

# Saladin and Muslim Military Theory

WILLIAM J. HAMBLIN

*Brigham Young University*

## INTRODUCTION

Saladin has attracted more attention from modern historians than any Islamic figure save the prophet Muhammad.<sup>1</sup> Interpretations of this remarkable man are varied, but his biographers are almost unanimous in criticizing at least part of his military strategy following his victory at the Horns of Ḥaṭṭīn.<sup>2</sup> Among other things, Saladin has been widely condemned for his delay in attacking the major port of Tyre, and for directing his assaults on weaker Frankish cities and castles, leaving the stronger sites to become centers of resistance during the Third Crusade.<sup>3</sup> Rather than attempting to analyze all of the various factors related to the interpretation and evaluation of Saladin's strategy after Ḥaṭṭīn, I will here focus on one important but neglected source for the study of Saladin's military policy, namely, medieval Islamic military science.<sup>4</sup>

- 1 There have been four major scholarly treatments in the past twenty years: Malcolm Cameron Lyons and D.E.P. Jackson, *Saladin: The Politics of the Holy War* (Cambridge, 1982); Hannes Möhring, *Saladin und der dritte Kreuzzug* (Wiesbaden, 1980); H.A.R. Gibb, *The Life of Saladin* (Oxford, 1973); Andrew S. Ehrenkreutz, *Saladin* (Albany, 1972). There are additional recent popular biographies.
- 2 But see Möhring, *Saladin*, pp. 36-37, for his defense of some of Saladin's strategic policies against Ehrenkreutz's criticisms.
- 3 For modern criticism of Saladin's strategy after Ḥaṭṭīn, see for example, Stanley Lane-Poole, *Saladin* (London, 1898), p. 241; Runciman, *Crusades* 2:471, 3:18; Ehrenkreutz, *Saladin*, pp. 204, 206, 212-213; Lyons and Jackson, *Saladin*, pp. 283, 286, 299.
- 4 For general surveys of extant manuscripts on Muslim military science see George Scanlon, *A Muslim Manual of War* (Cairo, 1961), who refers to most earlier studies; and H. Rabie, "The Training of the Mamlūk Fāris," in V.J. Parry, ed., *War, Society and Technology in the Middle East* (London, 1975), pp. 153-163, who mentions many Mamlūk manuals with a general discussion of their contents. On formal military theory among thirteenth-century Muslims see also: David Ayalon, "Notes on the Furūsiyya Exercises and Games in the Mamlūk Sultanate," in *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, 9 (Jerusalem, 1961), repr. in his *The Mamlūk Military Society: Collected Studies* (London, 1979), article II; Geoffrey Tatum, "Muslim Warfare: A Study of a Medieval Muslim Treatise on the Art of War," in Robert Elgood, ed., *Islamic Arms and Armour* (London, 1979), pp. 187-201. On Fāṭimid military theory and training in the early twelfth century see William James Hamblin, "The Fāṭimid Army during the Early Crusades," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1985), p. 155 ff. Similar types of Muslim military manuals clearly date back to at least the ninth century, and probably to the eighth. See

As is well known, Saladin and the other early Ayyubids instituted a series of important military reforms.<sup>5</sup> As a part of these reform efforts, Saladin ordered the preparation of at least three manuals on statecraft and warfare. A work of the "Mirror for Princes" genre<sup>6</sup> was written by 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Shayzārī, entitled *The Proper Course for the Policy of Kings*, which contains some interesting information on military theory.<sup>7</sup> A second work, dealing mainly with weapons and tactics, is *The Explanation of the Masters of the Quintessence [of Military Knowledge]* by Murdā b. 'Alī b. Murdā al-Ṭarsūsī.<sup>8</sup> The third manual is entitled *Al-Harawī's Discussion on the Stratagems of War*, by Abū al-Hasan 'Alī b. Abī Bakr al-Harawī, which deals with special stratagems and tricks of warfare.<sup>9</sup> Each of these three works complements the others, with their combination providing a broad overview of different aspects of Islamic military thought in the age of Saladin. Al-Shayzārī's approach is administrative, al-Ṭarsūsī's is technical, while al-Harawī's perspective is more theoretical.

