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PALESTINE IN THE LAST THIRD OF THE XI C.: BETWEEN THE FATIMIDS AND THE CRUSADERS

The present paper is dealing with the history of Palestine in the period immediately preceding the coming of the Crusaders to the Middle East. In scholarly literature this period is usually described in passim, as a peripheral aspect of Fatimid or Seljuq history, or a sort of introduction to the Crusades, often with a set of standard cliché about the Turks devastating the area and persecuting Oriental Christians. This period, however, is important on its own, as well as for understanding the Crusading epoch. Controversial character of the time that witnessed gradual decline of Shi'ī powers and rising of the Sunnī Seljuqs, and insufficiency of scholarly research resulted in confusing chronology and certain slips in interpreting the course of events.

By the 1070 AD most of the Middle East was conquered by the Seljuqs. In its Western fringe only two regions remained not controlled by them: Asia Minor under the Byzantines, and Greater Syria under the influence (Halab) or direct control (Damascus and Jerusalem) of the Fatimid Isma'īlī caliphate of Egypt. First groups of Turks had already started infiltrating into Eastern parts of Asia Minor and Syria from the middle of XI C., but the proper conquest of Syria and Palestine did not start until 1070s, when the Turkish chief Atsiz b. Uwaq (Awq)¹ appeared in Palestine and captured Ramla, then Jerusalem, as well as nearby lands except Asqalan [2, v. X, p. 46]. The dating of the conquest of Palestine by Atsiz, surprisingly enough, varies considerably in the scholarly literature: all of 1070, 1071, 1073 and 1074 can be found.² Thus, a re-examination of the sources is imperative³.

Ibn al-Athīr and a number of other Arabic authors report that Jerusalem and Ramla were captured by the Turks under leadership of Atsiz in 463 (9.10.1070 — 28.09.1071) [2, v. X, p. 46; 4, p. 166–167; 5, p. 199–200; 6, p. 152]. This explains why the scholarly literature mentions both 1070 and 1071: as the exact months of events are not specified, the selection of a Christian year can be a matter of taste. In fact, however, as the sources mention this event closer to the end of the annual section, this happened later in the year 463 AH, i.e. already in 1071 AD.

Besides that, however, there is a clear statement by Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī that Jerusalem was conquered in Shawwāl 465 (10 June — 8 July 1073): “This year [466 AH] letters of Atsiz al-Turkmānī, the leader of al-Nāwukiyya, arrived [to Baghdad], telling about conquest of Jerusalem in Shawwāl 465 and establishing the ‘Abbasid *khutba*” [6, p.169]. The story of the conquest is quite detailed and mentions peaceful way of taking the city. This information is partially reproduced by Ibn al-Athīr who simply states that “this year [465] the Abbasid call was established in Jerusalem” [2, v. X, p. 60]. The only explanation to existence of these two different dates is that Jerusalem and Palestine were taken by Atsiz twice — in 463/1071 and in 465/1073. This interpretation is supported by a Hebrew poem dated 27 January 1077 and dedicated to the

¹ See a summary of Atsiz's career: [1].

² See details of this scholarly discussion: [3, p. 5–6, esp. footnotes 26–30].

³ This task was facilitated by a possibility to use a new computer database of Arabic sources established recently in the Middle Eastern History Department of the Faculty of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg State University, Russia, under supervision of the author of the present paper and Prof. Nikolay Dyakov, Head of Department.

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victory over troops of Atsiz in Egypt: "...what they did to the people of Jerusalem // Whom they besieged twice in two years" [7, p. 161].

