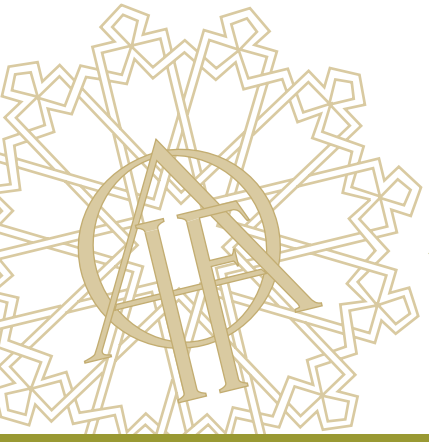
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Al-Amin Abouseada

Supernatural Powers in Christian-Muslim Warfare. Crusades and Beyond.

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AL-AMIN ABOUSEADA

Supernatural Powers in Christian-Muslim Warfare

Crusades and Beyond

"The relics of martyrs are more powerful than walls, trenches, weapons and hosts of soldiers."[1]

Ever since his early days on earth, man has believed in the presence of supernatural powers and continued always to do so. Whether these powers were thought of as gods or devils, demons or spirits, deified heroes or blessed ancestors, these were believed to exert influence of some sort on his life and their help was sought in time of need. This fact applies no less in the ancient world than in the medieval ages.

Remarkably, the first Christian emperor—Constantine the Great—won his decisive victory only with celestial help. On the Muslim side, the divine help appeared in the first Muslim major battle Badr, which the Qur'ān describes the celestial direct help of fighter angles in the course of battle.[2]

Indeed it is the aim of this paper to study the use and impact of supernatural powers in the context of an important confrontation between the east and the west, as represented in the late medieval Christian-Muslim warfare. Interestingly enough, since the conflict was motivated for the most part by religious zeal, it can be demonstrated that both sides, despite the prevailing wide differences between them, were similar in their belief in divine intervention in human affairs.

As I shall demonstrate, miracles were widely accepted with unshakable conviction by Muslims and Christians alike. However, my concern here is to explain how this phenomenon was used in the warfare between Muslims and Christians. On the Christian side, there are several examples of these divine and sacred powers, which were to help, support, soldiers both morally and actually in their fight against Muslims. Medieval Christian sources have several

1. John Chrysostom, *Laudatio Martyrum Aegyptiorum*, in J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia series Graeco-Latina* (thereafter *PG*), 50 col. 694.

2. Qur'ān, 3.124 "Remember thou said to the Faithful: "Is it not enough for you that God should help you with three thousand angels (Specially) sent down?"

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examples of these powers, such as Saints, Relics, Icons, angels, prayers of religious men, and finally even prayers of laity as well. Bernard of Clairvaux[3] understood aptly the role of miracles and "used them frequently to support his own preaching and to illustrate the power of faith, especially when preaching the Crusade".[4] Here the miracles stories which he recounted were a strong tool of recruitment of fresh soldiers for the holy war.

Similarly, on Muslim side there are several spiritual powers, which support the fighters in their *Jihad* against non-Muslims. Remarkably, most of these supernatural powers were mentioned and credited in the Muslim holy book, the Qur'ān, consequently, there was no way for any suspicious minds. Furthermore, the increasing role of Sufi orders in Muslim society, especially during the Crusades, with their strong conviction in miracles, had wider use and stronger unshaken confidence in supernatural powers in daily life and *ipso facto* in Muslim warfare.

On the other side, the divine intervention in Christian Muslim warfare had a wider and yet deeper impact in their polemic. To the Medieval mind, God *sine dubio* support the right side; the defeat is only a temporary ordeal for the sins of believers. So it was crucial for the medieval chroniclers, the majority of whom were religious men, to emphasize the role of the divine intervention for believers, both Muslim and Christian.

Rather than listing all the stories and incidents of miraculous divine intervention on both sides, I will rather study them collectively and categorically as a phenomenon within their historical context.

Relics

The first and maybe the oldest sacred object used in the military help in the battle fields was the relics. It appeared in Old Testament several times.[5] The most sacred was the Arc of Covenant, which was a source of blessing. It was carried with highest respect in the front of armies and was similarly mentioned in the Qur'ān with assurance of his blessing.[6]

The relics or the sacred objects appeared repeatedly in the crusades history. In the First Crusade, during the Antioch war, a certain man, named Peter Bartholomew, claimed to have a vision of Saints concerning the place of the Holy Lance, by which it was believed that Christ had been stabbed on the Cross. There were some people who believed in it, but there were few others who denied the whole episode.[7] Notwithstanding, the story of this lance played a significant part in raising the morale of the desperate soldiers. The same farmer who had this vision continued his claiming to see more saints giving their support and direct advice to

3. On him (1090-1153), see *CE*, II, p. 307–312:" Bernard of Clairvaux".
4. Ward, *Miracles and Medieval Mind: Theory, Record, and Event, 1000–1215*, p. 25.
5. For example: Ex 25:10 37:1; Heb 9:3,4; Nu 17:10; De 31:26.
6. 2: 248.
7. On the story of this spear see: Raymond d'Agiles, *Historia Francorum*, p. 279–290; *Gesta Francorum*, p. 57–58; Robert the Monk, *History of the First Crusade*, p. 162–163; Guibert de Nogent, *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, p. 101, 107.

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crusaders' armies afterwards. This story, which several—even among crusaders themselves—have suspected, is a clear use of relics and visions in war and politics.

Nothing illustrates the significance of this lance more than what Raymond IV of Toulouse did in the First Crusade. He used as a means to support his claim and ambitions to lead the war. During the war itself he used it more than once to raise the morale of his disappointed soldiers. Afterwards, the lance was carried in front of the crusade army by the bishop of Le Puy, the spiritual leader of the First Crusade. [8]

Much more important than the lance was the Holy Cross which Christ was believed to have been crucified on. It was often carried in front of the army to give blessings and moral support to the soldiers. One of the contemporary crusade historians describes passionately the military impact of the Cross:

> "The Holy Cross of the Savior was with us. It was mighty against Christ's enemies. By grace of God all the arrogance of infidels failed, as if the Cross had blinded their eyes. They did stop their attack but even hasten to flee."[9]

According to these words, it was neither the army nor the bravery of the fighters in the battle field but only the holy cross which played the decisive role in the victory over Muslims.

