Cluster Essay

The new knighthood: Terrorism and the medieval

Daniel Wollenberg

Department of English, Binghamton University, SUNY, Binghamton, NY.

Abstract Norwegian terrorist Anders Behring Breivik describes himself as a member of a neomedieval, underground paramilitary group known as the Knights Templar. This essay addresses Breivik's manifesto's use of the medieval as a vehicle for understanding the continued importance of the Middle Ages to the formation of modern political ideas.

postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies (2014) 5, 21–33.
doi:10.1057/pmed.2014.1

On 22 July 2011, at 3:35 p.m., Anders Behring Breivik set off a car bomb in front of the office of Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg and other government buildings in Oslo. The explosion killed eight and wounded over 200 people. Less than two hours later, at a summer camp on the island of Utøya run by the Workers' Youth League, the youth division of the ruling Norwegian Labor Party, Breivik, wearing a homemade police uniform, opened fire, killing 69 and wounding 110, mostly teenagers. It was the deadliest attack in Norway since the Second World War. His trial began on 16 April 2012 and ended on 22 June of the same year.

It has been widely recognized by the international media that the fundamental question of his trial was not whether the 33-year-old was responsible for murdering 77 people in Norway on 22 July, but whether a mass murderer can be considered mentally sound and held criminally liable for his actions. If he was found to be sane, Breivik nominally faced a prison term of 21 years, which ultimately could be extended to life in prison; if insane, Breivik would be committed to a lifetime of psychiatric care. Though one might have expected the

defense to argue for the latter, Breivik struggled throughout the trial to prove his sanity, so that his ideas would not be written off as the mere delusions of a psychopathic terrorist. The only official supporters of his insanity were two court-appointed psychiatrists from the Norwegian Board of Forensic Psychiatry, whose diagnosis was discarded only two days into the trial, when it became clear that Breivik himself was arguing for his own sanity and family members of the victims wanted to see him in prison rather than in a mental institution. By the end of the trial, the prosecution was again calling for Breivik to be declared insane, perhaps to thwart Breivik's own desire for his ideas to be taken seriously.

The diagnosis of insanity prior to the trial relied primarily on Breivik's claim in his sprawling, scattered manifesto, '2083: A European Declaration of Independence' (Breivik, 2011),¹ to have been a leader of a contemporary neomedieval brotherhood, the Knights Templar, an organization that does not actually exist except in the imagination of Anders Breivik, according to both the Oslo Chief of Police, Kenneth Wilberg, and a court-appointed psychologist, Eirik Johannesen (Breivik's Terror Network Doesn't Exist: Police, 2012; Orange, 2012). Breivik's manifesto is 1518 pages long and written in English; he writes under the anglicized pseudonym Andrew Berwick and claims to write and live in London. By claiming England as his base and choosing to write in English, Breivik seeks to appeal to as many Europeans as possible and to lessen the chances that he will be seen as a marginal figure. Many of the more mainstream, conservative, Anglo-European voices on Muslim populations in contemporary Europe write in English.² The manifesto derives its title from the year in which Breivik believes Muslims will outnumber Christians in France and the Netherlands (it also happens to correspond with the 400th anniversary of the Battle of Vienna, an event vital to Breivik's historiography). Breivik wrote the manifesto over a period of several years and distributed it electronically on the day of the attacks. Beyond its constant stream of diatribes against European and American leftist intellectuals and politicians, some of its material includes: historiographical surveys that focus on clashes between Christians and Muslims; personal 'interviews' in which Breivik appears to imagine himself being interviewed; extensive instructions on arms and bomb manufacturing; cut-and-pasted portions of other manifestos (including the Unabomber's); Web pages and books Breivik consulted; personal journal entries about his business ventures, friends and family; photographs of himself; and awards and honors for the Templars. The manifesto reads as any non-professional 1500-page document might; its range of interests is impressive but overwhelming, and Breivik's full-throated argument often gets lost in a sea of detritus whose connection to the main purpose of the manifesto is often obscure.

The most strident call to arms in '2083' does not appear at the very beginning of the manifesto, where one might expect it, but halfway through the work: 'The time for dialogue is over. We gave peace a chance. The time for armed resistance has come. PCCTS [Pauperes commilitones Christi Templique

1 See Breivik's manifesto at: publicintelligence.net/anders-behring-breiviks-complete-manifesto-2083-a-european-declaration-of-independence/.

