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CRUSADER CASTLES AND MODERN HISTORIES

For the last 150 years the historiography of the Crusades has been dominated by nationalist and colonialist discourses in Europe and the Levant. These modern histories have interpreted the Crusades in terms of dichotomous camps, Frankish and Muslim. In this revisionist study, Ronnie Ellenblum presents an interpretation of Crusader historiography that instead defines military and architectural relations between the Franks, local Christians, Muslims and Turks in terms of continuous dialogue, and mutual influence. Through close analysis of siege tactics, defensive strategies, and the structure and distribution of crusader castles, Ellenblum relates patterns of crusader settlement to their environment and demonstrates the influence of opposing cultures on tactics and fortifications. He argues that fortifications were often built according to economic and geographic considerations rather than for strategic reasons or to protect illusory 'frontiers', and that crusader castles are the most evident expression of a cultural dialogue between east and west.

RONNIE ELLENBLUM is an associate professor of historical geography at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, specialising in the geography, history, and archaeology of the Crusades, and in urban history. He is the director of the Vadum Iacob Archaeological Research Project.

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*For my wife Lenore and my children Gali,
Yuval and Maya*

Contents

395392

<i>List of illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>List of tables</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
Part I National discourse and the study of the Crusades	I
1 From moral failure to a source of pride	3
2 The narrative of the Crusades and the nationalist discourse	18
3 Nationalist discourse and Crusader archaeology	32
Part II Crusader studies between colonialist and post-colonialist discourse	4I
4 Colonial and anti-colonial interpretations	43
5 Who invented the concentric castles?	62
6 ‘Crusader cities’, ‘Muslim cities’, and the post-colonial debate	73
7 Crusader castle and Crusader city: is it possible to differentiate between the two?	84
Part III Geography of fear and the spatial distribution of Frankish castles	103
8 Borders and their defence	105
9 Borders, frontiers, and centres	118

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 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

viii	<i>Contents</i>	
10	The geography of fear and the creation of the Frankish frontier	146
11	The distribution of Frankish castles during the twelfth century	165
	Part IV The castle as dialogue between siege tactics and defence strategy	187
12	Siege and defence of castles during the First Crusade	189
13	Frankish siege tactics	203
14	Development of Muslim siege tactics	217
15	The appearance of the concentric castles	231
16	The construction of a frontier castle: the case of Vadum Iacob	258
17	The last years of the Latin Kingdom: a new balance of power	275
	Conclusion	287
	<i>Appendix</i>	305
	<i>Bibliography</i>	318
	<i>Author index</i>	347
	<i>Subject index</i>	351

Illustrations

Figures

10.1	The evolution of threat in Europe (1920–93) and the USA (1920–86)	<i>page</i> 148
11.1	Comparative chart of the Frankish castles (first and second generations)	183
11.2	Comparative chart of Frankish castles (third generation)	184
11.3	Comparative chart of Frankish castles (thirteenth century)	185
16.1	The castle of Vadum Iacob	263

Maps

7.1	Sites identified as crusader castles, towers, or cities	92
7.2	The consensual list of ‘crusader castles’	95
9.1	Sites mentioned along the itinerary of Ibn Jubayr	139
10.1	Major Muslim attacks on the Latin Kingdom (1099–1115)	150
10.2	Frankish attacks on Muslim centres (1115–mid-1160s)	154
10.3	Muslim attacks on the Latin Kingdom (1115–mid-1160s)	158
10.4	Major military confrontations (1168–87)	162
11.1	Castles built or conquered during the first period (1099–1114)	168
11.2	Frankish castles of the second generation (1115–67)	171
11.3	Frankish castles of the third generation (1168–87)	178

Tables

353217

7.1	Consensual list of the Frankish centres of the Latin Kingdom including those usually referred to as 'cities'	<i>page</i> 96
11.1	Frankish castles which existed during the early Muslim period (638–1099)	167
11.2	Castles of the earliest period constructed <i>ex nihilo</i>	169
11.3	An intermediary period (1113–1124)	170
11.4	Crusader castles of the second generation (1124 and 1167)	173

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353217

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The book is dedicated to my wife Lenore and to my children Gali, Yuval and Maya.