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Changing Strategies and Ideological Concepts in Byzantine-Arab Relations in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*

The reign of Emperor Basil II (976-1025 AD) represents both the apex and turning point of the Byzantine expansionist policy in the East[1]. As for the period from the mid-eleventh century onwards, scholarly interest focuses mainly on a set of groundbreaking changes evolving at that time in Byzantium's eastern provinces and the Middle East. Accordingly, matters of Byzantine-Arab relations were largely deemed of secondary importance and taken into consideration only inasmuch as they were directly connected with or affected by these new developments. The nascent Turkish-Muslim principalities in Anatolia and Syria ever since the 1070s and the Crusader States ever since the late 1090s inhibited communication between Byzantium and the Arab-Muslim central lands, with the empire's eastern boundaries shifting from Antioch and the Anti-Taurus mountain range up to the Pontos region as well as to the western and southern fringes of the Anatolian plateau[2]. One gains the impression that Byzantine-Arab contacts after 1050 were nothing more than side effects of the conflicts in Asia Minor and the Crusader States.

The present paper intends to show that this view does not tell the whole story. While it cannot be denied that the priorities of the Byzantine Eastern policy up to 1204 were to a large degree determined by the conflicts with the aforementioned powers, Constantinople by no means lost sight of the Muslim states further to the east, and the Arab political and intellectual elite in these regions continued to have an eye on Byzantium. The Seljuk expansion during the 1070s and 1080s, among many other areas, deeply affected the Arab lands of Syria and Northern Iraq, bringing forth a new ruling and military elite of Turkish origin[3]. The developments in these regions were closely connected with those in the former Byzantine provinces of Anatolia and with the Great Seljuk Sultanate in Iraq and Iran. In what follows, the phenomena in question will be analyzed on the basis of two key moments in the history of Byzantine-Arab relations throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries, namely (a) the change in the 1050s of the empire's political attitudes towards the Fatimid Caliphate of Cairo as a reaction to the growing power of the Seljuk Sultanate and its claims to universal leadership, and (b) the Byzantine attempt to gain possession of Muslim territories in Syria in the context of Emperor John II's campaign in Cilicia and Antioch in the years 1137-1138.

The Byzantine historian John Skylitzes and a number of Arabic chronicles relate that the regency of the underage Caliph al-Mustanṣir, shortly after his father's death on 13 June 1036, ultimately renewed the peace treaty with Constantinople, which, despite a series of diplomatic overtures ever since the death of Caliph al-Ḥākim in early 1021, was long overdue[4]. While the struggle for supremacy over Aleppo lingered on with undiminished intensity ten years later, in 437/1045-1046, the two sides were again interested in securing peaceful relations and thus renewed their agreement[5].

These diplomatic efforts by and large coincided with the first appearance of Turkmen warrior groups in the frontier zone between the Diyār Bakr province and the region around Lake Van, followed in 1048 and 1054 by large-scale incursions of Seljuk troops into the Armenian territories further north along the valleys of the Araxes and the Arsanias rivers[6]. These activities prepared the grounds for the intrusion of Turkmen groups into Syria during the early 1060s and enabled the Seljuk Sultanate to develop a Sunni-based imperial concept, presenting itself as a rival power to the Fatimid Caliphate[7].

* This essay was originally written as a preliminary study to my recent monograph: Byzantium and the Emergence of Muslim Turkish Anatolia, ca. 1040-1130, Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies (London and New York 2017). As it eventually turned out that the book would appear in print before this article, I decided to include a slightly different version of the section referring to the period 1049-1055 in chapter 2: Byzantine-Seljuk diplomacy and the first Turkish footholds, 92-132. Yet the present study has a different focus by concentrating on the long-term implications of Byzantine-Muslim relations in Syria and thus can still be read as complementary to the topics discussed in the book.

1 For the most recent discussion of Basil II's governance in the East, see Holmes, Basil 299-394 and Holmes, ›How the East Was Won‹ 41-56. For the political history of Byzantine-Arab relations in the period 1000-1050, the most comprehensive study is still Felix, Byzanz.

2 For the Byzantine network of alliances and communication established in the first half of the eleventh century, see Beihammer, Muslim Rulers 157-177. As for the time after 1050, most studies deal either with the Seljuk Turks of Asia Minor or with the relations between Byzantium and the Crusader States: Cahen, Pre-Ottoman Turkey; Cahen, Formation; Vryonis, Decline; Lilie, Crusader States; Harris, Crusades. There are hardly any detailed works discussing the relations with Fatimid Egypt: Lev, Fatimids 273-281.

3 Sevim, Suriye; El-Azhari, Saljūqs.

4 Iōannēs Skylitzēs, Synopsis historiarum 399; Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 6,88-89 (*sub anno* 429 = 14 October 1037-2 October 1038); Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ II 187 (*sub anno* 429). Felix, Byzanz 107; Bianquis, Damas 2, 499-500; Halm, Kalifen 349.

5 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 6,136 (erroneously *sub anno* 439 = 28 June 1047-15 June 1048); Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,194 (the emperor's gifts arrived in Cairo on 8 Ḏū l-Ḥiǧǧa 437 = 16 June 1046). For details, see Felix, Byzanz 114 f. Halm, Kalifen 360 f.

6 Cahen, Pre-Ottoman Turkey 66-70; Turan, Türkiye 13-19.

7 Sevim, Suriye 35-54, 56-62.

During the early 1070s, the promotion of this anti-Fatimid attitude became all the more important in that some of the rebellious Turkmen groups in Syria were ready to collaborate with Cairo to the detriment of their local adversaries who recognized the Abbasid Caliphate, thus consciously undermining Seljuk claims to supremacy in Syria[8]. Byzantium was directly involved in this intra-Muslim antagonism since both sides propagated their concepts of universal ascendancy by emphasizing their influence in Constantinople. The emperor, in turn, sought for a way to play the two opponents off against each other, being forced to maneuver between conflicting demands and frequently resort to contradictory decisions.

The Seljuk Sultanate as a New Political Factor in Byzantine-Muslim Diplomacy

An exchange of embassies in 1049/1050 inaugurated diplomatic relations between Byzantium and the Great Seljuk Sultanate[9]. This step, primarily motivated by the campaign of Ibrāhīm Ināl into the Armenian provinces and the ensuing defeat of the local Byzantine troops, affected the relationship between Constantinople and the Caliphate of Cairo, as had been reaffirmed by the treaty of 1046. The objectives of the negotiations were the conclusion of a peace treaty and the release of prisoners, especially the Georgian prince Liparit, who had been captured at the battle of Kapetrou, fought in September 1048[10]. From an ideological point of view, most noteworthy is the fact that Ṭuġril Beg, already on the occasion of this first official encounter, underlined his leading position within Sunni Islam by choosing a *šarīf*, i. e., a member of the Prophet's family, who perhaps can be identified with a certain Nāġiya ibn Ismāʿīl al-Ḥasanī, as ambassador to the Byzantine capital. Moreover, he laid claim to the mosque of Constantinople[11], which was to be repaired at his own expense and in which the Friday prayer was to be held in his and the Abbasid caliph's name[12]. This was tantamount to a direct affront to Fatimid rights concerning this mosque, which were first conceded in 988 to Caliph al-ʿAzīz[13]. Although Skylitzes' report makes every effort to depict the imperial government as negotiating from a position of strength, it is quite obvious that it was the military pressure of the Seljuk invaders on the eastern provinces which made Constantine IX Monomachos comply with the demands of their treaty partners, thus opting for a restriction of Fatimid influence in favor of a reaffirmation of relations with the Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad and its powerful new protectors. The fact that the Kurdish emir Naṣr ad-Dawla ibn Marwān, one of the most important allies of the Empire in the borderland south of the Anti-Taurus mountain range at that time[14], had recently recognized Seljuk suzerainty, clearly indicated that Ṭuġril Beg's presence in the region was something more than a short-term nuisance or a temporary disturbance of the preexisting balance of power[15]. Constantine IX made use of the new state of affairs, asking Naṣr ad-Dawla to mediate negotiations with the Seljuk sultan. While the imperial government was represented at Ṭuġril Beg's court by George Drosos, a secretary (*hypogrammateus*) of Aaron and thus a man well-acquainted with the political situation in the Armenian borderland, the Marwānid dignitary Šayḫ al-Islām Abū ʿAbdallāh ibn Marwān lent additional support to the emperor's cause[16]. The available accounts at first sight convey the impression that the main issue discussed in these contacts was the release of Liparit, but in view of the manifold results it seems that they envisaged more far-reaching goals, aiming at a comprehensive settlement of relations with the Seljuk Sultanate with the mediation of Muslim allies in the borderland. At about the same time, Ṭuġril Beg was granted a number of honorifics by Caliph al-Qāʾim, praising him as a lawful ruler and protector of Islam. This was a further step in the process of the Seljuk lord's gradual transformation from a Turkmen chief and conqueror to a legitimate holder of supreme power within the legal and ideological context of Muslim conceptions of public authority, and thus decisively contributed to the foundation of a clearly-defined relationship between the Seljuk Sultanate and the Abbasid dynasty[17]. Ṭuġril Beg's intra-dynastic position was further consolidated

8 Sevim, Suriye 68-70.

9 Iōannēs Skylitzēs, Synopsis historiarum 454; Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil VI 146, trans. Ibn al-Aṯīr, Annals 73 f. (*sub anno* 441 = 5 June 1049-25 May 1050); Bar Hebraeus, Chronography 206; Felix, Byzanz 170 f.; Dölger/Wirth, Regesten, no. 890d; Ripper, Marwāniden 157-160.

10 Iōannēs Skylitzēs, Synopsis historiarum 454: ἐξῃτεῖτο τὴν ἐλευθερίαν καὶ σπονδὰς εἰρήνης. Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 6,146, trans. Ibn al-Aṯīr, Annals 73: *rāsala malik ar-Rūm Ṭuġril Beg wa-arsala ilayhi hadīyatan aẓīmatan wa-ṭalaba minhu l-muʿāhada* (»the king of the Romans sent a message to Ṭuġril Beg, sending him precious gifts and asking him for a peace treaty«). For the battle of Kapetrou in the vicinity of Theodosioupolis/Erzurum, in which the Bulgarian prince Aaron, at that time governor of Vaspurakan, the commander of Ani and Iberia Katakalon Kekaumenos, and the said Liparit confronted the troops of Ibrāhīm Ināl, see Iōannēs Skylitzēs, Synopsis historiarum 452 f. While Aaron and Katakalon escaped by retreating to Van and Ani respectively, Liparit is said to have been brought to the sultan's residence in Rayy. Ṭuġril Beg's itinerary in 1049/1050 was largely determined by the incipient conflict with his half-brother Ibrāhīm Ināl, who, after refusing to hand over Hamaḏān and other strongholds in the Highlands of western Iran, resisted his brother for a certain period in the fortress of Sarmāǧ (in the vicinity of Dīnawar?). At about the same time Ṭuġril Beg was in contact with the Marwānid ruler Naṣr ad-Dawla in the province of Diyār Bakr, requesting the latter's submission: Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 6,146, trans. Ibn al-Aṯīr, Annals 73; Bar Hebraeus, Chronography 206.

