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## **Before the Kaiser: The Memory of Saladin and the Crusades in the Near East from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries.**

In 1898 Kaiser Wilhelm II courted the declining Ottoman Empire with a major state visit to Istanbul, Jerusalem, Baalbek and Damascus. He reached Syria in early November where an important destination during his stay in Damascus was Saladin's mausoleum, a building that housed both the recent (1878) Ottoman marble shrine and the wooden medieval coffin associated with the sultan's burial.<sup>1</sup> There, Auguste Victoria, the kaiserin, laid a wreath (now located in the Imperial War Museum, London) on the Ottoman tomb bearing a message in Arabic commemorating the visit of one great leader to the presence of another. Wilhelm himself said that the sultan 'was the great sign of his time, because of his boldness, his justice and his noble nature.'<sup>2</sup>

Later that evening the imperial party were guests at a lavish dinner hosted by Nazim Pasha the local Ottoman governor. William Shortland Richards, the British diplomat present, reported the Kaiser's words: 'I remember that I am now in a city in which once lived the greatest prince whose name is recorded in history, the valorious hero, whose by his courage, his elevation and nobility of character and his devotion to his religion was an example in heroism even to his enemies. I refer to the great sultan Saladin of the dynasty of Ayyub when I think of this.'<sup>3</sup>

There is little doubt that these episodes helped to draw attention to Saladin and they were widely reported in the Muslim press in Syria, Lebanon and Egypt. This also signifies that Saladin was a familiar figure to the readership. The newspapers made no attempt to introduce him or to explain who he was – his historical context and deeds were taken as known. A new Egyptian weekly, *al-Manar*, argued that Wilhelm praised Saladin because was the best warrior of his time – as the Kaiser led the best army of the day. *Al-Mu'ayyad* suggested that Saladin's honourable characteristics attracted the emperor, notwithstanding the fact that the former was 'protecting and propagating Islam' and the latter was propagating Christianity.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Descriptions of the tombs are summarised in A.-M. Eddé, *Saladin*, tr. J.M.Todd (Cambridge MA, 2011), pp. 494-95. The most detailed account of this visit is: E.von Mirbach, *Das deutsche Kaiserpaar im Heiligen Lande im Herbst 1898* (Berlin, 1899).

<sup>2</sup> A.-R.Sinno, 'The Emperor's Visit to the East as Reflected in Contemporary Arabic Journalism', *Baalbek: Image and Monument, 1898-1998*, eds. H.Sader, T.Scheffler and A.Neuwirth (Beirut, 1998), p. 131. Wilhelm also paid for the chandelier that was eventually placed above these monuments in 1914; *ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> National Archives, FO 195/2024, report of Consul William Shortland Richards, November 1898.

<sup>4</sup> Sinno, 'The Emperor's Visit to the East', pp. 132-33.

It is a matter of current academic debate as to the profile of both Saladin and the crusading movement as a whole in the Near East at the turn of the nineteenth century. Beginning with Sivan in the 1970s, followed by the German scholar Ende in 1984 and then Riley-Smith in 2002/2008 and Möhring, 2005, it has become accepted and is now perpetuated, that Saladin and the Crusades had near enough disappeared from view in the Levant until western Europeans brought them back to prominence in the middle of the nineteenth century, a process most clearly manifest through the Kaiser's visit of 1898.<sup>5</sup>

The historians above founded their arguments on a lack of printed biographies of Saladin (the first one was in Turkish in 1872); the absence of the word 'crusaders' (*al-salibiyyun*) in Arabic until the mid-nineteenth century, or an Arabic-language history of the subject. The last of these was published in Jerusalem in 1865 and was in fact a French work by Maxime de Montrond, heavily based on Michaud and originally published in 1840. It was translated into Arabic by Maximos Mazloun III the Melkite patriarch of Jerusalem, Antioch and Aleppo, with suitable neutralisation of some phrases used by Montrond that the readership would find offensive, such as 'barbaric', 'infidel' or 'false prophet'.<sup>6</sup> Comments by contemporary poet Ahmed Shawqi have been cited as evidence for the low profile of Saladin the fact that this man was educated in the West and that he had a particular agenda to encourage nascent feelings of Arab nationalism may not mark him out as an entirely objective voice.<sup>7</sup>

While these claims with regard to language and biography may be correct in and of themselves, they do not begin to provide a complete picture and there are many more markers that we can use to assess the legacy of the medieval age. There is a now growing body of evidence to suggest a far greater residual memory of Saladin and the crusades than has been

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<sup>5</sup> Sivan suggests that Christian intelligentsia helped fuel an interest in the subject in the mid-nineteenth century and this was followed by Arabic accounts – see note 6 below. E.Sivan, 'Modern Arab Historiography of the Crusades', *Asian and African Studies* 8 (1972), pp. 109-49; W.Ende, 'Wer ist ein Glaubensheld, wer ist ein Ketzer? Konkurrierende Geschichtsbilder in der modern Literatur islamischer Länder' *Die Welt des Islams* 23-24 (1984), pp. 70-94. J.S.C.Riley-Smith, *The Crusades, Christianity and Islam* (New York, 2008): 'With this bombastic theatre the Kaiser reintroduced Saladin to the Muslims who had almost completely forgotten him', p. 64; 'The fact is that the Muslims had lost interest', p. 71. H.Möhring, *Saladin: The Sultan and His Times, 1138-1193*, tr. D.S.Bachrach (Baltimore, 2008), originally published in German in 2005. He writes: 'Before the nineteenth century, Muslims had very little interest in the crusades or European affairs'; he then discusses the 1872 biography noted above. pp. 101-102. The perpetuation of these ideas can be seen in, for example, Eddé, *Saladin*, p. 493. Hillenbrand, references Ende, although then produces a series of works (most cited below), that I have used to contribute towards neutralising his ideas; C.Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh, 1999), pp. 589-92.

