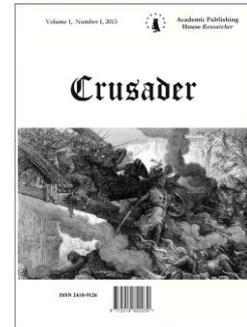


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Published in the Slovak Republic
 Crusader
 Has been issued since 2015.
 E-ISSN: 2413-7502
 Vol. 7, Is. 1, pp. 12-31, 2019

DOI: 10.13187/crus.2019.7.12
www.ejournal29.com



The Islamic Jihad during the Crusades

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Abstract

This paper examines the key characteristics of the process of emergence and development of the jihadist movement, which led to the ousting of the Crusaders from the Eastern Mediterranean. The author has identified four major stages in the development of the jihadist movement, as well as several sub-stages within some of them. The paper examines the key reasons behind the emergence of the jihadist movement, its key characteristics, and the role of several prominent historical figures in the cultivation of jihad, including major Middle Eastern figures such as Imad al-Din Zengi, Nur ad-Din, and Salah ad-Din. The author describes the key characteristics of the final stage of the jihad, including the role played in the process by the Mamluks (e.g., Baibars). The researcher discusses some of the key ideological, political, and other components of the Crusades-era jihadist movement. Based on a number of sources, the paper reveals that it is not straightaway that jihad became the banner of struggle against the European invaders. In fact, it took a lot of time before the leaders of the Muslim world could, using the available ideological clichés to launch a liberation struggle, work out a model of ideal jihadist behavior that would be based on the postulates of Islam and overcome the disunity between each other and political pragmatism. Yet, the author argues, based, inter alia, on conclusions drawn by earlier research, that one should not idealize particular leaders of jihadism, as these men were not indifferent to the pursuit of various local, contextual, or dynastic interests, which suggests there being more to the Muslim rulers' actions than just ideology. Throughout history, jihad has been an effective medium for not just achieving one's geopolitical objectives but also "playing the two off against each other" (e.g., Muslim activists against malcontents, never a small group in the Islamic East).

Lastly, while being, at its core, a fair movement aimed at liberating the Eastern Mediterranean from the Crusader invaders, jihad incidentally facilitated the cultivation of enmity against regular, peaceful Christians who had nothing to do with the pursuit of expansionist objectives.

Keywords: Crusades, Crusaders, military integrative expansion, jihad, Assassins, Batinites, Dar al-Islam, Dar al-Harb, Dar al-Sulh, Dar al-Ahd, atabeg, ash-shahid, askar, al-mujahid, isfahsalar, fada'il, Dar al-Hadith, al-Malik al-Adil, qibla, aqidah, Mamluks, Salafiya, Ayyubids

Jihad is God's solid link, and the jihad warriors occupy
 a high position near Him in the seventh Heaven
*Sirat al-Mujahidin**
 He conducts a double jihad – against the enemy
 and against his own soul
Abu Shama

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* An Arabic popular epic ('The Way of the Jihad Fighters')

1. Introduction

This paper will explore the emergence and development of the jihadist movement, which led to the ousting of the Crusaders from the Eastern Mediterranean. It will examine the period when the jihadist movement emerged, the subsequent stages in its development, the key characteristics of its development, the role played in the process by major Middle Eastern figures such as Imad al-Din Zengi, Nur ad-Din, Salah ad-Din, Baibars, and others, and the key ideological, political, and other components underpinning the jihadist movement in its stand against the invading Crusaders.

Of special interest are the mechanics of the development of the jihadist movement in the Eastern Mediterranean (Egypt, specifically) during the Crusades, in conjunction with the armed invasion (viewed by the paper's author and some other like-minded scholars as a military integrative expansion) (*Osnovnye etapy vseмирnoj istorii*, 2009: 141) into it by representatives of Western civilization for the purpose of conquering its territories under the banner of religion.

What makes the topic relevant is the recent events in the Middle East (specifically, Syria and Libya), Western Europe (the recent surge in extremism), and the North Caucasus (the events that took place between 1990 and 2000 in Chechnya and Dagestan) (*Dobaev, Nemchina, 2005; Sushchij, 2010; Matishov i dr., 2011*). Quite commonly, the image of the jihad fighter is stereotypically associated with the actions of reckless bigots, who are prepared to wreak death, killing women and children, ready to do anything to harm the "infidels". The aim of this work is to reveal the actual truth about the activity of Crusades-era jihadists, who do not appear to fit automatically within the above description. On the contrary, it would be wrong to view the jihadists merely as "knights without fear and beyond reproach". This work will attempt to demonstrate why the real situation was far more complicated and nuanced than that.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. The issue of the way the Muslim world reacted to the coming of the Crusaders remains underresearched in the domestic literature. In the pre-revolutionary literature, of particular interest is research by A.I. Agronomov (*Agronomov, 2002*), who, in exploring Crusades-era jihadist codes, draws quite realistic conclusions about the image of the mujahidin. Over the last decade, apparently just one scholar – A.A. Domanin – has addressed the issue of jihad and its role in building resistance to the European conquerors (*Domanin, 2010: 251-254, 259-265, 396*). The researcher has offered the remarkable suggestion that the idea of jihad as taught by Muhammad is quite complex and multi-layered (*Domanin, 2010: 251*). In 2010, the author of the present work conducted a research study exploring the early stages of the Islamic jihad during the Crusades (*Dudarev, 2010: 10-16*). A lot more attention to jihad has been devoted in the foreign literature. The most substantial work here is the monumental monograph by C. Hillenbrand (*Hillenbrand, 2008*), which has contributed immensely to the comprehensive study of the jihad phenomenon. Another noteworthy contemporary researcher in this area is Lebanese-born French scholar Amin Maalouf (*Maaluf, 2006*), who has explored the activity of prominent jihadist figures such as Zengi, Nur ad-Din, Salah ad-Din, and others.

2.2. Concurrently, the author's analysis of the jihadist movement will rely upon a set of Middle-Eastern and Muslim sources (Sadr ad-Din al-Husaini, Usama ibn Munqidh, Ibn al-Athir, Ibn al-Qalanisi, Ibn al-Adim, and others) (*Ahbar ad-daulat as-seldzhukijjina, 1980; Ibn Munkyz; Iz «Polnogo svoda vseobshchej istorii»..., 1977*). A highly valuable source on the early history of the jihad is the Chronicle of Ibn al-Qalanisi (d. 1160), a member of the nobility of the city of Damascus, published by H.A.R. Gibb (*Gibb, 2009*). The work provides an interesting insight into the very beginning of the jihadist movement. Another source that is of great interest is the work by Salah ad-Din's secretary, Baha ad-Din (Ibn Shaddad). It reveals that what contemporaries found particularly impressive about this historical figure was his staunch and consistent advocacy for the ideas of jihad, which made it possible to characterize him as virtually an ideal ruler (*Baha-ad-Din, 2009*). Without question, a substantial source on the subject is the Holy Quran (*Koran, 1986*), as well as the Sunnah of the Prophet of Islam.

The key methods employed in this work are the source analysis method, the historical-genetical method, and the historical-comparative method.

3. Discussion and results

Definition of jihad in Islam and its place in the relationship between the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds (an overview of the issue's history)

The view generally held in the West is that “Islam is the most martial of the world's great religions” (Хилленбранд, 2008: 101).

Let us see if that is the case. During the period of the Meccan revelations, jihad was viewed more as the way to save your soul than the way to proselytize people into Islam, i.e. the greater jihad – al-jihad al-akbar. What is more, during that period there was no consensus regarding the mandatoriness of taking part in jihad for members of the Muslim community. Furthermore, the Medina suras of the Quran make fighting for the faith a sacred duty for every Muslim, treating it as the fulfillment of a divine mission buttressed by faith in Allah (the lesser, or military, jihad – al-jihad al-asghar; also referred to as ‘ghazavat’). Of the greatest interest in this respect is the ninth chapter (surah) of the Quran, ‘The Repentance’ (‘At-Tawbah’). It provides clear instructions on how to participate in jihad (Aiiaty 14, 36, 88-89). Muslims who do not wish to take part in the struggle for the faith are threatened by the Quran and Sunnah with the same severe punishments as unbelievers and apostates. Those dodging the battle were threatened in the Holy Book with being turned into a non-Muslim: “Unless you mobilize, He will punish you most painfully, and will replace you with another people” (Sunna). The subject of jihad is taken up in the hadiths: “An undertaking (journey) in the forenoon or in the afternoon for Allah's cause is better than the whole world and whatever is in it”; “Standing for an hour in the ranks of battle is better than standing in prayer for sixty years”. In the following hadith, jihad participants are promised a place in Paradise: “The gates of Paradise are under the shadows of the swords”. This hadith is echoed by Hassan ibn as-Sabbah, the odious founder of the Order of Assassins*: “Paradise lies in the shade of the swords”. In this context, the question that is essential to the subject of the present work is as follows: Is there a compulsory link between the greater jihad and the lesser jihad? According to Syrian jurist of the late 11th-early 12th centuries al-Sulami, whose views will be essential in exploring the subject further on in this work, the greater jihad must precede the lesser jihad in order to help it to succeed. Let us see how this tandem worked out during the jihad against the Crusaders.