There are some other stories about miracles in the battle field itself. In a story mentioned by William of Tyre, during a local battle with Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, the Muslim army set fire on some grasses and dried crops. Heavy black smoke rising from the fire almost blinded the Crusaders, only when the Patriarch aimed the holy cross towards this fire, subsequently the wind turned miraculously towards Muslims, and smoke hurt them instead of crusaders.[10]

In the Third Crusade, another piece of the same cross became even more important. When Richard the Lion Heart was fighting in the east, there was a moment in which he was torn between his moral responsibility as a general leader facing Saladin, and his urgent need to return to England to face the unrest at home. Richard decided to leave the Holy Land, while almost everyone was trying to persuade him to continue fighting. It happened at this crucial moment that a certain monk claimed to have hidden from Saladin a small piece of the Holy Cross. When this piece of news reached the king, he quickly sent some people to receive the Cross with all proper honors.[11] The time of this event was obviously very important, the story appeared—or mostly invented—at a crucial moment, to give support to the idea of continuing the fighting and, more significantly, to convince the king to stay in the Holy Land and to stress his responsibility to fight Saladin.

The most bizarre example of relics was an old tree. A German traveler in Palestine in the Twelfth century narrates that there was a tree which was believed to shadowed on Abraham and his divine guests, and some crusaders knights used to carry a small piece of its wood so that their horses would never stumble.[12]

8. Robert the Monk, *History of the First Crusade*, p. 173.
9. Fulcher of Chartres, XI, p. 393.
10. William of Tyre, III, book XVI, 11, p. 254.
11. *Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, p. 334.
12. John of Wuzburg, *Description of the Holy Land*, eng. Trans. A. Stewart (London 1896), p. 59.

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It is interesting to note that Christian use of relics in their anti-Muslim warfare was negatively seen in the Muslim-Christian polemics.[13] For obvious reasons these relics were treated sarcastically and aggressively in Muslim folklore tales, such as *Sīrat al-Amīra Ḏāt al-Himma*[14] and in the more famous work, *The One Thousand Nights and Night*. In both epics Christian armies were blessed by excrement of the great Patriarch, before the fight against Muslims.[15] On the other hand, the anonymous Christian chronicle, in describing the severe battle around Acre in 1190, said that the Muslims "Carried a carved effigy of Muḥammad".[16]

It is noteworthy that, in medieval European epics, there is a similar function of relics in anti-Muslim warfare. In the Song of Roland—written mostly during the crusades—Charlemagne was fighting Muslims using the Holy lance, which was believed to pierce Christ on the Cross.[17]

Icons

Icons were another sacred objects used militarily and politically in several instances during Muslim-Christian warfare. Particularly in Byzantium, icons acquired a significant importance in all aspects of life;[18] it was widely and strongly believed that Mary was the protector of Constantinople. Her Icon was therefore one of the most sacred objects in Byzantium; it was often carried around the walls to protect the city, and was mostly carried with other sacred objects in front of the army before any battle. It was also believed that the people of Byzantium had never been defeated while carrying it.[19] Niketas Choniates, the Byzantine historian, describes the same icon as "the icon of Mother of God, which the Roman emperors reckon as their fellow general".[20] In some bizarre cases the holy icon surprisingly offered direct military

13. See for example: ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār, *Taṯbīt Dalāʾil al-Nubuwwa*, II, p. 202–210; Anonymous, "Un pamphlet musulman anonyme d'époque abbasside contre les chrétiens", p. 27–33.
14. An Arabic epic on the Byzantine-Muslim wars in the first two Islamic centuries, albeit it had some late historical allusions. The main character of the epic, the female Arab hero Fatima, is a legendary figure, but most of the other characters are historical persons who took part in Byzantine-Muslim conflict. The epic is huge text of several thousands pages. See, "Dhu 'l-Himma or Dhat al-himma", *EI*², II, p. 233–239.
15. *Sirat al-amīra Ḏāt al-Himma*, I, p. 288, 346, 350; *Alf Layla wa Layla*, I, p. 252 (Night 89, the story of King ʿUmar al-Nuʿmān). Cf. also, Qāsim ʿAbduh Qāsim, "al-Ḥurūb al-Ṣalībiyya fī Alf Layla wa Layla", p. 227–257. Although the narrator—or narrators—of *One Thousand Nights and Night* began his story in the Umayyad era, some elements are related to the First Crusade or even beyond. The chronological accuracy is no way in the scope of the whole story.
16. *Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, p. 90.
17. The Song of Roland, English trans. Brault, G. J. (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978) II, p. 183, verses 2500–2510.
18. On Icons in Byzantium see: Pentcheva, *Icons and Power: the Mother of God in Byzantium*, the Pennsylvania State University, 2006.
19. Andrea, *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, p. 220, 302.
20. Niketas Choniates, *O City of Byzantium*, p. 312.

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help in the battle fields.[21] John Komnenos (1118-1143) upon his victory over the Muslim Turkish Danshimandids, organized a triumphal parade dedicated to Mary Mother of God, and the main theme was her big and precious icon carried on a chariot, "as the unconquerable fellow General."[22]

Several events show, moreover, that the Holy Icons of Mary continued to influence the beliefs of the people of Byzantium. Although several centuries separate them, they indicate that its effect remained unchanged over the years. The first incident took place in 626 when the Avars besieged Byzantium. The main protectors of the city were only the icons of Mary which "were like the most brilliant sun, driving out the darkness by its rays".[23]

During the Fourth Crusade (1204), Robert Clari, one of the Latin eyewitnesses, was wondering why the Greeks were defeated although they were carrying with them such a Holy Icon, as the icon of the Mother of the God. He aptly found an answer; the defeat took place simply "because they—the Greeks—did not deserve it".[24] Baldwin I, the Latin emperor of Constantinople, found, to his horror, that he had forgotten the piece of Holy Cross when he was on his way to fight against Bulgarians. Nothing illustrates the effect of such an incident more clearly as the attribution of his defeat and death in this war to his hasting to fight without having such an important relic with him.[25]

A long time after, during the Turkish siege of the city in 1422, again Mary and Her Icons played a crucial role in the protection of the city.[26] Once more, during the Turkish siege of Constantinople 1453 the terrified population held Mary's icons and walked barefooted around the walls, hoping for support from God and Saints through these icons.[27] During that turmoil they called the Icon of the Virgin Mary to protect the city, as it did before against Persians, Avars and Arabs.[28]

Sometimes, Muslims realized the role and sanctity of relics and icons for their Christian foes, so they "used to stand on the City walls—Acre 1190—in full view of the Christians and

21. In the war of John Komnenos against the Patzinak, when his army was hard pressed by enemy, he «would look upon the icon of he mother of God, wailing loudly and gesturing pitifully, shed tears hotter than the sweat of battle. It was not in vain that he acted thus; donning the breastplate of the power from on high»: Niketas Choniates, *O City of Byzantium*, p. 10.

