

practices. For example, polygamy was practiced well into the Soviet period among both Christian and Muslim Ossetians, and both groups appear to have been relatively casual in practicing their respective faiths. This syncretic blend has resulted in a curiously unique and distinct Ossetian culture. In addition to adopting many beliefs of the local Caucasian peoples among whom they lived, including the Balkars, Ingush, Kabardinians, and Georgians, the Digors and other Ossetians also maintain fragments of the ancient cultural practices of their nomadic ancestors, the Alans.

The Ossetians are considered to be descendants of the ancient Scythian and Sarmatian tribes who inhabited the steppe region north of the Black Sea. In the fourth century A.D., the Alans, descendants of these tribes, were forced southward from their steppe homelands by more powerful nomadic tribes, including the Huns and the Mongols. Although they generally maintained their nomadic way of life, the Alans formed a loosely structured state called Alania in the foothills and mountain valleys between the upper Kuban River and the Darial Gorge of the Caucasus. Strong ties were established between Alania and the Byzantine Empire, and, in the 10th century, Christianity became the official religion of Alania [see further, ALĀN].

Following the Mongol invasions of the 13th century, the Alans scattered. One group migrated to what is now Hungary and parts of western Europe; another followed the Huns to China. The Alans who remained in the Caucasus region moved deeper into the mountain valleys and on to the southern slopes of the mountain range, abandoning their nomadic way of life for the more sedentary Caucasian life style of stock raising and agriculture. After intermarrying and culturally mixing with the local Caucasian peoples, the Alans re-emerged three centuries later as a distinct ethnic group now known as the Ossetians.

The Ossetic language is the only survivor of the northeastern branch of Iranian languages, also known as Scythian. Ossetic is divided into two main dialects: "eastern" or Iron and "western" or Digor. Among the Digor Ossetians, a form of Ossetic developed incorporating linguistic elements from Kabardinian (Circassian), a Caucasian language. Many archaic linguistic terms and structures that no longer exist in Iron or Tuallag Ossetic were preserved in Digor. Iron and Tuallag are more heavily influenced by the Russian and Georgian languages, respectively. In the late 19th century a distinct Digor literary language was created, which used Arabic characters. At the same time, the Iron dialect was written in the Cyrillic alphabet and Tuallag in the Georgian alphabet. In 1923, all dialects of Ossetic were changed to the Latin alphabet, and in 1939, the Digor literary language was abolished and replaced by standard literary Iron, which again used the Cyrillic alphabet.

In 1944 the Digor were deported to Central Asia along with other Muslim peoples of the North Caucasus. In the late 1950s, the survivors of the deportations were permitted to return to homelands in the North Caucasus, and the Digor were resettled more or less in their traditional territories in the Digor Valley and the foothills of western North Ossetia, along the border of Kabarda. Today, the Digors live primarily by animal husbandry, settled agriculture, and many work in the nickel mining industry of North Ossetia. There are no major cities in the Digor region of North Ossetia and the Digor remain less urbanised than their Christian Iron neighbours and kinsmen.

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OSTADSIS [see USTĀDHSIS].

'OTHMĀN, AL-I 'OTHMĀN [see 'OTHMĀNLĪ].

'OTHMĀN I, eponymous founder of the Ottoman dynasty. It is impossible to establish the dates of his birth or of his accession to sovereignty. He was active during the first quarter of the 8th/14th century, and Ottoman tradition asserts that he died shortly after his son Orkhan's [q.v.] conquest of Bursa (on 6 April 1326. For this date, see P. Schreiner, *Die Byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, ii, Vienna 1977, 231). However, this story which makes a son assume leadership already during his father's lifetime, may have originated in the early 9th/15th century simply as an ideal model of succession to contrast with the contemporary practice of succession by fratricide. A *wakfiyya* of 'Othmān's son Orkhan, dated Rabī' I 724/March 1324 (İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Gazi Orhan Bey vakfiyesi*, in *Belleten*, v/19 [1941], 277-88) already bears Orkhan's *tughra* [q.v.], suggesting—but by no means proving—that he had succeeded to full sovereignty by this date. In which case, 'Othmān's death should perhaps be placed before March 1324. (For an argument in favour of 724/1324 as the date of Orkhan's succession, see İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Gazi Orhan Beyin hükümdar olduğu tarih*, in *Belleten*, ix/33 [1945], 207-11.)

