

Chapter Twenty-five

The Crisis of the Dar al-Islam, through the Wars of Timur the Lame

While Christians and Judaeans were grimly coexisting in Catholic Europe's "Dark Age," followers of all three Abrahamic faiths were faring much better in the Dar al-Islam. From several perspectives the tenth and eleventh centuries were the high-point of the Muslim world. Arabic learning and literature were flourishing, while Persian-speaking Muslims were creating their own literary culture. The material circumstances of the Middle East and North Africa were better than those in Orthodox Christendom and far above those of Catholic Europe. Politically and militarily the Muslims' fortunes were not quite what they had been during the califate of Harun al-Rashid, before their empire had begun to break apart. Nevertheless, the regional amirs cooperated sufficiently that the lands that they governed were secure.

The relative positions of Catholic Europe and the Dar al-Islam began to change with the crusades. Although the crusades contributed to the decline of the Dar al-Islam, its principal cause was the devastation wrought by Mongolian raiders and conquerors in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The crusades were, however, of fundamental importance for the rise of Catholic Europe. Before reviewing the history of the crusades we must look at the worsening relations between Muslims and Christians in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The "Pact of Umar"

It may have been in the ninth century that the so-called "Pact of Umar" began to take shape. The earliest references to the "pact" date from the tenth or eleventh century, and during the later Abbasid period it became increasingly important in Muslim law. To give it a respectable pedigree the "pact" was apparently retrojected to the califate of Umar.¹ It assumes, however, the conditions of a time much later than the 630s (it assumes, for example, the availability of the published Quran in Christian lands), and reflects Muslim attempts to discourage Christianity that are incongruent with seventh-century realities. The main concern of the "rightly guided califs" and of the Umayyads had been to maximize the *jizya*, and they therefore preferred that the Dhimmis remain in their own religious traditions. Under the Abbasids everyone - Christians, Judaeans and Muslims - paid a land tax, and this became the chief source of revenue. As the poll-tax on the "people of the book" lost some of its importance, the Abbasid califs could with little fiscal sacrifice permit (although they hardly encouraged) widespread conversion of Christians to the Muslim faith.

We have seen (at the end of Chapter 22) that in the cities of the Levant the conversion of Christians to Islam occurred mainly in the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries. Late in the Umayyad period well over ninety per cent of the population in Palestine and Syria was evidently still Christian, but it seems that by the tenth century only half of the population was Christian and that by the fourteenth century only one out of ten Syrians was a Christian (approximately the same proportion as that reflected in Syrian censuses at the beginning of the twentieth century).² As the population turned toward Islam it was not uncommon for a church to be transferred from a Christian congregation to Muslims and converted into a mosque.

As Islam began to be seen as a universal religion, the “Pact of Umar” emerged to discourage Christianity (and perhaps Judaism, although evidence on that score is lacking). In the “pact” Christians acknowledge that they will receive protection from the Muslim rulers only on condition that they neither attempt to convert any Muslim to Christianity nor prevent a Christian from being converted to Islam. In addition, in the “pact” the Christians of Syria promise not to build new churches and monasteries or to repair old ones, not to ring bells at their churches or make loud wailing at funerals, and not to display their Christianity openly by wearing crosses or cutting their hair in a monk’s tonsure. From things Muslim and Arabic the Christians agree to keep their distance: dressing in the Arabian fashion, teaching their children the Quran, or even (this was unenforceable and disregarded) using the Arabic language. Furthermore, the Christians swear that they will not bear weapons, ride horses, or build houses that overtop those of the Muslims. Seated Christians will rise and give their places to Muslims who wish to sit down. And it is agreed that any Christian who strikes a Muslim forfeits all of his rights as a *dhimma* and may therefore be killed with impunity.

Had such conditions been announced in the 630s or 640s the enormous Christian population of the Levant and Egypt would have resisted Umar’s troops instead of welcoming them, and Umar would have had an altogether more difficult time creating the great empire for which he is famous. By the ninth or tenth century, contrarily, Christians were in no position to assert their prerogatives and in some cities of the Dar al-Islam Muslims were eager to lower the profile of Christianity. Toward that objective efforts were here and there made to discourage Christianity, and the “Pact of Umar” gave these efforts a specious legitimacy: it pretended that long ago the Christians themselves had drawn up the pact for Umar’s approval and had promised to abide by it.

The destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre

In 1009 the Fatimid calif of Egypt, al-Hakim (Abu ‘Ali Mansur, ruled 996-1021), ordered the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which was the grandest of the Christian churches in Jerusalem. It was also the goal of many pilgrims, who came yearly to Jerusalem to observe the holy days of Good Friday and Easter at the site of those events. Al-Hakim’s act of destruction was contrary to the protection that Muslim rulers - including the Fatimids - had given to the site for almost four hundred years, but it fit in very well with al-Hakim’s campaign against Christianity (he campaigned as well against Judaism and Sunni Islam). Although al-Hakim’s Fatimid successors regained the trust of their many Christian subjects, the burning of the church aggrieved Christians throughout both the Byzantine empire and Latin Christendom. Eventually it provided much emotional encouragement for the crusaders to recover Jerusalem and restore the church.

The Almoravids in Spain

In some lands the disabilities imposed by or reflected in the “Pact of Umar” do seem to have encouraged conversion to Islam. In Egypt it was evidently in the eleventh and twelfth centuries that most people in the countryside became Muslim, in an essentially voluntary manner. In Spain, however, a more coercive push toward Islamization began late in the eleventh century,

as a response to aggression by the adjacent Christian kingdoms, and this compulsory conversion backfired. How all of this came about needs to be studied in some detail.

The last of the Umayyad califs in Cordoba, Hisham III, was overthrown by the Cordobans in 1031. Although the ideology of a Spanish califate survived for another fifty-five years,³ in practical terms the califate was replaced by a cluster of small Muslim kingdoms, each kingdom - or *taifa* - being ruled by an amir. The most important of these taifas were Zaragoza, Toledo, Sevilla and Granada. On religious matters the amirs were as tolerant as had been the Umayyads, and the taifas were therefore pluralist states: although Muslims enjoyed the highest prestige, the amirs' Jewish and Christian subjects were protected and more or less content. The Jewish population in Spain was large, and by the eleventh century more Judaeans may have been living in Spain than in all the rest of Europe. Christians in the Muslim part of Spain were not so numerous, but were under few constraints and had developed their own "Mozarabic" tradition.⁴ Mozarabic was a language, or a group of closely related dialects, descended from Latin and so cognate with Spanish and Portuguese. It was written, however, not with Roman letters but with the Arabic alphabet. In most of the churches in Muslim Spain the liturgy was performed in a Mozarabic dialect and according to the Mozarabic rite.

