

changing posthumous reputation come under scrutiny. Reformation perspectives such as John Foxe's *History of the Turks* (1566) are examined and as Tyerman's survey progresses through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries writers such as Thomas Fuller, Voltaire and Edward Gibbon are drawn into the discussion. The cultural as well as political significance of Napoleon's late eighteenth-century Egyptian and Syrian campaigns is considered as is a nineteenth-century predilection to view crusaders as well-intentioned missionaries. When we reach the twentieth century Lawrence of Arabia receives a passing mention. Sir Steven Runciman's multi-volume history of the crusades, however, is accorded a full, but certainly not reverential, treatment. Modern American contributions to crusade historiography – some of them far from illuminating – are rehearsed. Claude Cahen, 'a rare marxist', and the Egyptian Aziz Suryal Atiya find a place here. Tyerman casts his net very widely; his subject dictates that he should.

Present-day relations between the West and Islam help to make Tyerman's book a highly relevant text for students and their teachers. The author's account of the historiography of the crusades emphatically rejects easy modern parallels. Nonetheless by virtue of its subject matter this volume does more than unpack the many layers of a particular topic which has continued to exert its fascination on generations of commentators over the centuries. Revealingly this study opens a window on to a broader landscape of deep-rooted, uneasy and often brutal international relations.

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'The Debate on the Crusades' Christopher Tyerman
(Manchester, 2011)

PREFACE

The history of history is increasingly fashionable. All history is revisionist, a response to what others have written. Thus, at its simplest, reading other historians will help any writer of history clarify their own views of the past. Writing history is not a neutral revelation but a malleable, personal, contingent, cultural activity. History examines the past by translating it into the present. The role of the translator – the historian – is thus instrumental, never a passive recorder or neutral interrogator but always a controlling producer. Study of the work of historians – historiography – becomes part of the way any historical subject is apprehended. Consequently, this book acts as a necessary pendant to my previous work on the crusades themselves. It is a negotiable analysis of predecessors and contemporaries.

This is not an entirely abstract exercise. Attitudes to the past are often conditioned by early perceptions, even, perhaps especially, if these are subsequently revised or rejected. My acquaintance with crusading began with images of heroic but misguided knights in the marvellously vivid, tendentious, but far from unintelligent, illustrated Ladybird History series of the 1950s and 1960s. Such pictures stay etched on the retina of memory. Intellectual engagement was later stimulated at school by exposure to the set-piece rhetorical arias of Edward Gibbon, Ernest Barker and Steven Runciman, embodiments of the very English tradition of astonished rational condescension that, although I did not then know it, reached back to Thomas Fuller in the seventeenth century. The bruising literary power of their historical imaginations failed to disguise that these were no objective summings up. From the very start, it was clear that the crusades were and remained controversial. They and their interpretations continue to be so in circles both academic and not. Why this should and continues to be so is a question that has long engaged me and provides the excuse for this book.

Inevitably, surveying historians across almost a thousand years is the labour of the magpie inviting error, superficiality and omission. No doubt the alert reader will spot examples of all

three, for which I alone am responsible. That there are not more can be attributed to the work of other scholars, not least some of those discussed in what follows. The enterprise has been equally dependent on the resources and friendliness of the libraries in Oxford where I have principally worked on the book, the still incomparable Bodleian, the History Faculty and those of my two colleges. To my colleagues at Hertford and New College, I owe a continuing debt of companionship and intellectual stimulation. I have tried out some of these ideas on my pupils in Oxford and on audiences in Oxford and Dublin. I thank them for their comments, generosity and tolerance as I do the MUP's anonymous reader. The editor and publishers of this series have combined patience and encouragement in rare measure. Lest proper perspective not be lost, the book is dedicated to two as yet innocent of the strange games historians play.

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INTRODUCTION

Few events of European history have captured the sentiments of contemporaries and the imaginations of later observers more vividly than the series of Christian wars now known as the crusades. At least from the capture of Jerusalem by an army of western Europeans in July 1099, if not before, this particular exercise in holy violence has attracted diverse interpretations from promoters, historians and theologians, from religious enthusiasts and from their critics. As wars regarded by their instigators as religious acts nonetheless directed at securing temporal space for Christendom and Christianity, they inescapably exposed the compromises of pragmatic idealism, the tension between rhetoric and experience, transcendent hope with present fear, the promise of eternal rewards with the immediacy of military conflict. Consequently, crusading was always controversial, a forum where moral absolutes jostled with material contingency.

There have been no centuries since the eleventh when books on the crusades have not been published and secured wide readership. At its simplest this has reflected crusading's protean nature. Over more than five centuries after the First Crusade (1095–99), armies under the banners of the cross and sustained by special offers of forgiveness of sins associated with that first campaign to win Jerusalem, reached all corners of Europe and the littoral of the Near East, touching some seminal political events of the age: the reordering of the Near East and the frontiers between Islamic and Christian rulers in the Mediterranean; the German and Christian conquest of the southern and eastern Baltic; the repression of religious dissent in Christendom; the assertion of papal authority. Although this book is not about the historical crusades as such, the briefest of surveys may help set the scene.

Large armies from western Europe attacked Syria, Palestine and Egypt in a series of massive campaigns by land and sea to some of which later commentators attached numbers: the First (1095–99 with a second wave 1101–2); Second (1146–49); Third

(1187–92); Fourth (1198–1204); Fifth (1217–21). Other substantial assaults on the eastern Mediterranean included the crusades of Frederick II of Germany (1228–29) and Louis IX of France (1248–54) who also briefly invaded Tunisia (1270). Louis's invasion of Egypt in 1249 was the last such from western Europe until Bonaparte's in 1798. Between grand assaults, many substantial but lesser expeditions followed similar routes, such as the crusades of the count of Champagne and the earl of Cornwall in 1239–41. Settlements were established along the Levantine littoral that lasted in various guises and extent from 1098 to 1291. Cyprus was captured in 1191 and held by western rulers until 1571. Jerusalem was in western Christian hands from 1099 to 1187 and, less securely, 1229–44. The next western European conqueror in the Holy City was General Allenby in December 1917 at the head of a polyglot army including a significant proportion of Muslims. In 1204 the Fourth Crusade had been diverted to capture the Greek capital of Constantinople (lost in 1261), an outrage for Greek Christians that irrevocably sealed the church schism with the Latin church of the west.

Traditions, ideology and institutions grew up thickly around these wars. Distinctive among these were the wearing of a cross to signal the taking of a vow; the consequent grant of spiritual privileges, remission of penalties of sins and later full indulgences for sin; the perception of this war as a sort of armed pilgrimage; temporal privileges such as avoidance of law suits or repayment of debts; and the protection of crusaders' families and property by the church. From the late twelfth century, taxes on laymen and especially the clergy were instituted to pay for these expeditions. Specific techniques and systems of propaganda and recruitment were honed to raise troops. While rhetorically, legally and emotionally retaining a connection with the Jerusalem war, if only as a reference point, this form of warfare proved easily exportable to other areas of conflict that involved the perceived interests of the official Latin church. These included the conquest of Muslim al-Andalus by the Christian kingdoms of Spain in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; the German penetration and annexation of the pagan eastern Baltic from the mid-twelfth to the fifteenth centuries; the suppression of heresy, notably in Languedoc in southern France in wars known as the Albigensian

crusades (1209–29); the defence of papal temporal interests in Germany and Italy in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the so-called political crusades. Together, these wars produced their own literature, liturgy and religious communities, notably the military orders, such as the Templars, Hospitallers and Teutonic Knights. Clearly associated, if lacking official support, were popular uprisings ostensibly aimed at the recovery of Jerusalem, such as the Children's Crusade (1212) and the Shepherds' Crusades (1251 and 1320). In places, even those attacked by crusaders countered by adopting the cross – such as anti-papalists in Germany in 1240 or rebels in England in 1263–65.

Crusading became culturally normative, even if active participation always remained a minority activity. The practice, aspiration and ideals of crusading persisted throughout the later middle ages, on occasion igniting military action, as against the Ottoman Turks in the Balkans in 1396, 1444 or 1456. The dying fall of active crusading, even if more in word than deed, lingered long into the sixteenth century and beyond. The attendant religious propaganda and economic necessities reached far beyond military recruitment into parish churches and taxpayers' pockets throughout the Latin Christian world; into the mechanics of salvation, the liturgy of penance and the ideology of kingship. At once a symptom and an encouragement of western Europe's engagement with its neighbours, crusading promoted the interests of international commerce while defining cultural differences, notably in the alienation of the Greek orthodox tradition. Alternatively or simultaneously imagined as wading through blood to the foot of the Cross, as an assertion of Christian identity, or as a moral and morale-boosting focus for resistance to enemies of church, faith or nation, the crusades coloured the texture of medieval politics, religion and society. Even after the reality of these wars faded into collective memory from the sixteenth century, their particular quality continued to exert a hold, on confessional and rationalist critics no less than religious or sentimental supporters.

