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**From a Christian Saviour to a Mongol Ruler: The
influence of Prester John's Glamor on the Muslim-
Crusader Conflict in the Levant, 1140s-1250s**

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Special Issue

Between History, Archaeology and Cultural Heritage. Some results of the ASRT / CNR Bilateral Project 'History of Peace-building: peaceful relations between Est and West (11th - 15th Centuries)'

Luciano Gallinari - Ali Ahmed El-Sayed
- Heba Mahmoud Saad (eds.)

RiMe 3 n.s. (December 2018)

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Editorial

Luciano Gallinari

(CNR - Istituto di Storia dell'Europa Mediterranea)

This Issue of the Journal *RiMe* celebrates its (first) 10 years of existence. In fact, the first volume was published in December 2008. Since then a lot of things have changed in *RiMe*.

Looking at its various volumes in a diachronic manner, we note that, alongside several more typically historical topics, the Journal has hosted several *Special Issues* with a monographic nature concerning other Humanities, such as Literature, or Disciplines at the boundary between Human Sciences and Exact Sciences, such as Architecture, for example.

Not to mention several incursions into the wide and interesting world of Social Networks or, again, Gamification and Public History.

The Journal has always paid great attention to a reliable and accurate dissemination of the results of Research in the civil society and, of course, in the Schools of all types and levels.

All this also in order to raise in the contemporary society the level of the debate on History and other Humanities, in the face of an ever-increasing risk of "presentification", and to make as many readers as

Con il presente numero la rivista *RiMe* festeggia i suoi (primi) 10 anni di esistenza. Infatti il primo volume uscì nel dicembre del 2008. Da allora molte cose sono cambiate in *RiMe*.

Osservando diacronicamente i suoi diversi volumi, si nota che accanto a numerosi temi più tipicamente storici la Rivista ha ospitato diverse *Special Issues* con carattere monografico riguardanti altre Scienze umanistiche quali la Letteratura, o discipline al confine tra Scienze Umane e Scienze esatte quali l'Architettura per esempio.

Per non parlare poi di diverse incursioni effettuate nel vasto e interessante mondo dei *Social Networks* o, ancora, della *Gamification* e della *Public History*.

La Rivista ha prestato sempre una grande attenzione anche a un'attendibile e accurata disseminazione dei risultati delle ricerche nella società civile e, ovviamente, nelle Scuole di ogni ordine e grado.

Tutto ciò anche al fine di innalzare nella società contemporanea il livello del dibattito sulla Storia e le altre Scienze Umane, dinanzi a un

possible can reach every content of *RiMe*, now accessible totally free of charge.

Precisely in accordance with the aims pursued since the the creation of the Journal 10 years ago.

In order to celebrate this first important Journal's anniversary in an even more appropriate way, we decided to adopt the Content Management System (CMS) "OJS". This choice is due to two of our objectives: 1) to adapt *RiMe*'s contents to parameters now very common at international level with regard to scientific Journals, and 2) to further increase the indexing and visibility of the essays hosted in it.

Currently, the last three issues have been uploaded to the new CMS, those marked "n.s.", i.e. "New Series" published in the last year, starting from December 2017.

Progressively all the previous 18 Issues will be uploaded in the new CMS, thus reaching a total of 27 Booklets.

rischio sempre crescente di "presentificazione", e di far raggiungere al maggior numero possibile di lettori ogni contenuto di *RiMe*, ormai accessibile in maniera totalmente gratuita. Proprio in ottemperanza delle finalità perseguite dalla creazione di questa rivista ormai 10 anni fa.

Per festeggiare in maniera ancora più adeguata questa prima importante ricorrenza della rivista, abbiamo deciso di adottare il Content Management System (CMS) "OJS". Tale scelta è dovuta a due nostri obiettivi: 1) adeguare così i contenuti di *RiMe* a parametri ormai molto diffusi a livello internazionale in riviste di carattere scientifico e 2) incrementare ulteriormente l'indicizzazione e la visibilità dei saggi ospitati in essa.

Attualmente sono stati caricati nel nuovo CMS gli ultimi tre numeri, quelli caratterizzati dalla dicitura "n.s.", ossia "nuova serie" pubblicati nell'ultimo anno dal dicembre 2017.

Progressivamente saranno inseriti nel nuovo CMS tutti i precedenti 18 numeri, arrivando così a un totale di 27 fascicoli.

Ad Maiora

Cagliari, 31 Dicembre 2018

Introduction

Luciano Gallinari

(CNR - Istituto di Storia dell'Europa Mediterranea)

Ali Ahmed El-Sayed

(Damanhour University, Egypt)

Heba Mahmoud Saad

(Alexandria University, Egypt)

This issue of *RiMe*, with which the Journal celebrates its (first) 10 years of existence, is once again, a *Special Issue*. In this case, it is dedicated to the topic of relations between Italy and Egypt and, more generally, between the Western World and the Islamic one in a chronological span that goes from the High Middle Ages to the beginning of the Modern Age, a theme at the heart of the Bilateral Project ASRT (Egypt) / CNR (Italy) "*History of Peace-building: peaceful relations between East and West (11th - 15th Century)*", financed for the years 2016 - 2017, whose scientific managers were, for the Egyptian side, Prof. Ali Ahmed Mohamed El-Sayed, from the University of Damanhour, and Dr. Luciano Gallinari, from the CNR-Istituto di Storia dell'Europa Mediterranea, for the Italian one.

