

ORIENTAL STUDIES AND CONCEPTION OF ISLAM DURING THE CRUSADE PERIOD*

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Preliminary

When Islam was revealed in the 7th century as a new higher religion, it considered revelation as received by the Prophet Muhammad to be superior to the former levels of Old and New Testament revelation. Christianity fought Islam as a Christian heresy. This new threat was seen as the fulfillment of the eschatological prophecies of the Apocalypse concerning the coming of the "false prophet" (Revelation to John). The apocalyptic interpretation of Islam as the religion of the "false prophet" also coined the archetypal struggle of the Christian Church of the Middle Ages against foreign religions, namely, the crusade. The idea of the Crusades¹ deeply influenced the self-consciousness of Western Christianity even in later centuries. In the crusade period attitudes of Latin Christendom, i.e. Western Christendom to the Muslims and to the Orthodox Christianity, i.e. Eastern Christendom damaged much materially and culturally in both sides.

The harm done by the crusaders to Islam was small in comparison with that done by them to Eastern Christendom. Pope Urban II had bidden the Crusaders go forth that the Christians of the East be helped and rescued. It was a strange rescue; for when the work was over, Eastern Christendom lay under enemy domination... When they set themselves up in the East they treated their Christian subjects no better than the Caliph had done before them. Indeed, they were sterner, for they interfered in the religious practices of the local churches. The Crusade had become a

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¹ See for detail, *The Crusades, Motives and Achievements*, ed. James A. Brundage (USA, 1964); H.C. Krueger, "Economic Aspects of Expanding Europe" in *Twelfth Century Europe and the Foundations of Modern Society*, ed. Marshall Clagett (Wisconsin, 1961) 69-74.

movement not for the protection of Christendom but for the establishment of the authority of the Roman Catholic Church.²

More harmful was the effect of the Crusades on the spirit of Islam. Any religion that is based on an exclusive Revelation is bound to show some contempt for the unbeliever. But Islam was not intolerant in its early days. The Prophet himself considered that Jews and Christians had received a partial revelation and were therefore not to be persecuted. Under the early caliphs the Christians played an honourable part in Arab society. Nor was the rivalry of the Caliphate with Christian Byzantium entirely unfriendly. Scholars and technicians passed too and fro between two empires to their mutual benefit. The Holy war begun by the Franks ruined these good relations. The savage intolerance shown by the Crusaders was answered by growing intolerance among the Muslims. The broad humanity of Saladin and his family were soon to be rare among their fellow-believers. By the time of Mameluks, the Muslims were as narrow as the Franks. Their Christian subjects were among the first to suffer from it. They never recovered their old easy acquaintanceship with their Muslim neighbours and masters. Their intellectual life faded away and with it the widening influence that it had upon Islam.

Although there had been many attempts of dialogues and polemics, the dialogue of the 15th-century German theologian Nicholas of Cusa on the peace of faith (1453) is the first Christian document that calls for the establishment of an eternal peace among world religions. When Constantinople fell to the Ottomans in 1453, Nicholas of Cusa's reaction was very similar to that of George of Trebizond. He, in his early times, dreamed of re-union of all religions in a single faith. His dream was to create "Una religio in rituum varietate", one religion in a variety of rites.³ In spite of this and other attempts to unify or at least to reconcile the religions have remained far beyond our achievement. For the idea of the crusade remained the model for the relationships between Islam and Christianity and shaped the whole process taking place between the two on the one hand and the fulfillment of the new missionary task that arose within the Roman Catholic Church with the discovery and exploration of the lands beyond Europe on the other. Even in the nineteenth century when missionaries diffused into Muslim countries they used military

² Sir Steven Runciman, "The Crusades: A Moral Failure, in *The Crusades, motives and achievements*, ed James Brundage, (USA, 1964) 78.

³ See for detail, Jean-Marie Gaudeul, *Encounters and Clashes, Islam and Christianity in History*, PISAI, (Rome, 1990) 195.

concepts as to associate with this crusade movements such as “peace **crusade**” or “**conquest** of the world for Jesus Christ”.

So, in our study, specifically, we first intended to work out the early form of orientalism, which had been formed during the crusade period and secondly to outline some Christian authors who undertook to write about Islam and Muslims i.e. Saracens⁴ or Moors then, either to uncover or to abuse them.

THE POPES' DEPICTION OF ISLAM AND MUSLIMS in THEIR CALLING FOR “THE CRUSADE”

Almost every single Pope had to tackle the issue of Islam and of Muslims in their own time. But two Popes, in the first place, deserve to be emphasised to start this misconception and deviation about Islam and Muslims. These two are Gregory VII and Urban II. I will analyse their speeches and letters about and to Muslims in turn:

1a. GREGORY VII* (d.1085) and His Speech for “Crusade”, 1074

Gregory VII barely missed having begun the crusading movement. His plan is clear from the following letter. The situation in 1095 was not materially different from that in 1074, and it is probable that Urban II, when he called for a crusade, had nothing more in mind than Gregory VII had when he wrote this letter. Gregory was unable to carry out his plans because he became involved in the struggle with Henry IV.

“Gregory, bishop, servant of the servants of God, to all who are willing to defend the Christian faith, greeting and apostolic benediction.

We hereby inform you that the bearer of this letter, on his recent return from across the sea [from Palestine], came to

⁴ Saracen: in the Middle Ages, any person--Arab, Turk, or other--who professed the religion of Islam. Earlier in the Roman world, there had been references to Saracens (Greek: Sarakenoi) by late classical authors in the first three centuries CE, the term being then applied to an Arab tribe living in the Sinai Peninsula. In the following centuries the use of the term by Christians was extended to cover Arab tribes in general; and, after the establishment of the caliphate, the Byzantines referred to all Muslim subjects of the caliph as Saracens. Through the Byzantines and the crusaders, the name spread into western Europe, where it was long in general use and has survived until modern times.

* See for detail, Catholic Encyclopedia, article Gregory VII.

Rome to visit us. He repeated what we had heard from many others, that a pagan race had overcome the Christians and with horrible cruelty had devastated everything almost to the walls of Constantinople, and were now governing the conquered lands with tyrannical violence, and that they had slain many thousands of Christians as if they were but sheep. If we love God and wish to be recognized as Christians, we should be filled with grief at the misfortune of this great empire [the Greek] and the murder of so many Christians. But simply to grieve is not our whole duty. The example of our Redeemer and the bond of fraternal love demand that we should lay down our lives to liberate them. "Because he has laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren," [1 John 3:16]. Know, therefore, that we are trusting in the mercy of God and in the power of his might and that we are striving in all possible ways and making preparations to render aid to the Christian empire [the Greek] as quickly as possible. Therefore we beseech you by the faith in which you are united through Christ in the adoption of the sons of God, and by the authority of St. Peter, prince of apostles, we admonish you that you be moved to proper compassion by the wounds and blood of your brethren and the danger of the aforesaid empire and that, for the sake of Christ, you undertake the difficult task of bearing aid to your brethren [the Greeks]. Send messengers to us at once inform us of what God may inspire you to do in this matter."⁵

During his Pontificate, open warfare opposed Christians and Muslims in several places. Politically, the Pope was involved in all the negotiations between Christian leaders to convince them against Muslims but was not capable of imposing his authority over them. And yet, he seems to have taken the initiative repeatedly in order to undergird this military effort with missionary attempts. In 1076 he wrote a letter to al-Nāsir (1062-1088) (belonging to the Hammadid dynasty) in which he uses some common denominators between Muslims and Christians. Here are some excerpts from this letter:

⁵ In Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 148:329, trans. Oliver J. Thatcher, and Edgar Holmes McNeal, eds., *A Source Book for Medieval History*, (New York: Scribners, 1905) 512-13. (Jacques-Paul Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, published between 1844 and 1855, and the four volumes of indexes published between 1862 and 1865. The *Patrologia Latina* comprises the works of the Church Fathers from Tertullian in 200 AD to the death of Pope Innocent III in 1216. *Patrologia Latina* contains 221 volumes most important primary sources for the study of medieval history and theology.)

