

UNIT V

The Battle of Manzikert and The Loss of Asia Minor⁵

On 1 January 1068, at the invitation of the widowed Empress Eudocia Makrembolitissa, Romanos IV Diogenes (1068-71) was crowned emperor. Two months later he set out for Membij in Syria, which he captured. Romanos' next campaign took place between spring 1069 and the winter of 1069/70. Although he drove the enemy from Larissa in Cappadocia, he did not manage to prevent the Turks from plundering Ikonion. The main battle, however, took place in 1071. In the spring of 1070 the emperor sent the kouropalates Manuel Komnenos, nephew of the late emperor Isaak I Komnenos (1057-59), as strategos autokrator of the Byzantine eastern army. Manuel had to defend the theme of Chaldia, which was being threatened by a certain Arisghi, brother-in-law of Sultan Alp Arslan. An important battle took place at Sebasteia in the autumn of 1070. The Byzantines were defeated; but then Manuel Komnenos persuaded Arisghi, who ^{62 διαβωβία / 62 νόρκα} was at odds with the sultan, to join the emperor's side.

Meanwhile in August-September, Alp Arslan took Arjish (Archesh) and Manzikert, moving on to Mayyafariqin, Amida and then Edessa, which he besieged but did not manage to take. By April 1071 Alp Arslan was besieging Aleppo. His primary aim, however,

⁵ Taken & revised from: D. A. Corobeinikov, "Raiders and Neighbours: The Turks (1040-1304)" in Jonathan Sephard (ed.): *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 701-705.

was to campaign against the Fatimid forces in Syria. At this juncture a Byzantine embassy arrived, offering Membij in exchange for Arjish and Manzikert. The sultan, who needed to secure his northern flank, agreed to a peace treaty on condition that the emperor paid a yearly tribute. But in the meantime Afshin al-Turki had penetrated deep into the territory of Byzantine Asia Minor taking Chonai and ravaging the environs of Tzamandos. It was at this moment when news of Afshin's audacious raid arrived in Constantinople that Romanos IV decided to declare open war.

In July 1071, the Byzantine army moved across the River Sangarios to Caesarea and the emperor arrived at Theodosiupolis: at this point the sultan was in Vostan, near Narek. By mid-August Romanos had retaken Manzikert. Alp Arslan believed that Diogenes had broken the truce; he abandoned plans to go to Syria and hastened back towards the Byzantine army. However, he offered to sign a peace treaty with Romanos once again. The emperor refused. The battle ended in humiliating defeat for the Byzantines, with Romanos IV being captured and brought before Alp Arslan on 26 August 1071.

The causes of the Byzantine defeat were manifold and complex. The first was Romanos' misjudgment of Alp Arslan's strategy. Had Romanos known that the sultan intended to concentrate on Syria instead of attacking the Byzantine borders, and that he faced serious financial difficulties in paying his own soldiers, the battle could have been averted. Secondly, the Turks employed superior tactics; they were mostly horsemen armed with bows and arrows, capable of striking the enemy while themselves staying out of range, thus rendering the Byzantine army's close formations a disadvantage. Not only did Byzantine tactics fail against the Turks; the action of the imperial army depended far too much on the instructions of its commander-in-chief. Romanos realized too late that the sultan was

αρχιστρατηγός /
Αρχηγός Γενικού Επιτελείου

approaching, and divided his forces by sending large ^(εὐδεδμενός) military troops- and detachments contingents in the direction of Akhlat. Finally, the emperor was betrayed by the proedros Andronikos Doukas, whose ^{δύσπιστα/ἀνημία/ἀνδραγαθία} detachment withdrew when the outcome of the battle was still uncertain. ^{ἡττομένης/ἀνδραγαθίας}

Given the ^{βυτρίτις} crushing nature of the defeat, the terms of the peace treaty were comparatively ^{ἡττομένης/ἀνδραγαθίας} moderate. Reparations came to a total of one and a half million dinars. Romanos was also required to ^{ἐκχωρῶ/παρά-χωρῶ} cede four cities in northern Syria and Armenia to Alp Arslan before the sultan would release him. Alp Arslan's intentions remained the same as they had been before the battle: he wanted the empire to be his peaceful neighbor and to keep his flanks in Syria secure for his further advance against the Fatimid caliph in Egypt. *

