



Journal of Universal History Studies

Cannibalism in the Middle Ages: Notes about the Historical Reasons and Psychology of Eating Human Flesh¹

Orta Çağ'da Yamyamlık: İnsan Eti Yemenin Tarihsel Sebepleri ve Psikolojisi Üzerine Notlar

Submission Type: Research Article

Received-Accepted: 24.02.2025/ 24.01.2026

pp. 1-29

Journal of Universal History Studies (JUHIS) • 9(1) • June • 2026 •

Ahmet Selçukoğlu

Mardin Artuklu University, Department of History, Professor Dr., Mardin, Türkiye

Email: ahmetsecukoglu@artuklu.edu.tr

Orcid Number: 0000-0002-0092-5447

Cite: Selçukoğlu, Ahmet (2026), "Cannibalism in the Middle Ages: Notes about the Historical Reasons and Psychology of Eating Human Flesh", Journal of Universal History Studies, 9(1), 1-29. <https://doi.org/10.38000/juhis.1646152>

¹ This article is analyzed by three reviewers and it is screened for the resemblance rate by the editor/ Bu makale üç hakem tarafından incelenmiş ve editör tarafından benzerlik oranı taramasından geçirilmiştir.

* In this article, the principles of scientific research and publication ethics were followed/ Bu makalede bilimsel araştırma ve yayın etiği ilkelerine uyulmuştur.

* This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) (Attribution-Non Commercial-Share Alike).

*There is no conflict of interest with any person/ institution in the prepared article/ Hazırlanan makalede herhangi bir kişi/ kurum ile çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.

Abstract

Although the phenomenon of cannibalism is often seen with suspicion by modern academic circles, numerous medieval sources written in different locations, time periods and cultures contain rich examples of events on this subject. Although an act such as eating human flesh is not a commonplace of daily life, it would be a mistake to dismiss the narratives that persistently cluster in the chronicles of the period as purely fictitious without a thorough analysis of the causes. The most common causes of cannibalism were severe starvation crises and famine, according to medieval authors. However, various case examples indicate that this extraordinary activity took place in different geographical and cultural circles for different reasons. Although many incidents are narrated in the sources of the period, specific studies evaluating, categorizing or subjecting mentality analysis to cannibalism in the Middle Ages are limited. This article aims, on one hand, to classify the causes and justifications of cannibalistic acts that took place in the Middle Ages, and on the other hand, to analyse the variable psychology behind such acts.

Keywords: Cannibalism, Famine, Hunger Crisis, City Sieges, Natural Disasters.

Öz

Yamyamlık olgusu, modern akademik çevreler tarafından çoğunlukla şüpheli görülse de farklı mekân, zaman ve kültür çevrelerinde kaleme alınmış çok sayıda Orta Çağ kaynağı bu hususta zengin olay örneğini barındırır. İnsan eti yemek gibi bir eylem, günlük hayatın olağan kıldığı fiillerden olmasa da etrafı bir sebepler analizi yapmadan dönemin kroniklerinde ısrarla kümelenen anlatıları tümüyle hayal ürünü saymak yanılığa neden olabilir. Orta Çağ müellifleri, yamyamlığın en yaygın sebebi olarak şiddetli açlık krizini ve zaruret hallerini ön plana çıkarır. Bununla birlikte muhtelif vaka örnekleri, bu sıra dışı faaliyetin farklı coğrafya ve kültür daireleri içerisinde değişik gerekçelerle gerçekleştiğine işaret etmektedir. Dönemin kaynaklarında çokça hadise anlatılmasına rağmen Ortaçağ'da gerçekleşen yamyamlıkları değerlendiren, kategorize eden veya zihniyet analizine tabi tutan özel çalışmalar sınırlıdır. Bu makale, bir yandan Orta Çağ'da gerçekleşmiş olan yamyamlık eylemlerinin sebep ve gerekçelerini sınıflandırmayı, diğer yandan bu tür eylemlerin ardında yatan değişken psikolojiyi analiz etmeyi hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yamyamlık, Kıtık, Açlık Krizi, Şehir Kuşatmaları, Doğal Afetler.

Extended Abstract

Over time, the term cannibal has systematically been stripped of its literal meaning of eater of human flesh and gained connotations such as brutality, barbarism or vandalism. In this article, the acts of consuming human flesh that occur in the literal sense of the word will be discussed. As an extreme subject of historical anthropology, cannibalism has often been studied by modern academic circles in the context of a specific geography, group or event. The most controversial aspect of the issue is about historical reliability of such narratives. Many researchers have long agreed that the figure of the man-eater described in the sources is exaggerated, fictitious and mythical. In response to this sceptical approach, there were those who found the cannibalistic stories, which were told in different details in the works of independent authors from a diverse cultural environment, worthy of examination in terms of historical reality. As a result, this issue has managed to shake off accusations of being fantastic and become a credible field of research.

In this study, based on the examples given, at least three main reasons can be suggested for cannibalism cases in the Middle Ages: famine, tradition/habit and outburst of anger. Among these, famine stands out as the most dominant and widespread cause. The narratives of famines that occurred in various geographies at different times are a reminder to rethink the possibility of anthropophagic tendencies. These types of orientations, in which physical impulses are the main determinant, have been able to take place in every environment where severe hunger due to famine has been experienced in the eastern or western geography. For the perpetrators, such acts are not appetizing activities, but a temporary state of brutality in which physical needs and emotional impulses are in constant conflict, with the outcome necessarily favouring the former.

Narratives of habitual cannibalism are often found in travel literature. Such acts were described as “*dangerous savagery*” by Eastern and Western travellers of the Middle Ages and according to the narrative, from the tendency of barbarian societies living in isolated environments such as forests or mountains to see human flesh as a delicious food source. Thus, this type of cannibalism, which emerged as a kind of “*human hunting*”, was carried out by capturing and cooking foreigners passing through the region. In cannibalism, which is practiced as a tradition, religious impulses are at the forefront rather than the need for nutrition. At certain times of the year, a group of people who come together in a submissive mood, sacrifice their relatives in a ritualistic ceremony and eat their flesh. Cannibalism, which emerged as a manifestation of strong hatred towards the enemy, generally manifested itself as a result of a state of psychological trauma. Although it occurs less frequently than the others, it is based on a more marginal cause. The key point in the discussion about the historical reality of cannibalistic actions narrated in the Middle Ages is the question of in what environmental conditions and for what reason these activities were carried out. A non-presuppositional causal analysis reveals that there is a linear relationship between the underlying reasons for the propensity to cannibalism and the involuntary impulses of human beings. When evaluated from this perspective, cannibalism cases in the Middle Ages provide convincing examples of the deterministic approach that the same causes will produce similar results.

Introduction

Why do humans eat the flesh of their own species? When evaluated through the events that took place in the Middle Ages, multi-faceted and dissimilar answers to this question emerge. The tendency to question the reasons for this extraordinary action of human beings from ancient times to the present, through historical case examples, began in the early periods in the contemporary Western world. In a monographic study dated 1939, German ethnologist Ewald Volhard gathered cannibalistic events that occurred in various geographies of the world and questioned the accuracy of historical cannibalism². Inspired by this work, Josef Henninger (1940, pp. 631-646) wrote an article discussing the possibility of cannibalism among pre-Islamic Arabs. In this text, Henninger discussed the issue of whether customs such as cutting and biting the ears, nose or lungs of the killed enemy or licking/drinking the blood of the killed enemy, as a symbolic sign of revenge and hatred among ancient Arab tribes, constitute real cannibalism. In her book focusing on the subject, M. L. Price discussed the reality of the cannibalism discourse in late medieval and early modern Europe, while Jay Rubenstein expressed her views on the acts of cannibalism said to have taken place during the Crusades (Price, 2003; Rubenstein, 2008, pp. 525-552). Addressing the issue from the perspective of an anthropologist, Shirley Lindenbaum (2004, pp. 475-498) evaluated the cannibalism discourse from an epistemological perspective through studies conducted by various field experts.

While historical cannibalism continues to be a mysterious and popular subject of study in the international academic community, in Turkish literature - despite many case studies in the Eastern geography - publications that provide insight into the problematic, historical reality, psychological and anthropological background of the issue are limited. Among these Ahmet San's article (2010, pp. 229-249) in which he comparatively discusses the cannibalism discourse in Turkish and German tales, Emrullah Kaleli's article (2019, pp. 217-231) in which he evaluates the cannibalism incidents among the Crusaders, and İrfan Polat's article (2020, pp. 1-19) in which he evaluates the narratives about the cannibalistic traditions of a people inhabited in the Van region.

Contemporary researchers specialized in different fields have focused on the more controversial issue of "*reality*" before the causes of historical cannibalism (Lindenbaum, 2004, pp. 480-481). While the issue has brought a structural expansion to the field of study of anthropologists, it has also sparked a heated debate about the possibility of such acts actually taking place. The fact that cannibalistic activities are mostly mentioned in legendary narratives dating back to prehistoric periods has created the impression in the minds of modern people that such activities did not actually occur and were imaginary or mythological elements. According to some modern writers, "*institutionalized cannibalism*" never actually existed because it was not based on reliable eyewitness evidence. To others, such derogatory accusations were nothing more than a slander used by colonists to justify their predatory behavior. Despite the case studies described in history, the lack of convincing

² See Volhard, 1939.

evidence that cannibalism did not occur in the hands of those who think that such narratives are imaginary has caused the debate to remain current (Lindenbaum, 2004, pp. 475-476)³.

Although the historical reality aspect of the issue continues to be debated, anthropologists have divided cannibalism into several groups in terms of structural differences. Anthropologists distinguish between endo-cannibalism and exo-cannibalism, depending on the target group to which it is applied. Endo-cannibalism, which is usually practiced as a funeral activity after a natural death, manifests itself as the eating of the dead body by the relatives of the deceased as a sign of love, obedience and respect. Exo-cannibalism, on the other hand, appears as an act of aggression that occurs for various reasons (famine, revenge, etc.) mostly in the context of war. When classified according to the way it is practiced, cannibalism can be classified under two headings: both killing and eating (active cannibalism) or eating only the dead (passive cannibalism). In addition to these, there is another type of cannibalism that has occurred in small numbers and is also caused by hunger crises: Auto-cannibalism or autophagy. This type of cannibalism refers to the act of eating parts of one's own body for various reasons (Lindenbaum, 2004, pp. 478-479).

