

THE FATE OF JERUSALEMITES AT THE HANDS OF THE FIRST CRUSADE

Maher Y. Abu-Munshar*

Abstract

Up until July 1099CE, Muslims, Christians and Jews in Islamic Jerusalem (*Bayt al-Maqdis*) had lived side by side in peace. This atmosphere of peaceful co-existence dramatically changed when the army of the first Crusade arrived in the region under the pretext of liberating Jerusalem, the Christian holy places, and the tomb of Jesus from the hands of the Muslims. They were able to storm the walled city of Jerusalem and within a week, slaughter most of the Jerusalemites.¹ This opened a new phase in the history of Islamic Jerusalem and Jerusalemites. This paper presents a critical analytical study of Muslim and Non-Muslims historical narratives dealing with the arrival of the Crusaders and the resulting fate of the Jerusalemites.

Key Words: *Bayt al-Maqdis*, Pope Urban II, Jews, Eastern Christians, Byzantine Emperor

Introduction

It was the fate of the people of Islamic Jerusalem to be the victims of those Crusaders, who came from Western Europe to slay them and empty their Holy city from its inhabitants. Surprisingly, the Crusaders came to the east in the name of religion without paying attention to the teachings of Christ who instructed his follows to extend the right cheeks to those who beat them on their left cheeks. Instead, they preferred to violate the sanctity of Islamic Jerusalem and to achieve exclusive possession of the city's holiness, excluding even Eastern and Arab Christians. This paper aims to study and investigate the fate of those who were present in Islamic Jerusalem in the first week after the arrival of the Crusaders. Other issues related to the Crusaders occupation will be discussed, such as the reasons of the Crusades and the status of the Eastern Christians before the arrival of the first Crusade.

Why did the Crusaders come to the East?

Pope Urban II (d. 1099 CE) repeatedly issued calls to the Christians in Western Europe to go to Jerusalem and rescue the Christian holy places and the tomb of Jesus from the hands of the Muslims. His efforts bore fruit on 27 *Dhu al-Qi'dah*, 488 AH/ 27November 1095 CE,² when he spoke to a massive crowd near Clermont in France. The pope's sermon was considered by historians as one of the most important ever preached, because the first Crusade would not have occurred without it.³ This speech has been reported in six different versions.⁴ Despite clear differences in the text, all agree that he called for the liberation of Jerusalem from the Muslims and for the recovery of former Byzantine territories.

The speech also contained a large number of accusations against Muslims and Islam. For example, that Muslims had circumcised the Christians,⁵ destroyed churches, appropriated church buildings for Muslim rites, or turned them into sheepfolds and cattle stalls.⁶ In addition, it was alleged that priests (Christian) and Levites (Jewish priests) had been slain in the sanctuaries, and Christian virgins had been forced to choose between prostitution and death by torture.⁷ These accusations have little basis in fact and are not confirmed either in Muslim or non-Muslim histories. The actual situation of the Christians in Islamic Jerusalem before the Crusades (will be discussed later) refutes the pope's allegations.

As a result of the pope's clarion call, thousands of European Christians raised the banner of the Crusades and headed east,⁸ the cross sewn on their garments as a symbol of their religious campaign. As they crossed Europe and northern *al-Sham* (historical Syria), they killed many Muslims and Jews. This large Crusader army reached

* Maher Y. Abu-Munshar (Ph.D), is an Associate Professor at the Department of Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences, Qatar University, Qatar. Email: m.abumunshar@qu.edu.qa.

¹ Muslims, Jews and local Christians.

² Jonathan Phillips (2013), *The Crusades 1095-1197*, Oxon& New York: Routledge, p.14. See also Edward Peters (1998), *The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Materials*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, p. 2. See also Jonathan Riley-Smith (2002), "The Crusading Movement and Historians" in Jonathan Riley-Smith (ed), *The Oxford History of the Crusades*, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, p.1.

³ Norman Housley (2002), *The Crusaders*, Stroud: Tempus Publishing, p. 13. See also Phillips, *The Crusades*, op. cit., pp.14-18.

⁴ Peters, *The First Crusade*, op. cit., pp. 24-37, 50-53. See also William of Tyre (1976), *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, trans. and annotated by E. A. Babcock and A. C. Krey, New York: Octagon Books, Vol.1, pp. 89-91.

⁵ Peters, *The First Crusade*, op. cit., p. 27.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁷ William of Tyre, *History of Deeds*, op. cit., Vol.1, p. 91.