For an understanding of Saladin's strategy the most important work is al-Harawī's *Stratagems*. Al-Harawī was a noted scholar and traveler, whose base of operations was Aleppo, where he died in 1215 at about age 70.<sup>10</sup> He seems to have served as a type of secret agent for Saladin,<sup>11</sup> and is known to have been in

William Hamblin, "Sasanian Military Science and its Transmission to the Arabs," *Proceedings of the International Conference on Middle Eastern Studies* (London, 6-9 July 1986).

- 5 Lyons and Jackson discuss Saladin's reforms at various points throughout their work; Ehrenkretz, pp. 73-75, 101-105; H.A.R. Gibb, "The Armies of Saladin," in S.J. Shaw, ed., *Studies on the Civilization of Islam* (Boston, 1962), pp. 74-90. Later Ayyubid military reforms are described by R. Stephen Humphreys, "The Emergence of the Mamlūk Army," *Studia Islamica* 45 (1977), 67-91, and 46 (1977), 147-182.
- 6 The origins of the Islamic 'Mirror for Princes' (manuals of instruction for rulers) tradition can be traced back to Sasanian sources. For a general introduction see G. Richter, *Studien zur Geschichte der älteren arabischen Fürstenspiegel* (Leipzig, 1932); Erwin I.J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam: an Introductory Outline* (Cambridge, 1958). Several works of this type have been translated: Kay Kā'ūs (wrote in 1082), *A Mirror for Princes*, trans. Reuben Levy (London, 1951); Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 1092), *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings*, trans. Hubert Darke (London, 1960); al-Ġhazālī (d. 1111), *Ġhazālī's Book of Counsel for kings*, trans. F.R.C. Bagley (London, 1964), with a useful introduction.
- 7 *Al-Manhadj al-maslūk fi siyāsat al-mulūk*, ed. Aḥmad Zakī Abū Shādī and Muḥammad Rushdī Afandī, (Cairo, 1326 AH). Military matters are discussed on pp. 104-119.
- 8 *Taḥṣira arbāb al-lubāb*... This work is described, with selections edited and translated by Claude Cahen, "Un traité d'armurerie composé pour Saladin," *Bulletin des études orientales* 12 (1948), 103-163.
- 9 An edition with French translation was prepared by J. Sourdcl-Thomine, "Les Conseils du Shayh al-Harawī à un prince Ayyubide," *Bulletin des études orientales* 16 (1961-62), 205-266. A more recent edition with notes was edited by Maṭī' al-Murābiṭ, *Al-Taḥkīrat al-Harawīyya fī-l-Ḥayl al-Harbiyya* (Damascus, 1972). My references are to al-Murābiṭ's edition, with Sourdcl-Thomine's French translation referred to as "Conseils."
- 10 Sourdcl-Thomine, "Conseils," pp. 205-213, provides a brief overview of al-Harawī's life. See also, especially, Sourdcl-Thomine's edition and translation of al-Harawī's *Kitāb al-Ishārāt ila ma'rifat al-Ziyārat*, translated as *Guide des lieux de pèlerinage* (Damascus, 1957), introduction, pp. xi-xxv. A concise summary is found in her article on al-Harawī in *Encyclopedia of Islam* (new ed.), 3:178.
- 11 Sourdcl-Thomine, "Conseils," pp. 207-208 discusses this. See also the other sources mentioned in note 10.

Syria during at least part of period of the Third Crusade.<sup>12</sup> His military manual was apparently written at the request either of Saladin or his son al-Malik al-Zāhir who ruled Aleppo from 1186 to 1216.<sup>13</sup>

It is not possible to establish the exact date of the writing of *Stratagems*, although the work was not completed before 1192, for al-Harawī mentions “the Muslim knights and monotheist heroes at the city of Acre [fighting] against the kings of the Franks, may God forsake them,”<sup>14</sup> a clear reference to the famous siege of Acre in 1191. Al-Harawī also makes reference to the crusader raids on a Muslim caravan at al-Khuwaylifa in 1192.<sup>15</sup>

Al-Harawī's *Stratagems* is a rather short work of 52 printed pages, or 138 manuscript pages, divided into twenty-four chapters. The first third of the book deals mainly with affairs of state and administration, and is thus a type of “Mirror for Princes.”<sup>16</sup> The rest of the work is largely concerned with military matters with chapters discussing ambassadors, spies and scouts, collecting money and supplies for war, marching and encamping, the importance of secrecy, the use of raiders, security, formulating military plans, morale, marshalling troops, besieging fortresses, firmness and clemency as qualities of a ruler, defense against sieges, and persistence in defeat.<sup>17</sup> In general, the military chapters of al-Harawī's manual can be characterized as being concerned in the main with special stratagems—how to win victory by surprise, ambushes, and tricks—rather than standard battlefield practice.

