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# European Receptions of the Crusades in the Nineteenth Century - Franco-German Perspectives

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Simone Lässig

# Introduction

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**Simone Lässig**

# Introduction

The Georg Eckert Institute for international Textbook Research appeared to be the most appropriate place to organise and host this workshop, which is documented in the following papers, because the very origins of our institute's work were connected to a central phenomenon under discussion, namely, the hyper-nationalism that led to the First World War, --. In the aftermath of what has been called the "great seminal catastrophe of the twentieth century", individuals, foundations and institutions like the League of Nations were under the impression that conveying stereotypes or prejudices and creating enemies in school text-books might be instrumental in inspiring mistrust and hatred between states and societies. Indeed, textbooks are aimed to influence the cultural identity of the next generation by defining relevant topics, establishing patterns of interpretation and offering social values and norms. They shape concepts of the self and the "other" which are crucial for defining identities, and thus contribute towards forming and separating social, ethnic or religious groups.

History textbooks in particular have played (and still play) a specific role in processes of nation building. They have frequently been used to demonise opponents and, in some periods and regions, even served as "weapons of mass instruction" (Charles Ingrao). It was against this background that the League of Nations and other stakeholders in the interwar period became convinced that international textbook revision would be an effective and sustainable method of promoting international understanding and sustaining peace.

In the collective shock left behind by the Second World War and the Holocaust, the German historian Georg Eckert was among those scholars who gave particular impetus to these efforts. Strongly supported by the British occupying forces, he organised textbook conferences with Germany's neighbours and especially with its previous "enemies" such as France or Great Britain and, in 1951, founded a small institute explicitly dedicated to textbook analysis and textbook revision.

One year after Eckert's death in 1974, the parliament (Landtag) of Lower Saxony passed a law to establish an institute that would continue and build upon what Georg Eckert had begun more than twenty years earlier. Highlights of this period certainly included the bilateral textbook commissions with Poland and Israel. By the end of the Cold War the institute extended its interest to post-conflict and transformation societies. The regional focus was on central Europe, eastern Europe and south eastern Europe, and later also on the Middle East.

What made and makes the Georg Eckert Institute rather special is the fact that it has never focused on research alone, but also on knowledge transfer and on connecting people or institutions in the very diverse field of textbook related research. We are especially proud of our unique library

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with more than 170,000 (mainly history, civics and geography) textbooks from 159 countries. This fine collection has become a magnet for scholars from all over the world and the heart of our international network.
Today, the GEI is therefore a modern academic institution and, as such, was recently admitted as a member of the German Leibniz Association. Over the last few years it has defined its research focus more sharply and established four research areas. Their focus is on:

1. Europe and Europeanness in textbooks,
2. The relationship between textbooks and conflict,
3. Images of the self and the other - symbolic boundaries in contexts of globalisation,
4. History, theories and methods of educational media (research).

Changing and competing memory cultures, mutual perceptions, and means of constructing seemingly legitimate and approved knowledge are at the core of our work in all these research areas. We are interested in nationally and socially preferred concepts of identity, in patterns of inclusion and exclusion conveyed by or in educational media, and in conflicts of memory and recognition that are caused, promoted or diffused by textbooks. However, we have also extended our understanding of textbook research, and are increasingly exploring the relationship between interpretations conveyed in textbooks and concepts of identity offered by other (educational) media. We are conducting empirical research on processes of reception and on impacts of textbooks. And we have finally started historical research on textbooks and educational media, a field which – despite the institute's outstanding collection of German history textbooks dating from the eighteenth century onwards – has been neglected for decades.
In light of the development of research at the institute, I was delighted that the workshop provided an opportunity to develop genuinely historical perspectives, and to do so with regard to an issue which evokes synergies with some of the main fields of research mentioned above. All of these topics, whether representations of the self and the other and symbolic boundary drawing, images of Europe in historical and contemporary textbooks, or patterns of conflict conveyed by history textbooks, are of importance when comparing representations and the reception of the Crusades, especially in France and Germany, and when discussing their role in processes of nation building in nineteenth century Europe. The Crusades have sustainably influenced perceptions of the "Christian Occident" and the "Islamic Orient". The nineteenth century marked an important phase in the emergence and transformation of European memory patterns with regard to the Crusades. They were interpreted in a way that made it possible to draw symbolic boundaries between a seemingly cultivated "Europe" and morally and intellectually inferior "non-European others". There is now sufficient research which shows how strongly western concepts of the "Orient" were influenced by Crusader narratives. The workshop was therefore less interested in the picture of the Orient that was painted by scholars, textbook authors or artists, than in how the "self" was defined via constructions of the "other" in the context of Crusader discourses.
Our aim was to investigate how collective identities were shaped and

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which patterns of identity were drawn in the process. Our first results pointed towards an interesting ambivalence. Representations of the Crusades ascribed greater meaning to Europe as well as national discourses of superiority expressing colonial interests. On the one hand they were seen and conveyed as a genuinely European phenomenon; an event that created cohesion in Christian (Catholic) Europe and which could therefore be seen as a prominent icon of Europeaness and shared European history. On the other hand the Crusades became an emblem of national superiority, a means by which symbolic boundaries could be drawn between states and societies within Europe. They played a crucial part in the traditions which modern nation states sought to invent and to implement in order to shape national identities. In other words, the Crusades became a significant component of nationbuilding and of national dissociation from European neighbours.

It was firstly and mainly this ambivalence that sparked our interest when we devised this project. Since the discursive tension outlined above has not been addressed in detail in historical scholarship, we wanted to analyse the persistence and change of Crusader narratives in relation to the emergence of the modern nation-state. Did the European narrative decline just as exclusively national narratives gained increasing importance? Or were both narratives interconnected? Did they coexist and sustain or exclude each other? Were there national, regional, and confessional differences, and were there commonalities, peculiarities and transfers between scholarly interpretations and textbook narratives?

In order to find answers to these and similar questions we did not focus primarily on emerging historiographical research. Instead we concentrated on perceptions which were often seen as trivial, concise and superficial, but which might have influenced generations of ordinary people. From this perspective school textbooks proved to be a particularly valuable source. Schools are one of the most central institutions of the nation-state, and they have the potential to raise loyal and patriotic citizens. School textbooks were conceptualised to carry out and to translate this mission. Once schooling had been made compulsory for all children, they became the most widespread media in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. And since they also conveyed their contents and interpretations in a condensed and authoritative form, they probably had a greater influence than scholarly history books over the images of history sustained in the minds of the population at large. It is, however, appealing to analyse whether and how textbooks reflected scholarly discourses, or whether they conveyed and perpetuated specific narratives. This is why we did not only compare national narratives, but also looked for moments of transfer when knowledge and interpretations were interconnected, either between Germany and France or between different historically effective medial arenas.

The workshop, which is in part documented by the following papers, offered a valuable opportunity to place the preliminary findings on school textbooks revealed in our project "Myths of the Crusades" in a wider historical and historiographical context – for example, by focusing on different media that have influenced memory cultures and the invention of national traditions, or by referring to new findings about the history of historiography, education, media or nationalism. The participants explored to what extent French and German representations of the Crusades

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differed, and identified contingencies, shifts and consistencies. However they did not have the opportunity to discuss or even determine the impact which different narratives might have had on the formation of national, European, Christian or secular identities. We therefore hope to continue scholarly debate and to explore adequate methods which facilitate in-depth analyses of intermedia transfers and translations. Both of these questions were frequently discussed in the project, which came to an end in September 2011, and at the workshop, and they will certainly continue to provoke further debate. All scholars doing research in this particular field or in related fields are therefore cordially invited and encouraged to discuss the findings presented in the following dossier and to submit further contributions.

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Stefan Berger

# Crusading Histories and European National Narratives – A Commentary

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**Stefan Berger**

# Crusading Histories and European National Narratives – A Commentary

**Abstract**
This article has its origins in a commentary delivered by the author on draft versions of the articles by Ines Guhe and Matthias Schwerendt included in this web publication. It seeks to contextualize crusading histories in the wider history of national historiographies and comments on the place of the crusades within European memory culture. Histories of the crusades are furthermore seen as exemplifying the strong interrelationship between national and religious master narratives. Furthermore, the article briefly alludes to the impact of Romanticism and Imperialism on crusading narratives and underlines the importance of future research into the ways in which those narratives have been gendered. The article concludes by arguing that there is no neat delineation between history and myths - in crusading histories as elsewhere in historical writing.

## Introduction

The foundation of the Belgian nation state in 1831 led to a massive outburst on national history, in which the crusades played a prominent part. Belgian national historians routinely claimed that no land had given the crusades more soldiers than Belgium. In the festivities celebrating 25 years of the Belgian nation state in Brussels in 1856, the crusades were prominently present in floats in a historical parade. The focus of attention in those Belgian crusading narratives was Baldwin IX of Flanders who had occupied Constantinople during the fourth crusade. In a supporting role we also find Peter the Hermit, born in the Belgian town of Huy, who played a certain, albeit ambiguous role in instigating the first crusade (1096 – 99). He had led troops famous for their lack of discipline and was ultimately defeated by 'the Turks'.
To make matters worse, his subsequent attempt to flee captivity failed. By contrast, Godfrey of Bouillon, was indeed a knight in shining armour. The duke of Lower Lotharingia was portrayed as a 'Christian Hercules', and it was no coincidence that an equestrian statue of Godfrey was unveiled at the Place Royale in Brussels in the presence of king and queen. It stood very near the park where Dutch troops had been defeated during the revolution of 1830. Godfrey was indeed celebrated as 'first king of the Belgians'. Naturally, he was also among the portraits of fifteen patriotic heroes installed in the senate chamber of the Belgian parliament in 1865, and he was portrayed again in two knightly portraits that were chosen to decorate the Royal Palace. In the nineteenth century, Godfrey was invariably seen as incarnation of the virtues of the Belgian national 'race'. The hero-worshipping of Godfrey in Belgium fit into a greater desire to portray a patriotic Middle Ages and link such patriotism with the virtue of

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a truly Christian, Catholic community. Godfrey, in other words, became the pioneer in the history of Christian civilisation, as seen through Belgian national eyes. When the liberal national master narrative began to clash rather badly with the Catholic one from the 1870s onwards, the liberal historians were more prone to celebrate the 'ancient Belgian liberties' and forget about Godfrey, but in the Catholic national master narrative he retained an absolutely central place.[1]

To a certain extent, the Belgian story repeats itself in the case of Luxembourg, where the crusades also played a very important role for the national historical master narrative.[2] John, king of Bohemia and count of Luxembourg, buried in Luxembourg, was, after all, a prominent participant in the northern crusade. As national hero he was immortalized in Romantic poetry, songs, paintings, novels and histories. In fact, liberal and Catholic historiography united in the celebration of the crusades as an important part of Luxembourg national history. And the stories of Belgium and Luxembourg could be multiplied across various European nation states.

The crusades are therefore a good example of medievalisms in modern Europe or of *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States* as the title of a recent volume in the *Writing the Nation* book series put it.[3] The series is based on a European Science Foundation-funded research programme entitled 'Representations of the Past: the Writing of National Histories in 19th and 20th Century Europe' (NHIST), which I had the pleasure to chair between 2003 and 2008.[4] Amongst other things, the programme confirmed the prominent role of the Middle Ages in national historical master narratives, something that had already been powerfully underlined by Monika Flacke's exhibition 'Myths of the Nations' held at the German Historical Museum in Berlin the late 1990s.[5] My commentary follows a thematic structure. First, it will reflect on European memory culture and the place of the crusades within it with a view to problematising whether it is more appropriate to talk about European or national memory cultures with regard to the crusades. Secondly, I will briefly talk about the interrelationship between national and religious master narratives of which

[1] Jo Tollebeek, "An Era of Grandeur. The Middle Ages in Belgian National Historiography", in: *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States: History, Nationhood and the Search for Origins*, Robert J. Evans and Guy P. Marchal, eds. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 113-136. See also Laurence Boudart, "Ils lisaient la patrie. La formation de l'identité nationale à travers les manuels de lecture de l'école primaire belge (1842-1939)", (PhD diss., University of Valladolid, 2008), http://eprints.aidenligne-francais-universite.auf.org/9/1/pdf_TESIS39-091216_repositorio_UVa_1.pdf (accessed 15 August 2011) who also discusses the important role of Godfrey in Belgian school books.

[2] Pit Péporté, Sonja Kmec, Benoit Majerus and Michel Margue, *Inventing Luxembourg: Representations of the Past, Space and Language from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-First Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

[3] Evans and Marchal, *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States*. See also Natalie Fryde, Pierre Monnet, Otto Gerhard Oexle and Leszek Zygner (eds), *Die Deutung der mittelalterlichen Gesellschaft in der Moderne* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006).

[4] For details on the programme including its many publications, see http://www.uni-leipzig.de/zhsesf/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1 (accessed 17 August 2011).

[5] Monika Flacke (ed.), *Mythen der Nationen: ein europäisches Panorama* (Munich: Koehler & Amelang, 1998).

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the history of the crusades is obviously part and parcel. Thirdly, I will investigate to what extend crusading narratives have been inflected by Romantic forms of history writing. Then I shall comment briefly on the gendering of the crusades as part and parcel of the gendering of national historical master narratives. I would subsequently like to discuss the role of crusading narratives in imperial European discourses. And finally, I will contextualise crusading narratives within a wider European history politics that has often worked by conflating history, memory and myths.

**The Place of the Crusades in European Memory Culture**

As I have argued elsewhere, there have been various attempts to construct a European memory culture around five distinct master narratives.[6] The first one has to do with ancient Greece and Rome as the intellectual birthplaces of Europe. The second one, of which the crusades are an essential part, is the idea of a medieval Christian Europe. The third one circles around the notion of European humanism and the fourth memory culture is that usually described as the European Enlightenment(s). The last one is less idealistic and beautiful, although arguably the most powerful one today, namely the history of the World Wars, of genocide and ethnic cleansing marking the first half of the twentieth century. None of these European memory cultures is without their problems, and arguably none of them really work as all-European memory cultures. Furthermore, they tend to be nationally inflected, and future research on the reception of the crusades as one of the central narratives of the notion of a Christian Europe will have to shed more light on the question to what extent this has been the case with the crusades and in what way it has led to a variety of different crusading histories. There can be no doubt that crusading histories have provided many Christian heroes and crystallized Christian virtues and understanding of morality, but equally that many heroic and virtuous narratives have been thoroughly nationalized.

We have already seen above, with the cases of Luxembourg and Belgium, how Christian heroes were nationalized in the nineteenth century. National master narratives in countries as diverse as Spain, Poland, Russia and Hungary contained ideas about national missions protecting Christian Europe from the infidels and being Christian Europe's shield and protection. National and European histories were thus entangled and interrelated, but the European was invariably read through the national lenses. National master narratives, in other words, subordinated the European storylines (including the one about the crusades) under their overarching story. This is in line with the findings of NHIST about the extraordinary powers of national master narratives to subsume other spatial (and, incidentally, non-spatial) master narratives under their remit. Matthias Schwerendt's contribution confirms this by emphasizing how closely linked crusading histories were with histories of national greatness in Spain, Rus-

[6] Stefan Berger, "History and Forms of Collective Identity in Europe: Why Europe Cannot and Should Not be Built on History", in: *The Essence and the Margin: National Identities and Collective Memories in Contemporary European Culture*, Laura Rorato and Anna Saunders, eds, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), 21-36.

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sia, Britain, France and Germany.[7]

**Religious and National Master Narratives**

The importance of Christianity to European memory culture points to the strong interrelationship between religious and national master narratives in European historiography.[8] As nation became a form of secularized religion in nineteenth-century Europe, so religion became an integral part of the national discourses almost everywhere in Europe. The language of 'chosen people' that we also encounter in Matthias Schwerendt's and Ines Guhe's articles about crusading narratives, indicates the close relationship between Christian and national concepts of salvation.[9] Indeed, the results of the NHIST project with regard to religious and national master narratives in Europe can be summarized as follows:

1. The religious master narratives were integrated into national ones almost anywhere in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
2. The symbiosis between national and religious master narratives was most uncontested in countries with a strong dominant religion, such as the Scandinavian countries, where Lutheranism ruled supreme and the strong identification of the nation with Protestantism was almost completely uncontentious.
3. By contrast, in countries with a prominent denominational split, e.g. Germany, separate denominational national master narratives (in Germany's case, a dominant Protestant and a minority Catholic one) appeared which appealed to the different denominational parts of the population.
4. In many of the predominantly Catholic nations in Europe, Catholic national master narratives were often contested by liberal, and sometimes laicist, national master narratives, which often had strong support from professionalised and institutionalized historiographies, e.g. in Spain, France and Italy
5. Religious master narratives were nowhere very successful in challenging national master narratives or providing strong counter-narratives to national ones.

With respect to these findings, Guhe's argument that both moderate laicist and Catholic crusading narratives in France shared an admiration for the crusades, resulting in remarkably similar narratives, is very striking because it points to a widespread acceptance among moderate laicists of the Christian traditions as basis for French civilisation. Only the small radical wing of laicism was so strongly anti-Catholic that it framed crusading narratives in an altogether different way. This finding underlines the power and importance of place of traditional religious narratives in nineteenth-

[7] Ines Guhe, "Images of the Nation and Concepts of Europe in French and German History Textbooks, 1871-1914" in this Dossier.
[8] See, more generally, Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz (eds), *The Contested Nation: Ethnicity, Class, Religion and Gender in National Histories* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
[9] Matthias Schwerendt, "The Crusades as a European Master Narrative of National Memory Culture", in this Dossier; see also Anthony Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003).

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century national master narratives in France, and, I would argue, beyond. Of course, from a denominational point of view the Middle Ages were deeply problematical, because, at least in the West, they were connected to a Roman, a Catholic idea of Europe associated with the papacy. Hence, for example, we find in deeply Protestant countries, such as the Netherlands, only limited attempts, especially by minority Dutch Catholics, to appropriate the Middle Ages for their own purposes, whereas in mainstream Protestant historiography, the Middle Ages were an embarrassment and Dutch history 'proper' only began with the Reformation, which, luckily and, for Dutch Protestant historiography, not coincidentally, fell together with the high point of the golden age in Dutch 17th century national history. By contrast, the Middle Ages were characterized by idolatry, corruption and empty ritual. Groen van Prinsterer, the main representative of this kind of radical Protestant historiography, was keen to write the Middle Ages out of Dutch national history.[10]

One would expect such sentiments to influence crusading narratives in Protestant countries and put them ad odds with Catholic ones just as much as the difference between radical laicist and Catholic narratives in Catholic countries, like France. There are hints in Matthias Schwerendt's discussion of Hans Prutz that there existed a strong anti-Catholic Protestant and Prussian historiographical tradition that linked the history of the crusades to the promotion of anti-Catholicism. However, overall it would seem that we need to explore this relationship between Protestantism and potential counter-narratives to the dominant Catholic crusading narratives more than has been done hitherto. The prominent Sybel-Ficker debate on the role of the Holy Roman Empire on the formation of a German nation state certainly indicates the importance of interpretations of medieval for national history in the German lands and the German empire after 1871.[11] And should we not also perhaps turn our attention to the third important Christian denomination in Europe – Orthodoxy and its positioning towards various crusading narratives? It might be worthwhile in this respect to reflect a little bit more on Byzantium. For many national histories in Eastern Europe, e.g. Greece, Romania, and Russia, the history of Byzantium and Constantinople were crucial in linking the ancient glories to nineteenth-century national movements.[12] Given the important role of the crusades in the eventual downfall of Byzantium and Constantinople, what perspectives on the crusades emerged in those national historiographies and where do they fit into a European narrative on the crusades?

[10] Peter Raedts, "A Serious Case of Amnesia: the Dutch and their Middle Ages", in: Evans and Marchal (eds), *Uses of the Middle Ages*, 75-87.

[11] On the Sybel-Ficker debate, see Thomas Brechenmacher, „Wieviel Gegenwart verträgt historisches Urteilen? Die Kontroverse zwischen Heinrich von Sybel und Julius Ficker über die Bewertung der Kaiserpolitik des Mittelalters (1859-1862)", in: *Historisierung und gesellschaftlicher Wandel in Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert*, Ulrich Muhlack, ed. (Berlin: Akad.-Verl, 2003), 87-111.

[12] Effi Gazi, "Theorizing and Practizing 'Scientific' History in Southeastern Europe (Nineteenth Century): Spyridon Lambros and Nicolae Jorga", in: *Nationalizing the Past: Historians as Nation Builders in Europe*, Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz, eds (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 192-208. On the importance of Constantinople to constructions of Moscow as the next Constantinople and the Russian orthodox church as heir to Byzantium, see also John Meyendorff, *Rome, Constantinople, Moscow: Historical and Theological Studies* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1992), chap. 7-8.

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Ines Guhe in her article stresses an overarching theme of crusading narratives being that of 'unity in Christian faith', but do the analyses presented here not point to the fictitious character of such unity? After all, the strong nationalisation of crusading narratives, the sceptical and perhaps even negative perception of those narratives in Protestant and Orthodox histories, and the distancing from crusading narratives in the laicistic historical narratives of a professionalizing nineteenth-century historiography – all of these factors seem to indicate first, that crusading narratives could serve many different political agendas, and secondly, that this was perhaps precisely why it made them so powerful and omnipresent. In other words, it was the lack of unity which made crusading histories so prominent.

**Romanticism and Inflections of Crusading Narratives**

The fine articles by Guhe and Schwerendt put the renaissance of crusading histories in their national, European and imperial contexts, but what about the context of the European-wide movement of Romanticism? Or perhaps it would be better to insist with Miklas Teich and Roy Porter that there were in fact many different, nationally inflected, Romanticisms in diverse parts of Europe[13] and ask to what extent the renaissance of crusading histories in the nineteenth century have to be seen also in the context of those Romanticisms? After all, the rediscovery and glorification of the Middle Ages played a vital role in many European Romanticisms. This was a major change from the Enlightenment which tended to connect the Middle Ages with everything that was wrong about Europe. Walter Scott and his influence is mentioned in Ines Guhe's contribution, and from here one could indeed ask to what extent Romantic literature in many different national contexts was of vital importance for the reception of the crusades. And as Romanticism was famously versatile when it came to politics and incorporated everything from left-wing Jacobinism to right-wing monarchism and absolutism, one would expect the history of the crusades once again serving many different masters.

Romantics were keen collectors: not just of fairy and folk tales, but also of medieval manuscripts, and in many cases it was these manuscripts which became so important for all authoritative historical accounts about the Middle Ages in the nineteenth century. Many of the Romantics might have been what we would now refer to as antiquarians rather than professional historians, but their activities in digging up manuscripts and other primary sources and ensuring their survival as well as editing and translating them laid the foundations on which nineteenth century historical scholarship could build. The famous Monumenta Germania Historica (MGH) in Germany, adopted and adapted in virtually every European nation state, was a product of the Romantic imagination about the Middle Ages. It became professionalized much later and was only to set standards in medieval manuscript editions after the 1870s, when Theodor Mommsen took charge of the MGH, but it was nevertheless rooted in the Romantics' rediscovery

[13] Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich (eds), *Romanticism in National Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988).

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of the Middle Ages.[14] In a similar vein, the nineteenth century witnessed veritable manuscript wars of medieval sources, e.g. in Ireland over the question of the origins of the Irish or in Iceland over the meaning of the sagas for Icelandic national identity.[15] In this context one could also ask about the role of the crusades not just in national and transnational narratives, but also about their presence in the primary source material on which these narratives were based. What did the manuscripts that were edited, first by antiquarians and later by professional historians, say about the crusades? How were myths, legends and histories interconnected in those medieval manuscripts? How did historical forgeries impact on the perception of the crusades in various parts of Europe, ranging from the Czech republic to Scotland?[16] All of these questions will be intimately connected to a more in-depth exploration of the role of Romanticisms in the forging of crusading narratives in Europe.

**The Gendering of the Crusades as a Constituent Aspect in the Gendering of National Narratives**

National histories are heavily gendered. They tend to be male narratives which seek to confirm the exclusion of women from the public sphere. Having said this, women are by no means entirely absent from national master narratives. As the nation is invariably imagined as a family, women are frequently depicted as important in the private sphere. Yet, given the frequent orientation of national histories towards the development of the state and political events, heroines often transgress this distinction between public and private. Boadicea in Britain, Joan of Arc in France, and Luise of Prussia (who can, in fact, be seen as a model for women in the private sphere, transgressing from this only in her meeting with Napoleon in Tilsit) are just some examples of women who play an important role in national histories precisely because they could be found in roles usually reserved for men. The nation was a male affair, and if women wanted to play an active role in the affairs of the nation, they needed to take over male attributes. Very rarely does one encounter cases of self-feminization in national histories. In fact, the only case might well be not a nation, but an empire – the historians of the Habsburg Empire could occasionally write its history in terms which would give to the empire soft, female attributes that were positively connotated in contradistinction to the male, aggressive and nasty northern rival, i.e. Prussia. It was a case of the good mother of the empire, Maria Theresia against the cunning and aggressive father of Prussia, Frederick II. The male historian's imagination certainly was not free of the occasional slant of misogyny. Thus,
for example, Johannes Lelewel argued in his history of Poland that most of

[14] On the history of the MGH, see Horst Fuhrmann, *'Sind eben alles Menschen gewesen': Gelehrtenleben im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Beck, 1996).
[15] Bernadette Cunningham, "Transmission and Translation of Medieval Irish Sources in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries", and Guðmundur Hálfdanarson, "Interpreting the Nordic Past: Icelandic Medieval Manuscripts and the Construction of a Modern Nation", both in Evans and Marchal (eds), *Uses of the Middle Ages*, 7-17 and 52-72.
[16] Fiona Stafford, *The Sublime Savage: a Study of James Macpherson and the Poems of Ossian* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1988); Ian Haywood, *The Making of History: a Study of the Literary Forgeries of James Macpherson and Thomas Chatterton in Relation to 18th Century Ideas of History and Fiction* (Rutherford: Farleigh Dickinson Univ. Press, 1986).

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the misfortunes of the Polish nation were the result of the influence of the foreign-born wives of the Polish kings. With the professionalization of historical writing throughout the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, women were marginalized, as they were usually not admitted to the all-male guild of historical master craftsmen, yet female historians continued to write a wide range of histories, even if it is true to say that they, with some famous exceptions, often chose other genres than national history.[17] Whilst women historians have received considerable attention within the history of historiography more recently, the gendering of historical narratives remains a highly underexplored topic. In this respect it is interesting to note that the contributions by Ines Guhe and Matthias Schwerendt allude to the fact that images of the nation and of Europe, as told through the history of the crusades, were heavily gendered. Many Christian virtues were explicitly manly virtues and connected to virility, strength, leadership, calmness and rationality. Virtually all of the heroes of the crusading narratives were knights and there was very little room in those stories for women. But overall, it remains an open question whether women were altogether excluded from crusading narratives and to what extent the narratives themselves were indeed gendered. One can only hope that current scholarship on the crusades will be able to shed more light on these issues.

**Crusading Narratives and Imperialism**

Many European national narratives were linked intensely to imperial expansion during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and crusading narratives were of great interest to the promoters of imperial-national identities. Thus, for example, Napoleon's expedition to Egypt was accompanied by a renaissance of interest in the history of the crusades. Louis Philippe's imperialist ventures were similarly draped in crusading costumes, when he, between 1838 and 1842, commissioned a series of crusading scenes which were to be displayed at the Versailles palace. The colonialist gaze of the Europeans was invariably linked to an Orientalising perspective just as the ideas of a civilising mission was a common trope of European imperialism. As this *mission civilisatrice* was also often a christianising mission, with the missionary movement expanding together with European colonialism, the histories of the crusades once again could be usefully mobilised for the purposes of empire.

However, as critics of Edward Said's concept of 'Orientalism' have pointed out, many colonisers and colonised engaged in a two-way process of intellectual transfer, with many European colonialists coming to admire the Orient and the civilizations that had developed in the Orient.[18] Ines Guhe

[17] For an introduction to the theme of the gendering of national histories, see Bonnie Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women and Historical Practice* (Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1998); Angelika Epple, *Empfindsame Geschichtsschreibung. Eine Geschlechtergeschichte der Historiographie zwischen Aufklärung und Historismus* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2003); Mary O'Dowd and Ilaria Porciani (eds), *History Women*, special issue of Storia della Storiografia 46 (2004), 79-104; Angelika Epple and Angelika Schaser (eds), *Gendering Historiography. Beyond National Canons* (Frankfurt/M.: Campus-Verlag, 2009).