22. Niketas Choniates, *O City of Byzantium*, p. 12.

23. Theodore the Syncellus, *Homily on the Siege of Constantinople in 626 AD*, English trans. R. Pearse, (2007); http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/theodore_syncellus_01_homily.htm - accessed 10-11-2009.

24. "He took with him the icon, and image of our Lady which the Greeks call by this name and which the emperors carry with them when they go to battle. They have so great faith in this icon, which they fully believe that no one who carries it in the battle can be defeated, and we believe that it was because Muzuphlus—the Byzantine leader—had no right to carry it that he was defeated": Robert of Clari, *The Conquest of Constantinople*, Eng. trans. E. H. NcNeal, p. 89.

25. Andrea, *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, p. 289.

26. John Kananos (Ioannis Canani), *Narratio de Bello Constantinopolitano anni ab orbe condito* 6930, *Christi* 1422. *Cum Amurat-Bei fortissimorum Militum exercitu in eam irrupit, quam et expugnasset utique, nisi immaculatissima Dei Mater conservasset* - *PG* 156, cols. 61–82.

27. Jones, *The Siege of Constantinople, Seven Contemporary Sources*, p. 33, 120.

28. Jones, *The Siege of Constantinople*, p. 75.

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beat with rods,—insult—icons and pictures which they had found in the city, representing the mysteries of the Christian religion. They would flog them as if they were alive, and spit on them and treat them ignominiously in many other ways".[29] This behavior in the battle field was aimed at demoralizing the confidence of the Christian soldiers, and to irritate them bitterly.

Angels and Demons

Medieval mind, both Muslim and Christian, strongly believed in supernatural beings, either good such angels, or evil such as demons. Even nowadays some people still believe that these supernatural creatures can offer military help.[30]

During the crusades, there appeared several stories about supernatural beings, which helped both Christians and Muslim respectively. In the First Crusade, Robert the Monk narrates that Bohemond I of Antioch, while negotiating with a Muslim emir,[31] the latter asked him about "the innumerable army of shining white soldiers who came to their help in every battle". Bohemond replied "these are the ones who suffered martyrdom for the faith of Christ and fought against unbelievers across the earth". Once again the Muslim emir asked for more explanation. One of the clerics answered him:

> "When the all-Powerful Creator decides to send his angels or the spirits of the righteous to earth, they assume bodies of air so that they can appear to us, because they can not be seen in their essential spirit form. So now they appear bearing arms to show that they are coming to help warriors in the battle".[32]

The dialogue seems to be similar to other medieval polemical catechetical tools, in which the opposite or more accurately the invented interlocutor seems to be simple minded, lacked solid knowledge and obviously had a kind of shaken faith. However, the text was written in Europe during the First Crusade, and it was remarkably most popular than any other chronicle, as more than hundred copies of its manuscripts were found.[33] One may safely assume that such text was used popularly for propaganda of crusaders against Muslims, and helped to recruit more soldiers of faith for the war. Even more, it could have been used to hush some terrible news of the large number of those who have been killed or lost in the First Crusade.

The same historian, Robert the Monk, narrates that during the battle around Antioch an enormous army of Saints with their known standards was seen fighting with the Christians.[34]

29. *Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, p. 110.
30. In last war in Gaza, both Palestinians and Israeli claimed to have angels helped them in war. See: http://www.youm7.com/News.asp?NewsID=130845&.
31. In fact he was an Armenian prince called Fayrūz (appeared in Latin as Piruz).
32. Robert the Monk, *History of the First Crusade*, p. 141–142. Most of the other chronicles did not mention this story, including eyewitnesses. A similar narrative appeared in the expedition of Emperor Fredrick I Barbarossa in Asia Minor. See: *Historia de Expeditione Frederici Imperatoris*, p. 164.
33. Robert the Monk, *History of the First Crusade*, p. VII (introduction of the translator).
34. *Gesta Francorum*, p. 94; Robert the Monk, *History of the First Crusade*, p. 171.

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Again in another section of his narrative he referred to this army of saints but this time attributed his narrative to an apostate Muslim who was impressed by these divine forces coming from heaven to help Christians outside Antioch.[35]

It is noteworthy that the battle of Antioch specifically attracted more stories of miracles and divine support, in the whole crusade sources. One may suppose that an explanation may lie in the extreme hardship of the battle and its circumstances, the increasing number of dead soldiers, and in those who lost their spirit and decided to leave the Holy Land, and finally in the ultimate unexpected victory which ensued. The most celebrated crusader preacher, Peter the Hermit, was one of those who lost faith and started his journey back to Europe, which indicates the very low morale of soldiers who had to eat dead meat of animals and even of humans sometimes. In such cases miracles stories would be a healing tool, and could be considered—without much exaggeration—as a kind of indirect military help in time of need.

Furthermore, in the First Crusade, some crusade sources narrate a story about two knights with shining shields who were advancing in front of the crusades army and frightening the Turkish and were not hindered by any Turkish weapons.[36] To make the story more authentic the author attributed it to some alleged Turkish apostates.[37] As a proof of the truthfulness of the story, it mentioned a number of corpses of dead Turkish knights and their horses which were found in the way of crusades army i.e. were killed before the arrival of the crusaders. In the same expedition, during the crusades attack against Jerusalem, a knight with a shining and magnificent shield appeared on an Olive Mountain encouraging the exhausted crusaders to continue their attack.[38]

Another incident took place around 1146. It was claimed then that a supernatural being appeared to help the crusaders' army which was fighting desperately against Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd. On their way back to Jerusalem, an unknown knight led the Christian army all along their journey and vanished afterwards. Since none of the soldiers could recognize him,[39] they all considered him to be an angel or a saint who came to support them in their holy war.

Similar stories circulated in the Byzantine-Ottoman conflict. During the Turkish siege of Constantinople—mostly in Mūrad II reign (1421–1451)—a knight was seen riding on his horse on the walls of the city. The Spanish traveler Pedro Tafur asked some Greeks about the truthfulness of this story and they told him this was an angel who used to protect the city. Around the same time Turkish Sultan asked one of his Byzantine prisoners about this story and the prisoner told him the same thing. What is more interesting, according to this story, is that the Turks abandoned their siege and retreated when they heard about the angel.[40] Ironically, however, it is obvious that Tafur, who was writing after 1453, assumed that

35. Robert the Monk, *History of the First Crusade*, p. 174–175.
36. Raymond d'Agiles, *Historia Francorum*, p. 240.
37. The tradition of attributing the miracles' narratives to a «hostile witness», was well known technique used in medieval hagiography to give more credit to such stories. See: Lapina, *Things Dome in a Foreign Land: Representation of the First Cursade in the Twelfth Century*, p. 29–30.
38. William of Tyre, II, p. 356.
39. William of Tyre, II, p. 157.
40. Tafur, *Travels and Adventures*, 1435–1439, Eng. transl. M. Letis, p. 144–145.

