

Forgetting Osama bin Munqidh

Remembering Osama bin Laden

The Crusades in Modern
Muslim Memory

RSIS Monograph No. 12

Umej Bhatia

Foreword by

Roger Owen

*A.J. Meyer Professor of Middle East History,
Harvard University*

... the *umma* is asked to unite itself under this Crusaders' campaign, the strongest, most powerful, and most ferocious Crusaders' campaign to befall the Islamic nation since the dawn of Islamic history. There have been past Crusader wars, but there has never been a campaign like this one before ... [e]ither you are with the Crusade, or you are with Islam.

– *Osama bin Laden, Al Jazeera Interview 21 October 2001*

I talked to Nizar of Usamah (bin Munqidh) ... He shrugged his shoulders.

“Your English books are full of good things. I am not understanding why you like so much of our Arab writing.”

“Usamah is also full of good things.”

“Not so full as your Henry Fielding.”

– *William Dalrymple, in Xanadu*

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**FORGETTING
OSAMA BIN MUNQIDH
REMEMBERING
OSAMA BIN LADEN**

**THE CRUSADES IN MODERN
MUSLIM MEMORY**

UMEJ BHATIA

S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

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For Khalista and Armahn – read, think, explore ...

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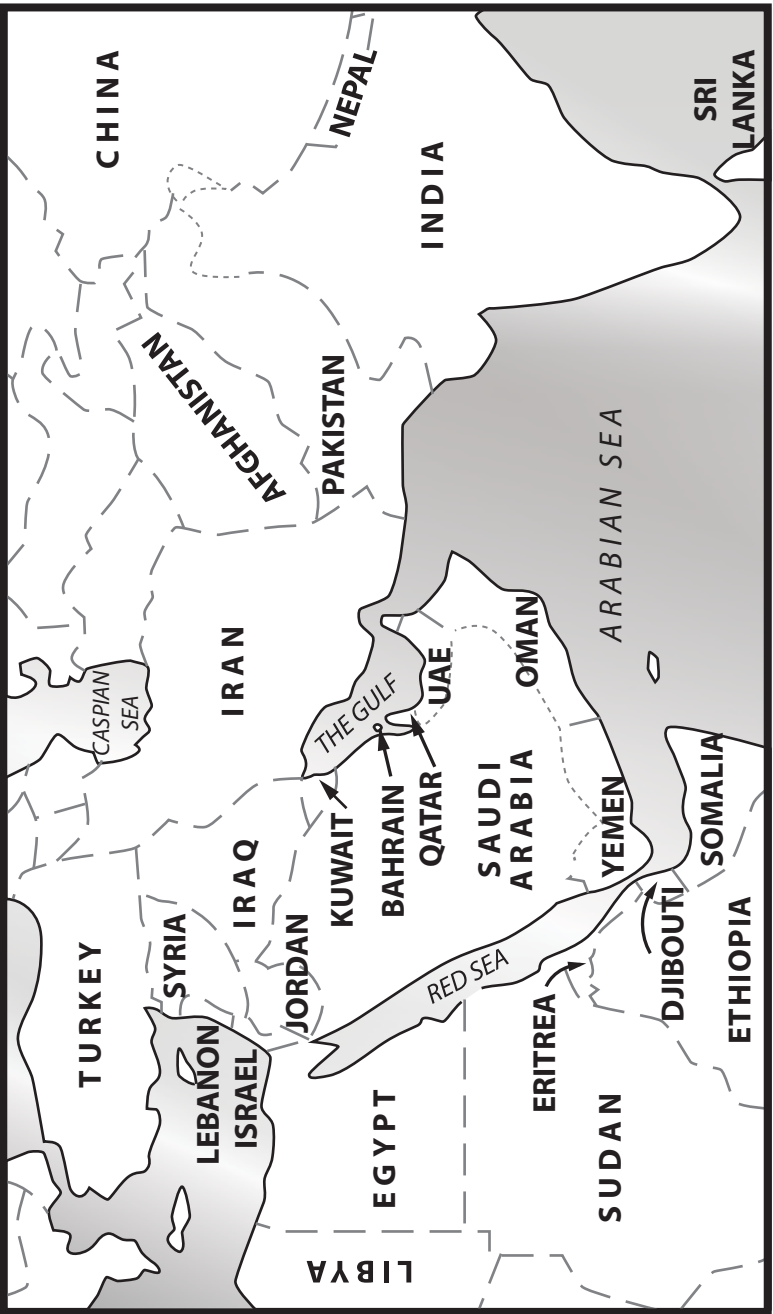


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Foreword

Umej Bhatia has done an important service by presenting this careful reconstruction of the way in which the image of the crusades underwent enormous changes in the 20th century as the encounters between the Western and Islamic worlds began to heat up. Judicious, impassionate and drawing on a wide range of popular and academic sources, it takes us through the history of a subject which is usually written about in almost complete ignorance of its historical complexity. Not the least of its merits is the way it traces the link between the real Saladin of the crusading period and his polemical reappearance as a knightly role model for men as different as Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden.

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Preface

I was doing a two-year mid-career advanced degree programme in Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. The course placed an emphasis on Middle Eastern history, particularly the medieval period, and required candidates to learn classical Arabic. Our study of Arabic was geared to having us read and understand medieval Arabic texts. At first, I could not really see the point of studying medieval history or high classical Arabic. I thought it would have nothing to do with the living and breathing history and language that I wanted to learn to better understand the region. My interest was not purely academic. I was in New York during 9/11. My apartment building was evacuated during the attacks. For several anxious hours I lost contact with my wife and two-month-old daughter. As a Foreign Service Officer, I was then also part of the Singapore team on the United Nations Security Council, covering the Middle East and Africa.

In the wake of 9/11, I was resolved to focus my energies on knowing the Middle East and better understanding political and radical Islam. After securing a government scholarship to study at Harvard, I set to work. I began to understand that for the Arabs and for Arabized Muslims, the past is always present. History and scripture run deep and resonate far more than it does in the more future-oriented Western cultures. The average Arab schoolchild will have a much better grasp of history than the average Western-educated child, although distractions like the XBOX or Nintendo now have a levelling effect.

Reading the communiques of Osama bin Laden, I was struck by his use of apparently bygone historical events. As I followed the references and spoke to some of my Arab friends, I realized that he was artfully radicalizing history to mobilize support. I traced back his intellectual influences and found that he was inspired by a cast of ideologues that included an Austrian Jewish convert to Islam who was once close to the revered founder of Saudi Arabia and later served as a senior Pakistani official and a secular Egyptian literary critic who later became a radical Islamist

ideologue. For these men, the Crusades is a never-ending assault on the Muslim world that has raged for a thousand years. Osama bin Laden dubs the so-called war on terrorism as a “battle of Muslims against the global crusaders”. Certain events and policies for better or worse invariably helped reinforce the beliefs he peddled. However, as I continued tracing back to its origins, this radical version of history through its various aspects, whether modern Islamist, Arab nationalist or Ottoman pan-Islamist, the actual historical crusades began to yield some counter-facts.

First, the contemporary Arab chroniclers did not see the Crusades as the central event of their times. Second, there was as much co-existence as there was conflict between the Crusaders and the Arabs of the period. The Crusaders were known to the Arabs then as the Franks (and a quick check of the authoritative Hans Wehr Arabic-English dictionary will show, the traditional Arabic word for venereal disease is the Frankish disease and is reputedly traced back to the Crusades and its armies). I found instances where Frankish forces and Arab forces joined hands to battle other confederations of Arabs and Franks. Studying some medieval texts, I came across the compelling figure of Osama bin Munqidh (spelt alternatively as Usama Ibn Munqidh). A Syrian poet, gentleman and warrior, he is also Osama bin Laden’s namesake. His modern avatar also shares his Syrian heritage through his mother, although we often only speak of bin Laden’s Saudi/Hadrami background. Osama bin Munqidh symbolised a more three-dimensional and nuanced version of Crusading history that I wanted to resurrect. He offered an alternative, now increasingly forgotten memory of the Crusades.

It might reasonably be said that my pitting of these two namesakes is a simplification of a much more complex history. *Mea Culpa!* We cannot help but impose patterns on randomness, and any historical account is bound to fashion some bias of order on the flux of events. My deeper aim in this slim volume remains to bring to light an important topic for further debate and discussion. It is a modest contribution to a wide-ranging and deep conversation with history. I should state that this is written entirely in my own capacity and does not reflect the views or opinions of the Government of Singapore in any way, shape or form.

Umej Bhatia is a graduate of the University of Cambridge and of Harvard University, where he completed an advanced degree in Middle Eastern Studies.

INTRODUCTION

It was the year of the first moon landing. Emmanuel Sivan, an Israeli historian, stepped into a Paris cinema in the Bohemian Latin Quarter. Entering the theatre, the Israeli found himself in the company of boisterous young Arabs who had come to see “*Al-Nasir Salah al-Din*” (“Saladin”)¹. The movie celebrated the legendary Muslim hero of the Crusades, the Ayyubid Sultan Salah al-Din Abu’l Muzaffar Yusuf ibn Ayyub, better known as Saladin. Directed by the Egyptian film-maker Youssef Chahine, “Saladin”² was first released in 1963 when Egypt’s charismatic leader Gamal Abdel Nasser dominated pan-Arab and Third World politics. Nasser roused the Arab street with declarations like “in the days of our forefathers the name they adopted for deception and treachery was the Crusades.”³ However, by the time Paris screened “Saladin”, the Nasser era evoked nostalgia instead of awe. The Six Day War of June 1967, an Arab fiasco known euphemistically as *Al Naksa* (the setback), had come and gone, dimming the lights on Nasser and his brand of radical populism. But, Israel remained the sworn enemy of all political Arabs.

Assuming the low-profile perspective of an anthropologist, the Israeli kept one eye on the audience during the film. He carefully noted viewer reactions to particular scenes. For example, when Ahmad Mazhar, the actor playing Saladin, strode on-screen, the movie house erupted with cries of “Gamal Abdel Nasser”. Ahmad Mazhar’s⁴ striking resemblance to Nasser was clearly no accident but an artful tribute to the populist Egyptian President. The Israeli scholar could scarcely overlook the audi-

ence reaction when a Crusader lumbered into view, prompting some rowdies to shout out “The Jews!” Images of Saladin’s finest moment at the Battle of Hattin (1187) inspired cries of admiration (“Like in Algeria!” or “Soon our turn!”) while a scene with Richard the Lionheart (1157–1199) provoked a spirited reference to the English during the 1956 Suez Crisis, shouted out this time in Egyptian colloquial. Not to be outdone in this tourney, the North Africans screamed out defiant anti-French slogans (“The French sons of bitches!”).

Struck by his experience, the Israeli academic recorded his observations. The audience’s surprising familiarity with a seemingly distant event was particularly salient: “A mixture of genres, confusion between past and present, intense personal involvement of the young audience, but also, and above all, an astonishing familiarity with such an ancient period of history: this has remained engraved in my memory ever since.”⁵ In the battle for young hearts and memories, “Saladin” revived the remembrance of the medieval Crusades as an ongoing struggle between Islam and the West. Young, diaspora Arabs yearned for a new Saladin to unite the Arabs and retake Jerusalem. They were eagerly pulled in by the canny Chahine, who portrayed the historical Crusades with a slant and in a light that fuelled deep grievances about the contemporary situation in the Muslim world.⁶

Chahine drew from a powerful and conflicted history that defies simple recounting. For those unfamiliar with the historical Crusades, it may be useful to provide an outline of what can be called the standard Western textbook history of the Crusades. This will hopefully furnish a backdrop for my broader investigation. Between 1096 and 1271 C.E., Europe unleashed nine Crusades to the East. In launching this series of campaigns, the Catholic Church had mobilized a new breed of Christian warrior—the Crusader.⁷ Endowed with special vows and privileges, these holy warriors first embarked on an armed pilgrimage to the Holy Land, ostensibly to protect the Christians in the East. In broader terms, the First Crusade uncoiled itself from the contradictions that gripped an emerging Europe in the pre-modern period. Showing greater cohesion, drive and purpose than their adversaries, the Crusaders quickly overcame a divided house of Islam in the Levant. Jerusalem was sacked by zealous Christian knights and their fellow travellers. The Crusader occupation established outposts in the Holy Land. However, corrupted by the

decadent pleasures of the Orient and weakened by endemic infighting, the Crusader kingdoms fell to a determined Muslim counter-offensive that over time recovered all the Crusader possessions in the East.

The account was not decisively closed. Instead, trailed by subsequent offensives in nearby regions, the Crusading phenomena made several more appearances over the next few hundred years before fizzling out. Framed as a war between faiths, the Crusade wars generated mixed feelings on both sides and drew the battle-lines between what may broadly be termed Islam and the West.⁸ The pre-politically correct West may have remembered the Crusades as a heroic enterprise, but today's multicultural West also views it as a bloody and better-forgotten episode of history. An increasingly secularized Europe sees the Crusades as an expended event, while the modern Catholic Church has consciously distanced itself from the brutality of the medieval campaigns. But admirers of the spirit of Charlemagne, unreconstructed European nationalists and born-again evangelists feel there is little to apologize for and affirm the abiding memory of the Crusades in all its power and glory.

In the East, the remembrance of *al-hurub al-salibiyya* (the Crusade Wars) is similarly conflicted in substance. Before pan-Islamic movements hoisted the cause of the Crusades, it was taken up by pan-Arab nationalists like Gamel Abdel Nasser. Although it was the work of Muslim Turks and Kurds who vanquished the Crusaders, Nasser believed that Arab unity had helped to defeat and expel the Crusaders. For him, the defeat was a lesson that modern-day imperialists and crusaders had absorbed. Their objective was to carve out artificial and weak nation-states from the Ottoman Empire, and to divide and control the entire region. In this regard, Israel was seen as the "neo-crusading bridgehead"⁹ amid the natural and undivided "Arab nation". With the decline of militant pan-Arabism after the Six Day War, a small but vocal minority in the *ummah*, the worldwide community of Muslims, promoted the Crusades as a recurring threat to the Islamic nation with a powerful connection to the present.¹⁰ Reviving the memory of the original campaigns performs a useful propaganda function for Islamists. Old grievances are used to support contemporary political objectives. As the Israeli historian Efraim Karsh puts it: "It is often easier to unite people through a common hatred than through a shared loyalty."¹¹

THEORY

Like all traumatic historical episodes, the Crusades potentially provide a crystallizing focus for the convergence of memory and the bolstering of cultural (Arab) and religious (Muslim) identity. A key issue to be considered is how images, symbols and stories of the Crusades have circulated within the *ummah*. This is the worldwide community of Muslims, formed by attachment to the holiest places of Islam, notwithstanding regional variations in ritual and religious practice. I assume that Islamic remembering of the Crusades, which encompasses Arab and Muslim collective memory, as amorphous as it sounds, has a certain sociological validity and substance as much as, say, British collective memory of the First World War.¹²

Undoubtedly, the various strands of the *ummah* remember and structure the Crusading phenomena according to their own historical experiences and contemporary political needs. No single collective memory of the Crusades circulates within the *ummah*, which cannot be reduced to a monolithic Islamic civilization standing still in time. For example, the young Arabs of different nationalities watching “Saladin” in the Paris cinema attached their own meanings and made specific connections from the images on screen. However, the thread that connects their outlook is how the Crusades represent the archetypal violation of the Islamic homeland. Can we speak of a collective Muslim memory of the Crusades that frames it as a recurring Western invasion of the *darul Islam* or sovereign Muslim space, an incursion first launched in the eleventh century C.E.?

To answer this question, I draw my broad theoretical perspective from the work of historians and sociologists of memory. They have created a unique discipline that recognizes the importance of collective memory and the political and social contexts it nourishes and sustains.¹³

I have benefited from the insights of the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1877–1945), twinned with the more recent observations of the French historical anthropologist Jacques Le Goff (1924–). Le Goff, discussing contemporary revolutions in memory, has noted the far-reaching changes wrought by the new historical approach. Linear temporality is renounced in favour of “multiple kinds of time”¹⁴ and historical phenomena are manipulated by collective memory. According to Le Goff, “the whole evolution of the contemporary world, under the impact of an immediate history for the most part fabricated on the spot by the media, is headed towards the production of an increased number of collective memories, and history is written, much more than in earlier days, under the influence of these collective memories.”¹⁵

But, it was Halbwachs who first worked out what he called a “sociological theory of memory”.¹⁶ Influenced by the arch-subjectivist Henri Bergson and the father of sociology, Emile Durkheim, Halbwachs was fascinated by the memory images of vanished societies. He pointed out that the Crusaders and other visitors to the Holy Land “imposed what was in their own eyes on the land they thought they were only describing”.¹⁷ For Halbwachs, specific memories of a particular event are conditioned by their “social frameworks”¹⁸ or the aggregate memory within which individual memory finds a place.¹⁹ Halbwachs believed that “no memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections”.²⁰ One cannot construe one’s past in terms other than language or imagery, according to Halbwachs, and, in doing so, we connect our thoughts to a larger system of ideas.

What makes recent memories hang together is ... that they are part of a totality of thoughts common to a group, the group of people with whom we have a relation at this moment, or with whom we have had a relation on the preceding day or days. To recall them it is hence sufficient that we place ourselves in the perspective of this group, that we adopt its interests and the slant of its reflections.²¹

I have quoted selectively from Halbwachs' and Le Goff's work not just for token theoretical scaffolding but because I feel that the spirit of their insights are pertinent to my study. However, the reader should also be made aware of my basic research methodology. In search of representative artefacts of Muslim remembrance of the Crusades, I have analysed and contrasted medieval Muslim discourse, particularly the chronicles and some memoirs, with a full range of modern Muslim discourse on the Crusades and "Crusaderism" drawn from Friday sermons, classical music, Arab school textbooks, Arab satellite TV programmes, cartoon series, popular histories, political speeches and tracts and radical Islamist communiqués. I have made an effort to tap into the oral traditions and stories on the Crusades circulating informally in various Muslim communities, whether in the heartlands of the original Crusades or elsewhere.

Of course, it is beyond my means to study the entire range of the Muslim response and remembering of the Crusades. The shifts in Western historiography of the Crusades, influential in their own right, are also beyond the scope of this study.²² Nor do I intend to examine in detail modern Arab historiography of the Crusades, except where it requires updating as the last significant essay on this topic was produced more than 30 years ago.²³ I have merely sought to identify broad trends and representative themes from a modest set of texts that I have culled from a range of media.

Political, religious and cultural factors all play a part in how the Crusades are recalled and revived in Muslim memory. Comparing chronologies provide an immediate and striking way to contrast Western and Islamic remembering of the Crusades. Traditionally, Western historians identify at least seven Crusades to the East, a number based on the despatch of a significant force and the fate of these specific ventures. From the Arab perspective, Amin Malouf²⁴ offers a seven-phased structure of remembering the Crusades.²⁵ He starts with the birth of Islam up to the Frankish invasion, the events following the initial Frankish invasion, the occupation, the Muslim riposte, the victory of Islam, a reprieve for the Franks and final expulsion of the invaders in 1291. According to Malouf: "The Arab world—simultaneously fascinated and terrified by these *Franks*, whom they encountered as barbarians and defeated, but

who subsequently managed to dominate the earth—cannot bring itself to consider the Crusades a mere episode in the bygone past.” Malouf stresses that it is “often surprising to discover the extent to which the attitude of the Arabs (and of Muslims in general) towards the West is still influenced, even today, by events that supposedly ended some seven centuries ago”.

Amin Malouf’s scheme is that of a historical novelist with a non-confessional and ostensibly apolitical frame of reference. However, a vastly influential Islamist and overtly political reading of the history of the Crusades was produced in the 1960s by the prolific Muslim Brotherhood propagandist Muhammad Jalal Kishk. Writing before and soon after the 1967 war, or the Setback (*Al Naksa*), Kishk’s historical perspective of the Crusades framed it as part of a centuries long struggle of ideas between Islam and the West. In works like *Al Naksa Wa al Ghazw al Fikri* (The Setback and Ideological Invasion) and in an earlier study *Al Marksiyah Wa al Ghazw al Fikri* (Marxism and Ideological Invasion), he outlined a radicalized history of the Crusades. According to Kishk, the First Crusade launched in 1095 pit sword and cross, and was largely a military offensive. Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt in 1798 represented the Second Crusade, and ushered in an age of imperialism that weakened the resolve and confidence of the Arab people. The Third Crusade, in the aftermath of 1967, resumed the work of Napoleon’s imperial crusade. It sealed Western supremacy in military, cultural and religious terms, and overwhelmed Muslim resistance completely.²⁶ The implication of Kishk’s argument, which Fouad Ajami has teased out in his masterful *The Arab Predicament*, is that only a return to an authentic Islam can resist the advance of the West.

The Indonesian Islamist leader Fauzan al-Anshori, spokesman of the *Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia* (MMI or Indonesian Holy Warriors Council) constructed a chronology that echoes Kishk’s scheme. Posting his commentary on the *Perang Salib Baru* (New War of the Cross, or New Crusader War) on the MMI website in March 2006, al-Anshori asserts that three Crusades preceded what he see as the latest and fourth Crusade launched in 2001 by U.S. President George Bush. Forgetting the momentous events from 1096–1099, he asserts that the First Crusade

began in 1189 under Richard the Lionheart and ended with Saladin's victory. The Second Crusade, according to him, began in 1914 when the *bangsa-bangsa Nasranii* ("Christian nations") joined together to defeat the Ottoman Caliphate.²⁷ He labels the father of modern Turkey Mustafa Kemal Atatürk²⁸ a "Jewish leader" for overthrowing the Caliphate of the Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876–1908) in 1924. Al-Anshori points out that the Crusaders divided Islam when they gained control over Palestine. In his idiosyncratic scheme of history, the Third Crusade is the 1956 Suez Crisis, also known as the Tripartite Invasion of Egypt by Israel, France and Britain.²⁹ Al-Anshori tried to³⁰ claim a wider resonance when he states that the new "Christian Crusade" goes by the name of "The Global War on Terrorism" and encompasses not just military means, but an economic war and a battle for public opinion.

