

Some Remarks on the Sultanate of Murad II

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I

The Turkomans on the border of the Ottoman Empire:

The travels of Bertrandon de la Broquière

In 1432, Bertrandon de la Broquière, a Burgundian knight, was sent to the east by Philip le Bon to study the position, “with a view to the crusade for which plans were so constantly and so fruitlessly discussed in the west” (Dorothy Vaughan). Bertrandon fulfilled his duty and came back to Bourgogne in the next year. The course of his journey was as follows:

Venice-Rhodes-Cyprus-Jaffa-Jerusalem-Gaza-Akka-Beyrut-Damascus-Baalbek-Homs-Hama-Antakya-Payas-Iskenderun-Misis-Adana-Tarsus-Eregli-Larende-Kayseri-Konya-Aksaray-Akshehir-Kütahya-Bursa-Izmid-Üsküdar-Galata-Istanbul (Constantinople)-Edirne-Plovdiv-Sofya-Belgrade-Szeged-Buda-Vienna-Konstanz-Basel-Besançon-Dijon

In this long journey, only the route from Damascus to Akshehir comes within the scope of this paper, for both the “Turquemans” and “Turquemanie” are mentioned exclusively on this route.

On the route from Damascus to Homs, Bertrandon encounters “deux Turquemans de Satalye (Antalya?)” who are on their returning trip from Mecca. They have their “pavillons” (tents) which are erected by single hand and lodge six to eight people. The tents are lifted when traveling and carried by camels. These two Turkomans set their eyes on Bertrandon’s belongings such as “bon cheval, belle espée et beau tarquois” and designs to kill and rob him. He is barely saved by a Mamelu (Mamluk) who is his good companion and is probably a Circassian. At the bazaar of Hama (Hamant), taking the advice of the Mamluk, Bertrandon buys personal effects such as “le bonnet qu’on met souz la tocque” and “autre petites coiffes de soye à la maniere des Turquemans”.

Leaving from Hama, in “grant plaine qui est large et longue”, Bertrandon meets with six or eight Turkomans and “une femme” in their company. Each of them holds his or her tarquais

(shields). Their women are “vallentes femmes” and “elles combattent aussy bien que font les hommes”. It is said that “elles sont bien xxx mille femmes portans ainsy le tarquais, subjectes à ung seigneur qu’on appelle Surgandiroly (Durgadiroğlu), lequel se tient les montaignes d’Armenie sur la marche de la Perse”.

On the route from Hama to Antakya, Bertrandon lodges at “ung logeis de Turquemans” and has the chance to see “les visages de leur femmes discovers”. They have “ung drapeau quarré d’estamine noir” in front of their faces and rich women decorate it with coins and precious stones. Within the logeis (lodges) Bertrandon sees six or eight Turkomans drawing their bows. They are “bon archiers” and “sy tirent assis”. Their targets are short and “pour un pou d’espace, leurs fleches vont bien tost”.

Leaving the country of Syria, Bertrandon enters “pays de Turquemanie que nous appellons Armenie”. The capital of the country is Entequ or Antioce (Antakya).

On the outskirts of Antakya, by the river coming from Hama, there live only the Turkomans with their numerous beasts such as camels, cows, sheep, and especially “les plus belles chievres” (Angora goat?) which have “la laine longue et douce et crespée”. These Turkomans carry most of their “marchandises” on the bulls or buffalos. As for horses, “plusieurs chargie de leurs marchandises, et d’aultres que l’on cheavaulchoit”.

The “seigneur” of “Turquemanie” called Ramedang (Ramazanoğlu) was “moult grand homme, riche et vaillant”. Being deceived by Karaman (Karamanoğlu), he was surrendered to Souldan (Sultan of the Mamluks) and was killed. At the present time the greater part of Turquemanie is under the rule of the Mamluks.

Outside the castle of Iskender, Bertrandon finds “logeis” of Turkomans consisting of some six hundred “pavillons” which are “les plus beaulx qu’on pourroit veoir, tant de cottons blancs et bleus comme de feutre”. Each of the pavillons is so large as to accommodate fourteen to sixteen people. And “leur mesnages” (their housekeepings) are “tout ainsy qu nous faisons en noz maisons excepte de feu”. Bertrandon shows great interest in Turkoman foods such as “fourmage”, raisin and “lait quaillié qu’ilz appellent yogourt”.