2 See Bawer (2006), Berlinski (2007) and Caldwell (2009). London mayor Boris Johnson has admitted that some of Breivik's ideas are 'rooted ... in the political discourse of the Anglosphere,' especially 'blog-post threads that you will find in the media, especially the "conservative" media in Britain' (Johnson, 2011).

Solomonici, The Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon, the full name of the Knights Templar], Knights Templar on behalf of the free peoples of Europe, hereby declare a pre-emptive war against the cultural Marxist/multiculturalist regimes of Western Europe' (816).³ This directive of pre-emptive strikes against the European left, which would make the continent inhospitable to Muslims, and to reclaim Europe for 'native' Europeans, became a horrifying reality in July 2011. In Breivik's mind he had begun waging a new crusade, an 'Indigenous Rights Movement and a pan-European Crusader Movement,' that he fully expected others to join (832). The title page of '2083' explicitly references Bernard of Clairvaux's 1130s apologia for the order of the Knights Templar, *De Laude Novae Militiae* ('In Praise of the New Knighthood'). Breivik is the 'Justiciar Knight Commander for Knights Templar Europe and one of several leaders of the National and pan-European Patriotic Resistance Movement' (9).

3 Numbers in parentheses refer to the PDF page numbers of Breivik's manifesto, unless otherwise noted.

On the reality of (his) Templars, Breivik has, of course, prevaricated. In the manifesto, presumably trying to clear himself of any criminal liability (this section must have been written well before he conceived of the 22 July attacks), he calls the Templars a 'hypothetical fiction group' and refers to himself as a 'sci-fi enthusiast' who writes from a fiction writer's perspective (767). However, according to Breivik's trial testimony, the Templars are not mere fantasy but 'a real network,' despite the fact that prosecutors and police have found no tangible evidence of its existence. Perhaps both the prosecution and Breivik are being somewhat naïve. Even if a right-wing paramilitary group called the Templars was cut out of whole cloth by Breivik, the 'Templars' have thrived as a pervasive trope in popular culture for at least the last decade. Despite (or perhaps because of) the actual Templars' existence in what can at times appear to be a hazy and remote medieval past, their enduring appeal seems to be grounded in their unique mixture of fidelity to elite peerage groups and the Church, their virtuosity as pugnacious and skilled warfighters, and the enigmatic air surrounding their banking practices and sudden demise in the fourteenth century. Today there is a Templar industry: from *The Da Vinci Code* to hobbyist websites to videogames to a Mexican drug cartel (known as the Caballeros Templarios) to English soccer fans, the fantasy of the crusading warrior-monk is ubiquitous. The pervasiveness of the Templars in popular culture famously inspired Umberto Eco to write in *Foucault's Pendulum* that you can always tell a lunatic 'by the liberties he takes with common sense, by his flashes of inspiration, and by the fact that sooner or later he brings up the Templars' (Eco, 1988, 58). The Templars' appeal to such a wide array of enthusiasts can be traced to the inherent seriousness of the medieval organization. The 'Templars' layer a name, an organization, a uniform, a history and a sense of secret but momentous purpose on top of otherwise vague notions of knighthood. Breivik laments the decline of knighthood as having 'gradually eroded into a corrupt tradition' (1069); calling himself a 'Templar' as opposed to just a 'knight' lends a sense of order and legitimacy to an image that can

be a very mixed bag, being anything from the Green Knight to Sir Mick Jagger to the 'Knights Who Say Ni!' in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*.

Even if an underground network of militant nationalists known as the 'Templars' does not exist, Breivik is tapping into the broader phenomenon of widespread interest in the Knights Templar to appeal, without having to explain very much about what they stand for, to those curious about the anti-immigration and anti-Islamic movements. Breivik imagines the medieval Templar as the ideal warrior: penitent, powerful, loyal and determined. Their 'principles' of 'strength and honor, courage and martyrdom' drew him to them (812), and their *modus operandi*, defending Christendom against all enemies, is precisely Breivik's own goal. Breivik makes no claims to continuity between his Templars and the medieval Knights Templar. Instead, he uses their name, history and symbology as a legitimization of his positions, a moral defense of his goals, and a cementing of group cohesion, attempting to bring together like-minded cohorts. As Eric Hobsbawm has shown, the use of history as a 'legitimater of action' is central to all invented traditions (Hobsbawm, 1983, 12), and in Breivik's manifesto the medieval past is central to his vision of an ideal future.