A standard moderate Islamist account is offered by Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, one of the best-known scholars in the Muslim world. His views are broadcast on the Al Jazeera network. He also regularly delivers the Friday sermons (*khutbah*) in Qatar. Qaradawi reaches an estimated audience of about 40 million viewers.³¹ He speaks therefore with a certain authority and his views can be considered, if not a barometer, then certainly a key shaper of global Muslim opinion. In a Friday sermon in May 2005 broadcast live on Qatar TV, Qaradawi declaimed:

Islam was afflicted by the Franks who came in nine campaigns to invade the Islamic Levant in the name of saving the grave of Christ. They committed horrible massacres. They only entered Jerusalem after massacring 70,000 Muslims. Blood was knee-deep. The Al-Aqsa Mosque remained captive in their hands and prayers were not held in it for 90 hijrah years. God then gave victory to the Muslims in these wars, which our historians called the wars of the Franks, and the Europeans called the Crusades. God supported Muslims in these wars after 100 years.³²

In his three-act play on the medieval Crusader occupation of Palestine, the Ruler of Sharjah, Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammad al-Qassimi, credited with leading a cultural renaissance in his Emirate, offers the conventional Arab chronology of the Crusades with a Palestine- and Jerusalem-centric focus.³³ Staged in Sharjah in 2004, the play included a cast of 180 members

from across the Arab world. Nine scenes deal with key historical stages of the Crusades.³⁴ For Sheikh Sultan, an accomplished historian in his own right, 1244 marked the year of closure of the medieval Crusades, when Jerusalem was finally taken from elite Crusader units by the dynasty of slave soldiers known as the Mamelukes.

A prominent example of the ideologically extreme, jihadi remembrance of the Crusades is found in the pronouncements of Osama bin Laden, the leading figure in the trans-national terror movement Al Qaida. A believer in an eternal Crusade between Islam and the West, bin Laden draws a straight line between U.S. President George W. Bush and Richard the Lionheart, Saladin's nemesis during the Third Crusade. Commenting on the American offensive against the Taliban in Afghanistan in October 2001, bin Laden noted: "... it is a war which is repeating the Crusades, similar to the previous wars. Richard Lionheart, and Barbarossa from Germany, and Louis from France ... similar to the case today, when they all immediately went forward the day Bush lifted the cross. The Crusader nations went forward."³⁵

Expanding on this theme, Osama bin Laden's comments on the U.S.-led global war on terror as a new Crusade found full expression in his October 2001 interview with the Al Jazeera correspondent Tayseer Allouni. In the interview, Osama bin Laden confirmed that his constant use of the term "Crusader" and "Crusade" showed that he subscribed to the clash of civilization thesis. He denied the possibility of peaceful interaction between cultures and civilizations.³⁶ For Osama bin Laden, the core clash is that between Islam and the Zionist and American enterprise. He questions the logic of a "Crusader alliance" that includes the U.S., Japan and Australia, among others:

What is Japan's concern? What is making Japan join this hard, strong and ferocious war? It is a blatant violation of our children in Palestine, and Japan didn't predict that it will be at war with us, so it should review where it stands. What is the concern of Australia in the farthest south with the case of those weak Afghans? And those weak in Palestine? What is Germany's concern with the war?³⁷

By and large, the tradition of Crusades chronicling, oral accounts

and medieval memoirs has been overwhelmed by such one-dimensional interpretations and agit-prop versions of history. While Islamists paint a Manichean world pitting Zionists and Crusaders against Islam, another strand of remembrance offers a more nuanced view of history. In this view, no single culture has a monopoly on good or evil. This version of history is epitomized in the memoirs of bin Laden's twelfth-century namesake, Osama bin Munqidh (1095–1188). Osama bin Munqidh was the nephew of the ruler of Shaizar, a tiny, now vanished principality in Northern Syria on the road to Jerusalem. When the Franks were en route to conquering Jerusalem in 1099, Shaizar made a strategic decision to guide them, which saved the city from destruction by the Crusading army. Osama bin Munqidh served as Shaizar's envoy to the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. But, amid the turbulent and shifting allegiances of the Crusades period, he also fought against the Franks and even served as Saladin's confidante.

Associated in Arab chronicles with valour and bravery,³⁸ Osama bin Munqidh's major themes are the mechanics of battle and various skirmishes, which he recounts with great relish. Having interacted closely with the Franks, he saw the positive and negative aspects of the Crusading enterprise. In his celebrated autobiography, *Kitab al-I'tibar* ("Book of Instruction and Examples"), he painted a vivid picture of Muslim perceptions of Frankish customs, manners and appearances.³⁹ Occasionally, the raconteur's taste for the strange and unexpected and bin Munqidh's natural curiosity for the bizarre give us a skewed picture of what the Franks were really like. Nevertheless, without his intimate portraits and anecdotes, we would lack a good first-hand feel of the intersection of the two different cultures as seen through pre-modern Arab eyes.

Today, bin Munqidh is barely known in his native Syria, let alone other parts of the region. In the early 1990s, retracing Marco Polo's epic journey from Jerusalem to Xanadu, the British travel writer William Dalrymple stopped by at the ruins of Shaizar. His young Syrian companion, Nizar, is an aficionado of English literature. Dalrymple asks him if he has read Osama bin Munqidh. He shrugs his shoulders, saying that he prefers Henry Fielding to bin Munqidh. However, Dalrymple detects that this "sentimental education" of the Western literary canon does not

make Nizar a “moderate Muslim” or a “moderate Arab”. Nizar declares his passion for Shakespeare’s “The Merchant of Venice”, explaining that it is “a great symbol of the struggle of the Arabs and the Israelis”.⁴⁰

In his novel *Travelling with Djinn*s, the Sudanese-British writer, Jamal Mahjoub, explores the loss of identity and the rival claims of historical memory. The novel’s protagonist, Yasin, by coincidence also half-Sudanese, half-English, travels with his seven-year-old son through Europe in search of history and identity. As father and son enter the Rhineland in a beat-up Peugeot 504, Yasin tells Leo about the mystics and visionaries of the region. He shows him a picture of a twelfth-century nun, Hildegard von Bingen, who opposed the Church’s call for the Second Crusade as she did not believe that Christians should engage in “swords and fighting”. Mahjoub writes:

The mention of war and swords makes Leo perk up. “The Crusades was when they had all those knights in armour, wasn’t it?”

“Pope Urban X called on all Christians to fight for the Holy Lands which were in the hands of the Saracens.”

“Who were the Saracens?”

“Well they were ... us.” He looks at me in a strange way and I decide to go back to the swordplay.⁴¹

The raconteur and the ideologue are not the only vehicles for transmitting Muslim memories of the Crusades. Between these iconic extremes lie the full range of Islamic remembering of the Crusades. Given the broad landscape and the deep undercurrents in the politics of Muslim memory of the Crusades, I will ground my investigation in the following four themes:

- Religion and piety
- Heroes and anti-heroes
- Holy cities
- Crusader culture

These themes, which are recurring concerns in Islamic remembering of the period, are indicative and certainly not exhaustive. Compared to society, state or nation-building, memory-building is a much more fissiparous task. Myths and memories take on a life of their own, abetted

by the complex alchemy of historical filtration. While the trajectory of historical memory is uncertain, in retrospect we can more easily see how in certain societies key personalities and episodes of history are transformed into a body of collective memory composed of powerful symbols, icons, labels and images.

Many of the symbols and icons in modern Islamic remembering of the Crusades were generated after the First World War. This was the period that produced the Modern Middle East, from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire. In the final year of the war, as the Ottoman Empire tottered, British forces began claiming swathes of the Levant. A week before Christmas Day in 1917, the British overcame a beleaguered Ottoman garrison in the holy city of Jerusalem. The British commander, General Sir Edmund Allenby, approached the Jaffa Gate on the West Wall of the Old City. Dismounting before the historical site, he entered on foot with his entourage, as a mark of respect to the three faiths of the Holy City. In his unspectacular khaki uniform, Allenby hardly fit the profile of a conquering Crusader knight.⁴² However, it was not protocol but expedience that shaped his approach. The British pan-Commonwealth army included Indian Muslim *sepoys*. Since they shared the faith of the Ottoman army, they were deemed susceptible to the pan-Islamic propaganda of the Central Powers.⁴³ Allenby, the Commander-in-Chief of the Egypt Expeditionary Force, could not afford to alienate part of his force by invoking a Christian victory. In fact, Allenby's proclamation following the "liberation" of Jerusalem tried to show sensitivity to Muslim interests.⁴⁴ However, he could not help but draw out the historical resonance of his grand entrance, making an ambiguous reference to the end of the Crusades in his public liberation speech. His mention of the end of the Crusades was poorly received by some Muslim notables of the city. They promptly withdrew from the celebrations.⁴⁵

Predictably, the Western media played up Allenby's victory as the "consummation of Europe's last crusade",⁴⁶ boosting a triumphal narrative that pandered to the popular imagination in Europe. Peddling anti-Turk propaganda, the U.S. newspaper of record, *The New York Times*, pointed out that after the Arabs and the Egyptian "fellahin" had recovered their holy cities in the Hijaz, they had helped Christianity recover its own holy

city, which had been wrested by the Turks.⁴⁷ Similar jingoism was evident in a 1923 pulp travelogue entitled *The Romance of the Last Crusade: With Allenby to Jerusalem*. Written by one of Allenby's admiring subalterns, it declared that in "all the ten crusades organized and equipped to free the Holy City, only two were really successful, — the first led by Godfrey de Bouillon, and the last under Edmund Allenby".⁴⁸ The tabloid account sought to appeal to the popular Western imagination with historical parallels that Allenby had himself tried studiously but failed to avoid.

Two years after Allenby's morale-boosting sweep through Jerusalem, Western statesmen and diplomats convened in Paris to sort out the post-World War I order. The frenzied diplomatic activity at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference was part of the wider mandate set by the victors to create a lasting post-war peace. The result was the disastrous Treaty of Versailles. But, the conference also took time to supervise the diplomatic carve-up of the Middle East.

In one of many sessions devoted to address the so-called Eastern Question, the French Foreign Minister Stephen Jean Marie Pichon began a speech to seek political support for France's claim to Syria. He confidently dated back the French connection to the period of the Crusades. Pichon's words resonated with some members of his audience. But, all were not amused. Among those listening intently to the interpretation of the Minister's speech was the Emir Feisal bin Husayn of the Hijaz. He had wrangled an invitation to the conference with great difficulty. The French had agreed to his presence but downgraded his credentials from Crown Prince to mere stand-in for his father. Deliberately snubbed even before the meeting began, Feisal would not have been in the mood to hear what must have sounded to his ears like a provocatively partisan lecture on his own region. His father, the Hashemite Sharif Husayn of Mecca, had led the Arab revolt against Ottoman rule in support of Allied victory in the East. General Allenby and the Emir's military advisor, Colonel T. E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) had supported the Arab uprising. The British had promised Sharif Husayn diplomatic support for a Hashemite Arab state. The Hashemites assumed that this would include Greater Syria. The final Allied victory raised Hashemite expectations. In Paris, as the post-war spoils were divided up, the Hashemite Potentate Feisal stood side by

side with his colourful British advisor. Serving as Feisal's interpreter and aide, Colonel Lawrence wore full Arab regalia, which the style-conscious French could hardly fail to miss. Pressing on before a war-weary audience, Pichon discoursed purposefully on how French claims to Syria dated back to the Crusades. In challenging the Gallic view, Feisal maintained his stately composure known to the Arabs as *hilm* (strong emotion buried under a mask of forbearance and self-control). Although he impressed the American Secretary of State Robert Lansing, the American diplomat had no instructions from Washington to intercede. Alone and isolated, the regal Arab could do little more than to offer his tormentor a succinct and dignified retort: "Pardon me, Monsieur Pichon, but which of us won the Crusades?"⁴⁹

Feisal drew his riposte from a collective memory that considered the Crusades a proud and ultimately victorious phase in Islamic history. Pichon, disdaining Feisal as a British puppet and less impressed by the sight of regal Arabs than his American counterpart,⁵⁰ unapologetically asserted France's long crusading pedigree in Syria. Lawrence provided moral support but could not help in any substantive way. When Lawrence met separately with the French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, the British officer was reminded of the French blood spilled during the Crusades. Offering rhetorical support to Feisal, Lawrence's reply was cutting: "Yes ... but the Crusaders had been defeated and the Crusades had failed."⁵¹

Despite Lawrence's jibe, the French, true to character, were undeterred by the mere fact of a monumental defeat already long past. A powerful, "log-rolling" lobby ranging from fabric manufacturers in Lyons to Jesuit priests in Beirut had their sights trained on Greater Syria. These interests informed the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement between Britain and France, a document of routine realpolitik that formalized their spheres of influence in the Middle East. France also drew inspiration from the glory of the *Chanson de Roland*, the classic of national poetry that celebrated medieval French valour in the face of the Muslim victory at Roncesvalles. French sentiments were further aroused by the works of Joseph Francois Michaud (1767–1839), who produced a popular, imperialistic history of the Crusades as a victory of European, especially French, superiority over Islamic civilization.⁵²

In the post-war contest over remembering the Crusades, French interests, pride and prestige were at stake. Although Feisal had collected some debating points with his clever retort, Pichon's *tricolore* and a great power backroom deal bested the Hashemite potentate. Subsequently, at the San Remo Conference held in Italy in April 1920, France arrogated to itself the mandate over Greater Syria. Barely three months later, after the French summarily exiled Feisal to Italy, the first French High Commissioner in Syria, General Henri Gouraud entered Damascus and strode up to Saladin's tomb. According to some possibly exaggerated accounts, he kicked the tomb, or perhaps merely stumbled, before announcing: "Saladin, we have returned. My presence here consecrates the victory of the Cross over the Crescent."⁵³

I have painted some vignettes from the making of the modern Middle East because both the Allenby and Gouraud episodes remain powerful symbols in radical pan-Arab and Islamic discourse of the Crusades. They are routinely cited to demonstrate the living link between Crusader perfidy and modern Western colonialism. For some, the Allenby Bridge over the Jordan River may commemorate the contributions of a brilliant tactician and general. But, in the popular imagination, he is seen also as among Europe's last Crusaders. In Egypt's Port Said, a festival dating back to 1917 called *Harq Allenby*, ("the burning of Allenby") involves the burning of a dummy every year just before the spring holiday of *Sham el-Nessim*.⁵⁴ The participants call the marionette "The Allenby", although the character changes each year, depending on the villain of the moment.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

The Crusades were not always considered a watershed event in medieval Muslim history and consciousness. Francesco Gabrieli, the noted Italian historian of the Crusades, has argued that “the Arab histories of the Crusades are usually only a section of a general historical panorama”.⁵⁵ Although the medieval Muslim chroniclers distinguished the Western Christian (“Frankish”) invasions from the attacks of the Eastern Christian Byzantine empire (“Rumi”), Gabrieli maintains that these invasions were nonetheless “never ... a single subject to be treated in isolation”.⁵⁶ For example, the period’s most wide-ranging Arab chronicler, the Mosul historian ibn Al-Athir (1160–1233), treated the “Frankish jihad” as a thread in the broader tapestry of the history of the Muslim world. The Damascene ibn Al-Qalanisi (1070–1160) was the earliest known Arab historian to chronicle the crusading period in detail. Ibn Al-Qalanisi was not only an accomplished scholar but an experienced politician as well, having served stints as mayor of the city. However, his work, *Dhayl Ta’rikh Dimashq*⁵⁷ (i.e. Continuation of the History of Damascus) which focused on his beloved city, is concerned more with Damascene infighting and sectarian rivalry. The Frankish invasions are only one part of a larger story.⁵⁸

Al-Qalanisi’s perspective is not unique. For example, Imam al-Ghazali, the celebrated eleventh-century philosopher and *mujaddid* (or renewer of Islam) who lived in Damascus when ibn al-Qalanisi was in his twenties, makes no reference to the Frankish scourge in his more than

seventy surviving works. Al-Ghazali serenely extolled the virtues of the *jihad al-akbar* (the greater jihad) over the *jihad al-asghar* (the lesser jihad) even as the Franks conducted their own lesser jihad in his midst.⁵⁹ As a result, al-Ghazali has been judged harshly by some Islamists for his apparent passivity. One Islamist writer prefaced an abridgement of one of al-Ghazali's works as follows:

... al-Ghazali in all his works does not refer at all, neither directly nor indirectly, to the Crusader War against the land of al-Sham; that savage war in which sanctities were transgressed upon, lands were destroyed and human dignities violated, placing the sword of transgression, injustice and enmity upon the neck of peaceful Muslims ... al-Ghazali in his magnificent work *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* did not devote a section for jihad in order to explain its virtue, nay its necessity, and that it is an individual obligation upon every capable Muslim when the Muslim lands are invaded and their enemy attacks them in their own territories.⁶⁰

The critic of Al-Ghazali reflects a *jihadi*-tinged Salafi-Wahhabi ideology. This ideological cocktail involved a radical re-interpretation of the faith drawing from what it imagined to be its well-springs, as practised by the noble ancestors (*salaf al-salih*). A cookie-cutter, collective memory is imposed on a past with wholly different concerns and preoccupations. This is a leap of logic and history which simply glosses over episodes that do not fit the governing framework. Salafi-Wahhabi ideology sees history as a series of assaults upon Islam countered by noble ripostes.⁶¹ The criticism of al-Ghazali is based upon the assumption that the collective memory of a "Crusader war" as such was an observable reality for al-Ghazali and his contemporaries, and that even if it was not, it should have been so. The ideological mould is a gross distortion of history and has even produced some startling revisionism. The more thoughtful Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi produced an elaborate defence of al-Ghazali in response to Salafi-Wahhabi criticisms. An admirer of al-Ghazali, al-Qaradawi has reasoned that by strengthening Islamic learning, the "great Imam" was implicitly working for the Crusaders' expulsion:

The great Imam's excuse may be that his most pressing engagement was the reform of his own self first, and that it is one's

personal corruption which paves the way for external invasions, as indicated by the beginning of Sura al-Isra'. The Israelites, whenever they became corrupt and spread corruption in the earth, were subjected to the domination of their enemies. But whenever they did good and reformed themselves and others, they again held sway over their enemies.⁶²

The Salafi-Wahhabi reconstruction of the history of the Crusades found its strength in the conservative Islamic setting of Saudi Arabia after the *sahwah* (Islamist awakening) of the 1980s. This movement had combined ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood from Egypt, with *Wahhabism*,⁶³ the dominant interpretation of Sunni Islam in Saudi Arabia. A key *sahwah* ideologue was the dissident Saudi religious scholar Safer al-Hawali, who dissected U.S. plans and strategies in the Persian Gulf in his popular audio-tapes and books. He collected his thoughts in his 1991 publication *Haqa'iq Hawl Azmat al-Khalij* (Realities behind the Gulf Crisis), which explained how the "Western Crusaders" led by the U.S. carried out their specific designs on the Gulf and Middle East region.⁶⁴

Beyond the Arab world, in other lands of the *ummah* threatened by European colonialism, the Eastern Crusades barely registered until the twentieth century. For example, in *Tohfut-Ul-Mujahideen*,⁶⁵ a late sixteenth-century call to jihad against the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean, the Malayali (Islamic scholar *alim*) Zayn al-Din did not connect his tormentors in the Far East to the Franks in the near East, apart from using the generic Arabic term *Ifranj* (Franks). Zayn al-Din's tract⁶⁶ on the Spice Crusade of the Portuguese did not connect with the so-called wars of the Cross and the Crescent further west, where the Franks had been pushed out of the Levant. There was no sense of a Manichean struggle between Christianity and Islam, as suggested in a more contemporary Grade 9 textbook from Saudi Arabia:

... because the Crusaders' malice had penetrated the hearts of the Portuguese, they committed the ugliest crimes against the Muslims wherever they were. They did not abide by the promises they had given, killed innocent people, violated people's honor, robbed them of property, destroyed mosques, countries and ships.⁶⁷

Unlike their modern counterparts, the classical Muslim historians did

not foreground Crusader malice as the greatest of all historical evils. For example, the Mongol conquests of the mid thirteenth century were of much greater concern to the medieval Hanbali jurist ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328)⁶⁸ who lived during the Crusades but also felt the full force of Mongol aggression. The Frankish invasions were also put in the shade of history by the Mamelukes' overpowering of the Mongols, and the power of the rising Ottoman Empire. In addition, Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 inaugurated a new phase in relations between Islam and the West, both deepening and complicating relations. Napoleon's conquest was chronicled by the renowned Egyptian historian Abdul Rahman Al-Jabarti (1754–1825). Al-Jabarti's masterful *Chronicle of the French Occupation*⁶⁹ avoided facile comparisons between Crusaders of Franks and the invading French of Napoleon's army, whom he carefully distinguished from the English.

