

The Byzantine - Turkish Frontier c1250-1300.

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HELENE AHRWEILER stated that the eastern frontier of Byzantium was unique: marked by division of faith (Christianity/Islam) and way of life (sedentary/nomad)¹. As such, it was very different from the frontiers that the Byzantines had in common with their western neighbours: indeed, its very difference may have helped to give Byzantine culture its particular distinctiveness from Latin Christendom in the years following the Arab onslaught in the seventh century².

This insight is worth exploring. The frontier's importance was emphasised for Turkologists by PAUL WITTEK who memorably wrote that in the frontier zone (*akra/uc*) 'la Tourquie se tourquise'³. This zone that was so crucial in forming the Byzantine identity was also crucial in transforming that culture into a Turkish society. However, the frontier zone was multi-faceted. AHRWEILER herself drew attention to frontiers that were ideological, administrative, fiscal, and military. We could also add the religious frontier. Ever since the Roman Empire had become at least nominally Christian under Constantine I in the 320s, the Christian emperor had assumed responsibility for the well-being of Christians living under non-Christian rulers⁴: with the loss of many of its eastern lands to the Arabs after the seventh century, the Byzantine emperor attempted to protect his subjects 'in partibus infidelium', and his patriarch confirmed the appointments of bishops in such sees as were outside any possible temporal Byzantine rule.

The cultural frontier was therefore more complex and deeper than any lines drawn on a map might suggest, as DIMITRI OBOLENSKY argued in his *Byzantine Commonwealth*⁵. It is now clear that the Byzantine state exercised considerable cultural hegemony beyond its notional frontiers, and this hegemony was present not only in the *uc*, where the transformation from Byzantium to Turkey was most marked, but even into the centre of the neighbouring Seljuk state. This has led to some serious misconception of the territorial extent of Byzantine power in our period. Many years ago now, DE JERPHANION raised the possibility of a Byzantine presence or even a province in Cappadocia under Kai-Khusrau I (1204-10) and Kai-Ka'us I (1210-19) on the basis of donor panels in Cappadocian churches dated by the era of the Laskarids of Nicaea⁶. This 'province' was linked to Byzantine domains by means of a 'corridor' between the ancient provinces of Lykaonia and Galatia between the Halys (Kızıl Irmak) and the Sangarios (Sakarya) rivers. This territorial chimaera was based on a passage of Gregoras⁷ which might just be construed as stating that Nicene power reached through the Galatian Pontos to Cappadocia.

This view, daring as it was, was unsurprisingly attacked⁸ on the grounds of the extravagant amounts of territory thereby ascribed to Nicaea. However, no scholar considered that the donor panels so carefully noted by DE JERPHANION were not testimony to Byzantine geographical extent but to its cultural hegemony over the Christian subjects and officials of the Sultanate of Rûm, and the Seljuks themselves. More recently, BALIVET has shown how a multi-cultural *élite* thrived in twelfth century Konya⁹. Not only were churches and Christian liturgical documents commissioned,

¹ AHRWEILER (1972), 227-30.

² AHRWEILER, *ibid*; HERRIN (1987), ch.7; DVORNIK (1948); RUNCIMAN (1955).

³ WITTEK (1952), 676.

⁴ FOWDEN (1993), ch.4.

⁵ OBOLENSKY (1971).

⁶ DE JERPHANION (1935).

⁷ *Histories* I.3 (Bonn, p.16).

⁸ ARNAKIS (1963); CHARANIS (1947); WOLFF (1949)

⁹ BALIVET (1994), 47-9; for the donor panel see p.45.

but also Christians held office. A donor panel of a church in the Ihlara gorge mentions its dedication by the emir Basil Giagoupes and his wife Tamara¹⁰. Here were Orthodox Christians who chose to live under and serve a Muslim state, rather than go into exile with their co-religionists. It was decisions made by individuals such as these, which enabled a new common culture to coalesce in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries and the success of this option made it more possible for the emperor's Orthodox subjects, alienated by his necessarily more western, pro-Catholic policies, to seek refuge with the nascent Turkish emirates and, ultimately, to accept Muslim domination after the capture of Constantinople in 1453¹¹ and thereby survive, albeit delicately, into this century¹². These cultural relations can be observed at all social levels: from the Greek secretariate employed by the Seljuks¹³ to the employment of Byzantine architects and masons by the Seljuks¹⁴, and of Seljuk masons by Byzantines¹⁵, as well as the re-use of attractive earlier architectural fragments, whether Byzantine or Seljuk.