During the process of development of the concept of jihad, the typology of this phenomenon in terms of the object of armed attack began to include the following six varieties: (1) jihad against the enemies of Islam (i.e., those posing a threat to the existence of the Islamic Ummah, those pursuing Muslims, and pagans); (2) jihad against those encroaching upon the boundaries of Dar al-Islam (‘abode of Islam’); (3) jihad against apostates (hypocrites, the munafiqun); (4) jihad against transgression (dissension, sedition) (baghi); (5) jihad against brigands; (6) jihad against monotheistic non-Muslims refusing to pay the jizya tax[†]. In the Western literature, jihad is commonly viewed as a collective, rather than individual, duty incumbent on every Muslim. In the areas bordering Dar al-Harb (‘abode of war’), populated by nonbelievers, jihad is mandatory for every single Muslim. This state of affairs will persist until the whole world embraces or submits to Islam. Eventually, all people will have to convert to Islam[‡].

* The Western name for a sect of Ismaili Shia Muslims, known as the Nizaris (also known in the East as the Batinites), who allegedly used hashish to motivate their disciples to commit terrorist acts. Hence, the use of the following terms to refer to them – ‘hashishiyya’, ‘hashishin’, and ‘assassins’. Contemporary martial science experts have expressed serious doubt that drugs could be used for such a purpose, as the use of such substances can lead to a loss in the person’s concentration.

[†] Monotheistic non-Muslims are divided into the ‘ahl al-kitab’ (‘people of the Book’), ‘ahl al-dhimma’ (‘people of the Covenant’), and ‘ahl al- tathlith’ (‘people of the Trinity’). They can live under the protection of Muslims in Dar al-Islam (‘abode of Islam’) provided they pay the jizya tax.

[‡] Let us make a brief excursion into modernity. Today, there is no consensus on a single classic doctrine of jihad, just like there is no consensus on a single Islamic way and there is no orthodoxy in Islam. In traditional, moderate, Islam, jihad is currently construed as a struggle for the faith, which can take on the following key forms: (1) jihad of the heart, i.e. combating one’s own ill dispositions; (2) jihad by the tongue, i.e. through verbal or written debate or persuasion (striving to countenance what is permitted and condemn what is prohibited in Islam); (3) jihad by the hand, i.e. choosing to do what is right and to combat injustice and what is wrong in Islamic terms with action; (4) jihad by the sword (or ghazavat), i.e. striving in the path of God through the use of arms, with the fallen rewarded with eternal bliss in Paradise. With that said, the greater jihad, or the inner jihad, is essentially construed as a personal struggle against sin, not a struggle against other

In the author's view, the above precepts are best suited for a period of intense confrontation between Islam and the non-Islamic world (e.g., the Arab expansion during the Great Caliphate era). In fact, they have been departed from more than once. After the Caliphate disintegrated, jihadism was no longer so rough as before. Instead of drawing a clear line between the "abode of Islam" and the "abode of war", the Islamic jurists speak of a region that is intermediate to the two, the so-called 'abode of treaty' (Dar al-Sulh), or 'abode of truce' (Dar al-Ahd). Non-Muslim states could retain their independence within it, but that was possible only provided that they recognized the priority of Islam and paid tribute to the Muslims. Whether or not that was materialized at the time is hard to tell, but it is known for a fact that on the eve of the Crusaders' invasion the sultans, emirs, and other rulers in the Middle East were not particularly enthusiastic about waging jihad against the infidels. They were absorbed in wars against each other. Rather, the primary initiators in this respect were Muslim "activists", who lived on the periphery of the Islamic world and among whom a prominent place was held by the inhabitants of Central Asia who had been recently converted to Islam. These individuals were becoming ghazis (fighters for the faith) (Mishin, 1999: 18)* and were going to regions where a war was being fought, especially against the Christians (e.g., against Byzantium). In the Eastern Mediterranean, on the eve of the Crusaders' conquests the spirit of jihad weakened, but in the mid-10th century the region witnessed the arrival of mujahidin, volunteer fighters of jihad, from other Islamic areas (e.g., Khorasan). Essentially, the majority, if not all, of the above-mentioned types of jihad fit the situation that unfolded in the Eastern Mediterranean as a result of the coming of the Crusaders (because of the possibility to regard as munafiqun those who agreed to an alliance with the unbelievers, who could be subsumed both under oppressors and under brigands (N'yubi, 2007: 48)†, there were all necessary grounds for that). Thus, there were several preconditions for the coming to the foreground of the military aspect of jihad after the start of the Crusader conquests. The essential question is how the doctrine of jihad worked out in that complicated situation in the land of Syria and Palestine in a climate of facing the warriors of Christ.

The initial stage of the Crusader conquests and the characteristics of the early jihad

The arrival of the Crusaders did not come as a complete surprise to the Muslims. According to Ibn al-Athir, the rulers of Fatimid Egypt, fearing conquests by the Seljuqs, "sent a messenger over to the Franks, calling on them to attack Syria, in order to have them capture it and establish themselves between Egypt and the rest of the Muslims" (Iz «Polnogo svoda vseobshchej istorii»..., 1977: 63). That is to say, the strife between the Middle East's major Muslim actors was urging the Alids to create a buffer between their own dominions and the lands of the Seljuqs. This, apparently, had little to do with the faith, with it all rather being about the self-serving political interests of the Eastern elites. The decline in the spirit of jihad witnessed in the second half of the 10th century in the Arab world, including in Syria, has been discussed, with Arab authors such as Ibn Hawqal and al-Muqaddasi cited, by C. Hillenbrand, who quotes the following words from the latter:

people. It is harder, but is essential for self-education and the achievement of the highest degree of religious consciousness. By contrast, the lesser jihad ("jihad of the sword") is construed as the defensive war against the oppression of Muslims. As suggested by Turkish traditionalist Harun Yahya, the use of the term 'jihad' in reference to any forms of violence, including against completely innocent people, i.e. to describe terror, is highly unfair and greatly distorts the truth. Islamic modernists construe jihad as either a defensive war exclusively or a battle for economic prosperity or a struggle for spiritual renewal ("intellectual jihad").

A different view has been expressed by Islamic fundamentalists. They tend to construe jihad as armed struggle and consider it the sixth pillar of Islam. They strive to engage in this struggle Muslims from all over the world. Their message is: "Based on the consensus (ijma) of the Ummah's scholars, jihad must be waged as a defensive war, being a personal duty of every Muslim, until all Islamic lands are recaptured from the infidels. Those claiming that jihad is a fard al-ayn [a duty incumbent on every single Muslim] only for those living in enemy-captured areas and their nearest neighbors are going against the ijma, i.e. are lying in the religion of Allah, no matter how famous they are" (Zelimhan Hunafa Merdzho, 2009).

* The term 'ghazis' was also used to refer to individuals who captured slaves through their raids on areas north of Bulgar and then sold them in the Middle East (Mishin, 1999: 19).

† This included the Muslim Assassins (Batinites), although some authors have suggested that the Ismailis responded with terror to persecution by the Seljuq sultans (N'yubi, 2007: 48). However, based on testimonials from both the Western and Eastern sources available to the author, the above judgment is lopsided and biased.

“The inhabitants [of Syria] have no enthusiasm for jihad and no energy in the struggle against the enemy” (Hillenbrand, 2008: 113).

Was, then, jihad an “empty shell” even when the enemy came onto the lands inhabited by Muslims, which had long been home to them? Ibn al-Athir, in his account of the battles at Antioch, relates about a battle at its walls during the breaking of the blockade of the city by Kerbogha: “Some of the Muslim warriors for the faith who fought there were observing the law and aspiring to a martyr’s death” (Iz «Polnogo svoda vseobshchej istorii»..., 1977: 121). As evident, by any means not all Muslim commanders were trying to earn the glory of shahids (martyrs) (Kerbogha fled the battlefield along with Soqman ibn Ortoq and Janah al Dawla), and nor were all regular warriors.

During the first years following the fall of Jerusalem, the above-mentioned al-Sulami preached his ideas from the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, calling on the Muslims to unite against the enemy, i.e. the Crusaders. He asserted that the Muslims’ loss was divine punishment for neglecting their religious duties – most importantly, *reneging on jihad* (!). Still, to what degree were the Syrian emirs and atabegs indifferent with regard to the slogans of holy war? The Chronicle of Ibn al-Qalanisi, in covering events from 490 AH (i.e., 1096-1097 AD), the year in which there began to come in the first tidings that “the armies of the Franks had appeared from the direction of the sea of Constantinople with forces not to be reckoned for multitude” (Gibb, 2009: 32), to 539 AH (i.e., 1144-1145 AD), when Imad al-Din (Zengi) captured Edessa (ar-Ruha), i.e. a period of nearly 50 years, uses the term “holy war” as many as 28 times in the sense of the Muslim leaders intending to wage it and undertaking particular military action. Is this not testimony that the Islamic world was not indifferent to the subject of jihad?! Yet, it is worth taking a closer look at the military actions undertaken by the Muslims in the early decades of the Crusader conquest. As indicated by the account of Ibn al-Qalanisi, within the first two decades of the invasion, the Europeans had enjoyed the upper hand, winning many of their battles against the Muslims – but things were not always so smooth. Suffice it to recall the failed siege of Tyre in 503 AH (1109–1110 AD). On the other hand, the attempts of Seljuq Sultan Ghiyath al-Dunya wal-Din Muhammad (Khorasan) to urge the governors of Baghdad and Mosul to galvanize jihad against the Franks (500 AH, 1106–1107 AD) only displeased them. That is when Atabeg of Damascus Zahir al-Din decided to take charge.

