Sultan ‘Izz al-Dīn Kaykāwus II in Byzantium (1262-1264/1265)

The vicissitudes in the life of the exiled Seljuk sultan Kaykāwus II (ruled 1245-1262) in Byzantium and his subsequent flight to the Crimea are widely known from mentions in all of the general histories of Byzantium and the Saljuq sultanate. Briefly, the story of Kaykāwus II is as follows. Beginning in the late 1240s, two co-rulers and brothers ‘Izz al-Dīn Kaykāwus and Rukn al-Dīn Qilich Arslan contested the supreme power of the sultanate. The Mongols of Iran, who subjugated Anatolia as early as 1243, resolutely supported Rukn al-Dīn. As a result of a series of conflicts, ‘Izz al-Dīn left the sultanate and fled to Byzantium and stayed there until the winter of 1264/1265. At first, his relations with the emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos were friendly; however, later for a reason there appeared tension between the sultan and the emperor. Kaykāwus hatched a plot and planned to depose Michael Palaiologos. The sultan appealed for help to the Bulgarians and the Mongols of the Golden Horde. Finally, there occurred the joint attack of the Bulgarians and the Tatars against the Empire who liberated Kaykāwus II from Ainos in Thrace and brought him to the Golden Horde. This is the generally known story of the sultan’s exile in Byzantium. The case of ‘Izz al-Dīn Kaykāwus is symptomatic of the two most significant paradigms of Byzantine attitudes towards the Turks: first, relations with those Turks who were outside Byzantium, and second, relations with the Turks as Byzantine subjects inside the empire. However, the case of Kaykāwus II has never been researched specifically, the chronology of his life in Byzantium still remains doubtful in some parts, and many details of the story are still obscure.

Kaykāwus’ adventures profoundly impressed both Greek and Oriental authors. Greek, Persian, Arab, Syriac, and Ottoman historians kept retelling the story for many decades after the event. In the primary sources, one may distinguish at least four independent accounts of Kaykāwus’ adventures. The Greek side is represented by the connected versions of Georgios Pachymeres (ca. 1308) and Nikephoros Gregoras (ca. 1359) who was dependent on the former. The Oriental tradition is more complex. The Persian chronicles of Ibn Bibi (ca. 1281) and Aqsarayi (1323) gave two independent, albeit intersecting, versions. Yaziczade ‘Ali’s Turkish paraphrase of Ibn Bibi’s story (1423) entitled »Tawārīkh-i Āl-i Saljūq« mainly follows its source adding important new details; however, the validity of some of his additions may be questioned.

The Mamluk historian Muḥi al-Dīn b. ‘Abd al-Ḡāir (1223-1293), who was a contemporary of the events, provides unique information on the diplomatic activity of ‘Izz al-Dīn Kaykāwus before his emigration to Byzantium. The Mamluk high official Baybars al-Mansūrī (d. 1325) was a younger contemporary of the events and gave in his writings one more independent version of the story. Finally, some minor details can be found in the Syriac History of Bar Hebraeus (Abū al-Faraj) (before 1286) and the Persian anonymous Ta’rīkh-i Āl-i Saljūq (ca. 1300).

I would like to focus on a few key episodes, which may allow, as I hope, to reevaluate the importance of the whole story. First, it is necessary to establish the chronology of Kaykāwus’ arrival in Byzantium; second, the circle of Kaykāwus’ courtiers and subjects will be discussed; finally, I will focus on the fate of Kaykāwus’ men after his flight from Byzantium.

1 My special thanks are due to Dr. Oya Pancaroğlu for her generous help during the preparation of this piece.

2 See: Muḥi al-Dīn. In the 1260s, Muḥi al-Dīn b. ‘Abd al-Ḡāir was a secretary in the chancellery of the Egyptian sultan ‘Abd al-Zahir Baybars (1260-1277) and prepared drafts of official correspondence of the sultan. It is possible that he himself drafted the letters going from the Mamluk court to ‘Izz al-Dīn Kaykāwus. Thus, he is the only contemporary high standing eyewitness for Kaykāwus’ affairs with a direct access to first-hand information unlike other Oriental and Greek authors. On Muḥi al-Dīn’s biography and writings see: Khwawer, Baibars 144-166.

3 See: Baybars al-Mansūrī. Baybars al-Mansūrī, a high-ranked military commander and secretary of the Mamluk court, made use of Muḥi al-Dīn’s accounts but also added important new information using the archives of the Mamluk state chancellery and information coming from the Mamluk diplomats and informers. The information of Muḥi al-Dīn b. ‘Abd al-Zahir and Baybars al-Mansūrī was extensively utilized by later Mamluk historians such as al-Maqṣūzī (1364-1442), al-‘Aynī (1360-1453) and many others (see for instance: Tizengauzen, Storimik).

4 Ibn Bibi (Erzi), an incomplete German translation: Ibn Bibi (Duda). – Aqsarayi (Turan).

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7 Abu al-Faraj (Budge). – Ta’rīkh-e Āl-i Saljuq (Jalali).
There is still no consensus in the scholarly literature about when Kaykāwus went to Byzantium and where in Byzantium he arrived. Most scholars date the sultan's arrival to the time before the conquest of Constantinople by the Greeks on 25 July 1261, while others simply avoid giving an exact date implying that Kaykāwus arrived in Byzantium sometime in 1261. The problem lies in the discrepancy between the evidences of the Byzantine and Oriental sources and the lack of an exact date in the available sources. However, a careful comparison of sources allows us to come to a more precise date.

The most plausible date of Kaykāwus' arrival in Byzantium may be derived from Oriental sources, which have been hitherto underutilized. Sometime before his journey to Byzantium, 'Īzz al-Dīn Kaykāwus fled from Konya to Antalya under the pressure of the forces of his brother Rukn al-Dīn and the Mongol army led by 'Alījāq. According to the anonymous Ta'rīkh-i Āl-i Saljūq, sultan Rukn al-Dīn conquered Konya on 12 August 1261 (14 Ramadan 659), just two days after Kaykāwus left the city for Antalya, as Ibn Bībī maintains. This chronology is supported by the well-informed Syrian historian Bar Hebraeus who reports that the civil war in the Saljuq Sultanate and the flight of Kaykāwus from Konya happened at the end of the summer of 1261. Kaykāwus, after his escape from Konya, spent a rather long time in Antalya where he waited for the outcome of the counter-offensive of his troops under the command of 'Alī Bahādūr and pleaded for support from his allies abroad. 'Alī Bahādūr gathered a large army at Sivrihisar and tried to besiege the enemy in Konya. In the meantime, the sultan sent envoys to Michael VIII Palaiologos to receive the emperor's consent to host him 12. Finally, 'Alī Bahādūr was routed by Rukn al-Dīn and the Mongols at Sivrihisar and fled to uc areas. After the final defeat of his troops the sultan was headed to Byzantium 13. However, the question arises as to how long the sultan stayed in Antalya. A clear answer to this question can only be found in Mamluk sources of the time.