In the Levant, Syrian Christian intelligentsia began to study and translate French histories, including the period of the Crusades. They gradually assimilated Western historiography on the subject, including now obscure works by Arabophile French authors like Gustav le Bon and others. As distinct terms, the Arabic terms *al-hurub al-salibiyya* (Crusader wars), or *hurub al-salib* (wars of the Cross) and *al-salibiyyun* (Crusaders) entered use in the modern Arab lexicon by the mid nineteenth century.⁷⁰ One observer offers the date 1865 after the Melkite (Syrian Christian) patriarch of Jerusalem supported an Arabic translation of a French history of the Crusades.⁷¹ A complex process of intellectual absorption took place, reflecting shifts in Western historiography of the Crusades.⁷² A pivotal moment in this process of absorption was when the Ottoman Sultan (and then Sunni Caliph) Abdulhamid II (1876–1908) explicitly labelled the seizure of his territory by the Western powers as a new "Crusade."⁷³ Faced with a difficult internal situation and volatile regional environment, Abdulhamid II cast about for ideas to resist Western encroachment in the provinces of the declining Ottoman Empire. Appointing the itinerant propagandist Jamal-al-din al-Afghani (1838–1896) as the head of his Pan-Islamic bureau, Abdulhamid II launched a campaign to enlist support for the "sick man of Europe" against Western intervention.⁷⁴ Al-Afghani was tireless and enthusiastic in pushing the pan-Islamic ideal. A centrepiece

notion was that the Crusades still lived with the fanatical spirit of Peter the Hermit, an eleventh-century French Jesuit monk who helped direct the first popular Crusade towards the Holy Land.⁷⁵ Al-Afghani's own ideas survived him as Abdulhamid's pan-Islamic campaign lasted some three decades. Abdulhamid II was quoted in the first non-Western history of the Crusading movement, *Splendid Accounts in the Crusading Wars* (1899) by the Egyptian Sayyid Ali al-Hariri. The writer notes with approval the Sultan's contention that Europe was carrying out a Crusade against Islam in the form of a political campaign. As the Ottoman Empire crumbled, the 1899 work of an Indian Muslim scholar, Syed Ameer Ali, entitled *A Short History of the Saracens*,⁷⁶ also helped to shape Islamic remembering of the Crusades, as the incarnation of fear and dislike of the West.

During the intellectual ferment of the *nahda* (rebirth) period (1850–1914) which found its locus in Egypt and Syria, a polemical view of the Crusaders was promoted by the liberal Egyptian reformer Muhammed Abduh (1849–1905). Rational, forward-looking and judicious, he demonstrated a blind spot, perhaps deliberately cultivated, when it came to discussing the Crusades. In this regard, Abduh was deeply influenced by the pan-Islamic rhetoric of al-Afghani.⁷⁷ Abduh participated in the *Urabi*⁷⁸ movement aimed at removing foreign interference and changing a compliant regime. Abduh referred to Europeans as the Franks, in the manner of his medieval predecessors. He equated British Prime Minister William Gladstone, who disliked Jesuit missionaries, with Peter the Hermit. Explicitly comparing the Crusaders and modern European colonialists, Abduh declared: “A Frank might reach the highest ranks, like Gladstone, yet still, every word he utters seems to be coming out of Peter the Hermit!”⁷⁹

In fits and starts, as the Arab world chafed under the shadow of modern colonialism, the idea began to emerge of a new Crusade by the West as a concerted assault on Islam and the autonomy of the nascent Muslim state. As the modern Middle East began to take shape under Western tutelage, what was once a historical sideshow in medieval Muslim consciousness, the Crusades, was transformed in the context of modern colonialism and under the sway of pan-Islamic ideas. The Crusades were becoming the centrepiece symbol of what was considered a renewed “Western” or “Christian” assault on Islam. Western violation and

corresponding Muslim humiliation tempted invocation of the historical memory of the Crusades for powerful mobilizing purposes.

In the years preceding the First World War, the allied Christian Balkan states rounded up on Turkey and closed their grip on Constantinople, with France consolidating its hold on Morocco, and Russia and Britain suppressing the Persian Revolution. This seemed to confirm the warnings of Sultan Abdulhamid II and al-Afghani about the Western and Christian Crusade to destroy Islam.⁸⁰ Expressing his anguish at the unfolding of events, an Indian Muslim writer of the period decried:

The King of Greece orders a New Crusade. From the London chancelleries rise calls to Christian fanaticism, and Saint Petersburg already speaks of the planting of the Cross on the dome of Sant' Sophia. Today they speak thus; tomorrow they will thus speak of Jerusalem and the Mosque of Omar. Brothers! Be ye of one mind, that it is the duty of every True Believer to hasten beneath the Khalifa's banner and to sacrifice his life for the safety of the faith.⁸¹

In the early 1920s, the Republican Kemalists in Turkey who sought to remove the Sultan and the Caliphate and consolidate their hold on the remains of the Ottoman Empire also used the mobilizing power of the Crusades. Indeed, pro-Kemalist propagandists played up the shared and painful memory of the Crusades to build up pan-Islamic solidarity. For example, on 11 March 1921, an article in an official Kemalist mouthpiece, the *Hakimiet-i-Millie*, drummed up support for the pending Congress of Muslim nations to be held at Ankara in Turkey.⁸² The article set the tone for the pan-Muslim Congress, commiserating with all those “groaning under Christian tyranny and oppression”⁸³ and alluding to the Allied powers' purported last Crusade in Jerusalem. It mixed the stirrings of Turkish nationalism with anti-Greek invective and some residual Ottoman pan-Islamism. A scathing indictment of Western manipulation and hostility towards Islam was issued as the piece denounced the new Crusade as the “invasion of the Cross and Capital.”⁸⁴

From the *Maghrib* to the *Mashriq*, the shared memory of the medieval encounter between the Cross and Crescent had become an iconic short-hand for propagandists to explain eternal Western designs on the land, peoples and resources of Islam. To illustrate the reach of this idea, in

French-administered Algeria in 1945, the first shots of the bloody Algerian war, the Arab bloodbath by the European *colons* at Setif, prompted the Algerian liberal leader Ferhat Abbas to declaim that Setif “has taken us back to the days of the Crusaders.”⁸⁵ And to the East, the concept of a new Crusade was given powerful expression by secular pan-Arab nationalists like Nasser, who explained the source of all perfidy as emanating from the Crusades:

After ... World War [I], during which England promised to give us our independence, Britain and imperialism wanted to suppress Arab nationalism by other means. Imperialism signed a pact with Zionism and the result was the Balfour Declaration ... The battle was continued, Brethren, to deal the deathblow to our Nationalism, this time under a new name, a substitute for “the Crusades”, which was “the mandate”. Palestine was placed under mandate, for no other purpose than the destruction of Arab nationalism in a new way.⁸⁶

Similar rhetoric was mobilized by Nasser’s foes like the “martyred” Egyptian ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwan*), Sayyid Qutb. Indeed, Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) is a key figure, particularly in the reformist-inspired rhetoric and remembrance of the Crusades. His polemics exert a powerful hold on the imagination of modern Sunni fundamentalism. Ironically, Qutb’s influential perspective on the Crusades was shaped by a Jewish journalist from Austria, Leopold Weiss. Converting to Islam, Weiss adopted the name Muhammad Asad (1900–1992), and went on to serve the fledgling Pakistani government. Asad enjoyed legitimacy as someone who understood the mind of Europe but who had crossed over to the “Islamic tent”. In his 1934 essay, “In the Shadow of the Crusades”, which Sayyid Qutb cited frequently in his book *Social Justice in Islam*, Asad argued pointedly that “the evil caused by the Crusades was not restricted to the clash of weapons: it was first and foremost, an intellectual evil.”⁸⁷ Asad argued that the Crusades occurred at a crucial juncture in history, as Europe began to cohere as an entity and awoke to a “new cultural consciousness”. Previous encounters with Islam, such as the attacks upon Southern France and Arab conquests of Sicily, had the character of local skirmishes. But, it was during the Crusades that a

new political concept of “Christendom” emerged, founded on a “hatred of Islam”.⁸⁸ For Asad, this was a period when Europe was still at its most impressionable age or in its “childhood”.⁸⁹ In Asad’s view, the period of the Crusades decisively shaped the ancient hatreds between Islam and the West, largely through the cruelties of the “pious Knights of the Cross”.⁹⁰

Drawing on Muhammad Asad’s interpretation of the phenomenon, Qutb saw Crusading above all as an intellectual enmity.⁹¹ He asserted that imperialism is but a “mask for the crusading spirit (*ruh salibiyya*) since it is not possible for it to appear in its true form, as it was possible in the Middle Ages”.⁹² He wrote also of “the Crusader spirit that runs in the blood of all Occidentals”,⁹³ tying together “financial influence of the Jews of the United States”, “English ambition” and “Anglo-Saxon guile”.⁹⁴ For Qutb, “General Allenby was no more than typical of the mind of all Europe when, entering Jerusalem during World War I, he said: ‘Only now have the Crusades come to an end.’”⁹⁵

From Egypt, Qutb’s writings on “Crusaderism” spread throughout extremist circles in the Arab Middle East and beyond. Other Muslim Brotherhood propagandists like Muhammed Jalal Kishk (discussed in Chapter 2) also popularized the notion of the Crusades as an ideological and cultural invasion. Kishk’s notion of the Crusades as an ideological invasion and Qutb’s characterization of the Allenby episode was affirmed in the 1988 Covenant of *Hamas*, the Palestinian wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, which states in part:

The Crusaders had understood that they had no way to vanquish the Muslims unless they prepared the grounds for that with an ideological invasion which would confuse the thinking of Muslims, revile their heritage, discredit their ideals to be followed by a military invasion. That was to be in preparation for the Imperialist invasion, as in fact (General) Allenby acknowledged it upon his entry to Jerusalem: “Now the Crusades are over.”⁹⁶

In the 1950s, Qutb and others in the Egyptian prototype of the pan-Islamist organization, the Muslim Brotherhood,⁹⁷ had agitated against what they saw as the Crusader spirit of Western encroachment. They were joined by *Wahhabi* proselytizers in Saudi Arabia. In 1966, a British

diplomat in Jeddah, reporting on Saudi King Faisal's pan-Islamic activity, played down its significance:

I take the relaxed view of Faisal's activities ... The American Embassy here, with whom we have discussed the subject at several levels, share this view. That is to say the concept of Islam as an aggressive force has completely disappeared except among some older Saudis. An article in one newspaper a few weeks ago referred to Africa as the "Dar ul Harb" and to Islam's main enemies as communism, Zionism and "sulubbiya"—which I suppose can only be translated as "crusaderism"—referring of course to Christian missionary activity.⁹⁸

But, the diplomat had overlooked a key grievance embedded in the discourse of the Islamist ideologues, which was troubled not merely by Christian missionary activity but something deeper and wider. This was the creation of Israel, alongside the mandate of Palestine, as Nasser himself had highlighted in his own pronouncements (see above). According to Richard Mitchell, who produced the definitive account of the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the terms "European crusading" (*al-salibiyya al-urabbiyya*) and "Jewish crusading" (*al-salibiyya al-yahudiyya*) were interchangeable.⁹⁹ Mitchell noted also that United Nations activity in Palestine in the 1950s was seen as "a new declaration of Zionist-Crusading war against the Arab and Islamic peoples".¹⁰⁰

While Nasser perceived or perhaps had no rhetorical use for making a connection between faith and the aggression of the New Crusades, the committed Islamists of the Brotherhood made it a point not to separate religion from politics. For them, the "Western imperialistic crusading" was directed by the West "under the guidance of the Church".¹⁰¹ Sayyid Qutb, in his monumental *tafsir* (Qur'anic interpretation),¹⁰² *In the Shade of Qur'an*, even asserted that there were "many priests, bishops, cardinals and popes who raised millions and millions to finance the successive Crusades. They continue to do so in order to finance missionary work and Orientalist research, all of which aim at turning people away from God's path".¹⁰³

The end of the Cold War and the 1991 Gulf War gave another twist to these ideas. In 1992, a former Egyptian general and hero of the Yom Kippur War produced a best-seller on the Gulf War as the "Eighth Christian Cru-

sade”, explicitly equating the modern West with the medieval Crusaders, and drawing an important link to faith with his reference to a “Christian Crusade”.¹⁰⁴ Other influential Arab writers and novelists made comparisons between the Crusades and the West’s determination to resume wars in the region.¹⁰⁵ But, this invocation of the history of the Crusades was not limited to the old Levantine stomping grounds of the historical Crusaders. During the Balkan wars, Orthodox Christian Serbs gleefully announced their own Crusade against Islam in Europe.¹⁰⁶ Predictably, this played into the hands of proselytizers. An Arabic language Geography textbook meant for 14-year-olds and published in 1994 states that:

... a malicious Crusader-Jewish alliance seeks to eliminate Islam from all the continents. Those massacres that were directed against Muslim people of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Muslims of Burma and the Philippines and Africa, are the greatest proof of the malice and hatred harboured by the enemies of the Islamic religion.¹⁰⁷

Mainstream Saudi textbooks had discussed a new *salibiyya* (crusaderism) before they were popularized by Osama bin Laden and his chief ideologue Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad terror group. Bin Laden, who took instruction in Islamic studies from Muhammed Qutb¹⁰⁸ at Jeddah, recognized the value of the label as a tool of propaganda for spreading Al Qaida’s message of hostility against the West and in particular the U.S.¹⁰⁹ By 1998, Osama bin Laden readily played up the clash between the Cross and the Crescent: “There are two parties to the conflict: World Christianity, which is allied with Jews and Zionism, led by the United States, Britain and Israel. The second party is the Islamic world.” Bin Laden’s communiqués addressed to the Islamic world are peppered with references to the modern Crusaders. He has described U.S. President George W. Bush as fighting under the “sign of the cross” while his 1998 merger with Ayman al-Zawahiri’s Islamic Jihad formed the “World Islamic Front for Holy War against Jews and Crusaders”, a name more suggestive about its radical ideology than the customary, enigmatic name of the movement, Al Qaida.¹¹⁰ As one writer notes: “When bin Laden named his front ... his meaning was clear to the entire Muslim world as providing both a definition of enemies and a belief in ultimate victory.”¹¹¹

Playing fast and loose with geography and working creatively with

history, Osama bin Laden explicitly extended the term Crusaders to include Australians in a 2001 broadcast.¹¹² Echoing the communiqués of bin Laden, Imam Samudra, the Indonesian operational chief of the October 2002 Bali bombings, screamed out “Crusaders!” when confronted by the relatives of his victims. A historical victim of the Spice Crusade of the Dutch, Imam Samudra tapped into the remarkably fungible collective memory of the extremists in remembering the Crusades.

For radicalized Muslim consciousness, contemporary “Crusaderism” is a living movement continuous with the West’s first penetration of the Muslim heartlands in the eleventh century. The leaden and ponderous “Qutbist”-influenced and now “Al-Qaidist”-inspired message on the website of the trans-national, London-based Islamist group, *Hizb-ut-Tahrir* (Party of Liberation) recycles the old rhetoric:

The malice and hatred towards Islam has existed ever since the days of the Christian crusades and is still perpetuated today. The origins of this hatred first appeared in Christian Europe, primarily due to a rude awakening from its slumber by the presence of the Islamic State at its doorstep ... The Crusader hatred allowed the Christian states to conspire and conclude the fate of the Islamic State. This same Crusader hatred is being used to detach the Muslims from their adherence to Islamic practices.¹¹³

In mind-numbing language reminiscent of Cold War tracts, the ideologically driven, Islamist memory of the Crusades demonizes its historic adversary in ostensibly religious terms. Reviving the past of the medieval crusades and applying it to the present provides a ready-made prophesy of the *ummah*’s ultimate victory over the West. As one noted Christian Arab writer points out, it “serves to reject the incorporation of the World of Islam into the globalization process—to reject, in short, this ‘modern crusade’ of Christianity against Islam.”¹¹⁴

I have provided a historiographical backdrop and noted the key shifts in modern discourse and rhetoric on the Crusades from the Islamic perspective. The four broad themes I identified earlier will now be used to illustrate both the continuities and the ruptures between pre-modern and modern Islamic remembering of the Crusades, as well as to highlight the politics that shapes this remembrance.

RELIGION AND PIETY

Inspired by the Qur'an, basic Muslim history sees the past as a constant struggle between belief and unbelief. However, Ibn al-Qalanisi (1070–1160), the earliest chronicler of the Crusading period, did not immediately propagate the black-and-white view of a Crusading Christianity versus a pious Islam. His chronicle recorded the impact of the First Crusade on Damascus in 1097 and ends a year before his death. Despite the wholesale slaughter visited on the Muslims (and others) after the fall of Jerusalem in 1099, al-Qalanisi's own account remained remarkably matter-of-fact and detached. He abstained from characterizing it as a collision between a deranged and aggressive Christianity and an Islam on the defensive. Instead, he merely recounts the technical mastery of a stronger army over a weaker adversary and the predictable outcome: "The swords of the Franks were given mastery over the Muslims, and death was meted out to the footmen, volunteers, and townsfolk, about ten thousand souls, and the camp was plundered."¹¹⁵ His description of the fall of Jerusalem contains little trace of indignation, or anti-Christian polemic. It is a clinical statement of the facts.

In his chronicle, al-Qalanisi highlights a dramatic episode that occurred in 1111. A delegation from Aleppo arrived at the Sultan's mosque in Damascus. The distraught Syrians appealed to the Sultan for help and bewailed their displacement by the Crusader hero Tancred. They are described as "clamouring and weeping for the misfortunes that had befallen Islam at the hands of the Franks, the slaughter of men,

and enslavement of women and children.”¹¹⁶ In presenting the appeal, al-Qalanisi ranked first the threat posed to Islam by the Franks, followed by the loss of men, and finally the enslavement of women and children. He stressed that Islam was the common denominator under threat, and took care to point out that the delegation burst into the Sultan’s mosque during Friday prayers. However, the Christian faith is not demonized. It is the “hard power” of Frankish military success and not Christianity per se that threatens the believers. Ibn al-Qalanisi next described the delegation’s visit to the Sultan’s favourite mosque on the following Friday. This sets the scene for the Sultan to intervene and to order what al-Qalanisi describes as “Holy War against the infidel, the enemies of God.”¹¹⁷ This stock phrase, “infidel, the enemies of God” was a generic reference that applied to all “infidel” religions. It did not single out the faith of the Franks.

Ibn al-Qalanisi placed the material factor above the ideological or the religious in explaining the Frankish onslaught. For example, in describing the pivotal episode of the Second Crusade, the ill-starred plan to attack Damascus, al-Qalanisi provides a factual description of the results of a skirmish outside his city: “The infidels gained the upper hand over the Muslims owing to the superiority of their numbers and equipment.”¹¹⁸ He acknowledged the role played by holy war ideology. However, the reference to “Holy War against the polytheists”, left unelaborated, is factual, shorthand, and not overtly polemical. In contrast, a later chronicler, a preacher called the Sibṭ (grandson) of ibn Al-Jauzi, portrayed the siege and battle for Damascus in highly polarized terms. It was a fight waged between the *Qur’anic* inspiration of the Caliph Uthman’s *Qur’an* and that of the donkey-riding crucifix and bible-laden priest.¹¹⁹

By the time of Sibṭ ibn al-Jauzi (1186–1256), the jihad of the counter-Crusades had become full-blown. The professional preacher portrayed the battle with the Franks as a clash of religions and beliefs. The later chronicles of al-Qalanisi exhibited some marks of this transformation. Over time, al-Qalanisi’s chronicle developed a hardening of attitude towards the Franks and evinced a shift from material towards religious and ideological explanations. This modulation is especially noticeable

when al-Qalanisi detailed the exploits of the Zangid Sultan Nur-ad-Din (1118–1174). The most distinguished son of Zangi (1084–1146), *atabeg*¹²⁰ of Mosul and the founder of the Zangid dynasty, Nur-ad-Din assumed power in Syria after his father's death. His father was the first to systematically launch the jihad of the counter-Crusade but Nur-ad-Din laid the foundation for Saladin's future victories. In Nur-ad-Din's time, "the idea of the Jihad against the Crusaders became one of the principal strengths of political and spiritual life in both Syria and the Jazira."¹²¹ Nur-ad-Din successfully manipulated jihad propaganda to unite the fractious Syrian Muslims and to present himself as the leader of the jihad. Al-Qalanisi's account of the initial siege of Damascus marks the progressive transformation from when the then still-obscure Nur-ad-Din accompanied his brother Saif-ud-Din, to the later account of Sultan Nur-ad-Din's subsequent triumph as defender of Islam at Damascus. In explaining Nur-ad-Din's final victory, al-Qalanisi notes approvingly that "God sent down His aid upon the Muslims and withdrew it from the polytheists."¹²² Although formulaic in a sense, it is interesting to note that this description is a far cry from his more technical account of the fall of Jerusalem, where ibn al-Qalanisi merely described the work of Frankish swords overcoming the Muslim armies.

Overall, ibn al-Qalanisi showed far greater restraint than Imad ad-Din (1125–1201), poet, chronicler and an administrator for both the Zangid and Ayyubid dynasties. Relishing his own portrayal of polarizing differences between Christianity and Islam, Imad ad-Din's chronicles produced crude and demonizing descriptions of Christianity for aesthetic effect (and Imad ad-Din's style is certainly an acquired taste). His description of the fall of Tiberias is telling: "Islam passed the night face to face with unbelief, monotheism at war with Trinitarianism, the way of righteousness looking down upon error, faith opposing polytheism."¹²³ Other medieval Muslim historians provided a less stark view of the Christian-Muslim encounter and were even prepared to acknowledge the strength of Christian piety. For example, Ibn al-Athir (1160–1233) recorded the story of a Muslim living at Hisn al-Akrad who recounts his meeting with a Frankish prisoner. The Frankish prisoner confides that his mother had given away everything to let her son join the Crusade.

This example of Frankish zeal prompted ibn al-Athir to generate a grim counter-factual. If the German Emperor Frederick Barbarossa had not drowned, the Christians (of the Third Crusade) would surely have taken Syria and Egypt:

Such were the religious and personal motives that drove the Franks on. They flocked to battle by any means they could, by land, by sea, from all directions. If God had not shown his grace to Islam in the death of the German King on his way to attack Syria, as will appear later, it would have been said one day that Syria and Egypt had once been Muslim lands.¹²⁴

In his twelfth-century collection of impressions, *Kitab al-asa* [*Book of the Walking Stick*], Osama bin Munqidh compared Christian and Muslim piety. Visiting Nablus, he witnessed a group of old Christian priests praying at the tomb of St John the Baptist. Osama was discomfited and admits: “The sight of their piety touched my heart, but at the same time it displeased and saddened me, for I had never seen such zeal and devotion among the Muslims. For some time I brooded on this experience.”¹²⁵ Osama recovered and went on to describe his experience of coming across some extremely pious Muslims from a Sufi order. Stumbling on a Sufi monastery for the first time, he announced with some relief that “there were among the Muslim men of even more zealous devotion than those Christian priests.”¹²⁶ The story about the Sufis may have conveniently upped the ante in terms of piety, but Osama had affirmed that the religion of the Franks inspired its own deep devotion, comparable indeed to that of Islam. Arguably, Osama seemed to be saying that without the devotion of the Sufis, Muslim zeal falls short of Christian piety.