Equally, the frontier spread westwards. We are aware of Komnenian turkophiles, among whom was the emperor Manuel I (1143-80) himself who had a chamber of his palace decorated in the Turkish style¹⁶ and was influenced by pro-Turkish councillors led by the Turkish exile John Axouch¹⁷. After the capture of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade in 1204, the Laskarid empire of Nicaea continued the good relations with the Seljuk court. After the battle of Köse Dağ the emperor received the sultan Kai-Ka'us and settled numerous renegade Türkmen groups within his state.

The zone of interaction therefore extended into the heart of each state. However, it is still necessary to establish the administrative and military frontier between the two states. We must first consider the evidence of Gregoras:

It was not only Bithynia which the Laskarids ruled, but also the coasts of the provinces, extending for a short length, but it also extended much into the mainland, indeed possessing land which stretched out very far; beginning from Karia and the Maiander River to the South, and reaching to the North as far as the Galatian Pontos and Cappadocia itself¹⁸.

The eastward extension is clearly specified as lying in the North. From Bithynia there were contacts with Paphlagonia, but only 'as far as', not including Cappadocia. The limiting agent was the other Byzantine cadet state of Trebizond, firmly in control of the North.

It is now necessary to define the eastern limits of the state. In the south, Lycia was a 'no-man's land'¹⁹. CLIVE FOSS has demonstrated that Byzantine presence there ceased in the eleventh century. Although difficult of access from the North (thereby excluding both Seljuks and Byzantines), Lycia was of crucial importance in providing harbours for fleets travelling to the West or to the East²⁰. The major roadstead at Kekova could be supplemented by smaller bases across the peninsula. Towards the end of the century we hear of Porto Genovese near the ancient Olympos²¹, newly acquired by the Genoese and supplied from the sea. In the early fourteenth century Abu'l-Fida mentions the raids of

¹⁰ THIERRY, N. and M (1963), 202-4.

¹¹ See ZACHARIADOU (1990-1).

¹² RUNCIMAN (1968).

¹³ DELİLBAŞI (1993).

¹⁴ See the masons' marks recorded by ERDMANN (1961).

¹⁵ See TAMARA TALBOT-RICE's discussion of the porches of Hagia Sophia in Trebizond in TALBOT-RICE (1968), 55-82.

¹⁶ MAGDALINO (1993), 118.

¹⁷ On whom, see ANGOLD (1984), 152-3, 165-6; MAGDALINO (1993), 194-5, 218-21, 254-5; MORAVCSIK (1958), 70-1.

¹⁸ *Histories* I.3 (Bonn, p.16).

¹⁹ On Lycia, see FOSS (1993), (1994), FLEMMING (1964).

²⁰ On the strategic importance of Lycia, see now KEEN (1998), 31-3.

²¹ FLEMMING (1964), 64.

Turkish ships across the Gulf of Makri/Fethiye²². He tells us that they were attacking the Kara'ites, a people who still called themselves by the name of their ancient province: Karia. This gulf, then, was the *uc* between the Türkmén and the Nicenes: as before, it was characterised by raiding²³, but now the raiding had the added sophistication of being carried out by sea. The Turks had gained seafaring experience in their contact with this rough coast. They were becoming a major threat. Byzantine neglect of this crucial area was to ensure that the southern Aegean was open to Turkish raids. This neglect dated not from the late thirteenth century, when much of the redeployment of troops to Europe took place, but from the very beginning of Laskarid power in Asia Minor, when the fortress of Makri/Fethiye, constructed by Anastasios II and strengthened by the Komnenoi²⁴ was abandoned. It became a base in the late thirteenth century for Mentese privateers.

