

HAÇLILAR KARŞISINDA İLK TÜRK LİDERİ: SULTAN I. KILIÇARSLAN

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Öz: Türkiye Selçuklu Devleti'nin kurucusu Süleymanşah'ın oğlu olan Sultan I. Kılıç Arslan, Büyük Selçuklu Sultanı Melikşah'ın 1092'de ölümünden sonra İznik'e gelerek 1093 yılından itibaren İznik merkezli Türkiye Selçuklu Devleti'ni yönetmeye başlamıştır. Türk birliğini yeniden kurmaya çalışan, Bizans İmparatorluğu'na karşı güçlenme çabası için de olan ve ülkesini genişletme gayretleri ile dikkatleri üzerine çeken sultanın Türkleri Anadolu'dan atmak için gelen Haçlı ordularıyla mücadelesi olağan üstü bir kahramanlık olarak kayıtlara geçmiştir. Haçlıların karşılaştığı ilk Türk lideri olan Sultan I. Kılıç Arslan, Birinci Haçlı Seferi'nin öncü gruplarını 21 Ekim 1096'da Drakon Savaşı'nda büyük yenilgiye uğratmış, arkadan gelen ve Türkiye Selçuklu başkenti İznik'i kuşatan seferin büyük ordularını ise buradan uzaklaştırmak için mücadele vermiş ardından da Dorylaion önlerinde Haçlıları durdurmak için büyük gayret göstermiştir. Çok çaba sarfetmesine rağmen Birinci Haçlı Seferi'ni burada sonlandıramayan sultan bunun intikamını 1101 Yılı Haçlı Seferleri'nde almış ve yüzbinlerle ifade edilen Haçlı ordularını Türk beylerinin de desteği ile Anadolu içlerinde yenilgiye uğratarak yok etmeyi başarmıştır. Böylece Kılıç Arslan, azim, cesaret, ileri görüşlülük ve kararlılık gibi liderlik vasıflarıyla hareket edip Haçlılara Türklerin Anadolu'dan atılmayacağını, bu toprakların Türk yurdu olduğunu ispatlayarak buraların değil işgali geçmenin bile mümkün olamayacağını göstermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sultan I. Kılıç Arslan, Haçlılar, Drakon Savaşı, Dorylaion Savaşı, 1101 Yılı Haçlı Seferleri.

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THE FIRST TURKISH LEADER AGAINST THE CRUSADERS: SULTAN KILIJ ARSLAN I

Abstract: Sultan Kilij Arslan I, son of Suleyman Shah, the founder of Seljuk Sultanate of Rum, came to Nicaea following death of Sultan Malik-Shah of Great Seljuk Empire in 1092, and started to rule the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum based in Nicaea. The Sultan who was recognized for his efforts to re-establish Turkish union, hold a stronger position against the Byzantine Empire and expand his lands outstandingly stood against the Crusader Armies that campaigned to throw Turks out of Anatolia, and challenged them which was recorded as a great heroism. Sultan Kilij Arslan I, the first Turkish leader that the Crusaders confronted, overwhelmed the vanguard units of the First Crusade in the Battle of Civetot in October 21, 1096, and fought for repelling the subsequent big armies that besieged Nicaea, capital city of Sultanate of Rum, and then he showed outstanding efforts to halt the Crusaders at Dorylaeum. The Sultan, who had failed to bring an end to the First Crusade in spite of his outstanding efforts, took his revenge in the Crusade of 1101, and succeeded in defeating and destroying the crusaders armies comprised of hundreds of thousands of soldiers in the interiors of Anatolia with the aid of Turkish beys (chieftains). Thus, Kilij Arslan well displayed determination, courage, farsightedness and decisiveness which are considered as leadership characteristics, and proved that it was not possible to repel Turks from Anatolia, and those lands would be Turkish homeland which could not even be passed through let alone occupying it.

Keywords: Sultan Kilij Arslan I, Crusaders, Battle of Civetot, Battle of Dorylaeum, the Crusade of 1101.

1. Arrival of Sultan Kilij Arslan I at Nicaea and His First Actions

Sultan Kilij Arslan I was son of Suleyman Shah, the conqueror of Anatolia and founder of Seljuk Sultanate of Rum. He was recognized for his efforts to re-establish the dissolved Turkish union, hold a stronger position against the Byzantine Empire, and expand his lands. His fight against the Crusader armies that campaigned starting from 1096 in order to throw Turks out of Anatolia was an outstanding heroic deed. As an important detail, he was also the first Turkish leader to confront the Crusaders.

Thought to be born in or before 1085, Sultan Kilij Arslan I was known to accompany his father Suleyman Shah when he campaigned to conquer Antioch, and stayed in Antioch after Suleyman Shah lost his life in 1086 in his fight against Tutush. However, Kilij Arslan left Antioch after Sultan Malik-Shah of Great Seljuk Empire came there taking him back to Isfahan, and started to live in Isfahan together with his mother and brother Kulan Arslan. Kilij Arslan was only allowed to leave Isfahan upon consent of Sultan Barkiyaruq following death of Malik-Shah in 1092, and arrived at Nicaea together with his brother Kulan Arslan. Abu al-Ghazi who was in charge of the city after death of Suleyman Shah then submitted the city to him, thus he started to rule the Sultanate of Rum based in Nicaea starting from 1093.

