
The Saljūq Campaign against the Crimea and

the Expansionist Policy of the Early Reign

*of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Kayqubād**

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The reign of Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Kayqubād (1219–1237) is depicted by both mediaeval and modern sources as the apogee of the Saljūq Sultanate of Rūm (Anatolia) (c. 1081–1308).¹ The later court historian, Ibn Bībī, reflected subsequent generations’ perception of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn when he recorded that “the earth has never borne a king the like of him, nor have the high heavens looked down on such a one”.² Above all, his reign was remembered for the great military conquests that unified much of Anatolia under Saljūq rule.³ To the north, south and east neighbouring principalities, both Muslim and Christian, were either annexed outright or reduced to tributary status in a series of memorable campaigns.

Yet a very different reality is hidden by the picture of unqualified Saljūq military success painted by the mediaeval Persian histories upon which our understanding of the sultanate of Rūm relies. In fact, as this paper will argue, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn’s policy of expansion suffered serious setbacks, especially in the early part of his reign. However, most of the surviving sources were written decades later, after the Saljūq state had fallen to the Mongols, and sought to commemorate what they saw as a golden age under the last truly independent Saljūq sultan, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn. As Ibn Bībī wrote, “After the death of the great [‘Alā’ al-Dīn] Kayqubād, no one felt joy any more. All affairs went into a decline, both those of the subjects (*ra‘iyyat*) and the military”.⁴

Modern scholarship has failed to qualify the romantic view of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn’s reign that characterises these Persian works, and has never sought to explore the motives behind the Saljūq expansion. On the basis of a comparison of the surviving sources in Arabic, Greek and Armenian in addition to Persian, this paper will reassess the early reign of the greatest of the Saljūq rulers of Anatolia through an examination of one of the most important of his campaigns, that against the Crimean trading city of Sudak. It is hoped that this will advance our still rather elementary understanding of the development of the Saljūq state in Anatolia.

*I am grateful to the British Academy Black Sea Initiative and the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara for supporting my research. I would also like to express my thanks to the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Turkey for granting me access to manuscript collections there, and to Sara Nur Yıldız and Hugh Elton for comments on an early draft of this paper.

¹ See, for example, C. Cahen, “Kayqubād” in *EF* iv, pp. 817–818.

² Ibn-i Bībī, *El-Evāmīrū ‘l-‘Alā’iyye fī ‘l-umūri ‘l-‘Alā’iyye* (Ankara, 1956), p. 223 (henceforth, Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmīr al-‘Alā’iyyah*). This is a deliberate reflection of the historian al-‘Utbi’s praise of Sultan Maḥmūd of Ghaznah, upheld as an ideal ruler by Islamic tradition.

³ C. Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey* (London, 1968), p. 126.

⁴ Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmīr al-‘Alā’iyyah*, p. 463.

At some point in the 1220s, Sudak (old Russian Surozh, Greek Sougdaia, Arabic Sughdāq/Sūdāq) was added to the Saljūqs' domains for a period as their first and only overseas territory. This was the first naval campaign the Saljūqs had undertaken, and its importance is demonstrated by the fact that Ibn Bībī, our main source for the history of the Saljūqs of Rūm, devotes more space to it than to any other military engagement, including the Mongol campaigns that led to the disastrous Saljūq defeat at Köse Dağ in 1243, subjugating the sultanate to the Mongol empire.⁵ While the Sudak campaign is mentioned in virtually every modern work dealing with the Saljūq Anatolia, only once has it been examined in any detail, in an article published in 1927 by the Russian scholar Yakubovskii.⁶ This study has its merits, but it suffers from being based on the mediaeval abridgement of Ibn Bībī's text known as the *Mukhtaṣar* in which much detail is omitted. Furthermore, Yakubovskii was interested in the campaign mainly for its relevance to Russian history, which is actually very limited; as will be demonstrated below, the significance of the Sudak campaign only becomes clear when viewed from the perspective of Anatolian history.

These facts alone would be sufficient reason for reexamining this important campaign. A further incentive is the total lack of scholarly consensus on its chronology, impeding our understanding of its context and of 'Alā' al-Dīn's early reign. No early source offers a date, and the chronology given in most secondary literature often seems little more than guesswork. Although Yakubovskii dated the campaign to 1221 or 1222,⁷ this has not been widely accepted by other scholars, who have suggested that it may have taken place in virtually every year between 1219 and 1227. Furthermore, there is no consensus over the duration of the occupation.⁸ The question of chronology is an exceedingly difficult one, mainly due to the contradictions of the sources. These will be discussed below, after a brief outline of the principal events of the campaign according to the main account, that of Ibn Bībī.

The Sudak Campaign according to Ibn Bībī⁹

Three Muslim merchants came to the court of 'Alā' al-Dīn Kayqubād in Kayseri seeking justice having been mistreated and having lost their goods at the hands of the people of Sudak, Leon, the ruler of Cilician Armenia, and the Franks in the Mediterranean. 'Alā' al-Dīn resolved to take military action, and appointed the amīr Ḥusām al-Dīn Chūpān, ruler of the province of Kastamonu and Sinop on the Black Sea littoral, to lead the campaign against

⁵ Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmir al-'Alā'iyyah*, pp. 300–333.

⁶ A. Yakubovskii, "Rasskaz Ibn-al-Bībī o poxode maloaziiskix turok na Sudak, polovcev i russkix v načale XIII v.", *Vizantiskii Vremennik* XXV (1927), pp. 53–76. See also the Turkish translation of the article, A. Yakubovskii, "İbn-i Bībī'nin, XIII. asır başında Anadolu Türklerinin Sudak, Polovets (Kıpçak) ve Ruslara karşı yaptıkları seferin hikâyesi", *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, XII (1954), pp. 207–226.

⁷ Yakubovskii, "Rasskaz", p. 60.

⁸ See A. G. Savvides, *Byzantium in the Near East: Its relations with the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum in Asia Minor, the Armenians of Cilicia and the Mongols A.D. c. 1192–1237* (Thessalonike, 1981), p. 172, n. 2 for a list of dates given by various authorities. In addition, see: T. Talbot Rice, *The Seljuks in Asia Minor* (London, 1961), p. 71 (suggesting the first year of 'Alā' al-Dīn's reign and putting his accession in 1219), O. Turan, *Selçuklular Zamanında Türkiye* (Istanbul, 2002 [7th ed.]), pp. 357–363, proposing 1227 as the year of the campaign, and more recently E. Uyumaz, *Sultan Alâeddin Keykubad Devri Türkiye Selçuklu Devleti Siyasî Tarihi* (Ankara, 2003), pp. 34–38, suggesting the end of 1224 to the beginning of 1225.

⁹ Longer summaries may also be found in the Russian and Turkish versions of Yakubovskii's article and Duda's German epitome of Ibn Bībī (H. W. Duda, *Die Seltschukengeschichte des Ibn Bībī* [Copenhagen, 1959], pp. 130–139).

Sudak. Meanwhile he sent expeditions against Cilician Armenia and the Mediterranean coast east of Antalya.

On reaching Sudak, Ḥusām al-Dīn Chūpān found the city anxious to come to terms, its people declaring themselves loyal to ‘Alā’ al-Dīn and offering to pay tribute. They tried to divert his efforts to making war on the Russians, and offered to help him in this in order to gain a breathing space while a Russian and Kıpçak army came to their aid. However, Ḥusām al-Dīn rejected their overtures, and having successfully landed his troops, held a banquet. The next morning, however, he was surprised by an enemy attack, which was eventually fought off with difficulty.