11 For the erection of a mosque in Byzantine Constantinople, which Muslim legendary accounts connect with the siege of Constantinople by Maslama b. ʿAbd al-Malik in 717/718, see Woods, Maslama.

12 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 6,146, trans. Ibn al-Aṯīr, Annals 73 f.: »*wa-ʿammarū masǧid al-Qusṭanṭīnīya wa-aqāmū ṣ-ṣalāt wa-l-ḫuṭba li-Ṭuġril Beg*« (»they repaired the mosque of Constantinople and established the prayer and the Friday sermon in the name of Ṭuġril Beg«). For the identity of the emissary, who is known from another Seljuk embassy to Constantinople sent some years later, see Felix, Byzanz 171, n. 114.

13 Dölger/Müller, Regesten, no. 770: Emperor Basil II conceded this privilege to the Fatimid caliph in exchange for a seven-year peace treaty during the blockade of Constantinople by Bardas Phokas in early 988.

14 Ripper, Marwāniden 153-186.

15 See above, n. 10.

16 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 6,146, trans. Ibn al-Aṯīr, Annals 73.

17 Bar Hebraeus, Chronography 206: »*malkā nāmūsāyā, bēṯ gāwsā ḏ-mashlānē, Rūkn al-Dīn Sūlṭān Ṭūghrel Bāg*« (»lawful king, house of refuge for the Muslims, pillar of religion, Ṭuġril Beg«). For the Seljuk use of *sulṭān* as the regular title for the holder of supreme rule, see Kramer/Bosworth, Sulṭān 850. For the sultan-caliph relationship, see Lambton, Internal Structure 205-208. For the Seljuk dynasty's relations with Sunni Islam in general, see Peacock, Early Seljūq History 99-127.

by the submission of Ibrāhīm Ināl[18]. Accordingly, Ṭuġril Beg's recognition as the supreme representative of Islam by the Byzantine emperor has to be interpreted as both an important complementary feature in the overall endeavor of the Seljuk sultan to become established as one of the leading authorities in the Muslim World and as another substantial gain in prestige, which enhanced his position vis-à-vis his Muslim, mainly Shiite, adversaries.

In the years after 1050, Ṭuġril Beg once more turned his attention to the Kākūyid dominions in the western Highlands of Iran, ultimately seizing Iṣfahān in May/June 1051 after a siege of one year and transferring his residence from Rayy to this newly-acquired town. In addition, he further built up his bonds with the Abbasid Caliphate through the exchange of embassies and lavish gifts[19]. A letter of Constantine IX addressed to Caliph al-Qāʾim, which according to Bar Hebraeus, our only source, reached Baghdad in the Muslim year 443 (15 May 1051 - 2 May 1052)[20], points to a remarkable revival of diplomatic contacts between Constantinople and the Abbasid court after decades of silence. After Bardas Skleros in late 986/early 987 had come to an agreement with the Būyid *amīr al-umarāʾ* in order to stage his rebellion against Basil II[21], Baghdad became completely overshadowed by the Fatimid court of Cairo and henceforth was considered a place of secondary significance by the decision-makers in the imperial city. The new Sunni prospects and the shifting of the center of gravity in the Muslim World from Egypt to western Iran as a result of Ṭuġril Beg's expansionist activity thus resulted in a reopening of the old lines of communication with the court of Baghdad. Unfortunately, Bar Hebraeus, apart from quoting the forms of address of the letter and giving a short description of its splendid outward appearance, fails to tell us anything about the political purposes of this contact, but it can be assumed that there must have been a causal relationship with the new situation in the Armenian and Upper Mesopotamian borderland and the constellations resulting from the growing influence of the young Seljuk sultanate. The proclamation of the prayer in Constantinople in the name of the Abbasid caliph meant that the latter was explicitly involved in the Byzantine-Seljuk negotiations and was considered an indispensable party to the agreements in his capacity as the uncontested legal and spiritual authority among Sunni Muslims.

A few years later, most probably in the months before Ṭuġril Beg's triumphal entrance into Baghdad in Ramaḍān 447/December 1055, the sultan reaffirmed his claims to formal control over the mosque of Constantinople by sending an embassy to Empress Theodora[22]. Eastern Christian sources mainly emphasize the tribute the empress was forced to pay as a token of submission to the sultan's overwhelming power, thus implicitly criticizing the weakness of the supreme head of Orthodox Christianity[23]. From the viewpoint of the Fatimid Caliphate, the key issue was the antagonism between Sunni and Shiite doctrine. The renowned Egyptian jurist and man of letters Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Salāma al-Quḍāʿī, who had served as a judge of the Sunni population in Egypt under Caliph al-Ḥākim and thereafter worked as a high-ranking official in the Fatimid chancery[24], had been sent at about the same time as the ambassador of Caliph al-Mustanṣir to Constantinople, and was thus able to follow the negotiations between the Seljuk representative and the imperial government. When with the latter's permission the rival ambassador held the Friday prayer in the name of Caliph al-Qāʾim bi-Amr Allāh, al-Quḍāʿī swiftly informed his lord of this event. The Fatimid caliph reacted by confiscating the property of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem and by other repressive measures against the Greek patriarch and the Christians in Syria and Egypt[25]. In this way, Cairo basically suspended all previous concessions regarding the emperor's control over the said church and the patriarchal see of Jerusalem[26], thus exacting vengeance on its Christian subjects for their spiritual leader's breach of allegiance and expressing its rejection of the Abbasid and Seljuk claims. In the context of an intra-Muslim conflict between the Shiite elite of Egypt and the rising Seljuk power representing the Sunni Caliphate, both sides sought to make their influence felt in Constantinople through the pressure they were able to exert, the former by oppressing the Christians living under Fatimid rule and the latter by threatening new invasions and

18 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 6,146: *wa-dāna ḥīnaʾiḏin an-nās kulluhum lahū wa-ʿaẓuma šaʾnuhū wa-tamakkana mulkuhū wa-ṭabata* (»At that time all people submitted to him, his prestige was great and his rule was strong and firmly consolidated«).

19 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kamil 6,149f., 160f., trans. Ibn al-Aṯīr, Annals 76f., 82.

20 Bar Hebraeus, Chronography 206f.

21 Dölger/Müller, Regesten, no. 769a.

22 Dölger/Wirth, Regesten, no. 929; Theodora ruled from the death of Constantine IX Monomachos on 8 January 1055 until her own death on 27 August 1056. A more exact dating is possible on the basis of the Armenian chronicle of Aristakes of Lastivert, Récit des malheurs 88f., who places this diplomatic contact *sub anno* 504 of the Armenian era (= 8 March 1055 - 7 March 1056). Bar Hebraeus, Chronography 207, dates it a year earlier, i.e., 1365 of the Seleucid era (1053-1054), but immediately afterwards relates Ṭuġril Beg's entrance into Baghdad. On the basis of these data one may assume that the Seljuk embassy arrived at Constantinople in about spring/early summer 1055, while the empress' response was dispatched in the subsequent months.

23 Aristakes, Récit des malheurs 88; Bar Hebraeus, Chronography 207 (who does not refer explicitly to the Seljuk embassy but mentions the tribute sent by the empress to the caliph of Baghdad).

24 Halm, Kalifen 297.

25 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,230: »In this year [447 = 2 April 1055-20 March 1056] al-Mustanṣir sent troops to the Kanīsa Qumāma [Church of the Holy Sepulcher] and confiscated all its possessions. This happened because the *qāḍī* Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Quḍāʿī had been dispatched by the caliph with a message to the ruler of the Romans (*mutamallik ar-Rūm*). While he was in Constantinople, a messenger of Sultan Ṭuġril Beg b. Salğūq arrived, who asked the queen Theodora (*al-malika Tiyūdūrā*) to allow his messenger to perform the prayer in the mosque of Constantinople. She gave him the permission for doing that, and thus he entered the mosque and prayed there and spoke the Friday sermon in the name of Caliph al-Qāʾim b. Amr Allāh al-ʿAbbāsī. Al-Quḍāʿī informed al-Mustanṣir about that, and therefore the latter confiscated everything that was in the Qumāma and took it away. He expelled the patriarch from there to a remote monastery, closed the gates of the churches in Egypt and Syria, demanded the *ğizya* [poll tax] of four years from the monks and increased the *ğizya* to be paid by the Christians. This was the beginning of the deterioration of the relations between the Romans and the Egyptians«.

26 Felix, Byzanz 102 with n. 176; Dölger/Wirth, Regesten, no. 843.

demanding sums of tribute. The Muslim place of worship in Constantinople, which, perhaps along with Rome, was considered the most awe-inspiring center of Christianity and the Roman imperial tradition[27], served as a point of reference for ambitions to exercise a patronage transgressing the boundaries of *dār al-Islām*, i. e., the Muslim realm, in favor of coreligionists living in infidel regions. The Byzantine analogue to this idea was the emperor's claim to authority over the patriarchal sees living under Muslim rule. The imperial government's decision to confer the formal suzerainty over the mosque to Cairo's rival power seriously disturbed the preexisting equilibrium of mutual respect for the other side's authority over its coreligionists and institutions in one's own realm. Unavoidably, then, Constantinople became an intrinsic part of the struggle between Shiite and Sunni claims to the Muslim caliphate.

The reasons leading the empress and her advisers to side with Ṭuġril Beg by conceding him preeminence in Constantinople most probably have to be sought in the unprecedented military power the Seljuk commanders and their Turkmen soldiers were able to deploy in the eastern provinces. Although further developments were not yet foreseeable, in 1055 it was already clear that this new enemy, with his newly-acquired strongholds in Transcaucasia, Azerbaijan and western Iran and his alliances with local lords in Upper Mesopotamia, was able to provoke serious harassment in the northern and central section of the eastern borderland[28]. In contrast, the Fatimid Caliphate, while a dangerous rival for control over northern Syria and the Emirate of Aleppo, was hardly able to launch attacks into the interior of Byzantine Asia Minor.

