

# The Crusades – From Christian, Jewish and Muslim Perspectives

Read the following accounts of the crusades and answer these questions.

1. What do the different accounts of the Crusades have in common? What commonalities, if any, do you detect between the religious ideas of the crusaders and those whom they attacked? What were the similarities and what were the differences in the experiences of the Jews in Rhineland cities and the Arabs in Jerusalem? Why do you think the response of the Jews was so different from the response of the Muslims?
2. What reasons does Pope Urban give for urging the Franks to take up arms and go to the Holy Land? What is the tone of his speech in presenting these reasons? Is this a rational appeal, or an emotional one? Or both? How important is religion in the appeal? What motivations other than religious ones does Urban give? Does his presentation of the reasons for this war conform to the requirements for a just war laid out by Augustine and Aquinas [it must (1) be defensive in nature; (2) violence must be proportionate, doing no more violence than it prevents; (3) aim must be the restoration of peace; and (4) be waged by a legal authority]?
3. Does what happened to the Jews in Germany and the Muslims in Jerusalem strike you as a logical outcome of Urban's appeal?
4. According to al-Athir's narrative, what is the cause of the Crusades to the Holy Land? How does his description of these causes and events compare with the Christian accounts of the launching of the First Crusade? How do you account for the different views of the same events?
5. Are the values and ideas expressed in the poem quoted by al-Athir consistent with the Muslim idea of just war and jihad [it must (1) have a just cause, essentially defensive; (b) targets have to be invited to convert to Islam or pay tribute; (c) legal Islamic authority has to declare jihad; and (d) be conducted according to Islamic values]? Was Saladin's campaign, as told by Bahas al-Din Ibn Shaddad, a just war within the Muslim tradition?

6. In your view, given that both the Christian and Islamic traditions employ concepts of a just war which are not dissimilar, was one side in the Crusades more faithful to the idea than the other?
7. What lesson should we take from the Crusades regarding the religious sponsorship of and participation in war?

*When Urban II preached the First Crusade at Clermont in 1095, he unleashed a movement that was seen and interpreted in many different ways. The first two documents tell the story from the perspective of Christian Europeans, the third tells the story from the perspective of Jews and the last two documents tell the story from the perspective of Muslims.*

### **Document One: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres (Early Twelfth Century)**

*Fulcher of Chartres, a chaplain for one of the crusade leaders, wrote his account of the First Crusade for posterity. His chronicle is ordinarily very accurate, and he is careful to note the different experiences of different participants. It is all the more significant therefore, that he expresses the public view of the First Crusade by making liberal use of biblical quotations and imagery to describe the event. He saw it as the fulfillment of God's plan for humanity.*

In March of the year 1096 from the Lord's Incarnation, after Pope Urban had held the Council, which has been described, at Auvergne<sup>307</sup> in November, some people, earlier prepared than others, hastened to begin the holy journey. Others followed in April or May, June or July, and also in August, September, or October, whenever the opportunity of securing expenses presented itself.

In that year, with God disposing, peace and a vast abundance of grain and wine overflowed through all the regions of the earth, so that they who chose to follow Him with their crosses according to His commands did not fail on the way for lack of bread. [Fulcher then names the "leaders of the pilgrims." ]...

So, with such a great band proceeding from western parts, gradually from day to day on the way there grew armies of innumerable people coming together from everywhere. Thus a countless multitude speaking many languages and coming from many regions was to be seen. However, all were not assembled into one army until we arrived at the city of Nicaea<sup>308</sup>.

What more shall I tell? The islands of the seas and all the kingdoms of the earth were so agitated that one believed that the prophecy of David was fulfilled, who said in his Psalm: "All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee O Lord" [Psalms. 86:9]: and what those going all the way there later said with good reason: "We

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<sup>307</sup> A city in southern France.

<sup>308</sup> A city in modern-day Turkey outside of Istanbul/Constantinople.

shall worship in the place where His feet have stood" [*Psalms*. 132:7]. We have read much about this in the Prophets which it is tedious to repeat.

## **Document Two: Pope Urban Preaches The First Crusade (1095)**

The Version of Robert the Monk

Oh, race of Franks<sup>309</sup>, race from across the mountains, race chosen and beloved by God as shines forth in very many of your works, set apart from all nations by the situation of your country, as well as by your catholic faith and the honor of the holy church! To you our discourse is addressed and for you our exhortation is intended. We wish you to know what a grievous cause has led us to your country, what peril threatening you and all the faithful has brought us.

