
The *Franj* Invasion of Islamic Lands: *Muslim View of the Crusades*

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Europe's Crusaders first began rallying to Pope Urban II's call for a Holy War following the Council of Clermont in 1095. He charged Christians to set aside their coreligionist struggles in order to set out and reclaim the holy lands of the Near East, specifically Jerusalem, from the 'infidel' Muslims.¹ The first, ill-prepared, non-combatant-driven expedition, the "People's Crusade," led by Peter the Hermit, was massacred almost to a man in August 1096.² Following that slaughter, Byzantine Emperor Alexius I consolidated the European generals in Constantinople and immediately launched the first "armed pilgrimage."³ This pilgrimage was not only successful, but provided the undertone of romanticism for further exploits. The rise in popularity and nod to "Christian duty" in the Western world still echoes with the exploits of the Crusader knights on their quest from God. Muslim historiography contradicts this line of thought and treats the "Crusades" almost as a footnote within the greater struggles of warring factions in the region—that they were in fact, "tiny and futile attempts to halt the inevitable expansion of Islam."⁴ In the beginning of the conflict, the Muslims did not even consider themselves involved in a religious struggle against Christianity.⁵

Aside from a handful of primary sources from some contemporary historians, such as the personal memoirs of Usāmah Ibn-Munqidh,⁶ or in the collective works of 'Izz ad-Din Ibn Al-Athīr, Abu Ya'la Hamza ibn Asad at-Tamimi (also known as Ibn Al-Qalanīsī), and Nasir ad-Din Ibn al-Furāt,⁷ most surviving historical Islamic sources reference early works that have been lost. Other surviving documents include significant revisions reflecting the views and motives of the author. Although the term *jihad* was a familiar lexicon in the Muslim world, the term *crusader* was not a term used by contemporary participants on either side of the struggle. It was not the Crusades, nor the Islamic reaction to them during the two hundred-year struggle, that shapes the modern-day world debate concerning the eternal struggle between Christianity and Islam.

Western views dominate the historiography of the Crusades, presenting a one sided view of a topic that is far from black and white. M.R.B. Shaw's translation of European noblemen Joinville and Villehardouin does just that. It captures contemporary views of Western Christendom's involvement in the Crusades.⁸ A true

discussion of this topic, often misrepresented in modern society, must include viewpoints that shed light on the opposite side of that same coin. There are some remaining contemporary writings, as mentioned above, and a handful of historians have sought to collect and translate additional scripts from either eyewitnesses or Arab historians using works no longer available. These sources, such as Amin Maalouf's *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes*, and Francesco Gabrieli's *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, are excellent in painting the necessary picture of conflict from the opposition's point of view.⁹

Two historians whose works are invaluable are Jonathan Riley-Smith and Carole Hillenbrand. Riley-Smith offers sound research for the Crusades and the overall period, without over reliance on either the Christendom or Islamic stance. His works, *The Crusades: A History* and *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*, provides excellent frames of reference for the actual events that transpired in the Levant for over one hundred and fifty years.¹⁰ Hillenbrand, on the other hand, provided a remarkable resource for even the casual historian, capturing the more aloof interpretation of non-Christendom resources. In the second edition of *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, she referenced both the attacks of 9/11 and the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The following quote captures the soul of her work. "These events have had a profound impact on the 'crusade' discourse of certain 'jihadist' groups active today . . . such matters which are, of course, far removed from the realities of medieval crusading or Islamic history."¹¹ It is only through an examination of both perspectives that a solid conclusion exists. The Crusades, as the majority of the population understands them, are skewed by either misrepresentation or an underrepresentation of all parties involved. The present turmoil in the twenty-first century—including the fanatical Islamic terrorists groups with their self-proclaimed *jihad* against the West, establishes a foundation for the popularity of the propagandist use of the words "jihad" and "crusades." Both of these words gained momentum in mainstream lexicon of post 9/11 attacks on America. America's immediate reaction in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 magnified them. However, it was not until the nineteenth century resurgence of Arabic and Ottoman-driven history that the religious conflict of the past gained a link to the ongoing modern struggle.¹²

Before the Latin Church unleashed what modern society terms, "The Crusades," Islam had spread across the Near East, across North Africa, and across the Mediterranean Sea to the Iberian Peninsula, engulfing the nomadic Turcoman lands that bordered the southern boundary of the Byzantine Empire. Despite its

wildfire spread, it was far from a uniting force that produced anything like a “United Islamic Empire.”¹³ When Mohammed died in 632 CE, divided on succession, Islam splintered into two main factions.

