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DELL'ORIENTE SOPRATTUTTO MUSULMANO

THE OTTOMANS AND THE SEA

Edited by Kate Fleet

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THE HUMAN LANDSCAPE OF THE OTTOMAN BLACK SEA IN THE FACE OF THE COSSACK NAVAL RAIDS

For this collection of studies devoted to the Ottomans and the sea I would like to bring to the fore some aspects of the Ottoman experience in and around the Black Sea during a period when this hitherto secure, stable, and prosperous region became one of danger, destruction, and, in all likelihood, economic decline. From about the mid-16th century, and especially from the 1590s through the middle of the 17th century, Ukrainian and Russian frontiersmen developed a naval capability that allowed them to challenge and confound a great and still powerful empire. Emidio Portelli d’Ascoli, an Italian Dominican resident missionary in the Crimea, begins his unsurpassed Description of the Black Sea and Tartary, written in 1634, with ruminations on why the sea is called “black”. After discussing the harsh and stormy conditions so common there (“every day one hears of one or another ship being smashed against some cliff, so that the hearts of those sailing on that sea become darkened and often the hearts of their relatives and their clothes too become darkened”) Portelli d’Ascoli puts forth the following claim:

However, if the Black Sea has always been furious from ancient times, then now it has become incomparably blacker and more terrifying, because of the many saiche (chaikas, Cossack long-boats), that lay waste to the sea and land... every year they bring such cruel harm, that the shores of the entire Black Sea have become completely uninhabitable, with the exception of some places protected by good fortresses. The Cossacks destroy, rob, burn, lead off into slavery, kill; often they besiege fortified cities, take them by storm, devastate, and burn them down.1

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This passage gives a compelling picture of the Black Sea and the Cossack impact on life there, yet it smacks of hyperbole, and brings to mind contrary tendencies in the way maritime exploits of the Cossacks have been portrayed in the historical literature. Ukrainian and Russian historiographies have, often uncritically, tended to make much of the significance of the “heroic era” of the Cossacks on the Black Sea for reasons of national pride, and also simply by virtue of fascination with an exciting and remarkable era. Ottoman historiographical studies have not yet begun to give this topic sufficient weight in the history of the Ottoman empire. Ottoman historiography is unaware of the stark tableau depicted by Portelli d’Ascoli and other contemporary observers of an age in which major Black Sea ports such as Kili (Kilia), Akkerman (Bilhorod-Dnistrov’s’kyi), Varna, Amasra, Sinop, Samsun, Trabzon (Trebizond), and even the suburbs of Istanbul were, in the words of the sources, “pillaged”, “burned”, and “destroyed”. Traditionally modern surveys of Ottoman history have treated the Cossack presence in the Black Sea episodically and perfunctorily, without contemplating its significance. At the end of this balanced treatment of the international political role of the Cossacks in a summary of principal political events. However, the work gives the Cossack naval raids only a passing mention and there is no consideration of any possible impact on the Black Sea economy, Inalcik, Halil, Suraiya Faroqhi, Bruce McGowan, Donald Quataert, Şevket Pamuk, An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1914, Cambridge, 1994, p. 293-295, 426-428. Of those historians to write surveys of the Ottoman Empire, Halil Inalcik has been the only one to assign great significance to the Cossacks, e.g., by stating that the Ottomans were unable to engage them effectively and defend the Black Sea coast and by positing a decline of the trade and ports of the sea due to lack of security, Inalcik, Halil, “The heyday and decline of the Ottoman Empire”, in: The Cambridge history of Islam, I, London, 1970, p. 324-353, esp. p. 350; Idem, The Ottoman Empire: The classical age, 1300-1600, London, 1973, p. 44, 105. Motin Kurt provides relatively extensive coverage of problems connected with Ukraine and the Cossacks in the 17th century and stresses the importance of the northern frontier, though his coverage of the Cossack Black Sea phase is episodic and does not attempt to assess any broader impact of the raids. Kurt, Motin, “Siyasal tarihi (1600-1789)”, in: Türkiye Tarihi, III. Osmanlı Devleti, 1600-1908, Akşin, Sina (ed.), Istanbul, 1990, p. 11-69, esp. 17-18. Some awareness of the degree to which the Cossacks complicated Ottoman relations with the northern powers of Poland-Lithuania and Muscovy, though only one concrete reference to actual raids and virtually no recognition of their effect on the Ottoman economy, war efforts in other regions etc. can be found in Shaw, Stanford, History of the Ottoman Empire, I, Empire of the Gazzis, Cambridge, 1976, p. 190-191, 192, see also p. 177, 201. There is hardly more than a sentence on the Cossack naval raids in Parry, V. I., “The period of Murad IV, 1617-48,” in: A History of the Ottoman empire to 1730. Chapters from the Cambridge history of Islam and the New Cambridge Modern History, M. A. Cook (ed.), Cambridge, 1976, p. 133-156, esp. p. 149 and Mantran, Robert, “L’Etat ottoman au XVIIe siècle: stabilisation ou déclin?”, in: Histoire de l’Empire ottoman, Robert Mantran (ed.), Paris, 1989, p. 227-264, esp. p. 229, 256. There is no mention of Cossack naval raiding activity in Matusz, Josef, Das Osmanische Reich. Grundli­nien seiner Geschichte, Darmstadt, 1985 or McCarthy, Justin, The Ottoman Turks. An introductory history to 1923, New York, 1997.
during the Cossack onslaught that is more authentic and precise than was possible in prior study of this phenomenon. It is thereby hoped to point the way to a fresh and unbiased picture, in place of both the superficial one in Ottoman studies and the often less than critical one in Ukrainian and Russian historiography. While some of the fundamental problems connected with understanding and assessing the Cossack presence on the Black Sea will become apparent, the primary intent here is not to give an exposition of Cossack exploits and Ottoman countermeasures — tactics, international implications, changes in administrative or economic structures in response to the Cossack pressure, problems of cataloguing and classifying the raids, and other basic aspects are beyond the present scope. Although there is interesting material on how the lives of individuals who were actually engaged in combating the Cossacks were affected (as opposed to other members of the 'askeri, or “ruling” class), here re’eya, or tax-paying Ottoman subjects, both urban and rural, Muslim and non-Muslim, are given the centre stage. However, how the empire was affected at highest level — the sultan and his milieu — will also be considered. In any event, there is no pretense at completeness of coverage. Much of the presentation here being work in progress and limitations in length mean that more of a sampling than a survey of the Ottoman experience in the Black Sea during the “Cossack” era is provided.

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5 — Southern Bessarabia, between the lower Dniester and lower Prut-Danube Rivers.

6 — While the Ottomans also established footholds at certain ports along the northeastern, Caucasian and eastern, Georgian shores, such as Anapa and Sokhum, and there was some degree of recognition of their suzerainty by the Circassians, Abkhazians, Georgians, and others, in fact, their control of this coast was looser than others, though there was never a power there able to threaten Ottoman control of the Black Sea. The notion of the “Black Sea littoral” is somewhat subjective: how far inland does it extend? E.g., Stanford Shaw considers that the complete Ottoman control of the Black Sea was achieved only toward the end of the 17th century with the conquest of Podolia in the 1670s, even though Podolia does not border the sea. Shaw, Empire of the Gazis, cit., p. 215. In any event, the view here is that the so-called “Ottoman lake” came into being with the establishment of effective control over the sea itself and the main regions of the littoral, i.e., by the first years of the reign of Beyazid II and the fall of Kili and Akkerman in 1484.

The Ottoman Mare nostrum

To more fully appreciate the Cossack impact on the Ottoman ruling class and subjects who lived on or visited the shores of the Black Sea and sailed its waters, it is necessary to understand what the sea meant to them prior to the Cossack onslaught. In modern historiography it is the common view that after the fall of Constantinople the Ottomans established a thalassocracy in the Black Sea, turning it into an “Ottoman lake” that lasted until the end of the 18th century when the northern seaboard was lost to the Russian empire. Indeed, the Black Sea’s human and natural resources were harnessed to work largely, if not overwhelmingly, for the benefit of the empire very soon after 1453 and even prior to the final establishment of Ottoman control over the last non-Ottoman region on or near the coast, that is, before 1538 when the Bucak was annexed. The sea’s economy in the first century of Ottoman rule has been studied sufficiently to produce a convincing picture of a flourishing region and of the post-conquest benefits that accrued to its population as well as to the Ottoman capital and state as a whole. The register of customs arrears (defser-i bevakî) of the port of Kefe (Caffa, Feodosia) for the years 1487-1490, drawn up after the subordination of the Crimean Khanate, the Ottomans’ most serious potential opponent in the immediate region (1475) and after the seizure of the respective Danubian and Dniester ports of Kili and Akkerman (Cetatea Albă, Bilhorod-Dnistrovs’kyi) from Moldavia (1484), meticulously and comprehensively studied by Halil İnalcık, presents an already rather complex and differentiated trade system. Moving between ports such as Kili, Akkerman, Kefe, Tana (Azak, Azov), Trazbon, Samsun, Sinop, İnebolu, Kerpe, and of course Istanbul, were slaves, grain, fruit and forest products, fish and dairy products, wines, honey, salt, skins and hides, cotton and cotton goods, hemp and hemp products, minerals and mineral products, silken goods, spices, sugar, dyes, wool-
ens, and other types of goods. Products of the coast and immediate hinterland, as well as those originating further afield in Poland, Lithuania, Muscovy, Central Anatolia, Iran, or even in more faraway lands, crossed and circulated around the Black Sea. Inalcik has also pointed out that along with control of the region came the deliberate Ottoman policy of directing the natural and human wealth of the Black Sea towards the new capital, a policy that became a major if not the decisive factor in the rapid growth of Istanbul to become the largest city in Europe by the first half of the 16th century. Ottoman takeover and control of the Black Sea has been seen as no less than a foundation stone of the Ottoman empire’s wealth and power. A near contemporary of these processes, the great Ottoman chronicler and intellectual Ibn Kemal, after relating the events connected with the Ottoman takeover of Caffa in 1475, expresses his appreciation of the now safe and thriving Black Sea by proclaiming the following: “With the conquest of the aforementioned fortress, the Black Sea coast, which is a flourishing land, was annexed to the abode of Islam; furthermore, with the takeover of the main fortresses in the vicinity of the Crimea, he states that “the Black Sea became fully controlled and... evil people of sedition no longer inhabited these parts, people of evil-intent were not able to remain on its shores, no places of ambush remained [there] for thieves and robbers...”.

Hyperbolic though Ibn Kemal’s assertion of security of the Black Sea may seem, remarkably, from the time of the Ottoman takeover of the sea until the arrival of the Cossacks there seems to have been virtually no activity resembling piracy on its waters and shores. A systematic search of the thousands of documents in the recently published volumes of the Müühimme defterleri or “Registers of Important (State) Affairs”, that is, the copies of rescripts issued by the imperial divan, or council of state, for signs of piratical activity (other than that of the Cossacks) has yielded no trace of any activity that could be construed as piracy. Because the Porte controlled the Straits from the time of the second reign of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror (1451–1481), possible intrusions by the various Christian pirates or corsairs who were a perennial headache for the Ottomans in the Mediterranean, were out of the question. Instead, what is meant here is pirate (or even coastal brigand) activity of local origin, what Suraíya Faroqhi has called «piracy on the local level» as opposed to «piracy in the grand manner», that is, local independent freebooters, what the Ottoman sources usually refer to as levend (“strong youth, irregular soldier”), eskiya (“bandits, brigands”), ehl-i fesad (“trouble-making or seditious folk”), or haram-zade (“bastards, villains”). While such local piracy and brigandage was not uncommon in other parts of the empire – the inland regions of Rumeli and the Danubian principalties, Anatolia, the Aegean – there seems to have been very little brigandage on the immediate coast of the Black Sea. That no pre-Cossack Ottoman era piracy is attested in the sources already scanned suggests a tendency. Without here bringing out differences in conditions in the Black Sea and

7 - Inalcik has extracted these wares from the Kepe and Kili customs registers and grouped them into these categories, Inalcik, Halil, Sources and Studies on the Ottoman Black Sea, I, The Customs Register of Caffa, 1487-1490, Cambridge, Mass., 1996, p. 121-124, 135-137.


9 - In the same section, referring to the concurrent conquest of Tana (Azak, Azov) ibn Kemal states that «from its port (iseke) a great amount of income was collected and delivered (to the state), in that place a famous port (bender) continued to function», Ibn Kemal, Tevârîh-i Al-i Osman, VII. defter (tankıdî translêşâyên), Turan, Şerfettin (ed.), Ankara, 1957, p. 386, 388.

10 - Prior to this, during Genoese and Venetian domination of navigation in the Black Sea, there were instances of piracy; Michel Balard gives the impression that it was not uncommon. However, it is clear that research specifically aimed at Black Sea piracy as opposed to Mediterranean piracy for the period of Italian commercial and naval ascendancy in both seas is needed. For instances of piracy in the Black Sea in the pre-Ottoman period see Balard, Michel, La Romanie génoise. XIIe-début du XVe siècle, Rome, 1978, p. 156-157, 569, 587-598. Note that in the 1340s Umur Beg of Aydın made a raiding expedition into the Black Sea striking as far north as Kili, Le destin d’Umûr Pacha (Düstûrêname-i Enderi), Melikoff-Sayar, Irène (ed.), Paris, 1954, p. 89-91.

11 - Approximately 6,800 decrees in five of the recently published Müühimme defterleri were surveyed (MD 3, 5, 6, 7, 44 covering the years 1558-1560, 1564-1568, and 1580-1584). The survey primarily relied on the summaries and transcriptions of the documents in these volumes, and on the summaries in the only volume that does not give fully transcribed texts (MD 5). In order to assure more thorough coverage, the indices were not relied upon. Many of the fermans in these Müühimmes are concerned with banditry and piracy in other regions of the empire. However, only five documents concerning local brigandage that affected Black Sea villages or towns were found: at Gerze, near Sinop, in MD 6, nos. 1036, 1234, 1244; at Yoros in the northern reaches of the Bosporus in MD 6, no. 1297; at İnebolu, on the Anatolian coast, in MD 7, no. 333. None of these cases qualify as piracy, as in all of them, land-based bandits raid a few boats or ships while the latter were in port. There are a few cases of Tatars harassing local boat traffic between Akkerman and Özâl. MD 6, nos. 452, 463. MD 3, 5, 6, and 7 have been prepared for publication by the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi and published in Ankara by the Turkish Directorate of State Archives under the respective titles 3, 5, 6, and 7 numaralî Müühimme defteri in 1993, 1994, 1995, 1998 (I have not been able to consult MD 12 which has also been published in this series). MD 44 has been published as Müühimme defteri 44, Ünal, Mehmet Ali (ed.), İzmir, 1995.

12 - I.e., international piracy supported by other states or in which pirates who in effect had their own state organization were involved, e.g., the Order of Malta, Faroqhi, Suraíya, Towns and townsman of Ottoman Anatolia. Trade, Crafts and Food Production in an Urban Setting, 1520-1650, Cambridge, 1984, p. 97-98.

13 - Faroqhi has found a case in the 1590s in which inhabitants of the Bosporus village of Beykoz set up false beacons to cause a shipwreck on the rocks in order to rob passing ships. Faroqhi, Towns and townsman, cit., p. 101 (MD 71, no. 306). A similar case occurred in the Bosporus in 1564: MD 6, no. 160.
the Mediterranean Sea, it can certainly be posited that the Black Sea must have indeed been one of the safer “well-protected” (as the Ottoman sources are wont to dub them) dominions of the empire. To go a step further, the sources examined give the impression that the Black Sea was not highly militarized, not unlike other internal regions of the empire. Pay registers (mevaci defterleri) show that coastal fortress garrisons were not large. Moreover, it had virtually no naval infrastructure beyond what was needed to supply the Ottoman fleet with ships and related raw materials.

To more properly locate the Black Sea within the Ottoman scheme of things, one must be aware of the relative ease with which its takeover was achieved, and the modest military investment needed to maintain security on its shores and sea lanes and to hold a strong strategic position in the face of outside powers. To be sure, after the fall of Constantinople, the Ottomans were the strongest power in the Black Sea region, but the intelligent and efficient way in which they transformed it into an Ottoman mare nostrum was truly a grand imperial achievement. After closing the Straits, they seem to have understood that the quickest and easiest way to take control of the Black Sea was first to gain suzerainty over local powers and then take over major entrances to the sea, strategic ports, and key emporia: Amasra (Amastris), Sinop, Trabzon (Trebizond), Kefe (Caffa, Feodosia), Tana (Azak, Azov), Akkerman, Kili, and others. For example, the ruler of Moldavia, Stephen the Great (1457-1504), was an astute politician and a most able commander who could outwit, thwart, and even defeat the Ottomans in the 1470s. But in 1484 it was enough for Sultan Beyazid II (1481-1512), on his first campaign as sultan, to take the key ports of Akkerman and Kili at the mouths of the Dniester and Danube Rivers respectively, and Moldavin’s fate was sealed as Stephen had no choice but to accept Ottoman suzerainty.

Yet the most ingenious and significant strategic accomplishment of the Ottomans in the Black Sea region was their coming to terms with the Crimean Khanate and the existing order in the great expanse of steppe-land to the north of the Black Sea, that is, the western terminus of the great Eurasian steppe known as the Daši-i Qıpçaq, or the Kipchak Steppe. Coming up against this region, the Ottomans seem to have demonstrated an understanding of the nature of the northern Black Sea steppes. To attempt to conquer this vast arid and sparsely populated region by brute force would have been a difficult and dubious task. Instead of attempting to take direct control of the region or to liquidate its nomadic and semi-nomadic order, they established a mutually-beneficial economic and political relationship with the Crimean Khanate, a new state ruled by a dynasty of older and more prestigious lineage than the Ottomans, that of the Chingizid Gerey clan. For with the Ottoman entry into the Black Sea, the Tatars began to mount greater and greater raids into the southern regions of Poland-Lithuania (mainly Ukraine) and of Muscovy to obtain captives for the vast Ottoman slave market. This relationship, although not without its periodic problems, afforded the Porte sufficient influence within the Crimean Khanate to manipulate the Crimea and even to a significant degree the great steppe region to the north to its favour. This important development set the stage for the ensuing centuries.

The Ottomans seem to have been astute enough to know how to deal effectively with this region. Factors in their circumspection vis-à-vis one of Eurasia’s greatest steppe zones may have been their own nomadic past, lessons learned in their frequent quagmires with the Turcomans in Eastern Anatolia, memory of their Seljuk forbears’ subervience to the Chingizid Ilkhanids, and their own humiliation by Timur (1370–1405). And they were fortunate that their clients who inhabited this buffer zone were nomads who were masters at survival and warfare in it. For the “Wild Field”, as it was known to its sedentary neighbors (e.g., Dzikie Pole in Polish), was a most formidable barrier blocking Poland-Lithuania and Muscovy from easy southward expansion to the sea.

Being the first not only to take control of the Black Sea but to establish a strong, stable, and mutually beneficial relationship with the main power in the steppes to the north, that is, the Crimean Khanate, the Ottomans in effect locked their northern neighbors, Poland-Lithuania and Muscovy, out of the Black Sea region for several hundred years as far as
an possibility of gaining a foothold on the Black Sea was concerned.\textsuperscript{20} This was certainly an achievement of world historical significance. With control of the sea’s trade helping to insure a steady supply of slaves, food products, and raw materials, and with a steppe zone that, though not an obvious alluring object of conquest,\textsuperscript{21} nevertheless, with its Tatar and Nogay masters, served as a kind of “active buffer”\textsuperscript{22} constantly putting pressure on the powers to the north, the Ottomans had what may be called an “ideal situation.”\textsuperscript{23} The region was rich and safe while control of it was relatively easy and inexpensive. This was in sharp contrast to the long and difficult wars that the Porte had to fight to conquer and control European and Asian territories in its traditional theaters of expansion (for example, compare the security in the Black Sea with that in Anatolia with the many upheavals by the refractory Turcoman \textit{kızılbaş} in the latter).

There are hints and even articulations in the sources that the Black Sea occupied a special place in Ottoman consciousness and conceptualization of their realm. This can be sensed in ibn Kemal’s above characterizations of the Black Sea as a region after it came under Ottoman sway. For another example, Evliya Celebi, the 17th-century Ottoman traveler who left an encyclopedic ten-volume account of what he saw and heard in practically every corner of the empire, concludes a discussion of the cosmography of the world’s seas and oceans, their relative size, interconnectedness and so forth, with the following statement: “... but if the truth of the matter is looked at, the source of all the seas is the Black Sea.”\textsuperscript{24} Portelli d’Ascoli expresses the same notion and adds that no other sea flows into it and that it is not only the source, but the main supply of water for all the other seas (\textit{fonte et padre dà acqua a tutti gli' altri mari}); he considers the sea’s high elevation as the reason high winds and storms are prevalent there.\textsuperscript{25} Having control of the world’s “headwaters” and, to a great extent, having channeled its economy to meet the needs of palace and empire must have been a point of conscious or unconscious pride to the Ottomans.\textsuperscript{26} When, at the end of the 17th century, the question of foreign...
ships being allowed into the Black Sea was brought up, the Ottoman reply to the ambassador of the Russian empire Ukraintsev in 1699 echoed such a sentiment: «The Sublime Porte protects the Black Sea as if it were a chaste and innocent maiden whom no one could dare to harm; the Sultan would sooner permit someone to enter his own harem than to permit the sailing of foreign ships upon the waters of the Black Sea; this could only take place upon the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.»

To better appreciate the grand imperial significance of the Ottoman takeover of the Black Sea, it should be noted no other power in history, before or after, was able to achieve the same degree and extent of control over both this sea and its shores for as long a period, the Pontic Kingdom of Mithradates VI (63–120 B.C.), the Roman and Byzantine Empires, the Genoese and Venetian commercial empires notwithstanding.

