

Manifesting the Crusaders' Instinct for Violence in the Context of the Capture of Antioch

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Abstract

This paper scrutinises the ideological foundations and violent practices of the Crusaders during the First Crusade, focusing specifically on the massacre at Antioch in 1098. It posits that the Crusaders' notion of divine salvation was inherently linked to the brutalisation of non-Christian populations, particularly Muslims, whom they perceived as adversaries to Christian faith and sovereignty. By conducting a comparative analysis of Crusader and Muslim sources, this study investigates the development of a Crusader ethos that legitimised mass slaughter as a divinely sanctioned act. Antioch, a strategic waypoint en route to Jerusalem, held significant religious importance for Christians, thereby intensifying Crusader aggression. This massacre, driven by religious zeal and demographic ambitions, precipitated a transformative shift in the city's populace and symbolised the Crusaders' determination to re-establish Christianity in the East. Chronicles from the period, including those by Raymond d'Aguilers and Peter Tudebode, vividly describe the slaughter, often depicting it as fulfilling God's will. The paper underscores how Crusader narratives celebrated this violence as divine retribution, setting a precedent for subsequent massacres in Maara and Bayt al-Maqdis. Ultimately, this study enhances our understanding of the Crusader mindset, particularly how it rationalised extreme violence against perceived 'infidels' as essential to fulfilling a holy mandate. The findings highlight the complexities of Crusader ideology, shaped by theological, cultural, and geopolitical factors, which influenced European perspectives on the Eastern world for centuries to come.

Keywords: Crusaders, marginalisation, Muslims, Antioch, massacre

Introduction

The Crusades consisted of dozens of campaigns between 1096 and 1291. The motivations behind the formation of the Crusades can be attributed to a complex interplay of political, economic, and social factors, with religious motivations playing a particularly prominent role.¹ The political crisis that Europe encountered following the fall of Western Rome hastened the rise of feudalism. However, this situation also facilitated Europe's readiness for recovery. In European thought, Rome is envisioned as an ideal to which society must aspire to return, grounded in the context of ancient law, even if it was destroyed. Consequently, feudalism is not merely a political fragmentation for Europe; it also embodies the concentration of power necessary for regrouping and resurgence.² From this perspective, the history of the Crusades also represents the evolution of a mentality that has profoundly influenced modern Europe. The Crusades were inaugurated in 1095 at the Council of Clermont and orchestrated under the auspices of the Papacy. The crusade sermon, delivered by Pope Urban II as God's representative on earth and embodying the authority of the Church, established the impetus for the expeditions.³ In his speech, drawing on the authority he received from God, Pope Urban II addressed the mischief in the world, the violation of Christianity and its sacraments, and the corruption among the people, before articulating his primary purpose. Urban noted that the hinterland of Anatolia had been seized by the Muslims (Seljuks) and asserted that this conquest had mercilessly subjugated the Christians.

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¹ Andrew Jotischky (2004), *Crusading and the Crusader States*, London & New York: Routledge, p. 25-28; Peter Frankopan (2012), *The First Crusade*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 13-18; Ziya Polat (2018), "Self-Perception in Fulcher Of Chartres: How the Crusaders Saw Themselves," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun*, Vol. 13, No. 2, p. 149; Khalid El-Awaisi (2021), "The Continuation of the Colonialist Project from the Crusades to Zionism," *SDE Akademi Dergisi*, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 178-228.

² Zoe Oldenbourg (1996), *The Crusades*, New York, p. 11-15; Jacques Le Goff (2005), *The Birth of Europe*, trans. Janet Lloyd, USA: Blackwell, p. 67-71.

³ Jotischky (2004), *Crusading and the Crusader States*, p. 46-47; Jonathan Riley Smith (2002), *What Were the Crusades?*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, p. 12-14; Maher Y. Abu-Munshar (2018), "The Fate of Jerusalem at the hands of the First Crusade," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun*, Vol. 13, No. 1, p. 27.

In his impassioned sermon, the Pope, speaking with the solemn authority of the Church, exhorted Christians to take action in a world where their religion was being denigrated. He signalled that the time had come for them to act in order to restore the Holy Church to its former strength.⁴ This speech, which serves as the manifesto of the Crusades, highlighted two principal approaches. The first was that the Church had lost power and needed to be restored to its former strength; the second the Muslim advance was causing the Church and Christians to lose control. This discourse became a long-term argument to position Muslims and the Eastern world against those who would become Crusaders in the long run. The issues that Pope Urban II highlighted in his Clermont sermon were not solely addressed to the Christians who were present but also extended to those who could not attend. In this regard, being a Crusader was not confined to the people and generations Urban addressed directly. Through the Pope's approach, the opportunity to become a Crusader was extended to anyone who wished to heed the call.⁵ This Crusader consciousness has equipped individuals to defend the Crusader cause in the future. It has also prepared those who will confront and combat Muslims and non-Crusaders. The Crusades, centred around the capture of Jerusalem as a place,⁶ regarded the routes leading to the holy city as significant milestones. Thus, besides Antioch's sacred importance to Christians, it was a strategic city that required the crusading army to march overland to Jerusalem. In this context, the actions taken in Antioch were understood as a preliminary step for the capture of Jerusalem.

