

Arabs And Crusades Through the Eyes of ibn Al Qalanasi and Ibn Al Athir

Syeda Ariba Rashid

Undergraduate Student, St. Ann's College for Women, Hyderabad, India

Abstract:

The research paper explores the Arab perspective of the Crusades, loss of Arab territories, and the impact of Crusades on the Arab states. It also includes fall of Tripoli, fall and reconquest of Jerusalem. The research consists of first 4 Crusades, the Arab leaders during that period, internal rivalries and the root of Order of Assassins. The research paper takes into account the written documents of two of the famous chroniclers of Arab world- Ibn Al Athir, and Ibn Al Qalanisi.

Keywords: Ibn Al Athir, Ibn Al Qalanisi, Crusades, Fall and reconquest of Jerusalem, Fall of Tripoli, Order of Assassins.

1. Introduction

The Crusades, (11th to the 13th centuries), were initiated by Western European Christians to recapture the Holy Land from Muslim control. Motivated by religious fervour, the desire for forgiveness of sins, and political-economic factors, the First Crusade (1096-1099) successfully captured Jerusalem, leading to the establishment of Christian states in the Levant. Subsequent Crusades, such as the Second and Third Crusades, varied in success. The Crusader states in the Holy Land, like the Kingdom of Jerusalem, influenced the region's political and cultural landscape. The Crusades involved complex relations with the Byzantine Empire, aiming to assist against Muslim forces but sometimes leading to tensions. As enthusiasm waned, later Crusades were less successful, with the Fourth Crusade (1202-1204) resulting in the sack of Constantinople. The Crusades' legacy includes lasting impacts on cultural, economic, and political aspects in the Western and Eastern worlds, influencing medieval chivalry, trade routes, and the exchange of ideas and technologies. The Crusades' complexity, involving religious, political, economic, and social factors, continues to be a subject of historical study and debate.

The Arab perspective on the Crusades is deeply rooted in the collective consciousness of the Arab world, portraying the Crusades as invasions by European Christians into the Islamic heartland. Key aspects of this perspective include a focus on resistance and defiance against the Crusaders, with figures like Salahuddin celebrated for their resilience. The Crusades are seen through a religious lens, symbolizing a clash between Islam and Christianity, particularly in the context of Western intrusion into the Holy Land. The historical impact on the Middle East, including the establishment of Crusader states, is acknowledged, leaving a legacy of mistrust and animosity towards the West. Cultural and literary reflections, such as works by Arab chroniclers like Usama ibn Munqidh, provide insights into emotional and cultural responses to the Crusader presence. The Arab perspective remains relevant in contemporary discussions, influencing views on Western interventions in the Middle East and contributing to a narrative of resistance against external forces. Overall, understanding the Arab perspective on the Crusades is crucial for a nuanced

comprehension of the historical and cultural context shaping perceptions in the Arab world today. The Crusades represent a pivotal chapter in the broader historical narrative of the Middle East.

2. Literature Review

This Research Paper explores Arab perspectives on the Crusades, analysing various sources to understand how these historical events are remembered and interpreted in the Arab world. The review covers contemporary Arab accounts by chroniclers like Ibn al-Qalanisi and Ibn al-Athir, highlighting the emphasis on Arab resistance and the Crusades' impact. It also discusses the influence of the Crusades on Arab literature and culture, examining works by modern writers such as Amin Maalouf. The impact of the Crusades on interfaith relations, historiographical approaches, and archaeological perspectives, particularly regarding Crusader-era architecture, are also explored. Overall, the literature review emphasizes the complexity and richness of Arab perspectives on the Crusades, calling for a nuanced understanding of this pivotal period in Middle Eastern history.

3. Methodology

This study is mostly based on the Crusades, their impact on Arab world, and differences between Arabs and the Templars. It mainly covers the background of Crusade attacks, Arab world during the attacks, unification of Arab world, difference between the Arabs and Crusaders.

The research was done through various books, especially "The Crusades Through Arab Eyes" by Amen Maalouf. Other books were referred too.

The limitations of this study are that it doesn't show a proper comparison between the technological and medical advancement of both the sides.

4. Background to the Invasion and Early Years of Invasion

In the year 1096, a group of peasants and low-level knights attacked and besieged the city of Nicaea (Modern day Iznik, Turkey). This was before the First Crusade. It is more commonly known as the People's Crusade or Peasant's Crusade.

Due to lack of military expertise, the army was defeated by Kilij Arslan, a young Seljuk king. This army was followed by a more experienced army, led by commanders such as Godfrey of Bouillon, Raymond IV of Toulouse, and Bohemond of Taranto. The army collaborated with the Byzantium army and besieged Nicaea. They were successful in capturing the city and from there, they moved forward and attacked many places like Tripoli, Beirut, Saida and Jerusalem.

After the Conquest of Nicaea, the Crusaders besieged the city of Antioch. The Governor Yaghi-Siyan, tried his best to protect the city. The city was under the siege from October 1097 till June 1098. A tale of betrayal and cowardice was written, and Yaghi-Siyan lost the city and it fell in the hands of Bohemond. Yaghi-Siyan was killed shortly after he escaped the city.

There are historical evidences of how the crusaders turned to cannibalism during the invasion of Ma'arrat al Nauman, located in present day Syria. The Chronicle of Futchet of Chartres documents this grim reality and the immorality of the Crusaders.

a. Arab World During the Years of Frank Invasion

During the early years of Crusades, the Middle-eastern world, or Arab World, was predominantly ruled by the Seljuk Turks. Apart from Seljuk dynasty, Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad, Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt, and Khwarazmian Empire in Persia were some of the other dynasties.

