

# What Went Wrong at Manzikert?

Jack D. Andersen  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

The Roman Empire's military in the middle 11<sup>th</sup> century faced a formidable amount of problems, largely created by hostile court officials and bureaucrats. Emperor Constantine IX Monomachus had squandered the empire's vast treasury on civic buildings and liberal gifts to the gentry and political favorites, inflating the currency in the process. The military detested Constantine with so much bitterness that a veteran general named George Maniaces nearly deposed him in 1043.<sup>1</sup> The military tried twice again in 1047, and Constantine IX finally abdicated to the general Isaac Comnenus in 1057. Isaac tried to reform the economy and to remedy Constantine's policies, but Isaac's health failed him within two years. Upon his death, the court faction returned to power with Constantine X Ducas enthroned in Constantinople. He quickly resumed the work that Constantine IX began, without heed to the harm it would cause.

The Ducas emperor and his followers doubtlessly knew that within seventeen years the military had attempted three coups to replace an emperor who would not give priority to the military, so the fearful court took measures to reduce the military's power as much as possible. Within a short time of Constantine X's ascension in 1059 the soldiers that marched under the banners of the empire were no longer sturdy Anatolian peasants and Armenian mountain men, but hired mercenaries from the corners of the empire. These included Pechenegs and Uzes from the Danube; Varganian and Rus men-at-arms from the cities of the Volga; and Norman, Frankish, and Sicilian soldiers-of-fortune from the west. These mercenaries, largely from nations actively hostile to the Roman Empire, had no vested interest in the security of the Empire. At that time, the Normans were actively carving a land for themselves in the ever-shrinking Roman domains in Sicily and southern Italy, the Pechenegs and Uzes sent constant raids into Thrace and the Balkans, and the Catholic kingdoms of the west considered the Orthodox Romans to be heretics when the Pope excommunicated the empire in the Great Schism of 1054. Furthermore, Constantine X reversed many of the unpopular fiscal reforms issued by Isaac Comnenus.<sup>2</sup> To cover the costs of restoring salaries and ranks to officials that found Isaac's budgetary knife, Constantine X mated his counter-reforms with anti-military regulations. Starved of funds and manpower, the frontier fortifications were allowed to crumble, the navy rotted in its docks, and the arsenals went unreplenished.<sup>3</sup>

To compound the military's problem, Constantine IX Monomachus had disbanded much of the Armenian militia in 1053,<sup>4</sup> and Constantine X Ducas had actively persecuted the heterodox civilians of that land.<sup>5</sup> This made no military sense whatsoever; the Armenians were for years the source of many of the Empire's best officers and hardy warriors and were not threatening Constantinople's authority. Their rugged militia also had years of experience in fighting the

---

JACK D. ANDERSEN graduated from Texas A&M University with a Bachelor of Arts in History in 2003. He developed this paper when he was a senior as part of an independent study.

<sup>1</sup> Treadgold, Warren. *Byzantium and Its Army: 284-1081*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.) p. 215. (Hereafter abbreviated as Treadgold, BA.)

<sup>2</sup> Franzius, Enno. *History of the Byzantine Empire*. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1967.) p. 284.

<sup>3</sup> Franzius, p. 284.

<sup>4</sup> Treadgold, BA. p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> Norwich, John Julius. *Byzantium: The Apogee*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998.) p. 341.

