

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN  
OSMAN GAZİ  
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FOR NICAËA

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The Byzantine Empire was forced to turn over all of Anatolia to the Turkish invaders within the twenty-five years following 1071. Süleymanşah established the Anatolian Seljukid Sultanate in Nicaea (*İznik*) in 1087. Following the Crusader campaign in 1097, which gave back Nicaea to the Byzantines, the emperors from the Comnenus dynasty started a counter attack to recapture Anatolia and reestablished Byzantine sovereignty in the coastal regions of the Aegean, Black Sea and Mediterranean. The emperors did not stop there, but tried to capture Central Anatolia. They built or repaired a number of fortresses and forts to repel and stop the raids of the *Türkmen* (Turcoman) nomads, who were concentrated at the Western Anatolian borders (*especially during the reign of Manuel I Comnenus between 1143-1180*). Thus, the Byzantines created a strong defense line from Denizli to the lower Sakarya via Uluborlu, Seyitgazi and Eskişehir.<sup>1</sup> In the Sakarya-Sinop region they recaptured Sinop from Emir Kara-Tigin (A. Comnena, *Alexiade: Charatikes [Kara-Tigin]*). The junction of the roads coming from the Central Anatolian plateau to Nicaea and İstanbul was Sultan-Öyükü. The Dorylaion (*Şar-Öyük, Sultan-Öyükü*) fortress, which was rebuilt by Manuel I at a distance of 3 km from Eskişehir, constituted an obstacle preventing the *Türkmens* from going beyond that point. However, after the Byzantine defeat of 1176 the walls of Dorylaion, were pulled down. Dorylaion was obviously in the hands of the Seljukids before the death of Manuel I (1180). Al-Haravî visited “Sultanyuki” in 1170’s. When the Lascarids (1205-1261) settled in Nicaea, especially during the reign of John III Vatatzes (1222-1254), they confronted the Seljukids in the Dorylaion front and started to attack against the Seljukid expansion initiatives in the Black Sea-Sakarya region (1225-1231).<sup>2</sup> Alâeddin Keykubad I (1220-1237) fought against this move by coming to Ankara during the first years of his sultanate. Apparently, during this struggle he lost Karacahisar.<sup>3</sup> The muslim town of Eskişehir came into existence apparently during the XII century, opposite to Dorylaion on the slope called Odun-Pazarı. In the first half of the XIII century 17 mesjid (*masjid*), that is 17 quarters existed at Eskişehir (*the waqf deed dated 1272 of the Eskişehir governor Caca-oğlu Nureddin*). No doubt, the governor representing the Seljukid Sultan and his Ilkhanid suzerain, called Eskişah Beyi (*Neşrî, I, 76*), was in control of the entire region and the bey of Dorylaion (*Sultan-Öyükü*) was under him. However, Sultan-Öyükü (*Sultanyuki in Al-Haravî, in 1170’s*) and Eskişehir remained in the hands of the Seljukids as the border towns between the two states. The roads coming through Sultan-Öyükü to Nicaea were reaching to the Lefke, Mekece, Akhisar and Geyve fortresses on the Sakarya River.

The Byzantines had determined the line of fortresses on the Sakarya River as the final defense line protecting Nicaea and Constantinopolis. Osman Gazi took the complete control of the Dorylaion defense line by first of all conquering Karacahisar in 1288 (*figs. 1,2*). Karacahisar was under a Tekvur who used to pay



fig. 1 The Hill of Karacahisar



fig. 2 Karacahisar

see C. Foss, *Cities, Fortresses and Villages of Byzantine Asia Minor* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996); C. Foss, “Dorylaion: the mark of the Byzantine Frontier,” *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 41 (1996): pp. 39-55, in this article Foss is not interested in the important Karacahisar fortress at a distance of 10 km from Dorylaion. The ruins of the walls at Karacahisar show that it was destroyed by the emperor in accordance with the agreement of 1176. Osman seized this fortress rather easily in 1288. Upon our initiative at the Turkish Ministry of Culture archeological excavations started at this important historic site since 1999; an enlarged text and a presentation at the Osman Gazi Sempozyum, Anadolu University, Eskişehir is prepared for publication. S. Langdon, *Byzantium's Last Imperial Offensive in Asia Minor*, New Rochelle 1992.

Neşrî, *Kitâb-i Cihan-numâ* I, eds. by F.R.Unat and M.A. Ögmen (Ankara 1949) 68; on Alâeddin and the Lascarids, see Langdon, mentioned in note 2; the Seljukid sources will be discussed in my forthcoming study.

tribute to the Seljukid Sultan; but acting against Osman, he had lost the Sultan's protection (*Aşıkpaşazâde*, 6. *Bâb*). After the capture of Bilecik (*Belokômis*) in 1299, Osman attempted in 1302 to seize Nicaea, which caused the battle of Bapheus. The collapse of the second line with his conquests of Lefke, Mekece, Akhisar and Geyve (1304), Nicaea (*İznik*) was cut off on all sides. The Turkish raiders, just as in the reign of Süleymanşah (1075-1086), were seen at the shores of the Bosphorus as early as 1304-1305. In the following paragraphs we will examine the siege of Nicaea by Osman, the battle of Bapheus (*Koyunhisar*) in 1302, and the campaigns in 1304 and 1305 to capture the fortresses on the Sakarya River to complete the blockade of Nicaea.

For the Frontier Turks, the final point of resistance in Anatolia of the Byzantine Empire was Nicaea, with its unsurmountable city walls and strong garrison. The Frontier (*Uc*) Turks, no doubt, did not forget that the city of Nicaea was an Islamic city, the capital city of the Seljukid state at one time. The regaining of Nicaea for Dâru'l-İslâm (*Islamic Domain*) for these Türkmens must have always been experienced as the final goal of gazâ among them.<sup>4</sup> Upon the death of Manuel I Comnenus in 1180 an internal chaos started in the Byzantine Empire. When Andronicus Comnenus besieged Nicaea in 1183, there were auxiliary Turkish soldiers among the Byzantine defenders in the city. When Andronicus captured the city, he impaled them.<sup>5</sup> In 1299, when Osman Gazi settled at Yenişehir, at only a distance of 25 km from Nicaea, as a Frontier gazâ base, his goal was to conquer the two major cities of Bithynia, İznik and Bursa. Osman's initiatives against these two cities (1302 and 1303) and the 1304 Sakarya campaign confronted him directly with the Byzantine state, which sent forces against him from Constantinopolis.

During the rule of the Lascarids (1205-1261), until the Mongolian threat from the east appeared in Anatolia (*the Mongol raid down to Sivas in 1232*), the Seljukid-Türkmen threat to the lower Sakarya and Nicaea was continuing and counter measures were being taken.<sup>6</sup> At that time, the Nicaea walls were reinforced with repairs and new forts. Outside of Nicaea, the warrior Cuman/Kipchak frontier soldiers (*akritai*), placed in mountainous areas, were a complementary part of the defense system of Nicaea. The Lascarid emperors were most of the time living at Nymphaeum (*Nif*), their capital city in Lydia and were considering Nicaea to be rather a border city.<sup>7</sup>

In the 1290s, the Chobanid dynasty, the Kastamonu frontier emirs of the Seljukid sultan, to whom Osman was dependent, were fighting against the Palaeologians on the Sakarya. In other words, Osman Gazi was in fact taking the place of the Chobanids here in an historical tradition extending back to the Seljukid Süleymanşah (1075-1086). The fact that the names of Kara-Tigin and Kara-Çepiş (*Çepüş*), engaged in activities together in the name of the Seljukid sultans at this Frontier region, from the end of the eleventh century, survived until the period of Osman Gazi, should also be emphasized. In the Ottoman traditions many Byzantine place names (*Lefke, Geyve, etc.*) continued, but the names of Kara-Tigin and Kara-Çepiş survived (*see below*).

The conquest of the Bilecik-Yenişehir region in 1299 signifies a definite development stage in Osman's career. Between 1300-1302, soon after this conquest, Osman attempted to directly conquer Nicaea and Prussa (*Bursa*). Unable to

<sup>4</sup> The Ottoman tradition about Süleymanşah allegedly b Osman Gazi's grandfather is noteworthy for this reason. (*Aşıkpaşazâde*, hereafter *Aspz.*, Chapters 1, 14, 125; No vol. 1, 108-110). However, a Mir Süleyman is also mentioned among the ancestors of Ertugrul, *Düsturîân* ed. by M. Halil, Istanbul, 1922, 78-81.

<sup>5</sup> Choniates mentioned in C. Foss, *Nicaea*, Brookline, 20 pp. 54-55.

<sup>6</sup> J. S. Langdon, "Byzantium's Initial Encounter with the Chinggisids," *VIZANTOR* 29 (1998): pp. 95-140; on the Mongol raid see Ibn Bîbî, *al-Abdînîrû'l-'Alâtiyye*, the facs Text, Ankara: TTK, pp. 418-420.

<sup>7</sup> J. S. Langdon, *Byzantium's Last Imperial Offensive*, mentioned in note 2.

conquer, he held them under blockade by building forts around them. Only at this stage, Osman's activities caused serious concern in the Byzantine capital. Pachymeres, the historian close to the palace, mentioned Osman as a threat at that time.

Like the other beys conquering Western Anatolian territories from the Byzantines, towards 1299, Osman Gazi undoubtedly took under his control an extensive region beyond the Seljukid borders from Karacahisar to Bilecik-Yenişehir and appeared to be in the position of a bey ruling over many cities and fortresses. Subsequently, Osman dealt no more with the local Byzantine tekfurs, who were subject to paying tribute to the Seljukid Sultan, but started gazâ activities directly against the forces of the Byzantine Empire.

### Osman Gazi's Siege of Nicaea and the Battle of Bapheus (Koyunhisar) July 27, 1302

First of all, let us determine the date of Osman's Nicaea siege and the place of the Battle of Bapheus.<sup>8</sup> Pachymeres indicates that in the spring of 1302, at the date when the Emperor's son Michael IX departed for Western Anatolia, "Amourios", the son of the Chobanid emir of Kastamonu (*actually Emîr Yavlak Arslan oğlu Ali*), Lamisés and Osman were in a state of attack.<sup>9</sup> Also, when mentioning the attacks on the Prinkipo (*Büyükkada*) island in the Marmara Sea of the Venetian pirates in the spring of 1302, he mentions that the Byzantine General Mouzalôn suffered a severe defeat in Mésiothynia (*Battle of Bapheus*) and all the local Byzantine people were fleeing and the defeat had created an emergency situation of defense against the Turks.<sup>10</sup> Here, the Byzantine historian opens a parenthesis<sup>11</sup> and describes former clashes with the Amourioi, that is, the Emir Çobanoğulları, of Kastamonu, in the Sakarya region and sidetracks the subject.<sup>12</sup> After describing the old situation, then he starts to relate in detail the Battle of Bapheus<sup>13</sup> between Mouzalôn and Osman. By keeping this chronological order under consideration, A. Failler, sets 27 July 1302 as the date of the Battle of Bapheus. The Ottoman narratives also verify this. The Anonymous Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman<sup>14</sup> describes the battle in detail and the old menakıbnâme summarized by Aşıkpaşazâde (*henceforth, Aşpz.*), sets the Battle of Bapheus (*Koyunhisar*) one year prior to the Battle of Dimbos (*Dinboz, Dinanoz*). The old menakıbnâme in Aşpz. gives the date of AH 702 for the Battle of Dimbos (*Erdoğan today*) by Osman against the united army of the Bursa Tekfur and his allies, the tekfurs of Kestel, Kite, Bidnos and Adranos.<sup>15</sup> The same menakıbnâme sets the siege of Nicaea immediately before the Battle of Dimbos. Thus, according to the Ottoman tradition, the Battle of Bapheus occurred in AH 701. AH 701 started on 6 September 1301 and finished on 28 July 1302. If it is considered (*Pachymeres*) that the battle occurred in July, then the Battle of Bapheus occurred towards the end of AH 701, that is, in July 1302.<sup>16</sup>

As for the place where the Battle of Bapheus occurred, in the Ottoman narratives it is shown as Yalak-Ovası. Yalak-Ovası is a plain where the Yalak-Dere reaches Hersek-Dili. Before the battle which occurred here, Osman's and the Byzantine advance forces fought at Koyun-Hisar, which blocked the road coming from Nicaea (*Pachymeres*). The Koyun-Hisar, on the main road coming from İznik by following the Yalak-Dere valley, is the fortress on the hill before coming to Yalak-Ova.<sup>17</sup> Later, Orhan was forced to take Koyun-Hisar before taking over İzmit in 1337. The description<sup>18</sup> in the Menakıbnâme of this fortress is exactly as follows: "The fortress

See H. İnalcık, "Osman Gazi's Siege of Nicaea and the Battle of Bapheus," *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1389*, ed. by J. Zachariadou, Rethymnon, 1991.