Their opponent, the Nicene state, was formed out of the remains of the Thrakesian theme. Its central section was still designated as such into the thirteenth century, but its northern part was the theme of Neokastron, based on the new Komnenian forts of Pergamon and Chliara²⁵. Further east, the defence rested on the forts of the Sangarios/Sakarya sector: Leuke/Lefke, Melangeia, Kabaia/Geyve, and those recorded in the Ottoman chronicles as Cadırlu, Leblebici-Hisar and Çepiș²⁶

Between the forts were the urban strongpoints, also misleadingly known as 'kastro'. The most important were Magnesia ad Sipylon/Manisa, and Philadelphia/Alaşehir. These towns controlled access to the farmlands of the coastal plain from the plateau of Anatolia. The frontier had become that of the early twelfth century which was an essentially ecological frontier between the agricultural and urbanised coastal plain, and the grazing lands of the plateau. It was, however, a deep frontier, centring on the major river valleys: the Maiander/Menderes, and the Hermos/Gediz. At the top of the Maiander was Laodikeia/Denizli. Far beyond Byzantine control to the North was Kotyiaion/Kütahya, soon to be the capital of the Germiyan emirate.

Between the cities were the strongpoints of the *akritai/uc beğleri*. These were small castles held by independent lords in fief. In the second half of the thirteenth century they were to have their financial support withdrawn by Michael Palaiologos so that he could use the resulting resources in his western campaigns. Those remaining, as revealed by Aşikpaşazade and Neşri, had to make their own terms with the invaders.

Such was the Byzantine *akra*. The Turkish *uc* started well east of the political frontier. When Michael Palaiologos fled to the Turks in 1256, he travelled through a region under the control of nomadic Türkmén who robbed him of all his possessions²⁷. The *uc* was a debatable land, under the control of nomadic groups. Sedentarists could only be protected by the presence of forts, to which they could retire on the arrival of the nomads, and at which strong defensive forces could be concentrated. The upper reaches of the river valleys of western Anatolia lay on the crucial divide between arable and grazing land. The extent of each zone was ultimately determined by environmental factors, but temporary changes in the balance of power between the transhumant and the sedentarist could temporarily advance the extent of each zone. It was the Byzantine policy to maintain this zone as a wasteland²⁸. East of Magnesia or Philadelphia, therefore, Türkmén controlled the countryside: whoever controlled the strongpoints such as Laodikeia/Denizli or Philadelphia/Alaşehir controlled the surrounding area. Just as in the twelfth century the control of Choma and Soublaion had been bones of contention in the complicated war of position between the Seljuks and the Komnenoi, so in the thirteenth century, the cities at the heads of the valleys were the crucial centres by which regions might be won.

The early thirteenth century was a period of Laskarid-Seljuk collaboration. There is evidence that, because of the catastrophic condition of Seljuk holdings after the Baba'i revolt and the chaos

²² Cited in WITTEK (1934), 1-2.

²³ On the *uc* see PERTUSI (1972); HOPWOOD (1993), 129-33.

²⁴ FOSS (1994), 4-5.

²⁵ AHRWEILER (1960); FOSS (1982).

²⁶ FOSS (1990).

²⁷ AKROPOLITES 65; p.137 Heisenberg.

²⁸ HOPWOOD (1993), 130.

after Köse Dağ, the Laskarid state exported wheat to the Seljuks²⁹. Trade with Nicaea was worth the Seljuks' protection: as late as 1253 a caravansaray was constructed a mere seven kilometres north of Denizli (Ak Han near Goncalı)³⁰ in the contested territory. This was the furthest in the route established by the Altınapa Han (1201)³¹, Kızılören Han (1205)³², Kuruçeşme Han (1207)³³. The late date suggests an adventurous push into disputed frontier territories. The presence of this line of caravansarays also emphasises the need to protect the trade routes through this dangerous area and attests to the importance of such trade. In effect, these caravansarays served a similar function to the Byzantine forts: both provided strongpoints for the protection of goods and traders in an area where security was at a premium.