Constantinople Mediating Sunni-Shiite Antagonism

Another incident of Fatimid-Seljuk antagonism occurring in these years shows that the imperial government, despite the concessions made to the Seljuk Sultanate with respect to the mosque of Constantinople, by no means abandoned its obligations towards Cairo and even intervened on its behalf when the existing order was jeopardized by seditious rivals from within the Fatimid Caliphate. The conflict was triggered by al-Muʿizz ibn Bādīs (1016-1062), head of the Zīrid dynasty of al-Qayrawān in the province of Ifrīqiya, who from the late 1040s onwards felt strong enough to renounce his allegiance to Cairo, submitting instead to Abbasid suzerainty[29]. At some point before 443 (13 May 1051 - 2 May 1052), al-Muʿizz sent an ambassador to Baghdad, declaring his readiness to proclaim the Friday prayer in the name of the Abbasid caliph (*ad-daʿwa al-ʿAbbāsīya*) and asking for a formal investiture[30]. Both the Abbasid caliph and Ṭuġril Beg must have been highly pleased by the prospect of gaining an ally as strong as the Zīrid emir in the rear of the Fatimid state. In July 1051, Baghdad was rocked by serious riots between the Sunni and the Shiite quarters because of certain inscriptions that had stirred up Sunni sentiments. The caliph and his officials were not able to restore order within the city, and a number of tombs of Shiite imams and Būyid emirs were seriously damaged[31]. Ṭuġril Beg, in the time following the conquest of Iṣfahān in May/June 1051, decisively strengthened his bonds with the Abbasid Caliphate by receiving robes of honor and titles, and a few months after these riots in January 1052 his ambassadors were received with huge amounts of gifts in Baghdad[32]. Hence the sultan came into conflict with the various Shiite or pro-Fatimid factions in Iraq[33]. The Būyid emir al-Malik ar-Raḥīm and his Turkish military commander Arslan al-Basāsīrī in Baghdad still controlled substantial territories in the region. In December 1052, the two potentates seized Baṣra and received the allegiance of Daylamī soldiers from the Iranian province of Ḫūzistān[34]. Likewise, the lord of Ḥilla and central Iraq, Nūr ad-Dawla Mazyad ibn Dubays, was Shiite along with the majority of his subjects and refused to perform the prayer in the caliph's name[35]. Ṭuġril Beg, therefore, was eager to undermine the Shiite opposition by gaining allies from among their ranks. A case in point is al-Malik ar-Raḥīm's brother Abū ʿAlī ibn Abī Kālīǧār, who after the conquest of Baṣra took refuge with Ṭuġril Beg. The latter received him honorably in Iṣfahān, married him to a woman from his family, and gave him important domains as *iqṭāʿ*[36]. The emirs Abū Manṣūr und Hazārasb in al-Ahwāz instead had initially submitted to Ṭuġril Beg, but then arrived at a new agreement with the Būyid lord[37]. These examples clearly demonstrate how unstable the situation in 1051-1052 was and how easily Ṭuġril Beg's newly-acquired predominance in Iraq could collapse.

In response to al-Muʿizz ibn Bādīs's query, the Abbasid caliph readily sent a certain Abū Ġālib aš-Šayzarī as an emissary to al-Qayrawān, carrying with him the letter of appointment (*al-ʿahd*), the black banner (*al-liwāʾ al-aswad*) of the Abbasid dynasty, and robes of honor. Abū Ġālib on his trip through Byzantine territory was arrested, and the emperor handed him over to the emissaries of Caliph al-Mustanṣir. In Cairo, a public act of humiliation was stage-managed, in which the ambassador was paraded through the town sitting backwards on a camel and carrying the letter of appointment

27 El Cheikh, Byzantium 139-162.
28 For details, see Peacock, Early Seljūq History 128-163.
29 Felix, Byzanz 117 f.; Talbi, al-Muʿizz b. Bādīs 481, 483; Halm, Kalifen 370 f.
30 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,214. Halm, Kalifen 466, n. 66, dates the whole episode back to 1047/1048, because in 1051/1052 the Zīrid provinces were already affected by the invasions of the Hilāl and Sulaym Arabs. From other sources we know that the rejection of the Fatimid dogma was officially announced in al-Manṣūrīya on 9 March 1049, see Halm, Kalifen 371. It would be difficult, however, to reconcile an earlier date with the details concerning the Seljuk involvement in this episode and thus I prefer to keep the year 443 as indicated in the sources.
31 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 6,15 f., trans. Ibn al-Aṯīr, Annals 79-81.
32 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 6,160 f., trans. Ibn al-Aṯīr, Annals 82.
33 Turan, Selçuklular Tarihi 126-134.
34 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 6,165 f., trans. Ibn al-Aṯīr, Annals 86 f.
35 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 6,159, trans. Ibn al-Aṯīr, Annals 81.
36 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 6,166, trans. Ibn al-Aṯīr, Annals 87.
37 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 6,157, 166, trans. Ibn al-Aṯīr, Annals 87.

around his neck. In Bayna l-Qaṣrayn, the heart of the Fatimid palace city, the Abbasid symbols of authority destined for al-Muʿizz were put in a hole and burned[38]. By destroying these objects and by deriding the Abbasid representative, the Fatimid government expressed its defiance of Sunni claims to suzerainty over provinces under its sway and denounced the lawlessness of the Zīrid-Abbasid coalition.

Baghdad reacted harshly to the Fatimid affront by organizing a propagandistic campaign supported by all the leading jurists and authorities of *fiqh*, who composed treatises condemning the Ismāʿīlīya doctrine[39]. At about the same time, al-Muʿizz ibn Bādīs dispatched a certain Abū l-Qāsim ibn ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān as ambassador to Baghdad and Constantinople in order to discuss the issue with both the Abbasid court and the imperial government[40]. The Zīrid ruler most probably tried to take advantage of this diplomatic episode and to gain official recognition as an independent ruler by Constantinople in case the latter was willing to enter into negotiations with his representative. The sources do not tell us more details about the talks in Baghdad, but in all likelihood emissaries of Sultan Ṭuġril Beg were present in the caliphal palace and participated in these discussions, so that a certain Abū ʿAlī ibn Kabīr was dispatched on behalf of the sultan and set off along with Abū l-Qāsim for Constantinople[41]. In his baggage he had a very carefully-formulated letter full of allusions to the political ambitions and ideological claims of the Seljuk sultan thus illustrating the discursive strategies with which Ṭuġril Beg and his advisers – most probably people from the circle that had prepared the anti-Fatimid pamphlets in Baghdad – underpinned his political program of Sunni leadership.

In this situation the Byzantine emperor was primarily interested in displaying his loyalty towards the Fatimid Caliphate. Accordingly, he refused to receive the emissary of al-Muʿizz ibn Bādīs[42], thus rejecting any recognition of the latter as an independent potentate and stressing his commitment to the treaty concluded with al-Mustanṣir in 1046. In the discussions with the Seljuk ambassador, Constantine IX pointed to his friendship (*al-mawadda*) with the Fatimid caliph, stating that he would not consent to an action that was to the detriment of his ally[43]. The imperial government, despite its change of policy in 1049/1050 regarding the revival of relations with the Abbasid Caliphate, still abided by the treaty with Cairo and avoided interfering with the internal affairs of the Fatimid Caliphate and its relations with rulers under its control. The mosque of Constantinople was a place of ideological significance within the empire's realm, and the emperor, no doubt, considered it his own business to decide which foreign power should have access to this place. Supporting the aims of a powerful rebel, who sought collaboration with Cairo's most dangerous rival, would have been a flagrant breach of the existing treaty. On the other hand, with the agreements of 1049/1050 a new state of affairs had come into being, and Constantinople could by no means afford to ignore the claims of the Seljuk sultan and the Abbasid Caliphate. Indicative of the emperor's appeasing attitude is his treatment of the Abbasid ambassador, who after his humiliation in Cairo was brought back safely to Constantinople and received the apologies of the emperor for the mistreatment he had to endure[44]. Apparently, the imperial government was fully aware of the grievous insult the Abbasid caliph had endured by the public mockery of his ambassador. The emperor had, at all costs, to avoid giving the impression that he had consented to the conduct of his allies in Cairo since he was interested in maintaining good relations with the Abbasid court and the Seljuk sultan.

As regards the content of Ṭuġril Beg's letter, it is worth having a closer look at the address formula and the summary that has come down to us, in order to see the various ideological allusions and propagandistic devices employed by the Seljuk chancery:

»From the pillar of religion and the aid of the Muslims, the splendor of the religion of God and the sultan of the lands of God, and the helper of the servants of God and the right hand of the caliph, the commander of the faithful, to the lord of the Romans (*min Rukn ad-dīn wa-ġiyāṯ al-muslimīn, bahāʾ dīn allāh wa-sulṭān bilād allāh, wa-muġīṯ ʿibād allāh, Abī Ṭālib, yamīn al-ḫalīfa amīr al-muʾminīn ilā ʿaẓīm ar-Rūm*). And its content after the *basmala* was as follows: Praise to God, whose dominion is mighty and whose demonstration is brilliant, whose position is sublime and whose benevolence is generous. The letter continued in this way until it stated: Many years ago a man of deception (*nāğim ad-ḍalāla*) made his appearance in Egypt. He invites the people to follow him; he is deceived by those of his companionship whom he has deceived; in doctrinal matters, he believes what none of the men of knowledge, be it in the time of the first imams or nowadays, considers lawful and what no reasonable man of the people of Islam and the infidels (*ahl al-islām wa-l-kufr*) considers correct. Thereafter the letter referred to the emissary Abū Ġālib, expressed rebukes concerning this issue, and demanded that he should be sent under guard to al-Muʿizz ibn Bādīs[45]«.

Just like the mosque of Constantinople, this was another favorable opportunity to project Ṭuġril Beg's image as defender and supreme political representative of Sunni Islam to

38 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,214.
39 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,223.
40 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,214, 223.
41 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,223.
42 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,214: »When al-Muʿizz b. Bādīs was informed of this [the arrest of the ambassador], he sent a message to Constantine [IX Monomachos], the emperor of the Romans, on this matter, but he did not reply«.
43 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,214: »He exposed the friendship which is between him and al-Mustanṣir and that he would not allow any harm to be done to him«.
44 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,223: »The emissary was sent back to the king of the Romans (*malik ar-Rūm*). He was repentant for what had happened to him and he apologized to him. For he had given him guarantees that he would be brought back safely from Egypt, when he had been asked to hand him over. Subsequently, the king of the Romans sent him back to Baghdad where he arrived in the year 44 [3 May 1052-22 April 1053]«.
45 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,223.

the outside world. A list of six compound honorifics (*alqāb*) defines the Seljuk sultan as the holder of a central position in the *dār al-Islām*, which consisted of three essential components, i. e., the orthodox Sunni faith (*dīn*), the territories under Muslim rule (*bilād Allāh*), and the faithful Muslim subjects (*al-muslimūn, ʿibād Allāh*). On all three levels, Ṭuġril Beg appears as supporter and protector (*rukn, ġiyāṯ, muġīṯ*), as a brightly-shining example (*bahāʾ*), or as sovereign (*sulṭān*), respectively. After the sultan's *kunya* »Abū Ṭālib« signals the end of the list of *laqabs*, the titulature contains a term referring to the sultan-caliph relationship, in which Ṭuġril Beg is presented as the caliph's »right hand«, i. e., the most powerful authority in Islam, second only to the incumbent of the Abbasid throne. The title of sultan, which the Seljuk chief had been using since the first conquest of Nīšāpūr in 1038 on coins and elsewhere in the form *as-sulṭān al-muʿaẓẓam*, i. e., »the great sultan«[46], is here combined with the specification »lands of God« and thus embedded in the context of Muslim universal rule. The honorifics *Rukn ad-Dīn* and *Ġiyāth al-Muslimīn* are first mentioned in the historical accounts either in the context of Ṭuġril Beg's solemn entrance in Baghdad in 1055 or in the course of the preceding diplomatic contacts with the Abbasid court and thus in any case reflect the gradual ideological elevation which the Seljuk chief achieved in return for his gestures of respect and obedience towards the Caliphate[47]. A case in point is the reception of the renowned chief qaḍī al-Māwardī, who in 1043/early 1044 was sent as Caliph al-Qāʾim's envoy to Ṭuġril Beg in order to mediate a peace treaty with the Būyid rulers. In honor of the caliph, the sultan escorted the emissary four leagues and declared his readiness to be the caliph's loyal servant[48]. The message conveyed by the aforementioned titles is also in line with the statement made by a Seljuk envoy at the caliphal court, according to Bar Hebraeus, shortly before the sultan's entry in Baghdad: Ṭuġril Beg expressed his desire to be honored and blessed by serving the Prophet. He would perform the pilgrimage to Mecca, provide for the safety of the pilgrimage routes and go to war against all rebels[49].

