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PEACE NEVER ESTABLISHED: THE CASE OF THE KINGDOM OF JERUSALEM

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NO historian of the Kingdom of Jerusalem is likely to ignore the hostile environment in which the western settlers found themselves and the effects of military needs on their politics, government and society. The Latins' war establishment has long been the subject of study, with historians naturally concentrating upon the actual manifestations of conflict: invasions and defence, feudal institutions and the use of mercenaries, castle-building and tactics in the field.¹ Other less tangible factors, quite as important in contributing to the stresses to which society in Palestine was subjected, are rarely considered. The Latins believed themselves to be engaged in a sacred task in maintaining Christian presence on the holiest soil in Christendom; others believed this too, and military reverses in the East aroused in the West bitter criticism of them. They found themselves, moreover, in a situation in which, for reasons outside their control, permanent peace with their Muslim neighbours was impossible. It is this ideological background to the history of the defence of the kingdom that is discussed in this paper.

It must first of all be emphasized, in spite of the use by many historians of misleading terms like 'the crusader states', that the westerners in Palestine were not themselves crusaders, by definition pilgrims who had taken a vow to journey temporarily away from home on an indulgenced military expedition legitimized by papal proclamation, but were ordinary churchmen and laymen. Some subjects of the kingdom, of course, might take the cross in exactly the same way as would their co-religionists in Europe: in 1216 James of Vitry, the new Bishop of Acre, was preaching the cross and receiving crusade vows in Palestine and Syria;² references to the redemption of crusade vows made in the Kingdom of Jerusalem are to be found

¹ See especially R. C. Smail, *Crusading Warfare (1097-1193)* (Cambridge, 1956), *passim*; P. Deschamps, *Les châteaux des croisés en Terre Sainte* (Paris, 1934-9), *passim*; J. Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (London, 1972), pp. 280-351; H. Prutz, *Kulturgeschichte der Kreuzzüge* (Berlin, 1883), pp. 181-213.

² James of Vitry, *Lettres*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens (Leyden, 1960), pp. 88-93.

in the thirteenth-century papal registers;³ and in 1290, as the shadows closed in, Pope Nicholas IV authorized the Patriarch of Jerusalem to preach the cross.⁴ But this evidence for occasional participation in crusades attests to the fact that for most of the time the Latins were not crusaders.⁵ They were, moreover, ambivalent in their attitude towards crusades. On the one hand they desperately needed help in the defence of Palestine and the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were punctuated by appeals to the West for help; on the other they were not particularly keen to have descending on their part of the world large numbers of enthusiastic Christian warriors who would arouse the Muslim enemy and acquire more territory before departing with their vows fulfilled, leaving with an increased commitment the same garrison as before their arrival. The very nature of a crusade, an armed pilgrimage preached in terms of a return after the achievement of a specified goal, meant that in the West no thought could officially be given to the long-term consequences of an expedition, and the Latins in the East tended realistically to want to hang on to what they had got, rather than to advance the Christian cause in so large a way as to put this at risk.⁶

But, although not crusaders, the lay defenders of Palestine were engaged in something of greater significance to contemporaries than ordinary patriotic duty. A distinction was already being made between just and holy wars and, although it must be admitted that this distinction could be, and was often, blurred, the work of canonists in this period tended to sharpen it. Both just and holy wars had to conform to the criteria for Christian warfare of a just cause, proclamation by legitimate authority and right intention on the part of the soldiers. The differences between them can be summarized as follows. First, a just war could only take place in a situation in which both belligerents had the same standing in God's eyes, although of course one of them had incurred condemnation by injuring the other, whereas holy war was a consequence of the conviction that God's intentions in this world were intimately associated with the well-being of one of the parties. Secondly, whereas just war

³ Alexander IV, *Registre*, ed. C. Bourel de la Roncière and others (Paris, 1902–31), nos. 956, 971, 1085, 1726; Gregory X, *Registre*, ed. J. Guiraud and L. Cadier (Paris, 1892–1906), no. 27.

⁴ Nicholas IV, *Registre*, ed. E. Langlois (Paris, 1886–93), no. 2270.

⁵ In the thirteenth century, Cypriot knights distinguished 'service of God', when they fought as crusaders, from more normal actions in defence of the mainland settlement. See 'Les Gestes des Chiprois', *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Documents arméniens*, ii, p. 677; 'Document relatif au service militaire', *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Lois*, ii, pp. 430, 432.