During his stay in Antalya the sultan, in particular, communicated with the Egyptian court hoping to get military aid from the Mamluks. Osman Turan in his seminal book Selçuklular zamanında Türkiye refers to the important testimonies of the Mamluk historian Muḥī al-Dīn b. 'Abd al-Zāhir which are the most chronologically reliable of the surviving sources. Muḥī al-Dīn's evidence allows us to define precise dates for 'Īzz al-Dīn's stay in Antalya. It seems pertinent to return to Turan's arguments with some emendations and additions. Muḥī al-Dīn b. 'Abd al-Zāhir refers to diplomatic contacts between the Mamluk court and 'Īzz al-Dīn Kaykāwus. The earliest reference belongs to the Muslim year 660 (25 November 1261-14 November 1262) with no indication of the month: two envoys arrived from 'Īzz al-Dīn at the Mamluk court with his letter in which he displayed great humility to him (that is to the Mamluk sultan Baybars – Author) and [said that he lost power over half of his country]. 'Īzz al-Dīn asked for support and, by the way of reciprocation, offered to grant iqtā' in his lands to the Mamluk emirs chosen by Baybars. Baybars ordered to prepare troops for helping the ruler of Rum and appointed one of his emirs to be sent to Rum with 300 cavalrymen. As subsequent passages show, this happened in the interval November 1261-April 1262. In Jumādā II 660 (22 April-20 May 1262), an Egyptian ambassador was sent by sea to ‘Īzz al-Dīn in Antalya to inform that Baybars responded to his request and answered his call for help by his decision to send an army 16. Next month, in Rajab (21 May-19 June 1262), ‘Īzz al-Dīn informed the Mamluk court that his enemies, having heard about his alliance with the sultan [Baybars], were in fear of the power [of the sultan] and fled, and that he went to Konya and was besieging it in order to seize his brother’s partisans inside it 17. Obviously, in the message of May-June 1262, ‘Īzz al-Dīn implied the attack of ‘Ali Bahādūr against Konya which finally ended with his severe defeat at Sivrihisar. As Ibn Bībī put it, ‘having spared of a good outcome’ ‘Īzz al-Dīn soon left for Byzantium. As to the planned Mamluk military aid, al-Manṣūrī remarked that while the military expedition was under preparation news came of ‘Īzz al-Dīn’s flight from the sultanate, and so there was no longer need for it.

Based on these testimonies one may suggest that Kaykāwus arrived in Byzantium as late as the summer of 1262 and not earlier than June 1262. In addition to narrative data, Seljuk numismatics provides confirmation for this date. 8
date. Coins under the name of ‘Izz al-Dīn Kaykāwus were still minted in 660 (November 1261–November 1262) and, probably, his latest mint of 1262 originated from Antalya.20 Thus, the summer of 1262 as the date of ‘Izz al-Dīn’s arrival in Byzantium perfectly fits the information found in Oriental narrative and numismatic sources.

In fact, the proposed chronology does not contradict our main Greek authority Georgios Pachymeres who gives no direct indication of the exact date of the event, albeit placing it (II. 24) before his account of the conquest of Constantinople by the Byzantine troops of Alexios Strategopoulos in July 1261 (II. 26)21. Pachymeres was about 19 at the time and wrote about the events many decades later. Pachymeres did not observe a strictly chronological order in his narration often jumping to the past or the future and returning to the chronological point he abandoned many pages above. It is my conviction that, chronologically, the whole story of the sultan’s arrival should be read after Michael Palaiologos’ return to Constantinople (15 August 1261). In addition, an ex silentio argument is probably not out of place here: neither Georgios Akropolites nor Theodoros Skoutariotes say anything about the arrival of the sultan. Akropolites and Skoutariotes were the most reliable historians of the early reign of Michael VIII and demonstrated a profound interest in the relations between Byzantium and the Seljuk sultanate. Both narrations end approximately with Michael VIII’s solemn return to Constantinople in 15 August 1261, and, one can suggest, they did not mention Kaykāwus’ arrival simply because the latter appeared in Byzantium approximately a year after that date.

Finally, in all probability, ‘Izz al-Dīn Kaykāwus went directly to Constantinople and not to any of Anatolian harbours of the Empire. Oriental authors are unanimous in stating this23. Scholars who argue that the sultan came to some Anatolian harbour base themselves on the wrong dating of the event and assume that at the time of the sultan’s arrival Michael VIII and his court were still in the Anatolian provinces of the Empire. However, Byzantine authors never stated explicitly that the sultan arrived in a place somewhere in Byzantine Anatolia. If we accept the proposed date for the event (summer 1262), my suggestion that Constantinople was in fact the destination point of the sultan would not contradict any available data.

Kaykāwus’ people in Byzantium

In his exile in Byzantium ‘Izz al-Dīn Kaykāwus was accompanied by his immediate relatives including his mother, wife, four sons (Mas’ūd, Kayyām, Konstantinos Melik and one unnamed), a daughter, his sister (who, apparently, was unmarried), and, finally, his two maternal uncles Kīr Khāya and Kīr Kādi/Kattidios. These are the ones who were directly mentioned in the primary sources; it is not impossible that at least the sultan’s eldest son (Mas’ūd) and uncles brought along members of their families. At first, Michael VIII Palaiologos sent the sultan’s family (probably, women and underage children) to Nicaea in order to keep ‘Izz al-Dīn under control24. However, later, by the time of the sultan’s flight from Ainos, we find most of his family in Constantinople.25 One of Kaykāwus’ sons, Konstantinos Melik, was left by his father in Byzantium and later held high ranks in the Byzantine hierarchy, founding the Byzantine aristocratic family of the Melikai.26 The subsequent history of the sultan’s family in Byzantium has been described in a number of studies.27

Besides family members, there were numerous courtiers of the sultan who followed him in his exile. Obviously, in close, even familial relations with the sultan’s family was Makarios, the metropolitan of Pisdia since 1250 who came along with ‘Izz al-Dīn from the Seljuk Sultanate, in the words of Pachymeres, as a guide (προαγωγοῦντος) for the sultan and his family.28

Some members of the Seljuk elite who followed the sultan are known by their names. These are ‘Ali Bahādur with his attendants, the amīr-ākhur (the chief of the horses) Muṣaffar al-Dīn Uğurlu with his retainers, Ḥusām al-Dīn Tashtī, Ḥājī Bābā30, Nūr al-Dīn Arzinjānī31, and, finally, Malik (Muʾāṣir) Ṣāliḥ, ʿAlī Bahādur32. Ḥājī Bābā and Nūr al-Dīn Arzinjānī are not known from other sources. Judging by his name, Ḥājī Bābā might have belonged to the spiritual elite of the Sultanate and possibly to Sufi circles. Ḥusām al-Dīn Tashtī is probably identical to sharāb-salār (the cupbearer, probably, a sinecure) Ḥusām al-Dīn Aq-Taṣ who is mentioned by Ibn Bībī and in a Seljuk official document.33 The amīr-ākhur Uğurlu and, especially, ‘Ali Bahādur are well-known from Oriental sources: they