Two distinct sects resulted from this splinter. The Shi’ites believe the caliphates, the political and religious leaders within a Muslim community, can derive only from a direct descendant of the Prophet Mohammed. The Sunni belief is contrary to this, believing that caliphates can, and should, rise to power from public demand. At the close of the eleventh century, the Shi’a powerbase was absorbed into the Fatimid Empire in Egypt and extended across Africa and into Palestinian territory. The Sunni powerbase, from a religious leadership point, stemmed from Baghdad with an “elected” caliphate, but its military power rested with the Seljuk Turks. Although based far to the east in present day Iran, the Sunni/Turk influence included portions of present day Iraq, Syria, and Turkey.¹⁴

When the *milites Christi* (knights of Christ), or the crusaders, first set out to liberate the city of Jerusalem in 1095, they did so at the height of the struggle between the two Islamic sects. This struggle “took precedence above all other affairs and the power of both Baghdad and Cairo stagnated.”¹⁵ In *The First Crusade: A New History*, Thomas Asbridge outlined that there was a “pathological hatred that divided the two main arms of the Islamic faith” so much so, that Muslims “had absolutely no intention of opposing the crusaders’ siege” of cities belonging to different sects or kingdoms. He further suggested that because of the constant power struggles between the Muslim sects, the original *Franj* invasions may have been confused with just another Byzantine campaign. Because of this confusion, there was not a distinction initially, but once the defending Muslims realized that their attackers were from Frankish lands, they identified their opponents as “*Franj*.” The Arabs described all European settlers and armies as *Franj*, never distinguishing between their actual nationalities.¹⁶

In addition to the internal fighting between rival tribes and rulers throughout the Near and Middle East, same-sect power struggles divided Muslims further. Mohammed's death created a faith-based schism. In the same way, the death of local sultans, Turkish nobility (or *atabegs*), and caliphates increased the warring between coreligionists. Many lesser lords and rulers were eager to exploit any weakness in their neighbors hoping for an increase of their own powerbase.

Two examples outline the extent of the “fratricidal struggles” between the Seljuks (a Sunni Muslim tribe that established a Turko-Persian empire in Iran) and the Fatimids (a Shi’a Muslim tribe that established a dynasty that extended from

Atlantic North Africa across Egypt and into Syria and the Arabian Peninsula). Between these two opposing powerhouses fell the openly hostile city-states that dotted Syria and Palestine.¹⁷ First, between the years 1096 and 1099, control of Baghdad passed from usurper to usurper eight times. This translated to a new ruler every hundred days.¹⁸ Second, the underappreciated contemporary historian Ibn al-Athir authored an accurate reflection that the invading Christian armies, properly referred to by Muslim leaders as the *Franj* armies, easily seized and controlled large portions of territory. This success stemmed from the Islamic sultans' inability and unwillingness to work together against a common enemy.¹⁹ The modern Muslim historian Amin Maalouf summed up the deep-seated, individualistic approach of the warring Muslim empires perfectly, "In the eleventh century, *jihad* was not more than a slogan brandished by princes in distress. No emir would rush to another's aid unless he had some personal interest in doing so. Only then would he contemplate the invocation of great principles."²⁰

On the eve of the Europeans' arrival in Asia Minor in 1096, the level of infighting and dissension among Muslims peaked, for "virtually the entire upper echelon of the region's Islamic authorities [passed away] between 1092-1094."²¹ The Seljuk vizier, or high-ranking political advisor, and Sultan died in 1092. In Egypt, the Fatimid caliph and vizier died in 1094. The vacuum of power in the Muslim world hindered their resistance to European aims.²² Salahuddin Ayubi, or Saladin, would eventually found the Ayyubid dynasty that spread from his rise to power in Egypt and eventually included Egypt, Syria, and regions across Mesopotamia. In the midst of consolidating power, Saladin found himself in conflict with both Muslim and Christian adversaries. During the Third Crusade, Saladin commented to King Richard the Lionheart: "the land, it is also ours originally. Your conquest of it was an unexpected accident due to the weakness of Muslims there at the time."²³ Later, to his own confidant and historian, he commented on the fragility of the united Muslim *jihad* efforts against the Christians, "If death should happen to strike me down, these forces are hardly likely to assemble again and the Franks will grow strong. Our best course is keeping on the Jihad until we expel them from the coast or die ourselves."²⁴

