1177: Ibn al-ʿAdīm on a Zengid Commander of "Frankish" Origin

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Abstract: This extract from Ibn al-ʿAdīm's *Zubdat al-ḥalab min taʾrīḫ Ḥalab*, indicates that Saʿd al-Dīn Kumuštikīn, a military commander and eunuch in Zengid service, was of "Frankish origin" (*aṣluhu faranğī*). The article examines the veracity of this claim and discusses its potential implications. If accurate, it provides important contextual information about the importance attached to ethno-religious identity by political elites in the crusader-era Levant. Even if we dispute Kumuštikīn's "Frankish" descent, the manner in which these events were framed by Ibn al-ʿAdīm and his contemporaries provides insight into how "authorial agency" shaped the historiographical documentation of the transition from Zengid to Ayyūbid rule in sixth/twelfth- and seventh/thirteenth-century Syria and Egypt.

Source

Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-ḥalab min taʾrīḫ Ḥalab*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār, 2 vols, Damascus: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿarabī, 1997, vol. 2, pp. 99–100, trans. James Wilson.

وكانت حارم لسعد الدّين كمشتكين، أقطعه إياها الملكُ الصَّالحُ، حين أخذها من بدر الدّين حسن، فأنَّهي إلى الملك الصَّالح أنَّ سعد الدّين يريد أن يسلَّمها إلى الفرنج، لأنَّ أصله فرنجي، وأنَّه قد قرَّر معهم أن يبيعها عليهم بمال وافر والدَّليل على صدق ذلك أنَّه أطلق مَنْ كان بالقلعة، مِنْ أسرى الفرنج، من أيَّام نور الدّين، وأطلق البرنسَ أرناط، فقطع الطَّريق بالكَرَك، وسيَّر أمواله من حلب وغيَّبها. وكتب إليه رجل من الفرنج يقال له الفارس بدران بشيء من ذلك، وبعث بعدّة كتب من سعد الدّين إلى الفرنج، تشهد بما

Ḥārim was under the control of Saʿd al-Dīn Kumuštikīn. It was granted to him as an *iqṭa* [1] by al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ [Ismāʿīl b. Maḥmūd] when he took it from Badr al-Dīn Ḥassan. It was communicated to al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ that Saʿd al-Dīn [Kumuštikīn] wanted to surrender it [Ḥārim] to the Franks because of his Frankish origin (*li-anna aṣlahu faranğī*), and that he had agreed with them to sell it (*yabīʿahā*) to them for a large sum of money. The proof for the veracity of this [claim] was that he released the Frankish prisoners from the citadel [of Aleppo] who had been captured during the reign of Nūr al-Dīn. He released Prince (*al-brins*) Arnāṭ [Reynald of Châtillon] who had committed brigandage from al-Karak [Krak des Chevaliers], and transferred his money from Aleppo and concealed it. A man from the Franks—called the knight (*al-fāris*) Badrān[2] or something similar—wrote to him [al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Ismāʿīl] and sent him some of the letters that Saʿd al-Dīn had sent to

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[1] During this period, *iqṭa* grants allocated portions of the tax revenues from specific areas to individuals. Peacock, *Seljuk Empire*, pp. 79–80.

[2] This could also be Budrān. For similar usages of this name, see: Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-ḥalab*, ed. Zakkār, vol. 1, pp. 312, 418; Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-ḥalab*, Paris, BNF, MS Arabe 1666, ff. 106v, 150v.

the Franks, providing evidence of what he had been informed of, and perhaps he charged him [Kumuštikīn] with all this, so that they [the Franks] achieved their goal [of sowing dissension] through him.

أَخَاه، ولعلَّه وضع ذلك كله عليه، حتى نالوا غرضهم منه.

Al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ seized Saʿd al-Dīn on Monday 9 Rabīʿ I [5]73 [5 September 1177] after he had asked permission to leave for Ḥārim. He demanded its surrender from him, but he refused. So he [Saʿd al-Dīn] was transported to Ḥārim under guard, and was brought to a place beneath its fortress, where he was tortured. He then summoned some of his trusted deputies from the garrison in the fortress, and he confided to them [in private] that they should not surrender it, even if he was cut into pieces. Then he said to them loudly that "at such and such point, surrender." He was hauled up to the fortress, where he was clearly visible to all the rebels and combatants, and he was tortured severely. He was hung by his feet, dunked in vinegar, lime, and smoke, and then subjected to crushing while his companions watched him and did not agree to surrender.

فَقَبَضَ المَلِكُ الصَّالِحُ علىَ سعد الدّين، في التاسع من شهر ربيع الأول، من سنة ثلاث وسبعين وكان قد جاء يطلب دستوراً إلى حارم، وطلب تسليمَها منه، فامتنع فحُمِل إليها تحت الحوطة، وجيء به إلى تحت قلعتها، وعُذّب، فاستدعى بعض من يثق إليه من المستحفظين بالقلعة، وأسرّ إليهما أنَّهم لا يسلّموها، ولو قُطِع، ثم قال لهما جهراً: "بعلامة كذا وكذا، سلّموا". فصعد إلى القلعة، وأظهر مَن فيها العصيانَ والمقاتلة، فعذَّب عذاباً شديداً، وعلّق برجليه، وسقط بالخلّ، والكلس، والدُّخان، وعُصِر، وأصحابُه يشاهدونه، ولا يجيبون إلى التسليم.

The Franks departed from Antioch, at the request of [the rebels in] Ḥārim. Al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ sent the order for Kumuštikīn to be strangled, and so he was strangled with a piece of twine. His companions [in Ḥārim] watched, but did not surrender. They broke his hands and neck and threw him into the moat of Ḥārim. When the Franks learnt of this, they marched to Šayzar.

وخرج الفرنجُ من أنطاكية، يطلبون حارم، فتقدَّم المَلكُ الصَّالِحُ بخنق كمشتكين، فخنق بوتر، وأصحابُه يشاهدونه ولا يسلمون، وكسروا يَدَيْه وعنقَه، ورموه إلى خندق حارم، فحين علم الفرنج ذلك ساروا إلى شيزر.

Authorship & Work

[§1] A teacher, diplomat, and scholar of Islamic legal theory, Kamāl al-Dīn ʿUmar b. Aḥmad Ibn al-ʿAdīm (d. 660/1262) is one of the most celebrated historians of Aleppo. He was a member of the Banū l-Abū Ǧarāda or Banū l-ʿAdīm, a pre-eminent Ḥanafī family drawn from the upper echelons of Aleppine society. Although his father, uncle, grand-father and great-grandfather all became chief religious judge (qāḍī l-quḍāt) in northern Syria's main urban centre, Ibn al-ʿAdīm never occupied this prestigious civic position. Instead, he was appointed to teaching posts at the al-Šāḍbaḫtiyya and al-Ḥallāwiyya madrasas, two of the most influential Ḥanafī madrasas in Aleppo. Ibn al-ʿAdīm also sporadically acted as an emissary for various Ayyūbid rulers of Aleppo and Damascus during diplomatic missions to Anatolia, Iraq, and Egypt.[3]

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3 Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Iršād al-arīb*, ed. Margoliouth , vol. 16, pp. 5–57; al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt*, ed. Ritter et al., vol. 22, pp. 421–26; Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*, pp. 1–2, 122–143, 151–173; Eddé, *Kamāl al-Dīn*.

