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A Critique of the Scholarly Outlook of the Crusades: the Case for Tolerance and Coexistence

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The Crusader period is defined in scholarly research as one of the most brutal and bloody chapters of Christian–Muslim relations in the Middle Ages. No doubt, the period witnessed a heightened level of religious militancy and propaganda between Muslims and European Christians in the medieval period. However, this was not the only reality at the time. There were countless instances of tolerance (religious and social), alliances (political and military) and exchange (commercial, cultural and scientific) between Muslims and Crusaders. Scholars have acknowledged some of them, but only as cases of marginal historical curiosity or opportunism and realpolitik. In their totality, such instances have not been studied or conceptualised as possibly shaped and informed by other factors including religion, or as forming a pattern that reflected the different agendas of the various actors during the Crusader period.

There is another problematic aspect of the Crusader period, namely the way it is often perceived as an epoch stretching from 1095 to 1291. When the Crusader period is treated as such, it exacerbates a tendency – that many have already challenged and criticised (for example, by Housley)¹ to think of it as separate from what came before 1095 and what came after 1291.

The argument of this chapter is that the dominant discourse of the clash between the worlds of Christendom and Islamdom has determined the contours of scholarly conventions on the Crusades in the Middle East. Thus, it has undermined the scholars' ability to understand the period as

involving many actors on each side with conflicting agendas, and a complex web of exposures, cooperation and animosities that not only unfolded during the Crusader period, but also preceded it and endured after it. When the Crusader period is re-examined with an awareness to these problematic issues, the exceptions to the dominant outlook of warfare – such as trade, political and military cooperation, religious tolerance, scientific exchange, and so on – cease to be isolated cases and become patterns, and the military clash ceases to be the dominant discourse and is reduced to another pattern.

The Problem with the Emphasis on al-Sulami and his *Book of Jihad*

In two separate articles, which he later incorporated into his book *L'Islam et la croisade*, Emmanuel Sivan advanced two theories that have had tremendous impact on the fields of Jerusalem studies and Crusader studies. In the first theory, Sivan postulated that the religious and political significance of Jerusalem to the Muslims only became an important matter because of the Crusades.² Despite its popularity, especially among non-specialists in Islamic history, this theory has already been proven wrong by several scholars on the basis of textual and archeological evidence.³ In the second theory, Sivan introduced al-Sulami (d. 1106) and his *Book of Jihad* as reflecting the first 'Islamic' reaction to the Crusades,⁴ ushering a previously unknown figure into the centre of scholarship on Islam and the Crusades.

The appeal and acceptance of the theory about al-Sulami has been sustained by scholarly conventions that gave it potency and persuasiveness.⁵ I am not contesting that al-Sulami wrote his *Book of Jihad* in reaction to the Crusader invasion and what he considered as the Muslims' religious lapses that allowed the invaders to accomplish their objectives. What I am contesting is the significance accorded to him in modern scholarship as the herald of the first Islamic response to the Crusade, which in my opinion reflects the scholarly convention that for a reaction to be labelled 'Islamic' it must be inherently militant and religiously fanatical, and so other reactions that include cooperation with the Crusaders or indifference to them cannot be deemed Islamic.

Moreover, the evidence at our disposal shows that al-Sulami was a marginal religious scholar and does not represent the views of the religious

establishment in Damascus or Syria. Irrespective of what his book conveys, his peers and later scholars did not consider him worthy of mention, and in all medieval prosopographies, we only have one rather very short biography of him.⁶ Additionally, al-Sulami preached his book outside Damascus in the mosque of Bayt Lihya, which at the time played no known role of any scholarly or social significance. Except for two figures who attended the reading of one section of the book, those who listened to al-Sulami's preaching (ranging between three in most cases and up to eight people in just one instance) were not scholars and seemed to occupy minor functions. Most importantly, al-Sulami's book does not have a single demonstrable case of impact. In other words, even though al-Sulami wrote a book on jihad, as far as we can tell no one who wrote or preached on jihad during the Crusader period read it or mentioned it.⁷

Al-Sulami's sentiments surely reflected the views of some people in Damascus, including some religious scholars. However, given the indifference shown to him and his book, it is not an exaggeration to say that the majority of the Damascene society and its political and religious elite did not share his enthusiasm. Therefore, when his book is presented as the first Islamic response to the Crusader onslaught, we are imposing a specific conceptualisation that for a reaction to be considered Islamic it has to fit the parameters of what al-Sulami expressed. Other responses – including indifference to the Franks and cooperation with the Franks – are, according to such a convention, non-Islamic.