The Arab world, especially the Levant area, was divided into various fragments, each ruled by an Emir. Political turmoil, competition for power, enmity between various Emirs and the desire of not losing their own principality made it difficult for the Arabs to unify under a single banner and fight against the Crusade. Many Emirs chose to gift and pay the Crusaders in order to protect their principality, and formed secret alliances to cause damage to the opponents.

Apart from this, there was a heavy tension between the Shia community and the Sunni community. Fatimid Caliph saw Seljuks as a threat to the Shia Community. Their rising power and the control over Al-Quds was unbearable humiliation for the Fatimids. Grasping the opportunity, Al-Afdal marched over to Jerusalem in the year 1098 and took over it after defeating the Seljuks. The misinterpretation of situation as “Crusaders will be his friends as they have common enemy” was soon disproved when the Crusades attacked Jerusalem and took over it in 1099.

5. Fall of Jerusalem

Ibn al Qalanisi in his book, “Dhail Taarikh Dimashq”, and Al Athir in his book “Al Kaamil fit Taarikh” give detailed accounts of First Crusade.

Jerusalem was under the control of a Fatimid commander called Iftikhar. He is described as a strong commander who protected the city fiercely. On 7th June, 1099, the inhabitants of Jerusalem saw the army of Crusades at the walls. Previously, the army of Franks had occupied various cities such as Beirut, Saida (Sidon), etc.

Seeing the Army on the walls, Iftikhar ordered strict defence. If the mobile towers were to move forward, arrows were to rain down on them. The Crusaders wailed and prayed to God for three days for this conquest. The frontliners were Popes and Fathers who wailed looking at the skies, asking God to allow them to enter this holy city.

Of the two mobile towers constructed by the Franj, Ibn al-Athir writes, one was on the side of Zion, to the south, while the other was placed to the north. The Muslims managed to burn the first one, killing all those inside. But barely had they finished destroying it. When a messenger arrived calling for help, for the city had been penetrated on the opposite side. In fact, it was taken from the north, one Friday morning, seven days before the end of Shaban, in the year 492. [1]

After the invasion, the Franj (Franks) massacred and killed Muslims and Jews alike. The valuable items were looted from the citizens, and the citizens fled the city to protect themselves.

While describing the invasion of Franj, one can compare the surrender of Jerusalem at the hands of Umar (RA) the second Caliph after the Prophet (PBUH). The caliph was respectable and considerate. Peace Treaty was signed, and none was harmed. Umar (RA) made a point to pray outside the Church so there won't be any conflicts between Muslims and Christians in the later years.

Franj even expelled the Christians who were of Greek and Rum origins, afraid that they might cooperate with Muslims and attack the Franj. Jerusalem was controlled by Godfrey of Bouillon.

Immediately after conquering Jerusalem, the Franj besieged Ramla, a city and Palestine. This city was very important as it lay between Jerusalem and Mediterranean Sea. Apart from this, it had significant importance in Trade routes and communication. Capturing the city of Ramla enforced and strengthen the rule of Franj in the Levant area. It helped them in eliminating a military threat from that direction.

In the year 1102, after the invasion of Ramla, the Franj attacked a city called Harran. It is also an important city, and fall of this city would lead to great damage to the Arab world. It would open the gateways to

conquest of Aleppo and even Baghdad. When the Franj attacked Harran, Jekermish, the governor of Mosul, was in a dispute with Sokman, former ruler of Jerusalem.

Sokman was trying to avenge one of his nephews who had been killed by Jekermish, and both were preparing for the confrontation. But in the face of this new event, they called upon each other to unite their forces to save the situation in Harran, each stating his willingness to offer his life to God and to seek only the glory of the Almighty. They united, sealed their alliance, and set out against the Franj, Sokman with seven thousand horsemen and Jekermish with three thousand. (as described by Ibn al Athir). [2]

This alliance allowed Muslims a great victory against the Franj. The Franj commanders, Bohemond and Tancred barely saved their lives. The news of the victory of Harran allowed a fresh wave of happiness, triumph and joy among the Muslims.

Ibn al Qalanisi relates the emotions of Muslims as: For the Muslims it was an unequalled triumph. The morale of the Franj was deeply affected, their numbers were reduced, their offensive capacity undermined, and their arsenal depleted. The morale of the Muslims rose, their ardour in defence of their religion was enhanced. People congratulated one another on this victory, feeling certain that success had forsaken the Franj. [3]

The Muslims were unable to reap the advantage of this victory and this allowed the Franj to get their bearings and prepare themselves. Bohemond left the lands of Arab and never returned, thus leaving behind a desperate army. The Franks lost a principal architect and were really disheartened. This defeat led to the halt to the East invasion campaigns of the Franks.

6. Internal Dispute among Franks, Different Arab Kings, and the Order of Assassins

A. Friction between Frank

In 1107, a new ruler replaced Jekermish of Mosul. Jawali, the new governor of Turkish origins used the friction between Baldwin of Edessa, who was in the Mosul as a prisoner, and Tancred. He immediately released him and informed him that Edessa is in grave danger. After his release, Baldwin immediately opened a front against Tancred if Antioch.

As soon as he was released, Ibn al-Athir relates, Count Baldwin went to see Tancred in Antioch and asked him to restore Edessa to him. Tancred offered him thirty thousand dinars, horses, arms, clothing, and many other things, but refused to restore the city to him. When Baldwin left Antioch, in a fury, Tancred tried to follow him to prevent him from uniting with his ally Jawali. There were a number of clashes between them, but after each battle they came together again to eat and chat!