Georges Pachymères, *Relations Historiques*, ed. by Albert Failler, French trans. by Vitalien Laurent (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 4, 1999), 358, note 40; P. Schreiner, *Kleinchroniken*, 3, pp. 217-219; Schreiner appears to have confused Osman's 1304 Sakarya campaign with the Battle of Bapheus; for the Chobanids, the emirs of Kastamonu see M. Yücel, "Çobanoğulları Beyliği", *Anadolu Beylikleri Tarihinde Araştırmalar* (researches on Anatolian Beylics), Ankara: TTK, 1991, pp. 33-51.

<sup>8</sup> Pachymeres, 10, Chapter 24, pp. 356-357.

<sup>9</sup> Pachymeres, 10, Chapter 25, pp. 358-364.

<sup>10</sup> H. İnalcık, "The Ottoman Empire," *The Cambridge History of Islam*, eds. by E. Holt and B. Lewis, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970, p. 298; E. A. Zachariadou, "Pachymeres on the 'Amourioi' of Kastamonu," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 3, 1977, pp. 57-71.

<sup>11</sup> P. Schreiner, *Kleinchroniken*, vol. 3, 217-219; Schreiner seems to have mistaken Osman's 1304 campaign with the Battle of Bapheus (1302).

<sup>12</sup> *Die altosmanischen anonymen Chroniken*, ed. by F. H. Briesau, Breslau, 1922. see in the Appendix the facsimile of the İzzet Koyunoğlu copy of the *Tevârih*.

<sup>13</sup> Ahmed Âşıkî (Âşık Paşazâde), *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, ed. by C. N. Atsız, Istanbul, 1947, Chapters 16 and 17.

<sup>14</sup> The date of 27 July 1301, given in our previous article, "Osman Gazi's Siege of Nicaea and the Battle of Bapheus", should be corrected as 27 July 1302.

<sup>15</sup> See the photograph of the fortress in my article mentioned in note 8.

<sup>16</sup> Aşpz., Chapter 30.

on the upper part of the hill was his (Kaloyan's). Now, Turkish people call it Koyun-Hisar". Pachymeres' description also confirms that the battle was fought on the plain at the coast near İzmit. There is a second Koyun-Hisar near Dimbos on the Yenişehir-Bursa road. In the Menakıbnâme, when the Battle of Dimbos is described, it mentions<sup>19</sup> "the road going to Koyun-Hisar at Dinboz". After Bapheus, in 1303 the Tekfurs and Osman first "met at Koyun-Hisar, they kept on fighting until they came to Dinboz". In that case, there are two separate Koyun-Hisar battles. J. von Hammer confused the Bapheus/Koyun-Hisar battle with the Dimbos/Koyun-Hisar battle<sup>20</sup> and ever since then this mistake has been repeated up until today. After determining the date and the place of the Battle of Bapheus, let us summarize according to Pachymeres and the Anonymous Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman (see the facsimile at the end of this paper) how the battle developed.

We summarize Pachymeres below:<sup>21</sup>

A) Osman departed from the Nicaea region, passed the mountainous land through passes and went after the Halizôns. B) But before that, some one hundred strong Turkish force made a sudden night assault at Télémaia. When escaping with the spoils, the Byzantine soldiers went after them. The Turks went up a hill and defended themselves with arrows. C) Osman was encouraged from this first encounter. The number of soldiers with him reached a great number with the other Turkish forces coming from the Meandre (*Menderes*) region. D) Emîr Yavlak Arslan oğlu Ali, by observing that those coming to raid from distant places became partners with him, Ali violated the agreements he made with the Emperor and he too restarted raids.<sup>22</sup> E) Osman passed through the mountain pass and suddenly appeared (*in the plain*). F) He was at the head of many warriors to whom others from around Paphlagonia (*Kastamonu*) had come to join. They were ready to eliminate or capture whoever they encountered.<sup>23</sup> He collected all these forces there. G) The forces under the command of Mouzalôn, together with his own soldiers composed of Byzantines and Alans and local and foreign soldiers and their numbers all together approached about two thousand persons. The fact that they were fighting on their own lands gave them the courage to go into battle against a crowded enemy. As most of them said, if they would attack courageously and stand fast in the battle, then they would be victorious. However, a short while before that they were deprived of their horses and money due to the aid requested from everyone to be given to the Alans, they entered into a lax and effortless atmosphere due to thoughtlessness more than ill-intention; they lost their first assault enthusiasm and did not enter the battle with much courage. This situation gave the Turks the opportunity to attack with great confidence; since they were superior in numbers against the enemy, they were courageous. Thus, the battle started under unequal conditions from the aspect of both numbers and morale. A large number of the Byzantines were killed at the battlefield and many opted to open the road and flee all together in a shameful manner to the nearby İzmit fortress. During this time, the Alans who were sacrificing their lives for the Byzantines, became quite supportive. In fact, when the outcome of the battle became clear, they gave the opportunity for the soldiers, most of whom were on foot, to flee: the Alans provided the opportunity for the Byzantine infantry to consolidate its lines and advance and to save themselves by surrounding the enemy; they withdrew step by step and thus delaying the advance of the enemy and dismounting from their horses and hitting them with arrow shots from the sides. The Alans, who were thinking to save the Byzantines before the danger they were confronted with, were

<sup>19</sup> Aspz., Chapter 17.

<sup>20</sup> J. von Hammer, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reichs*, Pest, 1836, vol. 1, pp. 67, 85.

<sup>21</sup> A. Failler and V. Laurent, 10, Chapter 25, pp. 364.

<sup>22</sup> Pachymeres, 11, Chapter 9; 12, Chapter 1.

<sup>23</sup> H.G. Ahrweiler, "La politique agraire des empereurs Nicéens", *Byzantion*, 28, 51-65.

falling on the battlefield one by one. At that time, there was nothing else left for the Turks to do for concluding the battle, except to disperse and easily collect the spoils without meeting any resistance. This was the harvest season and it became the beginning of major disasters in the entire region. Some of the peasants were made prisoners, some were killed and some who thought that the salvation would be to take refuge at a fortress opted to flee. People from the rural areas came with their entire families and took refuge in Istanbul (*The historian, who was an eye witness, goes on and describes the pathetic conditions of those who took refuge in Istanbul*). The enemy (*Turks*) were taking away not only the prisoners, but the animals and even the fruits on the trees. They were carrying everything that was possible to be carried with the animals they took as spoils. However, it must be that they did not dare to invade the regions beyond the İzmit region, they could not yet spread to those places. In fact, they did not touch the peripheral districts close to Istanbul, as if they were sacred and could not be touched. Actually, the destruction was not only here. Excluding the best fortified fortresses, all the regions up to Edremit, where Emperor Michael IX was present, were looted by the Turks. Beyond this, Achyraous (*Akira near Balıkesir*), Kyzikos (*Kapıdağı*), Pègai (*Kara-Biga*) and Lopadion (*Ulubat*) and the regions near the sea were saved from destruction. However, pillaging extended up to the gates of Bursa and Nicaea, thus all of the surrounding rural region was ruined. The destruction was terrible and could not be stopped. Everything was transformed into a ruin in several days.

#### **The Battle of Bapheus (Koyunhisar) in the Anonymous Tevârîh**

We are giving below the section in the Anonymous Tevârîh-i Âl-i Osman; among the Ottoman sources in which this battle was described it is the most detailed.

- “1. Osman had a son, he named him Ali Pasha, and left him by his mother.
2. Osman Gazi (*Neşrî: with Orhan Gazi*)
3. was busy conquering lands in those regions, came, and captured by force and pillaged Köprü-Hisar;
4. Then he came and he besieged Nicaea.
5. At that time, Nicaea was a very inaccessible and esteemed city; it was surrounded by reedbeds and swamps; such that it was not possible to go near it. It was a populous city. It was told that it had four gates; one thousand infidels on their piebald horses would come out from each gate, you compare the rest of the cavalry with horses of different colors; it was such a populous city;
6. At that time, the gazis were good, each one was like a dragon, if one thousand infidels would come onto one of them, he would not withdraw; they had an absolute faith in God; so Great God (*may his name be exalted*) gave opportunity to them.
7. For the blessing of their faith they succeeded in coming and pillaging the areas around the city of Nicaea; the infidels came out of the fortress many times to fight; Great God by giving an opportunity to the gazis, they drew the infidels back into the fortress;
8. they saw that the fortress cannot be taken by fighting, surrounded on four sides by water, no one can come near it;
9. then they went and built a fort on the slope of the mountain on the Yenişehir side and put men in the fort; at that time there was a brave man called Taz (*Draz*) Ali, he was a very brave champion; they gave him forty men and put them into the fort, thus blockading Nicaea. Today they call that fortress Taz-Ali Hisarı. And immediately above on the side there is a high rock, at the bottom of it there is a cold spring, that spring is called Taz-Ali Pınarı.

10. After that, becoming helpless the infidels shut themselves in the fortress; the gazis continuously raided and did not let anyone from inside to leave; no one could come in from the outside, either. They stayed like this for a long time.

11. Finally, the infidels one day found an opportunity and by sending a man to the Tekfur of Istanbul and informed him about their situation: the Turks, they said, came upon us, they made us hopeless, they did not let us go out, we are helpless, if you can help us, please do so; otherwise, they made us hopeless, they will take our sons and daughters as prisoners, if you do not help us, we will die from starvation.

12. Because at that time, the Tekfur of Istanbul used to rule over Nicaea, as well. When the Tekfur of Istanbul was informed about the situation, he collected many ships and put many soldiers into them and sent them so that they would go and repel the gazis from Nicaea. He also sent a trusted man with them. They entered into the ships, with the intention and determination to arrive and land at Yalak-Ovası; and from there to go on to Nicaea and come upon the gazis in a surprise attack.

13. While in Istanbul they were busy taking these decisions, the gazis happened to have a spy, who got the news and learned where the infidel soldiers would land and then in a hurry came back and informed the gazis. Then the gazis marched and came, laid in ambush at the seashore where those infidels would land and waited concealing themselves. The infidels sailed their ships from the other side, arrived at Yalak-Ovası one night, they tied up at the shore and started to come out from their ships onto the land. When each of them was trying to land their horses and equipment from the ship, the gazis made a surprise attack, by taking refuge in God and by shouting "*God is great!*" They mounted on their horses and attacked into the infidels' ranks, striking them with their swords; and in one instant they set the infidels at loggerheads with each other in the darkness and they killed so many of them, only God knows the number. Then, the infidels seeing this rushed towards the sea, only those who were lucky could go onto the ship, the rest drowned. In summary, most of the infidels died. Only a few of them were remaining; they were concerned how to save their lives; those who were already in the ships thought nothing else but to take their ships and escape.

14. They came to Istanbul and gave news on the situation to the Tekfur. The Tekfur heard this news and became much grieved, but what could he do, except to be patient. On this side, when the infidels in Nicaea became aware that the Tekfur [of Istanbul] was defeated, they too, could not do anything but cry and mourn;

15. Finally, they consulted among themselves and saying that those who escaped, those who could not escape, should surrender the city; so they surrendered the fortress to the gazis. The gazis took the city and obtained booty.

16. After they took Nicaea, they came to Yalak-Ovası and settled there in great numbers. Because at that time, the country around Yalak-Ovası was steep mountains with strong fortresses. At the same time there were endless provinces and prosperous places. At that time, in the mountains between Nicaea and Istanbul until reaching Nicomedia, there were no forests on the mountains, there was such prosperity, there were fortresses and cities and villages. Later, when they were deserted, trees and forests appeared, they say; all this was narrated by people who saw it at that time, it is a fact. They say that there were several reasons for that region to be prosperous. First of all, they were inaccessible places; second, the populations, which left their homes because of their fear of the gazis, came and joined the local inhabitants. The other reason was that the Tekfur of Istanbul had

a lovely daughter (the story, obviously told by the Greeks, about the sick princess benefiting from the Xalova hot springs and the emperor's decision to build facilities there)".

