

“THE CONFLICT BETWEEN EAST AND WEST: THE STORY OF THE CRUSADES”**B. N. Rizayev**

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ABSTRACT: In this article, causes, main stages, and consequences of the Crusades happened in Europe from 1096 to 1270 are examined, along with the connection between spiritual, political and economic factors of them. In addition, this article is about the Crusades' effects on the Eastern countries, particularly in the Muslim world, their trade relations in the Middle East, and the contribution to cultural exchange processes. In this research, the Crusades' historical role, and their events that had happened are also analyzed using historical-genetic, comparative analysis, historical comparison, typological methods. Moreover, a diachronic approach is used too, through this technique, the theme is analysed across periods. And then, events after the Crusades and impacts of these campaigns in today's world are also enlightened here. Furthermore, beneficial proposals for the world community have been put forward in the article. Regarding these proposals, concrete modern suggestions that are really helpful for public, and an analysis method are also employed.

Keywords: The Crusades, cross, church, Clermont Constantinople, islam, east, west, the Pope, historical-genetic, method, knight, Alexei I, Richard the Lionheart, Ayyubids, Mamluks

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada 1096 -1270-yillarda Yevropada sodir bo'lgan Salib yurishlarining kelib chiqish sabablari, asosiy bosqichlari va oqibatlari tahlil qilinadi. Maqolada diniy, siyosiy hamda iqtisodiy omillar o'rtasidagi o'zaro bog'liqlik yoritilgan. Shuningdek, Salib yurishlarining Sharq mamlakatlari, xususan musulmon dunyosiga ta'siri, Yaqin Sharqdagi savdo aloqalari va madaniy almashinuv jarayonlariga qo'shgan hissi haqida fikr yuritiladi. Tadqiqotda tarixiy-genetik, qiyosiy tahlil, tarixiy taqqoslash, tipologik metodlar orqali Salib yurishlarining tarixiy ahamiyati, bo'lib o'tgan voqealar tahlil qilingan. Ushbu tadqiqotda qo'shimcha tarzda diaxron uslub (davrlashtirish metodi) dan ham foydalanilgan. Diaxron uslub orqali mavzu davrlar kesimida tahlil qilingan. Keyinchalik salib yurishlaridan keyingi voqealar va hozirgi kunda bu yurishlarning tasiri ham o'rganilgan. Shu bilan birga maqolada dunyo hamjamiyati uchun foyda keltiradigan takliflar ilgari surilgan. Ushbu takliflar qismi uchun ham mutlaqo yangi bo'lgan Taklif va tahlil metodidan ham qo'llanilgan bo'lib unda xalq uchun foyda keltiradigan takliflar tahlil qilingan.

Kalit so'zlar: Salib yurishlari, but, cherkov, Klermont, Kanistantinopol, islom dini, Sharq, G'arb, Papa, tarixiy-genetik, tip, ritsar, Sharq, G'arb, Aleksey I, Richard I Sheryurak, Ayyubiylar, Mamluklar

АННОТАЦИЯ: В данной статье рассматриваются причины возникновения, основные этапы и последствия Крестовых походов, осуществлённых в Европе в 1096–1270 годах. Освещаются взаимосвязи религиозных, политических и экономических факторов, обусловивших данные события. Особое внимание уделяется влиянию Крестовых походов на государства Востока, в частности на мусульманский мир, а также их воздействию на торговые отношения и процессы культурного обмена на Ближнем Востоке. В ходе исследования применены историко-генетический, сравнительно-аналитический, историко-сопоставительный и типологический методы, что позволило определить историческую значимость Крестовых походов и осуществить анализ соответствующих событий. Дополнительно использован диахронный метод (метод

периодизации), благодаря которому тема рассмотрена в разрезе отдельных исторических периодов. В последующих разделах анализируются события, последовавшие за Крестовыми походами, и оценивается их влияние на современность. Наряду с этим в статье формулируются предложения, представляющие потенциальную ценность для мирового сообщества. Отдельные рекомендации разработаны с использованием нового «метода предложений и анализа», направленного на формирование выводов, имеющих практическую значимость для общества.