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the angel stopped protecting the city, but remarkably he did not deny the story or suspect its truthfulness, neither he mocked it, even after the dead end of the city.

On the other side, Muslims were ready to believe and even invent such stories of miracles in their holy war against crusaders. Usāma Ibn Munqiḏ, the famous Arab knight, narrated that he was pursued by the crusaders is the desert, being alone in rough desert, suddenly a man appeared to him and guided both him and his horse to a safe place. Our knight strongly believed that it was an angel who helped him.[41] He tried to make his story convincing by comparing this man with others who almost blackmailed him for a cup of water in the desert. The same author narrates that there was a Muslim prisoner in Constantinople, who met someone—unclear if he was an Arab or a Byzantine—who recognized this prisoner, paid his ransom and gave him money for his trip back home.[42] The story seems to be a mere myth, but our author saw it as a divine miracle.

Holy Men

Among supernatural powers were the Holy Men, who can sometimes foretell the future of rulers, states and even the outcome of war. Although they do not mostly take part in the combat itself, but they played most of times a fundamental role by supporting military operations, albeit indirectly, but still urgently needed from simple minded soldiers standing between death and life. This was an almost equal phenomenon on both Muslim and Christian sides. More important still is that medieval Christian and Muslim rulers, just like their soldiers, needed such help from Holy Men. Through these holy men, they could legitimize their crowns, support soldiers in the battle, enhance their political prestige, and have more confidence in critical moments of war and peace.

Al-Maqrīzī tells a story about a Sufi man who foresaw that a person called Šīrkūh would rule Egypt after the Fatimids. The story soon reached Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, Master of Širkūh, who encouraged him to go on an expedition to occupy Egypt. Šīrkūh succeeded in his mission and terminated the Fatimid state,[43] which had a deadly impact on the Crusades.

During the Crusades, Sufi men were the strongest propaganda machines against enemies of Islam, and they were opposed to any enfeeble Muslim rulers. They had a unique ability to infuriate the mobs against any sovereign, whom they did not agree with or who did perform his duties in the right manner.[44] Arabic sources include several narratives which prove the point. For example when Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd was in need of military support from his hesitating Muslim neighbors, he simply wrote to the Sufis of their cities asking for spiritual support and prayers, shortly they started a propaganda campaign for jihad, which embarrassed the emirs and eventually forced them to take part in jihad. [45]

41. Usāma Ibn Munqiḏ, *I'tibār,* p. 93–94.
42. Usāma Ibn Munqiḏ, *I'tibār,* p. 93.
43. Maqrīzī, *'Itti'āẓ al-Ḥunafā'*, III, p. 265.
44. See for example: Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, IX, p. 303.
45. Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, I, p. 468 (559 AH).

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The same Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, was advised to save some of his donations to *fuqahā'* and Sufis, he replied:

> "How could I cut donation of the people who fight for me while I am asleep using sure unfailing arrows —prayers and supplication—and divert these money to people who do not fight unless they see me, and whose arrows may hit and may not".[46]

Here the Muslim prominent leader considered Sufi as his second army who fought for him at night with supernatural arrows that never mistook their aims. Noteworthy that he considered them better than his army and even more effective. More interesting, some Sufis said, they heard from the Frankish in Jerusalem, whom Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd defeated, not by his military forces, but mainly by the night prayers he—Nūr al-Dīn—used to perform every night.[47] Here it seems to be another case of an invented interlocutor.

In the Mamlūk state, there was a strong belief in the miracles of holy men, and this fact was rooted in the Egyptian collective popular mind. Since this period of Egyptian history was preoccupied with continuous struggle against outside enemies, it was necessary somehow to bond these wars with holy men, in order to get more blessing from them, to satisfy spiritual needs of simple-minded soldiers, to attract more volunteers for the war, to some limit legitimize these salve rulers, and finally ipso facto give more popular credit for those saints themselves.

The most well known examples are the stories of Aḥmad al-Badawī a famous Sufi who lived in Ṭanṭa[48], and to whom the popular folk attributed a strong role in the late Muslim-Christian warfare. He was said to have miraculously released some of the Muslim prisoners of war. Strangely enough his reputation reached the Franks and began to take measures to guard their Muslim prisoners more toughly.[49] Some Sufi of his disciples saw in a dream that Muslim prisoners of war were coming from the Frankish areas to attend his festival memorial (mawlid).[50] As expected, this kind of stories had a strong impact on the belief of laity, and consequently several others stories of holy men in Egypt appeared with almost similar miracles attributed to them.

46. Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, IX, p. 463 (558 AH); Abū Šāma, *Muḫtaṣar Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn*, p. 108. On Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd's affection with Sufis, see for example Ibn Ǧubayr, *Riḥla*, p. 219; Elisséeff, *Nūr ad-Dīn*, III, p. 765–770.

47. Abū Šāma, *Muḫtaṣar Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn*, p. 48.

48. Aḥmad al-Badawī (known also as Abū 'l-Fityān, in modern colloquial Egyptian called al-Sayyid, sometimes called Šayḫ al-'Arab (because of his veil like Bedouin) is one of the most popular saints of the Muslims in Egypt. Aḥmad was probably born in 596 AH /1199–1200 AD. It was strongly believed that his family is a descendant of the Prophet. He visited Mecca for Pilgrimage, and finally stayed in Egypt in a small village in the middle of Delta—now city of Ṭanṭa. Soon al-Badawī had an ever growing popularity among half educated Egyptian farmers. There are many miracles attitude to him. He died on 12 Rabī'I 675 AH/24 August 1276 A.D. On him see the detailed study of Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāḥ 'Āšūr, *al-Sayyid al-Badawī* (Cairo, 1998); Mayeur-Jaouen, *Al-Sayyid al-Badawī*, Cairo, 1994; *EI*², I, p. 280–281.

