – the arrival of the Portuguese in 1498 is not at issue here. Even so, they consider that the increasing number of interregional interactions throughout the subcontinent justify viewing the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries as decidedly post-medieval or early modern.¹⁴ This view nicely coincides with Joseph Fletcher's conclusion that, between 1500 and 1800, societies all over Eurasia showed common characteristics including among others, population growth, accelerating social change, and the increase of towns and commerce.¹⁵ These views support our present assumption that both the Ottoman and the Mughal empires were part of an early modern world.

In 1526, Bābur (r. 1526–30), a descendent of Timur/Tamerlane (1336–1405), conquered the last Delhi sultanate then ruled by the Lodi dynasty. We begin our discussion with this conquest, which for our purposes, begins the early modern period. By contrast, scholars favouring a 'long' medieval age may prefer to view 1526 as beginning a subdivision of the 'medieval' time-span, namely the Mughal period (1526–1739, alternatively 1526–1857). The Mughal emperors ruled a gradually increasing part of India from 1526 to the early 1700s, and the empire lasted, at least on paper, until the formal British takeover in 1857. However, the disintegration of the empire was already underway when in 1739, the Iranian ruler, Nādir Shāh Afshār (1698–1747) raided Delhi and carried off much treasure, including the so-called 'peacock throne'. This date may mark the end of the epoch in which the Mughals dominated India.¹⁶ During the last section of the early modern period, often called 'transitional' (1739–1857), the Mughal Empire, which at the death of Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707) had encompassed almost the entire subcontinent, seriously contracted. After 1739, the Mughal Empire was only a regional kingdom along the banks of the Yamuna and the Ganges, which furthermore continued to lose power, while the political impact of the East India Company (EIC) increased. Mughal dissolution became especially marked after the Company's victory in the battle of Plassey (1757), which resulted in the territorial control by the EIC of the rich province of Bengal, formerly a premier possession of the Mughal Empire.

To limit the area under investigation, already enormous, we focus on the realm as it was around the year 1600, when Akbar's reign was about to end.¹⁷ In the Northwest, the Mughals controlled Kashmir and Kabul. While the Himalaya range was roughly the northern border, the empire extended eastward to encompass Bengal with the Ganges and Brahmaputra deltas. The southern border was the most complicated, as by 1600, the Mughals had begun but not completed the conquest of the Deccan. Thus, Berar and Gujarat were already part of Akbar's empire, but Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golconda were still separate polities under their own sultans.

It is more straightforward to define the temporal and spatial limits of the Ottoman domain under discussion here. As Bābur displaced the last dynasty of the Delhi sultanate

in 1526, we begin our analysis at about the same time. Coincidentally, the Ottoman armies began their conquest of Hungary in 1526 as well, winning the battle of Mohàcz. Conquering Hungary took several decades. However, by the mid-sixteenth century the empire had almost reached its maximum extension on the North Western front, or to put it differently in Central Europe. During the seventeenth century, the Ottomans gained some additional territory from their Habsburg and Polish rivals, and conquered the previously Venetian island of Crete. However, Crete was the only permanent addition, as the Habsburgs mostly recovered their lost territories in 1699, when the sultans had to give up almost all of Hungary. Otherwise, there were no further losses before the later 1700s; or, to be more precise, the Ottomans reconquered Iraq, briefly lost to the Safavids (1639), and in addition retrieved Belgrade, which the Habsburgs had occupied for a few years (1718). Our analysis will focus on the 'central lands', namely Western and Central Anatolia as well as the Eastern Balkans. Egypt and Syria will enter the picture too; however, it is illusory to claim that we can cover the empire in its totality.

It seems a good idea to end the Ottoman discussion in 1768. In this year, Sultan Mustafa III (r. 1757–74) entered the war against Russia, when the intentions of the Russian, Prussian and Habsburg rulers to partition Poland had become apparent. The first of these partitions occurred in 1772. While the Ottoman recovery of Belgrade from the Habsburgs (1739) took place in the same year as Nàdir Shàh's attack on Delhi, ending the discussion in this year probably gives the reader an overly optimistic slant on Ottoman history, while ignoring the challenges, which the empire had to face shortly afterward. Following the comparatively prosperous mid-century, the sultans' realm entered into a series of massive crises, and in the late 1700s, it seemed on the verge of dissolution.¹⁸ All predictions to the contrary however, the Ottoman dynasty held out just as long as did its Habsburg and Russian rivals.

Inter-empire contacts

Apart from comparisons, we will upon occasion discuss the contacts between subjects of the Ottoman sultans and the denizens of the Mughal Empire, following up the 'encounters' that as Sanjay Subrahmanyam has suggested, were part of the histories of all Eurasian empires.¹⁹ However, our sources on important aspects of this relationship, including Ottoman–Indian commerce, are not very ample. Therefore, the discussion of encounters is quite short, even if inter-empire contacts surely were closer than our limited documentation records.

Historians including Yakup Mughul, Naim Rahman Farooqi, and Salih Özbaran have studied Ottoman intervention in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean as a reaction against Portuguese aggression and as a means of protecting the pilgrimage routes to Mecca.²⁰ This latter concern was paramount first for the Mamluk sultans of Egypt and Syria, and after 1517, for the Ottoman rulers when the conquest of Egypt made them into the overlords of the Hijaz. More recently, Giancarlo Casale has adopted a wider perspective, inspired by the rapidly growing integration of the Ottoman world into the study and teaching of world history.²¹ He has suggested that quite apart from the protection of the spice trade and the religious-cum-political legitimacy concerns

highlighted by previous researchers, Selim I (r. 1512–20) and Süleyman (r. 1520–66) – and particularly their admirals – were out to explore the wider world and make a place for the Ottomans in overseas territories.