Narratives about cannibalism in the Middle Ages appear mainly in works written in chronicle or travelogue style. The medieval chroniclers state that such activities took place mostly during severe famines and hunger caused by war or natural disasters. In such narratives, cannibalism is portrayed as a temporary brutality caused by uncontrollable hunger. In the travel literature, such tendencies are introduced as primitive behaviors that emerge as habits and/or traditional impulses. When such activities, which are described in the sources with a distinct sense of disgust and horror, are examined structurally, it stands out apparent that there are distinctive reasons for historical cannibalism. In this study, cannibalism cases that occurred in different times and places in the Middle Ages were evaluated using content analysis and qualitative research method. The historical, social and psychological background of the act of eating human flesh, which has been defined as an abnormal behavior at all times, has been discussed comparatively, and the reality of the issue has been discussed in the context of cause-effect relationship. If we subject medieval cannibals to a typological classification, the following reasons and examples of events emerge regarding this extraordinary act.

1. Force Majeure: Famines and Hunger Crises

Medieval history contains many examples of cannibalism caused by famines in Eastern and Western societies. Fierce wars and city sieges taking a long time, dry seasons, insufficient rainfall, plague epidemics, and disasters such as locust invasions have triggered famines, some of which lasted for years, during which the living saw eating the dead as an option to survive. The urge of intense hunger, which forces the human body to reconsider its immunity, has forced physical needs and emotional principles to remain in a constant state of conflict and a significant part of the cannibalistic activities that took place throughout history occurred for this physiological reason. The purpose of this type of cannibalism, which occurs within the framework of a dominant state of necessity, is not to see human meat as a permanent and delicious food source (as can be

³ Not only modern writers, but also medieval authors who personally narrated cannibalism incidents are aware of the feeling of incredibility that the issue would evoke in the reader. For example, the 6th century chronicler Joshua Stylite (1882, Chapter LXXVII), makes the following sentence before telling the story of the women who ate human flesh during the famine triggered by the war in the city of Amida (modern day Diyarbakır, Türkiye) in years 504-505: *"In narrating what the women of the place did, I may perhaps not be believed by those who come after us"*.

understood from the fact that most of them are passive cannibals), but to turn it into a temporary means of survival.

In the chronicles written in different periods and cultural environments during the Middle Ages, cannibalism due to necessity was described in different details. Authors of the age do not portray this cannibal figure, which they characterize as a famine victim, as a sympathetic figure, but they imply that their improper actions were often accompanied by “*a felt sense of desperation*”. Many authors, regardless of cultural universe, tend to present this type of cannibalism as the last and most disgusting alternative to survival. In this context, the chroniclers introduce the perpetrators of these actions as a typology of people “*turned into monsters by their hunger*”, with the idea of drawing attention to the severity of famine and hunger and making their works interesting through extraordinary events. It is seen that a significant part of the cannibalism cases triggered by famine occurred in the political atmosphere created by wars and city sieges. During sieges, holding all entrances and exits of cities and preventing food or supplies from entering the city with remarkable sensitivity was one of the common strategies to compel the city's people to surrender. This functional method quickly caused food shortages in the besieged cities. Thus, those in the city have to fight not only against the besiegers but also against a more severe enemy: hunger and thirst. As a result, they often lost their ability to resist and were forced to surrender. However, some stubborn defenders began to consume everything they can find as food in order to resist a little longer and deter the enemy; for this purpose, they were even willing to feed on the flesh of their own dead. Thus, those who died during the long city sieges became not only a means of sorrow for those defending the city (even if they were their relatives), but also the last tool to resist the enemy (Maulana Juzjanî, 1881, pp. 1076-1077).

Although there is no direct statement about the prohibition of consuming human flesh in Islamic law, it is indirectly emphasized that this is a disgusting act. For example, in the Quran (al-Hujurat-12), negative conversations (backbiting) in the absence of a person are likened to eating that person's flesh, and then a reinforcing expression such as “*Look, you are disgusted by this*” is used⁴. Considering the intense sensitivity in consuming halal foods in Muslim societies, it is noticed that the tendency to turn to foods that are not permissible in times of famine is not random and cursory, but follows a gradual and sequential sequence from halal to haram. Experienced examples indicate that human meat is seen as the last link in the food chain and is consumed as a temporary food item if there is nothing else to eat. During the unbearable famine that shook Mosul and al-Jazirah in 1225, hungry people fed on the meat of stray animals such as cats and dogs⁵ (before eating dead human flesh); so much so that, according to a contemporary author of the event, the population of such animals on the streets had decreased noticeably compared to previous years (Ibn al-Athir, 2016, III, p. 266). Armenian historian Kiragos (1986, Chapter LXI), describing the Mayyāfāriqīn (modern day Silvan, Türkiye) famine in 1260, draws attention to this gradual arrangement with the words: “*they ate clean and unclean animals and then started to eat people when there was no more food*”.

⁴ O believers! Avoid many suspicions, for indeed, some suspicions are sinful. And do not spy, nor backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of their dead brother? You would despise that! And fear Allah. Surely Allah is the Acceptor of Repentance, Most Merciful.

⁵ These animals appear to have been food sources in many famines. This is not the main topic of the study, but a few references can be given. For example, see (Aachen, 2007, p. 375; Abdüllatif al-Bağdadî, 1998, p. 49; al-Utbi, 1858, p. 367; Ibn al-Jawzî, 1992, XVII, p. 66; Miskawaihi, 1921, p. 99; İbn Kesir, XIII, p. 104).

It is seen that cannibalism due to famine occurred frequently in Mesopotamia, where fierce wars and long-lasting sieges were common in the Early Middle Ages⁶. In 504, when the Sassanid king Kawad (488-531) besieged the city of Amida, a terrible famine occurred in the city. According to the narrative of Joshua Stylite, (1882, Chapter LXXVII) the chronicler of this period, the women of the city caught and killed any woman, man or child they met on the street, and then boiled or roasted their meat and ate it. Zachariah Mtylene (1899, Chapter VII/V), another author who confirms this incident, states that the women of Amida “*laid hold of some of the men by means of blandishments and guile and artifices*” and in this way they killed and ate more than five hundred people. Joshua's subsequent accounts indicate that this cannibalistic activity evolved into a more interesting dimension. Accordingly, when the Sasanian governor of the city (marzuban) learned that these women were out hunting for people, killing and eating many persons, he caught and punished some of them; nevertheless, due to the food crisis caused by the famine, he overlooked to “*passive cannibalism*” and gave them “*leave however to eat those that were dead*”. Joshua writes that cannibal women now eat human carcasses without hiding it from anyone (Joshua, 1882, Chapter LXXVII).

The lack of supplies and the state of necessity caused by the harsh siege conditions caused human meat to be seen as a “*nutritional source of last resort*” in the following centuries. Syriac chronicles agree on the cannibalistic activities of the Umayyad armies under the command of Maslama ibn Abd al-Malik during the difficult siege of Istanbul in 717. According to the narrative, the Arab army, which waited in front of the city for three years, was forced to eat their sandals, dead animals and eventually human corpses due to the severity of the famine (Can, 2021, p. 217; Duygu, 2017, p. 356, 451). It is seen that similar situations cause the same tendencies not only in the Eastern or Islamic world, but also in Western societies. For example, the 11th century English annalist John of Worcester wrote (1998, p. 11) that during a famine in 1069, hungry people turned to human carcasses after consuming the meat of cats and dogs⁷. Many Crusader chroniclers also tell that the difficulties experienced during the campaigns, violent clashes, long city sieges and dangerous blockades caused the Crusaders, who were deprived of all food, to turn to human flesh. In this context, it is told that some Crusaders, who were cut off from the outside world by the Muslim armies under the rule of Kerbogha in Antakya in 1098 and were exposed to severe hunger, were attracted to human flesh. In an epic work called *The Chanson of D'Antioche*, dating back to the 12th century, it is said that when the leader of the military unit called Tafurs within the Crusader army complained of hunger to a monk named Peter in front of Antakya, Peter replied as follows:

“That is [your starvation] because of you cannot bring yourselves to do what needs to be done. Go and fetch those [dead] Turks lying over there on the battlefield. They would taste perfectly all right if you cooked and seasoned them properly. The King of Tafur's said: ‘You are right. you know’. He left Peter's tent and his beggar army summoned. When all assembled there were more than ten thousand. They flayed the Turks, cutting of the skin, then boiled and

⁶ Various examples of events extend the chronology of cannibalism due to famine to ancient times. For example, it is said that people consumed each other due to hunger during a siege in Sicily during the reign of the Seleucid king Antiochus Siditos (138-129 BC) (Barhebraeus, 2003, p. 44).

⁷ See also Rubenstein, 2008, p. 532; Kaleli, 2019, pp. 222-228.

roasted the flesh; they ate their fill, although there was no bread to go with it" (Anonymous, The Chanson of D'Antioche, 2011, p. 200).

Another 12th century source confirming cannibalism in Antioch was written by William of Malmesbury. After stating that the Crusader soldiers, who were starving during this siege, consumed all kinds of animal flesh, the following record is made: "*Some, too, there were, who even fed their corpse-like bodies with other corpses, eating human flesh; but at a distance, and on the mountains, lest others should be offended at the smell of their cookery*" (William of Malmesbury, 1847, p. 380). Interestingly, this incidence of cannibalism in Antakya was also hinted at by some Muslim authors who resided geographically close to the region (Ibn al-Athir, 2016, I, p. 16; Ibn al-Qalānīsī, 2002, p. 46; İbnü'l-Adīm, 2014, p. 92).

The most well-known example of cannibalism among the Crusaders due to violent city sieges occurred during the siege of the city called Ma'arrat al-Nu'man. As many Crusader chronicles clearly confirm, a famine broke out among the Crusader army in this city, which was subjected to a long and severe siege and as a result, the Frankish soldiers who captured the city by force cooked and ate the flesh of the dead Muslims (Aachen, 2007, p. 375; Anonymous, The Deeds of the Franks, 1979, p. 80; Peter Tudebode, 1974, p. 102; Raymond D'aguilers, 1968, p. 81; Robert The Monk, 2016, p. 186). Fulcher Chartres, (1998, p. 84) after writing that the Crusader soldiers were tearing off a piece of dead Muslim flesh, says the following: "*they cooked but when it was not yet roasted enough by the fire, they devoured it with savage mouth*". There were similar images in the siege of Aleppo by Dubays ibn Sadaka, the emir of Hilla, in 1125. It is said that the long duration of the siege forced the people of the city, who were in a difficult situation, to feed on human corpses (İbnü'l-Adim, 2011, p. 127).

