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Araştırma Makalesi * Research Article

Kılıç Arslan I.'s Challenge with the Crusaders

I. Kılıç Arslan'ın Haçlılarla İmtihanı

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Abstract: it was a really worse circumstance for the empire of the Byzantine that the beginning of the capture of Anatolia by Seljuk's after the 1071 Manzikert victory. Especially the establishment of a new state centered on Nicaea by Süleyman shah was a situation that required urgent measures for the Byzantine Empire. The empire, which wanted to circumvent this situation with various defenses and attacks, was helpless in the face of the expansionist policy of the Turks. Believing that the Turks could only be expelled from Anatolia with external support, the empire found the solution in asking for help from its religious brothers. The emperor of the period, Alexios I Komnenos, who asked for help from his European religious brothers, thought to meet this need with mercenaries. Considering the economic difficulties in Europe, this action, which was planned to be carried out under the control of the Church, could have been used as an opportunity. As a matter of fact, the Church adapted this request to its own purposes and started to channel all the unqualified people in Europe to the east with various promises. This request for help, organized and mobilized by the Papacy, manifested itself in 1095-1096 and Crusader armies began to cross into Anatolia via Constantinople. Istanbul was adopted. Byzantium, which achieved relative success with the crusader action, was not so lucky against the brave and successful Seljuk sultan and Turkish misters like Kılıç Arslan I. Because the ignition of the Turkish national consciousness under the leadership of Kılıç Arslan I had frustrated the westerners. In the end, as a result of the struggles of Kılıç Arslan I and other Turkish beys against the crusader armies, it was proven that Anatolia was once again a Turkish homeland.

Keywords: Byzantium, Urbanus II, Crusaders, Kılıç Arslan I.

Öz: 1071 Malazgirt zaferi sonrası yoğun şekilde Anadolu'nun Selçuklular tarafından ele geçirilmeye başlanması, Bizans imparatorluğu tarafından hiç de hoş karşılanmayan bir durumdur. Özellikle Süleymanşah'ın İznik merkezli yeni bir devlet kurması, Bizans imparatorluğu için acil tedbir alınması gereken bir durum idi. Çeşitli savunma ve saldırılarla bu durumdan kurtulmak isteyen İmparatorluk, Türklerin yayılmacı politikası karşısında çaresiz kalmıştı. Ancak dışarıdan alınacak desteklerle Türklerin Anadolu'dan çıkarılabileceğine inanan imparatorluk, çareyi din kardeşlerinden yardım istemekte bulmuştu. Avrupalı din kardeşlerinden yardım isteyen dönemin imparatoru I. Aleksios Komnenos, bu ihtiyacını ücretli askerlerle karşılamayı düşünmüştü. Avrupa'nın içinde bulunduğu ekonomik sıkıntılar göz önüne alındığında Kilise kontrolünde gerçekleştirilmesi planlanan bu hareket, bir fırsat olarak kullanılabilirdi. Nitekim Kilise bu isteği kendi amaçlarına uyarlayarak, Avrupa'da ne kadar işe yaramaz (vasıfsız) insan topluluğu varsa çeşitli vaatlerle doğruya kanalize etmeye başladı. Papalık tarafından organize edilen ve karşılık gören bu yardım talebi, 1095-1096 yılında kendini gösterdi ve akın akın Haçlı orduları İstanbul üzerinden Anadolu'ya geçmeye başladı. Gerçekleşen Haçlı hareketleriyle nispeten başarı sağlayan Bizans, I. Kılıç Arslan gibi cesur ve başarılı Selçuklu sultanı ve Türk beyleri karşısında o kadar da şanslı sayılmazdı. Çünkü I. Kılıç Arslan önderliğinde Türk milli şuuru fitilinin ateşlenmesi batılıları hüsrana uğramıştı. Nihayetinde I. Kılıç Arslan ve diğer Türk beylerinin Haçlı ordularına karşı verdikleri mücadeleler sonucu Anadolu'nun bir kez daha Türk yurdu olduğu kanıtlandı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bizans, II. Urbanus, Haçlılar, I. Kılıç Arslan.

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INTRODUCTION

In the 11th century, the Turks' westward movement and their settlement in Anatolia in the middle of the same century was an important event in world politics at the time (Ostrogorsky, 2011: 317-318). After the Seljuks began to conquer Anatolia, the Byzantine Empire, which had begun to weaken, was gradually retreating and losing its lands to the Seljuks. In order to change this situation and to drive the Turks out of Anatolia completely, the empire asked for military aid from the western world. The institution that mediated the requested help was the papacy. The papacy adapted this request for support to its own understanding and purpose and announced it to the public. This call was eagerly welcomed in the western world. What is interesting is that a mass movement was launched for the sake of demonstrative purposes. This was the only way that military support could create a mass movement and achieve its goal. Indeed, this cunningly conceived plan was skillfully put forward. Religious justifications were brought to the forefront and solid foundations were established. In addition, various economic promises were put forward to increase the number of participants.

The economic structure of the Western world at that time did not look very favorable. While the rapid rise of the Muslim Turks in the East offered a rich economy and a prosperous life, the western world was in an opposite situation. In such a situation, the people were attracted by what they were told in this call, and the people of Europe, who were broken by poverty and misery, were not insensitive to this call. It was then understood that religious reasons were only used as a driving force, and it was quite normal for political, social and economic reasons to come to the fore. In this respect, peasants, townspeople, city dwellers, rich and poor alike set out on their journeys to possess the riches of the East.

