

AL-FANDLAWI AND AL-HALHULI (D. 543 AH / 1148 A.D.) - TWO POPULAR HEROES IN THE LEVANT FROM THE CRUSADER ERA

AL-FANDLAWI E AL-HALHULI (m. 543 AH / 1148 d.C.) — DOIS HERÓIS POPULARES DO LEVANTE DA ÉPOCA DAS CRUZADAS

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Abstract

This research paper examines the aspect of two popular heroes in the Levant during the era of the Crusades, specifically during the twelfth century A.D., who are : al-Fandlawi and al-Halhuli. It addresses the difficulties of the study, then what the historical sources mentioned about the incident of their martyrdom, and then, we present the final results that were able to be reached through this analysis.

Keywords: Al-Fandlawi. Al-Halhuli. Crusades.

Resumo

Este artigo de pesquisa examina a figura de dois heróis populares do Levante durante a era das Cruzadas, especificamente no século XII d.C., a saber: al-Fandlawi e al-Halhuli. Aborda as dificuldades do estudo, em seguida, o que as fontes históricas mencionam sobre o episódio de seu martírio e, por fim, apresenta os resultados finais aos quais se chegou por meio dessa análise.

Palavras-chave: Al-Fandlawi. Al-Halhuli. Cruzadas.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The problem of the study

Indeed, the researcher in this subject faces a clear problem in the form of the scarcity, if not the rarity, of Arabic sources, if not their repetition, as it is noted that the historians contemporary to those events, namely Ibn al-Qalanisi (d. 1160 A.D.) and Ibn Asakir (d. 1176 A.D.), did not mention in their books, “Thail Tarikh Dmashq “ and “ Tarikh Madinat Dimashq “, respectively , more than a few lines about the two mentioned figures. Likewise, references were mentioned from historical sources after the sixth century A.H / twelfth century A.D. such as what was written by Abu Shama al-Maqdisi (d. 1267 A.D.), Ibn Khallikan (d. 1282 A.D.), and al-Dhahabi (d. 1348 A.D.). Each of them mentioned very few notes that do not satisfy the thirst of the researcher eager for



more information about a pivotal and important event with a popular dimension in the history of the Islamic-Crusader conflict.

The preceding situation can only be explained by our understanding of a clear fact: contemporary Muslim historians of the period of conflict between the Islamic East and the Catholic European West did devote their works to political and military events, as we find in the numerous annals. Some even dedicated books to leaders of Islamic Jihad, such as Saladin (d. 1193 A.D.) and al-Zahir Baybars (d. 1276 A.D.), as did Baha' al-Din ibn Shaddad (d. 1234 A.D.) in his “al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyya wa al-Mahasin al-Yusufiyya “, and Ibn Abd al-Zahir (d. 1193 A.D.) in his book “al-Rawd al-Zahir fi Sirat al-Malik al-Zahir “. Meanwhile, popular heroes who did not engage in politics did not receive the same level of attention, which is naturally expected given the tracking of the development of Islamic historical writing itself, the class affiliations, and the official connections of the Muslim historians themselves.

It is important here to turn to books of deaths (wafayat), classes (Tabakat), and biographies (A’alam) to compensate for the lack we find in annals, but those, too, do not provide us with sufficient information about the two men.

In general, and as a result of the above situation, there are many gaps and questions surrounding the circumstances of their martyrdom. And without hypothesis and following the analytical method, the researcher cannot reach truly scholar conclusions from his research. In addition, the aforementioned historical sources do not reveal to us the development of the image of the two heroes mentioned in the popular consciousness in a way that would allow the researcher to attempt to deduce and analyze the scattered fragments to address the aforementioned gaps in the source material.

2 THE RISE OF THE CRUSADES

Whatever the case, the spark of the medieval world war, known as the Crusades (Croisades, Kreuzzuges), was ignited following the call of Pope Urban II(1089-1099 A.D) for the Crusades at the Council of Clermont in France on November 27, 1095 AD ⁽¹⁾. Its

¹) **On Pope Urban II's speech at Clermont, see :**

Fulcher of Chartres, *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem*, translated by F. Rita Rian, Tennessee, 1967, pp. 62-65.

apparent motive was religious, aiming to reclaim the Christian holy sites in Palestine. However, in historical reality, several pivotal economic, political, and social motives drove it (²).

The invaders managed to establish principalities for themselves in the Upper Euphrates and the Levant, such as Edessa, Antioch, the Kingdom of Jerusalem, and Tripoli. This came about through a history stained with blood, one manifestation of which was the infamous Massacre of Jerusalem, July 15-25, 1099 A.D (³).

It has become clear to researchers that they are facing a movement of colonialism (i.e., European colonialism in the Middle Ages), and that European Catholic Christian entities were forcibly implanted on Muslim land. The invaders were able to achieve this within a few years through their military efficiency and the political fragmentation of the Muslims, as well as their sectarian, doctrinal, and ethnic conflicts, which made the upper Euphrates and the Levant an area of attraction for external political powers that seized the opportunity at the expense of its original inhabitants. Thus, the conspiracy of the inside and the outside met together, i.e. the Muslims, through their political conflicts, conspired

Robert the Monk, in E. Peters, *The Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and other source materials*, Philadelphia, 1971, p. 14.

