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Introduction

This volume explores the culture that attached to, and continues to attach to, that most medieval of enterprises: the crusade. Broadly defined, a crusade might best be understood as a military campaign inspired by faith or piety; or, to put it another way, a crusade is a militarised pilgrimage.

The chapters gathered here might be said to be concerned with the *idea* of the crusade – the crusade as an aesthetic and cultural form – alongside its historical practice. The most enduring context for writing about crusading was the massive and tumultuous crusade, and subsequent establishment of the crusader states, in the Middle East. Yet the actual duration of the crusader state of the Holy Land – known as the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (1096–1189) – and the crusader presence in the Middle East (the last crusader mainland possession, Acre, was lost in 1291, and the crusader island of Arwad in 1302) was short and precarious, especially in comparison to the ongoing fascination with the *idea* (and ideal) of crusading in the West. Perhaps no other event in the Middle Ages inspired such a flourishing of textual activity as the crusaders' battles in and for Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Yet medieval crusades did not always involve non-Christians and medieval crusades did not necessarily involve the Holy Land. The crusades to Jerusalem were only a part of the crusading zeal that animated medieval Europe: there were historical crusades in Iberia, in the Baltic, in North Africa, and elsewhere, and the crusading orders of Hospitallers and Templars developed pan-European networks. This volume includes descriptions of crusading in its many forms, including its significant overlapping with other widespread cultural structures such as the sermon, pilgrimage, the quest, the touristic travel narrative, and the heroic epic. The timescale of the chapters that follow stretches from retrospective, pre-crusade crusaders (like Charlemagne and Roland), through the period of the 'Great Crusades' from the end of the eleventh century to the fourteenth century, and all the way to the crusades' current manifestations in popular culture and political discourse.

Crusading and holy war have exerted a remarkable influence over the European imagination over the course of the last millennium, and the crusades were amongst the most frequently described medieval events. As such, this Companion neither attempts nor pretends to offer a complete picture of the enormous corpus of what might be termed 'literature of the crusades'. There are national and language traditions not represented here, and our emphasis has tended somewhat towards western European materials. Rather, the ideas articulated in these chapters point to the suppleness and variety of crusading as a textual medium, and the subjects covered are designed to give the reader prompts for further interpretation and research.

As Matthew M. Mesley describes in his chapter on crusader masculinity, medieval crusaders were unlikely to have called themselves 'crusaders' or their military undertakings 'crusades'; they were *milites* (soldiers) and *peregrini* (pilgrims). The Latin word *cruciate* – one who is marked by the cross – did emerge around the thirteenth century, but it is clear that most people whom we now called crusaders thought of themselves as taking part in an exemplary or extraordinary version of a common spiritual undertaking: sacred travel in the form of an arduous pilgrimage. Historically, there was little fundamental homogeneity to what a crusade was; but in literary terms, we will see some key trends emerge: these include the ambivalent encounter with the other; the praise of pious violence; and the role of crusading in narrating and developing a sense of collective or communal memory. Indeed, the literary construction of the crusades has played a key role in shaping our understanding of what a crusade was; certainly, whereas the crusading movement was diffuse and evolutionary, the writing of the crusades has returned time and again to several key figures (such as Charlemagne, Richard I, Saladin, 'El Cid') and places (not least Jerusalem) and thereby gives shape in the Western imagination to what a crusade was, or should be.

Words – written and spoken – were crucial to the earliest stirrings of crusading and to the inculcation of the imperative to take the cross. In this volume, the 'literature of the crusades' has been interpreted capaciously, to reflect the importance of not only the textual or literary but also the verbal in the promotion of crusading. Indeed, M. Cecilia Gaposchkin has recently characterised crusader liturgies as 'invisible weapons'; Gaposchkin argues that 'crusaders and their supporters made recourse to liturgical prayer, masses, and alms in their fight. In one sense, the liturgy was one of their weapons of war, likened often to temporal arms'.[1] The crusaders' liturgies were thus a key way in which they endowed warfare with a religious meaning and endowed religious ceremony with a martial aspect. Moreover, as Christoph Maier has stated, 'Crusades were usually announced by

sermons' and sermons acted as a kind of verbal accompaniment to the entire enterprise of the crusade:

> Propagandists preached in order to recruit participants and collect money for the crusade. Sermons also marked the departure of a crusader or a crusade army. During the campaigns, the clergy accompanying the crusade armies regularly preached sermons in order to sustain the participants' enthusiasm or to give them courage on the eve of a battle or in moments of crisis. Last but not least, sermons concerning the crusade were also preached to those at home in the context of penitentiary processions and prayers in support of crusaders in the field. Indeed, the number of different types of crusade sermons preached at various times in late medieval Europe must have been immense.[2]