Because the Middle Ages are vital to Breivik's radical worldview, it is essential to address both Breivik's employment and manipulation of medieval sources as well as broader ideas from both the left and the right on the medieval period that either resemble Breivik's writings or had a direct impact on him. In order to illuminate fantasies of the medieval from broader perspectives, I will turn to two conceptions of the medieval: first, the characterization of the medieval 'collective will' by scholars on nations and nationalism; and second, recent characterizations of the Crusades as defensive wars and their impact on Breivik's thinking. In no way do I mean to imply that any of the secondary works I examine here had any direct impact (or even indirect impact, unless explicitly stated by Breivik) on the thoughts and crimes of Anders Breivik.

The Middle Ages and the Fantasy of the Collective Will

In his groundbreaking cultural history of the Renaissance, nineteenth-century Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt paints the Middle Ages as a foil to the period under consideration:

In the Middle Ages, both sides of human consciousness – that which turned within as that which was turned without – lay dreaming or half awake beneath a common veil. The veil was woven of faith, illusion, and childish prepossession, through which the world and history were seen clad in strange hues. Man was conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family, or corporation – only through some general category.
(Burckhardt, 1995, 87)

The characterization of the Middle Ages as a time of collective will and the postmedieval period as marked by the emergence of the 'human' and human beings' awareness of themselves as individuals is all too familiar and perennially irksome to medievalists due to the idea's pervasiveness in both academia and popular culture. The introduction to early modern literature in the 8th edition of the *Norton Anthology of English Literature* is emblematic in its description of a universal, sacral medieval identity: 'In 1485, most English people would have devoted little thought to their national identity. If asked to describe their sense of belonging, they would probably have spoken first of the international community of Christendom, and secondly of their local region' (Greenblatt, 2006, 496). According to the *Norton's* account, prior to the Reformation there were no 'others,' because 'until recently [they had] been more or less the same, that is, the Catholics of western Christendom' (Greenblatt, 2006, 496). It is only after the Reformation that Englishness emerges as a defining identity available to a newly emerging and self-consciously national community.

The idea of an 'unselfconscious coherence' of pre-modern Western Europe has been central to nonmedievalist scholarship on periodization, the nation and identity (see Anderson, 1991, 16). Literature on the nation and nationalism (generally by social scientists) tends to emphasize the newness of the nation-state and an acute break between the modern world and the premodern world. 'Modernist' theorists writing on nations and nationalism such as Benedict Anderson, Liah Greenfeld, Eric Hobsbawm and Ernest Gellner have dismissed the possibility of the premodern nation.⁴ In this metanarrative of the modern world, along with mass communication, the industrial revolution and broader political participation, the nation-state is one of the key aspects distinguishing the new from the old, or the medieval from the modern. In such schema, the medieval world is typically glossed and compartmentalized to fit an assumed narrative rather than seriously studied. While Gellner recognizes that the 'self-image of nationalism involves the stress of folk, folklore, [and] popular culture,' and that 'nationalism becomes important precisely when these things become artificial,' he does not examine the medieval period from which many of these artificial traditions purport to emerge (Gellner, 1965, 162). Even if we concede (with Hobsbawm) that the 'nation' is an exclusively modern phenomenon, this conclusion does not quite help us uncover the prevailing assumptions by European nationalists that their nation's origins are organic and permanent and either precede history or stem from the (often) medieval past (Hobsbawm, 1983, 10–14). Although Anderson recognizes that the 'objective modernity of nations to the historian's eye' does not affect their apparent 'subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists,' he predicates the very concept of the nation on the newness of the form when 'sacred communities integrated by old sacred languages were gradually fragmented, pluralized, and territorialized' (Anderson, 1991, 5, 19). Yet, as Jeffrey Cohen argues, just as modernists remind us that we cannot speak

4 By 'modernist' I mean the theory, widely held by social scientists, that nationalism is an inherently modern ideology that only emerged in the second half of the eighteenth century in Western Europe and the United States, and that nations and nationalism are integral to the modern world. See Smith (1998), Greenfeld (1992), Hobsbawm (1992) and Gellner (1983).