From one perspective al-Harawī's work can be considered a type of military apology for Saladin. It was written after Saladin's major victories, and thus is in part a series of generalizations based on the military successes of the sultan. One of the clearest examples of this is al-Harawī's treatment of Saladin's method of capturing Bourzey castle in August 1188, which will be discussed fully below. On

12 Lyons and Jackson, *Saladin*, pp. 351-352, discuss an incident in 1192 near Khuwaylifa where soldiers of Richard Lionheart plundered a caravan with which al-Harawī was traveling (also mentioned in his *Stratagems*, pp. 90-91 = “Conseils,” p. 230). Al-Harawī implies also (see note 14 below) that he was at the siege of Kawkāb (Belvoir) in Dec. 1188-Jan. 1189. For a full discussion see Sourdel-Thomine, “Conseils,” p. 207.

13 There is some question as to who commissioned the work. See Sourdel-Thomine, “Conseils,” pp. 205-206, and Maṭī' al-Murābiṭ's introduction, especially pp. 44-45 for a discussion of this problem. The work may have been commissioned by Saladin to be written for the benefit of his young son al-Malik al-Zāhir who became acting king of Aleppo in 1186 at age 14.

14 Al-Harawī, p. 116. He also refers to the fall of Belvoir which occurred in January 1189: “We have seen people whose castle was impregnable, who were valiant fighters; but when they ran out of salt, they abandoned (their castle), leaving it in shame, and surrendered it. That was the Castle of Kawkab (Belvoir) near Tiberias.” Al-Harawī, p. 86 = “Conseils,” p. 228.

15 Al-Harawī, pp. 90-91 = “Conseils,” p. 230.

16 Al-Harawī, Chapters 1-9, pp. 61-74. “Conseils” follows the same chapter divisions.

17 Al-Harawī, Chapters 10-24, pp. 75-118. Specific topics of each chapter are ambassadors (chs. 10 and 11), spies and scouts (ch. 12), money and supplies (ch. 13), marching and encamping (ch. 14), secrecy (ch. 15), raiders (ch. 16), security (ch. 17), plans (ch. 18), morale (ch. 19), marshalling (ch. 20), besieging (ch. 21), firmness and clemency (ch. 22), defense against sieges (ch. 23), persistence (ch. 24).

the other hand, many of the military concepts and stratagems described by al-Harawī have clear parallels in earlier Islamic military science. For example, al-Harawī discusses the standard Muslim military practice of marshalling troops with the sun and wind to their backs,<sup>18</sup> a concept which can be traced back through Islamic military thought to Sasanian, Byzantine, and Classical Greek sources.<sup>19</sup> However, J. Sourdel-Thomine believes that there is a fundamental difference between al-Harawī and earlier Muslim works. She sees al-Harawī as representing a more realistic and perhaps Machiavellian view of war and politics than is found in earlier literature, which is characterized by a more didactic and ethical flavor.<sup>20</sup> Thus the manual can perhaps best be understood as a "modernization" or reformulation of classical Islamic military thought, with the inclusion of examples from the campaigns and experiences of Saladin.

It must be emphasized that before we can obtain a complete understanding of the intellectual military environment of Saladin's day, we must establish the exact relationship of the ideas in the manuals commissioned by Saladin to earlier Islamic writings on military science. This will only be possible when we have a full history of Islamic military thought, a subject still in its infancy. Nonetheless, even lacking this complete background, al-Harawī's manual still provides some fascinating insights into Saladin's strategy. I will now examine two examples of how al-Harawī's work can illuminate the nature of the events of the crusades.

#### SALADIN'S SIEGE OF BOURZEY CASTLE

Judging by length of discussion, the most important topic in al-Harawī's manual is found in chapter 21, entitled "On attacking and besieging fortifications and related ruses and stratagems." This chapter consists of fifteen manuscript pages, or roughly one-sixth of the military portion of the book.<sup>21</sup> Al-Harawī's concern is not so much with the normal tactics of siegecraft as with special stratagems by which cities or castles can be captured without resorting to costly long-term sieges or full-scale assaults.