This article examines the foundations of the Crusaders' inclination to massacre Muslims and those in the Eastern world, whom they considered enemies, and analyses the practical application of this ideology in the Antioch massacre. Employing the source analysis method, the article explores the underlying mental framework of Crusader sources in relation to the subject. It investigates how such extreme violence, perceived as quite ordinary and natural in Crusader thought, and is evaluated through the lens of the Antioch massacre. This study aims to contribute to the predominantly event-and-fact-oriented literature by providing an academic insight into the Crusader mentality.

Approach and Method in the Crusader Invasions

When dealing with the history of the Crusades, Crusader thought is a subject that should not be left out. The Crusaders' pilgrimage to capture Jerusalem⁷ and to prevent the advance of Byzantium against the Seljuk Turks⁸ should be evaluated holistically with the Crusader approach and behaviour. This situation necessitates an examination of the actions taken by the Crusaders in the territories they conquered and the underlying motivations. By evaluating how and why they executed their invasions against the Eastern world, it becomes easier to discern the intricate details of Crusader ideology.

Pope Urban II delineated the Crusaders' strategic roadmap during the campaigns. His speech at the Council of Clermont elucidated the reasons for the Crusaders' setting out, the challenges they would face en route, the conduct they should adhere to, and the rewards they would attain upon reaching their destination.⁹ When considered in this context, it becomes evident how the Crusaders would treat Muslims, whom they regarded as enemies, during their campaigns. This situation constructs a distinct character for the Crusaders, which we can refer to as the Crusader identity. According to this concept, the notion developed that those outside the Crusader identity deserved Crusader attacks. The fact that individuals outside this Crusader identity were left at the mercy of the Crusaders serves as a pertinent example when evaluating the Crusader invasions.

The narrative from Clermont in Crusader sources and the Pope's approach delineate a roadmap for the Crusader invasions. In his Clermont speech, Pope Urban II first explained to his brethren the reasons for their assembly. In doing so, he spoke both as the ruler of Rome and as a religious figure who had modelled his life on Christian principles.¹⁰

⁴ Fulcher of Chartres (1969), *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095-1127*, trans. F.R. Ryan, The University of Tennessee Press, p. 61-65; Aziz S. Atiya (1962), *Crusade, Commerce and Culture*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. 20-21.

⁵ Fulcher of Chartres (1969), *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095-1127*, p. 66.

⁶ Edward Peters (ed.) (1998), *The First Crusade*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, p. 52-53; Ordericus Vitalis (n.d.), *The Ecclesiastical History England and Normandy*, Vol. III, London, p. 58.

⁷ Anna Comnena (1969), *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena*, trans. E.R.A. Sewter, England: Penguin Books, p. 309; Frankopan (2012), *The First Crusade*, p. 1-2; Edward Gibbon (1870), *Crusades*, London, p. 11.

⁸ Ordericus Vitalis (n.d.), *The Ecclesiastical History England and Normandy*, Vol. III, p. 66.

⁹ Ordericus Vitalis (n.d.), *The Ecclesiastical History England and Normandy*, Vol. III, p. 64-65; R.W. Shouthern (1953), *The Making of the Middle Ages*, London: Yale University Press, p. 131-132.

¹⁰ Frankopan (2012), *The First Crusade*, p. 1-3.

This is a crucial point: Pope Urban II's example and deep devotion illustrate that those who embrace the role of Crusaders must embody similar qualities. In this regard, being a Crusader fundamentally entails leading an exemplary life and meticulously upholding Christian sacraments. The construction of Crusader identity aims to prioritise individual virtue and the defence of Christian holy places. Here, the concept of virtue must be understood as one-sided for Christians and as a means of uniting the Crusaders, as they often disregarded their holy places for material gain. The Fourth Crusade serves as the clearest example of this phenomenon.¹¹ From this perspective, we can assert that the Crusaders shaped their approach to Muslims based on their own notions of right and wrong. This viewpoint is clearly articulated in Pope Urban II's speech at Clermont. Speaking with the authority of God, the Pope declared:

I, Urban, supreme pontiff and by the permission of God prelate of the whole world, have come in this time of urgent necessity to you, the servants of God in these regions, as a messenger of divine admonition. I hope that those who are stewards of the ministry of God shall be found to be good and faithful and free from hypocrisy.¹²

Here, Pope Urban II approached the Council as one authorised by God, issuing a divine warning to Christians. Speaking through the Pope, God desires for the restoration and rightful guidance of His religion. Through Urban, God proclaimed his side, declaring that Christians they represent the truth. Consequently, the Crusaders would embark on their journey with God's blessing, assured of His support.¹³ This idea forms the foundation of the Crusader thought paradigm. This approach provides a comprehensive framework for explaining the Crusader invasions and massacres. It elucidates the intellectual ground underlying the boundless nature of the Crusader massacres.¹⁴

To comprehend the Crusader invasions, it is essential to examine the targets of these invasions and the underlying rationale. In his address to those embarking on the journey with God's blessing, Pope Urban II delineates the adversaries they will face. This explanation also clarifies how prospective Crusaders should perceive the expedition. The Pope's urgent appeal to "help your brothers and sisters in the East" elucidates the nature of the encounters the Crusaders would face.¹⁵

The Catholic world's psychology of defending its religious brethren, Byzantium, against the Seljuk/Muslim advance, established Muslims as the enemy in Crusader thought. The notion of fighting Muslims on their pilgrimage route, where they are believed to walk in God's path, representing the truth, is a reference to the perceived falsehood of the Muslims.¹⁶

In this context, the invasion of Muslim lands and the ensuing brutality were perceived as actions commanded by God. According to Crusader thought, Muslims deserved the wrath of God for corrupting Christianity with their superstitions. In this framework, Christians who did not adhere to God's guidance and support would face the rebuke of Jesus, the Son of God. In the words of Fulcherius:

Oh what a disgrace if a race so despicable, degenerate, and enslaved by demons should thus overcome a people endowed with faith in Almighty God and resplendent in the name of Christ! Oh what Reproaches will be charged against you by the Lord Himself if you have not helped those who are counted like yourselves of the Christian faith!¹⁷

This perspective suggests that the journey undertaken with God's approval and support would be guided by divine moderation. The Crusaders' approach to the expedition and their anticipated enemy was

¹¹ Birsal Küçüksipahioğlu (2021), *Haçlılar ve İstanbul (1096-1261)*, İstanbul: Pozitif, p. 219-230.

¹² Fulcher of Chartres (1969), *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095-1127*, p. 62-63.

¹³ Ayşe Çekiç (2024), "Haçlı İdeasında Tanrı Tasavvuru ve Haçlı Seferlerine Tesiri," *History Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 3, p. 364.

¹⁴ Ziya Polat (2024), "Batı'daki İslam ve Müslüman Algısının Birinci Haçlı Seferi'nde Katliamlar Üzerinden Ortaya Konması," *Neşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli Üniversitesi SBE Dergisi*, Vol. 14, No. 2, p. 734-735.

¹⁵ Atiya (1962), *Crusade, Commerce and Culture*, p. 21; William of Tyre (1943), *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, Vol. I, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 77-79; Jonathan Riley Smith (2003), *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, London: Continuum, p. 13-15.

¹⁶ William of Tyre (1943), *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, Vol. I p. 89; Fulcher of Chartres (1969), *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095-1127*, p. 64.

¹⁷ Fulcher of Chartres (1969), *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095-1127*, p. 66.

realised through the coding of the leadership of God and Jesus.¹⁸ This approach afforded the Crusaders a broad spectrum of permissible behaviours.

The Crusades, under papal leadership, adopted a God-centred approach that developed a generalising method that did not exclude anyone. The feudal conditions in Europe preceding the Crusades had led to lawlessness and increased criminality. At the outset of the campaigns, Pope Urban, with the authority of God, proclaimed that everyone could be a Crusader without marginalising anyone. As being a Crusader is a service to religion and its sacraments, it involves forgiveness. Thus, even bandits, thieves, and criminals were granted the right to join the Crusades. This papal initiative aimed to reintegrate those involved in crime within continental Europe and sought their contribution to the Crusade.¹⁹

In this context, the Crusades, characterised as an inclusive movement that made everyone a Crusader, transformed the invasion towards the Eastern world into a formidable mass power. The fact that criminals, murderers, thieves, and others travelled with the power of God in the name of their holy cause elucidates the atrocities committed against non-Crusaders. This method, which unified everyone for a common ideal, simultaneously created God's enemies while building His friends.²⁰