To understand the text correctly, explanations are needed for some archaic expressions such as "segirtmek", "bisar etmek", "kapu yapmak" and "sarp". 1. In almost all of the texts, the word "segirtmek" in old Ottoman Turkish is used in the meaning of to raid. The words Segirdim (raid), segirdimci (raider), segirdim eylemek (to raid), segirdim salmak (to make a raid, to invade) from the root segirtmek were words used frequently in Turkish in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (see *Tarima Sözlüğü*, vol. 5); 2. "Hisar etmek" is to besiege, to blockade (ibid., vol. 3); 3. "Kapu yapmak" is to hold the gates in front of the fortress and not to permit anyone to go out (ibid., vol. 4), or to besiege, to blockade a fortress; 4. the word "sarp" was used here in the meaning of "difficult to approach", inaccessible.

In the Anonymous Chronicle it is mentioned that first of all Köprühisar was taken before the siege of Nicaea. Köprühisar was taken with yagma, "pillaging", that is, by force with the result of plunder. Köprühisar is at the junction point of the main roads coming to Nicaea from Bilecik in the south and from Yenisehir in the west. This fortress is the starting point of the Kizilhisar-Derbend valley leading to Nicaea. Osman went through this valley to Nicaea. Anyway, it was necessary for Osman to take Köprühisar first for his campaign to Nicaea.

In the Anonymous Chronicle it does not mention the first reconnaissance force of about one hundred men (*Pachymeres*) sent by Osman against Bapheus castle blocking the road. Actually, these two independent sources give information complementing each other. Both sources unite on the point that the Emperor sent his army to save Nicaea under siege. The Anonymous Chronicle provides complementing details about the Nicaea siege and the city. We learn from this source that there were sorties from the fortress and fights outside the walls. It is stated in the Anonymous Chronicle that Nicaea is surrounded by swamps, "there is water all around and it is not possible to approach the city walls" and "cannot be captured with fighting". Then, Osman resorted to the tactics applied by all the Türkmen beys; he applied the method of long blockading the city and forcing it to surrender from starvation. Osman had a havale (overlooking) fort built on a slope on the "mountain on the side of Yenisehir" for the long blockade and placed a small force under the command of Taz (Draz) Ali. "The gazis continuously raided and did not allow anyone to come out from the inside". Today, there is the Draz Ali village and the Draz Ali Spring on the left of the road going from Nicaea to Yenisehir. When we visited this village in 1996 we determined the spring mentioned in our source. There was no trace of the fort. It is possible that the fort could have been on the small mound under the spring looking at the roads coming from Nicaea (fig. 3, 4). This detail is another definite evidence showing how accurate the Ottoman narrative is.

We find another Ottoman narrative about the Nicaea siege and the Köyünhisar battle in the Neşri (*Kitab-ı Cihannüma*, eds. F. R. Unat and M. A. Köymen [Ankara, 1949], 104-108): "They cut off the roads to Nicaea and nobody could enter the city from outside, famine started in the city and the people of the city became depressed



fig. 3 Iznik, the rock on the Draz Ali Pinar (1996)



fig. 4 The view of Iznik from the Hill of Draz Ali



and sent furtively someone via the lake to Istanbul to ask for help" (Pachymeres also states that a messenger was sent from the "Lake Gate" to Istanbul). The Greek historian also states that Osman abandoned the siege of Nicaea for Yalak-Ova, passed through the "mountainous land through the passes" (the *Kırk-Geçit*, forty-passes via Yalak-Dere) and came to Bapheus. The details given in the Anonymous Chronicle about the description of the city of Nicaea as a crowded big city protected by numberless cavalry forces, is interesting. Further below, the Anonymous Chronicle acknowledges that it obtained these details from a local (Byzantine) source: "it was narrated by the people who have witnessed those days". This description obviously concerning the period of the Lascarids is extremely interesting. The source of the Anonymous Chronicle also explains the reasons for the "prosperity" of the Yalak-Ova-Nicomedia-Marmara region.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the prosperity of the region in agriculture during the period of the Lascarids becomes clear: The intensive migration to this region due to the Türkmen raids, must have paved the way for intensive agricultural activities of the peasants on this fertile plain (Yalak-Ova) and on the mountain slopes. At those times, labor was more important than land. It confirms the record related to the grain imports of the Seljukids from the Lascarids. Another story the Anonymous Chronicle relates from local Byzantine people is the story about the Emperor's daughter and the building of the Yalova thermal springs.

No doubt, Osman Gazi must have received the news that the Emperor's army was in preparation to come from the first one hundred strong Ottoman reconnaissance forces mentioned by Pachymeres or from the spy mentioned in the Anonymous Chronicle. Osman became concerned and asked for help from the sultan in Konya. Pachymeres claims that this help came from the Meandre (*Menderes*) region. On this point, Neşrî (vol. 1, 104-106) gives interesting details and in a sense, confirms Pachymeres. According to Neşrî, Osman says: "A large number of forces are coming from Istanbul. If we withdraw, they can attack us and the Byzantine infidels in this area will take courage like lions. There must be a solution to rout these coming infidels. The gazis said: our men are few in number, let us ask for help from Alâeddin II (sic) and immediately sent a messenger to Konya, .... Sultan Alâeddin II heard this news.... He ordered that several thousand people from Sabibin Karahisar go to help. Before the messenger who went to the Sultan returned, the infidels from Istanbul arrived and started to cross from Dil". Sahibin Karahisar (*Afyon today*) was an advanced Frontier (*Uc*) center under the Seljukid sultanate, but it was subject to the Germiyan bey at that date. According to Neşrî (vol. I, 106), in the meantime, Osman's "men captured a captive from Yalak-Hisar and learned the carelessness of the infidels".

Pachymeres confirms that around 1306 Osman's army reached five thousand cavalymen and infantrymen and after the Bapheus victory these soldiers made raids up to the Bosphorus and spread everywhere (see below). Pachymeres also states that many warriors from Paphlagonia joined Osman's army. Since Osman was dependent on the Chobanid emir of Kastamonu, it was natural for a reinforcement to come from there, too. Pachymeres adds an interesting detail: Ali the son of Yavlak Arslan from the Çobanids, by looking at what Osman was doing, violated the peace agreement made with the emperor and started raids at that time. It is understood that he entered the campaign of his at the lower Sakarya region. Thus, these details may show that the confrontation acquired an extensive nature in

<sup>24</sup> H. G. Ahrweiler, "La politique agraire des empereurs Nicée," *Byzantion*, 28, pp. 51-65.

which the Byzantine imperial soldiery and the Seljukid frontier forces were involved (*the fall of Ephesus in 1304*). In the Anonymous narrative, this aspect of the campaign does not come out.

According to Pachymeres, Osman “*left the Nicaea region, passed the mountainous land through the passes and came down to the coast*” to hit the emperor’s army coming from Istanbul. This mountainous region, which has many passes, is the Yalak-Dere valley. The Anonymous Chronicle explains that Osman waited with his army “*in ambush (at the coast) where the infidels would land*”. The Byzantine forces started to land at Yalak-Ova. According to the Anonymous Chronicle, the battle started as a “*surprise*” attack by the gazis when the Byzantine forces started to land on the shore at Yalak-Ova. Neşrî, by saying Osman “*at night made a surprise attack and killed some with swords and pushed some back into the sea*” and won a victory, is somewhat different from the Anonymous Chronicle. According to Neşrî, the Byzantine troops, who came by land to Dil-Ova near Gebze and “*did not cross*” the sea went back to Istanbul. If the different details are taken into consideration, then the Anonymous Chronicle and Neşrî seem to be independent from each other; or they summarized original text independently.

Pachymeres tries to explain the reasons for the defeat by emphasizing that there was no unity in the Byzantine army under the command of Heteriarch Muzalôn coming from Istanbul, which was composed mainly of local warriors and mercenary Alans. The Alans, who were good soldiers, were left without a leader upon the death of Emir Nogay in 1299 and presented their services as mercenary soldiers to the Byzantine Empire.<sup>25</sup>

Pachymeres describes the progression of the battle differently from the Ottoman sources. He describes that the two armies confronted each other, first the Byzantines made a hurried attack, but due to the discrimination made in favor of the Alans prior to the battle, the Byzantine soldiers were not sufficiently effective; upon this, Osman’s soldiers started a strong counter-attack and caused the Byzantines to run away. Pachymeres does not mention a night raid. We can suppose that after the night attack of the Ottoman forces during the landing of the Byzantines, that the Byzantine army pulled itself together and fought in a line the next day.

The Anonymous Chronicle tells us that the people of Nicaea felt hopeless and surrendered the city. However, the subsequent long period of blockade, during which many citizens left the city was alluded to in the same paragraph. The surrender of the city to the Ottomans occurred only in 1331. At this point, Neşrî (*vol. 1, 106*) gives the correct story and says, “*the gazis profited from the spoils, they did not care about the conquest of Nicaea and simply sent the good news to their communities*”.

However, according to Neşrî, who was trying to put the events into a logical chronology, the Seljukid Sultan Alâeddin (*actually Alâeddin Keykubâd III, 1298-1302*),<sup>26a</sup> who learned of this major success, sent Osman the symbols of a bey (*drum, flag, horse, sword and robe of honor*). Whereas, in the Aşp. history (*Chapter 8*), which is Neşrî’s main source, it was recorded that the Sultan had sent these symbols of the beylic upon the conquest of Karacahisar in AH 687/AD 1288. If this ever happened Neşrî seems to find it to be more accurate to put it on the

<sup>25</sup> 1302. Pachymeres emphasizes that “the situation was even grave in the East, in Anatolia”. Right at that time, unexpected opportunity, an opportunity for military aid, for the Emperor. The strong Emir Nogay, who rolled the western part of the Golden Horde Empire and bished a kind of protectorate in the Balkans, was inated by Toktai Khan (1290-1312), and those troops were dependent on him were left without a leader. ing them, the Alans applied to the emperor to serve him mercenaries (Pachymeres, 10, chapter 16, p. 338).  
A. Sevim and E. Merçil, *Selçuk Devletleri Taribi* (History e Seljukid states), Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995, p. . see H. İnalcık, “How to Read Âshik Pasha-zâde’s ıry”, *Essays in Ottoman History*, İstanbul: Eren 1998, pp. 13.

battle of Koyunhisar in 1302. In the compilations of the general Ottoman history made towards the end of the fifteenth century and in the sixteenth century, İdris Bilişi (*Bilâlisî*), Kemal Paşazâde, Ruhi and Lütfi Paşa, other than copying one, two or all three of the basic sources, that is, Asik Paşazâde, Nesîrî and the Anonymous Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman, or making them conform to each other, do not contain anything new. Certainly, they do not have the characteristics of independent sources.<sup>26b</sup>

This victory won against a Byzantine imperial army exalted Osman into a charismatic bey in the region. Pachymeres tells us that with this victory, Osman's reputation spread all the way to the Paphlagonia (*Kastamonu*) region and the gazis ran to serve under his flag. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, the historian Nesîrî seems to be correct in setting this date of Osman's actual beylic. The Battle of Bapheus won the prestige of a founder bey of a dynasty to Osman and after him, his son Orhan ascended the throne of the beylic without rivals. Thus, we can accept 27 July 1302 as the definite founding date of the Ottoman dynasty and consequently, the Ottoman state.

No doubt, with the Bapheus victory, Osman emerged as an important political-military power threatening the sovereignty of the Byzantine Empire in Bithynia. Like Pachymeres, Yazıcızâde, the Ottoman writer, also states that after 1300 Osman's reputation spread to the distant Islamic countries and from everywhere "migration upon migration of Turkish bousebolds came and filled the land". The record of Pachymeres, who was following the events at that time, shows how seriously the Ottoman threat was perceived in the Byzantine court. The Byzantine Emperor then proposed a Byzantine princess as a wife to Gazan Khan (1295-1304) in Persia and after his death to Olcaytu Khan (1304-1316) in order to stop Osman by inciting the Mongols against him.<sup>28</sup> But, it is to be remembered that the Ilkhanid ruler had to cope with the rebellion of the Mongol governor of Anatolia Süleymiş in 1299-1300 when Osman began his assault against Byzantium.

### After the Battle of Bapheus

As Pachymeres described, the gazis who met with no resistance at that time, and came to the Frontier region for the spoils, spread as far as the Istanbul Straits like a flood. The Greek historian<sup>29</sup> describes with dramatic expressions in his final sections, the situation of anarchy and hopelessness between 1302-1307 into which the Byzantine Empire fell after the Bapheus defeat. All of Mesothynia had fallen to these raiders. Mesothynia is determined as the region north of Nicaea, and the Kocaeli region extending from Scutari up to the lower Sakarya. This region also includes the territories where the Turkish forces from Kastamonu previously conducted raids at the Sakarya Frontier. Pachymeres describes the situation after Bapheus and Osman's subsequent expeditions in the period between 1303-1305 as follows:<sup>30</sup>

"They (Greek refugees) were leaving the East and escaping to the West only to save their lives... There were very many Turks and they were under the command of many commanders. It was useless to make an agreement with one of these, because they used to search and find another leader who would take them to pillage".