Having an "ideal situation" in the Black Sea, the Ottomans had a freer and richer hand with which to pursue their conquests in central Europe, the Mediterranean, and in the East. In addition to the factors of the physical and human geography of the steppe, surely Ottoman wariness of simultaneous wars on several fronts reinforced the lack of enthusiasm in expanding to the North. For these reasons the centuries-old Ottoman stance in the Black Sea was primarily a defensive one. There were discontinuities in this stance, when problems in the North or strategic considerations caused the Porte to abandon this policy. In such cases the experience of Ottoman forces usually showed that it was best to keep to the coast and leave the steppes beyond to the vassal Crimean Khanate. A striking example is the failed performance of Ottoman forces in the Daş during the Don-Volga campaign of 1569, when the conditions of the steppe and opportunism of the Tatars combined to doom the mission and many of its troops.

Landscape and Memory, New York, 1995, p. 261-262. I thank Caroline Finkel for drawing my attention to this work in this connection.


29 - Again articulated by Evliya Çelebi: «When there was no war and struggle between the State of the Ottoman dynasty and Moscow, the Ottoman dynasty was busy with gaza and jihad against other infidels», Evliya Çelebi, Seyahatname, cit., VII, p. 524-525.

30 - For a study of the Don-Volga campaign as well as an interpretation of the Ottoman northern policy as one of active attention and involvement aimed at maintaining a balance of powers in the north so that no rival to Ottoman power in the Black Sea

Another example is the 1621 Hotin (Khotyn', Choçım) War, mainly provoked by the naval expeditions of the Ukrainian Cossacks, in which the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth withstood a full, sultanic expedition thanks in large part to the participation of the Cossacks themselves alongside its forces. The stalemate at Hotin (in effect an Ottoman reversal) contributed to the demise of Sultan Osman II (1618–1622); Cossack anti-Ottoman pressure instead of being reduced was exacerbated, thanks to the huge swelling of the Cossack ranks by the desperate Polish call for them to join alongside in the defense of the Commonwealth. Even during the period of the so-called "active northern policy" in the final quarter of the 17th century, the behavior of the Ottomans showed that their goals were ultimately more defensive than offensive. Their actions during and after the 1678 conquest of Chyhyryn (Chehrin) in Ukraine show that instead of consolidating their rule over new territory, they did everything they could to make the region revert to the frontier that it had been in the previous centuries. Thus, instead of building up their presence in Cossack Ukraine, they demolished as many fortresses as they could, even if won in hard fought siege. This can only point to the fact that the Ottomans were still thinking in terms of their traditional Black Sea policy of maintaining the advantageous situation that they had had in the region since the time of Mehmed the Conqueror, rather than in terms of aggression and expansion.

The process of the establishment of the "Ottoman lake" is a topic requiring a more nuanced presentation than is possible here, and the portrayal of the first century or so of Ottoman control of the Black Sea as an "ideal situation" should be taken as a general characterization. There were problems in this region, for example, tension and near conflict when the reigning Crimean khan acted too independently in the eyes of the Porte, and similar difficulties in Moldavia. To be sure, the depiction of
the Black Sea as a prosperous region whose wealth greatly benefited the cause of empire in both economic and strategic terms is beyond question as far as the sources that have been brought to light in work of above all Halil İnalcık as well as Mihnea Berindei, Carl M. Kortepeker, and Gilles Veinstein are concerned. However, the current state of knowledge of the Black Sea economy remains based on too narrow a source base. While the sources, for example, customs registers or survey registers (tahır defterleri), can be detailed and voluminous in and of themselves, they are few and far between, particularly the former, which most directly relate to trade. Thus it is scarcely possible to isolate cycles of economic growth and decline, variations in the content and quantity or more subtle "currents and eddies" of trade. While there is ample mukata as documentation relating to customs duties for the Black Sea, because of the Ottoman practice often to change the content of mukata as from term of tenure to term of tenure (usually three years), that is, bundling the various taxes in different combinations, it is very difficult to arrive at figures that can be meaningfully compared. In addition, however crucial a factor the Black Sea economy may have been in the larger Ottoman economy, currently there is no way of assessing its weight in comparison with that of other regions. Certainly before there can be a better understanding of the


35 - In general, prior to the 18th century, the Ottoman Empire was able to maintain its customs registries and trade records. The reasons for this were the strategic importance of the Black Sea region in supplies to Istanbul, the difficulty of controlling the coastline, and the fact that the Ottomans were more concerned with their external trade than with their domestic economy.

36 - For example, while Berindei and Veinstein have on the basis of data in the tahır defterleri for the sanjak of Kefe proposed a sharp decline in the prosperity of the Black Sea ports during the first half of the 16th century, İnalcık has challenged their contention by pointing out how risky drawing conclusions on the basis of figures in two different defterler can be, and indicated other sources that show a more vigorous economy. In other words, as he points out, it is necessary to be aware of changes in the composition of accounts as the result of altered forms of property-holding, changes in financial arrangements, or varying tax-immunities. See Berindei, Mihnea and Gilles Veinstein, "La présence ottomane au sud de la Crimée et en mer d'Azov dans la première moitié du XVIe siècle", in: Cahiers du Monde russe et sovietique, XX (1979), p. 389-465, esp. p. 438-441 and İnalcık, Caffa Customs Register, cit., p. 109.

37 - Various taxes, often covering several nearby settlements, grouped together for collection by an individual or a team of agents (whether salaried government officials or private tax farmers).

Cossack impact on the Black Sea, and on the Ottoman empire as a whole, a sharper picture of region's economy through time is needed.

The Cossacks and the "Ottoman lake"

If the notion of the Ottomans' "ideal situation" in the Black Sea - the vibrant internal trade, strong strategic position, the secure shores and sea lanes - is even broadly accurate, then the irruption of the Cossacks into this relatively closed world must have come as a great shock. Certainly those Turks, Tatars, and others who braved the perils of the Black Sea steppes as travelers, herders, or warriors were acquainted with the Cossacks to some extent and had some experience in challenging or avoiding them, for many such types were themselves adept at steppe warfare and/or survival. In fact, the origins of East Slavic Cossackdom was deeply indebted to borrowings from the Tatars. As to the inhabitants of the Black Sea littoral, in their relatively secure existence they must have been completely unprepared to deal with such fierce interlopers as the Cossacks. Given that the Cossacks did not erupt onto the Black Sea all at once in every corner, but rather in stages, each expansion of their field of action must have brought unprecedented terror and trauma to those affected. In his discussion of the post-Hotin peace negotiations between the Commonwealth and the Porte, the English ambassador to the latter in the 1620s, Sir Thomas Roe, whose information and insight on contemporary events and developments in the Ottoman empire and even beyond are unrivaled, aptly summed up the predicament in which the incursions of the Cossacks had placed the Porte, while articulating the prime importance of the Black Sea region in supplying Istanbul: (The vizier and this state (having nothing more in care than to shut up that backport, whereby they suffer much loss and dishonor, and cannot revenge it upon a fugitive people; which divides their naval army, being forced to send a portion of galleys to defend the trade, the best part of relief of the city coming from these coasts) resolved to give content to the Poles, and to assure the peace...). What is of interest here are Roe's somewhat oblique parenthetical musings: a top priority for the Porte was to close the

38 - It is enough to recall the Cossack mode of dress and outward appearance or to become familiar with their Turkic military lexicon to become convinced of their formative contacts with the Turkic world. On the origins of East Slavic Cossackdom see Stökl, Günter, Die Entstehung des Kosakentums, Munich, 1953; on Turkic influences among the Ukrainian Cossacks see Pritsak, Omeljan, "Das erste turkisch-ukrainische Bündnis (1648)", in: Oriens, VI (1953), p. 266-298.

39 - Dispatch of 13 May 1623. In another place along a similar vein: I find really, in other words, as he points out, it is necessary to be aware of changes in the composition of accounts as the result of altered forms of property-holding, changes in financial arrangements, or varying tax-immunities. See Berindei, Mihnea and Gilles Veinstein, "La présence ottomane au sud de la Crimée et en mer d’Azov dans la première moitié du XVIe siècle", in: Cahiers du Monde russe et sovietique, XX (1979), p. 389-465, esp. p. 438-441 and İnalcık, Caffa Customs Register, cit., p. 109.

Various taxes, often covering several nearby settlements, grouped together for collection by an individual or a team of agents (whether salaried government officials or private tax farmers).
habitual musings: a top priority for the Porte was to close the
sea to the Cossacks against whom they were essentially unable to make an effective
move; as things stood, while their fleet could not adequately control the
Black Sea, it also could not be utilized at full, normal strength in the
Mediterranean (as in the old days) owing to the need to defend Istanbul’s
most important lifeline, the supply of foodstuffs and other goods from the
Black Sea.

For the Porte, there were several ironies connected with the rise of the
Cossacks as a force capable of breaking into and wreaking havoc in its
Black Sea preserve. One was that the first great challenge to Ottoman
control of the Black Sea came not from the northern powers, Poland-
Lithuania or Muscovy, but from the “freebooting” and “anarchic” Cos-
sacks who were usually beyond the effective control of the two northern
powers. Another even greater irony was that to a great degree, the Otto-
mans and Tatars were themselves responsible for the genesis of East
Slavic Cossackdom, particularly the Zaporozhian Cossackdom of
Ukraine. The perennial and brutal raids for captives by the Porte’s client
state, the Crimean Khanate, brought to the Turkic-Slavic frontier, the
ukraina or “borderland” (whence the name Ukraine), conditions which
were dangerous to the utmost, making normal, settled agrarian or town
life impossible. These conditions were the primary factors which, within
a generation of the establishment of the Ottoman-Crimean relationship,
that is by the end of the 15th century, led adventurers, colonists, and
those seeking to flee the burdens of Polish-Lithuanian rule to learn how
to survive and defend themselves on this steppe frontier, and particularly
in the region of the lower Dnieper River northward from the Crimean-
Ottoman domain.

This Dnieper region, which became known as the Zaporozhia or “re-

region below the cataracts”, was a largely wetland sanctuary made up of
hundreds of confusing islands and channels and very difficult to penetrate
and control. Soon enough, armed with gunpowder weapons, its new in-

40 - Depending on what was considered a cataract (poroh), there were between nine
and 13 of them on the stretch of the Dnieper that goes North-South (approximately
between the present-day cities of Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhia), which made navigation
all but impossible, thereby providing the Cossacks with a protective barrier against
easy intrusion by the Lithuanian and, after 1569, Polish administration.

41 - Viz., a contemporary description of part of the Zaporozhia: “...there is located a
fairly large island with ruins on it. This island is surrounded on all sides by more than
10,000 other islands and islets, lying scattered about in an irregular, disorderly and
confusing pattern. Some of them are dry, and others are marshy. In addition, they are
all covered with reeds as big as pikes, which prevent one from seeing the channels

habitants would learn how to go on the offensive, raiding first the Tatars’

horse and sheep flocks and eventually also attacking the fortresses of
their Ottoman overlords situated on or near the coast. By the mid-16th
century, especially from the time of the charismatic chieftain Prince Dmytro
Vyshevevychy (the founder of the Zaporozhian Sich, or “Dimitrash,”

as he was known to the Ottomans, these frontiersmen would descend
the Dnieper in their boats, known as chaikas in Ukrainian or saykas in
Turkish, and attack the town and castle of Ozi (Ochakov) at the river’s
mouth. In the same period, in cooperation with Don Cossacks and Circas-
sians, Vyshevevychy put pressure on Tana, the Ottoman stronghold at
the mouth of the Don River. In the next phase, the Zaporozhian Cossacks
ventured further along the Black Sea coasts towards the Danube in the
West and the Crimea in the East. By the last decade of the 16th century,
they would regularly raid the coast from Akkerman to the mouth of the
Danube and eventually further down the coast of the Ottoman Black Sea,
and into the Mediterranean (as in the old days) owing to the need to defend
Istanbul’s most important lifeline, the supply of foodstuffs and other goods from the

42 - The main Cossack stockade-type stronghold located at different times on different
islands in the Zaporozhia region of the Lower Dnieper.

43 - See Lemercier-Quelquejay, Chantal, “Un condottiere liubienien du XVIe siècle
le prince Dimitri Viavneveckiy et l’origine de la sev zaporogue d’après les archives ot-

44 - For a description of the chaika see below p. 42-43. Because the Ottomans had
their own river and sea boat known as sayka, which may have been an adaptation of
the Cossack chaika, but was probably not identical to it, here the Ukrainian term for
the Cossack vessel is used. Note that the Don Cossacks (see below) called their boats
straig rather than chaika, which may or may not indicate any difference, though it is
rather certain that the chaika as such was a Zaporozhian innovation. However, in this
work for the sake of simplicity, the example of the Ottomans, who applied one name,
ayka, to the naval boats of both Cossack groups as well as to their own long boats,
will be followed and all Cossack boats that raidied the Black Sea will be referred to by
one name, namely chaika, even though strictly speaking this may be not correct in the
case of vessels of the Don Cossacks. Such a usage is not completely inappropriate as
many Zaporozhians used the Don as their base of operations when conditions in
Ukraine became too difficult because of Polish attempts to control them, or when ac-

to the sea from the Dnieper was too hazardous because of a strong Ottoman pres-

45 - Including the Caucasian and Georgian coasts. However, here the encounters with
the local population seem to have had a markedly different character. Although the
by the Russian Cossacks who had originated on the Lower Don River under conditions similar to and yet distinct from those of the Ukrainian Cossacks. Though their initial career on the Black Sea was more modest than that of the Zaporozhians, certainly from the 1640s on the Don Cossacks would take the upper hand in the assault on the Black Sea and continue their naval exploits well into the 1670s. Meanwhile the Ukrainian Cossacks diverted their energies in other directions: the great rebellions and wars of the second half of the 17th century, which included a life and death struggle with their Polish-Lithuanian suzerains.

Here it is necessary to comment on an aspect of the Cossack phenomenon with which Ottoman historiography is for the most part unfamiliar. Given the nature of Cossack activity in the Black Sea, it is natural to infer that the Cossacks were simply “pirates” or “bandits” and to raise comparisons with, say, Mediterranean piracy or other bandit activity. Certainly from the Ottoman perspective the Cossacks were nothing more than “bandits” (ışkıya). Indeed, the labels “piracy” or “banditry” may be applied to their activity in the Black Sea as typological categories. However, Ottoman historians should also be aware that Cossackdom was a huge and complicated historical phenomenon and that while its naval phase can perhaps be labeled “piratical”, the Cossacks were by no means

evidence needs to be sifted and analyzed, Soviet Georgian authors stressed the friendly relations between the Cossacks and the various principalities (Guria, Imereti, Mingrelia, Abkhazia, Dadian) which they explain by common religion and anti-Ottoman interests. There are in the sources (Italian travel literature; Muscovite and English diplomatic materials) examples of Cossacks receiving supplies and sanctuary on this coast, as well as selling part of their booty there, including slaves (for an example of the latter, see below n. 121). Pietro della Valle, an Italian traveler to Iran in the early 17th century, on several occasions stressed that local rulers not only did not act against the Zaporozhians when these would venture to their shores, but even supported them with provisions and money and even contacted them to propose joint action against the Turks. Roe makes similar remarks. There were however cases when Georgian rulers turned Cossacks over to the Ottomans to demonstrate their loyalty. Muscovite diplomatic sources give explicit examples of Cossacks both finding common cause with the Christians of the Eastern Black Sea as well as raiding them. Which situation was more typical remains to be determined. Tivadze, T.G., "О взаимоотношениях населения западной Грузии с донскими и запорожскими казаками в XVII в."

47 From the 1620s it became involved in the struggle to revive Orthodoxy in the face of the Polish Counter-Reformation (which was aimed at the Commonwealth's Orthodox as well as Protestants). Of course the Cossacks were excellent soldiers (on land primarily as infantry) and military improvisers and innovators and had a spectacular career not only as rebels but also as mercenaries or as a self-contained host. When in 1648 Hetman Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi (1648-1657) led an uprising that turned into a long war against the Commonwealth (a war which was the beginning of the end of the existence of Poland-Lithuania as a state) the Ukrainian Cossacks became a force for state-formation which led to the so-called Hetmanate, a polity that maintained autonomy within the Russian empire until nearly the end of the 18th century.

48 At least such is the impression that Na'ima gives in his account of the famous battle near Karaharman in 1625 where he describes chaikas full of water able to press on thanks to the attached reed bundles: enihiyet şaykaların talazlığı da saz çubuklardan bir güne örümüs baglusu deşteri olmaga batmama nani' olub su ile tolnagla içinde olan mela'ın bozguna dek suya müstəqərlən kanıda çox direkt lider idin, Mustafa Na'ima, Raveat'ı-Hüzeyn fi hulasat albar'ı-f-hükûyâr, II, Istanbul, 1281-1283/1864-1866, p. 359. See also Ostapchuk, Victor and Halenko, Oleksandr, "Kozaksy čornomorskij poxodi u molodoj istorii Kryka Chalëbi" [Cossack Black Sea naval campaigns in merely pirates. In Ukraine, Cossackdom was a social, political, economic, even a national movement that completely transformed the face of Ruthenian or Ukrainian society whose elite had been much depleted by Polanization, and whose peasant masses were in the "yoke" of serfdom. Cossackdom was a way of life with its own ideology and claims to political and social legitimacy that made an open and, as it turned out, an unsolvable challenge to the political and social order of the Commonwealth. In the case of Russian Cossackdom, the situation was fundamentally different as it was always marginal in Russian history, never having anything approaching the same decisive effect on the Russian state or nation as did Ukrainian Cossackdom on the Ukrainian nation. Instead, it always remained a frontier phenomenon, be it on the Don, in the Caucasus, or in Siberia.

To return to the Cossacks and the Black Sea, there is no good record of the evolution of the Zaporozhian and Don Cossack naval craft and seamanship. By the end of the 16th century when confident forays into the Black Sea commenced, its Ottoman inhabitants and sailors encountered a new factor, unlike anything they had witnessed in the past: a versatile and efficient raiding vessel, known as the chaika or "seagull", operated by intrepid marines armed primarily with modern, gunpowder weapons. Unfortunately there are only a few, relatively late descriptions of the mainstay chaika, the best being that of Beauplan, the French military engineer who served the Polish Crown in Ukraine in the 1630s and 1640s. According to him, it was a large boat, or a longboat, (60 feet long, 10-12 wide, 12 deep; on occasion Ottoman sources even refer to it as a ship [gemi]) that could carry a relatively large crew of 40 to 70 well-armed and well-supplied Cossacks. Having no keel, but being very buoyant and difficult to sink because of ample reed bundles attached to its sides, the
Cossack chaika was not only suited for sailing in rivers and shallow waters, but was capable of weathering the high sea (though there were plenty of instances of chaikas succumbing to storms) and crossing over to the opposite shore of the Black Sea in 36 to 40 hours, according to Beaupian.49 The chaika could operate with considerable stealth. Lying low in the water, it was difficult to observe from a distance, while it could track the large Ottoman galleys, undetected from afar.50 Thanks to its maneuverability (e.g., it had Rudders on both ends and could change direction without turning around) and the Cossack tactics, the chaika was a formidable naval craft. Beaupian, obviously comparing their naval tactics to their Wagenburg tactics,51 which lent the Zaporozhians legendary prowess on land, refers to the chaika flotilla as a «mobile camp of the Cossacks upon the Black Sea, which is capable of assaulting the most important towns of Anatolia».52 As will become evident from the specific examples given below, in the period when Cossack chaika flotillas and fleets were a realia and even a fixture of the Black Sea, the “Ottoman lake” as a safe and thriving heartland of the empire could only have been a myth.53

Being caught off-guard in their secure preserve without anything resembling an adequate defense system in place, the Ottomans' search for countermeasures was a lengthy and difficult process of trial and error, with setbacks and advances along the way. Certainly through the first two decades of the 17th century, the Cossacks seem to have held the initiative

over the Ottomans, as they were able to operate in veritable armadas of 100 to 200 and even 300 boats (amounting to at least 5,000, 10,000, and even 15,000 men respectively). By the second half of the 1620s, the Ottomans evolved a defensive system and were able to prevent such large Cossack expeditions from entering the sea from the Dnieper,54 though the struggle went on for decades, with smaller Cossack raiding flotillas succeeding in causing considerable harm and damage, while tying up Ottoman flotillas sometimes even several times their size, flotillas whose ships were desperately needed in the Mediterranean Sea.55 Certainly examples of experiences in the struggle with the Cossack chaikas of Ottoman fighting men from marines (cebez), local cavalry (farsan), armorers (cebeci), and janissaries (yeniçeri) to fortress commanders (dizdar), local flotilla commanders (kapudan), and the grand admiral (kapudan pasha) could be presented here. Moreover the situation in the Black Sea affected sailors, fighting men, and ship captains from as far away as Chios, Kavala, Tunis, and Algeria, as every year, on a rotating basis, ships of the local Ottoman flotillas in the Mediterranean (the so-called beg gemiler) had to serve in the defense of the Black Sea.56

The Cossack raids experienced: the case of Black Sea settlements

What is really known about the experiences of Black Sea residents or visitors who suffered a Cossack raid? Such experiences can be imagined as terrifying and costly for the victims and fantastic or educated guesses can be made as to how such events transpired. Furthermore such conjurings can be supplemented by drawing on comparative material. However, a more rigorous, microhistorical approach, which assumes that events of the past have a distinct, even unique, "cast" and "texture", and which is wary of applying data from analogous situations or acting on hunches based on them might lead to a new and unexpected view of these occurrences, from the cataclysmic and spectacular to the minor and mundane.