<sup>6</sup> I.Shagrir and N.Amitai-Preiss, 'Michaud, Montrond, Mazloun and the First History of the Crusades in Arabic', *al-Masaq* 24 (2012), pp. 309-12; Sivan, 'Modern Arab Historiography of the Crusades', pp. 109-110.

<sup>7</sup> See Hillenbrand, *Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, pp. 593-94; Ende, 'Wer ist ein Glaubensheld', pp. 83-84; A.Boudot-Lamotte, *Ahmad Sawqi: L'homme et l'oeuvre* (Damascus, 1977), pp. 93-94. Shawqi also mentioned Saladin in a poem dedicated to the English novelist Hall Caine; see p. 338.

allowed for. This is a view I expressed tentatively in *Holy Warriors* in 2009 and has been given impetus for the seventeenth century by the work of Diane Abouali, published in *Crusades* in 2011; this present piece will bring together further ideas.<sup>8</sup> On closer inspection of material from the Near East down the centuries, the picture changes dramatically. In reality this is a far more complex picture, a point that must begin to make its way into a wider secondary literature, particularly for and amongst historians of the medieval period.<sup>9</sup>

Jerusalem and Damascus are the two most obvious places to look and histories by native inhabitants, travellers and pilgrims are informative because they both recall events and personalities of the medieval period and also reflect contemporary perceptions of the crusades. We should also remember, at the risk of stating the obvious, that the Ottoman Turks, the rulers of the Near East, were engaged in conflict with western forces for centuries. During the sixteenth century in particular, this took the form of active crusading conflict. Moments of external threat to the Ottomans in the Levant evoked recollections of the crusading era, while periods of tension between the indigenous Christians and Muslims of (especially) Jerusalem could have a similar effect. Thus various texts from Ottoman sources can help us. Unsurprisingly, Saladin appears as the ruler of the Muslim Near East in these sources, although it is important to note that there was also a memory of other aspects of the sultan's career when he was held up as an ideal ruler and prominence given to his roles as a religious benefactor and law-giver, rather than simply an opponent of the West.

Mujir al-Din wrote his 'History of Jerusalem and Hebron' in the late fifteenth century. This emphasised the religious merits of his own area and contains a substantial section on Saladin's recovery of the city, including texts of the sermon commemorating his conquest, the inscription that he had placed in the *mihrab* of the al-Aqsa mosque and his letter to the caliph that described his triumph.<sup>10</sup> The sultan also featured prominently in numerous biographical sections about important religious figures and in comments on the construction of particular buildings. Mujir al-Din's work was widely copied and circulated by many, many

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<sup>8</sup> J.P. Phillips, *Holy Warriors: A Modern History of the Crusades* (London, 2009), pp. 333-34; D. Abouali, 'Saladin's Legacy in the Middle East before the Nineteenth Century', *Crusades* 10 (2011), pp. 175-89.

<sup>9</sup> Some modern works concerned with the Near East address this issue, but their focus is often concerned with contemporary Palestine and thus they cover a limited number of the cases outlined here. H. Gerber *Remembering and Imagining Palestine: Identity and Nationalism from the Crusades to the Present* (Basingstoke, 2008) should be noted as questioning the alleged disappearance of Saladin and the crusades, pp. 61-67. The discussion in Y. Reitzer, *Jerusalem and Its Role in Islamic Solidarity* (Basingstoke, 2008) is largely concerned with place of Saladin and the crusades in the twentieth century. K.J. Asali makes some useful references to Christian-Muslim tensions down the centuries, albeit with little explicit connection with the crusades: 'Jerusalem under the Ottomans, 1516-1831 AD', in: *Jerusalem in History*, ed. K.J. Asali (London, 1989), pp. 200-227.

<sup>10</sup> The section on the inscription is found in the partial translation of Mujir ad-Din's work, *Histoire de Jérusalem et d'Hebron depuis Abraham jusqu'à la fin du xv s.*, tr. H. Sauvaire (Paris, 1876), p. 76.

writers down to the early twentieth century; thus helping to sustain the profile of Saladin and the crusades.<sup>11</sup> In a more contemporary context, Mujir al-Din wrote of a local sheikh who, in 1484 had restored the tomb complex of a notable religious figure, in the course of which he constructed a tower in which he placed weapons of war in order to fight the Franks (presumably the Europeans).<sup>12</sup>

Other histories of Jerusalem, one dating from fourteenth century and one from the sixteenth century, are also worth noting, as well as numerous accounts by Muslim pilgrims and travel writers.<sup>13</sup> Given the centrality of Saladin in the history of the religious sites described in such texts, he is an almost inevitable presence. Likewise, he features in histories of Damascus, such as the late fourteenth century text of Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Sasra who proudly recorded that ‘When kings desire a thing they do it, for it is easy for them with money and men. Of all the high ambitions of kings there is that of Salah al-din Yusuf (may God the Exalted have mercy on him) who conquered six cities with fortresses on the coastal plain on six Fridays, holding public prayers on each Friday in the city which he conquered.’<sup>14</sup>

