

**FROM THE BOSPHORUS TO KHURASAN:  
THE TURKISH DOMINATION OF ASIA IN THE  
PERCEPTION OF THE CHRONICLERS OF THE FIRST  
CRUSADE**

**İSTANBUL BOĞAZI'NDAN HORASAN'A: BİRİNCİ HAÇLI  
SEFERİ KRONİKLERİ AÇISINDAN ASYA'DA TÜRK  
HÂKİMİYETİ**

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**Abstract**

*Recent writing on the crusades has emphasised how much the military success of the First Crusade (1096-1099) owed to political and religious divisions within the Islamic world, which prevented any united Muslim response. Yet given the implacable rivalries between the Great Seljuk sultanate and its claim to leadership of the Sunnī world, and the Shī'ite caliphate of Egypt, one might well question whether any co-operation between them could have been reasonably expected. Much more significant was the lack of significant co-operation between the different Turkish powers. The Seljuks of Rūm, the Danishmendids, and the Artuqids had become independent powers, while the Seljuk sub-kingdoms and emirates of Aleppo, Damascus and Antioch had a high degree of autonomy from their nominal masters in Persia. Yet apart from the Seljuk heartlands of western Persia, and areas of significant Türkmén immigration, such as the Anatolian highlands and the Jazira, the Turks constituted a small military elite ruling over majority populations of Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians.*

*Whereas some modern writing on the crusades claims that Westerners made few real distinctions between different Muslim groups, key sources show that the crusader leadership had a clear perception of the Turks as a distinct ethnic group separate from their subject populations. Drawing on the evidence of the Gesta Francorum, Fulcher of Chartres, Raymond of Aguilers, and*

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Albert of Aachen, this paper will argue that, in contrast to the historical reality of political fragmentation, Western narrative sources present a picture of a powerful and unified Turkish world which extended from the Rüm-Byzantine borderlands to the original Seljuk homelands in Central Asia. In particular, the mysterious land of Corrozana (the Latin name for the historical Khūrasan) figures in chronicles as the epicentre of this empire, a constant source of military reinforcements and a place to which Christian captives are sent. It is argued that the crusaders' perception of a vast, united Turkish world derived from an awareness of the Turks as a conquering military elite, whose organisation and training ensured an effectiveness out of all proportion to their numbers. By the second half of the twelfth century the Franks even produced a history of the Turks which recorded their conquests from Khūrasan to the Levant. Written in the style of Western origin myths, this history thus gives the Turks a similar status to historic Western peoples such as Trojans, Goths, Normans and Scandinavians. It is a further indication of the mixture of fear and admiration with which the early crusaders viewed their Turkish opponents

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### Keywords

First Crusade (1096-1099), Turks, Khurasan, Latin Chronicles, Origin Myths

### Öz

Yakın dönemde Haçlı Seferleri üzerine yapılan çalışmalarda Birinci Haçlı Seferi'nin (1096-1099) askeri başarısında Müslümanların birlikte hareket etmesinin önüne geçen İslam dünyasındaki siyasi ve dini bölünmelerin ne denli önemli olduğu vurgulanmaktadır. Ne var ki, Büyük Selçuklu Devleti'nin Sünni dünyasında liderlik iddiası ile Mısır'daki Şii Halifelik arasındaki amansız rekabet göz önüne alındığında, aralarında herhangi bir işbirliği olmasını beklemenin makul olup olmadığı tartışılır. Ancak bundan daha da önemlisi, farklı Türk güçleri arasında belirgin bir işbirliği olmamasıydı. Selçukluların Halep, Şam ve Antakya'daki eyaletleri İran'daki sözde yöneticilerinden yüksek ölçüde özerklik elde etmiş, Anadolu Selçukluları, Danişmendliler ve Artuklular bağımsız birer güç haline gelmişti. Ne var ki, Selçukluların İran'ın batısındaki merkezi ile Anadolu yaylaları ve Cezire gibi çok sayıda Türkmen göçmenin bulunduğu bölgeler dışında Türkler, Arap, Yunan ve Ermenilerden oluşan çoğunluk topluluklarını yöneten küçük, askeri bir elit kesimi teşkil ediyordu.