⁸ Phillips, *The Crusades* op. cit., pp.19-20.

the walled city of Islamic Jerusalem in 492 AH/7 June 1099 CE, and laid siege to the city for nearly forty days.⁹ The siege was tightened until the city finally fell into their hands, whereupon they massacred most of its Muslims and Jews.¹⁰

There is disagreement between Muslim and non-Muslim historians as to the number of Muslims massacred by the Crusaders. Ibn al-Athir, for example, states that it was nearly seventy thousand.¹¹ Crusader chroniclers consider this figure too high and estimate it to be no more than twenty thousand.¹² There are a number of Christian chronicles and eyewitness accounts to these massacres, in addition to some Muslim testimonies of the savagery perpetrated by the Crusaders which will be elaborated further later on in this article. However, in establishing the context for these events, it is important to return to the speech delivered by Pope Urban II, its motives and consequences.

Peter the Hermit in Islamic Jerusalem: The Outcomes

William of Tyre (d. 1186 CE), an early historian, recounts that a hermit by the name of Peter (d. 1115 CE) had visited Jerusalem a few years before the Crusades and met Simeon II, the Greek patriarch of Jerusalem.¹³ The patriarch told the hermit that the Christians in the city were being persecuted and prevented from freely practising their religion. He asked him to convey this message to Europe.¹⁴ Peter promised to pass it on to the pope and the kings of Europe and to request that they send troops to liberate Jerusalem from Muslim rule.

Peter fulfilled his promise, taking the message to Urban II, who immediately commenced a journey around Europe calling for a crusade to liberate Jerusalem and return it to Christian hands. The pontiff's efforts bore fruit at Clermont, where his long and impassioned speech expressed considerable malevolence towards Muslims. He called on the Christians of the west to take up arms, and promised complete forgiveness of sins to whoever would do so.¹⁵

In this speech the pope managed to unite the hearts of Europeans, who at that time were engaged in numerous internal conflicts, and inspired many of them to march shoulder to shoulder to the Holy Land. Excerpts of his address are reported by William of Tyre:

“The cradle of our faith, the native land of our Lord, and the mother of salvation, is now forcibly held by a people without God, the son of the Egyptian handmaiden. Upon the captive sons of the free woman he imposes desperate conditions under which he himself, the relations being reversed, should by right have served ... For many years past, the wicked race of Saracens, followers of unclean superstitions have oppressed with tyrannical violence the holy places where the feet of our Lord rested. The faithful are made subject and condemned to bondage. Dogs have entered into the holy places, the sanctuary has been profaned, the people, worshippers of God, have been humbled. The chosen race is now enduring undeserved tribulations, the royal priesthood slaves in mud and bricks. The city of God, the chief over provinces, has been rendered tributary. Whose soul is not softened, whose heart does not melt, as these indignities recur to his mind? Who, dearest brethren, can listen to this with dry eyes?

The city of the King of all Kings, which transmitted to others the precepts of an inviolable faith, is forced against her will to be subject to the superstitions of the Gentiles. The church of the Holy Resurrection, the last resting place of the sleeping Lord, endures their rule and is desecrated by the filth of those who have no part in the resurrection, but are destined to burn forever, as straw for everlasting flames. The revered places, consecrated to divine mysteries, places which received the Lord in the flesh as a guest, which saw His signs and felt His benefits, and, in full faith, showed forth in themselves the proofs of all this, have been made sheepfolds and stables for cattle. That most excellent people whom the Lord of Hosts blessed, groans aloud, exhausted beneath the burden of forced services and sordid payments. Its sons, precious pledges of Mother Church, are seized and carried off; they are compelled to serve the uncleanness of the Gentiles, to deny the name of the

⁹ Ibid., p.25.

¹⁰ Amin Maalouf (2006), *The Crusaders through Arab Eyes*, trans. from the French by Jon Rothschild, London: Saqi Book, p. 50.

¹¹ Abu al-Hasan 'Ali Ibn al-Athir (1998), *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, Beirut: Mansurat Muhammad 'Ali Baydun, Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Vol. 9, p. 19.

¹² William of Tyre, *History of Deeds*, op. cit., Vol.1, p. 372.

¹³ Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 82. See also Geoffrey Hindley (2004), *A Brief History of the Crusades: Islam and Christianity in the Struggle for World Supremacy*, London: Robinson, p.20.

¹⁴ Malcolm Barber (2012), *The Crusader States*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, p.10.

