

## THE CRUSADES IN THE LEVANT (THE 12TH AND 13TH CENTURIES): THE DECLARED AND HIDDEN OBJECTIVES

### AS CRUZADAS NO LEVANTE (SÉCULOS XII E XIII): OS OBJETIVOS DECLARADOS E OCULTOS

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#### Abstract

This Paper does spotlights on the declared objectives of the crusader movement in the Levant Such as liberating the Holy land in Palestine from Islamic dominance. Besides, we can find hidden Objectives such as Christianity spreading among Muslims and subjugating the Orthodox Church of Constantinople. So, we can Study that era through several objectives.

**Keywords:** Crusades. Relations Between East and West. Crusader Scheme. Declared Objectives. Hidden Objectives.

#### Resumo

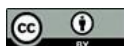
*Este artigo destaca os objetivos declarados do movimento cruzado no Levante, como a libertação da Terra Santa na Palestina do domínio islâmico. Além disso, podemos encontrar objetivos ocultos, como a disseminação do cristianismo entre os muçulmanos e a subjugação da Igreja Ortodoxa de Constantinopla. Assim, podemos estudar essa era através de diversos objetivos.*

**Palavras-chave:** Cruzadas. Relações Entre Oriente e Ocidente. Plano Cruzado. Objetivos Declarados. Objetivos Ocultos.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This article addresses what are described as “the declared and hidden objectives”, of the Crusader scheme, which represents a pivotal stage in the history of relations between East and West during the 12th and 13th centuries AD.

When we consider the speech of Pope Urban II (1089-1099 A.D.) (Fulcher of Chartres, 1969) (Awad & al-Sayyid, 2018) (al-Kutbi, 2024) (Awad, 2015) at the Council of Clermont in France on November 27, 1095 A.D., we notice that his focus was on Jerusalem, which he considered the earthly paradise that witnessed the birth of the



Redeemer—according to the Pope—and he urged Christians to go to the East in order to reclaim the Holy Places (Terrum Sacrum) from the grip of the Seljuk Turks, who, he claimed, had turned the Eastern churches into stables for horses and slaughtered Eastern Christians.

Thus, we can say that Jerusalem formed “the element of inspiration “in the Pope speech, who was extremely keen on it in order to make “the sole objective “to which all the souls of the Christendom yearned.

In addition, the Pope, in his speech, pointed to the economic aspect through encouraging Christians to head to the East, to the land of Canaan, which flows with milk and honey, especially since the land in Europe had become overcrowded.

The question that looms is, was this objective of liberating Jerusalem the only objective, or were there other hidden objectives behind that massive Crusader scheme for which Europe mobilized all its great capabilities?

In fact, there are other hidden objectives that can be observed through the following:

**First:** Christianization.

**Second:** Subjugating the heretical Orthodox Church of Constantinople.

**Third:** Controlling the kings of Europe through papal dominance over Political life.

**Fourth:** Ending the role of Muslims as trade brokers between East and West.

### **1) Christianization**

As for Christianization (Jacques de Vitry, 1896) (Ibn Jubayr, 1964) (Al-Muqaddam, 2010) (Kedar, 1984), it is certain that it was a hidden objective lies behind the Crusader Scheme The papacy sought to Christianize the Muslims of the East through its desire to compete with the Orthodox Church of Constantinople. We see that this aspect was fundamental in the minds of those who planned those wars.

During their first steps on the land of the Levant, the Crusaders' unbridled desire to impose Catholic Christianity on the Muslim population by force became apparent. A number of Muslims had to accept this, allegedly, to escape the fate of being slaughtered by the invaders' swords through dissimulation.