[§2] The author is best known to modern scholarship for his historical writings, and is widely regarded as one of the most talented local historians of his age. His qualities as a historian are best exemplified by his biographical dictionary "The Desired Object of Seeking in the History of Aleppo" (*Buġyat al-ṭalab fī taʾrīḫ Ḥalab*).[4] Although just ten of the original forty volumes have survived, the *Buġya* provides the most detailed insight into the lives and activities of the political and intellectual notables (*al-aʿyān*) of Aleppo from the first/seventh century until the 660s/1260s. Throughout the extant volumes of the *Buġya*, Ibn al-ʿAdīm makes reference to over 500 different books and multiple personal testimonies.[5]

[§3] The above extracts are taken from his more concise local history, "The Cream of the Milk of the History of Aleppo" (*Zubdat al-ḥalab min taʾrīḫ Ḥalab*). The *Zubda* is arranged chronologically, beginning before the Arabic-Islamic conquest of Aleppo in 16/637 and continuing until 641/1243, when the chronicle comes to an abrupt end. Ibn al-ʿAdīm was encouraged to begin compiling a "history of Aleppo" (*taʾrīḫ lī-Ḥalab*) by the Ayyūbid ruler al-Malik al-Ẓāhir Ġāzī (r. 582–613/1186–1216).[6] David Morray has proposed that the *Buġya*, the author's more detailed biographical dictionary, was written in the early late 650s/1250s and early 660s/1260s.[7] Yet we know that the *Zubda* was written after the *Buġya*, as Ibn al-ʿAdīm noted that: "I gave it the name *Zubdat al-ḥalab min taʾrīḫ Ḥalab* because it has been taken from my great history of Aleppo that is organised according to the letters of peoples' names."[8]

Content & Context

[§4] The excerpts taken from the *Zubda* describe the arrest, torture and execution of Saʿd al-Dīn Kumuštikīn, a prominent military commander in the service of the Zengid dynasty. He was killed outside the northern Syrian fortress of Ḥārim on the orders of the Zengid ruler of Aleppo Ismāʿīl b. Maḥmūd al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ (r. 569–576/1174–1181) in Rabīʿ I 573/September 1177.

[§5] The first paragraph provides the rationale for Kumuštikīn's arrest. It begins by stating that Kumuštikīn had authority over the fortress of Ḥārim, a strategically important site on the frontier between Frankish Antioch and Zengid Aleppo.[9] It then goes on to describe a conspiracy between Kumuštikīn and the Franks of Antioch to sell Ḥārim (*yabīʿahā*) in exchange for an unspecified, large sum of money. Ibn al-ʿAdīm also claims that Kumuštikīn was of "Frankish origin" (*aṣluhu faranğī*), which is offered as the key motive for his betrayal of the ruling al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ. The release of Frankish prisoners from Aleppo, of whom Reynald de Châtillon (*al-brins Arnāṭ*) is the only individual named, is given as further evidence of Kumuštikīn's guilt. Final confirmation is then provided by "a man from the Franks called the knight (*al-fāris*) Badrān," who sent al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ a series of letters that Kumuštikīn had allegedly exchanged with the Franks. Ibn al-ʿAdīm acknowledges that the sharing of this correspondence may have been an attempt to foment discord among the Zengid hierarchy. The second paragraph recounts al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ's attempts to quell the ongoing rebellion in Ḥārim, which continued even after Kumuštikīn's arrest and public torture, which took place within sight of his companions on the fortress's ramparts. The final paragraph details Kumuštikīn's execution on al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ's orders, and the subsequent decision of the Frankish army to march to Šayzar instead of Ḥārim.

[§6] There is very little concrete information about Kumuštikīn's life and career in the extant source materials. The Aleppine chronicler ʿIzz al-Dīn b. Šaddād (d. 684/1285) claims that

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[4] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Buġyat al-ṭalab*, ed. Zakkār.
[5] Eddé, Sources arabes d'Ibn al-ʿAdīm; al-Rawāḍiyya, Ittiğāhāt al-kitāba al-taʾrīḫiyya.
[6] Al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, ed. Tadmurī, vol. 48, p. 424.
[7] Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*, pp. 154–75.
[8] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-ḥalab*, ed. Zakkār, vol. 1, p. 31: "wa-rasamtuhu: 'bi-zubdat al-ḥalab min *taʾrīḫ* Ḥalab;' liʾannahu muntazaʿ min tārīḫī l-kabīr li-l-Šahbāʾ. Al-murattab ʿalā l-ḥurūf wa-l-asmāʾ."
[9] Buck, The Castle and Lordship of Ḥārim.

Kumuštikīn was a freedman (*ʿatīq*) of Nūr al-Dīn's brother Quṭb al-Dīn Mawdūd (d. 565/1170).[10] The Arabic sources generally refer to Kumuštikīn as a "servant" or "eunuch" (*ḫādim*), or as "commander of the armies" (*muqaddam al-ʿasākir*).[11] Having been appointed as commander of the citadel of Mosul by Nūr al-Dīn (r. 541–569/1146–1174) in 566/1171, Kumuštikīn fled the Jazīra province for Syria shortly after learning of his benefactor's death in 569/1174.[12] Alongside the vizier (*wazīr*) Šihāb al-Dīn al-ʿAğamī (d. 573/1177), Kumuštikīn would emerge as one of the leading protectors of Nūr al-Dīn's eleven-year old heir, al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, charged with the task of steering him through the difficult and often perilous transition from child ruler to fully grown independent leader.[13] He is also attributed with contracting the Nizārī Ismaʿīlī Assassins to undertake their failed attempt on Saladin's (r. 569– 589/1174– 1193) life during a siege of Aleppo in 570/1174.[14]

[§7] The manner in which events at Ḥārim in 573/1177 were reported in Arabic historiographical texts is illustrative of the ambiguous political situation that followed Nūr al-Dīn's death in 569/1174, and the emergence of Saladin as his undisputed successor in Syria, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. After Nūr al-Dīn died, his eleven-year-old son al-Ṣāliḥ took his place as ruler of Aleppo and Damascus, while his nephew, Sayf al-Dīn Ġāzī (II, d. 575/1180) seized control of his uncle's dominions in Mesopotamia. By 573/1177, things were going poorly for the Zengid dynasty. Zengid armies had suffered successive defeats to Saladin's forces at the Horns of Ḥamāh in Ramaḍān 570/April 1175 and at Tell al-Sulṭān (27 kilometres south of Aleppo) in Šawwāl 571/April 1176.[15] These military setbacks led to a string of territorial losses, with Saladin taking control of Damascus, Ḥoms, and Ḥamāh, leaving al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ and his advisors in control of Aleppo and a small number of minor settlements. Al-Ṣāliḥ died in 577/1181, just four years after Kumuštikīn's execution outside the walls of Ḥārim.[16]

