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PLAGUE IN TRABZON AND REACTIONS TO IT ACCORDING TO LOCAL JUDICIAL REGISTERS

The impact of the Black Death of the 14th century and the plague which continued until the 19th century had worldwide impact. It was one of the great disasters in world history. Few if any other diseases ever brought such catastrophic consequences over virtually the entire world. Western historians have long made plague a central concern in their studies, but no thorough studies of any part of the Muslim world had been attempted before Micheal Dols (1975), who searched out and studied most of the Arabic sources from the classical or medieval period of Islamic history. Dols' studies, particularly when combined with the studies of the Mediterranean and Black Sea during the whole period of plague history by the eminent French historian Jean-Noël Biraben, provide an excellent background for studying that disaster in territories that became central parts of the Ottoman Empire.

Unfortunately, very few Ottoman sources were available to those scholars. Dols concentrates on the earliest period. Despite Biraben's heroic efforts to find firsthand evidence of every kind, there are virtually no Ottoman sources that he can draw upon. Consequently, even for the long period when parts of the Ottoman empire became endemic centers of plague, Biraben has to draw almost entirely on European observers, that group whose misperceptions have long clouded the study of Ottoman history. Even Dols, who had the opportunity to uncover a small amount of Ottoman evidence, has little insight into the Turkish (and Persian, for that matter) worlds and world views. Unfortunately, only miniscule, scattered evidence has been discovered in Ottoman sources. Much of the western scholarship on the subject typically, therefore, presumes fatalism and ignorance in the attitudes of Ottoman officials and Ottoman subjects (even as they do, for example by presuming that Ottoman use of vaccination against smallpox was little more than folk medicine, that Ottomans could not understand science unless they learned it from the West, because there is no science other than that of Western Europe).

Thorough bibliographies of plague in the Ottoman Empire have been attempted recently for the 18th and 19th centuries, but unfortunately that

approach means using European sources, the reports of people very few of whom have any understanding of the nuances of Ottoman culture, medicine, or science, and anyway, that was a time when Ottoman culture and learning lagged far behind that of Western Europe. Thorough studies of plague must take those works into account because they do provide huge amounts of information, but until local evidence can be found such as what has been brought to bear in studying plague in France or some of the Italian states using local sources, Ottoman understanding of, and reaction to, plague will remain poorly known.

Such evidence is difficult to come by, but when adequate manpower becomes available to study this area, rich sources may be found. To the best of my knowledge, there is precious little about that plague to be found in published Ottoman sources. When I studied the judicial registers from Kayseri between 1590 and 1630, I did not encounter any evidence about the disease. Of course, at an elevation of 1055 meters and far from the sea in central Anatolia, Kayseri may have had a fairly healthful environment. A place that I have been studying more recently, however, Cyprus, at least starting in the 14th century, was a disease-ridden place where plague and malaria both became deeply entrenched; even when Venice controlled the island between 1489 and 1571, certain areas were considered to be so unhealthful that no one would live there, and Venice tried to attract Latin settlers to the island. I scrutinized the scattered judicial registers surviving between 1580 and 1640 without finding any evidence; and not even the mass of various and sundry imperial administrative orders provided any really good evidence. Trabzon was an important trading emporium and an international seaport, but nevertheless, it was with great surprise that I uncovered several references to plague when I was reading the judicial registers between 1565 and 1640.

Of course, it is not unusual for important differences to exist in the social, economic, and legal practices of Arabs, Persians, and Turks, so even a first-class study of Arab attitudes towards plague and disease must be treated with considerable caution before attempting to generalize. The existence of different legal traditions, and the different historical experiences result sometimes in profoundly different behavior by different Muslims. If Dols finds resignation and criticism of flight to avoid infected neighbors the predominant Arab Muslim ethos early in Islamic history, we must consider that strong grounds for considering behavior during Ottoman times. Ottoman legal practice, however, was often quite flexible, and there existed ample legal precedent for them to justify avoiding plague scrupulously.

I am unaware of any published evidence about reactions to plague during the time of the Ottoman Empire from archives or chronicles similar to what I have found in the Trabzon judicial registers. I have not found other evidence to confirm the registers, but a considerable number of consistent reports did occur over a period of almost 75 years, enough to convince me that this must have been the practice in the Black Sea province of Trabzon. Indeed, since *kadi*s were not local people, according to Ottoman law and practice, but professional judges who were educated and trained in the capital, then appointed and systematically

transferred by the imperial government, from city to city, and province to province, it would be extremely unlikely if the practices described below were somehow confined to the southern shores of the Black Sea. It is impossible to conjecture anything about the antiquity of those practices, or about how long they continued to be practiced after the mid-17th century.

