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THESIS

**IMAGINING DEFEAT:
AN ARABIC HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE CRUSADES**

by

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March 2007

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IMAGINING DEFEAT: AN ARABIC HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE CRUSADES

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ABSTRACT

This study tracks changing conceptions of the Crusades among Arab authors, from medieval through modern sources, examining how current emotionally charged interpretations of the Crusades came into the literature and how they came to resonate. This study shows that in medieval Arabic sources, the campaigns and settlement of the Christian Franks is not seen as a discrete event, and despite modern interpretations of a two-hundred year struggle between two sides, that the Franks are seen as just one more facet in the political scene of the era, often of less concern than “internal” enemies. The study then tracks the introduction of the concept of the Crusades as a discrete event into Arab historical writing in the mid-nineteenth century via Christian Arabs working from Western sources and its gradual inclusion in Muslim Arab historical thought. Finally, this study examines modern Arabic interpretations of the Crusades, colored by current experiences and nationalist and/or Muslim fundamentalist thought.

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I. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A. PURPOSE

One of the most common rhetorical strategies used by Islamic extremists to attack the West is to rally the “Arab street” against “the Crusaders.” Today’s Arab Muslims are still (or newly?) bitter about the Crusades, the reference to which makes them “relive the barbaric encounters of those times.”¹ In just one recent example of extremist use of this rhetoric, the Zarqawi network’s statement on their 09 November 2005 attacks on Jordanian hotels announced their action as attacking “a back yard for the enemies of Islam, such as the Jews and Crusaders.”²

The objective of this thesis is to find out why bitterness about the Crusades is a common theme among Arab Muslims today, whereas the primary sources from the time of the Crusades seem to show little evidence of this. Research shows that the identification of the European Christian warriors seeking to reclaim the Holy Land as “Crusaders” (*salībiyyūn*) does not appear in the primary literature of the time, which refers to the Western invaders consistently as “Franks” (*faranj*) and only obliquely references any religious motivation to their appearance in the Levant. Similarly, the well known feeling of “resentment over defeat” does not appear in the primary literature. This study traces how and when this cultural resentment came to be, and how it is articulated and transmitted.

B. IMPORTANCE

It is clear that the Crusades are an extremely emotional issue among Muslims today. Bitterness about the Crusades shows up in some very anti-Western, and sometimes very violent, contexts. Libyan propaganda in the early 1980s attempted to mobilize its population against America, which was presented as having launched “the offensive of the Cross against Islam.”³ Mehmet Ali Agha, before his attempted assassination of the Pope in 1981, wrote in a letter, “I have decided to kill John Paul II,

1 Abbas Kadhimi, statement at lecture attended by author, Monterey, CA, 10 November 2005.

2 Jonathan Finer and Craig Whitlock, *Washington Post*, 11 November 2005, A21.

3 Carole Hillenbrand, *Crusades then and Now*, 2000, www.caabu.org, accessed 23 October, 2005.

the supreme commander of the Crusades.”⁴ The most famous of these uses of anti-Crusader rhetoric is Usama Bin-Laden’s *fatwa* of 1998, in which he called for the killing of Americans, military and civilian. It was entitled “Text of World Islamic Front’s Statement Urging Jihad against Jews and Crusaders.”⁵

This research seeks to explain the production, transmission, and function of myths of defeat. The Arab myth of seminal defeat in the Crusades is a particularly interesting case, as most other “national tragedy” frames, such as France’s loss of Alsace-Lorraine, or Germany’s defeat in World War One, are heavily examined by, and motivational for, the society only within the historical context of the “fruits of defeat,” *i.e.*, the period during which the direct results (loss of territory, reparations payments, *etc.*) are ongoing. Others, such as the mythic Serbian defeat at Kosovo in 1389, and, this thesis argues, that of the Arab experience in the Crusades are re-introduced and re-interpreted well after their original context, when society is “similarly threatened,” whether the threat is in fact at all similar, or even real. This study will help policy makers understand the roots and use of a resentment that gives extremists the ability to manipulate lay Arab Muslims with anti-Crusader rhetoric. This, in turn, will help determine ways to take account of the effects of this rhetoric.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sources seeking to explain modern Arab bitterness about the Crusades show a striking unity of thought, seeing its roots directly in the primary records of the circumstances of the Crusades. Direct examination of primary sources, however, seems to disaggregate modern conceptions from those of the era. An examination of literature on what Eric Hobsbawm has called the “invention of tradition” gives a theoretical basis for explaining this disconnect.

1. The “Happy Equilibrium”

This is not a field with a wide body of secondary literature, but a few comprehensive treatments do exist. Most notably Amin Malouf⁶ and Carole Hillenbrand⁷

4 Carole Hillenbrand, *Crusades then and Now*.

5 Magnus Ranstorp, “Interpreting the Broader Context and Meaning of Bin-Laden’s Fatwa.” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 21, no. 4 (1998): 321-330.

6 Amin Malouf, *Crusades through Arab Eyes* (New York: Schocken, 1984).

look specifically at the Muslim viewpoint of the Crusades. Additionally, the subject is treated in biographical sources, most notably biographies of Saladin,^{8 9} and in various scholarly journal articles.¹⁰ Broadly, these sources can be divided into two groups, those that simply report a consolidated account of the Crusades based on the medieval Muslim sources and those that attempt interpretation. Malouf and Hillenbrand typify these two approaches. Malouf makes his goal clear in his forward when he states, “the basic idea of this book is simple: to tell the story of the Crusades as they were seen, lived, and recorded on ‘the other side’ –in other words, in the Arab camp.”¹¹ Hillenbrand, on the other hand, is devoted to “evoking the detailed responses of the Muslims to the Crusader presence.”¹² The interpretive works are mostly interested in showing the cultural superiority of Arabs at the time, especially in their own eyes, and in “evoking” (rather than explaining) the sense of victimhood that modern Arabs feel about the Crusades. There are no debating camps here. Authors who have discussed modern Arab responses to the Crusades present them similarly, as a natural reaction to the unwarranted and barbarous attack of the Crusaders. The singular exception to this approach is the work of Sivan¹³ who approaches Arab historiography of the Crusades in the period between World War II and 1973 as Arab Nationalist re-interpretation.

2. Upsetting the Apple Cart

Sivan’s iconoclasm is worthy of further examination. A review of the pertinent primary medieval Arab histories does not reveal the outrage expressed by modern sources at the time of the invasion itself, or for much of the time of the Western Christian “Crusader States” in the Levant. Instead, the invaders were seen as just one more in a

7 Carole Hillenbrand, *Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

8 for example, P.H. Newby, *Saladin in his time* (London: Phoenix Press, 1983).

9 Note: Arabic names are transliterated phonetically into Latin characters throughout, with the exception of those, like Saladin, who have a common ‘westernization’ in use in English writings, in which case this common name is retained.

10 Examples include Joseph Drory, “Early Muslim Reflections on the Crusaders.” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* no. 25 (2001): 92-101. and Matti Moosa, “The Crusades: An Eastern Perspective, with Emphasis on Syriac Sources.” *Muslim World: A Journal Devoted to the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 93, no. 2 (2003): 249-289. For further examples, see bibliography.

11 Malouf, *Crusades through Arab Eyes*, ix.

12 Hillenbrand, *Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 1.

13 Emmanuel Sivan, *A Modern Arab Historiography of the Crusades* (Kfar Chabad: Tel-Aviv University, 1973).

series of actors in the region. The presumptive ideological motives that give “the Crusades” their historical unity is the West was not apparent to the other side. Muslim chroniclers of the time were unconcerned with this Western concept and simply saw what we think of as “the Crusades” as more in a series of conflicts involving various enemies. They are certainly chronicled, not as a distinct event, but as occurrences within a chronological framework.

The majority of the primary sources agree that the initial reaction to the Frankish presence was one of limited interest. Religious and cultural outrage was very hard to find, even among those city-states with new Frankish neighbors. Only the dispossessed attempted to urge a general *jihad*, and these attempts fell mostly on deaf ears, especially in far off Baghdad. This was seen initially as simply a provincial Syrian problem. This is particularly surprising as the first wave of the Crusades included the most egregious atrocities¹⁴ and the loss of the holy places of Jerusalem.

These sources also agree that a swelling of anti-Frankish *jihad* rhetoric and feeling began in earnest after a decade of Frankish occupation, but that the feeling never fully took priority over local rivalries and other political considerations. Even at its height, during Saladin’s control over Egypt and Syria, as much or more military effort was spent on fellow Muslims as upon Crusader armies and holdings.

While the literature attempting to evoke Arab bitterness over this era points to many sources of ill-will based on Frankish action, it does not successfully explain the “second priority status” of anti-Frankish *jihad*, nor the many examples of Frankish cooperation with various Muslim factions throughout the era.

How, then, did we get from the general Muslim apathy of the First Crusade to the Muslim victory of 1291 and then to the bitterness and “lasting psychological scars”¹⁵ of today? It is clear that this historical viewpoint is invented, or at least, re-interpreted, rather than organic. An examination of the process of historical re-working offers valuable insight.

¹⁴ for example: the reported anthropophagi in Ma’arra, and the slaughter of the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

¹⁵ Hillenbrand, *Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 614.

3. **Invented History: A Theoretical Framework for Changing Perspectives**

A robust literature exists on the re-interpretation, or “invention” of history among identity groups. Most of this discussion takes place within the debate on nationalism¹⁶, though it is also treated in works on ethnicity¹⁷ and post-colonial identity.¹⁸ The essence of the argument within this literature is that identity groups interpret and invent history, both intentionally and subconsciously, to strengthen their identity bonds and to make sense of their status at a given historical moment. That which makes sense in the power relations of the moment, and/or the goals of the identity group for the future, is enshrined with the legitimacy of history. While this phenomenon is most often noted in the glorification of an imagined (even if based on factual history) “Golden Age” or the semi-deification of a “national hero,” myths of epic defeat are sometimes imagined as an explanation of why such a proud and strong identity group should find itself in a subordinate position. As Sollors puts it, “it is always the specificity of power relations at a given historical moment and in a particular place that triggers off a strategy of pseudo-historical explanations that camouflage the inventive act itself.”¹⁹

A well-known example of the myth of epic defeat is the Serbian interpretation of the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. While it is famous as a crushing defeat brought on by treachery that led the Serbs into centuries of Turkish subjugation, sources at the time of the battle saw it as a strategic draw. Constructed history has made of it a cultural touchstone, however, that nationalist leaders have disingenuously used to inflame Serb passions and strengthen Serb identity at the cost of generating significant “out-group” hatred and discrimination. Arab Nationalist interpretations of the Crusades show a mixture of the “Golden Age” and/or “Saladin as national hero” interpretations with those of a crippling epic struggle that explain current power relations. Islamic fundamentalist interpretations, however, tell a more straight forward story of unprovoked attack and

16 The best known examples include Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991). and E.J. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1992). For further examples see bibliography.

17 most notably, Werner Sollors, *The Invention of Ethnicity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

18 for example: David Gordon, *Self-Determination and History in the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971).

19 Sollors, *The Invention of Ethnicity*, xvi.

catastrophic defeat, with similar mixed purposes of strengthening identity bonds by showing threat to the group and of explaining dolorous historic circumstances.

D. SOME QUESTIONS OF TERMINOLOGY

When examining the Crusades, there are three important terms to consider: “Franks,” *jihad*, and “Crusade.” The first two of these are rather straight forward, while “Crusade” requires some examination. “Franks” is a generic term used in all medieval Arabic sources to refer to Western Europeans. The term “Franks” is differentiated from “Armin” (Armenians) and Rum (Byzantines), but does not specify people of French origin. As French was the *lingua franca* (literally) of the Western Europeans who came to the Middle East, the term refers to all Western Europeans. “*Jihad*” is an Arabic word meaning “an effort, or struggle.” In a religious context, it has two meanings. According to Islamic tradition, Muslims have a responsibility to undertake both the “Greater *Jihad*” of internal spiritual struggle against one’s base nature, and the “Lesser *Jihad*” of armed struggle on the behalf of Islam. While the first is considered by scholars to be of much greater importance, it is not highly relevant to the military campaigns under consideration in this study. For the purposes of this thesis then, *jihad* will be used only in the context of armed religious struggle.

It is not surprising that early Arab sources refer to the coming of the Franks, rather than the “Crusaders,” for that term was not current among the European participants at the time of the (as it is now called) First Crusade, either. They spoke instead of an “armed pilgrimage,” a term also not found in Arabic sources, whose conception of the religious nature of the coming of the Franks was, as we shall see in the next chapter, quite tenuous. The English word “Crusade” comes from the Old French “croiserie,” meaning “to mark with a cross,” or “to take the cross.” Its first recorded use in English in the now common context of “religiously inspired war in the holy land” dates to 1290, the year before the last “Crusader state” fell.²⁰ The phrase “to take the cross” was commonly used during the period of the Crusades to mean, “to take a vow to

²⁰ Oxford English Dictionary, online edition at http://dictionary.oed.com.libproxy.nps.edu:8080/cgi/entry/50054311?query_type=word&queryword=crusade, accessed 27 Jan 2007.

go fight in the holy land, and to mark one's clothing with a cross in sign of that,"²¹ and thus the verb form, if not the noun, is period to the era, if not the dominant term it has since become. By the end of the Middle Ages, the noun and its current meaning were in common use. As it is the word "Crusade" that has accumulated so many varying connotations, both in European languages and in Arabic, this paper will make use of it throughout, even for early eras in which it may be anachronistic. The Arabic term "*al-hurub as-selibiya*" is a translation of the French "*Croisade*," and means literally "cross wars," but is translated as "Crusades" throughout.

²¹ for example, the tale of the dying "Young King" Henry in 1183, who had taken such a vow and never fulfilled it. After receiving extreme unction, he gave his cloak with a red cross sewn onto the shoulder and, according to Painter's translation of the *Historie de Guillaume le Marechal*, said, "Marshal, you have always been loyal and faithful. I leave you my cross and pray for me my vow to carry it to the Holy Sepulchre. You will acquit for me my vow to God." Sydney Painter, *William Marshal: Knight-Errant, Baron, and Regent of England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 54.

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II. MUSLIM RESPONSES TO THE CRUSADES AS CHRONICLED BY MEDIEVAL ARAB SOURCES

This chapter examines Muslim perspectives on the Crusades during the Crusading era. Review of primary sources shows that Muslim reaction was remarkably unconcerned over the advent of the First Crusade and the formation of the Crusader States. Response built up over time, however, though anti-Frankish rhetoric was rarely reflected in significant high-profile military action as pictured in modern perceptions of the “Counter-Crusade.” The main changes to Islamic thought were attitudes about the institution of *jihad* and the city of Jerusalem in response to rhetoric intended to reverse the initial unconcern. Although anti-Frankish invective can be found within the period literature, it is less fervid than that aimed at “internal” enemies, such as the Assassins, and seems rarely to have led to direct action. These reactions are certainly insufficient to explain modern bitterness in the Islamic world over the Crusades.

A. MEDIEVAL ARABIC SOURCES

There are many primary sources written in Arabic by Islamic chroniclers that cover the era of the Crusades. Many important primary sources are not available in English translation, of which the best known is Ibn al-Athir’s *Universal History*.²² This is a major barrier to accessibility to many Western Islamic scholars who do not read Arabic. Others, such as Damascene chronicler Ibn al-Qalanisi²³ are available both in the original Arabic and in translation. Primary sources in the original language are, of course, the most authoritative, but they do have difficulties aside from the language barrier itself. As mentioned above, the Crusades as a distinct event are not found in period Arab sources. The student is forced to search for snippets of Muslim response within universal or local histories, biographies, and the like. While these snippets are extremely valuable, they can be difficult to find and to interpret.

