

Jerusalem

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JERUSALEM

At the battle of Aizanadin in 633 CE, Khalid ibn Walid - 'the Sword of God' - defeated the Roman army of Heraclius, inflicting the loss of fifty thousand men; it was soon followed by the fall of the great cities of Jerusalem, Antioch, Aleppo, Tyre and Tripoli.¹

On a red camel, which carried a wooden dish, a leather water bottle, a bag of corn and one of dates, Caliph Umar (the second Caliph who ruled during 634-44 CE) came from Medina to take formal possession of Jerusalem. He entered the Holy City riding by the side of the Christian patriarch Sophronius.² These are Caliph Umar's words:

*'In the name of Allah, the Benefactor and Merciful! This is the surety granted to the inhabitants of Aelia (Jerusalem) by the servant of God, Omar, Commander of the Faithful. He gives them protection of their persons, their churches, their crosses, whether these are in good or bad state, and their cult in general. No constraint will be exerted upon them in the matter of faith, and none of them will be harmed. The inhabitants of Aelia will have to pay the Jizya in the same proportion as the inhabitants of other cities. It is up to them to expel from their city the Byzantines and thieves. Those amongst the latter who would like to stay will be allowed to do so on the condition that they should pay the same Jizya as the inhabitants of Aelia.'*³

Under the Emperors of Constantinople, in Asia and Africa subjects used to pay very onerous, excessive and complicated forms of taxes. Under the Muslims, a simple well-defined tribute^{*} of far less amount, in some places only half of the previous tax, was charged. The lower orders were never made to feel the bitterness of conquest.⁴

The Jews, likewise, saw the positive difference Muslim rule could bring. Following Caliph Omar's entry in the city, a grateful Jewish noble man said:

*'The temple remained with Byzantium for 500 or so years and Israel were unable to enter Jerusalem; whoever did so and was found out, suffered death. Then when the Romans left it, by the grace of the God of Israel, and the kingdom of Ishamel was victorious, Israel was given leave to enter and take up residence and the courtyards of the house of God were handed over to them and they were praying there of a time.'*⁵

¹ J.W. Draper: *A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*; Vol I; Revised edition; George Bell and Sons, London, 1875. vol 1; p.335.

² J.W. Draper: *A History*; op cit; p.335.

³ Cited by Antoine Fattal: *le Statut legal des non Musulmans en pays d'Islam*, Imprimerie Catholique, Beyrut, 1958. in Yves Courbage, Paul Fargues: *Chretiens et Juifs dans l'Islam Arabe et Turc*, Payot, Paris, 1997; p.15.

* [Editor Comment: The "jizya" means compensation and was paid in compensation for not having to do any military service. Typically this was one dinar (about 4 grams of gold) per year and only applied to men who would have had to fight to defend the community otherwise.]

⁴ J.W. Draper: *A History*; op cit; vol 1; p.337

⁵ Thus said Salman ben Yeruhim (wr.ca 950) in his Judaeo-Arabic commentary on psalm 30. in R.G. Hoyland: *Seeing Islam as others saw it*; The Darwin Press, Inc; Princeton; New Jersey; 1997. p 127.

Under the Muslims, all Christians, Jews and Muslims lived in shared peace and prosperity in the city. Ibn al-Arabi, commenting on Jerusalem remarks that the Christians cultivated its estates and kept its churches in good repair.⁶ Ibn al-Arabi stresses that Jerusalem was the meeting place for religious scholars of all three faiths - Islam, Christianity and Judaism.⁷ The infamous Fatimid destruction of the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem was the act of a mad ruler, Al-Hakem (b.985), whose persecution of the Muslims was much worse than that of the Christians. With the exception of this incident all faiths lived together in the city in relative peace and harmony until the arrival of the crusades.

Jerusalem had been in Seljuk hands before the crusades (which were launched in 1096). But, as the Seljuks were fighting the crusaders pouring through the north, the Fatimid wrested Jerusalem from them in 1097 which was a 'real betrayal of Islam' according to Lamarque.⁸ 'The humour of history', according to Durant, means that when the Crusaders would arrive in front of Jerusalem in 1098, the Turks whom they had come to fight had been expelled from the city by the Fatimids in the previous year (1097)⁹. The Fatimids soon allied themselves to the crusaders against the Seljuks¹⁰. But in July 1099 the crusaders surrounded the city of Jerusalem held for the Fatimids by Iftikhar ad-Daula (The pride of the Nation). Iftikhar, his entourage and his army were allowed to leave the city under safe crusader conduct.¹¹ The population of 70 000 people, on the other hand, was slaughtered in cold blood¹². Draper narrates:

*'The capture of Jerusalem, as might be expected under such circumstances, was attended by the perpetration of atrocities almost beyond belief. What a contrast to the conduct of the Arabs! When the Khalif Omar took Jerusalem, A.D. 637, he rode into the city by the side of the Patriarch Sophronius, conversing with him on its antiquities. At the hour of prayer, he declined to perform his devotions in the Church of the Resurrection, in which he chanced to be, but prayed on the steps of the Church of Constantine; 'for,' said he to the patriarch, 'had I done so, the Musselmen in a future age would have infringed the treaty, under colour of imitating my example.' But, in the capture by the Crusaders, the brains of young children were dashed out against the walls; infants were thrown over the battlements; every woman that could be seized was violated; men were roasted at fires; some were ripped open, to see if they had swallowed gold; the Jews were driven into their synagogue, and there burnt; a massacre of nearly 70,000 persons took place; and the pope's legate was seen 'partaking in the triumph.'*¹³

A contemporary present during the dramatic moments called Abbot Raymond of Agiles of the French town of Du Puy, wrote gleefully:

⁶ I. Abbas: *Rihlat Ibn al-Arabi ila al-mashriq kama sawwaraha` Qanun al-Tawil'*, *Al-Abhatth*; 21/1, 1968. in C. Hillenbrand: *The Crusades, Islamic Perspectives*, Edinburgh University Press; 1999; p.50.