All the above means that there had to be a period of Fatimid re-occupation of the area, and Atsiz had to take it again. Being quite short, this Fatimid "restoration" was, not surprisingly, overlooked by most sources. Nevertheless, it was briefly mentioned by Ibn Shaddād: "When it [Jerusalem] came to al-Mustanşir, Atsiz b. Uwaq appeared and went to the land of Palestine and took Ramla and Jerusalem from his [al-Mustanşir's] representatives in 463. It remained in the hands of Atsiz until Badr al-Mustanşirī [i.e. Badr al-Djamālī] came in 465 (17.09.1072 — 05.09.1073) and took back Ramla and Jerusalem, and installed there his governors. Then he returned to Egypt in [46]6 (06.09.1073 — 26.08.1074), while Atsiz came back to Jerusalem and took it at the end of the year" [5, p.200]. Seemingly, Badr al-Djamālī's attack was performed after Seljuq's main ally in Egypt Naşir al-Dawla (about him see below) was killed in Rajab 465/ March-April 1073 [8, p. 730], which enfeebled positions of the Turks in Palestine. As for the reason behind the final Fatimid troops' withdrawal from Palestine in 466, it was related to the difficulties faced in Cairo by the Fatimid caliph al-Mustanşir who called for help to Badr al-Djamālī, at the time the governor of 'Akka. From other sources we know that Badr al-Djamālī left Palestine for Egypt by sea in the time of winter storms — in January 1074, and came to Cairo at the end of the day of Wednesday 28 Djumāda I 466/ 29 January 1074 [9, p. 76; 10, v. II, p. 449; 11, p. 205–206].

There is, however, some difference between Ibn Shaddād's and Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī's datings. Perhaps, in the account of Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī Shawwāl 466 was meant instead of Shawwāl 465, or, alternatively, Ibn Shaddād wrongly assumes that Badr al-Djamālī's departure to Egypt and Atsiz' retaking of Jerusalem happened the same year — 466. In fact, Atsiz could recapture Jerusalem even before Badr al-Djamālī departed from 'Akka. The latter, after retaking Jerusalem and Ramla from Atsiz, had left his deputies there, but soon enough he was summoned by al-Mustanşir and started preparing his army for the expedition to Egypt. As a result he was in no position to help Jerusalem against Turks: he could not spare even part of his troops, neither stop his preparations for incomparably more important Egyptian campaign. In any case, we can state that after Atsiz' occupation of Palestine in 463/1071 there was a short period of Fatimids' return to the area in 465 which ended by Atsiz' retaking the city some time between Shawwāl 465 and Shawwāl 466 (June 1073 — July 1074).

Though it may seem insignificant when exactly Jerusalem has been taken by Atsiz, but if we look closely at the dates in question we would realise that even 1-2 years difference does matter, as a wrong dating would produce wrong interpreting of the whole course of events. Why 1071 as a year of Atsiz's coming to Palestine is so important? The answer is obvious: it is not just a year, but *the* year of the famous battle of Manzikert when the Seljuq sultan Alp-Arslān defeated the Byzantine emperor Romanus IV Diogenes that eventually led to the loss of Asia Minor by the Byzantines and its gradual occupation by nomadic Turks.

From this point of view it becomes clear that Atsiz's activities in 1071, as well as in the following period were tightly related to the general process of Turkish occupation of the Middle East and, more specifically, with a policy that the Seljuq pursued in the West. Thus, Atsiz's actions should be seen as a part of a more general operation planned by the Sultan. The main target of Alp-Arslān's campaign of 463 was not Asia Minor but the Fatimids — the primary foe of the Seljuqs for about 15 years by then (since "liberation" of the Abbasid Caliph from the Shī'ī heretics Buwayhids in 1055 and following capturing of Baghdad by Arslān al-Basāsiri in

the name of the Fatimids in 1059), and only coming of the Byzantines led to redirecting Alp-Arslān's campaign to Asia Minor. Let us follow the events of this campaign in detail.

The goal of this campaign was Syria, with a view of attacking Egypt itself. The immediate cause of it was an appeal to Alp-Arslān by Nāṣir al-Dawla b. Hamdān, a descendant of the Hamdānids and senior commander of the Fatimids. At that moment he was fighting against the Fatimid Caliph al-Mustanshir and had got control over the Delta with Alexandria. Nāṣir al-Dawla contacted Alp-Arslān and proposed to surrender Egypt to the Seljuq sultan [12, p. 18]. Alp-Arslān had equipped a large army and marched to Diyār Bakr passing through Āmid towards Edessa (al-Ruhā). He besieged Edessa for some 50 days in the winter 1070/1071 [13, p. 132]. However, he was not able to take this well fortified city bravely defended by the Byzantine garrison and its inhabitants, and proceeded further to Haleb. He besieged the city for some 31 days [12, p. 18] and finally its master Maḥmūd b. Naṣr from the Mirdāsīd dynasty surrendered it on Tuesday 17 Djumāda II 463/ 22 March 1071 [12, p. 18]⁴.