The letter to the Byzantine emperor thus clearly draws on aspects of the caliph-sultan relationship, as it was defined in the course of the negotiations between the court of Baghdad and the Seljuk leadership in the years before 1055. A diplomatic affair in which both the Fatimid court of Egypt and the imperial government of Constantinople were immediately involved offered the ideal setting for the promotion of these ideas. Consequently, Fatimid doctrines had to be presented as being in contradiction not only to the teachings of the first imams and contemporary theologians, but also with the opinions of all reasonable men, both Muslims and infidels. Hence, the Byzantine emperor is called to distance himself from his allies in Cairo and to support the Abbasids as the representatives of the true Islamic faith. From the Byzantine point of view, the Sunni-Shiite antagonism for predominance in Iraq and the Seljuk-Fatimid conflict for control over the Zīrid Emirate, in particular, forced Constantinople to position itself in intra-Muslim disputes and to reconsider its one-sided reliance upon the peaceful relations with the Caliphate of Cairo. This resulted in the appearance of a twofold allegiance, in which the Byzantine government, on the one hand, acknowledged the formal supremacy of the Abbasid Caliphate and Sunni Islam by allowing the proclamation of the Friday prayer in its name according to older traditions, and, on the other hand, abided by commitments emanating from the treaties with Cairo regarding the integrity of the Fatimid realm and its protection from rebels and hostile threats.

The Last Byzantine-Fatimid Conflicts in Syria

The further development of the diplomatic network between Constantinople, Cairo, and Baghdad was to a large extent determined by the political situation in Syria and the degree of Fatimid influence on Iraqi affairs. The temporary replacement of the Mirdāsid emir Ṯimāl ibn Ṣāliḥ with direct Fatimid rule over Aleppo between January/February 1057 and September 1060, as well as the collaboration with the Turkish commander Arslan al-Basāsīrī during his activities between early 1056 and January 1060 in Iraq, led to a significant strengthening of the Fatimid position in the entire region. Expectations of an imminent collapse of Seljuk predominance may have arisen[50]. Major riots among the urban inhabitants, Ṭuġril Beg's Turkmens and the Būyid soldiery in December 1055 forced al-Basāsīrī along with a great part of the Baghdadi Turks to flee to Raḥba, from where he communicated with the Fatimid government offering his allegiance. Thereupon al-Basāsīrī concluded an alliance with the Shiite Mazyadids and attacked Qurayš ibn Badrān of Mosul, whom he defeated in a battle outside Sinǧār on 9 January 1057. As a result of this victory, the Friday prayer in Mosul was proclaimed in the name of the Fatimid caliph, while al-Basāsīrī and his companions were invested with robes of honor sent by al-Mustanṣir. At that time Ṭuġril Beg took action against this dangerous threat, leaving Baghdad for a large-scale campaign in the northern Ǧazīra between Takrīt, Ḥarrān, and the Marwānid territories around Ǧazīrat ibn ʿUmar. Several local rulers and a part of al-Basāsīrī's allies returned to Seljuk obedience and Ibrāhīm Ināl took control of Mosul. Yet in early 1058 the latter launched his rebellion, departing for the Highlands

46 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 6,100, trans. Ibn al-Aṯīr, Annals 38; Özgüdenli, Kuruluş devri 559 f.

47 See, for instance, the passage from the Chronicle of Bar Hebraeus quoted above, n. 16, and Ẓahīr ad-Dīn Nīšāpūrī / Rāšid ad-Dīn, Saljūq-nāma 41.

48 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 6,124, trans. Ibn al-Aṯīr, Annals 56 f.

49 Bar Hebraeus, Chronography 207.

50 For the situation in Aleppo, see Bianquis, Damas 2,565 f., 569-571; for al-Basāsīrī's role in Iraq in the years 1055-1061, see Turan, Selçuklular Tarihi 132-139; Bosworth, Iranian World 46 f., Halm, Kalifen 385-395; Hanne, Caliph 91-96.

to gain Hamaḏān. Thus, al-Basāsīrī and Qurayš swiftly retook Mosul and in late December 1058 entered Baghdad, abducting the Abbasid caliph and his entourage and proclaiming the Friday prayer in the name of his Fatimid rival. Both the local Shiites and – because of their bad experiences with the Turkmen soldiers – a large part of the Sunni populace sided with the new potentates, while other Iraqi urban centers like Baṣra and Wāsiṭ also submitted to their authority. Ṭuġril Beg, who was preoccupied with the rebellion of Ibrāhīm Ināl, was not able to react immediately. It was only with the support of his nephews Alp Arslan, Yāqūtī, and Qāwurt Beg that he managed to eliminate his seditious half-brother in July 1059, whereupon he invaded Iraq, took possession of Baghdad, and restored the caliph to his position, while al-Basāsīrī was killed in a battle near Kūfa in January 1060[51].

This brief digression on the developments in Iraq should underline the significant gain of prestige the Fatimid Caliphate achieved in these years until the supremacy of the Seljuk Sultanate was ultimately reestablished. It is also noteworthy that this sudden expansion of Fatimid suzerainty into the heartlands of the Abbasid Caliphate was realized merely on the basis of diplomatic contacts with Shiite elements of Iraq, without direct involvement in military affairs. The Fatimid Caliphate served as a counterweight and legitimizing authority for the political ambitions of all those discontented with the prospect of an Abbasid Sunni revival under the aegis of the Seljuk Sultanate. Hence, it becomes understandable why the decision-makers in Cairo in the mid-1050s suddenly altered their behavior towards Byzantium and adopted much more aggressive attitudes in terms of military operations in Syria and put forward pretentious demands at the diplomatic level. Unfortunately, the available accounts are contradictory and quite deficient in historical and chronological details, yet it is still possible to perceive the increasing amount of pressure the Fatimid government was able to exert at that time.

More specifically, the commander Makīn ad-Dawla al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Mulhim is said to have been dispatched from Cairo to lead a campaign against the Byzantine port of Laodikeia, which he put under siege. A second expedition under the emir as-Saʿīd Layth ad-Dawla resulted in the conquest of the town. A third contingent invaded Byzantine territory, pillaging, killing, and taking captives[52]. Besides Laodikeia, Ibn Mulhim is recorded as having attacked the city of Apameia/Afāmiya, the environs of Antioch, and the fortress of Qasṭūl/Qasṭūn, which surrendered in exchange for a guarantee of safety (*amān*)[53]. The Byzantine military presence in the region was eventually enhanced by a naval force of 80 ships, arriving in Laodikeia and fending off the troops of Ibn Mulhim[54]. On the whole, we are dealing with a serious disturbance of the previously peaceful relations. Furthermore, it becomes evident that the reasons for this clash have to be sought in a diplomatic dispute between the two sides, which erupted during the negotiations that were being held over the course of hostilities. Hence, the military operations were not an end in itself, but aimed at forcing the Byzantine government to make concessions in matters pertaining to bilateral relations at that time.

A difficult problem is the exact dating of these events. An important *terminus ad quem* is given by the years 446 (12 April 1054 - 1 April 1055) and 447 (2 April 1055 - 20 March 1056), in which Egypt was afflicted by famine and plague due to irregularity in the inundation of the Nile[55]. All accounts agree that the first occasion for the estrangement between Cairo and Constantinople was provided when a considerable load of wheat – the sources mention 100 000 *qafīz* or 400 000 *irdabb* respectively –, which in the framework of the customary exchange of embassies had at first agreed to be sent to Cairo in support of the starving population, was eventually withheld after the accession of a new emperor to the imperial throne[56]. As for the actual incumbent upon the throne, the details provided by our accounts are conflicting. According to one version, the »ruler of the Romans in Constantinople« (*mutamallik ar-Rūm bi-Qusṭanṭīnīya*) died and was succeeded by a woman (*imraʾa*), who asked Caliph al-Mustanṣir in a letter whether he would be willing to support her with his troops in case she were attacked by a rebel. When the caliph refused, she became angry and impeded the transport of the cereals[57]. The change of government mentioned in the account could have only referred to Constantine IX Monomachos' succession by Empress Theodora in January 1055. This chronology is in accordance with the aforementioned presence of al-Quḍāʿī as Fatimid ambassador at the court of Theodora in 1055 and fits well with the date of the surrender of Qasṭūl on 8. Rabīʿ I 447 (27 June 1055)[58]. The same report also mentions Mīḫāʾīl, i. e. Michael VI (31 August 1056 - 31 August 1057), as the successor to Theodora[59]. According to the second version, a certain Michael characterized as *ṣāḥib ḥarb*, i. e. »man of war«, *stratiōtikos*, in the days of the vizier Abū Naṣr al-Falāḥī (1045-1048)[60] had participated in an embassy to Cairo, where he was especially enticed by the attractions of the Fatimid court. After his accession to the throne he prepared the shipment of grain as well as gifts for the caliph, but was killed by the Romans, who suspected him of sympathy for Islam, and was replaced by a certain Ibn Saqlārūs[61]. There are certain fictitious elements drawing on recurring motifs in idealized narratives of Byzantine-Muslim relations and the chronology

51 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 6,181, 189 f., 191-193, 198-206, trans. Richards 102, 106, 108-113, 118-127. For bibliography, see the titles in the previous note, esp. Turan, Selçuklular Tarihi 132-141.
52 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,227 f.
53 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,228, 230 f.
54 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,229 f.; Maqrīzī, Ḫiṭaṭ 1,335. For further details, see Bianquis, Damas 2,566-568; Halm, Kalifen 382 f.
55 Halm, Kalifen 382.
56 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,227; Maqrīzī, Ḫiṭaṭ 1,335.
57 Maqrīzī, Ḫiṭaṭ 2,335.
58 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,230 f.
59 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,231.
60 Bianquis, Damas 2,548 f.
61 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,227.

is out of place, but the violent overthrow of Michael VI and the seizure of the throne by Isaac Komnenos (1 September 1057 - 22 November 1059) are still discernable. Although most chronological indications support a dating of the whole episode to the spring/early summer of 1055, it seems to the present author that the year 1057 fits better with the historical circumstances. The decline of Byzantine military power in the civil war preceding Isaac's rise to power, in conjunction with the general increase of Fatimid influence in Iraq, created very favorable conditions for a military intervention in Syria. The mastermind of the entire enterprise, according to one version, was the Fatimid vizier and supreme *qāḍī* al-Yāzūrī, a Palestinian from ar-Ramla, who owed his rise to power to the caliph's mother, and dominated the political scene in these years until his execution in March 1058 under the pretext of treacherous contacts with the Seljuk sultan[62].

