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THE SELJUKS

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The proposed scientific effort is written in an easily accessible format, and opens before the reader a panorama of the establishment, rise and the decline of the Seljuk dynasty, which in the 11th century created a powerful empire. Its territories spanned from the foothills of the Tian Shan Mountains in the East, to the shores of the Red Sea in the West; from the Caspian Sea in the North, to the Indian Ocean in the South. One of the dynastic branches formed the Seljuk state in Asia Minor (1075 – 1318 CE), the direct predecessor of the Ottoman Empire and the modern-day Turkish Republic. This research is based upon rare medieval sources, contains maps and antique engravings of several cities under the Seljuk control.

This book is intended for a wide range of readers interested in the history of the East.

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Dear Readers,

History is a legacy left to us by our ancestors; it is priceless experience that allows the future generations to learn on the mistakes of the past. It is the duty of every man to preserve the existential philosophy, momentous events, and celebrated names of his people. To carry within himself the spirit of his ancestors, complement it with the very best and pass it on to his children.

There are plenty of books and other materials on the history of the great Ottoman Empire – the most powerful and influential Islamic state of the Middle Ages. Its territories included Eastern and Southern Europe, parts of North Africa and essentially all of Arab east. Ottoman Empire is also credited with conquering Byzantium, but few realize that the true victors in the battle against the mighty Byzantine Empire were the Seljuks – the subjects of this very book.

The reader is given a chance to learn about the ascent and dawn of the Seljuk dynasty, as well as their contribution to the formation of the Ottoman state.

The terms “Seljuks”, “Oghuz” are often heard as you travel through Turkey getting to know its splendid historical and cultural monuments. After all we are talking about the worthy ancestors of the Turkish people who are rightfully proud of their history.

The rulers of the Seljuk state understood the importance of a rich social and intellectual life and made every effort to support literature, architecture, and music. Many of the historical monuments from the era, like Sultan Sanjar’s Mausoleum, are on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites.

According to UNESCO (2007) the most read eastern poet throughout the world, Mevlānā Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī, similar in the strength of his spirit to Andrei Rublev, Walther von der Vogelweide, Gottfried von Strassburg and the great troubadours gained fame at the Seljuk royal court.

The dynasty takes its name from its founder – Seljuk, whose descendants founded the so-called Great Seljuk Empire (1040 – 1195 CE) and the Seljuk state in Asia Minor (1075 – 1318 CE).

At its height (end of the 12th – first third of the 13th centuries) the Great Seljuk Empire spanned from the slopes of Tian Shan Mountains in the East, to the shores of the Red Sea in the West; from the Caspian Sea in the North, to the Indian Ocean in the South.

The other Seljuk state, formed by the “exiled branch” of the dynasty, and as the author demonstrated, contrary to the wishes of the Great Seljuks encompassed the absolute majority of Asia Minor.

The author of this book, Professor at the Moscow State Institute (University) of Foreign Relations (MGIMO), current member of the European Academy of Natural Sciences, renowned for his works on the Seljuks, the history of the Ottoman Empire and the overall military history of Turkey, conducted enormous research in order to meticulously reconstruct the events of that period.

The distinctive feature employed by the author is a thorough selection of eastern and western sources, comparative analysis of the evidence contained therein, research of evidence and what is most challenging, interpretation of different medieval scholars and the identification of the most reliable or probable facts or theories.

This is the foundation upon which the author, for the first time in modern scientific literature, recreates in detail the internal political and ethno-religious conditions within the Seljuk states at different stages of their development. He creates a plausible image of the military and political atmosphere in the regions where the Seljuks planned or engaged in conquests. One of the most successful examples of this approach is the first-ever analysis of the military and political conditions in Central Asia and the Middle East

during the end of the 10th – beginning of the 11th centuries where the Seljuks established their state.

The clear graphical result of this analysis and its indisputable embellishment is the map composed by the author that shows the essential arrangement of the principal opposing forces in the region.

The author carefully analyses and justly correlates and the Seljuks' victorious conquests with the talents of their sultans and the state military organization. The author conclusively demonstrates that the Seljuk military and state governance systems were the most advanced of their time. Hence the military was comprised of two integral components: the iqta cavalry (the most numerous portion of the army) and the constant professional army, located in the capital or in its immediate vicinity. Service in the army was rewarded through the endowments of land. These lands, or more precisely the taxes collected from them were referred to as "iqta". Its holder was obligated to select a number of local residents (that number varied depending on the size of the land), arm them, provide them with equipment and horses, train them and provide for them at his own expense. He was their commander and carried full responsibility for his men. The second component of the Seljuk army was comprised of the professional troops (the goulams). These troops were formed from the captives and slaves of different nationalities. Their training and upbringing was conducted over a long period of time, was very costly to the state, but at the end of their training the goulams were the absolute masters of their trade.

The author describes stellar Seljuk victories, which were a consequence of their perfected military organization and - here the author cites an important point – a well-conceived strategy that combined war with diplomacy. These vivid examples, including the momentous battle at Malazgirt (1071 CE) between the Sultan of the Great Seljuk Empire Alp Arslan (1063 – 1072 CE) and the Byzantine Emperor Empire

Romanus Diogenes, are of great interest to the professional historians and history enthusiasts alike. The author explained how the numerically superior Byzantine army was crushed at the hands of the Seljuk army with the Byzantine Emperor ending up in Seljuk captivity. The victory at Malazgirt crushed the Byzantine military machine and paved the way for the Turkic tribes (the Oghuz) to settle Asia Minor. Later, in 1147 CE the Sultan of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor Mesoud I (1116 – 1155 CE) annihilated the Crusaders of France and Germany led by their monarchs. As a consequence of this defeat the Crusaders had no desire to engage in yet another confrontation with the Seljuks and made their way to the Holy Land by sea. A memorable lesson indeed.

The Ottoman Turks later adopted the Seljuk military structure. For centuries it was responsible for their many victories and allowed them to expand the boundaries of their empire beyond Asia Minor into Europe, Asia and Africa. In addition to the military structure the Ottoman Turks adopted the Seljuks' framework of government, administrative and territorial structures, methods of economic development and much more.

The scientific value of this work is further enhanced by the fact that the author is not limited to the analysis of the role of the ethnically Oghuz Seljuk dynasty in the history of Central Asia, the Middle East in the 11th - 13th centuries. Using well-documented sources, the author shows that the Oghuz were one of the Turkic peoples. He traced the history of this ethnic group, starting with the first Turkic state, which left written records about themselves – the ancient Turkic Qaghanate (534 – 745 CE) and decisively proved that the Oghuz were the integral, if not the primary, component of the state. The author proposes a hypothesis that the people who could be referred to as Turks in its widest sense – Turkic-speaking, and those who referred to themselves as Turks didn't exist. Instead there was a clan, or a dynasty, or possibly

even a whole tribe that was called the Turks. This clan and the tribe disappeared after the Uighur liquidated the Second Eastern Turkic Qaghanate in 745 CE never to re-appear on the historic stage.

In the 11th century members of the Seljuk dynasty led the Oghuz - their tribesmen - to Asia Minor and these people remained active throughout history. Due to high birth rates these people soon pushed out the area's native Greek and Armenian populations. Starting with the 13th century the Oghuz Turks became the native population in Asia Minor and therefore are the direct ancestors of the Ottoman Empire's Turkic population and hence modern-day Turks.

A reasonable question arises: when and how did the Oghuz become known as the Türks (or Turks)? The author presents his view of this essential issue and offers his resolution in the form of a scientific hypothesis.

The author concludes this monograph with an analysis of the developments within the military and political conditions and the socio-economic situation in Asia Minor following the disappearance of the Seljuk state. The conclusion is an unexpected but well-founded inference: the multiple beyliks (principalities) that formed in place of the previous Seljuk territories were not amorphous and deteriorating fractions of the once-influential state. On the contrary they developed dynamic socio-economic and military and political structures and each small principality was a small-scale replica of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor at the height of its existence – same people, same state administrative structures, same military organization and so forth. These post-Seljuk “mini states” managed much of what the Seljuk state in Asia Minor was unable to achieve: they gained access to the Aegean Sea, established their own navy, began raiding European parts of Byzantium all ahead of the Ottomans. At last one of the beyliks, and at first the most vulnerable, was Osman's beylik, which subsequently transformed into the Ottoman Empire (1299 – 1923 CE).

As a whole the present book is an important and in some respects a unique historical work, which undoubtedly will be of interest to professionals and the widest possible range of readers.

President of the European Academy of Natural Sciences,
Professor

V.G. Tyminsky

INTRODUCTION

This book is intended as a thorough investigation of the pre-history of the Ottoman Empire and hence modern-day Turkey. We know that Ottoman Turks were the ancestors of the modern Turks, and more precisely they were the majority of the Turkic-speaking population of the Ottoman Empire, whose collapse prompted the formation of the Turkish Republic in the beginning of the 20th century. Ninety seven percent of modern-day Turkey is situated on the Asia Minor Peninsula, and prior to 1453 CE this territory, including the remaining European three-percent, belonged to the Byzantine Empire. Later, starting with the 15th century and until the early 20th century Asia Minor was part of the Ottoman Empire, its native population consisting primarily of Turks. What made this country different from all others is that the ruling Ottoman dynasty never changed throughout its five-century rule. Direct descendants of the original Osmanjik - or little Osman (Ottoman) as he was called by a 14th century Arabic wanderer İbn Battuta, who founded a small *beylik* (principality) in northwest Asia Minor in late 13th century ruled the Ottoman Empire until its collapse.

Nonetheless the Ottoman Turks were not the ones who conquered Asia Minor from the Byzantines. The true conquerors of Anatolia were the Seljuks who arrived in the area during the 11th century and established the Seljuk state in Asia Minor (1075 - 1318 CE). All the Ottoman Turks had to do at that point was to simply take over control the vastly weakened Constantinople from the Byzantines, which they did in 1453 CE. Native residents of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor were the Oghuz who were the direct ancestors of the Ottoman Turks and thus of the modern-day Turks. The distinguishing aspect of the Seljuk dynasty in Asia Minor was the unbroken succession of its rulers, whose founding ancestor was a 10th century Turk (Oghuz) named Seljuk.

The very history of the Seljuk state, it's socio-political,

economic, and military advances are of great interest to us, not in the least because they demonstrate that, most, if not all of the events that elicit pride in the Ottoman Turks, at least during the so-called Classical Period (1300 - 1600 CE), is in fact the legacy of their ancestors - the Seljuks. Every facet of the state's make-up, from its political structure, functional assignment of its various departments and officials, its administrative distribution of land, to its advanced state of trade, industrial production and agriculture and even its official language (*Farsi retained its official state status for a quite some time*) were all adopted from the Seljuks and integrated into their own culture.

We should point out the military organization of the two states, as both the Ottoman and the Seljuk armies were divided into two categories. The prevalent majority of the army consisted of landowners who were awarded their lots as payment for their military service. These landowners were allowed to tax and retain all proceeds from their residents. As the size of each parcel was different, so was the income collected by each landowner. In return the landowner was obligated to train, arm his men and provide enough horses for his cavalry division as determined by the size and income of the endowed land. In the event that the land parcel was insufficient to provide the required number of soldiers, the landowner was required to enlist himself as ordered by the sultan. It's important to note here that the landowner, regardless of the overall size of his possessions, always joined the campaign. The number of soldiers he provided determined his rank. As a result the state was able remove itself from having to train and maintain a professional cavalry, which both states referred to as "*sipahi*". The Seljuks referred to this highly effective system of sustaining an army as "*iqta*".

The remainder of the army, its smaller share, was a professional, hired force that made up the infantry and cavalry. This professional segment was typically stationed in the capital or in its immediate vicinity and was considered

personal slaves of the sultan. The Seljuks called them "*goulam*" while the Ottoman term was "*yanychar*".

It was this military structure that allowed the Seljuks to make vast conquests in Asia Minor and defeat the Byzantine army. It was also at this time in history when the first Crusaders arrived in Asia Minor and, contrary to common belief, it was the Seljuks and not the Arab warriors who defeated and severely damaged the Christian knight cavalry during the second crusade - enough to deter any subsequent attempts by the Europeans to regain formerly Christian territories from the Muslim Seljuks. Their subsequent routes to Jerusalem lay mainly by sea, bypassing the Seljuk-controlled territories. The Crusaders sustained truly colossal and irreparable losses at the hands of the Seljuks. During the Second Crusade, the Christian army essentially consisted of two armies: the German army, led by the Holy Roman Emperor Conrad III, and the French army, led by King Louis VII. The two armies combined had more than one million soldiers. In 1147 - 1148 CE this massive army was practically annihilated by the Seljuk sultan Mesoud I (1116 - 1155 CE) whose own army was but a fraction of his enemy's. We believe that it was precisely this military organization first implemented by the Seljuks and later copied by the Ottomans that produced such great victories for the latter. These conquests ensured a rapid expansion of the Ottoman Empire far beyond the geographic boundaries of the Asia Minor Peninsula.

In examining the causes for the formation of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor and its ethnic majority of the tribal Oghuz, we must recognize the contribution made by the existence of the so-called Great Seljuk Empire in near the Middle East during the 11th – 12th centuries. The empire received its title primarily because the first three of its sultans distinguished themselves through notable military victories. The first to receive this distinction was Seljuk's grandson - Tughrul, then came his great grandson Alp Arslan and then

Seljuk's great-great grandson Melikshah. Tughrul - the first in the Great Seljuk dynasty, started out leading his own small army, which did not have any political or military allegiances to any other ruler, and existed outside of the political boundaries of any state. Within just 5 years Tughrul successfully defeated the powerful Ghaznevid army (one of the most influential in the region), and wrestled away control of Khorasan, which in 1040 CE he made the capital of his newly independent Seljuk state. The following years marked further expansion beyond Khorasan and notably into Iraq. Tughrul forced the Baghdad caliph to surrender his temporal powers within the Abbasid caliphate to Tughrul and thus became the most influential monarch of his era in the Near and Middle East. In 1057 CE Caliph Kaim al-Buemrillah pronounced Tughrul "The King of the East and the West."

Alp Arslan further expanded the boundaries of the Seljuk state, moving them right up to the eastern Byzantine borders. He mounted several spectacular military campaigns, the most notable of which was his 1071 CE victory at Malazgirt over the Byzantine Emperor Romanus Diogenes. As a result of this devastating defeat, the Byzantine army was so severely weakened that for many years following the defeat it was unable to perform its basic responsibility of securing its imperial borders. Now, with the borders exposed and unprotected, nothing would stop the vast Oghuz tribes, concentrated along the Byzantine borders from flooding the country.

Melikshah essentially continued the military campaigns initiated by his ancestors and through his territorial acquisitions the Great Seljuk Empire completed its formation. Here it's important to note that the previously discussed two-tier formation of the Seljuk army was introduced and implemented during Melikshah's reign. Essentially it was his formula that was later copied by the Seljuk state in Asia Minor in their own military organization. (The professional division made up of goulams existed even earlier, and dates

back to the end of Sultan Tughrul's reign.)

A crucial historical distinction about the Seljuks of Asia Minor is that they were not an extension or a continuation of the Great Seljuk Empire. The pinnacle of the Great Seljuks' westward expansion to Asia Minor was their spectacular victory at Malazgirt.

The western Seljuk state was created independently of and contrary to the wishes of the Great Seljuks. The only common characteristic of the two states was that the descendants of the same man - Seljuk, ruled both. In fact it was Suleiman, son of Kutalmış (Süleyman ibn Kutalmış), a direct Seljuk descendant from an exiled family branch, who founded the western Seljuk state. Just as the state with its capital in Nicaea (Iznik) was established and officially recognized by Byzantium, and Suleiman received his official title from the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad proclaiming him sultan, Melikshah ordered his troops to conquer the newly created state. Suleiman managed to defeat the attack and retain his independence.

We have considered the similarities between the states, but now let's consider their differences, the most prominent of which was their ethnic composition. The subjects of the Great Seljuk Empire were mainly the conquered native populations consisting primarily of Persians and Arabs. The Oghuz, who shared the same ancestry with the ruling Seljuk dynasty, found themselves superfluous in the new state, and migrated en masse from their existing habitats between the Caspian Sea and the middle reaches of the Syr Darya River to Khorasan - the site of the newly established Seljuk state. Migration volumes increased in direct co-relation with the expansion of the new empire's borders. However the Seljuk attitude towards their kin was highly negative. It was becoming a matter of space and as the Seljuk migration volumes reached hundreds of thousands, if not millions of migrants, neither the Persian, nor the Arab territories were able to sustain them. The tactical solution to this population

dilemma was to keep the Oghuz at the periphery of the empire, in this case at the Byzantine borders.

A branch of the Seljuk dynasty likewise conquered the native populations (Greeks and Armenians) inhabiting the most productive lands in Asia Minor. Conversely, the state policy of the Seljuks in Asia Minor towards their Oghuz kin was quite different: state territories were specifically designated for settlement by the Oghuz. Towards the end of the 12th - beginning of the 13th centuries, the absolute ethnic majority in Asia Minor were the Oghuz Turks. We are now able to observe the correlation among all the above-mentioned states: The Great Seljuk Empire, the Seljuk state in Asia Minor, the Ottoman Empire, and the modern-day Turkey.

At the core of many important political developments of the 11th - 14th centuries in the Near and Middle East - in particular, the collapse of the Ghaznevids, Karakhanids, Samanids, Buyyids, the Arabic caliphate, and the collapse of Byzantium along with the emergence of others - the Great Seljuk Empire, the Seljuks of Asia Minor, and the establishment of the Ottoman Empire lay the mass migrations of the Turkic people. To be more specific, the formation of the latter states was a mere political formalization of ethnic migration trends in the area. This latest wave of migration echoed the natural trends established in the 6th century by the Turkic tribes located in modern-day Mongolia and Altai. The first Turkic Qaghanate established here in the 6th – 8th centuries was so vast that its eastern border was the Pacific Ocean, and the Caspian Sea defined its western limits. Altai and Lake Baikal defined its northern boundaries and borders with China marked its south rim. The Uighur and Kirghiz Qaghanate replaced the Turkic Qaghanate. This regional political shift caused the Turkic tribes to exist without a centralized state for quite some time. The prevailing tendency among these tribes was a steady westward migration with some moving southwest and some migrating northwest. Some

of the Oghuz, along with the Pecheneg (*Beçenek*) and the Kipchak moved to the southern Russian steppes, later extending their migration towards the Balkans and Byzantium.

The other Oghuz branch moved to Central Asia forming the so-called *yabguluk*. Their northern neighbors were the Kipchak, while the Yagma people, another ancient Turkic tribe, also moved to Central Asia, where between 927 and 1212 CE they established the powerful Karakhanid state. The chronology of the remaining Turkic tribes could, of course continue, but what is of special importance to us is that none of these tribes was referred to as the Turks. Another fascinating bit of historical insight is that the term “Oghuz” was used to describe subjects of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor and was later dropped in favor of the new term “Turks”. Later the Oghuz themselves accepted this “new” definition.

At this point it's essential that we break from the issues of Turkic migrations and focus our attention on the issues of language and semiotics.

Modern oriental studies use the term “Turk” to refer to all those tribes, nations and ethnic groups that at one time or another adopted a form of a Turkic dialect as their primary language. There are many languages that are classified as Turkic. Together they form the Turkic linguistic Group (according to one classification – the southwestern group) within the larger Altai family of languages. This Turkic linguistic group in turn contains several sub-groups and branches which are classified in a variety of different methods but do not display any principal differences. Hereby the Turkic group contains the following groups and sub-groups: **Oghuz** (*Turkish, Türkmén, Azerbaijani, Gagauz*, as well as other living and dead languages: *Polovec, Pecheneg* and others). **Kipchak** (*Kazakh, Nogay, Karakalpac, Kirghiz, Tatar, Bashkir, Kumyk and others*). **Karluk** (*New Uyghur,*

Uzbek and others). **Uyghur** (*Tuvan, Hakassian, Yakut, Shor and other live languages as well as dead ancient-Uighur language*). **Bulgar** (*Chuvash and the dead Bulgar and Khazar languages*).¹

As with any other method of classifying Turkic languages, this one is based largely on an assumed genetic relationship among the specified groups that either spoke or still speak any of the Turkic languages. All of these ethnic groups (tribes) are classified as Turkic and individually its members would be referred to as Turks. Furthermore, each of the Turkic ethnic groups has its own distinctive national identity and is classified as Tatar, Türkmen, Uzbek, Kazakh, and Uighur etc. Thus when we employ the term "Turks" we are in fact referring to a vast group of people speaking various languages within the Turkic linguistic group. An obvious question arises at this point: has there ever been a nation or a tribe of people that referred to itself as Turks in the widest and narrowest senses of the term? In contemporary history the answer is simple: it's the current Turkish population that comprises the ethnic majority of the Turkish Republic. But what about their ancient ancestors? Was there ever a nation or a tribe that called itself Oghuz? If the two nations existed then why did one disappear and the other remained to assume its identity? Lastly, what was the correlation between the ancient Turks and the ancient Oghuz? Unfortunately, we don't have enough factual documentation to answer these questions with utmost certainty.

Thus, the objective of this book is to make every attempt to fill in the gaps in our understanding of the pre-history of the Ottoman Empire and the modern day Turkish Republic. To proceed with the stated objective we must first accomplish the following:

⇒ Summarize the available information pertaining to the Oghuz

¹ Please see: Вендина Т.И. Введение в языкознание. Учебное пособие. М., 2005. С. 379 - 388; Реформатский А.А. Введение в языковедение. М., 2008. С. 425 – 428.

and other Turkic tribes existing in the area in the 6th – 10th centuries, and present a [hypothetic] correlation between the notions of “Oghuz” and “Turks”. Provide a detailed analysis of the military and political conditions in Maverannagr and Khorasan during the 11th – 12th centuries.

- ⇒ Define the pre-existing conditions leading to the political emergence of the Seljuk dynasty. Describe the history of the formation of the Seljuks state in Khorasan.
- ⇒ Provide a brief summary of the political history of the Great Seljuk Empire at the height of its influence.
- ⇒ Analyze the conditions leading to the collapse of the Great Seljuk Empire and provide a short summary of its political history at this stage of its existence.
- ⇒ Provide an analysis of the military structure utilized by the Great Seljuk Empire at the height of its military and political power.
- ⇒ Examine the shift in the ethnic and religious conditions in Asia Minor at the end of the 10th - beginning of the 11th centuries. Identify the preconditions leading up to the emergence and the establishment of a Turk-Oghuz Islamic state in Byzantium.
- ⇒ Describe the primary stages in the development of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor.
- ⇒ Provide a detailed analysis and a thorough description of the socio-economic, administrative and territorial structures, as well as the military organization of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor at the height of its influence.
- ⇒ Provide a detailed analysis and a comprehensive description of the ethnic, political and military conditions in Asia Minor in the post-Seljuk era.
- ⇒ Define the pre-existing ethnic and political conditions leading up to the emergence of the Ottoman Empire.
- ⇒ Provide an overview of historical sources and literature used for the purposes of this book.

CHAPTER I

Overview of Historical Sources and Literature.

1. Sources on the Oghuz and Other Turkic Tribes of the 6th – 10th Centuries.

The range of sources on the history of the Turks during the 6th - 10th centuries is extremely limited, which creates great difficulties for the researcher. The Chinese dynastic chronicles translated by the Russian and European scholars constitute the primary sources. China had an ongoing task of resisting the pillaging of the nomadic intruders penetrating its lands from the North. The ancient Turkic state, the Turkic Qaghanate, was founded in the area now occupied by Mongolia and bordered China with whom it maintained close military and trade relations. Therefore histories of the Wei (396 – 581 CE) and more importantly, the Soui (598 - 618 CE) and the Tang (618 – 907 CE) dynasties contain important detailed information that is crucial for the investigation at hand. Most of this evidence is derived from the work of an eminent Russian scholar N.A. Bichurin, who is also known by his monastic name father Iakinf. His work titled *Collection of Information on Peoples in Central Asia in Ancient Times* was first published in 1851. The value and the importance of his work remain unmatched to this day. Bichurin was born in the Kazan region in 1777 to a family of a priest and by 1799 graduated with distinction from the Kazan seminary. In 1802 he took the monastic oath and was appointed rector of the Irkutsk seminary and Archimandrite of the Voznessensky (*Ascension*) monastery in Irkutsk. Four years later, in 1806 the Synod ordered the appointment of Bichurin to the head of the Russian Orthodox Mission to China and Archimandrite of the Sreten monastery in Beijing. This appointment marked the beginning of his academic career. Bichurin remained in China until 1821 during which time he mastered Chinese, published

a Chinese dictionary, and completed all major works that were later published in Russia. In 1826 Tsar Nicolas I appointed Bichurin to the Asian Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He left China with a vast collection of the most valuable Chinese books – his 15-camel caravan carried close to 6400 pounds¹ worth of books. Bichurin would devote the rest of his life (he died in 1853) to studying and translating these books. Due to his remarkable erudition, and his scientific achievements he was a well-known scholar of his time. His work on the Kalmyk people was the primary source of reference for Pushkin for his “The History of Pugachev”. Bichurin was a world-renowned scholar. In 1931 in Paris, the epicenter of Asian and Chinese studies, he was elected a member of the Paris Asia Society.

The French scholar J. Deguignes² was among the first European scientists to translate the ancient Chinese manuscripts, but because these works were largely recounts from the original texts and not their direct translations, they are not considered as valuable by the researchers and historians. Klaproth published his work on the Huns and Turkic people³ in 1826, which similar to Deguigne’s work was a recount of the Chinese sources and works of other scholars. In 1864 CE St. Julien, another famous French Sinologist published a series of translations covering the history of the Turks from 545 - 931 CE⁴. However, his work was based on the Chinese sources dating to the 14 – 18th centuries.

What separates Bichurin’s work from others’ is that his translation adequately retained all of the stylistic nuances of

¹ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена. М., 1950 // От института. С. VIII.

² Deguignes, J. Histoire générale des Huns, des Turks, des Mogoles, et des autres Tartares occidentaux avant et depuis J.C. jusqu’à présents. Paris, 1756.

³ Klaproth, U. Tableaux Historiques de l’Asie. Paris, 1826.

⁴ Julien, St. Documents Historiques sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs). Journal Asiatique. 1864. Vol 3, 4.

the original Chinese sources. Along with these achievements Bichurin's work is especially valuable to us in that it contains the translations of the Chinese manuscripts describing the history of the ancient Turkic Qaghanate (section VI "Tugü and Western Tugü" as well as section VII "History of the Hoihu" that contains information on the ancient Uighur Qaghanate). Along with translating the source text Bichurin included relevant commentary, which is also based on the Chinese sources, specifically on the common history of the Tunzhang – Ganmu (12th century).

We will refrain from citing criticism of the *Collection of Information on Peoples in Central Asia in Ancient Times*, that was at one point or another brought up by the Russian and European scholars as we believe they don't detract from the value, and the immense significance of Bichurin's work.

In addition to Bichurin's work we used the translations from the Chinese source texts by a well-known Soviet Sinologist, professor Nikolai Kuehner¹, who offered selected explanations of Bichurin's translation along with parallel translations from similar Chinese sources, not mentioned by Bichurin. Kuehner's work, however helpful, does not compare to the magnitude of Bichurin's as determined by the parameters of this book. Kuehner himself was the first to note that his work was "Intended only as a supplement and further elaboration, to the remarkable work of Iakinf Bichurin' "Collection of Information on Peoples in Central Asia in Ancient Times", more specifically to the parts describing the people of the Amur and Siberia regions."²

It's important to note here that while the ancient Chinese dynastic manuscripts are crucial to our understanding of the ancient Turks and their history, there are many circumstances in which the use of other sources was imperative. Without

¹ Кюнер Н.В. Китайские известия о народах Южной Сибири, Центральной Азии и Дальнего Востока. М., 1961.

² Ibid. С. 7.

them we would have encountered grave difficulties in obtaining objective and adequate answers to the questions posed in this investigation. One of the fundamental obstacles of using a single source is the complexity of accurately relaying the phonetic equivalents of the names of specific tribes as well as geographic locations and the ancient Chinese chroniclers recorded these names with as much accuracy as the Chinese phonetic structure allowed them.

It's also important to remember that the Chinese hieroglyphic pronunciation has likewise evolved and transformed quite significantly throughout the centuries thus making the modern Chinese phonetic structure incapable of providing us with any representation of how any given hieroglyph would have been pronounced throughout history.¹ Original names of people and tribes became apparent only when the ancient phonetic equivalent of the hieroglyph was determined. (Bichurin noted these differences in pronunciation of the ancient and modern hieroglyphs in his book.)

Nonetheless, the similarities among the names remain comparative. Thus the Tugü are the Turks, the Hoihu are the Uighur, the Gelolu are the Karluks, the Tzueshi are the Kipchaks and the Pasims are the Basmils, etc. At times, however the Chinese referred to a given tribe by a name that was in no way similar to the way that group referred to itself. There is also little similarity in the geographic names: Hanghai - the Gobi desert, Kem - Yenisey river, Naryn - Syr Darya river, or Vynansha and Leizhou - the Aral Sea, and Tsinghai - the Caspian Sea.

As for the names of the Turkic Qaghans and other aristocracy, sadly the majority is known only in their phonetic Chinese pronunciation. To be more precise, according to the Chinese records the Turkic rulers, with some minor

¹ Кюнер Н.В. Китайские известия о народах Южной Сибири, Центральной Азии и Дальнего Востока... С. 25.

exceptions, were given Chinese names and no alternate sources exist that can disprove it.

Another factor contributing to the subjective nature of the Chinese chronicles is the imperial sense of superiority towards the events they describe, and all nomadic tribes, specifically the Turks, which is evident throughout these texts.

The Chinese chronicles describe the Turks as vile, despicable and sneaky people whose victories over the regular Chinese army are almost always accidental. The size of the Turkic armies was vastly exaggerated while the size of the Chinese troops greatly understated, and so forth.

Another series of written sources are the Byzantine records that, although incomparable in their breadth to the Chinese chronicles, offer a contrasting narrative of the Turkic Qaghanate describing it as a state that played an important military, political and commercial role. Here Menander Protector begins his accounts¹ in 558 CE with descriptions of the efforts undertaken by the Turkic Qaghanate in the establishment of the silk trade relations in the area; the war that followed an unsuccessful bid by the Sogdian merchants (subjects of the qaghan) sent by the Turkic qaghan to the shah of Iran in order to obtain duty free silk trading and caravan transit rights with Persia, as well as the subsequent Turkic invasion of the Byzantine empire, etc.

Accounts of the relationship between the Byzantine Empire and the Turkic Qaghanates can be found in the works of Procopius of Caesarea² and Theophanes of Byzantium³

¹ Византийские историки. Дексиппъ, Эвнапий, Малх, Петр Патриций, Менандр, Кандидъ, Ноннось и Феофан Византиец. Переведенные с греческого Спиридоном Дестунисом. Т.5. СПб., 1860.

² Прокопий Кесарийский. История войны римлян с персами, вандалами и готами. Перевод с греческого Спиридона Дестуниса, комментарий Гавриила Дестуниса. ЗИФФ. СПб.У, Ч.1, 1876.

³ Византийские историки. Дексиппъ, Эвнапий, Малх, Петр Патриций, Менандр, Кандидъ, Ноннось и Феофан Византиец. Переведенные с греческого Спиридоном Дестунисом. Т.5. СПб., 1860.

whose works, although detailed, are inferior in volume to those of Menander Protector.

Still the most significant source on the history of the ancient Turks comes from the ancient Turkic runic burial inscriptions produced by the Turks themselves. The term “runic” is more symbolic here, used mainly as tribute to their discoverers - the Swedish officers, captured and exiled to Siberia following their defeat in the Battle of Poltava. More specifically, to F. Stallenberg (1646 – 1747), who lived in Siberia from 1713 - 1722 CE and where he first discovered similarities between the hitherto unknown inscriptions and the Scandinavian and the German runes. While many Russian and European scholars published several articles on the ever-increasing number of memorials discovered in the Upper Yenisei Regions, they remained unable to decipher them.

Then in 1889 Russian archeologist Yadrintsev came upon a series of well-preserved memorial structures in the vicinity of the Orkhon River. Surfaces of these obelisks (stelae) contained inscriptions in the language identical to those found in the Upper Yenisei region some 200 years earlier. The sheer volume of the Orkhon inscriptions exceeded anything found earlier. Moreover, the signs on these obelisks were in runic as well as Chinese. The Chinese texts, in particular read that these memorial complexes were erected to commemorate the rulers of the Turkic state Bilge-qaghan and his brother Kul-tegin. The Chinese inscriptions also made it possible to date the monuments to the 730's CE. After this discovery a hypothesis was proposed that the runic inscriptions were made in one of the ancient Turkic languages. Nonetheless, none was still able to decipher the texts.

In 1890 the Finno-Ugor Society sent an expedition to the Orkhon region. The inscriptions were photographed and published in Helsingfors in 1892. In 1891 the Imperial Academy of Sciences dispatched its own expedition to Northern Mongolia headed by V. Radlov. The expedition

successfully, and in detail, examined the memorial complexes and discovered even more memorials. Their findings were then presented in a three-tome publication released in 1892 - 1896. In 1897 V.V. Radlov together with P. Melioransky published a summary on the Orkhon memorials.¹

The most interesting architectural monuments, and the most valuable scientific examples of these memorials were those dedicated to Bilge-qaghan and Kul-tegin. Of the two, the Kul-tegin memorial and the commemorative head stone are in a far better condition and are situated on a lot of land roughly measuring 2,000 sq. meters encircled by a wall made of unfired raw brick. The outer perimeter of the wall was, in turn encircled by a deep ravine, 2 meters deep and 6 meters wide at its widest point. A commemorative temple (10,25 x 10,25m) was erected within the walls of the compound, its outer walls primed and covered with red-pigmented designs and dragonheads molded out of stucco.²

The temple contained a sanctuary at its center and archeologists found two seated figures within the sanctuary - those of Kul-tegin and his wife. The head belonging to the figure of Kul-tegin was broken off but lay right next to the body and remained in good condition. To the west of what remains of the temple is a large cube-shaped stone with a large round indentation at the top. Radlov proposed that the stone was in fact a sacrificial altar. A monumental marble turtle and an obelisk were also found within the compound. The turtle was designed as the foundation for the obelisk and contained a vertical spire upon which the obelisk would be mounted. The Kul-tegin obelisk was 3.15 meters tall by 1.74 meters wide and 72 centimeters deep. The Bilge-qaghan column was slightly taller measuring 3.45 meters in height.³

¹ В.В.Радлов, П.М.Мелиоранский. Древнетюркские памятники в Кошо-Цайдаме. СПб., 1897.

² Кляшторный С.Г. Древнетюркские рунические надписи как источник по истории Средней Азии. М., 1964. С. 58.

³ Мелиоранский П.М. Памятник в честь Кюль-тегина. СПб., 1899. С. 3.

The upper portions of both columns are carved in the shape of pentagonal shields bearing depictions of the Chinese dragons - the seal of the Khan with the other side containing the Chinese and runic inscriptions. Three sides of each column bear the Orkhon (runic) script while the fourth contains Chinese inscriptions.

The existence of these memorial complexes was known from the Tang dynasty texts, but what was unknown was whether or not they survived. Kul-tegin died in 731 CE at the age of 47 and his brother Bilge-qaghan requested that the Chinese Emperor Suangtsung send craftsmen and artisans to design and build sculptures and the memorial temple. The emperor obliged and,

Sent a commander-in-chief Chzhan Tsu and official Lu Siang to express his condolences and make a sacrifice. The emperor ordered the artisans to excise a passage (an epitaph) on the stone plate, construct a commemorative temple and cover [the interior walls] of the temple with scenes depicting [Kul-tegin's] battles. The emperor [also] sent six most famous painters to the Turks who painted such realistic and lively scenes that the Turks have decided that they have never seen anything like this in their kingdom.¹

The Soviet scholar S.G. Klyashtorny observed that "...The sculpture of Kul-tegin, adorned with a five-shielded crown depicting a relief of a flying eagle, was the best sculptural portrait ever discovered in Central Asia."²

Bilge-qaghan himself wrote the Turkic text found on the monument, and Radlov further believes that the Chinese artisanal incision marks simply traced the ink outlines made

¹ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена... С. 276-277.

² Кляшторный С.Г. Древнетюркские рунические надписи как источник по истории Средней Азии. М., 1964. С. 58.

by Bilge-qaghan directly onto the stone.¹ Chinese artisans were also involved in creating the memorial structures for Bilge-qaghan. It is believed that the text was composed by Bilge-qaghan himself during his lifetime, and was likely incised by the very same artist once Bilge-qaghan died in 734 CE. This assumption is based on the fact that the story is told in the first person, i.e. Bilge-qaghan. It's also known that each monument mentioned the author of the inscriptions and declares Yolug-tegin as their author.

For instance the monument to Bilge-qaghan contains the following passage: "The Bilge-qaghan inscription, I Yolug-tegin wrote."² The monument to Kul-tegin bears the following: "Having written so many inscriptions I, Yolug-tegin, a relative of Kul-tegin wrote this. Having sat for twenty days, [working] on this stone for this stele I alone wrote this". It's nonetheless evident that one mustn't overestimate the independence of Yolug-tegin's political thinking and that the true author of these texts is none other than Bilge-qaghan himself. It's evident also that the extent of Yolug-tegin's contribution did not extend beyond the simple tracing of the characters (*Having sat for twenty days, [working] on this stone*) that were then incised by the Chinese artisans.

The achievement for decoding the Yenisey - Orkhon writings belongs to the outstanding Dutch scholar V. Tomsen³ who was able to determine the phonetic meaning of virtually every symbol. In November of 1893 he successfully determined the phonetic value of practically every runic inscription. On December 15th, 1893 Tomsen presented his discovery to the Dutch Academy of Sciences and later that month relayed the results of his work to Academician Radlov.

¹ В.В.Радлов, П.М.Мелиоранский. Древнетюркские памятники в Кошо-Цайдаме... С. 10.

² Малов С.Е. Памятники древнетюркской письменности Монголии и Киргизии. М.-Л., 1959. С. 24.

³ Please see: Бартольд В.В. Томсен и история Средней Азии. Петроград, 1926.

On January 19th, 1894 Radlov completed the first ever translation of the ancient Turkic inscriptions on the Kul-tegin monument and in January of 1894, with references to Tomsen, presented his translations of the ancient Turkic runic inscriptions to the Russian Academy of Sciences.¹

In 1897 E.N. Klements discovered a monument to Tonyukuk, an advisor to three qaghans, on the banks of the Tola River (the right tributary of the Orkhon River). Similarly to the monuments to Bilge-qaghan and Kul-tegin, the monument to Tonyukuk was a memorial complex, albeit a more modest one. The complex was paved with unfired mud brick and contained a temple, a sarcophagus, eight cut-stone human figures, and two stone stelae measuring 1.7 and 1.6 meters in height placed in close proximity to the temple. Tonyukuk himself composed the text on the stelae and V.V. Radlov was the first to complete the translation of the inscription.

All of the above-mentioned sites (found primarily in Northern Mongolia) contain the largest and most informative of all of the presently known ancient Turkic texts. For the most part we used this information, along with other sources, for the chapters on the ancient Turks. We have used the Russian-language translations by V.V. Radlov, P.M. Melioransky, S.E. Malov as well as the Turkish-language translation by H. N. Orkun.²

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the ancient Turkic monuments, as these are the rare traces that remain of the ancient Turkic culture written in their own language. The discovery and decoding of these texts allowed us to finally treat the fact of the overall existence of the ancient Turks and their state, their social and military structure, and their state history as a reliable and proven historical fact. Furthermore, since the Huns did not leave any

¹ Бартольд В.В. Томсен и история Средней Азии. Петроград... С. 7.

² Orkun, H. N. Eski Türk Yazıtları. Cilt I, Cilt II, Cilt III. İstanbul, 1936 – 1940.

written evidence of their existence, we must accept the records kept by the Chinese. Thus the possibility of the Huns being the ancestors of the ancient Turks is highly plausible, but remains nothing more than just that. A number of scholars, among them the French professor Pellio, considered the Huns to be Mongols. However, even the medieval Mongols, like many other nomadic cultures did not leave any written monuments of their existence. In fact the most ancient of the Mongolian monuments are dated to the 13th century.

These monuments, and here we are referring primarily to the texts inscribed on the memorials to Bilge-qaghan, Kul-tegin and Tonyukuk, not only offer material proof of the existence of the ancient Turks, but also tell us of the formation of the first Qaghanate with its first ruler Bumin, who the Chinese refer to as Tumin, and the 50-year Chinese yoke.

These texts contain extensive records on the formation and history of the so-called Second Eastern Qaghanate, on the resurrection of the Turkic rule in Mongolia in 680 CE, the qaghanate's struggles with its foreign enemies and the near-constant infighting within the Turkic Qaghanate itself. Moreover, the internal struggles were documented far more extensively than the external.

These texts also provide us with the genuine names and titles of the Turkic rulers, as well as the names of the tribes that were part of the qaghanate. Some other Turkic tribes, outside of the qaghanate are also mentioned here. The most significant aspect of the Orkhon inscriptions for this investigation, are their first-ever records of the people referred to as the Oghuz. Moreover, these texts make it possible for us to presume (but not decisively prove) that the Turks and the Oghuz were one people.

This book also makes use of the published results of the discoveries made by the Russian archeologists in the Altai region. These discoveries show that blacksmithing, and more precisely manufacturing of weapons and defensive gear was

well established in the region in the 5 – 6th centuries. The only way the Tugü of the ancient Chinese chronicles, would have been able to become a real military power in the region and acquire such vast territories in such a relatively brief (historical) period is through the well-equipped Turkic army. We allow for a possibility that Bumin's army used the weapons manufactured in the Altai region and that the Tugü were able to manufacture these weapons on their own. The Chinese chronicles tell us that the Tugü have been mining the iron ore for the Juan-Juan (Zhouan-Zhouan)¹ for quite some time as they remained their subjects up until the middle of the 6th century.

We also relied on the fundamental work of a famous Russian historian and archeologist S.V. Kiselev who in his "Ancient history of Southern Siberia,"² 1951 provided valuable information on the material culture in the Altai region based on the results of the archeological excavations. Kiselev was able to personally examine the dig pits where small amounts of bloomery iron were produced. Experts believe that bloomery iron produced in the 5th century was superior in quality to the cast iron of the same period.³ Kiselev was able to provide detailed descriptions of the weapons produces from bloomery iron and accompanied his descriptions with detailed schematic drawings.

The key source of information on the Oghuz and other Turkic tribes of the later periods, primarily during the 9 – 10th centuries is a Persian-language work by an unknown author titled "*Hudûd al-Âlam*" or ("The Limits of the World") written in 982 – 983 CE. This unique work was discovered in Bukhara in 1892 and has since been referred to as "*The Tumansky Manuscript*." No other copies of the manuscript have been found. The version used for the purposes of this

¹ The Juan-Juan (Joujan) - was an early medieval confederation of nomadic tribes in the Western Manchurian and Mongolian steppes.

² Киселев С.В. Древняя история Южной Сибири. М., 1951.

³ Ibid. C. 515.

book is the English translation completed by V. Minorsky¹ that contains explicit explanation and detailed commentary to the early 10th century text providing for a much easier reading.

What makes the Minorsky translation even more valuable is that the author employs a critical approach in treatment of the text. He engages the author, presents plausible arguments and additions to the text, often citing examples from Gardizi's ca. 1050 CE Persian-language work entitled "*Zayn al-Akhhbār*" ("Beautiful News"). Minorsky also cited from the encyclopedic work of the Arabic historian Massoudi written in the middle of the 10th century and entitled "*Muruj al-zahab*" ("Golden Pastures"). (We were unable to gain access to either of these works.)

The author of the *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam* described the Turkic tribes and their habitats in ten whole paragraphs and classifies all Turkic tribes into two main groups: south-eastern and north-western. The first group is made up of the Uighur, Yagma, Kirgiz, Karluk, Chigil and Tuhsi people. The Kimek, Oghuz, Pecheneg and Kipchaks belong to the second group. The majority of the chronological records on the Turkic tribes described in the *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam* pertain to the 9 – 10th centuries.

Some of the unique, although rather scarce information on the Oghuz state (or *yabguluk*), is further drawn from the memoirs of one Ibn Fadlan, who traveled to the Volga Bulgarians as a member of the Baghdad Caliphate embassy. Volga-Kama Bulgarian state of the 10 – 11th centuries had extensive trade relations with Byzantium and the Baghdad Caliphate and the embassy traveled through the Oghuz *yabguluk* territories in 922 CE. In his "Book" Ahmed Ibn Fadlan made detailed observations of the Oghuz social structures, the daily lives of the Oghuz people and the

¹ *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam. The Regions of the World. A Persian Geography 372 A.H. – 982 A.D. Translated and explained by V. Minorsky. London, 1937.*

diplomatic relations of the Oghuz state with their neighbors. There is a Russian-language translation of the work.¹ The author of Hudûd al-‘Âlam is likewise mentioned this book.

A series of noteworthy observations, albeit portions of it should be considered with a healthy dose of scholarly criticism, were made by Rashid ad-Din (1247 - 1318 CE) in his work titled "*The Collection of Chronicles*". The work was originally published in Persian but we referred to its Russian translation.² Rashid ad-Din was a remarkably well-educated man, fluent in Arabic, Persian, Mongolian, and Turkic. His position as the official historiographer of the Hulaguid dynasty, as well as the Minister of the Hulaguid state³ allowed him to have unprecedented access to the state archives where he was able to thoroughly examine all available historical information on the Turkic and Mongolian tribes. Rashid ad-Din made the following observations about his work "*The Collection of Chronicles*",

I have made every effort, without fail, to gather and compile every conclusion made by the most authentic monuments of every nation, all the most accurate stories and evidence presented by the most learned scholars. I considered the work of historians and genealogists from every state. I determined the most precise spelling and title of every people and every tribe. I organized my findings in a systematic order...⁴

"*The Collection of Chronicles*" by Rashid ad-Din contains extensive information on the Turkic and Mongolian tribes, and the authors offers his own explanations as to the precise origin and underlying causes that contributed to a given tribe's name. He lists names of all 24 tribes that

¹ Ковалевский А.П. Книга Ахмеда ибн Фадлана о его путешествии на Волгу в 921 - 922 гг. Харьков, 1956.

² Рашид-Эддин. Сборник летописей. История монголов. Перевод с персидского И.Н.Березина. СПб., 1858.

³ For more information on the Hulaguid dynasty please see: Chapter VII. Part 2.

⁴ Ibid. Chapter VIII.

constituted the Oghuz people in the 10th – 11th centuries, but his claim that each tribe was named after one of Oghuz Khan's 24 sons, and that all Turkic tribes are the descendants of Noah's son Japheth seem to be more mythical than historical in nature.

One of the very few, if not the only, sources on the Karakhanid Dynasty (927 - 1212 CE) is the work written by Munedjim-bashi, his given name – Ahmed-efendi - (1630 - 1701 CE), the Chief Astrologist of the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed IV. The book was written in Arabic and titled "*The Chronicles of the Chief Astrologist*." The work's primary value is its description of the Second (in chronological terms) Turkic state that formed after the collapse of the Turkic, Uighur and Kirgiz Qaghanates. The first Oghuz state, the so-called Oghuz Yabguluk ceased to exist at the beginning of the 11th century.

In his book Munedjim-bashi covers most of the Karakhanid history up to and including its last ruler Osman-khan who was killed at the hands of Khorezmshah Mohammed in 1212 CE. For the purposes of this analysis we have used the Russian translation of the Munedjim-bashi's book completed by V.V. Grigoriev and published in St. Petersburg in 1874 under the title "*The Karakhanids in Maverannagr*".¹

We used Muhammad Narshahi's book "*The History of Bukhara*" as the primary source on the history of the Samanid Dynasty (899 - 999 CE). The book was written in Arabic in 943 CE and presented to Nuh b. Nasr, Emir of Bukhara - the capital of the Samanid state. Abu Bakkr Muhammad bin Jaffar Narshahi (899 - 959 CE) was born on the outskirts of Bukhara, in a settlement called Narshahi. His work contains detailed descriptions of the palaces, mosques, bazaars, Bukhara city walls and its surroundings, but the most

¹ Караханиды в Мавераннахре по Тарихи Мюнедджим-баши. В османском тексте, с переводом и примечаниями В.В. Григорьева. СПб, 1874.

valuable passages in the book are those describing the origins, and the key periods of the Samanid dynasty.

Towards the end of the 9th century the Samanids were able to form a sizable state in Central Asia and the Middle East, which remained its principal military and political power until the middle of the 10th century. Nizam al-Mulk, the vizier of the Great Seljuk Empire considered the Samanid state regulatory structure, that was later adapted and improved upon by the Ghaznevids, to be exemplary. The Samanids had a well-developed agriculture, artisanal craftsmanship, and trade. A great deal of attention was paid to the cultural development. Bukhara was home to many of the distinguished people of that era. We know that the famous Avicenna worked in the Samanid library in Bukhara.

In 1228 CE Abu Nasr Ahmed b. Mohammed al Kubavi edited and translated Narshahi's work into Persian, and continued the history of the Samanid dynasty until its disappearance, and the Karakhanid conquest of Bukhara. In 1892 CE Shefer published the Persian-language translation of Narshahi's work in Paris. We referred to the 1897 Russian translation of the Parisian text completed by N. Lykoshin.¹

For the chapters on the history of the Oghuz and other Turkic tribes in the 6 – 10th century, along with the main source texts we have used the conclusions of published scientific and historical research. A complete reference of these sources is included in the bibliography.

We found the work of V.V. Bartold, the distinguished Russian and Soviet academician to be most valuable. His works *The History of the Turkic-Mongolian People*,² as well as the *Twelve Lectures on the History of the Turkish People in Central Asia*³ contain an in-depth analysis of essentially all

¹ Наршахи, Мухаммед. История Бухары. Перевел с персидского Н. Лыкошин. Ташкент, 1897.

² Бартольд В.В. История турецко-монгольских народов. Ташкент, 1928.

³ Бартольд В.В. Двенадцать лекций по истории турецких народов Средней Азии. Сочинения. Т. V. М., 1968.

facets of the issues facing the ancient Turkic nomadic people as well as the Turkic Qaghanate, from the linguistic to the socio-political. Bartold paid especially close attention to the ethnic composition of the ancient Turkic state. He managed to come very close to answering the question of the principal ethnic relationship between the Oghuz and the Turkic ethnic components within the Turkic society, and more precisely, the relationship between the definitions of the “Türk” and the “Oghuz.” Having insufficient factual evidence he eventually turned to using such terms as the “Türk-Oghuz”, the “Türk-Oghuz Khan”, along with the “western branch of the Oghuz people” (*The latter refers to the people settled within the Western Turkic Qaghanate. - author’s note.*) Additionally, Bartold insisted on a point of view that contrary to the assertion of many of the Arab and Persian sources, the Uighur were an independent Turkic people and were not ethnically Oghuz.

In his fundamental work titled *Turkestan During the Mongol Invasion*¹ and more specifically in the second chapter titled *Central Asia Before the 13 Century*, Bartold offers a spectacular analysis of the military and political developments, as well as the ethnic and religious conditions in Maverannagr during the 9 – 11th centuries. Bartold presented the history of the Samanid state, offered evidence of the Turkic Karakhanid state that put an end to the Samanid rule in Maverannagr, and talked about the Ghaznevid state, and their challenging relationship. Bartold barely touched upon the Seljuk appearance in the political arena making a point of stating in advance that this was not his objective.²

Work of the English Orientalist M. Gibb titled *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia*,³ devoted to the affirmation of the Arab rule in Maverannagr, and more specifically to the

¹ Бартольд В.В. Туркестан в эпоху монгольского нашествия. Сочинения. Т. I. М., 1963.

² Ibid. C. 364.

³ Gibb, M.A. *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia*. London, 1923.

actions of the legendary commander-in-chief and the official representative of the Caliph, Kuteyba bin Muslim is an important historical resource. Using the Chinese, Persian and Arabic sources to support his research Gibb presents valuable evidence about the Western Turkic Qaghanate during its final stages of existence and the role of the Türgesh army under the leadership of Sulu, in the fight against the Arab conquerors in Central Asia and Khorasan.

We cannot overlook the work of Lev Gumilev titled “*The Ancient Türks*” that was originally published in 1967, and has been subsequently reprinted several times. This book has left us with a mixed impression with some aspects representing concrete scientific research, while a number of provisions made by the author are decidedly questionable, and some are altogether incorrect. He begins his book - without any effort to resolve the question of the correlation between the Turk and the Oghuz components within the qaghanate - by stating that: “The tribe, whose history we shall be describing in this book, and in an effort to circumvent any confusion, shall be referred to as the Türküt - as they are called by the Zhouzhan and the Chinese in the 6th century.”¹ The author then swiftly resolves the question on the origin of the people as,

The “Türküt” people appeared at the end of the 5th century as the result of ethnic mixing in a *forest-steppe landscape*, which is typical of Altai and its surrounding regions. This integration of the newcomers with the [locals] was so absolute, that in just one hundred years, by 546 CE they have created that unique ethnic entity, that oneness, which was to be called the [ancient Türks] or the Türküt.²

Nor can we agree with Gumilev’s treatment of the term “Oghuz” which, in his opinion means “community” or a

¹ Гумилев Л.Н. Древние тюрки. М., 2004. С. 30.

² Гумилев Л.Н. Древние тюрки. М., 2004. С. 30.

union of several minor tribes regardless of their ethnicity. Gumilev wrote: "This is the origin of such ethnonyms as "tokuz-oghuz" = 9 oghuz (communities) are the uighur and uch-oghuz = 3 oghuz are the karluks."¹ Thus if there are 9 communities they are the uighur and of there are 3 - they are the Karluks. Gumilev concluded the Oghuz issue as follows: "Subsequently the term "Oghuz" lost its meaning... and became known as the name of a legendary Türkmen ancestor - Oghuz-khan, who was recognized as one of the Muslim prophets".² There are many more similar examples.

2. Sources on the Great Seljuks.

While the number of sources on the history of the Great Seljuks is also limited, thankfully, the vast majority of them are indisputable. The work of Abu-l-Fazl Muhammed b. Hussein Bayhaqi titled "*Tarihi Masudi 1030 - 1041*" ("*Mesoudian History 1030 - 1041*")³ is the main and the most unique source of historical information on the initial chapter of the Great Seljuks - beginning with their first appearance in Maverannagr as a military force, the conquest of Khorasan and the establishment of the first independent Seljuk state in 1040 CE.

Bayhaqi was born in 995 (died ca. 1078 CE) and spent nearly 25 years of his life serving at the State Secretariat (divan-i risalat) of the Ghaznevid Empire - at the time the most powerful state in the Central and the Middle East. Abu-l-Fazl Bayhaqi first held the title of the Assistant Director of this official establishment and was later promoted to Director. As director, Bayhaqi was familiar with the prevailing issues

¹ Ibid. C. 69.

² Ibid.

³ We referred to the Russian-language translation of the Tahiri Masudi completed, along with commentary, and published in Tashkent by A.K. Arends in 1962.

within the domestic and foreign policies of the Ghaznevid state. Bayhaqi's work, and more precisely that portion of the multi-tome edition that still exists, is dedicated exclusively to the rule of Sultan Mesoud (1030 - 1041 CE). What separates this work from that of an imperial chronicler or other Muslim authors, and what makes this work unique is that Bayhaqi approached his sultan from a purely historic perspective, interested only in relating the most unadulterated and optimally objective facts. Bayhaqi was careful to point out that in contrast to the great Sultan Mahmoud, who founded the powerful Ghaznevid Empire, his son Mesoud lacked all state and military leadership skills. In the fight with the Seljuks, who methodically carved away at the then-Ghaznevid-controlled Khorasan, Mesoud showed himself an incompetent commander and a drunkard, which only amplified and exasperated all of his negative characteristics and was one of the reasons the Ghaznevids sustained so many losses at the hands of the Seljuks. Along with the details of military preparations and operations Bayhaqi presented us with several unique documents that cannot be found in any other sources. He offers a description of the Battle of Dandanaqan that was catastrophic for the Ghaznevids and cost them Khorasan. Bayhaqi described the battle as an eyewitness as he was with the Sultan during the events. The Ghaznevid defeat at Dandanaqan in Khorasan led to the formation of the first Seljuk state headed by Seljuk's grandson – Tughrul. Throughout the history of the Great Seljuks, Tughrul was the first of the first three Seljuk sultans to be referred to as "The Great". The powerful Seljuk Empire established during his rule was unparalleled in its might and knew no equals throughout the near and the Middle East.

Bayhaqi's work also allows us a certain understanding of Tughrul's personal qualities during the conquest of Khorasan. As far as we know there haven't been any works on the Great Seljuk sultans written during their lifetime, or perhaps they simply didn't survive. Evidence of their

activities is presented in the works of historians of a much later period who based their stories on the written sources they had at their disposal. We shall talk more about these authors a little later.

Information on the state structure, social conditions, the administrative apparatus organization, and the Great Seljuk Imperial army is derived from the book titled “*Siyaset-name*” (The Book on Government)¹ written by a celebrated vizier and the mentor to the two Great Seljuk sultans Alp Arslan and his son Sultan Melikshah. The book written by Nizam al-Mulk, around 1091 - 1092 CE, not long before the author's death, was commissioned by the last of the Great Seljuk Sultans, Melikshah. The formation of the Great Seljuk empire was completed during his reign, therefore the sultan felt the need to provide a “State of the Union”- type report where he provided an analysis of the current state conditions, pointed out various shortcomings, and based on the analysis of governmental structures of other countries, offered recommendations for their elimination. The sultan charged several officials with completing this task but ultimately only the vizier's work was approved.

A number of historians, among them B.N. Zahoder, doubt that every chapter in the book can be attributed to Nizam al-Mulk, particularly the chapters on the Ismaelites. However, even those chapters that were added to the original book some decades following the death of Nizam al-Mulk by a scribe remain a valuable source on the history of the Great Seljuk state.

Another important resource on the history of the Great Seljuk Empire is the work of al-Bundari *The History of the Seljuks of Iran and Khorasan*. The majority of the book was most likely written by two other authors: Anoushirvan bin Halid and Īmadeddin Īsfahani.

¹ We referred to the translation and commentary made by B.N. Zahoder . Moscow – Leningrad, 1949.

The Vizier Anoushirvan bin Halid was a secretary in the Great Seljuk Imperial Divan¹ and described only the events that took place during his lifetime: 1072 - 1134 CE. This period encompasses the history of the Great Seljuk Empire from the time of Sultan Melikshah to the death of Sultan Tughrul bin Mohammed and since the vizier was an eyewitness to many of the events he described he was able to provide accurate accounts of such events as the battle between Barkiyaruq and Tutush.

Anoushirvan was friendly with Mueid ul-Mulk, the son of Nizam al-Mulk so when Barkiyaruq executed Mueid, Anoushirvan left state service and took up literary work in Basra. In 1104 CE following Barkiyaruq's death the throne was passed on to Mehmed Tapar (1105 - 1118 CE) who was sympathetic to Mueid ul-Mulk and invited Anoushirvan to return to the palace where the sultan appointed him the Finance Minister and the Military Inspector General. The new position allowed Anoushirvan access to the most important state documents as well as the frequent access to the sultan. During the reign of Sultan Mahmud bin Mohammed (1117 - 1131 CE) Anoushirvan held the title of the Grand Vizier and in 1132 CE Caliph Müstershid appointed Anoushirvan his vizier. Thereby Anoushirvan was an exceptionally well-informed man, who published his memoirs in Persian under the title *The Decline of the Era of the Viziers and the Viziers of the Era of the Decline*.

The second author, İmadeddin İsfahani translated these memoirs into Arabic and added several invaluable details pertaining specifically to the later period. Mohammed İmadeddin İsfahani was born in 1125 CE in İsfahan. Soon his family relocated to Baghdad where he received his education. He was in Baghdad in the middle of the 1150's and due to his personal qualities and extensive connections within the royal

¹ Divan – is the highest governmental body in many medieval and modern Muslim states in the Near and Middle East.

court he soon became a prominent figure in Baghdad. Caliph al-Muktefi expressed great interest towards İsfahani and soon appointed him deputy vizier. His father and uncles also held important government positions within the Seljuk state, thus enabling İsfahani's access to the valuable documents that he later referenced in his memoirs. However, he based his work primarily upon his own observations and impressions of the events he himself witnessed. Thereby what İmadeddin İsfahani wrote in 1183 CE was largely based on the work of Anoushirvan, translated into Arabic with important personal additions on the events prior to 1072 CE and those post 1134 CE. He titled his work *Assistance and Shelter to the Tired Creatures*.

The book took on its final form with the work of al-Feth bin Ali bin Mohammed al Bundari, also born in İsfahan. In 1226 CE he assumed the task of writing the condensed version of Anoushirvan's work for one of the Arab princes. In its final state, i.e. after al Bundari's reductions, the work was titled *Zubdat al-nushra va nuhbat al-'usra* which translates to *The Cream of "Assistance" and selections from the book "Shelter"*.

Kyvameddin Burslan translated the joint effort into Turkish and published the book in Turkey in 1943. The introduction to the book mentions that the author added information on the Seljuks' early history, prior to Sultan Tughrul. Burslan also wrote that he used the evidence contained in the writings of İbn ul-Esir, which, undoubtedly, adds great value to the book as a whole. We have used al Bundari's work in its Turkish translation.¹

We have drawn upon important evidence contained in the work titled "*Zubdat üt-Tevarih*" ("The Cream of the Chronicles") written by Şadraddin Ebu'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn

¹ Al Bundari. Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları tarihi. İmad ad-din Al-Katib Al-İsfahani'nin Al-Bundari tarafından ihtisar edilen Zubdat al-Nuşra va Nuhbat Al-Usra adlı kitabının tercümesi. Türkçeye çeviren Kıvameddin Burslan. İstanbul, 1943.

Nâşir ibn ‘Ali el-Hüsseini. The book, in its only edition is currently in the collection of The British Museum and features another inscription on its cover. It reads “*Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye*” or “Information on the History of the Seljuk state”. El-Hüsseini was in the service of the Khorezmshah Tekesh and wrote the book at the end of the 13th century. The book contains detailed information on the initial phase of the Great Seljuk state, and presents the most important details about the life and activities of the Seljuk sultans, especially the last 35 years of the state’s existence. The author pays great attention to the relationship between the sultans and the Christian world and provides a detailed description of the battle at Malazgirt between Sultan Alp-Arslan and the Byzantine Emperor Romanus Diogenes. El-Hüsseini’s work was originally written in Persian. Necati Lugal, a professor of the Ankara University translated the work into Turkish and published it in 1944.¹ We have used the Turkish-language translation of El-Hüsseini’s writings.

One of the most authoritative texts on the final stage of the Seljuk Empire was written in the beginning of the 13th century by Mohammed bin Ali bin Süleiman er-Ravendi. The author and his family belonged to the inner circle of the last Seljuk Sultan Tughrul III (1177 - 1194 CE). Ravendi described a series of battles Tughrul III was forced to engage in, including the fight against the Abbasid Caliph’s forces in 1188 CE. In 1194 CE, Tughrul III was killed in a battle with the Khorezmshah thus interrupting the Great Seljuk Dynasty.

Ravendi began work on his book in 1203 CE, i.e. after the Great Seljuk Empire ceased to exist, but at the time when another Turkic state was beginning to accumulate power in Asia Minor. Seljuk’s descendants also ruled this new state. Ravendi decided to dedicate his work to the sultan of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor, Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev. He

¹ El-Hüseyni (*Şadrüddin Ebu’l-Hasan ‘Ali ibn Nâşır ibn ‘Ali*) *Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye*. Türkçeye çeviren Necati Lugal. Ankara, 1943.

traveled to Anatolia and presented the Sultan with the complete work in the state capital of Konya.

Ravendi titled his work *Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür* - or the “Lightening the Hearts and Creating Joy”. In 1921 Muhammed Ikbāl edited and published the Persian-language version of the book in England. For the purposes of this book we have used the Turkish translation of Ravendi’s work completed by Ahmet Ateş.¹

We derived important information on the history of the Great Seljuk Empire from “*The Chronography of Abu’l-Faraj*” - a monumental work by the renowned Syrian scholar of the 13th century Gregory Abu’l-Faraj (Bar Hebraeus). Abu’l-Faraj was born ca. 1225/26 CE in Malatya to a family of a well-known Hebrew physician Aaron and soon got his Hebrew nickname Bar ‘Ebharyā, or Bar Hebraeus, which translates to “*the son of a Hebrew*.” He was born with a name Youhan, so the exact transformation from Youhan to Gregory remains a mystery. According to one theory the new name was given to him at the age of twenty by a local bishop. The other unanswered question is when and how he got his second (Arabic) name “Abu’l-Faraj” and the only feasible explanation is that Bar Hebraeus lived and worked within a Muslim Syrian - Arabic society. Bar Hebraeus was a highly educated man who held multiple positions within the Christian church and spent more than 20 years as bishop throughout the various cities in the Arab East. His religious designation didn’t interfere with his scholarly work and having wide academic interests he ultimately published close to 30 works on subjects as diverse as philosophy, metaphysics, dialectics, astronomy, cosmography, theology, and others.

The publication at hand “*The Chronography of Abu’l-*

¹ Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b.Ali b. Süleyman). *Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür*. (Gönüllerin Rahatı ve Sevinç Alameti.) Farsça metinden Türkçeye çeviren Ahmet Ateş. I. Cilt. Ankara, 1957; II. Cilt. Ankara, 1960.

Faraj” is a three - volume political history of the world from the time of its formation and until 1286 CE. Chapter X in volume I is titled “*The Arab Rulers*” and contains information on the Seljuk history. Abu’l-Faraj worked on the volumes at the Meraga library, which was the largest of its day and contained a vast collection of Syrian, Persian and Arabic scholarly manuscripts. Ernest Budge, who translated the work into English and published it in London in 1923 noted, “The work of Bar Hebraeus is truly a chronographic and historical encyclopedia, and contains an unprecedented volume of information...”¹

In Chapter X of volume I Abu’l-Faraj presents the history of the Seljuk dynasty starting in 1036 CE and continues with the establishment and the history of the Great Seljuk Empire from 1040 CE until its demise in 1195 CE. In 1945 Ömer Rıza Doğrul translated Budge’s English-language text into Turkish and published the work in Ankara.² We have used both translations of Abu’l-Faraj’s original text.

As Russian Oriental studies do not contain research on the Great Seljuks we have utilized the work of the Turkish scholars and more specifically that of the most prominent Turkish scholar M. A. Köymen, who authored *The History of the Great Seljuk Empire. Period of Formation*,³ *Tughrul-bey and His Era*,⁴ *History of the Great Seljuk Empire. Alp-Arslan and His Era*,⁵ *History of the Great Seljuk Empire. The Second*

¹ Budge, Ernest A. Wallis. *The Chronography of Gregory Abu’l Faraj (1225 – 1286) the son of Aaron, the Hebrew Physician commonly known as Bar Hebraeus, being the part of his political history of the world. Translated from the Syriac. Volume I: English translation.* Amsterdam, 1932.

² Abu’l Farac, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus). *Abu’l Farac Tarihi.* Cilt. I. Suryancadan İngilizceye çeviren Ernest A. Wallis Budge. Türkçeye çeviren Ömer Rıza Doğrul. Ankara, 1945.

³ Köymen, M.A. *Büyük Selçuklu imparatorluğu tarihi. Kuruluş devri.* Ankara, 2000.

⁴ Köymen, M.A. *Tuğrul-bey.* Ankara, 1986.

⁵ Köymen, M.A. *Büyük Selçuklu imparatorluğu tarihi. Alp Arslan ve zamanı.* Ankara, 2001.

Empire,¹ and other works published in periodicals. The main value of Köymen's research lies in the fact that while based on the Persian and Arabic sources, his research contains information on the Seljuk dynasty at the time of its increasing prominence in the political arena and the formation of the state in Khorasan (end of the 10th century - 1040 CE); the history of the state during the reign of Sultans Tughrul (1040 - 1062 CE), Alp-Arslan (1063 - 1072 CE) and Sanjar (1117 - 1157). It is precisely the reign of Sultan Sanjar that Köymen considers to be the "*Era of the Second Empire*". Some of the shortcomings of Köymen's work are their over-saturation with insignificant episodes and details. This observation is most apparent in *The History of the Great Seljuk Empire. Period of Formation*, and *History of the Great Seljuk Empire. The Second Empire*.