Ключевые слова: Крестовые походы, Восток, церковь, Клермон, Константинополь, ислам, Восток, Запад, Папа, историко-генетический метод, типология, рыцари, Восток, Запад, Алексей I, Ричард I Львиное Сердце, Айюбиды, Мамлюки.

Introduction

On the historical stage, relations between the East and the West have never been merely a matter of geography or politics. The centuries-old confrontation between these two poles represents a clash of ideas, a test of mentalities, and a continuous dialogue between civilizations. In particular, the Crusades are recorded in history as the most intense, complex, and multi-layered phase of this conflict. Cross and crescent, salvation and resistance, expansion and defense — these campaigns were not merely wars, but attempts at self-understanding, interpreting truth, and either rejecting or accepting identity. For the West, these campaigns were seen as a divine mission, whereas the East perceived them as a struggle for life, land, and faith. Both sides brought forth their own versions of truth, yet these truths were mutually rejected. Even in today's global world, the echoes of these past conflicts remain. Though their forms and tones have changed, their essence still lives on — in political rhetoric, intercultural relations, and even in the consciousness of individuals. Therefore, studying the Crusades is not only a way to understand history but also a means to address ancient questions that lie beneath the surface of contemporary life. In the following pages, the events of the Crusades will be examined not only through historical evidence but also through a reflective and analytical approach. The goal is not merely to interpret these campaigns as acts of aggression or defense, but to scientifically uncover the internal logical, cultural, and ideological foundations of one of the greatest confrontations in human history.

Throughout human history, there have been many periods when religion, politics, and economics were tightly interwoven. One of the brightest examples of this is the Crusades organized by the peoples of Europe against the East from the 11th to the 13th centuries. Initially launched under the banner of "liberating the holy places from the Muslims" by the papacy of Rome, over time, the true aim of the Crusades shifted toward achieving broader political dominance. Furthermore, the campaigns evolved into socio-economic movements aimed at consolidating political power in the region, controlling new trade routes, and accumulating wealth. The emergence of the Crusades was closely linked to the crisis-ridden socio-political situation in medieval Europe, the fragmentation of feudalism, and the Papacy's efforts to strengthen its political position. In addition, the rich culture, advanced economic system, and geographically advantageous locations of the Eastern countries, particularly the Muslim world, made the region an attractive target for European powers. Consequently, the Crusades became a geopolitical expansionist endeavor conducted under a religious guise.

As a result of the Crusades, economic and cultural changes occurred in Europe: trade relations developed in cities, and scientific achievements from the Muslim world stimulated the European Renaissance. Simultaneously, the Crusades reinforced the aspiration to restore political unity in Muslim states, leading to the rise of historical figures such as Saladin. Thus, the Crusades were not merely religious campaigns, but historical events that fundamentally

transformed the political, economic, and cultural relations between medieval Europe and the Muslim East.

Research and Findings

The term "Crusades" refers to the military-colonial expeditions carried out by European feudal lords from the late 12th century to the late 13th century in the Near East — in Syria, Palestine, Egypt, the Balkan Peninsula, the island of Cyprus, and other regions. Outwardly, these expeditions were religious campaigns, as the Catholic Church declared them a struggle against the "idol of the crescent" and Islam. Officially, the proclaimed goal was to "liberate Palestine from infidels" and to grant Christians access to the "tomb of Jesus Christ" in Jerusalem. In reality, however, these campaigns were acts of aggression, during which European barons and knights plundered Eastern cities, seized entire principalities and kingdoms, and gained new feudal taxpayers for their revenues. Beyond the feudal lords, other social classes, including peasants, also participated, giving the Crusades a mass and popular character. To contemporaries, it appeared as though all of Europe had mobilized, and a great new migration of peoples was taking place.