Kilij Arslan, who was called as Suleyman in the Crusader sources, first got into act to re-establish the dissolved Turkish union, and then expand in the territory and build up more strength. This political policy would inevitably make him confront the Byzantine Empire. Indeed, the Sultan assigned Amir Muhammad as the army commander, sending him to and ordering him to capture the Southern Marmara coasts of the empire. Against Muhammad who occupied cities of Kyzikos and Apollonias, the emperor sent a fleet commanded by Alexandros Euphorbenos for resistance. According to Byzantine Chronicler Anna Komnene, as the armada was not then ready, the emperor tried to build up a fleet with as many ships as he could find, loaded the soldiers in these ships and sent them to fight against Turks. With this fleet, the empire forces managed to besiege the city for 6 days but then retreated as they failed to succeed against Muhammad who continued his struggle in the interior castle. Seeing that the empire forces were set to leave, Muhammad handed them a big defeat before they could leave the territory. What made Alexandros to make such a move was that Turks came to the aid of Muhammad, as a result of which the empire troops were understood to be insufficient against such a unified power.¹

When Kilij Arslan continued his fight against the empire, he also tried to consolidate his position by marrying daughter of Chaka, a Turkish Bey who ruled Izmir and its vicinity, also involved in attempts against Byzantine to expand his

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¹ Anna Komnene, **Aleksiad**, trans. Bilge Umar, **Anna Komnene Alexiad**, Istanbul, 1996, p. 206 et seq. See also: Osman Turan, **Selçuklular Zamanında Türkiye**, Istanbul 1993, p. 95-97; Işın Demirkent, **Türkiye Selçuklu Hükümdarı Sultan I. Kılıç Arslan**, Ankara, 1996, p. 15-16

lands. However, the Emperor turned to his usual tactics trying to bring him into to the fold and drive a wedge between Chaka Bey and the Sultan. In his letter he sent to Kilij Arslan, the Emperor claimed that he inherited the sultanate from his father, and Chaka had risen against the Empire but he was not able to fight the Empire so his actual target was the Sultan himself. Emperor Alexios claimed that sultanate of Kilij Arslan was therefore in danger, and he advised the Sultan to bring Chaka Bey to his knees, either peacefully or forcibly. Kilij Arslan, who appeared to be greatly concerned as a result of that letter, thought that Chaka could be a problem for him, and acted against Chaka who was then besieging Abydos. Simultaneously, the Empire put pressure on Chaka from the sea with its armada commanded by Constantine Dalassenos. Stuck in a very difficult situation, Chaka Bey went to Sultan to come to terms with him. As recorded by Anna Komnene, Chaka Bey was not aware that Kilij Arslan had a deal with the Emperor. First welcomed by Kilij Arslan, Chaka Bey was killed by Kilij Arslan when he was having meal on the same table with the Sultan. The alliance between the Empire and Kilij Arslan did not last long after death of Chaka because when the Emperor was fighting against the Kumans, Turks led by Kilij Arslan started to carry out raids on Bithynia region, the vicinity of Lake Sapanca. As those raids threatened Nicomedia, Alexios started to design a new project. The Emperor discovered that there was a trench extending from the south of Lake Sapanca to the coast, and ordered to deepen that trench in order to prevent Turkish raids on Nicomedia and its vicinity. He contemplated to fill the trench with lake water, thus preventing entry of Turks into the territory. However, arrival of the Crusaders prevented that project.²

2. Sultan Kilij Arslan I and His Fight against the Crusaders

Emperor Alexios was forced to seek military aid from the West as did Emperor Michael VII (1071-1078) in order to fight against Turks more effectively. Indeed, the Emperor knew that his power was not solely sufficient for fighting against Turks, and relied on the aid from West as the most effective way of repelling Turks from Anatolia and the Near East. The West, on the other hand, would hundreds of thousands, turning that offer into the Crusade. The call by Pope Urban II in the Council of Clermont in 1095 constituted the basis for the Crusades. Upon that call, the armies campaigned, and started to arrive at the

² Anna Komnene, p. 269-271, 301-302. See also: Turan, *ibid.*, p. 97-98; Demirkent, *ibid.*, p. 17-19.

Imperial Capital, Constantinople, starting from 1096. The Crusaders who were helped to pass across the Bosphorus marched into the territory in order to throw Turks out of Anatolia and Near East. The first Turkish leader and sultan to stand and react against and tried to stop them was Kilij Arslan I. Sultan acted with determination, courage, farsightedness and decisiveness, showing great heroism against the Crusaders.

2.1. Sultan Kilij Arslan I and Battle of Civetot

Kilij Arslan's first confrontation with the Crusaders was against People's Crusade led by Pierre L'Hermite which was a prelude to the main armies of the First Crusade. Understanding that the army which arrived at Constantinople late July or early August in 1096 was good for nothing and had no chance against the Turks, Emperor Alexios realized that Turks who had superior fighting skills and tactics would shortly destroy those Crusaders so he told the Crusaders that they would not alone be able to defeat the Turks so they should not pass across the Bosphorus until arrival of the main armies.³ However, due to subsequent rampage caused by that army in the city of Constantinople, the Emperor ordered that the army immediately pass across to the Asian side of the city.

