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The expansion of the Seljuk in Asia Minor and the Levant at the expense of the Byzantine Empire

Dr. Salah .A .A Sualyman

(Assistant Prof, Department of the History, Faculty of Social Sciences
and Humanities Al-marj, University of Benghazi – Libya)



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SALAH .A .A SULAYMAN

salah.lamine@uob.edu.ly

Assistant Prof, Department of the History, Faculty of Social Sciences and
Humanities Al-marj, University of Benghazi – Libya July 2016

Abstract

The Byzantine-Seljuk Wars were a series of decisive battles that shifted the balance of power in Asia Minor and Syria from the Byzantine Empire to the Seljuk Turks. Riding from the steppes of Central Asia, the Seljuk Turks replicated tactics practiced by the Huns hundreds of years earlier against a similar Roman opponent but now combining it with new-found Islamic zeal; in many ways, the Seljuk Turks resumed the conquests of the Muslims in the Byzantine-Arab Wars initiated by the Rashidun, Umayyad and Abassid Caliphate in the Levant, North Africa and Asia Minor. The war's outcome was determined as much by the weakness of the Byzantines as the strengths of the Seljuks. Nonetheless, the latter, just like the Arabs many years earlier, failed to destroy the Byzantine Empire. The Seljuk Turks, having originated from the steppes, possessed many advantages. At the battle of Manzikert, the Byzantine heavy cavalry was defeated using simple hit and run tactics, with the faster light cavalry of the Turks outflanking and outmanoeuvring the exhausted cavalry. Asia Minor was not completely overrun by the Turks after Manzikert but the resulting chaos that followed was easily exploited - Turkic soldiers had been used as Mamluks by the Arabs before seizing power themselves - the same occurred in Asia Minor, with Byzantine factions inviting Turkic mercenaries to garrison towns. As Imperial rule was re-imposed in Byzantium, these factions, which were secured by Turkic soldiers, became part of the Seljuk Turk domains. Some Greeks fled conquered areas, others stayed to become second-class citizens in an Islamic world (though under Islamic rule were protected provided they paid the jizyah tax). More importantly, others converted and were assimilated into the settling population of Turks. Orthodox churches were replaced with Mosques and the crippling Imperial taxes levied by the government and the accompanying Church were lowered.

Key words: The Seljuk, the Byzantine Empire, Asia Minor, The Levant.

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Historical background of the study

The most dangerous bucolic peoples for the Byzantine Empire in that period of history were the Turkish¹ Seljuk who raided Asia Minor in the first half of the 11th century AD for fleecing and pillaging. It is very difficult to determine when the Seljuk tribes started heading westerly from the farthest of Turkistan² to beyond the River region Oxus³ (Amu Darya) and Khurasan. Probably these migrations started during the period between both centuries the 8th and the 10th century AD due to the bad economic conditions owing to the occurrence of dearth. Besides, they were defeated by stronger tribes, thus, the defeated tribes started to look for a new homeland. These travelling Turkish tribes were called the Seljuk attributing them to a leader of a group of the Turkish. He was Seljuk Ibn Dākāk⁴ who became the leader of group of Turkish, reunited them and organized them. The Seljuk embraced Islam⁵ according to doctrine of Sunni because they were neighbours of Sāmānids

¹ No doubt, the Turkish who were speaking what we call now Turkish were there since the most ancient medieval ages, however, it is carelessly to suppose that the word Turkish was there before the 6th century AD. The Arabs noticed that many peoples of those they fought in both the 7th and 8th century AD was speaking the same language as the Turkish, so they called it Turkish. The Dane researcher, Thomsen, sees that the word "Turkish" is a name of an independent tribe or mostly a name of a Dynasty, or probably the first meaning of the word "Turkish" is doughty, strength and precision. See:

R. Grousset, *L'Empire des Steppe: Attila, Gengis-Khan, Tamerlan*, Paris, n.d, 1948, p. 148.

² **Turkey** was called "Turkistan" and it is a Persian word means Turkey. The first thing we could hear about the Turkish in history is that they established for themselves in the 6th century AD a state or country ranged from the borders of china easterly to borders of both empires the Byzantine and Persian westerly. The Turkish homeland was divided then into two; an Eastern part, the beyond river region which is located between both rivers Oxus and Syr Darya and ranges around borders of china easterly, pampas of Russia northerly, and it may expand to Caucasus and Volga river. Then, the Western part which includes fertile agricultural lands between both rivers Oxus and Syr Darya, it includes lands of beyond river. See:

P. Charanis, "The Byzantine Empire in the eleventh Century," *A History of the Crusades*, Vol. I, edited by: M. W. Baldwin, Philadelphia, n.p., 1955, pp. 189-190.

³ Oxus River, or Amu Darya, English Amu River, Tajikistan Daryoi Amu, Turkmenistan Amyderya, Uzbekistan Amudaryo, ancient name Oxus River, River, Central Asia. It is one of the longest rivers in Central Asia, 1,578 mile (2,540 km) long measured from the remotest sources of the Panj River; its other headstream is the Vakhsh. It flows West-north-west to its mouth on the Aral Sea. It forms part of Afghanistan's borders with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan and part of Uzbekistan's border with Turkmenistan. See, Online: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/21934/Amu-Darya> (1st October 2015).

⁴ **The Seljuk** are attributed to their grandfather Seljuk, (meaning the very strong) Ibn Dākāk, who was the leader of Kinik tribe of Oghiez and this tribe had no name before his leadership of them, so the tribe was attributed to him and gave in to his govern. Before 985 AD, Seljuk separated from his group of the large Ghuzz tribes, then, he settled down at the right bank of the down Syr Darya River in Jhond near Perowask currently. Thus, the Seljuk became neighbours of Samanians; this in turn led them to leaving Buddhism and embracing Islam. Then they were enthusiastic for Islam. This affected on their behaviours making them respect Imams strongly and lean to theosophy, consequently, theosophy spread in their era and the theosophical denominations won respect and appreciation of people and governors. See:

L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, New York: University Press, 1958, pp. 29-31.

