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The Crusades, c. 1071–c. 1291

The aim of this book is to provide for the student and general reader a concise history of the crusades – whose chief goal was the liberation and preservation of the ‘holy places’ of the Middle East – from the first calls to arms in the late eleventh century to the fall of the last crusader strongholds in Syria and Palestine in 1291.

Professor Richard considers the consequences of the crusades, such as the establishment of the Latin east, and its organisation into a group of feudal states, as well as crusading contacts with the Muslim world, eastern Christians, Byzantines and Mongols. Also considered are the organisation of expeditions, the financing of such expeditionary forces, and the organisation of operations and supply. Jean Richard is the *doyen* of crusader historians and this work, the distillation of over forty years’ research and contemplation, is the only one of its kind in English.

JEAN RICHARD is Emeritus Professor at the University of Dijon and a member of the Institut de France. He is the author of many classic books on the period of the crusades, including *Saint Louis* (published under the title *Saint Louis: Crusader King of France*, Cambridge, 1992).

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JEAN RICHARD
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PREFACE

That the crusades have been and still are studied by so many historians and hold so much interest for the general reader is probably due to the sheer scale of the historical phenomenon they represent. They caused a massive movement of people, at the cost of a scarcely conceivable effort, and their main driving force was the Christian faith. They pose many questions, which have received very different answers; the documentation for them is uneven, but its abundance reveals that contemporaries were aware of the exceptional nature of these enterprises.

At the start of my study of the crusades, I should define the scope of my enquiry. The crusade, in the strict meaning of the term, is an expedition, essentially military, regarded by the papacy as a meritorious work and endowed by it with spiritual privileges granted to the combatants and to those who participated in their enterprise. These privileges were first granted to those who went to the East and in particular to the Holy Places, but they were also granted for other operations launched within Christendom against heretics or enemies of the Church of Rome and on its frontiers against pagans and the infidel. The appearance of a Latin empire of Constantinople was linked to a crusade; crusades were proposed against the Byzantine empire as well as in its support.

I have chosen to confine myself here to the expeditions directed against the Muslim powers of the East with the dual aim of defending the Christians against the Turkish invasion and of securing to Christendom possession of the Holy Land, regarded as unlawfully occupied by the infidel. They did not end in the thirteenth century, though they changed in nature as a result of the renewal of the Turkish threat, but I will

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remain faithful to the standard terminology, which gives the name 'the age of the crusades' to the period that begins with the councils of 1095 and ends in 1291, with the loss of the last possessions in the Holy Land. We should not, of course, forget that the crusades have their prehistory and that an expedition of the same type as those of the thirteenth century was being prepared as late as the time of Pope John XXII and King Philip VI of France.

The crusades gave birth to a Latin East which survived the fateful date of 1291; the kingdom of Cyprus, the duchy of the Archipelago, Genoese and, above all, Venetian Romania and the Hospitaller presence in Rhodes still appeared on the sixteenth-century map. The history of these states, and in particular of the kingdom of Jerusalem, the principality of Antioch and the counties of Edessa and Tripoli, is closely linked to that of the crusades; it was the dangers faced by these states, and their ordeals or their loss, that caused expeditions to depart. But the life of these political constructions is in itself the subject of studies which are proliferating and which raise questions that go beyond the domain of the crusade proper. I have therefore felt able only to sketch it in broad outline.

Many eastern historians have seen the crusades as part of the history of the East, one of the factors which have influenced the evolution of its societies and states. This approach has led to works of synthesis which come up against the problem that the crusades remained, for the most part, marginal to the life of the easterners, who were only rarely aware of their specific character. Nor did these peoples constitute a unity; Muslim Arabs, Syrians of various Christian confessions, Armenians and Byzantines were all separate communities which had their own existence and which were not deeply marked by the presence of the Franks, even though they were affected by it. Without underrating the interest of the eastern perspective, I have treated the crusades as a phenomenon closely integrated into European history with repercussions for the East.

