

SELF-PERCEPTION IN FULCHER OF CHARTRES: HOW THE CRUSADERS SAW THEMSELVES

Ziya Polat*

Abstract

The Crusades shaped world history by changing the relations between Muslims and Christians. They targeted the Muslim World in the Mediterranean basin and lasted approximately two hundred years. The ways the Crusaders perceived themselves had a great influence on the start of their expedition to the East. This article examines socio-psychological aspects of the First Crusade through analysis of the narrative of Fulcher of Chartres. It discusses how the self-perception of the Crusaders motivated them at the start of the First Crusade. It seeks to answer the following questions: How did the Crusaders see themselves, with what mind set did they go on this campaign? Why did they go to the East? How did they position themselves in respect to the Muslims?

Keywords: Crusades, Pope Urban II, First Crusade, Army of God, Holy Land, Servants of God

Introduction

The wars that are defined as Crusades were directed both against Muslims and against Christians who were opposed to the Papacy. They targeted a very large region, which included Asia, Europe and Africa.¹ Here the focus will be on the first period of the campaigns, which played out in the Eastern Mediterranean region and lasted two hundred years, from 1096 to 1291. These two centuries, which were an important period for Muslim-Christian relations, did not just consist of wars. In this period both sides developed long-lasting and multifaceted relations in the political, military, economic, social, cultural and scientific spheres.² This article approaches the topic through the prism of mentality and psychology.

The best way of grasping the mentality of the Crusaders is the study of their chronicles, which were written by important personages who took part in the campaign. Some of these chronicles start from the preparatory phase of the campaign and include the conquest of Jerusalem and a part of the later developments. Therefore, it is possible to analyse the feelings and thoughts of the Crusaders, their opinion of the war and their mentality. Fulcher of Chartres' (d. 1127) *Gesta Francorum Iherusalem Peregrinantium*³ is a case in point. It contains the impressions of one person who had first-hand experience of the events. From the preparatory phase of the campaign until his separation from the main army in Anatolia prior to arrival at Antioch (present-day Antakya, in the south east of Turkey), Fulcherius records what he experienced, sometimes in broad strokes and sometimes in detail. Especially original is the information about the preparatory phase. The author who belonged to the unit that went to Edessa (present-day Şanlıurfa, in the south east of Turkey) and founded the county together with Baldwin I, then went to Jerusalem together with Baldwin I (d. 1118) who had become the heir and successor of Geoffrey after his death in the year 1100 and spent the last part of his life there.

This article seeks to establish how Fulcher saw the Crusaders. Through analysis of the text central questions such as how the Crusaders saw themselves, what perception they had of themselves, will be addressed. As regards self-perception, that is, the ways in which the Crusaders perceived themselves, the chronicle of Fulcher has much to say. A second topic that will be discussed in this article is why the Crusaders went to the East. If one said that Fulcher built his work on the answers given to this question, one would not exaggerate. Lastly, the article will discuss how the Crusaders positioned themselves in regard to the Muslims, how they evaluated the victories they had gained, and in what framework they defined this process as the victory of God.

* Ziya Polat (PhD), Lecturer, History Department, Mardin Artuklu University, Turkey. Email: polatzypolat@gmail.com.

¹ Jonathan Riley-Smith (1999), "The Crusading Movement and Historians," in *The Oxford History of The Crusades*, ed. Jonathan Riley-Smith, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 3; Jonathan Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* England and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 1.

² İbrahim Kalın (2016), *Ben, Öteki ve Ötesi İslam-Batı İlişkileri Tarihine Giriş*, İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, p. 87. For example, the Crusaders were influenced by Muslims in medical science and herbal treatment. See also Usamah Ibn Munqidh (1929), *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman And Warrior in The Period of The Crusades: Memoirs of Usama Ibn-Munqidh*, trans. Philip K. Hitti, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 162; Işın Demirkent (2004), *Haçlı Seferleri*, İstanbul: Dünya Aktüel, pp. 280–83.

³ There are several Chronicles on the first crusade, see: Willermus Tyrensis (1943), *A History of Deeds Done Beyond The Sea*, trans. Trans. by Emily Atwater Babcock and A. C. Krey, vols. 1-2, New York: Columbia University Press; Albert of Aachen (2007), *Historia Ierosolimitana: History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, trans. Susan B. Edgington, Oxford: Oxford University Press; Robert the Monk (2017), *Robert the Monk's History of the First Crusade: Historia Iherosolimitana*, trans. Carol Sweetenham, London and New York: Routledge; Ralph of Caen (2010), *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen: A History of the Normans on the First Crusade*, trans. Bernard S. and David S. Bachrach, England: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd. This article is build up on Fulcher of Chartres's chronicle and his opinions.

Fulcherius' Definition of Crusade

From the eleventh century onwards, progress had been made in agricultural and trading activities in Western Europe and new institutions had come into existence.⁴ Thus, the economic and social situation had been partially improved. On the other hand, the collapse of the order founded by Charlemagne caused strife in the political and social spheres.⁵ It was attempted to overcome this strife through the Peace-of-God movement. Yet the struggle between the Papacy and the Empire rather increased it.⁶ The leaders of the church thought that it would be a good thing to direct the endless quarrels towards another target, that is, the Muslim World in the East.⁷ Thus, the Pope would be the leader of a Christian world, East Rome would be helped, and strife would end in Europe. The aim of saving the Holy Land would become the motor for this plan.

The apparent aim of the Crusaders was to save the Holy Land from Muslim occupation. They believed that they had been charged by God with the realisation of this purpose. In the work of Fulcher, one finds several expressions that show how the Crusaders defined and perceived themselves. These definitions reflected both the historical build-up of the Christian mentality as regards the Muslims, and the situation of strife in which the Christians found themselves. The writer took some of these definitions from the Bible and some from the words of Urban II (d. 1099). He gave examples that would show the self-evidence of these definitions, and sometimes added new definitions himself.