We found the work of Ibrahim Kefesoglu *Great Seljuk Empire during the reign of Sultan Melikshah*² to be particularly thorough and scientifically useful. The scholarly value of the work lies in his accomplishment of thoroughly analyzing and compiling excerpts and otherwise incomplete or contradictory data contained throughout the Persian, Arabic, Byzantine, and Armenian sources on the life and the multi-faceted persona of one of the greatest Seljuk sultans Melikshah, and providing a well-rounded description of the domestic and foreign policies of the empire.

We believe that A. Özeydyn's research work titled *History of the Seljuks during the reign of Muhammed Tapar (498 - 511/1105 - 1118 CE)*³ is of great importance. This period in the Seljuk history was associated with the infighting that followed Sultan Melikshah's death and contributed to the

¹ Köymen, M.A. Büyük Selçuklu imparatorluğu tarihi. İkinci imparatorluk devri. Ankara, 1991.

² Kefesoğlu, İ. Sultan Melikşah devrinde Büyük Selçuklu İmparatorluğu. İstanbul, 1953.

³ Özeydin, A. Sultan Muhammed Tapar devri Selçuklu Tarihi (498 – 511/1105 – 1118) Ankara, 1990.

weakening of the state. Mohammed Tapar ascended the Seljuk throne following the death of his brother Barkiyaruq and worked on restoring the centralized power in the state. Unfortunately he was unable to submit the emirs and couldn't end the murderous activities of the batanids (the assassins). The 177 pages of this relatively compact work are filled with well-outlined and factual information based largely on the Arabic, Persian, Byzantine and Armenian source texts. This notwithstanding, not every conclusion presented by the author should be taken for its presented value.

3. *Sources on the Seljuk State in Asia Minor.*

There are only two known sources on the history of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor. The more important of the two is the work titled *El Evamirül-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye*¹, also known as the "*Seljuk-name*" written in Persian by the Emir Hussein Muhammad Ali Jaferi Rugadi, better known as İbn Bibi. The complete work can be found in the collection of the Hagia Sofia library in Istanbul. In 1996 Mürsel Öztürk translated it into Turkish and the two volumes were published in Ankara.

İbn Bibi's chronicle was penned in the 13th century and represents a unique and primary source on the history of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor, containing unprecedented evidence of the political, military and social history of the Seljuk state between 1192 and 1280 CE. İbn Bibi and his parents served at the royal Seljuk court and İbn Bibi had extensive access to information pertaining to a wide range of social, political, and military aspects of the Seljuk life. He sited many organizational aspects of the Seljuk official

¹ İbn Bibi (el-Hüseyn b. Muhammed b. Ali el-Ca'feri Er-Rugadi). *El Evamirül-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye*. (Selçuk-name). Çeviren Prof. Dr. Mürsel Öztürk. Cilt I - II. Ankara, 1996.

structures, including information on the military and the military - feudal (*iqta*) system of land-allocation and ownership that served as the socio-economic basis of the Seljuk military structure. İbn Bibi further sited precise numerical relationship between the sizes of the *iqta* and the number of soldiers the owner of the *iqta* was responsible to train, mount, and prepare for service in the Seljuk army. The Ottoman Turks later adopted this system. His chronicles contain specific descriptions of the Seljuk military organization as well as the types of military equipment used by the army. The author also offered detailed descriptions of the military campaigns conducted by the state from the end of the 12th to the end of the 13th century.

An anonymous author wrote the second text on the history of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor, simply titled “*The History*”. Sultan Abdulmejid (1839 – 1861 CE) gave its only manuscript known to exist as a gift to the interpreter of the French embassy and a famous orientalist Shefer (1820 – 1889 CE) during the Crimean War. Shefer, in turn handed the Persian-language manuscript to the French National Library. Feridun Nafiz Uzluğ translated the book into Turkish and the translation was published in Ankara in 1952. The publication titled *The History of the Seljuks of Anatolia*¹ was also used as a source for this book. In the introduction to the book the author noted that the “*The History*” was written for the son of the last Seljuk sultan İzzeddin Kılıç Arslan V, Prince Alâeddin, who died in 1365 CE.

The key differences between “*The History*”, containing just 80 pages, and the work of İbn Bibi lie first and foremost on the overall volume of the work. Secondly the work by the unknown author offers limited information on the Seljuk dynasty and the Great Seljuk Empire and lastly, the anonymous work contains brief references to the early and

¹ Anadolu Selçukluları Devleti Tarihi. (Anonim.) Farsça’dan Türkçe’ye çeviren Prof. Dr. Feridun Nafiz Uzluğ. Ankara, 1952.

late stages of the Great Seljuk Empire missing from İbn Bibi's work. İbn Bibi begins his history of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor in 1192 CE with the ascent of Sultan Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev I - the historical period during which the Seljuk state in Asia Minor was at the height of its influence and ends it in 1280, the year when Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev III (1266 - 1284 CE) ascended the Seljuk throne. In contrast to İbn Bibi, the anonymous author begins his history of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor from the time of its formation by Suleiman bin Kutalmış up until the ascent to the throne of the second to last Seljuk sultan Alâeddin Keykûbad III (1298 - 1302 CE).

One of the most valuable sources on the decline of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor is the fundamental work by Ata-Melik Juvaini titled "*Tarih-i Jahan Gousha*" ("The History of the World Conqueror"). Ala-ud-Din Ata-Malik Juvaini was born in Khorasan's Juvaini region and died in Tebriz in 1283. He came from one of the most prominent families in Iran, whose members occupied leading posts in the Seljuk and the Khorezmshah governments. Ata-Malik Juvaini was personally familiar with many of the characters of his chronicles. He was on good terms with the founder of the Hulaguid Dynasty and state - Hulagu, who captured Baghdad and appointed Juvaini its governor. The work was written in the course of ten years. For the purposes of this book, the most valuable sections within the "*History of the World Conqueror*" are those that describe the Mongol invasions of Khorasan and Asia Minor, the subjugation and the subsequent liquidation of the Seljuk state. Juvaini's work was translated from Persian into English by John Andrew Boyle and published in Manchester in 1958.¹ In 1988 "*The History of the World Conqueror*" was published in Ankara in its Turkish translation.² There is also a Russian-language translation of

¹ Juvaini, Ala-ud-Din Ata-Malik. The history of the world conqueror.

Translated from Persian by John Andrew Boyle. V. I, V. II. Manchester, 1958.

² Cüveyni, Alaüddin Ata Melik: Tarih-i Cihangu. (Yay. M. Muhammed Kazvini, GMS. XVI, 1-3). Türkçeye çeviren Mürsel Öztürk, I-III, Ankara, 1988.

the book derived from its English version.¹

The principal source for the information contained in the chapters regarding the post-Seljuk history of Asia Minor is the work of the Arabic traveler İbn Battuta. Born in 1304 in Tangier, Morocco under the name Ebu Abdullah Muhammed İbn Battuta Tanci he died in Marrakech in 1368. In 2004 İbn Battuta's work was translated into Turkish and published in Istanbul in two volumes titled "*İbn Battuta Seyahatnamesi*" ("The Travels of İbn Battuta").²

İbn Battuta embarked on his travels in 1325 CE and wandered for 28 years. His travels through Asia Minor are of particular interest to us. İbn Battuta's arrival in Asia Minor coincided with the period in the history of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor when a cluster of new Turkic (Oghuz) principalities (beyliks) and states, the Ottoman beylik being one of them, appeared atop the remains of the former sultanate. İbn Battuta talked extensively about the structure and formation of the medieval Anatolian cities and fortresses, provided descriptions of the daily lives of everyday people, talked about his encounters with the scholars, emirs and sultans. His descriptions contain intricate details of the socio-economic structures of the Anatolian society of the first half of the 14th century. More specifically he offered information on the highly advanced state of various trades within the Anatolian society and talked about the plentiful trade workshops and guilds and a social stratum made up of the so-called *ahi*. *Ahi* was a title given to the master of the given workshop. Thanks to the well-organized guilds and their influence over tradesmen and artisans, the *ahi* exerted great influence over the social and political decisions within the

¹ Джувейни, Ата-Мелик. Чингисхан. История завоевателя мира, написанная Ала-ад-Дином Ата-Меликом Джувейни. Пер. С текста Мирзы Мухаммеда Казвини на англ. Язык. Дж. Э. Бойла. Перевод с англ. на рус. Язык Е.Е. Харитоновой. М., 2004.

² İbn Battuta (Ebu Abdullah Muhammed İbn Battuta Tanci). İbn Battuta Seyahatnamesi. 1. Cilt. Çevri, inceleme ve notlar. A. Sait Aykut. İstanbul, 2004.

Turkic Anatolian states.

In addition to the works penned by Muslim authors we used information contained in the Byzantine and European sources. No other source contained more relevant or more historically valuable information than the “*Alexiad*”¹ by the Byzantine Princess Anna Komnenos (Komnene) (1084 - 1153/1055 CE). The daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Alexios Komnenos (ruled from 1081 - 1118 CE) was also the wife of a Byzantine noble Nikephoros Bryennios. As the emperor lay on his deathbed, Anna at once tried to ease the suffering of her dying father, whom she worshipped, and conspired to bring her husband to the Byzantine throne. Preceding his father’s death, Anna’s brother John II Komnenos took over the Grand Palace and claimed the throne for himself, announcing himself emperor. Anna was forced to join a monastery, while her husband Bryennios remained at the royal court where he joined the emperor’s inner circle. He died in 1136 CE leaving unfinished his historical account of the reign of Alexios Komnenos entitled “*Historical Materials*”. Anna resumed her husband’s work completing it as the “*Alexiad*”.

There is no doubt whatsoever, that Anna Komnenos was one of the best-educated people of her time. As the daughter of the emperor she was personally acquainted with many state officials, and was an eyewitness to most of the events described in her “*Alexiad*”. We are therefore assured of the accuracy of the events described in her work. Her work’s historical value is further enhanced by the inclusion of the official documents, orders and letters written by her father or received by him. Historically, the “*Alexiad*” is the only text to contain a complete spectrum of historically relevant information on the Byzantine history of the end of the 11th - beginning of 12th centuries. Anna Komnenos dedicated much

¹ Комнина, Анна. Алексиада. Вступительная статья, перевод, комментарий Я.Н. Любарского. М., 1965.

of her attention to the relationship between Alexios Komnenos and the Seljuks who were in the process of conquering the Byzantine territories. This makes her point of view, as the Byzantine princess and a historian, especially valuable and interesting. Anne Komnenos described the establishment of the Seljuk state with its capital in Nicaea, talked about the emperor's struggle with the Seljuk Sultan Suleiman and about the boundaries established between the two states. The "Alexiad" confirmed the Great Seljuk Empire's negative attitude towards the formation of the new Seljuk state in Asia Minor. She wrote about Sultan Barkiyaruq's attempt to eliminate the new Seljuk state, the death of Suleiman in 1086 CE, and the victorious Ebul Kasym, who was left to oversee the Seljuk state in Suleiman's absence, and so forth.

Some of the information Anna Komnenos provided about the relationship between her father, Alexios Komnenos and the leaders of the First Crusade is often unique and not found anywhere else. The "Alexiad" also contains information on the organization of the Byzantine army, Emperor Komnenos' combat tactics (who was a talented military commander in his own right), and descriptions of specific weapons.

When writing about the crusades we used the writing of the Crusaders themselves, or to be more specific some of their leaders. Some of the works referenced in this book are "*The History of the Crusades*" by Jean de Joinville and Geoffroi de Villehardouin.¹

Valuable information on the history of the Byzantine Empire and the Crusades was also found in the works of well-known Russian and Soviet scholars like A. L. Fedorov -

¹ Жуанвиль, Жан де; Виллардуэн, Жоффруа де. История крестовых походов. Перевод с английского И.Е.Полоцка. М., 2008.

Davydov¹ and F. I. Uspensky².

Unfortunately there are very few scientific and scholarly texts detailing the history of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor. A work titled “*The Seljuk State in Asia Minor*” published in the 1940’s by the academician V.A. Gordlevsky (1875 - 1956) is the only study in the Soviet and Russian oriental studies to focus on the history of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor. The introduction to the book contains the following sentence, “As the necessary information on that particular period of the Seljuk history was at times missing, I referred to later texts...”³ The author indeed lacked the opportunity to refer to the key sources on the subject, particularly the information provided in the work of İbn Bibi.

Another invaluable source referenced in this book is a work of a Turkish scholar Osman Turan *History of Turkey of the Seljuk Period. Political History From Alp Arslan to Osman Gazi (1071 - 1318)*.⁴ The author thoroughly examined the widest possible range of historical documents on the political history of the Seljuks of Asia Minor starting with the Oghuz arrival in Asia Minor in the 11th century, the battle at Malazgirt, and in the 14th century, the formation of a number of small independent beyliks (*principalities*), including Osman’s, in place of the former Seljuk Sultanate. Sadly Turan’s work does not touch upon the administrative and military organizational structures, or the socio-economic issues of the Seljuk state.

The maps used in the present examination have been supplemented, further developed, or prepared by the author.

¹ Фёдоров - Давыдов А.Л. Крестовые походы. Историческая хроника. М., 2008.

² Успенский Ф.И. История Византийской империи. Т. I-V. М., 2005.

³ Гордлевский В.А. Избр. соч. Том I. Ист. работы. М., 1960 /Предисловие автора к первому изданию. С. 31.

⁴ Turan, O. Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi. Siyasi tarih. Alp Arslan’ - dan Osman Gazi’ye (1071 – 1318). İstanbul, 1984.

Following works have been used to compile the maps:

- “Historical Atlas” by William R. Shepherd. New York, 1923.
- “Huhûd al-‘Âlam.” “The Regions of the World. A Persian geography 372 A. H. - 982 A.D.” Translated and explained by V. Minorsky. London, 1937.
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CHAPTER II

The Oghuz and Other Turkic Tribes in the VI - X Centuries.

1. Earliest Evidence of the Turks.

Ancient Chinese records contain rich and detailed chronological descriptions of the events and developments throughout the history of the ancient Tugü state (the Turkic Qaghanate), and reference legends about the Tugü, or the ancients Turks, origins. Let's consider some of them here.

One of the legends¹ tells us that the ancestors of the first Tugü, named Ashina lived in the western regions of Mongolia, and comprised just one “*aimak*” (tribe). This aimak was brought to a near-annihilation by the neighboring tribe leaving just one ten-year-old boy who was rescued by a she-wolf. Some time later, in a vast cave at the center of the Altai Mountains the she-wolf gave birth to ten sons fathered by the saved boy. Ashina was one of the ten sons born of the she-wolf who grew up to found their own tribes. Brightest and strongest of the ten, Ashina was chosen as their ruler. Following several generations, when the number of Ashina's people swelled to hundreds of families his descendant Asian-she led his people out of the cave, settled the foothills of the Central Altai Mountains and became subjects of the Zhuang-Zhuang. In a tribute to his origins his banners bore a golden wolf's head.

Another legend² has it that Ashina's tribe formed through intermixing of different neighboring tribes and nations living in Northern China. When, in 439 CE emperor

¹ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена... С. 220 – 221.

² Ibid. С. 221 – 227.

of the Wei dynasty killed the ruler of the northern kingdom of Liang, Ashina led 500 families north into the neighboring state of Zhuang-Zhuang. The sparse tribe settled along the southern slopes of the Altai Mountains where they mined iron ore for the Zhuang-Zhuang. It was then that Ashina named his tribe Tugü or “helmet” after the perceived shape of the Altai Mountains.

According to yet another legend¹ the Tugü originated from the ruling House of Suo. (A.A. Aristov believed that the Suo lands lie in the northern Altai Mountains along the banks of the Biya River).² One of 69 brothers, the head of the tribe, or aimak, named Apanbu didn't stand out for his intelligence and suffered near annihilation of his clan. *Ichzhini Nushidu*, born of the she-wolf was the only of the 69 brothers left alive. He possessed supernatural powers and was able to summon wind and rain. *Nushidu* had four sons, the oldest *Nadolu-she* had the power to create heat. This gift allowed him to save the entire tribe during the cold nights while living in the mountains. In a sign of gratitude the tribe announced him their leader and named him *Tugü*. *Nadolu-Tugü* had ten wives, the youngest of whom bore him a son named Ashina. Following *Nadolu-Tugü*'s death, the strongest, most agile and cunning of them all, Ashina was made the tribe's leader.

Once we peel away all the supernatural and fantastical details of the legends, i.e. the she-wolf origins or the supernatural abilities of select characters, we are left with facts that should be considered from the historical standpoint. Therefore, we can deduce that the tribes referred to as Tugü originated in the Altai Mountains and that their unnamed ancestors were once part of another tribe. The Tugü arrived in Altai from Mongolia or Northern China during the second half of the 5th century in an attempt to escape annihilation.

¹ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена... С. 222.

² Аристов А.А. Заметки об этническом составе тюркских племен и народностей и сведения об их численности // Живая старина. Т. 3, С. 5.

The tribe ultimately settled on the southern slopes of the Altai Mountains, growing in population and influence, and began to refer to itself as the Tugü. One unifying fact in these legends is the existence of Ashina, who, in one way or another, is credited with founding of the Tugü. According to one legend it was Ashina who named his people Tugü, while others claim that Tugü was the name of the clan leader and Ashina was his son. It would be fair to assume then that Tugü was first the name of a smaller clan and later came to describe a larger tribal group led by the originating clan. The Tugü could also have been other tribes and clans that supported the ruling clan and fought under its wolf-head-bearing standard.

In our opinion this is the most probable hypothesis as many centuries later the term Seljuks was used to describe tribes, primarily of the Oghuz origin, who followed the principal tribe founded by Seljuk. Likewise, the term Ottomans (Osmans) was applied to the subjects of the empire founded and ruled by the dynasty founded by Osman.

Ancient Chinese chronicles also tell us, and this is no longer a legend that by the second half of the 6th century the Tugü became a numerous and influential people prompting a Wei dynasty emperor to send his ambassador An Nuopanto to the Tugü in 545 CE. It is at this point in history that the Chinese chronicles first mention the Tugü and the name Tumin as their leader further noting, “The Eastern Tugü Dynasty, which lasted from 534 - 745 CE (i.e. throughout its history), was ruled by 21 qaghans (khans).”¹ As the Orkhon runic inscriptions name Bumin² as the founder of the Turkic Qaghanate, it is apparent that Tumin and Bumin are the same person.

Bumin received the Chinese ambassador and in 546 CE sent his own embassy to the Chinese emperor. Six years later,

¹ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена... С. 227.

² Orkun, H.N. Eski Türk yazıtları. C.I. Istanbul, 1936. S. 29.

in 552 CE Bumin defeated the Zhouang-Zhouang and on their lands founded his empire - the Turkic Qaghanate, himself assuming the title of the ilkhan or qaghan.¹

There is little doubt that these rapid historical advances of the Tugū are caused by distinct factors, as it's highly unlikely that a handful of people over the course of just one hundred years transformed themselves into a numerous nation that created a vast empire. The more likely explanation is that the tribe formed a well-armed detachment, conquered neighboring tribes thereby expanding its army and thus continued its proliferation. Clearly Tumin, or Bumin, already controlled a well-equipped cavalry that was the principal advantage in conquering neighboring tribes and without a doubt was the primary factor in rapid and sweeping acquisitions of land.

The question of the Tugū's access to iron is answered by the fact that the Tugū mined iron ore in Altai Mountains, which was then turned over to the Zhouang-Zhouang as tribute. With time they would have acquired all the necessary skills not only to mine the ore, but to produce a multitude of utilitarian objects as well as weaponry from the mined ore. Archeological expeditions carried out by the Soviet scholars in the first half of the 20th century throughout the Altai region produced many such artifacts dating back to the 5th and 6th centuries. These finds demonstrate that the blacksmiths in the Altai Mountains produced a variety of tools, including those necessary for blacksmithing: sledgehammers, hammers of different shapes and sizes, pins, chisels, knives, axes, hammers, as well as a variety of drill bits. These metal workers manufactured metal cookware like plates, trays and pots, and metal portions of harnesses, stirrups, bits, buckles, etc. Archeologists also found swords with narrow blades, daggers with distinctive elongated triangular blades, spear

¹ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена... С. 228.

tips, and a variety of arrow tips. Often these arrow tips would be outfitted with a small perforated bone sphere which, when launched produced a terrifying shrill and often caused panic among the enemy troops. Since the Altai blacksmiths had all the necessary tools and skill to produce all of the above-mentioned items, as well as the protective gear, such as helmets and shields¹ they had the capacity to not only master the craft, but also to have an independent weapons production. It is therefore clear that in the 5th - 6th centuries the Tugü clan had the intention and a capacity to produce ammunition and defensive equipment for their troops.

Bumin-qaghan died in 552 leaving his son Kolo to succeed him. Kolo, who took up the name Isigi-khan, ruled for just a year but secured himself a place in history after suppressing the Zhouang Zhouang uprising in the battle at Laishan.

Following Kolo's death Bumin's second son Mugan-qaghan took over the reigns of the qaghanate and ruled from 553 - 572 CE. The Chinese offered the following description of the new ruler: "He had the most unusual look: his face was almost one foot long, exceptionally red in color, his eyes as clear as glass. He was stern, cruel, brave and highly intelligent. Concerned himself mainly with warfare."²

Mugan-qaghan is considered to be one of the more extraordinary rulers of the ancient Turkic state. During his reign the Turkic Qaghanate gained tremendous power and influence becoming a dominant state in Central and Middle Asia. Chinese chronicles offer the following reference: "He [Mugan] became a direct rival of the Middle Kingdom."³ Mugan's imperial expansion was followed by the final defeat of the Zhouang in 555 CE, and the subsequent conquest of the Kitans and the Kyrgyz. In 561 Mugan created an alliance with

¹ Киселев С.В. Древняя история Южной Сибири. М., 1951. С. 516 – 522.

² Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена... С. 229.

³ Ibid.

Emperor Bei-Zhou sending one hundred thousand of his troops to fight the Qi Kingdom. However, the campaign ended with disastrous results after the Turkic troops “*plundered on a grand scale*” and turned back. Without the courage to confront Mugan, the Zhou Empire continued to send one hundred thousand pieces of silk for years to come.¹

In their western territories the Turkic Qaghanate defeated the Hephthalites² in 565 CE and took control of Sogdiana³ and Bukhara. As a result of this victory the territories of the Turkic Qaghanate now included Central Asia, including Sogdiana and shared a border with Iran in the northwest.

This marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the ancient Turkic state - it took an active part in the political and economic relations between Byzantium, and Iran and engaged in a struggle for the control of the China - Constantinople trade routs. This period in the history of the Turkic state was partially covered by the Byzantine historians. Here, Menander Protector wrote,

By the end of 560's the Turks attained great influence and power. The Sogdians, who at the time were the subjects of the Hephthalites, requested that their king (qaghan) send an ambassador to the Persians to obtain permission to travel to Iran and trade silk.⁴

At the time the Byzantine Empire valued silk by its weight in gold and acquired vast quantities of the precious material from China. It was then used to partially satisfy the Empire's domestic needs and the remainder was sold to the European countries. However, before the silk arrived in

¹ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений... С. 232 – 233.

² The Hephthalites - were a tribal confederation that invaded the Iranian and Indian territories in the 5th and 6th centuries. In the 6th century their state included parts of Central Asia, modern-day Afghanistan and Eastern Iran.

³ Sogdiana – a historical region in Central Asia located in the basin of the Zeravshan and the Kashka Darya Rivers. One of the oldest centers of civilization.

⁴ Византийские историки... Т.5. СПб., 1860. С. 371.

Byzantium the caravans had to pass through Northern Iran. The route extended from Khorasan to Ray, Hamadan, then through Asia Minor, and finally to Constantinople.¹

Mugan understood the importance of the merchants' request not in the least because his own coffers were full of Chinese silk, some received as tribute and some plundered, and sent an embassy of the Sogdian merchants, headed by Maniakh to Iran in order to obtain permission to trade silk in Iran. The Shah Anoushirvan received the delegation but Khusraw did not take lightly to the idea of the Turks having free access to Iran and therefore denied the petition. The Shah purchased the silk from the Sogdian merchants and ordered it burned in their presence. The delegation returned to share the outcome with the qaghan.

Wishing for peaceful relations with Iran, the qaghan soon sent another embassy to the Shah but the new effort yielded even more damaging results. The Shah was persuaded by his advisors of "the evil and conniving character" of the Turks and wanting to "prevent any further desire by the Turks to enter his state,"² ordered the envoy poisoned. Nearly everyone from the delegation perished. Once the Turks were dead the Persians then spread rumors that the delegates died of intense heat and since the Turks were "used to living in snow-covered lands, they are unable to live in the areas without the cold."³

This thinly veiled lie did not impress the qaghan who now harbored hostility towards the Shah and refused to seek any further diplomatic relations with Iran. Instead in 568 CE⁴ Mugan sent Maniakh, and a new envoy to Byzantium - at the time a state at odds with Iran. The embassy was to negotiate a trade and a military agreement with the Byzantine Emperor

¹ Диль III. Юстиниан и византийская цивилизация в VI в. СПб., 1908. С. 542.

² Византийские историки... Т. 5, СПб., 1860. С. 372.

³ Ibid. С. 373.

⁴ Ibid.

Justinian II and convince the emperor that the Turks were ready to defend the Byzantine military interests against their enemies. Never empty-handed, the Turkic embassy arrived in Constantinople bearing great amounts of silk and presented it to the emperor who, according to Menander Protector, received the delegates favorably and soon signed the agreement with the qaghanate.¹

Wishing to further develop and expand diplomatic relations with the Turks Emperor Justinian soon sent Zimarkh the Cilician to lead the Byzantine embassy to the qaghan. Menander gave us the following account of Zimarkh's stay at the Turkic qaghan's camp in one of the valley's of the Golden Mountain (Altai). Zimarkh was taken to the qaghan's tent made out of pure silk where the monarch rested on a golden throne. Once the greetings were exchanged the Ambassador and the qaghan dined and "spent the rest of the evening feasting". The next day Zimarkh and his delegation were taken to another silk tent and found the qaghan lounging on a daybed made out of pure gold. A multitude of golden barrels, ewers, various golden receptacles and other objects stood in the center of the tent. "They feasted once more," wrote Menander, "as they drank, they discussed what needed to be discussed and retired for the night."²

On their third night the Byzantines were taken to a third tent where:

Wooden beams stood covered in gold and a gilded daybed rested on four golden peacocks. Large carts filled with silverware, trays, baskets and multitudes of animals made of silver, quite comparable to those made by our artisans lined the walls of a spacious hall. Such are the luxuries of the Turkic Qaghan.³

During the negotiations with the Byzantines, Mugan

¹ Византийские историки... Т. 5, СПб., 1860.

² Ibid. С. 378 – 379.

³ Ibid.

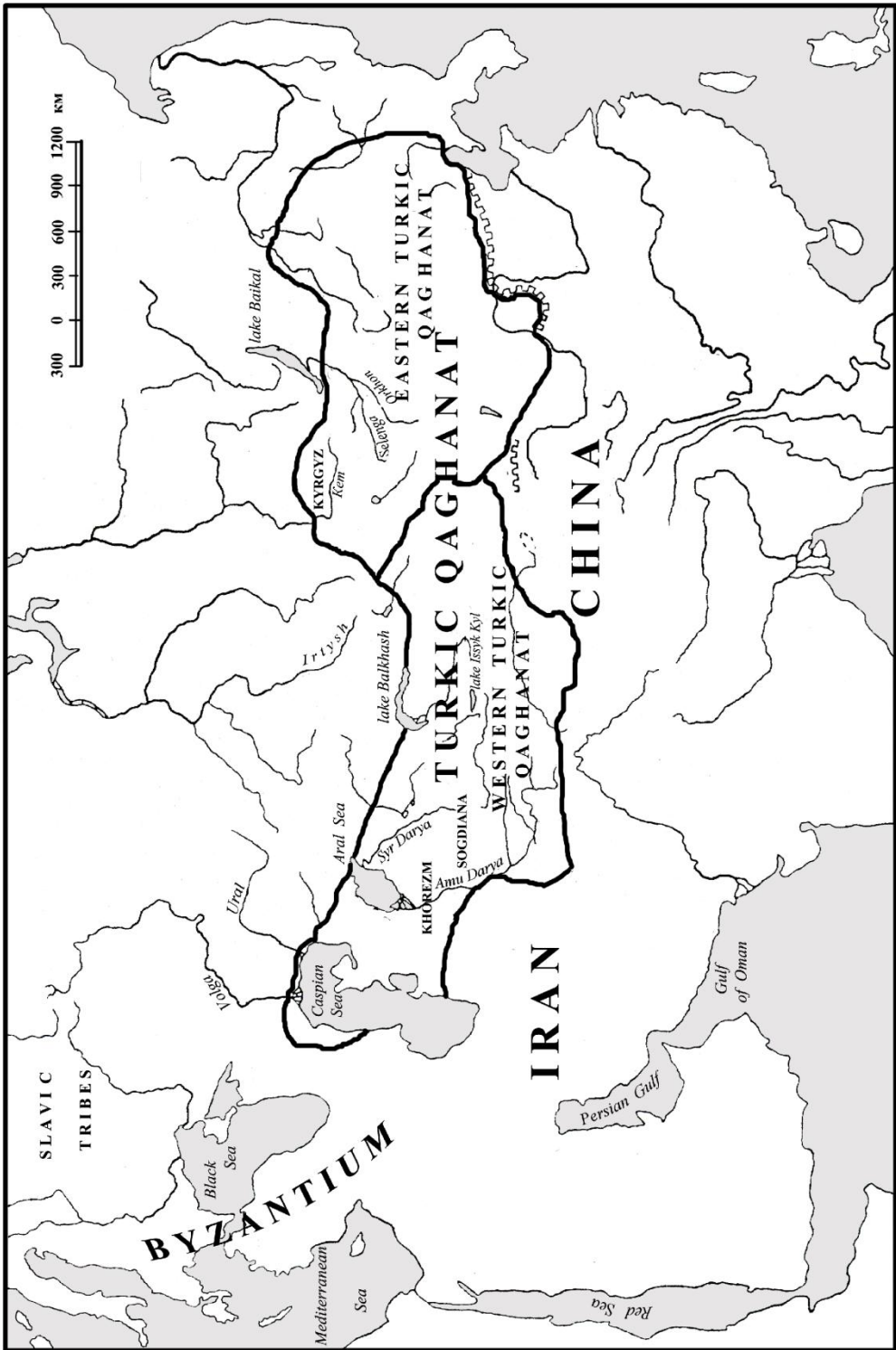
decided to declare war on Iran and requested that Zimarkh and 20 men from his entourage follow him in the campaign while the rest remained at camp.

The prospect of war with the Turkic qaghan, Byzantium's powerful new ally was highly undesirable for the shah. Understanding the disadvantage the shah sent his embassy to meet the Turks as they reached the Talas River. The qaghan received the Iranian envoy in front of Zimarkh but declined offers of a peaceful resolution. Zimarkh and his people were then sent back together with the new Turkic envoy headed this time by Tagma Tarhan.¹ This was not a successful campaign for either side and in 571 CE a peace treaty was signed establishing a Turkic-Iranian border along the Amur Darya River.

The Chinese chronicles tell us that towards the end of Mugan's rule the Turkic Qaghanate ruled the lands from the Bay of Korea in the East to the Western [Aral] sea in the West for ten thousand li. From the Sand Desert in the South to the Northern Sea [Lake Baykal] in the North for five thousand li.² Emperors of the two northern Chinese empires Qi and Zhou now became vassals of the Turkic qaghan. After Mugan's death in 572 CE Bumin's third son Tobo-khan ascended the throne. Tobo instilled widespread fear and obedience into the Chinese and fought extensively with the Byzantines. In 576 CE Turkic troops invaded the Byzantine-controlled Bospor Kimmer (Kerch), extending their victories through the Crimea and the Caucasus. By 581 CE the Byzantines were able to retake Bospor, force the Turks out of the Crimea, but the Turks took firm hold of the Northern Caucasus.

¹ Византийские историки... Т. 5, СПб., 1860.С. 380.

² Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена... С. 229.



Approximate boundaries of the Turkic Qaghanate during the 6 – 7th centuries

By 580 CE the Turkic Qaghanate reached its political and military pinnacle becoming the largest Asian empire. With territories bordered by the Pacific Ocean in the East, Northern Caucuses in the West, the Great Chinese Wall in the South and Lake Baykal in the North. This vast and rapid expansion of the empire was largely due to the military and political abilities of the first khans as well as their access superior military forces. Chinese historians place the number of Turkic warriors at the time at around 400 thousand men.¹ They describe the warriors' character and military might, "Their weapons included horn bows with whistling arrows, armor, spears, swords and glaives. They marched under banners bearing a golden wolf's head... Shoot arrows from horseback; fierce and merciless is their nature."²

The Chinese chronicles also contain interesting information on the legal structures of the ancient Turkic state, their customs and their ways of life. Their criminal code clearly stated that the following crimes were punishable by death: revolt, treason, murder, adultery and the theft of horses (tied down or free-roaming). If bodily harm was inflicted during a fight the punishment went as follows: for a damaged eye the offender must give his daughter. If he didn't have a daughter he had to give his wife's possessions. For most other serious inflictions the fine was a horse. Theft, other than a horse, must have been compensated ten times its cost.³

The Turks led a nomadic lifestyle living in tents and felt yurts, maintaining livestock and hunting; wore mainly fur and woolen clothes. Their diet consisted mainly of meat and koumiss. They believed in spirits and the Magi and thought that a death in battle was an honor, while a death from an illness was a disgrace.

Their death rituals included placing the deceased inside

¹ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена... С. 235.

² Ibid. С. 229.

³ Ibid. С. 230.

the tent while his sons and grandsons sacrificed horses and sheep. They slaughtered the animals and placed them around the tent. They circled the tent seven times making incisions on their faces and whaling. Blood and tears flowed “as one”. The process would be repeated seven times. All the deceased’s possessions along with his horse would then be burned and ashes buried at a specific time of the year. The grave would be marked by a structure resembling a small house with a stone placed inside it. The gravestone bore a drawing of the deceased along with inscriptions listing the battles he partook in. Outside the structure a number of other stones were installed in accordance to the number of enemy troops the deceased has killed.¹

The death of Tobo-qaghan in 581 CE marked an era of the decline of the Turkic Qaghanate. Severe famine spread throughout the qaghanate and led to inter tribal wars. At this time a coalition of opposing khans was formed that not only successfully resisted Tobo’s heir-apparent - Shabolio but also managed to cause severe damage to the qaghan. These unfavorable conditions led to Shabolio becoming a vassal to the Sui emperor² in 584 CE, who in turn provided military assistance to the Turkic khan in defending his interests against domestic enemies and sent a caravan with provisions for his people.

During Shabolio’s reign, in 600 CE the Turkic Qaghanate split into two independent states: the Eastern Turkic Qaghanate and the Western Turkic Qaghanate. The two fought each other for ten years following the split. By 610, CE, unable to maintain its independence, the weakened Western Qaghanate also became vassal to the Chinese empire.

Political turmoil and a civil war in China between 613 and 618 CE meant a shift in the status for the Turks. The Sui

¹ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах... С. 230 – 231.

² Ibid. С. 237.

dynasty was toppled and the Tang dynasty ascended the throne ruling from 618 until 907 CE. As a result a large number of the Sui dynasty imperial house along with many Chinese migrated to the Eastern Turkic Qaghanate where they were granted asylum. This political weakening of China allowed the Eastern Qaghanate to once more proclaim independence making Shibi-khan a powerful ruler. This new status allowed him and his heirs, Chulou-khan and Hyeli Qaghan, to continue claiming victories in wars with China.

The Chinese chronicles gave the following account of Chulou-khan and his disposition towards China:

He stood a step above all other nomads, with seething contempt towards the Middle Kingdom making arrogant demands in writing and in words. The emperor (*here it's the first Emperor Gauzu of the Tang dynasty*) was occupied with bringing order to his empire; why did he have to submit himself to the demands of Chulou and make large sacrifices; in spite of the generous gifts and rewards the qaghan was still unsatisfied and made unlimited demands.¹

Now the Chinese emperor became the vassal of the Turkic khan maintaining this relationship until 630 when the Chinese troops were finally able to deal a crushing defeat to the Turks killing off a large portion of the army and taking the rest captive. Among the prisoners was Hyeli-khan himself whose life was spared and he received land and a military rank in China. Unable to adapt to his new life on foreign soil Hyeli-khan died four years later. As the Chinese historians wrote, sadness and depression may have been the cause of his death.

The Eastern Qaghanate ceased to exist as an independent state between the years of 630 and 682 CE during which time the Chinese emperor divided its territories into four districts

¹ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена... С. 247.

and two prefectures. Administration of these new territorial units was distributed among members of the Turkic tribal elite recruited into the Chinese service.

The middle of the 8th century brought new reforms and another reorganization of the former Eastern and portions of the Western Qaghanates. The emperor established two jurisdictions Shang Yang and Baykal, and gave control over these territories to the members of the ruling Chinese dynasty. Thus the head of the Shang Yang was the emperor's son Ing Wang¹ who oversaw three provinces and 24 districts. The Baykal jurisdiction contained seven provinces and seven districts. The provinces and districts were attended by the Turkic elders who all held Chinese ranks and were considered officials of the Chinese state.

In 679 CE Ashide, the most senior of the Turkic elders in Shang Yang led an uprising against the Chinese which was joined by the 24 other elders unwilling to further submit to the Chinese. Together they elected Nushyfu, a descendant of Ashina as their new qaghan. The new leader successfully defeated the Chinese troops sent to quash the uprising. Almost ten thousand Chinese soldiers were killed or captured by the Turks during the uprising. But the newfound freedoms were not meant to last and in 680 CE the Chinese successfully put down the Turkic uprising. Ashina's descendant Nushyfu was killed but the Turkic discontent continued to simmer under the leadership of Hyeli's descendant Funian. A string of victories over the Chinese followed the new uprising but by 681 CE the leadership began to quarrel and soon lost their advances. Funian and another leader Wangfu were captured by the Chinese brought to the Chinese capital and swiftly beheaded.

¹ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена... С. 265.

2. *The Oghuz and Other Turkic Tribes of the Eastern Turkic Qaghanate.*

By 682 CE military and political situation in the Eastern Turkic Qaghanate saw dramatic changes including a new movement for independence led by a descendant of Hyeli, Gudulu (Kutlug) as he is mentioned in the ancient Chinese documents, or Ilterish as he is known from the ancient Turkic runic writings. This marked the beginning of the Second Eastern Turkic Qaghanate, a period of utmost interest for the purposes of this book. This era in the Turkic history is important not only because we are able to draw most of the information from the Turks themselves but also because this is the first time that we encounter the term Oghuz, a term used to describe the nine tribes that figure extensively in the Orkhon inscriptions. From the time of the formation of the first Turkic Qaghanate and until its destruction by the Chinese in 680 CE, those referred to as the Oghuz were possibly the closest relatives of the people we now refer to as the Turks (the Tugü of the Chinese chronicles). The encyclopedia of Islam: also points out, “The Oghuz were one of the two integral components comprising the Göktürk Qaghanate.”¹ The runic inscriptions further confirm this ethnic proximity where Bilge-qaghan himself wrote on his monument, “*The dokuz Oghuz people were my own.*”²

Nonetheless, throughout the almost-half-century history of the Second Qaghanate the Turkic ruling clan was in a near - constant struggle with the Oghuz, as well as other people and tribes. At the time of the Turkic re-unification campaign, led by Ilterish and his chief advisor Tonyukuk the nine Oghuz tribes (the dokuz Oghuz) were settled along the banks of the

¹ Sümer, F. Oğuzlar // İslâm Ansiklopedisi. 9. Cilt. İstanbul, 1962. S. 379.

² Orkun, H.N. Eski Türk yazıtları... I. Cilt. S. 6.

Tola River and were headed by Baz-qaghan.¹ Their opposition to the re-unification efforts was so powerful that they decided to annihilate the ruling Turkic clan before it gained strength and thus entered into an allegiance with the Chinese and the Kitay. Tonyukuk described this episode of the ancient Turkic history, “A [deserter] came to us from the Oghuz and said that a qaghan now ruled the Oghuz and that he sent Kuni Sëngun to the Chinese and Tongra Semig to the Kitay.” The ambassadors carried this message:

The [small Turkic tribe] is on the move. The [Turkic] qaghan is brave and his advisor is wise. If just two [Turks] are left alive they will kill you, the Chinese. In the East they will kill the Kitay and us, the Oghuz. Therefore the Chinese should strike from the South, the Kitay from the East and I shall attack from the North.²

Thanks to Tonyukuk's efforts the Turks were the first to create a coalition and preempted the Oghuz attack. In a bloody battle on the banks of the Tola River Tonyukuk's troops defeated the Oghuz yet did not succeed in subjecting them. Ilterish and Tonyukuk organized four more expeditions against the Oghuz, but only after killing Baz-qaghan did they manage to submit the Oghuz under their rule. This unfavorable reaction towards re-unification was not unique to the Oghuz. Other Turkic tribes and peoples held a very similar view on the subject and Tonyukuk wrote, “The powerful Kirgiz qaghan became our enemy.”³ The Kirgiz also planned a coalition against the Turks and intended to unite with the Chinese and the western Turkic tribes. Their efforts were in vain as here too; Ilterish and Tonyukuk preempted the Kirgiz and launched a swift attack killing the Kirgiz qaghan, overpowering and crushing the Kirgiz army and ultimately subjecting the Kirgiz people to Ilterish.

¹ Sümer, F. Oğuzlar (Türkmenler). Tarihleri-boy teşkilatı-destanları. Ankara, 1972. S. 6.

² Orkun, H.N. Eski Türk yazıtları... I. Cilt. S. 102 – 104.

³ Ibid. S. 106.

The Türgesh and the On-ok people faced a similar fate when they staged a significant opposition to Ilterish Qaghan. Tonyukuk wrote that almost one hundred thousand troops¹ gathered in the Yarysh steppe vastly outnumbering the Turkic Army. In a strategic move Tonyukuk launched a surprise attack against the enemy thus deciding the outcome of the battle. He wrote, “We have dispersed the enemy and taken the qaghan captive. That same night we sent a message to all their people and they sent their messengers and came themselves. They bowed their heads (submitted).”²

Ilterish was successful at re-establishing the borders of the Eastern Turkic Qaghanate and by 684 CE began raiding northern Chinese provinces. All attempts to crush the Turkic army were unsuccessful. A Chinese chronicle relayed the following: “The commander-in-chief Shun-yu met the rebels and fought them in a bloody battle, but was unsuccessful and lost almost five thousand men.”³

After Ilterish’s death his bother Mochjo (Kapagan) became the qaghan and was as successful in his military and political endeavors as his brother. Chinese chroniclers wrote, “Mochjo, intoxicated with glory thought very little of the Middle Kingdom and showed much pride before it. His army was just as vast as at the time of the Hyel. His lands, far and wide went for ten thousand li. All foreign rulers obeyed him.”⁴

In 701 CE Mochjo’s army conquered Sogdiana. However, even with this victory they were unable to restore its rule over all of the western territories that were previously part of the empire. One of the influencing factors was the Arab invasion of Central Asia led by a talented military

¹ Orkun, H.N. Eski Türk yazıtları... I. Cilt. S. 112.

² Ibid. S. 114.

³ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена... С. 267.

⁴ Ibid. С. 270.

commander Qutaiba bin Muslim.¹ In 705 CE Qutaiba conquered lands from Khorasan to Amu Darya and in 706 – 709 CE took control of Bukhara.²

The Oghuz remained loyal to Kapagan throughout his reign as he successfully submitted many Turkic tribes and nations like the Chik, the Az, the Karlouk, the Izgil, the Tügresh, and the Bayırku. Tonyukuk who served Ilterish, Kapagan and in his elder years, Bilge-qaghan concluded the passage on his memorial, “We, Ilterish-qaghan and I, the wise Tonyukuk have won; Kapagan has multiplied the [united Turkic people]. Now the wise qaghan skillfully manages the united Turkic and the Oghuz people.”³

Bilge-qaghan ascended the Turkic throne after the death (murder) of Kapagan’s and ruled from 716 - 734 CE. The Chinese referred to him as Bigya-khan Mogilyan and described him as having “a good heart and a friendly disposition.”⁴ While his rule was marked by positive developments in the Turkic Qaghanate’s foreign relations (a peace treaty was signed with the Chinese in 721 CE), domestic affairs suffered from great internal strife and turmoil that was a precursor to the collapse of the Turkic Qaghanate. Most of the resistance came from the Oghuz who refused to pay taxes to Bilge-qaghan. Bilge-qaghan wrote this about his enemies,

As the skies and the earth were in turmoil and the Oghuz were overcome with jealousy they became our enemy. In just one year [723 CE] I fought them four times. The first battle was near [the town of] Togu-balyk when my people swam across the Togla River and we [destroyed the enemy troops]. The second time I fought

¹ During 705 – 715 CE Qutaiba bin Muslim was the Umayyad governor in Khorasan.

² Gibb, M.A. *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia*. London, 1923. P. 31.

³ Orkun, H.N. *Eski Türk yazıtları...* I. Cilt. S. 120.

⁴ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). *Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена...* С. 273.

them at Antargu, crushed their army and won. The third battle I fought them at (either peak, or a wellspring) Chush. The Turkic troops tired their feet and were near panic. The enemy army began to surround us, but I chased them away. Many barely alive, facing death, survived... The fourth time I battled them at Ezgenti Kadazeh. There I crushed their army and destroyed their possessions.¹

The spring of 724 CE brought with it a new war when Bilge-qaghan attacked the Oghuz once more. The Turkic state faced a critical time in its history and its only salvation came when Bilge-qaghan's younger brother Kul-tegin managed to deflect the Oghuz counter attack as they advanced onto the qaghan's headquarters. Bilge-qaghan was explicit in stating that all credit for salvaging the situation belongs to his brother, Kul-tegin.²

The Oghuz were once again defeated but refused to submit and instead created a military alliance with the Tatars. The inscription on the monument to Bilge-qaghan reads: "The Oghuz people, having united with the dokuz Tatar (nine Tatar tribes), arrived. Two great battles were fought at Agu'da. I crushed their army..."³

Bilge-qaghan had to submit many other Turkic tribes, but most of them followed hostilities with the Oghuz, and were never as violent and bloody. We know that Bilge-qaghan was just 19 when he ascended the throne but his memorial inscription states that by the time he was 20 he embarked on a punitive campaign against the Basmil and the Idikut. The cause of this crusade was stated very clearly - refusal to pay taxes to the qaghanate.⁴ At the age of 26 Mogilyan completed campaigns against the Chik, Kirgiz ("...I

¹ Малов С.Е. Памятники древнетюркской письменности Монголии и Киргизии. М.-Л., 1959. С. 21.

² Мелиоранский П.М. Памятник в честь Кюль-тегина... С. 76.

³ Orkun, H.N. Eski Türk yazıtları... I. Cilt. S. 65.

⁴ Ibid. S. 60.

fought their soldiers with spears”) and the Az.¹ At 27 Bilge-qaghan battled the Kirgiz yet again. “I killed their qaghan - wrote Bilge-qaghan - I conquered their people.”² That same year Mogilyan headed west to fight the Türgesh people. “Their qaghan, *yabgu* and *shad* I killed. I conquered their land.”³ Then came the Beshbalyk⁴ campaign: “I engaged in six battles, all their army I destroyed...Their people submitted to me and that’s why Beshbalyk was saved [from destruction].”⁵ At 31 Bilge-qaghan battled and submitted the Karluks⁶ and then engaged in the above-mentioned wars with the Oghuz.

After his battles with the Oghuz, Mogilyan fought the Uighur and then again - the Karluk. He wrote: “Moving along the Selenga River I destroyed their homes and buildings. Eltebir (the Uighur chief) followed by a hundred solders, moved east. The Turkic tribe was starving. I seized the Uighur herd and improved the conditions.”⁷ When the Karluks refused to pay taxes Mogilyan sent his ambassador Tudun Yamatar with a warning that if the tribute caravan does not arrive he would have to resort to punishment. The caravan did not arrive and the Turkic qaghan embarked on a retribution campaign.⁸

Bilge-qaghan concluded his reign with these words,

My rule began over a nation not rich with material belongings, but a nation with empty stomachs and no clothes to cover their bodies. A nation meager and weak. We consulted with my younger brother Kul-tegin and decided to keep alive the name and the glory of our

¹ Orkun, H.N. Eski Türk yazıtları... I. Cilt. S. 60 – 61.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. S. 62.

⁴ Beshbalyk is the modern-day city of Urumchi. At the time of these events Beshbalyk was considered the ancestral land of the Basmils.

⁵ Orkun, H.N. Eski Türk yazıtları... I. Cilt. S. 62.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid. S. 66.

⁸ Ibid. S. 67 – 68.

people and the victories won by our father and uncle. For the Turkic people I did not sleep nights and (without a good reason) did not sleep days. With my brother Kul-tegin and the two shad I acquired (engaged in battle) until utter exhaustion (literally, until the last breath). With so many acquisitions (conquests) I did not force with fire or water those people who joined us (i.e. made every attempt at peaceful existence). Then I called upon those ready to die and made the once poor nation into a prosperous one, turned a meager tribe into a vast nation. Peoples living on all four sides [of the world] I forced into a peaceful existence...they all submitted to me.¹

In addition to listing all of the accomplishments on his memorial, Bilge-qaghan added:

I settled my people from the lands where the sun rises (the day is born), to the lands where the sun sets. For my tribe, my Turks, I procured gold that shimmered with a yellow glow, silver that that glowed white, silk, grain, horses, black ermine and blue squirrels. Obtained. I made my tribe happy (relieved them of their worries).²

The death of Kul-tegin in 731 CE significantly weakened the military and political positions of Bilge-qaghan (Mogilyan) who survived his brother only by a couple of years and died after being poisoned by one of his own men. Bilge-qaghan was succeeded by his son Ijan-qaghan (734 - 740 CE) and then by Ijan's younger brother Bilge Gudulu Qaghan. The Chinese chronicles tell us that: "The khan was young. His mother Pofu allowed the imperial servant Insy Dagan, to meddle in the state's affairs. Generations (i.e. Turkic tribes and nations) came to a disagreement."³ This marked the start of the rapid collapse of the Second Turkic Qaghanate as the young Gudulu qaghan was soon murdered

¹ Мелиоранский П.М. Памятник в честь Кюль-тегина... С. 70 – 71.

² Orkun, H.N. Eski Türk yazıtları... I. Cilt. S. 58.

³ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена... С. 277.

and the Turkic throne saw several rulers in the course of just one year.

As a result of this internal political turmoil the Uighur, Karluk and Basmil tribes have managed to overthrow the qaghan and seceded from the state. Baimei-khan Hulu Nfu was the last Turkic khan. Here the Chinese records tell us, "Great confusion descended upon the Turkic House during this khan's rule. The noblemen elected the leader of the Basmil to be their khan."¹ However, in 745 CE the Uighur defeated the Basmil and finally eliminated the Eastern Turkic Qaghanate.

This marked the end of both, the Eastern Turkic Qaghanate, and the tribes that gave the state its name. The people that the Chinese referred to as the Tugüi on the runic memorials, the Turks, have disappeared, never again to appear on the historical stage and the Oghuz joined the Uighur Qaghanate, but more on that in the next paragraph.

The chain of events that led to the extinction of the main clan and the peoples who founded the Turkic Qaghanate poses a crucial question. How do we determine the ethnic correlation between those who first referred to themselves as Turks, but later disappeared, and those referred to as the Oghuz throughout the existence of the Turkic Qaghanate and for some time after its collapse, who subsequently went on to be called the Turks?

In his extensive examinations of the history of the Turkic - Mongolian people V.V. Bartold essentially equated the two notions. Bartold believed that the Orkhon inscriptions were in fact made "in the name of the Turkic – Oghuz khan."² He made an even more categorical assertion by stating,

Even before finding the key to deciphering the runic inscriptions, Radlov was convinced that the Turks

¹ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена... С. 278.

² Бартольд В.В. Двенадцать лекций по истории турецких народов Средней Азии... С. 45.

of the 6th – 8th centuries in fact belonged to the Oghuz, and the inscriptions further confirmed this conclusion. The Oghuz (or the Türks), were subsequently made up of several nations: the Talyos and the Tardush in the East, and the Türgesh in the West. Several other Turkish (in our terms) nations are mentioned in addition to the Oghuz, some of whom - the Karluks, the Uighur and the Kirgiz came to prominence in the later years.¹

Bartold wrote, “A tribe referred to by the Chinese as the Shato (or the steppe) settled in the Turfan - Guchen region. These Shato Turks [essentially belonged to the Turk - Oghuz people]”.² Bartold referred to the Turkic Qaghanate of the 6 – 8th centuries as the “Türk - Oghuz state”.³

Although we tend to accept Bartold’s view, it’s difficult to disagree that his reasoning lacks argumentation, which in turn stems from the considerable gaps in the available resources on the history of the ancient Turks. We are trying to better understand whether the Oghuz were Turks (in its narrowest sense) or vice versa, based on handfuls of lines carved into gravestones. For their part, the Chinese didn’t delve into the ethnic make up of the House of Tugü and we find no references to the Oghuz (even in their distorted phonetic form), which begs further inquiry. As improbable as it may sound today, what’s being questioned is the historical existence of the Turks and not the Oghuz.

There is no doubt that the ruling clan at the head of the qaghanate; both prior to its split into the Eastern and Western Qaghanates in 600 CE and during the time of the Second Eastern Qaghanate called itself “Türk”. We further believe that the term originated from the tribal ancestral name and that the founding tribe was likely few in number. In our opinion, the runic inscriptions provide us with concrete

¹ Бартольд В.В. Двенадцать лекций по истории... С. 39 – 40.

² Бартольд В.В. История турецко-монгольских народов. Ташкент, 1928. С. 202.

³ Ibid. С. 201.

evidence that the term “Türk” was used not only as a reference to the founding clan, but also in reference to all those tribes and people that made up the qaghanate. It’s also likely that during the periods of peace, or during the time of victorious battles that led to the formation of the vast Turkic empire, the term Türk was also assigned to the Oghuz. Another possibility is that the term Türk was used by the ruling clan to describe all of the Turkic-speaking tribes encountered at the time of the conquests. These were the people, whose languages reflected similar linguistic roots, thus making it possible for the invaders to understand them.

Bilge-qaghan wrote this about the initial stages of the Turkic Qaghanate:

My ancestor, Bumin-qaghan ascended to rule the human sons. On all four sides there were enemies. Sending his troops he subjected tribes on all four sides, making them agreeable. Ahead (*to the East*) and up to the Kadirkan Forests,¹ behind [to the West] up to the Iron Gates² he settled [the Turkic people]³. Within these two [borders there lived the Heavenly⁴ (Göktürk) Turks, who knew no masters, or order].⁵

From the above-mentioned text we can conclude that Bilge-qaghan used the term Türk to describe all of the tribes and nations that became part of the qaghanate, either through conquest or willingly, and that the number of “his tribe” was

¹ The Kadirkan Forest (in Melioranky’s text – darkness) – Hingan.

² The Iron Gates – passage in the upper reaches of the Amu Darya River located between Samarqand and Balkh.

³ In Melioransky’s translation – his own people.

⁴ Heavenly (Turks) – This term is rarely mentioned in the runic inscriptions. Thee Turkic word “gök” could be translated as the sky – its primary meaning, as well as blue (as in sky blue). Considering the close ties between the Chinese emperors (the sons of the skies) with the Turkic qaghans, as well as the fact that the Chinese historians refer to the imperial forces as heavenly (please see: Bichurin, P. 271) we should therefore allow for the fact that the use of the term heavenly by the Turks was in imitation to the Chinese.

⁵ Orkun, H.N. Eski Türk yazıtları... I. Cilt. S. 64 – 65.

such that it required expansion into the vast new lands to accommodate the new settlements. In addition, Bilge-qaghan noted that the empire's new lands have already been settled by the Turkic-speaking tribes and further referred to them as the Türks.

It's unclear when the ruling clan began treating the Oghuz as their "own Turks", or as part of their people, but it's likely to have happened a considerable time ago. The Turk - Oghuz were the most numerous (or among the most numerous) nation within the Turkic Qaghanate, but contrary to the opinion stated by H.N. Orkun they were not "...one of the two contributing components (along with the Turks themselves) that the Turkic qaghan relied upon." More likely they were the cornerstone of the qaghanate and its' primary ethnic component. The only other nation that could have possibly compared itself to the Oghuz, at least by the number of tribes within the qaghanate, were the Uighur.

One of the most important arguments in favor of this hypothesis lies in the linguistic analysis of the Turkic runic texts. A.N. Kononov concluded, "The linguistic foundation of the Turkic runic texts, its defining phonetic - morphological feature is the Oghuz substrate, upon which thin layers of the Uighur linguistic elements were superimposed and expressed through specific morphological indicators."¹

N.A. Baskakov divided the language on the ancient Turkic memorials into two groups.

1. The ancient Oghuz and the ancient Kirgiz, i.e. the language of the Yenisei - Orkhon memorials.

2. The ancient Uighur language.²

According to S.E. Malov's classification, the inscriptions on the Orkhon memorials are in the "Oghuz

¹ Кононов А.Н. Грамматика языка тюркских рунических памятников VII-IX вв. Л., 1980. С. 40.

² Баскаков Н.А. Введение в изучение тюркских языков. М., 1962. С. 165 – 166.

language”.¹

Subsequently, two possible conclusions could be drawn: either the people that the Chinese chronicles referred to as the Tugü after the name of the “ruling House” were in fact the Oghuz. Or the Turks, which is highly unlikely if they were a defined nation, spoke the language of the “Oghuz”, with a slight Uighur accent.

The reluctance on the part of the Turk – Oghuz as well as other Turkic tribes to submit to the ruling elite are easily explained. It’s difficult to disagree with Bartold’s general theoretical conclusion:

In general, all nomadic tribes tend to value their own social and inter-tribal connections ahead of political unification, and have no inherent social need to establish official pacts or a separate power apparatus. At this stage of development the nomadic society is capable of sustaining itself to such an extent that it has no need for external interference on behalf of the authorities. The khans take power into their own hands, without appointment or election; the tribe or the tribes simply come to terms with the new political system, often only as a consequence of intense armed resistance. The khan’s attempt at re-unification of [his own people] is often accompanied by far longer-lasting bloodshed than the nomadic raids led by the khan into the “cultured lands”. (These raids and the loot they procure are the only consolation offered to the people as means of accepting the new rule.)²

Bartold’s formulated provisions explain the actions and attitudes of the Oghuz, Kirgiz, Türgesh and other tribes as Ilterish embarked on the re-unification campaign, as well as the raids on the Chinese territories that commenced shortly

¹ Малов С.Е. Древние и новые тюркские языки // Изв. ОЛЯ АН СССР. 1952. Т. XI. Вып. 2. С. 142.

² Бартольд В.В. Двенадцать лекций по истории турецких народов Средней Азии... С. 22 – 23.

after the re-unification.¹

The only way the ruling clan was able to sustain political stability and ensure its own enrichment between the raids or when the conditions prevented them altogether, was by imposing taxes onto the tribes and nations that comprised the qaghanate. Bilge-qaghan wrote this on the monument to Kulteğin, "...the Turkic people...[only] when you send caravans [to collect tribute or taxes], while living in the Utuken darkness² (*H.N. Orkun wrote "the Utuken forests" – author's note*), then you can live sustaining eternal peace among the tribes."³ The term "the Turkic people" in this case is more abstract. More precisely the reference is to the ruling or possibly the ancestral clan. Throughout the time of the Second Eastern Qaghanate the living conditions for the majority of the Turkic tribes and nations were rather severe. As Bilge-qaghan wrote (and we noted earlier in the text) they endured famine and existed practically unclothed. This state of existence and the requirement to pay taxes placed these people on the margins of physical survival and was the fundamental reason for withholding tribute and their strife to secede from the state. The independence from having to pay taxes meant better living conditions. Throughout its history only the Turks themselves didn't rise up against the ruling clan, which, if they were in fact a stand-alone nation, and not an ancestral clan, seems rather unusual.

What other factors contributed to the failed unification of the Turkic tribes around their famous Khans, and what were the causes that forced the "second pillar" of the empire i.e. the Oghuz to become its "title clan"? Besides the essential non-existence of the "Turkic" nation as a stand-alone ethnic group, a shift in the mental and ethnic make up of the ruling

¹ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена... С. 221 – 227.

² The Utuken (Otügen) darkness (forest) – the black taiga along the slopes of the Hangai.

³ Мелиоранский П.М. Памятник в честь Кюль-тегина... С. 62.

class, in our opinion, could have been a fundamental contributing factor.

Virtually all of the Tugü qaghans were closely related to the Chinese emperors. The Chinese chronicles tell us that the first Tugü Ilkhan Tumin (Bumin Qaghan) requested to marry a Chinese princess of the Wei Dynasty. The Emperor Wen-di agreed and in 551 CE sent to him princess Chan-li.¹ The third Khan of the Turkic dynasty Mugan Qaghan, married his daughter to a Chinese emperor of the Zhou dynasty in 568 CE.²

The Chinese Middle Kingdom signed a peace and “kinship” treaty with the fourth Turkic qaghan Tobo and their chronicles also contain information confirming that during Tobo’s reign almost one thousand Tugü lived in the capital of the Middle Kingdom. They were treated with “utmost honor” and wore “silk clothing.” There is no doubt that the thousand or so Tugü who lived in the Chinese capital and wore silk, which at the time was valued in its weight in gold, in fact belonged to the ever-expanding ruling clan. Following in the footsteps of their qaghan those permanently living in China were allowed to marry daughters of aristocratic Chinese families and faced no objections from their Qaghan. The chronicles note that Tobo was fond of everything Chinese and often lamented that he himself was “not born in China”.³

The fifth Turkic qaghan - Shabolio married the Chinese Princess Qianjin of the Zhou Dynasty.⁴ During the reign of the seventh qaghan Dulan-khan Yunyuilay, the khan of “the northern lands” – Shabolio’s son Tuli-khan also requested the hand of a Chinese princess in marriage. In 597 CE the Chinese emperor sent his daughter I-ang to marry Tuli-khan

¹ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена... С. 228.

² Ibid. С. 232.

³ Ibid. С. 233.

⁴ Ibid. С. 234.



The Head of the Kul-tegin statue

and when she died another Chinese princess I-chen¹ became his second wife. I-chen survived her first husband Tulan-khan and went on to marry four more qaghans.² According to law of the qaghanate, if the father, the older brothers and the uncles on the father's side have died, it was allowed to marry stepmothers, daughters-in-law and aunts.³

The tradition of marrying the Chinese princesses was subsequently observed during the Eastern Turkic Qaghanate. In 710 CE Mochjo-qaghan married the Chinese Princess Jin-Shan. Their son Yavachji Dele was sent to serve in the Chinese Imperial court and Mochjo requested of the Chinese emperor that he allow his daughter Ninhan-zhou⁴ to marry Yavachji. Bilge-qaghan repeatedly requested that the Chinese emperor send him a princess to marry but received several rejections. He was finally granted consent, (and the princess) but died before his wedding.

In conclusion, from the evidence presented above it is clear that whatever the Turkic bloodline was at the beginning of the dynasty, with time it became quite diluted with the Chinese blood. Also, since the mothers of the Turkic khans were ethnically Chinese they were very likely to have had an influence on the formation of the khans' ideology and their worldview. With time, and if we are to suppose that the statue of Kul-tegin was an accurate depiction of the Khan's features, the rulers of the Turkic Qaghanate even began to resemble their Chinese relatives. It is then possible that after the collapse and liquidations of the Eastern Qaghanate the surviving Turks (members of the ruling clan and the ancestral tribe) simply settled in China and began to associate themselves with the ethnic Chinese, thus relinquishing their "Turkic" ethnic designation.

¹ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена... С. 241.

² Ibid. С. 241 – 242.

³ Ibid. С. 230.

⁴ Ibid. С. 272.

3. *Oghuz and Other Turkic Tribes From the Middle of the VIII - to the Middle of the IX Centuries.*

In 745 CE the Uighur conquered all territories previously part of the Eastern Turkic Qaghanate and so began the history of another Turkic state - The Uighur Qaghanate that ruled Central Asia until 840 CE.

The collapse of the Western Turkic Qaghanate just preceded the destruction and liquidation of the Eastern Qaghanate. After Kapagan's death in 716 CE the western Turks, and more precisely the powerful Türgesh tribes reclaimed their independence from the Eastern Qaghanate. A man named Sulu, a leader of the so-called "black Türgesh",¹ who considered himself vassal to the Chinese emperor, proclaimed himself the Türgesh qaghan. The Chinese chronicles tell us, "Sulu was benevolent towards his people. [The tribes] slowly re-united and people became more numerous reaching almost 200,000 souls, thus once more becoming powerful in the West".

Sulu arrived in the Chinese imperial court in 717 CE where he was given military rank and the title of the "Tucishin [Türgesh] Governor".

As mentioned earlier, by the beginning of the 8th century the Arabs have already reached Central Asia. In 718 CE the Chinese emperor received a joint diplomatic delegation from the Shah of Bukhara Tugshada, the King of Kumad Narayan and the king of Samarqand Gurak. The ambassadors beseeched the emperor to order the Türgesh qaghan to start

¹ The Türgesh tribes were divided into two parts; some tribes called themselves the yellow Türgesh. According to the Chinese records, in 708 CE their leader, a man named Sogeh had almost 300,000 soldiers under his command. (Please see Bichurin, P. 297). The other tribes were the black Türgesh led by Sulu. In the middle of the 8th century the two fractions led an intertribal war that exhausted both sides. (Please see Bichurin, P. 300).

military operations against the Arabs, but the emperor ignored their pleas. The joint embassy together with the heads of other wealthy city-states located between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers then appealed directly to Sulu. (During this time the region consisted of many small and independent states that, together formed a form of a confederacy with Iranians making up the ethnic majority in the area).¹

The Türgesh dealt severe blows to the Arabs, but as M. Gibb noted in his *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia*, "The more significant defeat was one the Arabs suffered to their prestige. The balance has shifted. From this point on the Arabs were on the defensive and were gradually pushed out of the each region along the Amu Darya."² The most severe damage to the Arab troops was delivered in the summer of 724 CE. Gibb wrote,

After 8 days of pursuit the Arabs, constantly under attack by the swift and agile Türgesh cavalry, were forced to burn down a wagon valued at one million dirham. Next day, when the [Arabs] reached Syr Darya all approaches were occupied by the Shash and Fergana troops together with the Sogdians. Desperate and parched Arabs were met by the Türgesh army...The remnants of the army retreated towards Samarqand.³

In 726 CE the Türgesh qaghan surrounded the Arab army at Huttala. In the spring of 731 CE the joint Türgesh and Sogdian forces liberated Samarqand and in October of that year forced the Arabs out of Balkh - the site of their military headquarters. The Türgesh army at the time was over 30,000 strong⁴ but what made their western campaigns so successful was not only the military talents of their commander but also Sulu's personal popularity and prestige. According to the

¹ Gibb, M.A. *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia*... P. 4.

² Ibid. P. 66.

³ Ibid. P. 65.

⁴ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). *Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена*... С. 299.

Chinese records, “In the later years, Sulu experienced poverty and began to partially retain spoils without sharing. Soon his men began to separate from him. He caught a cold, and soon lost the use of one arm and couldn’t attend to his responsibilities.”¹

As a result those in his inner circle gained more influence over state matters and in 738 CE Sulu was murdered.² History of the Türgesh state ended with Sulu’s death - it soon broke apart and soon lost its historical significance.

Following the collapse of the Türgesh state just one other Turkic state continued its existence in Central Asia past 745 CE. The 10 Uighur tribes formed the ethnic core and the main force of the Uighur Qaghanate.³ Their ruling family of qaghans originated from the Iologe tribe, here Bichurin noted that the Iologe tribe originated from the Oikhor [Uighur) Dynasty.⁴ The qaghanate’s second most dominant ethnic and its second strongest component were the nine Oghuz tribes. More specifically, the encyclopedia of Islam tells us that the Uighur state relied primarily on its two largest ethnic groups - the Uighur and the Oghuz.⁵

Soon after the first Uighur Qaghan Moyun-Chur took the throne, the Oghuz, just like during the Turkic rule, united with the Tatars and rose against the qaghan. In the ensuing battle the Uighur defeated the Oghuz-Tatar army and forced them to retreat. Another battle soon followed. The memorial inscription on the Moyun-Chur monument reads:

I won then. Guilty noblemen (leaders) ...[many of them] Heaven handed to me. But I did not kill their

¹ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена... С. 299.