“Your Highness has written to us this very year that we might consecrate bishop according to the Christian Law the priest Servardus. This we hastened to do because your request seemed to us right and excellent. Moreover, you have sent us presents, and you freed some Christians held captive among your people, out of reverence for Peter, prince of the Apostles, and out of love for us. You promised as well to free the other (Christian) captives. It is certainly God, Creator of all things, God “without whom we can neither do”⁶ not conceive anything good, who inspired your heart to do this good action for “He enlightens any man coming into this world”⁷ and He has enlightened your mind on this occasion. For indeed God almighty “who wants all men to be saved”⁸ and “none to perish”⁹ ...

And this charity is a thing that you and I owe each other even more than we owe it to other people, since we confess and acknowledge – in different ways, it is true – one God whom we praise and worship every day as Creator of the centuries and Master of this world. According to the word of the apostle: “He is the Peace between us, He who has made the two into one”.

Thus it is that several noblemen of Rome admire unreservedly your goodness and your virtues and proclaim them since they have learned from us the grace that God has conferred upon you. Among us are two of our household, Albericus and Censius... in their great desire to deserve your friendship and your affection, and their eagerness to render you service in your wishes about what is of our competence, they send you some of their men from whom you will learn how wise and great they deem you to be, and how ardently they desire and are able to be of help to you. We recommend them to your generosity, that you may with utmost care, and for the love of us display towards them this same charity that we always display towards you and towards all your people. God knows full well that we cherish you for the sake of His glory, that we desire your salvation and your glory in this life and in the next, and that we ask with our lips and from our heart that He himself

⁶ Jn 15, 5

⁷ Jn 1, 9

⁸ I Tm 2, 3

⁹ Mt 18, 14

may receive you, after a long stay here below, into the “bosom of the most holy patriarch Abraham’s beatitude”.¹⁰

The great number of scriptural quotations in this letter seems to indicate that the pope’s intentions are not just political as some historians have thought. There was no need to find scriptural grounds for a simple political move. On the contrary, this is necessary in order to justify an attitude which includes the Muslim Community in the People of God, as it were.

There are several points which deserve our attention:

the absence of any reminder of the pope’s authority over political rulers: only the year before (1075) Gregory VII had issued his “Dictatus papae”, a definition of his prerogatives in 27 sentences:

No 8: The Pope alone can wear imperial insignia,

9: The Pope is the only man whose feet are kissed by all princes,

12: He can depose the emperors.

- Our text shows no attitude of superiority, only friendliness,
- there are no derogatory remarks against Islam,
- only the doctrines common to both religions are stressed: the name of Christ is not even mentioned,
- the two communities are proclaimed “one”, and their relationship is defined as one of love, preferential love,
- the pope emphasizes his conviction that God is at work among Muslims, and wants their salvation.

For a “political” letter, the Biblical quotations are too numerous. This inclines us to think that the messengers sent with the letter are not ambassadors, but missionaries or personal representatives.¹¹

¹⁰ Jean Mari Gaudeul, *Encounter and Clashes: Islam and Christianity in history* vol: II, 75.

On the other hand when we analyse both Gregory's call for the Crusade in his letter to emperors and princes given above and this letter he wrote two years later, we recognize the fact that the pope knew much about Muslims and their characteristics, though this information didn't arise from the original sources, i.e. the holy Qur'an and hadith, but in his speech he preferred to use the negative predicaments for Muslims such as pagan race. What determined this preference needs questioning.

1b. POPE URBANUS II*

Speech at Council of Clermont, 1095, according to Fulcher of Chartres¹²:

The imputation of idolatry to Islam

There is a widespread impression today in the West that the general mediaeval belief was that Muslims were idolators. This is probably because most people know the Middle Ages best in its literature, and, although this was emphatically not the belief of educated men, there was indeed a literary convention to that effect. The derivation of the English 'mommet' is well known, and the poets are full of the Saracens' worship of idols, Mahomet, Tervagan, Apolin and Jupiter.¹³ Still in the fifteenth century, romances would speak seriously of these gods and idols.¹⁴ At about the time of, and in association with, the First Crusade, propaganda in the West evoked statements about idols of Muhammad worshipped in mosques, especially in the Qubbat as-Sakhrah, Templum Domini.

Some serious works, and some authors who knew better, repeated allegations of this sort. In the extraordinarily unreliable report sent to

¹¹ J.M.Gaudeul, *Op.cit.*, vol: I, 105.

* See for detail, Catholic Encyclopedia, article Pope Urbanus II.

¹² See. Fulcher of Chartres, 1058?-ca. 1127. *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem, 1095-1127*. Translated by Frances Rita Ryan. Edited with an introd. by Harold S. Fink. New York, W. W. Norton 1973.

Fulcher of Chartres, *Chronicle of the First Crusade*. Translated Martha E. McGinty. London: Oxford University Press; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941.

¹³ Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The making of an image*, (Edinburgh, 1962) 309.

¹⁴ Cf. Arnoul Greban (1420-1471)'s *Le Mystere de la Passion*, (ed. Omer Jodogne, Belgium 1985) where Mahomet is apparently an ancient Egyptian god.

Innocent III* by the Latin Church of Jerusalem the fabulous element contrasted with others of great accuracy; its reference to Baghdad 'where Muhammad is God and the caliph is pope' may be thought to be one of the last fruits of an old-fashioned school of propaganda.

Wherever it was possible to insinuate that those who reproached Christianity with a polytheist tendency were themselves inclined to the same crime, this was done. The very vague statement lent itself to this purpose. Acqui, for example, spoke of Muhammad's being received by the Arabs quasi Deus.¹⁵ Millenarian fears increasingly coloured perceptions of Islam in the 12th and 13th centuries, intertwining concerns about the Muslim threat with the coming of Antichrist. In these considerations, Popes' depiction of Muslims as idolators played the chief role.

On November 27th, 1095 at Clermont in central France, Pope Urban II delivered the sermon which launched the expedition now known as the First Crusade. He called on the people to relieve the oppression of Eastern or Oriental Christians and to liberate the Holy Places by means of an armed pilgrimage. But it has always been discussed what the real motives were behind these expeditions. And many argue that the real motives were the expansion of Europe, the colonization on the one hand and to get rid of the robbers and rebels out of Europe on the other. So the Pope promised the Feudal barons "aforetime robbers" to become soldiers of Christ and to get material gains.¹⁶

This makes it all the more frustrating for historians that it is impossible to know precisely what Urban said. A number of accounts of his speech survive, some of them by members of his audience, but they were written a decade or more later and were influenced by the authors' knowledge of how events unfolded after Clermont, in particular how the crusaders captured Jerusalem in 1099 after a remarkable three-year campaign. The best way to reconstruct Urban's message, therefore, is to examine the ideas and images which he used to excite his audience. After all, the crusade needed careful presentation. Urban was proposing a novel idea to a generally conservative society. He was also asking people to

* See for detail, Giulio Cipollone, "Innocent III and the Saracens: Between Rejection and Collaboration", in *Pope Innocent III and his World*, ed. John C. Moore, (England 1999) 361.