After this defeat, the Russian ruler sent an envoy to Ḥusām al-Dīn, declaring his loyalty to the sultan. Ḥusām al-Dīn accepted the envoy, and agreed to peace on condition that the Russians paid tribute. He then sent huge amounts of booty, including both male and female slaves, back to Anatolia. Ḥusām al-Dīn subsequently advanced on the city itself, which fell after fierce fighting. Its leading citizens again tried to placate him with declarations of loyalty, offers of tribute, and promises to return the Muslim merchants’ goods, but to no avail. In accordance with ‘Alā’ al-Dīn’s commands, Ḥusām al-Dīn introduced *sharī‘ah* law and Islam to the city. A mosque was built, religious functionaries were appointed to it,¹⁰ and Ḥusām al-Dīn’s army left for home, taking with it hostages from the noble families of Sudak, and leaving behind a regiment to garrison the town.

The Sources

While the account given by Ibn Bībī is by far the most important source for the campaign, there are several references to it elsewhere that have hitherto been ignored. All the sources and their problems are discussed below.

1 *Ibn Bībī’s al-Awāmīr al-‘Alā’iyyah*

This highly ornate court chronicle was composed in Persian in the third quarter of the thirteenth century. However, some of the numerous poetic quotations in it unquestionably preserve passages from the verse *Saljūqnāmah* by Qānī’ī written for ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Kayqubād himself, and much of the earlier part of it, including the sections dealing with ‘Alā’ al-Dīn’s reign, is essentially a prose abstract of Qānī’ī’s work.¹¹ This is certainly true of the section dealing with the Sudak campaign, for Şafā has demonstrated that the verses introducing the episode include references to ‘Alā’ al-Dīn that show he must have been living at the time they were written.¹² As with most pre-modern Islamic historical writing, Ibn Bībī’s aim was less to present a bare record of the facts than to compose a work that would edify the reader through its ethical lessons, in this case through presenting ‘Alā’ al-Dīn as a model ruler.¹³ As dates were thus irrelevant to Ibn Bībī’s purpose, they occur very rarely in

¹⁰ Such was the conventional Saljūq policy when a new city was conquered, and this does not imply the population was forcibly converted. See O. Turan “Les souverains seldjoukides et leur sujets non-musulmans”, *Studia Islamica*, I (1953), pp. 65–100, esp. pp. 85–86.

¹¹ Dh. Şafā, *Tārīkh-i Adabiyāt dar Irān* (Tehran, 1352), III/1, pp. 494–497.

¹² *Ibid.* pp. 497–498.

¹³ See J. S. Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century* (Edinburgh, 1999), pp. 141–269, for a discussion of Saljūq historical writing in general, although excluding works produced in Rūm.

al-Awāmir al-‘Alā’iyyah. Modern scholars have generally used the abridgement known as the *Mukhtaṣar* composed shortly after the original was completed in recognition of the need for a simpler, more accessible version. However, the *Mukhtaṣar* omits not just Ibn Bibī’s flowery language but many details.¹⁴ This article is therefore based on the facsimile edition of the complete work, although reference will occasionally be made to the fifteenth-century Ottoman translation by Yazıcızade Ali, which contains some additional information.

2 *The anonymous continuator of al-Ṭabarī*

The great Arabic chronicle of al-Ṭabarī entitled the *Tā’rīkh al-Rusul wa-’l-Mulūk* (History of Prophets and Kings) was adapted into Persian in 962, forty years after the author’s death. At an uncertain date, probably in the fifteenth century, translations from the Persian were made into Ottoman Turkish. Just as the Persian translator had felt at liberty to alter al-Ṭabarī’s original, so did the Turkish translators adapt and add to the Persian. Often additional passages of interest to the scribe’s patron, or continuations up to the scribe’s own time were added.¹⁵ An appendix added to one of the numerous manuscripts of the Ottoman translation (Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul, MS Fatih 4278) discusses the Saljūq period, and contains a brief reference to the campaign. Unfortunately, it is impossible to estimate the date of this information as histories of the Saljūqs were popular throughout the Ottoman period, although especially during the fifteenth century.¹⁶ It was probably from such a work that the continuator derived his information, but it is unclear upon which sources the original relied, although its tales of an heroic ‘Alā’ al-Dīn fighting the Mongols owe more to popular tradition than any mediaeval literary sources or historical fact. The text, which therefore must be treated with caution, simply states that ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Kayqubād came to the throne in 617/1220, and invaded Armenia and the Lascarid lands. Then “religious warriors and Arab holy fighters set off from Sinop, and occupied the region of Caffa, which is the *Deşt-i Kıpçak*, after they had conquered the fortress of Sudak”. Afterwards, in 618/1221, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn built the walls of Konya and Sivas.¹⁷

3 *Müneccimbaşı’s Jāmi‘ al-Duwal*

The Ottoman historian Müneccimbaşı’s (d. 1702) Arabic chronicle entitled the *Jāmi‘ al-Duwal* is of limited value due to its late date, although it does occasionally preserve information from some earlier sources that are now lost to us.¹⁸ However, there is no evidence that this is the case for the Saljūq period, although Müneccimbaşı is the only author apart from the continuator of al-Ṭabarī to give the campaign an exact date (624–625/c. 1227). Although the *Jāmi‘ al-Duwal* is not cited in any modern literature referring to the campaign, it is nonetheless

¹⁴ C. Melville, “The early Persian historiography of Anatolia”, in J. Pfeiffer, S. Quinn and E. Tucker, (eds.), *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East* (Wiesbaden, forthcoming), [pp. 11–12]. I am most grateful to Dr Melville for an advance copy of his paper.

¹⁵ For details see A. C. S. Peacock, “Abū ‘Alī Bal’ami’s Translation of al-Ṭabarī’s *History*” (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2003), pp. 159–191.

¹⁶ C.f. S. N. Yıldız, “Historiography XIV. The Ottoman Empire” in *Elr*, xii, pp. 406–407.

¹⁷ Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul, MS Fatih 4278, *Tercüme-i Tarih-i Ṭabarī*, ff. 542b–543a.

¹⁸ V. Minorsky, *A history of Sharvan and Darband* (Cambridge, 1958), *passim*, uses Müneccimbaşı as a source for the now lost *Tā’rīkh al-Bāb*.

probably the source for the date of 1227 first proposed by Houtsma, and subsequently adopted by numerous Turkish scholars, perhaps most notably Osman Turan.¹⁹ It is probably not coincidental that Müneccimbaşı's history has long been available in print in a convenient Ottoman translation by Ahmed Nedim.²⁰ I will discuss Müneccimbaşı's date of 1227 in more depth in due course. In addition to the partial edition published by Öngül,²¹ I have consulted Müneccimbaşı's autograph manuscript in the Nuruosmaniye Library, Istanbul, MSS 3171–2.

4 *The Saltuk-name*

The *Saltuk-name* is an anonymous compilation of stories concerning the thirteenth-century Muslim holy man Sarı Saltuk, who is depicted as the bringer of Islam to the Balkans and the Crimea. The *Saltuk-name*, compiled in the late fifteenth century, is unusable as an historical source as events and personalities are mixed together in a chronologically impossible form. Moreover, it was intended not as an historical work but as an edifying popular romance.²² However, it does contain some clear if rather confused references to the campaign, mentioning Ḥusām al-Dīn Chūpān, here called Çopan, fighting against the unbelievers in the Crimea alongside Sarı Saltuk.²³ While of no historical value, these references demonstrate the impression the expedition made upon the popular imagination, still being recalled in some form over two hundred and fifty years later.

