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FROM HISTORIOGRAPHY TO MYTH: MIXED MARRIAGE IN HOLY LAND

According to the memoirs of Usâma ibn Munqidh (1095-1188), "The Franks are a damnable race that does not marry with somebody of another origin." The problem should nonetheless be more religious than ethnic. Canon law, but also shari'ah, forbids mixed marriage. Baptism or adherence to Islam is therefore a necessary precondition for these unions. Forced or voluntary, the conversion against a wedding appears repeatedly in the documentation about Holy Land. *The Royal Chronicle of Cologne* mentions the embassy arrived in 1173 from Egypt to the imperial palace to ask Frederick Barbarossa to marry his daughter to the son of Saladin, in exchange for the baptism of the emir and his family. More realistic seem to be, in 1191, the transactions between Richard the Lionheart and Saladin for the marriage of Joan of England, sister of the king, and al-'Âdil, brother of the emir, reported by Bahâ'al-Dîn ibn Shaddâd and 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, who participated in the negotiation. The Arab texts, however, attribute the failure of the wedding to the refusal of Joan herself and of Christian clergy. In both examples, the bride, not the groom, is a Christian, perhaps because in aristocratic Muslim families polygyny lowers the "donor of women" in contrast to the West where male hypergamy is prestigious. Latin and Arabic sources also mention Christian captives married to Muslims. Usâma mentions one of them whom his father offers to the emir of Qal'at Ja'bar: she gives him an heir, but she flees and marries a Frank shoemaker. During the summer of 1101, the defeat of William IX of Aquitaine at the "Valley of the torches", close to Heraclea Cybistre (Ereğli), delivers to the Seljuks many women of his retinue. Among them is Ida of Formbach-Ratelberg, widow of Leopold II of Austria: *The History of Welfs* (c. 1170) says that "she pleased a Saracen prince who had intercourse with her in a very impure marriage; it is said that he engendered from her the very villain Zengi (*Sanguinus*)." Since at least Adson Montier-en-Der (920-992), Christian intellectuals believed Antichrist conceived from a woman and an incubus devil, in absolute contrast with Christ's virginal birth. His maculate conception makes Zengi, the future conqueror in 1145 of Edessa Latin County, a hybrid monster of a similar nature than Antichrist. As expected, Christian epics and novel give a completely different face of the Muslim women who receive the baptism to marry their hero. On this point, literature in the Germanic language is amazing by its openness, recalling the most tolerant of modern ecumenisms. In his *Parzival* (c. 1205), Wolfram von Eschenbach presents Prester John as the grandson of Gamuret, a Western knight serving the Baghdad caliph, and Belacane, a black and "pagan" (that is "Muslim") queen. In his *Willehalm* (1212-1220), the protagonist marries Gyneburc, converted to Christianity, who says that we must not kill Muslims because they are of the same nature than Christians: "Treat with respect those creatures whom God made from his hand; the first man was pagan and we are all born in paganism, since we need baptism to become Christians, and we must always imitate the mercy with which Christ forgave his executioners." Between myth and social practices, mixed marriage shows the complexity of the relationship among Christians and Muslims.