

CONCEPT OF A CRUSAID

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Abstract

Mention the word Crusade and depending on who is listening, the word's meaning and cultural impact varies significantly. Specifically, the Medieval Crusades, often traditionally defined by historians as offensive military campaigns waged by Christians to recapture the Holy Land from Muslims are held out as an example of western exploitation of Islam. Much work by authors such as John M. Riddle and Jonathan Riley-Smith has highlighted the historical events but has not considered the possibility these Crusades were defensive actions to counter previous Islamic advances into Christian territories. This paper will first examine the origins of Christianity and Islam, their spread, and the general concept of a Crusade within each faith in an attempt to ascertain the roots of the actions of Christian and Muslim Crusades. There will be an examination of the early Islamic advances into the Christian Levant. The work will assess the 1094 call for help by Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus I to thwart the Seljuk Muslim invaders. The paper will also examine the abhorrent Western European behavior during the Crusades. Finally, in a thoughtful postmortem analysis, the case will be made that if the Crusades were not undertaken, Europe and its culture that we know today may not have existed.

Introduction

Mention the word Crusades and depending on who you converse with, the word's connotation and historical impact varies significantly with Christians and Muslims often holding diametrically opposing views. To comprehend why, this work will use numerous sources to attempt to answer these two questions:

1. Was warfare in the name of God, 'Holy War' common to both medieval Christianity and Islam?
2. Can a case be made that the Crusades were a partly a defensive action by Christians to halt Islamic incursions into previously held Christian lands?

Definition and Etymology

To begin any study of the Crusades, there must be an exploration of the word itself. According to the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, the definition of Crusades is:

“Crusades were military expeditions against various enemies of the church; the term refers particularly to the medieval campaigns aimed at liberating the Holy Land¹ from the Muslims.”²

¹ Holy Land is general term for the region of the Land of Canaan referred to in the Bible

² (Froehlich)

Subsequently, to appreciate this definition, it is essential to examine the etymology of the word – its developmental origin. In this case, etymological study shows the term to originate from the following:

“A 1706 respelling of *crois ade* (1577), from M.Fr. *crois ade*, Sp. *cruz ada*, both from M.L. *cruciata*, pp. of *cruciare* "to mark with a cross," from L. *crux* (gen. *crucis*) "cross". Figurative sense of "campaign against a public evil" is from 1786”.³

Together, this information provides a starting point from which to begin an analysis of the Crusades in order to answer the two questions posed earlier.

Origins of the Crusading Movement

The genesis of the Crusading movement is complex, deriving from the historical fusion of Christian pilgrimage and the concept of Holy War. This fusion began in the fourth century AD, when the Christian pilgrimage movement began with the help of Roman Emperor Constantine. With Emperor Diocletian’s resignation from the throne and Constantine’s conversion to Christianity the widespread persecution of Latin Christians in the west slowed allowing Christianity to become more appealing to citizens of the empire. Subsequent to Constantine’s conversion, his mother, Helena traveled to Palestine to help find the site of Christ’s Passion. Her discovery of the purported site motivated Constantine to begin a Church building program in Palestine including the construction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher on Mount Calvary in Jerusalem. From Constantine’s actions, a 'Holy Land' in Palestine emerged for the believers of Jesus cementing the city of Jerusalem’s importance to Christian pilgrims for centuries.^{4,5}

After the building of the first Christian churches in Jerusalem, scores of Christian pilgrims would come to the Holy Land to visit these new shrines fulfilling their vow to honor Christ’s death on the cross.⁶ As years went by, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher became the pinnacle destination for large parties (sometimes groups of thousands) of pilgrims. This church and the other sacred locations were locations where pilgrims could show their devotion to Christ and his death on the cross.⁷ By going to Jerusalem to pay homage to the Cross of Christ, pilgrims would not only demonstrate their faith in Jesus Christ but also acknowledge the humanity and history of Jesus that took place in the very city of Jerusalem. This practice of Christian pilgrimage, in some ways mimicked Augustine's metaphorical use of the image of Christian life as a pilgrimage.⁸ In his view, Augustine reinforced the fact that a Christian’s life journey, like a pilgrimage, was not always easy. However, the difficulty, Christian pilgrimages to Jerusalem would continue well into the eleventh century.

After the Arab conquest of the Levant, Pope Urban II’s eleventh century call to Christians from Clermont ‘to serve God as soldiers against Islam’ and free Jerusalem, motivated even more pilgrims to set out for the ‘Holy Land’. This new call for pilgrimage transcended Urban’s authority as historical reports from Clermont state, the crowd that was watching Urban chanted, *Deus hoc vult* – God wills it when referring to Urban’s order to undertake a ‘new type’ of pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

³ (Harper)

⁴ (Latourette 213)

⁵ (Dyas)

⁶ (Froehlich)

⁷ (Runciman 43)

⁸ (Miles)

Later sermons by Abbots and Bishops further solidified the connection of Urban's call to pilgrimage to Jerusalem and confront Islam as soldiers of Christ under Christianity's most revered symbol – the Cross. One can find an example of this rhetoric in a sermon to the faithful in Basel when Abbot Martin of Paris encouraged Crusaders with this message, “And so strong warriors run to Christ's aid today, enlist in the knighthood of Christ, hasten to band yourselves together under Christ's Cross”.⁹ It was likely, the Crusaders believed having Christ's Cross emblazoned on their person would make them invincible against the armies of the Muslims they would face in Jerusalem.¹⁰ This belief was likely because of the Roman Emperor Constantine's victory at Milvian Bridge in 312 AD when he had a vision that he should conquer another emperor Maxentius by using the sign of the Christ on his warriors' shields.¹¹

Historical study, to some extent, supports this theory given the discovery of many medieval artifacts and articles of military clothing having red crosses emblazoned on them. Historical writings of the period also depict the importance of the Christian Cross to Crusaders. For example, Geoffrey IV of Chateaubriand, in his medieval journal, spoke of the Christian symbol directly when he said, “We travelled to Jerusalem under the banner of the cross.” Even today, in Boston's Fruitland Museum, one can see the Cross and its importance to the Crusades in American Artist George Inness' 1850 painting entitled *March of Crusaders* which shows a band of Crusaders each with a red cross on their breasts.”¹² Given the history of Christian pilgrimage, there was probable belief held by the new pilgrims or Crusaders that they were indeed ‘Soldiers of the Cross’ or the Latin *Miles Christi* when they set off for Jerusalem from Europe in 1099 AD.¹³