² Ibid.

³ Малов С.Е. Памятники древнетюркской письменности Монголии и Киргизии. М.-Л., 1959. С. 38.

⁴ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена... С. 301.

⁵ Sümer, F. Oğuzlar// İslam Ansiklopedisi... S. 379.

simple black people, their yurts, homes and herds I did not take. I declared a punishment for them and let them live [as before]. “You are my people - I told them - follow me and come to me.” I departed, leaving them behind. They did not come. I chased them again. On the ninth day of the fourth month I caught up with them around Burgu fought them and won. I took their herds, their livestock, their girls and women. In the fifth month they came to me - eight Oghuz and nine Tatar all came to the last man.¹

The Uighur qaghan engaged in several more battles all in an effort to prevent the Oghuz secession from the qaghanate. However, the Oghuz were not the only people forced to join the qaghanate against their will. Other tribes like the Tatars, the Kyrghiz, the Chik, the Tardush, and the Tölis were all forced into the Uighur state. Moyun-chur’s two sons were appointed to lead the last two and given the titles of yabgu and shad.²

Moyun-chur refers to some of the Turkic tribes, such as the Basmil, the Karluk, and the Türgesh as his “external enemies” and wrote: “I, [having defeated] the Türgesh and the Karluk took all their possessions...”³ In 755 CE Moyun-chur fought the Karluks and the Basmil and talked about the battles on his memorial inscription, “Since then the Karluk and the Basmil are destroyed.”⁴

In 840 CE the Kirgiz destroyed the Uighur Qaghanate, occupied the Orkhon regions and established their own state that lasted until 924 CE.⁵ They did not seek unification of other Turkic tribes under their rule and in fact once the Kirgiz settled the Orkhon region, many of the Turkic tribes had to

¹ Малов С.Е. Памятники древнетюркской письменности Монголии и Киргизии. М.-Л., 1959. С. 39.

² Ibid. С. 40.

³ Ibid. С. 41 – 42.

⁴ Ibid. С. 42.

⁵ Encyclopedia Britannica. V. 22 Chicago – London – Toronto, 1958. P. 622.

relocate and find other lands to settle. As for the Uighur, the Kirgiz physically exterminated many of them. The Chinese records tells us that by 847 the “Hoyhu (Uighur) were practically annihilated.”¹

Those who survived and were not taken into the Kirgiz captivity relocated and settled in Tibet where they formed a small kingdom, but the majority of the Uighur settled to the east of the Tien Shan mountains. In 856 CE China recognized the Uighur state in the Eastern Tian Shan where it existed as an independent state until the 13th century.²

4. *Turkic Tribes and Nations in the 10th century.*

After the Kirgiz destruction of the Uighur, the Oghuz (anywhere from several hundred thousand to a million people)³ left Central Asia and migrated to the northwest where they settled between the Volga River and the Ural Mountains,⁴ within the territories of the modern-day Russia. The Pecheneg initially settled these lands but the Oghuz entered into a strategic alliance with the Khazar and occupied the Pecheneg lands forcing out the latter. The Oghuz then continued to move west where they finally settled along the right banks of the Don River. Their cavalry provided support to the Russian Prince Vladimir the Great when he moved against the Volga Bolgars in 985 CE. This was evidenced in the Russian historical records (the chronicles of Nestor). N.M.

¹ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф). Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена... С. 337.

² Currently, the absolute majority of the Uighur live in the Sintian – Uighur autonomous region of the PRC. Urumchi is the administrative center of the region. In 2000, the total population in the region was 19.25 million people of which 45% were Uighur and 40% Chinese. The Uighur also live in Kazakhstan, Kirgizia and Uzbekistan.

³ Öztuna, T.Y. Türkiye tarihi. 2. Cilt. Istanbul, 1964. S. 6.

⁴ Голубовский П. Печенеги, тюрки и половцы до нашествия татар. История южно-русских степей IX-XIII вв. Киев, 1884. С. 45.

Karamzin wrote:

Prince Vladimir, wishing to conquer the Volga–Kama Bolghars sailed down the Volga River together with the Novgorodians and the legendary Dobrynya. The [*Tork*] cavalry followed by land; they were allies of the Russians and served the Russians.¹

Karamzin further noted, “This [entry] is the first record of these people’s existence... They roamed along Russia’s south-eastern borders.”² It is interesting to note, and considering all of the evidence presented up to this point, that the Russians used the term “*Tork*” (which is very similar to “*türk*” or “*turk*”) specifically when referring to the Oghuz even though they had direct knowledge of other Turkic tribes. At the end of the 10th - beginning of the 11th centuries the Oghuz continued their westward migration settling in the Dnestr River regions at the time occupied by the Pecheneg. Continuous run-ins with the Pecheneg led to the great human losses for the Oghuz, but they sustained even greater depletion as a result of the severe winters, diseases, and famine.³ Nonetheless almost 600,000⁴ Oghuz crossed the Danube River and arrived in the Balkans where they were forced to battle the Bulgarians living in the Danube steppes. As a result the Oghuz sustained substantial losses and were forced to move south, towards and into the Byzantine Empire where they finally found refuge. The emperor designated Macedonian territories for settlement by the Oghuz and drafted some of them into the Byzantine army. We know that the Oghuz made up a large portion of the Byzantine Emperor Romanus Diogenes’ army when he fought the Seljuk Oghuz in 1071 CE.

¹ Карамзин Н.М. История Государства российского. Книга I. Тома I, II, III, IV. СПб., 1998. С. 139 – 140.

² Ibid.

³ Голубовский П. Печенеги, тюрки и половцы до нашествия татар. История южно-русских степей IX-XIII вв... С. 47.

⁴ Öztuna, T.Y. Türkiye tarihi. 2. Cilt. Istanbul, 1964. S. 5.

A larger group of the Oghuz migrated to Central Asia. (Smaller groups have migrated to the area considerably earlier.) In the 10th century most of the Oghuz settled in the area between the northeastern shores of the Caspian Sea and the middle reaches of the Syr Darya River. The Oghuz settled the Mangyshlak Peninsula, the Ustürt Plateau, and the shores of the Aral Sea. A large number of them inhabited the regions surrounding the Karachuk Mountains (from Isfijab to Syr Darya). All neighboring tribes: the Khazar to the west, the Kimek to the north, and the Karluk to the east, were ethnically Turkic. The Kimek and the Karluk people also belonged to the Eastern Turkic Qaghanate. Muslims, and more specifically the Persians occupied the areas south of the Oghuz settlements. Hudūd al-‘Ālam tells us that the border between the pagan Oghuz and the Muslims lay along Gurgan - Farab - Isfijab.¹

The Oghuz state or (yabguluk) existed in the 10th century in the general area roughly identified above. We can't say for sure when it formed, but we suppose it happened sometime after the Kirgiz destroyed the Uighur Qaghanate around the middle or the second half of the 9th century. Z. V. Togan believes that the Oghuz were vassals of the Khazar qaghan.² If we accept this theory then it becomes clear why the Oghuz chief titled himself a yabgu and not a qaghan. This vassalage could have only lasted through the middle of the 10th century as the Khazar Qaghanate (6th – 10th centuries) ceased to exist in 965 CE. F. Sümer believes that the Oghuz yabguluk was a powerful and independent state.³ The Oghuz were a combative people, Sümer wrote, "The Oghuz were always well-armed, brave and ready to engage in battle..."⁴ The Oghuz yabguluk was situated on almost one million

¹ Hudūd al-‘Ālam. The Regions of the World. A Persian Geography 372 A.H. – 982 A.D... P. 312.

² Togan, Z.V. Umumi Türk tarihine giriş. Cilt I. İstanbul, 1946. S. 175.

³ Sümer, F. Oğuzlar (Türkmenler). Tarihleri – boy teşkilatı... S. 54.

⁴ Ibid.

square kilometers, although the majority of its land were the Kızıl Kum and Kara Kum deserts.¹

The ruler of the Oghuz was called a *yabgu*. The second highest rank in the country belonged to the army commander who was called a *subashi*. It is possible that it was the latter who had the real power in the country. For example when official correspondence was sent from Baghdad, it was always addressed to the subashi and it was the subashi who replied.² In 922 CE an embassy from the Baghdad caliph arrived in the Oghuz yabguluk on their way to the Volga Bolgars. The secretary of the delegation was a man named İbn Fadlan, who left [rather limited] observations about the Oghuz state. İbn Fadlan failed to mention the name of the Oghuz yabgu, but noted that the subashi was named Etrek, son of Katagan.³ (Z. V. Togan restores this name to Etrek, the son of Togan.)⁴

At this time 24 Oghuz tribes made up the yabguluk and 12 of them went by a single name - the Bozok. In the event of war they were to form the right wing of the army. The remaining 12 tribes were the Uchök and were to form the left wing. The coat of arms of the Bozok was a bow and the Uchöks' the three arrows.⁵ Legend has it, as retold by Rashid ad-Din, that Oghuz-khan (a mythological character and the ancestor of all Türks) had 6 sons - Gün, Ay, Yıldız, Gök, Dag and Deniz and each of his sons had 4 sons. The Oghuz tribes are named after each of the grandsons of Oghuz-khan. The Bozok tribes were made up of the Kayi, Bayat, Alkaevli, Karaevli, Yazır, Dodurga, Döger, Yaparlı, Avshar, Kırık, Begdili and the Karkyn. The Bayındyr, Bichina, Chavuldur,

¹ Öztuna, T.Y. Türkiye tarihi. 2. Cilt... S. 10.

² Togan, Z.V. Umumi Türk tarihine giriş. Cilt I... S. 174 – 175.

³ Ковалевский А.П. Книга Ахмеда ибн Фадлана о его путешествии на Волгу в 921 - 922 гг. Харьков, 1956. С.129.

⁴ Togan, Z.V. Umumi Türk tarihine giriş. Cilt I... S. 175.

⁵ Рашид-Эддин. Сборник летописей. История монголов. Перевод с персидского И.Н.Березина. СПб., 1858. С. 22.

Chepni, Salgur, Eymür, Alayuntlu, Üregir, Iğdir, Bügdüz, Yiva and Kynyk belonged to the Uchök.¹ Each tribe had its own symbol (damga) that was used to brand their weapons, live stock and possessions. During the Ottoman Empire the symbol of the Kayi (the tribe of Osman)² was branded on the cannons up until the time of Suleiman I.

The size of each tribe was different, some counted as many as hundreds of thousands,³ but in all the population of the yabguluk consisted of about one million people.⁴ Several townships and settlements in modern-day Turkey still bear the names of the Oghuz tribes, mainly those that participated in the conquest of Asia Minor: Kınık, Avshar, Bayat, Kırık, Chepni, Begdili, Salgur, Karkın, Yazır, Eymür, Bayındır, Dodurga, and Kayi.⁵ Leaders of the small tribal groups, or *beys* were wealthy men. İbn Fadlan wrote that among the Oghuz he's seen men who owned hundreds of thousands of sheep and tens of thousands of horses.⁶

The Oghuz established close trade relations with the neighboring Muslims, conducting most of their transactions in the border town of Sabran. Their primary commodity was sheep. The Oghuz and the Karluks satisfied the Maverannagr and Khorasan meat consumption needs. They breed a special type of sheep that was unknown in Khorasan and thus were able to supply a unique product that was in high demand. Besides the livestock the Oghuz traded in some of the finest felt.⁷ Since Maverannagr engaged in trade relations with other Turkic tribes, many of the liveliest and most important trade routes lay through the Oghuz yabguluk. The most important of these trade routes went from Khorezm to the Volga

¹ Рашид-Эддин. Сборник летописей. История монголов... С. 22 – 25.

² Öztuna, T.Y. Türkiye tarihi. 2. Cilt... S. 15.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. S. 11.

⁵ Ibid. S. 15.

⁶ Ковалевский А.П. Книга Ахмеда ибн Фадлана... С. 130.

⁷ Sümer, F. Oğuzlar (Türkmenler). Tarihleri – boy teşkilatı... S. 43.

regions. İbn Fadlan crossed the Oghuz territories accompanied by a long caravan - the number of merchants and drivers reached five thousand men. The Oghuz sent their own caravans as well - they traded extensively with the Islamic world as well as China and India.¹

We don't have specific information on when and how the Oghuz yabguluk ceased to exist, but it must have been around the beginning of the 11th century when the state was weakened by internal conflict and could have been destroyed by the Kipchak.²

¹ Sümer, F. Oğuzlar (Türkmenler). Tarihleri – boy teşkilatı... S. 44.

² Ibid. S. 58.

CHAPTER III

Changes in the Military and Political Conditions in Central Asia and the Near East During the 11th – 12th Centuries.

Formation and Expansion of the Great Seljuk Empire.

1. Developments in the Military and Political Conditions in Central Asia, Near and Middle East at the End of the 10th - Beginning of the 11th Centuries. Allocation of the Principal Military and Political Forces.

Most of the states in the Near and Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia during the 8th - 9th centuries were part of the Abbasid Caliphate.¹ The governors appointed by the caliph ruled Maverannagr and Khorasan - conquered at the time of the Umayyad dynasty.² As time went by the local elite, primarily Persians replaced the traditional Abbasid governors - the Arabs from Baghdad. In 821 CE Caliph Mamoun (814 - 834 CE) appointed governor of Khorasan a Persian by the name of Tahir who later went on to found the Tahirid dynasty.

The Samanid dynasty, founded by Saman-Hudat, slightly predated the Tahirids. Narshahi wrote that Saman-Hudat got his name after founding a settlement by the name of Saman in the Balkh region.³ Saman had four grandsons - Nuh, Ahmed, Yahya and Ilyas - all of whom took part in

¹ The Abbasids were a dynasty of Arab caliphs (the caliph was a title of the supreme ruler who had the temporal and the spiritual powers) that ruled from 750 – 1258 CE. Baghdad was the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate.

² The Umayyads were a dynasty of Arab caliphs who ruled from 661 – 750 CE. During the time of the Umayyad dynasty the Arabs conquered North Africa, significant portions of the Iberian Peninsula, Central Asia and other territories. Damascus was the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate.

³ Наршахи, Мухаммед. История Бухары. Перевел с персидского Н. Лыкошин. Ташкент, 1897. С. 77.

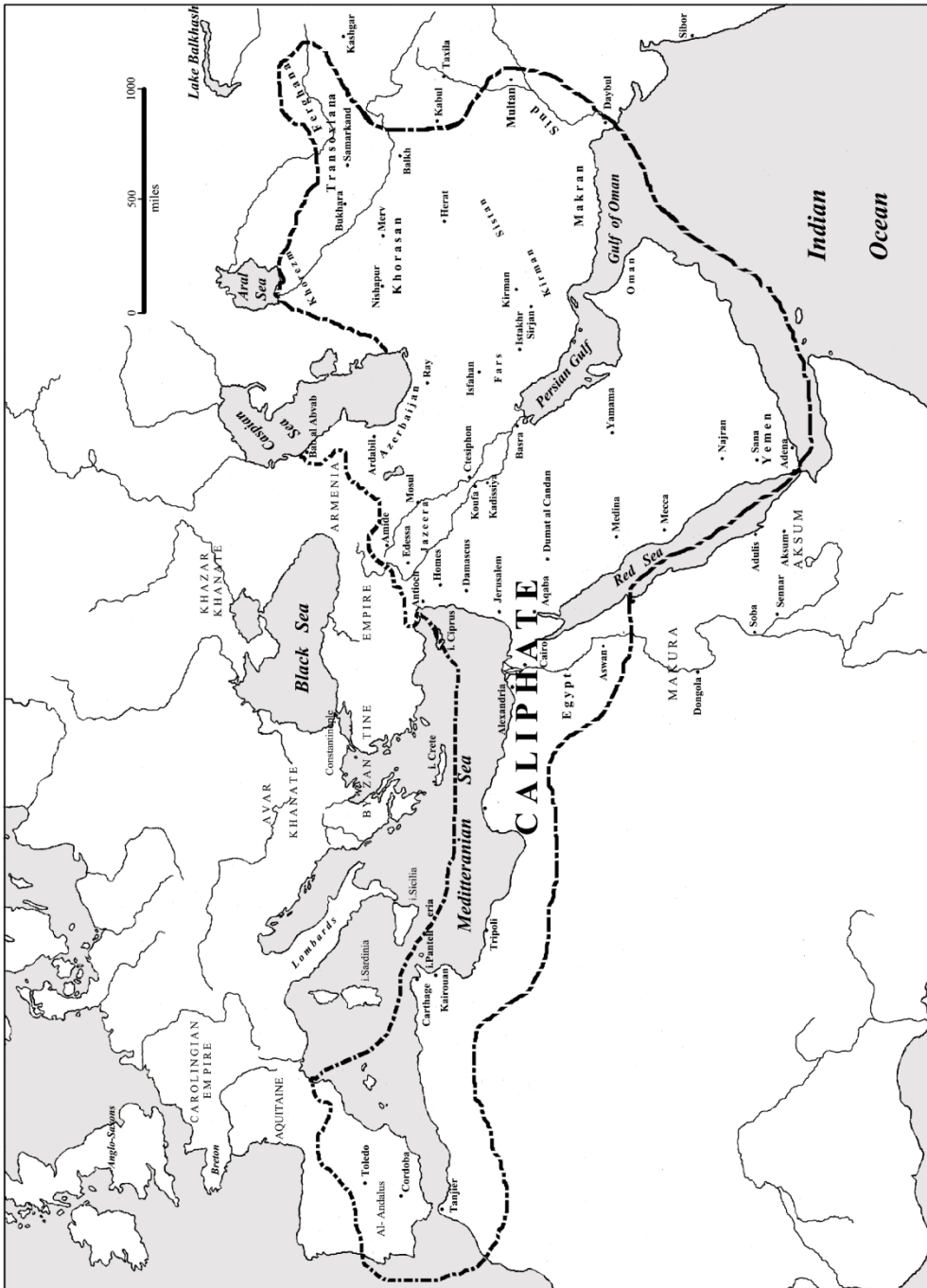
suppressing the Rafi ibn Leys rebellion who rose up against the Caliph Harun-ar-Rashid (787 - 810 CE). All four grandsons later served in the army of Caliph Mamoun, the son of Harun-ar-Rashid. In acknowledgement of their service to the caliphate all four were appointed to the high-ranking administrative positions in Maverannagr and Khorasan. In 817 - 818 CE Nuh became the Emir of Samarqand, Ahmed - the Emir of Fergana, Yahya - the Emir of Shash, and Ilyas - the Emir of Herat. His nephew Nasr, the son of Ahmed, inherited the position after Nuh's death. That same year Nasr received a charter giving him the power to govern all of Maverannagr.

At the same time Yakoub, the founder of the influential Persian Saffarid dynasty, seized power in Khorasan and displaced Mohammed bin Tahir - the governor appointed by the caliph. This could not have gone unnoticed by the Caliph Moutamid (871 - 892 CE) who swiftly re-instated Mohammed in the gubernatorial post, but was subsequently forced to issue a charter assigning governorship to Yakoub after the latter threatened to march on Baghdad. According to the charter Yakoub was to oversee Khorasan, Toharistan, Jurjan, Ray and Fars¹ but that still didn't preclude him from advancing onto Baghdad. He engaged the imperial forces in 876 CE around Deyr al-Kul, suffered defeat and was forced to flee to the south of Iran. Following Yakoub's death his brother and appointed heir Amr, submitted to the caliph and managed to get a governorship of Khorasan, Fars, Īsfahan, Sejistan and Sind.² However, Amr planned to expand territories under his control and conquer Maverannagr.

At the time Maverannagr was ruled by the great grandson of Saman, Abu Ibrahim Ismail who preempted Amr, and having crossed the Amu Darya River with 20,000 soldiers defeated Amr's army in 899 CE. Undeterred, Amr

¹ Бартольд В.В. Туркестан в эпоху монгольского нашествия... С. 276.

² Ibid. С. 277.



Spread of Islam by 750 CE (The Umayyad Valiphate)

began thorough preparations for the war with the Samanids but was once again stalled in his plans when Ismail crossed Amu Darya and dealt him a final and crushing defeat. Amr was captured on the battlefield, sent to a prison in Baghdad and soon thereafter executed. Following these events the caliph sent Ismail an official document transferring ownership of Khorasan and other areas - beginning with Hulvan, a mountain pass near Hamadan,- Sid, Hind and Hurgan. This document further confirmed Ismail's title to Maverannagr.¹

Hereby we see that by the end of the 10th century a vast Samanid state has formed in Central Asia, Middle East and South Asia. Persians constituted the ethnic majority of the Samanid Empire and belonged primarily to the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam. Ismail's grandson Said (914 - 943 CE) further strengthened the Samanid positions in the area subjecting Fars, Kirman and selected Iraqi territories into vassalage.

The Samanids had a sufficiently sophisticated and effective government structure. Narshahi wrote that a brand new imperial palace was constructed in Bukhara during Said's reign. Said ordered a series of government buildings be built in close proximity to the palace walls, and so several official building were built to house the following divans: the State Divan, the Mustavfi divan (the treasury), the "Government Support" Divan (the divan of the official documents), the Chief of the Military Divan, the Head of the Post Divan, the Muhtasib Divan (the police), the Mushrif Divan (the secret police), the State Property Divan, the Vakuf Divan,² and the Judicial Divan.³

The Samanids had a well-developed agriculture and artisanal tool production. Some of the most in-demand Samanid products were the cotton textiles made in the

¹ Наршахи, Мухаммед. История Бухары... С. 115.

² Vakuf (Arabic - waqf) – in Muslim countries refers to personal possessions and real estate removed from the public use and transferred for religious or charitable purposes by a government or a private citizen.

³ Наршахи, Мухаммед. История Бухары... С. 36.

Zeravshan Valley, metal objects, particularly weapons produced in Fergana, and paper from Samarqand. By the end of the 11th century, paper made in Samarqand has irrevocably replaced papyrus and parchment¹ as the material of choice throughout the Muslim countries. In all, the Samanid state was well equipped to provide for all its citizens' provisions and industrial needs and was actively involved in trade with both the nomadic and settled populations.

The Samanid state remained the principal military and political force in the region until the middle of the 10th century. Their influence in the area began to wane following the death of the Samanid ruler Emir Abu al-Malik in 961 CE. Narshahi wrote, "The army revolted and created a rebellion. Every man demanded power and confusion followed."² It was during this time of the Samanid decline that a new state, the Ghaznevid Empire, began to form within its borders.

Not long before his death, Emir Abu al-Malik appointed a Türk named Alp-tegin the Samanid *sipahsalar* (the commander-in-chief). Traditionally, the sipahsalar's head quarters were located in Khorasan and as the commander-in-chief the sipahsalar was also the governor of Khorasan. As soon as Alp-tegin received news of the emir's death he organized a mutiny and deployed the army towards Bukhara. An army loyal to the new ruler was sent to face Alp-tegin and was successful at preventing him from crossing the Amu Darya River. Following the mutiny Alp-tegin was dismissed from his posts and faced arrest for treason. He managed to conquer Balkh but was soon displaced from the city and besieged Ghazni, a small city in the eastern part of modern-day Afghanistan that the former sipahsalar took over several days later. The Ghazni garrison was primarily Turkic and so Alp-tegin felt protected in their midst. Alp-tegin repented before the emir and was appointed the governor of Ghazni.

¹ Бартольд В.В. Туркестан в эпоху монгольского нашествия... С. 296.

² Наршахи, Мухаммед. История Бухары... С. 121.

He died in 963 CE and the governorship was passed on to his son Abu Is'hak Ibrahim. When Abu Is'hak Ibrahim died in 966 CE the Turkic garrison elected one of their own commanders the new governor. The new leader, Bilge-tesin was also Turkic and a former slave of Alp-tesin.

Fearful of the Turkic ruler's growing influence, and the decline of the Samanid control over the city, the Samanid emir sent his army to Ghazni. Bilge-tesin defeated the Samanid troops and ruled Ghazni for the next ten years. After his death in 975 CE the reigns of power went to Piri-tesin also a former servant of Alp-tesin. Piri-tesin considered himself a Samanid governor of Ghazni. Two years later, in 977 CE the Turkic garrison deposed Piri-tesin and elected Sebuk-tesin as their leader. Sebuk-tesin also considered himself to be the governor of Ghazni within the Samanid state.

Sebuk-tesin is considered to be the founder of the Ghaznevid dynasty; his son Mahmud, born in 971 CE was the first sultan of the Ghaznevid state (994 - 1187 CE).

In 993 CE Faik and Abu Ali Simdjuri, two Samanid military commanders from Khorasan, staged a mutiny against the Samanid Emir Nuh bin Nasr. The fourteen-year-old emir called upon the Seljuk-led Oghuz (more on that later) and Sebuk-tesin for assistance. The latter played a key role in defeating the insurgents. In 994 CE the Samanid emir appointed Sebuk-tesin ruler of Ghazni, Balkh, Tukharistan, Bamiyan, Ghur, and Ghurjistan. Sebuk-tesin was given an honorary title of "Defender of Faith and State" and his son Mahmud was titled the "Sword of the State."¹ 994 CE is considered to be the year of the founding of the Ghaznevid state that recognized its vassalage to the Samanids.

Following Sebuk-tesin's death his youngest son Ismail ascended the throne but proving to be a weak ruler in 998 CE,

¹ Bosworth, C.E. *The Ghaznavids. Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran* 994 – 1040. Edinburg, 1963. P. 44.

after just 7 months on the throne, was deposed by Sebuktegin's oldest son Mahmoud who immediately declared himself ruler of all the lands previously ruled by his father. Later that year he arrived in Bukhara and the Samanid Emir Abul Kharis Mansour confirmed Mahmoud as the Samanid vassal ruler of the Ghazni, Balkh, Boust and the Termez regions. However, Mahmoud's ambitions extended to all of the Samanid territories in Khorasan and he soon declared war against the Samanids.

In February of 999 CE members of his inner circle deposed the Samanid Emir Mansour and his younger brother Abul Favaris Abd al Malik was declared the new emir. His supporters gathered a large army and deployed it to Khorasan. As a result Mahmoud was forced to sign the peace treaty on very unfavorable terms i.e. to accept what Emir Mansour already offered. That same year the Samanids broke the terms of the treaty and renewed military actions. Mahmoud won a spectacular victory, established absolute control over Khorasan and announced the formation of the independent Ghaznevid state. Since the Samanid state ceased to exist in 999 CE (we'll expand on that further in the text) the Baghdad caliph confirmed the formation of the independent Ghaznevid state and Mahmoud was given the title of sultan.

Mahmoud was probably the most remarkable of all Ghaznevid sultans. The government apparatus and the military organization established during his reign remained unsurpassed in the region and a vast empire was formed during his reign (until 1030 CE).

Sultan Mahmoud perfected upon the system of government he inherited along with Khorasan and made it so efficient that it was implemented by many subsequent eastern monarchs. In his famous work "Siyaset-name" ("The Book of Government") completed for the sultan of the Great Seljuk Empire Malik Shah (1072 - 1092 CE), the Vizier Nizam al-Mulk presented various aspects of Mahmoud's administrative structures and methods of government as canons of

government.

We believe there are three main reasons why the Ghaznevid state was so effective. The main reason, in our opinion was that the monarch was well informed about everything that took place within the state administrative apparatus, the army, the country as a whole and everything beyond its borders. Secondly, well-educated Persians who received their training while in the Samanid service staffed the state administrative structures. And finally, severe punishment awaited state employees who were either incompetent in their work or unlawfully enriched themselves.

Fear was the main motivator for integrity and efficient operation of all government officials - from the vizier to the common tax collector. The Ghaznevid state implemented an omnipotent system of intelligence gathering and espionage that were performed by the *Sahib Barid* and the department titled *Divan-i Shugl-i-Ishraf-i-Mamlakat*. Heads of these government agencies were appointed directly by the sultan.

These agencies staffed their own secret agents who, first and foremost, spied on the government officials and reported on all instances of abuse of power and position, and secondly gathered intelligence on various aspects of social life, including any changes within the state's internal political currents.

Divan-i Risalat, the sultan's personal cabinet, in its authority and its position within the state hierarchy was equal only to the divan of the vizier. The head of this divan was appointed directly by the sultan and was a man implicitly trusted by the Sultan and whose opinion was often considered above that of the vizier's. Bosworth, in particular, wrote that Mahmoud was generally massively suspicious of his viziers and that the head of his personal cabinet Abu Nasr Mishkan continuously fueled this mistrust by claiming that "...the

viziers shared power with their monarch”.¹

One of the responsibilities of the Divan-i Risalat was to maintain diplomatic correspondence with all foreign states. In addition to the foreign correspondence the divan received all of the internal intelligence dispatches from the agencies mentioned above, and compiled data on everything that transpired within the Empire. These reports typically contained information on the conduct of state officials, prices for various goods, including food, news of insufficient harvests, famines, food surpluses in specific regions, uprisings, natural disasters, enemy raids on the outer regions of the Empire, and so forth.²

This complete access to information allowed the sultan to take swift actions when necessary, which he often did. Mahmoud ordered a formation of the so-called “Committee of the Social and Military Leaders” that was charged with discussing important issues affecting domestic and foreign policies. The committee was more of an advisory body, but it allowed Mahmoud to hear valuable and sensible arguments, then take them into careful consideration (often after the committee’s meeting), and make the correct decision, even if it meant having to change his initial position on the matter.³

Mahmoud was short-tempered and cruel by nature. He imposed severe punishments on those who abused power, unlawfully collected taxes, or didn’t collect enough taxes. If the tax collector (*an amil*) was convicted of retaining a portion of the collected taxes, his possessions were confiscated and he was subjected to painful torture and execution. Even the post of the vizier was a dangerous position to hold. These intelligence departments staffed a whole series of officials who were responsible for identifying all instances where their own superiors illegally enriched

¹ Bosworth, C.E. *The Ghaznavids. Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran 994 – 1040...* P. 70.

² Ibid. P. 93.

³ Ibid. P. 60.

themselves as a result of the abuse of state office. Of the 6 viziers who held the post during the reign of Mahmud and his two sons Mohammed and Masoud, three were executed and the rest were thrown in prison. The viziers faced this fate not only as a result of an unlawful enrichment, but also in cases of treasury deficits as they were the ones with the ultimate responsibility for the expedient tax collection. One such example was Isferaini, who served as Mahmoud's vizier for 10 years. When the vizier was unable to guarantee the delivery of taxes from the Herat province and refused to compensate the treasury from his own funds, Mahmoud tortured the vizier to death and all of his possessions were confiscated.¹

In addition to the offices mentioned earlier, there were several others. One of them was the Divan of the Vizier, the role of the treasury was performed by the Divan-i İstifa, the role of the agriculture ministry was performed by the Divan-i Vikalat, all profits from the sultan's personal estates were recorded by the Mustavfi department and all dynastic land properties were managed by Vekil-i Haas.²

The Persian provinces of Khorasan, and after 1029 CE Ray and Djibal, were territorially removed from the capital of Ghazni and were managed by the local divans from administrative centers of Nishapur and Ray, respectively. During Mahmoud's reign the Ghaznevid Empire generated vast wealth, drawing most of its profits from taxes imposed upon the citizens of the Ghaznevid provinces as well as rich spoils brought back from India.

With well-developed agriculture, craftsmanship, industrial production and vast natural resources Khorasan was the best developed of all the Ghaznevid provinces. The mountains to the north of Khorasan contained rich silver,

¹ Бартольд В.В. Туркестан в эпоху монгольского нашествия... С. 350.

² Bosworth, C.E. The Ghaznavids. Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran 994 – 1040... P. 68.

copper, iron ore, lead and antimony deposits but the most in-demand products within the domestic and foreign markets were marble and the famous turquoise from Khorasan.¹

The Khorasani cities were built along the caravan trade routes and as such played an important role in both, domestic and international trade. The main caravan routes connected Baghdad and other wealthy cities of the Abbasid Caliphate with Khorezm. From there goods, like fur, leather, wax, honey, etc., were delivered from other areas of Central Asia and Siberia; porcelain and other luxurious wares arrived from China, and caravans of slaves arrived in Khorezm from Maverannagr.

Mahmoud's vast financial resources allowed for the creation of a professional, ethnically diverse army that was unmatched by any other in the region. The vast majority of the soldiers were Turkic, the rest were Indian, Kurdish and Arab. They were all considered to be the sultan's slaves and were referred to as the *ghulām*. The sultan's Cavalry constituted the bulk of the offense, (Turkic and Arab soldiers) and infantry which consisted primarily of Indian soldiers, made up the rest. The infantry was delivered to the battlefield on camel back. Mahmoud also made use of elephantry - a division of combat elephants. Each elephant was outfitted with a basket saddle that fit four soldiers, each one armed with bows and spears. This elephant platoon's main purpose was to charge the enemy. Soldiers would bang the drums and create other loud noises intended to infuriate the elephants that would then charge ahead causing great panic and spreading fear among the enemy troops. Their horses were especially frightened by the elephants and were rendered uncontrollable. Mahmoud's army counted 1,300 combat elephants.²

¹ Bosworth, C.E. *The Ghaznavids. Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran 994 – 1040...* P. 151.

² *Ibid.* P. 116.

The professional Ghaznevid army counted more than 100,000 soldiers.¹ Within it the Turkic majority was under the command of the Sipahsalar-i Ghulām, the Indian troops answered to a Sipahsalar-i Ghulām Hindien, and so forth. The commander-in-chief was called the Hadjib-i Buzurg.

The department in charge of the army organization, combat training, personnel resources, inspections, salary, and logistics was called Divan-i Ard. Besides the above-mentioned tasks, the agency was also charged with cataloguing and evaluating all trophies seized from the defeated enemy troops. The Sultan was entitled to one fifth of all spoils - first and foremost jewelry and other valuables, weapons, elephants, and slaves (prisoners of war).

The Divan-i Ard distributed the remaining four fifth of the trophies among the troops according to rank and official position. Soldiers who distinguished themselves in battle were awarded with an additional share of the loot.²

By the end of Mahmud's reign the Ghaznevid Empire was situated on almost 4.9 million square kilometers³ and came to include the territories of modern-day Afghanistan, Pakistan, some parts of Iran, Tajikistan, and India. And even though the ruling dynasty was ethnically Turkic, Persian was the principal language of the majority of its subjects. Other ethnicities of the Ghaznevid Empire included the Pushtuns, the Beljuks, the Sikhs, the Punjabis, the Hindus, and others. Hanafi School of Sunni Islam was the official state religion, and Persian- it's official language.

During the first third of the 11th century, the Ghaznevid Empire was the prevalent force influencing the formation of the military and political conditions in the Near and Middle East and South Asia.

In the beginning of the 10th century the Karakhanid state

¹ Bosworth, C.E. *The Ghaznavids. Their Empire in Afghanistan...* P. 126.

² Ibid.

³ Öztuna, T.Y. *Başlangıçtan zamanımıza kadar Türkiye tarihi*. Cilt. I. İstanbul, 1963. S. 239.

(927 - 1212 CE) was the dominant military and political force in Central Asia. Up until 999 CE the Karakhanids occupied the territories of the Southern Tian-Shan Mountains, Zhetysu, and Eastern Turkestan. The Karakhanid ruling dynasty purportedly belonged to the Yagma ethnic group and the state's population was made up of principally Turkic tribes and ethnicities. From the *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam* we learn that during the 10th century the Yagma people occupied the central and western Tian-Shan, areas to the south of the Naryn River, and north-western regions of the Chinese Turkestan.¹

There is no conclusive historical information on exactly how the Yagma came to settle in these regions but one of the versions offered in the *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam* is that the migration was a result of struggles among the Chinese, Karluk and the Yagma people.² Minorsky, citing Gardizi, wrote that the Yagma originated from the Uighur and that a portion of the Uighur (Yagma were possibly an ethnic subgroup of the Uighur) joined the Karluks and followed them west.³ F. Sümer also proposed that the Yagma were a people connected to the Uighur. The Yagma split from the larger Uighur population, migrated west to the areas surrounding the city of Kashgar, wrestled control of the city away from the Karluks and made it their administrative center.⁴ It is possible that the Yagma themselves split into two parts as there is evidence that some of them settled in the Ili River basin.⁵ The Yagma leader was called Bughra-khan (or Boghra-khan).

The Karakhanid state was founded around Kashgar in 927 CE and converted to Islam in 960 CE. Since the Karakhanid rulers were likewise referred to as Bughra-khan,

¹ *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam* The Regions of the World. A Persian geography 372 A.H. – 982 A.D... P. 278.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* P. 277.

⁴ Sümer, F. Oğuzlar (Türkmenler). *Tarihleri-boy teşkilatı...* S. 30.

⁵ *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam* The Regions of the World. A Persian geography 372 A.H. – 982 A.D... P. 278.

Bartold proposed that they originated from the Yagma people. Minorsky echoed this conclusion.¹ At the same time Bartold wrote that the exact ethnic origins of the Karakhanids remain unconfirmed. He wrote, "There are no existing sources that offer conclusive proof as to the exact origins of the Turkic tribe that the Karakhanid rulers descended from; they are simply referred to as the Türks."² In another work Bartold wrote,

Geographic literature does not contain any information on the Turkic conversion to Islam; historians simply refer to the numerous Turkish [Turkic] people converting to Islam. This reference can only be found in the Baghdad chronology. Meanwhile the document makes no references as to the proper name of these people, or to the areas they occupied. Most probably they were the Türks that gave rise to the Turkish [Turkic] Muslim Karakhanid dynasty.³

Some of the observations made by V.V. Grigoriev in his translation of "Tarih-i Münnedjim-bashi", which focused on the history of the Karakhanids in Maverannagr are of distinct interest. Grigoriev wrote:

The history of the Turkic dynasty that ruled Maverannagr during the 5th – 7th centuries of the Hijra, or the 11th – 12th centuries of the Christian calendar, is one of the least known and the least studied. Our familiarity with this dynasty is so poor that we have no accurate way of referring to it. In my description of the uncirculated coins that was published twelve years ago, I referred to them as "the Uighur rulers of Maverannagr", but later rejected my own definition having discovered that they had nothing in common with the Uighur. At this point I prefer to refer to this polyonymous, or

¹ Hudūd al-‘Ālam The Regions of the World. A Persian geography... P. 278.

² Бартольд В.В. История турецко-монгольских народов... С. 15.

³ Бартольд В.В. Двенадцать лекций по истории турецких народов Средней Азии. Сочинения. Т. V. М., 1968. С. 205.

nameless dynasty by the name of their first ruler who is credited with conversion to Islam – the Karakhanids.¹

We can discuss the ethnic make up of the Karakhanid state with much more certainty, as we have evidence that in addition to the Yagma the Çigil people also occupied the areas around Kashgar. The Çigil also settled the left banks of the Ili River and areas around Taraz (or Talas). Sümer, quoting Gardizi, wrote that the Çigil were one of the Karluk tribes² and furthermore constituted the majority of the Karakhanid army.³

It's possible to assume then that besides the Yagma and the Çigil, other Turkic tribes that were previously united under the Turkic Qaghanate partially or entirely, now were part of the Karakhanid state.

We know nothing of the official government structure, military organization, or the economic state of the Karakhanid Empire. In fact the entire history of the Karakhanids until their conquest of the Samanid Empire remains relative. It is possible that during the 960 - 990 CE they occupied the territory from Lake Balkhash in the North to the city of Yarkent in the South. Their western border ran about 250 - 300 kilometers to the east of the Syr Darya River and their eastern border lay approximately 500 kilometers East of Lake Issyk Kul. Kashgar and Balasagun were the two major cities in the area.

Bughra-khan conquered Isfadjab and in 922 CE made his first military expedition to Maverannagr. According to Münnedjim-bashi, Bughra-khan's entrance to Maverannagr was preceded by clandestine negotiations and a secret agreement with one of the Samanid commanders Abu Ali Sumjuri. The two sides decided to divide the Samanid

¹ Караханиды в Мавераннахре по Тарихи Мюннеджим-баши. В османском тексте, с переводом и примечаниями В.В.Григорьева. СПб, 1874. С. 3 – 6.

² Sümer, F. Oğuzlar (Türkmenler). Tarihleri-boy teşkilatı... S. 27.

³ Hudūd al-‘Ālam The Regions of the World. A Persian geography 372 A.H. – 982 A.D... P. 299.

territories with Abu Ali Sumjuri agreeing to provide uninterrupted passage for the Karakhanid troops all the way to Bukhara. After the Samanid dynasty was overthrown and in accordance with the agreement, Bughra-khan took control over Maverannagr and Abu Ali Sumjuri got Khorasan.¹ The aforementioned Samanid commander Faik also joined Abu Ali Sumjuri.

Bughra-khan arrived in Maverannagr accompanied by a large army and began to take positions throughout the Samanid cities. Along with Simjuri and Faik, and facing no outside resistance Bughra-khan Harun finally entered Bukhara forcing the Samanid Emir Nuh to secretly flee his capital for Amul.

Bughra-khan soon left Bukhara and Emir Nuh returned to reclaim the throne. Münnedjim-bashi attributed the Karakhanid departure to Bughra-khan's terminal decline in health. Münnedjim-bashi wrote,

Faik received the appropriate permission from Bughra-khan and departed from Bukhara in order to gain control of Balkh. In the meantime Bughra-khan found the local climate disagreeable and decided to return to his ancestral lands. The citizens of Bukhara chased and raided the departing caravan and managed to secure sizable loot...²

Bughra-khan Harun died on his return trip home. His heir Ilek-Ilkhan Abu Nasr³ most likely fought the Samanids, as we know that a peace treaty was signed in the mid 990's that effectively transferred all Samanid lands north of the Zaravshan River Valley to the Karakhanids. In 999 CE the Karakhanids gained absolute control of Maverannagr and the Samanid capital Bukhara. The city was taken practically without a fight. The Karakhanids arrested every member of

¹ Караханиды в Мавераннахре по Тарихи Мюнедджим-баши. В османском тексте, с переводом и примечаниями В.В.Григорьева. СПб, 1874. С. 25 – 26.

² Ibid. С. 26 – 27.

³ Ibid. С. 28.

the ruling Samanid dynasty thus ending the existence of the Samanid Empire.

Having conquered Maverannagr, the Karakhanids now came up to the Ghaznevid borders that ran along the banks of the Amu Darya River. In 1001 CE the Ghaznevid Sultan Mahmud initiated a peace agreement with the Karakhanids. In a move to strengthen ties with the neighboring state, Mahmud married the daughter of the Karakhanid ruler Nasr. The treaty defined Amu Darya as the natural border between the two states.

In 1006 CE, while Mahmud was away on a military expedition to India the Karakhanids broke the terms of the treaty and crossed the Amu Darya River conquering several Khorasani cities along the way including the Ghaznevid administrative center Nishapur. Mahmud promptly interrupted his expedition and returned to Ghazni. His army was then sent to Khorasan to free the captured cities from the Karakhanids. Undeterred by the recent defeats, by 1008 CE Nasr assembled a massive army for a second attempt at conquering Khorasan. The deciding battle took place in January of 1008 CE not far from Balkh. Almost 500 elephants charged the Karakhanid front lines causing great panic among the troops, overturning them and sending most of them on the run. The Karakhanid army was partially destroyed, partially captured and many drowned in the Amy Darya River.¹ This was the final Karakhanid attempt to capture Khorasan and engage Mahmud in general.

The official religion of the Karakhanid state was the Hanafi School of Sunni Islam.

Political and military conditions in the western regions of the Middle East were heavily influenced by the Buyyid state (935 - 1055 CE). The Buyyid population was ethnically Persian, as was its ruling dynasty which originated from the Deylem region on the southern shores of the Caspian Sea.

¹ Бартольд В.В. Туркестан в эпоху монгольского нашествия... С. 335.

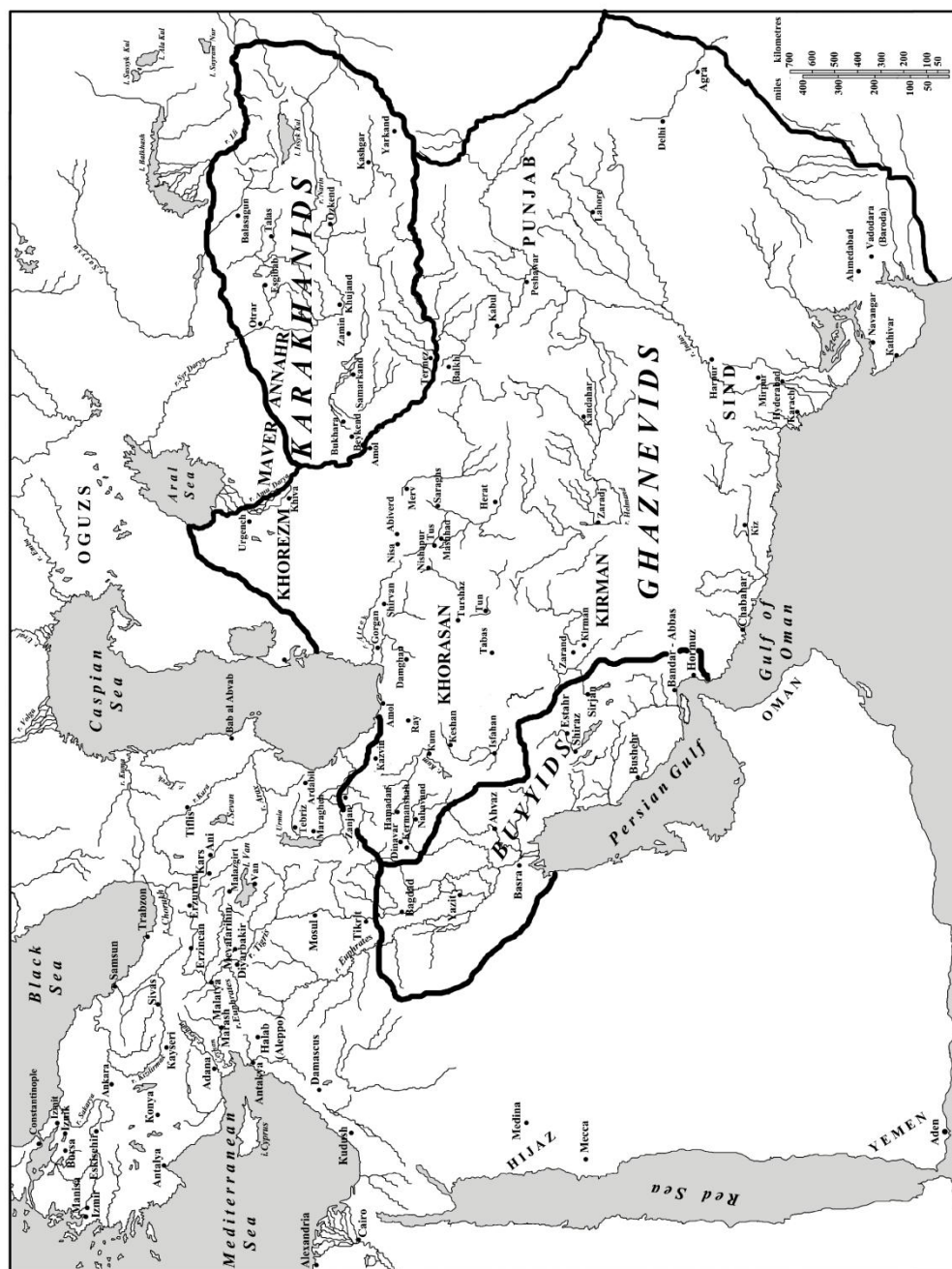
Three brothers - Ali, Hassan and Ahmad founded the Dynasty. The older brother Ali captured Īsfahan and Fars, Ahmad took over Kirman and Huzistan, and Hassan seized Djubal. In 955 Ahmad captured Baghdad and stripped the Abbasid caliph of his temporal powers. For the next one hundred years the Buyyid dynasty were the de-facto rulers of the Abbasid Caliphate. The official religion of the Buyyids was Shi'a Islam, which only contributed to the worsening of religious conditions in the caliphate. Violent clashes between the Sunni and Shi'a Muslims soon followed.

The Buyyid Dynasty achieved its peak in the end of the 10th century during the reign of Hassan's son Adud ad-Daula who maintained a vast army. During his reign the Buyyid state encompassed all of Iran up to Sind (except Khorasan that belonged to the Samanids) as well as Oman and Yemen on the Arabian Peninsula. Capital of the Buyyid state was Shiraz.¹

The beginning of the 11th century brought with it internal power struggles within the Buyyid ruling dynasty which ultimately led to the gradual weakening of the state. During the late 1020's the Ghaznevids increased their pressure and the Buyyids were forced to relinquish control of Ray and Djibal.

Thus the end of the 10th - beginning of the 11th century was marked by complex processes within the political and military conditions in the Central Asia, Near and Far East. As a result several independent states appeared within the Abbasid Caliphate. Towards the beginning of the 11th century the Samanid Empire ceased to exist - partly conquered by the Karakhanids, with Khorasan taken over by the Ghaznevids. By the time the Seljuks entered the political arena, with no

¹ Бартольд В.В. Историко-географический обзор Ирана. СПб., 1903. С. 105.



Approximate boundaries of the Ghaznavid, Karakhanid and the Buyyid states at the end of the 10th century — beginning of the 11th centuries

state of their own but with excellent military structure, the Ghaznevids and the Karakhanids have already engaged in several battles and now observed well-armed neutrality. By then the Buyyids have lost a portion of the territories to the Ghaznevids and were considerably weakened by the internal power struggles but remained the principal military and political force in the western parts of the aforementioned region. They possessed the temporal power in Baghdad.

In spite of the beginning of the decline of the Abbasid Caliphate during the second half of the 9th century, and the diminished temporal power, the caliph still played a major role in the political lives of the states practicing Sunni Islam. In fact, the Sunni states that have not been officially recognized by the caliph were considered illegitimate. He was also the only one with the authority to assign titles to the rulers of such states.

These were the overall military and political conditions in the area where the Great Seljuk Empire came into existence during the second half of the 11th century. These were the states that the Seljuks served (Samanid and Karakhanid) during the early stages of the clan's history, and with the exception of the Samanids the states, with which they fought as they established their state and expanded its borders.

2. Formation of the Great Seljuk Empire.

Events that unfolded in the 11th century within the vast territories between the Syr Darya and up to the Byzantine Empire in Asia Minor are closely related to the Seljuks - a Turkic dynasty founded in the 10th century by a man named Seljuk. He was originally from Central Asia, and more precisely the territory between the eastern shores of the Caspian Sea and the middle reaches of the Syr Darya River. During the 10th – 11th centuries these territories were

occupied by the so-called Oghuz yabguluk.

Seljuk's father, Dukak (or Tukak), nicknamed "The Iron Bow", was renowned for his unusual strength, courage and intellect and belonged to the yabgu's immediate circle. Seljuk was born in the beginning of the 10th century and like his father belonged to the noble Kynyk tribe.¹ After his father's death Seljuk was raised in the yabgu's royal court and made a subashi, or commander of the Oghuz army, at an early age.

Seljuk achieved great success in his tasks and so gained the yabgu's disposition.² Soon, however the yabgu's good-natured attitude towards Seljuk has taken a radical turn. There are several theories as to the exact reason of Seljuk's falling out with the yabgu but the most plausible is that the young and energetic commander had his sights set on the top post in the country (the Oghuz yabguluk) and was preparing a coup. Without the support of the local nobility Seljuk was forced to flee.

In 925 CE, Seljuk, accompanied by those closest to him arrived in the town of Djend, or more accurately in its surrounding areas. Abu'l-Faraj wrote that in addition to his tribesmen Seljuk brought with him many horses, camels, sheep and livestock.³ Some sources place the number of horses at 1,500 and sheep at 50,000.⁴ Djend was the place for a new period in Seljuk's life.

Djend was situated slightly east of Syr Darya's middle reaches and was officially controlled by the very same Oghuz Seljuk had to flee. However Djend was situated along the border separating the Muslim South and the still-not-converted North. If the process of religious conversion hasn't spread to the northern reaches of the river basins, then the south, including Bukhara and Samarqand have already converted to Islam. Furthermore Maverannagr was infamous

¹ Sümer, F. Oğuzlar (Türkmenler). Tarihleri-boy teşkilatı... S. 89.

² Budge, Ernest A. Wallis. The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l-Faraj... P. 195.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Togan, V.Z. Umumi Türk tarihine giriş. Cilt. 1. İstanbul, 1946. P. 175.

for its fanatical approach to fighting “the unfaithful”. The wealthy residents of this region contributed vast amounts of money to jihad,¹ to the construction of residencies for the *gazi*² and to the creation of *waqf*'s.

At the time of their arrival in Djend Seljuk and his followers were pagans, but they swiftly evaluated the new surroundings and converted to Islam quickly becoming one of the leaders of the jihad. Seljuk proceeded to organize the common protest of the Djend residents against the taxes (*haradj*)³ intended for the non-Muslim Oghuz treasury. The tax collectors were exiled from the city and thus began a series of clashes between the townspeople led by Seljuk and the Oghuz troops sent to deal with the unrest. As a result Djend successfully seceded from the Oghuz *yabguluk* and Seljuk was now famous. He formed his own army, limited as it was, and claimed a series of victories over the “unfaithful” in areas beyond Djend. At this point Seljuk was referred to as the *ghazi* and all those wishing to join the fight for their faith now hoped to be a part of his army, which only continues its expansion.

With time Seljuk was known not just in Djend but also throughout *Maverannagr*. Along with fame, the wars against the “unfaithful” brought him great fortunes as all of the expeditions were opportunities to plunder the enemy lands. Seljuk lived until a ripe old age of 102 and died in the beginning of the 11th century. Most of his life was spent in and around Djend.

Seljuk had four sons: Moussa, Yunus, Mikhail and Israil, but only the last two sons would come to play a role in the formation of the Great Seljuk Dynasty. We know

¹ Jihad – holy religious war Muslims had to lead against the non-believers .

² Gazi – (From the Arabic *gaza* – to fight): 1) a soldier who embarked on the Muslim military campaigns against the non-believers; 2) Honorary title of the Muslim commanders.

³ Haradj – Arabic. State land tax in the countries of the Near and Middle East levied upon landowners since the Middle Ages and up to the modern times.

practically nothing about Mikhail only that he was named heir by his aging father and that he was killed during one of the expeditions against the “unfaithful”. Mikhail had two sons - Tughrul and Davud. Tughrul would become the first ruler of the Great Seljuk Empire and all other rulers were the descendants of Davud.

It's important to explain the origins of the names given to Seljuk's children and grandchildren. According to the prevailing theory within the Turkic historical literature, Seljuk belonged to the noble tribe called the Kınıks. This notwithstanding, many of the works written during the middle ages refer to Seljuk's children and grandchildren as Mikhail, Israil, Yunus, Moussa, Tughrul, and Davud respectively. Clearly, at least some of the names cannot be considered to have Turkic origins in general and Oghuz in particular.

We have already mentioned that until 956 CE, the Oghuz yabguluk was likely in vassalage to the Khazar Qaghanate (middle of the 7th century - 965 CE). Since the 8th century the official religion of the Khazar Qaghanate was Judaism,¹ so it is possible that the Oghuz noble families wished to please the qaghan and gradually began to give their children Hebrew names. Once the qaghans converted to Judaism they too were given Hebrew names. Z. V. Togan believed that the above-mentioned names were a clear indication that by the 10th century a “Khazar - Jewish culture”² was gaining influence among the Seljuk aristocracy.

We can't say with certainty how and when those members of the clan who left a historical impact, changed their names. Most of the historical texts refer to Israil as Arslan and to Davud as Chagry. Tughrul was given a second name - Mohammed, but remained known throughout history as Tughrul. F. Sümer proposed a theory that Arslan, Tughrul, and Chagry were in reality titles and their true names

¹ Артамонов М.И. Очерки древнейшей истории хазар. Л., 1936. С. 5.

² Togan, V.Z. Umumi Türk tarihine giriş. Cilt. 1... S. 176.

remained Israil, Mohammed and Davud respectively.¹

Before Tughrul's becoming Sultan, the only other title mentioned in the historical records in reference to the members of the Seljuk clan was a *yabgu*. The only two people to have held it were Israil and following his death - Moussa. We believe that with time the given names Israil and Davud were either changed altogether or simply added to by using the Turkic names or those names more prevalent in the Muslim world. Here Bayhaqi, who was a contemporary of the Seljuk clan referred to them by their given names. Ravendi, on the other hand, referred to Seljuk's sons as Israil, Mikhail, Yunus, and Moussa but wrote that his grand children were called Chagry-bey Abu Suleiman Davud and Abu Talip Turgul-bey Mohammed.² Hosseini wrote that Seljuk's sons were "Mikhail, Moussa and Yabgu Arslan who was also called Israil."³

Abu'l-Faraj refers to the sons as Mikhail, Moussa, and Arslan and wrote: "Mikhail had two sons - Mohammed, who gained fame as Tughrul-bey and Davud, who became known as Chagry-bey".⁴

In the future we will refer to the members of the Seljuk clan by the same names that they entered history.

Following Mikhail's death the clan was headed by Arslan, who came to control a powerful military force that was capable of fighting other states and empires and was in great demand in the region fraught with political unrest. Ravendi correctly observed that prior to establishing their own state the Seljuks had a well trained and a powerful army.⁵

In the 980's CE the Seljuks entered the service of the

¹ Sümer, F. Oğuzlar (Türkmenler). Tarihleri-boy teşkilatı... S. 64.

² Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür... I. Cilt. S. 92.

³ El-Hüseyni... Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye... S. 2.

⁴ Abu'l-Farac, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus) Abu'l Farac Tarihi... Cilt I. P. 293.

⁵ Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür... I. Cilt. S. 85.

Samanids but instead of monetary compensation for their service the Samanid ruler paid them by giving them grazing lands and a village outside of Bukhara called Noor. When the Karakhanids attacked the Samanids in 993 CE, Arslan and his army defeated the Karakhanids and assisted the Samanid ruler Nuh to reclaim the captured territories and his throne. In 999 CE the Karakhanids staged another attack on the Samanid territories and this time their army significantly outnumbered their opponents'. In spite of the Seljuk participation in the battle their efforts were unmatched and the Karakhanids easily captured Bukhara. As mentioned earlier, later that year the Samanid state ceased its existence.

The ensued situation presented limited options to the Seljuks: they either had to relocate from the settled lands or establish relations with the new authorities. They chose the latter and began their service to the Karakhanids. The next twenty years were not distinguished by any particular events in the lives of the Seljuks, but everything changed upon the return of the disgraced Karakhanid Prince Ali Tekin in 1020 CE. Ali Tekin served as the governor of Bukhara, but was exiled by the Great Khan in 1017 CE. He escaped from exile, returned to Bukhara and, aided by the Seljuks, seized the city. Arslan became an ally of Ali Tekin and together they formed a Bukharan state within the boundaries of Maverannagr. The Great Khan's every attempt to punish the disgraced prince was deflected by the Seljuks and Arslan was a de-facto co-ruler of the new state in Maverannagr for the next five years.

The Karakhanid ruler decided to request military assistance from the most influential and powerful monarchs in the area Sultan Mahmud Ghaznevi. The sultan received the Karakhanid ruler Kadir Khan in a suburb of Samarqand in 1025 CE and promised to take the Bukharan state away from Ali Tekin and pass it onto Kadir Khan. He also promised to destroy the Seljuk military.

Ali Tekin learned of the Karakhanid - Ghaznevid pact and fled Bukhara. Arslan followed suit and abandoned the

city without any resistance to the Ghaznevids. Meanwhile Mahmoud managed to lure Arslan back,¹ bound him in chains and sent the prisoner to the Kalenjer castle in India. Arslan spent the last 7 years of his life imprisoned in the castle, and died in 1032 CE.

After Arslan's death, the reigns were passed onto Mikhail's sons Tughrul and Chagry. The Seljuks were now forced to relocate from the areas surrounding Bukhara and settled instead in Khorezm. There they first served Khorezmshah Altuntash and then his son Haroun. At the time Khorezm was in vassalage to the Ghaznevids but after Mahmoud's death and the transfer of power to his son Mesoud in 1030 CE the Ghaznevids lost most of their influence in the region. The new political reality prompted Khorezmshah Haroun to declare independence from the Ghaznevids in 1034 CE and he soon started plotting a takeover of Khorasan, an integral territorial and political component of the Ghaznevid Empire. The Seljuk army was to form the offensive front line. Mesoud found out about the impending attack and promptly sent assassins to the Khorezmshah. Haroun was killed in April of 1035 CE.

Haroun's death placed the Seljuks in a rather precarious position, as they were no longer able to remain in Khorezm and the return to either Bukhara or Djend was not a viable option. The latter was under the control of Shah Melik² who was hostile towards the Seljuks. The next series of actions on the part of the Seljuks had vast historical implications. They decided to move across the Amu Darya River and in May of 1035 CE entered the Khorasan area. Raiding and pillaging along the way they moved in the Amul' - Merv direction and set up camp in the areas surrounding the city of Nessa. The

¹ Please see: Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). *Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür...* I. Cilt. S. 88 – 89.

² Shah Melik was the son of the Oghuz ruler (yabgu) whom Seljuk had to flee. Melik assumed power after his father's death. Following the Kipchak capture of Yenikent Shah Melik relocated his head quarters to Djend.

Seljuk armed forces under Tughrul and Chagry's command counted almost 10,000 Oghuz warriors.¹

On May 19, 1035 Sultan Mesoud received a letter from the Seljuks signed by Tughrul, Chagry and Moussa requesting permission to settle and make use of the two desert towns of Nessa and Ferave. For their part the Seljuks offered to guard and protect Khorasan's northern and northwestern borders. Mesoud's reacted by sending an army to destroy the intruders. The ill-equipped Oghuz cavalry now faced a 17 thousand-man army and a division of combat elephants.²

The battle took place in June of 1035 CE and in spite of the considerable Ghaznevid military superiority their army suffered a crushing defeat and scattered, leaving the Seljuks to claim rich trophies. Ravendi wrote that besides the weapons, gear and livestock the Seljuks took control of the Ghaznevid treasury that contained 10 million dinars.³ The outcome of the battle was decided largely by the fact that the Ghaznevids grossly underestimated their enemy, and in particular their morale and tactical superiority.

The Ghaznevid sultan was so crushed by the defeat that he agreed to negotiate with the Seljuks. The negotiations lasted two months and resulted in the following:

1. The Nessa, Ferave and Dihistan regions are hereby transferred to the Seljuks.
2. The Seljuk leaders - Tughrul, Chagry and Moussa swear their allegiance to the Ghaznevid sultan and promise to make no future claims to other areas in Khorasan.
3. One of the three Seljuk leaders will stay in Mesoud's court as a hostage.⁴

Less than four months later the Seljuks broke the terms

¹ Бейхаки, Абу-л-Фазл. История Мас'уда 1030 – 1041. Вступительная статья, перевод и примечания А.К.Арендса. Ташкент, 1962. С. 103 – 104.

² Ibid. С. 483 – 484.

³ Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür... I. Cilt. S. 94.

⁴ Бейхаки, Абу-л-Фазл. История Мас'уда (1030 – 1041)... С. 518.

of the treaty and moved beyond “their” territories towards Balkh. As for the last point of the treaty, neither of the Seljuk leaders ever arrived in Mesoud’s court. Moreover, in November of 1036 CE they made new territorial claims from the sultan now demanding control of Merv, Serakhs and Baverd.

Under these conditions Mesoud had no other choice but to mobilize the remaining troops and fight the Seljuks to the end. The Ghaznevid and Seljuk forces once again faced each other at the end of May 1038 CE outside of Serakhs. The Sultan’s army suffered another defeat and as a result the Ghaznevids lost control of the better part of Khorasan. Several days after the battle and without any resistance, Tughrul entered Khorasan’s capital Nishapur, and Chagry took the largest Khorasani city Merv. By spring of 1039 CE Mesoud decided to lead the army himself and successfully defeated the Seljuks in the battle of Ulya-Abad. By the end of November of 1039 Mesoud pushed Tughrul and his army out of Nishapur and in the spring of 1040 won the battle of Serakhs. In the middle of may of 1040 CE, despite the severe shortages of provision, water and fodder Mesoud headed for Merv. He was attacked by the Seljuk forces on approach to the city and retreated towards the Dandanaqan fort situated in a desert some 60 kilometers from Merv. It was here that the fate of Khorasan was decided.

Seljuks arrived in advance of Mesoud’s army and poisoned all water wells in the vicinity of the fort. There were several wells inside the fort, but the available water was insufficient for the needs of solders, their tens of thousands of horses, camels, and elephants. The nearest water source was 35 kilometers from Dandanaqan. Mesoud clearly understood that without water his army was useless in battle and ordered them to head towards the reservoir. Once the army left the fort, stretched into a long procession and began its journey they were subjected to a series of coordinated attacks by the Seljuk cavalry. An eyewitness to the catastrophic events, the

royal chronicler Bayhaqi provided us with his account of what happened next. The main military forces were crushed and fled the battlefield. The infantry suffered grave losses and the remaining soldiers fled to the desert. The Indian contingent was annihilated. Arabic and Kurdish troops disappeared altogether. Bayhaqi wrote,

Had Mesoud only had around a thousand loyal soldiers the battle would have ended differently. The Sultan's son, Prince Mevdoud attempted to rectify the situation and gather the remnants of the army, but the panicked soldiers who fled the battlefield refused to obey his orders.¹

Soon the sultan's entourage consisted just of his inner circle and several ghulāms who managed to escape. Mesoud endured a difficult pass through the Charshistan and Goura mountains and returned to Ghazni in June of 1040 CE.² From here on the sultan's fate was a tragic one. In December of 1040 CE on his way from Herat, through Peshawar and on to the banks of the Indus River where Mesoud planned to spend the winter, he was arrested and deposed from the throne by his brother Mohammed. Mesoud was imprisoned in a fort and executed in January of 1041 CE.³

Mohammed's reign was a short one lasting just three months. Having learned of this father's execution Mevdoud, who was then in northern Afghanistan, rushed to face Mohammed. The battle took place in the province of Nangrakhar in April of 1041 CE. Mohammed, his family, and army commanders were captured and executed. On April 28 1041 Mevdoud returned to Ghazni and ascended the Ghaznevid throne.⁴ He spent the remainder of his life trying

¹ Бейхаки, Абу-л-Фазл. История Мас'уда (1030 – 1041)... С. 551.

² Bosworth, C.E. The Later Ghaznavids: Splendor and Decay. The Dynasty of Afghanistan and Northern India. 1040–1186. New York, 1977. P. 9.

³ Ibid. P. 20.

⁴ Bosworth, C.E. The Later Ghaznavids: Splendor and Decay. The Dynasty of Afghanistan and Northern India... P. 20 – 24.

to reclaim former Ghaznevid territories and prevent the Seljuks from capturing new ones. However the defeat at Dandanaqan once and for all undermined the Ghaznevid military influence in the area. After Dandanaqan the Ghaznevid state no longer posed a viable threat to the Seljuks.

In May of 1040 CE Khorasan was declared a Seljuk state. Official notices bearing the news were delivered to the heads of all neighboring states. In addition since the Seljuks were Sunni Muslims another letter was sent to the caliph in Baghdad presenting the circumstances that led to the formation of the new Seljuk state, their wars with the Ghaznevids, and requesting official recognition of their state from the caliph.¹

This official request was in line with all laws and traditions of its time. Furthermore, it was the caliph who had the authority to bestow titles onto the rulers of Muslim states. Many of them were in a habit of requesting additional titles or sometimes asked for new ones to better reflect their accomplishments before the state or the Muslim world as a whole.

Nizam al-Mulk wrote that the Ghaznevid Sultan Mahmud submitted ten similar requests to the caliph but received just one [new] title - *Yamin-ad-Daula*. At the same time the Samarqand Khakan (the Karakhanid ruler) was given three titles – *Zahir ad Daula*, *Mouin Khalifat I'll'ah*, and *Malik ash shark va-s-sin*.²

It's likely then that Tughrul's letter to the caliph was meant to serve a dual purpose. In addition to seeking official recognition of the new state, Tughrul was also hoping to receive the title of a Sultan. However, Caliph Al Kaim Biemrillah left the Seljuk letter unanswered.