¹⁵ Norman Daniel, *op.cit.*, 310

¹⁶ Hilmar C. Krueger, *The Crusades and European Expansion, in The Crusades, Motives and Achievements*, ed. James A. Brundage (USA, 1964) 59.

volunteer to do something which was very expensive, time-consuming, arduous and dangerous. What he told them, then, had to be direct and vivid.

Two ways to win over an audience are to conjure up bold, easily visualised images and to tap into deep seated emotions. Urban used both techniques skilfully. He described a state of crisis in the eastern Mediterranean: the Byzantine Empire was in retreat; churches were being defiled and polluted by infidels; Christians were being subjected to horrible persecutions including rape, torture, mutilation and murder. The Muslims were portrayed as wantonly cruel: according to Robert the Monk, Urban claimed that Christians were being tied to stakes so that they could be used for archery target practice. The particular villains of the piece were the Turks, nomadic warrior bands with roots in central Asia who had been extending their power into Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine since the 1070s. Of particular concern was their treatment of Jerusalem, which Urban reminded his listeners was the holiest place known to Christians.

Urban had almost certainly never been to the Holy Land himself, and what he said owed more to rhetoric than reality. His depiction of the sufferings of Christians, with its lurid details of torture and pain, resembled contemporary ideas about what it was like to suffer in Hell. It is possible that the Turks, as newcomers to the western Fertile Crescent and its complicated religious history, were sometimes hostile to the Christians living in their domains. But their treatment seldom, if ever, amounted to the sort of horror stories which Urban recounted. Nor was the composition of the Muslim world as straightforward as the pope's message implied. In fact the Turks lost control of Jerusalem to the Egyptians in 1098, a year before the crusaders arrived: it is a curious irony that the enemies faced at the climax of the crusade were not those whom Urban had originally envisaged.

Most Westerners' understanding of the politics and peoples of the Middle East was vague at best, and Urban exploited this. His aim was to instil the feeling that there was something gravely wrong, dirty and dishonourable about the plight of the Holy Land. This was a substantial achievement: such a sense of urgency comes through in the accounts of Urban's speech that it is easy to lose sight of the fact that Christians had not controlled Jerusalem since the Arabs captured it from the Byzantines in 638. Yet Urban was able to present a long-term fact -- 457 years of uninterrupted Muslim rule -- in terms of a pressing injustice against God

and His people. This was the key reason for the success of his message. Why?

An important clue is contained in the version of Urban's speech written by the contemporary chronicler Guibert of Nogent. Having described at length the important role which Jerusalem had played in history and would play at the Last Judgement, the pope asked his audience to consider the plight of those who went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The richer among them were subjected to violence at the hands of infidels; they were also forced to pay heavy tolls, taxes, entry fees to get into churches, and bribes. The poorer pilgrims were badly mistreated by locals trying to get money off them at any cost. 'Remember, I urge you', the pope said, 'the thousands of people who have died horribly and take action for the Holy Places'. This is rhetorical exaggeration, but there is also an underlying idea that Jerusalem meant something very real to Western Europeans.¹⁷

Perhaps Urban did not actually dwell on the troubles of Westerners going to the Holy Land as much as this -- other accounts of the speech focus more on Eastern Christians but Guibert was right to suppose that mentioning pilgrimage was an excellent way to evoke a sympathetic

¹⁷ In their self-righteousness the crusaders gave little thought to the fact that this same Jerusalem was sacrosanct to Jew and Muslim also. Jerusalem had a special place in the religion and culture of medieval Europe, for it was the place where Christ had died and his empty tomb in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was the very symbol of Christian belief. The people of the eleventh century were burdened by a profound sense of their own sinfulness, a perception increased by the confused state of theological ideas about penance. Heaven was a place for which 'Many are called but few are chosen' and the common fate of mankind must have seemed to be eternal punishment. Fear of hell has never prevented men from sinning, but at moments of crisis or illness eternal torment loomed large. In the late eleventh century the church preached peace to an upper class whose metier and delight was war the signs are that the tension engendered by this contradiction was unbearable. Pilgrimage was one deeply satisfying ritual of escape.

Jerusalem is, also, sacred to Islam: its name al-Kuds, 'the city of the sanctuary', refers to the important shrine we now call the Dome of the Rock, built in 691, whence the angel Gabriel took Mohammed through the heavens. Its great golden dome and the magnificent al-Aksa mosque built nearby in 780 dominate the enormous structure of the Temple Mount which towers over Jerusalem: its western wall is the famous 'Wailing Wall' sacred to Judaism.

The Jews had their own quarter in the north-east of the city and they were probably aware that Christian fanatics had massacred the Jews of the Rhineland cities even before setting out on the crusade, because Jews manned the walls in their own quarter and perished in the great massacre which followed the crusader capture. But the crusaders were not interested in the claims of other religions.

response in an audience. By linking his crusade message with Jerusalem pilgrimage Urban was cleverly tapping into a long-established feature of Christian religious practice.

In 1094 or 1095, Alexios I Komnenos, the Byzantine emperor, sent to the pope, Urban II, and asked for aid from the west against the Seljuq Turks, who taken nearly all of Asia Minor from him.¹⁸ At the council of Clermont Urban addressed a great crowd and urged all to go to the aid of the Greeks and to recover Palestine from the rule of the Muslims. The acts of the council have not been preserved, but we have four accounts of the speech of Urban which were written by men who were present and heard him. Here is the one by the chronicler Fulcher of Chartres. Not how the traditions of the peace and truce of God - aimed at bringing about peace in Christendom - ties in directly with the call for a Crusade.¹⁹ Does this amount to the export of violence?

“Most beloved brethren: Urged by necessity, I, Urban, by the permission of God chief bishop and prelate over the whole world, have come into these parts as an ambassador with a divine admonition to you, the servants of God. I hoped to find you as faithful and as zealous in the service of God as I had supposed you to be. But if there is in you any deformity or crookedness contrary to God's law, with divine help I will do my best to remove it. For God has put you as stewards over his family to minister to it. Happy indeed will you be if he finds you faithful in your stewardship. You are called shepherds; see that you do not act as hirelings. But be true shepherds, with your crooks always in your hands. Do not go to sleep, but guard on all sides the flock committed to you. For if through your carelessness or negligence a wolf carries away one of your sheep, you will surely lose the reward laid up for you with God. And after you have been bitterly scourged with remorse for your faults-, you will be fiercely overwhelmed in hell, the abode of death. For according to the gospel you are the salt of the earth [Matt. 5:13]. But if you fall short in your duty, how, it may be asked, can it be salted? O how great the need of salting!

¹⁸ Lois Brehier, “The Crusades: The Victory of Idealism”, in *The Crusades, Motives and Achievements*, 85.