20 See for instance: Erkiletlioğlu/Güler, Türkiye 184 no. 422. – Album, Checklist 63 no. 1231. – Hennesquin, Catalogue 769 note 1.
21 As it seems, in his account of the same events, Gregoros uncritically follows the relative chronology of Pachymeres: Gregorios, Historia I (Schopen) IV; 2 (1, 82, 4-83, 2). On other inconsistencies in Gregorios’ narration concerning the family of ‘Izz al-Dīn in Byzantium see: Şukuroğlu, Family 111-113.
22 See the concluding chapters of Akropolites, Historia (Heisenberg/Wirth) I, 188-189 and Skoutariotes 554-556.
23 Ibn Bībī (Ezri), 637-638. – Ibn Bībī (Duda) 283-284. – Aqsarāyī (Turan) 70. – Baybars al-Mansūri (Richards) 93. – Abu al-Faraj (Budge) 442. – al-ʿAyni (Amin), 1, 321.
24 Pachymeres, Relations (Failer) II, 24 (1, 185, 12-17).
25 Pachymeres, Relations (Failer) II, 25 (1, 303, 15-19).
26 Laurent, Une famille.
28 Pachymeres, Relations (Failer) II, 24 (1, 185, 3). – On the metropolitan Makarios see: PLP no. 16271.
30 These two names are mentioned in: Aqsarāyī (Turan) 70. – Earlier, Aqsarāyī refers to them as the sultan’s companions during his first exile in Byzantium in 1256-57 (Aqsarāyī (Turan) 42).
31 Baybars al-Mansūri (Richards) 93-94 (see also below).
32 The Chronicle of Morea (Schmitt) 4553-4554. 5171. 5181. 5206-5255. 5315. 5672. 5676. 5661-5738. – Libro de los fechos (Morel-Fatio) 75 § 335; 77 § 344. 79-82 § 359-372; 80 § 360. – Bon, La Morée, 1, 131-135, 337. – PLP no. 17785.
33 Ibn Bībī (Ezri) 623. – Ibn Bībī (Duda) 273. 341. – Turan, Resmi Vekilât 87 (Persian text). – Turan, Şefikçüler 480. 484. – Cf.: Cohen, La Turque 249 (according to Cohen, the sobriquet Tashtī might have indicated that its owner held also the court title of tashtdīr that is the keeper of the royal washing basin).
were famous commanders who fought much in Anatolia, trying to withstand the Mongols and their Anatolian allies. The two military officers (emirs?) Malik and Sālik are referred to in »The Chronicle of Morea« as commanders in the Turkish division of the Byzantine army that invaded Morea in 1263. There is no reason to believe that Malik and Sālik belonged to the Seljuk ruling dynasty and were relatives of ‘Izz al-Dīn Kaykāwus as some scholars believed; in all probability, they were middle-ranking emirs in charge of a part of the Turkish contingent. The following year (1263) Malik and Sālik with their Turks defected to the Achaian prince Guillaume de Villehardouin, because the Byzantines refused to pay them their salary. The prince married Malik to a noble lady, the widow of a certain Aimon de Simico. Later, some of Malik’s Turks settled in Morea in Vounarvi and Renta, while Malik went home to »Vlachia« (see below).

It is very likely that the sultan’s Constable the Greek (kundaṣṭabil-i rūmī) took refuge in Constantinople. He was a Greek Christian and had a brother holding the title amir-maydān. The constable appeared in the Seljuk sources in 1256. In 1258, the constable was granted the title of beglerbeg and after that time his influence upon the sultan became exceptionally strong. The titles of constable and beglerbeg were among the highest military ranks at the Seljuk court; amir-maydān was responsible for organizing the game of polo (chawgān) at the royal court. The constable’s role in the political life of the sultanate was appraised extremely negatively by Muslim historians of the time. Soon after mid-August 1261, the constable was sent by the sultan to Michael Palaiologos in order to arrange ‘Izz al-Dīn’s move to Byzantium and to obtain the emperor’s consent for this. The careers of the Christian constable and his brother at ‘Izz al-Dīn’s court have been comprehensively studied by Olga Apanovich, who, however, hesitates to identify the kundaṣṭabil with any known personage of the time.

Parallel reading of Pachymeres and the Oriental authors leaves little doubt about the identity of the Christian constable and his brother as the brothers Bascilikoi. If one takes into account the chronological inconsistency of Pachymeres’ narration for the period in question, the chronological obstacle (which is the only serious one) for such an identification vanishes. According to Pachymeres, the brothers Basilikoi (one of them was Basil by name) originated from Rhodes and, at first starting as «theatre actors» at the Seljuk court and becoming close to the sultan, soon gained supreme positions at the court and gathered enormous riches. Shortly before the sultan’s arrival in Constantinople, both brothers appeared in Byzantium and were well accepted by Michael Palaiologos due to the friendship he had established with them during his exile in the Seljuk sultanate a few years earlier. Basileios Basilikos was granted the court title of παρακομιμώτης τοῦ κοινού, while his brother that of πρωτοσεφαλής. Probably, it was Basileios Basilikos, as the most prominent of the two brothers, who held the positions of the constable and beglerbeg as at the Seljuk court. Pachymeres’ account and the evidence of the Oriental authors coincide in all key points: 1) kundaṣṭabil had a brother, and the Basilikoi were two brothers; 2) kundaṣṭabil and his brother were Christian Greeks, and the Basileikoi were Christian Greeks; 3) kundaṣṭabil held an extremely prominent position at the Seljuk court, and the Basilikoi’s position at the Seljuk court was high; 4) kundaṣṭabil arrived in Byzantium before the sultan, and the Basilikoi did the same. If Basileios Basilikos was the former sultan’s constable and beglerbeg while his brother the amir-maydān, it explains well why two immigrants from abroad enjoyed such an outstanding reception in Constantinople and were so quickly and easily incorporated into the aristocratic elite of the empire. If so, the arrival of the Basilikoi to Byzantium took place soon after mid-August 1261.

One court functionary is mentioned by his official title only: an unnamed amir-majlis whose duty was to organize receptions and audiences. Finally, in Constantinople the sultan was surrounded by his closest retainers (oikieion) and menacing bodyguards (φοβερούς σώματοφύλακας) who came with him from the Sultanate; however, we have no indications of the numbers of these oikieion or of the bodyguard detachment.

We know also about one individual of possibly lower social standing identified by name: San Saltık (Sarı Saltıq), a semi-legendary Sūfī saint who in the subsequent centuries became a rather famous figure in the Ottoman tradition and overshadowed sultan ‘Izz al-Dīn Kaykāwus. San Saltık was, possibly, associated with Turkic nomads rather than Anatolian townsfolk. The figure of San Saltık brings us to the question of the Turkish nomadic groups who followed sultan ‘Izz al-Dīn in his exile.

Kaykāwus’ nomadic supporters

The narrations of Pachymeres, Ibn Bībī and Yazıçızâde ‘Ali suggest that the sultan was also followed by a significant number of the Anatolian nomads who did not recognize the power of the Mongols in Anatolia and their protégé, the

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34 Žavoronkov, Türkü 171.
35 Cahen, La Turquie 189.
36 Apanovitch, Kundastabl 171-192. — Ibn Bībī (Erzi) G23. 637. — Aqsarayi (Turun) 49-50. 65-66. As Apanovich has shown, the identification of the Seljuk constable with Michael Palaiologos prevailing in the scholarly literature is essentially wrong.
37 Pachymeres, Relations (Faller) II, 24 (1, 181-183); VI, 12 (2, 575); VI, 24 (2, 615-12). — PLP nos 2458B. 2452.
sultan Rukn al-Dīn. The testimonies of Pachymeres and Ibn Bībī are plausible but rather vague, while that of Yaziczāde ‘Ali is more explicit and detailed although somewhat tinted with epic overtones. One can derive from Pachymeres’ account that a considerable number of Anatolian nomadic Turks (خُوُّشِي) refused to acknowledge the Mongol power and moved on to Byzantine territory recognizing the authority of the emperor. However, relations between the nomadic newcomers and the local population were far from harmonious: nomads plundered the locals and the latter paid them back in kind. Nonetheless, Michael Palaiologos »tried hard to win to his side borderliners« wishing to use them as a barrier in case of Mongol attack. One may conclude from this account that some nomadic Turks, as the result of internal conflict in the sultanate, crossed the border and recognized the power of Michael Palaiologos.

