



The Nature of Relations between Muslims and Non-Muslims in Asia Minor during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries

XII. ve XIII. Yüzyıllarda Anadolu'da Yaşayan Müslümanlarla Gayri Müslimler Arasındaki İlişkilerin Hususiyetleri

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Abstract

In this article, we first elaborated on the factors facilitating the rapprochement between the Muslims (Turks) and non-Muslims (Greeks, Armenians, Syrians and Jews) of Asia Minor during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Secondly, we examined the nature of the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims and described how it was experienced in their daily life. In this context, we provided various examples of the commercial, professional, religious and social interactions between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. With these examples, we concluded that the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims were mostly based on mutual tolerance.

Keywords: *Asia Minor-Seljukid-Turks-Muslims-Non Muslims-Tolerance*

Özet

Bu makalede öncelikle XII. ve XIII. yüzyıllarda Anadolu'da yaşayan Müslümanlar (Türkler) ile gayri Müslimler (Rumlar, Ermeniler, Süryaniler ve Yahudiler) arasındaki yakınlaşmayı kolaylaştıran faktörler üzerinde durulmaktadır. Akabinde Müslümanlarla gayri Müslimler arasındaki ilişkilerin yapısı ve bunun günlük hayattaki yansımaları hakkında bilgi verilmektedir. Bu bağlamda, her iki topluluk arasındaki ticarî, meslekî, dinî ve sosyal alanlardaki etkileşimlere dair çeşitli örnekler sunulmaktadır. Söz konusu örneklerden, Müslümanlarla gayri Müslimler arasındaki ilişkilerin, ağırlıklı olarak karşılıklı hoşgörüyü dayandığı sonucuna varılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Küçük Asya-Selçuklu-Türkler-Müslümanlar-Gayri Müslimler-Hoşgörü*

Introduction

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Asia Minor was shared by Turks, Armenians, Greeks, Syrians, Jews and other ethnic groups. It is well known that in this era the Turks ruled Asia Minor politically. They gained a demographic dominance in Anatolia through massive migrations from Central Asia to Anatolia and were scattered in urban and rural areas (Baykara 2002, 436-442). The urban inhabitants were constituted by traders, artisans, and adherents of Sufi orders, religious scholars and others.

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During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries non-Muslim population constituted a portion of society as they were mostly scattered in and around Malatya, Ahlat, Erzurum, Erzincan, Sivas, Kayseri, Konya and Antalya (Cahen 1984, 203-214; Şeker 2002, 60-67). The Armenians predominantly lived in Erzincan and Erzurum. They were also scattered in such cities as Malatya, Ahlat, Sivas, Kayseri, Niksar and Göksun. The Syrians mostly lived in Malatya but their relatives mostly lived in the Arab lands. The Jews that lived in cities such as Sivas, Konya and Antalya were not many. Most of them were occupied with commercial activities. The Greeks mostly lived in Konya and Antalya. Non-Muslim communities sometimes formed ghettos in separate quarters of some cities. For example, in Antalya there were Greek and Jewish quarters along with Turkish quarters. Similarly, there were Jewish quarters in Sivas and Konya. However, these examples do not prove that communities of different religious and ethnic background lived in total isolation from each other (Cahen 1984, 192).

There are several earlier studies that partly or fully elaborate on the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in Anatolia during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by both Turkish (e.g. Şeker, Küçük, Ünver and Yasa,) and foreign (Hasluck, Vryonis, Gordlevski and Cahen) scholars. These studies provide us with significant and original information and analyses but they rarely provide a systematic picture about the nature of the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This study tries to fill this void by providing a systematic analysis of the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in Anatolia during this era. For that purpose, we first tried to elaborate the causes of Muslim-non-Muslim rapprochement and later to establish the nature of these relations in various areas such as trade, religion, politics and culture.

I. Preparatory Factors to the Muslim and Non-Muslim Rapprochement

In Asia Minor, rapprochement began during the twelfth century between the Turks and non-Muslims who lived in the same quarters of the same towns and cities. They also built villages next to each other. However, this rapprochement did not emerge randomly but emerged as a result of several important factors. We elaborated these factors in three groups.

A. Non-Muslims' Discontent from Repressive Byzantine Policies

The repressive policies of the Byzantine government toward the native non-Muslim people in Asia Minor played a significant role in bringing them closer to the Turks. During the Turkish conquest of Asia Minor, the Byzantium was far from its glorious times. It lost its political stability with a dysfunctional tax system and improper defense system (Ostrogorsky 1991, 296-324; Bailly, II/261-275). The country was rocked by increasing political instability and the people of Anatolia faced serious difficulties due to mismanagement and wars. The native people somewhat began to regard the Turks that they had initially considered barbarians and looters as savior. They did not see the Turks as their arch enemy despite the destructions caused by their conquests in Anatolia. Moreover, they sometimes did not see the Turkish conquests against themselves but as a punishment to the Byzantine rule. Moreover, some Byzantines called for help from the Turks against other Byzantines. There were parallel efforts to prevent Turkish conquests as well as to facilitate it at the same time (Cahen 1984, 203).