[§8] The excerpt from the *Zubda* describes the final dramatic phase of the rapid breakdown in relations between Kumuštikīn and the then fourteen-year-old al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ in Rabīʿ I 573/September 1177. According to Ibn al-ʿAdīm's narrative, tensions between Kumuštikīn and al-Ṣāliḥ had already risen over the assassination of the Aleppine vizier al-ʿAğamī. Al-ʿAğamī was killed by a group of Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Assassins as he was leaving the grand mosque of Aleppo following Friday prayers on 4 Rabīʿ I 573/31 August 1177.[17] Kumuštikīn was quickly accused of organising the murder of his erstwhile rival. The *Zubda* describes an elaborate ploy that Kumuštikīn used to trick al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ into signing a letter to Rašīd al-Dīn Sinān (r. 557– 589/1162–1193), the Chief *Dāʿī* of the Syrian Assassins, ordering the assassination. Supposedly, Kumuštikīn asked al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ to add his signature to a blank piece of paper, on which he later composed the letter to Sinān. Al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ only learnt of Kumuštikīn's duplicity after he later contacted Sinān, asking why he would assasinate his vizier without al-Ṣāliḥ's permission. In response, al-Ṣāliḥ received a letter signed in his own hand requesting the

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[10] Ibn Šaddād, *al-Aʿlāq al-ḫaṭīra*, ed. ʿAbbāra, vol. 1,2, p. 60: "wa-ʿaṭāhu minhu li-Saʿd al-Dīn Kumuštikīn ʿatīq ʿammihi Quṭb al-Dīn ṣāḥib al-Mawṣil;" trans. Eddé-Terrasse, *Description de La Syrie du Nord*, p. 43.

[11] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-ḥalab*, ed. Zakkār, vol. 2, pp. 80, 85, 86.

[12] Ibn al-Atīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-taʾrīḫ*, ed. Thornberg, vol. 11, pp. 362–365, 406–406; Ibn al-Atīr, *Chronicle*, trans. Richards, vol. 2, pp. 192–194, 224–225.

[13] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-ḥalab*, ed. Zakkār, vol. 2, p. 518; Hirschler, 'He is a child.'

[14] Ibn al-Atīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-taʾrīḫ*, ed. Thornberg, vol. 11, p. 419; Ibn al-Atīr, *Chronicle*, trans. Richards, vol. 2, p. 234; Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-ḥalab*, ed. Zakkār, vol. 2, p. 89; Ibn al-ʿAdīm, Extraits de la Chronique d'Alep, trans. Blochet, vol. 3, p. 563.

[15] Ibn Šaddād, *al-Nawādir al-sulṭāniyya*, ed. al-Šayyāl, pp. 93–96; Ibn Šaddād, *The Rare and Excellent History*, trans. Richards, pp. 50–54; Ibn al-Atīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-taʾrīḫ*, ed. Thornberg, vol. 11, pp. 421–422, 427–429; Ibn al-Atīr, *Chronicle*, trans. Richards, vol. 2, pp. 241–242; Eddé, *Saladin*, pp. 392–394.

[16] Ibn al-Atīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-taʾrīḫ*, ed. Thornberg, vol. 11, pp. 472–474; Ibn al-Atīr, *Chronicle*, trans. Richards, vol. 2, pp. 277–278; Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-ḥalab*, ed. Zakkār, vol. 2, p. 106.

[17] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-ḥalab*, ed. Zakkār, vol. 2, p. 529; Ibn al-ʿAdīm, Extraits de la Chronique d'Alep, trans. Blochet, vol. 4, pp. 148–149.

assassination.[18] This gave al-Ṣāliḥ a reason to arrest Kumuštikīn and to lead his forces against Ḥārim, resulting in the episode described in the extract above.

[§9] The events surrounding Kumuštikīn's demise have been discussed by a number of modern scholars who have dealt with the Zengid dynasty,[19] the career of Saladin and the rise of the Ayyūbids,[20] the Principality of Antioch, and the Kingdom of Jerusalem.[21] Yet Ibn al-ʿAdīm's claim that Kumuštikīn was of "Frankish origin" (aṣluhu farangī) has been largely ignored in this wider discussion. The one exception is Taef el-Azhari, who viewed this claim as "unconvincing."[22] This tendency can be partly explained by the lack of corroborating information in Arabic sources composed at an earlier date. Additionally, focus has traditionally been placed on Saladin's rise to power and the negative implications this had for Frankish polities in the Levant. As a consequence, the *Zubda's* Aleppine-centred report on the final stages of Zengid rule has understandably received less attention. Another contributing factor may also have been Edgard Blochet's (d. 1356/1937) decision to omit sections of the second and third paragraphs of this extract from his translation of this section of the *Zubda*, which was published in 1896 and remains the only translation available to non-Arabists today.[23]

Contextualisation, Analysis & Interpretation

[§10] The following section discusses three ways in which this extract can enhance our understanding of Christian–Muslim relations in the crusader-era Levant:

1. First, it oulines how narratives of legitimisation and "authorial agency" shaped our understanding of events at Ḥārim in Rabīʿ I 573/September 1177, and the transition from Zengid to Ayyūbid rule in Islamic West Asia.
2. Second, it considers how we can reconcile the suggestion that a military figure of "Frankish origin" could have risen to high command in the service of the Zengid dynasty, with the ideological concepts that are thought to underpin Zengid involvement in the "counter-crusade" and "anti-Frankish ǧihād" movements.
3. Third, it suggests that the Arabic terms "Frank" (al-ifrang) or "Frankish" (al-farangī) retained a fluid ethnic dimension that could transcend fixed socio-political contexts or categorisations.

[§11] By applying the findings of Konrad Hirschler's methodology on "authorial agency" in medieval Arabic historiographical texts, it is possible to identify two narratological strategies that influence how events at Ḥārim in 573/1177 were depicted in the extant literary sources.[24] One version is what can be characterised as the pro-Saladin tradition, disseminated by members of his court. The second is a pro-Zengid or al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ narrative, propogated by Aleppine urban elites such as Ibn al-ʿAdīm who had a more complex view on the transition from Zengid to Ayyūbid rule than Saladin's former courtiers.

