



## Summary :

The Battle of Dazimon took place on July 22, 838 between the expeditionary forces of the Arab general Afshin and the troops of emperor Theophilos. Notwithstanding the initial success during the fight, the Byzantines were defeated in the end and took flight, while emperor Theophilos himself barely managed to escape the battlefield.

## Date

July 22, 838

## Geographical Location

Dazimon plain (modern Dazmana, Turkey)

## 1. Historical context

On April 5, 838 the Arab **caliph** al-Mu' tasim (833-842), leading a large military force,<sup>1</sup> departed from Samarra (where he had transferred the capital of his caliphate abandoning Baghdad) with the intention to invade the Byzantine territories in Asia Minor. The aim of this campaign was the vengeance for the sack of Arsamosata and Sozopetra (Zapetra), the caliph's birthplace, during a **campaign** led by the emperor **Theophilos** the previous year. Contrary to **earlier Arab campaigns**, which turned against the **fortresses** on the Arab-Byzantine borders, al-Mu' tasim aimed from the start at the capture of **Ankyra** and, above all, of **Amorion**,<sup>2</sup> which as the capital of the **theme** of **Anatolikon** constituted an important military centre; it was also the cradle of Theophilos' dynasty, a fact which attached special importance to its possible sacking.<sup>3</sup>

The caliph camped at **Tarsus**, by the river Lamos; there he split his troops into two groups. One of these,<sup>4</sup> under the leadership of the Arab general Afshin (a general of Persian descent), was ordered to join with the troops of the **emir** of **Melitene** 'Amr al-Aqta' and invade the theme of **Armeniakon**. Afshin's contingent marched into the plain of Dazimon, south-east of **Amaseia**, where it raised camp, while soon after the rest of the Arab forces<sup>5</sup> invaded western **Cappadocia**, the region of general Ashinas (June 19), followed by the main contingent under the caliph two days later. In the meantime, a little earlier (early June) emperor Theophilos, having been informed of the enemy's movements, left Constantinople to face the Arabs. The emperor's expeditionary force, which included the **tagmata** under the **domestikos ton scholon** Manuel, the Persian soldiers of **Nasr/Theophobos**<sup>6</sup> and possibly soldiers drawn from the themes of Thrace and Macedonia, initially camped at **Dorylaeum**, in order to strengthen the defence of Amorion and Ankyra. The emperor then headed to Cappadocia and camped by the river Halys. Around mid-June, Theophilos was informed that Afshin was in the area of Dazimon. Because the Arab military presence at this particular military junction threatened to cut off of the Byzantines' supply and withdraw routes, Theophilos decided to attack and repel the Arab forces.

## 2. The battle

On July 21, emperor Theophilos, leading a Byzantine army, reached the plain of Dazimon, where the Arab military force of Afshin, which among others included 10,000 Turkmen mounted archers, had already set up camp. The Byzantines forces took position south of the Dazimon fortress, on a hill called Anzen. Theophilos was in a dilemma



about the most appropriate time to attack the Arabs. Disregarding the advice of Manuel and Nasr/Theophobos, who argued that they should better move in the night, Theophilus followed the suggestion of the rest of the officers and ordered an attack in the early hours of the following day, July 22. Initially success swung in favour of the Byzantines, who forced a wing of the enemy forces to retreat, inflicting important losses on them (3,000 men). Soon before noon, however, and while Theophilus leading 2,000 men of the tagmata and Nasr/Theophobos' contingent crossed to the rear of his army to strengthen his other wing, thus being out of sight of the men fighting in the front line, the Arab cavalry launched a ferocious counter-attack. The mounted archers released a rain of arrows on the Byzantine camp, and this fact, combined with Theophilus' absence from the front line, resulted in the Byzantine troops becoming disarrayed as they were put to a disorderly retreat, abandoning the battlefield. The emperor and his retinue found themselves surrounded on the hill of Anzen, but a storm that suddenly broke out caused the strings of the Arab arrows to loosen, thus removing the immediate danger Theophilus was in. While Afshin was trying to move his stone-hurling war-machines to the first line so as to break the resistance of the last remaining Byzantine troops,<sup>7</sup> Theophilus managed to safely retreat from the battlefield<sup>8</sup> and sought refuge at Chiliokomon, north of Amaseia. There he regrouped the Byzantine army, as the soldiers who had thought the emperor had lost his life in battle and frightened had scattered in the nearby areas were gradually returning. The victorious Arabs marched towards Ankyra, where they joined the main expeditionary force of the caliph's invading army a few days later.