A similar case to al-Sulami's is the significance accorded to al-Findalawi, a Maliki scholar who came to Damascus from Muslim Iberia, who rushed out of Damascus to wage jihad against the Crusaders attacking Damascus in 1148.⁸ Again, the mention of al-Findalawi is repeated in modern scholarship as another example of the Islamic reaction to the Crusades.⁹ Yet, the fact that our sources only name him shows that his behaviour stood in contradistinction to that of the overwhelming majority of local Damascene religious scholars who, as far as we can tell, did not move a finger.¹⁰ Why their collective reaction (that is, abstaining from fighting) is not seen as Islamic is precisely the point that this chapter is criticising: scholarly convention on the Crusades does not consider 'Islamic' anything other than militancy and fanaticism. There is no doubt that the reactions of al-Sulami and al-Findalawi

are one type of Islamic responses to the Crusades, and they must always be presented as such, not as the only type.

Evidence of Tolerance and Coexistence

Stories of non-violent interactions between local Muslims and Franks are encountered everywhere in the sources. They reveal a significant degree of tolerance and cooperation (obviously, I am not intending these concepts to be understood according to modern standards and usages). They problematise the dominant scholarly outlook and undermine any simplified presentation of the period as governed by animosity, war and religious fanaticism. For instance, Ibn Wasil (d. 1298) describes the relinquishing of Jerusalem to the Franks in 1244 by al-Malik al-Salih of Damascus and al-Nasir Da'ud of Karak:

The Franks entered Jerusalem and took control of the sacred Rock, the Aqsa and all the sacred sites on the Noble Haram ... At the end of this year, I travelled to Egypt, and stopped on my way in Jerusalem. I saw the monks and priests over the sacred Rock, and wine jars on it intended for the holy communion (*bi-rasm al-qurban*). I went to the Aqsa Mosque and saw there a suspended bell. The call for prayer and dwelling in the Noble Haram were abolished, and heresy was declared.¹¹

Ibn Wasil's story is plagiarised by al-Maqrizi (d. 1442), with some minor variations that have major implications to the central point of this chapter:

Al-Nasir Da'ud and al-Salih Isma'il reached out to the Franks and enlisted them against al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din. They promised them Jerusalem and gave them Tiberius and Ascalon, and the Franks rebuilt their castles and fortifications. They also took hold of the Rock in Jerusalem and sat on it drinking wine, and even hung a bell in the Aqsa Mosque.¹²

There are a few points in this event as reported by the two historians that speak to the complex web of animosity and cooperation between Muslims and Crusaders, as well as to the manipulation of history on the part of medieval chroniclers. To start with al-Maqrizi, it seems rather evident that his paraphrasing of Ibn Wasil's language was intended to cast the Crusaders' capture of Jerusalem in 1244 as an intentional desecration of Islamic sacred

sites: 'The Franks took hold of the Rock in Jerusalem and sat on it drinking wine.' But Ibn Wasil's version does not show a process of desecration. No doubt, his words echo a sense of humiliation or disappointment for losing control of the Haram of Jerusalem (Temple Mount). Yet, Ibn Wasil's words clearly show that the Crusaders venerated the Rock, and he understood and described the presence of wine there as specifically intended for the service of the Eucharist. Thus, what al-Maqrizi described as deliberate desecration, the eyewitness Ibn Wasil saw as veneration. Moreover, Muslims were still permitted to visit and pray, though they were not allowed to dwell in the Haram. The two narratives, therefore, reflect different Muslim outlooks about the period and about interactions with and perceptions of the Crusaders. Al-Maqrizi's is rooted in animosity and peculiar negative historical memory, whereas Ibn Wasil's is reflective of dynamics that involved tolerance and coexistence. This example raises a bigger issue that has not been given due attention in modern scholarship, namely authors as actors and also readers as actors in relation to the transmission/reading of history and how they establish conventions that last for centuries.