So who were these invaders from Europe that arrived in the midst of the region's greatest internal strife? Muslim historians did not use the word "crusaders" when referencing the European forces. The terms "crusades" and "crusaders" were not contemporary terms of historians on either side of the conflict. Muslims grouped all Europeans into only two categories. Upon first arriving, all Europeans were deemed *Franj*, or the Franks (Pope Urban was from France). Later, contemporary

sources differentiated between the *Franj* and the *Rūm* (the Arabic term for the Byzantine Empire).²⁵ This distinction between the two did not occur immediately. The historiography reflects that Muslims were not aware that they were dealing with different foes than the Byzantine forces they had defeated without difficulty at Manzikert in 1071. The first indication of Muslim awareness that they were dealing with a different enemy did not occur until their first major defeat at the hands of Christian armies.

Even so, after the Muslims realized who the crusaders were they did not understand their intent. That is, they were unaware that the *Franj* arrived as *Muhjadeen*, or soldiers of a (in this case, Christian) Holy War. The only source that survived as the exception to this ignorance are the writings of As-Sulami, a Muslim cleric from Damascus. As early as 1105, As-Sulami recognized the European threat as a Christian *jihad* and began promoting Muslim unity as a necessary step for launching their own holy war to repel the European invaders. As-Sulami further prophesized that the arrival of the *Franj* in the Holy Lands was divine intervention. He believed that Muslims had strayed from the teachings of the Qur'an. This combined with the infighting made the European invasion an act of punishment on the Muslim world. He preached that spiritual purification for both the individual and for Islam as a whole rested on a united Turk-Kurd-Arab *jihad*. His insight received little attention, until some fifty years later with the ascension of Nur al-Din. Nur al-Din demanded a unified counter-*jihad* to expel the *Franj*.²⁶ Prior to Nur al-Din, *jihad* appears intermittently among Arabic historiography. When it does appear, it refers more often as propaganda or as an attempt to smooth over wrinkles stemming from same-sect armies warring with each other.

From the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, until the completion of the First Crusade and the European capture of Jerusalem, Muslims did identify the *Franj* separately from the *Rūm*. However, this separation only went as far as the Muslim consensus which indicated the *Rūm* were mercenary European armies but formed under the banner of the Byzantine Empire, and paid to re-conquer territories lost in 1084.²⁷ In this capacity, contemporaries, such as Yaghi-Siyan, the Muslim ruler of Antioch in 1097,²⁸ even legitimized the arrival of the Christian armies as honorable. It was honorable because they were waging a war to reestablish their original boundaries in Asia Minor.²⁹

By the middle of 1098, after the fall of Edessa and Antioch to a combined European crusader force, the Muslims did distinguish between the *Rūm* and the *Franj*. Furthermore, they highlighted the greater military prowess and fanaticism of

the *Franj*.³⁰ Despite actual friendships and even cordial visits among Christian settlements, contemporary historians are quick to riddle their histories with propaganda-based anecdotes. They pay tribute to *Franj* military skill but often lace the compliment with descriptions and stories that highlighted the “barbaric” and “backward” mannerisms of the *Franj*.³¹ Well known contemporary poet and adventurer, Usāmah Ibn-Munqidh wrote autobiographical accounts both during and after the early Crusades. He captured the life, struggles, and conflicts of the Muslim warriors and the Christian invaders. In his memoirs, he described the *Franj* in the following way, “when one comes to recount cases regarding the Franks . . . he sees them as animals possessing the virtues of courage and fighting, but nothing else.”³²

Not all observations and opinions were negative. One interesting story from Ibn-Munqidh records a surprising event. The Knights Templar (usually categorized with extreme disdain) extended an apologetic concern when they interrupted Usāmah during his Islamic prayers:

The Templars, who were my friends, would evacuate the little adjoining mosque so that I may pray in it. One day I entered this mosque . . . and stood up in the act of praying, upon which one of the Franks rushed on me . . . and turned my face eastward saying, ‘This is the way thou shouldst pray’. A group of Templars hastened to him, seized him and repelled him from me. I resumed my prayer [whereupon the Frank rushed in at him again]. . . . The Templars . . . expelled him. They apologized to me, saying, ‘This is a stranger who has only recently arrived from the land of the Franks and he has never before seen anyone praying except eastward.’³³

This fickle relationship between Christian and Muslim armies sheds light on an aspect overshadowed by the simple “us vs. them” mentality that accompanies discussions of the Crusades.