Not all of these ‘Soldiers of the Cross’ were motivated solely by religious reasons. At the time, both the knightly class and peasants faced hardships at home – disease, overpopulation, famine, and constant warfare. These conditions, especially for peasants, likely made Urban's call to crusade in the Levant an attractive proposition compared to the status quo facing them in Europe. It was probable Urban's words speaking of the Levant's land “floweth with milk and honey”, contributed to the belief of many of the Crusaders that a better life in the Holy Land was possible for them.¹⁴

Theological Justification for Holy War within Christianity and Islam

Beyond the symbolic use of the cross by early Christian pilgrims in fulfilling their call to be ‘Soldiers of the Cross’, it is also important to understand how Christian theology could support warfare in the name of God when they confronted Islam in Jerusalem. To help provide that understanding, this work explores the general concept of a Holy War (Just War) from the Christian perspective and from the Islamic analogue, Jihad. Understanding these closely related concepts shows that conflict in the name of religion intertwines with both Christian pilgrimage and Islamic evangelism. On the Christian side, the New Testament speaks of warfare but seems to make it clear that if Christians must confront wickedness or an unjust situation, their methods of redress must be non-violent. There is an example of this view in the Gospel of Matthew:

⁹ (Riley-Smith, *The Crusades, Christianity and Islam* 18)

¹⁰ (Riley-Smith, *The Crusades, Christianity and Islam* 10,11,17)

¹¹ (Knight)

¹² (Riley-Smith, *The Oxford Illustrated History of The Crusades* 366-374)

¹³ (Knight)

¹⁴ (Riddle 274)

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ No, ‘if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”¹⁵

However, elsewhere in The New Testament, Jesus acknowledges the legitimate use of force, when telling the apostles, "let him who has no sword sell his mantle and buy one".¹⁶ In Paul's Letter to The Romans, Paul speaks about those who experience evildoers, “for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil”.¹⁷

The early Christian theologian, Augustine of Hippo (d 430 AD), synthesized these words, along with other Christian writings, when he proclaimed the righteousness of defending one's faith and spoke that a 'Just War' might be better than an unjust peace. Thomas Aquinas (d 1274 AD) another Christian theologian, asserted proper guidelines to undertake a 'Just War'; 1) The war must be started and controlled by the authority of a state or ruler 2) There must be a just cause for war - the war must be waged to right a wrong 3) The war must be for good, or against evil.¹⁸ Given these tenets, Christians likely heard Urban's call to military action at Clermont, as proper and 'Just'. 1) Pope Urban II called for the Crusades. 2) The calling of Crusaders was to right the wrong of having Muslims control Jerusalem. 3) Urban's call made it clear, Christians are 'good' and Muslims were 'evil'.

In Islam, there are also theological writings regarding the concept of Holy War. In general, many Muslim believers see a strong connection between the precepts of a Holy War and the faith's central religious principle of Jihad. In Arabic, the word Jihad is a noun meaning 'struggle'.¹⁹ This struggle can relate to a Muslim's internal conflict to remain true to the teaching of the Qur'an. Nevertheless, in speaking of Jihad within the context of the *Hadith*, (The *Hadith* are writings of verified accounts of statements from the Prophet Muhammad, or descriptions of what he did during his life) it is clear that the struggle or Jihad can refer to just conflict applied against enemies of Islam. Muslims use the *Qur'an*, *Hadith* in concert with the *Sunnah* (written description of the Prophet Muhammad's traditions and actions) to formulate Sharia Law (legal system based on Islamic principles).²⁰ In all of these writings, there is much support for Holy War (Jihad) to defend Islam from unbelievers. Additionally, there is consensus on the nature of Jihad from all four schools of Islamic jurisprudence (i.e., Maliki, Hanbali, Hanafi, and Shafi'i) for example:

Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani (d 996 AD) writes

"Jihad is a precept of Divine institution. Its performance by certain individuals may dispense others from it. We Malikis maintain that it is preferable not to begin hostilities with the enemy before having invited the latter to embrace the religion of Allah except

¹⁵ (Romans 12:17-21)

¹⁶ (Luke 22:36)

¹⁷ (Romans 13:4)

¹⁸ (Riddle 334-335)

¹⁹ (Esposito 102)

²⁰ (Esposito 111)

where the enemy attacks first. They have the alternative of either converting to Islam or paying the poll tax (*jizya*), short of which, war will be declared against them."²¹

While the Qur'an itself does not refer specifically to the word Jihad it does speak of taking action against non-believers, "O ye who believe! Fight the unbelievers who gird you about, and let them find firmness in you: and know that Allah is with those who fear Him."²² In addition, the Qur'an states, O Prophet! Strive hard against the unbelievers and the Hypocrites, and be firm against them. Their abode is Hell, - an evil refuge indeed."²³ It is interesting to note, Strive hard is Arabic for jahadi, a form of Jihad.

Based on the Christian and Islamic precepts of a 'Just War' and Jihad, this work's first question is likely true - the concept of a Holy War to defend one's religion was common to both Christianity and Islam during their years of formulation as well as during the medieval Crusades.

However, to de-emotionalize, fully appreciate, and understand the motivations for the Christian Crusades, one should also know the historical context of the Crusades. To accomplish this, this paper will examine Christian and Islamic history leading up to the Crusades in an attempt to help distinguish if Crusaders were operating in a defensive or offensive manner. Additionally, during this examination, historical battlefield reports will seek to understand if the brutality of the Christian Crusaders was exceptional for the period.

Historical Context - Abrahamic Religions

To begin developing an appreciation of western and Islamic religious and social culture at the time of the Crusades, there must be a grasp of their extensive histories preceding the Crusades. This history shows a deep relationship between Judeo-Christian traditions and Islam well before the start of the Crusades. Furthermore, knowledge of the religions' common ancestral relationship could help in developing an understanding of the complexity surrounding the 'ownership' of the Holy Land. This is an essential point that will help answer the question posed above regarding the (offensive/defensive) nature of the Crusades.