The available reports speak of Theodora's anger or Ibn Saqlārūs' maliciousness and cruelty as reasons for the imperial government's change of mind, but if the identification with Isaac I is correct, the civil war of 1057, during which parts of the eastern provinces were devastated and the military units of Asia Minor suffered serious losses of manpower[63], provides a good explanation as to why the shipment of grain never reached Egypt. It was at the same time that Turkmen warrior groups, who had come in the wake of Ṭuġril Beg's 1054 campaign in Armenia, stayed for a longer period in the eastern territories without being expelled by local units[64]. The administrative and military structures in the region, no doubt, had suffered serious damage and in 1057 the overall situation may simply have been too chaotic to allow the shipment of such a load.

As regards negotiations on the diplomatic level, the Fatimid accounts provide a number of details regarding the lines of argument put forward by the two sides to support their viewpoints and political aims. The issues in question concerned both ideological and practical aspects. The Fatimid government very much insisted on the delivery of the gifts[65], which formed an indispensable part of the diplomatic protocol and were of major significance for the public projection of the mutual relationship between the two powers[66]. Matters of political importance were the release of Muslim prisoners detained in Byzantine territory and the restoration of former Muslim strongholds that were under imperial control[67]. Constantinople was willing to comply with the first demand, but requested the release of Byzantine prisoners and the restoration of Byzantine fortresses in return for the other two[68]. The Greek prisoners, so went the Fatimid counter-arguments, were widely dispersed in various Muslim countries, where the caliph had no authority. Furthermore, the Muslim inhabitants had acquired gardens and real estate in former Byzantine towns and thus had to receive compensations in case these possessions were restored to their original owners[69]. The Fatimid government obviously felt itself in a position of strength, being able to dictate its conditions for an armistice. Practical problems of political authority and geographical distance within the Muslim orbit and the property rights of Muslim landowners were regarded important enough to reject an agreement with the Byzantine side. Evidently, the Fatimid Caliphate was mainly interested in a demonstration of superiority. This attitude can be explained as a reaction to the preceding humiliations, such as the affairs of al-Muʿizz ibn Bādīs and the mosque of Constantinople, and as an expression of the new self-awareness resulting from the alliances with al-Basāsīrī and other powerful Syrian and Iraqi potentates. Accordingly, Cairo sought to degrade the Byzantine court in matters of diplomatic etiquette, requesting that the gifts the caliph would give in return for the imperial presents should have only half the value of the latter instead of the customary two-thirds[70]. The strengthening of the Fatimid position in the Muslim World in the years after 1055 had to be visualized in the symbolic language of Byzantine-Fatimid gift exchange with the imperial government of Constantinople being forced to accept a sort of devaluation in its relationship with the court of Cairo.

Byzantium's Last Attack on Syria

For some time the Fatimids had exerted a strong influence in Aleppo, Upper Mesopotamia, and Iraq and projected its superiority vis-à-vis Byzantium, but Ṭuġril Beg's victory in Iraq quickly reversed the situation. The Mirdāsids returned to Aleppo, and in the early 1060s the Turkmen incursion into Syria began. This brought about a deep involvement of Turkish warlords in the local rivalries of Fatimid and Syrian potentates and led to the establishment of new principalities in Palestine, central Syria, and parts of the coastland by the Turkmen commander Atsiz ibn Uwaq and Sultan Malikšāh's

62 Maqrīzī Ittiʿāẓ 2,227; Bianquis, Damas 2,550 f.; Halm, Kalifen 356-359, 390 f.
63 Cheynet, Pouvoir 68-70, 339-344.
64 Iōannēs Skylitzēs, Synopsis historiarum 484: Τοῦρκος γάρ τις τὴν κλῆσιν Σαμούχ, τὸ γένος οὐκ ἐπίσημος, πρὸς δὲ τὰ πολεμικὰ γενναῖος καὶ ἐνεργός […] αὐτὸς τῷ τόπῳ παρέμεινε μετὰ τρισχιλίων ἀνδρῶν, καὶ περιπλανώμενος ἐν ταῖς πεδιάσι καὶ τοῖς ὑπτίοις τόποις τῆς μεγάλης Ἀρμενίας.
65 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,227: »They replied that what made this [i.e., the attack on Laodikeia] necessary was his breach of the peace treaty (*al-hudna*), which had been agreed with his predecessor, and the detention of the gift and the [other] gift, which was not from his own belongings«.
66 For the significance of gift exchange in Byzantine diplomacy, see, for instance, Cutler, Gifts 247 f.; Schreiner, Geschenke.
67 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,227: »The condition was imposed upon him to release all prisoners in the land of the Romans (*bilād ar-Rūm*)«. Ibidem 2,228: »The condition was imposed upon him to hand over the Muslim fortresses which had come in the possession of the Romans«.
68 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,227 f.
69 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,227 f.
70 Maqrīzī, Ittiʿāẓ 2,227: »It was customary practice that when presents from the Romans arrived at the caliphal court, their value was estimated and presents of a value equal to two-thirds of the former were sent to them, so that Islam had a profit of one-third in comparison to them. Therefore, the condition was imposed that the value of the presents which were sent to them in return for the value of their presents would be half«.

brother Tāğ ad-Dawla Tutuš during the 1070s[71]. There were attempts of minor lords to collaborate with the Fatimid Caliphate, but there were also attacks on Egyptian soil, and Fatimid rule in Syria gradually collapsed[72]. The Byzantines still tried to maintain their influence over the Emirate of Aleppo, interfering in the intra-dynastic struggles of the Mirdāsids, and in 1068, in the course of his first eastern campaign, Emperor Romanos IV conquered the fortress of Manbiǧ[73]. Sultan Alp Arslan's 1070/1071 campaign in Upper Mesopotamia and northern Syria forced most Muslim local rulers in the region to recognize Seljuk suzerainty[74] and thus decisively contributed to the decay of the Byzantine network of alliances and political influence in the borderland. The battle of Manzikert, in comparison, was certainly a heavy blow to Byzantium's reputation of invincibility and triggered civil strife within the Byzantine aristocracy, but did not have particularly disastrous repercussions for the empire's military power and defense system[75]. Besides the downfall of the central government in Asia Minor and its replacement by mostly unstable and short-lived lordships of Christian rebels, Turkish warlords and seditious members of the Seljuk dynasty, it was mainly Sultan Malikšāh's 1086 campaign that put an end to the Byzantine presence in Syria, incorporating the urban centers of the former frontier zone, such as Antioch, Aleppo, and Edessa, into a centralized Seljuk regime drawing on loyal *ġulām* commanders from the sultan's entourage, such as Yaġī Siyān, Aqsunqur, and Būzān, and members of local Arab and Kurdish clans who had submitted to Seljuk authority[76]. The Seljuk civil strife of the years 1093-1095, in which Tāğ ad-Dawla Tutuš contested with Malikšāh's son Barkyāruq for the sultan's title, cut the bonds between the Syrian potentates and the sultanate and caused a new disintegration of the region with Tutuš's sons Riḍwān and Duqāq ruling in Aleppo and Damascus respectively and a number of newcomers in other territories of Syria and the northern Ğazīra. It was also in this period that a number of Turkmen rulers made their first appearance in some regions of eastern Anatolia, such as the basin of the Halys River (Kızıl Irmak), Erzurum, Tephrike/Divriği, Aḫlāt at Lake Van, and the province of Diyār Bakr[77], while Qiliğ Arslan managed to succeed his father Sulaymān ibn Qutlumuš in Nicaea and thus implemented the idea of dynastic continuity among the Seljuk Turks in western Asia Minor[78]. One can hardly speak of systematic conquests of Byzantine territories between the early 1070s and the 1090s. What actually happened was a gradual decay of the mechanisms of central rule as a result of the intrusion of Turkmen warrior groups, and their replacement by regional forms of government in the context of a thoroughly mixed Byzantine-Turkish social fabric. Contacts of the imperial court with the Muslim central lands were largely reduced to diplomatic exchanges with the court of Sultan Malikšāh, who between 1086 and his death in late 1092 made repeated attempts to put the Turkmens operating in Asia Minor under his control. A treaty of friendship with Emperor Alexios I including proposals for a marriage between the two dynasties was one way to achieve this goal[79]. At that time Byzantium's eastern policy was limited to attempts to recover territories in Asia Minor, without being able to exert any tangible influence in the old borderland. The situation suddenly changed with the arrival of the armies of the First Crusade in 1096/1097, which managed to cross Asia Minor and seize Antioch and Edessa, thereby decisively accelerating the Byzantine re-conquests in Asia Minor. This resulted in a major Christian penetration in the regions from Cilicia and the Mediterranean coast to the Euphrates River[80]. Furthermore, the Byzantine-Norman contest for the control of Antioch brought imperial troops back to the coastal towns of northern Syria, while the nearby island of Cyprus became a hub of major importance for control over and communication with the entire southern shoreline of Asia Minor. It is no coincidence that at this time the imperial government resumed its contacts with the Fatimid court of Cairo in order to mediate the release of imprisoned Frankish Crusader lords[81]. In constant conflict with the Normans of Antioch, the Byzantines for some time maintained control of fortresses, such as Laodikeia, Balaneia/Banyās, and Maraqlīya, and had some temporary successes in Cilicia, but the main focus of Constantinople's eastern policy quickly came to be the establishment of a protectorate over the Kingdom of Jerusalem[82]. Henceforth, Byzantine diplomacy with Muslim powers beyond Asia Minor was largely determined by this objective and was, in one way or another, a side effect of its political ambitions in Palestine and Antioch.