This great plan of the Byzantine Empire was called the "crusades" (religion association). Since they were weak against the Seljuks, they asked for help from Europe by using religion. They were acting through the Church for this work. On November 27, 1095, after the council, a call was made to "save the Holy Land" (Altan, 2002: 45-50). The Church skillfully coordinated this call and did its best to mobilize the people. Pope Urbanus II was the one who lit the fuse of the movement. Together with many clergymen, he convened the Council of Clermont and mobilized many armies with the text of the declaration he prepared (Demirkent, 1997: 5-8).

While organizing this movement, the Church was also planning to eliminate the hunger, misery and poverty in Europe. In addition, the Church, whose political power was increasing in medieval Europe, was thinking of bringing Europe to a level of prosperity by possessing the wealth of the east and transferring its power to the eastern lands. It was a wise move to put forward religious justifications both for the benefit of society and for its own interests. In this context, the rhetoric that the sins of those who would join the movement would be forgiven and those who died would go to heaven was quite impressive (Demirkent, 1997: 1-4).

HOW WERE THE CRUSADERS SUMMONED?

When the sources of the period are analyzed, political, social, economic and religious reasons, which were used as a driving force, were effective in the beginning of the crusades (Demirkent, 1994: 65-78). The conquest activities of the Seljuk Turks in Anatolia had narrowed Byzantium's sphere of dominance in this geography. The Byzantine administration, which could not tolerate the loss of the places under its control one by one, sought a remedy to turn the situation in its favor (Usta, 2020: 192-194). Byzantium, which was weakening economically day by day and experiencing a decline in its political power, decided to ask for help from Europe in order to have a say in these fertile lands again as soon as possible (Demirkent, 1994: 65-78).

The Byzantine Empire, which requested mercenaries from Europe through the Papacy to increase its defense and offensive power against the Turks, was planning to compensate for its losses with this

help (George, 2018: 13-16; Akyol, 2018: 84). The negotiations between Urbanus II, who was on the papal throne and the Byzantine emperor Alexios I Komnenos were the first step towards the crusade¹.

Photo 1: 14th century miniature depicting Pope Urbanus II's visit to Clermont and his call for a crusade.



Source: Demirkent, 1997: 2.

Indeed, Urbanus thought it more logical to raise a huge army of landless peasants, knights and starving commoners rather than wage soldiers. It would be easier to rally and mobilize them with promises that they would become rich and landowners. On the other hand, these promises alone would not be enough, it would be necessary to create a more valid discourse of religious motives that would create a mass movement. Only in this way could the masses be mobilized. With this in mind, on November 27, 1095, at the Council of Clermont, Urbanus addressed a large crowd of Europeans, largely clergy, and invited them to join the Crusades (Carnotensiz, 2009: 46-48; George, 2018: 37-47; Usta, 2020: 194-195). In his speeches, he told them that their brothers in the east were being persecuted, that the Muslims were torturing them in agony, and that they were urgently asking for help from their brothers in the west. For Urbanus, there was no difference between the struggle against the Muslims in Spain and the war against the Muslims in the east. He thought that Christians were the same all over the world and that it was not right to help them in one place and leave them to oppression and persecution in another (Demirkent, 1997: 4-5). When the sources of the period are analyzed, these statements of Urbanus appear to be merely fabricated excuses. Because the Christians living under the rule of Muslim Turks in the east were leading a very normal life. They were treated with tolerance under the Seljuks who ruled the region, and they were even making regular pilgrimages to Jerusalem every year. It is obvious that Urbanus was trying to create a strong influence with false pretexts in order to mobilize the masses.

Urbanus, aware of the influence of religious sentiment on the masses, tried in every way to encourage the participants. After all, war meant death, but if convincing reasons were presented, this negative situation could be avoided. Urbanus therefore thought of justifying the war to the people by keeping the religious motif as much in the spotlight as possible. In this regard, he said that the movement would be a pilgrimage and that those who participated would be absolved from their sins. On the other hand, he also assured the remaining property of the people who participated in the pilgrimage. Just as the property of those who had gone on pilgrimage in previous years had been protected, the church guaranteed protection for the property of those who would participate in this movement.

What was striking in all these preparations and conversations was that Urbanus tried to restrict those who would participate in the expedition to groups of armed knights. Because the main purpose was the need for people who could fight. Urbanus, who also strictly forbade the participation of monks, stated that the participation of the sick, those in need of care, the elderly, women and children would not be appropriate. This is because pilgrimage is a form of worship for the remission of sins and is open

¹ Byzantium had previously requested paid soldiers from the west through the papacy. Between Emperor Michael VII (1071-78) and Pope Gregorius VII (1073-85). Negotiations were held between them on this issue. For detailed information see Demirkent, 1994: 68-69; Demirkent, 1996b: 525-546; Demirkent, 1997: 2.

to all kinds of people. While healthy people cannot be prevented from performing crusader, sick people can also participate in the hope of being cured (Akyol, 2018: 85; Demirkent, 1994: 73). Urbanus' intentions here were quite clear. He wanted to prevent the participation of people who would be useless for the crusade to be effective. For this reason, he concealed the truth while calling for a crusade.

Another method used by Pope Urbanus II was to give a religious dimension to the idea of revenge. In fact, the European community was composed of large families. This situation strengthened the bonds of kinship and the fondness for relatives increased. Family members had to protect the interests of their relatives. Urbanus used this scheme to say "*I appeal to fathers, sons and nephews, if someone kills one of your relatives, would you not avenge the death of your own flesh and blood? Then you must also avenge the death of our Lord Jesus and your brothers and sisters in the faith*"(Demirkent, 1994: 74; Demirkent, 1997: 1-4) he channeled his sense of revenge into saving his oppressed brothers and sisters.