Haçlı Seferleri hakkındaki bazı modern çalışmalarda, Batılıların farklı Müslüman grupları arasında gerçekte pek ayırım yapmadığı iddia edilmesine rağmen, konuya ilişkin ana kaynaklar Haçlı liderlerinin Türkleri yönettikleri topluluklardan ayrı, müstakil bir etnik grup olarak algıladıklarını göstermektedir. Gesta Francorum ile Chartres'lı Fulcherus, Aguilers'li Raimundus ve Aachen'lı Albertus'un eserlerindeki kanıtlara dayanarak, bu tebliğde, Batılı yazılı kaynaklarda, siyasi parçalanmanın tarihsel gerçekliğinin aksine, Anadolu Selçukluları ile Bizans arasındaki sınırdan Büyük Selçukluların Orta Asya'daki vatanına uzanan güçlü ve birleşik bir Türk dünyası ortaya koyulduğu iddia edilmektedir. Vakayinamelerde, özellikle gizemli Corrozana (tarihsel Horasan kentinin Latince adı) bu imparatorluğun merkez üssü olarak yer almakta; Horasan'dan sabit askeri takviye kaynağı ve Hristiyan tutsakların gönderildiği yer olarak bahsedilmektedir. Haçlıların engin

*ve birleşik Türk dünyası algısının ardında ise sayıca az olmalarına rağmen örgütlenmeleri ve eğitimleri sayesinde beklenmedik bir etkinlik gösteren Türklerin Haçlılar tarafından fetheden, askeri bir elit olarak görülmelerinin yattığı ileri sürülmektedir. On ikinci yüzyılın ikinci yarısında Franklar tarafından Horasan'dan Levant'a Türklerin fetihlerini kayıt altına alan bir Türk tarihi dahi kaleme alınmıştır. Batının köken efsaneleri tarzında yazılan bu tarihi anlatı, böylelikle Türklere Troyalılar, Gotlar, Normanlar ve İskandinavlar gibi tarihsel Batılı halklarınkine benzer bir statü vermektedir. Bu da, erken dönem Haçlıların Türk hasımlarına karşı duyduğu korku ve hayranlık karışımının bir diğer göstergesidir.*

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#### **Anahtar Kelimeler**

*I. Haçlı Seferi (1096-1099), Türkler, Horasan, Latin Kronikleri, Yaratılış Efsaneleri*



## INTRODUCTION

The vast conquests made by the Seljuk leaders Chagri, Tughril and Alp Arslan, together with the migration of nomadic Türkmen into Iran, Iraq, Mesopotamia and above all, Anatolia, ensured that by the time Pope Urban II made his call for the liberation of Jerusalem in 1095, almost all of the Asian continent between the Mediterranean Sea and the Amu Darya was dominated by rulers of Turkish origin.<sup>1</sup> The only exceptions were on the western peripheries: the Byzantine empire clung on to parts of the Aegean and Black Sea coasts, while the cities of the Palestinian littoral from Ascalon as far as Tripoli were either held by the Fātimid caliphate of Egypt, or at least acknowledged its authority. Urban's main goal for the crusade was the liberation of Jerusalem and of Christian populations living under Turkish rule in Palestine and Syria. He was also undoubtedly keen to recover territories which the Byzantine empire had lost since its great defeat at the hands of at the battle of Manzikert (Malazgirt) in 1071. Yet in the event, the deteriorating relations between crusaders and Emperor Alexios I Komnenos made the crusade leaders less willing than the pope had been to support a Byzantine restoration in Asia Minor. This circumstance explains why, after the city of Nicaea (Izник) was handed over to Alexios on its capture from the Seljuk sultan of Rūm in 1097, the crusaders made no further attempt to seize and hold on to further territory until they reached areas in the south-east of Anatolia with substantial Greek or Armenian populations, which they hoped would assist their domination, as occurred, for example, at Tarsos, Edessa (Urfa) and Antioch (Antakya).<sup>2</sup> Yet despite varying strategies pursued by the crusaders along different sections of their march to Jerusalem, it was evident that the

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<sup>1</sup>Sergei Agadshyanow, *Der Staat der Seldschukiden und Mittelasien im 11.-12. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1994); A. C. S. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire* (Edinburgh, 2015), pp. 1-71; Claude Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey: A General Survey of the Material and Spiritual Culture and History c. 1071-1330* (London, 1968), pp. 20-30.

<sup>2</sup>There is no absolute agreement among historians on the aims of Urban II in proclaiming the crusade in 1095, but the weight of current scholarly opinion agrees on the centrality of Jerusalem and the Holy Land in his plans, and certainly it was this goal, rather than assisting Byzantium, which found the greatest appeal among the crusaders themselves. See especially: H. E. John Cowdrey, 'Pope Urban II's Preaching of the First Crusade', *History* 55 (1970), 177-88; Jean Flori, *La Guerre sainte: La Formation de l'idée de croisade dans l'Occident chrétien* (Paris, 2001); Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History*, 2nd edn (London, 2005), pp. 2-8. On south-eastern Anatolia and Upper Mesopotamia, see: James H. Forse, 'Armenians and the First Crusade', *Journal of Medieval History* 17 (1991), 13-22; Christopher MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East: Rough Tolerance* (Philadelphia, 2007).

opposing forces that would confront them would be made up primarily of Turks. The aim of this essay is to examine how these Turkish powers were perceived by the crusaders in distinction to both Muslim and Christian Arabs as well as Greeks and Armenians.