¹ For the content of the letters, please see: Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). *Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür*... I. Cilt. S. 101 – 102.

² Сиясет – намэ. Книга о правлении везира XI столетия Низам ал-Мулька. Перевод, введение в изучение памятника и примечания профессора Б.Н. Заходера. М.-Л., 1949. С. 153 – 154.

It's interesting to note that even though several years prior to the battle at Dandanaqan members of the Seljuk clan already regarded Tughrul as the "first among equals";¹ one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Seljuk state in Khorasan was an absence of a single ruler.

In May of 1040 CE the Seljuks gathered for a kurultay (council) and adopted several key resolutions. One of them was the division of Khorasan into three districts to be ruled by the three Seljuk leaders. At the time Khorasan consisted of four administrative provinces: Nishapur, Merv, Balkh and Herat.² Tughrul became the ruler of Western Khorasan, with capital in Nishapur; Chagry - would receive Eastern Khorasan (Merv and Balkh), and their Uncle Moussa Yabgu would rule over the northern Khorasani province of Herat.³ We know that the first gold coins bearing Tughrul's name⁴ were minted in Nishapur around 1040 - 1041 CE. Chagry issued his own coins in Merv a short while later.⁵ Moreover, the hutba⁶ was read with Tughrul's name in Nishapur and Chagry's name in Merv and Balkh.⁷

Besides dividing up the already conquered territories in Khorasan,⁸ the second purpose of the summit was to decide

¹ Please see: Sümer, F. Oğuzlar (Türkmenler). *Tarihleri-boy teşkilatı...* S. 85.

² Please see: Hudūd al-‘Ālam. *The Regions of the World...* P. 325.

³ Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). *Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür...* I. Cilt. S. 102 – 103.

⁴ Please see: Lane – Poole, S. *Catalogue of Orient Coins in the British Museum*. London, 1822. P. 28.

⁵ Please see: Köymen, M.A. *Tuğrul Bey*. Ankara, 1986. S. 29.

⁶ Hutba – A Friday prayers in Islam during which the imam read the name of the ruler. In the vassal states the prayer would be read with the name of the suzerain.

⁷ Please see: Sümer, F. Oğuzlar (Türkmenler). *Tarihleri-boy teşkilatı...* S. 86.

⁸ For the sake of accuracy we should mention that even after Khorasan was declared to be a Seljuk state, portions of the area were still under the Ghaznevid control. As such a powerful garrison, headed by the Governor Altuntash, defended the city of Balkh. Chagry made several futile attempts to besiege the citadel in the summer and autumn of 1040 CE. Sultan Mesoud sent Prince Mevdoud and his army to help Altuntash defend the city. Altuntash relinquished control of the city only after the Seljuks crushed the newly arrived Ghaznevid avant-garde in the winter of 1040. Around the same time Moussa Yabgu gained

on an expansion strategy. Thus Moussa Yabgu was to conquer Sistan and Chagry's oldest son Kavourd was to take over Kirman. However, the most challenging task was assigned to Tughrul who was charged with conquering Iraq. Therefore the original Seljuk expansion strategy relied primarily on military conquests intended to extend their territories and ultimately establish their own empire in the Near and Middle East.

For the next two years, from 1040 until 1042 CE the Seljuks engaged in simultaneous and continuous military campaigns on several strategic fronts. As mentioned earlier, Chagry was expanding his domain in the East. Kavourd and his army conquered the Iranian province of Kirman (where he founded a new Seljuk state of Kirman), and Moussa Yabgu crossed Khorasan's southern border and forced the Emir of Sistan Abul Fadl to capitulate. In October of 1042 CE, the two joined forces to defeat the Ghaznevid army, sent there to return Sistan to the Ghaznevid Empire.

Tughrul's forces continued fighting along the northwestern regions. In 1041 - 1042 CE he managed to conquer Jurjan (Gürgen) and annex it Khorasan. Taberistan, located along the southern shores of the Caspian Sea was conquered and forced into Seljuk vassalage. In 1042 CE Tughrul went on an expedition to Khorezm, at that time ruled by an ally of Mesoud and a Seljuk sworn enemy Shah Melik. Tughrul gained control of Khorezm and executed Shah Melik.

In 1043 CE Tughrul began a westward expansion of the Seljuk state towards the Persian and Iraqi territories then under the Buyyid control. The Buyyids, mired by internal feuds and infighting have surely experienced better times. In 1043 CE, the Seljuk army, led by Tughrul's half brother Ibragim Yinal captured Ray,¹ which became Tughrul's new

control of Herat. Please see Bosworth, C.E. *The Later Ghaznevids: Splendor and Decay...* P. 11 – 13.

¹ The Medieval city of Ray was located in the area of the modern-day city of Teheran – the capital of Iran.

capital. After capturing Hamadan later that year Tughrul turned his army northwest and headed towards Mosul, raiding several Iraqi towns along the way. He laid siege to Mosul and demanded that the governor pay him 50,000 dinars in ransom. Tughrul promised to move the troops if the money was paid. The governor refused and Tughrul stormed the city. Abu Faraj wrote that the Seljuks plundered the city, raped and murdered its citizens for twelve days. Rivers of blood ran down the city streets.¹

In 1044 CE Baghdad sent an ambassador to Tughrul with the following message from the caliph:

1. Emir Tughrul-bey was to immediately cease all future military actions aimed at conquering new territories and limit his possession to the already conquered lands.
2. Tughrul-bey was to remit a portion of all taxes collected from the conquered countries to the caliph.
3. Pending Tughrul-bey's acceptance of all stated conditions the caliph will recognize him as the lawful ruler of the conquered territories and will bestow upon him high titles.

Tughrul rejected the offer and continued his previous expansion tactics. In the five years since the start of his westward expansion campaign he managed to capture practically all of the Buyyid territories.

In 1048 CE citizens of Īsfahan sent a letter to the caliph informing him that Tughrul has been in their city for the last 9 months and during that time the local citizens have been submitted to tremendous suffering and harassment. The letter concluded with the plea from the residents of Īsfahan to protect them against Tughrul.²

Under these circumstances, the caliph informed Tughrul that he recognized him as the "lawful ruler", and hereby bestows upon him the titles of "Sultan, the Pillar of Faith"

¹ Please see: Abu'l Faraj, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus). *Abu'l Faraj Tarihi...* Cilt. I. S. 300.

² Ibid. S. 302 – 303.

and “Sultan, the Refuge of Muslims.”¹ The caliph also requested that Tughrul move his troops out of the city. Flattered, Tughrul complied with the request and furthermore, sent 20,000 dinars to the treasury of “The Master of the Faithful”. He also sent 2,000 dinars to each of the high-ranking Baghdad officials.²

Thus, in 1048 CE or just eight years after the victory at Dandanaqan, the new Seljuk state was deemed legitimate and Tughrul received the title of Sultan. A personal stamp (or toughra) with an engraving of a bow and Tughrul’s name was created for him in Ray.³

The Buyyid ruler Abu Kalidjar died in 1048 CE and his son Melik ar-Rahim assumed power. During his reign the relationship between the caliph and the Buyyids (the spiritual and temporal authority in Baghdad became particularly exacerbated. These relations were never favorable to begin with as the Buyyids were Shi’a and the Abbasid Caliphate - Sunni and thus the Buyyids never truly recognized the true legitimacy of the Abbasid power. During the 1040’s the Buyyids grew closer to the Fatimid Caliphate⁴ and soon, mosques in select Iranian cities began to preach Ismaelit ideology. Mosques in Shiraz started to mention the name of the Fatimid caliph instead of the Abbasid. During the reign of Melik ar-Rahim, the name of the Fatimid caliph was now spoken during the Friday prayers in some Iraq mosques. In the early 1050’s mosques in Baghdad followed suit. The Buyyid military commander-in-chief was the greatest

¹ Please see: Abu’l Farac, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus). *Abu’l Farac Tarihi...* Cilt. I. S. 305.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Fatimids – a dynasty that ruled over a number of states in the Near East during 909 – 1171 CE. They traced their origins to Fatima, considered to be the daughter of the Prophet Mohammed. In the 11th century the Fatimid Caliphate spanned the areas of modern-day Egypt, Syria, Tunisia and a number of other states. The official religion of the Fatimid caliphate was the Ismaeli branch of Shi’a Islam.

supporter of the Fatimids. Arslan al-Besasiry was of the Turkic descend and had undisputed support of the army, themselves mainly Turkic, and the common Baghdad residents.¹ Towards the middle of the 1050's al-Besasiry's attitude towards the Abbasid caliph turned openly hostile. El-Hüsseini wrote that al-Besasiry treated the caliph as a despot.² This created exceedingly precarious conditions for the Caliph Kaim Biemrillah and was the primary reason for the emphatic and repeated requests (orders) for Tughrul to come to Baghdad.

In 1055 CE, Tughrul and his vast army finally yielded to caliph's requests, arrived in Baghdad and set up camp outside the city gates. Al-Besasiry, along with the better part of his garrison fled the city for Syria leaving Melik ar-Rahim to fend for himself.³

Melik ar-Rahim was arrested on the very first day, chained and sent to Ray. The last Buyyid ruler spent the rest of his life prisoner inside the Tabarek fortress. (Al-Bundari wrote that ar-Rahim died on the way to Ray.)⁴ This was the end of the 120-year history of the Buyyid state.

In Baghdad Tughrul formed his administration, appointed new tax collectors and governors. A new residence of the Seljuk Sultan was erected next to the caliph's palace. Tughrul also ordered new homes built for his officials and barracks for his soldiers. Tughrul essentially became the temporal ruler of Baghdad.

In 1057 CE Caliph Kaim al-Biemrillah officially recognized Tughrul's new status and went as far as anointing the sultan "The King of the East and the West". The caliph

¹ Sümer, F. Oğuzlar (Türkmenler). Tarihleri-boy teşkilatı... S. 94.

² Please see: El-Hüseyni. (Şadrüddin Ebu'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn Nâşir ibn 'Ali) Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye. Türkçeye çeviren Necati Lügal. Ankara, 1943. S. 13.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Al Bundari. Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları. İmad ad-din Al-Katib al-İsfahani-nin Al Bundari. tarafından ihtisar edilen Zubdat al-Nuşra va NuHbat al-Usra adlı kitabının tercümesi. Türkçeye çeviren Kıvameddin Burslan. İstanbul, 1943. S. 8.

then personally girded him with two swords.¹ (Tughrul was the first Eastern ruler to ever receive such honors.)

Abu Talib Tughrul bin Mikhail - the founder of the Great Seljuk Empire and its first Sultan died in September of 1063, aged 70. He was buried in the imperial capital, the city of Ray.

¹ Abu'l Farac, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus). Abu'l Farac Tarihi... Cilt I. S. 312.

CHAPTER IV

The Great Seljuk Empire.

1. Further Strengthening of the Great Seljuk Empire During the Reign of Alp Arslan (1063 – 1072 CE).

Tughrul had no children of his own so he named Suleiman, one of Chagry's sons his heir apparent. When Tughrul died in 1063 CE Suleiman was just a child and many of the officials refused to recognize him as their new sultan. Vizier Amid ul-Mulk Kündüri respected Tughrul's will and ascended young Suleiman to the throne. Kündüri also sent a letter to Chagry's other son Alp Arslan, who in 1060 CE succeeded his father as the ruler of Eastern Khorasan. Kündüri warned Alp Arslan of taking the wrong step and attempting to ascend the throne of the sultan of the Great Seljuk Empire by force.

Alp Arslan ignored both, Tughrul's will and Kündüri's warning and moved his army on Ray. Suleiman learned about Alp Arslan's approach and fled the city for Shiraz. The guards took Alp Arslan's side, so Kündüri made no attempts at organizing a resistance. Furthermore, in October of 1063 CE in advance of Alp Arslan's arrival, Kündüri ordered the name of Suleiman to be replaced with Alp Arslan's during the Friday prayers. Alp Arslan ascended the throne of the Great Seljuks in November of 1063. Kündüri was arrested, exiled and executed a year later.¹ Nizam al-Mulk became the new vizier and has been recognized by many historians as having made a tremendous contribution to the Seljuk Empire. He served as the vizier for almost 30 years and was, according to Al Bundari, the "adornment of the state."²

¹ Al Bundari. *Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları...* S. 28.

² Ibid. S. 57.

Nizam al-Mulk established a strong and well-functioning government apparatus and further strengthened the army. He was a talented army commander and contributed to the development of science, and trade. Every aspect of government and social existence directly benefited from his attention. Al Bundari wrote that a whole generation of "noble people"¹ formed during Nizam al-Mulk's time. He was a wise advisor to two great sultans - Alp Arslan and Melikshah.

Alp Arslan's ascent to the Seljuk throne did not go unchallenged. Arslan's son Kutalmış gathered close to 50,000 Oghuz² and marched on Ray. He was killed on the battlefield and his army was destroyed.

After assuming the role of sultan, Alp Arslan focused his efforts on regaining the Seljuk positions in Baghdad. At that time the Abbasid caliph attempted to restore his temporal powers and served Alp Arslan with an ultimatum to leave the city. The caliph proceeded to appoint several of his own people to the Divan originally formed by Tughrul. His final step was to request the rulers of Arabic states in the Near East to join forces and together expel the Seljuk army from Baghdad. Unfortunately, there was little unity among the principalities within the caliphate and Biemrillah's call for action elicited no reaction except that the ruler of Mosul Müslim bin Khüreysh initiated hostilities against the caliph himself. He plundered Baghdad and its imperial palace.

In his first reconciliatory step intended to improve relations with the caliph, Alp Arslan sent the caliph's favorite daughter who married Tughrul shortly before his death, back to Baghdad. (*The caliph was very much opposed to the marriage.*) An embassy was then sent to the caliph and managed to get his permission to have Alp Arslan's name mentioned throughout Baghdad's mosques during the hutba (May 1064). New coins bearing the new Seljuk sultan's name

¹ Al Bundari. Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları... S. 58.

² Sümer, F. Oğuzlar (Türkmenler). Tarihleri-boy teşkilatı... S. 100.

entered the Abbasid capital's circulation almost simultaneously and soon the caliph delegated all of Baghdad's day-to-day operational matters to Alp Arslan.

Having restored his power within the caliphate Alp Arslan organized a military campaign to Georgia and Eastern Anatolia. He was accompanied by his Vizier Nizam al-Mulk as well as his son and heir to the throne Melikshah who was in charge of half of the army. After claiming victory over the Georgian forces, Alp Arslan destroyed the cities of Marneuli, Trialeti and Akhalkalak, slaughtered their residents for refusing to submit to his rule and forced the Georgian King Bagrat IV to accept vassalage to the Seljuk Sultan.

The Seljuk army then crossed into Byzantium and laid siege to the city of Kars. Threatening absolute annihilation Alp Arslan forced every citizen to convert to Islam and only then removed the army from the city walls.

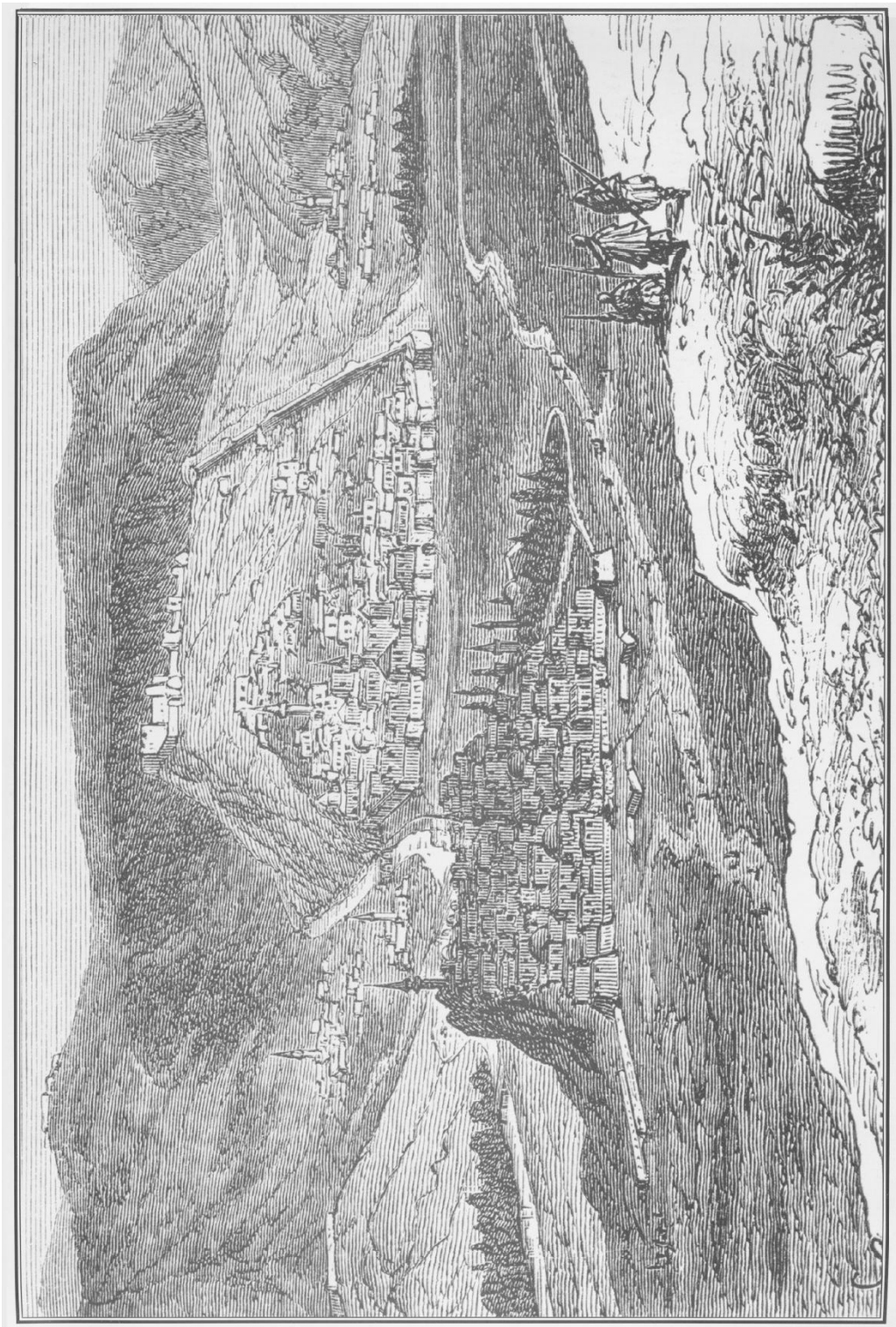
His next conquest was the city of Ani, which was previously considered unassailable. During the 10th – 11th centuries Ani was the capital of the Armenian kingdom of Ani, which, together with another Armenian kingdom of Vaspurakan were part of the Byzantine Empire and constituted its western most outposts.

Al-Hüseini wrote that Ani was by far the most unassailable fortress of the Byzantine Empire and thus the state treasury was kept here, in Ani.¹ Abu'l-Faraj also wrote his observations about Ani.²

Alp Arslan built a series of platforms with catapults and placed them around the hanging cliffs that surrounded the city and so served as its natural protective walls. The city was then continuously bombarded with vessels containing burning oil while at the same time attempts were made to undermine

¹ El-Hüseyni... Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye... S. 27.

² Please see: Abu'l Faraj, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus). Abu'l Farac Tarihi. Cilt I... S. 316.



Kars

the city walls (the cliffs) using mines. The latter technique was unsuccessful.

What made the approach to the city so difficult was the fact that its three sides were surrounded by a natural obstacle - the Araks River, and the fourth was protected by an artificial ravine filled with water. The only way in or out of the city was a single drawbridge. The burning oil mixture caused many fires inside the city, created a mass panic among its population and forced many to flee the city in droves. Alp Arslan took full advantage of the ensued panic and ordered his forces to enter the city. The remaining Armenian population was slaughtered.

Upon the successful conquest of the city, Alp Arslan restored the damage, built a mosque and stationed a portion of his army in Ani. Following his conquest of Ani, Alp Arslan seized Vaspurakan. These developments conjured grave concerns in Constantinople but brought great salutations throughout the Muslim world.

As he embarked on his return trip from Georgia and Eastern Anatolia Alp Arslan carried with him gold, silver, precious stones, and tens of thousands of slaves. This return was partially hastened by the fact that several states within the Seljuk state (Kirman, Houtellan, and Soganian) ceased paying taxes into the Seljuk treasury and declared their independence.

Alp Arslan managed to reach a peaceful resolution with the ruler of Kirman Kavourd who as we know, was Tughrul's brother and Alp Arslan's uncle. Later that year, in 1064 Alp Arslan embarked on a challenging campaign to Houttalan. This tiny state was located within the Seljuk territories of Khorasan and was in vassalage to the Seljuk sultan. Once the emir of Houttalan learned of Tughrul's death and Alp Arslan's succession he staged an uprising against the new ruler. Alp Arslan had the impossible task of storming the unassailable city walls and managed to suppress the uprising only after setting an example and personally leading his troops into

battle.¹

In 1064 CE the Houttalan state was stripped of its vassal status and made part of the empire.

The emir of another Seljuk vassal state Saganian also used the shift in power to declare his independence from the Seljuk sultan. As Alp Arslan's army approached the emir assumed defensive positions inside the city, situated atop a steep mountain. Alp Arslan led his army up the mountain and stormed the city-fortress. Emir Moussa was arrested and executed, and Saganian, like Houttalan was stripped of its vassal status and made part of the empire.

Alp Arslan's next move was towards the city of Gürgenç and from there onto Ustürt² and Mangyshlak.³ Starting in the 10th century these areas were densely populated by the Oghuz and the Kipchak. A man named Charyg-bey ruled Ustürt and the Kipchak under his control regularly raided caravans traveling from Khorezm to Volga thus causing great economic losses to the Seljuks and states under their vassalage.

Charyg-bey prepared for battle. By the time Alp Arslan reached the city he was met with a 30,000-man army, which nonetheless, lost the battle. Remnants of Charyg-bey's army fled to Mangyshlak. The ruler of Mangyshlak quickly understood the ramifications of an armed resistance and promptly sent ambassadors carrying rich gifts and assurances of loyalty to the Seljuk sultan. Satisfied, Alp Arslan decided against an expedition on Mangyshlak.

Following his campaigns to bring the Oghuz and the Kipchak of the Caspian and the Aral regions into obedience,

¹ Бартольд В.В. Туркестан в эпоху монгольского нашествия. Сочинения. Т.I. М., 1963. С. 367.

² Ustürt – the region between the northern shores of the Caspian and Aral Seas. The plateau northwest of the Mangyshlak Peninsula.

³ Mangyshlak – a peninsula located along the eastern shores of the Caspian Sea as well as a plateau that borders the Caspian Sea from its northern-most point to the Bay of Kara-Bogaz-Gol.

thus restoring the caravan route from Khorezm to Volga Alp Arslan came to Khorezm. There, in 1065 CE he appointed his son Salar Shah¹ ruler and continued his expedition towards Djend and Sauran. The ruler of those areas declared himself vassal to the Seljuks and as such managed to retain his territories. While in Djend Alp Arslan visited his great-grand father's tomb (the founder of the Seljuk dynasty), and returned to Khorasan.

Thereby, Alp Arslan's eastern campaign accomplished several goals: it reassured his power and influence throughout the Great Seljuk Empire, expanded its territories to include Ustürt and Mangyshlak and seized a portion of Maverannagr from the Karakhanid ruler Tamgach-Khan Ibrahim.

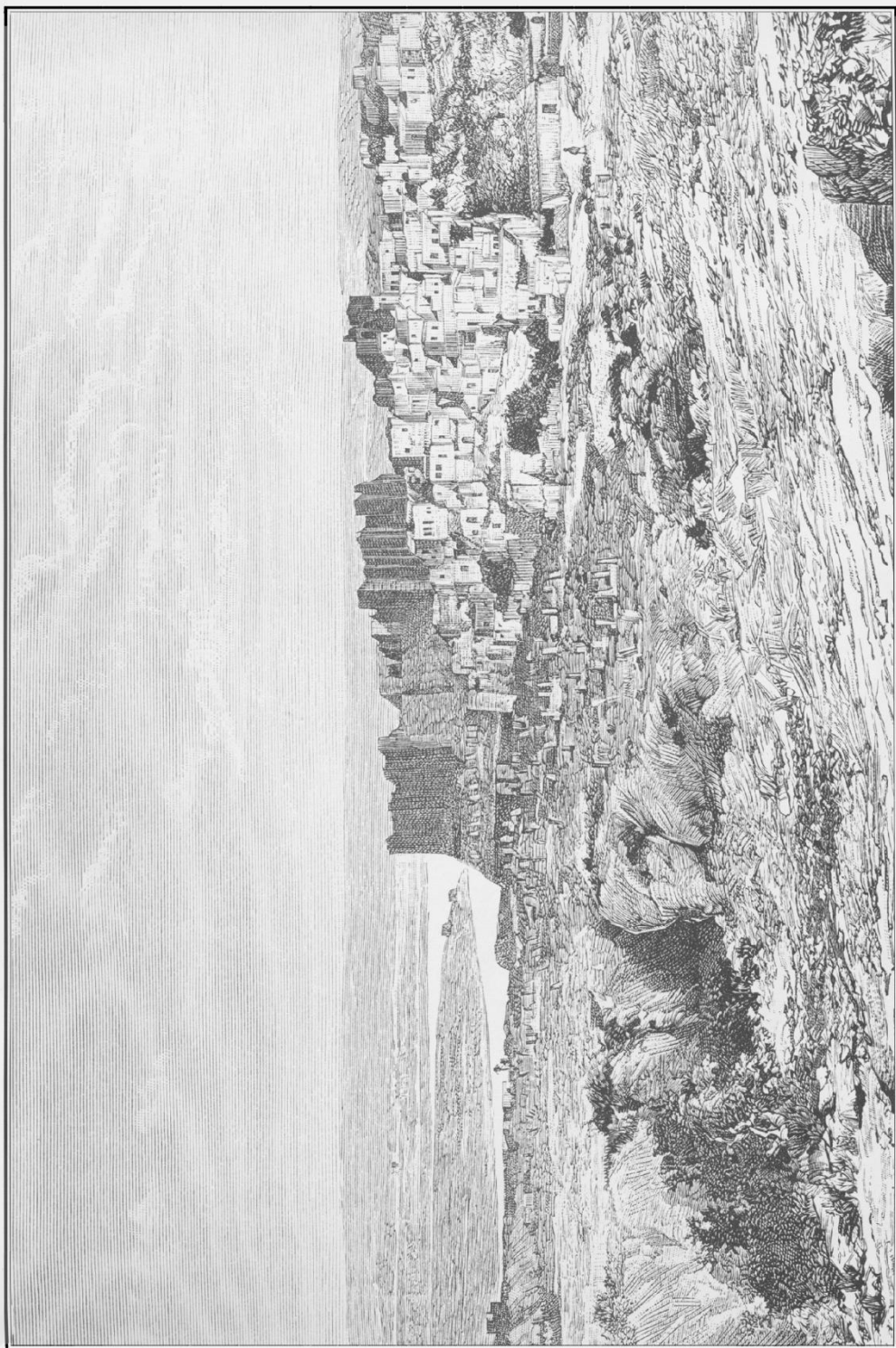
The number and the ferocity of the Seljuk raids onto the Byzantine lands have seen a significant increase starting with 1066 CE. That year, the Seljuk army, led by Gümüshtekin approached the well-fortified city of Edessa (Urfa) and defeated its army. The captured Edessan head of state was taken hostage and released only after a 20,000-dinar ransom was delivered to the Seljuks.²

In 1067 CE the Seljuks continued their military campaigns within Byzantium and focused their attention on the Armenian regions spreading terror among the population.³ That same year the Seljuk army moved further into the Byzantine Asia Minor taking control of Antioch (Antakya), Melitene (Malatya), Kesariya (Kayseri), and cities in Liakoniya and Cilicia. All settlements were raided and destroyed as tens of thousands of peaceful residents were led away into slavery.

¹ Please see: Abu'l Farac, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus). *Abu'l Farac Tarihi*. Cilt I... S. 317. El-Hüseini wrote that upon his return from Mangyshlak to Maverannagr Alp Arslan appointed his son Arslan Ergun the ruler of Gürgench and Khorezm. Please see El-Hüseyni. (Şadrüddin Ebu'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn Nâşir ibn 'Ali) *Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye*. Türkçeye çeviren Necati Lügal. Ankara, 1943. S. 28.

² Abu'l Farac, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus). *Abu'l Farac Tarihi*... Cilt I. S. 318.

³ Ibid.



This turn of events could not have gone unnoticed in Constantinople. The new Roman emperor, military commander Romanus Diogenes (1067 - 1071 CE) didn't limit his military strategic planning to simply defeating the Seljuk army in the Byzantine Empire and destroying it. Aiming to eliminate the mere possibility of future Muslim raids on Byzantine territories, the new emperor planned to conquer Iran, Khorasan, Iraq and Syria.

He embarked on his first campaign in March of 1068 CE. Leading 200,000 soldier¹ the emperor left Constantinople and headed for Kayseri. Just then he received news that the Seljuks plundered and destroyed Neocaesarea. He turned his troops northeast and met the main army at Tefrike (Divrigi). Diogenes crushed the Seljuk army, crossed Central Anatolia and entered Syria. In November of 1068 he seized and added further fortifications to the city of Menbij. There he established a large garrison intended to defend the Byzantine borders from possible raids from Halab. Diogenes leveled several Syrian cities and returned back to Constantinople. Abu'l-Faraj wrote that one of the factors contributing to the emperor's early return were severe shortages of food for the soldiers and fodder for the animals. Furthermore, the Seljuks kept a very close eye on all Byzantine movements and cut off all possible supply routes to the Byzantine army. The soldiers were starving.²

The Seljuks continued their incursions into the Byzantine territories through 1069 CE. Forces operating within Asia Minor would typically launch most of their raids from Akhlat, the city located on the western shore of Lake Van. Using Akhlat as their base, Seljuk commanders Afshin and Ahmed Shah conquered lands reaching up to the watershed of the Sangarius (Sakarya) River. They sacked the city of Amorium - a key post en-route from Constantinople to

¹ Abu'l Faraj, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus). *Abu'l Faraj Tarihi...* Cilt I. S. 318.

² *Ibid.* S. 319.

Cilicia. The Byzantine emperor dispatched his army to face the Seljuks, but it was defeated prompting the emperor to, once again, personally lead the army into battle in 1069 CE. He reached Kayseri and defeated the Seljuks based in the city but once the Seljuk forces began to retreat east they attacked Melitene (Malatya), then entered Liakonia and plundered several cities, including Ikonium (Konya).

The above-mentioned events made it very clear to Diogenes that having an army equal in size to the Seljuks' would not accomplish his goals. He appointed Manuel Komnenos head of the Byzantine army and returned to Constantinople. There he gathered a substantial army consisting primarily of hired Greeks, Armenians, Franks, Goths, Slavs, Oghuz, Kipchak, Bulgars, Georgians, Khazar and the Pecheneg. According to Sibt İbnü'l Cevzi the army counted 400,000 soldiers of whom 300,000 were active combat troops and 100,000 were support troops. 1,400 transport wagons were prepared to haul provisions and other military supplies. The army's command staff totaled 3,500 officers.¹

The Byzantine Army led by the Emperor Romanus Diogenes departed from Constantinople on March 13, 1071 CE and proceeded through the Khalis (Kyzylmak) River Valley towards Sivas and then Erzurum.

Alp Arslan received news of Diogenes' rapid advance while in Syria. By then the Byzantine troops surpassed Erzurum. He knew that the Byzantine invasion of the Seljuk territories could have unforeseen consequences. Alp Arslan assembled his personal guard, which consisted primarily of 4,000 goulams,² and rushed to meet Diogenes' army. Vizier Nizam al-Mulk was ordered to take the supply wagons and

¹ Sibt İbnü'l – Cevzi. Mir'atü'z – zaman fî Tarihi'l-ayan // İslam kaynaklarına göre Malazgirt savaşı (Metinler ve çeviriler). Prof. Dr. F. Sümer ve Prof. Dr. A. Sevim. Ankara, 1971. S. 35.

² Ibid.

return to Hamadan to assemble troops.¹ As Alp Arslan and his men continued to move towards the city of Akhlat - the Seljuk base in Eastern Anatolia they were joined by 10,000 Kurdish soldiers.² It's possible that along with the Kurds, the Oghuz joined Alp Arslan's army as they themselves often raided Eastern Anatolia. Upon his arrival in Akhlat Alp Arslan had at his disposal the army of the famous Seljuk commander Afshin. As Alp Arslan approached Akhlat, Romanus Diogenes reached Malazgirt from the north, captured it and continued towards Akhlat - an established Seljuk command post within the Byzantine state that he planned to destroy. Alp Arslan and his army left Akhlat moving north. They went around the Sübkhan Mountain and arrived in the Rahva Valley, by Malazgirt. Diogenes did not have reliable information on Alp Arslan's whereabouts, so both armies came upon each other and stopped there.

Our historical sources make the following observations regarding the battle at Malazgirt. Alp Arslan realized that his army was numerically inferior to the Byzantines and thus was unsure of the potential outcome of the battle.³ On the eve of the looming battle Alp Arslan sent an embassy to the emperor with an offer to sign a peace treaty and stand down the troops. Alp Arslan also promised to remove Seljuk troops from the Byzantine territories, but Romanus Diogenes, certain of his army's superiority, addressed the ambassadors with contempt and told them that that he'd continue negotiations in Ray.⁴ Sibt İbnü'l Cevzi wrote that during the negotiations Diogenes announced that he'd spent too much money on this campaign to accept the peace offer and that he will not return home

¹ Sibt İbnü'l – Cevzi. *Mir'atü'z – zeman fi Tarihi'l-ayan...* S. 33.

² Ibid. S. 34.

³ Please see: Abu'l Farac, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus). *Abu'l Farac Tarihi...* Cilt I. S. 319; Sibt İbnü'l – Cevzi. *Mir'atü'z – zeman fi Tarihi'l-ayan.* S. 34 – 35; Al Bundari. *Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları...* S. 37, 39.

⁴ Al Bundari. *Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları...* S. 39; Abu'l Farac, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus). *Abu'l Farac Tarihi...* Cilt I. S. 321; El-Hüseyni. (*Şadrüddin Ebu'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn Nâşir ibn 'Ali*) *Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye...* S. 34.

until he conquered the Muslim country¹ (*the Seljuk Empire*).

The battle ensued at noon on August 26, 1071 CE. Sources containing information on the course of the battle are not only incomplete but are often contradictory of each other, so we cannot be certain about many details of this battle. Alp Arslan split his army in two. One part was waiting in ambush, the other, led by Alp Arslan himself, traded their bows and arrows for swords, shields, and spears, put on armor, helmets and as such turned themselves into heavy cavalry. To better distinguish their own troops from the enemy's the Seljuks knotted all of their horses' tails. This portion of the Seljuk army ambushed and crushed the Byzantine right wing.

Romanus Diogenes dispatched his reserves to the right wing but Alp Arslan began a pre-planned retreat. Once the emperor saw the retreating Seljuk soldiers he ordered his center to engage in an offensive and follow the Seljuks. At this point in the battle the Oghuz and the Pecheneg light cavalry, which made up the left wing of the Byzantine army, suddenly switched sides now fighting for the Seljuks. (Some sources suggest that clandestine negotiations were held between the Seljuks and their fellow tribesmen in advance of the battle.) The Byzantine center, sent to follow the Seljuks suddenly found itself in an ambush and was attacked from the front, rear and wings. This caused great confusion among the troops. The Armenians fled the battlefield. Prince Andronikos Doukas, who commanded the reserves, declared that the emperor was killed and also left the battleground.

Even with the betrayal of the Oghuz and the Pecheneg (almost 15,000 cavalry soldiers) and the flight of the Armenians, the Byzantine army significantly outnumbered the Seljuks. Both sides now dispatched all available resources to try and gain advantage in this, particularly fierce fight. Al-Hüsseini wrote that at some point a dust cloud rose above the battlefield and since the prevailing winds were blowing

¹ Sibt İbnü'l – Cevzi. Mir'atü'z – zeman fî Tarihi'l-ayan... S. 34.

towards the Byzantines, the soldiers struggled to see their enemy and descended into panic.¹ The battle that started on August 26th was finally over by the next morning. The vast Byzantine army ceased to exist. Sıbt wrote that very few managed to survive,² with the surviving soldiers taken prisoner. The emperor himself remained on the battleground throughout the battle and was captured by the Seljuks.

An agreement was signed between Alp Arslan and Romanus Diogenes allowing the emperor to return to his throne, but upon his return he would have to send a one-time 1.5 million gold dinar payment to the Seljuks. He would also have to pay 360,000 dinars each year to maintain peace with the Seljuks and agree to make the Byzantine army available to Alp Arslan as needed.³

While still on the battlefield Alp Arslan took possession of the Byzantine Treasury, which contained one million gold dinars, the imperial silk outfits (Sıbt wrote that their convoy carried more than 100,000 sets of silk clothes), gold and silver jewelry, the Byzantine imperial crown and the emperor's cross.

The announcement of Alp Arslan's victory was sent to the caliph in Baghdad along with the Byzantine imperial crown, the imperial cross and some other items. Grand celebrations of the victory at Malazgirt were organized and several triumphal arches were erected in Baghdad. This was the most significant Muslim victory over Christians.

As for Romanus Diogenes, Alp Arslan ordered an official escort to accompany the emperor back to Constantinople. Once they reached the city of Dukia (Tokat) Diogenes partially fulfilled the terms of the agreement and

¹ El-Hüseyni... Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye... S. 35.

² Sıbt İbnü'l – Cevzi. Mir'atü'z – zeman fi Tarihi'l-ayan... S. 35.

³ For information on the conditions for the liberation of Romanus Diogenes please see: Abu'l Farac, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus). Abu'l Farac Tarihi... Cilt I. S. 323; Sıbt İbnü'l – Cevzi. Mir'atü'z – zeman fi Tarihi'l-ayan... S. 37.

sent the 200,000 dukats kept at the fortress.¹ This was all the emperor could pay in accordance with the terms of the peace agreement.

As soon as news of Romanus Diogenes' defeat reached Constantinople he was dethroned and the new emperor refused to satisfy the terms of the agreement. Furthermore, he ordered Diogenes blinded and thenceforth killed.

Alp Arslan's victory at Malazgirt was a deciding factor in the course of the future military, political, ethnic and religious developments in Asia Minor. The Byzantine military machine lost its capacity to engage in combat for a long time to come. This allowed for an uncontrollable, avalanche-like migration of the Oghuz tribes into Asia Minor. Within a brief historical period hundreds of thousands of Turkic nomads settled the Anatolian river valleys and plains. On the other hand, once Alp Arslan learned of Diogenes' demise he declared the previous peace accord invalid and ordered his generals to advance onto the Byzantine territories.

Alp Arslan began his own preparations for an expedition against the Karakhanid state. In the fall of 1072 CE he led a 200,000 strong army into Maverannagr but the campaign was cut short due to the death (murder) of Alp Arslan.

2. *The Great Seljuk Empire During the Reign of Sultan Melikshah (1072 – 1092 CE).*

The Apogee of Power and Preconditions of the Decline.

The next in line to the throne of the Great Seljuk Empire and Alp Arslan's direct heir Melikshah ascended the Seljuk throne on November 20, 1072 CE. Many of the young sultan's internal and external enemies attempted to take advantage of this change in power and by December the Karakhanid army invaded Khorasan, captured the city of

¹ Abu'l Farac, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus). Abu'l Farac Tarihi... Cilt I. S. 324.

Termez and plundered Balkh. At the same time the Ghaznevid army entered the Tokharistan province, but Melikshah's principal threat lay in his Uncle Kavourd - the vassal ruler of Kirman and Oman who had his own claims to the throne of the Great Seljuk Empire. In May of 1073 CE he led a vast army to İsfahan. The battle between Kavourd's army and Melikshah's troops took place on May 16, 1073 and ended with Melikshah's victory. Kavourd was captured and executed.¹ Kavourd's son Suleimanshah declared his obedience to Melikshah and thus received permission to rule Kirman and Oman.

Having successfully suppressed Kavourd's rebellion Melikshah asserted his position as head of state and was subsequently recognized by the army and all senior officials. By October 1073 CE the Abbasid Caliph Biemrillah recognized him as the Sultan of the Great Seljuk Empire.

Around the beginning of 1074 CE Melikshah moved his troops east with an intention to punish the Karakhanids and the Ghaznevids for violating the boundaries of his state. In April of 1074 he laid siege to Termez and almost immediately stormed and gained control of the city. He continued his expedition towards the Karakhanid city of Samarqand. The Karakhanid ruler Nasr II realized the futility of his situation and sent ambassadors to Melikshah begging to be spared and offering peace. Melikshah forgave Shems ul-Mulk Nasr II and allowed him to remain on the throne.

The Ghaznevid Sultan Ibrahim followed suit and sent his own ambassadors to Melikshah. They came bearing rich gifts and a request to allow Melikshah's daughter to marry the heir to the Ghaznevid throne, Prince Mesoud. Melikshah consented and sent his daughter Djevher to return to Ghazni with the ambassadors.²

¹ Al Bundari. *Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları...* S. 48 – 49.

² El-Hüseyni. (Şadrüddin Ebu'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn Nâşir ibn 'Ali) *Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye...* S. 40.

Melikshah continued with the Palestinian and Syrian conquests first initiated by his father. The first Oghuz people (3 - 4 thousand tents) arrived in Palestine in the 1060 - 1070's when Kurlu and Atsyzy founded their own principality in the area. They led a settled lifestyle, engaging primarily in agriculture. The city of Remle became their administrative center.¹

Following Kurlu's death Emir Atsyzy assumed leadership of the Oghuz beylik. Some sources suggest that Atsyzy belonged to the Oghuz Yiva tribe.² He began to pursue policies aimed at expanding the boundaries of the principality resulting in the termination of the Fatimid influence over the conquered territories. He also insisted that the hutba was read with names of the Abbasid caliph and the Seljuk sultan.

In 1070 - 1071 CE Atsyzy conquered southern Syrian provinces, with the exception of the port cities of Jaffa and Askalan. He conquered Jerusalem and made it the new capital of the principality. Next he turned his troops north and laid siege to Damascus, but his attempts were in vain.

He made another attempt in April of 1073 CE, but the Damascus commandant, appointed by the Fatimid caliph, responded with a well-organized defensive and forced Atsyzy to recall his troops two months later. His third attempt to take over Damascus was in the spring of 1076 CE. His initial siege tactic involved obstructing distant approaches to the city where he blocked the caravans carrying provisions from reaching Damascus resulting in starvation among the city residents. In the summer of 1075 CE the commandant of Damascus fled the city for Egypt where he was executed. Atsyzy finally entered the city in July of 1076 CE.

After conquering almost all of the Palestinian and Syrian territories he began to prepare for the conquest of Egypt. His

¹ Presently the city of Remla is located in Israel some 50 km west of Jerusalem.

² Kefesoğlu, İ. Sultan Melikshah devrinde Büyük Selçuklu İmparatorluğu. İstanbul, 1953. S. 31.

20,000 - strong army moved along the shores of the Mediterranean and soon reached Cairo, but was promptly defeated by Caliph Mustansyr's troops. As a consequence of this defeat Atsyz's power was no longer recognized through most of the conquered Palestinian and Syrian territories.

Melikshah paid close attention to the events transpiring in Palestine and Syria and in 1077 CE deposed Atsyz and replaced him with his own brother Tutush.¹ Melikshah ordered the ruler of Mosul, a talented military commander by the name of Müslim bin Küreysh to report to Tutush. At this point most of the large Palestinian cities were taken over by the Egyptians who also laid siege to Damascus. The Seljuk armies under the command of Tutush and Küreysh entered Halab and took course for Damascus. The Egyptian forces had to retreat. Abu'l-Faraj wrote that the continued and ferocious fighting between the Arabs and the Turks resulted in famine and wide spread epidemics among the Damascus residents. The city population contracted from 300,000 to 3,000 and the number of bakeries went from 240 to just 2. A house that was previously priced at 3,000 dinars now was offered at 1 dinar but there were no buyers.² Tutush finally entered Damascus, arrested and executed Atsyz. Tutush dedicated the subsequent years to re-establishing the Seljuk positions in Syria and Palestine.

In 1076 CE as a result of a coup in the Caucasian Shaddadid³ vassal state, with the capital in Gandja,⁴ the ruler, Emir Fadl II (Fazl) was deposed and the new monarch, the emir's own son Fadl III refused to recognize himself vassal of

¹ El-Hüseyni. (Şadrüddin Ebu'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn Nâşir ibn 'Ali) *Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye...* S. 49.

² Budge, Ernest A. Wallis *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l-Faraj (1225 – 1286) the son of Aaron, the Hebrew Physician commonly known as Bar Hebraeus, being the part of his political history of the world. Translated from the Syriac. Volume I: English translation. Amsterdam, 1932. P. 226.*

³ Shaddadids – a Kurdish dynasty that ruled Arran, Armenia, Nahichevan and some of the other regions in the Caucasus from 951 – 1088 CE.

⁴ Gandja (Gyandja) - city in modern-day Azerbaijan.

the Great Seljuks.

Melikshah responded by sending an army to the Caucasus led by one of the most senior military commanders Savtekin. Just before the expedition Melikshah announced to Savtekin that Arran,¹ Giandja and Bab ul' Ebad² are hereby transferred to him as *iqta*. Savtekin conquered the designated territories and made them part of the empire.

Savtekin invaded Georgia but was defeated by the Georgian King George II (1072 – 1089 CE) at Vartsykhe (south of Kutaisi) and was forced to retreat. Savtekin's defeat was followed by Melikshah's expedition to the Caucasus. By 1078 - 1079 CE Melikshah was able to claim several victories against the Georgians and occupy the Somhiti³ region as well as a large city of Samshvilde. He ordered Savtekin to complete the Georgian conquest and returned to Īsfahan.

Savtekin followed his orders but at Vartsykhe suffered another defeat at the hands of King George II. Melikshah responded by dispatching two armies to Georgia. One of the armies, under the command of Emir Ahmed dealt a severe blow to the Georgian army and in 1080 CE split the Kars province from Georgia and annexed it to the Seljuk Empire. The other army, under the command of Emir Ebu Yacoub captured Ardagan, Adjaria, Kartli and the Georgian capital Kutaisi. After the Seljuk forces arrived at Choroh River in 1081 CE King George II arrived in Īsfahan and announced himself vassal to the Seljuk Sultan.⁴

In 1076 CE Melikshah decided to eliminate the Karamanid state⁵ located in the eastern regions of the Arabian

¹ Arran – the area between the Kura and Araks Rivers. During the 6 – 9th centuries it was known as Caucasian Albania.

² Bab ul' Ebad - presently the city of Derbent in Dagestan.

³ Somhiti - historical area in southern Kartli in Georgia.

⁴ Kefesoğlu, İ, Sultan Melikshah devrinde Büyük Selçuklu İmparatorluğu. İstanbul, 1953. S. 113 – 115.

⁵ The Karamanids – followers of one of the most extreme Ismaelit Islamic Shi'a sects. Shi'a Islam was the dominant faith of the Fatimid caliphate (910 – 1171 CE).

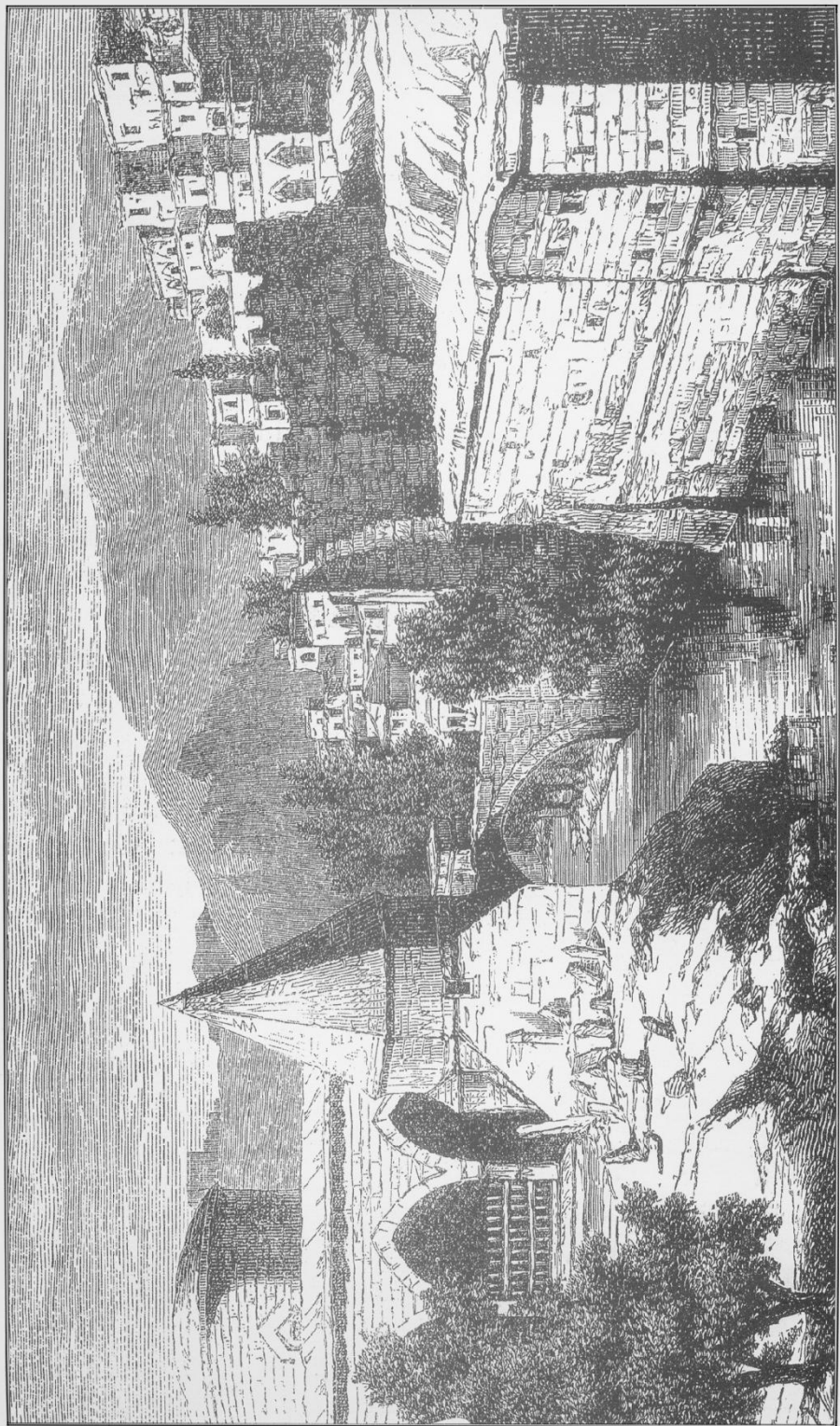
Peninsula and on the island of Bahrain. At the end of that year the Seljuk army under the command of Artuk-bey arrived at Basra. Artuk-bey was from Laristan, a province given to him by the sultan as iqta. The army replenished their provisions, water and fodder and continued to move south along the Persian Gulf, towards Bahrain. The Seljuk military campaign on the Arabian Peninsula lasted more than a year but they managed to conquer the Karamanid state by the beginning of 1078 CE.¹

In the early 1080's Melikshah and Tutush engaged in military campaigns in northern Syria and southeastern Anatolia. An important Syrian Mediterranean port of Tartus was conquered in 1081 CE. That same year the Seljuks laid an extended siege and conquered Halab (Aleppo). Harran was taken in 1083 CE, and by 1086 Melikshah took control of Amed (Diyarbakır). Bitlis and Akhlat were taken that same year.

What made these offensives different was that they were launched against a Turkic (Oghuz) Marwanoglu (Marwanid) dynasty that settled these territories during the reign of Sultan Tughrul. Abu'l-Faraj wrote that their lands included of the Seljuk soldiers, Muslim bin Küreysh assured Emir territories from Mosul and up to the shores of the Euphrates River (inclusively).² Meyafarikin was the capital of the Marwanid state. Mansour Marwanoglu ascended to power in 1080 CE and refused to acknowledge himself vassal to the Seljuk sultan.

¹ Kefesoğlu, İ. Sultan Melikshah devrinde Büyük Selçuklu İmparatorluğu. İstanbul, 1953. S. 38 – 39.

² Budge, Ernest A. Wallis. The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l-Faraj... P. 228.



Bitlis

The conquest of the beylik was mandated to Emir Artuk. As the threat of invasion hung over his capital Mansour Marwanoglu requested military assistance from the Emir of Mosul Muslim bin Küreysh whose army subsequently joined the meager Marwanoglu's troops and met the Seljuk army at Amed (Diyarbakır). Abul Faraj wrote that after seeing the sheer number Artuk that both, him and Mansour Marwanoglu were slaves of the sultan and suggested to Emir Artuk to withdraw troops. Additionally, Muslim bin Küreysh assured Artuk that their troops would also be withdrawn and no blood would be spilled. Artuk consented. However his army had no desire to leave empty-handed and at dawn the Seljuk cavalry attacked Muslim bin Küreysh's troops. The better part of the army was destroyed and the rest fled, leaving the Seljuks to claim rich spoils.¹ The Marwanid capital Meyafarikin was taken over after a long siege. The Marwanid beylik was liquidated and their lands annexed into the Great Seljuk Empire.

However, Muslim bin Küreysh's role in the Marwanid rebellion did not go unnoticed by Melikshah. To punish his subject Melikshah ordered a siege of Mosul and personally led the troops on this mission. The siege of Mosul didn't last long as Melikshah received news that his own brother, Prince Tokish - Governor of Balkh and Tokharistan, staged an uprising in Khorasan and was planning to establish an independent state. Tokish succeeded at conquering Khorasan's eastern regions and was now leading his troops towards the central regions of the province. Melikshah lifted the siege and moved his forces to Khorasan. Tokish relinquished all captured territories and withdrew to Termez. Melikshah stormed the city, arrested, and executed Tokish.²

Melikshah's first visit to Baghdad was in the spring of

¹ Budge, Ernest A. Wallis. *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l-Faraj...* P. 228.

² El-Hüseyni. (Şadrüddin Ebu'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn Nâşir ibn 'Ali) *Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye...* S. 44.

1087 CE when he arrived amid celebrations of the wedding of Caliph Al-Muktedi Biemrillah and his daughter Mehmelekhathoun. This increased influence the Seljuk sultan now had over the Abbasid caliph was especially important from the military and political standpoint as the threat of the Fatimid Egypt only continued to grow as the Fatimids refused to accept the loss of Syria and Palestine.

At the end of the 1080's the Egyptian army headed north along the Mediterranean coast as it began its offensive onto Tutush's Syrian and Palestinian territories. They swiftly captured the coastal towns of Saida, Akka, Djubeil, an inland city of Khimsh, and annexed them to Egypt.

Having lost a better part of his state and realizing that Damascus now faced a real threat of an Egyptian takeover Tutush requested Melikshah's assistance. In 1090 CE Melikshah ordered the emirs of Urfa and Halab (Aleppo) to provide military assistance to Tutush. The joined Arab and Seljuk forces that recognized the authority of the Baghdad caliph headed for Khimsh. Tutush's army took the city by storm, conquered the Akka fortress, and continued towards Tripoli. Tripoli's ruler confirmed his loyalty to Melikshah and in 1091 Tutush returned to Damascus.

In 1088 - 1089 CE Melikshah decided to conquer Maverannagr. His troops crossed the Amu Darya River and took course for Bukhara. They captured the city and continued towards the Karakhanid capital Samarqand. The Karakhanid ruler Ahmed bin Khazyr-khan (1081 – 1091 CE) anticipated the possibility of a siege. He ordered reinforcement of the city walls and positioned loyal army units and their commanders in the bastions. These preparations notwithstanding the Seljuks managed to overtake one of the bastions and entered the city. Ahmed-khan was deposed and arrested. Abu Tahir Kharezmi was made the new governor of Samarqand and Melikshah returned to Isfahan bringing the former Karakhanid ruler with him as his captive.

Ahmed-khan was soon freed,¹ possibly as a favor to Melikshah's wife Terken, who was of the Karakhanid descend. Ahmed-khan was allowed to return to Samarkand as a vassal to the Seljuk sultan.

The next year Melikshah marched on the eastern regions of the Karakhanid state where his power was still not recognized. He conquered Talas (Taraz), Balasagun, Isfidsjab and Ozbek (Uzgend). While in Kashgar, the ruler of the eastern Karakhanid provinces (Haroun Borghra-khan bin Youssef Kadir-khan),² declared himself vassal to Melikshah and in 1090 CE the Seljuk sultan returned to Isfahan.

In 1092 CE, Melikshah ordered his troops to the Arabian Peninsula in preparations for the takeover of Hejaz, Yemen and Aden. The conquest of Hejaz³ had purely religious and political significance. What mattered most was which caliph's name (the Abbasid or the Fatimid) and which sultan's name (the Seljuk or the Egyptian) would be read during the Friday prayers in Islam's holiest cities - Mecca and Medina. Tensions between the Sunni and the Shi'a have greatly escalated during Melikshah's reign, so the issue of the hutba in Hejaz was that much more pressing.

Starting in 1068 CE the Friday prayers in Mecca and Medina were read with the names of the Abbasid caliph and the Seljuk sultan. Then in 1074 CE, after the death of the Abbasid Caliph Kaim Biemrillah and under sufficient pressure from the Fatimid Caliph Mustansir the hutba in Hejaz was read with his name.

In 1076 CE Melikshah sent his ambassadors to Mecca and promised to give his sister in marriage to the Emir of

¹ Al Bundari. *Irak ve Horasan Selçukları tarihi...* S. 56 – 57.

² Kefesoğlu, İ. *Sultan Melikshah devrinde Büyük Selçuklu İmparatorluğu*. İstanbul, 1953. S. 121.

³ Hejaz – presently, a Saudi Arabian province. In the 7th century the birthplace of Islam and the region where Mohammed founded the first Islamic community that lay at the core of the Arabic caliphate. The two most sacred Muslim cities of Mecca and Medina are located in Hejaz.

Mecca. From then on the hutba in both holy cities - Mecca and Medina - was read with the names of the Abbasid Caliph Mouktedi and the Seljuk Sultan Melikshah.

Ever since Emir Atsyz took the Palestinian and Syrian territories from the Fatimids and advanced to the Egyptian borders the issue of the hutba and control over Hejaz was of utmost importance to both sides. In 1077 CE the Fatimids exiled Emir Hussein bin Mühen from Medina and in 1078 CE in Mecca the Fatimids burned a gilded minbar¹ - a present from the Abbasid caliph. However, as a result of the Seljuk military successes in Syria, Palestine and southeastern Anatolia in the 1086 - 1087 CE, the hutba in Mecca and Medina was once again read with the names of Muktedi and Melikshah.²

In 1092 CE the Seljuks entered Hejaz, taking over Mecca and Medina. Yemen and Aden³ were annexed to the empire later that same year.

One Shi'a organization that developed and rapidly gained in popularity during Melikshah's reign was an extremist religious sect called the batinids (assassins) whose leader was a man named Hassan ibn as-Sabah. His father was originally from Yemen who first moved to Kum and from there to Ray. Hassan ibn as-Sabah was born in Ray and lived there through the mid 1070's. The official government position towards the Shi'a within the Seljuk Empire was significantly hardened with Melikshah's ascent to the Seljuk throne and in 1076 CE Hassan Sabah left for Syria and in 1079 CE arrived in Cairo. The Fatimid Caliph Mustansir, who spoke highly of Hassan ibn Sabah, soon noticed his talents as an organizer and a propagandist.⁴ Sabah returned to the Great Seljuk Empire in 1081 CE and immediately embarked upon

¹ Minbar – the pulpit from which the hutba is read.

² Kefesoğlu, İ. Sultan Melikshah devrinde Büyük Selçuklu İmparatorluğu... S. 126 – 127.

³ Al Bundari. Irak ve Horasan Selçukları tarihi... S. 69.

⁴ Джувейни, Ата-Мелик. Чингисхан... С. 483.

organizational and propagandist activities among the Shi'a majorities of Kirman, Taberistan, Kuhistan and Gurgan (Jurjan). He was successful at establishing a vast and extensive organization whose members were fanatically loyal to their leader. Some of the pillars of his teachings were that faith was to be acquired through instruction (*talim*), that people needed a teacher, and that every order given by the teacher was to be strictly followed.

Juvaini wrote that acting through his followers (students) Hassan ibn Sabah "assassinated one after another - emirs and military commanders, thus getting rid of anyone standing in his way."¹

Through these actions, the batinids came to pose a threat to the state and now attracted the attention of the Seljuk government. Nizam al-Mulk, Melikshah's vizier wrote on the matter: "As soon as they [batinids] appear, there is nothing more sacred for the state than to expel them from the face of the earth, to cleanse the state from them."² Nizam al-Mulk demanded that the governor of Ray, Abu Muslim, put an end to all of Hassan ibn Sabah's activities and arrested him, but Sabah went into hiding and in 1090 CE found refuge in a remote Alamut fortress in the Kazvin province. (According to Juvaini, "Hassan ibn Sabah captured every fortress he could, and built new ones upon every suitable cliff he came across").³

Seljuk forces under the command of Emir Arslantash were sent to Alamut. In June of 1092 CE they laid siege to the mountainous fortress but had to retreat in defeat as they were suddenly attacked by a batinid unit that arrived to assist Hassan ibn Sabah.

Melikshah ordered support troops sent to Kazvin. Moreover, he sent units to other provinces with direct orders

¹ Джувейни, Ата-Мелик. Чингисхан... С. 491.

² Сиясет – намэ... С. 165.

³ Джувейни, Ата-Мелик. Чингисхан... С. 488 – 489.

to exterminate the batinids. Hassan ibn Sabah responded with an order to have Nizam al-Mulk killed. On October 14, 1092 CE a batinid assassin Abu Tahir, carried out the attack, stabbing Nizam al-Mulk with a dagger.¹ Two of Nizam al-Mulk's officials were also stabbed. As for Hassan ibn Sabah, all of the Seljuk attempts to do away with him failed and he died of natural causes in May of 1124 CE.

The death of Nizam al-Mulk, who served as the vizier of the Great Seljuk Empire for almost 30 years was a great blow to the empire and hastened its demise. This said, we should also mention that towards the end of his life, the vizier's influence over the sultan has waned. Moreover, according to Al-Hüseyini the only thing that kept the great vizier from being replaced was the love and admiration of the army.² The vizier's adversaries, most visibly Tadj ul-Mulk, made every attempt to compromise his position in the eyes of the sultan alluding mainly to the great power consolidated in the hands of the vizier – the power comparable only to that of the sultan. It was in fact true that Nizam al-Mulk made many of the important decisions on his own, but those were always based upon his assessment of the state's needs. Within the state apparatus, several key government positions were indeed occupied by his sons and other relatives.³

Al-Hüseyini wrote that Melikshah, spurred on by Nizam al-Mulk's detractors, sent the following letter to his vizier,

You have taken my domains, my country. You have distributed my country among your sons, sons-in-law and mamlüks (goulams); in my lands and in my Kingdom you conduct yourself as my co-ruler! It seems I should take away your inkwell⁴ and liberate the people

¹ El-Hüseyini... *Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye*... S. 45.

² Ibid. S. 46.

³ Al Bundari. *Irak ve Horasan Selçukları tarihi*... S. 73 – 76.

⁴ A gold writing set, or a simple golden inkwell was a symbol of the vizier's authority.

from your treachery.¹

Nizam al-Mulk was so confident in his own authority and in the fact that all his actions were based on the absolute best interests of the country in general, and the sultan in particular, that he immediately replied to the sultan with the following, "My inkwell and your crown - are two objects closely related to each other. When you take away the first from me- the second will fall off your head."²

As we mentioned earlier Nizam al-Mulk was killed in the middle of October of 1092 CE. Al-Hüsseyini expressed a possibility that Melikshah sanctioned the murder.³ At the end of October of 1092 the sultan arrived in Baghdad accompanied by his new Vizier Tadj ul-Mulk. By that time the relationship between the caliph and the sultan were gravely strained. At the core of their disagreement lay the issue of who would be designated heir to the caliph. In 1088 CE, Melikshah's daughter Mehmelek-hatoun, who married the caliph in 1082 CE, gave birth to a son they named Ebul Fazl Djafer. When the baby was one year old the sultan expressed his desire that his grandson be named heir to the caliph, but the caliph, who most likely lost interest towards the sultan's daughter soon after the wedding, denied the request. Melikshah arrived in Baghdad in the fall of 1092 and demanded, that his grandson Ebul Fazl Djafer be named heir to the Abbasid throne. Having been rejected once again, Melikshah ordered the caliph to leave Baghdad.⁴ The caliph agreed to the demands but requested to have 10 days to gather his possessions. On the ninth day of the caliph's departure preparations Melikshah began to suffer from fever and died soon thereafter on November 19, 1092 CE at the age of 37. Abu'l-Faraj wrote with absolute certainty that the Seljuk

¹ El-Hüsseyini... *Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye*... S. 47.

² Ibid. S. 48.

³ Ibid. S. 46.

⁴ Budge, Ernest A. Wallis. *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l-Faraj*... P. 231.

Sultan was poisoned.¹ Caliph Muktedi remained on his throne.

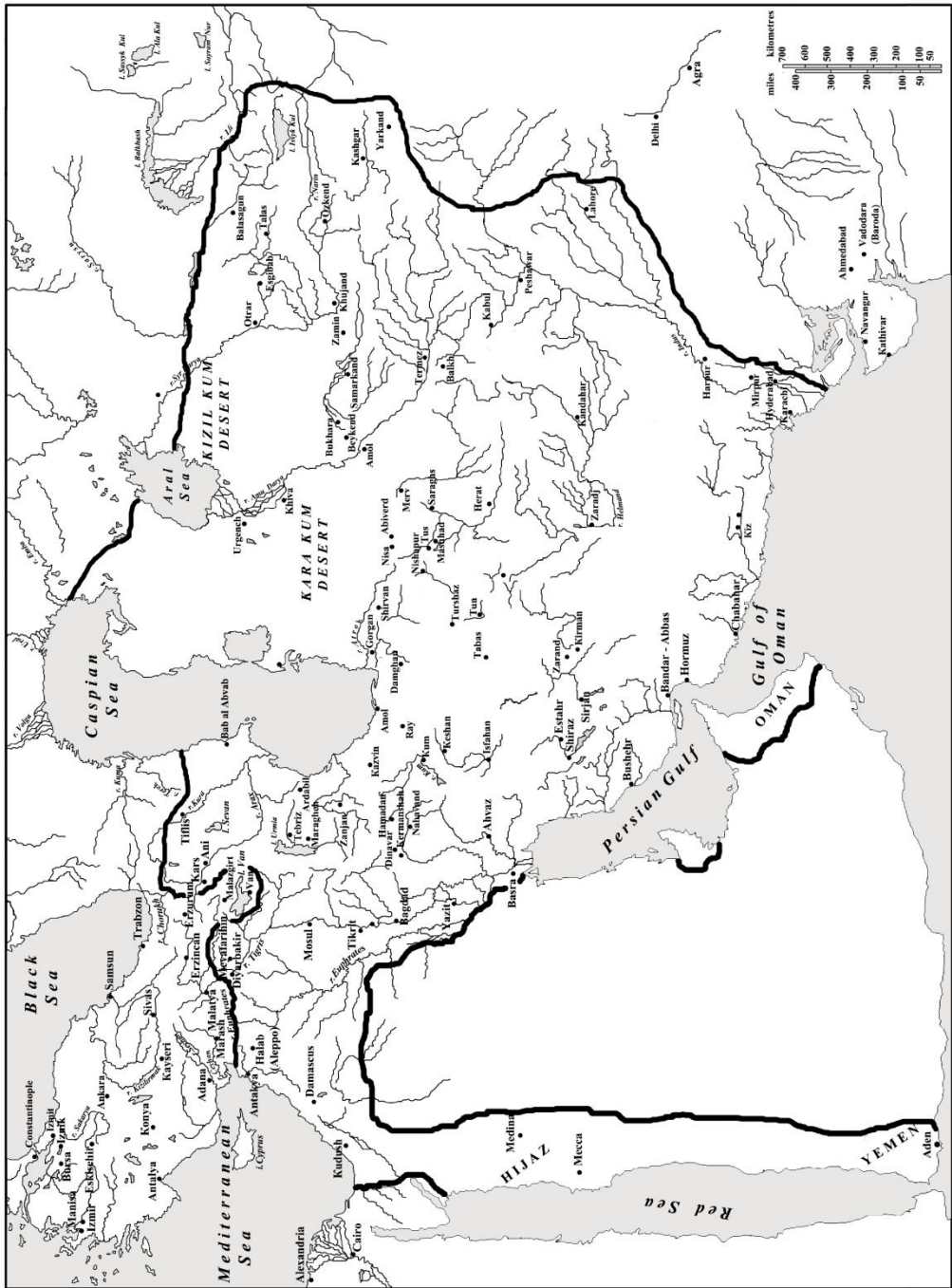
Melikshah's death marked the end of the historical period when the Great Seljuk Empire was the most influential power in Central Asia, the Near and the Middle East.