However, unlike other familiar aspects of the medieval past, such as the Vikings, Charlemagne's empire, or the Norman Conquest, the crusades never fitted easily into later cultural patterns. As historians from the seventeenth century increasingly

rejected religiously inspired providential interpretations of past events, they looked in the crusades for the origins of their own times in the development of nations, institutions of government, the growth of commerce and, above all, the progress of 'manners' or civilisation. The crusades sat awkwardly between secular and religious history in periods when the distinction was taken as axiomatic. They received the lofty condescension of the Enlightenment as they had the doctrinal disapproval of Protestants. Their inextricable weave of idealism and materialism, inconvenient for materialist and idealist historians alike, produced a near-ubiquitous rush to judgement, one of the most persistent and prominent features in histories of the crusades. Even today, writers on the crusades are routinely interrogated by reviewers and readers as to whether they regard the crusades in a positive or negative light. While some still oblige, experts on few other medieval events are expected to provide such moral opinions.

This uniqueness also represented a challenge to the tradition of historians seeking to chronicle national development, especially after the Reformation. Except in special cases such as early modern or Franco's Spain, the crusades rarely conformed to any straightforward projection of nationalism or national identity, their role in the emergence of nation states, for long of deep historical and cultural interest, apparently obscure or equivocal. The intrinsic internationalism of crusading rendered the spatch-cocking of the crusades into narratives of national progress or pride an uneasy business. Richard I, good crusader but absent king, provided one classic example of the difficulties; the embarrassment of Philip II of France abandoning the Third Crusade and the pious failures of Louis IX two more. This did not result in the crusades being ignored in cultic national histories. Rather they were incongruously recruited to serve under national flags. In the nineteenth century, the simultaneous developments of colonial politics and critical history combined with its spurious nationalism to consolidate crusading's popularity as a subject for entertainment and moralising. The European dash for empire happily recruited the crusades as exemplars of cultural virtues, occasionally vices, or superiority over conquered peoples and societies. Where Enlightenment critics had concentrated their fire

on the moral, religious and cultural aspects of crusading, the debate in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries revolved around essentially materialist interpretations, the crusades as wars of conquest, motors of economic expansion and expressions of colonialism. Thus crusading became reconciled with prevailing politico-historical fashions.

The twentieth century appeared to reinforce this. The creation of the State of Israel (1948) seemed initially to feed into the colonial model, certainly stimulating research into the westerners' settlement of Syria and Palestine. In Israel itself, new forms of national perspective were developed while the state's very existence ignited new forms of malign historical parallelism that continue to resonate loudly across contemporary political and cultural debates. Away from the Near East, the ideological wars that engulfed or threatened twentieth-century Europe encouraged new engagement with the ideology of crusading. At the same time, the intellectual as well as physical retreat from European imperialism was matched by root and branch critical reappraisal of the old model of crusading colonialism. Historians continue to mould the subject according to their own interests. Yet however viewed, the crusades constitute one of the great subjects of European history. They conjure issues of the manifestation of systems of transcendent belief; cultural and religious identity; economic and political expansion; imperialism and colonisation; the ideology, legitimacy and pathology of public violence; the experience of war; the impact of militarism on non-combatants, host societies and victim communities; inter-ethnic and inter-faith relations; the nature of popular political and religious action; state-building; and the use of propaganda. The crusades remain one of the few subjects of professional history that carry wide popular recognition even if little serious understanding.

This alone would merit examination. However, perhaps to the surprise of those who regarded the crusades as merely a clash of arms for remote, ultimately futile, inexplicable or hypocritical territorial or ideological goals, in the past half-century the crusades have become an increasingly prominent aspect of serious medieval study and research around the academic world, embracing some of the newest historiographical techniques. T'

development also deserves study. The object of this book is to give some account of how such interest has been created, developed and sustained. It investigates the ways in which the crusades have been observed by historians from the 1090s to the present day. Especial emphasis is placed on the academic after-life of the crusades from the sixteenth to twenty-first centuries.

This will not be another contribution to the debates on the nature of the phenomenon or to the major interpretive problems that continue to arouse professional controversy and research. It merely attempts to describe the history of these different opinions, how they have been adopted and their historical contexts. It is a book about books. Unlike some recent scholarship, this will not include detailed consideration of the wider post-medieval cultural reception of the crusades and the use of the images and language of crusading in art, literature and popular culture except insofar as these affected historians' approaches to the subject and what they wrote. Over thirty generations and more, the crusades have occupied simultaneous parallel worlds of past events and present imagination, a duality that provides the substance for what follows.

'The greatest event since the Resurrection': some medieval views of the crusades

The very first narrative accounts of the crusades were composed by participants on the First Crusade itself. They were contained in letters sent to the west in 1097–99, culminating in the carefully edited and pointed version prepared for the pope by the crusade leadership in September 1099, the first surviving history.¹ Although composed by eyewitnesses, these letters were formal exercises designed to construct didactic stories to explain to their audience the providential significance of the events experienced. They certainly did not contain simple or unadorned still less objective accounts of 'what really happened'. The military campaign was insistently rendered as a divinely instigated and directed mission that operated in the double contexts of history and scripture, this world and the next. Setting the tone for much subsequent historicising, from the start the First Crusade was a literary construct.

Medieval writers knew from the classical past that history differed from annals or chronicles on the one side, and satire, drama or other literary genres on the other. History was deliberately stylish, interpretive and didactic. Specifically Christian historiography, a legacy of the late Roman Empire and writers such as Augustine of Hippo, concerned itself with the significance of terrestrial events in relation to divine providence, sin and the march of the world to the Day of Judgement. Individuals could become merely patterns of conduct and free will. The narrative of events contained a moral purpose, presented rhetorically, in order to persuade. The Biblical tradition differed in that it purported to present a divinely inspired account of God's

Definitions and directions

In the past sixty years, the study of the crusades has flourished as never before, now the subject of courses at major universities from the eastern Mediterranean to the western seaboard of North America to the Antipodes. Research has reached far beyond traditional confines and occupies the attention of dozens of scholars worldwide. An international society, The Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East, was founded in 1980. It boasts over 400 members from thirty countries, dwarfing its nineteenth-century predecessor, Riant's elite Société de l'Orient Latin. In keeping with modern academic fashion, since 2002 the society has had its own niche journal, *Crusades*. After two centuries of academic debate, this raft of modern scholarship challenged certain traditional perceptions of the crusades and crusading, not least regarding the nature of the phenomenon itself. Erdmann's attempt at definition had merely added diversity rather than clarity. These issues caught a historiographical moment, exposing divergent perceptions as to how medieval Europe worked, how medieval evidence could be used and, indeed, how historians operate. Simultaneously, the crusades were placed more firmly than ever within non-crusading contexts of religion, society and economy. New approaches to sources appeared. The range of material studied expanded from records of government and diplomacy, property transactions (charters) to liturgical and academic legal texts. Arabists, like their distant Maurist predecessors, once again became interested in texts relevant to crusade history, opening clearer new perspectives to scholars from a western tradition. Critical responses sharpened, for example as regards

the nature and authority of narrative as a genre and narratives as witnesses. New models were applied, borrowed, for example, from literary theory and gender studies. In a climate of revived public religiosity, empathy for actions determined by faith, even violent ones, no longer appeared necessarily eccentric or a remnant of the Christian verities of the *ancien régime*. In such contexts, discussion of the nature of the crusades could appear somewhat abstract and even, on occasion, old-fashioned, as if the battles of the Enlightenment and Romantics were being refought. Elsewhere, much of what was sometimes proclaimed as representing fresh insights, in essence rehearsed some rather hoary interpretations, such as Fuller's theory of waste or Michaud's empathy.¹

One of the oldest features of crusade historiography had been its relation to contemporary cultural and political attitudes. This association was given fresh impetus in the six decades from the end of the Second World War. The power of ideology as a motive of political action was inescapable in the ruined aftermath of the wars against fascism and during the subsequent Cold War. After 1945, concepts and institutions of international law were applied at least rhetorically to the legitimacy of the use of force and the notion of war crimes. In Europe, the fall of the Soviet Empire after 1989 recreated states as well as granting new independence to existing ones. Their inevitable redefinition of identity encouraged engagement in a non-Communist vision of history. In many cases – such as Hungary, Poland, the Baltic States – this included the crusades. The simultaneous enlargement of the European Community stimulated fresh consideration of supranational identity, with various implicit and explicit references to a medieval past. Conflicts surrounding post-1945 decolonisation in Asia and Africa raised issues of legitimate violence as did struggles against oppressive regimes in Latin America, stimulating the development of Liberation Theology in the 1960s and 1970s. The Second Vatican Council (1962–65) discussed the role of papal authority and the nature of relations between Roman Catholics and other denominations and faiths. In the 1990s, from the carcass of the collapsed Yugoslavia, there emerged ethnic cleansing laced with religious contest and prejudice. In Serbia, Bosnia and Kosovo, propaganda and violence opposing Christian and Muslim once

more became features of politics and war. With them came a selective historical memory of holy war against the Turks. The failings of secular political movements in the Near and Middle East, in Egypt, Syria, Iraq and, in different register, Iran, encouraged dissident movements based on politically radicalised Islamic agendas, both Sunni and Shia. These movements were initially aimed at reforming or destroying what they saw as the corrupt Muslim regimes before turning their focus more intently on western influence in the region, symbolised in the continuing unresolved conflict between the State of Israel and the Palestinians. Most dramatically, in the first decade of the twenty-first century the extension of these conflicts to global terrorism invited a new public spotlight to be shone on the medieval wars of the cross. The facile historical parallelism this stimulated found receptive audiences not just in the Near East but in the rest of the World as well, notably but not exclusively in the United States of America among certain elements in fundamentalist evangelical groups, the religious Right and even constitutional conservatives. Once again, as Hume observed 250 years ago, the crusades engaged the curiosity of mankind.