If this hypothesis gains general acceptance, the concerns of mid-sixteenth-century Ottoman leaders resembled those of the commanders serving the Spanish and Portuguese kings. In consequence, historians should not regard the Ottoman Empire as a land-based polity for which the navy and maritime warfare were incidental. At least in the eyes of a certain faction at the sultan's court, headed by the long-lived grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Paşa (1506–79), expansion in the Indian Ocean region was a significant component of empire building. However, in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, after the murder of Sokollu, Ottoman priorities changed, and with the decline of Portuguese power in the 1600s, Ottoman sultans no longer attempted to chase away the Portuguese and – perhaps – acquire territory on the western coasts of India.

On the other hand, in the reign of Akbar (r. 1556–1605), there was considerable inter-empire tension when the Mughal ruler seemingly attempted to establish a presence in the Hijaz, allowing a high-profile pilgrimage to Mecca on the part of several prominent palace women. The latter remained in the Hijaz for several years, much to the discomfort of the Ottoman authorities.²² Presumably, Akbar's move involved courting the Sharifs that governed the holy city of Mecca, autonomous but recognizing the Ottoman sultan as their suzerain.²³ Under Jahāngīr (r. 1605–27) and Shāh Jahān (r. 1628–58) the builder of the Taj Mahal, the two empires occasionally exchanged ambassadors; and there were further embassies in the early 1700s.

Non-Mughal venues for contacts between Ottomans and Indians include the Bahmani sultanate (1347–1527). The Bahmanis had close commercial links to the fifteenth-century Ottoman realm, and members of the local elites often travelled to the Hijaz, under Ottoman control after 1517.²⁴ Even more important were the immigrants into India who arrived from the Ottoman realm, settled in Gujarat and at times controlled the city of Surat, later the major Indian Ocean port of the Mughal Empire. In the mid-1500s, these immigrants, mostly known as Rumi, strongly supported the interventions of Ottoman sultans and viziers against Portuguese attempts at controlling navigation in the Indian Ocean.²⁵

While the late 1700s are outside of the period treated here, noteworthy Ottoman–Indian contacts occurred in this period as well, namely when the ruler of Mysore/Deccan Tippu Sultān (d. 1798) sought Ottoman aid in his struggle against British encroachment.²⁶ However, during those years, Sultans Abdulhamid I (r. 1774–89) and Selim III (r. 1789–1807) were embroiled in both domestic and inter-empire conflicts, so that intervention in remote Peninsular India, which would have surely resulted in a confrontation with Great Britain, was not a practicable possibility.

Situating the problem: The politics behind historiography

As noted, many if not most authors of surviving early modern texts served, or had served in the bureaucracies of their respective rulers. Therefore, we largely have to construct our account on documents and narratives intended to stabilize the rule of

Ottoman sultans and Mughal emperors. As our purpose obviously differs from the aims of these authors, we need to read them 'against the grain' whenever possible. Given these and other difficulties, the present project is more modest than Duindam's enterprise is. While his work encompasses a large number of dynasties, we concentrate on just two of them, asking questions about the manner in which the texts and images produced by and for the Ottoman and Mughal court elites reflected the concerns of the relevant subject populations.

In both cases, the politics at issue had come into being by the conquest of a well-established agricultural territory by Turkic armies. Turkic migrants had been present in Anatolia since the later eleventh century and their numbers had much increased during the 1200s, because at that time many inhabitants of Central Asia fled from the Mongols, whose empire building often involved brutal attacks on the autochthonous populations. When the Ottoman dynasty in the early 1300s became visible to chroniclers, its members and adherents were thus no strangers to Anatolia. However, as Turkish-speaking Muslims whose scholars used Persian as a literary language, they differed profoundly from the local inhabitants, mostly Greek-speaking Orthodox Christians and Armenians, marginalized over the long term, by conversion to Islam.²⁷

Large-scale out-migration by warrior communities from Central Asia had reached India in the 1100s as well, probably due to the same reasons as in the Anatolian case. Thus, in 1526, the presence of Turkic and Muslim warriors founding sultanates in northern India was no novelty; and some of these rulers encouraged the composition of chronicles in the Iranian palace style.

In 1398, the Delhi sultanate had been the victim of a major raid by Timur/Tamerlane, who massacred the population of Delhi. At least indirectly, Bābur's memoirs indicate the author's awareness of this traumatic event and his attempt to distance himself from it.²⁸ Even so, long after the Mughal dynasty had founded a large Indian empire, its representatives – at least in certain contexts – continued to identify as descendants of Timur and Genghis Khan. By contrast, the authors writing about the early Ottoman dynasty certainly had no reason to glorify the still largely pagan Mongols of the late 1200s and early 1300s; nor did chroniclers writing in the fifteenth century see any reason to praise Timur's victory over Bayezid I in 1402. However, educated adherents of the early Ottoman project were part of the same 'Persianate' tradition of rule that the Mughals used as a source of inspiration; and thus, notions of good government were quite similar as well.²⁹ In addition, differently from the Safavid rulers of Iran, who dealt with an overwhelmingly Muslim population and might even develop ambitions to convert the entire population to Shiite Islam, Ottoman and Mughal elites, throughout their respective histories, accepted the existence of many non-Muslims among their subjects.

Despite these points of contact, for a long time Ottomanists regarded the empire ruled by the sultans as a state formation *sui generis*, which had little in common with either its western or its eastern neighbours.³⁰ This 'isolationist' view made sense for people who viewed the Ottoman Empire, and particularly the nineteenth-century avatar of this long-lived polity, as an 'ancestor' of the Republic of Turkey, by now nearly a century old. At the same time, once the Ottoman archives had become available, from the 1940s onward and – more significantly – in the closing years of the twentieth

century, Ottomanist historians mainly focused on the empire's internal history; for researchers soon became aware that they had known very little about urban or provincial life before the opening of the archives. For many researchers working during the last quarter of the twentieth century, the domestic history of the Ottoman Empire thus had a clear priority, although this preference did not completely exclude relations with the outside world.