Plague raged in Trabzon during the years 1565 and 1566, and again to some extent in 1633. New evidence of a conclusive sort appears in the judicial registers (*sicils*). Particularly since Trabzon was a rather busy long distance port, it may have been vulnerable to plague, although frankly, references to that problem are almost entirely lacking in the court records that I have used. Why the general avoidance of this topic in the records from Cyprus, Kayseri, and even Trabzon is a puzzle, particularly since their occurence is not infrequently reported by foreign merchants, consular officials, and travellers.[1] Unfortunately, virulent diseases and other disasters were rarely mentioned.

1565-1566

Most of the references to plague found during a perusal of the judicial registers for 1565 and 1566 concern attempts by individuals or by pious foundations (*evkaf*) to escape financial disaster on account of the severity of the calamity. No judicial registers survive before 1565 nor after 1566 until 1609, so nothing may be said about its origins or demise.

Probably the wealthiest pious foundation in 16th century Trabzon, was founded by Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror (1451-1481), who added Trabzon to the Ottoman Empire in a brilliant eastern campaign in 1461. Among its vast properties in the city were two Turkish baths. Another important foundation in Trabzon was that of the late İskender Paşa, who served several terms as provincial governor early in the 16th century, who had a quarter named for him in the eastern suburbs of the city, and whose wealthy foundation included a bath and a caravanserai. The renters and administrators of those foundations acted decisively and effectively to protect their financial interest.

The earliest references to the local effects of plague were on 17 March 1565 (14 *Şaban* 972) and on 25 March (22 *Şaban*), when in successive weeks special problems were brought to the *kadi* of the city. The next incidents occurred on the 3rd and 26th of April (2 and 25 *Ramazan*). Although only a single case was brought in May (30 May = last day of *Şevval*), five more incidents occurred in the next two months: the 8th, 25th, and 28th of June (9,

[1] In "Rural Society in the Empire of Trebizond", *Archeion Pontou* 28, 1966, p. 156, Anthony Bryer refers to "the urban exodus from the hot, plague-ridden coastal towns in the summer". According to J. N. Biraben, plague was active in Istanbul (Constantinople) in 1560-1561, 1564, 1567; also in 1628, 1629, *Les Hommes et la Peste en France et dans les pays européens et méditerranéens*, v.1, pp. 443f., Paris-La Haye, 1975. Elsewhere, he describes plague in the eastern part of southeastern Europe as on the rise after 1550, but in decline, and very low, after 1625, p. 128. In Europe generally he judged plague strong in 1557, 1564, 1580, 1629, 1636, and in remission in 1559, 1570-1575, 1584, 1633, and 1644, p. 119.

26, and 29 *Zil-Kade*) and the 16th and 29th of July (17 *Zil-Hicce* 972 and 1 *Muharrem* 973). After that only two further cases occurred which mention that plague: early January (11 *Cumadi II* 973) and late March, 1566 (10 *Ramazan*).

Apparently the winter of 1564-1565 had brought Trabzon little relief from the plague for dire conditions such as were found in March and April of 1565 must have required as least some months of severe plague to develop.

LOWERING (*KIST*) OF THE HAMMAM. The share (*kist*) of the hammam of Tabbak hane quarter (the *mahalle* of the Tanners) of the pious foundation (*evkaf*) of Sultan Han is in the care (*ᶜuhde*) of İskender bn Huseyn for 194 *akçe*/month. Now, on account of fear of plague (*taᶜun*), no one remains in the quarter. So the share is lowered 94 *akçe*/mo. to 100 *akçe*. İskender accepts that. Written at the request of the collector of revenue for the pious foundation (*cabi*). 17 March 1565 (1818 59-3; 14 *Şaban* 972).

LOWERING THE CARAVANSERAİ (*KARBANSARAY*) TAX-FARM (*MUKATAᶜA*). The caravanserai of the late İskender paşa in the city is under the care of Akob v. Arutin for 16,000 *akçe* for 3 years. Now the people of the city are dispersed. Its administrator (*mutevelli*) zaᶜim Mustafa uses clerk (*katib*) Musa kethuda, his legal agent, to give it to Akob for 500 *akçe* every 3 months. Registered. 25 March 1565 (1818 66-1; 22 *Şaban* 972).