### 3. The consequences

The defeat of the Byzantine forces by the Arabs in the region of Dazimon, affected negatively the outcome of the Byzantine military operations in Asia Minor in two ways. First, the rumour that spread in Constantinople that Theophilus was killed during the battle gave the opportunity to some officials to pose the issue of proclaiming a new emperor. As soon as Theophilus was informed about this march of events, he was forced to hasten his return to the capital, abandoning his defeated army at a time when the Arabs, encouraged by their victory at Dazimon, continued their military operations in Asia Minor.<sup>9</sup> Secondly, the troops of the Persian contingent were reassembled at [Sinope](#) or [Amastris](#),<sup>10</sup> fearing the emperor's wrath as they had also taken flight during the battle, and proclaimed Nasr/Theophobos emperor, against his will. Although this insurrection apparently did not have serious consequences for the empire, it did deprive the Byzantine army of a battle-worthy contingent during a crucial turn in the Arab-Byzantine conflict. The Battle of Dazimon is also important for yet another reason: this was the Byzantines' first contact with the formidable mounted Turkmen archers who in the following centuries will pose a considerable threat to the Byzantine control over Asia Minor, acting either as mercenaries of the caliphate or as independent nomad-raiders and eventually conquerors.<sup>11</sup>

---

1. Vasiliev, A. A., *Byzance et les Arabes I: La dynastie d'Amorium (820- 867)* (Corpus Bruxellense Historiae Byzantinae I, Bruxelles 1968), p. 146, calculates this force between 200,000 and 500,000 men; on the contrary, Treadgold, W. T., *The Byzantine Revival 780-842* (Stanford 1988), p. 297, speaks of around 80,000 soldiers accompanied by a multitude of servants, merchants and beasts of burden.

2. It is suggestive that the military standards and the shields of the Arabs had the word 'Amorion' engraved on them.

3. Rosser, J., "Theophilus' Khurramite Policy and its Finale: The Revolt of Theophobos' Persian Troops in 838 *Βυζαντινά* 6 (1974), p. 265, believes that the policy of supporting the Persian rebels adopted by Theophilus was the sole cause of the caliph's fierce attack against Amorion.

4. According to Treadgold, W. T., *The Byzantine Revival 780-842* (Stanford 1988), p. 299, it numbered 30,000 and included 10,000 Turkmen and the entire army of Arabian Armenia. Haldon, J. F., *The Byzantine Wars* (Stroud 2001), p. 80, calculates the numbers of the Arabian force to 20,000 men.



5. According to Treadgold, W. T., *The Byzantine Revival 780-842* (Stanford 1988), p. 299, they numbered 50,000 men.
6. Nasr took on the name Theophobos after his baptism and by this name he is mentioned in the Byzantine sources. For more see Rekaya, M., "Mise au point sur Théophobe et l'alliance de Babek avec Théophile (833/834-839/840)", *Byzantion* 44 (1974), pp. 43-67.
7. Haldon, J. F. *The Byzantine Wars* (Stroud 2001), p. 82.
8. According to Treadgold, W. T., *The Byzantine Revival 780-842* (Stanford 1988), p. 300, Manuel was responsible for Theophilos' rescue: he grabbed the reins of the emperor's horse and led him away from the battlefield. See also Treadgold, W. T., "The Chronological Accuracy of the Chronicle of Symeon the Logothete for the Years 813-845", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 33 (1979), pp. 180-183. On the contrary, Rekaya, M., "Mise au point sur Théophobe et l'alliance de Babek avec Théophile (833/834-839/840)", *Byzantion* 44 (1974), p. 63, Rosser, J., "Theophilus' Khurramite Policy and its Finale: The Revolt of Theophobos' Persian Troops in 838", *Βυζαντινά* 6 (1974), p. 269, and Belke, K.- Restle, M., *Galatien und Lykaonien* (Tabula Imperii Byzantini 4, Wien 1984), p. 66, attribute this very action to Nasr/Theophobos, while Vasiliev, A. A., *Byzance et les Arabes I: La dynastie d'Amorium (820- 867)* (Corpus Bruxellense Historiae Byzantinae I, Bruxelles 1968), pp. 156-157, does not suggest which of the two men was the protagonist in this event.
9. Vasiliev, A. A., *Byzance et les Arabes I: La dynastie d'Amorium (820- 867)* (Corpus Bruxellense Historiae Byzantinae I, Bruxelles 1968), p. 158-159, holds that the rebellion of the Persian troops and Nasr/Theophobos' proclamation as emperor forced Theophilus' to hasten his return to Constantinople. On the contrary, Treadgold, W. T., *The Byzantine Revival 780-842* (Stanford 1988), p. 301-302, Belke, K., *Paphlagonien und Honorias* (Tabula Imperii Byzantini 9, Wien 1996), p. 75, and Cheynet, J.-Cl., "Théophile, Théophobe et les Perses", in Λαμπάκης, Σ. (ed.), *Η Βυζαντινή Μικρά Ασία (6ος-12ος αιώνας)* (Διεθνή Συμπόσια 6, Αθήνα 1998), pp. 44-45, do not correlate the two events, but attribute the emperor's return to the capital to the machinations of certain nobles aimed at proclaiming a new emperor. According to Rosser, J., "Theophilus' Khurramite Policy and its Finale: The Revolt of Theophobos' Persian Troops in 838", *Βυζαντινά* 6 (1974), p. 269, it is very likely that they wished to proclaim Nasr/Theophobos emperor.
10. This second version is mentioned by Vasiliev, A. A., *Byzance et les Arabes I: La dynastie d'Amorium (820- 867)* (Corpus Bruxellense Historiae Byzantinae I, Bruxelles 1968), p. 159, and Cheynet, J.-CL, "Théophile, Théophobe et les Perses", in Λαμπάκης, Σ. (ed.), *Η Βυζαντινή Μικρά Ασία (6ος-12ος αιώνας)* (Διεθνή Συμπόσια 6, Αθήνα 1998), p. 44.
11. Kaegi, W. E., "The Contribution of Archery to the Turkish Conquest of Anatolia", *Speculum* 39 (1964), pp. 96-108.