Given their long-standing rivalry, there was little prospect of any co-operation between the Great Seljuk sultanate, with its claim to leadership of Sunnī Islam, and the Ismaʿīlī caliphate held by the Fātimid dynasty in Egypt.<sup>3</sup> Yet even the Turkish world was politically fragmented. The violent deaths in rapid succession of the Seljuk vizier Nizām al-Mulk and the sultan Malik Shāh in 1092 left the Great Seljuk territories in Iran, Iraq, Khurasan and Azerbaijan contested by the sultan's sons, who consequently had little interest in what was happening in the lands far to the west.<sup>4</sup> The areas through which the crusaders moved were held by a number of Turkish powers that were more or less independent of the Great Seljuks. Anatolia was divided between the Seljuk sultanate of Rūm in the west and the Danishmendid emirate in the east. Syria had been held by Malik-Shāh's brother Tutush, but on his death in 1095, Tutush's kingdom was split when his eldest son Ridwan seized Aleppo, while a younger son, Duqaq, established himself in Damascus. Each of the two brothers functioned as an independent ruler (*malik*), but they put most of their energies into combating the other. In the course of the war between them, Türkmen amirs were able to function more or less independently in Antioch, Saruj, 'Azaz, Edessa and Jerusalem. Even those Turkish commanders who were nominally subordinates of rulers elsewhere could not be relied upon to give loyalty. Thus in 1098, soon after the arrival of the crusaders, 'Umar, the amir of the city of 'Azaz, revolted against his lord Ridwan. Threatened with a punitive expedition from his lord, 'Umar asked for military assistance from one of the crusade leaders, Raymond of Saint-Gilles, whose troops fended off Ridwan's army, but also plundered much of the area. Thus not only did these two Turkish leaders fail to co-operate against the crusaders, but they allowed the invaders to secure much needed supplies at a

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<sup>3</sup>While the crusaders were held up at Antioch during the winter of 1097-98, a Fātimid embassy was sent to seek a common alliance against the Seljuks, a phenomenon that shows how little the Fātimids understood the ultimate objectives of the crusade. See Hadia Dajani-Shakeel, 'Diplomatic Relations between Muslim and Frankish Rulers 1097-1153 A.D.', in *Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth-Century Syria*, ed. Maya Shatzmiller (Leiden, 1993), pp. 190-215 (here 192-96).

<sup>4</sup>Carole Hillenbrand, '1092: A Murderous Year', *The Arabist: Budapest Studies in Arabic* 15-16 (1995), 281-96; Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, pp. 76-80.

time when the crusade was in danger of stalling at Antioch.<sup>5</sup> Emperor Alexios Komnenos, Pope Urban II and others in the West were undoubtedly aware of these divisions among the Turks, which made the time propitious for an attempt to recover the Holy Land for Christendom.<sup>6</sup>

The military strength available to each Turkish power varied considerably. Great Seljuk generals and viziers could each dispose of military forces consisting of tens of thousands of men. The Seljuks of Rūm had an *'askar* of professional *mamlūk* soldiers that was much smaller, possibly a couple of thousand men. However, like the Danishmendid and Artukid amirs, they could count on the support of the many thousands of nomadic Türkmen tribesmen who had occupied the Anatolian highlands. Although Kiliç Arslan I of Rūm was defeated by the crusaders at the battle of Dorylaion (Eskişehir) on 1 July 1097, the military effectiveness of both Seljuks and Danishmendids could be seen in 1101, when they inflicted defeats on all four contingents of the next wave of crusades from the West. The Seljuk *maliks* based in Aleppo and Damascus probably had fewer *mamlūks* and Türkmen than the Turks of Anatolia, although they had urban militias of Arabs. In the other cities beyond these capitals, for example at Antioch and Edessa, Turkish commanders often had at their disposal even smaller forces numbering only hundreds of professional soldiers. In 1098 the Fātimids seized Jerusalem from Suqman and Ilghāzi, sons of the Türkmen chief Artuk, who were governing the city; the Turkish garrison consisted only of a few hundred men.<sup>7</sup> The essential point is that unlike Anatolia, the different Turkish regimes in Cilicia, Upper Mesopotamia and Syriawere a small, largely military elite ruling over majority populations of Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians, who often resented this alien rule. These circumstances can be seen on the approach of the crusaders in 1097, when in cities such as Tarsus and Edessa, the Christian populations rose up and attempted to massacre or expel their Turkish garrisons, summoning the crusaders to their aid.<sup>8</sup>

It is important to recognise that the crusaders had no real understanding of the Turks as Muslims. In fact, at this time few Western Christians had any

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<sup>5</sup> Dajani-Shakeel, 'Diplomatic Relations between Muslim and Frankish Rulers, pp. 198-99.

<sup>6</sup>Carole Hillenbrand, 'The First Crusade: The Muslim Perspective', in *The First Crusade: Origins and Impact*, ed. Jonathan Phillips (Manchester, 1997), pp. 130-41.