⁷ In C. Hillenbrand: *The Crusades*, p.49.

⁸ Henri Lamarque: La Premiere Traduction Latine du Coran. In *De Toulouse a Tripoli, AMAM*; Colloque held between 6 and 8 December, 1995, University of Toulouse, 1997. pp 237-246. P.239.

⁹ W. Durant: *The Age of faith*, Simon and Shuster, New York; 6th printing; 1950. p.591.

¹⁰ Henri Lamarque: La Premiere Traduction; op cit. P.239.

¹¹ B. Z. Kedar: The Subjected Muslims of the Frankish Levant, in *Muslims under Latin Rule, 1100-1300*, ed J.M. Powell, Princeton University Press, 1990, pp 135-174, p.143. On the dumping of corpses, see e.g., *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, ed. K. Mynors, trans. R.Hill (London, 1962), p.92.

¹² Ibn al-Athir: *Kitab al-kamil*; ed K.J. Tornberg; 12 vols; Leiden; 1851-72. X, pp. 193-95.

¹³ J.W. Draper: *A History*; Vol II; op cit; pp 22-3.

'When our men took the main defences, we saw then some astonishing things amongst the Saracens. Some were beheaded, and that's the least that could happen to them. Others were pierced through and so threw themselves from the heights of the walls; others after having suffered in length were thrown into the flames. We could see in the roads and in the places of Jerusalem bits and pieces of heads, hands, and feet. Everywhere we could only walk through cadavers. But all that was only little...'

The abbot's description moves onto the Mosque of Omar, where,

*'there was so much blood in the old temple of Solomon that dead corpses swam in it. We could see hands floating and arms that went to glue themselves to bodies that were not theirs; we could not distinguish which arm belonged to which body. The men who were doing the killing could hardly bear the smoke from the corpses.'*¹⁴

The Christian chronicler, Humbert of Romans, delighted on 'the splendid occasion when the blood of the Arabs came up to the horses' knees, at the capture of Jerusalem in 1099.'¹⁵

The carnage perpetrated by the crusaders when they captured and occupied Jerusalem for 88 years (until 1187) had a permanent destructive effect. The scholars and scholarship that thrived in the city before the crusades were gone for good. The city would witness a certain revival in the late 12th century after it was retaken by the Muslims, but never again would it recover its glory and power after such a murderous onslaught.

Jerusalem: Its Sites, Scholars and Scholarship before the Crusades

Jerusalem prior to the crusades was a place filled with a thriving trade, scholars and madrasas. The crusades destroyed all such wealth and, above all, scholarship. This destruction, which will be considered in some detail in the last part of this article, will show how learning declined in Jerusalem due to the devastation of war inflicted upon Islam. Despite some improvement following the recapture of the city by Salah-ud-din in 1187, the city never recovered its prime scholarly activity, and just like the rest of the Muslim world, also suffering from the same problems, fell into gradual decline.

The thriving character of the city prior to the crusades is caught by the traveller Nasr-ud-din Khusraw who saw the city in 1047 just decades before the crusades. He noted how things were cheap and plentiful and how the city had beautiful markets and high buildings. It had a great number of craftsmen and each craft had its market. The city was large with the number of inhabitants at about a hundred thousand. Nasr Khusraw refers to a great teaching hospital with rich waqfs dedicated to it, from which medicines for its numerous patients were dispensed and salaries for doctors were paid. He also refers to hostels for the Sufis by the mosque where they lived and prayed.¹⁶

Serious patronage of architecture had begun in Umayyad times (661-750). During their rule no single architectural style was used throughout the Islamic world, but monuments associated with the dynasty or its high officials were often well built and elaborately decorated. In structures such as the mosques of

¹⁴ Abbot Raymond of Agiles; in G. Le Bon: *La Civilisation des Arabes*; Syracuse; 1884. p. 249.

¹⁵ N.Daniel: *The Arabs and medieval Europe*; Longman Librarie du Liban; 1975. p.253.

¹⁶ Nasir Khusraw in A.A.Duri; Jerusalem in the early Islamic period; 7th-11th centuries; in *Jerusalem in History*; Edited by K.J. Asali; Scorpion Publishing Ltd; 1989; pp. 105-29; at pp. 118-9.

Medina and Damascus the aim appears to have been to create monuments that would proclaim the power and ideals of the new Islamic state.¹⁷ Even richer and more complex was the decorative and epigraphic program of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, built by Caliph 'Abd al-Malik and completed in 691/692CE.¹⁸ From its plan—a central domed area over the rock proper and a double octagonal ambulatory around it—the commemoration of the rock appears to be the building's main purpose; a door placed where the mihrab should be demonstrates that it was not intended for use as a mosque.¹⁹ Both the inner (circular) and outer (octagonal) zones are formed of piers alternating with columns. Internally the building is notable for its colourful decoration: marble panels on the piers and lower wall surfaces; and mosaic cubes on the arcades of both zones as well as on the drum of the central dome.²⁰