¹⁵ William of Tyre, *History of Deeds*, op. cit., Vol.1, pp. 82-93.

living God, and to blaspheme with sacrilegious lips. If they shrink back in horror from the impious commands of the infidels, they are slain by the sword like beasts of sacrifice, and thus become companions of the holy martyrs. To the eye of sacrilege, there is no distinction of place and no respect for persons. Priests and Levites are slain in the sanctuaries; virgins are forced to choose between prostitution and death by torture; nor do matrons reap any advantage from their more mature years.”¹⁶

In fact, this was not the first time that Urban II had called for unity among warring Christians, but it was probably the most effective. Describing the cruelties inflicted by Muslims on Christian pilgrims trying to visit Islamic Jerusalem and the defeats suffered by the Byzantine Christians, he called on all of western Christendom to rescue their eastern brethren: ‘They should leave off slaying each other and fight instead a righteous war, doing the work of God, and God will lead them. For those that died in battle there will be absolution and the remission of sins.’¹⁷ As Runciman put it: ‘Here they were poor and unhappy; there they will be joyful and prosperous and true friends of God.’¹⁸

The response was overwhelming. The pope’s speech was interrupted by cries of ‘Deus lo volt’ (God wills it). Hundreds flocked to him begging permission to go on the holy expedition. Soon tens of thousands of knights and commoners headed for the Holy Land. Across Europe, preachers called on the faithful to wear the cross on their clothes until they had succeeded in their quest.¹⁹

The primary reason for the pope’s call was the persecution of Christians in Islamic Jerusalem. He also requested the Christian west to assist their brothers-in-faith in the Byzantine empire, whose battles with the Seljuks -who had begun an assault on Byzantine-ruled Central Asia after unifying the Muslim Turks in the region- had resulted in the loss of a huge area of Byzantine lands.²⁰ There were, of course, mercenaries from Western Europe in the Byzantine army, but they were individuals making a living.²¹ But did the Byzantine emperor formally ask the pope to help by sending thousands of knights? None of the six versions of the pope’s speech mentions any such appeal. Magdalino suggests that:

“The Latins did not want to admit the ‘wretched emperor’ had anything but a negative part in their heroic, godly enterprise, and the Byzantines were keen to portray this enterprise as an unsolicited intrusion on imperial space and a masterpiece of imperial damage limitation”.²²

I would like to argue that the Byzantine emperor did not ask for a Crusader campaign. The description by Anna Comnena, daughter of Emperor Alexius Comnena, of her father’s reaction to the Crusaders’ arrival undermines such a claim:

“Before he [Alexius] had enjoyed even a short rest, he heard a report of the approach of innumerable Frankish armies. Now he dreaded their arrival for he knew their irresistible manner of attack, their unstable and mobile character and all the peculiar natural and concomitant characteristics which the Frank retains throughout; and he also knew that they were always agape for money, and seemed to disregard their truces readily for any reason that cropped up. For he had always heard this reported of them, and found it very true. However, he did not lose heart, but prepared himself in every way so that, when the occasion called, he would be ready for battle”.²³

The emperor was obviously less than happy when he learned of the imminent arrival of the Crusaders, and it seems clear that he did not request help from the pope or the Crusader army. On the contrary, the Crusader conquests greatly complicated his attempts to recover lost territory in the east,²⁴ and ultimately one consequence of the Crusades was a fatal weakening of the Byzantine Empire.²⁵

¹⁶ Ibid., Vol. pp. 89–91.

¹⁷ Steven Runciman (1991), *A History of the Crusades: the First Crusade and the Foundation of Kingdom of Jerusalem*, London: Penguin, Vol. 1, p. 108.

¹⁸ Ibid., Vol.1, p. 108.

¹⁹ Ibid., Vol. pp. 108–09. See also W. B. Stevenson (2013), *The Crusaders in the East* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 5-6. Also Peter Frankopan (2013), *The First Crusade: The Call from the East*, London: Vintage Books, p.3.

²⁰ Niall Christie (2014), *Muslims and Crusaders: Christianity’s Wars in the Middle East, 1095-1382, From the Islamic Sources*, Oxon & New York: Routledge, p.8.

²¹ Fulcher of Chartres (1967), *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem (1095–1127)*, trans. by H Fink, New York: University of Tennessee Press, p. 77.

²² Paul Magdalino (2002), “The Medieval Empire (780–1204)”, in C. Mango (ed), *The Oxford History of Byzantine*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 190.

