Laonikos Chalkokondyles on Osman's Succession: Interpreting a Misconception

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*Περίληψη_* **Κωνσταντίνος Μουστάκας | Η αναφορά του Λαόνικου Χαλκοκονδύλη για την διαδοχή του Οσμάν: Ερμηνεύοντας μια παρανόηση**

Οι *Αποδείξεις Ιστοριών* του Λαόνικου Χαλκοκονδύλη συνιστούν μία οθωμανική ιστορία ως προς την βασική δομή της αφήγησης, με περιορισμένη όμως αξιοπιστία αναφορικά με τα πραγματολογικά δεδομένα του 14ου αιώνα, η εξιστόρηση των οποίων διακρίνεται από συνεχείς συγχύσεις και ανακριβείς αναφορές. Μία τέτοια ανακριβής αναφορά είναι η σχετική με την διαδοχή του Οσμάν από τον Ορχάν. Σε αντίθεση με το κοινώς παραδεκτό, και προκύπτον από διάφορες πηγές, δεδομένο της ομαλής διαδοχής, η οποία δεν αμφισβητήθηκε από άλλους γιους του Οσμάν, ο Χαλκοκονδύλης φέρει τον Ορχάν να έρχεται σε σύγκρουση με δύο αδερφούς του, και να παίρνει την εξουσία αφού τους εξοντώνει. Αυτή η καταρχάς ανακριβής αναφορά του Χαλκοκονδύλη μπορεί να ερμηνευθεί αν θεωρήσουμε ότι αφορά στα γεγονότα της διαδοχής του Ορχάν, για την οποία γνωρίζουμε ότι υπήρξε σύγκρουση ανάμεσα στον Μουράτ και τους αδερφούς του, αν και η σχετική πληροφόρηση περιορίζεται σε μια σύντομη αναφορά του Αχμέτι, ενώ οι λοιποί Οθωμανοί ιστοριογράφοι του 15ου αιώνα την αγνοούν ή την αποκρύπτουν. Στο παρόν υποστηρίζεται ότι ο Χαλκοκονδύλης έλαβε προφορική πληροφόρηση για αυτό το γεγονός, η οποία ανάγεται σε οθωμανική πηγή άλλη από τον Αχμέτι (λόγω των επιπλέον λεπτομερειών που δίνει), την οποία απέδωσε εσφαλμένα στην διαδοχή του Οσμάν, είτε λόγω σύγχυσης, είτε συνειδητά προκειμένου να αποδώσει μεγαλύτερο ιστορικό βάθος στα ιστορικά φαινόμενα της αδερφοκτονίας και γενικά των ενδοοικογενειακών ερίδων, που διακρίνουν την οθωμανική δυναστεία, και που ο Χαλκοκονδύλης αποτιμούσε ως ένα από τα κύρια δεδομένα της οθωμανικής ιστορίας.

Laonikos Chalkokondyles's conception of the composition of his *Demonstrations of Histories* has been well clarified. Positioning himself in the intellectual environment of the *Renaissance*, he aimed at composing a Herodotean history of his times, which is conceived as a confrontation between the 'West' and the 'East'. The latter is identified as the rise of a new world power, the Ottoman empire, in the place of Herodotus's Achaemenid Persian empire, and its

advances over Byzantium (the 'Greeks' in his conception) and the other Christian powers of the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean.[1] Consequently, his narrative is structured on a narration of the history and development of the Ottomans from their beginnings to the author's time of writing in the 1460's.[2] In this respect, his *Histories* can be considered as an Ottoman history in terms of their basic structure. The Herodotean idea of world history is served by the insertion of digressions in the main course of the narrative, exposing the recent or older historical development of the peoples or states he comes to refer to.

In referring to the rulers of several peoples, Chalkokondyles regularly uses the term *basileus* (βασιλεὺς) (king, emperor), devoid of any connotations of ecumenical rulership, and always specifying the people or the country the ruler's title refers to. In this respect, the Byzantine emperor is always described as "king of Greeks" (Ἑλλήνων βασιλεὺς). His only exception is the Ottoman sultan, who is normally referred to as simply "the emperor" (the *basileus*) without specifications, in analogy to the Achaemenid "Great King" of Herodotus. Chalkokondyles was aware of the old Byzantine norm to use the term *basileus* in the sense of the legitimate ruler, in contrast to tyrant (τύραννος). He exposes this knowledge in describing the ruler of Athens Nerio Acciajoli as a tyrant, which was due to the fact that the particular ruler had persecuted his family. In this respect, by referring to the Ottoman sultan as "the *basileus*" he could give to his readers the impression that he regarded the rule of the Ottomans as legitimate, even if that was not his purpose.[3]