The data provided by the Oriental sources confirms this in many ways, and adds further details. After the flight of ‘Izz al-Dīn from the sultanate, a war of many months erupted in borderland regions (uc) throughout the country’s west, north and south margins between the government forces and the nomadic Turks. In the 1230s-1260s, many nomadic Turks came to Anatolia from Turkistan, Central Asia and Iran as refugees from the Mongol conquests. They probably considered ‘Izz al-Dīn as a symbol of resistance against the hated Mongols and viewed the sultan’s defeat as their own. During Turkmens revolts in the western borderland regions, the Byzantines were occasionally involved in the clashes: a certain Pisar-i Khurmā revolted in the Danishmandiya region in the South-West Pontus and excited disorders in the province of Kastamonu where »on his advice the Roman army launched an attack«. The Seljuk general ‘Ali Bahādur together with amīr-ākhur Uğurlu tried to besiege Rukn al-Dīn in Konya but was routed again at the caravan-rail Altunba. ‘Ali Bahādur fled to the uc area and for some time fought in the regions of Çankırı (کنکرى, Byz. Gangra) and Ankara, which were located not far from the north-eastern Byzantine border, however he was defeated again by government forces. These events occurred between autumn 1261 and autumn 1262. Ibn Bībī continues of ‘Ali Bahādur’s story reporting that he »found refuge in uc but failed to gain a foothold there, and being all the time in fear of the rudeness of Turkic gangs there, went to Istanbul together with a group of his retainers to serve the sultan«.

The most detailed account of the migration of nomadic Turks to Byzantium can be found in a few controversial passages from Yaziczāde ‘Ali’s »Tawārīkh-i Āl-i Saljūq«. In summary, the accounts of Yaziczāde ‘Ali can be understood in the sense that Michael Palaiologos authorized a fairly large-scale emigration of nomadic Turks, partisans of ‘Izz al-Dīn, from Anatolia to the European part of the Byzantine empire. It seems plausible that the main bulk of the Turkish nomads was settled by the Byzantine authorities in Southern Dobruja. The spiritual leader of the Turks of Dobruja was San Saltık. The warriors of these nomadic groups participated in some victorious wars on the side of the emperor, in particular, one may think, during the re-conquest of Dobruja in the name of Michael VIII Palaiologos. The later Ottoman historian Lokmān adds that the nomadic resettlement in Dobruja happened in 662 H. (4 November 1263-23 October 1264) a date which perfectly fits the information available from other sources. The relevant passages from Yaziczāde ‘Ali and later Ottoman tradition have been comprehensively discussed more than once by specialists in Oriental, Byzantine, Romanian and Bulgarian studies; despite energetic attempts to question the reliability of the Ottoman tradition, it is now considered to be generally trustworthy. Further additional can be made: it is possible that the leading administrative role among the Dobrujan Turks belonged to the sultan’s maternal uncle Kyr Khāya and not to the mystic saint San Saltık.

Kaykāwus’ Turks, being incorporated into the Byzantine army, took part in the wars of the Empire. Ibn Bībī makes ‘Ali Bahādur the real hero of these wars. He asserts that every time an enemy appeared, the emperor asked ‘Ali Bahādur for help because of the latter’s courage. ‘Ali Bahādur fought with and defeated the emperor’s adversaries. Because of this, his position in the Byzantine service grew in importance and honour and he was bestowed with honorary clothing and other rewards by the emperor. The Greek references to Turkish detachments in the Byzantine army within one generation

42 Pachymeres, Relations (Failer) II, 24 (1, 187, 6-7): τούς μὲν κατὰ τὰ ἱσχυρὰτα Πόρνας καὶ λας ὑπετείχοντο ἢ μὲν προὼξ εἰς Ἰσραήλ χωρίζειν. My translation differs from that of Failer. See also commentaries to this page: Zachariadou, Histoire et légendes 84.

43 Aqaqaray (Turan) 71–74. – On the Turkish revolts in the upper Meander valley see also: Baybars al-Mansuri (Richards) 76.14-22. – Lippard, The Mongols and Byzantium 24-25.

44 Aqaqaray (Turan) 74. – I have corrected Turan’s reading which is grammatically impossible and should be re-checked in the original manuscripts. This is unique evidence for the Byzantine involvement in the Seljuk internal strife in the region of Kastamonu at that time. The name of the Turkmen rebel Pisar-i Khurmā (Son of Date-Plum) is very plausibly originally Central Asian.

45 Ibn Bībī (Erzi) 637. – Ibn Bībī (Duda) 342 note 73.

46 Aqaqaray (Turan) 74. – On Turkic revolts in the beginning of the 1260s see: Cahen, Notes 336-337. – Cahen, Quelques textes 136. – Lippard, The Mongols and Byzantium 24-25.

47 Ibn Bībī (Erzi) 638.


49 Lokmān 3 (Latin translation 2).

50 See, for instance, the most significant studies with further bibliographical references: Mutafciév, Die angebliche Einwanderung (excellent survey of Byzantine and Bulgarian material and helpful critical discussion of previous studies). – Wittek, Yavozgülü (brilliant defence of Yaziczāde ‘Ali’s reliability). – Decei, Le problème (comprehensive discussion of 16th and 17th century Ottoman tradition).

51 Suvorov, Oriental Margins 188-189.

52 Ibn Bībī (Erzi) 638.
of the sultan’s arrival (1262-1280s) are very scant and never mention ‘Ali Bahādur. For that time, it seems, Pachymeres refers to Kaykāwus’ warriors in the Byzantine army solely as Περσικόν and τοῦ Περσικῶν. He maintains that, τοῦ Περσικῶν detachment participated in the Byzantine campaign in Morea in 1263.60 According to »The Chronicle of Morea«, those Turks were partly under the command of the aforementioned Malik and Sālik. »The Chronicle of Morea« seems to indicate Dubruja as the homeland of these Turks. Around 1265, Malik asked his lord Guillaume de Villehardouin to let him go to his »patrimonies« (εἰς τὰ ιγονικά); receiving the prince’s asent he went to »Vlachia« (εἰς τὴν Βλαχίαν). Given the imprecise sense and polysemantic meaning of Βλαχία and Βάλκον at the time, could it have been an indication of Do-bruja? Or could Βλαχία have been any other location in the Balkans (like Macedonia or Thrace) which had been granted to the Turks by the Byzantine authorities? In any case, Malik’s ίγονικά was located in Europe, but not in Anatolia, which confirms that his soldiers came from Kaykāwus’ Turks64.

In 1271, Πέρσικα took part in the siege of Neai Patrai in Thessaly under the command of Rhimpsas65. Rhimpsas was a baptized Turk having been in Byzantine service since the late 1250s. It was common Byzantine practice to place non-Greeks under the command of officials of the same race.