To return to this episode of handing over Jerusalem to the Crusaders in 1244, the decision was made by al-Nasir Da'ud and his uncle al-Salih Isma'il, and was part of a broader complex web of alliances and competitions among Crusader and Muslim rulers at the time. It was not the first time Jerusalem was turned over or shared with the Franks. One particular case occurred fifteen years earlier when the Ayyubid sultan al-Malik al-Kamil handed over Christian Jerusalem to Frederick II when the two rulers signed a treaty. At that time, al-Nasir Da'ud was ruling Damascus and opposed the agreement, despite the fact that al-Kamil was able to maintain Muslim control over the Haram and most of the countryside around Jerusalem. Al-Nasir Da'ud enlisted Sibt b. al-Jawzi (d. 1256) to preach against the deal in the Great Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. The celebrated scholar obliged and delivered a very emotional sermon on Jerusalem and its religious merits that left everyone who crammed into the Umayyad Mosque weeping for the loss of the Holy City.¹³ Interestingly, the handing over of Jerusalem in 1244, according to terms much worse than the treaty of 1229, was not even mentioned by Sibt b. al-Jawzi.

So, was al-Nasir Da'ud in 1244 an opportunist by handing Jerusalem back to the Crusaders? Or was he an opportunist to reject the agreement

between his uncle al-Kamil and Frederick II in 1229 and enlist members of the religious establishment to preach against it? To ask the question differently, which of his actions can we describe as 'Islamic'? The answers generally proposed reflect stereotypes, whereby religion is invariably used to justify fanaticism and war, and realpolitik and pragmatism are used to explain peace overtures and cooperation.

Religious tolerance, and sharing sacred religious sites in particular, was a pattern for which we find many examples during the Crusader period. One example, rather overused in modern scholarship, relates to the famous medieval Iberian traveller Ibn Jubayr (d. 1217). In late summer 1184, Ibn Jubayr journeyed from Damascus to Acre in the hope of catching a ship to take him back home after a year and a half in the Levant. He observed on his way countless farming villages inhabited by Muslims who seemed to him to live in complete harmony with the Crusaders. What irritated Ibn Jubayr the most was not only that the Franks were not harming those Muslims. He bemoaned the fact that those Muslims did not seem to be bothered by their mingling with what he described as 'Christian pigs and filth', and even though they were still practising Islam openly, he considered living under those circumstances does not allow for the proper practice of Islam.¹⁴

In another instance, while in Acre, Ibn Jubayr visited a sacred site called the Spring of the Cattle – the spot where, according to religious belief, God caused a spring to gush out so that Adam could provide water for his cattle, and where he was buried. There, Ibn Jubayr saw the remains of a mosque, and described the following:

The Franks had installed for themselves a prayer niche on its eastern side. The Muslims and the heretics gather in it, each turning towards their prayer direction. It is under the control of the Christians; they venerate it and protect it. God saved a prayer spot in it for the Muslims.¹⁵

It seems rather evident that it was the Crusaders, not God, who allowed the Muslims to keep coming to that spot and did not mind the two communities having their respective religious services side by side. Ibn Jubayr's anger and disgust at the sight of fellow Muslims living in harmony with Christian Crusaders, and, even worse, having their religious practices respected by

the Crusaders, are the kind of reactions that speak of a mindset, not unique to Ibn Jubayr. This mindset reflects the agendas and biases of medieval historians who saw the Crusader period as one of animosity and war. Yet, it is precisely because his accounts offer a treasure trove of evidence about tolerance and shared religious heritage that to accept his ideological stance as normative disregards the complex reality of the period.

