

## **THE CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF PACHYMERES Related to the battle of Bapheus and the beginning of the Ottoman Empire**

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The chronology of the historical events at the end of the 13th Century and the beginning of the 14th Century is important because it witnessed the beginning of the Ottoman Empire and the decline of the Byzantine Empire. The confrontation between those two powers would intensify and finally result in the total triumph of the Turks over the Byzantines 150 years later, and the complete annihilation of the Eastern Roman Empire. After that, the Turkish threat over Europe would be strongly felt for nearly four centuries. The appearance of atheism and secularism would later repress the two predominant medieval religions, namely, the Roman Catholic Church in the West, and Islam in the East.

From a religious perspective, the beginning of the Turkish Empire is important because among other things, the Turkish threat to Europe allowed the survival of Protestantism which was being threatened with destruction by the papacy. This happened in the middle of the second Christian millennium. The papal attempts to crush Protestantism failed, because the Holy Roman Empire instead required both Catholic and Protestant princes to unite to fight a common enemy, the Muslim Ottoman Empire.<sup>2</sup>

We are witnessing today an attempt to revive both medieval religions, which never resigned their dreams of overcoming the entire world with their faith. Could they possibly succeed, now on a worldwide level, and restore the old medieval intolerance under the guise of world peace?

### **The work of Pachymeres**

The various motivations that bring us together to study this important period of the Middle Ages may be different. But we have to acknowledge that *history* is the only common ground all of us have to discuss the issues involved in it. George Pachymeres, the contemporaneous Byzantine historian, wrote extensively on this period of history. He is the only one who dealt with the key battle that is linked to the foundation of the Ottoman Empire, therefore his chronological references constitute the basis of our understanding about what happened at that time.

According to Pachymeres, at the end of the 13th Century the tremendous Turkish victory over the Byzantine army led by George Mouzalou at the Battle of Bapheus sounded the first alarm regarding the serious Turkish threat to the Eastern Roman Empire.<sup>3</sup> Pachymeres gave the day and the month of that

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<sup>1</sup> Doctorate in theology in the Protestant Faculty of the University of Strasbourg, France. I want to recognize Steve Emse for the wonderful exchange of information we had one year ago as we discussed these issues, which greatly enriched my understanding of the book of Pachymeres. At the same time I would like to thank Juan Gabriel Piedra, a young father and husband who saved me much time by gathering additional and helpful information concerning the way current Turkish historians view the historical facts related to the foundation of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>1</sup> I want also to thank my friend Dave Sydnor who voluntarily reviewed the English edition of this document.

<sup>2</sup> In 1544, the great reformer John Calvin urged the emperor Charles V to delay the task of reforming the church (from the Roman Catholic perspective) in order to deal with the Muslim threat, if he indeed wanted to leave his “posterity some Empire.” In his book, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church*, Calvin said: “Why do I speak of posterity? Because even now, while your own eyes behold—it is half bent, and totters to its final ruin!” *Tracts and Treatises* [Grand Rapids, 1958, reprinted], I, 121-123. For Calvin, it was clear that the so-called Holy Roman Empire was rapidly disintegrating.

<sup>3</sup> “Where and when does Ottoman history begin? The Byzantines first found Osman and his tribe worthy of special notice and attention in... the battle between the forces of Osman and Mouzalou at Bapheus, a place just outside Nicomedia.” “For the Byzantine chronicler George Pachymeres..., Osman became a man worth watching... as a result of the battle of Bapheus,” Rudi Paul Lindner, *Explorations in Ottoman Prehistory* (The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2010 [originally 2007]), 16,82-3). See more statements below.

battle, but not the year. It took place on July 27th. Peter Poussines in the 17th Century,<sup>4</sup> and Edward Gibbon in the 18th Century,<sup>5</sup> concluded that the Battle of Bapheus took place in the year 1299. However, ever since the proposal of Joseph von Hammer in the 19th Century, most historians have dated that battle first to 1301, and finally to 1302.<sup>6</sup> The almost standard historical view today is that Bapheus fell to the Turks on July 27, 1302.<sup>7</sup>

However, several historical facts make it nearly impossible to date the Battle of Bapheus so far from its actual occurrence. For this reason, I felt it necessary to carefully revisit the *History of Pachymeres*. Some scholars attribute specific importance to that battle as not just another battle in the Byzantine and Turkish conflict, but because it is often associated with the beginning of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>8</sup>

In order to study in depth the historical evidence that led most modern historians to the year 1302, I purchased a selection of books, most notably the four large volumes of the *History of Pachymeres*, the only contemporaneous and direct source that we have for the Battle of Bapheus. I spent about 500 dollars (a bargain price), to obtain the Albert Failler's collection, *Georges Pachymères. Relations Historiques*. I was also able to locate on the internet his extensive papers on the history corresponding to that time, and many other documents. Failler was the French translator of the historical volumes of Pachymeres, and his translation and commentaries published in 1999, are the standard for modern Western historians today, even though he is opposed on some chronological conclusions by various historians.

The chronology of the history of Pachymeres is essential to determine the date of the battle of Bapheus, because he is the first and only contemporaneous source for that battle. However, his chronology is quite complicated. As a matter of fact, many who study the *History of Pachymeres* are confused by the chronological dates offered by the author, because he mentions the month and the day of the events, but not the year. Adding to the confusion is his constant style of anticipation and retrospection when he depicts the events.<sup>9</sup> This is the reason why they warn constantly of the many "comings and goings" and "excursuses" found in the *History of Pachymeres*.

Let us summarize this fact from Albert Failler:

"The *History* [written by Pachymeres] proceeds by anticipation. In other places he works in retrospect for clarifying an event or the behavior of a man. This hovering over the times is the mark of the literary work and the sign that a material per se unrefined and limited in its signification suffers an elaboration and a refinement. *The History of Georges Pachymeres* is not a lineal chronicle of times and events, but a chart [or array] which illustrates sequences and consequences, causalities and hazards, by exposing and juxtaposing them... More frequent are the anticipations."<sup>10</sup>

Whenever possible, we need to resort to historical contemporaneous testimonies to confirm a presumable date. Even so, the history of that time is sometimes complicated because the testimonies of contemporaneous sources are sometimes contradictory. This is generally recognized by historians, who are constantly trying to choose between sources. One of them, despite his reconstruction of the historical

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<sup>4</sup> P. Poussines, *Observationum Pachymerianarum*, Book 3 (Chronology), chap 8, sec. 5: "The year, we asseverate in our synopsis, comparing carefully the events, to have been the year of our Lord 1299."

<sup>5</sup> E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, III, 370.

<sup>6</sup> J. von Hammer, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches Durch* (1827), 67-68.

<sup>7</sup> The chronology offered by A. Failler in his translation of the enormous volumes of Pachymeres into French, is considered the standard view for most historians today. A few modern historians, however, continue dating the battle of Bapheus to July 27, 1299. They are dependent on Gibbon for that date. See David S. Katz, *The Shaping of Turkey in the British Imagination, 1776-1923* (Algrave Macmillan; 1st ed. 2016), p. 31. Katz is director of the Lessing Institute for European History and Civilization at Tel Aviv University, Israel, where he has taught since 1978. He also holds the Abraham Horodisch Chair for the History of Books. See also Molefi Kete Asante, *Facing South to Africa: Toward an Afrocentric Critical Orientation* (Lexington Books, Lanham, MD, 2014), p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> See below, and especially at the end of this document.

<sup>9</sup> "George Pachymeres doesn't always adopt a linear style of composition...; he usually develops the subjects or depicts the chart in which the chronological order is momentarily interrupted by a reference to former facts or the anticipation of later events," Albert Failler, "Chronologie et composition dans l'Histoire de Georges Pachymères," in *Revue des études byzantines*, 39, 1981, 145. Failler repeats this principle again and again in his papers.

<sup>10</sup> Albert Failler, « Chronologie et composition dans l'Histoire de Georges Pachymères » (livres VII-XIII), 48, 1990, 11.

events, reached the conclusion that nothing is sure before the year 1302.<sup>11</sup> After reading this current paper that I have prepared, Dr. Albert Failler wrote to me:

“It is true that the chronology of Pachymeres which I had set about 30 years ago, remains fragile, especially for the Book 10. I am happy to see that the matter is considered again, and I wish that stronger conclusions will be reached” (July 18, 2017).

In consequence, we have to be humble in our deductions, and reference the problems encountered by different historians in their attempt to determine the year when the battle of Bapheus took place.<sup>12</sup>

Historians also need to admit that there are contradictions in both the Ottoman and Byzantine sources. They tend to prefer Pachymeres because he was a contemporaneous writer, and is free from Muslim dreams and zeal in bringing out the religious character of their wars. Moreover, the Ottoman sources were written a century later, and contain many legends. Anyway, Turkish historians normally place the date of the foundation of the Ottoman empire in the year 699, more definitely, in the Julian year 1299/1300. Some of them understand that Pachymeres introduces Osman as becoming prominent among Persian leaders after the battle of Bapheus. But they are usually confused by the date assigned to that battle by modern historians, because they link the battle of Bapheus with a battle in Koyunhizar, which several modern historians reject today for lack of evidence.<sup>13</sup>

In summary, all recognize “the complexity of the text,”<sup>14</sup> and some consider the *History* of Pachymeres to be a puzzle. We have to be careful not to force a piece into the puzzle in the wrong place. We will not attempt to correct Pachymeres, as many do today, in order to avoid damaging his construction of the events. When conflicts appear which lead historians to disagree with Pachymeres, we will be more careful in our reading regarding what he actually said, and illustrating how in our view he was misinterpreted on several issues. In fact, we find nothing in the book of Pachymeres concerning the dates offered for his chronology in Book 10 that need to be corrected.

The overwhelming evidence we have gathered from history leads us to date the battle of Bapheus to July 27, 1299. Many today consider that a key year for the foundation of the Ottoman Empire. There is strong evidence to support this fact, even in the book of Pachymeres. Some points of evidence are stronger than others, but the evidence as a whole helps us to see that there is no need to change the date which the first interpreters of the book of Pachymeres offered for the battle of Bapheus.

### **The situation of the Byzantine Empire at the end of the 13th Century**

As the 13th Century was drawing to a close, the Byzantine Empire was being threatened by several powers which were becoming increasingly covetous of its territory. Around the Black Sea and toward the north, the Mongols predominated over what is known as the Golden Horde, known today as The Ukraine, Russia, and several other countries. Those regions were conquered by Nogay khan, who was replaced at the end of the century by Toqta. Toward the west the Serbians were invading the Eastern Empire. And to the East of Constantinople the Persians or Turks were growing into a potential threat to the stability of the Empire.

The Byzantine emperors tried to avoid war with all those princes through marriage alliances, except with the Turks. Thus, in 1270 emperor Michael VIII gave his illegitimate daughter to Nogay, the great Mongol khan who dominated an extensive region in the north. In 1298, emperor Andronicus offered his

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<sup>11</sup> “I do not claim that the reconstructions offered here are the only possible or valid ones... The origins of the Ottoman enterprise, an enterprise that looks much like the Roman and byzantine Empires..., will remain a subject of discussion for years to come... Not all is as clear as we would like it to be,” Lindner, 120. See a review of the book of Lindner by Linda T. Darling, in *Journal of Central Eurasian Studies*, Volume 2 (May 2011): 105–108.

<sup>12</sup> Consider the different interpretations given to the same event by different politicians in their debates. Often evidence is neglected or supported depending on a person's political bias.

<sup>13</sup> We will provide more information on these issues at the end of this document, in an attempt to summarize the way Turkish historians look to the foundation of the Ottoman Empire and its connection with the battle of Bapheus.

<sup>14</sup> A. Failler, *Les Émir Turcs*, 107.

illegitimate daughter Mary to Toqta, the Mongol khan who replaced Nogay. In the same year, Andronicus offered the kral of Serbia in the West his daughter (a young child), to prevent his impending invasion. But he had to wait for the end of a severe winter in 1298/1299 to travel to Thessalonica for that marriage. The Turkish leaders were becoming a growing threat, but were divided among themselves, and fighting with the Mongols. They did not unleash their threat to the Empire until the battle of Bapheus. No marriage was arranged with them, but a treaty before that battle was made by the emperor with one of their princes named Amourios, who had been pillaging the region to the East of the Sangarius river (Book 10, chap 25).



**Map dealing with the time of George Pachymeres, at the verge of the 14th Century**

From the 11th century, Thrace and Macedonia appear to have been usually combined, as attested by numerous *strategoï* and judges holding jurisdiction over both themes. The name fell out of use as an administrative term in the Palaiologan period but it is still encountered in some historians of the time as an antiquarian term.

Another important people in this historical drama were the Alans, who participated in the battle of Bapheus. They were an Iranian nomadic people who had migrated behind the Germanic incursions into the Western Roman Empire. After nearly a millennium of relocation that took them as far as North Africa, most of whom were then living to the northwest of the Black Sea, between the rivers Dnieper and Prut. Nogay had seized many of them and forced them to fight for him for several years. Around the time when Nogay died, they escaped to the Byzantine Empire and offered their military service to the emperor. One contingent of them was urgently sent to Bapheus. Another, with their families, was sent toward the east of the Empire to settle there, and yet another more significant group was assigned to the emperor's son to fight against the Turks even farther toward the East.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *History of George Pachymeres*, Book 10, chap 16.