To take advantage of Sultan Ghiyath’s arrival in Baghdad, he resolved to pay a personal visit to the caliph and the sultan, wishing to tell them about the Muslims’ woes. The Eastern protocol was observed by the atabeg in full. To make sure his account of the infidels’ outrages and cunning designs were convincing, Zahir al-Din brought over, in addition to being accompanied by a retinue and personal officers, several Arab horses, Egyptian rarities*, jewelry, and other gifts, all of which “corresponded with the high level of the upcoming meeting”. However, on his way to it, the atabeg of Damascus was falsely apprised of intrigues allegedly being plotted against him by Sultan Ghiyath in company with Zahir al-Din’s rivals in Syria, which made him hastily head back home. His loyal officers delivered the gifts over to the Baghdad court, from where he, in turn, would later receive notes of appreciation and letters expressive of amicable intentions. Yet, not a word was said of jihad!

The rulers of Syria repeatedly made deals with the Crusaders, opting for making peace with them and paying them tribute over fighting them “to the bitter end”. For example, the governor of Ascalon, Shams al-Khilafa, who was “more desirous of trading than of fighting”, refused to submit to Fatimid vizier al-Afdal (1110) and entered into collusion with King Baldwin, lord of Jerusalem. This resulted in a revolt of townsmen and the renegade’s death. In effect, the inaction of Baghdad’s official authorities, *the only entity that could be behind the initiative of declaring and waging jihad*, led to violent protest activities on the part of the residents of Baghdad.

The first event of this kind took place on February 17, 1111, when a company of Sufis, merchants, and theologians paid a visit to the Sultan’s mosque and appealed for assistance. What ensued was a despicable act of blasphemy. The visitors drove the preacher from the minbar (pulpit) and broke it in pieces (!), clamoring and weeping for the misfortunes that had befallen the Muslims

* Al-Qalanisi has mentioned this “essentials kit” more than once in his writings. In the East, they have an eye for diplomacy. A shudder passes over the author of the present article, originally an archeologist, every time he hears the phrase ‘Egyptian rarities’. Could those curios have actually incorporated the various objects retrieved by grave robbers back then from the tombs of the Pharaohs and nobility in Ancient Egypt?

at the hands of the infidels*. The protest (and, for that matter, the actual riot) ceased only after the men were promised on behalf of the Sultan that appropriate measures would be taken to take revenge on the Franks for what they had done. Of interest is who headed this group of “radicals”. It was a Hashemite sharif, i.e. a person from the same, Banu Hashim, clan as Prophet Muhammad – and, on top of that, the latter’s descendant! But this was not all. Shortly afterwards, the princess, the Sultan’s daughter wife of the Caliph, arrived at Baghdad – in such magnificence and with such quantities of utensils, attendants, guards, slave-girls, and varieties of gorgeous raiment as exceeds all reckoning. In this context, the shrewd and diplomatic al-Qalanisi communicates the following cagily: “The tranquility of the city and joy at her coming were marred and disturbed”. So, why was that? One could only guess what it was all about. But, knowing the traditions of the Arab world and the Arabs’ penchant for expressing their indignation at something by throwing a shoe at the culprit, it becomes clear that the city’s rabble pelted the chic cortege of the princess with their dirty, tattered shoes. The caliph, al-Mustazhir, was indignant at what had happened, and determined to find and punish the instigators, but the wise Ghiyath (a lover of those Egyptian rarities) “excused the action of those people and directed the emirs and commanders to return to their governments and make preparations for setting out to the Holy War against the infidels, the enemies of God”. If only Baghdad’s residents knew what a farce they would be in for subsequent to that order!

Upon the call of Sultan b. Ali b. Munqidh, lord of Shaizar (ancient Caesarea), the fighters of Islam – the governor of Mosul, emir Ahmadil, emir Sukman, and others – set out to his aid. They encamped before the city of Tell Bashir and remained there awaiting the arrival of more units to join them. Soon afterwards, they attacked the fortress, which was governed by a Frank named Joscelin. When the Muslims made a breach in the fortress, Joscelin offered a deal to Ahmadil, with whom the greater number of the regular troops were, bribing him with money and gifts and promising to be with him. With the illness of Sukman al-Qutbi growing worse, Ahmadil was determined to receive the grant of Sukman’s lands from the Sultan. In spite of the disapproval of the other emirs, the armies of Islam withdrew from Tell Bashir to Aleppo, where, according to Ibn al-Qalanisi, “they encamped before the city, ravaged its territories, and created worse devastation than the Franks had done” (!). Afterwards, they proposed that the atabeg of Damascus join them. The following lines by the wise chronicler can hardly be read without sarcasm. Zahir al-Din was to “set out towards them [i.e. that gang of thugs, who had just made a deal with the Franks and plundered their own fellow believers] with the askar[†] to lend his aid in the Holy War and strengthen their resolution to protect these lands against the people of polytheism and false doctrine” (in actual fact, these “devotees of Islam” were no less a foe than Iblis himself![‡]). The atabeg of Damascus joined the “glorious” army of the “protectors of Muslims”, but he “did not find in them any true determination to wage the Holy War nor to protect the country”. He persuaded the emirs to advance into Syria, and they set out for it. They encamped at Maarat al-Numan, where, according to Qalanisi, “they acted as they had done formerly at Aleppo”. In other words, the valiant warriors of Allah did it again – they plundered other Muslims. What a “glorious” jihad, folks! Tired of all the mess and wary of a possible plot against him, the intelligent and far-sighted Zahir, who had a vast supply of horses, all kinds of rarities, and precious objects, presented the emirs with gifts, after which they all dispersed in different directions.

It is not by accident that the above colorful incidents were discussed at that much length – this was done to give the reader an idea of what jihad was “really” like in its early stages[§].

* As evidenced by the history of Islam, blasphemous acts of this kind were quite normal in cities like Baghdad back then, being a common way of expressing social protest. For instance, A. Mez, a renowned expert in Muslim civilization and history, provides the following description of the reaction of the townsfolk to an increase in the price of corn in 918, caused by the policies of the government: “This had put the people at the end of their patience, leading to a riot in Baghdad, which *took a usual course*: the Friday service disrupted, the pulpits broken in pieces, both bridges burnt down, the prisons unlocked, and the house of a police chief plundered” (Metc, 1996: 133).

[†] I.e., the army (Turkic)

[‡] I.e., Shaitan (Satan)

[§] That everything described above was not an accident is substantiated by events in the 10th century, when the same region was witnessing a very similar situation. During the Byzantine onslaught on the Caliphate, al-Mas’udi bemoaned the weakness of Islam, asserting that “when it is on its way to decline and the Romans come out victorious against the faithful, the paths of the pilgrims fall into disrepair, with the holy war dying

Note that, given the above-mentioned types of jihad, this concept also incorporated the struggle of the Syrians against the Assassins (Batinites)*, whom the locals hated fiercely. According to al-Qalanisi, from 507 to 522 AH (1114–1128 AD) they eliminated the Batinites' sect three times. In 522 AH (1128 AD), the murder of an influential Arab tribal chief resulted in a massacre leading to an almost complete extermination of the Batinites and their followers. Fearing for his life, a Batinite missionary ceded the fortress of Baniyas to the Franks (Gibb, 2009: 106, 135-139). During the massacre of the Batinites, they used the same cry as during the jihad against the Crusaders – 'Allahu Akbar!'.

By the end of the first decade of the 12th century, the Muslims began to gain victories over the Crusaders more often. In a sense, a turning point was reached with the major victory of the combined forces of Damascus and the Seljuq-Artukids over Roger, lord of Antioch, at Balat (Danith al-Baqal), between Antioch and Aleppo, in 513 AH/1119 AD. It came to be known as the Battle of the Field of Blood.

This was preceded by a campaign of agitation in the spirit of jihad, carried out by Najm al-Din Il Ghazi. On the actual battlefield, work on encouraging the Muslim fighters was conducted by Aleppo theologian al-Hashshab. Of interest is the fact that Islamic tradition immediately associated with this victorious year one other landmark event – the discovery in Jerusalem of the tombs of the prophets al-Khalil (Abraham) and his two sons (Isaac and Jacob), whose bodies were not decayed. This event by itself was to serve (in the context of the Balat victory), despite Jerusalem being in the hands of the Christians at the moment, as a sort of insurance of that the Holy City would be brought back under the aegis of the Muslims. Al-Qalanisi's chronicle mentions several phenomenal celestial events (comets), something to which some ascribed the Muslims' losses and the occurrence of other deadly events in the Islamic world (e.g., the Crusaders' capture of Antioch and dreadful crimes committed by the Assassins (Batinites))†.

Yet, the above triumph of the fighters of Islam was never followed up, so Antioch held out. This was the result of the Turkomans being satisfied with the plundering of the Frankish camp* and Il Ghazi celebrating the victory by drinking for an entire week. Which, of course, was still far from the expected behavior of a true mujahid!