By the end of Melikshah's reign the Great Seljuk Empire occupied vast territories spreading from the Tian Shan Mountains in the east to the shores of the Red Sea to the west; from the north-western shores of the Caspian Sea in the north to the Indian Ocean in the south. Territories of these modern-day countries were part of the Great Seljuk Empire: Kirgizstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, parts of Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Iran, parts of Pakistan, Armenia, Abkhazia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, parts of Russian Northern Caucuses, parts of Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, Oman, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, parts of Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Aden.

From an administrative and territorial standpoints the empire was made up of two primary elements: first, a sovereign Great Seljuk state, ruled by a sultan through his vizier and governors (or *amids*) who were in charge of the provinces or *vilayets*, the total number of which remains unknown, and the vassal states that made up the rest of the empire. Local rulers acting on behalf of the Seljuk sultan controlled these states. The sultan also stationed his own representatives (*amids*) within the vassal states. Shiraz was the imperial capital during Melikshah's reign.

The state administrative and procedural structure was similar to that of the Samanids and the Ghaznevids. Nizam al-Milk, the vizier to Alp Arslan and Melikshah, considered this structure to be the most perfect form of government of its time.

¹ Budge, Ernest A. Wallis. *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l-Faraj*... P. 232.



Approximate boundaries of the Great Seljuk Empire during the peak of its power

Sultan was the head of the state. His power came from God and was unlimited. The second most powerful person in the state was the vizier. He presided over the Grand Divan - the executive center of the state that consisted of the following departments or Lower divans¹: *divan-i toughra ve insha*, *divan-i istifa* (also called *divan-i zimam ve istifa*), *divan-i ishraf ve memalik*, *divan-i tugra ve insha*, and the *divan-i arz*.

The primary purpose of the *divan-toughra ve insha* was the processing, and the preparation of the sultan's orders and other state documents, maintenance of all diplomatic correspondence, correspondence with the heads of vassal states, provincial governors and so forth. Once a document was stamped with the sultan's official seal it was considered to be a legal document. The custodian of the stamp was the official at the head of the divan.

The *divan-i zimam ve istifa* attended to the financial issues of the state, kept track of state income and spending, compiled a budget etc. The divan had an extensive structure throughout the imperial provinces and was primarily responsible for collecting taxes. Amount of taxes and collection periods varied with each province. The governor of each province, or amid, was responsible for timely collection and remittance of taxes and answered to the vizier and the sultan. The divan's representatives within each province were called the *müstevfi*. The person reporting to the *müstevfi* was called an *amil*.

The *divan-i ishraf ve memalik* was in charge of compliance of all state civil servants in the capital (including those serving in the palace), and throughout the provinces. This department also gathered intelligence related to all political conditions within the empire. A man in charge of this divan held a title of *mushrif*. Nizam al-Mulk described the

¹ Al Bundari. Irak ve Horasan Selçukları tarihi... S. 60, S.102; El-Hüseyni... Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye... S. 47.

mushrif's responsibilities,

The man charged with *ishraf* should be trustworthy, as he is aware of everything that happens at the court and reports on the news when he is so inclined and when it is necessary. He must send his own trustworthy and reliable delegates to each province so they learn of everything that happens, from the trivial to the imperative.¹

The *divan-i arz* was primarily responsible for keeping exact account of the armed forces. They were charged with paying salaries to the permanent army. The department was also in charge of providing the army with sufficient weapons, ammunition, uniforms, provisions, fodder and so forth. The department was not responsible for combat or operational decisions and was not consulted on the application of the armed forces - they were merely responsible for their maintenance. With this in mind, the *divan-i arz* was responsible for periodic inspections, army reviews and parades.

One of the fundamental preconditions for the decline of the Seljuk Empire was the Seljuk attitude towards their kin - the Oghuz. It's important to note that the Seljuk ruling clan never set a goal of establishing a Turkic state. At the time of the Khorasan campaigns the Seljuk leaders and their troops shared both, the obstacles of military existence, and the spoils of war. Therefore we can allude to a sort of unity between the "haves" and the "have-nots." Once Khorasan was conquered and the empire established these relations went through radical transformations. Persians staffed the official state administrative apparatus that functioned throughout the Iranian and Arab-populated imperial territories. The state language within the Seljuk Khorasan, and later throughout the Great Seljuk Empire, was Persian. The Oghuz were effectively driven out of the imperial military organization and so in place of the former loyal servants the Seljuks now

¹ Сиясет – намэ... С. 64.

had foes.

Furthermore, the Great Seljuk sultans like the Ghaznevids before them were not fond of the nomadic Oghuz tribes living on their land(s). Nizam al-Mulk essentially wrote that the numerous nomadic Oghuz tribes were the primary cause of a great deal of unrest in the country, but that the government hesitated to adopt any harsh resolutions against them because of their relation to the ruling dynasty and their prior accomplishments.¹ The resulting administrative policy of the Great Seljuk Empire was to press the nomadic Oghuz tribes from the Iranian and Iraqi territories towards the Byzantine borders and Eastern Anatolia. This social and political policy resulted in a significant contribution to the overall tensions building between the ruling Seljuk dynasty and the nomadic Oghuz tribes. It is not by chance then, that any royal contender wishing to depose the lawful ruler would find broad support among the jaundiced nomadic Oghuz and had no trouble gathering a sufficient army.

As for the primarily Persian and Arabic native population, whose interests the Seljuk ruling elite protected against their own Oghuz tribesmen, their attitude towards the new authorities was never truly loyal. They viewed the Seljuks as foreigners who conquered their countries, who didn't even know their language or their culture. For instance Tughrul's death was the cause of many celebrations throughout Iraqi cities. Local residents would kill Seljuk representatives and then dance around their corpses.

The relationship between the Abbasid caliphs and the Seljuk Sultans was based principally on the hopeless and desperate position of the first group and the often-brute force of the second. For example, when Tughrul first arrived in Baghdad in 1055 CE the caliph made him wait a full year before he granted Tughrul an audience. Once Tughrul died, the caliph attempted to seize temporal power from the Seljuks

¹ Сиясет – намэ... С. 109.

and we can be almost certain that Caliph Muktedi was the mastermind behind Melikshah's poisoning.

From time to time the Seljuk sultans had to suppress uprisings within the already submitted, or vassal states. Therefore the empire's fate depended largely on these three principal factors: the state of its military, personal qualities of the sultan and the existence or lack thereof, of an outside military force capable of posing a real threat to the Seljuks.

Clearly Tughrul, Alp Arslan and Melikshah were talented military commanders and gifted heads of state. Vizier Nizam al-Mulk played such a significant role in the states affairs and his influence with the monarchs was so great that he could effectively be considered a co-ruler to Alp Arslan and Melikshah. Melikshah carelessly disregarded several key recommendations of his vizier, a decision that had a negative effect on the fate of the Seljuk Empire. Since Melikshah no longer perceived any viable military threat from his opponents, he planned to downsize his army from 400,000 men to just 70,000. Nizam al-Mulk insisted that only a 400,000 strong army could effectively guarantee the Seljuk dominance in Khorasan, Maverannagr, Blasahun, Khorezm, Nimruz, Iraq, Fars (southern Iranian province), Syria, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Antakya.¹ Furthermore, Nizam al-Mulk wanted to see the army expanded to 700,000 men to make possible the conquest of Sind (southwestern province of Pakistan), India, Egypt, Abyssinia (Ethiopia), and the Byzantine territories in Asia Minor.²

Nizam al-Mulk further advised the sultan to establish a special service, which would now be referred to as foreign intelligence gathering. Nizam al Mulk wrote,

We should send spies everywhere and all the time. They should present themselves as merchants, wanderers, sufi, traders of medicines, beggars. Let them

¹ Сиясет – намэ... С. 167.

² Ibid.

report to us on everything they hear and observe so that nothing remains unknown to us. And should anything new happen, we would be able to take the necessary measures. ... Or if another ruler were approaching with his army, the emperor would have time to prepare and defeat him.¹

The vizier also insisted that a state protection department be established (or more precisely the secret police). He wrote,

It is crucial that the emperor is aware of everything about his people and his army, whether near or far he should know of everything - minor or great, about everything that happens... But this is a sensitive task and should only be administered by the hands, tongues, and pens of those who could never be thought poorly of; those who would not undertake this to pursue their personal agendas, and should only be appointed by the state... They should be paid a salary and monthly expenses from the treasury so they have a sense of security and the emperor could learn of any development as soon as it transpires so he can take necessary measures...²

However, neither Melikshah nor his heirs implemented any of these recommendations, which was one of the causes the Seljuk state weakened and declined in the 12th century.

3. Military Organization of The Great Seljuk Empire

In the early history of the Great Seljuk Empire, i.e., prior to the state's formation in Khorasan, the army consisted mainly of light cavalry armed with bows, swords and spears. The principal differences of the Seljuk weapons were their more compact dimensions and their lightweight compared to

¹ Сиясет – намэ... С. 78.

² Ibid. С. 66.

the similar weapons used by armies in the other Near and Middle Eastern states. One weapon in particular was a Seljuk bow which was capable of shooting straight arrows for 1500 meters. By comparison, bows used by archers in other eastern armies had a longer range. Hüsseini wrote that when an army under the command of Nizam al-Mulk was sent to suppress a vassal rebellion, they were attacked with special arrows that were capable of going through metal.¹ The Oghuz spears were shorter, their shields smaller in diameter and lighter in weight.² While the shortcoming of the Seljuk weapons may seem apparent, we should also point out that they were easy to use and were less burdensome on the soldiers during long military expeditions.

The Seljuk army had certain strengths that enabled them to triumph over the professional Ghaznevid army and claim Khorasan.

First and foremost, the Seljuks had access to an almost unlimited source of replenishing their troops. Large numbers of the mounted Oghuz military units, not connected to the ruling Seljuk clan, roamed Khorasan plundering the local villages and were ever ready to fight under the Seljuk standard.

The second advantage of the Seljuk army against the Ghaznevids was their superior agility and maneuverability. The Ghaznevid army was impeded by the bulky wagon train, which on the one hand prohibited them from rapid advances, and on the other required a heavy guard, especially when the army was led by the sultan, in which case the state treasury followed the wagon train. At the same time the Oghuz managed without the wagon trains,³ which allowed for a swift attack and a timely retreat. Towards the end of the war the Ghaznevid sultan acknowledged this advantage when he said,

¹ El-Hüseyni... *Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye*... S. 29.

² Smail, R.C. *Crusader Warfare*. Cambridge, 1967. P. 77.

³ Budge, Ernest A. Wallis. *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l-Faraj*... C. 514.

“The reason for [the Seljuk military successes] lies in the fact that they don’t have the heavy wagons that they have to protect and we do, and because of that we can not dedicate out efforts to other tasks.”¹

The third advantage of the Seljuk army lay in their preferred strategy and tactics of warfare. To use modern terms, they conducted guerilla warfare. They avoided big battles often preferring to ambush the enemy with a small but bold and audacious unit. This strategy prohibited the Ghaznevids from taking advantage of their well-organized professional army. Mesoud commented on one such Seljuk operation: “And so it will be. Less than 2,000 horsemen will appear, taking away our camels and bringing great shame upon us, as this great army, marching in military formation would not provide the appropriate resistance.”²

The fourth Seljuk advantage over Mesoud’s army was the resilience and endurance of their soldiers that was put to use by the Seljuks. A reference to this advantage was made during a high council of the Seljuk leaders that took place in the summer of 1038. “Dey (winter) has passed, the month of Tammuz (July) is upon us, but we are desert-dwellers and are used to the heat and blistering cold - we will endure, but he and his army will not.”³

The last Seljuk advantage was their morale and their psychological mindsets. As the general state of the Ghaznevid army at the end of a battle with the Seljuks could be often described as crestfallen, melancholic and depressed⁴ Mesoud described the Seljuks as follows: “If my army is exhausted then the Oghuz are just as tired, but they endure more. They possess nothing and are fighting for their lives.”⁵

Following the establishment of the Seljuk state in

¹ Budge, Ernest A. Wallis. *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l-Faraj*... C. 515.

² Бейхаки, Абу-л-Фазл. *История Мас’уда (1030 – 1041)*... C. 545.

³ *Ibid.* C. 511.

⁴ *Ibid.* C. 512.

⁵ *Ibid.* C. 513.

Khorasan the overall structure of the Seljuk army went through significant changes. The principal change was that now the bulk of the Seljuk army, not unlike the Ghaznevid army, consisted of professional soldiers, or goulams, who were paid for their services. The Sultan's goulams were stationed in the capital, (some of them inside the palace) and were called *has-goulam* or the guard.

We don't know the exact number of the palace and guard goulams. However, when Alp Arslan had to mobilize his troops to Syria to face the Byzantine Emperor Romanus Diogenes, he took with him 4,000 soldiers¹ all permanently assigned to the sultan. Al Bundari wrote when Alp Arslan appointed a goulam named Djevkher commander of the goulam guard, he had 30,000 goulams under his command.²

The sultan's permanent professional army was funded from the state treasury. The annual payroll during Melikshah's reign was 600,000 dinars for the salaries and an additional 300,000 dinars to cover equipment expenses.³ Soldiers received additional payments during military campaigns.

In addition to the royal, or the guard goulams, the vizier and other senior officials had their own goulams, that they were obligated to provide for service in the sultan's army at times of war. Nizam al-Mulk wrote in his treatise that in order to gain the consideration of the ruler as well as the respect of your peers and the army, one should buy slaves - goulams from the market, and provide them with exceptional equipment.⁴

The primary source for procuring slaves - goulams was the war prisoner market. The goulams were paid for their service, they could be sold or gifted, and their ethnicity was irrelevant. As we mentioned earlier during Melikshah's reign

¹ Sibt İbnü'l – Cevzi. Mir'atü'z – zeman fi Tarihi'l-ayan... S. 35.

² Al Bundari. Irak ve Horasan Selçukları tarihi... S. 246.

³ El-Hüseyni... Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye... S. 46.

⁴ Сиясет – намэ... С. 130.

the Oghuz were largely displaced from the army. In his treatise, written towards the end of Melikshah's reign, Nizam al-Mulk proposed to once again begin admitting the young generation of the Turks and train them according to the goulam methodology.¹ (There is practically no information detailing the goulam preparatory system besides the fact that special instructors were designated for their training. Ravendi wrote that, during Melikshah's rule a man named Ahmed bin Abdulmelik was in charge of training the guard goulams.)²

Nizam al-Mulk advised that around 1,000 of their sons [Oghuz boys] should be kept as palace goulams. He wrote,

The more time they spend in service the better they will master the concepts of service and weapons, will learn to co-exist with other people, become citizens and serve as goulams. Savagery, inherent to their nature will disappear. As the need arises, five or ten thousand of them will mount their horses, and like the goulams will fight with the weapons and equipment provided for them.³

On the other hand, Nizam al-Mulk stressed the necessity of staffing the army with different ethnic groups emphasizing that each ethnic group will strive to distinguish itself among the rest and will therefore serve better.⁴

During Melikshah's reign the self-enlisted soldiers and the permanent professional army were joined by the "iqta" cavalry. Melikshah implemented this practice of "iqta" to lower his military expenses. Ravendi wrote that Melikshah's "iqta" cavalry consisted of 45,000 men. Their names were entered into a list that was then kept with the divan clerk. Their salaries were paid in the form of taxes collected from the residents of the lands assigned to them. The purpose of

¹ Сиясет – намэ... С. 109.

² Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür... I. Cilt. S. 156.

³ Сиясет – намэ... С. 109.

⁴ Ibid. С. 107.

designating these endowments in different parts of the empire was to “have income and allowances ready wherever they went.”¹ Upon successfully conquering Syria, Melikshah distributed coastal Mediterranean lands and cities among his commanders as *iqta*.²

The main notion of the “*iqta*” system - its primary gist, was this: the government endowed certain territories as payment for service in the armed forces. These territories, or more specifically, taxes collected from these territories were called “*iqta*”. Those endowed with these territories had the right to tax the local residents and keep the proceeds for themselves. The owner of the endowment (*iqta*) was required to select a certain number of men from his lands (depending on the size of the land), arm them, provide them with equipment and horses, train them and provide for them at his own expense. Once a military campaign was announced, the owner of the *iqta* was required to mobilize his unit (which reported to him), and fight under the sultan’s standard. The heads of vassal states were likewise required to provide their troops to join the imperial army.

Therefore the Seljuk military consisted of the permanent professional army - the *goulams*, the cavalry that was formed and maintained by the owners of the *iqta*, and forces of the vassal states. According to Nizam al-Mulk at the height of the Great Seljuk Empire the total number of men in the Seljuk armed forces reached 400,000 men³ but towards the conclusion of Melikshah’s rule, that number dwindled down to just about 70,000.⁴

The Seljuk army, similar to other armies of the Muslim Near and Middle East, did not have a strict army command structure. The lowest unit in the Seljuk military structure was

¹ Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). *Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür*... I. Cilt. S. 128.

² Ibid. S. 127.

³ Сиясет – намэ... С. 162.

⁴ Ibid.

one tent, or more specifically, the people in it. There is no definitive information on the exact number of people within each tent; furthermore we know that tents came in a variety of sizes. Nizam al-Mulk recommended that Melikshah implement the following Samanid tactic while training the goulams. Upon the completion of his seventh year of service (as a private), the goulam would be given a tent with one peak and 16 wedges. He would also get the command of his own three-goulam unit and be called *visak-bashi*. He would wear a black felt headdress with silver embroidery.¹

The next most numerous unit (we have no information about the exact number of men it contained) was headed by an officer referred to as *hayl-bashi*, then came the squad headed by a *hadjib*. The position of the *emir* was the next up on the hierarchy (some sources refer to this position as the “*salar*”). The emir was in charge of large detachments, a portion of the army. We know that Melikshah would introduce his emirs to the caliph, and Bundari confirmed by saying that Melikshah presented forty of his emirs to the caliph. During each individual introduction the sultan would state how many soldiers were under each emir’s command.²

The Seljuk combat formations were borrowed from the Ghaznevids and consisted of the left and the right wings, the center, the vanguard and the reserves.

¹ Сиясет – намэ... С. 111.

² Al Bundari. Irak ve Horasan Selçukları tarihi... S. 82.

CHAPTER V

The Demise of the Great Seljuk Empire.

1. Domestic Political Conditions Within the Great Seljuk State From 1092 - 1118 CE.

Melikshah fathered six sons: Ahmed, Davud, Barkiyaruq, Mehmed Tapar, Sanjar, and Mahmoud.

Ahmed and Davud, each named heir to the throne died before their father, so Melikshah willed the throne¹ to the oldest of the remaining sons - Barkiyaruq. Contrary to the sultan's will, however, the first son to ascend the Seljuk throne after Melikshah's death was the youngest son Mahmoud. It happened only because his wife Terken-hatoun and her 5-year-old son Mahmoud happened to be in Baghdad when Melikshah was on his deathbed. (Barkiyaruq was born of Melikshah's other wife – Zübeyde-hatoun).

Terken-hatoun was an energetic woman who exerted great influence over the royal inner circle,² and with the support of the Vizier Tadj al-Mulk began her pursuit of the appointment from the caliph. Terken-hatoun managed to convince Caliph Muktedi and Mahmoud was announced the new Sultan (1092 - 1093 CE) of the Great Seljuk Empire. All the top civil and military officials swore their allegiance to the new sultan.³

At the time of this announcement Barkiyaruq was in İsfahan. As soon as he learned that the sultan, his mother, the vizier and the army were on their way to İsfahan Barkiyaruq,

¹ Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür... I. Cilt. S. 136.

² Al Bundari. Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları... S. 83 – 84.

³ Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür... I. Cilt. S. 136.

fearful for his life, fled for Ray. The governor of Ray was Nizam al-Mulk's relative Abu Muslim, who was among the many supporters Barkiyaruq had in Ray. They considered him the lawful heir to the Seljuk throne. A portion of the Seljuk troops, (around 20,000 soldiers) took Barkiyaruq's side.¹

Sultan Mahmoud was on the Seljuk throne for less than a year. At the end of 1093 CE Mahmoud and his mother Terken-hatoun both died (presumably from smallpox).² Around that same time followers of Nizam al Mulk killed Mahmoud's Vizier Tadj ul-Mulk - one of the main people responsible for his predecessor's death. Major changes also took place in Baghdad when Caliph Muktedi died in 1093 CE and his son El-Mustazhir Bill'ah became the new Abbasid caliph (1093 – 1104 CE). One of the first decrees issued by the new caliph was Barkiyaruq's confirmation on the Seljuk throne (1093 – 1104 CE). Barkiyaruq appointed Nizam al-Mulk's son - Müeyid ul-Mulk his vizier.

This was the time when Tutush, ruler of the Syrian and Palestinian territories and Melikshah's younger brother, made his own claims to the Seljuk throne. Having assembled a large army Tutush crushed Barkiyaruq's army at Hamadan and took over the city. In February of 1095 CE Tutush gained control of Ray. On February 2, 1095 CE, about 100 km from Ray, Tutush's army once again fought with Barkiyaruq's but the outcome was quite different. In preparations for the battle Barkiyaruq, or more precisely his Vizier Müeyid ul-Mulk managed to significantly increase the size of their army and thus defeated Tutush, captured and executed him right on the battlefield.³ After Tutush's death the Seljuk state in Syria and Palestine broke apart. Damascus was now ruled by Tutush's son Dudak and Halab was ruled by his other son Rydwan.

Just as Barkiyaruq barely established himself on the

¹ Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). *Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür*... I. Cilt. S. 137.

² Ibid. S. 138.

³ Al Bundari. *Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları*... S. 86.

throne, and following his mother's advice, he replaced his Vizier Müeyid ul-Mulk with Nizam al-Mulk's other son Fahr u-Mulk.¹ Müeyid ul-Mulk was imprisoned but upon his release became one of the key conspirators against Sultan Barkiyaruq. Had the plot been realized Barkiyaruq's youngest brother Mohammed Tapar would have ascended the throne. At the time Tapar was the melik of Gandja and Arran. Spurred on by Müeyid ul-Mulk Tapar ordered the Friday prayers be read without Barkiyaruq's name (which was equal to declaring independence), and declared himself the sultan of the Great Seljuk Empire. Müeyid ul-Mulk was appointed vizier. Mohammed Tapar assembled his troops and headed for Ray. Wishing to avoid an armed confrontation Barkiyaruq had no other option but to retreat to İsfahan.² The official Seljuk ruler did that primarily because he wasn't altogether certain of his army's loyalty. Immediately preceding these events Müeyid ul-Mulk ordered one of the most renowned military commanders Emir Porsouq killed. However, the prevailing version among the military was that the murder was carried out on the orders of a man named Medjd ul-Mulk, head of the department in charge of the state finances (*Sahib-i Divan-i İstifa*), a man with close ties to the sultan. The military accused him of having ties to the batinids and demanded that he be handed over to them. Barkiyaruq refused their demands but the army threatened to take Medjd ul-Mulk by force. Barkiyaruq failed to protect his close ally and the soldiers mauled Medjd ul-Mulk as the crowd looked on.³ A portion of the army soon left to join Mohammed Tapar.

By September 1099 CE Tapar took control of Ray. Müeyid ul-Mulk ordered Barkiyaruq's mother Zübeydehatoun executed. Tapar continued to gain support and influence, so by the fall of 1099 Tapar sent an embassy to the

¹ Al Bundari. Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları... S. 87.

² El-Hüseyni... Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye... S. 53.

³ Al Bundari. Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları... S. 88.

caliph in Baghdad with the demand that from now on the hutba be read with his name. November of 1099 CE was the first time Caliph Moustahzir read the hutba in Baghdad with Mohammed Tapar's name.¹ This meant Tapar's official recognition as the ruler of the Great Seljuk Empire.

Sultan Barkiyaruq who first retreated to İsfahan and then to Huzistan learned about the caliph's decision and arrived in Baghdad demanding explanations. In December of 1099 CE, under pressure from the sultan Caliph Moustahzir resumed reading the hutba with Barkiyaruq's name. In June of 1100 CE Barkiyaruq and his army approached Hamadan where they planned to face Mohammed Tapar. The battle took place in May of 1100 CE and ended with a crushing defeat of Barkiyaruq's army. Right after that the hutba in Baghdad was once again read with Mohammed Tapar's name.

Domestic political conditions within the Great Seljuk Empire reached an exceptionally difficult period, and were further exasperated by the unprincipled position of the caliph. In essence two sultans ruled the empire. As far as Baghdad was concerned, the legitimate ruler was the one with an immediate advantage over the other and since both brothers took an uncompromising stance, both looked to an armed resolution as their only solution.

The second battle between Barkiyaruq and Mohammed Tapar took place in April of 1101 CE in the areas surrounding Hamadan. This time Barkiyaruq had luck on his side. Following an especially fierce daylong battle Tapar's army was defeated. The Vizier Müeyid ul-Mulk was captured and personally executed by Barkiyaruq.² Tapar was forced to flee to Gurgan.

At the time, Melikshah's remaining son Sanjar ruled Khorasan and Maverannagr. As soon as he found out of his brother's defeat Sanjar came to Gurgan and immediately

¹ Budge, Ernest A. Wallis. *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l-Faraj...* P. 236.

² Al Bundari. *Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları...* S. 89.

entered into a political and military alliance with Tapar aimed at defeating Barkiyaruq.¹ Sanjar ordered mobilization of Khorasan's army and together with Tapar's soldiers (the bulk of the joint forces consisted of Sanjar's men) they started to march towards the city of Damgan. The city was plundered and destroyed and the joint forces continued on to Ray to face Barkiyaruq.

After his victory over Mohammed Tapar Barkiyaruq had to dismiss a significant portion of his permanent army contingent as he didn't have the sufficient funds to keep them on his payroll. Knowing that the enemy army was approaching Ray Barkiyaruq came to Baghdad and demanded financial support from the caliph. The latter was compelled to issue Barkiyaruq a sum of 50,000 dinars,² but that was clearly insufficient for continuing operations.

In an attempt to gather the necessary funds Barkiyaruq sent his vizier Ebul Mehasin to Sadak bin Mezyed, the emir of a vassal Arab state, demanding repayment of the one million dinar he owed to the Seljuk treasury. The emir refused and furthermore ordered that the hutba be read without Barkiyaruq's name.

In the meantime in October of 1101 CE Tapar and Sanjar continued to pursue Barkiyaruq and entered Baghdad. At the time of these events Barkiyaruq was in Reml. The caliph received the two brothers with great fanfare and personally handed each one a banner.³ Caliph Moustahzir ordered that henceforth the hutba was to be read with Tapar's name.

By November 1101 CE Sanjar received news of unrest in Khorasan and urgently left Baghdad to return to Khorasan. Tapar and his army also left Baghdad and went to Hamadan. By that point Barkiyaruq's situation has improved somewhat

¹ Özeydin, A. Sultan Muhammed Tapar devri Selçuklu Tarihi... S. 23.

² Ibid. S. 25.

³ El-Hüseyni... Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye... S. 54.

thanks to Porsouq's sons and their armed units joining his army. Aware that Sanjar together with his army departed for Khorasan, and that Tapar's insignificant forces just left Baghdad Barkiyaruq began to pursue Tapar and caught up with him at Nihavend. Tapar clearly understood that a successful outcome was highly unlikely and so he sent an ambassador to Barkiyaruq calling for a truce. Barkiyaruq's Vizier Abul-Mehasin received the ambassadors and on December 27, 1101 the two sides signed a peace treaty, which contained the following key provisions:¹

1. Barkiyaruq was the sultan of the Great Seljuk Empire and Tapar assumed the title of "melik".
2. Mohammed Tapar was thereby acknowledged as the owner of the following territories: Gyandja and its surroundings, Azerbaijan, Diyarbakır, Al Jazeera (*Northern Mesopotamia*), and Mosul.
3. All other territories, with the exception of Khorasan were the property of Sultan Barkiyaruq.
4. Mohammed Tapar was required to pay Barkiyaruq a contribution in the amount of 1.3 million dinars.

The principal accomplishment of the peace treaty was the official acknowledgment of Sultan Barkiyaruq as the lawful head of the Great Seljuk Empire. The empire was divided into three parts according to the principles of vassal dependency. The primary aim of the treaty of 1101 was the stabilization of domestic conditions within the Great Seljuk Empire.

However, the treaty was soon broken and the sides engaged in new offensives. The last battle between Barkiyaruq and Tapar took place in February of 1103 CE. It was the last for two reasons - first of which was that both brothers found themselves financially unable to continue fighting. Secondly, Barkiyaruq died less than two years later.

In January of 1104 CE the two sides signed a new

¹ Özeydin, A. Sultan Muhammed Tapar devri Selçuklu Tarihi... S. 28.

agreement,¹ which specified that:

1. The authority of Sultan Barkiyaruq extended to Djibal, Fars, İsfahan, Ray, Hamadan, Huzistan and Baghdad. Azerbaijan, Diyarbakır, Al Jazeera, Mosul, Syria and some other Arab territories belonged to Mohammed Tapar who was considered an equal to Barkiyaruq.
2. Barkiyaruq's authority was not recognized in territories under Tapar's control and his name was not mentioned in the Friday prayers.
3. Following Barkiyaruq's death Mohammed Tapar would become Sultan.
4. Barkiyaruq and Tapar would not interfere with the military's decision in determining which ruler they wished to serve, and neither one of them would influence the timing of this decision.
5. Melik Mehmed Sanjar remained the ruler of Khorasan. He was vassal to Mohammed Tapar.

The agreement of 1104 CE is fundamentally different from the previous treaty in that it effectively divided the empire into two independent states and noticeably limited Barkiyaruq's power and authority. His authority now extended over a [smaller] portion of the empire and he was not to designate another heir to the throne but Mohammed Tapar. On the other hand the agreement now afforded Tapar, who officially had no title, but according to the agreement, was now equal to Barkiyaruq, much more power. Tapar was now a full-fledged ruler of his own independent state and was Sanjar's suzerain. This meant that Tapar's independent state included Khorasan. Tapar would have likely overseen the non-Seljuk Karakhanid and Ghaznevid vassal states (not mentioned in the peace agreement) even while Barkiyaruq was still alive. Following Barkiyaruq's death Tapar would have assumed his throne and automatically become the sultan

¹ El-Hüseyni... Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye... S. 54; Özaydın, A. Sultan Muhammed Tapar devri Selçuklu Tarihi... S. 35.

of the entire Great Seljuk Empire.

Therefore the primary factors determining the domestic conditions within the Great Seljuk Empire in 1092 – 1104 CE were ascension wars among Melikshah's sons Barkiyaruq and Tapar. The wars lasted for 10 years and left a definitive mark on the country and its population. The state's economic and military forces were severely undermined and the vast majority of the population was economically devastated. The country was split into two camps and by the end of the 1090's the empire was ruled by a diarchy, which not only destroyed the previously-centralized state but further exasperated all existing negative economic and military processes that plagued the Seljuk society. The preexisting Seljuk military structures ceased to exist, as did the official and administrative structures. These factors had a direct effect on the empire's financial and military capacities and impeded further abilities of the state to continue its battles. The ensuing conditions forced the opposing sides to accept a compromise and look for ways to resolve their disagreements through peace treaties and agreements, which interestingly enough, neither side felt compelled to uphold.

Some of the vassal states took advantage of this decline in power and influence and promptly declared their independence. The Crusaders established their own states within the former Seljuk territories in the southeastern Anatolia, Syria and Palestine. The new states were the County of Edessa, the Duchy of Antioch, and the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

Sultan Barkiyaruq died on December 22, 1104 CE or less than a year after signing the peace accord with Tapar. He died from phthisis at the age of 25. Just before his death he named his five-year-old son Melikshah heir to the Seljuk throne.¹ Emir Ayaz, one of Barkiyaruq's most loyal emirs, was appointed the boy's guardian and regent. After

¹ Budge, Ernest A. Wallis. *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l-Faraj*... P. 238.

Barkiyaruq's death, in January of 1105 CE Ayaz delivered the boy to Baghdad. A special divan was called to discuss the matter of ascent and the boy was proclaimed the Great Sultan Melikshah II. The next day in Baghdad, the name of Melikshah II was read in the hutba.¹

Tapar found out about the announcement and since the succession appointment violated one of the main points of the peace treaty, in the beginning of February of 1105 CE arrived in Baghdad. Melikshah II's guardian took all the necessary precautions and removed the royal quarters out of Baghdad.

Mohammed Tapar demanded to be recognized as sultan and in exchange offered immunity to Melikshah, Ayaz and other emirs serving the sultan. On February 13, 1105 CE in acceptance with these conditions Mohammed Tapar was declared Sultan. He ruled from 1105 until 1118 CE.

Along with Barkiyaruq's title Tapar inherited his territorial possessions. The empire, which was just recently divided into two, once again attained territorial unity and was ruled by Mohammed Tapar. He had an opportunity to re-establish a centralized state, stabilize the internal political situation and restore the former influence of the Great Seljuk Empire. This was Tapar's plan of action and he began its implementation from consolidating his personal power.

Despite the offered concessions, Sultan Tapar removed the emirs who personally served his brother Barkiyaruq. His first victim was Emir Ayaz. Following Sultan Tapar's orders he was executed on March 15, 1105 CE.² Vizier Abul-Mehasin met a similar fate in May of 1105. When it came to Melikshah II, he was arrested and blinded.³ Alp-Arslan's grandson Mengü-Pars bin Böri-Pars was arrested in 1105 - 1106 CE as a consequence of his refusal to recognize Tapar's authority.⁴

¹ Al Bundari. *Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları...* S. 91 – 92.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Budge, Ernest A. Wallis. *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l-Faraj...* P. 239.

Tapar spent three years trying to submit the Arab Emir of Hilleh, Seyf üd-Devle Sadak bin Mez'yed. In the beginning of March 1108 CE Tapar's army faced Sadak between the towns of Vasyt and Hilleh. The emir led 20,000 cavalrymen¹ into battle himself and was killed during one of such offensives.² Sadak bin Mez'yed's death didn't bring much of a change to the political situation within the Seljuk state. Up until 1116 CE Tapar constantly fought to regain his towns, suppress armed rebellions of vassal emirs, and prevent them from taking over cities and entire provinces.

The political instability within the country was further destabilized by the terrorist activities of the batinids. Melikshah was the first to launch the anti-terrorist policy but did not achieve any significant results; furthermore the batinid activity only increased during the ascension wars between Barkiyaruq and Tapar. Their cells spread throughout the country and they assassinated both civilian and military officials who did not support their positions. Soon the Seljuk officials were afraid to leave their homes and arrived at work wearing chain link armor.

Tapar considered the war on the batinids to be one of the key aspects of his domestic policy. In spring of 1107 CE he ordered a siege of one of the batinid strongholds, the fortress of Shandiz (Dizhouk). Sultan Melikshah built the fortress and some sources claim that the construction cost 1.2 million dinars.³ Following Melikshah's death the fortress was taken by one of the batinid leaders, Abul Melik bin Attash who used it as a launchpad for his operations. Tapar's troops surrounded the cliff upon which the fortress was built, but in spite of the water and food shortages, the batinids staged a bold defensive, deflecting the Seljuk army's attempts to storm the fortress. Only after the betrayal of one of the batinids in

¹ El-Hüseyni... Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye... S. 55.

² Al Bundari. Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları... S. 103.

³ Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür... I. Cilt. S. 152.

July of 1107 were the Seljuks finally able to enter the fortress. Most of the batinids were killed on site. Abul Melik bin Attash was captured and executed. Tapar ordered the fortress destroyed.¹

The loss of Shandiz was certainly significant for the batinids but their head quarters were still in Alamut. For the last 26 years it was the residence of Hassan as-Sabah and it was from Alamut that Sabah directed all batinid operations within the Seljuk Empire. In August of 1109 CE, Tapar sent his Vizier Ahmed bin Nizam al-Mulk and his troops to Alamut to lay siege to the city and its surrounding areas. Al-Mulk's army detained and executed a large number of the batinids but their siege ended at the start of winter.

The next attempt at taking over Alamut and putting an end to Sabah was made only in 1117 CE. The siege lasted from July of 1117 until March of 1118 CE. All provision reserves within the fortress were exhausted, but it was at this exact time that news of Mohammed Tapar's death reached the Seljuk army and the Seljuk Commander Anoushtekin Shirgir was called to the capital. As a result the siege was once again suspended.² Following Tapar's death the batinid political influence increased throughout the empire and they soon took over a number of settlements in Khorasan, Mazenderan, Gilyan, and Georgia.³

Towards the end of Mohammed Tapar's reign the political conditions within the Great Seljuk Empire (except in Khorasan which belonged to Sanjar) continued to deteriorate. Tapar failed to strengthen his personal power and the state, stabilize the political situation in the country, or achieve other critical goals. Emirs not subjected to repression refused to obey his authority. He lacked a strong army. Īsfahani wrote that there were no more noble emirs or other noblemen left in

¹ Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). *Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür*... I. Cilt. S. 155 – 157.

² *Ibid.* S. 158.

³ Özeydin, A. *Sultan Muhammed Tapar devri Selçuklu Tarihi*... S. 84.

the country at the time of Tapar's reign as sultan and that the country convalesced and was nearing its demise.¹ Anoushirvan, who as we know held a significant position in Tapar's court,² wrote, "During Mohammed's reign the country turned into a pile of ash."³

2. *Special Characteristics of the Domestic and Foreign Political Conditions of The Great Seljuk Empire During the Reign of Sultan Sanjar (1118 – 1157 CE).*

Ebul-Haris Sanjar was the last sultan of the Great Seljuk Empire. Ravendi described him as a calm man, who led a righteous life, kept a full treasury, claimed many victories, eliminated his enemies and gained fame.⁴

Compared to his predecessors - Barkiyaruq and Tapar, Sanjar clearly stood out as a talented statesman and military commander. He demonstrated these qualities at an early age when he ruled Khorasan, while both of his brothers were sultans. In 1102 CE he suppressed an armed uprising (a declaration of independence) of the eastern Karakhanids and executed their leader Kadir-khan Djabrail bin Ömer. He gave the Karakhanid throne to a close ally Mohammed II bin Suleiman and the Karakhanids soon accepted their vassalage to the Great Seljuks.

Following the death of the Ghaznevid Sultan Mesoud II in 1115 CE his sons began to battle for the throne. Sanjar decided to get himself involved and chose to back Prince Bahramshah who managed to escape his brother Arslanshah after the latter usurped power in the country. Sanjar sent a message to Arslanshah offering his assistance in resolving the

¹ Al Bundari. Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları... S. 113 – 114.

² Please see: Chapter I. Overview of historical sources and literature.

³ Al Bundari. Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları... S. 128.

⁴ Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür... I. Cilt. S. 164.

issues of ascension to the Ghaznevid throne but Arslanshah did not reply. At the same time Arslanshah, now concerned for the safety of his position, sent a letter to Tapar requesting interference against Sanjar's planned invasion of the Ghaznevid territories. Tapar, in turn sent a letter to his brother describing the greatness of the Ghaznevid dynasty and urging him to refrain from military actions against Arslanshah.¹

Sanjar ignored his brother's letter and personally led his army to Ghazni. In addition to infantry, Arslanshah's army counted 50 combat elephants that formed a straight line in front of the Ghaznevid army units. The battle took place in the outskirts of Ghazni and started with Arslanshah's elephants attacking Sanjar's formations. Hüseini wrote that the elephants brought such panic onto the Seljuk horses that the battle almost came to an end bringing victory to the Ghaznevids. As it happened, the head of the vassal state of Sistan, Emir Abul-Fadl was thrown off his horse but managed to stab the approaching elephant in the stomach. The wounded elephant reared, and started running in the opposite direction causing panic among other elephants that all turned to follow him. Confusion now spread through the Ghaznevid army. Sanjar began his offensive and won the battle.²

In February of 1117 CE Sanjar entered Ghazni and appointed Bahramshah vassal ruler of the Ghaznevids. He took away the Ghaznevid treasury and ordered Bahramshah to pay 250,000 dinars in annual tribute.³

Prior to his death on April 18, 1118 CE Mohammed Tapar appointed his 14-year-old son Mahmoud heir to the Great Seljuk throne. Tapar had four more sons: Tughrul, Mesoud, Suleiman and Seljuk-shah.⁴

¹ Al Bundari. *Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları...* S. 238.

² El-Hüseyni... *Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye...* S. 63 – 64; Al Bundari. *Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları...* S. 238.

³ Al Bundari. *Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları...* S. 239. According to Ravendi, the annual tribute amounted to 365,000 dinars (S. 164).

⁴ El-Hüseyni... *Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye...* S. 57.

Mahmoud ascended the throne and became the sultan of the Great Seljuk Empire. This absolutely legitimate succession didn't stop Sanjar from claiming his own rights to the throne and moving his army towards Iraq. The two armies fought each other at Sava on August 14, 1118 and Mahmoud's army was decimated. This victory brought Sultan Sanjar (1118 – 1157 CE) to the throne of the Great Seljuk Empire. Every decision made by the newly minted sultan testified to his determination to stabilize the political conditions within the empire - no matter the costs. One of the first steps on the way to achieving this goal was an establishment of a new vassal state in Iraq. It was called the Seljuk state in Iraq (1118 – 1194 CE). Mahmoud was appointed sultan of the new state and Sanjar's heir. Prince Tughrul received half of the Djibal province (Iraq-i Adjem) and the entire Gilyan province. Seljuk-shah received the Fars province, half of the Īsfahan province, and Huzistan. A significant number of emirs received towns and settlements as iqta. This is how Emir Dūbeish bin Sadaka received the city of Basra and its surrounding villages.¹

These steps were successful at achieving political calm and stability within the empire for the next twelve years. At the same time Anoushirvan wrote that by distributing all these lands as iqta Sanjar limited the amount of money coming into the state treasury.² He wrote, "The divan had no other recourse but to take away (confiscate) private property from the wealthy and breed beggars."³

The new system however, did not result in any popular discontent and Sanjar's authority and power strengthened over time. He resurrected the Great Seljuk military organization putting at its center the iqta cavalrymen. His budget allowed him to create a professional army, which in

¹ Al Bundari. *Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları...* S. 128.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

turn made it possible to suppress any and all attempts at destabilizing the political situation within the empire.

The first signs of trouble came in 1131 CE with the death of Mahmoud - the sultan of the Seljuk state in Iraq, as he willed his throne to his son Davud. Since Mahmoud was Sanjar's heir he was expected to first discuss the issue of ascent with Sanjar. However this was not the main incident that led to the increased aggravation in the domestic political situation. The main reason was the conspiracy between the two princes Mesoud and Seljuk-khan, which would place Mesoud on the Iraqi throne and make Seljuk-khan his heir. Once on the throne Mesoud planned to proclaim Iraq independent from the Great Seljuk Empire.¹

Under the circumstances in May of 1132 CE Sanjar named Prince Tughrul, who did not partake in the conspiracy, the sultan (1132 – 1135 CE) of the Seljuk state in Iraq. Tughrul was also named heir to the throne of the Great Seljuk Empire (and therefore Sanjar's own heir).² Sanjar and his army marched to face Mesoud. Bundari wrote that Mesoud was fearful of facing Sanjar on the battlefield and was bringing his troops back to Azerbaijan.³ Sanjar's army was on the move around the clock and caught up with Mesoud in the outskirts of Deynever. Once the enemy became visible, Sanjar ordered his troops ready for combat. Prince Tughrul I was in command of the right wing, and Khorezmshah Atsyz led the left wing. Sanjar was in charge of the central unit of 10,000 professional soldiers (the goulams). The total size of Sanjar's army was 100,000 men against Mesoud's 30,000.⁴

Sanjar won the battle and executed the military commanders - Emirs Karadja and Chavush - who partook in

¹ Köymen, M.A. Büyük Selçuklu imparatorluğu tarihi. İkinci imparatorluk devri. 3. Baskı. Ankara, 1991. S. 185.

² Al Bundari. Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları... S. 149.

³ Ibid. S. 149.

⁴ Köymen, M.A. Büyük Selçuklu imparatorluğu tarihi. İkinci imparatorluk devri... S. 194.

the conspiracy. The main conspirator – Prince Mesoud, was forgiven and allowed to return to Azerbaijan.

Tughrul I, the sultan of the Seljuk state in Iraq died in 1135 CE. Mesoud found out about his death, rushed to Hamadan, the capital of the Seljuk state in Iraq, and ordered the army to catch up with him. He managed to arrive in Hamadan ahead of anyone else, successfully suppressed the opposition uprising and claimed the throne for himself. Sanjar recognized him as the ruler of the vassal state of Seljuk state in Iraq but the Abbasid Caliph Mustershid refused to recognize Mesoud as legitimate heir and instead backed Tughrul's son Davud. So much so, that the hutba in Baghdad was read with the names of Sanjar and Davud. This caused a great strain in the relationship between the caliph and Sultan Mesoud who did not wish to submit to the caliph's will. Exasperated by the situation, the caliph assembled his army and left Baghdad for Hamadan. Mesoud's army departed from Hamadan to intercept the caliph's troops and they faced each other in June of 1135. Mustershid lost and was taken prisoner by Mesoud's forces. Following all appropriate protocols and affording the caliph all appropriate honors he was placed in a specially constructed royal tent. Mesoud informed Sanjar of the battle and the caliph's capture. Sanjar immediately sent a secret embassy back to Mesoud and soon the caliph was killed. Bundari wrote that the decision to kill the caliph came directly from Sanjar and the batinids carried it out.¹

The assassination of the caliph was an extraordinary event. The only reason Sanjar could have taken such a monumental step was possibly because he believed that his own authority was at risk. For the first time since the formation of the Great Seljuk Empire and the reign of Sultan Tughrul has the Abbasid caliph made claims to the temporal power in the empire. The caliph interfered with politics and to

¹ Al Bundari. *Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları...* S. 164.

make matters worse, his interference was an armed one. Sanjar, in our opinion, was for the most part indifferent as to the exact person on the Iraqi throne, but he could not possibly allow the caliph to make such decisions on his own, which meant relinquishing his authority.

The next Abbasid caliph, Müstershid's son Rashid ascended to the Abbasid throne in September of 1135 and continued Müstershid's policy towards the Seljuks. When Prince Davud arrived in Baghdad in November of 1135, the caliph announced him the sultan of the Seljuk state in Iraq and ordered the hutba read with his name. Mesoud laid siege to the city and achieved Rashid's resignation from the Abbasid throne. In 1136 CE his Uncle Muktefi became the next Abbasid caliph.

The new caliph (1136 - 1160 CE) recognized Mesoud as the new sultan and also married Mesoud's sister Fatima-hatun.¹ To Sanjar's great satisfaction, and by the order of the caliph the hutba was now read with the names of Sanjar and Mesoud. The political tensions within the empire subsided; all vassal states have submitted to Sanjar's rule and all was calm for the next five years. Ravendi considered Sanjar to be the greatest ruler of his era.²

This relative calm lasted until the Kara Khitan invasion of Maverannagr. (These tribes were also known as the Kitay or the Kidan people). The nomadic Kidan people settled in the northeastern parts of China and in 937 CE established their state. The state and the founding dynasty were called Lao. In the first quarter of the 11th century they took control of the Laodun Peninsula and severed the connection between the Chinese Empire and Korea. According to the 1024 CE agreement the Chinese Song dynasty (960 - 1279 CE) had to pay the Kidan state an annual tribute of 200,000 silver lian

¹ Al Bundari. Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları... S. 178.

² Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür... I. Cilt. S. 167.

and 300,000 pieces of silk.¹ However the Chinese joined forces with the Chjurchjen tribes from the northeastern regions of China and destroyed the Lao state. Juvaini wrote, "They were forced out of their country and had to wander in exile, submitting themselves to danger and burdens of travel."² The Kara Khitan moved west, through the Kirgiz territories, and arrived at the city of Balasagun. There they overthrew the local ruler and for a time made the city their capital. Towards the end of the 1130's they successfully established their own powerful state, which included Zhetysu and Eastern Turkestan.

In the spring of 1141 CE the Kara Khitan invaded Maverannagr and defeated the Karakhanid ruler Mahmoud in the battle of Hodjend. Later that summer Sanjar sent his own troops to assist Mahmoud. The Seljuk and the Kara Khitan armies engaged in a fierce and bloody battle on September 9, 1141 CE on the outskirts of Samarqand. Bundari wrote that the Kara Khitan army counted 700, 000 soldiers - Sanjar only had 70,000 men.³

As a result of the battle, Sanjar's army was decimated: 30,000 men were killed, the rest captured or fled. Ravendi wrote that towards the end of the battle Sanjar was left with just 300 horsemen clad in heavy armor. Together they charged at the enemy. He left the battlefield with 15 men⁴ by his side and fled to the Termez fortress.

The Kara Khitan conquered Maverannagr. Khorezmshah Arsyz took advantage of Sanjar's defeat and invaded Khorasan, taking the city of Serakhs. In November of 1141 CE he plundered Merv - Sanjar's capital city. Atsyz took away trunkfuls of money and jewels from the sultan's

¹ История Китая. Под ред. А.В. Меликсетова М., 2004. С. 201.

² Джувейни, Ата-Мелик. Чингисхан... С. 249.

³ Al Bundari. Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları... S. 249.

⁴ Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür... I. Cilt. S. 168 – 169.

treasury and brought them to Khorezm.¹

By 1144 CE Sanjar recovered from his defeat at Katvan sufficiently enough to lead his army to reclaim Khorezm. Atsyz returned the plundered treasures, once again accepted vassalage, but continued to implement policies aimed at achieving complete independence of the Khorezm state from the Seljuks.

In 1153 CE the Oghuz tribes staged a mass rebellion against Sanjar. These numerous tribes that settled in the Balkh province considered themselves independent from the Seljuk state and refused to recognize anyone else's authority except for their own tribal chiefs'. Furthermore the Oghuz killed the tax collector sent to them by the provincial governor and continued to cause great disturbances towards the local population. When the Balkh governor sent troops to punish the Oghuz his detachments were crushed and the governor himself was killed.²

Sanjar sent his own troops to Balkh and in the spring of 1153 CE his army met the nomad Oghuz but suffered a catastrophic defeat, which led to the unprecedented losses for the Great Seljuk Empire. The Seljuk army was annihilated and Sanjar was taken prisoner.³

With their royal captive in tow the Oghuz now took course for Merv. Juvaini noted that during the day Sanjar was transported atop his throne but at night he was placed inside an iron cage.⁴ Merv was plundered for three days.

When they finished with Merv the Oghuz headed for Nishapur and pillaged it as well. A portion of the residents was slaughtered only because the city had to be taken by storm. The Oghuz plundered every city in Khorasan, except

¹ El-Hüseyni... *Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye*... S. 67.

² Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). *Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür*... I. Cilt. S. 174.

³ Al Bundari. *Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları*... S. 253 – 254.

⁴ Джувейни, Ата-Мелик. *Чингисхан*... С. 197.

for Herat, which they failed to conquer.¹

This went on for the next three years. In spite of his captivity the sultan was outwardly surrounded with respect² and even allowed some entertainment, like hunting. It was during one of these hunting trips in the spring of 1156 CE that Sanjar was rescued by one of his commanders. Juvaini wrote that Emir Imad ad-din Ahmad ibn Abu-Bakr Kamadj sent a thousand riders who captured the sultan during a hunt and brought him to Termez."³ Sanjar died in April of 1157 CE less than a year after his liberation.

3. *Break-up and Disappearance of the Great Seljuk Empire.*

Sanjar's death brought with it the end of the Great Seljuk Empire. Prior to his death the Seljuk lineage in Syria came to its end as Tutush's two sons Dudak, in Damascus and Rydwan in Halab continued to fight for power. This infighting contributed to the overall weakening of the state under the Crusaders' attacks. Alp Arslan was the last Seljuk sultan in Syria, ruling the country from 1113 – 1114 CE. The Seljuk state in Kirman, founded by Kavurd (1041 – 1073 CE) lasted for 145 years until the Oghuz destroyed it in 1186 CE.

Finally the Seljuk Sultanate in Iraq disappeared from history as well. The last of the Great Seljuk dynastic rulers were nothing but a pathetic shadow of their ancestors who possessed no real authority in their own state.

While Arslanshah was still the sultan of the Seljuk state in Iraq, the real power was in the hands of a former slave and now the governor of Azerbaijan and Arran, Emir Sherefeddin

¹ Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür... I. Cilt. S. 176.

² Бартольд В.В. Сочинения. Т. I. Туркестан в эпоху монгольского нашествия... С. 393.

³ Джувейни, Ата-Мелик. Чингисхан... С. 198.

İl-Deniz. He commanded the army, dispersed funds from the treasury at his own discretion and awarded iqta to the people who served him.¹

İl-Deniz had two sons Pehlivan and Kızıl Arslan. At the time of İl-Deniz' death in 1175 CE his son Pehlivan was in Hamadan with Arslanshah. Pehlivan assumed his father's place and appointed Kızıl Arslan Governor of Azerbaijan and Arran.

When Arslanshah died just two months later, Pehlivan assisted Arslanshah's young son Tughrul III (1177 – 1194 CE) to claim the Seljuk throne and stayed with him as his guardian and mentor.² Since Tughrul III was just a boy Pehlivan concentrated power in his own hands. He was a powerful ruler and according to Ravendi, for the next ten years Mohammed Pehlivan bin İl-Deniz provided the Seljuk state with protection and stability.³

Pehlivan died in 1187 CE and left four sons: İnanch Mahmud, Emiran Omer, Ebubekir and Ozbeg. Before his death he appointed Ebubekir Emir of Azerbaijan and Arran. İnanch Mahmud and Emiran Omer received Ray, İsfahan and parts of Iran. Hamadan was given to Ozbeg. As he divided the lands among his four sons Pehlivan left instructions that his sons must obey their uncle and never declare war on Tughrul III.⁴

Pehlivan's division of the Seljuk-owned Iranian provinces among his sons and the overall uncertainty about his own standing led Kızıl Arslan to challenge his brother's will. Ravendi believed that Kızıl Arslan had enough resources

¹ El-Hüseyni... Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye... S. 117.

² Al Bundari. Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları... S. 268.

³ Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür. (Gönüllerin Rahatı ve Sevinç Alameti.) II. Cilt. Yazan Muhammed bin Ali bin Süleyman er-Ravendi. Farsça metinden Türkçeye çeviren Ahmet Ateş. Ankara, 1960. S. 309.

⁴ El-Hüseyni... Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye... S. 121.

to get rid of the Seljuk state without anyone's help,¹ but since the Abbasid caliph was interested in the same ultimate outcome, Kızıl Arslan and the caliph reached an agreement to get rid of Sultan Tughrul III and put an end to the Seljuk rule in Iraq and western Iran.

The caliph's army concentrated its forces in the Kirmanshah - Dinever area. Hüsseini wrote that the Abbasid commander Vizier Caliph Jelaluddin bin Yunus didn't see a worthy opponent in Tughrul III and decided to move his army towards Hamadan without waiting for the arrival of Kızıl Arslan's army.²

In 1188 CE on the outskirts of Hamadan the caliph's army engaged the sultan's forces. The caliph's soldiers used catapults to shoot burning oil mixture at the enemy. According to Ravendi, people and horses hit by this fiery mixture would burn up on the spot. The sultan's right wing suffered the gravest losses and retreated, but Tughrul's army led a successful offensive aimed at the enemy center and managed to pummel the formation and capture the caliph's vizier.³

Both armies retreated to Hamadan and Baghdad respectively. Although this was not exactly a defeat for the Seljuk Sultan, the bulk of his army was practically decimated.

At the end of 1188 CE, the caliph once again joined forces with Kızıl Arslan and brought their armies to Hamadan. Tughrul gave up the city without a fight and went to İsfahan and then on to Azerbaijan where he was joined by the army of the Governor of Azerbaijan and his father-in-law Hasan Kıfchak. Unfortunately his new army of 50,000 soldiers⁴ was defeated when Kızıl Arslan came to Azerbaijan.

¹ Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür. (Gönüllerin Rahatı ve Sevinç Alameti)... II. Cilt. S. 314.

² El-Hüseyni... Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye... S. 124.

³ Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür. (Gönüllerin Rahatı ve Sevinç Alameti)... II. Cilt. S. 320.

⁴ El-Hüseyni... Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye... S. 125.

Tughrul had no other choice but to surrender and was sent to Kühran - a fortress prison at Tebriz.

The caliph proclaimed Kızıl Arslan the new sultan and a ceremonial procession was held in the honor of his ascension.¹ Not long before the festivities Kızıl Arslan married his brother's widow İnanch-hatoun.

Hüseini wrote that while in Hamadan Kızıl Arslan led a licentious and dissolute lifestyle, rarely sober and often preferring the young slave girls to his wife. Unwilling to tolerate her husband's behavior any longer İnanch-hatoun arranged for him to be killed.² Once he was out of the way she surrounded herself with people she trusted and took over the reigns of the Seljuk state. Her son İnanch Mahmoud was made the ruler of the Iranian provinces. The governorship of Azerbaijan and Arran was given to Ebubekir bin Pehlivan, her first husband's son from another wife.

Following Kızıl Arslan's death and two years after he was imprisoned in the Tabriz fortress Tughrul III managed to escape. As soon as this news reached Ebubekir he immediately sent his people in pursuit of the sultan. At Ray Ebubekir joined forces with his three brothers Kutlug İnanch Mahmoud, and Emiran Omer. At the same time Tughrul arrived at Kazvin and was joined by its ruler and his army. In spite of a significant numeric inferiority of Tughrul's forces compared to the joined armies of Ebubekir, Kutlug İnanch Mahmoud, and Emiran Omer, Tughrul employed the same battle strategy as the one that brought him success against the caliph's army and attacked the enemy center first. The detachment, under the command of Kutlug İnanch Mahmoud was overturned and the remaining army scattered.

Victorious, Tughrul returned to Hamadan and once again ascended the Seljuk throne.³ After Tughrul's return to

¹ Er-Ravendi (Muhammed b. Ali b. Süleyman). *Rahat-üs-Südür ve Âyet-üs-Sürür*. (Gönüllerin Rahatı ve Sevinç Alameti)... II. Cilt. S. 333.

² El-Hüseyni... *Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye*... S. 127.

³ Al Bundari. *Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları*... S. 269.

the Seljuk throne Kutlug İnanch Mahmoud had no other option but to enter the service of Khorezmshah Tekesh. In the middle of the 1190's the khorezmshah state reached the pinnacle of its influence throughout the Near and Middle East, and contained the better part of the Seljuk imperial territories.

In the spring of 1194 CE Tughrul managed to liberate Ray from the khorezmshah's army but soon received a letter from the commander in chief of the khorezmshah's forces offering him a chance to leave the city on his own and save his life.¹ Instead, Tughrul III chose to fight. Once the khorezmshah's army reached Ray Tughrul brought his army past the city walls and charged at the enemy. Just 60 men from his personal guard followed the sultan into battle. Tughrul's military commanders had no faith in Tughrul's chances of winning this battle and so didn't move from their positions. Tughrul was killed on the battlefield. The khorezmshah ordered his head cut off and sent to Baghdad.²

The death of Sultan Tughrul bin Arslanshah bin Tughrul bin Mohammed Tapar bin Melikshah bin Alp Arslan bin Davud bin Mikhail bin Seljuk in 1195 CE brought an end to the dynasty of the Great Seljuk sultans.

¹ El-Hüseyni... Ahbar üd-Devlet is-Selçukiyye... S. 134 – 135.

² Al Bundari. Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları... S. 270.

CHAPTER VI

Transformation of the Ethnic and Religious Conditions in Asia Minor During the XII - XIII Centuries. Formation of the Islamic Turkic - Seljuk State in Byzantium.

1. Mass Migrations of the Oghuz to the Byzantine Territories at the End of the 11th - Beginning of the 12th Centuries.

Formation and Establishment of the Turkic-Seljuk State.

As a result of Alp Arslan's victory at Malazgirt in 1071 CE the Byzantine imperial military was rendered powerless at providing border security or any real protection of the state's territories. Thus a vast number of the Oghuz tribes, previously settled at the eastern Byzantine borders, flooded into the empire, and without any obstructions or barriers on the part of the Byzantines took over vast amounts of lands, settling the Byzantine plains and river valleys.

Seljuk military commanders simultaneously conquered the Byzantine territories and established upon them their own principalities or beyliks. Alp Arslan first initiated this process after Emperor Romanus Diogenes was deposed from the Byzantine throne, and the new emperor refused to recognize the terms of the agreement signed by Diogenes at the time of his release from the Seljuk custody. This was how Saltuk founded his own beylik in the Erzurum region, Mengüdjük founded his in the Erzindjan region, one of Alp Arslan's most noted commanders Artuk formed his beylik in Sivas, and Danishmend-ghazi established his beylik in Tokat, Amasya,

and Kayseri.¹

Around the same time, in the 1073 - 1074 CE Kutalmış's son and Seljuk's grandson Suleiman arrived in Anatolia. As we mentioned earlier, following Kutalmış's death members of his inner circle and his children were detained. According to some sources, Kutalmış's children were granted freedom after Melikshah became sultan,² while others claim that they took advantage of the infighting between the members of the Seljuk clan for the imperial throne and fled.³

Once in Anatolia Suleiman united the nomadic Oghuz tribes and conquered the Byzantine towns of Melitena (Malatya), Caesarea (Kayseri), Sevestia (Sivas), Aksaray, and Ikonium (Konya). In 1075 CE he arrived on the shores of the Sea of Marmara and conquered the well-fortified city Nicaea (Izmit), and then Izmit. Suleiman united all of the captured territories and announced the establishment of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor with the capital in Iznik. The official announcement was sent to Baghdad and as soon as the Abbasid caliph learned of a Sunni Muslim state established in the immediate vicinity of Constantinople he immediately recognized the new country and proclaimed Suleiman its sultan.⁴

Melikshah's reaction towards the new Seljuk state in Asia Minor and Suleiman's new title was highly negative and contributed to great tensions between the two states. Some sources claim that Melikshah even sent his army to Anatolia with an intention to force Suleiman to accept vassalage to the Great Seljuk Empire.⁵

¹ Sümer, F. Oğuzlar (Türkmenler). Tarihleri-boy teşkilatı-Destanları. Ankara, 1972. S. 100.

² Please see: Turan, O. Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi. Siyasi tarih. Alp Arslan'-dan Osman Gaziye (1071 - 1318). İstanbul, 1984. S. 47.

³ Please see: Budge, Ernest A. Wallis. The Chronography of Gregody Abu'l-Faraj... Volume I. P. 226.

⁴ Please see: Turan, O. Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi... S. 63.

⁵ Ibid. S. 56.

By 1080 CE Suleiman managed to expand his western territories all the way to the Aegean Sea. Anna Komnenos wrote that Suleiman conquered everything in the East, built his palace in Nicaea and that his cavalry and infantry units were stationed as far as Bosphorus.¹ Anna Komnenos continued: "The Byzantines saw how the Turks settled their coastal towns and erected their palaces (nobody tried to displace them from there), and so lived in constant fear, uncertain of how to conduct themselves."²

The Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos (1081 - 1118 CE) managed to displace the Seljuks from the areas in the immediate vicinity of the Bosphorus and Vifiniya but in 1081 the Byzantines were compelled to recognize the new Turkic Seljuk state with its capital in Nicaea. This was followed by an official peace agreement signed by the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos and the Seljuk Sultan Suleiman.³

With the Byzantine peace agreement in place Suleiman turned his attention to expanding his eastern and southeastern borders and soon conquered Armenian territories in Cilicia (1082 - 1083 CE), a well-fortified city of Antioch and then turned his troops towards Syria. As we mentioned earlier at the time of Suleiman's campaigns Syria was ruled by Melikshah's brother Tutush. Therefore Suleiman's incursion into Syria was a direct territorial challenge to the Great Seljuk Empire. Suleiman managed to take over several Syrian settlements and in 1085 CE his army laid siege to Halab (Aleppo). In 1086 CE Suleiman's army faced Tutush but lost the battle and Suleiman was killed.⁴ Suleiman's entourage and the better part of his army were captured. On Melikshah's direct orders, Suleiman's children Kılıç Arslan and Kulan Arslan were brought to the imperial capital and kept at the

¹ Комнина, Анна. Алексиада... С. 137.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Abu'l Farac, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus). Abu'l Farac Tarihi... Cilt I. S. 333.

royal court.

Suleiman's death resulted in the breakup of the centralized Seljuk state in Anatolia and the formation of several independent beyliks on its territory. What was left of the former Seljuk state was a small territory in the west. Just as Suleiman embarked on his final military campaign he left in Iznik a governor, named Ebul Kasım. Ebul Kasım proved himself a talented military commander and statesman who, until 1092 CE, successfully defended the city from the numerous take over attempts by the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos and the Seljuk Sultan Barkiyaruq. Following his ascent to the throne Barkiyaruq sent Borsuk - one of his most experienced military commanders - and 50,000 of his soldiers to Iznik.¹ Ebul Kasım managed to preserve the throne for Suleiman's descendants.

When Melikshah died in 1092 CE, Kılıç Arslan and Kulan Arslan managed to leave the capital of the Great Seljuk Empire and arrived in Anatolia where the older of the two sons assumed his father's throne and came to be known throughout history as Sultan Kılıç Arslan I (1092 - 1107 CE).

Kılıç Arslan spent his first years on the throne defending his state from the near-constant attacks by the Byzantine troops trying to gain control of Iznik. His military success resulted in a 1095 CE peace agreement with the Byzantine Empire. With peace attained in the west, Kılıç Arslan headed east with the intention of uniting the Oghuz beys and reinstating the Seljuk state within its pre-existing borders.

However, something else transpired at the time of Kılıç Arslan's eastern campaign that would drastically change the military and political makeup of Asia Minor and the Near East.

After loosing the better part of his territories in Asia Minor the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos reached

¹ Комнина, Анна. Алексиада... С. 192.

out to Pope Urban II for military assistance.¹ In November of 1095 CE, the Pope held Church Council at Clermont, France where he urged the European knights to take up arms and free Christ from the Saracens. At the Council the Pope also issued an order stating, "It is hereby the duty of every man who has taken on the Cross to fight the Saracens and not return home until he has come to the Holy Tomb."²

Europe began preparations for the First Crusade. All of the European nobility and aristocracy were to participate. In August of 1096 CE four armies set out for Constantinople. Godfrey of Bouillon, the Duke of Lower Lorraine and his brother Baldwin of Boulogne led the Crusaders from Germany and Northern France. Knights of the Norman Sicilian Kingdom and the Crusaders from the south of Italy were led by Bohemond, Prince of Taranto and his nephew Tancred. Hugh I of Vermandois, the brother of the French King Phillip I, led the Crusaders from northern France and Raymond IV of Toulouse commanded the knights of Provence and Italy.³

While some sources cite the size of the Crusaders' army at 300,000, and some claim the number was closer to 600,000⁴ the precise number of Crusaders remains unknown. Of the total fighters 100,000 belonged to the heavy cavalry, so named for a couple of different reasons. First, the cavalry knights as well as their horses were protected by heavy metal armor. Secondly, combat horses were a much bigger and

¹ In 1074 CE Emperor Michael Doukas sent a similar request to Pope Gregory VII. The Pope was very enthusiastic about sending European knights to Byzantium and then on to Jerusalem. However, due to a series of circumstances no practical steps were taken towards the implementation of the plan.