In the far north of Spain, in and near the Pyrenees mountains, were the Christian kingdoms. These were (from west to east) León, Castile, Pamplona (Navarre), Aragon, and the county of Barcelona. In these kingdoms the population was overwhelmingly Christian, with only small Jewish minorities attached to the larger cities. Linguistically the kingdoms were diverse, with as many Basque and Romance dialects as there were mountain valleys. The one language that all had in common was Latin, the dead language of the Catholic church, and the Basque language did not become a rallying flag for nationalists until the nineteenth century.

So long as the Umayyad califate ruled southern and central Spain, the Christian kingdoms in the far north were not expansionist. After 1031, however, the Christian rulers began to exploit the relative weakness of the Muslim taifas, and to encroach upon the closest of them. Most spectacularly, in 1085 Alfonso VI of Castile defeated the amir of Toledo and annexed his realm. Almost ten thousand square miles of central Spain were suddenly shifted from Muslim to Christian control.

To counter the threat from Alfonso other amirs called in a large force of Moroccan Almorāvids. The Arabic word *al-murābit* is usually translated as "ascetic warrior" or "warrior monk," and it denotes the puritanism, asceticism, and aggressiveness of these men. The Almoravids could also be described as "those who band together for the defense of the faith."⁵ In the tenth and early eleventh century many Berber tribesmen in Morocco had been nominal Muslims, but knew little of the Quran and were unfamiliar with *sharī'ah*. A tribal chief, Yahya ibn Ibrahim, went on a *hajj* to Mecca ca. 1040, and there learned what devout Muslims were supposed to do and how they were supposed to live. When Yahya returned to Morocco he brought with him a scholar-teacher, in order to instruct the Berbers on Muslim law. Initially the tribesmen refused to listen and Yahya had to withdraw to a monastic retreat, where he and his followers could practice an intense and ascetic Islam. Over the next several decades, by their puritanical example and their military prowess the "warrior monks" persuaded thousands of

Berber tribesmen to become “Almoravids.” In the 1070s the Almoravids, under the leadership of Yūsuf ibn Tashfin, made themselves masters of Morocco.

These were the allies whom the Andalusian amirs called upon to assist them against encroachment by the Christian kings of northern Spain. Quick to accept the invitation, Yūsuf ibn Tashfin brought a large Almoravid force across the Straits of Gibraltar. In 1086 Yusuf, who called himself “Amir of the Believers,” defeated Alfonso VI of Castile, halting the latter’s expansion toward the south. Dismissing his Andalusian employers after his victory, Yusuf ruled over both Morocco and most of the territory that had once belonged to the Spanish Umayyads. His was “an authority more hostile to non-Muslims than any previous one,”⁶ because the Almoravids believed that the forceful conversion of infidels to Islam was pleasing to God.

Instead of Islamizing Spain, however, the new militancy gave the Christian rulers in northern Spain added reason to make designs on the lands to the south: they would liberate the Christians of Andalusia from Muslim repression. Thus began the Christians’ Reconquista of Spain. The hostility toward “the Moors” that permeates the Spanish epic *El Cid* does not reflect the realities of the mid-eleventh century, when as a mercenary the real El Cid - Rodrigo Diaz - fought for both Christian and Muslim employers. Instead, it reflects the much more rancorous and polarized Almoravid period, when the long war between Christian Spain and Muslim Spain had gotten under way.⁷ More generally, the militancy of the Almoravids also contributed to the anti-Muslim emotions that were rising in European Christendom at the end of the eleventh century.

The Norman conquests in southern Italy and Sicily

The Norman conquests in southern Italy and Sicily were not religiously motivated, but they did contribute to the crusading spirit. Normans were ambitious adventurers in the eleventh century, and were regarded as exceptional warriors. As is well known, in 1066 William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy, pressed his weak claim to the English throne by taking an army of eight or nine thousand men across the English Channel and defeating Harold II at the Battle of Hastings.

Early in the eleventh century Norman mercenaries had begun hiring out to southern Italian employers, usually Lombard nobles but occasionally the Byzantine *catepan* (governor). Normans were among the troops that the Catepan, George Maniakes, took with him to Sicily in 1038-40, in his attempt to take the island back from its Muslim rulers. At about that same time William the Iron Arm and Drogo, two of the older sons of Tancred of Hauteville in Normandy, began their mercenary service in Apulia. They joined hands with Lombard nobles in expelling the Greek garrisons from strongholds in Apulia and Calabria, effectively ending the period of Byzantine control of southern Italy. A dozen Norman leaders set themselves up as local rulers in some of the most desirable places, but maintained a loose alliance among themselves. Ca. 1050 Drogo was named “Count of the Normans in all Apulia and Calabria.”

Having conquered most of Calabria, in 1060 the Normans crossed the Straits of Messina to try their luck in Sicily. At the time the island was divided among three Muslim amirs. One

of the amirs thought to improve his situation against his rivals by inviting a Norman force to assist him. This was the beginning of the end of the long Muslim chapter in Sicilian history. The Norman “allies” of the short-sighted amir were Robert *Guiscard* (“the cunning”) and Roger, two of the younger sons of Tancred of Hauteville. According to Anna Comnena, Robert Guiscard was very tall, powerfully built, and had a terrible battle-cry. Although as a young man Robert was said to have left Normandy with only three dozen followers, he and Roger had by 1060 parlayed the small band into a small army and were eager for more adventures.

Having easily taken Messina after a night-time crossing of the straits, the Norman brothers extended their control to all of northeastern Sicily. Robert returned to the mainland to live out his days as the Duke of Apulia and Calabria. Roger remained in Sicily and from 1071 until his death in 1101 was known as “Count of the Normans in Sicily.” He took the great city of Palermo in 1072, and by 1091 - with the fall of Noto, at the southeastern tip of the island - Roger ruled all of Sicily.