A key turning point was the capture of Edessa (ar-Ruha) in 1144 by Atabeg of Mosul Imad al-Din (Zengi). This is when the concept 'jihad' began to be closely associated with his name in the Islamic world. For example, in an inscription at Aleppo dated 1142 he is called "tamer of the infidels and the polytheists, leader of those who fight the Holy War, helper of the armies, protector of the territory of the Muslims" (Hillenbrand, 2008: 122). This inscription and other similar inscriptions made on architectural monuments are testimony that the Islamic world was witnessing the start of the *monumental propaganda of jihad*, when the earlier military successes began to be associated with this specific idea and there also began to form an alliance between the Turkic rulers and military leaders and the Muslim clergy.

Yet, while Zengi is portrayed by Ibn al-Athir as a true fighter of jihad and an al-shahid, i.e. a martyr, he was still far from being the epitome of the fighter for the ideals of the faith. He was

down" (as quoted in Metc, 1996: 19). The success achieved by Byzantium was impressive. In the 960s, it took possession of Crete, Cyprus, Aleppo, Antioch, Tarsus, and other areas. Ultimately, the Byzantines swept down on Mesopotamia and sacked it. This led to a rebellion in Baghdad, with the majority of those who staged it being refugees from the captured areas. "They were obstructing prayer services at the mosques, smashing the minbars [!], and attacked the Caliph's palace in such a violent manner that one had to start shooting at them through the windows. An army of volunteers was formed, 60,000 strong, with the government asking the caliph for money for waging a holy war. After stubbornly refusing for a long time to provide the funding, the caliph did gather 400,000 dirhams, which had made him sell many of his rugs and items of clothing, as well as some teakwood and lead from his palace, with it rumored among the pilgrims that "the caliph had some of his wealth confiscated". However, Sultan Bahtiyar used the funds to his own advantage, with the army voluntarily splitting into Sunnis and Shias and the two groups attacking each other. One could forget about the Greeks now" (Metc, 1996: 20).

* According to G. Newby, 'assassins' is a term of abuse applied to a group of Ismaili Shia Muslims who allegedly consumed hashish (hence, the use of the terms 'hashishiyya' and 'hashishin' to refer to them: see above). They responded with terror to continual persecution by the Seljuq sultans, which involved the use of hashish "to induce a mystic state as a spur to assassination and terror" (N'yubi, 2007: 48).

† Certain Western chroniclers (e.g., Raymond d'Aguilers), too, were indifferent to such omens, which may indicate this was an element common to the worldviews of both Eastern and Western cultures at the time.

* The theme of criticism of the Turkic fighters is expressed in the following statement by a Medieval Eastern writer: "The Turk does not fight for religion nor for interpretation of Scripture nor for sovereignty nor for taxes nor for patriotism nor for jealousy—unless his women are concerned—nor for defense of the home nor for wealth, but only for plunder" (as quoted in Hillenbrand, 2008: 487).

a ruthless tyrant, a despot who literally inspired terror in his army and subjects alike, which is unequivocally attested by his nickname – “the Bloody One”. He was ruthless toward his fellow believers as well. For example, subsequent to his capture of the Muslim city of Baalbek, he violated the pledge he had given to its defenders and ordered all to be crucified (Gibb, 2009: 181). Once, Zengi’s men seized a secretary of the Caliph, who was on his way back to Baghdad after having accomplished the objects of his mission in Damascus, and plundered all his baggage. However, despite the fact that the man they had ill-treated was a high-ranking official, none of them was punished in any way. Himself Zengi would not think of rendering an apology for what his horsemen had done. He would pass away in 514 AH/1146 AD, after being murdered in a state of drunkenness* by an attendant of his, a Frankish slave named Yaranqash! With all that said, even those sources which dwell on his despotic qualities are prepared to forget them because of his capture of Edessa – all his misdeeds are pardoned by this one act.

The caliph of Baghdad himself rewarded Zengi’s achievement with a string of honorific titles (e.g., ‘The Adornment of Islam’), forgetting about the insult he had offered to him. The winner is always right! Yet, even Zengi knew that violence alone would get him only so far, and ordered his men to cease plunder in Edessa and instead engage in restoring the city, promising the townspeople “fairness and kind treatment”. It is worth noting that, while the era of Zengi did produce in the Middle East rulers who matched the ideal of a wise and worthy ruler, the scale they were capable of did not, yet, match the level of objectives set before the Islamic world†.

Nur ad-Din – the architect of the Muslim Reconquest

A whole new stage in the conduct of the jihad began with the advent of Zengi’s son, Nur ad-Din. He was fortunate, it must be said, as it is with the beginning of his rule that the Second Crusade started, which brought the knights to the walls of Damascus. That was quite a shortsighted act on the part of the Europeans, as it embittered the Muslims even more, showing the residents of Damascus that it was no longer appropriate to make compromises with the Franks (more so that in the city’s siege the Muslims lost two major local figures of Islam: the Malikite imam al-Findalawi and a Sufi ascetic named al-Halhuli). It is gaining possession of Damascus, as the region’s main strategic location, that Nur ad-Din saw as a central item on his jihadist agenda.

He kicked off his efforts to capture the city with attempts to win over the townsfolk and nearby rural residents. Nur ad-Din forbade the plunder of the farmers. That resulted in a surge of enthusiasm on the Syrians’ part so powerful that they would even ascribe the arrival of long-awaited rains to Nur ad-Din’s “fair and righteous conduct”. After becoming aware of the change in the people’s sentiment, he did not hesitate to send a letter to the atabeg of Damascus, in which he presented himself as a Holy War-waging protector of Muslims, farmers, and women and children and presented his rival as an ineffectual ruler who robbed his own people, committing a sin before Allah. At that point, there began to form the image of the just ruler – al-Malik al-Adil, as Muslim chroniclers would soon come to call the new leader of that part of the Middle East.

The Damascene leaders had found nothing better to do than to double back to their former policy of asking... the Franks for help! (544 AH/1149-1150 AD). As for Nur ad-Din, he employed a policy of “endearment” with respect to the townspeople of Damascus, showing generosity to representatives of all sectors of society, including the poor and disadvantaged – which earned him much popularity among the townsfolk. At the same time, his policy incorporated a carrot-and-stick approach, for his power pressure on Damascus kept increasing. While Nur ad-Din avoided potentially bloody warfare, his askar routinely engaged in raids on the suburbs, staged exhibition battles under the walls of Damascus, and carried off cattle and supplies. Following the Franks’ capture of Ascalon, the key to Egypt, in 1153, Nur ad-Din realized he could procrastinate no longer. He initiated a direct economic blockade of Damascus, which would result in soaring grain prices and famine, as grain could no longer be brought in from the north. In March of 1154, Nur ad-Din’s

* Back then, binge-drinking was quite customary among Turkic rulers and military leaders and their guardsmen (Gibb, 2009: 145).

† A person of this kind, for instance, was emir Mujahid al-Din Buzan b. Mamin, the governor of the fortress of Sarkhad, who, according to Ibn al-Qalanisi, occupied it “to the joy of all the inhabitants of that district, on account of his generous and upright character, strict observance of the principles of religion, and personal scrupulousness, [unlike] his predecessors, who observed their duties towards God neither in matters of belief nor worship nor equitable dealing nor purity of heart nor generosity of action” (Gibb, 2009: 198).

army commenced the siege of the city. The lack of food and continual pressure took their toll. While the people were not particularly enthusiastic about fighting their fellow believers, they found it disgraceful to cede Damascus to someone just like that. In this connection, Ibn al-Qalanisi relates the following anecdotal story, which reflects the sentiment among the townspeople at that moment. There were hardly any defenders on the walls, with only a Jewish woman letting down a rope to Nur ad-Din's men, one of whom scrambled up to hoist his flag above the walls. The idea behind the story (which is self-explanatory) is that none of the Muslim locals wished to take upon themselves the responsibility of capitulating. So, that is when there appeared a woman, a dhimmi (non-Muslim), someone to put the blame on. It is only subsequent to her deed that the townspeople opened the gates. Face was kept and the troublesome siege was over. It is symptomatic that on seizing the wall Nur ad-Din's warriors shouted not the usual 'Allahu Akbar!' but 'Ya Mansur!' ('Victorious One!')*. In other words, political correctness prevailed. The new chief issued an order forbidding the plunder of homes and announced an amnesty. The former atabeg was even spared from execution, and was exiled. Soon, Nur ad-Din undertook another strong move – he introduced cuts in marketplace taxes and canal tolls. It is no wonder that the following year, 1155, the chroniclers would refer to him as 'al-Malik al-Adil' ('the just king').



Fig. 1. Sultan Nur ad-Din pursued by crusaders Godfrey Martel and Hugh de Lusignan the Elder (a medieval miniature)

* The term has other meanings as well – 'successful' and 'aided by God' (Gadzhiev, 1994: 11).