Since they had not succeeded in settling this problem, an attempt at mediation was made by the patriarch, who is a sort of imam for them. He appointed a commission of bishops and priests, who testified that before returning to his home country, Bohemond, the uncle of Tancred, had advised Tancred to restore Edessa to Baldwin if he were released from captivity. The master of Antioch accepted the arbitration and the count again took possession of his domain. [4]

Baldwin believed that this restoration was more due to the fear of Jawali, rather than through the good intentions of Tancred. Hence, he immediately released all the Muslim prisoners.

This coalition between the Emir of Mosul and Count of Edessa made King Ridwan uncomfortable and he asked Count Baldwin to not associate with Jawali. His pleas were not taken into consideration, so Ridwan formed an alliance with Tancred.

In the year 1108, two armies were facing each other in front of Tel Bashir. Tel Bashir was under the rule of Baldwin's cousin, Joselin. Jawali's army comprised of 2000 men, divided into three battalions. The left

battalion was of Arab soldiers, the one in centre was of Turks, and the right battalion were the knights of Baldwin and Joselin. The other army was under the command of Tancred of Antioch, and had 1500 knights and 600 Turk soldiers sent by King Ridwan of Aleppo.

The battle resulted in the defeat of Jawali's army and he fled from the battlefield. He was welcomed by Count Baldwin and the Muslims were given refuge in the lands of Edessa.

B. Arab Rulers of early 12th century

A brief list of Arab Rulers of different areas is as follows:

- **Al-Mustazhir (Damascus)**

Al-Mustazhir, also known as Shihab ad Din Mahmud, was the ruler of Damascus from the Burid dynasty. The Burids were a Turkish dynasty that played a key role in the Levant during the Crusades.

- **Ridwan (Aleppo)**

Ridwan, from the Banu Munqidh family, was the ruler of Aleppo. He was known for his military leadership and played a significant role during the First Crusade.

- **Alp Arslan al-Akhras (Aleppo)**

Alp Arslan al-Akhras, also known as Alp Arslan ibn Dawud, ruled Aleppo and was a military leader in the late 11th and early 12th centuries.

- **Tutush I (Damascus)**

Tutush I, a member of the Seljuk dynasty, ruled Damascus. He became the ruler of Damascus after the division of the Seljuk Empire.

- **Duqaq (Damascus)**

Duqaq, the younger brother of Ridwan, served as the emir of Damascus. He played a role in the political and military events during the First Crusade.

- **Ismail ibn Umar (Mosul)**

Ismail ibn Umar ruled over Mosul, a city in Iraq. Mosul was part of the broader political landscape influenced by various Muslim dynasties.

During the early 12th century, the Arab world navigated a complex political terrain characterized by a multitude of emirates and dynasties vying for dominance. The Seljuk Empire, while still influential, grappled with internal challenges, and its rulers struggled to maintain control over extensive territories. The Zengid Dynasty, led by figures like Imad ad-Din Zengi and later his son Nur ad-Din, played a pivotal role in regional politics, seeking to unite Muslim forces against the persistent threat of Crusader states in the Levant. Meanwhile, the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt faced internal strife, with military commanders and viziers often wielding more practical power than the nominal caliphs.

Arab rulers contended with the enduring presence of Crusader states, necessitating strategic alliances and periodic conflicts to counter external threats. The governance of various emirs and local governors, influenced by tribal affiliations and personal ambitions, added layers of complexity to the political landscape. Tribal alliances and conflicts were integral elements of Arab politics, shaping the trajectory of leadership and impacting regional stability. Internal conflicts and succession struggles within ruling dynasties were commonplace, with leadership changes carrying implications for both domestic governance and external relations.

Amid these political intricacies, cultural and scholarly exchange thrived in cities like Damascus, Aleppo, and Baghdad, serving as centres of learning and culture despite the challenges of the time. Overall, the early 12th century in the Arab world reflected a delicate balance of power, intricate political manoeuvring,

and a sustained struggle against external threats, particularly from the Crusaders, shaping the relationships between Arab rulers through a combination of geopolitical considerations and personal ambitions.

C. The Order of Assassin (Hashashin)

The story of Crusades will be incomplete without mentioning the Order of Assassin. The word “assassin” originates from the word Hashashin, which means the user of Hashish. Hashish is the Arabic name for cannabis. Hashashin would use cannabis to produce mystique affect. It could also be used to alter the state of consciousness. Some historians also argue that “Hashashin” might e derived from the Arabic word “Hashishiyyin” meaning hemp, a distinctive cloth of their attire instead of the drug.

Haasan bin Sabbah was born in a Nizari Ismaili family. He was born in Seljuk controlled Persia. He was really interested in astrology and medicine. It is said that he spent a great time with Omar Khayyan, the famous Mathematician and Astrologist. As he was a Shia, he naturally was inclined towards the Fatimid Caliphate. He started a different sect of people who called themselves “Fidai”. They were called “Fidai” because they were ready to sacrifice their lives on the command of their leader – Hassan ibn Sabah. Some historians argue that this was the effect of cannabis that was given to them.

King Ridwan, the king of Aleppo was greatly influenced by Hashashin. An astro-physician, sent by Hasan ibn Sabah had a great impact on his mind. This led to a conflict between the two brothers Duqaq and Ridwan. Duqaq was usually afraid that his brother would take help of Assassins to get him killed. Using his political influence, Ibn Sabbah made Aleppo its political headquarter till he conquered the Castle of Alamut.

The Order signed secret deals with the Franks and were involved in the deaths of many political leaders who died in mysterious ways. Sometimes, the Fidais would openly attack a leader and then, they would commit suicide in front of the crowds. Killing in front of crowds was a tactic used to induce fear among the people.

The Order caused heavy damage to both Shia and Sunni communities alike. Their hatred towards Sunnis increased with the downfall of Fatimid Caliphate, during the era of Nur Ud Din Zengi.