In the early sixteenth century Ibn Kemal (Kemalpaşazade), wrote a Turkish-language ‘Chronicles of the House of Osman’ in which he drew parallels between Suleiman the Magnificent and Emperor Charles V’s conflict in 1521 and the medieval crusades, depicting the former as a reprisal for German invasions of Asia Minor (presumably by Frederick Barbarossa during the Third Crusade).<sup>15</sup> Another document from the same century, this time from the Ottoman state archives, covered the rights of Jews to build synagogues in Jerusalem. Here the crusades were dealt with in a matter-of-fact way and in this instance the forceful conquest of the city by Saladin was contrasted with the gentler one of the caliph Umar.<sup>16</sup>

The sixteenth century also saw the walls of Jerusalem substantially reconstructed by the Ottomans. They had been partially destroyed back in the thirteenth century and since then suffered from neglect. Partially by reason of wanting to put their own stamp on the city and

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<sup>11</sup> D.P.Little, ‘Mujir al-Din al-‘Ulaymi’s Vision of Jerusalem in the Ninth/Fifteenth Century’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115 (1995), pp. 237-47. Gerber also notes sections concerning Saladin’s experiences in Egypt and at Hattin, as well as events concerning Jerusalem and the Fifth and Sixth Crusades. Tauber/Gerber, *Remembering and Imagining Palestine*, pp. 62-64.

<sup>12</sup> Mujir al-Din, *Histoire de Jérusalem et d’Hebron*, pp. 212-13.

<sup>13</sup> A-K.Rafeq, ‘Ottoman Jerusalem in the Writings of Arab Travellers’, in: *Ottoman Jerusalem*, eds. S.Auld and R.Hillenbrand (London, 2000), pp. 63-72.

<sup>14</sup> *A Chronicle of Damascus 1389-1397 by Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Sasra*, ed. and tr. W.M.Brinner, 2 vols. (Berkeley, 1963), 1.68-69.

<sup>15</sup> B.Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (London, 1982), p. 165.

<sup>16</sup> U.Heyd, *Ottoman Documents on Palestine 1552-1615: A Study of the Firman According to the Mühimme Defteri* (Oxford, 1960), no. 113, pp. 169-71, contrast noted above at p. 170.

also through a wish to defend the city from external, Christian, aggression, from c.1537 to 1541 the fortifications were hugely developed and strengthened at the instruction of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-66).<sup>17</sup>

From time to time, fear of a new crusade against the Holy Land caused serious concern to the Ottoman government and its representatives in the Levant. In 1614 British diplomats in Istanbul reported a fear amongst the Syrians that there was an imminent attack coming from the West, in part led by a renegade Druze emir of Sidon, in part by his allies, including the Medici duke of Tuscany. The fact that the Medici were the driving force behind the Order of St Stephen, a military order founded by Cosimo di Medici in 1561 designed specifically to fight the Turks in the Mediterranean, added to these concerns. The Ottomans dispatched naval reinforcements to patrol the coast while a further precaution was an instruction to the pasha of Damascus to expel monks, priests and other Christians from Jerusalem in case they assisted the invaders.<sup>18</sup> In 1621, the appointment of a French consul to Jerusalem produced a petition to Sultan Mustafa I criticising this dangerous novelty and arguing: 'Our city is a place at which the infidels look with covetous eyes... their schemes and plots against it never cease... We fear lest they occupy us as it happened several times before'. The grant was duly cancelled.<sup>19</sup>

Three years later, legislation caused Christian properties contiguous to the walls of Jerusalem to be torn down because their location posed a possible breach of security. A failed invasion by the emir of Sidon the previous year had done little to calm matters and in late 1624, a recently-arrived French consul to Jerusalem was accused of co-operating with the emir and plotting to deliver the city to him, a situation which led to the consul being imprisoned in Damascus.<sup>20</sup>

At around the same time, as Abouali has revealed, a poem was written by Muhammad al-'Alami, a Jerusalem shaykh and Sufi mystic.<sup>21</sup> His son was in dispute over control of a Sufi prayer hall and its multiple land and property endowments, a *waqf* founded by Saladin. The shaykh wrote a poem for public recitation in which he invoked the medieval sultan's

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<sup>17</sup> Y.Natsheh, 'The Architecture of Ottoman Jerusalem', *Ottoman Jerusalem*, eds. R.Hillenbrand and S.Auld (London, 2000), pp. 600-604; D.Myers, 'An Overview of the Islamic Architecture of Ottoman Jerusalem', *Ottoman Jerusalem*, eds. R.Hillenbrand and S.Auld (London, 2000), pp. 326-38.

<sup>18</sup> D.Ze'evi, *An Ottoman Century: The District of Jerusalem in the 1600s* (New York, 1996), pp. 20-21. National Archives, SP97, p. 94 (16 May 1614, not 1624 as Ze'evi cites). Abouali noted that this incident was also reported by the historian Naima; Abouali, 'Saladin's Legacy', pp. 180-81. On Naima, see below, pp. \*\*.

<sup>19</sup> Asali, 'Jerusalem under the Ottomans', p. 209.

<sup>20</sup> Ze'evi, *An Ottoman Century*, pp. 20-22; *Documents inédits pour servir à l'histoire du Christianisme en Orient*, ed. A.Rabbath 2 vols (Paris, 1905-21), 1.344-47.

<sup>21</sup> Abouali, 'Saladin's Legacy in the Middle East', pp. 175-89.

name and his many pious virtues and how his son would, as a new Saladin, restore the proper order:

Look to the khanqah, erected in the cause of our faith, by the hand of the righteous Salah al-Din, the high-minded one;

By him I mean the deceased King, may God's pleasure with him increase, he who saved Jerusalem from godlessness and injustice.

