

Views From the Edge

Essays in Honor of Richard W. Bulliet

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Lawrence G. Potter
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Editors

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The Rise of the Ottoman Empire: The Black Death in Medieval Anatolia and its Impact on Turkish Civilization

Uli Schamiloglu

Introduction

The Black Death—the popular name for the infamous epidemic of bubonic plague which spread widely across Asia, Europe, and Africa in the fourteenth century—was only the second of three major waves of bubonic plague in world history: the first major epidemic began in the time of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian (sixth century), the second was the Black Death (fourteenth century on), and the third is the modern plague (nineteenth century on).¹ While the geographic origin and many specific characteristics of these historical epidemics remain controversial (including whether they were all caused by the bacillus *Yersinia pestis*), the effects of the Black Death of the 14th century on human populations in medieval Europe have been treated exhaustively in the historical literature.² At the same time, with a few notable exceptions historians have generally ignored the effects of the plague in the time of Justinian and the Black Death in regions of the world other than Europe. I hope that this essay examining the plague in the time of the Emperor Justinian and its impact on early Turkic history, the Black Death in the 14th century and its impact on medieval Turkish civilization, and the Black Death as a major factor in the rise of the Ottoman Empire will be a fitting tribute to Professor Richard W. Bulliet, who has advanced the cause of innovative scholarship on the Islamic world through his own example as scholar and teacher.

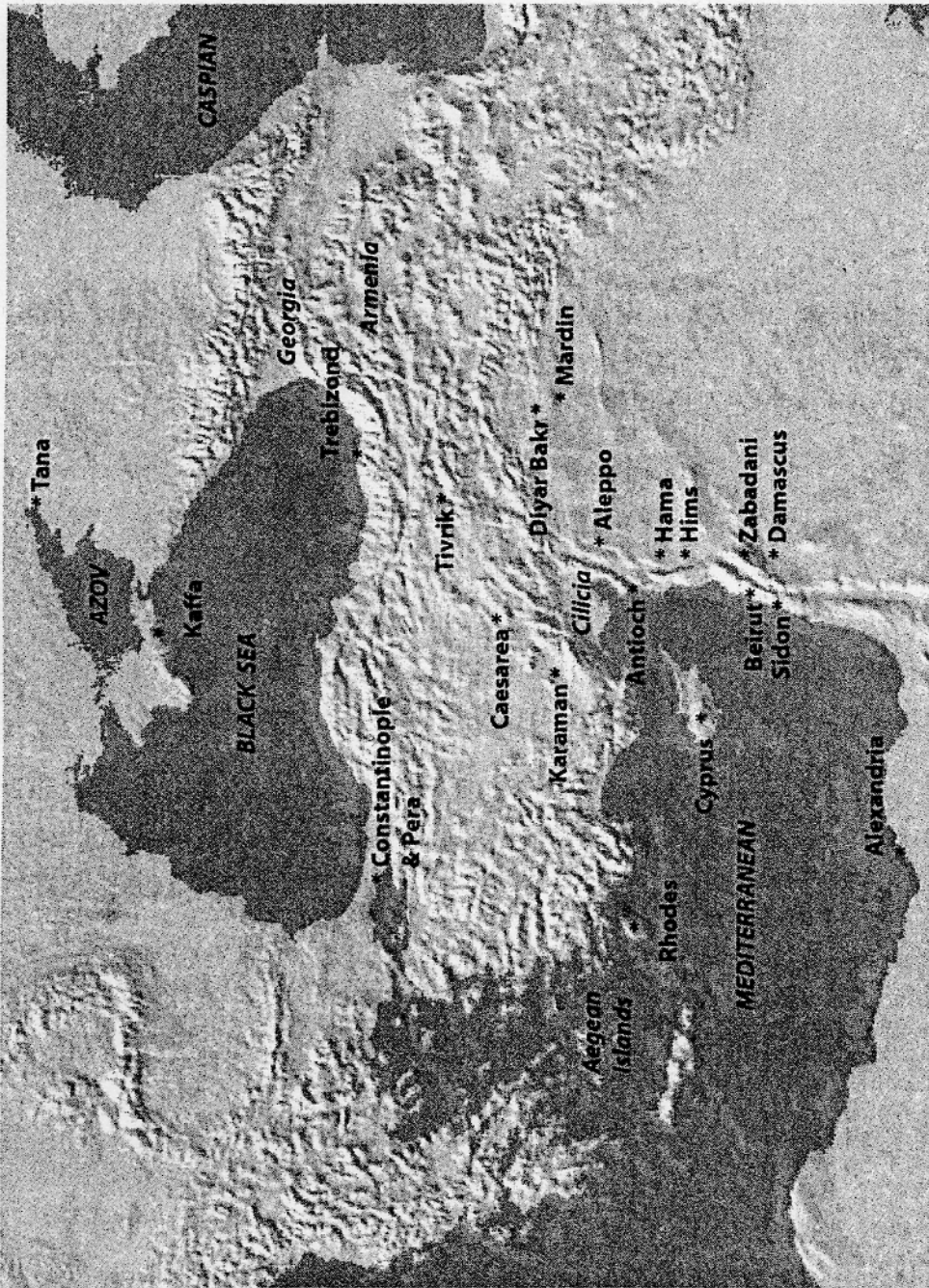
The Plague in the Time of Justinian

The consequences of the great outbreak of bubonic plague in 541–42 during the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian (r. 527–65) have not received the

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Map 1. Cities in Anatolia and Neighboring Regions Struck by the Black Death (1347-1348)

same level of attention as those of the Black Death of the fourteenth century.³ It can be argued, however, that this earlier epidemic of bubonic plague was just as significant in world history as the Black Death.

According to the sources the plague in the time of Justinian had a southern origin in Ethiopia, although this claim remains controversial.⁴ The classic description of this outbreak—and the first historical description of the symptoms of bubonic plague⁵—is offered by Procopius in his *History* (Book II, xxii–xxiii and xxiv: 8, 12).⁶ To briefly summarize the important points in Procopius's account, the plague began among the Egyptians living in Pelusium. One wave then moved on to Alexandria and the rest of Egypt, the other wave moved towards Egypt's border with Palestine. The epidemic did not miss any centers of population and always spread from the coast to the interior. In the second year it reached Byzantium in the spring. Procopius, who was an eyewitness to the epidemic, vividly describes how fever would suddenly overtake victims regardless of whether they were just getting up from sleep or walking about. This would be followed on the same day or not more than several days later by "bubonic swellings" that took place in the groin, armpit, next to the ears, and on the thighs. After this some victims would fall into a coma, while others became delirious and would no longer be able to take care of themselves. In some cases death came immediately, in some cases after many days. Those with hemorrhagic symptoms died immediately.

This disease afflicted Byzantium for four months, and during three of these months the disease was highly virulent. As mortality increased it rose first to 5,000 deaths per day and then later to 10,000 deaths per day. In the beginning households were able to attend to the burial of their own members, but disorder and chaos soon followed. Some households were completely emptied of their inhabitants, for which reason many victims remained unburied for days. The Emperor placed soldiers from the palace under the command of Theodorus to distribute money to see to the burial of all the victims. After they filled up all the tombs in the city of Constantinople, they were then forced to dig trenches to bury the victims. Finally, once they could no longer keep up with the digging and filling of trenches, they mounted the towers of the fortifications in Sycac (modern Galata in Istanbul) and tore off the roofs so they could throw the bodies in. Then, once the towers were filled with bodies, they put the roofs back on. The inhabitants of the city forgot their former differences as they worked together to bury the dead without being able to observe any of the traditional rituals for burying the dead. Finally, Procopius indicates that this epidemic soon afflicted the Persians as well.