The situation changed dramatically when Osman, one of the Turkish leaders, came from far away and fell abruptly upon the city of Bapheus. Apart from being located somewhere along the Sangarous river, no one knows for certain where that fortress was located. Osman obtained the support of other princes during that battle, and became the principal Turkish prince. He founded the capital of his government in Sogüt, after obtaining a victory at the battle of Bilecik in the year 1299. His dynasty would last for centuries, causing trouble for the Western powers.

Let us consider, then, the chronology of these events which Pachymeres addresses in his *History* of that time.

### Chronology of events

The chronology of events regarding our concerns begins with the severe winter which hindered emperor Andronicus from travelling to Thessalonica for the marriage of his daughter to the kral of Serbia.

#### I. The worst of the winters in 1298/9 (Book 10, chap 1; cf. Book 9, chap 33).

All historians agree that the winter portrayed by Pachymeres was that of 1298/9.<sup>16</sup> The Byzantine emperor needed to meet the kral of Serbia in Thessalonica to finalize the marriage of his daughter with the kral. He could not leave Constantinople because of the hard winter at the end of the year 1298. Let us quote two historians.

“In 1298, protected by the snows of a very severe winter, which had closed the routes west from Iran, Sülemish murdered Bayinjar and Bujukur and revolted against Ghazan Khan while simultaneously spreading the rumor that Ghazan had already been dethroned in a coup... Winter prevented the Ilkhan from responding until February 1299.”<sup>17</sup>

“After the severe winter of 1298-1299 the Turks had crossed the Byzantine borders along the Meander.”<sup>18</sup>

Within the *History*..., two specific facts help historians to determine the year.

##### 1. Friday evening, the day before the Torch Ceremony, falls in that winter at the end of February.

The conclusion of Book 9 specified that the emperor could not leave Constantinople because of the severe winter. That severity persisted through to the coming of Spring. One could possibly walk with the aid of a staff, but could not ride a horse due to the icy ground, often concealed under snow. In Book 10, chap 1, Pachymeres begins stating that at the beginning of February the severity of the winter persisted. So, the emperor still could not leave. He would obviously not leave for Thessalonica on foot with a staff. He had to wait till the end of February when the weather improved at least sufficiently to allow him to depart with his family in a horse-drawn wagon.

“On Friday evening, the day before the Torch Ceremony,” the emperor was able to leave. In the year 1298 this Torch Ceremony corresponded to February 7.<sup>19</sup> But in 1299, that feast fell on February 20, which better fits the narrative.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See already E. de Muralt, *Essai de chronographie byzantine. 1057-1453* (Bale-Geneve 1871), 472.

<sup>17</sup> Lindner, 92,93; Amir Mazor, *The Rise and Fall of a Muslim Regiment: The Manşūriyya in the First Mamluk* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 113: “The Mongols had stopped their march toward Syria and turned back, due to thunderstorms that [since the Fall in 1298] hit many of them.” They had to wait till Spring of the next year to depart for the battle.

<sup>18</sup> Dimitri Korobeinikov [Wolfson College, Oxford Bizantine Seminar 3], February 2006. An extended version of this paper was published in *Osmanskii mir i osmanistika. Sbornik statei k 100-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia A.S. Tveritinovoi (1910-1973)*, eds. I.V. Zaitsev and S.F. Oreshkova (Moscow, 2010), 215-239.

<sup>19</sup> Failler rightly criticizes Poussines for placing the torch ceremony at the beginning of February in the year 1299. In his view, the text of Pachymeres doesn't imply that the event took place at the beginning of February, Albert Failler, “Chronologie et Composition dans l'*Histoire de Georges Pachymeres (livres VII-XIII)*,” in *Revue des études byzantines*, 48, 1990, p. 38, n. 124.

<sup>20</sup> Concerning the Attik names of the months, Pachymeres gives them a different meaning. In the margin of the manuscripts the equivalent of the Julian months are specified regularly. So, Lenaeon means February, Failler I, p. 114, n. 1. It was inferred that

Some contemporaneous historical reports could be appealed to as further evidence that the winter could not be located in the year 1297/8. One of them comes from Arab sources which tell us that in the year 697 (1297-1298), the winter was mild in the northern territory dominated by the Mongols. At that time, Nogay and Toqta could not cross the Dnieper river because it was not frozen.<sup>21</sup> Is it likely that the Byzantine regions which were farther to the south would be frozen in that same year?

Another historical testimony reports a dry winter in Syria and Palestine. Let us keep in mind that South-Central Anatolia borders northern Syria. Pachymeres' testimony of the icy rain and snow in the 1298/9 winter again makes it difficult to locate that harsh winter in 1297/8.

"The catastrophic hydrological drought that struck Syria, Palestine... during 1296-1298 was one of the worst the early Mamluk sultanate experienced. In this year (697/1297-1298) spring wells and river in Damascus all dried up. The Thawara River was merely two shbrs, knee deep while the Barada river ceased to reach the Jisrin..."<sup>22</sup>

## 2. *Book 9 tells a story that harmonizes naturally with the severe winter of 1298/9.*<sup>23</sup>

We are told that Eudocia and her son Michael reached Constantinople toward the end of June 1298 (Book 9, chap 30). This happened before the departure of Andronicus to Thessalonica. Consequently, the departure to Thessalonica could not have happened in a presumable winter of 1297/8.

The sixth birthday of the emperor's daughter fell in Feb 1299 (Book 9, chap 31). If the winter took place in 1297/8, the daughter of the emperor would have been four years old, and on her birthday she would have turned five rather than six.

## 3. *Characteristics of that exceptional winter.*

Let us read the description of Pachymeres regarding the worst winter known to Byzantines.

"Then the winter came, and the most severe among the winters, an excessive winter, which even the old men could not see before. In fact, such an overstock of snow had consequences... During many days, no one saw or trampled the ground, but the travelers walked upon the compact snow, which became like a firm ground, *until the coming of the Spring; it was futile to ride a horse*, because one risked rather to slip. This hindered also the expedition of the emperor to Thessalonica" (Book 9, chap 33).

"The month of February had arrived (began), with the snow hardened on the ground, causing a compact ice, at the point that *the endless rivers stopped the current, because the water was frozen in the bottom*; this is the reason why the ground, contracted by the cold, vomited the plants, and the seed became absolutely ineffective. On

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the date of departure would be found within the month of February. However, the text of Pachymeres does not require that the date of departure be placed at the beginning of February. Eventually, the event connected with the day of departure could be even interpreted as taking place after the month of Lenaeon, which is not the case here. For Pachymeres, *ekatombaión* was January, and *Lenaeon* was February. This may easily be found in the index of the translation of Albert Failler. There is only one exception that we will consider in point XIX.

Pachymeres' attempts to use "classical Greek names to denote the months of the year" is "an innovation which may have been due to the spirit of reaction against everything coming from the Latin West." But the Attic names "employed by Pachymeres do not correspond to those of the ancient Athenians... [several examples are given]. For its equivalent on the Julian calendar, we have to identify them 'guided by the mention of immovable feasts of the Orthodox Church or, in a few cases, of historical event known from other sources.'" Thus, Pachymeres "uses Lenaeon in the place of February," *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbucher* (Athen, 1960), 144,146,147,149. H. Hunger, *Die Hochsprachliche Profane Literatur der Byzantiner* (C. H. Beck, 1978), 452: "Ten from thirteen names of months are taken from old tables of the calendar, without observing the old order." See also G. Arnakis, "The Names of the Months in the History of Georges Pachymeres," in *BNJ* 18 (1945-49), 147. See below, n. 93.

<sup>21</sup> Rashiduddin Fazlullah (or Rashi) dates that mild winter in 698, while Novairi and Makrizi date the mild winter in 697. The date 697 (1297/8) is to be preferred for several reasons that we will consider below. While the winter of 1297/8 was mild, the winter of 1298/9 was eminently catastrophic.

<sup>22</sup> Sarah Kate Raphael, *Climate and Political Climate. Environmental Disasters in the Medieval Levant* [Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2013], 190-1. Pachymeres mentioned a strong rain which was estimated to correspond to August 29, 1297, admitting that the year of that rain is uncertain (Book 9, chap 28, n. 95: "in all likelihood." See also E. de Muralt, 469. It could be a reference to the thunderstorms in the Fall of 1298. See Amir Mazor in n. 17.

<sup>23</sup> See Failler's notes on Book 9, and in « Chronologie et Compositions dans l'Histoire de Pachymérés (livres VII-XIII) », in *Revue des études byzantines*, V. 48, p. 37.

Friday evening, when the lamps are lighted and when the people commemorated the dead, according to an old custom, the emperor left..." (Book 10, chap 1).

This picture fits perfectly with the natural disaster portrayed later by Pachymeres. The melting snows were complicated by a severe storm (attested to by Makrizi in Egypt), producing the most severe flood pattern of an entire century. The flood waters wrought havoc with the fortifications of Bapheus, prompting Osman to lead his Turkish horde to attack the now defenseless city.<sup>24</sup>

Melting snow and the rising of the Sangarius in Spring is an annual occurrence, reaching its peak in the Summer, and varying only in degree.<sup>25</sup> This fits the story of Pachymeres concerning the year when Bapheus was seized. In portraying the winter that preceded the battle of Bapheus, Lindner wrote:

"Lower temperatures, stronger storms, and continuous precipitation have the same impact... Wet or snowy weather has two effects on the flock, one direct and immediate, the other lingering... Falling snow, one of the forms of late winter precipitation in upper Phrygia, bewilders the sheep, may stop them in their tracks, and prevents their grazing... In bad weather, then, the animals suffer. Over a few days or weeks, the suffering turns to sickness, wasting, and death, especially for the kids, who cannot endure cold or wet."<sup>26</sup>

"There are middling variations in precipitation from year to year, but an extremely wet spring occurs every generation or so... A nuisance in May becomes a tragedy during March if a once-in-a-generation inundation occurs."<sup>27</sup>

## **II. February 20, 1299: Emperor Andronicus departs for Thessalonica (Book 10, chap 1).**

As already seen, "on Friday evening, the day before the Torch Ceremony," the emperor left for Thessalonica, which corresponds to February 20.

## **III. March 4, 1299 (Book 10, chap 25). Severe storm in Cairo.**

Combined with the thawing of snow and ice caused by the worst of winters, a tremendous storm coming from the Mediterranean Sea would be catastrophic in Anatolia. It is important to point out that no external source can be invoked to confirm that combination of severe winter and tremendous storm in any other year than that of the battle of Bapheus. That storm was reported by the Egyptian historian Makrizi (1364–1442), who compiled the news which came to Egypt on the events which took place in the year 1299. It is amazing to find that his report of a severe storm in Cairo fell in the same season referred to by Pachymeres for the catastrophic storm which preceded the battle of Bapheus. Makrizi wrote:

"At this very time [*Djoumada I*, 29, 698: *Julian March 4, 1299*], rains fell down in the city of Cairo. The water flew from mount Mokattam in the cemetery of Karafah, and destroyed a big amount of tombs. The torrent penetrated till the gate of Cairo called Bab-Annasir, where it overthrew likewise many tombs."<sup>28</sup>

And Pachymeres confirms:

"In the month of March, the river drifted... The Sangaris, which had overflowed because of the rains..., and the alluviums coming from the mountains..." (Book 10, chap 25).

Pachymeres' description of the bursting of the banks of the river Sangarius shows an increase of waters caused by the storm, and the alluvions which came immediately from the mountains could be explained by the melting of ice and caked snow which in 1299, lasted till Spring because, as already seen, that winter was "the harshest winter of all winters."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Lindner, 112

<sup>25</sup> See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, III, "Black Sea," 707.

<sup>26</sup> Lindner, 112.

<sup>27</sup> Lindner, 110,111.

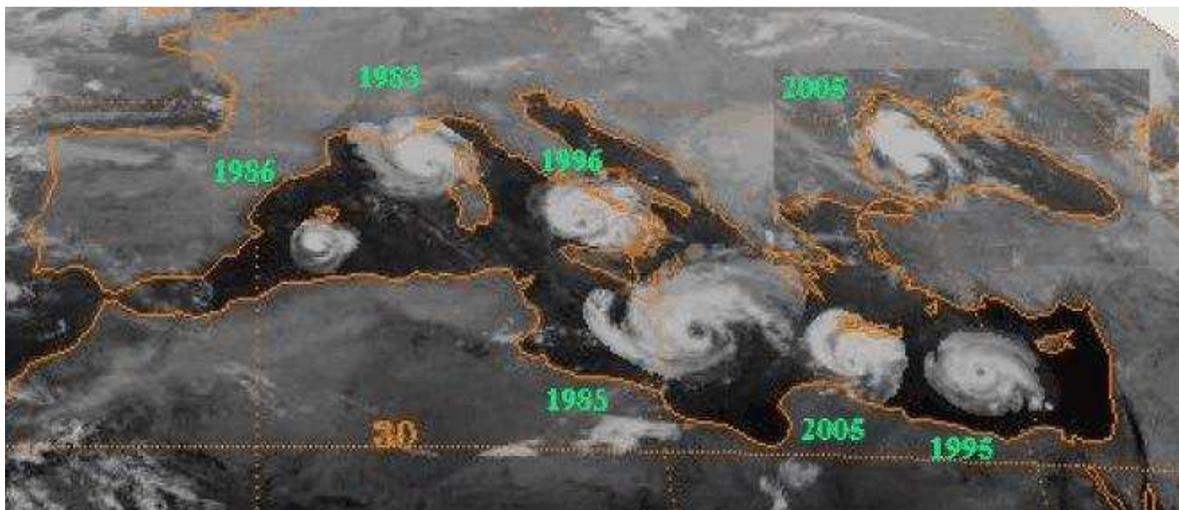
<sup>28</sup> Makrizi, *Histoire des Sultans Mamlocks de l'Égypte* (translated into French by M. Quatremere, 1845), II, 127. I am indebted to Steve Emse for this connection between Makrizi and Pachymeres.