These church-led sermons were very effective in mobilizing the people. The message that the people of Europe could be saved from their misery by fighting for the sake of religion, with political motives pushed to the background, found a response in a short time (Ostrogosky, 1995: 333-334; Runciman, 2008: 87-90). This began to show itself immediately. Already in the days of the crusade, the Christian people had begun destruction and devastation in their own lands. This destruction was especially directed against European Jews (Demirkent, 1994: 71-73). The genocide of Jews began in France and spread across Europe. The torture and killing of Jews and the looting of their property created horrifying scenes. They were forcing the Jews, whom they did not distinguish from Muslims, whom they called infidels, to convert and killing those who refused. The biggest justification they had was that the Jewish people were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. "*If they were going to fight for the sake of religion, for the sake of Jesus, to avenge the death of Jesus,*" then there was no need to discriminate between Muslims and those of other religions (Demirkent, 1997: 5-9). There is also a widespread Christian belief that at the time of his crucifixion, Jesus called on Christians to take revenge on the Jewish people who had caused it. Therefore, the Jews should be killed and Jesus should be avenged (Demirkent, 1994: 75-76).

It was obvious that these were all pretextual reasons, and these pretextual reasons are accepted by western writers of the time. With a little research, we can see that these writers wrote that the people who committed massacres of destruction were doing it all for goods and money. The fact that Europe was in famine in those years had brought the people to the point of starvation and made them constantly fight each other. Again, written sources say that the Crusaders exhibited these behaviors in order to improve their situation before the campaign. The Church was saying that the people were in hunger and misery and that action was needed to reach the riches in the east, and it did not neglect to add religion-based legendary stories to this. It increased the number of participants by telling heroic stories from the Bible. Again, although western sources call it a crusade movement that deviated from its purpose, it is clear that the real purpose was to reach the riches of the east. The concrete indicators of this lie in the behavior of the Christian people.

GENERAL SITUATION IN ANATOLIA BEFORE THE CRUSADER ATTACKS

After the 1071 Manzikert victory (Turan, 2014a: 3-11; Turan, 2014b: 178-187; Göksu, 2021: 78-80)¹, the Seljuk Turks began a policy of large-scale conquest in Anatolia.

Sultan Alparslan gave important information about his conquest policy in Anatolia to the Turkmen Beys and commanders he gathered around him ². Moreover, the conquered lands would belong to the conqueror (Ayönü, 2014: 26-38). Naturally, this situation became an important driving force to increase the speed of the conquest. The Seljukids, acting in this manner, accelerated their campaigns in various

¹ For detailed information on the Malazgirt victory, see. Sevim, 2003: 481-483; Alican, 2017: *Malazgirt 1071 Kiyametinin ilk günü*; Piyadeoğlu, Ayönü, Çağlayan, vd. 2018: *Malazgirt zaferi bin yıllık miras*.

² In his speech here, Sultan Alparslan summarized: From now on, the lands and homelands of those who worship the cross will be invaded. "*From now on, be lion cubs. Fly like eagles on the earth day and night and show no more mercy to the Greeks.*" He ordered that Anatolia should be completely conquered by Turkmens and turned into a Turkish homeland. See Göksu, 2020: 81; Göksu, 2021: 85-86; Ersan ve Alican, 2020: 66; Turan, 2014b: 187-189; Turan, 2014a: 58-62.

parts of Anatolia. Especially the activities of Suleiman Shah (Turan, 2014b: 95-129; Sevim, 2010: 103-105), the son of Kutalmışoğlu, in Anatolia were quite remarkable (Kafesoğlu, 1992: 59-60; Ayönü, 2014: 57-67). So much so that it was 1075¹ when he announced the establishment of a new Seljuk branch in nicaea, even before the effects of the Manzikert victory had worn off (Sevim ve Merçil, 2014: 521-523; Turan, 2014c: 280-281; Bayındır, 2020: 208; Yazıcı, 2004: 274-278; Cogito, 2001: 38; Turan, 2014a: 11-19; Göksu, 2019: 220; Öngül, 2014: 1-2). This situation revealed how fast and seriously the conquest policy was carried out. Another important point that draws attention is that Suleiman Shah saw himself on the way to becoming the great Seljuk sultan with these conquests (Turan, 2014a: 83-86; Ersan ve Alican, 2020: 38-40). So much so that he behaved like a great Seljuk sultan in the lands he conquered. These behaviors and his increasing power were closely followed by the central Seljuk sultanate. On the other hand, the fact that his deeds were reported to the great Seljuk sultan showed that Suleiman Shah was in a dependent position (Bayındır, 2020: 209; Ersan ve Alican, 2020: 41).

Having accomplished important deeds in the west and south of Anatolia, Suleiman Shah, perhaps with dreams of becoming a great sultan in his mind, went further south - to the dominion of the Syrian Bey Tutush (Ersan ve Alican, 2020: 43-44). As a matter of fact, this activity was not welcome by Tutush, the brother of Melikşah. Süleyman Shah, who had mobilized for the capture of Aleppo, had to confront Tutuş and suffered his first defeat so far. Suleiman Shah, the son of Son of Kutalmış, who resented this situation and could not digest the defeat, ended his life by committing suicide 1086².