Turks and would have been a valuable asset to Roman security, if left to its own devices. Instead, the Armenians found themselves repressed and heavily taxed from their erstwhile overlords and bereft of protection against Seljuk and Turkoman raiders. It should therefore have come to no surprise that the Armenians lost interest in the Empire's welfare, and did not resist the invaders.<sup>6</sup>

These invaders were the Seljuk Turks, who, prior to the 1040's, the Romans had largely ignored despite the chronicler Matthew of Edessa's warning that the Turks were "ferocious beasts covered in blood."<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, many Turkoman nomads had been moving into Anatolia, fleeing from the policies of the Seljuk warlord Türgül. With the frontier defenses weakened, the Turks found raiding a simple matter as early as 1045, when Türgül raided all the way to Lake Van and Kars.<sup>8</sup> From then on, Seljuk raids were an almost yearly occurrence in the eastern themes of the Empire and in Armenia.<sup>9</sup> The people were ravaged and the land plundered ruthlessly with the government powerless to respond. By 1064, as the army continued to decay and Constantine X faced tax-inspired rebellions at home, the dispirited Armenian city of Ani fell to the Seljuks. This city was according to the historian John Julius Norwich, "the only serious interruption to the Seljuks' progress."<sup>10</sup> From Ani as a central point, the Turks were able to strike deeper into Anatolia, sacking Caesarea in 1067 and approaching within 100 miles of Ancyra before turning back.

In spring of 1067, Constantine X became deathly ill, and his son Michael was too young to take the throne. The emperor on his deathbed obliged his young wife Eudocia to swear that she would never remarry and demanded that only a member of the Ducas family would succeed him. However, when the news of the sack of Caesarea greeted the horrified ears in Constantinople, there was a general outcry for drastic measures to be taken. To save the empire, Eudocia had the Patriarch of Constantinople annul her vow to Constantine X and married a member of the Anatolian military aristocracy, Romanus Diogenes.

Emperor Romanus IV Diogenes came from a prestigious military family from his birthplace of Cappadocia, and was the Duke of Serdica. He became a seasoned military man in his own right, winning multiple campaigns against the Pechenegs. However, he was exiled from his lands after he plotted to overthrow Constantine X.<sup>11</sup> Michael Psellus, a contemporary of Romanus and an ally of the Ducas family, noted that Romanus was "for the most part a hypocrite and a braggart."<sup>12</sup> Psellus added that Romanus "wished to reign unchallenged by anyone else and to govern the Empire entirely on his own."<sup>13</sup> Considering that Romanus saw the need to take

---

<sup>6</sup> Franzius, p. 283.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Morris, Rosemary. *The Oxford History of Medieval Europe*. Edited by George Holmes. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.) p. 168.

<sup>8</sup> Rice, Tamara. *The Seljuks in Asia Minor*. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1961.) p. 35.

<sup>9</sup> Rice describes the Turkish raids as highly organized raids, not military campaigns. The raiders were to meet at a pre-arranged meeting point, then divide into four groups of equal strength. Facing the four directions of the compass, each group would advance to another pre-arranged position, then further divide into three sub-groups of equal strength. From then, each force would spread out in a "fanlike formation" to loot and destroy everything in their path until the target was reached. Then raiders would then withdraw to friendly territory with their plunder. (Rice, p. 36.)

<sup>10</sup> Norwich, p. 343.

<sup>11</sup> Treadgold, Warren. *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.) p. 601. (Hereafter abbreviated as Treadgold, *HBSS*.)

<sup>12</sup> Psellus, Michael. *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers*. Translated by E.R.A. Sewter. (London: Penguin Books, 1966.) p. 350.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 351-2.

active measures to reform the military, Psellus may not have been totally off the mark with his comments.

The new sultan of the Seljuk Turks, Alp Arslan, was also a seasoned campaigner, as well as a competent administrator. He had captured Heart within one year of assuming power over the Seljuks in 1063. He then turned his attentions towards capturing Djand, where his great-grandfather Seljuk was buried.<sup>14</sup> Within twelve months he restored order in Fars and Kirman, captured the Muslim holy cities of Mecca and Medina from the Fatmids, and took Aleppo.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, Alp Arslan was “an excellent judge of men, and chose his advisers wisely,” and “had a natural respect for learning.”<sup>16</sup>

At once, Romanus went to work in transforming the mercenaries and levies into something resembling an army worthy of the name. But what kind of army would it be? Romanus decided that only a large army would suffice to stop the Turks from raiding the east. He mustered the western tagmata, Pecheneg and Uz horsemen, and European mercenaries and combined them with the Anatolian and Opsician themes of Asia Minor.<sup>17</sup> Once the army was gathered, he raised the pay of his troops and drilled them. Soon, they would face their first test.

