

# The Ennobling Oath

## A Pilgrim's Reflection on the Historiography of the Knights Templar

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**Seminar#1:** The Stream of History, the Rivers of Historiography.

1. Interest in the Crusades today is deeply by the politics and ideologies of the present
2. It's not just about history—belief systems, European colonialism, race, Western/non-western traditions
3. Huntington: Christianity is key to Western Civilization: separation of church and states
4. Legitimacy on the use of force, Just War, Holy War, Jihad, Total War as “evils of evils”

**Seminar#2:** The Call of the Crusades: why we still believe but are unable to explain why.

Crusade Historiography: **1095-1599**

1. A defensive war; Muslims perceived as an existential threat
2. History of the Crusade was understood as a branch of theology—influence of the Abbey of Cluny
3. The concept of the separation of church and state from Westphalia (1648) to Philadelphia (1787)
4. Interpretation is influenced by the times of the interpreter (historian, chronicler, story teller, etc.)

**Seminar#3:** The Outremer: Islam and the Crusades

1. French for "overseas", a general name given to the Crusader states established after the First Crusade
2. Initial Crusaders became indigenous, settling into the culture after Jerusalem was re-conquered
3. Key period under discussion:
  - i. *Start: June 7<sup>th</sup>, 1099: Crusaders capture Jerusalem*
  - ii. *End: May 18, 1291: Mamluk capture Acre, expel the Crusaders*
4. Thus on each end, Christians and Muslims experienced death, dispossession & slavery because of religious beliefs.

**Seminar#4:** The Struggle Within: Europe and US cultural approach to the Crusades.

Crusade Historiography: **1600—1799**

1. The idea of the Crusades moved increasingly from the “present” to the “past”
2. But also a “past” that was colored by confessional and/or rationalist historians
3. Renaissance, Reformation, Counter-Reformation, Age of Reason, Age of Enlightenment

Crusade Historiography **1800—1950:**

4. Crusades values re-emerge but the religious calling is secularized: honor, chivalry, duty, pure, noble
5. Age of Romanticism; Victorian Age—historians and storytellers recount the “best of the Crusades”
6. Sir Walter Scott (15 August 1771 – 21 September 1832); Thomas Rowley (1721–1796)

What made America different?

1. History:
  - a. started from scratch from other powers, asked new questions
  - b. fled to build the "New Jerusalem"; always looking to the future, not past; until Vietnam, never “lost” a war
2. Geography: Washington: "our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course."

**Seminar #5:** The Scholars vs Popular View: Four basic questions every SMOTJ Knight should know how to answer—

1. What is “The Crusades” and why should we care?
2. How could Christians do this?
3. Why are the Crusades such a prominent part of history?
4. What is your narrative for being part of the modern Order of Templars?

**Seminar#6:** The Narrative of the Modern Crusades.

Crusade Historiography: **1950—Present**

1. Top historians today: Jonathan Riley Smith, Jonathan Phillips, Christopher Tyerman, Giles Constable, Thomas Asbridge