This incident, which took place in 1086, was received with great sadness. Both Muslim and non-Muslim people mourned the death of Suleiman Shah. On the other hand, the great sultan Malik Shah, who was aware of what had happened, was very angry with his brother Tutush, and out of fear Tutush had to leave Aleppo and flee (İbnü'l Verdî, 2017: 41-43; Sevim ve Merçil, 2014: 528; Bayındır, 2020: 214). After a while, Sultan Malik Shah came to the region and after restoring peace and order in the city, he returned to the capital Isfahan, taking Suleiman Shah's wife and children with him³.

KILIÇ ARSLAN I'S ARRIVAL IN NICAEA AND DEVELOPMENTS

After the death of their father, Suleiman Shah's children stayed in Isfahan for 6 years⁴ and returned to Anatolia after the death of Sultan Malik Shah in 1092⁵. Kılıç Arslan I, who traveled from Isfahan to Anatolia with his brother Kulan Arslan, gathered some forces on the way and reached Nicaea in 1093 and took over the state inherited from their father without facing any resistance from⁶ Ebul Gazi (Demirkent, 2022: 396-398; Turan, 2014b: 125-128). Kılıç Arslan I, whom we also recognize as the second founder of the Seljuks of Turkey, is one of the greatest rulers of the state (Kaymaz, 2011: 27-29). By re-establishing the Son of Kutalmış administration, the Sultan began to reunite the scattered Turkmen tribes after a 6-year political vacuum. Again, Kılıç Arslan continued his conquest activities in Anatolia from the moment he sat on the sultan's throne. Kılıç Arslan, who tried to expand his activities centered on Nicaea, was also progressing with very successful steps in his struggle with Byzantium. The Sultan, who married the daughter of Çaka Bey (Kafesoğlu, 1984: 55-60), the ruler of Smyrna, and formed

¹ On the history of Nicaea's becoming the capital and the factors that contributed to its becoming the capital, see. Hacıgökmen, 2019: 31-40.

² It is possible to find different narrations about the death of Suleiman Shah in the sources. See Ersan ve Alican, 2020: 44; Turan, 2014c: 120-122; Usta, 2019: 153; Kafesoğlu, 1992: 59; Ayönü, 2014: 76; Bayındır, 2020: 213.

³ According to the sources, the reason why Sultan Malik Shah took Suleiman Shah's remaining family with him was the thought that the children would want to avenge their father. In this respect, their being under the sultan's supervision would prevent the sultanate from being jeopardized. See Sevim ve Merçil, 2014: 530; Turan, 2014c:123.

⁴ Some of the sources say it was six and a half years. See Anna Komnena, 1996: 205-206.

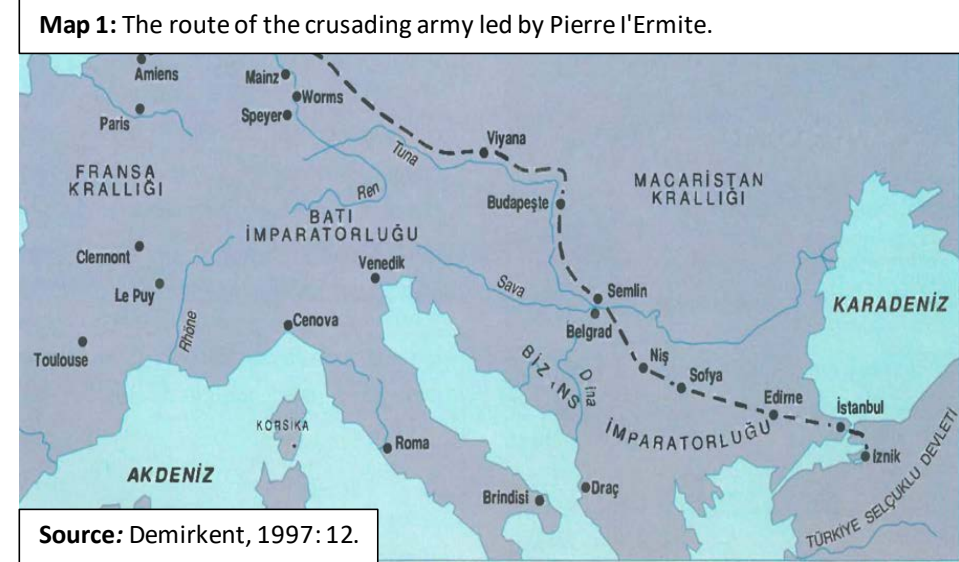
⁵ There is information in the sources that after the death of Malik Shah, Suleiman Shah's children fled or were deliberately released to Anatolia by Sultan Berkyaruk. See Usta, 2020: 150-151; Ersan ve Alican, 2020: 46-47; Bayındır, 2020: 295.

⁶ When Suleimanshah embarked on his Syrian campaign, he handed over the administration of the country to one of his emirs, Abul Qasim. After the death of the sultan, Abul Qasim started to see himself as the new sultan and carried out activities centered on Nicaea. After the death of Abul Qasim, whose relations with Byzantium were quite remarkable, his brother Abul Ghazi took over the administration. Abul Ghazi did not resist Kılıç Arslan out of respect for the Seljuk sultans. For the developments during the reign of Abul Qasim (1087-1093), see also Ayönü, 2014: 78-85; Anna Komnena, 1996: 207-208; Turan, 2014c:113-117.

a support force for himself, was following a cunning political path. He conquered important centers and their surroundings such as Kapıdağ peninsula and Ulubat by fighting against Byzantium, which occupied the Marmara and coastal regions that were lost during the reign of Abul Qasim. As a matter of fact, since he was not strong enough against Byzantium, he could not fully ensure his dominance in the coastal regions (Ayönü, 2014: 87).

