'Oṣmān Ghāzī's Siege of Nicaea and The Battle of Bapheus

During the period 1075-1086 Nicaea became the capital city of the Seldjukid ruler Süleymānshāh I, founder of the Seldjukid Sultanate of Anatolia.[1] Lost to the Byzantines as a result of the siege by the crusaders from the west in 1097 its re-conquest remained a constant concern for the Seldjukids. Seldjukid rule was restored in Nicaea in 1105, but the city was lost again in ca. 1147 to the Byzantines.

The dry Eskişehir plain where Turcomans were pushed back now became a frontier between Byzantines and Seldjukids. Pastoralist Turcomans needed the hilly country with good mountain pasturelands beyond the borderline and quite often penetrated with their herds into the Byzantine territory. Against them Emperor Manuel I Comnenus (1143-1180) built or reinforced fortresses on the border including Karaca-Hisar on a mound just three kilometer from Eskişehir. However, the crushing Seldjukid victory at

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[1] See "Süleyman-Şah I", (O. Turan) *İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (thereafter *İA*) fasc. III (1967), 210-219; S. Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century*, Berkeley: UCP 1971, 96-142; C. Cahen, *La Turquie pré-Ottomane*, Istanbul: Institut Français des Etudes Anatoliens, 1988, 13-15; Ali Sevim, *Anadolu Fatihi Kutalmışoğlu Süleymanşah*, Ankara: TTK, 1990; Süleymānşāh I conquered Nicaea in 1075 and made it the capital city of the Seldjukid Sultanate in Anatolia. Emperor Alexios Comnenus recognized his possession of Nicaea with the treaty of Dragos-Creek (near Maltepe) in 1081. Upon Süleymānşāh's death in June 1086 (See Ali Sevim, 37-39) the Seldjukid Sultan Melikshāh sent his general Porsuk, and then Bozan to take possession of the city. Abū'l Ḳasim, lieutenant of Süleymānşāh at Iznik, approached the emperor to be able to resist the Seljukid emirs until he was put to death by Bozan in 1087. It is to be noted that Abū'l Ḳasim is credited with the conquest of Nicomedia (Izmit) before his death. Osman Turan, 217-218, asserted that the state Süleymānşāh founded gave rise among the Turcomans in this part of Anatolia to a tradition of "the frontier state of the ghāzīs". The claim in the early Ottoman traditions that Süleymānşāh was the ancestor of 'Oṣmān Ghāzī may be taken as an evidence of such an enduring tradition over centuries. However, Enverī, *Düstūrnāme* (ed. M. H. Yinanç, Istanbul 1928, 18) correcting the error on the basis of the better sources, recognizes Süleymānşāh as the son of Ḳutalmış and gives a different genealogy for 'Oṣmān's ancestors. What is important here is that the re-conquest of Nicaea and revival of the Turkish-Muslim state of Iznik must become the ultimate ambition among the Turcomans settled in this area. On the Seldjukid presence in Nicaea in general, see S. Vryonis, *op. cit.*, 31-36, 52-58, 112-116, 146-155.

Myriokephalon in 1176 totally changed the conditions on this frontier, encouraging the westward expansion of the Turcomans; for Sultan's first condition for peace was the demolition of the recently built fortresses in the region.

Apparently the Seldjukids, in particular their frontier *ghāzīs*, never gave up the idea of the re-conquest of Nicaea for Islam. For Muslims, a land once being made part of the *Dār al-Islām*, is considered always an Islamic territory and its loss was believed to be only temporary. At any rate, after Süleymānshāh the Seldjukids seem to have always regard Nicaea a city just at the border of their territory. In fact, when Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Mes'ūd II (1283-ca. 1301 and 1303-1308) was bestowed by the Mongol Khan the Seldjukid Sultanate in Anatolia his territory was supposed to encompass all the lands "up to the border of Nicaea".[2]

Also, about 1261 when the Turcoman clans dependent on Sultan 'Izz al-Dīn Keykāvūs migrated to join him in Byzantium, "they went to Iznik pretending that they were going to their own winter pastures, and in a short period of time from there many Turkish nomad families (Türkevi) passed over to Europe".[3] As will be seen below, Oṣmān Ghāzī's strategy makes us believe that his ultimate goal was to reconquer Nicaea. In effect, comparative examination of the Byzantine and Ottoman sources show that the battle of Bapheus itself was an episode resulted from 'Oṣmān's attempt to capture Nicaea.

As a contemporary observer Pachymeres is, in general, our most reliable source for 'Oṣmān's activities, in particular for the battle of Bapheus.[4] In the introduction to his history Pachymeres makes it clear that his account is based either on his own observations or the statements of those who were the eye-witness of the events. Nevertheless, Pachymeres should be used critically, comparing his information with Ottoman traditions. For example, Pachymeres as well as modern authors following him seem to be mistaken

[2] Yazıdjızāde 'Alī, *Tārīkh-i Āl-i Selçuk*, Topkapı Palace Library, Revan Köşkü K. No. 130, 517; on this source see "Ibn Bībī" (A. S. Erzi), *İA*, V-2, 715-718.

[3] Yazıdjızāde, *op, cit.*, 462-464.

[4] George Pachymeres' account on 'Oṣmān Ghāzī's activities has been examined by various specialists including G. Caro, "Zür Chronologie der drei Letzten Bücher des Pachymeres", *BZ* 6 (1897) 116 ff., G. G. Arnakis, *Early Ottomans*, Athens 1947, 71 ff, in particular note 153; Tinnefeld, "Pachymeres und Philes als Zeugen für ein frühes Unternehmen gegen die Osmanen", *BZ.* 64 (1971), 46-54; E. Zachariadou, "Pachymeres on the 'Amourioi' of Kastamonu", *Byzantine and Modern Greek studies*, (1971), 57-70; Professor Zachariadou most kindly clarified for me several points in the Greek text. I am also indebted to Timothy O. Baldwin for his translation for me of the whole section on 'Oṣmān into English.

by showing 'Oṣmān active in lower Sangarus prior to 1300. Confusion seems to originate from the fact that Pachymeres in his story, leaving 'Oṣmān for a moment aside, goes back to an earlier period when the Paphlogonian Çobanid emirs were involved in the activities in the area.[5] In the Ottoman traditions it was Akça-Koca who was active in the lower Sangarius (Sakarya) area around Düz-Pazarı (Ada-Pazarı, today) down to Orkhan's time. Akça-Koca was an ally, and then a vassal, of 'Oṣmān Beg.

Actually, Pschymeres going back to earlier times describes the stituation in Bithynia prior to the major confrontation at Bapheus in 1301. He tries first to explain how the defense of the region was weakened as a result of the ill-measures taken by the usurper emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus in the 1260s. Greeks living in the district of Nicaea, Pachymeres tells us, rose up against the usurper, and harsh treatment of the rebels totally alienated the population in the region from him. When the Emperor abolished tax exemptions of the native soldiers in the fortresses they did not hesitate, Pachymeres adds, to join the Turks. "Some of them even served them as guides", a fact confirmed by the Ottoman sources. The Greek historian denounces the governor of Nicaeae who was acting toward the population "as a bandit rather than a soldier". The monks living in the monasteries in the area were severely persecuted as heretics.[6]

And then, narrating co-empreror Michael's campaign in western Anatolia in 1302, Pachymeres starts to tell us how 'Oṣmān became a pressing threat to the provinces close to Constantinople, Nicaea in particular. Summarizing first in a digression, the events preceding 'Oṣmān's raids "on the Sangarius river" he then tells us how 'Oṣmān crossed over the mountain (obviously the *Avdan* range in the Ottoman sources) and began to forage and pillage the land of "Halizonoi" in coastal plain, on the peninsula of Nicomedia/Izmit.

[5] Zachariadou, *art. cit.*, argues that the digression dates back to the events in the years 1290-1293 when Çobanid 'Alī, the chief of the Turcoman ghāzīs in the lower Sangarius made peace with Byzantium and gave up raiding into the Byzantine territory. Then, 'Oṣmān assumed the leadership of the ghāzīs, and vigorously continued the raids, which resulted in the siege of Nicaea. The passage is discussed by H. Inalcik, *Cambridge History of Islam*, I, eds. P. M. Holt, A. K. S. Lambton and B. Lewis, Cambridge 1970, 267; and Y. Yücel, "Çoban-Oğulları Beyliği", in *Anadolu Beylikleri Hakkında Araştırmalar*, I, 2. ed. 1991, 33-51; It is a Seldjukid source, *Musāmarat al-Akhbār* by Aksarāyī (ed. O. Turan, 1944) that brought clarification to Pachymeres' account.