<sup>7</sup>Thereafter the Artukids relocated to Mesopotamia. See Carole Hillenbrand, *A Muslim Principality in Crusader Times* (Leiden, 1990).

<sup>8</sup>John France, *Victory in the East: A Military History of the First Crusade* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 157, suggests that Sultan Kiliç Arslan I did not have more than 10,000 Turkish soldiers available, which presumably included both *mamlūks* and Türkmen auxiliaries.

knowledge about Islam, and since conversion of Muslims was not an aim of Urban II, the crusaders had little curiosity about it. The first Latin translation of the Qu'rān was not undertaken until the mid-twelfth century, and even after that it was only studied by small numbers of theologians and missionaries. If they describe Turks in religious terms, Westerners refer to them as 'pagans'. In so far as they knew anything about Islam, Westerners regarded the faith quite inaccurately as a polytheistic religion, whose adherents worshipped a variety of deities, many of them drawn from the Greco-Roman pantheon of Antiquity.<sup>9</sup> Westerners had a much better grasp of ethnicity as a factor of difference, and they were clearly aware that the Turks were quite distinct from the Arabs and other peoples. In fact, Urban II had stressed the recent arrival of this warlike people in his appeal for a crusade at the Council of Clermont, highlighting how they had seized control of the Near East within a short time.<sup>10</sup> The pope's preaching may well have contributed to the impressions of Christian chroniclers, whose writings tend to give the impression of a largely united Turkish world which stands in contrast to the political realities of the time as described above. In what follows I will draw on the evidence of some of the key chronicles to argue that Western narrative sources present a largely coherent picture of a powerful and unified Turkish world that extended from the Rūm-Byzantine borderlands to the original Seljuk homelands in Central Asia. The writers are the Frenchmen Raymond of Aguilers and Peter Tudebode and the anonymous (probably Italian-Norman) author of the *Gesta Francorum*, all three of whom were participants in the crusade. The fourth is the German chronicler Albert of Aachen, whose account of the crusade is by far the most detailed of any of the narratives.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Matthew Bennett, 'First Crusaders' Images of Muslims: The Influence of Vernacular Poetry?', *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 22 (1986), 101-22; John V. Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York, 2002); Sini Kangas, 'Inimicus Dei et sanctae Christianitatis? Saracens and Their Prophet in Twelfth-Century Crusade Propaganda and Western Travesties of Muhammad's Life', in *The Crusades and the Near East*, ed. Conor Kostick (London, 2011), pp. 131-60.

<sup>10</sup>Dana C. Munro, 'The Speech of Pope Urban II at Clermont, 1095', *American Historical Review* 11 (1906), 231-42; Alan V. Murray, 'Franks and Indigenous Communities in Palestine and Syria (1099-1187): A Hierarchical Model of Social Interaction in the Principalities of Outremer', in *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Time: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin, 2013), pp. 291-309.

<sup>11</sup>On the background to these sources, see Alan V. Murray, 'The Siege and Capture of Jerusalem in Western Narrative Sources of the First Crusade', in *Jerusalem the Golden: The Origins and Impact of the First Crusade*, ed. Susan B. Edgington and Luis García-Guijarro (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 191-215.

A central place in this image of the Turkish world is held by the province of Khurasan in Persia, a region which covered much of the north-east of present-day Iran, as well as parts of modern Afghanistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.<sup>12</sup> In the first half of the eleventh century Khurasan was invaded and annexed by the Seljuk Turks, and during the reigns of the sultans Alp Arslan (1063-72) and his son Malik Shāh (1072-92), many of the empire's administrators and military leaders, both Persian and Turkish, originated from Khurasan. In this sense the province could be regarded as playing a key role in the empire. Malik Shāh's eldest son Barkyaruq was obliged to make Khurasan into an apanage for his younger brother Sanjar. Sanjar ruled there more or less independently until he himself succeeded as sultan in 1118.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, at the time of the First Crusade, Khurasan was practically independent from the centre of Seljuk power in western Iran and Iraq, and (from a European perspective) was the farthest, most easterly part of the Turkish world. It is therefore remarkable that the crusade chroniclers have a great deal to say about a place known in Latin as *Corrozana*, *Corruzana* or *Corosanum*, which are the forms of name used by them for the historical Khurasan. At first sight it might appear as if this name is merely often listed by the chroniclers as one among many other regions that were part of the Turkish world, such as Syria, Persia, and *Romania*, that is the name applied to former Byzantine territories in Anatolia. However, on closer inspection *Corrozana* can be seen to have more distinct characteristics than the other regions. Even from the time of the earliest encounters between the crusaders and Seljuks in Asia Minor, which was of course the *westernmost* area of Turkish domination, Khurasan in the distant east repeatedly figures as a destination to which Christian prisoners are sent by their Turkish captors. The anonymous *Gesta Francorum* relates that when the forces of the so-called 'People's Crusades' were defeated near Nicaea in 1096, the Turks 'took their prisoners home to Khorasan, Antioch or Aleppo or wherever they happened to live', while later captives were sent away 'through all the neighbouring lands, some to Khorasan and some to Persia'.<sup>14</sup> When the main crusade armies were besieging

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<sup>12</sup>David Morgan, *Medieval Persia, 1040-1797* (London, 1988), p. 5; Agadshyanow, *Der Staat der Seldschukiden und Mittelasiens im 11.-12. Jahrhundert*.