Guilbert of Nogent, in Peters, pp. 10-13; Baldric of Dol, in Peters, pp. 6-10.

Munro.D., "The Speech of Pope Urban XI, at Clermont 1095," A.H.R., vol. XI, 1906, pp. 231-242. (A Pioneering research paper and indispensable).

Abd al-Salam Zaydan, *al-Da'wa lil Horoob al-Salibiyyah Ala Bilad al-Sham(1095-1189 A.D.)*, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Faculty of Arts, Assiut University, 2004 A.D., pp. 88-1204.

Muhammad Mu'nis Awad, *al-Horob al-Salibiyyah . al-Elakat Bayna al-Sharq wa al-Gharb* , Cairo, 1999-2000 A.D., pp. 66-169.

Ishaq Ubayd, *Roma wa Byzanta* , Cairo, 1970 A.D., pp. 83-86, 150.

²) **On the Crusades in general and their motives, see the following bibliographical works :**

W. Mayer, *Bibliographie zur Geschichte der Kreuzzuge*, Hannover, 1960

A. Atiya, *The Crusade, Historiography and Bibliography*, London 1962.

Muhammad Mu'nis Awad, , *Fosol Bibliographiyyah fi Tarikh al-Horob al-Salibiyyah* . Cairo , 1996.

³) **On the Massacre of Jerusalem, see:**

Anonymous, *The Deeds of the Franks and the Other Pilgrims to Jerusalem*, Trans. by R. Hill, New York 1962, p. 51.

Fulcher of Chartres, p. 122; Raymond d'Aguilliers, in Peters, p. 209.

Ibn al-Qalanisi, *Thayl Tarikh Dimashq* ; edited by Amidroz, Beirut 1908, p. 127.

Ibn al-'Ibri, *Tarikh Mukhtasar al-Duwal* , ed. B-T, p. 197.

Ibn al-Jawzi, *al-Muntazam fi Tarikh al-Muluk wa al-Umam* , ed Hyderabad al- Deccan, 1359 A.H, Vol. 9, p. 108.

against themselves, without recognizing, even before the European West conspired against them at that time.

3 THE ISLAMIC JIHAD MOVEMENT AND THE FALL OF EDESSA 1144 A.D.

The Islamic Jihad movement played its role gradually through popular and organized activities led by a number of leaders, including Karboghaz (1095-1101 A.D.), Jakermish (1101-1106 A.D.), Jawli Saqawa (1106-1108 A.D.), Mawdud Ibn al-tuntakin (1108-1113 A.D.), Aqsunqur (1114-1115 A.D. , 1121-1126 A.D.), up to Imad al-Din Zengi (1127-1146 A.D.), under whose leadership the Muslims were able to achieve the greatest accomplishment during the first half of the 12th century A.D. in the form of the fall of the Crusader County of Edessa, which was the first of the principalities established by the invaders in the upper Euphrates. Its fall came as a natural result of the cooperation of internal and external factors of fall; since fall in history always begins from within, and external factors give it its final form, and this definitely happened in the year 1144 A.D. (4)

Indeed, that prominent historical event reflected several indications, including that the Islamic Jihad movement had reached a stage of historical maturity and effectiveness, as it became capable of overthrowing a Crusader principality that was considered the head of the Crusader axe, that concentrated its arm on the Levantine coast, which is the lung through which the invaders breathe and connect them to the motherland in Western

4) On the fall of Edessa to the Muslims, see:

Ibn al-Qalanisi, the aforementioned source, p. 1279.

Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Tarikh al-Bahir fi al-Dawla al-Atabakiyya* (in Mosul), edited by Abd al-Qadir Tulaymat, Cairo 1963, p. 168.

Al-Isfahani, *Tarikh Dawlat Al- Saljuq*, Cairo 1900, p. 1186.

Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya*, Cairo 1935, vol. 12, p. 19.

Aliya al-Janzuri, *Emarat al-Raha al-Salibiyyah*, Cairo 1986, pp. 295- 312. (It is the best study on the subject in Arabic).

Mahmoud al-Ruwaidi, *Emarat al-Raha al-Salibiyyah*, Amman 2002, pp. 58-557.

Alptekin, *The Reign of Zangi (521-541 A.H/1127-1146 A.D.)*, Ataturk University, Erzurum 1978, pp. 64-65.

Europe. It also represented an early warning station that alerted its Crusader sisters, which were located in its west, to any Islamic movements coming from the east.

It is important to acknowledge here that this achievement occurred only as a natural historical development. The preceding stage began at the beginning of the 12th century A.D. Furthermore, the victory of 1144 A.D. is not based on the Atabeg of Mosul, Imad al-Din Zengi, as an individual hero. Rather, it is essential to highlight the role of the "people's hero" who originally produced him, lest we fall captive to the charisma of the individual hero in a way that contradicts the necessary and binding historical objectivity. Indeed, studying the history of the Crusades without its popular dimension—both in the European West, which launched the aggression against the East and which represented its historical challenge, and in the Islamic East, which was subjected to that aggression and offered its historical response—prevents us from understanding the true nature of this unique phenomenon in the relations between East and West during the Middle Ages.

