Proceedings of the 10th International Congress
on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East

Volume 1

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Edited by
Barbara Horejs, Christoph Schwall, Vera Müller,
Marta Luciani, Markus Ritter, Mattia Giudetti,
Roderick B. Salisbury, Felix Höflmayer
and Teresa Bürge

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Transformation & Migration
Barbara Horejs and Christoph Schwall

Archaeology of Religion & Ritual
Edited by Vera Müller

Images in Context: Agency, Audiences & Perception
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Islamic Archaeology
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Foreword to the 10th ICAANE Proceedings

The 10th anniversary of the International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East was held from 25th to 29th of April 2016 in Vienna, hosted and organized by the Institute for Oriental and European Archaeology (OREA) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. More than 800 participants from 38 different countries found their way to Vienna to celebrate the 10th anniversary of ICAANE with a wide range of 8 scientific sections, 28 workshops and round tables, a huge poster exhibition and a special section about 'Cultural Heritage under Threat'.

The topics in focus of this ICAANE covered traditional, as well as new fields, in relation to state-of-the-art approaches and methodologies. The general themes of transformation and migration, cultural landscapes, religion and rituals, environmental shifts, contextualized images, as well as economies and societies, are currently promising fields in archaeology and these proceedings give new insights into former Near Eastern societies. These general questions are obviously challenging topics in present times, too, a fact that is leading us archaeologists into a dialectic discourse of past and present social phenomena. This additional impact within our scientific community and beyond is underlining the ongoing fascination and power of Near Eastern archaeology. The first volume includes papers of the sections 'Transformation and Migration', 'Archaeology of Religion and Ritual','Images in Context' as well as 'Islamic Archaeology'. The second volume is dedicated to the sections 'Prehistoric and Historical Landscapes and Settlement Patterns', 'Economy and Society', and is completed by 'Excavation Reports and Summaries'. A number of presented posters are integrated in the theme relevant chapters too. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the editors of these sections, namely Teresa Bürge, Mattia Guidetti, Felix Höflmayer, Marta Luciani, Vera Müller, Markus Ritter, Roderick Salisbury and Christoph Schwall.

Altogether 28 workshops focussing on special research questions and themes demonstrated the ongoing dynamic and new inputs in Near Eastern archaeology. The engaged discussions of internationally high-ranked experts with young scholars was essential for the success and open atmosphere of the 10th ICAANE in Vienna. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the workshop organisers, who are also acting as editors for the separate workshop volumes, published as internationally peer-reviewed books in the OREA series of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, of which some are already in print, accepted or in preparation at the moment. The conference was delighted to have two keynotes given by Mehmet Özdoğan and Timothy Harrison; both pointed to the current political conflicts and related massive destruction of cultural heritage from different perspectives. In facing the current conflicts and continuing damage of cultural monuments in regions of the Near East, we are confronted with situations going far beyond the usual scientific challenges. Although we have to observe highly frustrating ongoing destructions and can hardly influence the general political situation, the archaeological

community is responsible for supporting, re-evaluating and advancing ongoing essential strategies in digital preservation of the cultural heritage and other current activities in that field.

Therefore, we decided to organize a Special Section within the 10th ICAANE about *Cultural Heritage under Threat*, where well-known experts and political authorities discussed the current challenges and future perspectives in a very fruitful and open atmosphere.

This special section was organized with the great support of Harald Stranzl, the Austrian Ambassador at UNESCO for the Austrian Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs. The discussions and contributions were accomplished by signing the 'Vienna Statement' (s. below) by a total of 34 authorities for antiquities in Near Eastern countries, European institutions and stakeholders. My sincere thanks are expressed to Karin Bartl and her engagement in organizing this special section.

The 10th ICAANE aside its impact on international archaeology, can additionally be seen as a powerful boost for the archaeological endeavours in Austria and for our local scientific community, not at least visible in the fruitful cooperation of several archaeological institutions acting committedly in our Local Organising Committee: the Historical-Cultural Faculty and the Faculty of Philological and Cultural Studies (University of Vienna), the Egyptian and Near Eastern Collection of the Kunsthistorische Museum, the Austrian Archaeological Institute, members of the Austrian Academy of Sciences as well as the Institute for Oriental and European Archaeology. My sincere thanks go to Manfred Bietak, Vera Müller, Hermann Hunger, Bert Fragner, Regina Hölzl, Claudia Theune-Vogt, Michael Doneus, Markus Ritter, Christiana Köhler, Marta Luciani, Sabine Ladstätter, Karin Kopetzky and Angela Schwab for their engagement in the local committee and making this conference real. I extend sincere thanks for financial support to several Austrian and international institutions, which are The Austrian Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, the University of Vienna, the City of Vienna, the Vienna Science and Technology Fund (WWTF), the Institute for Aegean Prehistory (INSTAP), the Austrian Orient Society/Hammer Purgstall Society and the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

The OREA institute took over the honourable duty hosting this conference with lots of effort and energy, all our institutes' members, students and scientists were involved in some parts and the OREA team together was making this conference running. Particular thanks and recognition also go to Angela Schwab, Ulrike Schuh and Christine de Vree. Finally, I thank the ICAANE Scientific Committee and the Harrassowitz Publishing House.