A major difficulty in interpreting these works is the authors’ tendency toward ideological demonizing of any enemy, be they Franks, “heretical” Muslims (for example,

22 'Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh* (Beirut: Dar Sadr, 1966).

23 Abu Ya'la Hamzah ibn Asad Ibn al-Qalanisi, *Dhayl tarikh Dimishq* (Beirut: Mutb'aa al-Aaba' al-Yaswa'iiin, 1908).

Seljuk Sunni referring to Fatamid Shia), or even an enemy city-state of the same sect. War against all of these enemies is couched as *jihad*,²⁴ and the side the chronicler represents is “the Muslims” in almost all contexts. The only major difference is that the Franks never become “the Muslims” in a later context when they were on the same side as the chronicler’s faction. This makes for difficulty in separating the “propaganda of the moment” from possible deep-seated Muslim hostility and true desire to expel the invader.

B. WHY THE FRANKS CAME

The arrival of the Franks in the Holy Land was not seen as a momentous event by Muslim chroniclers of the era, and certainly not as the opening round in an epic religious struggle. As discussed earlier, the concept of a “Crusade,” as such, was not yet current even among the participants, and even the notion of an armed pilgrimage, dedicated to “liberating” Christian holy places, so current among the Frankish forces themselves, is not reflected by the Arab chronicles. Many of the chroniclers, such as Ibn al-Jawzi and Ibn al-Qalanisi, spend no time on Frankish motivations whatsoever, simply noting their presence by means of what cities they besieged. Ibn al-Athir gives the most reflection on the matter and offers the explanation closest to Christian zeal for the holy land. Even he, however, offers it as one alternative explanation, and, if true, the result not of papal exhortation, but of political maneuvering on the part of Roger of Sicily. His conjecture is worth quoting in full.

In the year 490[H.], they [the Franks] attacked Syria. The reason for that is that their King, Barduil,²⁵ who was a relative of Roger the Frank, who ruled Sicily, gathered a great host of Franks and sent word to Roger saying, ‘I have assembled a great host, and now I am on my way to you, where I will depart for Africa²⁶ and conquer it and become your neighbor.’

Roger gathered his companions and consulted them about this. They said, ‘By the truth of the gospel, this will be a fine thing both for them and for us, as the country will become a Christian land.’ Then Roger raised his leg and let loose a mighty fart and said, ‘that is of more use than your speech!’ And why is that? He said, ‘If this host comes to me I will incur many expenses and [have to provide] ships to carry them to Africa and forces from my military, as well. If they conquer the country, it will

24 Hillenbrand, *Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 10.

25 Unknown reference. Barduil is a common “transliteration” of Baldwin, but no King Baldwin was reigning at that time.

26 In this context, Africa likely refers to the coast opposite Sicily, *i.e.*, the area now known as Tunisia.

be theirs, but they will need provisioning from Sicily. This would cut into the money I receive from the annual harvest. If they fail, they will return to my country, and I would suffer discredit on their behalf. Further, Tamim²⁷ will say that I have betrayed him and violated my pledge, and communication and travel between us will be disrupted. The country of Africa remains for us. When we find the strength, we will take it.'

He summoned his messenger and said to him: 'If you are resolved to fight²⁸ the Muslims, it would be better to conquer Jerusalem. By removing it from their hands, the honor would be yours. As for Africa, there are treaties and trust between myself and its people.' So the Franks made ready and descended upon Syria.

Another story is that that Alawite rulers of Egypt were afraid when they saw the power and capability of the Seljuk empire and its occupation of Syria as far as Gaza. No country remained between them and Egypt to resist them, and Aqsees²⁹ entered Egypt and besieged it. They therefore sent word to the Franks and invited them to invade Syria and rule it and be between them and the Muslims. But God alone knows.³⁰

C. INITIAL MUSLIM RESPONSES

The initial Muslim reaction to the Frankish presence was one of limited interest. Evidence of widespread religious and cultural outrage is very hard to find. As noted above, only the dispossessed attempted to urge a general *jihad*, a call which evoked little response in Baghdad, which saw this as simply a Syrian provincial problem. For all that this first wave of the Crusades included the most egregious atrocities and the loss of the holy places of Jerusalem, it did not evoke extensive passion, or even comment.

Jerusalem fell to the Franks on the 15th of July, 1099. By August, the *qadi* Abu Sa'ad al-Harawi had traveled from Damascus to Baghdad with a number of Jerusalem refugees. There he pled with the caliph directly for aid. The caliph responded by appointing a panel of dignitaries to investigate the "troublesome events." No report of the results of this investigation was recorded.³¹ Why were the losses of much of the Syrian coast, the important city of Antioch, and the third holiest city in Islam treated so cavalierly? Much of the answer lies in politics within the Dar al-Islam.

27 the emir of Tunis, Tamim ibn Mu'izz.

28 The word used for fight here is *jihad*, though any religious implication is unclear.

29 a Seljuk warleader subordinate to Malikshah, who attacked the Fatamids in 1076.

30 Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh* 10:272-3. (author's translation from the Arabic)

31 Malouf, *Crusades through Arab Eyes*, xvi.

The major polities at the time were the Sunni Abbasid caliphate, under Seljuk control in Baghdad, and the rival Shia (Ismaili) Fatimid caliphate in Cairo. This, in itself, was a major factor, as much of the areas that fell to the Franks were in between, and often contested by, the two power centers. In fact, Jerusalem had passed from Abbasid to Fatimid control just one year before it fell to the Franks. Feelings between the two groups of Muslims ran high. Many scholars believe that the Franks' presence was accepted as a buffer between the two or, at least, as a less important threat. The Sunni majority saw Ismaili Shiism, and especially the Assassin sect, as a greater enemy. Drory typifies this view when he writes, "The Frankish menace continued to be perceived as confined to the battlefield, and even there it was regarded as ephemeral. The orthodox adherents of Islam continued to be more troubled by ideological threats from within."³²

While this view has some legitimacy, a greater problem seems to lie in the fragmented and fractious politics within the Seljuk-dominated Abbasid caliphate. While the Fatimid and Abbasid caliphates look on a map like two great powers, there was little unity within either, especially the Abbasid. After the death of Malik Shah in 1092, the Seljuk domination fragmented. All of the major cities of the Abbasid caliphate were dominated by various Seljuk kings and princes. Very few of these leaders controlled more than one major city, and they all fought with each other for control of dependent towns and farmlands and, sometimes, even for the rival city itself. Thus, what looks like a great Abbasid empire was in reality a swirling mass of warring city-states. Rarely did these leaders band together to fight the Franks, nor had they often banded together against the Fatamids.

Clearly power politics among the Seljuks took priority over *jihad* against the Franks. Two examples of the intervention of Mosul governors, that of Karbuqa in 1097 and that of Mawdud in 1111, will illustrate this issue.

In 1097, when the Franks were attacking northern Syria, they benefited from an ongoing state of war between the kings of Damascus and Aleppo. The governor of

³² Drory, *Early Muslim Reflections on the Crusaders*.

Antioch, through careful diplomacy, got the two kings (who, incidentally, were brothers) to band together with him against the Franks. They proved unable to lift the siege of Antioch unassisted, however.

Karbuqa, the *atabeg* of Mosul, was convinced to send a force into Syria, but it dissolved in the face of conflict among the various commanders. As Ibn-Athir relayed, “the *atabeg* so annoyed the Muslims that they decided to betray him at the battle’s most decisive moment.”³³ Karbuqa returned to Mosul without having engaged the Franks. The Franks took Antioch, and the kings of Aleppo and Damascus retreated to their cities to defend them.

A similar fractious attempt at intervention came in 1111. Citizens of Aleppo (without the support of Ridwan, king of Aleppo) made pleas for help in Baghdad and responded violently when they were ignored. They destroyed *minabeer* (pulpits) in protest and disrupted Friday sermons until the Seljuk Sultan, Muhammad, agreed to mount an expedition.³⁴ The expedition did march to Syria under the leadership of Mawdud, emir of Mosul. It fell apart rapidly, however, as many Syrian emirs didn’t support it, and the king of Aleppo barred the gates to his “allies.” The Mosul forces went home without fighting a battle. When the sultan sent the force back in 1113, this time going to Damascus, Mawdud was murdered, most believed under the orders of the *atabeg* of Damascus.

Sultan Muhammad raised a truly wide-based force in response and invaded Syria in 1115. When he arrived, he was met by a Frankish-Syrian coalition including the King of Jerusalem and the Seljuk leaders of Damascus and Aleppo. Clearly, Syrian Emirs saw the “foreign” co-religionist who was their theoretical superior as a much greater threat than the unbeliever Franks.

The primacy of power politics over religious zeal was to be seen time and time again throughout the era. Although attempts to unify the Muslims in *jihad* against the Franks began very early, they had mixed results throughout the Crusading era. Even at

³³ as quoted in Malouf, *Crusades through Arab Eyes*, 34.

³⁴ Drory, *Early Muslim Reflections on the Crusaders*.

the apogee of Islamic unity, Muslim rulers were still known to make treaties with the Franks while they dealt with fractious fellow Muslims.

D. THE GROWTH OF *JIHAD* RHETORIC

In the Ninth and Tenth Centuries, *jihad* as a unified struggle to expand the Dar al-Islam had largely died out. *Jihad* preaching continued, but the context had changed considerably with the stabilization of most borders. Most anti-Christian and anti-pagan *jihad* had become a case of raid and counter-raid along relatively set borders. Diluting *jihad* further was the use of the term against fellow Muslims, as mentioned earlier.

By 985, al-Muqaddasi said of Syria. “The inhabitants have no zeal for holy war and no vehemence in the fight against the enemy.”³⁵ Hillenbrand summarizes the state of *jihad* with her statement, “When the Crusaders approached the Holy Land in 1099 the disunited and strife-ridden Muslim world had, it seems, buried the idea of *jihad* deep into the recesses of its mind.”³⁶ One would think that the disastrous defeats and the clear religious divide would spark an immediate return of the *jihad* ideal, but, as seen above, this was not the case.

The dominant expression of Muslim opinion of the Franks both prior to and following the fall of Jerusalem was centered not on their religion, but on their personal habits. According to these views “The Franks did not follow civilized pursuits. They were filthy in their personal habits, lacking in sexual morality and proper marital jealousy, but courageous and redoubtable in war.”³⁷ While barbaric, they were martially respected, and even useful. They were not seen as a natural religious enemy who must be forced from the Muslim lands at all costs.

The first to seriously challenge this view was the Damascus legist as-Sulami, who wrote “The Book of *Jihad*” (*Kitab al-Jihad*) in 1105. As-Sulami’s work was widely ignored in his own generation, but set the groundwork for the revival of *jihad* ideology that began the 1140s. As-Sulami envisioned a three step process of *jihad*. He

35 Emmanuel Silvan, *L'Islam et la Croisade: Ideologie Et Propagande Dans Les Reactions Musulmanes Aux Croisades* (Paris: Librairie d'Amerique et d'Orient, 1968), 13. (author's translation from the French)

36 Hillenbrand, *Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 103.

37 Ibid, 274.

emphasized the need for a spiritual revival among the Muslims as a first step, urging them to undertake the greater *jihad*. His next step called for the unification of the Muslims of Syria, Egypt and the *Jazira*. Finally, the unified Muslim forces would expel the Franks.

E. THE “COUNTER CRUSADE:” RHETORIC BEGINS TO PRODUCE ACTION

It was as-Sulami’s second step, unification, that seemed particularly to appeal to Seljuk rulers. After as-Sulami, *jihad* was rarely invoked until late in the reign of Zengi (1126-1146). Some historians (modern and medieval-Muslim alike) consider Zengi a reviver of *jihad*, while others see him as interested only in extending his power at the expense of the Franks and/or of other Muslims. He did use some *jihad* rhetoric and claims, but was not truly thought of as a *mujahid* until 1144, when he conquered the County of Edessa. While the next conquest he set his sights on was Muslim Damascus, many contemporaries took his conquest of a Frankish state as a preliminary to a reconquest of Jerusalem and the *sahil*. Instead, he was killed in 1146, and his territories fractured once again.

The conquest of Edessa gave great impetus to previously sporadic calls for *jihad*. The Second Crusade (strangely aimed at Damascus, rather than the recapture of Edessa) truly built *jihad* momentum. For the first time, *jihad* sentiment and a major Frankish invasion coincided. The stage was set for Nur ad-Din (1146-1174) to take up the mantle of the leader of the *mujahidin*. While the vast majority of Nur ad-Din’s military career after the Second Crusade was spent fighting other Muslims, he consistently used *jihad* and the need for Muslim unity as the justification of his conquests. While besieging Damascus in 1151, he sent a message seeking capitulation which said, “I seek nothing but the good of the Muslims and *jihad* against the associators (*mushrikeen*, *i.e.*, the Franks) and the release of the prisoners in their hands. If the army of Damascus appears with us and aids us in the *jihad*, and matters go agreeably and appropriately, that is the extent of my wish and desire.”³⁸

38 Ibn al-Qalanisi, *Dhayl tarikh Dimishq*, 313. (author's translation from the Arabic)

Well known as a pious ruler and defender of Sunni orthodoxy, Nur ad-Din endowed many religious monuments and buildings, all of which bore inscriptions praising him as a leader of *jihad*. A skilled mobilizer of ideological motivations, “Nur ad-Din had numerous ‘agents,’ either paid or voluntary, at his disposal, and employed a great variety of methods for spreading his ideology throughout the entire social structure.”³⁹ It was during his reign that the recapture of Jerusalem became the centerpiece of the “Counter-Crusade.” Nonetheless, Nur ad-Din never directly threatened Jerusalem. His greatest accomplishment was the conquest of Egypt and the dissolution of the Ismaili Fatamid Caliphate. When he died, his realm went through the traditional fragmentation.

It was Saladin, Nur ad-Din’s erstwhile lieutenant in Egypt, who was to take up his mantle and realize the goal of Jerusalem. First, though, he spent a decade fighting fellow Muslims and made truces with the Franks as he attempted to consolidate his power. An astute student of Nur ad-Din, he never failed to couch his conquests in *jihadi* terms and mobilized significant *jihad* “propaganda.” Even more than his predecessor, Saladin aimed his *jihad* aspirations and rhetoric at Jerusalem. During his reign, the “Merits of Jerusalem” (*Fada’il al-Quds*) writings reached their peak, and, for the first time, included writers from outside Palestine, such as Baghdad’s Ibn al-Jawzi.

Prior to 1150, the position of Jerusalem was ambivalent among Muslims. On the one hand, it contains significant religious importance, especially al-Aqsa mosque. On the other hand, prior to the First Crusade, Hanbali scholars had already marginalized its position as a holy place due to its being “tainted by the influence of Judaeo-Christian traditions and innovations.”⁴⁰ During Nur ad-Din and Saladin’s reigns, Jerusalem, all but ignored from 1099-1150, became an object of deep longing. “Merits of Jerusalem” books became common and were frequently read aloud to evoke the sanctity of Jerusalem and the importance of its recapture. In 1187, Saladin realized his goal. By now, even Hanbalis were convinced, and Hanbali legist Ibn Qudama joined Saladin on his triumphal entry into Jerusalem on 2 October, 1187.