In Payas Bertrandon meets with an Armenian who speaks a little Italian and obtains from him information about aforementioned Ramedan (Ramaznoğlu), “le seigneur d’icelluy pays de Turquemanie”. It is said that his mother was “une femme crestienne” and had her son baptized

“à la loy gregiesque por luy enlever le flair et le senteur qu’ont ceulx qui ne sont poit baptisiez”. However Ramedang was neither “bon crestien” nor “bon sarazin” (muslim). After his death at the hand of Mamluks, “pays de Turquemanie” was divided between Karaman and Mamluks. And the latter holds the land as far as “Tarsus et encore une journée”.

Bertrandon rides around the gulf of Iskenderun which is “un moult beau pays et sy a beaucoup de chasteaux destruis qui souloient estre crestiens anciennement”. There live only “celles nations de Turquemans” who are “belle gens” and “logent tousjours aux champs”. They carry their houses with them which are “toutes rondes en maniere de pavillons et sont couvertes de feutre”. They are numerous people (moult de gens) who spend little (de peu de despence) and all of them are archers. They have a chief (ung chief) to obey but do not stay in one place.

And no matter in what country they stay, they are under the rule of the lord (le seigneur) and must serve him in war.

On the shore of Iskenderun, Bertrandon comes across one of the lords of Turkomans who is hunting geese with falcons. They say that the lord has some 200,000 people under his rule. Bertrandon comes in “ung beau pays et plain” (Çukrova?) where live “moult de ces Turquemans”, and then passes by a mountain castle in which there are only “Ermins ou Armeniens”. In Misis (Misses) which used to be “ville aux crestiens”, finds Bertrandon “le grants église” converted to a mosque. In this devastated city the only inhabitants are “Turquemans en bien III cents maisons”.

After riding through “ung tresbeau pays et plain” which has a large population of Turkomans, Bertrandon enters the city of Adana (Adene). Adana is “trebonne ville marchande”. Its present ruler is “ung admiral” (Amîr us sevâhil) who is a Turkoman and a brother of aforementioned Seigneur Ramedang.

On the way to Tarsus (Therso), Bertrandon passes through “moult de Turquemans logies en villages de pavillons comme dit est, car ledit pays est tres beau et assés prés dela montaigne”. In the city of Tarsus, there is “ung admiral” appointed by the Mamluk sultan and “plusieurs Mores (Maures)”. Departing from Tarsus, Bertrandon rides “bien trois lieus françoises de beau pays et plain et peuplé de Turquemans”.

Bertrandon passes through “pays de Gazerie (Kayseri)” of which “seigneur” is named Surgadirioly (Dulgadiroğlu). He is “un moult vaillant homme” and has under his command “trente mil hommes d’armes Turquemans” and besides “bien cent mil femmes qui sont vail-

lantes femmes et aussi bonnes que les hommes”. This country is adjacent to “pays de Turquemanie” and is parted by high mountains from Tarsus and “le reaulm de Perse”.

On the route from Aksaray (Athsaray) to Akshehir (Acchary), Bertrandon goes through the country of Karaman between two mountains. This is the country of “merescaiges et d’erbes” and is “assés peuplé et le plus de Turquemans”. And then Bertrandon passes a river (Akarsu?) which divides the territory of Karamans from that of Ottomans. And beyond this point, Bertrandon never mentions the Turquemans in his travels.

What is the difference between Turks (Turcz) and Turkomans (Turquemans)? It is clear that there are no ethnical differences between them. As seen above, Bertrandon refers to Turquemans as a people staying mostly in plains, in mountains, on the outskirts or sometimes ruins of cities and not settled in one place. Except for the afore-mentioned “deux Turquemans de Satalye”, they live a collective life in logeis consisting of pavillons. Their lifestyle observed by Bertrandon seems to be nomadic, but not so much as, for instance, Tartar or Mongol tribes.

The noteworthy point of Bertrandon’s description is that the term Turquemans is exclusively applied to the people ranging from northern Syria to “pays de Turquemanie que nous appellons Armenie”. This is a remarkable contrast with the description of Ibn Battuta who travelled just a hundred years before (1332–33) throughout Anatolia. According to Ibn Battuta, Rûm (Asia Minor or Anatolia) is a land of Turkomans. They are not always nomadic but quite a few of them live in cities and their sort of guilds (akhiyyet) are found everywhere: “Les Akhiyyet existent dans toute l’étendue du pays habité par des Turcomans en Asie Mineure, dans chaque ville et dans chaque bourgade”. Moreover he mentions to the Ottoman ruler Orkhan Beg (1288–1359) whom he met in Iznik (Nicaea) as “le plus puissant des rois turcomans”, whereas Bertrandon refers to Murat II whom he saw in Edirne as “le Grant Turc”.

It seems that Bertrandon in a narrow sense applies the word Turc or Turcz exclusively to Ottomans. However it is not to say that the terms Turcz and Turquemans indicate definitely opposing concepts. The following passage which estimates the virtue of Turcz seems to be much more applicable for Turquemans, because almost the same passages are found in the descriptions estimating the virtues of Turquemans: “Les Turcz sont liés et joyeux et chantent volontiers chanson de geste, et qui veult vivre avec eux, il ne fault point estre pansif ne melancolieux, ains fasult faire bonne chiere. Ilz sont gens de grant paine et de petite vie et couchent à terre comme bestes par là où je les ai veuz en chemin”.

Only a few attempts have so far been made at interpreting the rare informations on Turkomans given in this travels. Formerly Fuad Köprülü evaluated them saying “Bertrandon de la Broquière....donne de très importants renseignements sur la vie des Turquemène de l’Anatolie méridionale et parle avec beaucoup d’estime de leurs qualités morale” and gave particular attention to the Turkoman troops of women (cent mille femmes armés). However he merely hinted at their relation to Bâdjiyânî-Rûm seen in the Ottoman chronicle of Âshîkpashazâde. And the same is true of Faruk Sümer. In his bulky study on Turkomans, Bertrandon is only once cited as evidence of their physical beauty; “celles nations de Turquemans qui sont belles gens”. Therefore, we must admit that there are still a lot of problems left to be considered on the Turkomans observed by Bertrandon de la Broquière.

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II

On the grave of Murad II

Early in August 1446, in Bursa, Sultan Murad II drew up his will and testament in the presence of Mullah Husrev, the chief military judge (kazasker). The three viziers, Halil Pasha, Saruca Pasha, and Ishak Pasha are cited as witnesses. According to H.Inalcık, this Arabic testament was translated into Turkish ten or fifteen days later to inform the local judges who were unable to read in Arabic. By chance these important documents have come down to us, preserved in Başvekalet arşivi (Arabic version) and Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi (Turkish

version) in Istanbul. Although I have not studied these documents in their original texts, the facsimiled copies of texts have been published by H.Inalcık, and I would like to make some remarks on these significant documents.

The testament of Murad II begins with the formulaic praises of God, introducing himself as the Great Sultan and Khaqan. After this passage, the wellknown Qur'anic verses are quoted to explain the object of the testament. "It is ordained for you that anyone who is at the point of death and has goods to leave, should bequeath them equitably to his parents and near relatives....".

Murad was not really on his deathbed, but was on his way to Edirne (the capital on the European side) to regain the throne from his son Mehmed II. Resuming his throne, he died five years later in 1451.

The contents of the testament are roughly divided into three parts. At first, Murad declares that he will bequeath one third of his property in Saruhan (or Manisa in the Turkish version). From 1444 to 1446, voluntarily abdicating the throne, he had retired to Manisa to enjoy a sort of hermit's life. Gaining abundant revenues from Saruhan province, an ex-sultan's hermitage in Manisa seemed to be pleasant one. And from the gold florins accumulated in Manisa, he bequeathes;

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| (1) to the destitutes of Holy Mecca | 3500 |
| (2) to the destitutes of Holy Medina | 3500 |
| (3) for the 70000 recitations of tawhîd (monotheistic formula) on the space between Ka'ba and Hatiym | 500 |
| (4) for the 70000 recitations of tawhîd before the sacred tomb of The Prophet in Holy Medina | 500 |
| (5) for the destitutes of Blessed Jerusalem | 1500 |
| (6) for the recitation in the Dome of Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque | 500 |
| (7) to the descendants of the Prophet | 1000 |
| (8) for the 70000 recitations of tawhîd and salawat (prayers) for the soul of Murad | 2000 |
| (9) for the recitation of Qur'an day and night beside the tomb of Murad | 7000 |
| (10) as the compensation for his neglected duty of pilgrimage | 1000 |
| | total 21000 |

In addition to 21000 florins in cash, Murad bequeathes his ring of ruby — which had the price of 95000 dirham (akçe) — for the recitation of the Qur'an day and night. Furthermore, he orders

his heirs to sell or pawn his diamond ring for the 70000 recitations of tawhîd before his interment. This part of the testament is no more than a list of donations to Holy Cities. The Ottomans were Muslim and the sultans had been declared Protectors of the Holy cities from the time of Selim I (1512-20). But none of them had ever earned the title of “Hajji” by performing the pilgrimage to Mecca. Instead of pilgrimage, since the time of Mehmed I (1413-21), the Ottoman house annually sent donations to Mecca and other Holy Cities.