Figure 1. Dome of the Rock²¹

In the early eighth century the Aqsa Mosque (The Further Mosque) was erected adjacent to the south side of the Dome of the Rock. It was also embellished with marble and mosaics.²² In their complex decorative and iconographic schemes the Umayyad religious buildings of Damascus, Medina and Jerusalem are unique. However even more influential was the basic spatial organization of the mosques in those three cities which was often imitated in later buildings.²³

The Aqsa Mosque has been repeatedly described by Muslim scholars. Al-Muqaddasi, who originally came from the city, wrote in 985:

the main building of the Aqsa Mosque has twenty six doors. The door opposite the Mihrab is called the Green Brazen Gate; it is plated with brass gilt, and is so heavy that only a man strong of shoulder and of arm can turn it on its hinges.... On the right hand side of the Court (that is along the West Wall of the Haram Area) are colonnades supported by marble pillars and plasters; and on the back (or north wall of the Haram Area) are colonnades vaulted in stone. The centre part of the

¹⁷P.P. Soucek: Islamic Art and Architecture; *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*; J.R. Strayer Editor in Chief; Charles Scribner's Sons, N. York; Vol 6; pp. 592-614; p. 593.

¹⁸P.P. Soucek: Islamic Art and Architecture; p. 593.

¹⁹P.P. Soucek: Islamic Art and Architecture; p. 593.

²⁰P.P. Soucek: Islamic Art and Architecture; p. 593.

²¹ <http://www.atlastours.net/holyland/jerusalem.html>

²²P.P. Soucek: Islamic Art and Architecture; p. 594.

*main building is covered by a mighty roof, high pitched and gable wise, over which rises a magnificent dome.*²⁴

The mosques played a primary role in disseminating science and culture in Islam. A brief glimpse of the scholarly institutions, which are described in great detail by the late medieval scholar, the Qadi Mudjir-uddin (d.1521), enlightens us on the link between faith and learning.²⁵ Although his outline also includes madrasas built following the crusades, the earliest institutes which saw the best of Muslim scholarship in the city date from before the wars. Inside the Aqsa Mosque, just near the women's area is the madrasa Farisiya founded by Emir Fares-ud-din Albky. There was also the madrasa Nahriye and the Nassiriya. The latter was named after the Jerusalem scholar, Sheikh Nasr, before it became known as the Ghazaliya, after the famed scholar al-Ghazali who resided and worked there. Around al-Aqsa was the Qataniya, the Fakriya, Baladiya and the Tankeziya. The latter, Ibn Mudjir tells, is an immense madrasa situated on the Khatt road, and its founder, the vice ruler of Syria Emir Tankiz Nasri, is also responsible for building the aqueduct for the water supply of Jerusalem.

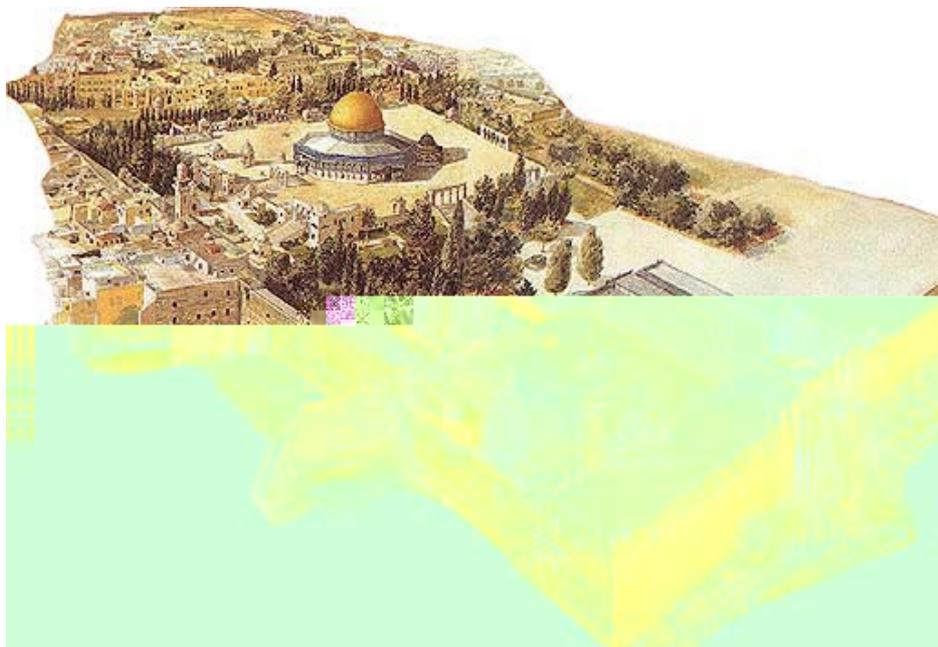


Figure 2. Al Aqsa Mosque is to the south on the lower right of this picture with the Dome of the Rock to north on the upper left²⁶

A number of Turkish women are behind the construction of many such madrasas in and around Masjid al-Aqsa. The madrasa Othmania was constituted in waqf in the year 1523 by a woman who belonged to one of the greatest families of the country; she was called Isfahan Shah Khatoun. Earlier, in 1354, another

²³P.P. Soucek: *Islamic Art and Architecture*; p. 594.

²⁴ Al-Muqaddasi: *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions*, a translation of his *Ahsan...* by B.A. Collins, Centre for Muslim Contribution to Civilization, Garnet Publishing Limited, Reading, 1994. p; 170

²⁵ Mudjir Eddin: *Al-Euns al-jalil bi Tarikh el-Qods wa'l Khalil*, translated into French as *Histoire de Jerusalem et Hebron*, by H. Sauvaire; Paris; Ernest Leroux; 1875; and 1926; pp. 140 fwd.