According to Urban II, the Christians had been given the role of servants of God and executors of the plan of God, since they were God's faithful people. Therefore, it was necessary to return to the sincerity of the faith and to save Christians from hypocrisy.⁸ By discharging this duty, the leaders of the church were at the same time not to forget their position as shepherds. The fact that the Crusaders saw themselves as servants of God constituted the psychological foundation, which allowed them to make the campaign and gain the necessary courage. The Pope characterised the leaders of the church, which he made ready to go on the campaign, as "salt of the earth."⁹ After he had used these expressions, he threatened those who did not discharge their duties with the curse of God and with Hell. Fulcher as one of those who believed strongly in the Pope would interpret what he experienced on the campaign on the basis of these concepts and would define the violence and massacre accordingly.

Apparently, the aim of the Crusaders was to restore power to their faith, which had been despised.¹⁰ This could only be done by the Crusaders who shouldered the mission of peace and were friends of God and believers.¹¹ Peace would be established when order had been achieved in the West and the Holy Land had come under the control of the Crusaders. Therefore, it was legitimate to use any method to achieve this aim. In any case, the Muslims had no right to live since they had occupied Jerusalem. The conquest of the Holy Land and its purging from the Muslim population could only be achieved by the Crusader army which consisted of friends of God or sons of God.¹² This was so since they served as the soldiers of Christ, as the soldiers of God and the army of God.¹³

According to Fulcher, the Crusader army, which consisted of people from all walks of life had promised to go wherever one sent them with the aim of preserving the honour of God. Because they "made a vigorous effort to drive out pagans from the lands of the Christians and they endeavoured in every way to glorify everything which was of God."¹⁴ The Crusaders who set out to preserve the honour of God, would not remain without bread during their journey.¹⁵ They who defined themselves with these words accepted that everybody who opposed them was

⁴ Norman Davies (1996), *Europe: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 336; Robert Fossier (2006), "The Rural Economy and Demographic Growth," in D. Luscombe and J. Riley-Smith, (eds.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History: Volume 4, C.1024-c.1198*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 11; David Nicholas (2009), "Economy," in D. Pover (ed.) *The Central Middle Ages: Europe 950-1320*, Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, p. 58.

⁵ Catia Di Girolamo C. (2015), "Karolenj Dönemi Sonrası Tikelcilik," in U. Eco, (ed.), L. T. Basmacı, (tran.), *Ortaçağ: Barbarlar Hristiyanlar Müslümanlar*, İstanbul: Alfa Tarih, p. 230.

⁶ Fulcher of Chartres (1969), *A history of the expedition to Jerusalem 1095-1127*, Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, p. 69; Catia Di Girolamo, C. (2014), "Dinsel Atamalar Mücadelesi," in U. Eco, (ed.), L. T. Basmacı, (tran.), *Ortaçağ: Katedraller Şövalyeler Şehirler*, İstanbul: Alfa Tarih, p. 30; Ernst-Dieter Hehl (2006), "War, Peace and the Christian Order," in D. Luscombe and J. Riley-Smith, (eds.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History: Volume 4, C.1024-c.1198*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 199.

⁷ Jacques Le Goff (2005), *The Birth of Europe*, trans. Janet Lloyd, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 46, 94.

⁸ Chartres, pp. 63, 66.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

fighting against God. It was claimed that those who went to make war against the Muslims would be forgiven all their sins through the authority that God had given to the Pope, regardless of what they had done before.¹⁶ Thus, the Crusaders would spend the remaining part of their lives as spotless believers.

The army of God, which the Pope wished to leave as soon as possible after the necessary preparations, could only be directed by a representative of the Pope who could speak in the name of God. Indeed, Adhemar (d. 1098), the bishop of Le Puy, had been charged by the Pope with leading the great army. For those soldiers who prepared to fight for the honour of God mantles were made from silk and gold cloth, which showed that they are belonged to the army of God.¹⁷ In this way were they made ready for the departure.

The army of God, which consisted of those who had answered the call of the Pope, was so great that Fulcher used the sentence “You could see a countless number from many lands and of many languages”¹⁸ in order to describe them. The author states that the Crusaders left behind their possessions, their families and their relatives and set out, describing in this way their psychological state: “But however many tears those remaining shed for departing friends and in their presence, none flinched from going because for love of God they were leaving all that they possessed, firmly convinced that they would receive a hundredfold what the Lord promised to those who loved Him.”¹⁹ The Pope and the leaders of the Crusade knew that an army that set out with such feelings would endure everything. Because they set out with trust in God and believed that in the end the victory would be theirs.²⁰

In Fulcher’s work one can see clearly the effects of the schism of 1054, which divided the Christian world²¹. Accordingly, he called the participants from Western Europe, to which he himself belonged, “Western Crusaders.”²² The sharp division of Christendom into Orthodox and Catholic corresponded to this definition. When considering the psychology of being in the region he indicated that the terms Catholic and Orthodox were contrasting terms and that the expression “Western Crusaders” was both a privilege and a higher rank insofar as the Eastern Christians were protected by them.

Why Did the Crusaders Come to the East?

Fulcher explains the reasons for coming to the East by beginning with the speech of Urban II. The Pope is a sacred spokesman who speaks with the permission and in the name of God.²³ Therefore, everything he says is clear and must be accepted without doubt. When one considers the speeches that Urban II gave at Clermont one can see that this is a good analysis of the situation in which Western Europe found itself. When building his speech on psychological arguments the Pope had two main aims. The first was to end the political and social strife that had come about in Western Europe, and the second was to elevate the Papacy to the position of leader of the entire Christian world. Therefore, he would not shrink from using the strife that Western Europe found itself in, the powerlessness of East Rome in the face of the Turks, the statement that the holy land was under occupation, and the claim that the Christians were oppressed.