Chalkokondyles is valuable as a source of factual information with respect to the history from the last years of the fourteenth century onwards, especially in so far as the Peloponnese and southern Greece are concerned. Nevertheless, with regard to the earlier Byzantine and Ottoman history, during the fourteenth century, his text is full of inaccuracies, confusions, even fictional reports. Those deficiencies are not irrelevant to the question of Chalkokondyles's sources. Several of his reports show affinities with other known sources, however, the corrupted way he presents the particular facts indicates that the

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[1] Markopoulos 2000; Kaldellis 2014; de Bakker 2017.

[2] The time of composition of Chalkokondyles's *Demonstrations of Histories* has definitely been established by Cazacu 1984, 96.

[3] In an older study of mine, I support that Laonikos Chalkokondyles gives some hints of his view of the Ottoman rule as legitimate: Moustakas 2011, 224–26. Anthony Kaldellis 2014, 77, 156, objects this idea but without any strong argumentation against it. Furthermore, at some point he states: "*At least two scholars have come away from the Histories thinking that its intent is to praise the Turks, even to exalt the deeds of Mehmed. This goes too far, possibly confusing Laonikos with Kritoboulos…*": Kaldellis 2014, 158 (n. 125). One of those two scholars is claimed to be me, even though I nowhere write the particular statements Prof. Kaldellis asserts, neither in the study referred, nor anywhere else. In contrast, my statement in the particular passage is rather in the opposite direction. Apparently, Kaldellis is caught here of an unattentive use of his bibliography and a confusion of his readings.

relevant information was transmitted to him orally.[4] Chalkokondyles himself often repeats statements, such as "*some say…*" or "*it is heard…*", indicating that he composed his *Histories* based for the most part on oral information. Contrary to what was believed in the past about his place of residence when writing his text, with claims for Italy, or Venetian Crete or even his native Athens,[5] more recent research has strongly indicated that in the 1460's he resided in the Ottoman environment (Constantinople or Adrianople) and, moreover, he probably had some acquaintance and affiliation with George Amoiroutzes.[6] This can explain the influence from Ottoman sources on his work.

One of several problematic points in his account of fourteenth-century Ottoman history are his reports about the supposed conflict that sparked upon Osman's death between Orchan and two brothers of his and ended with Orchan defeating and killing both of them. Chalkokondyles regards this event as the beginning of the Ottoman custom of sultanic fratricide, and reflects on its possible origins. In this respect, Kastritsis and Akışık have made a long comment on this particular account by Chalkokondyles with a view to how he perceived the fratricidal practices of Ottoman sultans, which he presented to be in force since the beginnings of the Ottoman dynasty being in line with older Oghuz traditions of family conflicts.[7] In what follows, Chalkokondyles's story about the conflict between Orchan and his brothers will be treated as another inaccuracy in his text, with a strong suggestion that it actually relates to events that concern Orchan's succession and the reported conflict between his sons that ended with Murad I's victory, which is an obscure point of early Ottoman history itself.

Chalkokondyles claims that upon Osman's death Orchan, who is wrongly presented to be his younger son, was advised by his father's courtiers to hide himself, for his brothers would assassinate him. So, he found refuge in Mt. Olympus (Uludağ). After he gathered a following of supporters, he moved against his brothers who were fighting one another, defeated them piecemeal and killed them both.[8] Undoubtedly, such events had not occurred upon Osman's succession. Not only all Ottoman historical texts present the succession of Osman by Orchan to be untroubled and compliant to Osman's decisions, there is also evidence by two different contemporary sources demonstrating

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[4] E.g. his account on Ertoğrul's ancestry shows an influence from Enveri's *Dusturname*. Yet, his reports about Ertoğrul's naval raids in the Aegean reflect a corrupted apprehension of Enveri and a confusion with the deeds of Umur Aydinoğlu as cited in the *Dusturname*: Moustakas 2012, 154–55; Kaldellis 2014, 126–28, 134–41.

[5] For the older beliefs on Chalkokondyles's whereabouts: Nicoloudis 1996, 44–45, 47–57.

[6] Reinsch 1999, 79–80; Kaldellis 2014, 21–22.