The Crusaders that passed across the Bosphorus on August 6, 1096 continued to get involved in looting and aggressive acts, and arrived at Kibotos (Civetot) military headquarters near Yalova in the fall of 1096 which indicated that they arrived near boundaries of Seljuk Sultanate of Rum. Even during their stay there, Alexios sent messengers strongly recommending Pierre that they should stay in the headquarters and should not engage the Turks in any way until arrival of the big Crusaders armies which started their campaign. Though Pierre told that he would obey orders of the Emperor, Pierre seemed to have difficulties in keeping the crown under control. Indeed, the Crusaders implied from the very beginning that they would not listen to orders of Alexios. Starting from September, the Crusaders completely entered lands of Turks, and carried out raids on Nicaea, capital city of Sultanate of Rum, and its vicinity. French Crusaders did not only steal herds of Turks but also were cruel to the Christian subjects. Anna Komnene

³ Anna Komnene, *ibid.*, p. 306; *Gesta Francorum et Aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, RHC. occ., III, p. 121, trans. Rosalind Hill *The Deeds of the Franks and the other Pilgrims to Jerusalem*, Oxford, 1979, p. 2 et seq.. See also: Birsell Küçükspahioğlu, "Türklerle Haçlıların İlk Karşılaşması: Drakon Savaşı", *Tarih ve Uygarlık İstanbul Dergisi*, İstanbul, 2013, ed. 3, p. 45-46.

stated that they speared, roasted and ate the babies, torturing the adults by such undreamed-of methods.⁴

This was the first time that Kilij Arslan learnt about the Crusaders. He sent a troop against them but they failed. Thereafter, the Sultan tried to build a gradual resistance against the Crusaders. After a Crusader group consisting of Germans and Italians captured the Castle of Xerigordon, and killed the people living in the castle, the Sultan collected 15.000 masterful Turkish archers, and tried to withstand. It was rumoured that his commander named İlhan commissioned Muhammad. Turks arrived at Xerigordon late September, besieged the castle, and gave the Crusaders hard times by preventing their access to water. This was a strategy which was implemented successfully. As indicated in the sources, the Crusaders slaughtered their horses and donkeys to drink their blood, as well as swung their clothes down the sewers to drink the water in there. They also tried to cool off by digging humid soil and burying themselves in the soil. They even tried to quench their thirst by peeing on palms of one another and drinking it. In the meantime, the clergymen delivered encouraging speeches trying to improve their morale. The siege lasted eight days, in the end of which the Crusaders were forced to surrender and open gates of the castle. On the other hand, the Turks dealt a death blow to the Crusaders on October 21, 1096 in Dracon. Setting snares along the route against that crowd which marched toward Nicaea, Turks laid an ambush against them in a forested valley named Dracon which was 5 km to Cive-tot headquarters. As soon as the Crusaders appeared at the entrance of the valley, they were rained with arrows, falling down their horses one by one before they could figure out what was going around. The Crusaders were perplexed, running here and there in despair and worry. And it was the first time that the Crusaders so closely witnessed the disciplined strategy and tactics of Turks, as a result of which many of them lost their lives while some of them could hardly escape and save their lives. Thus Turks led by Kilij Arslan courageously and determinedly showed the Crusaders that those lands were no ordinary lands, which could not be easily passed through.⁵

⁴ AnnaKomnene, p. 306; **Gesta Francorum, RHC. occ.**, III, p. 121-122, trans. p. 3.Cf. Küçükspahioğlu, “Türklerle Haçlıların İlk Karşılaşması: Drakon Savaşı”, p. 47.

⁵ Küçükspahioğlu, “Türklerle Haçlıların İlk Karşılaşması: Drakon Savaşı”, p. 48-50.

2.2. Siege of Nicaea by the Crusaders and Sultan Kilij Arslan I

Kilij Arslan engaged the Crusaders for the second time upon siege of the capital city, Nicaea, by the main armies of the First Crusade from May 14 to June 18, 1097. With the influence of Pope Urban II's speech delivered in Clermont, the First Crusade armies marched under the leadership of Hugh, Count of Vermandois, Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lower Lorraine, Bohemond, Chief of Southern Italy Normans, Raymond of St. Gilles, Count of Toulouse, Robert, Duke of Normandy, Stephen, Count of Blois, and Robert II, Count of Flanders. The first place the First Crusade armies to besiege during their march through Anatolia was Nicaea, capital city of Seljuk Sultanate of Rum. The Crusaders were accompanied by troops led by Manuel Boutoumites sent by Emperor Alexios. Sultan Kilij Arslan I was not then in the city as he was on a campaign to capture Melitene (Modern Malatya) held by Armenian Gabriel of Melitene. Though Sultan heard about marching Crusader armies, he thought that they would be small in number which could not pose a danger to his country, and he did not estimate that they could come as near as Nicaea, the capital city, either. He made such a decision under influence of his victory in the Battle of Civetot. Nevertheless, as soon as getting the news, Kilij Arslan sent vanguards, and subsequently personally set off, lifting siege of Melitene. Vanguards sent by the Sultan attacked the Crusaders and tried to enter the city but failed, and decided that waiting for the Sultan to arrive would be more appropriate. In the meantime, the Turkish garrison in the city of Nicaea where Kilij Arslan's wife and children also accommodated communicated and negotiated surrender terms with the Byzantine military forces commanded by Manuel Boutoumites who continuously sent letters to them recommending them to surrender the city to the Emperor. Manuel insisted on surrender of the city to the Emperor, promising them that the Emperor would give them rewards if they surrender the city. However, during such negotiations, it was heralded that Sultan Kilij Arslan I was marching toward Nicaea which terminated the negotiations between both parties. Indeed, when the Sultan arrived at the city on May 21, 1097, he started an attack on the southern walls where troops of Raymond of St. Gilles were deployed but he was forced to retreat due to large number of Crusaders. This was the first time that the Sultan and main armies engaged where even the presence of Sultan terrified the Crusaders. After that, the Crusaders were witnessed to behead the Turks captured during engagements, catapult some of such heads into

the city, and moved some heads around the city walls to demoralize the Turkish garrison.