<sup>13</sup>Cambridge History of Iran, 5: *The Saljuq and Mongol Periods*, ed. J.A. Boyle (Cambridge, 1968), p. 108.

<sup>14</sup>*Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum: The Deeds of the Franks and the Other Pilgrims to Jerusalem*, ed. and trans. Rosalind Hill (London, 1962), p. 4: *quidam conducebant suos in domum suam, alios in Corosanum, alios in Antiochiam, alios in Aleph, aut ubi ipsi manebant*; p. 5: *disperserunt illos per uniuersos regions has, alios in Corosanum, alios in Persidem*. See also Peter Tudebode, 'Petri Tudebodi seu Tudebovis, sacerdotis Sivracensis, Historia de Hierosolymitano itinere', in *Recueil des Historiens des*



Antioch, the Turkish garrison are described as 'exulting in their certainty of victory, bringing with them ropes with which to lead us bound into Khorasan'.<sup>15</sup>In the defeat of the Crusade of 1101, we are told that the victorious Seljuks and Danishmends 'filled the land and kingdom of Khurasan with very great wealth and plunder', while many thousands of women were carried off 'into the land of Khurasan in eternal exile'.<sup>16</sup>In a kind of mirror image of this characteristic, when the Turks are defeated by the crusaders, Khurasan is one of the places to which survivors flee in order to put themselves in a position of safety. When the crusaders defeat a Turkish force during the siege of Antioch, Peter Tudebode tells how the Turks fled, 'some to Khurasan and some to the land of the Saracens'; this formulation can hardly have been accurate, but rather seems to be a hyperbole employed to emphasise the completeness of the defeat.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, a common topos in the fictitious speeches attributed to Turkish leaders is their fear that the increasingly victorious crusaders will drive the Turks out of their territories; thus in two accounts Yaghi-Siyan, the amir of Antioch under Ridwan of Aleppo, fears that the Franks 'want to drive us out of Rum and Syria and even from Khorasan'.<sup>18</sup>These two motifs are both characteristic of a distinct feature of the literary Khurasan, that is its remoteness, with a position on the farthest periphery of the Turkish world.

A second characteristic of Khurasan is as a reserve of Turkish soldiers, which again can be seen from the earliest encounters in Anatolia. Albert of Aachen states that when Kiliç Arslan I, the sultan of Rüm (here called *Solimannus*, i.e. Ibn Suleyman) first heard about the arrival of the Christians, 'he assembled fifteen thousand Turks from all Rüm and the kingdom of Khurasan, men of war who were very experienced with the horn and bone bow and were very mobile

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*Croisades: Historiens Occidentaux*, ed. Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 5 vols (Paris, 1841-1906), 3: 12-13. In giving English versions of quotations from the sources I have retained the variant spellings Khurasan and Khorasan which are both used in the published translations.

<sup>15</sup>*Gesta Francorum*, p. 15: *Qui rursus uenerunt auxilio aliorum gaudentes et exultantes ad certum bellum, trahentes secum funes, quibus nos ligatos ducerent Corosanum*; Baldric of Dol, 'Baldrici episcopi Dolensis Historia Ierosolimitana', in *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades: Historiens Occidentaux*, 4: 19, 145.

<sup>16</sup> Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana: History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, ed. and trans. Susan B. Edgington, 2 vols (Oxford, 2007), pp. 622-23: *terram et regnum Corruzana diuitiis nimiis et spoliis auxerunt et impleuerunt*, pp. 630-31: *nisi quod aiunt eam inter tot milia matronarum in terram Corruzana eterno exilio deportatam*.

<sup>17</sup> Peter Tudebode, p. 45.

<sup>18</sup>*Gesta Francorum*, p. 50: *nosque alienare a regione Romaniae siue Syriae, adhuc autem et Corrozani*. See also Peter Tudebode, p. 60.

archers'.<sup>19</sup> It is to Khurasan that messengers are sent from the outlying Turkish-held territories to seek advice and military assistance from the sultan and caliph (a duality sometimes perceived as a kind of Muslim parallel to the Christian emperor and pope), and it is from there that Turkish armies and reinforcements emanate.<sup>20</sup> Thus Raymond of Aguilers identifies the amir Karbuqa as 'the commander of the caliph at the head of a large army from Corozan' who came to the relief of Antioch.<sup>21</sup>