Attitudes and Behaviour towards Non-Crusaders

There are numerous instances where one can observe the conduct and dispositions of the Crusaders during the Crusades. The Crusaders, embarking as soldiers of God and Christ, devised a distinctive mode of behaviour towards those who were not of their own kind. The pivotal rationale underpinning this behaviour was the belief that the world would be redeemed through the Crusader armies, allegedly supported by divine will. The envisaged establishment of the State of God, contingent upon the capture of Jerusalem, sought to distinguish between the nation of God and those beyond its bounds. According to the Crusader ideology, this expedition was ordained by divine providence, God wills it; *Deus vult!*²¹ Essentially, this ideology imbued the Crusaders with an instinct to annihilate those who were not of their own, particularly Muslims. This framework, which shaped the Crusaders' conduct and attitudes towards the Eastern Muslim world, legitimised the atrocities committed by the Crusaders.

The aggressions of the Crusader groups against the Jews in Europe, commencing after the Council of Clermont, serve as early exemplars of the Crusader ideology of eliminating the other.²² However, considering the detrimental actions inflicted upon Orthodox Christians in the East, it can be contended that the Crusaders exhibited a hostile stance towards non-Catholic groups.²³ Nonetheless, it is evident that the propensity for massacres during the Crusades was primarily directed towards Muslim populations. The fact that Bayt al-Maqdis was under Muslim control, combined with the Byzantine retreat in the face of Muslim advances, significantly influenced these violent episodes. William of Tyre, a distinguished chronicler of the Crusader period, attributes the phenomenon of violence against Muslims to the advent of Islam and the life of the Prophet Muhammad. In the prologue of his comprehensive treatise on the Crusades, William of Tyre elaborates on the geopolitical dynamics of the Eastern regions, asserting the following:

In the time of the Roman Emperor Heraclius, according to ancient histories and Oriental tradition, the pernicious doctrines of Muhammad had gained a firm foothold in the Orient. This first-born son of Satan falsely declared that he was a prophet sent from God and thereby led astray the lands of the East, especially Arabia. The poisonous seed he sowed so permeated the provinces that his successors employed sword and violence, instead of preaching and exhortation, to compel the people, however reluctant, to embrace the erroneous tenets of the prophet.²⁴

¹⁸ Ayşe Çekiç (2024), "İhtiyaca Binaen Çağırılan Peygamber: Haçlı Muhayyilesinde İsa Tasavvuru," *Şırnak Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol. 34, p. 202-206.

¹⁹ Fulcher of Chartres (1969), *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095-1127*, p. 67.

²⁰ Fulcher of Chartres (1969), *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095-1127*, p. 67.

²¹ Robert the Monk (2013), *The Historia Iherosolomitana*, trans. D.-M.G Kempf-Bull, UK: Boydell Press, p. 7; F. Funk Brentano (1934), *Les Croisades*, p. 26-27; Michaud (1860), *Histoire des Croisades*, Paris, p. 64.

²² William of Tyre (1943), *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, Vol. I, p. 112-115; Steven Runciman (1951), *A History of the Crusades*, Vol. I, USA: Cambridge University Press, p. 135-139.

²³ Işın Demirkent (1997), *Haçlı Seferleri*, İstanbul: Dünya Yayıncılık, p. 15.

²⁴ William of Tyre (1943), *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, Vol. I, p. 60.

This narrative roots the Crusaders' animosity towards Muslims to the inception of Islam and the life of the Prophet Muhammad. William of Tyre portrays the Prophet Muhammad as a false prophet who coerced conversions to Islam through the sword. Furthermore, he describes the Prophet as the devil, considering Muhammad the originator of a pernicious doctrine—an idea that would later render Muhammad in Western chronicles as a half-human, half-demon figure.²⁵ In this context, the Crusader notion of capturing Jerusalem evolved into the concept of eradicating the heretical religion of the Prophet Muhammad.²⁶ This perspective, cultivated by Crusader thought, profoundly shaped and influenced their treatment of Muslims.

Crusader sources often conflated the terms Muslim and Turk. The terminology used to describe Muslims in the campaign against the Seljuk advance also elucidates their treatment. Muslims were primarily characterised as enemies of God in a holistic sense.²⁷ The phrases “enemy of God and holy Christianity” and “infidel folk” further reinforced this perception.²⁸ Additionally, the depiction of Turks as brutal, disgusting, treacherous, and savage/cruel underscored the view that Muslims were far from civilisation in the eyes of the Crusaders.²⁹ Besides being seen as enemies of God and Christianity, their perceived brutal, savage, and cruel nature underpinned the Crusaders' inclination towards massacres against Muslims. This perception provided a legitimate basis for the Crusaders to prepare for their invasion against the Muslims. In this context, the Crusaders regarded the massacre of Muslims during their journey as a sign of divine salvation.