49. Ibn al-'Imād, *Šaḍarat al-Ḏahab*, VII, p. 602–605.

50. Al-Ša'rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, p. 268.

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The legendary Sufi biographical book, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* of al-Ša'rānī, (d. c. 1565 AD), narrates several stories of numerous miracles concerning the release of Muslim prisoners. Although most of the modern Muslim Sunni scholars strongly reject this book, it clearly reflects the popular behaviour towards the supposed role played by these holy men in the Muslim Christian warfare. Thus, in the reign of al-Ẓāhir Baybars, we hear of a crusader ship carrying a Muslim prisoner who noticed the shrine of a holy man—Muslim Sufi, called 'Ali b. 'Ālim—and asked God by the merit of this holy man to release him. Consequently the Franks beat him relentlessly, but the boat came to a complete stop suddenly, and eventually they had to liberate him. The prisoner then preferred to stay near the tomb of the Shaykh.[51] Baybars himself had a strong belief in Sufi men; in most of his raids against crusaders he consulted a certain Sufi called Ḫiḍar, on the best time for launching an attack.[52]

During the fighting itself, when some Sufi behaved insanely, it was considered as a good omen for victory and presumably raised the morale of the soldiers.[53] Some others were seen miraculously in the battle fields supporting Muslim armies, while they were actually living a long way from the battle scene. This alleged vision gave spirit to Muslim soldiers,[54] and supposedly gave them more confidence in victory. In some others cases, crusaders did not dare to harm some holy Muslim men, it was claimed, due to their sanctity[55].

Throughout Arabic sources one can find various similar stories of holy men who can predict future events, especially those related to victory over Christians, something which people were usually waiting for, and as a matter of fact increased the popularity of those holy men among laity. Thus the last Muslim victory over crusades in 1291 was said to have been foretold by several Muslim Sufis.[56]

To make the stories of miracles of Sufis more convincing, they were sometimes attributed to non Muslim, a tactic which as we have seen was similarly applied by Christian miracles authors. A Sufi man was said to have been killed during fighting with crusaders. When one of the Frankish was mocking at his body asking the dead man sarcastically "you claim that your martyrs are alive?" Miraculously a sound was heard from the dead corpse saying "Yes! Yes!". The Frankish stunned by this marvel, converted to Islam and carried the corpse of

51. Ibn'Abd al-Ẓāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-Zāhir fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Ẓāhir*, p. 240. There are some other beliefs that no one—of the Franks—could drive pigs or drink wine near the shrine of this holy man, those—from Franks of course—who tried to tempt him were severely punished.

52. Ibn Kaṯīr, *Bidāya*, XVII, p. 508; Ibn Šākir al-Kutubī, *'Uyūn al-Tawāriḫ*, XXI, p. 145–149. Cf. also Nāṣif, *Dawr al-Ṣūfiyya*, p. 204. He was Šayḫ Ḫidar b.'Abd Allāh b. Abī Bakr Ibn Mūsā al-A'dawī al-Mahrānī, died in 676 AH. He was teacher of al-Ẓāhir Baybars, and foretold his sultanate several times. But he used to persecute the Christian populations and their churches. Finally the Sultan fed up with him, and shut him gently in the Castle of Saladin.

53. Ibn'Abd al-Ẓāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-Zāhir*, p. 241.

54. Abū Šāma, *Muḫtaṣar Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn*, p. 68 (Conquest of Edessa in 1144).

55. Usama Ibn Munqiḏ, *al-I'tibār*, p. 92–93.

56. Al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara fī Ta'rīḫ Miṣr wa l-Qāhira*, I, p. 518. Cf. also Nāṣif, *Dawr al-Ṣūfiyya*, p. 209.

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the dead Sufi with him to be buried secretly in Acre.[57] The aim of the story here is clear, its confirmation of eternal life for martyrs, a moral message to fighters not to fear death, but rather to fight with an eye on heaven, and a tool for recruitment fresh soldiers. The martyr's life in heaven was assured by the Qur'ān.[58]

Ottoman conquests were characterized by holy men, who usually constituted a significant part of the army. They used to walk between lines of soldiers reading Qur'ān, promising soldiers with heaven. Some of them would even intervene in military councils, such as Shaykh Aqsunqur Šams al-Dīn, who advised Sultan Muḥammad II (1451–1481) to pursue his final attack against Constantinople 1453, and foretold the victory of the Sultan.[59] Byzantine authors recognized the role of Muslim holy men and bitterly described their efforts to encourage the soldiers in the battle fields, and mocked them in the most hateful language.[60]

On the other side, Christians were seeking military help and protection from holy men, either alive or dead. In the crusader siege of Jerusalem (1099) some Christian soldiers claimed to have seen the late Adhemar bishop of Puy, the papal legate and most respectable cleric in the First Crusade, helping the crusaders over the city walls.[61] There are some miracles attributed to Fulk of Neuilly, the preacher of the Fourth Crusade, by some of the people who followed him,[62] which were—at these early stages—aimed against Muslims. It is noteworthy that these stories of his miraculous deeds were spread—or even invented—at a time when, our contemporary chronicle says, "some people were scandalized because he collected tremendous wealth under the pretext of assisting the land of Jerusalem".[63] For the accused crusades preacher, nothing could defend him more than some stories of miracles, and this argumentum would be more persuasive *ad hominem* than any other means. On Spain, some miracles were attributed to St James, who delivered some Christian captives from Muslim hands.[64]

In 1453, on the eve of the great Turkish attack, the numerous population of Constantinople spent their night near the tomb of Sta Theodosia,[65] seeking her help in their desperate time.

Miracles sometimes could be performed by normal people, either in the battle field or outside it, provided that they fought bravely and lost their lives in battle, whereby they were transformed to martyrs. Thus they acquired some sort of holiness, and miracles appeared around them. During the Baybars attack against Acre 1266, the dead soldiers had "Light from

57. Nāṣif, *Dawr al-Sūfiyya*, p. 140.

58. 111, p. 169.

59. Yalmāz Uzutuna, *Ta'rīḫ al-Dawla al-'Uṯmāniyya*, Arabic trans., II, 2, p. 136–137. On the 'Ulma in the Ottoman army see: Darling, "Contested Territory: Ottoman Holy War in Comparative Context", p. 133–163.

60. See for example: John Kananos (Ioannis Canani), *Narratio de Bello Constantinopolitano*, *PG*, 156, col. 70.

61. Raymond d'Agiles, *Historia Francorum*, p. 300; William of Tyre, II, Book VIII, 22, p. 374–475.

62. Robert of Clari, *The Conquest of Constantinople*, p. 31.

63. Andrea, *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, p. 293 (Alberic des Trois Fontaines, *Chronicle*, ed. MGH SS).

64. Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, p. 112.

65. Jones, *Seven Contemporary Sources*, p. 100. On Theodosia see: Talbot, "Life of St Theodosia of Constantinople", Eng. trans., p. 1–8.