In a sense, the piety he witnessed was of course a performance. In this regard, the gap between rhetoric and reality cannot be overlooked. There were political reasons for overplaying the robustness of Western piety and religion, and it is possible that such propaganda influenced Osama bin Munqidh. For example, one study of the politics of holy war during the Crusades has speculated that Saladin made a “deliberate attempt(s) to alarm the Caliph”¹²⁷ about the military disposition of the Franks. Certainly, in his holy war propaganda, Saladin played up the Christian threat.

He emulated the strategy of his Zangid predecessor Nur-ad-Din to rally the Arabs for support in isolating and removing the Franks from their coastal settlements. These settlements provided a foothold to threaten the Muslim hinterland and the defence of the strategic, coastal city of Acre was especially neuralgic. Saladin had tried to relieve the besieged garrison but was hampered by the lack of support from his fellow Muslim leaders. They were perpetually engaged in feuds and intriguing. In a letter to the Caliph in Baghdad, Saladin complained that when Muslim troops “came from distant parts, they would begin their service by asking for leave ... (and) had excused themselves on the grounds that they had to protect their own lands”.¹²⁸

Saladin disclosed his deep frustration with his fellow Muslims in his summons to the holy war during the siege of Acre in 1191. He declared that “we shall never cease to be amazed at how the Unbelievers ... have shown trust, and it is the Muslims who have been lacking in zeal”.¹²⁹ Saladin, according to the twelfth-century chronicle of Abu Shama, paid a glowing tribute to Christian piety and zeal. He rebuked his fellow Muslims and waxes lyrical on how the Franks were ready to spend “life and soul” to defend their religion. Of course, we should bear in mind that Saladin wanted to shame his fellow Muslims into action. Using the model of mobilization put into place by his Zangid predecessors, he needed to secure popular support, and draw men and materiel for his campaign from recalcitrant emirs. When Saladin characterized Frankish defence of the coast as an extension of the protection of their homelands, the rhetorical overstatement for mobilizing effect was quite clear. Indeed, Saladin paid the highest tribute to Crusader piety and religiosity to bring out the contrast with Muslim apathy and lack of zeal.

The Islamic remembering of Crusader religion and piety has waxed and waned according to the reigning political realities. Today’s pulpit pronouncements take a different tack. Contemporary *ulema* (the official Sunni orthodoxy referred to derogatorily in popular Arab parlance as *ulema-as-Sulta* or as “learned men who work for the authorities”) prefer to portray Crusader religion and piety as epiphenomenal. The Western “Crusader” states are depicted as the antithesis of all religion while the

Crusades are recalled as a crude land-grab, a precursor of colonialism, Zionism and neo-colonialism. Days after the 9/11 attacks, Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi declared on his weekly Al Jazeera programme *Shari'a and Life*:

The West has made Islam his enemy for many reasons. One is [the Middle East's natural] resources. [Since] the days of the Crusades, there are some mental complexes from which the West has not freed itself. [The West] attacked the Muslim countries, but Islam triumphed, with 'Immad Al-Din Zangi, Saladin, Baibars, and others ...¹³⁰

The notion that the West coveted the natural resources of the Islamic world gathered momentum in the run-up to the Second Gulf War. In March 2003, the highest-ranking cleric in Sunni Islam, Muhammad Sayyed Tantawi, then Rector (and subsequently Grand Sheikh) of Al-Azhar University, approved a *fatwa* (ruling) issued by the University's Islamic Research Center. The *fatwa* stated, *inter alia*, that:

... in accordance with reason and with Islamic religious law, if the enemy raids the land of the Muslims, jihad becomes a personal imperative binding on every Muslim man and woman, because our Muslim nation will be subject to a new Crusader invasion targeting land, honor, belief, and homeland.¹³¹

This statement, which played to the Arab street, may not have been seen by all as entirely appropriate for an official of the Egyptian government, on account of Egypt's own national interests and its close relations with the U.S. Subsequently, Sheikh Tantawi declared that he did not support the term "Crusader war". Instead, during a subsequent meeting with the head of the Scottish Anglican Church, Sheikh Tantawi declared that "all the monotheistic religions call for peace, stability, and reform, and oppose war". He added that he was "opposed to the words 'Crusader invasion' because it had racist connotations and was against Islam and Christianity".¹³² The Al-Azhar Research Center then issued a "clarification communiqué" stating:

Islam was not and will not be at war with Christianity, because all monotheistic religions call for disseminating peace and secu-

rity among all humanity. The expression “Crusader war” in the previous communiqué was not aimed at declaring war between Islam and Christianity, and some misunderstood it. The Crusader wars took place hundreds of years ago, *and any reasonable person understands that the reasons for them were not religious but other [reasons]*.¹³³ [emphasis added]

As Sheikh Tantawi explained to the London-based, Saudi-owned newspaper, *Al-Hayat*:

Some tried to exploit the description of the war as “Crusader” in order to influence the positive positions of France, Germany, and Russia, which tried to prevent the (U.S.-led invasion of Iraq) war. Therefore, a need emerged to state that a war that bears religious slogans is unacceptable, and that Crusader wars were in the distant past and they had *causes that have no connection to Christianity, which calls for peace among men*.¹³⁴ [emphasis added]

Placed in a difficult position, and compelled to clarify his view, Sunni Islam’s highest authority had declared that the original Crusades lacked any religious motivation or any connection to Christianity. Religion was not even admitted as an epiphenomenon of the Crusades. But, as we have seen, the medieval chroniclers held a very different view of the religious mission of their adversary. They credited the Franks for their piety and zeal, even though the praise had political undertones.

HOLY CITIES

Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem (*al-Quds*) are considered Islam's three holiest cities. But, as I have described in the preceding chapter, the sack of Jerusalem in 1099 did not immediately arouse the Muslim counter-Crusade. At the time, the Muslim world found itself deeply divided with factional disputes in Syria, Egypt and the Hijaz. Those warning of the conquest's wider dangers were voices in the wilderness, such as the *Shafi'i* preacher from Damascus, Ali b. Tahir as-Sulami an-Nahwi (d. 1106). In as-Sulami's view, Jerusalem's conquest heralded a permanent occupation of the region. But, his jeremiad went unheeded.¹³⁵

Ironically, Crusader fixation on Jerusalem as the ultimate prize helped to mobilize and solidify Muslim sentiment towards the city. Although his father Zangi had first launched the counter-jihad against the Franks, Nur-ad-Din was the first Muslim leader to systematically play up the sanctity of Jerusalem and of the historic lands of Palestine.¹³⁶ Liberating the holy city of Jerusalem as a sacred duty emerged in Muslim texts in 1150, a few years after Nur-ad-Din came to power.¹³⁷ By the time of Saladin, who succeeded Nur-ad-Din, occupied Jerusalem had become a central theme in jihad propaganda. The rhetorically zealous chronicler Imad ad-Din ascribes to his emir Saladin a rousing speech on the religious significance of Jerusalem, portrayed as languishing in faith and adoration of Islam during its 91-year occupation by the Franks: "Jerusalem is the first of the two *qiblas*, the second of the two Houses of God, the third of

the Sacred Zones. It is one of the three places of prayer ... the home of pious acts and the theatre of joys.”¹³⁸

At the same time, it is worth noting that the medieval Muslim chroniclers paid due respect to Christian zeal over their own claim on Jerusalem.¹³⁹ Ibn al-Athir described the build-up to the battle for Jerusalem after Hattin in 1187. He recounted how the Franks gathered in Jerusalem to make a final stand: “... there was a great concourse of people there, each one of whom would choose death rather than see the Muslims in power in their city; the sacrifice of life, possessions and sons was for them a part of their duty to defend the city.”¹⁴⁰ Ibn al-Athir paid tribute to the legitimacy of Frankish defence of the city as part of a religious duty. And as battle is joined, Ibn al-Athir describes “... the fiercest struggle imaginable; each side looked on the fight as an absolute religious obligation.”¹⁴¹ Imad ad-Din also described the frenzied defence of the Franks of their holy place, the Church of the Resurrection:

This is our Church of the Resurrection, here we shall take up our position and from here make our sorties, here our cry goes up, here our penitence is performed, our banners float, our cloud spreads. We love this place, we are bound to it, our honour lies in honouring it, its salvation is ours, its safety is ours, its survival is ours.¹⁴²

Characteristically, Imad ad Din qualified that they (the Christians) “continued to attach errors like this to the object of their cult.”¹⁴³ Yet, he does not dismiss their attachment to the city as a desperate, materialistic struggle to hold on merely to territory and riches. Instead, he recognizes that they are motivated by religious worship and reverence for their city. He affirmed that the Franks had “fought grimly and struggled with all their energy, descending to the fray with absolute resolution ...” and had cried out that they would “bring about the end of the world in defence of the Church of the Resurrection ...” and “despise our own safety in desire for her survival.”¹⁴⁴

After the pitched battle for Jerusalem and its eventual capture by Saladin, the bloodless surrender of Jerusalem by Saladin’s successor to Frederick II in 1229 was considered a blow to the prestige of the

ummah. The Ayyubid and Mameluke chronicler Jamal ad-Din ibn Wasil (1234–1298) described how:

... the news spread swiftly throughout the Muslim world, which lamented the loss of Jerusalem and disapproved strongly of al-Malik al-Kamil's action as a most dishonourable deed, for the reconquest of that noble city and its recovery from the hand of the infidel had been one of Saladin's most notable achievements ...¹⁴⁵

But, ibn Wasil also expressed some sympathy to Saladin's successor Al-Malik al-Kamil's realpolitik rationale for surrendering the city, noting that he "knew that the Muslims could not defend themselves in an unprotected Jerusalem, and that when he had achieved his aim and had the situation well in hand he could purify Jerusalem of the Franks and chase them out".¹⁴⁶ Ibn Wasil showed himself perfectly conscious of the politicization of the holy city of Jerusalem by various factions. He outlined how Sibt ibn Al-Jauzi took to the pulpit to preach a sermon in the Great Mosque in Damascus. Ibn Wasil wrote: "He was to recall the history of Jerusalem, the holy traditions and legends associated with it, to make the people grieve for the loss of it, and to speak of the humiliation and disgrace that its loss brought upon the Muslims."¹⁴⁷ Ibn Wasil shrewdly adduced these as arguments and not as facts when he adds: "By this means al-Malik an-Nasir Dawud proposed to alienate the people from al-Malik al-Kamil and to ensure their loyalty to himself in his contest with his uncle."¹⁴⁸

In a modern incarnation of Sibt ibn al-Jauzi's propaganda, Article 15 of the 1988 Hamas Charter hoists Jerusalem as the centre-piece in the struggle against modern imperialism and Crusaderism:

Imperialism has been instrumental in boosting the ideological invasion and deepening its roots, and it is still pursuing this goal. All this had paved the way to the loss of Palestine. We must imprint on the minds of generations of Muslims that the Palestinian problem is a religious one, to be dealt with on this premise. It includes Islamic holy sites such as the Aqsa Mosque, which is inexorably linked to the Holy Mosque as long as the Heaven and earth will exist, to the journey of the Messenger of Allah, be Allah's peace and blessing upon him, to it, and to his ascension from it.¹⁴⁹

In contrast to Jerusalem, the sanctity of the two holy cities located in the Hijaz is incontrovertible. This was demonstrated by the different reactions to the fall of Jerusalem to the Crusaders in 1099 on the one hand, and, on the other, Saladin's attack on the adventurer Reynald of Chatillon in 1182. A contemporary Western historian observes that the capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders roused little interest in Damascus and Baghdad when they captured the city. He has pointed out: "the real counter-crusade began when the crusaders—very foolishly—began to harry and attack the Muslim holy lands, namely the Hijaz in Arabia, containing the holy cities of Mecca and Medina where Mohammed was born, carried out his mission, and died."¹⁵⁰ Nine hundred years after Jerusalem first fell to the Crusaders, the 1998 radical *fatwa* crafted by Osama bin Laden sought to unify a network of terrorist groups with the "Declaration of the World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and the Crusaders". Building on his earlier 1996 "Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places", he described U.S. presence on the hallowed soil of the *Hijaz* as a humiliating catastrophe for Muslims everywhere.

Bin Laden announced:

Since God laid down the Arabian peninsula, created its desert, and surrounded it with its seas, no calamity has ever befallen it like these Crusader hosts that have spread in it like locusts, crowding its soil, eating its fruits, and destroying its verdure.¹⁵¹

The rhetorical excesses are almost reminiscent of Imad ad-Din describing the pollution of Jerusalem: "... to purify Jerusalem of the pollution of those races, of the filth of the dregs of humanity ..."¹⁵²

The 1998 *fatwa* declared that duty to kill Americans and their allies is an individual duty: "in order to liberate the al-Aqsa mosque and the holy mosque (Mecca) from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam ..."¹⁵³

Gradually, over time, the objective of liberating holy cities has become less resonant than the sense that the entire *ummah*, the virtual city of Muslims, is under ideological and physical attack. Drawing from the ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood ideologue Muhammad Jalal Kishk, the late

Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Baaz (1909–1999) propagated the view of the dangers of “Crusader Hostility Enmity”.¹⁵⁴ In the late 1980s, the Sheikh declared in his “Ideological Attack” (*al-ghazwa al-fikri*) that:

The attack of the Christian crusaders is today at its most intense. Since Salah-ud-Din Al-Ayyubi achieved victory over the Christian crusading in the Muslim lands, with their strength and weapons, the Christians ... started thinking about the most destructive alternatives ... far more dangerous and destructive than military warfare, which was that the Christian nations, both individually and collectively, should launch an ideological attack on those Muslims who were just beginning to grow and develop. This is because conquering the hearts and thoughts of a people is far more permanent than conquering their lands!¹⁵⁵

This polemical reading of the Crusades, designed to strengthen *asabiya* (solidarity) and identity against the forces of globalization and modernization, has been taught (as recently as 2002) to Saudi students as early as Grade 9, perhaps contributing to an antagonistic collective memory. Past and present are inter-fused and the image of armed Crusaders is replaced by a Crusade of dangerous ideas that threaten the integrity and even the survival of the *ummah*¹⁵⁶, as Kishk had argued not long after the setback of the Six Day War. To stem the tide of the ideological invasion called for periodic jolts to the collective memory. It is worth noting that bin Baaz’s summoning of the memory of Saladin occupies a central place in Islamic remembering of the Crusades.

HEROES AND ANTI-HEROES

Muslim collective memory of the Crusades era retains an enduring fondness and respect for the storied Saladin. The counter-Crusader is almost universally remembered as the archetypal hero in Muslim consciousness. Indeed, to many Arab biographers, as Philip Hitti points out, this single, iconic personality is known as *al-batal al-khalid* (immortal hero).¹⁵⁷ Apart, of course, from the Prophet Muhammad and other Qur'anic figures, Saladin's heroic stature is unparalleled in the Muslim world.¹⁵⁸ A man for all seasons, the memory of Saladin attracts all shades of politics. In Islamist circles, Ayman al-Zawahiri, the Egyptian radical ideologue and right-hand man of Osama bin Laden has used Saladin as his code-name.¹⁵⁹ And before the signing of the Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916, an Arab author warning against the threat of Zionist settlement took the pen-name Saladin.¹⁶⁰ A sort of Islamic Charlemagne, he has been invoked equally by moderate Muslim leaders, secular Baathists, Palestinian nationalists as well as the most virulently extremist Islamist leaders. In recent times, beginning with Nasser, Arab nationalist leaders like Hafez Assad, Yasser Arafat and Muammar al-Qadafhi have all consciously sought to mould public opinion to link their personalities with the immortal hero or to legitimate certain political objectives. Distorting history, Nasser once even claimed that the Iraqi Kurd Saladin was a Syrian to create a false historical link between Syria and Egypt.¹⁶¹

Naturally, the former Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein, born in Saladin's hometown of Tikrit, sought to identify closely with this Kurdish

hero. In 1987, a Baghdad publisher printed a children's book entitled *The Hero Saladin*, with a picture of Saddam Hussein on the cover surrounded by horsemen brandishing swords.¹⁶² Saddam is referred to as Saladin II in the book, comparing his heroism in the war against Iran to Saladin's feats. Comparisons between Saladin and Saddam became a staple in the Arab press and even filtered out to the West. However, Saddam's detractors warned against facile historical comparisons. They highlighted Saladin's reputation for magnanimity and chivalry and many other noble qualities, attributes they found lacking in Saddam.¹⁶³

Ultimately, much of the lustre that surrounds Saladin can be traced back to a single enduring historical source—the “Rare and Excellent History of Saladin” by a contemporary of Saladin—Baha' ad-Din ibn Shaddad. This twelfth-century chronicler and courtier in Saladin's court claimed that he recounted his emir's exploits “to win the favour of God by urging people to bless his name and to remember his excellent qualities.”¹⁶⁴ Whether Baha' ad-Din won God's favour need not concern us here but Saladin's lasting and positive reputation is self-evident.¹⁶⁵ Baha' ad-Din's hagiography overshadowed contemporaneous accounts including the more critical profile by the Mosul historian ibn al-Athir.¹⁶⁶ Reading al-Athir's masterful “The Complete History” (*Al-Ta'rikh Al-Kamil*) gives us a more nuanced view of Saladin's achievements and legacy. But, his profile of Saladin is neglected while Baha' al-Din's historical Saladin has been reified in Islamic remembering.

For example, Baha' ad-Din described how Saladin held firm at the debacle of Acre and made sure that a rout was turned into a respectable defeat.¹⁶⁷ Ibn al-Athir, on the other hand, castigated Saladin for allowing the Franks to assemble at Tyre, which he believed led to the debacle at Acre. He took Saladin to task for not seizing Tyre with forceful action and for losing interest in the siege, giving the Franks a toe-hold to conduct further forays into the Arab hinterland. Ibn Al-Athir's sharp verdict was: “a king should not abandon forceful action even when fate seems to be on his side.”¹⁶⁸ But, ibn Al-Athir's admonitions lack traction in Islamic remembering. Few chroniclers were minded to point out Saladin's strategic errors. Muslim memory does not concern itself with Richard the Lionheart's scattering of Saladin's army with a powerful cavalry charge as he marched

south from a newly conquered Acre.¹⁶⁹ In contrast, even accounts of historically insignificant campaigns recorded by the faithful Baha' ad-Din have greater prominence. For example, Baha' ad-Din described Saladin's taking of the fortress of Safed during a rainy Ramadan:

Early in Ramadan ... Saladin left Damascus to go to Safad, unconcerned at parting from his household, his children and his home town in this month, when people, wherever they may be, travel to be united with their families. "O God, he bore that out of a desire for Your good pleasure, so give him a great reward."¹⁷⁰

In a recent review of legendary battles during Ramadan, an Al-Azhar academic recalled Baha' ad-Din's account of the fall of Safed, including an ailing Saladin's response to the advice of his doctors:

During the month of Ramadan a great Muslim victory was won over the Crusaders under the leadership of [Salah Al-Din] [Saladin] Al-Ayubi. His advisors counselled him to rest from the Jihad during the month of fasting, but Saladin insisted on continuing the Jihad during Ramadan ... Saladin replied to his advisors, "Life is short." Allah learned of [Saladin's] loyalty and the loyalty of his soldiers, and gave them a decisive victory.¹⁷¹

Saladin's errors at Acre and Tyre are mere footnotes in modern Islamic remembering of the Crusades.

Of course, chroniclers like ibn al-Athir or Baha' ad-Din could not hope to control the complex process of historical memory. Yet, precisely because Baha' ad-Din's representation of Saladin provided a powerful and unambiguous icon of independence and opposition to foreign domination, it has survived in Islamic remembering, especially in the case of Palestine.¹⁷² The commemoration of Saladin in Islamic memory provides a rallying point for individual Muslim memories to congregate and potentially mobilize their energies. Indeed, emotional attachment to the Saladin icon connects Saladin's medieval biographers and chroniclers to modern times with a powerful immediacy.

Saladin is venerated in the Levant, especially among the Palestinians, some of whom retain a messianic hope of seeing a second Saladin return to liberate Jerusalem. With his portrait hanging in some Palestin-

ian homes, the twelfth-century counter-Crusader remains a powerful historical inspiration for Palestinian nationalists and Islamists alike. In 2000, when the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat returned to the Gaza Strip after the breakdown of the Camp David peace talks, he was treated to a hero's welcome and feted as the "Palestinian Saladin" and the "Saladin of our era".¹⁷³ In addition, Palestinian militants and even more recently armed insurgents in post-Saddam Iraq have formed so-called Saladin brigades.