This chapter includes a description of a method of indirect assault on a fortress, which reads as follows:

[The king] should set up his camp on a high place overlooking the fortress, blockading it, if possible, from supplies and water. He should then go on a tour of inspection around the fortress, ascending to a place from which he can discover a weak position in [the fortifications]. But he must be certain not to tell anyone about [the weak position he has selected], not even his spies.

18 Al-Harawī, p. 97.

19 On Sasanian sources for Islamic military science see William Hamblin, "Sasanian Military Science" (note 4 above). Some Greek antecedents of Islamic military thought are discussed by Tantum, "Muslim Warfare" (note 4 above). "Conseils," p. 210-211 refers to several other instances where al-Harawī used earlier sources.

20 "Conseils," pp. 210-211.

21 Al-Harawī, chapter 21, pp. 102-107 = "Conseils," pp. 234-236.

He should then choose some of his renowned officers and knights whose bravery and strength have been proven, providing them with material and equipment, [including]: *kubūda* armor,<sup>22</sup> mail armor, naphta bombs (*qawāwīr al-naft*), [56r] and all types of equipment for fighting, assaulting and mining, such as ladders, ropes, picks, crowbars, lances, pikes, *tariqa* shields, *djanawiyya* shields,<sup>23</sup> grappling hooks, pincers, battering rams (*kibāsh*), and siege towers (*zahāfāt*). The chosen officer should then be positioned near the [weak] site which has been selected as the goal [of the surprise attack]. The [king] must order these officers and soldiers to not be careless or create a commotion, and not allow any of his soldiers to go [directly in front of] the selected [weak] position. Thus the [enemy's] watchfulness of [the weak position] will decrease, and they will leave it [undefended].

The king should then select the strongest places, the reinforced sides, and the well-defended parts [of the fortress], and prepare for battle, ignite the flames of war, and let the [enemy] taste the bitterness of [his] assault [against the strong sections of the walls]. [The enemy] will inevitably shift [his troops] to the site of the fighting, and the place of battle and assault, leaving the rest of the fortification [poorly defended]... In this manner the officer designated [for the surprise attack] will perhaps [be able to] gain possession of the selected portion of the wall, the miners will undermine it, and his men will take control of it in this moment of [the enemy's] carelessness. But let [the officer] be quiet, lest [the enemy] be alerted, and aroused from their slumber. Rather let the [enemy] taste the bitterness of assault and the violence of fighting... Thus they will inevitably ask for a truce, and appeal for safe conduct to the sultan, [who] can then grant the [enemy] a truce or conquer them, as he desires.<sup>24</sup>

Here we are presented a detailed, step by step description of how to capture a fortress by guile, which is clearly related to Saladin's capture of Bourzey castle in 1188.

In the spring of 1188 Saladin mobilized his army to continue his campaign of reconquest which he had begun in 1187 following his victory at Ḥaṭṭīn. In a series of assaults, sieges, and marches, Saladin worked his way up the coast of modern Lebanon and Syria, capturing or sacking nearly every Frānkish city and castle in his path. After the surrender of Latakia on July 24, he moved inland to deal with some of the mountain fortresses. One of these was Bourzey castle.<sup>25</sup>

The castle stood on the summit of a nearly inaccessible mountain spur, 480 meters above the surrounding valleys. It could be effectively assaulted only from the west, being unapproachable from both the north and south sides, and nearly so from the east. The exposed western wall was about 200 meters long and defended by six strong towers and the citadel. Bahā' al-Dīn wrote that "the impregnability [of the castle] was proverbial throughout the lands of both the Franks and Muslims."<sup>26</sup>

22 Al-Murābiṭ's edition reads *kubūda* (p. 105), which he claims is a type of dried (leather?) armor (p. 75, n. 10). Sourdél-Thomine's edition reads *kabūra* (p. 246), which she translates as *cuirasse* (p. 236, referencing p. 227, n. 3).

