



Just Wars, Holy Wars, and Jihads: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Encounters and Exchanges

Sohail H. Hashmi

Print publication date: 2012

Print ISBN-13: 9780199755042

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: September 2012

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199755042.001.0001

Ibn 'Asakir and the Intensification and Reorientation of Sunni Jihad Ideology in Crusader-Era Syria

Suleiman A. Mourad

James E. Lindsay

DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199755042.003.0005

Abstract and Keywords

The arrival of the crusaders in Syria led several scholars to rally the Muslims around a renewed ideology of jihad. This chapter examines the work of Ibn 'Asakir of Damascus (d. 1176). His works offer our best source of information on the types of religious radicalization that occurred during the first period of crusader presence (that is prior to the emergence of Saladin and the Third Crusade), especially in the Muslim understanding and attitude toward the duty of jihad.

Keywords: Ibn 'Asakir, Crusades, jihad, Damascus, radicalization, Saladin

The prominent jurist and theologian Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) was once asked his opinion about the legality of confiscating Christian churches in Cairo and elsewhere. In his response, which is preserved in his *Kitab al-jihad* (Book of Jihad; part of the massive collection of his legal opinions), Ibn Taymiyya digressed into a vituperative discussion of several Shi'i sects in which he declared that

they are not Muslims [*kharijin 'an shari'at al-Islam*] in the judgment of all the sects of Islam; that is, in the opinion of the scholars, the rulers, and the public of the Hanafis, Malikis, Shafi'is, Hanbalis, and others. Fighting them is therefore lawful.... Those of them—the Nizari Isma'ilis, the Nusayris, the

Druzes, and others like them—who live in Muslim lands have aided the Mongols in their war against the Muslims. Indeed, Hulegu's vizier, al-Nusayr [Nasir al-Din] al-Tusi, was one of their imams. They are the most notorious enemies of the Muslims and Muslim rulers. Next are the Rafidis [Fatimids and Twelvers], for they ally themselves with whoever fights the Sunnis.¹ They allied with the Mongols and with the Christians. Indeed, there was a truce between the Rafidis and the crusaders [*al-Faranj*] in the coastal areas. The Rafidis would ship to Cyprus the Muslims' horses and armor, the sultan's captive soldiers as well as other fighters and young warriors. When the Muslims defeat the Mongols, they mourn and are saddened, but when the Mongols defeat the Muslims, they celebrate and rejoice. They are the ones who advised the Mongols to kill the [Abbasid] caliph and massacre the people of Baghdad [in 1258].... Those knowledgeable about Islam know that the Rafidis favor the enemies of religion.... They are hypocrites [*munafiqun*].... The Rafidis are the most evil **(p.108)** among those who follow the direction of prayer [*sharr al-tawa'if al-muntasibin ila al-qibla*].²

When Ibn Taymiyya refers to Muslims here, he means Sunnis—those who, in his opinion, follow the true and proper Islam. The Shi'i groups he mentions earned his condemnation not only for their heretical beliefs but also for their traitorous aiding of the crusaders and Mongols in wars against the Muslims. Ibn Taymiyya states unambiguously in his *Qital ahl al-baghi* (Fighting the People of Falsehood): "There is no doubt that waging jihad against these people and imposing on them the legal punishments are the utmost forms of obedience and fulfillment of religious obligation."³ That he concludes his comments about the Rafidis by referring to them as "the most evil among those who follow the direction of prayer" seems to indicate that he did, in fact, tolerate their claim to be Muslims but only as Muslims of the worst sort.

Ibn Taymiyya concedes that Sunni Muslim jurists before him rarely justified killing or waging jihad against fellow Muslims on the basis of dogmatic or political difference; he argues simply that they were wrong not to do so.⁴ Was Ibn Taymiyya's call to jihad against errant Muslims unprecedented in Sunni scholarship? Does his argument represent a radical new development in jihad doctrine? The short answer to both questions is no. In fact, Ibn Taymiyya bears no responsibility for *initiating* this development, for the intensification and reorientation of Sunni jihad ideology was well under way by the time he arrived on the scene. As we demonstrate in this chapter, members of the mainstream Sunni political and religious establishment in Syria, most notably Ibn 'Asakir of Damascus (d. 1176), had advocated the reinvigoration of jihad ideology in the wake of the First Crusade (nearly two centuries before Ibn Taymiyya embarked on his scholarly career) in order to unify the Sunni Muslims of Syria and to fight

the external and internal enemies of God and Islam—the infidel Christian invaders and the heretical Shi'is, respectively.

We are not arguing that Ibn Taymiyya did not contribute significantly to the intensification of Sunni jihad ideology. Rather, we emphasize that since Ibn Taymiyya was born in the mid-thirteenth century, he was raised in a political and religious milieu that was already deeply saturated with a reanimated jihad doctrine and extensive jihad propaganda. That is, Ibn Taymiyya's arguments and rhetoric echo—very aggressively, to be sure—normative beliefs in his day that reflected what many among the Sunni religious establishment believed to be the true teachings of God in his revelation (the Qur'an) and those of his Prophet Muhammad. Ibn Taymiyya's passionate advocacy of jihad doctrine simply reinforced the long-standing view that the enemies of Islam included the crusaders (the enemy without) in addition to Shi'is, the recently and insufficiently Islamized Mongol Il-Khans, and other errant Muslims (the enemy within).

(p.109) The “Enemy Within” before the Crusades

As is well known, clashes within Islam started as soon as its founder, Muhammad, died. His followers were divided over a range of questions about what the new *umma* should be, who should belong to it, who should lead it, what were the qualifications for leadership, and so forth. The various factions and tendencies are far too numerous to mention here. For our purposes, we will focus on two broad camps: one group, arguing on the basis of close kinship, advocated for Muhammad's son-in-law and paternal cousin 'Ali to succeed him; the other group advocated the view that the leaders among the Muslims ought to decide the issue of succession. Several rebellions and suppressions during the course of the seventh and eighth centuries ensured that the rift between the two broad camps would never heal. Out of this politicoreligious split, what came to be known as the Shi'is and the Sunnis emerged in the ninth century as two distinct religious sects in Islam, each with its own theology, schools of law, and political ideologies. The mid-tenth century ushered in what is commonly known as the “Shi'i century,” where most of the central Islamic lands were ruled by Shi'i dynasties: Iran, Iraq, and central Mesopotamia were ruled by a Zaydi Shi'i dynasty, the Buyids (945–1055), who also patronized Twelver Shi'ism; northern Syria and western Mesopotamia were ruled by a Twelver Shi'i dynasty, the Hamdanids (945–1004); and southern Syria, Egypt, and parts of the Hijaz were ruled by the Isma'ili Shi'i Fatimid caliphs (969–1171).⁵