The common land of origin of the west's three Great Faiths (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) is today's Middle East. Beyond the commonality of the three faiths' ancestral land, there are shared theological beliefs including the core viewpoint that there is just one God – monotheism. All three of these religions hold this belief at the core of their respective theologies. Additionally, the three faiths have universal ancestral roots deriving from the patriarch Abraham. Christianity, Judaism, and Islam all believe God made a special covenant with Abraham that would provide them with land, many descendants, and a promise of blessing and redemption if they followed his law. The Old Testament tells both Jews and Christians of the special relationship God has with Abraham, "I will make of you a great nation and I will bless you" God tells Abraham when he instructed him to settle in Canaan.²⁴ (Canaan occupied today's Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, and Jordan) For Christians, in the New Testament, there is further discussion of Christianity's deep relationship with Abraham. Jesus spoke of Abraham in this passage, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob".²⁵ Muslims also connect with Abraham and see him as a revered prophet who stands in the direct lineage from Noah to

²¹ (Bostom)

²² (Qur'an 9:123)

²³ (Qur'an 9:73)

²⁴ (Genesis 12:2)

²⁵ (Mark 12:26-27)

Muhammad. Islam's Qur'an tells Muslims, "Allah gave revelations to Abraham."²⁶ The Qur'an also states that Abraham's first son, Ishmael built the Kaaba shrine in Islam's holy city of Mecca in the verse, "raised the foundations of the House."²⁷

Beyond common Abrahamic roots, there is similarity in each religion's belief in the laws of God. In fact, the Islamic Qur'an,(God's words) although written much later than the Hebrew Bible or the Christian Gospel, in its verses, shows Islam to sustain laws similar to the Jews' and Christians' Ten Commandments.²⁸ *As noted on page 9, Islam's other writings include the Hadith and the Sunnah, which were also completed well after the death of Muhammad. Beyond their use in Islam's legal framework called Sharia, these writings detail how Muslims should live, resolve their legal disputes, and significantly defines Islam's relationship with other faiths.*²⁹

Taken in aggregate, these similarities in ancestry, theological beliefs, and land of origin demonstrate the complexity in unwinding the question of whether the Crusades were offensive or defensive operations, i.e., when God promised Abraham and his descendents land, what people was he referring to, Jews, Christians, or Muslims? Although, there is no definitive answer to this question, exploration of the formation of the three religions can shed light on the history of the Holy Land and its meaning to the Christian Crusaders.

Historical Context - From Judaism to Christianity

To begin to understand the Christian Crusaders' motivations in the Holy Land requires thorough knowledge of how Christianity evolved from a Jewish heritage via Jesus Christ. Similarly, it is imperative to know how Jesus' followers spread the faith, first in the Levant (comprising Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, and Syria) and then into the Roman Empire.

Throughout history, Jews including Jesus have asserted their lineage is from the early Israelites. The Hebrew Bible states that these Israelites descended from Abraham's grandson Jacob whose own twelve sons would form the tribes of Israel and settle in Canaan. Although drought and famine led many Israelites from these tribes to go to Egypt where they suffered in bondage, Moses would eventually lead them back to the promised land of Israel. Once back in the land of Israel, the greatest Jewish king David, (also a revered Islamic Prophet - The Qur'an speaks of David and his exploits, especially his story of fighting the giant Philistine Goliath) would unite the Israelites' kingdom in the much-contested city of Jerusalem.

After King David's reign over the Israelites, his son, King Solomon would build the temple in Jerusalem, which established the city as the epicenter of the Jewish faith. However, throughout history, the site of this temple has been a point of contention between Judaism and Islam because David, the father of Solomon, is both a great Jewish King and an Islamic prophet. This situation complicates the question of who is the rightful owner of the temple site. According the Bible, ancient Israelites, lead by King Solomon, built a large temple in Jerusalem for worship and sacrifices. *Although Both Babylonian raiders and Romans destroyed this temple, this site is still revered by Jews. However today, the site is called the Temple Mount, which is where Islam's Dome of the Rock mosque currently sits. The mosque*

²⁶ (Qur'an 4:163)

²⁷ (Qur'an 2:127)

²⁸ (Esposito 306)

²⁹ (Esposito 212-214)

*is a holy site to Muslims, as they believe their Prophet, Muhammad ascended to heaven to be with Allah from this same site.*³⁰

Political divisions among the Jews and their city Jerusalem would weaken their nation such that the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and the Egyptians would all at one time dominated the land of the descendents of Abraham. Eventually, in 538 BC, the Persian King Cyrus would allow the Israelites to return to their homeland and finally in 331 BC, Alexander the Great defeated the Persians and allowed Jews to live free under their own laws in Jerusalem.³¹

However, the subjugation of the descendents of Abraham and the contention for Jerusalem continued into the first century AD. In this case, it was not the Greeks or Persians dominating the descendents of Abraham but instead, the Roman Empire controlled the Jews and Jerusalem under a repressive environment lead by Herod, a non-Jew. It was during Herod's reign that Jesus Christ was born of the House of David – the New Testament speaks of Jesus' family tree which is also the Jew's and Muslim's David. "So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David."³²

Jesus, always a Jew, began a public ministry of teaching, healing, and miracle working in Judaea, Galilee, and Jerusalem sometime in the year of 26 AD.³³ During his teachings, Jesus went out of his way to reprove racial (ethnic) bigotry and preach his message of salvation to a broad humanity.³⁴ This inclusive message and Jesus' antagonism of those in charge of Jerusalem's temple lead the Jewish and Roman hierarchy to arrest and crucify him in Jerusalem, which fulfilled the Jewish prophecy.³⁵ Jesus' death and resurrection also set Christianity's claim on the contested city of Jerusalem.

After Jesus' death and resurrection, in about 30 AD, Christianity would begin to expand from the Middle East into Asia-Minor and eventually to Europe. This expansion was induced by Jesus himself when he instructed his followers before his death: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations. . ."³⁶ The expansion story, as told in the Acts of the Apostles, shows St. Paul bringing Christianity from Jerusalem to Tarsus to Antioch and into Greece and finally to Rome.³⁷

As Christianity's expansion moved further west and into Rome, the threat to the Roman hegemony from this new faith set into motion large-scale persecutions of Christians. Up to this period, many Romans had ignored Christians, believing them to be too morbid and enemies of life in their preaching of doom and warning of the Second Coming of Christ.³⁸ With deteriorating political conditions in the Western Roman Empire, the Roman Emperor Diocletian initiated a great wave of Christian persecutions running from 303 AD to 311 AD.³⁹ However, despite these persecutions and mass killings, by the third century, Christianity had achieved a strong foothold well into the Roman Empire such that many of its citizens began to accept the faith. Finally, in The Edict of Milan, in 313 AD, Constantine, and Licinius - the Western and Eastern Roman emperors, proclaimed religious toleration throughout the kingdom. This act ended the wide scale persecutions of Christians and allowed Christianity to grow even more rapidly