Strengthen Christianity and Papacy

According to Fulcherius, the main reason for the chaos in which Europe found itself was the weakening of the faith and the church, and the loss of authority of the Papacy in Europe. The Pope’s statement was as follows: “...exhorted all to resume the powers of their faith and arouse in themselves a fierce determination to overcome the machinations of the devil, and try fully to restore Holy Church...”²⁴ According to this, he thought that one way of rescuing it from the negative state into which it had fallen would be to procure for the church, that is, the faith, its old strength. If the church was again strengthened, the bad condition into which Christianity had fallen would be corrected. Therefore, the Christians who had sunk into sin must get their act together.

The Pope thought that those who had caused the weak state into which the church had fallen were Christians “devious and dishonest, and far removed from the moderation of reason and justice, and obstructs the law of God...carelessness or neglect...the ignorant who gape overmuch after the lusts of the world...slothful

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 66.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 67–68.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 73.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 74.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 77.

²¹ Kürşat Demirci (1998), "Hristiyanlık: Giriş, Tarih," *DİA (Diyamet İslam Ansiklopedisi)*, İstanbul: Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, p. 334.

²² Chartres, p. 74.

²³ Ibid., pp. 62–63.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 62. See also Tyrensis, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond The Sea*, Vol. 1, p. 88.

performance of duty...²⁵ Enumerating these deficiencies of the Christians, the Pope then also described how one could overcome these problems. In the speech made by Urban II inner reform, takes the first place. He invited the participants in the council to reform society, "...first correct yourself so that then without reproach you can correct those under your care. If you truly wish to be the friends of God then gladly do what you know is pleasing Him."²⁶ The Pope then mentioned that the institution of God's peace, which had been tried several times but had remained unsuccessful, should again be activated, and explained his project concerning how the political and social order could be established:

By these evils it has been said, dearest brethren, that you have seen the world disturbed for a long time and particularly in some parts of your own provinces as we have been told. Perhaps due to your own provinces as we have been told. Perhaps due to your own weakness in administering justice scarcely anyone dares to travel on the road with hope of safety for fear of seizure by robbers by day or thieves by night, by force or wicked craft, indoors or out.²⁷

From this narration, it is clear that the Pope's true aim was to end the political and social strife in the West. As a result of the breakdown of the order that Charlemagne had founded undisciplined groups of soldiers had emerged. Various counts were constantly fighting with each other and plundering settlements and fields. Thus, many people had been murdered.²⁸ Therefore, it was necessary to renew the agreements of God's peace that had been made before by holy Popes but had not been enforced, and it was necessary that everybody apply them seriously in his own region. Those who opposed this, should be excommunicated according to a decision that had been taken by the council.²⁹

End of the Social and Political Chaos in the West

Another topic mentioned by Fulcher is the power struggle between the Papacy and the Empire. This struggle, which had already lasted two hundred years, began with the power struggle between the heirs of Charlemagne (d. 814) and the Pope.³⁰ This struggle, which reached its apex with holy Roman emperor Henry IV (d. 1106) and Pope Gregory VII (d. 1085), continued until the period of Urban II.³¹ Since the controversy continued when he became Pope, Urban II could only leave Italy in the year 1095. The journey to France was the first trip of a Pope in more than two hundred years.³² The purpose of the journey was to speed up the reforms, to show that the Pope was the leader of the Christian world,³³ and to call for a Crusade. When one reads between the lines of Fulcher's statements about Urban's rival Guibert, one finds details, which show that the aim of the meeting was to direct the attention elsewhere by means of a Crusade and thus to put an end to strife in Europe. Indeed, the size of the Crusader army that passed through Rome a year later made sure that the psychological superiority was bestowed on Urban. With the support of the duchess of Tuscany, Mathilda, Urban could gain superiority over Henry IV and Guibert (d. 1100) and assume the whole authority of the Papacy.³⁴ Thus, he had realised one of his objectives, to unite Western Christendom, even before the First Crusade. In the same way, one can sense that after the campaign the political and social strife lessened and Europe enjoyed a respite.³⁵

'Turkish Invasion' in Anatolia

Fulcher states that after the speech of the Pope positive decisions were made concerning the achievement of the inner order of Western Europe. Then he speaks about the reasons for the Crusade. With these expressions he reinforced the impression that the previous speeches and the decisions contributed to creating a foundation for the campaign.³⁶ The real aim of the Pope was to eliminate the tensions that threatened the order in Europe through a campaign that would move to the East, and thus to make sure that the long-lasting strife ended.³⁷ From Fulcher's narration it is understood that the real reason that moved the Pope to action was the fact that after the battle of Mantzikert (1071) the Turks had conquered a great part of the Anatolia (now Turkey).

²⁵ Ibid., p. 63.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 64.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 65. See also Tyrensis, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond The Sea*, Vol. 1, pp. 75–76.

²⁸ March Bloch (1965), *Feudal Society: Social Classes and Political Organization*, London: Routledge, Vol. 2, pp. 134–35.

²⁹ Chartres, p. 65.

³⁰ Marcella Raiola (2014), "Doğu İle Batı Kilisesi Arasındaki Bölünme," in U. Eco, (ed.), L. T. Basmacı, (tran.), *Ortaçağ: Katedraller Şövalyeler Şehirler*, İstanbul: Alfa Tarih, p. 23.

³¹ Anna Comnena (2000), *The Alexiad*, trans. Elizabeth A. S. Dawes, Cambridge: In Parentheses Publications, p. 25.

³² Thomas Asbridge, (2005) *The First Crusade: A New History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 31.

³³ Peter Landau (2006), "The Development of Law," in D. Luscombe and J. Riley-Smith, (eds.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History: Vol. 4, C.1024-c.1198*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 117.

³⁴ Chartres, pp. 70–71. See also Tyrensis, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond The Sea*, Vol. 1, pp. 85–87.

³⁵ Bloch, *Feudal Society: Social Classes and Political Organization*, Vol. 2, p. 15.

³⁶ Chartres, p. 65.

³⁷ Jacques Le Goff (1992), *Medieval Civilization 400-1500*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 65–66.