According to Evagrius (b. 536?) plague afflicted Antioch two years after its conquest by the Persians and continued to afflict this city for the fifty-two years up to the writing of his *Ecclesiastical History* (Book IV, xxix). No man was left with experience of the disease, which struck some cities so heavily that they were emptied of their inhabitants, while other cities were affected only lightly. It struck during different seasons, and within cities it could devastate one section of a city but leave other parts of the city unaffected. As with Procopius's description, Evagrius's description of the symptoms also documents that this disease was bubonic plague: the presence of the well-known buboes and fever, as well as the sudden death of many of its victims and the dementia that afflicted other victims.⁷

The accounts of Procopius and Evagrius are confirmed or supplemented by information in the accounts of Agathias (d. 582), Theophanes (d. ca. 818), John of Ephesus (d. ca. 585), and other sources. According to a description of the return of plague to Constantinople in 558 by Agathias in his *History* (Book V, x), the plague had never really ended. It afflicted the entire world, and while it moved from one location to another it emptied out certain places of habitation while leaving others alone. Its victims died suddenly, as though afflicted by a severe apoplexy, while others could survive as long as five days.⁸ John of Ephesus describes the difficulties presented by the burial of plague victims in 542 echoing the account of Procopius, adding that depopulation was severe enough in the countryside to disrupt the harvesting of crops.⁹ He also indicates that in the worst days of the epidemic there were over 16,000 victims per day and that workers stopped counting the dead when they reached 230,000.¹⁰ Surprisingly, Theophanes offers no significant details about bubonic plague during the reign of Justinian except to confirm the outbreak.¹¹

Just as with the Black Death, the plague in the time of Justinian exhibited recurring cyclical waves in Byzantium, Europe, southwest Asia, and elsewhere. Evagrius observes that the plague strikes in fifteen year cycles and that he had just experienced the fourth major cycle only two years earlier.¹² According to Biraben, various reports in the sources indicate that Constantinople was struck by waves of bubonic plague in 542, 543, 544, 558, 573, 574, 599, and 608? (sometime between 602–610), 618, 640 (?), 697, 700 (?), 717, and 747.¹³ According to Allen there are also reports of plague in the east in other years, including 560–61, 567–68, 583–84, 592, 598–99, sometime during 612–17, 639, 673–74, 687–88, 716–17, and other years until the plague had run its course by the mid-eighth century.¹⁴

There is a valuable description by Theophanes of plague in Constantinople in 745–46 reminiscent of the accounts for Constantinople two centuries earlier.

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This wave of plague apparently began in Sicily and Calabria and spread rapidly through Monobasia (Monemvasia in the Peloponnese), Hellas, and adjoining islands before reaching Constantinople. Theophanes reports of hallucinations that overtook the population. The plague intensified and by the summer it flared up suddenly, as a result of which entire households were shut up. It was impossible to bury the dead, and special animal carts were devised to transport the deceased.¹⁵ The dead filled up all the urban and suburban cemeteries, urban cisterns and ditches, many vineyards, and even the orchards within the old walls. Every household was destroyed by this wave, which is presented by Theophanes as a calamity resulting from "the impious removal of the holy icons by the rulers."¹⁶

What observations are we to make about the impact of this earlier epidemic which—based on the symptoms described by Procopius and Evagrius—appears to be an earlier wave of bubonic plague and therefore a precursor of the Black Death of the fourteenth century? Certainly the accounts by Procopius and others offer an irrefutable basis for concluding that in the mid-sixth century there was large-scale depopulation in Constantinople and elsewhere in Anatolia. The reports of recurring waves and the account of Theophanes for 745–46 suggest there must have been a continuing long-term decline in the population of Constantinople and other regions as a result of plague. According to Russell, Procopius's account suggests that 300,000 died during the first year it afflicted Constantinople, but he rejects both this figure as well as the even higher estimate by Agathias that 400,000 died in Constantinople in a later epidemic as too high, since he does not believe that the population of Constantinople even reached 300,000 in this period. Seeing a parallel with Egypt in this period, he offers an estimate of 20–25 percent loss in population during the first wave, with a total decline to perhaps 50–60 percent of the pre-plague population during the period 541–700.¹⁷ Russell also suggests that plague had different effects on sedentary and nomadic populations. Conrad offers a similar argument that in the Arab lands depopulation affected sedentary regions more than the nomadic regions.¹⁸

What were the results of depopulation on such a dramatically large scale? Depopulation is seen as a cause of the crisis in taxation in this period.¹⁹ Russell argues that after recurring waves of bubonic plague Byzantium was only able to field armies that were greatly reduced in size: while the Byzantine army was estimated at 350,000 for the east in the 5th century, by the time of Justinian's death in 565 it was estimated to be only 150,000.²⁰ We also see a fundamental restructuring of Byzantine administration under the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (r. 610–41) first foreshadowed under the emperor Maurice (r. 582–602). The new *theme* system, first introduced in Anatolia, consisted of military zones

into which troops were settled. This system, which replaced the earlier system of provinces (several of which were organized into one *theme*), took advantage of local Byzantine peasants and later imported Slavic populations to serve as soldiers. This effectively relieved the empire of recruiting and paying for the earlier standing army which it replaced.²¹ I would argue that the development of the *theme* system should be seen as a response to depopulation in Anatolia. Finally, Vasiliev also sees this period as a “dark age” in Greek letters.²² Despite substantial evidence in the sources, however, very few accounts of Byzantine history consider the effects of the plague in the time of Justinian.²³ In the case of the most popular accounts in English, Vasiliev mentions the plague in the time of Justinian only in passing²⁴ while Ostrogorsky does not mention it at all.

It is clear today that the impact of the plague in the time of Justinian and the succeeding waves of bubonic plague in Anatolia, Syria, Egypt, Arabia, Iran, and elsewhere in Asia through the mid-eighth century have only begun to be considered in our understanding of the history of these regions. Not only does the plague in the time of Justinian and its aftermath deserve to be better integrated into the study of the Byzantine and Sasanid Empires, it also deserves to be better integrated into the study of the early Caliphate. To what extent did depopulation in Byzantium, Iran, and other regions pave the way for the rapid early expansion of the Islamic Empire across North Africa as far as southern France in the west and Central Asia in the east by the mid-eighth century? Did recurring waves of bubonic plague weaken the Umayyad Caliphate, as suggested by Dols?²⁵ With such important questions remaining unconsidered in the standard accounts of Islamic history, more systematic study of these questions for the region as a whole remains a desideratum for future research. It may well be that the rapid expansion of the early Islamic Empire is more properly attributed to depopulation resulting from bubonic plague throughout Africa, Europe, and Asia than to the “sword.”

The Plague in the Time of Justinian and its Impact on Early Turkic History

According to a famous notice in the *History* of Theophylactus Simocatta (d. ca. 630–40) on the Western Türk embassy to the Emperor Maurice (598), the Türk are said to boast that they had never seen the occurrence of contagious disease since the earliest times.²⁶ If accurate, this suggests that the epidemic of bubonic plague in the time of Justinian did not have a Central Asian origin. Since this notice is believed to apply to the Issıq Köl region, it stands in stark

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contrast to the path of the spread of the Black Death in the fourteenth century, which first afflicted the Issiq Köl region before reaching Crimea and then Constantinople.²⁷

Evidence suggesting that the plague in the time of Justinian does not have an East Asian origin is offered by Denis Twitchett, who writes that bubonic plague appears to have been described for the first time in Chinese sources in a work completed only in 610.²⁸ He offers ample evidence suggesting that plague was well known throughout East Asia during the time of the T'ang dynasty (618–907), with major waves of epidemic disease documented for 636–55 and 682–707. According to Twitchett it is tempting to see the major wave of plague during 636–55 as parallel to the waves of bubonic plague sweeping through the Middle East, although he cautions that there is no evidence in the Chinese sources establishing that any of these epidemics was an outbreak of bubonic plague. I would argue that it is reasonable to assume that these waves of epidemic disease in China were indeed the same epidemic of bubonic plague that was ravaging broad regions in Africa, Europe, and elsewhere in Asia in this period.