³⁰ (Dolphin)

³¹ (Pagden 55)

³² (Luke 2:4)

³³ (Latourette 34-38)

³⁴ (Latourette 45)

³⁵ (Latourette 51-53)

³⁶ (Matthew 28:19)

³⁷ (Latourette 73,74)

³⁸ (Riddle 38-39)

³⁹ (Riddle 39)

throughout the Western and Eastern Empire.⁴⁰ In fact, by 325 AD, Christianity had penetrated to the highest levels of Roman leadership making the Christian Church The Catholic (universal) Church of Rome. As the church further matured, the Western Church's Bishop became the Pope and obtained significant religious and political influence throughout the Roman Empire and beyond.⁴¹ Like most Empires, Rome gradually lost influence and non-Christian barbarians from Germanic tribes began to set up kingdoms operating independently of Rome's control throughout Europe. Finally, after Emperor Theodosius' death, in 395 AD, the Western Rome fell. While the empire was still Christian, it divided into the Byzantine East with its capital in Constantinople and Latin West with its capital in Rome.

Therefore, by the year 600 AD, Christianity had spread from the border of Sassanid Persia on the east to the Visigoth Kingdom on the Iberian Peninsula in the west and to what is northern Africa today.⁴² This information is important, as it shows Christianity had begun to spread and take hold in a wide geography well before it would face a threat from a new religion that would develop on the Arabian Peninsula.

Historical Context - Islam's Birth and Expansion

The land of Arabia had never been under significant influence either from the burgeoning Christian faith or from the Persian Empire. This likely was due to the inhospitality of its terrain. This land would be the birthplace of the prophet and founder of Islam - Muhammad. In about 570 AD, Muhammad was born into the Quraish tribe in Mecca on the Arabian Peninsula and by about 595 AD, Muhammad a successful businessman, would be married and have two sons and four daughters.⁴³ Several years later, in 610 AD, Muhammad would begin to withdraw regularly to a cave near his home and communicate with Allah (God) through the angel Gabriel.⁴⁴ In these communications, God would tell Muhammad that salvation would come only to those who worshiped Allah and kept his laws (monotheism). Muhammad would eventually tell people in Mecca about God's messages to him (destroy tributes to false gods, and worship only Allah, the only true God) and began to develop a great following. However, after time, the Quraish elite in Mecca, who were mostly pagans, would see Muhammad as a threat to the status quo. They would eventually revolt against Muhammad's message and force him to go from Mecca to Medina.⁴⁵

It was in Medina where Muhammad would see a more receptive audience for his message. However, not all in Medina, especially the community of Jews, were open to Muhammad's message. Therefore, Muhammad and his followers offered these Jews a choice to either believe in Allah or face death. In fact, after a long siege, Muhammad and his followers executed all male Jews from the Banu Qurayzah tribe who had surrendered but did not accept Muhammad's teachings.⁴⁶ One should note that at this time, there was no written Islamic theological support for the Jews' massacre but Muhammad's call to war established precedence for warfare in the name of God within Islam.

After Muhammad's death in 632 AD, his community of believers continued their expansion under the leadership of Muhammad's father-in-law Abu Bakr, who became the Islam's first successor or

⁴⁰ (Pagden 134)

⁴¹ (Latourette 186)

⁴² (Riddle 126)

⁴³ (Riddle 130)

⁴⁴ (Esposito 6-7)

⁴⁵ (Esposito 8-9)

⁴⁶ (Pagden 168)

caliph - leader of Islam. During the caliphate of Abu Bakr, there was more Holy War in order to convert the Byzantine and Sassanid Empires to Islam.⁴⁷ Eventually, Abu Bakr fell ill and on his deathbed, Bakr selected Umar ibn al-Khattab as the next caliph.⁴⁸ Under Umar ibn al-Khattab, Islam expanded into Persia culminating in the battle of al-Qadisiyah in 637 AD, where Muslim Arabs defeated the Sassanids, (Persians) who primarily had been believers of Zoroastrianism, and forcibly converted them to Islam. This was the first time Islam expanded beyond the Arab world and shows the prevalence of religious warfare in the growth of Islam. In 638 AD, religious warfare in the name of Islam would continue when Umar took Jerusalem from the Jews and then forcibly took Christian Byzantine territory in Egypt to bring both under Islamic rule.⁴⁹

Finally, at the completion of documenting Allah’s messages to Muhammad in The Qur’an, there would be formal theology that defined how Muslims should relate to people of the book – an Islamic term for the Jews and Christians who adhere to the Torah and the Bible – during Islamic conquests.

“Fight those who believe not in Allah or the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the Religion of Truth, from among the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission and are subdued.”⁵⁰

From this point on, many future Islamic caliphs would justify their actions directly from the Holy Qur’an as they subjugated non-Muslims during their expansion beyond the Arabian Peninsula to Cyprus, Tripoli, and Afghanistan. Although, in the verse shown above, there was no direct call for killing of non-Muslims, the Qur’an did cement the role of dhimmis. (An Islamic subject) Dhimmis called for Christians and Jews under Islamic rule to pay a tax (Jizyah) to their Islamic protectors in lieu of conversion to Islam making them ‘second class’ citizens with respect to the Islamic majority.^{51,52}

Eventually, a new Islamic clan, the Umayyads, who were originally from Mecca, moved the caliphate to Damascus. In 637 AD, Islam took control of Jerusalem enabling the Umayyads to complete the Dome of the Rock Mosque in Jerusalem in 691 AD on the former site of Solomon’s Jewish temple (in 70 AD the Romans destroyed it) – the holiest spot in Judaism.⁵³ Subsequent to this period, in 717 AD, Byzantine Emperor Leo the Isaurian thwarted Islam’s caliph, Suleyman from taking Constantinople in one of the greatest Islamic defeats at the hands of Christians.⁵⁴

Later and farther west, in 732 AD, Abd ar-Rahman, a North African governor, advanced Islam into Spain and was moving into France in the name of Islam until he was stopped by Charles Martel at the Battle of Poitiers. This was the saving moment for Europe; however, the victory did not put an end to Islamic excursions into Europe, as there were future Islamic advances into Burgundy, Sicily, and even a sack of St. Peter’s in Rome.⁵⁵ In close examination of Islamic expansion and Christian reaction, it

⁴⁷ (Esposito 11)

⁴⁸ (Esposito 12)

⁴⁹ (Riddle 136-137)

⁵⁰ (Qur’an 9:23)

⁵¹ (Esposito 15-16)

⁵² (Esposito 307)

⁵³ (Esposito 12-13)

⁵⁴ (Pagden 191-192)

⁵⁵ (Pagden 192-194)

demonstrates that religious war to secure territory was part of the relationship between Christians and Muslims at the end of the first millennium.