Beyond the Arab world, an eager hagiographer of Pakistan's founder Mohammed Ali-Jinnah compared the politician to Saladin, demonstrating his pan-Islamic appeal.¹⁷⁴ Even so-called Muslim moderates routinely invoke Saladin's memory and example. The former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed, in his speech to Islamic leaders in 2003 drew upon the collective Muslim memory of Saladin as the ideal Muslim hero:

We must not strengthen the enemy by pushing everyone into their camps through irresponsible and unIslamic acts. Remember Salah-ed-Din and the way he fought against the so-called Crusaders, King Richard of England in particular.¹⁷⁵

But, the gentlemanly conduct and advanced Islamic values of Saladin were already a cliché in his own times. In 1183, ibn Jubayr, the Andalusian travelling scholar, described a chaotic scene at the customs inspection point upon landing at Alexandria port. Operating in territory administered by Saladin, the overwhelmed customs officials ransacked the belongings of the newly disembarked visitors. Yet, ibn Jubayr has nothing but praise for Saladin:

There is no doubt that this is one of the matters concealed from the great Sultan known as Salah al-Din. If he heard of it, from what is related of his justice and leanings to pity, he would end it ... In the lands of this man, we found nothing bad that merits mention save this affair, which was provoked by the officials of the Customs.¹⁷⁶

And in his fourteenth-century account, "The Memoirs of a Syrian Prince" by Abu'l-Fida', Sultan of Hamah (1273–1331), it is the memory of Saladin that resonates more than those of his Zangid predecessors who

initiated the counter-Crusade. Describing the landmark re-conquest of Acre in 1291, Abu'l-Fida recounts:

By a strange coincidence the Franks had captured Acre, taking it from Salah al-Din at noon on Friday, 17 Jumada II 587 [12 July 1191] took the Muslims in it, and then killed them. God Almighty in his presence decreed that it should be conquered in this year on Friday, 17 Jumada II, at the hand of the sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf Salah ad-Din. So its conquest was like the day when the Franks took possession of it, and likewise the honorifics of the two sultans.¹⁷⁷

Abu'l-Fida overlooks the exploits of the Mameluke Sultan Baybars (1260–1277), who had helped repel the Mongols, and who began the offensive that ejected the Franks. Ibn Wasil, who served Baybars, chronicles his overlord's contribution to the counter-Crusade:

... later to become ruler of Egypt under the name al-Malik az-Zahir and to defeat the Mongols at 'Ain Jalut with the aid of al-Malik al-Muzaffar Qutuz; and once on the throne, to reconquer most of the Frankish domains, for example Safad, ash-Shafiq, Antioch and the Isma'elite territories, and to defeat the Mongols on several occasions.¹⁷⁸

Concluding his infamous tract, *Milestones*, the Islamist ideologue Sayyid Qutb named Turan Shah as one of two champions who smashed the Crusading offensive. Turan Shan was murdered by Baybars and his Mameluke officers. Qutb's other hero was, of course, none other than the Kurd from Tikrit better known as Saladin. Baybar's military victories were far more impressive than those of Saladin. No Muslim leader had managed to repel the Mongol conquest until the fierce Kipchak Turk put his mind to it. However, the ruthless and unsentimental Baybars comes across more as a powerful anti-hero in Muslim chronicles of the counter-Crusades. In this regard, the chronicler ibn Abd Az-Zahir, describing Baybar's victory at Antioch over Bohemond IV, records his gloating letter to the Crusader king:

You would have seen your Muslim enemy trampling on the place where you celebrate the mass, cutting the throats of monks,

priests and deacons upon the altars, bringing sudden death to the Patriarchs and slavery to the Royal Princes. You would have seen fire running through your palaces, your dead burned in this world before going down to the fires of the next ...¹⁷⁹

This graphic record of violence may have produced a chilling effect among Baybars' adversaries. However, despite his formidable military victories, which immortalized his name, the slave-general Baybars is not a model of emulation in Muslim collective memory. The *Sira of al-Zahir Baybars*, a folk story-cycle that developed between the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries, is loosely based on Baybars' life and times, and focuses on his imagined association with all kinds of low-life and a gallery of medieval circus freaks.¹⁸⁰ He is vaguely remembered as a great general, but certainly not a timeless hero like Saladin. Nabil Saleh, in his historical novel *Outremer*, published in 1998, features Baybars, the "mighty Mameluke Sultan" who is "cunning and ruthless". The London-based Lebanese writer portrays Baybars as a classic Machiavellian who put self-interest above the call of clan, culture or faith:

He was, however, too clever to be fanatically blind and lose sight of his immediate interest. He realized that he still needed the Franks, to be sure, not on his territory—but for their skills as merchants, endowed with an adventurous spirit that had taken them to distant countries over treacherous waters aboard unreliable boats. He needed their raw materials, so essential for his war effort ... Baybars contempt for the Franks knew no bounds; however, that did not prevent him from having a good relationship and a treaty with the Emperor of Constantinople, himself a Christian but of the Greek Orthodox faith, or from corresponding with Charles of Anjou, King of Naples and Sicily, and vigorously pursuing trade enterprises with Venice.

Baybars' soldierly exploits have just about survived the test of time. On the wall of the main entrance of the famed *Qal'at Al Hosn* (Crac Des Chevaliers) in Syria, perhaps one of the most impressive fort structures in the world, an inscription extols Baybars and his efforts to fortify the castle. Baybars has also endowed his name to streets in the Palestinian Territories and elsewhere, but otherwise he is merely one among a list

of larger champions of the counter-Crusades.¹⁸¹ The Israeli-Arab novelist, Emile Habiby, noted sardonically on Baybars' murder of his former mentor, "The Arabs certainly don't say, 'Et tu Baybars'; Qutuz, the sultan this hero Baybars murdered, could only, after all, mutter a grunt in Turkish."¹⁸² To quote Philip K. Hitti:

Salah-al-Din followed Nur-ad-Din as champion of the cause. Third in the series of anti-Crusading heroes, to which the Mamluk Baybars should be added. Salah was by all criteria the greatest. His superiority in peace and in war, as a man and as a hero, was acknowledged by friend and foe. The passage of time has dimmed the memory of several Moslem heroes; research has tarnished the names of others, but in Salah's case time and research have added honor to the memory and luster of his name.

In 1998, a London-based Islamic publishing house published an English language history book on the Crusades, *Muslim Heroes of the Crusades*.¹⁸³ Aimed primarily at the British Muslim youth market between the ages of 11 to 14, the publication stands out from the usual low-quality, propagandistic history sold at London's many *Salafi* bookstores prior to the 7 July 2005 attacks.¹⁸⁴ A narrative typical of the British *Salafi* view of the Crusades is contained in the website of Mission Islam (See Appendix). The *Salafi* group Mission Islam states that its objective, among others, is to "increase awareness as to the extent of oppression against Muslims throughout the world ..."¹⁸⁵ The website portrays the Crusades as part of the long war against Islam. It states that the "implicit political agenda" of the first Crusade launched by Pope Urban (sic) the Second was "to militarily attack the ever expanding Islamic State, due to fear and horror that Islam may eventually enter Europe. It had already reached the gates of Vienna and France, so the Church inevitably felt threatened." Never mind that the battle at the Gates of Vienna only took place 600 years later, there was hardly a unified Islamic state when Pope Urban II made his famous sermon at Clermont. A few lines later, the narrative contradicts itself when it explains that the Muslims lost Jerusalem because of deep divisions over the "Khliafah (sic) Islamic State". The narrative, which is designed to incite its readers to revile the "*kuffar*" (infidel) Crusaders, both old and new, concludes:

... so Muslims must wake up and take responsibility of (sic) their situation and educate themselves in Islam, so that they do not feel apologetic about the slander and crusade against Islam, but can stand up and defeat it, like Salah Ud-Din and his army did.

In contrast, the author of *Muslim Heroes of the Crusades*, of Pakistani descent, explains that she wrote the book because of a lack of good quality English language works for young Muslims on Islamic history. The more soberly written text offers a good example of how Crusading history is being reclaimed by *diaspora* Muslim communities in the West in a balanced way. Medieval Islamic role models are revived as modern heroes.¹⁸⁶ The writer declared: “Salahuddin (i.e. Saladin) and Nuruddin (i.e. Nur-ad-Din), names that inspired both fear and respect in the crusaders eyes and in Europe’s eyes even today. Salahuddin and Nuruddin are perhaps among the greatest Islamic heroes today.”¹⁸⁷ The reclaiming of Nur-ad-Din’s legacy is unusual, since it is usually Saladin who is exclusively lionized. In this regard, the publication returned to the tradition established by ibn al-Qalanisi, who portrayed Nur-ad-Din as a steadfast hero of the jihad, and ibn Al-Athir, who worshipped him. But, it is also telling that no other Muslim counter-Crusader is mentioned in “Muslim Heroes of the Crusades”.

Apart from efforts to bolster cultural identity or revive Islamic sentiment, Saladin has also been used as a marketing and branding tool by some Muslim countries. In May 2004, the Malaysian Government funded a 13-part animation series celebrating the exploits of Saladin. The initiative is part of its effort to promote its “Multimedia Supercorridor”, an initiative to make Malaysia a global information and communications technology (ICT) hub.¹⁸⁸ Combining futuristic hi-tech aspirations with claims of cultural authenticity, “Saladin – the Animated Series” gives young Muslims an alternative to the standard Western comic book (and now big screen) superheroes like Superman and Spiderman.

The popular Arab media has also transformed some marginal figures of the medieval chronicles into heroes that play a central role in expelling the Crusaders. In 1969, the Syrian government began a children’s magazine called “Osamah”.¹⁸⁹ Popular until the mid 1980s, the magazine ran comic strips on current events, political and historical themes and

personalities. One of “Osamah”’s regular strips, titled “Isa the swimmer”, drew from an incident at the 1190 siege of Acre during the Third Crusade. As recounted by the twelfth-century historian Baha’ ad-Din, it briefly describes the exploits of a “Muslim swimmer called Isa”¹⁹⁰ who carried messages to and from the besieged Acre. Baha’ ad-Din called the story of Isa a “strange and amazing”¹⁹¹ incident. Drowned on one of his missions, Isa’s body washed up on the shoreline, carrying messages and money meant for the Muslim troops. Baha’ ad-Din noted wryly that he was the only man “who has faithfully carried out his duties even after death”.¹⁹² But, in the “Osamah” series, “Isa the Swimmer” is credited with doing much more. The hero “sinks Crusader ships, meets Salah al-Din in Damascus, and dies as a martyr”.¹⁹³ The strip played on the ambiguity of Isa’s name (Arabic name for Jesus) and clearly portrayed him as a Christian with a cross tattooed on his forearm. In this regard, the Crusades were re-cast not as a war of religion but a pan-Arab struggle against imperialism. Thus, the Arab crusading hero could be portrayed as a non-Muslim too. By the end of the series, it is explained that Acre was finally re-taken, the Battle of Hattin won and Arab lands cleared of “occupiers”. The reference to the struggle against Israel is quite explicit.¹⁹⁴

In the wake of 11 September 2001, amid the rhetorical fury of Al Qaida’s discourse on Crusaderism, some militant ideologues have returned to the original Arab chronicles for lessons and inspiration. In a recent issue of the online training manual of Al Qaida, an anonymous author writes about anti-ship warfare and Molotov cocktails at the siege of Acre. His account was drawn from the medieval chronicle of ibn al-Athir who recounts how a young Damascene at Acre developed a fascination with *naptha*, an incendiary known also as Greek fire. At first, his fellow soldiers mock him, but soon his device begins to trouble the attacking galleys of Richard the Lionheart. The Al Qaida propagandist extols the memory of the young *mujahid* (combatant) from Damascus. An example of grit and innovation, he is a fighter who refuses to give up. The manual also drew tactical lessons about insurgency and asymmetrical warfare from the siege of Acre. It relates these to the *mujahideen*’s struggle against the Soviets in Afghanistan and even finds a connection with the preparation of Molotov cocktails used in contemporary *jihadi* combat.¹⁹⁵

CRUSADER CULTURE

In theory, our constantly shrinking world gives us greater opportunities to form sophisticated perceptions and understanding of other cultures. Paradoxically, our enduring stereotypes are still passed down from oral history and through collective memory. What were the Muslim stereotypes of the Franks during the Crusades? The chronicler Baha' ad-Din encapsulated the stereotypical medieval Muslim view of the Franks in describing a disguise adopted by Muslim sailors. The sailors had been despatched from Beirut to re-supply a besieged Acre, and needed a ruse to get past the Frankish blockade. Baha' ad-Din writes: "[a] number of Muslims boarded the buss in Beirut and dressed up as Franks, even shaving their beards. They also placed pigs on the deck, so that they could be seen from a distance, and flew crosses."¹⁹⁶ The description of the Frankish disguise provides us with a telling snapshot of what the Muslims saw as the essential attributes of the Franks. Clean-shaven, unturbanned, surrounded by pigs and flying the cross, the Muslim sailors were confident of getting past the Frankish blockade. Baha' ad-Din depicted with obvious pride how the Muslim sailors fooled the Franks into thinking they were on the same side.¹⁹⁷

But, the Muslim chroniclers struggled to get into the minds of the Franks and understand what made them tick. Tamim al-Barghouti, a young Palestinian academic and poet who studied closely the culture of the Crusades period, has highlighted Osama bin Munqidh's *Kitab al Itibar* (Book of Lessons and Examples) as a primer in social relations

between the Franks and Arabs.¹⁹⁸ Al-Barghouti has noted that the value of the account lies not so much in how it documents “European social life, but rather the documentation of the astonishment with which Arabs and Muslims received those habits”.¹⁹⁹ Al-Barghouti offers a close reading of bin Munqidh’s text to foreground the medieval writer’s own cultural assumptions. Bin Munqidh failed to understand how Frankish men allowed their wives to interact so closely, unsupervised, with other men. The chivalrous Syrian noted: “This is one of God’s wonders, they have no jealousy (*gheera*) yet look at their courage and fierceness at war; why else would men fight if not for their honor (*sharaf*)!”²⁰⁰ In his socio-linguistic analysis of the sentence, Barghouti helpfully pointed out that *gheera* does not denote exactly jealousy or a sense of possessiveness, as often translated, but refers to a man’s protectiveness of his wife. In bin Munqidh’s eleventh-century Islamic culture, the honour (*sharaf*) of a man was measured by the degree of his protectiveness of his wife and the women in his family. It is this protectiveness that motivated the man to fight. Munqidh could not reconcile the fighting zeal of the Frank and his permissiveness towards his footloose and unveiled wife.

Moreover, for Baha’ ad-Din and some other Muslim chroniclers of the Crusades period, the Frankish custom of seafaring was considered an insane and near-suicidal practice. Indeed, in some schools of *fiqh*, or Islamic jurisprudence, the sailor’s evidence was considered null and void. He was considered barmy in the first instance by mere dint of his profession. Muslim accounts of the period evinced a clear bias against seafaring. Baha’ ad-Din recounted a trip he made along the coast with Saladin en route to Acre. They travelled in stormy weather and were rocked by turbulent waves. Unperturbed, Saladin confided to Baha’ ad-Din that his plan after removing the Franks from the coastal settlements was to sail to their islands and convert or kill all of them. One historian has pointed out that Saladin “was the first Muslim leader of the Counter-crusade to tackle the sea”²⁰¹ and indeed also the “last medieval ruler of Egypt to try to revive its naval power”.²⁰² But, Saladin’s plan to personally lead this naval counter crusade is greeted with horror by his faithful scribe. Baha’ ad-Din claims to have told him: “This is surely an excellent purpose, but let our lord dispatch troops by sea. He is the bastion and bulwark of

Islam and it is not right that he should risk his person.”²⁰³ Baha’ ad-Din distinguished between sensible Muslim kingship and suicidal Frankish leadership. He drew the line where sand meets sea.

Describing the conversation between the captured Crusader King Louis IX and his Arab gaoler, the chronicler ibn Wasil mentioned the gaoler’s puzzled question to the French King: “How did your Majesty ever conceive the idea, a man of your character and wisdom and good sense, of going on board ship and riding the back of this sea and coming to a land so full of Muslims and soldiers ...?”²⁰⁴ According to ibn Wasil, Louis IX laughed but did not reply. The gaoler explained to him that a sailor’s testimony was not accepted in Islamic courts as he was not considered of sound mind. King Louis IX laughingly agreed that this was a wise ruling. Some may find it hard to believe that the hard-line Louis IX would have agreed with such a Muslim ruling, let alone any. More to the point, the story discloses the mixed Arab attitude towards the Franks,²⁰⁵ which combined elements of awe and admiration, revulsion and puzzlement. This conflicted view endures to the present.

THE BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MEMORIES

As I have tried to show in earlier chapters, some of the medieval Muslim chroniclers, historians and men of letters had a remarkably nuanced view of their adversary. More so than we would expect or even see reflected today in modern memories of the Crusades. Much of the deliberate contemporary simplification of the history and meaning of the Crusades has distorted the historical richness and reality of the period and its outlook. The most extreme statements locate the conflict even further back than the Crusades. For example, in a reading of history inspired possibly by the historicism of the Qur'an and its references to the *Rum* (Byzantines), or perhaps Gibbon's *Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, the Crusaders are portrayed as a manifestation of a Roman empire that recurs throughout history. This is the view of the imprisoned leader of the Egyptian Islamist group Gam'ia Islamiyya, Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman:

Confrontation between Crusaders and Islam is an old one. In the early years of Islam there were two super Empires, the Persian and the Roman. It took only a few battles, ending with Al Qadeseya, to demolish the Persian Empire for good. The Roman Empire, however, had many strands across the centuries. When one strand is destroyed, another strand comes in another century, as illustrated in the Hadith of Allah's Messenger. The centuries are successive. The Roman Empire means the international Crusade and the international Zionism. War with the Crusades is ongoing until the Day of Judgement.²⁰⁶

But, the attacks and the events following 11 September 2001 helped radical Islamist elements and more generally the anti neo-imperialist brigades of all political and religious stripes to prove that the war between the Crusading West and Islam was still a living conflict. U.S. President George W. Bush's ostensibly offhand remark on 16 September 2001 that "this crusade, this war on terrorism, is going to take a while"²⁰⁷ appeared to renew the ancient hatreds of Crusading history. In a subtle jibe, the British historian Christopher Tyerman claims that both George W. Bush and Osama bin Laden are co-heirs of the nineteenth-century "European construct" of the French historian Joseph Francois Michaud.²⁰⁸ Indeed, while some may have wrung their hands at Bush's remarks, extremists and even some relative moderates leapt to the occasion, almost on cue. Osama bin Laden's number two, Ayman al-Zawahiri, described in his December 2001 autobiography how "he hopes to spend whatever is left of his life in serving the cause of Islam in its ferocious war against the tyrants of the new Crusade".²⁰⁹

Islamist rage has cynically exploited Bush's remarks. Montasser al-Zayat, an Egyptian Islamist lawyer, who fell out with his former associate al-Zawahiri and now claims "moderate Islamist" status, nevertheless shares al-Zawahiri's views on Crusaderism. In his critical biography of al-Zawahiri, he writes: "It is ... hard to believe that George Bush's use of the word 'crusade' regarding the American war on Afghanistan was merely a slip of the tongue. The word revealed his deeper intentions, and revealed that the war that was in the works was indeed a crusade."²¹⁰ Al-Zawahiri even ascribed these words to British Prime Minister Tony Blair as he lamented how the fragmented *ummah* is threatened by a "ruthless crusade".²¹¹

In the so-called Arab street, in the run-up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, a Palestinian National Authority preacher told a congregation in a Gaza mosque in March 2003: "This is a Zionist Crusader war. It is not I who say this, it was the little Pharaoh [Bush] who announced it when he stated that this was a Crusader attack ..."²¹² And at about the same time, Al Qaida leader Osama bin Laden assessed the significance of 9/11 thus:

One of the most important positive results of the raids on New York and Washington was the revelation of the truth regard-

ing the conflict between the Crusaders and the Muslims. [The raids] revealed the strength of the hatred which the Crusaders feel towards us ...²¹³

In his October 2001 Al Jazeera interview with Tayseer Allouni, referred to earlier, bin Laden noted that Bush had said “Crusade attack” with “his own tongue”. According to Allouni, bin Laden pronounced “Crusade attack” in English and expressed his outrage that “when Bush speaks, people make apologies for him and they say that he didn’t mean that this war is a Crusade, even though he said himself that it was a Crusade”.²¹⁴ Following the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, bin Laden spoke about the occupation of Baghdad as a threat to the entire *ummah* and drew from the history of the Crusades to defend it:

The Zionist-Crusader campaign on the nation today is the most dangerous and rabid ever since it threatens the entire nation, its religion, and presence. Did Bush not say that it is a Crusader war? Did he not say that the war will continue for many years and target 60 states ... as to how to resist these enemy forces from outside, we must look at the previous Crusader wars against our countries to learn lessons that will help us confront this onslaught, understand the most important causes of these attacks, and learn how they were repulsed and resisted.²¹⁵

Bin Laden’s appeal to history echoed the efforts of his non-Islamist, secular and nationalist predecessors. For nationalist Arab historians and Baathist politicians, as the case of Saddam Hussein demonstrates, the didactic value of the Crusades is considered critical for raising national consciousness and building Arab solidarity.²¹⁶ Commenting in 1981 on the Arab-Israeli conflict, then Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria rejected criticism that the Arabs had yet to score any decisive victories:

We view the matter from the perspective of the future of the nation and not that of the next few hours, months or years in which we shall live ... What I am saying here is not new. I am just reviewing some facts in our history. Let us go back to the Crusaders’ invasion. Although they fought us for 200 years, we did not surrender or capitulate. They, too, were a big power and had scored victories, while we had been defeated. After 200

years, however, we triumphed. Why are we now expected either to score a decisive victory in approximately thirty years or to completely surrender?²¹⁷

The memory of the Crusades has inspired some indulgence in historical numerology. A British-based Palestinian academic predicted in 1999 that the Zionist enterprise would last just 88 years, like the Crusader invasion. His view of the Crusades was limited to the conquest and recapture of Jerusalem. He begins the countdown, noting the similarities between the Crusades and Zionism. Both use religion to mask secular motives and capitalize on Muslim weakness, but he notes also the similarity of response:

In some ways, the 12th century awakening resembles today's Islamic awakening. In some other ways, the liberation of Jerusalem after 88 years of European occupation promises an imminent end to modern-day Zionist occupation of the first *Qiblah* [direction of prayer—i.e. Jerusalem]. In less than 40 years from now, this vision may just prove to be true.²¹⁸

From its obvious reverberation in the Levant and Egypt, the idea of the new Crusades fanned out across the *ummah*, to lands left relatively untouched by the Franks. Martin Kramer has argued that “Qutb’s idea of ‘Crusaderism’ had worked particularly well in Egypt and the Levant, where the legacy of the Crusades could be resurrected from the depths of collective Muslim memory, but it did not speak to the people of Iran”. He argues that Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader the Islamic Revolution in 1979, had used the label “The Great Satan” to get his point across about the U.S.²¹⁹ However, the notion of the new Crusades appears to have gained new adherents because of its compensatory teleology, that is, its prediction of Muslim victory based on the desired historical outcome. Of course, this is illogical and magical thinking, but it has totemic, rhetorical value. A recent Iranian newspaper editorial looked beyond the 54-year Israeli occupation of Palestine, and recalled the final ejection of the Crusaders from Muslim lands, highlighting, of course, the role played by Turks, Kurds and Persians:

Fifty-four years is a long period, although still short when

compared to the 88-year occupation of Bait Al-Maqdis by the Crusaders who were eventually driven out to Europe by a united and spirited Muslim attack that involved Arabs, Turks, Kurds and Persians ... The Muslim Ummah can achieve this victory once again if only they close ranks and stop worrying that their unity would irk the U.S.²²⁰

As has been pointed out, this structural history of the Crusades becomes a crucible of lessons and an inspiration to generate solidarity, hope and compensation for the failures of the present. What is unusual is its airing by an organ of the Shi'ites, whose collective memory of suffering at the hands of Sunnis exerts a far more vivid and powerful grip on the imagination. This, to some extent, confirms the spread and tenacity of the Crusaderism myth.