²³ Anna Comnena: *The Alexiad, Book X: Second Battle with Heresy: The Cruman War: First Crusade (1094–1097)*, p. 9.

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/annacomnena-alexiad10.html>. Visited on 22 August 2017.

²⁴ Magdalino, “The Medieval Empire”, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

²⁵ Richard Fletcher (2003), *The Cross and the Crescent: Christianity and Islam from Muhammad to the Reformation*, London: Penguin, p. 77.

In fact, the pope had given other reasons for his call to take up arms and head to the Holy Land:

“This land in which you inhabit shut in on all sides by the sea and surrounded by the mountain peaks, is too narrow for your large population; nor does it bound in wealth; and it furnishes scarcely food enough for its cultivators. Hence it is that you murder one another, that you wage war and that you frequently perish by mutual wounding. Let therefore hatred depart from among you, let your quarrels end, let war cease, and let all dissensions and controversies slumber. Enter the road of the Holy Sepulchre ...”²⁶

Thus the pope states that France, and even Europe, was limited geographically and in resources, but its population was getting bigger and needed more space. He was also anxious to stop the continual wars between the various kingdoms and principalities by offering them reasonable grounds to forego hostilities. More specifically, he wanted to unite them in what was regarded as a noble enterprise: the liberation of Jerusalem and its holy places from their Muslim enemies. But his desire to stop internecine strife seems to have been a strong motive for the Crusades. As we will see, the condition of the Christians in Islamic Jerusalem was not so desperate that it required thousands of their western brethren to rescue them.

By giving religious sanction to the Crusade, the pope gained a number of benefits. First, the exodus of a large and dedicated army could end the debilitating in-fighting in Europe. Second, occupying the Holy Land would bring it under the control of western Christianity. Third, the success of such an action would enhance the position of the pope and the Roman Catholic Church at a time when he and his priests were under persecution from the German emperor, Henry IV (d. 1106 CE). William of Tyre records how Pope Gregory VII and the priests were persecuted severely by the Emperor Henry because of political and religious conflict between the two parties.²⁷

Muslim Reactions

The question that arises here, what was the early Muslim reactions to the accusations of the Pope Urban II? To answer this question it would be useful to look at the situation of the Muslim world at that time.

Unfortunately, the early Muslim reactions to the Pope’s call for the Crusade, his accusations against Islam and Muslims and the military success of the Crusade were not effective, due to the prevailing political instability, disunity and lack of dedication among the various Muslim rulers. For example, Muslim countries were subject to the rule of two conflicting states, namely the Seljuks sultanate based in Baghdad and the Fatimid caliphate in Cairo. Within these two states were numerous emirates headed by leaders loyal either to the Fatimid state in Egypt or to the Seljuks in Baghdad; a sense of weakness, disintegration and disunity was their one binding characteristic.

The Seljuk and Fatimid empires had both disintegrated, leaving disorientation and anarchy in their wake. Years of inconclusive fighting between these entities had, by the end of the century, left the Islamic world weakened, fragmented and without any strong leaders or states.²⁸

The Condition of Christians in Islamic Jerusalem

Since the first Muslim conquest of *Bayt al-Maqdis* in 16AH/637CE, Christians had been allowed to practice their religion without hindrance and their places of worship were all over the city as well as the region.²⁹ They enjoyed civil rights and were allowed to move around the Muslim state as freely as Muslims. They also had the right to own property – shops, houses and land – and were allowed to communicate with co-religionists in other Christian countries.³⁰

Ra’if Mikha’il al-Sa’ati, a local Arab priest, commented on the situation of Christians in Islamic Jerusalem prior to the Crusades, and is quoted by Yusuf:

“The fact of the matter is that it is incumbent on us to state that Christian Palestinians lived with their Muslim brethren in peace and harmony. The caliphs would assign high-level positions in government to them. As for the persecution that was meted out to them from time to time throughout

²⁶ Peters, *The First Crusade*, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

²⁷ William of Tyre, *History of Deeds*, *op. cit.*, Vol.1, pp. 89–93.

²⁸ Maher Abu-Munshar (2010), “Fatimids, Crusaders and the fall of Islamic Jerusalem: Foes or Allies?” *Al-Masaq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean*, Vol. 22. No. 1, pp. 45–46.