From the confines of Jerusalem and the city of Constantinople a horrible tale has gone forth and very frequently has been brought to our ears, namely, that a race from the kingdom of the Persians,<sup>310</sup> an accursed race, a race utterly alienated from God, a generation forsooth which has not directed its heart and has not entrusted its spirit to God, has invaded the lands of those Christians and has depopulated them by the sword, pillage and fire; it has led away a part of the captives into its own country, and a part it has destroyed by cruel tortures; it has either entirely destroyed the churches of God or appropriated them for the rites of its own religion. They destroy the altars, after having defiled them with their uncleanness. They circumcise the Christians, and the blood of the circumcision they either spread upon the altars or pour into the vases of the baptismal font. When they wish to torture people by a base death, they perforate their navels, and dragging forth the extremity of the intestines, bind it to a stake; then with flogging they lead the victim around until the viscera having gushed forth the victim falls prostrate upon the ground. Others they bind to a post and pierce with arrows. Others they compel to extend their necks and then, attacking them with naked swords, attempt to cut through the neck with a single blow. What shall I say of the abominable rape of the women? To speak of it is worse than to be silent.<sup>311</sup> The kingdom of the Greeks is now dismembered by them and deprived of territory so vast in extent that it can not be traversed in a march of two months. On whom therefore is the labor of avenging these wrongs and of recovering this territory incumbent, if not upon you? You, upon whom above other nations God has conferred remarkable glory in arms, great courage, bodily activity and strength to humble the hairy scalp of those who resist you.

Let the deeds of your ancestors move you and incite your minds to manly achievements; the glory and greatness of king Charles the Great<sup>312</sup>, and of his son Louis, and of your other kings, who have destroyed the kingdoms of the pagans, and have extended in these lands the territory of the holy church. Let the holy sepulcher of

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<sup>309</sup> The Franks were Frenchmen, although the term had larger connotations of all Europeans during the Crusades.

<sup>310</sup> An archaic way of referring to Turks and Arabs.

<sup>311</sup> Needless to say, this list of charges is greatly exaggerated, and simply made up at points.

<sup>312</sup> Charlemagne, the first emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.

the Lord our Savior, which is possessed by unclean nations, especially incite you, and the holy places which are now treated with ignominy and irreverently polluted with their filthiness. Oh, most valiant soldiers and descendants of invincible ancestors, be not degenerate, but recall the valor of your progenitors.

But if you are hindered by love of children, parents and wives, remember what the Lord says in the Gospel, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake shall receive an hundred fold and shall inherit everlasting life." Let none of your possessions detain you, no solicitude for your family affairs, since this land which you inhabit, shut in on all sides by the seas and surrounded by the mountain peaks, is too narrow for your large population; nor does it abound 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 frequently you perish by mutual wounds. Let therefore hatred depart from among you, let your quarrels end, let wars cease, and let all dissensions and controversies slumber. Enter upon the road to the Holy Sepulcher; wrest that land from the wicked race, and subject it to yourselves. That land which as the Scripture says "floweth with milk and honey," was given by God into the possession of the children of Israel. Jerusalem is the navel of the world; the land is fruitful above others, like another paradise of the lights. This the Redeemer of the human race has made illustrious by His advent, has beautified by residence, has consecrated by suffering, has redeemed by death, has glorified by burial. This royal city, therefore, situated at the center of the world, is now held captive by His enemies, and is in subjection to those who do not know God, to the worship of the heathens. She seeks therefore and desires to be liberated, and does not cease to implore you to come to her aid. From you especially she asks succor, because, as we have already said, God has conferred upon you above all nations great glory in arms. Accordingly undertake this journey for the remission of your sins, with the assurance of the imperishable glory of the kingdom of heaven.

When Pope Urban had said these and very many similar things in his urbane discourse, he so influenced to one purpose the desires of all who were present, that they cried out, "It is the will of God! It is the will of God!" When the venerable Roman pontiff heard that, with eyes uplifted to heaven he gave thanks to God and, with his hand commanding silence, said:

Most beloved brethren, today is manifest in you what the Lord says in the Gospel, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them." Unless the Lord God had been present in your spirits, all of you would not have uttered the same cry. For, although the cry issued from numerous mouths, yet the origin of the cry was one. Therefore I say to you that God, who implanted this in your breasts, has drawn it forth from you. Let this then be your war-cry in combats, because this word is given to you by God. When an armed attack is made upon the enemy, let this one cry be raised by all the soldiers of God: It is the will of God! It is the will of God!

And we do not command or advise that the old or feeble, or those unfit for bearing arms, undertake this journey; nor ought women to set out at all, without their husbands or brothers or legal guardians. For such are more of a hindrance than aid, more of a burden than advantage. Let the rich aid the needy; and according to their wealth, let them take with them experienced soldiers. The priests and clerks of any order are not to go without the consent of their bishop; for this journey would profit them nothing if they went without permission of these. Also, it is not fitting that laymen should enter upon the pilgrimage without the blessing of their priests.

Whoever, therefore, shall determine upon this holy pilgrimage and shall make his vow to God to that effect and shall offer himself to Him as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, shall wear the sign of the cross of the Lord on his forehead or on his breast. When, truly, having fulfilled his vow he wishes to return, let him place the cross on his back between his shoulders. Such, indeed, by the twofold action will fulfill the precept of the Lord, as He commands in the Gospel, "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."