The Seljuks set down other markers in the *uc*. The most striking, of course, is the monument to Seyyit Battal Ghazi at Nakoleia/Seyyit Gazi. The dating of the *türbe* is disputed. The mosque is dated 1207, thus coinciding with the Seljuk control of the *uc* alluded to earlier. The *türbe* itself has a date of either 1092 or 1493/4³⁴. If, as seems most likely, the former date is correct, then the *uc* here in the highlands of Phrygia, had a major pilgrimage centre from an early date. It was always in the disputed land; and as such was a place of pilgrimage for those defining themselves as frontiersmen. The legend of Battal Gazi, like the Byzantine tale of Digenes Akrites³⁵, was based on the wars of the seventh and eighth centuries between the Arabs and Byzantines. Digenis, as his name implies, was the offspring of a cross-frontier love-match³⁶ and Battal Gazi was accidentally slain by his Byzantine beloved. Both Byzantines and Turks were telling the same romances about their frontier territories, and the people who lived there. Similar narrative patterns point to similar preconceptions and pave the way to an understanding: it might be best to understand the shrine at Seyyit Battal Gazi as a pilgrimage point for all the peoples in the *uc*, as well as taking the text along with the *Destan of Umur Paşa*³⁷ and the *Danışmendname*³⁸ as charter myths for Gazi principalities. The frontier was beginning to detach itself from the surrounding cultures, though the dominant narrative culture in this period was already Turkish.

Non-literary markers were also being erected in the *uc*. To the south of Seyyit Gazi lies the district of Kümbet; the village and valley both named after this furthest western monument of Seljuk type. It is unfortunately undated. It is, however, clear evidence of the need to claim the *uc* as possessed by erecting tomb monuments on its most debatable parts.

The frontier also made its mark on notionally Byzantine territories. During the 1220s and 1230s Turks were settled and integrated onto the Laskarid holdings in Asia Minor³⁹. The Byzantines also responded to raids of groups which did not wish to assimilate by pursuing them into the *uc*. The major raid of this type, extravagantly described as a 'crusade' by J.S.LANGDON,⁴⁰ was led by John Doukas Vatatzes as far as Laodikeia/Denizli to control Türkmen attacks. This detailed account of one incident merits serious consideration. For LANGDON, the necessity for this 'crusade' points to the hollowness of the peace between Nicaea and Konya celebrated by VRYONIS⁴¹. This is far from reality. There was indeed peace between the courts of Nicaea and Konya, but the Türkmen waged

²⁹ GREGORAS I 42-3.

³⁰ ERDMANN (1961), 67-72.

³¹ ERDMANN (1961), 29-32.

³² ERDMANN (1961), 45-9.

³³ ERDMANN (1961), 33-6. On this route, see FLEMMING (1964), 12-15.

³⁴ HASPELS (1971), 262.

³⁵ For text, see MAVROGORDATO (1956); RICKS (1990); for interpretation, see PERTUSI (1972), BEATON and RICKS, eds, (1993).

³⁶ HOPWOOD (1993), 130.

³⁷ Edited by MÉLIKOFF (1954).

³⁸ Edited by MÉLIKOFF (1960).

³⁹ AHRWEILER (1965).

⁴⁰ LANGDON (1992).

⁴¹ VRYONIS (1971), 130-3.

their own war in the *uc*. As CAHEN noted long ago⁴², the Byzantines were facing two contradictory 'politiques' carried out by the Seljuks and the Türkmén. This had been true in the days of Alp Arslan, and was no less true in the thirteenth century. Both sides fortified the frontier with cities and caravansarays to control the increasingly volatile populations of the *uc*. John Vatatzes was marching against Türkmén, not Seljuks.