After Nur ad-Din's capture of Damascus, his subsequent actions would vividly demonstrate the triumph of his new approach to jihad, which he would now wage in an integrated and large-scale fashion, both in terms of his lofty political agenda and in terms of the ideological aspect. Nur ad-Din's experience confronting the Franks on the battlefield had been a combination of ups and downs (he was victorious at Inab in 1149, but lost at al-Buqaia in 1163). But that did not prevent him from making a new strategically vital decision – to confront the Franks for *hegemony in Fatimid Egypt*, an area torn by strife among the ruling clans. The sagacious ruler was aware of the critical role Egypt could play in his military confrontation with the Franks as the region's breadbasket. Nur ad-Din undertook three campaigns in Egypt. During his third campaign, he entrusted the command to Shirkuh, the uncle of the future sultan Salah ad-Din. On Shirkuh's death in 1169, his nephew Saladin received the rank of Emir Isfahsalar and assumed command of the Syrian troops in Egypt. He began to quickly advance to power. Salah ad-Din first masterminded his own appointment as vizier by the Fatimid caliph al-Adid. On the death of the caliph in 1171, he abolished the Fatimid caliphate and restored Egypt to allegiance to the caliphate in Baghdad. Salah ad-Din made all these moves, at least on the outside, in the name of Nur ad-Din. Thus, the latter's strategy – to have the Franks surrounded by the dominions of a single Sunni ruler – worked superbly. Nur ad-Din would die in 1174, and an open rift between the two, which could have taken place as a result of increasing signs of estrangement between them, would not happen. Note, however, that, while creating the image of a pious fighter of jihad (which he brilliantly succeeded in, judging by the way the Muslim chroniclers portrayed him), Nur ad-Din, by no means, was as "innocent" as they made him out to be – he was cruel, cunning, and cynical in confronting his fellow believers who opposed his political projects, and, even worse, was no stranger to "fishing in troubled waters". Circa 1155, Ibn al-Qalanisi wrote in his chronicle about Nur ad-Din's role as an umpire in reconciling the feuding sons of the Anatolian sultans, with a hypocritical focus on that their feud would only benefit their enemies – the Greeks and the Franks. Yet, having dulled the Seljuqs' vigilance by "jollyng them and presenting them with expensive gifts", the "just king" instantly hurried to conquer several of the castles and fortresses in the lands owned by one of them, Qilij Arslan II.

When it comes to Nur ad-Din's *religious program*, which envisaged revitalizing Sunni Islam in the lands under his rule, promoting piety, and spreading the ideas of jihad, a major role in this respect was played by his protection of Syrian clergy. Nur ad-Din helped promote monumental religious construction in Syria, a booming industry in the mid-12th century. He undertook the construction of mosques, hospitals, and a school of hadith studies (Dar al-Hadith) and the rebuilding of the walls of Medina. The ruler would personally attend most proceedings at the House of Justice and classes at the Dar al-Hadith school. Construction activity was accompanied by monumental propaganda designed to glorify Nur ad-Din, with it becoming a common practice to engrave his name, accompanied by sumptuous titles, on the walls of buildings. In many of these inscriptions, he is referred to as a fighter of jihad (*al-mujahid*). At the same time, the objective behind the inscriptions (as well as his visits to meetings of experts in Sharia and Hadith and the keen focus on construction in the Haramayn area)* was to demonstrate his amicable relations with Abbasid Baghdad and his commitment to the values of Sharia and promoting personal piety and facilitate the formation of the image of the exemplary Sunni ruler.

A major role in the formation of Nur ad-Din's image as al-Malik al-Adil was played by Islamic written tradition. It is in this tradition (e.g., Ibn al-Adim) that one comes across stories about the role played in Nur ad-Din's spiritual rebirth on his path to personal religious piety as a committed and stalwart mujahid by his serious illness and the humiliating defeat he suffered at the hands of the Franks in 1163. It is after those two experiences that Nur ad-Din, essentially, dedicated himself to al-jihad al-akbar, i.e. the greater jihad, embarking on a path of asceticism, which, above all, implied renouncing listening to music and drinking alcohol. In this context, of relevance are the words of another famous Muslim author, Abu Shama, about Nur ad-Din: "He conducts a double jihad – against the enemy and against his own soul". Edifying stories of this kind are common in medieval Muslim writings moralizing about waging true jihad. Accordingly, one may start questioning what is real and what is Islamic propaganda here. Yet, there is one important circumstance to consider, and it reflects the North Caucasian regional component and flavor. This

* The traditional Islamic appellation of the two holy cities of Islam, Mecca and Medina

is how ghazavat was starting in the Northeast Caucasus under Imam Mansur* and Dagestani Imams Qazi Mullah, Gamzat-bek, and Shamil. The Imamate of Shamil forbade tobacco smoking, alcohol consumption, music, dancing, and folk customs. Violation of these restrictions was punishable by death (Degoev, 2001: 170).

The final remarkable item on Nur ad-Din's jihadist agenda was the *conquest of Jerusalem*. The Jami an-Nuri Mosque in Mosul, founded by him, contains a Quranic inscription, which dates back to 1170–1173 (i.e. a period when Mecca was in the hands of non-Muslims) and refers to Jerusalem as the *first qibla*, i.e. the direction Muslims must face in prayer. Of interest is the fact that in 1173, the year before his death, Nur ad-Din announced in a letter to the caliph his intention to reconquer Jerusalem. He had set himself the following clear-cut objective: “to banish the worshippers of the Cross from the Aqsa mosque... to conquer Jerusalem... to hold sway over the Syrian coast” (Hillenbrand, 2008: 161). Jerusalem was an emblematic city, both for the Christians and for the Muslims. It not only was the first qibla of Islam but was (and still is!) home to two of Islam's holiest sites – the al-Aqsa Mosque (‘the farthest mosque’) and the Qubbat al-Sakhrah Mosque (‘the dome of the rock’). It is from Jerusalem that Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven. The Dome of the Rock holds the rock that is marked with the footprint of al-Buraq, the winged mythical creature that, according to legend, transported Muhammad to heaven. During the reign of Nur ad-Din, owing to powerful religious propaganda (particularly, the use of Fada'il al-Quds (‘merits of Jerusalem’) literature), the city began to be viewed by the Muslims as the powerful symbol of religious and political unity. The struggle for the holy lands of Palestine and Jerusalem would become under Nur ad-Din the pivot of jihad and Muslim unification.

However, a number of Western scholars have questioned Nur ad-Din's apparent devotion to the holy war. For instance, German scholar M. Köhler regards his use of jihad propaganda as simply a way of advancing his political ambitions, including getting the Abbasid caliph to legitimize and recognize his suzerainty over the neighboring Muslim states. In any case, Nur ad-Din's popularity in the area of jihad was so great that in some respects it even surpassed that of Salah ad-Din. What role was played by politics and dynastic interests in the struggle of the Muslim leaders against the Crusaders would become clear in the later stages of the jihad, when it was waged by Salah ad-Din, Baibars, and others.

The acme of jihad. Salah ad-Din and Baibars, the continuators of Nur ad-Din's work

The dynamic jihad propaganda was working. In the mid-12th century, the Muslim world unified in the name of warding off the Christian threat, with the number of jihad fighters growing sharply. The success of jihad was largely due to the fact that the idea of holy war was keenly embraced first by Nur ad-Din, and later by Salah ad-Din, who used it to achieve their political objectives. It should be remembered that both Nur ad-Din and Salah ad-Din had come to power through their military strength. Both felt the need for legitimization from the caliph for their seizure of territories (Hillenbrand, 2008: 192). If initially the idea of holy war was propagandized and cultivated from “below”, these specific rulers did their best to put the concept of jihad into effect from “above”. As noted by C. Hillenbrand, the Muslim chroniclers portray the earlier Muslim military leaders who fought the Franks – for example, Il Ghazi and, above all, Zengi, the father of Nur ad-Din – in terms primarily of their military achievements. But in the case of Nur ad-Din, as already evidenced above, the focus, gradually, shifts to the religious aspects of his activity, which will be accentuated in all kinds of ways by Muslim tradition. Perhaps, there are good grounds for believing that this is how the Muslim chroniclers, notably those of the 13th century, wished to depict him (Hillenbrand, 2008: 136), i.e. as a pious fighter of jihad (al-mujahid).

It is now time to examine the way the Muslim authors were creating Salah ad-Din's image, which will be done through the example of a representative source such as the work by Baha ad-Din, a contemporary and companion of this prominent figure in the 12th century Middle East, who has been mentioned in this paper more than once previously.

* Relating about the beginning of ghazavat in Chechnya, Imam Mansur tell us “with a degree of humor” that “news of his having embraced honest living spread quickly among his relatives, as he renounced theft and plunder, the only virtue of our peoples”. A Chechen hajji interrogated in Sujuk-kala by an emissary of the Grand Vizier in the summer of 1785 narrated the following: “Our shepherd started to lecture us, forbidding us to drink wine, smoke tobacco ...” (Bennigsen, 1994: 49-50).



Fig. 2. Sultan Saladin (a medieval European drawing)

It is quite symptomatic that the first part of Baha ad-Din's work, which is a lot smaller than the second one and is a sort of introduction to the account of the deeds of Salah ad-Din, is devoted to discussing his merits as a historical figure. Baha ad-Din emphasizes a significant point right in the first lines of his work – that his hero's "creed was good and he was much mindful of God Almighty" (Baha-ad-Din, 2009: 9). Salah ad-Din's creed was not the result of private spiritual exercise solely. He "took his creed from proof by means of study with the leading men of religious learning and eminent jurisconsults". For example, Shaykh Qutb ad-Din an-Naisaburi* composed for him a sort of manual on the creed of Islam ('aqidah'), which contained "all that was needed in this field". Salah ad-Din always prayed in the company of others, and was devout in his prayers until his last days. He was not greedy for money, land, or real estate. In fact, he died with only forty-seven Nasirite dirhams and a single piece of Tyrian gold in his treasury. The rest of the wealth was expended by Salah ad-Din mainly on charity and gifts for members of his retinue and supplicants (Dyubi, 1994: 134-135)†. The sultan strictly observed the fast. He always tried to

* The very name of this Muslim scholar appears to be emblematic – 'The Pole-Star of the Faith'. In addition, the nisba in his name indicates that he was from the same area as Omar Khayyam.