Prof. Dr. Barbara Horejs
Director of the Institute for Oriental and European Archaeology
Austrian Academy of Sciences

ISLAMIC ARCHAEOLOGY

edited by M. Ritter and M. Guidetti

The Toprakkale Castle at the Arab-Byzantine Frontier: Textual Sources and Notes on Archaeology

Füsun Tülek [1]

Abstract

Toprakkale Castle, in East Plain Cilicia, is situated on the east–west trade route which runs along the southernmost fringes of the plain just before the first hills of the Amanus Mountains and at the north entrance of the Kısık Pass through which runs the land route leading to the northeastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The castle, placed strategically at such a junction of roads, surmounts a conical hill reaching an altitude of 140 meters with its inner and outer baileys. The kern of the castle encroaches on a steep talus and basalt bedrock with outer walls adorning the hill like a necklace. The walls rising high with round and pentagonal towers are awe-inspiring. The castle, Abbasid in origin and a Mamluk stronghold at its major final phase of use, is regarded as having an obscure foundation history. Archaeological evidence and Arabic literary sources shed light on the historical background of its site. The original name of the castle is controversial as well, frequently named Tell Hamdun or Tili in non-Islamic medieval literary sources. The present paper aims to comprehend the foundation phase and identity of the castle within the building program of the Arab armies in al-thughūr recorded in Medieval Arabic sources.

1. Geographical situation of Toprakkale

Toprakkale Castle, at the southernmost fringes of the East Plain Cilicia, is located at the junction of major ancient military and trade routes which is also today a main junction, named Toprak, of modern highways which connect Gaziantep, Adana, and the Hatay Provinces. The major ancient route, the D-400 highway today, runs from east to west, from the Arslanlı Bel Pass on the Amanus Mountain to the Misis Heights along the southernmost fringes of the plain. The second ancient route, the D-817 highway today, forks at the junction following the ancient route via Kısık Pass to proceed to shores of the Iskenderun Gulf along the Mediterranean Sea and, or, following the route to further south crossing the Amanus Mountain range via Belen Pass to proceed to Antioch and North Syria.

Minor ancient military routes on the Taurus Mountain Range which proceed from the ancient town of Kokusun, currently Göksun, to the north, and cross mountain passes such as Bağdaş Bel, Meryemçil Bel, Mazgaç Bel, and Esenli Bel descend to the south of the plain to converge at the Toprak junction in the Toprak district where the castle of Toprakkale in Osmaniye Province is situated (Alkım 1959: 60). The Toprak junction, situated before the north entrance to the Kısık Pass, also plays a

1 Kocaeli University, Archaeology Department

major strategic role as the gate of East Plain Cilicia. The Kısık Pass, 5km long on the north–south axis, separates the first heights of the Amanus Mountain Range on the east side from the heights of the Deli Basalt Formation on the west side. The ancient city of Oinoanda/Epiphaneia is situated at the southwestern edge of the Kısık Pass encroaching on the skirts of the Deli Halil Basalt Formation and keeps the south entrance to the Pass as well. Thus, Toprakkale Castle at the north and the ancient city of Epiphaneia at the south acts as the gates of the strategic Kısık Pass which provides access not only to the sea but also to North Syria (Tülek 2011).

A hill, conical in shape, stands on the large triangular field of Toprak junction crowned by a castle. The altitude of the junction field is 65m, from where the hill rises up to ±70m. On top of the hill the castle stands magnificent with outer and inner bailey walls, which still remain, rising ±10 to 15 meters high (Tülek 2015). In total the castle reaches to a height of ±140 to 150 meters above sea level with an awe-inspiring silhouette. Towers are placed purposefully at the kern of the castle to provide a panoramic view, making it easy to watch over the land and routes which it guards. The castle had a couple of major construction phases which included numerous repairs to the walls at intervals as well as the addition of permanent and temporary structures. The geomorphological composition of the hill demonstrates a bedrock of flysch and basalt layers; the southern half of the hill has a flysch formation covered with a thick basalt layer and the northern half is covered with the debris of settlements on flysch layers (Yılmaz 2015). The basalt layer is an extension of the Deli Halil Basalt Formation as the Deli Halil volcano is 3km away as the crow flies to the southwest of the castle. The south skirts of Toprak Hill are composed of column basalt formation. Today, the debris of settlements around the west, north, and northeast skirts of the hill is easily detectable beneath olive groves which yield a plethora of potsherds datable to the second millennium BC to Late Medieval times (Tülek 2013, 245). Toprak Hill that the castle surmounts has even been assertively identified as a prehistoric mound (Seton-Williams 1954: 128). The Karaçay stream, a branch of the River Pyramos runs to the north of the castle along the ancient route, and a small branch of it forks to the south running through the Kısık Pass like a canal.

