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ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ – RESEARCH ARTICLE

AN EVALUATION OF THE COOPERATION BETWEEN ARMENIANS AND TURKS AGAINST THE  
LATINS IN THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE 12<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

The Armenians, who were subjected to deportation many times while living under the Eastern Roman administration, were reactive against the Greeks because of their religious and heavy tax obligations. Towards the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, they had a hostile attitude towards Turks who entered Anatolia at the beginning. However, this situation did not last long, and they lived in peace under Turkish rule. The rapid Turkish advance in Anatolia and forming their own administration affected both the Greeks and the Catholic Christians, who were shaken by news brought by Greeks and those who left their own country to become pilgrims and went to Jerusalem. With the awareness created by the Reconquista movement in Spain, they accepted the cross, and set out to seize the “holy lands” and to end the persecution of the local Christians by the Muslims. Gregorian Armenians welcomed the incoming Crusaders with joy and, apart from some isolated incidents, made their work easier by directing the Crusaders. Since the Franks considered themselves superior to their Eastern Christian “brothers” among the Crusaders, bilateral good relations they had established over time began to deteriorate. During this period, although many Crusaders from the lower stratum of the Latins married local Christians, especially Gregorian Armenian women, the friction between them did not end due to the difference in sects. Since the Crusader County of Urfa is the geography where the relations between the Crusaders and Gregorian Armenians were the most intense, the marriage relations seen here were also seen among the nobles and gained enough power to have a say in the administration. However, there were also disadvantages of this intense relationship and Armenians were exposed to the ambivalent behavior of the Crusaders here. This situation continued for a while, but since the Catholic Christians began to consider the Gregorian Armenians as their subjects, the oppression of the Armenians caused a terrible disappointment and they sought salvation in their former allies, the Turkish rulers. For this reason, they asked the Turks for help many times and took their side against the Crusaders. The cooperation of the Gregorian Armenians with the Muslim Turks and their struggle to end the Crusader domination in the region show that establishment of a Christian union even during the Crusades is a dream. The leader of Catholic Christianity, the Pope, tried to have rights over all other Christian communities because he claimed to be universal, but he was not successful in putting this thought into practice due to the ill-treatment of the knights, nobles, and people against the native Christians. Although they brought new troops from the West to be permanent in the region, the Crusaders could not turn the power in their favor due to the unhealthy relations they established with local Christians. The good relations between Armenians, disappointed with the treatment they received behind this failure, with the Turks, and the policies they followed against the Catholic Crusaders were also seriously effective.

**Keywords:** Crusader, Armenian, Turk, Cooperation, Latins.



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XII. YÜZYILDA ORTA DOĞU'DA ERMENİLER VE TÜRKLER ARASINDA LATİNLERE  
KARŞI İŞBİRLİĞİNE DAİR BİR DEĞERLENDİRME

ÖZ

Ermeniler, Doğu Roma idaresi altında yaşarlarken Gregoryen Kilisesi'ne tabi olmalarından dolayı birçok kez tehcire maruz kalmış gerek dini gerekse de ağır vergi yükümlülükleri nedeniyle Greklere karşı tepkiliydi. XI. yüzyılın sonlarına doğru onlar, Anadolu topraklarına ele geçirmeye çalışan Türklere karşı başlarda düşmanca bir tavır içinde olmuşlardır. Ancak bu durum çok da uzun sürmemiş ve Türklerin hakimiyeti altında barış içinde yaşamışlardır. Türklerin Anadolu'da hızla ilerleyişi ve Doğu Roma topraklarını hızla ele geçirip kendi yönetimlerini oluşturması hem Grekleri hem de kendi ülkelerinden hacı olmak için ayrılıp Kudüs'e gidenlerin getirdiği haberlerle sarsılan Katolik Hristiyanları etkilemiştir. İspanya'daki *Reconquista* hareketinin yarattığı farkındalıkla birlikte haçı kabul ederek "*kutsal topraklar*"ı ele geçirmek ve Müslümanların yerli Hristiyanlara yaşattığı zulme son vermek için yola çıkmışlardır. Gregoryen Ermeniler, gelen Haçlı birliklerini sevinç içinde karşılamış bazı münferit olaylar dışında da Haçlıları yönlendirerek adeta işlerini kolaylaştırmıştır. Haçlı birlikleri arasında bilhassa Frankların kendilerini Doğulu Hristiyan "*kardeşlerinden*" üstün görmeleri nedeniyle zaman içerisinde kurdukları ikili iyi ilişkiler bozulmaya başlamıştır. Bu süre zarfında Latinlerin aşağı tabakasından çok sayıda Haçlı yerli Hristiyanlarla özellikle Gregoryen Ermeni kadınlarla evlilik yapsa da aralarındaki sürtüşme mezhep farklılığından da kaynaklanan kimi nedenlerden dolayı son bulmamıştır. Urfa Haçlı Kontluğu, Haçlı birlikleri ile Gregoryen Ermeniler arasındaki ilişkilerin en yoğun yaşandığı coğrafya olması hasebiyle burada görülen evlilik ilişkileri soylular arasında da tecrübe edilmiş olup yönetimde söz sahibi olacak kadar güç kazanmışlardır. Lakin bu yoğun ilişkinin olumsuz yanları da olmuş ve Ermeniler burada Haçlıların ikircikli davranışlarına maruz kalmıştır. Bu durum bir süre devam etmiş olsa da Katolik Hristiyanların, Gregoryen Ermenileri kendi tebaası altında değerlendirmeye başlamasından itibaren ezmesi Ermenilerde dehşetengiz bir hayal kırıklığı yaratmış ve kurtuluşu eski müttefikleri olan Türk hükümdarlarında aramışlardır. Bu nedenden ötürü birçok kez Türk yöneticilerden yardım istemiş ve Haçlılara karşı onların safında yer almışlardır. Gregoryen Ermenilerin, Müslüman Türkler ile kurduğu iş birliği ve bölgedeki Haçlı hakimiyetine son vermek için giriştikleri mücadele göstermektedir ki Haçlı Seferleri sırasında dahi bir Hristiyan birliğinin kurulması bir hayalden öteye gidememiştir. Katolik Hristiyanlığın ruhani lideri Papa, evrensel olma iddiasında olmasından ötürü diğer bütün Hristiyan cemaatler üzerinde hak sahibi olmaya çalışmış ancak bu düşüncesini uygulamaya koymada sefere katılan şövalyelerin, soyluların ve halkın yerli Hristiyanlara karşı kötü muamelesinden dolayı başarılı olamamıştır. Bölgede her ne kadar kalıcı olmak için Batı'dan yeni askerî birlikler getirsel de yerli Hristiyanlar ile kurdukları ilişkilerin sağlıksız olması nedeniyle Haçlılar, gücü kendi lehine çevirmeyi başaramamışlardır. Bu başarısızlığın arkasında gördükleri muamele nedeniyle hayal kırıklığına uğrayan Ermenilerin Türklerle yeniden kurduğu iyi ilişkiler ve Katolik Haçlılar aleyhine izledikleri politikalar da ciddi manada etkili olmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Haçlı, Ermeni, Türk, İş birliği, Latinler.