LOWERING THE SHARE (*MUKATAᶜA*) OF THE İSKENDER PAŞA HAMMAM. The hammam was in the care of İskender of 16,000 *akçe*/yr. Now the people of the city are dispersed on account of fear of plague (*taᶜun havfi*). The people want the cost lowered by administrator (*mutevelli*) zaᶜim Mustafa, who has clerk Musa (as his agent). Henceforth it will be lowered to 1700 *akçe* every 3 months. Written at the request of İskender. 25 March 1565 (1818 66-2; 22 *Şaban* 972).

LOWERING THE SHARE (KIST) OF KULLE (KALE=INNER CITADEL) HAMMAM. Kulle hammam of the pious foundation of the mosque (*cami-i Şerif*) of Sultan Mehmed Han is assigned from August 1564 (*Muharrem* 972) for 3 years to this Sufi Suleyman bn Huseyn, who gets a tax-farm (*mukataᶜa*) for 13,000 *akçe*. Now, when on account of the plague (*taᶜun*) the people of the city are dispersed, Suleyman comes to the court and complains of oppression: in truth the people of the city are dispersed, the hammam has no customers, and the share (*kist*) is deficient. Experts (*ehl-i vukuf*), notables (*aᶜyan-ı Şehir*), and administrator (*mutevelli*) Mehmed come to court and confirm this. On account of this, the tax-farm (*mukataᶜa*) is reduced at once to 8000 *akçe*. Written at the request of the administrator. 3 April 1565 (1818 26b-1; 2 *Ramazan* 972).

DEAD OF PLAGUE (*MATᶜUN*). Abdullah bn Kasim, Kuyum Huseyn, and jailor (*zindancı*) Şirmerd testify that Huseyn, son of Mirza, who was imprisoned (*habs*) for investigation (*ieftiş*) by imperial order (*emir-i Şerifi*), has died of plague. Written at the request of the present provincial

governor's deputy (*mir liva kethudası*) Memi çelebi. 26 April 1565 (1819 9b-1; 25 *Ramazan* 972).

LOWERING THE HAMMAM'S SHARE. Kulle Hammam of the Sultan Mehmed Han foundation (*evkaf*) is held in a tax-farm (*mukataᶜa*) for 13,000 *akçe* by Sufi Suleyman. On account of fear of plague (*taᶜun havfından*), it became 8000 *akçe*; now, by decision of the people of the city (*şehir halkı*), it is lowered to 7000, after due judicial consideration (*marifet*) of the collector of revenue for the foundation (*cabi*) Mehmed. Suleyman accepts that. 30 May 1565 (1818 19b-1; *selh Şevval* 972).

The intensity of the plague affected not just the city of Trabzon but also villages and towns to the south and east.

THE PUBLIC WEIGHING OFFICIAL (KABANCI). The taxpayers (*reᶜaya*) of Veryan village, south of Trabzon in Maçuka district (*nahiye*), which is the *tımar* of sipahi İbrahim bn İskender, made known (*iᶜlam*) as follows: The crops (*mahsul*) of the village are raised (*yetişub*) and it is weighing time (*kabal*, error for *kaban, zamani*), but our sipahi has fled on account of fear of plague (*taᶜun*).[2] We want a public weighing official appointed before the *Sharia* (i.e., at the court). From the tax-payers (*reᶜaya*) of the village Todor v. Kirako is appointed. 8 June 1565 (1819 20b-5; 9 *Zil-kade* 972).

SURETY (*EMANET*). The superintendent of market dues (*ihtisab emini*) Bayram bn Abdullah, who died of plague (*matᶜun*) when he became sick in Sürmene (a small town on the coast c. 40 km east of Trabzon), had given his money in surety (*emanet*) to this zaᶜim Hayreddin. When he died, his partner (*muşterik*) Hüseyn aga had the clerk of the market dues (*ihtisab katibi*) Kurd come to get it. Before the *Sharia* 3479 *akçe* was given to Kurd. Written at the request of Hayreddin. 25 June 1565 (1819 23-2; 26 *Zil-Kade* 972).

THE DEATH OF THE SUPERVISOR OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES AND THE BAZAAR (*MUHTESIB*). Hüseyn aga's partner (*muşterik*) Bayram bn Abdullah died of plague on 21 June 1565 (22 *Zil-Kade* 972). Written at the request of Kurd on behalf of the aforementioned Hüseyn aga. 28 June 1565 (1819 24b-3; 29 *Zil-Kade* 972).