4 THE ROLE OF MOROCCANS IN JIHAD

Throughout that era, the popular dimension was evident in the conflict with the Crusaders. In this regard, we note that the Islamic jihad movement attracted Muslim elements from outside the geographical range of the Levant, in the form of Moroccans who participated effectively and clearly in the jihad, as indicated by the Andalusian traveller Ibn Jubayr (d. 1217 A.D) in his famous journey, which reflected that this movement was not only Eastern in character, but extended to the farthest reaches of the Islamic world to the west, which reflected its own comprehensiveness.

Several motives were found that drove the Moroccans to come to the Levant. There was the religious aspect in the form of undertaking the Hajj pilgrimage to the holy Islamic sites in Hijaz, then heading to the Levant and settling there to participate in the jihad in an active way. There were also the numerous job opportunities that were available to them in a manner acknowledged by the aforementioned traveler, who invited his people to come there, especially since the people of the Levant treated the Moroccans well ⁽⁵⁾.

⁵⁾ **For more details, see:**

Ibn Jubayr, *al-Rihla*, Beirut 1984, p. 251

We also cannot overlook the concept of the journey to seek knowledge, as well as teaching it, in a way that made the major Levantine cities, such as Damascus, Aleppo and others, a destination for Moroccan students and scholars. If we add to all of this the proximity of the Levant to Egypt, in the south, and Iraq, in the east, we realize that the genius of its geographical location was one of the elements of attraction for the Moroccans to come to it.

Nor should we overlook the absence of clear political boundaries traversing the Islamic world in the Middle Ages—a stark contrast to our current bitter reality—which facilitated the easy movement of individuals across a vast geographical area spanning three continents. Undoubtedly, all of this positively impacted the arrival of people from the Maghreb (Morocco) to the Mashreq (East) without much difficulty.

5 AL-FANDLAWI AND AL-HALHULI

From this perspective, we can discern the existence of a figure like Yusuf ibn Dunas ibn Isa, known as Abu al-Hajjaj al-Fandlawi, a Maliki jurist who came to the Levant. We know that he resided in Baniyas (al-Dakhiliya) ⁽⁶⁾ in the Golan Heights, and later moved to Damascus, where he taught Maliki jurisprudence ⁽⁷⁾. Consequently, he had a following base of students and disciples. It is noteworthy that he was affiliated with (Fandlaw), which Yaqut identified as a place in the Maghreb ⁽⁸⁾, without elaborating further. His use of the term "place" likely reflects that it was not a city or even a town,

Ali Ahmad, *al-Andaluseyoon wa al-Magharebah fi Bilad al-Sham Min Nihayat al-Qarn al-Khamis wa Hatta Nehayat al-Qarn al-Tasi'a al-Hijri*, Damascus 1959, pp. 91-125.

⁶) Al-Zahabi, *Tarikh al-Islam wa Wafayat al-Mashaheer wa al-A'alam. Hawadeth wa Wafayat 541-550 A.H.*, edited by Omar Abdul Salam Tadmur, Beirut 1997, pp. 170-171

Baniyas was located 21 miles from the Sea of Galilee. On it, See:

Fulcher of Chartres, p. 205.

Omar Kamal Tawfiq, *Mukaddimat al-Odwan al-Salibi: al-Emperator Yohanna Tzimiskes wa Siyasatoho al-Sharqiyyah*, Alexandria, 1966, pp. 194-195.

Amal Hashim, *Baniyas al-Dakhiliyyah wa Dawroha Fi al-Siraa' al-Islami - al-Salibi (1095-1291 A.D. / 487-690 A.H)*, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Faculty of Arts, Alexandria University, 1983.

⁷) Al-Zahabi, The aforementioned source, pp. 170-171.

⁸) *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, vol. 3, p. 919.

Muhammad Mu'nis Awad, *al-Harakah al-Sofiyyah Fi Belad al-Sham*, *Asr al-Horob al-Salibiyyah*, a chapter of the Book : " *Fi Tarikh al-Elaqat Bayna al-Sharq wa al-Gharb (al-Osor al-Wusta)* ", Cairo , 2003 , p. 129, footnote (28).

On al-Fandalawi, see :Muhammad Mu'nis Awad, *Mu'ajam Aalam Asr al-Horob al-Salibiyyah Fi al-Sharq Wa al-Gharb*, Cairo ,2022,pp.208-209.

and it is presumed to be located in the far Maghreb, given the occurrence of the name "Dunas" there. He may have been from the encampments of the Zenata tribe.

As for the second figure we deal with in our research, who is known as al-Halhuli, his name is Abd al-Rahman ibn Abd Allah al-Halhuli al-Halabi, and he is related to the village of Halhul, which is 7 km away from the city of Hebron towards the north, on the Hebron-Jerusalem Road. It is located in a plain that is 997 m above sea level above the mountains of Hebron. This region was known for its numerous springs, numbering more than twenty, the most famous of which were Ain al-Dharwa, Ain al-Hasa, and Ain Marj al-Sur ⁽⁹⁾. Undoubtedly, such a region, rich in water and agricultural resources, did not escape the covetousness of invaders who were always eager for land and water, as part of a policy of plundering the country's resources from its original inhabitants.