The concept of the “enemy within” and the urge to wage jihad against them had been known before the Crusades. However, those who employed the rhetoric of jihad against fellow Muslims generally were not viewed as representative of mainstream Islamic thought or practice. In fact, while jihad was always understood as the duty to fight by various means the enemies of God and Islam, the articulation of the doctrine of jihad with respect to fellow Muslims in the

precrusader period was somewhat hesitant and ambiguous in that the tendency was to constrain it with a sophisticated legal jargon in order to ensure that its improper internal application against fellow Muslims—however rebellious they may have been—did not lead to chaos or *fitna*.⁶ This policy was, in part, a response by the jurists to the most dramatic example of *fitna* in early Islam: the beliefs and bloody campaigns of the Khawarij, a third camp apart from Sunnis and Shi'is who believed that it was the duty of “good” Muslims to wage jihad against “bad” Muslims. Such views were deemed to be well beyond the mainstream by nearly all parties.⁷

Consequently, early Islamic scholarship shows some restraint in its interpretation of the Qur'anic command to “fight [*jihad*] the hypocrites and the infidels” found in verse 9:73 (at least with respect to the hypocrites). According to the celebrated Qur'an exegete and jurist al-Tabari (d. 923), the overwhelming majority of early Muslim jurists and exegetes argued that while the unbelievers or infidels were to be fought by every possible means, and above all by the sword, **(p.110)** the hypocrites were to be fought either by means of argumentation (*al-lisan* or *al-kalam*) or by the strict application of God's laws (*iqamat al-hudud*). Al-Tabari appeals to Islamic tradition and past practice to explain why one should be lenient toward the hypocrites, especially if they openly affirm Islam. He argues that the teachings of Islam emphasize that when a hypocrite declares himself a Muslim, even if he secretly believes otherwise, his life and property are not to be compromised (*yuhqan damuhu wa maluhu*), since God prohibited the Muslims from speculating about what people secretly uphold.⁸ This view echoes an earlier statement by the influential jurist al-Shafi'i (d. 820), who argues that Muslim rulers must heed the example of Muhammad in dealing with hypocrites, namely that they should be judged by what they publicly profess, not by what they harbor in their hearts, irrespective of what God says about them, for God only speaks about their eternal fate in the hereafter and not about how they are to be treated in this world.⁹

In the formative period of Islam, most Muslim scholars, especially those representing the mainstream, were uncomfortable with applying the ideology of jihad against their fellow Muslims. Jihad in the first three centuries of Islamic history was understood as a duty to fight by various means the enemies of God and Islam, and given the demographic and political realities of the early centuries, the enemies of God and Islam were abundant. They were largely perceived to be pagan and polytheist Arabs during the early Rashidun period and subsequently Byzantines, Persians, Hindus, and other peoples and states beyond the frontiers of the rapidly expanding Islamic empire, not internal Muslim dissidents.

All of this started to change in the late eleventh century, when we begin to see the emergence of a Sunni revivalism and assertiveness in response to a number of factors. We will focus our attention on two that directly affected the

intensification of jihad ideology in Syria. The internal factor is the Shi'i century noted above, during which the core territories of Islam were ruled by Shi'i regimes. The external factor is a broad range of Christian counterattacks—the beginnings of the Reconquista in Spain, the Norman conquest of Sicily and southern Italy, and, most important for our purposes, the crusader conquests in northern Mesopotamia and Syria because of the challenge they posed to the Islamic heartland.¹⁰

We see this Sunni revivalist impulse in the context of the Fatimid presence in Syria and the threat that it (and that of their fellow travelers) posed to Seljuk designs in the region even before the arrival of the crusaders. The Seljuk vizier, Nizam al-Mulk (d. 1092), has much to say about the threat to good order posed by Shi'is in his own day. To provide but one example, he includes in his *Book of Government* a hadith that advocates waging jihad against Rafidis (his term for Isma'ilis—both Fatimids and Nizaris). According to the hadith, 'Ali (Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law and, according to Shi'is, his legitimate successor) and Fatima (Muhammad's daughter and 'Ali's wife, from whom the Fatimid dynasty derived its name) came to see Muhammad one day. **(p.111)**

The Prophet (upon him be prayers and peace) raised his head and said, "O 'Ali, greetings to you, for you and your kinsmen will be in paradise. But after you a people will rise up professing to love you, pronouncing the creed and reciting the Qur'an; and they will be called Rafidis. If you find them wage holy war against them for they are polytheists, that is, unbelievers."¹¹

That Nizam al-Mulk had good reason to be suspicious of Rafidi intentions was borne out in 1092, when he was murdered by a Nizari assassin.¹²

It is against this background that the transformation and intensification of jihad ideology in mainstream Sunni thought occurred in response to the events of the Shi'i century and the crusader invasions. In the wake of the crusader invasions, the impulse to revive Sunnism and to restore Sunni supremacy in Syria became increasingly potent. Consequently, the intended enemies against whom this reinvigorated jihad was preached were both Islam's external enemies, the Christian crusaders, and Sunnism's internal enemies, specifically the Shi'i Fatimid regime in Egypt and its sympathizers in Syria. An agenda emphasizing jihad against Christian forces was to be expected of any Muslim ruler in Syria ever since the initial conquests of Byzantine lands in the seventh century. But the use of jihad ideology against "errant" or "deviant" Muslims beginning in the eleventh and twelfth centuries represents a significant departure from the traditional scholarly aversion in Sunni Islam to identifying intra-Muslim conflicts as jihads. Moreover, the advocacy of jihad exclusively centered around selected Qur'anic verses and prophetic hadith that we see in the work of Ibn 'Asakir and other scholars of the crusader period also represents a methodological

reorientation designed to motivate as broad an audience as possible—scholars, soldiers, merchants, commoners, and others—precisely because such an approach goes against the meticulous attention to legal requirements and nuances that much of the earlier scholarly tradition emphasized.