CLAIM FOR THE FINES (*CERIME*) OF THE POLICE (*SU BAŞI*).[3] Sürmene police (*subaşileri*) Hasan and Arab made a claim against İskender v. Todor of Eyner zade quarter (*mahalle*), who makes cauldrons (*kazancılık*) in Sürmene: İskender had an apprentice (*şakird*) cauldronmaker (*kazgancı*) who had plague (*maᶜtun*). İskender took him and left him at a forest (*orman*) and he died. We want a fine (*cerime*). According to *Sharia* there

[2] In order that they could estimate the volumes, the *tımar* sipahis or their agents had to inspect the grain fields before villagers were allowed to harvest them.

[3] One important source of the salaries of local police consisted of fines (*cerime*) assessed on people guilty of homicide. When police tried to demand those fines from a certain cauldronmaker who had led a man with plague outside of the town, there to be left to die, the police considered this grounds for assessing the fine. However the court disagreed.

is nothing that must be done in this matter; it is forbidden (*menᶜve def*) to hear the claim of the police (*su başı*). Written at the request of İskender. 16 July 1565 (1819 3lb-3; 17 *Zil-Hicce* 972).

THE PROPRIETOR (*HAMMAMCI*) OF THE HAMMAM CALLED KAFIR HAMMAM BELONGING TO THE PIOUS FOUNDATION (*EVKAF*) OF CAMİᶜ-İ ATIK, İSKENDER, IS MISSING (*GAYB*). Yusuf was appointed acting proprietor (*kaym makam*) in his place. When he died of plague and the people (*şehir halkı*) had become dispersed (*perakende*), no one else would accept the hammam. It has been deserted (*battal, hali*) since 14 June 1565 (15 *Zil-Kade* 972). Written at the request of the collector of revenue for the foundation (*cabi*) Mehmed Çelebi. 29 July 1565 (1819 33b-4; 1 *Muharrem* 973).

A case involved Ömer Çelebi bn ᶜAli su başı, guardian for the orphans of the late slave (*kul*) of Erz-i Rum, Bayram, who formerly died of plague ... early January 1566 (1818 126b-1; 11 *Cumadi II* 973).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT (*İKRAR*) OF THE CUSTOMS OFFICERS (*GUMRUKCIYAN*). Gulam Şahi ᶜAli Beg, former harbor master (*iskele emini*) of Trabzon, makes a claim against Hiristodil Kaluk, Manuel v. Sodiro, Baskal v. Yani, Kostindin Vasil, and Nikola v. Savatiyos: The accused, with 38 companions (*yoldaş*), were in a ship of *zimmi* Lazaro Zehariye from Çömlekçi quarter (the *mahalle* of the Potters).While lying at anchor off the pier (*iskeleye demur burakmuş iken*), they heard that there is plague in the city. They brought out the ship and moved it to another place (*vilayet*), and sold things there, causing me great loss. The accused reply: In truth, with all our companions (*yoldaş*) we brought out the ship and took it to another place (*vilayet*), but we gave our captain (*re'is*) the dues (*hakk*) which we owed to the pier (*iskele*). Written at the request of Ali beg. 31 March 1566 (1818 94-4; 10 *Ramazan* 973).

1633

Another plague flourished in 1633, although known only through a single document. Since the case involved merchant seamen and their ship, one can be quite certain that the plague in 1633 was not confined to Trabzon. Although nothing is known of the ownership, home ports, or sailing routes of that vessel, clearly the captain was a Greek Orthodox Christian Ottoman subject.

Mehmed çavuş bn Hasan, legal agent (*vekil*) for a woman named Lalezar hatun, who is guardian (*vasi*) for the girl orphan of the late börekçi Mehmed aga, who took possession of a ship (*sefine*) 25 cubits long (*arşun*) called *Mesika*, states in the presence of captain (*re'is*) Zano v. Todori: Formerly I became agent (*vekil*) to receive the ship (*sefine*) and its cargo (*alat* and *esbeb*) from Yusuf Paşa, but plague (*taᶜun*) fell upon the people of the ship, killing most of them. It was necessary to hand the ship over to captain (*re'is*) Zano,

with permission of the *Sharia*, to protect it from the Rus (Cossack pirates, who were very active at that time). So I gave the ship and 21,000 *akçe* for investment capital (*sermaye*) to Zano. Zano confirms that. July 1633 (1828 7-3; 1 *Muharrem* 1043).