If plague did not have a Central or East Asian origin in this period, it must have arrived in China from the Middle East via Central Asia. We know that the plague spread to Iran, from where it could have spread easily to Central Asia. If one considers maps showing the wide distribution of plague in the time of Justinian,²⁹ one can also easily imagine that the first wave of 542 and/or subsequent waves could have reached other parts of the Black Sea region such as Crimea, which was historically in close maritime contact with Constantinople. In fact, there is important information in the Byzantine sources concerning plague among the Türk. According to Theophylactus Simocatta, some Türk who fell prisoner to Chosroes had been marked on the forehead with the sign of the cross by their mothers upon the advice of Christians in order to escape the effects of a strong plague.³⁰ Theophanes offers a similar account under the year 588–89:

The Turks had on their foreheads the symbol of the cross tattooed in black, and when asked by the emperor how they came to have that sign, they said that many years earlier there had been a plague in Turkey and some Christians among them had suggested doing this and from that time their country had been safe.³¹

These two accounts establish that plague had struck Central Asia or perhaps the region north of the Black Sea, the Caucasus, or the Caspian “many years earlier” than 588–89.³²

I would argue that it is likely that many important events in the Western Eurasian steppe in the era of Justinian have some relationship with recurring waves of plague. The arrival of the Avars (558) coincides with a wave of plague in Anatolia, as does the arrival of the Türk (568).³³ In the post-558–68 period we see the disappearance of many peoples in the North Caucasus, the Black Sea, and the Danubian region. According to Agathias (Book V, xi):

The Ultizuri and Burugundi were considered powerful and famous up to the time of the Emperor Leo and the Romans who lived in that time. We who live now do not know them and I think we never shall, for they have either perished or have settled in very distant places.³⁴

Many Turkic groups also disappear, including various Odur Turkic groups as well the Sabirs, whose territory was in the steppeland north of the Caucasus and who according to one notice could field an army of 100,000 earlier in 515.³⁵

Although my remarks concerning the Eurasian steppe in this period are of a tentative nature, I believe that an awareness of the effects of the plague in the time of Justinian can offer new insights into the partition of the Eastern and Western Türk and the complicated and often murky history of the First and Second Türk Empires in the east (552–744).³⁶ After all, if the plague arrived via Central Asia and resulted in important periods of plague in China, it is not to be excluded that plague also affected the territories of the eastern Türk before 610, during 636–55 and 682–707, or during other years for which the Chinese sources are silent. Clearly in the Western Eurasian steppe this was a time of tremendous upheaval: the out-migration of certain groups of people and the in-migration of others, the disappearance of significant groups of population, the absorption of once powerful tribal groupings into the Western Türk state, and civil war. It is in the aftermath of this confusion that the Khazar state emerges as a distinct state (circa 630–50).³⁷ This topic requires further study, as does the impact of other serious outbreaks of epidemic disease among the Turkic peoples prior to the Black Death in the fourteenth century.³⁸

The Black Death in Anatolia in the Fourteenth Century

The infamous Black Death began its course through Asia and Europe with devastating effects on large parts of China in the 1330s. It then spread throughout Central Asia and the territories of the Golden Horde before reaching the Genoese colony of Kaffa in Crimea.³⁹ One of the best known sources on the

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origins of the Black Death in Kaffa is the *Historia de Morbo* by Gabriele de' Mussis,⁴⁰ a resident of Piacenza. According to this source, in 1346 countless numbers of Tatars ("Tartars") and Saracens were afflicted with an illness that resulted in sudden death. Large portions of these provinces, kingdoms, towns, and settlements were soon stripped of their inhabitants. The illness spread among the Tatars while they were holding under siege the Genoese colony of Kaffa (modern Feodosiya) in Crimea, which at that time included among its numbers Italian merchants who had fled Tana, a Pisan colony on the mouth of the Don River. Unexpectedly thousands of Tatar soldiers began to die with the sudden swelling of the armpit or groin followed by a fever. The soldiers soon abandoned their seige, they began to place the corpses onto catapults and launch the bodies of their comrades who had fallen victim to the disease into the Genoese fortress of Kaffa. Although the Italians tried to dump as many of the bodies as possible into the Black Sea, the rotting corpses filled the air with a stench and poisoned the water supply.

These symptoms clearly identify this disease as bubonic plague. As we know from countless studies, this epidemic of bubonic plague that would come to be better known as the "Black Death" would soon spread to Egypt and Italy, from where it would spread rapidly throughout the Middle East and Europe. According to Gabriele de' Mussis, this illness had spread among "the Chinese, Indians, Persians, Medes, Kurds, Armenians, Cilicians, Georgians, Mesopotamians, Nubians, Ethiopians, Turks, Egyptians, Arabs, Saracens and Greeks (for almost all the East has been affected)." The same author also relates further that in the city of "Babylon"⁴¹ 480,000 subjects died in less than three months in 1348, which is known from the Sultan's register because he receives a gold coin to record the name of each deceased.

Unfortunately Gabriele de' Mussis was not an eyewitness to the events he relates, which can serve as a basis for doubting many important details contained in his account. Fortunately there are some corroborating details for Crimea to be found in other sources. According to Ibn al-Wardī, the outbreak arrived in the "land of Özbek" (*bilād Uzbak*) in Rācab 747/October–November 1346, where villages and towns were emptied of their inhabitants. There were approximately 1,000 deaths per day in Crimea, and a report from a *qādī* in Crimea estimates the death toll at 85,000.⁴²

There are two important accounts in the Byzantine sources which allow us to document in great detail that the Black Death then visited Constantinople with predictable results. According to Gregoras Nicephorus (1295–1359/1360) in his *Roman History* (Chapter 15.1.5), the people were overcome by a severe epidemic which began among the "Scythians" of the Maiotis (the Sea of Azov)

and the mouth of the Tanais (the Don River) in the beginning of spring 1347. It raged for a whole year along the coasts of the country, destroying both the city and the countryside as far as Gadeira (Cádiz in Andalusia) and the columns of Hercules. In the second year it spread to the islands of the Aegean, including Rhodes, Cyprus, and other islands, striking men and women, rich and poor, and young and old alike. Countless houses were emptied of their inhabitants in one day or sometimes by chance in two, and there was nothing anybody could do about it. The illness spread uninterrupted not only among human beings, but also among the other living creatures living together in the same house with human beings such as dogs, horses, all kinds of birds, and even the mice living in the walls. The symptoms of this disease and the indicators of impending sudden death were a swelling at the end of the legs and arms and the eruption of blood. Sometimes this illness took away most rapidly those who had just been sitting or walking, including the youngest son of the Emperor, Adronikos, who also died at that time.⁴³

According to the much lengthier account of John Cantacuzenus (d. 1383) in his *History* (Book IV, 17), the disease had begun among the "Scythians" of the extreme north and spread to almost every coastal region of the civilized world, killing a large number of inhabitants. According to this source, this disease affected the Pontic region (i.e., coastline of the Black Sea), Thrace, Macedonia, Greece, Italy, all the islands, Egypt, Libya, Judea, and Syria, and nobody was able to resist it. Some died on the same day or hour they exhibited the first symptoms, others were first gripped with a high fever and then lived for another 2–3 days. John Cantacuzenus describes that some would fall into a coma and wake up unable to speak, while others suffering from pneumonic plague would spit up blood. These individuals would also suffer from inflammations and black blisters. After a painful extended description of the horrible symptoms of plague, the author continues that many distributed their belongings to the poor before the disease could afflict them. Both those who were suffering as well as those who survived the plague became more virtuous and moderate in spirit.⁴⁴

While it is true that the language of the accounts of both Procopius in the time of Justinian and John Cantacuzenus in the fourteenth century echoes earlier accounts by Thucydides,⁴⁵ I would argue there is no reason to doubt the veracity of their accounts. After all, these descriptions clearly document the symptoms of bubonic plague in Constantinople in a manner that is fully consistent with descriptions of the Black Death for other parts of Africa, Asia, and Europe in this period. Given the existence of two such detailed accounts, ideally there should no question of the impact of the Black Death in Constantinople and the rest of Byzantium. Yet the traditional historiography offers very little discus-

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sion of the impact of the Black Death on the city of Constantinople and what was left of the Byzantine Empire in the fourteenth century. In his *History of the Byzantine Empire*, Vasiliev writes that the claims that two-thirds or eight-ninths of the population of Constantinople died seem an exaggeration.⁴⁶ Vasiliev's brief description—all of one page in total length—is one of the few traditional surveys of the history of Byzantium that mentions the Black Death. As with the plague in the time of Justinian, Ostrogorsky does not mention the Black Death at all.