[18] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); John M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1995); Jür-

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and Matthias Schwerendt have given us a number of clues that schoolbooks dealing with the histories of the crusades did not only use the crusades as a means to justify imperial expansion but also to tell stories which allowed for the greater reception of Oriental cultures.[19] In my view it will be worthwhile looking further into the tensions and contradictions of 'Orientalism' within European cultures that are revealed by the reception and portrayal of crusading histories.

This includes not only a more thorough look at European schoolbooks, but also greater attention to the diverse ways in which the crusades have been received outside of Europe and, in particular, in the Orient. The article by Guhe and Schwerendt begins with such a perspective provided by the Muslim writer Rafiq al-Azm, who was directly inspired by the potential of European national histories to inspire sentiments of national solidarity and nationalism. As I have tried to argue elsewhere, national history writing can indeed be seen as one of the most successful export articles of Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[20] Undoubtedly there were various degrees of adaption and adoption of those national master narratives. The situation was very different in areas which had some kind of national history writing of their own, such as China and India, and areas which had no such tradition, such as much of sub-Saharan Africa. There was also the intriguing case of the 'Prussia of the East', i.e. Japan, which adopted national master narratives with a vengeance as part and parcel of modernizing the country and creating its own 'Orient' in Korea and China.[21] Yet, despite many different nuances and forms of reception, there can be no doubt about the overall huge success of 'scientific' national history writing outside of Europe as a direct result of the colonial encounters.

## The Presentism of Crusading Narratives: History-Writing, Memory, Myths and History Politics

Another theme that emerges very clearly from Guhe's and Schwerendt's articles and that might be worthwhile reflecting on for a little longer, is the strong presentism that emerges in crusading histories and the uses of the Middle Ages in history politics and national history politics in particular. It is clear, as Matthias Schwerendt points out, that the crusades were a 'symbol for the current political landscape' in different European nation states. It was precisely the 'scientificitity' of historical scholarship that made it all the more effective as a political tool. 'Scientificity' was not an obstacle to political partisanship, as the often close relationship between

gen Osterhammel, "Edward Said und die ‚Orientalismus'-Debatte: ein Rückblick," *Asien, Afrika, Lateinamerika* 25 (1997), 597-607.

[19] Ines Guhe and Matthias Schwerendt, 'Describing the Enemy. Images of Islam in Narratives of the Crusades' in this Dossier.

[20] Stefan Berger, "Introduction: Towards a Global History of National Historiographies," in: *Writing the Nation: a Global Perspective* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 1-29.

[21] Jie-Hyun Lim, "The Configuration of Orient and Occident in the Global Chain of National Histories: Writing National Histories in North-East Asia", in: *Narrating the Nation: Representations in History, Media and the Arts*, Stefan Berger, Linas Eriksonas and Andrew Mycock, eds (Oxford: Berghahn, 2008), 288-306.

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political caesuras and historiographical caesuras demonstrates.[22]

And it is not only the proximity of 'scientific' historical research to history politics that needs to be highlighted. As Chris Lorenz has pointed out elsewhere, any straightforward distinction between myth and history might ignore more complex aspects of the relationship between the two.[23] Lorenz demonstrates that myths and histories fulfil very similar functions when it comes to providing guidance for actions in the present and in particular, when it comes to attempts to construct national identities and solidarities. Drawing on Georg Iggers' and Konrad von Moltke's analysis of Ranke's famous dictum and on an analysis of Wilhelm von Humboldt's theoretical writings on history, Lorenz holds that religious myths are inscribed into the very beginnings of German 'scientific' writing on history.[24] Myths are, Lorenz concludes, part and parcel of 'scientific' history writing from its inception. In the articles by Schwerendt and Guhe one also encouters links between 'scientific' history and myths. Thus, for example, we learn that Heinrich von Sybel was seeking to destroy some of the myths about the crusades by employing the 'scientific' historical method. And yet, few would deny that Sybel's Prussianism was itself a teleological construct which mythologized the history of Prussia in the service of a particular history politics. Guhe's contribution is also directly concerned with the way in which school textbooks conveyed particular crusading myths underlining in the process the proximity of histories and mythologies.

History has often been held up as being different from memory precisely because it does not mythologise but, through a critical re-examination of all available sources, arrives at a truthful approximation of 'what actually happened', in Leopold von Ranke's famous phrase. Even before the onset of modern 'scientific' history, when historians had been far less sure about the precise boundary between 'history' and 'mythology', medieval historians also criticised each other for peddling in myths.[25] Under the paradigm of scientificity, most historians were to agree with what the Irish historian T.W. Moody summed up so succinctly: 'good history … is a matter of facing

[22] Heiko Feldner, "The New Scientificity in Historical Writing around 1800", in: *Writing History: Theory and Practice*, Stefan Berger, Heiko Feldner and Kevin Passmore, eds (London: Arnold, [2003] 2010), 3-21. This is clearly different from the neohistorists' assumption of an autonomous sphere of scholarship that untouched by politics. For an exchange on this, see Ulrich Muhlack's review of Stefan Berger's, "The Search for Normality: National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Germany since 1800" (Oxford, 1997), *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute London* XXII, no. 2 (2000): 36-43, and Stefan Berger, "Response to Ulrich Muhlack," *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute London* XXIII, no. 1 (2001), 21-33.

[23] Chris Lorenz, "Drawing the Line: 'Scientific' History between Myth-Making and Myth-Breaking", in: *Narrating the Nation: Representations in History, Media and the Arts*, Stefan Berger, Linas Eriksonas and Andrew Mycock, eds (Oxford: Berghahn, 2008), 35- 55. See also Stefan Berger, "On the Role of Myths and History in the Construction of National Identity in Modern Europe," *European History Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (2009): 490-502, on which some of the following ideas are based.

[24] Georg Iggers and Konrad von Moltke (eds), *Leopold von Ranke: the Theory and Practice of History* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973).

[25] Peter G. Bietenholz, *Historia and Fabula: Myths and Legends in Historical Thought from Antiquity to the Modern Age* (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

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the facts and myth … is a way of refusing to face [them]'.[26]

And yet, this does not mean that we should necessarily charge historians with having been naïve positivists. After all, many of them were all too aware that they were at best aiming at an approximation of the truth and that it was impossible to avoid a subjective element in their historical writing. Nevertheless, debunking myths became the foremost characteristic of good 'scientific' history. Hence the professionalisation and institutionalisation of the historical sciences during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed an intense questioning of the various national myths associated with stories of ethnogenesis, the Middle Ages and national heroes.[27] Philology, in the form of source criticism, imploded many certainties of national histories, but at the same time, the new breed of 'scientific' historians were prone to erecting new mythologies. As Maciej Janowski has shown, three important 'scientific' national historians of Poland, the Czech lands and Hungary, Michal Bobrzyński, Josef Pekař and Gyula Szekfű, self-consciously destroyed the myths of their Romantic predecessors, but they at the same time found it almost impossible to construct mythologies of their own.[28]

Overall then, the examination of crusading histories might well re-affirm a more complex relationship between myths and 'scientific ' history: a self-consciously professional history writing contributed not only to the debunking of myths but equally to the construction of myths which came to underpin assumptions of national character and national identity. Commentators on Irish history have long pointed to the potency of myths in historical culture, including historical writing.[29] But Ireland was by no means exceptional. As Guy P. Marchal's penetrating analysis of the interplay between historical consciousness and myths in Switzerland shows, the public uses of history relied on mythologisation.[30]

The blurred borders between histories and myths have already been highlighted by the writings of Hayden White and Michel de Certeau, who have shown how closely intertwined historiography was with rhetorical and lit-

[26] Cited from Ciarán Brady, "'Constructive and Instrumental': The Dilemma of Ireland's First 'New Historians'", in: *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism, 1938-1994*, Ciarán Brady, ed. (Dublin: Irish Acad. Press, 1994), 7f.
[27] On the professionalization and institutionalisation of historical writing in Europe see *Writing History in Europe: An Atlas of National Institutions*, Ilaria Porciani and Lutz Raphael, eds (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), and *Setting the Standards: Institutions, Communities and Networks of National Historiography*, Ilaria Porciani and Jo Tollebeek, eds (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, forthcoming).
[28] Maciej Janowski, "Three Historians", *Central European University History Department Yearbook* 1 (2001/02), 199-232.
[29] Joep Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination: Patterns in the Historical Representation of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century* (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1997); also Roy Foster, *The Irish Story: Telling Tales and Making it Up in Ireland* (Oxford: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2002), and Alvin Jackson, "Unionists Myths, 1912-1985," *Past and Present* 136 (1992), 164-185.
[30] Guy P. Marchal, *Schweizer Gebrauchsgeschichte. Geschichtsbilder, Mythenbildung und nationale Identität* (Basel: Schwabe, 2006); see also Oliver Zimmer, *A Contested Nation: History, Memory and Nationalism in Switzerland, 1761-1891* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003).

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erary strategies.[31] And one can go even further back: the juxtaposition between history as 'science' and myths as fictitious and false was one already doubted by the Romantics in the early nineteenth century. They argued that myths were capable of expressing the inner truth about peoples and nations. Therefore they were able to access deeper levels of meaning than mere history and were in some respects more truthful and revealing than the study of the past.[32]

But the Romantics' rehabilitation of myths on the one hand retained the dichotomy of 'history' vs. 'mythology' and, on the other hand, Romanticism in Germany had very little influence on a historiography that professionalized itself earlier than other historiographies in Europe.[33] During the last third of the nineteenth century, historians throughout much of the rest of Europe hailed German historiography as the benchmark of international 'scientificity'. And most of the venerated German historians had drawn a firm line between history and myth, e.g. Johann Gustav Droysen in his famous *Historik*.[34] Myths became increasingly associated with memory, whereas truthfulness was the sign of history.

And yet, any closer look at collective memory will reveal the spuriousness of any such distinction. Collectives cannot remember anything, of course, but individuals construct versions of collecive memory through a highly volatile mixture of public and private narratives of which histories are but one part. Yet history writing, through its claims to 'scientificity, has argued that it should be awarded greater credibility and a higher status than other forms of narrative. Scientificity, in other words, was in part a strategy to claim greater authority on behalf of the professional historians. If, therefore, mythologies and histories cannot be neatly delineated, it looks as though, in crusading histories as elsewhere in historical narratives, we will have to be satisfied with the close interrelationship between history, collective memory and myth.

[31] Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1973); Michel de Certeau, The Writing of History (Columbia: Columbia Univ. Press, 1988).
[32] Peter Burke, "History, Myth and Fiction, 1400-1800", in: *Oxford History of Historiography*, vol. 3, José Rabasa, Masayuki Sato and Edoardo Tortarolo, eds (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press 2012, forthcoming).
[33] Ernst Schulin, „Der Einfluss der Romantik auf die deutsche Geschichtsforschung," in: *Traditionskritik und Rekonstruktionsversuch. Studien zur Entwicklung von Geschichtswissenschaft und historischem Denken*, Ernst Schulin, ed. (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 24-43.
[34] Wilfried Nippel, *Johann Gustav Droysen. Ein Leben zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik* (Munich: Beck, 2008), 219-238.

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# Images of the Nation and Concepts of Europe in French and German History Textbooks, 1871-1914

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**Ines A. Guhe**

# Images of the Nation and Concepts of Europe in French and German History Textbooks, 1871-1914

**Abstract**
This contribution is a comparative study of crusade portrayals in French and German history textbooks published between 1871 and 1914. It asks to what extent images of Europe are shaped by crusade narratives, or whether they are rather dominated by national and sub-national (denominational, Laicist ...) factors. Although in this nationalist age both of these neighbouring countries had consigned themselves to national history and thus the glorification of one's own nation, the textbooks nevertheless reveal highly varied portrayals of different concepts of the nation, conveyed via crusade narratives.

In a prize-winning book for young people by Gustave Hubault and Émile Marguerin, one that has been praised by the *Académie Française* and, since the 1860s, often awarded as a book prize to particularly bright pupils, we find the following lines:

> Crusade! Of what incomparable movement does this very word remind us! Nothing but great feats of battle, acts of selflessness and sacrifice; remembrance of which is, for the most part, the glorious heritage of France. For the chronicles have called the great deeds of the holy war "God's deeds carried out by the French", and two great men of our race, Godfrey of Bouillon and Louis IX, began and ended the era with the same faith, the same devotion and the same courage.[1]

This quotation illustrates the central role played by crusade narratives in the construction of the nation and its glorious past. It contains the essential components of such a construct: unusual, selfless acts of war stand for the faith of each individual in and the willingness to sacrifice for the nation. The shared struggle of the 'French' symbolises the community bound together by a common destiny. The terms 'glorious' and 'remembrance' link the past and present of the nation. In such collective memories great moments such as the crusades are nationally appropriated.

Crusade narratives are central features of both French textbooks and their German counterparts that inspire in pupils an emotional connection to their nation's past. On both sides, the crusades were nationalised as deeds in the

[1] Gustave Hubault and Émile Marguerin, *Les grandes époques de la France des origines à la Révolution* (Paris: Delagrave, 1879), 139.

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'heritage of memory' (Ernest Renan). This article will therefore address the following questions: Why did an event that had moved practically all of Europe in the Middle Ages become a point of focus in history textbooks for these two *nations*? Which different images of the nation were conveyed via this *European* event? How might the tension between nationalism and concepts of Europe be described using the crusade narratives?

I will begin by outlining the connections between national myths, historical scholarship and crusade discourse, which are of central importance for my study. Secondly, I will present the first results from my analyses of French textbooks, comparing them with some German examples in order to illuminate converging and diverging aspects.

## National Myths, Historical Scholarship and Crusade Discourse

In my study I focus on the crusade myths conveyed in textbooks. I understand myths as an aspect of the narrative staging of the nation. They convey a specific memory of the national past and thus constitute an important part of the nation's cultural memory, not only via national holidays, days of remembrance, the dedication of memorials, etc., but also via school textbooks. During the period in question, textbooks were responsible for a significant portion of cultural memory as conveyed by media and were conceived as the „continued work of reconstructed imagination"[2] of a society.[3] History textbooks in particular ensure, via language, images and rituals, the national interpretation of a historical narrative as conveyed to future citizens. As the nation was structured around a broad population stratum, the schools of the Third Republic and Imperial Germany could be regarded as places in which the nation established traditions via education and socialisation.[4] The national histories of 19th-century France and Germany were thus conveyed via textbooks and collectively renewed there and re-experienced, time and again.

[2] "[F]ortlaufende Arbeit rekonstruktiver Imagination": Jan Assmann, quoted in Daniel Levy, "Das kulturelle Gedächtnis", in: *Gedächtnis und Erinnerung. Ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch*, Christian Gudehus, Ariane Eichenberg and Harald Welzer, eds. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2010), 95.

[3] Especially from the 1870s onwards, the production of textbooks was increased considerably and they can be considered the most important medium for knowledge transfer for young people in Germany and France. "On German textbooks cf. Wolfgang Jacobmeyer, „Konditionierung von Geschichtsbewusstsein. Schulgeschichtsbücher als nationale Autobiographien", in: *Historisches Bewusstsein und politisches Handeln in der Geschichte*, Jerzy Topolski, ed. (Posen: UaM, 1994), 8. On French textbooks, still considered dangerous vehicles of subversive ideas until the Third Republic, cf. Christian Amalvi, *Les héros de l'Histoire de France. Recherche iconographique sur le panthéon scolaire de la troisième République* (Paris: Phot'oeil, 1979), 27-28.

[4] Rudolf Speth, "Die Funktion von Mythen und Heldenfiguren für die Entstehung des Nationalbewusstseins," in: *Was ist deutsch? Aspekte zum Selbstverständnis einer grübelnden Nation*, Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg, ed. (Nürnberg: Verlag des Germanischen Nationalmuseums, 2006), 34.

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Jan Assmann has described the transformation process from "factual history to remembered history and thus to myth".[5] The same can be said of the way in which historians of the 19th century dealt with the 'facts' they found in sources. Nineteenth-century historiography is equally conceived as a key medium of cultural memory, as – just like any other memory – it is 'dependent on epoch and interests' (Jan Assmann), as well as 'subject to conscious and subconscious mechanisms of selection' (Peter Burke).[6] With their interpretation and conveyance of historical events, historians contributed to the metamorphosis of memory into myths, which in turn were equipped with specific functions and qualities.

Probably the most important function of myths, especially for 19th-century nationalism, was their capacity to refer to the future whilst recounting past events, thus forming a certain continuum. Consequently, a myth depicted the past with the aim of constructing reality, as indeed was a peculiarity of 19th-century national historiography.[7] These myths could be used to propagate certain concepts of identity, political unity and political values that would imbue the 'imagined community' (Benedict Anderson) of the nation with meaning.

Just like the historical scholarship of the time, the textbook authors also had recourse to historical myths. To a certain extent, historical scholarship of the 19th century was assigned a very similar function. As a result, it constructed a tradition built around the nation-state by means of reduction and glorification. The structural idea of the 'nation' was to be legitimised by giving it a past, a reconstruction of a long narrative from the origins of the nation up to the present day. Recourse to myths could fulfil the needs of national historiography for clear origins, distinct structures, fixed identities and plausible objectives. The concept of a historical scholarship in the service of the nation-state was a development to be observed in Germany as well as in France, albeit in each case with specific characteristics. France used the mythologised national history in order to overcome societal unease following the upheaval caused by the defeat in the Franco-German War as well as the founding of the Third Republic, transforming disgrace into a good omen of great things to come. In Germany, on the other hand, the empire myth served to trace the new, such as the empire and the united German nation, back to the old, and to legitimise Prussia's claim to power.

A discursive procedure assigns the narratives of the crusades in the textbooks analysed semantic features (mythemes), which provide the framework for the myths' interpretations of the present. A crusade narrative could thus be understood as a national myth insofar as it satisfied the need of both France and Germany for a 'sanctified' national past in the light of their upheaval-torn pre-

[5] "[F]aktische Geschichte in erinnerte Geschichte und damit in Mythos": Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (München: C. H. Beck, 1992), 52.
[6] Sabine Moller, "Das kollektive Gedächtnis", in: *Gedächtnis und Erinnerung. Ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch*, Christian Gudehus, Ariane Eichenberg and Harald Welzer, ed. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2010), 87.
[7] Claude Lévi-Strauss, quoted in Wolfgang Müller-Funk, *Die Kultur und ihre Narrative. Eine Einführung* (Vienna: Springer, 2002), 106.

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sent. As the following examples will show, these semantic attributions point towards a 'sanctified' golden age of a national past that was once 'reality' and must be 'brought back to life'.[8]

The attribution of mythemes is particularly striking in portrayals of heroes within the crusade narratives. Heroes often played a key role in the German and French crusade myths. By focusing on these individuals, the narrative is lent certain dynamics, and the personification process allows for an improved national identification. A portrayal of a mythical hero not only fulfils a moral and exemplary function; the hero also embodies a concept of the nation as an homogeneous whole or as 'one person of flesh and blood' to be loved and protected.[9]

The French authors and teachers in particular emphasised that the pupils would learn best from the lives of 'great men'. The opening quotation from 'Les grandes époques' shows that on the French side the entire crusade narrative is centred around two heroes: Godfrey of Bouillon and Saint Louis – Louis IX. There is a close connection between myths and heroes. Heroes are larger, stronger and more courageous than a 'normal person'; their extraordinary characteristics and deeds lend them a mythical component and are ideal threads to be woven into the mythical narrative cloth. Heroic myths are particularly suited for an analysis of images of the nation as they are constructions, much like the nation itself. A hero acts as a collective ideal, yet at the same time offers an individual perspective on the nation's history that he represents. Identifying with the nation via a hero and his deeds for the fatherland was an indispensible means of patriotic education in schools. The pedagogical power of myths thus gained particular influence over heroic narratives.[10]

And so, other than because of their emotional potential mentioned above, why is it that the crusade narratives in particular took on such a central position in textbooks? One factor is the generally romanticised enthusiasm of the time for the Middle Ages and the Orient. Secondly, various political and socio-cultural events contributed to a heightened interest in the subject matter, such as Napoleon's Egypt expedition of 1798. Chateaubriand's Le génie du christianisme (1802) initially gave rise to a zeal for all things medieval and influenced the invitation by the Institut français (1806), while French historian Joseph-François Michaud decided to write a complete history of the crusades (1812-1822). The German historian Friedrich Wilken had begun his seven-part 'History of the Crusades' a few years earlier, although he only completed it in 1832. The success of the historical novels by Sir Walter Scott (1819-1831), in which crusaders played a significant part, showed that the interest in the Mid-

[8] Wulf Wülfing, "Mythen und Legenden", in: *Geschichtsdiskurs. Band 3: Die Epoche der Historisierung*, Wolfgang Küttler, Jörn Rüsen and Ernst Schulin, eds. (Frankfurt/M.: Fischer, 1997), 159-160.
[9] Cf. Étienne François, Hagen Schulze, "Das emotionale Fundament der Nationen", in: *Mythen der Nationen. Ein europäisches Panorama*, Monika Flacke, ed. (Munich: Koehler & Amelang, 1998), 20-21.
[10] Cf. George Minois, *Le culte des grands hommes. Des héros homériques au star system* (Paris: Éditions Louis Audibert, 2005), 10-11.

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dle Ages and knighthood was constantly spreading, even outside of academia. This development can be followed throughout the century, with regular stimuli such as the inauguration of the 'Salles des Croisades' in the new national museum at Versailles in 1843 by King Louis-Philippe. In the Third Republic and in imperial Germany too, interest in the crusades had by no means subsided. On the contrary, the need for glorious memories of national history was even greater following the new political situation in both countries after 1871.

## Textbook Analysis: Initial Results

The entire corpus of textbooks analysed comprises 40 French history textbooks, some for upper secondary level from the period 1871 to 1914, and the rest from a selection of books for young people (including the aforementioned book prize). These were compared with 20 German history textbooks.[11]

History lessons in France and Germany followed a Eurocentric, usually chronological perspective from antiquity to the present day. The focus, however, was clearly placed on national history and other countries were usually only mentioned when relevant for the national French or German events. Although the different chapters on the Crusades in the various books allocate varying amounts of space to the topic within the context of the medieval era, they nevertheless almost without exception describe the crusades as being amongst the most defining events of the Middle Ages. Despite the large amount of freedom available to authors regarding the structure of their chapters, the majority of books seem to follow the same goal: to portray the prominent part played by one's own nation in the Crusades. Using primarily French sources, the following passages will discuss the images sketched to this purpose, addressing how they depict the Crusades as something that was also a European event.

Two quotations illustrate the overarching narrative particularly clearly and can be considered representative of nearly all French history textbooks:

1. Théodore Bachelet, a history teacher in Rouen, writes in 1876: "The crusade was a universal and spontaneous movement, the union of all Christian Europe in one and the same thought; in one and the same faith."[12]

2. Twenty years later, François Corréard, who taught at the *lycée Charlemagne*, writes: "The Orient, which while civilised was nevertheless di-

[11] This study focuses on portrayals in French history textbooks, while the German texts merely provide a European comparison. As a result, fewer German comparative texts are included in the analysis. For an analysis of German textbooks see the contribution by Matthias Schwerendt in this publication as well as his essay "Araber, Türken, Ungläubige. Islamrepräsentationen in Kreuzzugsnarrativen deutscher Geschichtsschulbücher des 19. Jahrhunderts", Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft 58, no.7/8 (2010), 627-638.

[12] Théodore Bachelet, *Histoire générale. Première partie. Cours de troisième. Comprenant la France et les autres états du moyen-âge de 395 à 1270* (Paris: Courcier, 1876), 371.

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> vided and already in a state of decline, was attacked by the barbaric Occident, equally divided by kingdoms and petty feudal principalities, yet united by one common faith."[13]

The common message is clear: the Crusades united Europe in the Christian faith against the common enemy in the Orient. Many textbooks name further motives alongside religious zeal that inspired so many people to take the cross, the knights' desire for battle and adventure or the hope held by serfs to be set free of their feudal duties and begin a new life in the 'Holy Land'. The common Christian faith, however, is the sole factor behind the *unity* of Europe. This is astonishing if we consider the battle between '*laïcité*' and 'Catholicism' in the Third Republic. Yet even the authors Darles and Janin, who can be counted amongst the radical writers of Laicist[14] textbook contents, do not deny the significance of the Christian faith but simply name further motives.

Chapters on the Crusades often appear within the context of the reinvigoration of religious faith due to the apocalyptic spirit of the year 1000. This central narrative should not, however, be subjected to an exclusively 'religious' interpretation. Rather, we must place it in the context of the defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, as an allusion to the nation that emerges from the turmoil with new strength, looking to the future with an even stronger 'faith' in its community. Concepts of Europe are appropriated *nationally* in a similar fashion. Further on in the same crusade narrative by François Corréard we read the following:

> The various nations of Europe isolated and at enmity with one another, became better acquainted by uniting in a common task and fighting shoulder to shoulder.[15]

More features of nationalism resonate here than it might seem at first glance. Fighting shoulder to shoulder in the face of a common fate, the solidarity within the community and the willingness to make sacrifices for one another are key values of the nation that are conveyed here via a Europe narrative. The narrative on the unity of Christian Europe is thus merely the ideal framework for the national narrative, serving to highlight France as the chosen nation with a pioneer's role within Europe. I will therefore now address this national narrative as well as the various images of the nation that are shaped by it.

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[13] François Corréard, *Histoire de l'Europe et de la France depuis 395 jusqu'en 1270. Classe de troisième* (Paris: Masson, [1891] 1892), 231.

[14] The often discussed term of *laïcité* is to be distinguished from secularism and considered here a specifically French phenomenon in that it was shaped by societal and historical events peculiar to France. Laïcité was first formally defined by the philosopher and politician Ferdinand Buisson in 1881, who stated that 'Laïcité is the result of a process of laïcisation during which the public sphere has become liberated from the power of religion. This results in the laïcist state, neutral towards all religion and free in the face of all priests', in order to ensure the 'equality of all citizens before the law' with 'rights free of religious conditions and complete freedom of religion'. Quoted in Jean Baubérot, "Säkularismus und Laizität", Transit, Europäische Revue 39 (2010), 49.

[15] Corréard, *Histoire de l'Europe*, 231.

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The narrative of national superiority forms a consistent thread through the chapters on the crusades, and shapes them considerably. Many textbooks contain a separate chapter on 'The Role of France in the Crusades'. Here we find a classification that corresponds to this imaginary thread, for example in the book *Petit cours d'histoire universelle* by Victor Duruy. He was Minister of Education in the Second French Empire and an important textbook author, whose works continued to be published in the Third Republic:

> The French played the main part in the crusades. They had carried out the First Crusade. They shared the second (1147) with the Germans, the third (1189) with the English and the fourth (1203) with the Venetians. The fifth (1217) and the sixth (1228) were insignificant. The seventh (1248) and the eighth (1270) were exclusively French. The crusades historian even entitled his book Gesta Dei per Francos, - 'Deeds of God carried out by the Franks'. Even today, all Christians in the Orient go by one name, the Franks, regardless of which language they speak.[16]

It is clear from this classification of the crusades which aspects of crusade portrayals were especially highly valued in French textbooks. The leading role of the French could be especially clearly depicted for the first, seventh and eighth crusades. The 'Gesta Dei per Francos', the crusades history by Guibert de Nogent, is repeatedly referred to in order to underline the significance of the Franks, portrayed as the predecessors of the French.

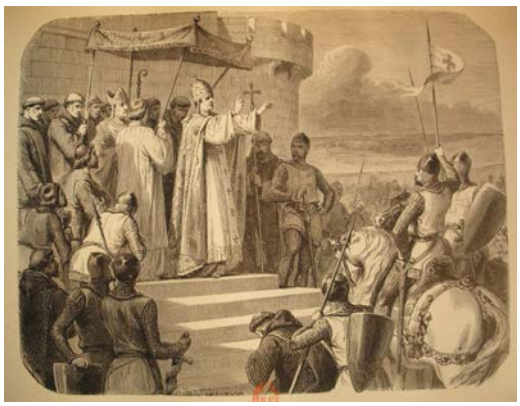

Image 1: Michaud/Poujoulat, Histoire des Croisades abrégée à l'usage de la jeunesse, Tours: Mame 1899.

The call for the First Crusade is a key event in the structure of a national narrative. For many textbook authors this is the prelude to France's dominant role. A wealth of myths emphasise the special characteristics of the French as the people 'chosen' to initiate the event from all European Christians. The call for the First Crusade is nationalised as a huge French event, both in the individual Pope Urban II with his speech and the location of Clermont. France is clearly distinguished from other European nations who were less responsive to the Pope's idea; the Italians, for instance, were less than enthusiastic at the Council of Piacenza. Finally, Urban II turned his hopes to France, where they were not disappointed. The French are distinguished even more clearly from other European peoples, however, by their language, which for the French plays an essential part as a 'lieu de mémoire' at several points during the crusades.