²⁹ Hamad Ahmad ‘Abd Allah Yusuf (1982). *Bayt al-Maqdis min al-‘Ahd al-Rashidi wa Hata al-Dawla al-Ayyubiyya*, Jerusalem: Da’irat al-Awqafwa al-Sh’un al-Islamiyyah, p. 146.

³⁰ Syed Ameer ‘Ali (1934), *A Short History of the Saracens*, London: Macmillan, p. 321.

history, this was a result of the extreme measures of some rulers, from whom even the Muslims themselves were not safe. If a certain ruler were a tyrant then it would be a great injustice to consider all rulers as such”.³¹

Michael Foss, a historian of the Crusades, explains that for more than 350 years, from the time of Caliph ‘Umar’s Assurance to Patriarch Sophronious in 16 AH/637 CE until 399 AH/1009 CE, when the Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim began to attack Christians and Jews in Egypt, Jerusalem was welcoming to the west. He even says that the journey from the west to Jerusalem was no more dangerous than travelling from Paris to Rome at that time.³² Moreover, the doors were open for Christians to enter government employment without discrimination, except during those periods when Islamic Jerusalem was under hard-line rulers such as al-Hakim or al-Mutawakkil³³. The right to visit the holy city was granted to Christians, who came on pilgrimage from many countries.³⁴ Al-Maqdisi (d. 390AH/1000 CE), a geographer who lived in Islamic Jerusalem all his life, states that Christians and Jews were not under persecution prior to the Crusades, and at times were even the dominant group:

“Everywhere the Christians and the Jews have the upper hand, and these same Christians are rude and without manners in public places ...”³⁵

From the above narrative, Al-Maqdisi as an eyewitness, was able to describe the situation of Jews and Christians in Islamic Jerusalem by showing that they were having the upper hand and the freedom to do whatever they want. Al-Maqdisi’s testimony clearly showed that the power and the influence that the Jews and Christians had in Islamic Jerusalem, entailed them to practice their religion without any hindrances, nevertheless it seems that the Christians were behaving inappropriately which indicated that they had unlimited power in Islamic Jerusalem.

Nearly fifty years before the Crusades, the Persian traveller, poet and philosopher Nasir-i-Khusraw visited Islamic Jerusalem in 541 AH/1047 CE and described the religious life of the Christians:

“I saw seated in this church [the Holy Sepulchre] great numbers of priests and monks, reading the Scriptures and saying prayers, both by day and by night”.³⁶

Hamilton states that:

“The Christians of Jerusalem enjoyed a considerable degree of religious freedom ... they were allowed to hold public processions on great feast days...”³⁷

Finally, Al-‘Arif quotes Guy Le Strange, who said:

“We should admit that the Christians were not persecuted and oppressed to the level that the Latin Christians took it as justification to invade the Muslim territory and proclaim the Crusading war.”³⁸

From the above accounts it is clear that Christians and Muslims in Islamic Jerusalem lived in a climate of coexistence and suffered much less distress than some in Europe had been led to believe.³⁹ I conclude that the condition of the local Christians under Muslim rule had not deteriorated to the extent that armed intervention was necessary to liberate them.

The Crusaders in the Holy City

The Crusader army approached the walled city in the early days of 492 AH/June 1099 CE. They made repeated assaults on the walls and stormed the city successfully the following month (13 *Sha‘ban*/15 July). A horrifying massacre followed their entrance into the city. The population was put to the sword, and the Crusaders spent a week massacring Muslims, killing at least 70,000 people. The Jews had taken refuge in their synagogues, where

³¹ Yusuf, *Bayt al-Maqdis*, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

³² Michael Foss (2000), *People of the First Crusade*, London: Caxton, p. 29.

³³ For example, Al-Hakim Bi-Amr Allah (d. 1021CE), the Fatimid caliph, at some point ordered the destruction of the Church of Holy Sepulcher in Islamic Jerusalem and persecuted Christians and Jews in Islamic Jerusalem and other parts of his state. Whereas, Al-Mutawakkil (d. 861CE), the Abbasid caliph, issued discriminatory rules and regulations against the Jews and the Christians and he made them observe a specific dress code that marked them out as non-Muslims. See Chawkat Moucary (2003), *Faith to Faith: Christianity & Islam in Dialogue*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, p. 310.

³⁴ Ameer ‘Ali, *Short History*, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

³⁵ Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad Al-Maqdisi (1909), *Ahsan al-TaqasimFiMa‘rifi al-Aqalim*, Leiden: Matba‘at Brill, p.167. See also Muhammad Al-Muqaddasi (2001), *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions*, trans. From Arabic into English by B. Collins, Reading: Garnet, p. 141.