Crusader sources often boasted about the massacres they perpetrated. For instance, during the capture of Nicaea, they proudly recounted the killing of many Turks, perceiving this as a divine victory.³⁰ Following the slaughter of Muslims in Nicaea,³¹ the Crusaders continued their violent campaign, committing atrocities in Maara and Bayt al-Maqdis. This practice of demographic change against Muslims rendered Muslim lands vulnerable to Crusader occupation. In the Maara massacre, instances of cannibalism were reported against Muslims,³² with sources mentioning that some Crusaders consumed meat cut from the corpses of dead Muslims, either cooked or raw.³³ The massacre in Jerusalem was even more catastrophic.³⁴ William of Tyre depicted the massacre and aggression against Muslims in Jerusalem as the realisation of divine justice.³⁵ The Crusaders perceived their actions against non-Christians as fulfilling God's will. Consequently, the massacre in Jerusalem, the ultimate goal of their expedition, was on a larger scale than any other, marking the peak of their violent campaign.³⁶ Given that the primary objective of the expedition was the capture of Jerusalem, the scale of the massacre there was unparalleled in other massacres.

Description of the Massacre in Antioch

The siege and eventual capture of Antioch were protracted and arduous. The Crusaders' efforts to seize Antioch were driven by the city's significance for Christianity and its strategic position as a transit route to Bayt al-Maqdis. Antakya was a well-fortified city and exceedingly difficult to capture. The city, which housed a church dedicated to St. Peter, one of the twelve apostles, was referred to by the Crusader chronicler Fulcher as “*the key to the kingdom of heaven*”.³⁷ Thus, capturing the city was crucial for the

²⁵ Susanne Lewis (1987), *The Art of Matthew Paris in the Chronica Majora*, London, p. 100.

²⁶ John Tolan (2019), *Faces of Muhammad*, USA: Princeton University Press, p. 41-42.

²⁷ *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen* (2005), trans. B.S-D.S Bachrach, England: Ashgate, p. 45; Fulcher of Chartres (1969), *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095-1127*, p. 67.

²⁸ *Gesta Francorum The Deeds of The Franks and The Other Pilgrims to Jerusalem* (1979), trans. Rosalind Hill, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 32; Caffaro (2013), *Genoa and The Twelfth-Century Crusades*, trans. Martin-Jonathon Hall-Phillips, England: Ashgate, p. 50-51; Gunther Von Pairis (2022), *Konstantinopolis'in Zaptı (Bir Keşişin Kaleminden IV. Haçlı Seferi)*, trans. Kutsi Aybars Çetinalp, İstanbul: Kronik, p. 35.

²⁹ *Anonymi Gesta Francorum et Aliorum Hierosolymitanorum* (1924), ed. Beatrice A. Lees, M.A., Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 19-27; *Anonim Haçlı Tarihi Gesta Francorum* (2013), trans. Ergin Ayan, İstanbul: Selenge, p. 72. Raymond d'Aguilers (1968), *Historia Francorum Qui Ceperunt Iherusalem*, trans. J. Hugh&Laurita L. Hill, Philadelphia, p. 47; Harun Korunur (2019), *Itinerarium Peregrinorum Et Gesta Regis Ricardi Işığında III. Haçlı Seferi (1189-1192)*, İstanbul: Kitabevi, p. 272.

³⁰ Malcolm Barber and Bate Keith (n.d.), *Letters From the East (Crusaders, Pilgrims and Settlers in the 12th-13th Centruies*, UK: Ashgate, p. 16-17.

³¹ *Anonymi Gesta Francorum et Aliorum Hierosolymitanorum* (1924), p. 24.

³² Ayan (2013), *Anonim Haçlı Tarihi Gesta Francorum*, p. 142.

³³ Fulcher of Chartres (1969), *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095-1127*, p. 112.

³⁴ Fulcher of Chartres (1969), *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095-1127*, p. 121-122.

³⁵ William of Tyre (1943), *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, Vol. I, p. 371.

³⁶ Polat (2024), “Batı'daki İslam ve Müslüman Algısının Birinci Haçlı Seferi'nde Katliamlar Üzerinden Ortaya Konması,” p. 734-735; Ziya Polat (2019), “Kudüs Katliamı Bağlamında Haçlı Seferlerinin Sebepleri,” *Milel ve Nihal*, Vol. 16, No. 1, p. 196.