> Urban II, who was French (born in Lagery in Champagne), could com-

[16] Victor Duruy, *Petit cours d'Histoire universelle. Petite Histoire du Moyen Âge* (Paris: Hachette, 1870 and 1906), 136.

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> municate easily with all those present by speaking to them in their mother tongue.[17]

This quotation emphasises that the originator of the crusade itself, Pope Urban II, as well as all participants of the Council of Clermont were French, as they communicated in one and the same mother tongue. Although the textbook does at several points mention the significance of the regionalisation of France at that time, at this point in the crusade narrative different regional dialects are of no consequence. There is no mention of a historical development of the French language. It was the unifying mother tongue of the French nation, both during the crusades and in the Third Republic.

Communication problems are only mentioned to distinguish France from other European peoples. The unifying French mother tongue is thus at the same time a recognition factor. Germans, Italians, Englishmen and others heard the French call to take the cross and came to France, where they could only communicate in a cumbersome sign language. This depiction marks the other peoples as 'foreigners' and as inferior to the French due to their [alleged] lack of language skills.

Catholic textbook authors in particular use this narrative of the language barrier to emphasise the relevance of the Christian faith, sometimes with a quotation from the chronicler Fulcher of Chartres, for example Pater Gazeau in 1890:

> Who has ever heard, exclaims a chronicler, that so many nations, so many different languages, were united in one single army? If a Breton or a Teuton came to speak to me it was impossible to answer him. But although we were divided by so many languages, we all seemed to be brothers and neighbours, united in the same spirit by the love of the Lord.[18]

These textbook authors with a clear Catholic and nationalist approach also present a reconstructed speech of Urban II, without naming sources and containing their own embellishments. The fundamental role of France as the 'eldest daughter of the Church' and as a chosen nation is particularly underlined:

> 'Men of France', he called, 'chosen and loved by God from all peoples, take the path of the Holy Sepulchre and set out on your journey, certain of the eternal glory that will await you in the kingdom of heaven!'[19]

[17] Eugène Darsy and Théodore Toussenel, *Histoire de France. Enseignement des jeunes filles* (Paris: Delagrave, 1893), 140.
[18] Le Père François Gazeau, *Histoire du Moyen Age* (Paris: Baltenweck, [1879] 1890), 316.
[19] Désiré Blanchet, *Cours complet d'histoire. Histoire nationale et notions sommaires d'histoire générale depuis les origines jusqu'en 1610. Enseignement secondaire des jeunes filles* (Paris: Belin, [1898] 1901), 146.

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This catholic narrative can be compared with a narrative that can be considered Laicist and national. It was written by authors who, as followers of the new Laicist law of the Third Republic, were attempting to 'laicise' textbook contents as well; that is, to liberate them from narratives with a strong Catholic influence. Such obvious deviances are, however, usually the exception to the rule. Most textbook authors present a relatively unanimous picture of the role of religious faith, and of the Pope in the call for the First Crusade. The exceptions include textbooks such as that by Alfred Rambaud. Right from the beginning, he structured the crusades not in the context of the strengthening of the Church, but within that of the feudal context of striving for expansion. Palestine, then, was a goal of the French, just as previously England, Portugal and Sicily. Rambaud did not ignore the role of faith in the First Crusade; rather, he depicted religious zeal not as something positive but explained that it could lead to religious fanaticism. Such fanaticism, he explained further, affected every crusader who massacred innocent Jews in the Rhine valley and the inhabitants of entire villages in Palestine. Ultimately, he concludes:

> Whether the crusaders were inspired by true Christian piety or by bloodthirsty fanaticism, it cannot be denied that religious sentiment was the primary motive behind the crusades.[20]

With this provocative wording Rambaud confirms that religious faith was the crucial factor inspiring the crusades. Yet he also makes it clear that it gave rise to a great deal of cruelty. It is by means of such unusual phrasing and modifications of well-known narratives rather than in specifically 'Laicist' myths that the few radically Laicist textbook authors expressed their versions of the story. The Laicist national narratives can therefore be divided into two categories: the larger, more moderate category, in which the textbook narratives recognise the Christian tradition as the fundament of civilisation and part of the national past, and a much smaller category of narratives that, while no less nationalistic, they paint a clearly separatist picture, as in the case of Rambaud, and which clearly reject the role of the Church. For here too, the French nation is portrayed as 'chosen' to lead the crusade, chosen from all other European peoples.

[20] Alfred Rambaud, *Histoire de la civilisation française. Tome premier: Depuis les origines jusqu'à la Fronde* (Paris: Colin, 1885), 186.

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Image 2: Michaud/Poujoulat, Histoire des Croisades abrégée à l'usage de la jeunesse, Tours: Mame 1856.

The mythical figure of Godfrey of Bouillon was appropriated as one of the main characters of the First Crusade and a national hero by several European states during the 19th century. France, German and also Belgium claimed him as a hero of their own national histories. In all three nations he was described as an ideal medieval knight who united all chivalrous virtues, including strength and courage, modesty and piety. The French textbooks of the Third Republic also depicted Godfrey as the ideal medieval hero, as is shown by an excerpt from a textbook for girls by Désiré Blanchet from the year 1901:

> The first king of Jerusalem deserved to be the hero of the crusade. Inspired by a burning and naïve piety he was often lost in prayer in the churches; modest and selfless as he was, he had sold all his worldly possessions without a profit; armed with such tremendous strength, he was ultimately dreaded by the Muslims. The heroic exploits carried out by his arm, which could cut a Turk in two with one swoop of his sword, have remained legendary in the Orient. Godfrey of Bouillon was the perfect knight and the perfect Christian.[21]

This excerpt addresses a wealth of myths surrounding the hero Godfrey in textbooks. Godfrey demonstrated his modesty and piety most emphatically by declining the crown following the capture of Jerusalem. This myth reappears in *all* the French textbooks analysed that mention Godfrey. Once the crown had been passed to – logically – the best knight in the army, Godfrey declined the honour. His modest justification was that he didn't want to wear a crown of gold while Jesus had to wear a crown of thorns. Today, research assumes that the crown was in fact first offered to Raimund of Toulouse, who declined it with the same humble reason. Godfrey obviously exploited this and, while he named the same motives for declining the crown, ultimately he did accept the honour of rule, decorating himself simply with the title 'Baron and Protector of the Holy Sepulchre'.

In French textbooks we now find the *national* appropriation of the hero Godfrey, firstly in the myths that surrounded him as the ruler of the newly founded kingdom. The characterisation and mythification of Godfrey to the lawmaker of the new kingdom of Jerusalem can be seen as specifically French, as this myth does not appear in connection with Godfrey in the German textbooks. In a large number of textbooks the new king has a new set of laws written – or

[21] Blanchet, *Cours complet d'histoire*, 152.

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perhaps he wrote them himself – based on French custom and in the French language. The authors also emphasise the pioneering character of the new set of laws, which was at the same time a reflection of French feudality, even if the latter had never possessed such a comprehensive and complete code of order before. Godfrey of Bouillon thus not only created a new set of laws as the ruler of Jerusalem, but even produced an improved version of those already existent in France.

This myth of a French-inspired kingdom of Jerusalem is detailed further in some textbooks and once again language plays a central part. Abbot Courval explains it in his textbook of 1883 as follows:

> French was spoken in the whole of Palestine. It was the language of politics, brought by the Normans from one end of the world to the other and established there; in England, in Italy, and in the Orient.[22]

The myth of the French language as a kind of official language is used here to emphasise its general significance and distribution as an identifying feature of the nation, not only in Palestine but all over the world. This repeated emphasis of the spread of French must also be considered in the direct context of the Third Republic and the aim to 'universalise' French and to eliminate local dialects via the institution of the school. A textbook of 1876 by Théodore Bachelet phrases it in a particularly striking – and unique – manner:

> Palestine was like a new France; the people spoke French and all westerners in the Orient went by the name of the Franks.[23]

It is astonishing that both the character of Godfrey and the national features of 'language' and 'feudal law' appear in a similar form in almost all textbooks. It is difficult to filter out a specifically Catholic and national or a Laicist discourse here. In all textbooks, Godfrey of Bouillon stands for the medieval chivalrous ideal, virtuous in battle and a devout Christian. This can probably be traced back to the much older image of Godfrey that we find in the primary sources. John France explains this in terms of the origins and the world view of the chroniclers themselves, who would paint a 'sacralised'[24] picture of Godfrey based on their own monastic background, accentuating aspects of faith and piety in the hero's character. In the French textbooks we can generally find more recourse to the primary sources. The French chroniclers and contemporary witnesses of the crusades are drawn upon to justify the superiority of France and to embellish and emphasise the heroic myths. The myths sur-

[22] Abbot Courval, *Histoire du Moyen Age. Cours d'histoire à l'usage de la jeunesse* (Paris: Poussielgue, [1862] 1883), 256.
[23] Bachelet, *Histoire générale*, 405. If we are to believe the oft-cited chronicles of Fulcher von Chartres in the textbooks, the conquests of the Franks by no means led to the formation of a new France, but rather the Franks became 'oriental' and saw themselves as Galileans or Palestinians. Cf. Michael Borgolte, *Europa entdeckt seine Vielfalt, 1050-1250* (Stuttgart: UTB, 2002), 224-225.
[24] John France, "The election and title of Godfrey de Bouillon", Canadian Journal of History 18 (1983), 322: "For them [the chroniclers] the spiritual quality of the host, rather than any temporal consideration, had brought about its success as the manifestation of the Divine Will. Devotion and penance were the key qualities of the crusaders, not mere military competence".

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rounding Godfrey in the French textbooks thus correspond to the picture of Godfrey painted in the sacralised primary sources.

Godfrey of Bouillon is only nationalised via his function as the writer of laws in line with French custom and in the French language. His depiction as the perfect medieval knight must, however, also be considered in the context of the patriotic education of the Third Republic, which often had recourse to images of war heroes. The majority of textbooks count the development of 'chivalry' amongst the positive effects of the crusades, describing the tasks and personal development of a knight. The pupils are expected to recognise their own tasks, such as devotion and the willingness to make sacrifices for the national community, via the romanticised portrayal of the strong yet also devout and disciplined medieval knight.

As stated above, it was not only in France that the figure of Godfrey was nationally appropriated during the 19th century. If we compare the 'French Godfrey' with the 'German Godfrey', we find that he is mythically glorified in much the same way in the German textbooks too. The German Godfrey constitutes the same perfect knight that we find in the French books. He is described as the 'most noble of the famous heroes' and as a 'splendid example for every knight to follow'.[25] His incredible strength is also connected to similar images and myths. Even the myth of the 'sliced enemy knight' reappears, with an even more detailed and bloody description:

> His sword flashed up through the air and came swishing down with tremendous force into the left shoulder of the Saracen between the armoured plates; he cut through the latter's entire chest, right through to the right-hand side of his belt. Thus cut into two, the upper half of the Turk fell to the ground while the other half remained in the saddle and, to the horror of everyone watching, the horse, now wild with panic and drenched in its master's blood, raced back to the city.[26]

The modesty with which he refused to take the crown and royal title is also part of the German textbooks' mythological repertoire. His drawing up of a rule of law – the so-called Assizes of Jerusalem – however, does not appear in the German books. This thus remains a uniquely French characteristic. While it is difficult to identify an equivalent for the German books, we can nevertheless conclude that Godfrey is, here too, subjected to a national appropriation. While most German textbooks do assign particular significance to the French – at least in terms of numbers – with regard to the First Crusade, Godfrey is nevertheless portrayed as a *German* hero, particularly from the turn of the century onwards:

The army of great men did not assemble in Constantinople until the winter

[25] Friedrich Nösselt, *Weltgeschichte für Töchterschulen und zum Privatunterricht heranwachsender Mädchen: Parts 1 and 2* (Stuttgart: Heitz, 1880), 113.
[26] Ibid., 117-118.

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of 1096; while the army consisted mostly of French knights, Godfrey of Bouillon from Germany was of particular importance. He had been Duke of Lower Lorraine since 1088.[27]

It is particularly interesting and significant that Godfrey is portrayed as a citizen of Lorraine. Both nations, France and Germany, conceive of this region as it existed at the time of the First Crusade, unquestioningly part of one's 'own' nation. One German textbook appropriates the matter as follows:

> The army of the cross consisted to a large extent of French knights; of the Germans, only the knights from Lorraine participated, led by Godfrey of Bouillon and his brothers Eustace and Baldwin.[28]

Image 3: Wilken, Geschichte der Kreuzzüge nach morgenländischen und abendländischen Berichten. 7 Theile in 8 Bdn, Erster Theil: Gründung des Königreichs Jerusalem, Leipzig 1807.

Godfrey still, however, plays a larger part in French textbooks, where more space and more detailed descriptions are dedicated to him. The hero who outdoes all other crusade heroes in the German narratives is the Kaiser Frederick Barbarossa, despite the fact that he died before reaching his goal during the Third Crusade. The crusade is thus, however, directly linked to the Kyffhäuser narrative, a key element of the Barbarossa myth. But the role of Barbarossa does shed light on a further aspect differentiating German crusade narratives from their French counterparts: the myth of the 'Reich' is the framework for the German narrative that nationally appropriates the crusades. The context is the emergence of the imperial German Kaiserreich, which also explains why the crusades are not always depicted in chronological order in the German textbooks, but rather as part of the narratives on the German Kaisers. Especially the German nation, growing in national consciousness, was in pursuit of role models inspiring a sense of identity. Germany primarily had recourse to the history of medieval imperial history, 'which embodied precisely that which the new nation yearned for: greatness, glory and its very own fatherland'.[29]

In the German textbooks the crusades therefore appear to be not so much a German national event as a great occurrence that provided German Kaisers and thus the German nation as a whole to take a clear stance. The crusades are not associated with national features such as with an important location, institutions or customs as they are on the French side. Rather, as a result of their participation in the crusades, the Germans became more renowned

[27] Friedrich Kurze, *Deutsche Geschichte, I. Mittelalter (bis 1519)* (Leipzig: Göschen'sche Verl.-Handlung, 1906), 87.
[28] Paul Wessel, *Lehrbuch der Geschichte für die Prima höherer Lehranstalten. Part I. Das Mittelalter* (Gotha: Perthes, 1889), 123.
[29] Camilla G. Kaul, *Friedrich Barbarossa im Kyffhäuser. Bilder eines nationalen Mythos im 19. Jahrhundert* (Köln/Weimar/Wien: Böhlau, 2007), 15.

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within Europe and Christendom, as demonstrates this last example from a chapter on the great German crusade hero Barbarossa:

> The name of Germany had never been more respected and feared as during the time of the Crusades. Friedrich set off as a seventy year-old man to seize Jerusalem back from the infidels. […] A wail of grief was to be heard when the news of his death reached Europe. The German people have treasured the memory of Barbarossa in their hearts until this very day.[30]

This excerpt does not mention the participation of the French and English kings in the Third Crusade. Rather, the German Kaiser Barbarossa is portrayed as the initiator of the Third Crusade, who, despite his old age, intended to enter into battle once again with the 'infidels'. Accordingly, the whole of Europe grieved at the death of the German Kaiser who had become so famous on account of his heroic deeds, and indeed not only during the crusades.

In conclusion, three main points can be ascertained. Firstly, there is a kind of 'basic narrative' to be found in the crusade narratives of all French textbooks. The First Crusade is placed within a European and Christian context in order to emphasise the superiority of France. While concepts of Europe may be used to differentiate from the external enemy, at the same time they transport national values. Concepts of Europe have a different standing in French textbooks than in the German books: while France allegedly became the 'grande nation' of medieval Europe during the crusades, the union of all of European or western Christendom via the crusades is given less significance in the German textbooks. Rather, the central context here is the myth of the 'Reich'. That means that the role of Germany in the crusades is embedded in the concept of German imperialism and not in that of Europe. The last quotation from a German textbook reveals how the staging of the German nation might have taken place via crusade myths in textbooks of Imperial Germany. The German nation is constructed in its portrayal at the particularly glorious time of the crusades and in the embodiment of an especially glorious Kaiser, who defended the nation and Christendom until he drew his last breath. Emotion is built up primarily in the depiction of his tragic death and the remembrance of him. The 'imagined community' of the nation is rendered directly tangible in this picture of a glorious age and a national hero, who might have been associated with the current Kaiser, William II.

Secondly, it has probably become clear that heroic figures play a central part in conveying concepts of national identity. In doing so, the textbooks from both nations even have recourse to the same heroes and myths, which are, however, differently – nationally – appropriated and related to the contemporary situation. Godfrey, who as Duke of Lower Lorraine is claimed by both sides and adopted as the personification of a current conflict, is significant in this regard. He appears in French textbooks as the initiator of French law in

[30] Carl A. Krüger, *Geschichtsbilder für Volksschulen. Erzählungen aus dem Altertum, der deutschen und brandenburgisch-preußischen Geschichte. Ausgabe für Schulen beider Konfessionen* (Danzig: Gruihn'sche Verlagshandlung, 1889), 47.

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the newly founded kingdom of Jerusalem by means of mythical elements; in the German books, however, rather the depiction of Lorraine as German territory is the striking aspect of the Godfrey myths.

Thirdly and finally, different images of the French nation were shaped using the national basic narrative. Catholic authors emphasise, for instance, the power of the Church and the role of the Pope in the crusades, thus portraying France as the most, indeed the only, suitable country for initiating the call for the crusade. Some Laicist authors, on the other hand, would attempt to free the crusade narrative from its religious context by associating it with feudalism and the pursuit of expansion. These two different images must be placed within the context of the 'deux France', the two Frances. In this disagreement two images of history and the nation confronted one another, one upholding a view of France as the 'eldest daughter of the Church'; the other celebrating France as the source of civilisation and human rights.

This brief glance at the textbook analysis has shown that concepts of the nation occupy a much larger space than concepts of Europe in the crusade narratives of French and German textbooks. Equally, it has become clear that depictions of the crusades prove to be highly variable, both within a nation and in transnational comparison. The individual national narratives harbour various interpretative patterns that in turn inspire different concepts of identity and often refer to contemporary contexts.

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Matthias Schwerendt and Ines Guhe

# Describing the Enemy: Images of Islam in Narratives of the Crusades

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**Matthias Schwerendt and Ines Guhe**

# Describing the Enemy: I mages of Islam in Narratives of the Crusades

**Abstract**
The following text will reconstruct a basic outline of images of the 'other' or of the 'enemy' in crusade narratives from French and German school media, research literature and journalism of the 19th century. As might be expected, the crusade narratives of that period (re)produced images of Muslims as well as descriptions of Greeks or of Eastern Christians. In the crusade narratives analysed in our study, these descriptions of Muslims (Turks and Arabs) as well as of Greeks are compressed into dense dichotomies forming opposites between the 'Orient' and 'Occident' in the sense of a European orientalism.

## Five Introductory Points

1. The juxtaposition of Europe and Asia, or of the Orient and Occident, is nothing new. It is based on a long geographical, historical and geopolitical tradition that outdates the tension between Europe and Islam.[1] Nevertheless, some historians claim that in many eras such as that of the crusades, or of the Ottoman rule in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans, the tension between East and West or between Europe and Asia took on such proportions that it can be characterised – simply put – as a 'Battle between Cross and Crescent'. There are many such claims in the crusade narratives we have analysed. This principle becomes less plausible, however, if we bear in mind the close economical and political ties between Christians and Muslims in the Mediterranean during the crusades era. The thesis of a 'Battle between Cross and Crescent' does refer, however, to the production of enemy images in relation to the crusades.[2] 'What the Crusades and their mythology were to create was a huge market for a comprehensive, integral, entertaining and satisfying image of the enemy's ideology.'[3]

2. The general dichotomy of the Orient versus the Occident and the specific dichotomy of Europe/Christendom versus Islam as one of its manifestations, as well as the basic and generally binary train of thought associated with it, have highly problematic political consequences for European perceptions of the Ottoman or Arab-Islamic world. One might consider this dichotomy legitimate in the context of an era in which Europe and Christianity were to a great ex-

[1] See Franco Cardini, *Europa und der Islam. Geschichte eines Mißverständnisses* (Munich: Beck 2004), 12f.; Michael F. Klinkenberg, *Das Orientbild in der französischen Literatur und Malerei vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zum fin de siècle* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2009), 29.
[2] For example: Thierry Hentsch, *Imaging the Middle East* (Montréal/New York: Black Rose Books, 1992), 33ff.
[3] Ibid., 35.

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tent one and the same thing; yet this was a severe anachronism with regard to the era in which the Enlightenment began to give way to Romanticism. It rather expresses the backward-looking approach of the German and French Romanticists, who tended to glorify an idealised view of the Middle Ages as a past Utopia.[4]

3. Current historical criticism uses the term *orientalism* to describe projections of Europe onto the history and culture of the Orient. This term is often understood as a discourse on the Orient developed in Europe, which draws an insurmountable boundary between the Orient and Occident using pejorative portrayals. This boundary is seen to be supported by ontological and epistemological differences between both entities. The Orient is considered to convey a fundamental construct of western thought on itself, its history and its traditions.[5] This thesis, of which Edward Said is probably the most prominent proponent, has been vehemently discussed and critiqued. Said and his reception have been accused – to a certain extent, correctly – of producing an explicitly theoretical, post-structurally infused construction that is highly ideological, both in its anti-imperialism and its anti-colonialism.[6] While there is not enough time to go into this debate in detail here, in our analysis we have attempted to defuse this criticism of the idea of orientalism by using a broader concept of the term 'discourse' that has been subjected to ideology with recourse to Foucault. Here, 'discourse' means a complex system of statements and judgements on the Orient and its actors within the framework of a procedurally argumentative confrontation on the phenomenon of the crusades. Rather, these statements and judgements takes place on different, often connected, levels, and give rise to flexible attributions that are subject to time and context.[7]

4. Crusade narratives describe a central event of Christian or Church history, and in the 19th century this is done often enough with a Christian panache. The general significance of history for Christianity is not to be overlooked. In Christian narratives we find a basic pattern of a Christian view on life: the destiny of mankind as a long adventure leading from the Fall of Man to Judgement Day. Pilgrimage is to a certain extent a classic example of this perception. It

[4] Klinkenberg, *Orientbild*, 27.

[5] Edward Said, *Orientalismus* (Frankfurt/M.: Fischer), 2009.

[6] See Klinkenberg, 22f.; Reinhard Schulze, "Orientalistik und Orientalismus", in: *Der Islam in der Gegenwart*, Werner Ende and Udo Steinbach, eds. (Munich: Beck, 5th revised and extended edition 2005), 763ff.; Jürgen Osterhammel, "Edward W. Said und die ‚Orientalismus'-Debatte. Ein Rückblick", in: *Asien-Afrika-Lateinamerika* 25, no. 6 (1997), 597-607; María do Mar Castro Varela/Nikita Dhawan, *Postkoloniale Theorie. Eine kritische Einführung* (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag, 2005), 37ff.

[7] See, for example, the methodological deliberations on the subject by Michael F. Klinkenberg, *Orientbild*, 11ff.; see also Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire. Religion, Race, and Scholarship (*Washington D.C.: German Historical Institute., 2009), xxii; Andrea Polaschegg, *Der andere Orientalismus. Regeln deutsch-morgenländischer Imagination im 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2005), 28-38; Jürgen Lütt, Nicole Brecvhmann, Catherina Hinz and Isolde Kurz, "Die Orientalismus-Debatte im Vergleich. Verlauf, Kritik, Schwerpunkte im indischen und arabischen Kontext", in: *Gesellschften im Vergleich. Forschungen aus sozial- und Geschichtswissenschaften*, Hartmut Kaelble and Jürgen Schriewer, eds. (Frankfurt/M./Berlin/Bern: Lang, 1998), 511-567; Nina Berman, *Orientalismus, Kolonialismus und Moderne. Zum Bild des Orients in der deutschsprachigen Kultur um 1900* (Stuttgart: M & P, Verlag für Wissenschaft und Forschung 1996), 17-35.

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embodies the experience of a group destiny mirrored in a huge drama centred around sin, martyrdom and salvation. Christian pilgrim literature and historical novels are full of these themes. The narrative framework of martyrdom and salvation in crusade narratives thus carries the basic structures of a Christian narrative.[8]

5. Identical images of the Orient can be found in the crusade narratives of highly different genres of literature. As there is an intertextual relationship between textbooks, historical research literature, books for young people, poetry and travel reports, it seems appropriate to extend our study beyond textbooks and historiographical literature and to include texts that enjoy a wide reception in the fields of education, politics and research (e.g. travel literature and books for young people).[9]

## Which Images of the Orient are Generated by Crusade Narratives of the 19th Century?

This overarching question gives rise to further questions: How do they relate to one another? Do they diverge in argument or do they complement one another? Do these images have recourse to older European attributions regarding Islam or Christianity in Byzantium or the Middle East, and do they seek to change these? Does the Orient serve as a political, cultural or aesthetic counterpart to Europe or the Occident?

We would like to begin with a text that is highly relevant for the French perspective on Palestine and the crusades at the beginning of the 19th century. It addresses the writings of the French Romantic Chateaubriand, describing a journey that took him through Constantinople, Syria, Palestine and Egypt, all the way to Spain.[10] In his itinerary of the journey from Paris to Jerusalem he founded the new literary genre of the *Voyage en Orient*, which in turn gave rise to a novel and romantic concept of the Orient.[11] We can probably identify two further reasons for the huge popularity of his travel account, initially in France and later in Germany. On the one hand, the revived *question d'Orient* drew an unexpected amount of attention from journalists to Chateaubriand's book within the context of a political colonial discourse. On the other hand, he had already published a successful critique of the French Enlightenment and Revolution with his book of 1802, *Génie du christianisme. Ou beautés de la religion chrétienne*, which had established him as a leading writer of the French Romantic and the pioneer of a restorative Catholicism and aristocratism.[12]

[8] Cf. Marc Bloch, *Apologie der Geschichte oder der Beruf des Historiker (*Stuttgart: Klett, 1974), 25f. The historian Jacob Burckhardt speaks of Christianity as a religion of martyrs, see *Historische Fragment (* Stuttgart: Koehler), 1957, 44f.

[9] In the context of this paper, these include a young people's edition of the work on the crusades by Michaud and Poujoulat, which enjoyed great popularity as a *livre de prix* in French schools, and travel reports such as that by Chateaubriand, which was also widely read in schools.

[10] François-René Chateaubriand, *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem et de Jérusalem à Paris…* (Paris: Le Normant, 1811).

[11] Klinkenberg, *Orientbild*, 351ff.

[12] See the translator's preface to the first German edition of the diary of a journey from Paris to Jerusalem via Greece, and from Jerusalem through Egypt, through the barbaric states and back to Paris via Spain, trans. J.

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Which concepts of the Orient are concealed in Chateaubriands *Itinéraire,* and what reception of the crusades does it render visible? For Chateaubriand the Orient had, above all else, the function of generating images that the author could sketch from the radically subjective experience of the journey in the real Orient, and of Islam in the style of romantic historical awareness. With his montage technique, similar to a collage, Chateaubriand combines fictional elements from lyrical and narrative fragments with those from scientific discourse. Chateaubriand saw himself as a historian and archaeologist on this journey; his goal was to rediscover the glory of Christendom by visiting its origins in the Holy Land.[13] Ironically, the entire Orient only exists as the Holy Land for Chateaubriand; at the same time, he can only perceive Palestine from a Christian viewpoint. For him the spirituality of the Orient results from the birth of Jesus as the saviour of mankind; the Orient is the place of Christian origin and of Christian pilgrimage, of which the crusades are the most glorious form.[14] He thus almost regards the crusade heroes at the graves of Godfrey of Bouillon and his brother Baldwin as Jesus' disciples.[15]

He considers the contemporary Orient, on the other hand, as a barbaric stronghold represented by both the Turks and the Arabs. The Arabs, he claims, are nothing more than greedy robbers threatening him and all other Christian pilgrims with robbery and blackmail so that he is forced to travel to Jerusalem unrecognised.[16] The Turks, on the other hand, are distinguished by such cruelty and despotism that their description pervades the entire itinerary from his arrival in the Ottoman Empire onwards. The barbarism of the Turks, who, he claims, had violated and destroyed the alleged radiance of the Christian Orient during the Ottoman rule, was obvious, he continued, not only on account of the current decline of the Ottoman Empire, but also as a noted characteristic of the entire history of Islam. Chateaubriand defines Christianity as the heir of Antiquity and the bearer of civilisation as opposed to Islam, the embodiment of Oriental despotism and 'anti-civilisation'. This logic renders the crusades the focal point of the confrontation of civilised Europe with the violent Islamic troops.[17] If we are to follow Chateaubriand's logic, neither the origins nor the consequences of the crusades could be considered foolish. This judgement

H. Eichholz, 3 vols, Leipzig 1812; see also Charlotte Lady Blennerhassett, *Chateaubriand* (Mainz: Kirchheim 1903) (Weltgeschichte in Karakterbildern).