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[18] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-ḥalab*, ed. Zakkār, vol. 2, pp. 530–531; Ibn al-ʿAdīm, Extraits de la Chronique d'Alep, trans. Blochet, vol. 4, p. 149.
[19] Ayalon, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans*, p. 169; El-Azhari, *Zengi and the Muslim Response to the Crusades*, pp. 130–131; El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines*, pp. 302–310, 316–321.
[20] Lane-Poole, *Saladin*, pp. 153–156; Gibb, *Saladin*, p. 115; Möhring, *Sultan*, pp. 64–65; Ehrenkreutz, *Saladin*, pp. 121–122, 158–160; Lyons and Jackson, *Saladin*, pp. 127–128; Eddé, *Saladin*, pp. 197–198, 392–394; Phillips, *The Life and Legend*, p. 122.
[21] Köhler, *Alliances and* Treaties, pp. 223–224; Buck, *The Principality of Antioch*, pp. 51–52; Böhme, *Außenbeziehungen*, pp. 169–170.
[22] El-Azhari, The Office of the Atābeg in Syria, p. 51.
[23] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, Extraits de la Chronique d'Alep, trans. Blochet, vol. 4, p. 150.
[24] Hirschler, *Medieval Arabic Historiography*, pp. 1–6, 122–123.

[§12] The most notable proponents of the pro-Saladin position are ʿImād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī (d. 597/1201) and Bahāʾ al-Dīn Ibn Šaddād (d. 632/1234). Al-Iṣfahānī spent several decades operating as Saladin's chancery official (*kātib*) and court poet. Born in Isfahan and educated in Baghdad, al-Iṣfahānī first entered into the service of Nūr al-Dīn, before moving to Saladin's court after Nūr al-Dīn's death in 570/1174.[25] Ibn Šaddād was a religious scholar born in Mosul and educated in Baghdad, who served as an army judge (*qāḍī l-ʿaskar*) in Saladin's military hierarchy, and continued working for members of the Ayyūbid dynasty after the sultan's death.[26] Debates about the preferential treatment given to Saladin and the Ayyūbid dynasty in these works have been ongoing for generations. The current academic consensus is that the potential bias of the authors is outweighed by their proximity to the events they relate, and the quality of historical information they provide as a consequence.[27]

[§13] Within their writings, both al-Iṣfahānī and Ibn Šaddād justified Saladin's campaigns into Syria by presenting al-Ṣāliḥ as a weak-willed, under-age ruler. This framing is most explicit in the following section of Ibn Šaddād's complimentary biography of Saladin "The Sultanic Prodigies and Merits of Joseph" (*al-Nawādir al-Sulṭāniyya wa-l-Maḥāsin al-Yūsufiyya*):

> "When the sultan received confirmation of Nūr al-Dīn's death, aware that his son was a child unable to shoulder the burdens of kingship and incapable of taking on the defence of the lands against God's enemies, he made his preparations to march to Syria, because it is the anchor of the lands of Islam."[28]

[§14] As part of this wider leitmotif, both authors make allusions to the ineptitude of those advising al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ in the aftermath of his father's death. Accounts of Kumuštikīn's swift rise to power, and his equally sudden downfall, are included in the works of al-Iṣfahānī and Ibn Šaddād. Ibn Šaddād's account contains no real explanation of why Kumuštikīn was arrested and killed. Instead, the author concentrates on the Frankish attack on Ḥārim, which he links directly to Malik al-Ṣāliḥ's decision to detain Kumuštikīn:

> "As for al-Ṣāliḥ, his affairs fell into disorder. He arrested Kumuštikīn, the leading figure of his state (*ṣāḥib dawlatihi*), and demanded that he surrender Ḥārim to him, but he would not, so he killed him. When the Franks heard that he had been killed, they descended on Ḥārim intending to seize it. This was in Ǧumādā II 573 [November–December 1177]. Al-Ṣāliḥ's troops confronted the Frankish forces. Seeing the danger from the Franks, the garrison surrendered to al-Ṣāliḥ during the last ten days of Ramaḍān of this year [mid-March 1178]. Having learnt this, the Franks departed from Ḥārim, making for their own lands. This was on 19 Ramaḍān of the aforementioned year [11 March 1178]. Then al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ returned to the safety of Aleppo."[29]

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[25] Richards, ʿImād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī; Richter-Bernburg, ʿImād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī'.

[26] Richards, A Consideration.

[27] Eddé, *Saladin*, pp. 2–9; Hillenbrand, Saladin's Spin Doctors.

[28] Ibn Šaddād, *The Rare and Excellent History*, trans. Richards, p. 51 (quote); Ibn Šaddād, *al-Nawādir al-sulṭāniyya*, ed. al-Šayyāl, p. 92: "wa-lammā taḥaqqaqa al-sulṭān wafāt Nūr al-Dīn, wa-kawn waladihi ṭiflān lā yanhaḍ bi-aʿbāʾ al-mulk, wa-lā yastaqill bi-dafʿ ʿadūw Allāh ʿan al-bilād, taǧahhaza li-l-ḫurūǧ ilā l-Šām, iḏ huwa aṣl bilād al-islām (…)."

[29] Ibn Šaddād, *al-Nawādir al-sulṭāniyya*, ed. al-Šayyāl, p. 97: "wa-ammā l-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ fa-innahu taḥabbaṭa amruhu, wa-qabaḍa ʿalā Kumuštikīn ṣāḥib dawlatihi, wa-ṭalaba minhu taslīm Ḥārim ilayhi, fa-lam yafʿal, fa-qatalahu. Wa-lammā samiʿa al-Ifranǧ bi-qatlihi nazalū ʿalā Ḥārim ṭamiʿan fīhā wa-ḏālika fī Ǧumādā l-āḫira sanat ṯalāṯa wa-sabʿīn, wa-qābala ʿaskar al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ al-ʿasākir al-ifranǧiyya. Wa-lammā raʾā ahl al-qalʿa ḫaṭarahā min ǧānib al-Ifranǧ sallamūhā ilā l-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ fī l-ʿašar al-aḫīr min šahr Ramaḍān min al-sana al-maḏkūra. Wa-lammā ʿalima al-Ifranǧ ḏālika raḥalū ʿan Ḥārim ṭālibīna bilādahum, wa-ḏālika fī tāsiʿ ʿašar šahr Ramaḍān min

[§15] Al-Iṣfahānī also included a description of the assassination of the Aleppine vizier al-ʿAǧamī. But rather than relating Ibn al-ʿAdīm's convoluted explanation of Kumuštikīn duping al-Ṣāliḥ into signing the assassination order, al-Iṣfahānī does not specify who was responsible for the attack. He instead gives the impression that it was an inevitable consequence of an ongoing power struggle between members of al-Ṣāliḥ's court. This reinforces the impression of a climate of chaos in Aleppo during al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ's reign:

> "A rivalry was developing between the Aleppines advising al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ. Al-ʿAdl Ibn al-ʿAǧamī Abū Ṣāliḥ had usurped his power of command. He was of a dreadful disposition and had a terrible sting; his tyranny was feared and his bite dreaded (…). The eunuch (al-ḫādim) Saʿd al-Dīn Kumuštikīn was commander of the army (muqaddam al-ʿaskar) and Emir of the troop (amīr al-maʿšar). His place of assembly was large and the coming and going was enormous. He was the lord of the fortress of Ḥārim, who issued decrees and organised the gathering seasons. His peers among the emirs and eunuchs envied him, for he was independent in his ability to rescind and to ratify, to saddle up and to use the reigns, to be valiant and to desist. He alone controlled the emirate, whereas al-ʿAdl Abū Ṣāliḥ dominated the vizierate (…). A group of Ismāʿīlīs jumped on him [the vizier al-ʿAǧamī] at the grand mosque in Aleppo after Friday prayers and destroyed his life; interrupting the path of fulfillment with a deathly assault (…)."[30]