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heaven shining on their bodies many times, and Christians and some Saracens have seen it".[66] At the same time, a kind of divine revenge was exacted from suspicious crusaders who did not respect those holy dead.[67] The same theme appears to have been popular all over Europe.[68] William of Tyre, aptly rationalized the advantage of these kinds of stories. In his opinion, it was better, he said, "that people should believe that whoever killed for the sake of God will rise again in spirit".[69] Later in the Battle of Nikopolis 1396, in which the Ottomans routed several Christian armies,[70] the corpses of some Christian soldiers were deliberately left unburied by Turks, for the wild animals to eat, but the animals could not touch these sacred bodies for the surprise of Turks, who claimed that wild beasts did not taste Christian bodies.[71]

In both cases, albeit one century apart, there was a clear message to common soldiers, promising them to be quasi-saints when killed, at the same time a relief for bereaved families mostly far from the battle scene, desperate for any news about their loved ones.

Spells and Talismans

Most of Medieval people, Muslims and Christians, strongly believed in talismans, spells, and magic which they thought could be used to protect them and their countries against their enemies. There are several stories which indicate such a role. Medieval chroniclers, both Muslims and Christians, wildly circulated such stories on spells against insects, snakes, and other evils, some of these stories had an impact on warfare.[72]

Just before the battle of Ḥaṭṭīn (1187 AD), a certain story was widely spread among Frank army concerning a Muslim witch who warned the Christian armies of their severe defeat in the following battle unless they return back. Eventually the Franks tried to burn her and finally killed that woman, the clergy men warned the Christians not to believe in such a story.[73]

66. The Templar of Tyre, Part III of "*Deeds of Cypriots*", p. 51.
67. Joinville & Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, p. 238.
68. See the story of Baldwin of Flanders, the first Latin emperor of Constantinople (1204–1205 AD) who was killed in ambiguous circumstances in a battle against Bulgarians. Some different sorties circulated around his death, one of them claimed that some local saw shining light arising from his remains, and even attributed several miracles to his body. See: Andrea, *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, p. 308 (Chronicle of Alberic des Trois Fontaines).
69. William of Tyre, I, p. 375.
70. Nikopolis was an international crusade under the leadership of Sigismond of Hungary (1387–1437), with volunteers from several European countries, against the ambitions of the Turkish Sultan Bayezid I (1389–1402), the battle ensued on 25 September 1296, near the River Danube. See: *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (thereafter *ODB*) "Crusade of Nikopolis", III, p. 1486. For wider details see: Atiya, *The Crusade of Nicopolis* (London, 1934).
71. Baronii, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, p. 578.
72. During the Muslim conquest of North Africa, the Muslim leader shouted in a certain mountain valley asking snakes and scorpions to leave the place for safety of the Muslim army. See: al-Nuwayrī al-'Iskandarānī, *Al-Ilmām bi l-I'lām fī-mā ǧarrat bihi al-Aḥkām*, III, p. 133.
73. Edbury, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade: Sources in Translation*, p. 40.

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Here in this case of supernatural power attributed to the witch *vis à vis* the power attributed to saints and holy men, the story had a negative effect on the morale of the soldiers, so the authorities tried to stop it.

Some medieval Muslim chroniclers spread a strange story: In Egypt it was believed that there was a mirror on the top of Alexandria Minaret, through which Constantinople could be seen,[74] and therefore any Byzantine fleet coming from there could be spotted. The Jewish traveler Benjamin of Tudela narrates the same story, adding that Byzantines failed several times to conquer Egypt because of this mirror, hence they sent some soldiers who managed to trick the Muslim Guards and destroyed the mirror, henceforth they began to attack Egyptian cost freely.[75]

Sometimes ancient monuments were considered as sacred objects and were used politically to legitimize rulers, and to raise their political prestige. In the reign of al-Ẓāhir Baybars (1260–1277 AD) while demolishing a wall of a Fatimid Palace, they found strange statues with inscriptions on them. One may suppose that they were simply ancient Egyptian, or even later, statues, but it was strongly believed to be a Fatimid talisman to protect Egypt from enemies. Significantly enough his biographer claimed that the name of Baybars was engraved on these objects.[76]

On the other side, some Muslim sources narrate—according to a famous prisoner, Hārūn ibn Yaḥyā[77]—that there were some talismans in Constantinople, one for the Byzantine horses, to make them calm and easy controlled.[78] This seems to be an epic justification for the good discipline of Byzantine horses in their wars with Arabs.

On the Crusader siege of Jerusalem, in 1099, some Latin sources narrate that two Muslim women, who were trying to make some kind of Magic on the wall, were killed by a flying stone.[79] Mostly these women were praying and trying to help the defenders against crusaders. Furthermore, in the Third Crusade, in the battle around Acre, some Christian soldier was carrying amulets under his clothes to protect him, and even when he was hit and all his clothes turn apart, this amulet was intact, and the Muslim arrow failed to pierce it.[80]

74. Naṣīr-i Ḫusraw, *Safar Nāmah*, p. 99; Ibn Rustah, *al-Aʿlāq al-Nafīsah*, p. 79. Ibn Ǧubayr the Muslim traveler visited Alexandria in the reign of Saladin, entered the Minaret himself, and did not mention this mirror. See: Ibn Ǧubayr, *Riḥla*, p. 33.

75. Benjamin of Tudela, *al-Riḥla*, p. 357.

76. Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-Zahir fī Sirat al-Malik al-Ẓāhir*, p. 419.

77. A Muslim civilian prisoner of war, c. 880–912 AD. He was carried to Byzantium where he lived for years, mostly as a slave. He wrote a vivid and valuable disposition of Constantinople and its monuments, also Rome and other places. His work was preserved in the geographical book of Ibn Rustah *al-Aʿlāq al-Nafīsa*; *ODB*, II, p. 903.

78. Ibn Rustah, *al-Aʿlāq al-Nafīsa*, p. 119.

79. Raymond d'Agiles, *Historia Francorum*, p. 299; William of Tyre, II, Book VIII, 15, p. 364.

80. Nicholson, *Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, I, 48, p. 104.

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Dreams, Visions, Divine Signs

Dreams were often considered in the Middle Ages as a kind of revelation from the highest to some chosen people, to deliver a message from God, mostly in turmoil. Visions have always had a religious significance in human history. Sovereigns and laity as well were interested in dreams as a kind of divine revelation. Furthermore, dreams were almost the only way of communication between living and dead, a unique chance to meet dead ones, inquire about their destiny, and a chance to deliver messages from heaven to the earthly world.[81]

In Islam, dreams played a crucial role, and had an ultimate importance for Muslims. Dreams appeared in the Qu'ran and hadiths several times. Most important prophet Muhammad himself was the first dream interpreter in Islam. The hadīth that reads:

> "Whoever sees me [the Prophet] in dreams will see me in wakefulness [the Hereafter] for Satan cannot take my shape" has long been understood to mean that a dream in which Muhammad appears as a character is unquestionably a true dream."[82]

This particular hadith gave assurance of ultimate credibility of specific dreams, which subsequently attract more attention and respect of dreams generally in the Medieval Muslim society. One may safely assume that, if Satan could not disguise the Prophet, he would not do the same with saints and holy men.