[13] Klinkenberg, *Orientbild*, 354f.; Jean-Claude Berchet, *Le voyage en Orient de Chateaubriand* (Houilles: Ed. Manucius, 2006).

[14] Francois-René Chateaubriand, *Tagebuch einer Reise von Paris nach Jerusalem durch Griechenland und von Jerusalem durch Egypten, durch die Staaten der Barbarei und durch Spanien zurück nach Paris*, translated and commentated by Dr. L. A. Haßler, vol. 2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1817), 80f.

[15] Ibid, 187.

[16] Ibid, 83-93, 113f.

[17] On the paradoxical use of the civilisation paradigm, see for example Jürgen Osterhammel, "'The Great Work of Uplifting Mankind'. Zivilisierungsmission und Moderne," in: *Zivilisierungsmissionen. Imperiale Weltverbesserung seit dem 18. Jahrhundert*, Boris Barth and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds. (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 2005), esp. 366-376, 383f.; Michael Broers, "Le Fardeau du Franc. Aufklärung zu Pferde – Eine Zivilisierungsmission in Napoleons Europa?," in: *Zivilisierungsmissionen. Imperiale Weltverbesserung seit dem 18. Jahrhundert*, Boris Barth and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., 90ff. For the use of the concept of 'oriental despotism' see Hentsch, *Imaging*, 107ff.; for the juxtaposition of Muslim barbarism and Christian-European civilisation see Mary Anne Perkins, *Christendom and European Identity. The Legacy of a Grand Narrative since 1789* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2004), 238ff.

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stands in opposition to the views of the crusades held by European Enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire and the Encyclopaedists.[18] They held that the view of the crusaders as armed pilgrims, who merely avenged the violence of 'Omar's descendents' and liberated Jesus' grave in Palestine, did not satisfactorily address the core of the historical dimension.[19] For Chateaubriand the crusades were a battle that would decide 'which of both religions would rule over the world: Islam, the thwarter of cultural progress, distinguished by fanatic conquest and persecution, ignorance, despotism and slavery, or Christianity with its Gospel of tolerance and peace, which, reawakening the spirit of erudite antiquity in the modern states, had abandoned serfdom.[20]

It is remarkable that Chateaubriand places himself in the tradition of the French pilgrims and crusaders. The end of his travel report in Palestine reveals only too clearly his expectations and the political and ideological context of the text. Jerusalem may still today be unique in its destiny, yet the murdering of Christians by Muslims still continued, he writes. Yet now all of Asia awaits the liberation from the Turkish yoke by French soldiers: he himself, he continues, was greeted euphorically as representative of the French protective force.[21] Based on writs of protection from several centuries, Chateaubriand creates a hair-raising account of the continued persecution of Christians by Muslims, emphasising the role of France as the Christian protector of the Orient.[22] 'Glory to the land that has come from far-away Europe to the middle of Asia in order to defend unhappy souls and who can protect the weak against the strong! Never did my fatherland appear so gracious and glorious than when I found the evidence of its charity towards Jerusalem in those accounts of the unknown suffering of the oppressed and the incredible cruelty of the oppressors.'[23]

We find a very similar portrayal of France's Christian civilising mission in the book for young people and *livre de prix* by the French historians Michaud and Poujoulat, who between 1838 and the turn of the century together produced a shortened edition for young people of Michaud's multi-volume work on the crusades.[24] In this book too, the idea of a superior Christian and European civilisation is associated with the contemporary colonialist discourse. France, it is claimed, had placed itself at the top of the crusades revolution seven centuries previously, thus crowning itself the defender of modern civilisation against the threat from the 'triumphant barbarians'. In their interpretation of the crusades, Michaud and Poujoulat lend the crusades a mission: it must not be forgotten that this war had the objective of taking the purity (*clarté*) of the Gospel to the barbaric lands and allowing the African peoples to share in the progress and shaping of Christian Europe. Accordingly, they claim that the capture of Algiers

[18] Klinkenberg, *Orientbild*, 363.
[19] Chateaubriand, *Tagebuch*, 217f.
[20] Ibid, 218f.
[21] Ibid, 113f., 228, 241f.
[22] Ibid, 288-291.
[23] Quoted from ibid, 291.
[24] Joseph-François Michaud and Jean-Joseph François Poujoulat, *Histoire des croisades, abrégée à l'usage de la jeunesse* (Tours: Mame, 1899).

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in 1830 and the more recent 'expeditions' in Africa were nothing more than crusades. Had the western crusaders succeeded in completing their mission in the 12th century, for Europe the Orient would constitute not a world to be conquered, but rather a heritage to be preserved.

Why is Chateaubriand important for our analysis of images of the 'other' or the enemy in portrayals of the crusades? Essentially there are many images in literary form in his texts which, like a burning glass, serve as examples for most of the crusade narratives we have examined in history textbooks and research literature. Chateaubriand has recourse to the conception of oriental despotism that evolved during the Enlightenment. He succeeds in completely eliminating from his argumentation the Enlightenment-inspired criticism of the atrocities of the crusades and of the despotism of the Europeans. This shift in argumentation is complete in the German history textbooks that we have examined by 1816 at the latest. Johann Christian Dolz, for example, in his Guidelines for Teaching a General History of Humankind, published in Leipzig in 1803, uses the harsh treatment of indigenous Christians and pilgrims in Palestine at the hands of the 'coarse Turks' and the lack of civility of the European Christians in equal measure to justify the crusades.
In his view, medieval Christians were defined by religious zeal, idolatry of holy places, the superstitious belief in reward for the persecution of infidels, and a mixture of a desire for glory, greed for plunder, love of adventure and the longing for liberation.[25] Even in 1816 a history textbook contests, in an Enlightenment-inspired style, the right of the Christians to attack the 'Mohammedian Peoples' in the crusades only because they owned Palestine, even if Muslim rule did indisputably mean certain difficulties for Christians.[26] After this point, there is no more fundamental criticism of the crusades to be found in the books we examined. Generally, the barbarians are the 'others'; the Christians are only barbaric in their excessive acts of violence that are either justified by being described as necessary for survival, or they are deplored as Christians who had fallen from grace.

A comparison with French history textbooks from the Third Republic shows that this understanding of 'barbarism' cannot be formulated in such a generalising manner. Indeed, the textbook authors include representatives of the Enlightenment-inspired criticism of the medieval Christians. The dichotomy of barbaric Christians versus civilised Arabs becomes particularly clear in the paragraphs on the results of the crusades. Here, the contact to the Arab and Byzantine world is described as essential for the development of the Occident, which up until that point had been rather barbaric, coarse and fanatical. It was thanks to this contact with the East, so it is claimed, that the West saw progress in industry and trade, rediscovered great works of the Roman and Greeks, and deepened its knowledge of the arts and sciences. The Occident rediscovered itself, was revived and awakened to new life thanks to the light

[25] Johann Christian Dolz, *Leitfaden zum Unterrichte in der allgemeinen Menschengeschichte für Bürgerschulen* (Leipzig: Barth, 3rd edition 1803), 62f.
[26] Hilmar Curas, Johann Matthias Schroeck and Karl Heinrich Ludwig Poelitz, *Einleitung zur Universalhistorie: zum Gebrauche bey dem ersten Unterrichte der Jugend in der 6. Auflage von 1816*, Berlin: Nicolai 1816), 322f.

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cast upon it from the Orient, as Gustave Ducoudray has somewhat dramatically put it.[27]

Some authors also maintain that those 'naïve westerners' should have corrected their view of the 'infidels'. The crusades, they claim, opened up a civilised Muslim world for them that was completely different to how they had imagined it to be.[28] Alfred Rambaud puts it even more clearly in his work on the history of French Civilisation.[29] He clearly describes the perceptions of Greeks and Arabs on the part of the French at the time of the crusades as distorted and stereotypical. The crusaders, he explains, were unable to distinguish between Turks and Arabs, and their religious prejudice led them to despise the Byzantines as schismatics and the Saracens as infidels. They failed to recognise that Arab civilisation was far more developed than that of the Greeks of or 'us'. Even more fierce is the critique by Charles Seignobos, one of the pioneers of historical positivism in the Third Republic, who evaluates the crusades as an invasion of the barbaric Christians into civilised Arabia.[30] In his view there is no doubt that the Muslim and Byzantine world of the 11th century was wealthier, more civilised and enlightened than that the Occident. While Seignobos seeks to correct the image of the fanatical, cruel infidels, here too there is no explicit criticism of the crusades. However, the positive picture he paints of the Orient explicitly excludes the barbarian Seljuqs. On the whole, the critical interpretations of the crusades by Rambaud und Seignobos remain ignored by the majority of French works we analysed.

The narrative of an Arab-Turkish net of relations thus appears in the crusade portrayals in a highly varied form. According to Chateaubriand, Arabs as well as Turks typically embody the barbaric Islamic culture, the catalyst of the crusades. Authors such as Rambaud and Seignobos develop contrary positions that ultimately lead to a critique of the 'barbaric Turks'. Many of the German and French textbooks examined oscillate between these two interpretative patterns, which are also visible in the research literature. We shall therefore now analyse the portrayal of these related aspects in the textbooks.
The glorified depiction of the crusades is closely tied to the threatening scenarios with which the pilgrims and Syrian and Palestinian Christians were confronted at the hands of Muslims. These scenarios are, however, ambivalent to a certain extent. In most of the texts we analysed, there is the statement that the Arabs were well-disposed towards the Christian pilgrims, even though in many texts their tolerance is explained by material advantage. Of the textbook authors in our German sample, only Friedrich Schiel explains the tolerance shown by the Arab Muslims as a result of their respect for Moses and Christ as

[27] Gustave Ducoudray and Alphonse Feillet, *Simples récits d'histoire ancienne, grecque, romaine et du moyen âge. Enseignement secondaire spécial* (Paris: Hachette, 1872).
[28] Adolphe Crémieux and Jean-Joseph Thomas, *Le Moyen Age et le commencement des temps modernes. Classe de cinquième* (Marseille: Ferran Jeune, 1906).
[29] Alfred Rambaud, *Histoire de la civilisation française. Tome premier: Depuis les origines jusqu'à la Fronde* (Paris: Colin, 1885).
[30] Charles Seignobos, *Histoire de la civilisation au Moyen Age et dans les Temps modernes. Des origines de la civilisation au XVIIe siècle inclusivement* (Paris: Masson, 1887).

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holy men.[31] In the eyes of most authors, the Turks had initially pursued a regime of cruelty against Christians and pilgrims following the conquest of Palestine, desecrating the holy sites. The acquisition of power by the Muslims in Syria and Palestine in the 7th century is thus placed within a dualistic value-system, where the Arabs are 'good' – tolerant – and the Turks are barbaric, cruel and greedy, having maltreated the Holy Land, its churches, the indigenous Christians and the Christian pilgrims since the middle or end of the 11th century. For many authors, then, it is the Turks – also described as the Seljuqs – who were the cause behind the crusades.

In the dualism of the 'good' Arab and the 'cruel' Turk, the recourse to descriptions of the 'Turkish threat' from the Early Modern Era is obvious.[32] Originally, medieval sources such as the anonymous chronicle from the 12th century, *gesta francorum,* assume that the Romans, Franks and Turks all descended together from the Trojans. The Turks were seen as equally courageous and noble warriors, unlike the disloyal and cowardly Byzantines.[33] It was the humanists who changed the European perception of the Turks with lasting effect in their countless reports on the so-called 'Turkish atrocity' following the conquest of Constantinople. Here they painted an enemy-picture of cruel Turks indulging in unimaginable massacres, atrocities and blasphemy.[34] French philosophers of the Enlightenment also held the Turkish conquest responsible for the demise of the Arab world and the rise of oriental despotism. Especially in the work of Voltaire, for instance, this resulted in an assumed antinomy between Arabs and Turks, which was juxtaposed with the stereotype of oriental barbarism and the 'Turkish rejection of art and science' as the antithesis of the idealised Golden Age of the Arabs.[35] This antimony was clearly reproduced in the crusade narratives of the 19th century.

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[31] Friedrich Schiel, *Lehrbuch der Weltgeschichte (Mittelalter und Neuzeit) für die unteren Klassen der Mittelschulen und verwandte Lehranstalten* (Nagyszeben (Hermannstadt): Michaelis, 3rd extended edition, 1909), 29.

[32] As representative of the concept of the 'Turkish danger' from the Early Modern Era see Almut Höfert, *Den Feind beschreiben: „Türkengefahr" und europäisches Wissen über das Osmanische Reich 1450-1600* ( Frankfurt/M./New York: Campus-Verlag, 2003), esp. chapter 2; see also Daniel J. Vitkus, "Early Modern Orientalism: Representations of Islam in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Europe," in: Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe, David R. Blanks and Michael Frassetto, eds. (New York: St. Martin's Press 1999), 207-230; Thomas Kaufmann, *'Türckenbüchlein': Zur christlichen Wahrnehmung "türkischer Religion" in Spätmittelalter und Reformation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2008); The opposition between Turkey and Europe, which at the same time negates the division and hostility between the Latin world and the Greeks, is an 'invention' of the Renaissance see Dieter Mertens, "Claronomtani passagii exemplum: Papst Urban II. und der erste Kreuzzug in der Türkenkriegspropaganda des Renaissance-Humanismus", in: *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*, Bodo Guthmüller and Wilhelm Kühlmann, eds. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2000), 65f.

[33] Cardini, *Europa und der Islam*, 191.

[34] Klinkenberg, *Orientbild*, 49; Johannes Helmrath, "Pius II. und die Türken", in: *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*, Bodo Guthmüller and Wilhelm Kühlmann, eds. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2000), 104ff.

[35] Klinkenberg, *Orientbild*, 184; Asli Cirakman, "From Tyranny to Despotism. The Enlightenment's Unenlightened Image of the Turks," in: *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33, no 1 (2001), 56ff.; Nina Berman, *Orientalismus*, 118-128; W. Daniel Wilson, *Humanität und Kreuzzugsideologie um 1780. Die „Türkenoper" im 18. Jahrhundert und das Rettungsmotiv in Wielands ‚Oberon', Lessings ‚Nathan' und Goethes ‚Iphigenie'* (New York: 1984), esp. 11-37; 134f.

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Particularly remarkable is the vagueness in the portrayals of chronological processes and incriminated misdeeds by the Turks, described by many authors as rough, wild and barbaric. While the Arabs had shown respect for the holy sites, the Turks, it was claimed, would mistreat the indigenous Christians as well as the clergy, and subject Christian pilgrims to grim forms of robbery.[36] On the whole, there is no truly consistent narrative of specific areas of political conflict between pilgrims, the local Christians, the Christian churches and the conquering Turks in our sources. The complaints are centred around the mistreatment of pilgrims, refused access to the holy sites, and the desecration of the latter as well as the disturbance of holy ceremonies. The true conflicts between Christians and Muslims are only suggested in few texts, and their political contexts remain almost invisible.

Yet the image of the tolerant Arab in the textbook portrayals does crumble in places. The picture of an Arab incapable of properly building up a state filters through; this Arab may well demonstrate religious reverence towards the holy sites; yet he still poses a danger to the pilgrims and indigenous Christians. The topos of the predatory and murderous Bedouin, who deviously exploits the naivety of devout pilgrims, also appears in the works of some authors.[37] This topos is also widespread in pilgrim literature from the Early Modern Era and is not reflected upon critically until the end of the 18th century by Carsten Niebuhr in German literature on pilgrims to Palestine. In the contemporary French and German school literature of the 19th century, however, we find no trace of this complex perception of the potential for conflict between pilgrims and Bedouins.[38]

If we chronologically compare the organisation of the crusades sections in the textbooks as militant reactions of Latin Christianity to the Turkish and Arab threats to the pilgrims and indigenous Christians, we find a clear tendency. From the second half of the 19th century onwards, many texts – despite a large amount of variety in the narratives – emphasise the necessity of conquering the Holy Land in the crusades through a holy war in order to 'cleanse' the Christian sites from the presence of the Muslims.[39] This usually happens in

[36] Ernst Kappe, *Geschichten aus der Geschichte, das ist: Denkwürdigkeiten aus der Weltgeschichte, ein Lesebuch fürs Volk und seine Jugend* (Meurs: Rheinische Schul-Buchhandlung, 1837), 49. Here we read, for instance, that during the crusades era, as today, a tax of 30 thalers had to be paid to the avaricious Turks in order to visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Auguste Ammann and Ernest-Charles Coutant, *Le Moyen Age et le commencement des temps modernes, Classe de cinquième* (Paris: Nathan, 1904), 192, also maintain that the situation became intolerable for pilgrims after the Seljuq Turks had replaced the Arabs. As representative of the research literature see Wilken, Friedrich, *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge nach morgenländischen und abendländischen Berichten:* Part I*: Gründung des Königreichs Jerusalem* (Leipzig: Siegfried Lebrecht Crusius, 1807), 44-54.

[37] See, for example, Friedrich Nösselt, *Geschichte des Mittelalters, Weltgeschichte in vier Bänden, Part 2*, (Langensalza: Schulbuchhandlung, (new edition, carefully revised and extended to the present day) 1904),101.

[38] On this complex issue see Annette Katzer, *Araber in deutschen Augen. Das Araberbild der Deutschen vom 16. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2008), 208-243, 416ff., 449.

[39] Heinz Gollwitzer has stated that the liberation of the sacred sites from Turkish rule was the favourite topic of the Christian-European world of the mid-19th century. See Heinz Gollwitzer, "Deutsche Palästinafahrten des 19. Jahrhunderts als Glaubens- und Bildungserlebnis", in: *Lebenskräfte in der abendländischen Geistesgeschichte*, Bernhard Bischoff et al., eds. (Marburg: Simons-Verlag, 1948), 307ff.

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the depiction of legends, such as Peter of Amiens or speeches by the Pope, which are reproduced with a great deal of charisma.[40] Many school texts of the 19th century contain a distinctly fanaticised religious rhetoric. Muslims are either portrayed as the shared enemies of all Christians,[41] as the most dangerous enemy of the faith,[42] or as a force aspiring to destroy the Byzantine as well as the Roman-Catholic Church.[43] The latter portrayal turns the idea of superiority in terms of civilisation into one of a battle between cultures, thus classifying the crusades as an epoch in the 'struggle and opposition of the whole of Christianity against Islam', from the emergence of the Ottoman Empire to its fall, upon which the crusaders sought to prove their superiority over the Arabs and Turks. Some authors add further dynamics to this idea of a fundamental struggle of cultures by justifying the Christian superiority using partially racist arguments.[44]

At this point we must ask which images of Byzantium and/or the Greeks are to be found in the portrayals of the crusades designed for school and research. Across the entire period of study, we have been able to identify two diametrically opposed depictions of Byzantium, its historical development during the crusades era, and its relationship with Muslims or Western European crusaders. Here, the political disputes between the Arab or Turkish powers and Byzantium almost always fades into the background of the textbook crusade narratives, despite the fact that it was in and with the Byzantine Empire (alongside the Iberian Peninsula and Sicily) that significant confrontations between Christians and Muslims took place before the First Crusade. It is obvious that many of the depictions in the school and research texts are shaped by the work of Edward Gibbon in their anti-Byzantine arguments. Gibbon overestimated Western Europe's part in the military confrontations between Muslims and Christians because he considered the Byzantine Empire, or the Greeks, to be too decadent for such battles.[45]

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[40] Robert Gohr, *Elementarbuch der Weltgeschichte: In zwei Cursen für den ersten Geschichtsunterricht in Schulen* (Berlin: Nicolai, 1868), 35; August Mauer, *Geschichts-Bilder: Darstellung der wichtigsten Begebenheiten und berühmtesten Personen aus der Alten Geschichte, dem Mittelalter, der neuen und neuesten Zeit* (Langensalza: Schulbuchhandlung Greßler, 1878), 172; Friedrich Nösselt, *Weltgeschichte für Töchterschulen und zum Privatunterricht heranwachsender Mädchen***,** Parts 1 and 2 (Stuttgart: Heitz, 16th edition 1880), 107.

[41] Paul Wessel, *Lehrbuch der Geschichte für die Prima höherer Lehranstalten, Part I: Das Mittelalter (*Gotha: Perthes, 1889), 122.

[42] Hubert Cremans and Wilhelm Pütz, *Grundriss der Geographie und Geschichte der alten, mittlern und neuern Zeit, Part 2: Das Mittelalter und die Zeit der Reformation (476 - 1648)* (Leipzig: Baedeker, 18th revised edition 1894), 65.

[43] Gottlob Egelhaaf, *Grundzüge der Geschichte, Part II: Das Mittelalter, including a time-line (*Leipzig: Reisland, , 3rd edition, 1892), 31-120, esp. 91 and 100.

[44] Friedrich Zurbonsen*, Geschichtliche Repetitionsfragen und Ausführungen. Ein Hilfsmittel für Unterricht und Studium: Part II: Das Mittelalter* (Berlin: Nicolai, second revised edition 1892), 21f.; Wessel, *Lehrbuch der Geschichte*, 42 and 46; also see Matthias Schwerendt, "Araber, Türken, Ungläubige. Islamrepräsentationen in Kreuzzugsnarrativen deutscher Geschichtsschulbücher des 19. Jahrhunderts", in: *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 58, no. 7/8 (2010), 635f.

[45] Cardini, *Europa und der Islam*, 13ff.

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Particularly striking from a quantitative point of view is the assumption that the Greeks were cowardly and weak, which we discover in many textbook crusade portrayals, usually in the absence of any narrative inspiring a specific meaning. This picture of the Greeks is extended in selected narratives to include the characteristics of guile, hypocrisy and deceit. The Greeks, it is suggested, would on account of their fear, weakness, moral corruptness or political failure find themselves permanently entangled in conflicts with the glorious crusaders, who in turn had achieved the capture of Constantinople in 1204.[46] An argumentative thread that seeks to legitimise the catastrophe of 1204 works with the reproach of the Byzantine Emperor's betrayal of the European armies by refusing them supplies, misleading their troops, cooperating with the Turks and calling for the murder of the European crusaders.
This betrayal had already been related in the medieval accounts of the crusades. All these shameful acts, it was claimed, could have led to the failure of several crusades.[47] Only few historians – those writing from a more scholarly perspective – point with moderation towards the complex political conflicts of interests with which Byzantium found itself confronted during the crusades era. Misunderstandings or antagonistic conflicts of interest regarding the crusaders are hardly mentioned.[48]

There is another anti-Byzantine topos that is assimilated by the crusade narratives of the 19th century. It hardly appears in the textbooks but is clearly visible in the research literature.[49] It is the topos of an effeminate or feminised and at the same time despotic Orient, expressed in Byzantine greed, pomp and circumstance, and flattery.[50] In the eyes of many historians, even the Palestinian Christians have thus become 'degenerate' and only capable of functioning as a group with the support of the western Christians. In his description, Friedrich Wilken even expresses doubt as to whether the Byzantine Church can still be referred to as 'Christian' at all.
In his writings, Byzantium and its Muslim allies are melted down to form a collective evil. From this perspective, medieval Byzantium becomes the true enemy of the Western European Christian armies, without whose surrender the much striven-for rule of the Orient would not have been achievable.[51] Particularly remarkable are Wilken's projections connected with this interpretation: while in his view the Greeks only have themselves to blame for their decline,

[46] See as representative of the German textbooks: Karl Friedrich Becker, *Die Weltgeschichte für die Jugend: Part 4* (Berlin: Heinrich Frölich, second improved edition 1806), 532ff., 554ff., and for the French textbooks: Le père François Gazeau, *Histoire du Moyen Age* (Paris: Baltenweck, 1890), 349.
[47] On this complex issue see Savvas Neocleous, "Byzantine-Muslim conspiracies against the crusades: history and myth," in: *Journal of Medieval History* 36 (2010), 253-274; Ludwig Schmugge, *Die Kreuzzüge aus der Sicht humanistischer Geschichtsschreiber* (Basel/Frankfurt/M.: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1987), 32.
[48] See Gustav Friedrich Hertzberg, *Geschichte Griechenlands seit dem Absterben des antiken Lebens bis zur Gegenwart: Part I. Von Kaiser Arcadius bis zum lateinischen Kreuzzuge* (Gotha: Perthes, 1876), 360ff.; Albert Gruhn, *Die byzantinische Politik zur Zeit der Kreuzzüge. Beilage zum Jahresbericht der 13. Realschule zu Berlin (*Berlin: Weidmann, 1904).
[49] For the school literature see Friedrich Nösselt, *Weltgeschichte*, 113f.
[50] Ludwig Streit, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des 4. Kreuzzuges: I. Venedig und die Wendung des vierten Kreuzzuges gegen Konstantinopel* (Anklam: Poettke, 1877), 7-19; Wilken, vol. I, 134; vol. II, 305ff.; vol. III, 105-155.
[51] Ibid, 139ff.

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at the same time they would perhaps only be freed from their slavery by the ancestors of those they had so shamefully betrayed.[52]

## Conclusion

In our paper we have attempted to outline the fundamental images of the Orient. Due to the huge number of sources only an outline has been possible here. We have nevertheless been able to ascertain that fundamental descriptions of a 'non-European other' are generated by the crusade narratives of the 19th century, all of which have recourse to very different traditions. Explicit images of Arabs, Turks and Greeks are negotiated, some of which was part of the cultural repertoire of the Middle Ages; some of which can be traced back to debates from the Renaissance or Enlightenment. In doing so, we find parallel descriptions of the Orient in the crusade depictions that conceptualise 'the Orient' and its actors as dangerous or degenerate, partly culturally superior or morally depraved, violent, bloodthirsty and despotic, or weak, effeminate and cowardly.

To sum up, the sources examined show a tendency towards radicalisation in the German textbooks from the second half of the 19th century. Many textbooks anticipate with Christian enthusiasm a holy war against the 'Barbarians from the Orient'. It is particularly remarkable that in the research literature we analysed there are to a certain extent opposing tendencies. Here, value statements regarding Muslims and the Orient can be – tentatively put – interpreted as attempts to judge the cultural significance of Islam for Mediterranean societies more appropriately than the crusade historians of the first half of the 19th century had done. The portrayals in the French textbooks are on the whole less permeated by radically Christian narratives. There are strong voices that can only be read as moderate criticism of the image of the 'barbarian Orient'.

In this regard, the images of Byzantium can be seen equally critically. The pejorative attributions to the Greeks become more intensive – chronologically speaking – in the history textbooks, while vaguely differentiated attributions are visible in the research literature. One phenomenon is especially noteworthy: Many of the anti-Byzantine and anti-Turkish stereotypes from the crusade narratives are clearly defined – quite isolated from the history of the crusades – by the racially inspired radically nationalist discourses of the voelkish movement (Völkische Bewegung) regarding the 'Southwest Asian Race' ('vorderasiatische Rasse') at the beginning of the 20th century. We can therefore assume that the crusade narratives of the 19th century contributed considerably to the anticipation of centuries-old concepts of the Orient, to their incorporation in nationalist discourses, and to a reorganisation of the stereotypes associated with them.[53]

[52] Ibid, 197.

[53] This insight touches upon the question of the relationship between orientalism and anti-Semitism, currently under heated debate within the field of anti-Semitism research, and unfortunately cannot be explored in depth here.

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An analysis of images, especially images of a perceived 'enemy', is ultimately an inquiry into mentalities. This question possesses both an emotional and a rational dimension. Emotions associated with certain moral values go hand in hand with complex views on the world and actions based on both. This framework contains a potential for mobilisation that points towards 'meaningful action'. This potential for mobilisation based on action can be seen as pre-political, as it allows for no direct statements on social or power relations. By juxtaposing images of self and other in the crusade narratives we can reconstruct how the nationalist conceptions of enemies and heroes that we find in the narratives can be instrumentalised. For the purposes of our study, however, the ideology concept does not aim for political instrumentalisation but rather for the cultural incorporation of certain attitudes and meanings. Here, ideology is understood with recourse to Clifford Geertz as a complex structure of interwoven meanings, by which political action only becomes possible when the ideas and patterns of meaning associated with it are meaningfully and empirically experienced via narratives.[54] In this regard, the crusade portrayals of the 19th century can be seen as highly fruitful sources for historians. They provide insights as to how conceptions and patterns of meaning were reproduced and/or incorporated into European orientalist narratives in order to historically and politically legitimise contemporary events of European colonialism from a Christian perspective.