When the *Franj* first arrived, the internal power struggles so engulfed the Muslim world of the Near East that Muslims viewed the European armies as just additional players on the field of battle. Almost from the beginning, separate Muslim sultans and *Franj* leaders sought to suppress or defend against internal rivals, often signing treaties and alliances with rival religious armies. In later years, when a rift occurred between the Europeans, there were even Muslim/*Franj* alliances against rival Muslim/*Franj* alliances, and Muslim/*Franj* alliances fighting Muslim/*Rūm* alliances.³⁴

Again, it was not until Nur al-Din finished consolidating his own powerbase by uniting the Sunni areas of Baghdad, Damascus, Mosul, and Syria that a united Muslim front appeared.³⁵ In 1149, after vanquishing a combined Christian and Muslim force with his victory at Inab, Nur al-Din bathed in the Mediterranean, a gesture that symbolized his dominance over Syria. This consolidation of power served as the first phase of Nur al-Din's quest for eliminating the *Franj*, but as a *jihad*, against Muslims, it was a contradiction to the term. Ironically, his second phase also did not focus on Christian armies, and was another declaration of "Holy War" against Muslims. Through his upstart, Shirkuh (and later his son, Saladin), Nur al-Din then conquered the Shi'a Fatimids in Egypt, creating an extended unified Sunni caliphate that included Egypt. With the Shi'a subjugated, he turned his attention to the *Franj*, and the first *jihad* to eliminate the Christian invaders.³⁶

Since the Muslims did not originally understand that the Crusaders arrived with every intention of bringing a Holy War to the region, it is important to understand the Muslim concept and contemporary view of *jihad*. The sectarian struggle was so great at this point, that little interest existed in pursuing action that would expand the borders of Islam.³⁷ Only an imam, or the Islamic religious and worship leader, can grant permission for an offensive *jihad*. This forced a multi-tiered leadership structure akin to Stalin's Red Army, wherein he had both military and commissar leaders in tandem roles. According to the Qur'an, the call for an offensive *jihad* of such magnitude equated to "the Last Days," or the Islamic Day of Reckoning. That is, the "Last *Jihad*" is the final struggle between Muslims and non-Muslims.³⁸

Therefore, the actual concept of pursuing a Holy War against the Christians was foreign to the Shi'a and an afterthought for the Sunni. It was after Nur al-Din prevented the European Second Crusade from gaining momentum beyond strongholds in Syria, and Muslims united under one leader from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean to the Nile, that a true *jihad* occurred.³⁹ Just over eighty years after As-Sulami's warning, and three decades after Nur al-Din set out to remove the Christians, his successor, Saladin, set out for Jerusalem. Muslim armies marched into Jerusalem as victors over the *Franj* in 1187. Muslim defenders finally became involved, in every sense of the word, in *jihad*, and battle for the Levant commenced through a lens of the survival of Islam equated with the destruction of Christianity in the Middle East.⁴⁰

As the focus shifted from infighting to *jihad*, so too did Arabic historiography. Rather than the casual mentioning of a conflict with the *Franj*,

specific details emerge concerning prisoner exchange, beheadings, emissary encounters, and other interactions occurring between the two warring religious groups. Religious overtones influenced the historiography. Victories occurred because "God willed it," or "'the infidel' lack of faith in the One True God."⁴¹ In the same way, the Muslims attributed defeat to "God's Will," rather than to the *Franj's* superior military actions.⁴²

In addition, superfluous adjectives riddle the sources. "Glorious," or "exalted" precede the names of Muslim warriors, and "May God Damn Them" or "may Allah render them helpless"⁴³ follows mention of the *Franj* "infidels." The saturation of the historiography with religious overtones stems from the caliber of the historian. They were religious scholars, not historians, or military strategists. As such, they viewed all historical events "through the prism of faith."⁴⁴

