

English Abstract

This study took as its field all of the Arabic poetry that was composed about Jerusalem during the Crusades, the greater events thereof and the heroes who waged on the Jihad or holy war for liberation of Jerusalem during three consecutive periods:

1. 490-492 A.H. This is when the Crusaders occupied the Holy Land.
2. 493-583 A.H. This is the period of bloody struggle that was crowned with the liberation of Jerusalem.
3. 584-648 A.H. This is the period of great grief for the Muslims because of the death of their hero Salah Addin (Saladdin) and the recapture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders. This period ends with the Ayyoubid era.

The emphasis on Jerusalem in this study entailed that the preface be followed by an introduction that discussed in brief the names of Jerusalem, their significance, the city ancient history, its position under the Muslim caliphate and finally its occupation by the Crusaders.

In addition to that, this study consists in six chapters:

Chapter one deals with the general conditions prevailing in Greater Syria during the Crusades with special attention to greater events, general social phenomena, culture and economy.

Chapter two discusses the nature of the conflict and the role played by Arabic poetry therein. It shows that this conflict was religious and that it purported in the Crusaders invading the Holy Land and in the Muslims waging Jihad or Holy War to repel the Crusaders and liberate the country. This chapter further exposes the functional role played by Arabic poetry in this connection through its call for Muslim Unity and Power, through its praise of Holy Fighters (Mujahideen) and its ridicule of the Crusaders, and through exhortation of Mujahideen to liberate Jerusalem.

Chapter three conveys this study to the second stage in the struggle for Jerusalem, a stage which reached its climax in the liberation of the city; an event which was long reverberated in Arabic poetry thereafter. This chapter included as well poetry that sang the good news and congratulations on the occasions of liberation, gave description of the fighting at the battle of Hittin and in the battles around Jerusalem that culminated in its liberation, and depicted the Muslim hero Saladdin versus the antagonist Crusaders.

Chapter four deals with the third period in which Saladdin dies and Jerusalem falls again in the hands of the Crusaders. We will therefore find in this chapter eulogies lamenting death of the hero, expressing concern over the tremendous vacuum his death occasioned, underlining the importance of his presence for re-establishment of the Nation's unity, and lamenting the miserable conditions Jerusalem was experiencing between occupation and liberation.

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Chapter five expounds the important role of poetry as a historical record registering features of the major battles, the names and nature of battle fields, also to what extent the student of this poetry can benefit from the historical information embodied therein about the major events in the struggle between Muslims and Crusaders.

In addition to the numerous art problems tackled in the previous chapters, necessity required assigning a new chapter, chapter six, for discussion of the artistic particulars of this poetry such as the traditional and new artistic pictures, special attention to some verbal decorations and rhetorical improvements, the phenomenon of sticking to the prevailing traditions and the general structural frame of these poems. This study attempted to interpret the dimensions of most of these artistic features in general and the motives behind their appearance in this poetry in particular.

Finally, it remains to be said that this study was rounded off with four appendices; one for proper names, one for geographical sites, one for the bibliography and one for the contents.