<sup>29</sup> Books 9, chap 33, and 10, chap 1.

A study of Mediterranean storms may help us to understand the correlation between the description of Makrizi in Cairo, and the tremendous storm portrayed by Pachymeres in Anatolia in the same month of the year. Today, those unusual storms are known as “medicanes” (*Mediterranean hurricanes*). They are born in the hot waters of North Africa and flow into Europe or in Anatolia. Thus, a storm born in Morocco flows into Spain. A storm born in Algeria or Lybia flows in Italy or Greece. A storm born near Cairo should therefore flow into Turkey.<sup>30</sup> These storms can form at different times of the year. For example, in March 7, 2017, a severe storm touched the Mediterranean Sea and Italy.<sup>31</sup>

Consider the Mediterranean hurricane of January 1995, which touched Turkey, formed from a convection of warm weather from the south and cold from the north.

“Among numerous documented medicanes, the cyclone of January 1995 is generally considered to be the best-documented instance...” As it approached Greece from Lybia, “it began to envelop an area of atmospheric convection; meanwhile, in the middle troposphere, a trough extended from Russia to the Mediterranean, bringing with it extremely cold temperatures. Two low-pressure areas were present along the path of the trough, with one situated above Ukraine and the other above the central Mediterranean. At the time of formation, high clouds indicated the presence of intense convection. and the cyclone featured an axisymmetric cloud structure, with a distinct, cloud-free eye and rainbands spiraling around the disturbance as a whole. Soon thereafter, the parent low separated from the medicanne entirely and continued eastward, meandering toward the Aegean Sea and Turkey... Intense convection continued to follow the entire path of the system as it traversed the Mediterranean, and the cyclone made landfall in northern Libya at approximately 1800 UTC on 17 January, rapidly weakening after coming ashore.”<sup>32</sup>



#### IV. From 1300 to 1303: A drought which lasted three years around the Black Sea.

“From 1300 to 1303 a severe drought occurred in the areas surrounding the Black Sea.”<sup>33</sup> These three years of drought were confirmed by Makrizi. In his compilation of news coming to Egypt in those years,

<sup>30</sup> The Mediterranean cyclone storms (medicanes) originate in the sea of Northern Africa and move into Turkey, Greece, Italy, France, or Spain. So, what happened in Spring 1299 is, according to the book of Lindner, something exceptional occurring once in a generation. In March 7, 2017, a severe storm touched the Mediterranean Sea and Italy

On the following page, we may see one *medicane* born in Lybia and reaching Greece. A storm which was felt in Cairo should therefore also fall in Turkey. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean\\_tropical-like\\_cyclone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean_tropical-like_cyclone) See also <http://reliefweb.int/report/turkey/torrential-rains-paralyze-daily-life-western-turkey> , and a picture with several medicanes in: [https://www.google.com/search?q=medicanes&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj3OHHR-nUAhVGKyYKHwzMAeMQ7AkIXg&biw=1920&bih=988#imgrc=6FBDmSw\\_6CFu1M:](https://www.google.com/search?q=medicanes&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj3OHHR-nUAhVGKyYKHwzMAeMQ7AkIXg&biw=1920&bih=988#imgrc=6FBDmSw_6CFu1M:)

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.severe-weather.eu/news/cutoff-low-and-a-strong-line-of-thunderstorms-over-italy-and-central-mediterranean-march-7-945-utc/>

<sup>32</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean\\_tropical-like\\_cyclone#January\\_1995](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean_tropical-like_cyclone#January_1995)

<sup>33</sup> Golden Horde, Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden\\_Horde](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Horde)

he wrote:

“At that very time [year 702/1303], the news were received that in the country submitted to Toqta, the drought had reigned the space of time of three years; that” an impressive amount of animals had died following that famine. “The inhabitants didn’t have anything to eat and had to sell their children and relatives to the merchants, who took them to Egypt and to other countries.”<sup>34</sup>

In the next paragraph Makrizi wrote:

“Toward that very time, one suffered in Egypt a violent earthquake... on the 23rd of Dhū al-Ḥijjah, 702, [which is Aug. 8, 1303], at the time of prayer in the morning...”

The description of the earthquake in the book of Makrizi is impressive. He specified that it was terrible and felt in several countries (even the Franks noticed it). Makrizi spent several pages describing the earthquake (from 214 to 220). This earthquake was also noticed by Pachymeres on the same day (Book 11, chap 11), who devoted the entire chapter to describing it: “On the eighth day of August.”

The month of Dhū al-Ḥijjah is the last month of the Islamic calendar. Three years prior to that last month in 702 brings us to August 699 (1300 Julian Calendar). Pachymeres also reported an awful drought in Book 10, chap 14, as being an unusual drought from at least the Spring to the Autumn of the year 1301. So that drought was more severe near Anatolia in the year 1301. This was the reason why von Hammer moved his first attempt to date the battle of Bapheus in the year 1301, to the year 1302. But, even if the drought had not been as severe during those three years as it was in the year 1301, could you easily infer that during these three dry years around the Black Sea, there was a tremendous storm in what is today Turkey?

The year 1302 is not a good candidate for the battle of Bapheus. The storm would have taken place during a Spring that was in fact experiencing a severe drought, with the battle then in the summer. In addition, there is no historical testimony of a severe winter and a flood in that year, or in the year 1300. So, the best candidate to date the battle of Bapheus is the year 1299, specifically July 27th.

#### **V. April 1299: Defeat and death of Nogay, the Mongol khan (Book 10, chap 16).**

The Alans fought in the battle of Bapheus,<sup>35</sup> but Pachymeres wrote that they deserted when Nogay died. They had been fighting for that Mongol king for a long time. But according to some contemporaneous Arab historians, Nogay died in the year 699, which began in the Julian calendar, in September 1299. If the battle of Bapheus took place on July 27, 1299, the Alans could not have been there.

Let us share the statement of Pachymeres:

“These are the things that happened in that year:<sup>36</sup> the magnanimous Alani a nation of about 16,000 in number, with more than a half of them combatants, became free of Nogay and his service, when he perished in the war, and requested to pass to the emperor's side” (Book 10, chap 16).

First of all, let us assert that this statement of Pachymeres could reference a *roughly calculated period*

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<sup>34</sup> Makrizi, *Histoire des Sultans Mamlocks de l'Égypte*, II, p. 214. I am indebted for this connection to Steve Emse.

<sup>35</sup> “The Alans had been Orthodox Christians since the first patriarchate of Nicolas Mysticus (901-07) when many Byzantine missionaries had been sent to Alania. Eventually Alania was raised to the rank of a metropolia, an act marking the increasingly important diplomatic ties between the Alans and Byzantium. During the whole of the Comnenian era Byzantine documents record a series of political marriages between members of the Byzantine imperial family and high-ranking Alan princesses as well as the constant presence of Alan mercenaries in Byzantine armies. Perhaps more to the point, Nogai was on good terms with the Palaeologian emperors. His erst-while Alan tümen knew exactly how to approach the Empire, and the positive reception they were likely to find there,” Scott Jessee and Anatoly Isaenko, “The Military Effectiveness of Alan Mercenaries in Byzantium, 1301-1306,” in *Journal of Medieval Military History*, XI, Boydell Press, 2013), 112-113).

<sup>36</sup> The year referred to has to do with the time when the Alans moved. See below.

of time, “when he perished in the war,” and not necessarily something that happened after his death. This way of telling a story is also found in the Bible, where a strict chronological order of events is not necessarily followed.<sup>37</sup>

Secondly, the contemporaneous historians don’t agree on the exact year when the two battles between Nogay and Toqta, the two Mongol princes, took place. A possible reason for this divergence could be that some historians who became a source for other historians, took the references from the Mongol archives, which didn’t give numbers to date the years.<sup>38</sup> Actually, Mongols had an animal calendar. One year was designated the year of the rats, another year was referred to as the year of the dogs, etc.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, the Mongol year didn’t begin on January 1, and Mongols didn’t employ the Islamic calendar either. For a foreigner this method of reckoning the years was confusing. Proof of that can be seen in the fact that they disagree by one year for the first and second battles.

**The two battles.** We have to keep in mind that there were two battles in the war between Toqta and Nogay. The latter died in the second battle. There were, however, other battles for succession among the sons of Nogay, until Ceke, the successor of Nogay, fled toward the end of 699 (1300) to Bulgaria and was killed.

“Toqta was defeated in their first battle. When the legitimate Khan Toqta tried a second time, Nogai was killed in battle in 1299 at the Kagamlik, near the Dnieper.”<sup>40</sup>

**1. The first battle** was dated by Nuwaryri [1279-1333] and Makrizi [1364-1442]<sup>41</sup> in the year 697 (1297/8), and by Rashid [1247-1318] and Abul Fida [1273-1331], in 698 (1298/9). This discrepancy led Bratiani to doubt the dates offered by those historians about the battle. He wrote, literally, “The

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<sup>37</sup> Let me give an example of this literary style, found in the Bible. Num 7:1 says that an offering was to be brought “on the day when,” which is interpreted as “when” the sanctuary was inaugurated, that is, when the tabernacle was anointed (v. 10), more definitely “after” completing its erection and priestly anointing (v. 84), without specifying a definite day. This is the conclusion of modern Jews on this passage which, otherwise, is hard to understand and, in fact, caused troubles to the Jewish interpreters throughout the centuries. See details in my book, *The Apocalyptic Times of the Sanctuary*, chap 2, p. 45, n. 5.

<sup>38</sup> Rashiduddin Fazlullah, *A History of the Mongols* (translated by W. M. Thackston, Harvard University, 1999), Part Two, 364. He is also known as Rashid. “Rashid al-Dīn’s history covers a vast field even outside the Muslim world. His sources of information were, for Mongolia and China, high officials of the Mongol empire and the Mongol records,” <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Rashid-al-Din> ; “Rashid al-Din follows his Mongol authorities in dating events by the twelve-year Animal Cycle, though for the most part giving the equivalent year according to the Muslim calendar. I have in all cases supplied the corresponding Julian year in the footnotes but have thought it useful to provide in the Appendix (p. 346) a table showing the years of the Animal Cycle corresponding to A.O. 1168-1371. It should be noted that the correspondence is only approximate, the Animal Cycle years beginning at the entry of the sun into 15° Aquarius, which at that time was on or about 27th January (now 4th February),” *The Successors of Genghis Khan*, translated by J. A. Boyle (Columbia University Press, 1971), x.

In addition, Rashid acknowledges the limits of his research, based on books and consulting traditions, and obtaining an incomplete knowledge of the events. He even admits the subjectivity of the reports brought by compilers, because they are taken from traditions, C. D’Ohsson, *Histoire des Mongols depuis Tchinguiz-Khan jusqu’à Timour Bey ou Tamerlan* (Amsterdam, 1852), xxxiii-xlvi..

<sup>39</sup> For the complicated way to count the years in the Chinese calendar, see <https://www.timeanddate.com/calendar/about-chinese.html>

<sup>40</sup> Golden Horde, Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden\\_Horde](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Horde).

<sup>41</sup> “It will be suggested that al-Maqrizi’s role [up to 696/1296-7] is merely that of a writer who has provided us with a convenient placement of events... Here and there, al-Maqrizi does provide a snippet of information—sources usually unnamed..., showing that he had at his disposal other sources, and indicating that he was capable of writing a synthetic work when he chose,” Reuven Amitai, *Al-Maqrizi as a Historian of the Early Mamluk Sultanate...* (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2003), 101-102. R. Amitai deals also with some “small changes” from Makrizi’s presumable sources in, for example, the description of a battle, but without radically altering “the view of the early Mamluk Sultanate,” *ibid*, 113. On other occasions, he gives important information not found in other sources, due probably “to his wide geographical knowledge,” *ibid*, 115. “Al-Maqrizi had other works in front of him... when he was composing the history of the early sultanate. We see that he was capable of dipping into different sources, even once using a report that was not in the parallel passage in one of them,” *ibid*. 116. See n. 50.

In other works, Makrizi is also valuable. “The original treatise of Makrizi [on the coins of the Mohammedans] is the most extensive and the most esteemed as any on the same subject,” Makrizi, “A Treatise of the Coins of the Mohammedans,” in A Society of Gentlemen, *The Critical Review or Annals of Literature* (London, 1799), 555.

chronology of these events is... uncertain.”<sup>42</sup>

The year 697 (1297/8) is to be preferred for this first battle because both armies could not cross the river until the coming of Spring. As already seen, the winter was mild at that time. In addition, as we will see below, Pachymeres refers to several years between that battle and the end of the war, which concluded with the total extermination of Nogay’s sons. In this way, the testimony of the *History...* seems to favor the date of Nuwayri and Makrizi.