[§16] When al-Ṣāliḥ later detained and executed Kumuštikīn, al-Iṣfahānī depicts this decision as motivated by the resentment of unnamed courtiers who pushed for his removal, despite there being no evidence that he was involved in the vizier's assassination. There is also no mention of Kumuštikīn's supposed collusion with the Franks. Al-Iṣfahānī's depiction therefore provides further evidence of the poor leadership abilities of the underage al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, and his continued reliance upon members of his court:

> "After this [the assassination of the vizier al-ʿAǧamī] Kumuštikīn gained autonomy after being shackled, and the former's decline has led to the latter's (Kumuštikīn's) rise, and he was dazzled by the abundance of his attire and his equipment (…). As his power became more apparent, his affairs flourished, his grooming increased, his wealth became known, the depths of his arrogance came to the surface, and the secrets of his pleasures became evident, they said: 'He is the one who killed the vizier by persuading the Ismāʿīlīs of the benefits of assassinating him.' So they gave their opinions to al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, who was still a young boy, and informed him while he was ignorant. They said: 'We are your slaves and we are invested in your reputation (…). This Kumuštikīn despises you, although you are bountiful, and considers you small, although you are great. He rules over you, whereas you are his lord, and he has power over you while you should have power over him. Recently he assumed the position of your vizier and advised you to murder your advisor.'

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al-sana al-maḏkūra, ṯumma ʿāda al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ ilā maḥrūsat Ḥalab." Ibn Šaddād, *The Rare and Excellent History*, trans. Richards, p. 54.

[30] Adapted from al-Iṣfahānī, *Der Syrische Blitz*, trans. Richter-Bernburg, pp. 310–311. Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Barq al-Šāmī*, ed. Rīḫtir-Bīrnbūrġ, pp. 37–38: "waqaʿat al-munāfasa bayna al-Ḥalabiyyīn mudabbirī al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, wa-istawlā ʿalā amrihi al-ʿAdl Ibn al-ʿAǧamī Abū Ṣāliḥ // wa-kāna marhūb al-šadāt, mašbūb al-šabāt // maḫūf al-baṭš, maḫšī l-nahš // lā-yalzamu ṭawrahu, (…) // wa-kāna Saʿd al-Dīn Kumuštikīn al-ḫādim muqaddam al-ʿaskar, wa-amīr al-maʿšar / wa-kabīr al-maḫšar, / wa-ʿaẓīm al-mawrid wa-l-maṣdar // wa-huwa ṣāḥib ḥiṣn Ḥārim, wa-l-muqarrir al-marāsim, wa-l-mudabbir al-mawāsim // wa-qad ḥasadahu amṯāluhu min al-umarāʾ wa-al-ḫuddām, wa-huwa mustaqill bi-l-naqḍ wa-l-ibrām, wa-l-israǧ wa-l-ilǧām, wa-l-iqdām wa-l-iḥǧām, wa-huwa mutafarrad bi-l-imāra, wa-l-ʿAdl Abū Ṣāliḥ mustabidd bi-l-wizāra (…) fa-qafaza ʿalayhi al-Ismāʿīliyya fī ǧāmiʿ Ḥalab yawm al-ǧumʿa baʿd al-ṣalāt, wa-faǧaʿūhu fī l-ḥayā, wa-qaṭaʿū ṭarīq al-wafāʾ bi-ṭāriq al-wafāt, (…)." See also: al-Bundārī, *Sanā l-Barq al-Šāmī*, ed. al-Nabarāwī, pp. 134–135.

They did not stop until they changed his mind and manipulated him (…). They demanded that he [Kumuštikīn] surrender the fortress of Ḥārim, they committed outrages because of him, and subjected him to terrible tortures. He wrote to his deputies [in Ḥārim], who stood up and insisted on refusing [to hand over Ḥārim]. Then the Aleppines brought him below the fortress, causing panic by their treatment. As the affair with him dragged on, his life came to an end, and so they stopped watching him and broke his neck."[31]

[§17] As Figure 1 (below) demonstrates, nearly all contemporaneous authors either drew upon, or corroborated, the reports provided by al-Iṣfahānī and Ibn Šaddād. Ibn al-Atīr repeats al-Iṣfahānī's version of events, including the assassination of the vizier al-ʿAǧamī, and the purportedly false accusations made against Kumuštikīn afterwards.[32] In the late seventh/thirteenth century, Abū Šāma (d. 665/1268) produced verbatim quotes from three authors, al-Iṣfahānī, Ibn Šaddād, and Ibn al-Atīr, while Ibn Ḫallikān (d. 681/1282) and Ibn Wāṣil (d. 697/1298) contented themselves with paraphrased summaries of the reports produced by al-Iṣfahānī and Ibn Šaddād.[33] The Latin chronicler William, Archibishop of Tyre (sed. 1175–1186), also made no reference to Kumuštikīn's alleged collusion with the Franks.[34]

Figure 1: Summary of Primary Source Accounts of Kumuštikīn's Arrest and Execution

Name of author and title of work	*Refers to the assassination of the vizier al-ʿAǧamī*	*Refers to Frankish siege(s) of Ḥārim*	*Refers to Kumuštikīn's negotiations with the Franks*	*Refers to Kumuštikīn's "Frankish origin"*
William of Tyre (d. 582/1186), *Chronicon*	No	✓	No	No
Michael the Syrian (d. 595/1199), *The Syriac Chronicle*	No	✓	✓	No
ʿImād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī (d. 597/1201), *al-Barq al-Šāmī*	✓	✓	No	No