### **Document Three: The Jewish Experience As Told by Solomon Bar Simson (Mid-Twelfth Century)**

*Around 1140, Solomon Bar Simson, a Jew from the German city Mainz, published a chronicle of the First Crusade. This excerpt shows that the Jewish community interpreted the coming of the crusaders as a punishment from God; hence their prayers and fasting and their conviction that those killed by the crusaders were martyrs for God.*

At this time arrogant people, a people of strange speech, a nation bitter and impetuous, French men and Germans, set out for the Holy City, which had been desecrated by barbaric nations, there to seek their house of idolatry and banish the Ishmaelites<sup>313</sup> and other denizens of the land and conquer the land for themselves...

Now it came to pass that as they passed through the towns where Jews dwelled, they said to one another: "Look now, we are going a long way to seek out the profane shrine and to avenge ourselves on the Ishmaelites, when here, in our very midst, are the Jews – they whose forefathers murdered and crucified [Christ] for no reason. Let us first avenge ourselves on them and exterminate them from among the nations so that the name of Israel will no longer be remembered, or let them adopt our faith and acknowledge the offspring of promiscuity."

When the Jewish communities became aware of their intentions, they resorted to the custom of our ancestors, repentance, prayer, and charity. The hands of the Holy Nation turned faint at this time, their hearts melted, and their strength flagged. They hid in their

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<sup>313</sup> Muslims, considered to be descended from Ishmael.

innermost rooms to escape the swirling sword. They subjected themselves to great endurance, abstaining from food and drink for three consecutive days and nights, and then fasting many days from sunrise to sunset, until their skin was shriveled and dry as wood upon their bones. And they cried out loudly and bitterly to God.

On the eighth day of Iyar<sup>314</sup>, on the Sabbath, the foe attacked the community of Speyer<sup>315</sup> and murdered eleven holy souls who sanctified their Creator on the holy Sabbath and refused to defile themselves by adopting the faith of their foe. There was a distinguished, pious woman there who slaughtered herself in sanctification of God's name. She was the first among all the communities of those who were slaughtered. The remainder were saved by the local bishop without defilement [baptism], as described above.

On the twenty-third day of Iyar they attacked the community of Worms.<sup>316</sup> The community was then divided into two groups; some remained in their homes and others fled to the local bishop seeking refuge. Those who remained in their homes were set upon by the steppe-wolves who pillaged men, women, and infants, children and old people. They pulled down the stairways and destroyed the houses, looting and plundering; and they took the Torah Scroll, trampled it in the mud, and tore and burned it.

#### **Document Four: The Seizure of Jerusalem As Told By Ibn Al-Athir (Early Thirteenth Century)**

*Ibn Al-Athir (1160-1233) was an Arab historian who drew on earlier accounts for this recounting of the crusaders' conquest of Jerusalem. He stresses the greed and impiety of the crusaders, who pillaged Muslim holy places, and their pitiless slaughter.*

##### *Origin of the Franks' Attack on Islam*

The power of the Franks first became apparent when in the year 478<sup>317</sup> they invaded the territories of Islam and took Toledo<sup>318</sup> and other parts of Andalusia<sup>319</sup>, as was mentioned earlier. Then in 484<sup>320</sup> they attacked and conquered the island of Sicily and turned their attention to the African coast. Certain of their conquests there were won back again but they had other successes, as you will see.

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<sup>314</sup> The eighth month of the civil year and the second month of the ecclesiastical year on the Hebrew calendar.

<sup>315</sup> A city in modern-day Germany located beside the river Rhine.

<sup>316</sup> A city in the southwest of modern-day Germany.

<sup>317</sup> 478 is the date in the Islamic calendar, corresponding to 1085-86 C.E.

<sup>318</sup> A southern Spanish city in Al-Andalusia, Muslim Iberia.

<sup>319</sup> The name for Muslim Iberia.

<sup>320</sup> 1091 C.E.

In 490<sup>321</sup> the Franks attacked Syria. This is how it all began: Baldwin, their King,<sup>322</sup> a kinsman of Roger the Frank who had conquered Sicily, assembled a great army and sent word to Roger saying: "I have assembled a great army and now I am on my way to you, to use your bases for my conquest of the African coast. Thus you and I shall become neighbors."

Roger called together his companions and consulted them about these proposals. "This will be a fine thing both for them and for us!" they declared, "for by this means these lands will be converted to the Faith!" At this Roger raised one leg and farted loudly and swore that it was of more use than their advice.<sup>323</sup> "Why?" "Because if this army comes here, it will need quantities of provisions and fleets of ships to transport it to Africa, as well as reinforcements from my own troops. Then, if the Franks succeed in conquering this territory they will take it over and will need provisioning from Sicily. This will cost me my annual profit from the harvest. If they fail they will return here and be an embarrassment to me here in my own domain. As well as all this Tamim<sup>324</sup> will say that I have broken faith with him and violated our treaty, and friendly relations and communications between us will be disrupted. As far as we are concerned, Africa is always there. When we are strong enough we will take it."

He summoned Baldwin's messenger and said to him: "If you have decided to make war on the Muslims your best course will be to free Jerusalem from their rule and thereby win great honor. I am bound by certain promises and treaties of allegiance with the rulers of Africa." So the Franks made ready and set out to attack Syria.