These attitudes survived the death of Alexios I in 1118 and persisted throughout the reign of his son and successor John II Komnenos. His large-scale campaign of 1137/1138 to Cilicia, Antioch, Aleppo, and other Muslim towns in northern Syria in many respects was a singular event[83]. After the

71 For details, see Sevim, Suriye 35-43, 49-56, 63-74, 78-84 (Atsiz b. Uwaq arrived in about 1069/1070 in Palestine and seized Damascus in June/July 1076; in 1079 he was replaced by Tutuš).
72 Sevim, Suriye 51-54, 74-78 (Atsiz's Egyptian campaign in early 1076).
73 Sevim, Suriye 43-46; Felix, Byzanz 122 f.
74 Sevim, Suriye 54-62.
75 Cheynet, Mantzikert 410-438.
76 Sevim, Suriye 127-136.
77 Turan, Doğu Anadolu.
78 Turan, Türkiye 83-98.
79 Kafesoğlu, Melikşah 101-112; Dölger/Wirth, Regesten, no. 1164.
80 Asbridge, First Crusade 107-250.
81 Dölger/Wirth, Regesten, no. 1216 (1102), 1218[e] (ca. 1104).
82 Lilie, Crusader States 70-72.
83 For details about the events of this campaign, see Chalandon, Comnène 127-154; Lilie, Crusader States 117-134; Angold, Empire 187 f.: After quick and successful operations in Cilicia ending in the surrender of the main strongholds in the region, the imperial army stood before the walls of Antioch in August 1137. Putting the town under siege, Emperor John II forced Raymond of Poitiers, the husband of Bohemond II's daughter, to enter into negotiations. The agreement reached by the two sides provided for the handing over of Antioch in exchange for the Muslim cities of Aleppo, Šayzar, Ḥimṣ, and Ḥamāh, which were to be conquered in a joint campaign during the following spring. In April-May 1138, the Byzantine-Frankish forces took Bizāʿa and besieged Šayzar, but were not able to make further inroads and thus retreated to Antioch. The emperor made his solemn entrance, but after turmoil instigated by Raymond was forced to leave the town and returned to Constantinople.

termination of hostilities with the Normans in 1108, it was the first attempt of the imperial government to restore direct control over the coastland south of the Taurus Mountains and the region of Antioch, and prepared the grounds for Manuel I's policy of tutelage, marriages and military coalitions which dominated relations with the Crusader States in the 1150s and 1160s[84].

Even more remarkable from a military point of view is the fact that John II's expedition marked the last personal involvement of a Byzantine emperor in conflicts with Arab potentates in northern Syria. From the death of Basil II in 1025, no more than two campaigns, namely those of Romanos III and Romanos IV in 1030 and 1068 respectively, took place in this region[85]. After John II, nothing of this sort was ever to happen again, for when his son Manuel came to Antioch in 1158-1159, he arrived at a peace agreement with the ruler of Aleppo, Nūr ad-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Zankī[86], while the naval expedition of 1169 against Egypt organized together with King Amalric of Jerusalem ended in a debacle, in which the emperor did not participate in person[87]. Hence, the Byzantine campaign of April/May 1138 was the last imperial enterprise aiming at an actual conquest of Muslim-Arab territories and, in a sense, can be regarded as the last echo of Byzantine claims to suzerainty over the Emirate of Aleppo, which were based on the protectorate first established in late 969 and determined Byzantine attitudes in the region at least until the late 1060s, as has been shown above[88].

After the demise of the Seljuk princes Duqāq of Damascus and Riḍwān of Aleppo in June 1104 and August 1113 respectively, their descendants proved too weak to maintain a stable dynastic succession. Hence, the leadership in Damascus passed to Duqāq's *atabeg* (i.e., »educator of princes«) and stepfather Ṭuġtakīn, who established a local dynasty of his own lineage, whereas in Aleppo, after a brief interplay of Riḍwān's son and a local dignitary, power was seized by the ruler of Mārdīn and Naṣībīn, Īlġāzī ibn Artuq, who remained firmly established in the town from 1118 until his death in 1122[89]. In 1127/1128 ʿImād ad-Dīn Zankī, the youngest son of the Seljuk governor Aqunsur of Aleppo (1087-1094) and holder of various posts in Iraq under Sultan Maḥmūd (1118-1131), was appointed *atabeg* of the sultan's son and acquired the governorship over the most important urban centres in the Ǧazīra and northern Syria, Mosul and Aleppo. Despite his personal involvement in the Seljuk power struggle in Iraq after the sultan's death in the early 1130s, ʿImād ad-Dīn managed to consolidate his position as an autonomous emir, constantly expanding his influence in central Syria. In the months preceding the arrival of the Byzantine troops, he exerted increasing pressure on the Būrid lord Šihāb ad-Dīn Maḥmūd of Damascus, threatening Ḥimṣ and the Biqāʿ region and negotiating a marriage with the emir's mother, Zumurrud Ḫātūn[90].

Due to its manifold political and ideological ramifications, the Byzantine campaign is covered by a very broad range of primary sources written in Greek, Arabic, Latin, Syriac and Armenian[91]. The most immediate echo of these events is expressed in the speeches composed by the court rhetoricians Michael Italikos (d. before 1157) and Nikephoros Basilakes (flourished in the first half of the twelfth century) in praise of Emperor John II's Syrian campaign in the months after his return to Constantinople[92]. In contrast to the texts composed in the second half of the eleventh century, where a sort of defensive attitude evoking the achievements of a glorious past prevailed[93], the 1130s seem to be marked by a increased self-confidence resulting from a number of successful military operations of the imperial army, fending off hostile attacks in the Balkans and in Asia Minor and re-stabilizing the frontier zones in both regions, especially after the treaty of Devol with the Normans in 1108 and during the two decades of John II's reign[94]. Michael Italikos, in two letters to John Axouch, the chief commander of the Byzantine army, is full of praise for the addressee's military abilities, portraying him as being even greater than the Macedonian emperors and the legendary generals of the Phokas family. Another recurring motif is the idea of the imperial troops fighting again in the border zones of ancient Rome at the Danube and Tigris Rivers[95]. A second letter to Theodore Prodromos, in which the author

84 Lilie, Crusader States 175-211.
85 Felix, Byzanz 82-89, 122-123.
86 Lilie, Crusader States 176-183.
87 Lilie, Crusader States 198-202.
88 Dölger / Müller, Regesten, no. 728a.
89 El Azhari, Saljūqs 178f.; Bosworth, Riḍwān b. Tutush 519; Süssheim, Il-Ghāzī.
90 Elisséeff, Nūr ad-Dīn 2,332-367, esp. 343-348, 352-356, 359-362. Heidemann, Zangī 451f. Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 7,7, trans. Ibn al-Aṯīr, Chronicle 325f. (on 30 December 1135, Ḥimṣ was handed over to Šihāb ad-Dīn Maḥmūd by its rulers because of the constant harassment by ʿImād ad-Dīn Zankī. While the former lords were compensated with the town of Tadmur, Šihāb ad-Dīn concluded a peace treaty with ʿImād ad-Dīn), ibidem 15f., trans. Richards 335 (Zankī's troops besieged Ḥimṣ between Šaʿbān 531 [24 April-22 May 1137] and 20 Šawwāl [11 July], negotiations with the governor on behalf of Šihāb ad-Dīn, Muʿīn ad-Dīn Unur, yielded no results); Ibn al-ʿAdīm, Zubda 453f. (new peace treaty with Damascus, ʿImād ad-Dīn married Ḫātūn, the daughter of Ǧanāḥ ad-Dawla Ḥusayn and brought her to Aleppo).
91 For Greek and Arabic sources, see the discussion below. Other important sources: William of Tyre, Chronicon 14, 24, 662f. (submission of Cilicia and advance to Antioch), 14, 30, 670f. (siege of Antioch, treaty between John II and Raymond), 15, 1f. (invasion of Muslim territories, siege of Šayzar, retreat), 15, 3-5, 676-681 (entrance of the emperor in Antioch, turmoil in the town forces the emperor to leave, departure for Constantinople). Matthew of Edessa, Chronicle: Continuation of Gregory the Priest 241f.; Bar Hebraeus, Chronicle 264.; Ibn al-Qalānisī, Ḏayl 257.
92 Michaël Italikos, Lettres et discours 239-270, no. 43: Λόγος βασιλικὸς εἰς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα Ἰωάννην τὸν Κομνηνὸν καὶ πορφυρογέννητον ἐπὶ τοῖς κατὰ Συρίαν ἀγῶσιν αὐτοῦ (dated by the editor to the second half of 1138). Nikēphoros Basilakēs, Gli Encomî 87-132.
93 See, for example, Iōannēs Skylitzēs, Synopsis historiarum 446f.: πρὸς δὲ Ῥωμαίους ὅπλα κινῆσαι ἀπεδειλία, δεδιὼς καὶ φρίττων ἐκ μόνης τῆς φήμης τὰ τῶν προηγησαμένων τριῶν βασιλέων ἀνδραγαθήματα, Νικηφόρου, Ἰωάννου καὶ Βασιλείου, καὶ ὑποπτεύων τὴν αὐτὴν ἀρετὴν ἔτι καὶ δύναμιν προσεῖναι Ῥωμαίους.
94 The most detailed modern narrative reconstruction of the events is still Chalandon, Comnène 2,35-91 (campaigns in Asia Minor, against the Pechenegs, clashes with Hungary and the Serbs). For a much briefer survey, see Angold, Empire 181-190.
95 Michaël Italikos, Lettres et discours 222-224 (no. 37): Πρὸς τὸν μεγάλον δομέστικον, 228-230 (no. 39): Τῷ μεγάλῳ δομεστίκῳ (both pieces dated to 1137 or 1138 by the editor), esp. 223f.: ὀκνῶ γὰρ εἰπεῖν Βασιλείους τινὰς βασιλεῖς καὶ τὸ ἐν μάχαις περιβόητον Φωκᾶ γένος καὶ ὅσοι μετ' ἐκείνους γεγόνασι, 229: καὶ νῦν μὲν τὸν Ἴστρον διαβαίνετε … νῦν δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν Τίγρητα ποταμὸν ἐλαύνετε καὶ τοῦ δόρατος ὑμῶν τὴν ὀξύτητα Πάρθοις καὶ Μήδοις διαδείκνυσθε. See also Nikēphoros Basilakēs, Gli encomî 112, ll. 658-660 (πολλοῦ γὲ τοῦ χρόνου […] οὐκ οἶδεν Εὐφράτης Αὐσόνιον ἄνακτα, οὐ Ῥωμαϊκὴν ἵππον ἐδέξατο).

at the recipient's demand exposed geographical knowledge about the East[96], shows that the information derived from the ancient tradition about the deserts, towns, and provinces of Syria and Palestine was still present and at times reactivated in the worldview of Byzantine intellectuals. What is new in the Byzantine texts of this period is the fact that the nations traditionally associated with these regions, such as the Persians and the Arabs, now came to be intermingled with newly arrived Christian groups, such as the »barbarians of Roupenios«, i. e., the Armenians, or the »Syrian Celts«, i. e., the Franks of the Crusader States[97]. Given that only the first part of the expedition in Cilicia and Antioch delivered tangible results in terms of territorial gains and political advantages, the rhetoricians avoid drawing clear distinctions between the empire's adversaries, despite the fact that they widely differed with respect to their religion and cultural affinity to Byzantium. From their perspective, all enemies opposing the Byzantine army were more or less of the same nature. Religion did not play an important role either in explaining the emperor's incentives or in outlining his foes' behavior. The predominant idea providing an adequate explanatory model for the campaign is its historical contextualization with the struggles of Alexander the Great and Ancient Rome with the Arsacids, the tribes of Cilicia, the Phoenicians, the Medians, and the Persians[98]. Alexander's victory at Issus, for instance, prefigures John's successful arrival in the port of Alexandretta, where »he warded off the whole of Asia«[99]. John achieved his victory at the same place where the Persians for the first time tasted subjugation[100].

