

CHAPTER TWO

THE REIGN OF BĀYEZĪD I, 1389-1402

Anatolia, 1389-1400

There is no direct evidence of a civil war between Murād's sons, Bāyezīd and Yakūb. In fact, the early fifteenth-century tradition which Ottoman chronicles preserve, and which also appears in the Greek histories of Doukas and Chalkokodylas, portrays Bāyezīd as executing his brother on the field of Kosovo after Murād's death. Contemporary evidence, however, suggests that perhaps Bāyezīd did not enjoy an undisputed succession. The coins which survive from his reign all bear the date 792,¹ the Muslim year beginning on 20 December, 1389. If this date represents the year of his accession, or the year in which he first declared his sovereignty by minting coins, it indicates that he did not, as tradition asserts, succeed his father immediately in June, 1389, but perhaps only after defeating and killing his brother in the six months between June and December of that year. In Anatolia, at least, these six months were a time of troubles, as the contemporary Azīz b. Ardashīr noted in *Feast and Battle*, his panegyric history of the Sultan of Sivas, Burhān al-Dīn. "The affairs of state," he says of the Ottoman domains, "became disordered. The Karamanids and Mongols from all around stretched out the neck of avarice into the realm." He records in particular that a certain Mürüvvet Bey seized Kırşehir and made it over to Burhān al-Dīn of Sivas; that Alāeddīn of Karaman recaptured Beyşehir, which he had previously lost to Murād I; and that the prince of Germiyan tried to recover "the places and realms which had fallen into the hands of the Ottomans." It was possibly Bāyezīd's struggles with Yakūb that had given these Anatolian lords the opportunity to annex Ottoman possessions. By early autumn 1389, these struggles, if they in fact occurred, seem to have been over, since on 26 October, 1389, the Genoese governor of Galata was able to ratify the agreement which his envoy had negotiated with the Sultan — presumably Bāyezīd rather than Yakūb —, confirming existing Genoese Treaties with the Ottomans.² By the end of 1389, Bāyezīd felt secure enough to lead his army into Anatolia.

Azīz b. Ardashīr notes that at the beginning of this campaign, Bāyezīd received troops from the lord of Kastamonu, Süleymān Pasha, with whom Murād had earlier established a link, presumably as suzerain, by marrying an Ottoman

¹ Anton C. Schaedlinger, *Osmanische Numismatik*, Brunswick (1973), 87.

² Michel Balard, *La Romanie Génoise*, Vol. 1, Rome (1978), 97. The author does not specify whether the document names the son of Murād with whom the Genoese were negotiating, as Bāyezīd

princess to a member of Süleymân's family.³ Bâyezîd's object was to attack the emirates of western Anatolia. "The result of this alliance and combination," writes Azîz b. Ardashîr, "was the reduction of the principality of Saruhan and the land of Aydın," and adds that, after the annexation of these two emirates, Süleymân Pasha returned to Kastamonu. He next describes how Bâyezîd attacked Alâeddîn of Karaman, forcing him to surrender the fortress of Beyşehir, before Burhân al-Dîn of Sivas, now allied with Süleymân Pasha, could bring him help. Later Ottoman Chronological Lists and chronicles confirm and embellish much of this narrative, some adding details of their own. In the Ottoman chronicle tradition, Bâyezîd also captured Philadelphia (Alaşehir), a town on the eastern border of Aydın, which had remained in the hands of the "infidels", meaning, presumably, under the control of an independent Greek lord. Âşıkpaşazâde adds Germiyan to the list of Bâyezîd's acquisitions, but attributes this conquest to a later campaign. Finally, all Ottoman sources mention the conquest of Menteşe in south-west Anatolia. The dates and even the sequence of these conquests are uncertain. On 6 March, 1390, a Venetian envoy received instructions to renegotiate with Bâyezîd Venice's earlier Treaties with the lords of Aydın and Menteşe,⁴ indicating that these principalities had either fallen or were expected to do so imminently, and suggesting that the campaign in western Anatolia lasted only a few months from the late autumn or early winter of 1389. The repossession of Beyşehir probably followed the reduction of Aydın and Menteşe. A year later, however, on 6 March, 1391, the governor of Crete received a letter from the Venetian Senate, instructing him to come to terms with the *emîr* of Palatia — meaning Menteşe —, and to negotiate without reference to Bâyezîd, implying that Menteşe had either retained or regained at least partial independence. Bâyezîd's conquests in western Anatolia were evidently as insecure as they were rapid.