When Kilij Arslan retreated, he advised the Turkish garrison to do what they were duly expected to do. The Crusaders intensified the siege after retreat of Sultan. However, it did not seem possible to destroy and demolish the strong walls running 5 km long. Finally, Raymond of St. Gilles accompanied by Adhemar constructed catapults and attempted to demolish the turret named Gonatas rising on the section of the wall where they were deployed. However, any demolished part was immediately repaired by Turks. Failing to capture the city in spite of all those efforts, the Crusaders decided to seek help from Emperor Alexios whereupon the Emperor tried to help the Crusaders by sending ships to Kios. Those ships were transported through land into the Lake Ascania (Iznik), thus blocking the lake route from which Turks had received help since the beginning of the siege. The Turkish garrison in Nicaea gave up hope of receiving help as the lake route was blocked, and they wanted to avoid capture of the city by the Crusaders so they resumed communication with Byzantine commander Manuel Boutoumites, resuming the negotiations to surrender Nicaea to the Empire. Indeed, Nicaea was surrendered to the Empire at the night of June 18. Thus, the Crusader siege lasted for weeks remained inconclusive, and the city went under dominance of the Byzantine Empire. Though this was an agonizing experience for Sultan Kilij Arslan, it would never lead to fall of Sultan. Indeed, Turks retreated interior territories, unified, established Konya as their capital city, and continued their attempts to grow stronger.⁶

2.3. Sultan Kilij Arslan I and Battle of Dorylaeum

After Nicaea, confrontation of Kilij Arslan with the Crusaders continued in Dorylaeum. Actually, Sultan could never forget his retreating from Nicaea so he

⁶ Anne Komnene, 325 et seq.; Matthew of Edessa, **Vekayinâme**, trans. Hrant Andreasyan, **Urfalı Mateos Vekayinâmesi (952-1136) ve Papaz Grigor'un Zeyli (1136-1162)**, Ankara, 1987, p. 190; **Gesta Francorum et Aliorum Hierosolimitanorum**, **RHC. occ.**, III, p. 126-127, trans. p. 14 et seq.; Raimundus Aguilers, **Historia Francorum qui Ceperunt Iherusalem**, **RHC. occ.**, III, p. 239-240, trans. J. H-L. L. Hill, **Raymond d'Aguilers**, Philadelphia, 1968, p. 25-27; Fulcherius Carnotensis, **Gesta Francorum Iherusalem peregrinantium**, **RHC. occ.**, III, p. 332 et seq., trans. R. Ryan, **Fulcher of Chartres. A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095-1127**, Knoxville, 1969, p. 80 et seq. Cf; Küçükspahioğlu, **Trablus Haçlı Kontluğu Tarihi**, İstanbul, 2007, p. 26 et seq.; I. Demirkent, "İznik'in Haçlılar Tarafından Kuşatılması (6 Mayıs-19 Haziran 1097)", **Haçlı Seferleri Tarihi, Makaleler, Bildiriler, İncelemeler**, İstanbul, 2007, p. 21-42.

closely followed up advancement of First Crusade armies into Anatolia which was the most explicit proof of his determination and courage. Indeed, the Crusaders that left Nicaea continued their advancement and arrived at Osmaneli (Lefke) on June 26, 1097. In the meantime, they were accompanied by commander Taktikos, who was of Turkish origins, in order to ensure that districts which they would capture come under the rule of the Empire. Recognizing the hardships in moving with a big army in Osmaneli, the Crusaders divided the army into two divisions and continued their advancement with one-day distance. Accordingly, the first group commanded by Bohemond consisting of troops of Robert of Normandy, Stephen of Blois, Tancred together with Byzantine troops set off on June 29 while the second group commanded by Raymond consisting of troops of Godfrey of Bouillon, Bishop Adhemar of Le Puy, Hugh of Vermandois and probably Robert of Flanders set off a day after.

When Bohemond and his companions continued their advancement, Kilij Arslan and his soldiers followed them. Sultan accompanied by troops consisting of Turks in Anatolia, in particular Danishmendid Gumush Teghin and Hasan Bey of Kayseri, passed through the Porsuk Valley and arrived at Dorylaeum before arrival of the Crusaders. The Crusaders led by Bohemond arrived at and encamped in Sarısu Plains near Dorylaeum on June 30, 1097. They sent their vanguards around to control and ensure security in their vicinity.

On July 1, 1097, Turks commanded by Kilij Arslan stormed down the hills early in the morning with battle cries, and besieged Bohemond's Crusader quarters. Turks attacked on the Crusaders by howling, screaming, shouting and speaking words in a language which they did not know (Allahu Akbar), rained Bohemond and his Crusades with arrows with Turkish battle tactics, giving them no respite. Turkish archers were flashing their arrows and retreating, being replaced by new archers. Bohemond who did not know what to do against that battle tactic which he encountered for the first time understood the severity of the circumstances, and ordered his soldiers to get ready for fighting immediately. The Crusaders who were dragged into a very difficult situation by arrows shot by Turks were only able to fight with their swords and spears, and only those who had armour, helmet and shield were able to protect themselves from the Turks. However, many people including some high-rank Crusaders lost their lives. While the field was filled with cries and weeps of Crusaders, the Turks, as narrated by Crusader sources, grew even stronger with Kilij Arslan, and terrified the Crusaders.

As Bohemond was worried about fierce battling style of Turks, he sent messengers and asked for immediate help from his fellow friends Raymond, Godfrey, and others who were in the following second group. Upon receiving the message, those in the second group consolidated and prepared to set off with each of them explicitly showing signs of desire for taking revenge on Turks. Crusaders who arrived at Dorylaeum with joy and hope were perplexed when they saw that Turks were at hills and everywhere but soon they overcome their perplexity as they consolidated, deployed in battle order, and prepared to fight against the Turks.