In the 14th century, the descendants of Kaykāwus’ Turks were normally known as Τουρκόπουλοι and the denomination τοῦ Περσικῶν was becoming less common. This is clear from Pachymeres’ account of the battle of Apros in July 1305: he refers to them as a detachment which »[had been labeled] formerly τοῦ Περσικῶν and was also called Τουρκόπουλοι.66 Consequently, it would be reasonable to suggest that initially the detachments of Kaykāwus’ Turks were technically called Περσικόν and τοῦ Περσικῶν and that only their descendants acquired the synonymic denomination of Τουρκόπουλοι.

There is no solid evidence about the total number of the Turks who moved from Anatolia to the Balkans. The only reference to the size of a Turkish detachment is found in »The Chronicle of Morea«. In 1263, 3000-3500 Turks took part in the Byzantine campaign against Morea, while the aforementioned Malik and Sālik were in charge of 1500 Turks.67 The men of Malik and Sālik seem to have come to Morea without their families, because later the Achaean prince »gave them wives and they begot children«.68 Only Yaziczâde ‘Ali gives estimates allowing to derive total numbers: »in the land of Dubruja, there were two or three Muslim cities and thirty to forty divisions (bölük, بولک) of nomadic Turkic families«.69 In another passage he implies that, in Byzantium, the sultan could count on »ten or twelve thousand« of his supporters, probably implying just soldiers among the sultan’s other attendants and compatriots in Byzantium60. If, in reality, 10,000-12,000 of Kaykāwus’ Turks were able to bear arms it might imply a minimum total of 35,000-42,000 immigrant Turks including men, women and children (with minimal ratio 1 adult man × 3.5).70 Interestingly, the other numerical indication of Yaziczâde ‘Ali mentioning about 30 or 40 divisions of Turkish families seems to match these figures well: given every »camp« consisted of about 100 families the total would average 35,000 individuals.72 The numbers provided by Yaziczâde ‘Ali are surprisingly highly plausible, and so provide one more indirect argument in favour of the reliability of this account. If so, the 1500 Turks who defected to William de Villehardouin were a relatively large force constituting at least 15% of the total number of Turkish immigrating soldiers.

53 Pachymeres, Relations (Fallier) III, 16 (1, 273, 3).
54 The Chronicle of Morea (Schmitt) 5729-5735. In the Greek version of the Chronicle, the description of the origin of Byzantine Turkish troops is rather confusing. On the first reference they are described as: 'Ενεργαία Μέλη στην Τουρκία κ’ εργάζονται τοις Φοινικίσι; μ’ χάλκον εργάζονται σε άλλες πεντεκόσια, κ’ και ήλθαν ανατολικά καί άλλους δύο χιλιάδες. Translation: Thereupon, he [that is Michael VII Palaiologos] went to Τουρκία and hired the Turks; he hired 1000 select troops and 500 others, and around another 2000 Anatolians went with them (The Chronicle of Morea [Schmitt] 4553-4555). First, the problem is that Τουρκία at that time terminologically might well have meant the Golden Horde, however, sometimes Τουρκία in a non-terminological usage could also have signified Anatolia (see online TLG). It is unclear whether a Mongol or Cuman detachment is implied here or just two different groups of Anatolian Turks. I suggest that it is more likely that Τουρκία denotes here Anatolia. Second, if Τουρκία is identical to Anatolia, probably the Chronicle intends to draw up a distinction between (1) 1500 mercenaries hired in Anatolia/Τουρκία, and (2) 2000 Anatolian Turks living in the Balkans, that is Kaykāwus’ Turks. Obviously, Malik belonged to the latter group of the Balkan Turks since he regarded as his home some location in the Balkans.

55 Probable, more reliable numbers are given by the Aragonese version of the Chronicle: 3000 for the total number of the Turks and 1500 for those defected with Malik (Libro de los fechos [More-Fatio] 75 § 385; 80 § 360).
56 Pachymeres, Relations (Fallier) IV, 31 (2, 425, 18).
57 Pachymeres, Relations (Fallier) XII, 23 (4, 573, 6): το εκ παλαιοῦ Περσικῶν οίς καὶ Τουρκόπουλοις ἀναφέρομεν. Cf. with Fallier’s French translation of the passage, which seems less precise. For the same events Gregoras speaks of a thousand Tourkopoloi »who followed the sultan ‘Izz al-Dīn when he defected to the Romans«: Gregoras, Historia I (Schopen) VII, 4 (1, 229, 11-12). However, it is evident that it could have been only the next generation after the initial Turkish immigrants, and that Gregoras again inaccurately reproduced Pachymeres’ statement. Gregoras uses the same anachronism when he calls the »Persian« detachments Τουρκόπουλοι in his account of the Thessalian war in 1271: Gregoras, Historia I (Schonen) IV, 9 (1, 111).
58 Libro de los fechos [More-Fatio] 80 § 360. – In the Greek version, the references to the strength of the Turkish troops are as follows: The Chronicle of Morea (Schmitt) 4553-4554 (1500 or 2000 men). 5095 (1000 men).
59 The Chronicle of Morea (Schmitt) 5737.
60 If, in reality, the Byzantine authorities gave one more indirect argument in favour of the reliability of this account. If so, the 1500 Turks who defected to William de Villehardouin were a relatively large force constituting at least 15% of the total number of Turkish immigrating soldiers.

61 For calculation patterns for the evaluation of medieval populations see: Ponomarev, Population 386-395. Similar ratio (× 3.5 and x 4) for 18th-century nomadic, and semi-nomadic societies see: Di Cosmo, Ancient City-Sates 397-398.
62 However, it is hardly possible to define the numerical value of »bölük« as it was used by Yaziczâde ‘Ali: »Böyük/böyük/bölük« could have been, in particular, a unit consisting of an indefinite group of families who make the seasonal migrations together and jointly use particular grazing grounds (see: Towfiq, ’Ali). See also entry اکى اوچ پاره مسلمان شهرى اوتوز و قرق بولوک اوبالرى ترک واردى to Yaziczâde Ali (Bakır) 772. – Wittek, Yaziczâde Ali 648.
63 Yasiczâde ‘Ali (Berlin) 367b line 13: See also: Yaziczâde Ali (Bakır) 772-773. – Decei has omitted this passage.
The testimony of Byzantine prosopography

Byzantine prosopography is one more instrument that may help to identify 'Izz al-Din's Turks in Byzantine service. To start with, in Greek sources, apart from the members of the sultan's family, the metropolitan Makarios and general references to the retainers and bodyguards, no other individual is directly referred to as a person coming to Byzantium together with 'Izz al-Din Kaykāwūs. However, there are a number of individuals of Oriental descent who might well have been the sultan's subjects coming with him or soon afterwards along with 'Ali Bahādūr or the groups of nomadic settlers. Below I would like to discuss the possible candidates for the virtual status of a Turk following Kaykāwūs. However, one has to bear in mind that the influx of Anatolian Turks in Byzantium as mercenaries and slaves did not cease in the course of the second half of the 13th century. This puts certain limitations on the discussion that follows below: having no direct indications in the sources, we can only speculate about a given individual belonging to Kaykāwūs' Turks. There are two major criteria for selection: 1) the chronological criteria (1260s to the late 1280s, the generation of initial Anatolian settlers) and 2) linguistic criteria; that is, the origin of a name in the Turkish Anatolian milieu. For the period under discussion one may refer to the following persons and families bearing presumably Anatolian Turkish names.