The same historical and historiographic themes were discussed by Egyptian and Italian researchers in the context of three other workshops, two of which were organized in Rome in February and December 2017 ("Historiographic reflections on the medieval relations between Muslims and Christians"), and the third and last one in Alexandria ("Egypt and Italy: Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Tourism and Peaceful Relations") always in December 2017.

The volume contains some articles by Italian and Egyptian researchers of the above mentioned Bilateral Project that fit in the wake of themes already examined at the International Conference *Peace Building between East and West (XI-XVI c.)*, held in Cairo on 27 October 2016.

Alongside an essay dedicated to the important theme of the profound change recorded in the settlement policies in the Late Ancient and Early Medieval Mediterranean, strongly affected by the rapid and large expansion of Islam, there is another text that examines the stimulating figure of the Priest John in relation to the Crusades, from the dual Christian and Muslim perspective.

The third essay is dedicated to a theme of great importance: the relationship between the Roman Curia and the Mamluk Sultanate at the time of Innocent

VIII (1484-1492). A pope who played an anything but a secondary role also in the setting up of Christopher Columbus' "discovery" enterprise, also aimed at breaking that sort of "encirclement" sensation on the part of the Islamic World that Christianity felt at the end of the Middle Ages.

This volume also includes six other scientific essays, three by Italian researchers and three by Egyptian researchers dedicated to the theme of Cultural Heritage and its management for cultural tourism purposes in Italy and Egypt. I will not talk about them because it will be done by Prof. Heba Mahmoud Saad in her pages of this Introduction, but I will just say that the idea of this booklet and other initiatives that will take place in the next two years of the aforementioned Bilateral Project (2019 - 2020) came to me during a stay in Alexandria, Egypt, in October 2016 after meeting the aforementioned Prof. Saad who very kindly accompanied me on a tour of that beautiful Egyptian city.

On that occasion, we talked for a long time about the rich cultural heritage of our two countries and the idea of increasing scientific collaboration between us was born. This volume is a first, small piece of this collaboration, which confirms how this Journal can be a forum for discussion and debate on the important issue of Dissemination of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage, which is one of the main aims of *RiMe* since its creation.

Finally, the volume contains an interesting archaeological essay dedicated to the medieval *villa* of Santa Gilla (or Santa Igia, in other sources) probably located within the lagoon of the same name a few kilometers from the Roman and Byzantine city of *Karales* located below a part of the centre of the current city of Cagliari. The author of this essay presents an interesting and stimulating proposal for the identification of this *villa*, attested in the sources from 1070 and seat of the judges of Calari, who were from an institutional point of view the most direct heirs of the previous Arconti / Giudici di Sardegna mentioned in the Byzantine and papal sources of the 9th and 10th centuries A.D.

The volume is closed by some Book Reviews of recent publications on Medieval and Modern History.

Luciano Gallinari

* * *

It is an honor to participate in the introduction of the special issue of *RiMe* journal which is dedicated to publish part of the results of the Egyptian-Italian (ASRT/CNR) research project entitled "History of Peace-Building: peaceful relations between East and West (XIth – XVth Century)"

The project focuses on the significance of the relations between Western Europe and the Islamic East and the efforts which were made towards peace-building from the eleventh to the fifteenth century, although that period was considered as the most serious stage in the conflict between the East and West, Islam and Christianity in the Middle Ages.

During the two-years of cooperation many activities and events were organized between the Egyptian and Italian partners: In October 2016, an international conference was organized by the Egyptian partners and was hosted by the Supreme Council of Culture aiming to compare the results of our research. It was followed by a workshop held in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, in collaboration with the Italian Principal Investigator; Dr. Luciano Gallinari.

In February 2017, Prof. Aly El-Sayed and Dr. Abdallah Al-Naggar, two members of the Egyptian research team, visited Rome and participated in a workshop hosted by Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea. Another workshop was also organized by the Italian team headed by Dr. Luciano Gallinari between 10-15 December. During that workshop which was held in Rome, the Egyptian participation was represented by Prof. Aly Al-Sayed, Dr. Abdallah Al-Naggar and Mr. Ahmed Sheir.

Considering the international interest in heritage and the common heritage shared by Egypt and Italy; a special workshop was devoted for that topic in 17 December, 2017. During the workshop, which was held in Alexandria and organized by Prof. Heba Saad together with Dr. Luciano Gallinari, Egyptian and Italian researchers presented papers, focusing on heritage as an aspect of peace-building and potential for sustainable development.

The results of the Bilateral Project were disseminated by various publications. The first is a multilingual (English-Arabic-Italian-Hungarian) book, entitled *Relations between East and West - Various Studies: Medieval and Contemporary Ages*, which contains all papers compiled by both research teams. This volume contains 11 papers in addition to a preface. The papers were prepared by 6 Egyptian researchers, 4 Italians, and 1 Hungarian. The current issue of *RiMe* is the second publication containing 3 papers on history (2 Italian researchers and 1 Egyptian), 6 papers on heritage (3 Italian researchers and 3 Egyptians) in addition to 1 focus and 3 book reviews.

Within the next few weeks, the third publication will be issued in the form of a book which presents histories of peaceful coexistence between various people, empires, cultures and religions from the Middle Ages to the end of the 20th century. The authors examined the contact points of different cultures from the Byzantine Empire, through the Trebizond Empire period and into the Seljuk Sultanate. The book also presents insights into the peaceful coexistence between

Egyptian Copts and Muslims in the period from 1882 to 1952. Researchers from Egypt, Italy, Germany, and Hungary participated in this work.