[7] Akışık & Kastritsis 2023, 36–40. They attribute his reference to Oghuz antecedents to some direct or indirect influence from Ali Yazıcıoğlu: Akışık & Kastritsis 2023, 41.

[8] Chalkokondyles: Darkó 1922, 18–19.

the absence of conflict between Orchan and his brothers. The first of those sources is a *vakıfname*, issued by Orchan and the rest of Osman's family in favour of a dervish lodgment at Mekece in 1324. That is considered as the earliest Ottoman document surviving, and its authenticity has not been questioned.[9] The document is valuable for more than one issues of early Ottoman history. It demonstrates that Osman was already deceased at the time it was drawn up, and had been properly succeeded by Orchan.[10] Moreover, it is the only source to provide the composition of Osman's family around the time of his death. Contrary to Chalkokondyles, Orchan did not have only two brothers then. Four of his brothers were present and are recorded in the document, Pazarlu, Hamid, Malak, Çoban, as well as his sister Fatima, and also Osman's wives Malhatun, Melek, and Efendi; finally, there is record of Orchan's three sons, Sultan, Süleyman, Ibrahim (Murad is not reported, an indication that either he was not born yet or he was an infant).[11] The *Histories* of John Kantakouzenos are the second contemporary source to include a reference to one of his brothers cooperating with Orchan. Kantakouzenos places one of the aforementioned brothers of Orchan, Pazarlu, to be present in the battle of Pelekanos – Philokrene (June 1329) and assist Orchan in the command of the Ottoman army.[12]

Among the later Ottoman historical texts, the chronicles of Aşıkpaşazade and Oruç, followed by several later chronicles, relate about a brother of Orchan with whom the latter was in a cordial relationship and who is shown to have willfully abstained from any participation in government preferring to become a dervish. Aşıkpaşazade calls that brother Alaeddin, whereas Oruç gives him the name Ali.[13] The references about him are a mystery, since he cannot be identified with any of Orchan's brothers as recorded in the Mekece document, and it can be supported that he is a fictional personality.[14] On the other hand, both Osman and Orchan are known to bear a second religious name, Fahreddin Osman and Succaeddin Orchan.[15] In this respect, Alaeddin could be such a second name to have been borne by one of Orchan's known brothers. In any case, the references about Orchan's brother can be considered as reflecting a historical memory of the absence of family conflicts in the beginnings of the

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[9] Uzunçarşılı 1941, 280–81; Imber 1990, 19; Lowry 2003, 73–77.

[10] In contrast to all Ottoman historical texts, all later of at least one century, that put Osman's death directly after the conquest of Bursa (1326).

[11] Lowry 2003, 76–77.

[12] Kantakouzenos I: Schopen 1828, 349: "…[Orchan] *Παζαρλοῦν τὸν ἀδελφὸν πανστρατιᾷ ἐκέλευσε τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις συμβαλεῖν*". John Kantakouzenos composed his *Histories* in the 1360's or 1370's, but since he was active in the 1320's and present in many of the period's events, including the one of our concern here, his testimony can be considered as contemporary.

[13] Aşıkpaşazade: Atsız 1949, 115, 117–18. Oruç: Atsız 1972, 29, 34: "*Ali Paşa dahi beğlerbeğliğini bırakıp Orhan'a verdi. Kendi meşayih yolunu tutup derviş olmuştu*".

[14] Imber 2002, 97.

[15] Uzunçarşılı 1941, 280; Lowry 2003, 75.

Ottoman dynasty, or the conscious tendency of later writers to show those conflicts as a later development in Ottoman history.