It is important to note that these two Byzantine accounts are confirmed and supplemented by Arabic sources. Maqrīzī for one confirms that the plague struck Iṣṭanbūl.⁴⁷ The Andalusian writer Ibn Xātimah, author of a treatise on bubonic plague, writes that the bubonic plague afflicted the Genoese fortress of Kaffa while it was under siege. Afterwards the disease spread to Pera (the colony adjoining Constantinople, modern Pera in Istanbul), then to great Constantinople, the islands of Armenia on the coast of the Mediterranean, Genoa, and France. This work then describes the further spread of the disease to Andalusia, Aragon, Barcelona, Valencia, the kingdom of Castile as far as Seville in the extreme west, and the Mediterranean islands of Sicily, Sardinia, Mallorca (Majorca), and Iviza (Eivissa). It then crossed over to the coast of Africa, from where it spread further to the west.⁴⁸

According to an important treatise on the Black Death, Ibn al-Wardī's *Risālat an-naba' 'an al-waba'*,⁴⁹ the plague had struck many countries, including China, India, Sind, the land of Özbek, Transoxiana, the Persians, Crimea, Byzantium (*Rūm*), Cyprus, and the islands. Ibn al-Wardī also indicates that the plague struck Gaza, 'Asqalān, Acre, Jerusalem, the coast towards Sidon and Beirut, Damascus, Mizza, Barza, Ba'labakk, Qārā, Ghasūla, and from Zabadānī north to Ḥimṣ. Among the other places it afflicted we may include Ḥamā, Ma'arrat an-Nu'mān, Sarmīn, Fu'a, Antioch, Shayzar, Ḥārim, 'Azāz, Kalza, Bāb, Tall Bāshir, Dalluk, Ḥāshir, Aleppo, and other towns and cities.⁵⁰ Ibn al-Wardī himself died in Aleppo in March 1349 of the same plague whose ravages in Aleppo he had described so well for posterity.⁵¹

Other sources provide additional details concerning the Black Death in many other regions of Anatolia as well. The Black Death attacked Trebizond in September 1347, while the earliest evidence for the plague in central Anatolia, from the Armenian monastery in Tivrik (modern Divriği), is dated September 10, 1348.⁵² According to Maqrīzī (under the year 749/1348–49), when the plague reached Antioch (modern Antakya or Hatay), the people fled to Rūm (Byzantium or in this case Anatolia) and carried the disease to the regions of Qaramān (modern Karaman) and Caesarea (modern Kayseri in Cappadocia).

The plague was also present in Mārdīn and Diyār Bakr (modern Diyarbakır), where Kurds tried to flee from it. Horses returned riderless to Antioch, and there were reports of beasts of burden and cattle dying from the disease in Qaramān and Caesarea. The region around Sīs (the capital of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia) became empty.⁵³ Maqrīzī describes similarly calamitous conditions in Cyprus, Rhodes, and elsewhere. As Dols observes, “mortality in the ports was so great that bodies were thrown directly into the sea.”⁵⁴

Despite such rich details from Byzantine and Arab sources for the fourteenth century, the Black Death is a phenomenon that is—inexplicably—almost completely absent from the pages of the historiography of the Ottoman Empire. For example, Hammer-Purgstall does not mention the Black Death in the fourteenth century at all.⁵⁵ Ernst Werner, one of the few authors to even mention the Black Death in the fourteenth century, included it in the first edition of his work, but wrote it out completely from the later “corrected and expanded” fourth edition!⁵⁶ More recently, a monumental work devoted to the social and economic history of the Ottoman Empire during the period 1300–1914 does not include a single reference to the Black Death in the fourteenth century, let alone a consideration of its effects on Ottoman population or economy in this period.⁵⁷

Generally we must wait until the fifteenth century for references in the historiography to outbreaks of plague. For example, Hammer-Purgstall makes a few brief remarks about deaths at the Ottoman court in 1431.⁵⁸ Babinger writes that in 1455 Sultan Mehmet II, fearing “one of the terrible outbreaks of the plague which so frequently visited Thrace, had left Edirne for the pure air of the Balkan Mountains.”⁵⁹ Babinger also describes in detail the plague which struck the entire coast of the Hellespont and the Black Sea in 1467 and 1469. This recurrence of the Black Death depopulated Bursa, and there were also 600 deaths per day in Istanbul, turning the city into a “desert.” Aware of the situation in Istanbul, Sultan Mehmet and his troops headed for the mountains of northern Bulgaria.⁶⁰ This suggests that modern historians of the Ottoman Empire need to rediscover what Sultan Mehmet II knew intuitively.⁶¹

The Impact of the Black Death on Medieval Turkish Civilization

In the absence of a body of scholarship examining the effects of the Black Death of the fourteenth century on medieval Turkish civilization, I would like to draw upon the lessons I have learned from my study of the Black Death in

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the Golden Horde.⁶² The major phenomena that I have observed for this state include severe depopulation of the urban areas (including the educated urban elite), complete political collapse after 1360 once the rules for succession could no longer be observed in collaboration with the tribal leadership in the "four-bey system," and social and economic disruption. The cities of the state soon fell into ruin. As in Europe, there is evidence of an increase in religiosity as seen from a literary work entitled the *Nehc ül-feradis* (whose Turkic subtitle *Uştmaxlarnıñ aêuq yolu* may be translated as "The Clear Path to Heaven"), a work produced during a plague year in the Golden Horde (1358).⁶³ After this work, the new Islamic Turkic literary language that had emerged in the Golden Horde ceased to be used for new works. Nascent Turkic literary languages used for funerary inscriptions came to a sudden end near Issıq Köl (Syriac Turkic) and in Volga Bulğaria (Volga Bulğarian), reflecting depopulation, cultural and technological regression, and perhaps inflation as well. This was followed by six decades of almost no new works being written in Turkic, after which there slowly developed new literary and epigraphical dialects closer to the spoken vernacular.⁶⁴ Later a series of smaller xanates replaced the earlier larger Golden Horde, while nomadic groups, who did not suffer as much from the impact of the plague, became relatively populous and powerful enough to begin a steady push to the south to Central Asia.

How much of this is applicable to Turkish civilization in Anatolia in the second half of the fourteenth century and later? This is of course difficult to say. Much of it will not be applicable because the new capital cities of the Golden Horde were the result of a recent process of urbanization resulting from the tremendous wealth from commercial revenues accruing to the formerly nomadic elite of the state. The state had converted officially to Islam only recently and new Islamic Turkic literary languages had just begun to develop on its territory. In contrast, Anatolia was not newly Islamized, Muslim Turkic literary languages had a longer history there, and the existing urban centers were not made possible exclusively through the support of a powerful, newly sedentarizing state elite. Nevertheless I believe that some of these insights can find application in the case of medieval Turkish civilization in Anatolia.

In the sphere of literature, it is difficult to compare the medieval Muslim Turkish literary culture of Anatolia with that of the Golden Horde, which had barely begun to emerge in the 1340s.⁶⁵ We do note, however, that the dominant literary languages of Anatolia in the thirteenth-first half of the fourteenth centuries were Arabic and Persian. While there were a few Turkish poets in the first half of the fourteenth century, notably Gülşehri and Aşıkpaşa, it seems there was a prominent shift to Turkish after 1347. As Mansuroğlu observes:⁶⁶

Turkish literary output in Anatolia increased suddenly in the 14th century, and reached a level incomparably greater than that of the preceding century. As a matter of fact the works surviving from this period are so numerous and varied as to defy any exact reckoning. The existence of specimens of folk literature and simple religious-mystical works side by side with historical works and books written to appeal to the upper classes demonstrate that the aesthetic needs of every class of the community were satisfied by literary works in both verse and prose. Besides these works, a large proportion of which are anonymous, there grew up a number of writers whose fame has gradually spread across the boundary of their centuries. . . . The principal cause of the abundance of Turkish works was the ignorance of Arabic and Persian shown by the Anatolian feudal lords.