These raiders, who were acting in small groups, engaged in activities everywhere in Kocaeli up to the Istanbul Straits. When these Turks found a ship they were

<sup>26b</sup> See H. İnalcık, "Osman Gazi's Siege", pp. 82-87.

<sup>27</sup> *Tarih-i Âl-i Selçuk* (History of the Seljuk Dynasty),

Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi, Revan 1390.

<sup>28</sup> S. Runciman, "The Ladies of the Mongols," *His Mien*,

K. I. Armatou, Athens, 1960, pp. 46-53.

<sup>29</sup> Pachymeres, 4: 13, Chapter 35, p. 700.

<sup>30</sup> A. Fallier / V. Laurent, vol. 4: 10, Chapter 29, p. 371

11, Chapter 9, p. 422; 11, Chapter, 9, p. 424.

crossing the Straits and came up to in front of Istanbul. The Chélé (*Şile*) and Hiéron (*Yoros, the fortress at the Anadolu-Kavağı*) were the targets of their attacks. The Byzantine people, who escaped in panic, were taking refuge in Istanbul, and the streets were filled with people who were starving and ill.

Under the title of "*General State of Disarray and Migration*", Pachymeres describes that the Turks spread to every part of the Byzantine territories in Bithynia, Mysia, Phrygia and Lydia; that the entire country was invaded "*other than fortified fortresses*", that the people were subjected to heretofore unheard of pillaging, killing and captivity; that every day the Emperor received worse news than the previous day, that the invaders came up to the Straits; and that he defines these raiders as Amourioi (*emirs, Çobanids*), Atmanes (*Osman*), Atinai (*Aydın oğulları*), Alışır (*Germiyan oğulları*), Mantakhiai (*Menteşe oğulları*), Salampasides, Alais, Amèramanés, Lamisès, Sfondiles and Pagadines.<sup>31</sup>

Pachymeres says, "*It was impossible to resist and send forces against the Turks, because the Byzantine forces were weak, because they lost their places and lands and their pronias (as the result of this invasion) and were leaving Anatolia and escaping to Rumelia just to save their lives. On the other hand, it was also impossible to settle mercenary soldiers by recognizing certain privileges. It was not only impossible to make agreements between the Turks and the Byzantines, it was also useless, because the Turks in separate groups were so many and they were subject to many leaders and one leader was giving permission to his men to join in pillaging under other leaders. If a leader would be fooled by the donations given by the Byzantines, then those Turks were seeking other leaders who would take them to obtain spoils and gains*". In fact, when the Çobanids made an agreement with the Emperor, their men appeared to have entered under the flag of Osman Gazi. Pachymeres, when describing the events of 1302, also emphasizes that the ceasefire made with Ali (*Amourios*) from the Çobanids was of no use.<sup>32</sup>

Also, the Emperor was in a weak position against the mercenary soldier groups, the Catalans, Alans, Tourkopouloi and the Turks who came from the Karesi, who were fighting against each other and continuously asking for money from the Emperor. When they could not get the money they wanted, they also started to pillage. Osman tried to make the maximum use of this anarchy in which the Byzantine Empire had fallen at that time. In 1305 the Bulgarians, who were in conflict with the Byzantines for the Black Sea ports of Anchialos, Mesembria and Sozopolis, sided with the insurgent Catalan mercenaries against the Emperor.

After 1302, the Emperor was thinking of a campaign against Osman Gazi in Anatolia. According to the news received, after Bapheus Osman had captured "*all territories surrounding Nicaea and Pythia*" (*Pythia was a city on the southern shore of the İzmit Gulf, it is thought to be the Yalova of today*).<sup>33</sup>

A. Failler, "Les émirs turcs à la conquête de l'Anatolie au début du 14<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Revue d'Etudes Byzantines* 52, 1994, . 69-112; the real names of only some of these beys and their regions could be determined.

Pachymeres, 1, Chapter 30, p. 378; 10, Chapter 25, p.

8: "Alè Amourios".

Pachymeres 13, Chapter 36, p. 706 perhaps Yalak-Ovaste in the Ottoman sources.

As a last resort, on the one hand, the Emperor applied to the Ilkhanid ruler and on the other hand, made initiatives to obtain peace with the Çobanids, to which Osman was officially subject.

Although the Byzantine Empire was always afraid of a Mongolian westward invasion ever since the Lascarid period, Michael VIII Paleologus was seeking an alliance with the Ilkhanids since 1260 to obtain the Mongol pressure on the Türkmens. Michael

sent his bastard daughter Maria, to Hülegü in Tabriz in 1264 and upon his death Abaka Khan married her. This princess, who returned to Istanbul after Abaka died (1282), established from Nicaea diplomatic relations with Öljüytü (*Olcaytü*) Khan in 1305 and tried to threaten Osman Gazi with a Mongolian attack (*see below*).<sup>34</sup>

In the summer of 1307 Pachymeres talks about a rumor that a 30 thousand strong Tatar army under the command of Ölceytü (1304-1316) started a campaign and was approaching Bithynia. Actually, the Byzantine source gives the news that Osman vacated “all fortresses” occupied in the Olympic (*Uludağ*) region at this date. It is possible to interpret this news in Pachymeres as follows. The Ottoman forces, after the 1303 Dimbos victory, made raids up to the fortresses of Ulubad (*Lopadion*) in the west, Adrianoi (*Orhaneli today*) in the south and withdrew to Yenişehir (*Aşpaz*, Chapter 17). Also, Osman had “*bavâle*” forts built around Bursa and Nicaea and withdrew his main forces from these two cities of Bithynia. In 1304 and 1305, Osman had to assemble his forces for campaigns against the fortresses on the main road going to Nicaea in the Sakarya valley in the east (*see below*).

### Osman Gazi's Dimbos Victory and Bursa Siege (1303)

After the siege of Nicaea and the Bapheus victory, Osman planned to take Bursa, the second largest city of the Byzantine Empire in Bithynia. He had already made a campaign against the Marmaracık and Koyunhisar fortresses on the Bursa road to secure his center of Yenişehir, just prior to starting his Nicaea campaign in 1302. Upon receiving the guarantee for obedience from the tekfurs of these fortresses,<sup>35</sup> he left them in their places and then marched on to Nicaea. The road going from the Yenişehir plain to the Bursa plain through Koyunhisar and Marmaracık reaches a deep mountain pass at Dimbos (*Dinboz*, *Dinanoz*, *Erdoğan today*). This mountain pass is a natural defense point separating the Yenişehir and the Bursa plains. The tekfurs in the Bursa plain, in response to the increasing threat of Osman after Bapheus, and perhaps upon the command they received from the Emperor, made an alliance among themselves. The tekfurs of Bursa, Adranos, Bidnos (*Patnos?*), Kestel and Kite united their forces, crossed the Dimbos mountain pass and marched towards Koyunhisar.

Yenişehir, Osman's Frontier center was in danger. Osman and his troops met the army of the tekfurs at Koyunhisar. The enemy withdrew by fighting up to the Dimbos narrow mountain pass and the decisive battle was made there. “*Since the tekfurs took the mountain at their rear, Osman's forces suffered great losses*”. At the end, Osman was victorious. After passing through the mountain pass, he came down to the Bursa plain. The Kestel tekfur had died in the battle. The Adranos tekfur succeeded in escaping, the Bursa tekfur escaped and closed himself in the Bursa fortress. Osman pursued the Kite tekfur who remained against him up to Lopadion (*Ulubat*). The tekfur crossed the bridge and took refuge with the Ulubad tekfur. Apolyont (*Apollonia*) Lake and the deep Apolyont River had always been almost an impassible obstacle in front of the armies coming from the east. This bridge is the only road going to the west (*fig. 5*). Osman threatened to destroy the country of the tekfur by going around the lake. The Ulubad tekfur finally had to surrender the Kite tekfur to Osman on the condition that he would never attempt to cross the bridge.

Osman, after his victories of Bapheus and Dimbos, considered himself to be strong enough to organize new campaigns in 1304 and 1305 to complete the blockade of



fig. 5 The Spring of Ulubat and the remnants of the bridge

<sup>34</sup> B. G. Lippard, *The mongols and Byzantium, 1243-13* Ann Arbor, 1948, 215 ff; compare S. Runciman, “The L of the Mongols,” 51, his correction about the marriage v did not take place.

<sup>35</sup> *Aşpaz*, Chapter 16; Nesri, I, 112.

Nicaea, so that no help to Nicaea could reach from the north and the east. By that time, his army increased to five thousand soldiers (*Pachymeres*) with the gazis coming under his flag in hordes for the gazâ and pillaging (*"doyum"*), from Paphlagonia and other regions in Anatolia.

Our first and most detailed source about the AH 704/AD 1304-1305 campaign is the narrative apparently coming from İshak Fakîh-Yahşi Fakîh in Aşpz. (*Chapter 20*). The Hegira year 1304 starts on 4 August and ends on 25 June 1305. Because the campaign season was in the spring and summer months, this campaign of Osman's must have been in 1304.

### Osman Gazi's AH 704/AD 1304 Sakarya (Sangarius) Campaign

Below, we are giving exactly the text of Aşpz. (*Chapter 20*) about this campaign. "Bir oğlını anasıyla Bilecük'de kodılar. Kendü hakka sığındı, yürüdü, doğru Leblebüci-Hisarı'na vardı, Tekvuru itâ'at ile karşı geldi, gene yerinde kodı, ve ol kâfirin bir oğlu var idi, oğlını bile aldı. Doğru Lefke'ye vardılar, Çadırlı Tekvuru ve Lefke Tekvuru muti' olup karşı geldiler, memleketlerin teslim etdiler; kendüler Osman Gazi'nün yanında <sup>a</sup> yarar nökerler <sup>a</sup> oldılar. Samsa Çavuş geldi, eydür: "Hânum! Bana ver bu vilâyeti kim bunlar gerü yağı olmasunlar" dedi. Osman Gazi eydür: "Vilâyetin ba'zısını vermezsin" der, "zirâ bunları vilâyetinden çıkarmazın" der. <sup>ee</sup> Lefke'nün yanında, dere ağzında, Yenişehir Suyunun kenarında bir hisarcık var idi; anı Samsa Çavuş'a verdi. Şimdi dahi oranın adı Çavuş Köyü'dür <sup>ff</sup>. Andan Mekece'ye vardılar; ol dahi itâ'at ile geldi. Tekvuru Ak-Hisar'a bile geldi. Ak-Hisar Tekvuru <sup>g</sup> leşker cem'etmiş, karşı geldi, <sup>b</sup> gâyetde eyü ceng etdiler; âhir kaçdı; hisarına girmedir. <sup>b</sup> Gaziler hisarı yağma etdiler. Tekvuru kaçdı, Kara-Çebiş hisarına girdi, ol hisar Sakarya kenarında dere içinde sarpca hisardır. Birkaç gün yürüdiler, döndüler Geyve'ye vardılar. Kâfiri hisarı boş komış, gitmiş; <sup>i</sup> Kori-Deresi derler <sup>i</sup>, anda becene olmuş, oturmuş, Osman Gazi'ye bildürdiler; <sup>i</sup> eydür kim: 'Hey! Ne durursuz' dedi. Ve yürüdiler, becene[yi] buldular, turfetü'l-'ayn içindei koyıldılar. Aralarında Tekvurun dutdılar; Osman Gazi'ye getürdiler. Mâl-i ganîmetlerin aldılar. Andan <sup>k</sup> Tekfur-Pınarı'na geldiler, anı dahi aldılar <sup>k</sup> Bir aydan artucak ol vilâyette durdular; muti' olan yerleri timar-erine verdiler. Halkın emn ü amân ile inandurdılar. Vilâyet mukarrer oldu tâ şimdiye değin "Ve bu feth-i gazânun târihi hicretün yediyüz dördünde vâki' oldu ki, İslâm Mihal dediler".<sup>36</sup>

Here is the English version of the text:

"He (*Osman*) left one son with his mother at Bilecik. He, himself, took refuge in God, marched and went directly to Leblebüci-Hisar. The Tekfur obeyed and welcomed him, Osman kept him in his place and that infidel had a son. Osman took the son. They went directly to Lefke. The Çadırlı Tekfur and the Lefke Tekfur obeyed and welcomed him and surrendered their lands; they themselves became useful nöker (*comrades*) to Osman Gazi. Samsa Çavuş came and said: "My Khan! Give this province to me so that they shall not become an enemy again". Osman Gazi said, "I will not give some of the provinces, because I shall not drive these out of their province." There was a small fortress next to Lefke at the mouth of the river on the banks of the Yenişehir stream; he gave it to Samsa Çavuş. Even now, the name of that place is Çavuş Köy. From there they went to Mekece; that also came and obeyed. The Tekfur came with Osman to Ak-Hisar. The Ak-Hisar Tekfur had



fig. 6 Towers on Göksu, Tower I.



fig. 7 Towers on Göksu, Tower II.