Let’s read the testimony of Nuwayri and Makrizi on the first battle.

Nuwayri:<sup>43</sup> “In 697 a tiff began between Toqta and Nogay... (753). Both princes met in 697 in Yacssi, between their two residences. Noughia [Nogay] had an army of 200,000 riders; Touctai was defeated.”<sup>44</sup> [The spelling of Nogay in Nuwayri and Makrizi is Noughia].

Makrizi: “That same month [Jumada I, 697 (March 1298)], it was known by a dispatch arrived from Alep, that the division had broken out between Toqta and the troop of Nogay; that in that war a big amount of Mongols had perished, and that king Toqta had been defeated.”<sup>45</sup>

**2. The second battle** was dated by the aforementioned historians to the year 699, except by Makrizi who based his report on the archives of Egypt.<sup>46</sup> Makrizi dated the second and decisive battle to the year 698, more definitely, in Jumada II (April 1299). We have to keep in mind that he had already reported the first battle in the same season the former year. Now, in April 1299, the Alans had enough time to move to the territory of the emperor and to be present at the battle of Bapheus on July 27th. As we shall see, a small portion of them was sent, urgently, to Bapheus.

Let’s read the report of Makrizi on the second battle, to compare it with how Rashid reported that battle.

Makrizi: “News coming from Alep informed that Nogay<sup>47</sup> and Taktai [Toqta] delivered a battle where a grand number of Mongols perished...”<sup>48</sup>

Rashid: “Nogay and his sons were defeated, and an enormous number of people were killed in the battle...”<sup>49</sup>

Makrizi does not say that Nogay died in the battle, which may be explained by his trend to summarize the events and omit some details.<sup>50</sup> But it is striking that he doesn’t mention another battle in his book among these two princes between the first and second battle, and the other historians affirm that Nogay

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<sup>42</sup> G. I. Bratianu, *Recherches sur Vicina et Cetatea Alba* (Bucarest, 1935), 110.

<sup>43</sup> “The Egyptian historian Novaïri had obtained [the materials of his book] from the reports of the ambassadors which the sultans of Egypt often sent to the court of Sarāï”, cf. M. le Baron C. D’Ohsson, *Histoire des Mongols...* (1835), IV, 319-323. Novaïri also recognizes in another section of his *History of the Mongols...*, that “the loss of many contemporaneous historical works doesn’t allow us... to scrutinize the accuracy of the facts reported,” *ibid*, lvi-lvii. A review of another book he wrote on many sciences, states that “innovative in design (his histories are grouped by nations rather than chronologies) and blithely unconcerned with contradictions,” Genevieve Valentine, *A Beautiful Edition of the Abridged ‘Erudition,’* August 229, 1016. I include here these facts to show that often, ancient books have limitations.

<sup>44</sup> In bab II of the cassm 5 of the Fenn V, of his *Universal History* (V. XXV of the manuscript copy of the Library of Leyden, 753-754.

<sup>45</sup> *Histoires des Sultans Mamlocks de l’Égypte*, II, 60.

<sup>46</sup> Bratianu wrote: “The chronology of these events is, in addition, uncertain: Arabic sources seem to indicate the year 1299 as the date for the decisive battle.” Bratianu doesn’t mention Makrizi who places that battle in April 1299, *Histoire des Sultans...*, 110, 128.

<sup>47</sup> Misspelled Bagaï by the French translator.

<sup>48</sup> Makrizi, 128.

<sup>49</sup> Rashiduddin, 365.

<sup>50</sup> The reason why Makrizi didn’t mention the death of Nogay can be explained by his trend to summarize his sources. For this reason, Amitai suggests that Makrizi “should be seen mainly as a general guide to the events of the period, and as an appropriate text for students to cut their teeth on early Mamluk historiography,” *Al-Makrizi as a Historian...*, 117. There is also evidence that Makrizi consulted different sources, as is proven by an analysis of his story in the early period of the sultanate up to 696/1296-7. See Reuven Amitai, 99-118. Amitai gives examples of “further indication of al-Maqrizi’s wide reading in earlier sources, which only occasionally finds expression in the annals of these years,” *ibid*, 116. See n. 41.

was wounded and at last killed in that second and final battle between Nogay and Toqta.<sup>51</sup> This second and decisive battle was followed by other battles which took place among his sons in their struggle for succession. The fact that some Arab sources date the battle and death of Nogay in the year 699 [1299-1300], could be explained by an attempt to summarize the complete defeat of Nogay's army several months later, when his son Ceke fled to Bulgaria to be killed even later by his brother in law.<sup>52</sup>

Joseph de Guignes also considered the date provided by Abul Fida for the death of Nogay to be dubious. He wrote in a note that, "according to Pachymeres, *it seems that it has to be earlier.*"<sup>53</sup> Actually, Pachymeres brings to consideration the alliance of the emperor with Toqta through the marriage of his illegitimate daughter Mary.<sup>54</sup> He stated that "the destiny of Nogay" in the war was reaching an end, and that "until Toqta submitted all the Tartar forces," "several years" went by.

If the quarrel between Toqta and Nogay began in March 698 [1299], as specified by Abul Fida, until the beginning of 699 (1299-1300), when Nogay would have supposedly died, there is only one year and a few months. But if we take into account the testimony of Nuwayri and Makrizi, that the war started in 697 (1297-8), the expression "several years" could be more easily understood, and even more so if Pachymeres was thinking in terms of a Byzantine calendar which began in September. In this context, Makrizi and Nuwayri are right when they date the first battle to 697 (1297-8) with the victory of Nogay. And only the next year 698 the lot of Nogay seemed cast (1299). Toqta could not completely overcome the sons of Nogay before the year 1300. From the beginning of 1298 to the end of 1300 there are about two years and some months or three indictional years in the Byzantine calendar.<sup>55</sup>

Briefly, instead of dating the death of Nogay to 699, it is more likely to date it in the Spring of the year 698, as Makrizi did in reference to the second and last decisive battle (April 1299).<sup>56</sup>

*Additional facts.* Already before the last decisive battle in March/April 1299, many troops were deserting Nogay. They knew that Nogay was old and weak, and the Alans (being Christians) were

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<sup>51</sup> Nogay is defeated and wounded when fleeing with his sons, and killed before reaching Toqta, Rashiduddin Fazlullah's, 365. If some locate the second battle in 699 [after August 1299] it is probably because at that time the war reached an end with the inner struggles for succession between the sons of Nogay, and their complete impotence before the forces of Toqta (other historians, following Rashid (or Rashiduddin) like C. D'Ohsson, *Histoire de Mongols*, 1835, 319, link the second battle with the death of Nogay; Iván Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars. Oriental Military in the Pre-Ottoman Balkans, 1185-1365* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 92-94: "After Nogay's death in the devastating battle of Kügenlik, a terrible struggle for inheritance broke out among his sons, the result of which was their total destruction within eighteen months."

<sup>52</sup> "Toqta believed that he had to stop Nogay in his ambition, and marched against him. He defeated Nogay in a pitched battle. Nogay was found among the dead, and the greatest part of his soldiers subjected themselves to the Khan; a small number remained faithful to Ceke, son of Nogay," Joseph de Guignes, *Histoire Générale des Huns, des Turks, des Mogols, et des autres Tartares Occidentaux* III (Paris, 1757), 348.

<sup>53</sup> "Abulfehda places the death of that prince in 699 of the Hegira. I followed him in the Tables. *But it seems by Pachymeres that it has to be earlier*, that is, as I mark it here," des Guignes, 348.

<sup>54</sup> "Toqta joined her but, since the Tatar war still continued developing and the destine of Nogay to beat like the tail of a serpent, he wanted to devote himself to the war operations, and not to marital relations which weak the body, and he sent back again Mary to the emperor. She remained here *during several years, until he could subject all the Tatar forces...* Then he sent a mission to the emperor to request his wife... Nogay had disappeared, while Toqta held the State of Nogay, which he submitted after strengthening the agreements contracted by the marital alliance" (Book 9, chap 27).

<sup>55</sup> Some authors don't believe that the emperor made the arrangement before Nogay's death, because they take into account the fact that the emperor had already made similar arrangements with Nogay. Would the emperor now make an equivalent arrangement with Toqta to raise the anger of Nogay? István Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars. Oriental Military in the Pre-Ottoman Balkans, 1185-1385* (Cambridge university Press, 2005), 91. But it was evident for all that Nogay was old and weak, and could not last long.

<sup>56</sup> The Alans, who had being fighting on Nogay's side, were doubtless feeling that they were caught in the middle of a chaos caused by the struggles between Nogay and Toqta, and the struggles of succession of the two sons of Nogay, Teke and Ceke, which started before Nogay's death. Ceke won the succession as may be also confirmed by his inscription on the coins as khan. If the sons were already fighting for the succession of Nogay's khanate in 698/1298-9, and Nogay could not live much longer due to his age, we shouldn't wonder that the Alans decided to defect to the Byzantine emperor's side at that moment, moving hastily into the territory of the empire. The expression of Pachymeres, "when Nogay died in the war," could be interpreted as in other cases, as referring to the time or year when he died, or related to his death. The weakness and age of Nogay was allowing them to feel that they could be released them from their loyalty to that man.

uncomfortable because Nogay had converted to the Muslim religion in the 70's.<sup>57</sup> They had already fought for the Roman emperor, and had good relations with the Byzantine court. So, it is possible that even before the defeat and death of Nogay, some “dignitaries” among the Alans met the archbishop of Bitzines, as reported by Pachymeres, as an intermediary between them and the emperor, a necessary step required before the escape. Thus, when Pachymeres wrote that they moved to the Roman territory “when Nogay perished in the war,” he could have been reporting in a general way what happened *at the time or in the year* “when Nogay died.”

We also have to keep in mind that there were many different Alans near the Black Sea. Only a *tümen* (10,000 soldiers) among them moved to the Eastern Roman Empire.

“It is necessary to take into account the large amount of testimonies of the presence of the Alans in all the southern littoral of the Black Sea... But the majority of their forces were in the West, in the region of Dniestr and Prut...”<sup>58</sup>

## **VI. From 1298 to 1300: Chaos for succession in the Bulgarian kingdom.**

The chaos was produced because Nogay could no longer intervene there. He was fighting with Toqta or had died in battle. Since the Alans who moved over to the emperor’s side departed their territory through Bulgaria, we could deduce that the Alans deserted Nogay at the same time.

Actually, the Mongol khan Nogay exerted his will over an extensive territory. The kingdom of Bulgaria was under his dominion. But:

“In November 1298, medieval Bulgaria faced a new period of total political chaos for some years. Common opinion has it that for more than two years there was an interregnum in Bulgaria, since the Bulgarian boyar clans could not reach agreement over the succession to the throne, nor could Nogay intervene in these struggles because of his conflict with Toqta, khan of the Golden Horde. Be that as it may, the chaos in the country and the death of Nogay... enabled Nogay’s son Ceke to enter the forefront of Bulgarian events.”<sup>59</sup>

## **VII. First half of 1299: The numismatic evidence suggests that Nogay died toward the end of 698.**

During the last 30 years, “new hoards of coins” shed new light on the history of the Mongols, especially related to Nogay and his son Ceke.

“Coins struck in the name of Nogay and/or his son Ceke... Nogay and Ceke’s coins were struck in the period between 1296 and 1301... The minting of coins in the ruler’s name is an obvious sign of sovereignty in Islam. The official title of Nogay as reflected in the coins is khan, while his son Ceke is designated sultan; but during his father’s lifetime, probably as early as AH 698 (1298/9), he also adopted the title of khan.”<sup>60</sup>

Some suppose that the adoption of the title khan by Ceke could be a sign of co-regency with his father Nogay. But it is hard to believe that Ceke had been sultan while Nogay was khan, and then became khan while Nogay was still khan. If he was already sultan when his father was still khan, what would be the reason to change the role of Ceke to become also khan? Would it rather not mean that his father had died in 698, and Ceke assumed his khanate?

## **VIII. Alans desert in masse to the Byzantine Empire (April 1299) [Book 10, chap 16].**

The *History of Pachymeres* states that the emperor had to furnish the Alans with weapons. Since most historians today think that the Alans moved in the year 1301 or 1302, they have to suppose that they fled

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<sup>57</sup> Vásáry, 89.

<sup>58</sup> Brătianu, 42-3.

<sup>59</sup> Vásáry, 91-92.

<sup>60</sup> Vásáry, 91.

from Toqta, the Mongol khan who had defeated Nogay two years before. But this is not plausible, because after leaving the Romans about two years later, the Alans offered their services to Toqta.

Actually, the evidence goes in another direction. They weren't afraid of Toqta, because after being among the Romans, they felt that they could fight for him.<sup>61</sup> The Alans would be rather escaping from Nogay even when he was still alive, or just after his death from his sons. In fact, they couldn't escape with their own weapons. In addition, Pachymeres tells us that the Alans fled to Byzantium in the year when Nogay died, not two or more years later.

Pachymeres, the first source and contemporaneous writer, didn't say that the Alans personally met the emperor when they entered Byzantine territory.<sup>62</sup> No mention is found in his writings of a presumable meeting with the emperor in person who, in our view, was still in Thessalonica. They requested the archbishop of Bitzines to intercede before the king on their behalf. The emperor sent them imperial letters inviting them to come. "He brought the Alan's *dignitaries* and received them benevolently." Where? Was it in Thessalonica? If they came through Bulgaria, that city was not necessarily farther than the capital of the Empire. Was it in Constantinople? Was it in the Empire, without implying a personal encounter? Nothing is said about that.

