

PREFACE

The history of the crusades ranges in time from the late eleventh century to the twenty-first, and in space from Asia to the Atlantic (and perhaps even beyond), and from the Mediterranean to the Baltic. It encompasses the crusades themselves, the military orders, the settlements established by the crusaders in the eastern Mediterranean region and elsewhere, and the peoples whom the crusaders fought, or ruled or persecuted. Twenty of the articles in this collection touch on aspects of these fields of study, but they also reflect interests which transcend them: family and feudal relationships (III, IV, V, IX), the power of ideas and emotions (VI, VII, VIII, XIV, XVIII), the working of institutions (II, V, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XVII, XIX) and the consequences of crusading on nineteenth- and twentieth-century thought and action (XX and XXI). A few details would now have to be modified in the light of more recent research, but I stand by the arguments I put forward in them. The first article, which was originally a memorial lecture, expresses more general ideas about the practice of history.

By 1972, when the earliest of these articles was written, I had published my first book, on the Knights Hospitaller in the Latin East, and was working on the political and institutional history of thirteenth-century Latin Palestine. By the early 1980s I had moved by way of crusade ideas to the First Crusade, which kept me occupied for about fifteen years, but I never abandoned my earlier concerns, not least because my research students, who were writing dissertations on topics which related to all of them, kept me up to scratch. If I have any method it is to work alone. I try to look carefully at all the evidence available, or as much of it as can be humanly absorbed, and to learn as much as I can about the ideas and emotional reactions of the men and women with whom I am concerned, the meanings they attached to words and the institutional and social background to their lives. I usually put off until the last moment anything written by my contemporaries, unless they have edited texts or are engaged in research which helps me to understand how society or government worked. I know this is a dangerous habit, since it could result in me finding late in the process that my research is duplicated elsewhere, but it seems to have worked for me.

The field of crusade history looked very different when I became a research student forty-eight years ago. For one thing, it was practically empty and the

few historians who were admired – Jean Richard, Joshua Prawer and Hans Mayer – were publishing not on the crusades themselves but on the Latin East. For another, it was still dominated by ideas which had their roots in the early nineteenth century and were tinged either by imperialism or by reactions to it (which meant much the same thing). The consensus was that crusading was defined in terms of the goal of Jerusalem and warfare against the Muslims. Most historians seem to have assumed that the crusades were generated as much by economic as by ideological forces and that the best explanation for the recruitment of crusaders was that they had been motivated by a desire for profit. They tended to be of the opinion that the military orders were most usefully to be considered not as religious orders, but as political and economic corporations, and that the settlements in the Levant were proto-colonialist experiments, although there was no agreement about the colonial model that it was best to adopt.

I discovered that these views were not mine. I came to believe that authentic crusades were fought in many different theatres and against many different opponents; that they were primarily religious wars and that, in so far as one could generalize, the best explanation for the recruitment of crusaders was that they were inspired by an intermixture of ideas and feelings; that the military orders could only be understood as orders of the Church; and that existing models of colonialism were not relevant to the Latin East, which should be treated in its own terms and in relation to other contemporary societies.

I was lucky in my early patrons. My research supervisor at Cambridge, Dr R.C. Smail, who was known to everyone, including his wife, as Otto, presented me with the ideal topic for a PhD dissertation. The only serious book on the order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem in the east had appeared sixty years before and was unsatisfactory in many ways, while much of the material I would need had already been published in a massive *Cartulaire général*. Meanwhile, Professor Lionel Butler of St Andrews, who was planning a four-volume history of the Knights Hospitaller, arranged that I should be commissioned to write the first volume long before I had completed my dissertation. Butler was, with Sir Steven Runciman, my PhD examiner. He gave me my first job as an assistant lecturer in his department and was later influential in my appointment to my first professorship.

I owe Smail and Butler a great deal, but I hope that were they still alive they would forgive me if I said that I owe even more to my research students, who have kept me on my toes for over four decades. These students came to me because I was located where the resources were; I have been very fortunate to have been employed by three universities – St Andrews, and especially London and Cambridge – which have the facilities for research on a subject which demands a greater range of material than most university libraries can cover.

Since I owe so much to those who completed their PhDs under my supervision I would like to name them. They are Thomas Asbridge, Bruce Beebe, Judith Bronstein, Marcus Bull, Cassandra Chideock, Nicholas Coureas, Claire Dutton, Peter Edbury (whose official supervisor was Butler), Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt, Norman Housley, Michael Lower, Joyce McLellan, Christoph Maier, Christopher Marshall, Marwan Nader, Gregory O'Malley, Aphrodite Papayianni, Peter Pattinson, Nicholas Paul, Jonathan Phillips, William Purkis, Rebecca Rist, Jochen Schenk, Elizabeth Siberry, Caroline Smith, Julie Taylor, Susanna Throop and Steven Tibble. I should add to the list some American students to whom I acted as adviser – Deborah Gerish, Christopher Libertini, Jennifer Price and Myra Struckmeyer – and a few outstanding masters students who went on to work in related fields, such as Axel Ehlers, Sarah Lambert, Tom Licence and Gerard Sheehan.

I cannot end without expressing my gratitude to John Smedley – also a student of mine, although as an undergraduate – who has patiently put up with my reluctance to issue a collection of this sort and has helped me through it.

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