39 N. Elisseeff, “The Reaction of the Syrian Muslims After the Foundation of the First Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.” in *The Medieval Mediterranean: Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 400-1453, Volume 1*, Edited by M. Shatzmiller (Leiden: Brill, 1993).

40 Hillenbrand, *Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 141.

F. POST JERUSALEM: RETURN TO AN EBB AND FLOW OF HOSTILITY

Following the conquest of Jerusalem, Saladin's forces took every Frankish city and stronghold except Tyre, Tripoli, and Antioch. *Jihad* enthusiasm was difficult to sustain for these last few outposts. Blunting the Third Crusade took up the remainder of Saladin's energy for *jihad*. Upon his death, his region once again fragmented into various Ayyubid statelets, and, as had been seen so often before, many of them made treaties, and even alliances, with the Franks. The wave of *jihad* zeal among the rulers had spent itself on Jerusalem. By 1229, the Ayyubid Sultan al-Kamil went so far into pragmatism as to cede Jerusalem to Frederick II for ten years in exchange for military aid against his relatives. A similar ceding occurred in 1243 after the previous agreement expired.

In contrast, the continuous preaching of *jihad* and the importance of Jerusalem still had the power to motivate the average Syrian Muslim. In 1210, Sibt ibn al-Jawzi was able to whip up a spontaneous raid against Frankish territory with the pro-martyrdom story of Abu Qudama, a ninth century military leader against the Byzantines, who told of a Medinan woman who sent her hair into the "jihad" as a ransom for his horse, and who was overjoyed at the news of her son's martyrdom in the fighting.⁴¹ Sibt al-Jawzi reported of 1229 that "the news of the handing over of Jerusalem to the Franks arrived and all hell broke loose in all the lands of Islam."⁴²

Despite popular support, anti-Frankish *jihad* by the leaders and the army would have to wait for the 1250s and the Mamluk dynasty. The Mamluks enthusiastically embarked on *jihad* against both the Franks and the Mongols, and even against the Christians of Armenia. In 1291, after listening to a full recitation of the Qur'an, the Mamluk Sultan al-Ashraf marched on Acre, the last Frankish stronghold, and expelled the Franks from the Dar al-Islam.

G. LASTING EFFECTS?

Anti-Frankish *jihad* rhetoric and feeling began in earnest after a decade of Frankish occupation and reached its peak in the mid-twelfth century, but that the feeling

⁴¹ Daniella Talmon-Heller, "Muslim Martyrdom and Quest for Martyrdom in the Crusading Period." *Al-Masāq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 14, no.2 (2002) 132-139.

⁴² as quoted in Hillenbrand, *Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 221.

never fully took priority over local rivalries and other political considerations until the Mamluk era. Even at its previous height, during Saladin's control over Egypt and Syria, as much or more military effort was spent on fellow Muslims as upon Crusader armies and holdings. So what was the sum of all this rhetoric?

Most scholars see the anti-Christian propaganda of this era as religious scholars' attempts to convince rulers to wage *jihad*.⁴³ Others see it as aimed at the Muslim population, "encouraging resistance to the Frankish presence while simultaneously fostering intensified fidelity to Islam."⁴⁴ While not universally recognized by either rulers or the Muslim population, it resonated with both. The extensive thought and writing that went into the philosophy of *jihad* in this era re-awoke the centrality of both *jihad* and Jerusalem to Islam. These issues seem once again to have dwindled in importance as the cultural impetus waned. They were little noted among Arabs during the Ottoman era, as *jihad*, when taking place, was outside Arab lands, and Jerusalem once again became a relative backwater. Under recent conditions, however, both Jerusalem and *jihad* have re-kindled as issues of extreme importance in relations between Islam and the West. As for bitter reflection on an unprovoked and barbarous attack, this seems not to be found, even during the height of the *jihad* movement. Twelfth century Damascene Ibn Qalanisi, who had no use for his Frankish neighbors and consistently couched war against them as *jihad*, had little to say on the subject of what are now highly referenced atrocities. Of the siege of Ma'arra, for example, he makes no reference to the Crusader cannibalism that so horrified Fulcher of Chartres, saying only that "their supplies of food were exhausted, and they were reduced to eating carrion."⁴⁵ Of the taking of Jerusalem and the oft referenced massacre of its inhabitants, while Ibn al-Qalanisi does relate the tale of the burning of the Jews in their synagogue, of the other inhabitants, he says only

43 Silvan pioneered this approach in *L'Islam et la Croisade*.

44 Daphna Ephrat and Mustafa Daud Kabha. "Muslim Reaction to the Frankish Presence in Bilād Al-Shām: Intensifying Religious Fidelity within the Masses." *Al-Masāq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 15, no. 1 (2003): 47.

45 H.A.R. Gibb, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades: Extracted and translated from the chronicle of Ibn Al-Qalanisi* (Mineola, New York: Dover, 2002), 46.

that “a great host were killed.”⁴⁶ Contrast this with the more horrific description from Raymond of Aguilers who referred to seeing “piles of heads, hands, and feet...in the houses and the streets.”⁴⁷

One might think that the Arab memory of the Crusades would be seen as one of triumph, but a more common interpretation is one of loss and seeing Islam as having suffered bullying from the West. While the sources attempting to evoke Arab bitterness over this era point to many Frankish actions that could be sources of ill-will, they never successfully explain the scarcity of outrage about these actions at the time, nor the many examples of Frankish-Islamic cooperation throughout the era. It is also interesting to note that, although the Western invaders are “Franks” throughout the medieval Muslim chronicles, they are consistently “Crusaders” (*selibyeen*) in modern Arabic narrative. This points to a distinct change in attitude that has great importance for modern Muslim bitterness about, and reaction to, the Crusades. Indeed, it is telling that it is the Raymond of Aguilers version of the taking of Jerusalem that is common in modern Arabic histories. The Arabic edition of Philip Hitti’s “The Arabs: A Short History,” relates of the taking of Jerusalem that “swords were used on men, women, and children without exception, ‘until a profusion of heads, hands, and legs were seen in the streets and squares of the city.’”⁴⁸ As we will see in the following chapter, not only narrative description, but the very concept of the Crusades as a discrete historical event, come from Western sources.

⁴⁶ Gibb, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, 48.

⁴⁷ as quoted in Malcom Billings, *The Cross and the Crescent: A History of the Crusades* (New York: Sterling, 1988), 66.

⁴⁸ Philip Hitti, *al-'Arab: tarikh mu'akhar*, (Beirut: Dar al-'Alm lil-Miliayeen, 1946), 221. The interior quote is a paraphrase of Raymond of Aguilers' account.

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III. “THE CRUSADES” ENTER ARABIC DISCOURSE

While military campaigns that would later be known as part of the Crusades continued to be chronicled in Arabic sources for hundreds of years after the Crusading era ended, the Crusades as a unified historical occurrence remained foreign to Arab conceptions of history until the modern era. In the mid-nineteenth century, increasing ties between France, which had declared itself protector of Catholics within the Ottoman Empire as early 1638 and Arab Christians, particularly Maronites, in the Levant, brought the concept of the Crusades into Arabic historical discourse.

A. THE FRANCO-MARONITE CONNECTION

1. Ties of Economy and Protection

The Crusades’ entry into Arab discourse came in the context of competition between Maronites and Druze in that portion of the Levant now known as Lebanon. Significant economic ties between Mount Lebanon and Europe date back to the reign of emir Fakhr al-Din (1585-1635), who encouraged the cultivation of silk (sericulture) and established trading links with Tuscany and France. As was customary throughout the Ottoman Empire’s economic relations with European powers, the French did business under Capitulation treaties and predominantly through religious minorities. In this case, of course, their protégés were the Maronites. In 1638, France had declared itself the protector of Catholics within the Ottoman Empire and in 1658 appointed the head of the Maronite Khazin family as “vice-consul of France in Beirut, with the permission of the Porte.”⁴⁹

From the seventeenth century onwards, French economic involvement in Lebanon grew continually. These trends accelerated greatly in the early nineteenth century with the invention of the Jacquard loom, drastically increasing the French market for raw silk, and again in the mid-century when the domestic French raw silk production was hit by silkworm disease.⁵⁰ The silk trade and the connections that came with it were to have enormous societal implications, not least of which was the Maronite expansion into the

⁴⁹ Richard van Leeuwen, *The Political Emancipation of the Maronite Church in Mount Lebanon (1736-1842)* (Amsterdam: Stichting MERA, 1990).

⁵⁰ Patricia Baker, *Islamic Textiles* (London: British Museum Press, 1995), 153.

previously Druze-dominated region known as the Shuf. Druze landholders welcomed the additional hands to work their suddenly profitable lands, and, at this time, sectarian differences were more an administrative curiosity than a danger. As sericulture became more and more profitable, however, the increased economic power of Maronite peasants and merchants led both to their restlessness under Druze control and to Druze resentment of their riches.

These economic tensions were exacerbated in the nineteenth century by the tumultuous reign of Bashir Shihab II, a Maronite emir who ruled over Mount Lebanon (for the most part) from 1788-1840. His 1825 arrest and strangulation of the Druze emir Bashir Janbalat may have made him the unquestioned ruler of Mount Lebanon, but it also violently introduced sectarianism into Lebanese politics. The Druze saw this act as that of “a Christian Shihab enemy bent on destroying the Druzes.”⁵¹ It was his support of Mehmet Ali’s son Ibrahim Pasha during the Egyptian invasion and occupation of Syria from 1831-1840 that brought European influence into the contentious politics of Mount Lebanon. As Bashir had “openly sided with them [the Egyptians] against his Ottoman overlords when they attacked Syria and complied with their requests for tax levies and arms,”⁵² he was unsurprisingly deposed and exiled when the Ottomans regained control of Syria, with European assistance.

Bashir’s deposal left a power vacuum that both Druze and Maronites scrambled to fill. Neither group hesitated to appeal to European sponsors to influence the Ottoman court on their behalf. The Druze sought British support in sectarian terms, offering to “deliver up their Country to the protection of Great Britain,”⁵³ and the Maronites similarly appealed to the French in the name of Christian brotherhood.⁵⁴ It was in the

⁵¹ Leila Fawaz, *An Occasion for War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 19.

⁵² Ibid, 21.

⁵³ Wood to Ponsonby, 14 October 1839, in Ussama Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism: Community History, and Violence in Nineteenth-century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 61.

⁵⁴ Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 75-78.

context of this Maronite appeal to French sensibilities that new interpretations of history, including the popular European conception of the Crusades, entered Arab (though not yet Arabic) historiography.

2. Maronite Re-invention of History

The first, and most overt, Maronite attempt to reinvent the past to support current goals was Bishop Murad's "history" published in 1844. His *Notice historique sur l'origine de la nation Maronite et sur ses rapports avec la France, sur la nation Druze et sur les diverses populations du Mont Liban* sought to create a shared identity with its "guardian angel," France, in whose language the book was written and to whose king it was addressed,⁵⁵ and to create legitimacy for Maronite claims over Mount Lebanon. Murad presented the Maronite "nation" as a hold-out against the Saracens in their mountain fastness, later joined by Druze who, while they had performed some services for the Shihab emirs, were inherently backward, fanatical, and lazy. Makdisi's analysis is particularly apt:

By creating this absolute distinction between Maronite and Druze and by conveniently presenting the Maronites as the original possessors of the land to which the Druzes were latecomers, Murad was not only legitimating the Maronite Church's position on restoration but was also reworking Maronite identity, casting it in imaginary national sectarian terms that totally excluded the Druzes. Loyal to France and to the Crusaders, loyal to the idea and existence of Christianity in the Orient, and on the front line between Christendom and barbarism, Murad's Maronites urgently needed French assistance in the troubled post restoration times. "Lebanon," he wrote, is "like another French land," and France was the "*seconde patrie des Maronites*." To add scientific evidence to his various arguments, Murad concluded his narrative with appendices that explain the "genealogy of the [Christian] Princes of Lebanon" and that enumerated the different populations of Mount Lebanon in which the Maronites, of course, constituted the overwhelming majority.⁵⁶

For the first time, an Arab history, though written in French and predominantly to influence a French audience, included the concept of the Crusades. Why did Bishop Murad choose this particular frame? Because in the mid-nineteenth century it resonated

⁵⁵ Asher Kaufman, "Tell Us Our History": Charles Corm, Mount Lebanon and Lebanese Nationalism." *Middle East Studies* 40, no. 3, (2004): 1-28.

⁵⁶ Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 82-83.

very favorably with its intended audience. This was the era of European romantic re-interpretation of the Crusades, which were seen almost universally favorably. In an era of dynamic expansion and “civilizing missions,” the Crusades were presented in Europe as an early example of selfless devotion to combating evil at the cost of great hardship. The popular European conception of the Crusades at the time is typified by Sir Walter Scott’s immensely popular 1820 work of historical fiction, *Ivanhoe*, in which the hero is presented as the pinnacle of chivalry, a penniless knight-errant returned from years of combat in the Third Crusade. In contrast, the villain is a rich Templar knight who lives off the donations that the pious public have offered to support the Crusades, yet fails to live up to their high ideals.

This popular conception found its reflection in the academic work of the time as well. The French historian Francois Guizot wrote in 1828 that “the crusades constitute the heroic event of modern Europe,” presenting the movement as a “popular, national, and European impulsion” that seemingly foreshadowed national representative government.⁵⁷ In his estimation, the Crusades were driven by “the impulsion of religious sentiment and creeds” that called for struggle against “Mahommedanism” and by the restlessness of a society recently turned sedentary, for which “the wandering life had ceased, but not the inclination for its excitement and adventures.”⁵⁸ With such positive connotations, Bishop Murad had chosen a powerful presentation of Maronites as both inherently European and as the most faithful adherents to an epic struggle. As the Crusades meant little to nothing to his Arab and Druze neighbors at the time, presenting the Maronites as having been on the “other side” was a risk free strategy.

Within fifteen years, Bishop Murad’s concepts made their way into a Maronite work in the Arabic language. Published in 1859, Tanyus Shidyaq, a Maronite of the Hadduth clan, published *Kitab Akhbar al-a`yan fi Jabal Lubnan* (History of the Great Families of Mount Lebanon), which contains what appears to be the first documented use of the term “Crusades” (*al-hurub as-selibiyah*) in Arabic, though it is only a fleeting reference. In his introduction, Shidyaq credits the possibly apocryphal work “History of

⁵⁷ Francois Guizot, *History of Civilization, From the Fall of the Roman Empire to the French Revolution* (London: H.G. Bohn, 1846), 150.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 151-2.

the Crusades and the role of the Maronites” (*Tarikh al-hurub as-selibiyah wa-dawr al-Marouniin*), attributed to seventeenth/eighteenth century Maronite Patriarch Estefan al-Douihy.⁵⁹ No further information could be found about this work, which may be Shidyaq’s invention of a title for one of Douihy’s works better known by another name. Douihy wrote ten known historical manuscripts, though none even close to the given title. According to Peitro Kheir, however, Douihy’s then unpublished work *Series of Maronite Patriarchs* includes a depiction of Maronites eagerly greeting the arriving Franks,⁶⁰ making it possible that this is Shidyaq’s source. In any case, the use of the term in Arabic is a breakthrough.

