

AHMED BEY
Menemencioğlu
(1799-1873)

LIFE

Ahmed Bey was born in 1214/1799 in the town of Qara°isālī (Çiçeli) in Ađana. He was named after his father, who was killed four months before his birth and had been the leader of the Turcoman tribe (°aşiret) Menemenci. A.B.'s mother Ümmü Gülşüm was also known as "Ekber qızı". His brothers Habīb, °Oşmān, and Nābī were tribal leaders who participated in conflicts with local notables; they also served as deputy lieutenant-governors (*mütesellim*) of Ađana and Țarsūs. A.B. had three sisters named Hamīde, °Ayşe, and Quğu, the first of whom was married to Hasanpaşazāde Mehmed Bey (d. ~1244/~1830), the deputy lieutenant-governor (*mütesellim*) of Ađana (*MT*, xix).¹ Ümmü Gülşüm, the daughter of the Bozoq region's Abdallı tribe's leader Qocabeyoğlu, was the mother of his other siblings, Çopur Ahmed, Hānım, Hadīce, and Faṭma. The mother of another brother named Muştafā was the unnamed daughter of local notable İmāmzāde, and she was also the former wife of Battal Paşa (d. 1215/1801), governor of Ađana. A.B.'s son Mehmed Tevfīq (d. ?) served as the head official (*qā'imaqām*) of the district of Dersim (Tunceli) and was later promoted to the rank of paşa. A.B. had another son called Hācī Bey.² Hasan Menemencioğlu and Numan Menemencioğlu, who were ministers in the Turkish Grand National Assembly during the 1940s, were members of this prominent family of bureaucrats and statesmen.

WORK

① *Menemencioğlu Ta'rīhi*

This work focuses on the history of the Menemenci family and narrates events which occurred from the beginning of the eighteenth century up to 1284/1867, such as the conflicts between local notables and tribes, the application of Tanzimat reforms in Çuqurova, and the occupation of the region by İbrāhīm Paşa of Egypt. A.B. states that his only source was the *Soğancızāde Ta'rīhi* which belonged to İşqodralı Muştafā Paşa (d. ?), governor of Ađana in 1266/1850 (*MT*, 6), but no other information remains about this work. While A.B. appears to have used some documents belonging to his family (*MT*, 5-6), mistakes concerning personal names and chronology indicate that he did not keep accurate and regular records. A.B. dictated his memoirs to his son Mehmed Tevfīq (*MT*, 1-337), who served as the head official (*qā'imaqām*) of the districts of Dersim and Üsküb. They were completed on 4 Rabi I 1278/9 September 1861. The author himself wrote the section on his eight years of exile in Istanbul (*MT*, 337-342) and must have done so in 1290/1873. Both parts of the work were copied on 10 Kanun-ı evvel 1330/23 December 1914 by Nigdeli °Aşım, an assistant

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scribe at the chief secretariat (*mektübî qalemi qalfası*). The introduction of the work, which does not include a table of contents, lists five chapter headings.

Chapters

The subject of the first chapter is Ḥabīb Çelebî, the first leader of the Menemenci tribe who rose to prominence in 1120/1708 as a result of his role in the punishment of the Topallı community of Dündarlı (*MT*, 5). Aḥmed Bey, also known as “Kör Boybeyi,” was probably the tribal leader in 1169/1756. His son Boz °Osmān assumed leadership of the tribe in 1180/1766 but was later executed in 1190/1776 by Çelik Mehmed Paşa (d. 1179/1765), the governor of Aḍana. Then tribal leadership passed on to A.B.’s father (*MT*, 8-9).

The second chapter focuses on Aḥmed Bey’s tenure as tribal leader. It includes the narratives of the battle between the Qara°isālî tribes and the arrival of Menemencis at the village of Çiçeli from the town of Qusun in Ṭarsūs; the governor of Nigde’s raid on the tribe, the wounding of Nābî Bey, and his death in Nigde; the clash with Qarcı Mehmed Ağa, a provincial notable of Aḍana; the conflict between another notable of Aḍana called Çapuroğlu and Qarslı Ḥalîl Ağa; as well as Baṭṭal Paşa’s attack on the Qara°isālî, his defeat and subsequent escape to Aḍana. A.B.’s reference to the Ottoman army as “enemy soldiers” and his mention of Ottoman soldiers’ pillage and plunder of the region en route to Aḍana are noteworthy.