Al-Halhuli settled in his town and built a mosque there ⁽¹⁰⁾, during its subjugation to the Crusaders. Al-Zahabi stated: "He built a mosque there and worshipped in it in the period of the Franks "⁽¹¹⁾. What is striking is the high level of his piety and devotion, to the point that the Crusaders themselves sought blessings from him and held him in high esteem ⁽¹²⁾. This reflects the extent of the influence that Muslim ascetics had on the hearts of even their enemies, who in their European lands sought blessings from their saints.

Logically, his popularity should have increased among Muslims under Crusader control, especially since they desperately needed to rally around a symbol to help them withstand the invaders who had relegated them to a low social and religious status compared to other classes within Crusader society.

It should be noted that the conditions of Muslims under Crusader control ⁽¹³⁾ still require further study, especially since they resisted the Crusaders militarily. The rugged

⁹) **On Halhul, see:**

Yaqut, *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, vol. 2, pp. 172-174; al-Harawi, *Kitab al-Isharat ila Ma'rifat al-Ziyarat*, edited by Janine Sourdel-Thomin, Damascus, 1953, p. 29; al-Khalili, *Tarikh al-Quds wa al-Khalil*, edited by Muhammad Adnan al-Bakhit and Nawfan al-Suwariyya, London, 2004, pp. 206-207.

A group of researchers, *Mawsu'at al-Mudun al-Filastiniyya*, Damascus, 1990, p. 261.

Ali Ahmad al-Sayyid, *al-Khalil wa al-Haram al-Ibrahimi fi 'Asr al-Hurub al-Salibiyya 1099-1187 A.D. / 492-583 A.H*, Cairo, 1998, pp. 250-251.

On al-Halhuli, See : *Mu'ajam Aalam Asr al-Horob al-Salibiyyah Fi al-Sharq Wa al-Gharb*, p.190.

¹⁰) Al-Zahabi, aforementioned source, p. 149.

¹¹) Ibid., same page.

¹²) Ibid., same page.

¹³) **On them, see:**

Ibn Jubayr, aforementioned source, pp. 274-275

mountain road between Jaffa and Jerusalem (¹⁴) (63 km) is the best proof and evidence, as revealed in the writings of the contemporary European travellers themselves.

Thus, we are faced with a Sufi mystic actively engaged with the tragic reality of the Muslims resulting from Crusader control. He left Palestine, though the sources do not specify the time when this occurred and went to Egypt (¹⁵). This indicates the phenomenon of "al-Shamsir", which is the deep-rooted geographical and historical link between the Levant and Egypt, especially since many Palestinians displaced by the Crusader invasion came to Egypt.

Then, we see that he went to Damascus and his status among the Damascenes rose, to the point that its great historian, Ibn Asakir, described him as being "among the great righteous and devout men" (¹⁶). He even went further, saying that he met him several times and benefited from his knowledge, and he explicitly stated: "I have not seen anyone in Damascus like him in his field" (¹⁷), which is a testimony issued from a distinguished historian, an expert on the worth of men. If we realize that Ibn Asakir received his education from several sheikhs, both men and women, to the point that he authored a

Kedar B.Z., "The Subjected Muslims of the Frankish Levant, in *Muslims under Latin Rule (1100-1300)*," ed. James M. Powell, Princeton, 1990, pp. 135-173.

Mayer, H.E., "Latins, Muslims and Greeks in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem," *H. Vol. 63*, 1978, pp. 175-192.

Hussein Attia, *al-Muslimoon fi al- Emarat al-Salibiyyah fi al-Sham*, A paper of "The Conference on the Levant during the Islamic-Frankish Conflict, 491-690 A.H.", *Irbid*, 2000 A.D., Vol. 1, pp. 375-426

¹⁴) The Jaffa-Jerusalem road was 67 kilometers long and characterized by its mountainous terrain. It began west of the Holy City at the Jaffa Gate and reached Deir Yassin (the site of the infamous Israeli massacre of Palestinian Arabs in 1948), Abu Ghosh, then Ramla, and finally the coastal plain. The Crusaders built six fortresses to secure it from Muslim attacks, especially since Jaffa served as the main pilgrimage port in the Crusader Kingdom.

On this, see:

Daniel, *Pilgrimage of the Russian Abbot Daniel in the Holy Land*, Trans. By Wilson, P.P.T.S., vol.V. London 1895, p. 9.

Sayed Farag, *al-Quds Arabiyyah Islamiyyah*, *Al-Darrah*, Issue (13), Year (8), January 1984, p. 412.

On Jaffa itself, see this study:

Ibrahim Saeed, *Yaffa wa Dawroha fi al-Seraa' al-Salibi al-Islami (1099-1291 A.D. / 492-690 A.H.)*, Alexandria, 2007, pp. 45-296. Faculty of Arts, Zagazig University, 1988, p. 122.

¹⁵) Quoted from al-Dhahabi, the aforementioned source, p. 149.

¹⁶) *Ibid.*, same page.