49 — Beauplan, Description of Ukraine, cit., p. 63-64, 67.
50 — Ibid., p. 67-68. Here is an Ottoman articulation of this feature: «Because their gyvows [i.e., chaikas] are not large-bodied and are not visible and apparent from a far distance like the galleys of the people of Islam, they [are able to] discern the mountain-like galleys of the imperial fleet from a place twenty or thirty miles away and turn face to flight [without being observed first]», Ostapchuk, “Gaznâme of Hallı Pasha”, cit., p. 492, 497.
51 — I.e., reliance on tabors (Turkish) or tabors (Ukrainian)-wagon-camps kept together by chains and armed with g pumping weapons; used with great effect by the Hus­sites, Hungarians, and the Ottomans themselves et al. For a description of the Zaporozhian tabor and how it operated in the steppe; see Beauplan, Description of Ukraine, cit., p. 13, 56-57.
52 — Beauplan, Description of Ukraine, cit., p. 66.
53 — It is recognized that the topos "Ottoman Lake" ("Turkish Lake" in some works) has several levels of meaning. It can connote Ottoman control of the waters, control of all shores of the sea, and finally, significant economic and political control and integration. As to the second connotation, in the literature it is standardly applied after Stilleyman I’s 1538 conquest of the Ducak. However, this is somewhat misleading as the Ottomans never had total control of the Caucasian and Georgian littorals (see n. 6).

54 — For the story of how the Ottomans finally managed to establish relative control over the mouth of the Dnieper, i.e., make it virtually impossible for large Cossack fleets to enter the sea with impunity, see Ostapchuk, “Ottoman Black Sea frontier”, cit., p. 166-257.
55 — See Ostapchuk, “Five documents”, cit.; see also n. 241.
56 — E.g., see Başbakanlık Osmanlıca Arşivi, ANST 1261; Ostapchuk, "Five documents", cit. p. 54. As stated in the beginning of this article, the concern here is with the re’eya and the highest stratum of the society. For some examples of the experiences of combat forces see my earlier writings on the Cossacks that provide a sampling of various situations, such as guarding strategic waters, patrolling the sea, pursuing Cossack flotillas, open sea battles, and amphibious operations in rivers, lakes, and marshes. See Ostapchuk, "Five documents", cit.; idem, “Gaznâme of Hallı Paşa”, cit.; idem, “Ottoman Black Sea frontier”, cit.; Ostapchuk and Halenko, “Київ Чесель"", cit.
but in any case dimmed and obstructed by the nature of the source base.\textsuperscript{57} It is perhaps surprising that although Cossack naval operations were common occurrences in the Black Sea during the early 17th-century heyday, there are virtually no direct depictions of the adventures and tribulations of those involved, and very little concrete information by which to assess effects. The most commonly utilized sources on the Cossacks in the Black Sea have been those recorded at a distance from the actual events, sometimes not only in space but also in time; for example, reports by foreign diplomats in Istanbul, texts of speeches in the Commonwealth's diet or provincial diets discussing how to deal with the Zaporozhians who again threaten to bring Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman empire to the brink of war, and so forth. Most often these sources make an extreme presentation of the given phenomenon. Be they diplomatic dispatch or parliamentary declamation, they tell of disaster upon disaster—in 1614 Sinop was "destroyed," in 1616 Kefe was "razed," in 1620 Varna was "burned," in 1625 Trabzon was "sacked," and so forth—few word depictions of extreme events, depictions that are, in fact, usually little more than cliché abstractions. Indeed, while these sources, when properly handled, can be valuable, if one listens to them with a critical ear one can sense a tendency toward the drastic, the dramatic, the consciously or unconsciously exaggerated rendering of events. Then there are the Ottoman chronicles, which contain much interesting and unique information, but which are quite tendentious as they are apt to minimize the frequency and effects of the Cossack raids and strive for a facesaving whitewash of unfortuitous events (see below). Finally, there are the relatively few extant documents by participants, for example, reports on operations against the Cossacks by Ottoman commanders, which, as shown elsewhere, can be quite revealing even though they seek to put Ottoman performance in the best light.\textsuperscript{58}

First, an example of how an attack on a Black Sea city is depicted in an Ottoman narrative source. The 17th-century Ottoman chronicler tradition turns to the Black Sea problem in earnest only after the first Cossack raid on the Anatolian shore. In his Fezleke, Katib Celebi introduces the topic of the Cossacks in the Black Sea with the remarkable event of the last days of August or first days of September 1614: \textsuperscript{59}

\begin{quote}
With the guidance of renegades who fled from the land of Islam [the Cossacks] came to the fortress of Sinop on the Anatolian shore and entered that old castle by surprise and caused much damage (hasaret-i 'azime)...they took [with them] the goods and families that they had plundered (garet etdikleri emvali ve 'iyali alab) and set out to sea.\textsuperscript{60}
\end{quote}

Writing half a century later, Naima, who for these years mostly repeats the Fezleke, here exchanges his pen for an artist's brush and adds a few strokes of his own. First he harks back to an old epithet for Sinop, «Island of Lovers»; \textsuperscript{61} «they called it the 'City of Lovers' (medeniâtîl-‘ışşak)»; in other words read, before the arrival of the Cossacks, life here was calm, without worry, idyllic, even romantic. Here his basic notion concerning how the Cossacks ruined the atmosphere of life in Sinop is correct. But he also adds that the Cossacks destroyed Sinop to the extent that «that beloved town was turned into a desert (heyaban)». \textsuperscript{62} This last detail is probably on the basis of a vague passage in a chronicle or other narrative source, it is stated that in 1575 the Zaporozhians captured Trabzon and Sinop, even making their way as far as Istanbul). This does not mean to rule out any contact with the Anatolian coast prior to 1614, e.g., by a flotilla that may have been blown off-course and ended up on the opposite shore. However, it seems clear from the resonance in the sources that in this year the first significant Anatolian raid occurred and in all likelihood it was indeed then that the given "navigational breakthrough" was made.


\textsuperscript{58}— See Ostapchuk, “Five documents”, cit., p. 50, 61-62.

\textsuperscript{59}— On problems of determining the exact date of this raid, see Ostapchuk and Halenko, “Kerî ôçesîie”, cit., p. 353. In the literature it is possible to encounter references to Cossack strikes against the Anatolian coast prior to 1614, but these are either erroneous and undocumented (e.g., Trabzon and Sinop in 1604 in Longworth, Philip, The Cossacks London, 1969, p. 29-30) or poorly documented (e.g., in Tushin, Русское мореплавание, cit., p. 100, 162, without giving any reference, though probably on the basis of a vague passage in a chronicle or other narrative source, it is stated that in 1575 the Zaporozhians captured Trabzon and Sinop, even making their way as far as Istanbul). This does not mean to rule out any contact with the Anatolian coast prior to 1614, e.g., by a flotilla that may have been blown off-course and ended up on the opposite shore. However, it seems clear from the resonance in the sources that in this year the first significant Anatolian raid occurred and in all likelihood it was indeed then that the given "navigational breakthrough" was made.

\textsuperscript{60}— Katib Celebi, Fezleke, I, Istanbul, 1286/1869-70, p. 358. The rest of this section is devoted to relating Ottoman attempts to cut off the Cossacks on their return, which resulted in an engagement near the mouth of the Dnieper. For a facsimile, translation, and commentary of an almost identical passage from Katib Celebi's naval history, Tadhfati'I-kibar fl esfarîl-kibar, Istanbul, 1329/1911, p. 106, see Ostapchuk and Halenko, “Kerî ôçesîie”, cit., p. 350-354, 425-426. In a continuation of Francesco Sansovino's compilation of sources on the Turks, Historia universale dell'origine, guerra, et imperio di Turchi..., Bisaccioni is cited as giving information that prior to the attack on Sinop the Cossacks first appeared before Trabzon where they sunk several ships in port (cited in Berindei, “Porte face aux Cosaques”, cit., p. 279). Stanislav Zôkiewski, the Polish Crown hetman, echoed this information in a diet speech and a letter, first stating that the region of Trabzon was attacked and later that the Cossacks raided the coast from Trabzon to Constantinople. However, his most detailed information for 1614 concerns the raid on Sinop (see n. 67). Джерело до історії України-Русі [Sources for the history of Ukraine-Rus'], VIII, Матеріали до історії української казаччини [Materials for the history of Ukrainian Cossackdom], pt. 1. Документи по рік 1631 [Documents up to 1631], Krypiakyczyn, Ivan (ed.), Lviv, 1908, p. 142; Pisma Stanisława Ziókiewskiego kancelaria koronnego i hetmana z jego popiersiem [Letters of Stanisław Zókiewski Crown Chancellor and Hetman with his portrait], Bielowski, August (ed.), Lviv, 1861, p. 513.

\textsuperscript{61}— Cezaret-i ‘ışşak actually referred to the almost fully insular peninsula next to, i.e., on the east side of, Sinop. E.g., see the chronicle Tursun Beg, Turîb-i ebdî-jehîn in İnalîk, Halîf and Rhoads Murphey, The history of Mehmed the Conqueror, Minneapolis and Chicago, 1978, fols. 88b, 146a.

\textsuperscript{62}— Na'îma, Ravzati-il-hüsâym, cit., II, p. 118.
probably directly or indirectly borrowed from the chronicle of Hasanbegzade who presents an even starker picture of the damage and harm done:

...going over the top of its [fortress'] ramparts and walls they entered inside and descended upon the center of the city and destroyed its circumference and edifices (kusur) and shed the blood of several thousand men and woman and struck the mentioned city with the broom of plunder and the fire of devastation and they left neither name or nor sign (nam u niğan) of its buildings (lınaret), turning it into a wilderness and a desert (berry ib beyaban).64

Such passages - incidentally, atypical for the Ottoman chronicle tradition, which tends to shy away from mentioning extreme negative effects of the raids - give the impression that the Cossacks brought a veritable holocaust to the shores of the Black Sea. There is little additional testimony to better qualify the extent of the destruction wrought by this ominous and pivotal raiding expedition. At this point there is only one relevant Ottoman document, a ferman issued by the imperial divan concerning the need to improve the town's defenses. It is not particularly telling in the way of the degree of destruction: «On that day the tribe of the Cossack bandits... came and burned all sides [of Sinop] (etrafi ihrak) and plundered the fortress' property and supplies (emval ve erzagin garet)». However, it reveals, almost in anecdotal terms, how the population of Sinop and its defenders were completely unprepared for this event. According to it, the garrison troops of Sinop, along with some of the city dwellers, set out to a distant village where at a weekly Friday bazaar trouble broke out between the re'aya and some bandits. It was when the garrison was away that the Cossacks appeared and overran their city. It is unclear whether the garrison and others went to the distant bazaar because of the trouble or also because they regularly participated in the village bazaar, for this ferman orders the bazaar to be banned and a new one established inside Sinop so that similar occurrences would not repeat themselves.65

The most concrete testimony on effects of the Sinop raid is from a speech delivered at a provincial dietine by the Crown hetman, Stanisław Zółkiewski, a man of great expertise on the Ukrainan Cossacks, thanks to his experience in combating them, and a man with informants in the Ottoman empire: «[They] plundered the fortress of Sinop, the Turks estimated the damage at 40 million66 and the imperial naval arsenal (cekauş [arsenal] cesarski) that was there, galleons, galleys, everything went up in smoke».67

It would seem undeniable that Sinop suffered heavily in 1614, as this sensational event resonated far and wide. For example, just a few days after the raid, Muscovite envoys returning from Istanbul, while at Tana, received word that «the Dnieper Cherkasy [i.e., Zaporozhians]68 took the Turkish emperor's (tsar) city on the Black Sea, Sinop, destroyed it, and killed all of its people».69 With the Sinop raid making a great impression on contemporaries, it stands to reason that the references to total destruction owe in part to hyperbole rather than completely to reality, as the chroniclers or their sources strove to evoke the great shock and trauma of this sudden debacle. Thus, Hasanbegzade's account of this calamity begins by referring to it as a «strange occurrence» (ahval-i 'acib) and ends with the epithet «happening full of horror (ahval piir ehval)». Yet, no matter how great the devastation, to be sure the city must have survived, for had it been anywhere close to fully destroyed, there would be some trace of such extreme consequences in the Ottoman archival sources.

An account that seems to have originated in much closer proximity to the actual event than those in the Ottoman chronicles is a one-page inscription in a Greek religious manuscript book kept by a certain monk, Metrophanes, from the Monastery of St. John the Baptist located on an island of the same name (Sveti Ivan) just off the coast of the Bulgarian town of Sozopol70 in the Bay of Burgas. It concerns Cossack raiding activity on the Bulgarian coast between 1606 and 1616. Throughout much of the first half of the 17th century this stretch of coast was a favorite objective of Cossack raiding expeditions. Because of the obscurity of this inscription's publication, its rare and valuable testimony has not been

66 - If gold pieces were intended, this would have been an impossibly high sum. Perhaps the Ottoman silver coin, the akça which would have made for a more realistic though still huge-figure, was meant?
67 - Pisma Zółkiewskiego, cit., p. 513, see also p. 302. For a composite relation of this raid on the basis of the Ottoman and Polish sources see Hrushevsky, Cossack Age, cit., p. 271-272.
68 - The standard Russian name for the Zaporozhian Cossacks was cherkasy, i.e., Circassians. Any possible connections between the Zaporozhians and the Circassians remains an open question.
69 - Документи російських архівів до історії України [Documents from Russian archives to the history of Ukraine], I, Документи до історії запорізького козацтва [Documents on the history of Zaporozhian Cossacks] (Turkish affairs [Turkiye je dela] of the Muscovite Foreign Office [Posolskiy przyiast]), Lviv, 1996, p. 71.
70 - On the south end of the bay opposite Ahyoli and less than 15 km southeast of Burgas.

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63 - Ahmed Hasanbegzade, Tarih-i al-i 'Osman, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (Vienna), H.O. 75, fol. 71v-72r; H.O. 19, 291r.
65 - Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Mükemme defteri 80 (henceforth MD only), p. 458, no. 1095. Reference to this document was found in Furoghi, Towns and Townsmen, cit., p. 363.
given the prominence in the literature connected with the Cossacks and the Black Sea that it deserves:71

...Upon the West [shore of the Black Sea] certain ones called Cossacks have descended from Little Rus72 and have devastated the entire coast, [coming] on so-called fustas.73 At that time they made their way to Varna in the month of July on the 27th day (1606) and burned and pillaged [that which is beyond] the fortress [and] most of the Christians. And many of them [i.e., the Cossacks] were killed by the Romans.74 And in the year 7120 (1612) in the month of April [the Cossacks] made their way to Misivri75 and looted and destroyed it. In the next year they made

71 – Metrophanes’ inscription was transcribed, translated into Russian, and commented upon in Granström, E.E., “Заметка современника о набегах кавказов на турецкие владения в начале XVII в.” [A notice of a contemporary on the raids of the Cossacks on Turkish possessions in the beginning of the 17th century], in: Восточный сборник III (1972) [Moscow], p. 37-40. Granström provides a reference to a similar notice in a Mt. Athos Greek manuscript, concerning Cossack raiding activity in the Bosporus in 1624: Istrin, V., “Греческая запись о набегах на Константинополь в начале XVII века” [A Greek inscription on raids on Constantinople in the beginning of the 17th century], in: Журнал Министерства народного просвещения (1898), pt. 318 [St. Petersburg], p. 42-48. Granström’s fragment is from a manuscript held in the Russian National Library of St. Petersburg. Here I translate Granström’s Russian translation of the Greek original, with reference to his commentary. However, thanks to the assistance of Albert Pietersma, the accuracy of the given translation of this important passage has been checked. Unfortunately, Granström only gave his transcription of the inscription, and no facsimile.

72 – I.e., Ukraine (in the original Μικρή Ρως, “Little Rus”).

73 – Повідомля, judging by the reluctance of authors to define fusta in the Ottoman context, a nondescript or poorly understood name for a boat or ship. Cf. Uzuçarşılı, Ismail Hakkı, Osmanlı devletinin merkez ve bahriye teşkilatı, Ankara, 1948, p. 397; Bostan, İdris, Osmanlı bahriye teşkilatı. XVII. yüzyılda terasine-i amire, Ankara, 1992, p. 21; Kahane, Henry, Renée Kahane and Andreas Tietze, The Lingua Franca of the Levant. Turkish Nautical Terms of Italian and Greek Origin, Urbana, 1958, p. 235. According to the latter work, it refers to some sort of ship. Granström, basing himself on Du Cange, Glossarius ad scriptores medie et infimae Graecitatis, Lugduni Batavorum, 1689, considers it as referring to a small ship with two rows of oars. In any event, it is unlikely that the use of this particular term can cast any new light on what is already known about Zaporozhian raiding vessels, and more likely the term is used carelessly or in ignorance.

74 – Позайри. Granström explains this as referring to the local population (Greeks) though he surmises that the author must have had in mind the local garrison. However, as “Rum” was a common Ottoman self-appellation, an alternative explanation is that it refers to the local Ottoman garrison.

75 – Мисир (Mesembria), Misivri in Ottoman, today the Bulgarian Nesebur, a port town located on a small peninsula less than 30 km northeast of Burgas, and about 25 km north northeast of Sozopol.

their way to Ahtopol76 and pillaged it and on top of this burned it. Coming again, they made their way to Misivri and one more time pillaged it, worse than the first time. In 7124 (1616) they again, for a third time, pillaged Misivri, and went to a settlement, which is to be found outside [the fortress] at a distance of one day’s journey and took possession [— word not fully legible in the original] of all its property and took it away.

The concern with this passage here is not to identify the raids mentioned in it and collate its information with what is known from other sources, but instead, to learn what Metrophanes, who was in the relative proximity of these events, although apparently not an eyewitness, tells about the local population’s experience during a Cossack raid. Two divergent observations may be made concerning the effects of the raids as related in his account. The first is explicit and concerns the great harm wrought by the Cossacks. In the four years mentioned (1606 Varna; 1612 Misivri; 1613 Ahtopol, Misivri; 1616 Misivri)77 the Cossacks brought great disturbance and havoc to the Bulgarian coast which included considerable loss of property and life. While the important coastal ports suffered the most, even the hinterland was not safe (on Cossack penetration of the hinterland, see below).78 However, in Metrophanes’ account is an unintentional intimation that the destruction and carnage were less than his words suggest. The attack and pillaging of Misivri at least three times in five years, suggests that it was not “destroyed” in the first year (1612), as the relation claims, and that after this and ensuing expeditions, enough survived for the Cossacks to have reason to return. Even allowing for the ability to recover, it seems that there is at least some, if not a considerable degree of exaggeration in this account as well. To be sure, for the local population these raids were great calamities, but they were not total holocausts as the words of this monk taken at face value might lead one to believe.

Testimony on the effect of Cossack operations upon the inhabitants and infrastructure of the Black Sea that was often not far removed from

76 – Αχτόπολη, Ahtopol, on the Bulgarian coast not far from the Turkish border and about 40 km southeast of Sozopol.

77 – Metrophanes’ account does not include all Cossack raids in and between these years, even on this particular stretch of coast, e.g., in 1609 the vicinity of Varna was attacked by 30 chaikas and Varna itself was reportedly sacked, MD 76, no. 92 (cited in Berindei, “Porte face aux Cosaques” cit, p. 278). However, it seems that during the Muscovite Time of Troubles, especially between 1607 and 1612, when much if not most of Ukrainian Cossack energy was channeled to marauding adventures as well as full-fledged military campaigns in the north, the Black Sea was spared the full brunt of Cossack fury. Cf. Iavornits’kyi, D.I., Історія захоплень Хазаїв [History of the Zaporozhian Cossacks], II [Lviv, 1991], p. 11-24.

78 – From this testimony it is clear that although the Ukrainian Cossacks were Orthodox Christians just like the Bulgarians, Greeks, and others of this region, this did not make the latter immune from the effects of the raids of the former (on this matter see below).
the actual events both in time and space can be found in local kadh Sharia court records, that is, the sicils. Although sicils from the coastal settlements of Runneli for the relevant period are not extant, sicils do survive and preserve unique data on various encounters with the Cossacks, both on land and at sea, for parts of the Anatolian coast – the Trabzon region in the East, and near the Bosporus in the west.79 In the 1620s, both the Zaporozhian and the Don Cossacks attacked the eastern Black Sea coast in the region of Trabzon time and again.80 In the spring of 1625 a massive assault was made on Trabzon and its vicinity. A Cossack fleet as large as several hundred chaikas,81 in the words of Thomas Roe, «sacked and burned the suburbs of Trebizond and all the adjoining coasts».82 Despite the relative completeness and presumed reliability of Roe’s dispatches, the phrase «sacked and burned» leaves much to the imagination. Finer details can be obtained from the Trabzon sicils. One entry records some of the damages rendered by this same raid to the ‘imare83 of the well-known Hatuniye mosque complex (külliye), originally dedicated in 1515 by Sultan Selim I (1512–1520) in honor of his late mother Gülbahar Hatun. On a very water-damaged page, it is possible to make out the following testimony concerning the Hatuniye: «On the 21st of this month of Receb [1034]/29 April 1625 the accursed Rus84 infidels overcame

80 – There were apparently several Trabzon raids in the 1610s (1614, 1615, 1616, 1617), they are mostly poorly or scantily attested (with the exception of several raids in the last year, see Brekhunenko, Viktor, Спорудження українського козацтва у XV-XVI столітті [Relations of Ukrainian Cossackdom with the Don in the 16th–middle of the 17th century], Kiev, 1998, p. 139–140). The lessor and greater raiders on Trabzon and its vicinity in the 1620s (1620, 1622, 1625, 1626, 1628 and also perhaps 1621 and 1623) are for, the most part, better-attested raids. See Ostapchuk, “Ottoman Black Sea frontier”, cit., p. 109–110.

81 – At least 160 boats, which amounted to about 8,000 men; other sources give higher figures, e.g., the usually reliable English ambassador, Roe, gives 300 boats which would have meant about 15,000 Cossacks (Ostapchuk, “Ottoman Black Sea frontier”, cit., p. 109).

