

The Battle of Nicopolis

On 25 September 1396, on the plains south of the central Bulgarian city of Nicopolis a battle was fought. It was what military historians used to call a 'decisive battle', a battle which changed history.

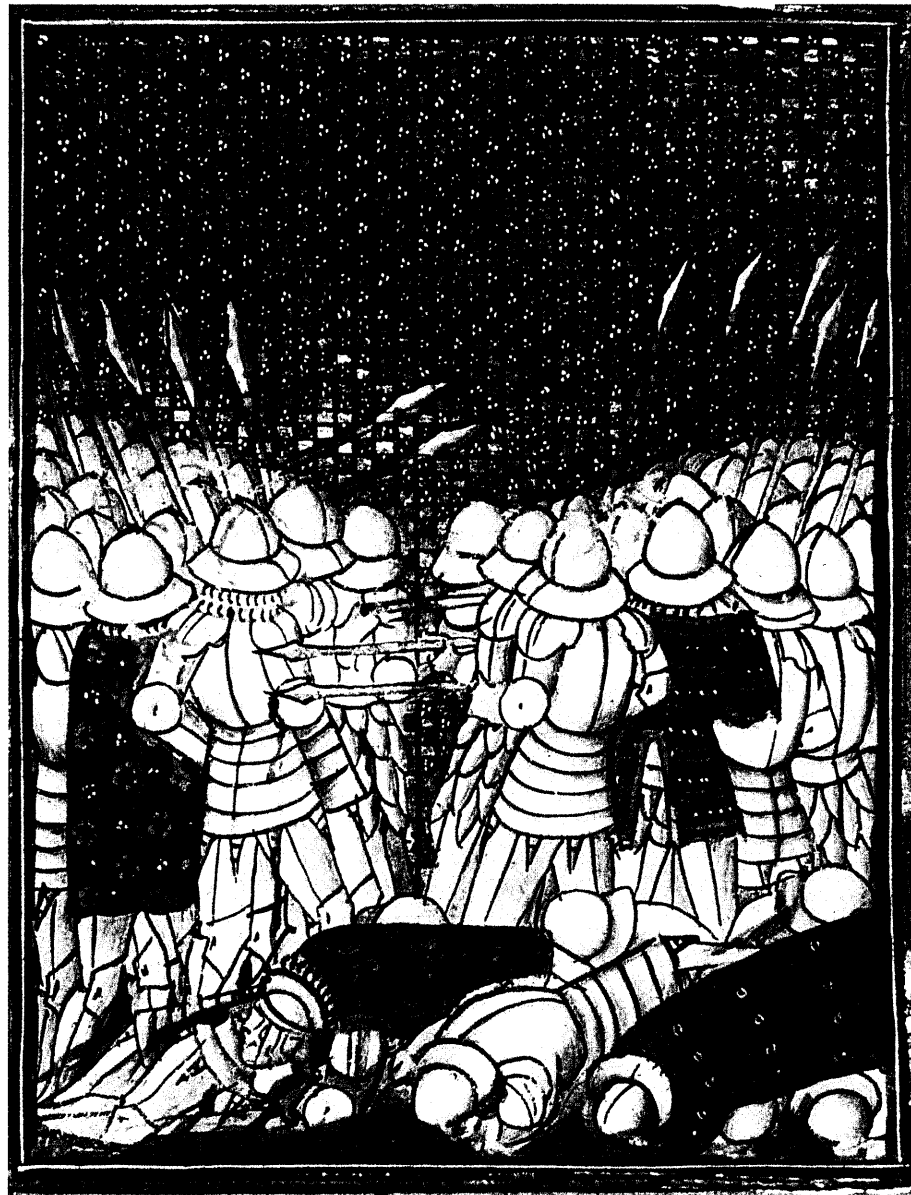
It was truly a diverse soldiery on the field that day. On the one side, Bayezid I, Sultan of the Ottoman Turks, led a force manned by troops from

his homeland, Asia Minor, and from his and his predecessors' conquered and vassal countries, namely Serbs, Bulgarians, Bosnians, and Albanians. Added to

these was the Turkish janissary corps, filled with young Christian tribute-children and prisoners of war, now converted to Islam and dedicated to the defeat of their old religious allies.

The total Turkish number, estimated by contemporary chroniclers, mostly western writers, at more than 100,000, was probably closer to 15,000.

Opposing Bayezid was a force composed of allied troops from throughout western and central Europe. Called a Crusade army by all contemporary western authors, it was composed of Hungarian, Wallachian, Transylvanian, Hospitaller, German, Burgundian, French, and English soldiers. Fewer in number than the Turks, although closer to a total of 12,000 than to the 100,000 found in contemporary sources, it



The Battle of Crecy (Froissard's *Chronicle*, Besançon, end of fourteenth century - Bibl. mun., no. 864 folio 138 - copyright BM Besançon)