Hashashin especially gained popularity due to the secrecy and infiltration. They infiltrated all the ranks and were very secretive with their agenda. Apart from this, their loyalty to the Grand Master or Imam was noteworthy. They readily sacrificed their lives for the Imam, their spiritual leader. Secrecy was also maintained amongst the ranks of Assassins, with circles inside circles.

The Hashashin would usually send a message or threat to their target to induce fear and paranoia in the target and those around him. After assassinating famous political personalities, they would often leave their signature dagger called “Yatagan” to create an atmosphere of fear and distress.

The headquarter of the sect, Alamut Castle was a castle in mountain range. The mountain top and fortified walls made it impossible for the enemies to siege and take over the castle. The castle served as an education centre for the sect. people received education in various fields like martial arts, arts, philosophy, etc. The castle had a library filled with various books, some written by Hassan ibn Sabbah himself.

After ibn Sabbah’s death, his legacy was carried by Bahram. The order was active till 13th century. The order was dissolved when Hulago Han conquered Alamut Castle in 13th century.

7. Fall of Tripoli

Saint-Gilles camped at the outskirts of Tripoli, a city along the coastline of Mediterranean Sea, in Northern Lebanon. It has several ports and it was very important economic city with access to marine trade routes. It was important for Franj to take over this city for various geopolitical reasons.

Qadi Fakhr al Mulk wanted to defend Tripoli at all costs. His soldiers tried their best to raid Saint-Gilles's camp, but their attempts were unsuccessful. All the caravans coming towards Tripoli were intercepted by Saint-Gilles's men. The city was under heavy siege, and Qadi found himself in a very difficult position, completely isolated from the rest of the Islamic World.

In 1103, Saint-Gilles had built a strong citadel known as Qil'at Saint-Gilles. Qadi's aim was to get rid of this citadel, or at least weaken it. After many unsuccessful raids, in September 1103, a raid led by Qadi himself was successful in burning the left tower of the citadel. The enemies were taken by surprise, and Saint-Gilles found himself under a burning roof, which led to his death after three months.

After Saint-Gilles's death, a strange compromise was made between the Siegers and the besieged. According to it, free flow of trade and goods was allowed in Tripoli after the payment of taxes to the Franj. Tripoli witnessed trade and got enough products for their survival through this agreement. Saint-Gilles was followed by the Count of Cerdagne.

In 1104, when Qadi heard the news of the victory of Harran, he dispatched a messenger to Emir Sokman, asking for help. Emir assembled an army and started the march towards Tripoli, but due to some conflicts, his march was halted and this led to the fall of morale of the people.

In 1105, after the death of Sultan Barkiyaruq, people of Tripoli saw a ray of hope once again. They hoped that Muhammed ibn Melikshah would help them. Qadi decided to go to Baghdad in person and present his plea to Sultan Muhammed and Caliph Al Mustazhir Billah. On his way, he stopped at Damascus. Duqaq had died, and he was followed by Toghtekin, who greeted Qadi warmly.

After his small stay, Qadi continued his journey towards Baghdad. Both, the Sultan and the Caliph welcomed him enthusiastically and agreed to send aid and army with him. Ibn Al Qalanisi reports the meeting and Sultan Muhammed's order as:

The sultan, ordered several of his principal emirs to go with Fakhr al-Mulk to help repel those who were besieging the city. He instructed the expeditionary force to stop briefly in Mosul to take the city from Jawali, and told them to head for Tripoli once that was done. [5]

Sultan was unable to understand the direness of the situation. Qadi was devastated by this news. His protests went all in vain. After his 4-month stay in Baghdad, Qadi returned back to his city, feeling sure that he would not be able to defend his city anymore. When he reached, he was informed that the people had surrendered the city to the Fatimid Caliph, thinking that Qadi was not going to return.

While the Qadi was being updated of the situation, the Franj were preparing a final attack. King Baldwin of Jerusalem, Count Baldwin of Edessa and Tancred of Antioch collectively attacked the city of Tripoli. The city couldn't defend itself and on one fateful day of March, 1109, the city of Tripoli fell in the hands of Franj, after 2000 days of resistance.

After Tripoli, the Franj targeted Beirut. 5000 inhabitants of Beirut resisted the army of Franj, but were defeated. As to teach them a lesson, the Franj massacred the people ruthlessly. After Beirut, Franj attacked Saida. Afraid that they will meet the same fate as the people of Beirut, the people of Saida surrendered quickly.

Hence, within one year, the Arabs lost three major cities – Tripoli, Beirut and Saida. Next target could be any city – Tyre, Aleppo and even Baghdad. This led to uneasy feeling in the mass, and the feelings of Jihad among the common people.

8. Resistance

a. Early Resistance

Qadi Ibn al Khashab, a famous and influential scholar in the city of Aleppo was one of the first one to start the resistance. He used his influence and his knowledge to provoke the emotion of Jihad in the Muslims. Ibn al Khashab visited Baghdad to speak to the Caliph and the Sultan. He was able to move the hearts of the people and the rulers as well. The Caliph agreed to send help. He asked the emir of Mosul, Emir Mawdud, to help Aleppo.

Ibn al Khashab returned back and shared his victory with king Ridwan. King Ridwan rejoiced with everyone, but when the armies neared the city of Aleppo, in the month of July, 1113, he quickly shut the doors of the city and made sure that the soldiers patrolled everywhere.