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and the Ghuzz.⁶ Then, they became zealotry to this doctrine. Since the late of the 10th century AD, the Seljuk leant to settling down in al-Jazīra especially after the decline and fall of the Sāmānid state in the end of the 10th century AD. The tribal life was rooted deeply in them, this in turn affected much on their firmly commitment to Islam and their bigotry for Sunni.⁷

⁵The Turkish who formed a country in the 6th century AD were embracing the Shamanic religion which is based on cloning of spirits and the existence of two gods, the light and darkness. Starting with the 7th century AD, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Manichanaeasim entered the homeland of the Turkish, even if the Nestorian evangelists had reached these Turkish cities before this period. Some of Alngzgz tribes embraced Zoroastrianism which was the religion of the Sassanid, and Uighurs embraced Manichanaeasim and so did people of Balkh and Tkharstanp. This latter religion was an attempt to accord among Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Buddhism. Manichanaeasim was most spreading among Turkish tribes as it was closer to Buddhism, thus, some Muslim historians like al-Beroni. So, al-Beroni mentions that the Manichanaeasim was spreading among the Turkish widely, while al-Massaody determines that it was spreading among Uighurs only. Muslims worked hard at the time of their conquests to spread the word about Islam peacefully, so caliphate HishāmIbnAbd al-Malik (724-742 AD) sent an ambassador to one of the Turkish Khans to invite him to Islam, but his invitation did not find acceptance. See:

Khalifa Bin Nasir & Salah al-Haidari, *Al-Mujaz Fi Tarikh al-Imbraturiya al-Bizantiya*, p. 166.

After all, Islam and Islamic civilization achieved widespread religiously and civilization ally more than what their wars achieved. Thus, we see that some of the Turkish tribes started to embrace the Islam, even there were cities under the govern of Ghuzz governors who were not Muslims, and these cities were Jhond, Kourah, and in the down part of Syr Darya. This is owing to few factors like; the rise of individual Islam preaching whether inside the Islamic world or outside it relating to Islamic theosophy. So, the life of theosophists and their parts had great effect on the Turkish. Besides, Islam got spread in places where Buddhists, Manichaeans and Christians, and this are due to the surpassing of Islamic world materialistically and morally over all other civilized countries. For example, nomads were in bad need for harvests of civilized countries, besides these nomads were familiar with Islamic goods and affected by the pattern of Islamic life in general. See:

W. Bartold, *TarikhAl-Turk fi Asia al-Wusta*, translated by: Ahmed Saied Suleiman, Al-Qāhirah: Dar al-Haiya al-MisriyahLiltabahwa-al-Nashr, 1996, pp. 15-16.

In addition, they were affected by the Islam, not only in terms or religious aspect, but also in terms of civilization aspect. Thus, being included in the civilized Islamic World was not possible except if they embraced Islam, besides, the Islamic succession sent its preachers to Khurasan and beyond the river region. Invitation to Islam or Islamic preaching was based on that everyone who embraced Islam should get all his political and civil rights without paying attention to his race. Also, of these reasons that led the Turkish to leaving Islam in the Umayyad era was imposing the toll or tribute on those who embraced Islam. However, the Islamic schools helped in spreading the word about Islam and thanks to them Zoroastrianism soon vanished and disappeared from Balkh and Tkharstan, even if it stayed consistent for some time in beyond the river countries. See:

AlterchkaAbu BakrMuhammad, *Tarikh Bukhara*, Al-Qāhirah: Maktabat al-Anglo, 1962, p.465.

⁶Ghuzz also spelled Oghuz, or Oğ uz, confederation of Turkic peoples whose homeland, until at least the 11th century AD, was the steppes of central Asia and Mongolia. The Orhon inscriptions, describing an early Turkic people, probably refer to the Oğ uz. The Seljuks, who comprised one branch of the Oğ uz, controlled an Empire stretching from the Amu Darya to the Persian Gulf and from the Indus to the Mediterranean Sea by the end of the 11th century AD. Speakers of the South-western branch of the Turkic language subfamily are also sometimes referred to as Oğ uz Turks. See, **Online:** <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/425909/Oguz> (5th October 2015).

⁷The emergence of the Seljuks and the establishment of the state. See:

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Research question

What is the impact the expansion of the Seljuk in Asia Minor and the Levant at the expense of the Byzantine Empire? Through the history of the Byzantine-Seljuk Relations in 11th century AD, religion played important role in relations between the Byzantine Empire and the Seljuk in the era of the Abbasid Caliphate. Religion was a prominent cause of the battles between the Byzantine Empire and the Seljuk State in the last 11th century AD; these confrontations were considered as the most calamitous events the Byzantine Empire had faced. Such incidents had paralyzed the Empire military and economy and paved the way for the Seljuk State to control the areas of Asia Minor which supplying the Byzantine Empire with a significant portion of its armies and goods. Therefore, these battles were considered the most important events in the history of the conflict between Christianity and Islam.

Objective of the study

To examine the impact the expansion of the Seljuk in Asia Minor and the Levant at the expense of the Byzantine Empire. The main objective is to find out the role of the State of the Seljuk in determining the beginning of the end of the Byzantine Empire. By tracing the history of the emergence of the Seljuk State, we found that the formation of a powerful Muslim State was a major reason for reducing the property of the Byzantine Empire in the Levant, North Africa and Asia Minor. So the Muslim state seized the opportunity to recover what was captured the Byzantine Empire from Muslim countries, Thus, our purpose is to study the impact the expansion of the Seljuk in Asia Minor and the Levant at the expense of the Byzantine Empire.

Methodology of the study

A unified historical science methodology has been used to further enrich and develop the level of research for this article. A qualitative approach has been used to achieve the aim of this article. The primary sources has been archival and library depository of available primary and secondary literary resources and memoirs. Moreover, based on manuscripts, documents, old sources, unpublished literatures, recent references, magazines, seminar papers, and scientific conferences that studied the history of the Byzantine Empire. The primary method to be used in this article is to collect all information about the impact the expansion of the Seljuk in Asia Minor and the Levant at the expense of the Byzantine Empire. By analysing manuscripts, documents, old sources from various places, after the process of compare and contrast with other available material, will help us to explain the impact the expansion of the Seljuk in Asia Minor and the Levant at the expense of the Byzantine Empire.

Grousset, *L'empire des Steppes*, pp. 203-204.