He founded it as an abode for the righteous [Sufi] masters from the world over, Arabs and non-Arabs...<sup>22</sup>

Thus, Saladin was clearly a familiar historical figure for him to cited in such a way.

Twice during the seventeenth century the famous Turkish travel writer, Evliya Çelibi (Tshelebi) visited the Near East, first in 1648-50, and then again in 1670-71, this time en route to Mecca. He wrote up his accounts on the basis of his experiences and the people he met and his texts include several instances from the period of the crusades, as well as events from many periods of history and episodes connected with the religious life of the area. He described a saint's shrine near Hattin connected to the family of the prophet Shu'ayb (biblical Jethro).<sup>23</sup> The saint himself was said to have been a warrior against the infidels and when Saladin came to visit him, 'honoured the sultan by putting his blessed head on the sultan's lap as he breathed his last.' Saladin then appointed a Maghrebi sheikh from his retinue, a man allegedly descended from the Fatimids, who built the shrine and was also buried there himself.<sup>24</sup> Shu'ayb is a central figure in the Druze tradition as the father of the prophets and the messenger of God and their most important holiday commemorates him. Çelibi's anecdotes are often inaccurate in detail (he further mentions Saladin in connection with Acre, Nablus and Jerusalem), but in broad outline represent a residual image of the medieval period in the Near East.<sup>25</sup> He also related a vision of the Prophet experienced by Suleiman the Magnificent when the latter succeeded to the Ottoman throne in 1520. The sultan was urged

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 187.

<sup>23</sup> Shu'ayb is a central figure in the Druze tradition as the father of the prophets and the messenger of God and their most important holiday commemorates him. S.H.Falah, *The Druzes in the Middle East* (New York, 2002), pp. 128-32.

<sup>24</sup> *Evliya Tshelibi's Travels in Palestine (1648-50)*, tr. St H. Stephan, reprinted and edited (Jerusalem, 1980), pp. 30-31. Saladin's secretary Baha al-Din mentioned the presence of Shu'ayb's tomb in the village of Hattin during his account of the build up to the battle there in 1187. Baha al-Din ibn Shaddad, *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin*, tr. D.S.Richards (Aldershot, 2001), p. 74, similarly, the Iberian Muslim writer, Ibn Jubayr noted it in his account of his pilgrimage in 1184: Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, tr. R.J.C.Broadhurst (London, 1952), p. 324.

<sup>25</sup> *Evliya Tshelibi's Travels in Palestine*, pp. 40-41, 48, 59. Gerber, *Remembering and Imagining Palestine*, pp. 64-65 also makes the point about a residual memory in his brief comments on Tshelibi.

to fortify the citadel of Jerusalem ‘in order to repulse the unbelievers’, thereby providing a later explanation why this had taken place tied to a memory of western hostility.<sup>26</sup>

Only four years later a remarkable demonstration of the popular memory of the crusades was reported by a French traveller, Jean Doubdan. He noted that repairs to the Franciscan convent of the Holy Saviour revealed unknown tunnels which were interpreted by the local populace as the means by which a new crusade could make its way into Jerusalem, from their origins in either Jaffa or even, somewhat improbably, the Hospitaller base of Malta. A riot ensued and Ottoman soldiers had to defend the convent. Once again, we see an intriguing, and presumably non-literate, echo of the traumas of the medieval age.<sup>27</sup>

In 1701, the French consul of Sidon was given permission to visit Jerusalem by Ottoman authorities in Istanbul. As was the case in 1621, this provoked fury amongst the local population who gathered in the Haram al-Sharif (the Temple Mount complex) and wrote a petition to Sultan Mustafa II demanding that he revoke this privilege. The people emphasised the sanctity of Jerusalem and said that allowing a foreign diplomat to remain in the city had never been permitted since the conquest by Caliph ‘Umar in the seventh century nor after Saladin’s recovery of the place in 1187. There was also an explicit fear of the current interest and attention of the infidels in the area and a worry that ‘we will be occupied as a result of this, as happened repeatedly in past times.’<sup>28</sup>

One of the most important histories of the Ottomans produced in Turkish was written by Mustafa Naima (1665-1716), who worked at a time of significant conflict between his masters and the Austrians and the Russians. Naima wrote until around 1704 and his account covered the years 1590 to 1660 with the idea of setting out the errors of previous rulers to enable contemporary heads of state to avoid similar mistakes. The need to explain to the Ottoman public the unpopular Treaty of Karlowitz (1699) in which the Ottomans surrendered Transylvania and much of Hungary, a first permanent loss of Ottoman Muslim lands to Christians, also prompted him to act.<sup>29</sup>

Bernard Lewis comments how Naima drew a parallel between contemporary wars and the earlier defeat of the crusaders. In the medieval period Muslim discord allowed the French and Austrian (!) infidels to occupy the shores of the Mediterranean and to threaten Damascus and Egypt. Saladin changed this balance and his successors drove them out. Yet Naima also

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<sup>26</sup> *Evliya Tshelibi's Travels in Palestine*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>27</sup> Jean Doubdan, *Le Voyage de la Terre Sainte* (Paris, 1661), pp. 327-40, especially, pp. 329-333; Ze’evi, *Ottoman Century*, p. 22; Gerber, *Remembering and Imagining Palestine*, p. 65.

<sup>28</sup> R.I.Khalidi, ‘Contrasting Narratives of Palestinian Identity’, in: *The Geography of Identity*, ed. P.Yaeger (Ann Arbor MI, 1996), pp. 215-17.