The context of the story favors the view that the emperor was in Thessalonica. As a matter of fact, Pachymeres tells us that "the emperor prepared for them abundant provisions brought from the territories of Thrace and Macedonia," whose principal city is Thessalonica. The emperor determined to furnish them with weapons, with a salary, and dispatched Roman guides to send them to the East, to dwell there (Book 10, chap 16). There is no reference to the Alans moving to Constantinople to meet the emperor. On the contrary, we are told that he sent them to the East, guided by his officials.

*"The Alans reached the border through Bulgaria and contacted the bishop of Bitzina at the mouth of the Danube. They asked the bishop to intercede with Andronikos and offered him their services in his struggle against the Turks in Anatolia... Imperial letters were immediately sent to them, inviting them into the Empire. Care was taken that sufficient supplies were provided to them from Thrace and Macedonia. Andronikos sent imperial officials to the Alans to ensure that their passage was smooth with sufficient guides to lead the way. The Alans departed together with their women and children in their wagons and carts just as a Mongol tümen would. Andronikos levied public contributions to pay their wages and furnished them with horses and arms taken from his own troops."*<sup>63</sup>

"It is not, however, clear why the Alans needed to be so completely reequipped that the exactions would be such a burden. It may simply be that after fleeing the Mongol army their horses were done in and their equipment

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<sup>61</sup> Scott Jessee and Anatoly Isaenko, 113, believes that it would have not been possible for the Alans to escape from Toqta's Mongols "in the aftermath of Kúgenlik with their heavy equipment and sufficient remounts demanded by their tactics." "Their whole adventure within the empire had started with their intense desire to get away from the Tatars and Toqta in particular," *ibid*, 127. This assumption leads Scott Jessee and Anatoly Isaenko, discredit the testimony of Pachymeres who stated that, when they were leaving the empire, they offered their services to Toqta, *ibid*, 127. But, would not this fact be rather an evidence that the Alans fled Nogay and his sons, and not Toqta? If they had left Nogay when he was still alive or were fleeing his sons shortly after his death, there would be no reason to fear a return to the Tartars under Toqta. See n. 80.

<sup>62</sup> More than half a century later, Nicephorus Gregoras wrote that the emperor met the Alans after returning from Thessalonica. But this is a different version of what Pachymeres wrote. Of course, the principal group of Alans which was assigned to the emperor's son, had to meet him before departing toward the East on April 10, 1300. In the meantime, this group evidently spent nearly one year in preparation, until they put themselves under the military orders of the king.

About Nikephoros Gregoras, *Historia Rhomáike*, written a generation later, Scott Jessee and Anatoly Isaenko, wrote: "While easier to read than Pachymeres, Gregoras' deficiencies as a historian and lack of personal knowledge of events mean that if the two Greek sources are not in agreement, Pachymeres is usually to be preferred..." Scott Jessee and Anatoly Isaenko, 110. "Gregoras' version is the briefest, the clearest, and the least reliable..." *ibid*, 123. He prefers Pachymeres because "he was better informed and a better historian in general than Gregoras," *ibid*, 117.

"Nikephoros Gregoras is closely inspired by his predecessor. His story is no more than a compendium of the pattern..." "Les Émirs Turcs..." in *Revue des études byzantines*, V. 52, 1994, 104-5. "Writing fifty years after his pattern, Nicephoros Gregoras could have edited, completed, or developed the story of his predecessor. This is not the case... Rather than looking for new reports, it is necessary to suppose that the historian [Gregoras] produces simply a bad summary of its source... The confusion touching this story is caused by the complexity of the text of the pattern, the *History* of Georges Pachymeres..." *ibid*, 107. "To summarize, it is useful to repeat once more here that it is not necessary to seek in the *History* of Nikephoros Gregoras new information... I am afraid that it will not be as dangerous as useless to hold forth on the divergences or contradictions that his *History* introduces with regard to the *Historical Relations of Georges Pachymeres*," *ibid*, 108.

<sup>63</sup>Scott Jessee and Anatoly Isaenko, 113.

either lost or worn out. More likely it had not been possible for the Alans to escape... with their heavy equipment and sufficient remounts demanded by their tactics. They seem to have fled south to Bitzina, away from their supply stations. Refugees fleeing a regime from which they could expect little consideration...clearly needed to receive new equipment, fresh horses, and pay.”<sup>64</sup>

Another statement of Pachymeres in this chapter allows us to see the need to urgently dispatch the Alans to Bapheus. He said: “the situation in the East was then bad and serious.” It is evident that the Byzantines were recognizing the Turkish danger, which began to be degraded after the battle of Bapheus. As a matter of fact, Pachymeres will remind us that the defeat of Bapheus some months later was “a serious defeat,” “the beginning of the great evils” (Book 10, chap 25). The greatest number of Alans, which were assigned to emperor’s son Michael, must have spent nearly one year preparing to place themselves under the military orders of the king.



**IX. July 27, 1299: The battle of Bapheus (Book 10, caps 25-26).**

It is striking that the Byzantine historians, following Pachymeres, consider the battle of Bapheus as a turning point in the history of the Turks in the conquest of the Byzantine Empire. As a matter of fact, Osman came unexpectedly from “far away to invade” the region. The other Turkmen had covenanted with the emperor, and were jealous for such an abrupt intervention of Osman, who saw in the practically

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

defenseless fortress of Bapheus, the chance to overcome in the assault (Book 10, chap 25).<sup>65</sup>

For Pachymeres, the battle of Bapheus was:

“A serious defeat” (Book 10, chap 25). “It was, therefore, *the beginning of the great evils* for the entire region at a time when the harvest of the fruits of the land urged” (Book 10, chap 26).”

“Where and when does Ottoman history begin? The Byzantines first found Osman and his tribe worth special notice and attention in... the battle between the forces of Osman and Mouzalon at Bapheus, a place just outside Nicomedia.” “For the Byzantine chronicler George Pachymeres..., Osman became a man worth watching... as a result of the battle of Bapheus.” “Osman, a petty Turkish leader from Bithynia, here makes *his first solid appearance in history*... Other Turks flocked to his banner and these combined forces threatened Nicomedia... *This victory was of crucial importance in Osman’s ability to take a commanding position among the various Turkish chieftains.* The ultimate end of this process would be the founding of the Ottoman Empire.”<sup>66</sup>

Since all the earlier Ottoman sources agree that the beginning of the Ottoman Empire took place in the year 1299, why do modern historians date the battle of Bapheus in the year 1302? In addition, modern historians don’t give references for a severe winter or abnormal rains in the year 1302. They place that exceptional bad weather in 1302 because of its connection to the story of Bapheus which they believe to have happened in that year. But no external reference is given for such exceptional weather in 1302.

By the way, the severe winter of 1298/9 gives additional evidence of abnormal weather which seems to have been accompanied by strong storms in the Spring, and which caused undoubtedly, the overflow of the river Sangarius as depicted by Pachymeres before the battle of Bapheus. As already seen, the only external documentation of severe weather given by historians is that of 1298/9.<sup>67</sup>

#### **X. 699 (1299-1300): Two coins with the inscription, “Ostman ibn Ertogrul.”**

Several modern authors denied the succession in lineage of Osman from Ertogrul. But coins found in recent times show that he was, indeed, son of Ertogrul.<sup>68</sup> Evidence of other similar coins dated in 699 (1299/1300), were struck in dies common in Anatolia in that year. Lindner suggests that these coins were struck in Sogut by Osman in that very year and, as a matter of fact, he found an impressive increase of similar coins dated in A.H. 699 [1299/1300 AD].<sup>69</sup>

“I examined the traditions of Ottoman independence and brought to bear evidence from an unexpected source, leading to the discovery that the year A.H. 699 had an importance throughout Anatolia, as the coinage demonstrates.”<sup>70</sup>

#### **XI. Between August and October in 1299: Letter of archbishop Athanasius to the emperor.**<sup>71</sup>

The letter of bishop Athanasius to the emperor who was in Thessalonica is extremely important, because it could not have been written before March or April 1299 when Andronicus left Constantinople, or after October of the same year, one month before his return from Thessalonica. Therefore, this letter contradicts the chronology of events offered by modern historians concerning the battle of Bapheus.<sup>72</sup> In

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<sup>65</sup> A. Failler, *Histoire...*, 364, n. 61 : “Osman... had already defeated on one occasion Mouzalon, while Hales Amourios did not cross the Sangarius. Then, the example of Osman [in Bapheus] incited Hales Amourios to take part in the invasion to the Byzantine lands.” Differing from the former confrontation between Osman and Mouzalon, the defeat of Bapheus was “a serious defeat.”

<sup>66</sup> Lindner, 16,82-3,116.

<sup>67</sup> See below on how the story of Bapheus is inserted in the literary frame of Pachymeres.

<sup>68</sup> Lindner, 18,98.

<sup>69</sup> Lindner, 98-100.

<sup>70</sup> Lindner, 118.

<sup>71</sup> Laurent believes that the letter should have been written before October 1300, because he believes that the king returned in that year. But if we assume that the king returned on November 22, 1299, as we will see next, that letter could not have been written later than October 1299.

<sup>72</sup> V. Laurent, A.A., « Les Regestes de 1208 a 1309, 568-9 (Fasc. IV), » in *Les Actes des Patriarches* (V. I); in *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarcat the Constantinople* ; in *Le Patriarcat Byzantin* (Série I). (Institut Francais d’Études Byzantins, Paris, 1971).

addition, the tone of the letter seems to contradict the report of Pachymeres who introduces Athanasius as being humble, while in the letter of Athanasius he threatens the emperor.

The letter is written in Constantinople. The fact that it is “placed at the head of the ancient collection, and is no doubt contemporaneous with what constitutes the Vaticanus,” requires it to be dated before the second patriarchate of Athanasius, because during the second patriarchate of Athanasius beginning June 1303, Andronicus II doesn't leave the capital. In addition, the requirement of Athanasius to the emperor to return to face the Turks agrees with the statement of Pachymeres who wrote that the campaign to the East the next year was led by his son Michael, “because the situation in the East required the intervention of the emperor” (Book 10, chap 16).

Actually, the perplexity of Laurent is that Athanasius “requires the emperor to pay attention to the public calamities, especially to *the evils brought out by the Turkish invasion...*” He wrote, literally, that the Byzantines “had become the prey of the Ishmaelites (Turks) who have shed the blood like water.” Since Pachymeres wrote that the battle of Bapheus was “the beginning of the great evils in the whole region,” and the letter could not have been written after October 1299, how could the battle of Bapheus be dated in the year 1302? Laurent insists that “the situation in Asia Minor did not start to be degraded before the defeat of Bapheus...”<sup>73</sup> And the mention of the presence of the emperor in Thessalonica further complicates the matter, because he returned to Constantinople several years before 1302.

Briefly, the letter of Athanasius makes sense when we place the battle of Bapheus on July 27, 1299, the consequence of which required the immediate return of the emperor to Constantinople. Since the emperor returned from Thessalonica on November 22, 1299, we have to date that letter between August and October, just before his return in the same Julian year.

## **XII. November 22, 1299: Return of the emperor to Constantinople (Book 10, cap 8).**

Pachymeres wrote that the emperor returned with his son from Thessalonica to Constantinople on November 22. He specified that they returned “near two years after” (Book 10, chap 8). This reference has confounded several interpreters. The Greek historian Nicephorus Gregoras, about half a century after Pachymeres (14th Century), was the first one to understand that Pachymeres dealt here with two indictional years within the Byzantine calendar. For this reason, he wrote in his compendium of the work of Pachymeres, “the next year” of the Byzantine calendar. Pierre Poussines (1609-1686), the first Latin editor of George Pachymeres, followed by E. de Muralt in 1871,<sup>74</sup> understood also that the two years of the emperors' absence were indictional years, which allows us to reduce the almost two years to as little as 10 months.

Actually, the Byzantine year 6807 embraced in the Julian calendar the period of September 1, 1298 to August 31, 1299. And the year 6808 lasted from September 1, 1299 to August 31, 1300. Thus, from February 20, 1299 to November 22, 1299, the duration of time indicated by Pachymeres embraces two different years in the Byzantine calendar, namely the years 6807 and 6808.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Laurent, 569. Mouzalou had suffered a defeat before the battle of Bapheus. But the defeat of Bapheus, as already seen, “was a serious defeat” (Book 10, chap 25).

<sup>74</sup> E. de Muralt, *Essai de chronographie byzantine. 1057-1453* (Bale-Geneve 1871), 474, n. 1, agree with Poussines. Both authors understood that Andronicus returned to Constantinople on November 22, 1299. Muralt quotes also Gregoras in the 14th Century as supporting also that view: “Pach. IV 8, p. 290, 8: ‘On Mounychion 22, after two years of absence’ (6807 and 6808), Greg. VI, 10, p. 204,14: ‘the emperor returning the next year.’”

<sup>75</sup> A. Failler, « Chronologie et Composition dans l'histoire de Pachymeres, » in *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 48, 1990, 38, disagrees with Poussines, though with an unnecessary argument. He believes that the Greek adverb *eggús* deals with extension in time. No one disputes that fact, except the assumption that the duration of years would have to be necessarily nearly two complete years. Pachymeres referred to an extension in time which is found within two years of the calendar (“after near two years” in the Byzantine calendar). As a matter of fact, Gregoras was Greek, and he understood Pachymeres in this way.