As an Armenian historian of Urfa, Mateos' work records some reactions from the native people to the repressive policies of the Byzantium. According to this historian, the Romans expressed their complaints about the Armenians when the emperor Roman Diojen came to Sivas during the time of the Malazgirt war. As these complaints angered the Emperor, he

swore to eradicate the Armenian church after his return from his incursion to Iran. When they heard about this intention, the Armenian clergy condemned his actions and hoped that he would not return from his military campaign (Mateos 1962, 140-141). Describing the Byzantine Emperor as cruel, Mateos talked about the Seljukid Sultan Melikşah, the son of Alparslan, “the heart of the Sultan was filled with mercy toward the Christians. He viewed the people he came across with an eye of a father. In this way, he conquered many territories without any fighting”. Moreover, Mateos mentioned that the Sultan forgave the taxes from the churches, monasteries and ministers upon the demand of the Armenian patriarch Basil (Mateos 1962, 171-176).

Under the Byzantine pressure the Armenians living deprived of a political unity easily admitted the Seljukid rule that did not intervene in their religion and daily activities. On the other hand, when the Seljukid state weakened and faced with crises and anarchy, the Armenians did not keep away from cooperating with the Byzantium, the Crusaders and the Mongolians. However, after such actions they very often regretted and lived together peacefully with the Turkish culture and civilization (Sevim 2002, 33-34; Ersan 2002, 637-643; Küçük 1996, 567). During the Crusades, the people of Malatya, especially Syrians, wanted to surrender the city to Süleymanşah’s son, Kılıçarslan I. As a result, the Christian governor of the city Gabriel killed the cardinal who preferred the Turkish rule. When a priest moving from Antioch to Constantinople said that the Armenians and Syrians supported the Turks, the Emperor Alexis I burned their church, expelled them from the city and forced those who remained in the city to convert to Orthodox religion. For that reason, the Christians mourned for Kılıçarslan I when he died in 1107 (Turan 1993a, II/146).

Some examples of the negative reactions of native people against the Byzantine rule were also recorded in the work of Nicetas. According to these records, the Byzantine Emperor Ioannes Komnenos II (1118-1143) set off to block Turkish raids around Antalya. When he came to the Beyşehir Lake (Karalitis), he witnessed the close friendship between the Christian islanders and the Turkish inhabitants of Konya. This Christian community cursed at the Emperor and disobeyed his orders. The Emperor tried to persuade them that the lake historically belonged to the Byzantium and demanded them to move to the Turkish side if they wished. However, this did not yield any result, leading the Emperor to invade the islands and to expel these communities to Konia (1142) (Nicetas Khoniates 1995, 24-25; Ramsay 1960, 433-434).

The repressive religious policies of the Byzantium did not please many Christian communities in Asia Minor (Arnold 1982, 106-107; Vryonis 1971, 67). The coercive politics of the Orthodox Church toward the Armenian, Syrian and other churches and forcing their clergy to live in constraint caused problems with local population (Cahen 1984, 81). This situation increased the distancing of local communities, that is, Armenians, Syrians, and Pauliciens pushed them closer toward the Turks (Turan 1993b, 56). The Byzantine tax policy was also heavy and suffocating. For example, the Emperor Manuel exhausted his people by implementing new tax regime different from the old policies. His attempts to construct monasteries, churches and to spend for the poor did not suffice to gain the hearts of his people, so he became the target of fierce criticisms and negative attitudes from the people (Nicetas Khoniates 1995, 142-143). People fed up with Byzantine economic pressures found the facilities provided by the Seljukid government more attractive. That is because the Turks were collecting the sole tax Islam prescribed for non-Muslims. Their land policy considered the agrarian Christians as renters like the Turks and made them liable to the same rules (Akdağ

1995, I/23). Such repressive policies of the Byzantium can be enumerated but these examples suffice here.

B. The Seljukid Sultans' Tolerant Policies toward Non-Muslims

The Seljukid sultans adopted a policy of tolerance almost as a state policy. They always respected religions outside Islam and remained away from fanaticism (Sarre 1998, 53-54; Holt (ed.) 1970, I/255-256). This kind of attitude helped the Sultans to control over the Anatolian territories and to gain the loyalty of the native population. For that reason, these policies were implemented starting with the time of Süleymanşah when the basis of the state was in the process of formation.

It is known that Süleymanşah considered these lands as the property of the state according to the Turkish nomadic (*urfi*) law and to the Muslim law of conquests as he justly distributed the lands for tax among Muslims and non-Muslims. In this way, the Christian villagers that were previously oppressed under the land owner aristocracy obtained lands and freedom under the new regime. Similarly, when Süleymanşah conquered Antioch, an important center of Christianity, he pleased the local people with his policies as he respected their religion and churches and treated them justly. With a firman obtained from the sultan the Syrian people constructed the churches of St. Mary and St. George (Turan 1993b, 79).

