

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