

# Al-Franj: the Crusaders in the Levant | Culture in the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem

“The Templars would evacuate the little adjoining mosque so that I might pray in it.”

Accounts in Ibn Jubayr's Travels and in Usamah Ibn Munqidh's Memoirs, present the perspective of the Muslim community. The writer, diplomat and politician Usamah (487–583 / 1095–1188), who lived at Shayzar Castle, was personally acquainted with Nur al-Din and Saladin, as well as their Frankish opponents. He describes a visit to Jerusalem: 'When I used to enter the Aqsa Mosque, which was occupied by the Templars, who were my friends, the Templars would evacuate the little adjoining mosque so that I might pray in it.' One day as Usamah stood to pray a Frank interrupted his prayers and forced him to pray towards the east. Usamah's Templar friends repelled the Frank and apologised to him saying “This is a stranger who has only recently arrived from the land of the Franks and he has never before seen anyone praying except eastward.”



**Name:**  
Frankish Letter

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 575–79 / AD 1180–8 Crusader

**Details:**  
Islamic Museum, al-Aqsa Mosque / al-Haram al-Sharif  
Jerusalem

**Justification:**  
The letter explains, 'Plans are being set to deport a disgraced Templar from the Holy Land'.

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**Name:**  
Sword

**Dynasty:**  
About hegira 6th century / AD 12th century Crusader

**Details:**  
Burrell Collection, Glasgow Museums  
Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom

**Justification:**  
A typical example of a sword used by Crusader cavalrymen.

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**Name:**  
Sword

**Dynasty:**  
About hegira 6th century / AD 12th century Crusader

**Details:**  
Burrell Collection, Glasgow Museums  
Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom

**Justification:**  
Detail of a Crusader-period sword handle showing the pommel.

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**Name:**  
Prick spur

**Dynasty:**

About hegira 6th century / AD 12th century Crusader

**Details:**

Burrell Collection, Glasgow Museums  
Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom

**Justification:**

A typical example of a prick spur used by Crusader cavalrymen.

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**Name:**

Aqsa Mosque

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 65–96 / AD 685–715 Built in the Umayyad period; renovated in the Abbasid, Fatimid, Ayyubid, Mamluk and Ottoman periods

**Details:**

Jerusalem

**Justification:**

The encounter between Usamah and his Templar friend regarding the rituals of prayer took place in the Aqsa Mosque, known as the first of the two qiblas (that is the direction of prayer) and the third most holy place after Mecca and Medina.

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