Toward the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Catholic Church in Rome renewed its contact with Orthodox Eastern Rome. At that time, the Papacy was eager to make an agreement with the Orthodox Christians against the Muslim Turks, who were threatening Eastern Roman territory, as it was in their own interests. In the aftermath of this renewed contact, an operation was planned in the Western world, with the Catholic Church in the lead, to liberate the "Holy Land" and "their Christian brothers". The subsequent "Crusades", as the operation was named, were primarily organized not by Pope Urbanus II, but by his predecessor Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085), who was not just the fiercest opponent of moral reformers in Rome but who also endeavoured to realize the Papal dream of leading the secular community. He believed that Jesus's soldiers must be present anywhere in the world to fight against evil. For this reason, he planned an aid expedition to the East to help his Christian brothers who were being "oppressed" under Muslim domination (1074). In a letter written to his ally Mathilde, Duchess of Toscana, Pope Gregory VII wrote:

"How serious my intention and how great my desire to go overseas and with Christ's help to carry succour to the Christians being slaughtered like sheep by pagans, I hesitate to say to some persons lest I seem to be moved by too great a fickleness of purpose. But to you, my most dearly beloved daughter, I have no hesitation

in declaring any of these matters; for I have more confidence in your good judgement than you yourself could possibly express.”<sup>1</sup>

However, Pope Gregory VII’s initiatives were in vain but when his successor Pope Urbanus II came on the scene the Church got a new opportunity in the form of an appeal for help from Eastern Roman Emperor Alexios Komnenos. In this regard, Emperor Komnenos (1081-1118) sent envoys to a gathering Pope Urbanus II (1088-1099) arranged in Piacenza in March 1095. At this gathering, the emperor’s representatives requested military assistance of an expedition against the Seljukid Turks who had seized all of Anatolia, with the exception of Istanbul and the Black Sea coast. Since the Pope’s gathering made adaptations based on its own sensitivities, this call took this form: “Aid to the Eastern Christians under Muslim oppression”. Pope Urbanus II seized this opportunity both because of the urgency he felt from the pleading messages of his Christian brothers, and to heal the rift between Rome and the Orthodox Greek Church that arose following a clash between the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Papal envoy in 1054.

In all likelihood, the initiative concerning the invitation to the imperial representatives came personally from the Pope. Anna Komnena does not mention anything about such a request from Alexios. Because had the emperor initiated such a move, he would have been accused of the problems the Latins created in the Empire.<sup>2</sup> It does not appear to be possible to reach a definite conclusion, based on current sources, as to whether or not Eastern Rome asked for help for the Catholic Christian world for a sacred goal. The issue that deepens the problematic aspect of the aid request is that in the writings of Eastern Roman personages like Anna Komnena and Ioannes Zonaras at the time of the gathering in Piacenza there is no mention of Alexios Komnenos’ letter to Pope Urbanus II, which was carried by East Roman envoys, asking for help.<sup>3</sup> The only Eastern Roman source that mentions the envoys and the message in Piacenza is in Theodoros Skutariotes’s chronicle *Synopsis Chronike*.<sup>4</sup> Although this chronicle has the sense of having been written at the time of the Crusades, in fact, it was written 200 years after the incidents of 1095.<sup>5</sup> It is possible that this event was adapted by Symeon II, who was Eastern Rome’s Orthodox Greek Patriarch in Jerusalem, and sent to the Pope through Pierre L’Ermite. Because Pierre L’Ermite visited Jerusalem as a pilgrimage duty, and he witnessed the miserable state of the Christians there. This claim is the basis of the argument that Pierre L’Ermite’s allegations lit the sparks for the Crusades.<sup>6</sup>