Here are the variants in Nesrî: Hâs nöker (Sultan's *rade-in-arm*); e-e, Nesrî: ama sana dahi hisse vereyim *yüp* (I will also give you a share); f-f, Nesrî: derler (they */*); g, itâ'at etmeyüp (did not obey), h-h, Nesrî: azim ceng üp âhir sinup kal'aya girmeyüp yabana kaçdı (he fought *y* well, but at the end he did not go back into the fortress *d* fled somewhere else); i-i, Nesrî: Karasu Derbendi *dikler* yerde (at the place they call the Karasu Derbend); i-lesrî: Osman Gazi dahi yürüyüş edip becenede olan küffârı up fi'hâl (also Osman Gazi marched, found the infidels the becene right away); k-k, Nesrî: -.

collected soldiers, he resisted, they fought very well; at the end the Tekfur fled; he did not go back to his fortress. The gazis pillaged the fortress. The Tekfur fled, he entered the Kara-Çepiş fortress. That fortress is the inaccessible fortress within the valley on the banks of the Sakarya. They marched for several days, they arrived at Geyve. They found that its Tekfur had vacated the fortress and was gone; he had hidden himself at a place called Kori-Dere, in a cave (*becene*). They gave the news to Osman Gazi.

“Then Osman Gazi said, ‘Then what are you waiting for, go get him.’ And they marched, found the cave or fort in a minute they were in. They captured the Tekfur among others and brought him to Osman Gazi. They took their shares from the spoils. From there, they came to Tekfur-Pınar and took that also. They stayed there in that province a little more than a month; they gave the places that obeyed to the timar-soldiers. Giving guarantees on oath, they made the people believe about their security and safety. That province became settled until our days.

“And this conquest and gazâ occurred in AH 704, and called it İslâm Mihal.”

### Explanations About the Fortresses Conquered During the 1304 Campaign of Osman:

1. Leblebüci Hisar, the Çadırlu and Lefke tekfurs obeyed. Osman left the tekfurs in their places. The people of Çadırlu village,<sup>37</sup> connected in Bilecik county, were engaged in growing rice at the banks of a stream and enjoyed the status of *çeltikçi* (rice-growers) and sharecroppers, and were exempted from extraordinary taxes. In the Muhasebe Defteri “*der nebr-i Çadırlu*” or Çadırlu stream is recorded by mistake as “*der şehri-i Çadırlu*” or town of Çadırlu. There is no such place called Çadırlu town. Kabakluca near Çadırlu might be Leblebüci. A city named Kouboukleia in Greek is known.<sup>38</sup> Lefke (Leukai) has the name of Osmaneli today.

2. Çavuş-Köyü, which is mentioned in the Menakıbnâme (Âşpız.): “a small fortress near Lefke on the banks of the Yenişehir stream”. Lefort’s estimation is the Kuleler location to the north of Eğerci on the Göksu stream. The forts are still standing today (figs.6,7). The Yenişehir Stream in the Menakıbnâme must be the Göksu. Another Çavuş Köyü on the maps is shown far away, to the west of İlyas-Bey village on the Bilecik-Yenişehir road (for forts, see below.)

3. The tekfur of Mekece obeyed. Mekece controls the roads coming to Nicaea from the north, from İstanbul through the south banks of the Sabanca Lake. Lefort determined the old Mekece on a hill at a distance of 1 km from the existing village today and remains of the city walls on the plain.<sup>39</sup>

4. It was necessary to make a major battle against the Akhisar tekfur (for Akhisar, see EXCURSUS).

5. For Kara-Çepiş (Çepiş) or, Katoikia fortress (see below EXCURSUS). The tekfur of Akhisar escaped and took refuge in Kara-Çepiş.

6. The Geyve (Kabaia) Tekfur escaped and “went to a cave (*becene*)” at the Kori-Dere. The Kori-Dere is between the Geyve villages (see the Barkan and Merçil, *Hüdavendigâr Tahrir Defterleri*, p. 325, No. 602). On the 1/200,000 scale map, Kori-Köyü is 10 km to the east of Geyve. Another estimation, the “*becene/peçene*” in which the Tekfur took refuge, could be one of the Kuleler (Forts) to the north of Eğerci. But it is far away from Geyve.

7. They took Tekfur-Pınarı. R. Kaplanoğlu determined a Tekne-Pınarı immediately to the east of Geyve. It is believed that the fortress is at Umurbey.<sup>40</sup> Also, there is

<sup>37</sup> 438 Numaralı Mubasebe-i Vilâyet-i Anadolu Defteri, Ankara, 1993, text: p. 219; for the place called “*şehri*” see R. Kaplanoğlu, *Osmanlı Devletinin Kuruluşu* (For the Ottoman state), İstanbul, 2000, p. 51; however, place where rice is grown, it is necessary to read the Çadırlu as *nebr-i Çadırlu*; it is *nebr-i Çadırlu* in the 1 Mubasebe-i Vilâyet-i Anadolu Defteri (vol. 1, 219); it mentioned together with Kabakluca.

<sup>38</sup> Lefort, “Tableau”, 112; it does not appear to be identified Kouboukleia with the Körükle of today. There mezza (arable land) called Kabakluca in the kazâ of B (Mubasebe-i Vilâyet-i Anadolu, vol. 1, p. 221).



fig. 8 Ha

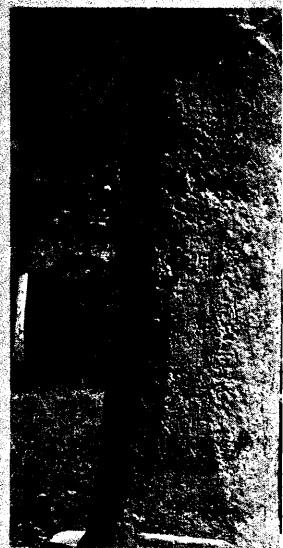


fig. 9 The pillar with Greek engraving in Ha

<sup>39</sup> J. Lefort, “Tableau De la Bithynie au XIII siècle” 77 *Emirate* ed. by E. Zachariadou, Rethymnon, 1993 114.

<sup>40</sup> Kaplanoğlu, *Kuruluş*, 52.

a Kara-Pınar to the west of Akhisar.

Osman, before departing from his headquarters at Karacahisar, called Mihal and invited him to become a Muslim. Then, Osman went to Lefke by the shortcut road in the region belonging to Mihal and went down to the Sakarya valley via Harman-Kaya (**figs.8,9**) and Gölpazarı. Osman must have followed this road. For this reason, Köse Mihal must have been called to Karacahisar before the campaign. The first conquest of Osman on this road was the Leblebüci-Hisarı. After that, he was in the Sakarya valley on the main road going to Nicaea. From Lefke to Mekece, the road turns to the north throughout the steep Sakarya valley and reaches the Akhisar plain (*Pamukova today*). In 1889, C. von der Goltz determined a Çoban-Kale (*see EXCURSUS*) in the narrow Sakarya valley when descending to Geyve.<sup>41</sup> The fortress is on the Doğan Stream. From here, Osman marched towards the powerful Akhisar fortress (*see EXCURSUS: Akhisar*) in the mountains, immediately to the north of Paşalar village.



fig. 10 The Peninsula of Kara Biga (Pegai)



fig. 11 Remnants of the walls in Kara Biga.



<sup>2</sup> The antique bastion in the walls of Kara Biga

In general, it is understood that in this campaign of Osman Gazi, he seized the fortresses of Lefke, Mekece and Geyve and the nearby fortresses, at the main stops coming to Nicaea from the north and east on the Central-Sakarya River. However, he could not capture the Kara-Çepüş fortress on this campaign (*see EXCURSUS: Kara-Çepüş/Katoikia*). The following year in 1305, he sent his son Orhan against this fortress accompanied by experienced commanders.

The term “yağma” (*pillage*) in the text also requires clarification. According to the Islamic law, the people of a fortress who surrendered with mercy and obeyed would be left unharmed and “pillaging” and enslaving of the inhabitants were not permitted. Yağma means the pillaging of the goods found in the city and taking the people of the city as prisoners. On this campaign, Osman is shown to leave unharmed the people of Lefke and the people of the other fortresses belonging to the tekfurs who obeyed. Lefke (*Leukai*), for this reason, kept its Christian population up until the 1924 population exchange between Turkey and Greece. According to the Muhasebe Defteri of 1530, Lefke within Bilecik Kazâ (*County*), entered among the Yörgüç Pasha (*a vizier of Murad II*) pious foundations and was composed of six quarters towards 1530 and there were 174 Muslim households and 26 Christian households in the city. Furthermore, in the fortress 36 households (*Muslim?*) were counted.<sup>42</sup> In addition, in Lefke 24 persons were registered as “hâssa carıye oğlanları”, that is “*the sons born from women slaves belonging to the sultan*”, were constituting a community with a different status. There is no explanatory record of this.

When Osman was on this campaign in 1304, Çavdar (*Çavdarlu*) Tatar came to the Karacahisar market and pillaged (*Aşpz. Chapter 21*). The next year, in AH 705/1305, Osman Gazi, sent Orhan with Mihal Gazi and the other experienced commanders to conquer the fortresses of Kara-Çepüş and Kara-Tigin (*Aşpz. Chapter 22*).

Apparently, Osman Gazi's successful 1304 Sakarya campaign, after Bapheus, created an atmosphere of panic in Istanbul. Pachymeres, a man who was close to the Imperial Court, describes by pouring out the woes, the fact that the attacks of the gazis under Osman Gazi extended up to the Bosphorus and created a deep concern in Istanbul and that a hope for salvation did not remain anywhere.<sup>43</sup> It

<sup>1</sup> Kiepert's map: Çoban-Kale; Evliya Çelebi calls Geyve si as Çoban-Kalesi: see, R. Kaplanoğlu, *Kuruluş*, pp. 52-53. *Muhasebe-i Vilâyet-i Anadolu Defteri* (937/1530), vol. 1, ara, 1993, text, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> Pachymeres, 11, Chapter 21, pp. 450 - 452



appears that with the Bapheus victory won in 1302 against an imperial army, thousands of gazis, who believed that the resistance of the Byzantine Empire had been broken, came in hordes from the interior of Anatolia to the Bithynia region for gazâ and spoils. Pachymeres himself indicated that the news had reached the gazis in Paphlagonia (*Kastamonu region*) and that the fame of Osman Gazi had reached there. He says that now the threats came up to the gates of Istanbul and the Turks were wandering around freely in small groups on the other side of the Straits. *“There is not a single day that passes without hearing that the enemy is attacking the fortresses on the coast and taking people prisoners or killing them. ... Only the Straits remained between us and the enemy. No one dares to go to the opposite shore. Istanbul is filled with beggars and people sleeping outside, poverty and contagious diseases. The Turks are not only attacking Chêlê (Şile) and Astrabite (40 km to the east from Şile), but also at the Hieron fortress (the Yoros fortress on the hill at the Anadolu Kavağı) at the entrance to the Strait of Bosphorus. Nicomedia was in an extremely bad condition with famine and lack of water. The city of Nicaea has been surrounded and its contact with the outside world was completely cut off and the population suffered from famine. The people had escaped from Bêlokômîs (Bilecik) or from Angêlokômîs (İnegöl) or from Anagourdy (?), Palatanêa (on the Bursa-İznîk road), Mêlangeia (Yenişehir) and the environs and the country had become deserted. The condition of Kroulla and Katoikia is even worse”* (Kroulla is Gürle.<sup>44</sup> Failler claimed by following Arnakis that Katoikia was Kite. However, Katoikia is the Kara-Çepüş fortress, see EXCURSUS). Pachymeres explains that with the seizing of these fortresses by the Turks the road from Byzantium to the Hârakleion (*Ereğli on the Black Sea coast*) port and the road to Nicaea were closed. In the 1304 campaign, Osman had already seized the main fortresses in the Sakarya valley, Geyve, Mekece, Absuyu (*Hypsus*), Akhisar and Lefke. Only the Kios (*Gemilik, Gemlik*) road had remained open on the lake side to come to Nicaea. Neşrî also states that a messenger could go to Istanbul only through *“the lake gate”* during Osman’s 1302 siege.

