ATTAINING AGREEMENT on terms, personal names, and place-names related to a vast region once ruled by the Ottomans and their Habsburg rivals is impossible. People in those lands spoke many languages, including Turkish, Greek, Armenian, Kurdish, Arabic, Persian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Croatian, Romanian, Hungarian, Slovak, Polish, Ukrainian, German, Italian, and Latin. They used different names for the same places. For Ottoman terms, which are written in the Arabic script, I have opted for the post-1928 modern Turkish transliteration system that uses Latin script. Unfamiliar terms and names will challenge many English-speaking readers. I tried to minimize their challenge by using accepted English forms of Turkish and Arabic terms whenever possible (such as agha, beg, pasha, sharia, vizier). I kept these forms even if the term had become part of the name of individuals (Osman Agha, Osman Beg, Osman Pasha). Because these foreign terms have entered English, they are not italicized. I opted for the modern Turkish forms of bey in composite words, such as sancakbeyi and beylerbeyi, meaning “district governor” and “provincial governor-general.” For simplicity, I do not indicate lengthened vowels, except when it is essential to avoid confusion—for example, to differentiate Âli, meaning “exalted” or “sublime,” from the commonly used name Ali. I do not generally use the Turkish capitalized dotted “i” (İ) for place-names and personal names that entered English (Istanbul, Izmir, Ismail), whereas lesser-known names are given in their Turkish orthography. For Serbian and Bulgarian names, written in Cyrillic, I use the Croatian orthography rather than any of the more complex scholarly transliteration systems. To help English-speaking readers, I have Anglicized the first names of historical figures (John Hunyadi instead of János Hunyadi and George Branković instead of Đurađ/Djuradj.
Branković), providing the original first name when they first appear in the book. In the Kingdom of Hungary and the Habsburg monarchy, many aristocratic and noble families were multilingual and used various name forms. I opted for the one most commonly used in the sources and literature I am familiar with.

Place-names are generally transcribed according to their modern name forms, with the following exceptions. Serbian and Bulgarian place-names are transliterated according to the Croatian orthography. Where established English forms exist, these are preferred. For the place-names in the Kingdom of Hungary that are situated since the end of World War I in Romania and Slovakia, the Hungarian name forms are preferred, as the modern Slovakian or Romanian name forms would represent anachronism. For the same reason, and for the sake of simplicity, I use the Polish name forms for place-names that belonged to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth—hence, Kamieniec Podolski instead of its Ukrainian name, which has too many transliterations (Kamianets Podilsky, Kamjanec’ Podil’skyj, Kam’yanets’ Podil’skyy, Kamenets Podil’skiy). A glossary of place-names at the end of the book lists the various name forms of frequently discussed places.

Throughout the book, I use Constantinople and Istanbul interchangeably. By doing so, I intend to dispel a common misconception that the Ottomans renamed the Byzantine capital Constantinople as Istanbul after they conquered it in 1453. In fact, the Ottomans called their new capital city Kostantiniyye (after the Arabic name form of Constantinople) on coins and in official documents until the end of the empire, especially when they referred to the court, where official documents were issued. At the same time, Istanbul (a distortion from the Greek phrase “to the city”) was also used in official documents and by the common people. The following pronunciation guide might be useful.

For Croatian: c = as ts in waits, č = soft ch, č = hard ch as in church, j = as y in yes, š = as sh in should, ž = as s in leisure.

For Hungarian: á = as a in father, c = as ts in waits, cs = as ch in church, é = as in café, gy = as in duke, í = as ee in see, j = as y in yes, ny = as in new,
ó = as o in go, s = as sh in should, sz = as s in sound, ty = as in stew, zs = as s in leisure, ú = as oo in root

For Romanian: j = as s in leisure, ş = as sh in should, ț = as ts in waits.

For Turkish: c = as j in jet, ç = as ch in church, ğ = soft g (lengthens preceding vowel), ı = undotted i (similar to the vowel sound in the word “cousin”), i = as ee in see, ö = as ö in German (similar to the vowel sound in the word “bird”), ş = as sh in should, ü = as ü in German.
THE LAST MUSLIM CONQUEST