'Othmān's origins are unknown. However, Turkish sources beginning with the *İskender-nâme* (ca. 1400) of Ahmedî [q.v.] (ed. İsmail Ünver, Ankara 1983, 65b) are unanimous in naming his father as *Ertogh̃rul* [q.v.], and a silver coin stamped on the obverse and reverse "Struck (by) 'Othmān son of Ertogh̃rul" supports this claim (İ. Artuk, *Osmanlı beyliğinin kurucusu Osman Gaziye ait sikke*, in *1st International Congress on the Social and Economic History of Turkey. Papers*, Ankara [1983], 27-33). The names of 'Othmān's children, apart from Orkhan, are also known, as they appear as witnesses to Orkhan's *wakfiyya* of 724/1324. They are Çoban, Hamid, Melik, Pazarlu and Faṭma Khātūn. The Malkhatun daughter of 'Ömer Beg, whose name also appears as a witness to the same document, may have been 'Othmān's wife. Ottoman tradition from 'Ashīk-paşa-zāde [q.v.] onwards name his wife as Malkhun, daughter of the legendary dervish Edebalı. Neshrî [q.v.], however, while taking over 'Ashīk-paşa-zāde's tale of 'Othmān's marriage, adds a separate anecdote about 'Othmān's love-affair with a lady called Malkhatun (ed. F. Taeschner, *Ğihānnümā. Die altosmanische Chronik des Mevlānā Mehmed Neshrî*, i. Text of Codex Menzel, Leipzig 1951, 24. The copyist of the Manisa ms. renders this name as Malkhun Khātūn. See Taeschner, *Ğihānnümā*, ii. Text of Codex Manisa 1373, Leipzig 1955, 29). These tales may conceivably represent folk-memories of a real Malkhatun, a wife of the historical 'Othmān.

The *Anonymous chronicles* (ed. F. Giese, *Die Altosmanischen Anonymen Chroniken*, Breslau 1922, 7) and Oruç (Oruç b. 'Adil, ed. F. Babinger, *Tevārīkh-i Āl-i 'Othmān*, Hanover 1925, 12, 15-16) attribute only

two sons to ‘Othmān: Orkhan and ‘Alī Pasha. ‘Ashik-pasha-zāde (ed. ‘Alī, *Tevārīkh-i Āl-i ‘Othmān*, Istanbul 1332/1913-14, 39-40) adopts this scheme, but re-names ‘Alī Pasha as ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Pasha [q.v., ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Bey]. Most later historians follow ‘Ashik-pasha-zāde. However, the figure of ‘Alī Pasha/‘Alā’ al-Dīn Pasha is wholly fictitious, despite inclusion in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. (For the origin and development of this legend, see C. Imber, *Canon and apocrypha in early Ottoman history*, in C. Finkel and C.J. Heywood (eds.), *Festschrift for V.L. Ménage*, Istanbul.)

The survival of a coin stamped with ‘Othmān’s name confirms the Ottoman tradition that he declared himself an independent ruler, since the issue of coinage served as a declaration of sovereignty. There are no other Ottoman texts or artefacts from his reign. The only contemporary source to mention ‘Othmān is the Byzantine chronicle of George Pachymeres (1242-ca. 1310) (ed. I. Bekker, *De Michaele et Andronico Palaeologo*, Bonn 1835, ii).