Süleymân Pasha's transfer of allegiance from Bâyezîd to Burhân al-Dîn of Sivas was an indication of the instability of Anatolian politics, and it was against Süleymân Pasha that Bâyezîd led his next campaign. On 8 June, 1391, the Byzantine Emperor, Manuel II, left Constantinople to serve in his suzerain Bâyezîd's army.⁵ Before 5 July, Bâyezîd had killed Süleymân Pasha and annexed his territory, as on this day the Genoese governor of Galata received a Turkish ambassador announcing the "victory which [Bâyezîd] had won over the Pasha of Kastamonu, how he had killed him and taken all his territory." An inevitable result of Bâyezîd's victory was conflict with Süleymân Pasha's overlord, Burhân al-Dîn who, on receiving the news, went to Artıkabad and sent out messengers to summon an army. When he was there, according to Azîz b. Ardashîr, an envoy

³ On the ruling family of Kastamonu, see Yaşar Yücel, "Kastamonu'nun ilk fethine kadar Osmanlı-Candar Münasebetleri", *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, I/I (1963).

⁴ Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade: Venetian Crete and the Emirates of Menteşe and Aydın*, Venice (1983), 77.

⁵ On this campaign, see Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, "Manuel II Palaeologus on the Strife between Bâyezîd I and Kādî Burhân al-Dîn Ahmad", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XLIII (1980).

came with the information that Bāyezīd had reached Osmancık and was seeking peace. Burhān al-Dīn refused this offer, as he regarded Osmancık as his own possession. Bāyezīd's army meanwhile continued to grow, as Emīr Ahmed of Amasya, the Taşanoğlu clan of Merzifon and the Tāceddīnoğlu clan of Niksar⁶ took his side, together with other local lords whom Azīz b. Ardashīr does not name. Burhān al-Dīn also received news that a certain Haccī Çelebi had ceded a fortress called Maden, perhaps in northern Kastamonu, to Bāyezīd and that a certain Abullah Çelebi had ceded Osmancık. He also received a message from Bāyezīd that he was coming to attack.

The armies met at Çorumlu — presumably near modern Çorum — in a battle where, in the words of Burhān al-Dīn's panegyrist, "the Ottomans, smashed and broken, turned their faces towards defeat and were scattered and dispersed to caves in the mountains and to passages in the ridges and peaks." After the battle, "the leaders of the Turcomans and the luminaries of the Mongols" pressed Burhān al-Dīn to plunder Bāyezīd's realms and "for forty days ... they pounded the trees, rocks and clods like dry rubble and decaying bones" in the district of Ankara, İskilip, Kalecik and Sivrihisar.

Burhān al-Dīn's victory at Çorumlu was probably less complete than Azīz b. Ardashīr's panegyric suggests. Nevertheless, it probably led the lords and tribal leaders of northern Anatolia to forswear their allegiance to Bāyezīd, forcing him to continue the campaign into the autumn and early winter of 1391. Bāyezīd's aim, in the garbled account of events which survives in the letters of the Emperor Manuel II, was to subdue a certain Begçe, the lord of a territory near Sinop; to force Süleyman Pasha's brother, İsfendyāroğlu Mübārizeddīn of Sinop to accept Ottoman overlordship; and above all, "to strike terror into the ruler of Sebasteia together with the Scythians," meaning Burhān al-Dīn and his followers. The lateness of the season is also clear from the correspondence of Manuel who, in a letter to Kydones, describes "the severity of the weather, the scarcity of supplies and the sickness which has struck down so many of our men." It seems from Manuel's letters that Burhān al-Dīn never attacked Bāyezīd, whose army advanced as far east as the Kızıl Irmak. However, when it had crossed this river to plunder Burhān al-Dīn's territory, "the woods and thickets about the fords became infested with bandits and ... [the river] turned into another Sicilian Strait." Whether these "bandits" were in reality Burhān al-Dīn's followers, or simply as Manuel described them, is not clear. In either case, they forced the Ottomans to recross the river and march to Ankara. From here, in December, 1391, Manuel and presumably the rest of Bāyezīd's army which, Manuel says, included Serbs, Bulgarians and Albanians, returned home. By the end of the campaign, Bāyezīd had presumably forced the lords of northern Anatolia, as far east as the Kızıl Irmak, to accept his suzerainty.