When he heard that the interior part of Romania had been occupied by the Turks and the Christians subdued by a ferociously destructive invasion, Urban, greatly moved by compassionate piety and by the prompting of God's love, crossed the mountains and descended into Gaul and caused a council to be assembled in Auvergne at Clermont, as city is called.³⁸

These expressions of Fulcher make one think that the meeting at Clermont was performed as a part of a bigger plan. After the defeat at Mantzikert in 1071 the new emperor of East Rome, Michael VII (East Rome Emperor 1071-1078, d. 1090), who had no soldiers left made a request to send mercenaries through an embassy that he sent to the Pope with the promise that he would enforce the unity of the churches.³⁹ But as has been expressed above, the controversy between the Empire and the Papacy caused a delay. In 1088 after Urban II had been elected Pope, the new East Roman emperor Alexius (d. 1118) sent again an embassy in 1091 and asked for the sending of mercenaries from Italy in order to push back the invasion of the Turks.⁴⁰ As far as one can see the request set Urban II into motion. The fact that the Turks controlled a big part of Anatolia worried not only East Rome but also the Papacy. But to think that the Pope moved only because he wished to protect the frontiers of East Rome would mean to overlook the point at which the Crusades had arrived. Therefore, the Pope, saving himself from several problems took this opportunity and turned the request of Alexius into the Crusade whose effects can still be felt today.

Persecution of Christians in the East

After he had taken decisions that were to secure order in Europe the Pope organised an open-air meeting in which the counts took part where he announced the Crusade. In the speech of the Pope it was emphasised that the Christians who lived in different regions of the world were harassed and oppressed: "...another tribulation not less but greater than that already mentioned, even of the worst nature, was besetting Christianity from another part of the world...For you must hasten to carry aid to your brethren dwelling in the East, who need your help for which they have often entreated."⁴¹ When one considers the Crusades as a whole even if they were not only directed against Muslims,⁴² the Pope made it clear with these words that the world of Eastern Islam was the prime target. Indeed, the Pope made his message even clearer in the following statements.

For the Turks, a Persian people, have attacked them, as many of you already know, and have advanced as far into Roman territory as that part of the Mediterranean which is called the Arm of St. George. They have seized more and more of the lands of the Christians, have already defeated them in seven times as many battles, killed or captured many people, have destroyed churches, and have devastated the kingdom of God. If you allow them to continue much longer they will conquer God's faithful people much more extensively.⁴³

Fulcher showed that the most important reason for the Crusade was the fact that the Turks had come up to the shores of Constantinople. But one would not exaggerate if one said that a great part of the topics, which Urban II mentioned and of which the writer approved, were a product of the imagination. For example, Fulcher's own words that Antioch was well protected are a striking example of this.⁴⁴ Besides, when one considers the process one can see that thanks to the efforts of the monastery of Cluny the number of pilgrimages to Jerusalem had gradually increased. In the eleventh century in which the Crusades took place there had been 117 in number.⁴⁵ Indeed, some Christians had gone to Jerusalem several times.⁴⁶ Therefore, the statement of the Pope, which Fulcher transmits, are open to debate. Even if the records mentioned above are debatable Fulcher gives many examples during the campaign where Christians had been oppressed in order to show that the Pope was right. For example, while the Crusader army was besieging Antioch the author narrates the following: "Oh how many Christians in the city, Greeks, Syrians, and Armenians, did the Turks kill in rage and how many heads did they hurl over the walls with petrae and fundibula in view of the Franks! This grieved our men very much. The Turks hated these Christians, for they feared that somehow the latter might assist Franks against Turkish attack."⁴⁷

³⁸ Chartres, p. 62. See also Tyrensis, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond The Sea*, Vol. 1, pp. 77–79.

³⁹ Alexander A. Vasiliev. (1952), *History of the Byzantine Empire, 324-1453*, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, Vol. 2, p. 395.

⁴⁰ Osman Turan (2014), *Selçuklular Zamanında Türkiye*, İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, p. 128.

⁴¹ Chartres, pp. 65–66.

⁴² Emrullah Kaleli (2016), "Haçlı Seferleri ve İslam Dünyası," in S. H. Özkan, (ed.), *Orta Çağ Tarihi*, İstanbul: İdeal, p. 554.

⁴³ Chartres, p. 66. See also Tyrensis, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond The Sea*, Vol. 1, pp. 89–90.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁴⁵ Warren Ortman Ault, (1937) *Europe in the Middle Ages*, Boston: D. C. Heath, p. 332.

⁴⁶ Thomas Andrew Archer; Charles Lethbridge Kingsford. (1894) *The Crusades: The Story of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, p. 16.

⁴⁷ Chartres, p. 94.

Fulcher's narration is partly true because according to his own words Antioch was taken through the treason of an Armenian convert.⁴⁸ But this is an event that cannot be explained through the hatred of the Christians. If it had been thus, the Muslim would have murdered all Christians when they took the city, as the Christians actually did. But in historical records one does not encounter such a situation. On the contrary, even in the Christian sources it is stated that Suleiman (Founder of Anatolian Seljuk State, d. 1086) did not do the people of the city any harm when he took Antioch.⁴⁹ But from another angle, Muslim chroniclers inform us that the Christians had been expelled from the city before the siege of the Christians began.⁵⁰ Therefore, one must approach the narrations of Fulcher with care.