Ali Ahmed El-Sayed

Peaceful relation between East and West is an important topic that attracted the attention of both Egyptian and Italian researchers to work on. Thus; a formal research project was established between CNR and ASRT entitled "History of Peace-building: peaceful relations between East and West (11th-15th Century). The current issue of *RiMe* is dedicated to publish some results of that project.

Leaving aside the first part of the Issue, already presented by Luciano Gallinari, I will focus on the second part of it which is dedicated to heritage since the Egyptian and Italian partners of the project believe that this wide and yet diverse aspect insures the deep relations between Egypt and Italy. The Italian contribution in the creation of the modern Egyptian heritage is unquestionable and the Egyptian heritage presented in Italy is irreplaceable; thus, heritage can provide a common ground for planning for the future. It ensures sustainable development of tourism and can strengthen the future relations between the two countries. Due to that importance of heritage a special seminar was organized in Alexandria in December 2017 to discuss Egyptian-Italian heritage and how it can be another aspect of peace-building between the two countries.

Many papers were presented in the seminar and 6 of them were chosen to be published in the current issue of *RiMe*. Sandra Leonardi's paper is entitled "*The cultural places' valorization through new models of tourism*" and it focuses on the sustainable tourism as one of the principles of economic development. The paper sheds light on new forms of tourism aiming at enhancing, integrating environmental sustainability of the landscape, cultural heritage and environmental resources by identifying their potential value and making them attractive.

Sara Carallo's paper which is about "*Digital Cultural Heritage and Tourism: Valle dell' Amaseo Web Portal*" presented a cultural heritage project executed in Valle dell' Amaseo to encourage the local community participate in the development of the cultural heritage. The project focuses on the census of cultural and environmental heritage and on the creation of tourist travel routes aiming at promoting sustainable mobility and improving accessibility through the proposal of alternative routes.

An innovative approach of using cultural heritage was presented by Luisa Spagnoli - Lucia Grazia Varasano in their paper "*Unused railways for a planning idea- A Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage*". They proposed the idea of the

transformation of two railways of Basilicata Region – the Lagonegro-Spezzano Albanese and the Matera-Montalbano Jonico, – which have a historical, cultural and environmental important value. The paper suggests that the reusing of these abandoned railways can have effects on the territory crossed, on the places, on the historical settlements, activating a special type of “experiential” tourism and other innovative forms of it. Such an experience can also represent an extraordinary Intangible and Tangible Cultural Heritage experience.

Another idea of using the tangible and intangible heritage for the benefit of tourism is proposed by Heba Saad in her paper *“Thematic walking tours in Alexandria as a way to discover its heritage: Case study of Italian heritage in Alexandria”*. The paper sheds light on the role of the Italian community in the creation of both the tangible and intangible heritage of the cosmopolitan city; Alexandria. The paper presented thematic walking tours as a way to discover the vivid Italian heritage of Alexandria; proposing a wide range of themes to present that heritage and the different routes of such tours.

Heba Said and Sherine Hamid in their paper *“Community participation in heritage sites tourism planning: Case study Dahshur mobilization plan”* explained the essential role of community participation in the planning, development and conservation of heritage sites. They applied their study on one of the sites in Egypt; “Dahshur World Heritage Site” to investigate the local community participation. The study proved that the residents had a positive perception of the participation experience which empowered them to influence the decision making process, enhanced their quality of life, created job opportunities and improved their skills.

In her paper *“Italian Egyptologists through the Ages”* Reham El-Shiwy looked at heritage from a different prospective focusing on how part of the Egyptian heritage was discovered in the past by Italian archaeologists, explorers and missionaries. The paper sheds light on the efforts of famous Italians such as Ippolito Rosellini, Giovanni Battista Caviglia, Belzoni, Ernesto Schiaparelli, Silvio Curto and others; highlighting their findings in Egypt and discussing their participation in the field of Egyptology.

Heba Mahmoud Saad

From a Christian Saviour to a Mongol Ruler: The influence of Prester John's Glamour on the Muslim-Crusader Conflict in the Levant, 1140s-1250s

Ahmed Mohamed Sheir

(CNMS, Philipps-Universität Marburg & Damanhour University)

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Abstract

The crusading movement influenced Muslim-Crusader thoughts and imaginations. It, in turn, changed the way in which West and East perceived each other. Thereby the legends played a role in transferring some imaginative and legendary conceptions shaped the Crusades' events. This paper studies the legend of Prester John and its development over space and time, examining how Prester John was perceived in the fact of a Christian saviour and a Mongol ruler during the 12th and 13th century. Additionally, I strive to measure the extent to which such connections and imaginations shaped the historical events of the conflict between the Muslims and the Crusaders at the time

Keywords

Crusaders; Prester John; Genghis Khan; Fifth Crusade.

Riassunto

Il fenomeno delle Crociate influenzò i pensieri e le fantasie musulmano-crociate. Esso, a sua volta, ha cambiato il modo in cui l'Occidente e l'Oriente si percepirono a vicenda. Pertanto, le leggende hanno giocato un ruolo nel trasferire alcune concezioni fantastiche e leggendarie che hanno plasmato gli eventi delle Crociate. Questo articolo studia la leggenda del Prete Gianni e il suo sviluppo nello spazio e nel tempo, esaminando come il Prete Gianni fu percepito come un salvatore cristiano e un sovrano mongolo durante il XII e XIII secolo. Inoltre, il saggio si impegna a misurare fino a che punto tali connessioni e fantasie hanno plasmato gli eventi storici del conflitto tra i Musulmani e i Crociati dell'epoca.

Parole chiave

Crociate; Prete Gianni; Gengis Khan; Quinta Crociata.