The Byzantine historian describes the general situation as follows: *“The people of Pylai (Topçu İskelesi) and Pythia (Yalova), Chalcédon (Kadıköy) and the Halizôns (local people living between Nicomedia and Pythia) had fallen into the same difficult situation. Those coming to Kios (Gemlik) by ship are waiting there that day and can continue their trips at night and were reaching Askania (Nicaea) Lake by following the coast. There they would land on the coast at the Lake Gate to enter the city, because there was no possibility to open the other gates due to the control of the enemy. Thus, the people of Nicaea were under a great danger”*. We had related above that Osman had the Draz Ali “havâle” fort built near Nicaea and kept the city under continuous blockade.

## Orhan's Campaign, 1305

According to Pachymeres, in 1305, the Emperor, who sent someone named Sguros, who was given the title of stratopedark, the “*head of the arbalest soldiers*”<sup>45</sup> equipped with arbalets and gave him some money so that he would form a local force there. Sguros came to the Katoikia region. “*Some five thousand enemy soldiers had secretly captured the roads going to the fortress during the night.*” According to Pachymeres, these forces suddenly attacked these Byzantine troops and drove them towards the fortress. An Ottoman force in ambush squeezed them from the other side.<sup>46</sup> This Ottoman tactic is described with all these details in the old

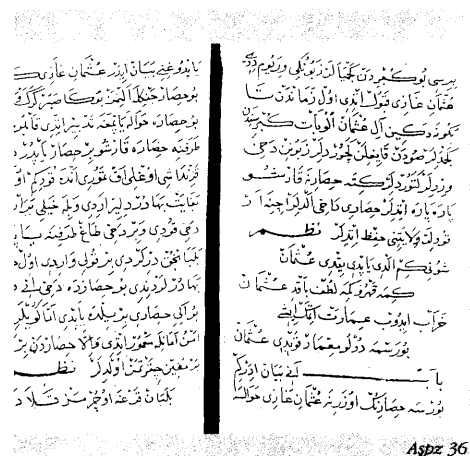
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<sup>44</sup> In fact, Pachymeres, (p. 454) tells us that it was a fortress on the way to Nicaea. Named Gürle today, it is the crossroads between Bursa-Iznik and Nicaea-Kios (Gemlik); see Kaplanoglu, *Kuruluş*, pp. 34-38.

**45** The Turks were powerless against the powerful and (cross-bow) arrows of the Westerners.

<sup>46</sup> Pachymeres, 11, Chapter 21, p. 454 - 456

menâkıbnâme in Aşpz. In fact, in AH 705/AD 1305, the Ottoman army under the command of Orhan came to Kara-Çepüş, divided the gazis into three groups and while one group attacked the fortress, “another group passed to the other side of the fortress at night and another group hid itself in ambush in the valley of a stream next to the fortress.” The group who marched on the fortress under the command of Orhan, pretended to run away and let the Byzantines coming out of the fortress pursue them. The forces in ambush captured the tekfur and took the fortress. Orhan had the Byzantine soldiers removed from the fortress and after fortifying it, he gave it to Konur Alp as a frontier post (*Aşpz.*, Chapter 22, the text is given below). Pachymeres, the contemporary Greek source, and the details in the old Ottoman narrative are in complete agreement and complementing each other. Once again this proves the completely reliable nature of the Ottoman narratives, obviously transmitted by İshak Fakih, the imam of Orhan Bey. A comparison of the two texts definitely proves that the Kara-Çepüş (*Kara-Çepiş*) fortress is Katoikia of Pachymeres (see, *EXCURSUS*). The Greek historian adds that the mercenary soldiers were of no use, that the people, including women and children, who fled to take refuge in the fortress, fell into the hands of the Turks, who captured the fortress and that the city was burned down. At this point, Pachymeres passes on to previous events, as he often does. He reminds that Osman took Bèlokômis (*Bilecik*) and only Bursa was still resisting. According to the Ottoman menâkıbnâme about these recent events, Bilecik was captured in 1299, and Bursa was put under blockade in 1303 after the Battle of Dimbos. In the meantime, Pachymeres states that Pègai, on the Marmara seacoast fell into the same difficulties. The Pègai peninsula (*Kara-Biga today*) had one of the best preserved fortresses on the shores of the Marmara Sea with its tremendous city walls from the antiquity and only in 1371 it was captured by Murad I. According to Pachymeres, the people in the region fled and took refuge at the Kara-Biga peninsula (figs. 10, 11, 12); there was an outbreak of an epidemic disease due to the crowded conditions and every day hundreds of people died. The local people in question who fled to Pègai, must have been fleeing in front of the raids either Osman's or Karesi bey's Türkmens. Pachymeres also describes in detail how much the local Greeks suffered from the abuses and the cruelties committed by the local Byzantine authorities and the fines imposed by the Emperor to this rich port city. Pègai had a continuous transport connection by sea with Istanbul to send the products of the region. In the meantime, the Byzantine historian cannot refrain himself from emphasizing the point that the entire Anatolian Greek population suffered as much from the greediness of the Byzantine administration as from the Turks. “The Emperor cannot catch up with the payments needed to pay the mercenary soldiers, the treasury is empty and waiting for voluntary contributions from the city people, an effective performance cannot be obtained from the Catalans, the mercenary company, against the Turks and General Maroulès in Pègai was forced to confront Osman's forces with his unarmed foot soldiers”.<sup>47</sup> The only concern of the Catalans, Pachymeres says, was to keep the spoils they obtained. The Catalans were waiting idly at Kyzikos (*Kapıdağı*) in the winter of 1304 and their only concern was to extract more money from the Emperor. On the other hand, the friction between the mercenary groups, and specifically between the Catalans and Alans, was delaying the action against the Turks. All this was just before Osman's Sakarya campaign in the summer of 1304.<sup>48</sup>



achymeres, 468-460, 11, 21.  
achymeres, 462-464.

spoils ("*doymum*"). This situation could explain the military superiority of the Türkmen beys against the Byzantine Empire. The Emperor did not have the opportunity to send the Catalan mercenary troops against the Turkish raids at Pègai and the environs, because at that time, an emergency situation came up in Western Anatolia. The Germiyanid bey Alişir, then the strongest of the Türkmen beys, besieged Philadelphia (*Alaşehir*) and captured the fortresses in the area so that the city was about to surrender from starvation (1304).

All roads coming to the city of Nicaea following the banks of the Sakarya through Geyve via Mekece in the east and via Lefke in the southwest joined at the Kara-Tigin (*Kara Tekin*, *Karadın today*) plain. The Kara-Tigin fortress was “*the gate of İznik*”. This fertile plain was also of great importance for feeding the city. The ancient aqueducts bringing water from the mountains to the city were also passing through this plain. In the 1305 campaign, Osman sent his principal commanders, Konur-Alp, Akça-Koca, Gazi Rahman and Köse Mihal with Orhan to Sakarya for the conquest of Kara-Çepüş and Kara-Tigin.

Osman Gazi stayed in Karacahisar to protect the Eskişehir region against a renewed raid by the Çavdar Tatars. According to the Menâkıbnâme (*Aşpż., Chapter 22*), when Osman was thinking to complete his conquests in the Sakarya region, he says, “Son! Although we made an agreement with these Tatars, but the Tatars are not people keeping their oaths, and their being Tatars never goes away, so you go on with the gazis to conquer Kara-Çepüş and Kara-Tigin...”. In the 1305 campaign Orhan first conquered the fortresses of Kara-Çepüş (*Katoikia*) and Absuyu (*Hypsus*). In order to secure his rear, he put Konur-Alp at Kara-Çepüş and Akça-Koca at Absuyu. “In summary, Orhan Gazi strengthened this frontier and marched onto Kara-Tigin himself. He sent a message to the bey of the fortress saying you give this fortress to me, I will still let you stay at the fortress and said only let its title belong to me. He added that “my objective is to conquer Nicaea” (“Benüm garazum İznik'dir”). The tekfur could not agree with the proposal and he did not surrender the fortress.<sup>49</sup> Orhan conquered the fortress by force and plundered (*yağma*), took the tekfur and executed him. “Orhan sent the daughter of the tekfur along with the booty goods to his father. Then, Orhan Gazi paid the ransom of the prisoners who were taken and put them back into the fortress and secured their allegiance under oath. He put Samsa Çavuş in the forts [with his troops] and returned to Yenişehir to meet his father. They also sent more men to Kara-Çepüş and to Kara-Tigin. The Kara-Tigin fortress, too, became like a havâle fort against Nicaea. From time to time they would go and destroy the gardens of Nicaea.” The raids on the Nicaea region from the Draz Ali and Kara-Tigin havâle fortresses continued more than a quarter of a century. Even at this date, the Ottoman frontier forces appeared to have descended from Absuyu (*Hypsus in Pachymeres, Abcalar today*) and Kara-Çepüş (*Katoikia*) in the Sakarya valley to the Beşköprü-Adapazarı plain further in the north. Until that time, it was impossible for the Ottoman forces to pass through the Absafi (*Sophon*)-Bıçkı mountain mass.<sup>50</sup> The only way through this mass was the Sakarya valley. In this valley, the fortresses of Geyve, Absuyu and Kara-Çepüş were blocking this road to the Ottomans. In 1304, Osman had taken Akhisar (*Byzantine Malagina defense line*)<sup>51</sup> and Orhan made it his center of operations in the 1305 campaign. The Beşköprü (*the Five-Bridges area*) is of a prime strategic importance where Justinianus' famous bridge was built in the period between 553-561. Akyazı, belonging to the Byzantines to the east of this plain, Nicomedia reached from the shores of Sapanca (*Sophon*) Lake in the west and the Adapazarı region in the north were now opened to the Ottoman raids. Thus, Osman's 1304 and Orhan's 1305

نرسن سگوری نغدی بکاردان  
 یوکه ندر راخت ابد  
 بکاردی اوغردی کما و نغاردان  
 سرنده هارکده یو صید ابد  
 لی حصان راکت یق و سکر یو نغرد  
 و غنوس طریقین ابد سکر فیه  
 عشقان غازی دخی سبغ اولدر  
 عشقان غازی صید  
 نه ککله انحراف کد اولدی بکاردی  
 بر یو نغردی اوغردی سکر جیمیک  
 لری صید ابدی عدلی انصار نغرد  
 نازار کد فریضک اولدر هر بر سبه  
 ویرل و وری هر لشی حید اولدی دخی  
 رعایت ابدی عشقان غازی کد یق غار کد  
 نغردی کد کما غار ابد استاز اولدر نظم  
 غنوس عشقان ابدی افریکاش  
 ساچولدی نغردی کاسلری جوقاش  
 اولدی و غردی کد صید ابدی  
 کد ابدی صید هر ابدی کد کاش  
 دغرس کد یق طریقین ابد  
 نرسن غازی صید غازی دخی جوق اولدر سون  
 نرسن کد حصان نغدی کدی  
 و هر کد کد یق اولدر نغرد  
 بر یو صید ابدی سالی  
 نغرد دخی اولدی جوق نغرد  
 جمانه هر یو کد آد و نغرد

بائنه آجی شین داکو فیئند  
 خان عسائی عدل کَل  
 تسان فیله دعا فوئند  
 دسانت باز منیه  
 ایاجی اورخان اوغلندن فیئند  
 لیه سان  
 لکیراق حسان و لکیم و لکیم  
 لور لور کده و جهل الدوغین با لور  
 لور لور حیدر کور لور لور مشهور  
 زاولور لور کور کور عتبار  
 حاتم امدت کور کور معلوم  
 ایلدای کور کور خاشاک کور  
 چا غا خان فارغی فیئند کور

<sup>49</sup> Nesrî, I, 126.

<sup>50</sup> This Absafi mountain mass is called Sophon in the Byzantine toponymy; the name Absafi could have been derived from Hypsu (Absuyu) or Sophon.