The causes of the Crusades can be partly traced to changes in the Near East during the second half of the 11th century and partly to the overall economic development and severe social conflicts in feudal Western Europe. By the 11th century, the Eastern situation had become favorable for European feudal incursions. The once-powerful Abbasid Caliphate had completely fragmented by 1055. The Byzantine Empire under the Komnenos dynasty was also experiencing difficult times. The Pechenegs, who had invaded the Balkan Peninsula, launched attacks from the north on the Byzantine Empire, while the Normans of Sicily posed a threat from the west. The Seljuk Turks were especially dangerous for Byzantium, having conquered large parts of Asia Minor and established their capital at Nicaea, near Constantinople. In 1071, the Turks defeated the Byzantine Emperor Roman IV Diogenes at the Battle of Manzikert. Although the new emperor, Alexios I Komnenos (who began ruling in 1081), managed to halt several Turkish attacks, the state of the empire remained precarious. In the 1080s and 1090s, Alexios repeatedly appealed to the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor for military assistance against the Turks. Despite the East-West schism of 1054, which split the formerly unified Christian Church into Eastern Orthodox and Western Catholic branches, Alexios, pursuing political goals, was even willing to consider reunification under the Pope's leadership. Consequently, the two largest Eastern powers — the Arab Caliphate and the Byzantine Empire — were incapable of posing significant resistance to the Crusaders. Moreover, Byzantium even invited Western feudal lords to intervene in Eastern conflicts. By the 1080s and 1090s, the Seljuks' once-stable tribal military confederation began to collapse, and several feudal Turkish principalities could not stop the Western feudal incursions.

Several factors contributed to the onset of the Crusades.

1st Cause: During the 11th century, as European cities experienced growth, both internal and external trade developed. The spread of the system of primogeniture (the custom of passing estates to the eldest son to prevent land fragmentation) left many knights without employment. These unemployed knights often became involved in various conflicts, sometimes openly engaging in banditry, attacking merchants, and even raiding monasteries. Under such circumstances, it became necessary to redirect the knights' attention elsewhere.

2nd Cause: European cities were keen to trade with Byzantium and Eastern countries. In particular, Eastern silk fabrics, precious weapons, glass art objects, and spices were in high demand in Western markets. Even a single successful merchant caravan returning from the East brought enormous wealth. At the time, various myths about the lands beyond the sea circulated

widely. The idea of the “East as a paradise on earth” sparked considerable interest among European rulers.

3rd Cause: In 1054, the Christian Church split into Eastern (Orthodox) and Western (Catholic) branches. By the 11th century, the popes of Rome were asserting their supremacy over European rulers. The weakening of the Byzantine Empire in the mid-11th century intensified the Pope’s desire to reassert his authority over the Eastern Church.

4th Cause: In the 11th century, the Seljuk Turks launched invasions of Byzantine territories in the Near East (present-day Turkey), capturing some regions and threatening others. This caused alarm among Byzantine emperors. Soon, the Seljuks captured Nicaea, a city near Constantinople, and made it their capital. The Battle of Manzikert also triggered a series of consequential events. Thus, by the end of the 11th century, the internal and external political situation in Europe created favorable conditions for the Crusades.

Although the Byzantine Emperor did not fully align with the Pope, he requested Western warriors to help fight Christian enemies. In response, Pope Urban II, in 1095, addressed a large assembly of clergy, knights, and commoners in Clermont, southern France. He called for the liberation of the “tomb of the Prophet” in Jerusalem from the Muslims. The Pope promised participants forgiveness of sins and the salvation of the souls of those who perished, assuring them entry into Heaven. Urban II also emphasized the richness and fertility of the “Holy Land,” describing Palestine as a “land flowing with milk and honey,” the “navel of the world,” and a paradise-like, fertile region. The crowd responded with shouts of “It is the will of God!” They cut images of the cross from fabric and sewed them onto their clothing. Thus, the participants became known as “Crusaders,” and the campaigns themselves as the “Crusades.” The Catholic Church also offered certain privileges to participants, such as forgiving peasants’ debts and placing their families under church protection.