Another story is that the Fatimids<sup>325</sup> of Egypt were afraid when they saw the Seljuqids<sup>326</sup> extending their empire through Syria as far as Gaza, until they reached the Egyptian border and Atsiz<sup>327</sup> invaded Egypt itself. They therefore sent to invite the Franks to invade Syria and so protect Egypt from the Muslims.<sup>328</sup> But God knows best.

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<sup>321</sup> 1097 C.E. This date clearly refers to the end of the Norman conquest [of Sicily].

<sup>322</sup> This Baldwin (Bardawīl) is a composite character, compounded of the various Baldwins of Flanders and Jerusalem; or else the first Baldwin is mistakenly thought to have been already a king in the West.

<sup>323</sup> This passage is characteristic of the contemptuous with which the Muslims usually spoke of their enemies, as well as giving a fairly accurate picture of Roger's political acumen and manners.

<sup>324</sup> The Zirid Amir, or prince, of Tunisa, Tamīm ibn Mu'izz. The Zirids were a Berber dynasty in what is modern Tunisa.

<sup>325</sup> The Fatimids, Fatimid Caliphate or al-Fatimiyyūn is the Arab Shi'a dynasty that ruled over varying areas of the Maghreb, Egypt, and the Levant from 909 to 1171 C.E., establishing the Egyptian city of Cairo as their capital. [The Levant is a geographical term historically referring to a large area in the Middle East south of the Taurus Mountains, bounded by the Mediterranean Sea on the west, and by the northern Arabian Desert and Upper Mesopotamia to the east.]

<sup>326</sup> The Seljuqs were a Turkish Sunni Muslim dynasty that ruled parts of Central Asia and the Middle East from the 11th to 14th centuries C.E.

<sup>327</sup> A general of the Seljuqid Turkish Sultan Malikshāh, who in 1076 C.E. attacked Egypt from Palestine.

<sup>328</sup> The Fatimids rulers of Egypt were also Muslims, but they were Shi'a rather than Sunni, and so seen as "heretics" and opposed to mainstream Islam.

### *The Finding of the Holy Lance and the Battle at Antioch*

When Kerbogha<sup>329</sup> heard that the Franks had taken Antioch he mustered his army and advanced into Syria... All the Turkish and Arab forces in Syria rallied to him except for the army from Aleppo<sup>330</sup>... When the Franks heard of this they were alarmed and afraid, for their troops were weak and short of food. The Muslims advanced and came face to face with the Franks in front of Antioch.<sup>331</sup> Kerbogha, thinking that the present crisis would force the Muslims to remain loyal to him, alienated them by his pride and ill-treatment of them. They plotted in secret anger to betray him and desert him in the heat of battle.

After taking Antioch the Franks camped there for twelve days without food. The wealthy ate their horses and the poor ate carrion and leaves from the trees. Their leaders, faced with this situation, wrote to Kerbogha to ask for safe-conduct through his territory but he refused, saying "You will have to fight your way out."... There was also a holy man [among the Franks] who had great influence over them, a man of low cunning, who proclaimed that the Messiah had a lance buried in the Qusyin, a great building in Antioch. "And if you find it you will be victorious and if you fail you will surely die." Before saying this he had buried a lance in a certain spot and concealed all trace of it. He exhorted them to fast and repent for three days, and on the fourth day he led them all to the spot with their soldiers and workmen, who dug everywhere and found the lance as he had told them. Whereupon he cried "Rejoice! For victory is secure." So on the fifth day they left the city in groups of five or six. The Muslims said to Kerbogha: "You should go up to the city and kill them one by one as they come out; it is easy to pick them off now that they have split up." He replied: "No, wait until they have all come out and then we will kill them." He would not allow them to attack the enemy and when some Muslims killed a group of Franks, he went himself to forbid such behavior and prevent its recurrence. When all the Franks had come out and not one was left in Antioch, they began to attack strongly, and the Muslims turned and fled. This was Kerbogha's fault, first because he had treated the Muslims with such contempt and scorn, and second because he had prevented their killing the Franks. The Muslims were completely routed without striking a single blow or firing a single arrow... The only Muslims to stand firm were a detachment of warriors from the Holy Land, who fought to acquire merit in God's eyes and to seek martyrdom. The Franks killed them by the thousand and stripped their camp of food and possessions, equipment, horses and arms, with which they re-equipped themselves.

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<sup>329</sup> Kerbogha was Atabeg [a title of Turkish nobility] of Mosul during the First Crusade and was renowned as a soldier. In 1098 C.E., when he heard that the Crusaders had besieged Antioch, he gathered his troops and marched to relieve the city. By the time he arrived, around June 5-9, the Crusaders had been in possession of the city since 3rd June. They were not able to restock the city before Kerbogha, in turn, was besieging the Crusaders in the city.

<sup>330</sup> A city in modern-day northern Syria.

<sup>331</sup> A city in modern-day Turkey which was founded near the end of the 4th century B.C.E. by one of Alexander the Great's generals. Antioch eventually rivaled Alexandria as the chief city of the nearer East.