What Ibn Jubayr saw was very common. When Jerusalem was under Crusader control and prior to its recapture by Saladin in 1187, Muslims regularly visited it to worship at the Haram. John of Würzburg, who came on pilgrimage in the 1160s, described how the Muslims were allowed to visit and worship outside the Dome of Rock.¹⁶ This is also corroborated by contemporary Muslim chroniclers, such as Abu Shama, who spoke of group of Sufi mystics having made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem while under Crusader control.¹⁷

One can also add the case of the famous poet/diplomat Usama b. Munqidh (d. 1188), who described his own visits to Jerusalem whilst under Frankish control as frequent, and had friends among the Templars who would clear up a space for him to pray inside the Aqsa Mosque. In one instance, Usama was harassed by a newly arrived Frank who took offence at the sight of a heretical Saracen praying in the direction of the south (that is, Mecca). The novice Frank stormed to interrupt Usama's prayer, holding Usama's head and turning it toward the east. Usama's Templar friends rushed to his defence and pulled away the new Frank.¹⁸ What is interesting in this story is not only the respect some members of the Templar order had for some Muslims and their right to pray in the Aqsa Mosque. What is stunning for us is Usama's own admission that his visits to Jerusalem were frequent, and that he had many Crusaders (in Jerusalem, and elsewhere) as close friends.

We also have the example of the scholar al-Harawi (d. 1215) who related that he took up residency in Jerusalem for a few weeks in 1173.¹⁹ He also went constantly to the Haram to pray, even though the Dome of the Rock was being used by the Crusaders as a church, but they, according to al-Harawi, did not make any serious alteration to it or to the Aqsa Mosque.²⁰ In his *Kitab al-isharat*, al-Harawi criticised and deconstructed many of the popular customs of making pilgrimage to particular shrines and religious

sanctuaries in Palestine and the surrounding regions as reflective of popular superstitions and false associations. Yet, his book attests to countless cases of Muslims, Christians and Jews converging on the same spots to worship. Some of these locations were under Crusader rule and others were under Muslim rule. Sites as far away from Jerusalem as the Church of Our Lady of Saidnaya, near Damascus, witnessed Muslims and Templars converging on a Christian Orthodox shrine. Also, when al-Kamil gave back Bethlehem and the Church of the Nativity to Frederick II, the sultan insisted that Muslims have a right to visit it and worship there.²¹

The fascinating thing about these examples is that the reality at the time featured systematic tolerance in relation to religious observance. We are not looking here at examples of Muslims or Crusaders concealing their religious beliefs and identities in order to avoid persecution or mistreatment when they were travelling through or living in each other's territory. Most of the examples discussed above point to Muslims who were determined to publicly display their adherence to Islam in Crusader-controlled areas.

Muslims also secured and protected Crusaders' right to sacred sites and safe conduct to them. When Saladin captured Jerusalem in 1187, he and his advisors debated the fate of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The words of Saladin's secretary 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani (d. 1201) leave no doubt that the sultan and most of his entourage, including religious scholars, were cognisant of their religious obligation to protect the site for the Christians:

The majority of [Saladin's] advisors declared that [the Church] should not be demolished or razed, and its gates should not be locked barring the infidels from making the pilgrimage to it. Their target of worship is the spot of the Cross and [Jesus's] grave, not the building itself. Even if it were to be shattered to pieces, the Christians in all their diversity will keep coming to the site. When Commander of the Faithful 'Umar, may God be pleased with him, conquered Jerusalem in the early years of Islam, he confirmed their right to the place and did not order the structure to be demolished.²²

Saladin's triumphal conquest of Jerusalem came at a time when the Crusaders were on the brink of complete elimination from Palestine. The sultan could have confiscated or destroyed the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as some

in his court urged him to do. However, the voice of the majority of commanders and religious scholars prevailed. Their awareness of their religious obligation to protect the Christians' right to come on pilgrimage and worship in Jerusalem was not a matter of political opportunism but rather an Islamic precedent set by the caliph 'Umar (r. 634–4).

A few years after this conversation in Saladin's court, the events of the Third Crusade unfolded. The final settlement between Saladin and Richard the Lionheart correlate with the argument made above. Saladin opened the city to Crusader pilgrims who came in large numbers and he even held a feast for them in Jerusalem.²³

There is one additional interesting detail that was under consideration between Saladin and Richard: the proposal to have Saladin's brother al-'Adil marry Joan, the sister of Richard, and have the married couple jointly rule over Jerusalem and Palestine. This proposal shows that the presentation of the period as governed by a religious clash is all the more illogical. Saladin and al-'Adil could only advance such a proposal after it was vetted and approved by religious scholars, and the idea, even though it appealed to Richard and some in his court, was rejected by certain Christian clerics in Joan's entourage.²⁴

These examples highlight the widespread cases of cooperation, coexistence and religious tolerance between Muslims and Crusaders. Many of them were informed by factors other than *realpolitik* and opportunism. Crusader and Muslim rulers did not only defend the religious rights of their respective communities; they also acknowledged in no passive terms the religious rights of the other group.