The two historians of John II's reign, John Kinnamos and Niketas Choniates, just like the court rhetoricians, promote the image of an exemplary ruler and military commander restlessly fighting at the head of his armies[101]. In contrast to Italikos and Basilakes, however, they give more detailed descriptions of the individual movements and military actions of the Byzantine troops. Striking is the lack of substantial information concerning the enemy and the political situation in the regions the Byzantine troops came to invade. There are only very few references to the political leaders in Syria, and the Muslims are usually referred to as »barbarians« and »enemies« (βάρβαροι, πολέμιοι) with their specific characteristics, such as »furious passion«, »wantonness«, and »arrogance«, or as collective ethnic entity like »the offspring of Agar« (τῶν ἐκ τῆς Ἄγαρ) and »Saracens« (Σαρακηνοί)[102]. This oversimplified and elusive image certainly has to do with the lack of communication with the rulers in Aleppo and other regions of Syria, which for many decades had been out of the reach of imperial policy. Apart from this, the Byzantines also lacked a clear ideological concept covering these operations. In contrast to the wars in Asia Minor, which are described as attempts to restore imperial authority in provinces which had always formed an intrinsic part of the Empire[103], the claims to the Muslim territories of Syria are much weaker and rooted, if at all, in a very remote historical past[104]. Religious connotations of an emperor fighting under divine protection and certain elements of Crusader ideology, which appear quite frequently with respect to the Anatolian campaigns, are less tangible here. Nikephoros Basilakes was the only author to create an explicit link between the emperor's physical presence in Syria and the idea of an ultimate mission leading to Jerusalem, thus invoking patterns of thought reminding us of a sort of a Crusader mentality[105]. What is actually highlighted by both the rhetoricians and the historians is the acquisition of sacred objects, above all a precious marble cross preserved in Šayzar, which was ascribed to the time of Constantine the Great and thus served as a symbol of victory concealing the failure of military operations[106].

The most detailed Muslim reports are transmitted in the Chronicle of Aleppo by Kamāl ad-Din ibn al-ʿAdīm and the *al-Kāmil fī l-tārīḫ* by Ibn al-Aṯīr[107]. Both texts are very accurate with respect to the military operations and written in support of the political program of ʿImād ad-Dīn Zankī. He clearly

96 Michaēl Italikos, Lettres et discours 99-101 (no. 6): Θεοδώρῳ τῷ Προδρόμῳ (not datable, the extensive references to the geography of Asia Minor and Syria most probably have to be seen in connection with John II's campaigns of 1137/1138 or 1141/1143).

97 Michaēl Italikos, Lettres et discours 252, ll. 15f. (Κίλικας ἐθάμβεις, Κέλτους ἐφόβεις), 255, l. 10 (δοῦλοι Ῥουπενίου βάρβαροι), 259, ll. 12f. (τούτους τοὺς Κελτοὺς λέγω Σύρους), 267, l. 4 (Ἄραβας καὶ Κελτοὺς καὶ Ἀρμενίους καὶ Κίλικας). Nikēphoros Basilakēs, Gli encomî 91, ll. 52f. (μετὰ Κελτῶν καταβέβληται, μετὰ Περσῶν τεταπείνωται, μετὰ Κιλίκων δεδούλωται).

98 Michaēl Italikos, Lettres et discours 254, l. 1 (Γένος μὲν ἰσχυρότατον Ἀρσακίδαι), 257, l. 12 (Ἔνθα γὰρ δὴ πάλαι Δαρεῖον Ἀλέξανδρος ἐτροπώσατο), 259, ll. 6f. (Ἀλλ' ὦ βάρβαροι Πέρσαι καὶ Μῆδοι), 264, l. 1 (καὶ τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον ἐνταῦθα μιμῇ), 266, ll. 21f. (ἐθριάμβευσεν ἐπ' Ἀρμενίων νίκαις ποτὲ καὶ Πομπήϊος, ἀλλὰ Λούκουλλος ἐνίκα καὶ Πομπήιος ἐν ἑτέρων ἀγῶσιν ἐπόμπευε). Nikēphoros Basilakēs, Gli encomî 110, ll. 616f. (Σὺ μὲν Ἰσαύρους ἐστρόβεις, καὶ Παμφυλίαν ἐστρόβεις, καὶ Κίλικας συνεστρόβεις), 110, l. 621 (Ἀλέξανδρον μὲν οὖν Δαρεῖος ἐθάρρησε καὶ τὴν μάχην ἐτόλμησε).

99 Michaēl Italikos, Lettres et discours 257, ll. 12f. (Ἔνθα γὰρ δὴ πάλαι Δαρεῖον Ἀλέξανδρος ἐτροπώσατο καὶ τῷ τόπῳ δέδωκε τοὔνομα, ἐνταῦθα σὺ τὴν Ἀσίαν ὅλην ἀπέωσας).

100 Michaēl Italikos, Lettres et discours 257, ll. 17f. (ἐκεῖσε τρόπαια στήσας οὗ πρῶτον Πέρσαι δουλείας ἐγεύσαντο).

101 Iōannēs Kinnamos, Epitome 16-21; Nikētas Chōniatēs, Historia 21-31.

102 Iōannēs Kinnamos, Epitome 20, ll. 14f. (Σαρακηνοῖς εἰς χεῖρας ἦλθε). Nikētas Chōniatēs, Historia 27, ll. 8f. (παρ' Ἀγαρηνῶν κατεχομέναις Συροφοινίσσαις πόλεσι), 27, l. 14 (πρὸς πάθος μανικὸν καὶ φορὰν παράλογον τῶν βαρβάρων), 28, l. 21 (τῶν ἐκ τῆς Ἄγαρ καθεῖλε τὸ φρόνημα), 31, l. 11 (τύφῳ ἐμπλήκτῳ βαρβαρικῷ). In one passage (31, l. 9), Niketas mentions the troops τοῦ Ζακῆ and two renowned prisoners of war, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Ἀτάπακα καὶ ὁ τοῦ Σαμοὺχ Ἀμηρᾶ (31, l. 15).

103 Beihammer, Orthodoxy 15f., 33-36.

104 For the ideological substrate of these ideas, see the articles of H. Ahrweiler, J. Koder, and E. Chrysos in Chrysos, Oecumene 13-45, 59-78. Very indicative of the ideological nature is for instance Nikēphoros Basilakēs, Gli encomî 91, ll. 73f. (καὶ φθάνει μὲν ἀπὸ περάτων ἕως περάτων τῆς οἰκουμένης, φοβεῖ δὲ ὅλα ἔθνη μυρίανδρα).

105 Nikēphoros Basilakes, Gli encomî 99, ll. 285-291. For details, see Beihammer, Orthodoxy 26f.

106 Michaēl Italikos, Lettres et discours 264f. (Τὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ τρόπαιον κατὰ πᾶσαν ὑπεροχὴν ὑπερέβαλεν …). Nikēphoros Basilakēs, Gli encomî 115f., ll. 747-772. Iōannēs Kinnamos, Epitome 20 (… προσάγεται δὲ καὶ σταυρός, ἐξαίσιόν τι χρῆμα καὶ βασιλεῦσι δῶρον ἀντάξιον). Nikētas Chōniatēs, Historia 30f. (τόν τε ἐκ λίθου ἀκτινώδους σταυρόν).

107 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 7,17, 19-22, trans. Richards, Chronicle 337, 339-342 (sub anno 531 [29 September 1136 - 18 September 1138] and 532 [19 September 1137 - 7 September 1138]): »Account of the expedition of the king of the Romans from his land to Syria (*aš-Šām*)«, »Account of the arrival of the king of the Romans in Syria (*aš-Šām*), of his seizure of Buzāʿa and of what he did to the Muslims«. Ibn al-ʿAdīm, Zubda 454-459.

appears as the holder of supreme authority in Syria, who is officially recognized by both the Abbasid Caliph al-Muqtafī (1136-1160) and the Seljuk Sultan Masʿūd, gradually extending his sway towards Damascus and its environs, and successfully warding off the attacks of the Franks and the Byzantines.

An important aspect stressed by both authors is the element of surprise, which the Byzantine troops took advantage of in their sudden and unexpected campaign in Arab territories. The events in Cilicia and Antioch are said to have caused fear in the people in Aleppo, so that they began to repair the city walls. But in September 1137 the emperor entered into negotiations, dispatching an emissary to ʿImād ad-Dīn and pretending that the Byzantine campaign was directed against the Armenian lord Leo. In response, the Zankid ruler sent one of his own dignitaries along with gifts, most probably in order to continue the talks and reach an agreement[108]. All of a sudden (*baġtatan*), the imperial army crossed the border of the Emirate of Aleppo and on Easter Sunday, 4 April 1138, laid siege to the fortress of Buzāʿā[109].

The most crucial moment of this campaign was the siege of Šayzar, ruled at that time by Abū l-ʿAsākir Sulṭān (1098-1154), the head of the Munqiḏ clan, which since 1081 had held sway over this small, semi-independent principality between the Ǧabal Anṣarīya and the Orontes River[110]. As for the successful defense of the town, Ibn al-ʿAdīm refers to a strong relief force of Turkmen warriors under the command of the Artuqid ruler Qarā Arslan, son of Dāwūd, the lord of Khartpert and Ḥiṣn Kayfā[111], as the main reason for the emperor's withdrawal[112], while Ibn al-Aṯīr primarily stresses the decisive role of ʿImād ad-Dīn[113]. Though it is not possible to assess the historical accuracy with certainty, it seems that the latter version is a pro-Zengid account propagated in order to underscore ʿImād ad-Dīn's claims to political leadership in Syria. The main focus lies on the diplomatic skills of the *atabeg*, who is said to have initiated an exchange of letters with the Byzantine emperor and the Frankish rulers, thus trying to play them off against each other[114]. John II is called by his Frankish allies to reach a decision on fighting a pitched battle, something that the emperor allegedly rejected because of his fear of the *atabeg*'s numerically superior military forces[115]. Further messages were intended to raise suspicions between the emperor and the Frankish commanders by pointing out the Franks' lack of reliability, on the one hand, and the Byzantines' plans to gain control of all Crusader territories, on the other[116]. This detail is indirectly supported by William of Tyre, who also refers to a serious dispute between the emperor and his Frankish allies[117]. Given that the idea of bringing the Crusader principalities under imperial control actually was at that time one of the primary objectives of Komnenian foreign policy, the existence of letters written by ʿImād ad-Dīn with the intention of stirring up the conflict is highly probable.