2. State of research on the site

Toprakkale Castle has been the subject of scholarly research such as *Die Burg Til im südöstlichen Kilikien* published by J. Gottwald in 1940; *Burgen der Kreuzritter im heiligen Land, auf Zypern und in der Ägäis* published by W. Müller-Wiener in 1966, *Burgen der Kreuzritterzeit in der Grafschaft Edessa und im königreich Kleinarmenian* published by H. Hellenkemper in 1976, and *The Fortifications of Armenian Cilicia* published by R. W. Edwards in 1987. Numerous articles and monographs have been published concerning the history and architecture of the Crusaders and Crusader castles, some of which also illustrate and mention Toprakkale. Major studies of the castle mentioned above sketched out a plan of the castle and tried to identify the

building phases as an essential initial step of examination. Gottwald utilized a sketchy plan drawn by the Berlin–Baghdad railway engineer E. Huebsch which is precious as it illustrated the castle on Toprak Hill with its environs (Gottwald 1940). It was Müller-Wiener who first drew a plan of the castle with its architectural units (Müller-Wiener 1966, fig. 5). Hellenkemper and later on Edwards elaborated the plan of the castle based on Müller-Wiener's plan (Hellenkemper 1976, fig. 90; Edwards 1987, fig.72).

3. Name and identification in textual sources

In the present day, the castle is named after the district of Toprak where it is situated as Toprakkale, hence the toponym newly flourishing town at north of the castle is named after the castle as town of Toprakkale in the Osmaniye Province. The above-mentioned research addresses the castle as Tell/Tall Ḥamdūn, Til Ḥamdūn or Tili, a name first known to have been mentioned in the medieval literature of the twelfth century referring to a castle in Plain Cilicia. Late medieval literature, which have an approach of Byzantine and Crusades perspective does not mention the castle and the name 'Tell Ḥamdūn' before the twelfth century (Edwards 1987, 244). The *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian in the twelfth century noted the attendance of a Jacobite bishop at a synod held in the eleventh century whose home place was recorded as Tall Ḥamdūn (Honigmann 1954: 152). 'Tall' or 'Tell' means 'hill' in Arabic which apparently denotes a castle or a settlement situated on a hill. A second twelfth century medieval Byzantine source, the *Alexiad* of Anna Comnena, employed the word 'Tili' (τιλίου/τίλια) in the chapter narrating Bohemond's oath to the Emperor Alexius Comnenos when he claimed 'together with the three Tilia (hills surmounted by castles)' (Comnena 1969: 13. xii, 432).

Indeed, in East Plain Cilicia there are three medieval castles in close proximity, each crowning a hilltop. These are the Toprakkale, Hemite and Castabala castles. The Hemite and Castabala castles are at the northeast fringes of the plain on the hill-tops of ridges of the Amanus Mountain Range along the River Pyramos/Ceyhan, and they are ±8km distant from each other. These two castles are on the north side of the major military-trade route running at an east–west axis and Toprakkale, as the third of the three castles, is on the south side of the major route just ±16km distant from the two castles (Tülek 2015).

A thirteenth-century diary, the travel log of Father Wilbrand von Oldenburg (1854), mentioned the castle Thila as a *castrum valde bonum cujusdam nobilis* in 1211 (Oldenburg XXV). Father Wilbrand's itinerary began from the port of Alexandretta (İskenderun), probably following the route along the coast of the Gulf listing places such as Portella, Canamella, then proceeding inland to Mamistra (Mopsuestia/Misis/ later named al-Maṣṣīṣa by Arabs) and other towns in West Plain Cilicia. He must have taken the route leading up to the north, to the first highlands of the Taurus Mountain Range, to visit Sis/Sisiya (Kozan) and then, making a detour, Wilbrand descended to the south visiting Anavarza. Wilbrand's itinerary is quite confusing

with the given location and names of towns after Misis, as well as after Anavarza. Later scholarhip seems reached to a consensus on some of the confused town names listed in Wilbrand's itinerary as Adamodana is Amuda, which later was considered as Hamatie or Hemite, as well as, the name Thila, which was taken by Gotwald as the name of the Toprakkale Castle. For Gotwald, the castle at Toprakkale should be the Thila, since between the Hemite Castle and Canamella 'there are no any other ruins of a castle as impressive as Toprakkale, which could deserve the phrase "castrum valde bonum of the noble man"' (Gottwald 1940: 100).