On the other side, dreams had relatively less importance in the Christian world.[83] Judging by the number of dreams interpretation manuals, E. Sirriyeh convincingly suggests that dreams were more popular in the Muslim world than in the Christian milieu.[84] However, dreams were occasionally used politically and even militarily since Old Testament time. Daniel's vision and vision interpreted by him were both widespread in medieval Europe and were used politically and in polemical works as well. The most important to consider, as far as this paper is concerned, is that dreams, especially of kings and holy men, had increasing importance in the late Middle Ages. They were often used politically, and sometimes had deep impact on political and military situation in the battle fields. The function of dreams in Muslim society is aptly explained by l. Kingberg saying:

> "Most of these dreams show how deeds performed by people during their life on this earth correlate with their condition after death in the next world. They demonstrate the merits of each deed, thus encouraging people to act accordingly."[85]

81. See: Smith, «Concourse between the Living and the Dead in Islamic Eschatological Literature», p. 224–236.
82. Bulkeley, *Dreaming in the World's Religions*, p. 200.
83. On the Christian attitude towards dreams in general see: Bulkeley, *Dreaming in the World's Religions*, p. 183–190.
84. Sirriyeh, "Muslims Dreaming of Christians, Christians Dreaming of Muslims: Images from Medieval Dream Interpretation", p. 207–221.
85. Kinberg, «The Legitimization of the Madhāhib through Dreams», p. 48.

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This fact was employed politically and militarily, to encourage Muslim leader and soldiers alike to play greater part in Jihad.

There are some examples of using dreams politically in several forms. 'Imād al-Dīn Zangī (1127-1146), who was bitterly blamed for his atrocity towards some of his fellow Muslims[86], was said to have appeared in a dream of a cleric who asked him about his posthumous destiny. 'Imād was claimed to have answered him: "God forgave me for [my role in the] conquest of Edessa".[87] This is a clear political whitewash of the founder of Zangids house, and certainly it was a kind of political propaganda. Similarly, a Sufi claimed that the Prophet Muḥammad appeared to him in a dream and asked him to carry a support message to Nūr al-Dīn (1146-1174) 'Imād's son.[88] The same story was repeated almost verbally but its hero this time was Saladin.[89] Muhammad's support in dreams was not exclusive for leaders, but sometimes extent to include normal soldier. A Muslim prisoner of war was claimed to have seen the Prophet in a dream, in which the Prophet told him to break his chain and flee. Waking up in the morning, the prisoner found his chains broken and fled walking between his guards. His flight escaped the notice of his guard and the sudden—may be miraculously—falling of the snow covered his traces.[90] These kinds of stories usually spread widely and quickly; and were strongly accepted in the Muslim society. On the other hand, in some bizarre cases other visions were seen—or even invented—to blame some Muslim rulers for their slackness at Jihad.[91]

Once again an old Muslim cleric died during the Second Crusade around Damascus, some claimed to have seen him in a dream boasting about his destiny in the heaven as a martyr (1174 AD).[92] After the death of Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, some common people treated him as a holy man, whose tomb was considered as a sacred place in which God may accept their prayers.[93] Similarly others claimed to have seen the prophet and some of his followers visiting the tomb of Saladin after this death (1193 AD).[94]

All these stories had indirect, but unyielding impact on the Muslim Christian warfare. The stories of destiny of the martyrs in heaven and the glory of leaders to extent that the Prophet himself visited their shrines as a sign of highest respect, all this must have penetrated within

86. Hillenbrand, "'Abominable Acts': the Career of Zengi" p. 111-132.
87. Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-Ta'rīḫ*, IX, p. 332.
88. Al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥuṣn al-Muḥāḍara fī Ta'rīḫ Miṣr wa l-Qāhira*, II, p. 289-290. Cf. also, Nāṣif, *Dawr al-Sūfiyya*, p. 119.
89. Al-Nuwayrī al-'Iskandarānī, *Al-Ilmām bi l-I'lām fī-mā ğarrat bihi al-Aḥkām*, IV, p. 63.
90. Usāma Ibn Munqiḏ, *Kitāb al-I'tibār,* p. 94.
91. Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir narrates the story of Kafūr's dream in which he saw himself trying to break the sky with hammer. The interpreters told him that he was breaking the religion of Islam, since he did not try to save *al-Ṯuġūr* (Borders towns) between Muslims and Byzantines in the mid-Tenth century. Ibn'Abd al-Ẓāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-Zāhir*, p. 442.
92. Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-Ta'rīḫ*, IX, p. 354. He was the famous Mālikī scholar Yusūf al-Maġribī al-Fandalāwī, to whom some miracles were attributed while still alive. Ibn'Asākir, *Tāriḫ Madīnat Dimšaq*, vol. 74, p. 234–235 (Biography no. 10185); Mouton, "Yūsuf al-Fandalāwī", p. 63–75. On the role of Maġribī Sufi refuge in the political and religious life of Damascus, see: Mouton, *Damas et sa principauté,* p. 287–310.
93. Ibn al-'Imād, *Šaḏarat al-Ḏahab fī Aḫbār man Ḏahab*, VI, p. 381.
94. Abū Šāma, *Muḫtaṣar Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn*, p. 371.

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soul and mind of fighters in the fields, given them more confidence in their war, and further assurance of destiny of killed ones, raising their morale. At the same times these stories would certainly be a divine inducement for other Muslim rulers to seek similar glory, *a fortiori* with the slave Mamluks who always had some obsessions about their legitimacy, since these Sultans were originally slaves brought to Egypt.

Dreams come sometimes to vindicate some evil actions, the traitorous emir who surrendered the castle of Antioch in the First Crusade, was whitewashed in some Latin sources, it was said that Christ appeared to him and ordered him to open the Gates for Crusaders.[95]

Mostly during the Crusades, we encounter several narratives of visions and dreams, mostly appearing—or invented—in hard times to give specific instructions to the distressed crusaders. In the battle around Antioch several Christian lost their spirit and started to flee. A certain priest claimed that God appeared to him, saying "do not flee, go back, and tell the others I am with them in the battle". The message assured them that the Most High would not neglect them, and provided that they stop their sins, they will be victorious. Some others believed to have seen some of their dead ones giving them moral support.[96]

In the literature of the First Crusade, one can thus speak about an exclusive role of dreams and visions used in several ways. The first preacher of the Crusades, Peter the Hermit, when he was on a pilgrimage trip to Holy Land before the Crusades itself, upon hearing and seeing the alleged suffering of the Christian pilgrims, decided to call for help from the Christian world in Europe. He claimed to have seen Christ in a dream in which He encouraged him to start his mission for calling a crusade. [97]

Later, in the First Crusade, during the terrible march to Jerusalem, some crusaders claimed to have seen sign of the cross on the bodies of their dead soldiers.[98] Raymond d'Agiles narrates some stories of visions in which some dead crusaders came to vision to support their friends and show them their places in heaven, and even promised them with their future houses in paradise.[99] The previous story needs more consideration; first the ghost of the dead crusader states clearly and firmly:

> "*Equidem non Moriuntar illi qui in Christi servitio vitam finiunt*: Indeed, they do not die those who pass away in the service of Christ."