Since the first quarter of the 13th century, as the Mongols turned to the Muslim realm, increasing wars, violent city sieges and sovereignty conflicts seem to have increased the number of cannibalisms due to famines and hunger crises. All the people of cities and castles who resisted the Mongol sieges suffered a similar fate and, in some cities, surrounded by the Mongolian army, cannibalism activities occurred due to severe famine and hunger. When the Mongols besieged the city of Cung-du (Beijing) in 1215 under the leadership of Genghis Khan, they closed the entrances and exits. It is said that the Khitans here started to consume human flesh after a while due to starvation (Anonymous, The Secret History of the Mongols, 2001, p. 239). Similar situations occurred during the Mongol siege of Mayyāfāriqīn in 1260. According to the records of Armenian chroniclers, the people of the city, whose supplies ran out during the siege, consumed all kinds of animals and began to eat first the poor, their own children and finally each other (Kirakos Ganjakets'i, 1986, Chapter LXI; Müverrih Vardan, 2017, p. 107; Blake-Frye, 1949, p. 335).

Not only the besieged, but also the besiegers, in some cases, considered eating human flesh as an option due to the food shortage triggered by the war environment. The 13th century traveler Plano Carpini (1996, p. 52) makes an interesting record that when the Mongols attacked a Chinese city, they kept one in every ten people for food because the siege lasted for a long time and the supplies were exhausted. This information is confirmed by another Western traveller Simon of Saint-Quentin (2006, p. 21). Matthew of Paris, a Western chronicler of the same century, describes in his work "*Chronica Majora*" that the Mongols ate human flesh "*as if they were eating bread*" when necessary (Lewis, 1987, p. 286; Price, 2003, pp. 6-7) and depicts this moment with an interesting miniature image (See Fig. 1). The fact that similar information is included in

Armenian chronicles draws a convincing framework that the Mongols eating human meat in difficult situations. According to the records of an Armenian chronicler, Mongolian soldiers ate human carcasses due to starvation when they perished and were thrown into the desert after a fierce battle with the Mamluks in 1303 (Başkumandan Simbad, 1946, p. 99).

Apart from wars and sieges, famine and the crisis it caused could also be caused by climatic conditions and natural disasters. In the Middle Ages, factors such as insufficient rainfall, rivers receding or not overflowing, drought, locust invasions, and plague epidemics often caused famines. In such cases, people who even eat animal carcasses, with a feeling of helplessness, began to see the dead bodies of their own race as food⁸. According to the information in the chronological table of James of Edessa, (1899, p. 227, 321) in the middle of the 6th century, there was such a severe famine in the eastern regions that many people could not get enough despite eating human flesh. Similarly, Matthew of Edessa (1993, p. 19) while talking about a famine that lasted for seven years in Edessa (modern day Urfa, Türkiye) in 952-953, mentions that people started to eat each other due to the severity of hunger.

In 1011, one of the worst famines that the medieval peoples would ever experience occurred in the Khorasan region, especially in Nishapur, one of the most important cities of this region. If the unusual records of the contemporary Ghaznavid historian al-Utbî (d. 1036) are correct, 100,000 men perished from starvation in Nishapur alone during this famine (al-Utbî, 1858, p. 366). The chronicler describes the misery of hungry people driven to cannibalism as follows:

“[...] And the intensity of this distress was so great that mothers ate their children and brothers made brothers' flesh the means of preserving life, and husbands killed their wives and boiled them, and cutting their members and limbs into pieces, dined upon them; and they seized men in the streets, killed and ate them, and people separating the flesh from the fat, would talk familiarly in the market and hold them up with the fingers, showing which of the joints and pieces of human flesh would best melt together (or cleaned the best joints and pieces of human flesh) and sold them in the market. [...] no one was so bold as to stir far from his house or to go far into the city, unless in company with others and well-armed” (al-Utbî, 1858, p. 367).

This famine, the severity of which is emphasized by many of the later chroniclers in similar terms, is also understood to have caused “*man-hunting*” in the city. An interesting incident narrated by al-Utbî on the occasion of this famine prompts us to think about the contrary actions that the feeling of hunger can make people do. According to the story, a man walking alone in the streets of Nishapur at night during the famine is suddenly dragged into a deserted street with a noose around his neck. At this moment, he sees an old woman coming out of a house and she pounces on him and hits him. The greedy old woman hits the man's testicles with both knees, knocking him unconscious. Luckily for the victim, a group of passersby at that moment cause these two starving people to flee in panic. The victim comes to his senses when he sees a few helpful people sitting next to him sprinkling water on his face (al-Utbî, 1858, pp. 367-368). Utbî's records on the following pages indicate

⁸ Such examples of cannibalism also appear to have an archaic character. For example, historian Zonaras writes that during a famine in Rome during the reign of Alexander Severus (222-235), the people were forced to consume human flesh (Zonaras, 2008, p. 73).

that man-hunting was also the subject of poetry of the age. A verse he quotes from a poet named Abd Lekanî is as follows:

*“Do not on any account go forth from the houses,
whether there be need or whether there be no need,
Fasten thy gates firmly with the bars,
Lest the famishing hunt for thee and cook thee into broth”* (al-Utbî, 1858, p. 370).

Human hunting, which emerged in harsh famine conditions, also manifested itself in the following centuries. Ibn Kathir's records (1994, XIII, p. 104) of the severe famine in Egypt in 1200 provide original content about the novel methods devised by hungry people to prey on others: *“A person would trick a poor person into taking him home under the pretence of feeding him or giving him something, then slaughter him and eat him. Many doctors who were called to treat patients were also slaughtered and eaten in their homes”*. The chronicler, who embellishes these records with an anecdote, tells the story of how a doctor escaped from two cannibals in a house to which he went with fear:

“A wealthy and reach man invited a specialist physician to his home. The physician went in fear. As the man drove him home, he gave alms to the people he encountered on the way, recited the remembrance of God, and blessed them. He was doing this a lot. The physician was suspicious of the man's behavior, but his greed compelled him to go to his home. When they arrived, he found the man's house in disrepair. The physician became suspicious again. When his friend, who was inside, came out, he said: ‘Is this what you brought us as prey?’ The physician, upon hearing this, became frightened and ran out of the house. The man and his friend immediately followed him and started chasing him. The physician had managed to free himself from them with great difficulty!” (İbn Kesir, 1994, XIII, p. 104-105).

In the following centuries, famines caused by adverse climatic conditions and natural disasters were not missing from the Muslim realm. The cannibalistic activities that took place on this occasion always occupied the first place among the interesting events described with horror by medieval authors. Reportedly, famines that occurred in Iraq and al-Jazirah in 1047-1048 and in Baghdad in 1057-1058 caused the people to feed on human carcasses (İbn Kesir, 1994, XII, p.173; İbnü'l Verđî, 2017, p. 26). Human hunting was also a common consequence of the famine of 1057-1058. Ibn Kathir writes (1994, XII, p. 174) that a person who was sent to a place as an ambassador by one of the rulers of the region this year was captured and killed by people who were starving, and was cooked and eaten.

One of the most frequent disasters in the Middle Ages was locust infestations. These winged destroyers, which cause famine in the regions where they pass in flocks by consuming the crops that provide food for people for a year while they are still in the field, are shown as one of the main causes of cannibalism in the sources of the age. For example, Michael the Great states (2019, p. 466) that the Mesopotamian famine triggered by the locust invasion in 1185 led to cannibalism in the region.

One of the main geographies that was devastated by famines in the Middle Ages and where people turned to cannibalism was Egypt. It is seen that famines here generally occur because the Nile River, which

gives life to the region, does not overflow. It is understood that the most severe famine that caused mass deaths in this geography took place in 1068-1069. Some Muslim chroniclers record that during this famine the people ate corpses and each other (Ibn al-Athir, 2002, p. 167; İbn Kalanîsî, 2023, p. 23; Canard, 1991, p. 859). Barhebraeus also shares (2003, p. 219) an interesting anecdote showing the severity of this famine:

“It is said that one day when the Wazir had alighted from his mule, and gone in to the Khalifah, three men came and snatched the mule from the hands of his syce, and cut its throat and ate it. And when this act had been made known to the Khalifah, he commanded and those three men were impaled. And during the night other men came and took the three men off the posts, and they cut off slices from the fleshy parts of their bodies and departed. And when the day broke the bones of the three men which were stripped bare were found heaped together under the impaling posts”

In 1198-1199, the failure of the Nile River to overflow triggered another severe famine in Egypt. The vivid descriptions by ‘Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadî (1998, p. 49), who was in Egypt during this famine, summarize what despair can do to human beings. According to the chronicler, when the famine, which started with drought, deepened with the plague epidemic, human flesh (especially the flesh of children) was consumed after dead animals, carcasses and dogs. Some people were even caught red-handed with grilled and cooked children's meat next to them⁹. In another famine in 1294-1295, about a century after this incident, it is stated that people again resorted to the flesh of dead people to survive (Abbas es-Safadî, 2003, p. 172; İbn Tağrıberdî, 2013, p. 84; Krenkow & Little, 1995, p. 759). As can be seen, Egyptian famines, which are directly related to the annual performance of the Nile River, have also been the dominant cause of passive cannibalism in the region.

Drought-induced famines have led to the same kind of cannibalism in distant and disparate cultural settings. For example, it is claimed that people ate each other due to drought-related famine in the city of Aksaray in Anatolia in 1299. So much so that, according to the claim of the chronicler Aksarayî (1943, p. 308), a native of this city, the water wells were filled with eaten human bones. Similar scenes were depicted in the famine that started in 1336 and lasted for seven years and devastated the Indo-Sindhî countries. Ibn Battuta (d. 1369), who was traveling in this region at the time, recorded what he heard about the famine from a few students from Khorasan: “[...] they went into a township called Akruha between Hansi and Sarsati, and finding it abandoned they went to one of its dwellings in order to pass the night, and found in a room in the house a man who had lit a fire and had in his hand a human foot which he was roasting in the fire and eating” (İbn Battuta, 1971, p. 734). This famine, which lasted for seven years, led to Battuta's extraordinary testimonies about cannibalism. According to this traveler, in 1342, while he was performing his duty of distributing food to the people in the India to reduce the effects of famine, he learned that a woman brought to him was a witch (kaftâr)¹⁰ and ate the heart of a child. Ibn Battuta was convinced when he was shown the body of the child and referred the cannibal woman to the regent of ruler for punishment (Ibn Battuta, 1994, p. 789).