⁶ See J. S. C. Riley-Smith, *The Knights of St. John in Jerusalem and Cyprus, c. 1050–1310* (London, 1967), pp. 113–15, 141–4, 201–02.

came to be believed to be condoned by God, holy war was believed to be positively sanctioned, even commanded, by him, since it was fought in accordance with his wishes for mankind. Thirdly, it followed that participation in holy war was not merely licit, as became the case in just war, but was a moral imperative.⁷ The crusading movement was one manifestation of holy warfare, but it was not the only one, and we must ask ourselves if the defence of the Holy Land had the same sort of status.

Defence of Palestine against the 'enemies of Christ' was defence of part of the Christian Republic, that universal and transcendental state which was believed to have been established by Christ and personally ruled by him; and the preservation of an asset of the Christian Republic involved acting on Christ's behalf and in accordance with his intentions. That would have been enough to classify the military operations of the Latins as holy warfare, in the same way as were those undertaken in defence of the Christian territories in Spain and in north-eastern Germany.⁸ But in fact the defence of Palestine ranked even higher than these, because its guardians were charged with the custody of the holy places and the Holy Land, and these had for contemporaries an importance it is nowadays hardly possible to appreciate. Palestine was the most important goal for Christian pilgrims and, as with all places of pilgrimage, its powers of attraction were closely linked to the cult of relics. In the central Middle Ages devotion to relics was something that united all sections of the European population. The presence of relics was regarded as ensuring the health and vitality not only of churches and monasteries, but also of regions and even kingdoms. Their acquisition or loss were seen to alter the balance of power in western Europe: the abduction of the hand of St James, carried to England by the dowager Empress Mathilda, was regarded as causing irreparable damage to the German kingdom and Henry II of England found it necessary to cloak his refusal to return it to the Emperor Frederick I in high-flown language that even suggested some recognition in England of Frederick's imperial sway. And it is possible that the taking of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade was partly motivated—it was certainly justified—by the prospect of seizing the greatest horde of relics in Christendom.⁹

The Holy Land was itself a source of relics even more inviting than

⁷ For the just war, see F. H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1975), *passim*. For a tentative approach to the holy war, see J. S. C. Riley-Smith, *What were the crusades?* (London, 1977), pp. 15–17.

⁸ Riley-Smith, *What were the crusades?*, pp. 18–33.

⁹ K. Leyser, 'Frederick Barbarossa, Henry II and the hand of St. James', *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xc (1975), 481–506; A. Frolov, *Recherches sur la déviation de la IV^e croisade vers Constantinople* (Paris, 1955), pp. 49–71.

Constantinople, for its ground continually brought forth new ones. The discovery in 1119 of the tombs at Hebron of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob made news in the Islamic as well as in the Christian world. The skeletons of the patriarchs were laid out and covered with new shrouds, and pilgrims were occasionally allowed to visit the tombs until they were closed in the fourteenth century.¹⁰ In 1145 the Patriarch of Jerusalem announced the finding at Sebastea of a cache of relics of St John the Baptist, Elisha and Abdias, which, he believed, had been hidden after the Emperor Julian had burned the body of St John in the fourth century.¹¹ Discoveries like these opened up an exciting prospect. A letter has survived from the Abbot of St Amand to his uncle, the Archbishop of Caesarea, begging him to send him something 'from the relics of Our Lord's Passion and also from those of saints buried in your diocese'.¹² Because the cathedral at Rheims possessed no relics that could be attributed to named saints a cleric in Palestine was collecting them on its behalf in the 1120s.¹³ Relics, and especially fragments of the True Cross, about which more below, were sent to individuals, to churches and to monasteries in the West by kings, patriarchs and nobles of Jerusalem, or given by returning crusaders and pilgrims.¹⁴ The churches in Palestine naturally had their own treasures: in Jerusalem there were four fragments of the True Cross and the heads of SS Philip and James the Greater; in Jaffa, until they were carried off by the Egyptian Sultan Baybars in 1268, were the head of St George and the body of St

¹⁰ 'Tractatus de inventiones sanctorum patriarcharum Abraham, Ysaac et Jacob', *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Historiens occidentaux*, v, pp. 302-16; Benjamin of Tudela, *Itinerary*, ed. and trans. M. N. Adler (London, 1907), p. 25; G. Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems* (London, 1890), pp. 316-19.

¹¹ Le Roux de Lincy and A. Bruel, 'Notice historique et critique sur Dom Jacques de Breul', *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, xxix (1868), 492-3. See Theoderic *Libellus de locis sanctis*, ed. T. Tobler (St Gallen, 1865), p. 96; Oliver of Paderborn, 'Descriptio Terre Sancte', ed. H. Hoogeweg, *Die Schriften der Kölner Domscholasters Oliverus* (Tübingen, 1894), p. 12.