The Norman conquest of Sicily was undertaken not at all for religious reasons, but out of sheer political ambition. Nevertheless, the conquest had religious repercussions, despite the fact that Roger was religiously tolerant and made no effort to convert the considerable Muslim population of Sicily to Christianity. The Norman conquest of Sicily occurred at the same time that the Almoravids, militant Muslims, were establishing themselves in Spain and that Seljuk Turkish warlords were taking over much of Anatolia from the Byzantines. The Norman achievement therefore helped to balance, so far as northern Europeans were concerned, the distressing news from Spain and Anatolia, and suggested that Muslim political and military power was more vulnerable than might otherwise have been supposed.

The Seljuks, and a Turkish-Persian culture (999-1220)

Because of their centuries-long contacts with the Dar al-Islam, and especially because they had furnished large numbers of *mamluk* horsemen to the califs and to the Samanid amirs, by ca. 1000 many of the Turkish-speaking nomads of central Asia had been converted to Islam. The *mamluk* soldiers rose to be captains, commanders, king-makers, and finally rulers. One of the first such rulers was Mahmud of Ghazna (now in Afghanistan), who in 999 toppled the Samanids and launched a short-lived Ghaznavid empire over most of Iran and much of central Asia. Because Turkish was not yet a written language, Mahmud and his successors employed Persian scribes and scholars in their court at Ghazna. The Ghaznavids were also generous patrons of Persian culture, supporting the epic poet Ferdowsi, the polymath and philosopher Ibn Sina (Avicenna), and several less notable writers.

Just as Persianate but more durable than the Ghaznavids were the Seljuks, a dynasty descended from an Oghuz Turkish warrior and leader named Seljuk. The grandson of Seljuk, Toghrul Beg (the honorific *beg* was the Turkish word for “chief”) commanded the loyalty of several thousand Oghuz horsemen and with them began raiding Ghaznavid cities. The Ghaznavid ruler forced a showdown, which came late in May of 1040 at an arid place called Dandanaqan (between the oasis-cities of Merv and Sarakhs, in eastern Turkmenistan). Because his own men were badly outnumbered, Toghrul Beg turned the size of the Ghaznavid army

against it: for days he kept it from replenishing its water supplies, and he then attacked and destroyed it. The victory put most of Iran under Toghrul's control. Not content with Iran, he added Iraq to his domain. In 1055 he made himself master of Baghdad. Although Toghrul Beg declared himself a servant of the Abbasid caliphate, the caliph at the same time recognized Toghrul as the *sultan* (ruler) of Iraq and Iran. The Turkish warlord was pleased with that title, and its distinction grew along with the territory ruled by the Seljuks.

Seljuk sultans ruled Iran for more than a hundred years, but by the end of the twelfth century they had lost it to another Oghuz Turkish dynasty. These were the Khwarezmian shahs (Khwarezm was the relatively arable territory along the Amu Darya river, which flowed from the Himalayas westward to the now-depleted Aral Sea). Like their Ghaznavid predecessors, both the Seljuks and the Khwarezmian shahs were energetic patrons of Persian culture. Umar bin Ibrahim Khayyam (1048-1131) lived and taught in Neyshapur, in northeastern Iran. He was supported by the Seljuk sultan Malikshah, who made his capital at Isfahan, in western Iran. During his lifetime Khayyam was celebrated for many books that he wrote on mathematics, astronomy and philosophy. All of these books he wrote in Arabic, the language of scholarship. Somewhat incidentally Khayyam also wrote a small volume of poetic quatrains - the *Rubaiyat* - in his native Persian language. Thanks to Edward FitzGerald's English translation of the *Rubaiyat* in 1859, "Omar" Khayyam has come to be relatively well known in the English-speaking world.

A later Persian poet at Neyshapur was Farīd ad-Dīn 'Attār, who died ca. 1220, probably in the Mongolian sacking of Neyshapur. Attar began as a pharmacist but became a wandering Sufi. His allegorical poem, the *Mantiq ut-tayr* (usually translated as "Conference of the Birds"), extolled the Sufi way. Although not widely known in Attar's own lifetime, the *Mantiq ut-tayr* eventually became one of the most important pieces of Sufic literature.⁸ Much more celebrated in his own time was Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Balkhī (1207-1273), often called Rūmī. Rumi was a mystic and poet from Balkh (now in Tajikistan), but was driven from there by the Mongolians and finished his life in Rum (Anatolia). He spoke and wrote in Persian. His immense poems, twice as long as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* combined, are among the great classics of Persian literature. Buried at Konya, he is regarded as a saint by the Mawlawīyah (Mevlevi) brotherhood of Sufi mystics. The order was founded by his disciples soon after his death. Another Persian Sufi poet who saw the end of Iran's Seljuk and Khwarezmian period was Mosleh al-Din Saadi Shirazi, ca. 1210-1290. He was a witness to the disasters wrought by the Mongolians, and some of his stories relate the sufferings of ordinary people whom he had met in his extensive travels. In the 1250s he composed his greatest works: the *Bustan* ("Orchard") in poetry, and the *Golestan* ("Rose Garden") in a mixture of prose and poetry.

The Seljuk conquest of Anatolia and the Levant

When Toghrul died in 1063, his powers as sultan were passed to his nephew, Alp Arslan, who directed his Turkish horsemen's energies against the Byzantine empire in general and against Armenia in particular. Armenia fell to the invaders in 1064. Seven years later the Byzantine emperor, Romanus IV Diogenes, assembled a huge army and attempted to regain Armenia. But on August 19 of 1071 the Turkish cavalry surprised Romanus' forces at

Manzikert, in the mountainous country near Lake Van. For the Byzantines, the Battle of Manzikert was a catastrophe. The Seljuks destroyed the Byzantine army and Emperor Romanus was taken captive. Although Alp Arslan released Romanus for a large ransom, the Byzantine empire effectively lost Armenia and Cappadocia to the Seljuks. Because the Armenians were Monophysite Christians they had no great affection for Constantinople and many of them were satisfied to live under the Muslim Seljuks. Others fled from Armenia to Cilicia, where they established a new kingdom for themselves in the twelfth century.