Perhaps we can think of "specimens of folk literature and simple religious-mystical works" or innovative poets of the second half of the fourteenth century such as Kadı Burhaneddin, İzzeddin Ahmed, Fahreddin Ya'kub, Yusuf Meddah, Şeyhoğlu, and Ahmedî as representing a new trend in vernacular literature comparable to Boccaccio in Italy. This would be comparable to the decline of Latin and the rise of vernacular literatures in Western Europe, a result in part of the decimation of the learned classes as a result of the Black Death.

In the case of an increase in religiosity, Anatolia was far more Islamized than the Golden Horde, for which reason it would be difficult to document increased religiosity. Perhaps we can point to the *Mevlid* of Süleyman Çelebi, composed in Bursa in 1409, as a pious devotional act.⁶⁷ Even its Arabic name, *Vesilet ün-necat* ("The Path of Safety"), suggests a work parallel to the *Nehc ül-feradis*. The *Mevlid* in Ahmedî's *İskendername* also dates to this period.⁶⁸

Finally, this new resurgence in literary activity offers an unexpected additional category of evidence, namely the shift in the orthographic system of written Turkish from the norms of Old Anatolian Turkish to the new orthographic norms of Ottoman Turkish.⁶⁹ The orthographic system of the Central Asian Islamic Turkic literary dialect had a tremendous influence upon the earliest specimens of Turkish written in Anatolia. Although written in Arabic script, this system generally continued orthographic principles used earlier by Old Uyğur written in the Uyğur script (subsequently adopted by Mongolian and later Manchu). Among the general characteristics of this system we may include a tendency to write all vowels plene; write /ŋ/ as *n + k* (*nūn + kāf*); write /t/ as *tā'* and /s/ as *sīn* in both back- and front-vowel words; write /b, p/ as *b* (*bā'*); write /c, ç/ as *c* (*cīm*); write suffixes as separate words; and certain

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other features. There are also numerous grammatical elements that link the language of thirteenth century Anatolian Turkish with the Central Asian Islamic Turkic literary dialect, and therefore with Old Uyğur. Of course, the Ottoman Turkish which emerges after this period is based on different orthographic principles, including a tendency to not write most vowels plene (following instead the system for short vowels in Arabic); write /q/ as *k* (*kāf*); distinguish graphically /t/ in back- and front-vowel words and /s/ in back- and front-vowel words; distinguish /b, p/ and /c, ç/ graphically as in New Persian; and write suffixes as a part of the word where ligatures permit.

These changes indicate that Old Anatolian Turkish was based in large part on a pre-Islamic orthographic system which reflected specialized knowledge on the part of a learned class of scholars. We must assume that as a result of the ravages of the Black Death in the fourteenth century and beyond, the sudden death of large segments of that learned class disrupted the transmission of such specialized knowledge. The new orthographic and grammatical principles that were adopted as innovations were based upon the Arabic and Persian models that were close at hand. Ottoman Turkish as it developed was also closer to the spoken Turkish of Anatolia and Rumeli in the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries. Such a fundamental transformation in an orthographic system also suggests that the impact of the Black Death on medieval Turkish civilization might be even more profound than our meager sources indicate.

The Black Death and The Rise of the Ottoman Empire: Ten Theses

The spectacular rise of the Ottoman state is a fundamental problem that has remained unresolved in the historiography of the Ottoman Empire. The major theories of the twentieth century on the origins of the Ottoman Empire proposed by M. Fuat Köprülü, Paul Wittek, and Rudi Lindner remain required reading for all students of Ottoman history.⁷⁰ In framing this problem we may recall the words of the great historian of the Ottoman Empire, Halil İnalcık:⁷¹

In the 1350s the Ottoman state was no more than one of many frontier principalities, but events after 1352 so firmly established its superiority over the others that, within thirty years, they had become Ottoman vassals.

The earliest Ottoman state was the principality (*beylik*) founded by Osman (d. 1326) in northwestern Anatolia at the end of the thirteenth century. This

principality, the Turkish principality nearest to Constantinople, gained its first major victory in Baphaeon (1301). As a result of this important victory the Ottomans began to attract numerous followers. Under Osman and his successor, his son Orhan, the Ottoman principality led a steady and successful campaign of expansion, but it was not yet a serious rival to Byzantium, now admittedly a much weaker state than it had been centuries earlier and mired in civil war. İnalçık rightly observes that over the course of the second half of the fourteenth century we see a major transformation in the Ottoman state.

I would argue that the most important fact overlooked in all the theories on the rise of the Ottoman Empire and missing perhaps in the entire historiography devoted to the Ottoman Empire is the impact of the Black Death. In response I offer below ten theses on the rise of the Ottoman Empire that consider the impact of this important phenomenon:

1. *The Black Death was a generalized phenomenon in Anatolia beginning in 1347.* Countless cities and regions throughout Anatolia were ravaged by recurring waves of bubonic plague: after arriving from Crimea the plague struck Pera, Constantinople, the coastline of Byzantium, the Aegean islands, the Mediterranean coast, Rhodes, Cyprus, Sīs, Antioch, Aleppo, Trebizond, Tivrik, Mārdīn, Diyār Bakr, Qaramān, Caesarea, and many other cities and regions. The Black Death ravaged not only the territory of Byzantium, but the territories of the Turkish principalities, Greater Armenia, Lesser Armenia (Cilicia), Azerbaijan, and various territories inhabited by Arabs, Kurds, and others. We know from the history of the Black Death elsewhere that mortality from plague varied from town to town, and that individual cities, towns, and even neighborhoods could escape the ravages of plague during specific waves. On the other hand, the sources indicate quite clearly that the Black Death had catastrophic results in many cities and regions in Anatolia. For this reason it would be important to have a better understanding of the course of the Black Death throughout Anatolia in the mid-fourteenth century and throughout the territories of the Ottoman Empire in later centuries.

2. *After the arrival of the Black Death in spring 1347 Byzantium fell into crisis, resulting in an invitation to the Ottomans for military cooperation.* In 1352 John Cantacuzenus invited his son-in-law Süleyman, son of Orhan, to cross over to Adrianople (modern Edirne) to assist Byzantium against the armies of the Serbs and Bulgarians. There can be no doubt that there is a direct causal relationship between the latest crisis in Byzantium resulting from the Black Death and the invitation to Süleyman to assist the Byzantine armies. This proved to be a watershed event in Ottoman history, for Süleyman was able to

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gain a foothold in Rumeli, the European territories across the Bosphorus from Anatolia. The earthquake of March 1-2, 1354—only the latest in the series of natural disasters befalling the Byzantines—allowed the Ottomans to capture the damaged fortresses at Gallipoli (modern Gelibolu) and elsewhere and to establish permanent control over these territories.

3. *The Turkish principalities that were the rivals of the Ottomans were devastated by the Black Death.* Most of these principalities—Karasi, Saruhan, Aydin, Menteşe, Tekke, and Karaman—were located directly on the Aegean or Mediterranean coast. The sources cited above indicate that all coastal areas were struck by bubonic plague, which would have affected Byzantium and all these principalities situated along the coastal regions as well as Cilicia. If we consider the observation by Procopius in the sixth century that plague always spread from the coast to the interior and did not miss any centers of population, there is no need to assume that Germiyan and Hamideli were spared, either. According to İnalcık the two major rivals of the Ottomans in Anatolia in the second half of the fourteenth century were Karaman and Eretna (with its capital in Sivas).⁷² We know, however, that both Karaman and Tivrik (only 100 kilometers from Sivas) were struck by plague.

4. *The Ottoman principality suffered less than its rivals because it was largely nomadic.* We do not know whether the urban centers of the Ottoman principality were ever affected by the Black Death or whether they were spared. In either case, the Ottomans were to a large extent nomadic.⁷³ As noted above, epidemic disease does not spread as easily among nomadic populations, and this has been offered as an explanation of why nomadic populations became relatively stronger in the medieval Arabian Peninsula or following the collapse of the Golden Horde. For this same reason the Ottoman nomadic population could have remained largely unaffected by the plague while Byzantium and the other Turkish principalities suffered from depopulation and instability. As a result the Ottomans would have suddenly gained in relative size and strength.