³⁶ Nasir-iKhusraw (1983), *Safarnama*, trans. from Persian into Arabic by Y. al-Khashab, Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Jadid, p. 69.

³⁷ Bernard Hamilton (2003), *The Christian World of the Middle Ages*, Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd., p. 217.

³⁸ ‘Arif Al-‘Arif (1986), *al-Mufasssal fi Tarikh al-Quds*, Jerusalem: Matba‘it al-Ma‘arif, p. 148.

³⁹ Youssef Courbage & Philippe Fargues (1997), *Christians and Jews under Islam*, trans. J. Mabro, London: I. B. Tauris, p. 45.

the Crusaders burned them alive. Islamic Jerusalem was emptied of its inhabitants.⁴⁰ There are several accounts of these massacres. William of Tyre says:

“It was impossible to look upon the vast numbers of the slain without horror. Everywhere lay bits of human bodies, and the ground was soaked with the blood of the dead. And it was not only the spectacle of the headless bodies and mutilated limbs thrown in all directions that aroused horror in all who saw them. It was still more dreadful to gaze upon the victors themselves, covered in gore from head to foot, a sight that brought terror to everyone they met. It was reported that within the Temple precinct alone 10,000 infidels were killed, in addition to those who lay slain everywhere though the city in the streets and squares, the number of whom was estimated as no less.

Soldiers roamed the streets in search of any wretched survivors who might be hiding from death. When found, these were dragged into public view and slaughtered like sheep. Some of our men formed bands and broke into houses where they laid cruel hands on men, women and children, and whoever else was in the household. The victims were either put to the sword, or thrown from some high place to perish miserably on the stones of the street.

The city was found to be full to overflowing with goods of all kinds. All the soldiers, from the least to the greatest, found an abundance of everything. In the houses were large amounts of gold and silver, valuable stones, and fine clothes. There were stores of grain, wine, oil, and plenty of water, for lack of which the army had suffered so much during the siege. Even our most needy pilgrims and brethren were satisfied with affectionate gifts from the more successful. By the second and third day of the occupation, an excellent public market was established for the sale and exchange of goods. Even the common people had all they needed in abundance. So days passed in joyous celebration, as the pilgrims refreshed themselves with the food and rest they so badly needed”.⁴¹

The extent of the slaughter was quite explicit in Christian sources. The anonymous author of the *Gesta*, who was among the Crusaders who entered the walled city, described events with brutal simplicity:

“Our men killed whom they chose and saved whom they chose. They rushed around the city, seizing gold and silver, horses and mules, plundering every kind of goods from the houses. Then they all came rejoicing and weeping for gladness to worship at the Holy Sepulchre of our Saviour Jesus, and there they fulfilled their vows to Him. Next morning, stealthily they climbed to the roof of the temple and attacked the Saracens sheltering there, both men and women, slashing their heads from their bodies with their swords. Then our leaders ordered that all the Saracen corpses should be thrown outside the gates on account of their dead bodies. The surviving Saracens dragged their fallen comrades out through the gates and piled them in mounds as big as houses. No one has ever seen or heard of such slaughter of pagans. They were burned on pyres like pyramids, and none save God knows how many there were”.⁴²

This sanctimonious slaughter, and the conjunction between plunder and righteousness, massacre and religious jubilation, was noted by Fulcher of Chartres, who was not present at the fall of the city but received reports of it soon afterwards:

“After this great slaughter, our men went into the houses of the citizens and seized whatever they found. The first to enter the house, whatever his position or rank, had the right to plunder it, and all the Franks acknowledged this. That house or even the palace was his, and he could take whatever he wanted. In this way many poor people became wealthy. They, all the clergy and laity, went to the Sepulchre of the Lord and His most glorious Temple, singing a new canticle to the Lord in voices of exaltation, making offerings and supplications, and joyously visiting the Holy Places as they had so long desired to do”.⁴³

Raymond D’Aguilers, a Crusader historian, also describes the massacre:

“Some of the pagans were mercifully beheaded, others pierced by arrows plunged from towers, and yet others, tortured for a long time, were burned to death in searing flames. Piles of heads, hands, and feet lay in the houses and street, and indeed there was a running to and fro of men and knights

⁴⁰ Mustafa A Hiyari (1990), “Crusader Jerusalem (1099-1187 AD)”, in K. J Asali (ed), *Jerusalem in History*. New York: Olive Branch Press, pp. 137–40. See also Adrian J. Boas (2005), *Jerusalem in the Time of the Crusades*, London & New York: Routledge, p.8.