² Эпоха крестовых походов. Под редакцией Э.Лависса и А.Рамбо. Перевод М.Першензона. М. - СПб., 2007. С. 348 – 349.

³ Ibid. С. 351 – 352.

⁴ See for example: Mathieu (d'Edesse). Chronique. Paris, 1858. P. 214; Turan, O. Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi... S. 100; Мишо Г. История крестовых походов. М. - СПб., 2004. С. 21.

stronger breed than the ordinary horses.¹

Thus, the Crusaders' heavy cavalry was practically invincible to the Seljuks whose main weapons were bows and arrows. The Crusaders also used crossbows, a completely new type of weapon, unknown by the Seljuks and the Byzantines alike. The daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos, Anna Komnenos offered the following description of the crossbow:

This *tsangra* (*this is how Anna Komnenos refers to the cross-bow – author's note*) is a bow of the barbarians (*here she refers to the Crusaders – author's note*) quite unknown to the Hellenes; and it is not stretched by the right hand pulling the string whilst the left pulls the bow in a contrary direction, but he who stretches this warlike and very far-shooting weapon must lie, one might say, almost on his back and apply both feet strongly against the semi-circle of the bow and with his two hands pull the string with all his might in the contrary direction. In the middle of the string is a socket, a cylindrical kind of cup fitted to the string itself, and about as long as an arrow of considerable size which reaches from the string to the very middle of the bow; and through this arrows...are shot out. The arrows used with this bow are very short in length, but very thick, fitted in front with a very heavy iron tip. And in discharging them the string shoots them out with enormous violence and force, and whatever these darts chance to hit, they do not fall back, but they pierce through a shield, then cut through a heavy iron corselet and wing their way through and out at the other side...²

Anna Komnenos described the Crusaders' body armor:

For the Frankish weapon of defense is this coat of

¹ Please see: Bartlett, R. *The making of Europe. Conquest, colonization and cultural change 950 - 1350*. London, 1993. P. 72 – 73.

² Комнина, Анна. Алексиада... С. 281 – 282.

mail, ring plaited into ring, and the iron fabric is such excellent iron that it repels arrows and keeps the wearer's skin unhurt. An additional weapon of defense is a shield which is not round, but a long shield, very broad at the top and running out to a point, hollowed out slightly inside, but externally smooth and gleaming with a brilliant boss of molten brass. Consequently any arrow, be it Scythian or Persian, or even discharged by the arms of a giant, would glint off such a shield and hark back to the sender.¹

An agreement signed by the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos and the Crusaders contained the following provisions:

- The knights and their leaders become vassals of the Byzantine emperor throughout their stay in Asia Minor.
- All former Byzantine lands, cities and fortresses recaptured by the Crusaders from the Seljuks will be returned to the Byzantine Empire.²
- For his part the Byzantine emperor agreed to provide the Crusaders with provisions along with any other assistance, including military, they may require in order to attain their mission.

In compliance with his obligations Emperor Alexios transported the Crusader knights across the Bosphorus to the Asian side of the empire. The Byzantine and Crusader armies laid siege to Iznik and six weeks later on June 26, 1097 CE the Byzantines took control of the city.³

The joint European armies continued their campaign into the interior regions of Anatolia forcing Kılıç Arslan to retreat towards Dorilea (Eskişehir). Here the Danishmendid forces led by Gümüshtekin, and the army of the Emir of Kayseri Hassan joined his army. The battle took place on July

¹ Комнина, Анна. Алексиада... С. 357.

² Ibid. С. 287.

³ Эпоха крестовых походов... С. 354.

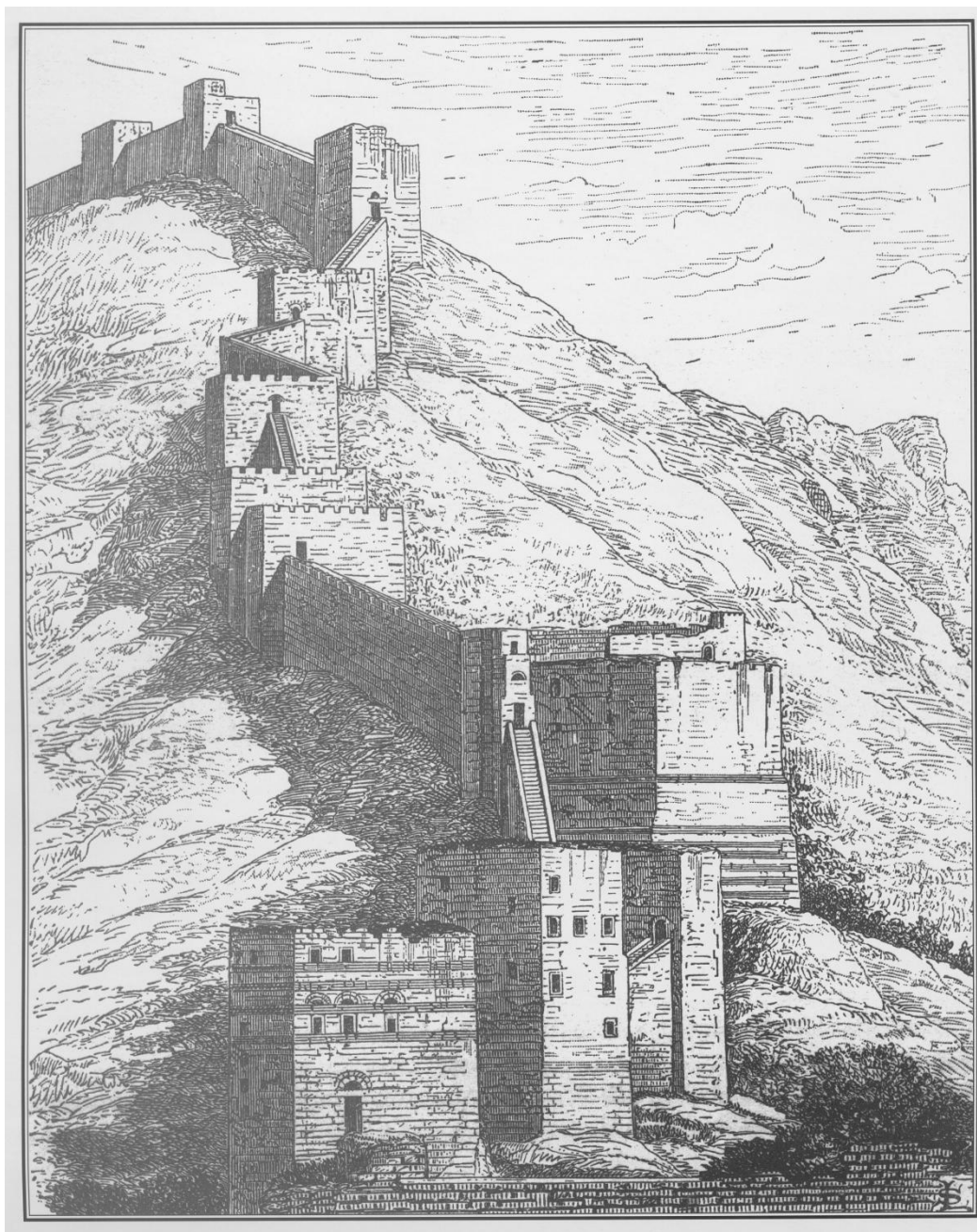
4, 1097 CE with the Seljuk attack on the advancing Crusader frontline as they reached Eskishehir. The rapid onset of the numerous Turkic cavalry caused confusion among the Crusaders, but the situation changed just as soon as European heavy cavalry caught up with the frontline and attacked the Seljuks dealing them a blow so severe that it decided the course of the battle. The Seljuks' only opportunity to save the remainder of their army was to flee the battlefield. The Crusaders captured the Seljuk treasury, their entire provision train and a large number of livestock, horses and camels.

The defeat at Eskishehir was evidence of the Turks' combat vulnerability against the Crusaders. In the aftermath of this defeat the Seljuks understood the futility of their resistance and gave up most of the territories without resistance. Soon Byzantium regained control of the western regions of Asia Minor as well as the Black Sea regions.

In October of 1097 CE the Crusaders arrived at Antioch, conquered by the Seljuks in 1084 CE, and laid siege to the city that lasted for seven months. Anna Komnenos wrote that the Crusaders managed the capture only after the betrayal of one of its defenders. Bohemond bribed an Armenian who was charged with defending the very same portion of the city wall. Komnenos wrote,

According to the agreement, Bohemond arrived at the wall at dusk and the Armenian opened the city gates. Bohemond and his unit climbed the wall, and in plain view of the besieged and the besieging ordered the trumpets to sound the attack. Stricken by fear and confusion, the Turks immediately ran through the opposite gates, with just a few brave souls staying behind to protect the acropolis. The Celts followed Bohemond up the wall ladders and soon took full control of Antioch.¹

¹ Комнина, Анна. Алексиада... С. 300 – 301.



Antioch (Antakya) City Walls

The knights stormed Jerusalem¹ on July 15, 1098 CE and killed everyone in sight. The new Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem was established and headed by Godfrey of Bouillon, the Duke of Lower Lorraine. This was one of four newly formed Christian principalities established by the Crusaders in Asia Minor and the Arabic East: the Principality of Antioch,² County of Edessa,³ and the County of Tripoli.⁴

The Seljuk state with their capital in Iznik was once again liquidated. The Oghuz continued to settle Anatolia but were now forced to relocate their settlements several hundred kilometers inland with no access to the Asia Minor coastlines.

The Byzantines continued to gain on their positions, successfully engaging the Turks and reclaiming their lands. Once the news of the Crusaders' military victories reached Europe almost 300,000 new soldiers from every European country arrived in Constantinople in 1101 CE to continue with the conquests started by their predecessors.

Kılıç Arslan and other Turks who recognized his authority retreated further into Asia Minor and established their new capital at Ikonium (Konya). Kılıç Arslan continued his resistance against the Byzantines and made new attempts to unite the beys of the Central and eastern Anatolian Oghuz principalities.

During this historical period a parallel Danishmendid dynasty⁵ was established in Anatolia. Acting in unison, the joint Seljuk and Danishmendid troops successfully defeated the Crusaders.

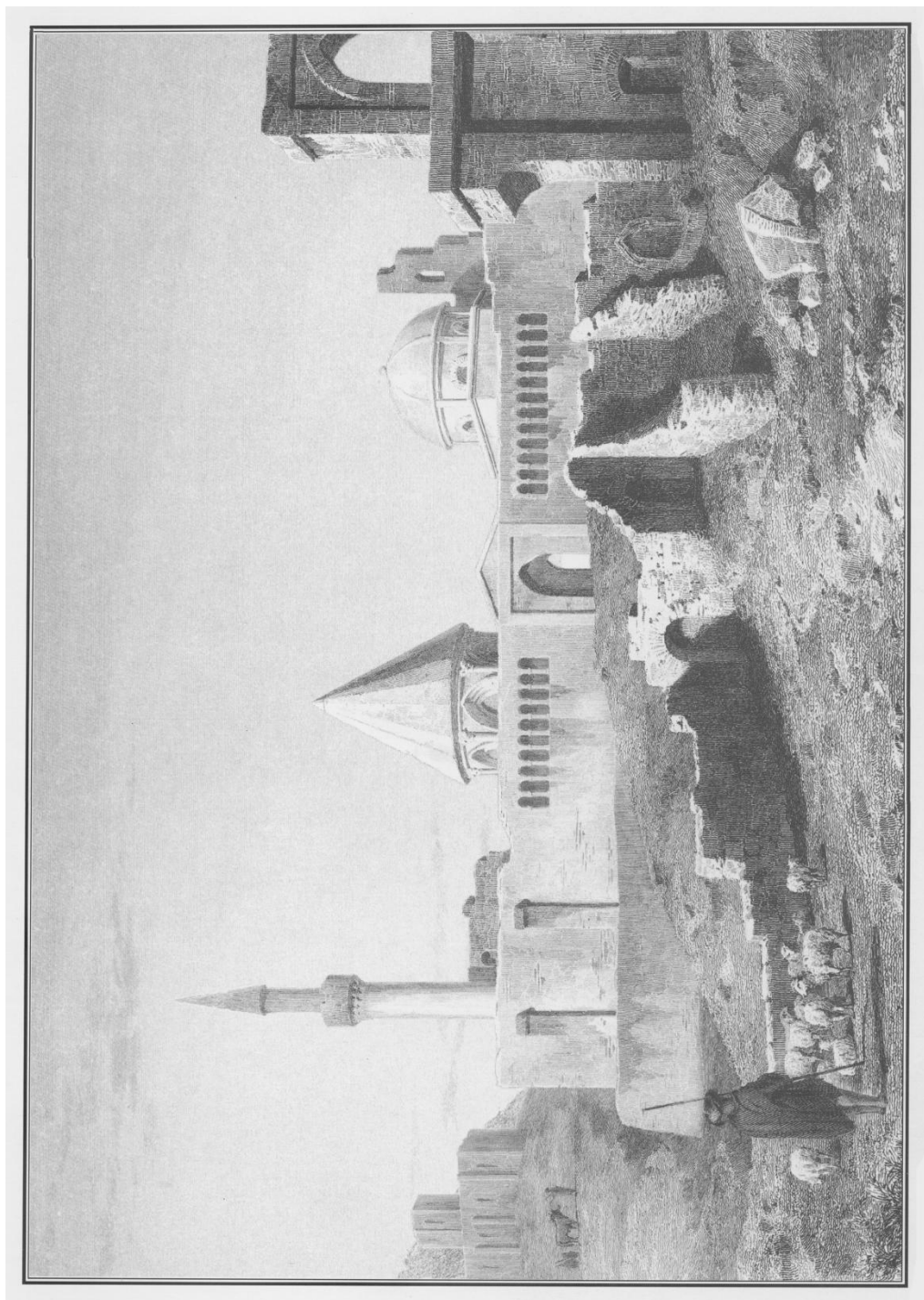
¹ At the time Jerusalem was part of the [Arab] Fatimid Caliphate.

² Antioch – presently the city of Antakya in Turkey.

³ Edessa – presently the city of Urfa in Turkey.

⁴ Tripoli – presently a city port in Lebanon.

⁵ Danishmendids – a Türkmen dynasty founded during the last quarter of the 11th century in Asia Minor. The dynasty founded its own powerful state in the vicinity of Amasya, Neocaesarea, and Melitene.



Konya (Alaeddin's Mosque)

In 1101 CE the Danishmendid army defeated Bohemond of Taranto (The Duke of Antioch) and the Crusaders under his command as they embarked on a raid from Antioch (Antakya) to the Malatya region. The Duke was taken hostage.

The defeat and the imprisonment of the duke served as a signal for the remaining Crusaders to begin their march from Constantinople. One of the three armies headed along the Iznik - Eskişehir - Akshehir - Konya - Ereğli - Çankırı - Amasya route to liberate the Duke of Toront who was imprisoned by the Turks in Niksandriya (Niksare). In 1101 CE the joint Danishmend-ghazi and Kılıç Arslan forces decimated the Crusaders' unit at Amasya.

The second unit of the Crusaders' army chose Antioch as their final destination and left Nicaea following the Eskişehir - Akshehir - Konya - Ereğli route. Kılıç Arslan attacked the Crusaders around Eskişehir, Akshehir, and Konya inflicting serious damage to their unit. The remaining troops were practically annihilated at Ereğli. Just several thousand Crusaders managed to make it to Antioch.¹

Kılıç Arslan advanced towards the city of Maraş and began preparations to attack the Crusader units at Antioch. However this campaign failed to materialize for a series of reasons one of which was the increasing tensions and the ultimate breakdown in the relationship between Kılıç Arslan and Gümüştekin Danishmend. The cause of these hostilities between two former allies lay in the following: without any prior discussion with Kılıç Arslan Gümüştekin Danishmend entered into negotiations with the Crusaders and having secured a 100,000 dinar ransom for himself, freed Bohemond. Then Danishmend's army took control of Malatya (which Kılıç Arslan planned to do, but didn't manage in time). Having regarded Danishmend's actions as hostile, Kılıç Arslan moved his army against Danishmend and in the ensued battle of 1103 CE crushed his former ally. In June of

¹ Turan, O. Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi... S. 105.

1105 CE Kılıç Arslan laid siege to Malatya and in September of that same year accepted the unconditional surrender of Danishmend's son Yagısayan. Also in 1105 Kılıç Arslan successfully united most of the Eastern Anatolian territories within his state.

The initial Crusader attempts at deposing the Byzantine emperor came in 1106 CE when the former broke the terms of the agreement with Emperor Alexios I Komnenos and began to appropriate the liberated lands as their own principalities. The leaders of the Crusader armies ignored all protestations of the emperor, his accusations of breaking the oath they've given to him, and his demands of the return of the liberated from the Muslims lands back to the Byzantine Empire. Alexios Komnenos found himself having to protect his lands not only from the Seljuk Turks but also from the Christian knights.

At the end of 1104 CE Bohemond of Taranto returned to Europe with definitive plans to organize the first military campaign against the Byzantine Empire. With these intentions he arrived in Rome in 1105 CE and was received by the Pope Paschal II. To better make his case and to gain Papal support for military actions against Byzantium Bohemond focused his argument on the differences between the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox churches and accused Alexios I Komnenos of attacking the Crusader armies with his own men as well as dispatching the Muslim barbarians against the Christian knights.

Anna Komnenos wrote,

To further infuriate those Italians closest to the Pope, he showed them the captured Scyths (*these could have been the Oghuz who, as we know served in the Byzantine army - author's note*) as proof that the autocratic Alexios was hostile towards the Christian, dispatched against them the unfaithful barbarians - fearsome mounted archers who aimed their weapons at

the Christians and threw their spears at them.¹

Bohemond succeeded at persuading the Pope to approve the military campaign against the Byzantines. In 1106 CE Bohemond arrived in Paris where he met with the French king and likewise managed to persuade him of the immediate necessity not only to begin preparations for the Second Crusade, but also to simultaneously attack the Orthodox Byzantines. At the end of March in 1106 CE Bohemond met with King Henry I of England, and returned to Italy in August of 1106 to begin the appropriate preparations for his campaign against Byzantium. Anna Komnenos wrote that Bohemond gathered “the most powerful army” with the intent of overthrowing the emperor and conquering the Byzantine throne.²

Emperor Alexios I Komnenos learned of Bohemond’s plans and moved his troops from Constantinople towards Thessaloniki. Bohemond’s fleet, which contained a large number of transport vessels, crossed the Adriatic Sea in October of 1106 CE and disembarked the troops in the Hellenic port city of Avlon (Devol). Bohemond captured the cities along the Adriatic coastline and laid siege to the city of Dyrrachium, which was considered the key to the Balkans. Komnenos, aware of the absolute numeric superiority of Bohemond’s army chose not to engage his enemy in direct combat. Instead he blocked the city from the sea and remotely surrounded the besieging army from land. The residents of Dyrrachium staged a brave defense and the siege extended beyond Bohemond’s expectations. The knights began to experience shortages of food and fodder, and by the time his disease-stricken soldiers began to die off, Bohemond was compelled to send ambassadors to the Byzantine emperor with a peace offer.

The peace agreement, or “The Treaty of Devol”, was

¹ Комнина, Анна. Алексиада... С. 337 – 338.

² Ibid. С. 330.

thereby signed in December of 1108 CE. Anna Komnenos gave us the text of the treaty in its entirety.¹

According to the treaty Bohemond agreed to become a vassal of the emperor, and also of Alexios' son and heir John. He agreed to give up his possessions within Byzantium and, moreover, agreed to "tirelessly defend" the empire against his nephew Tancred in the event the latter refused to give up Byzantine cities. In return he requested that the emperor grant him lands in the "eastern regions." The treaty contained within it a provision requiring all Byzantine lands to be returned to the empire after Bohemond's death.

From the legal standpoint, the treaty was a confirmation of Bohemond's defeat, however none of the provisions have been observed as Bohemond died less than a year later and Tancred refused to recognize its terms.

At this time in the Seljuk Empire Mohammed Tapar recently ascended the Seljuk throne and began to implement his plan aimed at stabilizing the domestic conditions within the empire. Kılıç Arslan took full advantage of the change of power and in March of 1107 CE breached the imperial boundaries and conquered Mosul. He replaced the municipal administration and installed his son Mesoud (Shahinshah) at the head of Mosul. According to new orders, the hutba in Mosul was to be read with Kılıç Arslan's name.

In retaliation Mohammed Tapar sent his troops to Mosul. As his army arrived at Mosul's city walls the neighboring eastern Anatolian beys, recently made vassals of Kılıç Arslan, betrayed their ruler and together with their troops joined Tapar's army. On June 14, 1107 the joint enemy forces decimated Kılıç Arslan's units and he was killed in battle. The authority and power of the Great Seljuk emperor was restored. Kılıç Arslan's son was arrested and sent to serve in the royal court of Sultan Mohammed Tapar.

As a direct result of Kılıç Arslan's death the Turkic

¹ Комнина, Анна. Алексиада... С. 364 – 372.

Seljuk state in Asia Minor had once again ceased to exist. The Byzantines took full advantage of the situation taking control of the former Seljuk western territories while the Crusaders occupied Byzantine lands up to the Ceyhan River.

In 1110 CE Shahishah, managed to flee from captivity and returned to Konya. Shahishah I (1110 – 1116 CE) took over his father's throne and became the third sultan of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor. We don't have extensive information on his reign except that he was in a near-constant state of defending his territories from the Byzantine armies. In 1116 CE Alexios Komnenos decimated Shahinshah's army and forced the sultan to sign an agreement, which stipulated a complete Seljuk withdrawal from Asia Minor. Anna Komnenos wrote that the Byzantine emperor met with the sultan and suggested that he become a vassal of the Byzantine Empire and more specifically that the Seljuk Turks should return to the lands they occupied before Romanus Diogenes took the reigns of the country in his own hands and suffered such a catastrophic defeat at Malazgirt.¹

The agreement was signed the very next day, and the emperor sent generous gifts to the sultan and his advisors. However, the agreement was never enforced. Several days after it was signed Shahinshah's brother Mesoud took over the throne and issued an order upon which his brother was executed.

Mesoud I (1116 - 1155 CE) ruled the Seljuk state in Asia Minor for 39 years, spending most of the time fighting the Danishmends. In the 1130's the borders of their state reached from the Euphrates River in the west to the Sakarya River in the east. The Danishmends controlled Malatya, Sivas, Kayseri and Ankara. They were successful at fighting the Crusaders and the Armenians in the west, and the Byzantines in the east. In recognition of his achievements in the Islamic lands in 1134 CE the Abbasid caliph gave

¹ Комнина, Анна. Алексиада... С. 413.

Mohammed Danishmend the title of Melik and recognized him as the most influential Muslim ruler in Anatolia.

Melik Mohammed Danishmend died in Kayseri - the capital of his state, in 1143 CE prompting an ascension war among his remaining sons, which resulted in the state's division onto three independent beyliks.¹ Mesoud I took advantage of the weakening of the Danishmendid state and in 1144 CE regained control of the Ceyhan regions with the center at Elbistan. Mesoud then turned his army west, defeated the Byzantines and took over the city of Denizli. His army advanced towards Eskişehir in the northwest and in 1146 CE the Seljuks arrived at Nicaea. Mesoud's military advances prompted the Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1143 – 1180 CE) to assemble his army and set out from Constantinople to face the Seljuks. He successfully liberated the city of Phrygia, the Menderes River Valley and defeated the Seljuks at Philomelion (Akshehir). The Byzantine Army then entered Akshehir and soon after, continuing their pursuit of the Seljuks, reached Mesoud's capital city of Konya. The battle of Konya ended with disastrous results for the Byzantines as they lost almost 20,000 soldiers and had to return to Constantinople giving up all of their campaign conquests.

Therefore, by 1147 CE Sultan Mesoud was able to achieve a substantial expansion of his borders and reinforce his influence.

1147 CE was also the year of the Second Crusade. The main causes of the Second Crusade were the substantial losses incurred by the European knights in the Near East. Their newly formed principalities were under constant pressure from the Muslims and their population was not well protected. In 1144 CE the Mosul Atabeg stormed Edessa (Urfa), killed all Christian residents, and eliminated the County of Edessa. The Principality of Antioch was now under

¹ Abu'l Farac, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus). Abu'l Farac Tarihi... Cilt I. S. 267.

direct threat.¹

As a consequence, Pope Eugene III called upon the German and the French knights to take up arms and seek revenge upon the foes of Christ. He promised forgiveness of all sins and blessings of the Church to anyone who embarked on the crusade.² As a result of the Papal address two armies were formed for the Second Crusade. The French army, headed by the King Louis VII of France and the German army headed by the Holy Roman Emperor Conrad III. The united forces counted more than one million soldiers of which 140,000 were the heavy knight cavalry.³ This massive army was to occupy the Islamic countries of the Near and Middle East, create Christian states in their place, and displace Islam - the dominant religion in the area.

In a stark contrast to the First Crusade the Byzantine emperor did not call for the Pope's or the European rulers' assistance against the Muslims. Furthermore, Manuel Komnenos regarded the Crusades as a potential threat to his own state and its faith. There is some evidence that the Byzantine emperor and the Seljuk sultan had a secret pact against the Crusaders whereby Komnenos provided military intelligence to Mesoud I.⁴

The German army was the first to arrive at Constantinople and the Byzantine emperor persuaded Conrad III to go ahead without waiting for the French to arrive and transported the Germans across the Bosphorus. The German knights followed the familiar route of the first crusade Nicaea - Eskişehir. Mesoud was aware of their plans and was preparing for a grandiose battle at Eskişehir. By the time the German heavy cavalry and their horses arrived they were suffering from exhaustion, severe hunger and dehydration.

The battle ensued on October 25, 1147 CE when the

¹ Turan, O. Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi... S. 181.

² Эпоха крестовых походов... С. 379 – 380.

³ Turan, O. Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi... S. 182.

⁴ Abu'l Farac, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus). Abu'l Farac Tarihi... Cilt I. S. 298.

waves of light Seljuk cavalry staged attack after attack onto the clumsy metal-clad German knights. As a result the battle turned into a massacre and just 10% of the German army remained standing. The rest were either killed or taken captive. The Seljuks captured massive loot: gold, silver, and weapons. Abu'l-Faraj wrote that the amount of silver and other jewels captured from the Germans was so vast that the price of silver in the Malatya markets fell to the level of lead.¹ Just a small portion of the German soldiers made it back to Nicaea, the Byzantines killed the rest.²

As King Louis VII of France arrived in Constantinople Komnenos deliberately lied to the king, reporting that Conrad III defeated the Seljuks and was now in Konya. However, the two European monarchs met at Nicaea and as a consequence of Conrad's recounting of his catastrophic defeat, King Louis VII decided not to expose his own army to such great risk and go around the Seljuk territories. He set out from Nicaea and marched along the Aegean coast bypassing the cities of Balıkesir, Bergama, Izmir and Efes. As the French crossed the Menderes River their army was attacked by the Seljuks and suffered tremendous losses. However, in spite of being pursued by Mesoud's cavalry the French troops made it to Antalya. Their state was a dismal one, as besides losing men in battle many died of diseases, hunger and dehydration. The king and the most noble of his knights crossed by ship from Antalya into Syria (to one of the crusader principalities) leaving the rest of their soldiers to fend for themselves in and around Denizli. Such was the inglorious conclusion to the Second Crusade.

Mesoud's victories brought him great fame across the Muslim lands. The Baghdad caliph thrice sent him royal standards and other attributes of the sultan's power and authority.

¹ Abu'l Faraj, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus). *Abu'l Faraj Tarihi...* Cilt I. S. 274.

² Turan, O. *Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi...* S. 182.

In 1149 CE Mesoud, accompanied by his son Kılıç Arslan started on a campaign against the Franks¹ who have by then settled in the east. That same year he laid siege and took control of Maraş, allowing the resident Crusaders to leave for Antioch. In 1150 CE he took the following cities from the Crusaders: Göksun, Behisni, Goynuk, Ayntab, Dulu, and Raban and transferred them to his son Kılıç Arslan. In 1152 CE Mesoud I succeeded at imposing his authority over the Danishmends and included their territories, as vassal states into the Seljuk Empire.

Sultan Mesoud I played a crucial part in the establishment and the formation of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor. Taking his inheritance of a small beylik with a capital in Konya he came to rule over the better part of Asia Minor. Following his victories over the Crusaders Mesoud I became the most influential ruler in the region. The Byzantine Emperor Manuel Komnenos and Mesoud I signed a peace treaty. According to the agreement the Byzantine Empire paid an annual tribute to the Seljuk state.

2. *Continued Mass Migrations of the Oghuz to Asia Minor During the Second Half of the 12th Century. Rising Tensions Between the Seljuks and the Byzantine Empire.*

Kılıç Arslan II succeeded his father to the Seljuk throne in 1155 CE and ruled until 1192 CE. The ruler of Sivas Yagıbasan Danishmend decided to take advantage of the transition on the Seljuk throne and sent his troops into the Kayseri and the Ceyhan provinces. Surprised by the unexpected hostilities Kılıç Arslan immediately set out on a campaign. In the subsequent battle of October 1155 CE the

¹ At the time the term “Franks” was used across Asia Minor and the Middle East to refer to all Europeans.

Danishmendid army was destroyed and the rebellious leader brought into submission.

The desire to reassess his own borders with the Seljuks also overcame the Atabeg of Halab and Mosul Nureddin Mahmoud who in 1156 CE occupied Aynteb and Raban. As part of his preparations for his eastern campaign Kılıç Arslan sent ambassadors to the Crusaders of Jerusalem and Antioch requesting that they either assist him in the campaign or remain neutral in the upcoming confrontations. With their consent Kılıç Arslan set out from Konya and soon besieged Aynteb. He used catapults to bring down the city walls and once the city fell he moved his army onto Raban. The King of Jerusalem and the Duke of Antioch staged a simultaneous attack from the south and Mohammed Nureddin had no other option but to return the conquered territories to Kılıç Arslan and in 1157 CE return to Halab.¹

In the late 1150's a vast number of the nomad Oghuz came to occupy regions along the western Seljuk borders. Officially these tribes were not subjects of Kılıç Arslan II and therefore did not recognize his authority. These Turkic nomads began invading Byzantine territories, raiding settlements, stealing cattle or other possessions of the peaceful Byzantine population, and taking them into captivity.

In an attempt to resist the assaults and protect the imperial borders and his citizens, Byzantine Emperor Manuel Komnenos personally headed the army against the nomad Oghuz, but was attacked in 1160 CE at Eskishehir. The nomad Oghuz strategy was simple - they made nighttime raids and by morning they vanished. The Byzantine army continued to sustain losses until they reached tens of thousands of dead soldiers.² Unable to tolerate further losses and facing the approach of winter the emperor had to return to

¹ Abu'l Farac, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus). *Abu'l Farac Tarihi...* Cilt I. S. 281.

² Turan, O. *Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi...* S. 200.

Constantinople. The Turks took full advantage of the Byzantine retreat, sustaining their raids on Byzantine territories and advancing as far as Isparta and Denizli. In a further coordinated effort, Kılıç Arslan's vassal Yagıbasan Danishmend occupied the Byzantine settlements of Bafra and Unye on the Black Sea coast.

These advances posed a great threat to Byzantium and the Emperor Manuel Komnenos was well aware that the existence of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor encouraged aggression and hostilities of the nomad Oghuz and other Turkic tribes towards the Byzantine Empire. In 1160 Manuel Komnenos entered into an alliance with the Crusaders and the Danishmendids aimed at defeating Kılıç Arslan. The ruler of Ankara and Kılıç Arslan's younger brother Shahinshah, was promised the Konya throne, and so joined the coalition against his brother.

Surrounded, Kılıç Arslan sent his ambassadors to Constantinople with a proposition for peaceful negotiations, but the emperor declined the offer. In 1160 CE, in an attempt to appease the Danishmendids and compromise the coalition, Kılıç Arslan handed Elbistan over to Yagıbasan Danishmend, but the latter refused to leave the coalition. In a retaliation attempt, Kılıç Arslan sent his troops against the Danishmendids but lost the battle after the coalition troops arrived in Yagıbasan's aid.

Kılıç Arslan found himself in a precarious situation and so in 1162 CE he traveled to Constantinople to seek peace with the Byzantine emperor. With full advantage of the situation Manuel Komnenos signed the proposed peace agreement with Kılıç Arslan II, provided that the Seljuks return a number of cities along the Byzantine border and assume the responsibility for keeping the nomad Oghuz from future raids on the Byzantine territories.¹

Once the peace agreement with the Byzantines was

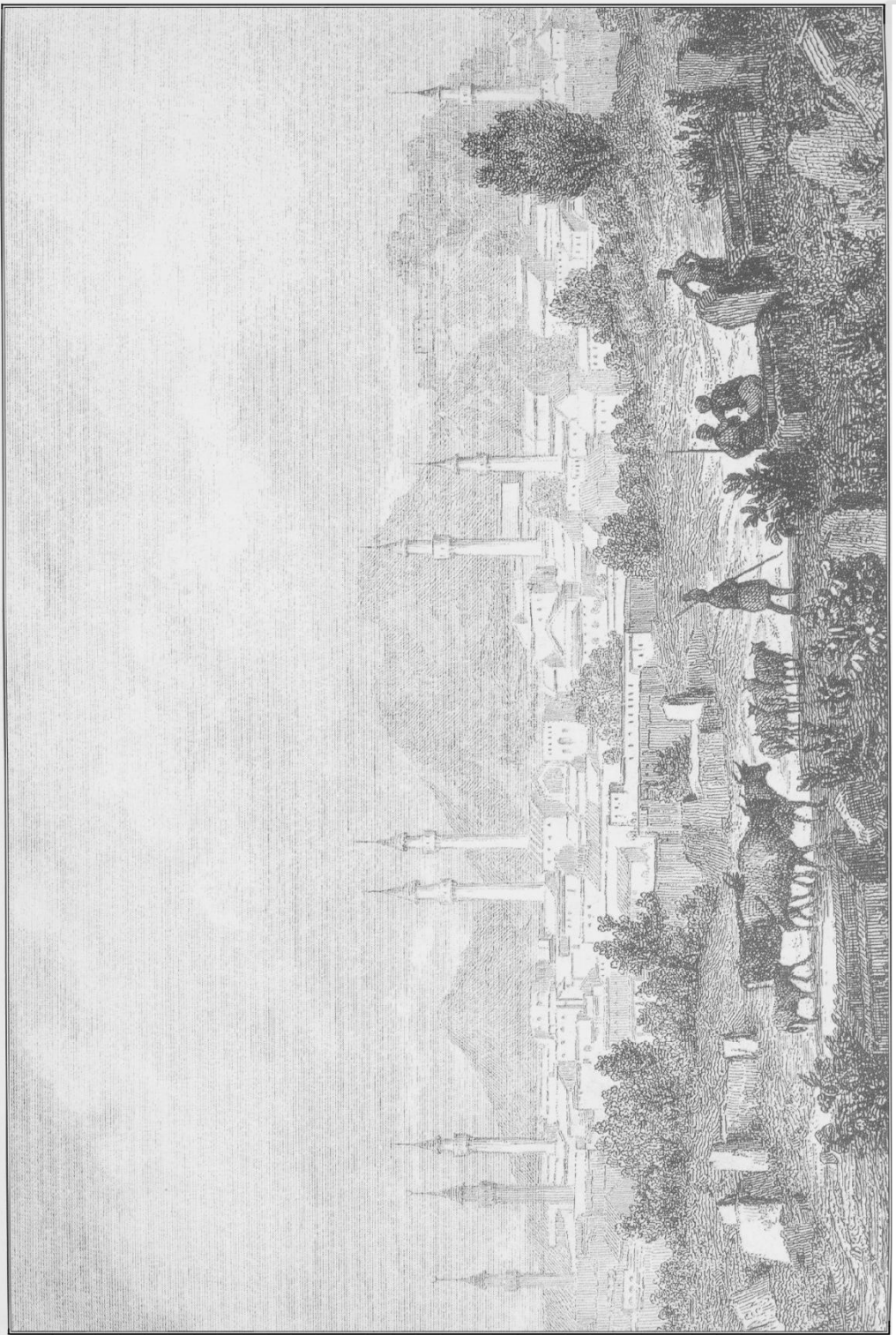
¹ Abu'l Farac, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus). *Abu'l Farac Tarihi...* Cilt I. S. 287.

signed, Kılıç Arslan went on a campaign against Yagıbasan Danishmend. In 1063 CE he occupied Sivas and from there went on to Ankara to punish his brother. Kılıç Arslan defeated Shahinshah's army, sent him on the run and occupied Ankara and Cankırı. In 1165 CE Kılıç Arslan went on a second campaign against the Danishmendids and gained control over Elbistan and the Ceyhan province. In 1169 CE he gained control of Kayseri¹ and in 1175 captured the Malatya beylik. In the summer of 1175 CE the Seljuks troops took over the cities of Niksar, Tokat, and other Danishmendid territories, thus liquidating the Danishmendid authority in Asia Minor and annexing their territories into the Seljuk state. For the 12 years immediately following the signing of the peace accord, the Byzantine Empire and the Seljuks maintained peaceful relations. However by 1175 CE the number of nomad Oghuz in the Eskişehir region once again saw a dramatic increase, reaching almost 100,000 people. Their demand for pasturelands continued to increase, as did their raids into Byzantium. Soon the raids became perpetual and their reach expanded to include all of the western regions of Asia Minor. The Turks made incursions onto Denizli, Kırkgach, Bergama, and Edremit. In other words they reached the western-most regions of the peninsula and arrived at the Aegean coastline. The Oghuz successfully occupied the northwestern territories of Asia Minor. In the course of their raids almost 100,000 Christians were captured and sold into slavery throughout the Muslim countries.²

In an attempt to end the aggression and terminate the Seljuk state, Emperor Manuel Komnenos assembled a colossal army consisting of his own troops, the Serbians, the Pecheneg and the Franks.

¹ Abu'l Farac, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus). Abu'l Farac Tarihi... Cilt I. S. 289.

² Turan, O. Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi... S. 206.



Ankara

The new army was comparable in size to that of Romanus Diogenes when he fought the Turks at Malazgirt. In the spring of 1076 CE the emperor led his army from Constantinople towards Konya where he planned to claim a decisive victory over the Turks.

Kılıç Arslan was aware that he was vastly outnumbered by the Byzantine army and avoided direct confrontation. Instead he split a portion of his army into several independent units that fought guerilla-style warfare. These units traveled parallel to the Byzantine army making sudden attacks on the troops and their supply train of wagons. The Seljuks also burned villages and poisoned water wells along the Byzantine route making it practically impossible to replenish supplies, water and fodder.

The Byzantine Army passed Denizli and turned northeast heading directly for the narrow pass in the Pysidian Myriokephalon Mountains around Lake Hayran. Once the vanguard of the Byzantine army entered the pass the around 50,000 nomad Oghuz attacked the rear. Kılıç Arslan and his army awaited the Byzantines at the other end of the pass. The Byzantine army was destroyed in the Myriokephalon pass and in the nearby Kumdanlı settlement. More than 100,000 men were captured and later sold as slaves. The captured Emperor Manuel I Komnenos was freed once he agreed to pay Kılıç Arslan a 100,000-dinar ransom. Furthermore, the emperor agreed to the additional stipulation of the agreement according to which he was to destroy all fortifications along his borders.

The destruction of the Byzantine army at Myriokephalon and Kumdanlı caused a radical shift in the military and political conditions in Asia Minor. Byzantium lost the influence and power it attained following the First Crusade and had an increasing difficulty resisting the attacks by the Seljuks and the nomad Turks. In 1182 the Seljuks captured the cities of Uluborlu, Eskişehir and Kütahya. In the southwestern regions of the peninsula the border between

Byzantium and the Seljuks state lay at Denizli. In 1183 the Seljuks began a new western offensive and by 1185 they gained control of 72 fortresses and advanced towards Philadelphia (Alashehir). As a consequence of such significant advances Kılıç Arslan II agreed to sign a peace agreement with the Byzantine emperor whereby for the next 10 years Byzantium agreed to pay the Seljuks an annual tribute.¹

3. *The Turkic Seljuk State in Asia Minor at the Height of its Influence.*

The Seljuk state in Asia Minor reached the pinnacle of its development during the reigns of Kılıç Arslan's son and grand sons: Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev I (1192 - 1196 and 1205 - 1211 CE), İzzeddin Keykavus (1211 - 1220 CE) and Alâeddin Keykûbad (1220 - 1237 CE).

Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev I, the youngest of Kılıç Arslan's 11 sons was the designated heir to the Seljuk throne, appointed in his father's lifetime. Other sons were given their own provinces where they had absolute authority.² This notwithstanding, in March of 1196 CE, the sultan's oldest son Rukneddin Suleimanshah assembled his troops and laid siege to Konya. İbn Bibi wrote that 60,000 of Sultan's archers kept Suleimanshah's advancing army from approaching Konya's walls and gardens. However, after four months of living in the besieged city, food and other supplies have been used up and Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev made a decision to cease all resistance. According to the terms of surrender the sultan and his entourage were given immunity, granted they leave the

¹ Turan, O. Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi... S. 214.

² Please see: İbn Bibi (el-Hüseyn b. Muhammed b. Ali el-Ca'feri er-Rugadi). El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye (Selçuk-name). I. Cilt. Türkçeye çeviren Mürsel Öztürk. Ankara, 1996. S. 41 – 42.

city and the country.¹

As soon as the younger brother was exiled Rukneddin Suleimanshah ascended the throne. During his time at the helm of the country Suleimanshah II successfully reinforced centralized power within the country, defeated the Armenian King Levon II (1187 - 1219 CE) in Eastern Anatolia and made a failed attempt at war with Tamar, the Queen of Georgia (1184 - 1211 CE).²

Rukneddin Suleimanshah died suddenly, and the throne briefly went to his young son İzzeddin Kılıç Arslan III (1204 - 1205 CE). Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev returned from exile as soon as he learned of his brother's death. He deposed the young nephew from the throne and appointed him the Melik of Tokat.³ According to other sources İzzeddin Kılıç Arslan III was imprisoned and executed not long afterwards.⁴

Once in power, Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev I instituted policies directed at liquidating the country's feudal fragmentation and aimed towards a further centralization of power. In accordance with tradition he appointed his sons meliks of their respective provinces⁵ but their authority was now significantly curtailed. They no longer had the right to issue currency or have their names read in the hutba. They were allowed to have a military but it was to be used only as part of the sultan's army and only on his orders.⁶

The beginning of Keyhüsrev's second term coincided with major developments in the West's foreign policy. In 1204 CE the Crusaders conquered Constantinople. Following events lay at the root of these changes.

¹ İbn Bibi El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 52 – 53.

² Ibid. S. 77 – 95.

³ Ibid. S. 103.

⁴ Turan, O. Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi... S. 274.

⁵ Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev had three sons. His older son İzzeddin was appointed the Melik of Malatya, his middle son Alâeddin Keykûbad was named the Melik of Tokat and his youngest son Jelaluddin became the Melik of Koyluhisar.

⁶ Turan, O. Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi... S. 275 – 276.

In the 1180's Europe began preparations for the Fourth Crusade. The intended objective of this latest campaign was the liberation of Jerusalem, conquered by the legendary Saladin in 1187 CE.¹

Pope Innocent III was elected in 1189 CE and soon assumed an active role in the lives of the European nobility. He sent ambassadors to Germany, France, England, Scotland, Hungary, and Italy who carried letters containing the Papal promise to release the sins of those who took the vow of the Cross and liberated the Holy Tomb of Jesus.²

At the time Emperor Alexios III, who seized the throne from his brother Isaakios II Angelos in 1185 CE, ruled the Byzantine Empire. Alexios III blinded his brother and imprisoned him and his son Alexios. The young prince managed to free himself and sailed to Italy. From there he made his way to Germany to the royal court of his brother-in-law, Phillip of Swabia, King of Germany who was married to his sister, Irene.³ There Alexios signed an agreement with King Phillip which essentially said that the European knights will help return the Byzantine throne to Isaakios II and his son Alexios. For his part, the prince agreed to submit the Byzantine Empire to the control of the Roman Catholic Church, make a one-time payment to the Crusaders in the amount of 200,000 silver coins (Marks), provide sustenance for the Crusaders, send 10,000 soldiers to help fight the Muslims, and maintain the corps for one year at the expense of the Byzantine Empire, etc.⁴

The agreement and the personal letter from King Phillip were sent to Boniface I, Margrave (Marquess) of Montferrat

¹ Saladin, or Salah ad-Din (1138 – 1192) - the Sultan of Egypt since 1171 CE, was the leader of the Muslim resistance against the Crusaders.

² Федоров - Давыдов А.Л. Крестовые походы... С. 249.

³ Жуанвиль, Жан де; Виллардуэн, Жоффруа де. История крестовых походов... С. 45.

⁴ Успенский Ф.И. История Византийской империи. Т.4. М., 2005. С. 452 – 453.

the man elected to lead the European knights. The Markgrave and the other Crusader leaders agreed to the terms. In June 1203 CE the Crusaders' fleet carrying Prince Alexios arrived in Constantinople.

The Emperor Alexios III fled after the first Crusader attempt to take control of the city. As a consequence of a wave of popular discontent of June 19th, the citizens of Constantinople freed the blinded Isaakios II Angelos and pronounced him emperor instead of Alexios III who ignominiously fled the city. The Byzantines announced their decision to the Crusaders and invited Prince Alexios IV to share the throne with his father. The young Prince was crowned Emperor Alexios IV on August 1, 1203 CE. The father and son managed to pay the agreed upon 100,000 dinars to the Crusaders but then faced significant difficulties in fulfilling the remaining terms of the agreement Alexios negotiated with the Crusaders prior to the campaign.

As Geoffroi de Villehardouin, wrote from his own observations made during the Fourth Crusade, the young prince soon began to disrespect the European knights and consistently delayed the settlement of his debt. Not too long after that the knights elected ambassadors from their midst who arrived at the imperial court bearing an ultimatum - should the emperor fail to fulfill his obligations as outlined in the agreement, the knights will resort to other methods of securing their debt.¹

And so began the war between the Greeks and the Crusaders. In the spring of 1204 CE Constantinople was taken by storm. What followed next, according to Geoffroi de Villehardouin was a widespread massacre of the Greeks and sacking of the city. Greeks were killed left and right.² The 400,000 Greek population of Constantinople was panic-

¹ Жуанвиль, Жан де; Виллардуэн, Жоффруа де. История крестовых походов... С. 80 – 81.

² Ibid. С. 89.

stricken and barely mounted any resistance at all.¹

The Crusaders found untold riches in Constantinople's palaces. Geoffroi de Villehardouin wrote, that the treasures were so vast that it was impossible to account for all of it.²

Ordinary Crusaders spread and plundered throughout the city. Their extraordinary loot contained gold, silver, jewels silk, furs, utensils, etc.³ As a result of confrontations between the local population and the Crusaders a fire decimated the city's central quarters. Two more fires would reduce a third of the city to a pile of smoldering rubble.

The Byzantine emperor and members of the senior Greek nobility fled the city just as soon as they realized the inevitability of the confrontation.

The European plan of action was in place even before the Crusaders stormed the city. It was agreed that in the event the knights gained control of the city they would elect an emperor from their midst. The new emperor would receive one quarter of all seized treasures as well as the palaces of Bucoleon and Blachernae. The remaining three quarters would be divided among the knights.⁴

In the beginning of May 1204 CE Baldwin, Count of Flanders and Hainaut, the descendant of King Charles the Great, and a close relative of the king of France⁵ was elected the first Emperor of the Latin Empire of Constantinople. The Byzantine Empire was renamed Romania and the knights wasted no time in subjugating every region of the empire. As the recognized leader of the Fourth Crusade, Boniface I, Margrave of Montferrat was granted Thessaloniki. He then went on to conquer Macedonia and soon thereafter announced

¹ Успенский Ф.И. История Византийской империи... Т.5. М., 2005. С. 3.

² Жуанвиль, Жан де; Виллардуэн, Жоффруа де. История крестовых походов... С. 90.

³ Ibid. С. 91.

⁴ Ibid. С. 86.

⁵ Успенский Ф.И. История Византийской империи... Т.5. С. 30.

the birth of the new and independent¹ Kingdom of Thessaloniki. The Venetians received Albania, Epir (along with Yanina and Arta), the Ionian Islands, Lacedaemon (Sparta), Egina, the Cycladic Islands, Cyprus, and the fertile Thracian regions along with its port cities of Rodosto and Silivia.²

As part of his personal territories, the emperor received eastern Thrace regions - from the walls of Constantinople all the way to the Black Sea; the cities of Chorlu and Vizu; all of the Byzantine imperial territories (*i.e. all Byzantine lands not under the Seljuk control - author's note*) as well as a number of large islands in the archipelago - Mitilini, Lemnos, Samos, Chios and others.³

The rest of the Byzantine territories, primarily its western regions were distributed among more than 600 knights who received them as feudal counties. These territories lay primarily between Thessaly and Athens.⁴

The collapse of the Byzantine Empire led to the formation of several Greek principalities in Asia Minor. Thereby in April of 1204 CE the new Trapezuntine (Trebizond) Empire was formed along the coast of the Black Sea. Its ruler, the 22-year-old Alexios Komnenos was able to gain control of the area with the military assistance of the Georgian Queen Tamar. The queen also helped Alexios' younger brother David to conquer Paphlagonia and Iraclion and form his own principality that included the port cities of Samson and Eregli. The two states later fused to form the Trapezuntine Empire (1204 – 1461 CE) with Alexios Komnenos at its helm.

A Greek by the name of Theodore Laskaris founded the Greek Nicaean principality in the western regions of Asia Minor – in Vifinia and Mizaëa. In May of 1206 CE Patriarch

¹ Федоров - Давыдов А.Л. Крестовые походы... С. 268 – 269.

² Успенский Ф.И. История Византийской империи... Т.5. С. 38.

³ Ibid. С. 38 – 39.

⁴ Ibid. С. 39.

Mikhail Avtorian officially crowned the 30-year-old Laskaris, King of the Eastern Greeks.¹ Not only was the Greek state unable to maintain peaceful relations with Komnenos' empire, but Laskaris had to make a considerable effort to protect his borders against the near-constant attacks by Baldwin's knights. The knights, for their part, concentrated most of their attention on the organization of the Latin state within the European territories of the former Byzantine Empire.

This foreign policy proved extremely beneficial to the Seljuks as neither the Greeks, nor the Crusaders had the military capacity to reclaim the Byzantine territories previously captured by the Seljuks. The on-going hostilities between the Greeks and the Crusaders proved highly beneficial to the Seljuks' geopolitical interests who skillfully played their enemies against each other. For instance, an agreement signed by Theodore Laskaris and Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev stated that the Greek state would pay the Seljuks a substantial annual tribute in return for the Seljuks agreeing not to engage in any armed hostilities against their state.

The principal motivation of the Seljuk military campaigns during the reign of Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev I was not necessarily new territorial conquests, but the defense and promotion of their trade and political interests in the region. Their trade opportunities were stunted by the lack of port access along the Mediterranean and the Black Sea coasts. Back in 1182 CE Kılıç Arslan made an unsuccessful attempt at capturing Antalya, a port city on the Black Sea, from the Byzantines. Following the sack of Constantinople and the dissolution of the Byzantine Empire the control of the city went to the Italians.

Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev I made his own attempt at taking control of Antalya in 1207 CE. İbn Bibi described the events that led up to this campaign,

Once merchants came to the sultan with a

¹ Успенский Ф.И. История Византийской империи... Т.5. С. 211.

complaint. The main reason for their grievance was this. The merchants successfully traded in Egypt where they acquired many goods. They continued on to Iskenderia where they bought exquisite objects and artifacts made by the Franks and the Maghrebis. They loaded their goods onto a ship, but once it arrived in Antalya, the local authorities confiscated all of the ship's cargo. The sultan ordered the merchants to be compensated from his own treasury and promised to punish those responsible.¹

Soon thereafter the sultan's army laid siege to Antalya. On March 5, 1207 CE after two months of non-stop fighting, the city was taken by storm. İbn Bibi wrote that Keyhüsrev ordered everyone who defended the city to be killed for refusing to surrender.²

The sultan appointed one of his military commanders and closest allies Mubareziddin Ertokush, governor of Antalya and then returned to Konya with rich spoils.

Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev's last military campaign was against Laskaris' state and according to İbn Bibi, the sultan embarked on this campaign for two reasons. Not only did Laskaris obstruct and interfere with the passage of trade caravans between the Muslim and European states, but he also stopped paying the annual tribute to the Seljuk sultan.³

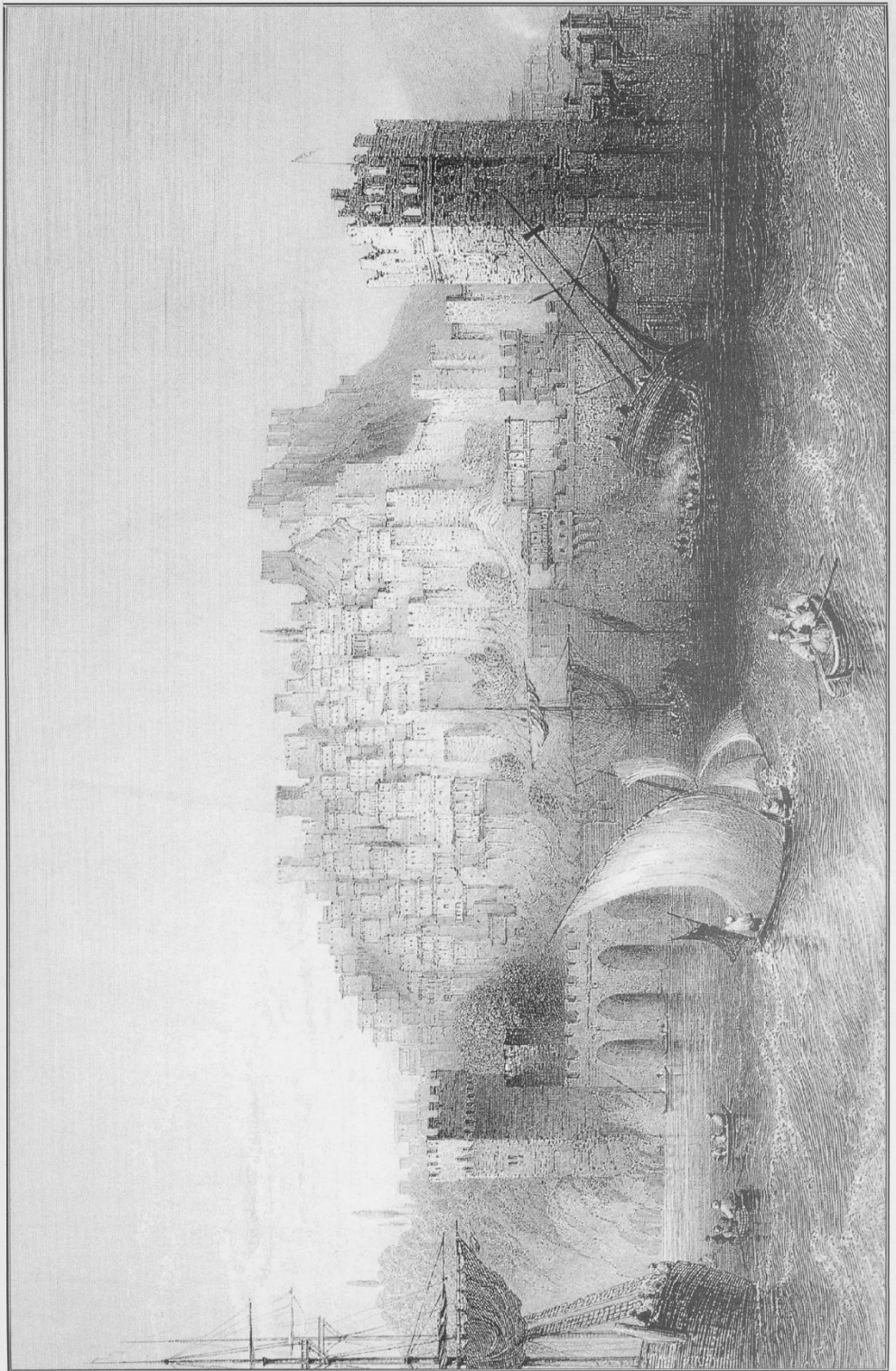
In May of 1211 CE the sultan and his army left Konya. To prepare for the impending battle Laskaris fortified his army with the German, Kipchak and Alan mercenaries. İbn Bibi made a special note of the overall size of Laskaris' army.⁴

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 116.

² Ibid. S. 118.

³ Ibid. S. 122 – 123.

⁴ Ibid. S. 127.



Antalya

The exceptionally fierce battle took place on June 5, 1211 CE around the city of Philadelphia (Alashehir). The sultan joined his soldiers on the battlefield. İbn Bibi described the battle's decisive factors,

At one point the sultan found himself in the middle of the enemy forces looking directly at Laskaris. He sheathed his sword and picked up his spear. At first clash the king was knocked out of his saddle. The sultan's servants wanted to kill the king, but he forbade them from doing so.. As soon as Laskaris' soldiers saw their king on the ground they turned to flee. Keyhüsrev's personal guards left the sultan's side and went in pursuit of the retreating enemy soldiers. Suddenly a mounted Frank appeared in front of the sultan. He charged at the sultan full speed and killed him. Now it was the Seljuk army fleeing the battlefield, and as such losing the battle.¹

Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev's oldest son İzzeddin Keykavus succeeded his father on the Seljuk throne ruling the country from 1211 until 1220 CE. Keykavus continued to implement his father's policies and as such in 1213 - 1214 CE established trade relations with the Crusaders' Cypriot Kingdom and Venice. These steps led to significant increases in the volume of trade transactions the Seljuks conducted with the Europeans through the port city of Antalya. The new sultan set out to conquer ports along the Black Sea coast. In October of 1214 CE İzzeddin Keykavus approached Sinop. His spies came back with news that the Trapezuntine emperor and his entourage were hunting on the outskirts of the city. Soon thereafter Emperor Alexios Komnenos was bound and delivered to the Seljuk sultan. There he was presented with the following ultimatum. Should he refuse to open the city gates, Sinop would be taken by storm, he would face execution and his citizens would either be killed or taken into

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye...* I. Cilt. S. 130 – 131.

captivity.¹ Without much further consideration Komnenos sent a messenger to the city ordering the gates opened and the city handed over to the Seljuks. On October 28, 1214 CE the Seljuk sultan's flag was raised over Sinop.

İzzeddin Keykavus and Alexios Komnenos signed an agreement whereby the sultan freed the emperor, restored Komnenos' right to the imperial throne, and his control over the Trapezuntine state except for the port of Sinop. In turn, the emperor agreed to an annual remittance of 10,000 gold dinars, 500 horses, 2,000 heads of cattle and 10,000 sheep. In addition Komnenos would dispatch his army as needed by the Seljuk sultan.²

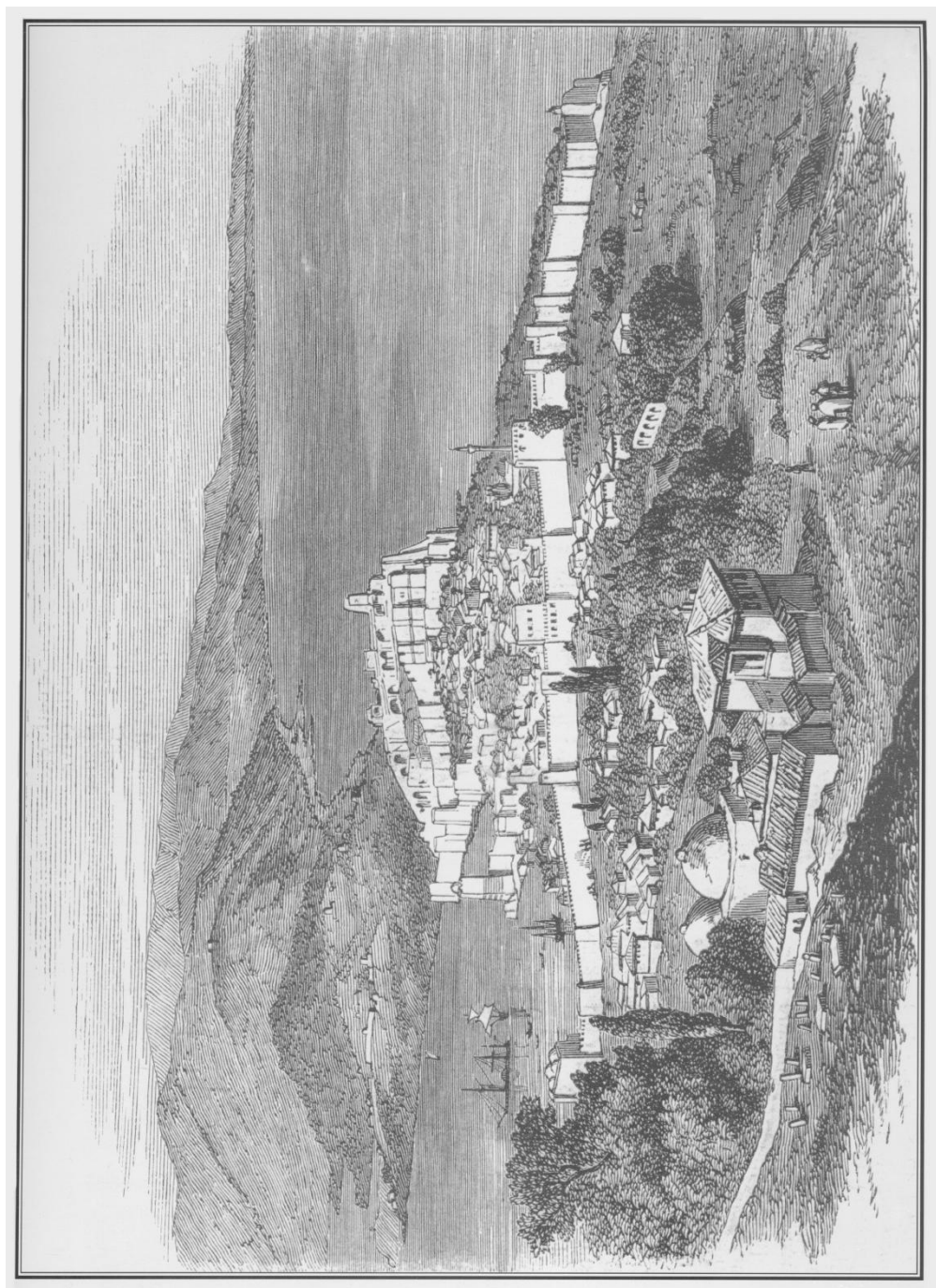
Once the agreement was signed Alexios Komnenos was allowed to sail to Trebizond. Sinop's churches were transformed into mosques, a Seljuk garrison was stationed in the city and the news of the conquest of Sinop was sent to Baghdad.³

İzzeddin Keykavus I was succeeded by Alâeddin Keykûbad who reigned from 1220 - 1237 CE. By this time there have been major shifts in the balance of military and political forces in the region, which was located in close proximity to the eastern and southeastern borders of the Great Seljuk state. By the end of the 12th century the shah of Khorezm Tekesh, successfully annexed Khorasan to his existing territories. His son Khorezmshah Mohammed (1200 – 1220 CE) consolidated most of the Great Seljuk imperial territories under his authority. The Khwarezmid Empire came to be the largest and the most powerful state in the Near and Middle East, one that continued the policy of further territorial expansion.

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 169 – 172.

² Ibid. S. 174.

³ Ibid. S. 174 – 175.



Sinop

In 1221 CE military detachments led by the previously unknown Mongol military chief Genghis Khan arrived in the regions of Zhetysu. They rapidly conquered the northern parts of the region and annexed them to their own state. As Genghis Khan in 1211 CE has not yet considered a westward expansion he declared war on China. Three years later in 1215 CE the war ended with the takeover of Beijing and the conquest of China.

Khorezmshah Mohammed was confident in his own military strength, but that didn't stop him from regarding Genghis Khan as a dangerous opponent with whom he now shared a common border. Wishing to gain reliable intelligence on this conqueror, the khorezmshah sent his ambassadors to Beijing. Genghis Khan gracefully received the ambassadors while still in Beijing and explained to the ambassadors that he considered the khorezmshah the ruler of the West and himself the ruler of the East and wished for the two neighbors to maintain peaceful and friendly relations and for the trade caravans to move unhindered between the two countries.¹

In a response to the khorezmshah's embassy, in 1218 CE Genghis Khan sent his own embassy of five hundred camels, merchants and ambassadors. As the caravan reached the border city of Otrar what happened next V.V. Bartold described as "the Otrar catastrophe".² The ambassadors and the merchants, 450 men in all were murdered as the Mongol spies.³ The only one to survive was a camel driver who went back and relayed the news of the massacre to Genghis Khan. It's not clear whether the Emir of Otrar Kadir-Khan personally ordered the massacre (which seems highly unlikely) or whether he simply followed Mohammed's orders. What is known is that the ambassadors carried with them a

¹ Бартольд В.В. Туркестан в эпоху монгольского нашествия... С. 461.

² Ibid. С. 465.

³ Juvaini, Ala-ud-Din Ata-Melik The History of the World Conqueror... P. 367.

letter, which stated in particular that Genghis Khan compared the khorezmshah to the most precious of his sons. It is possible that Mohammed found the comparison offensive and commented to someone in his immediate circle that no amount of conquests gives Genghis Khan the right to call the khorezmshah his son – i.e. his vassal.¹ This could have been the real reason the Emir of Otrar was given the order to have the Mongol ambassadors and merchants killed.

Nonetheless Genghis Khan was not convinced of the khorezmshah's direct involvement in the massacre and sent another embassy to khorezmshah Mohammed. The purpose of the second embassy was to reproach the khorezmshah for what happened in Otrar and to demand that the Emir be turned over for punishment. Mohammed's next move was a crucial tactical error that led to catastrophic consequences not only for himself but also for his entire state. In a careless move that decided the fate of his country, Mohammed ignored Genghis Khan's demands, ordered the ambassador executed and sent the rest of the delegation home with their beards cut off.²

With the Mongol invasion now inevitable Mohammed began feverish preparations to defend Maverannagr. Reinforced garrisons were stationed in each city, while the primary forces, almost 110,000 men, were concentrated in Samarqand.³

In the fall of 1219 CE Genghis Khan, accompanied by his three sons Ögedei, Jöchi and Tului, personally led his troops on the campaign. Several of his units immediately laid siege to Otrar, while Genghis Khan himself continued towards Bukhara. Both cities were taken after a short siege, sacked and burned. The Mongols killed almost every city resident that took part in defending the city. On the orders of

¹ Бартольд В.В. Туркестан в эпоху монгольского нашествия... С. 464.

² Ibid. С. 467.

³ Juvaini, Ala-ud-Din Ata-Melik The History of the World Conqueror... P. 370, 375.

Genghis Khan, the Emir of Otrar was to be taken alive. He was arrested, and suffered a painful death. Leading away vast numbers of prisoners, Genghis Khan left Bukhara and headed to Samarqand. The city was only able to defend itself for several days. The Mongols entered the city and killed anyone who resisted. The conquest of Samarqand was followed by the takeovers of Djend, Fergana, Khodjend, Khorezm, and Gurgandj. By the fall of 1220 CE the Mongols conquered all of Maverannagr.

Khorezmshah Mohammed fled Maverannagr in the spring of 1220 CE. Juvaini wrote that Mohammed became depressed once he witnessed the ease with which the Mongols did away with his own army. He realized that he was the one who brought this woeful misfortune upon himself and his country.¹ Pursued by three Mongol cavalry *tümens* (*divisions* - *author's note*) he first fled to Kazvin and then on to Hamadan, where the Mongols finally lost any trace of Mohammed, and ceased all further pursuits. The khorezmshah found refuge on one of the islands in the Caspian Sea, but died of disease at the end of 1220 CE.

In the meantime the Mongols continued their conquests of the Khwarezmid territories. In the spring of 1221 CE Genghis Khan transported his army across the Amu Darya River and conquered Balkh. In less than three months his son Tului gained control of Merv, and Nishapur as well as a number of smaller cities. Nishapur was dealt the most devastating hand of them all when the city was conquered in April of 1221 CE. Practically all of its residents, save for some artisans, were slaughtered, the city itself was in ruins, and the land on which it stood was plowed.²

Mohammed's son Jalal ad-Din mounted a brave and successful resistance to the Mongols. While his efforts

¹ Juvaini, Ala-ud-Din Ata-Melik The History of the World Conqueror... P. 380.