Alp Arslan's son and successor, Malikshah, annexed more of central Anatolia, but then turned south and took over the more lucrative Muslim lands of the Levant: by 1090 his troops had seized Damascus and Jerusalem from the Fatimids.⁹ The Great Seljuk empire, ruled from Isfahan, was then at its zenith, stretching from the Mediterranean and the Black Sea to central Asia. At Malikshah's death in 1092 his Great Seljuk realm was split among his sons, each of whom ruled his portion as an *atabeg* ("father-chief"). The sons maintained a very loose alliance but also feuded among themselves. Seljuks nevertheless remained in control of much of the Middle East.

The Seljuk prince who received Anatolia as his share was Kilij Arslan, who renamed it the Sultanate of Rūm (because the Byzantine empire was, formally, still "the Roman empire," the Seljuks regarded their newly acquired realm in Anatolia as "Rome", or "Rūm"). Kilij Arslan pushed all the way to the Dardanelles and the Sea of Marmara, and for a time made his capital at Nicaea ("Iznik," in Turkish), only a day's sail away from Constantinople.

The First Crusade

Under the Abbasids and most of the Fatimids the holy places in and near Jerusalem had continued to attract a small but steady stream of Christian pilgrims from western Europe, and during the eleventh century these visits to "the Holy Land" had tended to increase.¹⁰ The Seljuk atabegs were less hospitable to the pilgrims than the Fatimids and other Arabic amirs had been, and in western Europe tales began to circulate of how Christian pilgrims to the sacred sites were being robbed and killed. In 1095, at the Council of Clermont in central France, Pope Urban II called on the Christians of western Europe to march to the east. The Seljuks' violence and especially their dramatic conquest of Anatolia were - aside from Urban's own difficulties with a rival pope¹¹ - evidently his primary motivations for the call. In the east the Catholics were to shore up the Byzantines against the Seljuks and should reclaim Jerusalem and other Christian holy places from "the infidel Turks and Saracens." Urban urged every able man to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem in order to visit the Holy Sepulcher, but unlike their predecessors these pilgrims were to go armed and ready to fight their way through the resistance of the Turkish infidels.

The mood of the Christians in central and northern France in the late eleventh century is reflected in the *Chanson de Roland*. For a variety of reasons "the popular imagination ... chose Charlemagne as the prototype of the crusading king" and mythicized a minor battle that had taken place in the Pyrenees during his reign.¹² The anonymous creators of the epic were remarkably ill-informed about "the Saracens" (*Sarrazins*), by whom they supposed that Roland

was slain. The epic's Saracens are enormously wealthy, with caravans of camels or mules laden with gold, but they are also pagans (*paien*) who care nothing for God (*Deu*). Their master is Mahumet and they worship various gods, the most important being Apollin. Although in the *Chanson* Roland and his staunch comrade Oliver are both killed by the Saracens, the epic ends triumphantly, with Charlemagne taking the city of Saragossa and ordering the forcible conversion to Christianity of the city's 100,000 Saracens and Jews:

If any Charles with contradiction meet,
Then hanged or burned or slaughtered shall he be.
Five score thousand and more are thus redeemed,
Very Christians.¹³

Urban seems to have envisaged an expedition led by the lords temporal of Catholic Christendom, each lord bringing with him a retinue of trained and disciplined soldiers. The nobles, however, were not so easily persuaded to participate. The first to respond were peasants, who had only a vague idea where and how far away Jerusalem was. Urban had promised that anyone who died in the service of Christ would be a martyr, with all sins forgiven, a waiver from Purgatory, and direct entry into Heaven, and for many of the poor this prospect was much more appealing than was the tilling of the soil. Typically, the peasants - men, women, and even children - were stirred into action by the harangues of itinerant preachers. Peter the Hermit began attracting followers among the peasantry in Flanders, and as he progressed up the Rhine valley his motley retinue quickly swelled into five figures. Another leader in the so-called People's Crusade was Emich of Leiningen, whose followers plundered as they progressed and were therefore resisted by the cities along their route. Although Emich's retinue got no further than Hungary, Peter's much larger horde reached Constantinople late in 1096. The Byzantine emperor, Alexius Comnenus, wasted no time in ferrying his unwanted guests across the Bosphorus into Seljuk territory, and shortly thereafter they were met by the army of the Sultan of Rum. At Xerigordon, a fortress near Nicaea, the inexperienced "crusaders" were virtually annihilated by the sultan's professional troops.

Although the goal of the First Crusade was to save Constantinople from the Seljuks and to take Jerusalem from the Muslims, the crusade - and the rhetoric that preceded it - was more broadly a militarizing of Christians against non-Christians. The vanguard of the People's Crusade, especially those pilgrims led by Emich of Leiningen, first targeted "the Jews," who for centuries had been living in the cities of the Rhineland. Hundreds if not thousands of Jewish inhabitants of Cologne, Metz, Mainz, and other cities resisted the forcible baptism that the mobs demanded, and were thereupon slaughtered and their property seized. The Christian perpetrators of the massacres understood themselves to be doing the will of God, and the Jewish victims likewise assumed that their fate was the will of God.¹⁴ Although some bishops and other Christian authorities tried to prevent the peasant mobs from entering the cities, they were easily swept aside. The atrocities in 1096 were the first of western Europe's anti-Jewish pogroms.

The military phase of the First Crusade did not begin until late in 1096, when the nobles and their retinues left for the east. At the core of the force were men from Lorraine, led by their duke, Godfrey - or Godefroy - of Boulogne (assisted by his brother, Baldwin). Count Raymond

of Toulouse brought another large contingent, as did Bohemund of Tarentum. The crusaders crossed into Asia from Constantinople in March of 1097, and with Byzantine assistance took Nicaea. This was followed by a crusader victory on July 1, 1097, at Dorylaeum, possibly at the site of the Turkish city of Eskişehir. Driven from Nicaea and western Anatolia, Sultan Kilij Arslan was forced to move his residence to Konya (ancient Iconium).

By late 1097 the crusaders had made their way to Syria, which was riven by discord between two sons of Tutush, who had been the Seljuk amir of Damascus from 1079 until his death in 1095. The crusaders began a long siege of Antioch, which finally fell to them in the summer of 1098. Energized by the discovery there of the Holy Lance, which had pierced the side of Jesus, the crusaders left Antioch early in 1099 and besieged Jerusalem.¹⁵ In July of 1099 they entered and sacked Jerusalem, slaughtering its Muslim and Jewish inhabitants. It was the bloodiest day for the Holy City since Titus' legions had devastated it in August of 70.