Then he added more seductive stories about his new splendid house in heaven. This story which was widely narrated and circulated all over Europe, mostly by public reading of books, was a strong propaganda tool for anti-Muslim Holy War. Even more, it was *a fortiori* an effective tool to raise the morale of desperate soldiers, who were seeing their fellow Christian falling dead in every moment.

95. Fulcher of Chartres, Book I, surrender of Antioch, p. 57–59. Most of the other chronicles did not mention this story.
96. Fulcher of Chartres, Book I, p. 60.
97. William of Tyre, I, p. 84–85.
98. Raymond d'Agiles, *Historia Francorum*, p. 272.
99. Raymond d'Agiles, *Historia Francorum*, p. 276.

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Indeed the chronicle of Raymond d'Agiles uniquely elaborated several visions and used them in almost every problem his group faced during their anti-Muslim fighting. During the same battle around Antioch some other Christian soldiers claimed to have seen Christ himself delivering through them a message of support and advice for Christian armies.[100] In fact the battle around Antioch and its Latin sources is rich of narratives of visions and dreams in which Christ and some other saints were almost watching the crusaders in every movement, giving advice in each step. Even in Europe itself, far in France a clergy man saw several spirits of dead Christians killed in the war against Muslims, which he interpreted as a "divine dispensation [which] has been made to take us into the company of the blessed".[101]

William of Tyre, the famous historian of the Crusades, declared frankly that the visions stories around the battle of Antioch raised the morale of desperate crusaders, and eventually played crucial rule in the battle against Muslims.[102] More clearly, medieval sources rationalized the stories of dead' ghosts and emphasized their religious benefits to the true believers:

> "So that none of the faithful in Christ should doubt the future resurrection of the dead, but should eagerly desire the joys of blessed immortality."[103]

Although this text relates to a different historical context, it was still an effective and persuasive tool in the Christian-Muslim warfare, where the religious zeal was even stronger, and where victory or deafest was frequently attributed to supernatural powers and to higher intervention.

On the other hand, dreams can be a bad omen for sinners and those who do not follow the word of God. For them, dreams may foretell defeat and loss. A good example of these is the dream of King Guy Lusignan, King of Jerusalem, just before the deceive battle of Ḥaṭṭīn, in which he saw:

> "an eagle flying over the Christian army, carrying seven darts and crossbow in its talons and crying out in a terrible voice "Woe to you Jerusalem."

The anonymous writer of the text interpreted the vision as a bad sign for the king, and attributed his ill-fate to the seven sins the Christian committed.[104]

In some cases, visions were attributed to enemy, a known tactic used repeatedly by both Muslims and Christian's sources to give credit to their stories. During the First Crusade, one of the Frankish historians attributed a strange vision to mother of the Muslim leader Karbūġā, in which she warned her son, who was longing for fighting, not to fight the Christians. She stated that it was written in the Qur'ān that the Frankish will rout Muslims and rule their

100. Robert the Monk, *History of the First Crusade*, p. 161–162; Guibert de Nogent, *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, p. 99–100; Peterus Tudebodeus, *Historia de Hierosolymitano Itinere*, p. 98–100.
101. Joynes, *Medieval Ghost Stories*, p. 22.
102. Willam of Tyre, I, Book VI, 14, p. 280.
103. Joynes, *Medieval Ghost Stories*, p. 17.
104. Nicholson, *Chronicle of the Third Crusade: a Translation of Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*, p. 32.

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lands, and she inquired about these events from watching the stars, which confirmed it.[105] This story was certainly used to raise the morale of desperate soldiers, give them more confidence of the support of the highest, and furthermore, used in Europe mainland to refute any bad news might be circulated there on the hardships facing the crusaders, and at the same time encouraged still hesitated soldiers to go to the Holy Land.

In the same battle of Antioch some crusaders chronicle narrated that a divine fire fell on the Turkish camp outside Antioch, and eventually demolished the spirit of Muslim army and gave more support to Christians inside the city.[106]

Sometimes miracles were needed to support, not only the fighters in the battle fields, but also the highest religious authority in Europe. When the papacy imposed trade sanction against Muslims, as expected, some were selfish and preferred their trade benefits. In this particular issue, excommunication was not enough and a kind of miracles might had to be invented, so there are some circulated stories about divine intervention in the shape of disasters fallen upon those who ignored the sanction, and trade with Muslims.[107]

Conclusion

To sum up, phenomenon of the stories of Miracles of holy men, visions and relics were circulated or even invented to offer spiritual needs in the battle fields, and to give more prestige and glory for rulers, especially those seeking political and religious legitimacy. But in the wider scope miracles and supernatural powers stories were:

> "an expression of troubled society full of problems, which solutions could not be found, and through which people sought salvation in heaven or in other world."[108]

One may add that these kinds of stories, typically attributed and related to rulers and leaders, were used frequently to give some political credit to princes and military leaders, such as Raymond of Poitiers in the First Crusade, and Baybars of Egypt.

On the same time, the stories of medieval miracles were not always invented deliberately, but sometimes were only a human explanation of some natural phenomenon such as comets; or personal experience just like dreams, nightmares, or even visual or heard hallucinations by terrified simple minded and half or mostly none educated soldiers, and *ipso facto* the religious interpretation was the nearest to medieval mind, both Muslim and Christian.

105. *Gesta Francorum*, p. 50–53; Robert the Monk, *History of the First Crusade*, p. 154–156; Guibert de Nogent, *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, p. 96–98; Peterus Tudebodeus, *Historia de Hierosolymitano Itinere*, p. 93–96.
106. Robert the Monk, *History of the First Crusade*, p. 164.
107. Baronii, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, 1356–1396, XXVI, p. 129.
108. Maḥmūd Ismā'īl, *al-Muhammašūn fi l-Ta'rīḫ al-Islāmī*, p. 192.

AnIsl 43 (2009), p. 107-126 Al-Amin Abouseada
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