[6] See A. E. Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, Cambridge 1972, 86-93; on the conditions of life of the Greeks on the frontier zone and the attitude toward the Ottomans early Ottoman traditions contain information confirming the Greek sources; on Ottoman conciliatory policy of *istimālet*, see H. Inalcik, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest", *Studia Islamica*, II (1954), 103-129.

Pachymeres gives details on the state of the blockade to which Nicaea was subjected following the Ottoman invasion of the surrounding areas. Its communication with Constantinople, he said, was cut off except through the road from Cio (Cius, Turkish *Gemilik* or *Gemlik*).[7] Travellers stayed at Cio and crossed the land in the night to reach the lake and enter the city at the only gate which was left open. All the other gates, Pachymeres continues, were closed because the enemy forces had surrounded the city on all other sides. We shall return to this point of detail when we discuss the authenticity of the Ottoman tradition.

Like the Ottoman tradition, Pachymeres too, describes the battle of Bapheus as resulted from 'Oṣmān's blockade of Nicaea.

Here are the main points in Pachymeres' account of the events leading to the battle of Bapheus.

1 On the 27th of July 'Atman' ('Oṣmān) appeared suddenly in the vicinity of Bapheus, a place near Nicomedia together with his followers numbering many thousands.

2 Pachymeres then tells us how the raiders of 'Oṣmān attacked Mouzalon at *Telemaia* prior to the battle of Bapheus. The success encouraged him to cross the mountain passes and come to raid the "Halizonoi".

Comment: This first success apparently was a surprise attack of a vanguard of "about one hundred men". Arnakis believs that it happened one year before the battle of Bapheus,[8] which is plausible (see infra, Chronology).

3 Other Turcomans from near the "*Meander*" river joined 'Oṣmān's troops when he decided to confront the Byzantine army. Many Turcoman allies, he says, joined him in this campaign.

Comment: Who were these allies?

It is not plausible that Turcomans from such a far away region as the Meander came to join 'Oṣmān Ottoman tradition (see infra), however, states that when Osman learned that Emperor was preparing an army against him he asked aid from the Sultan of Konya who sent orders to the Turcomans of Sahibin-Karahisar (Afyon) for his support. In fact, Karahisar was the principal Seldjukid frontier center in this section under the direct dependence

[7] Already Abu'l Kasim built, obviously with the cooperation of the indigenous Greek craftsmen, a fleet at Cios/Gemilik around 1086, see Anna Comnena, II, 110-114, cited by Vryonis, *op, cit.* 481.

[8] *Op. cit.*, p. 129-131.

of the Sultan.[9] Turcomans of Aydın and Menteshe advancing on the Meander valley were better known in Constantinople at this time while Karahisar had become a back country in the wake of the conquests by the Turcomans over the Byzantines in western anatolia in the period 1290-1304. This may be another confusion in Pachymeres' account.

General Situation in the years 1298-1301

Ottoman chronicles[10] make sufficiently clear that at this point 'Oṣmān had not yet become a leader among the chiefs in the area, each of whom acted independently. Prior to the battle of Bapheus, during the raid against Göynük-Taraklı on the main road from Kastamonu to Nicaea, 'Oṣmān had to rely on the cooperation of the local Turcoman and Greek lords in the area between the Sakarya and Göynük rivers. Köse Mihal, one of these lords, appears to have been not his vassal but his ally at this time. Apparently, 'Oṣmān's allies in the area joined him to confront the major Byzantine reaction threatening all of them. Pachymeres adds that at this particular time Emīr 'Alī (son of the Çobanid Emīr Yavlak Arslan), seeing the general onslaught against the Byzantines, resumed his offensive policy against the Byzantines on the lower Sakarya valley in the Adapazarı area. This explains Pachymeres' digression on the Çobanids of Kastamonu. No connection, however, between 'Oṣmān and 'Alī is alluded to. 'Alī's action, Pachymeres notes, had no significant consequence. 'Oṣmān emerged as the leader confronting the imperial army. In any case, while 'Oṣmān moved to Yalak-Ova against Mouzalon with his troops the Byzantine frontiers from the lower Sakarya river all the way down to the river portages at Geyve and Lefke, which controlled the roads from the east to Nicaea, were under attack.

In general, the Turcoman frontier lords intensified their raids into the Byzantine territories at times when they felt secure from a Mongol threat in their rear.

The years 1298-1301 were particularly favorable for Turcomans to resume their hostile activities against Byzantium all over the western frontiers.[11] In 1298, in Anatolia Mongol general Sülemish had risen up

[9] 40 On the powerful Seldjukid emīr Sāḥib Fakhr al Dīn 'Alī and his sons who with their stronghold Karahisar had a dominant position in western frontier lands, see Aksarāyī, *op. cit.*, Index: Fakhr al Dīn 'Alī, in particular 145-153.

[10] For these chronicles see H. Inalcik, "The Rise of Ottoman Historioghaphy", *Historians of the Middle East*, eds. B. Lewis and P. M. Holt (London 1962), 152-167; for a detailed examination of the early traditions on 'Oṣmān see second part of this paper.

[11] On the decisive events in western Anatolia during this period, see P. Wittek, *Das Fürstentum Mentesche, Studie zur Geschichte Westkleinasiens im 13.-15. Jh.* Istanbul:

against the Khan while Bayıncar, or Bayancar, the new commander-in-chief of the Mongol regiments in Anatolia, put 'Alā' al-Dīn Keyḳubād III on the Seldjukid throne in Konya.[12] In the winter of 1299, Sülemish killed Bayancar. The important event is referred to in the early Ottoman traditions. In the years 1299-1300 Mongol troops under Emīr Kutlushāh and Emīr Çoban were kept busy quelling the Sülemish rebellion. Sülemish was popular among the frontier Turcomans. When he was eliminated Mongol forces under him moved to the west and took refuge in the Eskishehir-Bithynia area, becoming neighbors to 'Oṣmān. All these events have a confused reflection in the Ottoman popular chronicles. However, it must be pointed out that Sülemish's scene of activity was in the distant area of Amasya-Tokat where the Turcomans became his main supporters.

Our contemporary principal source on the Ilkhanids of Iran, Rashīd al-Dīn observes that "Sülemish gained the support of the Mongol troops in the province of Danishmend (the Tokat-Amasya region) and took conrol of the *Udj,* or frontier areas, granting the symbols of *beg*ship, the flag and the military band, to many lords (in the Danishmend province)". Z. V. Togan[13] speculated that the Ottoman tradition about Sultan 'Alā'al-Dīn granting the symbols of *beg*ship to 'Oṣmān may actually be related to Sülemish. In any event, it is a fact that in the period 1299-1302 the Turcomans on the western frontiers rose up in a general offensive against the Byzantine territories form the lower Sakarya valley down to Ephesus.[14]

Istanbuler Mitteilungen 2, 1934; reprint Amsterdam: Oriental Press 1967, 15-24; Zachariadou, 'Pachymeres', 57-70; Laiou, *op. cit.,* 85-126.

12 See *'Āshiḳ Pasha-zāde Tārikhi,* ed. Atsız, Istanbul 1949, 97; according to Ottoman traditions Bayancar's arrival is coincided with the siege of Karaca-Hisar and the date given is 687 of Hejira, which begins on February 6, 1288; details of this episode are well known through the Seldjukid and Ilkhanid sources: see Z. V. Togan, *Umumî Türk Tarihine Giriş,* 2nd., ed., Istanbul 1970, 243, 328-331, 468-488; Bayancar's arrival in Anatolia as governer general actually occured toward the end of the year 1298. By 1299 Sülemish, supported by the anti-Ilkhanid Turcomans, took under his control the entire central and western lands of the Seldjukid Sultanate (Togan, 330). According to Togan (331) 'Oṣmān must have been involved in this struggle on the side of Sülemish. Sülemish is captured, and executed in Tabriz in 1301. In brief, Sülemish rebellion coincides with 'Oṣmān's activities against Nicaea; thus in the years 1298-1301 the Mongol Khans lost control over the Turcomans in the western frontier zone. The Byzantines believed that the Turcomans were effectively under the Khan's control and could be checked by him in their anti-Byzantine raids, hence, the marriage arrangement of a Byzantine princess, Maria, the sister of Andronicus II to Ghazan Khan (died, 1304); "Maryam" was married to Ghazan's successor Öldjeytü in 1306, see B. Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran,* Berlin 1955.

13 *Op. cit.,* 331.