---

## Bibliography :

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <b>Ιωάννης Σκυλίτζης</b> , <i>Σύνοψις Ιστοριών</i> , Thurn, I. (ed.), <i>Ioannis Skylitzae Synopsis Historiarum</i> , Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 5, Berlin – New York 1973    |
|  | <b>Ostrogorsky G.</b> , <i>Ιστορία του Βυζαντινού Κράτους</i> , 1-3, Αθήνα 1989, Παναγόπουλος, Ι. (μτφρ.)  |
|  | <b>Belke K., Mersich N.</b> , <i>Paphlagonien und Honorias</i> , Wien 1996, Tabula Imperii Byzantini 9   |
|  | <b>Kaegi W.E.</b> , "Some reconsiderations on the themes (7th-9th centuries)", <i>Jahrbuch der österreichischen byzantinischen Gesellschaft</i> , 16, 1967, 39-53                      |
|  | <b>Hild F., Restle M.</b> , <i>Kappadokien. Kappadokia, Charsianon, Sebasteia und Lykandos</i> , Wien 1981, TIB 2  |
|  | <b>Belke K., Restle M.</b> , <i>Galatien und Lykaonien</i> , Wien 1984, TIB 4  |
|  | <b>Χριστοφιλοπούλου Α.</b> , <i>Βυζαντινή Ιστορία 2:1</i> , Θεσσαλονίκη 1993   |
|  | <b>Vasiliev A.A.</b> , <i>Byzance et les Arabes I: La dynastie d'Amorium (820-867)</i> , Bruxelles 1968, Corpus Bruxellense Historiae Byzantinae 1, Grégoire, H. – Canard, M. (trans.) |