²⁶ Source - http://www.atlastours.net/holyland/al_aqsa_mosque.jpg

Abu Hamid al-Ghazali was born at Tus in 1058, lost his father at an early age and was reared by a Sufi friend. He studied law, theology and philosophy; he spent much of his life teaching and writing and he would stay in Jerusalem, Damascus and Baghdad. At thirty-three he was appointed to the chair of law at the Nizamiya College in Baghdad where he taught. Soon all Islam acclaimed his eloquence, erudition and dialectical skill.³⁷After four years of this glory he was laid low by a mysterious disease; appetite and

The 19th century French medical historian, Leclerc, in the first volume of his work on Muslim medicine, (on pages 549-52) deals with a most interesting manuscript that is located in Madrid—Escorial 887, old 882—containing what seem to be the notes taken by a student at the consultations of a physician.⁵³ His physician is one Muhamad al-Tamimi about whom no definite information is given. Leclerc would place him in Toledo, c.1069, but Sarton notes that his conjecture is not convincing. There is a possibility that these two Tamimi are the same person. In any case this work seems to be very valuable and deserves a thorough investigation. About 50 consultations are reported in it.⁵⁴ Leclerc himself offers a good insight into this particular manuscript at the Escorial which he says is a mutilated, badly preserved manuscript.⁵⁵ It is divided into sessions, or consultations, and these sessions are in the number of fifty. A sick person presents himself/herself, the doctor asks them questions, and has them examined by his student with further questions and answers. The doctor then prescribes medicines. The doctor generally asks his student on his knowledge about the illness of the patient. If the student does not know much, the doctor then lectures him more about it once the patient has left.⁵⁶ If the student notices something that is odd in relation to the diagnosis, the prognosis or something that has struck him, he asks the master who then provides him with answers.

Here is an instance of a session narrated by the student:

*‘a patient arrived telling he was suffering from severe headache. My master asks him: ‘Is it at the front or at the back, and how do you feel the beating against the side of the head?’
The patient answered: ‘It is as if someone was hitting me with a hammer at the front of the head.’
The master provided the following prescription: You take some camomile, some rose leaves, and the head of poppies; you will mix the lot in a pan, and add water in sufficient quantity to cover the lot. You will boil the pan, and you bend your head towards the emanated steam. Do this for three days, day and night, and you will recover. With respect to your diet: eat something soft and that is relaxing.’ The patient soon recovered.⁵⁷*

Another session is also recounted by the student:

‘A man came in saying he had a large mole on his upper lid. My master orders me to measure the tumour with my hand, and whether it was static or moving. Which I did. The tumour moved like a sort of stone under the skin. The master asked me to see whether under the lid were lesions. Which I did and found nothing. The master then said: Friction the tumour with olive oil, and apply some compress with hot bread on it. The patient did it for three days and recovered.⁵⁸

In one session, the student relates how the master cured a disease by just prescribing a food diet. To the baffled student, the master answers that the prescribed food is enough to cure the disease.⁵⁹

Al-Muqaddasi (b.946-d.end of 10th century), originally from al-Quds (Jerusalem), hence his name, is by far one of the most instructive of all early Islamic writers on the social geography of Islam. On his travels,

⁵³ N.L. Leclerc: *Histoire de la médecine Arabe*; vol 1; pp. 549-52.

⁵⁴ G. Sarton: Introduction; vol 1; op cit; p. 679.

⁵⁵ L. Leclerc: Histoire; op cit; p. 549.

⁵⁶ L. Leclerc: Histoire; op cit; p. 550.

⁵⁷ L. Leclerc: Histoire; op cit; p. 551.

⁵⁸ L. Leclerc: Histoire; op cit; p. 552.

them, and how such revenues were distributed.⁶⁷ He would carefully study how a location was run and the way its citizens would act, dwelling mainly on such factors as order, cleanliness, morality and state of learning, all of which he considers for each and every place visited.⁶⁸

On water management and hydraulic technology, much can be learnt from him as he describes Egypt, the Nile and the Nilometer.⁶⁹ Currency, its uses, and its users as well as its fluctuations constitute a major aspect of interest; Dinar, Dirhem, their multiples and sub-multiples in addition to each region's local currencies were studied in good detail.⁷⁰ Also of interest is information on diets, clothing, dialects, the varied differences of the many ethnic groups of the vast Muslim land, a diversity in union, which Miquel notes in his conclusive words, was to be completely shattered by the Mongol irruption.⁷¹

This approach is in contrast with his predecessors, whose focus was much narrower, whilst Al-Muqaddasi wanted to encompass aspects of interest to merchants, travellers, and people of culture.⁷² Thus, it becomes no longer the sort of traditional 'geography', but a work that seeks to understand and explain the foundations of Islamic society, and not just that, the very functioning of such society. On the whole, Kramers concludes that '*There is thus no subject of interest to modern geography which is not treated by al-Muqaddasi.*' And so, he is, according to A. Miquel (the author of a more recent translation of Al-Muqaddasi), the creator of '*total geographical science.*'⁷³