¹⁷) **On this, see:**

Ibn Tulun al-Salihi, *Al-Qala'id al-Jawhariyya fi Tarikh al-Salihiyya*, edited by Muhammad Ahmad Wahman, Damascus, 1949, vol. 1, pp. 26-28.

Sivan.E., *Refugiés Syro-Palestiniens au temps des Croisades' R.E.I.T. XXXV*, 1967, pp. 135-147.

book about the sheikhs who taught him, then we will understand the value of describing al-Halhuli in that way.

Indeed, we cannot understand al-Halhuli's move from Halhul to Egypt, and then to Damascus, except through the movement of migration undertaken by the people of Palestine ⁽¹⁸⁾ who were subjected to the Crusader invasion, or what was called "al-Jafl" when they faced the Crusader massacres.

Thus, we realize that al-Fandlawi was a jurist, while al-Halhuli was a Sufi. We do not know, in light of the silence of the historical sources, when the two met each other. However, it is assumed that some friendship developed between them, and many factors of connection brought them together. The jihad movement in the Islamic West, the strengthening of the Spanish Reconquista movement in Andalusia, which the Maghreb (Morocco) was aware of, and then the Levantine phase of the Crusades, as understood by the jurist al-Salami (d. 1107 A.D.) in his treatise on jihad ⁽¹⁹⁾, which resonated in Damascus, all of those factors undoubtedly united the two men in the face of a common and imminent danger that confronted the Islamic Maghreb and the Mashriq.

They also agreed on the journey, although al-Fandlawi's journey was geographically longer, from Morocco to the Levant; while al-Halhuli's journey was shorter, as he travelled between Egypt and Damascus. They also were close in age, as it is understood from the general context of events that in 1148 A.D., they were both advanced in age ⁽²⁰⁾, though this cannot be determined precisely. It is assumed—without

¹⁸) **On this, see:**

Al-Salmi, *Kitab al-Jihad*, edited by the Libyan researcher Ramadan Hussein al-Shawish, in an unpublished master's thesis, Faculty of Education - Al-Fateh University, Tripoli, 1992.

On this reference, see: Jamal Muhammad Arikiz, *Qadat al-Sham fi Muwajahat al-Ghazw al-Salibi*, Cairo, 2006, p. 339, **and also:**

E. Sivan, *La Genèse de la Contre-Croisade: Un traité Damasquin du Début du XII E Siècle*, J.A., 1966, pp. 198-224.

¹⁹) Abu Shama, *Al-Rawdatayn fi Akhbar al-Dawlatayn*, Beirut ed., p. 53; Ibn Khallikan, *Wafayat al-A'yan wa Anba' Abna' al-Zaman*, ed. Ihsan Abbas, Beirut ed., 1972, vol. 2, p. 452.

C. Hillebrand, *The Crusades: An Islamic Perspective*, London 1999, p. 117.

²⁰) William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, trans. by E.A. Babcock and A.C. Krey, New York 1943, vol. II, pp. 163-194.

Odo of Deul, *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, ed. V. G. Berry, New York 1948, pp. 7-143.

Anonymous, *The First and Second Crusades from Anonymous Syriac Chronicle*, ed. and trans. by A.S. Tritton, and H. Gibb, J.R.A.S., Vol. 92, 1933, pp. 298-299.

Ibn al-Qalanisi, the aforementioned source, pp. 298-300.

Berry V.G., *The Second Crusade*, in Setton (ed.), *A History of the Crusades*, Wisconsin, 1989, Vol. I, pp. 463-512.J

certainty—that they were over sixty years old, which leads us to assume the possibility of a dialogue between the Islamic leadership at that time, represented by Mu'in al-Din Athar, the ruler of Damascus, and al-Fandlawi.

Despite the aforementioned common factors, we note a difference in that al-Halhuli was—most likely—more popular, as the miracles of Sufis attracted large crowds, especially during the Crusades, transforming them into popular spiritual leaders whose influence on shaping public opinion could not be ignored.

6 THE SECOND CRUSADE AND CONFRONTING THE CRUSADERS

In any case, the conquest of Edessa in 1144 A.D. had a significant impact on Western Europe, as it affected the strategic defence arrangements between the Crusader entity in the eastern Mediterranean (the Levant) and the homeland that spawned the Crusader phenomenon in Western Europe, and then what researchers called as “the Second Crusade” (²¹) took place (1147-1149 A.D.). It should be noted that the Crusader

Richard J., *The Siege of Damascus in History and Legend*, in *Cross Cultural Convergences in the Crusader Period*, New York 1995, pp. 225-235

Philips and Hoch (eds.), *The Second Crusade, Scope and Consequences*, Manchester 2001.

Hoch M., *The choice of Damascus as the Objective of the Second Crusade*, in *"Autour de la premiere Crusade"*, Paris, 1996, pp. 359-369.

Mayer, H. *The Crusades*, trans. by J. Gillingham, Oxford, 1987, pp. 107-108.

Stevenson, W.B., *The Crusaders in the East*, Beirut, 1968, pp. 159-163.