After a while, with the help of the Byzantine army, he eliminated his father-in-law, whom he saw as a rival with the provocations of the Byzantine emperor Alexios I. (Anna Komnena, 1996: 299-300). Kılıçarslan I, who was trying to expand his sphere of dominance in Anatolia, continued to make incessant raids on the Byzantine borders. On the other hand, the sultan, who was trying to ensure his own sovereignty in the interior of Anatolia, was getting stronger day by day.

While all this was happening, the Byzantine emperor, realizing that he could not cope with these attacks of the Turks and other threats in the Balkans (Cumans-Pechenegs) alone, had already asked for help from his European religious brothers (Ayönü, 2014: 91).



CRUSADERS LED BY MONK PIERRE L'EERMITE

It was not long after Alexios Komnenos asked for help from the West religion that Crusader armies were began to appear in the İstanbul. As we mentioned before, this movement, which took place after Byzantium requested mercenaries from the west, was organized by the Church. The papacy, which wanted to establish its growing power in the eastern countries, started to send crowds of people from different nations to the east with the calls it made in 1095. This irregular crusade, in which people from all classes participated, worried the Byzantine administration. Because these people, who were greedy for money and goods, plundered the cities they passed through without adhering to any rules and agreements, and massacred people regardless of religion, sect and race (George, 2018: 59-60; Akçol, 2018: 87). The emperor's concern was that the masses would do the same on his territory, and he was quite right. Led by a monk named Pierre l'Eermite (Demirkent, I, 1997: 11; Özer, 2020: 493-522; Kanat ve Burçak, 2018: 57), this disorganized and warlike mob behaved in much the same way when it entered imperial territory (Demirkent, I, 1997: 10-11). Yet the Emperor had been kind to the crusaders, forgiving their misdeeds during their journey and inviting Pierre to his palace (Runcıman, 2008: 99-100).

Indeed, the Emperor, realizing that Pierre was only a fiery monk, frail and miserable, immediately realized that this emthy crowd was of no use to theirselves, let alone to fight the Turks. Fortunately, the Emperor, trusting in the organized and fighting army that would come from the rear, made this crowded caravan stay outside the city walls near the Golden Horn of İstanbul. As far as possible, the Emperor made sure that this large group did not harm anyone. Soon the Crusaders started to enter the city with permission to visit the city and see the holy places. They were allowed to do so in a controlled manner, but this unruly crowd was extorting the property of the people, stealing the money of the shopkeepers, killing those who resisted without mercy, robbing mansions and mansions, removing the lead plates from the roofs of the churches, in short, stealing continuously (Demirkent, 1997: 15; Ostrogosky, 1995: 335).

The Emperor, who feared that the situation would take a turn for the worse, was justified in his concerns. Accordingly, this large group of people, who arrived in İstanbul on August 1, 1096, was

transferred to the Anatolian side by ships on August 6 (George.^{2018: 62}; Kanat ve Burçak, 2018: 61-62; Akyol, 2018: 878-89).

This group, who were told to stay at the Kibatos (Kibotos) (Civetot) headquarters near Yalova, embarked on a looting and plundering movement without paying attention to what they were told. They killed defenseless people without mercy and took away their property and considered this as a success. So much so that Anna Komnena, in her *Alexiad*, recorded this massacre, how they put babies on spearheads and fried them in the fire, how they cut open the bellies of pregnant women and took out their babies, and how they tortured adults horribly (Anna Komnena, 1996: 306-307).

Soon, emboldened by looting and pillaging, they began to attack Seljuk-controlled villages on Turkish borders (Runciman, 2008: 101). The fact that the French crusader group returned to their headquarters with various spoils as a result of these attacks whetted the appetite of the Italian and German crusader groups. They wanted to do the same as the French and they prepared a crowd of about six thousand people and took action (Demirkent, 1997:15-16).

The group proceeded with looting and after a while they captured the castle of Kserigordon near Nicaea. Located on a high hill, this castle was easy to defend and difficult to conquer. When the German crusader groups saw that the castle was abundant in supplies, they decided to use it as a base for their movements. As a matter of fact, when the original owners of the castle soon became aware of the situation, the course of events changed. Since the castle's drinking water needs were met from outside, this was to be used as an advantage (Demirkent, 1996a: 26-27). Sultan Kılıç Arslan I led some forces against this group of marauders and besieged the castle. After 7-8 days of siege, the crusaders were forced to surrender (Turan, 2014b: 128-133; Runciman, 2008: 101-102).

Photo 2: 14th century miniature depicting the defeat of the Crusaders. by the Turks at the Battle of Dracon.



Source: Demirkent, 1997: 17.

Battle of Dragon (Dracon) (October 21, 1096)

According to the news reaching Kibatos, the headquarters of the Crusaders, the Germans had captured the castle of Kserigordon and made it their base. On the other hand, Seljuk spies infiltrated the headquarters and spread the false news that not only the castle had been taken, but that the Germans had even captured Nicaea and were sharing the spoils. The crusaders' appetite was whetted and they wanted to act immediately. Indeed, soon after the truth became known, the enthusiastic crowd turned into a panic. Pierre l'Ermite had also traveled to Constantinople for reinforcements and financial aid, leaving the crusaders in a state of indecision (Runciman, 2008: 102; Kanat ve Burçak, 2018: 61). On the other hand, the news that the Seljuk Turks were moving towards the Kibatos headquarters doubled the panic. They debated for a long time whether to attack the Turks or wait for further support. As a matter of fact, a large part of the crowd argued that they had already come to fight the Turks, that this was their main purpose, and that action should be taken. And finally, on October 21, 1096, the crusader group moved from their headquarters with 20 thousand crusaders to fight the Turks (Demirkent, 1997: 15).