The political circles within travel camps influenced contemporary historians. Much of the historiography that survived omits specifics in regards to strategies and tactics of the force-on-force battles or the sieges and counter-sieges that occurred throughout the Crusades. There were some exceptions, such as historical accounts from military veterans turned historians, but the typical account glances over any worthy description of tactics, strategies, and weapons.⁴⁵ Still, the greater concentration of writing falls on the Muslim warrior-leaders that led the *jihad* against the *Franj*. The writings reflect a tight focus on their piety, their dedication to the *jihad*, and the Islamic teachings of the Qur'an. Usāmah summed up the Muslim approach to historiography. "Victory in warfare is from Allah and is not due to organization and planning, nor to the number of troops and supporters."⁴⁶

As stated above, many historians traveled in Muslim leaders' camps and often served as official secretaries or confidants. Thus, their accounts and descriptions are biased and highly propagandist. The genre of Arabic literature during this period was termed *adab*, and the primary purpose of this writing style was capturing a story that was both pleasing and entertaining to read. The writing also intended to teach some life or religious lesson to the reader. It was "not bound by conventions to tell the 'truth,' but sought rather to narrate a good story, even if in so doing the truth might be stretched a little, or more than a little."⁴⁷

Nowhere is this more evident than in the surviving accounts of Saladin. Saladin rose to power as Nur al-Din's lieutenant in Egypt. Once he was successful in overthrowing the Fatimid Caliphate, the two came dangerously close to warring themselves. The sudden death of Nur al-Din prevented the inevitable clash because Saladin claimed the rights as Nur al-Din's successor. His quick maneuvering allowed

for immediate subjugation of any opposition to his designs, and ensured the consolidation of the Egyptian kingdom within the vast empire left by Nur al-Din.⁴⁸

Saladin's first order of business in this consolidation phase was waging war against coreligionists, even among the same sect. The different opinions of Saladin in his own time are relevant today. Those that praise Saladin remark on his pious approach and dedication to the *jihad*.⁴⁹ According to Saladin's own historian, Baha al-Din Ibn Shaddad, Saladin "was very diligent in and zealous for the Jihad." He further praised his hero by recording that Saladin once remarked,

I have it in mind that, when God Almighty has enabled me to conquer the rest of the coast, I shall divide up the lands, make my testament, take my leave and set sail on this sea to their islands to pursue them there until there no longer remain on the face of the earth any who deny God – or die [in the attempt].⁵⁰

His desire for serving the best interest of Islam often skewed Saladin's treaties and alliances. Ibn Shaddad comments at length on a peace treaty signed by Saladin after a fierce battle outside Acre:

He continued to resist them [*Franj*], steadfastly, though they were in great numbers, until the weakness of the Muslims became evident to him. He then made peace at their request, for their weakness and losses were greater, although they were expecting reinforcements and we expected none. There was an advantage to us making peace, and that became clear when circumstances and fate revealed what they had kept concealed.⁵¹

In retrospect, Saladin was successful. He captured and secured Jerusalem from the Christians. Some Muslim historians still record the many treaties, non-aggression pacts, and alliances that occurred between the *Franj* and the Muslims with a negative connotation. The most prominent of these treaties was with Richard the Lionheart in 1192.⁵² Even though Saladin secured Jerusalem, the treaty left the coast from Tyre to Jaffa in the hands of the Christians. For this, Saladin suffered a backlash of accusations from contemporary accounts for not "taking the fight" to the infidels and failing to rigorously pursue *jihad*.⁵³ On the other hand, other Muslim historians recorded this same event in a positive light. They described it as the "nature" in which the relationship between *Franj* and Muslim changed as the local

Franj inhabitants were fully absorbed into the overall situation and struggles of the Near East. From the outset, the “nature” of war and power struggles throughout the Levant and the Near East suffered from any clarity of who was at war with whom. Muslims, Sunni, Shi’ite, Fatimids, and Christians, *Franj*, *Rūm*, all hoped for a foothold in the region as an extension of power. It was not a Crusade, nor was it a *jihad* as defined by Islamic leaders. It was a grasp for power.