Muwaffaq Eddin Yaqub Ben Saqlan was a Christian doctor of Jerusalem (fl. Middle of 12th century; d. 1229). He was an Oriental Christian who served as a manager of the hospital of Jerusalem under Muaddam the Ayyubid ruler. Muaddam took Yaqub into his service and showered him with gifts and honours.⁷⁴ Although his own health failed and he could not move due to problems with his legs, he still served the same Muaddam even if he had to be carried to see to the ruler.⁷⁵ Both died in a short space of each other. Ben Saqlan was not just an able doctor, he is also said to have been appreciated for his surgical skills; Ibn Abbi Ussaybaia (the 13th century medical historian) is particularly full of praise for him.⁷⁶ According to Ibn Abbi Ussaybia, Ben Saqlan observed very minutely all the symptoms, studied them while never allowing any detail to escape his attention and then applied the most accurate cures. He was an accomplished man, intelligent and judicious in his practice. He died leaving a son who followed in his footsteps.⁷⁷

Rashid Eddin Ibn Essury (fl. Late 12th century- early 13th century), as shown by his last name, is of Syrian origins and he learnt his trade in Damascus. However he too practiced medicine for some time in

Muslim Contribution to Civilization, Garnet Publishing Limited, Reading, 1994. p. 143.

⁶⁷ A. Miquel: *La Geographie*, op cit, pp 237-9.

⁶⁸ A. Miquel: *La Geographie Humaine du Monde Musulman*, Vol 4, Ecole des hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, 1988.

⁶⁹ Al-Muqaddasi: *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions*, (B.A. Collins); op cit; p.189.

⁷⁰ Al-Muqaddasi (Collins tr) op cit; pp. 215 fwd.

⁷¹ A. Miquel: *La Geographie*, op cit, p. 347.

⁷² S.M. Ahmad: Al-Maqdisi, in *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, C.C. Gillispie editor in Chief, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, Vol 9; at p. 88.

⁷³ Al-Muqaddasi: *Ahsan at-taqasim fi Ma'rifat al-Aqalim*; traduction partielle, anotee par Andre Miquel, Institut Francais de Damas, Damascus, 1963, p. xxiv, in D. M. Dunlop: *Arab Civilisation*, op cit, at p. 166.

⁷⁴ L. Leclerc: *Histoire*; op cit; vol 2; p. 170.

⁷⁵ Leclerc: vol 2; p. 170.

⁷⁶ Ibn Abbi Ussaybaia: *Waafayat al-Iyyan*; in L. Leclerc. P. 170.

⁷⁷ In Leclerc: vol 2; p. 171.

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Here instead, we will focus on what has not been dealt with in the other entries: the war, its killings, its devastation, its mighty demands, its fierceness shared by both Muslims and their enemies. Its endlessness, absorbing the energies and the lives of generations after generations, bleeding the land of Islam in its fight for survival in face of an enemy dedicated to wiping the whole entity out. It will be shown that the fact that Muslims survived is a tribute to their absolute resilience and the power of their faith, that they survived, indeed, the fiercest onslaught ever witnessed in history, is a miracle even if their civilisation suffered. Other races worldwide, in their tens of millions, had been wiped out of existence by much lesser onslaught than what Islam faced.⁸⁵ It will be shown how in those centuries (11th-13th centuries), when supposedly Islam or the Seljuk destroyed Islamic civilisation, how it was the war of devastation inflicted on Islam which prevented learning or civilisation prevailing, let alone thriving.

The crusades (1096-1291) are a result of the Christian awareness of divisions amongst the Muslims between the Shias and Sunnis who were then at war. The Christians had also been emboldened by their successes in Spain with the taking of Barbastro in 1063 and Toledo in 1085 (see entry on Toledo). They had also re-taken Sicily from the Muslims in 1089 (see entry on Sicily). The Catholic Church knew this was the most opportune time to strike at the centre of Islam and amongst the disunited, infighting Muslims. The Muslims in the East had also just lost their two greatest figures; Malik Shah, the Seljuk ruler and his minister Nizam al-Mulk were both assassinated and the Fatimids, whose leaders were generally Armenian in origin, were ready to make an alliance with the crusaders. It was only left for the Christian leadership to find an excuse to justify the attack on Islam and to rouse the people of Christendom. Hence Pope Urban II concocted a story of Muslim massacres of Christians in the Holy Sites of Jerusalem. His speech included:

‘An accursed race, a race utterly alienated from God, a generation forsooth which has not directed its heart and has not entrusted its spirit to God, has invaded the lands of those Christians and has depopulated them by the sword, pillage and fire; it has led away a part of the captives into its own country, and a part it has destroyed by cruel tortures; it has either entirely destroyed the churches of God or appropriated them for the rites of its own religion. They destroy the altars, after having defiled them with their uncleanness. They circumcise the Christians, and the blood of the circumcision they either spread upon the altars or pour into the vases of the baptismal font. When they wish to torture people by a base death, they perforate their navels, and dragging forth the extremity of the intestines, bind it to a stake; then with flogging they lead the victim around until the viscera having gushed forth the victim falls prostrate upon the ground. Others they bind to a post and pierce with arrows. Others they compel to extend their necks and then, attacking them with naked swords, attempt to cut through the neck with a single blow. What shall I say of the abominable rape of the women? To speak of it is worse than to be silent... Accordingly undertake this journey for the remission of your sins, with the assurance of the imperishable glory of the kingdom of heaven.’⁸⁶

⁸⁵ see, for instance:

-W. Howitt: *Colonisation and Christianity*. Longman; London.

-R. Garaudy: *Comment l'Homme devient Humain*. Editions J.A, 1978.

-D E. Stannard: "Genocide in The Americas" in *The Nation*, October 19, 1992; pp. 430-4.