¹⁹ See. J.A. Brundage, *The Crusades, a Documentary Survey*, (Milwaukee, 1962); S.B. Edgington, *The First Crusade, Historical Association 'New Appreciations in History' No. 37* (London, 1996); J. France, *Victory in the East: a Military History of the First Crusade* (Cambridge, 1994), A. Maalouf, *The Crusades through Arab Eyes* (London, 1984); J. Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: a Short History* (London, 1987).

It is indeed necessary for you to correct with the salt of wisdom this foolish people which is so devoted to the pleasures of this - world, lest the Lord, when He may wish to speak to them, find them putrefied by their sins unsalted and stinking. For if He, shall find worms, that is sins in them, because you have been negligent in your duty, He will command them as worthless to be thrown into the abyss of unclean things. And because you cannot restore to Him His great loss, He will surely condemn you and drive you from His loving presence. But the man who applies this salt should be prudent, provident, modest, learned, peaceable, watchful, pious, just, equitable, and pure. For how can the ignorant teach others? How can the licentious make others modest? And how can the impure make others pure? If anyone hates peace, how can he make others peaceable? Or if anyone has soiled his hands with baseness, how can he cleanse the impurities of another? We read also that if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch [Matt. 15:14]. But first correct yourselves, in order that, free from blame, you may be able to correct those who are subject to you. If you wish to be the friends of God, gladly do the things which you know will please Him. You must especially let all matters that pertain to the church be controlled by the law of the church. And be careful that simony does not take root among you, lest both those who buy and those who sell [church offices] be beaten with the scourges of the Lord through narrow streets and driven into the place of destruction and confusion. Keep the church and the clergy in all its grades entirely free from the secular power. See that the tithes that belong to God are faithfully paid from all the produce of the land; let them not be sold or withheld. If anyone seizes a bishop let him be treated as an outlaw. If anyone seizes or robs monks, or clergymen, or nuns, or their servants, or pilgrims, or merchants, let him be anathema [that is, cursed]. Let robbers and incendiaries and all their accomplices be expelled from the church and anthematized. If a man who does not give a part of his goods as alms is punished with the damnation of hell, how should he be punished who robs another of his goods? For thus it happened to the rich man in the gospel [Luke 16:19]; he was not punished because he had stolen the goods of another, but because he had not used well the things which were his.

... He continued:

"Although, O sons of God, you have promised more firmly than ever to keep the peace among yourselves and to preserve the rights of the church, there remains still an important work for you to do. Freshly quickened by the divine correction, you must apply the strength of your righteousness to another matter which concerns you as well as God. For your brethren who live in the east are in urgent need of your help, and you must hasten to give them the aid which has often been promised them. For, as the most of you have heard, the Turks and Arabs have attacked them and have conquered the territory of Romania [the Greek empire] as far west as the shore of the Mediterranean and the Hellespont, which is called the Arm of St. George. They have occupied more and more of the lands of those Christians, and have overcome them in seven battles. They have killed and captured many, and have destroyed the churches and devastated the empire. If you permit them to continue thus for awhile with impurity, the faithful of God will be much more widely attacked by them. On this account I, or rather the Lord, beseech you as Christ's heralds to publish this everywhere and to persuade all people of whatever rank, foot-soldiers and knights, poor and rich, to carry aid promptly to those Christians and to destroy that vile race from the lands of our friends. I say this to those who are present, it meant also for those who are absent. Moreover, Christ commands it.²⁰

"All who die by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the pagans, shall have immediate remission of sins. This I grant them through the power of God with which I am invested... "²¹

While such stories have much in common with twelfth-century chansons de geste and it may be that the audience was not expected to take them entirely seriously, they are nevertheless consistent with more educated views which present a more systematic picture of the role of Islam as part of the working out of a divine plan. It was inconceivable that God should actually approve of the possession of the holy places by the Muslims: therefore His purpose must be to activate faithful

²⁰ Marcus Bull, "The Pilgrimage Origins of the First Crusade", *History Today*, March 1997; Also see, K. Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of the Crusade*, trans. M. W. Baldwin and W. Goffart (Princeton UP, 1977).

²¹ From Bongars, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, 1, pp. 382 f., trans in Oliver J. Thatcher, and Edgar Holmes McNeal, eds., *A Source Book for Medieval History*, (New York: Scribners, 1905), 513-17.

Christians. Fulcher of Chartres, who was initially attached to the armies led by Stephen of Blois and Robert of Normandy on the First Crusade, may have been present at Clermont. His version of the speech of Urban II was that it was the duty and obligation of able-bodied Christians to rescue the holy places from desecration and pollution at the hands of barbaric races in the grip of the pernicious teaching of Mohammed. According to him, the pope had taxed his audience with the disgrace which would befall them 'if a race so despicable, degenerate, and enslaved by demons should thus overcome a people endowed with faith in Almighty God and resplendent in the name of Christ'. God himself would reproach them if they failed to help fellow Christians, now conquered by the 'vile race' of the Turks.

Urban presented the Turks as usurpers of what he called 'our lands', a belief which Fulcher confirmed from his own experience in Jerusalem where, in what he calls the Temple of the Lord (that is the Dome of the Rock on the Temple platform), the Muslims had 'preferred to say the prayers of their faith, although such prayers were wasted because offered to an idol set up in the name of Mohammed'. Once in Christian hands however, the Rock- 'which disfigured the Temple of the Lord' - was covered over with marble on which the crusaders placed an altar. Fulcher's view is not an isolated one. All the chroniclers who participated in the First Crusade maintained that Muslim occupation had resulted in the pollution of the holy places and the persecution of God's faithful.

Each crusader was convinced that every Muslim he cut down represented a step nearer to paradise, for the essence of Urban's message, which was the driving force of the whole expedition, was that killing Muslims was meritorious.²²

²² It was during the First Crusade that Christian knights laid siege to Jerusalem in June 1099. After five weeks, the city surrendered and the crusaders pillaged the city. The following is an excerpt from an account by Fulcher of Chartres who accompanied the crusaders to the Holy Land. In this quotation it is by far the most obvious result of pope's stimulating his people to massacre Muslims and Jews:

The Franks entered the city magnificently at the noonday hour on Friday, the day of the week when Christ redeemed the whole world on the cross. With trumpets sounding and with everything in an uproar, exclaiming: "Help, God!" they vigorously pushed into the city, and straightaway raised the banner on the top of the wall. All the heathen, completely terrified, changed their boldness to swift flight through the narrow streets of the quarters. The more quickly they fled, the more quickly were they put to flight.

Count Raymond and his men, who were bravely assailing the city in another section, did not perceive this until they saw the Saracens jumping from the top of the wall. Seeing this,

Let's give some chroniclers and orientalists of the time who informed the public about muslims:

2. EARLY CHRONICLERS' AND ORIENTALISTS' CONCEPTION OF ISLAM AND MUSLIMS DURING THE CRUSADES

The First Crusade engendered a mass of writing from both participants and other commentators, who explained how Jerusalem had been captured in 1099 and why, in the years that followed, it had been necessary to establish settlements to protect the holy places. The nature of Islam and the behaviour of its adherents inevitably formed a central feature of such work and, in these circumstances, it can hardly be expected that it would be objective. In these efforts the church and her members were the first to make up an oriental image suitable to be exploited. To illustrate this, let's give some addresses delivered by Popes so as to stimulate people to sweep Muslims, Saracens then, away from occupied lands.