Defining the definers

The last quarter of the twentieth century was also marked by a multifaceted debate on defining what a crusade actually was and, thus, the scope of the subject. Before Erdmann, little serious attention had been paid to the matter. The assumption prevailed that the crusades were Christian wars directed initially at recovering Jerusalem. Other subsequent theatres of religious warfare – in Spain, the Baltic, Languedoc, against papal enemies in Italy and Germany or against the Ottomans – were variously included by early modern and Enlightenment writers without much reflection. The nineteenth-century Franco-German concentration on the Holy Land hardly touched issues of category. Yet Erdmann's focus on crusading as a constructed political ideology and feature of western society, not a glorified frontier war, by challenging accepted conventions, invited debate. The various eschatological, spiritual, legal and liturgical emphases of Alphandéry, Delaruelle, Villey and Rousset combined with the reshaping of older Holy

Land interpretations by Cahen, Richard and Smail to further cloud the picture for those, like Hans Mayer in 1965, seeking a uniform, clear model and theory or, as he put it, an 'unambiguous, lucid and generally accepted definition of the term "crusade"'.²

What was a crusade? Were crusades synonymous with all or any Christian religious or holy war? If not, what distinguished them in nature, institutions or conduct? Were they defined by being expeditions to regain or retain Jerusalem and the Holy Land? If so, were they a special form of penitential war separate from other campaigns against infidels such as those in Sicily or Spain? Did that difference lie in the combination of warfare and pilgrimage and/or in a unique indulgence? Or were all and any campaigns proclaimed by popes crusades that attracted features associated with the Jerusalem wars, such as cross, indulgence, preaching, taxation, special liturgical support and temporal privileges? What was the status of wars against infidels or enemies of the church granted lesser papal privileges, such as in early thirteenth-century Livonia? Was there an official or unofficial hierarchy of crusades, with Jerusalem at the top and others following according to papal, political or popular mood? Could there be 'unofficial' crusades, such as those apparently essayed against papal crusaders in England in 1263–65 and Germany in 1240?³ If not, can these and other incidents with explicit crusader trappings be excluded? What of unauthorised expressions of popular enthusiasm for the recovery of the Holy Land, such as the Children's Crusade (1212) or the Shepherds' Crusades (1251 and 1320)? Where, in a strict view of crusading as an institution, do the military orders fit, especially where their activities strayed far from the Holy Land or even holy war; the order-states of Prussia, Livonia and Rhodes or the hospitaller function of the Knights of St John? Should definition be dependent on papal decree, medieval academic opinion or popular response?

Merely by stating this far from exhaustive list of questions identifies some of the difficulties inherent in historians' attempts to provide a satisfactory response to Mayer's request. Concepts and categories, medieval or modern, repeatedly fall foul of medieval action. It is probably fair to observe that none of the arguments offered in the post-1965 debate provides solutions to

all the conceptual and practical conundrums. None commands universal agreement, which is perhaps as it should be, given the diversity of medieval witness. It may be wondered whether in fact there was much point to the attempt to construct a universal definition in the first place. The range of views recorded by the canonist and crusade promoter Hostiensis among others in the thirteenth century indicates that consensus may in any case be fundamentally anachronistic, even unhistorical.⁴ However, in some ways, the debate acted as a device to promote a certain methodological approach as much as a means to reach a commonly agreed definition. It also allowed an otherwise disparate parade of research to march under one crusading banner, from theology to archaeology, from liturgy to logistics, from institutions to mentalities, from the early middle ages to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Whatever view is taken of the ubiquity of the influence of the crusades, its collective label has immeasurably assisted its prominence in the academic world.

Mayer's appeal for a definition was propelled by his challenge to those who disagreed with his own. Mayer championed a traditional, 'narrow' interpretation, regarding crusading in origin and essence as holy wars concerned with the Holy Land. The struggle for Jerusalem lay at the centre, both militarily and spiritually, the determining feature of the crusade indulgence. Crusades directed elsewhere either lacked the full panoply of privileges afforded the Jerusalem expeditions or represented an abuse. While not denying that non-Holy Land crusades were authorised by popes, justified by canonists and fought by *crucesignati*, Mayer commented that 'what is at issue is not Church doctrine but the extent to which society found that doctrine acceptable'.⁵ He rejected attempts to characterise vociferous opponents of non-Holy Land crusades in the thirteenth century as a self-serving biased minority by historians who simultaneously accepted, more or less at face value, the equally self-serving claims of promoters of these crusades for their popularity. Mayer was less interested in interior emotions or the self-referential theorising of the papal curia or university lawyers and canonists. He saw an institution originally devised for the Jerusalem campaign being used for different purposes under the guise of some theoretical association with the Holy Land. Consequently,

Mayer's definition tended to exclude crusades away from the Holy Land and wars of the cross in the later middle ages.

Mayer's challenge was taken up in 1977 by Jonathan Riley-Smith (b. 1938) who proposed a far more embracing definition.⁶ An increasingly dominant figure in Anglophone crusade scholarship, in outline his approach mirrored earlier general, inclusive formulations, the vagueness of which had in part prompted Mayer's search for clarity. However, Riley-Smith, in discussing what he dubbed 'first principles', sought precision which he found essentially in papal authority.⁷ Crusades were a particular form of Christian holy war that addressed the needs of the universal church as defined by Christ's representative and head of Christendom, the pope, whose authority ordered, legitimised and, in spiritual terms, controlled the exercise. Some, at least, of the participants took a vow, signalled by the receipt of a cross, and in consequence enjoyed certain specified privileges, including protection of the church. The war was regarded as waged for Christ and therefore itself holy, not merely just, and, for those involved, a penitential act. Consequently, crusaders were granted full remission of sins, later standardised as plenary indulgences. These privileges and institutions, as well as the language used by and about crusaders, were closely associated with pilgrimage. These formulae and thus this form of holy war was not restricted to the Holy Land or the eastern Mediterranean but was applied to warfare in Spain, the Baltic, against heretics, schismatics, Greek orthodox and political enemies of the papacy, branded rebels against the church. However, 'when they were not engaged in war in the East, the remission of sins or indulgence was related to those given to crusaders in the Holy Land'.⁸ This last point was particularly delicate, as it implied to some an acceptance of the centrality of Jerusalem that the thrust of Riley-Smith's thesis sought, at the very least, to qualify. This sensitivity may be reflected in the account of Riley-Smith's definition by two of his pupils in the *festschrift* for their mentor that omits any mention of the place of the Holy Land in his description of the crusade indulgence.⁹

The force behind Riley-Smith's definition is religious. Mayer looked at the material objectives of crusading and at motives largely in institutional terms, although he highlighted 'the

obstinate simplicity of the believer's heart' that drove them towards Jerusalem. Riley-Smith was centrally concerned with the faith that inspired crusaders and, he argued, initiated crusading. Thus he castigated Erdmann's apparent lack of feeling for genuine ideological and spiritual commitment.¹⁰ Defining crusading as a canonical institution, much in the fashion of Villey, allowed Riley-Smith geographically and chronologically to incorporate far more than Mayer. Where there were papally authorised institutions instigating wars of the cross, there were crusades. This led Riley-Smith to consider in detail technical aspects of the theology constructed around crusading, somewhat in the tradition of Delaruelle, Rousset and of German scholarship, such as that of Hehl. However, it was the empathy for the beliefs of the crusaders that colours this definition. This was allied to fierce opposition to the habit of historical judgementalism, so often the rhetorical prop of those who have written on the crusades, not least Runciman whose legacy Riley-Smith subjects to some distinctly acid criticism. While admitting the difficulty in grasping the 'discredited' 'amalgam of piety and violence, of love and hate', Riley-Smith has no room for 'moral repugnance felt by liberal thinkers' which he sees in part as a legacy of Protestant disapproval of Roman 'Catholic bigotry and zealotry'.¹¹ Here, the alert may catch faint echoes of Michaud. Given that crusading is thus seen to reflect the inner aspirations of so many Christians in medieval Europe, its wider significance becomes unmistakable, not just in studying the church and popular religion, but also in the habits of the aristocracy, the conduct of war and the development of medieval society in general, 'a movement which touched the lives of the ancestors of everyone of European descent'. Or, as another contemporary British historian not particularly associated with Riley-Smith's views claimed: 'the effects of the crusading movement were almost limitless', playing a major role 'on the stage of world history'. For obvious reasons, few crusade historians were or are as dismissive as the distinguished French medievalist Jacques le Goff, who declared that the crusades' chief contribution to western culture was the introduction of the apricot. However, not all follow the maximalist analysis. Some regard the crusades as less homogeneous or distinct as phenomena, as effects rather than causes.¹²