14 Wittek, *op. cit.,* 15-23.

Evidently, 'Oṣmān profited from the massive advance of the Turcomans in western Anatolia in the years 1296-1301, which prevented the Byzantines to maintain their position against 'Oṣmān in Bithynia. In any case, 'Oṣmān's move against Nicaea must be considered within this general picture. Now let us turn to the Ottoman traditions on the battle of Bapheus.

Since the original text for the early traditions compiled by Yakhshi Faḳīh, son of Ishaḳ Faḳīh, the imam of Orkhan Ghāzi is lost we have to reconstruct them by comparing various Ottoman sources which have made use of this source. The most complete among them on the events we are concerned about here is Anonymous Tewārīkh-i Āl-i 'Oṣmān.[15]

The Early Ottoman traditions on the Battle of Koyun-Hisar (Bapheus)

I. The passage on the siege of Nicaea and the battle of Bapheus in the Anonymous Tewārīkh-i Āl-i 'Oṣmān.

The anonymous account is the most detailed version available in the Ottoman traditions dealing with the siege of Nicaea. We followed basically the critical text established by F. Giese.[16] Other copies, not utilized by him, namely those of İzzet Koyunoğlu, Ayasofya, and Beshīr Çelebi do not contain important variants concerning the above-noted events. The Giese's text and Koyunoğlu MS retains the stories of the Tekvur's daughter and of the dervish while other copies lack one or both of these stories.

Among the later varsions of the same tradition, Lûtfī Pasha writing his History of the Ottoman House on the basis of an anonymous chronicle provided the most detailed version.[17] He omits, however, the legend of the daughter of the Tekvur but retains the story of the dervish. Here is a translation of the text:

> Another son was born to 'Oṣmān. He gave to him the name of 'Alī Pasha. He stayed with his father while Orkhan Ghāzī was active in conquering lands. He captured Köprü-Hisar by assault and let his ghāzīs pillage it. Then, he came and lay siege to Iznik. In those days Iznik was a city extremely well fortified, of good repute and populous.

15 F. Giese, *Die altosmanischen anonymen Chroniken,* vol. I, Breslau 1922; the following manuscripts are also been utilized: The İzzet Koyunoğlu MS, *Milli Kütüphane,* Ankara, Microfilm archive no. A. 1465, 10-16; the Ayasofya MS, no. A. 233, fol. 6-10; Türk Tarih Kurumu MS, no. A. 1701, 8-17; Beşir Çelebi, *Tevārīkh-i Āl-i 'Oṣmān,* ed. İ. H. Ertaylan, Istanbul 1946, 11-18; Orudj's chronicle: F. Babinger, *Die frühosmanischen Jahrbücher des Urudsch,* Hannover 1925, generally following the anonymous, skips over the siege of Nicaea.

16 Giese, *Chroniken,* vol. I, p. 7-9.

17 *Lûtfî Pasha Tarihi,* ed. 'Ālī, İstanbul 1341 H., 23-25.

It was surrounded on its four sides by swamps so no force could approach it. In addition, it had a very large population. It is related that from each of its four gates one thousand men mounted on piebald horses could ride out at a moment's notice. You may estimate, by comparison, how many men mounted on one-colored horses there were and how populous the city was. But in those days ghāzīs were well trained and each of them was like a dragon and did not turn his back even if attacked by a thousand infidels. They had an unshaken faith in God and God granted them his favor. So, blessed in their faith they came and pillaged the land around Iznik. When each time the infidels came out to attack, ghāzīs, with God's favor, defeated and drove them back into the city, but, in the end the ghāzīs saw that this city could not be taken by assault because it was protected by water on all four sides, and by no means wolud it be possible to approach it [so that they changed their tactics]. They went and built a watch-tower *(havāle)* on the slope of the hill on the side of Yenişehir and garrisoned it with troops.

A strong man, reputed for his valor in those days, known as Ṭāz 'Alī, was stationed there with forty men under his command to watch and intercept the city's traffic with the outside world. At the present time that small fort is called Ṭāz-'Alī Ḥiṣārı. There is a high rock above the fort at the foot of which a spring gave forth cool water. This spring now also bears the name of Ṭāz-'Alī-Pınarı.

Thereafter, the infidels, being thus closely controlled, remained confined to their city because the ghāzīs with their raiding did not let them exit from the city gates. No one from the outside was able to enter Iznik. Besieged in the city, the infields finally were able one day to dispatch a man to the Tekvur of Istanbul to report their condition, saying: The Turk attacked and overwhelmed us and cut off contact with the outside world; we can not do anything to change the situation. If you can help us do it as soon as possible, otherwise we are not in a position to resist. They will [take the city and] enslave our sons and daughters. If you do not help us, we shall perish from starvation.

[They asked help from him] since in those days Iznik was under the rule of the Tekvur of Istanbul. When the Tekvur learned the situation he prepared a number of ships filling with soldiers and sent them out to drive away the ghāzīs from the district of Iznik. The troops in the ships, put under the command of a trusted man of the Tekvur, were supposed to land on the coast at Yalak-ovası and thence go over to Iznik to make a surprise attack on ghāzīs. While they made this plan among themselves, a spy, working for the ghāzīs, came among the

enemy troops and learned where they were coming to land. At the risk of his life, the spy hastened to come and inform the ghāzīs.

Thereafter the ghāzīs came to Yalak-Ova and hid themselves in an ambush, waiting on the beach where the infidels were supposed to land. For their part, the infidels sailing in their ships arrived and started to land in the night on the beach at the Yalak-Ovası and to scatter around while each of them was busy in guiding out his horse and assembling his weapons the ghāzīs, shouting the name of Allāh and trusting themselves to Him, made a surprise attack by dashing their horses headlong into the infidel ranks. By putting many to the sword they stirred up such a panic among the enemy troops and created such a massacre that only God knows the number who died. The rest rushed into the sea and drowned. Only those who were fortunate enough were able to return to the ships. In short, the greater part of the infidels perished and only a small number of them could save their lives. Once they were in the ship they thought of nothing but to get away. They arrived in Istanbul and told the Tekvur what had happened. Hearing the news the Tekvur became very sad and moaned. But what else could he do except to sit in patience, feeling completely helpless.

When the news of the Tekvur's failure reached the infidels in Iznik, they lamented and mourned. Finally they discussed the situation among themselves and reached a decision. They agreed that those who had chosen to flee had run away already; now, for those who stayed, there is no alternative but to surrender and submit. So they did and surrendered the city-fortress to the ghāzīs. By gaining the city the ghāzīs gathered in much booty.

After they conquered Iznik, the ghāzīs turned in the direction of Yalak-Ovası. At that time, this area was defended by strong forts in the mountains at locations difficult to reach, and there were also countless prosperous settlements around. On the hills all the way to Iznikmid (Nicomedia) there was not a single tree, but many forts, prosperous towns and villages. The forest, they say, later covered these hills when the area became uninhabited [after the attacks of the ghāzīs]. This is related by those who lived in those days and it is true. They state that there were several reasons for the well-being of the area. One of them was that the area was hilly and rugged [difficult to penetrate]. Another was that many people who ran away out of fear of ghāzīs came and settled in this area. One other reason was that the Tekvur of Istanbul had a beautiful daughter....

Here, Greek and Turkish folk stories, obviously picked up in our popular histories, came into the historical narrative. Here is told the legend of how the princess was afflicted by leprosy and recovered in the Yalak-Ovası thermal sources. Thus the Tekvur was moved to build bath houses on the site. Also here is added the legend concerning a dervish with a wooden sword who showed miracles and caused the Greeks of this area to convert to Islam. Immediately following the legends came the coalition among the tekvurs of Bursa, Adranos, Batnos, Kestel and Kite who united against 'Oṣmān and confronted him at Dimboz. Then, the story of the siege of Bursa with the construction of the two *havāle,* forts for the blockading of the city followed.

II. *Neshrī's Version*

Neshrī's history, completed somewhere between 1486 and 1493, is the earliest compilation to elaborate the original tradition for dynastic claims.[18] The following translation of Neshrī follows the critical text established by Unat and Köymen, comparing the Menzel codex published by Franz Taeschner.[19]

The independence of 'Oṣmān Ghāzī and Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn's sending of a sword of honor to him.