The history of the crusades is in part that of the confrontation between different civilisations, that of western Christendom and those of the East. We must not, however, consider this confrontation only in the context of the crusades. Jacques Le Goff's little joke that all the Christians seem to have brought back from the crusades is the apricot is well known. Many other elements of a material nature passed from the East to the West, but it was not only the crusaders who introduced them. Pilgrims travelled to Jerusalem and merchants to Constantinople, Antioch and Alexandria before 1095; the latter, though they took advantage of the crusades to expand their trade by establishing themselves in Frankish Syria, continued to seek out precious goods in the Byzantine and Islamic states, before penetrating even deeper.

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And with regard to other elements of civilisation, the Franks of the East seem not to have been closed to the world that surrounded them. Admittedly, it was through Spain that most of the translations of ancient works preserved by the Arabs were transmitted, but the example of *The Book of the Secret of Secrets*, which was translated in Tripoli and became the source of a moral and political literature in the West, shows that this effort to penetrate the thought of others was not unknown to the Latin East. The crusaders who settled in the East took an interest in the peoples and the countries they discovered; from Fulcher of Chartres to James of Vitry, we owe to them descriptions that attest to their appetite for discovery. But here too, as in the case of contacts with eastern Christianity or with Islam, others than the crusaders were involved. One cannot encompass the totality of relations between East and West in the history of the crusades, and here again I have not felt it necessary to discuss the issue in detail.

The history of the crusades as I shall approach it here is primarily that of the expeditions from the West which went to the East and, more precisely, to what was called in the Middle Ages 'Syria'. It is the history of an enormous effort accepted by the people of that age, which occupies a unique place in the 'growth of Europe' in that the objective they set themselves was the recovery and preservation of what was in their eyes a Christian patrimony. A *chanson de geste* written at this period, the *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, recalled how the West had been concerned about the fate of the Holy Places since the age of the great Carolingians. This concern became more insistent, and it turned men's footsteps in the late eleventh century and for two centuries to come towards the shores of the Levant. What might have been only a chimera became a reality; for two centuries, the Christians of the West lived in contact with the Holy Places they venerated or close enough to hope to return to them.

It was an extraordinary venture. I have chosen, in classic fashion, to trace each expedition from its origin, through its preparation and its progress, in the hope of discovering the feelings that motivated the participants, their anxieties, their ordeals, their victories and their defeats. I will also discuss what made it possible to carry out enterprises that, given the resources of the age, may seem inordinate. It was necessary for the political, institutional, mental and economic structures of the West to be capable of supporting such a prolonged effort. I will emphasise that the crusade was not a fleeting enterprise, something that tended to be forgotten during the commemorations of the ninth centenary of the appeal of Clermont; the crusades continued for two centuries, at a

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different pace perhaps, but without any real slackening off. It was this permanence that made them a major phenomenon in European history.

To observe the 'men of the crusade' (the phrase is Régine Pernoud's) live is to be made aware of an extraordinary human experience. Men formed in the apparently narrow world of the early medieval West were confronted by societies, political structures and natural conditions very different from those with which they were familiar; they had to conduct military operations and diplomatic negotiations there, conclude alliances, build states and fit their architectural conceptions and religious life into this complex world; they had to do this in a durable way, in a hostile environment; they revealed unexpected skills in coping with what was alien to their customary universe.

The crusades have been assessed, judged and debated, praised and denigrated in ways that reflect the opinions and the sensibilities, even the prejudices, of different epochs, and they will no doubt continue to be so. For me, it is those men who lived a great adventure, to which they brought their courage and their discouragements, their faith, their talents and their failings, who remain the protagonists in this great drama and whom I hope to know better.

The background cannot be neglected. The history of the medieval East, with its complexities, provides the context for the activities of the crusaders and for those of them who settled on Asian soil. This history is not always familiar, and I have thought it necessary to sketch it in broad outline, without going into the detail that is not directly relevant to the crusades.