1. A certain soldier Γαζῆς, who died before September 1286 and was a former owner of lands in Lozikion (Macedonia, south of the lake Bolbe), might well have been one of Kaykāwūs' warriors63. The name Γαζῆς comes from the well-known Arabic term ghāzī (μ), which in Turkish and Persian of the time meant »warrior, conqueror, raider, soldier of fortune«64. The Byzantines had known the word γαζῆς as deriving from the Oriental »Γαζῆς warrior« since the 12th century. For the events of 1116, Anna Comnena refers to some Ghāzī (Γαζῆς), one of the noble Turks in the service of the Seljuks, the son of the emir Asān Katoç65. In the 12th century, the honorary title Ghāzī was extensively used by the Danishmandid rulers in its both Arabic and Greek forms. The Greek legend of Gümüştegin Ghāzī (1104-1134) gives the Greek form of his Muslim title as οἱ μέγας ἁμηράς (Ἀμὴρ Γαζῆς)66. Ghāzī sometimes could have been used as a first name as well67. Having first appeared in the 12th century, the word γαζῆς continued circulating in the Greek-speaking world throughout the Late Byzantine period and beyond68. Therefore, it is unlikely that Greek γαζῆς could have been confused with something other than ghāzī in Byzantine linguistic space of the 13th-15th centuries.

The aforementioned Thessalonian soldier Γαζῆς is referred to as belonging to the thematic cavalry troop of Thessalonike (ἀπὸ τοῦ μεγάλου Θησαυρολοχικοῦ ἀλλαγίου)69. Here Γαζῆς was a nickname which probably later became a family name. In the 14th century, two more soldiers had the same second name: Συργιάννης Γαζῆς and another Γαζῆς is referred to without his baptismal name. The Slavic Chilandar praktikon referred to pronoiar Γαζῆς, which in Turkish and Persian meaning »warrior for the Faith« was secondary and applied to without his baptismal name. The Slavic Chilandar praktikon referred to pronoiar Γαζῆς, which in Turkish and Persian meaning »warrior for the Faith« was secondary and applied to without his baptismal name. The Slavic Chilandar praktikon referred to pronoiar Γαζῆς, which in Turkish and Persian meaning »warrior for the Faith« was secondary and applied to without his baptismal name. The Slavic Chilandar praktikon referred to pronoiar Γαζῆς, which in Turkish and Persian meaning »warrior for the Faith« was secondary and applied to without his baptismal name.

Thus, one may suggest that the megalōallagites Γαζῆς was the great-grandfather of the protallagator Γαζῆς. As I have noted, Γαζῆς was rather popular name and we find ten more individuals bearing this name from the 13th to the 15th centuries, however, it is too risky to claim that all or even some of them were related to those discussed above72. 2. A certain pronoiar Πέτρος was called Φαχρατίνης by Persians before he was baptized; he died before 1283-1289. It seems that Πέτρος Φαχρατίνης himself or his two sons (one of whom was Andronikos by name) had a pronoia in Constantinople or its neighbourhoods. However, after the death of Πέτρος Φαχρατίνης the authorities attempted to deprive his two sons of their pronoia and to transfer them

64 Strictly speaking, the meaning »warrior for the Faith« was secondary and appeared later. Ghāzī soldiers in Central Asia in the Samanid time constituted gangs of soldiers of fortune who lived on the booty taken in their raids. Similar bands of ghāzī-mercenaries are found on the Byzantine-Arab borderlands in the 'Umayyad era. In Anatolia and Syria, in the 11th-13th centuries, ghāzī-warriors (mostly nomadic Turkmens) acquired even greater importance than ever before (Mélikoff, Ghāzī 1043-1044).
65 Alexios (Leib) XV, 6, 9.
66 The name Αμηρ Γαζῆς is found also on some subsequent Danishmandid coins. In the 13th century, the Menguejekid ruler Bahram-Shah in Erzinjan (1168-1225), the Ayıyıldız of Syria and the Salduqids bore the honorary title of Ghāzī. Later the Ottoman emirs and sultans called themselves ghāzī. See more details: Sukurov, Turkmen.
67 See for instance Ibn al-Athīr (Tombreg) 11, 329; 12, 278-279.
69 On megalē allagē see: Bartusis, Army 192-196.
70 Molin, Akti 20B, 171-172. – Possibly the same individual was referred to in: Aboch no. 18, 13 and p. 140; not listed in PLP.
71 Aboch no. 23, 10 (170). – PLP no. 91580.
72 PLP nos 3443. 3445-3451. 93299.
forcibly to Thrace or Macedonia where they could be enrolled, if they wished, in the »Persian military lists« (Περσικοὶ στρατηγικοὶ καταλόγοι) and would be given necessary provisions (σιτηρέσιον) and arable land. The young men appealed to the patriarch Gregory II of Cyprus to avoid this. The patriarch was surprised by the eloquence of the youngest brother so unusual for a barbarian. Gregory II of Cyprus told this story in his letter to the megas logothetes Theodore Mouzalon some time between 1283 and 1289.73

The story is symptomatic and of primary importance for my discussion. The name Φαχράτινης is identical to the Muslim name Fakhr al-Dīn (Ar. فخر الدين »Glory of the Faith«) which, obviously, was a personal name but not an honorary title (laqab)74. In all probability, he was a high-standing Muslim emir of Izz al-Dīn Kaykāwus who, at some point, converted to Christianity. Judging by the case of Φαχράτινης and the previous example of the megaloallagites Γεώργιος, some of Kaykāwus’ Turks, especially military commanders had been granted pronoia by the emperor. This assumption would help to explain numerous references in Oriental sources to the emperor’s generosity toward Kaykāwus’ retainers and attendants, which is formulated by Asقاراи (cf. 1348-1349) in the most precise way: the Byzantines »gave each of his retainers, to the extent of his proximity [to the sultan] and rank, a fair place to live, and some allowance for provisions and daily expenses was provided to each of them in accordance with his position«.75

As is clear from the discussed case of the sons of Fakhr al-Dīn, Kaykāwus’ men could have been bestowed with pronoia, arable land to be farmed, and also σιτηρέσιον. Curiously, the data of the Greek and Persian sources coincide fully and are similarly worded. Last but not least, the information on the second generation is equally noteworthy. The second generation pursued the military careers of their fathers in the »Persian« regiments which, as we saw above, were later commonly called »Tourkopoloucios«. At the same time, the second generation was completely Hellenized, and its members could even surprise a highbrow Byzantine intellectual with the eloquence of their language. The assimilating ability of the Byzantine culture was still strong and operative.

3. The unknown father of Βασίλειος Γιαγούπης, who was referred to in the famous inscription of the Church of St. George of Belisırma between 1282 and 1304, may well have been one of Kaykāwus’ Turks. I have discussed in greater details the inscription and its historical context elsewhere.76

73 Eustratiades 119 no. 159. Comprehensive analysis of the case is provided in: Bartusis, Army 374-375. See also: Bikov, Svedenia 95. – Laurent, Les regestes no. 1536 (326). – C: PLP no. 29669 (numerous factual mistakes in the entries).