In the Levant, the primary theatre of the Eastern Crusades is still marked by the physical leftovers of Crusades castles. We can see the extreme poles of modern Islamic remembering of the Crusades. On one hand, there is the usual recycling of simplistic and ideological views of the Crusades. For example, a May 2000 edition of "The Opposite Direction", the popular political talk show on Al Jazeera, featured the leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. At issue in the studio discussion was the choice between continuing armed struggle against Israel or trusting in U.S. diplomacy. Confronted by this choice, he resorted to the ancient hatreds theme. Echoing the Hamas Charter, the leader of Islamic Jihad declared: "... This conflict erupted before the beginning of the twentieth century and it continues. This was [demonstrated] by [the British] General Allenby who, when the British forces entered Jerusalem [in WW1], stood in front of its walls and declared: 'Today the Crusades have come to an end.'²²¹ Through 2002 and 2003, as the second Intifada waned and with the build-up to the invasion of March 2003 in Iraq, a common theme in Palestinian Authority sermons was that the U.S. had launched a Crusader war against the Arabs.²²²

But, there exists, on the other hand, a more textured remembering of the Crusades period. In her 1998 novel, *Harith al-Miyah* (Tiller of the Waves), the Paris-based Lebanese writer Hoda Barakat describes the multi-layered recollections of a textile merchant, Niquila Mitri, in Beirut.

His hallucinating imagination amid the contemporary devastation of Beirut is interwoven with memories of the past disasters that befell the city, including the Frankish invasions, Venetian bombardment, internal wars and Druze-Christian feuds. These are drawn from stories related by his father as passed down from his grandfather:

[Beirut] was laid siege by Baldwin, king of the Franks in the age of Sa'd al-Dawla al-Tawashi, who had ripped out its paving-stones, fearing the astronomers' warning that his steed would stumble and he would die ... whatever the sieges of Baldwin and the Egyptian navy had left behind was plundered. Salah al-Din had its vines cut down, and its olive trees too. Its monuments were destroyed.²²³

Niqula is shocked by the wanton destruction visited on Beirut by both sides. His father tells him not to fret as these were distant events. Niqla's father continues:

... the Franks maintained control (of Beirut) until the advent of Sunqur the Brave, leader of the armies of al-Malik al-Ashraf Khalil, son of Qalawun. Those armies laid it waste once again—or rather, they ruined whatever stood still—by hurling incendiary lime upon it.²²⁴

Niqula cannot comprehend why Beirut must suffer such a catalogue of destruction. His grandfather's fatalistic explanation is that this is the lot of a city created under an unlucky star. In Barakat's account, Saladin is not a superhero of the Muslim counter-Crusade but merely an uprooter of Beirut's trees and infrastructure. He is almost on par with a relatively obscure Muslim general who destroyed its paving stones to cheat destiny. And while the conquering Mameluke armies may have defeated the Franks, this is not celebrated as a Muslim victory since they destroyed the city in the process.

Barakat's vision of the period of the medieval crusades is one of a series of destructive events involving military leaders from different factions in different wars. Religion, solidarity or territorial expansion are not key factors. No moral or lesson is drawn that equates Western imperialism or globalization with the Crusades. Instead, Barakat's humane

and apolitical vision catalogues the facts of destruction and pleads for a sense of preservation over the urge to destroy. In telling the story of the Crusades as one thread in the tapestry of destruction visited upon Beirut, Barakat returns to the tradition established by the first Muslim historian of the Crusades period, ibn al-Qalanisi, in his *Chronicle of Damascus*.

An intriguing French-Syrian musical collaboration, known as the Al-Kindi ensemble, has also memorialized the works of several Crusades-era chroniclers. The unique musical project revives the poetic works of the Syrians, Osama bin Munqidh and ibn Al-Qaysarani, as well as the Baghdadi Abou Al-Mouzaffar Al-Abiouardi. Al-Kindi's *Les Croisades sous les regard de L'Orient* ("The Crusades seen through the eyes of the Orient"), ostensibly inspired by Amin Malouf's work, uses the *qasida* form (classical poetry) combined with the traditional classical music form known as *wasla* (suite) alternating vocal and instrumental pieces. The haunting chants of the Syrian singer Omar Sarmini re-create the Levant of the Crusades period, breathing fresh life into the compositions of Osama bin Munqidh and his contemporaries.

Also finding a deep connection with the oral traditions of the Crusades period is the Palestinian poet Tamim al-Barghouti. Unlike Barakat or the Al-Kindi ensemble, al-Barghouti relates these traditions more directly to contemporary events. Al-Barghouti insists that "for a politician, university professor, news reporter or tourist to understand the Levant, he or she must know something of the Crusades".²²⁵ While he admits that the Crusades are "a metaphor used to describe, judge and even distort the present",²²⁶ Al-Barghouti has also asserted that the "war in Iraq is the new link to the Crusades and colonial domination of the Arab world".²²⁷ To make his point, Al-Barghouti draws from folk-tales and anecdotes of the Crusades period.

Writing about an American foray in mid 2004 into the Shi'ite holy city of Najaf in Iraq, Tamim al-Barghouti recalled a folk-tale about an Arab and Frankish fisherman in the costal town of Acre in the early days of the Crusades. Their fishing lines get tangled. A quarrel ensues. The Muslim fisherman realizes he must concede. After all, the Crusaders outnumber the Arabs in Levantine Acre. So he makes a deal with the Frank. Each will beat the other with a stick. The last man standing wins the fish. The

hardy Frank agrees, receives his beating without complaint and proceeds to return the favour. But, the Arab fisherman does not live up to his end of the bargain. He discards his stick and walks away in disgust. He does not like fish after all, he tells the Frank, and invites the startled European to keep his catch.²²⁸ Barghouti recounts this and other folk stories from the Crusades period. His point is that invaders of the Levant and other Muslim lands can never claim a conclusive victory: “Whatever victory the Americans claim in Najaf is like the fish the Frank took from the Arab; the Frank can celebrate the fish as much as he wants but the sea speaks Arabic.”

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The notion of the West's offensive against the Islamic world, seen as a physical and ideological assault (*al-ghazwa al-fikri*), finds powerful expression in the notion of a recurring Crusade against Islam. In this view, the clash of civilizations is an ineluctable geopolitical reality. As the U.S.-occupation of Iraq developed into a grim quagmire, the global public perceived a replayed historical conflict between Islam, on the one hand, and the Christian West and non-Muslim rest. For Al Qaida propagandists, the situation serves as a God-given rallying call for a worldwide Muslim uprising. The Iraq invasion has given Islamists fuel for their rage. For example, the British Islamist documentary producers, Green 72 Media recently produced "21st Century Crusaders: A War on Muslims in Iraq and Palestine."²²⁹ The producers state that their aim is to expose "America's 'War on Terror' as a front for its Crusade against Islam". Of concern is how some otherwise mainstream voices in the Muslim world, in the context of the global war on terrorism, have begun to embrace the fundamentalist narrative of blame and hatred that traces its roots to the medieval Crusades.

To cite a recent example, Ibrahim Nafi, editor of the moderate Egyptian government daily *Al-Ahram*, labelled the "latter-day crusades" of the U.S. as the "true terrorism of today". In a reading that pulsates with the discourse of Qutb and bin Laden, Nafi explains the source of global conflict in this way: "Hatred is manufactured in the West. It sprouted during the Crusades, matured during the colonialist invasion, and flourished with the drive to Americanize the world. Hatred is the engine driving

domination and hegemony and it is the tool used to denigrate Muslims in order to facilitate this quest.”²³⁰ Nafi’s aggrieved lament collapses chronology and geography. He equates the Crusades with what he sees as contemporary Western outrages, projecting a raw resonance as if history were a contemporary news headline on the latest Israeli incursion in the occupied territories. Other ostensibly mainstream writers whose works are widely available in bookstores across the Arab world share a similar worldview, declaring that the effort by Arab Christian writers to distinguish between the “Frankish wars” (*Hurub Al-Franja*) and the “Crusades” (*Hurub Salibiyya*) is an effort to distort history.²³¹

In Muslim Southeast Asia, a similar perspective has also begun to emerge in mainstream intellectual discourse. For example, in his wide-ranging and well-referenced study entitled *Wajah Peradaban Barat: Dari Hegemoni Kristen Ke Dominasi Sekular-Liberal* (The Facade of Western Civilisation: From Christian Hegemony to Secular-Liberal Domination),²³² the young Indonesian scholar Adian Husain warns against the blind embrace of Western culture. With the basic thesis that the (Christian) West is the ideological other of the Muslim world, he carefully examines Western historical source material on the Crusades, including the accounts of Fulcher of Chartres, the *Geste Francorum* as well as the *Chanson de Roland*.²³³ Exploring how the West built up certain myths and symbols about Muslims, Husain points out how the Crusades (*Perang Salib*) left behind two paradoxical aspects in the collective memory of the West. The West had, on one hand, succeeded in mobilizing its strength to defeat Islam. Yet, it eventually experienced defeat at the hands of Saladin.²³⁴ According to Husain:

These traumatic historical aspects among the Western Christian societies were then exploited superbly and ingeniously by neo-conservative (sic) scholars like Huntington and Bernard Lewis to legitimize the political interests of Western countries, in particular the U.S. As we talk about the Crusades, even in the 21st century, the influence of the Crusades can still be felt. When President George W Bush urged a Crusade against terrorism, after September 11, Bush was not experiencing a slip of the tongue. As a born again Christian, and looking up to Jesus

as the ideal philosopher, Bush was expressing his subconscious thought that the spirit of the Crusades is currently needed to gather the West's strength.²³⁵

Husain's book received an endorsement from the spiritual guide of the Indonesian terror group Jemaah Islamiyah, Abu Bakar Bashir, who told researchers during an interview in a Jakarta prison: "You should read a book, 'The Face of Western Civilisation' by Adian Husaini. It's a good book, a thick one. The conclusion of the book is that Western scholars hold an anti-Islamic doctrine. It is true that there will be a clash of civilizations." Husain's work has found resonance not only among extremists. It has also found favour among so-called moderates who are concerned that Islam faces a mortal threat from the onslaught of secular-liberal values viewed as a Trojan Horse for Western Christian domination.

In his iconic and controversial *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*, Harvard Professor Samuel Huntington concluded that "(r)elations between groups from different civilizations ... will be almost never close, usually cool and often hostile ... (h)opes for close intercivilizational 'partnership' ... will not be realized."²³⁶ In Huntington's perspective, different cultures and civilizations are predisposed towards clash, not dialogue.²³⁷ Huntington also believes that it "is human to hate. For self-definition and motivation people need enemies."²³⁸

In this regard, while taking certain liberties of interpretation, Adian Husain's own reading of Huntington is instructive: "The spirit of the Crusades is needed, according to Huntington, for self-definition and to build up motivation, the human race needs rivals and enemies."²³⁹ This Manichean view of the world is a dangerous ideology of despair. It implies the need for a cynical accumulation of overwhelming force to maintain dominance and order.

In the struggle of ideas against violent Islamist extremism, a concerted effort is required to challenge the "norming" of the perception of an inevitable clash of civilizations, not only in Muslim worldviews, but in global consciousness. Otherwise, it not only becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy but offers little space for imagining a different reality. Instead, it becomes a paralysing form of cultural determinism. This plays into the hands of those who advance and support the clash of civilizations thesis and who refuse to acknowledge the perspective of the other side,

fearing contamination. Indeed, anxious about the beguiling influence of other cultures, the fundamentalist outlook completely rejects reconciliation with the opposing side. Psychologically, it is far easier to adopt a fundamentalist stance than it is to tolerate and to accommodate the other point of view. Such a perspective finds greater traction in a time of perpetual crisis. It thrives also in an atmosphere of fear that prompts the average citizen to tilt rightwards in his political views. Against such a backdrop where hard concepts of security are prized over soft notions of cultural understanding, it is insufficient and perhaps even unrealistic to champion civilizational dialogue.

To help correct the drift towards civilizational clash, it is necessary, first of all, to lower the geopolitical temperature before building trust between societies and faiths. In this regard, the media and, more importantly, media regulators have a key role to play to ensure responsible and temperate reporting on issues. The Danish cartoon controversy, which began after offensive cartoons of the Prophet Muhammed were published in a Danish newspaper in September 2005, clearly highlights this issue. Indignation reverberated across the Muslim world. There were violent protests in Syria and Iran, and also in Indonesia, Afghanistan and Nigeria, with some turning deadly. While some Western press prostrated themselves before the altar of human rights, some Arab governments and some pan-Arab media played a role in fuelling the crisis, competing to sway pan-Muslim sentiment especially once the value for political mobilization became clear. The controversy in September 2006 over the Pope's remarks on Islam further fuelled this antagonism.

In this context, the so-called dialogue of civilizations or interfaith dialogue may seem to some as a fig-leaf that barely conceals the harsh realities of our Hobbesian international order. Without doubt, dialogue is important but it should never be assumed that dialogue alone can dissolve differences on matters of creed, faith and existence. Whether we are Hobbesians or Havelians is a question of philosophical outlook. The more immediate task at hand is to identify and to develop effective means of practical and functional cooperation to isolate, expose and debunk extremism in all its forms. The collective responsibility for all states and societies is to oppose the warped vision of violent extremism. History and recent experience

clearly show that Islam does not have a monopoly on religiously inspired violence, or a greater propensity towards conflict. Nor does Islam own the logic of destruction to the exclusion of other faiths or beliefs. A zero-sum view of the world is not unique to any single faith or region. Fundamentalists are gathered behind every flag and faith. The ideological struggle against violent extremism must therefore be fought not only by Muslims; it can only be waged and won by a wider moderate front.

In essence, the struggle for the soul of Islam is not merely a theological battle that pits moderates against extremists. The simplistic polarization of extremists versus moderates is a convenient sound bite that overlooks three key dimensions.

First, it glosses over the complexity and heterogeneity of Muslim belief. Moderate Islamism is perhaps more virulent than conservative or traditional Islam. What have quietist Sufis to do with jihadi ideologues? A lot or nothing at all, depending on your interpretation. Can enlightenment classifications overcome the messy, living and dynamic realities of Islam? A recent Rand report²⁴⁰ neatly divides the entire Muslim world into four classes of fundamentalists, traditionalists, modernists and secularists, while proposing the new “religion-building” of Islam in the image of Christianity. The imbroglio in Iraq shows the task is not quite as simple.

Second, it ignores the political mobilization of faith for political or geostrategic reasons. In 2004, a former senior advisor to President Bill Clinton revealed that the serving deputy undersecretary of defense for intelligence had appeared regularly at evangelical revivals in the U.S. “preaching that the U.S. was in a holy war as a ‘Christian nation’ battling ‘Satan’.”²⁴¹ Without doubt, illogical or magical thinking cuts across the cultural, national and religious spectrum.

Third, it also fails to take into account the sentiments of a vast majority of Muslims who profess faith as a personal matter. Paradoxically, compelling these Muslims to speak out against extremists willy nilly politicizes their approach to the faith. Political Islam may be in the midst of a civil war between political Shiism and political Sunnism but does this amount to a faith-wide *fitna*? Some claim that the civil war has been going on for 1,400 years, since the assassination of the fourth Caliph Ali that split the faith into two broad camps. Yet, sectarianism has not been a constant factor in modern history.

Instead, it waxes and wanes according to larger geopolitical forces. If it is taken as an article of faith that moderate Muslims can and should expose and flush out extremists, then we overlook the important part played by non-religious factors such as culture and history in fuelling extremist ideology.

To emphasize the practical futility of dividing Islam between moderates and extremists, it may be helpful to contrast the two views as they relate to the remembrance of the Crusades. Can we simply say that extremists tout a “conflictual” memory of the Crusades instead of a “dialogic” remembrance? But, can we really nurture a “moderate” view in abstraction from the real world of policy and action. Does the resonance and diffusion of the Crusades in Islamic remembering exist in a vacuum? Are ideas not inextricably tied to actions? May specific policies not reinforce certain idea or offer free passes to dangerous propagandising and deepen historical grievances? At the same time, in the Islamic imagination in particular, which encompasses both the culture and faith of Islam, does not symbol and history run deep, nourished by the discourse and practice of the faith?

By now, it should be quite clear that the notion of the Crusades as a recurring ideological and physical invasion of the *Dar-ul Islam* (the Abode of Islam), particularly in the majority Sunni world, merely promotes a permanent and debilitating sense of victim-hood that fuels violent reprisal. Against this trend, it is a worthwhile task for historians and opinion-shapers in the Muslim world to develop a deeper understanding of the historical forces at play during the Crusades. In this regard, the figure of Osama bin Munqidh offers an important corrective to the ideas popularized by ideologues like Osama bin Laden. As the Syrian historical novelist Myriam Antaki notes:

If we are to give any sort of precise account of this 12th century of our era, we cannot leave aside the oriental point of view, expressed by a Prince of Syria, Osama bin Munqidh ... (t)his exceptional personality entered history armed with a dagger and a stylus. At the end of his long life, the patriarch of a whole epoch, he tells us his life story in a prose poem. The elements are so vast that they blend into the course of events and history, the story is both a testimony, an act of writing, far-reaching personal memoirs. Memories, visions experienced or dreamed, often defiled ... (a) prince and a man of honour, it is he who tells the story—in an ori-

ental fantasy-like tale, with no partiality—of the Crusades behind the scenes, as seen through the eyes of the Orient.²⁴²

Education, which includes a deeper dialogue on history, is a concrete part of the battle of hearts and memories in the struggle against violent extremism. For a start, school curriculum designers in the Muslim world and beyond should review textbooks and educational material that deal with the collisions between Islam and the West. It is important to develop a deeper and more textured understanding of historical events like the Crusades. In the clash over historical perspectives, an accent should be placed on finding concrete examples of positive cooperation instead of merely highlighting instances of conflict. History does not follow the nightly news model of destruction, disaster and bad tidings. Textbooks and public discussions should also highlight positive interaction and cooperation between individuals, societies and cultures, even in times of apparent conflict. But, at the same time, negative examples should not be whitewashed. Effective dialogue for enhanced inter-cultural awareness must be built on a true understanding of the reasons for the difficulties and misunderstandings of the past. Beyond the Muslim world, promoting a better understanding of the period may offer the scaffolding for an informed dialogue between the West and the Muslim world. As the poster conflict of civilizational clash, the history of the Crusades is an ideal subject for the foregrounding of such dialogue. In the final analysis, civilizations are not monoliths pitting different cultures in mutually antagonistic postures but a shifting landscape of units that cooperate or clash according to a logic of self-preservation. As Samuel, the Jewish physician in Nabil Saleh's novel *Outremer*, tells Aimeric, the young Cathar apprentice newly arrived to the Crusader kingdoms:

I assume you haven't been here long enough. Soon you will become familiar with local behaviour and will realize that friends and enemies alternate according to circumstances which change swiftly and frequently. Enemies of today are allies tomorrow against a common foe. That is the way it is here.²⁴³

This is a reality that Osama bin Munqidh embraced, and which Osama bin Laden cannot and is unlikely to ever acknowledge.

Notes

1. As recounted in Emmanuel Sivan, *Mythes Politiques Arabes*, Paris, 1988, pp. 23–24.
2. Youssef Chahine, who received the Cannes Film Festival Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997, is a Christian who jointly produced many of his later films with French companies. His detractors have accused Chahine of being too Western, secular, and bourgeois to speak to the Egyptian masses. But “Saladin” features a screenplay by the acclaimed Nobel Prize laureate Naguib Mahfouz.
3. Cited in Efraim Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism*, 2006, p. 134.
4. A graduate of the Egyptian Military Academy, Mazhar was also a colleague of Gamal Abdul Nasser.
5. Sivan, p. 24. My translation from the original French.
6. Ibrahim Fawal, *Youssef Chahine*, BFI London, 2001, p. 160.
7. The Crusader, however, is a ex-post-facto designation of subsequent history. Medieval Arabs simply called them *al-Ifrandj*, that is, the Franks from about the later twelfth century, when it dawned on them that these invaders, the Western Christians, were not quite the same as their Eastern brethren, the Byzantine invaders.
8. Islamic civilization and culture is of course a mosaic and not a monolith. Moreover, Islamic culture spans the various religions that fall under its civilization shadow, although the faith of Muslims plays a defining role within this complex culture. Thus, Islamic remembering encompasses Muslim remembrance and Arab collective memories.
9. See Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism*, p. 134.
10. Of course, Islamist manipulation of history is not unique. Such manipulation is widespread in many societies.
11. Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism*, p. 133.
12. What is unique in the case of Muslim remembrance is that the religious and cultural aspects of the past are not merely studied, but consciously emulated and may even inspire contemporary practice. This is especially true in the case of the reformist movements who draw from a static and reified construction of the past. Structurally, this leaves open the door for manipulating collective memory or distorting history to mobilize energies in the name of certain political objectives.