Catalyst for a Christian Response to Islam - al-Hakim and the Seljuk Turks

By the eleventh century, the new Fatimid caliphs in Egypt would show themselves to be one of the most powerful dynasties in Islam. They were now allowing Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land in part because of the money the pilgrims brought into the Islamic economy.

The status quo and relative peace between Christianity and Islam would change when one of the Fatimids caliphs, al-Hakim began a massive persecution of Christians without sanction from Islamic writings.⁵⁶ He exhibited his brutal repression of non-Muslims by ordering all Christians to wear heavy crosses and Jews to wear wooden calves around their necks and ordered the destruction of Christian churches, including the Christian Church of Holy Sepulcher (built on Jesus' burial spot in Jerusalem).⁵⁷ Al-Hakim's repression of Christians, his destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and the past Islamic incursions into Christendom after the Battle of Poitiers would set into motion a unified Christian response to Islam.

The tipping point for Christians would come after the Battle of Manzikert in 1094 AD, where Islamic Seljuk Turks defeated Byzantines Christians bringing Anatolia close to full Islamic domination. There was, however, a chance for peace. After their victory, the Seljuks would withdraw from Constantinople. However, in a puzzling move, according to many historical accounts, Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus I called for help from Pope Urban II to solidify his Byzantine empire and militarily confront the Seljuks.⁵⁸

Analysis of Pope Urban's Call to Action at the Council of Clermont

At the time of Emperor Alexius Comnenus I's plea for help, Christendom had progressed significantly. The economic and social conditions improved, driving increased urbanization. Northmen stopped being raiders, settled as merchants and joined with the Magyars, who had become Christians, to develop Christian kingdoms in Europe. Despite this relative progress, there were still splits within the Church over political control of Western Christendom. Holy Roman Emperors were ruling the German Kingdoms but struggling with the Church in Rome for political control and allegiance over the peasant class. At this time, the Church played both a religious and secular role in the Holy Roman Empire because the Holy Roman Emperor appointed the Pope. This relationship allowed the secular kings to investiture (appoint) prime church leadership positions such as bishop or abbot to relatives and those would adhere to their wishes based on simony (pay for a position). The Catholic Church's hierarchy would eventually break the struggle by solely allowing the College of Cardinals to elect the pope.⁵⁹

Even with this struggle over investiture, the Church's internal power struggles would fade from the forefront and nothing would ever be the same after Pope Urban II's November 1095 AD Clermont sermon. While there are many historical opinions as to why Urban called the Crusades, consideration for one reason not related to the eastern plea for help or for taking back Jerusalem was to address the Church's power struggles within Europe. Urban's call for fighting the 'accused race' of Muslims rather

⁵⁶ (Latourette 587)

⁵⁷ A quote from V.S. Naipaul in the Book *Among the Believers*, page 103

⁵⁸ (Latourette 408-410)

⁵⁹ (Riddle 267)

than fighting one another could relieve the pressure on the Church.⁶⁰ Whatever the truth, Jerusalem had been under Muslim control for some 457 years so when the pope called for action to take it back, Christendom's religious fervor took over, the Crusades would begin, and become one of history's most influential events.

In order to facilitate answering this paper's second question – were the Crusades partly a defensive reaction to years of Islamic conquest of formerly Christian lands - it is important to study the Clermont speech to ascertain if Urban's call for the Crusades could in anyway be construed as a defensive action. Without direct transcripts of Pope Urban's actual sermon at Clermont, historians have used five secondary sources of the sermon, some written years after Urban's original message, in an attempt to understand Urban's motivations. Cited below is an excerpt, from an account twenty-five years after the fact, report by Robert The Monk that specifically calls on the Franks, the most power group of Christians at the time, to take action.

"Oh, race of Franks, race from across the mountains, race beloved and chosen by God, - as is clear from many of your works, - set apart from all other nations by the situation of your country as well as by your Catholic faith and the honor which you render to the holy Church: to you our discourse is addressed, and for you our exhortations are intended. We wish you to know what a grievous cause has led us to your country, for it is the imminent peril threatening you and all the faithful which has brought us hither.

From the confines of Jerusalem and from the city of Constantinople a grievous report has gone forth and has -repeatedly been brought to our ears; namely, that a race from the kingdom of the Persians, an accursed race, a race wholly alienated from God, `a generation that set not their heart aright and whose spirit was not steadfast with God,' violently invaded the lands of those Christians and has depopulated them by pillage and fire."⁶¹

Based on these transcribed words by Robert The Monk, the call to Crusade is a direct plea by the Christian pope to take action in the name of God to help Constantinople and retake Jerusalem. Robert specifically states that these Persians - "*an accursed race, a race wholly alienated from God*" are the target. This rhetoric is highly inflammatory, even for the times, and likely caused passions within the church's membership to rise, leading even peaceful people to consider taking action against Islam. There is also a similar account of the sermon by Fulcher of Chartres, although, he speaks about a promise of remission of sins for those who participated in the crusades.

In attempting to ascertain Urban's intentions, one scholar has questioned Robert The Monk's vitriol towards Muslims in his translation of Urban's sermon at Clermont. "Robert does depict a more aggressive, animal-like opponent in his report of Pope Urban's speech at the Council of Clermont".⁶² Regardless of bias or not, in Robert The Monk's report, there is no language showing Urban calling for anything beyond the defense of Jerusalem and Constantinople. There is also no mention in Robert The Monk's report of forced conversion of Muslims or their subjugation.

Similarly, in the other accounts of Urban's sermon, (Fulcher of Chartres, Gesta Francorum, Balderic of Dol and Guibert de Nogent) seem to point to a Christian's duty to take up their cross like

⁶⁰ (Riley-Smith, The Oxford Illustrated History of The Crusades 274)

⁶¹ (Robinson)

⁶² (Woodall)

Christ and fight not fellow Christians, but instead fight those (Muslims) who blaspheme the place of Jesus' death and resurrection. In doing so, the reporters of Urban's sermon claim a righteous reward exists (redemption of their sins) for those who act.⁶³ Given these reports, Urban's call does appear to be more of a defensive action to take back Christian land than one of offense.