|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <b>Άμαντος Κ.</b> , <i>Ιστορία του βυζαντινού κράτους 1</i> , Αθήνα 1963  |
|  | <b>Jenkins R.J.H.</b> , <i>Byzantium: The Imperial Centuries (AD 610-1071)</i> , London 1966  |
|  | <b>Rékaya M.</b> , "Mise au point sur Théophobe et l'alliance de Babek avec Théophile (833/834-839/840)", <i>Byzantion</i> , 44, 1974, 43-67  |
|  | <b>Rosser J.</b> , "Theophilus' Khurramite Policy and its Finale: The Revolt of Theophobus' Persian Troops in 838", <i>Βυζαντινά</i> , 6, 1974, 263-271   |
|  | <b>Treadgold W.T.</b> , <i>The Byzantine Revival 780-842</i> , Stanford – California 1988   |
|  | <b>Cheyne J.-C.</b> , "Théophile, Théophobe et les Perses", Λαμπάκης Σ. (επιμ.), <i>Η Βυζαντινή Μικρά Ασία (6ος-12ος αι.)</i> , IBE/EIE - Κέντρο για Μελέτη Ελληνισμού Σπύρος Βρυώνης, Αθήνα 1998, Διεθνή Συμπόσια 6, 39-50   |
|  | <b>Haldon J.F.</b> , <i>The Byzantine Wars</i> , Stroud 2001  |
|  | <b>Συμεών Μάγιστρος</b> , <i>Χρονικόν</i> , Wahlgren, S. (ed.), <i>Symeonis Magistri et Logothetae Chronicon</i> , Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 44:1, Berlin – New York 2006   |
|  | <b>Συνεχισταί Θεοφάνους</b> , <i>Χρονογραφία συγγραφείσα εκ προστάγματος Κωνσταντίνου του φιλοχρίστου και πορφυρογεννήτου δεσπότης</i> , Bekker, I. (ed.), <i>Theophanes Continuatus, Joannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus</i> , Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae, Bonn 1838 |
|  | <b>Ιωσήφ Γενέσιος</b> , <i>Βασιλείαι</i> , Lesmüller-Werner, A. – Thurn, I. (eds), <i>Iosephi Genesii Regum Libri Quattuor</i> , Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 14, Berlin – New York 1978   |
|  | <b>Συνεχιστής Γεωργίου Μοναχού</b> , <i>Βίοι των νέων βασιλέων</i> , Bekker, I. (ed.), <i>Theophanes Continuatus, Joannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus</i> , Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae, Bonn 1838   |
|  | <b>Al-Tabari</b> , <i>Ta'rikh al-Rusul wa-l-Muluk</i> , Barth, J. et al. (eds), Leiden 1879-1901  |
|  | <b>Treadgold W.T.</b> , "The Chronological Accuracy of the Chronicle of Symeon the Logothete for the Years 813-845", <i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i> , 33, 1979, 159-197   |
|  | <b>Kaegi W.E.</b> , "The Contribution of Archery to the Turkish Conquest of Anatolia", <i>Speculum</i> , 39, 1964, 96-108   |

## Webliography :

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | Al-Mo'tasim and al-Wathik<br><a href="http://www.answering-islam.de/Main/Books/Muir/Caliphate/chap67.htm">http://www.answering-islam.de/Main/Books/Muir/Caliphate/chap67.htm</a> |
|  | Ninth-century Byzantine Army<br><a href="http://www.deremilitari.org/resources/pdfs/treadgold.pdf">http://www.deremilitari.org/resources/pdfs/treadgold.pdf</a>                  |
|  | Theophilus (emperor)<br><a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theophilus_(emperor)">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theophilus_(emperor)</a>  |

## Glossary :

|  |        |
|--|--------|
|  | caliph |
|--|--------|



The supreme religious and political authority of Muslims, considered successor of Muhammad (Arabic: khalifa = deputy). He was the head of the Caliphate, the religious state of the Arabs.

#### **domestikos ton scholon**

Commander of the regiment of *scholae*. The first officer with this title appears in 767/8. In the 10th C the domestici became very powerful among the army of the *themata*; in mid-10th C the office was divided in two, *domestikoi ton scholon* of the East and those of the West, commanders in chief of the eastern and the western provinces' army respectively.

#### **emir**

(from Arabic amir) Emir meaning "commander" or "general", later also "prince". Also a high title of nobility or office in some Turkic historical states.

#### **tagmata (pl.)**

Military units stationed in Constantinople and its outskirts during the Middle Byzantine period. The most important tagmata were that of the Scholae, the Excubitors (these originated from respective units of the Early Byzantine period and were organized into an imperial guard and a central strike force by Constantine V), the Vigilia (established by Irene the Athenian) and the Hikanatoi (established by Nicephorus I).

## Sources

Thurn, I. (ed.), *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum*. (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 5, Berlin-New York 1973), pp. 74.24 - 77.94.

Lesmüller-Werner, A. – Thurn, I. (eds), *Josephi Genesisii Regum Libri Quattuor* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 14, Berlin-New York 1978), pp. 47.21 - 49.73.