74 Laurent’s suggestion for the Asian prototype of the name is unlikely: Ferhated al-Dīn. The name Fakhr al-Dīn (Ar. فخر الدين »Glory of the Faith«) which, obviously, was a personal name but not an honorary title (laqab) which, in all probability, he was a high-standing Muslim emir of Izz al-Dīn Kaykāwus who, at some point, converted to Christianity. Judging by the case of Φαχράτινης and the previous example of the megaloallagites Γεώργιος, some of Kaykāwus’ Turks, especially military commanders had been granted pronoia by the emperor. This assumption would help to explain numerous references in Oriental sources to the emperor’s generosity toward Kaykāwus’ retainers and attendants, which is formulated by Asقاراи (cf. 1348-1349) in the most precise way: the Byzantines »gave each of his retainers, to the extent of his proximity [to the sultan] and rank, a fair place to live, and some allowance for provisions and daily expenses was provided to each of them in accordance with his position«.75

75 Asقاراي (Turani) 70: و عوضه ازدواج با یک را بر پیش می‌رود و معنای مستقیم این شده‌است که این نام، به اسیران نیز ما می‌گویند. See similar statements in: Ibn Bibi (Erzi) 637. – Ibn Bibi (Duda) 284. – al-Maqgiz (Ata) 2, 14.

76 Šukurov, Giagoupia 210-217 with further bibliographical references.


78 Šukurov, Giagoupia 215-216.

79 Ibidem 224-225: one Giagoup and one of the brothers Basiliko who »repatriated« from Muslim Anatolia to Byzantium, hold the title of protohierakarios. 80 Akr 3, no. 61, 21 (112) and 110: referred to as a neighbour. – PLP no. 94097. On the family of the Masgidades see: APhK 305-306. – APantel 99. – Mercati, Sull’epistola 239-244. A Venetian document of 1425 refers to two more Μασγίδας: Mertzios, Mnēmeia 51 and fig. 3a (facsimile of original document). – For other bearers of the family name Μασγίδας see: PLP nos 17216-17223. 94096 and not listed in PLP a landowner from Zichna Ιωάννης Μασγίδας in APantel no. 11, 17-18 (95). – Some or all of them could have been relatives. Thus, we know 15 Masgidades and one Μασγίδας (PLP no. 17224).

81 Moravcsik, Byzantinoturgica 2, 182-183.

82 MM 4, 76-77. – Αγιος, as a sobriquet was surprisingly uncommon in the Byzantine world, probably because of its negative connotations in a Byzantine context.
6. One may also suggest that the groups of the Vardariotai Turks, who presumably lived in north-western Macedonia and served as palace guards at the Byzantine court, were reinforced by Kaykāwus' Turks in the 1260s or later. As Pseudo-Kodinos maintains, they were «Persians» and pronounced in «Persian» their acclamations during the Christmas celebrations at the Byzantine court.83

7. Finally, some of the numerous Byzantine aristocrats, who bore the patronymic Σωλατάνος in the late 13th-15th centuries, were very likely descendants of one of the relatives of Kaykāwus accompanying him in his exile. Although the genealogy of the Σωλατάνος has been discussed more than once it still deserves further study.84

The emergence in the second half of the 13th century or a little later of some new Macedonian place-names could have been in connection with Kaykāwus’ Turks. These are Ταζές (near Rousiaou in Kalamaria), Μαλιά (east of Berroia), Τούρκοχώριαν (5 km north-west of Berroia) and, finally, another Τούρκοχώρια (near Gabrion in Kalamaria), which I have already discussed elsewhere.85 As we have seen in the story of Fakhr al-Dīn above, it was normal practice to grant Turkish newcomers pronoia and arable land. Probably, these place-names indicate the localities of concentration of Turkish military pronoia and farmers in the area that lasted as such for decades.86

Those listed above are the most likely candidates for being Kaykāwus’ men, however, as it has been already stated, we have no direct indications in the sources for this. The influx of the Turks into Byzantine society in the 13th century was enormous, and without unambiguous evidence one cannot be sure about the true background of this or that Anatolian Turkish newcomer.

Zhavoronkov described a few more persons as those who arrived in Byzantium with ʿĪzz al-Dīn Kaykāwus.87 However, as a more focused appraisal shows, not all of his attributions are completely convincing. First, I exclude all the persons from Zhavoronkov’s list who do not meet the chronological limits are completely convincing. First, I exclude all the persons from Zhavoronkov’s list who do not meet the chronological limits. Second, the sebastos Μπωτάλι Απελμένε (1268), who was possibly the founder of a noble family, could hardly be included in Kaykāwus’ list.88 The reason for my doubts is linguistic. Απελμένε most probably derived from the Arabic ʿAbū al-Maʿānī («Rhetorician» or from the less probable Arabic ʿAbū al-Maʿālī («Sublime», «Great»);89 both options for the Muslim original sound stylistically too Arabic to be the name of an Anatolian Turk; such names were not in use in Seljuk Anatolia, but prevailed in the Arab world: Egypt, the Maghrib, Syria.90 Probably, Απελμένε should be grouped with Βερβέρης (Kephalenia, 1264, landowner), Βαμβακιάνος (Serfha, ca. 1317-1321, paroikos) and Βαμβακιάνος (Chalkidike, 1327-1340s, a soldier company).91 Possibly, some or all of numerous Σωλατάνοι have to be added to the same group.92 All these names seem to have belonged to newcomers from the Arabic speaking world, most likely, from North Africa (in particular, the Berbers) who served in the Byzantine army as light cavalry.93 Third, we have no sufficient grounds to associate with Kaykāwus’ men the group of individuals bearing Oriental names who were the residents of Western Anatolia. These are Ιωάννης Προνοιας (Σμύρνη, 1272-1283), Γεώργιος Χαλούφης (Ephesos, 1273), and Κωνστάντιος (Σμύρνη, 1280).94 Of course, one cannot completely exclude the connection of these individuals or at least some of them with Kaykāwus, especially taking into account Pachymeres’ statement that Michael Palaiologos settled some Turkish nomads in the borderline areas. However, it seems that they might have been initially defectors, prisoners of war or slaves who came to the Byzantine Anatolian provinces for different reasons and by different ways.

Those who were left in Byzantium

In winter 1264/1265, Kaykāwus’ conspiracy against Michael Palaiologos failed, the sultan joined the Mongol and Bulgarian troop, which invaded Thrace, and left Byzantium for the Crimea. Ibn Bībī argues that the details of the conspiracy were finally exposed to Michael Palaiologos by the sultan’s uncle Kyr Kattidios.95 On the flight of the sultan with two of his sons, the emperor’s rage descended upon his emirs most of whom remained in Byzantium. Both Greek and Oriental sources describe the fury of Michael Palaiologos in a similar way. He arrested all the high-ranking officers of the sultan including ‘Alī Bahādur. ‘Alī Bahādur was executed as well as probably some others as Aqsarāyā argues.96 According to Oriental sources, ‘Alī Bahādur, amīr-ākhur Uğurlu, the unnamed amīr-majlis and some other unnamed emirs were the key figures in the conspiracy being those who inspired the sultan with the idea to attack and depose Michael Palaiologos.97 Evidently, ‘Alı Bahādur and probably some others were charged with treason and an attempt on the emperor’s
life. However, amir-ākhr Uğurlu managed to avoid the death penalty. Aqsarāyī relates that amir-ākhr Uğurlu »found refuge in the Monastery of Aya Sofia, for every offender looking for asylum in this monastery received protection from the death penalty. However, although they did not execute him, his two world-seeing eyes were blinded by a red-hot [iron] rod« 98. The whole story of Uğurlu sounds plausible for it was normal Byzantine practice for those accused of crime to look for asylum in a church and, especially, in St. Sophia.99 In summer 1264, just few months earlier, the chartophylax Bekkos and megas oikonomon Xiphilinos along with their wives and children rushed to St. Sophia to take asylum there from the wrath of the emperor 100. Probably, this resounding affair was taken as a model by amir-ākhr Uğurlu.