⁹ See also Ibn al-Athir, 2016, III, p. 61; Barhebraeus, 2003, p. 350.

¹⁰ Kaftâr or Keftâr is a malicious, mythological female figure who “eats human flesh” in folk beliefs that have taken root especially in the Middle East and South Asia countries. For further information see: (Polat, 2019, 399-408).

Details in some of the chronicles indicate that even the dead in the grave were seen as a means of food and sustenance in times of famine. Agapius of Hierapolis (d. 942), in a narrative dated to 771, wrote the following about a famine in Mesopotamia: *“The people were plunged into such misery that some searched the graves, seized the corpses, cooked and ate them”* (Agapius, 1912, p. 546). It is known that such tendencies also occurred in later periods, on the occasion of the famine that occurred after a plague epidemic that occurred around Ahwaz in 1057-1058. The chronicler Ibn Kathir (1994, XII, p. 173), after describing the severity of this famine at length, wrote: *“Poor people were cooking and eating dogs, [even] opening graves, taking out the dead, cooking them and eating them”*. It is said that the Tafurs mentioned above, during the hunger crisis in Antioch in 1098, exhumed and ate not only the Muslim dead on the battlefield, but also those who had just been buried (Kaleli, 2019, p. 225).

When cannibalism caused by famine is examined, it could be easily noticed that child meat is often preferred in such cases. Indeed, in many cases, it is seen that the physiological tension triggered by hunger finds its effects mostly in children. This situation can be explained by reasons such as children being more vulnerable or their meat being fresher than others. There are a convincing number of cases of widespread consumption of children's meat in famine settings. In 945, during a famine that began in Baghdad and spread across the region, it is reported that vulnerable children became the favourite food of some hungry women. If the Buwayhid historian Miskawayhi's account is accurate, the flesh of many children was consumed during this starvation crisis:

“This year prices rose so high that people had absolutely no bread and ate the dead, or grass or any creature that had died a natural death or carrion. [...] Men, women and children would stand on the highroad perishing of famine and crying Hunger, hunger, till they collapsed and died. [...] A woman of the Hashim family was found who had stolen a child and baked him alive in an oven. She had partly eaten him and was seized eating the remainder; she was put to death. [...] Another woman was caught killing children and eating them, and the practice became common, so that many women were executed for this offence” (Miskawaihi, 1921, p. 99).

One of thirteenth century chronicler Barhebraeus (2003, p. 164) confirms the above incident with his words: *“many women were arrested and killed because they had roasted their babies in the oven and eaten them”*. So, he states that many child victims were the material of cannibalistic activities. While narrating the same famine that devastated people in Baghdad, Ibn al-Athir (1991, VIII, 398) mentions that a man took a child and cooked it, but was caught just as he was eating it. About half a century later, in 1010, during a famine that occurred in Mosul, babies and children were the primary food on the menu of starving people. Then fat people were caught and killed, and their meat was eaten (Barhebraeus, 2003, p. 185). Similar situations occurred during the famine in Baghdad in 1031. The chronicler who narrates the incident says *“[...] there was so great a famine in the wilderness that the nomads who lived there ate their camels and their horses, and even their children”* (Barhebraeus, 2003, p. 193). According to the records of Ibn al-Jawzi (1992, p. 66), during the severe Nishapur

famine¹¹ in 1101, a man was brave enough to walk around the market with his hand wrapped around his neck, left over from the body of a child he slaughtered and ate. The examples can be multiplied¹².

Such extraordinary situations naturally gave birth to a peculiar famine economy and turned the meat of especially vulnerable children and women into a commodity for trade. It is mentioned that during the famous famine in Egypt in 1069, a man was caught who killed women and children, sold their meat, and buried their skulls and bones in the ground (İbn Kesir, 1994, XII, p. 216). Ibn al-Athir wrote (2016, II, p. 94) that during the Khorasan famine in 1157-1158, a cook from Nishapur slaughtered an Alawî, cooked its meat and sold it. In 1221, a similar situation occurred when Genghis Khan's son Ögedey occupied a fortified castle in the Gur region. According to Juzjani's record, the people of the castle, who were exposed to hunger, were trying to resist the enemy by eating the flesh of people who died in the conflict, and on the other hand, they were drying some of them for later consumption or "to sell and make money". The chronicler, a contemporary of the incident, relates what he heard as follows:

"[...] when food of that kind failed, affairs reached such a pitch that they were wont to eat the flesh of whoever was killed, or who died, to that degree that every person used to keep his killed and dead for curing and eating. Some have related after this manner -the narrators are responsible for correctness- that there was a woman of the minstrel class in the fortress of Ashiyar. She had a mother and a female slave. Her mother died, and she dried her body; and her female slave likewise died, and she dried her body also. She sold the flesh of both of them, so that, from the two corpses, she acquired two hundred and fifty dinars of pure gold. At last, she also died" (Maulana Juzjani, 1881, pp. 1076-1077).

An Armenian chronicler went further and noted the market value of human flesh during a severe famine caused by Mongol sieges. Accordingly, during the siege of Mayyāfāriqīn by the Mongols in 1260, cannibalistic activities began, so much so that one libra (about half a kg) of human meat was sold for 78 dahekans [dinars] (Kirakos Ganjakets'i, 1986, Chapter LXI).

In addition, a small number of examples indicate that some people subjected to severe starvation consume their own flesh as a foodstuff. Such acts, called autophagic cannibalism, have very rarely occurred in history, again under the stress of a hunger crisis. Agathias, one of 6th century Byzantine chroniclers, mention that a poor man ate his own limbs due to the plague epidemic that broke out in a war environment: "In a paroxysm of insane fury the wretched man actually began to eat his own limbs, fastening on to his arms with his teeth and rending and devouring the flesh like a wild beast licking clean a putrefying wound. And so, feasting on his own flesh he gradually wasted away and died a most pitiful death" (Agathias, 1975, p. 35). In some cases, criminals sentenced to starvation as a severe punishment have become cannibals of their own bodies. During the reign of the Mamluk ruler Malik Nasser Muhammad, a rebellious emir named Sellar was captured

¹¹ This famine broke out due to conflicts between Seljuk dynasty members Barkyaruq and Mohammad [Tapar] b. Malikshah (See Ibn al-Athir, 2016, I, p. 35; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 112-113).

¹² For example see İbn Kesir, 1994, XII, p.173; Matthew of Edessa, 1993, p. 175.

and imprisoned in a castle and was denied food for days as punishment. According to the Mamluk historian Ibn Tagri Birdi (2013, p. 136), this person had to bite his own calf due to the desperation of hunger¹³.

2. Traditional Reasons: Ritual and Habit

Some extraordinary activities in history have been carried out under the name of tradition, with a sense of sacred obligation and ritualistic activities, without questioning their logical and human aspects. It is seen that the tradition of consuming the flesh of deceased ancestors has been practiced since ancient times among societies isolated from city life for this reason. In medieval text, eating human flesh with conventional impulses described as a traditional activity usually carried out among exotic peoples living in isolated environments such as islands, mountainous or forest areas. Probably for this reason, the word “*cannibal*” was used as a general term to describe all closed societies living in such environments. Unlike in famine situations, the main purpose of such cannibalism is often to keep a tradition alive rather than to suppress hunger as a physical need. In such cases, cannibals cook and eat their relatives who are sick and old and have no hope of recovery. Since this traditional activity is performed as a ritual of respect for the sacrifice, it can be included in the scope of endo-cannibalism. Shirley Lindenbaum (2004, p. 485) notes that these societies saw the act of eating human flesh as “*an expression of sublimation of victim*” for centuries. Von Josef Henninger (1940, p. 632) rightly thinks that such ritualistic cannibalism should be considered as a social issue, not an individual one.

Some records of Herodotus indicate that the chronology of the act of eating the flesh of ancestors as a historical ritual is a liturgical activity dating back to ancient times. While describing the Massagetae people, he mentions the following tradition of theirs: “[...] *when a man has attained a great age, all his kinsmen meet, and sacrifice him, together with cattle of several kinds; and when they have boiled the flesh, they feast on it. This death they account the most happy*” (Herodotus, 1859, Chapter I/216). The last sentence of Herodotus is remarkable. The emphasis that practice is a “happy death” for the person whose meat is eaten indicates that such activities are also carried out with the idea of a “*sacred tradition*”. According to subsequent records by Herodotus, this practice was kept alive especially among the Indians called Callatians and was considered a reason for honour. Another Indian community, called the Padaeans, had the custom of killing their sick relatives and eating their flesh in festive events (Herodotus, 1859, Chapter III/38, 99).

The 13th century travelers Plano Carpini and W. Rubruck also point out that this tradition was practiced in almost the same way among the Burithabets [Tibetan] people. Carpini (1996, p. 61) says: “*when someone’s father passes away they all gather around their relative and eat him; we were assured that this was true*”. After talking about the same things, Rubruck states (1900, p. 151) that this is perceived as a religious ritual among them and that their main purpose is to “*make their own bowels a sepulchre for them*”. However, according to him, Tibetans have recently abandoned this tradition because other people find these activities disgusting. Another Western traveller of the same century, Marco Polo (1844, p. 285), provides more detail about this traditional event:

“[...] *when a man falls sick, his relations send for the magicians, and inquire if he will recover, as these deceivers profess to know, by their enchantments and idols, whether he will live or die. In the latter case, the friends send for persons who place something over his mouth, by*

¹³ This event is also confirmed by the traveler Ibn Battuta (1958, pp. 159-160) with vague sentences.

which he is suffocated. They then cook the body, and all the kinsmen come and eat his flesh, taking care not to leave the smallest portion; which they believe would breed worms, and thus seriously afflict the soul of the deceased”.