In fact, there are two more castles between the mentioned three castles Hemite, Castabala, and Toprakkale; these are the Hamus/Çardak Castle and the Gebeli Castle, both of which are on the west side of the Amanus Mountain Range and are aligned on a north–south axis. The Hamus/Çardak Castle is on a ridge on the Amanus Mountain Range at an altitude of ±800m controlling both the route proceeding to the plain via the Arslanlıbel Pass and the Plain having a view of Castabala and Hemite castles the Sarvanda/Sarvantikar Castle. However the Hamus/Çardak Castle can only communicate with Toprakkale Castle via the Gebeli Castle at an altitude of ±260m on the lower heights of the Amanus Mountain Range just by the Karaçay stream, where the stream reaches the plain from the mountains (Tülek 2007: 48).[2]

Medieval scholarship consensus is that the name given to Toprakkale Castle from the tenth century onwards is Tell Ḥamdūn, which was named after the last mighty commander Sayf al-Dawla, a member of the Hamdanid dynasty (Garood 2008: 128). It is known that Sayf al-Dawla was stationed in al-thughūr, Plain Cilicia, protecting the area in the name of Abbasid Caliphate and its ruling Hamdanid dynasty as Aleppo was the base. However, there is no clear evidence that Toprakkale was the headquarters of the commander Sayf al-Dawla and that the Tell Ḥamdūn castle was the Toprakkale Castle named after him (Canard 1953). In none of the literary sources is there clear geographical description to identify securely that Toprakkale was the Tell Ḥamdūn Castle. Besides, Honigmann confused the location of the Toprakkale castle illustrating it by the river Pyramos under the name Tell Ḥamdūn, but recounted it in the text as Hamaite Kalessi whose older name is ʿĀmūdā, which indeed is the original site of the Hemite castle (Honigmann 1935: Map 2).

4. The early Islamic period in Arabic textual sources

The above-mentioned scholarship of medieval studies and non-Arabic medieval primary sources do not mention the original name of the castle before the tenth century. The consensus of the scholarship on the original foundation date and past of the castle is unknown and obscure (Hellenkemper 1976). Edwards mentioned that Hārūn

2 Gebeli Castle has not been subjected to examination during any of the major studies on medieval castles mentioned in the present text.

al-Rashīd built two castles in al-thughūr on the west side of the Amanus Mountain Range, but eliminated the option that the second castle is the Toprakkale Castle, which is named Kanisat al-Sawdā/al-Kanīsa in origin. Edwards did not elucidate on what basis he rejected the possibility of Toprakkale as being al-Kanīsa (Edwards 1987: 244).

On the other hand, medieval Arab geographers and historians of the ninth and tenth centuries do not recount a castle under the name of Tell Ḥamdūn in al-thughūr. Arab writers such as the geographer Aḥmad b. Abī Yaʿqūb b. Jaʿfar b. Wahb b. Wadīh al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Yaʿqūbī for short, who lived in the ninth century wrote *Kitāb al-buldān*, Abū al-Qāsim ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿAbdallāh b. Khordādhbeh, Ibn Khordādhbeh for short, lived 820–912 and wrote *Kitāb al-masālik wa-l-mamālik*, Muḥammad Abī al-Qāsim Ibn Ḥawqal, Ibn Ḥawqal for short, wrote *Ṣūrat al-ʿarḍ* in 977 AD, and Yāqūt al-Hamawī wrote *Kitāb Muʿjam al-buldān* in the twelfth century, repeatedly describe a castle Abbasid in origin on the west side of the Amanus Mountain Range named al-Kanīsa (Kanīsat al-Sawdā) instead of Tell Ḥamdūn. According to their description the castle was isolated from the sea but close to Ḥiṣn al-Muthaqqab (al-Balādhurī 1987: 228). Besides, another tenth-century Arabic geographer Ibn Ḥawqal illustrates al-Kanīsa perfectly at the place described by former and contemporary Arabic sources (Ibn Hawqal 1992).