However, it is difficult to see complete pureness in the call to Crusade given Christ's teaching of all people being equal in the eyes of God. One must remember Jesus' command in Galatians about no distinction between male and female, Jew or Gentile.⁶⁴ Given this, it is quite incongruent that the Crusaders were in keeping with the teachings of Jesus when they began their actions against the Muslims in the Holy Land. Another explanation of Urban's intentions was that Urban was calling the Crusades, following Augustine of Hippo's definition of a 'Just War' as described previously, in his sermon at Clermont. In Urban's mind, the Crusades could have been as 'Just War' to right a wrong against Christianity by Islam by taking back the Holy Land from them.

There are other possibilities for Urban's calling for Crusades; Urban may have wanted to take action to defend the Western Christians against Islamic expansion by creating a buffer zone between Rome and Islam with his deployment of Crusaders in Byzantine. There could have been a need on Urban's part to avenge the faith and retake previously held Jerusalem given Islam's destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, once in 937 AD and again in 1009 AD. The call to Crusade may have been a defensive reaction to the barbaric tactics of al-Hakim against Christians. Alternatively, in a political move, Urban's personal motivations to solidify his power base in Europe against the warring kings may have held sway for Urban in calling the Crusades. This is plausible, based on all of the reports from Clermont. In his call to Frank warriors, Urban urged them to wage havoc not in the Europe against fellow Christians, but instead, the Franks should wage war against Islam in the Holy Land. By using the Franks as proxies for the church, their actions could have relieved some the pressure on the Church that was building over control of the hearts and minds of the peasant class.

We can never be sure of Urban's reasons; all of these postulates are merely speculation. However, if the Church was to survive given Islam's continued expansion into Christendom, Urban must present some measure of a defensive effort to protect its interests in the Holy Land and stop the conquest of the Byzantine world by Islam.

The First Crusade

Whatever the motivation, Urban's call to Crusade was heard. Historians often call the Christians' first military excursion, the Peoples' Crusade. According to the various accounts of events at Clermont, Urban did not want elderly, infirm, women, clerics, and monks from taking the Crusader vow.⁶⁵ Instead, he hoped after his call to action the military class (nobles and knights) would plan and lead the Crusade. However, the upper classes did not immediately respond to Urban's call, so the first Crusade began with peasants gathering in town centers waiting for instructions from the Pope as how to carry on, but the instructions never came. Eventually, peasant groups formed, leaders emerged, and off the Crusaders went to fight Islam under The Cross of Christ. Some of these groups would form under the leadership of Peter the Hermit and used old Roman roads to move east, pillaging, and pilfering from towns along the

⁶³ (Fordam University Five versions of Urban's Speech)

⁶⁴ (Galatians 3:28)

⁶⁵ (Riley-Smith, The Oxford Illustrated History of The Crusades 48)

way to Constantinople.⁶⁶ One should be aware, pillaging food and materials from vanquished communities was a common practice, in the Middle Ages, to sustain military operations.

Other groups of Crusaders did not go directly east and instead went and slaughtered the Rhineland Jews – at this time, the Crusaders held Jews and Muslims all to be the enemies of God.⁶⁷ Likely, mob mentality, anti-Semitism, and the era’s bloodlust led to this atrocity. Certainly, lower levels of the Church hierarchy during this era were not friendly to the Jews but nevertheless, some bishops would offer the Jews refuge from the Crusaders in their fortified sanctuaries in Speyer, Mainz, and Cologne.⁶⁸ Regardless, the Crusaders killed many Jews. Albert of Aix’s description of one Rhineland encounter with the Jews shows the brutality of Medieval Warfare.

“This slaughter of Jews was done first by citizens of Cologne. These suddenly fell upon a small band of Jews and severely wounded and killed many; they destroyed the houses and synagogues of the Jews and divided among themselves a very large, amount of money. When the Jews saw this cruelty, about two hundred in the silence of the night began flight by boat to Neuss. The pilgrims and Crusaders discovered them, and after taking away all their possessions, inflicted on them similar slaughter, leaving not even one alive.”⁶⁹

After the peasants marched through the Rhineland and upon reaching the east, ‘the tide would turn in what many today called poetic justice’. To those Crusaders who made it to Constantinople, they could not enter the city – they smelled and appeared as if they were barbarians according to Anna Comnenus, daughter of the Emperor.⁷⁰ Her father, Emperor Comnenus would betray these early arrivals ushering them off to Bosphorus by boat where the Seljuk Turks killed them. To understand this turn of events, one must recognize the nature of Byzantine society of the time. The Byzantine elite were very suspicious of barbarians and therefore leery of keeping large numbers of ragtag peasants near Constantinople.⁷¹

Finally, after several months had gone by, about 40,000 properly armed and supplied Crusaders made it to Constantinople including legendary names such as Raymond of Toulouse, Hugh of Vermandois, Godfrey of Bouillon, and Robert of Normandy. Once there, they resupplied and set out to Nicea where they defeated the Turks and took the city. After the victory, Emperor Alexius Comnenus I again showed the Latin-Byzantine divide by betraying Crusaders. This time it was not murder, instead, he did not let the Crusaders keep the booty from their victory – war booty like the results from pillaging was an important reward of warfare as it sustained operations. The Crusaders left Nicea without new supplies and went on to defeat the Seljuk Turks at Antioch. Conversely, this time, the Crusader win was by way of a bribe, which allowed the Crusaders safe passage into the city where the Norman Crusaders killed Muslims who resisted them. From Antioch, the Crusaders went on to take Sidon, Jaffa, Tyre, Acre, and Haifa from the Muslims on their way to Jerusalem.⁷²

⁶⁶ (Riddle)

⁶⁷ (Pagden 229)

⁶⁸ (Pagden 230)

⁶⁹ (Fordam University)

⁷⁰ (Riddle 227)

⁷¹ (Riddle 276)

⁷² (Riddle 275-278)

Finally, on June 13, 1099 AD, the Crusaders launched an all out assault on the walls of Jerusalem. However, breaching the old city did not take place until mid July when Godfrey from Lorraine and his men had finally gathered enough ladders and siege engines and were able to breach the walls.⁷³ The battle of Jerusalem was a defining moment in the Crusades – upon entering the city the Crusaders burnt Jews gathered in their synagogue, there was also destruction of many monuments including the city’s mosque. One of the widely accepted reports as to what happened in Jerusalem to the remaining Muslims was from Raymond of Aguilera, an eyewitness to the fall of Jerusalem. Even today, Christians and Muslims still speak of his description of events that took place in the Dome of the Rock and how the actions of the Crusaders do not correlate with Christian ideals. Raymond went on to say,

“As soon as he was there, the defenders fled along the walls and down into the city, and we followed them, slaying them and cutting them down as far as the Temple of Solomon, where there was such a slaughter that our men waded in blood up to their ankles.”⁷⁴

One question regarding the Christians’ actions in Jerusalem needing an answer is, were the Crusaders’ actions exceptionally brutal or normal for the period in history? (We cannot judge past warfare using today’s standards) One method to attempt to answer this question is to examine the description below of a similar Muslim military operation. A report from the 633 AD battle at the River of Blood that pitted Islamic soldiers against Persian and Byzantine Christians and compares in its level of violence with the description of the Christian brutality in Jerusalem’s al Aqsa Mosque.