When Turks saw the second army, they could not understand what was happening, and they could not prevent their joining the first group. Nevertheless, Sultan Kilij Arslan continued fighting against the Crusaders who were armoured from head to toe, holding long spears. However, he decided to retreat in order to prevent more losses. Kilij Arslan and his heroic soldiers could not devastate the Crusaders and bring the campaign to an end in spite of their superhuman efforts in Dorylaeum. However, they did a good job by terrifying and disturbing them. Even more, they received admiration of the Crusaders with their battle skills and tactics. If it were not for the help of the following group, Dorylaeum would have been a grave for bodies and hopes of the Crusaders. Indeed, the Crusader historian Fulcherius depicted -in such a way that no Crusader historian could ever dare to- the fear of the Crusaders against Kilij Arslan, and expressed his feelings as follows: “... *Turks attacked on us, clashing their weapons and yelling under a wild rain of arrows. We and many other wounded who were giddy and almost dead just turned back and ran away because we had never seen such a battle before... We all gathered like herds in sheepfold, trembling and terrified, encircled by enemies all around that we could not move anywhere... There was a great clamour echoing in the skies as the men, women, children and the heretics attacking on us cried out. There was no hope of living*”.

Sultan Kilij Arslan and his soldiers could not completely devastate the Crusaders in Dorylaeum but they determined their strategy which they would later use against them in the future. Now, the Turks would not engage the Crusaders in a pitched battle but rather prefer guerrilla war, weaken them with hit-and-run tactics in order to gradually devastate them. This showed that Kilij Arslan was a farsighted man who well maintained his determination.⁷

⁷ For more detailed information about the Battle of Dorylaeum see: Küçüksipahioğlu, “Sultan I. Kılıç Arslan’ın Eskişehir Yakınında Haçlılara Karşı Büyük Mücadelesi: Dorylaion Savaşı (1

2.4. The Crusade of 1101 and Sultan Kilij Arslan I

Kilij Arslan's fight against the Crusaders continued in the Crusade of 1101. Crusaders that arrived at Anatolia with armies told to be consisting of hundreds of thousands of people contemplated to repel Turks from the territory, and establish their own independent states. They even intended to capture Baghdad, as indicated by Crusader chronicler Albertus Aquensis. Of the three armies which set off separately, the first troops of the first group consisting of Lombards sailed off Milan in September 1100, and arrived at Constantinople in March 1101. Though Emperor Alexios welcomed them, he thought that there was no reason for their coming. Indeed, soon the Lombards whom the Emperor allowed to encamp outside the city walls adopted aggressive attitudes against the capital city which dragged the Emperor into even greater concern, as a result of which the Emperor ordered them to be immediately sent to the quarters located in Nicaea. Other two armies in the first group that is Germans under command of Conrad, Marshall of German Emperor Heinrich IV, and French Crusaders under command of Count Stephen of Blois arrived there later. Thereupon, the Emperor assigned Raymond of St. Gilles, Count of Toulouse, who was then in Istanbul, as counsellor of those armies, as well as commissioned a troop consisting of 500 Pechenegs commanded by Tzitas for guidance.

The Lombards in that first group that intended to go to Jerusalem, keeping the road from Anatolia to Syria open, then changed their minds and headed Amasya and Niksar because they intended to capture that territory and save Bohemond, founder of Crusader Principality of Antioch, who was then taken captive by Danishmendid Gumush Teghin. In spite of objections against that idea of them, it was not possible to deter the Lombards as a result of which the German and French in that group were forced to move along with them.

Sultan Kilij Arslan I then had a better position than he had during the First Crusade. He had grown stronger in four years, his perception and judgments had evolved. He was also aware of Crusaders' arrival at Constantinople and the route they would track in Anatolia. The Danishmendids that ruled in Sivas, Amasya and Tokat also had a strong position, and they had been growing even stronger. What is more, there was no problem between these two Turkic states. As the Danishmendids were threatened by the Crusaders, they welcomed proposal of Kilij Arslan to act jointly. Therefore, the fight against Crusader armies of 1101 would stage

joint efforts under leadership of Kilij Arslan by the Seljuks, Danishmends, as well as Malik Ridwan of Aleppo, Emir Belek of Seruc, and Emir Karaca of Harran whom Kilij Arslan sought help from.

The first Crusader group consisting of the Lombards, the French and the German left from their quarters in Nicaea on June 3, 1101, heading Niksar as they had contemplated. They followed the Nicaea-Osmaneli-Golpazari-Nallihan-Ayash route, known as the Pilgrims Route, instead of the route followed by armies in the First Crusade, and on June 23, they arrived at Angora (modern Ankara) which was evacuated by Sultan Kilij Arslan I as per his battle strategy. The Crusaders easily captured Angora as there was no force to resist them, and surrendered the city to the representative of Byzantine Emperor as per their agreement, and subsequently arrived at Çankırı early July. As Sultan Kilij Arslan I had limited number of soldiers when the Crusaders arrived, he did not carried out any direct attacks on them but retreated onwards through their route, plundering lands and fields which evidenced that Kilij Arslan I was adhering to the strategy that he determined during his fight against the Crusaders in the Battle of Dorylaeum. Failing to capture the castle in Çankırı, the Crusaders contended themselves with plundering the vicinity. As the help which Kilij Arslan had sought from other Turkish beys arrived, the Crusaders were leery of attacking on Turks. The number of soldiers of Kilij Arslan and all the beys was around 20 to 25 thousand which could not even be compared with the number of Crusader soldiers. As it could not be thought to drag these troops into a battle with overcrowded Crusaders, Turks decided to aggravate marching of Crusaders, and carried out raids on their vanguards and rearguards after they left Çankırı.