### *The Franks Conquer Jerusalem*

Taj ad-Daula Tutuḡsh<sup>332</sup> was the Lord of Jerusalem but had given it as a fief<sup>333</sup> to the Amir Suqman ibn Artuḡ, the Turcoman. When the Franks defeated the Turks at Antioch the massacre demoralized them, and the Egyptians, who saw that the Turkish armies were being weakened by desertion, besieged Jerusalem under the command of al-Afdal ibn Badr al-Jamali.<sup>334</sup> Inside the city were Artuḡ's sons, Suqman and Ilghazi, their cousin Sunij and their nephew Yaḡuti. The Egyptians brought more than forty siege engines to attack Jerusalem and broke down the walls at several points. The inhabitants put up a defense, and the siege and fighting went on for more than six weeks. In the end the Egyptians forced the city to capitulate, in sha'bān 489.<sup>335</sup> Suqman, Ilghazi and their friends were well treated by al-Afdal, who gave them large gifts of money and let them go free. They made for Damascus and then crossed the Euphrates. Suqman settled in Edessa and Ilghazi went on into Iraq. The Egyptian governor of Jerusalem was a certain Iftikhar ad-Daula<sup>336</sup>, who was still there at the time of which we are speaking.

After their vain attempt to take Acre by siege, the Franks moved onto Jerusalem and besieged it for more than six weeks. They built two towers, one of which, near Sion, the Muslims burnt down, killing everyone inside it. It had scarcely ceased to burn before a messenger arrived to ask for help and to bring the news that the other side of the city had fallen. In fact Jerusalem was taken from the north on the morning of Friday 22, sha'bān 492.<sup>337</sup> The population was put to the sword by the Franks, who pillaged the area for a week. A band of Muslims barricaded themselves into the Oratory of David<sup>338</sup> and fought on for several days. They were granted their lives in return for surrendering. The Franks honored their word, and the group left by night for Ascalon. In the Masjid al-Aqsa<sup>339</sup> the Franks slaughtered more than 70,000 people, among them a large number of Imams and Muslim scholars, devout and ascetic men who had left their homelands to live lives of pious seclusion in the Holy Place. The Franks stripped the Dome of the

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<sup>332</sup> A Syrian Seljuqid, brother of the Turkish Sultan Malikshah.

<sup>333</sup> Under the system of feudalism, a fiefdom or fief often consisted of inheritable lands or revenue-producing property granted by a liege lord, generally to a vassal, in return for a form of allegiance, originally to give him the means to fulfill his military duties when called upon.

<sup>334</sup> The vizier, or prime minister, of the Fatimid dynasty in Egypt.

<sup>335</sup> August 1096 C.E. If this date were correct, the connection with the fall of Antioch would no longer exist. In fact, the date given here is wrong: the Egyptians took Jerusalem in August 1098.

<sup>336</sup> Iftikhar ad-Daula (also Iftikhar ad-Dawla, meaning "pride of the nation") was the Fatimid governor of Jerusalem during the siege of 1099. On 15 July he surrendered Jerusalem to Raymond of Saint-Gilles in the Tower of David and was escorted out of the city with his bodyguard.

<sup>337</sup> August 1099 C.E.

<sup>338</sup> The Mihrāh Dawūd, called the Tower of David in the European sources, is the citadel at Jerusalem. It is not to be confused with a small sanctuary of the same name in the Temple precinct.

<sup>339</sup> Al-Aqsa Mosque (The Farthest Mosque) Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa, commonly refers to the southern congregational mosque located in Jerusalem, though according to Islamic law the entire complex known today as Al-Haram al-Qudsi al-Sharif (The Noble Sanctuary) to Muslims, including the Dome of the Rock, is considered part of the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Rock<sup>340</sup> of more than forty silver candelabra, each of them weighing 3,600 drams, and a great silver lamp weighing forty four Syrian pounds, as well as a hundred and fifty smaller silver candelabra and more than twenty gold ones, and a great deal more booty. Refugees from Syria reached Baghdad in Ramadan, among them the qadi Abu Sa'd al Hārawi. They told the Caliph's ministers a story that wrung their hearts and brought tears to their eyes. On Friday they went to the Cathedral Mosque and begged for help, weeping so that their hearers wept with them as they described the sufferings of the Muslims in that Holy City: the men killed, the women and children taken prisoner, the homes pillaged. Because of the terrible hardships they had suffered, they were allowed to break the fast.