This chapter also refers to Cabbārzāde Süleymān Bey (d. 1229/1814), who was considered “a second sultan according to feudal customs” of the time. It states that he sent his commander °Abdullāh Bey at the head of twenty-five thousand soldiers against the Bāyezīdoğulları in Mar°aş and the Menemencioğulları in Aḍana. It also records how Aḥmed Bey took refuge at the fortress of Milvan. According to the text Aḥmed Bey was killed in 1214/1799 by Piş Ḥasan of the Qarşandioğulları tribe and was survived by his twelve children from three wives. His eldest son Ḥabīb Bey was only fifteen at this time. (A photograph of his tombstone appends this article).

The text includes a section which narrates how Yūsuf Āgāh Efendi (d. 1239/1824), a prominent statesman and the protector of the Menemencioğulları, acquired the town of Qara°isālî as private property. This anecdote implies the mechanism by which some tribal leaders rose to prominence as notables and deputy lieutenant-governors with the support of the government.

The third chapter relates Ḥabīb Bey’s political struggles and his defense of the Milvan fortress. Ḥabīb Bey ascends to tribal leadership by “putting on the fur coat he purchased from his mother” in front of the whole tribe. This is explained as a tribal custom of the day. A.B. states that Ḥasanpaşaoğlu and Ḥabīb Bey traveled from Aḍana to Yozgād and participated in the conflict between Cabbārzāde Süleymān Bey and Ḥazinedāroğlu of Ṭrabzon in 1223/1808. Later the Qarşandılı tribe endures vengeful raids.

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When the Ottoman government sent Qaba Celil from Adana to Qara^oisali with the rank of major to enlist soldiers for pay (*mirilü asker*), Habib Bey attacks and kidnaps him at night to prevent conscription in regions controlled by the Menemenciogullari.

In 1225/1810 Cabbarzade Süleymän Bey sent Hacı Habib Bey to Tarsus as deputy lieutenant-governor. Hasanpaşazade Ahmed Bey, the deputy lieutenant-governor of Adana, had died and his brother Mehmed Bey had been appointed to that office with the support of his brother-in-law Habib Bey. Habib Bey had become rich by charging grain ships heading from Tarsus to draught-afflicted Europe 46,000 *quruş* each in exchange for permission to export.

In 1228/1813, when Belenli Muşafā Paşa (d. 1245/1830) was appointed governor of Adana, Hasanpaşazade Mehmed Bey was the *de facto* ruler of the region. Despite the appointment of the new governor, Mehmed Bey remained in charge for about two more years. Muşafā Paşa was eventually able to secure the exile of Mehmed Bey and Habib Bey, and thus established his own control. Habib Bey, who fled to Mehmed ^oAli Paşa in Egypt, was sent on pilgrimage after the pasha awarded him a monthly salary of 2,500 *quruş*.

In the fourth chapter A.B. relates the experiences of his older brother ^oOsmän Bey. He also describes the tribe's refuge at the fortress of Milvan upon Habib Bey's exile and Muşafā Paşa's siege of the fortress with the help of cannons brought from Istanbul. The account contains a full list of all who demonstrated bravery at the siege, including Armenians. A.B. mentions that the tribe sent its camels to Bozoq to protect them from plunder. After holding out for several months against 7,000-8,000 soldiers ^oOsmän Bey surrendered and was forced to give his brother A.B. to Hasanpaşazade Mehmed Bey as a "hostage." The tribe sent Nābi Bey away, however, to ensure that at least one member of the family was safe. After the confiscation of Habib Bey's possessions 250,000 *quruş* were paid to the state and 50,000 to Muşafā Paşa. When another 25,000 *quruş* were requested as payment to the "Tatars," however, the tribe had to sell all valuable belongings in the marketplace of Adana. A.B. notes that their protector in Istanbul, Yūsuf Āgāh Efendi, guaranteed the remaining 100,000 *aqçes*.

When Qaba Celil was appointed tribal ruler (*mīr-i aşiret*) of the Menemenci and when Şadiq Efendi became governor (*voyvoda*) over the Qara^oisali, ^oOsmän Bey, with his two brothers in his retinue, traveled to Istanbul to complain. First ^oOsmän Bey and then his brother Çopur Ahmed Bey and some of his men fell victim to the plague in Istanbul. Most members of their retinue had fled when confronted by the supporters of Muşafā Paşa. A.B. became registered in the 44th company of the janissary corps. He took refuge in their barracks and spent two months in hiding among them. When he heard news about the arrival of complaints from Adana and Tarsus, he pawned his belongings and set out for Adana.