*This essay is a result of the international workshop "European Receptions of the Crusades in the Nineteenth Century. Franco-German Perspectives", Braunschweig 16 and 17 February 2011. We would like to thank Jonathan Phillips, Stefan Berger, Kristin Skottki and Felix Hinz for their helpful advice and constructive critique. We would also like to thank Wendy Anne Kopisch for her translation of this article from the original German, including the textbook quotations from the original French*

[54] See Clifford Geertz, "Ideology as a Cultural System (1964)", in *The Interpretation of Cultures*: *Selected essays* (London: Basic Books, 1973), 193-233.

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Eckert.Dossiers No. 4

Felix Hinz

# The Crusades Myth in Historical Novels written in German: Work in Progress

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**Felix Hinz**

# The Crusades Myth in Historical Novels written in German: Work in Progress

**Abstract**
The paper deals with an actual project that investigates the Crusades Myth in historical novels written in German or translated into German. Its source base consists of 116 historic novels from 1786 until 2011 that deal with the crusades to the Holy Land. The results should allow insights into the ideas and values that were particularly important to the German-speaking societies of the Early Modern Period. Furthermore it is to be expected that the key threads of ideas and values will allow for a productive comparison of politics, historical research and historical culture. Ultimately, the work on this topic aims to unveil the kind of methodology that can be used for a comparison of mentalities and cultures using partially fictive historical sources.

## Historical Novels and History Didactics

Until now, the historical novel has been somewhat neglected by historical scholarship, and without good reason left to the field of literary history. Rather than dismissing it as an object of trivia, however, history research and especially history didactics, a field that considers itself 'the science of historical consciousness in society', as Karl-Ernst Jeismann has phrased it[1], would be well advised to take the historical novel more seriously. After all, together with period film, it is the most important manifestation of historical culture today.
The categorical dismissal of partially fictive genres is also the result of a self-deceptive assumption within historical scholarship. History, regardless of the form in which it appears, is simply inconceivable without imagination. In a constructivist sense, history is with good reason no longer counted today amongst the empirical sciences with regard to past realities, but rather considered in regard to the texts about these pasts. It would therefore appear entirely worthwhile to take a critical look at the relationship between fact and fiction in popular depictions of history too.
Generally speaking, the historical novel deals with an epoch prior to that of its own emergence. It has been given a more precise and appropriate disciplinary location by the Germanist Hugo Aust in his authoritative work, Der historische Roman (the historical novel): the latter 'emerges in the "border triangle" of autonomous poetry, precise historical research, and didactics seeking to legitimise knowledge. Its task is the representation of history, which it fulfils in three ways: It gives life to that which is past, it interprets that which has happened, and is itself a part of history.[2]

[1] „Geschichtsdidaktik", in: Wörterbuch Geschichtsdidaktik, Ulrich Mayer, Hans-Jürgen Pandel et al., eds. (Schwalbach/Ts.: Wochenschau-Verlag, 2006), 72.
[2] Hugo Aust, *Der historische Roman* (Stuttgart: Verlag J.B. Metzler, 1994), VII.

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This broad genre is, however, somewhat heterogenous. For the purposes of this article we may differentiate between the reconstructive and the parabolic tendencies; most historical novels feature both. While the reconstructive tendency aims at the most authentic rendition of a historical epoch or person possible, the parabolic novel takes the historical setting as a reflection of its own present.[3] Both varieties give the appearance of presenting historical 'truth' in a historicist sense and thus often endeavour, as far as possible, to paint a scientifically correct picture, using footnotes, historical maps, glossaries and/or bibliographies. Yet when analysing historical novels we must always bear in mind that these works are, as Alfred Döblin famously remarked, indeed novels and not 'history'.[4] All formally scientific elements may be products of literary and artistic license.

While a historical novel can therefore not be methodically employed as a source for the era in which it is set, it may well, however, be used from the perspective of ideological critique as a source relating to the era in which it was written. As the historical novel is in itself a personification of history and tends to be built around interpersonal relationships, it also has an emotionalising effect, lending expression to the basic sentiments of the society of that specific era.[5]

The parabolic type and young-adult fiction appear most productive for the project to be depicted here, as the former tends towards self-reflection in its statements about its historical period, and young-adult fiction follows by definition a specifically pedagogical approach, thus producing a 'moral of the story' that is equally related to the present.

These are the strengths of the historical novel: while fictitious or intentionally non-factual settings should, strictly speaking, be ignored by historical scholarship in line with the fundamental principles quod non est in actis non est in mundo and the rule of writing sine ira et studio, they can nevertheless be of great inspiration for a critical reflection of one's own contemporary world.

## The Middle Ages and the Crusades in Novels

Ever since the emergence of the historical novel, the Middle Ages have been a strikingly popular epoch in contemporary historical culture; that is, in the public medial sphere beyond schooling and academia. One reason for this nowadays[6] might be that the medieval world – the uniformity of which is rather more an ideal of that time than a historical reality – may be different to the world of today, yet generally not considered different enough to count as inaccessible or incomprehensible. It offers a colourful, straightforward and sometimes bloodcurdling contrast to our anonymous, hectic and technological present day. For modern readers, the Middle Ages also appear to be an era that can provide mental compensation for the contemporary lack of primary

[3] Ibid., 33.
[4] Alfred Döblin, *Aufsätze zur Literatur* (Olten: Walter-Verlag, 1963), 169.
[5] Wilhelm von Humboldt recognised that "the greatest asset of an artwork is its capacity to unveil the inner truth of its figures that is obscured in their true appearance". Quoted in Barbara Potthast, Die Ganzheit der Geschichte. Historische Romane im 19. Jahrhundert (Goettingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2007), 20.
[6] For earlier times, cf. Georg Lukács, Der historische Roman (East Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1955), 65.

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experience. We must bear in mind, of course, that the picture painted of the Middle Ages in the novels primarily conveys 19th century ideas that were more-or-less invented to serve the purpose of a romanticised alternative world,[7] and that these images are thus far more fictional than most readers – and indeed most novelists – realise.

The 'Orient', on the other hand, remains an object of great fascination to western readers, from the apparently contemplative desert to erotic harem fantasies.[8] The journeys of crusading protagonists in exotic foreign lands provides an ideal narrative thread for character development, such that most narrative could lead the reader to assume that the crusade constitutes something of a 'trip towards self-discovery' for the main character of the novel – and thus for the empathic reader.

**Source Base and Status of the Project**

The project's source base consists of 116 historic novels written in German that deal with the crusades to the Holy Land. (This means that – other than via random samples – the project does not examine novels that have not been translated into German, the history of the Teutonic Knights in the Baltic, the so-called 'heretic crusades' within western Europe, the reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula that took place at the same time and was also reminiscent of a crusade, or the Trials of the Templars, which have been paid a great deal of attention by European historical culture.)

The oldest novel that fits these criteria dates back to 1786.[9] A study of the number of novels published reveals that they remained fairly constant, with only one novel every two or three years, until 1944. There is a striking gap from 1944 until 1977 in which only one crusades novel is published in German. This gap is a matter of interpretation. In the meantime, especially since the 1990s and following the 11 September 2001, however, there has been a notable surge of interest in such novels. Currently several crusades novels are published every month (see www.histocouch.de ).

Until now, 60 of the 116 novels have been analysed. The current status of the analysis suggests that the project will be completed in 1½ - 2 years' time at the latest.

**Expected Results of the Project**

The expected results include insights into the ideas and values that were particularly important to the German-speaking societies of the Early Modern Period. To a large extent, the novels project these onto the Holy Land, Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre, and we can derive the inherent images of

[7] Valentin Groebner, *Das Mittelalter hört nicht auf. Über historisches Erzählen* (Munich: Beck Verlag, 2008); Barbara Potthast, *Die Ganzheit der Geschichte. Historische Romane im 19. Jahrhundert* (Goettingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2007).

[8] Since imperial times a pertinent element of superiority has been inherent to this fascination. (Cf. Edward Said, Orientalism (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978)).

[9] Benedicte Naubert: Walter von Montbarry, *Großmeister des Tempelordens*, 2 vols (Leipzig: Weygand Verlag, 1786).

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the 'other', but also first and foremost of the self. It becomes clear even at this early stage that Islam was hardly addressed at all in novels up until the mid-20th century, neither from a cultural nor from a religious perspective. Today this has only changed for the better in relation to the cultural aspect; however, there is recognition of the fact that medieval societies (which indeed are seen as considerably less tolerant than our own) were able to reach a modus vivendi of the various religions, even during the crusades. The novels provide numerous examples of this.[10]

It is to be expected that the key threads of ideas and values will allow for a productive comparison of politics, historical research and historical culture. In this regard, the literature originally written in German is compared with works translated from other languages. Here it is striking that almost only novels written in English have been translated. Why no French novels have been included remains an open question that needs to be resolved and subjected to interpretation.

Ultimately, the work on this topic aims to unveil the kind of methodology that can be used for a comparison of mentalities and cultures using partially fictive historical sources. It also aims to determine how teaching materials might be produced inspiring pupils to train their historical consciousness in a variety of ways, not least their political and moral consciousness. These materials would comprise three analytical levels: 1. sources in the form of extracts from novels; 2. sources from the time in which the novel was written; and 3. sources from the epoch in which the novel is set. I have discussed this method in an article using the examples of the 'Old Man of the Mountain' and the recently killed Bin Laden, who are more-or-less openly juxtapositioned [11] in contemporary novels.[12] Another example of such a process can be found in a novel of 1935 in which the Knights Templar are parabolically depicted as members of the resistance against the National Socialists.[13] They defend the Holy Land (which stands for the Holy Roman Empire or, later, for Stauffenberg's 'Holy Germany') against the destructive barbarism to which they ultimately also fall victim, despite their valiant efforts. There are numerous further examples.

## The Crusades Myth in Novels

Many findings of the workshop held at the Georg Eckert Institute workshop on 'European Receptions of the Crusades in the Nineteenth Century. Franco-German Perspectives' (16-17 February 2011) also apply to the depictions of history in novels: the highly positive portrait painted of Saladin, for instance, as emphasised by Jonathan Phillips in his keynote lecture. The Ayyubid Sultan has been an idol of crusade narratives ever since the Enlightenment, in both the Christian and the Muslim worlds. Jan Guillou encapsulates it thus: "His

[10] The novels highlight the multicultural character of Mediterranean harbour cities such as Acre, Alexandria and Palermo, as well as that of Jerusalem with its many diverse districts that still exist today.

[11] Felix Hinz, 'Saladin und der Alte vom Berge. Geschichtsdidaktische Zugriffe auf Islambilder in parabolischen westlichen Kreuzzugsromanen', in: Historische Sozialkunde. Geschichte – Fachdidaktik – Politische Bildung 4 (2010), 49-56.

[12] See the pentalogy *Die Templerin* by Wolfgang Hohlbein 1999-2011.

[13] Ernst Sommer, *Die Templer* (Nuremberg: Nest-Verlag, 1950 [1935]).

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name became immortal, and for all time Saladin remained the only Saracen who was truly respected by the lands of the Franks"[14] In the novels, his character embodies the chivalrous virtues that most crusaders (unlike their heathen counterparts) do not fulfil. It is hardly surprising, therefore, to read how the Italian adventurer Baudolino 'came thundering in [to the ravaged Hagia Sofia], as magnificent as Saladin, on a steed with a shabraque, a red cross on his chest, and a drawn sword in his hand' to intervene during the excessive plundering of Constantinople by the crusaders during the Fourth Crusade.[15]

The novels also focus a certain amount of interest on the so-called Children's Crusades. This may be because the groups of unarmed pilgrims whose journey ended in North African slave markets in 1212 and 1213 epitomise most aptly the concept of 'crusade' in its purely Christian terms of self-sacrifice or a via dolorosa. This element requires further inquiry, however, especially regarding its sociopolitical background and implications.

Subsequent to the western intervention procedures in Iraq, Afghanistan and, more recently, Libya, there has been growing unease in the West regarding military war in the service of a higher ideal ('freedom'?, 'democracy'?) and in view of the accusation of resuming, or continuing, the 'crusades'.[16] This tendency is clearly visible in the novels, for example in the fictitious diary of the knight Roger of Lunel in the novel 'Der Kreuzritter. Das Tagebuch des Roger von Lunel' by Stephen Rivelle (2005; English 1996):

> Wie vielschichtig die ganze Angelegenheit mittlerweile ist. Ich hatte geglaubt, klar zu sehen, wofür und wogegen ich kämpfe. Doch mit jeder Wegbiegung trübt sich mein Blick mehr.[17]
>
> (How complex the whole affair has become. I had believed that I could see clearly for what and against what I am fighting. And yet with every turn of the path my vision becomes more clouded.)

The reward has become as uncertain as the journey. Roger of Lunel reminisces:

> Außer der Dunkelheit, der feuchten Erde und dem dumpfen Kalkgeruch gab es nichts. Sollte das hier das Heilige Grab sein, um dessentwillen ich all das auf mich genommen hatte? Fast hätte ich gelacht. Hier war nichts,

[14] Jan Guillou, *Die Büßerin von Gudhem. Ein Roman aus der Zeit der Kreuzfahrer* (Munich: Piper Verlag, 2000), 464. (Engl. The Road to Jerusalem (London: Orion, 2002)

[15] Umberto Eco, *Baudolino* (Munich: Hanser Verlag, 2003), 27. (Engl. Orlando, Florida: Harcourt, Brace and Company, U.S.A. 2002). Only one novel has been identified so far in which Saladin is given a negative portrayal (that of an effeminate barbarian): Cecelia Holland, *Jerusalem.* (Engl. New York: Forge Books, 1997, Ger. Bergisch Gladbach: BLT, 2002.)

[16] Cf. for instance Gilles Kepel, *The War for Muslim Minds. Islam and the West* (Cambridge Mass./London: Belknap Press, 2004); Claus Kleber, *Amerikas Kreuzzüge. Wohin treibt die Weltmacht?* (Munich: Pantheon Verlag, 2005). Earlier works include Friedrich Heer, Kreuzzüge – gestern, heute, morgen? (Frankfurt a.M.: C.J. Bucher Verlag, 1969).

[17] Stephen J. Rivelle: *Der Kreuzritter. Das Tagebuch des Roger von Lunel* (Munich: Heyne, 2005), 126. (Engl. A Booke of Days. A Journal of the Crusade (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1996). The English translations given here are not the original text, but re-translations from the German version.

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> und ich befand mich in der Mitte dieses Nichts. Hier also war meine Wahrheit - eine schmale Grabkammer. Mit einem Lächeln legte ich mich auf die Seite, rollte mich über mein Schwert gekauert zusammen und schlief ein.[18]
>
> (There was nothing but darkness, damp earth and the musty smell of limestone. Was this supposed to be the Holy Sepulchre, for which I had taken all of this upon me? I almost laughed. Here there was nothing, and now I found myself in the midst of this nothing. And so here was my truth: a narrow burial chamber. With a smile I lay down on my side, huddled up over my sword, and fell asleep.)

Following the World Wars, the radiant heroes of the crusades whom we encounter in novels until well into the 19th century are now broken and shattered heroes. For by the end of the book, Lunel has lost everything: his faith, his ideals, his wife, his mistress, his child and his inheritance. Inspiring dreams have become crippling nightmares.[19] And yet who will settle for such a provocative nihilistic view (as the many contemporary publications of crusade novels reveal)? As Ulrike Schweikert's novel Das Siegel des Templers asks: 'Are we not all pilgrims? Do we not all spend our lives in search of something?'[20]

[18] Ibid., 508.
[19] Herbert Plate, *Der weiße Falke* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer-Taschenbuchverlag, 1998), 329: 'Welch unwissende Toren sind wir doch gewesen, als wir aufbrachen, die Heilige Stadt zu befreien. Jerusalem wird mir zum Alptraum.' At this, the hero converts to Islam.
[20] Ulrike Schweikert, *Das Siegel des Templers* (Munich : Blanvalet Verlag, 2006), 40.

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Jonathan Phillips

# The Image of Saladin: From the Medieval to the Modern Age

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**Jonathan Phillips**

# The Image of Saladin: From the Medieval to the Modern Age

**Abstract**
In 1187 Saladin recovered the holy city of Jerusalem for Islam; in subsequent years he fended off the armies of the Third Crusade before his death in 1193. Even though over 800 years have passed since his death the sultan continues to have a prominent profile in history, politics and culture. This paper is designed to give an overview of his career and to see which aspects of his life have been taken and moulded by people over the centuries and to explain his sustained and continued popularity in the Muslim world and in the West.

In the early years of the twenty-first century three biographies of Saladin have been published: by Hannes Möhring (a translation of an earlier work from German to English), Abdul Rahman Azzam and Anne-Marie Eddé (2008). He was the subject of major exhibitions in France (2001-2002) and Germany (2005-2006). Saladin has also been invoked by the Islamist leader of *al-Qaeda*, Osama bin Laden. He was the subject of a major music and dance performance in Damascus, Syria, in October 2009, and he has starred in a multi-part children's cartoon series made by Malaysian TV and al-Jazeera channel, broadcast in 2010-11.[1] Not a bad range for a man who died over 800 years ago... The purposes of the paper, given here in an abbreviated form, are to give an overview of his career and to see which aspects of his life have been used and moulded by people over the centuries in order to maintain or to return him to the public spotlight. I will then try to explain his (largely) sustained and continued popularity in the Muslim world and in the West. The paper will also trace how his reputation was created in the first instance.

## A Brief Outline of Saladin's Life

Saladin was born in Takrit (modern Iraq) in 1137-1138 to a Kurdish mother. His father and uncle were in the service of, first, Zengi, the brutal ruler of Aleppo and Mosul, and then (after Zengi's murder in 1146) of his son Nur ad-Din, the man who really gave the Muslim counter-crusade its spiritual and military vigour. Saladin emerged as a promising young soldier, although certainly of a fairly secular disposition in his early years. His real advance came when Nur ad-Din conquered Egypt in 1169 and, soon afterwards, his representative

[1] Hannes Möhring, *Saladin: The Sultan and His Times, 1138-93*, trans. David S. Bachrach, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2008), first published in German as *Saladin, der Sultan und seine Zeit, 1138-93* (Munich: Beck, 2005); Abdul Rahman Azzam, *Saladin* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2009); Anne-Marie Eddé, *Saladin* (Paris: Flammarion, 2008). The French and German exhibitions were held, respectively, at: Paris, l'Institut du monde arabe, 2001-2; and Halle, Oldenburg and Mannheim, 2005-6. For the bin Laden reference, see note 8 below. The cartoon can be located at: www.saladin.tv/

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there (Saladin's uncle, Shirkuh) died, to leave the 32 year-old in charge of the country. One major complication was that Egypt was Shi'a and that Nur ad-Din, Saladin and Syria were Sunni. Saladin began to encourage the construction of *madrasas* (teaching colleges) and, more importantly, was behind the removal of the Shi'a caliph and survivors from the now-deposed Fatimid regime. Around this time Saladin himself became more austere and ceased to drink wine, for example. All of these things were a source of delight to Nur ad-Din but Saladin also began to form his own power base in Egypt. His father became the treasurer of Cairo and his brother took power in the Yemen and the Mecca-Medina area. Such behaviour was entirely conventional in terms of the Muslim Near East but to Nur ad-Din it looked like a challenge to his authority. When Saladin refused to assist his master in campaigns against the Franks of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem in the early 1170s, civil war seemed likely. But then Nur ad-Din died (April 1174).

Over the next 13 years Saladin spent much of his time trying to take over Nur ad-Din's former lands (he had left a son) and he became frequently involved in armed conflict with his co-religionists. Exhortations to join him in the Muslim holy war (*jihad*), the production of material emphasising the importance of Jerusalem as the place where the Prophet began his Night Journey, and the need to expel the Franks; plus a series of campaigns (of varying degrees of success) against the Christians all helped to balance out or to overshadow the fact that he was, in some ways, a usurper who had moved in on Nur ad-Din's lands. By the summer of 1187 he had gathered a precarious confederation of the Muslim Near East consisting of Egypt, Syria and the Jazira (northern Iraq). He managed to bring the Franks to battle at Hattin in 1187 and there he destroyed the Christians' military strength. By October he had recovered Jerusalem for Islam – the apogee of his career and the event that stamped his name on history. His lenient treatment of the Frankish prisoners – in contrast to the brutal slaughter that had accompanied the conquest of the First Crusade in 1099 – was widely admired.

Inevitably, western Europe responded. The armies of the Third Crusade, led by the greatest monarchs of the day, Emperor Frederick Barbarossa of Germany, King Richard the Lionheart of England, and King Philip Augustus of France managed to recover some of the Franks' possessions on the Levantine coast but they failed to take Jerusalem. In spite of several defeats Saladin could justifiably claim that he had seen off the finest warriors of Christendom. The fight had taken an enormous toll on the sultan, however, and he died soon afterwards, in March 1193.[2]

## Medieval Western Views of Saladin

This is one of the most intriguing aspects of Saladin's life – and 'afterlife'. Medieval Latin chroniclers from the First Crusade (1095-99) characterised Muslims as animalistic creatures who gabbled and howled and performed

[2] For details of Saladin's life and career see the three works cited above, plus: Carole Hillenbrand, *Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh: Edindburgh Univ. Press, 1999); Malcolm C. Lyons and David Edward Pritchett Jackson, *Saladin: The Politics of the Holy War* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982).

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unspeakable acts of barbarism against Christians. The Frankish settlers in the Levant, by dint of living alongside Muslim lands and with many Muslims amongst the indigenous peoples whom they ruled over, had acquired a more sophisticated viewpoint. William, archbishop of Tyre, saw Saladin as "a keen and vigorous mind, valiant in war and generous beyond measure". He recognised the sultan's personal charm when he wrote, before 1184, that a Frankish diplomat got on too well for comfort with him: "a prince who should have been resisted to our utmost won our goodwill". William was, however, highly critical of Saladin's behaviour towards Nur ad-Din, he alleged that the sultan had clubbed the caliph of Egypt to death in person and noted that he had distributed all his treasure. William died before the loss of Jerusalem so his testimony is untainted by that event. Saladin's real bridge to the European consciousness was the Third Crusade when several writers ended up spending years in close proximity to the Muslims and their charismatic leader.

Not all were won over: the anonymous *Itinerarium peregrinorum*, the first part of which was written c.1191-2, described him as a "persecutor of the Christian faith" whose first job was licensing a levy on prostitutes in Damascus. He was allegedly knighted by a Frankish knight whom he had captured although he remained a treacherous, greedy tyrant. Ambroise, a Norman-French priest, wrote a long account of the Third Crusade c.1195 and while the Muslims were characterised as a 'hated pagan race', Saladin was described as a generous and valiant man who protected pilgrims when they visited Jerusalem. He reported an interesting conversation between the bishop of Salisbury and the sultan in which the former said: "if one combined your [Saladin's] qualities with his [Richard's] then nowhere in the world would two such princes be found", a clear mark of esteem. There was clearly much here that the knights of western Europe liked. Aside from the small matter of the capture of Jerusalem, Saladin's courtesy, generosity and bravery were traits that they deeply admired. It is also worth noting, however, that respect for this one individual did not extend to a wider understanding of Muslims in Western Europe.

During the 1220s to 1240s there were a series of extensions and modifications to the first accounts of the Third Crusade and William of Tyre's chronicle was extended beyond 1184 and translated into Old French and widely circulated. Saladin's virtues were embedded within these texts and his virtues became familiar to many. Before looking at these further I would like to look at some Muslim views of the man – is there any consistency with those from the West?

**Muslim views of Saladin**

Without going into great detail it is certainly the case that the many sources writing about him project a spectrum of virtues. He was renowned for his generosity, his piety, his cultured court, his courtesy and kindness to others, including Christians. In one story, a young Frankish mother was brought to the sultan, weeping because her infant had been taken from her tent by a Muslim raider. Saladin found out who had brought the baby, repaid him, and had it reunited with his mother amidst scenes of great emotion. Finally, he was, of course, the hero of Islam for his recovery of Jerusalem. The fact that two of

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the principal sources were part of Saladin' personal entourage and/or administration could be said to render the overall picture as rather biased. That said, Saladin was not entirely above criticism – his coalition was often fragile and some were angry with him for his years fighting Muslims rather than Christians in the period before Hattin. Those favourable to Nur ad-Din's dynasty were also inevitably muted in their praise at times too. For a more neutral view it is perhaps it is worth looking at the account of Ibn Jubayr, a Spanish Muslim pilgrim who visited the Middle East in 1184-5 and by virtue of his background had no need to appease this particular master. In short, his verdict was highly positive: Ibn Jubayr judged Saladin "a gift from God, a righteous man, always waging holy war against the enemies of God".[3]

**The Evolution of Saladin's Image in the West**

Returning to the medieval West, and reflecting upon the evidence of the Muslim writers, there is, I believe, a fairly sound basis for the positive characteristics attributed to him. But to explain why Saladin was embraced so enthusiastically in the West it is necessary to acknowledge the major cultural force in thirteenth century Europe; namely, the blossoming of chivalry. Consisting of a combination of bravery, status, courtly love, deeds told in *chansons des gestes*, it was an ideal in which conduct defined one's nobility. From the 1250s the *Ordene de chevalerie*, the *de facto* handbook of chivalry, was widely circulated and one of its central characters was – ignoring the fact (or in spite of the fact) that he was a Muslim – Saladin. With his famous virtues of truth, justice, generosity, fair treatment of women – he was (notwithstanding the inconvenience of his religious beliefs) a courtly man who could play a vital didactic role in this text.

Within the literary realm over subsequent decades his career began to take several improbable turns, including his alleged descent from the countess of Ponthieu, his relationships with women in the West (including Eleanor of Aquitaine) and various excursions to Europe. He also appeared in more distinguished locations such as Dante's *Divine Comedy* (c.1320) in the first circle of Hell with the pagan heroes of Troy and Rome, and Boccaccio's *Decameron* (1353). In later centuries Saladin continued to feature as an exemplar of generosity and austerity in various moral works. By the time of the Enlightenment, however, crusading had fallen into considerable disrepute, although one of its prime critics, Voltaire (1756), still emphasised and contrasted the sultan's mercy and toleration compared to the barbaric, misguided hordes of the Catholic West.[4]

The main vehicle for Saladin's continued presence in the popular imagination of the West became the writing of Sir Walter Scott. Scott's novels were the

[3] Jonathan Phillips, *Holy Warriors*, 43-50. The story about the mother and the infant is to be found most easily in: Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969), 111.

[4] Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (London/New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1984); Margaret A. Jubb, *The Legend of Saladin in Western Literature and Historiography* (Lewsiton, NY: Lewiston [et al.] : Edwin Mellen Press, 2000).

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international best-sellers of the nineteenth century, widely translated and the inspiration for numerous theatrical, musical and artistic ventures. In *The Talisman* (1825) Saladin's courtesy, generosity, medical skill (a new talent) and chivalric behaviour set him up as a figure of almost unmatchable virtue.[5]

**Saladin's Position in the Muslim World Down to the Present Day**

In 1898 Kaiser Wilhelm II courted the Muslim world with his journey to Jerusalem and Damascus. In November the Kaiser visited Saladin's tomb in Damascus and laid a wreath with the message: "from one great emperor to another". He also paid for the restoration of the building and the marble shrine next to the wooden medieval coffin. There is little doubt that this ceremony helped to draw attention to Saladin. It is a matter of current academic debate as to the extent of Saladin's profile in the Muslim Near East by this time. It is true that the deeds of Baibars continued to attract far greater attention; in fact, in Cairo during the 1830s no less than 30 street performers earned a living reciting a verse account of the Mamluk sultan's life (although Saladin played a small role in this). While acknowledging the importance of the Kaiser's visit as an external stimulus in a revival of the memory of the crusades, especially amongst the elite levels of Muslim society, the transmission of a memory of the crusades – and therefore Saladin - through popular culture should not be underestimated and is an area of research ripe for further work.

Public storytelling was an extremely important aspect of Middle Eastern culture and such tales helped to provide a seed-bed of memory that political and religious leaders could tap into whether they were Islamists or Arab nationalists. Furthermore, as Muslim empires began to decline during the nineteenth century, the concept of looking to the past to learn lessons for the present also emerged. Through this variety of means, therefore, the history of the crusading era started to resonate to religious and political movements across the (Sunni) Muslim world.