2a. ALBERT OF AACHEN (ALBERTUS AQUENSIS)

Albert of Aachen²³ was one of the most important of the commentators of crusades. He was a member of the Imperial Collegiate

they joyfully ran to the city as quickly as they could, and helped the others pursue and kill the wicked enemy.

Then some, both Arabs and Ethiopians, fled into the Tower of David; others shut themselves in the temple of the Lord and of Solomon, where in the halls a very great attack was made on them. Nowhere was there a place where the Saracens could escape the swordsmen.

On the top of Solomon's Temple, to which they had climbed in fleeing, many were shot to death with arrows and cast down headlong from the roof. Within this Temple, about ten thousand were beheaded. If you had been there your feet would have been stained up to the ankles with the blood of the slain. What more shall I tell? Not one of them was allowed to live. They did not spare the women and children. Cf. Fulcher of Chartres, *op.cit.*

* For more detailed information on the Chronicles' of the Crusade see, Elizabeth Hallam, *Chronicles of the Crusades: Eye witness Accounts of the wars between Christianity and Islam*, London? Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1989.

²³ A chronicler of the First Crusade. His "*Chronicon Hierosolymitanum de bello sacro*", in twelve books, from 1095 to 1121, printed in Bongars (*Gesta Dei per Francos, I, 184-381*), is also found in the fourth volume of the "*Recueil des historiens des croisades*". His work and others like it served as bugle calls to summon to the Orient new multitudes of devoted soldiers of Christ.

Church in that city and an assiduous collector of stories about the First Crusade and the adventures of the early settlers in Palestine and Syria.

To his opinion, Islam had to be presented as the enemy. Consequently, Muslim belief had to be disproved or mocked, and Muslim social behaviour distorted and denigrated. If the stories could be enlivened by an appeal to listeners' sexual prurience, then so much the better. All Western perceptions were affected by this context; even when a favourable view of specific Muslims appears it is presented in a manner which shows how the individual concerned overcame the disadvantages of such an alien upbringing, sometimes with the help of innate qualities derived from ancestors in which Latin blood could be discerned.

Albert's description of incidents such as the capture of a large number of noblewomen near Mersivan in Northern Asia Minor during the crusade of 1101, offered a golden opportunity for such fantasies. Allegedly, these women, abandoned by most of their male military protectors - who had apparently fled in panic - were either slaughtered (if unattractive) or carried off to harems in Khorasan where they were kept to satisfy the unbridled sexual appetites of the Turks.²⁴

2b. GUIBERT OF NOGENT

Once the news of the capture of Jerusalem reached the West, several monastic writers set themselves the task of explaining what had taken place. Two of them - Guibert²⁵, abbot of the small house of Nogent, near Laon, and William, a monk at Malmesbury abbey in Wiltshire - had certainly read Fulcher and were influenced by him, but at the same time they were concerned to place the events in a wider historical perspective, which meant some consideration of the nature of Islam itself. Both tried to research the matter to the best of their ability and resources,, although

²⁴ Barber, Malcolm, "Confranting the Crusade: How The West Saw Medieval Islam", *History Today*, May 1997

²⁵ Guibert, born in Picardy about 1053, was a monk at Saint-Germer-de-Fly, elected Abbot of Nogent-sous-Coucy in 1104, had been a witness of the enthusiasm aroused by the preaching of the crusade, perhaps he had even assisted at the Council of Clermont. Desiring to write an account of the Crusades, he chose this title of the "Doings of God through the Franks", and in his account, wherein the marvellous occasionally mingles with reality, he affirms at different times the Divine mission of the Franks. When, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Jacques Bongars (1546-1612) undertook to publish the works of all the known historians of the Crusades, he chose as the title of his collection "*Gesta Dei per Francos (God's work done by the hand of the Franks)*" (Hanover, 2 v., 1612). Guibert de Nogent in *Histor. Occid. Croisades*, IV, 115-263.

neither could transcend the contemporary context of hostility towards Islam.

Guibert's work presented a picture of a religion founded by an epileptic, who was exploited by both the devil and by a renegade Christian hermit. Guided by the hermit, Mohammed produced the Koran, the chief message of which was the encouragement of sexual promiscuity. They persuaded the people that the message had come from Heaven, although in fact it had been brought on the horns of a cow, trained for the purpose. Mohammed's death came about as a result of his epilepsy:

... it happened once, while he was walking about alone, that he was struck by the illness in that place and fell down. While tormented by this suffering, he was found by pigs and so badly torn to pieces that no remains of him were found except his ankles.

Although there was a common context, it was evident that an understanding of Islam and the Muslim world could take place at different levels. The anonymous author of the *Gesta Francorum*²⁶, who took part in the First Crusade, and whose text was extensively used by

²⁶ *Gesta Dei per Francos* (God's work done by the hand of the Franks) is the title adopted by Guibert de Nogent (died about 1124) for his history of the First Crusade. In the eleventh century the name of "Frank" was applied in a general manner to all the inhabitants of Western Europe, being a survival of the political unity established by the Carolingians for the benefit of the Franks. The Byzantine chroniclers never otherwise refer to the Westerns. Hervé, a Norman adventurer in the service of the Byzantine emperors in the eleventh century, is called "Francopoulos" (Son of the Franks). It was therefore quite natural that this name of "Frank" should be used by the Orientals in referring to the crusaders, and it is evident that they called themselves by the same name. "Gesta Francorum" is the title of one of the chief accounts of the Crusades. Since the Crusades the word Frank remains in the east a synonym for Western, and today the term is still used in that sense. Moreover, the idea that the Franks were a people chosen by God arose soon after their conversion to Christianity, and finds expression many times in the traditions relative to Clovis, which Gregory of Tours transmits to us. We read in one of the prologues of the Salic Law: "Glory to Christ, who loves the Franks! May He preserve their kingdom! May He replenish their leaders with His grace, for this is the strong and brave nation which has richly covered with gold the bodies of the holy martyrs." With Charlemagne the Franks protected the Roman Church from the Lombard invasion, destroyed paganism among the Saxons, drove back the Muslims, and established their protectorate over the Holy Sepulchre. Hence the crusade was, for the men of the eleventh century, merely the crowning of that alliance between God and the Franks, and after the discourse of Urban II at Clermont, it was to the cry of "God wills it!" that all made haste to take the cross.

later writers, is among those nearest to popular belief. Most of his picture of Islam is based upon a series of imaginary conversations of Kerbogha, Atabeg of Mosul, who was defeated by the crusaders outside Antioch in June, 1098.²⁷

2c. WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY

William of Malmesbury²⁸ rejected the popular conception of Muslims as idolaters and, to some extent, succeeded in placing Islam within the context of Jewish and Christian history. In his *Commentary on Lamentations* (written c. 1136), he says that the Slav peoples 'to this day breathe out only pagan superstitions about all matters', but that 'the Saracens and Turks devote themselves to God the Creator, believing Mohammed not to be a God but their prophet'. Moreover, although the Christians, Saracens and Jews have contending opinions about the Son, 'nevertheless all both believe in the heart and confess in the mouth in God the Father, Creator of things'.²⁹

However, William's grasp of these points did nothing to mitigate the severity of his condemnation of Muslim usurpation of the holy places. In his *Deeds of the Kings of England*, William's account of the pope's speech emphasises the way Muslims insolently controlled most of the world, including Asia, where 'the shoots of our devotion first sprouted' and which all but two of the apostles 'consecrated' with their deaths. There in our time the Christians, if there are any left, suffering starvation from an impoverished agriculture, pay tribute to these abominable people, and with inward sighs, long for the experience of our liberty, since they have lost their own'. Muslim occupation of Africa was damaging to Christian honour, since it had been the home of St Augustine and other distinguished Church Fathers. Even Europe, 'the third part of the world', was under threat, since for 300 years the Muslims had held Spain and the Balearics.