The fifth chapter relates events of the period up to 1277/1861, including the Egyptian occupation of Çuqurova. A.B. states that some tribes sided with the Egyptians while others supported the Ottomans during the occupation (1248-1256/1832-1840). While A.B. of the Menemenciogullari tribe supported the Egyptians, his brothers

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sided with the Ottomans (*MT*, 229). Nābī Bey was appointed deputy lieutenant-governor of Aḍana by İbrāhīm Paşa (d. 1264/1848), but he was later exiled to °Akkā after being charged with embezzlement. İbrāhīm Paşa of Egypt stayed at A.B.'s mansion and the two played chess. Egyptian propaganda claimed İbrahim's army to be the saviours of Islam in Anatolia; A.B., on the contrary, describes İbrāhīm Paşa as "a disbeliever who neither prays nor fasts".

A.B. was forced to present a harnessed horse of 30,000 *quruş* to Ḥacī °Alī Paşa (d. 1261/1845), the governor of Qonya, for having forgiven him for his support of the Egyptians. Following the departure of the Egyptian army, he also sent a valuable horse and gifts to °İzzet Mehmed Paşa (d. 1308/1891), the governor of Aḍana, and twelve additional horses for his retinue (*MT*, 269). Under A.B.'s leadership Mene-menciogulları administered all affairs of the provinces.

Around the time when the construction of the great mansion in Çiçeli was completed, two sergeants dispatched from Istanbul brought the decrees ordering the exile of Ḥabīb Bey to Bursa and A.B. to Kütāhya (*MT*, 143). After A.B. had spent fifteen months in Kütāhya, the janissary corps was abolished and the janissaries in exile there began to be executed in accordance with imperial decrees. A.B. made escape plans with Ḥabīb Bey, but the plans failed. He therefore remained in exile for another nine months until allies brought a decree from Istanbul granting him his freedom. Soon after his return to Aḍana, A.B. and Ḥabīb Bey became involved in a conflict between Nūrullāh Paşa (d. 1257/1841), the governor of Aḍana, and Kelağazāde Mehmed Bey (d. ?), the local magnate of Ṭarsūs. Despite his appeal to Nāmiq Paşa (d. 1310/1892), field marshal (*müşīr*) of Arabia, and Ḥamdī Paşa (d. 1299/1882), the governor of Qonya, A.B.'s efforts to save himself from exile to Qarahişār-ı şāhib (Afyonkarahisar) failed. A.B. does not mention the date and duration of his exile, but the exile must have taken place around 1266/1850, when Kel Ḥasan Paşa became the new governor of Aḍana.

In 1283/1866 some of the soliders of the Fırqa-i İslāhiyye were stationed at A.B.'s mansion in Qara°isālī because no appropriate place could be found for them in Aḍana. In the same year °Alī Rızā Paşa (d. 1294/1877), the governor of Aḍana, ordered that A.B. be sent first to Mersin and later to Istanbul "for the sake of the independence of the head official of the district of Qara°isālī". After the government issued A.B. a monthly salary of 5,000 *quruş* he purchased and moved into a mansion in Beyoğlu. A.B. died in the month of Jumada II/Ağustos of the year 1290/1873 during his exile in Istanbul.³

In addition to narrating the history of the Menemenci tribe, *Menemencioglu Ta'rīhi* also sheds light on struggles between the local notables of the Çuqurova region and provides information about the background of these conflicts. The appointment of powerful governors to Aḍana by the central government would naturally impinge on the power of notable families. These families therefore made common cause in support of the administration of Aḍana by deputy lieutenant-governors. An indication

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of this is the fact that Es'ad Paşa (d. 1267/1851), once appointed governor of Adana, was not allowed to travel beyond Nigde (*MT*, 155-156).

Menemencioğlu Ta'rîhi was penned not by an official chronicler but by a tribal leader deemed rebellious, seditious, and mischievous by the Ottoman state. It vividly depicts the power struggle between local notables and Ottoman governors sent from Istanbul. Ottoman soldiers are sometimes referred to as "enemy soldiers," and the pillage and plunder that happens after the defeat of an Ottoman governor is justified by referring to it as "taking a share" (*paylaşqa almak*).

The work was written in a plain language and includes vocabulary of local origin, such as paylaşqa, çerge, derim evi, derinti, huş, qapuruz.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

① *Menemencioğlu Ta'rîhi*

Manuscript: (1) Ankara, Private Collection of Tuğgeneral Metin Denli; 342 pages, 19 lines, rıq^a. From page 337 onwards, the events which transpired during A.B.'s eight years of exile in Istanbul are related (*MT*, xii). The manuscript also includes a poem of seven strophes entitled *Şarqî-i teşrîfi* which was added to the manuscript by an unidentified person at an unknown date, a note concerning Quğu Hâtûn, and a composition of four lines penned by an unidentified lady from Ankara for her older brother. The following 30-40 pages of the manuscript are left blank. The researchers Mükrimin Halil Yinanç, Kasım Ener, Taha Toros, and Faruk Sümer are known to have referred to a manuscript which came down to Hasan Menemencioğlu from his family. The current location of that manuscript is unknown.⁴

Editions: Menemencioğlu Ahmed Bey. *Menemencioğulları Tarihi*. Ed. Yılmaz Kurt (Ankara, 1997).