In the course of the last 50 years a number of Arab nationalist leaders have chosen to identify themselves with Saladin as the man who defeated the West. Their reasoning can reveal fascinating parallels – and contrasts – between their own agendas and the career of the medieval hero. Gamal Abdel Nasser, president of Egypt between 1954 and 1970 drew a particularly close tie with the medieval sultan. Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal in 1956 set Egypt against Israel, France and Britain and was, as he saw it, a stand for Arab identity against western colonial powers and their Zionist allies. In 1958, Nasser created the United Arab Republic, a confederation of Syria and Egypt – the same lands ruled by Saladin back in the twelfth century. Nasser's speeches often referred to his famous predecessor and in February 1958 the president planned a formal visit to the sultan's tomb in Damascus.

Nasser drew an explicit connection to the crusading period with his claim that "the whole region was united for reasons of mutual security to face an imperialism coming from Europe and bearing the cross in order to disguise its ambi-

[5] Elizabeth Siberry, *The New Crusaders: Images of the Crusades in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

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tions behind the façade of Christianity. The meaning of unity was never clearer than when the Christianity of the Arab Orient joined the ranks of Islam to battle the Crusaders until victory." He also spoke of the Third Crusade: "Fanatic crusaders attacked us in Syria, Palestine and Egypt. Arab Muslims and Christians fought side by side to defend their Motherland against this aggressive, foreign domination. They all rose as one man, unity being the only means of safety, liberty and the expulsion of the aggressors. Saladin was able to take Richard… as prisoner of war and was able to defeat his forces." This last point is entirely false, but it enabled a comparison to the Egyptian victory in the Suez Crisis: "We had the honour of beating Britain and France together [at Suez] after we had beaten each of them before separately". He boasted that the westerners "had never forgotten their defeat [by Saladin]" and wanted revenge in another "fanatical, imperialist, crusade.".

Another facet of this atmosphere was an epic product of the Egyptian film industry, Youssef Chahine's *Saladin* (1963), in essence a manifesto for Pan-Arabism. Thus, early on in the film, Saladin says: "my dream is to see an Arab nation united under one flag." The Arabs only fought the Christians because the latter had attacked them; Saladin stated: "I hate war. Islam and Christianity condemn bloodshed. Yet we shall fight if necessary to save our land". By the end of the film there was a clear message: Saladin and his trustworthy allies presided over a cosmopolitan and humane society, they were worthy guardians of Jerusalem and would freely welcome outsiders to visit. Saladin explained: "Christianity is respected here; you know that. Jerusalem belongs to the Arabs. Stop this bloodshed." Religion has a limited place in the film. As noted above, there was a strong spiritual dimension to Saladin's *jihad* against the Christians, but for Chahine and Pan-Arabism in the early 1960s this was not something to emphasise. That aside, the history of the crusades and the role of Saladin at the head of resistance to the westerners was firmly established in the public consciousness.

President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria was another to link his image to that of Saladin. The impressive equestrian statue that stands outside the Damascus citadel was part of that process (erected 1992). This monument shows a triumphant Saladin on horseback, preceded by a Sufi holy man and a *jihad* warrior, while trailing behind him slump disconsolate, defeated crusaders. The message is clear: just as Saladin defeated the West, so too, will Asad. Similarly, his office was adorned with a massive picture of Saladin's victory at Hattin signifying his hope that one day Israel would share the same fate as the crusaders.

A third nationalist leader to embrace the legacy of Saladin – and a man who also invoked *jihad* was Saddam Hussein. The Iraqi president made much of the fact that he shared Saladin's birthplace, the village of Takrit. Given Saddam's persecution of the Kurds, presumably no one felt inclined to point out that Saladin himself had been of Kurdish stock. That historical inconvenience aside, the president lauded the sultan's recovery of Jerusalem and his resistance to the West. Saddam's methods of making these connections ranged from a colloquium: "The Battle for Liberation – from Saladin to Saddam Hussein"; to a

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children's book, while a mural on his palace wall depicted the medieval sultan watching his horsemen, as next to him Saddam admired his tanks rolling to an imagined victory against the West.[6]

It has not been solely Arab nationalists who have used Saladin's memory to their advantage. When President Bush so disastrously used the word 'crusade' in his unscripted response to the 9/11 atrocities he simply fulfilled the claims that Osama Bin Laden had been making for years: "So Bush has declared in his own words: 'Crusader attack'. The odd thing about this is that he has taken the words right out of our mouth." He deftly turned Bush's words against him: "So the world today is split into two parts, as Bush said: either you are with us, or you are with terrorism. Either you are with the Crusade or you are with Islam. Bush's image today is of him being in the front of the line, yelling and carrying his big cross."
Bin Laden praised Saladin's wisdom and his use of the *jihad* to succeed in defeating the West; thus once more he provided an appropriate exemplar for a cause.[7]

**Conclusion**
In conclusion it should be emphasised that one should not push the memory and legacy of crusading too far in exploring parallels between the medieval and the present – crusading proper certainly ended in the sixteenth century; on the other hand one should certainly be aware of its powerful and toxic resonance in the Muslim Near East today.

Saladin's defeat of the westerners and his recovery of Jerusalem means that his achievements have matched the aspirations of many in the Muslim world. Yet his attributes as a man of courtesy, generosity and mercy captured the imagination of people in the West from the medieval age onwards as well. Such traits cross boundaries and generations and still loom large in some modern treatments of him such as the 2010-11 cartoon series where he stands as a moral exemplar to the teenage audience. Saladin has become a metaphor, albeit a remarkably flexible and adaptable one. As we have noted, he was far from perfect but history has chosen to concentrate on his more positive aspects, and his image is, in many respects, based on reality. The contemporary eulogy of 'Abd al-Latif, who visited Saladin in 1192 stands as a suitable note to close on:

> I found a great king who inspired both respect and affection, far and near, easy-going and willing to grant requests. His companions took him as a model... [when he died] men grieved for him as they grieve for

[6] Jonathan Phillips, *Holy Warriors,* 308-344; Paul B. Sturtevant, "SaladiNasser: Nasser's Political Crusade in El Naser Salah Ad-Din," in: *Hollywood in the Holy Land: Essays on Film Depictions of the Crusades and Christian-Muslim Clashes,* Nickolas Haydock and Edward L..Risden, eds. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009) 123-46; Mordechai Kedar, *Asad in Search of Legitimacy: Message and Rhetoric in the Syrian Press under Hafiz and Bashar* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2005); Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's Word: Political Discourse in Iraq* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998).
[7] *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden*, Bruce Lawrence, ed., tr. James Howarth (London: Verso, 2005), 218.

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> prophets. I have seen no other ruler for whose death the people mourned, for he was loved by the good and the bad, Muslim and unbeliever alike.[8]

*This text is a shortened version of the lecture presented at the Braunschweig conference in February 2011. Elements of it are based on sections from my book Holy Warriors: A Modern History of the Crusades (London, 2009), translated into German and published in October 2011 as Heiliger Kreig: Eine neue geschichte der kreuzzüge (Munich, 2011). A more detailed, research-based, version of the paper, exploring further some of the ideas outlined here will be published in 2013.*

[8] Abd al-Latif translated in: Bernard Lewis, *Islam: From the Prophet Muhammad to the Capture of Constantinople: Volume 1: Politics and War* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), 66-67.

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Matthias Schwerendt

# The Crusades as a European Master Narrative of National Memory Culture

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**Matthias Schwerendt**

# The Crusades as a European Master Narrative of National Memory Culture

**Abstract**
This contribution discusses the various enemy images conveyed by crusades narratives in French and German research literature and history textbooks. It addresses how the concept of a 'non-European other' emerged on the basis of long-standing traditions, and how this inspired highly varied enemy representations (dangerous, violent, weak, cowardly, culturally superior). Further, the comparison of textbooks and research literature reaches important insights, unveiling a clear dichotomy within enemy portrayals.

The crusades were penitential war pilgrimages carried out by European armies in Levant, North Africa, Spain, Portugal, Poland, the Balkans, Hungary, Scandinavia, and Western Europe. They began in the 11th century and, according to most historians, ended with the fall of Acre in 1291, although modern historical research questions this chronological classification.[1] The historian Jonathan Riley-Smith, one of the leading experts on crusades, has placed the end of the crusades in the late 18th century when the last Order, the Sovereign Military Knights of Malta, was dispersed by Napoleon after he conquered Malta in 1798.[2]

So the crusades were not confined to the high and late Middle Ages; they are instead a central part of European history. The crusades play a significant role in the history and historical awareness of Europe and the Mediterranean area, from the Renaissance and the early modern era up to modernity. If we follow Riley-Smith's chronology then we can see that, ironically, Napoleon's expedition to Egypt and Palestine – the reason why the Knight's Order was dissolved in the first place – was also the starting point for a new epoch of euphoric appreciation of the crusades in Europe. The expedition triggered a burst of enthusiasm for all things oriental on the part of historians, archaeologists, artists, politicians, writers and theologians, which found its expression in the reception of the crusades.[3] After 1800, we can discern a rise of scientific and li-

[1] See also Jürgen Sarnowsky, "Kreuzzüge und Ritterorden in der neueren Forschung", in: *Die Aktualität des Mittelalters*, Hans-Werner Goetz, ed. (Bochum: Winkler, 2000), 25-55; Norman Housley, *The Later Crusades 1274-1580. From Lyons to Alcazar*, (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press), 1992.

[2] Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades, Christianity, and Islam*, New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2008 (Introduction), *Wozu heilige Kriege? Anlässe und Motive der Kreuzzüge* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 2003), 142ff.; Adam Knobler, "Holy Wars, Empires, and the Portability of the Past: The Modern Uses of Medieval Crusades", in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History 48* (2006), 293f.

[3] Mary Anne Perkins, *Christendom and European Identity. The Legacy of a Grand Narrative since 1789*, Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2004, 256f.; Elizabeth Siberry, "Images of the Crusades in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries", in: *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*, Jonathan Riley-Smith, ed., Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995, 365.

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terary publications with new questions and perspectives on the crusades. It stands to reason to see Napoleon's conquests and the new perception of the crusades they inspired in Europe as a turning point. What place does the recollection of the crusades have in European memory and which arguments and ideologies are connected to this memory? My paper will seek to answer these questions. In doing so, we should bear in mind that speaking of a '19th-century European memory culture' is in itself problematic. While the national crusades narratives are indeed closely tied to concepts of a Christian Europe, Christian heroism and descriptions of Christian morals and virtues, they are nevertheless also always formulated from a clearly national perspective.[4]

I will begin by considering the crusades as a master narrative from an external perspective. This view from the 'outside' gives us a good idea of the effect the reception of the European crusades had in the 19th century on the concept of 'heroic history' in the Mediterranean, 100 years after Napoleon's adventures in Egypt and Palestine. It is striking that around 1900, Muslim intellectuals lamented that the younger generation in their countries were not acquainted with the heroes of their own history. While the Europeans, they claimed, had a proud awareness of their history, the younger generation of Muslims was not well prepared for an altercation with Europe. It was with this in mind that Muslim intellectual Rafiq al-Azm from Damascus (1865-1925) defended the publication of a collection of heroes' biographies (1903) with which he wished to redress this deplored defect in contemporary Arabian literature. This regrettable situation must be remedied, he said, because one of the reasons why Europe is so strong and culturally advanced is because the young grow up with a sense of their past's own heroes. This admiration fuels their own efforts and makes them committed to their nations. Muslim youths in Arab countries should therefore be educated in the same way.[5]

It might surprise you that I am starting my presentation on the analysis of the European memory of the crusades with an invective by al-Azm from Damascus on the value of heroes of the past. But this perspective from the 'outside' hints at the enormous implications of the production of European historical images and interpretations. And indeed the narratives concerned with crusades in modern European historiography and literature aim at a historical complex in which heroism and religion, nation building and concepts of Europe are tightly interwoven. With regard to the history of science, modern historiography in particular is closely linked to the emergence of nationalism.[6]
Historians' interpretations of national histories are a constitutive element of nationalism. Each closer determination of the connection between nationalism and crusade narratives must, however, also provide a definition of the aims and values, patterns of thought, argumentation and behaviour, if the definition is not to remain an insignificant abstract analysis.

[4] I thank Stefan Berger for pointing this out.
[5] Werner Ende, "Wer ist ein Glaubensheld, wer ist ein Ketzer? Konkurrierende Geschichtsbilder in der modernen Literatur islamischer Länder", in: *Die Welt des Islams* 23/24 (1984), 70-94. This quotation shows that 19th-century national historiography in Europe can be regarded as a highly successful export model.
[6] Jörg Echternkamp, *Der Aufstieg des deutschen Nationalismus (1770-1840)* (Frankfurt/M./New York: Campus-Verlag, 1998), 14; Stefan Berger, *Inventing the Nation – Germany* (London: Arnold, 2004).

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This is why I have decided to focus on two main points in my presentation: firstly, I will briefly speak about the presence of the crusades in public awareness in European countries and raise the question as to why the crusades suddenly gained in popularity at the turn of the 19th century. Secondly, I would like to outline some of the main nationalistic figurations to be found in the research literature of historiographical crusades discourses. In doing so I will examine to what extent colonialist and/or imperialist patterns of argumentation appear in these discourses.

The presence of crusade images in Europe's public culture, trans-nationally and in all social classes since the early 19th century is amazing. The royal palace of Versailles in France was turned into a national museum in the 1830s (dedicated to 'the glories of France'). The majority of paintings with medieval themes glorify the crusades. The majority of crusading scenes in Versailles were commissioned between 1838 and 1842, corresponding to Louis Philippe's renewal of Charles X's 'crusade' in Algeria.

In Spain, the collective memories of the crusades seeped into the anti-Napoleonic propaganda around 1800 and were reproduced throughout the century in various anti-Muslim and imperial discourses. The clergy in rural areas were particularly successful in their political rhetoric, following the tradition of the Medieval *Reconquistadores.* As they were responsible for a large part of the rural population's education, it was easy to let crusade propaganda flow into religious teachings. The secularised schools too became arenas for political battles, where for decades ideological debates were fought about the return to national greatness through the successes of the holy wars at the time of the *Reconquista*[7]

In Russia, Catherine the Great's successor, Paul I, educated in the tradition of French history, wished to revive the tradition of the crusades. An important step in this direction was his attempt to re-establish the Maltese Hospitaller Order in Russia that had been dissolved in 1798. Paul I's idea was that through the re-establishment of the Order, Russia and the Russian elite in particular would develop a feeling of past greatness and, at the same time, register a claim as the Christians' defenders in the Levant.

Elizabeth Siberry has compiled an impressive study on the fascination the crusades inspired in British literature, art and music.[8] 'In Britain the crusades were de-catholicized and gradually blended into "the cult of Christian militarism" which first took hold in Britain at the time of the Crimean War. The image of the crusades and the crusader re-entered the public sphere as part of the popular political empire discourse to such an extent that, by World War One, war campaigns and war heroes were regularly lauded as crusaders in the popular press, from the pulpit, and in the official propaganda of the British war machine.'[9]

[7] Knobler, *Holy Wars*, 301.
[8] Elizabeth Siberry, *The New Crusaders. Images of the Crusades in the 19th and early 20th centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).
[9] Cit. Knobler, *Holy Wars*, 310.

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The rhetoric of the crusades was not just reflected in representative places of remembrance for lost glories of the Middle Ages and early modernity, in the literature of the educated classes and in political media. For historians and orientalists the rediscovery of the crusades was a fertile soil. The 19th century was, particularly for France and Germany, a century of crusade narratives.[10]

The apparent omnipresence of crusade images poses the question as to how the complexity of medieval conflicts between Christians and Muslims could penetrate the public discourse so distinctly, especially since the 'crusade mentality' had been unpopular in Church politics since the late 17th century. A lot of historians at the time of the Enlightenment criticised the crusades as being a fanatic and barbaric aspect of a distant and unenlightened past. This makes it even more amazing that many 19th century historians, intellectuals and rulers did not share this view without indulging in a romanticised image of knights in shining armour and noble maidens in peril.[11] Instead, for many of those at both the apex and nadir of the social classes, the crusades were an apt and readily portable symbol for the current political landscape.[12] For the followers of the Ancien Regime in the face of the French revolution, the crusades represented a time where exercising power was sanctioned by God and political actions followed an uncomplicated set of moral certainties. It was conservative monarchists and religious rightwing ultra-monists who, protesting against Europe's steady secularisation, 'rediscovered' the crusades, thereby causing the implementation of crusades metaphors into the political language of the 19th century. A specific term, 'medievalism', has come to be broadly identified with those working on the 'uses' of the Middle Ages' later periods, yet few historians have examined the place of the crusades in the context of broader political and social discourse.[13]

The enthusiasm conservative Christian groups felt for the Middle Ages was largely determined by overall concepts whose focus and scientific interest was on 'moral development', i.e. the relationship between politics and religion.[14] Their aim was to revitalise the medieval crusaders' values, ideas and ways of life that brought to mind terms like chivalry, submission and purity. The idea of a Christian hero was central to these efforts. Schlegel's understanding of history was paradigmatic for this group. Schlegel's romanticised thoughts on the philosophy of history draw on empire narratives the appreciation of which is connected to the glorification of medieval empires. Schlegel is being consequent in his 'Universal History' when he says Christ and the German hero: everything good comes from them.[15]

[10] Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 6ff.
[11] Knobler, *Holy Wars*, 294.
[12] Riley-Smith describes this phenomenon as a number of paracrusading projects and a large amount of pseudocrusading language, see Riley-Smith, *The Crusades, Christianity, and Islam*, 53f.
[13] Knobler, *Holy Wars*, 295.
[14] See Werner Maleczek, "Auf der Suche nach dem vorbildhaften Mittelalter in der Nationalgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts: Deutschland und Österreich im Vergleich", in: *Nationalgeschichte als Artefakt: Zum Paradigma „Nationalstaat" in den Historiographien Deutschlands, Italiens und Österreichs*, Hans Peter Hye, Brigitte Mazohl and Jan Paul Niederkorn, eds. (Wien: Verlag der Österr. Akad. der Wiss., 2009), 106f.
[15] Cf. Echternkamp, *Aufstieg des deutschen Nationalismus*, 203ff.

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Despite their obvious failure, it is therefore hardly surprising that the crusades play such a large role in the glorification of the Middle Ages. The crusades present the culmination of a symbiosis between politics and religion and also the start of an international cooperation of European powers based on Christianity. But for the first part of the 19th century at least, the political actors' evaluation, romantically tinged as it was, allowed neither the people nor the Church to be independently manoeuvring subjects; both in general and with regard to the crusades. Instead, the subject was a heroic individual, or rather a theocratic concept of history, and his actions were attributable to God.[16] The extent to which this concept of history changed in the crusade narrative throughout the 19th century will become clear in the following deliberations.

I now come to the second part of my presentation in which I wish to give a brief summary of some of the main nationalistic figurations to be found in the research literature of historiographical crusades discourses.
Throughout the whole of the 19th century, European states and countries discussed the meaning of nations, nation-states, the use of national symbols, and the value of national history. Christianity was nearly always the constant unifying factor for nation concepts and ideas of 19th century Europe. The relationship between the two concepts 'nation' and 'Europe' is problematic. Both concepts offer guidance for social behaviour according to various religious, social or aesthetic maxims and therefore the construction or perpetuation of a legitimate system.

A glance into 19th century history books shows that the topos of the crusades' takes up a central position in national narratives on the Middle Ages. A look at primary school textbooks from the period in question shows that the prevailing romanticisation of the medieval crusades was not, it seems, only restricted to social elites and ultra-conservative Christian milieus. This is a phenomenon that can be found all over Europe. As well as biblical stories, the adventures of Richard the Lionheart, Godfrey of Boullion, Bohemond of Tarento, St. Louis, Saladin or the fall of Constantinople in 1453 have their fixed place in European cultural memory. But which main concrete nationalist figurations can be found in historiographical research literature and textbooks with regard to the crusades? To which traditions were the crusade narratives able to refer? Did stories that were passed down from generation to generation change according to pre-existing traditions and myths to the extent that something new emerged with significant impulses for a nationalist version of history? In other words, which long-enduring collective tendencies provided strongholds for nationalist narratives of history, and can these be held responsible for the success of nationalist narrative figures or images that form in the mind of the reader? I would like to address these questions with a glance at a selection of significant German and French crusades historians.

[16] For early German nationalism, ibid, 207. On the significance of romanticism for the emergence of historicism see, for instance, Ernst Schulin, "Der Einfluss der Romantik auf die deutsche Geschichtsforschung," in: *Traditionskritik und Rekonstruktionsversuch: Studien zur Entwicklung von Geschichtswissenschaft und historischem Denken (*Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 24-43; Stefan Berger, "The Power of National Pasts: Writing National History in Ninetheenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe", in: *Writing the Nation. A Global Perspective* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 30-62.

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I would like to begin with Friedrich Wilken's 8-volume work on the history of the crusades based on reports both from East and West.[17] Wilken (1777-1840) was Professor of History at Heidelberg and Berlin, Royal Librarian and clerk of renowned French and Prussian academies. His monumental work on the crusades is distinguished not so much by its national reception than by its euphoric, conservative and Christian interpretation, which sees the true greatness of the crusades in the unity of Europe through holy war. After the Council at Clermont, he claims, there was hardly any family whose father or son had not 'sacrificed himself for Christ' by taking the cross.[18] Wilken describes the ideal Christian warrior who – cleansed by the blood of Turks – receives true forgiveness for his sins. Although the crusades were an endeavour affecting the whole of Europe, it was the Norman warriors who particularly excelled during them. The connection he draws between landscape and character is especially striking here: Wilken explains the Norman's penchant for pilgrimage in terms of their sense of romance inspired by the northern forests. And he explains the Germans' hesitation at the beginning of the crusades movement as a result of the conflict between 'the German people' and the Curia.[19] Wilken's nationalism does not appear until he speaks of the conquest of Jerusalem, where it was Godfrey with his Lorraine troops and courageous Germans who fought at the most dangerous points of the siege.[20] Wilken places the battle for Jerusalem in the biblical context of crucifixion, divine intervention and salvation.[21] What is more, in the second volume of his crusades history he anticipates the mobilising power of a lasting Christian holy war, even after the conquest of Jerusalem. This holy war, he claims, was only provoked by the unity and strength of Europe and thus the victory in Palestine.

Wilken describes the survival measures undertaken by the Frankish crusaders using martial turns of phrase: 'For whoever wished to kill the snake would have to stamp on its head … And so, now that the First crusade had regained the Holy Sepulchre and founded the Empire of Jerusalem, the Second crusade was to destroy the caliphate and complete the victory of Christianity over the delusion of the Muslims.'[22] According to his logic, the reasons for the failure of this military and political undertaking were transgressions against Christian moral standards and the loss of the true faith in the one and only God. Nationally tinted criticism of the barbaric nature of the crusades filters through only very hesitantly; the Italians, so claims the text in one example, soiled the reputation of the Christians through their disloyalty and cruelty, while not a shadow of doubt was cast upon 'the glory of the pious valour shown by the Norman pilgrims'.[23]

[17] Friedrich Wilken, *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge nach morgenländischen und abendländischen Berichten*, Seven parts in Eight Volumes (Leipzig: Siegfried Lebrecht Crusius, 1807-1832).
[18] Friedrich Wilken, *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge nach morgenländischen und abendländischen Berichten*, Part 1: *Gründung des Königreichs Jerusalem* (Leipzig: Siegfried Lebrecht Crusius, 1807), 58.
[19] Ibid, 63f.
[20] Ibid, 281.
[21] Ibid, 291ff.
[22] Quoted in Friedrich Wilken, *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge*, Part 2: *Das Königreich Jerusalem und die Kämpfe der Christen wider die Ungläubigen bis zu dem Verluste der Grafschaft Edessa und dem Kreuzzuge der Könige Conrad des III. und Ludwig des VII. im Jahre 1146* (Leipzig: Siegfried Lebrecht Crusius, 1813), 119f.
[23] Ibid, 213.

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The conflicts between the European army and Byzantium are also interpreted thus. The Byzantine Emperor forgot, so runs the account, that those crucified included the most noble and courageous of knights – the pride and joy of their peoples. Wilken vehemently criticises Alexios' scepticism towards the crusaders and postulates that the Byzantines, 'interested primarily in worldly things, were unable to grasp the selfless heroism of the Europeans, shaped by religious devotion and the capacity for suffering'.[24] Particularly interesting in this context is the evaluation of the escalating conflict between the German army of crusaders and Byzantium during the crusade of Conrad II and Louis VII. Wilken paints a picture of egalitarian Germans as opposed to obsequious Greeks. According to his account, the conflicts between the Germans and the Greeks did not arise because of a lack of diplomacy and knowledge or a conflict of interests, but due to the particular honesty of the Germans. This led, he claims, to the fact that the Germans – unlike all other crusaders – were unable to understand or honour the feigned subservience of the Greeks, nor could they hide their own anger as a result of it.[25] It is therefore hardly surprising that Wilken's preface to the fifth volume reveals a colonialist perspective against both the Muslims and the Byzantines. Wilken deplores the failure of a European empire in Constantinople. The former Byzantium could have had a share in the great developments of the western empires as a result of the crusaders' founding of a German empire at the Bosporus. The 'blessed lands' at the Bosporus and the Black Sea were, he continued, now sadly under the control of 'eastern hordes', who resisted all forms of education and development with a 'frozen stubbornness'.[26]

On the French side, Joseph Francois Michaud (1767-1839) was one of the first authors to write multi-volume historical works on the crusades at the beginning of the 19th century.[27] His work too contains a clear historical theology and, like Wilken's, can be seen as a Christian treatise for mobilisation. For Michaud the crusades and the idea of a Christian holy war undoubtedly had a civilising effect, inspired by the nobility of mind of great generals.[28] According to Michaud the Franks may have been rough, yet they were also noble and generous in character, thanks to the power of the Gospel which inflamed western Christianity and produced saints and heroes. During times of darkest despotism – here Michaud is indirectly criticising the French Revolution, which he deeply deplored – Christianity was the only power capable of upholding morality and remembrance of the past as well as pointing towards a better future.[29] In his crusade narrative, Michaud paints a picture, with recourse to the myth of Peter of Amiens, of all oriental Christians desperately awaiting redemption

[24] Ibid, 306.
[25] Friedrich Wilken, Geschichte der Kreuzzüge, Part Three, Section 1: Der Kreuzzug der Deutschen und Franzosen unter Conrad III. und Ludwig VII. (Leipzig: Siegfried Lebrecht Crusius, 1817), 107f., quotation 115.
[26] Friedrich Wilken, Geschichte der Kreuzzüge, Part Five: Der Kreuzzug des Kaisers Heinrich des Sechsten und die Eroberung von Constantinopel (Leipzig: Siegfried Lebrecht Crusius, 1829), IIIf.
[27] Joseph Francois Michaud, Geschichte der Kreuzzüge, trans. from the fourth French original edition by Dr. F. H. Ungewitter, vol. 1, with 2 maps and 8 illustrations (Quedlinburg/Leipzig: Verlag von Gottfr. Basse, 1827).
[28] Ibid, 6, 11f.
[29] Ibid, 66.