Seeing this, Emir Mawdud chose Damascus as his headquarter for the fight against the Franj. Toghtekin welcomed the army with open arms, but an unfortunate incident occurred in this city. On 2nd of October, Emir Mawdud was attacked and he couldn't survive the attack. Ibn al Qalanisi relates the attack as:

When the prayer was over and Mawdud had performed several supplementary devotions, they both departed, Tughtigin walking ahead out of respect for the emir. They were surrounded by soldiers, guards, and militiamen bearing arms of all varieties; the slender Sabres, sharp épées, scimitars, and unsheathed daggers gave an impression of thick undergrowth. All around them, crowds pressed forward to admire their arsenal and their magnificence. When they reached the courtyard of the mosque, a man emerged from the crowd and approached the emir Mawdud as if to pray God on his behalf and to ask alms of him. Suddenly he seized the belt of his mantle and struck him twice with his dagger, just above the navel. The atabeg Tughtigin took a few steps backwards, and his companions quickly surrounded him. As for Mawdud, who never lost his head, he walked as far as the north gate of the mosque and then collapsed. A surgeon was summoned and managed to suture some of the wounds, but the emir died several hours later, may God have mercy upon him! [6].

Some blame this attack on the followers of Hassan ibn Sabah, while others blame Toghtekin himself. No one knows it for sure. This death was so shocking that even King Baldwin was shocked. When Sultan Muhammed got to know, he decided to meddle in the business of Franj, taking the murder of his Emir as a personal insult.

In the year 1113, Sultan's army had to face an army of Franj and Muslims alike. Baldwin's knights and soldier from Aleppo and Damascus had combined their forces and stood against the army of Sultan. Sultan's army had to move back, and henceforth, Sultan Muhammed did not concern himself with the problem of Franks.

The same year, Ridwan of Aleppo passed away. He was succeeded by his son Alp Arsalan. Qadi seized this chance to unite the Arabs and start Jihad. First thing that was to be done was to cleanse Aleppo from the Hashashin. His aim was to make sure that the traitors are punished, and are made into example for others. Alp Arsalan, son of Ridwan, took this opportunity to kill anyone and everyone. Despite Qadi's warning, he turned this hunt to punish traitors into a bloodbath. For six years, Aleppo was sunk into deep anarchy, where a monarch was killed and another would replace him.

Finally, in the year 1119, Ilghazi was appointed as the ruler of Aleppo. He was appointed by Qadi himself, and was regarded as a brave man who was willing to go for Jihad against the Franj. Kamal ad Din talks about Ilghazi's spirit for Jihad as:

Ilghazi made his emirs swear that they would fight bravely, that they would hold their positions, that they would not retreat, and that they would give their lives for the Jihad. The Muslims were then deployed in

small waves, and managed to take up night-time positions alongside Sir Roger's troops. At daybreak the Franj suddenly saw the Muslim banners approach, surrounding them on all sides. The Qadi Ibn al-Khashab advanced astride his mare, and gestured with one hand, urging our forces into battle. Seeing him, one of the soldiers shouted contemptuously, 'Have we come all the way from our home country to follow a turban?' But the Qadi marched toward the troops, moved through their ranks, and addressed them, trying to rouse their energy and lift their spirits, delivering a harangue so eloquent that men wept with emotion and felt great admiration for him. Then they charged. Arrows flew like a cloud of locusts. [7]

This was the first victory bestowed upon the Muslims after years of occupation and humiliation. This led to happiness and joy across the Arab world. People spent their time singing and celebrating.

Baldwin of Edessa died, and was replaced by Joscelina. He wasted no time and sieged the city of Tyre. In 1123, Ilghazi died due to alcohol. He was replaced by Balak. He was a brave Turkish commander who took charge of the army and attacked Franj. In May, 1124, Balak walked to save the city of Tyre. There, while standing near the armies, an arrow shot him and caused his death. His death was really a fatal blow to Muslims, as the inhabitants of Tyre got very disheartened and they handed over their city to the Franj to avert the bloodbath that follows every conquest.

During next two years, Aleppo and Damascus witnessed the deaths of many great leaders, Qadi being one of them. They became the targets of infamous Hashashin. The Order had signed secret contract with the Franj and killed the Emirs and the Qadi. Despite belonging to the Shite Community, Qadi couldn't escape the Order as he was an active member against the Order. He also actively participated in cleansing the city of Aleppo from the Hashashin. The order lost its control over Aleppo, so Hassan ibn Sabah made Damascus his headquarter.

The year 1126 saw Buri getting into the power. Buri was the son of Toghtekin, the Emir of Damascus. After coming to the power, he punished all the Batinis (The members of Hashashin are also called as Batinis). This punishment led to the expulsion of all the Batinis from the city of Damascus, hence the city was saved from the internal threat of this sect.

Buri attacked the rich plains of Ghouta and killed many Franj. He was victorious and returned back with enormous amount of booty and wealth. Even after this blow, Baldwin II assembled an army and tried attacking Damascus. He was opposed by a very strong army and the Muslims were victorious.

Unfortunately, just like every other leader who stood against the order, Buri was also attacked by the Assassins. He was stabbed in the stomach. Surgeons were summoned, surgery was performed, but before he could heal properly, Buri insisted on getting on horseback. This turned out to be a fatal mistake, resulting in his death.

Buri is considered as the chief architect of riposte period. He had defeated the Franj and had inflicted heavy loss on the Order. He was followed by Imad Ud Din Zangi, who followed his footsteps and continued Jihad against the Franj.

b. Zangi Era

• Imad Ud Din Zangi

Imad Ud Din Zangi was born in the city of Mosul in the year 1085 in a Turkic family, from among the tribes of Barbarians. He rose to power after the death of his father. He was a brilliant man, with a strategic mind and great military skills. His love for Jihad was very great. He wanted to defend and save all Muslim territories from the hands of the Crusaders. He resisted the Crusaders and tried to establish a strong and unified government against them.