Whenever the latter were at issue, the conquest of principalities, kingdoms and sultanates in the Balkans, Anatolia and finally the Arab lands took centre stage, followed by the integration of these new acquisitions into an empire that profoundly changed character as it grew.³¹ Historians concerned with economic relations rather than politics might look beyond the Ottoman borders because they wished to chart the process by which the empire, or at least some of its provinces, suffered 'incorporation' into the 'world economy' dominated by the industrializing powers of Europe and at a later stage, North America.³² Historians of literature and painting, by contrast, looked toward Iran, as Iranian culture, both in its Timurid and its Safavid incarnations, made a profound impression on the people creating Ottoman palace culture. As for Japan, this ancient empire began to interest first Ottomans and then Ottomanists after the Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese war (1904-5): The dissident 'young Turks' of the period considered Japan an example they hoped to emulate.

Thus, both Turkish and Japanese scholars have published on late Ottoman history.³³ By contrast, other world empires have remained in shadow. The number of Ottomanists concerned with Russia is still limited; and China until quite recently was completely outside the world as imagined by historians of the Ottoman domain.

In today's Turkey, there is some tension between the historians' vision of Ottoman history and a 'popular' view, which currently has strong support in governmental circles as well, and which focuses on the greatness and glory of the Ottoman sultans and the benisons they bestowed on humankind in general. Even among professional historians, there are many who assume that the Ottoman state represented Islamic justice and morality, playing down abuses as rare and uncharacteristic.³⁴ However, at present debates about such matters are mostly the affair of journalists with an interest in history and historians appearing in television programs and/or widely diffused print media. When writing for fellow professionals, few historians focus on Ottoman glory and morality.

Matters are somewhat different when it comes to India. Here, the fact that the majority population is Hindu but the rulers and elites in power for centuries before 1857 were largely Muslim is an issue that sparks heated political debate. Even remote periods such as the Delhi sultanate (1206-1526) and the Mughal Empire (1526-1857) are not exempt from political uses. Recently, exchanges have become even more polemical, since the current government apparently sees itself as representing Hindu values often equated with 'national' ones.

At the same time, quite a few historians teaching in elite Indian universities take issue with claims and policies of that kind.³⁵ It is in fact quite probable that their concern with the possible political implications of their work has made them more attentive to the uses and abuses of sources than is true within the somewhat less politicized Ottomanist community.

Ottoman–Mughal connections and the long shadow of Marshall Hodgson

Viewing matters from a different angle, the reader soon notices that in comparative studies dealing with the Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals the Ottoman perspective remains under-represented. Marshall Hodgson, the pioneer who inspired scholars and teachers to take an interest in this type of comparison, was a world historian, working on what he used to call the region between Nile and Oxus. Hodgson mainly studied the religion and culture of what he had labelled as the ‘Middle Period’ of Islamic history, thus concentrating on the period before about 1500; he was definitely not an Ottomanist. Stephen Dale and Douglas Streusand, who have written on the ‘three empires’ as well, have made their reputations as historians of India, and specifically of the Mughal Empire.³⁶ Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Naim Rahman Farooqi and most recently Gagan Sood, who all have shown interest in the Ottoman world, are principally historians of India as well.³⁷ Only Ali Anooshahr falls into a different category, combining a comparative orientation with a strong interest in the founding periods of both the Ottoman and the Mughal empires, while Central Asia is one of his major concerns as well.³⁸ Surely, the time has come to complete the picture and attempt a comparison from the perspective of the mature Ottoman Empire, and this is the aim of the present study.

Hitherto, scholars viewing the Ottoman and Mughal empires in a comparative mode have often included the Safavid polity of Iran (1501–1722).³⁹ There are many arguments in favour of such a proceeding. Firstly, albeit in varying degrees, all three empires used gunpowder weapons to a significant extent, although only the Ottomans specialized in cannon and musket warfare. Secondly, the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal empires were contiguous, so that discussing all three of them together results in a study covering much of South and West Asia, with Egypt, North Africa and the Balkans ‘thrown in’. Thirdly, historians will find it attractive that the Safavid and Mughal dynasties flourished and lost power at about the same time.

As a fourth reason for including the Safavids, the observation of Iranian political culture can make us aware of phenomena existing in the Ottoman and Mughal orbits too, but to which we may not have paid sufficient attention. Rudi Matthee’s study of the seventeenth-century Safavid Empire, for example, provides much ‘food for thought’ when the author discusses the lack of interest of the last two shahs in military matters – surely an issue relevant to the mid-eighteenth-century Mughal emperor Muhammad Shāh (r. 1719–48) as well. Furthermore, the ferociously divisive factions at the Safavid court made it impossible for provincial office-holders to concentrate on their jobs, because they needed to counteract the innuendos by which their enemies might make their positions untenable. These observations bring to mind the representatives that in the 1700s, Ottoman magnates routinely entertained in Istanbul as well, although these people probably dealt more with the gains or losses from tax farms or the complaints of overtaxed provincials, than with rumours of possible treason. In a similar vein, a Safavid governor of Qandahar once handed over the city to a Mughal commander because he feared execution, probably due to another court intrigue.⁴⁰ The

problem of elite morale that Matthee has thus raised is surely of interest in the Mughal and Ottoman contexts as well.