† Here it is evident how Salah ad-Din very accurately matches the feudal values of his own time, which, incidentally, were common in the West as well. A generous seigneur used to be the ideal over there. For instance, during a knightly festival held in 1306 the King of England, who had gathered 300 young men – the sons of earls, barons, and knights – on the occasion of their receiving knighthood, presented them with purple garments from the royal wardrobe, jewels, and, gold-embroidered vestments. And in order to provide

compensate for the missed fasting and stay away from wine*. Salah ad-Din had always wanted to perform the pilgrimage, which he had to postpone for compelling reasons[†]. He delighted in hearing the Quran and Hadith read to him, with certain passages bringing tears to his eyes (Hillenbrand, 2008: 12).

At the same time, the sultan, so sentimentally steeped in religious literature, had a major dislike for “philosophers, heretics, materialists, and deviants from Islamic Law”. It is at his behest that they executed the era’s prominent religious philosopher Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi, whose philosophical system is viewed as an original syncretic teaching that combined the ideas of Neoplatonism, Ismailism, Zoroastrian mythology, Eastern Peripathetism, and Sufism.

In other words, Saladin showed himself in this as the child of his own time, a grim religious bigot, a monster resembling those who once staged a riot at the Nishapur Madrasah. Having said that, some of his counterparts in the opposing camp actually even outdid him in killing in the service of the faith. For instance, Richard the Lionheart had a hundred Jewish women burnt alive and the assets of the Jewish communities confiscated. Likewise, Simon de Montfort (d. 1218 during the siege of Toulouse) showed an exceptional ruthlessness in dealing with the heretic Cathars.

Baha ad-Din goes on to share the “rare” information about the sultan and pile up the praise for “Yusuf”’s “excellent”^{**} virtues, pointing out that the sultan was “just, gentle and merciful, a supporter of the weak against the strong” (Baha-ad-Din, 2009: 16). He was courageous and fearless on the battlefield, no matter how critical the situation was (e.g., at Acre). That being said, he remained a man of piety even in this area. Even when between the two battle-lines, i.e. facing the actual enemy on the battlefield, he would order an attendant to read Hadith to him. By such manners, he had lived up to his name. All that said, Salah ad-Din was patient in the suffering caused by his illness and took the news of the death of his loved ones manfully. He even was generally merciful toward non-Muslims and considerate of the pleas of the weakest of them (e.g., the case where he ordered the return of a child kidnapped by some robbers to its mother, a Christian), and was merciful toward his own servants, even including those found to have committed a theft... The lavish praise is justified once you learn from Baha ad-Din that Salah ad-Din spent all his gold and silver on the jihad and his warriors. Holy war against the infidel was his obsession: “The Jihad, his love and passion for it, had taken a mighty hold on his heart and all his being, so much so that he talked of nothing else, thought of nothing but the means to pursue it, was concerned only with its manpower and had a fondness only for those who spoke of it and encouraged it. In his love for the Jihad on the path of God he shunned his womenfolk, his children, his homeland, his home and all his pleasures, and for this world he was content to dwell in the shade of his tent with the winds blowing through it left and right” (Baha-ad-Din, 2009: 25). That is truly the life’s program of a true mujahid, a standard for Salah ad-Din’s contemporaries to emulate! But the meaning behind this passage is, by any means, not about only that. In essence, it sums up all of the sultan’s qualities described by Baha ad-Din, and suggests a sort of paradigm for true jihadist conduct. You can become a true fighter of jihad by aspiring to being a virtuous and morally upright person and molding yourself to be one by engaging, as already noted above, in a “a double jihad – against the enemy and against his own soul”. With that said, the lesser jihad – the one against the enemy – is to be waged in reliance upon the best insights on the subject from scholars of the Ummah. It was not long before they appeared. Baha ad-Din has the following to say to this effect: “Numerous books on the Jihad were composed for him [Saladin]. I, too, am one of those who compiled a book on it for him” (Baha-ad-Din, 2009: 26).

his guests with accommodation in tents the king ordered the cutting down of fruit trees and leveling of walls in London (Dyubi, 1994: 134-135).

* He gave it up after his seizure of power in Egypt. Another Muslim author, al-Maqrizi, amplifies the moralizing tinge of this side of the sultan’s personality even more, stating that Salah ad-Din ‘gave up wine, being sorry for consuming it immoderately in the past, and renounced all frivolous pastimes (Hillenbrand, 2008: 179, note 2).

† Cases like these are not rare in Islam. In the North Caucasus, there likewise were Muslims who were unable to perform the pilgrimage despite wanting to do so. The very intention to do so earned them some respect, with some even coming to be referred to as *hajji*, as though they had performed the actual pilgrimage. They could be called a “hajji by intention”.

** The words used in the title of Baha ad-Din’s book. The word ‘Yusuf’ is a part of his full name.

One may think of Salah ad-Din's biographer as a theoretician of jihad. It, however, would be an exaggeration to call Ibn Shaddad (Baha ad-Din's better-known name) that. Indeed, the author humbly confesses: "I brought together its practices and every Koranic verse or hadith that has been transmitted concerning it, and I explained anything unusual". In a word, Baha ad-Din had compiled a handbook on jihad, a sort of collection of instructional guidelines on waging it. Saladin "frequently used to peruse it, and, in the end, his son, al-Malik al-Afdal, studied it with him". In other words, prominent scholars in that part of the Middle East did their best to prepare Salah ad-Din theoretically for waging jihad against the infidels.

There is little reason to doubt Salah ad-Din's deep personal commitment to the ideals of jihad, for, as suggested by research, he, just like Nur ad-Din, must have had serious personal reasons for undergoing a religious rebirth, such as the threat of illness and death (during his illness Saladin is said to have vowed that he would devote himself to liberating Jerusalem whatever the cost). However, Salah ad-Din's struggle in terms of jihad proceeded by reference to a broad spectrum of social-political and life situations, and did not rest on the participants' religious enthusiasm alone. Salah ad-Din's army included many ordinary mercenaries. As already mentioned above, many medieval Eastern writers criticized Turkic fighters for their primary interest lying in plunder. Of relevance in this context is an ironic observation by our contemporary A. Champdor, whereby most of the volunteers in the sultan's army, hired to perform military service for him for an average of six months, were recruited at bazaars from among members of nomadic tribes in the Mesopotamia prairies, forming a motley, ragtag crowd. On top of that, many of their commanders could not have been rapt in religious fervor, as they regularly short-changed their subordinates by keeping the best part of the loot for themselves. Clearly, not the best force for engaging in positional warfare and long sieges. Here is what an Arab poet had to say about fighters in Salah ad-Din's army at the time: "This war makes their hearts sink in their chests. Many who joined just recently already want out" ([Shamdor, 2004: 263](#)).

A similar narrative is provided by R. Irwin, who writes that, although the armies that Saladin led against the Latin principalities were formally dedicated to the jihad, they were not composed of ghazis. Saladin's army was mainly composed of Turkic and Kurdish professional soldiers. The majority of his officers (emirs) were paid for their service with taxes collected from villages, estates, and factories under their control and a portion of the spoils of war. A major part of Saladin's elite force was formed by Mamluks (slave soldiers), as was the case with almost every medieval Muslim army ([Monusova, 2010: 123](#)).

Another important factor was seasonal weather conditions. For example, Salah ad-Din had to lift some of his sieges due to torrential winter rainfall. Besides, many of the emirs who fought on his side did not support the idea of creating an Arab empire, as they were happy with their trans-Euphratian dominions. For instance, according to Baha ad-Din, wearied by the long siege of Acre, the lord of Jazira*, Muizz al-Din, son of Saif ad-Din Ghazi, whose very name "programmed" one to take part in jihad (Saif ad-Din is translated from Arabic as 'the sword of the faith', and ghāzī as 'warrior for the faith'), and nephew of none other than Zengi, who, as it may be remembered, was the mastermind of the Holy War in the Eastern Mediterranean, simply departed with his men from Acre right after a meeting with Salah ad-Din, who refused to grant him leave to depart. He would return only after being compelled to do so by Taqi al-Din, the sultan's nephew; he was pardoned after rendering an apology to the sultan through go-betweens. Another figure who distinguished himself by long wrangling with Salah ad-Din was Imad al-Din, the uncle of "escapist" Muizz al-Din. Imad al-Din pestered the sultan for leave to depart, complaining of the onset of winter for which he had made no preparation. The argument scribbled by the sultan on Imad al-Din's petition requesting permission to depart had nothing to do with holy war discourse. It is of a purely feudal nature: "Whoever loses such as me. Would that I knew what gain has he!" ([Baha-ad-Din, 2009: 223](#)). Such deeds of Salah ad-Din's emirs were not an expression of their personal reluctance or fatigue. They had the right to do that by way of a custom, similar to the one followed in Western Europe, whereby the duration of feudal service was limited. This is, for instance, discussed by Sadr ad-Din al-Husaini ([Ahbar ad-daulat as-seldzhukijjina, 1980](#)).