Following his conquests of Bilecik, Yar-Hisar, İnegöl and Yenişehir with all their dependencies, 'Oṣmān Ghāzī showing zeal [for further ghazā] proceeded to make a raid against Iznik. He came and cut off the roads coming to the city so that all supplies from outside stopped. Since famine broke out and the population became greatly distressed they secretly sent a courier across the lake to ask for help from Istanbul. [An army] was about to be sent from Istanbul. Thereupon 'Oṣmān addressed the ghāzīs saying "now a rather large army is coming form Istanbul". If we leave this place [and retreat] the infidels around us will become as bold as lions and attack us; we must find a way to repulse them. The ghāzīs responded saying: Since our forces are small in number, we must seek aid from Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn and so they sent immediately a courier to Konya and reported their recent conquests and what was happening. The Sultan, hearing all this, became extremely content and decided that a drum and flag be bestowed [upon 'Oṣmān] and

[18] On Neshrī's history and its editions see V. L. Ménage, *Neshrī's History of the Ottomans, The sources and Development of the Text,* London: OUP, 1964; H. Inalcik, "The Rise", 152-167.

[19] *Ğihānnümā: Die altosmanischen Chronik des Mevlānā Meḥemmed Neschrī,* ed. Franz Taeschner, Band I: Einleitung und Text des cod. Menzel, Leipzig 1951.

ordered that several thousand men from Ṣahibin-Karahisarı (Afyon Kara-Hisar) go to their aid. But before the courier returned, the infidel troops coming from Istanbul started marching over the pass at the Dil.

> The infidels, believing that the Turks had run away encamped without taking precautions. 'Oṣmān meanwhile captured a man from the fortress of Yalaḳ-Ḥiṣarı and being informed of the infidels' carelessness suddenly fell in the darkness of the night upon those who already had come over the pass and put them to the sword. Those who ran away were drowned in the sea. Those who had not proceeded over the pass returned to Istanbul. The ghāzīs took much booty. 'Oṣmān then did not concern himself further with Iznik, and sending the good news of the victory to his people and with the intention to reach his capital, he set out. His mother and other relatives came out to meet him at one or two days' distance. By coincidence on the same afternoon, the drum, flag, diploma and robe of honor arrived [form the Seldjukid Sultan].

III. *Ahmedī's Version*

The earliest reference to the siege of Iznik comes from the poet Aḥmedī, writing in his *Iskendernāme* the section dealing with the Ottomans around the year 1410.[20]

Here is the full translation of his verses on the events leading to the siege of Iznik:

> That champion ('Oṣmān) conquered Bilecük, Inegöl and Köprü-Hisar and never stopped; sending out troops in every direction he took many lands in a short time. Burning and destroying the infidels' land he laid siege to Bursa and Iznik.

Aḥmedī provides a clear testimony that the source used by Anon., Aşpz. and Neshrī is a common one prior to their histories, most plausibly Yakhshi Faḳīh's lost *Manāḳibnāme* written ca. 1405.[21] In Aḥmedī the sequence of 'Oṣmān's conquests prior to his blockades of Iznik and Bursa is closely reminiscent of the later compilations (Yenişehir and Yar-Hisar are omitted by our poet Ahmedī, but the conquest of Köprü-Hisar, preceeding the blockades

[20] Now a critical text of this section of *Iskendernāme,* established by Kemal Sılay is available: "Ahmedī's Ottoman History", MA Thesis, Department of Uralic and Altaic Studies, Indiana University, 1990.

[21] On Yakhshi Faḳīh's *Menāḳibnāme* now see V. L. Ménage, "The Menāqib of Yakhshi Faqīh", BSOAS, XXVI (1963), 50-54.

is added). 'Oṣmān's blockades, not the capture, of Iznik and Bursa follow these conquests mentioned in Aḥmedī, and in later compilations. Obviously Aḥmedī, writing a short epic, skipped over the details. In essence, the main events are told *in the same sequence.* Aḥmedī also shows that Anonymous' statement of the Ottoman conquest of Nicaea at this date is a distortion of the original source.

IV. *Compilations made upon Sultan Bāyazīd's order: The Histories of Idrīs-i Bidlīsī and Kemāl Paşa-zāde.*

The Idrīs' writing between 1502 and 1506, and Kemāl Pasha-zāde about the same time represent later compilations made for the Sultan Bāyazīd II, using chiefly copies of the Anonymous chronicles, which obviously differ from our copies and Neshrī.

In Idrīs' arrangement the sequence of events is as follows: 'Oṣmān married his eldest son Orkhan to Nilüfer, to whom he granted the province of Kara-Hisar "Otherwise known as Sultan-önü"; he granted Eskişehir to his own brother Gündüz Alp, and the fortress of In-önü and Yund-Hisar to Aygud Alp, the province and fortress of Yar-Hisar to Hasan Alp, that of Inegöl to Turgut Alp, and finally, he bestowed the entire revenue of the province of Bilecük to Shaykh Ede-Bali.[22] Then, 'Oṣmān chose Yenişehir as his capital city. His younger son, 'Alā' al-Dīn Paşa remained in Bilecük beside his mother. He himself stayed most of the time in Yenişehir. Then "in the year 701 which is the third year in his accession to the sultanate" he marched for the conquest of Köprü-Hisar.

After the fall of Köprü-Hisar, the fortress of Marmara near Köprü-Hisar and Dimboz surrendered. 'Oṣmān then returned to his capital city and planned to conquer Iznik.

> 'Oṣmān Bey considered its coquest one of the most important undertakings and without warning he marched toward that land". 'Oṣmān found a strong resistance but his men overran and laid waste the countryside outside the fortress, pillaging and killing as they moved. Before leaving the place, they built in the vicinity of Iznik a strong watch-tower and placed a garrison of a hundred men there, who kept provisions from reaching this large populous city. "The tower built by

[22] This addition to the Yakhshi Faḳīh's original history belongs to 'Āshıḳ Pşz., who tried to show that Shaykh Edebali of the *Wafāiyya* order was the spiritual mentor of the Ottoman dynasty; 'Āshıḳ Pşz. himself was of the same *ṭarīḳa* as his ancestors 'Āshıḳ Pasha and Elvān Chelebi were, see H. Inalcik, "How to Read 'Āshıḳ Paşa-zāde's History" see no.II in this volume.

> 'Oṣmān became known as Targay-Hisarı[23] after one of his brave and trusted men. The ruins of this tower are still visible.

Idrīs finds the rationale for this great plan in 'Oṣmān's beilef in his mission revealed in an extraordinary dream 'Oṣmān experienced while sleeping in Shaykh Ede-Bali's convent: "The divine promise will become in the end a reality through such exploits for Islam".

Kemāl Pasha-zāde[24] puts the battle of Yalak-Ovası before the conquest of Köprü-Hisar and the siege of Iznik, and "'Oṣmān's succession to the sultanate of the Seldjuks" after the battle. While Kemāl Pşz. evidently follows Neshrī ("the messenger via the lake" in both) in the description of the events preceding the battle and of the battle itself, he diverges from it on "'Oṣmān's succession to Sultanate" and follows Rūhī or the Bodleian Anonymous chronicle.[25]

The story of the battle is missing in 'Āşıḳ Pşz. He merely makes a very brief reference to the raid and siege of Iznik and the blockade.[26]

I Siege of Nicaea

In the following, versions of the original tradition of Yakhshi Faḳīh as we find in later compilations will be compared and discussed.

1 *A son was born to 'Oṣmān; he named him 'Alā' al-Dīn and kept him at his side.*

Anon. and Aşpz. appear to be the most faithful to the original text.

Actually this statement is designed to tell us that the elder son, Orkhan, was given the command of the raids. Orkhan was the elder son of 'Oṣmān beg. It was a Turco-Mongol steppe tradition to keep the youngest son at the hearth and to send the eldest to the most advanced frontier for raids.[27] This

[23] A close examination of his text shows that he misread Ṭāz-'Alī as Ṭargay; the correct form is Dirāz-'Alī which is shortened to Ṭāz-'Alī in the chronicles, see below.

[24] *Tevârikh-i Âl-i 'Oṣmān,* II. Defter, ed. Ş. Turan, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu 1983, 130-146.

[25] On Rūhī and The Bodleian MS, see Ménage, Neshrī , 12-14, 26.

[26] Atsız ed. 105: "Iznig'ün vilâyetine segirtdiler. Şehrün kapusını yapdurdılar. Bir nice gün ceng etdiler. Dört yanı vilâyet dapdılar. Kal'a üzerine er kodılar. Dapan vilâyeti timar erlerine verdiler; kendiler gene Yenişehir'e çıkdılar".

[27] See H. Inalcik, "Ottoman succession and its Relation to the Turkish Concept of Sovereignty", in *The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire,* Bloomington, 1992, 37-69.

custom survived with all of the Turcoman emirates and continued with the Ottomans for a long time. Being in command of the frontier forces gave to the eldest son a greater chance of succeeding his father as ruler.