During the Crusades, the military equipment and armor of European knights astonished the East. Heavily armored knights were difficult to defeat. At the same time, the Muslim armies were by no means inferior in terms of military skill. Feudal armies were organized hierarchically: at the top was the king, the most important lord. During the king’s reign, a council of noble knights was formed, comprising the largest feudal lords, dukes, and counts, each commanding a “banner,” the highest organizational unit. Knights were armed with swords, spears, battle axes, and maces. The sword and heavy spear were their primary weapons, while shields, helmets, and armor provided protection. By the second half of the 12th century, knights’ warhorses were also armored. With advances in military technology, weapons such as crossbows began to appear. The continuous improvement and increasing weight of the knights’ equipment made combat increasingly difficult. Strategically, wars were not aimed solely at direct battles. Conflicts among major feudal lords, both between countries and within each country, were nearly constant, although large-scale battles were rare. Furthermore, many campaigns did not achieve their intended objectives. Even battlefield victories were often not consolidated by subsequent pursuits. The decentralized nature of military forces made large-scale warfare difficult. Long-distance campaigns, such as the Crusades, were particularly loosely organized, often accompanied by ongoing disputes among the major feudal lords commanding their own forces.

Chronology of the Crusades:

Crusade Period

1st Crusade 1096–1099

2nd Crusade 1147–1149

3rd Crusade 1189–1192

Crusade Period

4th Crusade 1202–1204

5th Crusade 1217–1221

6th Crusade 1228–1229

7th Crusade 1248–1254

8th Crusade 1270

Historical-Genetic, Comparative, and Typological Analysis of the Crusades**Historical-Genetic Approach:**

The historical-genetic method aims to analyze the origins, development stages, and outcomes of historical events. Applying this approach to the Crusades reveals that their roots lie in the internal crises of the European feudal system and the political ambitions of the Catholic Church. By the 11th century, population growth, scarcity of land resources, and the increasing complexity of feudal relations led many knights and lower-ranking nobles to seek new opportunities. During this period, Pope Urban II sought to consolidate his authority and unite the Christian world around a common goal. In November 1095, at the historic Council of Clermont, he called upon all Christians to undertake a military expedition to “liberate” sacred sites under Muslim control. Although this call was framed in religious terms, it effectively served as a tool to redirect Europe’s economic and political pressures outward.

The First Crusade (1096–1099) resulted in the capture of Jerusalem and the establishment of the “Kingdom of Jerusalem.” This success strengthened the Pope’s authority in Europe, yet subsequent crusades ended in failure. The genetic development of the Crusades shows that while religious ideology initially dominated, by the 12th–13th centuries, the movement gradually acquired political, expansionist, and economic dimensions. By the end of the 13th century, with the Eighth Crusade (1270), the Crusades reached their historical conclusion. The historical-genetic analysis demonstrates that the Crusades were an expression of Europe’s internal socio-political problems, conducted under the religious guise of geopolitical expansion.

Comparative Analysis:

The comparative method allows historical processes to be examined across different regions and civilizations, highlighting their similarities and differences. Examining the Crusades from the perspective of interaction between the Muslim East and Christian West provides a deeper understanding of their nature. For Europe, the Crusades were both a religious duty and a means of acquiring new economic opportunities. Maritime republics such as Venice, Genoa, and Pisa sought to dominate trade routes to increase their wealth. Conversely, the Muslim world, particularly under the Seljuks, Ayyubids, and later the Mamluks, perceived the Crusades as a threat to political sovereignty and religious values.

As a result, Muslims strengthened internal unity and reinforced national and religious ideologies. These conflicts also opened new avenues for cultural interaction. The Crusades introduced Europe to the advanced scientific achievements of the Muslim East—including algebra, astronomy, medicine, philosophy, geography, and engineering. In turn, the East benefited from European technological innovations, maritime expertise, and trade organization systems. Comparative analysis shows that although the Crusades began as a religious conflict, they significantly intensified cultural, scientific, and economic exchange between East and West.