1. Introduction. - 2. Prester John in the Figure of a Crusading Saviour in the Twelfth Century. - 3. Associating Actual Events with the Figure of Prester John. - 4. Prester John, Genghis Khan and the Fifth

Crusade. - 5. Searching for Prester John among the Mongols. - 6. Conclusion. - 7. Bibliography. - 8. Curriculum vitae.

1. *Introduction*

The crusading movement was a medieval episode contributed to creating emotional enthusiastic imaginations that inspired the Crusades. The myths were one of the motives that stimulate the Crusaders to expand their authority over the East. Seeking to shed light on such mythological motivations of the Crusades, this paper examines the legend of Prester John and its development during the study period. It also strives to pinpoint how Prester John was perceived in the figure of an Oriental-Christian saviour in the twelfth century and in the persona Genghis Khan in the thirteenth century. Between those two perceptions, the influence of the legend allure on peacebuilding endeavours and war actions between the Muslims and the Crusaders would be studied.

2. *Prester John in the Figure of a Crusading Saviour in the Twelfth Century*

The legend of Prester John was born in the twenties of the twelfth century; it was probably associated with St. Thomas of India, Thomas the Apostle, (Zarncke, 1996a, pp. 23-38; Beckingham, 1996, pp. 6-7). According to an anonymous chronicle dated to the mid-twelfth century, an Indian man called John, who claimed to be an Indian Patriarch, reached the papal court in Rome in 1122 and disseminated stories about the miracles of St. Thomas in India. This Indian Patriarch visited Rome in 1122, the fourth year of the pontificate of Calixtus II, c. 1065 –1124, and recounted mysterious stories about a Christian community in India. (Brewer, 2015, pp. 30, 34; Baum, 1999, p. 122). It was mentioned that the Pope and all his court believed such Christian community raised their hands to heaven and glorified Christ for such divine and great miracles (Brewer, 2015, pp. 33, 38; Odo of Rheims, 2015, pp. 39, 40, 42).

Such notion about the existence of a Christian kingdom somewhere in Asia or India highlighted the crusading hope of establishing an alliance against the Muslims (Hilal, 1997, p. 17; Lach, 1994, p. 26; Slessarev, 1959, pp. 7-9). Consequently, the Indian bishop's visit to Rome was the nucleus of the story of an Asian ruler called Prester John who had defeated the Muslims in the East and governed a Christian Kingdom (Kurt, 2013, pp. 297-320; Zarncke, 1996, pp. 23-38; Bar-lian, 1995, pp. 291-98). According to the early Christian traditions, St. Thomas was martyred after establishing a Christian society in India and the rest of his disciples were then moved to Edessa after the Crusader invasion to the Levant (Baum, 1999, pp. 46-48, 56; Lach, 1994, pp. 25-26; Kerr, 1824, pp. 18-26). As a consequence, to the downfall of Edessa to the Turkish atabeg 'Imad al-Dīn Zengi in 1144, the Queen Melisende, the regent of Jerusalem, demanded

from Raymond of Poitiers, Prince of Antioch (d.1149) to dispatch an envoy to Rome to ask for a new crusade (Runciman, 1995, v.2, pp. 225, 247-248; William of Tyre, 1943, v.1, pp. 119, 142-144).

Hugh Bishop of Jableh (a coastal city in Syria), was dispatched to the court of Pope Eugenius III (1145-1153) in Viterbo in 1145 (Runciman, 1995, v.2, pp. 225, 247-248; William of Tyre, 1943, v.2, pp.119, 142-144). Otto of Freising, (1111-1158), a German bishop and historiographer, was witness to the report of Hugh of Jableh and was the first extent to record Prester John's legend in the seventh book of his chronicle the two cities "Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitatibus." According to Hugh of Jableh's reports, there was a mysterious king called Prester John, who was also a Nestorian preacher, governed a kingdom beyond the Armenian and Persian lands in the Far East. He was powerful enough to assist the Crusaders and to attack the Muslims, having fought against the so-called Samiardi brothers, kings of Persia, in Media in today's western Iran and stormed the royal city of their kingdom, "Ebactana" or "Ekbatana," - nowadays the city of Hamadan in Iran (Beckingham, 1996, p. 3). This alleged Prester marched to assist the Crusaders, but he could not cross the Tigris River, which was frozen in the winter. Consequently, he returned to his country promising that he would return to fight the Muslims. Otto of Freising, however, apparently had some doubts about the legend authenticity saying enough is enough "Sed hechactenus," (Ottonis Episcopi Frisingensis Chronica, 1912, pp. 363-367).

3. Associating Actual Events with the Figure of Prester John

There was a real historical event other than that of the fall of Edessa to Zengi contributed to flourishing the European-Levantine imaginings about such heroic figure. The Muslim sources recorded that Sultan Sanjar, ruler of Khorasan and Ghazni (died 1157), was defeated by Yelu Dashi of the Qara Khitai State at the ferocious battle of Qatwan in 1141-42 /536 AH, which took place in central Asia. The said battle was so tremendous, and Sanjar apparently lost a countless number of his people (Ibn al-Āthir: 2003, v. 9/p. 319; Ibn-al-Jauzī, 1992, v.18/pp. 17-19).

As consequence to that, the reports of Yelü Dashi became conflated with the figure of Prester John believing that Prester John was the leader who defeated Sultan Sanjar in 1142 and would, therefore, come to overthrow Zingi in Edessa in 1144. Nevertheless, Yelu Dashi was not a Nestorian, but in fact Buddhist (Hilal, 1997, pp. 19-21; Hamdi, 1949, p. 51).