As can be understood from all these records, cannibalisms that took place in the context of tradition were performed as a form of glorification that envisaged attributing respect, gratitude and sanctity to the deceased. In this framework, it can be said that the sanctity of the body has become more important than the inviolability of the body for those who commit such acts. Apart from that, it is also observed that the activity of cooking and eating the meat of first-degree relatives is performed as a religious obligation on certain days of the year within the framework of some kind of festival activity. The most main difference between this type of cannibalism and those described above is that the victim is a child and the act is performed not for traditional reasons but because of religious conviction. Ibn al-Nadim, in his work called al-Fihrist, writes that the pagans of Harran carried out such an activity while explaining the principles of belief. He describes the special practices of these pagans on April 28th as follows:

“They sacrifice a child born today to their idols. The child is slaughtered, boiled until its flesh falls apart, its flesh is removed and kneaded with semolina flour, saffron, hyacinth, cloves and oil, and turned into small tablets like figs, and baked in a newly built oven. [...] A woman, a slave, a slave child or a madman cannot eat from it. Only three kamrin (seers) may participate in the ceremony of slaughtering and making the child. The seers burn the remaining bones, cartilage, nerves and vessels (of the child) as a sacrifice to the gods” (en-Nedîm, 2019, p. 1006)¹⁴.

Some medieval sources also mention primitive peoples who, regardless of any traditional or sacred impulse, considered human flesh a tasty foodstuff and made it a habit to capture and eat strangers they saw. These activities of isolated societies as a form of human hunting can be considered within the scope of ex-cannibalism. Examples of this were described with striking resemblances by travellers who passed through Southeast Asian countries at different times. Eastern and Western travellers mention that some people living on deserted islands in this region, disconnected from the outside world, hunted for people and cooked and ate the people they caught. The records of Suleiman al-Tajir, 9th century Muslim traveller, on the Andaman Islands contain extraordinary details about an asocial community that had turned man-eating into a form of addiction:

“The nation of here eat people alive. They are black men with curly hair, ugly faces and eyes, and long legs. [...] They are naked and have no boats. If they had boats, they would eat everyone who passed by them. Sometimes ships get stuck at sea, cannot sail because there is no wind, [or] the ship runs out of water. Those on the ship approach them to ask for water. They eat some of these, and many people are saved from them” (Süleyman el-Tacir, 2018, pp. 19-20)¹⁵.

¹⁴ Ibn al-Nadim writes (2019, p. 1008) that the same tradition was repeated on August 8 with similar rituals.

¹⁵ See also Bosworth, 1995, p. 12; Ahmad, 1986, p. 407.

This information is confirmed by the observations of Marco Polo, who came to the same region centuries later. According to him, a group of natives who are accustomed to eating human flesh live in this land cut off from the mainland: “[...] *they are a most extraordinary race, having a head, teeth, and jaws like those of a mastiff dog. They are very cruel, and eat all the men of every other nation whom they can seize*” (Marco Polo, 1844, pp. 288-289). This traveller, who describes the natives living in the mountainous regions of Sumatra Island as barbarians who feed on human flesh, writes the following about them: “*When they take any man belonging to another country, who cannot redeem himself, they kill and eat him in like manner*” (Marco Polo, 1844, p. 285). The records of some geographers who lived in the following centuries indicate that the tendency to view human flesh as a food item was not unique to the peoples of Far East Asia. For example, Abu'l-Fida (d. 1331), writes (2017, p. 144, 153) that such cannibal tribes also existed in the African countries of Sudan and Matan.

As can be seen, cannibalism performed in the form of addiction is accepted by the narrator as natural extensions of an asocial primitiveness. The common point of the narratives of the travellers who describe these actions as pure barbarism and brutal fantasy is that they describe most of the perpetrators as living on islands or in mountainous/forest areas, semi-animal, and disconnected from social life.

3. Political Reasons: Vengeance and Outburst of Anger

The tendency to cook and eat the flesh of the murdered person as a manifestation of uncontrolled anger towards this person is another main reason for the cannibalism activities that took place in the Middle Ages. Although not as common as those committed for other reasons, deep anger towards those killed in some sovereignty conflicts, as well as those executed for rebellion and treason, has led to such cannibalism. When the case examples are subjected to a structural classification, it is understood that this punishment is mainly applied to crimes such as rebellion and treason, or is applied with an uncontrollable sense of revenge¹⁶. These cannibalisms occur in two ways: Feeding the enemy's flesh to the enemy's relatives/supporters or, in a more unusual form, eating the enemy's flesh himself as a sign of hatred. In both cases the distant targets are the same: Showing the intensity of anger towards the murdered and giving a direct message to those left behind, forcing them to do/not do something.

Two anecdotes reported by Herodotus indicate the archaic character of the method of cooking the flesh of the enemy and feeding it to one's relatives¹⁷. According to the narrative the Scythians, who were humiliated by the Median king Cyaxares (653-585 BC), cut up one of the children that this king entrusted to them to educate, with a feeling of revenge, cooked it with game animals and sent it to the king to eat. When Cyaxares and his guests ate this meat, unaware of everything, the Scythians quickly took refuge in the Lydian king Alyattes. When Cyaxares learned of the matter, he wanted them back, but his request was rejected, causing a five-year war between the Lydians and the Medes (Herodotus, 1859, Chapter I/73-74). According to another

¹⁶ Some examples indicate that this severe punishment is applied for various reasons in different countries. For example, Suleiman el-Tajir states that oppressing the people can lead to such a punishment by saying, “*In China, if someone loyal to a great ruler oppresses, sometimes they kill him and eat him*”. Sirufi, in a narrative about the Chinese country, implies that this punishment is also meted out to adulterous married men and women, thieves and murderers (Süleyman el-Tâcir, 2018, p. 34, 42).

¹⁷ In the Greek legendary narrative, it is stated that the Mycenaean king Atreus punished his brother Thyestes, who he claimed had seduced his wife, by making him eat the flesh of his own children (See Lindenbaum, 2004, p. 479; Price, 2003, p. 3).

account by Herodotus, this time the Median king Astyages (585-550 BC), out of anger towards a general named Harpagus, cooked his own child and fed the meat to himself.

“[...] when the son of Harpagus arrived, having slain him and cut him into joints, Astyages roasted some parts of his flesh and boiled others, and having had them well dressed, kept them in readiness. At the appointed hour, when the other guests and Harpagus were come, tables full of mutton were placed before the rest and Astyages himself, but before Harpagus all the body of his son, except the head, the hands, and the feet, these were laid apart in a basket covered over. When Harpagus seemed to have eaten enough, Astyages asked him if he was pleased with the entertainment; and when Harpagus replied that he was highly delighted, the officers appointed for the purpose brought him the head of his son, covered up with the hands and feet, and standing before Harpagus, they bade him uncover the basket and take what he chose. Harpagus doing as they desired, and uncovering the basket, saw the remains of his son's body, but he expressed no alarm at the sight, and retained his presence of mind; whereupon Astyages asked him if he knew of what animal he had been eating. He said he knew very well, and that whatever a king did was agreeable to him. After he had given this answer, he gathered the remains of the flesh and went home, purposing, as I conjecture, to collect all he could and bury it” (Herodotus, 1859, Chapter I/119).

Although these narratives, dating back to ancient times, give the impression of legendary fiction, the fact that similar examples have been found in different countries in subsequent times makes us think about what extraordinary anger towards the enemy can make a person do. Moreover, there are examples that indicate that the tradition was continued in the Middle Ages. For instance, it is narrated that Hind ibn Utbah, the wife of Abu Sufyan, took out and bit the liver of Hamzah, who was killed in the Battle of Uhud in 625. “[...] Then she ripped open Hamzah's body for his liver and chewed it, but she was not able to swallow it and spat it out” (Tabari, 1987, s. 129). Although it did not manifest itself in the form of directly consuming the flesh of the enemy, this incident (if true) indicates that such actions were carried out among the ancient Arab tribes with a deep sense of revenge (See also Henninger, 1940, p. 637, 639). As a marginal form of reckoning with the enemy, such methods continued to be practiced in subsequent centuries. While narrating the events of 987-988, Ibn al-Athir writes (1991, IX, p. 50-51) that in this year, the ruler of Ifrikiyya, al-Mansur, captured and skinned a Fatimid dai who was making propaganda in his region, and some of his slaves ate his flesh. The Fatimid envoys who were with Mansur at the time witnessed this heinous act and when they returned to the caliph, they said: *“We come from the side of demons that eat human flesh”*.

Another incident narrated by Ibn al-Athir from the year 1153 has many structural points in common with the cannibalism incident above. Accordingly, in that year, Qumaj, one of the influential emirs of Sanjar, won a battle with one of his enemies, Zanki b. Khalifa al-Shaybani and captured him along with his son, killed his son, fed his flesh to his father and then killed Zanki also (Ibn al-Athir, 2016, II, p. 58; Lange, 2008, p. 74). This radical action, which emerged as a manifestation of an overflowing sense of revenge, was often implemented with a momentary decision in order to restrain the violent anger towards the enemy. It is said that the Anatolian Seljuk ruler Kilidj Arslan II (1155-1192) also used this method against his enemies in 1172. This

year, the allied forces, including the Danishmands, surrounded Kilidj Arslan II in Kayseri and persistently demanded from him the four Danishmand dynasty members he held hostage. According to Syriac chroniclers, Kilidj Arslan II implemented an unusual method to deter them and show his determination. *“He slaughtered one of them, roasted him in fire, and sent him on a plate to his father with bread as a meal in addition, he threatened that if they would ask for the three others, he would send in the same manner. When the [allied] Turks realized this, they grew fearful”* (Barhebraeus, 2003, pp. 296-297; Michael the Great, 2019, p. 342).

There are examples that can be said this tradition, as a functional method of deterrence, also found its counterpart among the Crusaders. According to the records of Willermus Tyrensis, during the siege of Antioch in 1098, the Crusader commander Bohemond implemented this unusual practice to intimidate those he thought were spies within his army. Bohemond killed a few Turks whom he had previously captured, roasted their meat, and after presenting it to the princes, he declared in front of everyone that *“the flesh of all enemies and spies will suffer such a fate”*. According to the author, this measure was quite effective; The spies, frightened by the horror, returned to the countries they came from and told that the Crusaders were *“people who filled their stomachs with the flesh of the enemy”* (William Archbishop of Tyre, 1943, Chapter IV/23).