In 1988, Riley-Smith claimed his interpretation had 'won the day', partly because of shifts in contemporary cultural attitudes that tended to a greater awareness and understanding of ideological violence; and partly through the promotion of his theory in his own works and those of his pupils. One of those pupils subsequently reflected that this assertion of victory had been made 'somewhat hubristically'. Nonetheless, a decade later there was the confident revelation that 'all of us now know that the subject of crusading is a religious one, whatever other elements were important to it'.¹³ As far as that went, that was hardly controversial, but it could be said that it did not go very far. All previous crusade historians had acknowledged the role of religion. Where they differed was what that actually meant in operation, what it implied for cause, motive and conduct. Some critics suggested that Riley-Smith and his followers seemed wedded to an acceptance of the significance of often self-referential texts from sections of the clerical elite. From this there flowed both an insistence on the primacy, sincerity and truth of religious commitment on the part of crusaders and a rejection of the evidence of contemporary criticism. The Riley-Smith definition was thought by some to be too neat and theoretical, at times parodying papalist apologia (Riley-Smith himself noted that its proponents 'follow the medieval popes'), arguably a very partial reading of the middle ages.¹⁴

However, different interpretations not only persisted but gained new advocates. Erdmann's opinion that the crusade was another form of holy war *deo auctore* remained attractive, for example in the work of E.-D. Hehl in the 1990s and, by implication, in K.V. Jensen's categorising of all Danish wars against pagans.¹⁵ The Danish scholar J. M. Jensen and others challenged the centrality of pilgrimage, at least in the origins of crusading, a line followed in part by Jean Flori.¹⁶ However, Flori revives elements of Alphandéry's eschatological analysis, while emphasising the importance of Jerusalem. Gary Dickson has focused with subtlety and insight on popular crusades that Riley-Smith's original definition awkwardly excludes. Dickson shows how a set theoretical definition of crusading, of whatever sort, can still miss some of its protean aspects.¹⁷ More recently, the American Paul Chevedden has sought to emphasise the external political

elements in crusading as a response to the threat of Islam, returning circuitously to one of the oldest historiographical tropes. For Chevedden, the crusades began with the papally sponsored invasion of Muslim Sicily in 1060.¹⁸ This recent revival of interest in crusading as part of a political as much as a religious contest with Islam is tinged with more than a hint of historical parallelism. More potentially challenging to existing fashions has been, on the one hand, a recent attempt to apply a historical materialist analysis of the First Crusade and, on the other, a widening of perspective towards a context of religious war.¹⁹ All the while, Mayer's view has retained adherents and Mayer himself has recently vigorously taken up cudgels against those followers of what they claim as the 'now predominant' view of crusading and attempts to belittle his approach.²⁰

Internationally, perhaps most crusade scholars have not been led by theory. The question of definition, especially where it excludes elements so obviously associated with the Jerusalem wars, is not always a *sine qua non*. Even on the territory most churned up in the definition debate, much, in any case, comes down to different assessments of particular pieces of evidence, not some meta-theory of human or divine inspiration. One such area surrounds the key issue of popularity. Were the Jerusalem crusades more, or more consistently, popular than the others regardless of the similarity of benefits on offer? This answer has much to do with accepting the competing bias in the evidence. It also is determined by attitudes to the extent of papal power and how far attitudes in Christendom followed or were accurately reflected in papal diktats or not. Even historians who recognise the legal validity of papal crusades wherever fought, have, like Mayer, taken account of varying popular responses. The insistence of some of Riley-Smith's pupils not just on the sincerity of religious response but on the ubiquitous popularity of all crusading, has not universally been found convincing. Yet the differences between Riley-Smith's interpretation and those he seeks to revise may also be exaggerated. By arguing that an equation with the Jerusalem war was integral to the crusade indulgence, Riley-Smith, as Mayer pointed out, was putting 'Jerusalem squarely back at the heart of things'. Furthermore, some historians found it entirely possible to acknowledge the

legal validity of all papal crusades while noticing the continuing primacy – in the policy of many popes, in liturgy, in literature, in rhetoric and in public responses – of Jerusalem. As Riley-Smith wrote: 'everyone accepted that the crusades to the East were the most prestigious and provided the scale against which the others were measured'. This was precisely the point argued not only by critics but latterly by some close supporters of the Riley-Smith definition. There may not have been a formal 'league table of crusades', but at least some popes, such as Innocent III in his handling of Livonian pagans and the Albigensian heretics, recognised the prior claims of Jerusalem. The technical efficacy of identical privileges may not have varied according to different military targets, but participants inevitably were aware of the difference on the ground.²¹

This is merely one example of how theoretical definitions come apart when faced by the reality of research and the developing ideas of scholars. Thus there is something inherently artificial in the recent attempt by Giles Constable to define the definers. In 1953, Constable, a leading historian of twelfth-century monasticism and religion, had long anticipated Riley-Smith's inclusive definition in his study of the Second Crusade (1146–49) where he argued for the coherence of the various crusading fronts in Iberia and the Baltic as well as the eastern Mediterranean. A quarter of a century later, he pointed the way to how charters could be used by crusade historians to investigate attitudes, finances and prosopography.²² In an influential article on crusade historiography published in 2001, Constable proposed four categories into which he judged contemporary crusade scholarship roughly fell.²³ Traditionalists were primarily concerned with where the crusades were directed and, like Mayer, restricted authentic crusades to those aimed at recovering or defending Jerusalem. Pluralists, such as Riley-Smith, emphasised how crusades were initiated, authorised and organised, including all campaigns conducted by those who had taken legitimate crusade vows and enjoyed crusade privileges, not just wars for the Holy Land. Popularists Constable described as those, such as Alphandéry and in a different manner Delaruelle, who identified the collective prophetic and eschatological elements as of the essence, a conclusion largely derived from regarding the First Crusade as 'a moment of collective

exaltation'. Unlike the pluralists, this interpretation included the popular demonstrations of the Children's Crusade and the Shepherds' Crusades. Finally, Constable classified those, like Hehl, who regard the crusades simply as a holy war, *deo auctore*, as generalists, potentially admitting into the definition a far wider category of warfare even than the so-called pluralists.

While his classifications have been widely accepted, Constable himself sounded an immediate note of caution. Although described as a pluralist, he noted he was 'reluctant to exclude the "popular" crusades or to deny that at least a spiritual orientation toward Jerusalem was an essential aspect of crusading'.²⁴ The attempt to label scholars invites caricature of both scholarship and categories in a *reductio ad absurdum* that argues over the classification not the history. Thus Riley-Smith regards Jean Flori as a popularist while Norman Housley sees him as a traditionalist. In a related example, traditionalism can be traduced because two scholars so designated (not by themselves but by others) disagree, even though neither fit neatly into the boxes chosen for them, the one because of popularist elements, the other through adopting a pluralist frame.²⁵ Constable applied his categories cautiously to recent historiography, but others have extended the classifications backward in time. Erdmann may illustrate the wider point. For some, Erdmann is a generalist, in placing the crusade firmly in the pre-existing tradition of war *deo auctore*. Yet he emphasises the Rankean contrast between the hierarchic crusade and the popular, with its eschatological dimensions. For Erdmann, the novelty of Urban II's call lies in Jerusalem and pilgrimage, a traditionalist claim. Yet put the other way round – pilgrimage first, Jerusalem second – is to touch on pluralist territory.