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The expansion of the Seljuk in Asia Minor and the Levant

After the decline of the Sāmānid⁸ state in 999 AD, Qarakhanid⁹ and the Ghuzz conflicted for its land, thus, Qarakhanid occupied al-Jazīra and the Ghuzz occupied Khurasan.¹⁰ At this point the Seljuk worked hard to benefit from the chaos that accompanied the new situation, so they settled down in the heart al-Jazīra and in the North of Bukhara. When Seljuk died, his eldest son, Israel, took his place, which then allied with the king of Qarakhanids in 1025 AD against Sultan Mahmud, the founder of the State of the Ghuzz. So, the latter worked hard to get rid of Israel and in order to achieve that, he arrested him through trap and sent him to a prison in one of his castles in India till he died in 1030 AD.¹¹

No doubt, this betraying behaviour drove the Seljuk mad and made them determined to retaliate for Israel. So, they chose his brother Mikhail to be their leader and soon he moved with them to Khurasan in order to establish and root his people in this region then attack the Ghuzz and retaliate them. Then, he aimed to form a strong state which would take the place of the Ghuzz in Khurasan and al-Jazīra. Mikhail is written to Sultan Mahmūd¹² the Ghuzz asking him to let them cross his lands and live within Nessa

⁸Sāmānid Dynasty (819-999 AD), Iranian dynasty that arose in what is now Eastern Iran and Uzbekistan. It was renowned for the impulse that it gave to Iranian national sentiment and learning. The four grandsons of the Dynasty's founder, Sāmān-Khodā, had been rewarded with provinces for their faithful service to the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mūn: Nūḥ obtained Samarkand; Aḥmad, Fergana; Yaḥyā, Shāsh and Elyās, Herāt. Aḥmad's son Naṣr became governor of Transoxania in 875 AD, but it was his brother and successor, Ismā'īl I, who overthrew the Ṣaffārids in Khorāsān (900 AD). See, **Online:** <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/520234/Samanid-dynasty> (1st October 2015).

⁹Qarakhanid Dynasty also spelled Karakhanid, also called IlekKhanid, Turkic Dynasty (999-1211 AD) that ruled in Transoxania in Central Asia. The Qarakhanids, who belonged to the Qarluq tribal confederation, became prominent during the 9th century AD. With the disintegration of the Iranian Sāmānid Dynasty, the Qarakhanids took over the Sāmānid territories in Transoxania. In 999 AD Hārūn (or Ḥasan) BughraKhān, grandson of the paramount tribal chief of the Qarluq confederation, occupied Bukhara, the Sāmānid capital. See, **Online:** <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/485479/Qarakhanid-Dynasty> (1st October 2015).

¹⁰Khurasan historical region and realm comprising a vast territory now lying in North-eastern Iran, Southern Turkmenistan, and Northern Afghanistan. The historical region extended, along the North, from the Amu Darya (Oxus River) westward to the Caspian Sea and, along the South, from the fringes of the central Iranian deserts eastward to the mountains of central Afghanistan. Arab geographers even spoke of its extending to the boundaries of India. The history of the area stretches back to very ancient times, being part of the Achaemenid Empire of the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. See, **Online:** <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/316850/Khorasan> (1st October 2015).

¹¹Grousset, *L'empire des Steppes*, p. 204.

¹²Maḥmūd his full name Yamin Al-Daula Abu al-Qasim Maḥmūd Ibn Sebūktigin, was born in 971 AD, and died April 30th, 1030 AD, Ghazna, sultan of the kingdom of Ghazna (998-1030 AD), originally comprising modern Afghanistan and North-eastern modern Iran but, through his conquests, eventually including North-western India and most of Iran. He transformed his capital, Ghazna, into a cultural centre rivalling Baghdad. See, **Online:**

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and Barrod. Then, Maḥ mūd agreed thinking that killing their former leader broke them. However, as soon as the Seljuk settled down in Khurasan, they started to enhance their troops and spread throughout their neighbourhoods, besides, they were waiting for the suitable chance to ruin the Ghuzz state and uproot it from Khurasan and al-Jazāra.¹³

When sultan Maḥ mūd died in 1030 AD, and his son Masūd I (1031-1041 AD) took the place of him in governing the Ghuzz, the Seljuk saw it was high time they ruined the Ghuzz. Thus, they united under the leadership of Toghrīl Beg¹⁴ (1037-1063 AD) who hurried to Neyshābūr¹⁵ the capital of Khurasan and occupied it in 1037 AD. Then, he took the throne of Masūd I in Neyshābūr. Accordingly, he became the first Sultan of the Seljuk and the real founder of their state.¹⁶ However, Sultan Masūd I decided to retaliate Toghrīl Beg for himself, thus, a fierce battle broke out between the Seljuk and the Ghuzz at Dandānqān¹⁷ in 1040 AD. The battle was near Merv¹⁸ and ended in defeating the Ghuzz

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/358248/Mahmud> (7th October 2015).

¹³Abdalenaïm Mohamed Hassanein, *Dualh al-Seljuks wa-al-Iraq*, Al-Qāhirah: Maktabat al-nahdha al-Misriyah, 1957, p. 26.

¹⁴Toghrīl Beg, also spelled T̄ ughril was born in 990 AD, and died September 4th, 1063 AD, in Rayy, Iran, founder of the Seljuk Dynasty, which ruled in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Anatolia during the 11th -14th centuries AD. Under his rule the Seljuks assumed the leadership of the Islamic world by establishing political mastery over the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad. The grandson of Seljuk, chief of the Oğ uz tribes in the Jand region, Toghrīl, with his brother Chaghri, entered Muslim Transoxania shortly before 1016 AD, and in 1025 AD they and their uncle Ar-slān entered the service of the Turkish Qarakhanid prince of Bukhara. See, **Online:**

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/598045/Toghril-Beg> (7th October 2015).

¹⁵Neyshābūr city, also spelled Nīshāpūr, town, North-eastern Iran. Neyshābūr is situated 46 miles (74 km) west of Meshed. The town, which has shifted its position repeatedly in historical times, lies at an elevation of 3,980 feet (1,213 meters) in a wide, well-watered, and fertile plain at the Southern foot of the Bīnālūd Mountains. The surrounding area produces cereals and cotton, and the town's industries include agricultural marketing and the manufacture of carpets and pottery. Neyshābūr is linked by road and railway with Tehrān and Meshed. Neyshābūr derived its name from its alleged founder, the Sāsānian king Shāpūr I (272 AD). See, **Online:**

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/413358/Neyshabur> (7th October 2015).

¹⁶Ahmed Kamaluddin Helmi, *Al-Seljuks fi al-Tarikhwa-al-Hadharatiha*, Al-Kuwayt: Dar al-Qalam, 1975, pp. 23-25.