⁴¹ William of Tyre, *History of Deeds*, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 372.

⁴² Anonymous (1962), *Gesta Francorum et aliorum hierosolimitanorum. The Deeds of the Franks and the Other Pilgrims to Jerusalem*, ed. R. Hill, London: Thos. Nelson & Sons, pp. 91–93.

⁴³ Fletcher, *The Cross and the Crescent*, op. cit., p. 123.

over the corpses. Let me tell you that so far these are few and petty details, but it is another story when we come to the Temple of Solomon, the accustomed place for the chanting rites and services. Shall we relate what took place there? If we told you, you would not believe us. So it is sufficient to relate that in the Temple of Solomon and the portico crusaders rode in blood to the knees and bridles of their horses. In my opinion this was poetic justice that the Temple of Solomon should receive the blood of pagans who blasphemed God there for many years".⁴⁴

The fall of Islamic Jerusalem was widely reported in Muslim and Arab sources. According to Ibn al-Athir, the Crusaders killed more than seventy thousand people in the al-Aqsa mosque, among them a large group of Muslim imams, religious scholars, devout men and ascetics, many of whom had left their homelands to live near the holy place.⁴⁵ The Coptic historian, Ibn al-'Ibri, confirmed this number when he stated that the Crusaders spent a week in Islamic Jerusalem killing Muslims, and that in al-Aqsa mosque more than seventy thousand were killed.⁴⁶

Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597AH/1200CE), in his account, states that Islamic Jerusalem was taken by the Franks on Friday 13 *Sha'ban*, 492 AH /15 July 1099 CE. He says that they killed more than seventy thousand Muslims and took forty-odd silver candelabras from the Dome of the Rock, each worth 360,000 *dirhams*, as well as a silver lamp weighing forty Syrian *ratls*, twenty-odd gold lamps, and innumerable items of clothing and other items.⁴⁷ Another historian, Ibn al-Qalanisi (d. 555 A.H /1160 CE), reports:

"...and the Franks stormed the town and gained possession of it. A number of the townsfolk fled to the sanctuary [of David], and a great host were killed. The Jews assembled in the synagogue, and the Franks burned it over their heads. The sanctuary was surrendered to them on guarantee of safety on 22 *Sha'ban* [14 July] of this year, and they destroyed the shrines and the tomb of Prophet Ibrahim [Abraham]".⁴⁸

Conclusion

The year 1099CE was a sad year for Islamic Jerusalem and Jerusalemites. In that year, the occupiers who came from Western Europe slaughtered the population and changed Islamic Jerusalem's civilizational and architectural features. The new situation led to the denial of Muslims and Eastern Christians from living in Jerusalem for almost 90 years. No doubt that the first Crusade was based on false claims; but even if these claims were accepted, and the Eastern Christians were persecuted by Muslims in Islamic Jerusalem, this cannot justify the arrival of thousands of Western Christians with all the ensuing brutality.

References

Abu-Munshar, Maher, (2010), "Fatimids, Crusaders and the fall of Islamic Jerusalem: Foes or Allies?" *Al-Masaq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 45-56.

'Ali, Syed Ameer, (1934), *A Short History of the Saracens*, London: Macmillan.

Al-'Arif, 'Arif, (1986), *al-MufasssalfiTarikh al-Quds*, Jerusalem: Matba'it al-Ma'arif.

Al-Maqdisi, Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad, (1909), *Ahsan al-TaqasimFiMa'rifat al-Aqalim*, Leiden: Matba'at Brill.

Al-Muqaddasi, Muhammad, (2001), *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions*, trans. From Arabic into English by B. Collins, Reading: Garnet.

Anna Comnena: *The Alexiad, Book X: Second Battle with Heresy: The Cruman War: First Crusade (1094–1097)*. <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/annacomnena-alexiad10.html>.

Anonymous, (1962), *Gesta Francorum et aliorum hierosolimitanorum. The Deeds of the Franks and the Other Pilgrims to Jerusalem*, ed. R. Hill, London: Thos. Nelson & Sons.

⁴⁴ Raymond D'Aguilers (1968), *Historia Francorum Qui Ceperunt Iherusalem*, trans. with introduction and notes by J. Hill and L. Hill, Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, pp. 127–28.

⁴⁵ Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 9, p.19.