The debate over definition may have petered out, perhaps because the expanding range of research, source material and consequent interpretations and interests render such definitions irrelevant or redundant. Moreover, enthusiasm for 'schools' of interpretation is fashionable only in some not all academic traditions and institutions. For many, mainly but not exclusively non-British historians, the definition debates appeared of little consequence. Even in Anglophone scholarship, it impinges but little if at all, to take a few random examples, in recent work on

attitudes to Islam by John Tolan, on John Pryor's studies of logistics, on Gary Dickson's examination of crusading 'mythistory', on Ronnie Ellenblum's or Denys Pringle's archaeology, on Benjamin Kedar's historiographical exposés, on Peter Edbury's analysis of the legal texts of the thirteenth century and the translations of William of Tyre, or on Jay Rubinstein's reappraisal of First Crusade sources. German or French scholarship seems relatively unaffected. In Italy, Franco Cardini, for example, or Elena Bellomo's work on Genoa discuss definition, but are not framed by it.²⁶

Even as shorthand, Constable's categories seem to raise as many difficulties as they solve. Perhaps a less constricting approach might avoid unnecessary ideology, theory and confusion. Crusade historians vary one from another and even within their own published research. Some are led by the need for a pre-existing model; others, more critically empirical, are not: the idealists and the pragmatists. Some historians prefer to see in the evidence the workings of an overarching, almost mechanical process, the discovery of which is a collaborative endeavour striving towards agreed consensus, even a 'truth'. Others are less eager to identify consistency in the historical record or insist on uniformity in historical interpretation. Scepticism over the extent any medieval evidence can provide unmediated access to the thoughts of the laity limits the attraction of any theories based on examining the responses of the inarticulate. It encourages suspicions that much of what passes for revealing information as to the existence, progress, popularity of crusade ideas are part of internalised debates within self-validating elites. More simply, much, perhaps most, research on topics related to wars of the cross does not depend for its intellectual coherence or integrity on adopting a position on any abstract definition but rather on the critical interrogation, assessment and interpretation of the sources. Definition that implies exclusion may seem, *a priori*, a peculiar place from which to proceed. Beyond that, despite, perhaps because, of the claims for the ubiquity of crusading as a socially normative phenomenon, it is often unprofitable to impose discrete boundaries between crusading and its context. The real vitality in the debate on definition in fact lay paradoxically less in an attempt to find agreement over 'first principles', but rather in the promotion

of a particular way of looking at the medieval past in order to dispel any lingering modern condescension, a project that came to characterise a vociferous group of younger crusade historians centred from the 1960s in Britain.

The British school and the rehabilitation of crusading

Possibly the least predictable development in crusade studies in the past fifty years has been the unmistakable explosion of academic interest and scholarly achievement amongst British medievalists. To give this too much prominence risks the charge of insularity. However, it represents perhaps the most notably cohesive and extensive national network of active crusade scholars since the inter-war US school, if only in the weight of publication demanding notice and academic posts obtained. Its genesis depended on groups of individuals but also on certain extrinsic academic influences: the availability of translated texts for teaching purposes; the revival in the study of medieval religion and ideas; the abundance of increasingly available literary and archival evidence, both published and in manuscript; the growth in the size and number of university departments and the consequent increase in the numbers of students in search of doctoral topics. Here, the excitement of Runciman's narrative, however meretricious, may have played a role. It should be remembered that, in contrast to many continental European nations, notably Germany, or to the USA, a formal research culture including postgraduate training in methods and skills or supervised doctorates, was for long unknown among arts subjects in the oldest, grandest and richest of English universities, Oxford and Cambridge. Most of the most distinguished late nineteenth-century medievalists were not professional academics, having begun or remained private gentleman scholars. This only began to change after the First World War and only gathered momentum a generation later. In that sense, the rise of crusades from 1960 conformed to a general eruption of postgraduate research. In Britain, too, the crusades seemed to carry less awkward, less current baggage than in France, Germany or Italy, let alone Franco's Spain. While ideological warfare had returned to the agenda of civilisation, British observers could apparently regard it

with greater equanimity. Perhaps the self-satisfied and rather smug British myth of measured, moderate detachment, evident from Fuller to Hume and Gibbon to Runciman, rendered the crusades less polemic, less toxic. In this vein, Richard I was an ideal British crusade hero: one of ours yet not; a regal absence, his crusading a presence always somehow just off-stage.

However, there was and is no single or uniform British coterie of crusade historians. The difference between clusters of crusade historians in part reflected different approaches to teaching and research, possibly to history itself. There emerged a distinct and remarkably cohesive 'school' of explicitly crusader studies primarily associated with the universities of Cambridge and London that proved notably successful in colonising British university history departments. This is not necessarily a common experience in universities that teach crusading history. To take just one contrasting example, in Oxford, where the crusades became an optional specialist subject for undergraduates in the late 1960s, crusading was incorporated into wider study of the middle ages, driven by a variegated empiricism that hardly saw 'The Crusades' as a whole subject apart. A number of very distinguished Oxford medievalists, none of whom were 'crusade specialists', nonetheless taught the course and, as offshoots of both teaching and their other research, published often significant articles on crusading: Karl Leyser on money and supplies on the First Crusade; Colin Morris on the Fourth Crusade; John Prestwich on Richard I on crusade; John Cowdrey on the intellectual, institutional and spiritual origins of the First Crusade; Henry Mayr-Harting on Odo of Deuil and the Second Crusade; Maurice Keen on fourteenth-century crusaders. Another contemporary Oxford scholar, Eric Christiansen, has written innovatively and imaginatively on the Baltic crusades. Yet, despite some individual theses – such as Randall Rogers (a Leyser pupil) on twelfth-century crusading siege warfare and Simon Lloyd (a Prestwich pupil) on thirteenth-century England – there was and is no Oxford crusade school.²⁷ This is not to privilege the Oxford experience, merely to note its eclecticism as illustrative. Another British example lies with Bernard Hamilton at Nottingham and his pupils, notably Malcolm Barber of Reading and John France of Swansea, three of the most effective recent British crusade

historians, whose research in this area has also been conducted on an individual basis, in a non-ideological context, and as part of larger portfolios of interests and publications.

Rather different was the study of the crusades in Cambridge. In part this reflected, specifically as opposed to Oxford, the subtly different structure of academic employment and history syllabus that allowed for more pedagogic specialism, academic focus and research concentration. It may have also demonstrated certain features of the Cambridge history school in general. The Cambridge system encouraged the creation of intellectual schools around university lecturers who dominated certain reaches of the past, or tried to. Equally, from the 1930s, there developed in Cambridge a concern for the importance of ideas in politics and society, a sort of filtered *geistesgeschichte*. This rejected equally the sentimental determinism of Whiggish materialism, the mechanistic materialism of the Marxists, and the institutional and prosopographical materialism of Lewis Namier of Manchester (originally of Oxford). This 'revisionist' Cambridge school became associated with figures such as J. H. Plumb and Quentin Skinner. Amongst medievalists, Walter Ullmann provided his own logical explanations of how ideas operated in the way the middle ages worked, likened by one colleague to his fascination with the internal combustion engine.²⁸ In such an atmosphere, that the crusades were essentially of interest for their demonstration of powerful ideology would come as no surprise.

Ironically, the flag-bearer for the crusades in post-war Cambridge, R. C. Smail, could not have been less domineering in personality, manner or scholarship or more sceptical of abstractions. Nonetheless, his influence was profound beyond his own studies. In his 1957 review of Runciman, Smail had mapped out three areas for future research: the military orders; the Jerusalem *Assises*; and crusading ideas and motives. As his pupil Riley-Smith remarked fifty years later, Smail brilliantly 'foresaw the direction of crusade studies for the next half-century'.²⁹ This becomes less remarkable when it is remembered that Riley-Smith's own academic pilgrimage followed precisely Smail's agenda, taking him from the military orders, to the institutions of the kingdom of Jerusalem, including the *Assises*, to the ideology and motives of crusaders. Yet whilst Riley-Smith admitted owing his greatest

academic debt to Smail, their take on the crusades differed. Smail was never finally a convinced pluralist. He was wedded to the tradition of close textual scrutiny, German-style *Quellenkritik* and suspicious of categories: 'the more complex the phenomenon, and the wider the differences of opinion about its nature, the less useful a one-word label'.³⁰ Although referring to colonies, his remark could be applied to the crusade as well.