The Preaching of Jihad in the Early Crusader Period

In 1105, a scholar of Arabic grammar named al-Sulami (d. 1106) took to the pulpit in the mosque of Bayt Lihya, a village on the eastern outskirts of Damascus, to preach his recently completed *Kitab al-jihad* to a small number of young apprentices and to denounce his fellow Muslims for their weakness and divisiveness, which had allowed the crusader enemies to attack them and seize their lands. Al-Sulami's work is modeled on earlier jihad treatises in that it is made up of chapters that present the duty of jihad as laid out in the Qur'an and hadith, along with discussions of Islamic legal theory and application (e.g., who may wage jihad, how to treat the enemy, how to divide the booty, etc.). In this respect, al-Sulami's text replicates earlier styles of jihad preaching that were promulgated for the most part against the Byzantines.¹³

(p.112) Al-Sulami is noteworthy for two new insights that had an impact on the intensification of jihad ideology in the twelfth century. First, al-Sulami blames the miserable situation in Syria on the Muslims' weak spiritual condition. Hence, in his opinion, a religious purification—what he calls the “greater” or spiritual jihad—is required before they could successfully embark on the “lesser” or military jihad to defeat the invaders. It is important to note that al-Sulami does not say that greater jihad supersedes lesser jihad or that Muslims must abandon the lesser military jihad for the greater spiritual jihad. Moreover, he was the first to depict the Crusades as part of a larger Christian campaign to seize the lands of Islam, which had started in Spain (al-Andalus) and Sicily and had now reached greater Syria.¹⁴ The notable thirteenth-century historian Ibn al-Athir (d. 1233) viewed the Crusades in a similar vein.¹⁵

Al-Sulami was not the only scholar in Damascus to preach jihad in reaction to the crusader invasion of Muslim lands and their capture of the holy city of Jerusalem in 1099. Although we know of only one instance when his book was used after his death to preach jihad (a public reading at the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus in 1113), it must have contributed to the popularization of jihad preaching and propaganda in Damascus, sometimes at the instigation of the political rulers but often as an angry reaction on the part of religious scholars to the ruler's and the public's lack of motivation and their unwillingness to stand up and fight the invading crusaders.

The most explicit example of documented jihad propaganda and indoctrination in Syria comes from the reign of the Seljuk amir Nur al-Din (d. 1174), who rose to power following the murder of his father, Zangi, in 1146. He ruled from Aleppo (the former capital of the Twelver Shi'i Hamdanids) until he captured

Damascus in 1154. Nur al-Din spent most of his career fighting other Muslim rulers in northern Syria and to a lesser extent crusaders, in an effort to unify Muslim Syria. He also had a keen interest in conquering Egypt, which was under Fatimid rule, and incorporating it into his domain. Consequently, Nur al-Din made jihad the central ideology of his regime and rallied the population by employing a host of religious scholars and preachers to promote it. There is no doubt that he acted out of self-interest, seeking to stabilize his realm and overcome his opponents. But it is the effectiveness of his jihad propaganda that contributed significantly to the reinvigoration of jihad ideology in the minds of Syria's mainstream Sunni religious establishment and public.

As noted above, most mainstream Sunni jurists before the Crusades had been cautious in their treatment of jihad as a problematic religious duty, one that had to be kept well guarded and controlled by jurists lest it lead to internal chaos or *fitna*. They also consistently asserted that it was the caliph alone who possessed the right and prerogative to call for jihad and that the people were under no personal obligation to wage jihad until the caliph summoned them to it. Certainly, there were exceptions to the rule, such as 'Abdallah ibn al-Mubarak (d. 797) and the movement he represents, a group of jurists and hadith scholars who took to asceticism and **(p.113)** were angered by the reluctance of late Umayyad and early Abbasid caliphs to wage jihad against the Byzantines, the preferred infidel enemy since the early Islamic conquests.¹⁶ Taking matters into their own hands, Ibn al-Mubarak and his disciples began to promote jihad against these external enemies of Islam as an obligation that is incumbent on each Muslim individual who is able to contribute to the cause of jihad in some fashion.¹⁷ When the celebrated jurist al-Shafi'i articulated his concept of jihad as both a personal obligation (*fard 'ayn*) and a communal obligation (*fard kifaya*), he was very much influenced by the views of this movement.¹⁸

The effectiveness of Nur al-Din's propaganda can be judged by its success. Nur al-Din was indeed able to unite Syria along with southeastern Anatolia and northern Mesopotamia under his rule, and in 1171, his general, Saladin, succeeded in toppling the last Fatimid caliph in Cairo. But an important factor in the success of Nur al-Din's jihad propaganda was that the local population was already quite familiar with it, for jihad had been preached in Damascus by a number of religious scholars in addition to al-Sulami since the early twelfth century, most likely on their own initiative and with little support from the Burid rulers of the city. Nur al-Din was therefore skillfully exploiting the earlier efforts of a militant group of scholars and their very receptive audience.

Some of these hadith scholars who preached jihad in Damascus had been displaced from their hometowns, such as Jerusalem, Nablus, and Tyre, as a result of crusader occupation or threat, and they sought refuge in and around Damascus. In his *Mu'jam al-shuyukh* (Compendium of Teachers), the notable hadith scholar Ibn 'Asakir provides a rare glimpse of the fundamental role these

displaced scholars played in the dissemination of jihad ideology in Syria in the period between the First and Second Crusades.¹⁹ These displaced scholars, whom Ibn 'Asakir describes as zealots in their defense and promotion of Sunnism, were actively involved in the transmission of hadith on jihad and were instrumental in the propagation of jihad ideology in Damascus.²⁰ Their efforts were ineffective at first, as they had little, if any, support from the local political establishment. In fact, for much of the first half of the twelfth century, the Burid rulers of Damascus had allied themselves with the kingdom of Jerusalem; they were justifiably worried and fearful of the intentions of Zangi and Nur al-Din in Syria, especially after Zangi managed to capture the city of Edessa in 1144, ending the crusader rule that had lasted there since Baldwin captured it during the First Crusade in 1098.²¹

The fall of Edessa to Zangi was the pretext for the Second Crusade, but instead of moving against Edessa, the leaders of the Second Crusade decided to attack Damascus.²² Their failure to capture the city in 1148 proved to be a turning point in the history of the Muslim "Counter-Crusade": the popular mood in Damascus firmly shifted from perceiving the crusaders as possible allies against Zangi and his son Nur al-Din to considering Nur al-Din as their savior from the threat of crusader conquest.²³ It is thus not surprising that the local Damascene rulers soon lost the support of the local population and had to turn the city over to Nur al-Din in 1154.

(p.114) Nur al-Din's jihad ideology was intended to achieve two broad religious and political goals. First, the jihad rhetoric stressed that there was a need for one ruler to unify the divided Syrian Muslims under the banner of Sunni Islam and to put an end to all internal political and sectarian divisions, specifically those posed by the Fatimid regime in Egypt and its sympathizers in Syria. Second, it called on the Muslims to employ the strength of that unity to defeat the crusaders. These were not easy goals to achieve given the political and religious divisions among the Muslims in Syria and the strength of the crusader states in Jerusalem and coastal Syria. But they were the very goals that al-Sulami and the displaced scholars in Damascus had long advocated. Hence many Damascene Sunni religious scholars were eager to serve a capable ruler such as Nur al-Din, who would take up such a formidable and righteous task. One such scholar was the venerable Ibn 'Asakir, who quickly became a close adviser of Nur al-Din and was very much involved in devising and disseminating the sultan's jihad ideology.