“The Muslim cavalry broke up into several groups and galloped out in pursuit of the fugitives who had crossed the Khaseef Killing in the river went on for the rest of that day and the whole of that night and the whole of the next day and part of the next. Every vanquished warrior who fell into the victors' hands was decapitated”⁷⁵

Both reports illustrate that during medieval military operations, there was a great deal of cruelty, especially by today’s standards, but military operations of the time usually called for the killing of all enemies. Given this, one could postulate that the Crusaders’ methods were no more brutal than other military actions, including those of Islam’s, during the first millennium.

After the slaughter of Muslims in Jerusalem, the Crusaders sent a letter to Pope Urban II telling him of the Crusader’s victory for Christ but by the time it reached Rome, Urban II had died.⁷⁶ In the meantime, Christians controlled Jerusalem for the first time in over four hundred years. They made Godfrey of Bouillon the Protector of the Holy Sepulcher. The Crusaders left outside of Jerusalem established themselves in feudal structures throughout many outposts in Palestine and Syria with the Church in Rome establishing numerous bishoprics and archbishoprics to lead them. While the first Crusade did little to bring unity between Rome and Constantinople – in fact, it made the relationship worse, it did accomplish the goal of bringing the Holy City of Jerusalem under Christian control for the first time since Islam seized it in 638 AD.⁷⁷ Taking Jerusalem was important to the Crusading

⁷³ (Pagden 232)

⁷⁴ (Riddle 279)

⁷⁵ (Akram)

⁷⁶ (Pagden 231-233)

⁷⁷ (Latourette 410-411)

Christians, as the city's history played such a large role in Jesus' life. The Bible according to the Gospel of Luke tells Christians that Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem when he was young.⁷⁸ Matthew tells us in Chapter 11 that Jesus removed peddlers from the same temple. Finally, Jesus' death and resurrection took place in Jerusalem, so the city's return to Christians was essential given the importance of the Jerusalem to Christian history and its prominent place as a destination for pious Christian Pilgrims.

There were also many unintended consequences of the first Crusade. While the Crusaders filled leadership positions within the Levant, Jews did not fare well and intolerance towards them grew. In addition, the first Crusade made no progress in the west; the Christian-Islamic conflict in Spain proceeded unabated and the Islamic caliphate used the Christian excursion into the Middle East as a reason to unite its followers such that future Crusades would not achieve the results of the first.⁷⁹

The Next Crusades

Shortly after the first Crusade, a debacherous environment grew in the newly captured Christian states as drinking, partying, and prostitution became popular, in contrast to life in the Roman west. Relations between Jews, Christians, and Muslims grew even more estranged.⁸⁰ It was also in this period that new religious orders of knighthood formed with the vow to continue war against the Saracens (Medieval term used to describe all Muslims) in order to defend the Church's four remote outposts – Jerusalem, Edessa, Tripoli and Antioch against any Islamic incursions. However, after many years under western control, skirmishes between Christians and Muslims, in remote areas of the Levant, would eventually lead to another war.

In 1144 AD, the Christian Principality of Edessa fell to Imad al-Din (Zangi), the prince of Mosul. This event shocked the Church hierarchy in the west and compelled Louis VII of France, Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine, and a great number of knights, motivated by the exhortations of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, to call for another Crusade against Islam.⁸¹ Upon Imad al-Din's death, his son, Nur al-Din built on the victory at Edessa and took Damascus and Aleppo to bring them completely into the hands of Muslims. While the Christians in Europe sent forces to confront the Muslims, many turned back at Constantinople and never reached the Levant. Those Crusaders, who did get to the Levant, received a strong warning to stop from Nur al-Din when they saw he had killed all Christians in Aleppo. Although brutal, the massacre in Aleppo did not deter the Crusaders. After a failed Christian siege of Damascus, most Crusaders went home and this would be the end the second Crusade.⁸² This failure would keep the Crusading movement in check for nearly one hundred and forty years.

After some time, Saladin, a Kurd, took on the Fatimid caliph, coming out of the confrontation with control of not only Egypt but also in position to challenge Nur al-Din for Damascus. Upon Nur al-Din's death, Saladin, who was his nephew, would succeed him in Damascus where he subsequently declared Jihad against the Christians and began further reducing their holdings in the Levant. After the annihilation of Christians in the village of Hattin, Saladin and the Crusader commander in Jerusalem made a deal to facilitate peace. The arrangement allowed Saladin to bring Jerusalem again under Muslim control and spare the Christians who lived there. The agreement also stipulated that Christians, who paid

⁷⁸ (Luke 2:22)

⁷⁹ (Riddle 281)

⁸⁰ (Riddle 316)

⁸¹ (Knight)

⁸² (Riddle 318)

ransom could leave Jerusalem while any who could not pay for their freedom, were sold into slavery.⁸³ This devastating loss of Jerusalem would lead to a call by Pope Gregory VIII for yet another Crusade.⁸⁴

After the Pope's call for the third Crusade in 1189 AD, the Kings of France and England and the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire would all set out on different routes to confront Saladin – Frederick the Holy Roman Emperor would drown on the way to confront Saladin. In this third Crusade, Saladin would begin with the upper hand as he controlled all of the Levant except for three cities, Tyre, Tripoli, and Antioch. Saladin, a legend to this day among Arab Muslims, had great ambitions to capture all Christian land and kill its inhabitants.