Pachymeres’ references to ‘Othmān are confused. His chronicle records a victory which ‘Othmān won over the Byzantine *hetaireiarches* Mouzalon at Bapheus, identified as the district around Nikomedia/Izmit (Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, 333). The battle, Pachymeres claims, “was the beginning of great trouble for the whole region.” In a second attempt to defeat ‘Othmān, the Byzantine Emperor Andronicus II sent another force against him under the *stratopedarch* Siouros. ‘Othmān defeated this army in a night attack near a fortress called Katoikia, which he had also occupied (Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, 414). Pachymeres follows his account of this victory with a statement that ‘Othmān next occupied Belokome/Biledjik [q.v.], thereby “gaining great wealth and living in prosperity, and using the fortresses as places of safekeeping for treasures” (Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, 414-15). The exact sequence of events is, however, unclear. In a slightly earlier passage, Pachymeres already refers to the loss of Belokome, together with Angelokome (İnegöl?), Melangeia (İnönü?), Anagourdia and Platanea (unidentified), without, however, attributing these conquests to ‘Othmān (Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, 413). It would perhaps be reasonable to assume that it was ‘Othmān who captured all these places, at about the time of his victory at Katoikia. Pachymeres reports that he also laid siege to Prousa/Bursa [q.v.] and to Pegai on the coast, where the besieged population suffered famine and plague (Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, 414), and finally that he made a determined but unsuccessful assault on Nikaia/Iznik [q.v.] (Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, 637). His final reference to ‘Othmān reads: “So in this way ‘Othmān was greatly inspired to ambitious plans. There was nothing in the regions around Nikaia, Pythia and everywhere right down to the coast which he did not control” (Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, 642). The disjointed sequence of events that Pachymeres describes must have occurred before 707-8/1308, the closing date of his chronicle. One can infer from this source that by this date the occupation of Belokome/Biledjik and other fortresses had given ‘Othmān a secure base in the Sakarya valley and that he controlled the countryside westwards as far as the Sea of Marmara.

The earliest Ottoman lists of ‘Othmān’s conquests also indicate that his secure base was the Sakarya valley. The *İskender-nâme* of Ahmedi (*loc. cit.*) credits him with the capture of Biledjik, İnegöl and Köprühisar, at least the first two of which correspond with Pachymeres’ narrative. A *Chronological list* of 824/1421 lists Biledjik, Yarhisar, İnegöl and Yenışehir (Ç.N. Atsız, *Osmanlı tarihine ait takvimler*,

Istanbul 1961, 25), and the subsequent chronicles by Shükrollāh (ca. 1460) (ed. Th. Seif, *Der Abschnitt über die Osmanen in Shükrollāh’s persischer Universalgeschichte*, in *MOG*, ii [1923-6], 81) and Enveri (ca. 1465) (ed. M.H. Yinanç, *Düstür-nâme-yi Enveri*, Istanbul 1928, 82-3) offer permutations of these earlier lists. The *Anonymous chronicles* (ed. Giese, 6), Oruç (ed. Babinger, 12) and ‘Ashik-pasha-zāde (ed. ‘Alī, 18), all deriving their information from a common source of ca. 825/1422, also refer to ‘Othmān’s conquest of a fortress called Kara[dja]hisar (“Black Fortress”). This toponym may correspond to the Melangeia of Pachymeres, since alternative forms of this name are Melagina/Melaina, which resemble the Greek word *melaina* (f. sing. ‘black’) and suggest that the Turkish name is a calque of the Greek. The correspondence of these places with the general locations of ‘Othmān’s conquests to be inferred from Pachymeres suggests that in these few particulars the Ottoman tradition is historically accurate.

In general, however, Turkish traditions about ‘Othmān are clearly unhistorical and should be understood as belonging to the literary genres of folk-epic (*dāstān* [q.v.]) and *manākib* [q.v.]. These traditions appear in their most primitive and disjointed form in the *Anonymous chronicles* and Oruç, which derive the core of their material from the “common source” of ca. 825/1422. The *History* of ‘Ashik-pasha-zāde presents a fuller and more coherent narrative, adding a great deal to the stories which it shares with these two chronicles. For this reason, it is ‘Ashik-pasha-zāde whose narrative has come to form the basis of the modern historiography of ‘Othmān’s reign. However, ‘Ashik-pasha-zāde’s additional material is similar in type to what he took from the “common source”. For example, he also derives the names of ‘Othmān’s followers and companions from toponyms, and creates battle stories both from folk-etymologies of place-names and from the sites of shrines. An example of this last type is ‘Othmān’s supposed victory over the Byzantines at Koyunhisar, which modern historians have over-optimistically identified with the Bapheus in Pachymeres. The original story comes from the “common source”, and locates the battle at the site of a shrine, which popular tradition came to associate with the tomb of a fictitious relative of ‘Othmān who supposedly fell in a battle at that spot (Oruç b. ‘Adil, *op. cit.*, 13). ‘Ashik-pasha-zāde (ed. ‘Alī, 21) adopts the same tale, but removes the battle-site to nearby Dinboz. This clearly reflects the influence of a tale preserved in the *Ottoman history* of Theodore Spandugino (for the recension of 1513, see *La cronaca italiana di Teodoro Spandugino*, in C. Villain-Gandossi, *La Méditerranée aux XII-XVIIe siècles*, London 1983, 158-60; for the recension of 1538, see C. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs à l’histoire de la Grèce au moyen-âge*, ix, Paris 1890, 138-9) of an Ottoman victory over the infidels at Dinboz. The starting point of Spandugino’s story is the name Dinboz itself, which he understands as deriving from Turkish *din boz* (“to destroy religion”) and as being so named in commemoration of an Ottoman victory over the Greeks. ‘Ashik-pasha-zāde has simply conflated the two stories to create a new account of a battle, and this procedure is typical of his entire narrative.