2 *Osman completed the conquest of Bilecük, Yar-Hisar, Inegöl and Yenişehir, and then he began to make raids into the province of Iznik.*

Neshrī here elaborates his source, telling us first 'Oṣmān's four earlier conquests and his following major feat of the siege of Iznik and adds that this led to his rise to the status of an "independent" *beg* (ruler) whereas in the original tradition (cf. Anon.) it was actually Orkhan that made the raid and captured Köprü-Hisar.

It is interesting to note that the same four places, Bilecük, Yar-Hisar, Inegöl and Yenişehir with the same sequence is to be found in the *Taḳvīm*s which are Neshrī's source. One particular *Taḳvīm* dated ca. 1446, presents the conquest of Bilecik (or Bilecük) with the other three forts a turning point in Osman's creer.[28]

Actually these conquests in the years 699-702 H. appear to have constituted part of his plan to capture the two most important cities in Bithynia, Iznik and Bursa. Then, he moved his headquarters to Yenişehir situated in the middle of these two cities. There, he settled his ghāzīs and made it a new *udj* leading into Bursa plain in the west and that of Nicaea in the north. The latter city was only about 25 km. from Yenişehir. 'Oṣmān's ghāzīs in the new *udj*, the tradition says, "wanted to continue the raids all the time".

Before he attacked Nicaea 'Oṣmān organized raids in the valley of Göynük river and the Sakarya valley to take control of the main highway coming through Göynük-Taraklı-Lefke or Mekece to Iznik from the east. The highway Göynük-Taraklı to Lefke in the south or Geyve to the north remains still today the main thoroughfare from the inner Anatolian plateau to Iznik and Izmit.

3 *The raid against Iznik.*

In the Anon. Orkhan alone is responsible for the raid. It is to be remembered that the original tradition comes from Yakhshi Faḳīh , son of Orkhan's imam.

[28] *Tarihî Takvimler,* ed. O. Turan, Ankara, 1954, 16, 52.

4 *The conquest of Köprü-Hisar.*

Anon.: Orkhan conquered Köprü-Hisar by force and plundered.

Aşpz.: Orkhan and 'Oṣmān together conquered Köprü-Hisar and plundered.

Neshrī here omits the conquest of Köprü-Hisar. In a previous chapter he says (Menzel 32; Unat. 92) 'Oṣmān had aided the *Tekvur* of Bilecük in his capture of Köprü-Hisar. Perhaps Neshrī thought that when 'Oṣmān conquered Bilecük Köprü-Hisar, too, came into 'Oṣmān possession among the lands conquered. However, the original source asserts that Köprü-Hisar was conquered later in connection with the raids against Iznik.

Between Yenişehir and Iznik rose the Avdan mountain range and the passes over it was defended by Kızıl-Hisar and Köprü-Hisar fortresses. The Ottoman surveys, or *taḥrīr defteri*s of Hüdāvendigār supply interesting details on them.

The passage concerning Köprü-Hisar in the survey of 1571 says: "Since the mountain pass called Dirāz-'Alī, situated on the public road coming from Iznik to the village named Köprü-Hisar is frightful, dangerous and uninhabited a report is formerly sent to the Porte asking to station there guards. "The aforesaid pass", the record continues, "is one *menzil,* or a day's march away from Iznik to Köprü-Hisar and it is extremely difficult to guard it if the guards are placed in the middle of the pass". It is proposed that half of the guards, thirty people, should be stationed in the Kızıl-Hisar fort in the middle of the pass to watch the road coming from the side of Iznik and the other half of the guards at Çamlıca to watch the road coming from Köprü-Hisar. The area was covered with forests. In 1571 sixty *yaya* militia were appointed guards with exemption from ordinary and customary taxes.[29]

It is of crucial importance for us to note that this document confirms the fact that the place-names and topography given in the narrative traditions such as the Anonymous chronicles can not be inventions or contrived legends but well-informed authentic sources. No contrived story could give such precise topographical details.

The note from the surveys establish the fact that in order to descend to the plain of Nicaea, 'Oṣmān's forces had first to get control of the Dirāz-'Alī mountain pass. Also known as Ṭirāz 'Alī or Dirāz-'Alī, a hero in our narrative sources, the man is obviously an historical figure who left his name in various place-names along the strategic road from Yenişehir to Iznik. The

[29] *Hüdâvendigâr Livası Tahrir Defterleri,* eds. Ö. L. Barkan and Enver Meriçli, Ankara: 1988, pp. 219-220; no. 366 and p. 225, no. 378/2, p. 274; today Dıraz Ali Köyü.

same survey (p. 225, no. 378/4) tells us that a winter pasture, or *kıshlak,* in the Kara-Dere village on the Avdan mountain is called Uzun-Oghlu (son of the tall one), most probably the son of our *Dirāz (tall* in Persian) 'Alī. The name of *Avdan* is found among Turcomans as that of a nomadic clan.

Later on, in the fifteenth century the *ketkhudā* of Isḥaḳ Pasha built a dervish convent at Köprü-Hisar to give shelter to the travelers, and he made *waḳf* of his freehold village called 'Isā-Vīrānı in the Inegöl district. According to a record in the same survey book, there was another mountain pass called *Katranlu-Derbendi* between the sea-landing *(iskele)* of Samanlu and Yenişehir, frequented by merchants. The villagers from Çardak, Sartı-Oğlu, Makri, Dimboz, and Menteşe were appointed guards at this pass. While Dirāz-'Alī-Derbendi led 'Oṣmān to the plain of Iznik the Dimboz-Koyun-Hisar mountain pass led 'Oṣmān into the Bursa plain. Following the battle of Bapheus a major confrontation would take place at this pass between 'Oṣmān and a coalition of the Tekvurs of the Bursa plain, namely, those of Bursa, Adranos, Batanos, Kestel and Kite and the victory would open to 'Oṣmān the entire plain of Bursa.

5 *The surrender of the "district of Marmara".*

Aşpz. refers to it.

In the Anon. and Neshrī missing.

The "Marmara vilāyeti" is the area between Yenişehir and Bursa just before the strategic pass of Dimboz, leading to the Bursa plain. There is a swamp called Marmaracık-Gölü there today. The Greeks of this area surrendered to 'Oṣmān to avoid the ghāzī attacks. As the Ottoman tradition puts it "they came and submitted, and 'Oṣmān Ghāzī left everyone on his land *(yerlü yerinde)".* This piece of information is omitted in Anon. and Neshrī perhaps because they believed it was not important. Among later compilers, Kemāl Pşz. (I, 143-144) and Idrīs (p. 66) mention the surrender of the population of Marmara. Idrīs provides further details referring to a "fortress of Marmara" and its surrender when its inhabitants saw the fate of Köprü-Hisar.

In any case, 'Oṣmān must have deemed it necessary to make a raid into the Marmara district obviously to safeguard his capital of Yenişehir before he set out for the siege of Iznik.

6 *The siege of Iznik, the construction of a watch-tower (havāle) to intercept the city's traffic with the outside world. The ghāzīs made raids and subdued the countryside around the fortress of Iznik.*

Anon., Aşpz. and Neshrī all have this information. While Aşpz. and Neshrī are laconic on the siege of Iznik and the subsequent raids in the plain, the Anon. gives deatils coupled with folk stories of Greek and Turkish origin about the ancient city of Iznik and the conversion to Islam of the population in the area. However, in essence, the three sources, using evidently the same source, agree with each other. Anon. and Aşpz. make clear that 'Oṣmān's forces laid siege to the city and fighting lasted quite some time. Our three chroniclers agree that by making a blockade and organizing raids in the countryside, the ghāzīs subdued the entire population outside the city walls.

The details which the Anon. transmitted are interesting. Firstly, Iznik is described as a populous and strongly-garrisoned city which was not true in that time period. As a result of the recovery of Constantinople from the Latins in 1261 and the subsequent increasing Turcoman raids, part of the Nicaea's inhabitants had already left for Nicomedia or Constantinople, and Michael VIII. Palaeologus reportedly neglected its defense. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's eyewitness report (1332?) of the city as a ruined one belongs to a period when the Ottomans had taken control of the city (March 1331) and had permitted the inhabitants to leave. Anon.'s exaggerated statement evidently must be a reminiscence of the situation under the Lascarids. In any case, 'Oṣmān's failure at the siege needed explanation in the Ottoman account. Emphasis is also put on how the city's defense was enhanced by the surrounding waters and swamps.