The presence of Arab armies in East Plain Cilicia dates back to the first half of the seventh century. The Yarmūk Battle which took place between Arab and Byzantine armies in 636 AD had a crucial impact on the socio-political history of the Plain Cilicia. Nine years after the Yarmūk victory, Arab armies crossed the highlands of the Taurus Mountain Range and were before the gates of the major Byzantine cities in Anatolia such as, before the city of Amorion in 645/46 AD and eight years later they were before the gates of Constantinople. Emperor Heraclius, after the defeat of Yarmūk, ordered the eviction of the Cilician castles and towns to retreat to north of highlands, to the inner parts of Anatolia so as to create a buffer zone where the Taurus Mountain Range was a natural border (Strange 1930: 128; al-Balādhurī 1987: 224). Thus, at first the Plain Cilicia was part of *al-ʿāṣima* of the Arab armies; later it became a military zone of al-thughūr in 673 AD as part of Bilād al-Shām.

Muʿāwiya the First, governor of Bilād-al-Shām, let Arab soldiers reside in the empty castles between Antioch and Tarsus. However, later, he ordered his son, commander Yazīd, to destroy all of them. Muʿāwiya I attacked and destroyed Mopsouhestia in East Plain Cilicia (Brooks 1898: 183), but later had a castle built named al-Maṣṣīṣa by the year 680 (al-Balādhurī 1987: 237). However, the first substantial building program in al-thughur took place at the time of the chaliph ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān in 703 AD; the al-Maṣṣīṣa stronghold was restrengthened which later became the rampage for the attacks of Arabs to inland to take over the castles in the area including the castles of Sis/Kozan and Tyanna/Niğde (Brooks 1898: 191). Newly founded places such as Kafr Baya along the Ceyhan River and across it the al-Maṣṣīṣa castles were populated by Arabs (Ibn Hawqal 1992: 167–168). Al-Balādhurī recounts that the Umayyads, particularly at the time of the caliph Hishām b. ʿAbd al-

Malik (724–743 AD), undertook a building program at East Plain Cilicia reinforcing it with settlements and strongholds which safeguarded the roads leading to Bilād al-Shām such as al-Rabad, al-Khusus, Ḥiṣn Qatarghash, Ḥiṣn al-Muthaqqab, and Ḥiṣn Mūra and Ḥiṣn Buqa in the Antioch region (al-Balādhurī 1987: 228).

Building activities gained impetus during the rule of Abbasid Caliphate, particularly at the time of al-Manṣūr, on the west side of the River Ceyhan. Tarsus was chosen as headquarters and the destroyed towns of Germanicia-Marʿash, Adhana, al-Maṣṣīṣa, and ʿAyn Zarba were rebuilt (Grabar 1987: 244). The strategy of creating a secure zone for the army was first employed at the time of al-Mahdī (775–785 AD) rebuilding the city of Tarsus, which was later renewed by caliph Harūn al-Rashīd following the plan of a Miṣr in 788 AD (al-Balādhurī 1987: 230–232).

In the second half of the eighth century caliph Harūn al-Rashīd (786–809 AD) also undertook a building program reflecting a new conception of settlement organization. According to al-Balādhurī, Harūn al-Rashīd organized settlements to the northwest of Bilād al-Shām in hierarchical organisation as Manbij became the capital town of al-ʿawāṣim. Thus, at the time of war, the settlements of al-ʿawāṣim would be safe places for Arab armies to retreat from the frontier/al-thughūr (al-Balādhurī 1987: 180). Harūn al-Rashīd accomplished a substantial building program in East Plain Cilicia and rebuilt the town of ʿAyn Zarba and its castle in 797 AD. ʿAyn Zarba became a military base for the army to capture al-Sisiya, which is situated at north, on the Taurus highlands. Three years later, in 800 AD al-Harūniyya and Kanīsat al-Sawdā were built ex novo in East Plain Cilicia just by the the Amanus Mountain Range (al-Balādhurī 1987: 234–235).

Ibn Ḥawqal recounts that Kanīsat al-Sawdā was a castle built over the ruins of a Roman structure in black stone by Harūn al-Rashīd (Ibn Ḥawqal 1992: 155). Literally, Kanīsat al-Sawdā meaning ‘black church’ or ‘black building’ is illustrated on an Arab regional map shown on the west side of the Amanus mountains, close to al-Muthaqqab but isolated from the Mediterranean Sea (Ibn Ḥawqal 1992: 168). Ibn Khordādhbeh recounts that Kanīsat al-Sawdā was one of the frontier castles of Bilad al-Sham together with ʿAyn Zarba, al-Harūniyya, and Tell Jubayr in 846 AD.