Turks led by Kilij Arslan, Danishmendid Gumushteghin, Artuqid Belek, Amir Karaca of Harran and Malik Ridwan of Aleppo with their soldiers as many as 20000 suddenly attacked on the Crusaders that gathered in a plain near Mersivan (Merzifon). Seeing Turks attacking on them with war cry, the Crusaders were perplexed, and hastily tried to make a camp. Around the camp, they gathered all vehicles and all sorts of goods to construct a barrier behind which they took shelter. Seeing that move, Turks immediately encircled the camp, and rained the Crusaders with arrows, giving them no respite. However, they retreated as they saw that they could not do more against the Crusaders who were ten times stronger than them. The Crusaders came to a conclusion that the Turks were in trouble, and considered that a pitched battle with Turks would help them to improve their

position. Actually, the battle that started early in the morning and continued till the evening of August 5 would turn into a nightmare for the Crusaders as a result of battle tactics of Turks. Though the battle did not produce an absolute outcome for both parties, it was to evolve into a victory for the Turks as the Crusaders that understood they could not do anything against the Turks would sneak off at night. Cheered up with such a victory, Turks followed them, and put to the sword the Crusaders they could catch. Those who managed to run away, on the other hand, arrived at Byzantine districts Bafra and Sinop, and saved their lives. Of the Crusaders who suffered a severe defeat and lost a great part of its armies, those who managed to stay alive, in particular their leaders, returned to Istanbul whacked and exhausted. The defeat against Kilij Arslan and Turkic beys dragged the first army of the Crusade of 1101 into total demoralization. Thereafter, those who wanted to go to Jerusalem sailed off with ships provided by Emperor Alexios.

The French under the command of William II, Count of Nevers, that constituted the second group of the Crusade of 1101, could also escape wrath of Sultan Kilij Arslan. William II, Count of Nevers, who arrived at Constantinople in June 1101, moved fast in order to catch the first army, and arrived at Angora (Ankara). As he could not find the first group there, the Count marched toward Konya, suffering Turkish raids along the way. Actually, when Kilij Arslan and Gumushteghin who just devastated the Crusaders in Mersivan heard about advancement of the second group, they attempted to quickly catch the Crusaders, and hamper them before they arrived at Konya. As a result of such attacks, when the Crusaders arrived at Konya, they had already been terrified by Turks, and they attempted unsuccessful attacks on Konya, capital city of Kilij Arslan, though they saw that the city was well protected and surrounded with walls. Subsequently, the Crusaders that left Konya headed south to Antioch lacked water throughout the way as Turks had destroyed the water sources. The Crusader group, exhausted by thirst and tiredness, and the Turks engaged in a violent battle in August. The battle which lasted all day resulted in victory of Turks once again. Most of the Crusaders died while some of them run in misery. Even, among runaways were Count William II of Nevers, his brother and top soldiers. Thus, Turks led by Kilij Arslan duly responded that group, too, proving them that those lands could not be passed through. Now, it was time for the next: third group of the Crusade of 1101.

The French and German that headed East under the command of William IX, Duke of Aquitaine, and Welf arrived at the capital city, Constantinople, early

June 1101, where they headed Konya through Nicomedia-Nicaea, entering Seljuk lands near Akşehir. As Kilij Arslan and his soldiers had heard of their marching long time ago, they evacuated cities, including Konya, and destroyed the fields and water sources as they had done before. With the demoralization caused by failure to find water and food, the Crusaders marched on, arriving near Ereğli early September. Kilij Arslan, Gumushteghin, Karaca and other Turkish beys avoided directly engaging those overcrowded Crusaders, and waited for them to get weaker and weaker. They even laid ambush for the Crusaders whom they surely knew to come to the river with thirstiness. Indeed, the Crusaders seeing and running toward the river ended up with attack of Kilij Arslan and his soldiers. Turks who suddenly appeared in front of the Crusaders shocked them with their arrows. Already weakened, most of the Crusaders who could not find the strength to fight the Turks fell dead, while some other managed to flee. Thus, three armies of the Crusade of 1101 were destroyed by the Turks, terminating the campaign there. The Crusade of 1101 was a fight to survive between Crusader armies consisting of nearly 200 thousand to 450 thousand soldiers and Turkish armies probably consisting of 20.000 or 25.000 soldiers led by Kilij Arslan, who was in his 20s. In those battles against Crusaders which ended victorious, Turks showed outstanding success, making a heroic history.

In the Crusade of 1101, Turks led by Kilij Arslan proved that it was not possible to repel Turks from those lands, and those lands would be Turkish homeland which could not even be passed through let alone occupying it. With the destruction of armies in Anatolia, the Muslims in Syria avoided the Crusader-threat, which also deprived the Eastern Crusader states of the help which they had expected. Kilij Arslan and his companions proved how such great achievements were possible with acting in unity, banding together, determination and courage.⁸

3-Kilij Arslan after the Crusade of 1101 and His Death

After fights with the Crusaders, Kilij Arslan determined a new policy, and contemplated to expand his lands by concluding an agreement with the Byzan-

⁸ Albertus Aquensis, *Liber Christiane Expeditionis pro Ereptione et Restitutione Sanctae Hierosolymitanæ Ecclesiae*, RHC. occ, IV, VIII, 1 et seq, p. 559 et seq. Cf; J.L. Cate, "The Crusade of 1101", *A History of the Crusades*, Madison-Milwaukee-London, 1969, I, p. 343 et seq.; Demirkent, "1101 Yılı Haçlı Seferleri", *Prof. Dr. Fikret İşıltan'a 80. Doğum Yılı Armağanı*, İstanbul, 1995, p. 17 et seq.

