by 1172. (See Map 6.1.) At war continuously with Christian Spanish rulers, in 1212 they suffered a terrible defeat. For the Christian victors, the battle was known simply by its place name, Las Navas de Tolosa; but for the Almohads, it was known as “The Punishment.” It was the beginning of the end of al-Andalus.

The Muslims were more successful in the shadow of the Crusader States. There, emboldened by the failure of the Second Crusade (see p. 173), Nur al-Din (r. 1146–1174), son of Zangi, invaded Antioch. Soon his forces were occupying all the territory east of the Orontes River (see Map 5.4 on p. 173) and absorbing the entire county of Edessa. In 1154 he seized Damascus and began to carry out his goal of reuniting Syria and Egypt under his Sunni Muslim—rather than Fatimid Shi’ite—rule. During the 1160s, Nur al-Din’s general Shirkuh led three successful military expeditions into Egypt accompanied by Shirkuh’s nephew Saladin (r. 1171–1193). In 1169, without formally deposing the Fatimid caliph, Shirkuh took over the powerful position of Egyptian vizier. Shortly thereafter, when Shirkuh died, Saladin succeeded him, and when in 1171 the Fatimid caliph died, Saladin simply had the name of the (more-or-less powerless, but Sunni) Abbasid caliph substituted for that of the Fatimid. Saladin was now ruler of Egypt, though ostensibly in the name of Nur al-Din.

Little wonder that when Nur al-Din died three years later, Saladin was ready to take over Syria. By 1183 he was master of Egypt, most of Syria, and part of Iraq. Like the Almohads, Saladin was determined to reform the faith along the Sunni model and to wage jihad against the Christian states in his backyard. Above all he wanted to recover Jerusalem, and in 1187, at the battle of Hattin, he succeeded. The Christian army was badly defeated, the Crusader States reduced to a few port cities. See Map 6.2. For about a half-century