The Church moved to immediately activate the idea of a sacred war, which nourished the claim of universality, inviting the knights of the West, the nobility and the populace to take up the cross to save “their Christian brethren” in the East, and by providing the necessary financing to motivate the expedition. However, a great portion of those who took up the cross and participated as volunteers in the expeditions were from groups that Westerners were displeased to have living among themselves, like “criminals, robbers, sinners, thieves, parent killers, false witnesses, pimps, gamblers, women who had left their husbands to become prostitutes, and traitors.”<sup>7</sup>

Despite the inclination of Christian rulers to distance themselves from these expeditions, the knights accepted the call to holy war with ardour. The main factor driving them to action was the urge they felt for possibly acquiring land. In the West, and especially in northern France where the right of first-born children was entrenched, the attractiveness of this type of war was quite high. Because younger male children were motivated to find their fortunes elsewhere. The desire to acquire new lands and enjoy adventure was something that intoxicated

<sup>1</sup> *The Correspondence of Pope Gregory VII*, Trans. Ephraim Emerton, WW Norton & Co, United States 1959, p. 60, 61; *The Correspondence of Pope Gregory VII*, Trans. Ephraim Emerton, WW Norton & Co, United States 1969; Malcolm Barber, *The Crusader States*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London: 2012, p. 11; C. Wright, “On The Margins of Christendom the Impact of the Crusades on Byzantium”, *The Crusades and the Near East*, ed. Conor Kostick, Routledge, London 2011, p. 56; B. Hamilton, *The Latin Church in the Crusader States*, Variorum, London 1980, p. 161; S. Kangas, “Inimicus Dei Et Sanctae Christianitatis? Saracens and Their Prophet in Twelfth-Century Crusade Propaganda and Western Travesties of Muhammad’s Life”, *The Crusades and the Near East*, ed. Conor Kostick, Routledge, London 2011, p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> P. Magdalino, “The Pen of the Aunt: Echoes of the Mid-Twelfth Century in the Alexiad”, *Anna Komnene and Her Times*, ed. T. Gouma-Peterson, New York 2000, p. 25, 26; J. G. Ghazarian, “The First Latin Encounters”, *The Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia During the Crusades the Integration of Cilician Armenians with the Latins 1080-1393*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2000, p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> I. Zonaras, *The History or Zonaras: From Alexander Severus to the Death of Theodosius the Great*, tr. Thomas M. Banchich and Eugene N. Lane, Routledge, London 2009, p. 82.

<sup>4</sup> K. A. Zafeiris, *The Synopsis Chronike and its Place in the Byzantine Chronicle Tradition: its Sources (Creation-1081 CE)*, A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of St Andrews, St Andrews, Scotland 2007, p. 305.

<sup>5</sup> J. Harris, *Byzantium and Crusades*, The Bath Press, New York, London 2003, p. 48.

<sup>6</sup> E. O. Blake and C. Morris, “A Hermit Goes to War: Peter and the Origins of the First Crusade” *Studies in Church History*, XXII, 1985, pp. 79-108; A. Jotischky, “The Christians of Jerusalem, the Holy Sepulchre and the Origins of the First Crusade”, *Crusades*, VII, 2008, pp. 35-57.

<sup>7</sup> S. Runciman, *Haçlı Seferleri Tarihi* vol: I, tr. Fikret İşıltan, TTK, Ankara 2008, p. 71; P. M. Cobb, *Müslümanların Gözüyle Haçlı Seferleri*, tr. Ekin Duru, Say Publisher, Istanbul 2018, p. 59; H. Korunur (tr.), *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi Işığında III. Haçlı Seferi (1189-1192)*, Kitabevi Publisher, Istanbul 2019, p. 4.

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knighthood in France and particularly the Normans, who had become tied to the land for just a few generations and who had not yet abandoned the life of nomadic brigandry. The Church was very pleased that the expedition gained momentum among Catholic Christians, thanks to the Normans.<sup>8</sup> In addition, their lands were plundered and rendered useless by the invasions of barbarian tribes from the north and west. Requests for deforestation to allow for new lands were rejected by nobles who hunted in the forests, and continuous attacks by bandits on the lower classes motivated them to join the expeditions in search of hope in the East. In Pope Urbanus's Clermont Sermon, he emphasized the troubles of the populace, noting that their land could no longer sustain them so they were always fighting among themselves, and he insisted that they must therefore acquire the "sacred lands" where rivers of milk and honey flowed. In this regard, in Petrus Tudebodus's chronicle, it was conveyed that all of Europe was gradually being enveloped by evil, the kings were constantly at war and banditry, injustice and oppression were everpresent, with homes and even churches being burned.<sup>9</sup>