Shidyaq’s work is a family history of each of the notable families of Lebanon. While he does not use the term “Crusades” again in his work, he does reference the Maronites, and especially the Murad family, as ardent supporters of their brother Christian Franks from 1099 through their expulsion in 1291. In his narrative, the Murad family is given a French progenitor in a (certainly apocryphal) French community in Tripoli prior to the Arab conquest of the Levant. At the time of the conquest, the Murad Bishop had moved his people to the mountains to protect them from the rising tide of Islam.⁶¹ In 1099, the Maronites are presented as gleefully greeting the arriving Franks. In 1250, when Louis IX arrived in Syria, emir Murad is represented as sending his son and 25,000 fighters to the king’s aid. In response, Shidyaq claims, Louis adopted the Maronites as “French.” Shidyaq then chronicles the Mamluk conquest of Acre, with long descriptions of Muslim atrocities, until all of the fortresses and coastal towns were taken by 1290 (in Shidyaq’s narrative, but 1291 according to most historians). Finally, with all of the other Christians expelled, Shidyaq describes a momentous attack on the Maronites of Kasrawan by “all the Muslims in the area,” but the outnumbered Maronites prevail.⁶²

The family resemblance between this work and Bishop Murad’s is clear, but Shidyaq was clearly writing for a local audience of notables. In addition to his hagiographic treatment of the Murad family, he wrote similar chapters about families of

59 Tanyus Shidyaq, *Kitab Akhbar al-a`yan fi Jabal Lubnan*. (Beirut: Butrus Bustani, 1859), 3.

60 Pietro Kheir, “Maroun,” at www.bachirgemayel.org, accessed 23 February, 2007.

61 Shidyaq, *Kitab Akhbar al-a`yan fi Jabal Lubnan*, 25.

62 Ibid, 207-210.

other religions, for example claiming descent from Abu Bakr for the Shihab family and presenting their puissance in battle *against* the Franks.⁶³ Great deeds during the Crusades were now part of a self-invention of history, and not just for external consumption.

3. The Catholic Printing Press in Beirut

The French interest in the Crusades, and their influence on Arab conceptions thereof, is born out in the publications of the French Jesuit supervised *Imprimerie Catholique* in Beirut. Two publications edited by the Jesuit Priest Louis Cheikho illustrate this process. In 1906, the *Imprimerie Catholique* released *Un Dernier Écho des Croisades* (A Final Echo of the Crusades), a collection of Arabic manuscripts extracted from the chronicles of various Muslim historians, most particularly Salih ibn Yahya, dealing with the Mamluk invasion of Crete. With the exception of the title and the introduction, both of which are in French, this book is entirely in Arabic and quotes the original manuscripts directly. The word “Crusades” is found nowhere in any of these manuscripts, the most recent of which was that of Ibn Sahim az-Zahiri from 1894 and all of which continue the tradition of referring to “the Franks.”. Nonetheless, in Father Cheikho’s estimation, the invasion of Crete, whose ruler still styled himself “King of Jerusalem,” was clearly the last act in a sweeping Crusade narrative, and as such it is presented.

In 1927, Father Cheikho presided over the publication of another work based on the chronicles of Ibn Yahya, *Kitab Ta’rikh Bayrut* (The Book of the History of Beirut). This work is entirely in Arabic, and, while those portions that are direct quotes of Ibn Yahya continue to use the term “Franks,” the publishers are not shy about the use of the terms “Crusades” and “Crusader,” which by now are assumed to be clear to a general Arabic speaking audience. In the introduction, the publishers reference both the title of their previous work, *Un Dernier Écho des Croisades*, in Arabic and that it deals with “French princes of Cyprus from the progeny of the Crusader Lusignans.”⁶⁴ Further, they write of Ibn Yahya’s manuscript, “One of the best things about this book is that it

⁶³ Shidyaq, *Kitab Akhbar al-a`yan fi Jabal Lubnan*, 44-45.

⁶⁴ Salih Ibn Yahya,, called Ibn Buhtur, and Louis Cheikho, and Hamzah ibn Ahmad Ibn Asbat. *Kitab Ta’rikh Bayrut*. (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1927), 3. (author’s translation from the Arabic)

mentions numerous matters pertaining to the French Crusader princes and their glorious deeds on these shores.”⁶⁵ The term shows up again in the body of the text. Under the discussion of the various conquerors of Beirut, from the first Muslim forces in 635, the Fatamids in 1014, Mustansir in 1057, and the Franks in 1118, the publishers included a note that for more information on Beirut during the era “between the time of Arslan and the Crusaders, see our book *Beirut, its History and Relics*.”⁶⁶ Parenthetically, for all that Father Cheikho had previously presented the invasion of Crete as an episode of the Crusades, this more complete collection of Ibn Yahya’s writings on the subject shows that he presented the entire affair as being instigated by Basque pirates. The Franco-Catholic interest in the Crusades is clear in the presentation given these works, and by the time of the second, the use and general understanding of the term is implicit.

B. FIRST ARABIC HISTORIES OF THE CRUSADES

1. Patriarch Mazlum’s History

The tale of the first history of the Crusades written in Arabic is shrouded in academic mystery. No copies are available for viewing, at least without considerable further research and perhaps a trip to Jerusalem. The original Western source is unknown to current scholarship, and even its author’s name is doubtful. There is also confusion as to the Arabic translator. This study will endeavor to clear up some of this confusion and offer a solution to this mystery. According to Emmanuel Sivan, “a ‘History of the Holy Wars in the East, otherwise called the Wars of the Cross,’ translated into Arabic from French, appeared in Jerusalem in 1865, bearing the *imprimatur* of the Patriarch of the Holy City.”⁶⁷ In his endnote to this statement, he cites “M. Monrond, *Ta’rikh al-hurub al-muqaddasa fi-l-mashriq al-mad’uwwa harb al-salib*, transl M. Mazlum.”⁶⁸ This reference is widely cited⁶⁹, but no one has shed any further light on what the original source of this work may be. In the course of researching the work of Hariri (as discussed

⁶⁵ Ibn Yahya, *Kitab Ta’rikh Bayrut*, 3.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 18. (author’s translation from the Arabic)

⁶⁷ Emmanuel Sivan, *Modern Arab Historiography of the Crusades* (Kfar Chabad: Tel-Aviv University, 1973), 10.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 55.

⁶⁹ eg, Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 592. and Edward Peters, “The Firanj are Coming--Again,” *Orbis*, 48, no.1 (2004) 3-17.7. Both of these citations further cloud the issue by attributing to Sivan’s “M. Mazlum” the full name Muhammad Mazlum.

below, the first Muslim to write a history of the Crusades), one finds in his list of references “*The History of the Holy Wars*, which Maximus Mazlum translated into Arabic.”⁷⁰ This makes it clear that the referenced work was not simply printed under the *imprimatur* of the Patriarch, but was actually translated by Maximus III Mazlum, Melkite Patriarch of Jerusalem from 1833 through 1855, though it was apparently published posthumously. While Maximus is best known for having achieved recognition for the Melkites as separate *millet* within the Ottoman Empire and adding the Sees of Antioch and Alexandria to that of Jerusalem, prior to his election as Patriarch, he accomplished several translations of religious works from Italian into Arabic, so further translation efforts are unsurprising.

As for the source work itself, it is likely that the spelling of the author’s name as “Monrond” is a result of the transliteration into Arabic, and subsequent re-transliteration into the Latin alphabet, of the French “Montrond.” While no known authors of the era bear the surname “Monrond,” Maxime de Montrond was a prolific French author of popular histories in the mid-nineteenth century. Although no copies could be located, one of his cited works was *Historie des Croisades*, published in Paris in 1840.⁷¹ The context of the citation makes it clear that Montrond’s work discussed positive relationships between the Crusaders and the indigenous Christians and thus makes it a likely candidate for translation by Patriarch Maximus III Mazlum. While this cannot be conclusively proven without a comparative reading of each text, it appears that the first Arabic language history of the Crusades was Patriarch Maximus III’s translation of Maxime de Montrond’s *Historie des Croisades*, published in Jerusalem in 1865. Although the very mystery surrounding this work shows its limited impact on the Arab world, it did serve as a source for Western conceptions of the Crusades for Hariri, for whom it was the only Western source cited.

2. The First Arab Muslim History of the Crusades

This interest in the Crusades, inspired by the interaction between Europeans, especially the French, and levantine Christians, finally made it’s way into the Arab

⁷⁰ Sayyid `Ali Hariri, *Kitab al-akhbar al-saniyah fi al-Hurub al-Salibiyah* (Cairo: al-Matba`ah al-`Umumiyah, 1899), 3. (author's translation from the Arabic)

⁷¹ Cesar Mourani, *L'Architecture Religieuse de Cobiath sous les Croisés* at http://www.kobayat.org/data/books/cesar_mourani/cobiath/index.htm, accessed 29 January, 2007.

Muslim conception in 1899, when Sayyid `Ali Hariri published his groundbreaking *Kitab al-akhbar al-saniyah fi al-Hurub al-Salibiyah* (*Book of the Splendid Stories of the Crusades*) in Cairo in 1899. As his introduction indicates, the concept of the Crusades already had resonance among Turkish court circles, for the Sultan had previously made reference to European-Ottoman interaction as being a new form of Crusade. This statement bought no response from Arabs, Hariri seems convinced, because the concept meant little to them. Thus, he set out to rectify that situation and wrote his work to educate Arab speakers about the Crusades as a distinct occurrence. His goals are clear in his introduction:

For what follows, the importance of the Crusades, which happened during the bygone era, is not hidden from everyone. The Popes and clerics incited the people of Europe to attack the Muslims, and the Crusaders hurried to seize Syria with the goal of removing Jerusalem from the hands of Islam. Following that came a unification of the Muslims and the removal of the Crusaders from the land and the difficulties, failures, ruin, and confusion that those Crusaders faced.

It is given that the Kings of Europe are now colluding against our country (may God protect it) such that it resembles what those gone by had done. Therefore, our great Sultan, our most exalted Khakhan, he who is protected by the double lion, Abd al-Hamid II, said that Europe is once again waging a Crusading war on us, in a political form. Since the community of Arabic readers don't have a book in our language that encompasses the wars of the Crusades so that we can know the truth about them, though we can find bits about them in books of history, free of any information about their reasons, their intentions, their outcome, etc., I took up this book, which I named 'The Splendid Stories of the Crusades.' I took a precise interest in writing this comprehensive book of the eight Crusader wars, elucidating each of these wars singularly, clarifying its reasons and instigators and the travel of its military forces and what the Crusaders did by way of fighting the Muslim Kings. I have also clarified the history of the Kings of Islam from the era of these wars who had interaction with the Crusaders from the year 490 *hijri* until the year 690 *hijri*, in which the Crusaders were driven out of Syria, in a simple manner, free of complexity and boring prolixity.⁷²

The general narrative of Hariri's book is an interesting contrast of long portions of classical Arab chronicles quoted *in extenso* for those stories of the related to the Crusades

⁷² Hariri, *Kitab al-akhbar al-saniyah fi al-Hurub al-Salibiyah*, 2-3. (author's translation from the Arabic)

that had been covered by these sources, and portions that read as though they are similarly quoted from non-academic Western sources of the era.⁷³ The writing style changes considerably between the two, but it is most telling that those passages taken from older Arabic sources consistently use the term “Franks,” whereas the rest of the book uses the term “Crusaders” throughout.

Hariri was writing in a time when Egypt, while nominally still part of the Ottoman Empire, was under the *de facto* control of Great Britain. By 1876, Britain and France had assumed considerable control over Egypt’s economy under the Debt Commission. In 1882, Britain intervened in the Urabi uprising of Arab nativist officers and occupied Egypt. While this was all done in the name of *khedive* Tawfiq, and British control remained, technically, “assistance,” British domination of Egypt was firmly entrenched. Hariri’s dissatisfaction with this state of affairs is clear in his introduction, both above and in his entreaty on behalf of the Sultan.

I beseech God, creator of the heavens and earth, of the sincere heart, to bring the ‘High State’⁷⁴ eternal power and eternal victory, such that the Ottomans and the Muslims live forever in sovereignty and exaltation, and that He may protect His Majesty the Great Sultan and Caliph, the greatest of the Ghazi,⁷⁵ Abd al-Hamid II, and that He [God] protect Egypt under the shade of His Majesty.⁷⁶

Although Hariri presents himself as an Ottoman nationalist in this introduction, his presentation of the Crusades appears more a sort of proto-Egyptian nationalism. His account of the Crusades concentrates on the role of Saladin as a “Golden Age” hero, not just of Muslims, but of Egypt in particular. Here, Hariri benefits considerably from Western sources, which had long since made of Saladin the “flower of Saracen Chivalry” and noble foil to Richard the Lion-Hearted. He relates several of the favorite Western tales of Saladin likely found in Mazlum’s translated French history, such as the

⁷³ For instance, the story of Peter the Hermit gives him as the originator of the idea of the Crusades, following a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Reportedly, he was saddened to see it in Muslim hands, so upon his return he convinced Urban II to call for a Crusade. This story is presented by William of Tyre in his 12th century chronicle and was common in Nineteenth Century popular accounts of the Crusades, but has been long been considered apocryphal by scholars, as it appears in none of the first hand accounts.

⁷⁴ The Ottoman Empire.

⁷⁵ “War Leader,” a title popular with the Turks who led raids on Christian lands during the Ottoman-Byzantine struggle.

⁷⁶ Hariri, *Kitab al-akhbar al-saniyah fi al-Hurub al-Salibiya*, 3.

apocryphal exchange of letters between Richard the Lion-Hearted and Saladin negotiating over the status of Jerusalem and the True Cross that Saladin reportedly captured when he took Jerusalem. In this exchange, Hariri quotes Saladin's letter as stating

Jerusalem is for us as it is to you, and the country was ours by origin. Your conquest befell it because of the weakness of the Muslims at that time. As for the true cross, its destruction is a great opportunity for us, impermissible for us to neglect it unless for some reason beneficial to Islam.⁷⁷

As well as presenting Saladin as a hero of both Islam and Egypt, Hariri consistently presents Egypt as a natural independent unit, an attack on which was an attack on "the Egyptians." This calls for a certain amount of mental agility; when considering the Ayyubids, Hariri considers the conquest of Fatamid Egypt by Nur ad-Din's general Asad al-Din "attacking the Egyptians,"⁷⁸ whereas the actions of Asd al-Din's successor and nephew Saladin are construed as working for Egypt's independence.⁷⁹ Hariri similarly excises much of the hostility towards the Fatamids found in many of the period chronicles he quotes from. While the Fatamids are referenced as Shia (using the terms *alawi* and *mehdi'in*), he avoids calling them Isma'eili, a term he reserves for the Assassins. While the Assassins of Damascus are presented as allies of the Franks, the Fatamid Caliphs are, like their Sunni counterparts given the title "Protector of God's Religion."⁸⁰

Hariri's interpretive readings of his sources are far from flagrant, but they do indicate that even in this first Arab history of the Crusades written by a Muslim and incorporating both Arabic and Western accounts, the current context was influencing the presentation. This phenomenon would accelerate greatly as Crusade references began to be more familiar and emerging contexts gave them increased resonance. Hariri's work served as both a springboard and a foreshadowing of later, more polemic histories.

⁷⁷ Hariri, *Kitab al-akhbar al-saniyah fi al-Hurub al-Salibiya*, 202.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 88.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 109.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 49.