Albert of Aachen describes the kingdom of *Corruzana* as a land enclosed by mountains and marshes, so that 'anyone who is captured and enters there is unable to come out again... unless with the licence and permission of the Turks'.<sup>22</sup> This seems to be a reasonably accurate reflection of the mountainous character of Khurasan, but Albert's statement that Baghdad is the capital of the kingdom (*civitatem Baldach, quae est caput regni Corrozana*) means that in this text the name clearly denotes much more than the historical province; it seems actually to refer to the greater part of the empire of the Great Seljuks.<sup>23</sup> The Seljuk ruler at the time (the historical sultan Barkyaruq) is referred to as *soltanus* or *rex Corruzan*, and Khurasan is regarded as the land of his birth.<sup>24</sup>

We can gain a more detailed sense of the characteristics of this literary Khurasan in two extended descriptions that occur in different crusade chronicles. The first occurs in the history of Albert of Aachen, who gives a description of a council of war held by Yaghi-Siyhan, the Turkish amir of Antioch, at a point when the crusaders were besieging the city. Supposedly, Yaghi-Siyhan sends Kiliç Arslan of Rûm as his envoy to the Great Seljuk sultan to ask for military assistance, saying, 'you shall set out for Khurasan in the land and kingdom of our birth'.<sup>25</sup> Albert continues:

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<sup>19</sup> Albert of Aachen, pp. 34-35.

<sup>20</sup> *Gesta Francorum*, p. 52; Albert of Aachen, pp. 694, 701. This characteristic is also present in the Old French crusade epic; all four occurrences of the name *Coroscane* in the *Chanson d'Antioche* refer to it as a source of Saracen military forces: *Chanson d'Antioche*, ed. Suzanne Duparc-Quioic (Paris, 1976), lines 4760, 5080, 9379, 9387.

<sup>21</sup> Raymond of Aguilers, *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades: Historiens Occidentaux* 3: 246.

<sup>22</sup> Albert of Aachen, pp. 610-13: *Terra autem et regnum Corruzana sic montanis et aquarum paludibus undique clausum est, ut quicumque captiui semel illuc intrauerint, non ultra hinc magis quam pecus a cauea exire ualeant, nisi licentia et permissione Turcorum.*

<sup>23</sup> Albert of Aachen, pp. 594-97.

<sup>24</sup> Albert of Aachen, pp. 248-53.

<sup>25</sup> Albert of Aachen, pp. 248-49: *Tu, generis mei proximus, cum duodecim legatis meis et filio meo sansadonia, Corruzan In terram et regnum natiuitatis nostre profecturus es.*

So they came to a certain town called Samarthan, which belonged to the kingdom of Khurasan, in very great splendour and extravagance and in great magnificence. There they found in great glory the great prince and sultan himself, ruling over all kings and princes in the eastern region, and Prince Karbugha the king's second-in-command.<sup>26</sup>

The name Samarthan seems reminiscent of Samarkand in Central Asia, but as it figures as the sultan's capital, it is more likely that it is meant to represent one of the central cities of the empire in Iran, such as Isfahan. But it is interesting that it is placed in Khurasan, which in the Latin chronicle thus seems to have a far greater geographical extent than the historical province in the extreme east of the empire. The Great Seljuk ruler is described as the 'king of Khurasan' or 'sultan of Khurasan, who is the chief and prince of the Turks' (*Corruzan soltano, qui caput et princeps est Turcorum*), and it is this region that provides soldiers and supplies for the recapture of Antioch from the crusaders. Albert's description of this Turkish legation and council of war in the Great Seljuk capital is a highly literary construction, yet it may be evidence of considerable historical research combined with pure imagination.

We find a similar account in an equally invented passage, which has become much more famous in crusade scholarship. This describes a scene after Karbuqa, atabeg of Mosul, has marched to the relief of Antioch; this episode is noteworthy as being one of the few occasions when Turkish leaders from different regions were prepared to co-operate against the crusaders. The author of the *Gesta Francorum* credits Karbuqa with a speech in which he supposedly shows his disdain for the crusaders, when he reacts haughtily to the sight of some captured crusader weapons of evidently inferior quality:

... Karbuqa began to chuckle, and said to all those who were present, 'Are these the warlike and splendid weapons which the Christians have brought into Asia against us, and with these do they confidently expect to drive us beyond the furthest boundaries of Khorasan, and to blot out our names beyond the rivers of the Amazons? Are these the people who drove all our forefathers out of Rum and from the royal city of Antioch, which is the honoured capital of all Syria?' Then he called his scribe and said, 'Be quick and write many letters which may be read in

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<sup>26</sup>Albert of Aachen, pp. 250-51: *Venerunt siquidem in apparatu et sumptu nimio et in gloria magna ad ciuitatem qandam Sanmarthan que erat de regno Corruzan. In qua ipsum principem magnum et sceptrigerum soltanum super omnes reges et principes orientalis plage, Corbahanque principem et secundum a rege in gloria magna repererunt.*

Khorasan, in these words: "To the khalif our pope and the lord sultan our king ... know also that I have got all the Franks shut up in Antioch, and I hold the citadel in my power while they are down below in the city. I have them all in my hands, and I will have them either executed or led into Khorasan in most bitter captivity, because they threaten to repulse us by their weapons and to drive us out of all our lands, as they drove our forefathers out of Rum and Syria"<sup>27</sup>.