³⁷ Fulcher of Chartres (1969), *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095-1127*, p. 92-93.; For the Antioch pilgrimage route, see: Esra Doğan Turay (2017), “Anadolu Hac Güzergâhı: Antakya Menzili,” *Kadim Akademi SBD*, Vol. 1, No. 1-2, p. 109-125.

campaign towards Jerusalem. Antakya, a significant Byzantine city, had been conquered by Suleiman Shah in 1085. When the Crusaders besieged the city, Yaghi-Siyan (Aoxianus) was the ruler.³⁸ Antakya had a cosmopolitan structure at the time, with residents of various races and religions; besides Muslims, it also included Christians, Armenians, and Assyrians.³⁹ The Crusaders arrived in front of Antioch in October 1097. The initial clashes revealed that Antioch could not be easily captured. The siege, which began in October 1097, proved to be a prolonged and arduous process,⁴⁰ nearly exhausting both the Crusaders and the Muslims by its conclusion in June 1098.⁴¹ Despite the hardships endured during the siege, which weakened their strength,⁴² the Crusaders did not succumb to discouragement. They overcame the adversities of famine, misery, hunger, and poverty within their ranks⁴³ through various motivations.⁴⁴ Ultimately, the Crusaders managed to enter the city with the assistance of Firuz, an Armenian convert.⁴⁵ Upon seeing that the Crusaders had entered Antioch, Yaghi-Siyan fled the city, only to be captured by Armenian villagers in a nearby mountain village. These villagers killed Yaghi-Siyan, decapitated him, and presented his head to the Crusaders.⁴⁶ This tragic end of Yaghi-Siyan also foreshadowed the fate awaiting the Muslim population of Antioch.

The massacre in Antioch is chronicled in both Crusader and Muslim sources. The anonymous Gesta mentions a horrific massacre in Antioch, noting that all Muslims and Turks outside the citadel were killed amidst the screams of the city's inhabitants. It is stated that, when the massacre concluded, the streets were filled with reeking corpses, making it impossible to move without stepping on them.⁴⁷ Fulcher provides a more detailed account, describing how the Crusaders brutally killed the astonished Muslims like executioners with drawn swords. Additionally, they confiscated property within the city.⁴⁸ Unlike the Anonymous Gesta, Fulcher also mentions the looting of the possessions of the slain individuals.

Raymond's chronicle extensively describes the massacre of Antioch by the Crusaders, unabashedly expressing the pleasure derived from recounting the event. According to Raymond, it was God Himself who cast the Muslim population into chaos upon the Crusaders' entry into the city, implying divine sanction for the massacre. He writes that the confusion and chaos filled him with great astonishment, noting that the city's inhabitants could not even muster resistance. Although Raymond refrains from specifying the number of Muslims killed, he indicates it would be sadistic to detail their slaughter. Despite this, Raymond recounts an incident he found gratifying: a group of Muslim cavalymen attempting to flee were trapped and fell off a cliff. Raymond regretted that horses also perished in the process, falling off the cliffs with the Muslims. His account of the massacre includes descriptions of demographic and property changes in the city, emphasising the unprecedented wealth acquired by the Crusaders and underscoring their belief in divine support.⁴⁹ Raymond's sorrow for the wasted horses, juxtaposed with his indifference to the death of Muslims, reflects the Crusader mentality that viewed Muslims as less than human.

In Peter Tudebode's chronicle, the capture of Antioch is portrayed as a victory ordained by God's will, similar to Raymond's account. Upon entering the city, the Crusaders wielded their swords indiscriminately against everyone except those who managed to seek refuge in the inner citadel. The streets and alleys became littered with corpses, and the overwhelming stench marked the beginning of

³⁸ Ibn al-Athir (2006), *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period from al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, trans. D.S. Richards, Part 1, London: Routledge, 2006, p. 14; Demirkent (1997), *Haçlı Seferleri*, p. 38; Fatma İnce (2002), "Doğu Akdeniz'de Bizans-Haçlı Çatışması (Antakya Örneği)," *INJLOSS*, Vol. 11, No. 1, p. 203.

³⁹ Fulcher of Chartres (1969), *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095-1127*, p. 94.

⁴⁰ *Anonymi Gesta Francorum et Aliorum Hierosolymitanorum* (1924), p. 27-28.

⁴¹ William of Tyre (1943), *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, Vol. 1, p. 260.

⁴² Fulcher of Chartres (1969), *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095-1127*, p. 109.

⁴³ Özlem Genç and Harun Korunur (2016), "Antakya'nın Haçlılar Tarafından Ele Geçirilişi," *Studies of the Ottoman Domain*, Vol. 6, No. 10, p. 73-74.

⁴⁴ Ziya Polat (2024), "Haçlıların Antakya Kuşatmasında Motivasyon Aracı Olarak Günah-Tövbe Denklemi," *Milel ve Nihal*, Vol. 21, No. 1, p. 13-17.