of modern communities as ‘immemorial, continuous, and unchanged,’ we must also consider medieval groups as possessing ‘no stable or core essence,’ because like modern communities they too have an ‘enduring status as a collective’ that ‘belongs to the realm of fantasy, where it nonetheless demonstrates a powerful ability to give substance and historical stability to what is ultimately impalpable’ (Cohen, 2006, 4). Medieval communities did not, as Anderson has suggested, have an ‘unselfconscious coherence.’ Collective experiences were consistently reshaped and redefined to give order to the world’s disorder. Breivik’s vision of a unified Europe inhabited and run by ‘indigenous’ Europeans is a self-conscious community of wholeness not unlike the ‘universal sacral West’ proposed by Anderson and other constructivists (Lavezzo, 2004, vii–viii). Breivik envisages a world dominated by a single identity that overrides and dwarfs other competing allegiances (to nation, local region, political party and so on). His characterization of Christendom, Europe and the West as a unified whole where individual national identities are of merely nominal significance, superseded by a pan-European identity, echoes erroneous characterizations of medieval Western Europe by leading theorists of the nation and nationalism.

Liah Greenfeld’s characterization of the absolute difference between medieval and postmedieval identities serves as an illustrative example of the ‘modernist’ narrative. For Greenfeld, national sentiment only emerged in England (where ‘the birth of nations’ took place) in the first third of the sixteenth century; before that century, there was only a Christian identity available for the English (Greenfeld, 1992, 23). Greenfeld juxtaposes the positions of Thomas More and Henry VIII as absolute worldviews. More’s idea of England, the Catholic Church and the Papacy represents a belief in ‘the unity of Christendom,’ and was at its core a medieval perspective: the pre-nationalist (More) and the nationalist (Henry VIII and More’s adversaries) ‘defined men’s very identities’ and

no intermediate position was possible between them; there was a cognitive abyss, a clear break in continuity. The unified world Sir Thomas More saw through his inner vision was a vanishing world, and he was a lonely figure among the growing numbers of neophytes of the new, national, faith.

(Greenfeld, 1992, 30)

For Greenfeld, More was representative of the pre-nationalist era as above all else a Christian, as ‘this was his identity, and all his roles, functions and commitments that did not derive from it’ were merely incidental to that identity. Thus for Greenfeld, in the postmedieval, nationalist period every person makes a conscious, rational choice to belong to a community, whereas in the medieval, pre-nationalist period no choices were available because there was only one possible identity and it entirely superseded all other potentially competing identities.

Unlike many other extreme right-wing groups and individuals, Breivik is no ethno-nationalist. Despite his insistence that he is a ‘patriot’ and a ‘nationalist,’

Breivik's manifesto minimizes loyalties to nations (Norway is not addressed in the manifesto to a greater degree than other Western European nations) in lieu of a more intense devotion to Western Europe as a singular union. When Breivik writes that he is a nationalist, what he means is that he is dedicated to the rich cultural heritage of the Christian West. The 'free indigenous peoples of Europe' that Breivik's Templars defend are in direct conflict with the 'multiculturalist regimes' in power throughout Western Europe. Breivik sees an essential difference between French Christians and French Muslims, but he sees no essential difference between traditional French and English cultures. The prevalent theme of the 15 stated goals of his Templars in '2083' is the preservation of European culture, traditions and heritage and the 'genocide' that is being inflicted on Christian Europeans. His Knights Templar is a 'pan-European nationalist military order' whose founding members hail from England, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Greece, Russia, Norway, Serbia, Sweden, Belgium and 'European' America, by which Breivik appears to mean Americans of European descent. Breivik describes himself as 'English Protestant,' not Norwegian (817).