<sup>29</sup> N.Itzkowitz, *Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition* (Chicago, 1972), pp. 84-85, 100-103.



wrote in a didactic fashion and noted that it had been necessary to make treaties with the Franks, even ceding Jerusalem to them at one point, as a way of taking a longer view. He argued that: 'this has been written for the purpose of showing how important it is to make armistices with infidel kings, indeed, to make peace with the Christians of the whole earth so that the Ottoman lands may be put in order and the inhabitants may have respite.'<sup>30</sup>

Naima viewed Saladin as a magnificent exemplar for contemporary rulers: 'It is the truth that he served religion and the state in a way which has been granted to few other kings. Books of history are full to overflowing with honour and praise for that noble individual.'<sup>31</sup> The latter observation is also an interesting and powerful attestation to his continued standing and memory down to at least the early eighteenth century. Naima also gave a lengthy description of the history of a book of advice given to Saladin and a Sufi scholar from Baghdad.<sup>32</sup> These references show the sultan being remembered outside of a strictly military context and, given Naima was based in Istanbul, shows that the sultan's memory, presumably preserved in earlier sources, had survived there.

Back in the Levant, Muhammad al-Khalili (d.1734), mufti of Jerusalem, wrote about Jerusalem and Hebron between 1714 and 1716 and gave a generous account of Saladin's achievements.<sup>33</sup> In 1726 al-Khalili set out details of land and property in Jerusalem in his *waqf*. He warned against the transfer of *waqf* property to covetous foreigners because he felt that this endangered the holy city and he encouraged the authorities to develop the buildings and population of Jerusalem so as to deter aggression.<sup>34</sup>

At the end of the eighteenth century, however, a seismic change in relations between the West and the Muslim Near East took place. In 1798 Napoleon invaded Egypt to initiate major European involvement in the region, a move that, aside from the massive cultural, economic and political upheavals that this produced was also a cue for both groups to recall the crusades. In the case of the West this process is becoming well documented, most notably through the work of Siberry; the same cannot be said for the Near East.<sup>35</sup>

To some in Napoleon's forces their actions echoed campaigns of ages past. Captain Joseph-Marie Moiret, for example, wrote 'we could not wait to set our feet on the dust so

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<sup>30</sup> Cited in: Lewis, *Muslim Discovery of Europe*, pp. 165-66; L.V.Thomas, *A Study of Naima* (New York, 1972), pp. 78-83.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas, *A Study of Naima*, p. 46.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

<sup>33</sup> Abouali, 'Saladin's Legacy in the Middle East', p. 180.

<sup>34</sup> Asali, 'Jerusalem under the Ottomans', p. 219.

<sup>35</sup> E.Siberry, *The New Crusaders: Images of the Crusaders in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Aldershot, 2000).

often trodden by the Macedonian phalanxes, by the Roman legions and the blessed battalions of the Crusaders. We burned to surpass the pagan heroes of old and to avenge the spilled blood of our Christian forefathers.’<sup>36</sup> By contrast, Napoleon and his associates, through a combination of their own ideology and a serious concern that such imagery could harden opposition to them, tried very hard to explain to the Egyptians their admiration for Islam and to make clear that they would not persecute locals on religious grounds. They even pointed out that they had just conquered Malta, the headquarters of the Knights of St John (the Hospitallers), a group sworn to destroy Islam.<sup>37</sup> Such protestations did not, however, convince many. In the immediate aftermath of the invasion the important Caireine historian al-Jabarti wrote the first of a trio of important narratives (MS *Mudda*) in which he made plain that he regarded the French as untrustworthy in their promises to respect the foundations of the religious community while he also mentioned the conduct of a holy war against them.<sup>38</sup> In the second, completed soon after December 1801, (MS *Mazhar al-Taqdis*), he showed his readers that God’s will had saved Egypt from Napoleon through the arrival in the region of the Ottoman troops dispatched under the grand vizier, Yusuf Zia Pasha. He argued that whenever Egypt had been in trouble in the past it had been rescued by someone named Yusuf (Joseph) and amongst the four individuals whom he cited was Salah al-Din Yusuf who had saved Egypt from the Fatimids and their heresy and had proclaimed the party of the *sunna* and the true faith.<sup>39</sup> This represents a further example of Saladin being remembered in circumstances aside from the conflict with the crusaders. The *Aja’ib*, the third of al-Jabarti’s texts, is a history from earliest times to 1805 and in it Saladin is identified as a hero of the holy war, as well as again referencing his removal of the Shi’a. The book also mentioned the defeat and imprisonment of Louis IX: ‘These were the French crusaders.’<sup>40</sup>

Another eye-witness to the French invasion was Niqula al-Turk (Nicholas the Turk), a Greek Catholic court poet whose family lived around Deir el-Qamar, located in the Chouf Mountains, to the south-east of Beirut in Lebanon. Largely on behalf of his master, the Druze

<sup>36</sup> Joseph-Marie Moiret, *Memoires of Napoleon’s Egyptian Expedition, 1798-1801*, ed. and tr. R.Brindle (London, 2001), p. 40.

<sup>37</sup> J.R.Cole, *Napoleon’s Egypt: Invading the Middle East* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 8-11, 30-35.

<sup>38</sup> The MS *Mudda* is translated in: *Napoleon in Egypt: al-Jabarti’s Chronicle of the French Occupation, 1798*, introduction by R.L.Tignor, trans. S.Moreh, expanded edition, (Princeton, 2004), pp. 3-15, 24-33 for the refutation of French claims to be religiously neutral; see pp. 36, 83 for the fighting of a holy war against the French. On al-Jabarti see also: D.Ayalon, ‘The Historian al-Jabarti and his Background’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 23/2 (1960), pp. 217-49, who includes comments on the circulation of the text.