The Church saw itself as responsible for promulgating the word of God, and the crusaders saw themselves as faithful servants of God, and crusading should be considered within the currents of spirituality, as well as politics, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[3] Thus preaching and liturgy can be seen as important parts of the 'soundtrack' to the crusade, from the clergy's communication with the laity to the exhortation to go into battle. The First Crusade (1096) is usually traced to Pope Urban II's sermons, in which, amongst other things, he urged for safeguarding pilgrims' access to the *loci sancti* in Palestine, then ruled by the Fatimid caliphate. This was not, however, the pope's only, or indeed primary, motivation for preaching the crusade: he also urged support for the Byzantine emperor Alexius I, then fighting Seljuk Turks invading from the East, and we must see Urban's rhetoric in the context of what was then the fairly recent East-West schism of 1054, in which the Eastern and Western, Byzantine and Roman, branches of the Church had split.

Pope Urban II urged a great 'pilgrimage' at the Council of Piacenza (March 1095) and at the Council of Clermont in November of that year.[4] No entirely reliable versions of these sermons (or speeches) survive, but they quickly attracted literary attention: the versions we have, in the *Gesta Francorum* (*The Deeds of the Franks,* c. 1101) and in texts by Fulcher of Chartres (who participated in the crusade) and Robert the Monk (c. 1106), were all written after the successful capture of Jerusalem in 1099. What we do still have, however, are several of Urban's formal letters to petitioners in which he sets out his ideas for a campaign for the Eastern churches (rather than, as would come to pass, a campaign focused largely on Jerusalem);[5] these letters continued to circulate, and to be edited and augmented, for hundreds of years after the First Crusade. Indeed, Urban's letter to the Flemings, his first letter dealing exclusively with crusading matters, only survives in copies from the seventeenth century.

It has often been argued that the First Crusade came about through a more or less impromptu expression of mob violence and religious enthusiasm. However, the immediate context of crusading in the 1090s was rhetorical in character: not only did the First Crusade gather momentum through the written word, but a large deal of what we know about it comes from highly rhetorical sources: sermons, letters, chronicles, liturgy. Stephen J. Spencer has recently explored the role of idealised and rhetorically inflected emotions in accounts of the First Crusade; Spencer shows how accounts of the crusaders' fear, their weeping, and their anger can be understood as 'textual indicators of the spirituality and motives participants were thought to have possessed'.[6] Spencer here represents a significant trend in recent crusader historiography, moving away from asserting 'what actually happened' towards thinking through the written account within ongoing traditions of 'emotional rhetoric'. Texts which claim 'eyewitness' status are no longer taken at face value, and texts by 'participants' in the crusades are considered highly partial and narratively inflected accounts, rather than statements of documentary truth. Within a very short time, men who had participated in and witnessed the First Crusade – such as Peter Tudebode, Raymond of Aguilers, Fulcher of Chartres, and the sources behind the *Gesta Francorum* – placed the unfolding events into the written form of chronicles which were read and cited in the West.[7] As Yuval Noah Harari has argued, concern with factual 'truth' swiftly became eclipsed by narrative concerns of shaping a compelling epic.[8] Moreover, in the fourteenth century if not earlier, the literary stereotype of the crusading knight-errant had become very familiar to western European audiences, to the extent that 'the crusader knight' had become a literary ideal as much concerned with conduct, manners, *courtoisie*, and horsemanship as with the practical retaking of the Holy Land.[9]

It is important also to remember that both pro- and anti-crusading rhetoric was a more or less constant feature of crusading in the west; as Palmer Throop and Elizabeth Siberry have shown in their detailed studies of criticism of the crusades, 'public opinion', expressed in encyclicals, letters, memoirs, sermons, and in poetical songs too, was often unfavourable to the crusades or robustly hostile to the pope. Sometimes, the pope's political and worldly motives were invoked, and horror was often shown at the idea of Christians waging war on other Christians (Greeks and Armenians for instance); elsewhere, the pope was criticised for neglecting the Holy Land.[10] These voices are mentioned here to remind us how the crusades were discursively engendered, defined, and redefined: words could make or break a crusade.[11]

Soon, crusading could be found, or represented, everywhere. The twelfth-century poet Chrétien de Troyes projected stories of chivalry and war in the Eastern Mediterranean into a story of the court of King Arthur. In his long and innovative romance *Cligès*, Chrétien describes the story of Cligès of Constantinople, at once part-Byzantine prince and great-nephew of King Arthur (Cligès's father is Alexander, son of the Greek emperor, and his mother is Soredamors, Arthur's niece). The story follows the handsome and charming fifteen-year-old Cligès from Greece to Arthur's court in England, where he proves himself as a knight, then back to a perilous situation in Constantinople, from which Cligès escapes with his lover, the peerlessly beautiful Fenice. After a long series of ruses and machinations, Cligès is crowned emperor of Constantinople, Fenice becomes the empress.