Self-consciously moving beyond the rhetoric of traditional right extremists, Breivik dismisses 'race' as the defining characteristic of Europeans in favor of 'culture.' While he singles out the 'Men of the North' – 'the Danes, the Norsemen, the English, and the Celts' – as 'hardy and selfreliant' [sic] peoples who form 'the core of the Counterjihad' (242), they are merely one sub-group 'resisting and fighting Islamification' among the other equally valiant cultures and historical heroes of Western Europe such as Pope Urban II and Charles Martel of France, St James the Moorslayer and El Cid of the Iberian Peninsula, and Vlad Țepeș of Romania (242–244). When Breivik refers to that which he seeks to defend, he uses the first-person plural to refer to all of Western Europe. At the opening of his manifesto he writes, 'It is not only our right but also our duty to contribute to preserve our identity, our culture, and our national sovereignty by preventing the ongoing Islamisation' (9). Breivik's thinking is paradoxical; he is a nationalist without national borders. He imagines Western Europe as a single community juggling national and Christian loyalties. Breivik's definition of nationalism as 'cultural self-confidence' (5) means taking pride in 'traditional' Western European culture; having 'cultural self-confidence' means accepting and glorifying the West's past instead of defaming it. Here Breivik echoes other voices on the far and even mainstream right who use as a starting point for a variety of arguments the denigration of the past by the left and academia. For example, John Howard, the Prime Minister of Australia between 1996 and 2007, has spoken of the 'need to guard against the rewriting of Australian political history ... to ensure that our history as a nation is not written definitively by those who take the view that we should apologize for most of it' (McKenna, 1997).

The European far right in general has shifted its focus in the last few decades away from rhetoric espousing racial purity towards calls for the preservation

of cultural purity. However, what Breivik envisions is a very different kind of 'nationalism' and right nationalist rhetoric from the kind championed by other far right nationalists like Jean-Marie Le Pen and his daughter Marine Le Pen in France and the New Right in England. Founder of the National Front, France's far-right party, Jean-Marie Le Pen has explicitly linked cultural and ethnic homogeneity with nations' strength. He writes, 'The more homogenous a country, the more it possesses an historic density, the more it develops an energy which is proportional to the size of its population.' Le Pen rejects multiculturalism and believes that all peoples 'are the products of an historical evolution and, just like individuals, they have a past, they have origins, their own characters and a singular destiny' (Marcus, 1995, 101, 106). Although Le Pen, like Breivik, inevitably and persistently points to the medieval past as a legitimization, analog and inspiration for today's 'France,' using the imagery of the Franks defeating the Saracens at Poitiers or the Christian forces defeating the Turks at Lepanto and at the gates of Vienna, he does so in order to make a point about French strength rather than the culture of Western Europe (Marcus, 1995, 105). But Breivik is not stridently patriotic for one people or one nation. Breivik's 'patriotism' (his word) is on behalf of a united Christian Europe that resembles Benedict Anderson's universal sacral West more so than Le Pen's radical French nationalism or strands of Nordic racism of the earlier twentieth century.

Though a radical right-wing politician like Jean-Marie Le Pen boasts that France's heritage stretches back uninterrupted to Clovis and that France 'is one of the two oldest nations on earth, along with China,' and although, like Le Pen, other nationalists consistently turn to the Middle Ages to frame a historical narrative for and basis of their contemporary far right politics, what Breivik represents is something both like and unlike his fellow far right nationalists (see Gourevitch, 2012). He also looks back to the medieval period for affirmation and inspiration, but the Middle Ages that he sees is not a period that buttresses an individual nation's ends. Instead, it is a place that distinctly lacks a nationalist spirit and harbors a broader, more homogenized Christian European culture. Essentially, the goal of Breivik's 'crusade' is not to conquer the Holy Land nor to subdue Islamic sovereignties but to establish a kind of European sacral wholeness that left constructivists have located in the Middle Ages.

The Crusades and the Right

Anti-immigration nationalists in Norway label themselves as 'resistance' movements and commonly cite the resistance against the Nazi occupation of Norway in the Second World War as their model and basis of legitimacy. The 'new' intruders are, of course, Muslims, and anti-immigrant activists imagine them as a

‘Muslim army of conquest,’ not unlike the invading Nazi army (Bjørge, 1997, 60; Henkel, 2012, 353–355). Breivik ignores World War II and instead devotes a significant portion of his manifesto to the Crusades, representing them as the chief precursor and analog of contemporary Europe’s dilemma. The Crusades are depicted in ‘2083’ as necessary, just, defensive wars against encroaching Muslim forces with clear corollaries to Europe’s contemporary situation. They are positioned to legitimize his mission to defend ‘indigenous’ European traditions and peoples.