Despite the advantages of a tripartite comparison, there are good reasons for focusing on merely the Ottoman and Mughal cases. Hodgson and Dale have written general histories with a strong focus on high culture, Anoooshahr has discussed the socio-political role of literature in the self-fashioning of Islamic rulers, and Streusand has approached tripartite comparison as a political and military historian. By contrast, the present author deals with the interaction between elites and societies, with a strong emphasis on the latter. Thus, this study focuses on the growth and contraction of cities and urban systems, merchants active in domestic and foreign trade, and craftspeople both organized and unorganized. In addition, it includes the men and women that contemporary elites probably considered 'marginal', such as female members of the subject classes, servants, and slaves. To deal with this multitude of issues in two rather different societies, both characterized by the coexistence of different religions, already requires a good deal of space. An attempt to discuss three societies in some depth would have resulted in a book too voluminous for most publishers – to say nothing of the fact that for an Ottomanist, obtaining even a limited degree of familiarity with a single non-Ottoman empire is already enough of a challenge. Whenever the opportunity has presented itself, I have thus opted for the scrutiny of details, viewed as closely as possible. If this procedure means sacrificing breadth of coverage, so be it!

As noted, the starting point for scholars today attempting to compare the Ottoman and Mughal empires is the third volume of Marshall Hodgson's classic *The Venture of Islam*. Admittedly, Hodgson (1922–68), who had spent much of his life teaching in Chicago and interacting with locally based historians and anthropologists, had left his magnum opus incomplete at the time of his death; and it fell to his friends and students to prepare it for publication.⁴¹ Despite the lack of polish that Hodgson would surely have given his work had he lived long enough, his notion of an 'Islamicate' culture has been and is still very influential. By this term, historians denote an environment in which Islam predominated although non-Muslims including Christians, Jews and Hindus might be strong minorities – or even the majority.

Hodgson wrote at a time when the Ottoman archives were accessible only to a very limited extent, and in any case, archival studies were not his main interest. For this author as a practising Quaker, the role of religion in developing individual consciences and inculcating social responsibility was a key issue. From that perspective, Hodgson emphasized the significance of sharia-mindedness, a worldview that could bind elite and non-elite people together. Following a line of reasoning opened up by his academic teacher Gustav von Grunebaum, Hodgson was interested in global cultural trends, an orientation which today's readers may find somewhat one-dimensional, at least where *The Gunpowder Empires and Modern Times* are at issue. Well informed on ongoing research, however, Hodgson did not assume that the differences between Islamic empires were of little importance in comparison with their common features, especially religion; he was far too careful a scholar to make such claims. Nor did he believe, as older colleagues had been inclined to do, that the Ottomans destroyed the prosperity of the lands that they conquered; Hodgson pointed out that quite often, the opposite was true.⁴² Similarly, while discussing the problems inherent in eighteenth-century

decentralization, he readily acknowledged that some provincial magnates were closer to the populations they ruled than the sultan's officials had ever been.⁴³

At the time when Hodgson was writing his magnum opus, only a few of İnalçık's articles had appeared in English; in the 1970s and 1980s these works were to give non-Ottomanists a sense of what Ottoman subjects were doing when they were not thinking about religion or moral responsibility, but making a living or simply enjoying life. After all, in 1968 İnalçık had not yet relocated to Chicago – we may speculate about the interchanges that could have taken place between these two scholars had Hodgson only lived some ten years longer. As this discussion never occurred, the image of Ottoman society as presented by Hodgson is very much a general overview, in the sense favoured by von Grunebaum, without the attention to individual cities, guilds, books or buildings which today we expect from an account of Ottoman culture and society. However, Hodgson's claim that, in comparison to Iran and the Mughal Empire, Ottoman culture encouraged its representatives to be very cautious about philosophical or intellectual novelties retains some validity.⁴⁴ Even so, we now know more about Ottoman 'non-conforming spirits', who were out of line with the conservative tendencies of their contemporaries, than was possible in the 1950s or 1960s. Evliya Çelebi (1611–after 1683) comes to mind first, but Şanizâde (d. 1826) is a strong candidate as well.⁴⁵ Pressures to conform were certainly strong, but Ottoman society did produce its own brand of people ready to explore their physical and cultural environments.

Both in the Ottoman and in the Mughal realm, palace culture was a feature that Hodgson admired, but about whose elitist character he had misgivings. He had encountered the Mughal variety of this culture, including Akbar's palace of Fatehpur Sikri, during a post-doctoral year in India. Any scholar from abroad could easily encounter some of the major works of Ottoman and Mughal architecture, while the arcana of miniature painting were less accessible – and even on a major example of architecture such as the Ottoman palace, the work of Gülru Necipoğlu and Leslie Peirce was still far in the future. It is thus not surprising that Hodgson, otherwise so careful, was quite ready to attribute the woes of the empires to 'harem intrigues', presumably on the part of eunuchs or palace women.⁴⁶

Intriguingly, despite the high esteem that Hodgson's work enjoyed, Ottomanists and Mughal historians before the year 2000 did not produce many tripartite or 'two-empire' studies with a comparative slant. While in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a number of conferences did bring together Ottomanists and Mughal historians, the researchers involved did not publish most of the resulting contributions in a single venue, and thus the enterprise had limited impact.⁴⁷ Only a few scholars, with Sanjay Subrahmanyam perhaps the most committed, continued to stress that historians might learn something from Ottoman–Mughal comparisons. By the new millennium, however, reviving interest in world empires induced several historians to take up the challenge involved in such comparisons.