It seems that this method did not lose its appeal even in the late Middle Ages. The 14th century traveller Ibn Battuta reports (1971, p. 711) that in 1328, the ruler of Delhi, Muhammad Tughluq, captured a man named Bahâ al-Din Kusht-Asp who rebelled against him and fed his flesh to his children: *“The Sultan then ordered him to be flayed alive, and when he had been flayed his flesh was cooked with rice and sent to his sons and his family. The remains of him were put in a platter and thrown to the elephants to eat, but they would not eat it”*.

In addition to feeding the enemy's flesh to their relatives out of a sense of revenge, actions such as eating the enemy's flesh himself were also carried out. Such a situation can be interpreted as the outcome of a deeper hatred towards the victim. Historically, such activities are most common among the Mongols, who made the feeling of revenge a taboo. Records of Western travellers who travelled to Mongolian countries in the 13th century are clustered at the same point. Traveler Marco Polo (1844, p. 135), who confirmed the cannibalism of the Mongols due to their anger against criminals and traitors, conveys his observations on this subject as follows: *“I must tell you, too, another of their customs, that when any man is judged and condemned to death by his lord, they cook and eat him, but not when he dies a natural death”*. Similar statements are repeated by Simon of Saint-Quentin (2006, p. 21), who was sent as an ambassador to the Mongols in 1248: *“[...] they eat human flesh like lions do. Fried over fire and boiled in water. When they catch someone who is against them and an enemy, they gather in a large crowd to eat that person as revenge for the rebellion against them. They greedily suck his blood like hell's leeches”*. Another traveller of the same century, Ricoldus De Monte Crucis, embodies the observations of the two travellers above through an actual incident. Accordingly, during the Syrian campaign of the Mongol Khan Abaqa, a Tatar lord who attempted to rebel was captured and sentenced to death. Meanwhile, some Mongolian women appear before the Khan and demand that the rebel be handed over to them. When the Khan approves this request, the women take the rebel and cook him alive *“to set an example for others”* and they cut his body into small pieces and send them to other men in the army to eat (Tvrkovic, 2013, p. 191).

Another incident of cannibalism, which took place during the time of the same Mongol ruler, with the same justification and the same feeling of revenge, was reported by the Armenian chronicler Hetum. Seljuk vizier Muin al-Din Suleiman Parwana, who was held responsible for the decisive defeat of the Mongols in the Battle of Albistan against the Mamluks, was tried and sentenced to death for allegedly collaborating with the enemy and treason. Hetum writes (2004, Chapter 34) that the Tatars firstly divided him into two on August 2, 1277, “*as per their tradition*”, and took a piece of Parwana's meat at every meal and ate it with the nobles. In some cases, the people acted before the official authorities, executed the guilty themselves, and cooked and ate his meat with emotions that manifested themselves in the form of an explosion of anger. Mongolian statesman Majd al-Mulk suffered such a fate in 1282. Accordingly, when the person in question was imprisoned for trial, he was fraudulently taken from the guards by the people and hastily slaughtered. Meanwhile, people from various nations who were present cooked and ate his flesh and shouted until the morning (Juvainî, 1958, pp. xxiv-xxxv).

The act of eating the flesh of the enemy as an expression of unbridled revenge is practiced by some island natives (except as a ritual). Marco Polo wrote (1844, p. 275) the following when describing Zipangu and the surrounding islands: “*I shall only mention, that any idolater of these isles, when he captures an enemy, who cannot procure a ransom in money, invites his friends, who cook and eat the prisoner, reckoning his flesh the most delicate food that can be obtained*”.

As can be seen, the practice of eating the flesh of a fierce enemy or feeding it to his relatives/supporters was a tradition that the medieval ruling class inherited from ancient times in order to take revenge on the enemy with an extraordinary method. What is most striking about this kind of cannibalism is that it is almost always carried out by passionate hatred and revenge. Moreover, as can be easily understood, the main focus of this activity is not to feed oneself or fulfil a ritual, but to take revenge on those who rebel and betray by giving them one of the heaviest punishments, and also to intimidate those who have the potential to commit the same crimes.

4. Governmental Reaction and Punishment of Cannibalism

In the Middle Ages, depending on various cultural environments, states sometimes killed those who committed serious crimes and handed them over to cannibals, and sometimes imposed severe punishments on those who practiced cannibalism. Therefore, while the act of cannibalism sometimes caused a painful punishment, sometimes it could be the punishment itself. The cases where cannibalism is considered a crime and severely punished by the official ideology are usually those that occur at the hands of ordinary people on the occasion of famine and starvation¹⁸. Others would not be considered crimes because they were practiced to keep a sacred tradition alive among primitive peoples who did not have the concept of the state, or they would not be subject to punishment because they were carried out as a political manoeuvre by an untouchable focal point (ruler, governor, etc.) representing the state itself.

It is confirmed by the common discourses in the chronicles that medieval states generally imposed heavy punishments such as execution or burning on those who consumed human flesh in times of famine. For

¹⁸ In case of famine, the first and most important reaction of the state was usually to distribute money or supplies to the public (See Ibn Battuta, 1994, p. 789).

example, during the famine of 945 in Baghdad, women caught baking and eating children were punished with death. According to al-Utbî (1858, p. 367), during the great Khorasan famine in 1010, some people selling human flesh in the markets were caught and executed after human bones were found during a search of their homes. Likewise, during the Khorasan famine of 1157-1158, a cook who cooked and sold human meat was caught and killed right there. In 1198, during the famine in Egypt, another person who committed the same crime was given an even more exemplary and severe punishment. According to Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadî (1998, p. 49), people who were found to have consumed the flesh of children during this famine were executed by burning. Ibn Battuta also noted (1994, p. 789) that during the famine in 1342 in the Indian country, a woman who ate the heart of a child was burned to death. In some cases, the ruling class took measures other than the death penalty to prevent the eating of carcasses in a wartime environment. When the Crusader nobles heard that the soldiers were starving and consuming human carcasses during the siege of Ma'arrat al-Nu'man, they gathered all the corpses outside the city and had them burned (Peter Tudebode, 1974, p. 174). This detail provided by Tudebode, who personally participated in the Crusades, indicates that the ruling class was not moderate or tolerant of consuming human meat, even during severe hunger crises. However, in some exceptional cases, it is seen that the government turns a blind eye to passive cannibalism (consumption of the flesh of dead people). For example, according to Joshua (1882, Chapter LXXVII), during the famine in the city of Amida in 504, the governor of the city sentenced most of the women who hunted people and ate their flesh to death, but allowed some of them to eat the corpses of the dead.

In cases of cannibalism, punishments are sometimes meted out in the form of “*tit for tat*”, exposing the offender to the crime he has committed. Especially during times of famine, those who ate or traded human flesh were themselves killed and fed to hungry people. In 1069, during a famine in Egypt, a man was caught killing women and children, selling their flesh, and burying their skulls and bones in the ground, and was himself killed and his flesh eaten as punishment (Ibn Kesir, 1994, XII, p. 216).

5. Psycho-historical Background of Medieval Cannibalism

What are the determining psychological impulses behind cannibalism as an open challenge to the inviolability of the human body? Based on the examples given above, at least three main factors that fed this psychology in the Middle Ages can be considered: Starvation, tradition and anger. Among these, the ones that deserve the most to be evaluated as psychopathological cases are undoubtedly the ones that occur with the feeling of revenge and hatred. This type of cannibalism, performed without the impulse of a sacred tradition or a state of physical necessity, manifests as an expression of a visible tantrum. A person's wrath to the point of eating the flesh of the enemy necessitates a focus on the psychological and emotional reasons behind the action.

As can be understood from similar expressions of the sources, cannibalism in a state of necessity is an act accompanied by a complex psychological impulse. In such situations, where emotional and physiological orientations are in deep conflict, the tendency of the survivors to eat the dead (passive cannibalism) manifests itself, accompanied by a dominant psychology of helplessness. In such cases, physiological needs, which have become an uncontrollable orientation, have a striking authority over parental, husband-wife motives. So much so that it is said that severe hunger crises sometimes lead parents to act such

as selling their own children into slavery¹⁹ and sometimes, more horrifyingly, feeding on the flesh of their own children. The writings of John bar Penkaye, one of the authors of the 7th century, about a famine incident dated to 686-687, summarize this conflicting situation between the feelings of motherhood and hunger: *“sometimes in the evening she might be sleeping with her children, but in the morning their lives had been put to a silent end”* (Brock, 1992, p. 71; Duygu, 2017, p. 136). Another chronicler (2021, p. 261), who tells the story of a similar famine in 747-748, explains the mental state of parents who were in a severe hunger crisis with the following sentences: *“Parents were staying away from their own children”*.

Such incidents have also been recorded in some Islamic chronicles. For example, Ibn Kathir recorded (1994, XI, p. 133) that during a famine in Tabaristan in 894-895, parents were forced to eat their own children. In the above-mentioned Nishapur famine of 1011, it was stated by authors contemporary with the incident that the meat of children, even siblings and spouses was used as food for hungry people (al-Utbî, 1858, p. 367). What Barhebraeus wrote (2003, p. 193) while describing the Baghdad famine in 1031 is valuable in terms of showing the psychological dimensions of the issue: *“And a man would exchange his child for that of his fellow so that he might not suffer (or, feel it) when he pounded him up”*. An Armenian chronicler also describes the helpless state of the Mayyāfāriqīn people, who were exposed to famine due to the difficult Mongol Siege in 1260, and wrote the following after stating that all feelings of compassion have disappeared: *“Fathers ate sons, and women ate their daughters; and they did not spare the fruit of their wombs. Lovers renounced their loved ones and friends, their acquaintances”*. Likewise, the details of the Mongol siege of Ashiyar Castle are noteworthy in terms of showing the impotence of kinship relations against the feeling of hunger (Maulana Juzjanî, 1881, pp. 1076-1077).