²⁷ Barber, Malcolm, *op. cit.*

²⁸ Born 30 November, about 1090; died about 1143. He was educated at Malmesbury, where he became a monk. From his youth he showed a special bent towards history, "Thence it came that not being satisfied with the writing of old I began to write myself". By 1125 he had completed his two works, "*Gesta Regum*" and "*Gesta Pontificum*". See. Sharpe, *Introduction to Translation of Gesta Regum* (London, 1815); Birch, "Life and Writings of William of Malmesbury" in *Trans. of Soc. of Lit.*, X, new series; Rodney Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, (Boydell and Brewer, 1987).

²⁹ Barber, Malcolm, *op. cit.*

2d. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

Contemporaneously with William of Malmesbury, Bernard of Clairvaux³⁰ had lent his support to the view that the Muslims had no right to occupy the holy places of the Christians. Those who failed to understand this deserved their fate. In his treatise *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, he presented the Templars as moved by the example of Christ, who had driven the moneychangers out of the Temple:

The devoted army, doubtless judging it far more intolerable for the holy places to be polluted by the infidel than infested by merchants, remain in the holy house with horses and arms, driving forth from this place, as from all holy places, the filthy and tyrannical madness of infidelity.

Bernard's life were saddened by the failure of the Crusade he had preached, the entire responsibility for which was thrown upon him. He had accredited the enterprise by miracles, but he had not guaranteed its success against the misconduct and perfidy of those who participated in it. Lack of discipline and the over-confidence of the German troops, the intrigues of the Prince of Antioch and Queen Eleanor, and finally the avarice and evident treason of the Christian nobles of Syria, who prevented the capture of Damascus, appear to have been the cause of disaster. Bernard considered it his duty to send an apology to the pope and it is inserted in the second part of his *"Book of Consideration"*. There he explains how, with the crusaders as with the Hebrew people, in whose favour the Lord had multiplied his prodigies, their sins were the cause of their misfortune and miseries.³¹

³⁰ Born in 1090, at Fontaines, near Dijon, France and died at Clairvaux, 21 August, 1153. It was a time when an alarming news came at this time from the East that Edessa had fallen into the hands of the Turks, and that Jerusalem and Antioch were threatened with similar disaster. Deputations of the bishops of Armenia solicited aid from the pope, and the King of France also sent ambassadors. The pope commissioned Bernard to preach a new Crusade and granted the same indulgences for it which Urban II had accorded to the first. A parliament was convoked at Vezelay in Burgundy in 1134, and Bernard preached before the assembly.

³¹ See More detail, Bernard of Clairvaux. *The Letters of St. Bernard*, translated by Bruno Scott James, (London: Burns and Oates, 1963); Jean Leclercq, *A Second look at Bernard of Clairvaux*, (Kalamazo, 1990); Antony Lane, *Calvin and Bernard Of Clairvaux*, (Princeton, 1996); Watkin Williams, *Studies in St. Bernard of Clairvaux*, (London 1927); W. Williams, *The Mysticism of Bernard of Clairvaux*, (London, 1931); James Cotter Morison, *The Life and Times of Saint Bernard*, Abbot of Clairvaux A.D. 1091-1153,

Whatever the level of understanding of individual writers there was no escape from this context of conflict. In this sense there was little change in attitudes until the crises of the late thirteenth century began to encourage men like Ramon Lull to consider alternatives to violence, but even he, fighting against the tide of crusading polemic, was unable to sustain this position for very long. This is not surprising.

2e. PETER THE VENERABLE

In the midst of all this belligerence there were no students of the sociology of comparative religion, but there was one man who made a genuine attempt to understand Islam. This was Peter the Venerable³²,

(London 1863). Bernard of Clairvaux. *The Letters of St. Bernard*. Translated by Bruno Scott James. (London: Burns and Oates, 1963).

³² Born 1092, Montboissier, Auvergne, Arles, and died in 1156, Cluny, Burgundy. He was an outstanding French abbot of Cluny whose spiritual, intellectual, and financial reforms restored Cluny to its high place among the religious establishments of Europe.

Peter joined Bernard of Clairvaux in supporting Pope Innocent II, thereby weakening the position of the antipope, Anacletus II. After Peter Abelard's teachings had been condemned at the Council of Sens (1140), Peter received him at Cluny and reconciled him with Bernard and with the Pope. He also tried to convert the Crusades into nonviolent missionary ventures; ordered the first Latin translation of the Qur'an so that it might be refuted; and was papal ambassador to Aquitaine, Italy, and England. He wrote hymns and poems in addition to theological tracts and left about 200 letters of considerable historiographical interest. Although Peter has not been canonized, his cult received papal approval in 1862.

The readiness of encounter or even cooperation of Christianity with non-Christian religions is a phenomenon of modern times, with few precedents in the history of the struggle of Christianity and the non-Christian religions. Until the 18th century, Christianity showed little inclination to engage in a serious study of non-Christian religions. Four hundred years after the beginning of the struggle with the Muslims in Spain, almost half a century after the proclamation of the First Crusade against Islam, Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny, issued the first translation of the Qur'an (the Islamic scriptures) in 1141 in Toledo; but he was not understood by his contemporaries. Bernard of Clairvaux, the propagator of the Second Crusade, even refused to read it. Four hundred years later, in 1542/43, Theodor Bibliander, a theologian and successor of the Swiss Reformer Zwingli, edited the translation of the Qur'an by Peter the Venerable again. He was subsequently arrested, and he and his publisher could be freed only through intervention by Luther.

The committee Peter commissioned for translation of some of the basic works on Islam were as follows:

Fabulae Saracenorum (An edition of Hadiths about the creation, former prophets and the life of Muhammad)

Liber Generationis Mahumet (This is the translation of the book by Said b. Omar titled *Kitabu Neseb-i Rasulillah*, which was translated by Herman of Dalmatia.)

Abbot of Cluny, who, in 1142, in the course of a journey to Spain, commissioned translators to provide him with five important Islamic works, including the Koran. At Najera he met Robert of Ketton, Hermann of Dalmatia, Peter of Toledo and, said Peter the Venerable, in order that nothing should be omitted or hidden from him, 'a Saraceni' whose name was Mohammed. These men appear to have begun work even before Peter had completed his Spanish journey. Among the translations were Ketton's version of the Koran completed in 1143, and Peter of Toledo's rendering of an Arabic work, the *Apologia for Christianity* of al-Kindi, which the abbot said informed him of many things of which he had previously been ignorant.

Armed with these materials, Peter was able to compose both a concise handbook which explained Islamic beliefs as he understood them (*Compendium of all the Heresies of the Saracens*) and a treatise intended to prove the errors of Islam (*Book against the Sect or Heresy of*

Doctrina Mahumet (The Latinic translation of a Muslim Catechism written by Abdullah b. Sellam. It was translated by H. of Dalmatia.)