tine Emperor. He intended to bring under his rule the Turkic states to the east and south that were under domination of the Great Seljuks. Among them were Ibrahim son of Yinal who ruled Amid, Kyzyl Arslan who ruled Siirt, Sökmen who ruled Ahlat, Chubukoghlu who ruled Harput, Zia ad-Din who ruled Meyyafarikin, and Danishmends who ruled Sivas, Amasya and Tokat; and in particular, those two Turkic states that is the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum and the Danishmends had long been rivals. They only established an alliance during the Crusade of 1101 and fought against the Crusaders but the old enmity and rivalry continued non-stop right after the end of that campaign. As a matter of fact, capture of Melitene (Modern Malatya) by Danishmendid Gumushteghin in September 1102 aggravated the ongoing conditions for both parties because Kilij Arslan had long been struggling to capture that city which was ruled by Armenian Gabriel of Melitene, and he even caused to loss of Nicaea as he ignored the potential of first armies of the First Crusade during his siege of Melitene. Now, capture of Melitene by Gumushteghin appeared to be totally unacceptable for him. Therefore, Sultan decided to prevent expansion of the Danishmendid. However, before that, he contemplated a campaign on the Crusader Principality of Antioch because Bohemond, Prince of Antioch, had previously been taken captive and imprisoned in Niksar by Gumushteghin. Therefore, intending to take advantage of in his absence, Sultan marched toward Antioch in 1103. In acting so, he was encouraged by Ridwan, Seljuk Melik of Aleppo. In fact, Ridwan was threatened by Tancred who then ruled Antioch instead of Bohemond, urging Crusader attacks especially on Northern Syrian region and the Empire-held Çukurova. During his campaign on Antioch, when Kilij Arslan arrived at Marash, he sent messengers to Aleppo asking permission for merchants for meeting needs of his army. Presence of Sultan in the territory and news about his march on Antioch led to great joy among the people. However, that campaign on Antioch did not end up in success because Gumushteghin then released Bohemond for 100 thousand Dinars as a result of which the campaign remained incomplete. Extremely angry at Gumushteghin for such a move, Sultan returned to punish Gumushteghin, and overwhelmed him in their engagement.⁹ Ibn al-Athir¹⁰ held Gumushteghin responsible from Prince Bohemond's attacks on the Turkic & Islamic World and massacre of the Muslims for taking revenge after being released, and he asserted that all the good deeds

⁹ Ibn al-Qalanisi, *Zeylû Târihi Dimaşk*, trans. H.A.R. Gibb, **The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades**, London, 1932, p. 59. See also: Turan, *ibid.*, p. 106 et seq.

¹⁰ Ibn al-Athir, *el-Kâmil fi't-Tarih*, trans. Abdülkerim Özeydin, Istanbul, 1987, Vol. X, p. 281.

Gumushteghin had done that far were negated by that disaster suffered by the Muslims.

Following death of Gumushteghin in 1104, Kiliç Arslan captured Melitene in 1106. Thus, he managed to break influence of the Danishmends, expanding his boundaries to the east. Then he wanted to advance toward southeast, and besieged Edessa in 1106. In the meantime, Aleppo Governor Chokurmish's men in Harran invited him there, telling him that they wanted to surrender the city to him. Upon that invitation, Kiliç Arslan arrived at Harran and took the city; then he got sick and was forced to leave the territory leaving behind Edessa beyond whose strong walls he could not pass. He first went to Melitene, and then Nusaybin. When he was there, the prominent figures of Mosul who preferred to remain loyal to Chokurmish invited him to Mosul and offered to surrender Mosul to him. Actually, Great Seljuk Sultan Muhammad Tapar took Mosul from Chokurmish and gave the city to Chavli but those who preferred to remain loyal to Chokurmish did not want to surrender the city to Chavli after death of Chokurmish so they invited Kiliç Arslan. Indeed, Kiliç Arslan came to and took the city, and then terminated khutbah preaching in the name of Muhammad Tapar, and had khutbah preaching delivered in his own name. Kiliç Arslan also possessed Baudouin du Bourg, Count of Edessa who had been taken captive in the Battle of Harran in 1104 and then kept in prison in Mosul.¹¹

In the battle where Kiliç Arslan engaged Chavli in July 1107, Kiliç Arslan fell dead at a very young age when he attempted to pass across Habur Stream on his horse in order to avoid being taken captive as he had been deserted by his men. His corpse was found near Shemsaniyye Village of Habur was then transferred to Meyyafarikin, and buried there.¹² Even the Christians were affected from and felt deep sorrow for his death. Matthew of Edessa referred to him as a very good person, indicating that the Christians mourned for him¹³, while Abu'l Faraj¹⁴ mentioned his fair government, telling that when he captured Mosul, he issued a mandate ordering that "anybody who cast aspersion on somebody will

¹¹ Abu'l Faraj, **Abû'l-Farac Tarihi**, trans. Ömer Rıza Doğrul, Ankara, 1999, Vol. II, p. 345-346; Matthew of Edessa, p. 231; Ibn al-Qalanisi, p. 74 et seq.; Ibn al-Athir, Vol. X, p. 340 et seq. See also: Turan, **ibid.**, p. 108 et seq.; Demirkent, **ibid.**, p. 52 et seq.

¹² Ibn al-Qalanisi, p. 79; Ibn al-Athir, Vol. X, p. 344-345.

¹³ Matthew of Edessa, p. 231.