²¹) Bernard of Clairvaux, Abbot and theologian, was born in Fontaines near Dijon in 1099 A.D. He is considered the founder of the Cistercian Order and was one of six distinguished sons of a Burgundy nobleman. In 1113 A.D., he decided to join a new monastery in Citeaux. Later, he became one of the most prominent figures of the Western Church, renowned for his extensive knowledge of the Bible. He was an opponent of the Greek Orthodox Church and possessed a remarkable eloquence that served him well in advocating for the Second Crusade. He was known for his support of the Knights Templar. He died in Clairvaux in 1153 AD. His feast day is August 20th. **See:**

Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Letters of Bernard of Clairvaux*, Trans. by : Bruno Scott James, Institute of Cistercian Studies, Western Michigan University, 1988

Attwater D., *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints*, London 1977, pp. 66-77.

Anthony Bridge, " *Tarikh al-Horob al-Salibiyyah* ", translated into Arabic by : Ahmad Ghassan Sabano and Nabil al-Jirouki, Damascus 1985, pp. 146-147.

Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman al-Rabi'i, " *al-Dawafi' al-Diniyyah lil Hamalat al-Salibiyyah* ", A paper delivered in " the Symposium on the Historical Framework of the Crusades" , Union of Arab Historians, Cairo 1996, pp. 95-96.

project is an indivisible whole, and that the numbering here is only for the sake of facilitating the study without applying to the historical reality itself.

This campaign was called for by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153 A.D.) at the Council of Vézelay. It was joined by the French King Louis VII (1137-1180 A.D.) and the German Emperor Conrad III (1133-1152 A.D.), in addition to the local Crusaders, led by King Baldwin III (1144-1162 A.D.). It is noteworthy that instead of aiming to recapture the Principality of Edessa, the Crusaders preferred to head towards the Atabegate of Damascus, which was at peace with them. Several motives drove them in this direction, which can be summarized as follows:

First: The annexation of Damascus would secure the northern borders of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, extending into Palestine, and would definitively bring the strategically important Golan Heights under Crusader control, both defensively and in terms of water security. Water security was a top priority for the invaders, who were extremely keen to control the sources, courses, and mouths of the Levantine rivers to the best of their ability.

Second: The Crusaders imagined that subjugating Damascus, the historical capital of the Levant, would allow them to control global trade routes in central Syria, heading towards the eastern Mediterranean. This, in turn, would provide the Crusader treasury with vast sums of money, which it desperately needed to compensate for lost military spending.

Third: If the invaders succeeded in annexing Damascus, they were expected to then turn their attention to Aleppo, the commercially prosperous capital of northern Syria, thereby eliminating the strategic defensive line of Aleppo-Mosul, which corresponded to the Crusader line of Edessa-Antioch.

Fourth: The Crusaders believed that subjugating Damascus would necessarily lead to a significant propaganda achievement that would enhance the Crusader project in Western Europe, inevitably resulting in a flow of volunteers and pilgrims to Palestine in support of the Crusader entity, similar to what happened in the aftermath of the success of the first Crusade to capture Jerusalem in 1099 A.D., and thus they could contribute

partially to solving the problem of manpower shortage, a chronic problem that plagued conquerors throughout their history in the Levant ⁽²²⁾.

In any case, the Crusaders reached Baniyas (inland) in the Golan Heights with their army and held a meeting with a number of those knowledgeable about the topography of the region. They realized that the best way to subdue it was to seize the area of " al-Basateen " or "orchards" that surrounded it on most sides ⁽²³⁾. The Crusaders continued their march until they reached the village of Darya on Friday, the first of Rabi' al-Awwal, 543 A.H. (July 23, 1148 A.D.).

It should be noted here that King Baldwin III and his forces were at the forefront, given his knowledge of the region, followed by Louis VII and his forces, then Emperor Conrad III and his forces ⁽²⁴⁾.

The invaders reached the Mezzeh area on Saturday, the 5th of Rabi' al-Awwal, 448 A.H (July 24, 1148 A.D.), and attempted to reach the Barada River, which is likely, given that it was the main and most abundant river ⁽²⁵⁾.

It appears that a battle took place on Saturday, July 24, 1148 A.D., in which two political leaders, Mu'in al-Din Unar and Mujir al-Din Abaq, led a large army of Damascenes, including al-Fandlawi, al-Halhuli, and their followers. Two hundred Muslims were martyred in the Nayrab area (an old name for a park located in the Abu Rummaneh and al-Maliki neighborhoods between al-Rabwa and Damascus, north of the Beirut road). Among them were the two scholars aforementioned ⁽²⁶⁾.

Undoubtedly, this popular resistance of the people of Damascus changed the course of events, as the invaders realized that the historical capital of the Levant was not an easy target for every greedy usurper. The Damascenes cut down trees and placed them to impede the invaders' advance. Diplomatic contacts also took place between the Damascene political leaders and the local Crusaders to create a divide between them and

²²) See also the important analysis presented by Taysir bin Musa, op. cit., p. 138.

²³) Abd al-Salam Zaydan, al-Hamlah al-Salibiyyah al-Thaniyah, p. 198.

²⁴) Ibid., same page.

²⁵) Ibid., p. 199.