For almost all fifteenth-century Ottoman writers, the practice of sultanic fratricide, and family conflicts within the Ottoman dynasty in general, had begun with sultan Bayezid I's accession. Only Ahmedi, whose oeuvre –the *Iskendername*– is the earliest surviving text of a historical nature to be written in the Ottoman environment, does include a brief reference to the conflict between Murad I and his brothers upon Orchan's succession.[16] Later Ottoman writers of the fifteenth century, if aware of those facts, apparently preferred to conceal them, as they did, including Ahmedi, with the later dynastic conflicts that mark Murad I's reign, i.e. his struggles against his brother Süleyman's scions, who had a power base in Thrace,[17] and the rebellion of his own son Sauci. Such a kind of facts did not fit the idealized stereotype image of the first Ottoman rulers, as created by the fifteenth-century writers, which had them to be *gazis*, characterized by a moral perfection and fully dedicated to the 'Holy War' against the "infidels". It is true that preemptive fratricide was introduced by Bayezid I (1389–1402), to be repeated and 'institutionalized' by Mehmed II upon his second enthronement (1451). With the experience of all dynastic conflicts his father had to face, Bayezid would logically care to annihilate his surviving brother Yakub, as he did before the death of Murad I became widely known. Later writers would not conceal such an action by Bayezid, due to their ambivalent views toward his person and in congruence with their covert criticisms of his.[18] He was believed to have diverted from the *gazi* ideals that were supposedly shared by his predecessors, which was based on several of his actions and policies that were considered as controversial, such as his aggression against the Muslim Turkish principalities in Anatolia, or his wish to conquer Constantinople, a prospect which many in the Ottoman environment raised a metaphysical objection against. In any case, the dynastic conflicts that emerged with Murad I's reign, as well as those of the Ottoman *interregnum*, including those of Murad II's accession, were a different matter from preemptive fratricide, yet they establish the background for its adoption.

For those reasons the conflicts within the Ottoman dynasty during Murad I's reign (1362–1389) were concealed and excluded from the canon of fifteenth-century Ottoman history writing, with the exception of Ahmedi's brief reference to the war against his brothers on Orchan's succession. Nevertheless, some written records of those conflicts must have existed during the fifteenth century, perhaps some undisclosed official *takvims* (chronological lists of

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[16] Ahmedi: Atsız 1949, 15.

[17] Gomez 2014, 230 (n. 513).

[18] E.g. Oruç: Atsız 1972, 34: "*O zamanda padişahlar ve beğler kardeşleriyle danışırlardı. Birbirlerine saygı gösterip birbirlerini öldürmezlerdi. Tâ Yıldırım Han zamanına gelinceye kadar böyle idi. Sonra kardeş kardeşi öldürmek Yıldırım Han zamanında oldu*".

events), and were used as sources by much later writers in reporting some of those events. The chronicle of Sadeddin, composed in the second half of the sixteenth century, was the earliest Ottoman text to record the revolt of Sauci against his father Murad I, to be followed by the chronicle of Münnecimbaşı in the seventeenth century.[19] Chalkokondyles too reports on Sauci's rebellion, and his account presents some affinity with the descriptions of Sadeddin even though it is one century earlier, in relating the chasing of Sauci down to the small town of Dimetoka in the Çanakkale region. However, Chalkokondyles gives a confused account of those events by associating Sauci's revolt with the one by Andronikos Palaiologos against his father emperor John V in 1373, and positioning the events of Sauci's rebellion in Thrace (Dimetoka is confused with the similarly named town of Thrace).[20] In any case, it cannot be ascertained whether Chalkokondyles's information on Sauci's rebellion originated from an Ottoman source. An account of that rebellion is included in a Byzantine *short chronicle*, with its particular section dated by Peter Schreiner around 1377, and most of the rest of the chronicle in the mid-fifteenth century before the fall of Constantinople (1453),[21] moreover, records of Sauci's events are also included in Italian texts of the late fourteenth or the early fifteenth century, such as those of Caresini and Mignanelli.[22]

Returning to Chalkokondyles's account on the supposed conflict between Orchan and his brothers, his emphasis on that story derives from the strong impression he had of the practice of sultanic fratricide, and more generally the enmities between brothers within the Osmanli family.[23] It cannot be ascertained whether he confused the facts of Murad I's succession struggles and wrongly placed them in Orchan's accession, or deliberately did so in order to further emphasize that Ottoman peculiarity by giving it a background going back to the beginnings of the dynasty. In any case, his account can be suggested to have originated from some information he got about Murad I's conflict with his brothers. As is already mentioned Ahmedi is the sole Ottoman writer of the fifteenth century to provide a report of those facts, albeit a brief and obscure one.[24] He states that: "*His brothers became his enemies. He gave an end*

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[19] Sadeddin: Parmaksizoğlu 1979, 156–58. Münnecimbaşı: Ağirakça 1995, 116–17.

[20] Chalkokondyles: Darkó 1922, 36–42.

[21] Schreiner 1975, n. 9, 91, 96: "*6882* [1373] *σεπτεβρίῳ κθ′ παρέλαβεν Μουράτης τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ Σαουτζίμπεη ἐν τῇ πόλει Διμοτείχῳ καὶ ἐτύφλωσεν αὐτὸν. τοὺς δὲ σὺν αὐτὸν σχεδὸν πάντας ἀπέκτεινεν*".