Ibn 'Asakir and the Second Crusade

Ibn 'Asakir belonged to a notable family of jurists and religious scholars who played leading roles for more than two centuries in medieval Damascus. He achieved a high reputation as one of the city's and Syria's leading Sunni scholars as a result of his extensive travels in the Muslim world to study religious sciences, especially hadith. One particular group of teachers—the displaced

scholars from Jerusalem, Nablus, and Tyre noted above—had a direct impact on shaping the young scholar's religious views, especially with respect to jihad ideology.

Ibn 'Asakir witnessed firsthand the attack of the Second Crusade against his hometown and preserved rare testimonies concerning the popular reaction to the attack and the defense of the city. The reaction of one particular scholar, a jurist of the Maliki school of Sunni law and teacher of Ibn 'Asakir named Yusuf ibn Dunas al-Findalawi, is worth mentioning. Al-Findalawi was from North Africa and came to reside in Damascus following his pilgrimage to Mecca. When the army of the Second Crusade attacked Damascus, he went out to fight against them. He was killed on Saturday, July 25, 1148, in the village of Nayrab, in the foothills of Mount Qasyun, which overlooks Damascus from the northwest. According to Ibn 'Asakir, the Damascene army chief tried to deter al-Findalawi, who replied that he had sold his soul to God and that God had accepted the sale—a reference to Qur'an 9:111: "God has purchased from the believers their souls and wealth in return for paradise. They fight in his path, and kill or get killed. It is a binding promise."²⁴

The sense of urgency that led notable religious scholars to involve themselves directly in combat marks a significant change in the mood among the Sunnis of Damascus. The Second Crusade's attack on the city marks the moment when members of the Sunni religious establishment began to take matters into their **(p.115)** own hands. Not only had they lost confidence in the ability of the military leadership to defend Damascus, but they also were anxious that the city might never be safe unless the whole of Syria was united by a powerful Sunni ruler and Sunnism was restored to its rightful place of dominance. In addition, there is clear evidence that Nur al-Din played a direct role in luring the Sunni religious establishment to his camp.

The Second Crusade seems to have convinced Ibn 'Asakir that he should become directly involved in the dissemination of jihad ideology. In contrast to his somewhat passive involvement of studying hadith on jihad noted above, he now became actively engaged in writing about and teaching the subject. For example, in his *Ta'rikh madinat Dimashq* (History of Damascus), Ibn 'Asakir informs his readers that he taught a seminar on Ibn al-Mubarak's *Kitab al-jihad* to a group of students that included 'Izz al-Dawla, the older brother of the celebrated amir and poet Usama ibn Munqidh (d. 1188).²⁵ After the seminar ended, 'Izz al-Dawla went straightway to fight the crusaders in Ascalon (where they had turned their attention following the failure at Damascus)²⁶ and achieved martyrdom there in the summer of 1151.²⁷ The degree to which Ibn 'Asakir influenced any of his students' convictions or actions cannot be established with certainty. But the apparent correlation between the failed

attack of the Second Crusade against Damascus in 1148 and Ibn 'Asakir actively joining the band of jihad propagandists shortly thereafter is clear enough.

Ibn 'Asakir and Nur al-Din

Six years after the failed Frankish siege of Damascus, the city fell to Nur al-Din in 1154. The city's Sunni scholars, including Ibn 'Asakir, welcomed Nur al-Din as a hero and placed themselves in his service.²⁸ They saw the sultan as the ideal candidate to liberate Syria from the crusader menace and reunite it after centuries of intra-Muslim division and hostility. Owing to Nur al-Din's efforts, the alliance between Sunni politicians and religious scholars was firmly joined to the ideology of jihad and the revival of Sunni Islam.²⁹ Nur al-Din employed in his army a host of religious scholars and preachers whose sole function was to indoctrinate and stimulate the troops and the public.³⁰ Moreover, he ordered that an extensive network of religious and secular institutions and monuments (mosques, minarets, schools, hospitals, city walls, fortifications, etc.) be built throughout his realm. The intention of these buildings and monuments was to further enhance the sultan's religious and public image. The structures are also testimony to his use of propaganda to advance his political and religious ambitions, as most of the dedicatory inscriptions on the buildings and monuments celebrate him as the great jihad warrior.³¹ His building campaigns succeeded in gaining tremendous support from the scholars and the Sunni masses and undoubtedly contributed to the revival of Sunnism in Syria.³²

(p.116) Nur al-Din found in Ibn 'Asakir a particularly ardent defender of Sunni Islam and ordered that a school for the study of hadith (known as Dar al-Hadith al-Nuriyya or Dar al-Sunna) be built for his scholarly ally.³³ Ibn 'Asakir shaped the school into the intellectual epicenter of Nur al-Din's jihad propaganda. Its output was deployed against the internal and external enemies of Sunni Islam throughout Nur al-Din's realm, continuing long after its founder's death.³⁴

In a biography of Nur al-Din included in his *History of Damascus*, Ibn 'Asakir provides little information about the career of his patron except that it was mostly spent fighting the crusaders and ending heresies. Nevertheless, his words leave no doubt that he considered the triumph of Sunnism in Syria and Egypt (a consequence of Nur al-Din's many wars against other Muslims) to be Nur al-Din's most important achievement, the highlight of his reign. Ibn 'Asakir memorializes the significance of Nur al-Din's capture of the city of Aleppo as follows: "He reintroduced Sunnism and reestablished true religion, corrected the heresy that they used to follow in the call for prayer, crushed the heretical Shi'is, and revived the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence."³⁵ Similarly, Ibn 'Asakir celebrates Nur al-Din's ending two centuries of Shi'i Fatimid rule in Egypt: "Finally, Sunnism became triumphant in Egypt and the sermons were read in the name of the Abbasid caliph after almost complete despair. God had

relieved the Egyptians from disaster and ended their suffering. Therefore, God is deserving of thanks for His graces and for the success of conquests.”³⁶

These testimonies were written when Nur al-Din was still alive, so presumably, Ibn 'Asakir was expressing not only his sentiments toward the sultan but also his allegiance to him. Yet one should not underestimate the new sense of empowerment that the Sunni religious establishment enjoyed during Nur al-Din's reign as a result of the sultan's exceptional generosity and sponsorship.³⁷ Given the sultan's success in unifying the various parts of Syria and Egypt under his rule, along with his plan for the revivification of Sunnism, the Sunni religious establishment's expectations of him had been realized beyond their wildest dreams. Hence their words of praise reflect a deep and sincere veneration of him for accomplishing what they once may have thought was unattainable in their lifetimes.