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[31] Adapted from al-Iṣfahānī, *Der Syrische Blitz*, trans. Richter-Bernburg, pp. 312–313. ʿImād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Barq al-Šāmī*, ed. Rīḫtir-Bīrnbūrǧ, pp. 38–39: "wa-min baʿdihi inbasaṭa Kumuštikīn baʿd īnkišāmihi, wa-ʿādat ʿaṭrat dālika min hādā bi-intiʿāšihi, wa-iġtarra bi-wufūr rīšihi wa-riyāšihi (…). fa-lammā ẓahara ẓuhūruhu wa-umirat umūruhu, wa-wafara sufūruhu, wa-safara wufūruhu; wa-ittaḏaḫat ġuzar ġurūrihi, wa-uqtuḏiḫat asrār surūrihi // qālū: 'huwa alladī qatala al-ʿAdl wa-ḥassana li-l-Ismāʿīliyya al-fatk bihi wa-l-qatl.' // wa-ḥassanū li-l-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ wa-huwa ṣabiyy, wa-ʿallamūhu wa-huwa ġabiyy // wa-qālū: 'wa-naḥnu ʿabīduka wa-nuʾtira iġlālak (…) // wa-hādā Kumuštikīn yaḥtaqiruka wa-anta katīr, / wa-yastaṣġiruka wa-anta kabīr // wa-yaḥkum ʿalayka wa-anta sulṭānuhu, wa-yatamakkan minka wa-bika imkānuhu // wa-bi-l-ams taqallada wizr wazīrik, wa-ašāra bi-l-fatk bi-mušīrik.''/ fa-mā zālū bihi ḥatta ṣarrafūhu wa-ḥarrafūhu, (…) wa-ṭālabūhu bi-taslīm qalʿat Ḥārim, wa-awqaʿū bihi li-aǧlihi al-ʿaẓāʾim, wa-irtakabū min taʿiḏībihi al-maḥārim // fa-kataba ilā nuwwābihi bihā fa-nabū, wa-aṣarrū ʿalā l-imtināʿ wa-abaw // fa-ḥamalūhu wa-waqafū bihi taḥta al-qalʿa fa-ḫawwafū bi-l-ṣurʿa // fa-lammā ṭāla amruhu, qaṣṣara ʿumruhu // wa-tarakū riqbatahu, wa-fakkū raqabatahu //". See also: al-Bundārī, *Sanā l-Barq al-Šāmī*, ed. al-Nabarāwī, p. 135.

[32] Ibn al-Atīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-taʾrīḫ*, ed. Thornberg, vol. 11, pp. 445–446; Ibn al-Atīr, *Chronicle*, trans. Richards, vol. 2, pp. 255–256; Ibn al-Atīr, *al-Taʾrīḫ al-bāhir*, ed. Tulaymat, p. 178.

[33] Abū Šāma, *Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn*, ed. al-Zībaq, vol. 2, pp. 468–471; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarriǧ al-kurūb*, ed. al-Šayyāl, vol. 3, p. 63; Ibn Wāṣil, *Taʾrīḫ al-Ṣālīḥī*, ed. Tadmūrī, p. 222; Ibn Ḫallikān, *Wafāyāt al-aʿyān*, ed. ʿAbbās, vol. 7, p. 168.

[34] William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. Huygens, vol. 2, lib. 21, cap. 18, 24, pp. 986–987, 994–995; William of Tyre, *History of Deeds*; trans. Babcock and Krey, vol. 2, pp. 424–426, 434–435.

Ibn al-Aṯīr (d. 630/1233), *al-Kāmil fī l-taʾrīḫ*	✓	✓	No	No
Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Taʾrīḫ al-bāhir*	No	✓	No	No
Bahāʾ al-Dīn Ibn Šaddād (d. 632/1234), *al-Nawādir al-Sulṭāniyya*	No	✓	No	No
Sibṭ b. al-Ǧawzī (d. 654/1256), *Mirʾāt al-zamān fī taʾrīḫ al-aʿyān*	✓	✓	No	No
Ibn al-ʿAdīm (d. 660/1262), *Zubdat al-ḥalab*	✓	✓	✓	✓
Abū Šāma (d. 665/1268), *Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn*	✓	✓	No	No
ʿIzz al-Dīn Ibn Šaddād (d. 684/1285), *al-Aʿlāq al-ḫaṭīra*	✓	✓	✓	No
Ibn Wāṣil (d. 697/1298), *Mufarriǧ al-kurūb*	✓	✓	No	No
Ibn Wāṣil, *Taʾrīḫ al-Ṣaliḥī*	No	✓	No	No

[§18] This uniformity in the majority of the extant literary sources raises servere doubts about the accuracy of Ibn al-ʿAdīm's historiographical documentation of these events. It is therefore necessary to question why the Aleppine author may have chosen to frame his account in this manner. This decision is especially noteworthy when one considers that Ibn al-ʿAdīm was personally acquainted with Bahāʾ al-Dīn Ibn Šaddād, who lived in Aleppo for the last forty years of his life.[35] One potential answer could be Ibn al-ʿAdīm's family history. The author's father was appointed chief religious judge (*qāḍī l-quḍāt*) of Aleppo under al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ in 575/1179, and stripped of this position when Aleppo fell under Saladin's dominion in 579/1183. It is therefore quite probable that Ibn al-ʿAdīm would have had a positive opinion of the Zengid dynasty, and al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ in particular.[36] As the *Zubda's* version of events was written more than eighty years after the events it reports, we could view the original information included in his account as products of "authorial agency."

[§19] This would mean that his description of the elaborate plot used by Kumuštikīn to orchestrate the assassination of the vizier al-ʿAǧamī, the accusations of Kumuštikīn's collusion with the Franks, and his supposed "Frankish" origins, are little more than literary inventions designed to repair the damage done to al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ's reputation by earlier authors. Equipped with these new details, the reader may believe that al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ only moved against Kumuštikīn after clear evidence of his duplicity had been exposed, and that the latter's negotiations with the Franks left the fourteen-year-old ruler of Aleppo with little choice but to execute his principal political advisor. Instead of being weak and indecisive, we are given contextualising information that portrays al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ in a decidely more positive light.

[§20] Yet there are a couple of textual sources that lend support to certain aspects of Ibn al-ʿAdīm's account. Sibṭ b. al-Ǧawzī (d. 654/1256) claims that Kumuštikīn was "rebellious"

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[35] Eddé, Kamāl al-Dīn, pp. 132–133.
[36] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Buġyat al-ṭalab*, ed. Zakkār, vol. 3, p. 1211; Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*, pp. 40–41.

(ʿāṣiyan) against al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, which is followed by a brief account of a siege of Ḥārim and an even briefer report on the deaths of Kumuštikīn and the vizier al-ʿAǧamī.[37] ʿIzz al-Dīn Ibn Šaddād, who was a close friend and colleague of Ibn al-ʿAdīm, also corroborated the *Zubda*'s account concerning Kumuštikīn's involvement in the assassination of the vizier al-ʿAǧamī and his subsequent negotiations with the Franks.[38] Finally, the Patriarch of the Syriac Orthodox Church, Michael the Syrian (d. 595/1199), wrote that Kumuštikīn, aware that "the lord of Aleppo intended to arrest and kill him, made an offer to surrender Ḥārim to the Franks, and therefore "became an enemy of the Turks."[39] Yet none of the surviving Arabic, Latin, or Syriac historiographical texts substantiate Ibn al-ʿAdīm's claims about Kumuštikīn's "Frankish origin."