Although few in number, there are examples of such events in which dialogues are conveyed about the feelings of the perpetrators and why they did this. For example, a woman who was caught cooking and eating her dead child during a great famine during the Siege of Malatya in 1258 defended her actions as follows: *“If I hadn't eaten him, the wolves would have eaten him. I wanted to survive by eating him. I didn't kill him. I ate him after he died”* (İbnu'l İbri, 2011, pp. 31-32). On the other hand, narratives have survived to this day that, in times of severe famine, some parents offered their own meat to their children to prevent them from starving. The Egyptian chronicler al-Nuwayrî (d. 1333) told an interesting story about a severe famine in Egypt in 1200:

“[during the famine] some people heard a woman's scream, sometimes decreasing and sometimes increasing. When they followed the sound, they reached a house in which a fat woman was lying on the floor. A young man was cutting meat from this woman's thigh. When they saw this, the woman said to them: Don't harm him. He's my son. Because of the pain we felt from hunger, I told him to cut off my meat and eat it and be satisfied” (al-Nuwayrî, 2005, p. 6).

This incident -although it may seem hard to believe- is noteworthy as it shows that the feeling of motherhood manifests itself with an opposite psychology in times of famine. The conflicting psychology of the

¹⁹ According to a case recorded by Michael the Great, many people had to sell their children due to the famine that raged in 1185. For this reason, in the city of Donisar (modern day Kiziltepe, Türkiye) alone, 22,000 boys and girls were sold in writing. According to the chronicler, they were taken to Babylon as slaves.

clergy, who were exposed to the provocative tension of hunger along with the city people, may also be insightful on this subject. For example, the words of the archpriest of Mayyāfāriqīn, who was forced to eat dead human flesh along with the helpless people during the Mongol siege of 1260 and confessed his sins in tears, were noted by Armenian chronicler Vardan. The details conveyed here are interesting as they show the psychological state of mind of a clergyman who had to commit this disgusting act. Accordingly, after committing this sin, the archpriest in question repeatedly cried out and asked for forgiveness for himself. He also confessed his sin in writing so that those after him would see this and pray for him and ask for forgiveness (Müverrih Vardan, 2017, p. 107). Despite this, it can be said that not every clergy has the same sensitivity. For example, it is interesting that a cleric (monk Peter) himself recommended the cannibalism committed by 10 thousand Crusader soldiers in Antioch in 1098. According to the source who reported the incident, Peter described it as *“a job that had to be done”* in order to survive, and then pointed to dead Muslim meat to the hungry soldiers. It is said that with this permission of the monk, approximately 10.000 Crusader soldiers (Tafurs) flocked to the flesh of the dead Muslims clustered in front of the city walls. The 20.000 Muslims who watched these cannibals in tears, hanging from the walls of city, and who witnessed in horror the flesh of their co-religionists being eaten by enemy soldiers, muttered the following: *“These are not Frenchman. They are living devils”* (Anonymous, The Chanson of D’Antioche, 2011, pp. 200-201).

Analysing the psychology of those who experienced these events as well as the mental states of those who described them may be useful in determining the place of cannibalistic activities within the social values of the age. Most medieval chroniclers tended to view cannibalism, carried out in cases of necessity, as the last and most disgusting option for survival. All chroniclers, whether Muslim or Christian, narrate such events with a palpable sense of horror, often with disgust, and reflect such actions as a manifestation of *“man’s animalization”*. Robert the Monk (2016, p. 186), who had to describe the consumption of the dead by the Crusaders at the siege of Ma’arrat al-Nu’man in 1098, qualified the event as *“a horrible thing to describe”*. Another author, after describing the same event with disgust, uses the following expression, emphasizing the reasons dimension of the issue: *“There is no sharper sword than long drown out hunger”* (Aachen, 2007, p. 375). Travelers who travelled to distant countries and described cannibalism motivated by tradition and habit or revenge added fear to these emotions. For example, Marco Polo described (1844, p. 135) the cannibalistic activities of the Mongols over the flesh of the enemies they killed with words such as disgusting, animalistic and frightening.

Conclusion

What is the probability that all these stories are fiction? Could these be products of the exotic fantasies of medieval chroniclers/travellers? Today, people at all levels, whether they have a specialty or not, have come to rely on the idea that cannibalism is an imaginary, unrealistic discourse that is fed by folkloric narratives. The truth is that it is difficult to pick out exaggeration or fiction from historical cannibalism cases. It is well known that both Muslim and Christian authors were concerned with making their works interesting for the reader by including such extraordinary events in the narrative. However, before rejecting experiences related to cannibalism with a rigid attitude, it is necessary to think once again about what the drive of hunger, the historical passion for traditional rituals and outbursts of anger can make a person do. First of all, the remarkable structural similarities in cannibalism cases occurring in different geographical and cultural environments necessitate an

examination of the causes before concluding that all these are purely imaginary discourses.

When the historical reasons for such an extraordinary act as consuming human flesh are examined, it is realized that these are exceptional factors such as famine, outbursts of anger and traditional impulses that often override the willpower. In the Middle Ages, in times and environments where such special conditions occur, a stable cluster of cannibalistic stories makes itself felt. Such gastronomic excesses, which emerged especially in cases of famine and turned into a mass perversion over time, are abundantly mentioned in the sources of the era as manifestations of the survival instinct. It can be said that this type of cannibalism, which temporarily puts physical needs before cultural, humanitarian or moral values, is not institutionalized and ends when the hunger crisis is over. In cannibalism that is carried out with the savage instinct triggered by deep anger towards the enemy, emotional rather than physical instincts are decisive, but in such cases, human-eating also manifests itself as a short-term activity. On the other hand, it is understood that cannibalism, which takes place in isolated environments and can be defined as a kind of intra-tribal barbarism, stems from the fact that human flesh is seen as a delicious foodstuff. Ritualistic cannibalism performed as a religious/ceremonial rite is similarly persistent, but it appears that these acts are performed to fulfil a religious duty rather than to satisfy physical/emotional needs. In conclusion, considering what famines, wars and epidemics, hunger as a physiological need, the eclipse of anger or the tendency to tabooize traditions can do to a person, it can be concluded that the cases of cannibalism that occurred in the historical process are not the work of the authors' fictional world. Therefore, it is best to reconsider historical cannibalism in the context of the unique conditions of its time before evaluating it as semi-legendary or a product of imagination. In addition, since an act such as cannibalism has not only historical but also anthropological, ethnological, psychopathological and sociological dimensions, the need for multidisciplinary studies on this subject is obvious.

References

- [1] Aachen, Albert (2007), *Historia Ierosolimitana: History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, (Eng. Trans. S. B. Edgington), Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- [2] Abbās al-Ṣafadī (2003), *Nuzhat al-Mālik wa'l-Mamlūk fī Mukhtaṣar Sīrat man Waliya Miṣr min al-Mulūk*, (Thk. O. A. Tadmori), al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya li'l-Ṭibā‘a wa'l-Naṣh, Beirut.
- [3] ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī (1998), *Kitāb al-Ifāda wa'l-‘tibār fī'l-Umūr wa'l-Mushāhadāt wa'l-Ḥawādīṭ al-Mu‘āyana bi-Arḍ Miṣr*, 2nd Edition, (Thk. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd-Allāh al-Shaykh), al-Hay’a al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma li'l-Kitāb, (Cairo).
- [4] Agapius (Mahboub) de Menbidj (1912), “Kitāb al-‘Unvan: Histoire universelle”, (Ed. and Fr. Trans. A. A. Vasilev), *Patrologia Orientalis*, II. 2, vol. VIII, (397-550). Firmin-Didot, Paris.
- [5] Agathias (1975), *The Histories*, (Eng. Trans. J. D. Frendo), Walter De Gruyter, Berlin.
- [6] Ahmad, S. M (1986), “Hind”, *Encyclopedia of Islam* (2nd Edition), vol. III, Leiden.
- [7] Aksaraylı Kerimeddin Mahmud (1943), *Müsamerat al-Ahyar (Selçukî Devletleri Tarihi)*, (Turk. Trans. M. N. Gençosman), Ulusoglu Press, Ankara.
- [8] al-Nuwayrī (2005), *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab*, vol. XXIX, (Eds. N. M. Fawwāz-H. K. Fawwāz), Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, Beirut.
- [9] al-Uṭbī (1858), *The Kitāb-i-Yaminī*, (Historical Memoirs the Amir Sabaktagin, and the Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna), (Eng. Trans. J. Reynolds), W. H. Allan & Co, London.
- [10] Anonymous (1979), *The Deeds of the Franks and Other Pilgrims to Jerusalem*, (Ed. R. Hill), Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- [11] Anonymous (2001), *The Secret History of the Mongols*, (Eng. Trans. U. Onon), Routledge, London.
- [12] Anonymous (2011), *The Chanson of D’Antioche: An Old French Account of First Crusade*, (Eng. Trans. S. B. Edginton-C. Sweetenham), Ashgate Publishing, Farnham.
- [13] Bar Hebraeus (2003), *The Chronography of Gregory Abū’l Faraj*, vol. I, (Eng. Trans. E. A. W. Budge), Gorgias Press, New Jersey.
- [14] Başkumandan Simbat (1946), *Vekayināme (951-1334)*, (Turk. Trans. H. D. Andreasyan), [unpublished copy of the TTK].
- [15] Blake, Robert P.- Frye, Richard N. (1949), “History of the Nation of the Archers (The Mongols) by Grigor of Akanc, Hitherto Ascribed to Matak, ia The Monk: Armenian Text Edited with an English Translation and Notes”, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 12, ¾, (269-399).
- [16] Bosworth, C. Edmund (1968), “The Political and Dynastic History of the Iranian World (A.D. 1000-1217)”, *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V, (1-203).
- [17] Bosworth, C. Edmund (1995), “Nicobars”, *Encyclopedia of Islam* (2nd Edition), vol. VIII, Leiden.
- [18] Brock, Sebastian P (1992), *Studies in Syriac Christianity*, Variorum, Hampshire.