In summer of 1068, the Turks raided Syria and Romanus marched to drive them out. While the main body of the Turks evaded Romanus’ army and sacked Neocaesara, Romanus was able to catch and defeat a detachment of the raiders near Tephrike. The autumn season saw a similar campaign; Romanus marched to the city of Melitene where the alienated Armenians there had aided the Turks.<sup>18</sup> Again the Seljuk main body did not engage Romanus, but instead sacked the prosperous town of Amorium while Romanus routed the emir of Aleppo<sup>19</sup> and captured the old Roman fort of Artach and the Arab border town of Manbij.<sup>20</sup>

After this campaign, Romanus returned to Constantinople, sending a detachment of Norman mercenaries under the command of Robert Crispin to guard the upper Euphrates river. Michael Psellus and the court faction were not impressed with Romanus’ campaign. Psellus scoffed, “we succeeded in making a lot of noise at the barbarians!”<sup>21</sup> Still, if Romanus had failed to prevent Turkish raids into the Empire, he at least was able to fight some of the raiders off and, more importantly, he prevented the loss of his army or annexation of Roman territory. The emperor was confident that the following campaign would bring victory and enlarged his army. Early in 1069, Crispin revolted for want of higher pay and his troops plundered the surrounding area until Romanus himself arrived with an army. The emperor restored order in the area then defeated some nearby Turkish raiding parties.

Romanus left the Armenian general Philaretus Brachamus to defend the Euphrates with a large force, then marched eastward to the Turkish fortress of Chliat. However, the Turks defeated Philaretus’ army and crossed the river, so Romanus was forced to turn back after defeating some raiders near Caesarea.<sup>22</sup> Romanus arrived too late to avenge Philaretus’ defeat; those Turks managed to sack Iconium before some Armenian troops ambushed them in return.

---

<sup>14</sup> Rice, p. 32.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Treadgold, *HBSS*, p. 602.

<sup>18</sup> Franzius, p. 289.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Treadgold, *HBSS*, p. 602.

<sup>21</sup> Psellus, p. 354.

<sup>22</sup> Franzius, p. 289.

At this time, Alp Arslan had taken the fortified town of Manzikert and Romanus had returned to Constantinople with his army still unbeaten in the field.

Romanus did not campaign in 1070. Wishing to buy more time to train his army, he proposed a truce with Alp Arslan to exchange Manbij for Manzikert. During the negotiations, some Turks under Er-Sighun had defeated the Roman general Manuel Comnenus near Sebeastea then promptly deserted Alp Arslan to Romanus.<sup>23</sup> The negotiations broke down when Romanus refused to extradite them to an irate Alp Arslan, whose troops sacked Chonae in the Thracian theme.<sup>24</sup>

In spring of 1071 the Normans had taken the last Roman outpost in Italy, the prosperous city of Bari. The Roman Empire would never return to Italy, but for the time being, Romanus needed money to pay and expand his army in response to continued Turkish incursions. Thus, the coinage was debased again and Romanus' army was enlarged to 100,000 soldiers.<sup>25</sup> He marched them through Anatolia to the city of Erzerum, where Romanus ordered his troops to gather enough provisions for two months, as Armenia was ravaged from years of raiding and could not support an army living off of the land.<sup>26</sup> He then decided to split his army into two: he would take the main force to Manzikert while a detachment, under the command of the Norman mercenary Russell of Baillieul, marched to Chliat.<sup>27</sup> There the detachment became aware of the sultan's arrival in the area and promptly withdrew to Melitene.<sup>28</sup> It made no effort to contact Romanus at Manzikert nor made any effort to support him as he became engaged later in the campaign.