23 The *tariqa* is a large kite-shaped shield resembling the shield of Frankish knights. The *djanawiyya* is a large shield somewhat like a mantelet. See Murdā al-Tarsūsī (note 8 above), Arabic text, p. 114; Cahen's French translation, p. 137.

24 Al-Harawī, pp. 105-107 = "Conseils," p. 236.

25 On the general course of this campaign see Lyons and Jackson, *Saladin*, pp. 267-291.

26 Bahā' al-Dīn b. Shaddād, *Al-Nawādir al-sultāniyya wa al-muhāsana al-Yūsifiyya* (Cairo, 1964), p. 92. For general discussions of Bourzey castle see Gabriel Saade, "Le Château de

Saladin's army arrived at the castle on Saturday, 20 August 1188, setting up their camp in the valley to the east.<sup>27</sup> While his troops were preparing camp Saladin scaled the mountain to survey the terrain. The impossibility of attacking from any direction but the west was quickly recognized, and Saladin ordered mangonels to be set up to bombard the western wall. The bombardment began on Sunday, 21 August continuing until the evening of Monday the 22nd when it had become evident that the crusader mangonels, with the advantages of both height and angle of fire, could keep the Muslim mangonels beyond effective range. Saladin therefore ordered a general assault for the following morning.

The sultan divided his army into four divisions, three of which were marshalled on the west side of the castle for the main assault. A small fourth group, to which I shall return in a moment, was left in the camp in the valley below the eastern wall. The first wave of the assault began early in the morning of Tuesday the 23rd. The Muslim troops advanced in waves establishing a shield wall of *djanawiyya* shields behind which their archers and crossbowmen kept up repeated volleys of arrows. Under the cover of this missile fire assault troops advanced and attempted to storm the walls with scaling ladders and ropes.

By about mid-morning this first wave of the assault was called off, to be immediately followed by the second division composed of Saladin's bodyguard, the *Halqa*, under the personal command of the sultan. The second division also attempted to storm the western wall for several hours but was again unsuccessful, and began to withdraw around noon.

By this time the Frankish position was rapidly deteriorating. As Ibn al-Athīr described it, "the Franks were completely exhausted and unable to continue the battle. They were too weak to wear their armor because of the extreme heat and [their exhaustion from] fighting."<sup>28</sup> Seeing the Franks on the verge of collapse, Saladin ordered a general combined assault with all three of his divisions. This time the Muslims managed to scale the wall, and the Franks began to withdraw into their citadel.

In the meantime the fourth division had begun their surprise attack in precisely the manner described by al-Harawī. In the course of Saladin's first two assaults, most of the Frankish garrison had been summoned to defend the western wall. Ibn al-Athīr tells us that "there was a small band [of Muslim troops] in the tents to the east of the castle. They saw that the Franks had neglected the [east] side since they didn't see any soldiers there, for the [Franks] had [all] reinforced the wall Saladin was attacking. So this band of soldiers climbed [the mountain], overcoming all obstacles, and scaled [the wall] of the castle from the eastern side."<sup>29</sup>

Bourzey," *Annales archéologiques de Syrie* 16 (1956), 139-162. Paul deschamps, "Les Châteaux des Croisés" in *Terre Sainte*, 3 (Beirut, 1973), pp. 345-348.

27 The following description of the siege is based on three independent eyewitness Arabic accounts: Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī al-a'rākh* (Beirut, 1966), vol. 12, pp. 14-17; Bahā' al-Dīn b. Shaddād, (note 26 above), pp. 92-93; 'Imād al-Dīn al-Isfahānī, *Al-Fath al-quṣṣī fī al-fath al-quṣṣī* (Cairo, n.d.), pp. 248-254.

28 Ibn al-Athīr (note 27 above), 12:16.

29 Ibn al-Athīr 12:16.

The hard pressed Franks attempted to withdraw into their citadel and obtain terms for surrender. But a group of Muslim prisoners who were being held in the citadel, heard the noise of the battle, and began to shout the *takbīr*.<sup>30</sup> Hearing the Muslim war cry within the citadel, some of the Franks thought it had been taken and surrendered a postern door to Saladin's troops, who quickly captured the citadel. Thus Bourzey castle was taken by storm after only about four hours of fighting.