¹⁷Battle of Dandānqān in 1040 AD, decisive clash between the forces of the Ghaznavid sultan Masūd I (reigned 1031-1041 AD) and the nomad Turkmen Seljuks in Khurasan. The battle resulted in Masūd's defeat and the Seljuk takeover of Ghaznavid territory in Iran and Afghanistan. The late 1030 AD saw a struggle for supremacy in Khurasan between Masūd and the Seljuks, led by Toghrīl Beg. Taking advantage of a growing Ghaznavid weakness, Toghrīl gradually expanded his influence and began taking over territories formerly administered by the Ghaznavids. In 1037 AD Merv fell voluntarily to the Seljuks, followed likewise in 1038 AD by the cities of Herāt and Nīshāpūr. See, **Online:**

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/150862/Battle-of-Dandanqan> (7th October 2015).



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fiercely, which in turn led to ruining their powers in Persia and al-Jazīra, then, Khurasan wholly for the Seljuk.¹⁹ In the next year, 1040 AD, Toghrīl Beg wrote to the Abbasid caliphate Al-Qa'im, asking him to declare and profess the sultan of the Seljuk and legitimacy of his govern. Although the Abbasid Caliphate at that time was extremely weak, getting its profession would give the Seljuk State the legitimacy which in turn would make people satisfied with this state. Accordingly, the Abbasid Caliphate paid much attention to Toghrīl Beg and professed his being a sultan. (Refer to map 1).²⁰

Map 1: The Seljuk Dynasty (1037-1194 AD)²¹

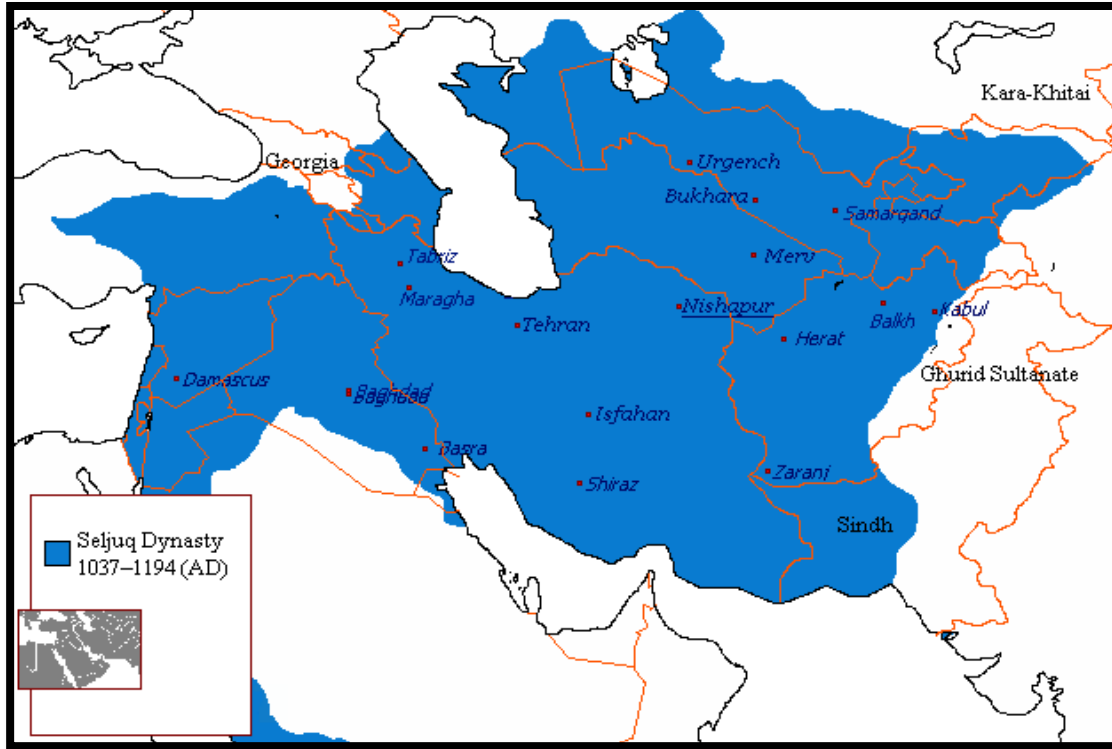
¹⁸Merv city of Central Asia lying near the modern town of Mary. Mentioned in ancient Persian texts as Mouru and in cuneiform inscriptions as Margu, it was the seat of a satrapy of the Persian Achaemenid Empire. Under the Arabs in the 7th century AD the city was rebuilt as the capital of Khurasan and served as a base for Muslim expansion into Central Asia and later China. A great centre of Islamic learning under the Abbasid Caliphs, Merv attained the zenith of its glory as capital of the Seljuk sultan Sanjar (reigned 1118-1157 AD). See, **Online:** <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/376494/Merv> (7th October 2015).

¹⁹Alvariqa, Joseph, Ibn Ahmad Ibn Ali, (birth: 510 H / 1116 AD), *TarikhAlvariqa*, edited by: Badawi Abdul LatifAwad, Bayrūt: Dar al-Nahdha al-Arabiya, 1974, p. 5.
See also: C. Cahen, *The Turkish Invasion (The Selchnkids)*, A History of the Crusades, Philadelphia: Setton Ed., 1955, Vol. I, pp. 141-142.

²⁰Ahmed Kamaluddin Helmi, *Al-Seljuks fi al-Tarikhwa-al-Hadharatiha*, p. 26.

²¹ See, **Online:** http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Seljuq_Dynasty (2nd October 2015).

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Sultan Toghril Beg continued expanding his state, so, he seized Khwārezm city²² in 1042 AD, Rayy city²³ and Kazvin city²⁴ in 1045 AD. In 1050 AD Toghril Beg besieged Eṣ fahān city²⁵ till it fell at his hands after many difficulties, at the same time he took

²²Khwārezm city also spelled Khorezm, historic region along the Amu Darya (ancient Oxus River) of Turkistan, in the territories of present-day Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Khwārezm formed part of the Empire of Achaemenian Persia (6th - 4th century B.C); the Arabs conquered it and introduced Islam to the area in the 7th century AD. From the late 11th to the early 13th century AD, Khwārezm was ruled by an independent dynasty, the Khwārezm-Shāhs, and thereafter it was ruled successively by the Mongols. See, **Online:**

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/317150/Khwarezm> (2nd October 2015).

²³Rayy city, also spelled Ray, Rey, formerly one of the great cities of Iran. The remains of the ancient city lie on the Eastern outskirts of the modern city of Shahr-e-Rey, which itself is located just a few miles Southeast of Tehrān. A settlement at the site dates from the 3rd millennium B.C. See, **Online:**

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/492588/Rayy> (2nd October 2015).