In 1125, Zangi fought against the Crusaders for the first time. The battle was against Roger of Antioch. The results were inconclusive, but it marked the beginning of Zangi's era. In 1128, he took Aleppo under his principality. He was a man of fixed principles, who wouldn't tolerate any misbehaviour. He expected best from his soldiers and his Emirs. He valued bravery and discipline.

Zangi was a big supporter of the Seljuks, and he helped Sultan Mahmud, son of Sultan Muhammed many times. During his expeditions against the Caliph, he was once saved by a man Ayyub, who was the father of Salah Ud Din, a key figure in the conquest of Al Quds.

Zangi's fame was tarnished in 1136. It was Isma'il, son of Buri who asked for help from Zangi. He sent a message in which he informed Zangi about his situation, saying if he doesn't come to their aid, he will have to hand the city over to the Franj. The bloodbath that will follow it will all be on Zangi's head. Zangi rushed to help Damascus.

When the people of Damascus got to know about this, they assassinated Isma'il. A man named Mu'in Ud Din Unar. When Zangi reached Damascus, he was surprised and furious at the same time. He refused to go away and camped near Damascus. It was all futile and Zangi had to move away with his army.

1137 marked the rise of Zangi once again. He started conquering various cities such as Harran, Mosul, etc. He soon took the whole Central Syria under his command. His victories resonated in the whole Middle-east, and he was regarded as the Saviour of Arabs. He established a strong principality and a strong and well-trained army.

In 1144, Zangi sieged the city of Edessa. Joscelin II was the ruler of Edessa during the time of siege. There were a lot of internal conflicts among the people of Edessa, and Zangi seized this moment.

Edessa was not prepared for such a long assault. The city was under siege from 28th of November. They were not able to defend the city, and on 24th of December, the city fell in the hands of Zangi. The Conquest of Edessa proved to be a very crucial event in the history of the Crusades.

After this victory, Zangi returned back to the city of Aleppo. He was preparing for a huge conquest. People were joining the army to get a share in Jihad. The preparations were ongoing when an unfortunate event occurred.

Zangi was attacked by one of his slaves while he lay in his bed, after the consumption of Alcohol. He was stabbed and didn't die immediately. One of his commanders entered his tent and saw him in a fatal condition. Ibn Al Athir reports the testimony of the commander as:

When he saw me, the atabeg thought that I had come to finish him off, and with a gesture of his finger, he asked for the coup de grâce. Choked with emotion, I fell to my knees and said to him, Master, who did this to you? But he was unable to answer, and gave up his soul, may God have mercy on him! [8]

Zangi's death led to an outbreak among soldiers and emirs alike. The discipline was long forgotten and no one was in their right state of mind. Among all the chaos, a person had kept his head straight and took over the administration. This person was the son of Imad Ud Din. He was Nur Ud Din Zangi, the pious king.

• Nur Ud Din Zangi

Nur Ud Din was Zangi's second son, a very pious man and a very humble person. His character can be understood better through an incident narrated by Ibn Al Athir:

Nur Ud Din's wife once complained that she did not have enough money to provide adequately for his needs. He had assigned her three shops which he owned in Homs; these generated about twenty dinars a year. When she found that this was not enough, he retorted: 'I have nothing else. With all the money I command, I am but the treasurer of the Muslims, and I have no intention of betraying them, nor of casting myself into the fires of hell on your account.' [9]

This had a very positive effect on the Muslims. For them, a saviour had finally emerged, who dressed in common clothes, thought about the welfare of his people, didn't oppress his subjects and stood against the Franj and declared Jihad against them. He made sure that his army never drank wine, and he made sure that the music was also banned, so as to not displease Allah. He took control of Aleppo after Zangi's death and sent letters to different Emirs to come under his flag and join him in Jihad against the Franj.

Nur Ud Din reclaimed the city of Edessa in 1149. This was the time when 2nd Crusade was being dispatched from Constantinople. The leaders for this Crusade were King Louis VII of France and King Conard III of Germany.

The Franj wanted to capture Damascus. They sieged the city in 1148. Nur Ud Din started defence strategies and tried to protect Damascus from the Franj. 'Unar, the Ruler of Damascus used diplomacy and the internal conflict amongst the Crusaders to his advantage. He signed a deal with Conard III, the King of Germany. This internal dispute led to the failure of the siege. The army was defeated by Nur Ud Din's army. He was accompanied by Shirko, Salah Ud Din's Uncle. This victory allowed the end of the Second Crusade. Second Crusade was a failure, as it was not able to fulfil any of its objectives.

Now, Nur Ud Din sought to take Damascus under his control. He formed alliance with various Muslim leaders. Seeing this, 'Unar formed an alliance with the local Franj. Nur Ud Din intervened, saying that he is working for the interest of Muslims. It was the year 1154, when he launched the military campaign against 'Unar. He used diplomacy, internal conflicts and siege to take over Damascus. After several months of siege, the power was peacefully transferred to Nur Ud Din.

After uniting Syria, Nur Ud Din decided to attack Jerusalem and reclaim it. But when he was preparing for the expedition, they were hit with a strong earthquake that stopped the progress of the expedition.

This temporary setback led to the fight for River Nile. Nur Ud Din dispatched an army under the leadership of Shirko to Egypt to make sure that Cairo is not fallen into the hands of the Franj. In the year 1169, he appointed Salah Ud Din as the governor of Egypt. Egypt was still under the rule of Fatimi caliphate, but with the death of Al-Adid, in 1179, the Fatimid Caliphate was abolished and Salah Ud Din was claimed as the Ruler of Egypt.