Ibn 'Asakir's *Forty Hadiths for Inciting Jihad* and the Intensification of Sunni Jihad Ideology

Sometime in the 1160s, Nur al-Din asked Ibn 'Asakir to compose a short book of forty hadiths on the virtues of waging jihad. The sultan's objective was to employ this book in religious propaganda. He could not think of a better authority to speak to the binding duty of jihad than the prophet of Islam himself or a better scholar for achieving the task than Ibn 'Asakir, the greatest authority on hadith in Syria at the time. The scholar enthusiastically took up the challenge, and rather than producing a legal treatise on jihad which would have required that he address **(p.117)** all sorts of legal questions and exceptions, he produced an easily accessible collection of prophetic traditions titled *al-Arba'un hadithan fi al-hathth 'ala al-jihad* (The Forty Hadiths for Inciting Jihad).³⁸ By producing a manual that only included hadiths some of which cite or allude to Qur'anic verses that stress the duty of jihad, Ibn 'Asakir was able to strip the Sunni jihad doctrine of its legal and juristic edifice and recenter it on an unambiguous and firm foundation of divine and prophetic instruction. Of the thousands of hadiths that Ibn 'Asakir could have included on the subject, he intentionally chose forty that enabled him to transform Muhammad into a jihad advocate and cast Islam as a religion that emphasizes the duty to wage jihad above all others. That Nur al-Din and Ibn 'Asakir were so successful in this endeavor demonstrates that the Sunnis in Damascus and greater Syria were already predisposed to these kinds of works and that they were amenable to being exploited by them.

The introduction to the *Forty Hadiths* provides us with invaluable information about religious propaganda and the interconnectedness of political opportunism and religious discourse under Nur al-Din. Ibn 'Asakir writes that Sultan Nur al-Din

expressed his desire that I collect for him forty hadiths relating to jihad that have clear texts and uninterrupted sound chains of transmission so

that they could stimulate the valiant jihad fighters ... and stir them up to truly perform when they meet the enemy in battle, as well as incite them to uproot the unbelievers and tyrants who, because of their unbelief, have terrorized the land and proliferated oppression and corruption—may God pour on them all types of torture, for He is all-watching. So I hastened to fulfill his desire and collected for him what is suitable for the people of learning and inquiry. I especially exerted a tremendous effort in collecting them in the hope that I should receive the reward [from God] for enlightening and guidance.³⁹

There is no doubt that when Ibn 'Asakir refers to those who have “terrorized the land and proliferated oppression and corruption,” he means the crusaders and the Muslim military leaders, both Sunnis and Shi'is, who were responsible for the disunity, turmoil, and weakness of Muslim Syria. Since Ibn 'Asakir did not identify these people by name, his patron and his hearers could employ such jihad rhetoric against any they deemed to have “terrorized the land and proliferated oppression and corruption,” crusaders and Muslims alike.

Yet what is more interesting for our purposes is that such a work was even needed for propaganda—that is, to be read to the troops and the public in order to stimulate them to fulfill properly a highly prized religious duty, the obligation to wage jihad against God's enemies. It is not surprising, then, that the sultan sought hadiths that were clear, straightforward, and comprehensible to all audiences. That Ibn 'Asakir's *Forty Hadiths* became very popular among the Sunni **(p.118)** religious establishment in Damascus is confirmed by the many teaching sessions of the book organized by important religious scholars and held in prestigious religious centers in Damascus, such as Nur al-Din's Dar al-Hadith and the Umayyad Mosque, between 1170 and 1230.⁴⁰ Ibn 'Asakir obviously expected a reward from his patron for authoring the *Forty Hadiths* but he was more keen on receiving the eternal rewards bestowed by God on those who took on the responsibility of properly guiding and enlightening the Muslim public.

Four major themes characterize the forty hadiths gathered by Ibn 'Asakir: the importance of the religious duty of waging jihad, the punishments for neglecting its fulfillment, the rewards for jihad fighters, and the prerequisites they are to fulfill. These four themes were meant to encapsulate, in Ibn 'Asakir's opinion, the most important aspects of the ideology of jihad in a very precise and clear manner. The following excerpts illustrate each of the four themes:⁴¹

(Hadith 1) The Messenger of God was asked: “Which aspect of belief is the best?” He replied: “The belief in God—glory and greatness belong to Him.” He was then asked: “And what comes next?” He replied: “Next is jihad in the path of God—glory and greatness belong to Him.” He was asked again: “And what comes next?” He replied: “An accepted pilgrimage.”

(Hadith 13) The Messenger of God said: "Lining up for a battle in the path of God is worthier than sixty years of worship."

(Hadith 16) The Messenger of God said: "... At the end of days, there will appear a group of people who do not believe in jihad. God took an oath upon Himself that everyone who says that will be tortured like no other sinful human being."

(Hadith 21) The Messenger of God said: "The deeds of the dead person are sealed, except those of the garrisoned warrior in the path of God whose deeds accumulate rewards until the Day of Resurrection and who will also be saved from the torment of the grave."

(Hadith 29) The Messenger of God was heard saying: "God will admit into paradise three men for every arrow: the one who makes it and hopes it is used for something good, the one who donates it to be used in the path of God, and the person who shoots it in the path of God...."

(Hadith 40) The Messenger of God said: "The slain-dead are of three types. One is a believer who exerts his life and wealth waging jihad in the path of God—glory and greatness belong to Him—and when he meets the enemy in battle he fights them until he is killed. He is a tested martyr whose abode will be the Tent of God, underneath His Throne; nothing separates him from prophets except their rank of prophethood. Another is a believer, having already committed transgressions and sins, who exerts his life and wealth waging jihad in the path of God, and when he meets the enemy in battle he fights them until he is killed. His transgressions and **(p.119)** sins are cleansed, for the sword purifies from sins. He will also be admitted to paradise from whichever gate he chooses, for paradise has eight gates, and Hell has seven gates with some deeper than others. And a third is a hypocrite [*munaḥfiq*] who exerts his life and wealth waging jihad in the path of God—glory and greatness belong to Him—and when he meets the enemy in battle he fights them until he is killed. He is in Hell, because the sword does not wipe out hypocrisy [*nifaq*]."