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IV . THE CRUSADES IN MODERN ARAB HISTORIOGRAPHY

The early twentieth century was an era in which Arab authors spent little time on the Crusades. This is surprising, as it was this era that included the British formalization of their colonial status in Egypt, Allied Powers' war against the Ottoman Empire (and, thus, the technical Caliph), and France's 1920 invasion of Syria and deposition of King Faisal, assumption of mandate control, and creation of the independent and majority Christian state of Lebanon. However, as much as these actions may seem likely candidates for analysis as parallel to the Crusades, this concept was not yet well enough established in the Arab world to resonate. Instead, the parallels came from the colonial powers, who spread Crusade allusions widely.

Among the most widely reported of these allusions, the two best known are those of General Allenby's capture of Jerusalem in 1917 and General Gouraud's capture of Damascus in 1920. It is almost certainly apocryphal that Allenby remarked on his entry to Jerusalem that "today the Crusades are over." Certainly his memoirs contain no such quote, nor do any press reports at the time. That said, however, Crusade allusions to the campaign were all through the British popular press. The first, and most overt, of these was the publication in *Punch* magazine just a week after Allenby's entry, a cartoon showing Richard the Lion-Hearted looking down from heaven upon the scene in Jerusalem and commenting happily, "At last, my dream comes true."⁸¹ There is more evidence for the tale of General Gouraud's conquest of Damascus, after which he was said to have visited Saladin's tomb, kicked it and declared "Awake, Saladin! We have returned," though the exact words are not recorded. Neither of these incidents drew widespread comment from the Arab Muslim population at the time, for whom the Crusades were a relatively obscure concept. With a few decades of colonial rule to absorb the new vision of history, and then the sudden prospect of the creation of the state of Israel to draw new parallels, Arab histories of the Crusades proliferated, and colonial and Zionist parallels became the dominant interpretation.

81 Eitan Bar-Yosef, "The Last Crusade? British Propaganda and the Palestine Campaign, 1917-18." *Journal of Contemporary History* 36, no. 1 (2001). 87-109.

A. ARAB NATIONALIST INTERPRETATIONS OF THE CRUSADES

The study of the Crusades became an important part of Arab academic writing after World War II and continues to be a popular subject to this day. The dominant viewpoint has been through the lens of Arab nationalism, and several themes have predominated in interpreting the Crusades. The most ubiquitous of these themes is the drawing of parallels between the Crusades and colonialism and/or the establishment of Israel. Also common to these works is the issue of Arab unity. In earlier works, the Crusades are seen both as a symptom of lack of unity and as a triumph for “regained” unity. This offered a clear road map to victory for Arabs of the day. Thus, in Hasan Habashi’s view in his 1947 work *Nur ad-Din and the Crusaders: The Islamic Revival and Convergence Movement in the Sixth Century Hijri*,⁸² success came for the Arabs after Nur ad-Din unified Syria, Egypt, and northern Iraq under one polity, forming an example of how “the occurrences of the Middle Ages in the Near East show how these countries were able to defend themselves against the dangers of the Crusader forces.”⁸³ As the dream of Arab Unity drifted away, the dark lessons of disunity continued to be emphasized, but the triumphant power of unity was less often invoked as the notion of Arab defeat of Israel became, perhaps, less realistic. The imagined consequences of the Crusades play a large role throughout the literature, that similarly seems more one sided as the hoped for reversal of relative power for the Arabs fails to materialize. The modern Arab historiography of the Crusades is both consciously and subconsciously contemporary in nature. Not only do the authors explicitly draw parallels and lessons about current affairs, but the image of the current state of affairs influences the lens of implicit interpretation.

1. Post World War II

Four works make up this study’s sample of Arab histories of the Crusades written between the end of World War II and the Suez Crisis of 1956. The first is Habashi’s 1947 study of Nur ad-Din quoted above. In the same year, Habashi published another book, entitled *The First Crusade*.⁸⁴ Between these two works, he covers the period from

82 Hasan Habashi, *Nur al-Din wa-al-Salibiyyun: harakat al-faqah wa-al-tajammu` al-Islami fi al-qarn al-sadis al-Hijriyah* (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-`Arabi, 1947).

83 Ibid, 6. (author's translation from the Arabic)

84 Hasan Habashi, *al-Harb al-salibiyah al-ula* (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-`Arabi, 1947).

1099-1174. His works were followed in 1949 by ‘Abd al-Latif Hamzah’s *Literature of the Crusades*,⁸⁵ which was followed in turn by Juzif Yusif’s *Louis the Ninth in the Middle East, 1250-1253 A.D.: The Plight of Palestine in the Age of the Crusades*.⁸⁶

Habishi: *Nur ad-Din and the Crusaders*

Habashi’s work was written before the partition of Palestine and thus, rather than looking at a specific contemporary problem, he concentrates his interpretation on the virtues of the “unified Islamic front,”⁸⁷ which is implicitly Arab. The fact that his Golden Age hero, Nur ad-Din, is a Seljuk Turk is glossed over. He is more interested in how his hero is presented by history. In Habashi’s view, Muslim chroniclers of the era over-emphasized Nur ad-Din’s religious side, spending too much of their chronicles discussing his efforts to solve and mediate religious issues within his territory, which makes it seem as though he didn’t have much concern over “the violent struggle between East and West, the appearance of the Latin principalities in the East, and the Muslim’s efforts to extirpate these principalities.”⁸⁸ The Christian authors, on the other hand, had it right when they presented Nur ad-Din as an epic enemy. Of course, being on the wrong side, they tended to demonize him. Habishi is particularly concerned here with getting the “right blend” that shows Nur ad-Din as both a pious leader of the community and a heroic unifier and enemy of the Crusaders.

Habishi’s primary Western source is Stevenson’s 1907 work, *Crusaders in the East*, an already somewhat dated study, notable mostly for its early attempts to put together a history of the Crusader states using significant Arab sources and for its hagiographic depictions of Saladin. While Habashi’s extensive use of this source in 1947 is not of particular note, we will see that Stevenson continues to be a heavily cited source throughout the works included in this study, long past the era of any academic credibility for this work in Western academe. It is likely that Stevenson continues in use so long

85 Abd al-Latif Hamzah, *Adab al-Hurub al-Salibiyah* (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-‘Arabi, 1948).

86 Juzif Nasim Yusuf, *Luyis al-tasi` fi al-sharq al-awsat, 1250-1254: qadiyat Filastin fi `asr al-hurub al-salibiyah* (Cairo: s.n., 1956).

87 Habashi, *Nur al-Din wa-al-Salibiyun*, 7.

88 Ibid, 7.

because his romantic presentation of Saladin resonates much more favorably than more modern Western studies that provide more nuanced approaches.

Hamzah: *Literature of the Crusades*

Hamzah's work, published shortly after *al-nakba* ("the disaster," the contemporary Arab term for the 1948 Arab-Israeli War), shows the immediate effect this event had on interpreting the Crusades. He opens his book with

In this afflicted age in our Egyptian modern history, a violent crisis is passing among us, which this generation have dealt with and perhaps future generations will as well. This crisis is our struggle on behalf of Palestine, hoping for its freedom from the covetousness of the Jews.⁸⁹

Hamzah self consciously approaches the Crusades as a representative of the Arabs and conflates the Crusades with Palestine in no uncertain terms.

This crisis has awakened the intellect to the Crusades. Cultured people in all the Arab countries have begun to want to know something about the history of this religious war, and about its Arab literature. And that is what led me to answer this desire for the entire kingdom of the Arabic language in Egypt....I am happy to dedicate this book to the martyrs who died on behalf of Palestine and wrote upon its land with their blood, inscribing a page from among the pages of Arab gallantry and military honor. May God the Highest grant success to the first jihad of His Majesty, King Farouk, and guide the steps of his brother Arab Kings and presidents so their jihad bears fruit and they all realize their hopes.⁹⁰

As well as clarifying the parallels between the Crusades, whose Latin principalities "resembled a foreign patch on the garment of the Muslim world,"⁹¹ and the new patch which he hopes can soon be excised, Hamzah's comments mark him as part of the "Arab Awakening" based in a resurgent Arabic language literature. In his estimate, the poems of the era, written in Arabic, express the true feelings of the truly Arab masses who demanded action against the Crusaders, as opposed to the official court letters that were written for political purposes.⁹² Sivan has justifiably taken issue with this assessment, as almost all poetry of the era was written under court patronage and "a great

⁸⁹ Hamzah, *Literature of the Crusades*, 3. (author's translation from the Arabic)

⁹⁰ Ibid, 4. (author's translation from the Arabic)

⁹¹ Ibid, 17. (author's translation from the Arabic)

⁹² Hamzah, *Literature of the Crusades*, 19.

deal of the poems of Jihad took the form of panegyrics (*madih*) or were composed according to explicit instructions of the poet's patrons and served the latter's immediate political purposes."⁹³

Hamzah's take on Arab poetry of the era is one of many ways that Arab nationalist interpretations of the Crusades tended to "Arabize" the "Counter-Crusade" *jihad*. These poems are presented as evidence that the Arab masses were the driving force behind the "popular revival movement in the Muslim countries to do away with the Crusaders in some of their regions."⁹⁴ While the military leadership of the (as we have seen in the period sources) "on-again, off-again" *jihad* was entirely non-Arab, the argument is that the leadership may have dragged their feet, but the masses were steadfast and pushed their leaders towards action. Even Yusif, whose work, aside from its title and a brief mention in the introduction of the Crusades as "one among many episodes in the long struggle between East and West of which history is overfull from the earliest ages until our current days,"⁹⁵ seems mostly value-neutral, supports this interpretation of an Arab masses-driven *jihad*. In a claim not supported by any known period account of the incident, Yusif asserts that popular indignation at the notion pressured the Mamluks to break off peace negotiations with Louis IX.⁹⁶

A final aspect of the Crusades whose interpretation begins in the post-World War II literature is that of the reasons for the initiation of the Crusades. Most sources do accept the claims of period Western sources that mistreatment of Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land lead to the Crusades as a factor, but as one expects of historians, they also sought other factors to explain the movement. These early interpretations offer a variety of factors, which, we will see, become more dominated by claims of colonial goals in later works. Hamzah offers six factors that lead to the Crusades, only one of which seems directly parallel to colonialism. According to his account, the Crusades were influenced by: 1) Seljuk treatment of Christian pilgrims; 2) Princes and the Catholic Church wanting to find an outlet that would benefit them for the "general warlike

93 Sivan, *Modern Arab Historiography of the Crusades*, 35.

94 Habashi, *Nur al-Din wa-al-Salibiyyun*, 6. (author's translation from the Arabic)

95 Yusuf, *Luyis al-tasi` fi al-sharq al-awsat*, 3. (author's translation from the Arabic)

96 Ibid, 163.

activities that European countries experienced as a result of the feudal and chivalric systems;” 3) a wish to solve overpopulation in Europe; 4) hopes to benefit materially from the founding of the Crusader states, especially among the Italian merchants who supplied shipping; 5) “the desire of the slaves [serfs] to rid themselves of the shadow of control, for they were oppressed by the feudal system;” and 6) a response to the Seljuk conquest of Christian lands in Armenia and Byzantium which upset the Roman Catholic Church.⁹⁷ While Hamzah provides no citation for this enumeration, it seems to be a paraphrase of Stevenson’s account of the motivating factors behind the Crusades.⁹⁸ Of these, only number four sounds like colonialism, and general hostility to Islam is not found at all. These two interpretations become conventional in later works.

2. After the “Tripartite Aggression”

In 1952, the Free Officers movement overthrew the British-supported King Farouk of Egypt, leading to the presidency of Jamal ‘Abd al-Nasser, a staunch Arab Nationalist and opponent of colonialism. In 1956, Nasser nationalized the privately (and mostly French and British) held Suez Canal company. This nationalization led to extreme tension between Britain and France on the one hand and Egypt on the other, eventually leading to military conflict. Israel, already at loggerheads with Egypt, allied with Britain and France, and the three attacked Egypt jointly, with Israel invading on 29 October 1959, and Britain and France joining in two days later, after their “offer” to occupy the area and separate the warring parties was rejected by Nasser. International pressure eventually forced all three parties to withdraw from Egyptian soil. This attack, generally referred to as the “Suez Crisis,” is known in Egypt as the “Tripartite Aggression.”

With attacks from the two great European powers and a Europe-supported “imposed state” in the Middle East, the Crusades parallels were obvious, and previous experience and writings had made the concept highly resonant. The predictable response came quickly, with Charles Issawi’s publication of “Crusades and Current Crises in the Near East: A Historical Parallel” in the British magazine *International Affairs* in July of

⁹⁷ Hamzah, *Literature of the Crusades*, 16. (author's translation from the Arabic)

⁹⁸ William Stevenson, *The Crusaders in the East: A Brief History of the Wars of Islam with the Latins in Syria during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907), 4-8.

1957.⁹⁹ Issawi, a native speaker of Arabic, published a translated copy of his article in the same year in the Beirut magazine *al-Abhath* (research). A similarly marked parallel was drawn by al-Kholi, in his historical novel *The Tripartite Aggression in the Middle Ages* (*al-'Udwan al-thulathi fi al-'Usur al-Wusta*);¹⁰⁰ though, as a work of fiction, this work falls outside the scope of this study. Two other works will join Issawi in illustrating the thrust of Arab Crusade scholarship between the Suez Crisis and the Six Day War, al-Najjar's 1962 work *The Crusaders and Saladin*¹⁰¹ and Ashur's 1963 *The Crusade Movement: Description of the History of the Arab Jihad in the Middle Ages*.¹⁰²

Issawi: "Crusades and Current Crises in the Near East"

Issawi, though of Cairene origin, was a professor of economics at Columbia University at the time of his article on Crusade-Suez Crisis parallels. He thus unsurprisingly concentrated on economic factors involved in the disputes. Nonetheless, many of the themes first introduced in the post-World War II literature find support here, many quoting Runciman's well known (and at the time, the West's cutting edge of Crusades research) *A History of the Crusades*. Issawi weighs in on both the "Arabness" of the issue and the dangers of Arab disunity in his quote of Runciman that "It was, above all, the disunion of the Arabs that permitted the small intrusive state to be established in their lands."¹⁰³ That these lands are inherently Arab is accepted as given, even though Issawi proceeds to chronicle in the next paragraph the Fatamid seizure of "southern Palestine" from the Seljuk Turks, who had held it at the arrival of the Franks. Issawi similarly participates in the lionization of Saladin and both his and the *jihad*'s "Arabization," drawing triumphant parallels to modern Egypt.

The next point of similarity is more fundamental. It was pointed out that, under the shock of Crusader intrusion, the Arab states in Egypt and Syria coalesced under Salahuddin. This process was not, however, a

⁹⁹ Charles Issawi, "Crusades and Current Crises in the Near East: A Historical Parallel." *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-) 33, no. 3. (1957): 269-279.

¹⁰⁰ Mohammad al-Shadhili Khuli, *al-'Udwan al-thulathi fi al-'Usur al-Wusta* (Cairo: al-Dar al-Qawmiyah, 1963).

¹⁰¹ Muhammad al-Tayyib Najjar, *al-Salibiyun wa-Salah al-Din* (Cairo: s.n, 1962).