Catholic opposition to Orthodox Christianity

Although the crusaders marched against the Muslim rulers of Jerusalem and the rest of the Levant, they were also alert to opportunities for advancing Catholicism at the expense of Orthodox Christianity. The ancient patriarchates of Antioch and Jerusalem had always been connected to Constantinople, even after Antioch and Jerusalem had fallen under the rule of Muslim califs. The patriarchs of the two cities were just as staunch as their colleague in Constantinople in denying that the pope in Rome had authority over the entire Christian Church. This of course angered the crusaders, who proceeded to install their own Catholic bishops as patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem. Thus the First Crusade, which Pope Urban had called in order to deliver Byzantine Christianity from the rule of the Turkish Seljuks, made very clear how divided Catholic and Orthodox Christianity had become.

The later crusades

Exploiting their victories in 1098 and 1099, the crusaders established themselves as rulers of small principalities in the Middle East. The most important of the crusader kingdoms was the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem (where Godfrey of Boulogne took the title, "*Advocatus* of the Holy Sepulcher"). Godfrey's brother Baldwin set himself up as ruler of Edessa, in north-central Syria, and other leaders established themselves at Antioch, Acco, Tripoli, and on Cyprus.

The first of the crusader states to be retaken by Seljuk chiefs (*atabegs*) was the County of Edessa. Almost from the outset the Seljuk atabeg of Mosul began dueling with the crusaders at Edessa, and it was during these conflicts in northern Syria that the Christian cathedral at Aleppo was appropriated and made into a mosque (1124). In the early 1140s the Seljuks won a decisive victory over the crusaders and annexed Edessa. This insult to Catholic Christendom inspired the Second Crusade, which was announced by Pope Eugene III at the end of 1145. Initially the Catholic kings showed little enthusiasm for another crusade, but in spring of 1146 the venture was powerfully urged by Bernard of Clairvaux (St. Bernard). Although the kings of both France and Germany participated in the Second Crusade, they proceeded separately and in 1147 and 1148 were separately defeated, shortly after crossing into Asia from Constantinople. What was

left of the German and French forces abandoned the idea of recovering Edessa and instead made their way to Jerusalem. Like the First Crusade, the second inspired much violence against Jewish communities in Germany. The crusade was also paralleled by an offensive against the pagan Wendish (Slavic) population along the Baltic: the heathen were given the choice of conversion or death.

The main Muslim counteroffensive against the crusader states occurred toward the end of the twelfth century, and was led by Saladin (Salah al-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub). A Kurdish general of uncommon ability and gallantry, Saladin's career began in earnest in 1174, when he took over Egypt from the Fatimids and founded his own Ayyubid dynasty. Saladin was a Sunni Muslim, and was therefore more to the liking of most Egyptian Muslims than were the Shiite Fatimids. After adding much of Syria to his realm he took on the crusader kingdoms of the Levant. Jerusalem fell to Saladin in October of 1187, and that spectacular victory brought on the Third Crusade (1189-92), led by Richard I ("the Lion-heart") of England, Philip II of France, and Frederick Barbarossa, the Holy Roman Emperor. The Third Crusade was more successful than the second: although a treaty drawn up in 1192 by Saladin and Richard confirmed Saladin as the ruler of Jerusalem, it also guaranteed the safe passage of Christian pilgrims (unarmed) to the city's holy sites.

From the standpoint of Christendom the worst of the crusades was the fourth. Like its predecessor, this crusade was declared (in 1198, by Pope Innocent III) in order to re-establish Christian control of Jerusalem. The leader of the Fourth Crusade was Boniface of Montferrat (Monferrato, in the Italian piedmont of the Alps). Boniface's strategy for recovering Jerusalem was first to conquer Ayyubid Egypt, which upon the death of Saladin had been ruled by his younger brother, Saphadin. For so great an expedition a large fleet was required, which the Venetians agreed to build. Because the crusaders were unable to pay the Doge of Venice what they owed him, it was decided (against the protests of Innocent III) that before attacking Egypt the crusaders should seize various Byzantine possessions and so obtain the money they needed. An additional source of funds would come from returning an exiled prince to Constantinople and making him emperor. In 1202 the crusaders' fleet set sail. After a long siege the crusaders entered Constantinople in April of 1204. They sacked the city, hauling off the treasures that had been accumulating since Constantine made the city his capital. Now in charge, the crusaders set up their "Latin empire" as a successor to the Byzantine empire, with Baldwin of Flanders as the first Latin emperor (Baldwin was soon succeeded by his younger brother, Henry). The crusaders also set up a Catholic patriarch of Constantinople: this was the Venetian, Tommaso Morosini, reviled by the Orthodox Christians as an anti-patriarch. The Latin patriarchate continued off and on at Constantinople until 1261, when the city was re-taken from the Latins by the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos.

Many of the best parts of Greece were taken over by Franks and Venetians. The Venetians, with their great sea power, generally took control of the most productive islands of the Aegean. Immediately after the sack of Constantinople a company of Frankish knights installed themselves in the Peloponnesos and called their state the Principality of Achaëa. At the same time, a Burgundian set himself up in Athens. The Byzantines, of course, refused to recognize the Catholic Latins as anything but interlopers, and the Laskarids set up a rump Byzantine state at

Nicaea. Another “legitimate” and Orthodox Byzantine state was set up in Epirus. The Latin empire in Constantinople itself held together only until 1261, when Michael VIII Palaeologus led Nicaean troops back into the city. In Greece the Latin occupiers were not so easily dislodged, and the Duchy of Athens lasted more or less until the fifteenth century, when it succumbed to the Ottoman empire.