After subjugation of Northern Syria Alp-Arslān had planned to continue his march against Egypt, but receiving information about the Byzantines' attack the Sultan departed from Halab on 23 Djumada II 463/28 March 1071 [12, p. 19]⁵ and went to Khoy in Adherbaijan (a city c.150 km to the East from the lake Van) [2, v. X, p. 44]. There he learned about Byzantine army approach to Manzikert (Malazgird), a city c. 50 km to the North from the Lake Van, some 250 km from Khoy. Then he proceeded to Manzikert and eventually defeated Romanus in August 1071⁶. Thus the major Western campaign of Alp-Arslān ended quite differently from his own plans. Romanus' bold attack saved the Fatimid Caliphate, which lasted for another hundred years. As *atabek* Tughtakīn put it: “[Alp-Arslān] had come to Syria wishing to go to Egypt for conquering it. If he went [there] he would take all countries and take Egypt” [12, p. 27].

The following year some problems in the East attracted sultan's attention and in course of his expedition he was killed near Amu-Darya. As a result he had no chance to renew his Egyptian campaign. His son Malik-Shāh had to suppress revolts of his relatives, thus Western borders became of marginal importance for the central Seljuq power for a while. Besides, as it was mentioned, the Seljuqs' main ally in Egypt Nāṣir al-Dawla was killed in Rajab 465/March-April 1073.

But even all the above did not mean that plans of taking Syria and Egypt were abandoned. First, in time of Alp-Arslān's siege of Halab Seljuq troops invaded all of central Syria as far as Homs and Qaryatayn. Then, before leaving Syria to fight Byzantines, Alp-Arslān ordered Maḥmūd of Halab — together with some Turkish contingents left behind in Syria — to invade Damascus. Maḥmūd's expedition was unsuccessful due to problems in Halab (his uncle 'Atiyya threatened the city and Maḥmūd had to return back). On the other hand, exactly this time Atsiz took Ramla and Jerusalem. Thus, regardless the official status of Atsiz (some sources name him as a sultan's commander⁷, but others do not mention this fact), he acted as if his enterprise was a part of Alp-Arslān's anti-Fatimid operations, at least it closely followed Sultan's policy. After sultan's departure Atsiz remained in (or, perhaps, came to — it is not explicitly expressed by sources) Palestine, but had to act on his own.

⁴ Ibn al-Qalānisi, however, considers this day as a starting point to the siege of Halab [4, p. 167].

⁵ Ibn al-Qalānisi, correspondingly, gives a month later date: 23 Rajab 463/26 April 1071 [4, p. 167].

⁶ *Bughya* [12, p. 31] gives 5 Dhū-l-Qa'da 463/ 4 August 1071 as a date of the battle, but the sources differs in this respect. Carole Hillenbrand listed two more plausible dates given by the sources — 19 or 26 August 1071 (unlike other dates, these days were Fridays, while Friday prayer time was mentioned in most sources as a starting point for the battle) [14, p. 14].

⁷ See, e.g., Ibn al-Athīr, who call him “one of *amīrs* of Sultan Malik-Shāh” [2, v. X, p. 46].