Consequently, Saladin's strategy at Bourzey can be seen as a textbook example of the stratagem described by al-Harawī. In both cases we see that a portion of the fortifications was attacked with such vigor that it drew off all available enemy troops from other posts. A surprise assault was made when the enemy had abandoned the designated section of the fortification.<sup>31</sup>

#### SALADIN'S STRATEGY AFTER ḤAṬṬĪN

Al-Harawī's writings are also useful as a type of military commentary on some of Saladin's policies following the battle of Ḥaṭṭīn, providing some insights into the strategic thinking of the age which lay behind some of Saladin's decisions and actions. I will discuss four main topics as dealt with in al-Harawī's manual. First, the military theory behind Saladin's delay in attacking Tyre. Second, his tendency to focus attacks on weak Frankish centers. Third, his seemingly excessive liberality toward defeated enemies. And fourth, reflections in al-Harawī's work of some Muslim prejudices about the Franks.

The first topic can be formulated as a question: according to Muslim military theory, was Saladin justified in delaying his assault on Tyre after his victory at Ḥaṭṭīn? Al-Harawī states that, "[a sultan] must realize that capturing an impregnable fortress or a well-fortified port... by storm or treaty, will contribute to the disarray of the [enemy's] country through fear of his great [military] strength..." This is essentially the situation in which Saladin found himself after the battle of Ḥaṭṭīn. His great victory had made him the military master of Palestine. How could he best profit from this advantage? Al-Harawī continues, "[In such a situation the sultan] should *not* [immediately] launch an attack on [another] fortress... or a port which he wishes [to conquer]. For it is possible that [if he instead] writes or sends a messenger to its people, they will offer to surrender [the fortress] to him through fear."<sup>32</sup>

In another passage al-Harawī expands upon this concept. "[A sultan should not besiege an impregnable fortress, or a well-fortified port until he has attempted to win over the hearts of its citizens, soldiers, officers, and leaders, by

30 The Muslim war cry, "*Allahu akbar*."

31 I am here avoiding the question of whether al-Harawī composed his general military stratagem based on Saladin's tactics at Bourzey, or whether there existed earlier Muslim military theory which formed the basis for both al-Harawī's manual and Saladin's siegecraft. I will attempt to deal with this topic in a future study.

32 Al-Harawī, p. 103, emphasis added, = "conseils," p. 234.

all possible means. [He should] communicate with [them], and beguile the commanders and the nobles with whatever they desire, guaranteeing them what they request. [He must do] this *before* initiating any [military] activity, and before besieging them."<sup>33</sup> In other words, the sultan should use the psychological advantage of a great victory to maximize his gains with the least expenditure of time, money, and manpower.

This was, of course, Saladin's policy. Following Ḥaṭṭīn he immediately sent messengers to Acre, Jerusalem, Tyre, and other cities offering them a chance to surrender.<sup>34</sup> Initially only Jerusalem refused Saladin's offer. Acre accepted, when faced with the inevitability of an immediate siege.<sup>35</sup> Tyre also accepted Saladin's offer, but was galvanized into resistance by the fortuitous arrival of Conrad.<sup>36</sup> As it turned out, Saladin did not capture Tyre. But if his initial policy had been successful, he would have taken the city without the expenditure of a dinar, or the loss of a single soldier.

But even after his failure to secure the surrender of Tyre, Saladin did not immediately begin a siege. In view of these two passages from al-Harawī, it is likely that part of the reason for this was that he hoped that the psychological pressure of a continued series of Muslim victories elsewhere in Palestine would culminate in the surrender of Tyre by treaty, thereby avoiding the need for a costly siege.

Let me now turn to the second topic. When Saladin had taken all the cities which were immediately willing to surrender, he was faced with a new strategic decision. Should he attempt to capture strongly defended Frankish cities, and risk becoming bogged down in a long siege, thereby losing the momentum of his victory; or should he take as many weak Frankish centers as possible? As is well known, Saladin chose the latter option, and al-Harawī's manual provides insights into the military theory behind this decision. "[A sultan] must beware lest he besiege a fortress that is more powerful than he, and stronger than his army, . . . For [being forced to] retreat from a place after beginning to besiege and attack it, is a disgraceful defeat."<sup>37</sup> In other words, don't undertake a siege unless you are certain you will be successful.