One of the examples that Fulcher gave in order to support the abovementioned views is the following. When the Crusader army moved towards Jerusalem after the fall of Antioch and one hundred knights went to Bethlehem the people of the city began to sing and cry when they realised that those coming were not Turks but Christians. Fulcher explains that the people of the city cried because "...they feared that so few people might very easily and at any time be slain by the great multitude of pagans who they knew were in the country."⁵¹ A similar example is an experience which Baldwin I had when he moved towards Edessa with his troops.⁵² According to the author the oppression of the Muslim was not quite a massacre. The most interesting example is related to Jerusalem. The author claims that when the Crusader army was still outside the walls "They allowed no Christian to enter the Temple."⁵³ With these examples the author strives to justify the Crusade. But he completely overlooks that in the city the Christians could freely express their faith and could use the churches without any restrictions. Therefore, according to him the Turks and the Muslims had laid hold of the lands and the churches as well as prevented their worship. But Fulcher overlooks an important point. There were no problems between the Muslims and the Christians. For centuries the non-Muslims had lived their faiths and worshipped in their sacred places. When the Crusaders came into the region the lands of the Muslims were under threat, life, honour and security were in danger. In Edessa and Antioch, the Christians turned away from the Muslims together with whom they had lived for centuries and allied themselves with a foreign force. Thus, the Muslims had the feeling that they had been betrayed. Naturally the Muslims took measures against them and tried to defend themselves. That is, the reason why the Christians were worried for their lives was again the Crusades. If they had not come into the region, the Christian would not have experienced such fear.

In this way Fulcher narrates various events in many sections of his text in order to justify why the Crusaders had come into the region and to support what the Pope had said. However, in a letter sent to the Pope they stated:

We have subdued the Turks and the pagans; but the heretics, Greeks and Armenians, Syrians and Jacobites, we have not been able to overcome. Therefore we ask and ask again that you, our most dear father, come as father and head to the place of your predecessor; that you who are the Vicar of the Blessed Peter seat yourself on his throne and use us your obedient sons in carrying out all things properly; and that you eradicate and destroy by your authority and our strength all heresies of whatever kind.⁵⁴

One wonders how much agreement there is between these words and the aforementioned examples. Even if these words had been used in order to persuade the Pope to give help, they summarise in a nice way the attitude of the Western Christians towards the Eastern Christians. Therefore, the thought that they were in the region in order to save them and to unite the Christians hid their real intentions. Indeed, some modern Western historians claim that the Crusades deepened the existing separation and led to unsolvable problems in the Christian world.⁵⁵

The Superiority of the Crusaders and the Victory of God

The Consent of God

As it is the case in all other Crusader chronicles, in Fulcher's work, too, it is repeatedly stressed that the Crusaders were superior to the Muslims because they were servants, friends, sons and soldiers of God. The aim of the campaign was only to win the favour of God. If they died in the fighting they would enter into eternal bliss in

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 98–99.

⁴⁹ Matthew of Edessa (1993), *The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, Lanham-New York-London: University Press of America, p. 147.

⁵⁰ Ibn al-Qalanisi (1983), *Ta'rikh Dimashq*, ed. S Zakkar, Damascus: Dar Hassan, p. 216.

⁵¹ Chartres, p. 116.

⁵² Ibid., p. 91.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 118.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 111.

⁵⁵ Le Goff, *The Birth of Europe*, p. 96.

Paradise, and if they were victorious, they would win worldly rewards. In both cases, God would be on their side. Fulcher does not doubt the correctness of the decisions taken at the Council of Clermont (in France) in December 1095. Since all decisions had been executed, God had immediately responded. "In that year peace and a very great abundance of grain and wine existed in all countries by the grace of God, so that there was no lack of bread on the trip for those who had chosen to follow Him with their crosses in accordance with His commands."⁵⁶ At this point the superiority of the Crusaders begins. The decisions taken on behalf of God and their immediate execution showed that the Crusaders were under the protection of God. According to Fulcher, the preparations made in order to secure the peace of God among themselves and afterwards to rescue the Christians in the East and the Holy Land which had been occupied, had been seen and approved of by God. But what the Crusaders experienced on the move did not bear out these statements. For example, Fulcher himself mentions several times in his work that the Crusaders experienced great hardship and had difficulties in finding provisions.⁵⁷

The Crusaders had received the reward for their trust in God when they were victorious in Nicaea (present-day İznik, Turkey).⁵⁸ But in accordance with the treaty that they had made it had been handed over to the Emperor. The second success of the Crusaders was the battle of Dorylaeum on 1 July 1098 when they defeated the Seljuk sultan Kilicarslan I (d. 1107).⁵⁹ In this battle the Crusaders as recompense for the hardship they had suffered turned to God and God finally heard their prayers and helped them so that they were victorious. One of the examples showing that God had rewarded the Crusaders and given them great rewards, is, that God had given them Antioch together with its fertile hinterland when they were weak and not numerous and had great difficulty to provision themselves; "These had for a long time been under the control of the Turks, but God, foreseeing all, kept them intact for us so that one day He would be honoured in them by ourselves."⁶⁰ The clearest statement that express the superiority of the Crusaders was that they were honoured with the lands. That is, the Crusaders had been honoured with the lands of Antioch because they did service for God. The Turks held the city in their hand only because it served to give greater honour to the Crusaders.

Corbagath (Amir of Mosul, d. 1102) who had come before the city in order to take Antioch back from the Crusaders suffered on 28 July 1098 a heavy defeat and was forced to withdraw. Fulcher describes this situation with the following words: "Corbagath fled, swift as a deer... But why did he flee...?...Because he dared to contend against God."⁶¹ Therefore, Corbagath, that is, the Muslims, were punished by God not because they fought against the Crusaders but because they fought against God.

As has been expressed above, in Fulcher's narrative the Crusaders were usually superior, but sometimes he spoke of defeats in clear words in situations where it could not be denied. He did this probably in order to strengthen the belief that God was always on their side. The author explains that a great part of the defeats by the Muslims was due to the fact that the Crusaders had sinned and were therefore abandoned or punished by God.⁶² When the Crusaders were defeated this was not due to the fact that the Muslims were stronger or superior but because of human failings of the Crusaders. In the same way it cannot be said that the defeats were real defeats, because the crusaders always took their revenge. For example, the crusaders were defeated by the Fatimids (a shia state, 909-1171) in Ramla (city in Palestine) in May 1102.⁶³ But the author used the words "...Then by the will of God our men were vanquished by those whom they had vanquished."⁶⁴ Even though Fulcher accepted that this was a defeat, he stresses that the Crusaders took revenge and thus emphasises the superiority of the Crusaders, so that their belief that they had received help from God did not waver.