## Quotations

### Account of the battle of Dazimon by John Scylitzes

ὁ δ' ἀμερμουμνῆς τοσοῦτον ἐτρώθη τὴν ψυχὴν ἐπὶ τῇ καταλήψει τῆς ἐκπορθηθείσης πατρίδος αὐτοῦ, ὡς πανταχοῦ θεσπίσαι πᾶσαν ἡλικίαν ἔκ τε Βαβυλωνῶν καὶ Φοινίκης καὶ Παλαιστίνης καὶ Συρίας, ἔτι δὲ καὶ τῆς πορρωτέρω Λιβύης ἀθροίζεσθαι. πάντα δὲ τὸν στρατευόμενον γράφειν ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκειᾶς ἀσπίδος Ἀμωρίων, τὴν κατ' αὐτοῦ ὀρμὴν αἰνιττόμενος. συνήχθη γοῦν αὐτῶ πᾶς ὁ στρατός ἀνὰ τὴν Ταρσόν. ἐπεξῆει δὲ καὶ ὁ Θεόφιλος κατὰ τὸ Δορύλαιον, τριῶν ἡμερῶν ὁδὸν Ἀμωρίου ἀπέχον. πολλῶν οὖν συμβουλευόντων μετοικίσαι τὸν ἐν Ἀμωρίῳ οἰκοῦντα λαὸν καὶ ὑπενδύουσαι τῇ ἀσχετῶ φορᾷ τῶν Σαρακηνῶν, τοῦτο μὲν ἄδοξον ἐδόκει τῷ Θεοφίλῳ καὶ ἀνανδρον, καλὸν δὲ καὶ πρὸς ἀνδρείαν εὐδοκίαν τὸ μᾶλλον ἐποχυρῶσαι αὐτὸ καὶ στρατηγοῦ γενναίου διασῶσαι βουλαῖς. ἐξαπέστειλε γοῦν Ἀέτιον τὸν πατρίκιον καὶ τῶν Ἀνατολικῶν στρατηγόν, δούς αὐτῶ καὶ χεῖρα ἀρκοῦσαν εἰς ἀποτροπὴν τῶν ἐχθρῶν. ἐδίδου δὲ καὶ ἡγεμόνας τοῦ λαοῦ τοὺς μετὰ βραχὺ μαρτυρήσαντας, Θεόδωρον τὸν Κρατερὸν καὶ Θεόφιλον καὶ τὸν Βαβουτζικόν καὶ τοὺς λοιπούς, οἵτινες οὐ μόνον τοῦ πεμφθέντος τότε λαοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς φάλαγγος τῶν τεσσαρακονταδύο μαρτύρων γεγόνασιν ἀρχηγοί. ὡς δὲ κατὰ τὴν Ταρσόν ἐπέστη μετὰ παντός τοῦ λαοῦ ὁ τῶν Σαρακηνῶν ἡγεμῶν, βουλευσάμενος μετὰ τῶν συνόντων αὐτῶ καὶ μαντευσάμενος δεῖν ἔκρινε, μὴ εὐθέως χωρεῖν πρὸς Ἀμωρίων, ἀποπειράσασθαι δὲ πρότερον τῆς τοῦ βασιλέως δυνάμεως διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, μέγας λαβόντος <τοῦ στρατοῦ>, τοῦτο λογισάμενος, ὡς εἰ περιγένηται τοῦ βασιλέως οὗτος, ἔψεται πάντως ἡ νίκη καὶ τῷ πατρί, εἰ δὲ μὴ, βέλτιον ἡσυχάζειν. ταῦτα βουλευσάμενός τε καὶ κρίνας ἐξέπεμψε τὸν υἱόν, λαβόντα μεθ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἄμερα τὸν τῆνικαῦτα διέποντα τὴν Μελιτηνὴν καὶ Τούρκους ὡσεὶ χιλιάδας δέκα καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν ἐξ Ἀρμενίων στρατίαν καὶ τὸν ἄρχοντα τῶν ἀρχόντων. ὅς κατὰ τὸν λεγόμενον Δαζιμῶνα γενόμενος παρεμβολὴν ἐπήξατο. ἀπῆει γοῦν καὶ ὁ Θεόφιλος κατ' αὐτοῦ στρατόπεδον ἐπαγόμενος οὐκ ἀγεννῆς, ἔκ τε Περσῶν καὶ τῶν δυτικῶν καὶ τῶν πρὸς ἀνίσχοντα ἥλιον συνιστάμενος. γενόμενος δὲ κατὰ τὸν οὕτω καλούμενον χώρον Ἀνζῆν ἐπεθύμει κατασκοπεῦσαι πρὸ τοῦ πολέμου καὶ τῆς προσβολῆς τὸ τῶν ἐναντίων ἄθροισμα. εἰς τινα δὲ ὑψηλοτάτην περιοπὴν ὑπὸ τοῦ δομestikou τῶν σχολῶν ἀνενεχθεὶς Μανουὴλ κατεσκόπει τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἐναντίων καὶ πῶς ἐκ στοχασμοῦ βαρύτερον ἐδόκει τὸ τῶν Σαρακηνῶν πλῆθος. ἀλλ' ὁ Μανουὴλ· «μὴ πρὸς τὸ πλῆθος, ὦ βασιλεῦ, ἀπόβλεπε, πρὸς δὲ τὸν ἐκ τῶν δοράτων καλαμῶνα τῶν ἀμφοτέρων.» ἐπεὶ δὲ ἰσχυρότερος ἐδόκει ὁ τῶν ἐναντίων στρατός, ἐβουλεύετο, ὅπως ἂν αὐτοῖς ἐπιθήται μετὰ δόλου. ὁ μὲν οὖν Μανουὴλ ἄμα τῷ Θεοφίλῳ νυκτὸς ἐπιθέσθαι τούτοις παρήνει, οἱ δ' ἄλλοι τῶν στρατηγῶν ἡμέρας τὴν συμβολὴν γενέσθαι πρόετρεπον, οἷς ἐπέπειστο καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς. ταύτης δὲ ἐπικρατεστέρως γενομένης τῆς γνώμης, ὡς ἦδη ἡ ἡμέρα ἐπέλαμπε, μάχη συρρήγνυται φοβερὰ. καὶ τῶν βασιλικῶν ταγμάτων ἐκθύμως ἀγωνισαμένων οἱ Ἰσσηλίται ἐνέκλιναν εἰς φυγὴν. τῶν δὲ Τούρκων ἐπιμόνῳ χρωμένων τῇ τοξείᾳ, καὶ τὸ καταδιώκον τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀνακεκρουκότων, παλίντροπον συνέβη γενέσθαι τὴν μάχην. μὴ δυνάμενοι γὰρ οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι τὰ Τούρκων φέρειν τοξεύματα τῷ βάλλεσθαι καρτερῶς νῶτα δόντες τὸν βασιλέα κατέλιπον. οὐ μὴν οἱ τῶν ταγμάτων ἔξαρχοι, οὐδ' οἱ Πέρσαι τοῦτο δρᾶσαι ἠνέσχοντο, ἀλλὰ περιστάντες τὸν βασιλέα εὐρῶστος σφάζειν ἠπειγόντο. καὶ κὰν ἀπώλοντο πανδημί, εἰ μὴ νῦν ἐπῆλθε καὶ βραχὺς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ κατενεχθεὶς ὑετὸς τὰς μὲν νευρὰς τῶν τόξων χαλαρὰς εἰργάσατο, τοῖς δὲ Ῥωμαίοις ἄνεσιν τὴν ἐκ τῶν βελῶν περιεποίησε καὶ σωτηρίας ἐνέδωκεν ἀφορμὰς. βαθείας δὲ