It is evident from Muslim historiography that the Crusades' initial success caused a unifying effort through Zengi, Nur al-Din, and finally Saladin. Further, it was the realization that the Europeans were waging their own Holy War that served as the impetus behind their own *jihad*. However, evidence also exists that the *Franj* were not specifically anti-Islamic, and the two religions co-existed before, during, and after the Crusades.⁵⁴ Three contemporary sources remark that the *Franj* were tolerant of Islamic practices within the lands they controlled. First, Imad ad-Din commented that the *Franj* “changed not a single law or cult practice of the [Muslim inhabitants].”⁵⁵ Second, Yaqut remarked, “the Franks changed nothing when they took the country.”⁵⁶ Third, Ign Jubayr echoed Yaqut’s observation, when he wrote, “in the hands of the Christians [the shrine at Ain el Baqar and its] venerable nature is maintained and God has preserved it as a place of prayer for the Muslims.”⁵⁷

Muslims themselves did not have a term for the “Crusades.” Until the nineteenth century, they referred only to “the invasion by the *Franj*.”⁵⁸ In the 1890s, the Ottoman Empire suffered humiliating defeats in the Balkans. This brought the end to the last great Muslim Empire. Afterwards, non-Muslim religions surrounded the Muslim Middle East. This caused a rekindled interest in the champions of Islam—namely Nur al-Din and Saladin. Furthermore, the Ottoman Sultan called for the unification of Muslims under one authority.⁵⁹ It was not until this resurgence, nested within a romantic notion of the great *jihad* against Christianity, that the term *Hurab al-Salibiyya*, or “Wars of the Crusades,” came into use.⁶⁰

The European “Holy War” and presence in the Near East lasted less than 200 years.⁶¹ This period is minute considering the great and vast history of the cradle of civilization. Ultimately, the Crusades were a failure. Only the initial shock and initial Muslim dissension allowed the First Crusade any real measure of success in the Muslim Near East. Anachronistic manipulation in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries transformed the Crusades into a modern day “rally cry” of Islamic extremists. Thus, terrorists enacted their own warped version of *jihad*. Jonathan Riley-Smith noted that until this modern misrepresentation, “Muslims . . . looked back [on the crusaders] with indifference and complacency. They believed, after all,

that they had beaten the crusaders comprehensively . . . [and] had driven them from the lands they settled in the Levant.”⁶²

In the 1930s, Muslims claimed, “[The] West is still waging crusading wars against Islam under the guise of political and economic imperialism.”⁶³ In the 1970s, Islamic Nationalists, under the leading ideologist Sayyid Qutb, defined “crusading” as “any offensive, including a drive for economic or political hegemony, against Islam anywhere by those who called themselves Christian . . . and to any aggressive action by their surrogates, like Zionists or Marxists.”⁶⁴ The argument today that the “*Franj* Invasion” that began in the late eleventh century is the impetus of today’s claims of a religious war between Christianity and Islam is unfounded. Eastern historiography on the “Crusades,” suggests the Muslims of yesterday gave the *Franj* invasion little attention. Muslims did not inherit bitter, hate-filled accounts of the Crusades from their contemporaries⁶⁵—rather their main interest lay in recording the everyday Muslim views and portraying comic book-esque plights of their heroes and champions of Islam.⁶⁶

Afterword

The concept of this essay arose from the peculiarities of the author’s specific situation when his research was at its infancy. Extensive reading and scribbling of notes occurred in the backseats of Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles while on breaks from traveling, almost daily, from the mission at hand. The author served as a Captain on a United States Army Military Transition Team (MiTT) in the position of Combat Advisor for Iraqi Army Officers. He assisted in the training and rebuilding of the Iraqi Army in 2009. Thus, working hand-in-hand with the Iraqis, daily interaction occurred with both the Iraqi Army counterparts and/or the five interpreters assigned to the team—all of them Muslim. Both the Shi’a and Sunni sects were represented. Having received weeks of cultural awareness and even elementary Arabic language training, the author saw a great opportunity and environment for discovering the Islamic/Arab view of the European Crusades.

Not long after research began, one of the interpreters commented on one of the sources. “Do not trust everything you read, especially in Arabic history—most of it is twisted or is lies, time after time in order for politics and dictators to influence the minds of the Arabic people.” It was an interesting point of view.