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by Europe. A clearly nationalist perspective only appears, however, in the depiction of the Councils of Piacenza and Clermont. Here, Pope Urban II knew of the unreliability of the greedy Italians and therefore held a second council at Clermont. The portrayal of the call to the First Crusade at Clermont takes place as a direct speech to the 'chosen' French nation, 'beloved of God' and the hope of the entire Christian Church. Michaud relates this directly to the Battle of Poitiers. All French descendents were committed by those immortal heroic deeds carried out whilst fending off the dangers inherent in 'Mohammed's laws'.[30] Here Michaud constructs a direct association between Jesus, Jerusalem and the alleged liberation of Europe and Asia as the continuation of the historic mission of the Christian forefathers. From Michaud's perspective, the crusade is thus shifted into a discipleship of Jesus and is seen as God's revenge, while the heavenly riches of Asia beckon in true colonialist style as a reward for Christian bravery. For this author, Asia is a country of milk and honey for Christians as long as the barbarians no longer engage in acts of violence towards Christ's followers. In Clermont, he claimed further, the mighty France had united the whole of Europe to a powerful crusade. For him, Clermont is therefore the epitome of a glorified French history in which France becomes the reformer of Christianity.[31]

It is remarkable that Heinrich von Sybel (1817-1895), a pupil of Ranke and Professor of History at Marburg, Munich and Bonn, in his works on the crusades also interprets the myth of Poitiers as the battle that decided the fate of Europe. In Sybel's works, however, it is the Germans, 'men with sharp eyes, weighty chests and arms of steel', who crushed the Arabs before Poitiers and saved Christianity.[32] Sybel places the crusades as well as Poitiers within the pattern of a holy war lasting over a thousand years, hugely influencing the Middle Ages as well as the present day, ever since the founding of Islam. This conflict, he claims, is the most severe, the longest and most encompassing war in human history.[33] Sybel's interpretation of the crusades is, however, fundamentally different from the accounts of the authors mentioned previously. Sybel seeks to deconstruct the crusade myths, usually passed on within a Christian context, using a scientific and rational analysis of the political power relations, distancing himself from the Christian semantics of historians such as Michaud and Wilken. He therefore criticises the rapturous enthusiasm of the Christian armies and the fact that their military strategy was restricted to the liberation of Jerusalem, while the key to a successful conquest and colonisation of Palestine would have been in the occupation of Egypt and in the destruction of the Turkish sultanate.[34]
For Sybel, not Urban II but rather Gregor VII therefore constitutes the epitome of a politician with the qualities of an ideal ruler. Sybel compares him with Bonaparte and Cromwell, as that Pope, he claimed, sought to lead the Euro-

[30] Ibid, 80f.
[31] Ibid, 86.
[32] Heinrich von Sybel, *Geschichte des ersten Kreuzzuges* (Leipzig: Robert Baum, third unaltered edition 1881), 147; and "Aus der Geschichte der Kreuzzüge", in: *Kleine Historische Schriften*, 2 vols. (Munich: Literarisch-Artistische Anstalt, 1869), 7.
[33] Ibid, 4.
[34] Ibid, 15ff.

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pean peoples and the whole of Christendom in battle against 'Mohammedian Asia', and to liberate the entire Orient.

In Sybel's description of the Third Crusade we find clearly nationalist and European colonialist perspectives. Firstly, he compares the Siege of Acre and/or the confrontation with Saladin with the Siege of Sewastopol during the Crimean War. The Fall of Acre, he claims, forms a new act in the great war between Orient and Occident, which – although it is no longer a holy war as such – has shown, if not Europe's military power, then certainly its spiritual superiority at its best. Secondly, according to Sybel, with Frederick I, Europe 'saw for the first time in these wars of armed pilgrims a spirit aware of its destiny and empowered by its own means'. Frederick I steered the army 'with an unwavering and relentless will' and the sons of the Emir of Iconium experienced through him 'the heaviness of the German arm'. The news of Barbarossa's arrival caused Saladin's front line to crumble, an allusion to the renown of the German Kaiser. His mere shadow was capable of more than any Frankish sword. The death of Barbarossa by drowning is thus interpreted by Sybel as a warning: the highest hopes were thus destroyed in the tragedy of death, as a harsh fate was to demonstrate to the Christian world the possibility of victory. These who had underestimated the great Kaiser, however, were now destined for misery and defeat.[35] He can only criticise the political benefit from the negotiations between the European armies and Saladin: "What an end to this world war, to these immeasurable efforts! Once the only true leader had been torn away from the Christians by a terrible turn of fate, the aimlessness of the others ruined all fruits gained thus far in the battle; from Baitnuba the flocks of devout pilgrims were able to see Jerusalem, and then, numbed by their grief, had to turn away from the holy city."[36] In other words, the French with Philippe August and the English with Richard the Lionheart failed utterly in the self-proclaimed struggle between Christianity and Islam.

For Sybel it was ultimately the Mongol invasions that broke the will of Islam and thus assigned the rule of the earth from this point forward to the 'more fortunate nations of our part of the world'. With his idea of the struggle for the world, Sybel identifies the strength of Christianity not in the fanatic crusaders' religiously founded contempt of the world, but rather in their calmness and rationality which, he claims, can still be observed today. For the Christian states, he continues, religion is now a private matter and questions of trade and war are decided by politics. Wherever there is Christian power and education, the world recognises – either with pleasure or with anger – the steps of the conqueror and ruler. According to Sybel, therefore, Jerusalem, the conquest of which cost millions of lives quite unnecessarily, would today be taken from the hands of the Turkish ruler by a proceedings report of 5 lines, should Europe be interested in doing so.[37]

Unlike Sybel's work, the cultural history of the crusades by Hans Prutz (1843-1929), history professor at Königsberg, provides no positive assessment of the

[35] Ibid, 84f, 88f.
[36] Quotation: ibid, 92.
[37] Ibid, 103.

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significance of the Popes for the crusades. On the contrary, for Prutz the Catholic Church is the stumbling block of 'the West'. Nevertheless, in his view the crusades are the catalyst for the national self-discovery of the nations involved. Each nation, he claims, became aware of its own idiosyncrasies as a result of encounters with other European entities. This was the most significant basis for the cultural development of the following centuries, in which the rights of the individual nation were diametrically opposed to the Roman idea of a world state.[38]

For Prutz, it was not until the Third Crusade that the masses in Germany were united and sufficiently moved to participate. The great crusades hero of that time is in his view not Frederick I but Heinrich VI. Barbarossa may indeed have 'had the disloyal Greeks suffer at his hard and punishing hands and won immortal glory in the battle against the infidels'. And on the occasion of his death the German nation honoured him as the illustrious reformer of their lost glory. Barbarossa, however, had embodied the idea of a world empire for the whole world, claims Prutz.[39] He nevertheless rates the influence of Heinrich VI higher, because the latter would, he claims, have led the Christian world rule to its final completion, initiated by the German people, had he not met sudden death in Italy. Prutz characterises Heinrich VI as a ruler who during his time was perceived as an '*Übermensch*'. Thanks to his greatness, the German people were able to grow into the primary people of the world and to the bearers of world rule with joyous pride. Prutz reinforces this glorification with the prophecy of a monk from the Black Forest who revealed in the lament for the death of Heinrich that in future the Germans would have been able to grow superior to all other nations.[40] Ultimately, for Prutz the crusades brought about the advantage that the European states were liberated from the cultural authority of the Catholic Church, marking the beginning of a new age. Nevertheless, this also meant a loss of power for Germany and Italy, who found themselves lagging behind the other peoples they had been leading for so long. Prutz criticises the shift of political and economic power from Germany to the west and the loss of national greatness, despite the 'cultural work of unfading value' achieved, so he claims, by the German colonisers in the east.[41]

Which interpretations and conclusions can be drawn from my observations?

I hope that it has become clear from my paper that at the beginning of the 19th century a novel fascination for the crusades emerged in European historical consciousness. It has left clear tracks in memory culture, in the political semantics of public discourses and in research. Within the space of only a few years, a neo-crusades ideology was established almost simultaneously in various European states. There is no doubt that, in France at least, Napoleon's

[38] Hans Prutz, *Kulturgeschichte der Kreuzzüge* (Berlin: Mittler, 1883), 5.
[39] Hans Prutz, *Allgemeine Geschichte in Einzeldarstellungen. Staatengeschichte des Abendlandes im Mittelalter vom Karl d. Großen bis auf Maximilian*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Grote, 1885), 536f.
[40] Ibid, 568ff. There is also material on the characterisation of Heinrich VI as a German *Übermensch* and emperor in the school programme by Carl Hopf, *Bonifaz von Montferrat, der Eroberer von Konstantinopel und der Troubadour Rambaud von Vaqueras*, Ludwig Streit, ed. (Berlin: Habel, 1877), 23f.
[41] Hans Prutz, *Allgemeine Geschichte in Einzeldarstellungen*, 8ff.

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conquest of Egypt served as the turning point in the European evaluation of the crusades. This modern crusades metaphor related to older narratives that had emerged in the context of predictions regarding the weakness of the Ottomans in the 17th and 18th centuries and here there was discussion as to whether the European great powers should perhaps be better advised to divide up the Ottoman Empire between them in a new crusade. This referred back to the idea of the illegitimacy of the Ottomans and the legitimate claims of the Christian countries.[42] Although enlightened historians did indeed interpret the crusades extremely critically in terms of their religious fanaticism, in doing so, they served to develop a new dichotomy of Orient and Occident. The new perception of Islam as fanatical and despotic that emerged with the Enlightenment paved the way for an imperialist and colonialist policy in the 19th century. With their unwavering faith in rationality and progress it was precisely these enlightened Europeans, so it was believed, who should introduce the Orient to true civilisation. To a certain extent, France played a pioneering role in this respect with its many historical and literary works.[43]

Selected works of significant French and German crusades historians, which could only be briefly outlined in the scope of this paper, show that individual contributions to European crusades narratives emerged from different political, religious, national or regional perspectives. A comparison reveals that the neo-crusades ideology at the beginning of the 19th century was firstly established with an enthusiasm for theological history. The crusades were seen as works of God, even when related to the present. The representatives of this expressly Christian crusade narrative vehemently countered processes of secularisation within Europe and their narratives clearly tended towards a Christian and European – rather than national – direction. With the turn towards historicism, there was in turn a move away from the primarily theological interpretations of the crusades; in the course of the 19th century the originally Christian crusades idea was secularised and historicised, as can be seen in the nationalistic interpretations of the Battle of Poitiers. The nationalisation of the crusade narratives reflects a tendency already noted by Thomas Nipperdey: 'In the national context, religious aspects become secularised and the secular becomes sacralised'.[44]

At the same time, the Christian idea of the crusades evolved into a primitive conception of colonialism, which was also lent a new national flavour with regard to the idea of civilisation. Here, the difference between medieval crusades rhetoric or the medieval picture of Islam and the new Laicist ideology becomes clear. We can probably call this a caesura, despite the fact that this process of change took place slowly and ambivalently. Norman Daniel describes the difference between the new Laicist ideology and the Medieval image of Islam and the crusades as follows: 'The difference came when the old 'legal right' to rule in territory once Christian was replaced by a 'moral right' to

[42] See Michael F. Klinkenberg, *Das Orientbild in der französischen Literatur und Malerei vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zum fin de siècle* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2009,) 209.
[43] Ibid, 228f.
[44] Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte 1800-1866: Bürgerwelt und starker Staat* (Munich: Beck, 1993), 300.

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civilise any alien people'.[45] From the medieval perspective on Islam, the crusades were defensive wars that served the recapturing of Christian territories. In the 19th century the concept of the crusades changed into that of a blueprint for national, colonial and imperial ideas. Obviously the nationalisation of the crusade narratives influenced this change in the long term. For now national arguments come more visibly to the fore, whether in the form of the secular idea of a civilising mission, as in France, or in line with the idea of a medieval, nationally organised world dominion as we find, for instance, in the words of Sybel or Prutz.

The caesura that we may perceive here becomes somewhat blurred, however, when we look at the crusade narratives in the history textbooks – rendering our assessment even more complicated. In a varied sample of over 90 German textbooks from our period of study, we find a normative, religiously inspired crusades semantics alongside national and imperialist arguments, even at the end of the 19th century. As a general rule, however, we can ascertain that the significance of the medieval crusades for Europe, the development of its nations and of the Mediterranean is exorbitantly overrated, both in the research literature and in the textbooks. The energy Europe expended on Crusade and in Spain on Reconquest was little in comparison with what it expended on internal struggles.[46] The crusade narratives were lent immense significance for collective identity construction – both Laicist and Christian – within the context of the emergence of modern European nation-states in the 19th century. In these narratives, central political concepts of nationalism, such as victims, heroism, holy war, etc. were associated with orientalist or nationalist 'enemy' constructions and with collective ideas of 'Volk', Christianity and Europe. Certain crusade myths also possessed a function of promise regarding the present and future, such as the myth surrounding Barbarossa.
Not surprisingly, these moral values and political objectives of the educated middle-classes reappear in the crusade narratives, which served as a projection screen for modern concepts of the nation. The narratives feature a middle-class ethic directed towards the general well-being that preaches the improvement of conventions, the upholding of Christian virtues and self-discipline in the sense of avoiding temptation. Normative statements regarding the 'noble knights and heroes' are given a nationalist flavour. The question as to whether a knight such as Godfrey of Bouillon was of German or French origin is ultimately a negotiation between the lines regarding what is to be considered French or German.[47] Nineteenth-century crusade portrayals thus prove to be extremely adaptable texts that can integrate secular and Christian ideas as well as structure classifications of the European, colonial or the national into a historical master narrative.

[45] Norman Daniel, *Islam, Europe and Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1966), 67.
[46] Ibid., 7.
[47] Godfrey of Bouillon was claimed as a national hero not only by the Germans and French, but also by the Belgians. On the nationally flavoured debate surrounding Godfrey's origin as well as on the changes to images of Godfrey in 19th-century historiography, see Gerhart Waeger, *Gottfried von Bouillon in der Historiographie* (Zürich: Fretz und Wasmuth, 1969), 29-90.

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Kristin Skottki

# The Other at Home? On the Entanglement of Medievalism, Orientalism and Occidentalism in Modern Crusade Historiography

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**Kristin Skottki**

# The Other at Home? On the Entanglement of Medievalism, Orientalism and Occidentalism in Modern Crusade Historiography

**Abstract**
This article examines the construction of alterity in modern crusade studies. Instead of looking at processes of 'othering' in the medieval sources, it tries to understand how modern historiography constructs "others" (be it Muslims or medieval crusaders) and uncovers these constructions as products of a long and conflictual tradition of scholarly discourse. The main argument is that, up to a certain extent, the self-image of (post-) modern, western society determines how much the objects of historical research appear to be similar to 'us' or as 'others'. These constructions of either continuity/identity or alterity seem to be natural processes of history writing, but the underlying judgements on cultural and moral difference between 'us' and 'them' are called into question here.

The 'other'. Who is this other and where is he located? Somewhere in the Orient? In crusade historiography 'the other' usually refers to Muslims, or the inhabitants of the Levant. But in this article I would like to focus on another 'other', on the medieval other. This article will therefore explore not the spatial but the temporal processes of othering that are important for modern crusade historiography and medieval studies in general.
It is my argument here that crusade narratives need to be viewed through two different pairs of metaphorical glasses. One pair, binoculars, allows us to study the artefacts of past times as sources for our historical knowledge, and the other pair works as magnifiers with which we look at the recent scholarly discourse that determines our own research and its outcomes. In my view these two approaches need to be combined, especially when dealing with the scientific representation and imagination of past times and events.
In view of the famous comparison of Bernard of Chartres that we are like dwarfs on the shoulders of giants[1], my glasses metaphor becomes even more vivid. In 1998 Benjamin Kedar also used this phrase to criticise our frequent unawareness of past approaches to the problems we as historians have to deal with today. He wrote:

> [O]ur customary inattention to historical works that are too recent to qualify as 'sources' but too out-of-date to pass muster as 'secondary lite-

[1] "Dicebat Bernardus Carnotensis nos esse quasi nanos gigantum umeris insidentes, ut possimus plura eis et remotiora uidere, non utique proprii uisus acumine, aut eminentia corporis, sed quia in altum subuehimur et extollimur magnitudine gigantea." John of Salisbury: Metalogicon III, 4. Edition: John of Salisbury, Ioannis Saresberiensis Metalogicon (Corpvs Christianorvm Continuatio mediaeualis 98), J. B. Hall, ed. (Turnholt: Brepols, 1991) , 116.

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> rature', denies us the possibility to comprehend the process by which the perception and explanation of the problems in which we are interested evolved in the past; nor are we capable of grasping realistically our true role in that process. Both dwarfs and giants, I submit, may benefit from glancing down the ladder of shoulders on the uppermost rung of which they themselves are perched. Such a downward glance may amuse them, a no mean thing in these days of ours when so much historical writing is stricken with the blight of unrelenting seriousness.[2]

I am therefore very grateful to the organisers of this workshop as they draw our attention to a nineteenth century that still is so important for our historical research today, as it is the giants of this era on whose shoulders we obviously still stand. For example, the blight of unrelenting seriousness that Kedar criticised so harshly is, in my view, a legacy of nineteenth-century historicism because the historistic approach is in a sense all too often a-historical: a-historical in so far as it is a hard and often neglected task to historicise our research as products of our own times, and in response to a long tradition of scholarly discourse.

Crusade historiography is a good example for this as our understanding of the crusades has changed again and again especially in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the periods on which I will be concentrating here. Thus instead of using the binoculars to look at processes of othering in the Middle Ages I will now use the magnifying glass to trace the invention of the medieval other in modern academic research.

## The Invention of the Middle Ages

As we all know, the people of the Middle Ages did not perceive themselves as medieval. Rather, most European people in this period allegedly perceived themselves as living in a late if not the last era of Christian salvation history. The idea of Antiquity, Middle Ages and Modern Times as the guiding principles of dividing our history are a relatively new invention.[3]

Indeed, already back in the Middle Ages triadic concepts of salvation history existed, like that of Joachim of Fiore († 1202), who divided earthly time according to the Trinity into the Age of the Father (the time of the Old Testament, the time of the Law), the Age of the Son (the time of the New Testament, the time of the Incarnation) and the Age of the Holy Spirit (the age of freedom, the Last Days beginning in 1260, according to Joachim). [4]

But the origins of our concept of the Middle Ages can be traced back to the Italian humanists of the fourteenth century. [5] The "medium aevum" that the

[2] Benjamin Z. Kedar, "Crusade Historians and the Massacres of 1096", Jewish History 12, no. 2 (1998), 11-31, here 11.

[3] Ingrid Kasten, "Eine europäische Erfindung: Das Mittelalter", in *Germanistik in und für Europa. Faszination – Wissen*, Konrad Ehlich, ed. (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2006), 49-68.

[4] Cf. Eugène Honée, "The Image of Salvation History in Joachim of Fiore", in *Tijdschrift voor theologie* 38 (1998): 392-408; Emmett Randolph Daniel, Joachim of Fiore, "Patterns of History in the Apocalypse," in *The apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, Richard K. Emmerson, Bernard McGinn, eds. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 72-88.

[5] Cf. George Gordon, *S.P.E. Tract No. XIX. Medium Aevum and the Middle Age* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925); Nathan Edelman, "The early uses of medium aevum, moyen-âge, middle ages," in *Romanic Review* 29, no 1 (1938), 3-25.

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Italian humanists referred to was still not completely congruent with our idea of the Middle Ages, as Petrarch, Boccaccio, Villani and Vasari all saw themselves trapped in this "middle time" that wedged in between the 'glorious' antiquity and a "renascita", a rebirth of this antiquity dreamed of by the humanists.[6] It is noteworthy that their negative view of the recent past and their own time was almost exclusively limited to the arts, as they saw the 'good style' of the 'elders' lost in the course of time, while they usually made no judgements of human history in general.

The idea of the Middle Ages became more prominent and was applied to other areas of human life during the sixteenth-century Renaissance. Although Renaissance and Reformation were two quite different phenomena, they both tried to disassociate themselves from the recent past by establishing a new chronology: an immaculate origin, a time of corruption (the Middle Ages) and finally – in their own time – the rediscovery of the original sources that allowed to restore the original form ("reformatio") or a rebirth of the ancient ideal ("renaissance").[7] In Reformation thought the Middle Ages became the Dark Ages of the papal tyranny that kept the faithful from the true gospel. Thus it is no wonder that it was two German protestant scholars who first prominently used the division of history into the triad of Antiquity-Middle Ages-Modern Times in their very influential history textbooks at the end of the seventeenth century: Georg Horn(ius) and Christoph Cellarius.[8] Horn for example defined the Middle Ages as the time between the emergence of the Antichrist and the Reformation ( ("Ab Antichristo usque ad Reformationem"), the Antichrist being the Roman pontiff, who according to classical Reformation interpretation was revealed as such when he elevated himself above the other prelates of the church and claimed mundane power over the occidental empires.[9]

Again it was a prominent Protestant historian who first used the term 'middle age' in English, namely John Foxe (†1587) in his "Actes and Monuments of these Latter and Perillous Days", also known as "Foxe's Book of Martyrs" and first published in 1563.[10] In the second edition from 1570 Foxe used 'middle

[6] Cf. Alfred Dove, "Der Streit um das Mittelalter", in *Historische Zeitschrift* 116, no 2 (1916), 209-230, especially 213-217.

[7] Cf. Uwe Neddermeyer, *Das Mittelalter in der deutschen Historiographie vom 15. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert: Geschichtsgliederung und Epochenverständnis in der frühen Neuzeit* (Köln: Böhlau 1988).

[8] Cf. Johan Hendrik Jacob van der Pot, *Sinndeutung und Periodisierung der Geschichte: Eine systematische Übersicht der Theorien und Auffassungen* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 316-317 with references; the work mentioned is: Christoph Cellarius, Christophori Cellarii historia universalis. Breviter ac perspicus exposita, in *antiquam, et medii aevi ac novam divisa, cum notis perpetuis* (Jena: Bielke, 1703).

[9] Georg Horn, *Georgii Hornii Historia Ecclesiastica et Politica*, (Leiden: Hack, 1665), the second period (Middle Ages) is treated on pp. 129-168. Interestingly enough his account of this period begins with Muhammad and the loss of Christian territory and faith in the orient. For the influence of humanist critique on papal claims for worldly power in Luther's concept of the papal Antichrist compare the recent study: David M. Whitford, "The Papal Antichrist. Martin Luther and the Underappreciated Influence of Lorenzo Valla", in *Renaissance Quarterly* 61, no 1 (2008): 26-52.

[10] John Foxe, Actes and Monuments of these latter and perilous days, touching matters of the Church, wherein are comprehended and described the great persecutions and horrible troubles that have been wrought and practised by the Romish prelates, specially in this realm of

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age' to denounce the time when the monks went astray by leaving the wilderness, becoming priests, intermingling with the nobility and interfering in worldly affairs.[11]

Two observations need to be stressed: first, the terms 'Middle Ages' and 'medieval' have implied, since their very first usage, an image of darkness, deterioration and renunciation from the 'good style' of Antiquity or the true faith of the Old Church. Otherness therefore is something inherently characteristic for the idea of the Middle Ages. Since their invention the Middle Ages were never completely dark of course, as prominent figures were always found, be they mighty kings or true believers, but in the end these little shining lights only plunged the overwhelming part of this time into an even darker shadow.[12]

Second, the triadic division of history was, until the eighteenth century, still part of a salvation-historical concept; especially in protestant circles the present times were still conceived as the latter times and the end of this world imminent. According to this concept the objective of history was its end, because after judgement day this world and its history would no longer exist. A state of perfection and harmony could only be established in a transcendent 'new world', in which God's creation would be reconciled again with the Creator (cf. Rev 21:1-4). As for example Frank Rexroth has shown, this salvation history concept was only abandoned in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when for the first time history became a secular concept no longer attached to the Christian idea of history as guided by God's plan for his people.[13] But the secular idea of history as an autonomous object for academic research was not, ironically, a concept free of a teleological bias.[14] The concept of 'modernity', especially as opposed to the Middle Ages, implied ideas of development, progress and evolution and therefore itself having an objective ("telos"), but now an entire inner worldly state of perfection and harmony.[15] Noteworthy here is that both the concepts of the Middle Ages and of modernity are fundamentally oriented and defined occidental as both terms were developed by Western

England and Scotland, from the year of our Lord 1000 unto the time now present: gathered and collected according to the true copies and writings certificatory, as well of the parties themselves that suffered, as also out of the bishops' registers, which were the doers thereof (London: s.ed.,1563).

[11] "Thus thou seest, gentle reader, sufficiently declared what the monks were in the primitive time of the church, and what were the monks of the middle age, and of these our later days of the church." John Fox, "The acts and monuments of the Church. Book 1", John Cumming, ed. (London: George Virtue, 1844), 212.

[12] Cf. Klaus Arnold, "Das 'finstere' Mittelalter. Zur Genese und Phänomenologie eines Fehlurteils", in *Saeculum* 32 (1981), 287-300.

[13] Frank Rexroth, "Das Mittelalter und die Moderne in den Meistererzählungen der historischen Wissenschaften", in *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 38, no 151 (2008), 12-31; „Meistererzählungen und die Praxis der Geschichtsschreibung. Eine Skizze zur Einführung", in *Meistererzählungen vom Mittelalter: Epochenimaginationen und Verlaufsmuster in der Praxis mediävistischer Disziplinen*, Frank Rexroth, ed. (München: Oldenbourg, 2007), 1-22.

[14] Cf. Michael Allen Gillespie, *The theological origins of modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

[15] Cf. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, "'Modern', 'Moderne', 'Modernität'," in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, vol. 4, Otto Brunner, Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck eds. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1978), 93-131.

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thinkers to describe Western history.[16] But I will come back to this later.

Our own times are often referred to as 'post-modern' or as 'second modernity' implying that the teleological idea of progress is no longer determining our idea of history.[17] But as I will try to show, ideas of progress and development to the better are still often part of the unnamed presumptions that govern our historical interpretations, especially for those of us who work on the Middle Ages, as modernity constantly intrudes into our research like a distorting mirror. Accordingly, much has been written on the problems of the concept of the Middle Ages and in Germany in particular it was Otto Gerhard Oexle who published various articles on the images of the Middle Ages in modern times.[18] There is no question that we always have to deal with this temporal tension as we always see the Middle Ages through the eye-glasses of our own time, be it modernity or post-modernity.

## Medievalism

Medievalism is a term used to describe the receptions and images of the Middle Ages and is applied most prominently in literary studies.[19] But Medievalism refers in most cases only to the popular image of the Middle Ages and it is hardly ever used to describe academic research on the Middle Ages.[20] I see this as part of the heritage of nineteenth century historicism with its demand for detached and scientific objectivity that dismisses the creative part of the historian in writing history. Creative imagination was for a long time only ascribed to fiction and not to scientific research. I would argue that this division is misleading, as both popular imagination and scientific research are shaped by constructions of the imagination, whether that be via scholars or authors.[21] What distinguishes the authors from the scholars is the claim for truthful representation. Through the application of the historical-critical method and the use of original source material the historian's creative imagination is restricted and protected, so that the outcomes of his research cannot be challenged as

[16] Cf. Couze Venn, *Occidentalism: Modernity and subjectivity* (London: Sage 2000).

[17] Cf. F. David Peat, "From certainty to uncertainty. Thought, theory and action in a postmodern world," in *Futures* 39, no 8 (2007), 920-929.

[18] To name just a few: Otto Gerhard Oexle, "'Das Mittelalter' - Bilder gedeuteter Geschichte," in *Gebrauch und Missbrauch des Mittelalters 19. - 21. Jahrhundert. Uses and abuses of the Middle Ages 19th - 21st century. Usages et mésusages du Moyen Age du XIXe au XXIe siècle*, János M. Bak, Jörg Jarnut et al. eds. (München: Fink, 2009), 21-44; "Die Moderne und ihr Mittelalter. Eine folgenreiche Problemgeschichte", in *Mittelalter und Moderne: Entdeckung und Rekonstruktion der mittelalterlichen Welt*, Peter Segl, ed. (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1997), 307-364, "Das Mittelalter und die Moderne. Überlegungen zur Mittelalterforschung," in *Paradigmen deutscher Geschichtswissenschaft. Ringvorlesung an der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin*, Jürgen Kocka, Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk, eds. (Berlin: Berliner Debatte und GSFP, 1994), 32-63.

[19] Cf.Defining medievalism(s) (Studies in Medievalism 17), Karl Fugelso, ed. (Cambridge:Brewer,2009).

[20] Cf. Richard Utz, "Mittelalterrezeption/Medievalism - Editorial. What is Medievalism?", in *Perspicuitas: Internet-Periodicum für Mediävistische Sprach-, Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft der Universität Duisburg-Essen*, http://www.uni-due.de/perspicuitas/editorial.shtml#what (accessed 22 July 2011).

[21] For the creativity of the historian see: Johannes Fried, "Wissenschaft und Phantasie. Das Beispiel der Geschichte", in *Jahrbuch des Historischen Kollegs* 2 (1996), 23-47.

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mere figments of his mind but can be championed as attempts to reconstruct history.

The combined process of construction and reconstruction in writing history describes the nature of history itself very well. History can only exist if people attach importance to events in the past and are able to make sense of them. According to the classical notion of Isidor of Sevilla († 636), history ("historia") is the narrative of deeds done ("rei gestae") through which we can understand what has been done before (in the past).[22] Thus history is always a textual representation of the past, shaped by those who note events worthy to be remembered, or in our case through historians who try to interpret the artefacts from the past as sources for history. Accordingly, I would define Medievalism as a necessary process of imagination and textual representation of the Middle Ages. But what has become obvious from my little excursion into the history of the term 'Middle Ages' is that it does not only describe a certain period of time but that it also contains judgements on the character and nature of that time and of the people living in it. The criteria to judge the Middle Ages or medieval people are of course established by those who write about it and are therefore shaped by actual discourses. And as time changes, so too does the image of the Middle Ages.