¹² *Thesaurus novus anecdotorum*, ed. E. Martène and U. Durand (Paris, 1717), i, cols. 351-2.

¹³ *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina*, comp. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1844-64), clv, cols. 477-80.

¹⁴ See, for instance, A. Frolow, *La relique de la vraie croix* (Paris, 1961), pp. 310-11, 321-5, 335-6, 338, 341-2, 344-5, 351, 449-50 (but see also p. 305); also H. Mayer, 'Das Pontifikale von Tyrus und die Krönung der lateinischen Könige von Jerusalem', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, xxi (1967), 182-3 note. One might also note the extraordinary collection, including pieces of stone, a fragment of the True Cross and hair from the heads of Our Lady, St. Mary Magdalene and the Holy Innocents, presented to various churches in the Limousin by a monk of Grandmont called Guy of Blond, who claimed that the seals from the Holy Land authenticating them had been stolen from him on his journey home. 'Documents inédits concernant l'Orient latin et les croisades (XIIIe-XIVe siècles)', ed. C. Kohler, *Revue de l'Orient latin*, vii (1899), 6-9.

Christina; Bethlehem possessed one of St Thomas's hands and a nail from the Cross, together with the hammer that had driven it in.¹⁵

Unquestionably the most potent of these was the True Cross in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and its history epitomizes what can be said about the power of relics. The cult of the True Cross, well-established in Jerusalem in early times, had spread throughout the West by the eleventh century,¹⁶ but whatever fragment had been housed in the Holy Sepulchre had been lost by the time of the First Crusade. On 5 August 1099, shortly after the capture of the city, it was 'rediscovered' by the new Latin Patriarch, Arnulf of Rohes, in circumstances which are obscure—there are conflicting accounts in the sources—but which look similar to those surrounding the discovery of the Holy Lance at Antioch a year before.¹⁷ The True Cross was normally kept in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, being processed round the Sepulchre itself during the ceremonies associated with the lighting of the sacred fire on Holy Saturday;¹⁸ the faithful visiting the church made oblations to it.¹⁹ But it was also regularly carried to war.²⁰ On campaign it was probably kept in the king's tent: it was certainly lodged there during the siege of Ascalon in 1153.²¹ It was venerated by the troops before battle²² and it was then customary for it to be carried at the head of

¹⁵ *Pat. Lat.*, clxii, col. 732; John of Wurzburg, 'Descriptio Terrae Sanctae', ed. T. Tobler, *Descriptiones Terrae Sanctae ex saeculo VIII, IX, XII et XV* (Leipzig, 1874), pp. 160–1; 'Les Gestes des Chiprois', p. 771; Innocent IV, *Registre*, ed. E. Berger (Paris, 1884–1921), no. 1531 (and see also no. 2057).

¹⁶ Frolow, *La relique de la vraie croix*, pp. 55–152. See also A. Frolow, *Les reliquaires de la vraie croix* (Paris, 1965), *passim*.

¹⁷ Frolow, *La relique de la vraie croix*, pp. 68–9, 286–7. For the history of the relic, or rather relics, of the True Cross in Jerusalem before the First Crusade, *ibid.*, pp. 55–68. By the early twelfth century four churches in Jerusalem, including the Holy Sepulchre, possessed fragments of the Cross (*Pat. Lat.*, clxii, col. 732).

¹⁸ C. Kohler, 'Un rituel et un bréviaire du St.-Sépulchre de Jérusalem (XIIe–XIIIe siècle)', *Revue de l'Orient latin*, viii (1900–1), 421.

¹⁹ *Cartulaire de l'église du Saint Sépulchre de Jérusalem*, ed. E. de Rozière (Paris, 1849), pp. 46, 48, 285, 297, 302.

²⁰ For references other than those in the succeeding notes, see Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, ed. H. Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg, 1913), pp. 312, 409, 411, 495, 625–6, 648, 665, 686–7; Albert of Aix, 'Historia Hierosolymitana', *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Historiens occidentaux*, iv, pp. 491–3, 550; William of Tyre, 'Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum', *ibid.*, i, pp. 455, 528–9, 542, 647, 795, 974, 992, 993, 1054, 1095, 1103, 1108, 1130; 'Historia Nicaena vel Antiochena', *ibid.*, v, pp. 178, 179; 'Li Estoire de Jerusalem et d'Antioche', *ibid.*, v, p. 647; Anselm of Gembloux, 'Continuatio Sigeberti', *Monumenta Germaniae historica. Scriptores*, vi, p. 379; 'Annalista Saxo', *ibid.*, vi, p. 736.

