History of Syria, 1099-1250: Conflict and Co-existence

A conference convened by Professor Carole Hillenbrand FBA, FRSE, OBE

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Speakers & their topics
Papers will be given by the following:

Amitai, Reuven (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
Asbridge, Thomas (Queen Mary University of London)
Bray, Julia (University of Oxford)
Cobb, Paul M. (University of Pennsylvania)
Eddé, Anne-Marie (University of Paris, Panthéon-Sorbonne)
Elazhari, Taef (Qatar University)
Goudie, Kenneth (University of St Andrews)
Humphreys, R. Stephen (University of California, Santa Barbara)
Madden, Thomas (St Louis University, Missouri)
MacEvitt, Christopher H. (Dartmouth College)
Mallett, Alex (University of Exeter)
Mourad, Suleiman A. (Smith College, Massachusetts)
Mouton, Jean-Michel (University of Paris, Panthéon-Sorbonne)
Pahlitzsch, Johannes (Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz)
Peacock, Andrew (University of St Andrews)
Phillips, Jonathan (Royal Holloway, University of London)
Richter-Bernburg, Lutz (University of Tübingen)
Smarandache, Bogdan (University of Toronto)
Stewart, Angus (University of St Andrews)
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Reuven Amitai  
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Gaza in the Frankish and Ayyubid periods: the run up to 1260

Having recently commenced a study of Gaza and its environs under Mamluk rule, I soon saw that little research had been done on the history of the city and the region in the previous centuries. I have no choice then but to also conduct a study on the area and its main town in the times of Frankish and Ayyubid rule, i.e. ca. 1100 to 1260. This study is important to understand better developments in the Mamluk period, but also has significance in its own right. For a period of about 40 years (from the mid-eleventh century to the Third Crusade), Gaza played a significant role in inner-Frankish affairs and in the fighting with the Muslims. Under the Ayyubids, it also enjoyed a certain importance. Meron Benvenisti has written: “The city was restored by the Moslems and became an administrative, military and commercial centre.” (The Crusaders in the Holy Land, Jerusalem, 1970, p. 191). A more exact and detailed appraisal of this restoration, and the Frankish period that preceded it will be presented here. Whatever the state of the town under the immediate successors of Saladin, late in the Ayyubid period Gaza and its rural surroundings suffered from much fighting and other difficulties, with much damage certainly occurring in the fateful year of 1260. The Mamluk authorities found a somewhat desolate city and region. This sets the scene for renewal under the early Mamluks, and contrasts with the thriving city and countryside in the early fourteenth century.

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Thomas Asbridge  
Queen Mary University of London  

The Representation of Violence in Walter the Chancellor’s Bella Antiochena

Walter the Chancellor’s Antiochene Wars has long been recognised as an important source for the early history of the northern crusader states. It offers a vivid, first-
hand account of two significant military campaigns (in 1115 and 1119), during which the Latin principality of Antioch sought to defend itself against Muslim opponents. As a highly placed official within the principality, Walter was able to provide an authoritative account of the events that culminated in the fateful battle of the Field of Blood (1119). This paper assesses Walter’s representation of violence and brutality enacted both on and off the battlefield, and questions whether he sought to present the Antiochene Wars as extension of the First Crusade.

Julia Bray
University of Oxford

A self-appointed propagandist for Saladin: the poet 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Jilyānī

Al-Jilyānī (1136-1205 AD), “the Sage of the Age” (ḥakīm al-zamān), an Andalusi émigré who settled in Damascus, was a physician, oculist, druggist and alchemist by profession, but also a mystic and a poet. Prolific in many genres, he took it upon himself to write panegyrics of Saladin and several of his Ayyubid successors. They are of two kinds: poems which follow the rules of Arabic prosody and ordinary page layout, and poems which are normal in every respect except that they are inscribed in geometrical and stylised naturalistic figures, both figures and poems being intricately interwoven and requiring instructions (supplied by the poet) in order to be read. These were apparently sent to their dedicatees in the form of long scrolls. Some of the panegyrics were recorded by the medical historian Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a (d.1270) in ‘Uyūn al-anbā’ and by Abū Shāma (d.1267) in Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn. The surviving picture-poems form a more substantial corpus. Neither set of panegyrics has been studied in depth. This paper will offer an overview of both.
Hamdan al-Atharibi’s History of the Franks Revisited, Again

Of all the many lost Arabic works written during the age of the Crusades, none is mourned so much as the work known generally as the History of the Franks by Hamdan ibn ‘Abd al-Rahim al-Atharibi, an eyewitness to the coming of the Franks to Syria and one of the few Muslim landlords who went on to willingly serve a Frankish lord who is in any way documented in our sources. Over the past century, many scholars have speculated on what his lost work contained, but these have been only guesses. As it happens, however, one source, Ibn al-‘Adim’s Bughyat al-talab, preserves a few lengthy quotations from this work, and allows us now to weigh in a more informed manner about what the work may have contained and whether it is really worth mourning after all.