<sup>39</sup> Bjørnbee, *In Search of the True Political Position of the ‘Ulama*, pp. 185-217, esp. 197-201.

<sup>40</sup> ‘*Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti’s History of Egypt*, 3 vols., eds. T.Philipp and M.Perlmann (Stuttgart, 1994), 1.21-23; Bjørnbee, *In Search of the True Political Position of the ‘Ulama*, p. 252; T.Philipp, ‘The French and the French Revolution in the Works of al-Jabarti’, *Eighteenth Century Egypt: The Arabic Manuscript Sources*, ed. D.Crecelius (Claremont, CA 1990), pp. 127-40.

Emir Bechir, Niqula observed the French from the town of Damietta in northern Egypt, although as a Christian himself, he felt some affiliation with the French. His own views aside, he was quite clear why the Egyptians resisted the Europeans: ‘Les Égyptiens ne pouvaient absolument pas supporter les Français, à cause des divergences de religion, de langue et de costume, sans compter qu’une vieille inimitié existait entre les Français et les Égyptiens depuis l’époque du Sultan Baibars. Les troupes du roi de France Louis étaient venues se faire battre en ce point par l’armée musulmane, et le souvenir en fut perpétué par le nom donné à la ville, Mansourah (la Victorieuse).<sup>41</sup> He wrote of the pain the people felt enduring the invaders’ occupation of a country that had been in Muslim hands since the time of the Prophet. He noted that the French had tried to take it in the past but had never succeeded and the last attempt had been by King Louis, who had suffered defeat at Mansourah ‘comme cela ressort des chroniques.’<sup>42</sup> This final comment indicates the circulation of written texts, or oral traditions from the medieval period, as will be noted further below.

Napoleon’s landing in Egypt prompted the Ottoman governor of Damascus to inform the notables of Jerusalem that their city was, as always, the ultimate target of the infidels.<sup>43</sup> The governor of Gaza wrote to Jerusalem warning of the imminent approach of the French in early 1799, describing them as ‘cursed French infidels, may God destroy them all’. Other correspondence included the *qadi* of Anatolia urging the people of Palestine to fight the French, while the ‘*alim* of Jerusalem wrote a poem to celebrate the victory of Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar over the invaders at Acre in 1804.<sup>44</sup>

The ongoing and increasing European presence in the southern and eastern Mediterranean was prompted by, and contributed towards, the slow collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The broader instability of the region also created an environment that raised tensions between Christians and Muslims in the Middle East and formed another cue for historical comparisons. Finally – and often interlinked with this wider framework of regional instability – various international conflicts presented an opportunity to look back to the medieval age.

It is clear that as the nineteenth century progressed westerners had a far greater and more permanent presence in the Levant than for many centuries. Britain was concerned to guard its strategic and economic interests in the area; the Germans wanted to support the Ottoman Empire; France wished to preserve its role as protector of Catholics in the Holy

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<sup>41</sup> Nicolas Turc, *Chronique d’Égypte 1798-1804*, ed. and tr. G. Wiet (Cairo, 1950), pp. 35-36. On Niqula’s career and writings also see: Afaf Lufti al-Sayyid Marsot, ‘A Comparative Study of ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti and Niqula al-Turk’, in: *Eighteenth Century Egypt*, ed. Creelius, pp. 115-126.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>43</sup> Gerber, *Remembering and Imagining Palestine*, p. 66.

<sup>44</sup> Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, pp. 41-42; Asali, ‘Jerusalem under the Ottomans’, p. 222.

Land (based on the 1535 'Capitulations'), while the Russians wished to promote the Orthodox Church and to weaken the Ottomans.<sup>45</sup> This meant the appearance of consulates in Jerusalem, an issue so firmly rejected in the past. Thus, in 1839 the British established a consulate, in 1842, the Germans, in 1843 the French, Russia in 1858 and so on.<sup>46</sup> These developments also prompted greater religious representation, most notably, in 1844 when a Greek Orthodox patriarch returned to Jerusalem, followed three years later by a Latin patriarch.<sup>47</sup>

In consequence, from the early to the mid-nineteenth century, the Middle East also saw a substantial rise in western visitors, some as tourists, some as pilgrims and some as missionaries.<sup>48</sup> The fact that various of these people or institutions recalled the crusades may well have had some effect. The traveller Poujoulet articulated just such a view, combining Christian zeal with an unshakeable regard for French destiny and a sense of continuity with the past. In the mid-1840s he wrote of taking up the work of Godfrey of Bouillon, Louis VII and Saint Louis and he claimed '...la mission providentielle de la France contre l'islamisme au profit de l'unité du genre humain, de la unite chrétienne...', as well as 'notre guerre d'Afrique est donc une continuation des croisades'.<sup>49</sup> The behaviour of these westerners could also recall the crusading age. The decision (for domestic political reasons) by the French community in Jerusalem to celebrate the 14 July as the taking of Jerusalem by Godfrey of Bouillon, rather than Bastille Day is but one small example of this.<sup>50</sup>

While Poujoulet represents the voice of a visitor the local Christians were perhaps more likely to influence the feelings of the native population in recalling the crusading era. In 1841 Syrian Christians petitioned western leaders for the creation of an independent Christian territory. In mid-1855 so great was the level of turmoil in Palestine the possibility of a French military occupation was raised, partially in response to requests by local Christians and also echoing the French wish for greater political influence in Palestine. A close observer of the Middle East at this time was James Finn, the British consul in Jerusalem who held office

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<sup>45</sup> R.Mazza, *Jerusalem from the Ottomans to the British* (London, 2009), pp. 84-85.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Y.Shalit, "'The French Kingdom of Jerusalem": Franco-Vatican Rivalry in the mid-Nineteenth Century', *France and the Middle East: Past, Present and Future*, ed. M.Abitbol (Jerusalem, 2004), pp. 37-38.