In 2006, Subrahmanyam published an important article confronting the empires of the Spanish Habsburgs, Ottomans and Mughals, with a revised version appearing in 2018.⁴⁸ After examining the Iberian and Mughal empires, Subrahmanyam took a long hard look at the economic and commercial situation of the Ottoman world as depicted by Halil İnalçık. He concluded that the latter had overestimated the importance of

Ottoman dirigisme, which many Ottomanists would probably call a 'command economy'. Even more remarkably, and gratifying to the present author, Subrahmanyam argued that İnalcık had exaggerated the role of Islamic institutions – presumably the pious foundations (*vakıf*, *evkaf*) in Ottoman economic life. In this context, Subrahmanyam pointed out that, if proceeding just a single step further on the road indicated by İnalcık, the historian would arrive at the assumption that Islamic institutions impeded capital formation, and thus were responsible for the lack of economic development in the Ottoman territories.⁴⁹

The logic is impeccable, although surely İnalcık had never intended such a claim. However, by viewing Ottomanist statements from the critical distance made possible by a close study of the Mughal Empire, Subrahmanyam encourages his readers to reopen an old question: Were Islamic institutions as hostile to economic development as some authors tend to think?⁵⁰ If they were not, what explanations can we offer for the fact that the market economy, Ottoman style, did not lead to capitalism? Following Çizakça and Kenanoğlu, the present author would opt for the force of the political opinions held by the Ottoman central elite, inveterately hostile to social groupings that its members found difficult to control. Elite policies thus impeded capital formation at least in the central provinces. However, other responses are surely possible.

Turning to the political and cultural spheres, Subrahmanyam points out that, while the Ottomans never tried to force the vast majority of their Christian subjects to convert to Islam, the Mughals were more successful in ensuring that non-Muslim, Hindu elites acquired a stake in the imperial enterprise, thus establishing a political culture that promoted supra-regional unity.⁵¹ This issue will resurface in the course of the present study.

In a volume that appeared in 2010, Stephen Dale has jointly discussed the three major Islamic empires. Apart from works on the South Indian community of the Mapillas and Indian merchants active on Russian territories, this author has written major works on Bâbur's autobiography and Ibn Khaldûn, thus engaging with socio-economic history as well as the resurgent genres of cultural historiography, biography included.⁵² The author defines *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals* as a guide for students.⁵³ However, he by far transcends this modest aim, for he has produced a panorama of cultural history appealing to specialists as well. Confined to a single chapter, economic issues take a back seat, so that the book at times reads like a modern version of Hodgson's work, much enriched by the research undertaken in the nearly forty years elapsed since the publication of *The Gunpowder Empires and Modern Times*.

The authors' choices in terms of time result in further resemblance between the works of Hodgson and Dale: Both authors do not end their accounts in the eighteenth century, as is true – for instance – of the present study. Therefore, they have to deal with the aftermath of empires and the nostalgia for past glories, an issue featuring prominently in Turkey's political culture today. On the other hand, Dale does not focus on the religious-moral impetus so characteristic of Hodgson's work, nor does he share the interest of his predecessor in systematizing the periodization of political and social change. Even so, Dale too focuses on explicating the dilemmas confronting present-day Muslims to an American or European audience.

A brief glance at the 'Table of Contents' shows that cultural history is the main concern: Dale discusses the legitimacy of rulers in addition to the cultures they fostered, devoting about one third of the text, to poetry, art and, especially in the Iranian context, philosophy and mysticism as well. Moreover, the author confides that he would have liked to dedicate more space to architecture and gardens, the favourites of Mughal royalty and nobility, and especially of Bābur.⁵⁴ Of particular interest for our present purposes is his discussion of the personal and political use to which Sultan Süleyman put his knowledge of Persian-style versification.⁵⁵ For the uses of literature in real life are a complex question, which Ali Anooshahr had taken up just a year before, although the latter author has defined his work partly in opposition to Stephen Dale's biography of Bābur.⁵⁶

Among the authors discussed here, Anooshahr is unusual because he is willing to focus on two rulers that few (if any) historians have regarded as having something in common, namely Bābur and the Ottoman sultan Murad II (r. 1421–44 and 1446–51). In line with current concerns with 'self-fashioning', Anooshahr suggests that medieval Islamic historiography provided not only ways of describing past deeds and events, but models for future conduct as well. Thus, when Bābur found himself campaigning in the Ganges-Yamuna plain, the history of Mahmūd of Ghazni provided a first 'script' for his own conduct, for which he later substituted some of his own writings. As long as Anooshahr discusses Bābur's self-fashioning, the latter's diary provides an incontestable textual base. More hypothetically, this author points out that the words of the anonymous historian of the Islamic-cum-heroic campaigns (*gazavat*) of Murad II resonate with Bābur's own 'script'. Of course, the difficulty is that we do not know if Bābur had ever heard of this text – and if he had heard of it, what the lines of communication may have been.⁵⁷ While we will gladly follow Anooshahr in leaving this matter undecided, it is important to remember that texts, including chronicles, not only reflected reality but might furnish models for heroic and religiously sanctioned conduct as well.

Warfare as a literary subject and a means of 'self-fashioning' brings us to the most recent attempt at treating the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal empires together, namely the work of Douglas E. Streusand, another member of the Chicago school of comparative historians. While Streusand starts out from the approaches pioneered by Hodgson, he has thoroughly assimilated the work of his former professor Halil İnalcık. While Streusand's monograph concerns the Mughal conquest of India, in the tripartite comparison attempted in his second book, the author has paid much attention to Ottoman expansion, with İnalcık's article on 'Ottoman methods of conquest' seminal to his thinking.⁵⁸ Streusand resembles Hodgson in that he claims to address his work to (advanced and intelligent) undergraduates, but differently from Hodgson he is as good as his word. For while the present author thinks that much of Hodgson's discussion is intelligible only to readers after considerable preparation, Streusand has put a great deal of effort into making his text as accessible as possible, particularly by the long 'chronologies' that in reality, discuss the political histories of the empires under study. Moreover, as a professor at a military institution, Streusand has paid much attention to the tactics and technologies of warfare, once again building on the work of İnalcık for the Ottoman world and that of Jos Gommans for the Mughals. In a different vein, the author has focused on Mughal views of kingship in the time of Akbar and his

successors, thus discussing military history not as a self-contained field but as part of the structures of imperial rule. While in the study undertaken here, military history gets short shrift, Streusand reminds us that we must keep the military basis of Ottoman and Mughal rule constantly in mind.