“When God almighty has enabled me to conquer the rest of the coast, I shall.... cross the sea to their (Christian) islands to pursue them until there remains no one on the face of the earth who does not acknowledge Allah – or I die.”⁸⁵

King Richard of England (Known as Richard the Lionhearted) set out by ship, landing first in Cyprus in order to bring it back into Latin possession. King Philip, of France, also went by sea and arrived in the east to blockade the city of Acre. By the time Richard reached the same location, Saladin and Philip were already in negotiations to break the siege. When an impasse formed, Richard summarily killed 2700 Muslim prisoners in front of Saladin, which caused Saladin to do likewise in retaliation. In the end, Richard and Saladin would negotiate so that the Christians would control the Levant's seacoast; Islam would keep Jerusalem but would allow Christian pilgrims to visit holy sites. This agreement thus ended the third Crusade.^{86,87} This third Crusade, while having some success in keeping land in Christian hands on the outer Levant would mark the end of the major Crusades.⁸⁸ The poor results achieved by the three Crusades probably made Crusaders understand their transportation and supply technologies could not support their armies' movement and sustenance so far from home.

Despite this, by the year 1200 AD, Christians were again willing to attempt to retake Jerusalem so their armies set sail from Venice. Again, as in the previous Crusades, negotiations played a role in the Crusaders' strategy. However, this time the deal failed due to another Byzantine betrayal. Alexius III became the new Byzantine Emperor by way of buying the throne with bountiful spending on his army. To keep the weakly held throne, Alexius negotiated and subsequently reneged on a promise to send three thousand Greek knights and 2000 pounds of gold to help the Crusaders defeat the Muslims if they in turn would help him stay as emperor. This betrayal so infuriated the Crusaders they ended up sacking Constantinople in retaliation. Like in previous Crusades, Crusaders ransacked the city for immense profit, killed its inhabitants, and made Constantinople a Latin kingdom.⁸⁹ However, in an extreme irony, these victims of the Crusaders were not Muslims but mostly Orthodox Christians. The end result was that this Crusade like the others before it did nothing to return the Holy Land to Christendom. Instead, the events of the fourth Crusade were an atrocity of Christian - killing - Christian and made the West/East Christian divide almost insurmountable.

⁸³ (Pagden 234-239)

⁸⁴ (Riddle 325-326)

⁸⁵ (Pagden 240)

⁸⁶ (Pagden 242)

⁸⁷ (Riddle 327)

⁸⁸ (Riley-Smith, The Oxford Illustrated History of The Crusades 327)

⁸⁹ (Pagden 242)

From 1219 to 1270 AD, the Church would launch three more Crusades to return Christian lands but none even made it to the Holy Land so after the last excursion, the period of the Crusades was over and no Christian army would return to the Levant until the nineteenth century.⁹⁰

Conclusions

In seeking to answer the first of two questions posed by this work, namely was warfare in the name of 'God' common to both medieval Christianity and Islam, the answer is a confident yes. The answer's basis is from analysis of the Crusades where Christians acted under the Cross of Christ in Holy War brutally attacking Muslims in Asia Minor and in the Levant. Christians in dealing with the Christian Byzantines and Jews were equally brutal as shown in the sacking of Constantinople and the Rhineland massacre. Likewise, on the side of Islam, there were many brutal Islamic-Christian conflicts fought in the name of Allah. The 633 AD battle at the River of Blood, the 633 AD Battle of Yarmuk in Syria, and the 937 AD, the battle of Jerusalem where Muslims took the city and burnt The Church of the Holy Sepulcher are such examples.

In further analysis of the theologies of Christianity and Islam, the concept of 'Holy War' was indeed prevalent within religious their writings. As an example, Christian theologians such as Saint Augustine and Thomas Aquinas wrote extensively of the concept of a 'Just War' in defending the Christian faith or in righting an egregious wrong committed against the Church.

Similarly, Islamic theology supported Holy War when Islam was in danger at the hands of non-believers. Islam's Qur'an, Hadith, and Sunnah writings clearly spell this out. Additionally, there are specific guidelines in these Islamic writings as to how Muslims should treat non-believers and how they should conduct relations with people of the Book (Christians and Jews) when they hold dominance over them.

In answering the second question as whether there is a case the Crusades were partly a defensive action by Christians to halt Islamic incursions into Christian lands leads subjectivity to be unavoidable. Given the call and philosophy of Jesus, it is difficult to see much goodness in the intentions and actions of the Crusaders. In many instances, Crusaders acted in a bloodthirsty and immoral manner, even by standards of the day. However, many of the primary and secondary historical sources show that medieval Christians truly felt threatened and wronged by Islam's advances into both the Levant and into mainland Europe.

Furthermore, in examining how Islam extended into Christian territories, even laying siege to Vienna as late as 1683, it could be convincingly said, the Crusades were defensive maneuvers. It was reasonable for Christians to attempt to contain continued Islamic expansion and to protect Christian interests in the Levant such that Christian Churches could exist unmolested and their parishioners are free to practice their faith without the burden of Jizyah.

Postscript

In a final analysis of the Crusades, one could also examine a hypothetical scenario; what if the Crusades never happened? In this theoretical postulate, one could look to another group who faced Islamic incursions into their land; the Zoroastrians once dominated Iran until Islamic armies overran them at Qadisiyah in 637 AD. After the Muslims defeated the Persian Zoroastrians, Islam placed in the Zoroastrians in state of permanent dhimmis. Over time, this condition would almost lead to Zoroastrian

⁹⁰ (Pagden 242-245)

extinction. Today, possibly because of their domination by Islam, Zoroastrians remain in an extreme minority in Iran and Afghanistan and it is as if their previously expansive culture has died.

In this writer's mind, it is not without merit to consider that if the actions called for by the Crusades did not occur, a strong likelihood exists, that possibly both the Byzantine East and the Latin West could have succumbed to the armies of Islam and Christianity may not be present to the level it is today in Europe.

Moving forward, the question remains as to if the Crusades have yet fully resolved. In Samuel Huntington's article *Clash of Civilizations*, he postulates about future clashes between the west and Islam, "The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural".⁹¹ In Huntington's mind, our modern world may not be yet safe from wars such as those occurring during the Crusades. This belief is based on Huntington's thought that people continue to define their identity in ethnic and religious terms such that there is an "us" versus "them" mentality. We have seen manifestations of this mentality time and time again even since the break-up of the Soviet Union. Looking back at recent history, it seems the centuries-old tension between the West and Islam continues to grow even more rapidly leaving one last question this writer leaves the reader of this work to ponder in order to understand the potential outcome of this perennial conflict.

Will the sustained expansion of China's military power align with the west or with Islam?⁹²

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⁹¹ (Huntington)

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