[22] Loenertz 1939, 336.

[23] Akişik & Kastritsis 2023, 38–41, 44–45, 47.

[24] About a century later, several of Ahmedi's verses, including those relating to the events of Murad I's accession, were copied and incorporated in a number of anonymous Ottoman chronicles, which are dated after Bayezid II's reign (1482–1512). For scholars like Friedrich Giese and, more recently, Necdet Öztürk, those chronicles are versions of a single one, which they attempt-

to all their affairs with his hand. They all died from his sword".[25] There is some verbal affinity with the account of Chalkokondyles, in the latter's statement about "*treating brothers as enemies*",[26] however this is not enough evidence to suggest that Chalkokondyles's information originated from Ahmedi. In fact, Chalkokondyles provides some further details, absent in Ahmedi, which, at least in so far as the number of "Orchan's" (i.e. Murad's) brothers is concerned, fit the historical context of Orchan's succession. Chalkokondyles claims that his hero had two brothers against whom he fought. Contemporary Byzantine sources allow us to confirm that Orchan was survived by three sons of him. Kantakouzenos states that Orchan, already his son-in-law, had four sons alive in 1347 and was accompanied by them, when they met in Scutari to take his congratulations for ascending the Byzantine throne.[27] They can be identified as Süleyman, Murad, the young Halil, and another one whose identity is a puzzle.[28] After Süleyman died in an accident during hunting in 1357, three of his brothers remained on Orchan's death in 1362.

Osman's arrangements for his succession followed the principle of primogeniture and provided for the integrity of the principality. Thus he introduced a strong tradition of rulership by one heir and of state intactness, to which the members of the Ottoman dynasty abided later on and which became a basic factor to the future aggrandizement of the Ottoman state.[29] Nevertheless, those principles would lead to dynastic conflicts if one's priority was disputed by his brothers or other relatives, as it actually happened with Orchan's succession and later on after Bayezid I's unexpected loss in the battle of Ankara.

Apparently, Osman's succession by Orchan was untroubled and respected by his brothers. Orchan can also be presumed to have had properly arranged his succession by Süleyman, his older son and heir apparent during the later period of his reign.[30] On Süleyman's perishing, for all fifteenth-century Ot-

ed to edit: Giese 1922, 19; Giese 1925, 28; Öztürk 2000, 25. However, in theses chronicles the verses relating to the conflict between Murad and his brothers are placed in a different order as compared with Ahmedi. In this respect, they do not conceal the existence of such a conflict, but they present it to have had a different outcome, as Murad appears to have pardoned his brothers and not to have killed them.

[25] Ahmedi: Atsız 1949, 15: "*Oldılar yağı ana kardaşları. Kamunun bitdi elinde işleri. Kılıcından oldılar cümle tebâh*". Imber 2002, 97–98.

[26] Chalkokondyles: Darkó 1922, 19: "…*περὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν, χρῆσθαι σφίσιν αὐτοὺς ὡς πολεμίους, …*"

[27] Kantakouzenos III: Schopen 1835, 28.

[28] Some scholars identify him as Ibrahim, of the Mekece act: Uzunçarşılı 1982, 160; Bryer 1981, 479; İnbaşı 2018, 73.

[29] Kafadar 1995, 120, 136–37; Imber 2002, 98.

[30] Among the three sons of Orchan, who signed the *vakıfname* of Mekece in 1324, the first to sign was Sultan, an indication that he was older than Süleyman and Ibrahim who followed. Nevertheless, Sultan can be presumed to be deceased by the 1340's, leaving Süleyman first in the line of succession, as it was then when Süleyman appeared to have prominent roles in the

toman history writers except of Ahmedi, Murad who appears to be his only brother properly took his place in Orchan's succession. Nevertheless, things were not as simple. Süleyman's sudden loss in 1357 appeared at a moment when Orchan's younger son, Halil, was held captive in Old Phokaia, having been abducted by corsairs from that town during the previous year. Nikephoros Gregoras relates that Orchan, an old man by then, was much distressed of those events.[31] Modern scholars deduce from Gregoras's account that Halil was Orchan's favourite son.[32] Desperately seeking his release, he offered peace and friendship to John V Palaiologos, in order to gain his assistance in getting back his son. Even though Old Phokaia nominally belonged to the Byzantine state, its governor, Kalothetos, did not obey the Byzantine emperor's orders to release his prisoner. John V had to campaign against Old Phokaia without success, and finally he achieved Halil's release only after he paid Kalothetos and the Phokaians a large sum of ransom, which was gathered partly by Orhan and partly by a fundraise held in Constantinople.[33]