When Romanus arrived at Manzikert in summer he quickly forced the surrender of the weak Seljuk garrison and formed his ranks according to the traditional military manuals of the day. The Roman left and right wings were made of Uz and Pecheneg cavalry respectively, while the Russian and Norman mercenaries were twenty miles to the rear.<sup>29</sup> Romanus himself commanded the center of the army and had for his officer corps Sicilian and Frankish soldiers of fortune. Andronicus Ducas, the son of the exiled Caesar John Ducas and nephew of Constantine X, commanded the rearguard made up of the private armies of the nobility. In contrast to this motley crew, the Turks fielded a force of roughly 20,000 soldiers, of whom nearly three-quarters were compact, highly trained, and very mobile Turkish cavalry. They were "above all devoted to their leader."<sup>30</sup>

Alp Arslan undoubtedly knew that he could not defeat the Roman army in a set battle. To even the odds, Arslan decided to weaken the Roman army through days of skirmishing and harassment. Roman foragers and cavalry would often be shot at and led into carefully prepared ambushes, lessening both their number and the morale of the entire army. On the first night, the Seljuks fired nearly constant salvos of arrows into the Roman camp. The next morning

---

<sup>23</sup> Kafesoğlu, İbrahim. *History of the Seljuks*. Translated and edited by Gary Leiser. (Carbondale, I.L.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988.) p. 48.

<sup>24</sup> Treadgold, *HBSS*, p. 603.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Franzius, p. 290.

<sup>27</sup> Treadgold, *HBSS*, p.603. However, the commander is disputed amongst historians. Norwich has Joseph Tarchaniotes in command of the Chliat expedition and mentions nothing of Russell in command (Norwich, p. 348), while Jenkins implies a shared command of the detachment between the Norman and the Roman commanders (Jenkins, p.373), and Gibbon notes that Russell was only in command of the French and Normans (Gibbon, p. 2110).

<sup>28</sup> Norwich suggests that Tarchaniotes was a traitor; 'a tool of the Ducas' (p. 348)

<sup>29</sup> Jenkins, p. 372.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

Romanus learned that the Uzes, blood-related to the Turks, had defected.<sup>31</sup> At a stroke Romanus had lost much of his mobile units and scouts. Combined with the mysterious departure of the Chliat detachment, the Roman army had lost nearly half its available manpower before any serious fighting began. Still, Alp Arslan maintained a healthy respect for the Roman army and had sent Romanus an offer of a truce. Alp Arslan probably wished to simply divide Armenia between the Seljuks and the Romans so that he could march against the Fatmids into Egypt. Romanus, believing this was his only chance to rid the Roman Empire of the Turks, dismissed the embassy and prepared for the following battle.<sup>32</sup>

On what the Romans would later call “the dreadful day,” the Seljuk army was in a crescent formation, while the Roman army arrayed itself in the shape of a squared phalanx.<sup>33</sup> Romanus, not bothering to send out scouts,<sup>34</sup> advanced with his army planning to push the Turks into terrain when Alp Arslan would be unable to take advantage of his mobility. At first Romanus seemed to be doing well. The Turks withdrew all day until Romanus’ army found itself led in a valley. Fearing that he was pushing out too far from his main camp, Romanus ordered the army to turn back. Alp Arslan, watching safely from his hilly position above the valley, ordered his army to attack, sending 10,000 of his fresh cavalry into the action.<sup>35</sup> The tips of the Seljuk formation began to surround Romanus’ center, endangering the emperor of being cut off from his base camp and the rest of his army. Romanus ordered his army to stand firm, but Andronicus Ducas smugly spread the word that Romanus had been defeated in the fighting and withdrew the entire rearguard from the field.<sup>36</sup>

The Roman troops of the left wing attempted to sally forth to their emperor’s rescue, but the Seljuks hit them from the rear and forced them to withdraw. As his army became consumed with panic and confusion, Romanus attempted to rally his troops and fought with admirable personal courage until fatigue and wounds prevented him from even holding his sword. As one of the few Roman survivors of obvious importance to survive the disaster, Romanus was brought before Alp Arslan, who could not believe that the disheveled and bloodied man before him was indeed the Emperor of the Romans.