There is no doubt that Ibn 'Asakir considered these hadiths to have been applicable in Muhammad's day, but he chose them for inclusion in his collection because he believed that they were also relevant to his own day and, according to Hadith 16, would continue to be so until the end of days. Not only does Ibn 'Asakir use them to argue against Muslims who were reluctant to participate in jihad, but he also employs them to highlight the indirect ways in which one can participate in jihad, by sponsoring or manufacturing what jihad fighters need in order to wage jihad effectively and successfully. And like al-Sulami before him, he uses them to emphasize that jihad requires each person to correct his beliefs and practices in order to be worthy of jihad's eternal rewards. As Hadith 40

states, a jihad fighter must also be an authentic Muslim; he cannot be a hypocrite or a heretic such as a Shi'i Fatimid caliph in Egypt or one of his followers.

Conclusion

The examples we have discussed here demonstrate that an intensification and reorientation of jihad ideology began to take root in mainstream Sunni religious discourse as a direct response to the crusader invasion and in reaction to the Shi'i century. Because al-Sulami, Ibn 'Asakir, and other Sunni scholars in Syria believed that the Crusades and other Christian attacks of the eleventh century were only successful because of the *internal* political divisions and religious weaknesses in the Muslim lands, they advocated jihad against the enemies within, who were responsible for this deplorable state.⁴² In this respect, Ibn 'Asakir and his contemporaries departed from the earlier mainstream Sunni discourse on jihad, which did not tolerate its use against fellow Muslims and which was more focused on legal nuances than on literal application of selected Qur'anic verses and prophetic hadith.

While al-Sulami was concerned primarily with the enemy without, his *Kitab al-jihad* signals the first stage in this transformation and intensification of jihad ideology. He argues that spiritual purity, in the sense of cultivating sound religious beliefs and practices, is necessary for the jihad of the battlefield to be successful in this life and to yield eternal rewards in the next. His *Kitab al-jihad* ushers in the age in which an increasing number of Sunni scholars began to tie the ideology of jihad specifically to the classification of Muslims as good and bad.

(p.120) Sunni jihad propagandists in later decades and centuries, partly on their own initiative but also at the instigation of the political leadership, cemented this intensification by expanding the ideology of jihad to include direct and indirect attacks on other Muslim groups, especially Shi'is. Their powerful jihad preaching incorporated the more restrictive religious view that a proper Sunnism must reign supreme in the lands of Islam in order to defeat the Christian invaders—whether Christian princes in Spain, Normans in Sicily, or crusaders in Syria. Therefore, any Muslim group that fell outside the boundaries of this proper Sunnism were considered enemies within and had to be fought under the same righteous banner of jihad that was to be directed against the enemies without, the Christian invaders.

The discussion above helps us better understand the intensification and reorientation of Sunni jihad ideology during the crusader period, but it does not explain how or why this ideology remained normative in Sunni religious discourse long after the last crusader outpost in Syria fell in 1291. The explanation, we contend, lies in the Sunni consensus that developed in this period that only through religious renewal and reform could the Muslims turn

the tide of Christian military successes. Since Sunnism was built on the foundation of the Qur'anic admonition to "obey God and his messenger" (8:20, 46; 9:71), it was logical for Sunni scholars to blame their misfortunes on the Muslims' failure to heed God's commands and the example of his messenger. Consequently, as religious scholars turned to the Qur'an and the life of Muhammad for guidance on how to respond effectively to the crisis created by the crusader invasions, they gravitated to the militant Qur'anic passages from the Medinan phase of Muhammad's career and hadith that advocated militant jihad against unbelievers. As this material was preached to receptive audiences in Syria and elsewhere, many became convinced that their own salvation depended on their embracing Islam's militant message as they discerned it in God's word, the Qur'an, and Muhammad's example, the *sunna*.

This intensified and reoriented jihad ideology, which was effectively promoted and disseminated by Nur al-Din and his "minister of propaganda," Ibn 'Asakir, and by other Sunni scholars in Syria, demonstrates that the crusader challenge precipitated a paradigm shift within mainstream Sunni Islam that also affected perceptions of identity. Many mainstream Sunni scholars became less cautious and more assertive in judging who was inside and who was outside the Muslim fold, thus bestowing a lasting legitimacy on the duty of jihad against enemies both within and without. In short, the prevalent conditions contributed to this particular jihad rhetoric becoming normative in Sunni religious thought and to some extent definitional of the Islamic persona. Its lasting impact on Islamic identity is that the duty of fighting jihad against God's enemies—however defined—became an essential component in mainstream Sunni religious discourse and thus was easily invoked in any circumstances that could be depicted as approximating—however tendentiously—the types of challenges that Muhammad had faced in Medina, that the early community faced during the Rashidun period, or that the Muslims faced during the Crusades.

(p.121) In short, the intensification and reorientation of jihad ideology became normative in Sunni religious thought as mainstream Sunni scholars started to adopt it and promote it as part of their strategy to combat threats to the revivification of Sunnism and the restoration of Sunni supremacy after the periodic domination of the Islamic heartlands—Syria, Egypt, and Iraq—by various Shi'i, crusader, and/or Mongol Il-Khan regimes during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. The words of Ibn Taymiyya cited at the beginning of this chapter are a case in point. It is no surprise that Ibn Taymiyya's fatwas offered religious legitimacy for the many military campaigns conducted as jihads in Syria against Nizari Isma'ilis, Nusayris, and Druzes by Mamluk and Ottoman sultans.⁴³

Modern Sunni radical thought owes a great deal to this medieval intensification and reorientation of jihad ideology, too, as even a cursory survey of the jihadist literature demonstrates.⁴⁴ However, unlike their medieval and Ottoman

predecessors, who primarily targeted Shi'is as Sunnism's internal enemies, some modern Sunni radicals are quite eager to cast their net far wider and to include also a great number of their fellow Sunnis. Although many modern Muslim scholars have criticized the arguments of contemporary jihad propagandists as a uniquely modern radicalization of jihad ideology, their criticism fails to acknowledge the medieval origins of this discourse or the fact that such influential figures as Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, and 'Abdallah 'Azzam, along with their disciples, are quite cognizant of their ideology's medieval roots.⁴⁵ They enthusiastically appeal to many of the hadiths included in Ibn 'Asakir's *Forty Hadiths*; they frequently refer to Ibn Taymiyya's fatwas on combating errant or hypocritical Muslims. Modern jihadists embrace the same methodology of jihad advocacy that Ibn 'Asakir helped set up and actively disseminate and that Ibn Taymiyya did much to solidify. Moreover, like their medieval and early-modern predecessors, modern Sunni jihadists are quite certain that it is they who are the authentic Muslims, for it is they and they alone who simply and dutifully "obey God and his messenger."