The Seljukid sultans seemed to follow the principles of justice and tolerance in their policies of migration and settlement. In that regard, the Sultan Gıyâseddin Keyhüsrev I moved a significant number of people from the Menderes region to his country after his incursion to this region. The sultan registered those people he forced for migration according to their names, families and lands. The members of each family and territory was divided into groups of five thousand people and provided them with traveling subsistence. He took strict measures to protect their properties, honors and ordained sever punishments in case of any violations. He distributed lands, seeds and agricultural tools to these people that were settled in the Akşehir region and exempted them from taxes and told them that they could return back when a peace agreement was reached with the Byzantium. But those people seemed to be happy with their situation and did not return back to their original lands. Moreover, they helped other people from their original region to migrate to the territories under the Turkish rule (Turan 1993a, II/156).

The sultans were respectful and constructive in their relations with the non-Muslim clergy. Their conciliatory and tolerant approach also constituted a model for the relations between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities. The friendship between the Sultan Kılıçarslan II and the Syrian Michael who was Malatya's patriarch and a historian is noteworthy. In 1181 the sultan invited the patriarch to his post and made him discuss religious and philosophical issues with his philosopher Kemaleddin. The sultan invited the patriarch inhabiting in the Barsuma monastery again at a later time. The patriarch and his followers came to the sultan with their bibles and crosses. The sultan embraced the patriarch and did not allow him to kiss his hand out of respect. After returning to the church, the patriarch said that they prayed for the sultan and the nation. The next day the sultan waived the monastery's tax obligation with a firman. He also gave him a very valuable cross as a gift. After a while, Kılıçarslan II won victories against the Byzantium and notified the Patriarch with this new development with a letter. The letter started with the expression "from the great Sultan Kılıçarslan to the patriarch that reside in Barsuma monastery and is pleased with our victories" and continues "God granted us the victories through your prayers and, therefore, I demand the

continuance of your prayers” (Turan 1993a, II/147). Like Kılıçarslan II, many other sultans’ positive attitude toward non-Muslim clergy is obvious.

The Seljukid sultans did not hesitate to give responsibility to non-Muslims in state offices and in the military. In the capital Konya, along with the central army mostly constituted from the Turks, there was a Frank Armenian and Georgian military force. In that regard, the Christian soldiers played a major role in suppressing the Babaî rebellions (İbn Bibi 1996, II/52-53). Sometimes the Christians that gained the trust of sultans were able to reach to the commanding post in the military. For example, during the time of Alâeddin Keykubâd (d.1237) someone named Emîr Komnenos from the Komnenos dynasty was brought to the position of a commander. The son of Hajuk of Armenian origin was in charge of governing Kayseri during the Mongolian invasion and he himself submitted the city to the Mongolians (İbn Bibi 1996, I/289, 320, 345; II/73-75). The Sultan Kılıçarslan II made a Greek priest named Michael one of the finance officials of the state (Turan 1993a, II/153).

The Seljukid sultans provided non-Muslim tradesmen with the same rights as the Muslims ones. Regardless of his religion and nation, every tradesman had a right to express a complaint to the Divan and had the right to equal trial before the court of justice (Günay 1996, 198). Caravanserais aiming to guarantee the security and provisions of caravans (Turan 1946, 474-479; Gordlevski 1988, 216) served both Muslims and non-Muslims. People became acquainted with each other and new friendships emerged in these places where the poor and the rich, the free and the slave are served regardless of their descent and religion. The government also reimbursed the losses and damages of the local and foreign traders on the road or in the sea for any reason (Turan 1988, 127-128). All these guarantees increased the non-Muslims’ trust on the state as they seemed to enjoy their equal treatment.

The fact that some of the sultans lived in Constantinople for political reasons and married Christian women implies that they acted with a tolerance toward the non-Muslim population (Aktaş Yasa 1996, 427- 428). It is known that as one of those sultans Gıyâseddin Keyhüsrev (d.1211), the son of Kılıçarslan, lived in Istanbul for some time and married to the daughter Mavrozames that was a prominent statesman. In fact, his mother was also a Christian. According to a record in Ibn Bibi (1996, I/115), the *qadi* of Konya did not approve the Sultan’s residing in Istanbul and, therefore, issued a fatwa for the impropriety of his rule.

Among the wives of Gıyâseddin Keyhüsrev II were a Georgian princess and a wealthy Christian’s daughter (İbn Bibi 1996, II/36-38; Turan 1993a, II/149). The sultan promised the Goergian princess not to intervene in her religion before getting married. The princess accompanied by the priests came to Konya in her Christian dress (Gregory Abu’l-Farac 1950, II/537-538). The queen, who was known as *Gürcü Hatun* in the capital and later married to the vizier Süleyman Pervane, converted to Islam, became pious and charitable Muslim and was especially affiliated with Mevlevîlik (Eflâkî 1986, I/159, 223, 282, 325, 356; 1987, II/132-133, 151).