At that moment Ramla and Jerusalem belonged to the area under Nāṣir al-Dawla's influence. He had sent to Palestine his brother Fakhr al-'Arab who received support from local Arabic tribes [15, p. 645–646]. As a result the area came out of the control of Badr al-Djamāli — the governor of 'Akka and major partisan of the Fatimid cause in Syria. Under such circumstances Atsiz managed to take Ramla and Jerusalem the same year 1071: there was no opposition from the side of Nāṣir al-Dawla who, perhaps, regarded Atsiz as a potential ally, while the Bedouins were expelled easily enough. On the other hand, after Nāṣir al-Dawla's death, Atsiz retreated from Jerusalem when the puissant Fatimid commander attacked him. Apparently, the Turkish leader had no significant personal military resources to withstand a concerted attack of the Fatimid forces. However, when Badr al-Djamāli withdrew his troops to 'Akka in course of his preparations to Egyptian campaign, thus stripping Palestine from most of its military contingents, the Turkish commander immediately returned back to retake Jerusalem from a Fatimid governor installed there by Badr al-Djamāli. It is necessary to mention that after retaking Jerusalem in 465/1073 Atsiz proclaimed the Abbasid *khuṭba* in Palestine, thus officially recognizing authority of the Abbasid caliph and the new Seljuq sultan Malik-Shāh [6, p. 169; 2, v. X, p. 60].

After that another three years passed before Atsiz was able to take Damascus: he made annual spring raids against the city affecting its agriculture and provoking famine, but had not enough forces to take the city. This delay again is to a large extent related to the situation inside the Seljuq empire. While Malik-Shāh was consolidating his state in the East, there were no reinforcements available for Atsiz, but after the firm power of the Sultan had been established and the empire pacified, a number of Turkish soldiers became free to go to Palestine. In Dhū-l-Ḥijja 467/July-August 1075 three thousand *ghulāms* from the sultan's *'askar* arrived to Atsiz in response to his request [6, p. 175].

As a result Atsiz's pressure on Damascus increased until such a point that he could take the city the following year (in Dhū-l-Qa'da 468/June-July 1076) [2, v. X, p. 68–69; 4, p. 174; 6, p. 180], thus depriving the Fatimids from all their Syrian possessions except some coastal towns. Moreover, he felt himself strong enough to attack Egypt itself at the end of the same year. He besieged Cairo, but was finally defeated by the new Fatimid *wazīr* — the above mentioned *amīr al-djuyūsh* Badr al-Djamāli — at the end of January 1077 [2, v. X, p. 70–71; 4, p. 176–181; 6, p. 181–185; 11, p. 207–208; 16, p. 25], and expelled from Egypt. Afterwards Atsiz was, in turn, threatened by the Fatimid troops in Damascus, which made him appeal to the Seljuq sultan Malik-Shāh for help. The arrival of Tutush, a brother of Malik-Shāh, in 1078 led to the final withdrawal of the Fatimids from Syria and Palestine. Atsiz, however, did not enjoy this victory as he was killed by Tutush after he met him under the walls of Damascus (Rabī' II 471/October 1078) [10, I, p. 295; 4, p. 182–183; 2, X, p. 76]⁸.

Consequently, all the above shows that that the conquest of Palestine and Southern Syria by Atsiz and his Turks was a process, though not straightforward, but tightly related to the general Seljuq policy in the West. All his deeds, at least starting from 465/1073, Atsiz carefully reported to the central authorities in Baghdad (his letters are mentioned in the Baghdad-centred chronicle of Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī [6, p. 169, 178, 179, 181]), receiving both moral approval and practical military help from the Caliph and the Sultan.

It is also important to point out that despite a widely known opinion that coming of the Turks to the Middle East caused chaos and devastation⁹, the Turkish leaders in Syria — exactly as it

⁸ Ibn Muyassar gives a slightly different date — Rabī' I 471/ September 1078 [16, p. 26].

⁹ See, e.g., the article about Jerusalem in the Encyclopaedia of Islam [17, p. 328]. A contrary view is expressed in a thoughtful article by Shimon Gat [3].

was in other parts of the Seljuq empire — paid a special attention to restore economy of the country after its conquest, including measures to recover agriculture [6, p. 153, 180]. As a result in Damascus, for example, soon after Atsiz's occupation of the city, "the prices became low and the souls of the subjects grew happy" [6, p. 180]. On the other hand, as it was mentioned, Jerusalem was taken peacefully [6, p. 169], and Atsiz made it his capital — first time since the city was conquered by the Arabs (before that the main city of Palestine was Ramla). Even after taking Damascus the Turkish leader continues to regard Jerusalem as his main centre, as before departing with his troops to Egypt Atsiz left his treasury and his family in Jerusalem [6, p. 184], not in Damascus.