According to Gregoras, during their negotiations John V had requested from Orchan the marriage of his daughter, Eirene Palaiologina (nine years old around that time), to Halil, and, moreover that Orchan appoint Halil his successor.[34] Gregoras does not specify whether the request for Halil's appointment had been accepted and realized. If so, that would normally be opposed by Halil's older brothers, especially by Murad, who is known to have exercised administrative and military command by then.[35] Whether Orchan had made any arrangements for his succession after 1358 is not clarified. It seems that he had either accepted John V's proposal and had declared for Halil, or, more likely, that he left the issue undecided, which could be attributed to his distress on the loss of Süleyman and to some special favour he probably held for Halil, which could have been strengthened due to the experience of the latter's captivity. In any case, the idea about succeeding the Ottoman throne can be strongly expected to have been inspired on Halil during his stay in Constantinople,

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administration and in leading campaigns, followed by Murad.

[31] Gregoras III: Bekker 1855, 560–61.

[32] İnalcık 2010, 66: "…*Theodora'dan olan çok sevdiği oğlu…*". Some other scholars too believe or suggest that Halil was Theodora Kantakouzene's son: Uzunçarşılı 1941, 287; Runciman 1965, 36; Bryer 1981, 479. Nevertheless, there could not be such a case. If Halil was Theodora's son, he could have not been born before 1347, in which case he would only be in his ninth years of age at the moment of his capture in 1356. At such a young age he could not be given a commanding position, while Gregoras III (Bekker 1855, 559) informs about his being in command of the lands around Astakos (Izmit) gulf when captured by the Phokaians. Moreover, if he had been Theodora's son, Kantakouzenos would have logically noticed that in relating his facts.

[33] Kantakouzenos III: Schopen 1835, 320–22. Gregoras III: Bekker 1855, 504–8, 558–62; Radić 1993, 284–85.

[34] Gregoras III: Bekker 1855, 504–5, 508.

[35] Apart from the testimony of the Ottoman texts, Gregoras confirms that Murad had been in command of an inroad in Thrace in 1352. Gregoras III: Bekker 1855, 117–19.

where he spent some time after his release hosted by John V, and where his engagement to Eirene Palaiologina took place.[36]

Those circumstances can help establish the context of Orchan's succession when he died a few years later in 1362. His succession seems to be either unresolved or disputed. As a result, a conflict arose between his three surviving sons with Murad prevailing. The brief and obscure reference by Ahmedi to those events can be strongly suggested to be further illuminated by the story of Chalkokondyles about an Ottoman familial conflict, which is wrongly related with Osman's succession. A fact supplied by Chalkokondyles that can further elaborate the conflict between Murad and his brothers is that the three brothers fought one another, instead of the two being in coalition against Murad, with the latter defeating and annihilating them piecemeal.

The information about that conflict probably reached Chalkokondyles orally and this can explain why he wrongly placed it on Osman's succession if the reason was his confusion. However, some written records of those facts did exist in the Ottoman environment in the 1460's and were not limited to the brief reference in Ahmedi's *Iskendername*, as the further details in Chalkokondyles's account demonstrate. The oral information of Chalkokondyles originated from those written records. His Ottoman Muslim contemporaries, such as Enveri, Şükrüllah, Karamanlı Mehmed, Aşıkpaşazade, Oruç, would rather conceal such facts in the case they came to their attention, since they did not fit the stereotype idealizing image of the first Ottoman rulers that became the canon in Ottoman historical writing. Chalkokondyles did not share this tendency to idealization, therefore he needed not conceal any disturbing facts about the first Ottoman rulers. Moreover, his strong impression of the sultanic custom of fratricide, and of conflicts between brothers in general within the Ottoman dynasty, had probably driven him to doubt the prevalent belief of his day about the beginning of those phenomena with Bayezid I. In this respect, it can be guessed that he deliberately sought to antedate them as back as possible, relating their emergence with Osman, as an alternative to his having confused his information.

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[36] Gregoras III: BEKKER 1855, 505–8.

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