To make his case, Breivik relies heavily on the work of American historian Thomas Madden, specifically his *Concise History of the Crusades* (1999, rev. 2005) and a 2004 interview, ‘What the Crusades Were Really Like,’ that Madden gave with Zenit, a news agency that covers the Catholic Church and examines world news from the perspective of the Vatican. Spurred by prominent crusade historian Jonathan Riley-Smith, whose work since the late 1970s has stressed the authentically religious nature of the Crusades and Crusaders and is dismissive of Marxist and liberal Crusade historians, Madden insists that the Crusades were defensive wars waged by pious Christians committed to their faith and the sincerity of their cause (Riley-Smith, 2005, 304–309). For Madden, the Crusades ‘were not the brainchild of an ambitious pope or rapacious knights but a response to more than four centuries of conquests in which Muslims had already captured two-thirds of the old Christian world. At some point, Christianity as a faith and a culture had to defend itself or be subsumed by Islam. The Crusades were that defense’ (Madden, [2002] 2011). Madden’s Zenit interview is essential for Breivik because, as Breivik (copying almost verbatim from Zenit) characterizes it, it purports to explode commonly accepted Western ‘myths’ about the Crusades. Far from being (as Madden characterizes Steven Runciman’s position) ‘the West’s first colonial venture’ and ‘nothing more than destructive wars of greed cynically covered in a thin veneer of pious platitudes,’ for Madden the Crusades were fought by mostly authentically Christian men acting out of ‘piety, charity, and love’ who were ‘defending their world’ (Madden, 1999, 213; Madden, 2005, 219–220). Zenit’s (and thus Breivik’s) summation of Madden’s interview is that ‘crusaders were not unprovoked aggressors, greedy marauders, or medieval colonists, as portrayed in some history books’ (‘What the Crusades Were Really Like’, 2004a) – though, perhaps predictably, no specific book is cited as evidence. Breivik’s description of Europe’s contemporary dilemma – the threat of the loss of Christian European identity, culture and sovereignty to Muslim invaders – very closely resembles the circumstances of medieval Europe, as Breivik sees it.

Madden contends that Islamists and Western leftist scholars have stripped the Crusades of their uniquely medieval nature and unjustly retrofitted them to modern agendas, and he insists that there are fundamental inconsonances between the medieval and modern worlds. Nevertheless, his portrayal of the left’s abuses of the legacy of the Crusades is clearly attractive to Breivik,

who accepts Madden's Crusades 'myths' wholesale and ignores his warnings wholesale. By labeling himself a Templar, Breivik positions himself as the same kind of defender of Western European Christendom as Madden's authentically pious crusader soldiers. Breivik's 'pre-emptive' war against 'cultural Marxist' and 'multiculturalist regimes of Europe' must be waged to 'repel, defeat, or weaken an ongoing Islamic invasion/colonization' (816). Like the Crusades, this war is justified because it is a war of 'self-defence.' From Madden, Breivik moves to quoting the work of Robert Spencer, a provocative Islamophobic author – he published in 2005 *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades)* – and blogger (*Jihad Watch*)⁵ who argues that Westerners ought to 'take pride' in their past because 'they have a culture and a history of which they can and should be grateful ... they are not the children and grandchildren of oppressors and villains ... their homes and families are worth defending against those who want to take them away, and are willing to kill to do so' (EWTN, 2006). Breivik moves from the scholarly Madden, who provides the intellectual groundwork for thinking of the crusades as an authentic holy war fought defensively and with just cause, to the instigator Robert Spencer, who takes the 'Crusades-as-defense' argument and positions the West today as the 'Modern Aftermath of the Crusades,' the headline on his Zenit interview. For Spencer, the past is never truly past and it is not a history of shameful exploitation, but the work of heroes whom we should be proud of and embrace. When Breivik defines nationalism as 'cultural self-confidence,' he draws on Spencer's call for Europe to embrace and glorify its medieval past and echoes Jean-Marie Le Pen, who has claimed that the National Front 'accepts all of France's past' (Marcus, 1995, 103).