After his defeat in Egypt, however, some of his Syrian subjects rebelled, so Atsiz went to Damascus to gather troops, and later had to suppress a revolt in Jerusalem [10, I, p. 295; 2, X, p. 70; 6, p. 184–185]. The city was taken by force and many people were killed indeed. But it is necessary to point out that it was not an example of a fabulous "Turkish vandalism", but — despite all its cruelty — quite a comprehensible action. First of all, the people of Jerusalem revolted against their master. Moreover, they behaved not only treacherously, but I would say arrogantly, as not only the treasuries of Atsiz's and his companions' were plundered, but their families were brutalized: "The *qadis* and *shuhud* and those who were in Jerusalem fell upon their [the Turks] property and women. They distributed the Turkish women between themselves, separated wives from children and enslaved them" [6, p. 184–185]. The citizens — more exactly the Muslim community and its leaders — were so sure that the city was impregnable and the Fatimids were to come back soon, that they boldly declined Atsiz's generous proposal to pardon them, if they surrender the city by *aman*. Furthermore, when Atsiz came personally to make a last attempt to pacify them, they insulted him publicly from above the walls [6, p. 185]. Eventually, the city was taken and Atsiz severely punished its citizens, many of them were killed — he stopped killing only in the Qubbat al-Sakhra of Haram al-Sharif [2, X, 103]. But this action is quite understandable under above circumstances; moreover Christian and Jewish communities that did not participated in the rebellion were not affected. On the other hand, the people of Damascus who kept loyal to their master were thanked by Atsiz and exempted from the *kharāj* of this year [6, p. 184].

What is important to note, however: at the start of the period under consideration — in early 1070-s — the population of Jerusalem and Palestine as a whole (Ramla, Ghazza, Jaffa and other towns also rebelled against Atsiz [6, p. 184–185]) supported the Fatimids of Egypt, affiliating themselves with the Fatimids, and considering the Turks as invaders and their enemies.

After the death of Artuq Palestine and Damascus came under direct control of the Seljuqs: sultan Malik-Shāh appointed his brother Tutush as a governor of Damascus. The latter made all his efforts to continue Atsiz policy of pacifying the region and arranging its administration in a good order. The Bedouins who during last decades of the Fatimid rule used to plunder villages and people of Southern Syria and Palestine — including Christian pilgrims going to Jerusalem — were finally suppressed and calmed down. A certain stability and prosperity was established [2, v. X, p. 111; 6, p. 226]. In the last quarter of the XI C. Jerusalem became a prosperous city, an important centre of spiritual life not only for Muslims, but for Christians and Jews as well¹⁰.

The power base of Tutush became Damascus, but there was another important city in his possessions — Jerusalem, a major religious centre and a *de facto* capital of the province of Pal-

¹⁰ For more detail about Christian and Jewish communities see: [3, p. 15–38].

estine (Ramla as a centre of the area lost its importance by then), which required a special attention of the ruler. At first he left in the city the former governor emir Turmush, installed there in 1077 by Atsiz, but later, in 1083, Tutush replaced him by one of his major emirs — Artuq b. Aksab [6, p. 213]. Jerusalem however, was not the only possession of Artuq (he also had some lands in al-Djazīra) and he was absent from the city often enough. For the sake of its better administration Artuq left as his deputy a Jakobite Syrian named Mansur b. Bilbay¹¹.

After the death of Artuq in 1091 [10, I, p. 191] his two sons — Sukmān and ʿĪl-Ghāzī — succeeded their father as rulers of Jerusalem. In 1093–1095, after the death of sultan Malik-Shāh they supported Tutush in his dispute for the sultanate against Malik-Shāh's son Barkyārūq. After Tutush had been killed in the struggle, Sukmān, seemingly, took possessions of his father in al-Djazīra, first of all, the city of Sarūdī located to the south of Edessa, at least he is mentioned as being in Sarūdī after the death of Tutush in 488/1095 [18, v. II, p. 123]¹². Both Artuqids were relatively young, but Sukmān as the elder brother played much more prominent role in the following period, than ʿĪl-Ghāzī. Being one of the major Syrian emirs of the period, Sukmān actively participated in 1096–97 in the struggle for preponderance in Syria between two sons of Tutush — Ridwān of Halab and Duqāq of Damascus, being on the side of Ridwān.