Thus, Salah ad-Din's struggle was the result of both a personal conviction of his special mission and a combination of circumstances of a material nature. Yet, from the viewpoint of today,

* Or al-Jazira, i.e. Upper Mesopotamia

it is evident that Salah ad-Din, just like his immediate predecessor, was instrumental in using the ideology to boost the morale of his soldiers*.

Be as it may, in terms of the revival of the ideals of *jihad* in the Levant, it is, ultimately, his *social* position that mattered the most. For example, Usama ibn Munqidh characterizes Saladin as the “sultan who restored the example of the Rightly-Guided” (as the first caliphs were called) and installed “a new pillar of religion and state” (Ibn Munkyz). Here Saladin built on the foundations laid by Nur ad-Din. Each step on Saladin’s path towards the goal of recapturing Jerusalem was ratified retrospectively by the Sunni caliph at Baghdad. This was a ‘legal fiction’, yet Saladin asked for the caliph’s “diploma of investiture” after each new conquest. After his capture of Homs in Syria from his fellow Sunni Muslims he attempts to justify this as part of his progress in a just cause: “Our move was not made in order to snatch a kingdom for ourselves, but to set up the standard of the holy war. These men had become enemies, preventing the accomplishment of our purpose with regard to this war” (Hillenbrand, 2008: 192).

Whatever personal motives (which are quite likely to have included personal and familial interests) Nur ad-Din and Saladin may have had, their significance to the history of *jihad* lies in that they justified every step they took by the needs of *jihad*. By acting that way, they laid the groundwork for the successes that the Muslim world would achieve in its struggle against the warriors of Christ.

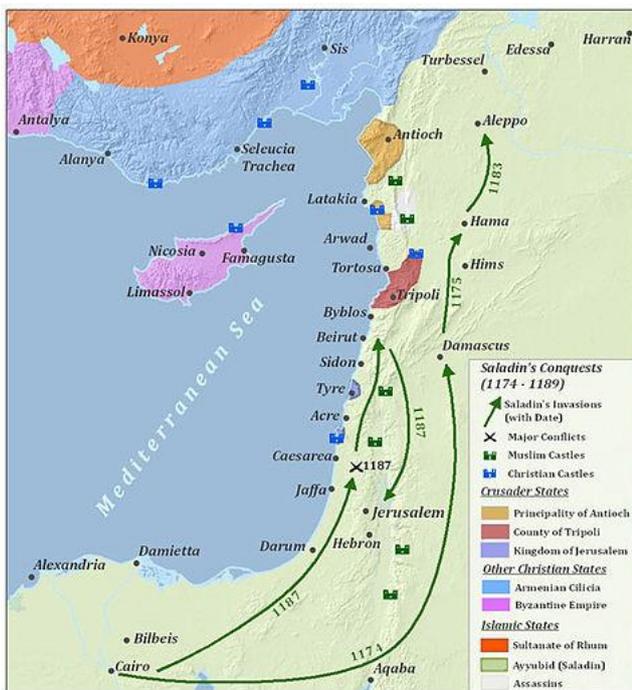


Fig. 3. The conquests of Salah ad-Din (1174–1189).

The consummation of the jihadist movement is characterized by the following two concluding stages. The third stage (in total count) in the practical materialization of the idea of *jihad* is grounded in historical events that occurred between 1174 and 1250. This period can be divided into two substages. The first mini-period chronologically covers events from the start of Salah ad-Din’s expansion to the signing of a peace treaty with Richard the Lionheart (1192). The second mini-period covers events from Salah ad-Din’s death to the fall of the Ayyubid dynasty in 1250. These substages represent a period of temporary slump in the conduct of “holy war”, a sort of *détente* in the relationship between the Muslims and the Levantine Crusaders. Despite the fact that the period’s religious discourse continued to be grandiloquent (as it was at the time of the early

* The efforts of Salah ad-Din’s image-makers were not wasted. Largely thanks to them, there appeared in Europe in the later Middle Ages the legend of Saladin, with an idealized image of him offered. For instance, in his ‘Inferno’, Dante places Saladin in Limbo, the place for the virtuous.

Crusades) with respect to *jihad*, these religious speculations had little to do with the political realities of the Ayyubid period (Fedorov-Davydov, 2008, 2008: 158). In their relationship with the Franks, particular members of the Ayyubid clan aspired to peace, rather than war. The Ayyubid period witnessed a complete integration of the Franks as local Levantine rulers. The Ayyubids forged alliances with them and fought both against and for them. In the 1240s, Ayyubid ruler as-Salih Isma'il ceded to the Franks many of the castles in Galilee and southern Lebanon which Saladin had conquered.

This initiative on the part of as-Salih Isma'il was prompted by his desire for Frankish support against his nephew as-Salih Ayyub. In this period (during the sixth Crusade), Jerusalem was even handed back to the Franks for a while – a political accommodation unthinkable in the time of Saladin. As noted by C. Hillenbrand, this fact serves as “a silent commentary on the ephemeral nature of extreme religious fervor” (Hillenbrand, 2008: 210).

Ibn al-Athir complains bitterly that *jihad* has disappeared in his own time: “Amongst the rulers of Islam we see not one who desires to wage *jihad* or aid ... religion. Each one devotes himself to his pastimes and amusements and to wronging his flock. This is more dreadful to me than the enemy” (Hillenbrand, 2008: 211).

The situation changed after the Mamluks seized power in Egypt. In 1249, the army of Louis IX landed in Egypt. Following Salih Ayyub's death in the midst of directing defences, the conduct of the war against the Christians was taken over by the Mamluk officers. In 1250, the Mamluks overpowered the French at al-Mansura, prompting chronicler Ibn Wasil to call them ‘Islam's Templars’. However, a few months later, the very same Mamluks murdered Turanshah, Salih Ayyub's son and heir, triggering the start of a 10-year-long political struggle in both Egypt and Syria, which involved Ayyubid princes, Turkic and Kurdish generals, and rival factions of Mamluks. However, in 1260 a bloody coup, which put an end to instability in the very heart of the Mamluk state, made Baibars the new Sultan. This event marks the start of the last, fourth, (“Mamluk”) stage in the *jihad*, which lasted to the fall of Acre in 1291.

Baibars, an ethnic Cuman, was a newly-converted Muslim, just like many other Mamluks. The dynasty of the Mamluks, with their powerful centralized state, was seeking to establish itself as an Islamic leader in the Middle East via *jihad*. Its objective was to prove its people were true believers (something quite typical of neophytes). It did succeed in this. Under the firm guidance of Baibars, the Mamluk Sultanate eliminated the Ayyubid dynasty in Egypt, spread its dominion to Syria, and continued the fight against the fearsome Mongols in the East (Vijmar, 2006: 198). The Mamluks' military successes against the Mongols were accompanied by their strenuous attempts to oust the Franks from the Muslim area. It is during the reign of Baibars that *jihad* again started to play a key role in preparations and ideological support for the Mamluks' military pursuits.

The links of the religious classes with the Mamluk ruling elite seem to have been particularly close at that specific time. In fact, Sivan goes as far as to assert that without the support of the religious classes, the Mamluks would not have been able to maintain themselves in power for so long. Members of the Sufi orders and the ulama are mentioned as taking part in military campaigns alongside the sultans. For instance, Ibn al-Furat mentions that at the conquest of Beaufort (Sha'qif Arnun) in 666/1268 there were present pious shaykhs and members of the ulama: “Each one of them did his best to fight in God's cause as far as his circumstances allowed” (Hillenbrand, 2008: 243).

Just like it was done earlier by Nur ad-Din, in carrying out their jihadist program, they resorted to monumental propaganda and made use of traditional, acknowledged symbols of *jihad*. The inscriptions on the mausoleum in Homs (Syria) refer to Baibars as the protector of Islam's holy places in the Hejaz and call him an Alexander the Great of his time (!), etc. Of major significance is the fact that the mausoleum belongs to “the Sword of Islam” Khalid ibn al-Walid, one of the closest companions of Prophet Muhammad. In other words, Baibars is viewed by Muslim propagandists as a ruler who epitomizes the linkage between the earlier centuries of Islam (the times of the salaf (predecessors) and the first four righteous caliphs) and his own accomplishments in the area of protection of the faith. Thanks to this and other efforts, Baibars earns the image of the “ideal mujahid”, as was the case earlier with Nur ad-Din and Salah ad-Din.

Under Baibars, the Mamluk state launched the era of “ever-increasing aggression” against the Franks, with the idea of *jihad* gaining renewed momentum and a special focus laid on the concept's military aspect – war against the infidels. Out of Baibars's 38 military campaigns, 21 were carried out under the banner of holy war and were aimed against the Crusaders. According to his

panegyrist, he “prosecuted the jihad with the utmost zeal and fought against the unbelievers, for which God rewarded him” (Hillenbrand, 2008: 230).