Two more crusades, between 1217 and 1229, were called by the popes in order to recover Jerusalem. The Fifth was an utter failure, most of the crusaders dying in Egypt, while the Sixth (1228-29) was a mixed success. Without papal endorsement Frederick II (*Stupor mundi*) led his crusaders into Jerusalem and was recognized by the sultan of Egypt as the ruler of Jerusalem. Frederick agreed, however, to let the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa mosque remain in Muslim hands and to allow unarmed Muslim pilgrims to enter the city.¹⁶

The Islamization and Turkicizing of Anatolia

During the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries what had been Anatolia - in which the language was Greek and the religion was Christianity - became largely a Turkish-speaking and Muslim land. Several hundred thousand Turkish-speaking nomads from east of the Caspian flooded into Anatolia.¹⁷ The transformation of Anatolia was due equally to the Islamization of the native Anatolians. The Seljuk “Sultans of Rum” implemented the conversion, often in ruthless fashion. As noted above, the First Crusade passed through western Anatolia, the crusaders marching overland from Constantinople to Antioch. To what extent the Islamization of Anatolia was hastened by that episode is unknown, but the Seljuk warlords must have perceived that future crusaders would find passage through a predominantly Muslim land much more difficult than was the march in 1097. In any case, the transformation of Anatolia occurred in the aftermath of the early crusades.

The Anatolians’ conversion to Islam evidently preceded their adoption of the Turkish language. Islamization was in part the result of “missionary” work by Turkish Sufi initiates, or dervishes. Having no property, the Sufi dervish wandered as he begged his bread and sought union with God. In Anatolia the Turkish dervishes went from one Christian village to another and made a vivid impression with their poverty and austerity. As mentioned above, it was to Konya (Iconium) that Rumi and his followers fled from the Mongolian menace, and there established the Mehlevi tariqa: the order of dervishes who sought a religious trance with their whirling dances. At about the same time the teachings of Hacı Bektaş Veli gave rise to another order of Sufi dervishes in Cappadocia.

More often, however, the Islamization of Anatolia was not simply a matter of voluntary conversion by the formerly Christian population. As summarized by Sidney Fisher and William Ochsenswald, the project was often carried through with violence or intimidation:

Throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and on into the fourteenth, pressure was exerted on every aspect of Christian life and society. Decisive victories for Muslim armies, continual marches across the land by soldiers, sacking of cities, and scorched-earth policies generated massacres, flight, enslavement, plague, and famine.

Those Christians who remained were filled with insecurity and a sense of helplessness.

As various areas fell into Turkish Muslim hands, certain factors made it fairly easy to assume the customs and manners of the victors. In the first place, non-Muslims were tolerated but nevertheless discriminated against in many ways with regard to dress and life: unquestionably they were second-class subjects. Converts, on the other hand, escaped discrimination - as well as many taxes. Furthermore, Christian communities became leaderless at a time of great psychological and economic crisis. Consequently, whole villages turned Muslim overnight, at first in the interior and later along the coasts of Anatolia. By about 1300 a majority of the population of Anatolia was Muslim.¹⁸

As they converted to Islam, Anatolians took Muslim names and learned the Turkish language. By the sixteenth century at least eighty per cent of the Anatolians were Muslims.¹⁹

The Almohads in Spain and the Christian *reconquista*

While the crusades were roiling the Middle East, Christian kings in the northern half of Spain enlarged their realms by heading south to wage war against “the Moors”: the Moroccan rulers who succeeded the Umayyads. The Reconquista’s success against the Almoravids in the first half of the twelfth century brought to Andalusia another Moroccan force, the Almohads, which at the outset was even more fanatical than its predecessor. The Almohads or “monotheists” had been founded ca. 1100 as a Muslim monastic community in the Atlas mountains of Morocco, and by the 1140s their calif was the ruler of Morocco. From Morocco their power spread eastward toward Egypt and then, in 1147, across Gibraltar to Spain. By 1170 the Almohads had ousted the Almoravids and ruled all of Muslim Spain. Although they soon mellowed, their initial policy toward their Jewish and especially their Christian subjects was brutal: if a *dhimmi* converted to Islam he was spared, but if he persisted in his unbelief he was threatened with the sword. For the rest of the twelfth century the Almohads dominated much of Spain.

Early in the thirteenth century Almohad power receded and then was much reduced by Ferdinand III, who had inherited the crown of León from his father and the crown of Castile from his mother. With such resources at his disposal Ferdinand was able to resume the Reconquista and to conduct a sustained offensive against the Almohads. In 1236 he took Cordoba, the Almohads’ capital city, and followed up that feat by taking Seville. Almohad rule came to an end, and by the time of Ferdinand’s death the only part of Spain still in Muslim hands was Granada. For Spanish Catholics Ferdinand became the hero of the Reconquista, and in the seventeenth century he was canonized as San Fernando. For Muslims lamenting the removal of *al-Andalus* from the Dar al-Islam, Ferdinand III was a villain.

The Mongolian invasion and its consequences for the Dar al-Islam

Although the crusades contributed to the decline of both the Byzantine empire and the Muslim states of the Middle East, far more devastating for the Dar al-Islam was a storm that broke from the northeast. This was the Mongolian invasion, which in the early thirteenth

century came from central Asia to wreak havoc in the Middle East and in eastern Europe. Among the Mongolian invasion's victims were Baghdad and the Abbasid califate: although much reduced since the glorious days of Harun al-Rashid, the city and the califate had been the nominal center of the Dar al-Islam for more than five hundred years.

An older generation of linguistics scholars grouped the Mongolian languages together with the Turkish languages in a single "Altaic" family, but a close relationship of Mongolian to Turkic is now generally rejected. The Mongolian invasion can nevertheless be seen as the last in a series of attacks upon the Middle East by horsemen from the central Asian steppes. The earlier attacks had been made by Turkish-speaking warlords, who had already been converted to Islam. The Ghaznavids, Seljuks, and Khwarezmian shahs had fought for dominion and rule within the Dar al-Islam, and once they had won their battlefield victories they installed themselves as the rulers and protectors of their realms. The Mongolians may have begun with vaguely similar goals, but they were not Muslims (most of them were practitioners of a shamanistic religion) and they saw the Dar al-Islam simply as another fat and vulnerable prey. In 1200 many Mongolians had been recently centralized into a chiefdom, under a hereditary khan, and with a seemingly limitless number of archers mounted on horseback they created an empire that stretched from Korea to eastern Europe.