Everyone participating in the expedition was to bear a red sign of the cross, sewn onto coat sleeves. Everyone accepting the cross vowed to go to Jerusalem and in the event that they turned back before reaching there or refused to go at all they would be excommunicated from the Church. Priests and monks would be able to accept the cross only if the bishop and senior priests gave permission. No one would be able to join the expedition with a priest they were previously linked to. The matter was not just one of a conquest. In all cities seized from the hands of nonbelievers all rights and goods acquired were to be returned to the Eastern churches over time. Everyone was required to be ready to abandon their land and hearths after gathering their crops, on 15 August 1095, the day marking the Blessed Virgin Mary's ascension into heaven. The armies that gathered in all corners of the West were to meet in Constantinople, the capital of Eastern Rome.<sup>10</sup>

Contrary to modern sources written about the Crusades, Claude Cahen states that Eastern Rome made no such appeal for help and, instead, at a time when they had achieved superiority over the Muslim Turks threatening their eastern border, Emperor Alexios Komnenos became irritated when he became aware of the initiative in the West. Also, Cahen adds that the subject of letters written between Pope Gregory VII and the Armenian Catholic Patriarch concerned their common enemy, Orthodox Eastern Rome, because for quite some time Eastern Rome had adopted an inimical attitude toward the Armenians, who were of a different sect. For this reason, the Gregorian Armenians felt as though their existence was under threat. Consequently, they adopted an inclusive approach against the Crusader army coming from the West and accepted any and all proposals for cooperation.<sup>11</sup> Besides this, some priests in Jerusalem who held Eastern Christian beliefs made some appeals to Catholic Christians with whom they established contacts in order to play on their sympathies, but these priests' aim was definitely not military aid but, rather, to collect alms for the churches they belonged to.<sup>12</sup> For these reasons they depicted themselves as being in need of aid.

Catholic Christians saw their Eastern Christian co-religionists, to whose aid they were rushing, as "heretics" and, believing that they had strayed from the true path, were not fond of them. At the beginning of the expeditions, they concealed these feelings but, in a letter, thought to have been sent by the Crusades leaders to Pope Urbanus II on 11 September 1098 this attitude was very evident. The letter, probably written by Bohemund when he was making preparations in France and gathering soldiers, characterized the Eastern Christians as infidels and the aim of the letter was to ensure Pope Urbanus's active role in the Crusades and to encourage him to that end. It appears that Fulcherius Carnotensis did not use this letter as a source. However, the letter was included in a later one of his studies. So why was it deemed necessary to add this letter later? Probably, the writer, adding the letter in 1105-1106, may have wanted to embolden Bohemund for a new expedition. Many years later when the work was under its second rectification this information was deemed unnecessary and was not included<sup>13</sup>:

"We have subdued the Turks and the pagans; but the heretics, Greeks and Armenians, Syrians and Jacobites, we have not been able to overcome. Therefore we ask and ask again that you, our most dear father,

<sup>8</sup> J. R. Smith, *The First Crusade and The Idea of Crusading*, Continuum, London-New York 2003, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Petrus Tudebodus, *Bir Tanığın Kaleminden Birinci Haçlı Seferi Kudüs'e Yolculuk*, tr. Süleyman Genç, Kronik Book, İstanbul 2019, p. 57.

<sup>10</sup> D. C. Munro, "The Speech of Pope Urban II at Clermont, 1095", *American Historical Review*, XI, 1906, p. 231; A. C. Krey, "Urban's Crusade-Success or Failure", *American Historical Review*, LIII, 1948, p. 237; J. A. Brundage, "Adhemar of Le Puy: The Bishop and his Critics", *Speculum*, XXXIV, 1959, p. 202.

<sup>11</sup> C. Cahen, *Haçlı Seferleri Zamanında Doğu ve Batı*, tr. Mustafa Daş, Yeditepe Publisher, İstanbul 2018, p. 49, 50.

<sup>12</sup> C. Cahen, "An Introduction to the First Crusade", *The Crusades Critical Concepts in Historical Studies*, ed. A. Jotischky, vol: I, Routledge Group, New York, London 2008, p. 256, 257.

<sup>13</sup> Fulcherius Carnotensis, *Kudüs Seferi (Kutsal Toprakları Kurtarmak)*, tr. İ. Bihter Barlas, IQ Kültür Sanat, İstanbul 2009, pp. 91-94.

come as father and head to the place of your predecessor; that you who are the Vicar of the Blessed Peter seat yourself on his throne and use us as your obedient sons in carrying out all things properly; and that you eradicate and destroy by your authority and our strength all heresies of whatever kind. And thus you will finish with us the pilgrimage of Jesus Christ undertaken by us and proclaimed by you; and you will open to us the gates of the one and the other Jerusalem and will liberate the Sepulcher of our Lord and exalt the Christian name above all. For if you come to us and finish with us the pilgrimage that was inaugurated by you the whole world will be obedient to you. May God who liveth and reigneth forever and ever suffer you to do this. Amen.”<sup>14</sup>

Even though controversy continues about the authenticity of the letter, whatever the intention, the inclusion of the letter in the Latin chronicle makes clear how the Crusaders would approach the local Christians when necessary. Additionally, the Crusader armies spilled blood beyond what words can describe to reach their goals and saw no reason not to pillage the Orthodox Christians and their places of worship.