Fighting for God: They Have all Rights

In the struggle in the name of God, the Crusaders could legitimately behave as they wished. The Muslims deserved everything that came to them. Besides, they possessed a deviant faith and had unjustly occupied the Holy Land. Therefore, this deviant and unbelieving community should be killed and despoiled wherever they were seen. Indeed, we can see a reflection of this thought when the Crusaders took Antioch. For the author, the "Franks running about through the streets with drawn swords and savagely killing people, they were bewildered and began

⁵⁶ Chartres, p. 70.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 87.

⁵⁸ Comnena, *The Alexiad*, p. 195.

⁵⁹ Chartres, pp. 86–87; Comnena, *The Alexiad*, p. 196.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 93.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 106. Willermus uses the similar statements in the siege of Antioch: "As we have said, the Christians had only about seven hundred men. Divine will ordained, however, that when these arranged in squadrons according to the rules of military science, they appeared to be unnumbered thousands. It was as if additional forces had been given from on high. Willermus, *A History of Deeds*, Vol. 1, p. 226.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 86, 95, 101.

⁶³ Seteven Runciman (1995), *A History of the Crusades*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Vol. 2, p. 77.

⁶⁴ Chartres, p. 169.

to flee here and there.”⁶⁵ How Fulcher understood this topic can be seen in his accounts of the conquest of the cities of Barra and Maarat al-Numan. At that time the leaders of the Crusader army were Bohemund (first prince of Antioch, d. 1109) and Raymond (first count of Tripoli, d. 1105). It is stated; that “they very quickly captured the former, killed the citizens to a man, and confiscated everything.”⁶⁶

Fulcher regarded Jerusalem as the holy place where God had created the first man. He thought that the Muslims were unbelievers who defiled it and stated that those who cleansed these holy lands which had been defiled by the Muslims were the true believers.⁶⁷ For this reason, the Crusaders were closer to God and superior to Muslims. Indeed, the Crusaders who fought with the self-confidence that this gave them displayed great cruelty when they took Jerusalem. They massacred all people whom they considered to have defiled the place.

The pagans were completely terrified...Many of the Saracens who had climbed to the top of the Temple of Solomon in their flight were shot to death with arrows and fell headlong from the roof. Nearly ten thousand were beheaded in this Temple. If you had been there your feet would have been stained to the ankles in the blood of the slain. What shall I say? None of them were left alive. Neither women nor children were spared.⁶⁸

These lines are a striking reflection of the Crusader mentality, that what whatever they did was legitimate because they fought in the name of God. Besides, the fact that these lines came from the pen of a clergyman shows clearly how the Crusaders perceived themselves, what their mentality was, and with what mind-set they acted. Muslim historians state that the Jews who had taken refuge in the synagogue were burned.⁶⁹

God Against Muslims

In 1101 Baldwin became king of Jerusalem. At the beginning his land only encompassed Bethlehem (town in West Bank), Jaffa (city in Palestine on Mediterranean coast), Ramla and Haifa (city in Palestine on Mediterranean coast). This is one of the events that Fulcher uses in order to show that God was on their side and against the Muslims. According to him, Baldwin succeeded in protecting his lands through the winter despite the fact that his troops were few in number. This was so because Baldwin was a master fighter and God supported the initiative.⁷⁰ However, when one looks at the history of the battle one notes that in that period attacks were seldom launched in winter. The Muslims did not attack because the conditions were not right. Besides, the Muslims in the region had not secured inner cohesion and had not got over the shock of seeing their lands occupied by a foreign power.

The king of Jerusalem, Baldwin, was taken captive by the Artuqid (a dynasty which ruled the south east of Turkey between 1098 and 1408) Emir Balak Han. The Muslims in the region could not exploit this situation and could not take Jerusalem. This is the point where Fulcher stresses the superiority of the Crusaders. According to him, the only reason why the Muslims could not harm the leaderless Crusaders was that their lord was God.⁷¹ According to the author, even though Baldwin was taken captive God remained as king. In this way the Crusaders were superior to the Muslims. Indeed, although the Muslims were many in number, and fought well, and sometimes were even victorious they could not achieve anything because God was on the side of the Crusaders. In order to express this Fulcher used the following words; “Let us cleave to the King above and place our hope in Him, and we shall not be confounded in eternity.”⁷² Therefore, all negative things that the Crusaders had done had been demanded of them by God. Whatever they did was legitimate, because it was done through the grace of God. Indeed, all activities against the Muslims became the reason for reward.

Fulcher describes the Crusaders, who came on ship to Jerusalem after the end of winter, in the following way that the Christians were a group of people deserved help because they were fighting in the name of God against the unbelieving Muslims and that they received their reward. But this help from the West was short-lived. The Crusaders went home because they believed that they had done their duty by staying in the region for a while. As a result, very few soldiers were left who could protect the regions under the control of the Crusaders. The author

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 99. See also Anonim (2013), *Anonim Haçlı tarihi*, trans. Ergin Ayan, İstanbul: Selenge Yayınları, p. 105; Ralph of Caen, *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen*, pp. 91–92; Willermus, *A History of Deeds*, Vol. 1, p. 257; İbn al-Qalanisi, *Ta'rikk Dimashq*, p. 220; Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana: History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, p. 285.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 112.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 123.

⁶⁸ Chartres, pp. 121–22. See also Tyrensis, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond The Sea*, Vol. 1, pp. 370–72.

⁶⁹ İbn al-Qalanisi, *Ta'rikk Dimashq*, p. 222; Sevim, *Azîmi Tarihi: Selçuklular Dönemiyle İlgili Bölümler (H. 430-538=1038/39-1143/44)*, p. 37.