1639

For 1639 the judicial records merely attributed the death of a single local Muslim resident of the old walled city to plague, and so provide no basis for conjecture about its range or virulence. When his plague-marked body was discovered, the office of the provincial governor had to investigate the circumstances.

Present Trabzon governor Hüseyn Paşa had his sergeant-at-arms (*alay çavuş*) say to the court: It was heard that Ahmed of Orta Hisar (the middle of the city's three walls) died with blood-colored eyes. (*ḳân eñlu etdûb*). We want someone to come and investigate (*keşf*). From the *Sharia* court scribe (*mahkeme katibi*) Esaʿd çelebi, the aforementioned overseer (*mubaşir*), and the Muslims whose names are listed below came, investigated, and testified: We did not find any traces of wounds (*eser-i cerh*), but there was the mark of plague (*haşibesi*) on his face.[4] He died (*fevt*) of plague (*matʿunen*). Written at the request of the scribe. Late April/early May 1639 (1900 16b-6; III *Zil-Hicce* 1048).

The following year a janissary officer (*yeni çeri zabiti*) in Trabzon castle (*kalʿesi*) named Sefer aga emancipated Zul-Fikar bn Abdullah, his 16 year-old Georgian (*Gurci i-asl*) slave (ʿ*abd-i memlugi*), whose identifying characteristics included black eyelashes, black eyes, and the mark (*eser*) of plague (*taʿun*) on the right side of his face.[5] Early November 1640 (1900 70-5; *II Receb* 1050).

OBSERVATIONS

The cases illustrate some of the dire social and economic consequences accompanying plague in the 16th and 17th centuries. Much of the town economy might be paralyzed as people curtailed their daily business activities sharply. Holders of tax-farms, who had paid their fees in advance, were especially vulnerable, but renters also were susceptible to heavy losses. Administrators of pious foundations demonstrated considerable flexibility and ingenuity first in lowering fees even more than once when disaster struck, and then raising them

[4] Based on the descriptions by Michael Dols the mark of plague (*haşibe*) on the face might refer to abscesses or buboes or pustules or black sores. *The Black Death in the Middle East*, Princeton, 1977, pp. 72, 74n, 78.

[5] The mark (*eser*) of plague (*taʿun*) on one who has survived it possibly refers to black sores, or to a blackness of complexion.

slowly as conditions improved.

In such circumstances the fluctuations in the economy of Trabzon may be attributed exclusively to the presence or absence of the disease. There are no indications of other factors such as debasement of coinage, inflation, famine, or brigandage which might have influenced conditions. Surely the economic and social consequences of the plague of 1565-1566 in Trabzon are independent of all other factors. When plague struck, the economy collapsed. When the plague moderated, conditions quickly returned to normal.

It is interesting to consider these cases in the light of the stereoypes of Muslim intransigence and fatalism in the face of disease, including plague. Some official registers of legal proceedings specifically mention local people in Trabzon, both Muslim and Greek Orthodox Christians, acting out of fear of the plague. Hammams of course through all the Muslim world were important social gathering places, especially for women, and Islamic law makes numerous requirements in regard to cleanliness. If attendance at Kulle hammam or İskender Paşa hammam dropped drastically, surely people must have had some understanding that contact with those infected by plague could cause themselves or their families to become infected. If people very much reduced their contacts with the İskender Paşa caravanserai in the city, that means that they were cutting back severely their participation in business. If people became dispersed because of the plague, that means that many of them fled the city for safety. Probably some went to the numerous villages in the vicinity of Trabzon, where they hoped to live with their families in greater security until the plague passed. Others must have established themselves in the summer pastures (*yayla*) where many of them spent their summers anyway.[6] Certainly in a modest-sized place like Trabzon, with only 6000 or 7000 people in 1565,[7] hundreds, or possibly thousands, of residents abandoned the city temporarily in fear.

Not only some townspeople but also some villagers followed the practice of allowing the infected to be carried to the outskirts of a town and left to die. The court judged that practice to be in accordance with the *sharia*, and the claims of police officials for the fees that they were able to collect from people of a town quarter or village when some one died under inauspicious circumstances were rejected, making the behavior of cauldron-maker İskender completely legitimate.