Historically, *Cligès* cannot be mapped onto the crusades, even as it was composed around the time of the Second and Third Crusades;[12] but, poetically, it is replete with crusading imagery.[13] Unlike other Arthurian tales, *Cligès* takes as its setting the flow of knights between Constantinople and Western Europe, its narrative propelled by warring factions, treacherous brothers, and rival dynasties of ambivalent co-religionists. The battle scenes taking place in central Europe are highly reminiscent of the crusaders' own passage to the Mediterranean; for instance, Chrétien describes how at Regensburg the Greeks and the Saxons 'were encamped in the meadows beside the Danube', watching and waiting, each looking to attack the other (line 3395).[14] Elsewhere, men are armed with 'Danish axes' and 'Turkish swords' (1985); Cligès has 'a fresh white Arab steed' (4911); characters attack and conquer territories with a dizzying frequency that is hard to keep track of. That Chrétien's imagination here was influenced by the crusades is beyond doubt.

Even as Cligès eventually becomes emperor of Constantinople, the text suggests that this is through his, and his father's, training at and loyalty to Arthur's court. In the worldview presented in the poem, Byzantine knights come from the east to the west, as Chrétien imagines the Christian world's centre of gravity to be not at Constantinople or Jerusalem but at Wallingford and Windsor. Indeed, one scene in the poem imagines the evil Count Angrés's own crusader-like raid on London for food, gold, and silver (1197) and his occupation and subsequent fortification of Windsor Castle like a crusader fortress, with 'walls and palisades, moats and drawbridges, ditches, barriers and barricades, iron portcullises and a great keep of dressed stone' (1236). Chrétien's perspective on crusading is hard to gauge, and *Cligès* can be read as an ironic statement on crusading, not least because the eponymous character is explicitly modelled on the vain Ovidian anti-hero,

Narcissus (2761). Furthermore, Cligès has no 'Saracen' or heathen enemies but rather navigates his way through mixed, factional Christian dynasties; identity in the poem lacks the simplicity of 'us *versus* them' and instead asks, through stratagems, violence, sea-crossings, and conquest, 'who are we?'

Chrétien's poem shows how far we should consider a crusade not only to have been a historical event but a framework for imagining entire worlds. Crusading inflected the cultural vocabulary of chivalry and romance, love and masculinity, luxury and materiality, travel and geography; and, as *Cligès* demonstrates, the crusades could be read back, projected, imagined and reimagined, with a remarkable versatility. Not only Arthurian England could become implicated in the crusades: the Frankish hero Charlemagne, as described below by Anne Latowsky, was imagined as a crusader hero, and the Spanish hero 'El Cid', discussed by Julian Weiss, have both proved incredibly durable 'crusaders' even though they lived and died before the 'First Crusade' was launched.

The chapters gathered here aim to provide a companion to some of the ways in which the crusades have been verbally constructed and reported. This book is organised in five sections: genres; contexts and communities; themes and images; heroes; afterlives. The first section, on genre, provides the reader with the coordinates to understand three key literary frameworks for crusading: the chronicle; the *chanson de geste*; and the troubadour lyric. Elizabeth Lapina shows how historical writing in the form of chronicles interpreted and re-presented the events of the crusades in a wide, and often underexplored, variety of texts. Marianne Ailes describes the role of *chansons de geste* both as propaganda and as a more ambiguous and multi-faceted genre through which to describe the 'Saracens' encountered by the crusaders. Linda Paterson shows the range of perspectives on the crusades provided in the troubadour poetry, which could offer celebration and praise but also bitter, personal portraits of the difficulties and disappointments of crusading.

'Contexts and Communities' helps us to understand who, where, and how the idea of the crusade was mediated. Connor Wilson describes the emergence of an idea of holy war in the tenth and eleventh centuries, comparing the Roman and Byzantine contexts; Wilson draws our attention to the role of both narrative histories and military manuals in theorising the morality and spirituality of warfare. Helen J. Nicholson describes women's involvement, principally through authorship and patronage, in the crusades, balancing our understanding of crusading as far from an exclusively male domain. Anthony Bale explores the literary production of the Holy Land, tracing the ways in which crusader literary culture both paralleled and departed from western European textual cultures. And Uri Zvi Shachar attends to

important non-Christian voices, from Jewish and Muslim sources, to demonstrate the ways in which the crusaders' enemies reported the tumult of holy war in which they found themselves.

In the 'Themes and Images' section, three key strands of imagery are explored: Jerusalem; the 'Saracen'; and the knight of chivalry. Suzanne M. Yeager shows the centrality of the city of Jerusalem, in both its worldly and spiritual aspects, as the object of the crusaders' desire. Lynn Ramey charts the crucial, if ambivalent, figure of the 'Saracen' in the crusader imagination, whilst Matthew M. Mesley probes the iconic 'masculine' figure of the chivalrous hero.