Taking the shortest route from Kibatos to Nicaea, the crusaders set out early in the morning, leaving behind women, children and the elderly (Demirkent, 1997: 528; Turan, 2014b: 133-141). Through the passes between the mountains, the knights continued on their way, knights in front and

foot soldiers behind¹. All this was the result of the Turks' espionage work (Anna Komnena, 1996: 307). Turkish soldiers, who had set up ambushes along important transit routes, were waiting for the crusaders to leave their headquarters. As a matter of fact, when the crusaders reached the Drakon (Dragon) valley between the mountains, the Seljuks, who were lying in ambush in the woods, surprised the crusaders by attacking (Ayönü, 2014: 92). Having neutralized the knights and horses with arrow shots, the Turkish soldiers drove stray horses at the crusaders on foot, who did not yet realize what had happened, creating a great panic (Akyol, 2018: 91²). The crusader army, massacred to the point of slaughter, was forced to flee backwards. The Seljuk army's pursuit of the fleeing crusaders and their entry into the headquarters (Kibatos) was met with horror. The Turks slaughtered those who stood in their way, while those who fled to the mountains and forests escaped with their lives (Demirkent, 1996a: 28; Runciman, 2008: 102). The Turks laid siege to the crusaders who had taken refuge in a palace on the coast, and after a while the Byzantine Emperor, who was aware of the situation, lifted the siege when he saw the rescue ships and retreated towards Nicaea. The remaining crusaders retreated to Constantinople by ship and were placed in the headquarters outside the city walls to await the arrival of the main army (Anna Komnena, 1996: 307).

Photo 3: A view from the walls of İznik.



Source: Demirkent, 1997: 30.

Thus, after such an effective attack by Sultan Kılıç Arslan I, the crusader army led by Pierre l'Ermite was completely dispersed and ended (George, 2018: 62-63; Ayönü, 2014: 93; Demirkent, 1997: 18; Kanat ve Burçak, 2018: 61-62).

In the light of all these developments, we see that Sultan Kılıç Arslan I concluded that the crusader groups were not very dangerous and took action to take the city of Malatya, which he had been after for a long time. This situation leads to the conclusion that the crusaders were underestimated by Kılıç Arslan. Because when he heard that the main crusader army consisting of larger and more organized armies was coming, he did not take it seriously and continued the siege of Malatya. So much so that Kılıç Arslan left his wife, children and all his treasure there when he left the capital Nicaea (Demirkent, 1997: 18).

CONQUEST OF NICAEA BY BYZANTINES

Having fended off the crusader attacks led by Piere l'Ermite, Sultan Kılıç Arslan concluded that this movement was not serious. For this reason, he concentrated on his own affairs and continued his efforts to expand his sphere of dominance. He took action to besiege Malatya under the Armenian Gabriel, which the Danishmendli principality (Öngül, 2018: 1-27) had long wanted to capture. The city was well fortified and surrounded by strong walls. Although the Armenian and Assyrian inhabitants of the city expressed their dissatisfaction with the administration and did not want the Turkish rulers to take over the city, Gabriel strongly opposed this. And he rejected the offers from Sultan Kılıç Arslan without

¹ This road must have been the route that today reaches the shore of Lake Nicaea at Boyalıca via Altınova, Soğuksu, Yalakdere. See. Demirkent, 1997: 18.

² For information on the weapons used by the Seljuks of Turkey, see. Göksu, 2010: 300-366.

a second thought. Sultan Kılıç Arslan then continued the siege of the city and planned to attack at the most opportune moment and take the city.

As events were unfolding in Malatya, news came that the Crusaders were about to depart from Constantinople and their target was Nicaea. The Sultan understood the seriousness of the situation thanks to the intelligence he received. He immediately sent a vanguard force and ordered the city to be defended. He himself lifted the siege and set off for Nicaea. Unfortunately, it would take Kılıç Arslan days to reach Nicaea from Malatya. By then the crusaders had besieged the city and were stationed in there.

Nicaea was a city with five kilometers of strong walls fortified with 144 towers. The garrison of the city also consisted of highly accomplished soldiers (Demirkent, 1997: 29-30). It is known that Turkish vanguard units clashed with the crusaders as soon as they arrived in Nicaea. As a matter of fact, these troops, which could not achieve complete success due to their small numbers, generally tried to weaken the enemy with hit-and-run tactics.

After several attempts, the troops decided to wait for the Sultan and stopped fighting (Demirkent, 1996a: 26). Towards the end of May, Sultan Kılıç Arslan arrived in Nicaea with other Turkish Beys. The fact that the Crusader army was crowded and heavily armored foreshadowed how tough the battle would be. Although Kılıç Arslan and his subordinates tried to drive the crusaders away from the city with day-long war moves, they were not successful. The sultan, who did not want to suffer any more casualties, retreated to the mountains with his troops after dark and left Nicaea to its fate (Anna Komnena, 1996: 328; Ayönü, 2014: 94). It is known from the sources that the Sultan wrote a letter to his men in the city while retreating and told them to do as they saw fit from now on (Runciman, 2008: 138; Anna Komnena, 1996:326; Usta, 2017: 22; Demirkent, 1997: 32-33).