In the 20th century, a number of historians have adapted Ottoman traditions relating to ‘Othmān and his forbears in order to construct new theories of the origins of the Ottoman Empire. M. Fuad Köprülü (*Les origines de l’Empire Ottoman*, Istanbul 1935) accepted that the Ottoman tradition making ‘Othmān a leader of the Kayı [q.v.] tribe is, at least in essence,

true. R.P. Lindner (*Nomads and Ottomans in mediaeval Anatolia*, Bloomington 1983) also postulated a tribal origin for 'Othmân and his followers, but greatly modified the traditional stories to accord with modern anthropological theory. P. Wittek (*The rise of the Ottoman Empire*, London 1938) rejected the traditions of 'Othmân as leader of a tribe, in favour of the view that he was leader of a *ghāzī* corporation and that these *ghāzī* origins pre-determined the future trajectory of the Ottoman Empire. (On the intellectual roots of Wittek's famous theory, see C.J. Heywood, *Wittek and the Austrian tradition*, in *JRAS* [1988], 7-25; idem, 'Boundless dreams of the Levant': Paul Wittek, the *Georg-Kreis*, and the writing of Ottoman history, in *ibid.* [1989], 30-50. See also R.C. Jennings, *Some thoughts on the gazi-thesis*, in *WZKM*, lxxvi [1986], 151-61.) Another thesis harmonises the 'nomad' and 'ghāzī' theories (Halil İnalcık, *The question of the emergence of the Ottoman state*, in *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, ii/2 [1981-2], 71-80). Another view is that the Ottoman traditions concerning 'Othmân's origins and forbears are myths, most of which developed during the course of the 9th/15th century and had the function of legitimising Ottoman dynastic rule (C. Imber, *The Ottoman dynastic myth*, in *Turcica*, xix [1987], 7-27; on the legitimising functions of the Ottoman genealogy, see Wittek, *op. cit.*, 1-15; Barbara Flemming, *Political genealogies in the sixteenth century*, in *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, vii-viii [1988], 123-37).

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(C. IMBER)

'OTHMÂN II, sixteenth sultan of the Ottoman empire (regn. 1027-31/1618-22), was born on 19 Džumādā II 1012/15 November 1603; cf. *Sidjill-i 'othmānī*, i, 56), the son of Sultan Ahmed I. After the death of his father in November 1617, the brother of the latter had been proclaimed sultan as Muṣṭafā I [q.v.] but 'Othmân, taking advantage of the weak character of his uncle and supported by the *Muf-tī* Es'ad Efendi and the *Kızlar Aghası* Muṣṭafā, seized the throne on 26 February 1618 by a coup d'état.

The youth of the new sultan at first assured the promoters of the coup d'état of considerable influence. To them was due the replacement of *Khalil Paṣha* [q.v.] as grand vizier by Öküz Mehmed Paṣha [q.v.] in January 1619. *Khalil* had just concluded a treaty of peace with *Shāh* 'Abbās I of Persia, after a campaign which had been indecisive. The relations with the other powers, Austria and Venice, with which the capitulations were renewed, were also peaceful. But in January 1620, after Mehmed Paṣha had been replaced by the very influential favourite Güzelçelebi 'Alī Paṣha [q.v.], who removed from the court all possible rivals, the chances of war increased. This time it was a war with Poland, which broke out through the intrigues of the voivode of Moldavia. In the battle of Jassy on 20 September 1620, the Polish army was annihilated by the *ser-fasker* Iskender Paṣha. The grand vizier, who held office mainly by satisfying the avarice of the young sultan, never lost an occasion to irritate and provoke the enmity of Austria and Venice. He died on 9 March 1621 and under his successor Hüseyin Paṣha of *Okhri*, 'Othmân II took part in person in the campaign of 1621 against Poland. This campaign ended in a check for the Turks and the Tartars, who, with great losses, had in vain tried to storm the fortified Polish camp on the Dniester near Choczim. A preliminary peace was signed under the same conditions as before under Süleymân I, and the sultan appointed a new grand vizier, Dilâver-zâde Hüseyin Paṣha.