Anne-Marie Eddé
University of Paris, Panthéon-Sorbonne

Sunnīs and Shi‘īs in Aleppo during the reign of al-Ṣālih Ismā‘īl (1174-1181): Between conflicts and reconciliation

The short reign of al-Ṣālih Ismā‘īl in Aleppo (1174-1181) has been less studied than that of his father Nūr al-Dīn (1146-1174) or his successor Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (1174-1193). This paper examines the relationship between Sunnīs and Shi‘īs in Northern Syria in this period. It shows that the religious oppositions, conflicts and alliances between Sunnis and Shi‘īs often had political or social origins. Power struggles between the major Aleppan families indeed occupy a significant place in the bloody riots that opposed Sunnīs and Shi‘īs after Nūr al-Dīn’s death. Political motivations were also behind the rapprochement between the citadel’s governor and the Ismā‘īlīs. Finally, it is clear that the conciliatory policy of al-Ṣālih towards the Shi‘īs in Aleppo, at the time when Saladin tried to seize the city, was dictated more by political and social reasons than religious considerations.
Diplomacy and coinage between the Turkmen, Ayyubids and the Crusaders: Pragmatism and change of identity

During the two hundred years of the Crusading period in the Levant, one sees several European and Muslim powers clash against each other, but also establish different forms of cohabitations. One of these forms on the official level was diplomacy. The Fatimids sent an embassy to the Crusaders at the walls of Antioch in 1097 to collaborate with them against the Sunni Saljuqs of Syria. On the other hand, one sees the Turkmen Saljuqid king of Damascus, Artash, in 1105 contact King Baldwin I of Jerusalem and seek refuge in his kingdom.

In 1110-1111, the Turkmen atabek of Damascus, Tuughtakin, contacted the Crusaders of Jerusalem to make a pact with them, against the Turkmen lord of Mosul Mawdud who arrived in Syria for jihad. Another Turkmen atabek of Damascus, Unur, formed a military pact with King Fulk of Jerusalem in 1140 to save his city from Zengi, the Turkmen lord of Mosul. This pragmatic amicable relationship continued under the Ayyubids. Saladin, who rebelled against his master, Nur al-Din, in 1174, wrote a very significant letter to King Baldwin IV of Jerusalem expressing his full and unconditional support for his Crusader kingdom. During the Third Crusade, one sees in 1191-1192 a long period of diplomacy leading to an unusual solution to achieve peace between the two warring sides. That influenced another Ayyubid king, al-Kamil, to contact Frederick II of Germany asking for his military help against the Ayyubid king of Damascus. In addition there were various contacts between the Italian republics and the Ayyubid kingdom, which reflect respect and pragmatism between the two sides.

The long co-existence between the Crusaders and the Muslim side produced a better understanding of the political-religious identity of one another, as the letter of Sultan Baybars to Bohemond VI in 1268 reveals to us.
The unusual Crusader coins, minted fully or partially in Arabic during the 13th century, present us with a very strange phenomenon and another dimension of a cultural cohabitation which run contrary to the original or principal Crusading ideas. This study tries to examine several levels of diplomacy, and to ask the questions: Why did such forms of diplomacy take place, and to what extent was there collaboration between the two sides, and what was its impact on both powers?

Kenneth Goudie
University of St Andrews

Contextualising al-Sulamī: His Kitāb al-jihād and the Syrian Discourse of Jihād

The Kitāb al-jihād of ʿAlī b. Ṭāhir al-Sulamī (d. 1106) is the earliest extant response to the First Crusade and the establishment of Christian control over much of the Levantine coastline. At its most basic level it is a call to jihād which seeks to exhort the Muslim populace of al-Shām to fight back against the crusaders. Whilst the Kitāb al-jihād has been subject to increasing study in the last decade, with particular focus on the hortatory techniques employed by al-Sulamī, there has as yet been no serious attempt to contextualise it within the broader discourse of jihād in al-Shām. That there was a discourse of jihād particular to al-Shām is more readily apparent in the early Islamic period: it remains to be seen, however, whether such a discourse continued to the twelfth century. This paper will therefore have two purposes. Firstly, it will briefly discuss the beginning of the Syrian discourse of jihād by focusing on the earliest surviving Kitāb al-jihād, compiled by Ibn al-Mubārak (d. 797). Secondly, it will discuss the extent to which al-Sulamī's Kitāb al-jihād reflects ideas present in Ibn al-Mubārak's text: doing so will broaden our understanding of the intellectual significance of al-Sulamī's work, particularly in relation to the Syrian discourse of jihād.
Christian communities under Muslim rule in 12th-century Syria