5 *The Synaxary of Sougdaia (Sudak)*

This Synaxary contains brief notes on important events in the mediaeval history of Sudak which have been published by Nystazopoulou.²⁴ Although extremely laconic, many of these notes are contemporary, or nearly contemporary, with the events they mention, and so are of particular importance in establishing the chronology of mediaeval Sudak. Only one note seems to refer to the Saljūq occupation, stating that on 14 June the fortress was evacuated. Unfortunately, it does not state the year, so is of little help in resolving the chronological problems presented by other sources. Nystazopoulou was unable to resolve the problems in dating it. There are no other references to the Saljūqs in the Synaxary, probably indicating the occupation was of a relatively short duration.²⁵

¹⁹ M. T. Houtsma, "Über eine türkische Chronik zur Geschichte der Selguken Klein-Asiens" in *Actes du Seizième Congrès International des Orientalistes* (Athens, 1912), p. 381; Turan, *Selçuklular Zamanında Türkiye*, pp. 357–359.

²⁰ Müneccimbaşı, *Saha'if ül-ahbar*, (Istanbul, 1285/1886).

²¹ Müneccimbaşı Ahmed b. Lütfullah, *Camiu'd-Düvel: Selçuklular Tarihi*, ed. A. Öngül (Izmir, 2001). On the Nuruosmaniye ms see *ibid.*, i, pp. xxiii–xxix, and A. Dietrich, "Textkritische Bemerkungen zu V. Minorsky's kaukasischer Geschichte", *Orientalia*, XXVII (1958), pp. 262–268, esp. 262–263.

²² See *Battalname*, ed. & tr. Yorgos Dede (Harvard University, 1996), pp. 1–79, esp. p. 43ff, for a discussion of such works.

²³ Ebu 'l-Hayr-ı Rûmî, *Saltukname*, ed. Ş. H. Akalın (Ankara, 1987), i, p. 164ff. The identification of Çopan with Ḥusām al-Dīn Chūpān was first made by Y. Yücel, *Anadolu Beylikleri Hakkında Araştırmalar* (Ankara, 1988), i, pp. 39–40.

²⁴ M. G. Nystazopoulou, *Hé en té Taurikê Khersonésô Polis Sougdaia apo tou XII mekhri tou XV aiónós* (Athens, 1965), pp. 109–160.

²⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 119, 138–139.

The date of the campaign

It is understandable that there is so much confusion in the secondary literature as to the chronology of the Sudak campaign; the continuator of al-Ṭabarī and Müneccimbaşı are clearly not likely to be reliable, while earlier sources offer no date at all. Only Yakubovskii has offered a reasoned defence of the date he offers (1221 or 1222), and his arguments have not been challenged even by those scholars who have proposed a different chronology. However, it is hard to accept all Yakubovskii's arguments without reservation. For example, he notes that Ibn Bībī places the building of the walls of Konya in 618/1221 before the Sudak expedition (one of the very few dates Ibn Bībī gives, and one which is supported by epigraphic evidence), and thus argues that this must be the *terminus ante quem* for the campaign.²⁶ Yet as Turan rightly points out, there is no reason to suppose that Ibn Bībī arranged the material in *al-Awāmir al-'Alā'iyyah* in chronological order, but probably did so rather in accordance with literary considerations.²⁷ It is therefore impossible to deduce the date of an event accurately from its position in the text.

Yet a close examination of the sources yields sufficient clues to calculate the date of the campaign. Ibn Bībī states that at the same time as Ḥusām al-Dīn Chūpān's invasion of the Crimea, the amīrs Mubārīz al-Dīn Chavī and Comnenus were despatched to make war on Cilician Armenia, and Mubārīz al-Dīn Ertokuş attacked the coastal region east of Antalya, capturing forty castles.²⁸ The Cilician campaigns are mentioned by other mediaeval writers, although they are unfortunately somewhat imprecise about the chronology, and part of the text of the main Armenian source, the chronicle of Smbat Sparapet, seems to be missing at this point. Nevertheless, the sources for the Cilician campaigns offer the possibility of dating the Sudak expedition more accurately than has been done hitherto.

Saljūq campaigns against the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia started in earnest under 'Alā' al-Dīn's predecessor, 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā'ūs, and the first significant success of 'Alā' al-Dīn's reign was the capture of the Mediterranean fortress of Kalonoros (modern Alanya) from its Armenian lord shortly after the sultan's accession. The sources record further campaigns against Cilician Armenia in 618/1220,²⁹ 622/1225³⁰ and 623/1226.³¹ This may reflect not disagreement over the date of a single campaign, but rather that campaigns against Cilicia were repeated over several years. 1225 is the date given by Turan for the expeditions of Mubārīz al-Dīn Chavī, the amīr Comnenus, and Mubārīz al-Dīn Ertokuş,³² but there is no conclusive evidence in the sources to confirm this. However, it is likely that by about

²⁶ Yakubovskii, "Rasskaz", pp. 60–61.

²⁷ Turan, *Selçuklular Zamanında Türkiye*, p. 347.

²⁸ Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmir al-'Alā'iyyah*, pp. 305, 342–343. Ibn Bībī does state that at the time of this attack on Cilicia, its king was Leon, who died in August 1219. However, this cannot be taken as evidence that the attack did occur in this year; Muslim authors seem to have used Leon as a generic term to refer to any ruler of Cilicia (e.g. *Tārīkh-i Āl-i Saljūq dar Anāṭūlī*, ed. N. Jalālī [Tehran, 1377/1999], p. 89, refers to a King Leon in 623/1226 when the ruler would have been Hethoum). Furthermore, at this point a Leon was lord of the castle of Geben, which may be identified with the Armenian castle attacked by the Saljūqs under Chavī and Comnenus, and it is quite possible the baron and the king have been confused. See R. W. Edwards, *The Fortifications of Armenian Cilicia* (Washington DC, 1987), p. 125. I am grateful to Sara Nur Yıldız for this suggestion.

²⁹ Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abu 'l-Faraj*, tr. E. A. Budge (London, 1932), i, p. 379.

³⁰ *İstanbul'un Fethinden Önce Yazılmış Tarihî Takvimler*, ed. O. Turan (Ankara, 1984), pp. 76–77.

³¹ *Tārīkh-i Āl-i Saljūq dar Anāṭūlī*, loc. cit.

³² Turan, *Selçuklular Zamanında Türkiye*, pp. 342–347.

this date, as Bar Hebraeus says, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn had become “master of many of the fortresses of Cilicia”,³³ and with the accession of Hethoum as King of Cilician Armenia in 1226, the Saljūq campaigns bore fruit with the Armenian acknowledgement of their suzerainty, as is attested by the well-known bilingual coins struck there in the names of both Hethoum and his overlord, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn.³⁴ Thus both the Crimean and Cilician expeditions must have occurred before 1226, after which hostilities against Cilicia seem to have ceased.