Nur Ud Din Zangi passed away on 15th May, 1174. The circumstances surrounding Nur Ud Din's death are not entirely clear, and historical records provide varying accounts. Some sources suggest that he died of an illness, possibly dysentery, while others mention the possibility of assassination. He was followed by Salah Ud Din Yousuf.

9. Salah Ud Din Yousuf and Victory

Salah Ud Din, ascended to power in Egypt through a series of strategic moves that showcased his military prowess and political acumen. Initially appointed as the vizier under the Fatimid Caliphate, Saladin distinguished himself by successfully defending Egypt against a Crusader invasion in 1169. This victory elevated his standing, leading to his appointment as the vizier of Egypt. Recognizing the internal strife within the declining Fatimid Caliphate, Saladin seized the opportunity in 1171 to abolish the Fatimid rule and declared allegiance to the Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad. This marked the end of the Fatimid era and the beginning of Salah Ud Din's independent rule in Egypt.

The establishment of the Ayyubid Dynasty by Salah Ud Din marked a crucial turning point in the region's history. As the de facto ruler, Salah Ud Din sought to unify Muslim territories and resist Crusader advances. Engaging in military campaigns across Syria, he secured control over key cities and worked towards establishing stable governance. One of his most significant achievements was the recapture of

Jerusalem in 1187 after the decisive Battle of Hattin. The fall of Jerusalem had far-reaching consequences for the Crusades and solidified Salah Ud Din's legacy as a military commander and statesman.

Salah Ud Din's rise to power also involved diplomatic finesse and strategic alliances. He negotiated with various Muslim leaders, aimed to maintain stability within his territories, and occasionally entered into agreements with Crusader leaders to ensure peaceful coexistence. Saladin's multifaceted approach, combining military strength, political manoeuvring, and diplomatic skill, established him as a revered figure in both Muslim and Western histories, leaving an enduring impact on the course of the Crusades and the Middle East.

Salah Ud Din was successful in unifying Egypt under his military control. He defeated the military revolts that were occurring in his Army. He also had a very elaborate espionage system, through which he was able to keep in touch with the actions and movements of his enemies. He succeeded in unifying the Egyptians and the Syrians under one flag and doubled his efforts to recapture the city of Jerusalem, and free Al-Aqsa from the hands of the Franj.

Apart from his military expertise, Ayyubi was a very diplomatic man. This way, he succeeded in conquering many cities using his diplomacy, without fighting and bloodshed. He was a kind-hearted man, who gave refuge to whoever asked for it, and never broke his promise.

Salah Ud Din also faced a lot of opposition from the Batinis. He was attacked by them on several occasions. Batinis had infiltrated in the ranks of his personal guards and had attacked him while he was asleep. But miraculously, he was saved each time.

a. Battle of Hittin

On July 4, 1187, Battle of Hittin occurred. It was fought alongside the shore of River Galilee. Sultan Salah Ud Din used his military strategy to make sure that the water is not available for the enemies. This tactic proved to be very successful as the Army of the Franj was exhausted due to heat and thirst. They couldn't put up with the resistance. Sultan's army encircled the Franj, and they were defeated. Many Franj were taken as captives. Apart from common knights, many significant leaders were also captured, King Guy of Lusignan, who was the King of Jerusalem, being one of the captives. This victory opened the path for the reconquest of Jerusalem.

b. Reconquest of Jerusalem

After the decisive Battle of Hittin, Muslims were emboldened and the Franj were put into a difficult situation. Unlike his predecessors, Sultan did not stop after one victory. He decided that it will be wise if the enemies were not given chance to reclaim their wits. With this in his mind, he started moving towards Jerusalem. On his way, he claimed the city of Tiberias too.

Sultan's forces sieged Jerusalem. Jerusalem had no leader, as King Guy was a captive in the hand of Muslims. The city was defended by knights, soldiers and civilian. As the siege prolonged, the situation inside the city worsened. The resources were depleting day by day, and even water was becoming scarce. After analysing the situation, the subjects decided to handover the city peacefully.

Sultan accepted the terms for peace and accepted low-rate ransom for the people. He even allowed the Arch bishop to take away the treasure he held. Sultan provided with the security for these people to cross Muslim land and enter their lands.

On October 2, 1187, Jerusalem officially surrendered to Salah Ud Din. The city, considered holy by Christians, Muslims, and Jews, returned to Muslim control. The reconquest marked the end of almost a century of Crusader rule in Jerusalem, dating back to the First Crusade in 1099.

One of the notable aspects of Salah Ud Din's reconquest was his commitment to respecting the sanctity of religious sites. Churches were protected, and Salah Ud Din ensured that the Christian inhabitants who chose to remain in the city could practice their faith without interference. This approach contrasted with the brutality witnessed during the First Crusade when Jerusalem was initially captured by the Crusaders. The reconquest of Jerusalem had profound consequences. It triggered responses in Europe, leading to a renewed sense of urgency for the Christian world to regain control of the holy city. The loss of Jerusalem became a rallying cry for the Third Crusade (1189-1192), during which European leaders, including Richard the Lionheart, sought to reclaim the city.