Claude Cahen explains that Armenian women were among the wives of the sultans because the Armenians did not have much political power. For him, the sultan tried to establish familial bonds with the powerful dynasties in Byzantium. On the other hand, they defended their Christian subjects against the threats to their religion due probably to political and/or personal reasons (Cahen 1984, 205). The tolerance to non-Muslims reached to the level that some Muslim travelers expressed their discontent toward this situation in the Seljukid state (Roux 1994, 31).

C. The Role of Clergy

The clergy representing Muslim and non-Muslim population generally seemed to have a positive and constructive attitude toward each other during the 12th and 13th centuries. In this way, they tried to carry their religion's messages to the masses. It is interesting that the relations between the Muslim and non-Muslim clergies never turned into a mutual antagonism or imbalanced competition except for few exceptional cases. Even the crusades that were organized in Europe against the Muslims did not seem to change these friendly relations.

In this era, the clergy's words were important as they reflected other people's opinion as well as their followers. For example, we can find their traces in the words of Mevlânâ that was a famous philosopher (Sophist) in the 13th century, known with his uniting personality. Among his followers were people from various religious, sects and Sufi orders. He established friendly relations with Christian priests and Jewish rabbi and frequented to their churches and monasteries and even visited Christian drinking bars. At the same time, many people of around Anatolia came to see him and joined among his followers. Even some priests came from Istanbul to meet and learn from him. According to Eflâkî (1986, I/274; 1987, II/57), they came with the priests of Konya to meet Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî and even became his disciples. Moreover, a group of Jewish rabbi and Christian priests converted to Islam and became Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî's disciples. It seems that Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî's positive remarks about non-Muslims attracted them as he said that non-Muslims also believed in Allah and they shared the same goal with the Muslims in spite of different methods to reach it. He even advised a tradesman cursing a Christian man to ask prayer and forgiveness from that man. Some Christians joined Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî's *sama* rituals. According to a somewhat exaggerated record in Eflâkî, about a hundred Christians converted to Islam during a *sama* ritual. His disciples also involved such non-Muslims as a doctor, a painter, an architect. Until Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî's death, the converts to Islam reached to eighteen thousand (Eflâkî 1986, I/149-150, 374-375; 1987, II/57).

The number given in this Mevlevî source seems to be exaggerated but provides a sense of conversion taking place during this period. This number might aim to show the proximity between this famous Sufi, Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî, and his vast Christian followers. During his death, many people wept after him (Eflâkî 1987, II/47; Sipehsâlâr 1977, 114). Many people of Christian, Jewish, Arabs and Turkish origin attended his funeral. Each of them was reading verses from their own holy books and was crying for him. There was a huge crowd in the funeral and the Muslims wanted to control the burial proceedings of Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî's body and asked the Sultan to allow them. The officials called the priests and told them "what do you have to do with this funeral, this religious leader is our imam and our guide". The Christians said "we understood the truths brought by Moses, Jesus and all other prophets from his explicit words. In his words, we found the character and actions of mature prophets we read in the books. As you see him today's Muhammad of the era, we consider him Moses and Jesus of our time. We like him the way you do." An Armenian said, "Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî was like a bread that no one could do without". In that situation the officials could not say a word (Eflâkî 1987, II/47- 48).

All the information narrated by the Mevlevî sources explains a closeness of their relations with the members of other religious. However, it is important to note that these friendly relations in Asia Minor did not emerge from a void in the thirteenth century and we can trace the origin of such relations in the twelfth century. Moreover, this kind of friendly relations does not emerge from one side's good will but from a mutual tolerance and respect.

II. The Relations Between the Muslim and Non-Muslim Communities

It is obvious that people of different origins, religions and cultures that live together for a long time seemed to affect each other in various ways. This phenomenon was also true for the Muslims and the non-Muslims living in Asia Minor in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and its reflections could easily be found in the real life. However, it is not possible to establish the nature of these mutual relations in full details. For that reason, we can do this only as far as the era's sources allow us to make inferences. In that regard, we organized these relations as follows.

A. Commercial and Professional Relations

The non-Muslim inhabitants of Asia Minor maintained their traditional professions and economic activities under the Turkish rule. For example, the Armenians were occupied with artifacts and commerce, were sewing carpets and fabrics (Marco Polo 2006, 20-21; Vryonis 1971, 182). A *waqf* document (*waqfiyya*) dated 1272 mentions that Armenians were growing grapes. The same document also mentions an Armenian bazaar and a kebab house in Kırşehir (Temir 1989, 110, 125). The Mevlevî writer Eflâkî's book states that an Armenian butcher showed a great respect to Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî (Eflâkî 1986, I/165). On the other hand, it is known that Armenians were working at grinding-mills (Yinanç 1991, 35-37). The presence of a drinking bar where the Armenians frequented in Konya implies that they were involved in winery (Cahen 1984, 210). According to Eflâkî (1986, I/146), Armenians were not generally preferred as housekeepers.