The literature on the Crusades has produced much discussion on relations between the indigenous Christian communities of twelfth-century Syria and their Frankish overlords. This has recently been reframed by the work of Christopher McEvitt, who has proposed a model of “rough tolerance” rather than the older and mutually exclusive frameworks of assimilation and acculturation or domination and control. However, there is still very little on those Christian communities that remained under Muslim rule, or that found themselves fluctuating between Muslim and Frankish control. In particular, we know almost nothing about the internal governance and social structures of these communities. The aim of this paper is simply to ask what we can know about such issues—, i.e., about the possibilities and limits of our sources. It may be possible to venture a few hypotheses even within this narrowly constructed approach, but any such hypotheses will inevitably be propositions to be tested rather than well-founded conclusions.

It seems clear both from McEvitt’s work and from my own research on the earlier Islamic centuries that there is a clear bifurcation between North Syria and the Jazira on the one hand, and central and south Syria on the other. Substantively, the north was dominated by the Miaphysite churches, while the south was predominantly Melkite (Chalcedonian). Likewise, the political frontiers in the north were exceedingly fluid, while those in the south were relatively stable for much of the century. In terms of sources, for the north we can draw on contemporary (though by no means transparent) Syriac and Armenian texts, while for the south we are compelled to rely mostly on Muslim Arabic texts, which rarely evince any interest in the region’s Christian population. Even so, there is some information to be gleaned, enough at least to lay out productive lines of research.
Thomas Madden  
St Louis University, Missouri  

The War of St Sabas: Tyre, Acre, and the Italians in the Mid-Thirteenth Century

Traditionally, the so-called War of St Sabas has been cited as an example of deep-seated divisions in the Crusader States that fundamentally weakened them from within as the region itself was becoming increasingly dangerous. Indeed, the war is routinely cited as a cause for the final collapse of the Latin Kingdom in 1291. It is all the more remarkable, then, that it has never had a detailed examination. This paper will bring together the traditional sources as well as several additional Venetian narratives to better understand the causes of the war, its prosecution, and its long-term effects. Although there is no doubt that the struggle damaged the city of Acre, the extent of the damage will be considered in light of subsequent developments internally and in its relationship to Tyre.

Christopher H. MacEvitt  
Dartmouth College  

The Afterlife of Edessa: Remembering Frankish Rule after 1150

The Frankish county of Edessa had a brief life; created in 1098 when Baldwin of Boulogne was elected dux by the population, it had vanished by 1150, when its remaining lands passed to Emperor Manuel I Komnenos. The brevity of the county’s existence is belied by its tenacity within the historical accounts of Franks, Armenians, and Syrians of all backgrounds, from Nerses Shnorhali’s lament on the fall of Edessa, written shortly after the city’s conquest, to the multiple narratives of the polymath Gregory bar ’Ebroyo. Unsurprisingly, different groups at different times emphasize different aspects, events or personalities of Edessa’s history. For example, while the conquest of Edessa in 1144 by Zengi and its reconquest by Nur al-Din in 1146 loomed large in the memory of the Armenian generation that lived through the events, by the thirteenth century, the transfer of the castle Hromgla from the widowed countess of Edessa to the Armenian catholicate had surpassed it in significance. But it is not only in chronicles that we find lingering traces of the
county; in the late fourteenth century, the title of count of Edessa was re-created in Cyprus to emphasize the enduring ties between the Franks of the island and their vanished Levantine holdings. Frankish Edessa came to emblematize crucial moments in the historical memory of communities connected to the county, which illuminate the ways in which they understood providential history, their relations with the Franks, as well as their relations with Muslim rulers.