In the first part of the tradition, the Anon. admitted that the city could not be taken by storm ("Gördüler kim cenk ile alınmaz.") so that 'Oṣmān built the Ṭāz-'Alī, rather Dirāz-'Alī, fort to keep the place under siege. But in the paragraph concerning the aftermath of the victory over the emperor's troops at Yalak-Ovası (Bapheus) the Anon. claims that the Nicaeans surrendered the city to the Ottomans. The author of the Anon. might have thought that the logical outcome of the victory should be the fall of the city so that he changed the original source at this point. In any case, Aşpz. and Neshrī, following the original text literally stated that 'Oṣmān's men gave up the fight against the fortress of Nicaea and concerned themselves with subjecting the population in the open country around the fortress.

The story about the erection of the *havāle,* or the fort for the blockade, is related only in Anon. Aşpz. does not mention it; Neshrī refers to the blockade without mentioning the fort. Later compilers, Idrīs (67) and Kemāl Pşz. (145), obviously following Anon., mention it.

Always by following the Anon., which appear to have reproduced the original source in a most detailed fashion, we find that under Ṭāz-'Alī the men in the fort, numbered one hundered but in some copies of the Anon. it is changed to forty, a sacred figure. The watch-tower intercepted the traffic to the city coming from the outside so that famine resulted. The Anon. asserts that this situation lasted for quite sometime ("bir nice zaman"). Thus, the date of the actual siege might have taken place one or two years before the battle of Bapheus, between 1299-1301. The main cause leading to the battle of Yalak-Ovası is attributed, in the original tradition, to the fact that Iznik, under blockade, distressed by famine, finally succeeded to send a messenger to the Emperor in Istanbul stating that if the relief forces do not arrive in time they have no choice but surrender.

Neshrī adds that the messenger was sent *over the lake* (compare Pachymeres). In order to explain why the people of Iznik asked for help from Istanbul, the Anon. adds that "at that time the Tekvur of Istanbul ruled over Iznik, too."

II The Battle of Bapheus

Now, the question remains to determine whether or not the Ottoman account of the battle of Yalak-ovası and Pachymeres' account of the battle of Bapheus refer to the same event. Let us review comparatively the main points in the two sources.

1 *The circumstances and causes leading to the battle*

According to Pachymeres 'Oṣmān's threat to the land of "Halizonoi" made the Emperor decide to send an army under Heteriarch Mouzalon. As seen earlier Pachymeres stops at this point and goes back to earlier events connected with 'Oṣmān. He then tells us how "a group of 'Oṣmān's men numbering about one hundred made a surprise attack on Mouzalon and almost captured him". This emboldened 'Oṣmān, Pachymeres adds, to cross "Siphonas Mountains" and to descend on the "Lând of Halizonoi".

The Ottoman account of the battle does not speak of this vanguard activity but concentrates on the battle of the Yalak-ovası on the shore. However, both Pachymeres and the Ottoman chronicles refer to 'Oṣmān's earlier activities around Nicaea, the latter source giving full details about the siege of the city and the urgent appeal of the besieged to the Emperor. It becoms clear that Emperor sent Mouzalon to relieve Nicaea from the blockade. The "Land of Halizonoi" is obviously the Ottoman Yalak-ovası, the flat coastal plain between Yalova and Kara-Mürsel.

Pachymeres clearly said that 'Oṣmān sent his vanguard before he set out to pass through the valley leading to the coast (for the valley and the highway *infra).* In the valley there is a fort called today Çaban-Kale (Shepherd's Fort) (see Photo 3 and 4), a few kilometers from the coast, controlling the highway Dil-Hersek-Iznik.

'Oṣmān sent the vanguard to make sure that the garrison in the fort, apparently reinforced by Mouzalon's men, would be neutralized to open his way to the plain on the Gulf of Izmit. The surprise attack by his vanguard must have taken place near the fort surrounded by hills. In fact, Pachymeres talks about the hills where 'Oṣmān's men, at first repelled by Mouzalon's soldiery, retreated and then made a successful counter-attack. The success made 'Oṣmān decide to pass through the valley to reach the Yalak-Ovası on the coast.

Çoban-Kale is situated between the village of Karadere and that of *Ayazma* where there is a Greek *Hagiasma.* Local people say the fort was built by the Genoese. Çaban-Kale is in ruins today, shepherds come there with their herds to rest, thence its name Çoban-Kale. Koyun-Hisarı, as referred to in the Ottoman tradition in this connection must have been our Çoban-Kale (see infra).

It is suggested that the skirmish must have occured one year prior to the battle of Bapheus.[30] If this is correct Muzalon must have been at the fort prior to his coming back with a sizeable army to confront Osman's invasion, the following year. In fact, subsequent to the vanguard's success 'Oṣmān's mustering a large army by calling on his allies, to which Pachymeres refers, would take some time.

In any case these are the principal antecedents and causes which appear to have led to the major confrontation on the plain of Yalak-Ovası in 1301 (for the date *infra).* On the whole, both the Byzantine and Ottoman accounts agree and complement each other on the background of the battle of Bapheus.

2 *The location of the Battle-Field*

Pachymeres tells us that 'Oṣmān, crossing the mountain pass with "allies and partners for his raids" entered the "Land of Halizonoi". He adds that Bapheus is in "the area around the wonderful city of Nicomedia" and Byzantine troops when defeated "swarmed ignobly into the nearby city of Nicomedia". The Ottoman tradition identifies the battle-field as Yalak-Ovası or Yalak-Plain on the sea coast. Thus, both of our sources agree that the

30 Arnakis, *op. cit.* p. 129-131.

battle took place on the coastal plain on the south shores of the Gulf of Izmit (Nicomedia) in a place where the highway coming from Nicaea reached the coastal plain.

During the Byzantine times the imperial "Military Road" passing through Dakibyza (Gebze), reached Aigialoi "where they crossed the narrow entrance of the gulf of Astakos to Kibotos and continued their journey by land to Nikaia".[31] The ferry from Aigialoi to Kibotos was in use under the Byzantines as well as under the Ottomans. Aigialoi must be the *Dil* (the *tongue* or promontory) of the Ottomans, and Kibotos, the Hersek Town (see Photo 2). During the Ottoman times this main highway between Istanbul and Asia Minor was known as the "Baghdad Caddesi" through which passed caravans and armies (see Photo 5 and 6). At the Hersek Town, under Bāyezīd II, grand vizier Hersek Ahmed Pasha built a *wakf* complex with a caravanserai, mosque, fountains and other facilities for the confort of the travellers before they started their long trip through the Yalak-Dere valley and Nicaea into Asia Minor. About twenty five km. to the west of the Hersek Town lies Helenopolis (the vulgar pronounciation Eleinopolis) or Turkish Yalova. Yalak-Hisar mentioned in the Ottoman tradition must be Helenopolis. Turkish name of Yalova must rather derive from Yalak-Ova(sı).

Farther west between Helenopolis and the promontory Poseidion lies Pylai which was also used as a landing place by the Byzantine emperors on their way to Asia Minor. The city of Pylai was still an important commercial center in the thirteenth century. In order to protect the city Manuel I Comnenus (1143-1180) built the fortress of Pylai and forts.[32] Our Çoban-Kale or Koyun-Hisarı in the valley leading to the coastal plain must have been one of these newly built or repaired forts.

When Orkhan resumed his father's plans of expansion on the Yalak-Ova coast following the conquest of Nicaea (1331) the fortress of Yalak-Ova (Yalova) and Koyun-Hisar in the area put up resistance until Nicomedia surrendered (1337).

According to the Ottoman tradition, by 1337 fortresses of Yalak-Ova and Koyun-Hisarı formed the appanage of a Byzantine princess. The fortresses are described exactly as follows: "the fortress in the valley *(deredeki)* in the

[31] W. Ramsay, *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor,* London 1890, reprint 1962, 200-201; cf. Evliya Çelebi, *Seyāhatnāme,* II, 60-61; F. Taeschner, *Das Anatolische Wegenetz nach Osmanischen Quellen,* Leipzig: Mayer and Müller 1924, 66-67, 99-100.

[32] H. Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, "Les fortresses construites en Asia Mineure face à l'invasion seldjoucide", *Akten des XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten Kongresses,* München 1958, eds. F. Dölger and H. -G. Beck, Munich 1960, 186-189; Vryonis, *op. cit.,* 116.

Yalak-Ova belonged to an infidel by the name of Yalknya (or Balknya), and on the hill there was another fort which they call Koyun-Hisarı at the present time". Yalak-Ova was the name given to the area between Yalova and Hersek or Kara-Mürsel. Ottoman tradition adds that Koyun-Hisarı was put under the command of Kaloyan, brother of the "master" *(sāḥib)* of Yalak-Ova, Yalknya.