The Jews were very much involved in trade in such cities as Konya, Sivas and Antalya. The mentioning of Jewish houses in the *waqfiyya* belonging to Sivas' *Gökmedrese* (Bayram-Karabacak 1981, 54) clearly implies the presence of Jewish tradesmen in this area. The number of Jewish and other non-Muslim tradesmen in Sivas increased with the development of international commercial activities in Asia Minor. It seems that Konya's Jews came there with the development of the city (Vryonis 1971, 52). A *waqf* document dated 1202 during the era of Rûkneddin Süleymanşah the son of the Sultan Kılıçarslan II, mentions that some *waqf* revenues were devoted to the non-Muslims converting to Islam. These former non-Muslims included the Jews. Osman Turan (1947, 211-212) thinks that the Jews came to the city for commercial purposes. In Eflâkî's book (1987, II/64), it is noted that Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî brought a jug of wine for Şems-i Tebrizî from the Jewish quarter of Konya, suggesting that, like Armenians, the Jews were involved in producing and/or selling wine in Konya.

We see that the Franks that drew attention with their jobs in the Seljukid military seemed to be involved in commerce in the second half of the thirteenth century. Former soldiers obtained privileges to operate some mines (Heyd 1975, 332). The Franks played a significant part in the development of economic life in Konya (Baykara 1985, 135). There were strong economic and professional relations between the Muslims and the non-Muslims that shared the same bazaars and streets. In fact, these relations began after the Turkish invasion of Asia Minor. In their efforts to organize economic life, the Turks benefited from the experience of some Greeks and Armenians mostly related to commercial and industrial activities. Local Christian artisans continued to work in textile, mining, producing metal tools and construction. Some Turks began to learn these professions from them (Akdağ 1995, I/10).

The major sites of interaction between the Muslims and non-Muslims were the inner-city bazaars and the fairs outside cities. In these places they established communications with each other and learned about each other's cultures and faiths. That probably created a sense of

interdependence toward each other. They generally had constructive relations as non-Muslim doctors, painters and architects were known to Muslim community and were welcomed. Many non-Muslim doctors such as Hasnon and Vasil treated the sultans in the Seljukid palaces (İbn Bibi 1996, I/312-313; Turan 1993a, II/153-154). Ibn Battûta (2000, I/423) mentions the presence of a Jewish doctor in meeting with Aydınoğlu Mehmet Bey in Birgi. The famous Greek painter Aynuddevle drew Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî's picture several times (Eflâkî 1986, I/307-308). Many Greek architects and workers took a part in construction business. According to Eflâkî (1986, I/334; 1987, II/155-156), a Greek architect built a fireplace in Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî's house. Sultan Veled made the Greek workers plaster the *madrassa's* roof. When the Sheik Salahaddin gave the responsibility to cultivate his garden, Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî advised him to use Greek farmers to do the business as they were very skillful in farming business (Eflâkî 1987, II/115). Greek women were also popular as housekeepers.

In Asia Minor, the Muslims' relations were not limited to local non-Muslims but also included the traders who came for trade from abroad to Anatolia. These contacts generally took place in port towns and other big cities. Ibn Battûta (2000, I/403) mentions that each ethnic and religious group lived in different quarters. Many non-Muslim tradesmen lived in Antalya's port quarter known as *mina* in Antalya. There were also many non-Muslim tradesmen living in the cities such as Konya, Kayseri and Sivas. They mostly stayed in hostels (*hans*) and caravanserais which served equally their guests without any racial or religious discrimination. In a *waqf* record, it is noted that the Karatay caravanserai would served all passengers, men and women, free and slave alike, providing good evidence for such practices (Turan 1948, 83-86, 109-117). As Gordlevski (1988, 208) mentioned, living together with the Christians changed the Turkish outlook and helped them to adapt to commercial life.

B. Religious Relations

Asia Minor witnessed a peaceful cohabitation between Muslims and non-Muslims for a long time as both sultans and people acted parallel to these peaceful relations. Therefore, this process worked in a tolerant spirit and goodwill as to be seen under two titles below.

1. Common Holy Places and Cults

There emerged various places and cults that were considered sacred by both Muslims and non-Muslims in Asia Minor. This was in a sense a religious culture that emerged from a common experience between Muslims and non-Muslims (Günay 1996, 201-202). In visiting these sites, they sometimes had the same purpose while at other times different ones. Some statues and mummified bodies around Obruk near Aksaray became holy sites for both Muslims and Christians, receiving visitors from various regions. There were a mosque and a church in that place as Muslims considered these bodies belonging to the martyrs of the Caliph Omar era. The Christians considered these bodies as Christian saints (Turan 1993a, II/182).

The Saint Charitan monastery known as Akmanastır or Deyri-Eflatun Manastır in Konya was considered sacred by both Muslims and non-Muslims. Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî also visited the monastery that incorporated churches carved in rocks and a mosque. He once stayed in a cold-water cave for seven days. In another visit, he remained there in a room for forty days, temporarily withdrawing from society. He made a close friendship with the wise and hospitable priest of the monastery. His son, Sultan Veled and Ulu Arif Çelebi visited him there several times (Eflâkî 1986, I/239, 374; 1987, II/206). Hasluck (1929, II/373-374) narrates a miracle whereby Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî's son was rescued from the cliff by an old man

identified as Saint Charitan. Moreover, he argues that every year Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî's followers bring candle oil to this place in order to commemorate this event and they prayed in the mosque within the monastery for a night every year.