νυκτός γενομένης, ὡς ἡσχόλητο περὶ τὰς φυλακὰς ὁ Μανουήλ, γλώττη πῶς ἦσθετο τῇ Σαρακηνῶν τοὺς Πέρσας τοῖς Σαρακηνοῖς σπενδομένους καὶ τὸ στρατεύμα τῶν Ῥωμαίων προδοῦναι καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἐνεγκοῦσαν παλινδρομησαί. δὴλα γοῦν εὐθὺς ταῦτα ποιεῖ τῷ βασιλεῖ καὶ σφῶζειν ἑαυτὸν μετὰ τῶν λογάδων ἡξίου, καὶ μὴ περιμένειν τὴν ἄλωσιν. τοῦ δὲ βασιλέως «καὶ πῶς τοῦτο ἔσεται» ἐπερωτήσαντος, «τῶν δι' ἐμὲ προσμεινάντων ἀπολομένων» ὑπολαβὼν ὁ Μανουήλ «σοὶ μόνον ἔστω, βασιλεῦ» ἔφη, «τὸ σφῶζεσθαι ἐκ θεοῦ, οὗτοι δὲ ταχέως τὰ κατ' αὐτοὺς διοικήσουσιν.» ὅψῃ γοῦν κατὰ τὸ περιορθρον τοῦ βασιλέως φυγῆ χρησαμένους καὶ πρὸς τὸ λεγόμενον Χιλιόκωμον διασωθέντος οἱ λειποτάκται ὑπήντων αὐτῷ καὶ ἀναξίου ἑαυτοὺς ἔφασκον τῆς ζωῆς, βασιλέα ἐν πολέμῳ καταπροέντες, καὶ ἅμα τοῖς ἑαυτῶν ἐγυμνοῦντο ξίφεσιν. ἀλλ' ὁ Θεόφιλος τῷ θεάματι τρωθεις τὴν ψυχὴν, «εἰ ἐγώ», φησί, «σέσωσμαι ἐκ θεοῦ, σώθητε καὶ ὑμεῖς.» αὕτη ἡ τῶν Περσῶν πρὸς τοὺς ἐξ Ἄγαρ κοινολογία τοῖς Θεοφόβου ἐχθροῖς καὶ θάνατον αὐτοῦ ψηφίζομένοις δευτέρα τις γέγονεν αἰτία καὶ ἀφορμὴ εὐκαιρος εἰς διαβολήν. τῷ δ' ἀμερομυνη ἀκηκοῖτι τὴν νίκην ἔδοξε μὴ μέλλειν, ἀλλ' ἀπιέναι πρὸς τὸ Ἀμώριον.