⁷⁰ Chartres, p. 150.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 245.

⁷² Ibid., p. 246.

argues that they could control the region during this period because the Muslims were not brave. They could only have been brave if God had given them help.⁷³

Throughout his work Fulcher claims that the few Crusaders were almost always superior to the many Muslims. According to the author this showed that they always fought in the name of God and that God's help proved that they were right, and the Muslims were wrong. For example, in the letter of the Pope to the Crusaders before Antioch the following expressions are used: "We were so few that the enemy thought that we would not fight him, but would flee." But in the next section it is stated; "The grace and mercy of God assisted us so that we who were so few in comparison with them forced them into a mass. With the right hand of God fighting on our side we compelled the Turks, thus herded together, to flee and to abandon their camps with all that they contained."⁷⁴ The author mentions the disadvantages of the fact that the Muslims were more numerous than the Crusaders. According to him the fact that the Muslims were more numerous was the reason for their extreme bravery in the field of battle and that this extreme bravery caused their looking down on the enemies, and this easily led to the defeat on the battle ground.⁷⁵

Fulcher asks why the Muslims did not have courage. According to him, only three hundred knights some of whom had no horses and a number of foot soldiers defended the fortresses of Jerusalem, Jaffa, Ramla and Haifa. Compared with this, there were hundreds of thousands of Muslims in Egypt, Anatolia, Iran and Syria. Why they could not muster the courage to harm the Crusaders is explained by Fulcher in the following way:

Truly it is manifest to all that it was a wonderful miracle that we lived among so many thousands of thousands and as their conquerors made some of them our tributaries and ruined others by plundering them and making them captives. But whence came this virtue? Whence this power? Truly from Him whose name is the Almighty, who, not unmindful of His people labouring in His name, in His mercy aids in their tribulations those who trust in Him alone. Moreover God promises to reward with everlasting glory in the life to come those whom He sometimes makes happy with very little temporal reward.⁷⁶

As Fulcher states, the fact that the Muslims were not apprised of their small numbers is a normal state of affairs. The Muslims were probably informed of the loss of Jerusalem when a part of those coming from there returned. But as Fulcher mentions, it is difficult to establish that they were so few in number. Actually, as has been stated above, the problem was not so much about the numbers as the discord between the Muslim rulers in the region. Indeed, some of them even allied them with the Crusaders.⁷⁷

As mentioned, according to Fulcher, the Crusaders did all the battles and all massacres in these battles in the name of God because God had given them this as a task. But that the Muslims defended themselves and that they killed Crusaders when they fought in order to win back the lands that they had lost, was unjust.⁷⁸ The same logic can be seen in the year 1126 when the Fatimid fleet plundered the coast of Palestine. Fulcher states that "Thus were our enemies harsh and pitiless toward all whom they could get into their power, gloating in their cruelty toward our people."⁷⁹ But they themselves did not put any limits on their deeds. Since they fought in the name of God they were always right and superior.

One of the important arguments in religious wars is the matter of conversion, which is seen as a proof of the superiority of a particular faith. Fulcher does not shrink from using this argument. Even though he himself did not witness it he states that when the army of Corbagath dispersed after the fall of Antioch the defenders in the fortress lost all hope and surrendered to Bohemund and became Christians.⁸⁰ Those who fight in the name of God are always superior. Therefore, one of the ways chosen by those who suffered defeat was conversion. Only those who converted had a chance of staying alive. Fulcher's claim is confirmed by Anonymous *Gesta Francorum*. According to Anonymous, some of the surrenders in the inner castle are said to be Christians.⁸¹ However, *Gesta Tancredi* clarifies this situation. According to it, those who converted to Islam after the inner fortress was taken, were actually Crusaders (certain of Raymond's people) who had converted to Islam during the siege of Antioch

⁷³ Ibid., p. 149.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 110.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 290.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 150.

⁷⁷ See Aydın Usta (2008), *Çıkarların Gölgesinde Haçlı Seferleri*, İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi.

⁷⁸ Chartres, p. 256.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 296.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 110.

⁸¹ Anonim, *Anonim Haçlı tarihi*, p. 133.

due to the various reasons (captivity or starvation). He went further and claimed that the delivery of the inner castle was done through them.⁸² In the same way, Fulcherius's assertion is not justified by the Latin sources, such as Aachen and Willermus, as well as by Muslim sources such as Ibn al-Qalanisi and Ibn al-Athir.⁸³ Therefore, it can be said that Fulcherius, as stated from the beginning, has a production that emphasizes the supremacy of the Crusaders.

Conclusion

Fulcher uses several concepts in order to define the Crusaders. These concepts, which are taken from the Bible and from the words of the Pope, are used to justify a Crusade as a religious affair. As can be seen in the work the way in which the Crusaders defined themselves was a fundamental impetus that structured their behaviour. What was done in this framework, that is, the behaviour during the Crusades, is justified as a behaviour that made it easier to achieve their goal and was sometimes even necessary.

Fulcher claims that the Crusade took place in order to end the oppression of the Eastern Christians. However, the speech of the Pope and the details of the preparatory phase of the campaign do not bear out this. Instead, one of the fundamental motivations was the strife that the world of Western Europe found itself in. In the same way the expressions used in the letter to the Pope show that the Crusaders did not intend to protect the Eastern Christians but that they were a burden for the Crusaders.

Fulcher thinks that the Crusaders were superior to the Muslims in every situation because they possessed an unshakable belief in God. The aim of their coming into the region was to do service to God by purging the holy land of the Muslims that defiled it. Therefore, all their movements were performed to gain the favour of God. They would always be victorious as long as they did not sink into sin but held on to God and their beliefs. Indeed, as long as they preserved their loyalty they would always be rewarded by God. That is, in either case the winners would be the Crusaders.