5 See *Jihad Watch* here: www.jihadwatch.org/.

Surely we may come closer to the realities of the Crusades if we look somewhere between Runciman's cynical, moralizing portrayal of them⁶ and Madden's reaction to Runciman. Such a mediatory stance is taken by Christopher Tyerman, who reminds us that the Crusades were not a monolithic event experienced in the same way by all Christians but 'adopted and adapted by [the faithful] for reasons pious, sordid, noble, selfish, heroic or hypocritical' (Tyerman, 1998, 33). Different individual witnesses to the Crusades experienced them and reacted to them in very different ways, and there can be no single explanation of all of the ideologies and actions of the Crusades. The idea that all people all believed in a single faith or ideology and all acted according to the same motivations can mold easily digestible narratives, but misconstrue the complexities of both the past and present.

6 Three of Steven Runciman's more notorious declarations (they irk both Madden and Tyerman) are that: (i) the 'Holy War itself was nothing more than a long act of intolerance in the name of God, which is a sin against the Holy Ghost'; (ii) 'there never was a greater crime against humanity than the Fourth

On Friday, 24 August 2012, Anders Behring Breivik was declared sane. As a result, he was sentenced to 21 years in prison, Norway's maximum prison sentence. The sentence had the paradoxical effect of satisfying most Norwegians, including victims' families, as well as Breivik himself. As the sentence was read in court, the roughly 40 relatives and survivors in the courtroom nodded in

approval; at the same time, Breivik smirked and raised his clenched fist in the air (Lewis, 2012). The reputations of the doctors who diagnosed the terrorist with psychotic paranoid schizophrenia have been ruined.

Militia est Vita

In a manuscript painting in British Library Harley 3244 (folios 27v, 28r), in which a mounted knight on the right folio page defends virtues such as charity and good will against the 69 vices on the left folio page, a red inscription at the top of the right page reads, 'militia est vita hominis super terram.'⁷ Human life on earth is *militia*: a constant campaign or struggle of the knight on the right page against the threatening vices on the left page. The vices on the left folio page are boxed in, suggesting their permanence as afflictions against humankind, whereas the virtues on the right are free-floating, suggesting the permanent need for men like the mounted knight to ceaselessly defend them. When Breivik looks left, he sees just such demons, boxed in place, forever ready to destroy the world of the virtuous knight on the right folio page. As a pious soldier, that knight is the ideal defender of Christendom.

Bernard of Clairvaux calls for a new kind of knight, the Templar, to be 'God's minister in the punishment of evil doers and the praise of well doers' and justifies their actions by praising such knights as 'evil-killers' and not 'man-killers' (Bernard of Clairvaux, 2000, 39). Anders Breivik sees himself as the *new* new knighthood, a rebirth of Bernard's ideal. His murder of 77 people, from his perspective, makes him not a 'man-killer' but an 'evil-killer.' His violence, like the violence of the mounted knight on the right folio page in Harley 3244, was noble and heroic violence, carried out by right in the name of a higher good. Bernard's Manichean absolutes of just and unjust killing seduce the modern would-be 'medieval knight' into a totalizing rhetoric that ignores complexities and moral relativity. Absolute justice and absolute evil are the comforts offered by Bernard's Middle Ages. His new knighthood is for men like Breivik: fighting on behalf of a united Christian Europe and devoted to a defensive war against ever-encroaching enemies; or, the Crusades, again.

About the Author

Daniel Wollenberg is a lecturer in English and the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Binghamton University, SUNY. His interests include nationalism, Middle English romance and chronicles, and the use of medieval imagery and rhetoric in contemporary political discourse. He has forthcoming articles on Guy of Warwick and post-Conquest rhetoric about the Danes and about cultural racism and pan-Europeanism on the far right (E-mail: dwollen@binghamton.edu).

Crusade'; and (iii) 'Seen in the perspective of history, the whole Crusading movement was a vast fiasco.' See Runciman (1951–1954, 3: 480, 130, 469).

7 This manuscript painting is discussed in Kaeuper (2009, 1–4). The manuscript images can be viewed at: www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=21478.