¹⁰² 'Abd al-Fattah Sa'id 'Ashur, *al-Harakah al-Salibiyah: safhah mushriqah fi tarikh al-jihad al-'Arabi fi al-'Usur al-Wustá* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anjilu al-Misriyah, 1963).

¹⁰³ Issawi, "Crusades and Current Crises in the Near East," 272.

mere dynastic union; it was part of a far reaching social change. It involved the replacement of the luxury-loving, cultured, easygoing, tolerant Fatamids by stronger, more coarse-grained, more single-minded successors. The change was consummated under the Mamalukes, a military caste whose primary interest was warfare....A similar change has taken place in Egypt from the supine, polished, luxury-loving society of the 1930s and 1940s to the rougher, healthier, less easy-going, more militaristic society of today.

Moreover, in both cases, popular hostility to foreign intrusion was largely responsible for the change.¹⁰⁴

In support of his thesis of popular hostility, Issawi cites several examples, none taken from a period Arabic source, and includes Yusef's apocryphal tale of popular pressure forcing the Mamluks to break off negotiations with Louis IX cited above.¹⁰⁵ Issawi is also the first to introduce the "draining effect" of the struggle against the Crusades, a thesis that becomes increasingly popular as modern low levels of relative power for the Arabs become more acute, or at least clearer.

The Mamalukes succeeded in their main military objective, the expulsion of the Crusaders, but in the process they overstrained the economy of their country, sacrificing first agriculture and industry and then, as will be seen below, international trade. The last years of their rule were marked by inflation, a decline in rates of exchange, and a fall in the standards of living and of culture.¹⁰⁶

Both current and future decline are shown as caused by the Crusades.

The last parallelism is the most dramatic of all. While the Moslems were fighting the Crusaders, a new and far greater danger began to loom on the horizon, the Mongol invasion....As Runciman put it: 'But had it not been for the Crusaders, the Arabs would have been far better able to meet the Mongol aggression. The intrusive Frankish State was a festering sore that the Moslems could never forget. So long as it distracted them they could never wholly concentrate on other problems.' As a result, although in desperate battle the Mamalukes later on preserved Egypt from the Mongol invasion, they could not save Iraq or Syria. Al Musta'sim was slaughtered, together with scores of thousands of his subjects; his capital

104 Issawi, "Crusades and Current Crises in the Near East," 274.

105 Ibid, 274-5

106 Ibid, 274.

was ruined, and Iraq was so thoroughly devastated that it did not recover for over six centuries. Syria was wrecked only comparatively less. One wonders whether, in this respect, history will repeat itself.¹⁰⁷

While Issawi doesn't make his "possible greater enemy" clear (Perhaps the U.S.S.R.?), his estimate of the long-term negative effects of the Crusades for Islam would resonate highly. Issawi's conceptions seem largely taken from Runciman's *A History of the Crusades*. Runciman's list of woes brought on by the Crusades is long and doleful, covering the last eight pages of his monumental work and offering negative effects for Western Christendom, Islam (which he conflates neatly with Arab civilization), and most of all Eastern Christendom¹⁰⁸. The rest of Runciman's negative effects would soon be disputed by Arab scholars who argued for Western gain from the Crusades, but the notions of the Crusades as the birthplace of civilizational decline for the Arabs would only gain ground.

Najar: *The Crusaders and Saladin*

Najar's book, while it adds little to the narrative, is the first to present the Crusades in a completely cynical light. In his estimation, the goals of the Crusades were aimed at "material desires under a deceptive screen of religion."¹⁰⁹ He draws more implicit parallels to colonial economic exploitation than Hamzah's above in his claims that the trading cities of the Mediterranean were in favor of the Crusades because they feared that the Seljuks would expand to the Mediterranean and squeeze them out of lucrative trade routes.¹¹⁰ Further, he offers as the primary goal of the Crusades "to take a region of Asia and all of its riches."¹¹¹ He also is an adherent of the long-term negative effects of the Crusades. While he presents Saladin and his conquest of Jerusalem in a triumphant light, his overall assessment of the Crusades is that they are explanatory for

107 Issawi, "Crusades and Current Crises in the Near East, 275.

108 Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), 472-480.

109 Najar, *The Crusaders and Saladin*. 2. (author's translation from the Arabic)

110 Najar, *The Crusaders and Saladin*, 8.

111 Ibid, 2. (author's translation from the Arabic)

Arab disadvantage in the modern world, referring to “the Crusades which distressed the Muslim world for two complete centuries, and of which we still suffer from the effects to the current time.”¹¹²

Ashur: *The Crusade Movement*

If Najar’s book is moderate in its level of interpretation, Ashur’s is a polemic. To Ashur, the story of the Crusades is something of a morality play, offering important lessons in how to deal with current crises. The parallels are all explicit and highly normative. In Ashur’s estimation, studying the Crusades is important in order to “learn from mistakes of the past and avoid them in the future”¹¹³ in dealing with “the most important danger facing the Arab Nation today, Israel and its supporters, the regressive forces of colonialism.”¹¹⁴ Arab unity is paramount for Ashur, who saw the Crusades as succeeding in getting a foothold in “the heart of the Arab Nation” due to disunity, as “the appearance of weakness, political dissolution, and civilizational lingering really began after the Arab Nation was divided before the First Crusade began.”¹¹⁵ Thus Buyyid and Seljuk domination over the Arab Caliphate were the progenitors of weakness, and the Arab Nation became strong again with the appearance of the “unity movement,” when Arabs refused to “follow traitorous leaders.”¹¹⁶ These traitorous leaders, who “cooperated with the Crusaders against the unity movement” are presented as equivalent to those “cooperating with Israel against freedom groups.”¹¹⁷ And though the “Arab Nation saw many conspiracies against it” in the Crusade era, unity won out in the end, “returning the land to its Arab owners.”¹¹⁸

To Ashur, the point of studying the Crusades is clear. It aims towards “protecting the Arab’s rights, and the existence of Arabness, and to guarantee our children a free and

112 Najar, *The Crusaders and Saladin*, 9. (author's translation from the Arabic)

113 Ashur, *The Crusade Movement*, 3. (author's translation from the Arabic)

114 Ibid, 8. (author's translation from the Arabic)

115 Ibid, 4. (author's translation from the Arabic)

116 Ashur, *The Crusade Movement*, 10.

117 Ibid, 6.

118 Ibid, 8-9.

generous life in our great Arab Nation.”¹¹⁹ He presents the Crusaders as atrocity-prone invaders (quoting Western sources for the atrocities, as they were little remarked by the period Arab chroniclers) and then excuses any atrocities perpetrated by Muslim as retribution for the massacre at the taking of Jerusalem.¹²⁰ While the Crusades are presented as the great victory of a Golden Age, the barbarity of the invader and the unfair results of the long struggle are highlighted. In Ashur’s presentation, the Crusades led to destruction and long occupation for Arab countries, whereas Europe enjoyed the Renaissance “as a result of contact with the Arab Islamic civilization.”¹²¹

Modern Arab historical presentations of the Crusades prior to the Six Day War left an interesting impression, strongly, and often explicitly, influenced by current realities. Arab nationalism, the dominant ideology of the time, called for Arab unity, and the Crusades were presented in that light. The Crusades were presented as a great victory of an heroic past, but they were also presented as a devastating attack that explained centuries of relative civilizational weakness. The Crusades were thus a symbol of strength and of (past) weakness. As battlefield defeat unfolded, past weakness became present weakness, and the vision more dolorous.

3. After the Six Day War

The crushing military defeat of the Six Day War also crushed the use of the Crusades as a blueprint for Arab victory. In fact, the entire study of the Crusades went into a long silence. Only one work published between 1968 and 1979 was discovered for examination in this study, M.A.M. Ahmad’s 1969 *Egypt and Syria and the Crusaders*.¹²² When the publication of works on the Crusades returns in 1980, those of nationalist influence offer a similar framework to those published previously, though the negative effects for the Arab world are magnified, and the triumphant confidence of victory is gone.

119 Ashur, *The Crusade Movement*, 3. (author’s translation from the Arabic)

120 Ibid, 244-5.

121 Ibid, 5.

122 Muhammad Hilmi Muhammad Ahmad, *Misr wa-al-Sham wa-al-Salibiyyun* (Cairo: Dar al-Thaqafah al-‘Arabiyyah, 1969).

Ahmad: *Egypt, Syria, and the Crusaders*

Ahmad's lonely work offers little that is new. It reads as though it were written during the era of the United Arab Republic, concentrating on the joint role of Egypt and Syria, "the heart of the Islamic world," and their role "during the Crusades in protecting the Islamic inheritance."¹²³ There is something of the "stiff upper lip" and a bit more emphasis on religion here, as Ahmad presents Egypt and Syria as constant towards their religion and their Islamic nationality. In Ahmad's narrative, Egypt, with the help of Syria, was able to overcome "the forces of destruction and devastation" and to realize "God's victory for those who are sincere in *jihad* in the path of God."¹²⁴

Astal: *The Future of Israel*

A twenty-one year gap in new Arabic works on the Crusades comes to a close in 1980 with Kamal al-Astal's "The Future of Israel, between Extermination and Dissolution: A Study of the Historical Parallel between the Crusader Invasion and the Zionist Invasion."¹²⁵ Inspired by a university course on "Comparative Historical Studies Between the Crusader Invasion and the Zionist Invasion," Astal's article presents a hopeful argument for Arab nationalists. In Astal's view, Israel is doomed, even without direct military action, by structural factors that similarly doomed the Crusader states, such as a loss of European support, and the gradual development of a unified Arab front.

It is possible to say that the international framework works against the future of Israel and that the local framework works against it, as well. Arab unity will occur and surround Israel in a direct relationship. Likewise, the universal system works against Israel, as it suffers from internal problems.¹²⁶

The vital factor in bringing this about is "realizing Arab unity, which is the hope of every loyal Arab who carries in the beat of his heart purity of origin and pride in his Arabness and his Arab Islamic culture."¹²⁷

¹²³ Ibid, 3.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 4.

¹²⁵ Kamal Muhammad Muhammad Astal, *Mustaqbal Israil bayna al-istisal wa-al-tadhwib: dirasah hawl al-mushabaha al-tarikhiyah bayna al-ghazwah al-salibiyah wa-al-ghazwah al-sihyuniyah* (Cairo: Dar al-Mawqif al-'Arabi lil-Sihafah wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzi, 1980).

¹²⁶ Ibid, 278. (author's translation from the Arabic)

¹²⁷ Ibid.

Qasim: *An Israeli view of the Crusades*

The next work on the Crusades published was Qasim's *An Israeli View of the Crusades*,¹²⁸ and, like Astals's work above, is not so much a history of the Crusades as a study of Israel in relation to the Crusades. He opens the book with an overview of the Crusades, however, which resembles those whose development this study has traced. For example, Qasim sees the Crusades as "aimed at the Arab Nation,"¹²⁹ and states "colonial settlement was the greatest goal of the Crusading movement."¹³⁰

In Qasim's view, "even though the Crusades were primarily a confrontation between the Muslims and the Christians, Jewish researchers have taken a stance on the Crusades for themselves... which support[s] their Zionist political goals."¹³¹ He identifies three main thrusts of Israeli re-interpretation of the Crusades: 1) an emphasis on Crusaders' pre-departure acts of anti-Semitism, thus showing Jews as victims of the Crusades; 2) "Attempts to steal the Arab history in Palestine and the Arab lands" by means of claiming that the Jews owned the land and defended it against the Crusaders just as the Arabs did, thus legitimizing the Jewish right to Palestine; and 3) studying the Crusader phenomenon, especially the political reasons that led to its failure.¹³²

In addition to Qasim's complaints about Israeli interpretation of the Crusades, he adds interpretation of his own, much like Astal's thesis above. In Qasim's view, the "October War" of 1973 made it clear that Israel can't survive without its European and American sponsors. He draws a parallel between social changes in Europe which eroded support for the Crusader states and recent backlash against Israeli policies in the West. Qasim asserts that Israel is aware of this danger and is attempting to insulate itself by creating a local economic hegemony, a strategy for which Arabs are falling.¹³³

¹²⁸ Qasim `Abduh Qasim, *Ruyah Israiliyah lil-hurub al-Salibiyah* (Cairo: Dar al-Mawqif al-`Arabi, 1983).

¹²⁹ Ibid, 4.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 12. (author's translation from the Arabic)

¹³¹ Qasim, *Ruyah Israiliyah lil-hurub al-Salibiyah*, 35.

¹³² Ibid, 36.

¹³³ Ibid, 86-87.

After the works above that are as much about Israel as they are the Crusades, three more traditional histories will wrap up our analysis of mainstream Arab historiography of the Crusades: Ma'adiyah, *et al*'s 1986 work, *The History of the Arab Nation and the Crusader Invasion*,¹³⁴ Hamidah's 1990 publication *The Crusades*,¹³⁵ and Jindi's 2006 study *Crusader Colonization in Palestine, 492-690h/1099-1291 A.D.*¹³⁶

Ma'adiyah: *The History of the Arab Nation and the Crusader Invasion*

Ma'adiyah, *et al*'s work seems, both from its multiple authors and from its presentation, to have been written for use as a textbook, most likely in Syria. The theme of the book is two-fold. First, it shows how three major leaders, Zengi, Nur ad-Din, and Saladin (all claimed as Syrian), were able to form a unified internal front to meet the invaders. The book's second goal is to show how the nation, under these leaders, faced the "attacks of the Crusaders that were aimed at the land and people and at controlling Syria and exterminating the existence of Islam."¹³⁷ The theme of the importance of unity is still paramount, and modern parallels are still emphasized, but the negative effects of the Crusades for the Arabs are now more central. The introduction states that "the Arab nation is still suffering until today from colonial and Zionist attacks which take the place of the Crusaders in weakening the Arabs and bringing about the continuation of the occupation of Palestine."¹³⁸ There is no talk here of lessons to be learned and a triumph over Israel similar to that over the Crusaders. There is instead a note of despondency over weakness in such statements as "many of the situations and happenings of the Crusades resemble those of the current situation of we, the victims, in numerous ways."¹³⁹

Ma'adiyah, *et al* spend ten pages on the positive results of the Crusades for Europe, giving almost exclusive credit to the Crusades for the European Renaissance. In

¹³⁴ Khasih Ma'adiyah and 'Abd Muhammad Sawadi and Durayd 'Abd al-Qadir Nuri, *Tarikh al-watan al-'Arabi wa-al-ghazw al-Salibi* (Beirut: s.n., 1986).

¹³⁵ Salim Muhammad Hamidah, *al-Hurub al-Salibiyah*, 2 vols. (Baghdad: Dar al-Shuun al-Thaqafiyah al-'Ammah, 1990).

¹³⁶ Jum'ah Muhammad Mustafā Jindi, *al-Istitan al-salibi fi Filastin: 492- 690 H./ 1099 - 1291 M.* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anjulu al-Misriyah, 2006).