We cannot avoid asking ourselves the reason why Failler becomes unnecessarily punctilious in a matter like this, when for a future event in the next year, he tries to openly correct Pachymeres to date it again, one year after the event portrayed by the author (see point XVI in this study). Why does he do this? Because the statements of Pachymeres cannot be adjusted to Failler's particular chronological fabrication. We will speak more on the presumable reasons of Failler for doing this.

## JULIAN CALENDAR

February 20, 1299 (depart) November 22 (return)  
/ \_\_\_\_\_ September 1 \_\_\_\_\_ /  
Year 6807 / Year 6808

## BYZANTINE CALENDAR

If Pachymeres wrote “near two years,” it is because they were not two complete years in the Byzantine calendar. The current historians’ departure from the short-time view of Gregoras, Poussines, and de Muralt in the former centuries, concerning the time spent by the emperor in Thessalonica, seems to be another modern attempt to justify a more extended span of time in history between the years 1299 and 1302, to more comfortably extend the battle of Bapheus to the late date they are proposing (see points XIV and XVI in this study).

### **XIII. Feb 1, 1300: Emperor Andronicus visits John the patriarch to explain to him the reasons why he married his daughter to the Kral of Serbia (Book 10, chap 9).**

John the patriarch was outraged because the emperor went to Thessalonica to give his six year old daughter to Simonides, a Serbian king who was invading the Byzantine Empire, and had more than one woman. For this reason, the emperor decided to meet patriarch John. He explained to John that he gave his daughter in marriage to the Kral with great pain, but expecting to avoid a war with terrible consequences to many people. In addition, the emperor could justify it because the legitimate wife of Simonides had passed away, and the other women were not legitimate wives.

The next day, February 2, was Hypapante festival, the presentation of baby Jesus. Both events can be dated only in 1300.<sup>76</sup> If the emperor returned from Thessalonica before the winter on November 22, 1299, and he was especially concerned by the opposition of the patriarch, there is no reason to extend the meeting one more year to arrange the situation.

### **XIV. April 10, 1300: Michael and Alans start their march to fight the Ottomans near the time of Easter (Book 10, chap 17).**

Some modern historians date the coming of the Alans to the Byzantine Empire in the year 1301, or even in 1302. They agree with Failler that they came to the Byzantine Empire after Nogay khan died in the year 1299.<sup>77</sup> One of the reasons motivating them to fix the Alans’ move two or three years later is that the battle of Bapheus, where a small contingent of Alans died, could not take place in the dry year 1301. The year 1300 is not considered a good candidate by them because they take the almost two years of the emperors in Thessalonica as literal complete years, instead of almost two years within the Byzantine calendar (indictional years).<sup>78</sup> The consequence is that they repeatedly need to correct the dates given by Pachymeres in the following chapters.

Pachymeres stated that the Alans escaped the Mongol war, and sought refuge in the Byzantine Empire.<sup>79</sup> If Nogay died in the year 1299, why would they escape to the Byzantine territory two years later, or even three, as suggested by Failler? They weren’t afraid of Toqta, because after being among the Romans, they offered their services to Toqta.<sup>80</sup> They fled Nogay and his sons at a moment when many

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<sup>76</sup> E. de Muralt, 475.

<sup>77</sup> A. Failler, *Georges Pachymeres...*, 338, n. 99: “Nogay died in 1299, and the context allows us to place in 1301 or 1302 the first contacts between the Alans and the emperor.”

<sup>78</sup> We have already seen above the historical evidence that allows us to date the death of Nogay in the first half of the year 1299, and when the Alans moved to the Byzantine Empire.

<sup>79</sup> “They had just barely been saved [by the Romans who accepted them in the Byzantine Empire], and many of them had suffered the evils that they had faced and found...” (Book 10, chap 16).

<sup>80</sup> Scott Jessee and Anatoly Isaenko end by discrediting the testimony of Pachymeres who stated that, when they were leaving the Empire, they offered their services to Toqta, *ibid*, 127. But, would not this fact be rather an evidence that the Alans fled Nogay and his sons, and not Toqta? If they had left Nogay when he was still alive, or immediately after he died, there would be no reason to fear a return to the Tartars under Toqta. See above, n. 61.

were deserting them because they were realizing that Nogay was old and weak and his sons were fighting for succession. That increasing desertion caused the defeat and death of Nogay in the second great battle.

Another discussion has to do with the moment when the Alans met the emperor and where. If the battle of Bapheus took place on July 27, 1299, the emperor was at that time in Thessalonica. But, as already seen, nothing in the text requires us to deduce that they met personally with the emperor in Constantinople. “The Alans departed from Bulgaria together with their women and children in their wagons and carts just as a Mongol *tümen* would.”<sup>81</sup> Their location was practically equidistant to Thessalonica and Constantinople. They requested the archbishop of Bitzines, near their location, to intercede before the king in their behalf.

The emperor sent the Alans imperial letters inviting them to come. “He brought the Alan’s dignitaries and received them benevolently.” Again, where? Is this a reference to some representatives among them who went to Thessalonica where the king was at that moment? The Alan *tümen* didn’t seem to have moved to Thessalonica or to Constantinople. Is this a reference to a welcome into the empire, without implying a personal meeting? Pachymeres doesn’t explain it. But he wrote that the emperor determined to furnish them with weapons taken from the territories of Thrace and Macedonia, which favors the view that he was still in Thessalonica. He offered them a salary, and dispatched Roman guides to send the Alans to the East, to dwell there (Book 10, chap 16).

Now, we are dealing with the date when the emperor’s son left for the east to fight with an army composed of Romans and Alans. This took place not before April 10, 1300. The Alans who would leave with the emperor’s son spent doubtless several months preparing themselves for that expedition. We are not told, however, at what moment the emperor joined the troops before departure.<sup>82</sup> It should be, doubtless, after returning from Thessalonica on November 22, 1299.

But Pachymeres states clearly that not all Alan troops left for the Orient at the same time. Among “those who rushed first to the East” was a small troop of Alans who went to Bapheus (Book 10, chap 16).<sup>83</sup> What urged that group to depart? Evidently the situation created by the natural destruction of Bapheus’ defenses prompted the Turkish armies to assault the city. If the estimated year chosen for the battle of Bapheus is the year 1300, there would have had no reason to urge 2,000 Alans to leave because the destruction of Bapheus’ defenses took place in March. In that case, they would have departed practically at the same time of the army assigned to Michael, the emperor’s son. But the greatest group of Alans required additional time in preparation for a more comprehensive expedition because the life of the emperor’s son would be at risk. They had to wait for the order of the departure of Andronicus. They departed, finally, in the Spring of 1300.

In other words, those among the Alans who departed first to the east, did so before the Spring of 1300, that is, toward the end of the Spring of the former year or at the beginning of the Summer. Pachymeres affirms clearly that the battle of Bapheus was “the beginning of the great evils in the whole region.” Those misfortunes were also felt, after the battle of Bapheus, in the Eastern upper part of the empire where the emperor’s son was located with his army in the year 1300 (Book 10, chap 26).

During the first half of the year 1301, when the expiration date of the contract came, the emperor could not allow the Alans to depart because:

“Misfortunes threatened around, so that others harassed the land of the Romans, and Amourios, Lamises and Osman and other thousands attacked” (Book 10, chap 20). “Under the extreme need and misfortunes which reached the region beyond Pergame, when the Persians attacked freely, no inhabitant remained” in their lands... “All dreamed to depart: some went till Pergame and further inland around Atrammytion.<sup>84</sup> Others went near the sea toward Lampsakos, but most of them reached the opposing shore, crossing the Helespont; others went even

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<sup>81</sup> Scott Jessee and Anatoly Isaenko, 113.

<sup>82</sup> As mentioned above, more than half a century later, Gregoras would have interpreted that the Alans met the emperor when he returned from Thessalonica. The emperor’s son Michael met the troops to organize the expedition at the end of the year 1299 or at the beginning of the year 1300. But the first and only contemporaneous source of the events is Pachymeres, and his version of these events is different. See n. 62.

<sup>83</sup> The second group went with their families toward the East where they expected to dwell.

<sup>84</sup> The exact location of Atrammytion is unknown.

farther, because *they had been shaken before of great fears*" (Book 10, chap 21).

Pachymeres deals with a desperate mass exodus that was already occurring when the Venetians surrounded the city with their ships, in the first half of the year 1300 (Book 10, chap 24). The hurried emigration began more definitely after the battle of Bapheus, according to Pachymeres in Book 10, chap 26, with the people fleeing toward Constantinople (Book 10, chaps 25 and 26).

Pachymeres considered the flood which destroyed the protection of Bapheus a manifestation of the wrath of God against the Romans (Book 10, chap 24). His reflections on the fearful situation becomes, therefore, Apocalyptic.<sup>85</sup>

"Even in Atramythion where the emperor was [during his campaign to the East in 1300?],<sup>86</sup> had suffered the Turkish invasion. All the surrounding countryside had been devastated; the misfortune was terrible, and the events inexorable, because everything *had been destroyed in few months* [obviously, especially by Osman]. Since because the divine wrath and the divine anger had determined to suffer in this way, it was also logic to think that the end of these misfortunes would be the result of the exclusive divine protection and the Omnipotent compassion" (Book 10, chap 26).

Let us insist again that the year 1300 is not a good candidate for the battle of Bapheus, because in that year there is no historical report of a severe winter like that of 1298/9 or a tremendous storm like that in the Spring of 1299. To this we may add the letter of Athanasius which required the emperor to return to Constantinople to face the invasion of the Turks which the context places after Bapheus, which the *History* placed at the beginning of evils. Even more, as we will see next, Pachymeres himself places the defeat of Bapheus before the first half of the year 1300.

#### **XV. Spring of 1300: The ships of the Venetians surround the city of Constantinople (Book 10, chaps 23-24).**

The Alans who were assigned to the emperor made a contract for one year, which was extended for three additional months (Book 10, chaps 17-22). Since the departure of the emperor's son with a significant number of Alan and Roman soldiers toward the east took place on April 10, 1300, we can suppose that the expiration date of the contract reached the Spring of the following year. Pachymeres wrote in his *History*: "Before this, the same month of the former year, on the same day," which was April 10 because this is the only specific date given by Pachymeres for the departure of the emperor with his army.

Pachymeres tells us how at the expiration of the one year contract, the Alans wanted to leave the Empire.<sup>87</sup> By then, the danger of Nogay and his sons was over, and Toqta was no longer at war with them. The emperor tried to prevent their departure, and a civil war burst out. One year before the expiration date and three months or even the time of the civil war that followed their attempt to depart, the Venetians came with their ships and took prisoner those who were fleeing from the Persians (Turks). (Book 10, chaps 23-24).

The episode of the Venetians concludes with the following statement of Pachymeres.

"Another combat urged against the Persians who besieged the whole Orient, as from the sea to the sea, and

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<sup>85</sup> One century later Turkish historians took this Orthodox apocalyptic vision as God's punishment against the Eastern Roman Empire, and interpreted it as a testimony of the divine support to encourage the Muslim invasion and take possession of Constantinople. See Kaya Sahin, "Constantinople and the End Time: The Ottoman Conquest as a Portent of the Last Hour," *in Journal of Early Modern History* 14 (2010), 317-354. Protestants a little later interpreted the Turkish invasion likewise, as a manifestation of the divine intervention against the Eastern Roman Empire prophesied by the fifth and sixth trumpets of Revelation. See A. R. Treiyer, *The Seals and the Trumpets* (2005), Excursus III, "History of Interpretation of the Trumpets;" and *The Apocalyptic Times of the Sanctuary* (2014), 261-282.

<sup>86</sup> See n. 84.

<sup>87</sup> We are once more amazed here, at how Failler dates these events neglecting the one year contract of the Alans (p. 347, n. 17 of his translation of the work of Pachymeres).

there was not a defender. Diverse dangers loomed here and there the unfortunate Romans, while the entire Mesothynia emigrated, after Mouzalon who had been nominated as governor of those regions, suffered a serious defeat” (Book 10, 24).

Here we again see that the emigration of the people of those regions took place after Mouzalon’s defeat at the battle of Bapheus, which in Pachymeres’s words, was a “serious defeat.” In fact, the next chapter begins with the description of the battle of Bapheus on July 27, when Mouzalon was defeated. In order to tell that story, Pachymeres insists that “*it is necessary to resume the story from the beginning.*” And he jumps backward several years, to the rivalries among the different Persian leaders.

In other words, the battle of Bapheus where Mouzalon was defeated took place before the Venetian invasion in April 1300, and before the departure of Michael toward the East around the same time. July 27th should fall consequently in the former year 1299. This fact is corroborated in some way by several current Turkish scholars who are relating the beginning of the Ottoman Empire with the victory of Osman at Bapheus.<sup>88</sup>

What was the “other combat” that was expected to happen at that time, after the defeat of Bapheus? All the hopes of those regions in the year 1300 were placed in the army commanded by Michael, the son of Andronicus. But that expedition ended in complete failure. The Roman generals were afraid and told the emperor that they needed to protect him. This seemed reason enough not to engage in battle and so they fled. The Alans, aware that the Romans had fled from Bapheus, didn’t want to be betrayed as their fellows had been there. Therefore, they now also left the camp.