References

- Anderson, B. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition. New York: Verso.
- Bawer, B. 2006. *While Europe Slept: How Radical Islam is Destroying the West from Within*. New York: Doubleday.
- Berlinksi, C. 2007. *Menace in Europe: Why the Continent's Crisis is America's, Too*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Bernard of Clairvaux. 2000. *In Praise of the New Knighthood: A Treatise on the Knights Templar and the Holy Places of Jerusalem*, trans. M.C. Greenia. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications.
- Björgo, T. 1997. The 'Invaders,' 'the Traitors,' and 'the Resistance Movement': The Extreme Right's Conceptualisation of Opponents and Self in Scandinavia. In *The Politics of Multiculturalism in the New Europe: Racism, Identity, and Community*, eds. T. Modood, and P. Werbner. London: Zen Books.
- Breivik, A.B. 2011. 2083 – A European Declaration of Independence, *public intelligence*, 28 July, <http://publicintelligence.net/anders-behring-breiviks-complete-manifesto-2083-a-european-declaration-of-independence/>.
- Breivik's Terror Network Doesn't Exist: Police. 2012. *The Local: Norway's News in English*, 30 May, <http://www.thelocal.no/20120530/breiviks-terror-network-doesnt-exist-norwegian-police>.
- Burkhardt, J. 1995. *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*. London: Phaidon Press.
- Caldwell, C. 2009. *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam, and the West*. New York: Anchor.
- Cohen, J.J. 2006. *Hybridity, Identity, and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain: On Difficult Middles*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Eco, U. 1988. *Foucault's Pendulum*, trans. W. Weaver. New York: Ballantine.
- EWTN. 2006. Modern Aftermath of the Crusades: Robert Spencer on the Battles Still Being Waged. EWTN: *Global Catholic Network*, 11 March, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/CHISTORY/zaftcrus.htm>.
- Gellner, E. 1965. *Thought and Change*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Gellner, E. 1983. *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Gourevitch, P. 2012. Once More Unto the Breach: The Other Winner of France's Election. *Harper's Magazine*, July: 53–54.
- Greenblatt, S. 2006. The Sixteenth Century: 1485–1603. In *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. S. Greenblatt. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Greenfeld, L. 1992. *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Henkel, H. 2012. The Political Anthropology of Scandinavia after July 22, 2011. *American Anthropologist* 114(2): 353–355.
- Hobsbawm, E.J. 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Hobsbawm, E.J. 1992. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Johnson, B. 2011. Anders Breivik: There is Nothing to Study in the Mind of Norway's Mass Killer. *The Telegraph*, 25 July, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/borisjohnson/8658872/Anders-Breivik-There-is-nothing-to-study-in-the-mind-of-Norways-mass-killer.html>.

- Kaeuper, R. 2009. *Holy Warriors: The Religious Ideology of Chivalry*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Lavezzo, K. 2004. Introduction. In *Imagining a Medieval English Nation*, ed. K. Lavezzo, 7–34. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Lewis, M. 2012. Why Norway is Satisfied with Breivik's Sentence. *Time*, 27 August, <http://world.time.com/2012/08/27/why-norway-is-satisfied-with-breiviks-sentence/>.
- Madden, T. 1999. *A Concise History of the Crusades*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Madden, T. [2002] 2011. The Real History of the Crusades. *Crisis Magazine*, 19 March, <http://www.crisismagazine.com/2011/the-real-history-of-the-crusades>.
- Madden, T. 2005. *The New Concise History of the Crusades*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Marcus, J. 1995. *The National Front and French Politics: The Resistible Rise of Jean-Marie Le Pen*. New York: New York University Press.
- McKenna, M. 1997. Different Perspectives on Black Armband History. *Parliament of Australia Library*, http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/RP9798/98RP05.
- Orange, R. 2012. Anders Behring Breivik is Lying, not Delusional. *The Telegraph*, 11 June, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/norway/9324267/Anders-Behring-Breivik-is-lying-not-delusional.html>.
- Riley-Smith, J. 2005. *The Crusades: A History*, 2nd edn. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Runciman, S. 1951–1954. *A History of the Crusades*, 3 vols. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, A. 1998. *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism*. London: Routledge.
- Tyerman, C. 1998. *The Invention of the Crusades*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.
- What the Crusades Were Really Like. 2004a. (Part 1): Thomas Madden Dispels Myths. *Zenit.org*, 10 October, <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/what-the-crusades-were-really-like-part-1>.
- What the Crusades Were Really Like. 2004b. (Part 2): Thomas Madden Dispels Myths. *Zenit.org*, 10 October, <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/what-the-crusades-were-really-like-part-2>.