Interestingly, we find relatively new information (or suppositions) about the Turks combined with learning derived from the classical period (for example, the reference to the Amazons), but the important point is that within a single speech, we find Khurasan being depicted as the centre of Turkish power, the farthest limit of the Turkish world, and a place of oppressive captivity. Thus the name *Corrozana* and its variants can be seen to have quite specific but distinct characteristics, even within the same work. However, it is perhaps surprising that references to Khurasan should be so frequent, especially in Latin historiography, when we consider how peripheral the actual role of the province within the Seljuk empire was at the time of the First Crusade.

Two different factors may be significant here. Firstly, at least among reasonably learned writers in the West, there was knowledge and awareness of the origins of the Turks in Central Asia. At the time of the First Crusade, the author of the *Gesta Francorum* claimed that 'the Turks declare themselves to be of the same origin as the Franks, and that no men, except the Franks and themselves, are naturally born to be knights'.<sup>28</sup> It is unclear on what this claim is based, but it is evident that the anonymous author was so impressed by the fighting abilities of the Turks of Asia Minor, that he wished to distinguish them from the other Muslim peoples by according them a similar status with Westerners. A similar, but more elaborate statement of Turkish origins can be found in the writings of the great Frankish chronicler William of Tyre, who was writing in the third

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<sup>27</sup>*Gesta Francorum*, pp. 51-52: *Tunc Curbaram coepit surridere, palam dicens omnibus: 'haec sunt arma bellica et nitida, quae attulerunt Christiani super nos in Asiam, quibus putant nos et confidunt expellere ultra confinia Corrozanae, et delere omnia nostra ultra Amazonia flumina; qui propulerunt omnes parentes nostros a Romania, Antiochia urbe regia quae est honorabile caput totius Syriae?' Mox convocavit suum notarium, et ait: 'Scribe cito plures cartas quae in Corrozania sint legendae; videlicet Caliphae nostro apostolico, ac nostri regi domino Soldano ... Adhuc quoque sciant omnes, quoniam ego cunctos Francos intus in Antiochia conclusos habeo, et castrum in mea libera teneo voluntate, illi vero deorsum sunt in civitate. Habeo etiam omnes illos iam in mea manu, eosque faciam aut capitalem subire sententiam, aut deduci in Corrozanam in captivitatem nimiam, eo quod minantur nos suis armis propulsare et expellere ab omnibus finibus nostris; ceu eiecerunt omnes parentes nostros a Romania sive Syria'. See also Peter Tudebode, p. 78.*

<sup>28</sup>*Gesta Francorum*, p. 21: *Verumtamen dicunt se esse de Francorum generatione, et quia nullus homo naturaliter debet esse miles nisi Franci et illi.*

quarter of the twelfth century. William did extensive research on the Muslim peoples for a work which he refers to as the 'History of the Eastern Princes' (*Historia ... de principibus orientalibus*).<sup>29</sup> This history has not survived, but it is possible to see some glimpses of it in William's better-known chronicle of the First Crusade and the history of Outremer up to the year 1186, which often incorporates pieces of information on the Eastern peoples. At one point William observes that since he will have a great deal to say about the Turks, he will give a short account of their origin. He starts with an intriguing statement:

The people of the Turks or Türkmen – for they have the same origin – was at first a northern one. They take their name (as they themselves maintain and as is also contained in our chronicles) from a certain Turcus, a leader under whom they fled after the fall of Troy to northern regions, where they gave up the use of arms and devoted themselves to their flocks and herds, a people quite uncivilised and without fixed habitation.<sup>30</sup>

This claim for a Trojan origin of the Turks is of course fanciful and derives from a Western literary tradition, which sought Scandinavian or Trojan origins for a whole range of ancient peoples from the Goths onwards.<sup>31</sup> This is confirmed by William's statement about 'our chronicles'. However, He seems to have combined this Western tradition with actual knowledge of Turkish migrations, especially from the point that the Turks entered Islamic history. He tells how they crossed a river known as Cobar and lived as tributaries under the ruler of Persia. As their numbers multiplied, they became aware of their growing power, deciding that the main obstacle to the conquest of Persia was the fact that they had no king 'as was the custom among other peoples'. They then elected a chieftain named *Solduc* (i.e. Seljuk) as their king and proceed to conquer the entire East. William's account of the Turks thus shows a combination of Western literary traditions as well as some of the actual history of the Turks, especially their origins in the area around the Aral Sea. However, he does not use the name

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<sup>29</sup>On William and his works, see Peter W. Edbury and John Gordon Rowe, *William of Tyre: Historian of the Latin East* (Cambridge, 1988).