¹⁴ Abu'l Faraj, C. II, s. 346.

be sentenced to death”. Ibn al-Athir¹⁵ told that when he took Mosul, he rescinded the taxes which the people could not afford, treated people fairly, win their hearts, and ordered that if somebody complains against each other, that person would be sentenced to death. Aksarayî¹⁶ recorded in his work named *Müsamarat al-Ahbâr* that Gumushteghin who thought that the Sultan was mad at him due to his release of Prince Bohemond of Antioch offered Sultan 10.000 Dirham in order to appease him in return for which Kilij Arslan retorted that he had no purpose other than protecting Islam, and he was not in need of money.

Kilij Arslan whom the Crusader Chronicler Willermus Tyrensis¹⁷ characterized as “very strong and courageous” was a hero and a versatile leader who showed outstanding efforts to help us staying in these lands. As the defender of Islam against the Christians, Kilij Arslan’s determination, efforts and dedication brought salvation of these lands and Turkic & Islamic world against the Crusaders.

¹⁵ Ibn al-Athir, X, p. 343. For Kilij Arslan, see also: Turan, “Kılıç Arslan I”, *İA*, Vol. VI, p. 681-688; Demirkent, “Kılıcarslan I”, *DİA*, Vol. XXV, p. 396-399.

¹⁶ Aksarayî, *Müsâmeretü'l-Ahbar*, ed. Osman Turan, Ankara, 1944, p. 28. Cf. Demirkent, *ibid*, p. 52.

¹⁷ Willermus Tyrensis, *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum*, *RHC. occ.*, I, III, 1, p. 112, XI, 6, p. 460-461, trans. E. A. Babcock - A. C. Krey, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea. By William Archbishop of Tyre*, New York, 1943, Vol. I, p. 153, 470.

SUMMARY

THE FIRST TURKISH LEADER AGAINST THE CRUSADERS: SULTAN KILIJ ARSLAN I

Birsel KÜÇÜKSİPAHİOĞLU*

Sultan Kilij Arslan I was son of Suleyman Shah, the conqueror of Anatolia and founder of Seljuk Sultanate of Rum. He was recognized for his efforts to re-establish the dissolved Turkish union, hold a stronger position against the Byzantine Empire, and expand his lands. His fight against the Crusader armies that campaigned starting from 1096 in order to throw Turks out of Anatolia was an outstanding heroic deed. As an important detail, he was also the first Turkish leader to confront the Crusaders. Kilij Arslan's first confrontation with the Crusaders was against People's Crusade led by Pierre L'Hermite which was a prelude to the main armies of the First Crusade. Arrived at Constantinople late July or early August in 1096, the army then passed across the Bosphorus on August 6, 1096 and arrived at the military quarters in Kibotos (Civetot) near Yalova in the fall of 1096 which indicated that they arrived near boundaries of Seljuk Sultanate of Rum. Starting from September, the Crusaders completely entered lands of Turks, and carried out raids on Nicaea, capital city of Sultanate of Rum, and its vicinity. This was the first time that Kilij Arslan learnt about the Crusaders. He sent a troop against them but they failed. Thereafter, the Sultan tried to build a gradual resistance against the Crusaders. Sultan overwhelmed the vanguard units of the First Crusade in the Battle of Civetot in October 21, 1096, and endeavoured to repel the subsequent big armies that besieged Nicaea, capital city of Sultanate of Rum. However, he was forced to lose and surrender its capital city Nicaea to Byzantine Empire. Thus, the Crusader siege lasted for weeks remained inconclusive, and the city went under dominance of the Byzantine Empire. Though this was an agonizing experience for Sultan Kilij Arslan, it would never lead to fall of Sultan. Indeed, Turks retreated interior territories, unified, established Konya as their capital city, and continued their attempts to grow stronger. Then Sultan showed outstanding efforts to stop the Crusaders near Dorylaeum. Kilij Arslan I could never forget his retreating from Nicaea so he closely followed up advancement of

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First Crusade armies into Anatolia. Of the Crusaders who advanced as two groups with one group following the other one day behind, Kiliç Arslan overwhelmed the first group on July 1, 1097 by using Turkish battle tactics. He also continued to fight against the second group which the Sultan did not know coming up from behind but he later decided to retreat in order to prevent more losses. Kiliç Arslan and his heroic soldiers could not devastate the Crusaders and bring the campaign to an end in spite of their superhuman efforts in Dorylaeum. However, they did a good job by terrifying and disturbing them.

Sultan's fight against the Crusaders continued in the Crusade of 1101, and he managed to defeat and destroy, with the aid of Turkish beys, the Crusader armies told to be consisting of hundreds of thousands of people in Anatolia. Thus Kiliç Arslan and his soldiers proved that it was not possible to repel Turks from Anatolia, and those lands were homeland for Turks, which could not even be passed through let alone occupying it. With the destruction of armies in Anatolia, the Muslims in Syria avoided the Crusader-threat, which also deprived the Eastern Crusader states of the help which they had expected.

Capturing Melitene (Malatya) in 1106, Kiliç Arslan besieged Edessa the same year but failed to capture the city. Then, upon invitation of men of Mosul ruler Chokurmish, he went to Mosul, took the city, terminated the khutbah preaching in the name of the Great Seljuks, and had khutbah preaching delivered in his name. In the battle where Sultan engaged Chavli in July 1107, Sultan fell dead at a very young age when he attempted to pass across Habur Stream on his horse in order to avoid being taken captive as he had been deserted by his men. Even the Christians were affected from and felt deep sorrow for his death and mourned for him. Kiliç Arslan whom the sources mentioned to be fair, merciful, valiant and very strong person was a great hero who endeavoured to secure that we stay in these lands, as well as a versatile leader who acted with determination, courage, farsightedness and decisiveness. As the defender of Islam against the Christians, Kiliç Arslan's determination, efforts and dedication brought salvation of these lands and Turkic & Islamic world against the Crusaders.

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