At this point I should acknowledge my debts. Historical research into the crusades began at an early date, and the humanists collected the texts on which their history is based. The first great synthesis, that of Joseph Michaud, whose *Histoire des Croisades* deservedly remains a classic, did not overlook the Arab sources, which had been quarried by Joseph Reinaud. The end of the nineteenth century was the age of the great scholars: Heinrich Hagenmeyer and Reinhold Röhrich, who established with precision the chronological sequence of the crusades to the Latin East, and Paul Riant, himself an indefatigable editor of texts, who continued the work undertaken by the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres in the *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades* and founded the Société de l'Orient latin. The *Revue de l'Orient latin* brought together the work of historians. Soon after the First World War, Jean Longnon and Louis Bréhier paved the way for new works, which culminated in the magisterial synthesis of René Grousset, whose *Histoire des croisades et du royaume franc de Jérusalem* (1934–6) can still be regarded as the indispens-

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able starting point for all new research. It benefited from the assistance of many great orientalists – including Paul Pelliot, Gaston Weit and Henri Massé – but it remained the work of one man who took in the totality of this history.

Other works have appeared since which, while distinguishing themselves from that of René Grousset, were in the same tradition, such as those of Sir Steven Runciman and Francesco Cognasso. But the great work of the thirty years following the end of the Second World War was the collection of six volumes, fruit of a collective labour, encompassing the whole domain of the crusades from the eleventh to the fifteenth century, the history of the Frankish, Muslim and Armenian East and that of Byzantium, inaugurated by John L. LaMonte and completed thanks to the perseverance of Kenneth M. Setton. This work is indispensable and I have drawn heavily on it.

Major questions have, however, been taken up again and re-examined in depth. The idea of the crusade, since Carl Erdmann and Etienne Delaruelle, has been the subject of works by Paul Rousset, Paul Alphandéry and Alphonse Dupront. In *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, Jonathan Riley-Smith has looked at it in a new way and more works have since appeared.

Both the military history of the crusades, an English speciality, and their economic history, have also made great progress. The monographs devoted to the states of the Latin East, beginning with Claude Cahen's *La Syrie du Nord*, those dealing with the lordships and the biographies of the various participants, both Franks and Muslims, have greatly enriched our knowledge, and numerous studies of the documents or of specific topics have thrown new light on many issues. Convenient and well-informed syntheses have appeared for the benefit of a wider audience including students, among which a special place must be reserved for Hans Mayer's *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge*, many times revised and twice translated into English. I should also note the works of Cécile Morrisson, Zoé Oldenbourg, Canon Platelle, Michel Balard and Jonathan Riley-Smith, who each approach this history in their own way, and Régine Pernoud's *Les Hommes de la croisade*, and the recent *Atlas of the crusades* edited by Riley-Smith.

The bibliography is now considerable and proliferating. One can no longer count the articles and contributions to conferences, and I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have sent me extracts and offprints, from which I have benefited greatly. In the face of this rising tide, and to remedy the dispersion of these works, the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East, distant heir of the Société de l'Orient Latin, has been founded, an initiative in which I myself was

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involved. This is an opportunity to thank those who have worked and still work within the Society, making it possible to publish an information *Bulletin* and hold many conferences. The large number of participants is in itself evidence of the revitalisation of the history of the crusades.

I hope that I have been able to show the importance of all this new work to our knowledge of the crusades, and that I have not misrepresented the work of all those scholars and researchers, many of whom have become friends, too numerous to name, though I should mention two we have recently lost, Joshua Prawer and Maurice Chehab. I would like also to express my debt to those who, more than fifty years ago, introduced me to the study of the history of the crusades, Claude Cahen, Jean Longnon, Paul Deschamps, Henri Seyrig, Paul Pelliot and, above all, the man I acknowledge as my master, René Grousset, who, in 1947, wrote the preface to my *Royaume latin de Jérusalem*, and hoped that I in my turn would stimulate students to labour in this field of research.

I would also like to thank those who have helped me to complete this book, especially my family; I should make special mention of Agnes Fontaine, without whose insistence I would have hesitated to embark on it; and I am very grateful to Jean Birrell for the great care she has taken over the English translation of this book.