Outlining the present project

As noted, we begin our discussion in 1526, when Bābur won the first battle of Panipat and Sultan Süleyman began the conquest of Hungary. However, this choice does not imply the claim that the two monarchs stand for the same stage in the histories of their respective dynasties. As Ali Anooshahr has explained *in extenso*, in the tripartite scheme of dynastic history favoured by medieval Islamic authors, Bābur was the ‘founder king’, in the Ottoman realm, parallel perhaps to Murad II. Süleyman by contrast stood for the maturity of an Islamic empire, in which the monarch ensured justice and presided over the conquests of subordinate ‘warriors for the faith’, but without necessarily taking the field in person.⁵⁹ However, despite the inspiration derived from Duindam’s work, the present study focuses not on dynasties but on elite–commoner interactions. Therefore, we do not emphasize questions of dynastic rise and decline.

In the first chapter, we discuss written sources. Both Ottomanist and Indianist historians in the last few decades have paid renewed attention to what authors of the past actually said, what they could say given the literary models available, what kinds of lessons they wanted their readers to take away, and often most importantly, what they left unsaid. Given this knowledge, and with all due caution, we may then try to read between the lines, searching for information about interactions between officials and ordinary people. Moreover, since the history of the archives is markedly different in the Ottoman and Indian contexts, we will briefly discuss the problem of storing and accessing documents as well. It is worth remembering that officials composing documents in some ways conformed to the same rules as chroniclers, for they too worked according to established models. Thus, the image of events that they recorded was not a simple reflection of realities on the ground, and for that very reason, the voices of the underprivileged often remain hidden. Our attempts to make them audible are deeply problematic, but they are worth making nonetheless.

The second chapter deals with visual records: Both Ottoman and Mughal patrons normally sponsored work inspired by Iranian-style arts of the book. However, in addition Mughal – and Iranian – grandees ordered large-scale wall paintings showing people and animals, a genre known to Ottoman art lovers – if at all – through the booty that army commanders brought back from Iranian campaigns.⁶⁰ As for the interface between Ottoman elites and non-elites, miniatures showing the wedding and circumcision festivities of 1582 and 1720 are the most helpful, as they depict the floats through which Istanbul artisans showcased their daily work in front of sultans Murad III (r. 1574–95) and Ahmed III (r. 1703–30). On the Mughal side, the miniatures made in the entourage of Akbar are especially valuable. After all, this ruler liked to attend construction sites in person and commissioned miniatures depicting him in this

activity, amidst the workpeople building a fort or palace. In addition, scenes of daily life often appear in the backgrounds of pictures focusing on religious or literary topics, and the frequency of this type of artwork permits us to interpret it as a historical source. When establishing the dominant artistic conventions, however, we soon come up against limits set by the rules of a given atelier. Thus, we do not know what information about the denizens of the working world the painters have sacrificed, for the sake of aesthetic appeal, gravitas or decorum.

In the third chapter, the focus is on the way in which Ottoman sultans and Mughal emperors established and secured their rule, through their armies and, in the Ottoman instance, through a navy that in the mid-1500s, was the most powerful in the Mediterranean. Once a region was under the sultans' rule, the Ottomans often built fortresses to secure their new acquisitions, both in the territories conquered from the Safavids in Eastern Anatolia and in the Northwest, near the border with the Austrian Habsburgs in Hungary. In the Mughal world, castles seem to have had a rather different function; they were the strongholds of especially Hindu Rajput princes that the Mughals set out to conquer, often with much bloodshed. Akbar, Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān also fortified their palaces in Agra and Delhi. To conclude, certain Mughal miniatures allow us at least a vague impression of the role of masters and labourers in the building trades. By contrast, Ottoman patrons were much more reticent on this issue.

In the third chapter, we discuss the notion of the 'gunpowder empire', often used for both polities, although Ottoman commanders mustered more enthusiasm about firearms than their counterparts in the Mughal world ever managed to do. In this context, we introduce the anti-Mughal rebellion of the Marathas and their efforts to found a Hindu kingdom in Peninsular India: Evidently, under certain circumstances, the commanders of Maratha war bands easily found large numbers of raiders willing to fight for them. Then, the discussion turns to the challenges to Mughal power posed by neighbouring polities; in particular, the emperors' military preparedness had to impress the Portuguese Estado da India and the English and Dutch trading companies as well. However, these foreigners remained of limited political importance as long as the Mughal Empire was securely in place.

Armies consist of soldiers, often modestly paid and eager to supplement their income by booty. In the 1400s, Ottoman sultans and commanders required military service from peasant-soldiers, and in the Balkans from nomads too; however, the latter had lost their tribal affiliations at an early date. In the 1500s, Ottoman officialdom, now eager to draw a sharp line between the taxpayers and the privileged servitors of the sultans, phased out these peasants and nomads as regular combatants, although the men at issue might become guardsmen. From the late 1500s to the end of the period under study, sultans and especially grandees of various types hired so many mercenaries from among the subject population that soldiering became a source of livelihood for significant numbers of villagers, particularly in Anatolia. The men recruited in this fashion had certain affinities with the peasant-soldiers that were part of the Mughal and Maratha armies, although the Ottomans did not find their soldiers in the loosely controlled borderlands of the empire, as was widespread in the Indian context.