Scholars agree that the the Saljūq campaigns against Cilicia encouraged the regent of the kingdom, Constantine, to seek the marriage of Prince Philip of Antioch to his ward, the Cilician queen Zabel. Smbat Sparapet depicts Constantine appealing to the Cilician barons to help find her a husband due to the disastrous situation in which the country found itself, and her marriage to Philip seems to have been intended to secure the assistance of Antioch against the Saljūqs, although it eventually ended disastrously with Philip’s death. The wedding took place in 1222, so the Saljūq campaigns against Cilicia, and thus also against Sudak, must have started by this date.³⁵

Although the Muslim sources offer no exact date for the invasion of the Crimea, evidence for the end of the Saljūq occupation of Sudak exists. A note in Yazıcızade Ali’s Ottoman Turkish translation of Ibn Bībī indicates that the occupation lasted “until the Tatar time of troubles” (*Tatar fetretine değin*),³⁶ in other words down to the Mongol invasion. This in itself is not particularly helpful, as there were two Mongol occupations of Sudak, the first in January 1223, the second in December 1239,³⁷ and this is confirmed by Mongol sources such as the Ilkhānid minister and chronicler, Rashīd al-Dīn.³⁸ However, the contemporary Arab historian Ibn al-Athīr (d. 1233) records that:

“When the Tatars [i.e. Mongols] reached Sudak, they occupied it. Its people dispersed, some of them going up into the mountains with their families and possessions, while some sailed across the sea and reached the land of Rūm which was in the hands of Muslims descended from Kılıç Arslan [i.e. the Saljūqs]”.³⁹

Ibn al-Athīr dates these events to 620/1223. The fact that some of the population fled to Muslim Anatolia suggests that Sudak either was in Saljūq hands at this date or had been recently. Without such a connection, there would have been little incentive for the mainly Christian population to flee to Muslim lands when it would have been equally easy to go to Christian Trebizond, a mere two days’ voyage from Sudak, or to hide in the mountains of central Crimea, as some evidently did.

³³ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, p. 389.

³⁴ C. Mutafian, *Le Royaume Arménien de Cilicie XIIe-XIVe siècle* (Paris, 1991), p. 54; P. Z. Bedoukian, *Coinage of Cilician Armenia* (New York, 1962), *passim*.

³⁵ Mutafian, *Le Royaume*, p. 52; Bedoukian, *Coinage*, p. 10; F. C. R. Robinson and P. C. Hughes, “Lampron – Castle of Armenian Cilicia”, *Anatolian Studies* XIX (1969), pp. 183–207, p. 187; Smbat Sparapet, *Letopis’*, tr. A. G. Galst’yan (Yerevan, 1974), p. 126.

³⁶ M. T. Houtsma, *Recueil des textes relatifs à l’histoire des Seldjoucides*, (Leiden, 1891), iii, p. 217. The text given by Houtsma is rather corrupt, but the meaning is clear enough. The text given in Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi, Istanbul, MS Revan Köşkü 1390, f. 93a is correct: *merhum Hüsameddin Bey çeri ile geçip karadan deşte varup Kıpçağı basup sınup Suğdağı feth idüip Rusun haracın aldıktan sonra dahi küffar temerrüd etmediler ta Tatar fetretine değin*.

³⁷ Nystazopoulou, *Sougdai*, pp. 119–120.

³⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi’ al-Tavārikh*, ed. M. Rawshan & M. Mūsavī (Tehran, 1373), i, p. 525.

³⁹ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fi-l-Ta’rīkh*, ed. C. Tornberg (reprint Beirut 1385–7/1965–7), xii, p. 386.

The evidence therefore strongly suggests that the Saljūq campaigns against Sudak, Cilicia, and the Mediterranean coast must have taken place before the beginning of 1223, when the Mongols attacked Sudak. As ‘Alā’ al-Dīn only came to the throne in March 1219,⁴⁰ the occupation of Sudak must have been of relatively short duration. Presumably such a major undertaking would have taken some time to prepare, and would have had to be launched in summer to ensure favourable weather for the fleet, as the date of 14 June for the attack given in the *Synaxary* indicates.⁴¹ Therefore the expedition must have occurred between 1220 and 1222, leaving open the possibility that the occupation lasted only for a few months, which would also explain the lack of references to it in the *Synaxary*.

There remains the problem of why Müneccimbaşı states so confidently that the campaign occurred around 1227. It seems very unlikely he had access to an unknown source, for at the beginning of the *Jāmi‘ al-Duwal* he mentions all the books he consulted, and his list for the Saljūq period indicates that fewer sources were at his disposal than are available today, being limited to Ibn Bībī and Aqsarā’ī’s *Musāmarat al-Akhhbār*.⁴² As Aqsarā’ī has very little to say about the Saljūqs,⁴³ Müneccimbaşı was essentially entirely reliant on Ibn Bībī, from which both his description of the Sudak campaign and of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn’s reign in general are exclusively derived. However, in contrast to Ibn Bībī, the very structure of Müneccimbaşı’s work compelled him to provide dates for every historical event, for the *Jāmi‘ al-Duwal* is essentially a chronology of Muslim states throughout history. This meant that it was impossible for Müneccimbaşı to mention an event without stating the year in which it occurred, and doubtless he resorted to guessing when his sources did not provide sufficient information. The *Jāmi‘ al-Duwal* is not, then, a source upon which much reliance can be put.

The commercial motives for the Sudak campaign

Ibn Bībī states that the motivation for both Cilician, Mediterranean and Crimean campaigns was the mistreatment of Muslim merchants by local rulers. The claim that the Saljūqs would have launched three major military operations, including their first ever naval campaign, purely because of the complaints of three individuals must naturally be treated with scepticism. Such doubts are reinforced by the fact that Ibn Bībī’s account of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kaykhusraw’s conquest of Antalya in 1207 contains a virtually identical motif: a group of Muslim merchants from Iraq and Khurāsān travelling from Egypt to Anatolia complain of the theft of their goods by the Frankish rulers of Antalya. In response, Kaykhusraw besieges Antalya, and on the conquest of the city returns the Muslims’ goods to them.⁴⁴ It would be

⁴⁰ *Tārīkh-i Āl-i Saljūq dar Anāṭūlī*, p. 88. There is contradictory evidence for the date of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn’s accession, with the years 615 and 617 also cited in the sources, but 616 seems to be the most widely accepted date, as the earliest coins struck in his name date from this year (İsmail Galib, *Takvim-i Meskûkât-ı Selçukîyye (Catalogue des monnaies seljoucides)* (Istanbul, 1309/Ankara, 1971), p. 26, no. 25).

⁴¹ Uyumaz’ suggestion (*loc cit*) that the campaign may have taken place in winter is untenable. As the account of the Spanish traveller Clavijo demonstrates, ships were extremely reluctant to venture into the Black Sea in winter, even for trade, due to the danger presented by the weather. Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*, tr. G Le Strange (London, 1928), p. 94ff.

⁴² Müneccimbaşı, *Jāmi‘ al-Duwal*, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, MS 3171, f. 11a.

⁴³ Melville, “The early Persian historiography of Anatolia”, p. 20.

⁴⁴ Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmīr al-‘Alā’iyyah*, pp. 94–101.

easy to dismiss the tales of the merchants as a convenient literary *topos* allowing Ibn Bībī to portray the sultan as the ideal Muslim ruler dispensing justice, but it is entirely plausible that commercial motives did indeed inspire the Saljūqs' aggressive policy.

Black Sea trade was valuable to Sudak, the Saljūqs, and the Saljūqs' rivals, the Christian empire of Trebizond ruled by the dynasty of the Grand Comneni. As Cahen notes, by the early thirteenth century, traders from the northern Black Sea coast were to be found at the great *entrepot* of Sivas,⁴⁵ and the Saljūqs' dream of acquiring an outlet on the sea was fulfilled with the capture of Sinop in 1214. It would have been through the Crimea, and most of all through Sudak itself,⁴⁶ that the Saljūqs' important trade with Russia was carried out, which "was useful in supplying the furs, honey and slaves normally sought there, and in addition allowing them to compete with the people of Trebizond for the transit of goods to their destination in more distant Muslim lands."⁴⁷ Indeed, Ibn Bībī's Muslim merchant complaining of the Sudakians' mistreatment of him specifically states that he been working in the Kıpçak, Bulghar and Russian lands, and so must have been engaged in precisely such trade.⁴⁸ Ibn Bībī mentions that Sudak's ally against the Saljūq invasion was the *Malik-i Rūs*, the Russian King.⁴⁹ Doubtless a reluctance to damage his lucrative trading relations with the southern Black Sea coast helps account for his swift abandonment of his allies in Sudak to the Saljūqs.