² Бартольд В.В. Туркестан в эпоху монгольского нашествия... С. 514.

ultimately had no effect on the course of the campaign, the young khorezmshah gained fame and popularity as the recklessly brave and talented commander, and a defender of faith. More importantly, some of his victories raised the spirits of the population and what remained of his army. In February of 1221 CE Jalal ad-Din defeated the Mongols at Kandahar and later that month arrived at Ghazni, his fiefdom, where 50,000 men awaited to join him. Juvaini wrote that as the news of Jalal ad-Din's arrival spread beyond Ghazni, "Troops and fellow tribesmen began to arrive from all over... Said ad-Din Ighrak and his army of 40,000 brave soldiers joined the sultan (*the khorezmshah - author's note*). The emirs of Ghur also joined him, arriving from every direction."¹

In the spring of 1221 CE Khorezmshah Jalal ad-Din left Ghazni and set up camp in the vicinity of Parwan. There he was informed that the Mongols laid siege to Valian and were about to seize the fortress. Jalal ad-Din left the wagon trains at Parwan and moved his army towards Valian. With vast numeric advantage over the Mongols he forced them to break the siege and retreat. As the news reached Genghis Khan he sent 30,000 soldiers to Parwan. The two armies met some seven kilometers from Parwan. The battle lasted for two days and was distinguished by the extreme tenacity and determination on behalf of the opponents.

Juvaini wrote, "The Mongol army was defeated, and while the sultan's (*the khorezmshah - author's note*) army was busy collecting their spoils, two of the Mongol *noyons* (*commanders - author's note*) took a small detachment and went to see Genghis Khan."²

The last battle between Jalal ad-Din and Genghis Khan's armies took place on the banks of the Indus River in

¹ Juvaini, Ala-ud-Din Ata-Melik The History of the World Conqueror... P. 404 – 405.

² Ibid. P. 405 – 407.

November of 1221 CE. This time Genghis Khan personally led the Mongol army into battle that ended with the crushing defeat of the Khwarezmids.

Jalal ad-Din barely managed to save his life by jumping off a high cliff and into the Indus River.¹ By the end of 1223 CE Genghis Khan conquered the vast majority of the Khwarezmid Empire. He bequeathed the new western territories to his son Jöchi and returned to Mongolia. Genghis Khan died in 1227 CE having designated Ögedei his heir.

As for Jalal ad-Din, after spending just two years in India he returned to his homeland. Hoping for assistance from the Abbasid caliph he lead a small detachment to Baghdad. He arrived in Baghdad in the spring of 1224 CE and sent a messenger to the caliph informing him of the purpose of his arrival. Keeping in mind that Jalal ad-Din's grandfather, Khorezmshah Tekesh defeated his troops and executed his vizier, and that his father Khorezmshah Mohammed never recognized the Abbasids' claim to the Baghdad caliphate, the caliph sent 20,000 soldiers against Jalal ad-Din and his small detachment with explicit orders to expel the khorezmshah from Iraq. Juvaini wrote that Jalal ad-Din's army consisted of just 2,000 - 3,000 men. While most of the troops waited in ambush, Jalal ad-Din and 500 of his men attacked the caliph's advancing army. After inflicting slight damage to the enemy's army, he pretended to retreat, drawing his enemy right into the ambush. The vast majority of the caliph's army was killed and those who managed to stay alive were chased right to the city walls.²

Jalal ad-Din left Iraq and settled in Azerbaijan making Meraga his capital.

Sultan Alâeddin Keykûbad kept a close eye on the developments in the territories that, up until a short while ago, belonged to the Great Seljuk Empire, and was well aware of

¹ Juvaini, *Ala-ud-Din Ata-Melik The History of the World Conqueror...* P. 410.

² *Ibid.* P. 422 – 423.

the high probability of the Mongol attack on his own state. With this in mind he spent the first 4 - 5 years on the throne fortifying the city walls around Konya and other key cities in Central Anatolia like Kayseri and Sivas.

In the winter of 1221 CE Alâeddin Keykûbad continued his conquest of the Mediterranean coastline. He laid siege to the Kolonoros fortress from land and surrounded it from the sea blocking all access to the unassailable fortress. One hundred heavy catapults were brought in to destroy the city walls. The siege continued for two months. Finally the city's Greek ruler Kir Vart agreed to negotiate with Keykûbad and gave up the control of the city on honorable terms. According to the agreement, the lives of those who defended the city were spared and Kir Vart was appointed the Emir of Akshehir receiving all surrounding areas as iqta.¹

On the sultan's orders the city and its fortified walls were rebuilt, new shipyards were constructed and the city of Kolonoros was renamed Alaye.²

İbn Bibi wrote that soon after the conquest of Kolonoros the caliph sent his personal representative Muhyeddin ibn al-Djevzi to Alâeddin Keykûbad. The sultan received the ambassador in Sivas and was informed that according to the Abbasid intelligence the Mongol armies were wrapping up their campaign against the khorezmshah and were preparing their attack on Iraq and Eastern Anatolia. Therefore the caliph was assembling all those ready to defend the faith and requested all Muslim rulers to send a portion of their troops. The caliph requested that Alâeddin Keykûbad send 2,000 men to Baghdad.³

The sultan immediately deployed 5,000 of his top cavalrymen and arranged for a year's worth of provisions to

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 265 – 266.

² The city of Alania in modern Turkey.

³ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 265 – 266.

be sent along. İbn Bibi wrote that the dispatched unit was so well organized, well armed and well equipped that the rulers of those towns through which they passed - Kharput, Amid, Mardin, Mosul and Baghdad - "seeing the grandeur of his army, its equipment and their horses," gained even more respect for the sultan.¹

Some months later Alâeddin Keykûbad received a letter from the caliph that said,

According to earlier intelligence reports, once the Mongol army was finished with Khorezmshah Mohammed, they planned to move in our direction. With this information in mind we have requested assistance from the [Seljuk] sultan. According to our most recent intelligence the [Mongols'] plans have changed. Therefore, we have given permission to all meliks who have come from distant lands to return to their homelands. Let the Emir of Kutlugja (*the commander of the Seljuk units - author's note*) also return to his motherland.²

This letter allowed Alâeddin Keykûbad to focus his attention on the domestic issues. By that time members of senior nobility accumulated excessive power, which in itself constituted a great risk to the sultan and the state, so soon after his ascent the relations between the sultan and his officials deteriorated sharply. We should describe some of the circumstances surrounding Alâeddin Keykûbad's ascent.

The death of sultan İzzeddin Keykavus was kept secret by the top court officials for quite some time as they contemplated which member of the royal family should be enthroned as their next monarch. There were three possible candidates to the throne: the son of Kılıç Arslan II, melik of Erzurum Mugisseddin Tugrulshah, Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev I's

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 279 – 280.

² Ibid. S. 281.

younger brother Kay Feridun bin Keyhüsrev, at the time imprisoned at Koyluhisar, and İzzeddin Keykavus' middle son Alâeddin Keykûbad - also imprisoned inside the fortress in Malatya. Members of the court couldn't agree on the candidate. What ultimately brought Alâeddin Keykûbad to the Seljuk throne was a recommendation of one the most influential court officials Saifeddin Ayaba, who occupied two positions at once - he was the melikülûmera¹ and the çaşnigir.² Evidently the vizier, the man second in command in the Seljuk state after the sultan, objected to Keykûbad's candidacy. İbn Bibi wrote that Saifeddin Ayaba managed to submit all of the state officials and beys to his authority. These men would typically refer to his position anytime an important decision regarding state matters was considered. Even the sultan's personal security forces reported to him.³

Along with power and influence the noblemen accumulated vast amounts of wealth, at times even surpassing the sultan in the opulence of their existence. İbn Bibi wrote that if the royal chefs slaughtered 30 sheep per day, the cooks at the chief military commander's palace would slaughter 80 and that all meals at the melikülûmera's palace were served exclusively upon gold or silver platters, and so forth...⁴

Alâeddin Keykûbad's intention to manage the state independently from his advisors became clear shortly after he ascended the Seljuk throne. A conspiracy to murder the sultan and in his stead appoint Kay Feridun bin Keyhüsrev was foiled and all 24 conspirators, including the commander-in-chief Saifeddin Ayaba, were executed in November of 1223 CE. Their possessions were counted and transferred to the

¹ Melikülûmera – commander in chief.

² Çaşnigir, also emir çaşnigir – a palace official whose duties included tasting the sultan's food and drink before it was served to the sultan. People appointed to this position had the monarch's absolute trust.

³ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 283.

⁴ Ibid. S. 222, 283.

state.¹

In 1225 CE in a response to the merchants' complaints that the Franks were attacking their ships on the Mediterranean from the coasts of Asia Minor, and that the Armenians raided their caravans passing through Anatolia, Alâeddin Keykûbad implemented a military operation intended to secure the trade routes from the Arab countries, through the Seljuk state and on to the Black Sea port of Sinop. The first army left Antalya and moved east along the coast, the second army moved from Karaman towards the Göksu River valley and on towards the city of Silifke. Yet another army left Maraş and moved towards the Chukurova Peninsula. As a result the Seljuks captured key Mediterranean coastal cities and fortresses including the city of Silifke as well as the İçel province from the Crusaders (the Hospitallers and the Templars). Subsequently, the Crusaders fled to Cyprus. An agreement with the Armenian King Constantine stated that the king agreed to prevent all future raids on the passing caravans, double the annual tribute paid to the sultan, and send soldiers to serve in the Seljuk army. The hutba in the Armenian capital Sis was to be read with Alâeddin Keykûbad's name and the Armenian currency was now to be minted with the name of the Seljuk sultan.²

Meanwhile, towards the middle of the 1220's tensions continued to rise in the Eastern regions of the Empire. In the spring of 1226 CE, the vassal Artukid³ ruler Mesoud, who controlled the Diyarbakır and Mardin provinces, declared his independence from the Seljuk state. On his orders the hutba was no longer read with Keykûbad's name, he declared

¹ İbn Bibi, *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 284 – 289.

² Turan, O. *Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi*... S. 344 – 347.

³ The Artukid dynasty was founded in Eastern Anatolia by Artuk, one of Alp Arslan's military commanders, who arrived in the area at the end of the 12th century following the victory at Malazgirt.

himself vassal to the head of the Egyptian Ayyubid¹ Sultan Kamil and began to issue currency with Kamil's name. Furthermore, Mesoud established an alliance with Khorezmshah Jalal ad-Din.

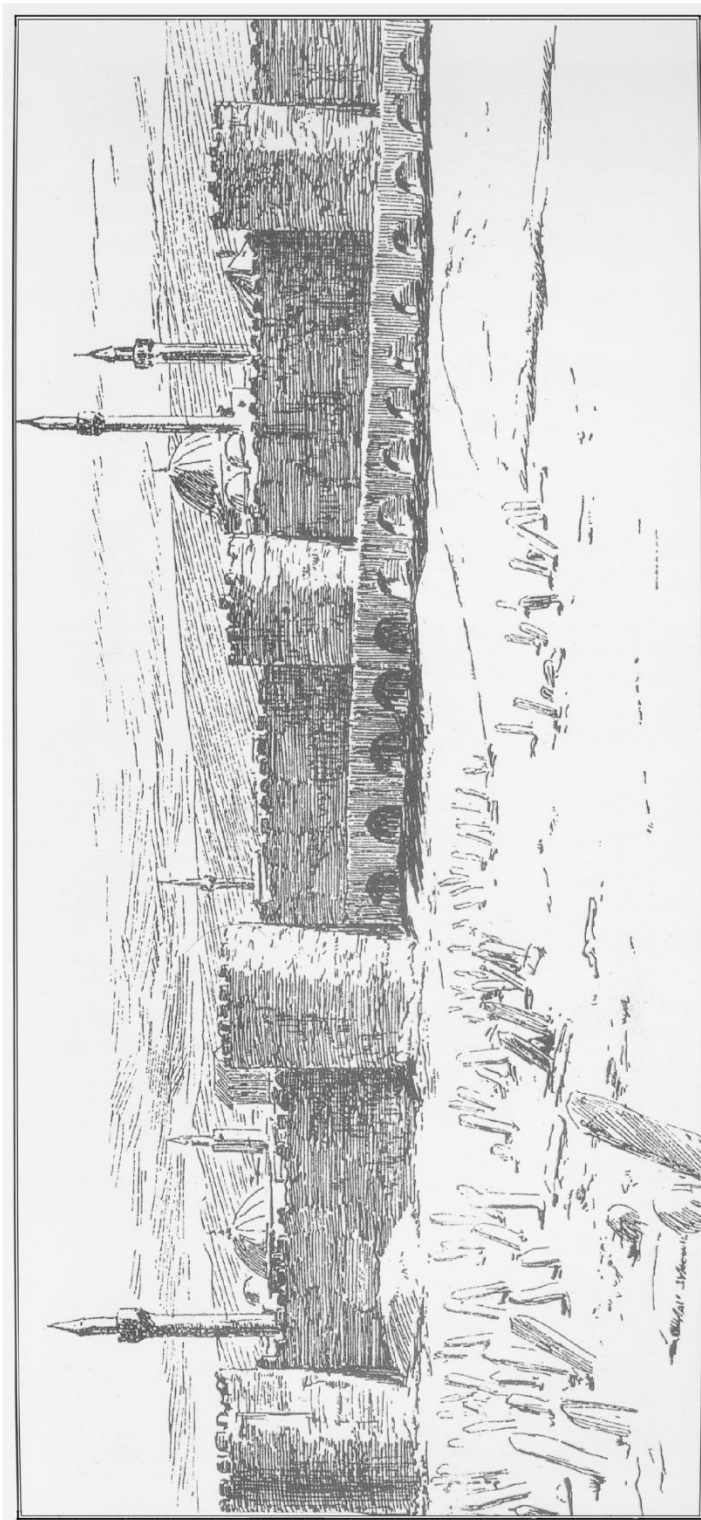
The consequences of this trilateral alliance were evident to the sultan who wasted no time and immediately moved to decisive action. As the vast army assembled around Malatya in the spring of 1226 the sultan began combat operations on the Artukids in the Diyarbakır province. The sultan's army besieged the city of Adıyaman and the two principal Artukid defense links - the Kahta and Çeşkezek fortresses, both situated atop sheer mountainsides.

Seeing that neither fortress would be capable of withstanding a prolonged siege the Artukid ruler left to seek help from the Ayyubids. Soon Alâeddin Keykûbad received ambassadors from the Syrian melik Eshref, suggesting the sultan cease the siege of the fortress and return all of the conquered lands to Mesoud. Their proposition was rejected and Melik Eshref sent 10,000 soldiers to help defend the Kahta fortress from the Seljuks. In addition to Eshref's forces, six thousand cavalymen arrived from the provincial administrative center of Amed (Diyarbakır).

The joint Arab and Artukid army made three unsuccessful attacks on the Seljuks but each time they were repelled, sustaining heavy losses. İbn Bibi wrote that casualties were so severe that it was impossible to count the dead. Many were captured, including the commander-in-chief of the Arab army İzzeddin ibn Bedir.²

¹ The Ayyubids – an Arab dynasty that ruled in the countries of the Arabic East from the end of the 12th – to the middle of the 13th century. The founder of the dynasty, Ayyub was from the Kurdish Khazbani tribe. Salah-ad-din, or Saladin (1138 – 1193 CE) was the best-known member of the dynasty and ruled Egypt from 1171 CE. The Ayyubids replaced the Fatimid Caliphate and adhered to the Sunni teachings of Islam.

² İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 292 – 298.

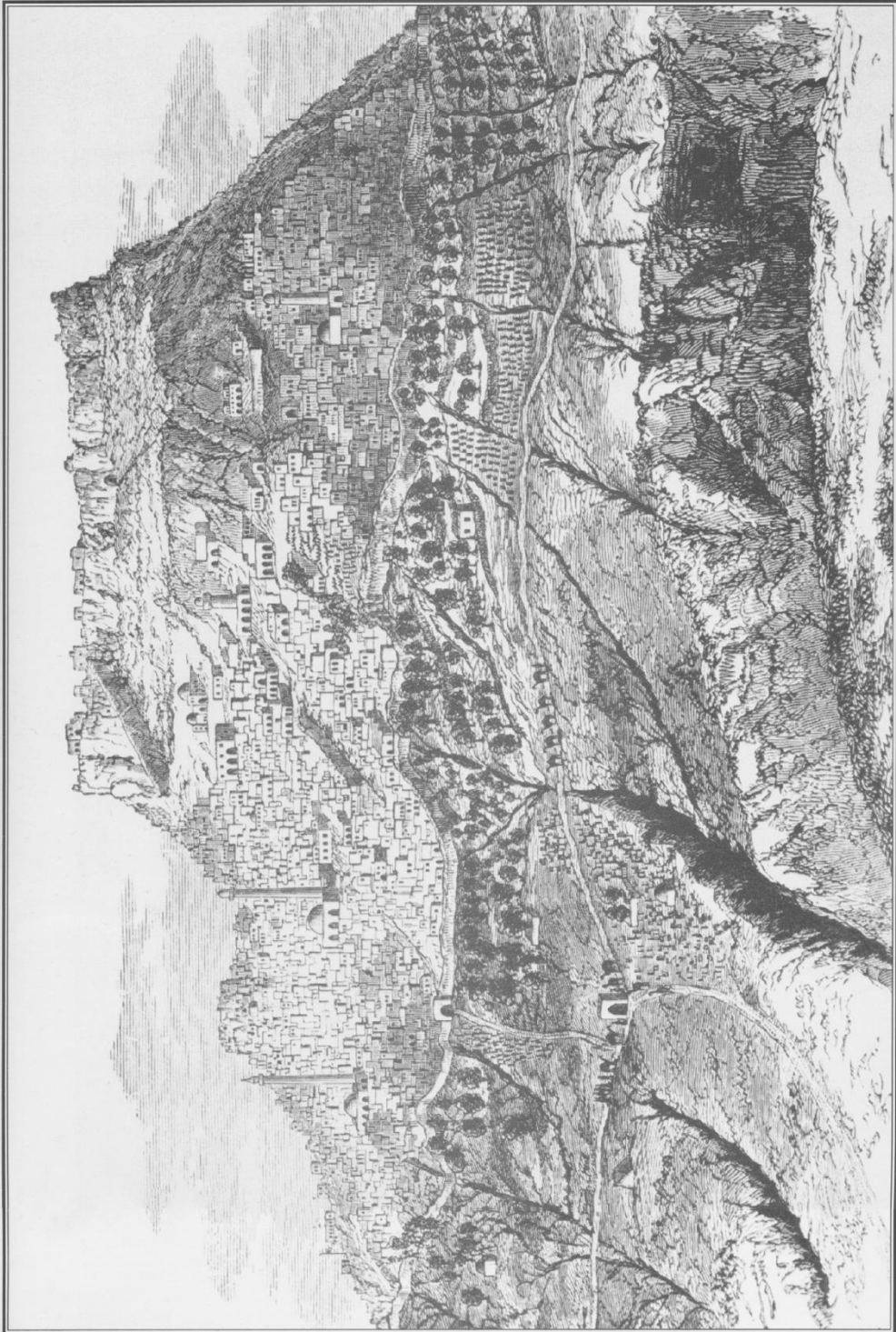


Diyarbakir

Once the Ayyubid forces were destroyed the Seljuks began to attack the Kahta city walls by catapulting pots with burning oil. As a result, all of the wooden support structures were burnt and the fortress surrendered in August of 1226. Around the same time the Seljuks successfully captured the Çeşmikezek fortresses and the city of Adıyaman and continued to move further into the Diyarbakır province. Soon Alâeddin Keykûbad received ambassadors from the Artukid ruler Mesoud requesting peace and assuring him of obedience and loyalty. Once peace was achieved with the Artukids, Alâeddin Keykûbad focused on stabilizing conditions in the eastern and southeastern regions of his empire - areas that shared borders with the Ayyubids. Peace with the Ayyubids was ultimately achieved in 1227 CE through the marriage of Alâeddin Keykûbad's sister and the Syrian melik Eshref.¹

Meanwhile, conditions in Eastern Anatolia continued to deteriorate. In 1228 the Mengüdjik melik of Erzindjan Alâeddin Davudshah, whose people arrived in Asia Minor about the same time as the Artukids, announced his independence from the Seljuks. To protect himself from the impending attack by the Seljuk army sent to quell the insurgence, Davudshah sent letters to the melik of Erzurum Rukneddin Djihanshah and the Khorezmshah Jalal ad-Din requesting their support. Rukneddin Djihanshah agreed to the alliance, but the situation with the Khorezmshah Jalal ad-Din was somewhat more perilous. The khorezmshah secretly supported any destabilizing efforts on behalf of the sultan's vassal rulers and wasn't convinced the timing was right for a direct military confrontation with the sultan. As such, in November of 1228 CE the khorezmshah sent a letter to Keykûbad informing him that he will not provide any military support to Davudshah.

¹ Turan, O. Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi... S. 351.



Mardin

Later that year as the Seljuk troops occupied the Erzindjan province, Davudshah requested an audience with the sultan. His request denied, Alâeddin Keykûbad in turn informed the melik that he is to receive Akshehir (near Konya) as iqta and the former melik was transferred to his new residence under military convoy. The Erzindjan province was consequently annexed to the Seljuk state and the sultan moved his army towards Erzurum. Having taken control over half of the province Keykûbad received an embassy from the Erzurum Melik Rukneddin Djihanshah bearing gold, precious jewels, expensive textiles, slaves and so forth. In addition to the plentiful gifts, the ambassadors brought with them a letter from the melik where he begged for forgiveness, referred to himself as a “pitiful slave” of the sultan and swore his loyalty.¹ Alâeddin Keykûbad accepted the gifts and allowed the melik to retain his title and position.

In 1229 CE Khorezmshah Jalal ad-Din began his own military campaigns in Eastern Anatolia. His cavalry began making raids into the Erzurum and Mush provinces and in August of 1229 he besieged the city of Akhlat. At this point the Erzurum Melik Rukneddin Djihanshah broke his oath to Alâeddin Keykûbad, announced himself vassal to the khorezmshah, and sent troops, provision wagons, fodder and obsidional tools to Akhlat.

Along with the highly probable Mongol invasion, the khorezmshah's uprising posed a grave threat to Alâeddin Keykûbad. In an attempt to persuade the khorezmshah to cease the siege of Akhlat, relocate his troops to Azerbaijan and Erran, and instead of furthering the divide among Muslim rulers, unite against the Mongol invaders, the sultan sent an embassy to the khorezmshah. İbn Bibi wrote that the ambassador arrived with a caravan of presents, the likes of

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 368 – 369.

which stunned the khorezmshah's emirs.¹ Nonetheless, neither the sultan's pleas, nor his gifts could sway the khorezmshah. The siege continued and Akhlat soon surrendered. The fetihname, written upon the conquest of Akhlat, proclaimed the khorezmshah's intentions to swiftly conquer Syria and Rum (Anatolia).²

As the news reached the sultan, Alâeddin Keykûbad sent 12,000 cavalry guards to the Erzindjan province and began to mobilize his troops. He also requested help from the Syrian ruler and his brother-in-law Melik Eshref, who sent 10,000 cavalymen to Alâeddin Keykûbad. The Syrian and Seljuk armies joined at Sivas and together totaled around 30,000 men. Together they continued towards Erzindjan where the Seljuk vanguard was already repelling the enemy attacks. İbn Bibi wrote that the overall army consisted of around 100,000 men.³

The deciding battle between Alâeddin Keykûbad and Khorezmshah Jalal ad-Din took place on August 10, 1230 CE around the Yassıchemen settlement in the Erzindjan province. Most of the khorezmshah's soldiers were killed in action, his army practically annihilated. The khorezmshah and a small unit of soldiers managed to escape to Kharput, then to Akhlat to finally to Azerbaijan. Jalal ad-Din's ally, the melik of Erzurum Djihanshah was taken hostage on the battlefield. Alâeddin Keykûbad entered Erzurum without a fight and the 28-year-old beylik ceased to exist.

The first Mongol raids onto the Seljuk territories came in 1231 when the Mongols raided the cities of Akhlat, Bitlis, Amed (Diyarbakır), Siirt, Mardin, Kharput and others. Their residents were either savagely killed or taken into captivity. The Mongol cavalry rapidly advanced through the Seljuk

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 385.

² Turan, O. *Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi*... S. 366.

³ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 395.

territories and in 1232 arrived at the walls of Sivas.¹ Alâeddin Keykûbad ordered his commander-in-chief Kemaleddin Kamyar to halt the Mongols' advance; however, the Mongols left just as swiftly as they arrived. The Seljuks combined the pursuit of the Mongols with a campaign to Georgia where they occupied a number of fortresses along the eastern border.

In 1232 - 1233 CE Alâeddin Keykûbad rebuilt Akhlat and a series of other settlements that sustained the brunt of the damage following the Mongol invasion. All of the destroyed fortifications were also rebuilt.

The following year was marked by the invasion of Eastern Anatolia by the joint Syrian and Egyptian forces. The Ayyubid leader was determined to conquer the Seljuk state and annex Anatolia.² The Ayyubid army started out from Halab and advanced in the direction of Kayseri. As the Arabs arrived west of Malatya they encountered Kemaleddin Kamyar and his army who forced them to return to the Besni – Adıyaman - Siverek defense line. The first encounter with the Seljuks resulted in heavy losses for the Ayyubids who changed their direction and resumed their advances through Kharput and towards Central Anatolia. Here they encountered Alâeddin Keykûbad and his army. The battle was catastrophic for the Ayyubids as they sustained severe losses and were subsequently forced out of the Seljuk territories. Alâeddin Keykûbad entered Kharput and ordered members of the ruling Artukid dynasty executed for providing assistance and fighting alongside the Ayyubids.

Alâeddin Keykûbad further enforced the Seljuk influence in the region by conquering most of the Eastern Anatolian region and displacing the Ayyubids from the Siverek, Urfa, Kharran regions.

As the Seljuk military units left Eastern Anatolia in 1236

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 420.

² Ibid. S. 434.

CE the Egyptian sultan Kamil once again occupied the Eastern Anatolian regions. In a bold response to the Ayyubids Alâeddin Keykûbad marched into the Artukid territories destroying Koçhisar and leading its residents into captivity. As part of the coordinated response effort Alâeddin Keykûbad also began preparations for a full-scale military campaign against the Ayyubids [of Syria and Egypt].

In the beginning of 1237, in advance of the upcoming campaign, Alâeddin Keykûbad mobilized his military concentrating it in the Kayseri region. On account of the forthcoming military campaign in Kayseri, the sultan invited ambassadors from the vassal, allied and neighboring states as well as the representatives of the caliph and the Mongol khan to join him in Kayseri where the honorable guests were treated to a lavish military parade. Immediately following the parade Alâeddin Keykûbad announced that his youngest son Kılıç Arslan has been chosen to succeed him on the Seljuk throne (his oldest son Giyaseddin has already been named the melik of Erzindjan). Soon thereafter, on June 1, 1227 during a reception attended by all of the dignitaries, Alâeddin Keykûbad fell ill and died just several hours later. İbn Bibi didn't state the sultan's cause of death, but did mention that the sultan fell ill after tasting the fried chicken [unexpectedly served] by his Çhaşnigir Nasireddin Ali.¹

It's highly plausible that Alâeddin Keykûbad was poisoned by his officials, as they preferred to have Keykûbad's oldest son on the throne instead of Kılıç Arslan.² Before Alâeddin Keykûbad's body was even buried, his oldest son Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev was installed on the throne³ while the lawful heir was sent to prison in the Uluborlu

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 456 – 457.

² Please see: Turan, O. *Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi*... S. 389 – 390.

³ Turan, O. *Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi*... S. 404.

fortress.¹

The death of Alâeddin Keykûbad marked the end of the most influential period in the history of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor. To be more precise the Seljuk loss of influence slightly preceded Alâeddin Keykûbad's death as in the spring of 1237 CE he was forced to accept vassalage to the Mongol khan.

The ambassadors of the Great Mongol Khan Ögedei arrived carrying a silver *paiza*² and a *jarliq*.³ İbn Bibi offered the direct quote from the *jarliq* handed to the Seljuk sultan:

The just Padishah Sultan Alâeddin Keykûbad should know that we have been informed of his great renown and fame for the righteous rule of his country and the good will towards his people. We were quite happy... We wish for your country to only know order and peace... The Almighty made us great and revered. He bequeathed the world to our people. This is to inform you of our decision to call you into submission and obedience. Those, to whom this letter was delivered, but who chose to take the path of disobedience, we sent our armies and their roots are exterminated. Their women and children are taken into captivity. Those rulers have nothing more to say to us. Written in the year of the Monkey 633 (1235 CE)⁴

As we mentioned earlier, Alâeddin Keykûbad received this letter in the spring of 1237 CE. Keeping in mind that his country was at war with the Syrians and the Egyptians the sultan decided to pay this high price and accept the Mongol

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye (Selçuk-name)*... I. Cilt. S. 27.

² *Paiza* – A nameplate (a small tablet) issued to the rulers, officials, and military commanders of the conquered and submitted states. The *paiza* stated the bearer's status and was a symbol of the Mongol khan's gracious disposition towards its holder.

³ *Jarliq* – order, ruling.

⁴ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye (Selçuk-name)*... I. Cilt. S. 450.

offer of peace, which would avert the Mongolian invasion. İbn Bibi wrote that the ambassadors were well received and that Alâeddin Keykûbad expressed his obedience to the Mongol khan and his intention to send rich gifts to the khan.¹ Just as the embassy was preparing for their return trip Alâeddin Keykûbad was killed. The new sultan, his son Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev reassured the ambassadors that he adhered to his father's decision.

4. *The Administrative, Territorial, Socio-Economic Structures and Military Organization of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor.*

During the rule of Alâeddin Keykûbad I the Seljuk state occupied the majority of the Asia Minor Peninsula situated primarily in Central and Eastern Anatolia. Their western border with the [Byzantine] Nicaean state ran along the İnebolu - Eskişehir - Kütahya - Denizli - Bodrum boundary. In the north, they controlled a minor portion of the Black Sea coastline through the port cities of Sinop and Samsun. The northeastern border was shared with the vassal Trapezuntine Empire and Georgia. The Armenian states lay along the eastern Seljuk borders and the southern and southeastern borders were shared with the Kurdish principalities, Syrian Arabs, Franks (the Duchy of Antioch) and the vassal Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia. The Mediterranean coastline from Antalya in the west to Silifke in the east also belonged to the Seljuks.

The Oghuz Turks made up the absolute ethnic majority of the state and for the 140 years following the battle of Malazgirt their migration to Asia Minor was essentially uninterrupted. The Turkish historian Yilmaz Ötzuna cited the

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 451.

following statistics. While in the 11th century the Oghuz yabguluk contained 24 cities and several million people, towards the 13th century only 4 cities remained with the majority of the population having migrated to Anatolia and other countries in the Near East.¹

The high birth rate among the Oghuz contributed to the significant increase in the number of migrants and in the first quarter of the 13th century the Oghuz literally flooded the peninsula, displacing the indigenous Greek population from the territories. Here we should revisit the issue of transformation of the term Oghuz to the term Turk (in its narrow sense).

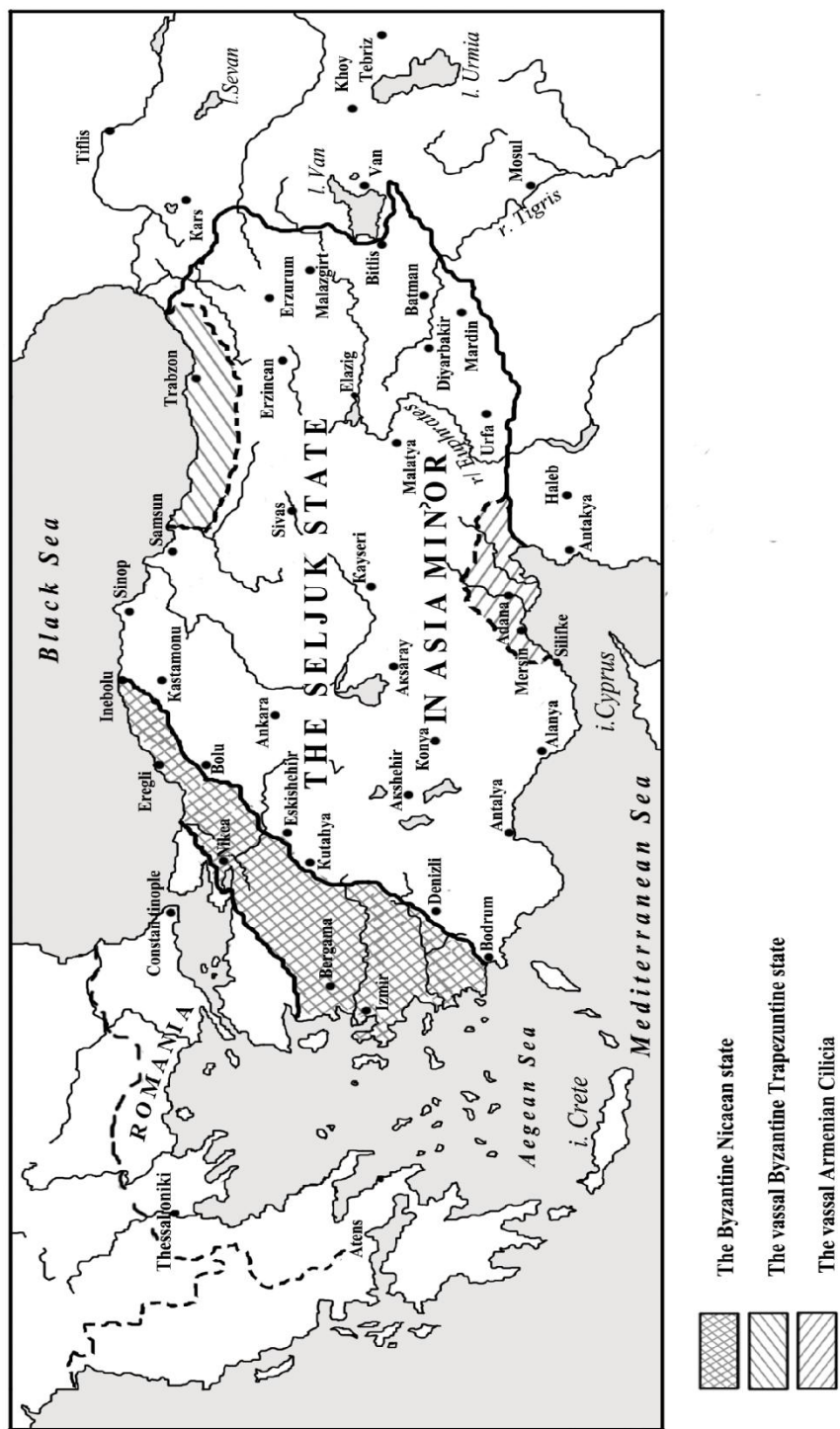
In the 11th century many Muslim scholars and historians already adopted the term *Türkmen* when referring to the Oghuz. While there have been several attempts to explain the meaning of the term *Türkmen*, none of them appear valid to us. In any case, with time, the term *Türkmen* gradually replaced its ethnonym Oghuz. Essentially the references are made to the same ethnic group - the Oghuz, and both terms were employed in the 11th century.

As an example, the Persian scholars Bayhaqi and Gardizi referred to the Oghuz-Seljuks as the *Türkmen*, while their Arab contemporaries used the term the Oghuz when talking about Tughrul's army.² During Melikshah's reign *Türkmen* was the prevailing term, but during Sanjar's reign medieval historians resumed the use of the term Oghuz.³

¹ Öztuna, T.Y. Türkiye tarihi. 2. Cilt. İstanbul, 1964. S. 9.

² Sümer, F. Oğuzlar (Türkmenler). Tarihleri-boy teşkilatı... S. 105.

³ Ibid. S. 106.



Approximate boundaries of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor during the first half of the 13th century

Beginning with the 13th century the common terms when referring to the Oghuz were the *Türkmen* and the *Turks*. The only difference was that the term *Türkmen* was used to describe the nomadic Oghuz tribes and the *Turks* were the settled Oghuz. With time the Oghuz of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor were commonly referred across both, the Muslim and the Christian worlds, simply as the *Turks*. Starting with the middle of the 13th century, those in Europe and the Near East began to refer to the Anatolian Turkic state simply as Turkistan or Turkey (Türkiye).¹

Sunni Islam, the religion of the Seljuk Turks (Türks) arrived to the Seljuk state from Iran and likewise in the Great Seljuk Empire all of the religious and state officials were ethnically Persian and spoke Persian.

The majority of the Turkish Seljuk population lived in the rural areas, leading a combination of nomadic and settled existence. The nomad Oghuz tribes lived primarily in southern and southeastern Anatolia, while the settled Oghuz population was concentrated in central Anatolia. The peasants raised livestock, particularly sheep, and cultivated grain crops, melons, and grapes. The Seljuk agriculture was not only sufficient for the needs of the population but was one of the main Seljuk exports, providing livestock to the Greek and more importantly the Arab states.² İbn Battuta wrote about the “endless [fruit] plantations” of Konya and noted that the local apricots were exported into Syria and Egypt.³

All land suitable for farming was the state’s property, therefore all peasants, regardless of whether or not they were settled or led a nomadic lifestyle were essentially tenants of the state. The Seljuk term for the peasants, later adopted by

¹ Sümer, F. Oğuzlar (Türkmenler). Tarihleri-boy teşkilatı... S. 157.

² Please see: Akdağ, M. Türkiye’nin iktisadi ve içtimai tarihi. Cilt I. (1243 – 1453). İstanbul, 1995. S. 25.

³ İbn Battuta (Ebu Abdullah Muhammed İbn Battuta Tancı). İbn Battuta Seyahatnamesi. I. Cilt. Çeviri, inceleme ve notlar A. Sait Aykut. İstanbul, 2004 S. 412.

the Ottoman Turks, was *reaya*. Ottoman - Turkish dictionary offers the following description of the term: “taxpayers, subjects to their ruler”.¹

Taxes collected from the peasants were either directly deposited into the state treasury or were collected by the government representative, or the military commander in lieu of salary. The exact location of each *iqta*, its size as well as the taxes collected from the land parcel were determined and allocated by the state, which in turn kept a register of each allotment.

Besides lands designated as *iqta*, the Seljuk state had two more categories of parcels - the *wakuf*, or lands designated for charitable purposes, and the so-called *mülk* – the land sold by the state to private owners. Owners of *mülks* were allowed to sell it, give it as a gift, transfer it as part of an inheritance, etc. We know that for his loyal service to Alâeddin Keykûbad, his commander-in-chief Hüsameddin Choban was awarded the city of Kastamonu as private property.²

A village elder, or *kethüda*, *koy kethüdası*, oversaw law and order in the rural settlements. The *kethüda* was an elderly man held in great respect among the local population. The leader or the *yığıbaşı*, of the rural youth organization (*gençlik ocağı*) was appointed by the *kethüda* and reported directly to him. The youth organization was the real strength of the settlement and could be easily called upon to bring order to the area.

Artisanal trade thrived throughout the Seljuk cities. It was well organized and fulfilled the population's needs, with the exception of the luxury items that Seljuks imported from the East.³ İbn Battuta wrote that he has never seen carpets of such craftsmanship as he has seen in Aksaray. These were

¹ Osmanlıca – Türkçe sözlük. Ankara, 1964. S. 392.

² Uzunçarlı, İ. H. Osmanlı devleti teşkilâtına medhal. Ankara, 1988. S. 115.

³ Akdağ, M. Türkiye'nin iktisadi ve içtimai tarihi... I. Cilt. S. 27.

exported to Syria, Iraq, India, and China.¹

During the early stages of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor, and even before the Oghuz arrived and settled the peninsula, most of the artisans and craftsmen were Greeks and Armenians, while the Oghuz served mainly as apprentices. With time, they mastered the necessary skills.

Artisans constituted an important aspect of the city's social structure. Each city had a pre-determined number of trades that produced a variety of goods, intended first and foremost to satisfy the needs of the population. These included the bakers, seamstresses, cobblers, butchers, leather-tanners, etc. Trade workshops belonged to a guild, which in turn held a monopoly on the production of a particular type of product. These guilds often had a significant number of craftsmen, united under its auspices.

İbn Battuta wrote that Antalya's tannery guild had 200 members.² Each workshop had just one artisan, and everyone else was an apprentice. The most respected among the artisans of the guild was referred to as the *ahy*, or the *ahi*. İbn Battuta was the first to mention the medieval Turkey's institution of the *ahi* and defined the term to mean "the first person".³ The number of guilds in a given city determined the number of the *ahi* and according to İbn Battuta the leader of the *ahi* was referred to as the *ahi çelebi*.⁴ His responsibilities were not limited to the needs and interests of the guilds, and the *ahi* often played an important role in the city's social life.

İbn Battuta wrote that part of the *ahi*'s responsibilities was to take care of the foreigners arriving in the city. The *ahi* were charged with providing the foreign visitors with complimentary living arrangements, free food and had to protect them from robbers and thugs. Per *ahi*'s orders, money

¹ İbn Battuta (Ebu Abdullah Muhammed İbn Battuta Tancı). İbn Battuta Seyahatnamesi... I. Cilt. S. 414.

² Ibid. S. 405.

³ Ibid. S. 403.

⁴ Ibid. S. 417.

earned by the guild was used to build housing, buy furniture and utensils. These living quarters were then offered to the travelers, foreigners and dervishes passing through the town. Their every need was provided for at the expense of the guild. İbn Battuta wrote that he has never seen anything like it in any other country.¹

The *ahi*'s influence over the large groups of artisans as well as the unmarried, unemployed young men, who received a stipend from the guild's earnings,² was not only social but also political. İbn Bibi wrote that following four months of the siege of Konya begun by Prince Rukneddin and aimed at overthrowing the legitimate ruler Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev I, the *ahis* were the ones who ultimately determined that further defense of the city was futile and prepared the draft of the surrender agreement, which was subsequently signed by both sides.³ As a result of the agreement Rukneddin Suleimanshah became the new sultan and Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev went into exile.

The next level of the city's social hierarchy was comprised of the eminent city citizens and nobility, also called the *ayan* and the *iğdiş* (igdish). The igdish were city officials in charge of specific city neighborhoods, elected by the residents of the neighborhood and confirmed in their post by a city *kadii*, or a religious (authority) judge who administered justice according to the Sharia law. The igdish also played an integral part in the city's life. Their direct responsibilities included informing the general population of the orders issued by their superiors and the *firman*s, or decrees, issued by the sultan. The head of the neighborhood igdish was called the *başığdiş* (bashigdish). The city merchants, trading in large retail or wholesale volumes were

¹ İbn Battuta (Ebu Abdullah Muhammed İbn Battuta Tancı). İbn Battuta Seyahatnamesi... I. Cilt. S. 404.

² Ibid.

³ İbn Bibi. El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 52.

generally on this social level. The top echelons of the Seljuk urban society were comprised of the meliks, emirs and their families who controlled most of the political power and owned most of the valuable real estate.

The sultan enjoyed absolute power in the state, personally making all of the most important decisions pertaining to the country's daily existence. The sultan's advisory and the executive department was called the Grand Divan. The Grand Divan was made up of several top-level state officials, most importantly the vizier who presided over the divan in the sultan's absence.

The vizier was appointed by the sultan's special decree and was the second most-important state official after the sultan, responsible for the implementation of the sultan's orders, and for the general state of affairs in the state. During the official ceremonies the vizier wore a crown or a *külâh* - a cone-shaped headdress. One of the symbols of the vizier's authority was a gold writing set, or sometimes just a gold inkwell. When the divan was in session, the interpreters as well as secretaries who took the necessary notes surrounded the vizier.

The divan was further made up of high-level officials who could be compared to modern-day ministers. Each was in charge of an administrative apparatus, called the Lower Divan.

The *niyabeti saltanat (naib)* was the next in the official Seljuk hierarchy. The naib was in charge of all state affairs in the event that both, the vizier and the sultan were away from the capital. The naib's symbol of authority was a golden sword.

The person in charge of the state finances was called the *müstemfi*. A major role in the Grand Divan was delegated to the *tugrai* who was in charge of the *divan-i tugra*. Its officials prepared the sultan's formal correspondence, his orders and other decrees that were deemed official once stamped with the sultan's seal or the *tugra*. The *tugrai* were responsible for

the safekeeping of the sultan's tugra.

The *pervane* was in charge of maintaining the register of the official lands distributed as iqta and prepared official decrees granting or denying the iqta.

The *emir-i ariz* and his department were in charge of all military provisions, military payroll and maintained military personnel records. All major provinces or those provinces presenting the most strategic importance to the Seljuk state had the department representative's office in its capital.

Emir-i dad was an important official who did not belong to the Grand Divan, but whose official responsibilities were close to that of a modern-day chief prosecutor or an attorney general and were combined with those of an interior minister. Officials with this department were in charge of criminal prosecution, conducted arrests and interrogations. Emir-i dad had the authority to arrest anyone, including the vizier and members of the Grand Divan and his department also oversaw the House of Preliminary Detentions or *tevkifhane*. İbn Bibi described the activities of this department during the uncovering of the conspiracy by the top-level officials against Alâeddin Keykûbad.¹ He also mentioned that following the execution of the conspirators; the sultan overheard several mid-level officials making comments about his persona that signaled their disloyal attitude. These men were stripped of their title, possessions and were expelled from the country.²

The members of the divan along with other esteemed officials were paid in the form of iqta.

In the administrative-territorial terms the Seljuk state consisted of a number of provinces (*vilayet*), which were typically named after their respective central cities, for example: Kayseri, Erzindjan, Sivas, and so forth. By the middle of the 13th century the Seljuk state consisted of more

¹ İbn Bibi, *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 286.

² Ibid. S. 289.

than 30 such vilayets.¹

There were three separate types of vilayets.² A governor-general, who was called a *subashi*, headed the first and the most common type of a vilayet in the Seljuk state. The subashi was in charge of the vilayet troops, comprised of the cavalry maintained, trained and equipped at the expense of the iqta holder. The officials in charge of keeping accurate account of taxes, the state's primary source of income,³ were stationed in capital of the vilayet - its administrative center. All taxes collected in the vilayet were then transmitted to the Seljuk capital to the Grand Divan and the department of the müstevfi. A portion of the collected taxes, or the "*rûsum-i örfiye*" was transferred to the sultan's personal treasury and was the sultan's personal income.

The second type of a vilayet was headed not by a subashi but by the *meliks*, or the children and the relatives of the sultan. They were entirely independent from the divan and reported directly to the sultan. At times of war the meliks were obligated to send their military units to the sultan's army.

The third type of a vilayet was the border vilayet, or the *udj*. The Seljuks typically referred to the areas along the border with the Christian states as *udj*, but the term was used only to describe the territories along the Seljuk - Byzantine borders. With the exception of the Trapezuntine Empire, this border ran along the İnebolu - Eskişehir - Kütahya - Bodrum boundary. The nomad Oghuz, whose leaders were called *bey*s or *udjbey*s, made up the majority of the population along this border. These areas were divided into the right and left *udj*-vilayets with the border running along the Ankara - Eskişehir boundary. Each of these vilayets was overseen by a *beylerbey*, with the respective *udjbey*s reporting directly to

¹ Uzunçarşılı, İ. H. Osmanlı devleti teşkilâtına medhal... S. 119.

² Please see: Akdağ, M. Türkiye'nin iktisadi ve içtimai tarihi... I. Cilt. S. 48.

³ Ibid.

him. In case of a military mobilization each *beylerbey* was responsible for assembling an army made of the nomad Türkmen (Oghuz).

The vilayets and similar territories were the primary source of the military personnel in the Seljuk state. As we mentioned earlier the holder of the iqta was responsible for the maintenance and training of the cavalry in his iqta. The number of cavalymen was determined by the size of the iqta and based on the writings of İbn Bibi we are able to determine the exact relationship between the size of the land and the number of soldiers the iqta owner was responsible to provide for service in the sultan's army. Thereby in the early half of the 1220's Alâeddin Keykûbad granted the Zara vilayet with the reported income of 100,000 dirhams¹ as iqta to Kemaleddin Kamyar. In return Kamyar was responsible for training, maintaining and equipping 60 soldiers.² Therefore during the reign of Alâeddin Keykûbad each holder of the iqta was responsible for training and equipping one soldier per 1,670 dirhams of income.

As soon as the troops were ordered to mobilize the holder of the iqta and his unit were to report to the subashi. The subashi would then lead the combined vilayet troops to the location specified by the sultan. Mobilization orders were issued as follows: the sultan would issue an official letter announcing the assembly of troops. The order was then sealed with the tugra and the messengers would deliver the sealed decrees to the appropriate Seljuk subjects. The success of a given military campaign was often contingent on the mobilization time frame, therefore any delay in following the orders or a failure to comply carried with it severe punishment. As such, when Rukneddin Suleimanshah issued the appropriate firman and it was sent to all of the vilayets,

¹ Dirham was the primary monetary unit of the Seljuk state. Made from silver it weighed 3.21 grams.

² İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 290.

including to those headed by the meliks, the first to arrive with his army was the sultan's brother Melik Giyaseddin Tughrulshah followed by melik Fahreddin Behramshah. At the same time the melik of Erzurum delayed deployment for which he was promptly punished. On sultan's orders the melik's lands, cities and fortresses were confiscated and according to the written decree, ownership was now transferred to Giyaseddin Tughrulshah.¹ At the same time military commanders who distinguished themselves in battle would often see their territorial holdings expanded by the sultan.²

A mobilization effort was considered timely if the troops arrived at the specified place within eight to nine days of the initial order.³ This meant that the troops were required to be in a constant state of combat preparedness. The iqta cavalry made up the foundation and the majority of the Seljuk army. This portion of the army was called the *sipahi* cavalry.

In addition to the iqta cavalry, the Seljuk army contained professional soldiers who received a salary for their service. These troops - infantry and cavalry - were concentrated in the capital and reported directly to the sultan. As mentioned earlier when the Mongols first began their raids on the Seljuk territories and approached Sivas the sultan ordered his commander-in-chief to halt the advancing armies. İbn Bibi wrote that for this purpose the sultan provided Kemaleddin Kamyar with soldiers from his permanent army (*hazır ordu*), which consisted of the sultan's infantry and cavalry guard.⁴

The permanent army was made up of the captured prisoners of war and slaves of different ethnicities and nationalities. We have no information about their military training, however it is evident that the training was extensive

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 93.

² Ibid. S. 188.

³ Ibid. S. 289.

⁴ Ibid. S. 420.

and was conducted over an extended period of time. During this time former slaves and prisoners, now in service to the sultan learned the language, familiarized themselves with the Oghuz customs, and mastered their war skills; thereby they formed the sultan's most loyal professional army unit. They were entrusted not only with protecting the royal persona but also with finding solutions to the most complex military problems. Many distinguished army commanders and state officials started as soldiers in the sultan's professional guard. Among them was Mübarezzeddin Ertokush, who was appointed the subashi of Antalya by Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev I, and subsequently became the atabeg (mentor) to Alâeddin Keykûbad. Other distinguished men who began their careers with the royal guard include Jalal ad-Din Karatay, Emir Shemsüddin Khasoguz, Seifeddin Torumtay and many others.¹

In addition to the sipahi cavalry and the permanent professional army, the vassal rulers were obligated to provide the sultan with additional troops. According to the agreement between the Seljuk sultan and the Armenian King Levon, every year the king was obligated to send 1,000 soldiers and 500 *charkchi* (*a chark is a weapon resembling a catapult. During a siege it was used to launch arrows at the besieged city*),² to the Seljuk sultan. İbn Bibi noted that as Alâeddin Keykûbad prepared to quash the Artukid rebellion, "There arrived a large army from the land of Laskaris..." (*a Greek Nicaean state - author's note*).³

In case of an emergency the treasury allocated money to recruit and hire Oghuz (Türkmen) and foreign mercenaries.

The Seljuk army employed a number of well-prepared sappers (*lağımçı*), who often played an integral part during sieges. They dug out passages and tunnels under the walls,

¹ Uzunçarşılı, İ. H. Osmanlı devleti teşkilâtına medhal... S. 101.

² İbn Bibi. El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 352.

³ Ibid. S. 295.

which were then used by the troops to penetrate the fortress. They would also expand the existing cracks and openings in the walls. The unassailable Chemyshkezek fortress was conquered after 50 well-trained engineers created tunnels underneath the fortress walls.¹

The Seljuk army utilized a vast number of catapults, some made of metal, that were used to destroy the walls by launching heavy boulders. The catapults also hurled vessels (pots) with burning oil (petroleum) that would burn down all wooden support structures inside the fortress walls. These vessels with burning oil were also launched at the enemy during field battles. Once launched, they would scatter the enemy and cause great panic and confusion among the soldiers.

Once on the battlefield, the Seljuk army assumed a specific military configuration. Its key formations included the vanguard, the center of the army, the right and the left wings and the rearguard. Additionally, the army had its own intelligence units. The decision to conduct a military operation or a battle was taken after a preliminary assessment of the situation and was typically processed at the sultan's headquarters and issued in writing.²

As a consequence of conquering the Black Sea port cities, the Seljuks established their own navy, albeit it was no match to the European fleets that dominated the seas. Nevertheless, when Alâeddin Keykûbad laid siege to the Kolonoros fortress, İbn Bibi noted that the Seljuks cut off both – the marine and terrestrial approaches. Navigation of the Black Sea was first made possible by using the Byzantine ships captured at the time of the conquests of Sinop and Samsun.

A large-scale landing operation was carried out during

¹ İbn Bibi, *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 299 – 305.

² Ibid. S. 205.

the reign of Alâeddin Keykûbad aimed at capturing the Crimean city of Sudak and securing trade routes. The Seljuk commander-in-chief Hüsameddin Choban and his cavalry were delivered from Sinop to the Crimea aboard “gargantuan” ships (*dağ gibi*),¹ as İbn Bibi called them. According to their spies a vast Kipchak army protected the city walls. The Seljuk landing troops engaged the Kipchak in a two-day long battle that ended with the decisive defeat of the Kipchak army. İbn Bibi further noted that the city was well prepared to withstand an attack - its walls were well fortified and its warehouses stored plenty of food and weapons. The city was surrounded by deep trenches and was further shielded by additional defense structures.

The Seljuk cavalry was met with a hail of stones, arrows and burning oil. Then the city gates swung open and the Kipchak cavalry went on the offensive. The Seljuks briefly engaged the Kipchak and then resorted to their usual tactic - they pretended to flee in panic, drawing the enemy into an ambush. As a result the Kipchak cavalry was wiped out. By nightfall the Seljuks returned to the city walls and conducted something resembling psychological warfare where they set up camp in close proximity to the city and held a feast. “The louder the Seljuks played their music - wrote İbn Bibi - the louder grew the cries of despair in every city home.”² By morning a delegation of the city’s noblemen arrived at the Seljuk camp begging for mercy and offering to pay the sultan any tribute he cared to determine. With Sudak now conquered, the Seljuks returned to Sinop.

Based on all of the above-mentioned information the military organization of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor can be described as follows. The army consisted of the infantry and the navy. The substantial majority of the Seljuk ground forces

¹ İbn Bibi, *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 205.

² Ibid. S. 339.

was made up of the iqta cavalry (*sipahi*), while the professional, salaried units, with their own infantry and cavalry divisions, made up the rest. The professional army was stationed in the capital. At the time of war, the armies of the vassal states supplemented these principal forces.

The commander-in-chief, or the *melikûlumera*, was the top official in charge of the army and received iqta in compensation for his services. More often than not it was a vilayet, not far from the capital.

The only constant in regards to the size of the army was the 10,000 soldiers in the sultan's permanent troops. The rest was determined by the task at hand. According to İbn Bibi, the overall army was not numerous. Hence, during his war with Syria, İzzeddin Keykavus' army counted 22,000 men.¹ When Alâeddin Keykûbad faced Khorezmshah Jalal ad-Din's 100,000 soldiers² at Yassıçemen, his army counted between 40,000 and 45,000 men. When the joint Syrian and Egyptian forces attacked the Seljuk territories in 1234 CE, the Seljuk commander-in-chief had "50,000 cavalymen made up of old and new soldiers, sipahs and members of the permanent, salaried army."³ Before the battle at Kösedag the sultan's army counted 90,000 soldiers.⁴

In spite of its relatively small size the Seljuk army successfully managed most of its campaigns. This significant achievement was in no small part due to the superior adaptability of the soldiers, their ability to quickly master new weapons, the overall organizational structure of the army as well as the military strategy and tactics they employed during battles. Having lost to the Crusaders once during the First Crusade, and in spite of the vast European superiority and

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... I. Cilt. S. 209.

² Ibid. S. 395.

³ Ibid. S. 444.

⁴ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-name)... II. Cilt. S. 68.

their heavy cavalry, the Seljuks never lost to them again. During the Second Crusade they managed to turn the previous European advantage of a heavy cavalry to their own benefit. The Seljuks would retreat far into their own territories until the heavily clad European knights barely managed to move under the sweltering southern sun and were no longer able to engage in combat. Then the Oghuz light cavalry not only claimed easy victory over the Crusaders (the battle of Eskishehir, October of 1147 CE), they practically slaughtered ninety percent of the army.

On the other hand the Seljuks adapted the Crusaders' heavy defensive weapons and used it to defeat the khorezmshah at Yassichemen. İbn Bibi described the Seljuks as being armor-clad.¹

One of the primary advantages of the Seljuk army was its military strategy and tactics. Their smashing victory over the Byzantine army at Kumdanlı in September of 1176 CE was one of the paramount examples of this unrivaled tactical Seljuk superiority. The Byzantine army, led by Emperor Manuel was vastly superior to the Seljuks, by some accounts numbering around 700,000 soldiers.² The Seljuk sultan Kılıç Arslan led his army in a methodical retreat. Without any resistance whatsoever, the sultan used compact units of 5,000 - 10,000 soldiers to deliver consistent blows to the Byzantine procession, allowing the Byzantine army to follow the Seljuk units into the narrow Miriokephalon passage from where there was no conceivable escape. The Byzantine army was annihilated near the Kumdanlı settlement by the largely inferior (numerically) Seljuk army. One hundred thousand Byzantine soldiers, including the emperor were captured.³

The Seljuk army and its commanders had extensive

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye (Selçuk-name)*... I. Cilt. S. 406.

² Turan, O. *Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi*... S. 208.

³ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l-Ala'ıye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'ıye (Selçuk-name)*... I. Cilt. S. 208 – 209.

combat experience and were capable of facing any adversary in a variety of terrains. These superior military skills were further aided by the near constant military campaigns conducted throughout the history of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor. These two principal advantages - the strategic and tactical superiority and extensive combat experience, determined the Seljuk ability to achieve their military goals with a relatively compact army. In other words they fought using their know-how, instead of focusing on the size of the army.

However, in our opinion, the Seljuks maintained a small army not because they wanted to, but simply because they didn't have the necessary means to expand it. Towards the middle of the 13th century the volume of lands suitable for cultivation and agriculture was limited, as was the state's capacity to increase its territories, therefore the number of soldiers designated by the *iqta* was also limited. Another shortcoming of the Seljuk army was its poorly defined unit structure that handicapped the management of a large military organization. Therefore, the smaller the army - the more effective was its combat management.

In fact, most of the armies in the Near and Middle East during this historical period could be noted for the same deficiency. The only exception was Genghis Khan's army. In the middle of the 13th century the Mongol army had a strictly defined organizational structure, which was based on a decimal system and was the main factor in their decisive military victories. This meant that the primary unit in the Mongol army consisted of 10 soldiers and reported to a junior commander. An officer was in charge of the 10 primary units that together formed a hundred, or a *sade*. Ten *sade* formed a regiment (1,000 soldiers) and reported to another officer with a rank of an *emiri hezare*. Ten regiments formed a *tumen* or a division (10,000 men). The division reported to a *noyon* or an *emiri tumen*. This rank would be equivalent to a modern-day General. The overall size of the Mongol army stationed in the

Near East was 20 divisions, or 200,000 men. This was a remarkably flexible and effective military structure that essentially exists to this day.

The Ottoman Turks - the descendants of the Oghuz Turks, would later implement a similar structure.

CHAPTER VII

Collapse of the Turkic Seljuk State in Asia Minor.

1. Domestic Political Conditions in the Seljuk State in Asia Minor During the Reign of Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev II.

The Seljuk sultanate managed to retain its regional influence for a short while after the death of Alâeddin Keykûbad I. The Greek Trapezuntine Empire as well as the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, among others, continued to recognize the Seljuk state in Asia Minor as their sovereign and continued to pay the annual tribute, issue currency and read the hutba with the sultan's name. The Mongols, for their part resorted to receiving their tribute from the now vassal Seljuk sultan and observing the development of the domestic political conditions in the sultanate.

The new sultan Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev II (1237 – 1246 CE) did not possess the qualities necessary for the successful management of the country, especially during this crucial period in its history, and those close to him understood the gravity of the situation. Thanks to their joint efforts the state managed to circumvent hostilities with Egypt. To further strengthen the relations between the two countries they proposed that the ruler of Halab, Melik Nasyr marry the sultan's sister and in turn requested that Nasyr's daughter become Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev II's wife. Furthermore, to pacify the Ayyubids in Eastern Anatolia the top Seljuk officials arranged for the Ayyubid leaders to receive several cities as iqta. Even before Alâeddin Keykûbad's death the Syrian leader, Melik Eshref sent a letter to the sultan confirming his peaceful disposition. All in all the domestic and foreign relations of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor were generally favorable, albeit not for long.

One of the main proponents of Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev II ascending to the Seljuk throne, an official by the name of Saadeddin Köpek soon became a favorite of the sultan. As a consequence of this association, all decisions made by the sultan at the suggestion of Saadeddin Köpek produced a severe weakening of the state on the international stage, and contributed to the deterioration of the political situation within the country. Köpek's first victim was the leader of the khorezmid beys serving the sultan, Emir Kadir Khan. A victim of slander, the emir was arrested and sent to a fortress where he died a short while later.¹ That very day the khorezmid beys and their troops left Konya and headed for the Syrian border, raiding and pillaging settlements along the way, and leaving them in ruins. The attempt to return the beys to Konya resulted in a military conflict with the Seljuks crushed in defeat. As a result of this confrontation the subashi of Kharput was killed and the Malatya subashi was taken hostage.

Saadeddin Köpek used these events to discredit the Vizier Shamseddin Altunaba who was fired from his position. Köpek's other victims included all of the top state officials, including the Seljuk commander-in-chief Kemaleddin Kamyar, who were either imprisoned or executed. This allowed Saadeddin Köpek to accumulate practically all of the state power in his own hands.

In 1238 CE Saadeddin Köpek ordered the sultan's two bothers Kılıç Arslan and Rukneddin arrested and sent to the Borgulu fortress.² According to one theory, Köpek planned to kill the sultan and claim the throne for himself. To make his claims more plausible he spread rumors that he was the son of Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev I and Shehnaz hatun, the daughter of a wealthy Konya nobleman.³

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l - Ala'ıye Fi'l - Umuri'l - Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-Name)... II. Cilt. S. 23.

² Ibid. S. 27.

³ Turan, O. *Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi...* S. 411 – 412.

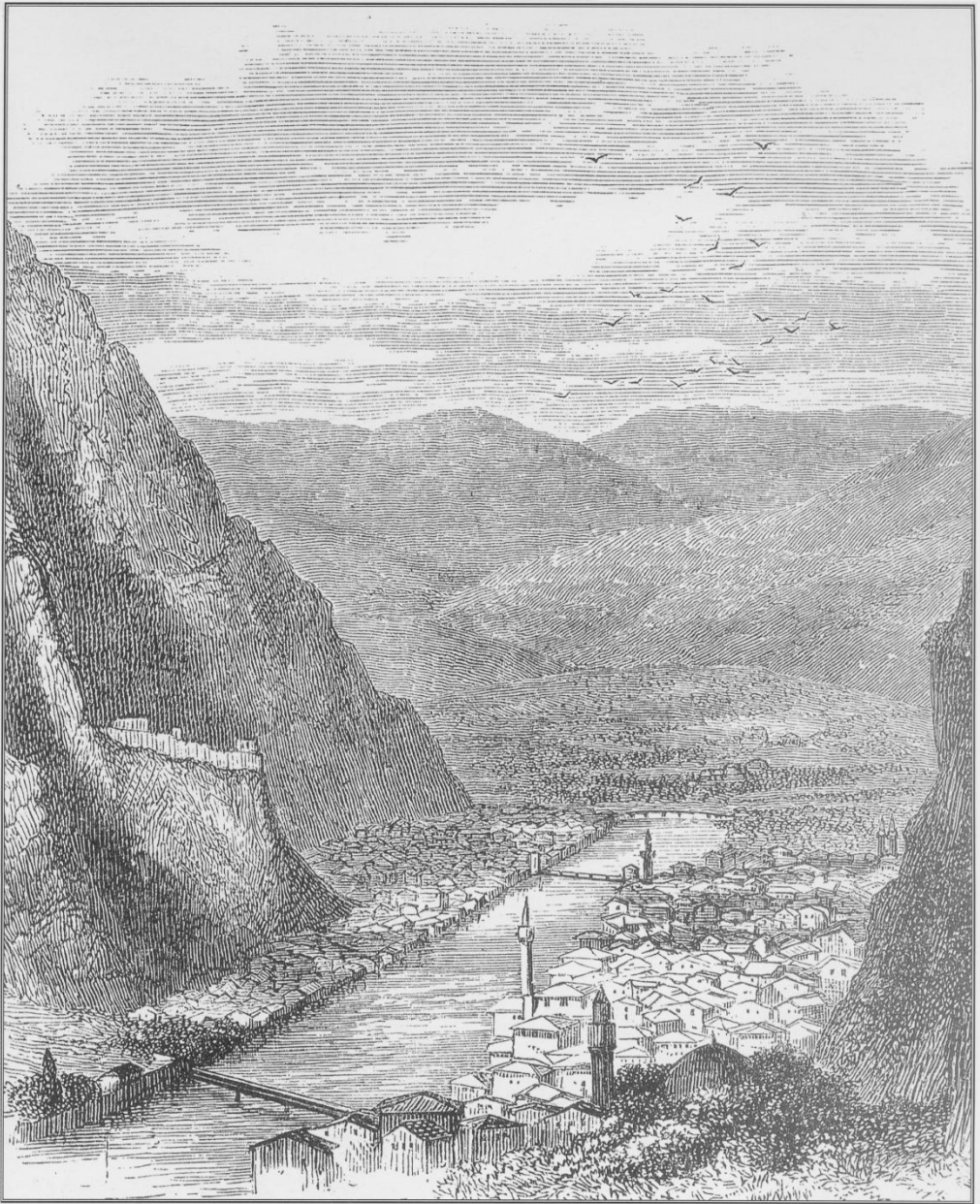
Only then did the sultan realize that his life was in danger and his disposition towards Köpek changed, but getting rid of the former favorite was not easy. The sultan managed to summon to Konya his loyal subashi of Sivas Hüsameddin Karadja who killed Köpek shortly after arriving at the palace.

The next, and a much more severe shock to the Seljuk state, was the socio-political movement and the uprising of Baba Is'haq. The movement was born in connection to the mass migration of the Türkmen nomads, arriving in southeastern Anatolia as a consequence of displacement from their previous habitats by the Mongols.

The Seljuk authorities struggled to keep waves of hundreds of thousands of Türkmen moving across the Syrian border. Eventually the nomadic Türkmen flooded the Southeastern and Central Anatolia, raiding and assaulting, the local population along the way. Every attempt by the local authorities to instill some sense of order was met with extreme discontent and resistance on behalf of the nomads. It is in this environment, fueled by the disgruntled attitude of the Seljuk state that the Baba Is'haq movement was born among the nomads. İbn Bibi described Baba Is'haq as half Muslim - half pagan, first appearing in the vicinity of the city of Simsat¹ around 1204 CE, then settling in one of the villages around Amasya.