A related concept is as follows: "[The sultan] should seek [special] opportunities [to capture a fortress] . . . ; he might receive information from trusted scouts or spies that a fortress is short of provisions, lacks [a sufficient] garrison, has weak fortifications, or has no water. [In this situation] he should . . . hasten to besiege and storm it. He must overwhelm its people with the strength of his attack, and with the resoluteness of his assaults."<sup>38</sup>

33 Al-Harawī, p. 102, emphasis added, = "Conseils," p. 234.

34 Good descriptions of these events can be found in Runciman, *Crusades*, 2:461-473, and Lyons and Jackson, *Saladin*, pp. 267-280.

35 They surrendered on 9 July, the day after Saladin arrived at the gates of Acre.

36 For a discussion of these events, and references to primary sources see Möhring, *Saladin* (note 1 above), pp. 40-46, and Runciman, *Crusades*, 2:471-472.

37 Al-Harawī, p. 102, = "Conseils," p. 234.

38 Al-Harawī, p. 102, = "Conseils," p. 234.

The combination of the military ideas of these two passages can be summarized in modern terms as follows. Of cities that refuse to surrender on terms, the sultan should first attack the weak sites which offer the best chance of a quick victory. He should not attack powerful fortresses which have a good chance of withstanding his assault, but rather keep the momentum of victory; take as many cities and castles as possible with the minimum risk of manpower and wealth. When Saladin's post-Hattin campaigns are examined in light of al-Harawī's military theory, it is fair to say that this is exactly what he did.

Now whether Saladin's strategy in this situation was ultimately the best option or not is another question. Personally I believe it can be argued that when all factors are considered, the final outcome of the Third Crusade vindicates Saladin's general policy. After the mobilization of tens of thousands of troops, the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of gold pieces, the deaths of thousands of people, and a campaign of almost two years, the crusaders were unable to destroy Saladin's field army, managing to reconquer only five cities which had fallen to Saladin in less than a month. But be that as it may, what al-Harawī's manual clearly demonstrates is that Saladin's military policies were not capricious or based on poor strategic judgement. Rather they were consistent with at least one school of Islamic military theory of the period.

Al-Harawī's writings provide insights into some of Saladin's other policies as well. Saladin has occasionally been criticized by both his contemporaries and modern scholars for his liberality in freeing so many of the commoners of Jerusalem, and his extravagant distribution of the plunder of Acre and Jerusalem to his followers. It has been claimed that if he had saved the money from the plunder of those cities, he might have had the extra resources necessary to allow him to have been more successful in his future campaigns.<sup>39</sup>

This may in fact be true, but Al-Harawī provides a different perspective on this matter. "When [a sultan] invades a country attempting permanent conquest,<sup>40</sup> he should guarantee the security of the peasants and the poor, sending someone to defend them, and protect them from the evils of the military camp.<sup>41</sup> There are two benefits from this: first, the [peasants] will bring fodder and graciously provide the army with whatever supplies they need. The second is that people of [other] fortresses... will hear about this, and will learn that [the sultan] is not an impoverished ruler;<sup>42</sup> they will thus lose courage and desist,

39 For a discussion of these events see Lyons and Jackson, *Saladin*, pp. 267-268 (Acre), pp. 274-277 (Jerusalem). For a sympathetic account see Runciman, *Crusades*, 1:465-473. On specific criticisms see Ibn al-Athīr, 11:555; Lyons and Jackson, *Saladin*, pp. 266, 283; Ehrenkreutz, *Saladin*, pp. 206, 211.

40 Literally, "not wishing to relinquish it" (*wa fī nafsihi 'an la yatrukahū*).

41 By this I assume al-Harawī refers to preventing soldiers from plunder and stealing from the peasants.

42 Al-Murābi's edition reads "*malik la mu'ir*," "a king who is not poor" (p. 104), while "Conseils," p. 247 reads, "*malik la muḡhayyir*," "a king who is not changeable (in his goals)." Neither edition gives variant readings or reasons for their selection.

their resolution will slacken, and differences of opinion will arise [among them]."<sup>43</sup>

According to this passage, kindness towards non-combatants can be used as a demonstration of power, which may help intimidate the enemy. If Saladin could afford to lose several hundred thousand dinars by freeing the poor of Jerusalem and liberally distributing the plunder of the city to his officers and troops, he must have appeared to his enemies as a king of immense economic resources. Generously allowing the garrisons of captured cities and castles to retreat to Tyre or other Frankish centers was another demonstration of power, showing that the sultan had nothing to fear from his defeated enemies. Even if these actions alone would not convince other cities to surrender, it could at least create a more malleable faction. Although al-Harawī's military ideas should not be seen as the only motivation behind Saladin's actions in these incidents, they do offer an important theoretical perspective on the perceived psychological implications of his policies.