It was the discord between the Muslim princes, as we shall describe, that enabled the Franks to overrun the country. Abu I-Muzaffar al-Abiwardi<sup>341</sup> composed several poems on this subject, in one of which he says:

We have mingled blood with flowing tears, and there is no room left in us for pity(?)  
To shed tears is a man's worst weapon when the swords stir up the embers of war.  
Sons of Islam, behind you are battles in which heads rolled at your feet.  
Dare you slumber in the blessed shade of safety, where life is as soft as an orchard flower?  
How can the eye sleep between the lids at a time of disasters that would waken any  
    sleeper?  
While your Syrian brothers can only sleep on the backs of their chargers, or in vultures'  
    bellies!  
Must the foreigners feed on our ignominy, while you trail behind you the train of a pleasant  
    life, like men whose world is at peace?  
When blood has been spilt, when sweet girls must for shame hide their lovely faces in their  
    hands!  
When the white swords' points are red with blood, and the iron of the brown lances is  
    stained with gore!  
At the sound of sword hammering on lance young children's hair turns white.  
This is war, and the man who shuns the whirlpool to save his life shall grind his teeth in  
    penitence.  
This is war, and the infidel's sword is naked in his hand, ready to be sheathed again in  
    men's necks and skulls.  
This is war, and he who lies in the tomb at Medina seems to raise his voice and cry:

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<sup>340</sup> The rock from which, the Muslims believe, Muhammad ascended into heaven. Over it was built the so-called Mosque of Umar, the chief Islamic monument in Jerusalem. It was from this mosque that the conquerors took their booty. Nearby, but separate from it, is the 'Farthest Mosque' (al-Masjid al-Aqsa), where according to Ibn al-Athir the armies of the Cross showed even greater barbarity. The two sanctuaries are often confused in both Arabic and European sources.

<sup>341</sup> An Arab poet of the eleventh and twelfth centuries C.E., from what is modern-day Iraq.

"O sons of Hashim!"<sup>342</sup>

I see my people slow to raise the lance against the enemy: I see the Faith resting on feeble pillars.

For fear of death the Muslims are evading the fire of battle, refusing to believe that death will surely strike them."

Must the Arab champions then suffer with resignation, while the gallant Persians shut their eyes to their dishonor?

**Document Five: Bahas al-Din Ibn Shaddad on "Saladin: The Lion of Islam"**

*Saladin (1137-1193 C.E.) proved to be one of the greatest Islamic warriors of all time. His family was of Kurdish descent and had served the Seljuk sultans and local Islamic rulers. Saladin was a young man when he followed his uncle in the capturing of Shi'ite-ruled Egypt in 1169. He was able eventually to rule Egypt and most of Syria, where his rule was seen as benefitting the local populations.*

*Troubles with Christian crusader raids on Muslim caravans by Reynald de Chatillon finally led Saladin to attack and to defeat the Christians in 1187. He quickly captured the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, which caused the formation of the Third Crusade (1189-1192 C.E.) Although King Richard I (the Lionhearted) of England and King Philip II Augustus of France were able to retake the port of Acre and a strip of land down the seacoast, they were never able to retake Jerusalem.*

*Just after signing a truce with King Richard, whereby Christian pilgrims were permitted free access to all Christian sites, Saladin died. His lands were divided among his sons and his brother.*

*The following selection on the Battle of Hattin, where the Christians were defeated, is by Baha al-Din Ibn Shaddad, who was a judge in Saladin's army and his biographer. It depicts Saladin's battle tactics and his subsequent treatment of the defeated crusaders.*

*Account of the Battle of Hattin, a blessing for the Muslims*

It took place on Saturday, 24 Rabi II 583.<sup>343</sup> The sultan perceived that his gratitude for God's favor towards him, evidenced by his strong grasp on sovereignty, his God-given control over the lands and the people's willing obedience, could only be demonstrated by his endeavoring to exert himself to the utmost and to strive to fulfill the precept of Jihad. He sent to summon all his forces, which gathered on the date given at 'Ashtara.<sup>344</sup> He reviewed them and made his dispositions, then set forth into the God forsaken enemy's lands at midday on Friday, 17 Rabi II.<sup>345</sup> He always sought out

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<sup>342</sup> The Prophet Muhammed, who from the tomb raises his voice to rebuke his descendants (the sons of Hashim), that is, untrustworthy Caliphs whose opposition to the Crusades was only half-hearted.

<sup>343</sup> July 4, 1187 C.E.

<sup>344</sup> A locale south of Damascus, in modern-day Syria.

<sup>345</sup> June 26, 1187.

Fridays for his battles, especially the times of Friday prayer, to gain the blessing of the preachers' prayers on the pulpits, for they were perhaps more likely to be answered.

As he marched out at that time in battle array, he heard that the enemy, when they learnt that he had concentrated his armies, gathered in full on the plain of Safftiriyya in the territory of Acre<sup>346</sup> and intended to come to battle. The same clay, the sultan camped at Lake Tiberias<sup>347</sup> near a village called Sannabra. He then moved and camped west of Tiberias on the top of the mountain, in battle formation and expecting that the Franks, when they heard that, would come against him. However, they did not move from their encampment. He took up this position on Wednesday, 21 Rabi II<sup>348</sup>, and having seen that they were not moving, he descended upon Tiberias with a light force, leaving the main divisions in position facing the direction in which the enemy were. He attacked Tiberias and took it within one hour after a direct assault. Eager hands then turned to plundering, taking captives, burning and killing. The citadel alone held out.