An important role of Sukmān in this period can be seen from Ridwān's appeals for his military help in a number of occasions, but especially evident it became in course of Ridwān's attempt to make an alliance with the Fatimids in 1097. Ridwān proclaimed the Fatimid *khutba* on 17 Ramadan 490/7 September 1097 [18, v. II, p. 127–129; 4, p. 217], but it did not last even a month, because Sukmān and another major Syrian emir Yāghī-Siyān of Antioch joined their efforts against this and persuaded Ridwān to stop *khutba* for the schismatic Fatimids. Moreover, an Egyptian historian Ibn Muyassar, who described events from the Egyptian vintage point, put the responsibility for Ridwān's break with the Fatimids on Sukmān alone [16, p. 38]. Though it is a sort of exaggeration, but this reflects an Egyptian attitude, indicating the key role of Sukmān in the Middle Eastern politics of the time.

As for ʿĪl-Ghāzī, he, as a younger brother, remained in Jerusalem which seems to have been a sort of domicile for the Artuqids. Though he participated with Ridwān in the Tutush's last campaign (they departed with the troops remained in Syria to help Tutush, but the latter was defeated and killed while they were still en route [2, X, p. 167]), in the described period he did not play a significant role. He found himself in a complicated situation because of ensuing Ridwān — Duqāq confrontation: on the one hand, he was tied to his elder brother, while on the other hand, his possessions were geographically tightly related to Damascus, belonged to Sukmān's enemy Duqāq.

His ambiguous position is reflected in the sources. In course of Ridwān's campaign of 489/1096 against Duqāq [4, p. 215], in which Sukmān participated on the side of the former, ʿĪl-Ghāzī was in Duqāq's army, though the reason behind this fact is explained differently by different sources. Thus, Ibn al-ʿAdīm reports that ʿĪl-Ghāzī was imprisoned by Duqāq, so Sukmān went from Damascus to Jerusalem to take the city peacefully from representatives of his brother [12, p. 139; 18, v. II, p. 124]. Ibn al-Qalānisī, however, says that ʿĪl-Ghāzī was out of Damascus with the army of Duqāq and Yāghī-Siyān, participating in their military campaign against Ridwān [4, p. 215]. Perhaps, he was in Duqāq's army as an ally and a hostage simultaneously; in any case, there is no mention of his actual participation in the battles of the period on the side of Duqāq.

¹¹ Sawirus (Cairo, 1948), p.461, after: [3, p. 11].

¹² Ibn al-Athīr, however, says that Sukmān captured Sarūdī ahead of Ridwān when Syrian emirs decided to take al-Djazīra, which remained without maser after Tutush had perished [2, v. X, p. 70].

It was, in general, a turbulent period of shifting alliances in which the Artuqids of Jerusalem played an essential part. One of the reasons behind their rising is related to the fact that the sons of Tutush were very young (Ridwān, the oldest, was born in 475/1082, i.e. he was 13 years old only when his father was killed in 1095), so they had to rely on elder emirs such as their atabegs Tughtakīn and Djanāḥ al-Dawla, and local Syrian princes such as Sukmān and Yāghī-Siyān of Antioch — who competed for influence on young princes and shaped the politics of the period. This explains shifting alliances of the time, indecisiveness of military engagements and campaigns, as well as easiness and speed of changing sides, which depended on concrete circumstances.

The above mentioned inner fighting for leadership in Syria, however, was a sort of “home quarrels” between Turkish leaders, but coming of the Crusaders — a new enemy from outside the Middle Eastern world — drastically changed the situation in the region.