While Smail gave Riley-Smith his initial direction, inspiration and doctoral topic on the Hospitallers in the east, the Cambridge-London 'pluralist' school was very much the creation of the pupil. Second to Smail as a mentor came Lionel Butler, a representative of a very different academic tradition, a pupil of the intellectually austere K. B. McFarlane, whose approach was defiantly secular, influenced by both Marx and Namier. Butler gave Riley-Smith his first job, at St Andrew's, and later helped his move to a chair in London. Butler's own work on the Hospitallers foundered, but, primarily from his Department of Medieval History at St Andrew's, he exerted a subtle influence on the development of crusade studies, conveyed largely through personal engagement with colleagues, undergraduates and graduate pupils. He left no school, and his pupils came to adopt very different approaches to the crusades.³¹ However, true to his own academic training under McFarlane, Butler grounded in his pupils the importance of archives, not up to that point a marked feature of Anglophone crusade scholarship. By contrast to Butler's urbane, eclectic *laissez faire*, at Cambridge (where he returned after St Andrew's), then London, then Cambridge again, Riley-Smith built up an unsurpassed *équipe* of crusade scholars as his graduate students, attracted by his skilful, green-fingered identification of research topics, clarity of vision, generosity of nurture and infectious enthusiasm. Few areas or aspects of crusading were ignored. The pluralist agenda was pursued through studies of political crusades, crusading in the Holy Land, the Baltic and Greece, the organisation and motivation of crusades. Some characteristic features are discernible: a reliance on papal evidence; the preparedness to hear authentic medieval voices in often formalised texts; the search for an early coherence and achronological consistency in crusade theology. These were concerns shared by Riley-Smith himself, notably in studies of the ideas

surrounding the First Crusade and response to them of the First Crusaders in which he stresses the absence of material incentive and seeks to demolish the fancy of crusaders as greedy land-grabbers or feckless impecunious younger sons on the make.³²

Riley-Smith's vision of the crusades was that of a movement possessed of almost anthropomorphic patterns of youth, maturity and old age. The spiritual was central. In some of his pupils this produced an almost mechanical insistence not just on the crusades' narrow canonical legitimacy, but on the sincerity and weight of religious inspiration behind them. Personal conviction is repeatedly insisted upon. Axiomatic is the approval afforded crusading at the time. Riley-Smith's own work has been infused by a desire to understand the crusaders' motivations on their own terms, however alien or contradictory those motives may appear to modern eyes. Increasingly, the penitential aspect is identified as crusading's 'most important defining feature'.³³ As two of his more senior pupils have identified, this 'process of imaginative engagement' has been informed by Riley-Smith's beliefs as a Roman Catholic and Knight of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta and the Venerable Order of St John. 'Always earthed by Jonathan's professionalism', this empathy 'plays a large part in yielding some of his richer insights and observations'.³⁴ It also makes him especially alert to historians with other frames of reference, past and present. As with many prophets, Riley-Smith is an eager and robust disputant. He has a proselytising enthusiasm for his ideas and his approach. Others are judged accordingly almost as if in a search to expose those who stray from the path of true doctrine. Erdmann is dismissed as lacking sufficient ideological sympathies. Runciman, like Riley-Smith a product of Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, but so very different in so many ways, is taken to task for his romanticism and judgementalism but also, it seems, for his religion, 'another Lowland Calvinist' (the other being Walter Scott). Runciman's Calvinism, though sincere, was scarcely of the puritanical or disapproving sort and his dislike of the crusaders hardly sprang from religious taste or distaste. Jean Richard's 'visceral attachment to the Holy Land' is lamented. Materialism and the condescension of Protestants, Marxists and liberals are especially to be rooted out.³⁵ The 'pluralist' stance and empathetic engagement become almost

totemic. Like many sectarians, Riley-Smith and his 'pluralist' school can indulge in exhaustive mutual endorsement and dismissive polemic against dissidents. Observing from across the North Sea, Hans Mayer, himself a target for Olympian pluralist disdain, recently teased: 'in England it is really dangerous not to be a pluralist'.³⁶

Of course, such knockabout is the stuff of historical debate. Historians are notoriously disputatious. It cannot be denied that the stimulus given by Riley-Smith and other British crusade scholars in the past half-century has helped transform the subject. Constable's definitions have in fact served usefully to expose their own limitations. Many of the articles of faith, even among pluralists, have admitted of modification. Anxiety has been expressed that the desire to empathise minimises the difficulties in teasing out authentic witness of belief and detailed events in formalised medieval texts, from chronicles and vernacular literature to no less artificial charters and trial records.³⁷ The much harked-upon dichotomy between spiritual and material motives seems increasingly either misconceived or old hat. An increased awareness of the roots of the historiography has shifted perceptions. Anyone reading Knolles or Fuller or even Wilken might not find pluralism so novel. Anyone reading Michaud would appreciate the value of controlled empathy. More widely, the increasing academic interest in historiography as a subject of cultural history in its own right has thrown new light on past and developing interpretations of the crusades, what might be called the historicism of history. The crusades remain a barometer of attitudes both to the sort of history each generation regards as worth exploring and of the wider social response. Thus the twentieth-century interest in the legitimacy of violence has become subsumed in a renewed focus on the crusades as examples of inter-faith conflict and of cultural and political imperialism.

New lamps for old?

It is trite but true to say that any historian will 'see the crusades filtered through the material of his own mind'.³⁸ Revision is, or should be, as inherent in the study of history as interpreting evidence. This book is about the past. However, it may be worth

considering pointers to future debates on the crusades and how they conform to patterns already revealed. Within what might be described as traditional crusade scholarship, familiar themes remain attractive: papal records; the military orders; attitudes of theologians, canon lawyers, preachers; the study of liturgy and popular religion. There is a renewed activity in assessing how the western settlement in the Holy Land fits the context of multi-faith Mediterranean societies.³⁹ It is probable that there will be a reaction against the prevailing religious emphasis in explaining the crusades towards a more nuanced materialist approach. Hitherto, such initiatives have tended to be misjudged, eccentric or mutton dressed as sushi. Some rely on highly speculative if not contentious and partial readings of imprecise texts or a set of very generalised but equally speculative determinist theories, such as the American 'Frontier' thesis or Lynn White Jnr's once fashionable thesis of technological development producing a force that the crusades released.⁴⁰ Old saws receive ill-fitted new clothes. The hardly novel idea that crusading resolved the crux of Christian doctrines of sin confronting the social reality of violence reappears as psychological tension resolutions. When added to millenarian anxiety and the perceived Muslim threat, the First Crusade is rebranded in sociological terms as a remedial 'disaster reaction' in accordance with 'Disaster Theory'. Some economic theorists in the 1990s regarded the crusades as 'an essential part of a wealth-maximising strategy'; the church gained a monopoly over salvation in the face of the threat from Islam and crusaders sought their fortunes through war and conquest. As Constable noted in his restrained account of these developments, 'the views of Voltaire and Gibbon have thus been revived'.⁴¹

Materialism will probably have its day again with convincing analysis of the sources and a defter use of the models of social science. However, other fresh directions are suggested by new academic approaches beyond either the crusades or even the middle ages. New techniques of source criticism borrowed from literary critical theory are being applied not just to explicitly imaginative literature, such as vernacular poems and songs, but also to chronicles. The process of composition and the techniques of narrativity are also complemented by ideas derived from Pierre Nora and others; crusading as confected memory.⁴² Study of the

transmission of literary and historical images is matched by that of art, notably the nature of the stylistic forces at play in the plastic arts in Outremer, especially architecture, the decorative arts and manuscript illumination.⁴³ This feeds naturally into the wider debates about cultural exchange, increasingly seen in non- or post-colonial ways. As yet in its relative infancy, the methods of gender studies have begun to produce intriguing commentaries on the distinctive experiences and images of women in their varied relationship with crusading, hitherto largely neglected.⁴⁴ Further removed from classical crusade studies, in books such as *Medieval Film* and *Queer Movie Medievalisms*, the genre of film studies argues for the inclusion of this popular medium as conveying serious interpretive messages, from Cecil B. de Mille's *The Crusades* (1935) to Ridley Scott's *Kingdom of Heaven* (2005), the latter's fundamental, meretricious historical errors nonetheless attracting the fury of Muslim activists and right-wing Christians alike.⁴⁵

The Crusades and politics

Such reactions to Scott's lamentable film provide just one demonstration of the unavoidable recent development: the politicisation of the crusades. This is not primarily an academic issue in so far as few serious historical studies are predicated on interpretations derived from modern politics. However, the crusades have been elevated into models of oppression and proclaimed as a continuing force in the politics of the First World in its dealings with Muslim countries. Western colonialism in the nineteenth century revived, or, some argue, created interest in previous Christian European penetration of the eastern Mediterranean, an interest unfortunately fed by the fashionable, available and predominantly neo-colonial vision of writers such as Michaud. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the succession of the British and French mandates in Syria and Palestine consolidated the neo-colonial interpretation, not least in western scholarship and Near Eastern politics. Post-war conflicts in the Near and Middle East, from the creation and defence of the State of Israel from 1948 to the Lebanese wars in the 1980s to the Iraq wars of 1990–1 and 2003 and beyond, have attracted claims of crusading

precedents, almost exclusively from Muslims. The exception of G. W. Bush's notorious *faux pas* of 16 September 2001 lent such views a phoney credibility. The crusades had ceased to be a subject for disagreement between academics; they were thrust back into the arena of public debate and often violent and bloody political action.