Soon after 1200 Chingiz Khan, commanding tens of thousands of horsemen, attacked the Tangut kingdom in northwestern China (he took and sacked Beijing in 1215). Once in control of the eastern half of the Silk Road with its lucrative trade, Chingiz began to interest himself in the western half of the route. Much of this was in the vast territory ruled by the Khwarezmian shah, whose realm extended from the Caspian to northwest India (Pakistan) and included almost all of Iran. An enormous force of mounted Mongolian archers first appeared on Muslim horizons in 1219. Alleging that the shah's men had killed Mongolian merchants and robbed their caravan, Chingiz Khan attacked the Khwarezmian empire. Possibly at the outset Chingiz's intentions were to occupy and rule the empire without atrocities, but if so they quickly changed. Late in 1220 he took and sacked Bukhara, emptied it of inhabitants, and then did the same to Samarkand.²⁰ Two years later, he razed to the ground the "rebellious" city of Herat, killing all but forty of its inhabitants. Balkh was also reduced to rubble. It may have been a revolt of the Tangut in northwestern China that persuaded Chingiz that terror and destruction were the most effective methods for keeping his enormous empire under control.²¹ Chingiz' ruthless policy was continued by his son and successor, Ögödei Khan, and by the several khans subordinate to Ögödei. One of the most active of the sub-khans was Batu Khan, a grandson of Chingiz: in the 1230s Batu's horsemen roared through Russia - sacking Kiev and Moscow - and then proceeded to Poland.

For a few years Iraq and Anatolia were spared the disaster that had overwhelmed Iran. In 1243, however, the Seljuks of Rum - who by then controlled most of Anatolia - were defeated by the Mongolians in the shadow of Köse Dağ, a high mountain near Erzincan. Eastern Anatolia fell under the Mongols, and what was left of the Rum sultanate became a Mongolian vassal. Ca. 1250 Hülägü Khan, another grandson of Chingiz, established what came to be known as the Ilkhanate. As Ilkhan, Hülägü was - in theory, at least - subordinate to his brother Möngke, the Great Khan. In effect, Hulagu ruled Iran, and Mongolian rule greatly increased Iran's

commercial and cultural connections with China and the rest of eastern Asia, while separating Iran from the Dar al-Islam. As the son of a Nestorian Christian princess, Hulagu had some sympathy for Christianity. He established alliances with crusaders and other Christian powers against “the Saracens”: against, that is, the various Muslim rulers in the Middle East and especially against the Mamluk sultan, who ruled not only Egypt but most of the Levant. Before taking on the Mamluks, however, Hulagu first made himself master of Iraq, which he did with little difficulty. In February of 1258 Hulagu Khan led his men to Baghdad and after a siege of several months he entered the city and sacked it. The last Abbasid calif in Baghdad was killed, and the inhabitants of the fabled city were slaughtered *en masse*. Some of the city’s Christian and Jewish inhabitants were spared, but little mercy was shown to the Muslim majority. The heads of the city’s most eminent men - writers, administrators, courtiers - were stacked into a pyramid. The calif’s library and the House of Wisdom were utterly destroyed. Hulagu then did to the rest of Iraq what he had done to Baghdad.

When there was nothing left to sack in Iraq, Hulagu headed west into Syria. The prince of the crusader state at Antioch, along with the Christian king of Armenia, allied with Hulagu against the Mamluks who ruled over Egypt and much of the Levant. The Mongolians were finally stopped in 1260 at Ain Jalut (“the Springs of Goliath”), not far from Damascus. There they were defeated by Baibars, a Mamluk commander from Egypt. Baibars’ horsemen, most of them Turkish, attacked, retreated, and lured the Mongolians into a trap. In the aftermath of Ain Jalut, Baibars put an end to the Principality of Antioch and the other remaining crusader states.

The Ilkhanate continued to rule Iraq and Iran, however, and continued to be hated by its Muslim subjects. This changed somewhat in 1295, when Ghazan Khan converted to Islam (thereafter he was Mahmud Ghazan). Like his predecessors in the Ilkhanate, Ghazan tried to add Syria and Palestine to his realm, but in 1303 the Mamluk ruler, Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad, inflicted upon Ghazan’s forces a severe defeat at Marj al-Suffar, in southern Syria. In 1322 the Ilkhan was forced to sign the Treaty of Aleppo, acknowledging Mamluk control of the Levant. The Ilkhanate lasted until 1335, when Abu Said died with no clear successor as Ilkhan. For the next fifty years Iran and the rest of the Middle East not under Mamluk control was divided among various regional powers, most of them either Mongolian or Turkish.

The profound effects of the Mongolian ruin of the Middle East have been summarized by Ochsenswald and Fisher:

In their conquests the Mongols pillaged widely, often destroying what they had to leave behind. They could not garrison the cities adequately, and the first generations neither understood nor appreciated the cultures and civilizations of the peoples they conquered.... The effects of the devastations wrought by the Mongols lasted in some areas for centuries. Millions of people perished; cities vanished; canals silted and irrigation decreased; lands became barren and deserted; governments disintegrated; civilization foundered; and life returned to the bare essentials. Taxes were sharply increased and collected in an unusually brutal fashion. Since the initial Muslim conquests, conquering armies and peoples had come and gone as customs, religions, knowledge, and culture had been modified, developed and altered. But through all this time the Middle East had

never suffered such a cataclysmic shock as it received from the Mongol invasions.²²

Just as consequential as the direct damage done by the invasions was the interpretation of the catastrophe. Across the Dar al-Islam a consensus formed that what had happened to Baghdad and to so many other cities in the Middle East was a punishment from God. The pious Muslim had traditionally been satisfied to explain all things - good and bad, success and failure, prosperity and poverty - as the will of God. So it was beyond doubt that although the Mongolians were the immediate agents of this overwhelming disaster, they were merely the instruments that God used to work his will. Why God had decided to scourge the Dar al-Islam was another question, but for this question too religious faith provided the answer. The Mongolian invasion, it was widely believed, was God's punishment of the Muslim world for its neglect of religion and especially for deviation from the *sunnah*. Far from weakening the hold of Islam in the Middle East, the disasters in the thirteenth century intensified it (Jewish and Christian observers were no less certain that the Mongolians were a scourge sent by God, but of course their explanations for God's wrath were very different). The brilliant and classical period of Arabic literature and learning came to an end with the Mongolian invasion. From the ruin of Baghdad until the nineteenth century - while western Christendom was evolving through the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment into modern civilization - Arabic culture remained in a bleak and backward-looking depression.