Additionally, a quarrel arose when Alan mercenaries sought to protect a woman from sexual abuse by Catalan mercenaries. It resulted in Catalans killing a number of Alans and the emperor’s son had to intervene to stem the violence. All in all, by time of the expiration date of their contract, the Alans were disappointed with their stay in Byzantium and decided to leave the Empire.

We have to insist here that one of the problems in identifying the place of the fortress of Bapheus and the year of the battle, has to do with an attempt to link Bapheus with a Turkish legend about a presumable battle in Koyunhizar in the year 1302.<sup>89</sup> But this connection is today rejected by many scholars for two basic reasons. The battle of Koyunhizar is a legend and its description has nothing to do with what Pachymeres depicts in connection with the battle of Bapheus. For its importance, I will quote again two current historians which affirm this fact.

“Attempts to match the Ottoman and Byzantine chronologies together, with Bapheus as common to both chronologies, have been unsuccessful... No battle in the Ottoman chronicles accord well with the description of Pachymeres.” “No battle description in the early Ottoman sources matches Bapheus as Pachymeres recounted it.”<sup>90</sup>

I wrote on December 5, 2015, to Dr. Colin H. Imber (Professor of Middle Eastern studies at the Univ. of Manchester, England), who had written this: “... modern historians have overoptimistically identified [Koyunhizar] with the Bapheus in Pachymeres.” On December 7 he answered me as follows:

“Ottoman tradition (from the 15th century) mentions Koyunhizar as the site of Osman’s victory over the Byzantines, with the result that later historians conflated it with Bapheus. However, looking at the Ottoman texts it became obvious to me that the Koyunhizar story is a fabrication that came about via folk etymology of place names and the existence of a shrine, to which the name of an Ottoman ‘martyr’ became attached. I discussed this (and other legendary material) in an article entitled ‘the Ottoman dynastic myth’ in Elizabeth Zachariadou (ed.), *The Ottoman Emirate (1300-1389)*, Crete University Press, 1993.”

Another statement of Pachymeres makes it hard to believe that the battle of Bapheus took place after the year 1299. He said: “It was, therefore, *the beginning of the great evils for the entire region* at a time

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<sup>88</sup> Some, like Inalcik, place the date of the foundation of the Ottoman Empire in 1302 after the battle of Bapheus, believing that the battle took place in that year and Osman became the undisputed leader among the Persians. See below.

<sup>89</sup> A. Failler, *George Pachymeres*, IV, 358, n. 40.

<sup>90</sup> Lindner, 103, n.3; 83.

when the harvest of the fruits of the land urged” (Book 10, chap 26).

#### **XVI. October 25, 1300: John the patriarch and Andronicus meet (Book 10, chap 12).**

Another illustration of how some modern historians are confused in their consideration of Pachymeres’ Chronology, has to do with the moment when John the Patriarch and Andronicus met. According to the story, the patriarch rides on horseback to meet the emperor on the evening of October 25, the eve of the feast of Saint Demetrious. Pachymeres specifies the day when they met, the third day of the week. *Tuesday* of that year corresponded to the year 1300, not to the year 1301 as usually proposed by historians. What amazes us more is that instead of correcting their own chronology of events, modern historians prefer to correct Pachymeres. Let us read what Albert Failler, currently the greatest interpreter of Pachymeres, wrote on this issue:

“This indication causes a trouble. In 1301, October 25 fell on Wednesday, and not on Tuesday. The mistake is as much embarrassing as the link of the feast to the visitation of the emperor every *Tuesday* in the monastery of Hodegoy.”<sup>91</sup>

What astonishes us more is that Failler does not simply impose his own construction of the chronology against the plain statement of Pachymeres, but he also tries to make his correction plausible by making Pachymeres say something that he didn’t write. No, there are not two mistakes! There is no mistake at all! Pachymeres doesn’t say that every *Tuesday* evening fell on October 25, on the before the feast of Saint Demetrious the emperor met the patriarch. Let us read what Pachymeres wrote:

“They depart together, because it was *the third day of the week*, and the emperor must necessarily, from a long time, to go that day [the third day of the week] to the monastery...”

What day? Was it on Tuesday every year? Yes! Does he say that the emperor met the bishop every year on October 25? No! In the year 1300, that Tuesday fell on an October 25, but this doesn’t mean that every year, October 25 fell on Tuesday, on the eve of the feast of St. Demetrious.<sup>92</sup>

#### **XVII. From the Spring to the beginning of Summer 1301: Dramatic dry season (Book 10, chap 14).**

Joseph von Hammer dated the battle of Bapheus to the year 1301. Later on he realized that in that year, from the Spring to the end of the Summer, there was a dramatic drought. Therefore he had to push the date of that battle to the next year, without caring that there is no record of a tremendous storm in that year either, and that the drought continued during the year 1302 (see above). Unfortunately, in spite of the historical evidence, most historians today still cannot break away from his proposition.

#### **XVIII. September 1301: Halley's Comet seen in Constantinople (Book 10, chap 14).**

Halley's Comet was seen in Constantinople in September of 1301. The Byzantine historian tells us that for many, that phenomena was an omen of “a public misfortune” that touched past and future events. Actually, Pachymeres recalls a poem that he had written in his *Memories*, when he considered the drought as the source of the apparition of the comet, and the great evils that were expected to happen in the Empire. At that time, the author of the *History* didn’t realize the limitation of his superstition. That comet marked not only the beginning of local misfortunes caused by the Persians in the Eastern part of the

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<sup>91</sup> In his book *Georges Pachymeres, Relations Historiques* (Paris, 1999), 332, n. 23.

<sup>92</sup> “A procession of the Theotokos of the Hodegon monastery was instituted on every Tuesday..., in a divine and holy Litany that takes place once every week.” “In other cases, icon processions were created anew, such as the Hodegetria litania on Tuesday mornings at the Hodegon monastery, Bissera V. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power. The mother of God in Byzantium* (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 59, 123.

Empire, something that had already taken place like the drought. It marked a misfortune which would reach the whole territory of the Byzantine Empire in those Eastern regions with the general Persian invasion that came after the fall of Bapheus (see details above).

### **XIX. January 14, 1302: Eclipse of the moon. (Book 10, chap 15).**

The only time Pachymeres mentions the Julian month is found here. He explains that for the Athenians, January was called Lenaeon, while in the rest of his *History* it corresponds to February.<sup>93</sup>

Some authors deduce that the Alans moved to the Roman Empire after the comet was seen in September 1301 (Book 10, chap 14), and after the eclipse of the moon took place on January 14, 1302 (Book 10, chap 15). They interpret, like Failler, that these stellar phenomena took place the same year as the Alan's departure from Mongol territory. But this is not what the text of Pachymeres necessarily states. In chap 16 Pachymeres goes backward to the story of the Alans, and wrote this.

"The Alans who moved to the emperor's side. These are the things that happened in that year [when they moved to Byzantium]: the magnanimous Alan nation..." requested the intercession of the archbishop of Bitzines "to plea to the king on their behalf."

Let us notice that there is a colon which separates the phrase, which may be tracked far back in the Greek manuscripts of Pachymeres. In other words, the year referred to here is not the year of the stellar phenomena, but the year when the Alans fled to the Empire. Was Pachymeres thinking in terms of Julian years, or Byzantine years? In the former chapter, he translated the Greek month into the Julian month. It is evident that he was working with different calendars.

Anyway, I don't think that this is an important issue. The Byzantine year 6807 began in the Julian year September 1, 1298, and ended in August 31 in 1299. If the Alans met the archbishop of Bitzina around April 1299, and moved shortly thereafter to Roman territory before the battle of Bapheus in July 27, the story told by Pachymeres is comprehended within the 6807 Byzantine year. Besides this, Pachymeres is characterized by inserting past or future events into a story. But the main issue in chapter 16 is the contact of the Alans with the emperor through the archbishop of Bitzina, and their fast move to the Byzantine Empire, fleeing from Mongol armies. In our view, all this took place within the same year 6807.

## **THE BEGINING OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN TURKISH SOURCES**

Turkish sources don't mention the battle of Bapheus, and all attempts to synchronize the dates of the Ottoman sources with the Byzantine sources for the battle of Bapheus have failed. They mention, instead, the seizure of Bilecik because Osman founded there the Ottoman Empire, with Sogüt as his capital. That battle is dated in the year 1299. We have to keep in mind that Persian memories or legends were written more than one century later. Modern Turkish historians often disagree on which of those traditions to choose, discrediting one tradition, or choosing another story. In some instances, we can see the influence of Western historians for the date assigned to the battle of Bapheus.

In an attempt to harmonize Byzantine sources with their legends, modern Turkish historians link the battle of Bapheus to a place known as Koyunhisar. This identification was followed by many modern authors, including A. Failler,<sup>94</sup> but without serious support. As a matter of fact, this connection is being rejected today for lack of evidence (see references above).

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Turkish government called on Turkish historians to

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<sup>93</sup> "Only in a single instance, in the little poem referred to above, does he identify Lenaeon with January, in order to conform, as he says, to the practice of 'the commentators of Hesiod.'" "Once he tells us that Lenaeon is January and elsewhere, beginning with Hecatombaeon as the first month of the year, he places Lenaeon as the second and Cronios as the third... The origin of Pachymeres' misconception with regard to the month Lenaeus is the work of Tzetzes on Hesiod. This explains, among other things, why our historian uses Lenaeon in the place of February," *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbucher* (Athen, 1960), 149. See n. 20 in this document.

<sup>94</sup> A. Failler, *Georges Pachymeres. Relations Historiques*, IV, 359, n. 40.

determine the exact year of the foundation of the Ottoman Empire. And they concluded that this event happened in the year 1299. As a matter of fact:

“The Ottoman sources ascribed to Osman in A.H. 699/C.E., 1299-1300.” “It is with (Osman) that Ottoman history begins.” “Ottoman sources... produce a date of 699/1299-1300” for the Ottoman independence of Seljuks.<sup>95</sup>

“In 1914, Efdaleddin, a member of the Ottoman Historical Society..., published an article in which he discussed the date on which the Ottomans became independent of the Seljuks. His article contained the results of research sponsored by the Ottoman government, which had sought to find the appropriate date on which to celebrate the anniversary of the Ottomans’ independence and foundation as a polity. Efdaleddin published quotations from a number of Ottoman sources... which he melded together to produce a date of 699/1299-1300. Most... [“later scholars”] have concurred with his date.”<sup>96</sup>

Derviş Ahmed, or Ahmed the Dervish (1400–1484), better known by his pen name Âşîki or family name Aşıkpaşazade, was an Ottoman historian, a prominent representative of the early Ottoman historiography. He participated in the fall of Constantinople in the year 1453. In the last part of his life he started to write his famous historical work *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osmân*. It is a chronological history of the Ottoman Empire between the years 1298 and 1472. The work is written in Ottoman Turkish and is partially based on older Ottoman sources, it is more detailed regarding the events he witnessed personally. His work was used by later Ottoman historians and became fashionable. Based also on him, modern Turkish historians conclude likewise that Bilecik, Karacahisar, and Yarhisar, were conquered in the year 699 [1299-1300].<sup>97</sup>

Let us share other equivalent testimonies on this issue by current Turkish historians.

“The Byzantines, who had panicked because of the conquests of the frontier towns of the Empire by Osman Gazhi, prepared a raid on the occasion of a wedding ceremony in order to assassinate him. Osman Bey, who responded to the assault with a counter-attack, conquered Yarhisar and Bilecik in 1299, and transferred the center of the principality to Bilecik. At the same time he married Nilüfer (Holofura), the daughter of the *takfur* (ruler) of Yarhisar, who had plotted the intrigue with his son Orhan. *This is regarded as the founding date of the Ottoman state.*”<sup>98</sup>

“The conquered festivals took place in the year 699. And genius Osman Gâzi came to İznik after this. The soldiers were loyal to both the bride and the gentleman, who had been suffering” for the pressing which was coming from Istanbul.<sup>99</sup>

Lindner tries to connect those traditions with the battle of Bapheus, assuming that the conquest of Bilecik opened the way to the Sangarius. For him:

“It is significant that these conquests [Bilecik and others in the land of unbelievers in 699/1299] are said to have been Osman’s first sovereign acts as the independent leader of an army.”<sup>100</sup> “There was an understanding in all the early Ottoman traditions, that these conquests were something special, opening up the lower Karasu and thus the Sangarius... There is also an understanding that these fortifications had fallen at about the same time, namely, in the year A.H. 699 [1299/1300].”<sup>101</sup>

“In two early sources composed just after 1396 by the scholar Shams-al-Din Muhammad ibn al-Jazari, who had come to Bursa and joined the court of Bayezid..., there appears a notice of the capture of Bilecik in A.H. 699

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<sup>95</sup> Lindner, 17-18.

<sup>96</sup> Lindner, 81.