When the Crusades began, the Armenians were living in various places in Anatolia under the rule of the Seljuks and the Eastern Romans. In particular, the Seljukid Turks established a permanent administrative organization following the raids they made throughout the region after 1071, so the Armenians had no choice but to live under Muslim Turkish rule. At first, although the Armenians reacted against the Seljukid presence and living under their rule, later they became a part of this organization. And since they did not encounter problems similar to those they were subjected to by Eastern Rome, they succeeded in living peacefully. This situation lasted until 1095 but at that time the Armenians perceived the expedition that the Catholic Christians initiated to be a rescue operation for Eastern Christianity, and they supported it enthusiastically as best they could. In this regard, the Armenians were the ones who ensured the fate of the first Crusade with food assistance and advice at the times when the Crusader army needed such things as it advanced and laid siege. In fact, Pope Gregory VIII (1118-1121) said that “no other nation rushed to the aid of the Crusader armies as much as the Armenians did. The Armenians gave the Crusaders horses, guns, and grain.”<sup>15</sup>

The Armenians provided important services to the Crusader army from the standpoint of settling and stabilizing it in the regions it came to<sup>16</sup> (but when they realized that the Crusaders had not come to liberate Eastern Christian groups, they experienced a number of incidents. It is worth mentioning one incident that occurred before this realization. While the Crusaders were engaged in a long siege of Antioch, there was some Armenian-Turkish cooperation. As the Antioch siege continued, a group of Armenians remained loyal to Yağısıyan, the city’s governor, and undertook spying activities to the advantage of the Muslim Turks, obtaining information from the Crusader command post and feeding it to Yağısıyan. The Armenians and Assyrians pretended to flee to the Crusader command post and there they were able to obtain information about the Crusader army’s situation and ensure that Yağısıyan learned about it, providing invaluable support for the city’s defence.<sup>17</sup>

The Catholic Crusaders received broad support from the Armenians during the Crusades, and they responded with an accommodating attitude and tried to establish good relations. However, one sees that this situation began to change as events progressed. With the movement of many Crusaders from Antioch and other regions to Urfa (Edessa) the Crusaders’ status there was strengthened.<sup>18</sup> Initially, Armenians were appointed to high positions in the Crusaders’ administration because of scarcity of their own kind. When this need no longer remained, though, the Armenians began to be replaced by Latins. In the Spring of 1104, Antioch ruler Bohemund I seized Elbistan and his troops who were settled there imprisoned influential local Armenians following the Harran defeat of 7 May 1104 in their effort to hold on to Elbistan. According to information from Matthew of Edessa (d. 1144) about this event, the Armenians of Elbistan suffered greatly at the hands of the Catholic Crusaders and in revenge they sent

<sup>14</sup> Carnotensis, *ibid*, p. 94; A. C. Krey, *The First Crusade the Accounts of Eye-witnesses and Participants*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1921, p. 193.

<sup>15</sup> Jacques de Morgan, *Histoire du Peuple Armenien* adlı çalışmasından, H. Zimmermann, *Das Papsttum im Mittelalter*, p. 216; F. Tournebiez, *Histoire Politique et religieuse de l’Armenie*, p. 221; quoted by Mehmet Ersan, *Selçuklular Zamanında Anadolu’da Ermeniler*, TTK, Ankara 2007, p. 116.

<sup>16</sup> Carnotensis, *ibid*, p. 126; Guibert of Nogent, *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, tr. Robert Levine, The Boydell Press, Woodbridge 1997, p. 84; Willermus Tyrensis, *Willermus Tyrensis’in Haçlı Kroniği, Başlangıç’tan Kudüs’ün Zaptına Kadar*, tr. Ergin Ayan, Ötügen, İstanbul 2016, p. 198.

<sup>17</sup> Anonim Süryani Vekayinamesi, “The First and Second Crusades from an Anonymous Syriac Chronicle”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (JRAS)*, 1933, p. 88; J. France, *Victory in the East: A Military History of the First Crusade*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1994, p. 190; E. Altan, *Antakya Haçlı Prinkepsliği Tarihi Kuruluş Devri (1098-1112)*, TTK, Ankara 2018, p. 53, 54.

<sup>18</sup> Z. İnan, “I. ve II. Haçlı Seferleri Sürecinde Ermeni-Latin İlişkileri”, *Tarihte Türkler ve Ermeniler: Ortaçağ*, vol: II, ed. Mehmet Metin Hülagü etc, TTK, Ankara 2014, p. 214.

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an envoy to Kılıç Arslan I in 1105, informing him that they wanted to surrender the city to him.<sup>19</sup> Turkish units immediately came to the city walls and were let in by the Armenians. The Crusader commander, sensing what was happening, wanted to attack the Armenians in the city and punish them but, instead, the Armenians defeated the Crusaders, putting them all to the sword. Matthew of Edessa, who put the number of Crusaders at 300, described the oppression visited on the Armenians by the Crusaders as follows<sup>20</sup>:

When the inhabitants of the city of Edessa learned of all this, they all became sad and gloomy because of Baldwin, for they thought that he was dead. So they assembled in the Church of St. John in the presence of the Frankish papios in order to consult with each other [as to what was to be done]; for they feared that the city would once again fall to Tancred and he would hand it over to Richard who, when he had previously occupied Edessa, had caused the ruin of many persons. When all the townspeople of Edessa came together, they had a conference with the papios and said: "Let your men and ours guard the citadel until we learn who is to be the lord [of the city]." A day later Joscelin and Baldwin came and entered the city of Edessa. They inquired as to what had been proposed at the assembly and regarded it as quite dangerous, interpreting it to be an act of disloyalty. So they proceeded to wantonly pillage everything in sight and to put out the eyes of many innocent people. On this occasion they inflicted severe punishments on the Christians, for the Franks easily lent an ear to all the vicious accusations made and were very willing to shed the blood of innocent and righteous men. They went so far as to make an attempt to blind the Armenian bishop, his lordship Stephen. However, when the townspeople learned that the bishop was beyond reproach, they ransomed him for a sum of one thousand dahekans