⁴⁵ *Anonymi Gesta Francorum et Aliorum Hierosolymitanorum* (1924), p. 42-45; Raymond d'Aguilers (1968), *Historia Francorum Qoi Ceperunt Iherusalem*, p. 47; Guibert de Nogent (n.d.), *A Translation of Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, trans. Robert Levine, The Boydell Press, p. 90-93; William of Malmesbury (1847), *William of Malmesbury's Cronicle of Kings of England*, London, p. 380.

⁴⁶ *Anonymi Gesta Francorum et Aliorum Hierosolymitanorum*, p. 45-46; Fulcher of Chartres (1969), *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095-1127*, p. 99; Guibert de Nogent (n.d.), *A Translation of Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, p. 93; Ordericus Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History England and Normandy*, Vol. III, p. 125-126.

⁴⁷ *Anonymi Gesta Francorum et Aliorum Hierosolymitanorum* (1924), p. 45-46.

⁴⁸ Fulcher of Chartres (1969), *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095-1127*, p. 99.

⁴⁹ Raymond d'Aguilers (1968), *Historia Francorum Qoi Ceperunt Iherusalem*, p. 47-48.

a significant ordeal.⁵⁰ Guibert notes that the horrifying sight and stench of countless massacred bodies soon emboldened the Crusaders, rendering them indifferent to the corpses as they traversed the streets and alleys.⁵¹ Robert the Monk offers a more literary depiction, stating that children, youths, and the elderly, oppressed by life's hardships, were all put to the sword. He also mentions the dismemberment of corpses in the pursuit of gold, with searches conducted within the intestines of the dead. Robert does not hesitate to describe the ubiquity of bodies and blood throughout the city.⁵² Thus, the 'liberation' of the city, long held captive by Muslims, was accomplished with the perceived divine assistance to the Crusaders.⁵³

William of Tyre, notable for his education among the Crusader chroniclers, provides essential insights into the Antioch massacre. He records that upon the Crusaders' entry into the city, the Christian Armenians and Assyrians greeted them with great joy and hospitality. Despite this, the aggression against Muslims spared neither women, children, nor the elderly, with cries and sobs echoing throughout the city. The Crusaders ravaged homes, distributing spoils based on who entered first. William of Tyre quantifies the massacre, stating that the Crusaders slaughtered over ten thousand people, leaving the streets piled with corpses.⁵⁴ Remarkably, even beggars amassed wealth through the subsequent looting.⁵⁵ The appalling and horrifying nature of the massacre is unanimously highlighted by the sources.⁵⁶ Muslim chroniclers of the Antioch massacre also note the incalculable number of those killed and maltreated.⁵⁷ After the Crusaders entered Antioch, they sent a letter to Pope Urban to announce their victory. Some passages in the letter are particularly noteworthy. The letter sent to Pope Urban, written from the Crusaders' perspective, describes the capture of Antioch as follows: "*We wish and desire that notice be made to you that through the great mercy of God as well as through His most manifest assistance Antioch has been taken by us; that the Turks, who had brought much shame to our Lord Jesus Christ, have been captured and slain; that we, pilgrims of Jesus Christ going to Jerusalem...*". In this narrative, the Crusaders claim they captured the city with divine will and assistance. Furthermore, it is emphasised that the Turks, i.e., Muslims, were slaughtered because they brought shame to Jesus. In the same spirit, the Crusaders declare their intent to march to Jerusalem to exact God's revenge on the Muslims. The letter continues to describe the massacre carried out by the Crusaders with joy, celebrating the reversion of Antioch to the Roman religion through Jesus. It also expresses the wish that the Crusaders, having subjugated the Muslims, will proceed to Jerusalem.⁵⁸

After the Crusaders entered Antioch, the formidable army of Corbagath/Karbuga, which arrived as reinforcement to the city, failed to dislodge the Crusaders from Antioch.⁵⁹ The demographic transformation following the Antioch massacre, culminating in the city's transfer to Crusader control, marked a pivotal moment in their invasion strategy. The Crusaders employed the same brutal tactics in Maara⁶⁰ and Bayt al-Maqdis as they did in Antioch. Crusader sources unanimously highlight that no one, especially the Muslim population, was permitted to settle in Antioch once the Crusaders had breached the city. Consequently, the deep-seated animosity and slaughter instinct of the Crusaders towards Muslims were vividly manifested during their campaigns, particularly in Antioch.

Conclusion

The history of the Crusades emerges from a complex and multifaceted process. The formation of these expeditions was significantly influenced by the feudal structures, economic challenges, political upheavals, and social dynamics prevalent within Western Europe. The reformation of the European

⁵⁰ Peter Tudebode (1974), *Historia de Hierosolymitano Itinere*, ed. J.H.-L.L. Hill, Philadelphia, p. 63-65.