The Artuqids, together with other Syrian emirs, took an active part in the fighting against the Franks of the First Crusade in course of their siege of Antioch in 1097-1098 and in an attempt of the atabeg of Mosul Kurbūqā [19] to relieve the city. The defeat of the Turks in June 1098 near Antioch, however, allowed the Fatimids’ to start an invasion to Palestine that resulted in taking Jerusalem from Sukmān and Īl-Ghāzī on 26 August of 1098¹³. After capturing Jerusalem the Fatimid *wazīr* and commander al-Afḍal did not continue the campaign of conquest, recognizing that it is impossible to confront other major Syrian emirs such as Duqāq of Damascus. He returned to Egypt, appointing as a governor of Jerusalem a certain Iftikhār al-Dawla [2, v. X, p. 193; 21, p. 518].

The Fatimids held Jerusalem for less than a year and the historians do not pay sufficient attention to this fact (their conquest of the city in 1098 was totally overshadowed by the Crusaders’ seizing Jerusalem the following year). But if we look at the event more closely, we can see its real importance. First of all, this meant that the Fatimids partially recovered their possessions in Sothern Syria lost in early 1070-s. Jerusalem became their property again, the status quo in Palestine, seemingly, was restored. However, if we consider the event, we will see also a huge difference between the situation in Palestine in 1071, when first Turks under Atsiz came there, and that of 1098, some quarter a century later. It should be noted here that 25 years is a generation-long period, i.e. historically significant piece of time.

What happened in Palestine during this period? At its beginning we have seen a strong opposition of the population of Palestine and Jerusalem to the Turks. At the very first opportunity they rebelled against Atsiz and waited for coming of the Egyptians to liberate them. This means that they considered their land as a part of the Fatimid empire and connected themselves to the Fatimid cause, while the Turks were regarded as their main enemies. In 1098 the situation was different: unlike first Fatimid restoration in 1073, it was very difficult for the Fatimids to take the city. Why?

Of course there were some purely military reasons, as the Artuqids were able commanders, but more importantly, they considered Jerusalem as their land, their domain, which they inherited from their father, not as a newly conquered foreign city as it was for Atsiz. As a result they were ready to defend their possession until the very last possibility. This can be seen from the lengthy and difficult siege of Jerusalem by al-Afḍal: despite overwhelming strength of the Egyptian army and having no hope to get any help from outside from the Seljuqs recently routed

¹³ For more detail about Fatimid’s conquest of Jerusalem under al-Afḍal see: [20].

by the Crusaders, the Artuqids defended their city for about 40 days until a section of the wall was destroyed by Egyptian *mandjaniks*; finally, they surrendered on honours terms — they were allowed to leave the city with all their troops, weapons and treasury. But even more important was the support of the population of Jerusalem: in defending the city the Artuqids were assisted by its people [2, v. X, p. 193], nobody conspired to open the gates for the Fatimids.

The citizen attitude can be clearly seen from a story about the Jerusalem *qurrā'* Ibn al-Kāzarūnī told by Ibn al-ʿArabī¹⁴. He informs that the citizens were angry with the Fatimids because they launched a war against the city, so the *qurrā'*, expressing common feelings, openly offended al-Afḍal in a public prayer in the al-Aqṣa mosque by quoting a relevant Qur'anic sentence. However, he was generously pardoned by the *wazīr* who, in turn, quoted another meaningful Qur'anic passage — about God's forgiveness¹⁵. Though it is a typical "pious tale" of the *adab* type, it clearly shows the opposition of Jerusalem population to the Fatimids and the inability of the latter to suppress it: al-Afḍal had to calm down the situation diplomatically, as he, obviously, did not feel himself sure enough to punish his offender, fearing to provoke an open revolt.

This small episode speaks volumes how drastically had changed the situation in Palestine since its rebellion against Atsiz in 1077. In 1098 the population affiliated themselves not with the Isma'īli Fatimids, but with the Sunni Turks, who became familiar to them and closely connected to their interests. Jerusalem became a centre of the Sunni orthodoxy (this is obvious from Ibn al-ʿArabī's experience described in his writings¹⁶) and its population had no sympathy to the Egyptians who were considered as aliens and heretics. This change of affiliation shows that during this generation Palestine — despite all its specifics — became an integral part of the Seljuq Empire, and lost its previous ties to the Fatimid Egypt. As a result, the positions of the Fatimids in newly recovered lands were quite weak.