Romanus was made to prostrate himself before the Seljuk warlord, who placed his foot on the emperor’s neck. This was only a symbolic act, as Alp Arslan assured Romanus that he would be treated with all respect due his rank, and made the peace treaty fairly lenient.<sup>37</sup> Allowed to return to Constantinople with an escort of Turkish guards, Romanus departed Alp Arslan’s camp. En route to the capital, Romanus learned that in his absence the Ducas family had deposed him and forced his wife Eudocia into a nunnery at swordpoint. Romanus gathered

---

<sup>31</sup> Franzius claims it was only Cuman mercenaries who defected (Franzius, p. 290), and Rice adds that the Pechenegs and Cumans deserted as well as the Uzes (Rice, p. 38.)

<sup>32</sup> Norwich, p. 349-50.

<sup>33</sup> Gibbon, Edward. *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Edited by J.B. Bury. (New York: The Modern Library, 1995.) p.211.

<sup>34</sup> Rice, p. 38.

<sup>35</sup> Jenkins, p. 373.

<sup>36</sup> This included the Armenian soldiers (Franzius, p. 291).

<sup>37</sup> The exact terms are somewhat disputed. Gibbon states that Alp Arslan was “satisfied by the trophies of his victory, and the spoils of Anatolia from Antioch to the Black Sea,” (Gibbon, p. 2013) while Norwich has a treaty where Alp Arslan did not demand Armenia, but only Manzikert itself, Antioch, Edessa, Hieropolis, one of Romanus’ daughters as a bride for one of Alp Arslan’s own sons, and a million and a half gold pieces as a ransom, with an 360,000 annual tribute in gold (Norwich, p. 354). Treadgold’s treaty coincides with that of Norwich’s, but Treadgold does not give numbers and adds a treaty of alliance between the Seljuks and Romans (Treadgold, *HBSS*, p. 603.) Davis adds that the ransom was to be paid over a period of 50 years (Davis, p. 122).

the remains of his army, (most of which had managed to escape the destruction at Manzikert) and attempted to march on the capital. However, Andronicus Ducas, the traitor who deserted Romanus with the rearguard at Manzikert, defeated the emperor in the field. Taken captive for the second time in his career, Romanus experienced treatment quite differently than he did at the hands of Alp Arslan. Romanus was tortured, blinded with pokers, and then sent into exile to the island of Prote.<sup>38</sup> He died in agony in the summer of 1072.

With Romanus dead and Eudocia exiled to a convent, the empire faced a disaster. The new emperor Michael VII Ducas debased the coinage more and passed laws that hurt the economy even further, which sparked a military insurrection. Furthermore, Michael VII refused to abide with Romanus' treaty with Alp Arslan, giving the Seljuks a pretext for a full scale invasion. Alp Arslan had died of wounds on November 24 of 1072, so his son Malik-Shah collected in land what he could not receive in specie. By 1080 the Seljuk Turks had penetrated to the very heartland of Asia Minor, leaving the Roman Empire with only the coastal lands.<sup>39</sup> The loss of the fertile Anatolian plains hurt the empire's economy as well as its military. The army's backbone before the era of the Ducas emperors consisted mainly of peasant infantry.<sup>40</sup> Many of these soldiers came from lands now lost to the Turks, the Romans could not restore the old army even if it wanted to. Thus, the empire became even more reliant on mercenaries, which brought with it the entire nest of problems that follow hired swords. Some of these, such as the lack of real loyalty to the state, have been mentioned. What has not been noted is that after the Manzikert disaster, the most serious drain on the already embattled imperial finances was that of paying and equipping these mercenaries so they could fight the Turks.<sup>41</sup> Eventually the situation became so bad the emperor Alexius I Comnenus called for the Catholic west for military assistance. Starting in 1096, this assistance arrived, but in the dangerous form of the Crusades. From then on, the fighting men of Europe saw the riches and fertility of the empire firsthand and Venetian and French mercenaries eventually sacked Constantinople and partitioned the empire in the Fourth Crusade. The seeds sown by ruinous policies before Manzikert came to full fruition in its ruinous conclusion.