We must not overlook a pivotal aspect here, which is the translation of the Holy Qur'an into Latin (Lingua Latina) for the first time in 1143 CE, through the efforts of Peter the Venerable (Kritzeck, 1962) (al-Fadl,1411) (Zaqzouq, 1989) (Gurevsky, 1996)

(Shukri,2000), Abbot of Cluny in France (d. 1157 CE). He undertook a journey to Spain between 1141 and 1143 CE and formed a committee with the help of a man named “Raymond of Tudela “. That translation was completed by the English scholar Robertus Retenensis, who held the position of Archdeacon in Miltonium, with the assistance of a German monk named Herman as well as a man named “ Peter of Tudela” . Some believe that the latter played a prominent role in the translation of the Holy Qur'an. After its completion, it was sent to the Abbot of Cluny, who made it available to all benefactors, especially senior churchmen, who wanted it from among those involved in missionary work (al-Fadl,1411) (al-Shayyal, wd).

We must acknowledge that the aforementioned translation is closer to an expanded summary than a translation. It does not adhere to the text in terms of accuracy and literalness, nor does it adhere to the sentence order in the original Qur'an. Rather, it extracts the general meaning from the parts of a single surah and then expresses this in a special arrangement of the translator's ideas (Zaqzouq, 1989). In addition, there are partial translation - errors in the understanding of some Qur'anic verses.

There are numerous examples of Christianization in the Levant during the 12th and 13th centuries CE. That we need not detail them here, but we will mention, for example, the man from Bujaja in Morocco who associated with the Crusaders for a long time, apostatized from Islam, and embraced Christianity. That was mentioned by the Andalusian traveller Ibn Jubayr in his travelogue (Ibn Jubayr, 1964).

Likewise, during the events of the Fifth Crusade(1218-1221 AD) (Oliver of Paderborn, 1948), Crusader sources indicate the conversion of (400) Egyptian Muslim children. They were baptized and then sent to Europe. It is noteworthy that converting children was an easy matter because they offered no resistance.

Nor should we overlook the campaign of the French King Louis IX (1226-1270 A.D.) (Jean de Joinville, 1970) (al-Kinani, 1985) (al-Husseini, 2000) (Amer, 2002) against Tunis in 1270 AD. Missionaries convinced him that he could support its ruler, al-Mustansir al-Hafsi (1149-1277 A.D.) (Ibn Abi Dinar, 1993) (Mawqif, 1998) (Awad, 2015), in converting to Christianity, especially through his good treatment of French merchants. However, the opposite occurred, as that ruler led a valiant resistance against the crusaders which was acknowledged by the French sources themselves, such as the Chronicle of Prima (Chronique de Primat) .

In general, the Crusaders did not achieve any significant accomplishments in the field of Christianization. In fact, it has been confirmed that some Crusaders themselves sought to embrace Islam of their own free will, as acknowledged by the Crusader sources themselves.

During the Second Crusade (1147-1149 A.D.) (Odo de Deul, 1948) (Zaydan, 2000), it happened that some Crusader elements were deceived by the Byzantines in the region of Antalia in Asia Minor. They were not shown the way they should take, but rather their money was plundered. They found no one but the Muslims to provide them with food and drink. The French historian Odo de Deul acknowledges the conversion of about 3,000 Crusaders to Islam of their own free will and curses them (Odo de Deul, 1948) (Ubayd, 1970) for abandoning their original religions. This is the largest incident of mass conversion by the Crusaders themselves, leaving no room for doubt.

In addition, during the events of the Third Crusade (1189-1192 A.D.), sources mention the conversion of a number of Crusaders to Islam, although they justified this mass conversion was due to a famine (Nicholson, 1997).

Deeds of Saladin (1171-1193 A.D.) (Ibn Shaddad, 1964) (Lev, 1999) (Diane, 2002) (Awad, 2013) (Awad, 2020), who entered Jerusalem and conquered it on October 2, 1187 A.D., without shedding Crusader blood, and who ransomed many of them from his own pocket, were the best publicity for that religion. The Crusaders leaved their camps and sought refuge with him to embrace Islam (Arnold, 1970).