While imperative to insist that the medieval wars of the cross were of a different nature, in a different time and between different peoples, and have nothing directly to say to modern problems, the recent adoption of a caricature of them as a parallel and model for our times cannot be ignored, even in a study of largely academic historiography. As should now be evident, historical parallelism often sits at the centre of writing history, the subject of this book. It is only within the past eighty years, perhaps only fifty, that such facile comparative habits have been replaced by a historical relativism that judges the past on its own terms not ours. This at least is true in the hitherto dominant European and North American historiographical tradition. One potential new direction of crusade studies lies with non-Europeans, in particular Arab and Turkish scholars whose historiographic legacy, in part derived from nineteenth-century Europe, has in the past displayed marked discrepancies from the trends analysed above. In his pioneering 1972 study of what he called 'Arab historiography of the crusades', Emmanuel Sivan described the umbilical link between Near Eastern politics and the study of the crusades since the 1860s.⁴⁶ Such little Arabic academic study that there was before 1945 seemed to follow ideas of east-west conflict developed by governing elites. This was further encouraged by Arab nationalists during and after decolonisation from the 1930s and 1940s who sought to deflect attention from indigenous problems and define a new political identity against an oppressive and exploitative external force, the western Mandate powers. In the early 1930s, Palestinian nationalists celebrated the 'Day of Hattin'. One division of the Palestine Liberation Army bore the name 'Hattin'. For those, like General Nasser of Egypt, wishing to promote a pan-Arab unity in the region, heroes of the resistance to the crusaders, such as Saladin or the Mamluks (both conveniently based in Egypt), supplied powerful historical models. The role of the French and the

British, from the mandates of the 1920s to the Suez invasion of 1956, invited further comparison with the western invasions of the crusades. To this was added the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. Consistently supported by western powers, Israel provided a ready excuse for historical parallelism, the Zionists as new crusaders occupying the Muslim homelands, the *dar al-Islam*. Thereafter, it became commonplace to regard the crusades, as one Syrian writer noted in 1948, as providing 'a major link in the chain connecting the past and the present'.⁴⁷ While drawing on a long intellectual tradition of extrapolating present moral lessons from history, this parallelism suggested that history was actually repeating itself, a lesson of hope to Arab nationalists.

The debate over the crusades in the Arab world had been stimulated intellectually by the interpretations of western writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Ernest Barker's essay was translated into Arabic twice, in 1936 and 1960). Partly originating among the Christian intelligentsia of the Lebanon and Egypt, the academic study of the crusades remained largely secular: 'the west today is still waging Crusading wars against Islam under the guise of political and economic imperialism', this from an Egyptian book published in 1934.⁴⁸ Following the French colonial school, the crusades were depicted as driven by materialism confronting the idealism of their Muslim opponents. This idealism was interpreted by secular-minded nationalists after 1945 in terms of 'Arabhood' rather than religious faith. Within this could be subsumed non-Arabs in the crusade story – including Saladin and Baibars – and hence in modern political agendas. This trope of conflict was not just a feature of crude political polemic. The central irony within Arab historiography is that it derived so directly from the European Enlightenment and Romantic tradition filtered, in part, through the cultural influence of precisely those invading powers – France and Britain – that were being branded neo-crusaders. From India to Cairo, which, from the 1920s, with Damascus, acted as the focus for what Near Eastern crusade research there was, intellectual circles absorbed a western model of a clash of civilisations as, for example, in the work of A. S. Atiya.⁴⁹ Revival of interest in the crusades was thus doubly a product of empire.

The secular approach reversed the post-Enlightenment debate

about western superiority. It has been argued that Arab writers used the crusades as a means of 'uprooting the inferiority complex created as a result of their encounter with the modern west'.⁵⁰ The issue of the apparent transfer of economic, technological and cultural supremacy from east to west had been a staple of western analysis from the seventeenth century onwards. In this process, the crusades were variously regarded, from being central to peripheral. Although many Islamicists and Arabists argued that the crusades were of only tangential significance to medieval Islam, the idea re-emerged that the crusaders' contact with the east had civilised the west. Such reheating of tired western clichés scarcely furthered either a political or an academic agenda. It did, however, speak to a sense of frustration and victimisation fuelled by colonialism, continued western interference and the political capital local regimes made from both. Any sense of inferiority was hardly assuaged by comments such as Sivan's in 1972, describing Arab historiography: 'the account it renders is essentially an emotional one', stemming from an 'unintellectual approach'.⁵¹ In the same issue of the journal of the Israel Oriental Society, perhaps tinged with post-1967 triumphalism, Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, a distinguished Israeli scholar of Islam, wrote of 'the lack of intellectual and emotional maturity in the Arab world today' which she found in the judgemental dualism and extreme, inappropriate language of Arab textbooks. She continued: 'Imperialism, like Israel, reminds the Arab world daily, hourly, of its backwardness, of the loss of its splendour and greatness,' adding that, 'Islam is the embodiment of the glorious national past and the source of national pride'.⁵²

Since the 1970s, the political dimension to the Arabic study of the crusades has been radically altered in two significant ways. First, the dominance of the secular, materialist interpretation of crusading has given way to a more stridently religious understanding of the past conflicts which have been projected forward to the present day. Second, the jihadism and jihadist attitudes that this has produced have been turned from being mainly directed against corrupt regimes within the Near East to a confrontation with western powers who, in Iraq and elsewhere, have once more intervened violently into the Muslim world. In 1972, Sivan looked forward to a more sophisticated Arab historiography. The

current context makes this more difficult. Much of the impetus for the study of the Arab world invaded by the crusaders still comes from Arabist scholars based in the west where new debates about the nature of Islam, the medieval Islamic threat to Europe and the extent of cultural conflict have arisen, products of the same sense of anxiety and renewed combat.⁵³ The scene has shifted. In his well-known study *Orientalism* in 1978, Edward Said argued that at least since the eighteenth century, western cultural attitudes, public policy and academic scholarship towards Islam and the Arab world have rested on convenient self-interested, ignorant, inaccurate, hostile and patronising caricatures. Yet in his lengthy polemic, Said gave the crusades only fleeting cursory mention.⁵⁴ Such indifference would be unlikely in any similar investigation today, a point presciently emphasised by Amin Maalouf's widely read *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes* (1983 original French edition; the often creaking and clumsy English translation 1984).

Maalouf (b. 1949), a Lebanese Christian writer and journalist living since 1976 in exile in Paris, provided what he called a 'true-life novel' of the eastern crusades, an essentially uncritical and in places imaginative and sentimental narrative based largely on Arabic sources to challenge the Eurocentric vision of the classic accounts of Grousset or Runciman. As if to underline this imbalance of traditional perspective, the majority of his primary sources exist in western European editions. In its superficial populist approach, Maalouf's *Crusades* implicitly demonstrates the paucity of contemporary Arab scholarship and its dependence on western research. If inconsequential and occasionally inaccurate as a historical study, Maalouf's work nonetheless clearly and deliberately exposes the inescapable contemporary resonance of his subject. The commentary on the First Crusade focuses on Arab humiliation and the sense of violation by the barbaric western invaders encapsulated in the experience of Palestinian refugees 'determined never to return until the occupiers had departed for ever and ... resolved to awaken the consciences of their brothers in all the lands of Islam'. The modern parallel needs no pointing. Nor does the argument that the jihadist revival of the twelfth century came not from the political elites but from 'a ground swell' beginning in the streets and mosques, a force

mobilised by Nur al-Din, the 'Saint King', and Saladin who directed Muslims morally, militarily and through propaganda to recover 'the occupied territories'.

However, from his non-Muslim Arab Lebanese perspective, Maalouf achieves some objectivity in skilfully reconciling the final telling irony of the book and, he implies, of the history of the Near East. The Muslim world won the crusades and repelled the invaders, yet this presaged the rise of western Europe and the eclipse of Arab civilisation. Maalouf's take on this hoary paradox involves an unblinking critique not so much of what the west gained from contact with the east as of the structural weaknesses within Arab society itself, a subject far less studied. Among the causes for the decline of Arab power Maalouf identified disunity, the predominance of foreign leaders, the lack of stable civic institutions, the reliance on the arbitrary power of rulers over the rule of law and the consequent failure to develop strong traditions of individual rights. Some of these issues remained 'on the agenda in scarcely altered terms in the latter part of the twentieth century'. The struggle to defeat the crusaders produced an insularity that rejected openness to new still less foreign ideas. This militated against innovation, intellectual, scientific or commercial, leading to 'long centuries of decadence and obscurantism'. More corrosively, Maalouf argued, the creation of a solipsistic culture of embattled victimhood encouraged the Muslim world to regard progress and modernism as alien. Western colonialism exacerbated the sense of grievance and persecution, as the options presented veered from imposed westernisation to the embrace of obsessive 'xenophobic traditionalism'. Either way the modern west appeared an enemy, with the crusades the obvious precursor, the legitimate resistance of Saladin or Baibars against one seeming to validate supposed vengeance against the other. Maalouf concluded that 'there can be no doubt that the schism between these two worlds dates from the Crusades, deeply felt by the Arabs, even today, as an act of rape'.⁵⁵ While adding nothing to the understanding of the medieval phenomenon, Maalouf helps explain why rational academic study of the crusades in the Arab world seems so difficult.