Learning what had happened to Tiberias, the enemy could not bear not to give into their impulsive zeal, but set out at once and marched to defend Tiberias. The Muslim scouts told the emirs that the Franks were on the move, and they sent people to inform the sultan. He left men in Tiberias to watch the citadel and then he and his force joined the main army. The two armies encountered one another on the slopes of the mountain of Tiberias, to the west of the town, late on Thursday 22, Rabi II.<sup>349</sup>

Nightfall separated the two sides and both spent the night at battle stations, bristling with weapons, until the morning of Friday, 23rd.<sup>350</sup> Both armies mounted and clashed together. The vanguard was in operation, then the main divisions moved forward and battle was joined and became very intense. This was around a village called Lubiya. They were closely beset as in a noose, while still marching on as though being driven to a death that they could see before them, convinced of their doom and destruction and themselves aware that the following day they would be visiting their graves.

The conflict continued at close quarters, each horseman clashing with his opponent, until victory [for the Muslims] and for the infidels the onset of disaster was imminent, but night and its darkness intervened. That day there occurred mighty deeds and momentous doings, such as have not been related of past generations. Each party spent the night in arms, expecting his adversary at every moment, though too weak through tiredness to stand up and unable through fatigue to crawl, let alone run.

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<sup>346</sup> Acre (or Akko) is a city in the Western Galilee district of modern-day northern Israel, near Haifa.

<sup>347</sup> The Sea of Galilee.

<sup>348</sup> July 1, 1187.

<sup>349</sup> July 2, 1187.

<sup>350</sup> July 3, 1187.

Eventually, there came the Saturday morning, on which the blessing was vouchsafed. Both sides sought their positions and each realized that whichever was broken would be driven off and eliminated. The Muslims were well aware that behind them was the Jordan and before them enemy territory and that there was nothing to save them but God Almighty.

God had already ordained and prepared the believers' victory, and he duly brought it about according to what he had predestined. The Muslim divisions charged on the wings and in the centre. They let out a shout as one man, at which God cast terror into the hearts of the unbelievers. "It was right for us to give aid to the believers."<sup>351</sup>

The Count [Raymond] was a clever and shrewd leader of theirs. He saw that the signs of defeat were already upon his co-religionists and no notion of aiding his fellows stopped him thinking of himself, so he fled at the beginning of the engagement before it grew fierce and made his way towards Tyre<sup>352</sup>, pursued by a group of Muslims. He alone was saved, but Islam became safe from his wiles.

The forces of Islam surrounded the forces of unbelief and impiety on all sides, loosed volleys of arrows at them and engaged them hand to hand. One group fled and was pursued by our Muslim heroes. Not one of them survived. Another group took refuge on a hill called the Hill of Hattin, the latter being a village near which is the tomb of Shu'ayb (on him and on the rest of the prophets be blessings and peace). The Muslims pressed hard upon them on that hill and lit fires around them. Their thirst was killing and their situation became very difficult, so that they began to give themselves up as prisoners for fear of being slain. Their commanders were taken captive but the rest were either killed or taken prisoner, and among those who lived were their leader; King Guy,<sup>353</sup> Prince Reynald,<sup>354</sup> the brother of the king, the prince who was lord of Shawbak, the son of Humfrey, the son of the Lady of Tiberias, the Master of the Templars<sup>355</sup>, the lord of Jubayl and the Master of the Hospitallers<sup>356</sup>. The rest of the commanders were killed,

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<sup>351</sup> *Qur'an*, xxx. 47.

<sup>352</sup> A city, dating back to ancient Phoenicia, located in the south of modern-day Lebanon.

<sup>353</sup> Guy of Lusignan [also Guy of Jerusalem or Guy of Cyprus] (1159–1194 C.E.) was a French Knight who, through marriage, became King-Consort of Jerusalem, and led the kingdom to disaster at the Battle of Hattin in 1187.

<sup>354</sup> Reynald of Châtillon [also Reynaud, Renaud, Raynald, Reynold, Renald or Reginald of Chastillon] (1125 – 1187 C.E.) was a knight who served in the Second Crusade and remained in the Holy Land after its defeat. He ruled as Prince of Antioch from 1153 to 1160 and through his second marriage became Lord of Oultrejordain.

<sup>355</sup> The Knights Templar or the Order of the Temple – the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon – were among the most famous of the Western Christian military orders. The organization existed for approximately two centuries in the Middle Ages. It was founded in the aftermath of the First Crusade of 1096 C.E., to ensure the safety of the many Europeans who made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem after its conquest. Templar knights in their distinctive white mantles with red cross were among the best fighting units of the Crusades. The Templars' success was tied closely to the Crusades; when the Crusaders suffered defeat and lost the Holy Land, support for the Order faded.

<sup>356</sup> The Knights Hospitaller (also known as the Order of St. John, Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta, Knights of Malta, Knights of Rhodes, and Chevaliers of Malta) is a Christian organization that began as an Amalfitan hospital founded in Jerusalem in 1080 to provide care for poor and sick pilgrims to the Holy Land. After the Christian conquest of Jerusalem in 1099 during the First Crusade it became a religious/military order

and the lowly soldiers were divided up, either to be slain or made captive. Everyone not killed was made prisoner. Some nobles amongst them willingly surrendered in fear for their lives. Someone I trust told me that in the Hawran he met a single person holding a tent-rope with which all by himself he was pulling along thirty odd prisoners because of the desperate defeat that had befallen them.