5. The Middle Byzantine, Crusader and Mamluk periods

After three hundred years of Arab rule, Byzantine armies took back the region in 962 AD (Honigmann 1935: 92). In the hands of the Byzantine Empire the castle received substantial construction works. The outer bailey, whose walls had pentagonal towers, encircled the west and north side of the castle (Tülek 2015). At the end of the eleventh century, it seems that the castle was the seat of Jacobites. Anna Comnena does not mention such a use of the castle but recounts how the patrimony of the castles in the region was given to the Crusadres. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the region became a battleground where Byzantines, Crusaders, and Armenian barons destroyed towns, took over castles and then rebuilt them (Hellenkemper 1976:

150; Hild and Hellenkemper 1990: 137), thus the castle changed hands many times between the Crusaders, and Armenian barons.

Mamluks took over the control of Plain Cilicia with its castles. King Hethum of the Armenians, at that time, was the lord of the Cilician Armenia surrendered to Mamluk Sultan Baybars in 1274/75 AD (Har-El 1995: 31). A century later, by the middle of the fourteenth century, Turkmen tribes, the Dulkadirids and later the Ramadans were in Cilicia ruling the region in alliance with the Mamluks (Har-El 1995: 34). The Mamluks ruled in Cilicia for almost two centuries considering it a military zone for their Aleppo- and Cairo-based power centres until they were defeated by the Ottoman Sultan Bayazıd II in 1488 and they lost power in Cilicia and Anatolia forever.

6. Archaeological evidence

The history of the castle and its region can be told briefly based on Arabic and Byzantine literary sources and architectural evidence. However, this account does not tell us much about the unwritten and untold past of the site before the initial building phase of the extant castle, that is to say, before the rule of Arab armies in Plain Cilicia. Nothing is mentioned of the Kanīsat al-Sawdā after the ninth century. Was it destroyed? Why would the Abbasids destroy it? None of the Arab and Byzantine historians recorded such a major incident. Literary texts are silent concerning the castle as if the castle had fallen into oblivion or its name had been changed.

The archaeological examination of the castle and remains over the hill slopes and finds, such as ceramics and marble spolia, shed light on the unknown past of the site. Ceramics are the basic diagnostic material culture to identify once prevailing cultures at a given site. The site yields a plethora of potsherds all over the hill skirts, in the cut sections of the hill slope as well as in the inner and outer baileys of the castle. Potsherds are found in the cut sections of the modern road leading to the castle and many more are visible in parts of the soil beneath the stones of the talus. The examination of the potsherds of the site are attested at the earliest to the Hittite Imperial period and in general the dates of the potsherds range from the Early Iron Age to Hellenistic, Roman Imperial, and Byzantine periods; the latest dated potsherds belong to the Mamluk period. Possibly, there was a hiatus of habitation on the castle mound from the end of the middle Iron Age to the middle Hellenistic period. Potsherds indicate a continuous settlement from the middle Hellenistic period into the Roman Imperial period. Potsherds of Color Coated Fine Ware and East Sigillata A types are found in considerable amount. The ceramic repertoire indicates a middle Hellenistic and Roman Imperial period settlement on the slopes of the hill as well as, possibly, a fortress on the top. However, a late Antique pottery type, the Red Slipped Late Roman C ware, is absent. Absence of Late Roman C ware indicates another hiatus in the settlement history of the Toprak Hill between the fourth and possibly the ninth centuries. Medieval pottery of glazed sgrafiatto dating to the middle Byzantine period at the earliest through to the thirteenth century is abundant, particularly on

the west, northwest, and northern slopes of the hill as well as in the interior of the castle (Tülek 2015).

The pre-Islamic past of the castle site should be taken into consideration together with the ancient major settlements at its close geographic periphery as well. The archaeological evidence denotes that in the pre-Islamic past the conical hill was lived upon and fortified to guard the northern entrance of the Kısık Pass. The southern entrance of the Kısık Pass was guarded by the ancient city of Epiphaneia. The ancient city of Epiphaneia is precisely located on the southwest side of the Kısık Pass. Epiphaneia was the classical city of Oinoanda which was renamed in the middle Hellenistic period after the king Antiochus the IV Epiphanes, who ruled the region between 175–164 BC and refounded the city in his name. The ancient city of Epiphaneia encroaches on the fringes of the basalt formation, and probably had a colonnaded street leading to the harbor (Bell 1906). At the present, the ruins of the ancient city are ca. 8km distant from the sea where the ancient harbor is completely covered with sand dunes (Tülek 2012). It is most reasonable to anticipate that the king Antiochus Epiphaneus would build a castle on the conical hill at the northern entrance of the Kısık Pass to protect the city he built at the southern entrance of the pass from the enemy which, would definitely approach from the north via the major military routes. All through the ages, any ruling power of the East Plain Cilicia would reasonably fortify the Toprak junction to guard major military-trade routes and the Kısık Pass that connects the East Plain to the Mediterranean Sea, to North Syria, to deploy armies and to transport goods safely. It is no wonder that all the castles in Cilicia are positioned strategically on top of hills guarding the routes on the plain and mountain passes. Caliph Harūn al-Rashīd, following a similar military strategy to secure the north and south entrances of the Kısık Pass, must have fortified the hill top at north of the Kısık Pass, which was already covered with Roman ruins, and must have restored ruins of the ancient city of Epiphaneia at south of the Kısık Pass such as, the theatre and baths. At present the surviving ruins of the ancient city of Epiphaneia yield black basalt walls with solid buttresses, enclosing the ancient theatre, as well as material culture of the Abbasids such as intact pottery, for example, jugs, juglets and cooking pots unearthed at rescue excavations conducted by the archaeologists of the Hatay Archaeology Museum, yet to be published.