Apart from the pious donation, Murad orders the emancipation of his slaves. Among others his pages who always accompanied him, such as the fodder suppliers (*alufeci*), door keepers (*kapıcı*), guardsmen (*solak*), falconers (*doğancı*), dog-keepers (*sekbân*), muleteers (*harbende*), camel drivers (*deveci*) and cooks (*aşçı*). They are all to be liberated retroactively forty days before the death of their lord. This part of the testament thus appears to be a kind of manumission document (*azadnâme*). It was generally a pious act to set free a slave. It was often done at a man’s death, and the manumission of a slave was the atonement for certain ritual offences. So far, nothing unique can be found in the testament of Murad II.

But in the third part, Murad speaks as follows; “When I die, you are to bury my body in Bursa three to four arshin (approximately eight feet) from the grave of my son Alaeddin, not far from my mosque. Do not build a sumptuous mausoleum over it, as for great rulers. Lay my corpus directly in the earth. Over me let the rain fall as the grace of God; only build four walls around my grave and set a roof over them, so that the Qur’an readers sit there. Bury none of my children or relatives beside me. For the construction of my tomb I set aside 5000 gold florins. In case I should not die in Bursa, transport my body there. It should arrive on a Thursday and be laid in the earth on Friday ”.

These words were faithfully obeyed before and after his death. He is the last Ottoman Sultan buried in Bursa. His mausoleum was already completed before 1437 in accordance with the words of his will nine years later. According to Goodwin, it is left as was first intended, with the single grave of the sovereign set in regal loneliness in the center under its dome. The dome is open to the sky so that the rain may keep fresh the flowers which grow in the soil of the grave; a simple mound of earth is enclosed in marble. There is a broad ambulatory around the tomb and on the east side, there is an annexe in which are four graves including that of Alaeddin.

The unique feature of this mausoleum is the presence of an oculus on the top of dome. No

other example is found in Ottoman history of architecture. Citing Tritton's remarks on popular Turkish belief, Goodwin compares the oculus with the hole left in the grave slab which is made for the soul to breathe. He then goes up to the old Turkish custom of sprinkling water on a grave. The hole at the top of dome also reminds us of the crown of the Turc-Mongol nomadic tent.

The crown is "the sun in the sky" (Faegre,T.) as well as the hole to allow the emission of smoke. But I do not think it proper to connect the oculus of the dome to this pre-islamic tradition of tents-architecture.

Osman Gazi, the eponymous founder of the Ottoman dynasty, wished in his will to "be placed under the silver dome in Bursa" (Neshri) and he was buried in the baptistry of the former chapel of St. Profitis Elias, which was then converted into a mosque. His son Orhan Gazi was also buried in what had been the nave of the chapel. Although some mourning practice — cutting off the horse-tails, wearing robes inside out, lamenting aloud in tears — might echo the old nomadic tradition, it is difficult to discover the pre-islamic style of interment during the Ottoman dynasty.

The image of rain as the blessing of God occurs frequently in the Qur'an ; for instance, "Who created the heavens and the earth, and sent down water from the clouds with which We raise beautiful orchards ?" (XXVII-60)