<sup>97</sup> Prof. Dr. Necdec Öztürk, Anonim Osmanlı Kroniği (1299-1512) (Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı, İstanbul - 2000), 11. “This conquest is located in six hundred and ninety-nine” (Prepared-Translated by Kemal Yavuz – M. A: Yekta Saraç, Aşık Paşazade: osmanoğulları'nın Tarihi (MAS Matbaacılık A.Ş. Dereboyu Caddesi Zagra İş Merkezi, Maslak, İstanbul, 2003), Bölüm 13, p. 71). The sermon, which was read in the name of Osman Gazi, was performed in six hundred and ninety-nine. (Prepared-Translated by Kemal Yavuz, Mehmet Ali Yekta Saraç, Aşık Paşazade: osmanoğulları'nın Tarihi (MAS Matbaacılık A.Ş. Dereboyu Caddesi Zagra İş Merkezi, Maslak, İstanbul, 2003), Bölüm 14, p. 73.

<sup>98</sup> Ahmed Akgunduz, Said Oztur, *Ottoman History - Misperceptions and Truths* (IUR Press, Rotterdam, 2011), 43.

<sup>99</sup> Yürsek Lisans Tezi, *Anonim Tevârih-i Âl-i Osmân; Kuruluştan 892/1487'ye kadar* (T.C. Marmara Üniversitesi, İstanbul, 2006), 5.

<sup>100</sup> Lindner, 84-5.

<sup>101</sup> Lindner, 87-8.

[1299]. Osman's power now was not that of a chief within easy reach of the plateau; he was now poised to capture historic cities and their agricultural hinterlands. No wonder that the Ottoman historical memory associate these conquests to his independence from a weak Seljuk overlord."<sup>102</sup>

Some have remarked that while Persian (or Turkish) princes were fighting among themselves or against the Mongols, Osman faced the Byzantines. With the support of the Seljuk Sultan, several chiefs joined him. In the meantime, other Seljuk leaders were defeated by the Mongol army, and had to flee. This fact strengthened the position of Osman Gazi, giving him more freedom to act independently.

"While the other Turkish principalities in Anatolia were fighting with each other Osman was fighting with the Byzantine Empire's feudal landlords. With the approval of the Seljuk Sultan he took responsibility of defending the area under his control against the Byzantines. Some clan chiefs joined him in this fight and with the authority given to him by the Seljuks, he started conquering the neighboring cities and towns. He took Bilecik and made his new capital. At this time the Anatolian Seljuks rebelled against the Mongolians but failed to defeat them, Sultan Allaeddin Keykubad III escaped from the Mongolian invaders, leaving the Seljuk State headless. Osman Gazi took advantage of this situation and started acting more freely and he declared his independence on January 27, 1299 (Sources vary it. Dates suggested 1299 and 1300)."<sup>103</sup>

Turkish traditions don't mention the battle of Bapheus. In their memories one century later, the most important thing was the foundation of the Ottoman capital after the battle of Bilecik. While the year 1299 is very important in their traditions, the exact dating of the events is not easy, much less the connection of the battle of Bapheus with those traditions, which in our view, historians are today wrongly dating too far ahead in time.

Among the 13 reasons given by current Turkish historians to prefer the year 1299 for the foundation of the Ottoman Empire, we can summarize 6 of them here.

1. In reference to the year 1299, they state that the influence of Osman became prominent by the sword.

"In the first sermon, Osman Ghazi declared his 'Khanate' only after he had captured Bilecik... and then he uttered his own sermon... Our main source, Aşıkpaşazade, greets this event as 'the omen of Osman Gazi.' In other words, this event is in Osman Gazi's personal history and in the history of the Osmanogullari family a very important transformation. Osman Ghazi, who had always been waiting for the most favorable conditions to develop his strategy, estimated that the moment had come in 1299 for his Independent Movement."

2. The fact that Osman Ghazi, after the sermon, required taxes and distribution of goods, which are a mark of power and authority, is a sufficient reason to accept 1299 as the date for his independence.

3. After 1299, we find a wider scope in the activities of Osman Gazi, which strengthened his influence in north-western Anatolia against both Mongols and Byzantines.

4. "Unfortunately, there is no illuminating information in Pachymeres about the position assumed by Osman Gazi in the region before the battle of Bapheus. But it is clear that he gained a dynastic identity after that battle."

5. "July 27, 1302, is a problematic date in the history of Pachymeres." [We agree, because in our view, Pachymeres was misinterpreted in this point by modern historians. The historical evidence points to the year 1299].

6. In the book of Pachymeres, "we cannot know more about Osman Ghazi than the battle of Bapheus

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<sup>102</sup> Lindner, 88.

<sup>103</sup> "The Ottomans," based on *A Study Sponsored by the US Department of Education, the Commission of the European Union, and the University of Florida's Division of Sponsored Research and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences*. See [http://www.smie.co/html/cultural\\_history/ottomans/ottomans.shtml](http://www.smie.co/html/cultural_history/ottomans/ottomans.shtml)

and the beginning of the conquest in the region.” They believe that the issue must be left open for discussion.

These authors conclude their arguments in behalf of the year 1299 in the following way:

“We repeat that all these assessments are done in the light of the year 1299, the year of the establishment's first reading” of the sermon of Osman, “until more powerful and persuasive suggestions are made.”<sup>104</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In their study of the battle of Bapheus in the *History of Pachymeres*, modern historians encountered several problems. The first one has to do with the moment when the Alans communicated with the Byzantine Empire and their resulting flight from Mongol dominions. They didn't perceive a certain discrepancy among contemporaneous authors on the two principal battles between Nogay and Toqta, the two rival Mongol princes. Thus, today historians take for granted the disputable reference of the second half of 1299 when the second battle, in which Nogay died, would have taken place.

Since the battle of Bapheus occurred on July 27, they could have inferred that the battle took place the following year, 1300. But this seemed unfeasible to them because they supposed that when the Alans moved to Byzantium, the emperor would have been home in Constantinople (something that Pachymeres didn't specify). They interpret the period of time of Andronicus in Thessalonica in terms of almost two complete literal years, instead of Byzantine indictional years. In consequence, they date the return of the emperor to Constantinople on November 22, 1300, instead of November 22, 1299. But the battle of Bapheus took place on a July 27, therefore they have to push that battle further ahead, to the year 1301.

Really? Not at all. Pachymeres said that a tremendous storm battered Anatolia in the year of the battle of Bapheus, and the year 1301 was characterized by a severe drought. So, again, they needed to travel still farther, to the year 1302 as the only possible candidate for the event. Additionally, Pachymeres mentioned some stellar phenomena which can be confirmed today astronomically as having occurred in the years 1301 and 1302 respectively, and interpreted those phenomena as happening before the transfer of the Alans to the Eastern Roman Empire. But a careful reading of the Greek text shows us that there is a colon which can be tracked in the manuscripts of Pachymeres far back in time. That colon allows us to read that the story which will be told has to do with the year when the Alans moved to the Byzantine Empire, not with the year of the stellar phenomena.

Even more. Since most historians today think that the Alans moved to the Byzantine Empire in the year 1301 or 1302, they have to suppose that the Alans fled from Toqta, the Mongol khan who had overcome Nogay two years before. This is the reason why they later have to discredit the statement of Pachymeres about the Alans offering Toqta their services. Besides this, Pachymeres tells us that the Alans fled to Byzantium in the year when Nogay died, not two or more years later.

The year 1302 contains several problems for dating the battle of Bapheus. The dry season which lasted three years around the Black Sea includes the year 1302, which makes it still harder to choose that year as the year of the flood. And in order to reach that year, modern historians have to correct Pachymeres several times in his historical statements. However, if we place the battle of Bapheus in the year 1299, there is no need to change his account of the events.

The extremely severe winter and terrible storm that battered Anatolia, destroying the defenses of Bapheus, have historical confirmation from Pachymeres' testimony, in the first half of 1299. Also the battle where Nogay died, facilitating the departure of the Alans, has a usually neglected historical confirmation in April 1299. Even the recently discovered numismatic evidence seems to confirm that Nogay's son Ceke adopted the title of “khan” already in that first half of the year. Therefore, the flight of the Alans to the Empire, and the return of the emperor to Constantinople, must be placed as Poussines did, before November 22, 1299.

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<sup>104</sup> Cezmi Karasu, Tuğçe M. Sakarya, Oktay Berbe, *Osmangazi. İlkler ve Karacahisar* (Eskisehir: Odunpazari Belediyesi, 2010), 134-137.

The agenda of Andronicus in Thessalonica does not justify remaining almost two complete literal years away from the Byzantine capital. From February to November 1299, there are two indictional years in the Byzantine calendar. This point of reference makes it easier to understand the following chronological references of the book, which is the only contemporaneous source we have for the battle of Bapheus. No attempts for correcting the Byzantine historian are needed.

A careful reading of Pachymeres' narrative doesn't allow us to determine if the emperor received the Alans in person, or if he did it through others, or if that supposed reception took place in Thessalonica or Constantinople. All we know is that the communication with the emperor was performed through intermediaries, by letter, and by officials whom the emperor sent to guide the Alans to their new location. Therefore we don't need to believe that the emperor was in Constantinople when the Alans came to Byzantium.

In addition to the exceptional weather of the year 1299, other historical documents can be added as overwhelming evidence to place the battle of Bapheus on July 27, 1299. One of them makes it more difficult to place that battle in the year 1300, because it has to do with an almost desperate request of an archbishop to the emperor to return quickly to Constantinople. The reason given to urge the emperor to hasten his return is the Turkish invasion. If Andronicus returned on November 22, 1299, that letter could not have been written in the year 1300 when he was already home. Furthermore, no historical reports of a severe winter and a huge storm are brought to support a presumable date in 1300, or in 1301, or in 1302 for the battle of Bapheus. The only historical reports we have to date the battle of Bapheus fit perfectly with the year 1299. It is time, therefore, to return to the proposition of Peter Poussines in the 17th Century, and Edward Gibbon in the 18th Century, who dated that battle in the year 1299.

We do not have to pass over the fact that, for the Byzantine author, the battle of Bapheus marked the beginning of the great evils which would fall upon that Eastern region of the Ottoman Empire. While formerly, Osman had been fighting with the Byzantines far away and mostly for pillage purposes, now the seizure of a fortress like Bapheus, deep within Byzantine territory, was considered by the Greek narrator, "a serious defeat," "the beginning of evils," to the point of giving it Apocalyptic meanings for the disastrous and dramatic consequences it had for the Empire.

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## REACTIONS OF SPECIALIZED SCHOLARS ON BYZANTINE AND MEDIEVAL STUDIES

I wrote to current scholars who were writing on the subject, and this was their reaction to my paper.

"It is true that the chronology of Pachymeres which I had set about 30 years ago, remains fragile, especially for the Book 10. I am happy to see that the matter is considered again, and I wish that stronger conclusions will be reached," Dr. Albert Failler (July 18, 2017).

Dr. Albert Failler is the greatest specialist in the chronology of Pachymeres. He translated the complete work of Pachymeres into French, and wrote an impressive amount of documents related to that time. He is in charge of the emeritus research at CNRS, and director of the French Institute of Byzantine Studies. He is also the director of the *Revue des études byzantines*.

"Sorry it has taken so long to reply. I have been traveling and have not yet had a chance to finish your article. *It is very interesting and I think you may be right.* Dr Isaenko and I simply accepted the best opinion we could find since it was not essential to our main purpose... *It would, however, be worth establishing the date for the appearance of Osman.* If you can get your article published, please cite our article as a joint effort: Jessee and Isaenko. My friend Anatoly worked on it too! Thank you for taking the time to contact us and sending the article," Scott Jessee (July 23, 2017).

Dr. Jessee Scott obtained his Ph.D. in the University of Minnesota. He is specialist in Medieval History, and teaches in the Department of History of the Appalachian State University.

Dr. Anatoly Isaenko earned his B.A. and M.A. in History and English Language at North Ossetian State University in Vladikavkaz, Russia. Dr. Isaenko went on to complete his Ph.D in Global History at Moscow State University, Russia in 1976 with a dissertation titled *The Puritan Movement in England in the Sixteenth and the Beginning of the Seventeenth Centuries*. Prior to becoming a professor at Appalachian State University, Dr. Isaenko was Professor and Chair of Ancient and Medieval History at North Ossetian State University, in Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia-Alania, Russia.

“Many thanks! I look forward to reading it and reminding myself of the difficulties in establishing early Ottoman chronology” (July 3, 2017). “Thanks! Can you let me know when the paper is published? I have been asked to do a revised edition of my Ottoman history book, and I may need to reference your article, and will certainly need to include it in the bibliography,” Colin H. Imbert (July 4, 2017).

Dr. Colin H. Imber is lecturer in Turkish Studies in the University of Manchester, UK.

“I admire your diligence, determination, and ingenuity. It is beyond my competence, and it is none of my business, to comment on matters of prophecy... As we view the practice of history from different vantage points, I can only wish you well,” Rudi P. Lindner (July 2, 2017).

Dr. Rudi H. Lindner is Professor Emeritus of History and Astronomy in the University of Michigan.

My reply to Lindner in July 21, 2017: “We may have different motivations to study a specific history, and even disagree. But the common ground to discuss the issues is in this case history. And it is from that perspective that I worked. I appreciated your three key words to qualify my document, which I complement here with a short commentary.

Diligence: sometimes this is necessary to find the truth.

Determination: sometimes this is necessary to bring out the truth.

Ingenuity: Sometimes this is necessary to free ourselves from prejudices.”

- Later I changed the last sentence: “Sometimes this is necessary to lay a good foundation for a historical research.”

Dr. Alberto R. Treiyer, Doctorate in the University of Strasbourg, Retired Professor of Theology and Pastor, International Lecturer and Writer.