Thus there were obvious commercial benefits for the Saljūqs in occupying Sudak, perhaps encouraged by this rivalry with Trebizond that Cahen notes. Certainly, Ibn al-Athīr indicates that great damage had been caused to Muslim merchants by the closure of the Black Sea trade routes in the early thirteenth century due to hostilities with Trebizond,⁵⁰ so it was in the Saljūqs' interest to ensure that the Empire's hegemony over the sea did not go uncontested. Trebizond had close relations with Cherson in the south of the Crimea, which seems to have been a Trapezuntine dependency, referred to in the title of the Grand Comneni as *Perateia*, "the overseas territory", although the exact nature of the relationship between the two cities is unclear.⁵¹ While other cities of the northern Black Sea littoral maintained trading relations with Trebizond,⁵² Cherson may have been sending tribute there in the 1220s, and seals of the Grand Comneni found in the Crimea attest Trebizond's strong political influence there, which lasted until at least the first half of the fourteenth century.⁵³

The lucrative commerce between the northern and southern coasts would doubtless have roused the envy of the Saljūqs in any event, but of particular importance for them was the slave trade. As in all pre-modern Muslim states, the economy and army of the Saljūqs of Rūm relied on slaves, one of the most important sources of which was the northern Black

⁴⁵ Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, p. 164.

⁴⁶ Nystazopoulou, *Souqdaia*, p. 16.

⁴⁷ Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, p. 166.

⁴⁸ Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmīr al-'Alā'iyyah*, p. 302.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p. 319.

⁵⁰ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, xii, p. 242 and see the discussion of the passage in A.A. Vasiliev, *The Goths in the Crimea* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), pp. 158–159.

⁵¹ See *ibid.* pp. 152–159, and more recently, S. B. Soročan, B. M. Zubar', L. B. Marčenko, *Žizn' i gibel' Xersonesa* (Xar'kov, 2001), p. 325ff.

⁵² C. Cahen, "La commerce anatolien au début du XIII siècle", in *Turcobyzantina et Oriens Christianus* (London, 1974), XII, p. 94 (reprinted from *Mélanges Louis Halphen*, [Paris, 1951]).

⁵³ N. M. Bodganova, "Xerson v X–XV vv. Problemy istorii vizantiiskogo goroda" in *Pričernomor'e v srednie veka*, ed. S. P. Karpov (Moscow, 1991), i, p. 95.

Sea region.⁵⁴ They were imported into Saljūq lands through Sinop and the province of Kastamonu, which was ruled at this time by Ḥusām al-Dīn, the Saljūq general who captured Sudak.⁵⁵ We know from Ibn Bībī that Ḥusām al-Dīn was involved directly in the slave trade, for he says of this amīr and another, Sayf al-Dīn Kızıl, “most of the slaves they brought from the non-Muslim lands (*dār al-ḥarb*) they elevated to greatness and positions of command”.⁵⁶ Indeed not only was the military reliant on slaves, but some of the most important figures in the state were of slave origin, such as Jalāl al-Dīn Karatay, the chief minister in a slightly later period.⁵⁷ Much of the Saljūqs’ interest in the Crimea, and Ḥusām al-Dīn’s in particular, was inspired by the desire to control the source of this important commodity. Ibn Bībī specifically notes that Ḥusām al-Dīn sent slaves and slave girls from the Crimea back to Sinop and Kastamonu, the main towns of his appanage, while Ibn al-Athīr records that such slaves (*al-jawārī wa-’l-mamālīk*) were among the main exports of Sudak.⁵⁸ The numbers of slaves required by the Saljūqs are unknown, but were clearly very significant: on the capture of the east Anatolian town of Akhlāṭ, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn apparently sent no fewer than one thousand military slaves (*ghulāms*) to occupy it. In addition to slaves belonging directly to the sultan, each amīr would have his own levies of such *ghulāms*.⁵⁹

It must in any event have seemed desirable to the Saljūqs to possess a foothold on the Crimean peninsula to allow them to compete more effectively with their Trapezuntine rivals with their links to Cherson, but the circumstances of the first quarter of the thirteenth century suggest that the need to obtain new sources of slaves may have become more pressing. In earlier times the Saljūqs had been able to rely on wars with their Greek neighbours to the west to provide a reliable source of slaves as booty,⁶⁰ but the situation changed in the early thirteenth century. After the death of the sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kaykhusraw in 1211 in battle with the Greek Lascarid Empire of Nicaea, the Lascarids and Saljūqs had concluded a peace treaty, and there were no further hostilities of significance between the two powers. The Saljūqs were thus compelled to seek this vital component of their state’s manpower elsewhere. ‘Izz al-Dīn’s conquest of Sinop in 1214 and his campaigns against Cilician Armenia, continued by ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, may be seen as in part a response to the need to find new sources of booty. Of course, it was always possible to import slaves, but the costs of this could be very great.⁶¹ A foothold in the Crimea would allow the Saljūqs direct access

⁵⁴ The most famous such slave is the Mamlūk ruler of Egypt, Baybars, who came from Solkhat (Eski Kırım) in the Crimea.

⁵⁵ Ibn Sa’id cited by Cahen in “Questions d’histoire de la province de Kastamonu au XIIIe siècle”, *Turcobyzantina et Oriens Christianus*, X, p. 146 (reprinted from *Selçuklu Araştırmaları Dergisi*, III [1971]).

⁵⁶ Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmīr al-‘Alā’iyyah*, p. 137.

⁵⁷ On the Saljūqs’ use of slaves see Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley, 1971), pp. 174–176, 240ff and idem, “Seljuk Gulams and Ottoman Devshirmes”, *Der Islam* XLI (1965), pp. 224–252, esp. pp. 225–239.

⁵⁸ Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmīr al-‘Alā’iyyah*, p. 323; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, xii, p. 386. Talbot Rice’s statement (*The Seljuks*, pp. 104–105) that merchants embarking at Sinop were under an “obligation” to bring slaves back from Sudak seems to be a misunderstanding of W. Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au moyen âge* (Leipzig, 1936), i, p. 298. In fact, as Ibn al-Athīr indicates, it was just common practice for them to purchase slaves and fur in exchange for the silks and textiles they were importing.

⁵⁹ Vryonis, “Seljuk Gulams”, pp. 230–231.

⁶⁰ Vryonis, *Decline*, pp. 268–269.

⁶¹ There is no direct evidence from Saljūq Rūm for the costs, which seem to have fluctuated greatly. For instance, it has been estimated that the average price of a slave in the fifteenth century was around fifty to seventy *dinars*, but towards the end of that period the Mamlūk sultan Qāytbāy spent the vast sum of nearly four million *dinars* on the

to supplies of slaves from the peninsula and the southern Russian steppe, cutting out the need for intermediaries and reducing their expenses significantly.