The death of Baibars in 1271 did not weaken the ranks of the proponents of holy war. At the time, society was witnessing growing fanaticism, with most deeply convinced that the world of Sunni Islam needed to be ridden of “all the filth of the infidels”. In 1291, during the reign of Sultan al-Ashraf Khalil, there took place the fall of Acre, the last substantial bulwark of the Christians in the East. The fall of this mighty fortress meant the end of Syrian Christianity. South of Acre, there still remained many fortifications of the Templars, but it was now simply impossible to continue the war. Upon receipt of the news of the Muslims’ victory, the Christians fled. A few weeks subsequent to the disastrous day of May 18, the Europeans left the Syrian coast (Kugler, 1995: 484).

Khalil remembered what had happened after Salah ad-Din’s victories, so he decided to forestall the appearance of new Crusaders. He ordered his men to destroy all Latin cities and ports across the coast of Palestine and Syria, depriving the Franks of the opportunity to land another Crusader army (Haritonovich, 2010: 206).

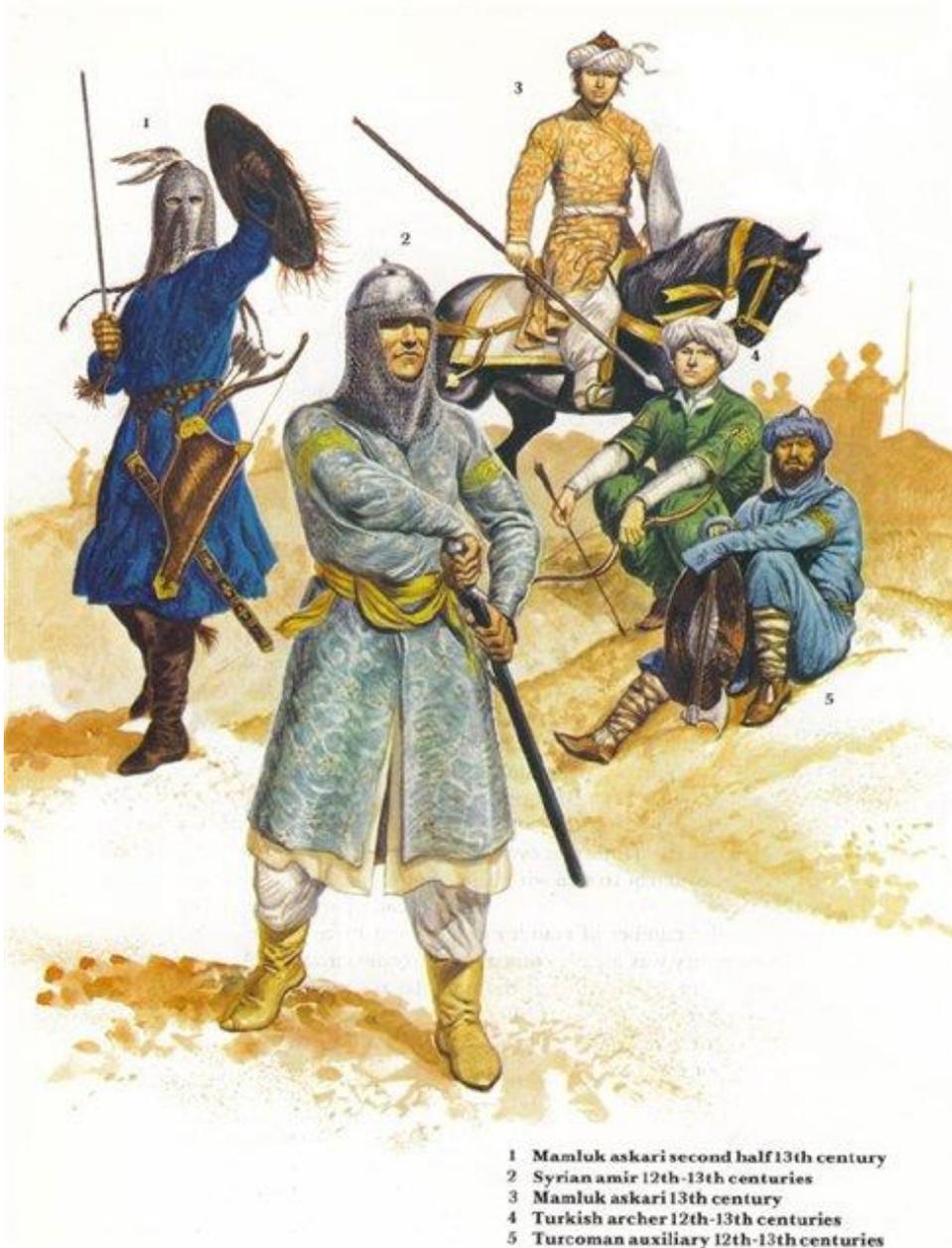


Fig. 4. Crusades-era Muslim warriors

4. Conclusion

This section will sum up the outcomes from the jihad in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Crusades. The history of the Crusades-era jihad can be divided into several timeframes reflecting the gradual consolidation of the concept of jihad as the ideological basis of the military confrontation between the Crusaders and the Muslim population of the Middle East. The first stage spans the years 1099 through 1144, i.e. the period from the commencement of the Crusades to the capture of Edessa by Imad al-Din Zengi. It, mainly, was characterized by verbal declarations of a “holy war”, which the period’s Muslim leaders would, in actuality, not wage – due to disunity among them and their pursuit of private interests. A certain landmark within this period is the victory of the fighters of Islam in the Battle of Balat. Yet, in actual fact, the first sprouts of real jihad appear to have emerged in the period of the reign of Imad al-Din – but, again, that is with reservations, as his moral character did not match the image of a true mujahid. The second stage (1146–1174) is the time of the reign of Nur ad-Din, who was doing a lot in the way of both fighting against the Crusaders and imparting to the struggle against the “infidels” a relevant moral and ideological quality, through prohibiting plunder and murder against peaceful Muslim settlers from rival groups and promoting jihad on a mass scale. The third stage (1174–1250) is associated with the waging of jihad by Salah ad-Din, and later on by the Ayyubid dynasty, founded by him. Its success was based on its special focus on the high ideological objectives behind the jihad and its aspiration to gradually reclaim one of Islam’s major centers of religious worship, Jerusalem, under Salah ad-Din. Subsequent to his death in 1193, there was a tangible decline in ideological intensity, with the intensity of jihad subsiding as well. The capture of Jerusalem played a key role in the Muslims’ regaining the initiative in the war and the Ayyubids’ taking possession of the Egyptian throne, with the holy city becoming in the first third of the 13th century the “collateral damage” in the diplomatic “games” with the Crusaders. It is possible to speak of a policy of pacification à la the Ayyubids, when the dynasty’s key priority was to be in possession of Egypt, in return for which they were ready to make significant concessions*. Subsequent to the fall of the Ayyubids in 1250 and the end of infighting, the Mamluks intensified their jihad activity (1260–1291). Particularly instrumental in this was Baibars. There were several successful jihad-promoting campaigns, led by charismatic individuals, which reached the following two culmination points during the period of the Crusades. The first one was reached in 1187, when Saladin reclaimed Jerusalem. The second one was reached during a campaign that concluded in the Mamluks ousting the Franks from the Levant in 1291. As evident from the above discussion, the wide use of the highly effective and versatile mechanism of jihad propaganda was a decisive factor in reviving and unifying the Muslim areas bordering the Crusaders’ states and in the Muslims reclaiming their areas from the Crusaders.

Yet, throughout history, no Muslim country or region has ever been possessed with the idea of waging jihad permanently. As a rule, jihad has been ignited and promoted for political purposes by particular rulers, dynasties, or groups. It has been an effective medium for not just achieving one’s geopolitical objectives but also “playing the two off against each other” (e.g., Muslim activists against malcontents, never a small group in the Islamic East).

Priorities with regard to jihad have changed throughout history. It has been evidenced that in certain periods this key idea of Islam did weaken under the influence of social-political and economic conditions. It took a significant amount of time before the Crusader invasion resulted in a revitalization of the values of jihad. In the first few decades of the Crusader expansion, the retaliatory activity of the Muslims, only outwardly vested in the traditional form of jihad, which was more of a declarative nature, was intertwined with self-seeking feuds and downright plunder against fellow believers. Indifference on the part of the leadership elite triggered protest actions on the part of the populace. It took over 40 years to restore the spirit of jihad and escalate the jihadist ideas. The basis for this was the political unification of Muslims under the guidance of Zengi, and especially Nur ad-Din. Concurrently, work was being carried out in the way of restoration and development of religious slogans. Most of these slogans would be used in practice very effectively, especially thanks to the activity of Nur ad-Din. The activity of Salah ad-Din, and later Baibars and his successors, was the culmination of the jihadist movement, when it, even if not so fast as its organizers desired, eventually

* As-Salih Ayyub gave his son, Turanshah, the last Ayyubid sultan of Egypt, the following piece of advice: “If they [the Franks] demand that you give them the coast and Jerusalem, do not hesitate for a moment to agree to do so – but on one condition: they will never set foot in Egypt” (Hillenbrand, 2008: 218).

reached the objectives set (with this taking over a century). The Muslims' jihad during the Crusades could be regarded as fair, as it facilitated the liberation struggle of the population of Syria and Palestine (above all, its Muslim segment) against the foreign invasion. At the same time, the propaganda of the ideas of jihad resulted in a negative, hostile attitude toward not only the invading Crusaders, knights, and warriors but also the peaceful descendants of the Europeans living in the Holy Land, as well as the Christian population of the East.

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