⁸⁶ In D. C. Munro, "Urban and the Crusaders", Translations and Reprints from the *Original Sources of European History*, Vol 1:2, 1895, pp. 5-8

In truth, there were no Turkish atrocities and defilements of the Holy sites; far from being in danger of extermination, the Christians enjoyed a uniquely favourable status under Muslim rule. In 1047 the Muslim traveller Nasir-i-Khosru, having seen Christians freely practicing their faith, described the Church of the

Even when some Bedouin thieves, who preyed on caravans, whether Muslim or non Muslim, attacked the Christians in order to rob them, the Saracen lord of Ramleh came to the rescue, and under his guidance the pilgrims visited Jerusalem in safety.⁹⁴

The true reasons for the call of the crusades, other than the awareness of Muslim chaos and divisions already cited, was the fact that the Church became aware that inflicting the final blow on the foe was within reach. The reason was, Bennet holds, the Church's overriding ambition to destroy the Muslim creed and annihilate Islam.⁹⁵ The need to exterminate the Muslim enemy was also reinforced by the need to re-assert Christian unity; first between the Greek and Latin Churches and also within Western Christendom.⁹⁶ Pope Urban also sought unity amongst Western Christians in his own realm, as divisions were being exacerbated by the conflict between Pope (Gregory VII) and Emperor (Henry IV).. Urban stressed the ideological aims of the crusade: peace among Christians and death to the enemies of the faith.⁹⁷ And amidst the new unity, peace was found with local feudal internal wars being now repressed; the men's pugnacity was now diverted to the Crusades.⁹⁸

*'Let hatred, therefore, depart from among you; let your quarrels end,' said Urban in his speech, 'Enter upon the road to the Holy Sepulchre; wrest that land from a wicked race, and subject it to yourselves. Jerusalem is a land fruitful above all others, a paradise of delights. That royal city, situated at the centre of the earth, implores you to come to her aid. Undertake this journey eagerly for the remission of your sins, and be assured of the reward of imperishable glory to the Kingdom of Heaven.'*⁹⁹

*'..... To all those who will depart and die on route, whether by land or sea, or lose their life in fighting the pagans, the forgiveness of their sins will be granted. And this I grant to those who participate to this voyage in accordance with the authority that I hold from God.'*¹⁰⁰

Equally high on the Western Christian agenda was the need to wrest from the Muslims their wealth. The men of Provence and Italy, Conder explains, were not insensible to art and beauty but many of the Latins came from gloomier lands, from dark castles and small fortresses frowning over squalid wooden villages.¹⁰¹ They were astonished at the wealth and luxury of Asia and their hearts rejoiced thinking of the spoils that lay before them in the east, where Baghdad and Damascus were said to rival Byzantium.¹⁰² The powerful trading cities of Pisa, Genoa, Venice and Amalfi also had great desire to extend their rising commercial power and capture such Islamic wealth for themselves.¹⁰³ The leaders of the

⁹⁴ T.A. Archer: *The Crusades*; p. 17.

⁹⁵ C. Bennett: *Victorian Images of Islam*; Grey Seal; London; 1992. p. 6.

⁹⁶ J.J.Saunders: *Aspects of the Crusades*; University of Canterbury publishing; Canterbury; 1962. p.20.

⁹⁷ J.H. Lamonte: crusade and Jihad: in N.A. Faris ed: *The Arab heritage*, Princeton University Press, 1944. pp 159-198. p.161.

⁹⁸ W. Durant: *The Age of faith*, op cit; p.829.

⁹⁹ Ogg quoted in W.Durant: *the Age of faith*; op cit; p. 587.

¹⁰⁰ A. Bouamama: l'Idée de croisade dans le monde Arabe hier et aujourd'hui, in *De Toulouse a Tripoli*, AMAM, Colloque held between 6 and 8 December, 1995, University of Toulouse; 1997 .pp 211-219.p.212.

¹⁰¹ C.R. Conder: *The Latin Kingdom*; op cit; p. 30.

¹⁰² C.R. Conder: *The Latin Kingdom*. p. 30.

¹⁰³ W. Durant: *The Age of faith*, op cit; p.586.

*none of that multitude accepted the Christian faith. At last Bohemond brought out all those he had first invited to lock themselves in the tower of the place. He ordered that all old women be put to death, and also old men, whose age had rendered useless; then all the rest he ordered to be taken to Antioch to be sold as slaves. This massacre of the Turks took place on 12 December (1098); on Sunday; but on this day not all work could be accomplished; so the following day our men killed all the rest.*¹¹⁶

Radulph of Caen mentioned how

*"In Maarra our troops boiled pagan adults in cooking pots; they impaled children on spits and devoured them grilled."*¹¹⁷

In fact it was a common practice, as the chronicler William of Tyre reports, for the crusaders to roast and eat the flesh of the Turks they slew.¹¹⁸ At Ma'arrat, to avoid such a fate, many Muslims were said by a Christian writer to have jumped down wells to their deaths.¹¹⁹

After a few more similar massacres down the road, the crusaders reached Jerusalem in 1099. The city must have contained a sizeable population at the time of the Crusader siege, since, as well as its own inhabitants, it probably also housed refugees from other towns and villages who had sought asylum behind its walls.¹²⁰ None escaped with their lives. The massacre has been described above to warrant more gruesome details here, but that can be found in any contemporary chronicle, or in old Western history books (The modern ones have typically cleansed Western history of such dark images and have in the same process cleansed Islamic history of anything positive).