In light of all these facts, it is confirmed that the invaders did not achieve their goal of Christianization, and the Muslims remained steadfast in their religion. If there were specific cases of apostasy, they were on the part of individuals whose faith was weak and who had lived with the invaders for a long time. However, there is no mention in the sources of a mass apostasy on the part of Muslims.

## **2) Subjugating the church of Constantinople:**

As for the heretical Church of Constantinople, it is noted that the aforementioned goal is considered one of the most important hidden objectives of the Crusader scheme.

There is no doubt that there were doctrinal differences and political rivalry between the Church of Constantinople and the Church of Rome, which considered itself the matriarch of the churches, given that its founder was St. Peter, who was considered the rock of Christ upon which his very church was built, as mentioned in the Gospel of John. The Popes of Rome, thus, could not accept any rival to their church.

The Great Schism occurred in 1054 A.D. during the time of the Bishop of Constantinople, Michael I Cerularius<sup>1</sup> (Nicol,1991) (Awad, 2007), and Pope Leo IX<sup>2</sup> (Kelly, 1996) (1049-1054 A.D.). The latter declared that the Church of Constantinople was outside the mercy of the Church of Rome, the matriarch of the churches, and it was treated as a heretical church.

It should not be overlooked here that throughout the twelfth century, numerous political tensions arose in Byzantine-Latin relations, especially after the Crusaders failed to honour their commitments to the Byzantines regarding Antioch. They had promised to return it to them once they seized it from the Seljuks, and that did not happen. Instead, they established a Norman principality there, leading to what became known as "the Antiochian Question" (Zeitoun, 1980) in Byzantine politics. This referred to the Byzantine emperor's desire to assert his sovereignty over Antioch and attempt to remove Crusader control, a claim the Crusaders refused to acknowledge. Throughout the twelfth century, numerous Byzantine attempts were made in this regard, particularly during the reign of Emperor Manuel Comnenus (1143-1180 A.D.) (Kinnamos, 1976) (Magdalino, 1997) (Awad, 2015) (Al-Ghamdi, 1409). Ultimately, Antioch did not remain in Crusader hands, nor was it controlled by the Byzantines. Instead, it fell under the rule of a powerful Islamic state, the Mamluk Sultanate, in the second half of the thirteenth century, in 1268 A.D.

During the Third Crusade (1189-1192 A.D.), King Richard the Lion Heart (1189-1199 A.D.) (Ambroise, 1943) (Flori, 2006) (Reston, 2001) seized the Island of Cyprus, which belonged to Byzantium, so it represented an indication of the growing of Western ambitions in Byzantium and the escalating hostility between the two sides.

As for the events of the Fourth Crusade (1202-1204 A.D.) (Choniates, 1984) (Ubaid, 1970) (Zeitoun, 1980), they occurred internal conflicts in Constantinople, Western intervention, and it was conquered for the first time in its history since the fourth century A.D., and it was subjected to Latin occupation during the period from 1204 to 1261 A.D.

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Cyrularius, Patriarch of Constantinople during the years 1043-1058 AD, is known for his participation in a conspiracy against Emperor Michael IV (1034-1041 AD). He is famous for his dispute with Cardinal Humbert, the papal apostle, in 1054 AD, which led to " the Great Schism"

<sup>2</sup> Pope Leo IX, A Pope and Saint, ascended the papal throne from February 12, 1049 AD until April 19, 1554 AD. He was born on June 21, 1002 AD. His original name was Bruno, son of Count Hugh of Eglshiem, sought to reform the Church through a council held in Rome from April 9 to 15, 1049. He died in 1054.

The Church of Constantinople was subjugated to the Church of Rome, during the reign of Pope Innocent III (1198 -1216 A.D.) (Roger of Wendover, 1971) (Abdel-Gawad, 2003), who believed in the necessity of the unity of the Eastern and Western Churches, and the throne of the Church of Constantinople was assumed by a Latin Patriarch.