Fig. 1. Asia, ca. 1142 CE: The Qara Khitai (Western Liao) Empire (Amitai and Birn, 2004, p.193)

The fall of Edessa to the Muslims' hands in 1144 coupled with the fiasco of the Second Crusade, contributed to thriving the glories of the legendary King-Priest (Frimmer, 1976, p. 177). Prester John's glamour was perpetuated in an anonymous letter sent to the Byzantine Emperor, Manuel I (1142-1180), between 1165 and 1170. Such letter stated that Prester John was the "Lord of Lords, by the power and virtue of God" (*Epistola Presbiteri Iohannis*, 2015, pp. 44-46, 66-67; Zarncke, 1996, pp. 40, 77; Röhrich, 1893, p. 67, no. 264). It was said that such spurious letter was first sent to Emperor Manuel I and forwarded to Emperor Frederick Barbarossa (1222-1190) and Pope Alexander III (1159-1181) (Baum, 1999, 127-28, de Reachewiltzy, 1971, p. 35; Ross, 1930, p. 178). It seems that Pope Alexander did not give credence to the boastful letter ascribed to Prester John in circulation. In September 1177, he addressed his Physician Phillip to search for Prester John (Papa Alexander III, 2015, pp. 92-96; Röhrich, 1893, p. 145, no.544; Roger of Hovden, 1853, pp. 491-93), but he disappeared somewhere and did not leave any tangible evidence of his travels (Hilal, 1997, 22; Ross, 1930, p. 179).

Briefly, Prester John was sensed as zealous Christian saviour who had great authorities in the Far East and would assist the Christians of the holy land. Otto's report described him as a ruler "beyond Persia and Armenia from the furthest east" (*Otonis Episcopi Frisingensis Chronica*, 1912, pp. 363-367). In the letter sent to the Byzantine Emperor, it was stated that Prester John dominated lands of the three Indias crossing from the furthest India (*Epistola Presbiteri*

Iohannis, 2015, pp.46, 68). Therefore, the scenarios of such legend took place in the Far East, of which the Mongols emerged and then advanced to attack the Muslims lands in coinciding with the fifth crusade on Egypt. As consequence to that, the Mongols fantastically were associated with the charm of Prester John.

4. *Prester John, Genghis Khan and the Fifth Crusade*

During the fifth crusade (1217–1221AD/ 612-618 AH), the legend was revived and the spheres of Genghis Khan traditionally corresponded Prester John. The bulk of the texts and news of Prester John were, in fact, the actual activities of the Mongol ruler and his army that mythically transferred to the persona Prester John or his son King David. Jacques de Vitry, Bishop of Acre, was the first one to believe in, and refer to, Prester John in 1217. He wrote a letter to various ecclesiastics in Europe; claiming that many Christian kings who lived in regions next to the land of Prester John, had heard of the advent of the Crusaders, “crucesignatorum,” and were about to come to help them against the Muslims “Sarracenis.” (Jacques de Vitry, 2015, pp. 98-99; and 1960, pp. 95-98).

The Crusader army arrived on the coast of Egypt at Damietta on May 27th, 2018/ late Şafar 615 AH. Sultan al-Kāmil of Egypt offered to deliver the crusaders Jerusalem; Tibnān, Tiberius as well as the other cities that had been taken by Salah al-Dīn, except for the castles of Karak and Montreal “Shoubak.” In return, the Crusaders should have withdrawn from Damietta (al-‘Ainī, 2010, v.4/p. 57; Ibn al-‘Ibrī, 1994, p. 413, Oliver of Paderborn, 1971, pp. 84-86, 89-90). However, the papal legate Pelagius refused to hold peace (Ibn-al-Athīr, v.10/379; Cole, 1991, pp. 143-144; Donovan, 1950, 62-63).

It seems that the Crusaders were waiting for the coming oriental hero before engaging in any peace negotiations, and then they might be able to conquer the Ayyubids. In 1219, Oliver of Paderborn, a German ecclesiastic and historian, wrote that the Crusaders received a letter written in Arabic, whose author was neither a Jew or a Christian nor a Muslim. This anonymous letter mentioned that son of Prester John, King David, sent his envoys to release the Christian captives captured in Egypt during the Crusaders’ siege of Damietta, and then they were sent to the Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad as gifts (Oliver of Paderborn, 2015, pp. 135-39, and 1971, pp. 89-91). Consequently, in August 1219/Jumada al-Thani 616, the Crusaders refused a second peace offer from al-Kāmil, who sent two Crusader prisoners, Andrew of Nanteuil and John of Arcis, to renew his recent peace offer (Omran, 1985; p. 264; Vitry, 1960, p. 150; Donovan, 1950, p. 62).

During the siege of Damietta, May 1218-August 1219, there were some internal disorders in the Ayyubid camp. The people of Damietta suffered indescribably starvation and Ibn-al Mashtūb with other princes led a conspiracy to depose al-Kāmil. This caused a sort of chaos inside the Muslim army on the eastern side of Nile River. Thus, in February 1219/Zulqida 615, the Crusaders marched and took control of the Muslim camp (al-Maqrīzī, 1997, v.1/p. 314; Ibn-Wāṣil, 1960, v.4/pp. 16-17; Röhrich, 1893, p. 246.no.924; 270). As always, the third peace-making attempt failed a few days before the fall of Damietta in November 1219 (Omran, 1985, p. 270; Ibn-Wāṣil, 1960, v.4/p. 23; Roger of Wendover, 1849, v.2/pp. 421-422).