<sup>51</sup> For the main defense line of the Byzantines in the Akhisar region, see C. Foss, "Byzantine Malagina and the Lower Sangarius," *Anatolian Studies* 40, pp. 161-183.

campaigns actually provided the Ottoman control over the road to Istanbul and prevented any aid coming to Nicaea from that direction. In the new gazâ frontiers, Konur-Alp started continuous raids to areas around Akyazı, Akça-Koca to Nicomedia and Konur-Alp in the direction of Bolu. Later under Orhan, Konur-Alp captured Tuz-Pazarı at Akyazı and after a hard battle, which went on for two days and two nights against the Byzantine forces at Uzunca-Bel, he conquered the entire region. He made Tuz-Pazarı the new frontier center. Akça-Koca (*along with Osman's nephew Aktimur*)<sup>52</sup> and over time Konur-Alp captured Akyazı, Konurpa, Mudurnu and Bolu in the east. Orhan first placed Gazi Abdurrahman at Kara-Çepüş and Absuyu in the Sakarya valley. He then started raids to Akova. These developments, briefly mentioned in Aşpz. and Neşrî, were, no doubt, materialized in a long period of time after the 1305 campaign.

All the Ottoman narratives about the conquest of Nicaea appear to have come from a common source, from the history of Yahşi Fakîh. Yahşi Fakîh wrote the Ottoman history up until Yıldırım Bayezid I. He must have taken the narratives belonging to the periods of Osman and Orhan, from his father, İshak Fakîh, who was Orhan's imam, that is, a source contemporary of the early Ottoman beys. The Yahşi Fakîh history has not been discovered up until the present. However, his work appears to be transmitted, apparently verbatim, by Aşpz., Neşrî and the Anonymous histories. No doubt, Neşrî mainly follows Aşık Paşazâde and summarized in prose the verses added by Aşpz. to the original text. The Anonymous-Oruc group and the Düsturnâme mention the Nicaea surrender with a few lines. We are giving the main text of Aşık Paşazâde.<sup>53</sup>

Pachymeres describes as follows the difficult situation Nicaea under blockade: On the other hand, the situation in the east, especially around Nicaea reached an unbearable stage, because Osman was keeping the region under terror. Especially, the Emperor's sister Maria,<sup>55</sup> who was given the name of the Empress of the Mongols, when she came to Nicaea, she behaved extremely insolently against Osman and was threatening to summon the new Ilkhan Ölceytü (*1304-1316*). The Emperor had sent his sister Maria with sufficient forces to Nicaea to encourage the people, who had been under a long blockade. In Nicaea, Maria also arranged the marriage of a Byzantine princess with the Mongol Khan.<sup>56</sup>

Aspx 39

For the Byzantine Empire, the general situation was tragic,<sup>57</sup> “because of the unbearable attacks” of the Turks in Western Anatolia, including Osman and the Germiyanid bey. The Emperor was unwillingly forced to use the Catalan and Alan mercenary troops for defense of the empire. Under those circumstances, another solution the Emperor resorted to with great expectations was to acquire the help of the Ilkhanid Mongol Khan against all the Frontier Türkmens, including Osman in the years between 1302-1307. Lascarids and Michael VIII had benefited from that policy. The Fact that Keyhatu’s earlier campaigns and massacres against the frontier Türkmens of Menteşe and Denizli (1291-1292), as well as against the Çobanids in the Kastamonu region (1291) was well known and encouraged the Byzantine court in the 1300s.<sup>58</sup>

A Byzantine ambassador was sent to Gazan Khan (*October 1295-May 1304*) and an alliance and the marriage of Gazan Khan with a Byzantine princess was decided (*It is guessed that the princess was Irene Palaeologina, the illegitimate daughter of Andronicus II*).<sup>59</sup> According to Pachymeres, close to the Palace, the Khan made firm promises about starting a campaign against “those who were doing bad things” (*Türkmen*s).<sup>60</sup> When the news spread, Turks, even if they did not become much concerned at that time, they appear to have limited their activities. Among these, “*Alais*”, who was engaged in activities in Lydia, made an agreement with the people of Sardes and permitted them to obtain food supplies.<sup>61</sup> However, when the coming of the Tatars to the region did not materialize, the *Türkmen* beys resumed their attacks. Upon the death of Gazan Khan, the Byzantine Emperor felt a great disappointment.<sup>62</sup> It is to be noted that Osman started his campaign in the Sakarya valley in August 1304.

### **The Surrender of Nicaea to the Ottomans (2 March 1331)**

When after a long blockade (1303-1326) Bursa surrendered to Orhan on 6 April 1326, the fall of Nicaea, which had been suffering starvation under blockade since 1302, was expected. As it was indicated in the Ottoman chronicles, the sortie operations made from time to time by the Byzantine soldiers from Nicaea, did not produce any results. The Ottoman forces were at the Kara-Tigin fortress in the east and the Draz Ali fort in the south and were not allowing anyone to go through. As confirmed by Pachymeres and the Ottoman chronicles, the Ottomans had established a complete control on the countryside and the villages around Nicaea. They had established good relations with the peasants if one is to believe the Ottoman narrative. The ordinary people, who felt hopeless, were considering to surrender and be saved as soon as possible. The Byzantine commander in Nicaea must have informed the Emperor of this hopeless situation and asked for urgent help after the fall of Bursa. Andronicus III (1328-1341), who was an energetic emperor, decided to take serious measures. He first came to Pëgai in 1328 and made an agreement with Karesi Bey, who was the rival of the Ottomans. The following spring, he came with his army to the Eskihisar-Pelekanon region. There was a sea passage on the Dakibyza (Gebze) shore where four powerful fortresses were located. From there, the Emperor was planning to cross over the gulf and to go to the aid of Nicaea. However, Orhan had come with his army before the Emperor arrived and captured the hills. The decisive Pelekanon battle, which took place here at Pelekanon (*end of May-1 June 1329*), became a turning point in the Ottoman-Byzantine relations. Orhan, who applied the ambush and fake withdrawal tactics, won the battle. The Emperor, wounded, escaped to Istanbul. Nicaea

[illegible]

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58. "Byzantium's Initial Encounter with the Chinggisids," *VIATOR* 29 (1998): 95-140; for the Mongol repressions of Türkmen beys see K. M. Aksarayî, *Musâmaratu'l-Akbâr* (i Persian), published by O. Turan, Ankara, 1944, pp. 133-170-179.

<sup>59</sup> Pachymeres, Failler, vol. IV, p. 440, note 22.

<sup>60</sup> Pachymeres, 11, Chapter 16, p. 440.

<sup>61</sup> Pachymeres, 11, Chapter 16, p. 442.

<sup>62</sup> Pachymeres, 12, Chapter 1, p. 506.

**63** Cantacuzenos and Gregoras described this battle in detail. This important event was passed over quietly in the Otto chronicles. It was indicated very briefly that Abdurrahman together with Orhan repulsed a Byzantine force.

<sup>64</sup> Ahmed Âşıkî, *Tevarih-i Âl-i Osman*, ed. by Çifcioglu N İstanbul (1947); Atsız employed the Berlin MS not used by others, p. 85, and indicated the variation in the apparatus 294). We reproduced here the Berlin MS in the margins.



through the Istanbul gate. Only himself and his people went away; the most of the remaining city people and of the soldiers did not go. Orhan Gazi sent the tekvür in company with his men [to make sure of his safety]; they took him to a ship; he went to the region he had in mind. The moment the tekvür left the city through the gate [of Istanbul], Orhan Gazi entered from the Yenişehir gate. There was a garden inside the gate called İkülos (*Aya Kelsos, Ebkelos, İlkiüs, Eykelse*). It was an extremely beautiful place. They took Orhan Gazi directly to that garden. The infidels of the city came to welcome him. It was as though their ruler died and they were ascending his son to the throne. And also many women came. Orhan Gazi asked: *'Where are the men of these women?'* They answered: *'They died, some in the battle, some from starvation'*; (e.) Among the women, there were many extremely pretty ones. Orhan Gazi distributed them to the gazis; and he ordered: 'take these women and marry them in a legal marriage'; and that is what they did. The city had well-built houses; they gave them to the gazis who married. If you have the women and the houses ready, who would not accept it?" (*verses by Aşpaz.*)

And the date of this conquest was AH 731.

The important variants and additions in the Neşrî (*vol. I, pp. 156-158*) version: (a.) They built two havâle forts on both sides of İznîk and blockaded the city for many years as mentioned. From time to time, the cavalry of the infidels would come out of the fortress and fight with the gazis. The gazis would kill some of them and some of them would escape and go back to the fortress. (b.) When Orhan Gazi knew that the infidels in the fortress were depressed he marched on İznîk. (c.) For that reason, the Tekfur of İznîk sent an infidel he trusted to Orhan Gazi and said: "If you promise us that you will not hurt us and let those who want to go, go, and those who want to stay, stay, then we will give the fortress. (d.) Orhan Gazi accepted an agreement under oath and the Tekfur came out from the Istanbul gate of the fortress and went to Istanbul with his own people. However, most of the sipahi (*soldiery*) did not go and went to meet Orhan with the people of the city and let him enter the city from the Yenîşehir gate then the pretty women came in his presence. Orhan asked who are these women? They told him, my sultan, some of their men died from starvation and some others in the fights. (e.) The high quality houses were left empty.

In Neşrî, the record (d) about the fact that most of those belonging to the Byzantine military class remained after the occupation, is particularly interesting. This confirms the extent of the understanding and peaceful relations between the Ottomans and the Byzantines at that time.

## EXCURSUS

## Notes on Kara-Çepüş (Çepiş, Cebiş) and Akhisar Fortresses

## Kara-Çepüş

Pachymeres and the Ottoman menâkıbnâme as reproduced in *Aspz.*, about Orhan's 1305 Kara-Çepüş and Kara-Tigin sieges, no doubt describes the same event. As it was described above, the Kara-Çepüş fortress was nothing other than the Katoikia in Pachymeres.<sup>65</sup>

Upon the capture of Katoikia/Kara-Çepüs and Kara-Tigin by the Ottomans, the city of Nicaea was cut off from aid that would come from the north via the Gulf of Izmit-Sapanca.

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ما یزید لبه ازین در نغمه  
و بدین آواز لرزان خجلی مالیه  
بار آید آینه کز دوش و آینه ازین  
باری سخن آید که نه حجاز در  
درین آینه بختی خفته جان و خجسته  
یکه ازین بختی غایب ازین شقی  
یکدی و اول قافله جان و دخی آدم  
و از و در یکدی دخی آدم کز دل  
یکه کلاه یکدی اولی کلاه و دوازده  
عقدی خواب از دوزخ تا محالیه کلام  
نه راحت می و میز و اول و درین  
یکه ازین بختی غایب ازین شقی  
ازین بختی غایب ازین شقی  
ازین بختی غایب ازین شقی



In the *Menâkıbnâme*, Kara-Çepüş is shown as a place near Absuyu (*Pachymeres: Hypsu*), that is, in the Sakarya valley. Absuyu is Abcalar or Abca in the Sakarya valley on our maps. It is immediately to the north of Geyve. In fact, in the *Menâkıbnâme*, it is stated, “that fortress (*Kara-Çepiş*) is on the banks of the Sakarya River, a somewhat inaccessible fortress on a stream.” Since it was an inaccessible fortress, looking down on the valley from above, the Akhisar Tekkur escaped and took refuge there during Osman’s 1304 campaign. Osman, in the 1305 campaign had sent his son Orhan to capture the Kara-Çepüş and Kara-Tigin fortresses. The Kara-Çepüş and Absuyu were preventing the Ottomans from descending to the Sapanca (*Sophon*) and Adapazarı plains. Thus, their strategic positions were very important for the Byzantines. Orhan, after capturing Katoikia/Kara-Çepüş, marched on to the Kara-Tigin fortress, which was considered to be the gate of Nicaea (*for Kara-Tigin, see below*). Orhan told the tekfur, who resisted surrender, “*my objective is İznik*.”