82 – Dispatch of 22 June 1625, Negotiations of Roe, cit., p. 410.

83 – A complex of public buildings endowed by a vakf, such as a refectory for the poor, hospital, bathhouse, and workshop.

84 – The Ottomans used Rus or Urs as inconsistently, sometimes meaning Ruthenian/Ukrainian and at other times, Muscovite/Russian, though for the latter Moskof/Moskov was also used. Perhaps they simply did not distinguish between these two main branches of East Slavs and hence Russ/Uruss could be interpreted as denoting “East Slav.” Alternatively, according to the context it can be rendered by Ruthenian/Ukrainian or Muscovite/Russian. However, for this period, to translate invariably Russ/Uruss as “Russian” is anachronistic and misleading.

85 – There were apparently several Trabzon raids in the 1610s (1614, 1615, 1616, 1617), they are mostly poorly or scantily attested (with the exception of several raids in the last year, see Brekhunenko, Viktor, Спорудження українського козацтва у XV-XVI столітті [Relations of Ukrainian Cossackdom with the Don in the 16th–middle of the 17th century], Kiev, 1998, p. 139–140). The lessor and greater raiders on Trabzon and its vicinity in the 1620s (1620, 1622, 1625, 1626, 1628 and also perhaps 1621 and 1623) are for, the most part, better-attested raids. See Ostapchuk, “Ottoman Black Sea frontier”, cit., p. 109–110.

86 – Turkish National Library (Milli Kütüphane [Ankara]), Trabzon şer‘iye sicili 1823, fol. 22v. Although here only the day and month and not the year are indicated, in other sicil-entries in this register (see n. 99) clearly relating to events during the same raid three days later, the day, month, and year are written out, i.e., 24 Receb 1034/2 May 1625.

87 – Trabzon şer‘iye sicili 1824, fol. 35v; 1827, fol. 70v. For summary translations of these two entries see Jennings, Ronald, “Pious foundations in the society and economy of Ottoman Trabzon, 1565–1640”, in: Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, XXXIII (1990), p. 271–336, esp. 311-332.

88 – Trabzon şer‘iye sicili 1823, fol. 2v. See also Jennings, “Ottoman Trabzon”, cit., p. 300.

89 – Alan Fisher, on the basis of Evliya Çelebi’s accounts of long-term devastation in the Crimea (when he visited in 1666–1667 some of the damaged or destroyed sites that he described had been attacked by the Cossacks several decades earlier) and evidence from the Ottoman survey registers (fabrik defterleri), has suggested that there was a link between the Cossacks and demographic and economic decline in the Crimea, Fisher, Alan, “The Ottoman Crimsa in the mid-seventeenth century. Some problems and preliminary considerations”, in: Encouristion. Essays Presented to Omeljan Pritsak on his sixtieth birthday by his colleagues and students (= Harvard Ukrainian Studies III-IV 1979-1980), Cambridge, Mass., 1980, p. 215-226.

85 – Although the sources are not unanimous, it is certain that the entire city with its fortress complex was not overthrown. Certainly the citadel (Upper Castle) held out while the lower fortress, which was closer to the waterfront, succumbed according to some accounts. The Hatuniye complex was located in the western suburbs and, accordingly, more easily attacked. See Ostapchuk, “Ottoman Black Sea frontier”, cit., p. 109–110.

86 – Turkish National Library (Milli Kütüphane [Ankara]), Trabzon şer‘iye sicili 1823, fol. 22v. Although here only the day and month and not the year are indicated, in other sicil-entries in this register (see n. 99) clearly relating to events during the same raid three days later, the day, month, and year are written out, i.e., 24 Receb 1034/2 May 1625.

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above, there are the following examples: a sicil-entry from the beginning of 1626 states that several mills (değirmen), in a place which could not be determined because of fading of the ink, have laid in ruins for more than five to six years since the Cossacks came.90 A 1633 sicil-entry reveals that «in the aforementioned well-protected [city of Trabzon], previously [perhaps during the events of 1625 recounted above]» the accused Rus bandits destroyed by fire the bezzazistan that belonged to the vakf of the [Hatunye] mosque (camii'-i şerîf) and 'imaret». This entry is a copy of an imperial diploma (nişan-i şerîf) granting a group of outsiders the right to take over the operations of this bezzazistan in exchange for paying the relevant vakf an annual 5,000 akças; this group outbid another party that had proposed to pay an annual 1,000 akças.92

This sampling of data on Cossack destruction and later consequences recorded in the Trabzon sicils provides a more realistic picture of the Cossack impact on Black Sea cities and towns than stock phrases such as «burned and destroyed» allow. Of course sicil registers were not drawn up with the aim of recording destruction wrought by Cossacks — it seems that mentions of damages found their way into the registers by happenstance rather than through someone’s intention to provide a systematic record. Such details found their way into the sicils only because of specific circumstances brought about by the Cossack raids, for example, as mentioned above, circumstances that affected the legal and economic status of a given vakf, or, as will be seen below, contractual relations between parties. References to damages rendered to Trabzon suggest serious destruction and economic setback that lasted for months, even years. Moreover, because of the chance nature of the data that ended up in the sicils, the picture that emerges from them may very well be an underestimate. On the other hand, without minimizing the harm and damage wrought by the Cossacks, from these sources it is clear that nothing approaching total destruction in the affected districts of the city had occurred and that civic life did go on. While the picture provided by these documents is much more precise than that of the more common “burned and destroyed” type of testimony, there is no way of knowing whether other sites in the same quarters of Trabzon were as badly affected, if at all — the full extent and degree of the destruction remain open variables.

The Trabzon sicils occasionally provide glimpses of quantitative, as well as qualitative, effects of Cossack predations. In late summer 1620, the tax farmer in charge of the market inspection and brokerage fees (ihtisab ve dellaliye mukata’as) for the city of Trabzon obtained a reduction in the annual revenue that he was to collect, from 65,000 to 55,000 akças, a reduction of 15 per cent. According to him, the revenue shortfall was the result of ships failing to come to Trabzon out of fear of the Cossacks, and therefore this particular mukata’a became fully reliant on remissions by merchants who arrived by land and thereby it registered a great shortfall in revenues.93 Whether the statement that “ships do not come at all!” or that merely “fewer ships come than usual” cannot be determined. We must be careful to draw firmer conclusions as to the scale of reduction in shipping traffic at Trabzon. In any event a 15 per cent reduction in a tax revenue was significant. It should be noted that though the document indicates that loss of revenues related to sea traffic caused a great shortfall to the given mukata’a, there is no way of discerning what proportion of the merchants who now brought their wares by land had previously used ship transport — another vagary of this interesting document that makes comparison of the relative land and sea traffic volume before and after the raids risky.

In a sicil register from a few years later, in 1631, there is an entry that strongly suggests a very serious if not disastrous impact of Cossack raiding activity. It is a copy of an order to the beglerbegi of Batumi94 stating that because the sub-province (sancak) of Trabzon is located on the coast, its population has been scattered and ruined by the Cossacks, and so it is necessary to reduce drastically the number of ‘avariz haneleri.95 The central government gives strict orders to levy tax for 600 hanes only, whereas 1,000 ‘avariz haneleri are registered.96 A 40 per cent reduction must be an indication that by 1631, the effects of the Cossack ravages of the Trabzon coastal region had become grave.

Some of the documentation in the Trabzon sicils gives us specific information, again quantitative as well as qualitative, relating the effects of Cossack predations on coastal villages. One occasion for such sicil-entries was a fall in the revenues that tax farmers were able to collect as a result of the Cossack raids. Thus, in the Trabzon sicil for 1625 there are two separate entries covering a range of personal, commercial, agricultural, and other taxes (ispence, rüşum-i ʿorfiyye, beytiilmal, resm-t tapu, gümrük-i iskele, ʿâshr, etc.) for two different sets of villages in the sub-

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90 — Trabzon şerîye sicilî 1820, fol. 45r.
91 — Covered bazaar where valuables were sold (bedesten).
92 — Trabzon şerîye sicilî 1828, fol. 96r.
district (nahiye) of Akça Abad. These records first present the original amounts that the winners of bids to hold these two mukata’as for these two sets of villages contracted to deliver over a three-year period: 320,000 and 186,000 akças respectively. It is noted that the tax collections for the first year had been operating normally until «on 24 Receb 1034/2 May 1625» the accused Urus came in 220 saykas (i.e., chaika) and overcame Trabzon and they plundered (garet) and devastated (harab) [such and such (the names could not be fully made out)] villages and [other] villages in the vicinity and took their little children (sagar), belongings (enval), and provisions (erzak) and the villages became ... deserted (hali). As a result, the tax farmers of both mukata’as resigned their positions because they insisted that they would be unable to collect the taxes that they were under contractual obligation to deliver to the state. However, subsequently they managed to renegotiate their contracts at a reduced obligation of revenue collection, reducing their obligations by 14.0 and 13.3 per cent respectively. In one of the documents there is the stipulation that the new lowered tax intake was to be adhered to and under no circumstances increased by the tax farmer in the upcoming year; only when «the destroyed villages again become flourishing and prosperous (ma ‘mur)» was an increase in tax load to be contemplated. Thus it is evident that not only a prominent and prosperous city such as Trabzon, but also the more modest coastal villages of the Black Sea littoral were targets for the Cossacks. They were targets either by choice or circumstance (unlike the city, they were without formidable defensive works; perhaps the Cossacks relied on raiding villages in order to replenish their provisions). In addition, there is no doubt that both Muslim and Christian rural populations could suffer seriously at the hands of the Cossacks. That the local Christians were affected in this case is practically beyond challenge at least one tax specific to them, iṣpence, was a component of the mukata’as affected by the Cossack raids. 101

Can these reductions in tax-farm valuations be read as a measure of the level of Cossack destruction? While these records speak of the destruction of villages and the dispersion and impoverishment of peasantry, the eventual fall in the mukata’a valuations by 13.3 and 14.0 per cent would appear to belie the claim that the effects were so extreme. How substantial were the effects claimed in this and other laments of the re’ayn recorded in the sicili from the same decade? For another example:

Because our villages are [located] on a road that is close to the sea, the accursed Rus bandits have come several times and suddenly attacked our villages and looted our possessions and valuables (esbab u eskal) and killed so many of us. Because of this most of us have become scattered and ruined and only a few miserable poor re’ayn have remained. But [even] now those who come to collect cizye102 demand from us [all] the cizye [that has accumulated] up until now, even for those who died or fled. 103

Obviously some element of the never-ending game between taxpayers, who try to lessen their burden, and the state, which strives to maximize revenue, was a factor in such situations. However, that the re’ayn would dare to appeal to the central government on blatantly false pretenses seems hardly plausible. It appears that in such situations a compromise was usually effected in which the final adjusted lower mukata’a valuation would be less than it had been prior to the disastrous event, but greater than that requested by the tax farmer (or the re’ayn). And, what is important for gauging the extent of destruction, these 13.3 and 14.0 per cent reductions in mukata’a valuation were probably less than the postraid situation merited, that is, the final, adjusted, lower mukata’a valuation was greater than the amount justified by the actual damages and losses. It should be noted that even such percentages of fall in revenue were not trivial amounts. Clearly more cases need to be examined and analyzed, not only relating to Cossack attacks, but other disasters as well, including natural ones, such as earthquakes and floods, and especially those whose degree of damage is somehow corroborated by the sources.

mukata’as less solvent. This is, of course, unlikely and without doubt the Christians suffered as well. Nevertheless here is another example how mukata’a data can be indeterminate.

101 - Strictly speaking, the fall in revenue potential of the given mukata’as could have been due to the inability to collect other taxes that were part of the mukata’as, taxes which both the Christians and Muslims paid. Conceivably, the Christians could have been unscathed or less so and the taxes specific to them could have continued to accrue according to plan, while it was the Muslims’ inability to pay because they were targeted by the Cossacks, and the harm rendered to them that made the given

98 - Trabzon şer’iye sicilli 1823, fols. 36r, 48r. Akça Abad (today Akçaaban) is a coastal town just west of Trabzon.

99 - Notice that this date is three days later than the date given for the raid on Trabzon in the sicili-entry cited above (see n. 86). This is not a discrepancy, as from other sources it is known that there was a four-day battle in an unsuccessful attempt to take the lower fortresses of Trabzon, and in all likelihood the Cossack operation against the city did not end on this day as well. See Историческое описание земли Воиска Донского [A historical description of the lands of the Don Host], J, Novocherkassk, 1869, p. 187-188.

100 - See n. 85.

101 - Poll-tax levied on non-Muslim households.

102 - Trabzon şer’iye sicilli 1825, fol. 97r (3 Safar 1038/2 October 1628). The concern here over the cizye incontrovertibly shows that the non-Muslims in this region (mostly Orthodox Greeks) were seriously affected by the (Orthodox) Cossacks. On the problem of fellow Christians as victims of the Cossacks see below.

103 - Presumably the tax farmer might have been using the given mishap as a pretext to lower the valuation of the mukata’a that he was holding so as to deliver less to the state and reap a larger profit himself. However then he risked losing his tax farm to a competing higher bid in mid-term, as was usually allowed.
With such comparative analysis it might be possible to better assess how serious of a disaster an event followed by a seemingly small or modest, for example, a 10 or 15 per cent fall in revenue, really was. The following case relating to Varna recorded in the **Mühimme defterleri** supports the notion that appeals for a reduction of taxation because of losses caused by the Cossacks were resolved by a compromise between the priorities of the state and the needs articulated by the taxpayers.\(^{105}\)

In 1627, the *çizye*-paying, that is, the non-Muslim *re'aya* of the city of Varna sent a petition to the Porte concerning the difficult situation that they found themselves in as result of a Cossack raid several years before. According to the petition, although 480 *hanes* are recorded in the register, those assigned to collect the *çizye* overestimated the population and entered additional *hanes* into the register, so that now they are collecting *çizye* for 770 *hanes*. In fact, several years ago there was a Cossack raid on Varna which was «sacked and plundered (yagma ve garet) and so many of [their community] were killed and injured that only 400 individuals [*nefer*, as opposed to *hane*/*households*] survived and these are extremely poor and without the capacity to pay [*çizye*] for so many *hanes*.\(^{106}\) An investigation was launched from the capital and even the renowned şeyhülislam Yahya was called to look into the matter. With the state being reluctant to forgo revenue, the final decision involved shifting some of the due *çizye*, 70 *hane*’s worth, to villages able to bear an extra burden, but insisting on a 600-*hane* figure for the non-Muslim community in the city of Varna.\(^{107}\) In other words, claiming wholesale carnage and requesting a very substantial reduction in their *çizye* liability, the non-Muslim community was only granted a lesser reduction.

It is not fully clear which figure the non-Muslim *re'aya* of Varna were objecting to and trying to have officially changed, the 770 *hane* that the *çizye* collectors had begun to impose, or the 480 *hane* formerly registered in the *defter*, though it seems that they were addressing the larger figure. If it was a matter of returning from the new assessment to the old one, then that means they wanted a 38 per cent reduction. But as they were claiming that only 400 individuals remained, they must have been asserting that the losses were truly drastic, for the new *hane* figure would be 80 *hane* if a multiplier of, for instance, five individuals per *hane* is applied, or 200 *hane* if 400 *nefer* referred to adults only (that is two *nefer* per household; even less *hane* if households included extended families, i.e., more than two *nefer*).\(^{108}\) Given the vagueness of the wording of the document, one can only take into account various possible combinations of these figures and arrive at a range of possible reductions in the number of *hanes* requested by the *re'aya*, from 38 to 90 per cent. Which they were actually requesting cannot be determined; presumably the population loss was in proportion to one of the possible figures between these two extreme percentages.\(^{109}\) What the state agreed on, which was to reduce the number of *hanes* in the *çizye* register from 770 to 600, meant that they were granting only a 22 per cent reduction. Implicit in its decision to recognize 600 *hanes* is that in all likelihood the 480 *hane* figure claimed by the *re'aya* was outdated — probably the population had increased since the previous survey.

In this document again the difficulty of gauging the effect of a raid on the basis of taxation data, at least as it is presented in such a document, is apparent. Did a 22 per cent reduction of the number of *çizye* *haneleri* mean that there was approximately a 22 per cent fall in the total population or at least in the segment of the population subject to the *çizye* tax, that is, the non-Muslims? In any event, given how reluctant the state could be to lose any income (again, note the transfer of 70 *hane*’s worth of *çizye* liability to other locales), and taking notice of the fact that after an investigation involving at least one figure of presumably great moral authority and prestige, there is no hint that the state rejected the basic veracity of the petitioning community’s story, suggests that indeed the losses were not grossly exaggerated and probably greater than the final settlement reflects. Here too, it is likely that a compromise was effected between the amount that should have been assessed if the tax liability was to have been in line with the level of the surviving population and the amount the state had been expecting to receive before the protest. In other words, the actual losses were likely to have been greater than the 22 per cent recognized by the state (a substantial figure in itself), according to the possibilities that the figures as stated in this document allow, somewhere between 22 and 90 per cent. Without ignoring the vagaries of this

\(^{105}\) Negotiation and compromise in settling differences concerning the assessed and realistic tax burdens has been found in other contexts and was probably a not uncommon practice. For examples in a different region, see Singer, Amy, Palestinian Peasants and Ottoman Officials. Rural Administration Around Sixteenth-Century Jerusalem, Cambridge, 1994.

\(^{106}\) While big raids of Varna are recorded under 1606, 1609, 1612, and 1616, probably the raid of August 1620 is meant here when a reported 150 Cossack *saykas* were said to have spilled and entirely burned Varna, which has no less than fifteen or sixteen thousand souls (... les Cossacs avec 150 barques ravagent toute la mer Noire ayant pillé et entièrement brûlé Varna où il n’y avait pas moins de quinze ou seize mille âmes), dispatch of the French ambassador to the Porte, Philippe de Harlay, comte de Césy, 25 August 1620 in: Turgenev, A.I. (ed.), Historia Russiae monumenta/Aкты исторические, относящиеся к России, II, St. Petersburg, 1842, p. 412. See Hrushevsky, Cossack Age, cit., p. 342.

\(^{107}\) MD 83, no. 113.

\(^{108}\) Only relative figures are of interest here; arriving at any sort of absolute and precise demographic figures is not intended, and thus only a very rudimentary multiplier is applied.

\(^{109}\) A reduction of 770 *hanes* to 80 *hanes* meant a decline of 90 per cent, 480 to 80 = .83 per cent, 770 to 200 = .74 per cent, 480 to 200 = .58 per cent, 770 to 480 = .38 per cent and, the most conservative figure, 770 to 600 = .22 per cent.
document, while Varna was not entirely destroyed, as the words of the French ambassador to the Porte, Philippe de Harlay, comte de Césy might lead one to believe, and perhaps its population was not even decimated, as the non-Muslims of the city claimed, the effects of recent Cossack raiding activity on population, infrastructure, and economy must have been quite significant. Prior to the disclosure of this document there were no solid grounds for making such an assertion, as only vague and impressionistic testimony was available.

Between the extremes of death and destruction, and survival unsathed and with property intact, a third fate awaited those who underwent a Cossack raid: to fall captive. Three examples of Cossacks taking captives have already been mentioned: the one in the passage by Portelli d'Ascoli quoted at the start of this paper, the information in the Ottoman chronicle account of the milestone expedition to Sinop in 1614 that the Cossacks took [with them] the goods and families that they had plundered and set out to sea, and the disclosure in the documentation of a re-negotiated mukata'a contract which states that, aside from destroying villages, pillaging possessions, and seizing provisions, the Cossacks took little children (sagar). Because the aim here is to provide specific, micro-level views of the human impact of the raids, further examples of Ottoman subjects taken captive by the Cossacks are in order.