²⁴Kazvin city also spelled Qazvīn, North-central Iran, in a wide, fertile plain at the Southern foot of the Elburz Mountains. Originally called Shad Shāhpūr, it was founded by the Sāsānian king Shāpūr I about 250 AD. It flourished in early Muslim times (7th century AD), serving as a base for Islamization, and was surrounded by strong fortifications by Hārūn al-Rashīd. Genghis Khan laid waste the city; however, it revived under the Ṣafavids when Shāh Ṭahmāsp I (ruled 1524-1576 AD) moved the capital from Tabriz to Kazvin. See, **Online:**

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/313938/Kazvin> (2nd October 2015).

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control of Persia and ruined Buwayhid State²⁶ completely. Then, in 1054 AD, he headed for Azerbaijan region and seized it completely, and in the following year, 1055 AD, he entered Baghdad, according to the call of the Abbasid Caliphate, to take the place of the Shiite Buwayhid in predominating Iraq.²⁷

The Byzantine Empire did not suffer from dangerous raids from the side of the Seljuk except in the era of the emperor Constantine IX Monomachus (1042-1054 AD). Thus, in 1048 AD, Ibrahim Yanal, the step-brother of Toghril Beg raided regions of the Byzantine Empire especially Trabzon city,²⁸ Abkhaz²⁹ and Erzurum city,³⁰ then, the

²⁵Eş fahān city, also spelled Isfahan, City is West-central Iran. An ancient Median town, it was known as Aspadana. It was a major city in the 11th -12th century AD under the Seljuk Turks and during the Şafavid dynasty of Iran (16th -18th century AD). Its golden age began in 1598 AD when Shah Abbās I made it his capital and rebuilt it into one of the 17th century's AD greatest cities. At its centre he created the immense Maydān-e Shāh, or "Royal Square" (now Maydān-e Emām; Imam's Square), a great rectangular garden enclosing the Masjid-e Shāh (now Masjid-e Emām). See, **Online:** <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/192452/Esfahan> (2nd October 2015).

²⁶Buwayhid Dynasty also called Būyid (945-1055 AD), Islamic Dynasty of pronounced Iranian and Shī character that provided native rule in Western Iran and Iraq in the period between the Arab and Turkish conquests. Of Daylamite (Northern Iranian) origin, the line was founded by the three sons of Būyeh (or Buwayh), Ali, Ḥasan, and Aḥmad. Ali, appointed governor of Karaj about 930 AD by the Daylamite leader MardāvīzebnZeyār, seized Isfahan and Fārs, while Ḥasan and Aḥmad took Jibāl, Khūzestān, and Kermān (935-936 AD). In December 945 AD Aḥmad occupied the Abbasid capital of Baghdad as amīr al-umarā (commander in chief) and, reducing the influence of the Abbasid Caliphate. See, **Online:** <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/86866/Buyid-Dynasty> (7th October 2015).

²⁷Grousset, *L'Empire des Steppes*, pp. 205-206.

²⁸Trabzon city also called Trebizond, historically Trapezus, city, capital of Trabzon (province), North-eastern Turkey. It lies on a wide bay on the South-eastern shore of the Black Sea backed by high ranges of the Pontic Mountains, which separate it from the central Anatolian Plateau. The heart of the city is on a triangle of tableland between two deep ravines, with remains of an ancient Roman-built harbour at its base. At its Southern end stands a ruined citadel. The city centre is enclosed on the east and West by walls that date from Byzantine times. See, **Online:** <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/601397/Trabzon> (7th October 2015).

²⁹Abkhaz also called Abkhazian, Abkhaz Apswa, any member of a Caucasian people living chiefly in the Abkhazia republic in North-western most Georgia. The Bzyb Abkhaz, who have a distinct dialect, are found around the Bzyb River; the Abzhui Abkhaz, on whose dialect the literary language is based, live near the Kodori River; and the Zamurzakan Abkhaz are found in the South-east. The Abaza people, who speak a similar language, dwell north of the main Caucasus mountain chain around the sources of the Kuban and Zelenchuk rivers in Karachay-Cherkessia, Russia. See, **Online:** <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1352/Abkhaz> (7th October 2015).

³⁰Erzurum city is Eastern Turkey. It lies a fertile plain surrounded by high mountains. On a caravan route from Anatolia to Iran, Erzurum has been a major commercial and military centre since antiquity and is now a major rail station on the route between Ankara and Iran. Although its foundation was probably much earlier, Erzurum achieved real importance as Theodosiopolis, the 5th century AD Byzantine fortress that fell

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Muslim Seljuk achieved exotic victories.³¹ In the following year, 1049 AD, negotiations were initiated between the Byzantine emperor and the leader of the Seljuk, Toghril Beg, who released the king of Abkhaz in exchange for that Byzantines reconstruct a mosque in Constantinople, then, prayers were performed in it and his name mentioned during the Friday sermon.³² In 1051 AD, Toghril Beg sent to the emperor Constantine IX a messenger asking him to permit them to visit to Egypt through the Levant. However, the Byzantine Empire refused the request of Toghril Beg explaining to Toghril Beg how close the relation between him and the Fāṭimid caliphate, al-Mustanṣir Billah,³³ and that he cannot permit to harm that caliphate.

In fact, the relation between the Byzantine Empire and the Fāṭimid State at that time was very close and strong. This could be evidenced through that when the crisis for al-Mustanṣir³⁴ occurred in Egypt, the Fāṭimid caliphate al-Mustanṣir Billah, sent in 1054 AD to the emperor Constantine IX asking him to provide Egypt with 400 ardeb of wheat to face the dearth that occurred to it.³⁵ Then, the emperor decided to send the shipment to Egypt; however, he died before doing that. Then, when Theodora,³⁶ the last

to the Arabs in 653 AD. Thereafter it was disputed among the Byzantines, Arabs, and Armenians until taken by the Seljuk Turks in 1071 C.E. See, **Online:**
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/192184/Erzurum> (7th October 2015).

³¹Ibn al-Āthir, *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, Vol. 9, p. 546.

³²S. J. Vryonis, *The decline of medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the process of Islamization from the eleventh through the fifteenth century*, California: University of California Press, 1971, p. 83.