Historical-Comparative Method:

This method is essential for comparing different phases of the Crusades and identifying dynamics and changes in their nature. The early crusades (I–III) were primarily religious in

character, while later campaigns (IV–VIII) assumed political and economic dimensions. The First Crusade (1096–1099) successfully captured Jerusalem, whereas the Second Crusade (1147–1149) ended in defeat by Muslim forces. During the Third Crusade (1189–1192), a truce between England’s Richard I the Lionheart and Sultan Salah al-Din allowed Christian pilgrims access to Jerusalem, which remained under Muslim control. The Fourth Crusade (1202–1204) diverted entirely from religious goals, with Crusaders sacking the Christian Byzantine capital, Constantinople, causing a deep rift within Christendom. Subsequent crusades (V–VIII) ended in military and political failure.

Historical-comparative analysis demonstrates that while religious motivation dominated the early stages, material and political interests prevailed in the later phases. In this way, the Crusades evolved from a religious movement into a geopolitical rivalry.

Typological Method:

The typological method allows classification of historical events based on shared characteristics. Three main typological phases of the Crusades can be identified:

1. **Religious Phase (I–III Crusades):** The primary objective was the capture of Jerusalem and liberation of sacred sites. Religious ideology was the driving force.
2. **Political Phase (IV–VI Crusades):** Conflicts reflected clashes of interest between the Church and feudal states, aiming for control over Byzantium, territorial expansion, and Western influence.
3. **Economic Phase (VII–VIII Crusades):** The Crusades lost their religious significance and became a tool for acquiring wealth and controlling trade routes. Merchant cities such as Venice and Genoa played leading roles.

The typological method demonstrates that the Crusades were not merely religious wars but a process through which Europe attempted to address internal socio-political needs via external expansion.

Decline of the Crusades:

By the late 13th century, the Crusades declined due to significant social, economic, and political changes in Europe. The growth of productive forces reduced the impact of natural disasters. Peasants increasingly moved to growing towns, and aspirations for land and freedom in the East were frustrated by the failures of the campaigns. Changes also occurred in the lives of knights: as royal authority strengthened, feudal wars decreased, and minor knights preferred service in royal armies over perilous Eastern campaigns. The unification of Muslim states under the Mamluks complicated Eastern conflicts, gradually extinguishing the Crusades.

The Crusades also affected the Catholic Church. Initially, the Church benefited, with papal prestige increasing during the 12th century. By the late 13th century, however, papal greed became evident, reducing the Church’s influence.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

The Crusades (1096–1270) were the product of religious, political, and economic conflicts between Europe and the Muslim East. Key factors included papal ambitions, resource scarcity in Europe, and religious zeal. Consequently, the West invaded the East under the guise of a “holy war,” opening trade routes and fostering cultural contact. While devastating for Eastern peoples, the Crusades provided economic and cultural benefits to the West.

Even though the Crusades did not continue militarily from the 16th–19th centuries, their ideological legacy persisted in European colonial policies. The “civilizing mission” replaced the religious mission in Asia and Africa. Unequal relations between East and West were established, resulting in economic dependency. The ideological roots of the Crusades resurfaced in early 20th–21st century global politics, including the “clash of civilizations” theory, military

interventions in the Middle East, and the rise of religious extremism. Simultaneously, organizations such as the UN and UNESCO fostered dialogue between East and West. Lessons from history now serve as a basis for global peace, cultural dialogue, and sustainable development.

Recommendations:

1. Strengthen the concept of intercivilizational interaction in historical education.

Explanation: Studying the Crusades not only as wars but also as cultural exchanges and historical lessons fosters tolerance among young generations.

2. Launch programs to study and restore the lost cultural heritage of the East during the Crusades.

Explanation: Archaeological research, digitization, and museum exhibitions can help restore cultural justice between East and West.

3. Establish an international “Day of Intercultural Reconciliation.”

Explanation: Celebrating this annually with participation from both Eastern and Western nations strengthens peace policies, mitigates historical enmity, and promotes cultural diplomacy.

4. **Creating a Scientific Model for Predicting Intercivilizational Conflicts**

Explanation: Economic, ideological, and cultural differences were among the root causes of the Crusades. Developing a predictive model based on these factors can help anticipate potential social and geopolitical conflicts in various regions and take preventive measures in advance.

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