The Peace of al-Kamil and Frederick

The circumstances of al-Kamil turning over Christian Jerusalem to Frederick II, as part of a peace the two monarchs forged in 1229, is another case that speaks to alliances and tolerance where religion was a factor. The dominant view in Crusader scholarship is that al-Kamil did so out of political opportunism and *realpolitik*.²⁵ The evidence, however, points otherwise. When Frederick arrived in Acre in the autumn of 1228, al-Kamil was at the pinnacle of his power. Internally, the sultan had no serious challengers, and was reorganising the Ayyubid realm along terms very favourable to him. The major

headache was the potential alliance between his brother al-Mu'azzam and the Khwarazmians,²⁶ but that fell apart with al-Mu'azzam's death in 1227. Al-Mu'azzam's son al-Nasir Da'ud was too young and immature to be able to secure his own transition to power in Damascus, let alone represent any threat to al-Kamil.

With respect to Frederick, there is every reason to believe that even though he was keen on fulfilling his vow and lead a crusade, he did not come to fight. Because of Rome's intrigues, the emperor was facing a precarious situation in Italy and could not afford a prolonged stay in Palestine. He was also excommunicated, which caused most of the local Franks to snub him or conspire against him when he arrived in Palestine, a matter that was known to the Muslims.²⁷ More importantly, he came invited, for al-Kamil in 1226 had dispatched his confidant, Amir Fakhr al-Din, to Sicily to try to hammer out a deal. The idea appealed to Frederick and he followed up on al-Kamil's overture and sent Thomas of Acerra and Bishop Berard of Palermo to Cairo. Frederick even went further and ordered Thomas and Berard to proceed to al-Mu'azzam and try to secure an agreement with the strong man of Damascus, under whose jurisdiction Palestine fell. Al-Mu'azzam's infamous words to Frederick's envoys – 'Tell your master I only have for him the sword'²⁸ – are nothing more than posturing. For, according to Sibte b. al-Jawzi and al-Nuwayri, al-Kamil complained that he did not have much room to negotiate the terms of the deal over Jerusalem with Frederick in 1229, because al-Mu'azzam had already concluded a treaty with the emperor, giving him 'the area between the Jordan River and the sea, including the villages from the gate of Jerusalem to Jaffa as well as other places'.²⁹ So, all in all, before he even set sail, Frederick had negotiated the broader outline of a peace treaty with the Muslims.

Al-Kamil and Frederick stood to lose a lot of their religious and political capital. They were vehemently attacked by groups within their respective communities for not pursuing war. In a letter, Patriarch Gerald of Jerusalem condemned Frederick precisely because his enterprise did not feature war and his treaty with al-Kamil was an affront to Christianity.³⁰ Several contemporary Muslim chroniclers echoed similar resentments towards al-Kamil for 'losing' Jerusalem, and how that led to the evacuation of the Muslim population from the city and its surrounding area.³¹ It did not matter to them that,

in reality, the treaty secured the Muslims' presence and control over parts of Jerusalem and most of its countryside.³²

To return to the central issue of this chapter, can one consider al-Kamil's deal with Frederick a case of opportunism and *realpolitik* and therefore un-Islamic? If we look at al-Kamil's career, we realise that opportunism was not his political philosophy. A great example that speaks to this point unfolded during the Fifth Crusade (1218–21). When al-Kamil was on the verge of annihilating the Crusader army near al-Mansura in 1221, he halted his attack and reached out with a peace proposal instead. He even sent the Crusaders food and supplies that saved them from assured starvation.³³ Al-Kamil decided to do so against the advice of some of his generals who urged him to destroy the Crusader army. Here again, historians have explained the sultan's overture as a case of opportunism and *realpolitik*,³⁴ thus eliminating any possibility that he could have done so out of religious or moral considerations. I am not completely dismissing political opportunism and *realpolitik* as factors in as much as pointing to other factors shaped and informed by religion and a philosophy of rule.