The Sudak Campaign in the context of 'Alā' al-Dīn's military policy

The Sudak campaign must be seen in the context of other military activity in Anatolia, namely the contemporaneous operations against Cilician Armenia and the Mediterranean coast. These southern campaigns were also designed to secure commercial advantage, although Ibn Bībī's account is too imprecise to allow us to do more than understand their broad outlines. From a commercial perspective, Cilicia, with its important Mediterranean harbours, was a major transit route for imports and exports between Europe and the Middle East on the one hand and Russia, Central Asia and beyond on the other. Equally, some of the main roads connecting the Levant and Anatolia by land via Maraş led through Armenian-controlled territory, including the vital routes from Constantinople and Konya to Syria.⁶²

The Mediterranean littoral campaign undertaken by Ertokuş apparently led to the conquest of more than forty castles in Cilicia Tracheia, the territory on the western borders of the Armenian kingdom proper. Ibn Bībī names five of these, but the defects of the Arabic script mean only one of them is readily identifiable, the great fortress of Anamur, restored by both Leon and later by 'Alā' al-Dīn.⁶³ The castle called Andūshij by Ibn Bībī is probably the Armenian Andouchedza, the site of which is unidentified, but which Boase suggests was at Antiochia ad Cragum where there was an important mediaeval castle, or nearby.⁶⁴ Another of the castles has been identified as Silifke,⁶⁵ although this is unlikely as it still seems to have remained under Armenian or Hospitaller control for many years to come.⁶⁶ Siq, twelve kilometres east of Anamur, and also known by a confusing variety of alternative names – Sechin, Siquinium and Softa Kale among others – is a more likely identification for this castle, Ibn Bībī's سيق perhaps representing an attempt to transcribe the Latin or French version of the name. Duda identifies the ماقف of the text with the Armenian Maghva, an inland castle slightly to the north of Mut.⁶⁷ Maghva and Siq were held by the same lord, Kīr Isaac, son of Sir Adam, the ruler of the coast from Silifke to Alanya, so it would have made sense to subjugate both in order to prevent reinforcements from one castle coming to the assistance of the other.⁶⁸

purchase of a thousand new recruits to the military. See David Ayalon, *L'Esclavage du Mamelouk* (Jerusalem, 1951), p. 9 and C. F. Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians? The last Mamlūk Sultans and Egypt's waning as a great power* (Albany, 1994), p. 81. The thirteenth century Mamlūk sultan Qalā'ūn was given the nickname *alfi* indicating that he cost one thousand *dinars*, a considerable sum. Although this was a sufficiently large amount to cause comment, it was clearly not unique as the sources give other individuals the same nickname. See Ayalon, *Esclavage*, pp. 6–7.

⁶² Heyd, *Histoire*, i, p. 302.

⁶³ Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmir al-'Alā'iyyah*, pp. 342–345. See Edwards, *Fortifications*, p. 49 and T. S. R. Boase et al. *The Cilician Kingdom of Armenia* (Edinburgh, 1978), pp. 171–172.

⁶⁴ Boase, *Cilician Kingdom*, pp. 128, 153.

⁶⁵ This is the interpretation of the Turkish translator of Ibn Bībī: *El Evamirü 'l-Ala'iye fi'l-Umūri 'l-Ala'iye*, tr. M. Öztürk (Ankara, 1996), i, p. 354. However, while the scribe's transcription of the name may be inaccurate, it is hard to read the word in the facsimile edition as Silifke without a great deal of ingenuity.

⁶⁶ Boase, *Cilician Kingdom*, p. 25.

⁶⁷ Duda, *Seltschukengeschichte*, p. 142.

⁶⁸ Smbat Sparapet, *Letopis'*, p. 117. An inscription at Maghva records the rebuilding of the castle by 'Alā' al-Dīn, although the date on it has been read in wildly divergent ways. Unfortunately, from a photograph of the inscription kindly provided to me by Hugh Elton, it appears that the crucial slab of stone with the date is now missing, so the

Although the coast of Cilicia Tracheia was subject to the Armenian kingdom, Ibn Bībī refers to the defenders of the castles as Franks. Sir Adam de Gastine, after whom the region was named Siradan by the Armenians, held the region as a vassal of King Leon, along with the important castle of Baghras in Eastern Cilicia. He was appointed co-regent after the death of Leon in 1219, and attempted to make himself absolute ruler of all Cilician Armenia, although he was murdered by his rival, Constantine of Lampron, in 1221.⁶⁹ The great ports and commercial centres of Cilicia did not lie in the country of Siradan, but further to the east at Ayas, Mamistra and Tarsus. However, the region was of especial importance as much of the Saljūqs' trade with the rest of the Mediterranean world would have passed by it. The merchant quoted by Ibn Bībī was apparently an Antalyan sailing to Egypt when he was shipwrecked and his goods plundered by these Franks. Anamur, notorious for its winds and dangerous sea, would have been a particularly dangerous spot for sailors as the shipwrecks lying nearby attest to this day.⁷⁰

Of particular significance among the numerous trade routes between Anatolia and the Levant were the links between Crusader-occupied Cyprus and the Saljūqs. The surviving texts of letters between King Hugh of Cyprus and 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā'ūs (1210–1219), and a treaty of friendship from 1216 emphasise the importance of such trade and make special provision for the treatment of shipwrecks, forbidding imprisonment and plunder.⁷¹ However, such treaties could not protect ships wrecked off the mainland closest to Cyprus, the land of Siradan, making it a natural target for the Saljūqs to annex. Ibn Bībī records that after the conquest of the coast, an over-enthusiastic Ertokuş offered to conquer Cyprus (*Jazā'ir-i Firangān*) too. 'Alā' al-Dīn's lack of interest in this, as well as the fact that no attempt was made to disrupt the main centres of Cilician trade, suggests his interest was at this stage less in conquest for conquest's sake than in securing trade routes.

It is more difficult to identify the precise target of the expedition commanded Chavli and Comnenus. Ibn Bībī indicates their efforts concentrated on a castle he calls جنجين or حنجي – it is impossible to establish the correct form.⁷² This may be identified with four possible locations, the fortresses of Hadjin (modern Saimbeyli), Kanč' (possibly modern Fındıklı Kalesi), Činčin and Geben. All lie in the Anti-Taurus mountains: Hadjin controls the roads south from Kayseri and the Black Sea leading towards the Armenian capital of Sis (modern Kozan) and thence to the Mediterranean, while Geben, apparently a lucrative customs post, controls all routes south from Göksun leading to Maraş and ultimately Syria. Fındıklı Kalesi lies slightly to the north of Geben, on the same important road. Apart from its probable location also being in the northern Anti-Taurus, Činčin is unidentified.⁷³ Any of these castles would have been an obvious target for an attack aimed at asserting Saljūq authority over the northern approaches to the Armenian kingdom and controlling the flow of goods

matter is unlikely ever to be resolved. See E. J. Davies, *Life in Asiatic Turkey* (London, 1879), p. 329; M. Gough, "Excavations at Alahan Monastery", *Anatolian Studies* XIII (1963), pp. 105–115, esp. p. 115.

⁶⁹ Smbat, *Letopis'*, pp. 125, 168. Boase, *Cilician Kingdom*, pp. 22–23.

⁷⁰ The name Anamūr derives from Anemurium, in turn possibly derived from Greek ἀνεμος, "wind". On Anamūr see N. Sevgen, *Anadolu Kaleleri* (Ankara, 1959), pp. 49–50.

⁷¹ O. Turan, *Türkiye Selçukluları Hakkında Resmi Vesikalar: Metin, Tercüme ve Araştırma* (Ankara, 1958), pp. 139–143.

⁷² Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmir al-'Alā'iyyah*, p. 334. The form of the name and placing of the diacritics vary with each mention.

