

Ibn Al-Athīr (d 1233), *The Collection of Histories*, in Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 10-11.

THE FRANKS CONQUER JERUSALEM

(IBN AL-ATHĪR, X, 193-95)

Taj ad-Daula Tutūsh¹ was the Lord of Jerusalem but had given it as a fief to the amir Suqmān ibn Artūq the Turcoman. When the Franks defeated the Turks at Antioch the massacre demoralized them, and the Egyptians, who saw that the Turkish armies were being weakened by desertion, besieged Jerusalem under the command of al-Afdal ibn Badr al-Jamali.² Inside the city were Artūq's sons, Suqmān and Ilghazi, their cousin Sunij and their nephew Yaquī. The Egyptians brought more than forty siege engines to attack Jerusalem and broke down the walls at several points. The inhabitants put up a defence, and the siege and fighting went on for more than six weeks. In the end the Egyptians forced the city to capitulate, in sha'bān 489/August 1096.³ Suqmān, Ilghazi and their friends were well treated by al-Afdal, who gave them large gifts of money and let them go free. They made for Damascus and then crossed the Euphrates. Suqmān settled in Edessa and Ilghazi went on into Iraq. The Egyptian governor of Jerusalem was a certain Ifrikhār ad-Daula, who was still there at the time of which we are speaking.

After their vain attempt to take Acre by siege, the Franks moved on to Jerusalem and besieged it for more than six weeks. They built two towers, one of which, near Sion, the Muslims burnt down, killing everyone inside it. It had scarcely ceased to burn before a messenger arrived to ask for help and to bring the news that the other side of the city had fallen. In fact Jeru-

¹ A Syrian Seljuqid, Malikshāh's brother.

² If this date were correct the connection with the fall of Antioch would no longer exist. In fact the date given here is wrong: the Egyptians took Jerusalem in August 1098.

salem was taken from the north on the morning of Friday 22 sha'bān 492/15 July 1099. The population was put to the sword by the Franks, who pillaged the area for a week. A band of Muslims barricaded themselves into the Oratory of David¹ and fought on for several days. They were granted their lives in return for surrendering. The Franks honoured their word, and the group left by night for Ascalon. In the Masjid al-Aqsa the Franks slaughtered more than 70,000 people, among them a large number of Imams and Muslim scholars, devout and ascetic men who had left their homelands to live lives of pious seclusion in the Holy Place. The Franks stripped the Dome of the Rock² of more than forty silver candelabra, each of them weighing 3,600 drams, and a great silver lamp weighing forty-four Syrian pounds, as well as a hundred and fifty smaller silver candelabra and more than twenty gold ones, and a great deal more booty. Refugees from Syria reached Baghdad in ramadan, among them the qadi Abu Sa'd al-Hārāwī. They told the Caliph's ministers a story that wrung their hearts and brought tears to their eyes. On Friday they went to the Cathedral Mosque and begged for help, weeping so that their hearers wept with them as they described the sufferings of the Muslims in that Holy City: the men killed, the women and children taken prisoner, the homes pillaged. Because of the terrible hardships they had suffered, they were allowed to break the fast.

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It was the discord between the Muslim princes, as we shall describe, that enabled the Franks to overrun the country.

¹ The *Mihrab Dawūd*, called the Tower of David in the European sources, in the citadel at Jerusalem. Not to be confused with a small sanctuary of the same name in the Temple precinct.

² The rock from which, the Muslims believe, Muhammad ascended into heaven. Over it was built the so-called 'Mosque of 'Umar', the chief Islamic monument in Jerusalem. It was from this Mosque that the conquerors took their booty. Near by, but separate from it, is the 'Farthest Mosque' (al-Masjid al-Aqsa), where according to Ibn al-Athīr the armies of the Cross showed even greater barbarity. The two sanctuaries are often confused in both Arabic and European sources.