Alex Mallett
University of Exeter

Infernalising the Enemy: Images of Hell in Muslim Presentations of the Franks during the Crusading Period

Over the last few years, there have been a number of scholarly outputs examining how the Franks of the crusading period are presented in the Muslim sources from the time. These have, rather surprisingly, implied that there was little overt criticism of the Franks, with the exception of certain belligerent characters such as Reynald of Chatillon. However, there has been relatively little attempt to go any deeper into the presentations other than assessing direct statements made by the Muslim writers about the Franks, while other literary methods they employed have been ignored. This paper will highlight how Muslim writers used images from the Islamic idea of hell to reveal their ideas about the Franks. It will focus on three main areas: the infernalisation of Frankish leaders; of the Franks in general; and of Frankish-held territory. In so doing, this paper will demonstrate that the descriptions of the Frankish ‘other’ by Muslim writers were more complicated than is currently believed, and that fuller assessments of them are required.
Deconstructing the Scholarly Outlook of the Crusades in Syria: The Case for Co-Existence

The Crusader period is invariably defined in scholarly research as one of the most brutal and bloody chapters of Christian-Muslim relations in the Middle Ages. Indeed, the period witnessed and ushered some of the worst acts of religious violence in the medieval period between Muslims and Christians. But the problem of this particular outlook is that it ignores and sidelines countless instances of tolerance (religious and social) and exchange (commercial, cultural, scientific) between Muslims and Crusaders. Such instances have never been studied in their totality, and scholars have acknowledged some of them, yet they were invariably dismissed as nothing more than marginal historical curiosities.

I will present some reflections that problematize the general scholarly outlook of the Crusades in Syria. I will discuss the evidence for co-existence between Crusaders and Muslims that reveals a degree of religious tolerance and trust (obviously I am not intending these concepts to be understood according to modern standards and usage). This evidence also undermines any simplified presentation of the period as governed by animosity and war. What also interests me is the question of the motivation behind this co-existence: was it a result of opportunism or did it stem from religious or cultural values?

Jean-Michel Mouton
University of Paris, Panthéon-Sorbonne

Treatises and manuals on the art of war and their influence on Saladin's military strategy

During his reign (565 / 1069 to 589 / 1193), Saladin soon became the main opponent to the Franks. The literal transcription of this great leader name, "Al Malik an Nasir Salah ad-Din Yusuf", means "the one who was given Victory by God"(An Nasir) and "the straightness of the faith" (Salah ad-Din). During his 24 years long reign, Saladin
both managed to re-take back the Middle East from the Franks and to rule the territories of the great Syria and Egypt under an undisputed authority. Thus, one has to wonder why Saladin’s military strategy was so effective. Where and from whom did he take advice, as far as the art of War is concerned? It appears that Saladin could rely on the wisdom and the skills of several advisers, amongst who Shaikh ’Ali Al-Harawi and ‘Ali b. Murda at-Tarsusi had a key role. The former wrote in an essay called "al-Tadkira l’Harawiyya fi l’hiyal al-harbiyya (Al Harawi memorandum on the ruses of War), whereas the latter compiled miscellaneous military processes in a "treaty of armurery written for Salah- ad -din". It is unclear whether Saladin had asked for those documents before and after his campaigns against the Franks, or those strategists conducted their own thinking process in a separate way, observing Saladin’s strategy against the Franks, and drawing conclusions from it. This communication will try to clarify this issue.

Johannes Pahlitzsch
Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz

The Melkites of Syria during the Period of the Crusades

This paper will focus on the situation of the Melkites, i.e. the indigenous, mostly Arabic-speaking members of the Byzantine Orthodox Church in Syria, between the collapse of the first Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem in 1187 and the Mongol invasion of Syria in the middle of the 13th century. Two major topics will be addressed: firstly, the consequences that the Muslim re-conquest of 1187 had for the Melkite community; and, secondly, how did their relations to Muslims and other Christian communities develop during this period? A number of Greek, Latin and Arabic sources are available. Beside historical accounts and pilgrim reports, manuscripts and documents from the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai and the Greek Orthodox patriarchate of Jerusalem, polemic writings of Paul of Antioch, hagiographical texts or the anonymous account of the burning of the Cathedral of St Mary in Damascus, that were probably written in the 13th century, will be examined.
Kamal al-Din Ibn Talha: a vizier, ‘alim and author in early thirteenth-century Syria