Joseph von Hammer correctly identifies Bapheus with Koyun-Hisarı[33] but confuses it with another Koyun-Hisarı ner Dimboz where 'Oṣmān confronted the coalition of the tekvurs of the Bursa plain. Just before the battle of Bapheus 'Oṣmān had captured a man from Yalak-Hisarı and learned from him that his ambush at the Yalak-Ova was not known to the enemy.

The Koyun-Hisarı village in the Kite cadiship had its *karye* (village) status in the 16th century and then mentioned in the following survey registers as a simple *mezra'a,* or an abandoned village. Apparently, it was a gathering point of the sheep herds the tax revenue of which was levied by the *Koyun-emini.* In this period the yürüks, mostly Akça-Koyunlu, are mentioned in the area.

3 *The Armies and the Battle*

Let us first attempt to analyze Pachymeres' account of the battle.

Mouzalon's army consisted of the Byzantine soldiery, the Alan mercenaries and the local militia, altogether about two thousand men. But this army lacked unity because, Pachymeres tells us, just before the battle the money and horses belonging to the militia were given to the Alan mercenaries, which made them jealous and reluctant to cooperate.

As regards 'Oṣmān's troops they, Pachymeres says, largely outnumbered the Greeks because he attracted allies, and even men from Paphlagonia who, for booty, joined him enthusiasticaly. Pachymeres tells us they included footmen as well as horsemen.

Because of the non-cooperation, Pachymeres asserts, of the local militia and of the troops' carelessness, the Greek army's attack collapsed and they began to run away. Many fell, but most fled. They swarmed into the nearby city of Nicomedia. At this critical point, the Alans courageously counter-attacked giving the great mass of infantry the chance to retreat. Encircling the Ottoman troops, the Alans attacked soldiers on foot and wounded the horses of the cavalry by sending salves of arrows crosswise. Thus, in order to secure, Pachymeres adds, the retreat of the Greeks, the Alans sacrificed themselves and fell one after another.

[33] Joseph von Hammer, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches,* Pest 1935, I. 67, 85.

In brief, in his attempt to explain the Greek failure, Pachymeres underlines the superiority of 'Oṣmān's troops in number, the non-cooperation of the local militia on the battlefield and the lack of discipline among the Byzantine soldiery. The Alan mercenaries coming from the northern Black Sea area where they had served under Emir Nogay (d. 1299 or 1300) and trained in the Turco-Mongol steppe tactics proved that they were a match for the Turcoman fighters.

The victory at Bapheus signalled the approaching uninterrupted Ottoman successes against the Byzantium or the Balkan states in the following decades. The explantion of it is that in addition to the superiority in tactics the Ottoman rulers received from Anatolia innumerable ghāzīs, or professional Turcoman soldiers who later on under Orkhan would be organazed as Yaya troops. Turcoman ghāzīs rushed to fight under Ottoman flag just for the anticipated booty, while the Byzantine and Balkan rulers had to enroll and maintain professional soldiery including *Turcopouloi* by paying huge sums from their dilapidated treasuries. The advantageous position of the Turcoman begs was obvious, and from the beginning Byzantium was doomed to loose its desperate struggle. Andronicus II's dismantling the expensive and ineffecient Byzantine navy in 1284 made perfect sense because what was then desperately needed was the mercenary troops in order to stop the Turcoman onslaught in Anatolia.

In 1354, in his speech of abdication John VI Cantacuzenus confessed the invincibility of Turkish soldiery. Believing in the professional military superiority of the Turcoman, he himself stuck during all his career to his alliance with Umur Ghāzī of Aydın, and then Orkhan since they brought to his aid Turcoman troops against his rivals while his enemies in Constantinople failed to attract this decisive element to their own side.[34]

Ottoman chronicles give a different version on the course of the combat. According to this source the Emperor sent a relief army by sea for Nicaea which arrived at Yalak-ovası and began to land to make a surprise attack on 'Oṣmān's troops. But informed through a Greek spy of the enemy's plan, 'Oṣmān laid in ambush. Neshrī's verison includes the interesting detail that the Byzantine army began to pass from Dil[35] to Yalak-ovası during the night. The Ottoman forces made a surprise attack as the Byzantine troops began to

[34] See H. Inalcik, "The Rise of the Turcoman Maritime Principalities, Byzantium and Crusades", *Byzantinische Forschungen*, IX.

[35] The streams from the Iznik-Hersek valley in the south and the Dil-Ovası valley from the north of the Izmit bay made tonguelike deltas on both sides, narrowing the sea passage at this point; both deltas are called *Dil;* the southern *Dil* is also called Hersek-Dili (see Photo 1 and 2).

take their horses out of the ships, and thus being scattered around and caught by surprise many Byzantines were massacred and of those attempting to reach their ships were drowned. Those who could escape to the ships sailed back to Constantinople.

In this story what is definite is that 'Oṣmān fought against an army "sent by the Tekvur of Istanbul"; so there is no doubt that both Greek and Ottoman sources speak of the same event. But how to explain or combine the divergent descriptions of the battle in the Byzantine and Ottoman accounts.

Pachymeres contains no details on how the army under Mouzalon arrived at Bapheus/Yalak-Ovası whether directly by sea or by the land route Gebze-Dil-Bapheus. In his entire account there is no reference to ships. However, according to him prior to confrontation Mouzalon had been long enough in the area to organize his troops (taking the horses of the local militia and giving to the Alan mercenaries, etc.).

For a surprise attack, the Emperor must have sent the main troops by sea rather than the long land route. But, even if the land route was used, the troops had to pass over the narrow sea passage from Aigialoi (Dil) to Kibotos (Hersek) on ships as Neshrī's version confirms. An Ottoman surprise attack near Kibotos is in order in either case or, the Byzantine troops from Constantinople arrived partly by land and partly by sea. As for the course of the battle the only theory to reconcile the two divergent reports is that each deals with a different stage of the confrontation. Apparently, first the Ottomans attacked the Byzantine soldiery arriving on ships from Constantinople, and when the Byzantine local militia took in panic the route to Nicomedia, the Byzantine regular troops rushed under the cover of Alans back to their ships waiting on the shore. The Ottoman tradition possibly preferred to concentrate on this dramatic flight to the ships of the main Byzantine soldiery and made it the main theme of the battle.

4 *The Date of the Battle of Bapheus*

Since Muralt's "Essai" Byzantinists have discussed the date of the battle. Most of them agree on 27 July 1301 and thus have rejected the date 27 June 1302 accepted by Muralt.[36]

Pachymeres mentions 'Oṣmān and the battle of Bapheus in the context of the retreat of the Co-emperor Michael IX from Magnesia to Kyzikos and finally to Pegai (Kara-Biga on the Marmara shore) in the year 1302. On the

[36] Muralt, *Essai*, 479, No. 12; cf. Hasluck, "Bytinica", *Ann. Br. School at Athens*, XIII (1906-1907).

other hand, the Catalan expedition to western Anatolia, which took place in 1303-1304, is related in Pachymeres to the account on 'Oṣmān's attack.

By discussing, on the basis of the contemporary sources Pachymeres and Philes, Andronikos II's military and diplomatic activities in the period 1296-1299, F. Tinnefeld suggests that in 1298 Emperor sent a military expedition against "the barbarians in Bithynia" (referred to by Philes).[37] The Byzantine failure at this expedition marked the beginning of the successful expansion of Ottomans in the region. Lastly, P. Schreiner discusses the dates 1301 and 1302, comparing Pachymeres with the notices in the Byzantine short chronicles.[38] He suggests that the year 1304 may also be considered for the battle of Bapheus since in that particular year our sources speak of a general assault of the Turks in western Anatolia and of the flight in mass of the Greek population toward fortified places including Constantinople.

As for the Ottoman tradition on the date of the Yalak-ovası battle this is placed immediately before the battle of Dimboz against the *Tekvurs'* coalition in the Bursa region on the Hegira year of 702 which starts on 26 August 1302. So, the battle of Bapheus must have taken place in the previous year, in the summer of 1301.

In conclusion, with the siege of Nicaea and his victory over the emperor's relief army 'Oṣmān won an incomparable fame and charisma among the frontier Turcomans and leaders, securing him and his offspring an enduring legitimation for primacy and sovereignty. Neshrī and other compilers around 1500 were right in associating his beg-ship or "independence" to the event. The contemporary Byzantine historian Pachymeres mentioned 'Oṣmān after his victory as one of the most energetic Turcoman emirs, threatening Byzantium.