²⁶) **On this, see:**

Ibn Asakir, Tarikh Madinat Dimashk, edited by: Muhi al-Din al-Umari, Damascus edition, 1995 A.D., Vol. 37, p. 1342.

Yaqut, the aforementioned source, Vol. 2, p. 1173.

Ibn Taghribirdi, Al-Nujum Al-Zahira, Cairo ed., n.d., Vol. 5, p. 282.

the European Crusaders. The invaders moved their camp to another exposed area, but this was a mistake. The Damascenes also hastened to request aid from Nur ad-Din Mahmud, the ruler of Aleppo.

In light of all these considerations, this Crusader campaign, in which the great European kings and emperors participated, failed.

It is important here to highlight the circumstances of the martyrdom of the two popular scholars, Al-Fandlawi and Al-Halhuli. Sources mention that Mu'in al-Din Athar saw Al-Fandlawi and asked him not to participate in the fighting due to his advanced age, but he replied, saying something to the effect that "God has purchased" ⁽²⁷⁾, referring to Allah the Almighty's words: "Indeed, God has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties in exchange for Paradise" ⁽²⁸⁾. This refusal was met with insistence on participation. It is clear that this historical dialogue took place publicly, in full view and under hearing of many. It had an effect on arousing people, especially the younger generation who saw with their own eyes the elderly in such a fiery quintet, and no one prevented them from participating in the jihad against the invaders.

The sources also highlight a dialogue between al-Halhuli and al-Fandalawi, where the former asked his companion: "Are these the Romans? ", meaning the Crusaders. Al-Fandalawi replied, "Yes." Al-Halhuli then said: "How long will we remain standing still ⁽²⁹⁾?" He then went with him for fighting them. The expression "the Romans" mentioned in the text indicates that until the first half of the 6th century A.H/12th century A.D., the Muslims sometimes used this expression for referring to the Crusaders, considering that the Crusader invasion was similar to what the Romans (Byzantines) did in the 10th century A.D. when they invaded the Levant.

The sources do not reveal the nature of their military participation, nor do we know the extent of their military background. All these aspects lack any source

²⁷) Fayid Hammad Ashour, *Jihad al-Salibiyyin fi al-Horoob al-Salibiyyah . al-Asr al-Fatimi wa al-Siljuki wa al-Zinki* , Beirut ed., 1985 , p. 215.

Ali Ahmad, *Door al- Andalusiyeen fi al-Horoob al-Salibiyyah Ala Masrah al-Sham wa Misr*, A Paper delivered in the Symposium on the Historical Framework of the Crusader Movement, Cairo ed., 1996 , p. 219.

²⁸) Holy Quran , Chapter : At-Tawbah, Verse No. 111.

²⁹) Usama ibn Munqidh, *Kitab al-I'tibar*, edited by Qasim al-Samarrai, Riyadh, 1987, p. 117.

See also:

Afaf Sabra, "Door al-Fukahaa wa Ulamaa al-Muslimeen fi Jihad al-Salibiyyin , A fascicule of the book : "Dirasat fi Tarikh al-Horoob al-Salibiyyah " , Cairo, 1985, p. 36.

information that would shed light on the events. Nevertheless, it is assumed that they were volunteers who placed themselves under the command of the regular army.

Significantly, their martyrdom occurred on the first day of fighting, reflecting their pioneering spirit, initiative, and sincere desire for self-sacrifice, which transformed them into popular symbols whose story has been passed down through generations. It is assumed that this was further embellished by popular imagination, deepened by the miracles attributed to al-Halhuli, which even the invaders themselves acknowledged.

Ibn Khallikan states that someone saw al-Fandalawi in a dream and asked him, "What did God do with you, and where are you?" He replied, "He forgave me, and I am in the Gardens of Eden, reclining on couches facing one another." ⁽³⁰⁾ This text can only be understood through the deepening of their image as "folk heroes" in the collective imagination. Indeed, some even decide to visit their graves and pray there. Al-Dhahabi, a contemporary of the 14th century A.D, mentions that prayers at al-Fandalawi's grave are answered. ⁽³¹⁾

It is quite clear that this statement came as a confirmation of the general popular belief and of al-Dhahabi's own personal experience, and thus supported what Abu Shama had previously mentioned when he stated the following about al-Fandalawi: " And his grave is now visited in the Bab al-Saghir cemetery ⁽³²⁾ ." It is also noteworthy that al-Adawi (d. 1623 A.D.), five centuries later, decided that al-Qandalawi's grave was a place of visitation, and he referred to it in his book "al-Ziyarat" ⁽³³⁾. This is clear evidence that reflects his continued popular presence.

As for al-Halhuli, he was buried in the "al-Sha'bani orchard ", on the eastern side near the mosque adjacent to the Sha'ban Mosque, known in the time of Abu Shama as "the Talut Mosque ", where he resided during his lifetime ⁽³⁴⁾. Thus, the soil of Damascus, with its history and civilization, brought together the two martyrs, just as the era of the

³⁰) Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Tarikh al-Bahir* , p. 189.

Ibn Khallikan, the aforementioned source, p. 452.