After Kılıç Arslan's unsuccessful attempt, the crusaders, knowing that there was no longer any possibility of a force from outside the city, began to storm the defensive walls. The Turks' determined resistance and skillful fighting made the defense unbreakable. The Turks, who were being resupplied with food and drink from the southern part of the city, were also increasing their resistance. The crusading army, aware of the situation but unable to attack from the lake to the south because they had no ships, had to ask the Byzantine emperor for help. Alexios Komnenos was already aware of the situation, but he was waiting for the crusaders to ask for help. Because he wanted to capture Nicaea and take the city before the crusaders. In the light of these developments, the emperor sent dozens of lightly equipped ships and 2 thousand soldiers to Nicaea and closed the southern side of the city. After a while, the Turks, whose power to resist was broken, started negotiations with the Emperor's men. The emperor, who told them that they could save their lives and their property would not be harmed if they surrendered the city, seemed to have a very good opportunity. After six weeks of resistance, on June 19, the Turkish leadership accepted the terms and agreed to surrender the city to the Byzantines. The administration of the city was given to Manuel Butumites (George, 2018: 79-78; Demirkent, 1996a: 26-28; Demirkent, 1997: 33).

The emperor treated Kılıç Arslan's family well and did not allow anyone to be hurt, and did not allow the city to be sacked. The Crusaders were very angry, but the emperor managed to appease them with various gifts (Turan, 1997: 681-688; Demirkent, 1996a: 525-546-; Demirkent, 1997: 33; Usta, 2020: 194-195).

The capture of Nicaea caused great joy among Christians and had positive consequences in Europe. Those who were skeptical of the Crusader movement and those who wanted to give voluntary support started to join the movement.

It was a very regrettable situation that the capital city was lost due to a small calculation error of Sultan Kılıç Arslan. The sultan, who closely followed the next crusader movements, would act more cautiously and by completing his preparations in advance.

Battle of Dorylaion (Eskişehir) (July 1, 1097)

After the fall of Nicaea, the sultan Kılıç Arslan I retreated towards the Anatolian interior and began to gather auxiliary forces. Intending to stop the crusaders by gathering Turkish forces together, the sultan immediately summoned Gümüştekin Ahmet Gazi of Danişmendli, Hasan, the Seljuk Bey of

Kayseri, and Ridvan, the Sultan of Aleppo in Syria, as well as Tuğtekin, the atabeg of Dimaşk (Damascus), to help him (Demirkent, 1997: 34; Ayönü, 2014: 96).

On the other hand, after the Crusaders captured Nicaea, they wanted to move towards the Anatolian interior without wasting time, and large crusader armies were mobilized. On June 21, the crusaders set out for Dorylaion (Eskişehir). Since this large crusading army did not know the way, the Byzantine emperor gave them a Byzantine army under the command of Tatikios to guide them. The crusaders started to march on the road shown by Tatikios and planned to turn south through Osmaneli (Lefke), Eskişehir (Dorylaion), Akşehir (Philomelion), Konya (Ikonion) and Ereğli (Heraklea) to land in Antioch (Demirkent, 1997: 35). In addition, another duty of this guiding unit given by Alexios was to take over the places captured by the crusaders on behalf of the emperor.

Thanks to the intelligence he had obtained, Sultan Kılıç Arslan I acted according to the crusaders' transit routes and arrived in Eskişehir plain before them and deployed his troops. After a while, as darkness fell,

the first part of the crowded crusader army arrived on the plain and set up its headquarters. At dawn, the Seljuk armies attacked. The crusaders were surprised and suffered many casualties before they had a chance to defend themselves. In the following hours, the crusaders took cover with their wagons and tried to resist the hit-and-run attacks of the Turks. This unit, led by the crusader army leader Bohemund, realized that they could not hold out much longer. He called for help to the other crusaders who were one day away. The rearguard picked up the pace and reached the battlefield around noon.

Sultan Kılıç Arslan could not hide his surprise at the situation. Because he thought that this was the only crusader army. Unfortunately, these two crusader armies could not be prevented from uniting and forming a line against the Turks. The heavily armored crusaders began to inflict casualties on the Seljuk Turks. The Turks were no match for the crusaders in one-on-one battles because the crusaders were inflicting casualties on the lightly armored Turks thanks to their armored horses and long spears. In fact, during the battle, Adhemar, the bishop of Le Puy, took a French unit and attacked from behind, forcing the Turkish soldiers to scatter. Kılıç Arslan ordered his troops to retreat, fearing that the situation would worsen (Runciman, 2008: 140-141; Demirkent, 1997: 35).

Struggles with the Crusaders in the year 1101 and the Death of Kılıç Arslan I

Unfortunately, Sultan Kılıç Arslan I was unable to defeat the Crusaders, who outnumbered him despite the troops he had gathered. In 1097, after this fierce battle in Dorylaion, the Seljuk Turks realized that they could not prevail against the Crusaders in a pitched battle. Instead, Sultan Kılıç Arslan would use hit-and-run tactics to inflict as many casualties as he could on his enemy on his way to the target. In this regard, he began to destroy water wells and food sources on the crusader route. It ensured the safety of the people in the settlements by moving them to safer areas (Demirkent, 1996a: 31; Demirkent, 1996b: 529).

