



BAYAZIT

BAYAZIT (Bāyazīd; Osm. Bayezid), a stronghold located three kilometers southeast of the modern village of Doğubayazıt and approximately twenty-five kilometers southwest of Mt. Ararat, important in the defense of Anatolia against invasion from Iran. Situated in the province of Ağrı near the eastern border of the Turkish republic, Bayazıt straddles the once strategic road from Erzurum to Tabrīz. The name Bayazıt, which was attached to the settlement by the sixteenth century, may have been derived from the Ottoman Sultan Bāyazīd I (1389-1403) or the brother of Sultan Aḥmad (1382-1410), the Jalayerid prince Bāyazīd. Before the Ottoman epoch the site was referred to by its Armenian name, Daroynk'.

Fragments of Urartian walls and a relief from the 8th (?) century B.C. are still visible at the base of the fortress. In the mid-fourth century A.D. the Sasanians failed to capture the Armenian stronghold and royal treasury at Bayazıt. Until the mid-5th century, princes of the Bagratid dynasty resided at Bayazıt and rebuilt the fortress. In the early 10th century Bayazıt was held briefly by Amir Yūsof of Azarbaijan only to be recaptured by King Gagik Arcruni. In 1020, the Byzantines took possession of the fortress and town, only to surrender both fifty years later to the Saljuqs. Tīmūr Leng briefly occupied the Bayazıt region. It was not until the mid-16th century, after Sultan Solaymān concluded his Persian campaign, that this settlement was attached nominally to the *īalat* of Erzurum. In view of the Persian threat, the Ottomans assigned the defense of the town to the local Kurdish beys. In 1735, Persian troops destroyed part of the settlement but could not take the fortress. The Russians occupied Bayazıt



briefly in 1828, 1854, 1877, and 1914.

Bayazit is composed of three distinct but adjacent units: to the west at the base of an ascending canyon are the remains of the uninhabited town; to the east on the north flank of the road an impressive medieval fortress (Karaköse Kale) surrounds a towering outcrop; and on the south flank are the Armenian cemetery and the saray of İshak (Eshāq) Paşa. The widely dispersed village of Bayazit, originally an Armenian settlement, was populated entirely by Kurds in 1930, when the Turkish army destroyed it during the Kurdish rebellion. The fortress of Bayazit has recently been the subject of a survey. The consistent use of rounded towers, finely drafted rusticated masonry, displaced entrances, and irregular plan of the walls indicate that most of this fort is of Armenian construction. Immediately below the fortress outcrop is the small mosque of Selim. The fabled saray of İshak Paşa is possessed of every convenience, including a lavishly decorated bathhouse, mosque, and harem. Constructed in the eighteenth century by Armenian, Georgian, and Persian artisans under the direction of Mahmud Paşa, the saray suffered considerable damage during the Russian occupations. In 1956, it was partially restored by the Turkish government.

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