In the last chapter we saw that after Emir Süleyman took Bursa in 1403–1404, he was based mostly in Anatolia, where he tried to regain territory from the beyliks and his brother Mehmed. In the end, Mehmed was able to free himself from Süleyman’s presence by introducing Musa Çelebi as another contender to the Ottoman succession struggle. Musa was sent to Rumeli as a diversion in order to draw Süleyman away from Anatolia. While it is uncertain exactly when Musa was released, it seems that he first spent some time in Kastamonu and Karaman, eventually crossing from Sinop to Wallachia with the aid of İsfendiyar and the Wallachian voyvoda Mircea. As we will see in a moment, there is also evidence that the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos was involved in the plot to bring Musa to Rumeli.

While the timing of Musa’s crossing to Wallachia is unknown, his first activities in Rumeli took place after September of 1409.1 It is therefore most likely that he arrived in Wallachia shortly before that time. While Alexandrescu has suggested that Musa was in Wallachia as early as 1406, there is little evidence to support this assertion.2 As we will see, Süleyman did not return to Rumeli until June of 1410; had Musa

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2 See Alexandrescu, “Les relations,” 116. İnalçık, “Mehmed I,” 974 has followed Alexandrescu, who cites Joseph von Hammer and the Rumanian scholars M. Guboglu and Mustafa Mehmet. However these are as the only scholars who have adopted the date of 1406 for Musa’s crossing to Wallachia. As for her evidence, it is based on the situation in Wallachia around 1406. But the fact that Mircea may have sought a solution to his problems with the Ottomans at that time does not mean that he actually succeeded in bringing Musa there that early.
been in Wallachia already in 1406, it is likely that Süleyman would have reacted to his presence there sooner. Moreover, one would have expected to find references to Musa’s presence in various documentary sources, which are in fact totally lacking. Of course it is not impossible that Musa might have been held as a “guest” of Mircea in Wallachia for several years, but there is no way of knowing this.

We saw in the last chapter that while Süleyman was campaigning in Anatolia, he sought to preserve the status quo in Rumeli by maintaining peaceful relations with the Christian powers there. However, the same did not hold true for the Christian powers in question, which naturally perceived Süleyman’s expansion into Anatolia as a threat. After 1404, it seemed probable that Süleyman might eventually defeat his rival Mehmed Çelebi and reunite his father’s realm under his rule, leading to a revival of Ottoman power in the region. From the perspective of the Ottomans’ enemies such an event had to be avoided at all costs. For that reason, during Süleyman’s absence from Rumeli several Christian rulers there sought to cooperate against him. While the sources are not entirely adequate for a detailed reconstruction of those alliances, they do provide evidence that suggests common action on the part of Byzantium, Wallachia, Hungary, and other powers. Furthermore, they suggest that the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos may have supported Musa during his rise, an idea that has been overshadowed in the literature by Musa’s subsequent career, which involved many violent attacks against Byzantine territory.3

Apart from Wallachia and Byzantium, the Turkish raiders (akıncı) and provincial cavalry (sipahi) of Rumeli also played an essential part in Musa’s rise to power. These people were displeased with Süleyman’s peaceful policies toward the Christians, which had robbed them of their livelihood. As we saw in the last chapter, while Süleyman was preoccupied in Anatolia, limited raids were carried out by localuç begleri and akıncı against Venetian interests in Albania and Greece. While our sources on the eastern Balkans are more scarce, they are sufficient to suggest that such raids also took place against Wallachian territory. As we saw in chapter 1, around the time of the Battle of Ankara Mircea may have already regained his old territories in the Dobrudja (Deliorman) region across the Danube, which Süleyman had granted him in exchange for the payment of a tribute. But the Dobrudja was home to

3 See chapter 5.