- [19]Can, Umut (2021), 1234 Yılı Anonim Süryani Vekâynamesi'nin Tercüme, Tahlil, Tenkid ve Sunumu (7-13. Yüzyıllar/İslâm Sonrası Döneme Ait Kayıtlar), Celal Bayar Üniversitesi, Manisa. (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis).
- [20]Canard, M (1991), "Fatimids", Encyclopedia of Islam (2nd Edition), vol. II, Leiden.
- [21]Carpini, G. di P (1996), The Story of the Mongols Whom We Call the Tartars, (Eng. Trans. E. Hildinger), Branden Publishing Co., Boston.
- [22]Duygu, Zafer (2017), Süryani Tarih Yazıcılığında Geç Antikçağ, Divan Publications, İstanbul.
- [23]Ebü'l-Fida (2017), Ebü'l-Fida Coğrafyası. (Turk. Trans. R. Şeşen), Yeditepe Publications, İstanbul.
- [24]en-Nedîm, Muhammed b. İshak (2019), el-Fihrist, (Turk. Trans. R. Şeşen), TYEKB Publications, İstanbul.
- [25]Ewald, Volhard (1939), Der Kannibalismus, Strecker Und Schröder, Stuttgart.
- [26]Fulcher of Chartres (1998), The First Crusade the Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Materials, (Ed. E. Peters), University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.
- [27]Henninger, J (1940), "Kannibalismus in Arabien? Eine quellenkritische Untersuchung im Anschluß an eine neue Monographie über den Kannibalismus", Anthropos, 35/36, (631-646).
- [28]Herodotus (1859), The Histories, (Eng. Trans. H. Cary), Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York.
- [29]Hetum (2004), History of the Tartars: The Flower of Histories of the East, (Eng. Trans. R. Bedrosian), New Jersey. <https://www.attalus.org/armenian/hetumtoc.html> (Access Date: 11. 01. 2025).
- [30]Ibn al-Athir (2002), The Annals of Saljuq Turks: Selection from al-Kâmil fi'l Ta'rikh of İzz al-Din İn al-Athir, (Eng. Trans. D. S. Richards), Routledge, London.
- [31]Ibn al-Athir (2016), The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period from al-Kâmil Fi'l-Ta'rikh, vol. I-III, (Eng. Trans. D. S. Richards), Routledge, London.
- [32]İbn Kalanisi (2023), Zeylû Tarihi Dımaşk Tercümesi, (Turk. Trans. H. Aydın), KDY Yayın, İstanbul.
- [33]İbn Kesir (1994), Büyük İslam Tarihi (el-Bidâye ve'n-Nihâye), vol. XI-XIII, (Turk. Trans. M. Keskin), Çağrı Publications, İstanbul.
- [34]İbnü'l Verdî (2017), Bir Ortaçağ Şairinin Kaleminden Selçuklular, (Turk. Trans. M. Alican), Kronik Publications, İstanbul.
- [35]İbnü'l-Adîm (2011), Biyografilerle Selçuklular Tarihi: İbnü'l Adim Bugyetü't-taleb fi Tarihi Haleb (Seçmeler), (Turk. Trans. A. Sevim), TTK Publications, Ankara.
- [36]İbnü'l-Adîm (2014), Zübdetü'l-Haleb min Târîhi Haleb`de Selçuklular (h. 447-521=1055-1127), TTK Publications, Ankara.
- [37]Ibn al-Jawzî (1992), al-Muntazam fi Tarikh al-Umam wa-l-Muluk, Dâr al-Kutub al-İlmiyya, Beirut.

- [38] Ibn al-Qalânîsî (2002), *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, (Eng. Trans. H. A. R. Gibb), Dover Publications, New York.
- [39] Ibn Battuta (1958), *The Travels of Ibn Battuta (A.D. 1325-1354)*, vol. I, (Eng. Trans. H. A. R. Gibb), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- [40] Ibn Battuta (1971), *The Travels of Ibn Battuta (A.D. 1325-1354)*, vol. III, (Eng. Trans. H. A. R. Gibb), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- [41] Ibn Battuta (1994), *The Travels of Ibn Battuta (A.D. 1325-1354)*, vol. IV, (Eng. Trans. H. A. R. Gibb), Cambridge University Press, London.
- [42] İbn Tağnberdî (2013), *en-Nücumu'z Zahire (Parlayan Yıldızlar)*, (Turk. Trans. A. Batur), Selenge Publications, İstanbul.
- [43] İbnü'l Esir (1991), *İslam Tarihi (el-Kamil fi't-Tarih Tercümesi)*, vol. VIII-IX, (Turk. Trans. A. Özeydin), Bahar Publications, İstanbul.
- [44] İbnu'l İbrî (2011), *Tarihu Muhtasari'd-Düvel* (Turk. Trans. Ş. Yaltkaya), TTK Publications, Ankara.
- [45] James of Edessa (1899), "The Chronological Canon James of Edessa", (Eng. Trans. E. W. Brooks), *Zeitschrift Für Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft*, LIII, (261-327).
- [46] John of Worcester (1998), *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, vol. III, (Eng. Trans. P. McGurk), Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- [47] Joshua the Stylite (1882), *The Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite: Composed in Syriac A.D. 507* (Eng. Trans. W. Wright), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- [48] Juvainî 'Alâ' al-Dîn 'Atâ Malik (1958), *The History of the World-Conqueror*, (Eng. Trans. J. A. Boyle), Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- [49] Kaleli, Emrullah (2019), "Haçlı Seferlerinde Yamyamlık Hadiseleri", *Turkish Studies*, 14 (2), (217-231).
- [50] Kirakos Ganjakets'i (1986), *History of Armenians*, (Eng. Trans. R. Bedrosian), New York. <https://www.attalus.org/armenian/kgto.html> (Access Date: 21.01.2025).
- [51] Krenkow, F.-Little, D. P (1995), "Safadî", *Encyclopedia of Islam* (2nd Edition), vol. VIII, Leiden.
- [52] Lange, Christian (2008), *Justice, Punishment and the Medieval Muslim Imagination*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- [53] Lewis, Suzanne (1987), *The Art of Matthew Paris in the Chronica Majora*, University of California Press, London.
- [54] Lindenbaum, Shirley (2004), "Thinking About Cannibalism", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 33 (1), (475-498).
- [55] Marco Polo (1844), *The Travels of Marco Polo*, (Eng. Trans. H. Murray), Oliver and Boyd Co., Edinburgh.

- [56]Matthew of Edessa (1993), *The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, (Eng. Trans. A. E. Dostourtan), University Press of America, Lanham.
- [57]Maulānā [Juzjanī], Minhāj-ud-dīn Abū-‘Umar-i-‘Usmān (1881), *Ṭabaḳāt-i Nāṣirī: A General History of the Muḥammadan Dynasties of Asia Including Hindustan*, vol. II, (Eng. Trans. M. H. G. Raverty), Gibert & Rivington Co., London.
- [58]Michael the Great (2019), *The Chronicle of Michael the Great (The Edessa-Aleppo Syriac Codex)*, (Books XV-XXI from the Year 1050 to 1195 AD), (Eng. Trans. A. Harrak), Gorgias Press, Piscataway.
- [59]Miskawaihī (1921), *The Concluding Portion of the Experiences of the Nations*, vol. II, (Eng. Trans. D. S. Margoliouth), B. Blackwell, Oxford.
- [60]Müverrih Vardan (2017), *Türk Fetihleri Tarihi (889-1269)*, (Turk. Trans. H. D. Andreasyan), Post Publications, İstanbul.
- [61]Peter Tudebode (1974), *Historia de Hierosolymitano Itinere*, (Eng. Trans. J. Hugh-L. L. Hill), The American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.
- [62]Polat, İrfan (2019), “Anlatılardan Seyahatnamelere Olağanüstü Bir Varlık: Keftar ya da Kaftarküski”, *Türk Dergisi*, 7 (19), (399-408).
- [63]Polat, İrfan (2020), “Yamyamlığın Tarihi ve Van’da İnsan Yiyen Bir Topluluk: Mirovharlar”, *Motif Akademi Halkbilimi Dergisi*, 13/29, (1-19).
- [64]Price, Merrall Lewelyn (2003), *Consuming Passions: The Uses of Cannibalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Routledge, London.
- [65]Raymond D’aguilers (1968), *Historia Francorum Qui Ceperunt Iherusalem*, (Eng. Trans. J. H. Hill-L. L. Hill), The American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.
- [66]Robert the Monk (2016), *Robert the Monk’s History of the First Crusade (Historia Iherosolimitana)*, (Eng. Trans. C. Sweetenham), Routledge, London.
- [67]Rubenstein, Jay (2008), “Cannibals and Crusaders”, *French Historical Studies*, 31/4, (525-552).
- [68]Rubruck, W (1900), *The Journey of William of Rubruck to The Eastern Parts of the World* (Eng. Trans. W. W. Rockhill), Ashgate Publishing Co., London.
- [69]Sarı, Ahmet (2010), “Türk ve Alman Masallarında İnsan Yiyeceklik (Antropophagy)”, *Atatürk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 14/35, (229-249).
- [70]Simon de Saint Quentin (2006), *Bir Keşiş’in Anılarında Tatarlar ve Anadolu 1245-1248*, (Turk. Trans. E. Özbayoglu), Daktav Publications, Antalya.
- [71]Süleyman el-Tâcir (2018), *Doğu’nun Kalbine Seyahat*, (Turk. Trans. R. Şeşen), Yeditepe Publications, İstanbul.
- [72]Tabarî (1987), *The History of al-Tabari (Ta’rikh al-rusul wa’l-muluk)*, vol. VII, (Eng. Trans. W. M. Watt & M. V. McDonald), State University of New York Press, New York.

- [73] Tvrtkovic, Rita George (2013), *A Christian Pilgrim in Medieval Iraq Riccoldo Da Montecroce's Encounter with Islam*, Brepols Publishers, Turnhout.
- [74] William Archbishop of Tyre (1943), *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, (Eng. Trans. E. A. Babcock-A. C. Krey), Colombia University Press, New York.
- [75] William of Malmesbury (1847), *William of Malmesbury's Chronicle of the Kings of England: From the Earliest Period to the Reign of King Stephen*, (Eng. Trans. J. A. Giles), H.G. Bohn, London.
- [76] Zachariah of Mtylene (1899), *The Syriac Chronicle Known as That of Zachariah Mtylene* (Eng. Trans. E. W. Brooks-F. J. Hamilton), Methuen & Co, London.
- [77] Zonaras (2008), *Tarihlerin Özeti*, (Turk. Trans. B. Umar), Arkeoloji & Sanat Publications, İstanbul.

APPENDICES

Fig. 1: A Mongol Cannibal Feast Illustrated in “*Chronica Majora*” of Matthew Paris



Reference: Lewis, 1987, p. 286.