5. *Ottoman expansion was aided by depopulation in Southeastern Europe.* As we have seen above, the sources for the fifteenth century speak regularly of recurring waves of bubonic plague in the Balkans, which necessarily meant depopulation in these areas as well. This may also have relevance for the development of the *timar* system and the population transfers known as *sürgün*, both of which may be seen as an administrative response to depopulation parallel to the development of the *theme* system in Byzantium following the plague in the time of Justinian.

6. *The city of Constantinople became depopulated as a result of the Black Death.* The recurring waves of plague in Constantinople and the other coastal regions of Byzantium resulted in a process of depopulation beginning in 1347. This factor ultimately favored Sultan Mehmet II, known in Turkish as *Fatih*, “Conqueror” of Constantinople. By the time of the Ottoman conquest in 1453 the population of Constantinople is estimated to have been only 30,000–50,000, with the army consisting of only about 7,000–9,000 soldiers.⁷⁴ This process of depopulation also continued after the Ottoman conquest, as noted above.

7. *There was a decline in indigenous ethnic and religious communities in Anatolia as a result of the Black Death.* I attribute the so-called “decline of Hellenism,” the virtual disappearance of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia in the second half of the fourteenth century,⁷⁵ and the decline of Christian communities in Anatolia beginning in this period in large measure to the catastrophic effects of the Black Death.

8. *The Byzantines and Ottomans became serious rivals only after 1347.* There was no Byzantine-Ottoman rivalry of equals before 1347. It is only after the implosion of Byzantium beginning in 1347 and the establishment of a permanent Ottoman presence in Rumeli after 1354 that we see the beginning of a rivalry between two states that may be considered to have been in the same league. Even so, it is significant that it was only after another century of recurring waves of plague in Constantinople that the Ottomans would finally be able to conquer the city.

9. *The increase in religiosity in Anatolia after 1347 contributed to the development of a new ideology of religious war against Byzantium.* There was an increase in religiosity in Anatolia following the arrival of the Black Death, which had many important consequences. One of them, I would argue, is that the new (post-1347/1352/1354) rivalry between the Byzantines and the Ottomans came to be interpreted—sooner or later—in terms of a religious ideology of holy war. Therefore it is likely that the ideology of *gaza* or “holy war”—which figures so prominently in theories of the rise of the Ottoman state—is a phenomenon that came into existence only after 1347/1352/1354, that is in the climate of a new Byzantine-Ottoman rivalry and increased religiosity in Anatolia.⁷⁶

10. *The Black Death is not mentioned in the Ottoman sources, even though this historical phenomenon is well documented in other sources.* As far as I am aware the Ottoman chronicles simply do not mention the Black Death in their

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accounts of events in the fourteenth century.⁷⁷ This is why modern historians of the Ottoman Empire—who naturally base their work on the Ottoman sources—have been misled in their study of the transformation of the Ottoman principality into a major empire. Is it possible that the later chroniclers did not preserve a memory of the Black Death in the mid-fourteenth century, even though waves of bubonic plague were a fact of life in the fifteenth century, too?⁷⁸ Is it possible that there was a strict taboo against invoking the name of such a powerful disease lest one unleash its awesome power, as Turkic peoples of Central Asia or Siberia would have believed? Or is it the case that the Ottoman chronicles—almost none of which date from the fourteenth century—are so much a product of later efforts to legitimate the Ottoman dynasty in Islamic religious terms that many inconvenient earlier historical facts (the Black Death, possible dynastic origins emerging from the Golden Horde, etc.) have simply been discarded in favor of later ideologies?⁷⁹

Endnotes

1. For scientific literature on the transmission and genetic composition of bubonic plague see most recently M. J. Keeling, C. A. Gilligan, "Metapopulation Dynamics of Bubonic Plague," *Nature* 407 (19 October 2000), pp. 903–6; Stewart T. Cole, Carmen Buchrieser, "Bacterial Genomics: A Plague o' Both Your Hosts," *Nature* 413 (04 October 2001), pp. 467–470; and J. Parkhill, B. W. Wren, N. R. Thomson, R. W. Titball, M. T. G. Holden, M. B. Prentice, M. Sebahia, K. D. James, C. Chu et al., "Genome Sequence of *Yersinia pestis*, the Causative Agent of Plague," *Nature* 413 (04 October 2001), pp. 523–27.

2. For surveys of the most important historical literature see J.M.W. Bean, "Plague, Population, and Economic Decline in England in the Later Middle Ages," *Economic History Review* 15 (1963), pp. 423–37; "The Black Death: The Crisis and its Social and Economic Consequences," *The Black Death: The Impact of the Fourteenth Century Plague*, ed. Daniel Williman (Binghamton, New York: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1982); F.D. Shrewsbury, *A History of the Bubonic Plague in the British Isles* (Cambridge, 1970); Jean-Noël Biraben, *Les hommes et la peste en France et dans les pays européens et méditerranéens*, i–ii, *Civilisations et sociétés* 35–36 (Paris: Mouton, 1975–1976); *The Black Death*, ed.-trans. Rosemary Horrox, Manchester Medieval Sources Series (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994); David Herlihy, ed. Samuel K. Cohn, Jr., *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); and most recently Edward A. Eckert, "The Retreat of Plague from Central Europe, 1640–1720: A

Geomedical Approach," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 74:1 (2000), pp. 1–28. See also the contribution in this volume by Stuart J. Borsch, whom I would like to thank for sharing bibliographic information from his recent Ph.D. dissertation.

3. See J.C. Russell, "That Earlier Plague," *Demography* 5:1 (1968), pp. 174–84; Michael W. Dols, "Plague in Early Islamic History," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94:3 (1974), pp. 371–83; *The Black Death in the Middle East* (Princeton, 1977); Biraben, *Les hommes et la peste*, i, pp. 25–48; Lawrence I. Conrad, "The Plague in the Early Medieval Near East," Ph.D. dissertation (Princeton University, 1981); "The Plague in Bilād al-Shām in Pre-Islamic Times," *Proceedings of the Symposium on Bilād al-Shām during the Byzantine Period*, ed. M. A. Bakhit and M. Asfour (Amman, 1986), ii, pp. 143–63; P. Allen, "The 'Justinianic' Plague," *Byzantion* 49 (1979), pp. 5–20; and additional works (some cited below).

4. On the geographical origins of this plague see the comments of Dols, "Plague in Early Islamic History," p. 373; Allen, "The 'Justinianic' Plague," p. 6; Conrad, "The Plague in the Early Medieval Near East," pp. 92–98; and Evagrius, trans. Michael Whitby, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*, Translated Texts for Historians 33 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), pp. 229–30 n. 78.

5. Dols, "Plague in Early Islamic History," p. 373.

6. Procopius, trans. H. B. Dewing, *History of the Wars* (London: 1954), i, pp. 451–73, 475, 477. Procopius's account is considered to echo Thucydides's description of an earlier plague, see Allen, "The 'Justinianic' Plague," p. 6.

7. Evagrius, trans. Whitby, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*, pp. 229–32.

8. Agafiy, trans. M.V. Levçenko, *O tsarstvovanii Yustiniana* (Moscow, 1953), pp. 146–47.

9. Allen, "The 'Justinianic' Plague," p. 12. Information from his *Ecclesiastical History* is preserved in the later work of Michael the Syrian: ed. J.-B. Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, ii (Paris, 1901), pp. 235–40.

10. Allen, "The 'Justinianic' Plague," p. 10.

11. See Theophanes, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284–813*, trans. Cyril Mango et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 322 (under the years 541–542), 337 (555–556), 340 (557–558), 345 (560–561), 389, 503 (683–684), 559 (725–726), 569 (732–733), 573, 585–86 (745–746).