13. Patrick H. Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory*, Vermont, 1993, p. 6.
14. Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, translated by Steven Randall and Elizabeth Claman, New York, 1992, p. 95.
15. Ibid.
16. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, Chicago, 1992, p. 40.
17. See Lewis A. Coser's illuminating introduction to Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, Chicago, 1992.
18. *Cadres sociaux* in Halbwachs' formulation.
19. Ibid., p. 52.
20. Ibid., p. 43.
21. Ibid.
22. Christopher Tyerman in his *Fighting for Christendom, Holy War and the Crusades*, Oxford, 2004, has produced an admirably succinct essay on Western historiography of the Crusades. See also Jonathan Riley-Smith's essay, from *Crusades*, Volume 2, 2003, edited by Benjamin Z. Kedar and Jonathan S.C. Riley-Smith with Helen J. Nicholson, Aldershot.
23. See Emmanuel Sivan, "Modern Arab Historiography of the Crusades", *Asian and African Studies* 8, 1972.
24. Malouf is a French-based Maronite Christian intellectual with an impressive command of the sweep of Islamic history.
25. Amin Malouf, *The Crusades through Arab Eyes*, London, 1984.
26. Muhammad Jalal Kishk, *Al Marksiyah Wa al Ghazw al Fikri* (Marxism and Cultural Invasion), Cairo, 1964, p. 41.
27. Accessed at Majelis Mujahideen Indonesia (MMI) website, majelis.mujahidin.or.id/new/kolom/hadist_shaikh/perang_salib_baru/
28. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938), father of modern Turkey, was the founder of the Turkish Republic and its first President. Out of ruins of the Ottoman Empire, he created the modern nation-state of Turkey. Encouraging extreme nationalism, he inaugurated a conscious programme of secularization and modernization, from the mid 1920s.
29. A sophisticated and historically aware Indonesian reading of the Crusades is outlined by the young Islamic scholar Adian Husain, in his "Wajah Peradaban Barat: Dari Hegemoni Kristen Ke Dominasi Sekular-Liberal" (The Facade of Western Civilization: From Christian Hegemony to Secular-Liberal Domination), foreword by Prof Dr Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, Jakarta, 2005.
30. Anshori's thumbnail view of history seems to be inspired by the pronouncements of Al Qaida leader Osama bin Laden.

31. Madeleine Bunting, "Friendly Fire", *Guardian*, 29 October 2005.
32. As carried live on Qatar TV at 9.04 a.m. on 12 May, a sermon from Umar ibn-al-Khattab Mosque in Doha with text from BBC Monitoring Service, 14 May 2005.
33. Among other degrees, Sheikh Sultan holds a PhD with distinction in History from Britain's Exeter University.
34. See www.jaihoon.com/watan/indarbsultanplay.htm
35. Tayseer Allouni, "Unreleased Interview with Usama bin Laden", 21 October 2001, available at www.religioscope.com/info/doc/jihad/ubl_int/4.htm
36. The "Clash of Civilizations" thesis was put forward by Harvard academic Samuel Huntington in his infamous 1993 article for *Foreign Affairs* and later expanded to book form. In the article, he asked whether conflicts between civilizations, specifically the West and Islam, would dominate the future of global politics, hitherto dominated by a clash of ideologies between capitalism and communism.
37. Allouni, 2001.
38. See Osama bin Munqidh (1095–1188). *Memoirs of an Arab-Syrian gentleman; or, An Arab knight in the Crusades: memoirs of Usamah ibn-Munqidh (Kitab al-I'tibar)*. Translated from the manuscript by Philip K. Hitti. New York, 2000, Introduction, p. 9. One modern Arab biography of Osama bin Munqidh portrays him as "A Hero in the Age of the Crusades".
39. For instance, describing the high position enjoyed by Frankish knights, he is struck by the authority of their judgments. He learns this when he brings a case before them involving some of his livestock. After the ruling is made in his favour, he notes approvingly: "Such a judgment, after having been pronounced by the knights, not even the king nor any of the chieftains of the Franks can alter or revoke." But, Osama also recounts another case where a duel is used to settle a dispute between two Franks, an old man and a blacksmith. Here, he is less impressed by the brutal and primitive nature of this trial by ordeal. The old man is bludgeoned to death and dragged away. He concludes by describing the rough and simple justice of the outcome: "The lord who brought the smith now came, gave the smith his own mantle, made him mount the horse behind him and rode off with him. This case illustrates the kind of jurisprudence and legal decisions the Franks have." (*ibid.*, p. 168).
40. William Dalrymple, *In Xanadu – A Quest*, Melbourne, 2000, p. 53.
41. Jamal Mahjoub, *Travelling with Djinn*s, London, 2003, p. 58.
42. Bruce Anthony, *The Last Crusade – The Palestine Campaign in the First World War*, London, 2002.

43. This was particularly true after a failed *sepoy* mutiny in the Far East in 1915. The Singapore Mutiny in 1915 was instigated in part by German and Ottoman propaganda that tried to solidify a sense of Islamic solidarity among Muslims serving in the British army. Interestingly, German propagandists even portrayed Kaiser Wilhem as a staunch Muslim.
44. *Source Records of the Great War, Vol. V*, Charles F. Horne (Ed.), *National Alumni*, 1923.
45. A Palestinian eyewitness, Wasif Jawhariyyeh, describes Allenby's entrance thus: "General Allenby entered Jerusalem with a great victory celebration, a celebration that marked the official conquest of Jerusalem. This was on Sunday, 18 December 1917, eight days after Jerusalem had been surrendered in Mahallat al-Sheikh Badr. I still remember that great day. He entered from the Jaffa Gate side. I still keep some historical photographs in the Jawhariyyeh collection, and in them appear some of the great personalities of Jerusalem. There was another celebration at his Christmas visit, at which he was ceremonially received at Bab al-Qal'a inside the wall. It is worth mentioning that when General Allenby read his famous declaration referring, unfortunately, to 'the end now of the Crusades', Muslim leaders met and some of them withdrew from the celebration. They were specially invited by the occupation forces as leaders and notables of the people in the city of Jerusalem." *Jerusalem Quarterly File*, Issue 9, 2000, "My Last Days as an Ottoman Subject, Selections from Wasif Jawhariyyeh's Memo" available at www.jqf-jerusalem.org/2000/jqf9/memoir.html.
46. James Reston, *Warriors of God, Richard the Lionheart and Saladin in the Third Crusade*, New York, 2001, p. xvii.
47. "Jerusalem Falls to British Army", *New York Times*, 11 December 1917.
48. Vivian Gilbert, *The Romance of the Last Crusade – With Allenby to Jerusalem*, New York, 1927, p. 171.
49. Cited in B.H.L. Hart, *Lawrence of Arabia*, London, 1989, p. 315.
50. See "T.E. Lawrence and the Arab Cause at the Paris Peace Conference", C.T. Evans and A. Clubb, 2005, available at www.nv.cc.va.us/home/cevans/Versailles/diplomats/lawrence/Andrew.html
51. Margaret Macmillan, *Paris 1919, Six Months that Changed the World*, New York, 2001, p. 390. See also Edward Peters, "The *Firanj* Are Coming—Again", *Orbis*, Foreign Policy Research Institute, Winter 2004, available at www.fpri.org/orbis/4801/peters.firanj.html#sdfootnote1sym
52. Jonathan S.C. Riley-Smith, "Islam and the Crusades in History" in Benjamin Z. Kedar & Jonathan S.C. Riley-Smith with Helen J. Nicholson (Eds.), *Crusades*, Volume 2, Aldershot, 2003, p. 155.

53. Reston, p. xvii.
54. "Effigy burning ban," *Al-Ahram* Weekly Online Issue No.585, 9–15 May 2002.
55. F. Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, London, 1969, p. xx of introduction.
56. *Ibid.*, p. xx.
57. It completes the History of ibn 'Asakir, *Ta'rikh Madinat Dimasha* (58 volumes).
58. Ibn al-Qalanisi, *Dhayl tarikh Dimishq*, translated by H.A.R. Gibb as *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, London, 1982. H.A.R. Gibb's translation and publication of part of ibn al-Qalanisi's chronicle provides a misleading title: "The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades" as pointed out by Robert Irwin. See "Muslim responses to the Crusades" by Robert Irwin in *History Today*, April 1997.
59. Nikita Elisseeff, "The Reaction of the Syrian Muslims" in M Shatzmiller (Ed.), *Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth-Century Syria*, Netherlands, 1993, p. 164.
60. Excerpted from British *Salafi* website IslamicAwakening.com, available at [www.as-sahwah.com /viewarticle.php?articleID=4&](http://www.as-sahwah.com/viewarticle.php?articleID=4&), circa, June 2002.
61. The Salafi-jihadist advocate a violent response to "defend" against perceived aggressions while the reformist camp calls for the transformation of Muslim society before launching a defensive campaign. For a detailed description of the diversity within Salafism and tendencies in modern Islam, see Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*, Oxford, 2004, pp. 24–30, as well as Khaled Abou El-Fadl, *The Great Theft – Wrestling Islam from the Extremists*, Harpers, San Francisco, 2005.
62. See www.sunnah.org/history/Scholars/imam_alghazali.htm
63. Wahhabism is based on the puritanical reforms of the Nejdi missionary Abdul Wahhab and based on the Hanbalite School of Sunni jurisprudence, and is often used as a term of disapprobation. So-called Wahhabis prefer to call themselves, *muwahhidun*, or Unitarians, stemming from their attachment to the fundamental Quranic precept of *Tawhid*, or Unity of God.
64. See Mamoun Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, London, 1999 for an excellent analysis of al-Hawali's works.
65. Zayn ul-Din, *Tuhfat al Mujahidin fi b'ad ahwal al-Purtakaliyyin*, translated by M. J. Rowlandson, London, 1883.

66. Stephen Frederic Dale, in *"Islamic Society on the South Asian Frontier"*, Oxford, 1980, p. 4, points out that Zayn ul-Din's text continues to circulate in Malayalam and Arabi-Malayalam texts and was also responsible for triggering the Mapilla rebellion three hundred years later in 1921. Zayn ul-Din is the ibn Taymiyyah of the Mappila world.
67. *History of the Muslims*, Grade 9, 2000, p. 41, cited in the report by The Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace (CMIP): *The West, Christians and Jews in Saudi Arabian textbooks, The West vs. Islam in History*.
68. Ibn Taymiyya greatly influenced Salafi and Wahhabi thought, and gave Salafi propagandists the source material for their invective against the so-called modern Mongols, that is, the regimes of the Middle East, especially during the era of Egyptian President Sadat. Drawing from ibn Taymiyya's work, Osama bin Laden has also compared President Bush to the leader of the Mongols. The issue of Mongol invasions in Muslim memory is another topic altogether and one which deserves further study.
69. Al Jabarti, Abdul Rahman, *Napoleon in Egypt, Al Jabarti's Chronicle of the French Occupation*, translated by Shmuel Moreh, Princeton, 2001.
70. Sivan, p. 25.
71. Peters, op. cit.
72. The medievalist Edward Peters succinctly presents it as follows: "Skeptical interpretations from the Enlightenment gave way to a different view shaped by critical scholarship and romantic interest in the Middle East. France appropriated the Crusades to its heritage, and French intervention in Algeria in 1830 provided a prism for interpreting them ... The rise of political Islam and the establishment of a Jewish state in the twentieth century encouraged historical parallels and a formerly marginal event, the Crusades, became the foundation of Western conflict with Islam. Western historiographical changes absorbed by Arab thinkers and politicians thus enabled the polemical invocation of the Crusades as an assault on the Islamic world". Edward Peters, Professor of Medieval History at the University of Pennsylvania, quoted in a seminar series "The American Encounter with Islam", recorded by Hay, W. A., in *A Report of the Foreign Policy Research Institute History Institute for Teachers*, The Newsletter of FPRI's Marvin Wachman Fund for International Education 8(4), 1 September 2003.
73. Jonathan Riley-Smith, "What an Osama bin Laden means by 'Crusade'", National Review Online, 5 January 2004 and Christopher Tyerman, *Fighting for Christendom, Holy War and the Crusades*, Oxford, 2004, p. 202.

74. See www.naqshbandi.org/ottomans/khalifa/s34_detail.htm
75. Lothrop Stoddard, *The New World of Islam*, London, 1932, p. 53.
76. For a useful and brief survey of the history of the term Crusades from the perspective of the West and Islam, see also Edward Peters, "The *Firanj* Are Coming—Again", Orbis, Foreign Policy Research Institute, Winter 2004. Peters, however, does not examine the trajectory of its influence within Islamist currents and overlooks the wider Islamic context.
77. In a succinct biographical essay entitled *Jamal al-Din al-Afghanii*, Iraj Bashiri writes that al-Afghani was "a philosopher and politician, he promoted the concept of unity of all Muslims against British rule in particular and against global Western interests in general. His call for Muslim solidarity influenced Egypt's nationalist movement, Turkey's *Tanzimat* reforms, as well as Iran's constitutional and Islamic revolutions." Available at www.angelfire.com/rnb/bashiri/Afghani/Afghani.html
78. The Urabi movement, led by an Egyptian army officer, set off the failed 1881–1882 revolution that led to British military occupation. It was the predecessor of Nasser's Free Officer movement that culminated in the 1952 revolution and full independence. See Juan Cole's study, *Colonialism & Revolution in the Middle East: Social & Cultural Origins of Egypt's Urabi Movement*, Pennsylvania, 2001.
79. Cited in Tamim al-Barghouti, "Mohammed Abdu and the Islamic-secular debate", Daily Star, 11 May 2004.
80. Stoddard, p. 57.
81. Ibid., p. 59.
82. This was a process that would ultimately culminate in the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924.
83. Anita L.P. Burdett, *Islamic Movements in the Arab World, 1913–1966*, Volume 1: 1913–1924, London Archive Editions, 1998, p. 373.
84. The piece notes: "The corporeal and spiritual European Christian nations are apparently still not far from showing the extremely fanatical and implacable enmity towards Moslems as did the Crusaders of old ... From Turkey to Algeria and as far as India, all of us know to our cost that, if Dorotheos, the Patriarch at Constantinople and King Constantine at Athens realize the desires of the priests of London, there will not remain either right of existence or of worship to that last Moslem remnant which has been able to escape from the massacres of the Crusaders. Then the call of the EZAN from the heights will be reduced to silence before the centuries-old fanatical attack of the West and the Crusaders' Army ... a labour which has lasted from the Middle Ages. Ibid, pp. 374-375.

85. Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace, 1954-1962*, London, 1977, p. 28.
86. As cited in Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism*, pp. 134–135.
87. Muhammad Asad, *Islam at the Crossroads*, Kuala Lumpur, 1982, p. 48.
88. *Ibid.*, pp. 46–47.
89. According to Asad, this first act of “collective consciousness” or the “intellectual constitution” of Europe was produced by the Catholic Church whereas subsequent achievements in the West flowed from a revolt against everything that the church represented, p. 47.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
91. Martin Kramer has pointed out that Asad’s pamphlet “Islam at the Crossroads” appeared in an Arabic translation in Beirut in 1946 entitled *al-Islam ‘ala muftariq al-turuq*, followed by numerous editions through the 1940s and 1950s. This is the translation that Qutb read. See Kramer’s article “The Road from Mecca: Muhammad Asad (born Leopold Weiss)” from *The Jewish Discovery of Islam*, available at www.geocities.com/martinkramerorg/WeissAsad.htm.
92. Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, The Mother Mosque Foundation, Cedar Rapids, 1984, p. 160.
93. Dore Gold, *Hatred’s Kingdom – How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism*, Washington, 2003, p. 93.
94. Richard Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, Oxford, 1969, p. 230.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 230.
96. *The Charter of the Allah: The Platform of the Islamic Resistance Movement* (Hamas), translated and annotated by Raphael Israeli, Harry Truman Research Institute, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel, available at www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/880818.htm.
97. The Brotherhood was the prototype for modern, militant Sunni Islamist movements with its centrepiece ideology of *Salafism*. See Richard Mitchell’s path-breaking study on the Muslim Brotherhood for a fuller explanation.
98. Gold, p. 93.
99. Mitchell, p. 229.
100. Writing the path-breaking study on the Muslim Brotherhood, Richard Mitchell’s work on the organization was initially noted and approved by its ideologues. However, the relationship soured later when the Islamist monthly magazine *Al-Dawa* published a document while Mitchell was visiting Cairo in 1979. It suggested that Mitchell was a CIA agent seeking the destruction of the Muslim Brotherhood and that the Copts

were his fifth column. Subsequently, a series of articles were published in *Al-Dawa*, eliminating the distinction between Christians as People of the Book who submitted to Islam and nefarious Crusaders out to destroy the religion. All were tarred with the same brush. See Giles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, California, 1993, pp. 118–119.

101. Mitchell, p. 229.
102. Qutb's *tafsir* is widely read across the Islamic world. It has been translated into English, Persian, Urdu, Bengali, Malay, Turkish and other languages.
103. Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, Volume VIII, Surah 9, Islamic Foundation, London, 2003, p. 143. Qutb's nuanced and varied Qur'anic exegesis, meditative and confrontational in turns, mustered a wider and more heterodox audience in the Islamic world than his oft cited manifesto, *Milestones* ("Ma'alim fi-l Tariq"). *In the Shade of the Qur'an* comprises a unique compendium of *tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis) spanning some eight volumes. It is not merely a product of pious concentration on the Qur'an. Exhibiting elements of autobiography, albeit expressed indirectly, it is also resolutely political and ideological in many of its interpretations. It was the commanding *Zilal* that provided the rich lodestone for the shorter manifesto's call for a Qur'anic revolution.
104. The work is Sa'duldin al-Shadhli's *The Eighth Christian Crusade* cited in Bassam Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism – Political Islam and the New World Disorder*, California, 2002, p. 50.
105. Kanan Makiya, *Cruelty and Silence: War, Tyranny, Uprising, and the Arab World*, New York, 1993, pp. 279–280.
106. Tibi, p. 46.
107. *Geography of the Muslim World*, Grade 9, 1994, p. 32, cited in CMIP, www.edume.org/reports/10/25.htm. There has since been a reported improvement in the syllabus of Saudi textbooks.
108. Some leading ideologues in Saudi Arabia were influenced by Sayyid Qutb's brother, Muhammed Qutb, who taught at the King Abdul Aziz University of Jeddah and who carried the torch for many of his brother's anti-Western ideas on Crusaderism. He and other exiled Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwan*) ideologues had recognized the potential of seizing the memory of the Crusades to rally Muslims. Thus, the term Crusaders, originally a term of Levantine pedigree, found its way from sermons and tracts into the official school curriculum of Gulf Arab states. The political context today is different as scions of the *sahwa* join hands with the government to fight jihadi terrorism on Saudi soil.
109. Gold, p. 217.

110. Paul Marshall, "This war we're in – Taking Extremist Islam seriously", National Review Online, 26 November 2002.
111. Reuven Paz, "Middle East Islamism in the European Arena", *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 6(3), 74, September 2002.
112. Statement by bin Laden broadcast on the Al-Jazeera satellite station on 3 November 2001, cited in Giles Foden, "Australian 'crusaders' targeted by bin Laden", *Guardian*, 16 October 2002.
113. See www.khilafah.com/home/category.php?DocumentID=9000&TagID=
114. Tibi, p. 118.
115. Richards, p. 48. I rely here on translations of the original.
116. Ibid., p. 111.
117. Ibid., p. 111.
118. Ibid., p. 283.
119. Gabrieli, p. 56. In his account, ibn al-Athir details the diplomatic messages sent to the Franks as a factor influencing their psychology and eventual retreat. In stark terms, ibn al-Qalanisi's account of the siege of Damascus stresses the military aspect, ibn al-Athir gives play to the diplomatic aspect and Sibte ibn Al-Jauzi, a preacher, highlights the religious aspect.
120. Zangi was appointed as *atabeg* (governor) by the Caliph at Baghdad in 1127 and quickly extended his hold over other neighbouring territories until he achieved command over Syria.
121. Elisseeff, in Shatmillier, p. 167.
122. Richards, p. 331.
123. Gabrieli, p. 131.
124. Ibid., p. 183.
125. Ibid., p. 84.
126. Ibid., p. 84.
127. D.E.P Jackson and M. Lyons, *Saladin, The Politics of Holy War*, Cambridge, 1982, p. 324.
128. Ibid., p. 324.
129. Gabrieli, p. 215. This declaration is from a summons to holy war around the time of the fall of Acre, attributed to Saladin by the historian Abu Shama (1203–1267).
130. "Shari'a and Life" on Al-Jazeera Television (Qatar), 16 September 2001, cited in Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) *Special Report – No. 30*, "Sheikh Yusef Al-Qaradhawi in London to

- establish ‘The International Council of Muslim Clerics’, 08 Jul 2004, available at memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sr&ID=SR3004.
131. MEMRI Inquiry and Analysis Series No. 130, 8 April 2003, www.memri.org.
 132. Ibid.
 133. Ibid.
 134. *Al-Hayat*, London, 6 April 2003.
 135. Elisseeff, in Shatzmiller, p. 164.
 136. Ibid., p. 168.
 137. Ibid., p. 169.
 138. Gabrieli, p. 153.
 139. In this regard, they were more sophisticated than the New York Times report, ‘Jerusalem Falls to British Army’, *New York Times*, 11 December 1917, which suggested that Jerusalem was exclusively the preserve and the holy city of the Christians.
 140. Gabrieli, p. 140.
 141. Ibid., p. 140.
 142. Ibid., p. 148.
 143. Ibid., p. 149.
 144. Ibid., p. 154.
 145. Ibid., p. 271.
 146. Ibid., p. 271.
 147. Ibid., p. 272.
 148. Ibid., p. 272.
 149. Hamas Charter, translated by Raphael Israeli.
 150. Bernard Lewis, ‘Jihad vs. Crusade’, *Wall Street Journal*, 27 September 2001.
 151. Bernard Lewis, ‘License to Kill; Usama bin Ladin’s Declaration of Jihad’, *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 1998, p. 14.
 152. Gabrieli, p. 147.
 153. Fatwa accessed online at www.library.cornell.edu/collidex/mideast/wif.htm
 154. Gold, p. 102.
 155. Shaykh Abdul Azeez bin Baaz, *The Ideological Attack*. Translated by Abu Aaliyah Surkheel ibn Anwar Sharif, distributed by Message of Islam, London, 1999.