Mosul Emir Mevdud's siege of Urfa in 1110 ended unsuccessfully and although he tried again in 1111 and 1112, he could not take the city in those years either.<sup>21</sup> The second siege caused a calamity for Urfa's native Christian populace, the Armenians. During this siege Mevdud sent word to the Urfa Armenians promising them that if they surrendered the city to him, they would suffer no negative consequences and would live in peace. Despite the city's Armenian ruler rejecting this proposal, about 20 Armenians secretly made a deal with Mevdud and let the Turkish soldiers climb over the walls during the night.<sup>22</sup> Based on the agreement they made, the Turks climbed up ropes the Armenians hung over the walls on the eastern side of the city.<sup>23</sup> However, Urfa ruler Joscelin I (1118-1131) began a violent operation against the Armenians. According to Matthew of Edessa, "with the incitement of the evil words of some instigators, the blood of many innocent men of the populace flowed because of killings and burnings."<sup>24</sup> This violent action inflicted on the Armenians was described as follows in the *Anonim Süryani Vekayinamesi*: "Mevdud returned to his own country. The Franks put the traitors on trials, seized quite a few guilty and innocent people, cut off their hands and noses, plucked out their eyes. Many died and the others were executed."<sup>25</sup> When his siege was unsuccessful, Mevdud returned to Mosul but within the city of Urfa, in particular, enmity and distrust began to fester between the Armenians and the Crusaders. Count Baudouin du Bourg and Joscelin's operation against the Armenians in 1111, convinced the Armenians that there was no hope of them living together with the Crusaders, leaving the helpless Armenians, who realized that there was strong evidence that the Crusaders would control the region, to seek contacts with the Turks. This idea of the Armenians about cooperating with the Turks engendered deep anger among the Crusaders, prompting them to renew their violence against the Armenians after the incident.<sup>26</sup> Although Crusader chronicles make no mention of this violent operation, both modern Assyrians and Armenians writers have written, as if with the same pen, similar accounts.<sup>27</sup> It is understood that when Mevdud realized that the Armenians of Urfa had been cowed and that a new attack on the well-fortified walls would be fruitless, he lifted the siege and instead seized Tell-Mavzen in the Shabakhtan region as he returned to Mosul.

<sup>19</sup> K. H. Maksaudian, *The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, University Press of America, New York 1993, p. 218.

<sup>20</sup> Maksaudian, *ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>21</sup> I. Demirkent, *Urfa Haçlı Kontluğu Tarihi (1098-1118)*, vol. I, TTK, Ankara 1994, p. 129.

<sup>22</sup> R. W. Thomson, "The Crusaders through Armenian Eyes", in *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, ed. A. E. Laiou and R. P. Mottahedeh, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection Washington, D.C. 2001, p. 74.

<sup>23</sup> Maksaudian, *ibid.*, p. 206; *Anonim Süryani Vekayinamesi*, *ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>24</sup> Maksaudian, *ibid.*, p. 207.

<sup>25</sup> *Anonim Süryani Vekayinamesi*, *ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>26</sup> N. Hodgson, "Conflict and Cohabitation: Marriage and Diplomacy between Latins and Cilician Armenians, c.1097-1253", *The Crusades and the Near East*, ed. Conor Kostick, Routledge, London 2011, p. 85.

<sup>27</sup> *Anonim Süryani Vekayinamesi*, *ibid.*, p. 84, 92; Maksaudian, *ibid.*, p. 207; Demirkent, *ibid.*, vol. II, p. 149-152; J. R. Smith, *The Feudal Nobility and the Kingdom of Jerusalem 1174-1277*, Archon Books, London 1973, p. 133.

In 1136, Antioch Prince Raymond completed preparations for an expedition against Imadeddin Zengi (1085-1146) and to ensure that his rear was secure he moved against the Cilicia Armenians firstly.<sup>28</sup> Raymond obtained the approval of Jerusalem King Foulque (1131-1143) and, acting together with Keysun and Maraş Count Baudouin, Raymond (1136-1149), targeted the local Armenian administrations. On the northeast borders of Urfa County, developments occurred that at first appeared to be exceptions, but which actually indicated a vicious Armenian-Crusader enmity which would predict the end of Urfa County. The incidents happened at Gerger and surrounding areas and in the middle of 1123, after the Jerusalem King took Badouin II (1118-1131) prisoner, it was seized by Belek but following the death of this powerful Turkish bey (1124), it again fell into the hands of the Crusaders. Gerger was left under the administration of Mikhail, son of Constantine, an Armenian notable who aided Baudouin I<sup>29</sup> Young Urfa Count Joscelin II (1131-1159) implemented a very determined policy toward the Armenians and not just thinking about the interests of the Crusader Franks. Within the county, there were bad relations, in part because of his own indecision, with the Armenians living in Keysun and Maraş, west of the Euphrates River. On the other hand, the Armenian Ruben dynasty that ruled the Kozan mountains and in Cilicia, were his closest relatives on his mother's side. Thoros I (1100-1129), who was the third ruler of the dynasty, which was established around 1080 with its centre in Vahka (Feke), was his uncle. In 1333 Armenian rule stretched from near Mersin in the south to the vicinity of Maraş in the north, which was linked to Urfa County (County of Edessa). In 1135, though, Leo I occupied Servendikar Fortress, which was tied to Maraş.<sup>30</sup> Subsequently, from time to time there were clashes between the Cilicia Armenians and the Antioch Principality that intensified and continued. The administrators of the Antioch Crusader Principality engaged in efforts to expand their territory at the expense of the Cilicia Armenians, while the Crusader counts in Urfa subjected the Armenian populace there to severe oppression, including torture and massacres, based on the accusation that from time to time they cooperated with the Turks.<sup>31</sup>