³³Al-Mustanṣir **Billah** was born in July 2nd, 1029 AD, al-Qāhirah, and died January 10th, 1094 AD, eighth Fāṭimid caliph. He inherited the rule of the most powerful Muslim State of the time, but, during his reign, which was the longest of any Muslim ruler, the Fāṭimid government suffered decisive and irrevocable setbacks. He became caliph in 1036 AD, when he was only seven years old, and real authority had to be wielded by his father's vizier (prime minister) and, after the death of the latter, by al-Mustanṣir's mother. See, **Online:**
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/399581/al-Mustansir> (7th October 2015).

³⁴In the inception of the second half of the 11th century AD in the history of the Fāṭimid State in Egypt in the era of caliphate al-Mustanṣir Billah (1036-1094 AD) a great crisis occurred and it was called that because it is a term that is called to famine and devastation that occurred in Egypt due to the lack of Nile River water for seven years. It was known as colocyth in the end of era of Fāṭimid caliphate al-Mustanṣir Billah. See:

Al-Maqrīzī, *Ette'aaz al-honafa be Akhbaar al-A'emma Al Fatemeyeen Al-Kholafaa*, Vol. 1, p. 219.

³⁵Al-Maqrīzī, Taqi al-Din Ahmad Ibn 'Ali, (died: 845 H / 1441 AD), *Ette'aaz al-honafa be Akhbaar al-A'emma Al Fatemeyeen Al-Kholafaa*, edited by: Mohammed Halimi Mohammed, Al-Qāhirah: Dar al-Kutob, 1973. Vol. 1, p. 214.

³⁶Theodora was born in 981 AD, Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey), and died in August 31th, 1056 AD, Constantinople, Byzantine empress who reigned jointly with her sister Zoe in 1042 AD and on her own in 1055-1056 AD. The third daughter of the emperor Constantine VIII (1025-1028 AD), Theodora possessed a strong and austere character and refused the hand of the heir presumptive, Romanus III Argyrus

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Macedonian Dynasty emperors, became the empress of Byzantines in 1055 AD, she told the Fāṭimid caliphate that she would provide Egypt with wheat on one condition. That if anyone attacked the Byzantine Empire, the caliphate must provide the Empire with the Egyptian soldiers to defend it. Then, communications took place between the caliphate and empress aiming to hold a treaty between them, in which the Fāṭimid Caliphate had to promise to support and stand by the Empire against any enemies.

It was clear that the project of this treaty was directed against the Seljuk. However, al-Mustanṣir Billah refused to get involved in the Byzantine-Seljuk conflicts, so the empress stopped sending the shipment of wheat to Egypt. Accordingly, disputes and conflicts broke out between both states. The Fāṭimid Caliphate al-Mustanṣir Billah, prepared an army under the leadership of al-Hasan Ibn al-Mulheim³⁷ who moved to the Levant and seized Latakia city and besieged Antioch,³⁸ however, he was defeated by a naval Byzantine Crusade in 1055 AD.³⁹ It seems that these Byzantine-Fāṭimid communications reached the Seljuk. This is evidenced when Toghril Beg himself led a military crusade against the Byzantine lands. His soldiers' fleeced regions located between Lake Van (Wan) and the Erzurum city, then, they besieged Manzikert,⁴⁰ which belonged to Byzantines, and nicked it for its people and pillaged its neighbours; however, he could not seize it because it was strongly castellated.⁴¹

(1028-1034 AD), who was married instead to her sister Zoe (1028 AD). Though living in retirement, she excited Zoe's jealousy and, accused of complicity in a conspiracy, was confined in a monastery. In 1042 AD the popular movement that caused the dethronement of Michael V Calaphates (1041-1042 AD). See, **Online:** <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/590620/Theodora> (7th October 2015).

³⁷Al-Hasan bin Ali Ibn al-Mülheim is one of the men of Fāṭimid, they are said to him Fāṭimid al-Hasan bin Ali Ibn al-Mülheim and called him the state, Hassan appeared as a strong leader in the war waged by the Fāṭimids on the Emir of Aleppo Thumal bin Saleh bin Boumerdes in the year 1057 AD. See: Abu Al-fida', *Tarikh al-mukhtasar fi Akhbari 'l-bashar*, Vol. 3, p. 217.

³⁸**Antioch city** is populous city of ancient Syria, and now a major town of South-central Turkey. It lies near the mouth of the Orontes River, about 12 miles (19 km) North-west of the Syrian border. Antioch was founded in 300 B.C by Seleucus I Nicator, a former general of Alexander the Great. The new city soon became the Western terminus of the caravan routes over which goods were brought from Persia and elsewhere in Asia to the Mediterranean Sea. See, **Online:** <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/28297/Antioch> (7th October 2015).

³⁹Al-Maqrīzī, *Ette'aaz al-honafa be Akhbaar al-A'emma Al Fatemeyyeen Al-Kholafaa*, Vol. 2, pp. 230-231.

⁴⁰**Manzikert city:** is located in the province of Moss in Turkish, was the center of important trade during the reign of the Kingdom of Armenia, as well as during the Byzantine Empire, later the city witnessed one of the most important battles in Islamic-Byzantine history periods, known as the Battle of Manzikert between the leader Seljuk Alp-Arslan, the Byzantine Romanus IV Diogenes 1071 AD. See: Ibn al-Ādim, *Zubdat al-Halab fi ta'arikhHalab*, Vol. 2, p. 120.

⁴¹Ibn al-Āthir, *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, Vol. 9, p. 599.

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The Abbasid caliphate, al-Qa'im bi Amr Allah, sent a messenger to Toghril Beg inviting him come to Baghdad and the Abbasid Caliphate at that time was very weak because the Shiite Buwayhid were dominating it. At that same time the powers of Arslān al-Muẓ affar al-Basāsīrī⁴² soldiers' leader increased and things were messy in Baghdad. According to Ibn al-Umranī, "every soldier in Baghdad was the boss of himself." Then, Toghril Beg answered the request of caliphate. Then he prepare his army to conquer Baghdad on 18th December, 1055 AD, that,

"I aimed to this side for three purposes; the first is to kiss the holy threshold of the prophet and serve it. Then, the second is to pilgrimage the house of Allah (Mecca) and open the road of pilgrimage through Iraq, and the third is to go Egypt and take for the hands of the Shiite Fāṭ imid Caliphate existing in it and call on its pulpits for the Abbasids."⁴³

The Byzantine Empire realized how strong and dangerous the Seljuk was especially after they conquered Baghdad. In 1055 AD, the Byzantine empress, Theodora, received the messenger of the Seljuk Sultan Toghril Beg, and permitted him to give the speech for the Abbasid Caliphate and the Seljuk sultan in Constantinople mosque.⁴⁴ The Fāṭ imid State could not launch any military action after its relations with the Byzantine Empire were spoiled due to being busy with the Seljuk attack of Iraq and the Levant, and the failure of al-Basāsīrī as well as the tough and hard economical conditions.