¹³⁷ Ma'adiyah, *Tarikh al-watan al-'Arabi*, 3-4.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 3. (author's translation from the Arabic)

¹³⁹ Ibid, 3. (author's translation from the Arabic)

their view, Europe benefited socially, culturally, and economically from the Crusades.¹⁴⁰ To back up their claims, they quote extensively from Ernest Barker's 1928 *The Crusades*, which shared their thesis. This work has been entirely left behind by modern Western historiography, however, and it is interesting that it would still find acceptance, especially as their list of negative effects for the Islamic world is taken mostly from Runciman, whose work is less dated, and who finds negative effects for Europe from the Crusades as well. Here we see a clear example of looking at ancient history through the lens of contemporary experience. As for the Arab world, we see the now familiar Runciman thesis of the Crusades paving the way for Mongol conquest, but we also see some interesting religious results cited. As these authors cite for the Crusades, recent reverses had led to more religiosity in the Arab world, as we shall examine in a later section. Reflective of the renewed interest in religion, the authors cite the Crusades as having led to a greater concern for Islam and for the status of Jerusalem among the people and as having re-awakened *jihad* in the path of God, particularly in Syria, but also throughout the Islamic world.¹⁴¹

Hamidah: *The Crusades*

Hamidah's work is primarily a military study of the Crusades. Published in Baghdad in 1990, it mirrors the bellicose rhetoric of Iraq of that era, stating categorically the intent of the West to weaken and oppress the Arabs in the Crusades, through colonialism, and through the creation and support of Israel. In Hamidah's estimation, these are merely different manifestations of the same goals. He has published his history of the Crusades because, in his estimation, the true version has been intentionally obscured by Westerners.

As for the Muslim books, after Islamic thought relied upon ideas that Europe provided it after the World War I, there was a shadow aimed at obscuring this period of Islamic history with the knowledge that the revival efforts which Arabs and Muslims had undertaken in that period and the sacrifices they put forth were more radiant than those of the Crusaders themselves. Armed resistance to this invasion on the part of the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 255-265.

¹⁴¹ Ma'adiyah, *Tarikh al-watan al-'Arabi* 265-272.

Muslims lasted for the entire two hundred years of the Crusades without relaxation until the conditions for expelling the Crusaders and liberating the land they occupied were realized.¹⁴²

If Hamidah is uncovering previously obscured truths, they seem remarkably like, though more forcefully stated than, the interpretations found in earlier Arabic histories. In his estimation, the Crusaders came due to papal political ambition, though the volunteer masses bought into the religious “mask.” He offers the now standard popular Arab demand for the Counter-Crusade, though he stakes Iraq’s claim to leading the *jihad*. He also argues for the continuous and unified nature of the movement; even though some individual Muslim princes were weak and didn’t further the *jihad*, the masses realized that “the only way to defeat the Crusaders was to not accept the idea of their presence in the Muslim lands and to not live with them in peace.”¹⁴³

Hamidah is more hopeful of a new victory than other post-1967 authors, although, rather than expressing the victory in the Crusades in triumphant terms, it is seen more as a long and sorrowful struggle in which the Arab Islamic world suffered “hundreds of thousands of victims until they were able to expel the invaders and free the land from their occupation.”¹⁴⁴ The implication is that any victory over Israel would be a similarly long and difficult road. He has written his book specifically to show parallels between the Crusades and the Arab world post-World War I and how to “benefit from it in treating the current situation.”¹⁴⁵ In Hamidah’s narrative, Arab weakness and disunity led to European colonization after World War I, and the colonial powers “did not shun imposing ignorance and poverty on the Arab countries” and didn’t leave until “after the Zionist entity was planted in the heart of the Arab nation,” an entity which “if it differs in shape from the Crusader invasion, agrees with it in its goals and purposes.”¹⁴⁶ The goal of occupying Palestine, both in the Crusade era and with the modern imposition of the

142 Hamidah, *al-Hurub al-Salibiyah*, 1:5. (author's translation from the Arabic)

143 Hamidah, *al-Hurub al-Salibiyah*, 2:5. (author's translation from the Arabic)

144 Ibid, 2:7. (author's translation from the Arabic)

145 Ibid, 1:7.

146 Ibid, 1: 6.

“Zionist entity,” is presented as a strategic effort to “cut off contact between the parts of the Arab nation in favor of numerous artificial borders between its parts.”¹⁴⁷

Some of Hamidah’s assertions seem built on shaky logic. For example, he states that “the Arabs seized Syria from the Byzantine Empire which was occupying that Arab land, and the Arab armies liberated Jerusalem in the year 15 *hijri*.”¹⁴⁸ While he might be claiming Syria as “Arab land” because some of the inhabitants of portions of what is now Syria were Arab-speakers, the notion of Byzantium occupying Arab Syria in a time before Arabs had ever held Syria seems peculiar. Other assertions are equally disingenuous. In the time between the Arab conquest and the Crusades he claims

The Muslims left all the religions in perfect peace....Peace was not disturbed except by what was committed by armies of the Byzantine Empire by way of acts of vengeance against Islamic areas, which led in the end to lighting the fire of the Crusades.¹⁴⁹

This perfect peace seems unlikely, especially as he admits in the following paragraph that Christian pilgrims suffered difficulties in Seljuk held areas. Having said that, however, Hamidah spends two pages enumerating the perfectly valid reasons for these difficulties. In part, Hamidah lays the blame on Byzantium, as Seljuk actions were in response to the above mentioned atrocities, and, as Byzantium supported Armenian Christians in Seljuk territory, a general distrust of Christians. In part, he explains it as a natural tendency among the Seljuks, who were new to Islam and came from a tribal background and were, therefore, extremely pro-Islam and anti other religions.¹⁵⁰ This marks the first appearance in a mainstream history of such an apologist approach which puts all blame for any negative actions on the “other party.”

Jindi: *Crusader Colonialism in Palestine*

Jindi’s *Crusader Colonialism*, published in 2006, and thus the most recent work considered here, shows the prolonged continuity of the themes that we have been

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 2:8.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 1:25. (author's translation from the Arabic)

¹⁴⁹ Hamidah, *al-Hurub al-Salibiyah*, 1:25. (author's translation from the Arabic)

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 1:25-27.

examining. Its point of view is apparent from the title, which characterizes the Crusades as a colonial movement. Jindi emphasizes this in his first chapter.

This book, entitled *Crusader Colonization in Palestine* covers a subject both ancient and modern, ancient because it goes back to the age of Crusader expansion against the Arab world, when, in the last part of the eleventh century A.D., the European West unleashed the well known colonial campaigns against the countries of the Arab East and West to extend its influence and its control over them. It is also a modern subject because the current time urgently requires this type of research, due to the human tragedy which the Western colonialists practice in Palestine by means of the Zionist colonial entity there in the last half of the twentieth century and what this entity does in the occupied Arab lands in the West Bank of the Jordan river, the Gaza Strip, Rafah, the Syrian Golan Heights, and Southern Lebanon....This tragedy truthfully resembles, in nature and extent, the Crusader hostility.¹⁵¹

In building parallelism between the colonial nature of the Crusader movement and modern experience, Jindi cites several examples of “colonial Crusaderism.” While the modern version is implicit, all of these results are commonly avowed as relevant to Israel. Jindi cites the Crusades as having caused a refugee crisis, which upset the ethnic balance in the areas the refugees settled. He also cites the Crusaders as encouraging European immigration to attempt to balance the numbers and the difficulty the King of Jerusalem had in controlling military forces, especially those newly arrived.¹⁵² In a glimmer of hope for the future reminiscent of Astal and Qasim’s analyses from the early 1980s, Jindi also discusses social changes in Europe in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, including diminished Papal influence, which led to a gradual decline in support for the Crusader states.¹⁵³

Jindi’s main secondary source, now over fifty years old, is Runciman, and like almost all examined works, Stevenson’s book, which, now one hundred years old, continues to serve as an important source for Arab histories. Only a couple of post-1950s Western sources are cited and both of these are from the early 1970s. But one of these is Prawer’s controversial work *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem: European Colonialism in the Middle Ages*, which shares Jindi’s thesis. In general, the use of only sources that fit

151 Jindi, *al-Istitan al-salibi fi Filastin*, 7. (author's translation from the Arabic)

152 Ibid, 8-10.

153 Ibid, 10.

one's thesis, and of not presenting alternate interpretations, seems common to these works. The Crusades have a certain meaning to these historians, and that is the narrative which they present.

The narrative of the Crusades among mainstream post-World War II Arab historians is one of Western attack on a disunified Arab world. While some cite atrocities, the main concern is not the physical acts of the invaders, but the imposition of a foreign state in the "heart of the Arab Nation." The parallel to Israel is not only clear, it is annunciated, as is, to a lesser extent, that of colonialism on the part of the European powers. The "Counter-Crusade" is presented as a unified and continuous Arab effort, more or less triumphant depending on the viewpoint of the author and the modern lens through which he looks. Finally, the Crusades brought positive results to Europe, whereas they weakened the Arab world and explained later defeats. This is not a narrative that came naturally from ancient Arab histories which still impact people to this day; it is the result of the re-interpretation of history throughout the last fifty years.

B. THE ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST NARRATIVE OF THE CRUSADES

Most modern Islamic fundamentalist positions were articulated in the post-colonial era of the triumphant ascendancy of secular nationalism. These were movements at the margins, as secularism was at first seen by most Arabs as having delivered on its promises. As problems, such as lack of opportunities and social inequity, became more prevalent in the revolutionary republics, however, space opened for Islamic opposition. Adherents became easier to find as the luster of secular nationalism faded and Islamic groups, many of them fundamentalist in ideology, grew in numbers and influence. One of the largest such groups was the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

The Muslim Brotherhood under Hasan al-Banna (1906-49) and, later, the more radical Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) saw Islam as a "complete system" and had a goal of establishing an Islamic state that would implement top-down reform. Qutb denounced the secular nationalist system as "*jahiliyya*" (ignorance, *i.e.*, un-Islam) during Nasser's repression of the late 1950s and 60s, and the Brotherhood has often operated as a semi-covert organization within Egypt, often in violent opposition to the government. With Islam as the "complete system," and the *rashidun* era of the original followers of the

prophet as the only time worth of emulation (*salaf*), Islamic Fundamentalists have different narratives on many issues, including the Crusades. Qutb, the Brotherhood's chief ideologue, first articulated this narrative in the late 1940s through the early 1960s. While the Crusade narrative was not highly developed or highly resonant at the time, later social factors led to Islamic Fundamentalist views of the Crusades becoming an important facet of the discourse.

1. Sayyid Qutb

For Sayyid Qutb, the concept of the "Arab Nation" was valueless. To him, the issue was one of the *Dar al-Islam* in its totality. As such, Qutb spoke not about attacks on Arabs, but about attacks on the religion of Islam itself. To him, the greatest threat facing Islam was not external attack, but internal ignorance. He also, however, was influenced by his surroundings, and thus saw Jews and Israel as among Islam's threats. The Crusades and colonialism seemed secondary concern to Qutb, but they were often conflated with the issue of Israel, much as occurred in the nationalist discourse. In Qutb's mind, however, attacks were not about territory or acquisitiveness or even control. They were about the distortion and destruction of Islam.

Qutb wrote no works specifically on the Crusades, but he did include his view of the Crusades as a sidebar in several of his works. It is difficult to determine the precise dating of many of Qutb's works, as they were only formally printed well after they were written, and he included no dates. Of the three noted references to the Crusades, however, all seem to be from the late 1940s and early 1950s and are found in two of his best known works, *Social Justice in Islam*¹⁵⁴, and *In the Shade of the Quran*,¹⁵⁵ while one was found in his little known and posthumously published *Our Struggle with the Jews*.¹⁵⁶ Qutb offers the Crusades, which he interprets as all Christian attacks on Islam, from Byzantine response to the original Muslim conquest of Syria to twentieth century colonial dispossession of Muslims in Zanzibar, as one of the two great struggles between Islam

¹⁵⁴ Sayyid Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam* (Oneonta, New York: Islamic Publications International, 2000).

¹⁵⁵ Sayyid Qutb and M A Salahi and A A Shamis, *In the Shade of the Quran*, 30 vols. (London: Wamy, 1995).

¹⁵⁶ Sayyid Qutb, *Ma`rakatuna ma` al-Yahud*. Translated and with commentary in Ronald Nettler, and Sayyid Qutb, *Past trials and present tribulations: a Muslim fundamentalist's view of the Jews*. (New York: Pergamon Press, 1987).

and polytheism (“associators,” *i.e.*, those who deny the complete uniqueness of God).¹⁵⁷ In his estimation, “the Crusades” are the polytheist response to the original Islamic conquest and represent a counter-attack aimed against the spirit of Islam. With this wide description of the Crusades, and with the close association with Zionism, almost any hostility not internal to Islam can be denounced as a Crusade.

Qutb, like nationalist historians, explicitly conflates Zionism and the Crusades. In the era of the Crusades itself, it was the Jews who helped the Crusaders in his narrative, whereas in the modern era, the Western support of Israel is, among other evils, Crusaderism.

Not once did they stop their multifarious scheming against Islam, and with a determination that never weakened. No one has ever worked against Islam during any period of its history, including the Crusades and all forms of colonialism, without having had some help and encouragement from the Jews.¹⁵⁸

We may be overawed when we say that all Western countries are supporting the Israelis....True support comes from God, not from people and states, even though they may have hydrogen bombs and missiles to deliver them. ..Let us then, not be frightened by the support given by the atheists, polytheists, and Crusaders to the Jews.¹⁵⁹

This mutual support leads to a rhetorical turn of phrase that has since become quite familiar. “The Jews are [also] the ones who utilize Christianity and idolatry in this comprehensive war....And they attack every foundation of this religion [Islam], in a Crusader-Zionist war!”¹⁶⁰ Similarly, he conflates the Crusades and Imperialism:

As we trace the development further, in the West we find the war in Spain, and in the East the disaster of the Crusades....From that time to this it [Islam] has had to contend with ferocious enemies of the same spirit as the Crusaders, enemies both open and hidden.

But the final overthrow of Islam took place only in the present age, when Europe conquered the world, and when the dark shadows of colonization spread over the whole Islamic world, East and West alike. Europe mustered all its forces to extinguish the spirit of Islam, it revived the

¹⁵⁷ Hillenbrand, *Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 600-601.

¹⁵⁸ Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran* 3:172-3.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 183.

¹⁶⁰ Netler, *Past trials and present tribulations*. 64.

inheritance of the Crusaders' hatred, and it employed all the materialistic and intellectual powers at its disposal.¹⁶¹

There are those who hold that it is the financial influence of the Jews of the United States and elsewhere which has governed the policy of the West. There are those who say that it is English ambition and Anglo-Saxon guile which are responsible for the present position. And there are those who believe that it is the antipathy between East and West which is responsible. All these opinions overlook one vital element in the question to which all other elements are subordinate, the Crusader spirit which runs in the blood of all Occidentals. It is this which colors their thinking, which is responsible for their imperialistic fear of the spirit of Islam, and for their efforts to crush Arab strength.¹⁶²

2. The Message Spreads

Many of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood were pushed out of Egypt by Nasser's government from the mid-1950s on, and Qutb himself was executed by the Egyptian government in 1966. His message may have remained obscure but for two new factors, the rise of Saudi Arabia and the declining fortunes of Arab nationalism. Many of Qutb's followers found refuge in Saudi Arabia and, with Islamic fundamentalist doctrine's similarity in many ways to the kingdom's Wahabism, found themselves accepted within the Islamic educational establishment. Many former members of the Muslim Brotherhood taught at the Medina University. "Sayyid Qutb's writings, which were edited and published by his brother Muhammad Qutb in Saudi Arabia, were held in high esteem by his growing contingent of followers there."¹⁶³

While this was a larger audience than previously, fundamentalist ideas may yet have remained obscure if not for nationalism's great loss of legitimacy. While corruption and other social injustice among secular governments had already created disillusionment among some, the greatest symbol of failure for the secular nationalists was the disaster of the Six day War in 1967. With this catastrophic event "the consensus around nationalist values was beginning to crumble."¹⁶⁴ Islamic fundamentalism was

¹⁶¹ Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, 235.