Another aspect underlined by Ibn al-Aṯīr was ʿImād ad-Dīn Zankī's attempt to confront the Byzantine threat with the aid of a broader transregional coalition of military forces. Outside Syria, the most important political power was the Abbasid Caliphate and Sultan Masʿūd. Hence, the *atabeg* sent the *qāḍī* Kamāl ad-Dīn Abū l-Faḍl aš-Šahrazūrī on an official mission to Baghdad, the details and results of which are partly transmitted in the sources in the emissary's own words[118]. The initial refusal of the sultan caused aš-Šahrazūrī and his companions to stage-manage a public show of despair triggering a popular riot in the Friday mosque. Masʿūd, fearing a further escalation of violence, was forced to comply with the emissary's request and dispatched troops to Syria:

»Thus he put one of his companions to go to the Palace Mosque (*Ǧāmiʿ al-Qaṣr*) on Friday accompanied by some people from the mob. He ordered him to create turmoil when the *ḫaṭīb* mounted the minbar and to shout along with the others: ›Woe for Islam, woe for the religion of Muḥammad‹, and to tear his clothes and to cast his turban from his head and to go to the palace of the sultan (*dār as-sulṭān*) while the people would shout for help together with him. And he

108 Ibn al-ʿAdīm, Zubda 454f.: »In this year the king of the Romans Kālyānī [= Kalogiannis, i.e., Emperor John II] arrived along with his troops from Constantinople. When he came to Antioch, the Franks resisted him – thanks to the benevolence of God, may he be exalted – and he stayed there until his ships arrived with the baggage, the provisions, and the money. Thereafter he attacked Lāwun b. Dūbāl, the lord of the frontier region (*ṣāḥib aṭ-ṭuġūr*), and achieved a great victory against him. The inhabitants of Aleppo became afraid of him and started to fortify the town and to dig trenches. But he [the emperor] returned to the land of Lāwun and conquered it all ... While returning from Antioch towards Baġrās on 22 Ḏū l-ḥiǧǧa of the year [5]31 [10 September 1137] he dispatched his emissary to Zankī … and the emissary came to Zankī, while he was traveling to al-Qibla. He sent him [the emissary] back to the king of the Romans along with gifts, namely leopards, falcons, and hawks, with the aid of the chamberlain (*al-ḥāǧib*) Ḥasan. Thereafter, he returned to him [Zankī] accompanied by an emissary from him [the emperor]. He informed him that he was attacking the land of Lāwun. Thus he [Zankī] set off for Ḥamāh«.

109 Ibn al-ʿAdīm, Zubda 456 (21 Raǧab 532).

110 Mouton, Shayzar 410.

111 Taeschner, Artuḳids 664.

112 Ibn al-ʿAdīm, Zubda 459: »They were informed that Qarā Arslaan b. Dāwūd b. Sukmān b. Artuq had crossed the Euphrates along with huge forces, which were more the 50,000 Turkmen and other warriors«.

113 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 7,19f., trans. Richards 340: »It was one of the best-fortified fortresses. They [the Byzantines] attacked it only because it did not belong to Zankī, for he had no great interest in guarding it … hence, they put it under siege, setting up eighteen trebuchets against it. The lord of the place sent a message to Zankī asking him for help«.

114 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 7,20, trans. Richards, Chronicle 340f.

115 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 7,20, trans. Richards, Chronicle 341: »[The emperor is addressing his Frankish allies:] Do you believe that he has not more troops than those that you see? He only wants you to attack him so that an uncountable number of reinforcements of Muslims will come to him«.

116 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 7,20, trans. Richards, Chronicle 341: »Zankī also sent messages to the king of the Romans, making him believe that the Franks of Syria (*Faranǧ aš-Šām*) were afraid of him. If he moved from his position, they would abandon him. He sent messages to the Franks of Syria, terrifying them of the king of the Romans and saying to them: If he seizes a single fortress in Syria, he will seize all your land«.

117 William of Tyre, Chronicon 15.1, 675.

118 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 7,20f., trans. Richards, Chronicle 341: »When the Franks were besieging Buzāʿa, Zankī sent the judge Kamāl ad-Dīn Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh b. al-Qāsim aš-Šahrazūrī to Sultan Masʿūd to ask him for help and to request troops. Thus the latter went to Baghdad and reported the situation to the sultan and explained to him the result of negligence and that between him and the Romans would be nothing if they took possession of Aleppo and descended along the Euphrates towards Baghdad«.

put another man to do the same in the mosque of the sultan. When the *ḫaṭīb* mounted the minbar, this man stood up, beat his head, threw off his turban and tore his clothes, while the others were shouting with him. The people began to cry and interrupted the prayer, cursed the sultan and left the mosque following the sheikh to the sultan's palace. There they found the people in the mosque of the sultan doing the same. The people surrounded the sultan's palace shouting for help and crying[119]«.

This is one of the earliest examples for the mobilization of military forces fuelled by the idea of a common enemy threatening Islam. It has to be seen in conjunction with the revival of the Muslim jihad ideology against the Franks which can first be detected in honorifics used in the funerary inscription of the Artuqid ruler Balak (m. 1124), in the Syrian monumental inscriptions of ʿImād ad-Dīn Zankī, and eventually in historical accounts referring to the conquest of Edessa in 1144 as well as the siege of Damascus by the Second Crusade in 1148[120]. The 1137/1138 campaign coincided with the formative stage of this ideological re-orientation among the Turkish-Muslim elite in Syria, and it therefore comes as no surprise that the Byzantine emperor and his army were included among the Christian enemies of Islam. As has been shown above, the Byzantine imperial propaganda concerning this campaign also contained notions of Crusader ideology, referring to Jerusalem as the emperor's ultimate goal. It therefore becomes clear that at the time of this expedition the Byzantines and the Muslims of Syria underwent a parallel process of ideological infiltration emanating from the Crusader States, which, on the one hand, resulted in a partial adoption of conceptual features and, on the other, led to the crystallization of a counter-crusade attitude.

Another interesting aspect is the symbolic language used by the collaborators of aš-Šahrazūrī. Verbal and non-verbal gestures of despair expressing distress and fear in combination with symbolic acts of discontent directed against Sultan Maḥmūd served as a powerful means of influencing public opinion and create an appropriate atmosphere for the promotion of political demands. Despite the fact that for more than three decades the Muslim rulers in Syria were confronted with the threats emanating from the Frankish principalities in Palestine, Antioch, and Edessa, the authorities in the Muslim central lands seem to have been widely indifferent to the state of affairs in Syria. Muslim unity against Christians could not be taken for granted and had to be gradually implemented through the collaboration of the military and religious elites. The latter at times mobilized mobs of the urban populace in order to promote their demands and to bring pressure to bear on the supreme holders of sovereignty. In this way, ʿImād ad-Dīn Zankī is propagated as the most powerful protector of Islam coordinating the resistance to the Byzantine invasion, which is conceived of as a part of a broader Christian-Muslim confrontation. Yet the accounts of both Ibn al-Aṯīr and Ibn ad-ʿAdīm still do not explicitly refer to specific elements of jihad ideology, nor do they make use of the usual binary juxtaposition of Muslims and infidels, as can be found, for example, in the accounts on the large-scale Seljuk attacks under the sultan's personal command against Byzantine territory and in the Muslim sources on the battle of Manzikert[121]. There was a clear tendency to frame the conflicts of the Great Seljuk sultans against the Byzantines and other Christian neighbors along the lines of jihad principles, thus projecting the image of exemplary rulers and champions of Islam. The new generation of local potentates, who replaced the Seljuk lineage of Tāǧ ad-Dawla Tutuš and the group of commanders established by Malikšāh and Barkyāruq in the main centers of Syria and Upper Mesopotamia, gradually embedded these ideas in their own discourses of self-representation while increasingly engaging in conflicts with the Crusader States. The fact that a campaign under the command of the Byzantine emperor was propagated at the caliphal court of Baghdad as a major threat to Islam requiring the unification of all available forces was an important step in this direction.

To sum up, the relations between Byzantium and the Muslim central lands between 1050 and 1138, although frequently overshadowed by the struggle for Asia Minor and the conflicts with the Crusader States, were still full of exciting changes and innovations reflecting the complex realities of the constellations emerging during that time in the Muslim World. Certainly, Byzantium no longer was a major player in the region, nor a protagonist of large-scale conquests, but Muslim elites still regarded it as the embodiment of Christian imperial rule and as a point of reference for Muslim universal ambitions. Hence, when the conflicts between the Fatimid Caliphate and the rising Seljuk Sultanate began to escalate, the emperor and the mosque of Constantinople became directly involved in the Sunni-Shiite antagonism. Simultaneously, the Abbasid court of Baghdad for some time regained its former significance as a destination of Byzantine embassies, constituting a second supportive authority for negotiations with the court of the Great Seljuk sultan. The predominance of the Seljuk Empire, the emergence of new Muslim principalities in Syria and Asia Minor, and the revival of Byzantine expansionist tendencies towards the east determined developments in the first half of the twelfth century. The last Byzantine campaign against Aleppo in early 1138 offered ample opportunities for the propagation of new concepts on both sides. While the emperor could once more be celebrated as a victorious military leader advancing with his troops as far as the banks of the Euphrates River, the *atabeg* ʿImād ad-Dīn Zankī was presented as the uncontested champion of Islam unifying all Muslims and fending off the common foe.

119 Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil 7,20f., trans. Richards, Chronicle 341.
120 Hillenbrand, Crusades 108-117.
121 Hillenbrand, Turkish Myth, esp. 111-143.

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Summary / Zusammenfassung

Changing Strategies and Ideological Concepts in Byzantine-Arab Relations in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries

This essay concerns the effects which the rise and expansion of the Seljuk Empire had upon the diplomatic relations of the Byzantine Empire with the Islamic world. The first portion is primarily concerned with the situation in the 1050s, in which Byzantium reacted to the Seljuk incursions in the border region in Armenia and the Upper Euphrates by shifting its diplomatic emphasis from Fatimid Cairo to Abbasid Baghdad. Yet in the process it did not entirely heed Seljuk claims to supremacy and still sought to preserve a balance between the Fatimids and the Seljuks. The second portion examines the ideological aspects of the last Byzantine campaign in Syria, which Emperor John II undertook in the early part of 1138 and above all aimed at an expansion of Byzantine ascendancy over the Crusader states.

Sich verändernde Strategien und ideologische Konzepte in den byzantinisch-arabischen Beziehungen im 11. und 12. Jahrhundert

Dieser Beitrag behandelt die Auswirkungen, welche die Entstehung und Expansion des seldschukischen Reiches auf die diplomatischen Beziehungen des byzantinischen Reichs mit der islamischen Welt hatten. Der erste Teil widmet sich vornehmlich der Situation in den 1050er Jahren, in der Byzanz auf die seldschukischen Einfälle in die Grenzgebiete in Armenien und dem Oberen Euphrat mit einer Verlagerung seines diplomatischen Schwerpunkts vom fatimidischen Kairo ins abbasidische Bagdad reagierte, dabei jedoch den seldschukischen Vorherrschaftsansprüchen nicht gänzlich Folge leistete und weiterhin ein Gleichgewicht zwischen den Fatimiden und den Seldschuken zu wahren versuchte. Der zweite Teil untersucht ideologische Aspekte des letzten byzantinischen Syrienfeldzugs, den Kaiser Johannes II. im Frühjahr 1138 von Antiocheia aus unternahm und vor allem auf einen Ausbau der byzantinischen Vormachtstellung in den Kreuzfahrerstaaten abzielte.