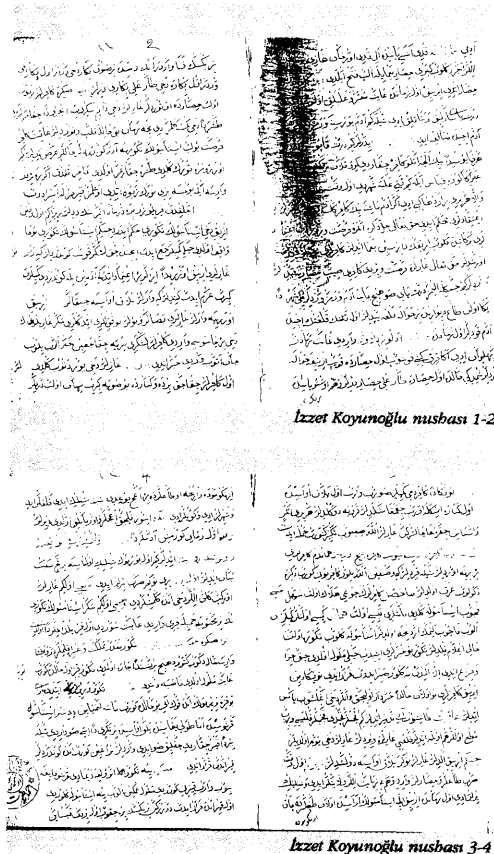
The *Menâkıbnâme* puts Osman Gazi’s Sakarya campaign at the date of AH 704 and Orhan’s Kara-Çepüş campaign at AH 705 (*Aşpż., Chapters 20 and 22*). The Hegira year 704 started on 4 August 1304 and finished on 25 June 1305. Since the campaign must have continued in the summer months of 704, Osman’s campaign must have occurred after 4 August 1304.

As for Orhan’s AH 705 campaign, it must have occurred in the summer months of 705 or after 24 July 1305. AH 705 starts on 24 July and ends on 14 June 1306. Pachymeres shows the capture of Katoikia/Kara-Çepüş by Orhan at the time when Emperor Michael IX was residing at Pègai (*Kara-Biga*). Michael had been there since the autumn of 1303. The Ottomans captured Pègai only in 1371 after a long siege. Under Orhan there was an archont dependent on the Ottoman ruler. Gregory Palamas visited the archont in 1354.

According to Clive Foss, Kara-Çepüş must be a fort “*that does not justify a siege for a long period*.”<sup>66</sup> As we have described above, Kara-Çepüş was the important Katoikia fortress, which caused the Ottomans a lot of difficulties. A. Failler’s conjecture based on Arnakis that Katoikia was Kite near Bursa is not correct.<sup>67</sup>

Kara-Çepüş could be originally the name of a Seljukid emir, like Kara-Tigin, who had captured Katoikia for the first time during the period of Süleymanşah (1075-1086). (*Çepiş or Çebiş, “a one year billy goat”, has the meaning of a fighter, like the young billy goat, as the name of a person. The name of Kara-Çepüş or Çebiş is an archaic name; it is not encountered during the Ottoman period*). Katoikia must have been referred to among the Frontier Türkmens with the name of Kara-Çepiş until the time of Osman Gazi.

The Kara-Çepiş village is recorded with the same name among the villages of İnegöl County in the Hüdavendigâr Tahrir Defter dated AH 892/AD 1487 and in the subsequent defters.<sup>68</sup> In the *Menâkıbnâme*, Kara-Çepüş and Absuyu fortresses were mentioned in the same area, near each other. Absuyu (*today Abcalar*) is situated just to the north of Geyve. In Kiepert’s map an Eski-Kale or Çoban-Kale is shown near Abcalar. In 1889 C. von der Goltz found a Çoban-Kale in the same area. Kara-Çepüş must be this Çoban-Kale (*compare, Lefort, 116*). In this region, in ancient tahrir defters, many villages have Byzantine and Armenian names (*Hordoni, Kirlas, Gelene, Genci, Akdamar, Süle, Bednos-Alanı, Istavros*). In the nineteenth century,



İzzet Koyunoğlu nushası 1-2

İzzet Koyunoğlu nushası 3-4

<sup>66</sup> C. Foss “Byzantine Malagina”: *Cities, Fortresses and Villages of Byzantine Asia Minor*, Aldershot: Variorum, 1996, 172.  
<sup>67</sup> Pachymeres, *Relations Historiques*, 454, not. 65.  
<sup>68</sup> *Hüdavendigâr Lıvası Tahrir Defterleri*, yay. Ö.L. Barkan ve E. Meriçli, p.91, no. 141.



names such as Kemaliye, Kâzimiye and Fevziye were given in place of these Byzantine and Armenian toponyms. For instance, we were able to determine that the village belonging to the sultan's havâss with the name of Despina (*Tespina*) was given the name of Fevziye.

### Akhisar

Osman had captured Akhisar (*Malagina fortress of the Byzantines*) during his 1304 campaign with "pillaging", namely by force. Orhan, in his 1305 campaign, made this important fortress his base of operations. In 1530, in the Muhasebe-i Vilâyet-i Anadolu Defteri, summarizing the previous Anatolian tahrir defters, there is a list of the villages, foundations and property belonging to the Akhisar Kazâ (*County*).<sup>69</sup> The fortress is recorded there as "Akhisar or with its other name, Karagöz". The village Karagöz must be the village Kara-Pınar in modern maps, just 2 km to the ruins of an imposing fortress (*in Turkish göz-pınar= Tarama Sözlüğü, III, 1830*). Before the people of Akhisar in the Ottoman times descended to the plain and moved the town there, the fortress Akhisar could have been somewhere on the slope of the mountain. C. Foss determined the Akhisar fortress as the Byzantine Metabole.<sup>70</sup> As for Metabole, it must be Eskihisar mentioned by C. von der Goltz in 1889 (*for a photograph of Eskihisar, see Lefort, "Tableau", 113, 116, he conjectured that this fortress was called Niketiata*).

Three rich villages connected to Akhisar County, Desbina, Ahır and Kirasya villages were separated as belonging to the Sultan's havâss. Desbina (*Tespina*) village was a large village. In 1530, the town of Akhisar itself was a small town composed of two districts called Cami (*Mosque*) and Mescid-i Kethüda (*Masjid of Kethüda*) and its population was composed of 49 families and 25 unmarried and one preacher and two muezzins. The properties and pious foundations at the Akhisar County belonging to the Ottoman dignitaries were generally closely related to the history of İznik. Especially, the foundations in this region of Süleyman Pasha (*Orhan's son*), who was appointed as governor to İznik by Orhan, and those of the Çandarlı family are of interest. Among those who owned property and established foundations in this region were Süleyman Pasha himself, Murad I, Sinan Bey, Hayreddin Pasha, from the Çandarlı family, who established foundations for the soup kitchens in İznik, İbrahim Pasha, of the Çandarlı family, Umur Bey (*the son of Timurtaş*), Yörgüç Pasha and Çoban Mustafa Pasha. A particular community, the population of which came from many villages and forcibly brought from other places, established the village of Köprü-Başı for the bridge services over the Sakarya River. Süleyman Pasha established pious foundations for this bridge. In the same defter, we find recorded Orhan's vakf deed summarized for the Şerefeddin Pasha zaviye. Mekece is included in the zawiya foundations. This Şerefeddin Pasha is no other than "Tavaşi Şerefeddin Mukbil", whose name is mentioned in the vakf deed of Sultan Orhan's Mekece zawiya.<sup>71</sup> Also, the Yörgüç Pasha Mosque foundations at Akhisar and the foundations for Süleyman Pasha's Karaoğlu zawiya in İznik are noteworthy. Zawiyas which have pious foundations in Akhisar County are: Tavaşi Şerefeddin (*Mukbil*) zawiya (*by Orhan*), Ahi İlyas zawiya (*by Orhan*), Ahi Hızır zawiya (*by Murad I*) and the Oruç bey zawiya. There was a caravanserai on the banks of the Sakarya River in this region and an mezraa was reserved for its repairs. All these indicate the importance of the place which Orhan chose as his headquarters in the 1305 campaign.

**Translated By:** Elen Yazar

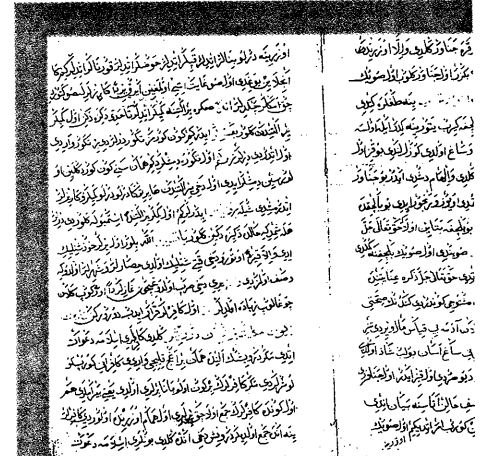
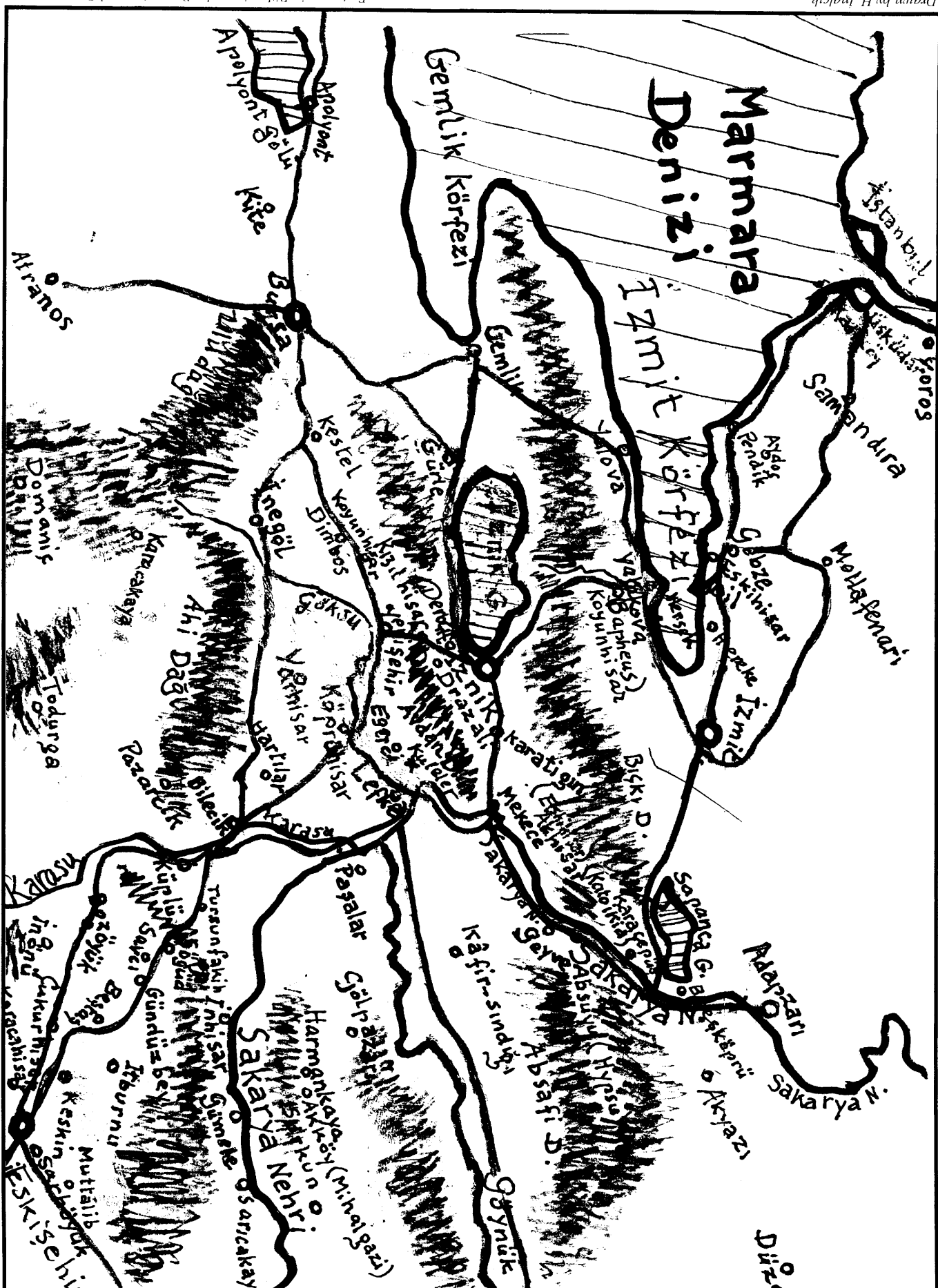


Figure 1: Muhasebe-i Vilâyet-i Anadolu Defteri

<sup>69</sup> No. 158, Ankara, İktisat Ministry General Archives, Ottoman Archives No. 27 Ankara, 1935.

<sup>70</sup> See Clive Foss, "Byzantine Malagina and the Sakarya", *Antiquaries Journal* 40, 172: The village must have been Metabole, whose walls are prominent.

<sup>71</sup> I am preparing a new edition of this work.



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