The Amphilokios church estimated to be built during the nineteenth and eleventh centuries on the Alâeddin hill (Eyice 1994, 477) was considered sacred by both Muslims and non-Muslims. Muslims respected the grave of the Christian saint Amphilokios, associating him with Platon (Gordlevski 1988, 330). Christians too considered the grave sacred attributing it to Amphilokios. These attitudes continued even after the conversion of the Church into mosque. According to Hasluck (1929, II/373) the Mevlevis played a significant role in promoting Muslims' respect for Platon. Moreover, it seems that this cult contributed to the rapprochement between the Muslims and non-Muslims.

Some holy sites around Kayseri used to draw the believers of both Muslim and Christian religions. The fountain of needs (Hacet Pınarı) in Ağırnas, the fountain of malaria (Sıtma Pınarı) in Felahiye, the cave in Yahyalı's Barazama village were such sites (Günay 1996, 202). The Komnenos church in Sivrihisar was a site which was believed to cure animal diseases (Turan 1993a, II/182). In Kayseri there remains a belief that a disease called 'priest disease' is cured by the Christian priests (Günay 1996, 202). In Kırşehir a monastery was built near the town of Karakurt in Kırşehir probably during the Byzantine period. This place later turned into a visiting site with the construction of a tomb for an unknown personally (Çetin 1981, 133-134). When he was in Sinop, Ibn Battûta found about eleven Greek villages. There was a convent over the hill attributed to Khidir Elias that periodically attracted visitors from locals (İbn Battûta 2000, I/442). Similarly, both Christians and Muslims regularly visited some churches and monasteries near Karaman.

The cult of Saint Georges (Aya Yorgi) emerged as a result of the interactions between the Muslims and Christians, leaving strong traces in the collective memories of both communities. The Turks of Asia Minor considered him as Cercis Nebi (prophet) and generally associated him with Khidir Elias due to practical reasons. The death of Saint Georges dated April 23 (May 6) 303 was commemorated as the cult of Aya Yorgi. The Muslims that used to associate Aya Yorgi with Khidir Elias adopted this date as the cult of Khidir Elias. In this way, both sides started to commemorate the two intertwined cults at the same time (Ocak 1991, 667, 669). The Muslims attributed to Khidir Elias the monasteries and sacred locations of Aya Yorgi scattered around Anatolia and even Crimea and the Balkans as a reflection of this understanding in practice. Muslims associated Aya Yorgi riding a white horse and killing dragons with ancient legendary Turkish folk heroes. A form of Aya Yorgi legend attributed to Khidir Elias still lives in Anatolia (Ocak 1991, 669-670).

2. The Phenomenon of Conversion

The religious interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims resulted in conversions between the two sides. It is important for a scholarly analysis that this phenomenon must not be denied, under-stated or overstated because the shortage of historical material on this topic prevents us from establishing a clear statistical figure on the nature of conversion. The era's Muslim and Christian sources mention individual conversion events in the upper classes. These chronicles do not talk about mass conversions except for one event (Ocak 1981, 33-34).

This exceptional situation occurred during the crusades. During the campaign some crusaders could not make their way to Syria and faced with famine, disease and poverty

around Antalya after being left alone by the Greeks. The Turks helped those crusaders by giving them food, shelter and even money and treated their patients. When explaining this event, a Frank historian said “more than three thousand young crusaders who ran away from the persecution of their Christian brethren sought protection, shelter and mercy from the Turks. Oh Mercy, you are crueler than treason because Muslims bought their religion from these Christians. However, the Turks did not force them to convert to Islam despite their favor to them” (Arnold 1982, 100-101).

There were several reasons why non-Muslims converted to Islam in Anatolia. Firstly, the Seljukid state was more advanced, just and tolerant. Moreover, some religious controversies among Christians along with the privileged status of Muslims within the state, their desire to be exempt from non-Muslim taxes, Sufi activities among Christians and close interaction with Muslims can be listed among these reasons (Turan 1993a, II/165, 170; Cahen 1984, 203-214; Köprülü 1986, 111, 141; Çetin 1981, 115). We cannot talk about a systematic forced conversion policy toward non-Muslims but we find a kind of indirect proselytizing policy in order to meet the demand for soldier and other palace needs. In that regard, the young Christian boys, bought or imprisoned, were first trained in the slave school (*gulamhâne*) and then hired to work in the palace or army and some others served in the houses of the rich people (Turan 1993a, II/171). Ibn Bibi mentions that most of the slaves even reached the status of Emir. Among them were Şemseddin Altun-Aba, Celâleddin Karatay, Mübârizeddin Er-Tokuş, Şemseddin Yavtaş, Mübârizeddin Çavlı, Cemaleddin Ferruh Lala, Eminateddin Mikâil and Alâmeddin Kayser and Şemseddin Hasoğuz (İbn Bibi 1996, I/119; 1996, II/93, 99, 117, 125, 207; Turan 1947, 213). These practices seemed to be irrational at first sight but, considering that these people were hired in the military and the palace and reached very high ranks, this policy seemed to work for the advantage of non-Muslims.