When Toghril Beg died in 1063 AD, conflicts started for a short time among the Seljuk until Alp-Arslan,⁴⁵ the nephew of Toghril Beg, conquered Rayy city in the late of 1063 AD. So, in 1063 AD Alp-Arslan launched a huge crusade against Azerbaijan, then,

⁴²Arslān al-Muẓ affar al-Basāsīrī (died January 15th, 1060 AD, Saqy al-Furāt, near Kūfah, Iraq), Islamic military leader. Al-Basāsīrī was born a Turkish slave, and his activities were first mentioned about 1025 AD. At the time, the weakened Abbasid Caliphs at Baghdad, who represented Sunnite Islam, were under continuous pressure from the Fāṭ imid Caliphs of Egypt, representing the Shiite sect, and the insurgent Turks commanded by Toghril Beg. Al-Basāsīrī, a veteran of many battles in these struggles, joined with Arab tribesmen in 1058-1059 AD to attempt to defeat the Abbasid caliph al-Qa'im in favour of the Fāṭ imids. He was unsuccessful and was killed by the Turks in 1060 AD. See, **Online:** <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/54670/Arslan-al-Muzaffar-al-Basasiri> (7th October 2015).

⁴³Ibn Al-Amorany, Muhammad Ibn Ali, (died: 580 H / 1184 AD), *Al-Anba fi Tarikh Al-Kholafaa*, edited by: Qasim al-Samarrai, Leiden, n.p., 1973, pp. 188-189.

⁴⁴Al-Maqrīzī, *Ette'aaz al-honafa be Akhbaar al-A'emma Al Fatemeyyeen Al-Kholafaa*, Vol. 2, p. 230.

⁴⁵Alp-Arslan original name aḍ ud al-Dawla AbūShuja' Muḥ ammad Ibn Dāūd Toghril Beg (born 1030 AD- and died December 1072 AD), second Sultan of the Seljuk (1063-1072), who inherited the Seljuk territories of Khurasan and Western Iran and went on to conquer Georgia, Armenia, and much of Asia Minor (won from the Byzantines). Alp-Arslan was the son of Toghril Beg, the ruler of Khurasan in Iran, and the nephew of Toghril Beg, the governor of Western Iran, the base of Seljuk expansion. In 1061 AD his father died. See, **Online:**

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/17003/Alp-Arslan> (7th October 2015).

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he decided to fight the Byzantines and conquer them. After that, he headed for Kyrgyzstan country⁴⁶ (Al-Karj State) and attacked few of the Byzantine fortresses, and then he finished his victories by conquering Ani city,⁴⁷ the capital of Armenia region. It was a very castellated city with a very strategic location. After the Seljuk seized this city, they undertook the Armenian highland which was the protective shield for the Byzantine Empire in the East due to its location and difficult roads.⁴⁸ After it was settled down for the Seljuk in Eastern and Southern regions, they set their eyes on the West, on the Levant where the powers of Fāṭimid's as well as lands of the Byzantine Empire.

In 1071 AD, Alp-Arslan headed for the Levant and his arrival to the Levant was very significant as none of the Turkish countries, which existed in the East; leader ever reached borders of the Levant. This was expressed best by the jurisprudent Abu Jaffar Ibn al-Bukhary, the judge of Aleppo, when he talked to sultan Alp-Arslan during his way to cross Euphrates River heading for Aleppo in 1071 AD, saying

"O our patron, I thank Allah for this blessing which is that this river never been crossed by any Turkish or slave, but you crossed it and you are a king."

This saying appealed to Sultan. Then, Aleppo gave in to the Seljuk Sultan when Alp-Arslan reached it in 1071 AD. Then, Alp-Arslan decided to give Aleppo freedom to as a State⁴⁹ under the govern of its governor Mahmud Ibn Nasr al-Maradsí.⁵⁰

While Sultan Alp-Arslan was on his way to Damascus to cross through to Egypt,⁵¹ he knew that the Byzantine emperor had crossed Armenia aiming to seize Khurasan. So,

⁴⁶**Kyrgyzstan Country** is central Asia. In the South-east the Kok Shaal-Tau Range, part of the Tien Shan, forms the border with China. Area: 77,199 square mile (199,995 square km). Capital: Bishkek. The Kyrgyz make up about two-thirds of the population; most of the remainder consists of Uzbeks and Russians. Languages: Kyrgyz, Russian (both official). Religions: Islam (mostly Sunni); also Christianity. See, **Online:** <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/326091/Kyrgyzstan> (7th October 2015).

⁴⁷**Ani** is ancient city site in extreme Eastern Turkey. Ani lies east of Kars and along the Arpacay (Akhuryan) River, which forms the border with Armenia to the East. Situated along a major East-west caravan route, Ani first rose to prominence in the 5th century AD and had become a flourishing town by the time Ashot III the Merciful (reigned 952-977 AD), the Bagratid king of Armenia, transferred his capital there from Kars in 961 AD. Thus began a Golden Age for the city, which was beautified under two subsequent Bagratid rulers. See, **Online:** <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/25434/Ani> (7th October 2015).

⁴⁸Vasiliev, *A History of the Byzantine Empire*, Vol. I, p. 355.

⁴⁹Ibn al-Ādim, *Zubdat al-Halab fi ta'arikh Halab*, Vol. 3, p. 20.

⁵⁰**Mahmud Ibn Nasr al-Maradsí** entered into a dispute with his brother Atiya Ibn Saleh al-Maradsí on the emirate of Aleppo, was able Mahmoud al-Maradsí with the Turkmen assistance of the victory over his brother's Atiya al-Maradsí and was able to expel his brother Atiya of the emirate, and recommended that after the succession of his son Shabib. But his will not be carried out; when he died in 1074 AD, was chosen by his men and led to his eldest son to succeed him in power. See, **Online:** <http://www.discover-syria.com>. (9th October 2015).