As for their leaders that survived, we shall recount their fate. The count who fled arrived at Tripoli and was taken ill with pleurisy, and thus God brought about his death. As for the officers of the Hospitallers and the Templars, the sultan chose to put them to death and killed them all without exception. The sultan had vowed to kill Prince Reynald if he got him in his power. This was because a caravan from Egypt had passed through his land at Shawbak during the state of truce. They halted there under safe conduct, but he treacherously killed them. The sultan heard of this and religion and his zeal encouraged him to swear that, if he seized his person, he would kill him. After God had bestowed the great victory on him, the sultan sat in the entrance lobby of his tent, for it had not been fully erected, while people were offering him prisoners and any commanders they had found. The [main] tent was then erected and he sat there in great delight, expressing his gratitude for the favor that God had shown him. Then he summoned King Guy, his brother and Prince Reynald. He handed the king a drink of iced julep, from which he drank, being dreadfully thirsty, and he then passed some of it to Prince Reynald. The sultan said to the interpreter, "Tell the King, 'You are the one giving him a drink. I have not given him any drink.'" According to the fine custom of the Arabs and their noble ways, if a prisoner took food or a drink of water from whoever had captured him, his life was safe. His intention was to follow these noble ways.

He ordered them to proceed to a place assigned for their lodging. They did so and ate something. Then the sultan summoned them again, now having with him none but a few servants. He gave the king a seat in the vestibule and, having summoned Prince Reynald, confronted him as he had said. He said to him, "Here I am, having asked for victory through Muhammad, and God has given me victory over you." He offered him Islam but he refused. The sultan then drew his scimitar<sup>357</sup> and struck him, severing his arm at his shoulder. Those present finished him off and God speedily sent his soul to Hell-fire. His body was taken and thrown down at the door of the tent. The king, when he saw him brought out in this manner, was convinced that he would be next. The sultan called him in and reassured him, saying, "It has not been customary for princes to kill princes, but this man transgressed his limits, so he has suffered what he suffered." That night was spent by our people in the most complete joy and perfect delight, raising their voices in praise of God and gratitude towards him, with cries of "God is great."

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under its own charter, and was charged with the care and defense of the Holy Land. Following the loss of the Holy Land by Christian forces, the Order operated from Rhodes, over which it was sovereign, and later from Malta where it administered a vassal state under the Spanish viceroy of Sicily.

<sup>357</sup> A sword with a curved blade design commonly used by Arab and Turk armies during the mediæval period.

## **HW # 54: Encounters with the "Other": Nomads and Sedentary Societies**

Read the below.

Answer the following questions.

1. What characteristics of nomadic life stand out to all these authors – that is, what do they agree on about the nomads? What differences appear in the different accounts? Do the differences result from the different perspectives of the different authors, from differences among nomadic peoples, or both? Is there evidence for change over time among the nomads (are the Mongols significantly different from the Xiongnu, for example)?
2. What do the different authors' sources of knowledge about the nomads tell us about the various ways in which the nomadic and sedentary worlds came into contact with and related to each other? How was each world influenced and perhaps transformed by their relationships with the other? Was influence more significant in one direction or the other? Why? What do these readings tell you about the hopes, fears, and assumptions about the world common in sedentary societies? How do their accounts of nomadic life seem distorted or unreal because of their prior assumptions?
3. What characteristics of the Xiongnu way of life stand out to Chinese observers? Why are these characteristics significant? How did the Xiongnu view the Chinese way of life? What were the attractions of Chinese goods? What were the disadvantages and dangers of closer contact with China? What sources of information did the Chinese have about the Xiongnu? How accurate do you think the reports in these histories are? Was there an incentive to accuracy on the Chinese side? In other words, what was the purpose of these histories, and what do they tell us about the Chinese world view of the time?
4. What characteristics of the Huns stand out most to Ammianus? What is significant about these characteristics? What sort of tone does he use to describe these characteristics? Is there anything he admires about the Huns? Ammianus often describes the Huns in terms of negatives: "they do not have X; they do not do Y." What does this sort of description tell you about Ammianus himself and the way an educated Roman saw the world? Given this style of negative description, what do you think Ammianus might have missed in describing the Huns? That is, what might be the inaccuracies of omission rather than commission in this account?
5. What characteristics of the Mongols stand out for Ibn al-Athir? What tone does he take in describing their attacks? What factors, for the author, account for Mongol success in overrunning the Islamic world? What is the moral of the story? Or put another way, what is the purpose of this history? How does it compare in this respect with the Chinese document? What are the author's sources? How reliable do you think his account is? Does he have the same stake in reliability that the other sources do?

## **INTRODUCTION**

*In the ancient and classical world, the inhabitants of many traditional civilizations did face invasions from another world, strange and terrifying invasions. Periodically, most of*