

Noble Warrior

by Brandon Marlon (February 2018)



Abd al-Qadir, with Legion of Honor.

Ensconced in Damascus, he was widely revered as a Sufi and Islamic scholar from Mascara, Algeria, a hajji whose pilgrimage as a young man made him desirous of living the life religious, a gallant stalwart

once elected emir when his countrymen in Oran
had declared jihad against French invaders; still,
his fifteen years as guerilla leader were long gone,
and exile to Syria had proved a serene sentence.

Imagine his countenance, then, when rioting Muslims
threatened to massacre local Maronite Christians,
forcing him to gallop with his posse amid mayhem,
rescuing nuns, priests, merchants, entire families,
plucking Western consuls like brands from a blaze,
safeguarding civilians in the city's medieval citadel,
and the surplus from that palace in his very own home.

How biblically reminiscent was the obstreperous mob
arriving at his door demanding he surrender his guests!
Yet Abd al-Qadir, more seasoned in resistance,
outdid Lot and the Levite both, rebuking the bloodthirsty
for wishing to slay innocents contradictory
to Allah's will, thereby dispersing miscreants.

Ten thousand lives he spared from slaughter, for which
chivalry he garnered renown as a second Saladin

and was showered with honors, his ethics sung
from the Vatican to Greece to Turkey;
America and Britain bestowed bejeweled firearms;
even his victorious conqueror, France, could not resist
awarding the Legion of Honor and an annual pension.
Thus a resistance fighter turned irresistible,
his principles crowned with universal laurels.

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