By the end of the fourteenth century the Mongolian conquerors had been converted to Islam, but their conversion did not much change their behavior. In the 1380s Timur the Lame ("Tamerlane"), a warlord who came from a Mongolian tribe near Samarkand,²³ conquered what is now Iran and eastern Turkey. Once in control of these lands, he ruled them with an iron hand. At Isfahan, treachery against a Mongolian garrison was punished by the slaughter of all 70,000 of Isfahan's inhabitants. From Iran Timur looked westward to Iraq, the Levant and central Anatolia. In 1399 Bayezid I, the Ottoman sultan in Edirne (Adrianople), and Barquq, the Mamluk sultan of Egypt and the Levant, allied themselves against Timur. From autumn of 1400 until March of 1401 Timur's army stormed across Syria. Barquq's troops fled back to Cairo, abandoning the cities of Syria to their fate. When Timur besieged Aleppo and Damascus the civilians fought alongside the few Mamluk soldiers garrisoning the cities. Pretending to accept the surrender of the cities, Timur toyed with the inhabitants for days: after extorting higher and higher ransoms, he loosed his men to torture, rape, and then either slaughter or enslave the population, whether Muslim, Jewish or Christian. After the massacre, Timur had the cities burned.²⁴

Later in 1401 Timur sacked what had been rebuilt of Baghdad, then ruled by a rival Mongolian sultan, and here too his troops slaughtered the populace. The next year Timur defeated Bayezid at Ankara and took him prisoner, throwing the Ottoman empire into desperation and casting a pall of fear even over Catholic Europe. Wherever Timur's armies went, they left devastation behind. At his death in 1405 Timur ruled an empire that stretched from central Anatolia to the Indus river, and far into central Asia. His realm was nominally Muslim, but most of it lay in ruin and the high civilization of the Middle East - whether Persian or Arabic - was a distant memory.

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1. For discussion of the date of the “Pact of Umar” see Goddard 2000, p. 46.
 2. See Fargues 1997.
 3. Demonstrated by Wasserstein 1993.
 4. *Mozarabic* meant “Arabicized,” and the Mozarabic Christians typically spoke Arabic as well as their own Mozarabic Romance language.
 5. Fletcher 2003, p. 74.
 6. Fletcher 2003, p. 75.
 7. Fletcher 2003, pp. 72-74. It was also in the 12th and 13th century that the legend of Santiago Matamoros (“St. James, slayer of Moors”) was elaborated and popularized. The legend celebrated the help that the heavenly St. James, riding a charger down from the clouds, provided to Spanish Christians at the Battle of Clavijo. The battle had taken place in 844, some three hundred years before the myths ripened.
 8. See Leonard Lewisohn and Christopher Shackle, editors, *Attār and the Persian Sufi Tradition: The Art of Spiritual Flight* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006).
 9. Ochsenswald and Fisher 2004, p. 126
 10. Fletcher 2003, pp. 52-53.
 11. Urban II was the pope of the Gregorian reformers and had the backing of Norman rulers in Sicily and southern Italy, but Clement III was the pope of the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry IV. Until 1094, the year before his call for a crusade, Urban had been unable to take up residence in Rome.
 12. Although nominally about an 8th-century battle at Roncesvalles in the Pyrenees, against Basque mountaineers, the epic took shape in the second half of the 11th century. By then the Basques had disappeared from the tradition and “the Saracens” had taken their place. For the quotation see Uitti 1973, p. 79, and for the larger picture see his pp. 65-84.
 13. Stanza 266, lines 3669-72 (Charles Moncrief translation).
 14. Solomon bar Samson, writing in Hebrew ca. 1140, described the carnage and interpreted it as God’s punishment of his chosen people: “The hand of the Lord was heavy against His people. All the Gentiles were gathered together against the Jews in the courtyard to blot out their name.... When the children of the covenant saw that the heavenly decree of death had been issued and that the enemy had conquered them and had entered the courtyard, then all of them - old men and

young, virgins and children, servants and maids - cried out together to their Father in heaven and, weeping for themselves and for their lives, accepted as just the sentence of God.” The translation is taken from Fordham University’s Internet Medieval Sourcebook:
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1096jews-mainz.html>

15. As the crusaders marched into Syria, and as Tutush’s sons quarreled among themselves, the Fatimids saw an opportunity to regain Palestine from the Seljuks. As a result, by the time the crusaders finally reached Jerusalem the city was once more in Fatimid hands.

16. Between 1248 and 1271 Catholic kings launched (again without papal endorsement) three more crusades, none of which was of much consequence. The 7th and 8th were led by Louis IX of France, and the 9th by Edward I of England. These crusades were little more than a distraction for the Dar al-Islam, because throughout these years both Arabic and Seljuk Turkish rulers were transfixed by the devastation being wrought by the Mongolians.

17. Perhaps the numbers were still higher. See Findley 2005, p. 72: “Between 1071 and the Mongol conquest of the Rum Seljuks (1243), perhaps a million Turks entered Anatolia, forming not its largest ethnic group but the only one spread throughout that region.”

18. Ochsenswald and Fisher 2004, p. 161.

19. Ochsenswald and Fisher 2004, p. 199, put the proportion of Muslims even higher, suggesting that by the 1530s “probably less than one-tenth” of the Anatolian population was Jewish or Christian.

20. Kolbas 2006, p. 34: “After taking Bukhara, Chingiz Khan drove much of its populace east before him as fodder for the defenders of Samarqand.”

21. Kolbas 2006, p. 60, suggests that it was because of the Tangut revolt that the policies of Chingiz Khan “switched from occupation to devastation.” On Bukhara and Herat see Kolbas 2006, pp. 31 ff, and 53.

22. Ochsenswald and Fisher 2004, p. 136.

23. On Timur the Lame see Manz 1989.

24. In the 15th century Ibn Taghribirdi wrote a history of Mamluk Egypt. Although born four years after Timur’s death, Ibn Taghribirdi gave a detailed description of the terror at Aleppo and Damascus. See <http://www.deremilitari.org/resources/sources/taghri1.htm> An even more detailed account, in Latin, was written by Bertrando de Mignanelli, an Italian merchant from Sienna who visited the ruins of Damascus in 1402. For an English translation of this account see Walter J. Fischel, “A New Latin Source on Tamerlane’s Conquest of Damascus (1400/1401),” *Oriens* 9 (1956), pp. 201-232.