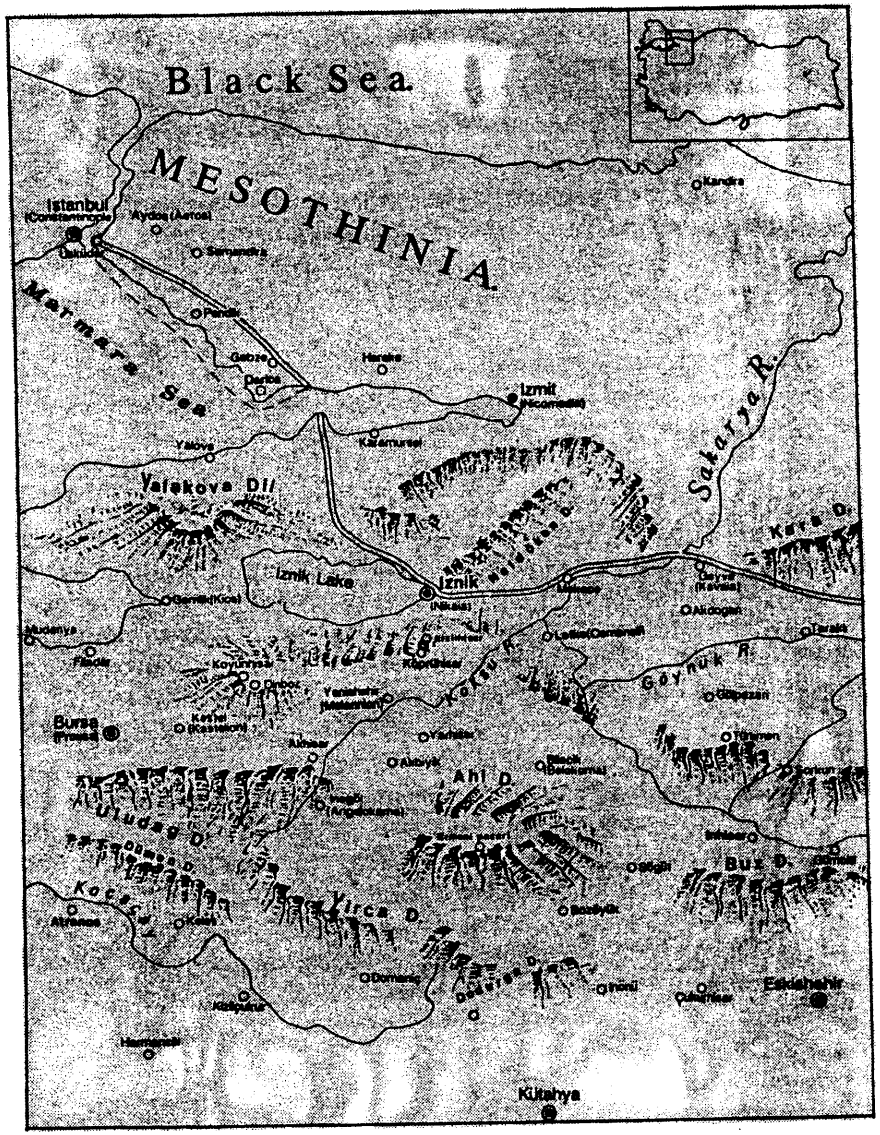
The compilations arranged at Bāyazīd II's request by Idrīs and Kemāl Pşz. after his accession to the throne put 'Oṣmān's rise to sultanate or to empire as the successor to "the Seldjukid Sultan of Konya" or "the *Ḳayṣer* (Ceasar) of Constantinople" upon his victory over the Byzantine Emperor's army. Thus, at a time when Mehmed the Conqueror's claim to universal empire had become a dynastic assertion to primacy among the states to the East and to the west, the Ottomans used 'Oṣmān's victory at Bapheus as the dynasty's legitimation to imperial sovereignty already in the time of the dynasty's founder.

[37] F. Tinnefeld, "Pachymeres und Philes als Zeugen für ein frühes unternehmen gegen die Osmanen", *BZ*, 6 (1971), 51.

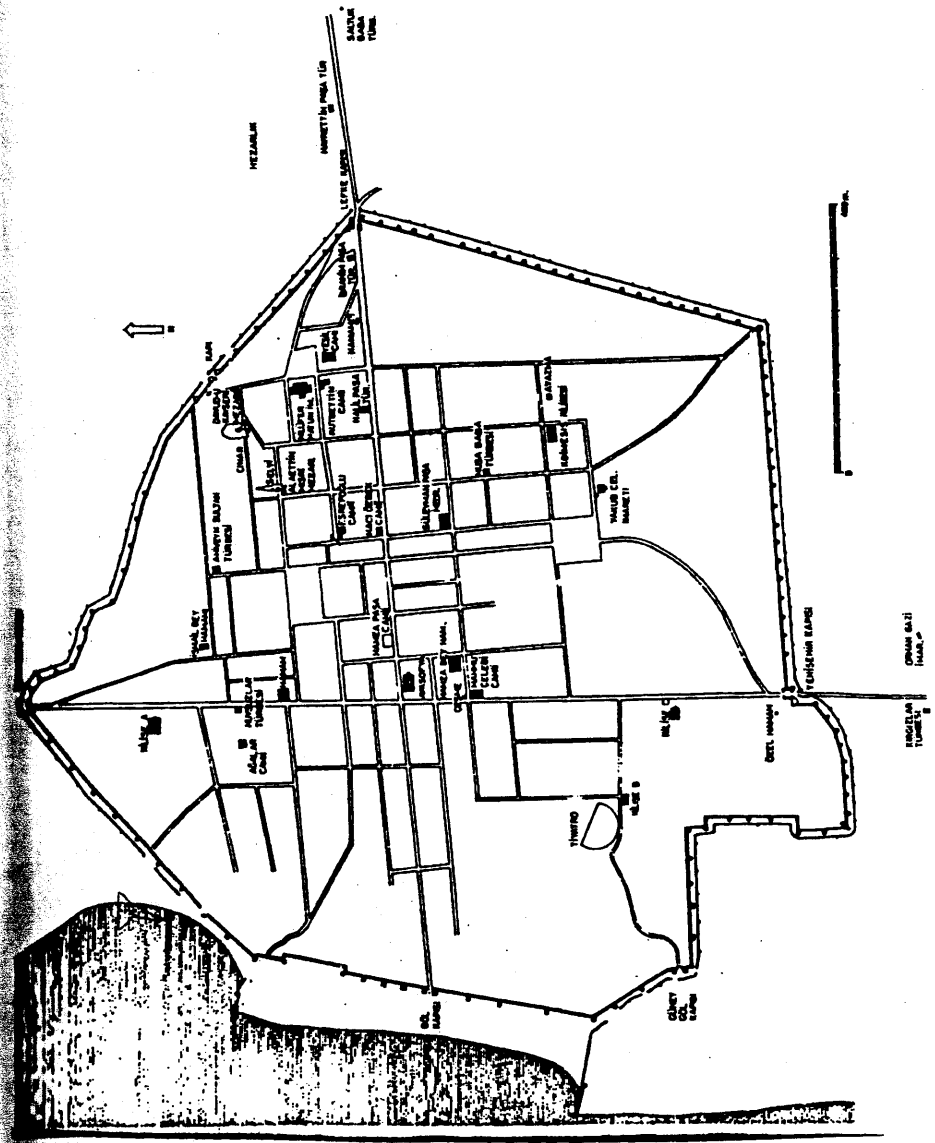
[38] Peter Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, 3. Teil: *Teilübersetzungen, Addenda et Corrigenda, Indices*, Wien: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1979, 217-219.

The eleborate formula and apparatus added by the later compilers to the original candid story of the humble origin of the dynasty should not be an excuse for the historian to dismiss both the early folk traditions and the later elite elaborations. Such later additions as the divine revelation of the imperial power through the dream and its interpretation by a shaman-like holy man, or the Seldjukid sultan's recognition of the exalted lineage of 'Oṣmān are, in fact, extremely interesting and meaningful for the historian. Also it is equally misleading to dismiss as pure myth and legend the early Ottoman traditions altogether because of these later elaborations.

For legitimation to the empire some of the compilers did not find strong enough even the Seldjukid Sultan's recognition of 'Oṣmān as his successor, and had recourse to the "right of sword", or victory, as a sign of divine *ta'yīd* (support) and consider him 'mu'ayyad min 'indillāh', 'sovereign by God's support'.



Bithynia in the Period 1300-1350



City of Iznik plan. (Professor Semavi Eyice).