Indeed, throughout the Fifth Crusade, al-Kamil proposed one truce after another (giving Jerusalem and its territory back, paying for the rebuilding of its fortification and returning the relic of the True Cross), only to see them rejected by the dominant faction among the Crusaders. With respect to the relic of the True Cross, it is thought to refer to the one taken by Saladin during the Battle of Hattin in 1187.³⁵ However, this particular relic of the True Cross came from the Fatimid treasury in Cairo, and al-Kamil ended up sending it to the Crusaders in Damietta with an unidentified monk,³⁶ which is to be seen as an act of tremendous religious deference.

One might explain that al-Kamil's earlier peace overtures were made under duress when his forces were in retreat and when his position as sultan was in danger. This, however, does not explain him pausing the attack against the Crusaders when fortunes turned in his favour and could have wiped them out. It is precisely this last peace overture that shows *realpolitik* and opportunism were not always the factors that determined cooperation and tolerance.

Relinquishing part of Jerusalem was not a light matter to al-Kamil, and he must have struggled with its religious implication. The ruler of

Irbil urged him to inform the caliph in Baghdad. Al-Kamil relented and dispatched Amir Fakhr al-Din, but only after he expressed his resentment toward the insinuation in such advice: 'We are the slaves of that sacred house. Our fathers' and our own services to it are very well known. We are neither deceitful nor hypocrites in that.'³⁷ That al-Kamil was advised to inform the caliph shows the religious significance of the deal, for the caliph at the time did not muster any real power on the scene of Syria and Egypt. Thus, his angry outburst was about religious pride that his family's legacy derived from their liberation and protection of Jerusalem, given its religious symbolism to Islam, and that his treaty with Frederick did not compromise that legacy or his religious responsibility towards the city.

Moreover, the negotiations between al-Kamil and Frederick were not done in secrecy. They involved a large apparatus of religious scholars and military advisors. There was al-Kamil's most trusted advisor Amir Fakhr al-Din, who was knighted by Frederick and carried the emperor's emblem on his flag until his death in the battle against the Seventh Crusade in 1250. There were also two other key figures in al-Kamil's court who were involved, both religious scholars: al-Salah al-Irbili (d. 1234), who was al-Kamil's chamberlain, and Shams al-Din al-Urmawi (d. 1252), who was chief-religious jurist of al-Kamil's army and professor of Shafi'i law at the Salihyya School in Cairo.

Some Muslim historians even speculated that al-Kamil's friendship with Frederick and his earlier promises to the emperor forced his hand during the negotiation.³⁸ Indeed, the peace between al-Kamil and Frederick laid down a lasting friendship between the two dynasties, and it was renewed between Frederick and al-Kamil's son al-Salih (r. 1240–9), and then between Frederick's son Manfred (r. 1254–66) and the Mamluk sultan Baybars (r. 1260–77).³⁹

Thus, the deal to share Jerusalem was done despite the problems both monarchs were facing to their legitimacy and popularity. Each was aware of the right of his community to religiously significant sites in the sacred city, while respecting the right of the other community to their sacred sites. What al-Kamil considered important for the Muslims he did not relinquish, and what he considered significant to the Christians, he turned over. Similarly,

Frederick's visit to the Haram displays his deference to the Muslims and Islam,⁴⁰ and his words to Amir Fakhr al-Din underline what he could and could not do:

If I did not fear for my reputation among the Franks, I would not have bothered the sultan with anything. I do not have any need for Jerusalem or other than it. I only sought to preserve my rule in their midst.⁴¹

In these words, Frederick is essentially emphasising the religious significance of Jerusalem to the Christians, an issue he saw bigger than himself and could not therefore relinquish. He repeated similar sentiments in his letters to King Henry III of England, in which he attributed the achievement to Jesus's intervention.⁴²

Back to the Outlook: Concluding Remarks

When modern historians present the Crusader period as governed by religiously motivated war and violence, they inadvertently endorse and promote particular agendas and biases, thus undermining and obliterating the complex historical reality of that time. The corollary is that the entire period is conceived and assessed as belonging to a barbaric age. Accordingly, the evidence for tolerance and exchange is not recognised, even though it is staring us in the eye every time we read the sources, because the conventions that shape the field of crusader studies tell us this evidence is not a competing pattern to violence but rather a list of non-representative cases that have no religious legitimacy.