Meanwhile, Genghis Khan's attacks against the Khwarezm State in 1219-1221 took place only in part with the fifth crusade against Damietta. Thus, there was, in a sense, a natural association between the old tradition of Prester John and the victorious Mongol army under Genghis Khan (who died 1227). Sweeping victories by the Mongol armies in Asia under the leadership of Genghis Khan thus gave the legend new stimulus and life and it was believed that Prester John's forces would join the crusade against Egypt (Claverie, 1999, pp. 603-04; Papacostea, 1998, p. 166).

The news spread quickly among the Christians of the medieval world of the time about the presence of a Christian sovereign in the Far East, King Prester John/King David, who governed large numbers of people and had enormous wealth (Oliver of Paderborn, 1971, pp. 91, 112-113). Jacques de Vitry in Egypt received a copy of a letter dated 1220 or early 1221 that supposedly transferred the initial movements and victories of the Mongols to the imagined person King David, son or grandson of Prester John. Such letter referred that King David had controlled many places in the Far East, which the Mongol, in reality, took hold. When they invaded Inner Asia and the steppes. (*Relatio de Davide*, 2015a, pp. 101-122; Aigle, 2014, p.49; Ibn-al-Athīr, 2003, v. 9/ pp. 401-407).

The Mongols invasion of the Khawarizm lands had terrified the Muslims in the Levant (Ibn-Wāṣil, 1960, v.4/p. 41). By contrast, the same news revived the crusading spirit. Once again, *Relatio de Davide's* text represented King David as a Nestorian Christian, who freed the Christian captives sent by al-Kāmil of Egypt, "Sultan of Babylon" as a gift to the Caliph of the Muslims in Baghdad (*Relatio de Davide*, 2015a, pp. 105-106, 112-113). Attaching further dramatic materials, Jacques de Vitry in his Letter dated 18th April 1221 said that Sultan al-Kāmil had heard about the marvels of King David, Prester John's son. He, as consequence, contacted John of Arques-la-Bataille, Odo of Chatillon, and Andrew of Carignon, who were captives in Cairo. He also reached some Templars, Hospitallers and Teutonic Knights, through them he offered new peace agreement, for the fourth time, that was refused by the Crusaders.

(Jacques de Vitry, 2015b, pp. 128, 132, Röhricht, 1893, p. 250/no. 941). It seems that Jacques de Vitry did trustworthily consider this legendary letter, translated it into Latin, and “Christianized” the Mongols (Jacques de Vitry, 2015b, pp. 128, 132; Taylor, 2010, pp. 8-9).

In Genghis Khan (1206-1226 AD/ 603-623 AH) the Crusaders' advocates of the legend in Egypt waited to for Prester John considering him a divine ally (Omran, 1985, p. 236, Hassan, 1933, p. 28). It could be argued that the Crusaders in Damietta used, even partly, such legendary figure as an emotional instrument to discourage any attempts to make peace with the Muslims and led the Crusaders' rejection of peace with the Ayyubids of Egypt.

It was claimed that King David insulted the Muslims' Caliph and demanded to deliver Baghdad. He sent his messengers to Abbasid Caliph saying, through an interpreter, “Our king (...) wants to have Baghdad so that the seat of our Patriarch might be there.” The Caliph answered them “the king must set up his stewards throughout the conquered lands. I, therefore, ask humbly that he make me his steward in this land, and I will give him as much money as he wants” (Relatio de Davide, 2015a, pp. 105-106,112-13).

Supposing that Genghis Khan dispatched such letter to the Abbasid Caliph al-Nāṣṣir (named "Alnazer" in Davide's letter) and subsequently the events were mythically transferred to the figure of King David. However, the historical resources did not record something about such letter or another similar corresponds at the time. In contrast, It was mentioned that the Caliph al-Nāṣṣir requested the assistance of Genghis Khan against the Sultan Mohamed Ibn Khawarizm, who was in disagreement with the Caliph and was about to attack Baghdad. Al-Nāṣṣir demanded Genghis Khan to enlist him as an ally against the Khwarezmid Sultan. Ibn-al-Athīr said that al-'Ajam "Persians" were right when they said that Caliph al-Nāṣṣir, who communicated with the Mongols, was the reason of the latter's greediness in the Muslims' lands (Ibn-al-Athīr, 2003, v.10/p. 453; Saiād, 1980, vol1/ p. 72).

Ibn al-'Ibrī mentioned that the Tatars under the leadership of Genghis Khan conquered the lands beyond the river, called "Alaanar" in the Relation de Davide's letter, in 1219/ 616 AH with about 200,000 soldiers. He subsequently captured the lands of the Khwarezmid state, named “Chavarsmisan” in David's letter, as well as Samarkand, and other cities up to the borders of Iraq, Baghdad, and the Muslim Caliphate (Ibn al-'Ibrī, 1994, pp. 407-411, Fahmy, 1981, pp. 57-70). Subsequently, in reality, there are no mentions about such letters dispatched from Genghis Khan, who was received in the romantic persona of King David, to the Abbasid Caliph at the time. This illustrates that the writer of King David/Prester John letter and the Crusaders added imaginative and

dramatic materials to the legend by attributing the exploits of the actual historical Genghis Khan to the non-existent Prester John and his son David.

Ibn al-Āthīr also wrote that people came from China to the lands of Turkistan, including Kashgar and Blasagun. They then headed to areas beyond the River, including Samarkand and Bukhara, among others. Some of these Tatars marched on Khorasan and devastated it, after which they conquered the cities from Khorasan up to the border of Iraq. Then, a group of them advanced to Ghazni, India, Sajestan, Kerman and towns and other countries, committing atrocities and crimes (Ibn-al-Athīr, 2003, v.10/pp. 399-401). It seems that the said text regarding King David/Prester John had attached fabricated and dramatic materials to the legend by attributing the exploits of the actual historical Genghis Khan to the non-existent Prester John and his son David.