⁶ On this clan, see M. Oğuz, "Taceddin Oğullan", *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, VI/5 (1948).

It is probable that he intended to complete his domination of the area with the capture of Sinop in 1392. In April of that year, the Venetian Senate received reports of a Turkish fleet near Thessaloniki, whose destination most observers believed to be Sinop, and which numbered Manuel among its commanders. The expedition did not, however, materialise. By the end of April, the Senators in Venice heard that Bāyezīd and Manuel had parted company. It seems that events in Europe had thwarted the Sultan's plans.⁷ He did not resume his campaigns in Anatolia until 1397.

The anonymous chronicle of 1484 which was to be a source for Neşrī, claims that when Bāyezīd left Anatolia for Europe — probably in the autumn of 1392 — he appointed Kara Timurtaş *beylerbeyi* of Anatolia, with his seat of government at Ankara. During Bāyezīd's absence, Alāeddīn of Karaman attacked and captured Kara Timurtaş, imprisoning him at Konya. This action provoked the Ottoman Sultan who, on his return from Europe, rejected Alāeddīn's placatory gifts and, in 1397, led an army against Karaman. He had in his suite the Bavarian Johann Schiltberger, whom the Ottomans had taken prisoner in 1396 and who, thirty years later, compiled an account of his captivity in a book which combines seemingly accurate eyewitness reports with hearsay and fantasy. This was his first campaign with Bāyezīd whose army, he says, encountered Alāeddīn's on a plain near Konya. On the second day of the battle, Alāeddīn, retreated into the city which Bāyezīd, with the complicity of the citizens, stormed eleven days later. Alāeddīn was beheaded, apparently against Bāyezīd's wishes, and the army proceeded, in Schiltberger's memory, southwards towards Larendē. The citizens offered to submit, provided that one of Alāeddīn's sons, whom the Anonymous-Neşrī calls Ali Bey and Mehmed Bey, could be their lord. Bāyezīd refused, and constructed platforms and brought up weapons in preparation for a siege, whereupon Alāeddīn's widow — who was also Bāyezīd's sister — opened the city gates. Bāyezīd appointed an unnamed Ottoman governor and removed his sister and nephews to Bursa. To Bāyezīd's conquest of Konya and Larendē, the Anonymous-Neşrī adds the surrender of Aksaray, Develü Kārahisar and Akşehir. With these acquisitions, and the removal of Alāeddīn's heirs to the Ottoman capital, the emirate of Karaman lost its independence.

The next campaign which Schiltberger records, and which presumably occurred in 1398, was against Burhān al-Dīn, who had seized Amasya, the possession of Bāyezīd's vassal, Emīr Ahmed. Bāyezīd answered by sending thirty-thousand men, among them, his son Mehmed, who recaptured the city. Azīz b. Ardashīr confirms that Burhān al-Dīn had seized Amasya, but since he does not describe Bāyezīd's conquest of the city, unless in a disguised form, the event probably took place after the completion, in March 1398 of his *Feast and Battle*. Schiltberger adds that Bāyezīd bestowed Sivas on Mehmed and compensated Emīr Ahmed with another territory; but since Sivas was not yet Bāyezīd's to bestow, it is clear that he must in fact have appointed Mehmed to Amasya.

⁷ Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, "Manuel II Palaeologus".