It is not that modern scholarship has not discussed cases of exchange, alliances and tolerance between Muslims and Crusaders. Some scholars have written extensively on these issues.⁴³ My argument is that such studies did not realise that the cases of tolerance, alliances, cooperation and exchange form a pattern, and more importantly, aside from a passing reference, their conclusions have not altered the dominant scholarly outlook of the Crusades. For instance, in a recent study on Muslims' reaction to the Crusades, we are told that 'the Muslims who helped the Franks almost exclusively came from groups outside the elites of society'.⁴⁴ Those who did so 'were willing to sacrifice their religious ideals for their own personal safety, which suggests that their faith was not as strong as it was for some'.⁴⁵ Even in a study dedicated

to tolerance and peace, the following words of Friedman sum up what I am describing as the problem:

Even if the prevailing perception of the 1096 to 1291 era is one of perennial holy war, this epoch of holy war was in fact punctuated by interludes of peace. These treaties were accepted by both sides as legally binding and, although in principle a temporary remedy for inability to continue to fight a holy war, in fact both the Muslim and the Christian political entities could legitimately enjoy periods of peace.⁴⁶

Why are cases of cooperation and tolerance between Muslims and Crusaders seen as lacking religious legitimacy and those involved in them as having questionable religious beliefs? Why could tolerance and peace only be opportunistic pauses for warriors otherwise keen on pursuing their holy wars? Why cannot we look at the era as one dotted with occasional wars instead of one dotted with occasional peace? These questions touch the core problem that even studies about tolerance cannot escape the grip of the dominant scholarly outlook of the Crusader period as one of war and violence and of true religion as only informing fanaticism and the clash between Islamdom and Christendom.

As seen in the cases of alliances, they were never instances of a monarch acting individually. Each court had an apparatus of scholars, religious jurists and military advisors. At times they lobbied for war, and at other times they were split between groups who promoted tolerance, cooperation and exchange, and other groups in the same court who advocated for war and violence. In the particular case of Islam, which lacks a church institution to impose uniformity and be the sole voice (if one were to argue that at the time Rome was such a case), what we commonly call the teachings of Islam are actually the views of individual religious scholars. So, when al-Sulami and Ibn 'Asakir wrote and preached on jihad they were expressing their individual voices, not the voice of all of Islam. Many, no doubt, would have agreed with them, but many others did not. Similarly, when al-Urmawi and al-Irbili helped negotiate and draft the treaty between al-Kamil and Frederick, they were also expressing their voices as religious scholars. By so doing, the agreement became Islamically sanctioned, even though many other Muslims rejected it. When Saladin presented to the religious scholars in his court the

proposal to marry his brother al-'Adil to Richard's sister Joan, their vetting and approval of the proposal made it an Islamically sanctioned marriage proposal. So, we do not need to go searching for theological treatises that champion peace between Muslims and Crusaders. Those treatises are there in front of us, but because of the dominant scholarly discourse, that evidence is not acknowledged.

The cases of alliances, tolerance and cooperation formed a pattern and were not isolated cases. The Crusader period was in some sense a clash between European Christians and Oriental Muslims, but in another sense it was an opportunity for alliances between them against others (be they other European Christians or Muslim foes). In yet another sense, it was also a period that continued and ushered additional forms of cooperation, exchange of learning and science, trade, sharing religious and cultural heritage and sites, and other common interests. Those who pursued cooperation and alliances represented the entire strata of society and were not always opportunists. It is judicious to listen to the evidence that speaks of religious factors, friendships and philosophy of rule that could have informed and shaped this reality of coexistence.