Now it was turn of the Crusaders to come to the stage. After spending almost a year in the Northern Syria, they finally refused terms of agreement proposed by the Fatimid embassy [26, p. 89-90] and departed from Tripoli on 16 May 1099. The 6 of June they laid siege to Jerusalem. The Crusading advance took al-Afḍal by surprise, his army was not ready for campaign. Thus he could not help the city and, after several unsuccessful attempts, the Franks took it by assault on 15 July 1099.

Why it became possible? On the one hand, military strength and shrewd diplomatic activity of the Crusaders, who overplayed the Fatimids, contributed considerably to the former's victory. On the other hand, it was an obvious fault of al-Afḍal who failed to check the Crusaders' advance and did not provide military help to Jerusalem in time. Later — not surprisingly, taking into account military prowess and determination of the Franks — he was unable to recover Palestine from them either, being totally routed by the Crusaders near Ascalon on 12 August 1099 and withdrew to Egypt never to come back in person.

But not less important factor was the very fact that Jerusalem was in the hands of the Fatimids, not the Artuqid Turks. For the Sunnis, al-Afḍal — and, consequently, the Fatimids in general — was a person to blame for the loss of Jerusalem to the Franks. "There was his [al-Afḍal's]

¹⁴ Abu Bakr b. al-ʿArabī (468–543/1076–1148), a scholar from al-Andalus, visited the Middle East, including Palestine, in 1092–1100 AD [10, v. IV, p. 296–297; 22; 23]. Ibn al-ʿArabī stayed in Jerusalem in 1092–95, and also visited Palestine briefly in December 1098 on his way back to Egypt. This can be derived from notes scattered in his numerous exegetic books.

¹⁵ Ibn al-ʿArabī. *Ahkām al-Qurʾān*, 4: 1584–1585 (after [24, p. 114]).

¹⁶ His notes were collected by Iḥsān ʿAbbās [25] and Joseph Drori [24].

governor left in [the city], but those who were there had no strength to withstand the Franks, so they took [Jerusalem] from this [governor]. If it had been in the hands of the Artuqids, it would have been better for the Muslims!” [9, p. 82; 10, v. I, p. 179]¹⁷.

In this particular case the Sunni attitude was reasonable near the truth. To take the city using resources of the whole Egypt is one thing, but to keep it is another matter. First of all, the governor had a relatively small garrison, incomparable to the *‘askar* of major emirs. Moreover, not only military resources, but also determination of independent emirs far exceeded those of a governor, however competent he was. The difference can be clearly seen if we compare the siege of Antioch, which was defended by such an emir Yāghī-Siyān, and defence of Jerusalem. The scale of Yāghī-Siyān’s defensive activities — repulsing Crusaders’ attacks and making bold and numerous sorties — is incomparable to that of Jerusalem defenders. The Fatimid governor of Jerusalem Iftikhār al-Dawla was no match to Sukmān and ʿĪl-Ghāzī.

And last but not least: there was an indifference and even hostility of the population of Jerusalem towards the Egyptians. The citizens had no wish to fight for the Fatimid cause, which considerably weakened positions of the garrison. As a result the Fatimid governor was unable to defend the city against the Crusaders, and it was lost for Muslims for almost a century. Thus, it was, finally, this lack of support to the Fatimids in Palestine since they occupied the region in 1098, that paved the way of the Crusaders to Jerusalem.

As for the Turcoman Artuqids, they lost their most valuable possessions in Palestine and had to withdraw to al-Djazīra, which became a centre for their power for centuries to come, as well as a base for continuation of their struggle against the Crusaders in the following 12th Century. Thus this short-lived (some quarter of a century only) period in Palestine history, which can be named the first Turkish period, came to its end. A new — Crusading one — began.

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¹⁷ It is possible that Ibn Khallikān repeats here the chronicle of Ibn Zāfir, or they draw from the same common source.

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