Al-Harawī's manual concludes by offering some interesting insights about some Muslim prejudices concerning the crusaders. "[The sultan] should not neglect to write to the clergy (*usūṣ*) [concerning surrender]...<sup>44</sup> and those who carry out their orders. For they have little religious sentiment and are capable of treachery and disloyalty; they desire the things of this world and are indifferent to the things of the next; [they are] irresponsible, thoughtless, petty, and covetous..., being concerned with rank and status among kings and nobles; [they] have a permissive religious judgement regarding their own [actions]."<sup>45</sup> This prejudice may be related to several notable examples of the clergy absolving crusaders from breaking oaths to Saladin.<sup>46</sup>

On the other hand, al-Harawī's view of the Hospitallers and Templars is quite different: "[A sultan] should beware of [the Hospitaller and Templar] monks..., for he cannot achieve his goals through them; for they have great fervor in religion, paying no attention to the [things of this] world; he can not prevent

43 Al-Harawī, pp. 103-104—"Conseils," p. 235.

44 I have omitted the phrase, "and the cooks and their assistants," from this passage because I wish to focus on the Muslim perception of the Christian clergy. Although al-Harawī is certainly saying that it was the cooks and servants who are treacherous and greedy, he is including the clergy in the entire description, for he ends with the phrase, "(they) have liberal religious interpretations of their own actions;" which can only refer to the clergy, as cooks and servants cannot issue a *fatwā*.

45 Al-Harawī, p. 104—"Conseils," p. 235. The final phrase in Murābiṭ's edition is "*ittihā al-rukhas fī fatāwayhim anfusihim*," "they pursue a policy of permission of liberties in their religious decisions (regarding) themselves." Sourdel-Thomine's edition reads, "*ittihā al-rukhas fī fatā'ihim anfusihim*" (p. 247), which she translates, "ainsi que la debauche avec leurs jeunes gens." Again there are no textual notes in either edition. My translation follows al-Murābiṭ's edition, which I believe makes more sense, but the passage is confusing.

46 For example: Guy being absolved from his oath of not fighting Saladin, (Runciman, 3:20-21. Lyons and Jackson, p. 296); Balian of Ibelin who had sworn not to remain to defend Jerusalem in 1187 (Runciman, 2:463); Reginald of Belfort, who falsely swore to surrender Belfort in the summer of 1189 (Lyons and Jackson, pp. 294, 298).

them from interfering into [political] affairs. I have investigated them extensively, and have found nothing which contradicts this."<sup>47</sup> Here again, al-Harawī's manual and Saladin's military policy are clearly parallel, as witnessed by Saladin's consistent harsh treatment and execution of the monks of the military orders.<sup>48</sup>

In summary, an examination of al-Harawī's military manual offers us important insights into the military mentality of Saladin's age, providing general military principles which parallel several of Saladin's actions and policies in his campaigns following his victory at Ḥaṭṭīn. What is perhaps most interesting is the fundamental concern for psychological factors in al-Harawī's military theory. According to al-Harawī, as a general principle, battles are won as much in the minds of the combatants as on the battlefield. Or, as al-Harawī himself put it, "If the enemies of a [sultan] fear him he has already gained power over them."<sup>49</sup> When we examine the legend of Saladin which has persisted among both Muslims and Europeans to the present day, we can safely say that however one may interpret the ultimate military outcome of Saladin's post-Ḥaṭṭīn campaigns and the Third Crusade, Saladin indeed won the psychological war. In so doing, he became the most famous ruler of his age, renowned from India to England.

47 Al-Harawī, pp. 104-105, = "Conseils," p. 235. Al-Harawī's text simply reads monks (*ruhḥān*), which I am here interpreting as referring to the military orders.

48 As described by Lyons and Jackson, *Saladin*, pp. 265-266.

49 Al-Harawī, p. 112, = "Conseils," p. 238.