In a 1639 report to the Porte by Piyale Kethüda, the vice-admiral of the Ottoman fleet (kethüda-i tersane-i amire), concerning nine Cossacks that caused considerable trouble in the Black Sea that summer but were in the end overcome, it is said that the Ottoman forces liberated not only captured children whom the Cossacks had managed to bring as far as the mouth of the Dnieper («13 or 14 little boys — Muslim children between the ages of 7 and 8», but several women as well. Beaufan's invaluable description of Ukraine and neighboring lands is one of the very few Christian sources to venture any information on the proportion of human ware in the Cossacks' “catch” and its possible fates: returning home with much booty and a number of slaves (quelques esclaves), i.e., some slaves), usually young children, whom they keep in their own service or give as gifts to the lords of their homeland. No old people are detained, unless they are judged rich enough to buy their freedom by paying ransom. It should be noted that the existence of Muslims or others as slaves (or even as servants) on 17th-century Polish or Ukrainian estates is an unsearched topic. Beaufan's implication that the captives were relatively few seems plausible; certainly it is difficult to imagine that the numbers of Ottoman subjects that the Cossacks brought back could compare with the thousands of East Slave that the Crimean Tatars annually drove across the steppes to supply the huge Ottoman slave market. As to Muscovy, although there was both serfdom and a status resembling or equivalent to slavery known as kholopstvo, investigation is needed to determine if the Don Cossacks in any systematic way sold or delivered their Black Sea captives to Muscovy, kept them as laborers, or only tried to ransom them. But at this point, when dealing with the unstudied problem of the Cossacks' human chattel, one should be ready for surprises in the data, which may or may not have represented a typical situation. In 1622, de Césy reported that in a raid on the Anatolian shore near the Bosporus (see n. 132) the Cossacks «have left their marks [of destruction] and led away more than a thousand captives in kara mürsels» that they had captured. Aside from a possible Hait of

110 — See n. 106.
111 — To probe Ottoman fiscal data in search of better indicators of the effects of Cossack raids than those provided by impressionistic data stemming from descriptive accounts is to ask basic even if obvious questions about the sources. It is analogous to the attempts to assess the degree to which the Ottoman fiscal data correlates with the performance of the Ottoman economy, e.g., Genç, Mehmet, “A study of the feasibility of using eighteenth-century Ottoman financial records as an indicator of economic activity”, in: İsl amoğlu İnan, Huri (ed.), The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy, Cambridge and Paris, 1987, p. 345-373. From probes of the literature and conversations with colleagues it is my impression that much more empirical work comparing specific natural disasters, epidemics, wars, uprisings with possible fluctuations in fiscal data is needed in order, for example, to gain some indicators, if not absolutely quantitative, certainly less qualitative than those which are usually utilized to qualify an event as disastrous, having negative effects on the well-being of a society, economy, and so on.
112 — 'îyal, “household, including a man's wife, children and dependents” or the Turkish ayâl, meaning simply a man's wife or household, Redhouse, James, A Turkish and English Lexicon..., Constantinople, 1890, p. 1329-1330. Does the use of this term indicate that the Cossacks favored women and children as captives, rather than men? Cf. n. 115 where a document is referred to that mentions only women and children as captives of the Cossacks.
113 — See n. 60.
114 — Trbзон şer'iyce sicilli 1823, fol. 36r.
116 — Beaufan, Description of Ukraine, cit., p. 11.
118 — Richard Hellie's large study of kholopstvo (bond slavery), while mentioning Tatar military captives being enslaved, has no information of the Don Cossacks dealing in captives. Hellie, Richard, Slavery in Russia, 1450-1725, Chicago, 1982, p. 67-70, 99-100. In a personal communication, Michael Khodarkovsky informs that he never encountered any systematic trafficking in captives with Muscovy by the Don Cossacks. He believes that most kholopy in Muscovy of Turkic origin came not from the Crimean Tatars or Ottoman Turks, but from the various Muslim peoples from the East and Southeast, such as Kazan Tatars, Bashkirs, and Nogays.
119 — A type of small cargo ship (Caravassuls in the French text).
had captured.\textsuperscript{120} Aside from a possible trail of captives taken in the Black Sea by the Cossacks leading back to Ukraine and Poland or to the lower Don and Muscovy, it is highly likely that a significant proportion were sold to the Abkhazians, Mingrelians, and other peoples of the Caucasian and Georgian coasts not fully under Ottoman control. In a Trabzon \textit{siell} document from the early 1640s there is the following testimony by an individual who managed to return to his homeland after a long captivity: «20 years ago the accursed Rus made me a slave (\textit{esir}) and sold me to the Georgian land (\textit{Girci vilayeti}).\textsuperscript{121}

In the case of Tatar raids in Ukraine and southern Muscovy there is a relatively clear picture of the fate of Slav captives, either enslavement in the Crimea, or being sold and transported to Ottoman lands proper.\textsuperscript{122} In the case of the Cossacks, although their booty consisting of human alongside material chattel is beyond question, it is at this point prudent to mince words and avoid the term “enslavement” for the simple reason that the fate of their captives is poorly documented and remains largely a mystery: what were the relative proportions of those who ended up in some form of servitude and those who were returned for ransom?\textsuperscript{123} On the whole, most sources that mention the Cossacks taking captives do so in passing, almost casually, without hinting at the purpose of such activity or the fate of the unfortunates.

Modern historians of the Cossacks too have passed over such mentions without comment. Indeed, in Ukrainian and Russian historiographies, the Cossacks are usually depicted as liberators of Eastern Slavs from Crimean or Ottoman captivity. Moreover, the liberation of enslaved Cossack brethren or other countrymen has been considered one of the main purposes of the Cossack naval expeditions. As in any frontier phenomena, moral categories tended to be vague in such matters. The Cossacks taking captives or committing atrocities is not incompatible with their viewing themselves as carrying on a just struggle of retribution against their bellicose, slave-taking neighbors to the South. Even contemporary sources that were not only apologetic of the Ukrainian Cossacks, but even hostile to them, recognized a connection between their expeditions and the Tatar slaving activity.\textsuperscript{124} One wonders if the Cossacks took only Muslims as captives, as in the cases related by Piyale Kethûda and Hasanbegzade's chronicle. Below are examples of their robbing Christians but releasing them rather than taking them captive. Finally, though there is evidence that the Cossacks did liberate slaves in the Black Sea, so far Ottoman evidence of their taking Turkish and Tatar captives outnumbered evidence of the same origin of their liberating their own kind, whereas the sources stemming from the other side of the frontier, that is, from the Slavic suggest the opposite trend.\textsuperscript{125} Which is closer to the true situation remains to be established.

Coastal towns and villages, being unprotected by formidable walls, were the settlements most vulnerable in the face of the Cossacks. To get a sense of the scale of the devastation of all types of Black Sea settlements, one needs only to follow the descriptions of Evliya Çelebi which indicate that many of the ports and coastal settlements visited by him suffered at the hands of the Cossacks, some repeatedly.\textsuperscript{126} One might expect that the 17th-century Cossack onslaught would have brought about a change in Black Sea settlement patterns. Indeed there is some evidence of relocation of settlements away from the shore. Thus, in his description of Kovarna,\textsuperscript{127} Evliya states that at the edge of the shore are some wheat granaries (\textit{bugday mahzenleri}), a landing stage (\textit{iskele}), fresh-water wells, and plundered possessions, and delivered great destruction to the mine itself, twice even managing to set it on fire. MD 88, no. 346.

\textsuperscript{120} - Dispatch of 12 July 1622, \textit{Historiae Russicae}, cit., p. 420.

\textsuperscript{121} - Trabzon \textit{siell} 1829, fol. 10r.

\textsuperscript{122} - Of course, while slavery was usually a regrettable condition, in Muslim societies it was regulated by law and custom, and the fate of a slave was not always that of abject misery and manumission was not uncommon. See Inalcik, “Servile labor,” cit., p. 98. Remarkably, very little evidence of Cossacks freeing slaves of the Ottomans has been encountered, though perhaps not enough material has been canvassed. However, there is a remarkable \textit{nihâime} document from 1637 stating that every year the Cossacks arrive at a mine in the area of the port of Bender Teleghi (Eregli, on the western Anatolian coast) in order to liberate the four to five hundred Cossack slaves who were toiling there. In the process of freeing their brethren, the Cossacks took Muslims captives (\textit{esir}), plundered possessions, and delivered great destruction to the mine itself, twice even managing to set it on fire.

\textsuperscript{123} - Aside from Beauplan’s above reference to ransom, the chronicle of Hasanbegzade relates how in 1629 the Cossacks took Muslim captives who had to be ransomed for a heavy price, Hasanbegzade, \textit{Târîkh-i al-i 'Osman}, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, H.O. 75, fol. 122r. Those relatively few captives taken for military purposes, i.e., to gain intelligence about the enemy (so-called “tongues”, \textit{jazık} in East Slavic languages, \textit{dil} in Turkish), are not considered here. This was a practice common in all lands and on all sides.
«and nothing else; because of the fear of the Rus (Urus) all of their build­ings (limarct) are on the top of a mountain».128

It has been suggested that typically pirates could not venture far inland from their ships.129 However, as far as the Cossacks were concerned, there is ample evidence that they did proceed inland, leaving their boats behind under guard or, if there was even a small river, going up it in their chaikas, taking advantage of the craft’s shallow draught. Beauplan mentions that the Cossacks would sometimes venture as far as a “league” inland (1 French league = 4.445 km).130 Even deeper penetrations inland could occur. Portelli d'Ascoli makes a startling claim, informing that Kerpe which is east of Sile and Agva, and is about 15 km upstream being coastal, and suggests the shock «terra»).13

However, as this point the author of the account A town and fortress about 80 km south of Ordu as the crow flies.


Even deeper penetrations inland could occur. Portelli d’Ascoli makes a startling claim, informing that «sometimes they go by day and by night so as to pillage some rich place inland (dentro terra)».131 This has already been seen in the Greek monk Metrophanes’ account of raiding near Misivri («[they] went to a settlement…at a distance of one day’s journey»). In July 1622; de Cézy reported that the Cossacks came in 30 boats within 15 leagues (67 km) of the capital and took an Anatolian town called Caudria five leagues (22 km) inland from the Black Sea.132 This was probably today’s Kandira.133 Two months later, Muscovite envoy Kondyrev and T. Bormosov, going the last leg of their journey to Istanbul by land because a storm had wrecked their ship, happened to be passing through these same parts and found a scene of terror and devastation. They described the villages around Kandira (which they call Kandra) and along the inland road to the Bosporus as being deserted, with their inhabitants hiding in the forests for fear of the Cossacks.134 In fact, when the party of Kondyrev and Bormosov first came ashore at a bay (liman) near Kandira they found ten ships that had been waiting out a storm. When the crews of these ships sighted the party they mistook it for marauding Cossacks and fled their ships to nearby villages and hamlets, which caused another local panic. According to the envoys, Kandira itself, which had had about 500 households, was completely burned out. The local inhabitants eventually informed the envoys that the neighboring villages had also suffered the same fate that summer.135

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129 – Faroqhi, Towns and Townsmen, cit., p. 99.
130 – Beauplan, Description of Ukraine, cit., p. 67.
132 – Dispatch of 12 July 1622, Historiae Russiae, cit., p. 420. This is the same raid as the one mentioned above in which captives were taken away in captured karar mursels.
133 – Inland from Kerpe which is east of Şile and Ağa, and is about 15 km upstream by the Baba Deresi.
134 – Their road took them from Kandura to Beykoz on the Bosporus, almost midway between the Black Sea and Istanbul.
135 – Историческое описание, cit., p. 170-171.

In 1640, an account by a member of an ambassadorial mission of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the Porte, while en route to Istanbul by land, when passing Pravadi,136 describes its castle as being situated «on a cliff and [partly] made of the cliffs» and being «shamefully» neglected and ruined. However, as this point the author of the account muses that after all, «the Zaporozhian Cossacks, by passing the castle, often made incursions into the town by descending on ropes off the cliff [directly] into the town».137 An example of remarkable capability to penetrate inland, at least in the opinion of the Ottomans, is documented in a ferma from September 1624 registered in the Üsküdar kadi sicles: As the Cossack bandits have in recent times have been very active on the Black Sea and brought great damage and harm to the Anatolian coast, there is a good chance that they would go ashore and attack the town of İzba (kasaba-i Iznikmid), almost 80 km south of the Black Sea coast at Şile as the crow flies. The sancakbeği of Kocaeli is warned and that he is responsible for organizing the patrolling and defense of the area.138 Evliya Çelebi’s description of Koyulhisar in the north-central Anatolian sancak of Şebinkarahisar, gives an extreme example of the vulnerability of areas that in no way qualify as being coastal, and suggests the shock and horror that a local population and its authorities must have undergone. In connection with Koyulhisar,139 he mentions the Black Sea settlement of Pençhenbe (Pençhenbi) Bazan140 that he says, can be reached from Koyulhisar on foot in a day’s journey. This prompts him to relate that once in the time of Sultan Ahmed I (1603–1618) the Dnieper Cossacks (ÖZ kazagi, i.e., the Zaporozhian Cossacks) came out of the sea [at Pençhenbi Bazan] and passing over the mountains, raided and plundered the suburbs of this fortress and then fled.141 With their capability of going inland either with or without their vessels, the Cossacks invite comparisons with the Vikings who would also venture inland, sometimes quite far, whether on foot or, like the Cossacks, taking advantage of the shallow draught of their ships, going up-river (in fact Cossack chaikas and Viking ships were approximately the same size and had some similar design features, such as the lack of a deep keel).

136 – Today Provadiia, about 60 km inland from Varna and about 75 km by way of several rivers.
137 – The diary of Zbigniew Lubieniecki in Wałaszek, Adam (ed.), Trzy relacje z polskich podróży na wschód muzułman'ski w pierwszej połowie XVII wieka [Three relations from Polish journeys to the Muslim East], Cracow, 1980, p. 110.
139 – A town and fortress about 80 km south of Ordu as the crow flies.
140 – Probably today’s Persêmbe, on the Anatolian coast just northeast of Ordu.
Inland penetrations notwithstanding, most vulnerable to Cossack raids were those who lived along major waterways, meaning not only on the Black Sea coast, but also along the major rivers and channels connected to it. Earlier mention was made of the famous Cossack raids into the Bosporus of 1624, \(^{142}\) when Yeniköy and other suburbs of Istanbul (in the various sources also named are Saryyer, Tarabya, Istinye, and Büyükdere) were, judging by most reports, severely damaged, \(^{143}\) bringing considerable terror to the population of the capital itself. \(^{144}\) In fact, there were also incursions into the Bosporus in 1615, 1617, 1621, and 1627, though these are not as well-documented as the ones of 1624. \(^{145}\) By the last decade of the 16th century, the delta and lowest reaches of the Danube, at times even as far upstream as Harsova and perhaps even Silistre (Silistra) and beyond, had become unsafe because of Cossack penetration and even "infestation" of the river. For example, the key lower Danubian port towns of Kili, Işımat'ıl (Isma'il), İbra'ıl (Braiha), Isakçı (Isacchi) and Tulça (Tulcea) were all targeted by the Cossacks. By the 1590s, villages in this area were described as being destroyed and abandoned, while traders were said to be unable to navigate or even cross the river. \(^{146}\) As late as the first decades of the 17th century it was necessary to mobilize local forces and even send in the ships of the imperial fleet to protect this important supply route for military provisions to the Hungarian front, and for grain, meat, and fish bound for Istanbul. \(^{147}\) There is also evidence that the Cossacks were able to set up, even for extended periods of time, something akin to forward bases in the large delta of the Danube, lying in wait in the reedbeds so as to ambush Ottoman shipping. Despite the fearsome reputation of the Cossacks, at times they and the local population found common cause. In 1618, an order had to be sent to officials in the lower Danube drawing attention to the fact that the Cossacks had entrenched, or fortified (tahassum) themselves in reedbeds and entered into cooperation with local re'ya people who kept illegal fishing weirs (dalyan) which provided sustenance for the Cossacks; moreover, these locals acted as guides (kilagus) in the delta's complicated maze of channels. \(^{148}\)

The sicils also provide an unprecedented glimpse of complications that the Cossack raids brought to various business undertakings and personal transactions that compelled affected parties to go to court. In 1624, two Greek cauldron-makers (kazganci) were contracted by a certain Süleyman Çelebi to repair the ruined cauldron of the Old Bathhouse (Köhne Hamam) of the Sultan Mehmed viif in Trabzon. They were supplied with necessary copper for the repair and were paid 3,000 akças ahead of time for at least part of the labor. In the meantime, the Cossacks came and, in the words of the two cauldron-makers, «plundered near and far» taking also the cauldron, which the two Greeks claimed to have repaired. In their testimony, they insisted that they tried several times to deliver the repaired cauldron, but that Suleyman Çelebi kept procrastinating, as he was not yet ready to reinstall the hamam's heat source. Süleyman Çelebi, for his part, claimed that the cauldron-makers had not done the work and therefore they were liable for the loss. After an investigation, the court decided that the two Greeks were telling the truth and forbade the litigant from pursuing any further claims against them. \(^{149}\)

Other cases involved disputes over personal belongings lost to or immoveable property destroyed by the Cossacks. Typically one party had lent to or deposited with another party something of value. After the Cossacks seized or ruined the given item(s), the court was asked to decide whether or not the party holding the goods at the time was to be held liable for the loss. Thus, in 1626 in a village near Akça Abad, after the Cossacks looted unspecified goods (eyva) belonging to two zimmis, \(^{150}\)

\(^{142}\) - "Raids" rather than "raid" because in this year there were actually three separate Cossack operations in the Bosporus. For an analysis of the Cossack activity in the Bosporus in 1624 based on various sources, both Ottoman and non-Ottoman, see Ostapchuk, "Ottoman Black Sea frontier", cit., p. 78-83; see also Ostapchuk and Hulenko, "Karić Çelebi", cit., p. 370-374, 420-421.

\(^{143}\) - "Sacked and burned all the houses of pleasure [i.e., yahra] on both sides of the river as far as the castles (Rumeli Hisari and Anadolu Hisari)», dispatch of 20 July 1624, Negotiations of Roe, cit., p. 257.

\(^{144}\) - Again Röe: «never was seen a greater fear and confusion», ibid. Cf. «Les Kosqaques... saccager un gros bourg Nocoris qui touche aux tours de la Mer Noire a la veue du Serrail du G. Seig et plus proche d'Ici que plusieurs maisons de plaisir... Et apres avoir demeure plus de six heures en terre brulant et ravageant quantité de belles maisons sur le bord du Canal...», De Cléy, dispatch of 21 July 1624, Historiae Russiae, cit., p. 426-427. See also Evliya Çelebi, Seyahatname, I, Istanbul, 1314/1896-1897, p. 458, 459, 460-461.

\(^{145}\) - The subject of Cossack activity in the Bosporus needs to be studied and clarified, as some of the incursions are poorly attested and their effect has been exaggerated by Slavic historians of the Cossacks. Thus, it is not uncommon for the literature to accept without question that on more than one occasion, the Cossacks attacked and even sacked Istanbul itself, which was hardly the case. Again the account and chronology of Cossack raids by Tushin is overly inclusive in its choice of data, i.e., practically any Cossack raid mentioned in every possible source is included without an analysis of the veracity of the given mention (e.g., its origin, authority, distance from the event, etc.). Such a maximalist presentation of the data may tend to exaggerate the frequency of Cossack raids, Tushin, Русское мореплавание, cit., p. 108, 109, 111-113, 162-170.

\(^{146}\) - MD 69, no. 194; MD 70, nos. 207, 321, 323; MD 71, no. 171; MD 82, no. 63; Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Malayleden Müdavvefer Defterleri 9820, p. 186, 223.

\(^{147}\) - During the 1621 Hotin (Khotyn) campaign, the imperial fleet had to guard the pontoon bridge at Isakç on which Osman II's army crossed the Danube, and even had to fend off a Cossack attack on the bridge. See Ostapchuk, "Gazanime of İhalil Paş", cit., p. 505.

\(^{148}\) - MD, no. 63. See Berindei, "La Porte face aux Cosaques", cit., p. 286-287.

\(^{149}\) - Trabzon şer'iye sicili 1820, fol. 34v.

\(^{150}\) - Non-Muslim subjects; they were required to pay the ezye or Islamic poll tax.
which had been in safe deposit (emanet) in a chest (sandik) located in the house of a Muslim, a court action to confirm liability of the house owner was commenced,\(^\text{151}\) while in 1625, 90 dirhems of silver left with a jeweler, which fell into Cossack hands, became the subject of a similar suit.\(^\text{152}\) Another situation is documented in a 1627 sicil-entry that is a copy of a new patent (nizan) indicating the status and state-stipend of a prayer-reciter (du'a-ga) who had lost his old patent during a Cossack raid.\(^\text{153}\) Yet another sicil-entry, from 1628, registers the sale of a property that had been destroyed by the Cossacks with the provision that the purchaser brings no complaints of defects against the vendor.\(^\text{154}\) In an Usküdar sicil from 1622, there is record of an unidentified Christian community suing for the right to rebuild its church inside the Sile fortress that had been ruined during a Cossack raid and thereafter turned into a mescid.\(^\text{155}\)

Hitherto mention has been made of instances of the Cossacks harming Ottoman Christian subjects, most often their own co-religionist Orthodox Greeks and Bulgarians. Of course these facts are at odds with much of Ukrainian and Russian historiography, where Cossackdom has tended to be viewed as a sort of crusader phenomenon dedicated to the struggle against the unbeliever Turks and Tatars. The issue of the Cossacks and liberation of their countrymen enslaved by the Tatars and Ottomans has already been touched on. Moreover, in this historiographic tradition, a related aim of the Cossack naval raids was to avenge and even prevent the never-ending Tatar raids for slaves and go on the offensive against the Turks, who are viewed as the sponsors of the death and destruction brought to the East Slavic lands by the Tatars. There is little in the way of sources to provide a better notion of the “mental equipment” of the seagoing Cossacks and assess the nature of their religiosity. The evidence brought to bear here raises interesting questions on the degree of their religiosity, the nature of their religious consciousness, and their perceptions and attitudes towards the Greek, Bulgarian, Armenian, and other Christian inhabitants of the Ottoman Black Sea. Presently there are no direct sources that shed light on any possible Cossack cognizance of their harming their co-religionists in Ottoman lands (or for that matter, the degree to which they even recognized Ottoman subject Greeks and other Orthodox as co-religionists, and if they did, what possible justification for the violence was put forth). The Cossacks may have simply been indiscriminate and random in their choice of targets, given the fact that there was a great number of Christians in Trabzon and these latter could have been subjects to harm according to the law of averages.\(^\text{156}\)

As was often the case in other frontier contexts, perhaps here too religious lines were not so important to the Cossacks (it is known that at times they cooperated with Muslims, their "official" foes— for example, with the Tatars). The undeniable harm suffered by Christians may well indicate that the notion of religion among the Cossacks could be rudimentary and superficial, though this need not have been the case and care should be taken against swinging from one simplistic extreme to another. Aside from the argument that their Christian victims happened to be innocent bystanders, so to say, "in the line of fire", there could have been various justifications for such violence— be they genuine or hypocritical— for example, that the Christian subjects served the "pagan Turk", were his collaborators, and so forth.\(^\text{157}\) This aspect of the Cossack raids seems to defy simple explanation, for there is evidence that the Cossacks at times did "honor" lines of religious allegiance and did not raid Christian populations indiscriminately.\(^\text{158}\) For example, as mentioned above, on the Georgian and Caucasian coasts, the Cossacks were known to spare and even cooperate with local Christian populations; below are examples of Cossacks sparing the lives of Ottoman Christians, though there are no explicit and certain clues as to possible motivations. Moreover, from the sources brought to bear by Mykhailo Hrushevsky, it is clear that the ideal of the Cossacks as fighters for the faith, whether or not it was shared by a significant number of them, was already current in the first quarter of the

\(^{151}\) Trabzon şer'ıye sicilli 1823, fol. 6r.