<sup>48</sup> Siberry, *New Crusaders*, pp. 64-72; Mazza, *Jerusalem from the Ottomans to the British*, pp. 78-80.

<sup>49</sup> J.J.F.Poujoulat, *Études africaines: récits et pensées d'un voyageur*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1847), 2.109, 114. See also 2.109-121, plus 1.10. In his *Voyage dans l'asie mineure*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1840-41), 2.366 he notes 'La vieille France, la France du moyen âge, a laissé partout des traces sur les chemins de la Palestine'.

<sup>50</sup> C.Nicault, 'Foi et politique: les pèlerinages français en Terre Sainte', in: *De Bonaparte à Balfour. La France, l'Europe occidentale et la Palestine, 1799-1917*, eds. D.Trimbur and A.Aaronsohn (Paris, 2008), p. 319.

from 1845 to 1863. In May 1855 he reported that this idea of a French army of occupation was present 'in the minds of the city's inhabitants.'<sup>51</sup>

Weak Ottoman control over Jerusalem meant decades of declining political stability in the Middle East and in 1831 Muhammad 'Ali Pasha of Egypt occupied the city. Nine years later an Anglo-Ottoman fleet forced him to relinquish his hold on Acre, potentially another reminder of earlier events at the city.<sup>52</sup> Over the next two decades tensions between the Maronites and the Druze in the Lebanon grew, fuelled in part by wider political and economic factors and also by a determined missionary presence. In 1856 the grant of full equality for all subjects in the Ottoman Empire prompted many anti-Christian riots in the area.<sup>53</sup> By the summer of 1860 the violence became far more serious, most notably in Damascus where thousands of Christians died and their property was torched in an outbreak of sectarian brutality. An English missionary in Damascus wrote of his fear that he would be identified as 'A Frank or a Christian', as the mob tore through the streets.<sup>54</sup> Many in Europe demanded a military response and inevitably some couched this in terms of a crusade. Napoleon III sought to inspire his troops with a call to 'show yourselves the dignified children of those heroes who gloriously brought the banner of Christ to that land.'<sup>55</sup> General Charles de Beaufort led the French troops to Syria. He spoke of his place in a long succession of his compatriots' responsibilities in the region, fighting for a noble, civilised cause and following in the footsteps of, amongst others, Godfrey of Bouillon, the first ruler of Crusader Jerusalem. The volume of these calls meant that, at the very least, the Ottoman government at the very least had to hear such comments and be aware that such imagery was being used.<sup>56</sup>

The connection between wider international struggles and Christian-Muslim relations in the Near East has been mentioned above and one can cite two examples in more detail. The Greek War of Independence from 1821-30 produced intense conflict between Christians and Muslims and had the side-effect of provoking considerable tension between the two faiths in Jerusalem with the Christians accused of conspiring with the Greeks.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Around the time of the return of the Catholic patriarch to Jerusalem, ideas in the papal court expressed the possibility of an independent state in Palestine based on a Military Order and even the foundation of a hereditary or elected monarchy in Jerusalem. Shalit 'Franco-Vatican Rivalry', pp. 41-42.

<sup>52</sup> J.P.Spagnolo, *France and Ottoman Lebanon 1861-1914* (London, 1977), pp. 11-13.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-25.

<sup>54</sup> L.T.Fawaz, *An Occasion for War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860* (London, 1994), p. 90.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>56</sup> Fawaz, *Occasion for War*, pp. 101-110, quote at p.119.

<sup>57</sup> Asali, 'Jerusalem under the Ottomans', pp. 223-24. Some supporters of the Greeks in France saw their cause in terms of a crusade. One example can be seen in Stendahl's novel *Armance* (1826); further evidence in politics and art can be found in N.M.Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *French Images from the Greek War of Independence, 1821-1830* (London, 1989), pp. 3-25.

The Crimean War brought particular concerns. Once again, Consul Finn provides an insight into the situation in Jerusalem. His extensive memoirs were heavily coloured by the outbreak of this conflict which he felt posed a considerable threat to the Christian community in the East, not least because it aroused memories of the crusading age. In 1853 the Turkish commandant of Jerusalem was asked by Arab troops: 'Who are these upstart Russians? We have heard of the French, the English and the Germans as being honourable foes of Saladin, but who are these dead dogs with burnt fathers, the Russians?'<sup>58</sup> Finn wanted England to support the Ottomans, not least to deprive the war 'of its most dangerous characteristics, namely that of a Holy War between all of Christendom on one side and all of Islam on the other.'<sup>59</sup> He believed that the Muslims of the region saw war against the Russians 'as a holy war in which Islam was to be ranged against Christianity'. Finn remarked on the strong historical memories of the locals: 'The lapse of the centuries does not tell us much in the East... the people judge of history rather by their own lasting impressions than by dates of chronology. In this way it is that our own native neighbours were better acquainted with the battles of Yarmuk or Hattin, or Afoolah (Tabor), and the French siege of Acre, than the Treaty of Kainardj which concerned only the Turks and the yellow-haired Russians'.<sup>60</sup> Thus this contemporary political struggle apparently evoked a popular memory of the medieval period and of Saladin as the opponent of Christianity. A more prosaic anecdote that echoed the crusades was noted by Finn as he visited Acre where a low hill nearby was known as Coeur-de-Lion.<sup>61</sup>