Among these inhabitants of the *uc* were Byzantines who could only be recognised as such with difficulty. Pachymeres tells us that, in response to the Turkish threat, many landowners sold their land and bought sheep; a more fragile, but more mobile, form of wealth⁴³. In this area devoted to pastoral production, called by Byzantine authors an *eremia* (desert), Byzantines and Turks were cohabiting together. This had been so from the twelfth century, when Manuel Komnenos had been snubbed by Byzantines living around Lake Beyşehir who had largely assimilated to Turkish customs⁴⁴. In such a community, either party might provide a leader. Niketas Choniates⁴⁵ tells of a certain Manuel Mavrozomes, a Byzantine officer who had ranked highly enough to receive Kai-Khusrau I when in exile in Nicaea, who was granted by the Sultan a fiefdom in the Upper Maiander Valley at Chonai/Honaz and Laodikeia/Denizli. His fiefdom thus controlled the head of the valley and its master could therefore open it or close it to the passage of Türkmén. It is clear from the sources that he was a Seljuk appointment, and it is likely that he was a precursor of the later office of emir of the *uc*⁴⁶. Although an intimate of the Emperor also, he was considered an enemy by Theodore Laskaris who took the field against him and, after his defeat, was sufficiently elated to assume the Nicene throne. Any such concentration of power in the hands of a man of power whom both sides recognised was dangerous for the Byzantines.

Another such man might have been Manuel Palaiologos, whom we last met fleeing to the Turks through the *uc*. At the Seljuk court, he was made welcome by the Sultan 'Izz ad-Din Kai Ka'us II in whose service he fought vainly, if with great personal distinction, against the Mongols in 1256. By 1259, he was back in Nicaea and had assumed the throne. He was a Nicene Emperor who might have made a true *uc emir*. For a time, events seemed to go that way. In 1260, his former host, 'Izz ad-Din sought refuge in Nicaea after his expulsion by the Mongols. He ceded Laodikeia/Denizli to the Byzantines⁴⁷.

Byzantine control of Denizli was to be short-lived. A local man of power, Mehmet Beğ, recaptured the city and hung 'Izz ad-Din's followers from the walls⁴⁸. He is described as 'beğ al-Uci' by Aqsarayi, and it is initially unclear whether the author means this as the title of the Seljuk official, or as an independent ruler, as the title would mean later. The ambiguity is revealing: if Mehmet Beğ began his career as a Seljuk official, he certainly ended it as at least an aspirant to the mastery of an independent emirate; if he was not a Seljuk official, his aspirations to independence might have been masked by such a title, which later became copied by the independent emirates of Menteşe, Aydın, Karaman, and Germiyan. He himself destroyed the ambiguity of his status by appealing for recognition to Hülagü Han in Tabriz. The Mongols ordered their dependant Seljuks to send an army to suppress him. At the height of his power, Mehmet Beğ held the country from Denizli to Dalaman.

The suppression of Mehmet Beğ was the work of the Mongol deputy, the *pervane* Mu'in ad-Din Sulayman. Under his control, Seljuk culture and power in Anatolia underwent a brief, if fertile renaissance. The *uc* was safe in his hands. Within a decade, however, the *pervane* had rebelled against the Mongols unsuccessfully, and met his death at their hands. As Aqsarayi relates, the death

⁴² CAHEN (1964).

⁴³ PACHYMERES IV.27; p. 311, ed. BEKKER.

⁴⁴ KINNAMOS, I.10, cf NIKETAS CHONIATES p.50, ed. BEKKER. For discussion, see HOPWOOD (1993), 188-9.

⁴⁵ 626; 638 ed. BEKKER.

⁴⁶ FLEMMING (1964), 32.

⁴⁷ GREGORAS, IV.2.

⁴⁸ AQSARAYI, p.49 DUDA.

of the *pervane* freed the Türkmén to invade Rum⁴⁹. The collapse of Byzantine territory in Asia Minor followed swiftly, as other leaders arose following Mehmet Beğ's example⁵⁰.