<sup>30</sup> William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens, 2 vols (Turnhout, 1986), p. 116: *Gens igitur Turcorum sive Turcomannorum – nam ab eodem habuerunt originem – ab initio septentrionalis fit. Dicti autem sunt prout ipsi asserunt idque ipsum etiam in nostris continetur cronicis, a quodam eorum duce Turco nomine, sub quo post excidium Troianum ad regions Yperboreas se contulerunt, ubi armorum usu relicto procurandis gregibus et armentis vacabant, gens inculta penitus et certam non habens sedem.*

<sup>31</sup> František Graus, 'Troja und trojanische Herkunftssagen im Mittelalter', in *Kontinuität und Transformation der Antike im Mittelalter*, ed. Willi Erzgräber (Sigmaringen, 1989), pp. 25-43; Herwig Wolfram, 'Le genre de l'origo gentis', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 68 (1990), 789-801.

Khurasan, although his geographical knowledge takes in this area. This, however, may be a consequence of his education and known classicising tendencies, which caused him to reject neologisms.

When describing the regions through which the crusaders passed, the First Crusade chronicles employed well established names from regions which were well known since classical times, such as Persia, Syria, and Cappadocia. They also adopted the newer name *Romania*, which derived from the Arabic name for Byzantine territory in Anatolia (*Rūm*), as can be seen in many of the examples discussed above. By contrast, the four chroniclers discussed here use different forms of the name Khurasan in Latin: *Corrozana* (with a feminine grammatical ending), *Corosanum* (neuter ending) and forms such as *Corruzan* without any inflectional ending. Forms used by other writers include *Corathania* and *Corotamia*.<sup>32</sup>This diversity suggests that the name Khurasan was written in such different ways by the crusade writers because it was unfamiliar to them, and that it came to prominence because they or their informants heard it from Turks or Arabs themselves.

I would argue that the use of this name derives from the importance of the traditional Turkish homelands as a source of military recruitment. On their march from Nicaea as far as Syria, the crusaders were confronted with highly mobile, efficient and disciplined armies of Turkish mounted soldiers. Most of these professional slave soldiers, i.e. *aghlām* and *mamlūks*, were recruited from the original areas of Turkish settlement in Central Asia, that is areas corresponding to or close to the province of Khurasan. Even though they were employed by different rulers, the similarity of the armaments, weapons and tactics employed by each Turkish force may have convinced the crusaders, and the chroniclers who wrote about them, that they were all part of a vast, united Turkish world.<sup>33</sup>This status as a source of military strength made the mysterious kingdom of Khurasan into a distant but powerful territory that gradually developed additional characteristics so that in the crusade narratives it changed its place from one of distance and peripheral status to one of centrality, as the crucible of the Turkish world. It would seem that the efficient military forces that the crusaders encountered throughout Anatolia and Syria were not necessarily seen as settled local populations, but as evidence of the military support that was sent out from the centre of the Turkish empire to its satellites (as the crusaders imagined them) in the far west. In the crusade chronicles, *Corrozana* is the nerve-centre of the

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<sup>32</sup> See *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades: Historiens Occidentaux*, p. 929.

<sup>33</sup> Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh, 1999), pp. 440-44.

Seljuk world and the primary source of its power, both military and political. It is the Turkish homeland *par excellence*, and central in terms of political power.

The chroniclers may have been even more impressed by this apparent unity of the Turkish territories because they were aware that it contrasted with the Christian world at the time. Almost all of the Western chroniclers describe the many differences and antipathies between the Westerners and the Byzantines that produced numerous disputes and threatened the success of the crusade on several occasions. Even Western Christendom was divided within itself. The long-running dispute between the pope and the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV concerning investitures and the control of the Church meant that most of Germany and much of northern Italy did not give allegiance to Urban II, the pope who proclaimed the crusade, which was reflected in the poor response to his appeal in these countries. When the crusader Fulcher of Chartres describes how he and his companions visited Rome while they were travelling through Italy, access to many of the famous shrine churches was made difficult because they were under the control of Urban's rival, the imperialist antipope Clement III (Wibert of Ravenna).<sup>34</sup> Even Albert of Aachen, writing in the Rhineland, has such an imperialist perspective that his account of the crusade gives the credit for the initiative of the crusade not to Pope Urban, but to the popular preacher Peter the Hermit.<sup>35</sup> Finally, this contrast between a perceived, if inaccurate view of a united, powerful Turkish world and a small army of crusaders also served to magnify the great achievements of the Christian warriors and to give proof of the divine direction and favour which brought them to their goal of a liberated Jerusalem.

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<sup>34</sup>Fulcheri Carnotensis *Historia Hierosolymitana*, ed. Heinrich Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg, 1913), pp. 143-53, 164-66.

<sup>35</sup>Albert of Aachen, pp. 3-9.

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