12. Evagrius, trans. Whitby, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*, pp. 229–32.

13. See Biraben, *Les hommes et la peste*, i, pp. 27–32.

14. Allen, "The 'Justinianic' Plague," pp. 13–14. Russell, "That Earlier Plague," p. 179, gives the dates 556–558, 561, 567–568, 573, 577, 586, 618, and 622. For a discussion of the chronology of the epidemics see Conrad, "The Plague in the Early Medieval Near East," pp. 328–52 (including Tables 1–4) and the critical comments on p. 132 and elsewhere.

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15. See also Herlihy, *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West*, p. 61, who cites parallel observations by Boccaccio on this same topic.

16. Theophanes, trans. Mango et al., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, pp. 585–86.

17. Russell, "That Earlier Plague," p. 180. On the other hand, Dols suggests that we should approach many of Russell's estimates with caution, see Dols, "Plague in Early Islamic History," p. 371 n. 3; and *The Black Death in the Middle East*, p. 16. See also the discussion in Conrad, "The Plague in the Early Medieval Near East," pp. 434–41.

18. Conrad, "The Plague in the Early Medieval Near East," pp. 465–82; and "The Plague in Bilad al-Sham in Pre-Islamic Times." I have made a similar argument for the Golden Horde, see my "Preliminary Remarks on the Role of Disease in the History of the Golden Horde," *Central Asian Survey* 12:4 (1993), pp. 447–57.

19. J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire* (New York, 1958), ii, pp. 352, 358; J. L. Teall, "The Barbarians in Justinian's Army," *Speculum* 40 (1965), pp. 294–322; and Russell, "That Earlier Plague," p. 182.

20. Russell, "That Earlier Plague," p. 182.

21. George Ostrogorsky, trans. Joan Hussey, *History of the Byzantine State* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1969), pp. 80, 95–100.

22. A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire, 324–1453* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1958), p. 230; and Russell, "That Earlier Plague," pp. 181–82.

23. See for example the limited descriptions in Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire*, ii, pp. 62–66; and E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire* (Paris, 1949–1959), ii, pp. 758–760. See also E. Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance, 4e-7e siècles*, *Civilisations et sociétés* 48 (Paris, 1977), pp. 85–89.

24. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, p. 162.

25. Dols, "Plague in Early Islamic History," pp. 380–81.

26. See E. Chavannes, "Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) Occidentaux," *Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) Occidentaux. Recueillis et commentés. Suivi de Notes additionnelles* (St. Petersburg, 1900–1903/Paris, n.d.), p. 248; Dols, "Plague in Early Islamic History," p. 373; and Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East*, p. 16. For translations of this source see: Feofilakt Simokatta, trans. S. P. Kondrat'ev, *Istoriya, Pamyatniki srednevekovoy istorii narodov Tsentral'noy i Vostochnoy Evropi* (Moscow, 1957), p. 161; and Theophylactus Simocatta, trans. Peter Schreiner, *Geschichte*, *Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur. Abteilung Byzantinistik* 20 (Stuttgart: A. Hiersemann, 1985), p. 188. See also Theophylactus Simocatta, trans. Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby, *The History of Simocatta: An English Translation With Introduction and Notes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

27. See my "The End of Volga Bulgarian," *Varia Eurasistica. Festschrift für Professor András Róna-Tas* (Szeged, 1991), pp. 157–63; "Preliminary Remarks on the Role of Disease in the History of the Golden Horde"; "Bolgar tele kaya kitkän?," *Idel* 1994:4, pp. 46–48; and *The Golden Horde: Economy, Society, and Civilization in Western Eurasia, Thirteenth-Fourteenth Centuries* (Madison: Turko-Tatar Press, in press), Chapter 9.

28. Denis Twitchett, "Population and Pestilence in T'ang China," *Studia Sino-Mongolica. Festschrift für Herbert Franke*, ed. Wolfgang Bauer, Münchener ostasiatische Studien 25 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1979), pp. 35–68, especially pp. 42–45.

29. Biraben, *Les hommes et la peste*, i, pp. 34–41.

30. Theophylactus Simocatta, trans. Schreiner, *Geschichte*, pp. 154–55 and n. 739. See also Denis Sinor, "The Establishment and Dissolution of the Türk Empire," *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, ed. Denis Sinor (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 285–316, especially p. 306. Sinor does not indicate a source, nor does he connect this epidemic with the plague in the time of Justinian.

31. Theophanes, trans. Mango et al., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 389 (compare as well the motif of oily crosslets, p. 585).

32. Later Theophanes uses "Turkey" to refer to Khazaria, see for example Theophanes, trans. Mango et al., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 567, n. 1 under Masalmas's invasion of "Turkey" (730–731).

33. On this period see P.B. Golden, "The Peoples of the South Russian Steppes," *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, pp. 256–284; and *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples. Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East*, Turcologica 9 (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1992), pp. 97–113. Golden does not consider the plague in the time of Justinian or its possible effects.

34. I have cited the translation of this passage in Peter B. Golden, *Khazar Studies. An Historico-Philological Inquiry into the Origins of the Khazars*, i–ii, Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica 25 (Budapest, 1980), i, p. 33. See also Agathius, *O tsarstvovanii Iustiniana*, pp. 147–148; and Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples*, p. 98.

35. Golden, *Khazar Studies*, i, pp. 33–39. Elsewhere Golden considers this figure "an exaggeration that nonetheless indicates a considerable military presence," see *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples*, p. 105.

36. On the Türk Empire see Denis Sinor, "The Establishment and Dissolution of the Türk Empire"; and Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples*, pp. 127–41.

37. Golden, *Khazar Studies*, i, pp. 39, 50–51.

38. See Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East*, p. 32, on the plague in Samarqand and Balkh in 448–449/1056–1057 that killed 6,000 people per day in Samarqand and Balkh, which suggests an outbreak of pneumonic plague.

39. See William McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* (Garden City, NY, 1976); and my "Preliminary Remarks on the Role of Disease in the History of the Golden Horde"; and *The Golden Horde: Economy, Society, and Civilization in Western Eurasia, Thirteenth-Fourteenth Centuries*. See Twitchett, "Population and Pestilence in T'ang China" for doubts concerning the Black Death in China in the fourteenth century.

40. *The Black Death*, ed.-trans. Rosemary Horrox, Manchester Medieval Sources Series (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 14–26, especially pp. 17–18, 20.

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41. This is presumably a reference to Bābalyūn in the vicinity of Cairo, see C.H. Becker, "Bābalyūn," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, CD-ROM Edition v. 1.0 (Leiden, 1999) [I:844b].

42. Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīx Ibn al-Wardī* (Najaf, 1969), ii, p. 492. See also my comments in "Preliminary Remarks on the Role of Disease in the History of the Golden Horde," p. 455 n. 29.

43. Gregoras Nicephorus, trans. Jan-Louis van Dieten, *Rhomäische Geschichte*, iii: *Kapitel XI–XVII*, Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur. Abteilung Byzantinistik 24 (Stuttgart, 1988), pp. 175–176; and C.S. Bartsocas, "Two Fourteenth Century Greek Descriptions of the 'Black Death'," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 21:4 (1966), pp. 394–400, especially p. 395. My paraphrase is based on the German translation.

44. Timothy S. Miller, "The History of John Cantacuzenus (Book IV): Text, Translation, and Commentary," Ph.D. dissertation (The Catholic University of America, 1975), pp. 185–88; and Bartsocas, "Two Fourteenth Century Greek Descriptions of the 'Black Death'," pp. 395–97.

45. Allen, "The 'Justinianic' Plague," p. 6; and Bartsocas, "Two Fourteenth Century Greek Descriptions of the 'Black Death'," pp. 397–98.

46. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, pp. 626–27.

47. Maqrīzī, *As-sulūk li-maʿrifat duwal al-mulūk*, ii/3, ed. M.M. Ziada (Cairo, 1958), p. 773.

48. Taha Dinānah, "Die Schrift von Abī Ġāfar Aḥmed ibn ʿAlī ibn Moḥammed ibn ʿAlī ibn Ḥātimah aus Almeriah über die Pest," *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 19:1 (1927), pp. 27–81.