## Analysis

So what went wrong at Manzikert? To determine this, it is necessary to realize that the battle was lost before it was even fought. First and foremost, the 'home front' was not secure. No one of importance in the government, save for the possible exception of the empress Eudocia, supported emperor Romanus. The Ducas faction, left alone in Constantinople and aided by Michael Psellus, constantly second-guessed Romanus and very likely had a hand in the desertion

---

<sup>38</sup> Psellus, p. 366.

<sup>39</sup> According to Kafesoğlu, this was Alp Arslan's wish from the beginning, as he wrote that "Anatolia was ready for conquest, and Malazgird [Manzikert] would be the place where the Seljuks would finally settle their account with the Byzantines..." (Kafesoğlu, p. 48) and again upon the death of Romanus, "the order that Alp-Arslan had given to conquer Anatolia was put into effect." (Kafesoğlu, p. 50). Rice concurs, stating that "Alp Arslan... realized that the victory of Manzikert had opened the road for Seljukid penetration westward..." (Rice, p. 40). However, Norwich disagrees, writing that "...the idea of annihilating Byzantium would have struck the Seljuk Sultans as completely unrealistic, even ridiculous..." (Norwich, p. 340) and mentioning that Alp Arslan was only interested in fighting the heretical Fatmids in Egypt (Norwich, p. 350). Geoffrey Regan agrees, writing that "the Seljuks had no plan to conquer the empire." (Regan, p. 232.) Treadgold takes a middle ground, writing that "...Alp Arslan took Romanus's death as grounds to repudiate his treaty and to restart the war." (Treadgold, *HBSS*, p. 604)

<sup>40</sup> Regan, Geoffrey. *First Crusader*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.) p. 229.

<sup>41</sup> Morris, p. 169.

of many of Romanus' soldiers at Chliat and at Manzikert itself through Andronicus Ducas and some of the mercenary captains. But what could Romanus have done? Banishing the Ducas faction from the capital would have seriously undermined his already fragile authority. The Ducases and their followers were, after all, relatives and allies of past emperors and guilty of no obvious crime. However, if Romanus had taken the Ducases with him on his campaigns, it would have prevented them from undermining his authority at home. However, like Andronicus, if given command of units, they would have doubtlessly caused strife in the army and befuddled Romanus' campaign. Still, it is difficult to see how matters might have turned out worse with the Ducas faction diligently watched in the baggage train or safely under house arrest instead of scheming at the capital and deserting with the rearguard.

Secondly, the seeds of discord were planted even before Romanus became emperor. As noted earlier, years of feckless policies had allowed the military to decay just when threats were looming from the Normans and the Turks. Traditionally the emperor and his bureaucracy enjoyed near-total control of the country, so there was no available voice that could have demanded reform just when it was needed the most. The only effective protests to the poor policies were the military insurrections of Constantine IX Monomachus' time, but when these failed the court became even more fearful and it compounded the problem. The loss of the seasoned Armenian militia was bad enough, but the persecution of the civilians for their religious beliefs turned potentially valuable allies fighting for hearth and home into sullen liabilities, eager to turn to the Turks for religious toleration.<sup>42</sup> It is unlikely that Romanus could have created a "quick fix" to these problems because his political authority was undermined at every turn and he could only focus on one problem at a time. The most pressing of these problems of course was the Turks in Armenia and Syria.