The final two sections of the book chart the outplaying of the idea and fantasy of the crusade. In the section on 'Heroes' we alight on English, Islamic, Spanish, and French figureheads of crusading. Christine Chism describes the multifaceted way in which Richard I of England, 'the Lionheart', and his adversary Saladin were represented, often in relation to each other. Julian Weiss chronicles the emergence of 'El Cid' as a Spanish crusader *avant la lettre*. Anne Latowsky attends to the evolving nationalist memories of a triumvirate of French heroes – Charlemagne, Godfrey of Bouillon, and Louis IX – who historically are from before, during, and after the first crusades.

The 'Afterlives' section takes the reader from the twilight of the later crusades in Europe up to the present day. Robert Rouse charts the development, in late medieval England, of narratives that recast crusading as part of the enduring Christian struggle against the heathen world. Lee Manion takes us into the early modern period, asking why and how memories of religious violence remained so attractive to later audiences. Louise d'Arcens brings the volume almost to the present day, to show how the crusades continue to 'haunt' Western culture, albeit for changing geopolitical messages and in widely divergent contexts.

In November 2017, on the British Broadcasting Corporation's version of the television show *The Apprentice*, one pair of entrepreneurs, Bushra and Sarah, developed, unsuccessfully, a dining recipe kit called 'Gourmet Crusaders'. The episode revealed the ongoing valence, and discursive controversy, of crusading. Sarah, who had suggested the brand name, seemed oblivious to the negative connotations of the term, and argued that it represented 'a call to action'; 'to crusade', said Sarah, is 'to stomp, to walk around, to travel, to explore'. She continued, 'As a crusader, you would be on a crusade to explore new flavours and textures'. Bushra, on the other hand, saw that the idea evoked 'an army, a fight, like a battle'; 'it's about war', she said. The potential investor Alan, Lord Sugar, regarded the use of the term 'crusader' as one of the reasons why the team and its business project failed; the name, he said, 'implied that [the team] was going to war'.[15]

This moment, broadcast to millions of people on British television, showed that crusading remains at once central to public discourse yet mobile, open, unfixed. The rhetorical and cultural construction of crusading is fundamental to Western culture, but its definition depends on what we need or want our crusaders to be.

NOTES

1 M. Cecilia Gaposchkin, *Invisible Weapons: Liturgy and the Making of Crusade Ideology*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2017, 6.
2 Christoph Maier, *Crusade Propaganda and Ideology. Model Sermons for Preaching of the Cross*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, 3.
3 See William Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality in the Holy Land and Iberia, c. 1095–c.1187*, Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2008, 4–8.
4 H. E. J. Cowdrey, 'Pope Urban II's Preaching of the First Crusade', *History*, 55 (1970), 177–88.
5 Georg Strack, 'Pope Urban II and Jerusalem: A Re-examination of his Letters on the First Crusade', *The Journal of Religious History, Literature and Culture*, 2 (2016), 51–70.
6 Stephen J. Spencer, 'Emotional Language in the Narratives of the First Crusade', in Susan B. Edgington and Luis García-Guijarro (eds.), *Jerusalem the Golden. The Origins and Impact of the First Crusade*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2014, 173–89, 176.
7 Alan V. Murray, 'The Siege of Jerusalem in Narrative Sources', in *Jerusalem the Golden*, 191–215.
8 Yuval Noah Harari, 'Eyewitnessing in Accounts of the First Crusade: The *Gesta Francorum* and Other Contemporary Narratives', *Crusades*, 3 (2004), 77–99.
9 See Timothy Guard, *Chivalry, Kingship, and Crusade: The English Experience in the Fourteenth Century*, Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2013.
10 Palmer A. Throop, *Criticism of the Crusade: A Study of Public Opinion and Crusade Propaganda*, Amsterdam, Svets & Zeitlinger, 1940, 26–37; E. Siberry, *Criticism of Crusading, 1095–1274*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1985.
11 For an overview of poetical responses to the crusades see Michael Routledge, 'Songs', in Jonathan Riley-Smith (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995, 91–111.
12 See Sharon Kinoshita, 'The Poetics of *Translatio*: French–Byzantine Relations in Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligès*', *Exemplaria* (1996) 8, 315–54.
13 For similar texts and a cultural-historical context see Laura Ashe, 'The Ideal of Knighthood in English and French Writing, 1100–1230: Crusade, Piety, Chivalry and Patriotism', in Marcus Bull and Damien Kempf (eds.), *Writing the Early Crusades: Text, Transmission, and Memory*, Woodbridge, Boydell, 2014, 155–68.
14 Quoting from David Staines (ed. and trans.), *The Complete Romances of Chrétien de Troyes*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1990. References are given to line numbers from this edition.
15 *The Apprentice* (BBC), 'Food Boxes', series 13:9, first broadcast 29 November 2017.