⁵¹ Guibert de Nogent (n.d.), *A Translation of Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, p. 93-94.

⁵² Robert the Monk (2005), *Robert the Monk's History of the First Crusade*, trans. Carol Sweetenham, USA: Ashgate, p. 185-186.

⁵³ Robert the Monk (2013), *The Historia Iherosolomitana*, p. 79.

⁵⁴ William of Tyre (1943), *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, Vol. I, p. 258.

⁵⁵ William of Tyre (1943), *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, Vol. I, p. 260; Conor Kostick (2008), *The Social Structure of the First Crusade*, Leiden: Brill, p. 117.

⁵⁶ William of Malmesbury (1847), *William of Malmesbury's Cronicle of Kings of England*, p.381; Ordericus Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History England and Normandy*, Vol. III, p.126.

⁵⁷ Ibn al-Qalanisi (2002), *The Damascus Cronicle of the Crusades*, ed. H.A.R. Gibb, New York: Dover Publications, p. 44; Ibn al-Athir (2006), *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period from al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, Part 1, p. 15; Abu al-Fidā' (1997), *al-Mukhtasar fi-Akhbar al-Bashar*, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, Vol. II, p. 27.

⁵⁸ Fulcher of Chartres (1969), *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095-1127*, p. 107-112.

⁵⁹ Fulcher of Chartres (1969), *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095-1127*, p. 105-107.

⁶⁰ Genç and Korunur (2016), "Antakya'nın Haçlılar Tarafından Ele Geçirilişi," p. 77-78; Nicholas Morton (2016), *Encountering Islam on the First Crusade*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 179-180.

continent by the Church imbued the Crusades with a fundamentally religious impetus. For the Crusaders, spurred by religious fervour post the Council of Clermont and inspired by the Papal decrees, the world was dichotomised into those who championed God's cause and those perceived as enemies of God. The First Crusade offers numerous instances that vividly illustrate this perception. This article explored how contemporary perceptions influenced the conceptualisation of massacres. Specifically, it examined the intellectual underpinnings and ramifications of the massacres during the siege of Antioch. Antioch was a pivotal stop on the Crusader route to reach Jerusalem. Without capturing Antioch, the Crusader armies could not penetrate the Palestinian region and reach Bayt al-Maqdis. Hence, Crusader chroniclers consistently emphasised the strategic importance of Antioch, often referring to the city as the key to the Kingdom of Heaven (Jerusalem). The protracted and arduous siege of Antioch not only tested the Crusaders but also served as a unifying force, bolstering their collective motivation. In June 1098, with the assistance of an Armenian, the Crusaders breached the city walls and subsequently perpetrated a bloody massacre. Contemporary Crusader sources documenting the First Crusade vividly detailed the gruesome aspects of these killings.

The prolonged and arduous nature of the siege exacerbated the severity of the massacre within the city. Upon breaching the walls of Antioch, the Crusaders indiscriminately slaughtered the Muslim inhabitants, regardless of gender or age. The extent of the massacre is evident when considering the overwhelming stench from the piled-up corpses lining the streets, rendering passage impossible without stepping on them. This brutal revelation of the Crusaders' instinct for massacre in Antioch is closely tied to the city's significance for Christianity. Muslim sources corroborate the accounts provided by the Crusader chronicles. However, the narrative of the massacre in Muslim sources appears to be less detailed compared to the Crusader accounts. This disparity may be attributed to the profound suffering experienced by the Muslim population during the massacre. The vivid depictions in Crusader sources are linked to the belief that their actions were divinely sanctioned. Additionally, the Crusader authors' sense of revenge significantly influenced the graphic descriptions within their narratives. In the broader context of Crusader massacres, the massacre at Antioch represents a critical juncture in the progression towards the violence witnessed during the Jerusalem massacre.

When the Crusaders, who regarded Muslims as enemies unworthy of life, unleashed their massacring instincts following the arduous siege of Antioch, they effectively set a precedent for subsequent massacres. The atrocities committed at Maara and Jerusalem can be seen as a continuation of the violence initiated at Antioch. The Crusaders not only secured significant booty and property through the Antioch massacre, but also instigated a demographic transformation within the city. This demographic shift, resulting from the Crusader massacre at Antioch, served as a model for future massacres and subsequent changes within other cities.

Viewed through the lens of the Crusader methodology, the act of massacring non-Crusaders and its practical application conferred a sense of legitimacy upon the Crusaders in terms of occupation and demographic transformation. The Muslims of Antioch, who exemplify this practice, were annihilated under the Crusaders' ethos of massacre, leading to the establishment of a Crusader settlement in the city.

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