Many of Kaykāwus’ Turks were arrested by the authorities. Baybars relates the continuation of the story as follows: »However, with regard to the emirs, he [i.e. Michael Palaiologos – Author] blinded all of them, and then ordered to gather all those who have dealt with them, their soldiers, slaves, commoners, and servants. All of them were brought together in the Great Church [i.e. St. Sophia – Author], where higher clergy and officials were present and they demanded from them to adopt the Christian faith. Those who accepted baptism remained unscathed, but those who at all cost wanted to remain Muslim were blinded. Among them was a man from Erzincan Nūr al-Dīn by name; when they brought him and asked him to adopt Christianity, he exclaimed: ›Paradise is prepared for Islam, and fire is prepared for you!‹ His words were passed to the emperor. The emperor said: ›This man is firm in his faith, provide him with a written travel permit and let him go‹. They did this and released him« 101. As I have mentioned above, the 15th-century Ottoman tradition implied that the Kaykāwus’ Turks (or some of them) continued to confess Islam in Dobruja up to the time of the Ottoman conquest. It may be added that, according to Ottoman tradition, some Turks of Dobruja (including San Saltık) followed the sultan in his move to the Crimea 102.

In summary, in the discussed episodes we have an instance of forcible conversion of Muslims, which had a distinct juridical meaning. During the sojourn of Kaykāwus in Byzantium, the Anatolian Muslims who came with him to the empire, both noble persons and commoners continued to profess their religion. It is also confirmed by the case of Malik and...
Sālik’s Turks: they remained Muslims while serving first in the Byzantine and then in the Latin army, and only later, as the war ended, did some of them adopt Christianity (presumably, the Latin rite) and were settled in Morea. Consequently, Kaykāwus’ Muslims in the Byzantine territories were juridically considered as the subjects of a foreign sovereign and in that capacity could legally have kept their Muslim faith. However, after the failure of Kaykāwus’ conspiracy and his escape from Byzantium, the juridical status of his people changed: they were treated as prisoners of war or new settlers and as expatriated individuals fell under the jurisdiction of the emperor and Roman law. Insofar as Islam was classified as paganism by the Byzantine church tradition, while according to the civil law practicing of any sort of paganism was illegal throughout the Empire, Kaykāwus’ Muslims had no other option than baptism. This is why those who refused baptism and tried to retain their »pagan« faith were put in jail. Consequently, here we have the only credible evidence of forcible mass conversion of Muslims in Byzantium. To my knowledge, in the entire Byzantine history either before or after that time Muslims were never forced to adopt Christianity in such great numbers and within such a short period.

And, finally, it is also remarkable that Michael Palaiologos did not punish the sultan’s women and children, although he put them under custody for some time immediately after the sultan’s escape. The sultan’s wife, mother, sister, daughter and two sons remained in Byzantium, were probably finally settled in Berroia in Western Macedonia (at least some of them) and enjoyed the high status of the noblest aristocratic families of the empire. It conformed to the Byzantine tradition of not harming underage children and women of even the bitterest enemy.

Evidently, the overall number of Kaykāwus’ followers was large and included not only high military and civil officers but also their families, servants, slaves and soldiers. Most of his people had kept their Muslim faith in Byzantium as foreign subjects until the escape of their lord, and immediately after people had kept their Muslim faith in Byzantium as foreign also their families, servants, slaves and soldiers. Most of his large and included not only high military and civil officers but of not harming underage children and women of even the families of the empire. It conformed to the Byzantine tradition of not harming underage children and women of even the bitterest enemy. Evidently, the overall number of Kaykāwus’ followers was large and included not only high military and civil officers but also their families, servants, slaves and soldiers. Most of his people had kept their Muslim faith in Byzantium as foreign subjects until the escape of their lord, and immediately afterwards they had to choose between baptism and punishment. Evidently, after the sultan’s escape in winter 1264/1265 extensive disturbances ensued in Constantinople and probably throughout some other provinces of the empire resulting in mass arrests and persecutions of the Turks and their forcible conversion into Christianity. We can only guess about the real extent of the crises which Muslim authors reflected in more vivid ways than Greek historiography of the time. However, most of Kaykāwus’ men were finally incorporated in Byzantine society and soon each found his niche in the new life.

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110 The Chronicle of Morea (Schmitt) 5735: καὶ ὅρισεν ὁ πρίγκιπας ἀπὸ τῶν ἱεραρχῶν τοὺς ἐκείνους.

111 See for more details about the status of Islam: Vyonis, Manpower 129-132. – Reinert, Muslim Presence 125-150. – Sukurov, Crypto-Muslims 135-158.


Rhalles / Potles, Syntagma: K. Rhalles / M. Potles, Syntagma tòn theiòn kai ierôn kanonôn 1-6 (Athènè 1852-1859).


Sultan 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykāwus II in Byzantium (1262-1264/1265)
The article deals with the fate of the Seljuk sultan Kaykāwus II (ruled 1245-1262) and the lot of those who followed him in Byzantium. The author discusses the closest circle of Kaykāwus II's courtiers, Seljuk military commanders and ordinary Turks who accompanied him in his exile, on the basis of Greek, Persian, Arabic etc. sources. The author revises the commonly accepted date and place of arrival of Kaykāwus II in Byzantium. Most of Kaykāwus II's subjects remained in Byzantium after the sultan's escape to the Crimea. The author discusses in detail the fate of Kaykāwus II's former subjects and argues that most of them underwent forcible conversion to Christianity. The case of conversion discussed represents the most detailed and best-documented example of forcible Christianisation of Muslims in the entire history of Byzantine-Muslim relations.

Zusammenfassung / Abstract / Résumé

Sultan ‘Izz al-Dīn Kaykāwus II in Byzanz (1262-1264/1265)

Sultan ‘Izz al-Dīn Kaykāwus II à Byzance (1262-1264/1265)
Cet article traite du destin du sultan seldjoukide Kaykāwus II (1245-1262) et du sort encouru par ceux qui l’avaient accompagné. L’auteur, basé sur des sources grecques, perses et arabes, discute le cercle interne des courtisans de Kaykāwus II, à savoir des commandants seldjoukides et de simples Turcs qui l’avaient suivi dans son exil. L’auteur révise la date acceptée jusqu’ici et le lieu d’arrivée de Kaykāwus II à Byzance. La plupart des sujets de Kaykāwus II restèrent à Byzance après sa fuite en Crimée. L’auteur discute aussi de manière approfondie le sort des ex-sujets du sultan et soutient que la plupart d’entre eux furent convertis au christianisme par la force. Ce cas de conversion est l’exemple le plus détaillé et le mieux documenté d’une christianisation de Musulmans par la force dans toute l’histoire des rapports entre Byzants et Musulmans.