49. M. Dols, "Ibn al-Warḡī's *Risālah al-nabaʿ ʿan al-wabaʿ*: A Translation of a Major Source for the History of the Black Death in the Middle East," *Near Eastern Numismatics, Iconography, Epigraphy and History. Studies in Honor of George C. Miles*, ed. D. K. Kouymjian (Beirut, 1974), pp. 443–55.

50. Alfred von Kremer, "Über die grossen Seuchen des Orients nach arabischen Quellen," *Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philologisch-historische Klasse* 96:1 (Vienna, 1880), pp. 69–156, especially pp. 136–37; and Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East*, p. 62.

51. Dols, "Ibn al-Wardī's *Risālah al-nabaʿ ʿan al-wabaʿ*," pp. 445, 451–54.

52. Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East*, pp. 46, 62–63.

53. Maqrīzī, *As-sulūk li-maʿrifat duwal al-mulūk*, ii/3, pp. 773–74; and Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East*, pp. 58, 62, 157 n., 174. For a later episode reported for Anatolia in 1429 see Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East*, p. 205.

54. Maqrīzī, *As-sulūk li-maʿrifat duwal al-mulūk*, ii/3, p. 776; and Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East*, pp. 58–59.

55. Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches*, i (Pest, 1827/Graz, 1963), pp. 138ff.

56. Ernst Werner, *Die Geburt einer Grossmacht—Die Osmanen (1300–1481). Ein Beitrag zur Genesis des türkischen Feudalismus*, Forschungen zur mittelalterlichen

Geschichte 13 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966), index: "Pest"; and *Die Geburt einer Grossmacht—Die Osmanen (1300–1481). Ein Beitrag zur Genesis des türkischen Feudalismus*, Forschungen zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte 32 (Weimar: H. Böhlau Nachfolger, 4th ed., 1985).

57. See *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1916*, ed. Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), index: "epidemic," "plague" (cf. pp. 231–32, 471 n. 27, 651).

58. Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches*, i, pp. 443–44.

59. Franz Babinger, trans. Ralph Manheim, ed. William C. Hickman, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, Bollingen Series 96 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 133.

60. Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, pp. 253–54. This is also the earliest episode of plague mentioned in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 231–32, citing the fifteenth century historian Kritovoulos. See Kritovoulos, trans. Charles T. Riggs, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954), pp. 219–21.

61. One must wait for the modern period for a monographic treatment of bubonic plague in the Ottoman Empire, see Daniel Panzac, *La peste dans l'empire ottoman, 1700–1850*, Collection Turcica 5 (Leuven: Éditions Peeters, 1980); and trans. Serap Yılmaz, *Osmanlı imparatorluğunda veba (1700–1850)*, Tarih vakfı yayınları 51 (Istanbul, 1997). I was not been able to consult the works of A. Süheyl Ünver for the purposes of this essay (see the citations in Dols and Panzac).

62. See my "Preliminary Remarks on the Role of Disease in the History of the Golden Horde"; and *The Golden Horde: Economy, Society, and Civilization in Western Eurasia, Thirteenth-Fourteenth Centuries*, Chapter 9. Most—but not all—of these phenomena are well known from the literature on the Black Death in Europe and the Middle East (see the literature cited above).

63. See my "The Islamic High Culture of the Golden Horde," *Proceedings of the John D. Soper Commemorative Conference on the Cultural Heritage of Central Asia*, ed. András J. E. Bodrogligeti (in press); "Islamskaya tsivilizatsiya v Zolotoy orde," proceedings of the conference on Islam in the Volga Region (Kazan: Institute of History, in press); and *The Golden Horde: Economy, Society, and Civilization in Western Eurasia, Thirteenth-Fourteenth Centuries*, Chapter 8.

64. See my "The End of Volga Bulgarian"; and "Bolgar tele kaya kitkän?"

65. On Turkish literature in Anatolia in the 13th–14th centuries see in English Alessio Bombaci, trans. Kathleen R.F. Griffin-Burrill, *The Literature of the Turks* (Madison: Turko-Tatar Press, forthcoming), Chapters 15–16.

66. M. Mansuroğlu, "The Rise and Development of Written Turkish in Anatolia," *Oriens* 7 (1954), pp. 250–64, especially p. 261. It will be apparent to readers of this essay that I disagree with Mansuroğlu's explanation in his article of why this shift took place.

67. See Bombaci, *The Literature of the Turks*, Chapter 16.

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68. Ahmedî, ed. İsmail Ünver, *İskender-nâme. İnceleme—Tıpkıbasım*, Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları 504 (Ankara, 1983), p. 14. See the forthcoming edition and study of the historical section of the *İskendername* by Kemal Silay for new evidence regarding the Black Death in Anatolia. I would also like to thank Professor Silay for his comments on this paper.

69. Many of these points are made in Mansuroğlu, "The Rise and Development of Written Turkish in Anatolia," pp. 255–62, while some are my own observations as a Turkologist.

70. M. Fuat Köprülü, *Les origines de l'empire ottoman* (Paris, 1935); trans. Gary Leiser, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992); Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1938); and Rudi P. Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia*, Uralic and Altaic Series 144 (Bloomington, 1983). It cannot be my task here to review these theories in detail. I refer the reader to the discussion of these and other works in Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds. The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). For an overview of major scholarship on the history of the Ottoman Empire in this period see most recently the essays in *Osmanlı*, i (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 1999); and *Türkler*, ix (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002). Many important essays concerning the rise of the Ottoman Empire are translated into Turkish in *Söğüt'ten İstanbul'a. Osmanlı Devleti'nin Kuruluşu üzerine Tartışmalar*, ed. Oktay Özell and Mehmet Öz (Ankara: Fimage Kitabevi, 2000).

71. Halil İnalcık, trans. Norman Itzkowitz—Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire. The Classical Age, 1300–1600* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1973), p. 9.

72. İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire. The Classical Age, 1300–1600*, p. 14.

73. See the discussion in Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia*.

74. See the figures in Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, pp. 82–83.

75. See V. F. Büchner, "Sis," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, CD-ROM Edition v. 1.0 (Leiden, 1999) [IX:678a].

76. I am well aware of the controversial evidence for the use of the terms *gazi* and *gaza* before 1347. See Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds. The Construction of the Ottoman State*, pp. 38, 50–59, 62–90, 109–14, 119–20, and elsewhere.

77. See for example the treatment of this period in Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i al-ı osman* (Istanbul, A.H. 1332).

78. I am not convinced that this is a plausible or likely explanation.

79. For a discussion of early Ottoman historiography see Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds. The Construction of the Ottoman State*, pp. 90–114 and elsewhere. Kafadar does not, however, give adequate consideration in his work to the historical section in Ahmedî's *İskendername*. See also Heath W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), a valuable study which appeared after this essay had been submitted for publication.

“The Rise of the Ottoman Empire: The Black Death in Medieval Anatolia and its Impact on Turkish Civilization”, *Views From the Edge: Essays in Honor of Richard W. Bulliet*, ed. Nequin Yavari, Lawrence G. Potter, and Jean-Marc Oppenheim (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. 255-279.

ERRATA

PAGE: LINE	PRINTED TEXT	CORRECTED TEXT
262: 13	Odur Turkic groups	Oğur Turkic groups
263: 8	a Pisan	an Italian
267: 8	<i>Uştmaxlarnıñ aêuq yolu</i>	<i>Uştmaxlarnıñ açuq yolu</i>
268: 15	‘Izzeddin Ahmed	‘İzzeddin Ahmed
275, n. 27: 2	<i>Andr s Róna-Tas</i>	<i>András Róna-Tas</i>
276, n. 34: 3	<i>O tsarstvovanii Iustiniana</i>	<i>O tsarstvovanii Yustiniana</i>
277, n. 49: 1	“Ibn al-Warğī’s	“Ibn al-Wardī’s
279, n. 70: 13	Özell	Özel
279, n. 70: 13	Fmage Kitabevi	İmage Kitabevi