\(^{152}\) Trabzon şer'ıye sicilli 1820, fols. 41r, 42v.

\(^{153}\) Trabzon şer'ıye sicilli 1825, fol. 12v.

\(^{154}\) Trabzon şer'ıye sicilli 1825, fol. 25r.

\(^{155}\) İstanbul Muftuluğu, Usküdar mahkemesi 6/138, fol. 134v.
17th century, and was by no means an invention of romantic 19th-century historians.\textsuperscript{159}

It should be kept in mind that the Cossacks were not a monolithic mass, but a very heterogeneous group made up of not only former peasants and burghers, but also nobles, gentry, even clerics, whose religiosity or morality need not have been uniform. Moreover, Cossackdom, like any social phenomenon, was constantly evolving and it was precisely during the heyday of the naval raids, in the 1610s and 1620s, that the Ukrainian Cossacks and the Ruthenian Orthodox Church began to support each other; by 1621, when Hetman Petro Sahaidachny enrolled the entire Zaporozhian Host into the Kievan Confraternity, the Cossack and Ruthenian Orthodox Church movements merged to form a united front against the anti-Orthodox policies of the Commonwealth. Hrushevsky\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{k}}}}} did not seek to conceal the role of booty as a motivation for Cossack military operations. He even pointed out that among the Cossacks there were those who disguised their yearning for plunder behind religious motives and would have few qualms about harming Orthodox Slavs no less than Muslim Turks if a given situation required this.\textsuperscript{160} However aside from exhibiting no awareness that the Cossacks were harming Christians in the Ottoman empire,\textsuperscript{161} Hrushevsky\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{k}}}}} insisted that Cossack brigands so evocatively depicted by him as “steppe wolves“ (see n. 160) were a minority of the Ukrainian Cossacks of the time.\textsuperscript{162} The picture presented here may require a reassessment of the nature of pre-Khmelnytskyi era Ukrainian Cossackdom, allowing for a greater role for predatory motivations.

\textsuperscript{159} – Thus, a 1621 memorandum by Ruthenian Orthodox bishops sent to the Polish Crown portrays the Cossacks as Christendom’s greatest warriors against the infidels: “It is certain that no one in the world, except God, renders as much benefit to enslaved humanity as do the Greeks with their ransoms, the Spanish king with his strong fleet, and the Zaporozhian Host with its courage and victories." Hrushevsky, Cossack Age, cit., p. 305-306.

\textsuperscript{160} – Yet we know of the Cossacks’ inclination to cloak their border hunt for booty in the idealistic garb of a struggle ‘against the enemies of the Holy Cross.’ Thus, we can understand that even a wild freebooter, who, when the need arose, would be equally unsparing of his coreligionist, an Orthodox Muscovite or a Belarusian, as of a Muslim, found it pleasant to sense a higher mission in Cossack life, to have some ideological framework for his rampages in the steppe borderland. The idea of defending the religious interests of their people ... could not have failed to strike a responsive chord in the souls even of those steppe wolves, Hrushevsky, Cossack Age, cit., p. 304.

\textsuperscript{161} – Far as is known, although bits of the evidence pointing to the fact that Christians were harmed by the Cossacks have been published earlier (e.g. the testimony of Metrophanes, see n. 71), here for the first time incontrovertible direct evidence of non-Muslim inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire being harmed by the Cossacks is presented.

\textsuperscript{162} – Hrushevsky, Cossack Age, cit., p. 305.

\textsuperscript{163} – Beauplan, Description of Ukraine, cit., p. 68.

\textsuperscript{164} – Eszer, “Beschreibung des Schwarzen Meeres”, cit., p. 204; Berthier-Delagard, “Описание Черного моря”, cit., p. 98.

\textsuperscript{165} – Katib Çelebi, Tuhfet, cit., p. 108; facsimile, translation, and commentary in Ostapchuk and Halenko, “Крити і Фензлі,” cit., p. 357 ff., 422-424. Is this an indication of the utility of what seems like wanton cruelty and brutality, i.e., such behavior gave the perpetrators a fearsome reputation which led to less resistance on the part of the target populations and allowed for more efficient extraction of booty?

\textsuperscript{166} – Katib Çelebi, Tuhfet, cit., p. 108, 109; see Ostapchuk and Halenko, “Крити і Фензлі,” cit., p. 357 ff., 365 ff., 421-424; Roe, dispatch of 3 August 1624, Negotiations of Roe, cit., p. 265; De Cézy, dispatch of 12 July 1622, Historia Russica, cit., p. 420. For an instance of several empty ships, abandoned or captured, that were later
Crown hetman, in a letter to the king dated 20 February 1617, referring to the new situation during the previous two years on the southern shore of the Black Sea, provides us with vivid testimony of the great fear that the new Cossack presence had brought to the Anatolian coast and how it affected Ottoman shipping:

... for the Cossacks have snatched away from them the possession and navigation of the Black Sea which the Turks [have had] in peace from [olden times], and have [ruined] their main ports and until now no one has [effectively] resisted them [i.e., the Cossacks]. They have routed their sea hetman (who after the emperor...is [ranked] among the viziers [i.e., the kapudan paşalar]...and all the ports are in great fear and besieged [by terror]...[a certain contact (name unclear)] saw and heard plenty of this. He quickly [related to] me...[lacuna in text] [how] when the Cossacks came to Trabzon, thereafter [some Turkish ships] made their way from Trabzon to Constantinople sneaking along from port to port and stopping and taking their goods...and their things off the ships, and having found out that there were no Cossacks they again loaded their ships, while in each port such a great fear arose among the inhabitants, both on the European and Asian shores, that they petitioned the sultan (Cesare): if he does not protect them then they will pay tribute to the Cossack.

To be sure, shipping merchants could no longer act as freely as they must have in the pre-Cossack era of the "Ottoman lake," and those who did venture to sea risked losing much. Even the Bosporus, which, being next to the capital must have been as secure a waterway as there could be, was no longer safe. Although Cossack operations in the Bosporus in 1624 were apparently not the first incursions into the Straits, it seems that the very rich Greek merchant ships based there and properties on its shores, particularly in Yeniköy (which may have been what drew the Cossacks so relatively deeply into the Bosporus), were caught completely off guard, even though Cossack activity in the Black Sea as at one of its all-time peaks. The near-contemporary Ottoman Armenian Eremya Kōmirciyan (1637–1695) wrote the following: «[The Cossacks] raided the Turkish houses and robbed the rich Rum captains (re'is). They opened the coffers (sandik) of these [rich] people as if they were their old acquaintances and they took what was inside and fled as if they had themselves put it there». Concerning this same event, Gédoyn le Turc, the French consul in Aleppo, wrote from the island of Chios having just left Istanbul that after the Cossacks «sacked, pillaged, and burned everything, killing indiscriminately the Greeks like the Turks, they made off with more than a million gold [pieces]».

Again it is the kadi silihan that provide a closer view of situations that arose when Ottoman merchant ships, owned or captained by both Muslims and non-Muslims, were encountered by the Cossacks at sea. None of the cases here involved fatalities, though lack of fatalities is not necessarily a significant pattern as matters involving fatalities might simply not have found their way into the court books for lack of a surviving litigant or defendant. In 1619, a zimmî inhabitant of Kefé, probably a Greek, while carrying moruna (white sturgeon) in his sayka from Taman, was intercepted by Cossacks just as he was nearing the Anatolian coast, near Yaraboli (?). For some reason, while the Cossacks took his ships, they only took half of his money and fish, leaving the other half of his fish, three anchors, three gold pieces (altın), and other unspecified items in his sayka that they altogether jettisoned out to sea (deryaya saliverib). How Qostantin survived and made it to shore is not revealed, but when he did, he learned that his boat and remaining cargo had fallen into the hands of the state (miri). The victim entered into litigation with a tax-farm official (naziş) to get his belongings back. Apparently the problem of owners or captains losing their ships as a result of Cossack operations was not recovered by state authorities, see Trabzon şer'iye sicili 1825, fol. 55r. It should be noted that for certain crew members, being taken captive may have entailed temporarily piloting ormanning the oars of their ship at the behest of their captors until it would be abandoned or scuttled. Possible motives for commandeering a ship include to make it back across the sea with booty and captives, or to use the ship as a sanctuary piloting or manning the oars of their ship at the behest of their captors until it was noted that for certain crew members, being taken captive may have entailed temporarily piloting or manning the oars of their ship at the behest of their captors until it would be abandoned or scuttled. Possible motives for commandeering a ship include to make it back across the sea with booty and captives, or to use the ship as a sanctuary piloting or manning the oars of their ship at the behest of their captors until it was not revealed, but when he did, he learned that his boat and remaining cargo had fallen into the hands of the state (miri). The victim entered into litigation with a tax-farm official (naziş) to get his belongings back. Apparently the problem of owners or captains losing their ships as a result of Cossack operations was not

169 – Though such records in the silihan are not inconceivable, e.g., litigation by an inheritor for property of the deceased, or between surviving inheritors over shares.
170 – Kostantin Todoris in the Ottoman text.
171 – East of the Crimea, across the Strait of Kerch.
172 – Perhaps Yarbolı (map of J. J. Hellert, "Arménie et Kurdistan", 1838) which is just west of Büyük Liman, or Yuvaboli which is a few kilometers further west (according to the map of Turkey issued by the Harita Genel Müdürlüğü, 1936); perhaps these were the same places. In any event, apparently a coastal town west of Trabzon and Akça Abad, and for sure not Tirebolı/Dreboli (Tripoli; located much further west and just east of Giresun), as in both occurrences (see n. 179) it clearly written with an initial ye rather than te.
173 – Trabzon şer'iye sicili 1821, fol. 3v.
uncommon, as several additional similar cases can be found in the Trabzon sicili; here too the Cossacks had jettisoned vessels along with excess cargo which fell into state hands, forcing the captain or owner(s) to file a claim through the kadi court.178

Another group of cases involved suits between partners operating a ship. In the aftermath of an encounter with the Cossacks, whether on the high sea or in port, problems would emerge between the partners over recouping resulting losses and expenses. In a case from 1626, a zimmi captain (reis) of a private ship, whose name could not be deciphered and consequently whose ethnicity has not been determined, came to the kadi court to level a complaint against a Muslim captain with whom he had been operating a ship in partnership. While they were in the harbor of Yaraboli, the Cossacks intercepted them and were ready to destroy their ship. But the zimmi managed to save himself, his partner, and the ship by offering to pay 30 gold coins (sikke-i altun, sikke-i hasene) immediately and arranging for an additional 30 in short time. That more money could be obtained, on land or from a nearby ship, meant that the Cossacks must have allowed someone to leave the ship and fetch the extra money. When 60 gold coins were handed over to the Cossacks, they freed these future litigants along with their ship. But when the zimmi captain asked the Muslim captain to reimburse him for the 30 gold coins paid for him, the latter began to procrastinate. After obtaining the impartial testimony of a third party, the court ordered the Muslim reis to pay his share.179 Evidently such encounters with the Cossacks did not necessarily mean loss of life (contrary to Beauplan’s above-cited statement that captured ships would be scuttled with their crew) or even of all property at hand, be it a vessel or its cargo, as the Cossacks would take what they needed or wanted, often stripping a ship of useful sailing equipment such as sails and anchors,180 as well as foodstuffs. The sparing of lives and even property is a feature of the Cossack raids which was not previously evident.

The greatly altered conditions in the “Cossack-infested” former “Ottoman lake” must have meant dire consequences for commercial traffic, the extent of which can only be speculated upon at present. In the late 15th and 16th centuries, before the Cossacks entered the scene, with the Black Sea apparently spared of local piracy, there must have been little risk in going out to sea with goods beyond inclement or unpredictable sailing conditions. As the Cossacks appeared, first on the northern Black Sea coast in the mid-16th century, then on the coast of Rumeli in the 1590s, and eventually all shores by the middle of the 1610s, merchants would have had to react to take this new factor into account.

178 – Trabzon şehiye sicili 1822, fols. 27r, 44r-44v; 1825, fol. 55r.
179 – Trabzon şehiye sicili 1823, fol. 10r. Cf. Trabzon şehiye sicili 1825, fol. 41r.
180 – Trabzon şehiye sicili 1821, fol. 3v; 1822, fol. 27r.
181 – Trabzon şehiye sicili 1822, fol. 27r.

The greatly heightened risk must have led to a reduction in traffic and higher shipping costs. Putting to sea now meant preparing for and dealing with a factor completely alien to the old Ottoman Black Sea. Those who did choose to venture into the Black Sea must have taken measures to lessen the risk.182 Perhaps they relied on a kind of “early warning system” that the sources mention. For example, Beauplan informs that, when it is learned that the Cossacks entered the Black Sea «...the alarm is then sounded throughout the whole country, even as far as Constantinople. The Great Lord (the sultan) sends messengers all along the coasts of Anatolia, Bulgaria, and Rumeli, warning that the Cossacks have put to sea, so that everyone may be on his guard.»183 There may have been other adjustments to the altered reality of the sea which can only be speculated upon. Perhaps mariners counted on the chance that the Cossacks might miss them on the open expanse of the sea. In connection with such a possibility, there are all sorts of potential factors and variables. Although not enough is known about precise sea lanes in the Black Sea, as there were specific itineraries, such as Kerpe-Kefe, İnebolu-Kefe, Sinop-Kefe, and Trabzon-Kefe,184 did these itineraries have their specific, shortest or otherwise advantageous sea-lanes (e.g., determined by prevailing winds or currents)? Did the Cossacks know these lanes and lurk along them?185

182 – A puzzling aspect is the lack of evidence of Ottoman naval escort for merchant ships. Whether evidence on this remains to be discovered, or convoys were present but were simply too self-evident to be mentioned in the sources, or for some reason did not accompany merchant shipping, cannot be determined at present. Cf. the not uncommon references to escorts for transport ships in the eastern Mediterranean, e.g., an order in 1565 that sufficient galleys escort a supply ship from Egypt to Rhodes: «...ezhab gemisine kifayet nikdarı kadırı koşub...» MD 6, no. 1331 (for publication see n. 11).

183 – Beauplan, Description of Ukraine, cit., p. 67.
184 – E.g., see İnalcık, Caffa Customs Register, cit., p. 114-116.
185 – There is some evidence that the Cossacks were familiar with navigation techniques based on the stars and other celestial bodies, and even using maps, see Beauplan’s mention that the Zaporozhians at sea carried quadrants (though perhaps solar clocks as quadrant), Beauplan, Description d’Ukraine, cit., p. 57. The English translation, giving “compass” with no commentary, is probably incorrect, Beauplan, Description of Ukraine, cit., p. 66. It has been argued rather convincingly that there is substantial direct evidence that the Cossacks oriented themselves according to the stars when traveling on land and circumstantial evidence that they used quadrants, clocks, and maps when at sea, and that it may have been nearly impossible for them to sail in the Black Sea by dead-reckoning, see Korolev, V.N., “Технология донского язичного мореплавания на Азовском и Черном морях в XVII в. (мореходные инструменты и карты)”, [The technology of Don Cossack seafaring in the Azov and Black Seas in the 17th century (seafaring instruments and maps)], in: Торговля и мореплавание в восточной части Черного моря в древности и в средние века [Trade and Seafaring in the Black Sea Basin in Antiquity and the Middle Ages], Rostov-na-Donu, 1988, p. 107-133.
Would merchants now avoid these and sail in more roundabout and less predictable routes? Another point worth noticing is that the relevant _kadi_ court cases give the impression that ships or boats often sailed alone. Perhaps a solitary vessel had more of a chance of slipping past the Cossacks? Could the desire to avoid being spotted by the Cossacks partially explain the apparent popularity of smaller ships or boats, such as the _sayka_?186

The sailing by cabotage with ships being unloaded at each port until it was considered safe to proceed as described by Zółkiewski above must have been extremely time-consuming and costly. As it would seem to have been unworkable, the question arises whether such careful cabotage really was practiced beyond the initial period of shock when the Cossacks first developed the capability to appear on the opposite shore of the Black Sea, and if it was, was it a norm? Certainly Zółkiewski’s stark scenario suggests that commercial sailing became a next to impossible undertaking. Pertinent here is the above-cited passage from the 1620 Trabzon _steti_—register, «because of the fear of the Rus bandits, ships have stopped coming from the direction of the sea»187 which, though probably an overstatement, points to substantially if not radically altered conditions in the region. As there is little available data from which statistics can be derived (for example, because of the paucity of surviving 17th-century Ottoman customs registers), reliable evidence of a decline, not to mention the degree of a decline, in the level of Ottoman commercial shipping in the Black Sea during the Cossack heyday will be hard to come by, though it is too early to pronounce this problem as insolvable without further probing the sources and quest for new approaches. In any event, it is difficult to imagine that the level of sea traffic remained anywhere close to what it had been in the past. One should look for a growth in traffic along the Rumelian “right wing” (sag kol) land route from Istanbul to Moldavia, the Commonwealth, as well as to Ottoman territories on the northern rim of the Black Sea – Akkerman, Özi, and even beyond, to the Crimea and Muscovy.188 If it turns out that because of Cossack expeditions during the late 16th and first half of the 17th centuries, this slower but more secure land route came to be preferred over the faster, more efficient, that is, at least formerly, cheaper sea route,189 would mean that a major transformation in Black Sea realities had taken place.189

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186 – One should also be aware that vessels sailing in smaller groups or solo and/or being smaller in size could have been dictated by the capacity of given markets, or the means of merchants.

187 – See n. 93.

188 – This road went via Edirne, crossing the Danube at Isakci, or if proceeding slightly to the east, in the passable western end of the delta, crossing an arm of the Danube first at Tuşca and then another one at Isma'il.

189 – This has been claimed but not demonstrated in Bennigsen, Alexandre and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay, “Les marchands de la cour ottomane et le commerce
In the first dream, Melek Ahmed Pasha "while squatting to relieve himself" is seen; Evliya and his companions were unable to sleep out of fear of Cossacks. His powerful patron, vizier Melek Ahmed Paşa, then governor of Özi, seems at times also haunted by the Cossacks. Thus, on at least two occasions he recounts to Evliya nightmares about the Cossacks.\footnote{Cevi, Seyahatname, V, Istanbul, 1315/1897-1898, p. 176. In other places the Cossacks would hide out in forests or scrub-growth (ormanklık), or inside reed-beds (ezlik) and accost Tatars on their way back to the Crimea; the Tatars too are described as being in great fear of the Cossacks, Evliya Çelebi, Seyahatname, V, cit., p. 186; Ielem, Seyahatname, VII, cit., p. 521.} During a bloody, week-long, Cossack siege of Özi by land and sea, a certain "Ali Celebi went up a minaret with Evliya to view the Cossacks down below. Upon beholding the unfolding battle he remarked as follows:

But these devils...are frisky fighters, the swine. They don’t care whether they live or die. They have absorbed thousands of cannonballs and have been decimated by 200 bombshells, but this hasn’t deterred them in the least. These devils have been battling continuously for nine hours. Don’t you see how they remove their dead, then freshen up and resume fighting? I’m really afraid of these infidels!\footnote{Dankoff, Intimate Life, cit., p. 215.}

The fearsome reputation of the Cossacks which could compel crews simply to jump ship and flee for shore upon sighting chaikas has been mentioned several times; again one is reminded of the perilous and frightful predicament of crews during night which was apparently a favorable time for the Cossacks to board and seize a ship. Foreign diplomats on more than one occasion witnessed great frights, even mass panics by the population of Istanbul and its suburbs. In March 1625, after the Bosphorus raids of the previous year, Thomas Roe reported that the news of Cossack presence in the Black Sea and rumor that their number exceeded 300 chaikas brought about the following scene: «All the inhabitants of the Bosphorus do daily retire to the [walled] city [of Istanbul]. The fear is general».\footnote{Dispatch of 22 March 1625, Negotiations of Roe, cit., p. 362-363. Cf. The Cossacks have entered the Black Sea and given many alarms to the city, dispatch of 30 May 1623, Negotiations of Roe, cit., p. 158.} Even in 1626, a year when the Zaporozhians must have been weakened following their setback in the great naval battle of Karaharman in July 1625, and their reversal in a confrontation with Polish Crown forces at Kurukove Lake in October 1625, the situation in the Ottoman capital was still very tense.\footnote{Perhaps this is because the Cossack losses at both Karaharman and Kurukove were not as great as claimed in the Ottoman and Polish sources respectively. On Karaharman and problems associated with this event see Ostapchuk, "Ottoman Black Sea frontiers," cit., p. 112-118, Ostapchuk and Halenko, "Криті Історії," p. 375-382, on Kurukove see Hrushevsky, Cossack Age, cit., p. 428-436.} In the following spring, Roe wrote that with a rumor of 700 Zaporozhian boats, now with Polish support, being ready to set out and attack near Istanbul,

all the villages on the Bosphorus, to the gates of Constantinople tremble, and the city is not without fear; softened by certain prophecies and astrologians, who foretell a great blow from a Northern people. Twenty galleys keep watch at the mouth of the channel (the Bosphorus): the captain bassa (grand admiral) with about 40 more will depart within 10 days, almost already conquered by his own and the common fears.\footnote{Roe’s reference to predictions and prophecies of a catastrophe at the hands of “a Northern people” circulating in Istanbul suggests an eerie and unsettling atmosphere similar to that evoked by Evliya Çelebi in his recollection of fears and anxieties bestirred by the Cossacks. The degree of}

According to de Césy, even a relatively small number of chaikas spotted at the entrance to the Bosphorus in 1621 caused a panic:

The fright is so great that it is not possible to express it. Sixteen boats of the Cossacks have these last days passed up to the column of Pompey near the entrance of the canal of the Black Sea [i.e., the Bosphorus] taken some kara mürel [cargo ships], burned and sacked some villages from which the sudden panic was such that many people from Pera and Kasum Pasha as far as the arsenal have begun to move their possessions to Constantinople.\footnote{197 - Dispatch of 19 May 1626, Negotiations of Roe, cit., p. 509.}

De Césy observed that even the rumor of four boats of the Cossacks in the Black Sea troubled them here [in Istanbul] more than would the plague in the Morea or in Barbary, so much do they fear this side [i.e., the Black Sea].\footnote{Roe wrote of the Cossacks as being a “most perilous of places”, Evliya and his companions were unable to sleep out of fear of Cossacks. His powerful patron, vizier Melek Ahmed Pasha, then governor of Özi, seems at times also haunted by the Cossacks. Thus, on at least two occasions he recounts to Evliya nightmares about the Cossacks. During a bloody, week-long, Cossack siege of Özi by land and sea, a certain 'Ali Celebi went up a minaret with Evliya to view the Cossacks down below. Upon beholding the unfolding battle he remarked as follows: But these devils...are frisky fighters, the swine. They don’t care whether they live or die. They have absorbed thousands of cannonballs and have been decimated by 200 bombshells, but this hasn’t deterred them in the least. These devils have been battling continuously for nine hours. Don’t you see how they remove their dead, then freshen up and resume fighting? I’m really afraid of these infidels! The fearsome reputation of the Cossacks which could compel crews simply to jump ship and flee for shore upon sighting chaikas has been mentioned several times; again one is reminded of the perilous and frightful predicament of crews during night which was apparently a favorable time for the Cossacks to board and seize a ship. Foreign diplomats on more than one occasion witnessed great frights, even mass panics by the population of Istanbul and its suburbs. In March 1625, after the Bosphorus raids of the previous year, Thomas Roe reported that the news of Cossack presence in the Black Sea and rumor that their number exceeded 300 chaikas brought about the following scene: «All the inhabitants of the Bosphorus do daily retire to the [walled] city [of Istanbul]. The fear is general». Even in 1626, a year when the Zaporozhians must have been weakened following their setback in the great naval battle of Karaharman in July 1625, and their reversal in a confrontation with Polish Crown forces at Kurukove Lake in October 1625, the situation in the Ottoman capital was still very tense. In the following spring, Roe wrote that with a rumor of 700 Zaporozhian boats, now with Polish support, being ready to set out and attack near Istanbul, all the villages on the Bosphorus, to the gates of Constantinople tremble, and the city is not without fear; softened by certain prophecies and astrologians, who foretell a great blow from a Northern people. Twenty galleys keep watch at the mouth of the channel (the Bosphorus): the captain bassa (grand admiral) with about 40 more will depart within 10 days, almost already conquered by his own and the common fears. According to de Césy, even a relatively small number of chaikas spotted at the entrance to the Bosphorus in 1621 caused a panic: The fright is so great that it is not possible to express it. Sixteen boats of the Cossacks have these last days passed up to the column of Pompey near the entrance of the canal of the Black Sea [i.e., the Bosphorus] taken some kara mürel [cargo ships], burned and sacked some villages from which the sudden panic was such that many people from Pera and Kasum Pasha as far as the arsenal have begun to move their possessions to Constantinople. De Césy observed that even the rumor of four boats of the Cossacks in the Black Sea troubled them here [in Istanbul] more than would the plague in the Morea or in Barbary, so much do they fear this side [i.e., the Black Sea]. Roe’s reference to predictions and prophecies of a catastrophe at the hands of “a Northern people” circulating in Istanbul suggests an eerie and unsettling atmosphere similar to that evoked by Evliya Çelebi in his recollection of fears and anxieties bestirred by the Cossacks. The degree of}
alarm that arose when there was word of activity by even small Cossack raiding parties is significant. In 1639, a year when the Cossack presence in the Black Sea was not particularly great, the vice admiral of the imperial fleet, Piyale Kethidja, in a report sent from Özi to the Porte, expressed in vivid and telling terms the great fear that spread along the shores of the sea when the Cossacks entered it once more that season: «The above-mentioned accursed ones set out again and a great fear of their inflicting harm and hurling flames of destruction to the shore settlements of the heartland became widespread».200 The depiction of the inhabited coast of the Black Sea as iç il yalıları, that is, “shores or shore settlements of the interior land (heartland)”, harks back to the notion of the “Ottoman lake,” the internal and safe preserve of the Porte. This passage gives the impression that even after several generations of perennial Cossack presence, the Black Sea was still considered an inner sanctum of the empire and their trespasses were abhorred as violations of it.

The psychological impact of the Cossack intrusions into the Ottoman Black Sea made its mark not only on civilian inhabitants and on officials and commanders who had to react and seek remedies to the threat, but also on those in the higher echelons of power including the sultan himself. It is probably telling that there are not infrequent references to the sultan’s reaction to news of Cossack depredations in the sea. When the shocking news of the sacking of Sinop in 1614 broke, the grand vizier, Nasuh Pasha was so afraid of the sultan’s reaction that when Ahmed I asked him if such information was true, he steadfastly denied it. When various messengers from the stricken areas with the tragic news and pleas for help (ferayd u figanlar) arrived in the capital, and the sultan realized that Nasuh Pasha was withholding the truth, he became incensed with him; some Ottoman chronicles regard this as the beginning of Ahmed’s extreme anger with Nasuh Paşa, which, as the chronicles agree, was a contributing cause of his execution a few months later.201 The wrath of the sultan was so great that it was noticed almost immediately in the Polish sources. In a letter to King Zygmunt III (1587-1632), Žófkiewski relates the following:

201 – İbrahim Peçevi, Tarih, II, Istanbul, 1283/1866-1867, p. 342; Katih Çelebi, Fezleke, I, cit., p. 358; Na’ima, Ravzati i-hüseyn, cit., p. 119. For a lengthy exposition of Nasuh Pasha’s over-ambition and other faults that led to his downfall (but no mention of the Sinop incident) see “The Fall of Nasau” and following sections in Richard Knolles, The generall historie of the Turkes, from the first beginning of that nation to the rising of the Ottoman familie, with all the notable expeditions of the Christian princes against them … With a new continuation, from yeare of Our Lord 1629 unto the yeare 1638 faithfully collected, [London], 1638, p. 1334-1337.

According to Richard Knolles’ history of the Ottoman empire sub anno 1620, when news of Cossack presence in the sea reached the sultan, the grand Signor took it in great scorn, that such a base and rude people should come and affront him so near his doors.202 On 1 May 1622, two-and-a-half weeks before Sultan Osman II was deposed and killed, de Césy reported that when word arrived in the capital that the Cossacks were close by in the Black Sea and had taken several ships, the young sultan went into such a rage that he threatened to decapitate the grand vizier and the main treasurer (defterdar) if within the next day they did not send galleys to the Black Sea.204 Although the grand vizier, Dilaver Paşa, and the defterdar, “Abdülbaki Paşa, were loyal to Osman,”205 his impetuous outbreak must have further discredited him in the eyes of the faction that was determined to overthrow him.

Roe suggests how disruptive Cossack activity in the Black Sea could be to the everyday workings of the state: when it was divulged that they had entered the Black Sea and took «prizes and assails[ed] a town… the council [i.e., the imperial divan] broke up in rage and haste to send out to prevent their further invasions».206 There were occasions in which the Cossacks penetrated the Bosporus close enough to the sultan that he could see, if not the chaikas themselves, the smoke rising above torched towns or villages, Žófkiewski recalls how, when 80 chaikas struck in the Bosporus in 1615, «close to Constantinople between Misewna and Archioka», the sultan, who happened to be nearby on a hunt, «could see the smoke from his pavilion (?)»,207 for the Cossacks had burned these two ports; having walked away very upset, the emperor dispatched the artil-
and practice in the reading of cursive chancery scripts. Although they contain many of the same formulae as do 'arz-type documents (petitions, reports), these documents are best classified as telhises. 213 In the top left corners of these documents are notations made by the sultan, so-called hatt-i hûmayûns written in the characteristic “awkward” hand of the sultan. 214 Some are carefully drawn out in an even simpler, almost “childish” nesîh than that of the main body of the given document. Others are in a very rough, unpracticed, and often hardly legible hand and frequently in unconventional or erroneous orthography, that was typical of Ottoman sultans. Among these it was possible to isolate 15 telhises concerning Cossack activity on the Black Sea and counter-measures taken against them. 215 Here they are of interest not so much for their interesting data on the naval expeditions of the Cossacks and their encounters with the Ottomans, but rather for the hints they provide on the sultan’s awareness and perception of the given phenomenon, and his interest and concern with it.

These documents deserve a separate, fuller treatment; here only some examples are drawn upon. A telhis, perhaps from the kapudan paşa, reports that villagers in the kazâ (district) of Amasra have made it known that nine Cossack chaikas have arrived nearby. Immediately ten galleys of the imperial fleet that were 150 miles (mil) away were sent out to find the Cossacks. It seems that these galleys were contacted by couriers (ulaks), for it is later said that ulaks have been dispatched along both the Anatolian and Rumelian coasts bearing orders that these chaikas be intercepted and not the slightest harm be allowed to occur anywhere. In response to this upbeat notification of early warning and rapid reaction, apparently before any destruction had been wrought, Sultan İbrahim...

208 – Pisma Żółkiewskiego, cit., p. 303. Although both of these settlements were apparently in the Bosporus, as they were, in the words of the Crown hetman, close to Istanbul, Missevna (Misevna) could not be identified satisfactorily. Archiolk may indeed be ancient Archeion which the Turks knew as Ortaköy, less than 5 km from the promontory of the Topkapı Palace (Sarayi Burnu), Gökbilgin, M. Tayyib, “Boğaziçi-Tarihte Boğazıçı”, in: İlâm Anıskılıpedisi, II, İstanbul, 1970, p. 671-692, esp. p. 673 (map), 675. I do not agree with the identification by the editors of the Hrushevsky’skyi translation of these two place names with Nesebur (Misivri) and Ankhialo (Ahyoh) on the Bulgarian coast. Hrushevsky, Cossack Age, cit., p. 276, n. 140. These could not have been considered “close to Constantinople” and, moreover, although I have no firm record of the whereabouts of Sultan Ahmed I in the summer of 1615, it is less than likely that he had hunting grounds so far from the capital.


211 – Topkapı Sarayi Arşivi, E.7002 and E.7022 (henceforth only E. [evrak]). Almost all of these documents are undated, but they are attributed to İbrahim’s reign in the fiches that accompany each document. Perhaps such an attribution was based on external evidence, such as what other materials these documents were originally stored with? The one dated document that I came across is from late 1651/early 1652, i.e., definitely from the reign this sultan (E.7022/654). An identification of the persons named in these documents can lead to a more definite dating, which is perhaps one of the bases of their attribution to İbrahim’s reign. In those documents that I was able to inspect, some of the persons mentioned in them, such as Piyale Kethûda and Vizier Ken’an Paşa, were still active in the first years of İbrahim’s reign.

212 – In the first half of İbrahim’s reign, when these documents were apparently written, the grand vizier was still Sultan Murad IV’s last grand vizier, Kemâncı Kara Mustafa Paşa, (1638-1644). Davişmend, Osmanlı kronolojisi, V, cit., p. 36.

213 – Summary of a report made especially for the sultan. Although most of these documents begin with ‘arz-i bende-i bi-kıdâr ol-dur ki, the (report of the worthless slave is as follows), occasionally the document refers to itself or others like it by the term telhis (E.7002/86, E.7022/641, 653). For a recent and quite comprehensive treatment of the telhis, see Fodor, Pál, “The grand vizierial telhis. A study in the Ottoman central administration,1566-1656”, in: Archivum Ottonamicum, XV (1997), p. 137-188.


215 – Given the still rudimentary nature of the Topkapı archive’s catalogue, it was not possible to determine how many of the documents in E.7002 and E.7022 are indeed telhises to İbrahim bearing his hatt-i hûmayûns. Judging by the sub-numeration of the single-sheet documents (verakas) under these two archival code numbers, they contain a possible total of 742 telhises with hatt-i hûmayûns (i.e., E.7002/1-86 and E.7022/1-656).
scrawled on the document a barely legible exhortation: «God is gracious. Their heads will be lowered. Attentiveness is necessary. Whatever is required we will do it.»

In a different communication, the archival fiche of which indicates that it was from the grand vizier, but which appears to be rather from the kapudan paşa, the situation augurs less well: a letter from the Kefe beglerbegi informed that 15 Don chaikas had set out and encountered in the Strait of Kerch a private merchant ship (rencber gemisi) which the Cossacks burned, thereupon proceeding to enter the wide sea. This telhis states that there is a possibility that they will bring further harm, and requests permission to do all that is necessary to prevent this, including barring warships from returning from the Black Sea and sending them back into the sea the moment information on the whereabouts of the Cossacks emerges. Now in a tone more stern, Ibrahim noted at the top of the document: «May they set out upon the Muscovites (?)». May they defend as is proper and necessary. May they give (?) to the kapudan [paşa that which he needs]. May preparations be carried out. May there be no negligences.»

A third telhis, clearly from someone in Istanbul, probably the grand vizier, aside from problems in the Black Sea, reports on matters connected with a heat wave and the situation on the Hungarian frontier. As to the Black Sea, the document summarizes a report from the region with better news than the previous telhis. Twelve chaikas raided some villages near Baba Dağı (Babadag), just south of the mouth of the Danube, but unspecified defensive forces surprised and overwhelmed the Cossacks, killing some, capturing others, and even managing to wound and take alive some of their main leaders (belli başlı hatmanlar). The document goes on to discuss what must have been a matter of importance to the given mind-set. It explains why the severed heads of the dead Cossacks have not yet been sent to the center – the hatmans were still too injured to travel (it is understood that in interests of economy it was preferred to bring the heads and captives together on one ship). An impression is given that the Cossack heads were no less important as trophies than the Cossack heads was significant enough to warrant the direct attention and involvement of the sultan. At the town of Rize the beglerbegi of Trabzon held nine Cossacks that he had captured and the severed heads of two others. The report states that the captured Cossacks and two heads were dispatched to the imperial divan and at the end of it a request is made for special permission to transfer thereafter the live Cossacks to the jurisdiction of the imperial naval arsenal in Istanbul. The sultan’s answer is detailed and to the point (even though, without knowing the actual context, its exact indications are not so obvious): «Bring the nine persons to the garden (of the palace, arsenal?), and with all speed do with the two heads as the kethiida yer» says. And as to other affairs, be attentive and do not be negligent.»

In addition to captured Cossacks, Roe noticed the importance assigned to the procedure of delivery of severed heads directly to the sultan for his close inspection, and recognized it as practically a ritual. Though Roe makes it clear that this presentation of the heads was strange to him, relating an actual scene in which severed heads were brought in for personal examination by the short-reigned Sultan Mustafa I (1617-1618, 1622-1623), whose stability, indeed mental health, were open to question, the ambassador considers his personal examination of them as an encouraging sign that the troubled sultan was not too withdrawn from affairs at hand, had a “normal” interest in the world around him, including the regular business of statecraft: «At the return of the galleys from the Black Sea, who brought some Cossack prisoners alive, and some heads of the dead, he would see them all brought before him, a custom unusual. This and some answers he hath given, makes us judge him active». In other words, the inspection of dead heads was all part of a day’s work for a right-minded sovereign. Decapitation was considered a demeaning and humiliating mode of execution and display of heads was especially applied to rebels and those guilty of perfidy before...

216 - «Hüda kerimidir onlardan baş aşağı olurlar takayyid lazımdır ne ıktita ederse ede­lım». E.7022/640. I thank Eleazar Birnbaum for his assistance in reading this hatt-i hümâyun.

217 - «Moskovlar (?) varsular bir hoşça gerekçe gibi gözdesünler kapudana versünler (?) tedarik edersiniz ihmal olmasın». E.7022/636.

218 - Normally in the Cossack context, the hatman was the head of the Zaporozhian Host, but hatman in the Ottoman text here obviously designates lesser officers.

219 - In a section entitled “Discourse of the Changes of the Emperor Mustafa... September and October 1623”, in: Negotiations of Roe, cit., p. 179.
the sultan and the state. However, while the procedure of displaying heads, for example, in front of the first or second gates of the palace has been treated, that of delivering heads to the sultan for his inspection seems not to have attracted specific attention in the literature. Given these examples and others, there is no doubt that such a regular procedure existed.

Among these undated telhises sent to Sultan Ibrahim, are five devoted to an operation to track and hunt down six Cossack chaikas active between Ahtopol (Ahtopolı) and Varna. Report by report, the grand vizier (in all likelihood) details the movements of the six chaikas – near Ahtopol they were unable to seize any booty (doymuluk) as they turned around and traversed the coast northward, combing its shores and wandering in and out of various out-of-the-way places (koltuk yerlerde dolaşıkları), making their way toward Varna. Into these reports of their movements the grand vizier inserts details of the Ottoman tracking operation and preparations to strike against them – the dispatch of couriers to gain intelligence on their strength and location, the organization and coordination of various land and sea forces (with types and numbers of ships being named), and so forth. The final extant telhisa of this series reports of an engagement in progress with these six chaikas in which the Cossacks end up abandoning their boats, spilling onto the shore in flight, with the Özi forces following in pursuit. This report was apparently sent in the heat of the operation, for the final outcome is not given, only a hope, invoking God, that none of the Cossacks would succeed in escaping (according to its text, this report was delivered by a ship of one of the local Mediterranean fleets [beg gemileri] assigned to serve in the Black Sea that season). Unfortunately these five telhises have only pro forma hatt-i humayuns, saying «we have received this news», so there is no hint of the sultan’s reaction to this series of events. Nonetheless it interesting that such an isolated sequence of events, an incursion by a small Cossack raiding party, was considered important enough to warrant the repeated attention of the sultan (especially when compared to the fleets of even hundreds of chaikas that plied the Black Sea a generation earlier).

Since Ibrahim’s hatt-i humayuns are probably chance remnants from what was once a much richer stash of documents, it impossible to venture a statistical argument on the basis of these documents as to the significance of these events and problems in the eyes of the Porte, as compared with other developments and issues. Nor are they incontrovertible proofs of a particularly strong reaction to the Cossack threat by the sultan, though clearly he was far from indifferent to it. To indulge in an impressionistic reaction to these telhises, the image of disturbing news of Cossack interlopers out in the nearby Black Sea repeatedly intruding the recesses of the palace and the consciousness of Ibrahim, nicknamed Deli, “the Crazy,” can be a compelling one. In any event, part of the value of these documents is in their being rare and authentic traces of a sultan’s personal reaction and involvement in the Cossack problem, not only as an observer, but as an active participant, as can observed from the specific, albeit laconic, reactions and instructions recorded in some of the hatt-i humayuns. Even in the case of the last five telhises, where there are no specific instructions or endorsements coming from his hand, that he was receiving ongoing and perhaps nearly day-to-day reports indicates a definite level of involvement in the given affair, even on the level of micro-management. Certainly the sultan had a role in the decision-making process.


224 – Kelle görnümek, “to delivery with all speed” (lit. “to carry off a head”) has its origin in the procedure of express delivery (e.g., by mounted couriers) to the center of heads of those, for whatever reason, prominent persons who had been executed, Pakalin, Mehmet Zeki, Osmanlı tarih dinimi ve terimleri sözlüğü, II, Istanbul, 1971, p. 238.

225 – Özi kulları, probably the garrison troops of the Özi fortress complex. If so, then probably by the time of this report the Cossacks had made their way from Varna to the mouth of the Dnieper.

226 – «Our royal» or «imperial» or «felicitous knowing [of this] has occurred (ma‘lum-i humayun olmusdar, ma‘lum-i zaharum olmusdur, and ma‘lum-i sa‘adetim olmusdur), E.7022/548, 637, 644, 645, 646.

227 – Of course the presence of a hatt-i humayun specific in content is not a necessary condition for the given event to have had any sort of effect on the sultan. In other words, a pro forma “we have been apprised of the situation” is not a sufficient condition for the given information having no significance to the recipient (such pro forma acknowledgments are quite common in the given series of telhises).

228 – It is not certain that all 742 documents of E.7002/1-86 and E.7022/1-656 constitute telhises with Ibrahim’s hatt-i humayuns. If they do, that would mean that over the span of his reign he received an average of fewer than two telhises per week, which seems like a small number (certainly not the pace at which he was receiving the documents relating to the Cossack operations on the Rumeli coast just discussed). For this reason it can be supposed that either much is missing due to loss or, because of opaqueness or imperfections of the Topkapı archive’s catalogue, much remains to be discovered by the archivist or researcher.

229 – This is no trivial statement. It should be noted that the picture that emerges from these and the other telhises with hatt-i humayuns is somewhat at variance with the typical notion of the so-called “sultanate of the women”, when the harem was very involved in the affairs the state, and when between it, the grand vizier, and other top officials, the sultan has been considered of marginal importance to the actual workings of the palace and state.
While it is not easy to gain a well-documented and distinct notion of how the sultan and other members of the ruling class perceived and reacted to the Cossacks, in addition to fleeting glimpses of sultans such as Ahmed I and Osman II falling into a fury at news of their operations, the extreme hatred and cruelty that would often be directed at captured Cossacks by the sultan is certainly a telling indicator. The ritualistic delivery of captured Cossacks and severed heads was evidently a component of the “triumph ceremony.” It seems that whenever Cossacks were defeated and captured by the Ottomans, some would be slaughtered on the spot while the rest would be brought in triumph with their chaikas to Istanbul for presentation. At this ceremony a number would be executed (often by torture), while thereafter the rest would be enslaved, typically as galley oarsmen. The Ottoman narrative sources sometimes even specify the ways in which the Cossacks were put to death. For example, when 200 captured Cossacks were brought before Osman II when he was at the bridge spanning the Danube at Isakçı on the way to Hotin in 1621, they were beheaded, cut in half at the waist, impaled on hooks, or shot with their own arrows. In a gazaname devoted to the exploits of Halil Paşa, who was the kapudan paşa during the Hotin campaign, the wrath of the sultan and satisfaction with which the Cossack interlopers were put to death is even more graphically described:

His [majesty] made an order that the seized infidel chaikas be brought a place close to the imperial tent which was on the edge of the waters of the Danube River.... Those swine – who were deserving of destruction – as they were brought opposite that fateful river – their principal members (a’za-yi re’ise, heads, limbs, and other vital body parts) were crushed under the feet of enraged elephants and their wicked souls were reunited with the fire of hell. Thereafter, some of the violence of the rage of the padishah, whose gravity is as that of the celestial sphere, found calm.