* Although in the event the Byzantines only ceded Manzikert, these four cities were the key Byzantine ^{οὐκ ὕψα} strongholds in northern Syria and Armenia. And although the peace treaty in theory gave the empire a twenty-year respite from attacks by the sultan's army, it could not stop the ^{ἀνὰ νότον/ἀνὰ νότον} incursions of the other Turks. The bitter experience of the three decades before the battle of Manzikert had shown that the Byzantines' defense of the region relied on a strong ^{ἐκείνη} field army, working in ^{στρατός} liaison with the large fortresses' ^{στρατός} garrisons. After 1071 the main field army was no longer an ^{λεγεων} operational military unit, although the empire still possessed ^{καταξίμης} battle-worthy detachments. Had there been a strong government, the army could still have been restored to a level comparable with the enemy's. Instead, the empire plunged into ^{βυζαντινῆς} civil war. ^{ἐμφύλιος πόλεμος}

Romanos IV Diogenes was released after 3 September 1071. He wrote to his wife, the empress Eudocia, informing her of what had happened. While the letter was still on its way, a ^{πραγματοποιήσας} coup d'etat took place in Constantinople. In October 1071 Michael VII Doukas (1071-8) was ^{ἀνακηρύσσων/ἀνακηρύξας} proclaimed emperor; the son of Constantine X (1059-67),

Michael had the support of his uncle, the Caesar John. Eudocia was ^{εὐδοκία} compelled by them to become a nun. Civil war became inevitable.

Romanos IV, who ^{ῥωμανός} enjoyed support in eastern Anatolia, was de-
feated twice: the first time near Amasea, and then in ^{ἰσλ/ἰσλ/} Cilicia. He was
^{ἡλῆναι} captured and so cruelly blinded on 29 June 1072 that he died a few
weeks later. Romanos' death ^{ἀπέθανε} nullified the peace treaty struck be-
tween him and Alp Arslan, who himself ^{ἠλῆναι} perished in Transoxiana
shortly afterwards. It is agreed by all sources that it was Romanos' death which gave the Turks the opportunity to invade Byzantine ter-
ritories and, more importantly to remain permanently in Anatolia.

In 1073 Michael VII sent Isaak Komnenos against the Turks; Isaak was the domestic of the Schools of the East, and elder brother of the future emperor Alexios Komnenos. Their expedition ended in disaster; the western mercenaries under the command of Russell Balliol rebelled and abandoned the Byzantine army. Meanwhile Issak was defeated and taken captive by the Turks; Alexios managed to escape and get as far as Ankara, where he was ^{ἐπέστρεψε} rejoined by Isaak, who had been ^{ἀνέλαβε} ransomed by the Byzantine cities.

The Turks managed to make their first territorial acquisition on Byzantine soil only after 1075. The ^{ἡ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐσθίων} territories conquered were the Pontos and Bithynia, and the loss was a result of Russell Balliol's ^{ἐπὶ τῶν ἐσθίων} re-
volt. After ^{ἀνὰ τὴν ὁδὸν} breaking away from Isaak Komnenos' army, Russell's own detachment of 400 men went to Melitene, where he ^{ἀνέστη} repulsed the Turkish hordes, then returned to Sebasteia and managed to occupy the theme of the Armeniakoi from the autumn of 1073 onwards. The small and ^{ἀσθενὴς} ineffectual Byzantine army ^{ὡν ὁ τὸν διοικῶν (διοικῶν)} under the command of Caesar John Doukas could do nothing to stop him, and Russell reached Chrysoupolis in 1074 with an army by then numbering 3,000. ^{ὑπὸ τῶν ἀπὸ τῶν} Under these circumstances, Michael VII had no choice but to ask the Turks for help. In June 1074 he sent an embassy to the Seljuk sultan Malik Shah but, ^{ἡ ἐπὶ} as time was pressing, the emperor also sought help from

clan or tribe", among c Turkiz peoples.

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Telomowno
(us @ 20800)

dodger = evasive person
λουφαδορας / φοροφυγας,
produttori /
αυτοδ του ο λαγουφου

1. The supreme ruler of an empire emperor
2. A series of military operations with a particular objective in a war. campaign (кампания)
3. To rob or despoil a person or a place by force, esp. in warfare. plunder
4. A fight, esp. a large-scale engagement, between forces on land, at sea, or in the air. battle
5. A large, organized body of soldiers for waging war. army
6. To hem in with armed forces, esp. for a sustained attack. besiege
7. A critical moment in the development of events. juncture
8. The right or left side of a formation or force. flank
9. The land under the jurisdiction of a nation, state, ruler. territory
10. To destroy violently. ravage
11. A sudden, hostile attack, esp. by troops, military aircraft etc., or by armed bandits intent on looting. raid
12. To state or announce formally. declare

1. To speed up, to be quick *hasten*