Since the time when 'Othmân, still considerably

under the influence of the *Kızlar Aghası* Süleymân and his *Khodja*, Mollâ 'Ömer, had begun to act independently, he had not been able to gain the sympathy of the army on account of his brutal treatment of the Janissaries, nor of the people chiefly as a result of his avarice, nor of the 'ulemâ'. The latter were particularly horrified at the sultan's wish to take four legitimate wives from the free classes of his entourage; he actually married the daughter of the *Muf-tī* Es'ad. His unpopularity increased still further when he wished to put himself at the head of an army to fight *Fakhr al-Dīn Ma'n* [q.v.], the Druze *Amīr*, and to go on and make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Preparations had already been made for this expedition when on 18 May 1622, a mutiny broke out among the Janissaries and *Sipāhis*, who plundered the house of Mollâ 'Ömer. Next day, the rebels secured the cooperation of the chief 'ulemâ and demanded the heads of the *Kızlar Aghası*, the *Khodja*, the grand vizier and three other high officials. 'Othmân at first refused, but after the rebels had forced the third wall of the palace he had to sacrifice the grand vizier and the *Kızlar Aghası*. But in the meantime, his uncle Muṣṭafā had been brought out from his seclusion in the harem to be proclaimed sultan. 'Othmân tried during the night to secure his throne through the influence of the *Agha* of the Janissaries, but the latter was killed on the following morning and he became the prisoner of the Janissaries, who took him to their barracks. The rebels had no intentions against his life, but meanwhile the direction of affairs had passed to Dāwūd Paṣha, the favourite and son-in-law of Māh-Peyker, the mother of Sultan Muṣṭafā. Dāwūd Paṣha, being appointed grand vizier, had 'Othmân taken to the castle of Yedi Kule, where he was put to death in the evening of 20 May 1622. He was buried in the *türbe* of his father Ahmed I. 'Othmân is praised for his skill as a horseman and for his intelligence. He was also a poet with the *makhlas* of Fārisi. He was the first of three sultans to lose his life in a rising, the others being İbrāhīm and Selīm III.

Bibliography: The Turkish sources are the works of Na'imā, Peṭewī, Hasan Bey-zāde, the *Rawdat al-abrār* of Kara Çelebi-zāde, and the *Fedhile* of Hādjdjī *Khalifa*. The *Waḳ'a-yi Sulṭān 'Othmān Khān* of Tūghī is specially devoted to the deposition of 'Othmān (tr. by A. Galland; cf. *GOW*, 157), while his whole reign is described in a *Shah-nāme* by Nādirī (*GOW*, 169). Among contemporary western accounts, see the *Relazione* quoted by von Hammer, in the note on p. 806 of *GOR*², ii, and that of Sir Thomas Roe. See also the general histories by von Hammer, Zinkeisen and Jorga; İ.H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı tarihi*, iv/1, 337-41, iv/2, 370 ff.; A.D. Alderson, *The structure of the Ottoman dynasty*, Oxford 1956, index; S.J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman empire and modern Turkey*, i, Cambridge 1976, 246; R. Mantran (ed.), *Histoire de l'empire ottoman*, Paris 1989, index; *İA*, art. *Osman II* (Şinâsi Altundağ). (J.H. KRAMERS)

'OTHMÂN III, twenty-fifth sultan of the Ottoman empire (regn. 1168-71/1754-7) and son of Muṣṭafā II, succeeded his brother Maḥmūd I on 14 December 1754. He was born on 2 January 1699 (*Sidjill-i 'othmānī*, i, 56) and had therefore reached an advanced age when he was called to the throne. No events of political importance took place in his reign. The period of peace which had begun with the peace of Belgrade in 1739 continued; at home only a series of seditious outbreaks in the frontier provinces indicated the weakness of the empire. In the absence of any outstanding personality, the sultan was able to