A few days later, another interpreter, who was also attending Baghdad University for a degree in History, remarked that in his University, and in Iraq in general, historical lessons only concentrate on Classical History, such as the Greeks and Romans. This made sense to him, because “Arabs know that most history after that is just made-up, to give the messages of the people in power.” Because he held this viewpoint with such passion, there was no point in explaining that not only were Greek and Roman historians guilty of manipulation, but also, unless approached from a purely scholarly lens, all history contains biases or propaganda. Within three weeks of the initial research, all five interpreters and three accompanying Iraqi officers echoed the same sentiment. The “*Franj* invasion” was hardly a footnote in Arab or Muslim history. All agreed that Saladin is overrated as a hero, having warred against fellow Muslims more than Christians, and that any history regarding Saladin is circumspect at best. One even remarked, through a “thousand-yard stare,” that during Saddam’s reign over Iraq, there was endless comparison of Saddam to Saladin—both from Tikrit and both power-hungry at the expense of their own people and Muslims in general.⁶⁷ With that in mind, the author researched the topic and the above article is a product of that work.

Notes

1. Thomas F. Madden, *The New Concise History of the Crusades* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 7-8.

2. *Ibid.*, 16-18.

3. Norman Housley, *Contesting the Crusades* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 15.

4. Madden, *The New Concise History of the Crusades*, x.

5. Thomas Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 114.

6. Usāmah ibn-Munqidh, *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman & Warrior in the Period of the Crusades: Memoirs of Usāmāh Ibn-Munqidh* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

7. Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

8. Shaw, Margaret R.B., trans. *Joinville and Villehardouin: Chronicles of the Crusades* (London: Penguin Books), 1963.

9. Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*; Amin Maalouf, *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes* (New York: Schocken Books, 1984)

10. Riley-Smith, *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*; Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).
11. Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), xiv.
12. Ibid.
13. Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History*, 113.
14. Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 37.
15. Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History*, 113.
16. Ibid., 186.
17. Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 19.
18. Maalouf, *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes*, 55.
19. Ibid.
20. Maalouf, *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes*, 21.
21. Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 38.
22. Ibid.
23. D.S. Richards, trans., *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin, or al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyya wa'l-Mahasin al-Yusufiyya* by Baha' al-Din Ibn Shaddad (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2002), 186.
24. Ibid., 195.
25. Maalouf, *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes*, 20-21.
26. Thomas Madden, ed., *The Crusades* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 221.
27. Maalouf, *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes*, 21.
28. Ibid.
29. Madden, *The New Concise History of the Crusades*, 46.
30. Madden, ed., *The Crusades*, 224.
31. Riley-Smith, *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*, 233.
32. ibn-Munqidh, *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman*, 161.
33. Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History*, 71.
34. Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History*; Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 344.
35. Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades*, 344.

36. Ibid., 345.

37. Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History*, 116.

38. Qur'an. Surat At-Tawbah, 9:5,29. There are numerous references throughout the Qur'an in regards to *jihad* between Muslims and non-Muslims, and the "Last Days." In 9:5 a particular course of action is outlined and in 9:29, specific reference to the "Last Days" occurs.

39. Riley-Smith, *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*, 228.

40. Madden, *The New Concise History of the Crusades*, 51, 63-64.

41. Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 32.

42. Ibid.

43. Riley-Smith, *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*, 233.

44. Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 32.

45. Ibid., 432.

46. Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 433.

47. Ibid., 261-262.

48. Maalouf, *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes*, 174.

49. Richards, trans., *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin*, 27.

50. Ibid., 29.

51. Ibid., 27.

52. Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 184; Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History*, 146.

53. Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 184.

54. Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 158-159.

55. Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History*, 70.

56. Ibid.

57. Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History*, 70.

58. Riley-Smith, *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*, 259.

59. Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History*, 305.

60. Riley-Smith, *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*, 259.

61. Margaret R.B. Shaw, trans., *Joinville and Villehardouin: Chronicles of the Crusades* (London: Penguin Books, 1963), 7.

62. Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History*, 305

63. *Ibid.*, 306.

64. Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History*, 307.

65. *Ibid.*, 306.

66. Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, xvii.

67. A fact that was actually referred to in the Epilogue of Carole Hillenbrand's *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, page 595. See Bibliography.

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