The fundamental motivation leading to the successes of the Crusades was that many knights who had gone on the campaign had no other alternatives, that is, when they returned home they would again enter a world of strife. Rather than returning to such a life landless counts and knights preferred to gain land through fighting or to die. One of the main motivations for the success of the Crusaders was that the clergymen encouraged them whenever their hopes were waning. But before Antioch and before Jerusalem the Crusaders were successful because they were encouraged by clergymen.

References

- Albert of Aachen, (2007), *Historia Ierosoliminata: History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, Translated by Susan B. Edgington, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Anna Comnena, (2000), *The Alexiad*, Translated by Elizabeth A. S. Dawes, Cambridge: In Parentheses Publications.
- Anonymus, (2013), *Anonim Haçlı tarihi*. Translated by Ergin Ayan, İstanbul: Selenge Yayınları.
- Archer, Thomas A, and Kingsford, Charles L., (1894), *The Crusades: The Story of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.
- Asbridge, Thomas, (2005), *The First Crusade: A New History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ault, Warren O., (1937), *Europe in the Middle Ages*, Boston: D. C. Heath.
- Bloch, Marc, (1965), *Feudal Society: Social Classes and Political Organization*, Translated by L. A. Manyon. Vol. 2, London: Routledge.

⁸² Ralph of Caen, *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen*, 113.

⁸³ Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosoliminata: History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, p. 341; Tyrensis, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond The Sea*, Vol. 1, pp. 259–60; İbn al-Qalanisi, *Ta'rikh Dimashq*, 220; Ibn al-Athir (2002), *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, ed. Khalil Ma'mun Shayha, Beirut: Dar al-marefa, Vol. 8, pp. 397–401.

Davies, Norman, (1996), *Europe: A History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Demirci, Kürşat, (1998), 'Hristiyanlık: Giriş, Tarih', *DİA*. İstanbul: Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları.

Demirkent, Işın, (2004), *Haçlı Seferleri*, İstanbul: Dünya Aktüel.

Di Girolama, Catia, (2014), 'Dinsel Atamalar Mücadelesi', In *Ortaçağ: Katedraller Şövalyeler Şehirler*, edited by Umberto Eco, translated by Leyla Tonguç Basmacı, İstanbul: Alfa Tarih, 27–32.

_____, (2015), 'Karolenj Dönemi Sonrası Tikelcilik', In *Ortaçağ: Barbarlar Hristiyanlar Müslümanlar*, edited by Umberto Eco, translated by Leyla Tonguç Basmacı, İstanbul: Alfa Tarih, 230-233.

Fossier, Robert, (2006), 'The Rural Economy and Demographic Growth'. In *The New Cambridge Medieval History: Vol. 4/2, C.1024-c.1198*, edited by David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 11-46.

Fulcher of Chartres, (1969), *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem, 1095-1127*, Translated by Frances Rita Ryan, Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press.

Hehl, Ernst-Dieter, (2006), 'War, Peace and the Christian Order'. In *The New Cambridge Medieval History: Vol. 4/1, C.1024-c.1198*, edited by David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 185-228.

Ibn al-Athir, (2002), *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, ed. Khalil Ma'mun Shayha, Beyrut: Dar al-Marefa.

İbn al-Qalanisi, (1983), *Ta'rih Dimashq*. Edited by S Zakkar. Damascus.

Kaleli, Emrullah, (2016), 'Haçlı Seferleri ve İslam Dünyası', In *Orta Çağ Tarihi*, edited by S. Hilmi Özkan, İstanbul: İdeal, 553-602.

Kalın, İbrahim, (2016), *Ben, Öteki ve Ötesi İslam-Batı İlişkileri Tarihine Giriş*, İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları.

Landau, Peter, (2006), 'The Development of Law', In *The New Cambridge Medieval History: Volume 4/1, C.1024-c.1198*, edited by David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 113-147.

Le Goff, Jacques, (1992), *Medieval Civilization 400-1500*, Translated by Julia Barrow, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

_____, (2005), *The Birth of Europe*, Translated by Janet Lloyd, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Matthew of Edessa, (1993), *The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, Translated by Ara Edmond Dostourian, Lanham-New York-London: University Press of America.

Nicholas, David, (2009), 'Economy', In *The Central Middle Ages: Europe 950-1320*, edited by Daniel Pover, Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press.

Raiola, Marcella, (2014), 'Doğu İle Batı Kilisesi Arasındaki Bölünme', In *Ortaçağ: Katedraller Şövalyeler Şehirler*, edited by Umberto Eco, translated by Leyla Tonguç Basmacı, İstanbul: Alfa Tarih, 23–27.

Ralp of Cae, (2010), *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen: A History of the Normans on the First Crusade*, Translated by Bernard S. and David S. Bachrach, England: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

Riley-Smith, Jonathan, (1999), 'The Crusading Movement and Historians', In *The Oxford History of The Crusades*, edited by Jonathan Riley-Smith, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1–14.

Riley-Smith, Jonathan, (2009), *What Were the Crusades?*, England and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Robert the Monk, (2017), *Robert the Monk's History of the First Crusade: Historia Iherosolimitana*, Translated by Carol Sweetenham, London and New York: Routledge.

Runciman, Steven, (1995), *A History of the Crusades*, Vol. 2, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sevim, Ali, (2006), trans. *Azîmî Tarihi: Selçuklular Dönemiyle İlgili Bölümler (H. 430-538=1038/39-1143/44)*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu.

Turan, Osman, (2014), *Selçuklular Zamanında Türkiye*, İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat.

Usamah Ibn Munqidh, (1929), *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman And Warrior in The Period of The Crusades: Memoirs of Usama Ibn-Munqidh*, Translated by Philip K. Hitti. New York: Columbia University Press.

Vasiliev, Aleksandr Aleksandrovich, (1952), *History of the Byzantine Empire 324-1453*, Vol. 2, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.

Willermus Tyrensis, (1943), *A History of Deeds Done Beyond The Sea*, trans. by Emily Atwater Babcock and A. C. Krey. Vol. 1, New York: Columbia University Press.