Such leaders had plenty of followers. Since the Mongol invasion of Khwarezmia, Turkish-speaking refugees had flooded into Seljuk lands⁵¹. These displaced people, previously used to an urban or agricultural existence, swept into the *uc* to join the Türkmén discontented by the pagan Mongol régime and still rebellious from the Baba'i revolt⁵². The fusion of Anatolian mysticism and experience of new forms of government was to transform the *uc* in this period⁵³: This group had been barely controlled by the *pervane*: now, enlarged, they were free to press against the Byzantine strongpoints that controlled the access to the plains of western Anatolia.

This massive growth of offensive potential was matched by the number of troops available on the Byzantine side of the border. In 1261, the armies of Michael Palaiologos of Nicaea recaptured Constantinople. The Byzantine world had at last regained its centre and capital, but at a tremendous cost. Claimants to the Latin kingdom of Constantinople received support from western powers and the Papacy to reassert Catholic control over eastern Christendom. The area of what is now Greece had broken into a patchwork of Latin and Byzantine successor states, each of which might enter into a pact with any claimant. This danger was strongest when Charles of Anjou, who had the claim, the armies and the backing of the Papacy, took up the claim to the Latin empire of Constantinople⁵⁴. Until 30 March 1282, when those forces were needed to cope with the consequences of the 'Sicilian Vespers'⁵⁵, Michael needed to back his Balkan diplomacy with force. Soldiers had to be transferred to the West to serve in Michael's struggle for survival.

The Laskarid state of Nicaea had organised itself as a series of themes, of whose land a significant amount was parcelled out as military fiefs (*pronoiai*) to soldiers, and land in the dangerous *akra/uc* was assigned to *akritai/tekfurs* or castellans. Such a system lacked the flexibility of deployment needed by threatened Byzantium. Michael seized the only possible solution: the ties between the soldiers and their lands in Asia Minor had to be broken. His removal of soldiers and his imposition of taxes on the *akritai* were seen by Pachymeres as a major weakening of the eastern frontier⁵⁶.

By 1280 the situation had considerably deteriorated. The akritic system had largely collapsed, but the fortified cities of Magnesia-ad-Sipyllum/Manisa, Philadelphia/Alaşehir and the forts of Neokastra still held out. Nomadic Türkmén, however, were by now active around Miletos on the Aegean coast, Priene and the lower Maiander valley. The opening of the Maiander valley to Turkish raids can be directly attributed to the activities of Mehmet Beğ. His seizure of Laodikeia/Denizli opened the head of the valley to the Türkmén. Michael intervened, and sent his heir apparent, Andronikos, to revitalise the defence of the area. His army, of cavalry and heavy infantry, easily dispersed the light horse of the Türkmén, and he reached Tralleis/ Aydın half way up the valley. There, according to Pachymeres⁵⁷, he was 'seized by the charm of the place' and decided to refound it as Andronikopolis or Palaiologopolis. The beauty of Tralleis was its position at the mid-point of the valley blocking access to the plains of the lower Maiander. The refortification of Tralleis was an imaginative counterstroke.

It was parried by an equally imaginative opponent. Pachymeres tells us that Tralleis was recaptured by a *Σαλπακηζ*, Menteşe by name⁵⁸. WITTEK believed that *Σαλπακηζ* was a

⁴⁹ P.129 DUDA.

⁵⁰ PACHYMERES I.6, Bonn p.19.

⁵¹ SÜMER (1960).

⁵² On the Baba'i revolt, see OCAK (1989).

⁵³ Notably, by the use of the concept of *nöker*: see HOPWOOD (1993), 134-6; BUĞDAY (1998).

⁵⁴ See GEANAKAPLOS (1959).

⁵⁵ See RUNCIMAN (1958).

⁵⁶ II.22; 221-4 Bonn.

⁵⁷ VI.20; Bonn 469.

⁵⁸ VI.21; Bonn 472.