Acknowledgments

This chapter draws on Suleiman A. Mourad and James E. Lindsay, *The Intensification and Reorientation of Sunni Jihad Ideology in the Crusader Period: Ibn 'Asakir (1105–1176) and His Age, with a translation of Ibn 'Asakir's Forty Hadiths for Inciting Jihad* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

Notes:

(1) . In this section of his fatwa, Ibn Taymiyya uses the term *al-rafida*, meaning "turncoats" or "traitors," as a standard epithet to describe Shi'is in general; later in his fatwa, he uses it specifically to refer to the Fatimids in a scathing rebuke of their beliefs and policies. For a complete translation and detailed analysis of this fatwa, see Mourad and Lindsay, *The Intensification*, chap. 7.

(2) . Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmu' al-fatawa*, ed. Mustafa 'Ata (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2000), 16 (pt. 28): 279–80.

(3) . Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmu' al-fatawa*, 19 (pt. 35): 77. The chapter on Ibn Taymiyya and jihad in Rudolph Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam* (Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener, 1996), 43–54, does not seriously engage Ibn Taymiyya's call for jihad against errant Muslims, nor does it specify what Ibn Taymiyya means by "Muslims."

(4) . Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmu' al-fatawa*, 16 (pt. 28): 217.

(5) . On the various strains of Shi'ism, see Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985); and Farhad Daftari,

The Ismailis: Their History and Doctrines (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

(6) . On jihad preaching in Islam, see Nial Christie and Deborah Gerish, "Parallel Preaching: Urban II and al-Sulami," *Al-Masaq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 15, no. 2 (2003): 139–48; Nial Christie and Deborah Gerish, *Preaching Holy War: Jihad and Crusade, 1095-1105* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2009); Christopher van der Krogt, "Jihad without Apologetics," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 21, no. 2 (2010): 127–47; Reuven Firestone, *Jihad: The Origin of Holy War in Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Michael Bonner, *Jihad in Islamic History: Doctrines and Practice* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006); David Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Peters, *Jihad*; and Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985). On jihad ideology before the Crusades, see Roy P. Mottahedeh and Ridwan al-Sayyid, "The Idea of the Jihad in Islam before the Crusades," in Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy P. Mottahedeh, eds., *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2001), 23–29.

(7) . Paul L. Heck, "Eschatological Scripturalism and the End of Community: The Case of Early Kharijism," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 7 (2005): 137–52.

(8) . Al-Tabari, *Jami' al-bayan fi ta'wil al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1999), 6:419–20.

(9) . Al-Shafi'i, *Kitab al-umm* (Cairo: al-Matba'a al-Kubra al-Amiriyya, 1903–7), 5:111.

(10) . A third factor not discussed in this chapter is the renewed conquests of India under Mahmud of Ghazna (d. 1030) and his successors that were explicitly depicted as jihad campaigns against the infidel Hindus. On the Ghaznavids and the conquest of India, see C. E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids: Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran, 994-1040* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1963); and Mohammad Habib, *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate* (Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, 1961), 46–47.

(11) . Nizam al-Mulk, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings: The Siyar al-Muluk or Siyasat-Nama of Nizam al-Mulk*, trans. Hubert Darke (Richmond, U.K.: Curzon, 2002), 163.

(12) . The Nizaris were famously known at that time as *al-Hashshashin*, from which the European name "Assassins" is derived.

(13) . On Muslim attitudes toward the Byzantines, see Michael Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence and Holy War: Studies in the Jihad and the Arab-Byzantine*

Frontier (New Haven, Conn.: American Oriental Society, 1996); and Nadia Maria El-Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

(14) . On al-Sulami and his *Book of Jihad*, see Niall Christie, "Motivating Listeners in the *Kitab al-Jihad* of 'Ali ibn Tahir al-Sulami (d. 1106)," *Crusades* 6 (2007): 1–14; and Paul E. Chevedden, "The View of the Crusades from Rome and Damascus: The Geo-Politics and Historical Perspectives of Pope Urban II and 'Ali ibn Tahir al-Sulami," *Oriens* 39 (2011): 257–329. Christie is preparing a new edition and translation of al-Sulami's text, which will be published by Ashgate.

(15) . Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamil fi al-ta'rikh*, ed. C. J. Tornberg (Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1966), 10:272–73.

(16) . On jihad as a manifestation of ascetic practice, see Thomas Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 168–95.

(17) . On this movement, see Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence*; and Deborah Tor, "Privatized Jihad and Public Order in the Pre-Seljuq Period: The Role of the *Mutatawwi'a*," *Iranian Studies* 38, no. 4 (2005): 555–73.

(18) . Al-Shafi'i, *Al-Risala*, ed. A. Muhammad Shakir (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1979), 363–64 (sect. 980); cf. Majid Khadduri, trans., *Islamic Jurisprudence: Shafi'i's Risala* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1961), 84.

(19) . Ibn 'Asakir, *Mu'jam al-shuyukh*, 3 vols., ed. Wafa' Taqiy al-Din (Damascus: Dar al-Basha'ir, 2000), contains descriptions of more than 1,621 male teachers whom the author had met and studied with over the course of his illustrious scholarly career. Ibn 'Asakir also composed a similar though smaller *Mu'jam* for approximately eighty of his female teachers.

(20) . See Mourad and Lindsay, *The Intensification*, chap. 3.

(21) . On the career of Zangi, see Carole Hillenbrand, "'Abominable Acts': The Career of Zengi," in Jonathan Phillips and Martin Hoch, eds., *The Second Crusade: Scope and Consequences* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2001), 111–32.

(22) . On the issues relating to the Second Crusade, see Giles Constable, "The Second Crusade as Seen by Contemporaries," *Traditio* 9 (1953): 213–79; Alan J. Forey, "The Second Crusade: Scope and Objectives," *Durham University Journal* 55 (1994): 165–75; and Martin Hoch, "The Choice of Damascus as the Objective of the Second Crusade: A Re-evaluation," in Michel Balard, ed., *Autour de la Première Croisade: Actes du Colloque de la Society for the Study of the*

Crusades and the Latin East—Clermont-Ferrand, 22–25 Juin 1995 (Paris: Sorbonne, 1996), 359–69.

(23) . See Yaacov Lev, “The Jihad of Sultan Nur al-Din of Syria (1146–1174): History and Discourse,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 35 (2008): 227–84.

(24) . See Ibn 'Asakir, *Ta'rikh madinat Dimashq*, ed. 'Umar al-'Amrawi and 'Ali Shiri (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1995–2001), 74:235. See also Jean-Michel Mouton, “Yusuf al-Fandalawi, cheikh des malékites de Damas sous les bourides,” *Revue des Études Islamiques* 51 (1983): 63–75.