The Qur'an (The first Qur'an translation in Latin by Robert of Ketton and Muhammed who was commissioned to check the translation.)

Epistola Saraceni et Rescriptum Christiani/Apologia for Christianity (This is the first kind of apologia and polemics which took place between Abdullah b. Ismail el-Hašimi and Abdul Mesih b. Ishak el-Kindi. This was translated into Latin by Peter of Toledo and Peter of Poitiers. N.A. Newman translated this polemics into English and published. Currently one of my MA students is preparing it as an MA thesis. See for detail: N.A. Newman, *The Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue, A collection of documents from the first three Islamic centuries* (632-900 AD.) Translations with Commentary, Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, Pennsylvania 1993, 355-547. With regard to detail information about the translators of the above mentioned works see, *Islamochristiana*, 5, 1979, 312-13.

The reasons for such reticence toward contact with foreign religions were twofold: (1) The ancient church was significantly influenced by the Jewish attitude toward the pagan religions of its environment. Like Judaism, it viewed the pagan gods as "nothings" next to the true God, the Creator of the world and, in the case of the Christians, the Father of Jesus Christ; they were offsprings of human error that were considered to be identical with the wooden, stone, or bronze images that were made by humans. (2) Besides this, there was the tendency to degrade the pagan gods as demons, evil demonic forces engaged in mortal combat with the true God. The conclusion of the history of salvation, according to the Christian understanding, was to be a final struggle between Christ and his church on the one side and the forces, powers, and thrones of the Antichrist on the other, culminating finally with the victory of Christ. See for detail, Giles Constable and J. Kritzeck, *Petrus Venerabilis*, (Romae, 1956); James Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*, (Princeton Univ., 1964).

Islam/Liber Contra Sectam sive haeresim Saracenarum)³³. He hoped (in the end fruitlessly) that Bernard of Clairvaux would take up the cause of refuting what he regarded as the only heresy to which the faithful had not made proper reply, despite the fact that it had brought almost limitless confusion to the human race. Even Peter the Venerable, however, was prepared to give vigorous support to the crusades when the occasion seemed to demand it, so it does appear that the protestations of peaceful intent with which he prefaces his polemic against the Saracens were intended for a Muslim rather than a Christian audience.

If the major formative influence upon the Western views of Islam in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was that of confrontation, both physical and intellectual, it did not always follow that the contact which this brought produced an entirely negative conclusion. Admiration of their fighting qualities and indeed chivalry was not unknown among those who actually did battle with the Turks. Here, there is an interesting contrast between William of Malmesbury, who probably never met a Muslim, and the author of the *Gesta Francorum* who experienced the bitter years of the First Crusade.

William professed to believe that Urban II had described the Turks as favouring a manner of warfare based upon swift flight, as a consequence of both lack of courage and thinness of blood. It was apparent to William that:

... every race, born in that region, dried out by the excessive heat of the sun, has indeed more discretion but less blood; and thus they retreat from fighting at close quarters, because they know that they do not have enough blood.

Not so the Franks, who as a people originating in the more temperate provinces of the world could afford to be more prodigal of blood. The author of the *Gesta* was under no such illusions, however:

What man, however experienced or learned, would dare to write of the skill and prowess of the Turks, who thought that they would strike terror into the Franks, as they had done into the Arabs and Saracens, Armenians, Syrians and Greeks, by the menace of their arrows?

³³ His arguments were later on resumed by William Muir (1819-1905) in his *The Testimony borne by the Coran to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures* (Written in English in 1855, later translated into Urdu, 1861).

For many crusaders, they were certainly preferable to the Greeks. Odo of Deuil, the St Denis chronicler, who blamed the Byzantines for the failure of the Second Crusade, was pleased to draw lessons following a battle with the Turks near Adalia:

By the blood of these soldiers the Turks' thirst was quenched and the Greeks' treachery was transformed into violence, for the Turks returned to see the survivors and then gave generous alms to the sick and the poor, but the Greeks forced the stronger Franks into their service and beat them by way of payment.³⁴

2f. RAYMOND LULLY (RAMON LULL)

Probably a courtier at the court of King James of Aragon until thirty years of age, Raymond Lully³⁵ then became a hermit and afterwards a tertiary of the Order of St. Francis. From that time he seemed to be inspired with extraordinary zeal for the conversion of the Muslim world. To this end he advocated the study of Oriental languages and the refutation of Arabian philosophy, especially that of Averroes. He founded a school for the members of his community in Majorca, where special attention was given to Arabic and Chaldean. Later he taught in Paris. About 1291 he went to Tunis, preached to the Saracens, disputed with them in philosophy, and after another brief sojourn in Paris, returned to the East as a missionary. After undergoing many hardships and privations he returned to Europe in 1311 for the purpose of laying before the Council of Vienna his plans for the conversion of the Moors. Again in 1315 he set out for Tunis, where he was stoned to death by the Saracens. In his efforts to convert people, some considered him physically insane and others as an avarage philosopher possessing signs of megalomania and intolerance.³⁶

Raymond's literary activity was inspired by the same purpose as his missionary and educational efforts. In the numerous writings (about 300), in Catalanian as well as in Latin, he strove to show the errors of Averroism and to expound Christian theology in such a manner that the

³⁴ Barber, Malcolm, *op.cit.*

³⁵ "Doctor Illuminatus", philosopher, poet, and theologian, born at Palma in Majorca, between 1232 and 1236; died at Tunis, 29 June, 1315. See; Allison Peers, *Ramon Lull, A Biography*, (N.York 1929), 27-28; J.N.Hillgarth, *Ramon Lull and Lullism in Fourteenth Century France*, Oxford, 1971.

³⁶ Joachim Lavajo, "The Apologetical Method of Raymond Marti According to the Problematic of Raymod Lull", *Islamochristiana*, 11 (1985) 155.

Saracens themselves could not fail to see the truth. With the same purpose in view, he invented a mechanical contrivance, a logical machine, in which the subjects and predicates of theological propositions were arranged in circles, squares, triangles, and other geometrical figures, so that by moving a lever, turning a crank, or causing a wheel to revolve, the propositions would arrange themselves in the affirmative or negative and thus prove themselves to be true. This device he called the *Ars Generalis Ultima* or the *Ars Magna*, and to the description and explanation of it he devoted his most important works. Underlying this scheme was a theoretical philosophy, or rather a theosophy, for the essential element in Raymond's method was the identification of theology with philosophy. The scholastics of the thirteenth century maintained that, while the two sciences agree, so that what is true in philosophy cannot be false in theology, or vice versa, they are, nevertheless, two distinct sciences, differing especially in that theology makes use of revelation as a source, while philosophy relies on reason alone.