The scholars of Jerusalem suffered the same fate as the population. Al-Rumayli, the most celebrated Palestinian hadith expert of his age and author of tracts on the merits of Jerusalem and Hebron, was stoned to death.¹²¹ When the Crusaders took the city, he was made prisoner and was ransomed at 1000 dinars. As nobody paid his ransom, he was stoned to death at the gate of Antioch.¹²² Abd Al-Djabbar B. Ahmad of Isfahan was also killed.¹²³

Such was the killing that the chronicler William of Tyre tells us,

*'The place was inundated of the blood of the faithful. We could not watch without horror that multitude of deaths, their limbs scattered laying on the ground on all sides, and the flood of blood inundating the surface of the ground.'*¹²⁴

¹¹⁶ Robert the Monk, in G. Le Bon: *La Civilisation des Arabes*; Syracuse; 1884; p. 248.

¹¹⁷ In Janet Abu Lughod: *Before European Hegemony*; Oxford University Press; 1989; p. 107.

¹¹⁸ C.R. Conder: *The Latin Kingdom*; op cit. p. 45.

¹¹⁹ R. Finucane: *Soldiers of the Faith*; op cit; p.106;

¹²⁰ C. Hillenbrand: *The Crusades, Islamic Perspectives*, op cit;p.66.

¹²¹ B. Z. Kedar: *The Subjected Muslims of the Frankish Levant*, op cit.143.

¹²² Mudjir Eddin: *Al-Euns* (Histoire de Jerusalem); P. 65.

¹²³ Mudjir: *Ens*; op cit; p. 299.

¹²⁴ A. Bouamama: 'l'Idée de croisade dans le monde Arabe hier et aujourd'hui, in *De Toulouse a Tripoli*, AMAM, Colloque held between 6 and 8 December, 1995, University of Toulouse; 1997 .pp 211-219. p.213.

In the words of Raymond of Aguilers,

*It was a just and splendid judgment of God that this place should be filled with the blood of the unbelievers... the city was filled with corpses and blood.*¹²⁵

Some spared captives were forced to clear the streets and the court of the Haram of tens of thousands of corpses which were collected in heaps and burnt or thrown over the walls.¹²⁶ When the Christian chronicler Fulcher visited Jerusalem in December 1099, five months after it was taken, he was disgusted by the stench of death inside and outside the city walls.¹²⁷

*Oh what a stench there was around the walls of the city, both within and without, from the rotting bodies of the Saracens slain by our comrades at the time of the capture of Jerusalem, lying where they were hunted down.*¹²⁸

All Muslim houses and trades, now vacant, were taken over by the crusaders. For seven days as the riot and carnage of the Muslim population went on, a contemporary wrote,

*Men forgot their vows, forgot the Sepulchre and Calvary, hastening to gather spoil, revelling and exulting, and claiming for their own the empty houses which they seized.*¹²⁹

Even priests were not slow to ask their share. Arnold, as Latin patriarch, claimed the treasures of the Mosque, which Tancred and Godfrey, the crusade leaders, had shared between them.¹³⁰ In fact, it is whole Muslim towns and villages which became property of the Church. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was the richest and most important of all; Geodfrey, the first crusade leader gave twenty one villages to the church and the number increased to seventy through the donations of other kings and barons.¹³¹ These lay mainly in the mountains around Jerusalem within the Royal Domain; but in 1165 five villages in Galilee were purchased, and land in the north east of Caesarea.¹³²

It is needless here to go on about the military campaigns that followed the taking of Jerusalem, the intensity and bitterness of each military encounter, etc... as some of these can be found under other entries (Mosul, Hama, Aleppo) and from these the cost of the crusades upon Islam can be understood. The Muslims re-conquered Jerusalem in October 1187. Three months after Salah-ud-din's victory at Hattin on July 1187, on 2 October 1187, Jerusalem surrendered to the Muslims after a short siege. Salah-ud-din's terms were accepted, says a learned Christian, "with gratitude and lamentation"; perhaps some learned Christians compared these events of 1187 with those of 1099.¹³³ No massacre or violence was perpetrated, the entry of Salah-ud-din was more like that of Omar rather than that of Geodfrey'.¹³⁴ (Geodfrey, it must be noted, was the

¹²⁵ Raymond of Aguilers: *Historia francorum qui ceperunt Jerusalem*; tr. J.H. and L.L. Hill (Phila., 1968); p. 127-8.

¹²⁶ M.A.Hiyari: Crusader Jerusalem; in Jerusalem in History; op cit; pp. 130-76; at p. 140.

¹²⁷ in R. Finucane: Soldiers of the Faith; op cit; p.104.

¹²⁸ Fulcher; Expedition; p. 132; in M.A. Hiyari: Crusader Jerusalem; at p. 140.

¹²⁹ C.R. Conder: The Latin Kingdom; op cit; p. 67.

¹³⁰ C.R. Conder: The Latin Kingdom; op cit; p. 67.

¹³¹ C.R. Conder: The Latin Kingdom; op cit; p. 194.

¹³² Regesta, No 420-425; see Quarterly Statement, Palestine Exploration Fund; January, 1890. There are fifty documents in the Cartulary of the Holy Sepulchre, referring to property in Palestine and in Europe.

¹³³ W. Durant: The Age of faith, op cit; p.598.

¹³⁴ C.R. Conder: The Latin Kingdom; op cit; p. 156.7.

(When the crusaders took Jerusalem in July 1099, the Aqsa Mosque was given to the Knights of the Temple, who made considerable alterations to it and to the adjoining portions of the Haram area.)