While the image of this period was from its beginning mostly negative we can find new and more positive attitudes towards the Middle Ages during the Romantic era at the end of the eighteenth century.[23] It was the German novelist known as Novalis († 1801) who first prominently painted a picture of the Middle Ages as a time of unity, harmony and faith in opposition to his own time that he perceived as being shaken by wars and faithlessness.[24] This view of the uniformity of the Middle Ages, being governed completely by the church, is still held by some medievalists, for example the famous Jacques Le Goff.[25] But the important difference between Novalis and Le Goff is that their images of the Middle Ages were of course shaped by different circumstances, the one reacting to popular and academic images of the Middle Ages at the end of the eighteenth century, the other to images from the first half of the twentieth century.
Le Goff's Middle Ages are shaped by the approach of the 'Annales' school. Starting in the 1960s the Annales School has attempted to understand the Middle Ages as a civilisation in own right that can best be studied using the methods of the history of mentalities and historical anthropology.[26] This new

[22] Isidor of Sevilla: Etymologiarum I, 41: "Historia est narratio rei gestae, per quan ea, quae in praeterito facta sunt, dinoscuntur." Edition *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi. Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, W. M. Lindsay, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911).
[23] Otto Gerhard Oexle, "Das entzweite Mittelalter", in *Die Deutschen und ihr Mittelalter: Themen und Funktionen moderner Geschichtsbilder vom Mittelalter*, Gerd Althoff, ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992), 7-28, references 168-177. For 'positive' images of the Middle Ages since Johann Gottfried Herder († 1803) see also: Rudolf Stadelmann, "Grundformen der Mittelalterauffassung von Herder bis Ranke", in *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 9 (1931), 45-88.
[24] Novalis, *Fragmente und Studien. Die Christenheit oder Euro*pa (Universal-Bibliothek 8030), Carl Paschek, ed. (Stuttgart: Reclam, [1799] 2006).
[25] Jacques Le Goff, *Medieval civilization 400 – 1500* (Oxford: Blackwell, [1964] 1995).
[26] Jean-Claude Schmitt, "Plädoyer für eine historische Anthropologie des Mittelalters", in *Früh-*

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approach towards the otherness of the Middle Ages must be seen as a reaction to earlier attitudes, especially those of the nineteenth century.

Although nineteenth century historicism claimed scientific objectivity, different studies have recently shown that historians of that period also had an agenda. According to this agenda the Middle Ages were to be used to legitimize the emergence of national states.[27] Not only were medieval studies oriented nationalistically, but they also served to provide the nations with historical roots. This approach to the Middle Ages originates from the idea of historical development and progress, so that the medieval period was no longer perceived as the opposite but as the precursor of modernity.

While this may sound like no bad thing, the epistemological usurpation of the Middle Ages as point of origin made the images of this period susceptible for ideological and political abuse in the first half of the twentieth century. Norman F. Cantor for example, showed this in his highly controversial book "Inventing the Middle Ages".[28] Other recent studies also show very clearly how much medievalists took part in legitimizing the blood and soil ideology of the Nazis, for instance.[29] To stress the otherness of the Middle Ages as Le Goff, Jean-Claude Schmitt and other French medievalists did in the 1960s can therefore be understood as an attempt to free the Middle Ages from this kind of abuse and usurpations.

As our workshop aims to compare approaches from France and Germany it is worth noting here that it took a long time before the methodology of the French medievalists was also used in Germany[30], and even today the Middle Ages in German medieval studies is more often portrayed as the antecedent of modern times than as another culture separated through a hermeneutical difference.[31] But of course seeing the Middle Ages as a civilization in it's own right

*mittelalterliche Studien* 38 (2004), 1-16.

[27] Cf. Otto Gerhard Oexle, *Geschichtswissenschaft im Zeichen des Historismus: Studien zu Problemgeschichten der Moderne* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996); *Historismus in den Kulturwissenschaften: Geschichtskonzepte, historische Einschätzungen, Grundlagenprobleme*, Otto Gerhard Oexle, Jörn Rüsen, eds., (Köln: Böhlau, 1996).

[28] Norman F. Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages: The lives, works, and ideas of the great medievalists of the twentieth century* (New York: Quill William Morrow, 1991). See also the critical review of Glenn W. Olsen, "Inventing the Middle Ages," in *Quidditas* 14 (1993), 131-150.

[29] Cf. Eduard Mühle, Hermann Aubin, "Der 'Deutsche Osten' und der Nationalsozialismus. Deutungen seines akademischen Wirkens im Dritten Reich", in *Nationalsozialismus in den Kulturwissenschaften 1. Fächer - Milieus - Karrieren*, Hartmut Lehmann, Otto Gerhard Oexle et al., ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 531-591; Peter Raedts, "The Once and Future Reich: German Medieval History Between Retrospection and Resentment", *in Gebrauch und Missbrauch des Mittelalters 19. - 21. Jahrhundert. Uses and abuses of the Middle Ages 19th - 21st century. Usages et mésusages du Moyen Age du XIXe au XXIe siècle*, János M. Bak, Jörg Jarnut et al., eds. (München: Fink ,2009), 193-204. More generally: Geschichtsschreibung als Legitimationswissenschaft: 1918 – 1945, Peter Schöttler, ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997).

[30] Otto Gerhard Oexle, "Das Andere, die Unterschiede, das Ganze. Jacques Le Goffs Bild des europäischen Mittelalters", in *Francia* I-17, no 1 (1990), 141-158. "Was deutsche Mediävisten an der französischen Mittelalterforschung interessieren muß", in *Mittelalterforschung nach der Wende 1989*, Michael Borgolte, ed. (München: Oldenbourg, 1995), 89-127.

[31] Bernd Schneidmüller (January 5, 2009), Rezension: Harald Müller. Mittelalter, in *H-Soz-u-Kult*, http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/2009-1-005 (accessed 22 July 2011):

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cannot claim to be the answer to everything as it, too, entails some new problematic notions. I would like to address these under the question of Medievalism and Orientalism in the next chapter.

**Medievalism and Orientalism I**

As I mentioned earlier, Western historians have to cope with the fact that our methods and concepts are inherently Eurocentric. Ethnology and anthropology were the first that had to face the accusation that our understanding of other cultures and peoples are limited if not misguided, as our approaches and methods are not equipped to understand others on their own terms.[32] This critique was most prominently represented by Edward Said, who accused Western scholars of misrepresenting the Orient and trying to silence the people in these countries.[33] He criticised the hegemonic discourse of Orientalism, accusing Western scholars of abusing their power of representation by inscribing certain, mostly negative, characteristics to 'the Orientals' that legitimized the political usurpation of the Orient through colonialism and imperialism.[34]

I see a strong connection between the discourse of Orientalism and the discourse of Medievalism. Both construct the alterity or otherness of their research objects. But the image of an 'other' always needs to have a counterpart in the image of the self. The anthropologist James G. Carrier therefore defined Occidentalism as the self-image of the West on whose background the otherness of the Orient is created.[35] He pointed out that Orientalism is always dialectically or contextually defined through Occidentalism. Accordingly I would argue that Medievalism is always contextually defined through Modernism, i.e. the self-image of modernity. In this way we can understand in a more theoretical way the highly different images of the Middle Ages from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century as a more or less natural process of imagery and textual representation.

The almost unsolvable problem is that we can only understand other times and people on our terms. But what we can call into question are the master narratives with which the characteristics and the culture of the others are evaluated. What Said showed to be most problematic about the Orientalist discourse is the hegemonic power with which scholars not only describe but also create the Oriental other. I think the same is true for medievalists. I would like to gi-

"Auch wenn man heute dem Mittelalter mehr Alteritäten als Vorgeschichten und den Historikerinnen wie Historikern mehr Mut zum ethnographischen Blick auf die große Fremdheit wünschen möchte, weist dieses Studienbuch glücklich die ersten Wege in eine vergangene Welt."

[32] *Cf. Anthropology as cultural critique: An experimental moment in the human sciences*, George E. Marcus, Michael M. J. Fischer, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Alan J. Barnard, *History and theory in anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[33] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

[34] Cf. Edward W. Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered", in *Cultural Critique* 1 (1985), 89-107.

[35] James G. Carrier, "Introduction", in *Occidentalism: Images of the West*, James G. Carrier, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 1-32.

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ve you an example from a recent book on the crusades. Thomas Asbridge wrote in his study "The First Crusade" from 2004:

> [O]n the question of Christian violence, the moral and spiritual code that governed medieval European society differed vastly from that which prevails today. Thus, before judging the nature of crusading violence, we must remember that in the Middle Ages, an era of endemic savagery, warfare was regulated by a particular, medieval sense of morality.36

I must admit that I was a bit shocked when I read this for the first time as I did not believe that today, still, a medievalist would judge the Middle Ages as an 'era of endemic savagery', which makes medieval people appear as barbaric or at least less civilized others in comparison to ourselves. As I just suggested, this interpretation seems to be born out of a self-image of our modern Western society as progressing more and more towards a complete state of perfection and civilization, or at least of a society with a much more civilized moral and spiritual code than medieval society.
I quoted Asbridge as his interpretation is part of a very influential discourse that became predominant in the twentieth century. Accordingly I will now turn to some major trends in crusade historiography in the twentieth century.

## Crusade historiography in the 20th and early 21st centuries

The rejection of the legitimacy of the crusades became the most powerful interpretative force for crusade studies after World War II. In an article from 2005 Nikolas Jaspert named four developments and events in the twentieth century that lead to a condemnation of the religious legitimization of crusader violence:

- the general secularisation and the critique of the churches
- the critical assessment of colonialism
- the 'Holocaust'
- the crusades as precursors of and triggers for the 'clash of civilizations' and international terrorism, [37]

Although Jaspert rejected the critique born out of the conjunction of these events and developments as hardly helpful to understand the crusades, I find it important to stress again that I see it as the normal process of historical research to see past events in the light of the present. Although Jaspert was right in pointing out the strong moral rejection of the crusades in the twentieth century, we can now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, trace back other assessments of the crusades to this negative image of the crusades.[38]

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[36] Thomas S. Asbridge, *The first crusade: A new history: The Roots of Conflict Between Christianity and Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004), 274.

[37] Nikolas Jaspert, "Von Karl dem Großen bis Kaiser Wilhelm. Die Erinnerung an vermeintliche und tatsächliche Kreuzzüge in Mittelalter und Moderne", in *Konfrontation der Kulturen? Saladin und die Kreuzfahrer*, Heinz Gaube, Bernd Schneidmüller, Stefan Weinfurter, eds. (Mainz am Rhein: von Zabern, 2005), 136-159, here 138-139.

[38] For the rejection of crusader violence see the still most influential study by Steven Runciman, which contains this final judgement: "The triumphs of the Crusade were the triumphs of faith? But faith without wisdom is a dangerous thing. By the inexorable laws of history the

Concerning the first point – the general secularisation and the critique of the churches – I would like to draw your attention to the currently prevailing definition of the crusades by Jonathan Riley-Smith.[39] His definition of the crusades stresses the true religious motives of the crusaders and the character of the crusade as an act of penitence.[40] Riley-Smith himself declared that his interpretation of the crusades is a reaction to the overwhelming image of the crusades as motivated foremost by greed and the urge for territorial expansion. He saw this interpretation as a legacy of nineteenth century liberal and secular thought that rejected religious motivations in general as mere cover-up tactics for material aspirations.[41] Some of us might remember that until the late twentieth century it was a common view that religion had lost its explanatory power and bonding force and would soon vanish completely.[42] Accordingly, a materialistic approach, especially in social history, was predominant, but also in crusade studies. Riley-Smith's studies and those by others like the important article from Ernst-Dieter Hehl, who defined the crusades as armed pilgrimages, shed a new light on the crusades.[43] They made it possible to understand that medieval faith and piety obviously differ from our understanding of Christianity, although other examples will show that even today, there is no agreement over the true character of Christianity. For now we should keep in mind that since the 1980s or at least since the end of the Cold War religious motivations and explanations are powerful again and hardly anyone would deny today that the crusades were indeed a religiously legitimized and motivated enterprise.

Jaspert's second point – the critical assessment of colonialism – is still very important, as the crusades were for long time interpreted as the prototype of European colonialism in the Orient. This was seen positively in the colonial era itself, especially by French colonialists who saw their mandate in the Levant as

whole world pays for the crimes and follies of each of its citizens. In the long sequence of interaction and fusion between Orient and Occident out of which our civilization has grown, the Crusades were a tragic and destructive episode. The historian as he gazes back across the centuries at their gallant story must find his admiration overcast by sorrow at the witness that it bears the limitations of human nature. There was so much courage and so little honour, so much devotion and so little understanding. High ideas were besmirched by cruelty and greed, enterprise and endurance by a blind and narrow self-righteousness; and the Holy War itself was nothing more than a long act of intolerance in the name of God, which is the sin against the Holy Ghost." *A history of the crusades. Volume 3: The kingdom of Acre and the later crusades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), 480.

[39] Cf. his highly influential standard works: Jonathan Riley-Smith, What were the crusades? (London: Macmillan, 1977 [latest edition 2009]); *The first crusade and the idea of crusading* (London: Athlone, 1986 [latest edition 2009]).

[40] Jonathan Riley-Smith, "Kreuzzüge. A. Definition. II. Der Kreuzzug," in *Lexikon des Mittelalters 5*: CD-ROM Ausgabe, J.B. Metzler 2000, 1508-1509; "Kreuzzüge", in T*heologische Realenzyklopädie* 20 (1990), 1-10.

[41] Jonathan Riley-Smith, "History, the crusades and the Latin East, 1095-1204: A personal view", in *Crusaders and Muslims in twelfth-century Syria, Maya Shatzmiller,* ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 1-17.

[42] Cf. Alex Saxton, "The God Debates and the Materialist Interpretation of History", in *Science & society* 73, no 4 (2009), 474-498; Antonio Labriola, "The materialistic conception of history", in *Roots of the Italian school of economics and finance* 87, no 8 (1998), 799-804.

[43] Ernst-Dieter Hehl, "Was ist eigentlich ein Kreuzzug?", in *Historische Zeitschrift* 259, no 2 (1994), 297-336.

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the return into French territories that existed since the period of the crusades.[44]

The idea of crusader colonialism became a negative reference point in the process of decolonization and was also used to show that the crusaders were indeed driven by greed and not by piety.[45] But I was quite disturbed by what Jessalyn Bird wrote recently about the idea of crusader colonialism:

> Historians from the Near East and non-European countries have often seen the Crusades as the first emergence of a cyclical European colonialism that would lead to Columbus, the British Empire, and the partitioning of the Globe following World War Two. Adherents of this "colonialist" theory characterize the Crusades in the Baltic as a nascent *Drang nach Osten*, the Reconquista in Spain, and the crusade against the Albigensians in the Midi as wars of expansion window-dressed with religion.[46]

Bird obviously tries to denigrate this interpretation as a kind of oriental revenge for modern colonialism and imperialism. It is true that the alliance of the crusades with modern forms of Western imperialism is also part of the anti-Western rhetoric in fundamental Islamic and nationalist Arabic circles, but it certainly cannot be dismissed as their invention.[47] To avoid such unrestrained attributions it is important to glance down the ladder of shoulders, as Benjamin Kedar demanded (cf. my introductory remarks), and thereby becoming aware of earlier historical interpretations from our own scientific community.
I also find it problematic to reject the notion of crusader colonialism completely, as for example some chronicles of the first crusade, like that by Robert the Monk, very clearly portray the crusades as a fulfilment of the biblical promise of the return to the God-given homeland in the Levant.[48] This is a

[44] The French general Henri Gouraud is said to have kicked Saladin's tomb when the French invaded Syria in 1920 exclaiming "Saladin we're back!" - an anecdote that is hard to verify but which is cited over and over again. Cf. Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The crusade: A history* (London: Continuum, 1987), 303; Tariq Ali, *The clash of fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads and modernity* (London: Verso, 2002), 42. For the epistemological usurpation of the Crusader Castles as French national heritage cf. Ronnie Ellenblum, *Crusader castles and modern histories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), especially 32-40.

[45] Cf. Ingolf Ahlers, "Die Kreuzzüge. Feudale Kolonialexpansion als kriegerische Pilgerschaft", in *Mediterraner Kolonialismus: Expansion und Kulturaustausch im Mittelalter*, Peter Feldbauer, Gottfried Liedl and John Morrissey, eds. (Essen: Magnus, 2005), 59-81.

[46] Jessalynn Bird, "The Crusades: Eschatological Lemmings, Younger Sons, Papal Hegemony, and Colonialism", in *Misconceptions about the Middle Ages*, Stephen J. Harris and Bryon Lee Grigsby, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 85-89, here 85. The mentioning of the "partitioning of the Globe following World War Two" is obviously a mistake as she seems to refer to the mandates of the League of Nations following World War One.

[47] Cf. Osama Bin Laden's statements about the "Crusader wars": *Messages to the world: The statements of Osama Bin Laden*, Bruce Lawrence and James Howarth, eds. (London: Verso, 2005), especially 133-138.

[48] Robert the Monk I, 1: "Non vos protrahat ulla possessio, ulla rei familiaris sollicitudo, quoniam terra haec quam inhabitatis clausura maris undique et jugis montium circumdata, numerositate vestra coangustatur; nec copia divitiorum exuberat; et vix sola alimenta suis cultoribus administrat. [...] Viam sancti sepulcri incipite, terram illam nefariae genti auferte, eamque vobis subjicite. Terra illa filiis Israel a Deo in potestatem data fuit, sicut Scriptura dicit quae lacte et melle fluit." Edition: Robert the Monk I, 1, "Roberti Monachi. Historia Iherosolimitana," in *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades: Historiens occidentaux, Tome troisième, Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, ed. (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1866), 717-881.

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strong religious legitimization for the establishment of the crusader kingdoms that as far as I can see is rarely mentioned in recent definitions of the crusades. And I think it would also be helpful not to draw a line from the crusades to modern colonialism as a historical development, but to see it as a projection from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that functioned as one possible historical legitimization of modern colonialism. In this way, looking at the crusades as a form of colonialism may perhaps not help to better understand the crusades, but it might be useful for reflecting the problem of the invention of traditions and so may become a useful tool for the study of modern colonial history and empire studies.

But back to Jaspert's third point – the 'Holocaust'. There has been a powerful discourse since the beginning of the secularization claiming that Christianity is prone to violence against 'others' and the crusades are often aligned with the Inquisition, witch persecution and the confessional wars in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[49] Also the Holocaust is sometimes seen as an outcome of the age-old Anti-Semitism or Anti-Judaism in Christianity, as for example stated by Peter Wiener who characterized Martin Luther as Adolf Hitler's spiritual ancestor.[50] Other influential scholars like René Girard or, in Germany, Jan Assmann saw the reason for the inherently violent character of Christianity in the exclusive nature of monotheistic religions.[51] The characterization of Christianity as an inherently intolerant religion was also fostered by some important studies in medieval history, as for example by Robert Moore who described medieval Western society as a 'persecuting society' and also by Dominique Iogna-Prat who tried to show that medieval Christianity was always trying to exclude if not annihilate other forms of religion and heterodox beliefs.[52] This shows that the idea of an inherently peaceful Christianity is, even today, very contentious.
Paul Freedman explained the interpretations of Moore and Iogna-Prat in a very plausible way:

> The emphasis on medieval aggression and persecution of marginated groups is similar to the desire to see the period as progressive in that both agree on regarding the Middle Ages as foundational, the point of origin for the modern and contemporary Western outlook. One opinion sees the Middle Ages as the origin of a "good" modern (reason, individuality, political and social institutions from the state to the university); the other the be-

[49] Cf. Karlheinz Deschner, *Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1986). So far eight volumes appeared, the latest about the 15th and 16th in 2004.
[50] Peter F. Wiener, *Martin Luther: Hitler's spiritual ancestor* (London: Hutchinson, 1945). See also more recently: Michael R. Steele, *Christianity, the other, and the Holocaust* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2003).
[51] Jan Assmann, *The price of monotheism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, [2003] 2009); Rene Girard, *Violence and the sacred* (Baltimore: Hopkins University Press, [1972] 1977).
[52] Robert I. Moore, *The formation of a persecuting society: Power and deviance in Western Europe, 950 – 1250* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987); Dominique Iogna-Prat, *Order & exclusion: Cluny and Christendom face heresy, Judaism, and Islam (1000 - 1150)* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, [1998] 2002).

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ginning of a "bad" modern (racism, romantic misogyny, colonialism).[53]

If either the Christian legitimization of violence against 'others' is seen as an overcome relict of the past, like Thomas Asbridge does, or if Christian violence is seen as a burdensome legacy modernity has to struggle with, there is no question that generally religiously justified violence is seen as something foreign to Western culture at least since World War II.

This leads us to Jaspert's fourth point: the crusades as precursors and as triggers for the 'clash of civilizations' and international terrorism. One of the main arguments to denounce the crusades was that because of them the battle between Islam and Christianity began.[54] This argument is closely related to the critique of the Orientalist discourse, assuming an everlasting urge of Western society to dominate the Orient and the violent character of Christian Western society. There were even voices after the events of 9-11 who spoke of these attacks as being a response to the long historical tradition of Western atrocities against Muslim societies. [55] But these voices are all but silenced nowadays, because the concept of the 'clash of civilizations' as promoted by Samuel Huntington sees the reason for Islamic violence today deeply rooted in Islamic culture itself. [56]

The idea of Islam as an inherently violent religion is so overwhelming that it also found its way into crusade studies and it turned the question of guilt upside down. More and more recent publications stress that it was the Muslims who started it all and that the crusades were only defensive wars against Muslim aggression.[57] Indeed we can find in our source material from the Middle Ages exactly these kinds of arguments with which already the crusaders legitimized their enterprise, either claiming to help their Christian brothers in the East, or to free their own heritage from the Muslim invaders. [58] But it is less these arguments from the sources than the situation today that for some seems to prove the crusaders right.

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[53] Paul H. Freedman, "The medieval other. The Middle Ages as other", in *Marvels, monsters, and miracles: Studies in the medieval and early modern imaginations*, Timothy S. Jones, David A. Sprunger, eds. (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2002), 1-24, here 17.

[54] Cf. Tariq Ali, *The clash of fundamentalisms* (cf. note 44). Gerhard Armanski, *Es begann in Clermont: Der erste Kreuzzug und die Genese der Gewalt in Europa* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus, 1995).

[55] Karen Armstrong wrote: "It is now over a millennium since Pope Urban II called the First Crusade in 1095, but the hatred and suspicion that this expedition unleashed still reverberates, never more so than on September 11, 2001, and during the terrible days that followed." *Holy war. The Crusades and their impact on today's world*, 2, Anchor Books, ed. (New York: Anchor Books, [1988] 2001, ix (Preface to the second edition).

[56] Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?", in *Foreign Affairs* 71, no 3 (1993), 22-49; *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996). See also: Bernard Lewis, *What went wrong? Western impact and Middle Eastern response* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[57] Cf. Rodney Stark, *God's battalions: The case for the Crusades* (New York: HarperOne, 2009).

[58] For the different versions of Pope Urban's speech in Clermont 1095 see: *The first crusade: The accounts of eye-witnesses and participants*, August C. Krey, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1921), 24-43.

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**Medievalism and Orientalism II**

One of the most important promulgators of the 'clash' theory is Bernard Lewis, who in different articles and books tried to explain that Islam is alone to blame for the problematic relationship between Orient and Occident as Muslims always tried to attack and subjugate the West.[59] This is of course the reversal of the Orientalism discourse Edward Said denounced.[60] It does not come as a surprise that the adherents of the 'clash' theory compare our situation today with the era of the crusades, justifying the crusades as a just and necessary act to save 'our Western culture' from Muslim occupation. In Germany it was especially my colleague from Rostock University Egon Flaig who defended the crusades in this way.[61] In France it is particularly Jean Flori who over and over again tried to show that the Muslim jihad is much worse than the Christian crusades, as the crusades for him are more or less an abuse of Christian religion while Islam not only permits jihads, but they are, according to him, a core element of Islamic religion.[62]

There is also another major trend in crusade studies now to expose crusade myths, like in the above quoted article by Jessalyn Bird. The most important crusade historian trying to uncover these myths is Thomas F. Madden.[63] Many of Madden's more popular articles appeared in Christian online magazines and they are all linked on the important website for crusade studies, the 'Crusades-Encyclopaedia'.[64] His studies are obviously an attempt to overcome those predominant interpretations from the second half of the twentieth century I just pointed out. In some ways his revision therefore seems reasonable and necessary; unfortunately he goes so far as to also defend the crusades as just acts against Muslim aggression. To quote only one example:

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[59] Cf. Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage. Why so many Muslims deeply resent the West, and why their bitterness will not easily be mollified", in *The Atlantic* (September 1990), http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1990/09/the-roots-of-muslim-rage/4643/ (accessed 22 July, 2011); *Europe and Islam* (Washington: AEI Press, 2007).

[60] For the debate between Lewis and Said see: Bernard Lewis, "The Question of Orientalism", in: *Islam and the West*, Bernard Lewis, ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 99-118; Edward W. Said, "The Clash of Definitions", in *Reflections on exile and other essays*, Edward W. Said, ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 569-592.

[61] Egon Flaig, "Der Islam will die Welteroberung," in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 216, 15 September 2006, 35, "'Heiliger Krieg': Auf der Suche nach einer Typologie", in Historische Zeitschrift 285, no 2 (2007), 265-302.

[62] Jean Flori, *Guerre sainte, jihad, croisade: Violence et religion dans le christianisme et l'islam* (Paris : Édition du Seuil, 2002); "Croisade et Jihad",l in *Le Concile de Clermont de 1095 et l'appel à la croisade* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1997), 268-285 ; "Croisade et djihâd: Le problème de la guerre dans le christianisme et l'islam", in *Les croisades: l'Orient et l'Occident d'Urbain II à Saint Louis. 1096 - 1270*, Monique Rey-Delqué, ed. (Milan: Electra 1997), 49-61.

[63] Cf. Thomas F. Madden, *The new concise history of the Crusades* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005); "The Real History of the Crusades: A series of holy wars against Islam led by power-mad popes and fought by religious fanatics? Think again", in *Christianity Today*, (2 May 2005), http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/news/1400196/posts (accessed 22 July 2011); "Crusade Propaganda: The abuse of Christianity's holy wars", in *National Review* (2 November 2001), http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/220747/crusade-propaganda/thomas-f-madden (accessed 22 July 2011).

[64] „Crusades-Encyclopedia: Myths, Misunderstandings, and Controversies," http://www.crusades-encyclopedia.com/crusadesmyths.html (accessed: 22 July 2011).

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> From the time of Mohammed, Muslims had sought to conquer the Christian world. They did a pretty good job of it, too. […] As far as unprovoked aggression goes, it was all on the Muslim side. At some point what was left of the Christian world would have to defend itself or simply succumb to Islamic conquest. […] In other words, the Crusades were from the beginning a defensive war. The entire history of the eastern Crusades is one of response to Muslim aggression.[65]

In this way not only the 'clash' theory is historically enshrined, but the roles of villains and heroes are redistributed once more. While the villains in the predominant images of the crusades in the twentieth century were the medieval Western Christians, it is now the Muslims (again) who are described as religious fanatics in past and present.
To sum up, the images of the crusades and the medieval crusaders changed rapidly during the last three centuries. While medieval otherness in liberal thought since the Enlightenment was mainly attributed to the religious fanaticism of medieval Western society, these religious motivations were later exposed as window dressing according to the materialist approach to history. Then the rediscovery of the true religious motivations of the crusaders was a helpful way to understand the crusades, but the connection with the 'clash' theory leads anew to the construction of the Oriental other. For me this is a really deplorable development because I think our historical research does not need these master narratives of friends and foes, or of villains and heroes – instead of sympathetically taking up medieval arguments or ignorantly rejecting them, we should try to understand them empathically and stay away from condemnations and blaming one side or the other.

Using the magnifying glass reveals that the 'medieval other' is not only somewhere out there, but that he also exists in our minds. Through our attempts to understand history in changing contexts and with changing perspectives the medieval other assumes a new shape all the time. Sometimes he seems to be the very antithesis of ourselves and sometimes he seems to be facing the same problems as we do. If we acknowledge this link between the historian and the objects of his research it becomes clear why a glance over the shoulders of all those other giants and dwarfs of historical research makes sense. In this way we can understand our new findings and interpretations as outcomes of a communication process between us, the 'medieval other' and those who tried to understand him before us.

[65] Thomas F. Madden, "Crusade Myths", in *Catholic Dossier* 8, no 1 (2002), http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/history/world/wh0057.html (accessed 22 July 2011).

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