Other Notable Conquests

- **Battle of Marj Ayyun (1179):** In the Battle of Marj Ayyun in 1179, Salah Ud Din confronted a coalition of forces led by Prince Raymond III of Tripoli. Despite facing numerical disadvantages, Saladin's strategic brilliance secured a resounding victory, enhancing his reputation as a masterful military tactician.
- **Battle of Arsuf (1191):** During the Third Crusade, Salah Ud Din faced European forces commanded by Richard the Lionheart in the Battle of Arsuf (1191). Although this engagement is often remembered for Richard's tactical prowess, Saladin adeptly directed his forces, resulting in an inconclusive outcome. The battle underscored Salah Ud Din's capacity to adapt to varying battlefield conditions.
- **Reconquest of Jaffa (1192):** Following the death of Richard the Lionheart's sister in Jaffa, Salah Ud Din and Richard agreed to a truce. As a goodwill gesture, Salah Ud Din permitted Christian pilgrims to access Jerusalem. The reconquest of Jaffa exemplified Salah Ud Din's diplomatic finesse alongside his military strength.
- **Defence of Acre (1189-1191):** Acre, a pivotal coastal city, became a focal point during the Third Crusade. Salah Ud Din defended Acre against the siege by European forces. Although the city eventually succumbed to the Crusaders, Salah Ud Din's unwavering resilience highlighted his ability to endure prolonged sieges.

Salah Ud Din passed away on March 4, 1193, in Damascus, Syria. His death marked the end of an era and had significant implications for the political landscape of the Middle East. Saladin's legacy endured long after his death. Salah Ud Din's death was reportedly due to a fever, and he died at the age of 56.

10. Forth Crusade

The Fourth Crusade, which began in 1202, had a significant impact on the Arab world and extended beyond the borders of the Holy Land. A decisive development step was the redirection of the Crusader forces towards Constantinople in 1204, when their focus shifted away from the Muslim territories. This distraction temporarily mitigated the immediate threat of the crusaders to the Islamic states of the Levant. The sacking of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204 led to the fragmentation and weakening of the Byzantine Empire, changing the power dynamics of the eastern Mediterranean.

This situation gave Arab leaders the opportunity to exploit the divisions in Christendom and create or strengthen alliances that favoured Muslim interests. Although the Fourth Crusade temporarily diverted attention from the Holy Land, the crusader states of the Levant continued to worry about the Arab world. The fragmentation of crusader territories and internal conflicts between European powers did not eliminate the long-term threat posed by the presence of crusaders in the region.

Economically, the crusades, including the Fourth Crusade, had a significant impact. Disruptions to trade routes, campaigns, and changing dynamics in the eastern Mediterranean affected economic activity in the

Arab world. Arab traders and businessmen have faced challenges due to changes in business structures and general instability. The Arab leaders probably adapted diplomatic and military strategies in response to the changing situation created by the Fourth Crusade.

The weakened Byzantine Empire and internal conflicts among the Crusaders affected alliances and military planning in the Arab world. Managers are trying to take advantage of the opportunities that this development offers. Despite the overthrow of the Fourth Crusade, the crusader states remained important in the Levant. The Arab world had to contend with ongoing military and political challenges in those regions that required constant preparedness and diplomatic counsel. In sum, the multifaceted impact of the Fourth Crusade highlighted the complex dynamics of the eastern Mediterranean during that period and shaped strategic aspects of the Arab world.

11. Conclusion

In conclusion, viewing the Crusades through Arab eyes reveals a complex and multifaceted perspective shaped by geopolitical, cultural, and religious considerations. The Arab world witnessed the waves of Crusader invasions with a mix of resistance, adaptation, and strategic manoeuvring. While the Crusades had profound impacts on the region, including the loss and reconquest of key territories, the Arab response was marked by a resilient commitment to defending their lands.

Arab chroniclers, such as Ibn al-Qalanisi, provided invaluable accounts of the Crusades, offering insights into the military strategies, diplomatic intricacies, and cultural exchanges that unfolded during this tumultuous period. The Arab perspective emphasizes the ongoing threat posed by Crusader states in the Levant and the continual need for vigilance and adaptation in the face of shifting alliances and internal conflicts among the European powers.

The Fourth Crusade, with its diversion towards Constantinople in 1204, brought both relief and renewed concerns to the Arab world. The sacking of Byzantine territories altered power dynamics and presented both challenges and potential opportunities for Arab leaders navigating the intricate politics of the Eastern Mediterranean.

Economically, the Crusades disrupted trade routes and introduced new dynamics, impacting Arab merchants and traders. Diplomatically, Arab leaders adjusted strategies to capitalize on divisions among Crusaders and protect their territories. Throughout, the Arab world maintained a keen awareness of the broader implications of Crusader activities and sought to navigate a complex landscape with resilience and strategic foresight.

In essence, the Arab perspective on the Crusades illuminates a rich tapestry of responses, from military resistance to diplomatic engagement, revealing a dynamic and adaptive Arab world facing the challenges posed by the Crusader presence in the Levant. The legacy of the Crusades in the Arab historical narrative underscores the enduring impact of these events, shaping the geopolitical and cultural landscape of the Middle East for centuries to come.

12. REFERENCE

1. Text extracted from “The Crusades Through the Arab Eyes” by Amin Maalouf, page number 68.
2. Text extracted from “The Crusades Through the Arab Eyes” by Amin Maalouf, page number 79.
3. Text extracted from “The Crusades Through the Arab Eyes” by Amin Maalouf, page number 80.
4. Text extracted from “The Crusades Through the Arab Eyes” by Amin Maalouf, page number 82.
5. Text extracted from “The Crusades Through the Arab Eyes” by Amin Maalouf, page number 87.

6. Text extracted from “The Crusades Through the Arab Eyes” by Amin Maalouf, page number 95-96.
7. Text extracted from “The Crusades Through the Arab Eyes” by Amin Maalouf, page number 102.
8. Text extracted from “The Crusades Through the Arab Eyes” by Amin Maalouf, page number 145.
9. Text extracted from “The Crusades Through the Arab Eyes” by Amin Maalouf, page number 149.
“Dhail Tareekh Dimashq” by Ibn Al Qalanisi. “Al Kaamil fi’t Tareekh” by Ibn Al Athir.