A thorough examination of the Toprakkale Castle also recorded marble spolia. The construction material of the castle is mainly black basalt. The circuit walls of the inner and outer bailey are built of basalt stones. The exteriors of two towers, the North Tower of Unit A and Tower I, are each encircled by one row of marble like a necklace to define the second storey. Spolia marble is used only in one unit, in the piers of Unit B. Unit B is a rectangular hall covered with cross vaults of which 4 piers at the center contain huge white marble blocks having 3 fascias on one face. Dirt and contamination of the ages has blackened the spolia marble blocks; a simple scratch on the surface easily reveals the beautiful white marble beneath. These marble blocks having a 3-lined fascia should be entablature pieces of a Classical monumental structure, possibly of a pagan temple (Tülek 2015). Three temple sites

are known of close to Toprakkale, the closest is the temple at the ancient city of Epiphaneia, the second site is the temple at Toprakkale town in the Karataş district, and the third temple site is on the hilltop of the Deli Halil ancient settlement (Tülek 2014: 194). However, it is most plausible that the marble entablature pieces could have been from a temple situated on top of the Toprak Hill where the castle proper is built over. It should be kept in mind that Arab historians and geographers recount that Harūn ar-Rashīd built a castle over the Roman ruins.

A settlement must have been situated at the site where the castle stands, probably on its slopes and skirts, possibly dating to the middle of the Hellenistic period and enduring through the Roman Imperial period and lasting until sometime late in the fourth century as evidenced by the abundant potsherds. The Roman settlement of the Toprakkale Hill might have terminated due to natural catastrophes such as earthquakes in the fourth century AD. Historically well-known major earthquakes of the region date to the sixth century, of which two of the three have epicenters at Antioch and one at Anazarbus. There must also have been former devastating earthquakes, dating to the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century, which demolished towns and settlements in the periphery of the castle as the Theodosius Codex records an edict of the emperor Theodosius granting tax exemption to the people of the region and to the city of Epiphaneia to recover and heal their wounds from a natural catastrophe.

7. Summary

Accounts of Arab historians and geographers mention that the caliph Harūn al-Rashīd built a castle on Roman ruins on the west side of the Amanus Mountain Range and that the name was Kanīsat al-Sawdā, meaning built out of black stone. Hence, we strongly believe that our evaluation of the archaeological and architectural evidence such as ceramics and architectural spolia presented above supports the accounts of Arab historical geographical texts that the Kanīsat al-Sawdā built on the west side of the Amanus Mountains is the present day Toprakkale Castle, which later in the late medieval ages came to be known as Tell Ḥamdūn under the rule of the mighty commander Sayf al-Dawla.

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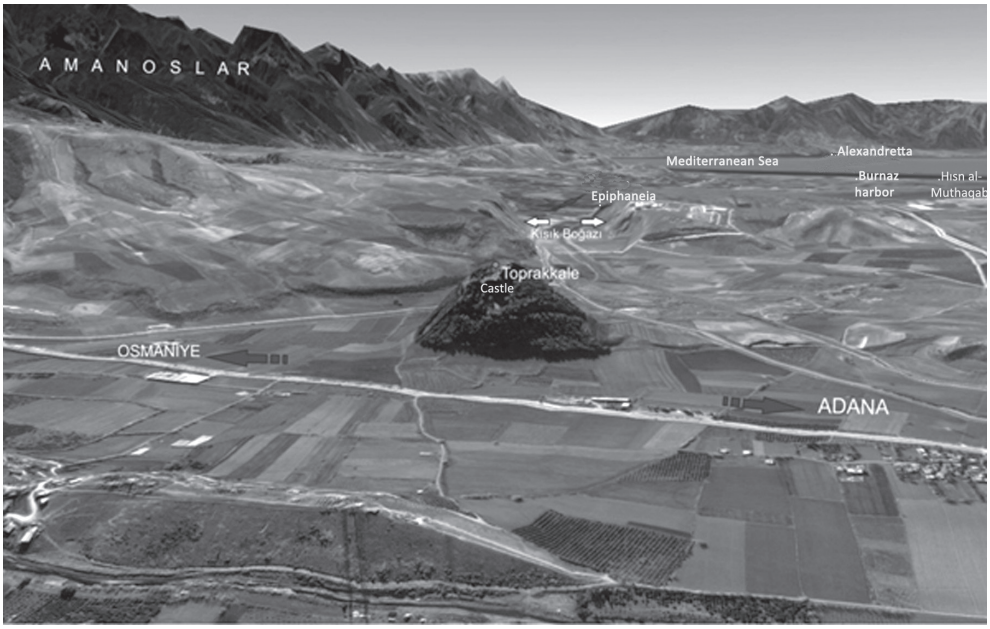