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he left Egypt and went back to Constantinople.⁵² When the Seljuk's raids got fiercer and stronger against the Byzantine Empire, the emperor Romanus IV Diogenes⁵³ (1067-1071 AD) tried to stop the Seljuk march and blocking outlets in front of them. However, the Seljuk had entered inside and got outside the Byzantine Empire through three outlets; the lacunas in the North of the Levant, and lacunas upper the island, and Armenia. So, Romanus IV set a plan aiming to block these three outlets in three stages. Then, he himself led three Crusades against the Levant and upper al-Jazīra and Armenia in the years from 1068 to 1071 AD. The first Crusade the emperor Romanus IV launched was in 1068 AD against lands of Aleppo emirate in the Levant and al-Jazīra.

Romanus IV succeeded in his first Crusade over Mahmud Ibn Nasr al-Maradī, the prince of Aleppo, and those who were with him of the Turkmen⁵⁴ and Arabs. After the Byzantine emperor Romanus IV seized some fortresses, he backed off to his countries when he heard about the attacks of Turkmen who deepened inside the Byzantine lands.⁵⁵ In the following year, 1069 AD, the Byzantine Empire Romanus IV, came back at the head of his crusade to the Levant in which he reached Manbij⁵⁶ (or Hierapolis) village in Aleppo, thus, he captivated many of its people. Then, after ruining villages existing between lands

⁵¹In fact, Alp-Arslan though lightly and seriously of conquering Egypt and ruining the Shiite Fatimid State after Mustanşir destroyed it and caused turbulences and tumult between the Turkish and Sudanese. The war between the competitive troops aiming to domineer caliphate Mustanşir Billah was about to break out.

⁵²Al-Maqrīzī, *Ette'aaz al-honafa be Akhbaar al-A'emma Al Fatemeyyeen Al-Kholafaa*, Vol. 2, p. 302.

⁵³**Romanus IV Diogenes** (died August 4th, 1072 AD, Prote, Byzantine Empire) Byzantine emperor (January 1st, 1068-1071 AD), a member of the Cappadocian military aristocracy. In 1068 AD Romanus married Eudocia Macrembolitissa, widow of the emperor Constantine X Ducas (1059-1067 AD). He led military expeditions against the Seljuk Turks but was defeated and captured by them at the Battle of Manzikert (1071 AD). On his release Romanus found that Constantine X's son had been crowned sole ruler as Michael VII Parapinaces (1071-1078 AD). Romanus was blinded and exiled to the island of Prote in the Sea of Marmara, where he died. See, **Online:** <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/508781/Romanus-IV-Diogenes> (9th October 2015).

⁵⁴**Turkmen**, people who speak a language belonging to the South-western branch of the Turkic languages. The majority live in Turkmenistan and in neighbouring parts of Central Asia. About one-third of the total population lives in Iran, especially in the North, and another live in North-eastern and North-western Afghanistan. These groups are called the Trans Caspian Turkmen. Pockets of Turkmen are found in Northern Iraq and Syria. See, **Online:** <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/610111/Turkmen> (9th October 2015).

⁵⁵Suheil Zakar, *Madkhal ilā Tarikh al-Ḥrūb al-Şalybiah*, Lebanon: Muasast al-Risalah, 1972, p. 138.

⁵⁶**Manbij**, or Hierapolis ancient Syrian city, now partly occupied by Manbij (Membij), about 50 miles (80 km) northeast of Aleppo. The place first appears in Greek as Bambyce, but its Syrian name was probably Mabbog. The Seleucids made it the chief station on their main road between Antioch and Seleucia-on-Tigris. As a centre of the worship of the Syrian nature goddess Atargatis, it became known to the Greeks as the Holy City (Hierapolis). In the 3rd century AD, Hierapolis was one of the great cities of Syria, but it thereafter declined. Hārūn al-Rashīd restored it at the end of the 8th century AD. See, **Online:** <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/264977/Hierapolis> (9th October 2015).

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of the Byzantine Empire and Manbij, he withdrew due to lack of provisions and the spread of dearth and epidemics. (Refer to map 2).⁵⁷

Map 2: Islamic expansion in the territory of the Byzantine Empire⁵⁸



Conclusion

Despite being under Roman rule for almost 1000 years, the Seljuks rapidly consolidated their holdings over Anatolia. This allowed them to hold on to their lands and made it all the more difficult for the Byzantines during the Komnenian restoration to re-conquer. The result was that even when the Byzantine Empire was not riddled with civil disputes, it could not defeat the Seljuk Turks, who rarely allowed the Byzantines to engage them, hence the slow campaigning of John Komnenus.

The old Roman state was in a constant state of war due to the numerous enemies on its borders; Muslims to the South and East, Slavs to the North and Franks to the West. The Byzantine Empire had to face Normans, Pechenegs and Turks within a few decades of each other at a time when the army was torn in civil conflict.

⁵⁷Al-Isfahani, Imad al-Din Muhammad, (died: 597 H / 1200 AD), *Tarikh Dualh al-Seljuk*, Bayrūt: Monshūrat al-Maktaba al-Asriya, 1978, p. 37.

⁵⁸ See, **Online:**
<http://cache.eb.com/eb/image?id=7031&rendTypeId=4> (9th October 2015).

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The war had great consequences. The Middle East was dominated by the power of the Fatimid Caliphate and the Byzantine Empire; by the end of the 13th century, neither of the two were in a position to project power; the Fatimids having been toppled by the Kurdish influenced Ayyūbid, whilst the Byzantines severely weakened by the Seljuks. Power shifted to the Mamelukes by the 14th century and then back to the Turks in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. Never again would a Christian Kingdom yield so much military and political power in the Middle East. As the Turks steadily gained ground in Anatolia, the local population converted to Islam, further reducing any chances of a successful recon quest.

For the Turks, it was the beginning of a new era of power. Despite further invasions and attacks by Crusaders from the west and the Mongols and Turkic tribes from the east, the Turks slowly emerged as a superpower under the Ottomans. The rise of the Ottomans was parallel to the fall of the Sultanate of Rum and the carving up of the Byzantine Empire. The power vacuum left in Anatolia was easily exploited by one of the Sultanate's nobles, Osman I. Matters were made worse for the Byzantine Empire due to the Latin presence in the Peloponnese and the rising power of the Bulgarians who continued to press hard against the borders of Byzantium. In time, the Byzantines would be forced to call on the aid of the Ottomans to head to the European mainland and fight the Bulgarians, giving the Ottoman Turks a firm grip on Europe. The close proximity of Osman's Beylik ensured that confrontation between the Byzantines and the Ottomans would be inevitable. The Byzantines were a match for the Ottomans but events west of Constantinople coupled with civil war and incompetent leadership left the Byzantines reeling from one siege after another until Constantinople fell in 1453 AD.

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