Hellenisation of Sahil Beğ, or lord of the coast⁵⁹, but this derivation takes no account of Pachymeres' gloss of Σαλπιακῆζ as 'ανδρειον' - brave. Such a confident assertion by Pachymeres implies he knew some Turkish, and BALIVET⁶⁰ provides a gloss of Sağlam Beğ. This mutual recognition was an important development in the frontier society, and Pachymeres' awareness of Turkish language and culture shows how profoundly Turkish culture had penetrated the centre of Byzantium. A new force had arrived on the scene in the shape of Mentеше himself, who quickly cut the water supply to Tralleis and recaptured the city finally.

When Michael himself returned in 1280, the *akraluc* seemed superficially similar to the frontier of the 1230s. He bewailed the existence of a Scythian *eremia* (desert), which was the typical band of deserted territory that had always represented the frontier⁶¹. As always the Türkmén retired before his attack. However the Türkmén now had leaders who could construct a state, and were beginning to settle. Before the end of the century, the descendants of Mentеше had a palace in the lower Maiander valley, the predecessor of the later Peçin Kale⁶².

This process can best be followed by studying the career of Osman. I have argued for the historicity of the accounts of Aşıkpaşazade and Neşri and I have shown how the formation of an emirate depends on the sedentarisation of the Türkmén and their relations with the *akritai*⁶³. The emirate truly develops when a town with a fort is captured. This can be seen for the Ottomans with Yenişehir and then Bursa, for the Germiyanoglu with Kütahya, and for the Aydınoglu with Ephesos/Selçuk. Mentеше held Denizli and later Peçin Kale. The urban centre, together with the skills of the refugees from the Mongols, formed the basis for the emirates. Sedentarisation of the Türkmén followed the drift down to the western coastal plain of Anatolia.

That drift was itself made possible by the presence of huge numbers of Turkish refugees who could not be contained by the attenuated Byzantine forces. Again, the Ottoman example illustrates the rest: Osman had good relations with his Byzantine opposite number, the lord of Beloukome/Bilecik⁶⁴. He intervened in local disputes and thereby ultimately outflanked the major Byzantine forts of Cadırlu, Leblebeci-Hisar and Kara Çepiş in his advance down to the plain. These forts only yielded to the Ottomans later after they had been hopelessly outflanked, as the Ottomans had not the means to capture them. This lack of siege equipment of the early emirates explains the survival not only of these forts, but also of fortified cities such as Magnesia and Philadelphia well after the *uc* had moved beyond them to the West.

By the first decade of the fourteenth century little of Asia Minor remained in Byzantine hands. During this process of conquest the *uc* had facilitated cultural intermingling. Both groups had told similar stories about their past; now they were telling similar stories about the present and were responding to them. In the late thirteenth century, the gallant Alexios Philanthropenos, cup-bearer to the emperor Andronikos II himself, was sent to Asia Minor to restore the situation. He did this so successfully that the Anatolian aristocracy and peasantry joined him in a revolt to set up a separatist state in the *uc*. He was betrayed, arrested and blinded. Pachymeres tells us that in his first campaign, he encountered the beautiful widow of great Mentеше himself, secluded with her women in an island castle. He proposed marriage to her, was rejected, and sacked her castle⁶⁵. At about the same time, a more successful romance is alleged to have occurred in the *uc*. The daughter of the castellan of Aydos became enamoured of the charm of Osman's son Orhan⁶⁶. These were both variants of a mutual folktale motif. Some years later the blinded general Philanthropenos was sent out into the *uc* to restore the frontier. Incredibly, he succeeded. The local Byzantines and their neighbouring Turks

⁵⁹ WITTEK(1934), 29-30.

⁶⁰ Asserted by BALIVET (1994), 39-47.

⁶¹ PACHYMERES VI.29: 502 Bonn.

⁶² GUILLAND (1923).

⁶³ HOPWOOD (1992); (1993).

⁶⁴ HOPWOOD (1992); (1998).

⁶⁵ GUILLAND (1923) 49-51.

⁶⁶ Aşıkpaşazade 26; Neşri 45b; WITTEK (1965); HICKMAN (1979).

flocked to greet him. The romance of the borderer was still at work. Such a synthesis of cultures produced the Ottoman state.

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