Baba Is'haq preached that the country was overrun by godlessness and tyranny. He accused the sultan of leading a dissolute lifestyle and unwillingness to involve himself in matters concerning the lives of the common citizens. His popularity grew rapidly and soon his followers (*the mürids*) preached his ideas far beyond Amasya. Eventually Baba Is'haq accused the sultan of veering off Allah's path and

¹ Simsat – in present day Turkey, the city of Samsat. Located on the banks of the Euphrates River between Urfa and Adiyaman.



Amasya

called for a popular uprising. Acting through his mürids Baba Is'haq ordered the nomad Türkmén to arm themselves and be prepared to answer his call to begin the fight against the prevailing authority in order to ensure improved conditions for their people. Those who joined him were promised a share of the loot, and trophies; others were to be killed without mercy.¹

Following Baba Is'haq's orders the Türkmén indeed began to sell off their livestock and arm themselves. Once the call was issued they attacked and captured the cities of Simsat, Kakhta and Adıyaman. As they moved from city to city everyone who disagreed with the preaching of Baba Is'haq, regardless of their faith was murdered. As the rebels approached Malatya they were met by the subashi Muzafereddin Alişir and his army, but the brutal and violent battle led to the subashi's defeat. Alişir returned to Malatya, assembled a bigger army and returned to face the rebels, but was once again defeated.

The followers of Baba Is'haq, with their morale and determination to continue the fight strengthened, set out for Sivas. Here the armed citizens joined the numerous Sivas garrison, but their efforts were in vain. The city was plundered and the igdishbashi, along with the city's nobility were hanged.²

As the rebellion grew across Eastern and Central Anatolia nomadic Türkmén from other provinces rushed to join the movement. The rebels took over the city of Tokat and moved towards Amasya to be headed by Baba Is'haq himself. At this point the situation in the country was extremely complicated. The sultan sent one of his allies, commander Mübarizeddin Armaganshah and his army to Amasya with orders to do whatever it took to stop further advances of Baba

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l - Ala'ıye Fi'l - Umuri'l - Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-Name)... II. Cilt. S. 49 – 50.

² Ibid. S. 51.

Is'haq and his insurgents. Armaganshah arrived at Amasya in advance of the rebels, took control of the city, arrested Baba Is'haq and hanged him right on the city wall.

As the news reached the rebels, they charged at Armaganshah's army with unparalleled fury, destroying the army, capturing and executing their leader. The rebels entered the city in search of Baba Is'haq's body. Unable to find it they proclaimed their leader alive and took course for Konya.

Horried, Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev ordered a 60,000-strong army, at the time stationed in Erzurum to resist a possible Mongol invasion, to be sent to quash the rebellion. The sultan then promptly left the capital.

The Erzurum army, which constituted the better part of the overall Seljuk military forces passed through Sivas and Kayseri, and faced the rebels in the Kyrshahir province in 1240 CE. The battle ended with the complete annihilation of the rebel forces and put an end to Baba Is'haq's uprising.¹

The sultan sent out the *fetihname* to all the neighboring countries and generously rewarded his military chiefs. Nonetheless, the situation in the country remained perilous since the underlying tensions between the nomad Türkmen and the Muslim and Christian populations have not been resolved and continued to deteriorate. Furthermore, it took all of the state's resources to suppress the Baba Is'haq insurgency resulting in a significantly weakened state by the end of the campaign. İbn Bibi wrote that the Baba Is'haq socio-political movement was unparalleled in the history of the Seljuk state and left the country in a state of severe shock.²

¹ İbn Bibi. El Evamirü'l - Ala'ıye Fi'l - Umuri'l - Ala'ıye (Selçuk-Name)... II. Cilt. S. 53.

² Ibid. S. 54.

*2. The Mongol Invasion of Asia Minor.
The Seljuk Defeat at Kösedag.
Transformation of the Seljuk State to a Vassal of the
Mongolian Khans.*

Once the Mongols realized that the Seljuk Sultan Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev II was indeed a weak ruler and the state military reserves were depleted as a result of the efforts exerted to suppress the Baba Is'haq uprising, a decision was made to invade Asia Minor. Thirty thousand soldiers under the command of Bayju noyon (according to İbn Bibi, they were the elite Tatar cavalry)¹ invaded Anatolia and in the fall of 1242 CE besieged Erzurum.

The Erzurum garrison under the command of subashi Sinaneddin Yakut bravely defended the city, even attempting bold raids beyond the city walls, causing substantial damage to the Mongols. However, in the first days of the siege, the city's governor secretly met with Bayju and having negotiated personal protections opened the city gates at nightfall. The fight to defend the city lasted until the morning, but the Seljuks were vastly outnumbered. Almost all of the city's defenders were killed. Subashi Yakut and his son were both hanged. The pillaged city stood in ruins; the young men and women were shackled and led into slavery, while everyone else was murdered. Those who lived beyond the city walls shared the fate of Erzurum's residents. The Mongols showed no mercy.

The sultan called for the mobilization of the iqta troops as well as the armies of vassal states. A decision was made to reinforce the army by hiring additional Muslim (Arab) and Christian (Armenian and Frankish) soldiers. To accomplish

¹ İbn Bibi used the term Tatar to refer to the Mongols settled in Iran. Please see: İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l - Ala'ıye Fi'l - Umuri'l - Ala'ıye (Selçuk-Name)*... II. Cilt. Commentary on P. 62.

this task the Seljuk treasury allocated vast resources sending 100,000 gold dinars and several million silver dirhams to Syria alone.¹

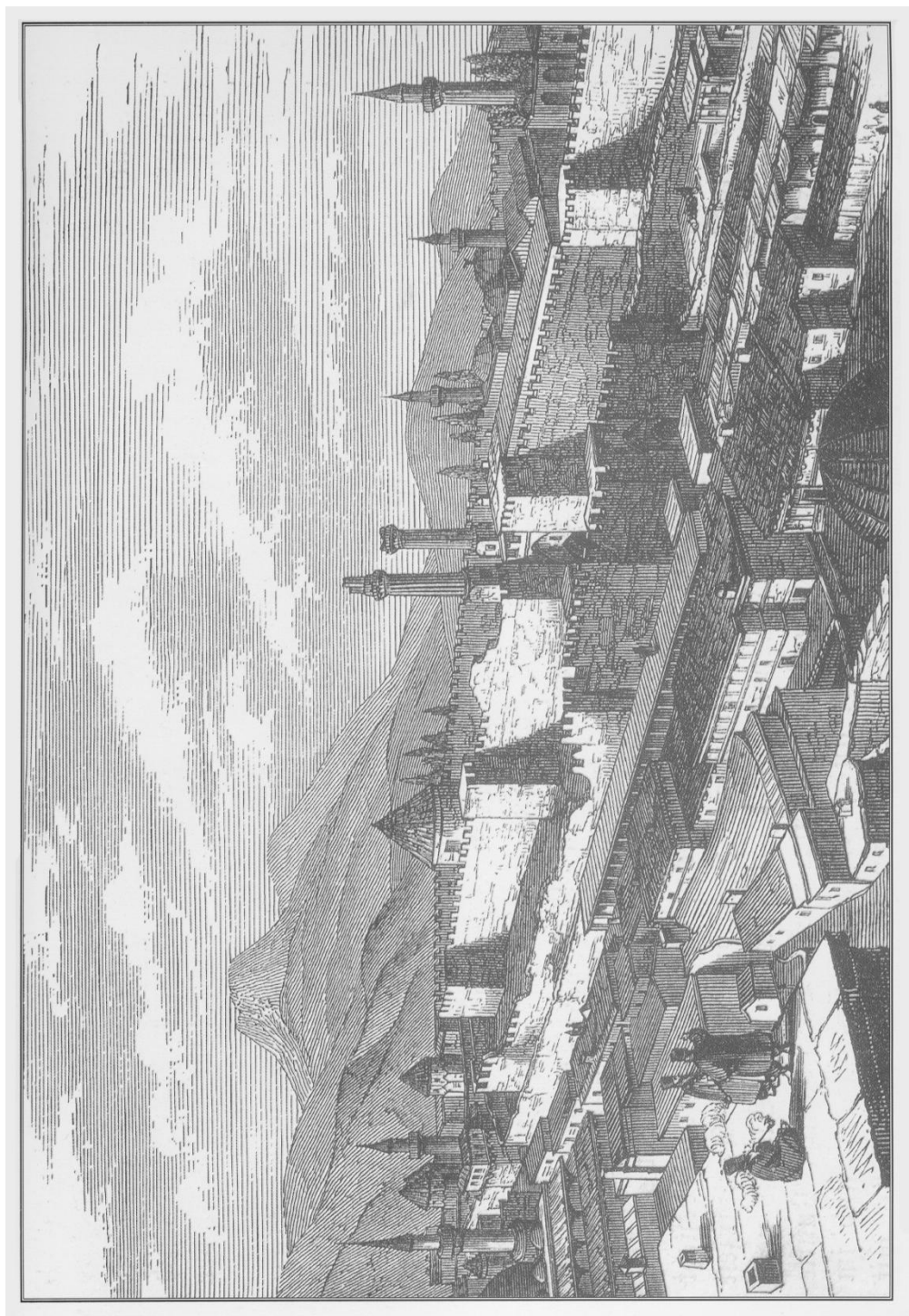
Seventy thousand soldiers, including the iqta cavalry and the sultan's professional army arrived at Kayseri in the winter of 1243. From there the sultan led his troops to Sivas where they were to connect with the mercenaries and the vassal armies.

The disagreements on what to do next started while still at Sivas as the older and more experienced commanders advised the sultan to wait for the enemy at Sivas - a well-fortified city with great provision reserves. The argument was further substantiated by the fact that the armies of hired soldiers as well as the vassal armies were yet to arrive. The younger and less-experienced commanders believed that the sultan should mobilize to face the enemy instead of waiting for them at Sivas. The sultan struggled to make a decision, and finally decided to leave Sivas, marching in the direction of Mt. Kösedag.²

These later events are highly indicative of the changes among the top military leadership in the Seljuk army. What also became clear was that the sultan was clueless when it came to devising military strategy and tactics; nonetheless, he sent his commander-in-chief (*melikülûmera*) Shemseddin İsfahani to recruit Syrian mercenaries. At the same time the Seljuk army lacked any kind of a central military command center that would issue coordinated orders to the combat troops, which only meant that the army was destined to fail.

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l - Ala'ıye Fi'l - Umuri'l - Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-Name)... II. Cilt. S. 65 – 66.

² Mt. Kösedag is located between the Zara and Sushehir settlements.



Erzurum

At Kösedag, the Seljuk troops took up advantageous positions that could only be taken by storm. Their rear provided good fodder for the horses and had sufficient amounts of drinking water to sustain the army. The Seljuk vanguard that arrived at Kösedag in advance of the main army guarded all mountain approaches. Seljuk intelligence reported that Bayju and his 40,000 soldiers were moving from Erzindjan approaching Kösedag. The Seljuk army, even without the hired units counted almost 90,000 troops.¹

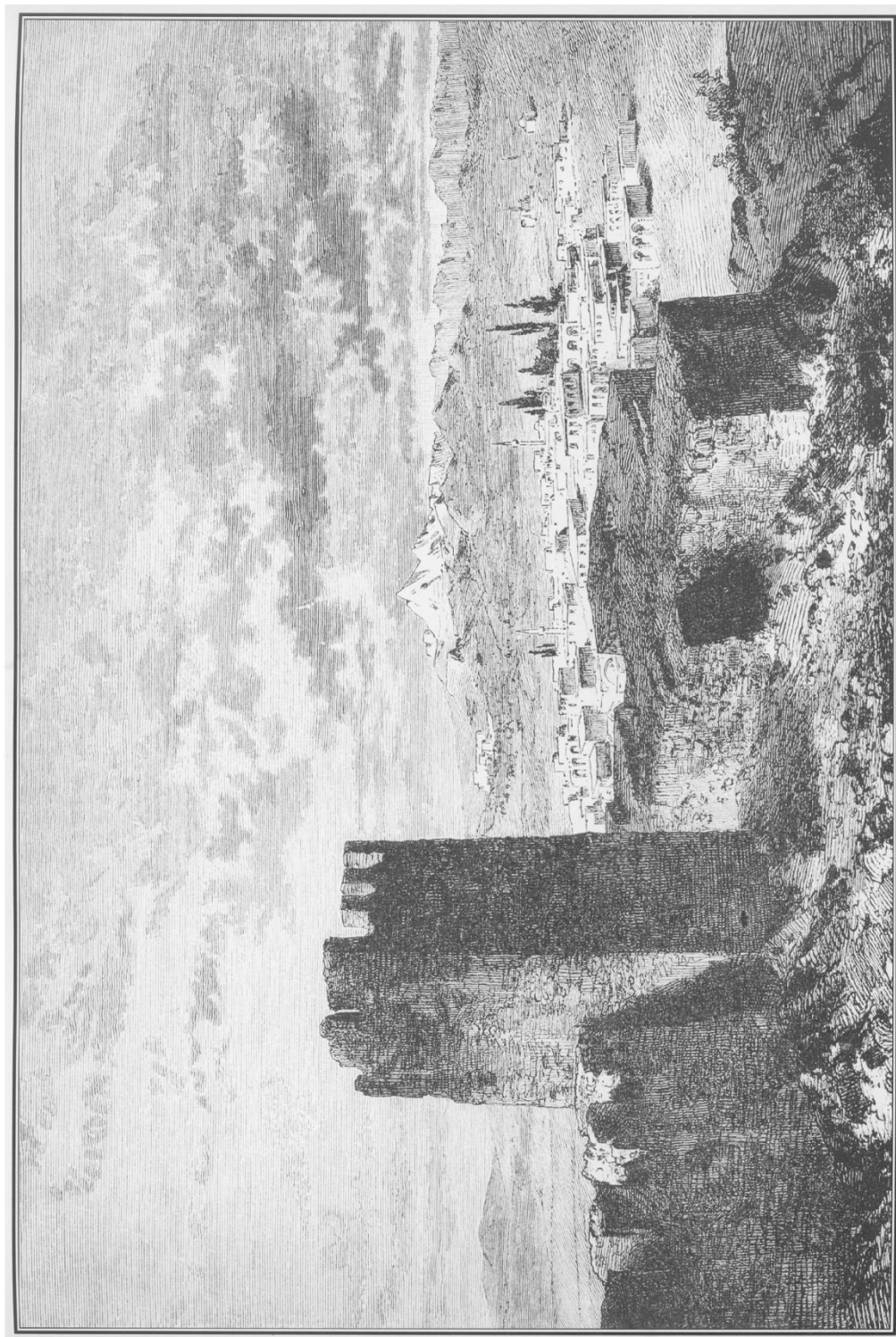
The young Seljuk commanders advised the sultan to abandon their positions and march to face the Mongols. İbn Bibi wrote that “due in large part to their foolishness and ignorance”² the young commanders were celebrating their anticipated victory. The vizier and the senior, more experienced commanders regarded the proposition as a dangerous gamble. All this bickering among the military commanders was often accompanied by personal insults and as a result, one of the commanders, Muzafereddin oğlu, while in a state of severe alcohol intoxication, decided to attack the Mongols on his own.³ On the morning of July 3, 1232 CE he ordered his troops to leave their positions and charge the Mongols. The Mongols quickly destroyed the insignificant Seljuk units. Some of the other commanders followed Muzafereddin oğlu, in all about 20,000 soldiers, but soon met a similar fate. The Mongols likewise swiftly destroyed their troops.

With this the “battle” at Kösedag was over. Overcome by panic, the sultan fled to Konya and the troops, abandoned and without appropriate supervision scattered from the battlefield.

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l - Ala'ıye Fi'l - Umuri'l - Ala'ıye (Selçuk-Name)...* II. Cilt. S. 68.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.



Kayseri

Noyon Bayju continued on to Sivas without any resistance from the Seljuks. At the time of the Mongol occupation of Central Asia the Kadii of Sivas Nedjmeddin Kyrshahirli spent time in Khorezm and somehow managed to obtain a jarliq from the Mongols. Kyrshahirli led the delegation of the city's top officials to welcome Bayju to Sivas with rich gifts. Upon seeing Kyrshahirli's jarliq and being assured that the city was not going to resist the Mongols, Bayju agreed to spare the lives and possessions of its residents. At the same time he issued orders to destroy all munitions warehouses and a portion of the defensive structures.

Kayseri was next on Bayju's path to Konya, but in contrast to Sivas the city intended to defend itself. The Mongols besieged the city and set up a number of catapults around its walls. For fifteen days the walls sustained continuous bombardment, which resulted in cracks and small breaches. The city's ahi worked tirelessly to mend the gaps and the city continued to defend itself. From time to time the city's garrison made raids outside the city walls causing substantial damage to the enemy troops.

İbn Bibi wrote that faced with such a formidable defense, Bayju considered lifting the siege and returning to Kayseri the following year.¹ However, at this point, the Kayseri's igdishbashi Hadjouq oğlu Hüsam negotiated immunity for himself, his family and his possessions and secretly fled the city. He also informed Bayju that the city was barely sustaining itself - its people relying on their reserves to survive. The very next day garrison commanders, Kayseri's subashi Fahreddin Ayaz and Emir Samsamuddin Kaymaz received an ultimatum from Bayju that offered immunity to the commanders in exchange for a peaceful surrender of the city. Subashi Ayaz abandoned the city and

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l - Ala'ıye Fi'l - Umuri'l - Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-Name)... II. Cilt. S. 73 - 74.

joined Bayju's army, but Emir Kaymaz remained at the fortress and took over its defense.

Bayju refused to lift the siege, instead he used the information supplied by the subashi and concentrated his catapults in the areas most susceptible to destruction and soon the walls gave way. The Mongols burst into the city executing all of its defenders. The city was plundered, destroyed and subsequently burned to the ground. As a result, the vast majority of its citizens perished.

Events immediately following the destruction of Kayseri are an excellent illustration of the conditions within the executive apparatus of the Seljuk government, and more specifically the attitude of the top Seljuk government officials towards their sultan. Following the defeat at Kösedag the vizier Muhezeddin fled to Amasya. The vizier and the kadii of Amasya Fahreddin took it upon themselves to travel to Bayju's camp and negotiate peace with the Mongols. İbn Bibi wrote that most of the officials took these measures because they understood that "with such an ignorant and inexperienced sultan" the country's very existence was in grave danger.¹

The Mongol Noyon Bayju welcomed the ambassadors who assured him that the Seljuk sultan recognized the authority of the Mongol Khan and agreed to pay the khan an annual tribute of 360,000 silver dirhams, 10,000 sheep, a thousand heads of cattle and a thousand camels.² According to other sources the monetary tribute was set at 400,000 gold dinars.³

The vizier returned to Konya and informed the sultan of the meeting and the terms of the agreement. Overcome with joy, the sultan rewarded the vizier with rich gifts and

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l - Ala'ıye Fi'l - Umuri'l - Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-Name)... II. Cilt. S. 75 – 76.

² Ibid.

³ Turan, O. *Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi*... S. 445 – 446.

endowed him with vast iqta lands.¹

In line with the established Mongol traditions the noyon's decision had to be approved by the khan. To be more specific, the Great Khan had to issue the new vassal ruler a permission to rule his lands. In the period following Ögedei's death the Mongol throne was vacant, so the eldest of Genghis Khan's descendants, his grandson Baty had to approve Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev's new status.

In 1243 CE Khan Baty founded the Golden Horde. The state's territories included Western Siberia, northern regions of Khorezm, Volga Bulgaria, Northern Caucasus, the Crimea, as well as the steppes stretching from the Volga River to the banks of the Danube River. Russian principalities were also among the Mongol vassals. The Seljuk delegation headed by the commander-in-chief Shemseddin İsfahani, the kadii of Amasya Fahreddin and an interpreter Medjeddin Mohammed headed to Saray, the capital of the Golden Horde.² Baty received the ambassadors and signed the peace treaty between the Mongols and the Seljuks. Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev was ordered to rule his country and as symbols of authority the Mongol khan sent the sultan a bow, an arrow, a sword and a headdress called a *külâh*. Shemseddin İsfahani used this opportunity to request Baty's permission to march against the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia.³

Upon his return from the Golden Horde, Shemseddin İsfahani was appointed vizier. The sultan presented him with a sword, gave Kyrsehir as iqta and requested that the new vizier take over the management of the country.

At the end of 1245 CE the Seljuk forces invaded the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia. The main reason for the invasion was that the Armenians stopped paying tribute to the Seljuks and the Armenian king adopted hostile foreign

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l - Ala'ıye Fi'l - Umuri'l - Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-Name)... II. Cilt. S. 82.

² Saray was located in the mouth of the Volga River.

³ Turan, O. *Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi*... S. 450 – 451.

policies towards the sultanate in light of the Seljuk defeat at Kösedag. İbn Bibi wrote that Muslims fleeing the Mongol invasions sought refuge in Armenian cities, but were robbed by the local population. Muslim refugees escaping Malatya and Kayseri passing through Sis, on their way to Halab experienced similar treatment. Furthermore, the Armenian king refused to let the sultan's mother and daughter pass through his territories en route to Syria and instead handed them over to the Mongols.¹

As a result of the military campaign against the Armenians a new agreement was signed that stipulated that the Armenian king had to repay the tribute due for the past two years plus the next year, reimburse the Seljuks for the costs of the military campaign, cover the losses sustained by the refugees and return all territories captured during the Mongol invasion.²

Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev II died unexpectedly in 1246 CE. His vizier Shemseddin İsfahani assembled the most loyal among the top officials in order to decide which of the sultan's children should be installed on the throne.³ The eleven-year-old İzzeddin Keykavus was chosen to replace his father. The new sultan's fractured rule extended from 1246 - 1249, 1249 - 1254, 1257 - 1259, and from 1259 - 1262 CE. The vizier, whose authority in the Seljuk state soon transcended all boundaries, remained in the cabinet of the new sultan, married the sultan's mother and eliminated all potential adversaries.

In 1246 CE the Mongols called a *kurultay* to elect the new Great Khan⁴ to be held in the state capital Karakorum.¹

¹ İbn Bibi. El Evamirü'l - Ala'ıye Fi'l - Umuri'l - Ala'ıye (Selçuk-Name)... II. Cilt. S. 79.

² Ibid. S. 87.

³ Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev II had three sons: İzzeddin Keykavus, Rukneddin Kılıç Arslan and Alâeddin Keykûbad.

⁴ The Great Khan Ögedei passed away at the end of 1241. According to a joint decision by Ögedei's brother and his sons, in anticipation of the kurultai, Turakina-hatun - the mother of the Princes' with ascension rights, should

Juvaini wrote that messengers traveled to the "lands near and far" to deliver the invitations to the princes and noyons. Sultans and kings were required to appear at the council.² Khan Baty did not make a personal appearance but sent his brothers. Sons and grandsons represented the Chagatai clan. Genghis Khan's sons and grandsons also arrived in person, as did all of the Mongol noyons, some of whom accompanied rulers of vassal states. Among other invited guests were the head kadii of Baghdad Fahr-ad-Din, heads of most of the eastern Muslim countries as well as the Frankish ambassadors. Two thousand tents were erected in order to accommodate all of the invited guests.³

Sultan İzzeddin Keykavus was among those ordered to attend the celebrations, but the vizier decided not to jeopardize the young sultan's life and consequently his own official position, and sent the sultan's brother Rukneddin Kılıç Arslan and his atabeg (mentor) Bahaeddin Terdjuman to attend the celebrations on behalf of the sultan.

The kurultay elected Ögedei's son Güük (1246 - 1248 CE) the new Great Khan. Juvaini wrote that Güük appointed Eldjigitay head of the army and all conquered lands but his first order of business was to tend to Rum (the Seljuk state in Asia Minor), Georgia, Aleppo, Mosul, Diyarbakır "So that none but him minded these matters and sultans and rulers of those places were accountable just to him for the tributes they pay".⁴ Güük also presented all of the rulers with *jarliqs* and the *paiza*. Rukneddin Kılıç Arslan was named the new Seljuk

become the interim ruler of the country. Turakina-hatun was a wise woman whose political position improved with the Princes' consent. Chagatai's death soon after Ögedei, only added to a list of reasons that contributed to the extended interim period.

¹ Karakorum – Founded by Genghis Khan in 1220 CE in the upper reaches of the Orkhon River, the city remained the Mongol capital until 16th. Its ruins now lay not far from Ulan-Bator.

² Джувейни, Ата-Мелик. Чингисхан. История завоевателя мира... С. 172.

³ Ibid. C. 173.

⁴ Ibid. C. 177.

sultan "Because [Rukneddin Kılıç Arslan] appeared before him to demonstrate his obedience".¹ İzzeddin Keykavus was demoted.

In 1249 CE, Rukneddin Kılıç Arslan and his envoy of 2,000 Mongol soldiers arrived at Sivas where he announced himself the new ruler and appointed his mentor Bahaeddin Terdjuman the new vizier. On March 25, 1249 the sultan ordered Shemseddin İsfahani arrested and executed. His orders were carried out the very same day. As a result Erzindjan, Sivas, Kayseri, Kharput and Diyarbakır recognized the authority of the new sultan while the rest of the country still considered İzzeddin Keykavus their sovereign. To make matters more complicated İzzeddin Keykavus had no intentions of giving up his throne in favor of his younger brother. In the battle of June 14, 1249 Rukneddin Kılıç Arslan's army was defeated.

The top Seljuk officials came to an awkward and unprecedented decision to install all three brothers on the throne. They managed to convince the brothers to accept the arrangement and from 1249 - 1254 CE all three sultans ruled the country: İzzeddin Keykavus II, Rukneddin Kılıç Arslan IV, and Alâeddin Keykûbad II.²

In 1253 the Mongol khan sent a messenger to Konya demanding that İzzeddin Keykavus II immediately present himself to the Great Khan. However, the sultan understood that he could face severe punishment for disobeying the khan's orders and even if he did manage to return from Mongolia, Rukneddin Kılıç Arslan would become the sole ruler of the country. Unwilling to face either of these possibilities, İzzeddin Keykavus II declined the messenger's demands citing the immediate necessity to suppress a Türkmen uprising in the country's western regions. The

¹ Джувейни, Ата-Мелик. Чингисхан. История завоевателя мира... С. 177.

² İbn Bibi. El Evamirü'l - Ala'ıye Fi'l - Umuri'l - Ala'ıye (Selçuk-Name)... II. Cilt. S. 133.

sultan's youngest brother Alâeddin Keykûbad II was sent to Mongolia to appear before the Great Khan, but the young sultan never arrived at Karakorum. The official statement said that Alâeddin Keykûbad died as a result of illness, but the more plausible explanation is that the young sultan died as a consequence of a conspiracy between the two older brothers. There was a definite possibility that Alâeddin Keykûbad II could have returned from Mongolia with a jarliq anointing him the sole Seljuk ruler, so İzzeddin Keykavus II bribed Alâeddin's mentor, and the young sultan was killed in 1254 CE.¹

Meanwhile the relationship between the two remaining brothers deteriorated even further and they were no longer able to sustain the ruling tandem. In 1254 CE Rukneddin Kılıç Arslan left Konya and assumed the throne in Kayseri. His attempt to split the country failed and the two brothers began to assemble their troops. In the ensued battle Rukneddin Kılıç Arslan was defeated and subsequently attempted to flee to Sis, but was captured by the local Türkmen and delivered to Kayseri where İzzeddin Keykavus II ordered Rukneddin Kılıç Arslan imprisoned in the Borgulu fort.²

Economic conditions within the Seljuk state also suffered as a result of the internecine warfare. One of the indicators of this process was the devaluation of the principal currency unit used in financial transactions - the silver dirham. Up until 1252 CE the standard Seljuk coin weighed 3.21 grams, but by 1256 CE its weight dropped to just 2.73 grams of silver.³ At the same time prices increased on all of the essential items.⁴ The state soon had difficulties maintaining their tribute remittances to the Mongols. All this,

¹ Turan, O. Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi... S. 473.

² İbn Bibi. El Evamirü'l - Ala'ıye Fi'l - Umuri'l - Ala'ıye (Selçuk-Name)... II. Cilt. S. 140 – 143.

³ Akdağ, M. Türkiye'nin iktisadi ve içtimai tarihi. Cilt I. (1243 - 1453)... S. 36.

⁴ Ibid. S. 37.

coupled with the fact that the country was ruled by a sultan who repeatedly ignored the Mongol orders made a new Mongol invasion inevitable and put the sultan's own fate in jeopardy.

In 1251 CE, Genghis Khan's grandson Mengu (1251 - 1259 CE) became the new Great Khan. The new khan appointed his brother Hulagu¹ ilkhan (i.e. the khan of a specific geographical region) and sent him to "conquer the western regions". Hulagu established the western Mongol state and founded the Hulaguid dynasty that ruled in Iran, most of the territories of the modern-day Afghanistan, Transcaucasia, Iraq and the eastern areas of Asia Minor from 1256 CE until the middle of the 14th century. The Hulaguid state, the state of western Mongols, was an integral part of the Great Mongol Empire.

In August of 1256 CE Ilkhan Hulagu sent Noyon Bayju to Anatolia. Soon the news of the Mongol approach reached the Seljuk sultan - Bayju's units were marching towards Konya, destroying all settlements from Erzurum to Aksaray. İzzeddin Keykavus began to assemble his army in anticipation of the confrontation with Bayju's army. İbn Bibi wrote that the sultan acted under increasing pressure from the senior palace goulams.² The bloody and fierce battle on October 14, 1256 CE resulted in İzzeddin Keykavus' defeat and the sultan with his immediate entourage fled to Antalya and from there to Denizli. Noyon Bayju ordered İzzeddin Keykavus captured, but the sultan managed to escape Denizli and find safety in Laskaris' Greek Nicaean state.

Following İzzeddin Keykavus' escape Bayju ordered Rukneddin Kılıç Arslan released from prison. In November of 1256 he returned to Konya and new administrative structures were implemented by March of 1257 CE. Soon thereafter

¹ Джувейни, Ата-Мелик. Чингисхан. История завоевателя мира... С. 441.

² İbn Bibi. El Evamirü'l - Ala'ıye Fi'l - Umuri'l - Ala'ıye (Selçuk-Name)... II. Cilt. S. 145 - 146.

Rukneddin Kılıç Arslan traveled from Konya to Hamadan to meet with Ilkhan Hulagu where he was awarded the jarliq to be the sole ruler of the Seljuk state.

In 1257 Ilkhan Hulagu completed his conquest of Iran and began preparations for the takeover of Baghdad. As the campaign required significant additional reinforcements, Hulagu called on all of his noyons to join the fight, more specifically Noyon Bayju. A year later in 1258 CE Hulagu captured Baghdad. The city was plundered and most of its residents killed. Even the Baghdad Caliph al-Mustansir and his son didn't escape the fate of the city's other residents, and were executed on Hulagu's orders, thus ending the history of the Abbasid caliphate in Iraq.

İzzeddin Keykavus took advantage of the simultaneous absence of Rukneddin Kılıç Arslan and his Mongolian protectors from the capital, left Nicaea and returned to Konya to reclaim the Seljuk throne. The claim was made official on May 3rd 1257 CE. The sultan accompanied his ascent by arresting all officials, in the capital as well as in the provinces, appointed by Rukneddin Kılıç Arslan.

As Rukneddin learned of his brother's actions he decided to return to Konya. Accompanied by a Mongol detachment under the command of Bayan, Rukneddin nonetheless delayed the campaign to assemble more troops at Erzindjan. The joint Mongol - Seljuk army left Erzindjan in the spring of 1258 CE and took course for Tokat. The brothers' armies met between Sivas and Tokat. In the resulted battle İzzeddin beat Rukneddin and his Mongol protectors. As the remnants of the Mongol division retreated towards Erzindjan Rukneddin sent a letter to the ilkhan requesting additional military assistance. With the help of the new Mongol detachment led by noyon Alynjan Rukneddin took over Niksar, but his attempts to capture Tokat remained unsuccessful.

Sultan İzzeddin recruited the nomad Türks and Kurds and went on the offensive, this time coming very close to

capturing Erzindjan. Rukneddin now had the assistance of Bayju himself. The noyon advanced from Iraq to Elbistan, captured the city and executed 7,000 of its residents, taking all of the young men and women into captivity. From there he continued on to Malatya, captured the city and forced its residents to swear allegiance to Sultan Rukneddin. Bayju then returned to continue the siege of Baghdad.

Hostilities between the two brothers resumed after Bayju's departure when in 1259 Hulagu finally ordered both siblings to appear before him in Tebriz. The ilkhan declared that he's decided to split the country into two separate states. Territories west of the Kızıl Irmak River all the way to the Byzantine borders would be given to İzzeddin Keykavus, and everything east of the river, up to and including Erzindjan would go to Rukneddin Kılıç Arslan. The ilkhan also informed the brothers that the Seljuk tribute would be increased and that they would now be responsible for sustaining all of the Mongol troops stationed on their territories. The Great Khan Mengü confirmed his decision and the internecine wars between the brothers finally ceased.

Most of what happened next is closely connected to a man named Müeneddin Suleiman, the *pervane* in Rukneddin Kılıç Arslan's royal court. Rukneddin received a *jarliq* from the Mongol khan confirming the appointment.¹

In the summer of 1261 CE the *pervane* reported to the Mongols that İzzeddin Keykavus was in communication with the Egyptian Sultan Baybars, planning to join forces against the Mongols in Anatolia (*historical evidence confirms the validity of this report - author's note*). Ilkhan Hulagu responded by sending troops to Konya to arrest the sultan. Aware of the impending danger, İzzeddin, his harem and close officials fled to Constantinople seeking refuge at the

¹ İbn Bibi, *El Evamirü'l - Ala'ıye Fi'l - Umuri'l - Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-Name)... II. Cilt. S. 156.

court of the Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos,¹ but the emperor, unable to withstand the pressure from the Mongol khan, was forced to imprison İzzeddin and his two sons and execute the officials.

In 1264 CE the Great Khan of the Golden Horde Berke² freed İzzeddin and his two sons. İbn Bibi wrote that the Great Khan was merciful towards the sultan and endowed him with iqta in the Crimea, including the town of Sudak.³

İzzeddin Keykavus spent 17 years in exile, with the last 15 years in Crimea, where he died at the age of 44. After İzzeddin's flight to Constantinople Rukneddin Kılıç Arslan remained the sole ruler of the Seljuk Empire. However four years after his ascent, in 1266 CE the pervane sent another letter to the Mongols, this time accusing Rukneddin of conspiring with the Arabs against the Mongol authority. Later that year Rukneddin was assassinated, strangled with a bowstring, but the official cause of death was announced as illness.

The throne was handed over to Rukneddin's son, the two-and-a-half-year old Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev III (1266 – 1284 CE). Müeneddin Suleiman assumed the post of the sultan's regent and thus gained infinite power and influence in the state. His policies were designed to benefit the interests of his Mongol superiors. Soon the Mongol warriors began to replace the Seljuk subashi and the Mongols came to control the Seljuk iqta territories. In stark contrast to the previous iqta holders the Mongols restricted themselves to simply collecting taxes from their territories without fulfilling any of the military obligations. Mongol soldiers were stationed all

¹ In June of 1261, after 57 years of Latin dominance in Constantinople, the Greeks exiled Emperor Baldwin and his Latin court. Please see. Успенский Ф.И. История Византийской империи. Т.V. М., 2005. С. 310 – 311.

² Khan Baty died in 1255 CE. His brother Khan Berke (1256 – 1266 CE) succeeded him on the Mongol throne.

³ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l - Ala'ıye Fi'l - Umuri'l - Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-Name)... II. Cilt. S. 162.

across the iqta territories.¹ The consequences of these changes were the diminished number of the Seljuk sipahi cavalry, and therefore the imbalance in the foundation of the Seljuk military organizational structure.

The professional army faced similar challenges, as the Seljuk treasury no longer had the sufficient funding needed to sustain the goulams. Annual tributes and other expenses associated with maintaining the Mongol military stationed on the Seljuk territories grew while the state income continued to contract.

To make up for the budget deficit, the Seljuk government continued to increase taxes it imposed onto its citizens and the divan officials, fearing for their lives and safety, cut on their personal expenses. At last the Mongols decided to have complete oversight over the Seljuk finances and introduced their own representative to the Seljuk divan. The new official assumed the title of an advisor to the state. Seeking to maximize their annual tribute, the Mongols deprived the sultan of the right to collect the *orfi rüsumü* taxes, which traditionally counted as the sultan's personal income. This move essentially discounted the sultan's authority and equated him to the rest of the Seljuk nobility who received income from their iqtas. The sultan's only income would now come from the iqta he received from the Mongols.²

From then on, the Seljuk authority was wholly discredited in the eyes of the population. Minor insurgencies and pockets of popular disobedience popped up throughout the empire and spread across the state. There was also an increase in the number of the nomadic Türkmen attacks on the Mongol garrisons. Soon the Seljuk population began to associate their hopes for freedom not with their own sultan, but with the Egyptian monarch Baybars. Back in 1260 CE his

¹ Turan, O. Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi... S. 526.

² Akdağ, M. Türkiye'nin iktisadi ve içtimai tarihi. Cilt I. (1243 - 1453)... S. 59.

mamluk¹ army defeated Hulagu's troops at Ain Djalüt, thus shattering the myth of Mongolian invincibility across the Muslim and Christian worlds.

In 1276 CE the governor of Diyarbakır Hüsameddin Bayjar and his army relocated to Syria. Also that year, the Türkmen (Oghuz) Hatyr clan began preparations for an armed uprising against the Mongols. Its members hoped that if they succeeded sultan Giyaseddin would join them and head the popular liberation movement. Another member of the clan Ziyaeddin Hatyroglu traveled to Egypt in 1276 CE with a request to the Egyptian monarch to come to Anatolia and drive out the Mongols.

Around the same time, another member of the same clan Shefereddin Hatyroglu took advantage of the pervane's and the Mongol Ilkhanid noyons' absence from the capital and began to conduct an active propaganda and organizational efforts intended to attract the Seljuk beys into the ranks of supporters of the armed uprising against the Mongols. Some time later, a Mamluk ambassador arrived with a letter addressed to Shefereddin Hatyroglu that confirmed Sultan Baybars' consent to the joint military actions against the Mongols. Shefereddin Hatyroglu relayed this information to the Anatolia beys, including his son Karaman Bey Mehmet and requested that they arrive at Nigde. At the same time the Mamluk vanguard – some 6,000 cavalrymen arrived at Elbistan. By the time news of Baybars' arrival reached Mehmet Karaman, his army joined by the nomadic Türkmen, already engaged the Mongol troops and liberated the İçel Province. Shefereddin Hatyroglu sent out the fetihname with the news of Karaman's victory to everyone in Anatolia.

In the fall of 1276 CE pervane Müeneddin Suleiman

¹ Mamluk – from the Arabic, slaves. Slave warriors who served in the Ayyubid guard. In 1250 CE the mamluks deposed the Ayyubid dynasty in Egypt and founded their own dynasty of the Mamluk sultans. The dynasty ruled the united Egyptian-Syrian state until 1517 CE when it was later replaced by the Ottoman Turks.

returned to Anatolia with 30,000 troops. The Mamluk Sultan of Egypt and Syria Baybars concentrated his troops in Halab. In April he arrived in Diyarbakır and then went on to Kayseri. As soon as the Mongols received intelligence of Baybars' movements, Suleiman and his joint Mongol - Seljuk armies marched out to meet Baybars. İbn Bibi wrote that Baybars' army was numerically inferior to the joint Mongol - Seljuk forces.¹ The ferocious and bloody battle ended with the Mongols' crushing defeat. Close to six thousand men were killed and the rest ran from the battlefield or were taken captive. The Seljuk army refrained from engaging in combat, some even giving themselves up to Baybars voluntarily. The Seljuk beys whose units were not part of the pervane's forces also joined the Mamluks.

Many of the senior Seljuk officials also switched alliances and joined Baybars. Among them were the pervane's son beylerbey Mühezzibüddin Ali, the defense minister (Ariz ül-ceyş), Emir Kemaleddin, the head kadii of the Seljuk state Hüsameddin, the governors of Erzindjan, Sinop, Sivas, and others.²

Consequently, the Mongols' attitude towards the pervane radically changed and in August of 1277 CE on Ilkhan Abaga's orders the pervane was executed.³

Victorious, Baybars arrived in Kayseri on July 12, 1277 CE where he was received with the highest honors. There he was ceremoniously installed on the specially prepared Seljuk throne and the Friday hutba was read with the Mamluk Sultan's name. However, Baybars didn't spend much time in Anatolia - he soon returned to Syria where he died later that summer.

Ilkhan Abaga arrived in Anatolia soon after Baybars'

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l - Ala'ıye Fi'l - Umuri'l - Ala'ıye (Selçuk-Name)...* II. Cilt. S. 187.

² Turan, O. *Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi...* S. 515 – 546.

³ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l - Ala'ıye Fi'l - Umuri'l - Ala'ıye (Selçuk-Name)...* II. Cilt. S. 199.

departure. He visited the battlefield at Elbistan and issued orders for the immediate repressions of all Muslim Seljuks - the settled Turks and more specifically the nomadic Türkmen. As a consequence of his orders several hundred thousand people (numbers range from 200,000 - 600,000)¹ were executed and almost the same number was enslaved and taken into captivity. The ilkhan ordered Noyon Kongurtai to execute the Karamanids and rule Anatolia on his behalf.

In the meantime the Karamanids continued to gain political strength in Anatolia. According to İbn Bibi, the founder of the dynasty, a Türk named Karaman, worked as a coal miner in the Central Taurus Mountains. He made a living by making daily coal deliveries to a small town of Ermenek, but as living conditions continued to deteriorate and reached unbearable levels following Bayju Noyon's second raid, Karaman organized a gang of armed robbers and began to plunder the roads.² Over time, several military units were sent to eliminate the gang, but Karaman showed unrivaled strategic skills and emerged victorious from each confrontation. As a consequence Sultan Rukneddin recruited Karaman to serve the state and endowed him with a large iqta estate.

As Baybars entered Kayseri Karaman's son Shemseddin Mehmet sent his brother Ali to swear allegiance to the Mamluk Sultan on behalf of the Karamanid clan. Baybars awarded Mehmet Karaman all lands and towns from the town of Larende³ to the Mediterranean coast.⁴

In May of 1277, with the Egyptian sultan still in Anatolia, and the Seljuk sultan, the pervane and other officials in Tokat, the Karamanids and their Türkmen allies, surrounded and later captured Konya.

¹ Turan, O. Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi... S. 551.

² İbn Bibi. El Evamirü'l - Ala'ie Fi'l - Umuri'l - Ala'ie (Selçuk-Name)... II. Cilt. S. 202.

³ Larende – presently the city of Karaman in Turkey.

⁴ Turan, O. Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi... S. 548.

A man nicknamed Jimri¹ came to Konya along with the Karamanids. He insisted that his real name was Siavush and that he was the son of the exiled sultan Giyaseddin Keykavus. One of Giyaseddin's sons was in fact named Siavush, and several people came forward to confirm that they saw Siavush in the Crimea with Giyaseddin and that Jimri was in fact Siavush. One of these "eyewitnesses" was a man named Taki, nicknamed Sivasly, who recently fled Sudak. He claimed that he was personally acquainted with the prince who taught him reading and writing. Following Taki's confirmation, whom İbn Bibi called a liar,² Jimri gained quite a bit of confidence among Konya's residents.

The first to recognize the impostor was Mehmet Karaman, who swore his allegiance to Jimri. The Konya igdishbashi, ayans, ahi and other city residents followed. İbn Bibi noted that their recognition was prompted more by fear than by any genuine conviction on behalf of the citizens.³

In May of 1277 CE, Siyavush - Jimri was enthroned in Konya. The new divan was formed and Mehmed Karaman assumed the post of the vizier. In one of its first rulings the new divan announced Turkish as the official state language.⁴

Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev's vizier Fahreddin Ali could not ignore the developments in Konya and requested assistance from Ilkhan Abaga. At the same time he issued orders for the army to step out ahead of the Mongolian arrival. Once the news of the advancing Seljuk army reached Konya Mehmed Karaman and Jimri marched to meet the Seljuks in Akshehir. In June of 1277 CE their army defeated the Seljuks and

¹ Jimri, in Persian - wanderer, rebel.

² İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l - Ala'ıye Fi'l - Umuri'l - Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-Name)... II. Cilt. S. 204.

³ Ibid. S. 209.

⁴ Here the reference is made to the language used throughout Anatolia by the settled and nomad Oghuz (Türk and Türkmen) within the parentheses of the described historical period. This directive was not implemented and Persian remained the official state language. Turkish language gained its official state designation at the time of the Ottoman Empire.

returned to Konya bearing rich trophies. Their territories now spread from Ankara all the way to the Mediterranean coast.

Inspired by their success the Karamanid rulers now announced that they would organize a campaign to Erzurum and liberate Anatolia from the Mongols. The second battle between the Mongols and the army of Siavush and Karaman took place on June 30, 1279 CE and the insurgent troops were crushed and scattered. Siavush - Jimri was taken hostage and executed. Nonetheless, the suppression of the Karamanid anti-Mongolian insurgencies did not contribute to the strengthening of the Seljuk state and neither did it aid the stabilization of the domestic political conditions.

The Seljuk sultans were mere executors of their Mongol ilkhanids' and their noyons' wills and had no support from the Turkic beys or their citizens. The Ilkhanid interest towards the Seljuks was determined solely by how well a given ruler managed the country and remitted his share of the tribute. As the sultans were less and less able to adhere to the designated tributary parameters the Ilkhanids introduced the institution of the supreme ruler (the governor-general) of Anatolia and their attitude towards the sultans became one of sheer disdain and disregard.

Members of the ruling Seljuk dynasty long lost their authority to designate their own heirs and so in 1284 CE sultan Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev III was arrested, exiled to Erzindjan, and soon executed. Ilkhan Argun passed the throne on to Giyaseddin Mesoud II, the son of the exiled İzzeddin Keykavus II.¹ In 1296 CE Giyaseddin Mesoud II was deposed and exiled. For two years following his exile the Seljuk throne stood without a monarch and the Mongols ruled the country on their own. In 1298 CE Ilkhan Geyhatu handed the throne to İzzeddin Keykavus II's grandson - Alâeddin Keykûbad III, at the time exiled in Constantinople. His

¹ İbn Bibi. *El Evamirü'l - Ala'ıye Fi'l - Umuri'l - Ala'ıye* (Selçuk-Name)... II. Cilt. S. 248 – 249.

authority was officially limited in every sense. The jarliq given to Alâeddin Keykûbad at the time of his ascent, contained specific directives for the sultan to receive authorization for any and all administrative decisions from the Ilkhanid noyon Abışga. The first violation of the directive resulted in Alâeddin Keykûbad's deposition from the throne (1302 CE) and exile to İsfahan.

Towards the end of the 13th - beginning of the 14th centuries the Seljuk state was but a formality, and existed largely as a shell of its former self. The members of the ruling dynasty gave up all hopes and made no attempts at taking advantage of the decline of the Hulaguid state and pursuing their own interests.

In 1312 CE Ilkhan Oljeitu declared war on the Mamluks of Syria and Egypt. The war was unsuccessful and brought with it a sharp decline in the Mongol prestige and authority throughout the Near and Middle East. In the spring of 1315 CE the Mamluks took advantage of the declining regional Hulaguid influence and occupied all of southeastern Anatolia. They advanced to Malatya, crushed the Mongol resistance, plundered and destroyed the city.

In 1316 CE Ilkhan Oljeitu died and his heir Abu Said Bohadır replaced Oljeitu as the head of the Hulaguid state. In the ensued power struggles, most of the authority in the country concentrated in the hands of the influential state official, the military commander-in-chief Emir Choban.¹ In 1317 Emir Choban appointed his son, the Mongol Noyon Timur-tash the supreme ruler in Anatolia. Timur-tash established his capital in Kayseri and from there ruled Anatolia without any regard for the Seljuk Sultan Kılıç Arslan V (1310 – 1318 CE), then on the throne in Konya.

When İzzeddin Kılıç Arslan V died in Konya in 1318 CE, Timur-tash prevented the ascent of Arslan's son and lawful heir Alâeddin (died in 1365 CE), neither did he allow

¹ Köprülü, M.F. Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Kuruluşu. Ankara, 2003. S. 67.

any other member of the Seljuk dynasty to claim the throne. In other words Timur-tash abolished the Seljuk political institution. This decision evoked no reaction from the population. As for the members of the Seljuk ruling dynasty, they gave up all ambitions to the throne and ceased all resistance to the Ilkhanids. In other words, after 243 years of political and military prominence in the region (1075 - 1318 CE), the Seljuk state in Asia Minor went quietly into the dawn of history, once and for all disappearing from the political arena.

Timur-tash single-handedly ruled Central Anatolia for the next ten years. He managed to push the Türkmen chiefs towards the western and southern border regions, and in 1321 CE occupied the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia. He proved an authoritative leader who achieved prompt domestic stabilization in Anatolia and gained wide popular support. One of the primary reasons for his popular support was Timur-tash's firm belief and intentional integration of Islam into every fiber of the Seljuk social and administrative institutions. As a result of these policies his influence and popular support continued to grow, prompting Timur-tash in 1322 CE to seriously consider announcing Anatolia's independence from the declining Ilkhanid state.¹ News of Timur-tash's plans reached Tebriz, and it took Emir Choban considerable efforts to obtain forgiveness for his son as well as the permission for him to retain his position of Anatolia's supreme ruler.

We can only speculate what would have happened in Anatolia had the Ilkhanid Emir Choban retained his positive relations with Tebriz, but those relations soured and the emir was executed in 1327. Timur-tash's own life was now in danger. He fled Anatolia seeking refuge from the Mamluk Sultan Nasır and attempted to persuade the Mamluk ruler to wage war against the Ilkhanids. However in 1328 the Ilkhanid

¹ Turan, O. Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye tarihi... S. 647.

ruler Abu Said Bohadyr sent an embassy to Cairo demanding that Timur-tash be punished. Adhering to the Ilkhanid demands Timur-tash was executed in August of 1328 CE.

The Mongols managed to retain their regional influence in Central and parts of Southern Anatolia for a short time after Timur-tash's flight and execution. Mehmed Fuad Köprülü wrote that the Ilkhanid rule did not extend west of Ankara.¹ The Mongols focused their conquests on the towns situated along roads suitable for timely military transport. However, this would not last either.

As a result of Ilkhan Abu Said's death in 1335 CE the Ilkhanid state ceased to exist in 1336 CE and the Mongols withdrew from Anatolia.

3. Military-Political and Socio-Economic Developments in Asia Minor Following the Dissolution of the Seljuk State and the Mongol Withdrawal.

Military and political configuration of Anatolia changed as a result of the dissolution of the Seljuk state and the Ilkhanid withdrawal. While the Sunni Türks (primarily the Oghuz people) still made up the vast majority of the population across the territories of the former Seljuk state, political borders in the region were very different. The area was now divided into several administrative entities (principalities) with a varied number of citizens, military capacity and level of independence. Turkish historiography refers to these principalities as beyliks. Some of these led a short existence and ended up being absorbed by the neighboring principalities. Others retained their sovereignty and, as we will illustrate below, had all the necessary institutions and attributes of an independent state.

¹ Köprülü, M.F. Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Kuruluşu... S. 70.

The nomad Oghuz (Türkmen), seeking refuge from the Mongols arrived in the western parts of Anatolia and began establishing their beyliks even before the disappearance of the Seljuk Sultanate in Anatolia. In Central Anatolia this became possible only after the Mongol departure. The largest and most powerful of these were the Karaman and the Germian beyliks.

We talked in some length about the Karamanid dynasty, descendant from the Oghuz Avshar tribe, who established their beylik preceding the Mongol departure and made Konya their capital. The Karamanids laid claims to the Seljuk political legacy in the region and were noteworthy rivals to the Ottoman state up until the end of the 15th century.

The Germiyanid beylik played a crucial role in the Turkic western advances thus creating favorable conditions for the future Ottoman conquests. The Germiyanids shared their Oghuz Avshar ancestry with the Karamanids. Their earlier settlements were in the Iranian provinces Fars and Kirman, but they relocated to Asia Minor in the middle of the 13th century, seeking refuge from Mongol oppression. Their earlier settlements were in the vicinity of Malatya, but they subsequently relocated closer to Kütahia and settled there. The founder of the dynasty Alişir was a loyal servant of the Seljuk sultans. While in the Seljuk service he took part on the conquest of the city of Tripolis located in the Meandrous (Menderes) river valley, and participated in the siege of Philadelphia. Alişir's son Yacoub Germiyan proclaimed the Germiyanid beylik's independence during the height of its political and military influence in the area. Beys under Yacoub's command conquered Ayasulug, Manisa, Balıkesir and other western Anatolian towns. Some of them established their own beyliks. Likewise the Germiyanid army commander (subashi) Mehmet Aydın formed the Aydın beylik that included the cities of Izmir, Birgi, Tire, Ayasulug, Alaşehir.¹

¹ Orkun. H.N. Türk tarihi... Cilt IV. S. 121.

Later the Aydın beylik, with its capital in Birgi became vassal to the Germiyanid beylik.

During Yacoub's time new dependent beyliks were formed. These were the Saruhan beylik with the capital in Manisa, and the Karasi beylik with the capital in Balşkesir. The Karasi beylik included the cities of Manyas, Bergama, Edremit, and Gördes as well as the Aegean coastal regions from Edremit to Çanakkale on the Dardanelles straight.

The Menteşe beylik was founded in the southwest of the Asia Minor Peninsula and included the cities of Mugla, Milas, Dalaman, Fethie, and others.¹ To the east of Menteşe lay the Hamidid beylik, founded by the Hamid clan with the capital in Egridir, its southern borders ran for 250 km along the Mediterranean coast and the northern borders were defined by Lake Akshehir. At its center lay the city of Antalya. The cities of Yalvach, Uluborlu, Isparta, Akshehir, and others belonged to the Hamidid beylik.

The Eshref clan established their beylik with the capital city of Beyshehir. Its founder, Suleiman Eshref was one of the high-ranking officials in the Seljuk administration and received the city as iqta. The beylik consisted of the city itself and nearby suburbs south of the city.

The Dulkadır and Ramazan beyliks were formed in the southern Anatolia regions, at the time under the heavy Mamluk influence. Zeyneddin Karadja founded the first of the two beyliks in 1339 CE. Karadja was the son of an Oghuz Bayat tribal chief named Dulkadır. The Dulkadır beylik included cities of Maraş, Elbistan, Malatya, and Kharput. In 1521 CE the Dulkadır beylik ceased to exist and became part of the Ottoman Empire. Chief of the Oghuz Üregir tribe Ramazan founded the second beylik in the middle of the 14th century. Adana was the capital of the Ramazan beylik. The beylik also ceased its existence and in 1608 CE became part

¹ Orkun. H.N. Türk tarihi... Cilt IV. S. 124.

of the Ottoman Empire.¹

The Ertenid beylik was formed in Central Anatolia in 1340 CE. During the early stages of its existence the beylik was one of the most powerful and influential political and military forces in the region. Its founder was the last of the Mongol supreme rulers Alâeddin Ertena, a descendant of the Uighur people. The beylik included the cities of Kayseri, Ankara, Amasya, Tokat, Sivas, Çorum and Erzindjan. Following the death of Alâeddin Ertena's son Ali in 1380 CE, the reigns went to the former head kadii of Kayseri and Alâeddin's vizier Burhaneddin. The new ruler was a descendant of the Oghuz tribe Salour. He ruled the beylik for 17 years and in 1397 CE passed the reigns to his son. From then on the beylik was known as the Burhaneddin beylik.

The Djandar beylik with its capital in Kastamonu was formed in northern Anatolia in 1309 CE by Shudjauddin Suleyman, the son of Shemseddin Yaman Djandan - the forefather of the dynasty and a descendant of the Oghuz Kayi tribe. The beylik consisted of 40 plus cities and 350 kilometers of the Black Sea coast from Eregli to the mouth of the Kızılırmak River.

The Umur Han beylik lay west of the Djandar River to the Sakarya River.

The Pervâneoğlu beylik was formed prior to the Mongol withdrawal. Its ruling dynasty descended from Müeddin Suleiman, the pervane to the Seljuk Sultans İzzeddin Keykavus II, Rukneddin Kılıç Arslan IV and regent to Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev III. The term *pervane* originally described an official position within the Grand Divan that was responsible for keeping accurate accounting of the state lands. However, with time the term was transformed into a proper noun, especially when referring to Müeddin Suleiman and was used as a first name even during Suleiman's lifetime. Pervane received Sinop as iqta after its capture and the beylik

¹ Orkun. H.N. Türk tarihi... Cilt IV. S. 130.

continued to be ruled by his descendants. The last of its rulers was Çelebi Pervane. After his death the Djandars absorbed the beylik.

The Ottoman (Osman) beylik was located in the northwestern regions of Asia Minor. The small principality contained within it the towns of Següt, Bilejik, Karadjahisar, and Inegöl.

The very existence of the independent Turkic beyliks before the Mongol withdrawal is further confirmed by İbn Battuta. In his “Seyahat-name”, when talking about the daily lives in the towns he visited, of which there were almost thirty, İbn Battuta always specified to whom the city belonged. Here he wrote that in 1333 CE, the cities of Aksaray, Nigde, Kayseri, Sivas, Amasya, Gümüşhane, Erzindjan, and Erzurum were under the Ilkhanid control. The cities of Larende (Karaman), Konya, Alanya, Antalya, Egridir, Gölhisar, Karaagaç, Denizli, Mugla, Milas, Birgi, Tire, Izmir, Manisa, Bergama, Balykesyr, Bursa, and Kastamonu belonged to the independent Turkic principalities. İbn Battuta cited the names and titles of their rulers, offered selective information on their way of life, the state’s military organization, and presented detailed descriptions of the principality’s social life.

His observations allow us to draw an important conclusion. After 250 years of existence in Asia Minor, following the Seljuk victory in the battle of Malazgirt, we can see that in spite of the disappearance of the centralized Seljuk state in Anatolia, and the ensued century of the Mongol rule all of its social and military structures were resumed and re-established in the small principalities that formed in its place. These principalities were for the large part ruled by the Oghuz tribal chiefs. The smaller Turkic principalities resumed all, or practically all of the institutions established during the Seljuk state, including the army. The society retained its cultural traditions, social structure and technical knowledge, and as a rule continued to lead the life of an

earlier period when the Seljuk state was at the pinnacle of its existence.

This seems to be the central, most important point in İbn Battuta's Seyahat-name. He referred to Asia Minor as the "Turkic land" and as early as 1333 CE wrote,

Of all the countries, this is possibly the most beautiful. All that is beautiful and can be rarely seen in other countries can be seen everywhere here... Here live the people who wear the cleanest clothes and prepare the most flavorful dishes... Of all of God's servants, the local people are the most compassionate and merciful... Upon our arrival in Anatolia, and wherever we stopped along the way we were treated with utmost attention... Neighbors, men and women who don't cover their faces, rushed to feed us. As we left people bid us farewell with tears in their eyes and offerings of food for our journey.¹

A *zaviye*² in one of the villages near Kastamonu made the biggest impressions on İbn Battuta who wrote,

What we saw was the biggest and the most beautiful *zaviye* in the country. On the orders of Fahreddin bey, who built this *zaviye*, dervishes arriving from Kaaba, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Khorasan, and other regions were given 100 silver dirhams and a new outfit. Upon their departure they received an additional 30 dirhams. Throughout their stay they were treated to bread, meat, pilaf, butter and halwa. There was a bathhouse across from the *zaviye*, which could be visited at no charge.³

In his recollections of Antalya İbn Battuta wrote: "The Friday Mosque, the medrese, several bath houses, and a very well-planned and abundant city market are located in the

¹İbn Battuta (Ebu Abdullah Muhammed İbn Battuta Tancı). İbn Battuta Seyahatnamesi... I. Cilt. S. 400.

² Zaviye - in Turkish abode, tenement.

³ İbn Battuta (Ebu Abdullah Muhammed İbn Battuta Tancı). İbn Battuta Seyahatnamesi... I. Cilt. S. 441.

center of town.”¹ He continued:

The most beautiful of the Anatolian towns is Milas. It has abundant water, fruits and gardens. Here we stayed at one of the ahi's abodes. This man remains unsurpassed in the attention he showed us, the offerings and feasts, and his desire to maintain cleanliness and order in our quarters and his insistence on inviting us to the bathhouses...²

The Anatolian Turkic principalities issued their own currency. Their coins were embossed with their ruler's title - Great Sultan, Sultan, Great Emir or the name of the ruler and his father.³

İbn Battuta offered the following description of the Aydın beylik 's Sultan Mehmet Aydın's palace in his capital city of Birgi:

As we passed through the massive gates and walked closer to the palace we saw around twenty servants. They wore silk clothes, their hair was parted in two... As we ascended a long staircase we entered a cavernous hall. At the center was a pool lined with bronze lions, whose open mouths spewed streams of water... The servants brought out gold and silver chalices with sherbet; the spoons were also made of gold and silver. The sherbet was also served in porcelain crockery.⁴

The beylik's sultan administered the state's affairs with the help of a divan, which was a contracted replica of the Seljuk divan.⁵ The sultan's name was also read during the Friday prayers.

Each of the beyliks maintained an active army and some even had an additional fleet. Military served as the principal

¹ İbn Battuta (Ebu Abdullah Muhammed İbn Battuta Tancı). *İbn Battuta Seyahatnamesi...* I. Cilt. S. 403.

² *Ibid.* S. 411.

³ Uzunçarşılı, İ.H. *Osmanlı devleti teşkilâtına medhal.* Ankara, 1988. S. 135.

⁴ İbn Battuta (Ebu Abdullah Muhammed İbn Battuta Tancı). *İbn Battuta Seyahatnamesi...* I. Cilt. S. 422.

⁵ Uzunçarşılı, İ.H. *Osmanlı devleti teşkilâtına medhal...* S. 138.

pillar of the Turkic principalities in Anatolia. Just as in the Seljuk state, the sipahi cavalry made up the largest portion of the military and land was the property of the state. It was then endowed as iqta in payment for state - primarily military - service. The holder of the iqta did not assume ownership of the land, but was given the right to collect and retain taxes from the allotted territories. In the event the owner of the iqta passed away, his son would then assume ownership and all responsibilities it entailed. With the ascent of a new ruler the iqta holder would have to receive an official document confirming his ownership rights. The document would be stamped with the new ruler's tugra.¹

Also, in a reference to the earlier Seljuk models, the professional beylik army was an integral part of the state's military forces and was comprised of the slaves - goulams, traded on the open markets. The professional unit was stationed in the capital of the beylik and was kept in a state of constant preparedness. Traditionally, Turkic commanders making raids onto Byzantine territories were obligated to send a fifth of all captured soldiers to the state - or the sultan.²

Some rulers also maintained impressive ground forces. For example in the first half of the 14th century the Karaman state maintained a 25,000-strong cavalry and the same size infantry. The Eshref state had a 70,000-men cavalry. The Menteşe infantry had 100,000 soldiers. The Germiyanid army had 40,000 men, however their total number of men including soldiers from the subjugated states was closer to 170,000 - the army of the Aydın beylik had 70,000 soldiers, Karasi - 40,000 men, and Saruhan - 20,000 men.³

A number of principalities also maintained a substantial fleet. The western Anatolian principalities of Menteşe, Aydın, Saruhan, and Karasi all had their own navy. In fact, their

¹ Uzunçarşılı, İ.H. Osmanlı devleti teşkilâtına medhal... S. 141.

² Ibid. S. 144.

³ Ibid. S. 143.

numerous victories in the Mediterranean were a cause of serious concern for the Byzantines. In 1364 CE, the Menteşe navy counted 200 galleys.¹ There were two shipyards in Aydın - one in Izmir and one in Ayaslug (Selçuk) and their fleet, capable of transporting up to 30,000 soldiers, counted 400 ships of various sizes.²

The Çelebi Pervane beylik, in the northern city of Sinop also maintained a fleet and İbn Battuta described Ghazi Celebi as a capable and talented naval commander who maintained a well-prepared navy and engaged the Christians. Before the introduction of naval artillery, most naval combat involved either ramming the enemy ships, or hand-to-hand combat across the coupled ship decks. İbn Battuta wrote that the Çelebi navy had specially-trained divers who jumped off the ships as they approached the enemy, and drilled holes in the ships' hull. The vessels would fill up with water and sink.³

The Sinop shipyards continued to grow after the Çelebi Pervane beylik was absorbed into the Djandar beylik. Its new ruler dedicated great efforts to introducing new types of vessels into the navy. One of the largest ships of its time, built and launched upon the sultan's order had a displacement of nine hundred tons.⁴

Towards the end of the 13th - beginning of the 14th centuries, several of the western Anatolian beyliks - Germiyan, Menteşe, Saruhan, Aydın, and Karasi came to pose a grave threat to Byzantium, which was no longer able to mount its own resistance to the Turks. In 1302 CE a young Byzantine Emperor Michael Palaiologos, who shared the throne with his father Andronikos II Palaiologos embarked on an unsuccessful war against the Karasi and Saruhan beyliks. In spite of the numeric superiority of the Byzantine troops the

¹ Uzunçarşılı, İ.H. Osmanlı devleti teşkilâtına medhal... S. 145.

² Ibid. S. 146.

³ İbn Battuta (Ebu Abdullah Muhammed İbn Battuta Tancı). İbn Battuta Seyahatnamesi... I.Cilt. S. 443.

⁴ Uzunçarşılı, İ.H. Osmanlı devleti teşkilâtına medhal... S. 146.

army was defeated and the remaining troops fled the battlefield prompting Andronikos II to request assistance from the European (Catalonian) mercenaries. Prior to the unification of Catalonia and Aragonia, these units were in the service of the Aragonian king and consisted primarily of nobility and lesser knights. The key formation of the Catalonian army was the *almogavrs*, or the Spanish infantry that advanced at the enemy in a close formation and was considered one of the best armies in Europe. A man named Roger de Flor led the Catalonians.¹

In 1302 CE de Flor and his army defeated the Turks besieging Philadelphia (Alashehir) and liberated the city. The Catalonians continued their campaign with noteworthy victories against the western Anatolian beyliks. As a result of this campaign, the 20,000-men Germiyanid army was reduced to just 1,500 soldiers. De Flor also defeated the joint Saruhan and Aydın forces - around 18,000 soldiers - and liberated the plains and other areas along the Meander (Menderes) River.²

Andronikos II grew increasingly cautious of the Spanish advances and used a potential threat of a Bulgarian invasion to recall the Catalan troops to Thrace. In 1305 CE Roger de Flor was killed during his visit to Andrianople where he planned to see the young Emperor Mikhail. Mikhail's cavalry then suddenly attacked the Catalan army units killing most of the Spanish soldiers.

Following the Catalan withdrawal from Asia Minor western Anatolian beyliks quickly reclaimed all of the lost positions and once again advanced to the Aegean shores. Starting in 1305 CE the Karasi and Aydın beyliks began to use their navy to attack the Byzantine territories in Thrace and Macedonia.³ These raids were not conquering in nature as the Turks limited their goals to bringing their loot back to

¹ Успенский Ф.И. История Византийской империи... Т.5. С. 382.

² Ibid. С. 383 – 386.

³ Wittek, Paul. Osmanlı imparatorluğunun kuruluşu. Çeviren Güzin Yalter. İstanbul, 1971. S. 35.

Anatolia.¹

Therefore, the historical period immediately following the demise of the centralized Seljuk Empire saw the establishment of several well-functioning independent principalities in Anatolia and was not one of stagnation. Several small principalities formed in place of the earlier unified Turkish state, all of which recreated the pre-existing Seljuk institutions including the military. The Turks of Asia Minor made great strides in the areas of shipbuilding and by the beginning of the 14th century the entire peninsula, with the exception of the Trapezuntine Empire, situated on the Black Sea coastline and areas immediately surrounding the Asian districts of Constantinople, was conquered from the Byzantines. Hence, the beyliks of western Anatolia managed to accomplish something the Seljuks failed to do - gain access to the Aegean Sea. In the first half of the 14th century, preceding the Ottoman campaigns in the area, they began raiding Byzantium's European territories, making it easier for the Ottomans to capture the remaining Byzantine lands and advance to the northwestern regions of the peninsula and the sea of Marmara, thus laying ground for the future Ottoman conquests in Rum.

¹ Oikonomidis, N. Avrupa'da Türkler (1305 - 1313) ve Küçük Asya'da Sırplar (1313) // Osmanlı beyliği. Editör Elizabeth Zachariadou. 2. baskı. İstanbul, 2000. S. 173.

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