Kamal al-Din Ibn Talha (1186-1254), a prolific yet little known author active in the Ayyubid and Artuqid realms in the early thirteenth century, was also a leading statesman who served both dynasties. His works illustrate the fluidity of confessional boundaries in this period, for while a Sunni Shafiite, he repeatedly stresses typically Shiite topics such as the return of the twelfth imam. Indeed, some of his works such as *al-Durr al-Muntazam fi al-Sirr al-A’zam* and the *Matalib al-Su’ul fi Manaqib Al Rasul* are characterised by an interest in apocalypticism, and Ibn Talha evidently believed the end days to be nigh. Ibn Talha was also a major figure in the development of *jafr* (divination). Although Ibn Talha’s interest in the occult has received some attention in Muhammad Masad’s 2008 dissertation on Islamic apocalypticism, he remains a neglected figure, and his political works, mirrors for princes written for the Ayyubid al-Malik al-Nasir and the Artuqid al-Malik al-Sa’id respectively have not been the subject of study to date, the latter remaining unpublished in manuscript form. In this paper I assess Ibn Talha and his works in their historical context of the Ayyubid and Artuqid states on the eve of the Mongol conquest.

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Jonathan Phillips
Royal Holloway, University of London

Saladin and Gift-Giving

Gift-giving is a basic facet of all societies, impacting upon many aspects of political, personal and social relations. It was enormously important in the life of the medieval Near East, even meriting a literary sub-genre. This paper explores how Saladin (and his contemporary family) used gift-giving in different contexts and it will consider
the ways in which his career created opportunities for, and required the use of, this practice. It will tentatively compare Saladin’s behaviour to that of Nur ad-Din and the Fatimids.

Lutz Richter-Bernburg
University of Tübingen

Ayyubid realpolitik and counter-crusading ideology in the memoirist-chronicler al-Kātib al-Isfahānī

As Saladin’s deputy chancellor and secretary in constant attendance, ‘Imād ad-Dīn was in a privileged, if ‘caged’, position as a political observer and recorder. No student of his life and times would expect him to be an—even if only in intention—impartial chronicler of Saladin’s and other Ayyubids’ (or earlier, Nūr ad-Dīn’s,) reigns. On the other hand, in his very eulogy of Saladin’s supreme achievement in the counter-crusade, ‘The inspiration of a Quss regarding the conquest of al-Quds’ (al-Fath al-Qussī fī l-fath al-Qudsī), he yet professes himself committed to the requirement of truthfulness as a witness. Regardless of whether or not he met this standard, in ‘Inspiration’ as well as his more private memoir-chronicle, ‘The Syrian lightning’ (al-Barq ash-Shāmī), his record is too closely observant not to offer glimpses of a more complex reality than would seem to agree with his panegyric- and staunchly counter-crusade-minded Ayyubid loyalties. His self-righteous and generally somewhat Manichaean outlook may carry him to extremes of sanguinary pious pornography, yet he acknowledges, at times but barely or grudgingly, shortcomings, reverses, and coolly calculated political arrangements. Cases in point include Saladin’s sustained campaigns against Muslim rivals and concomitant willingness to enter into deals with the ‘Franks’; Ayyubid susceptibility to Frankish enticement; the reoccupation of Jerusalem; massacres of knights Templar; the elusive conquest of Tyre; negotiations towards and conclusion of, an extended armistice after the Third Crusade.

The presentation here outlined will trace the Kātib’s authorial ambivalence and contradictions, between an acknowledgment of refractory reality and the ideal of orthodox Sunnite jihād, in ‘Lightning’ and ‘Inspiration’.

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Assessing the Evidence for a Turning Point in Ayyūbid Frankish Relations in a Letter by al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil

In this paper I present a letter attributed to ʿAbd al-Raḥīm “al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil” (529-596/1135-1200), the chief secretary of the Ayyūbid sultan Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (570-589/1174-1193), from the Cambridge University Library MS Qq. 232. The letter was addressed to the sultan’s nephew al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Taqī al-Dīn (d. 586/1191). The first part of this presentation provides a diplomatic commentary on the letter, focusing on al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil’s epistolary style, his use of formulae and titles, and his rhetorical flourishes. In the second part, I propose a context for the letter by analyzing the individuals and events referenced and described therein. If my dating of the letter to the year 575/1179 is correct, then it contains crucial details for an obscure period in the history of Frankish-Muslim relations. In detail, the letter reveals several diplomatic initiatives undertaken by polities neighbouring the Ayyūbid confederacy at a time when the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem experienced political and military setbacks. Finally, I discuss the letter’s “afterlife” and propose possible reasons for its appearance in an Ottoman-era manuscript of selected chancery letters and fragments.

Hülegü: the New Constantine?