On the other hand, the Byzantine Empire, which was trying to take the lands it had previously lost to the Seljuks by using the crusaders, turned towards Dorylaion after the capture of Nicaea and started to seize the coastline again. Emperor Alexios, who assigned his father-in-law Ioannes Doukas to take Dorylaion and its surroundings, which were in the hands of Çaka Bey's son and Tanrıvermiş, a Turkish Bey, was trying to show that they were in control by holding Sultan Kılıç Arslan I's wife hostage (Ayönü, 2014: 96-97). Dorylaion, which was besieged from both land and sea, realized that it could not fight after a while and started to negotiate with Doukas. The city was surrendered to Byzantium with an agreement

Photo 4: Miniature depicting the Crusaders attacking a castle.



Source: Demirkent, 1997: 36.

that the people would not be harmed and the city would not be looted. As a matter of fact, the murder of Kaspaks, who was appointed as the governor of the city, after an incident caused a massacre in the city and many people were massacred. In this respect, the Seljuks, who lost Izmir and its environs to the Byzantines, had to retreat to the Dorylaion-Antiouch line (Anna Komnena, 1996: 337; Ayönü, 2014: 97).

Sultan Kılıç Arslan I's inability to stop the crusaders despite all his efforts led him to move the capital of the country to Konya (Hacıgökmen, 2019: 65-68). On the one hand, the sultan was fighting the crusaders and on the other hand he was trying to protect the western borders of his country against Byzantium. In 1098, the capture of Antioch (Demirkent, 1997: 39; Altan, 2001: 571-582) by the crusaders and on July 15, 1099, the capture of Jerusalem by the crusaders were major events. The fall of Jerusalem in particular caused great excitement in Europe and led to the movement of new crusader troops eastward (Runciman, 2008: 219-220; Demirkent, 1997: 55).

Despite all that happened, Kılıç Arslan I never stopped fighting. Together with other Turkish Beys, they continued to resist the crusaders with all their might. In 1101, the crusader armies entering Anatolia were heavily defeated near Merzifon under the leadership of Kılıç Arslan together with Turkish Beys such as Gümüştekin, Karaca and Belek. The survivors were on their way to İstanbul to save their lives. On the other hand, Kılıç Arslan and other Turkish beys, who neutralized a second crusader army in Konya, fought a relentless battle against another crusader army near Konya-Ereğli and succeeded in eliminating this murderous horde (Demirkent, 1997: 60-61; Ayönü, 2014: 99).

The fact that the Byzantines could never get along with the crusaders led them to come to an agreement with the Seljuks. After the agreement between Sultan Kilic Arslan I and Emperor Alexios Comnenos, Kilic Arslan continued to expand his borders by turning eastward. Just like his father Suleiman Ishah, he dreamed of one day becoming the great Seljuk sultan and advanced as far as Mosul in the east.

Mosul was under the control of Emir Chavli, appointed by the great Seljuk sultan Muhammad Tapar. When Emir Chavli killed another Seljuk bey, Çökürmüş, the people of the city sent a message to Kılıç Arslan I asking him to take over the city. The sultan, who was already on his way to becoming the great Seljuk sultan, responded to the offer and took immediate action, entering the city and having the khutbah read in his name. Kılıç Arslan, however, faced opposition from Emir Çavl. As a result, the two forces came face to face near the Khabur River and war was inevitable. On July 13, 1107, they fought a fierce battle and Emir Chavli was victorious. Sultan Kılıç Arslan I, who wanted to retreat and recover, drowned in the river while crossing the Habur River due to the weight of his armor and the armor of his horse (İbnü'l Esir, 1987: 343-344; Bayındır, 2020: 297; Sevim, 2014: 117-118; Ayönü, 2014: 100; Turan, 1997: 681-688; Demirkent, 1996a: 55-58; Turan, 2014b: 175; Kafesoğlu, 2014: 58).

CONCLUSION

Sultan Kılıç Arslan I had accomplished tremendous things for his country during his reign of nearly 15 years. He revived the legacy Son of Kutalmış in Anatolia after his father Süleyman Shah. Starting from the first years of his reign until the Son of Kutalmış end of his life, the sultan tried to establish Turkish unity in Anatolia and had to deal with the Byzantine Empire on the one hand and the crusader hordes on the other. Despite his young age, his work required great maturity.

The sultan, who was forced to retreat to central Anatolia with the first crusades (1097), fought against the crusaders, who outnumbered them, with the consciousness of national unity and solidarity they formed together with other Turkish beys, Gümüştekin Ahmet Gazi of Danişmendli, Hasan, the Seljuk bey of Kayseri, Rıdvan, the Syrian emir of Aleppo, Tuğtekin, the atabeg of Dımaşk (Damascus) and many other Turkish beys, and ensured that Anatolia remained a Turkish homeland forever.

Again, Kılıç Arslan and other beys had determined the existence and future of the Turkish nation in Anatolia with their victory in three great battles (Konya-Merzifon-Ereğli) against the crusader movements of 1101. If Sultan Kılıç Arslan's determination and effort had not created a sense of unity against the crusaders, possibly irreparable deterioration might have occurred.

Thanks to the victories of Sultan Kılıç Arslan in 1101 - except for the lands held by Byzantium - Anatolia was now completely free from the remnants and threat of the crusaders.

On the other hand, these admirable achievements of Kılıç Arslan I and other Turkish beys had driven a wedge between Byzantium and the crusaders and things were no longer going on as before. The successes in the wars of 1101, especially after the capture of Urfa, Antioch and

Jerusalem, cut off the flow of human support and other aid to these counties (states) they had established.

As a result, thanks to these achievements and the national consciousness created by the efforts of Sultan Kılıç Arslan I, Anatolia had become an insurmountable power against further attacks of the Crusaders.

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