One prominent historian comments: " A Latin patriarch ascended the throne of the Byzantine Church, and the legitimate Byzantine patriarch, John X, fled. Pope Innocent III realized that converting an entire people and Latinizing them was impossible, so he recommended treating the Byzantine bishops kindly and not rushing the policy of appointing Latin bishops. He understood the danger of placing Latin priests over the churches of an Orthodox Byzantine people. Therefore, the Pope sent a delegate with the text of the oath that the Byzantine bishops were to take. It included loyalty to Rome and recognition of Pope Sovereignty" (Zeitoun, 1980).

Thus, a key hidden objective, which the papacy had been keen on and achieved after a full century of calling for the Crusader scheme, was realized.

A study of the declared and hidden aims of the Crusades has confirmed that we are indeed facing a complex and multifaceted historical movement. Those behind it deceived Western Europe with glittering religious slogans, while concealing their political and economic ambitions. This confirms that they conspired to achieve these goals and sought to implement them simultaneously in order to consolidate their position in the region, so it is logically unlikely that such a huge project would be undertaken without a great deal of reliance on the weapon of information.

### **3) Control of papacy over kings and emperors of Europe:**

As for the third objective, by which we mean the papacy in using the Crusades, in order to impose its control over political life in Western Europe and to pressure emperors and kings to go to the East to fight the Muslims, it possessed an effective weapon, which was excommunication. This meant that the legitimacy of the rule of any emperor or king who opposed it was rejected, and it happened several times that it used this weapon against a number of leaders who were late in going to the East.

What is certain is that the Crusader's Scheme is an action of the Western Church, and its own issue was not the Holy Land, but rather the multiple ambitions that were available to the papacy in order to support its political influence in Western Europe, and it played political roles, far from the religious character that the largest ecclesiastical institution of that era was supposed to be.

It is worth noting here that the hidden objectives coincided with the declared objectives and proceeded together, indicating the depth of planning in the Crusader scheme.

Some objectives were achieved by the invaders early on, while others were not achieved until a full century after the start of the Crusade. These objectives were general policies of the Papacy that did not change with the change of popes.

There is no doubt that there was a pivotal factor that helped the Crusaders achieve their objectives, which we observe in the political division and sectarian conflict among the Muslims, Especially in the early stages of the invaders' history, where they exploited events to their advantage and planted their alien entity, which required Muslims to work continuously for two centuries to expel them.

#### **4) Ending the role of the Muslims as Commercial brokers:**

The Western Europeans sought to eliminate the role of the Muslims as Brokers in the trade of the East and the West; a role they had played throughout 8th to 11th centuries Without a real competitor, and that led to the Muslims gained abundant wealth.

The Italian cities, like Genoa, Pisa and Venice, helped the Crusaders to subdue the cities of the Levant coast in order to obtain significant commercial privileges. This is what actually happened on the part of the kings of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem, and this came in light of what was known as the commercial revolution which lasted throughout the period (950- 1350 A.D.), where the means of payments in cash increased, and the massive trade caravans appeared. Those trade activities were concentrated in silk, slaves, gold and spices. It is noted that the Crusades' Subjugating of the Levantine coast made them control over the movement of trade activities, and the Islamic powers in the Levant became limited-access ones which needed the crusaders to Dispose their excess production (Lopez, 1976).

That was a presentation of the declared and hidden objectives of the Crusaders in the Levant in the 12th and 13th centuries.

#### **The research paper concluded The following points:**

1) There were declared objectives of the Crusades, in particular the liberation of the Christian holy lands in Palestine from the grip of the Muslims.

2) Multiple hidden objectives were at play, including Christianization, subjugating the Orthodox Church of Constantinople, and controlling over the kings and emperors of Europe.

3) We must understand the Crusaders' scheme through its hidden objectives, not its apparent and declared goals only.

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### **Authors' Contribution**

Both authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

### **Data availability**

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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