The next problem, though minor in comparison to his problems from the Ducas faction, was Romanus' army itself. Regan claims that a lack of native manpower, and thus a reliance on mercenaries, hurt his cause greatly.<sup>43</sup> This is probably true, but it is difficult to imagine how Romanus could otherwise fill his ranks with soldiers. After all the veteran Armenians were, as mentioned, largely disbanded. The mercenaries, for all of their faults, were available. The appointment of Andronicus Ducas to the leadership of the rear guard at Manzikert was an act of supreme folly that cost Romanus the battle. One must wonder why Romanus gave that appointment to the son of his hated political enemy: perhaps it was to keep Andronicus as a political hostage to ensure the loyalty of his family back in the capital. If this was so, Romanus was foolish indeed not to have an officer that he could trust to watch over Andronicus and ensure that the rear guard would perform its duties.

At Manzikert itself, Romanus made poor tactical choices. His plan to use a large army to bludgeon the Turks into better terrain was a mistake. The Turks had been fighting in that land for years and likely knew of ways to navigate it without falling prey to unfavorable land. It is also unlikely, given the composition of the Seljuk army, that mobility would be a problem. Romanus' army, mainly infantry, would be at a severe disadvantage in pursuit. Its ability to encircle and destroy the Seljuk army on its own merits was nonexistent. Hence the likely reason for Romanus' idea to push Alp Arslan into a natural trap. However, his failure to send out scouts into hilly Armenian terrain was inexcusable; despite the discontent of the Armenian soldiers and the defection of the Pecheneg and Uz horsemen, Romanus should have been aware of the ground that he was fighting on. Indeed, the Roman emperor Maurice wrote in his military manual

---

<sup>42</sup> Franzius, p. 289.

<sup>43</sup> Regan, p. 227.

*Strategikon* that scouts should “keep both the enemy and their own units under observation to prevent any attack from ambush or any other hostile trick.”<sup>44</sup> Even if Andronicus Ducas had not deserted during the battle, it is difficult to determine if Romanus could have won the battle after all, given his tactical choices. It is doubtful that he would have been destroyed. However, given Alp Arslan’s strategy of harassment and delay, Romanus could not have remained in the field for too long before morale collapsed or the supplies gave out.

Lastly, given the state of the empire’s finances and the political situation at home, it might have been more prudent for Romanus to forgo enlarging the army in favor buying Alp Arslan off and investing in border fortifications. This would have given Romanus the time that he needed to solidify his support at home, restore the coinage, and train the army. While Romanus had experience as governor of a province and knew how to work with people through his military career, this might have been asking too much of him given the seriousness of the times and the mettle of his foes, both foreign and domestic.

---

<sup>44</sup> Maurice. *Strategikon*. Translated by George T. Dennis. (Philadelphia:University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984.) p. 30.



## Bibliography

- Davis, Paul. *100 Decisive Battles of the World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Franzius, Enno. *History of the Byzantine Empire*. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1967.
- Gibbon, Edward. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Edited by J.,B. Bury. New York: The Modern Library, 1995.
- Jenkins, Romilly. *Byzantium: The Imperial Centuries: AD 610-1071*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.
- Kafesoğlu, İbrahim. *History of the Seljuks*. Translated and edited by Gary Leiser. Carbondale, I.L.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988.
- Maurice. *Strategikon*. Translated by George T. Dennis. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984.
- Morris, Rosemary. *The Oxford History of Medieval Europe*. Edited by George Holmes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Norwich, John Julius. *Byzantium: The Apogee*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998.
- Psellus, Michael. *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers*. Translated by E.R.A. Sewter. London: Penguin Books, 1966.
- Regan, Geoffrey. *First Crusader*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Rice, Tamara. *The Seljuks in Asia Minor*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1961.
- Treadgold, Warren. *Byzantium and Its Army: 284-1081*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.
- Treadgold, Warren. *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.