The starting point for this paper will be an image from a Syriac Lectionary, now in the Vatican, of Constantine and Helena with the True Cross (Vat. Sir. 559, f.223v). While previously dated to 1220, the manuscript was redated by Fiey, in an article in 1975, to 1260. As a result of this redating, Fiey suggested that this particular image could – as both figures are shown with ‘Oriental’ features – be intended as a double
portrait of Hülegü and his Christian wife Doquz Khatun. This interpretation has come to be widely accepted, to the extent that it repeated in popular history magazines and even Wikipedia. It appears to be supported by some contemporary writing – for example, Step’annos Orbelean explicitly relates Hülegü and Doquz with Constantine and Helena.

I remain uncomfortable with this identification. While some sources report that Doquz was instrumental in protecting the Christians of Baghdad from the massacre of 1258 – the source of her great reputation – Bar Hebraeus prefers to praise the Jacobite Catholicus. If this image was intended as a representation of the Mongols as well as the Romans, then why? For whom was this done? More significantly, there is the question of the relationship of this lectionary with another work, now in the British Library (MS Add. 7170). This can be dated with some degree of certainty to 1216-20; while not wishing to challenge Fiey’s redating of the Vatican version, the close similarities between the two works suggest that the older one may have served as a model for the younger; given that the figures of Constantine and Helena are similarly ‘Oriental’ in appearance in the earlier version, and are clearly not portraits of Hülegü and Doquz, I feel that this undermines Fiey’s interpretation of the 1260 image.

So: if we cannot see this as a portrait of new Mongol overlords, how should we understand it? Is it part of a wider pattern? Indeed, one of the Deir al-Surian wall paintings, in Wadi al-Natrun, Egypt, dated to the 1220s, includes an image of the Magi where the third Magus is also ‘Oriental’ in appearance. Does this tell us anything about the relationship between the Syriacs of the Middle East and Central Asia in the immediate pre-Mongol period? While from James of Vitry onwards Nestorians have been identified as possible culprits for the spreading of rumours concerning Prester John and his son King David among the crusaders in Damietta, do these images of Inner Asian monarchs in Syriac religious contexts point to a possible Syriac origin for these stories about Christian saviours coming from the east?
A View from Above: Calculating Conflict and Co-existence in *Midmār al-haqāʾiq wa-sirr al-khalāʾiq* by al-Malik al-Mansūr of Hamāt (d. 617/1220)

The Ayyubid prince al-Malik al-Manṣūr Muḥammad b. ʿUmar b. Shāhanshāh is an unusual figure in medieval Islamic history, on at least two counts. First, he was both an accomplished and pious scholar and a successful ruler, in the Syrian city of Ḥamāt between 587/1191 and his death in 617/1220. Second, he wrote a work of history that covered the early part of his own life and which, somewhat unusually, contains substantial autobiographical information; this is the well-known *Midmār al-haqāʾiq wa-sirr al-khalāʾiq*. Peering through this uncommonly learned and reflexive window onto the thought of a medieval Syrian Muslim ruler on the front lines of the Counter-Crusade, I examine representations of competition and cooperation in *Midmār al-haqāʾiq*. My purpose is to understand the decision-making calculation in which al-Manṣūr engaged when determining how best to maximize his own access to resources. This essay will study the ways in which religious and political ideologies, social bonds, and economic interests combined to affect al-Manṣūr’s decisions about which means to employ in order to access, preserve, and valorize scarce resources.

Abbés Zouache
University of Lyon 2

Peace, war and sovereignty: Nūr al-Dīn’s (d. 569 A.H./1174 A.D.) body in medieval texts

Nūr al-Dīn’s body (d. 569AH/1174 AD) played a central role in the history of medieval Syria. He is generally magnified in literary sources as the incarnation of the pious ruler, who laid the foundation of a new political order and fought over and over again the Crusaders and the Franks.
This paper focuses on the representations of his body conveyed by these sources. I have tried to understand if and how his body was used in medieval narratives as a tool of legitimating power. I will successively focus on:

- Nūr al-Dīn’s living body. His body appears to have formed a keystone of his sovereignty and, to a larger extent, of the new political order. Nūr al-Dīn embodied warrior masculinity. His body must be a vivid symbol of his strength and his wealth, but according to his apologists, it must also show “stigmas of holiness”.

- Nūr al-Dīn’s death and his dying body. I’ve essentially tried to know if his death had been anticipated and staged.

- Nūr al-Dīn’s dead body: how was his body treated, from the first moments after his death? When he died, the sovereign theoretically met the common Muslim. But did his body receive a special treatment because of his previous power?
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