The second version of *Relatio de Davide's* letter described the advent of Genghis Khan, but presented him, as always, as King David referring to the capture of Khwarezm state and other cities (*Relatio de Davide*, 2015b, pp. 114–17). The third version of David's letter was written by anonymous clergymen whose names are abbreviated to W. and R. in the manuscript copies. They were probably privy to one of the earlier David letters and circulated the story among their ecclesiastic followers in the German city of Münster. They express their excitement at the news brought from Egypt and the victories of Genghis Khan, or as they thought, "David, son of Prester John of India," who had come to the Holy Land after capturing many cities in the East. They did not fail to mention that, at the time of the writing of the text, King David was himself in Baghdad (*Relatio de Davide*, 2015c, pp. 118-122).

The perception of Prester John and his dynasty in a real victorious king or leader, such the Mongol leader, or in the structure of a historical Christian king or priest, would support the belief in the existence of Prester John or the called King David. The prediction of Prester John's arrival during the fifth crusade was transmitted in the letters of the Oriental-Crusaders to Europe and Pope; reflecting the actual political occurrences in the East, in which the Mongols played a key-figure. Therefore, the relations between the Latins (Europe and the Crusaders in the Levant) and the Mongols first relied on the association between Prester John and the Mongol king, in turn; such relations and connections reflected on the Crusades and the Mongol-Muslim conflict as well (Knobler, 2017, p. 8).

After an extended waiting period, during which four peace overtures from the Muslims were refused, Prester John did not reach Egypt. This interval of time in which the Crusaders waited for Prester John enabled the Muslims to regroup themselves. The Crusaders marched towards Cairo in July 1221 and the Egyptian forces repulsed them. The Ayyubids were thus able to besiege the

crusader forces between the two main distributaries of the Nile River, Damietta, and Rosetta. After several clashes between the two sides, the Crusaders eventually did come to hold a peace agreement and left Egypt on September 7th, 1221/Rajab7th, 618 (Al-'Ainī, 2010, v4/p. 57; Ibn al-Muqaffa, 2006, v.3.2/p.1539; Ibn-al-Athīr, 2003, v.10/p. 380)

Matching Prester John with the fact of Genghis Khan was used to boost the Crusaders against the Muslims. However, the Crusaders eventually sought to peace without any of the advantages they initially had. Such setback did not eradicate the belief in the existence of Prester John and his kingdom. The perception of Prester John was developed and revived by dispatching Catholic-papacy missions to search for Prester John or his ancestors among the Mongols in the 1240s.

5. *Searching for Prester John among the Mongols*

As a Justification for the fiasco of Prester John to join the fifth crusade, the Alberic's chronicle (1232-41) recorded that King David returned to his fatherland when he heard the frustrated outcomes of the fifth crusade. However, Alberic persisted in matching Prester John with the Mongol ruler. He mentioned that the Hungarians and Cumans called the army of King David the "Tartars," and this was at the time of writing his Chronicle between 1232 and 1241 (Alberic de Trois-Fontaines, 2015, pp. 142-149). As soon after the Mongols conquest of Russia, Hungary and Poland, the Latins in West and Levant realized that they had exaggerated in their aspiration toward Prester John and his troops (Baum, 1999, pp. 152-53). Nevertheless, Alberic defended Prester John saying that the Tatars had killed their lord Priest John, who would have come to the aid of the Latin Christians and their kings in the Levant (Alberic de Trois-Fontaines, 2015, pp. 142-149; Baum, 1999, pp. 152-153).

Prester John had a great allure on the western imaginations, especially the papacy that craved for conquering the Muslims and expand the Catholic authority. The Mongols, thus, were deemed as natural allies against Muslims. All such aspects combined with the internal crusader turmoil in the Levant stimulated Pope Innocent IV (1195-1254) to hold the council of Lyon in 1245 and then sent four missions to the Mongols to open a direct conversation with them (Jackson, 1994, pp. 15-32; Guzman, 1968, pp. 34-35).

The Franciscan monk Lawrence of Portugal was the first Papal Envoy to the Mongols and departed from Lyon on March 5th, 1245. However, the outcomes of this embassy are unknown and it was said that Lawrence probably misled his path or might never go out Europe (Guzman, 1968, pp. 34-35; Dawson, 1955, pp. 73-75; Carpine, 1913, p. 5). Between 1245 and 1247, the Franciscan John of

Plano Carpine (ca. 1180- c. 1250) travelled to the court of Cuyuk Khan (1241-1246) in the Karakorum. He aimed to preach for Christianity among the Mongols and to hold an alliance against the Muslims (Carpine, 1913, pp. 4-5, 129-30)

Carpine's account, *Historia Mangalorum*, was dedicated to reporting stories about Genghis Khan and the war between Mongols and Prester John that certainly made his account distinguished (Carpine, 1913, pp. 7-8, 74, 170-177; Beazley, 1903, pp. 83, 116-117). He stated that there was a war was between the Mongol forces and an Indian king called Prester John, "Qui vulgö Presbyter Iohannes appellatur." Prester John governed the Indians, who were black Saracens and called Ethiopian who were defeated by the Mongol ruler. (Ruotsala, 2001, pp.40-41; Carpine, 1913, pp. 74,170; Beazley, 1903, pp. 83, 17).