(25) . For the valuable memoirs of Usama ibn Munqidh, see *Kitab al-i'tibar* (Baghdad: Maktabat al-Muthanna, 1964). An English translation is found in *The Book of Contemplation: Islam and the Crusades*, trans. Paul M. Cobb (London: Penguin, 2008). For biographical details, see Paul M. Cobb, *Usama ibn Munqidh: Warrior-Poet in the Age of the Crusades* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006).

(26) . On the Second Crusade's plan to attack Ascalon, see Martin Hoch, “The Crusaders' Strategy against Fatimid Ascalon and the 'Ascalon Project' of the Second Crusade,” in Michael Gervers, ed., *The Second Crusade and the Cistercians* (New York: St. Martin's, 1992), 119–28.

(27) . Ibn 'Asakir, *Ta'rikh Dimashq*, 43:239. The Banu Munqidh family was in control of the Shayzar castle, on the Orontes River to the west of the city of Hama, and were particularly involved with Nur al-Din's Counter-Crusade.

(28) . Nikita Elisséeff, *La description de Damas d'Ibn 'Asakir* (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1959), xxii. At the time, Damascus had a sizable Shi'i population, made up of Twelvers and Isma'ili Fatimids.

(29) . On the career of Nur al-Din, see Nikita Elisséeff, *Nur ad-Din: Un grand prince musulman de Syrie au temps des croisades (511–69 H./1118–1174)* (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1967); and Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 117–70.

(30) . See Elisséeff, *Nur ad-Din*, 3:735; and Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 119–22.

(31) . See Yasser Tabbaa, “Monuments with a Message: Propagation of Jihad under Nur al-Din,” in Vladimir P. Goss, ed., *The Meeting of Two Worlds: Cultural Exchange between East and West during the Period of the Crusades* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Medieval Institute, 1986), 223–40.

(32) . On the function of these buildings and monuments, see Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 122–31; and Yasser Tabbaa, *The Transformation of Islamic Art during the Sunni Revival* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).

(33) . Only a few traces of the building (notably the niche of the prayer hall) remain in old Damascus in what is known as the 'Asruniyya market area; see Qutayba al-Shihabi, *Mu'jam Dimashq al-tarikhi* (Damascus: Wizarat al-Thaqafa, 1999), 1:274.

(34) . Elisséeff, *La description*, xxii-xxiii; and Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 127.

(35) . See Ibn 'Asakir, *Ta'rikh Dimashq*, 57:120.

(36) . See *ibid.*, 57:123. Invoking the Abbasid caliph here underscores his symbolic importance as spiritual head of Sunnism.

(37) . On the career of Nur al-Din and his support and sponsorship of the Sunni religious establishment in Syria, see Elisséeff, *Nur ad-Din*, 3:750-79.

(38) . This work is also known as *al-Arba'un fi al-ijtihad fi iqamat al-jihad* (The Forty Hadith on the Obligation to Wage Jihad). In addition to our edition and translation in *The Intensification*, two previous editions of Ibn 'Asakir's *Forty Hadith* exist, the first by 'Abd Allah ibn Yusuf (Kuwait: Dar al-Khulafa' li al-Kitab al-Islami, 1984) and the second by Ahmad 'A. Halwani in his *Ibn 'Asakir wa dawruhu fi al-jihad didd al-Salibiyyin fi 'ahd al-dawlatayn al-Nuriyya wa al-Ayyubiyya* (Damascus: Dar al-Fida', 1991), 101-49.

(39) . Mourad and Lindsay, *The Intensification*, pt. 2.

(40) . On the many teaching sessions of Ibn 'Asakir's *Forty Hadith*, see *ibid.*, chap. 6. It is noteworthy that the colophons and dates of teaching sessions 3 and 4-9, held in 1221 and 1227-30 at different locations in Damascus, coincide with the Fifth Crusade and the Crusade of Frederick II, respectively. The best-attended teaching session, number 8, took place over two days in April 1229, one month after Frederick II had entered Jerusalem.

(41) . For a complete examination of Ibn 'Asakir's *Forty Hadith*, see *ibid.*, chap. 5. The hadith quoted below are taken from *ibid.*, pt. 2.

(42) . For examples of other Sunni scholars who promoted the radicalization of jihad after Ibn 'Asakir, see Mourad and Lindsay, *The Intensification*, chaps. 4, 6, 7; and Devin J. Stewart, "The *Maqamat* of Ahmad b. Abi Bakr b. Ahmad al-Razi al-Hanafi and the Ideology of the Counter-Crusade in Twelfth-Century Syria," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 11, no. 2 (2008): 211-32.

(43) . For an examination of many major Ottoman jurists who invoked Ibn Taymiyya's fatwa, see Mourad and Lindsay, *The Intensification*, chap. 7.

(44) . For examples of the theological and juridical reasoning of modern Sunni jihadists that draw on the Qur'an, hadith on jihad, and the thought of Ibn Taymiyya and other classical scholars, see Sayyid Qutb, "Jihad in the Cause of

God,” in A. B. al-Mehri, ed., *Milestones: Ma'alim fi al-tariq* (Birmingham, U.K.: Maktabah, 2006), 63–86; Hasan al-Banna, “Kitab al-Jihad,” in al-Mehri, *Milestones*, 217–40; 'Abdallah 'Azzam, *Join the Caravan* (London: Azzam, 2001); Osama bin Laden, *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden*, ed. Bruce Lawrence, trans. James Howarth (London: Verso, 2005); Shmuel Bar, *Warrant for Terror: Fatwas of Radical Islam and the Duty of Jihad* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006); Raymond Ibrahim, trans. and ed., *The Al Qaeda Reader* (New York: Doubleday, 2007); Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli, eds., *Al Qaeda in Its Own Words*, trans. Pascale Ghazaleh (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008).

(45) . See, for example, Mahmud Muhammad Taha, *The Second Message of Islam*, ed. and trans. Abdullahi Ahmed an-Na'im (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1987); Abdullahi Ahmed an-Na'im, *Toward an Islamic Reformation* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1990); Abdulaziz Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Khaled Abou el-Fadl, *Rebellion and Violence in Islamic Law* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and Khaled Abou el-Fadl, *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005). In his *Arguing the Just War in Islam* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), John Kelsay advocates the approach of scholars such as Taha, an-Na'im, Sachedina, and Abou el-Fadl; but see Ella Landau-Tasseron's critique of Kelsay's approach in “Is Jihad Comparable to Just War? A Review Article,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 34 (2008): 535–50.