The fourth chapter takes up a problem confronting both Ottomans and Mughals, namely the post-conquest legitimization of rule. For this purpose, both elites

highlighted the power and glory of the rulers through ceremonies, festivities and the display of valuable objects. Rulers might enjoy special appreciation when providing visual and auditory experiences to people whose daily lives were otherwise monotonous and full of toil. Ceremonies and festivals were especially prominent in the Indian world, but we do not have much information on the role that the Mughal emperors, their *grandees* and individual artists played in the organization of festivities. By contrast, the Ottoman archives retain an enormous documentation on the ‘nuts-and-bolts’ of organizing such events, including occasional protests of urban artisans and traders against the high costs of celebrations. After all, even if ‘on paper’ the sultan or a high official footed the bill, the money ultimately came from the scanty resources of urban and rural taxpayers.⁶¹

Sufis and dervish saints, sometimes close to the ruling elite and sometimes conspicuously aloof, had a role to play in the legitimacy of most early modern Muslim empires. Quite often, these men mediated between the varieties of Islam practised at the Ottoman and Mughal courts on the one hand, and on the other, the Muslim – and sometimes non-Muslim – subject populations. In both empires, Sufism opened up spaces for the arts, especially poetry and music. Where Mughal–Ottoman encounters were at issue, the ‘new style’ Naqshbandi/Nakşbendi dervishes known as the *Mujaddidiya*, founded by an Indian religious figure, drew numerous adherents among the Ottoman elite of the eighteenth century.

On a different plane, the policies adopted by sultans and emperors toward their non-Muslim subjects were part of their legitimacy quests as well. A major issue, on which the two governments differed profoundly, was the demand for payment of the poll tax (*cizye/jizya*), which Ottoman non-Muslims always had to defray but which was intermittent in the Mughal orbit: Akbar abrogated, and Aurangzeb reinstated it, while after this ruler’s death abrogation and reinstatement followed one another at a rapid pace. In Mughal India, circumstances surrounding payment of the *jizya* might give rise to questions of honour and respectability, as complaints from Hindu taxpayers often emphasized the aggressive behaviour of the collectors. By contrast, reinstituting the *jizya* probably enhanced Mughal legitimacy in the eyes of certain Islamic scholars.

While for the rich Mughal exchequer, the *jizya* was of minor significance, for the less well-endowed Ottoman treasury, the *cizye* was a major source of income especially when it came to financing the wars against the Habsburgs (1683–99, 1715–18). Individuals rather than communities became liable for payment, so that officialdom could reach down to the individual taxpaying family. We may wonder whether in the Mughal realm as well, demanding the *jizya* was a means of keeping track of the non-Muslim population.

When recruiting future servitors for the ruler, language was a potent device. Sometimes, knowing or not knowing a given language was crucial for a young boy aspiring to rise into a particular section of the elite. In the 1400s and 1500s, for instance, the sultans did not recruit boys as potential janissaries, who already knew Turkish, presumably because they had access to information that the elite wished to withhold. On the other hand, the mastery of Ottoman Turkish in the sultans’ realm, or Persian fluency in Mughal India, was a prerequisite for entry into the bureaucracy. If a boy with

the necessary language skills entered officialdom, his gratified family must have often viewed the ruler as a legitimate source of status and livelihood.

In India, Hindus could attend a madrasa and acquire fluency in Persian and a polished style 'in school', an option unavailable to would-be entrants into the Ottoman ruling apparatus.⁶² As far as we know, in the Ottoman world it was unlikely for the son of a peasant to enter a madrasa and later make a brilliant career as a scholar-official; moreover, no Christian or Jew ever attended a school of this type. As Ottoman non-Muslims were unlikely to make places for themselves in the governing apparatus unless they converted to Islam, they had less motivation to learn Ottoman Turkish than did Hindus when it came to mastering Persian.

In the fifth chapter, the focus is on markets and small towns, substantial port cities, and large capitals as well. In both empires, roadside stops and customs offices attracted buyers and sellers. In both venues, villages might turn into towns when overall population grew and opportunities for trade increased. In the Mughal Empire and the post-Mughal principalities, as well as in the Ottoman realm, officials attempted to found markets, for as tax-takers they needed to convert grain dues into money, thus promoting the exchange of goods for cash. However, villagers and townsmen needed to regard the newly established markets as useful, or the latter remained empty.

Port cities flourished and declined partly because of natural factors, namely the availability of deep water close to the coast, necessary for the unloading of large ships. By contrast, ports declined when nearby rivers had silted up so much that large vessels could no longer access them. Political conditions played a role as well. Thus, Cambay lost out to Surat because the latter port enjoyed the protection of the Mughals; and at a later stage, Surat suffered from the dissolution of Mughal power in Gujarat.⁶³ In this instance at least, imperial power usually protected merchants from the depredations of robbers, officials and subordinate princes. Izmir, by contrast, owed its florescence at least in part to the limits that seventeenth-century conflicts in Anatolia placed upon the sultans' control of the new urban site. Relative remoteness from the attentions of the central power certainly attracted foreign merchants, although we should not exaggerate the 'incorporation of the Aegean coast into the European-dominated world economy' during the seventeenth or even the early eighteenth century. Settlements where official control was less intense attracted Ottoman merchants and artisans as well. Unfortunately, we cannot clearly determine when royal power was a source of security and when the demands of its officials destabilized the region, causing taxpayers to flee.

As for capital cities, the situation in the Ottoman and Mughal empires differed profoundly. While in the 1300s and 1400s, the sultans had moved their seats several times, in the second half of the fifteenth century, the government finally settled in Istanbul and apart from an interruption of about fifty years in the 1600s, remained in this city until the end of the empire in 1923. By contrast, the pre-eminence of Delhi was less clear-cut; as in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, there was competition from Lahore and Agra, the latter including the nearby palace, mosque and mausoleum compound of Fatehpur Sikri. Delhi became the uncontested Mughal capital only with the founding of Shāhjahānabād (today: Old Delhi) in the mid-1600s.