Even allowing for flights of rhetoric in the depiction of the rage and anxiety of the sultan, certainly the display of emotion ascribed to him and the cruelty of the executions and satisfaction that they brought must have been in keeping with the actual attitude and emotions of the sultan toward the presence of the Cossack menace in his “backyard.” Of course the cruel punishment of these most hated enemies may have had a deterrent purpose. On the other hand, he must have produced a cycle of greater brutality as the Cossacks would be determined to fight to the maximum knowing the possible horrendous fate that awaited them in case of capture.

Yet along with psychological release, the staging of triumphs served another purpose, which can be termed both psychological and political, namely propaganda. When, as often was the case, the campaign in the Black Sea did not go as well as was hoped for or claimed, a triumphant return through the Bosporus and into Istanbul with captured Cossacks and chaikas in tow would be mounted, staging a greater victory celebration than was actually merited. After the much-touted victory at Karaharman in 1625 a great triumph was enacted on the return to Istanbul, even though, according to various non-Ottoman sources, the outcome was not as sensational as it was made out to be. While the kapudan paşa proudly delivered to the capital a large train of chaikas and captured Cossacks (270 souls according to Roe, more than 800 according to Katib Celebi), Roe makes a caustic aside, that his return and reception was «as if Pompey had again finished the piratique war, that almost famished Rome» and then adds what he considered the true sentiment of the admiral at this celebration: Non de victoria, sed de non victo triumphavit. In other words, the triumph was for having survived and not lost the entire fleet. A similar spectacle was put on after Ibrahim Paşa managed to intercept, just inside the mouth of the Dnieper, part of the Cossack fleet returning from the great raid on Sinop in 1614. Much was made of this encounter to assure somewhat the losses and humiliation at Sinop, so that those who could have been blamed for the given debacle could save face before the sultan. If there were 20 captured Cossacks were sent to the Porte where they were turned over to the unfortunate residents of Sinop who had come to lament their losses, so that they could wreak vengeance upon them.

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232 – For other instances of triumphs staged after successes over the Cossacks with the participation of the sultan, see Katib Çelebi, Fezleke, II, cit., p. 74, 211. Negotiations of Roe, cit., p. 439.
233 – E.g., as the fleet limped back, it itself was hit by bad weather, losing additional ships. Meanwhile the Cossacks, perhaps even the same ones defeated at Karaharman, attacked Kili on their return journey. Even the Ottoman chronicles admit that the outcome at Karaharman was mostly due to very good fortune – a sudden storm favored the galleys and took sure victory away from the Cossacks.
The intense hatred reserved for the Cossacks can be sensed in the language of the Ottoman chronicles and documents, where the words kazak or Rus, in the context of the Black Sea, scarcely occur without an accompanying curse, most commonly mel’un, “accursed.” The impression given is that imprecations were levied upon the Cossacks with greater frequency than against the other “infidel” enemies of the Porte. Evliya Çelebi recounts a scene, which, though applying to the Crimean khan, would probably be much the same if it were the Ottoman sultan in his place. Khan Mehmed Gerey IV (1641-1644, 1654-1666) pursued and captured a joint Cossack and Kalmyk (Kalmuk) raiding party that had made a serious incursion into the Crimea, but was now back in the steppes beyond the Crimea. He was said to have killed the Kalmyks on the spot, whereas the Cossacks were brought back to the Crimea and tortured to death, “killing each one with the most violent punishments.” All of these examples suggest that the hatred directed at the Cossacks was not merely for the death and destruction delivered by common pirates or bandits. Undoubtedly the intensity of the Ottoman reaction was also connected with the Cossack ruination of the Porte’s secure and prosperous domain and their disruption of its ongoing campaigns in the East and West, where the “true calling” of the Ottoman state lay. Naturally, as Roe so aptly puts it, the psychological (for example, the humiliation and frustration) and the physical effects of the Cossack depredations (for example threat to Istanbul’s day-to-day food supply), went hand in hand: «... the Black Sea... doth them more affronts, and give them more feares than a greater enemy; for hereby the relief of the city with victuals is much disturbed, and their force of galleys is divided and the enemy a fugitive, from whom they can neither reap honor, nor benefit.»

This prompts mention of a related factor contributing to the Ottoman disposition toward the Cossacks. Regardless of the degree to which gaza was or was not a motivation for early Ottoman expansion, by the 16th and 17th centuries, the notion of being gazi - champions of struggle with the domain of the unbeliever through raid and conquest in the name of expansion of the domain of Islam - must have been an integral and substantial part of Ottoman self-consciousness (certainly it was ubiquitous in the rhetoric of chronicles and other narrative sources). In the Black Sea, long a part of the Darü‘l-Islam, the Ottomans were put into an unusual situation, for with the coming of the Cossacks they were decidedly put on the defensive. The Darü‘l-Islam was under constant threat and the Ottomans’ inability for decades to eliminate this threat, if not, like true gazi, by going on the offensive and conquering the place of origin and refuge of the “accursed unbelievers,” then at least by being able to mount an effective defense, meant that they were placed in a very frustrating and even shameful predicament. Soldiers, commanders, and men of state showed few signs of being particularly eager to serve and wage war in the Black Sea. Already possessing a most favorable strategic and economic situation in the region, there seems to have been little desire to fight for what was the empire’s “birthright” anyway. Instead the main drive of the ruling and military establishment was to expand in central Europe, the Mediterranean, and on the Eastern frontier. Military activity in the Black Sea probably had less to offer in the way of booty (the main prizes were Cossacks as slaves, their weapons, supplies, boats, and perhaps their booty – altogether not insignificant, but presumably still less attractive than what, for example, the better-settled Habsburg or Mediterranean territories had to offer) and virtually nothing in the way of territorial gain (for example, territory out of which new provinces could be carved and in which new timars created, or at least with abundant prosperity which could be taxed). Being in what was essentially the predicament of a partisan war with an elusive but dangerous enemy must have been demoralizing for both troops and commanders. The Ottoman fleet was primarily a one-sea-at-a-time force. Usually the main fleet, the Istanbul-based 40 galleys, served its campaign season either in the Mediterranean or in the Black Sea. Traditionally it was better suited for and more used to operating in the former, whence many of its traditions and much of its naval expertise had originated, and where there was a better support infrastructure as well as a permanent auxiliary presence (the beg gemileri). Thomas Roe makes frequent reference to the absence of the fleet from the Mediterranean, when almost year after year it was forced to serve in the “Ottoman lake.”

There is a tendency in relevant Ottoman chronicles that is symptomatic of Ottoman reluctance and regret at the expenditure of energy and resources in the Black Sea “better spent” elsewhere. On the surface, the most authoritative Ottoman chroniclers of the 17th century, Katib Çelebi and, largely borrowing from him, Naima, present the Cossacks in the Black Sea as an episodic and marginal phenomenon with which the Ottomans were able to cope almost as a matter of course; Ottoman forces

237 - See n. 39.
238 - Note that the Arabic word gaza denotes an offensive, aggressive action, such as a raid, assault, or invasion. In Lane’s dictionary, the definition of gaza‘awīt includes “the act of repairing to fight with [or to fight with and plunder] the enemy [in the country of the latter] (stress added)”, Lane, Edward William, An Arabic-English Lexicon, London, 1877, p. 2257.
239 - For examples of difficulty in mobilizing troops to serve in the Black Sea, see Ostapchuk, “Ottoman Black Sea frontier”, cit., p. 170-176.
240 - On the difficulties of the galleys in operating against the Cossacks, particularly in the shallow waters of the northern Black Sea, see Ostapchuk, “Five documents”, p. 58-60.
241 - Negotiations of Roe, cit., p. 236, 247, 357, 410-411, 453.
prevail in practically every section devoted to encounters with the Cossacks. The impression given is that there hardly was a "Cossack problem" in the Black Sea worthy of mention. It is not an exaggeration to state that the eight sections on the Cossacks that Katib Çelebi extracted from his Fezleke and included in his naval history Tuhfet constitute the overwhelming bulk of the main Ottoman chronicle tradition's presentation of this phenomenon in the Black Sea. This presentation maintains that the Cossacks appeared as a true threat only in 1614, and thereafter in only six or so out of 23 years (in the Tuhfet: 1616, 1621, 1624, 1625, 1638, 1639 plus a few years with supposed lesser activity) did they cause any noteworthy difficulties in the sea.

The gist of the chronicle version of this epoch is as follows. In the few named years the "accursed" Cossack bandits caused some trouble in the waters and shores of the Black Sea and lowest reaches of the Danube River by attacking a few towns and villages, while of cities, sacking only Sinop (in 1624 Yeniköy is said to have lost its only shops to fire, though there is substantial evidence of a harsher turn of events). Absent is any mention of damage and harm rendered to, for example, Trabzon and Varna and their vicinities of which first hand evidence was provided above. Ottoman forces engaged the Cossacks in several naval encounters and in all of them they either annihilated, captured, or put the Cossacks to flight. Lack of references by the chronicles under other years even to events with such propitious endings implies that in those years the Black Sea was immune to Cossack incursions and attacks or that nothing significant enough to warrant mention occurred. Embarrassing or disastrous occurrences are mentioned only in passing or more often simply passed over - for example, a reversal, perhaps even a serious defeat, of the Ottoman fleet near the mouth of the Danube in 1615 and the subsequent malicious destruction of captured galleys at the mouth of the Dnieper before the eyes of the garrison at Özi; the great raid on Kefe in 1616; in 1625, several weeks prior to the battle of Karaharman, the humiliating destruction at Özi of the fleet of Saksaki Paşa who was sent to guard the mouth of the Dnieper with 180 vessels (frigates). These are but a few examples of occurrences skipped by the chronicles.

No less misleading is the mainstream Ottoman chronicle tradition's coverage of the commencement of Cossack activities in the Black Sea. Although by the 1590s the Zaporozhians expanded their range of operations beyond the northern seaboard and began their descent down the coast of Rumeli, reaching the entrance of the Bosphorus by 1614 if not earlier, coverage in the main chronicles begins with the section devoted to what is presented as the first major expedition in the Black Sea, namely, what was, in fact, the first attack on Anatolia, that is, the Sinop raid of 1614. In Katib Çelebi's Tuhfet, this section is in fact entitled "The beginning of the appearance of the Cossacks on the Black Sea." Obviously this raid in the heart of the empire was a great shock, which may...

242 - Some of the titles alone point to tendentiousness: 1. The beginning (sic) of the appearance of the Cossacks on the Black Sea (1614); 2. The campaign of Mahmud Paşa (1616); 3. The campaign to defend the bridge over the Danube (1621); 4. The defeat of the Cossacks in the battle of Taman (1621); 5. The coming of the Cossacks to Yeniköy (1624); 6. The campaign that destroyed the Cossacks at the battle of Karaharman (1625); 7. The campaign of Piyale Kethiä (1638); 8. The campaign of Piyale Kethidä (1639). A ninth section in a different part of his naval history is on the Ottoman fleet near the mouth of the Danube in 1615 and the serious reversals for the fleet, only a few vague lines are allotted in this section devoted to encounters with the Cossacks.

243 - E.g., 1622 and 1629. See n. 244, 252.

244 - Aside from Cossack activity in these years, one can find only a few other, brief mentions of encounters with the Cossacks: a naval battle in 1622 off the cape of Kaliakra, northeast of Varna, Katib Çelebi, Fezleke, II, cit., p. 27; an expedition against the allied Crimean Tatars and Zaporozhians in 1624 which does not speak of Cossack naval raids, but only of land operations in the Crimea, ibid., p. 59-61; brief references to the Cossack occupation of Tanai between 1637 and 1642, ibid., p. 190, 224-25. The pattern of coverage of the chronicle of Topçular Katibi differs from the main tradition: though it cannot be said that it gives a fuller coverage, he does provide some other episodes. See also n. 251.

245 - Based on Zölkiewski's testimony. A Polish translation of a letter from a vizier claims the opposite, Hrushevsky, Cossack Age, cit., p. 276. In any event, on the basis of Italian and Muscovite sources it is very clear that 1615, on which the Ottoman chronicles are silent, was a difficult year for the Ottomans in the Black Sea, Welykyj, Athenasius G. (ed.), Litterae Numitorum Apostoliciorum historiae Ukrainae illustrantes, III, 1609-1620, Rome, 1959, p. 122, 123, 125; Документи російських архівів до історії запорозького, cit., p. 78-83.

246 - Писма Золкіевського, cit., p. 304; Документи російських архівів до історії запорозького, cit., p. 105. See Hrushevsky, Cossack Age, cit., p. 277-278. For the most recent and fullest presentation of this operation, based on new Muscovite sources, see Brekhunenko, Спогідки українського козацтва з Дону, cit., p. 133-136. Moreover, under this year, in which there was Cossack raiding activity near Trabzon, Samsun, Varna, and the Bosphorus and serious reversals for the fleet, only a few vague lines are allotted in Tuhfet concerning the fleet's coming across some Cossack chuitkas and six galleys being grounded in shallow water. See Berindei, "La Porte face aux Cosaques", cit., p. 280-281; Ostapchuk and Halkonen, "Критичні погляди", cit., p. 355-356, 425.

247 - In the evening of the first day of the 'id il-fitr, or festival marking the end of the month of Ramadan, Saksaki was ashore in Özi for "dinner" (to use Roe's word, which probably meant a bayram feast) only to be "surprised by the Cossacks and hardly escaping, lost all his fleet and many of his men," dispatch of 30 July 1625, Negotiations of Roe, p. 426; See also Hrushevsky, Cossack Age, cit., p. 418-419; Ostapchuk, "Ottoman Black Sea frontier", cit., p. 112-113.

248 - Документи російських архівів до історії запорозького, cit., p. 70. See also Berindei, "La Porte face aux Cosaques", cit., p. 275-279.

249 - Katib Çelebi, Tuhfet, cit., p. 106.
partly explain the prominence and significance allotted to it. But the cities, towns, and villages on the coast of Rumeli and in the lower reaches of the Danube ravaged in the two decades prior to Sinop (viz. the vivid testimony of Metrophanes), to which there are virtually no references in the chronicles, were not on a distant frontier that could be overlooked by accident or because of their marginality. The Fezleke acknowledges the pre-1614 Cossack operations with a brief aside: «At [the time of our] predecessors there were [Cossack] raids upon villages in the Danube and on the seacoasts. The first era of Cossack strikes against the northern seaboard, including the meteoric career of Vyshnevets'kyi/Dimitrash, seems to be absent in the sixteenth century chronicles, at least in those that have been published. The evidence that has accrued from Ottoman

250 - There is no doubt that the picture of heavy raids on this coast in these years presented by Metrophanes is correct, though his data concerning the Cossack raiding activity on Rumeli coast in 1606, 1612, 1613, and 1616 needs to be collated with data in other sources, such as dispatches of papal nuncios or their agents in Venice and Istanbul that indicate raids on the same coast in these same years, as well as other, intervening years, Welykij, Athanasius G. (ed.), Litterae Nunziarum Apostolicorum historiae, Vaticanae illustrantes, II, 1594-1608, Rome, 1959, p. 263-264; ibid., III, 1609-1620, p. 32, 33, 71, 72, 98, 99, 102, 103, 109-110, 111. For other instances, including those documented in the Mihiimme defterleri, see Berindei, "La Porte face aux Cossiques", cit., p. 275-279.

251 - Katib Celebi, Fezleke, II, cit., p. 358; repeated in Na'inma, Ravzatül-hüseyn, cit., p. 118. The wording in Katib Celebi’s naval history is more generous: «At [the time of our] predecessors it became the custom of the Don and Daniper Cossacks to plunder the shores of the Danube and the sea», Katib Celebi, Tuhfet, cit., p. 106. Note that Katib Celebi’s and Naima’s chronicles start with the year 1000/1591-1592, when serious Cossack incursions into the Black Sea were already taking place.

252 - As the purpose here is to use the contemporary or near contemporary chronicles as a source on the Ottoman mentalitāt, there is no pretense of evaluating the chronicles as sources for la histoire événementielle, for which they are, shortcomings notwithstanding, valuable sources. Further work is needed on the 16th-century chronicles and the chronicles that straddle both the 16th and 17th centuries. I have only had the opportunity to check those of Lutfi Paşa, Selanikī, Hasanbegzade, and Pechevi. Selanikī has some significant entries (relating to Cossack depredations in 1594 and 1595), Selanikī Mustafa Efendi, Tarih-i Selanikī, İşpişti, Mehmet (ed.), Istanbul, 1989, p. 363, 481-483. The case of Hasanbegzade is interesting. While he covers the 1614 Sinop raid he makes no mention of the other “major” Cossack episodes on the Black Sea according to the “official version” of Katib Celebi (see n. 242). He also notes the 1622 battle off Kaliakra mentioned in the Fezleke (see n. 244), Hasanbegzade, Tarih-i al-i Osman, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, H.O. 75, fol. 99v. On the other hand in a different manuscript there is also the mention of episodes not mentioned in the other chronicles. In 1622, a successful, albeit minor encounter with two chaikas apparently in the Sea of Azov which resulted in the freeing of Muslim captive, capture of 30 Cossacks, and delivery to the Porte of more than 30 Cossacks heads, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, H.O. 19, fol. 309r. Another such “unique” mention is of a foray into the sea in late 1629, when the Cossacks took advantage of the absence of the main fleet and devastated unnamed regions of the sea, taking many Muslims captive who could only be ransomed for a heavy price, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, H.O. 75, fol. 122r. In any event, Hasanbegzade’s few mentions of Cossack activity in the Black Sea also portray the phenomenon as less momentous in their impact, even though in the relations of the Sinop raid and the incident in the Sea of Azov the seriousness of the attacks is suggested. Judging from the lack of references to early Cossack Black Sea activity in Hammer’s history of the Ottoman Empire or Danişmend’s chronology of Ottoman history, both of whom based their works largely on the chronicles, it appears that the observation here on the scarcity of mentions of the Cossacks in them, particularly for 16th century, is close to the mark.

253 - For a sample of frequent references to the early Cossacks in the Mihiimme defterleri see Lemercier-Quelquejay, “Višneveckij et la soč zaporouge”, cit.
In tracing the human landscape of the Ottoman Black Sea, this article has separated the effects of the Cossack onslaught into the physical and the psychological aspects. Interestingly enough, it is much easier to establish the presence and discern the effects in the mental sphere rather than in the physical. Although the physical consequences of a Cossack raid might be thought to be weightier than the psychological ones, the latter were certainly more widespread. While an entire coastal population may have been possessed by fear of a sudden ravage, not to mention the perturbation caused in the empire’s nodes of power and responsibility, such as the palace and imperial naval arsenal, in a given raiding season only a limited number of settlements would suffer, the intensity of their experience notwithstanding. The range of the psychological could be great not only in space but also in time. Thus, in the last quarter of the 17th century, when Cossack raids on the sea were a thing of the past, the Ottomans exhibited a lingering anxiety lest the depredations resume and a clear distrust of the Ukrainian Cossacks even though, periodically since the time of Khmel’nyts’kyi, the Ukrainians sought Ottoman suzerainty in their strivings to escape Polish and eventually Russian rule. Though Khmel’nyts’kyi and other hetmans offered Ukraine to them practically on a “silver platter,” the Ottomans responded with extreme caution and ultimately with refusal. While such behavior in part stems from their greater interest in traditional vectors of expansion and the old defensive northern policy, the trauma suffered in the era of Cossack ascendancy on the Black Sea was no doubt a significant factor.

As far as the physical consequences of the raids are concerned, a more nuanced presentation of the raids based on real examples has revealed that while they were much more serious than has been recognized by most Ottoman historians, they were not always fatal or ruinous for those affected. The human landscape in the aftermath of Cossack strikes was littered not only with death, destruction, and displacement, but marked by looted personal possessions, lost documents, broken agreements, aborted transactions, and lawsuits to reclaim property or to determine who would ultimately bear a loss. For the time being, a more exact qualitative characterization of the effects is possible, which has become possible thanks to new sources for this topic introduced here. More rigorous quantification and comparison with the effects of other phenomena, such as the Celian uprisings or natural disasters remains an elusive goal.

While the actual Cossack expeditions were not the main object of inquiry, it is clear that better chronological and typological catalogues of the raids, and a deeper understanding of the motives and methods of operation, are needed before the human impact of this phenomena can be more thoroughly mapped. Also more data is needed on the Black Sea economy before and during the Cossack era to determine the degree to which the proposed “ideal situation” possessed by the Ottomans in this region prior to the Cossacks is valid and to ascertain the extent of the apparent economic decline thereafter. However, at this point it can be stated with confidence that, whatever the substance of Ottoman control of the Black Sea was, the idea of an Ottoman mare nostrum had such a formative influence on Ottoman strategic thinking and historical vision that it not only had a great effect on the perception of the harsh realities of the age by 17th century statesmen and intellectuals, but also largely fixed the view from the vantage point of modern historiography. In this connection the Ottoman chronicles have proved to be a relatively rich and reliable body of evidence.

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