Sources: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Hatt-ı hümayun 233/12988, 460/22640-1. Ahmed Cevdet. *Tezâkir*. Ed. Cavid Baysun (Ankara, 1986), vol. 4, 190. Mehmed Süreyyâ. *Sicill-i 'Osmânî*. Ed. Nuri Akbayar (Istanbul, 1996), vol. 1, 157. *Yurt Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul, 1981), vol. 1, 31, 157. Yılmaz Kurt. "Menemencioğulları ile İlgili Arşiv Belgeleri I." *Belgeler* (Ankara, 2001), 85-187.

¹ Menemencioğlu Ahmed Bey, *Menemencioğulları Tarihi*, published by Yılmaz Kurt (Ankara, 1997), XIX.

² Hacı Habîb Bey mentioned in *Sicill-i 'Osmânî* (vol. 1, 157) is not his son but his older brother.

³ Mehmed Süreyyâ, *Sicill-i 'Osmânî*, ed. Nuri Akbayar (Istanbul, 1996), vol. 1, 157; *Yurt Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul, 1981), vol. 1, 31.

⁴ I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Mahmut Şakiroğlu for this information.

Yılmaz KURT

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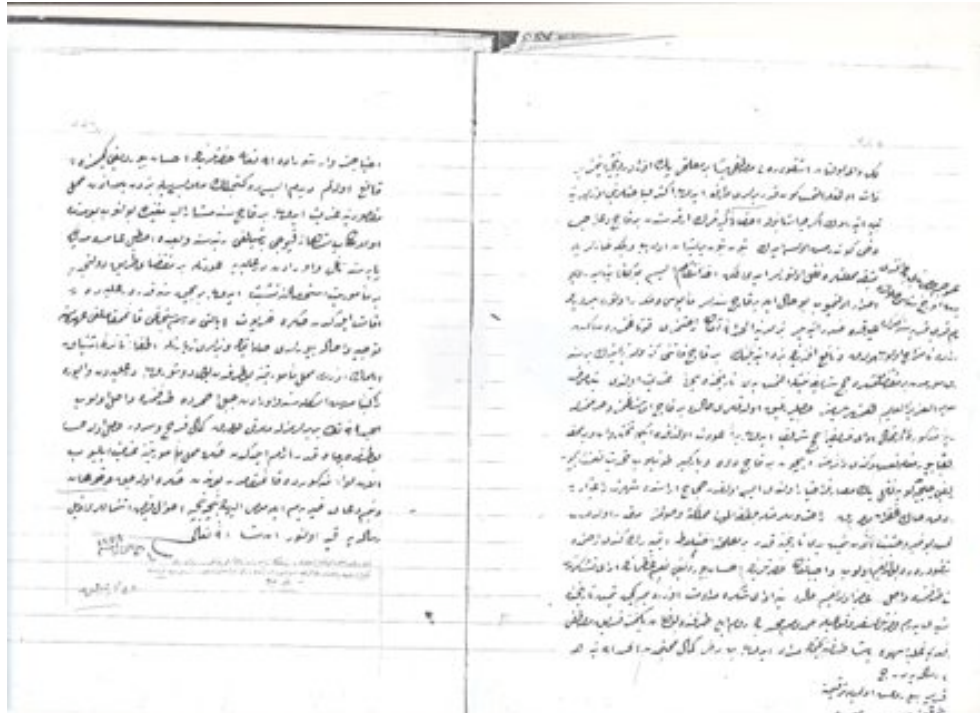
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Ahmed Bey's tombstone located south of Karaisalı (Çiçeli) Mosque

*āh mine'l-mevt
Qara'īsālī sancağı aqdem
hūnedān-ı mekārīm-ı unvānundan
merhūm mağfūr el-muhtāc
ilā rahmeti rabbihī el-ğafūr
Menemencizāde es-seyyid
el-ḥacc Ahmed Bey Efendiniñ
rūhu-yçün el-fātiḥa
sene 12<..>*



Final pages of the manuscript from the private collection of Tuğgeneral Metin Denli

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