⁷³ Edwards, *Fortifications*, pp. 122, 124–125, 208–209. See also note 28 above and Heyd, *Histoire*, I, p. 371.

coming from or going to the Black Sea. Much of this would have been the lucrative trade in the hands of Venetian and Genoese merchants.

This pincer movement from north and west on Armenian Cilicia, doubtless encouraged by the political vicissitudes afflicting that kingdom after the death of Leon in 1219, seems to have aimed less to destroy it than to ensure Saljūq control over its commerce. While this was certainly part of a general strategy to protect Anatolian trade, the powerful barons of the Cilician borderlands may also have provoked ‘Alā’ al-Dīn’s intervention by their obstruction of the trade routes. Although King Leon had concluded agreements with Italian merchants promising them duty free trade, Sir Adam de Gaston and Leon of Geben continued to impose levies on the Genoese and Venetians, and Leon proved unable to stamp out the practice. The barons Hethoum of Ṭabarīa, on the northern border, and Vahram of Gorygos, a major port opposite Cyprus, also imposed such levies.⁷⁴ Treaties between Italian merchants and the Saljūqs illustrate the great value of Anatolian trade to both parties,⁷⁵ and in the absence of strong central authority in Cilicia after the death of Leon, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn probably wished to limit the damage done to international commerce by the greed of such marcher lords.

However, Cilicia was not the sole target of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn’s aggressive policy, for the Saljūqs also turned their attention to their other commercial rivals, Trebizond. The Grand Comneni had been vassals to the Saljūqs since they had lost Sinop to them in 1214, but in 1223 there was a major Saljūq attack on the city led by an unidentified “Melik Sultan” which was heavily defeated. The Trapezuntines attributed their miraculous escape from the Saljūqs to the intervention of the city’s patron saint, St Eugenius.

The circumstances of Melik Sultan’s attack are shrouded in mystery. There have been several attempts to make sense of the rather confusing Greek accounts, but none resolve the difficulties entirely.⁷⁶ As we shall see, this attack was linked to events in the Crimea, so it is worth pausing to reconsider it in some detail. None of the Oriental sources mention Melik’s attack at all, doubtless because it ended in failure, so the only references to it are in local Trapezuntine texts. All date from the fourteenth century and they are:

1. *The Encomium of St Eugenius of Trebizond* by Constantine Loucites which records the defeat of Melik and his capture by the Emperor, Andronicus Gidos. Loucites gives no date for the event.⁷⁷
2. The chronicle of Michael Panaretus, which states that “in the year 1223, the second year of the reign of Gidos, Melik Sultan came to Trebizond and [his army] was destroyed utterly”.⁷⁸
3. The *Synopsis* of John Lazaropoulos, another hagiographic work. This contains by far the longest and most detailed account of the attack, which is, however, extremely difficult to understand.⁷⁹ Briefly, Lazaropoulos states that in 1223, a peace treaty was concluded between Melik Sultan, the son of Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, and Andronicus Gidos. However,

⁷⁴ Bedoukian, *Coins*, p. 28.

⁷⁵ Turan, *Vesikalar*, pp. 143–146.

⁷⁶ The best discussion is by Rosenqvist in *The Hagiographic Dossier of St Eugenios of Trebizond in Codex Athous Dionysiou 154*, ed. & trans. J. O. Rosenqvist (Uppsala, 1996), pp. 50–63.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 164–165.

⁷⁸ Michael Panaretus, *Peri tôn Megalôn Komnênôn* (ed. O. Lampsides), *Archeion Pontou*, XXII (1958), p. 61.

⁷⁹ *Hagiographic Dossier*, pp. 308–335.

due to the foolishness of Etoumes, the *Rais*⁸⁰ of Sinop, this agreement was broken, for Etoumes plundered a ship bringing levies from Cherson and the province of Gothia (i.e. the Crimea) to Trebizond which had run aground at Sinop with important officials (ἄρχόντες) on board, among them an Alexius Pactiares. Etoumes then raided Cherson itself, and in response the Trapezuntines attacked Sinop, at which point the *rais* decided to seek reconciliation. However, when Melik Sultan, who was in Konya, “heard about these events he found them intolerable”. He gathered an army and advanced on Trebizond from the south. Lazaropoulos then gives a detailed account of the siege, which failed due to the intervention of St Eugenius, and ended with the capture of Melik. The latter was released by Andronicus and sent back to Konya safely, having concluded a peace treaty with him that released Trebizond from its vassalage to the Saljūqs.

Quite apart from the legendary elements typical of hagiography, the presence of numerous chronological anachronisms renders Lazaropoulos’ account suspect, as Rosenqvist rightly notes. Lazaropoulos refers to the sea walls of Trebizond, but these were only built during the reign of the Emperor Alexius II (1297–1330).⁸¹ Elsewhere in his account, he mentions the Germiyanids, a Turkish dynasty that did not appear until the end of the thirteenth century.⁸² Shukurov has recently attempted to resolve the numerous difficulties of this passage of the *Synopsis*, arguing that it refers to at least four separate events: a treaty between the Saljūqs and the Grand Comneni of 1223; the attack on the Trapezuntine ship, which he dates to 1225; a Trapezuntine attack on Sinop in 1228; and a Saljūq campaign against Trebizond, in 1230.⁸³ Yet much of the evidence for this is extremely sketchy. For instance, nowhere else do any references to a Saljūq–Trapezuntine peace-treaty of 1223 exist (the only known one of this period is that of 1214 after the Saljūqs had captured Sinop), and the evidence for the attack on the Trapezuntine ship occurring in 1225 is tenuous. It is based on a passage from Ibn Naẓīf al-Ḥamawī’s Arabic *al-Ta’rīkh al-Manṣūrī* that runs:

“In this year [622/1225] the Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn destroyed the Byzantine Emperor al-Lashkarī (i.e. the Lascarid ruler of Nicaea) and the king (*malik*) Kīr Aliks, also a Greek, and captured him”.⁸⁴

Shukurov argues that the Kīr Aliks mentioned in this obscure passage refers to Alexius Pactiares, the revenue official on the Trapezuntine ship. There are no other references to this individual in any other oriental or Greek text, and it seems somewhat unlikely that al-Ḥamawī, writing in Syria, would have heard of an obscure revenue official from Gothia. Admittedly, al-Ḥamawī’s text is difficult to interpret: there are no other records of hostilities between Nicaea and the Saljūqs at this date, and it is impossible to identify the Kīr Aliks with any known ruler alive in 1225. Although al-Ḥamawī is an important source for mediaeval Anatolia, he is usually only well-informed when events there directly affected Syria. For instance, he makes no mention of any of the early campaigns of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, and even important events such as the sultan’s accession are mentioned only in a laconic line with an

⁸⁰ This Arabic word, meaning “chief”, is used in the original Greek. “Etoumes”, if he existed, would have been an agent of Ḥusām al-Dīn; alternatively, Etoumes may be a reference directly to the amīr.

⁸¹ *Hagiographic Dossier*, p. 56.

⁸² *Ibid.* p. 456.