¹⁶² Ibid, 140.

¹⁶³ Giles Keppel, *Jihad: The Trial of Political Islam* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 51.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 32.

well positioned as an alternative. This was followed shortly by the oil boom in Saudi Arabia that fueled “Petro-Islam,” as Saudi money flooded Islamic causes worldwide, most notably for the purposes of this study, in education.

Under Saudi influence, the notion of a worldwide ‘Islamic domain of shared meaning’ transcending the nationalist divisions among Arabs, Turks, Africans and Asians was created. All Muslims were offered a new identity that emphasized their religious commonality while down-playing differences of language, ethnicity, and nationality.¹⁶⁵

For history, this meant a new sense of the “Islamic Nation” and its shared experiences of, among other things, the Crusades, as influenced by the writings of Sayyid Qutb. Thus, by 1983 the Saudi history textbook for the eleventh grade was titled *History of the Islamic State*. While it presents the Crusades in orthodox terms, as conflated with colonialism and Israel, it does so in an overtly religious manner, and includes the Ottoman Empire, normally ignored by Arab nationalist readings, among the victims.

The Saudi eleventh grade text of 1983 treats this topic [colonialism] differently. This text describes the actions of the European countries as ‘Crusader imperialism.’ Also, this text deals only with the Muslim world. Finally, this text bases its entire discussion upon Islamic religious concepts. ‘The main goal of Crusader imperialism behind imposing its authority on Muslims all over the world was to humiliate them and exploit their wealth, civilization, and heritage.’

This text continues by describing the tactics employed by the imperialists to achieve their goals. Specifically, it discusses ‘a conspiracy against the Ottoman Caliphate by inspiring the Nationalistic Movement in the area...European imperialism also supported the Zionist Jews against the Islamic rule of the Ottomans.’¹⁶⁶

The Islamic Fundamentalist narrative is similar enough in its content to the more familiar Arab narrative, if different in tone and widening the ring of who the victims are, to resonate as a reasonable departure with some of those who accept the nationalist interpretation as a starting point.

¹⁶⁵ Giles Keppel, *Jihad: The Trial of Political Islam*, 73.

¹⁶⁶ Aydh Athopaiti, *A Comparative Analysis of the Treatment of World and Arab History in Saudi Arabian and Egyptian High School History Textbooks since 1900* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1987), 240-241.

3. Expanding on the Theory

Now that Islamic Fundamentalist readings were at least peripherally part of the main stream of Crusade analysis, several analyses written from this perspective appeared. The first of these was written by Dr. Ahmad Shalabi, a professor and Chair of the Department of Islamic History and Islamic Civilization at the Dar *al-'Alum* College, University of Cairo in 1986.

Shalabi: *The Crusades*

Dr. Shalabi, who's credits include *Jews in the Shadows: A Study of the Methods and Institutions which the Jews Invented against the Knowledgeable People: The Daggers of Masonry and Rotarianism among Easterners and Westerners*,¹⁶⁷ a work based heavily on the discredited *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, would not seem from such reference to be an appropriate academic source. His position at a legitimate university and his many other credits for works on Islamic thought and history mark him as an accepted academic and further mark the level to which Islamic Fundamentalist thought has achieved legitimacy in the Arab world. In 1986 he published *The Crusades: Their beginning with the Emergence of Islam and their Continuity until Today: Description of the Western Crusade Military and Ideological Attacks on the Islamic World across the Ages*.¹⁶⁸ This work, as the title indicates, accepts Qutb's expanded definition of Crusade, and expands upon Qutb's rhetorical framework to produce an entire tome.

The Crusades are long-lasting.

Many people err if they picture the Crusades as only that which the Pope 'Urban II' announced in Clarendon France on 26 November, 1095, and which ended approximately two centuries later in the era of the Egyptian Sultan 'al-Ashraf Khalil' in 1292 A.D.

The root of this error, which many make by tying this term to the wars fought between the Kings of Europe on one side and Syria and Egypt on the other, as I see it, is that the Crusades—or the Crusading movement—

¹⁶⁷ Ahmad Shalabi, *al-Yahud fi al-Zilam: dirasah 'an al-wasail wa-al-muassasat allati ibtakaraha al-Yahud didda shu 'ub al-'alam : khanajir al-Masuniyah wa-al-Rutari fi zuhur al-gharbiyin wa-al-sharqiin* (Cairo: al-Zahra lil-'Ilam al-'Arabi, 1992).

¹⁶⁸ Ahmad Shalabi, *al-Hurub al-Salibiyah: baduha ma'a matla' al-Islam wa-istimraruha hattá al-an : 'ard lil-hajamat al-Salibiyah al-Gharbiyah 'askariyyatan wa-fikriyyatan 'alá al-'alam al-Islami 'abra al-'usur* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahdah al-Misriyah, 1986).

began before Pope ‘Urban II’ by several centuries, and similarly, they lasted after al-Ashraf Khalil by several centuries, and they are still ongoing in one form or another. Their works become clear occasionally when the entire West occupies the entire Islamic world and steals this world and places it in shadow and barbarity; and knowledge about them disappears from view occasionally when the West appears to undertake friendship between it and some of the Islamic countries, or all of them, to distract them from feverish Crusade efforts, *i.e.*, creating a Zionist country in Palestine to be an eternal thorn for all Arabs and all Muslims.

The Crusades are against all Muslims.

There is another mistake related to that error which is far more dangerous, for many researchers and cultured people fall into the trap when they follow the West in saying that the Crusades were against the Arabs and that their goal was recovering Jerusalem, for the truth is that the goal was deeper than that and more dangerous. The Crusader movement was against all Muslims and not against the Arabs alone, and their goal was to humiliate the Muslims and bring down damage upon them....This can also be seen in the numerous strikes launched by Christians to attempt to colonize the entire Islamic world, Arab and non-Arab, and by creating Israel in this place so that this country may play its role at the Crusader direction, and it can also be seen in the strikes on Iraq and Tunis and the threats against Pakistan, and, similarly, the destructive Russian advance on Afghanistan.¹⁶⁹

With this wide definition of the Crusades, Shalabi identifies twenty-two separate manifestations of the Crusades or the “Crusading movement,” each of which is treated in a short chapter explaining his conception of it. Of these chapters, only one deals directly with the Crusades as defined in this study, or as Shalabi puts it, “the famous Crusades of 1097-1292 A.D..” Two others deal with issues commonly conflated with the Crusades, colonialism and the creation of Israel. The others treat issues from those perhaps intuitively related, such as European/Ottoman competition and Napoleon’s Egypt campaign, to such far-flung issues as “the Crusading movement cooperates with the Zionists to create clubs which spit poison into the Islamic world, such as the Masons, Rotary, and Lions.”¹⁷⁰ Shalabi’s work is not so much a history of the Crusades as it is a book-length expansion of Qutb’s conception of the Crusades as the framework of an epic struggle between the West and the Islamic world.

169 Shalabi, *al-Hurub al-Salibiya*, 21-22. (author's translation from the Arabic)

170 Ibid, 24. (author's translation from the Arabic)

Habibah, *The Muslims and the Crusaders, and Struggle in the East*

Habibah, on the other hand, while coming from a similar philosophical background, concentrates on the history involved and treats the Crusades in a way much more closely related to the nationalist-inspired histories examined above. His books are histories of the Crusades, rather than statements of position, yet the Islamic fundamentalist position can be found throughout them. Habibah's works, 1990's *The Muslims and the Crusaders*,¹⁷¹ and 1994's *Struggle in the East*¹⁷² are remarkably similar. The second seems to be, for the most part, a redaction of the first for a more general readership and includes the introduction and other large portions which are *in extenso* quotations of the first. As such, they will be treated together in this work.

In the fundamentalist conception of the Crusades, it is not Arab disunity that offered opportunity to the Crusaders, but the Muslims' lack of adherence to true Islam. In Habibah's conception "weakness in Islam was due to inconstancy and innovation in Islamic education," as contrasted with the *rashidun* era, which was the time of Islam's power.¹⁷³ Thus, while the Muslims were engaged in a defensive struggle, their religious weakness left them vulnerable.

We don't understand that the Crusades were solely a religious war whose effects were fanaticism and narrow-mindedness well known in that era. This conclusion comes after we look at the Muslim side in terms of its defensive use of force in order to destroy the dangers at hand or after examining the conditions of the Muslims, which came from the provocation of the invasion of their lands....That differs, however, from the case of the Christians, who found an opportunity in the hearts of the Muslims because of their distance from Islam, or because of the removal of Islam from its family.¹⁷⁴

Habibah presents the results of the invasion as a Crusader victory, and, while he later references the expulsion of the Crusaders as a victory also, it is the initial Muslim defeat that is highlighted. As is the case in the nationalist narrative, the Crusades are

171 `Ali Habibah, *al-Muslimun wa-al-salibiyun* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Shabab, 1990).

172 `Ali Habibah, *Sira` fi al-Sharq* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Shabab, 1994).

173 Habibah, *al-Muslimun wa-al-salibiyun*, 4.

174 Ibid, 3. (author's translation from the Arabic)

presented as highly relevant today, though the lesson to be learned is religious, rather than “Arab unity.” “Muslim defeats came against the European at first and in many later battles, from the Europeans in Andalusia, *etc.*, and from the colonialists in the modern era....All of these defeats came after inconstancy and its entrenchment.”¹⁷⁵ If inconstancy in Islam is the problem, then righteousness in Islamic education is the solution and, Habibah offers, the current era, like the Crusading era, does not give enough importance to Islamic education.¹⁷⁶

Habibah agrees whole-heartedly with the assertion of European benefits and Arab impairment as the results of the Crusades.

It is well known that these wars had contradictory results for the two sides that fought in them. Among these contradictions is that they led to a worsening of weakness and dissolution in all the Arab countries. This decay continued for a long time, such that it formed one of the reasons related to the Turkish occupation of the Arab lands. This occupation led, in turn, to the control over all of our people by Western colonialists, which the Arab nations suffered through in recent times.

As for the Europeans, in spite of the fact that they returned defeated to their countries in the end, they nonetheless were on the threshold of a conclusive civilizational Renaissance, which developed throughout the era and increased its blessings and had multiple results leaving many marks....It is certain that the first origins of this Renaissance happened as a result of contact between the Europeans and the Arab Islamic civilization, by way of the Crusades, *etc.*¹⁷⁷

Habibah presents a view of the Crusades markedly similar to the nationalist imagining examined above. With such similarity, this more measured fundamentalist interpretation can resonate well with those Arabs brought up on the view of Crusades developed since World War II and presented by secular nationalist governments and education systems. Among those disenchanted with such governments, even maximal presentations such as Qutb and Shalabi’s may find favor.

¹⁷⁵ Habibah, *al-Muslimun wa-al-salibiyyun*, 17. (author’s translation from the Arabic)

¹⁷⁶ Ibid 9-15.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 18-20. (author’s translation from the Arabic) See also Habibah, *Sira’ fi al-Sharq*, 3-5, for an almost word-for-word repetition of this statement.

C. CONCLUSION

Current Arab conceptions of the Crusades are not simply a memory that continues from that era until today. They are the result of a complex pattern of interpretation, carried out, for the most part, over the course of the last century. Much as Muslims took time during the Crusades to develop any sense of urgency or outrage over the Frankish presence, so too did Arabs develop a view of the Crusades as a unified historical event with gradually increasing connotations in the modern era. Only with the coming of the European powers and their strong and romantic attachment to the Crusades did the concept gain any attention.

The early connections between Europe, especially France, and local Christians overtly seeking their patronage led to the insertion of the Crusades into the Arabic discourse. Only repeated European references and activities drawing parallels to the Crusades would bring them relevance. The putative words of Allenby and Gourad may have brought little reaction at the time, but modern realities made them loom large in later years. In 1988, HAMAS included both incidents in Article 15 of their charter.

The partition of Palestine brought particular resonance to the study of the Crusades, and the vast majority of Arab histories of the Crusades follow the announcement of the partition. The issue of Israel looms largest in the re-imaging of the Crusades. Almost all examined sources have drawn that parallel. Pre-1967 Arab histories of the Crusades draw a narrative of a European invasion of a divided land, followed by an heroic Arab unification and eventual triumph. After the disaster of the Six Day War, the narrative remained similar, but the depth of loss became highlighted, as did the assumption of unequal results from the Crusades that led Europe to world domination, while the Arab world, weakened by the Crusades, fell to the Mongols, the Ottomans, and the Europeans in succession.

Islamic fundamentalists developed a parallel interpretation of the Crusades. While similar in many ways, the Crusades in their presentation, were aimed not at “the heart of the Arab nation,” but at Islam as a whole. It is this vision that Usama bin Laden invokes in his Crusade references, such as his famed 1998 *fatwa* in which he said:

Despite the great devastation inflicted on the Iraqi people by the Crusader-Zionist alliance, and despite the huge number of those killed, which has exceeded one million....Despite all this, the Americans are once again trying to repeat the horrific massacres, as though they are not content with the protracted blockade imposed after a ferocious war, or the fragmentation and devastation.

So here they come to annihilate what is left of this people and to humiliate their Muslim neighbors.¹⁷⁸

While bin Laden's maximalist interpretation of the Crusades may resonate strongly only among fundamentalists, other interpretations, borrowing from both traditions and aimed at more common parallels, seem to resonate well even with what the West refers to as "moderate Arabs." In the view of many Arabs, HAMAS is fighting a war of liberation, and mixed nationalist and religious Crusade references such as these from the HAMAS charter, if not how they would put it, are nonetheless perfectly legitimate.

Hamas regards Nationalism (Wataniyya) as part and parcel of the religious faith. Nothing is loftier or deeper in Nationalism than waging Jihad against the enemy and confronting him when he sets foot on the land of the Muslims.

....There is no escape from introducing fundamental changes in educational curricula in order to cleanse them from all vestiges of the ideological invasion which has been brought about by orientalist and missionaries.

That invasion had begun overtaking this area following the defeat of the Crusader armies by Salah a-Din el Ayyubi. 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." General Gouraud stood on the tomb of Salah a-Din and declared: "We have returned, O Salah-a-Din!" 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

178 Ranstorp, "Broader Context of Bin Laden's Fatwa," 328-9.

on the minds of generations of Muslims that the Palestinian problem is a religious one, to be dealt with on this premise.¹⁷⁹

Modern Arab conceptions of the Crusades are not entirely about loss, but the current balance of relative power does lend an air of discouragement. The current experience is imagined as the end result of the experience of the Crusades. Despite the eventual expulsion of the Crusaders, it is this notion of “unequal results that explain current realities” that makes the Crusades a defeat. From the fundamentalist viewpoint, the great discouragement of the modern era is that the Muslims are still removed from the Islam of the *rashidun*. To the nationalists, it is that the Arab world has been unable to achieve a common front against the invader. Either way, the current situation resembles that of the era of Crusader victories after the invasion, not that of the heady days of the Crusader expulsion. Thus the Crusades are imagined as today as a disheartening defeat.

¹⁷⁹ English translation of Hamas Charter at <http://www.acpr.org.il/resources/hamascharter.html>, accessed 02 February 2007.

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