Since the Christians are not at peace with the Saracens, O Lord', wrote the Mallorcan Ramon Lull (Raymond Lully) in his *Book of Contemplation on God* in the early 1270s:

. . . they dare not hold discussions upon the faith with them when they are among them. But were they at peace together, they could dispute with each other peacefully concerning the faith, and then it would be possible for the Christians to direct and enlighten the Saracens in the way of truth, through the grace of the Holy Spirit and the true reasons that are signified in the perfection of Thy attributes.³⁷

2g. RICOLDO de MONTE CROCE

Far fewer Westerners actually lived in a Muslim society, but one who did was the Dominican missionary, Ricoldo da Monte Croce³⁸, who

³⁷ Barber, Malcolm, *op. citato*. Matthew Bennett, "First Crusaders' Images of Muslims The Influence of Vernacular Poetry?", *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 22 (1986); Penny Cole, "O God, the Heathen have come into your inheritance" (Ps. 78.1) "The Theme of Religious Pollution in Crusade Documents", 1095-1188', in *Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth-Century Syria*, ed. M. Shatzmiller (E.J. Brill, 1993); Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West. The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh University Press, 1960); Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission. European Approaches toward the Muslims* (Princeton University Press, 1984); James Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam* (Princeton University Press, 1964); Richard Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Harvard University Press, 1962).

³⁸ Born at Florence about 1243; died there 31 October, 1320. He made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land (1288), and then travelled for many years as a missionary in western Asia,

was in Baghdad in 1291 when Acre fell to the Mamluks. The Pope had sent him to Baghdad in 1288 at the age of 45. While in Tabriz and Baghdad he learnt Arabic and studied Islamic Religious Sciences, and followed courses at the Mustansiriyya University at Baghdad.

The very nature of his profession of course made any religious accommodation impossible, for he shared many of the assumptions of his Christian contemporaries, but he is fulsome in his praise of the personal conduct of the Muslims he met and observed in Baghdad, and does not miss the opportunity to point up Christian moral deficiencies in contrast. Neither the author of the *Gesta* at the end of the eleventh century, nor Ricoldo da Monte Croce two centuries later, would have conceded that Muslims could in any way be 'right', but they do show that even in the midst of the crusades observation sometimes modified stereotyping.

Ricoldo's best known work is the "*Contra Legem Sarracenorum*", written at Bagdad, which has been very popular as a polemical source against Islam, and has been often edited (first published at Seville, 1500). This book has been called "*Improbatio Alcorani (Refutation of the Qur'an)*" by some people. This book contains 17 chapters. Most of them attempt to show that the Qur'an can not be a divine law. Chapter 13-15 relate how the Qur'an came to be written by Muhammad under the influence of Jews and Bahira. Chapter 16-17 establish a parallel between the Gospel and the Christian Law on the one hand, and the Qur'an and Islamic Law on the other.

The "*Christianæ Fidei Confessio facta Sarracenis*" (printed at Basle, 1543) is attributed to Ricoldo, and was probably written about the same time as the above mentioned works. Other works are: "*Contra errores Judæorum*" (MS. at Florence); "*Libellus contra nationes orientales*" (MS. at Florence and Paris); "*Contra Sarracenos et Alcoranum*" (MS. at Paris); "*De variis religionibus*" (MS. at Turin). Very probably the last three works were written after his return to Europe. Ricoldo is also known to have written two theological works--a defence of the doctrines of St.

having his chief headquarters at Bagdad. He returned to Florence before 1302, and was chosen to high offices in his order. His "*Itinerarium*" (written about 1288-91; published in the original Latin at Leipzig; 1864; in Italian at Florence, 1793; in French at Paris, 1877) was intended as a guide-book for missionaries, and is an interesting description of the Oriental countries visited by him. The "*Epistolæ de Perditione Acconis*" are five letters in the form of lamentations over the fall of Ptolemais (written about 1292, published at Paris, 1884). See, Ricardo de Monte-Croce, *Lettres de Ricoldo de Monte Croce*, Archives de l'orient Latin II, Documents II, Paris 1984, pp.258-296.

Thomas (in collaboration with John of Pistoia, about 1285) and a commentary on the "*Libri sententiarum*" (before 1288). Ricoldo began a translation of the Koran about 1290, but it is not known whether this work was completed.³⁹

His missionary methods changed with time: at first, eager to engage his adversaries in public debate, in particular among Eastern Christians, he realized progressively that another attitude was needed: one of respect, and humility. This evolution is summarized in "*Libellus ad nationes orientales*", where he gives five rules for future missionaries among separated Christians: Use no enterpreter, know the language, know the Scriptures and the Doctrines of those one is sent to, aim at establishing a common faith in a variety of rites, speak with the leaders rather than the people, and "above all let your only motive be the love of God and of souls".⁴⁰

Ricoldo's main success has been his refutation of the Qur'an. He had written it to help other missionaries and to meet a need really felt by them. The book was edited in Spain, as well as in the East. During the 14. Century, it was translated into Greek by Demetrius Cydonius (1324-1397), and became the classical textbook for polemicists.

Ricoldo thinks that non-Christians are bound to go to hell. This gives him a totally negative view of Islam, and of Muhammad. At the same time, his theological formation had left him with the conviction that all these people were destined to hell because they did not hold the right beliefs.⁴¹

These and similar conceptions of chroniclers and orientalist of this period in their works formed a negative image about muslims, which still retains its basic structure with slight amendments.

CONCLUSION

When judged by narrow military standards, the Crusades were a failure. What was gained so quickly was slowly but steadily lost. On the other hand, to hold territory under a Christian banner so far from home,

³⁹ See. Murray, *Discoveries and Travels in Asia*, I, 197

⁴⁰ Jean-Marie Gaudéul, *Encounters and Clashes, Islam and Christianity in History*, PISA (Rome 1990) 150.

⁴¹ *Op.cit.*, 148-150.

given the contemporary conditions of transport and communication, was impressive.

For many years, scholars were inclined to give the Crusades credit for making Western Europe more cosmopolitan. They believed the Crusades had brought Western Europe higher standards of Eastern medicine and learning, Greek and Muslim culture, and such luxuries as silks, spices, and oranges. Extreme statements of this view held that the Crusades brought Europe out of the provincialism of the Dark Ages.

Scholars no longer accept this assessment. It is too simple. It ignores the larger trends of population growth, expanding trade, and the exchange of ideas and cultures that existed long before 1095. These trends would have encouraged East-West exchange without military expeditions or the taking of Jerusalem. The Crusades, while an exciting and integral part of the Middle Ages, merely served to hasten changes that were inevitable.

The most important effect of the Crusades was economic. The Italian cities prospered from the transport of Crusaders and replaced Byzantines and Muslims as merchant-traders in the Mediterranean. Trade passed through Italian hands to Western Europe at a handsome profit. This commercial power became the economic base of the Italian Renaissance. It also provoked such Atlantic powers as Spain and Portugal to seek trade routes to India and China. Their efforts, through such explorers as Vasco da Gama and Christopher Columbus, helped to open most of the world to European trade dominance and colonization and to shift the center of commercial activity from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic.

The main point which must be emphasised when concluding that people especially religious ones live together with their past heritage and history. And historically we witnessed that both the Church and some orientalists formed an image about Muslims which last centuries and even today. And this image was beyond doubt negative one. In the course of history some orientalists supported this approach, while others tried to put Islam and Muslims in line with other heavenly religions. Accordingly some dialogue efforts have gained a reasonable and sound base on which mutual co-existence can be established. But a question remains unanswered: Has the church which displayed the success of showing Islamic thought, the essential bearer of civilization in Medieval Ages, as pagan and dissolute one to her people got theological self-confidence as to convert this outdated mode of thinking and accept them as co-partners in a globalizing world.