We find several converted Muslims that were not trained in these slave schools and reached to the highest rank in the state apparatus. For example, Ali bin Sivastos was among the Seljukid emîrs whose name is written in the sign of Afyon Grand Mosque. His father Fahreddin Sivastos, too, was one of the emirs for Izzeddin Keykâvus II (1246-1262) and was a convert (Uzunçarşılı 1929, 14). It is known that the Komnenos dynasty from the Byzantine aristocracy were also converts (Köprülü 1986, 140-141). We know that Hajuk's son Hüsam was also a convert who surrendered the city of Kayseri to the Mongols during the siege (Turan 1993a, II/173).

Among the converts were also some members of clergy, scholars and artisans. For example, in a town near Istanbul a monk of the monastery secretly converted to Islam and even joined Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî's disciples. Similarly, the monk of Akmanastır converted to Islam and became Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî's disciple. According Eflâkî (1986, I/156-157, 374-375), the painter Aynuddevle did the same. There were many other examples of conversions but they are not sufficient to make a generalization about the extent of conversion among the Anatolia population.

Some important statesmen seemed to encourage non-Muslims to convert to Islam through charitable organizations. For example, in a 1202 *waqf* document of Altun-Aba it is noted that the *waqf* aimed to provide food, cloths and shoes for the converts and to help them in getting circumcision, to learn and perform religious worships (Turan 1947, 211-212). The fact that as a convert himself Altun-Aba provided for the converted ones shows the phenomenon of conversion with some frequency in this era.

The historical sources do not provide sufficient information about the converts but there are some claims especially by Christian writers that some Seljukid sultans and queens leaned toward Christianity. For example, Gıyâseddin I is said to be baptized while in Istanbul and that Kılıçarslan II was a secret Christian and Izzeddin Keykâvus II converted to Christianity after the Mongolian defeat and moved to Istanbul (Turan 1993a, II/149-152). As mentioned above, the Seljukid sultans lived in Istanbul for political reasons and married Christian women. It is inevitable that the sultans and queens living in Istanbul faced the Christian culture and became influenced by this culture (Sarre 1998, 53-54). We can trace these influences in their actions but it is better to attribute their religious tolerance and freedom to the political and cultural context of this era as these sultans grew with a strong Islamic culture and worldview. Disagreeing with Gordlevski (1988, 334), it would not be a fair judgment to describe these sultans as disguised Christians due to their tolerance and sympathy toward the Christians.

Among others, Ibnü'l Esir mentions one exceptional conversion story from Islam to Christianity, concerning the grandson of Kılıçarslan II and son of the Mugiseddin Tuğrulşah. According to the narration, Tuğrulşah wanted to marry the Georgian Queen Rasudan and suggested her marriage but she accepted it under the condition that he would convert to Christianity. Tuğrulşah approved this marriage and asked his son to adopt Christianity and marry the Georgian Queen. What Ibnü'l Esir (1987, XII/372) described as an unusual marriage took place in 1223. Then the prince wore the Georgian crown robe and put on a hat with a cross drawn on it (Turan 1993b, 414). From this marriage they had two siblings whose names were Tamara and David as David later became the Georgian king and Tamara married to Gıyâseddin II and then converted to Islam (Gregory Abu'l-Farac 1950, II/537-538).

3. Sharing Joys, Sorrows and Sadness

The Muslim and non-Muslim inhabitants of Asia Minor sometimes acted together in common political, social and cultural affairs as they shared the same fate by living in the same territories with common interests. They seemed to enjoy victories together and other times shared their sorrows. There are several examples of such sharing. For example, Alâeddin Keykubâd as a very knowledgeable and religious sultan visited the tomb of Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî's father Bahaeddin Veled and prayed for a victory before going to war against Celâleddin Harzemşah in Yassı-Çimen. In 1230 the sultan returned victorious from this war. When he approached Kayseri, Muslim scholars and sheiks along with Christian priests went out to celebrate him and many other Christians that could not reach the sultan gathered on top of a hill to show their happiness. When the sultan realized this, he told them to ring the bells and entered the city in their company (Turan 1993a, II/150-151). It seems that Christians were as happy as the Muslims with the sultan's victory and wanted to share this happy event. The Syrian priest expressing his happiness with the victory of the Sultan Kılıçarslan II against the Byzantium (Cahen 1984, 212) might reflect the mood of Christians in the Seljukid society.