Ibn Qadi Shahba, *al-Kawakib al-Durriyya fi al-Sirah al-Nuriyya* , edited by: Mahmoud Zayed, Beirut, 1971, p. 129.

³¹) *Tarikh al-Islam*, p. 172.

³²) *Ibid.*, p. 53.

³³) *Al-Ziyarat* , p. 63.

³⁴) *Ibid.*, same page.

Crusades had brought them together, and as time passed, they became an inseparable part of " the memory of the era " .

On the other hand, it is inconceivable that Saladin was a young boy, no more than 11 years old, during the year 1148 A.D. It is assumed that some of the stories of that event reached his ears, and thus the martyrdom of the two popular heroes aforementioned contributed to shaping the imagination of a boy whom God Almighty destined to lead the Muslims 39 years later in the historic victory at Hattin on July 4, 1187 A.D.⁽³⁵⁾, in a way that made him enter Jerusalem as a liberator on October 2, 1187 A.D.⁽³⁶⁾, fulfilling the wish of al-Fandalawi and al-Halhuli, who did not live long enough to enter the Holy City after its liberation from the defilement of the brutal Crusader invasion.

It remains to mention that approximately 800 years after the martyrdom of al-Halhuli in 1148 A.D., his homeland, Palestine, was subjected to a fierce attack and Zionist invasion and settlement in 1948 A.D., when the state of Israel was established on the land of Palestine. The oppression, repression, and ethnic cleansing that was acknowledged by

³⁵) **On the Battle of Hattin, see:**

Ibn Shaddad, *al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyyah wa al-Mahasin al-Yusufiyyah*, edited by Jamal al-Din al-Shayyal, Cairo Edition, 1964 , pp. 75- 79.

al-Imad al-Isfahani, *al-Fath al-Qusi fi al-Fath al-Qudsi*, edited by Muhammad Mahmud Subayh, Cairo, 2003 ,pp. 69-75.

Yusuf Sami al-Yusuf, *Hattin*, Damascus Edition, 2000 .

Kedar B.Z., (ed.) *The Horns of Hattin*, Jerusalem-London, 1992.

³⁶) **On the Muslim conquest of Jerusalem, see:**

Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, Beirut ed., vol. 11, p. 225.

Al-Fath al-Bandari, Sana al-Barq al-Shami, ed. Fathiyya al-Nabrawi, Cairo ed., 1979, p. 385.

Malcolm Lyons and Jackson, Saladin, ed. Ali Madi, reviewed by: Nicola Ziyada and Fahmi Saad, Beirut ed., 1988, p. 320.

Amin Maalouf, *al-Horoob al-Salibiyyah Kama Raaha al- Arab*, ed. Afif Dimashqiyya, Beirut ed., 1989, p. 249.

Aziz Suryal Atiya, *al-Horoob al-Salibiyyah wa Taatheeroha ala al-Elakat Bayn al-Sharq wa al-Gharb*, ed. Philip Saber, Cairo ed., 1977, p. 468.

A group of researchers, *Nadwat Hattin* , Damascus, 1987

authoritative Israeli historians such as Benny Morris, Effi Shlaim, and Ilan Pappé (³⁷), among others, were repeated.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 We conclude from this research paper several findings, which can be summarized as follows

First: The popular dimension is fundamental to studying the era of the Crusades. It is important to search for the leading figures who moved the minds and hearts of the masses. These figures can be found among the jurists and Sufis who did not seek any positions and were connected to the masses, contributing to awakening the spirit of jihad. Avoiding the study of this aspect would cause us to revolve in a closed circle of writing the history of Muslim political leaders without considering the popular base.

Secondly: Popular imagination rejected the death of the hero, instead elevating him to the highest rank, for he was martyred to live with his Mighty God. Therefore, the two aforementioned figures were like "absent- yet- present" figures, even surpassing the political rulers of Damascus such as Mu'in al-Din Athar and Mujir al-Din Abaq.

Thirdly: The two aforementioned figures were an integral part of the long caravan of jihad, both past and afterward. Their martyrdom, in such a dramatic manner, is supposed to have deepened their presence in historical sources. It is no wonder, then, that a number of Muslim historians mentioned this incident, despite the brevity of its details. Indeed, sources continued to repeat their story for several centuries afterward, reflecting the enduring nature of the popular symbol and its non-death potential. This confirms that the martyr defies death twice: in the moment of his martyrdom and in his continued existence as a symbol in history.

Fourth: It is logical to assume that there were other popular heroes from the era of the Crusades about whom information has not reached us, especially those who were

³⁷) See his excellent book: al-Tatheer al-Erki fi Felasteen, Beirut, 2007.

within the Islamic regions under Crusader control. Therefore, al-Fandlawi and al-Halhuli are only two examples of “the phenomenon of popular leadership ” in that era.

Fifth: The oft-repeated claim about the Sufis' reluctance to engage in jihad and their passivity in that era is far from the truth. There are indications in historical sources that reflect their participation in the heart of events, as has become clear in this research. If they had been passive, they would not have lived on in the popular consciousness for several centuries after their passing

This was a presentation about al-Fandalawi and al-Halhuli, being two popular heroes in the Levant during the Crusades.

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