[§21] Unfortunately, it is not possible to ascertain the underlying literary sources for the *Zubda*'s account of these events. There are no surviving entries for Kumuštikīn or the vizier al-ʿAǧamī in Ibn al-ʿAdīm's biographical dictionary (*Buġya*), where the author often cites his sources. In addition, the *Buġya*'s entry for al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ is relatively short and provides no insight into the activities of Kumuštikīn.[40] One potential source could be the lost writings of Ibn Abī Ṭayyiʾ (d. 627/1230), a member of the Twelver Šīʿī community of Aleppo whose work is occasionally quoted by Ibn al-ʿAdīm, Abū Šāma (d. 665/1268), and Ibn al-Furāt (d. 807/1405). Yet as noted above, Abū Šāma does not quote Ibn Abī Ṭayyiʾ when discussing this episode.[41] Additionally, there is a lacuna for the years 567–586/1171–1190 in the only surviving manuscript of Ibn al-Furāt's "The History of States and Kings" (*Taʾrīḫ al-duwal wa-l-mulūk*).[42]

[§22] Another potential avenue through which Ibn al-ʿAdīm could have gained this information is through personal testimonies. ʿIzz al-Dīn Ibn Šaddād stated that Kumuštikīn was executed "close to the property of the Banū l-ʿAdīm."[43] This assertion is substantiated by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1229), who reported that Ibn al-ʿAdīm's family owned landed estates to the southwest of Aleppo, near Maʿarrat Miṣrīn and the Ǧabal Samʿān.[44] Maʿarrat Miṣrīn is located twenty kilometres to the southwest of Ḥārim, while the Ǧabal Samʿān covers much of the territory between Maʿarrat Miṣrīn and Ḥārim. If Kumuštikīn was killed close to the land holdings of the author's family, then it is conceivable that Ibn al-ʿAdīm could have received information about it from family members or retainers with knowledge of these events.

[§23] Yet perhaps the most persuasive argument in support of Ibn al-ʿAdīm's claims about Kumuštikīn's "Frankish origins" can be found in repeated references to other "white" (abyaḍ) eunuchs who worked in the service of the Zengid dynasty. For example, ʿAbd al-Masīḥ, who was described as a "a white eunuch among the mamluks of Zengī" (ḫaṣīy abyaḍ min mamālīk

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[37] Sibṭ b. al-Ǧawzī, *Mirʾāt al-zamān*, ed. al-Ǧabūrī, vol. 21, p. 248.

[38] Ibn Šaddād, *al-Aʿlāq al-ḫaṭīra*, ed. ʿAbbāra, vol. 1,2, pp. 60–62; trans. Eddé-Terrasse *Description de La Syrie du Nord*, p. 43.

[39] Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, trans. Moosa, p. 715: "In this time the governor of the fortress of Ḥārim (Kumuštikīn) realised that the lord of Aleppo (al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ) intended to arrest and kill him. He rebelled and joined the Franks. The prince of Antioch (Bohemond III) swore that he would not evict him from the fortress but would help him and protect him. Therefore, Kumuštikīn offered the Franks allegiance and became an enemy of the Turks".

[40] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Buġyat al-ṭalab*, ed. Zakkār, vol. 4, pp. 1822–1826.

[41] Abū Šāma, *Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn*, ed. al-Zībaq, vol. 2, pp. 704–708.

[42] Ibn al-Furāt, *Taʾrīḫ al-duwal wa-l-mulūk*, fols 70v–119v; Bora, Ibn al-Furāt, p. 77.

[43] Ibn Šaddād, *al-Aʿlāq al-ḫaṭīra*, ed. Sourdel, vol. 1,1, p. 94: "ḫānaqāhu anšaʾhā Saʿd al-Dīn Kumuštakīn al-ḫādim mawlā bint al-ātābak ʿImād al-Dīn qurb dawr Banī l-ʿAdīm wa-tuwuffiya al-maḏkūr sanat ṯalāṯ wa-sabʿīn wa-ḫamsamiʾa maḫnūqan bi-watar."

[44] Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Iršād al-arīb*, ed. Margoliouth, vol. 16, pp. 53–54; Eddé, *Kamāl al-Dīn*, p. 113; Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable*, pp. 126–127.

Zankī) governed Mosul between 563–566/1167–1170.[45] Another "eunuch" (*al-ḫādim*) of "white colour" (*abyaḍ al-lawn*) named Qaymāz al-Zaynī, who was taken from Siǧistān (Sistān) in southeastern Iran as a youth (*ṣaǧīran*), served the Zengids of Mosul and Erbil in the decades following Nūr al-Dīn's death.[46] Ibn al-Qalānisī (d. 555/1160) even claims that there was a separate case of a "eunuch" of "Frankish origin" named Yaranqaš (d. 541/1146), who was directly involved in the assassination of Nūr al-Dīn's father Zengī (d. 541/1146). Yaranqaš is described as a "man of Frankish origin (*āṣluhu ifranǧī*), who nursed a secret grudge against him [Zengī] on account of some injury previously done to him by the Atābeg."[47]

[§24] Although the Zengid dynasty's reliance on "white" eunuchs seems to have been a practice that they adopted from the Seljūq Sultanate,[48] al-Iṣfahānī claims that Zengī expanded this policy during his lifetime:

> "Whenever Zengī slept, a number of eunuchs (*ḫuddām*) used to sleep round his bed (…). He loved them and bestowed gifts upon them. Yet, in spite of their faithfulness to him, he used to treat them harshly. They were the sons of nobles of the finest stock (*abnāʾ al-fuḥūl al-qurūm*), from amongst the Turks (*al-turk*), the Armenians (*al-arman*), and the Byzantines (*al-rūm*). It was his habit to kill important people or banish them to faraway places, and as revenge, keep their sons with him and castrate them (*wa-ḫaṣāhu*)."[49]

[§25] This suggests that Zengī established a custom of castrating the sons of defeated political rivals and granting them positions within his court. When placed in the context of these claims about Zengī, in addition to other examples of "white" eunuchs attaining positions of political power under Zengī and his son Nūr al-Dīn, the notion that Kumuštikīn could have been of "Frankish origin" seems quite credible. Indeed, if as seems to be the case, the Zengid dynasty customarily relied upon a trusted cohort of eunuchs drawn from the families of vanquished adversaries, it makes sense that some of these eunuchs would have been Franks, due to the regularity with which their armies engaged in conflict with Frankish armies in Syria during the course of the sixth/twelfth century.

[§26] Kumuštikīn and Yaranqaš would be the first documented cases of Franks serving Muslim rulers in the crusader-era Levant, while the former would be the first to be granted control over the tax revenues from a specific area or settlement. Ibn al-ʿAdīm clearly states that Kumuštikīn was granted Ḥārim as "an *iqṭaʿ* by al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ." Analogous cases of Muslims operating in the service of the Frankish crusader states are also exceptionally rare. The only equivalent example would be Ḥamdān al-Aṯāribī (d. 541/1147), who was reportedly gifted a village in 521/1127–1128 by a Frankish lord of al-Aṯārib, although Paul Cobb has raised doubts about whether this validates the notion that Ḥamdān was a "Frankish vassal."[50]

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[45] Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-taʾrīḫ*, ed. Thornberg, vol. 11, pp. 331, 362–364; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Chronicle*, trans. Richards, vol. 2, pp. 168, 192–193.