156. See CMIP report cited earlier in Note 68 above. The Saudi history textbook *History of the Muslims*, Grade 9, 2002, pp. 12–13, states that the Christians were enraged by the loss of Jerusalem and the other conquests of the First Crusade, and began “plotting and waiting for opportunities for getting back what they had lost”.
157. Philip Hitti, *Makers of Arab History*, New York, 1968, p. 117.
158. For an interesting discussion of the evolution of the Saladin myth, see Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades – Islamic Perspectives*, Edinburgh, 1999, p. 592. For a more nuanced picture of Saladin by his contemporaries, see also J. Howard Roberts, “Respect by his Crusader Opponents, Saladin had a More Controversial Image among his Fellow Muslims”, *Military History* 16, 24-, Dec 1997.
159. This was an August 1999 code-name discovered by the Wall Street Journal reporter Alan Cullinson who came across Ayman Zawahiri’s computer in Kabul. Presentation by Alan Cullinson at the CMES, Harvard University on 9 December 2003.
160. Riley-Smith, J.C., “What Osama bin Laden means by ‘Crusade’”, National Review Online, 5 January 2004.
161. Nasser himself said: “We Arabs always liken our future and our past ... And it is interesting to recall the ancient link between Syria and Egypt, now united into one nation. Saladin was a Syrian ... If there is a comparison between Saladin and myself, it is a comparison of aims. One must look into the meaning of our actions. It was the unity of Syria and Egypt, which under Saladin, produced a defensive line against aggression.” Cited by C.L. Sulzberger in “Foreign Affairs; Nasser: I – Saladin in a Gray Flannel Suit”, *The New York Times*, 26 March 1958.
162. Bengio Ofra, *Saddam’s Word – Political Discourse in Iraq*, New York, 1998, p. 82.
163. See, for example, M.T. Mehdi, “The New Saladin?”, Letter to *New York Times*, 23 September 1990.
164. Baha’ al-Din ibn Shaddad, *al Nawadir al-Sultaniyya wa’l-Mahasin al-Yusufiyya*, translated by D.S. Richards as *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin*, Aldershot, 2001, p. 245.
165. *Ibid.*, p. 245.
166. Ibn al-Athir clearly identified the Crusades as a “Western jihad” to take the holy city of Jerusalem.
167. *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 161–162.
168. Gabrieli, p. 180.
169. Ronald Finucane, *Soldiers of the Faith: Crusaders and Moslems at War*, New York, 1983, pp. 24–25.

170. Richards, p. 88.
171. Fuad Mukheim, "Muslim Victories During Ramadan", MEMRI Special Dispatch Series - No. 308, 5 December 2001, available at www.laila-talqadr.com, unofficial website of Egypt's Al-Azhar University .
172. See, for example, the Pakistani writer Irfan Hussein's "Waiting for Saladin", *Dawn*, 5 April 2003.
173. Amos Oz, "The Specter of Saladin", *New York Times*, 28 July 2000, p. A21.
174. Akbar S. Ahmed, *Jinnah, Pakistan and National Identity: The Search for Saladin*, New York, 1997.
175. Dr Mahathir Mohamed, "Speech by the Prime Minister of Malaysia Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad at the opening of the 10th session of the Islamic Summit Conference at Putrajaya Convention Center, Putrajaya, Malaysia on 16 October 2003", available at www.gov.my, website of Malaysian Government.
176. R.J.C. Broadhurst, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr, Being the chronicle of a mediaeval Spanish Moor concerning his journey to the Egypt of Saladin, the holy cities of Arabia, Baghdad the city of the Caliphs, the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, and the Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, Delhi, 2001, p. 32.
177. Abu'l-Fida, *Al-Mukhtasar fi akhbar al-bashar*, partial translation by P.M. Holt as *The Memoirs of a Syrian Prince – Abu'l-Fida, Sultan of Hama*, Wiesbaden, 1983.
178. Gabrieli, p. 296.
179. Ibid., p. 311.
180. Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights – A Companion*, London, 2005, p. 144.
181. Philip Hitti, *Makers of Arab History*, New York, 1968, p. 117.
182. Emile Habiby, *The Secret Life of Saeed, the Pessoptimist*, p. 4, translated by Salma K. Jayyus and Trevor Legassick, Interlink Massachusetts, 2003.
183. Shahnaz Husain, *Muslim Heroes of the Crusades*, London, 1998, p. 10. The book begins with some background to the Crusades including a description of Pope Urban II's historic speech at Clermont. In describing the Pope's speech, the author elects to use the version of Robert of Rheims, with its graphic descriptions of Muslim defilement, and concludes that the Pope's speech was largely "inflammatory propaganda". The focus of the book is on the Muslim response to the first few Crusades, spotlighting Nur-ad-Din and Saladin, who are celebrated as "Muslim heroes of Jerusalem". Nur-ad-Din is described as "the first

- real threat to the Latin Kingdoms” while the epic encounter between Saladin and Richard Lionheart is given extensive treatment, an obvious choice given the primarily British Muslim audience.
184. The London 7/7 attackers were fired up in part by propaganda juxtaposing the medieval Crusades with contemporary Muslim suffering, found in the Iqra bookstore some of the attackers frequented in their hometown of Beeston in the United Kingdom.
 185. See www.missionislam.com/mission/index.htm
 186. Young British Muslim youth can plug into a separate collective memory between field trips to Britain House of Parliament, guarded, of course, by a statue of Richard the Lionheart.
 187. Husain, p. 11.
 188. Toh Mei Ling, “*Net Value, Riding on Saladin’s shoulders*”, *The Edge*, 17 April 2006.
 189. A. Douglas & F. Malti-Douglas, *Arab Comic Strips, Politics of an Emerging Mass Culture*, Indiana, 1994, p. 117. This is a title which evokes the chivalric name of Osamah bin Munqidh.
 190. Gabrieli, p. 201.
 191. Ibid., p. 201.
 192. Ibid., p. 202.
 193. Douglas & Malti-Douglas, p. 122.
 194. Ibid., p. 125.
 195. “Anti-Ship Warfare – A Translation from al-Qaeda’s Military Journal Al-Battar”, *Terrorism Monitor*, Jamestown Foundation, Volume II(9), 6 May 2004.
 196. Richards, p. 124.
 197. Baha’ ad-Din does not tell us what language they spoke, but perhaps the diverse composition of the Crusading armies would certainly have made it easier to slip by.
 198. Tamim al-Barghouti, “11th century Book of Lessons has much to offer on social relations – How Munqiz recorded strange ways of Crusaders”, *The Daily Star*, Outlook, 15 November 2003.
 199. Ibid.
 200. Philip Hitti’s own translation is as follows: “Consider now this great contradiction! They have neither jealousy nor zeal but they have great courage, although courage is nothing but the product of zeal and ambition to be above ill repute.” See Osama bin Munqidh, *Kitab Al-Itibar*, translated by Philip K. Hitti as *Memoirs of An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusades*, New York, 1929, p. 166.

201. Hillebrand, p. 567.
202. Ibid., p. 570.
203. Richards, p. 29.
204. Gabrieli, p. 299.
205. Gabrieli, p. 299.
206. *Nida'ul Islam* magazine, Issue 16, December - January 1996-1997, www.islam.org.au.
207. See transcript of President Bush's speech on the White House website, www.whitehouse.gov/president/
208. Christopher Tyerman, *Fighting For Christendom: Holy War And The Crusades*, Oxford, 2004, p. 200.
209. Ayman Al-Zawahiri, *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner*, London, 2001, serialized in "Al Sharq Al Awsat".
210. Montasser Al-Zayyat, *The Road to Al Qaeda*, translated by Ahmed Fekry as *The Road to Al-Qaeda – The Story of Bin Laden's Right Hand Man*, London, 1994, p. 116.
211. Ibid, p. 116.
212. The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) Special Dispatch Series and Inquiry and Analysis Reports, *Special Report No. 24*, 26 Dec 2003. Palestinian Authority Sermons 2000-2003, available at memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sr&ID=SR2403
213. Al Qaida leader Osama bin Laden's "Sermon on the first day of Eid al-Adha, the Feast of Sacrifice" *MEMRI Special Dispatch Series, No. 476*, 5 March 2003.
214. Allouni, 2001.
215. Transcript of full text of Osama bin Laden's 4 January 2004 audio message from www.why-war.com/news/2004/03/04/fulltext.html
216. For example, the Arab historian Sa'd Ashur wrote in his *History of the Crusades* (1963): "The importance of the Crusades lies in their being a gigantic experience, full of lessons and admonitions. Therefore, we should study this subject and reflect on it time and time again, now and in the future in order to be able to benefit from mistakes committed [by our forefathers] and avoid them, and to face and overcome present perils and obstacles"; Sa'd Ashur, *Al-Haraka al-Salibiyya*, vol. 1, pp. 3, 6, quoted in Sivan, E., "The Crusaders described by Modern Arab Historiography", *Asian and African Studies*, 8, 104–149, 1972.
217. Asad's interview by *al-Rai al-Amm* (Kuwait), broadcast by Damascus Domestic Service, 13 December 1981 and cited in Efraim Karsh in *Fabricating Israeli History: The New Historians*, London, 1997.

218. 'Azzam Al-Tamimi, "Nine Hundred Years and Two Crusades", *Palestine Times*, August 1999. *MEMRI Inquiry and Analysis Series, No. 163, A Political-Ideological Brief*, 19 Feb 2004
219. Martin Kramer, "Fundamentalist Islam: The Drive for Power", *Middle East Quarterly*, 1996, available at www.geocities.com/martinkramerorg/FundamentalistPower.htm
220. *Kayhan International*, "All Muslims must come together to defeat the U.S.", *Viewpoint column. MEMRI Special Dispatch Series, No. 379*, 14 May 2003.
221. Cited in *MEMRI Special Dispatch Series, No. 95*, 23 May 2000
222. "Palestinian Authority Sermons 2000-2003", translated by Steven Stalinsky *MEMRI Special Report No. 24*, 28 December 2003.
223. Hoda Barakat, *Harith al-Miyah*, translated as *Tiller of the Waves*, Cairo, 2001, p. 28.
224. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
225. Tamim al-Barghouti, "The Crusades – the invasion – Looking at the history behind the bloodshed", *The Daily Star*, 26 July 2003.
226. *Ibid.*
227. Tamim al-Barghouti's contribution to *Los Angeles Times*, 13 April 2003, cited by *Mother Jones Daily: War Watch*, 14 April 2003, available at www.motherjones.com/news/warwatch/2003/04/we_359_02.html
228. Tamim al-Barghouti, "Occupation can be nothing but a temporary victory", *The Daily Star*, 24 August 2004, available at www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=10&categ_id=4&Article_id=7628.
229. "21st Century Crusaders: A War on Muslims in Iraq and Palestine", *Green Media* 72, 2006.
230. Quoted in *MEMRI Special Dispatch, Egypt No. 800*, 15 October 2004.
231. See, for example, Abdulaziz, Zainab, *Hurub Al-Salibiyya bi kul Al-maqayis* (Crusades by All Standards), Cairo, 2003.
232. Adian Husain, *Wajah Peradaban Barat: Dari Hegemoni Kristen Ke Dominasi Sekular-Liberal* (The Facade of Western Civilisation: From Christian Hegemony to Secular-Liberal Domination), foreword by Prof Dr Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, Jakarta, 2005.
233. *Ibid.*, see especially Chapter 8, "Several Myths on Islam".
234. *Ibid.*, see, in particular, Chapter 2, "A Perspective on Islam".
235. *Ibid.*, pp. 195–196. I am grateful to Shaffiq Selamat for help with the translation.

236. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York, 1996, p. 207.
237. Huntington's analysis is congruent with the ideas of Bernard Lewis, doyen of Middle Eastern studies in the U.S. and a prominent academic supporter of the American neo-conservative push to attack Iraq in 2003.
238. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York, 1998, p. 130.
239. Husaini, p. 196.
240. Cheryl Benard, "Civil Democratic Islam, Partners Resources and Strategies", RAND Corporation report, 2003.
241. Sidney Blumenthal, "The Religious Warrior of Abu Ghraib - An Evangelical U.S. General played a Pivotal Role in Iraqi Prison Reform", *Guardian*, U.K., 20 May 2004, accessed at www.guardian.co.uk.
242. "One Friday", p. 31, an essay by Myriam Antaki, in booklet accompanying "Les croisades sous le regard de L'Orient" by Omar Sarmini and Ensemble Al-Kindi, 2001.
243. Saleh, p. 62.

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THE CRUSADES CONTINUE

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What were the Crusades?

The Crusades were fought during the middle ages by the Catholic Church in western Europe against heretics or, in other words, Muslims because their belief differed from that of the official church. The first Crusades was launched by Pope Urban the second in 1095. This was the longest and largest Crusade of the Christian church and lasted for over 200 years. It was fought in the Middle East against Muslims and Islam. The apparent aim was to take the holy land of Palestine which was revered by Christians and was a place of pilgrimage for them. The Pope claimed that the land was controlled by infidels, which was what they called the Muslims. But the more implicit political agenda was to militarily attack the ever expanding Islamic State, due to fear and horror that Islam may eventually enter Europe. It had already reached the gates of Vienna and France, so the Church inevitably felt threatened.

Crusade Fever

During the Middle Ages, Europe was a feudal society controlled by the monarchy, clergy and knights. The church in Europe at this time had the upmost authority, the Pope being the head of the church had the most power and therefore he had political interest in society. The Crusades were part of the church's wish to expand its empire. At the time of his call to destroy Islam in the Middle East, the Pope realized that the church's political interests could be furthered as the Byzantine Empire (controlled by the Greek Orthodox Church) was requesting help against the Muslims, from Rome. If the Crusades were fought and won, it would mean geographical expansion of political power and authority for the Church.

The whole of Europe was gripped by "Crusade Fever". The military venture was seen as a confrontation between the truth of Christianity against the supposedly demonic and ignorant face of Islam which had been painted by the church. This propaganda included attacking the authenticity of the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), who were both tagged imposters, sorcery, satanic, evil, and pagan. Furthermore, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was considered sexually promiscuous and lewd, an alcoholic, gambler and pimp. From this

wretched fabrication, the church concluded that all Muslims were despotic and evil, to the extent where not only did they resemble beasts in their behaviour, but also in their looks. So ridiculous were all these allegations, yet they were unquestioned and lapped up by the people, and added to the justification of attacking the Muslim world. These essentially became the roots of the long and continuing attack on Islam by the West, especially from its development into Orientalism. Years later, when the Crusades were subject of huge romanticisation, Chateaulri would write about how the Crusades were the “glorious Christian attempt to liberate the Muslims from the only thing they knew which is force”.

This is ironically more accurate a picture of the Crusades rather than the Muslims’.

The church had little worry of acquiring the military force that would be needed for the war; the religious hysteria which the church had evoked by using the above and similar depictions of Islam and the Muslims was enough to fund and haul support for the cause of the Crusades. Additionally, this was one of the first times in history when European countries successfully mobilized against a common enemy, further strengthening the Christian position. Driven by the Church’s promise of eternal paradise and martyrdom, and seething, blind hatred for the “barbaric” Muslims, a mass exodus of knights and peasants left Europe particularly from France, Germany and England, to conquer and ruthlessly kill the Muslims and take Jerusalem.

Muslims Divided

After three years of traveling, encountering Muslims and fighting, pillaging, raping, for example in Constantinople, the kuffar reached Jerusalem and took control. Why did they enjoy such a success? This was due to the fact that the Muslims at the time were deeply divided as a result of the dispute over the Khliafah (Islamic State); there was a division between the Abbasid and Fatimid families. Palestine was the place where the conflict between the Muslims took place, making them weak and the land easy to occupy. After occupying Palestine, the kuffar founded new states which were called “Outremer” (a French word meaning overseas). A king was established in Jerusalem and military expansion occurred when more knights were recruited from Europe, such as the knights Templar. The Muslims closed off the north and Outremer became like a fortress. Anyone coming into Outremer from Europe had to do so by the sea. Eventually, the Templar Knights became rich and powerful and by 1187 they were the biggest land owners in the Middle East. However, the Crusaders’ power could only be maintained while the Muslims remained divided; the policy they applied to achieve this was divide and rule.

Salah Ud-Din's Rise to Power

Amidst the turmoil, a strong group of Muslims arose to challenge and defeat the power of the Outremer. In 1144, a Muslim by the name of Zengi took control of Edessa, the most northern of the Outremer states. His son, Nur-ad-Din, also participated in the jihad against the crusaders and the weakness of their states became more evident. An officer of Nur-ad-Din, Salah Ud-Din Ayubi, overthrew the Crusaders and united the Muslims. Salah Ud-Din overthrew the kuffar in many areas such as Damascus (1174) Aleppo (1183) and Mosud (1186). These areas surrounded the Outremer. Salah Ud-Din led an army against the Christians in Tiberias. The king of Jerusalem sent knights to attack the army but failed and the Muslims recaptured Jerusalem without killing a single person in the city.

The church in Europe was shocked at the fact that they had lost Jerusalem to the Muslims. The church started to organize a further Crusade and requested the assistance of European riders (or butchers) such as Frederick Barbarossa, the German Holy Roman Emperor who had taken part in the earlier Crusades, Philip Augustus of France and (the barbaric) Richard the First of England known as Richard the Lionheart, who was responsible for the massacre of Muslims at Acre. It was reported that the streets were covered with Muslim blood. Nonetheless, the Crusaders failed to regain their previous stature and capture Jerusalem, and Salah Ud-Din maintained power.

The Decline

It became clear to the Crusaders after a long war which spanned generations that they were not a military match to the Muslims. European leaders left the Middle East after having their own power and authority threatened in their homelands, such as Richard the First of England who left his brother John on the throne in England realizing that John was reluctant to hand the authority back. Military allies of the Pope lost confidence in the churches' loyalty after the Greek Orthodox Church offered money to the church to help them place Alexius, son of the former emperor of Greece, in power which meant they had double crossed the Greeks. After the murder of Alexius, the Crusaders were sent to capture Byzantium instead. Byzantium later fell to Muslims in 1453. As we can see, the Crusaders had to cope with much political dissension and corruption on their own territory, which made it increasingly difficult to wage military campaigns against the Muslims as Islam was expanding at a rate which they could not stop, or were not willing to take on. More accurately, though victory is in the hands of Allah or He (SWT) says:

We hurl the truth against the falsehood and it knocks out it's brain and behold, the falsehood does perish. (Quran 21:18)

Europe did gain many things as a result of the Crusades against Islam. As a result, Europe progressed materially. They advanced their knowledge in science, mathematics, medicine, astronomy, navigation and trade. Many new textiles such as silk reached Europe because of this new trade route established by the European presence in the Middle East, as well as spices and fruit. Many books were translated by Muslims from Arabic into Latin and used in European universities. This period in European history was called "The Enlightenment". Unfortunately for Europe, they only took materially from the Muslims and not the complete Deen of Allah (SWT). The military Crusades were the beginning of the long attack against Islam in the West.

Today, Europe relishes in the propaganda against Islam, creating myths and stereotypes and perpetuating them in order to create a climate of Islamophobia. Words like Saracens, barbaric and infidels were created in the past to negatively and wrongly stereotype Muslims and today they have been replaced by words like terrorist, fundamentalist or extremist as we often see in the Western media.

The crusading continues but manifests differently today Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an:

"...Hatred is revealed by the utterance of their (the kuffar's) mouth, but that which their breast hides is greater..." (Quran 3:118)

... and so Muslims must wake up and take responsibility of their situation and educate themselves in Islam, so that they do not feel apologetic about the slander and crusade against Islam, but can stand up and defeat it, like Salah Ud-Din and his army did. Islam is the Truth, we should take pride in that, and remember that the Truth will always prevail. over the falsehood, by the Will of Allah (SWT).

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This is an excellent piece of work on all counts ... [t]he thesis makes a number of original contributions. Mr. Bhatia is able to combine his knowledge of the crusades with a knowledge of Arabic that allows his access to the modern sources—a rare combination. He is able to show how complex, nuanced, and far from universally negative the medieval Muslim view of the crusaders is. He shows the use by Al Qaeda of stories related in a medieval chronicle, and the use made of the towering figure of Saladin by a number of modern Muslim rulers. The treatment ... is inventive and innovative.

- Angeliki E. Laiou, Dumbarton Oaks Professor of Byzantine History, Harvard University

Launched a thousand years ago, the Crusades live on in Muslim memory. Extremists like Al Qaeda's chief Osama bin Laden say that the West is waging a renewed Crusade to destroy Islam. The grievance even shapes the region's enduring source of instability, the Palestinian issue.

The Crusades resonate in Islamist consciousness today. But the Arab historians of that era considered it a marginal event. Exploring the paradox, this unique study shows how the modern Islamist narrative of the Crusades, wrapped around contemporary events in Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine, has gained ground in the battle for hearts and memories in the Muslim world.

Who will win this battle over history, part of the larger war of ideas against extremism? Could the ideas of a 12th century Arab warrior and diplomat, Osama bin Munqidh, counter the propaganda of Osama bin Laden's movement?

About the Author

Umej Bhatia is a graduate of the University of Cambridge and of Harvard University, where he completed an advanced degree in Middle Eastern Studies.



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