Notwithstanding such confrontational scenarios, the memory of Saladin could survive outside of the paradigm of Christian-Muslim conflict. Another relevant document comes from the Greek Archimandrite of Cyprus, who, in 1844, cited a 'Memorandum on the Various Christian Communities and their Disputes about the Holy Places'. This was part of a dispute between the Greeks and the Armenians over possessions in Palestine and made much of a grant by Saladin to the Ethiopians, places in turn now claimed by the Greeks. In fact the document was a forgery, although for our purposes attests to the potency of Saladin in the Near East as an authoritative figure from history.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> J.Finn, *Stirring Times*, 2 volumes (London, 1878), 1.337.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.340.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.127.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.58-59; 2.15.

<sup>62</sup> E.Van Donzel, 'Were there Ethiopians in Jerusalem at the Time of Saladin's Conquest in 1187?' in: *East and West in the Crusader States II. Context, Contacts, Confrontations*, eds. K.Ciggaar and H.Teule (Leuven, 1999), pp. 125-27.

Likewise, in 1849 the Presbyterian missionary and traveller Josias Leslie Porter arrived in Damascus and he remained in the Middle East for the next ten years. Amongst his publications was a description of Damascus that included matters of historical interest. He was, incidentally, aware of the important twelfth century historian of the city, Ibn ‘Asakir, and had visited his tomb. More pertinently, he concluded his account of Saladin’s life by noting his tomb at the edge of the Great Mosque and stated: ‘In Damascus, where his subjects had the best opportunities of witnessing his justice and clemency, the people mourned as for a father and benefactor; and to this day his name is venerated by every Muslim.’<sup>63</sup> Once again, we see Saladin remembered as a figure of integrity and standing, rather than just as a holy warrior.

An interesting episode occurred in 1858 when one of the very first Lebanese newspapers (*Hadiqat al-akhbar*, or Garden of News) was launched. In its first year of publication it chose to serialise Abu Shama’s work ‘The Two Gardens’, a substantial and popular thirteenth century account of the lives of Nur ad-Din and Saladin that had been copied in manuscript form many times down the centuries. Presumably the decision to select such a work shows a belief that it would be of interest to the readership. As early as 1860, the first printed version of this text was advertised too, followed by an Egyptian-produced printed version in 1871.<sup>64</sup> In fact, Abu Shama’s work, along with fellow-medieval writers such as Ibn al-Athir, were both still being copied in manuscript form during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, showing that scholarly communities were still using them. That said, the production of printed versions of the main medieval histories also took off, enabling the stories of Saladin and the crusades (amongst many others, of course) to circulate more widely several decades before the Kaiser’s visit to the East. Thus Ibn Khallikhan’s Biographical Dictionary was printed in 1881, Ibn al-Athir’s *al-Kamil fil-Tarikh* in 1885 and even the more recent text of al-Jabarti, noted above was printed in 1879.<sup>65</sup>

In conclusion, while acknowledging the importance of the Kaiser’s visit as an external stimulus in a revival of the memory of the crusades, especially amongst the elite levels of Muslim society, the transmission of the memory of the crusades – and Saladin as an exemplary leader – should not be underestimated (nor, of course, should it be overestimated!). The strict accuracy of these histories or anecdotes is not at issue but in this

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<sup>63</sup> J.L.Porter, *Five Years in Damascus: With Travels and Researches in Palmyra, Lebanon, The Giant Cities of Bashan and the Hauran*, second edition (London, 1870), p. 35; Ibn ‘Asakir reference at p. 17.

<sup>64</sup> K.Hirschler, *Medieval Arabic Historiography: Authors as Actors* (London, 2006), pp. 118-121; on the context of newspapers at this time, see: A.Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East: A History* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 29-34.

<sup>65</sup> Khalidi, ‘Palestinian Identity’, pp. 43-44 and p. 223, n. 20.

instance their importance lies in channelling and maintaining a historical legacy. Come the early twentieth century, such memories helped to provide a seed-bed for political and religious leaders, as well as the popular classes, to tap into. As has been made plain, once into the nineteenth century western influences certainly started to add to, and to fuel, such memories but they had already survived for centuries. The westerners' frequent labelling of their enterprises as crusades may well have had some effect on how the local population saw what was happening, thus – alongside the residual memory of the medieval age and the locals' own perceptions – perceived parallels could be perpetuated and amplified.

Kaiser Wilhelm's tour chimed in with the emergence of Arab nationalism. This in itself grew out of the cultural, political, religious and economic events covered so briefly in the latter stages of this article. One could also add the influence of Arabs who had been to the West, or were western educated, as well as the advance of the Zionist movement.<sup>66</sup> The literature produced during and in the aftermath of the Kaiser's visit was important to the place of Saladin and the crusades in the public consciousness of the Near East and then in the ideas of Arab Nationalists and later Islamists. But the role of the sultan and the crusaders were not, as historians have suggested, purely driven by the external stimulus of Wilhelm's visit.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, pp. 41-42; Itzkowitz, *Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition*, points to this happening from the late eighteenth century, p. 109

<sup>67</sup> It seems evident that with linguistic skills beyond the European-based capabilities of this present author, and a long research project much information from Arabic and Turkish sources would emerge.