After Salah-ud-din re-took Jerusalem in 1187, to Richard's vow that he would not abandon Jerusalem, Salah-ud-din wrote to Richard (Lionheart):

*Al-Quds is to us just as much as to you, and is more precious in our eyes than in yours, for it is the site of our Prophet's nocturnal departure and the place where people will assemble on Judgment Day. Therefore do not imagine that we can waver in this regard.*¹³⁸

As for the Jews, what they lost under crusader occupation, they regained under the Muslims. After retaking Jerusalem in 1187, Salah-ud-din raised the ban imposed on them by the Crusaders and encouraged them to settle the Holy city once more.¹³⁹

Once Salah-ud-din died in 1193, his brother and his sons divided the realm, and instead of fighting the Crusaders, they sought to compromise so they could keep their territory. Two of the Ayyubid rulers were actually ready to hand back Jerusalem to the Franks.¹⁴⁰ During the sixth crusade as the crusaders besieged Damietta, Malik al-Kamil offered to give up Jerusalem to the Crusaders, to free all the Christian captives and to pay a large sum towards the rebuilding of the walls, only for the offer to be rejected by the Pope legate, Cardinal Pelagius.¹⁴¹ Al-Kamil was not the only Ayyubid who sold out Jerusalem and other territories for the sake of his own realm. On hearing that the Franks had designs on Jerusalem, another Ayyubid, al-Mu'azzam, i.e The Grand, who initially had patronised building projects in the city, found himself dismantling its fortifications. According to Sibt al-Jawzi, al-Mu'azzam justified this very unpopular act by saying: `If they (the Franks) were to take it (Jerusalem), they would kill those in it and rule over Damascus and the countries of Islam. Necessity demands its destruction.'¹⁴²

In 1228 Frederick II of Sicily arrived in Palestine on a Crusade, the sixth. Worried about his own realm, and without a blow, the Ayyubid sultan al-Kamil concluded a treaty with Frederick, which in the words of Muslim chroniclers was a supplication on the part of the Muslim ruler.¹⁴³ In the treaty, al-Kamil surrendered the whole of Jerusalem except the Mosque of Omar, the keys of which were to stay with the Muslims, but Christians under certain circumstances could enter it for prayer; the treaty further restored Bethlehem, Jaffa and Nazareth to the Crusaders.¹⁴⁴ So pleased was Frederick he decorated the Sultan's chief ambassador with the order of knighthood.¹⁴⁵ This capitulation over Jerusalem caused widespread indignation and outrage amongst Muslims. In 1229, the chronicler Sibt b, al-Jawzi wrote, `In it (this year)

¹³⁸ Ibn Shadad: *Al-Nawadir al-Sultaniya wa'l Mahassin al-Yussufiya*; in *Receuil des Historiens des Croisades; Historiens orientaux*; Paris; 1884; III; p. 265.

¹³⁹ Kenneth Setton: *History*. in Y. Courbage, P.Fargues: *Chretiens et Juifs dans l'Islam Arabe et Turc*, Payot, Paris, 1997; p.99.

¹⁴⁰ C. Hillenbrand: *The Crusades*, op cit;p.249.

¹⁴¹ C.R. Conder: *The Latin Kingdom*; op cit; p. 310.

¹⁴² Sibt al-Jawzi: *Al-muntazam fi tarikh al-muluk wa'l umam*; X; Hyderabad; 1940; VIII/2; p. 601.

¹⁴³ G.W. Cox: *The Crusades*; op cit; p. 189.

¹⁴⁴ G.W. Cox: *The Crusades*; op cit; p. 189.

¹⁴⁵ A.S. Atiya: *Crusade, Commerce and Culture*; Oxford University Press; London; 1962; p. 89.

appearance of some individuals here and there, would never recover the glory and power which preceded the combined crusade-Mongol onslaught. Only Cairo, which had been spared both would remain the beacon of Islamic civilisation for centuries after.

This is only the most minute illustration of what the land of Islam faced. Yet the eventual reality is staggering, as anyone reading through the history of Islam will know, the marvellous powers Muslims and their faith had in surviving the terrible onslaughts on them is astounding. Millions upon millions of enemies dedicated to wiping out Islam, descending upon the Holy land, and yet, after hundreds and thousands of fierce battles, despite betrayal, despite treachery, despite mass slaughter and all plots, the Muslims prevailed but at huge costs. The Muslims did lose their civilisation to the devastating blows of unforgiving enemies in wars that ran on and on but they survived. No other people suffered similar onslaught, an onslaught which the Muslims today in their shameful ignorance of history can never figure out, but an onslaught out of which emerged the greatest miracle of all: Muslim survival and Islam as strong as ever. And here is no better, and more fitting a conclusion than these words by the Italian historian, Gabrieli, who tells us,

'I am going to make a confession, a confession of somebody who had studied since his youth Muslim society, its faith and culture, without ever reaching any sympathy for it, sympathy which alone allows a good understanding of history. Well, this sympathy, I must say, I did feel, though, when listening to the voices of these Arabs, these Muslims, who, at a time of great peril during the crusades, still clung fiercely by their faith, their civilisation, and fought back, and died defending it, like this old sheikh from the Maghrib: Al-Findalawi, who, Ibn Al-Athir says, walked amongst the volunteers for the defence of Damascus (in 1148), and who was told to withdraw from the fight because of his old age, but who answered:

*'I have given my life to God; He had accepted it; this engagement is still valid.' And, resolutely, and solemnly, he moved forwards towards death.*¹⁵⁵

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¹⁵⁵ F. Gabrieli: Introduction aux historiens arabes des croisades; in *Cahiers de Civilisation Medievale*; vol 13; 1970; pp. 221-8; at p. 228.

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