Thurn I. (ed), *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum*. Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 5 (Berlin-New York 1973), pp. 74.24 - 77.94.

### The Byzantine historian Joseph Genesios relates the battle of Dazimon

τὸν δὲ ἴδιον υἱὸν ὁ ἀμεραμουνῆ προεξέπεμψεν κατὰ τὸ πρὸς ἀνατολήν σὺν τοῖς ἀνατολικωτάτοις τῶν ἀνδρικῶν Τούρκων, καὶ αὐτοῖς γεινιάζουσιν, ἄχρι χιλιάδων ἑ', μετὰ πάσης τῆς ἐξ Ἀρμενίων στρατιᾶς, τοῦ τε Βεσπαρακανίτου, καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀρχοντος τῶν ἀρχόντων, καὶ Ἄμερ τηνικαῦτα τὴν Μελιτηνὴν διέποντος, οἱ κατὰ τὸν Δαζυμῶνα συνήχθησαν στρατοπεδευσάμενοι. οὕτως γὰρ τοῦ ἀμεραμουνῆ οἱ ὑπὸ χεῖρα βουλήν συντιθέασιν, τὸν μὲν αὐτοῦ υἱὸν μετὰ προσηκούσης προεξιέναι δυνάμεως· «καὶ εἰ μὲν οὗτος νικήσειεν, ἔσται καὶ σοὶ νικητήριον· εἰ δὲ γε τὸ ἐναντίον, κἂν τὸ σωτήριον.» Ταῦτα Θεόφιλος διακηκῶς ἔκ τε τῶν <ἐξ> ἀνατολῆς ἀγγεγερμένων καὶ δύσεως καὶ Περσῶν ἐπαγείρει στρατόπεδον· ἦν δὲ ἀπὸ Συρίας ὁ Μανουήλ νεωστὶ ἐξεληλυθὼς καὶ τῆς πρὸ τῆς φυγῆς στρατηγίσεως τότε τῶν σχολῶν προστασίας μεταποιοῦμενος· προῖόντος οὖν τοῦ στρατοπέδου κατὰ τὸν Ἀνζήν, οὕτω χωρίον καλούμενον, προηρέθη ὁ βασιλεὺς τὸ τῶν ἐναντίων θεάσασθαι στρατεύμα· ὃν κατὰ τινὰ τῶν ὑπερκειμένων τόπων τοῦ Μανουήλ προβιάσαντος, στοχαστικῶς κατείδεν στρατὸν τὸν Σαρακηνικὸν τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐλάττονα. πρὸς ὃν στοχασμὸν συντίθεται Μανουήλ, ἀλλ' ὅμως αὐτῷ ἀντειρήκει· «ὦ δέσποτα, τὸν ἐπ' ἀμφοῖν ἐκ δοράτων καλαμῶνα στοχάσθητι, ἐξ οὗ γνώση τὸ καρτερώτερον.» συμβεβουλευκότες οὖν ὁ τε Θεόφιλος καὶ οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν μεγιστᾶνες, ὁ μὲν Μανουήλ καὶ ὁ Θεοφόβος ὑπετίθοντο συνιστᾶν ἐν νυκτὶ πόλεμον, κατὰ τὴν ἡμέραν δὲ ἔτεροι· οἱ μᾶλλον καὶ προετίμηνται. κατὰ γοῦν τὸ πρὸς αὐριον γενοῦναι προσβολῆς οἱ Ἰσμηλίται τροπὴ συνεσχέθησαν, ὅθεν οἱ Τούρκοι ἐπιμόνως τοξεία χρησάμενοι τοὺς Ἰσμηλίτας θαρσαλεότητος καὶ ἰσχύος ἐπλήρωσαν, τοὺς δὲ Ῥωμαίους πρὸς φυγαδεῖαν ἐτρέψαντο· καὶ μόνον τῷ βασιλεῖ οἱ ἀρχηγοὶ τῶν ταγμάτων προσεκαρτέρησαν μετὰ Μανουήλ καὶ Περσῶν, οὓς κύκλῳ περιστοιχίσαντες οἱ ἐξ Ἄγαρ βιαίως συνέιχον, κἂν οἱ Τούρκοι τὸ τοξάζειν κεκώλυντο ὑετοῦ γε συμβάντος τῶν τε νευρῶν τῶν τόξων χαννωθεισῶν τῇ ὑγρότητι. ἀμέλει τῶν Ῥωμαϊκῶν στρατευμάτων πημαιομένων ὁ Μανουήλ διηκούτιστο τῇ Σαρακηνικῇ γλώττῃ πρὸς αὐτοὺς τῶν Περσῶν καθ' ὁμίλιαν οἰονεῖ σπενδομένων, καὶ τῷ Θεοφίλῳ φησίν· «οἶμαι, ὦ βασιλεῦ, ὅτι ἡ Ῥωμαϊκὴ νῦν δυσφορία τῷ ἀμεραμουνῆ τοὺς Πέρσας περιποιήσεται εἰς τὸ προδοῦναι σε αὐτῷ, τὸ πρὶν ἀποστάντας αὐτοῦ. οὐκοῦν καλῶς συμβουλευομένῳ μοι σύνθοιο. συναγερωῦ τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς στρατεύματος τὸ κατ' ἐκλογὴν σύστημα, δι' οὗ τὸ σὸν κράτος ἐκ τῶν πολεμίων ἐξοίσσομαι.» ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς· «καὶ τούτου γινομένου, ὦ Μανουήλ, τῷ λαῷ τί συμβήσεται;» ὦ βασιλεῦ, σοὶ μὲν θεόθεν παρέσται τὸ σφῶζεσθαι, ὁ δὲ γε λαὸς καὶ αὐτὸς ὑπόθεν, οἶμαι, προνοηθήσεται.» τοῦ γοῦν βασιλέως μόγις τῶν πολεμίων ἐκστάντος, κατὰ δὲ τὸν Χιλιόκωμον παραγεναμένου, οἱ τῶν στρατηγετῶν τὸ συνειδὸς λιποταξία πιέζοντες ἐκέισε τῷ Θεοφίλῳ γονυπετοῦσι καὶ τὰς σπάθας αὐτῶν ἀποθέμενοι ἑαυτοὺς θανάτῳ ψηφίζονται· πρὸς οὓς ὁ βασιλεὺς φιλοικτιρμόνως διατεθεὶς ἐν ὀδυρμῷ δικαίῳ ἀπολελόγητο· «ἐπεὶ ἐγώ, ὦ ἄνδρες, κἂν <ἐκ> λιποταξίας ἐνεκλίνασθε, παρὰ θεοῦ τοῦ οἰκτιρμόνος ἠλέημαι, καὶ ὑμᾶς οἰκτερῶ.» ὁ οὖν πρωτοσύμβουλος τὸ κατὰ Ῥωμαίων μαθὼν ἀνδραγάθημα εὐθέως κατὰ τοῦ Ἀμορίου συντίθεται <στράτευμα>· ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς πρὸς τε Νίκαιαν καὶ τὸ Δορύλαον διεκαρτέρει, τῇ αὐτοῦ πατρίδι τὸ μέλλον ἀπεκδεχόμενος· τὰ γὰρ δύο στρατόπεδα τοῦ τε ἀμεραμουνῆ καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὸ Ἀμώριον ἦνωντο. ὡς δὲ τὸ περὶ ταύτης δυστύχημα διενώτιστο, ἐγκαρδίῳ φλογώσει κάτοχος γίνεται, ὥστε ταύτη τοῦ χιονώδους ὕδατος προσιόντος χλιαρὸν τοῦτο λογίζεσθαι· οὐ γ' ἐκ> τῆς πόσεως ἀφορμὴ τοῦ δυσεντεριάσαι αὐτῷ γέγονεν.

Lesmüller-Werner, A. – Thurn, I. (eds), *Iosephi Genesii Regum Libri Quattuor*. Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 14 (Berlin-New York 1978), pp. 47.21 - 49.73.

## Chronological Table

April 5, 838: Caliph al-Mu' tasim launches his campaign on Asia Minor



Early June, 838: Emperor Theophilos departs from Constantinople

June 19, 838: A contingent of the Arab expeditionary force under Ashinas enters western Cappadocia

June 21, 838: The bulk of the Arab army under caliph al-Mu' tasim enters western Cappadocia

July 22, 838: Battle at the plain of Dazimon. The Byzantines are defeated by the Arabs