⁴⁶ Grigurius al-Maltibn al-'Ibri(1992), *TarikhMukhtasar al-Duwal*,Beirut: Dar al-Mashreq, p. 197.

⁴⁷ Abu al-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzi(1995), *al-MuntazanfiTarikh al-Mulukwa al-Umam*, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Vol. 17, p. 47.

⁴⁸ Abu Ya'la Hamza Ibn Asad Ibn al-Qalanisi (2002), *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, extracted and trans. H. A. R. Gibb, from *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Qalanisi*, New York: Dover Publications, INC., p. 48.

- Barber, Malcolm, (2012), *The Crusader States*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Boas, Adrian J., (2005), *Jerusalem in the Time of the Crusades*, London & New York: Routledge.
- Christie, Niall, (2014), *Muslims and Crusaders: Christianity's Wars in the Middle East, 1095-1382, From the Islamic Sources*, Oxon & New York: Routledge.
- Courbage, Youssef & Fargues, Philippe, (1997), *Christians and Jews under Islam*, trans. J. Mabro, London: I. B. Tauris.
- Fletcher, Richard, (2003), *The Cross and the Crescent: Christianity and Islam from Muhammad to the Reformation*, London: Penguin.
- Foss, Michael, (2000), *People of the First Crusade*, London: Caxton.
- Frankopan, Peter, (2013), *The First Crusade: The Call from the East*, London: Vintage Books.
- Fulcher of Chartres, (1967), *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem (1095–1127)*, trans. by H Fink, New York: University of Tennessee Press.
- Hamilton, Bernard, (2003), *The Christian World of the Middle Ages*, Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd.
- Hindley, Geoffrey, (2004), *A Brief History of the Crusades: Islam and Christianity in the Struggle for World Supremacy*, London: Robinson.
- Hiyari, Mustafa A., (1990), "Crusader Jerusalem (1099-1187 AD)", in K. J Asali (ed), *Jerusalem in History*. New York: Olive Branch Press, 130-176.
- Housley, Norman, (2002), *The Crusaders*, Stroud: Tempus Publishing.
- Ibn al-'Ibri, Grigurius al-Malti, (1992), *Tarikh Mukhtasar al-Duwal*, Beirut: Dar al-Mashreq.
- Ibn al-Athir, Abu al-Hasan 'Ali, (1998), *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, Beirut: Mansurat Muhammad 'Ali Baydun, Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya.
- Ibn al-Jawzi, Abu al-Faraj, (1995), *al-Muntazam fi Tarikh al-Muluk wa al-Umam*, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya.
- Ibn al-Qalanisi, Abu Ya'la Hamza Ibn Asad, (2002), *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, extracted and trans. by H. A. R. Gibb, from *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Qalanisi*, New York: Dover Publications, INC.
- Khusraw, Nasir-I, (1983), *Safarnama*, trans. from Persian into Arabic by Y. al-Khashab, Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Jadid.
- Maalouf, Amin, (2006), *The Crusaders through Arab Eyes*, trans. from the French by Jon Rothschild, London: Saqi Book.
- Magdalino, Paul, (2002), "The Medieval Empire (780–1204)", in C. Mango (ed), *The Oxford History of Byzantine*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 169-208.
- Moucary, Chawkat, (2003), *Faith to Faith: Christianity & Islam in Dialogue*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press.
- Peters, Edward, (1998), *The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Materials*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press
- Phillips, Jonathan, (2013), *The Crusades 1095-1197*, Oxon & New York: Routledge.
- Raymond D'Aguilers, (1968), *Historia Francorum Qui Ceperunt Iherusalem*, trans. with introduction and notes by J. Hill and L. Hill, Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society.

Riley-Smith, Jonathan, (2002), "The Crusading Movement and Historians" in Jonathan Riley-Smith (ed), *The Oxford History of the Crusades*, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1-14.

Runciman, Steven, (1991), *A History of the Crusades: the First Crusade and the Foundation of Kingdom of Jerusalem*, London: Penguin.

Stevenson, W. B., (2013), *The Crusaders in the East* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

William of Tyre, (1976), *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, trans. and annotated by E. A. Babcock and A. C Krey, New York: Octagon Books.

Yusuf, Hamad A., (1982). *Bayt al-Maqdis min al- 'Ahd al-Rashidi wa Hata al-Dawla al-Ayyubiyya*, Jerusalem: Da'irat al-Awqafwa al-Sh'un al-Islamiyyah.