[46] Ibn Ḫallikān, *Wafāyāt al-aʿyān*, ed. ʿAbbās, vol. 4, p. 82.

[47] Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Damascus Chronicle*, trans. Gibb, pp. 270–271, 273; Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Ḏayl taʾrīḫ Dimašq*, ed. Zakkār, pp. 444, 449: "waradat al-aḫbār bi-anna aḥad ḫadamihi, wa-man kāna yahwāhu wa-yaʾnas bihi, yuʿraf bi-Yaranqaš wa-āṣluhu ifranǧī, wa-kāna fī nafsihi ḥiqd ʿalayhi li-isāʾa taqaddamat minhu ilayhi (…)."

[48] Ayalon, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans*, pp. 145–174; El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines*, pp. 302–310, 316–321.

[49] Adapted from: Ayalon, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans*, pp. 166–167, 247–248; al-Iṣfahānī, *Taʾrīḫ dawlat al-Salǧūq*, ed. Marād, pp. 319–320: "wa-ḏālika anna Zankīyan kāna iḏā nāma, yanām ḥawla sarīrihi ʿidda min ḫuddāmihi, (…) wa-huwa yuḥibbuhum wa-yaḫbūhum, wa-lakinnahu maʿa al-wafāʾ minhum yaǧfūhum wa-hum abnāʾ al-fuḥūl al-qurūm, min al-Turk wa-l-Arman wa-l-Rūm. Wa-kāna min daʾbihi annahu iḏā naqama ʿalā kabīrin ardāhu wa-aqṣāhu, wa-istabqā waladuhu ʿindahu wa-ḫaṣāhu."

[50] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Buǧyat al-ṭalab*, ed. Zakkār, vol. 6, p. 2928; Cobb, Hamdan al-Atharibi's History, pp. 19–20.

[§27] The probable presence of eunuchs of "Frankish origin" in the service of Zengī and Nūr al-Dīn therefore provides fresh insight into the pragmatism that permeated relations between Christian and Muslim elites in Syria and the Jazira during this period. The example of Kumuštikīn is particularly pertinent here, as it suggests that an individual of Frankish heritage could rise to the upper echelons of the Zengid military hierarchy during Nūr al-Dīn's reign. This seems to indicate a degree of religious or ideological flexibility that does not correspond with the modern historiographical consensus that Nūr al-Dīn acted as the theological catylyst or "pivot" for the Islamic "counter-crusade" and "anti-Frankish ǧihād" movements.[51] One would expect that for an individual motivated by "anti-Frankish" sentiments, Nūr al-Dīn would have distrusted someone of Kumuštikīn's parentage. Instead, Kumuštikīn's political career seems to suggest that Frankish eunuchs could survive, and even thrive, in the service of Nūr al-Dīn under the right circumstances.

[§28] Even if we consider Ibn al-ʿAdīm's claim about Kumuštikīn's ancestry to be a literary invention, it still provides important contextual information about the representation and definition of the terms Frank, Franks and Frankish in seventh/thirteenth century Syria. Several researchers have studied how the conceptualisation of European Christians in the Arabic-Islamic sphere developed during periods of sustained Latin-Christian expansionism in Iberia, Sicily, and the Levant. In this context, the ethnonym "Franks" (*al-Ifranǧ* or *al-Afranǧ*) was used by Arabic-Islamic authors in Western Asia as a "generic" term for "the expanding peoples of Latin Christendom."[52]

[§29] The historiographical categorisation of Yaranqaš and Kumuštikīn as eunuchs of "Frankish origin" may give an additional dimension to the use of the term "Franks" or "Frankish." Information about Yaranqaš's and Kumuštikīn's origins were only revealed after they had betrayed their Muslim masters in ways that potentially benefitted the Levantine crusaders. Rather than being contingent upon their parentage or the social and religious context in which they were raised, these "Frankish origins" were seemingly confirmed by actions they had undertaken to further the cause of Latin-Christian expansionism in Syria. It is also possible that this was a literary trope, whereby a eunuch's ethnicity is "revealed" by the author to rationalise an alliance with non-Muslim enemies against a Muslim lord.

[§30] Yet it should also be noted that the clear identification of Yaranqaš and Kumuštikīn as "Frankish" seems to have been something of an anomaly in pre-Mamlūk Arabic-Islamic historiography. While other individual eunuchs are sometimes described as "white" (*abyaḍ*) or "black" (*aswad*),[53] their ethnic backgrounds are not typically disclosed in sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth century Arabic literary souces.[54] In the case of Kumuštikīn, we can see that even if a Frank was enslaved at a young age and then castrated, before rising through the military ranks of the leading Sunnī "counter-crusading" dynasty in Syria and the Jazira, he could still be defined by his Frankish origins. This seems to differ from an analogous case in sixth/twelfth century Byzantium, where the descendents of a former Turkish captive named John Axouch were able to intergrate themselves into the Byzantine hierarchy, and even marry into the imperial royal family, without direct allusions being made to their ancestry in later

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[51] Sivan, *L'islam et la croisade*, 59–130; Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, pp. 116–141, 161–166; Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders*, pp. 35–42; Mourad and Lindsay, *The Intensification and Reorientation*, pp. 47–54.

[52] Chevedden, The Islamic Interpretation of the Crusade, pp. 94–100; König, *Arabic Islamic Views of the Latin West*, pp. 216, 222–228.

[53] Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-taʾrīḫ*, ed. Thornberg, vol. 11, p. 407; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Chronicle*, trans. Richards, vol. 2, p. 225.

[54] Ayalon, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans*, pp. 175–176; El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines*, pp. 302–321; Yosef, Mamluks of Jewish Origin.

Greek historiographical texts.[55] Although the use of the term "origin" seems to indicate that Kumuštikīn's ethnically informed identity underwent some sort of change during this process, before his underlying "Frankish" nature reasserted itself towards the end of his life. Kumuštikīn did not betray al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ because he was a Frank, but rather, because he used to be a Frank.

[§31] To conclude, this article has argued that despite a lack of corroborating evidence in contemporaneous Latin, Arabic, and Syriac sources, Ibn al-ʿAdīm's claim that Kumuštikīn was of "Frankish origin" can be viewed as plausible. Although we cannot overlook the extent to which "authorial agency"—i.e. Ibn al-ʿAdīm's partiality for the Zengid dynasty and al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ in particular—may have shaped his reporting of this episode in the *Zubda*, examples of other white, and even Frankish, eunuchs in the service of the Zengid dynasty lends a degree of credibility to Ibn al-ʿAdīm's report. Moreover, the article has examined how the possible presence of a eunuch of "Frankish origin" in the upper echelons of Nūr al-Dīn's political hierarchy can provide fresh insight into the ideological nuances that underpinned Christian–Muslim relations in the sixth/twelfth-century Levant.

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[55] Simpson, *Niketas Chroniates*, pp. 323–324. I would like to thank James Cogbill for bringing this example to my attention.

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