Yet the refashioning of the crusades into a modern jihadist banner of hate is not without western parallels. Any visit to the

world wide web can reveal apparently serious western historians arguing over the intrinsic violence of Islam and consequently that the crusades were a necessary defensive measure against Turco-Islamic barbarism, a debate joined enthusiastically by a motley coalition of right-wing secularists, conservative libertarians, biblical fundamentalists, evangelists and Christian bigots. While possibly beginning to exert an influence in the direction of crusade studies back towards more political, material considerations, this new – actually rather old – political and cultural stance prompts a final observation, if one of absence.

The study of the crusades has rarely attracted historians of the political or intellectual Left. The oppositionist critique of the crusades by the *philosophes* was not sustained. Partly this has been a function of the appeal of medieval studies, not just the crusades, for Roman Catholic scholars, not least, but not only, in countries where confessional higher education remained prominent. While German nineteenth-century liberals may have taken to *Forschung* and *Quellenkritik* in some degree to escape the stultification of hierarchy and confessional orthodoxy, the crusades hardly lent themselves in any country to radical championing. The Enlightenment characterisation of crusading as one of the most bewildering and depressing aspects of the middle ages and, by extension, its *ancien régime* hangover, left an indelible impression. Where the crusades were not seen as reactionary obscurantism, their identification with either nationalism or colonialism confirmed their place in a world of the powerful not the powerless. In the twentieth century, with the exceptions of writers such as Alphonse de Lamartine and Dickson, the popular dimensions of crusading have generally been seen as adjuncts to hierarchical promotion. Erdmann's attention to the *populäre Kreuzzug* was Rankian; his whole approach was dictated by a liberal humanism.

Yet, given crusading's popular elements, the grandiose material and cultural claims made on its behalf, not least as a vehicle of social change, and its association with social institutions or constructs such as feudalism, its avoidance by Marxist and socialist historians is notable. Claude Cahen was a distinguished exception. Yet there was no serious scrutiny by members of the *Annales* school in any of its incarnations. Given the wide embrace of crusade studies, and its increasing admittance of theoretical

models, this may appear a peculiar omission. Perhaps more recent interpretations emphasising religious devotion and the public acceptance of ecclesiastical orchestration of beliefs, what Beryl Smalley called 'deep acquiescence', has taken for granted a form of medieval social deference.⁵⁶ This may appear highly questionable when set beside evidence of medieval scepticism, dissent and popular action, some of it crusading. Perhaps interest in the sociology of crusading will encourage different approaches. Yet, whatever the direction of new research and whoever, wherever, conducts it, one conclusion is evident. The crusades have been reinvented by each new generation; so will they be in the future.

Notes

- 1 On historiographic parallels, see C. Tyerman, *The Invention of the Crusades* (London, 1998), p. 125.
- 2 H. E. Mayer, *The Crusades* (Eng. trans. by J. Gillingham of 1965 *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge*, 1st edn Oxford, 1972), pp. 281–6; cf. 2nd edn Oxford, 1988, pp. 312–13.
- 3 On anti-papal crusades, Tyerman, *Invention*, pp. 32, 45, 77–8, 87 and refs.
- 4 Cf. Mayer's brief but pertinent commentary on Hostiensis, *Crusades* (2nd edn 1988), pp. 320–1.
- 5 Mayer, *Crusades* (2nd edn 1988), p. 313. Leading figures in the debate on popularity include P. Throop, *Criticism of the Crusades* (Amsterdam, 1940) and, attempting to dismiss or minimise evidence of hostility, E. Siberry, *Criticism of Crusading* (Oxford, 1985).
- 6 J. Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* (London, 1977).
- 7 Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* (3rd edn Basingstoke, 2002), p. xi.
- 8 Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* (3rd edn Basingstoke, 2002), p. 88.
- 9 N. Housley, with M. Bull, 'Jonathan Riley-Smith: An Appreciation', in *The Experience of Crusading*, ed. N. Housley and M. Bull (Cambridge, 2003), i, 4–5; cf. Mayer's review of *What Were the Crusades?* in *Speculum*, 53 (1978), 841–2.
- 10 J. Riley-Smith, 'Erdmann and the Historiography of the Crusades 1935–1995', in *La primera cruzada*, ed. L. Garcia-Guijarro Ramos (Madrid, 1997).
- 11 Housley, with Bull, *Experience of Crusading*, i, 9; Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* (3rd edn 2002), pp. xii–xiii; cf. *idem*, *The Crusades* (2nd edn New Haven CT, 2005), pp. 303–4.
- 12 Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* (3rd edn 2002), p. xiii; S. Lloyd, 'The Crusading Movement and the Historians', in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*, ed. J. Riley-Smith (Oxford, 1995), p. 64; J. Le Goff, *La civilisation de l'Occident medieval* (Paris, 1964), p. 98; but cf. M. Balard's summary, 'Notes on the Economic Consequences of the Crusades', in *Experience of Crusading*, ed. Housley and Bull, ii, 233–9.

- 13 N. Housley, *Contesting the Crusades* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 18–19 and note 74 for ref.; in general this is an eloquent apologia for a particular, 'pluralist' view of the crusades masquerading as an objective study of recent historiography; Riley-Smith, 'Erdmann', p. 29.
- 14 Riley-Smith, *The Crusades*, p. 309; cf. Tyerman, *Invention*, pp. 1–6.
- 15 E.-D. Hehl, 'Was ist eigentlich ein Kreuzzug?', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 259 (1994), 237–336; K. V. Jensen, 'Denmark and the Second Crusade: The Formation of a Crusader State?', in *The Second Crusade*, ed. J. Phillips and M. Hoch (Manchester, 2001), pp. 164–79. Cf. J. M. Jensen's similar approach, 'Sclavorum expugnator: Conquest, Crusade, and Danish Royal Ideology', *Crusades*, 2 (2003), 55–81.
- 16 J. M. Jensen, 'War, Penance and the First Crusade', in *Medieval History Writing and Crusading Ideology*, ed. T. M. S. Lehtonen and K. V. Jensen (Helsinki, 2005); C. Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (London, 2006), pp. 71–4; J. Flori, *La guerre sainte* (Paris, 2001), pp. 316–20.
- 17 G. Dickson, *The Children's Crusade* (London, 2008); cf. his collected studies, *Religious Enthusiasm in the Medieval West* (Aldershot, 2000).
- 18 P. Chevedden, 'Canon 2 of the Council of Clermont', *Annuaire historia Conciliorum*, 37 (2005), 57–108, 253–322; cf. *idem*, 'The Islamic View and the Christian View of the Crusades: A New Synthesis', *History*, 93 (2008), 181–200.
- 19 C. Kostick, *The Social Structure of the First Crusade* (Leiden, 2008); N. Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe 1400–1536* (Oxford, 2002).
- 20 H. E. Mayer, *Zwei deutsche Kreuzzugsgeschichten in Züricher Sicht: Eine Replik* (Kiel, 2008); the quotation is from Christoph Maier's collusive review of N. Jaspert, *Die Kreuzzug* (Darmstadt, 2003), *Crusades*, 4 (2005), 177–8 at p. 177.
- 21 Mayer's review, *Speculum*, 53 (1978), 841–2; J. Riley-Smith, 'The Crusading Movement and the Historians', in *Oxford Illustrated History*, p. 9; Tyerman, *Invention*, pp. 2–3; *idem*, 'The Holy Land and the Crusades of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries', in *Crusade and Settlement*, ed. P. Edbury (Cardiff, 1985), pp. 105–12; N. Housley, *The Later Crusades* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 3–4 (but cf. his more nuanced later work, *Fighting for the Cross*, London, 2008); cf. I. Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades 1147–1254* (Leiden, 2006); M. Lower, *The Barons' Crusade: A Call to Arms and its Consequences* (Philadelphia PA, 2005); R. Rist, *The Papacy and Crusading in Europe 1198–1245* (London, 2009).
- 22 G. Constable, 'The Second Crusade as Seen by Contemporaries', *Traditio*, 9 (1953), 213–79; *idem*, 'The Financing of the Crusades in the Twelfth Century', in *Outremer*, ed. B. Kedar et al. (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 64–88; *idem*, 'Medieval Charters as a Source for the History of the Crusades', in *Crusade and Settlement*, ed. Edbury, pp. 73–89.
- 23 G. Constable, 'The Historiography of the Crusades', reprinted in *idem*, *Crusaders and Crusading in the Twelfth Century* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 3–32.
- 24 Constable, 'Historiography', pp. 12–13.
- 25 Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* (3rd edn 2002), pp. 101–2; Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, pp. 2 (and note 4), 5, 19–20 and, generally, pp.