⁸³ R. M. Shukurov, *Velikie Kommyny i Vostok (1204–1461)* (St Petersburg, 2001) pp. 126–145.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p. 136. Ibn Naẓīf al-Ḥamawī, *al-Ta’rīkh al-Manṣūrī*, ed. Abū ’l-’Id Dūdū (Damascus 1402/1982), p. 113.

incorrect date. The most credible explanation for this passage is simply that it is confused, perhaps referring to the capture of the Grand Comnenus Alexius in 1214.⁸⁵

A further illustration of the difficulties presented by trying to make sense out of Lazaropoulos' account is offered merely by the form in which he gives 'Alā' al-Dīn Kayqubād's name, well-known to other Byzantine writers. In the *Synopsis* this is written as του μεγάλου σουλτάνου Ἀλατίνη του Σααπατίνη, yet it is found in this inaccurate form in no other Greek author, which usually refer to him either with a transcription of 'Alā' al-Dīn or occasionally as Καϊκουπάδης.⁸⁶ Shukurov suggests that Σααπατίνη stands for the Arabic Shihāb al-Dīn,⁸⁷ perhaps referring to the ruler of Mayyāfariqīn who bore this name, yet this individual had nothing to do with any campaigns against Trebizond. Whatever explanation is sought, the conclusion that Lazaropoulos or his sources are utterly confused is unavoidable. To separate the historical core of Lazaropoulos' narrative from the numerous anachronisms, legendary elements, and facts distorted by the passage of time is virtually impossible.

Fortunately, however, two other sources that confirm in part Lazaropoulos' account survive. The first is the Trapezuntine chronicler Panaretus, who records the attack of Melik Sultan on Trebizond in 1223, the same date given in the *Synopsis*. The second is Ibn al-Athīr, who mentions the sinking of a ship of refugees from the Mongols off Anatolia, which was then plundered by the Saljūqs, also in 1223. These refugees were apparently "rich and notable merchants (*a'ḡān al-tujjār wa-aghniyā'ihim*), bearing their precious belongings."⁸⁸ It is likely that in fact this is exactly the same ship as that mentioned in Lazaropoulos, and the "rich and notable merchants" on board are the same as the ἄρχόντες he mentions. That two totally unrelated sources should record that a ship laden with wealth, carrying important passengers, was shipwrecked and plundered by the Saljūqs in approximately the same time and place is highly unlikely to be coincidental, and the relatively minor differences between the accounts can easily be explained by the vicissitudes of the tale's transmission.

Although the details of events are unclear, the following tentative reconstruction of events may be attempted. In 1223, the Saljūqs did indeed plunder a rich ship wrecked off their northern coastline, and it is very likely that it was indeed making for Trebizond, the only major port on the southern littoral of the Black Sea not in their hands at this date. The Saljūqs' treaties with Cyprus and the Venetians mentioned above make provision for the treatment of shipwrecks, and ships of friendly powers were not to be plundered. Although there is no mention of wrecks in the surviving outline of the 1214 peace-treaty between Trebizond and the Saljūqs concluded after the conquest of Sinop,⁸⁹ it would have been reasonable for the Trapezuntines to interpret the plunder of this ship as a hostile act. Thus possibly Lazaropoulos is to be believed that the Trapezuntines were provoked into retaliating, sparking a full-scale confrontation and the defeat of the Saljūqs. However, Lazaropoulos may have confused

⁸⁵ On al-Ḥamawī, see A. Hartmann, "A unique manuscript in the Asian Museum, St. Petersburg: the Syrian Chronicle *at-Ta'riḥ al-Manṣūrī* by Ibn Naẓīf al-Ḥamawī from the 7th/13th century" in *Egypt in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, ed. U. Vermeulen and J. van Steenbergen (Leuven, 2001), pp. 89–100.

⁸⁶ G. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica II: Sprachreste der Türkvolker in den Byzantinschen Quellen* (Budapest, 1943), ii, pp. 66, 133.

⁸⁷ Shukurov, *Velikie Komniny*, p. 143.

⁸⁸ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, xii, pp. 387–388.

⁸⁹ Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmir al-'Alā'iyyah*, p. 153.

this with a separate incident, the Trapezuntine attack on Sinop in 1228, recorded by Ibn al-Athīr.⁹⁰ Other than Lazaropoulos' unreliable account, there is no evidence of a Saljūq raiding expedition against Cherson at this point, although it is possible. Ibn Bībī says only a regiment was left behind to garrison Sudak, so the Saljūqs' military capability would not have been seriously damaged by their ejection from Sudak by the Mongols. Thus, they would have retained the capability to raid the Crimea, which would have been a convenient target, being considerably closer to Sinop than Trebizond is. Alternatively, this may be a distant and confused recollection of the Sudak campaign.

Despite the obscurity of the details, it is clear from Panaretus that hostilities between the Saljūqs and Trebizond did occur in 1223, leading to the defeat of the Saljūq army. It is likely that the immediate provocation for this was the Saljūq plundering of the shipwrecked vessel, but there were probably more profound causes too. As argued above, the Crimean expedition under Ḥusām al-Dīn Chūpān should be seen as an attempt to weaken Trebizond's control of the Black Sea trade by establishing a Saljūq stronghold at Sudak. Ḥusām al-Dīn himself seems to have profited significantly from the expedition, for Ibn Bībī tells us he sent an enormous quantity of spoils back to Sinop and Kastamonu, the main towns of the province he governed.⁹¹ Doubtless this would have allowed him to recoup the costs of the expedition and ensure a sufficient profit for himself. Having lost Sudak to the Mongols, Ḥusām al-Dīn then continued his efforts to disrupt Trebizond's role in the Black Sea trade by attacking its shipping. He doubtless also hoped to gain by plundering an alternative source of income to replace that of Sudak. The Saljūq expedition against Trebizond in 1223 may be seen as an extension of their Crimean policy: having failed to defeat their rival in the Black Sea, they now took the war directly to the Empire of the Grand Comneni itself.

Conclusion

Despite the limitations of the sources, it has been possible to establish the basic sequence of events regarding the Saljūq invasion of the Crimea. The Sudak campaign was not an isolated incident, but part of a whole series of ambitious expeditions aimed against Cilician Armenia and Trebizond. These expeditions were largely driven by commercial motives: the need to secure and protect trade routes from rivals, and the Saljūq state's insatiable appetite for slaves.

The Persian sources that form the basis for modern interpretations of 'Alā' al-Dīn's reign invariably depict him as the model sultan, ever victorious, although this often masks a less glorious reality. The Saljūq occupation of the Crimea was brief, and their attack on Trebizond failed: only in Cilicia did this phase of expansionism meet with success, although later campaigns in Eastern Anatolia were to have better fortune. The Saljūqs never gained the mastery over the Black Sea they desired, and Trebizond continued to be a threat to their interests, for the Grand Comneni did not relinquish their desire to recapture Sinop, which they succeeded in retaking during the 1250s, only to lose it again.⁹² The significance of the Sudak campaign lies less in its success or failure, than in the fact it took place at all. The

⁹⁰ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, xii, p. 479.

⁹¹ Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmīr al-'Alā'iyyah*, p. 323.

⁹² Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, p. 284. See also Shukurov, *Velikie Kommyny*, pp. 116–190 for details of the ongoing struggle for Sinop in the thirteenth century.

speed with which the Saljūqs built up a fleet within only a few years of their capture of Sinop in 1214 illustrates the intense importance in which they held the Black Sea trade and the need to compete with their rival, Trebizond.

The idealisation of 'Alā' al-Dīn by the Persian authors of the Mongol period may obscure the setbacks of his reign, but it is easy to understand why they admired his achievements. Saljūq authority unquestionably did come to reach across more of Anatolia than it ever had before, and the ambition and audacity of early campaigns of 'Alā' al-Dīn are reflected by the fact that some, such as the Sudak expedition, were still remembered into Ottoman times. For writers like Ibn Bībī, living in an age when the puppet Saljūq sultan was at the mercy of his amīrs and his master, the Mongol khān, the confidence and power of the Saljūq state in the 1220s must have seemed enviable indeed.