Fig. 1 Topography of the Kısık pass and the castle hill



Fig. 2 Toprakkale castle viewed from the west



Fig. 3 Toprakkale castle, inner bailey, Unit B northwest pier



Fig. 4 Toprakkale castle, inner bailey Unit B northeast pier

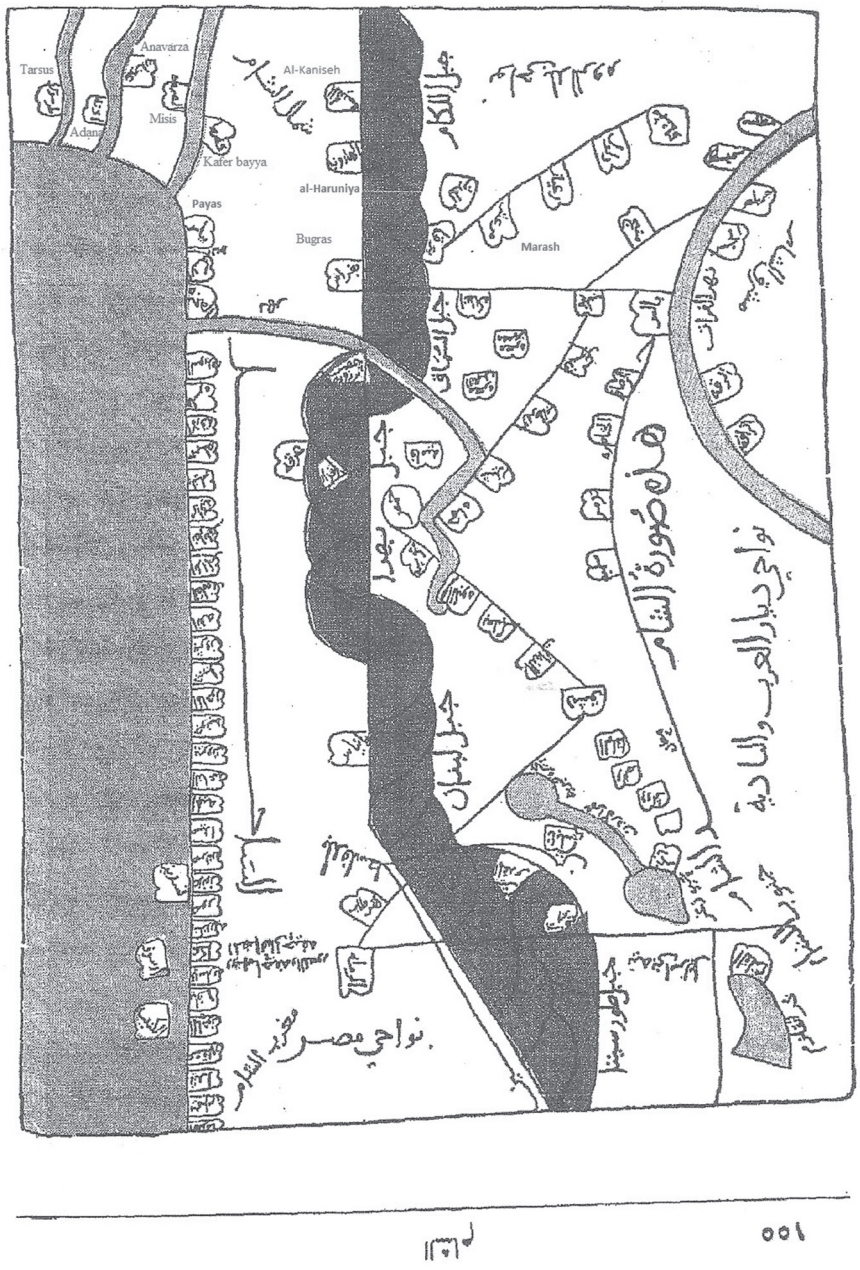


Fig. 5 Map of settlements at al-thughur by Ibn Hawkal