The term of three Indias, *Tribus Indies*, that meant Nearest India, Furthest India, and Middle India, was a clear indication of where the kingdom of Prester John was assumed to be. It is supposed that the Nearest India meant the North of the sub-continent that was known as infertile lands, according to what was ascribed to Alexandria the Great. The Furthest was the south India, which was accessible to some Europeans through East Africa and Arabian ports. Middle India was an indication to Ethiopia as determined by Marco Polo. However, Middle India was not a synonym for Ethiopia as it self-nowadays. The geographers of the twelfth and thirteenth century implicitly assumed Ethiopia to be situated in Middle India between Nearer and Further, North and south, Lesser and Greater India, somewhere near Nagpur (Heng, 2003, pp. 437, 453; Beckingham, 1997, pp. 14-15, 17; Brooks, 1898, pp. 30-33, 231-232)

Therefore, it could be argued that the term of black Saracens "nigri Sarraceni" used by Carpine, was synonymous with the Ethiopians as being the black Indian who might have dwelled somewhere near to the Muslim lands (Carpine, 1913, p. 170, Beazley, 1903, p. 278). This might illustrate the medieval combination between India and Ethiopia, considering the latter the minor or middle India. Such conception of India might interpreter the transition of the legend scenarios to Ethiopia in the Fourteenth-century.

It was reimagined that the ancestors of Prester still existed among the Mongols. Such perception acted as a transition phase in the discourse of the legend. In 1247, while King Louis IX (1226-1270) was in Cyprus heading to attack Egypt in the called seventh crusade, he received two Nestorian envoys, named David and Mark sent by Eljighidei, the Great Khan's commissioner at Mosul. They expressed the Mongol sympathy with Christianity and that the Mongol Khan would assist King Louis IX to recapture Jerusalem (Joinville and Villehardouin, 1973, p. 197; Edues de Châteauroux, 1723, pp. 624-626).

Prester John did not distinctly state in the mutual letters between the Mongols and King Louis IX. However, it was claimed that the mother of the Great Khan Kiokai was the daughter of a Christian King called Prester John (Ruotsala, 2001, p. 45; Edues de Châteauroux, 1723, pp. 626-627). Subsequently, rumours were raised that the Mongol King Sartaq son of Batu Khan (1227-1255) converted to Christianity. On May 7th, 1253, therefore, King Louis IX dispatched the Franciscan monk William of Rubruck (1220-93) to propose an alliance with Mongols, hoping that he can return to conquest Egypt after his defeat in the seventh crusade (Aigle, 2014, p. 47; Beazley, 1903, pp. 144-147, 184-188, 168, 214, 216).

However, Rubruck realised that the Mongol Sartaq never believed in Christianity, he reported that there was a Nestorian shepherd lived in a central Asia and was the ruler of the Naimans; one of the Mongols tribes ruled by Genghis Khan. This shepherd became the governor over the entire kingdom after the death of "Con Khan," (Ong Khan) who was the king of the Cathay "Cataya," and Khan of the Kerait tribe. Such shepherd called King John by his people, "Vocabant eum Nostoriani Regem Iohannem," It seems that the Franciscan Rubruck did not trust in the reports of the informants about this king John. As a result, he concluded that the Nestorian people exaggerated the said John's powers and marvels. They reported made great rumours about nothing (Beazley, 1903, pp. 168, 214, 216).

The bulk of the travellers' accounts frequently associated between presented Prester John and Genghis Khan. The common pattern was that the Tatars or the Mongols were the vassals of Prester John and then Genghis marched to Prester John's lands and caused him a disastrous defeat. Thus, the transmission process of the legend through the texts led to enrich the knowledge about Prester John. The legend was subjected to the diversity of the transmitters' perspectives and how they saw and transferred the events over space and time (Aigle, 2014, pp. 48-49, 52; Guzman, 1986, pp. 34-55).

The Europeans, Kings and Popes, were keen to negotiate with the Mongols as a possible partner against Mamlukes, which contributed over time to refresh the Latin-crusading memory of Prester John. The legend's memory was transported spatially and temporally to be revived in Ethiopia. In the figure of the Ethiopian King, the Prester John's adherents imagined their divine ally against the Mamluks of Egypt during the 14th and 15th centuries.

6. Conclusion

The legend of Prester John was an imaginary conception acted as an emotional motive for the crusade advocates after the fall of Edessa to Imad al-Dīn Zengi in

1144. The legend was created on a mixture of actual and mythical spheres took place in the Far East, such as transferring the conflict between the Sanjar Sultan and Qarakhitai ruler to the legendary persona of Prester John. By Otto's report of 1145, the legend was persisted and survived for centuries. The legend was used as an enthusiastic instrument to boost the Crusaders in the Levant. Being a powerful motive, the military activities of the Mongols in the far east were attached to the alleged figure Prester John. The Crusaders understood the Muslims' actions as a fear of Prester John and converted the Mongols' victories into such imaginary king John and his successor David. Such legend contributed to obstruct the peaceful negotiation during the fifth crusade.

After the fifth crusade, the impact of the legend on Latin-Muslim conflict and the Mongol-Muslim conflict developed by dispatching envoys to build an alliance with the Mongols. Assuming that Prester John was the Mongols; ruler, or, at least lived in the Mongols' lands. The previous tradition knowledge about Prester John affected the travellers and missionaries reports. Therefore, they were imagined that Prester John was defeated by the Mongol ruler. The legend then remained as a key-figure of the travellers' accounts throughout the forthcoming centuries to end up with associating Prester John with the reality of the Ethiopian King, starting from the 14th up to the 16th century.

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Abbreviations

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