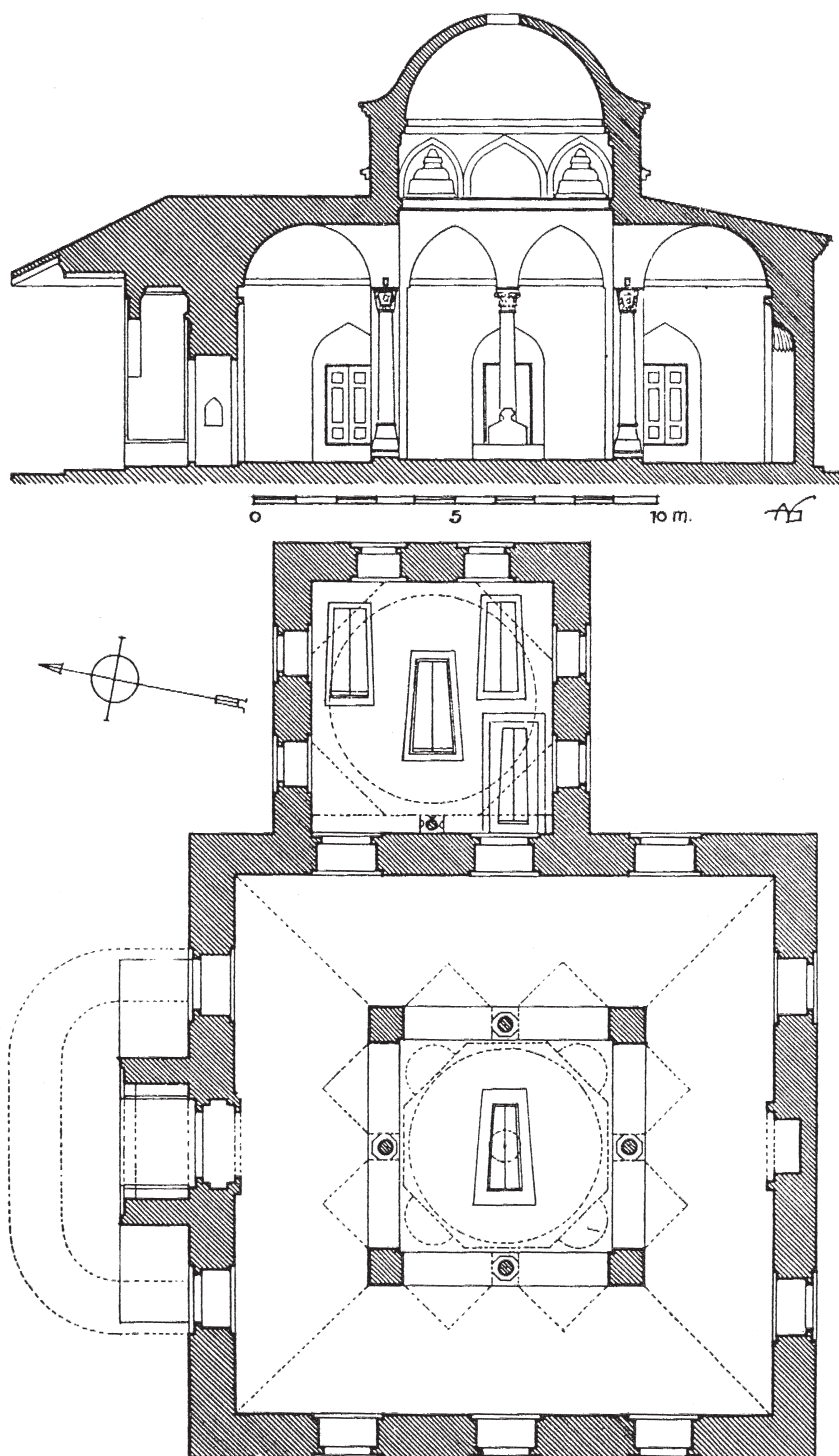
Murad II wished in his testament to be buried directly in the earth like an ordinary Muslim. His desire was not fully granted but his marble coffin was covered with earth and grasses. This type of tomb is not common among muslim monarchs. Only in Mogul India, there are a few similar examples such as the tomb of Jahan Ara Bigam of which epitaph contains the lines "Let my tomb be covered with nothing but green grasses...". She was a daughter of Shah Jahan and was known as a devotee to Sufism.

Murad II also ordered to be buried "three to four arshin from the grave of my son Alaeddin". His favoritism to the late Prince Alaeddin seems to be an expression of paternal love and should not be regarded as having a political meaning. After the enigmatic death of Alaeddin, Murad designated another son Mehmed as the defacto crown prince and thereafter never changed his mind. Moreover, Murad firmly refused to share the grave with others and his lonely tomb is governed by a noble serenity. In the inscription over the door, there are lines clearly echoing the will of the late sultan whom "the Most High lead to the fresh, limpid region of Paradise and shed on him the dews of forgiveness..".

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The grave of Murad II



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