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### Research and Writing: Chapter 11

Looking back on the crusades of the 12th and 13th century can actually be quite difficult for many in the modern era, especially considering that the ordeals so heavily involve popular salvation religions. As a person occupying a space in the modern era, I can easily look at the happenings of this period and see the clear injustice of the crusades. What strikes me the most is the overlap between moral duty and personal gain being the motivation for such grotesque violence which fueled these wars. I do not know that many can survey the crusades and find much admiration for its events. These initial thoughts provoke a fairly strong reaction in me, but I know that there is much value in looking semi-objectively into the past and seeing historical events from perspectives aside from my own.

Popular images might convey similar sentiments to mine: the crusades were barbaric, selfishly motivated, and so on. There is no denying the depraved reality of it all: innocent people were slaughtered, and more murders ensued simply because of difference of belief. The political motivation to increase empires and resources was equally corrupt. However, from a socio-cultural standpoint, there was some good which came out of it.

In the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, a fair point is raised when the authors express, “The Crusader states extended trade with the Muslim world, bringing new tastes and foods to Europe... [and] had a marked impact on the development of Western historical literature,

bringing a plethora of chronicles and eyewitness accounts.” (Baldwin, et al.) As ever-evolving societies, there are certain things that are widely accepted and agreed upon – this includes a propensity toward non-violence! However, we can also agree that from a networking angle, the hierarchical figures were right in their overarching sentiment that trade and commerce bridges must be gapped somehow. Furthermore, the kinds of advanced communication and record-keeping which was developed contributed much to that time in history. We must understand that what charged the brutality of the war was indeed the climate of impending subcultural warfare, because of the various religions of the regions and their own civil disputes. As each group began to demonize one another, brutality subsequently ensued. I believe that if these wars were not “crusades” and simply just intercultural wars, they may not have left such a bloody mark in history. The point being: there was a semblance of good which came out of this era.

Additionally, I think that we can learn from the crusades about what it means to conduct contractual relationships between groups; uncommunicated/ambiguous motive can certainly spoil cross-cultural benevolence, and certainly when religion (which simply boils down to opinion and personal conviction) is involved, we must guard against bias and foster an environment of coexistence (for lack of a better term). It is not that everyone should agree, or even that everyone should be at peace, but if there is a contractual agreement between two parties there must be a transparency in communication, motive, and some tried and true common ground.

Works Cited

Baldwin, Marshall W. , Dickson, Gary and Madden, Thomas F.. "Crusades". Encyclopedia

Britannica, 29 Mar. 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Crusades>. Accessed 10 April

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