In addition, Ibn al-Athir (d. 1233) and Gregory Bar Hebraeus (Abu'l-Faraj, d. 1286) both recorded a significant incident, with some similar nuances, that played a definitive role in the fate of Armenian territory on the west side of the Euphrates River: The wife of Kogh-Vasil, who had died, applied to Aksungur to negotiate against the Franks.

Ibn Al-Athir, after Kogh-Vasil's death, reported that Kogh-Vasil's wife who was afraid of Franks and ruled the region which was regency to her adopted son sent envoys to Aksungur, who was besieging Urfa, and communicated with him. Additionally it is reported that Aksungur sent an envoy named Sungur Dirâz (Dizdar), the owner of Habur region, to the Armenian regent lady however here the Franks attacked Sungur Dirâz, who had a hundred people in his entourage, and the Franks were defeated in the fierce struggle and many of them were killed; Dirâz returned to Malik Masud and Aksungur with many gifts given by the Armenian regent, that Aksungur promised obedience to the regent, and when the Franks heard about this, many of the Armenians who were with the Armenians returned to Antioch. He also states that when the Franks heard about this, many of them who were with the Armenians returned to Antioch. In the telling of the same story, and the communications between Kogh-Vasil's wife and Sungur Dirâz, but in a more detailed and colourful manner, Abu'l Faraj related essentially the same tale but added that the Franks' attack on the Turks was made by 700 Frankish cavalymen and that it was successful. Other than that, there was nothing else contrary to Ibn al-Athir's narrative. Subsequent incidents serve as evidence to confirm the truth about this event, which is important from the standpoint of showing how the increasing hatred between the Armenians and the County of Edessa became clear for all to see. At the same time, it constitutes evidence that the Armenians of the Euphrates region had begun to clearly sense the near future. This expedition of Aksungur, which began successfully and held out the promise of greater possibilities after the Armenian queen regent appealed to him, ended without a result owing to a dispute that arose with Ilgazi and a defeat at the hands of the Artuqid Turkmens. In fact, after the Turkish forces withdrew, Baudouin de Bourg, on the pretext of suspecting treachery and back-stabbing, seized Kogh-Vasil's territory, fortresses and a number of other small, independent Armenian cities by force, attaching them to the County of Edessa and thereby, if only temporarily, reinvigorating the strength of the county.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> B. Z. Kedar, "On the Origins of the Earliest Laws of Frankish Jerusalem: The Canons of the Council of Nablus, 1120", *Speculum*, 74, 1999, pp. 310-35.

<sup>29</sup> Demirkent, *ibid.*, vol: II, p. 110.

<sup>30</sup> Süryani Mikhail, *Süryani Patrik Mikhail'in Vakâyinâmesi (1042-1195)*, trans. Hrant Andreasyan Unpublished TTK Copy, 1944, p. 248.

<sup>31</sup> Ersan, *ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>32</sup> İbnü'l Esir, *el-Kâmil fi't Tarih*, X, tr. Abdülkerim Özeydin- A. Ağrakça, Bahar Printing House, İstanbul 1987, p. 351, 352; Abû'l Farac, *Abû'l Farac Tarihi*, tr. Rıza Doğrul, TTK, Ankara 1987, p. 352; Demirkent, *ibid.*, vol: II, p. 159, 160.

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The local Turkish administrators who took the decision to oppose the Crusader states in unison were able to acquire the support of the Armenian's princes over time. One example occurred on 2 October 1180. Yusuf ibn Ayyub ibn Shađi (*Saladin*, 1169-1193), arranged a meeting to oppose the Crusaders near Samsat. Jonathan Riley - Smith mentions that at the meeting it was mentioned that the Crusaders were harming not only Muslim interests in the region, but also Armenian interests, and therefore the Armenians were ready to cooperate with the Muslims.<sup>33</sup> Among those attending this meeting were the Artuqid beys, Sultan Kılıç Arslan II's (1156-1192) envoys, Mosul ruler Seyfeddin (1170-1180) and Armenian ruler Ruben III (1175-1187) and they took a vow with a ceremony to preserve the peace among themselves for the following two years. Doubtless, this alliance came about because of their common enemy, the Catholic Christian Crusaders.<sup>34</sup>