Notes

1. Housley, 2006.
2. Sivan, 1967; Sivan, 1968, 115–120.
3. Elad, 1995; Mourad, 2008; Marsham, 2013; Avni, 2014.
4. Sivan, 1966; Sivan, 1968, 23–37.
5. For instance, Christie, 2007b; Chevedden, 2011.
6. Ibn 'Asakir, 1996, 4. The very few other biographies of al-Sulami in later biographical dictionaries were copied from Ibn 'Asakir.
7. Al-Sulami's *Book of Jihad* was read in 1113 at the Umayyad Mosque of Damascus to three boys and the reader's assistant, who could have been Ibn 'Asakir's older brother. Yet, there is no indication that any one of them copied it or had a role in transmitting it. In this respect, the view that Ibn 'Asakir could have been aware of it – as argued in Mourad and Lindsay, 2013, 43 – stands corrected.
8. Ibn al-Qalanisi, 1908, 298.
9. Mouton, 1983; Mourad and Lindsay, 2013, 36–37.
10. Actually, another person is mentioned by the contemporary Ibn al-Qalanisi who

also went to fight the Franks and was killed. He was a recent immigrant from Iraq, a mystic named 'Abd al-Rahman al-Halhuli.

11. Ibn Wasil, 1977, 332–333.
12. Al-Maqrizi, 1956, 314–315.
13. Sibt b. al-Jawzi, 1951, 654; Ibn Wasil 1977, 332–333.
14. Ibn Jubayr, 1988, 273–282; Ibn Jubayr, 2008, 315–325.
15. Ibn Jubayr, 1988; Ibn Jubayr, 2008, 318–319.
16. Kedar and Pringle, 2009, 135.
17. Abu Shama, 1997, 63.
18. Usama b. Munqidh, 2008, 147.
19. Al-Harawi 2004, 70–76.
20. Ibid., 70–72.
21. Hamilton, 2000b, 210.
22. 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, 1965, 146.
23. Al-Maqrizi, 1956, 110.
24. 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, 1965, 555–557; Ibn Shaddad, 1964, 293; and Ibn Shaddad, tr. Richards, 2001, 187–188.
25. Van Cleve, 1972, 213–220; Madden, 2005, 146–153; Cobb, 2014, 210–212.
26. Ibn Wasil, 1977, 233. According to Sibt b. al-Jawzi, al-Mu'azzam was only reacting to the possible alliance of al-Kamil and Frederick; Sibt b. al-Jawzi, 1951, 647–648.
27. Sibt b. al-Jawzi 1951, 657; Kantorowicz, 1931, 184.
28. Sibt b. al-Jawzi, 1951, 643; Mourad and Lindsay, 2013, 96.
29. Sibt b. al-Jawzi, 1951, 654; al-Nuwayri, 2002, 151–152.
30. Munroe, 1896, 27–31.
31. Sibt b. al-Jawzi, 1951, 654; Ibn al-Athir, tr. Richards, 2010, 481; Ibn al-Athir, 2008, 294; Ibn Wasil, 1977, 243; al-Maqrizi, 1956, 23.
32. Ibn Wasil, 1977, 241–242; Abu'l-Fida, 1907, 141–142.
33. Al-Dhahabi, 1996, 29–30.
34. Powell, 1986, 175–194; Madden, 2005, 145.
35. Oliver of Paderborn, 1948, 45; Riley-Smith, 2005, 148.
36. Al-Dhahabi, 1997, 30.
37. Al-Hamawi, 1981, 183.
38. Ibn Wasil, 1977, 234; al-Hamawi, 1981, 176–177; al-Maqrizi, 1956, 229–230.
39. Ibn Wasil, 1977, 234–235; Abu'l-Fida, 1907, 141.
40. Sibt b. al-Jawzi, 1951, 655–657; Ibn Wasil, 1977, 244–255.

41. Ibn Wasil, 1977, 243.
42. Roger of Wendover, 1899, 522–524.
43. For example, Draelants et al., 2000; Köhler, 2013; Kedar, 2008; Burnett, 2009; Friedman, 2011.
44. Mallett, 2014b, 138.
45. *Ibid.*, 139.
46. Friedman, 2016, 98.

Syria in Crusader Times **Conflict and Coexistence**

Edited by Carole Hillenbrand

EDINBURGH
University Press