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[6] On the mountain life of Trabzon, see X. de Planhol, "A travers les chaines pontiques. Plantations côtières et vie montagnarde", *Bulletin de l'Association de Géographes Français*, 311-312, 1963, pp. 2-12, and "Geographica Pontica", *Journal Asiatique* 251, 1963, pp. 293-309. See also A. A. M. Bryer, "The Estates of the Empire of Trebizond", *Archeion Pontou*, 35, 1978, pp. 374f.

[7] Heath W. Lowry has estimated the population of Trabzon as 6,012 in 1523, 6,100 in 1553, and 10,575 in 1583. *Trabzon Şehrinin İslamlaşma ve Türkleşmesi 1461-1583*, Istanbul, 1981, pp. 53, 62, 68, and *passim*. My own interpretations of the same sources give populations in the range of 4,500 to 5,200, 4,900 to 5,700, and 6,400 to 7,500 for the same time periods. "Urban population in Anatolia in the Sixteenth Century: a Study of Kayseri, Karaman, Amasya, Trabzon, and Erzurum", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 7, 1976, pp. 42-47 and p. 51.

Seamen and merchants were so wary of plague that they took themselves to another harbor rather than land at plague-infected Trabzon. Neither the point of origin of the vessel nor the alternate port that the ship found are mentioned, unfortunately, nor are the goods involved. Perhaps the goods were landed at a nearby port and sent by donkey or camel to Trabzon; perhaps another market was found for the goods. But obviously merchants and seamen thought they knew a great deal about plague and how to avoid it.

Michael Dols, in *The Black Death in the Middle East*, points to tensions in Muslim thought between God's omnipotence and human finitude. If some jurists felt that complete submission to God's will required unwillingness to flee from plague, at least some other authorities spoke out in favor of trying to avoid or escape the disease. For whatever it is worth, the important Ottoman scholar Taşköprüzade (d.1553) approved of fleeing from an epidemic of plague, arguing that changing the air is useful and that people should try to go someplace where plague is not expected, so long as they do not violate their familial or civic responsibilities.[8]

In his recent book *Plagues and Peoples*, William McNeill finds great differences in the reactions of the Muslim world and the Latin Christian world in plague. "Moslem response to plague was (or became) passive ... The effect of .... traditions was to inhibit organized efforts to cope with plague ... By the sixteenth century, when Christian rules of quarantine and other prophylactic measures against plague had attained firm definition, Moslem views hardened against efforts to escape the will of Allah ... Moslems regarded Christian health measures with amused disdain, and thereby exposed themselves to heavier losses from plague than prevailed among their Christian neighbors ... this turned into a demographic handicap."

In Latin Europe, on the other hand, "... city governments, especially in Italy, responded rather quickly to the challenges presented by devastating disease. Magistrates learned how to cope at the practical level, organizing burials, safeguarding food deliveries, setting up quarantines, hiring doctors, and establishing other regulations for public and private behavior in time of plague. The ability of city authorities to react in these more or less effective ways was symptomatic of their general vigor..."[9]

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[8] Princeton, 1977, pp. 22f, 98f, 121, 297f, 299f.

[9] Oxford, 1977, pp. 188f, 186. The Imperial Habsburg ambassador to the Porte, Ogier de Busbecq, resided in Istanbul in 1555 when he reported that 1000 to 1200 people per day were dying there from the plague. According to Busbecq people made no efforts to avoid the disease: "The Turks entertain this opinion concerning the pestilence, that every man's destiny is written by God in his forehead; so that it is a foolish thing among them, to think to decline or avoid it..." *Travels into Turkey*, 3rd ed. Glasgow, 1761, p. 214. Cf. F. Braudel, who observes that in the 16th century between one fourth and one third of the inhabitants of a town could disappear suddenly, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, N.Y., 1972, v. 1, pp. 332f.

Very business-like vigor, and determination, occured in 16th and 17th century Trabzon. It would be very useful to know more about how that and other Ottoman cities really did function in the face of plague. In Trabzon at that time, the behavior was not passive.[10]

[10] In a paper on locusts which I recently submitted for publication I accumulated a considerable amount of evidence concerning Ottoman officials, and local Muslims and Christians, sometimes making extraordinary efforts to combat locusts. The judicial registers of Trabzon are preserved in the archives of Topkapı Palace in Istanbul. Cases cited in the text have been summarized selectively on the basis of their importance and relevance to the topic.