Ultimately, there emerged an Eastern Roman Empire reality regarding the deepening ties between the local Christians and, in particular, the Armenians, with Turkish administrations. Orthodox Eastern Rome had a policy of casting out the Gregorian Armenians and the Assyrian people who were members of the Yaqubi Church<sup>35</sup> and was prepared to sacrifice these groups, when necessary, even going so far as to exile them to other regions. For this reason, they felt more secure under Turkish administration. Although the Crusaders' presence in Anatolia had excited them, the subsequent treatment they received was not much different that what they had seen from the Eastern Roman Empire and so the Armenian notables and princes cooperated with the Turkish administrators to find renewed liberation. When the explanations of modern writers who support this claim are carefully examined the positive characterization of the Turks is immediately evident. Eastern Christian historians, who were believers in Miaphysitism, and particularly Assyrians and Armenians of that belief, put forth the claim that God would punish the Eastern Roman Empire and its church policy by means of the Muslim armies. They considered the Muslim Turks to be their "liberators" and "saviours" and in their writings they said this explicitly. This idea was the direct consequence of Assyrian and Armenian historians making the distinctions of "the tyrannical Roman administration" and the "oppressed believing Christian", to mean the Miaphysitism believers, as they examined the events of the past. In the works of Assyrian and Armenian historians of the Miaphysitism belief, their characterizations of Muslims as "liberators" and "saviours" is based on the claims of these historians that they directed against the Eastern Roman administration, to mean tyranny towards those Christians opposed to the council and the pro-council "perversion" of the faith.<sup>36</sup>

In her work, Anna Komnena related that the Fatimid Caliphate opposed the Crusaders' move to take Jerusalem and that in her army the caliphate did not only include Muslim Arabs and Turks, but also benefited from the Armenians under her command: "When relating to the Babil Ruler (Egyptian Sultan) Amerimnes (here, Anna mistakenly understood the saying Amir al-Mu'minin and, thinking it was his name, used this made-up name wrongly. The Fatimid Sultan in Egypt that she meant to name was Şehenşah, who went by the name Afdal) about the Celts' expedition, how they took Jerusalem and how they seized Antioch itself and many other cities in the area, (this Sultan became enraged) and assembled an army made up of Armenians and Arabs, (Syrian) Muslims and Agarenos (Turks) and sent it against them (Crusaders)."<sup>37</sup> From this it is understood that not all the Armenians had come under the Crusaders' sway and that their allegiance to their own rulers continued. And even though Fatimid Wazir al-Afdal was unsuccessful with this expedition, it served to continue the efforts of the region's local people against the Crusaders until a later time.

### CONCLUSION

The Eastern Rome subjected the Gregorian Armenians to exile several times for both religious and political reasons. As the result of this negative treatment, the Armenians soon established good relations with the Turks who entered Armenian territory in Anatolia as of 1071 and had no problem living under Turkish rule. In the works of Armenian writers of the period, however much they mention the entry of the Turks into the region in a negative context, one easily sees that once relations were established these same writers recalled the Turks and their administrations with praise. The cruelty the Armenian people experienced at the hands of the Eastern Roman

<sup>33</sup> Smith, *ibid*, p. 73.

<sup>34</sup> Albertus Aquensis, *Albert of Aachen: Historia Ierosolimitana History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, tr. Susan Edgington, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2017, p. 680; Runciman, *ibid*, vol: II, p. 78; Guibert of Nogent, *ibid*, p. 113 Willermus Tyrensis, *ibid*, s. 221.

<sup>35</sup> Cahen, *ibid.*, 2018, p. 107.

<sup>36</sup> Z. Duygu, *Hristiyanlık ve İmparatorluk Geç Antikçağ'da Kilise-Devlet İlişkileri ve Kristoloji Paradigmaları*, Divan Book, İstanbul 2017, p. 455.

<sup>37</sup> A. Komnena, *Alexiad*, tr. Bilge Umar, İnkılap Publisher, İstanbul 1996, s. 343.



administration made their lives with the Turks relatively easy and this situation of living side by side continued up until the idea of the Crusades was raised in the West in 1095. Subsequently, things changed.

The Catholic Christians who took up the cross and headed out to save the “Holy Land” and help “their Christian brothers” were met as “liberators” by, in particular, the Armenians in Anatolia. Armenian notables who believed that they would be able to establish new independent states with the help of the Crusaders later realized that the main aims of the groups that came were personal gain and greed for riches, so the Armenians gradually began to change their allegiance and once again aligned with the Turks, especially against the Crusaders. When the Armenians, whose main aims were establishing independent states and gaining the power to administer these states, realized that they would not get such assistance from the Crusaders they adopted a two-pronged policy and after a while began to form open alliances with the Turkish beys and the Seljukid emirs. The alliances that the Turks, who desired to put an end to Armenians’ existence in the region, established with the Armenians served to strengthen their hands against the Crusaders and bolstered their claims of establishing a worldwide state.

The main reason for the breach that opened between two Christian groups was that the Armenian populace in both the County of Edessa and the Antioch Principality lost status, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, were subjected to unjust taxing and political policies. The Crusader advance that soon after was directed against Armenian administrations further irritated the Gregorian Armenians. Their cooperation with Muslims against their co-religionists that was required for them to preserve their existence shows how meaningless the terms “my Christian brother” and “liberator” were.

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