The demand generated by the rulers' palaces stimulated trade, although with respect to Istanbul, we should not overestimate the resulting commercial opportunities. After

all, Ottoman taxpayers had to supply many goods and services at below-market prices, or even without payment of any kind, in lieu of taxes. Even so, Istanbul artisans joined revolting soldiers in 1703, when it seemed that the sultans might permanently transfer their capital to Edirne. After all, the palace and central administration employed many people who had to buy necessities in the urban market. The serious difficulties of Istanbul during the first fifty years of the Republican period (1923 to the 1970s) may indicate the value of the market generated by government employees and investments.

In the Mughal Empire, the nexus linking palace and marketplace seems to have been stronger, although the emperors and many subordinate princes could procure high-quality goods outside of market channels. However, gold and silver were available in India in far larger quantities than in the Ottoman milieu. Thus, there was much more money in circulation in Shāhjahānābād or Agra than in Istanbul, a situation that helped sizeable numbers of Delhi and Agra inhabitants to make a living by means of the market.

Individual traders, the focus of Chapter 6, remain elusive in both empires; in the Ottoman world, their accounts have survived in the archives mostly when the owners had died leaving debts to the treasury, and officials confiscated the delinquents' inheritances. However, in Cairo around 1600, there was an exceptional trader, who for reasons remaining unknown had most or perhaps all of his transactions recorded by the local qadi. From Nelly Hanna's study, there emerges a merchant with business connections to both Venice and India, and who sometimes even cooperated with traders professing a different religion.⁶⁴ Apparently, business skills were the principal qualification that a junior merchant needed to become and remain a partner of the redoubtable Ismā'il Abū Taqiyya. Moreover, it is noteworthy that this successful trader avoided involvement with the governing apparatus. Evidently, in Cairo around 1600 this was possible. In Istanbul, by contrast, such a merchant might not have been able to avoid investments in tax farming and the confiscations so often resulting from this line of business.

Close-up views of Indian merchants are not frequent either, but we possess the unique example of a seventeenth-century minor trader, a Jain, who specialized in jewels and precious stones. While this man proclaimed the importance of keeping silent about successful business deals, his open discussions of his many failures, and how he managed to survive them, provide incomparable insights into seventeenth-century North Indian business life.⁶⁵

Indianist historians have studied local merchants working for the export market, whose activities have entered the records of their Dutch, English or French business partners. Ottoman archives seemingly contain few records concerning Ottoman subjects active in the export business; but Armenian merchants in close contact with Izmir, selling cotton in eighteenth-century Amsterdam have left records in the archives of that city. Moreover, Ottoman merchants trading in Central Europe have left traces in eighteenth-century Vienna or Hungary, mostly a Habsburg possession after 1699.⁶⁶ Until very recently, historians used to think that eighteenth-century Ottoman traders in Europe were all non-Muslim. While this observation is true for most venues, recent research has shown the occasional involvement of Muslims as well.

No city without craftspeople: and in Chapter 7, artisans working for the courts of the two empires permit interesting comparisons. After all, the Ottoman archives

contain significant evidence on people servicing the palace, as highly skilled artists or practitioners of very humdrum trades. As for the Indian context, the Hindu principality of Jaipur, long in close contact with Agra and Delhi, has left us with a sizeable amount of evidence on the artisan servitors of the princely court, a major source covering elite and artisan interactions.

Migrating craftspeople invite comparison as well. In Mughal India, the frequent movement of the emperors must have caused many artisans to follow, as the imperial court contained their best customers. Furthermore, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, dislocations caused by the Mughal-Maratha wars must have caused numbers of craftspeople to move house as well. In a different vein, droughts often increased the price of basic foodstuffs, so that there remained very little money disposable for the purchase of craft products. Under such conditions, migration was often a precondition for survival.

In seventeenth-century Anatolia, artisans must have migrated along with other town dwellers, when previously prosperous places like Amasya were shrinking to half their sixteenth-century size.⁶⁷ Presumably, Istanbul was a preferred destination for all migrants, artisans included, as the presence of the sultans and their soldiery kept the city – though not necessarily the suburbs – safe from bandit attacks. Among the artisans attracted by İzmir, we find Jewish woollen weavers, refugees from Salonika, where a slack market for locally woven woollens, combined with large-scale textile deliveries required by the janissaries, placed many weavers in a nearly hopeless situation.⁶⁸ Once again, many artisans fled to a city where the taxes were lower and the chances of finding customers seemed better.

All townspeople depend on the countryside for their food, and the growing, marketing and taxation of food crops dominates Chapter 8. In both the Ottoman and the Mughal contexts, tax registers reflect what officials thought that peasants could pay as taxes. In the Ottoman case, such records are numerous and indicative for the 1500s but less helpful for later periods. In the Mughal instance, sixteenth-century documents are available largely – though not exclusively – through the account that Abū'l-Faẓl 'Allāmī (1551–1602) has left of them.⁶⁹ Even so, enough evidence survives from principalities once subject to the Mughals – and retaining Mughal modes of taxation – that we can discuss the control of agricultural land and the role of what we might call the rural gentry as a power intermediate between the central administration and the peasantry.

In the Ottoman Empire, the central government during the 1500s exercised relatively tight control over these intermediaries. In the late seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth century, by contrast, there was significant decentralization. Even so, the central government retained some control over its appointees, and differently from the Mughal polity of the 1700s, magnate autonomy did not result in the central government's complete withdrawal from its more outlying provinces.

In the Ottoman world, the sultans' officials refused to recognize the control of large landholders over 'their' peasants by sultan law, though tolerating the *de facto* powers of local magnates. This issue is inseparable from the sultans' claim to eminent domain over all fields and meadows in their empire, allowing their subjects the ownership only of shops, houses and gardens. In Mughal India, peasants apparently had relatively