As a sign of solidarity between the Muslims and non-Muslims, an incidence took place in Malatya where an Armenian priest raped a bride visiting the church in the year 1156. Fearing a public uproar, the priest killed her and hid her body in the church. When the event was exposed to the public, the city's major made him arrested. Then the Muslims and non-Muslims came together and lynched the priests and organized a joint funeral for the diseased women and mourned for her together (Turan 1993a, II/184). Another incidence happened in Malatya after the Kösedağ war (1243). Afraid of a Mongolian invasion, the military chiefs (*subaşı*) fled to Aleppo, leaving the city without an administrator. After that, the Muslims and

non-Muslims united to form a joint government under the leadership of Syrian cardinal by making an oath on mutual loyalty (Gregory Abul-Farac 1950, II/543).

As we mentioned above, the death of a personality loved by both Muslims and non-Muslims might cause common sadness among the Muslim and non-Muslims communities alike. According to Mateos of Urfa (1962, 231), when Kılıçarslan II died the Christians, too, mourned for him as they saw the sultan as a good and nice ruler. Similar scenes were found in Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî's death and the members of all religions mourned for him in his funeral.

4. Marriages

It is known that the Seljukid sultans married to Christian women and this was seen very natural by the inhabitants of Anatolia. Like sultans, some emirs and statesmen used to marry non-Muslim women (Çetin 1981, 163; Şeker 2002, 47-49). There were some women of Georgian and Greek origins among the wives of the Sultans but we did not find anyone with an Armenian origin among them. This can be attributed to their lower socio-economic status (Cahen 1984, 205; Çetin 1981, 165). Unlike the sultans, other statesmen belonging to the palace seemed to sometimes marry Armenian women (Gregory Abul-Farac 1950, II/587-588, 591). Along with the Armenians, the statesmen also married women of other ethnic and religious groups. For example, it is known that some Frank women married to the Seljukid emirs during the crusades. It is stated that the sultan Kılıçarslan I married to Isabella, the sister of the Comte of Toulouse and St. Gilles, Raimond VI (d.1105) (Babinger-Köprülü 1996, 15; Gordlevski 1988, 333). Some emirs also married to Christian women related to the non-Muslim kings. For example, Tâceddin Hüseyin, the son of Fahreddin Ali married to the daughter of Kir Khaya who was the Izeddin Keykaus II's uncle (Kerîmüddin Mahmud-i Aksarayî 2000, 62).

Some scholars such as Gordlevski (1988, 330, 332) by looking at the Greek nicknames of the wives claimed that Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî and his son Sultan Veled had married to Greek women. However, this seemed to be an error on their part as Tahsin Yazıcı (Eflâkî 1986, I/8-16 -in preface-) explained that this confusion comes from the close neighborhood relations between the Muslims and non-Muslims and the use of similar words that were adapted from Greek to Turkish or Persian as the official language of the time. Some nicknames coming from Greek were used instead of real names during this time (Turan 1993a, II/185).

The Turks' marriage with non-Muslim women had some advantages in itself. Above all, it accelerated the process of Islamization of Asia Minor (Yuvalı 1996, 447). Very often Christian Muslim who married to Muslim man converted to Islam and even grew their children as Muslims (Çetin 1981, 165). This consolidated the presence of Islamic religion and civilization in the region. On the other hand, these marriages helped bring the two populations closer to each other and decreased the intensity of religious antagonism (Gordlevski 1988, 328). The Muslim-non-Muslim marriages played a significant role to absorb and to integrate the non-Muslim population within the Islamic community at all levels of social life (Vryonis 1971, 227-229). Despite the shortage of information, we estimate that the marriage of Muslim women with non-Muslim men was not very common as Islam prohibits such a practice. However, we have the information about such incidences as some Syrian men married to Muslim women (Turan 1993a, II/184).

Conclusion

The relations between the Muslims and non-Muslims of Asia Minor during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries seemed to remain very friendly and tolerant in general except for some problems such as conquest and subordination. The people that shared a common geography and a common fate managed to live together for a long time. These relations were also present among the Muslims and non-Muslim inhabitants of these territories. The tolerant policies of the Muslim sultans toward the non-Muslims did not seem to cause a major friction among the two as the non-Muslims of Asia Minor even preferred the Muslim Seljukid rule over the Christian Byzantine rule during the conquest of Anatolia. The Muslim and non-Muslim populations were closely interacting with each other with trade as some non-Muslim artisans and professional people worked for Muslims to provide goods and services.

Muslims and non-Muslims had very strong cultural interactions as they adopted common cults and holy sites and became familiar with each other's culture. Due to this close interaction, some non-Muslims converted to Islam along with some exceptional conversion of Muslims to Christianity. For example, Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî had many converted followers from the non-Muslim population and he also received a great sympathy from the non-converting Christians and Jews. Moreover, these societies shared some of joys and sorrows of each other in the issues that concerned both communities.

Some Muslim leaders and ordinary men married to non-Muslims women. The leaders' such marriage had both political and cultural purposes. By doing that, they tried to increase the loyalty of their non-Muslim subjects through kinship and to set a friendly relation among the two populations. In very few cases, some Muslim women married to non-Muslim men despite Islamic restrictions. Muslims and non-Muslims lived together in close and mixed neighborhood and they met each other in the bazaars and conducted their businesses together. All these historical experiences provide us with significant examples of living together peacefully in the same territory.

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