²¹ William of Tyre, p. 807 (see especially the old French translation).

²² Albert of Aix, p. 492; William of Tyre, pp. 425, 855 (old French translation), 856; 'Annalista Saxo', p. 736; 'Li Estoire de Jerusalem', p. 647.

the Christian army.²³ Its presence was believed to give the faithful a strength against which pagans could not prevail²⁴ and at least one defeat was considered to have been sustained because it had not been brought along.²⁵ Miracles, brought about its by powers of intervention, were reported in military actions in 1101, 1108 and 1147.²⁶ After the capture of Ascalon in 1153 it was solemnly carried into the principal mosque, which was to be converted into a church.²⁷ On return from campaign it was ceremonially welcomed back into Jerusalem by clergy and people.²⁸ It is not surprising that the citizens of Jerusalem did not at all like the idea of it being taken outside the frontiers of the kingdom: it was only with great reluctance that they allowed the king to carry it north to Antioch in 1120. 'What shall we do', they cried, 'if God should allow the Cross to be lost by us in battle, just as once the Israelites lost the Ark of the Covenant.'²⁹ When in 1147 a Christian army was in desperate straits as it withdrew from Bosra, the young king Baldwin III was advised to make his escape on the best available horse, carrying the relic.³⁰ The loss of the True Cross during the Battle of Hattin in 1187—and it seems to have completely disappeared in the confusion—was a real catastrophe, the news of which reverberated round Europe.³¹ In the 1190s

²³ Fulcher of Chartres, p. 454; William of Tyre, pp. 544, 650, 760 (see especially the old French translation), 1042, 1119; 'Gesta Ludovici VII regis', *Historiae Francorum Scriptores*, iv, p. 404; Ekkehard of Aura, 'Chronicon universale', *Monumenta Germaniae historica. Scriptores*, vi, p. 223.

²⁴ Fulcher of Chartres, pp. 414, 453-4, 495, 629-31, 639; Albert of Aix, pp. 492-3, 544, 551, 552, 653; William of Tyre, p. 529; 'Li Estoire de Jerusalem', p. 647; Ekkehard of Aura, p. 223; *Cartulaire général de l'ordre des Hospitaliers de St.-Jean de Jérusalem (1100-1310)*, ed. J. Delaville Le Roulx (Paris, 1894-1906), no. 53.

²⁵ Fulcher of Chartres, pp. 453-4.

²⁶ Albert of Aix, pp. 551, 653-4; William of Tyre, pp. 723-4.

²⁷ William of Tyre, p. 812.

²⁸ Fulcher of Chartres, pp. 632-3, 641-2, 650-1, 668, 690; William of Tyre, pp. 530, 727. See 'Li Estoire de Jerusalem', p. 647.

²⁹ Fulcher of Chartres, pp. 639-40; see also William of Tyre, p. 533. For the effect in Antioch, see Walter the Chancellor, 'Bella Antiochena', *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Historiens occidentaux*, v, p. 119. Antioch had had its own relic of the True Cross, but this had been lost in battle the year before (Frolow, *La relique de la vraie croix*, pp. 316-17).

³⁰ William of Tyre, pp. 721-2. On the other hand, although Anselm of Gembloux (p. 379) referred to the patriarch 'pro vexillo ferens crucem Christi', the *vexillum sanctae crucis*, also carried on particularly serious occasions, was presumably a battle-flag. See *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, ed. M. Bouquet and others (Paris, 1737-1904), xvi, p. 63; *Cart. gen. Hosp.*, no. 527.

³¹ See Frolow, *La relique de la vraie croix*, pp. 347-9; R. Röhrich, *Geschichte des Königreichs Jerusalem (1100-1291)* (Innsbruck, 1898), p. 437 note. During the siege of Jerusalem that followed the battle, a fragment of the Cross in the possession of the monophysite Jacobites was processed through the city. (Ernoul, *Chronique*,

a search party was sent to the battlefield to try to find it, but with no success,³² and for years popes and crusaders lamented its loss and referred to the need to recover it. It has been argued that the fragments of the Cross that were known to be in Constantinople were the greatest lure to those who participated in the storming of the city in 1204.³³ In 1218, a splinter, wrongly supposed to have been cut from the original before its loss, was kept by the patriarch and the canons of the Holy Sepulchre, in exile in Acre, and accompanied the Fifth Crusade to Egypt.³⁴

The Holy Land was not only a source and storehouse of relics. It was also itself, rocks, sand, earth and water, a relic. In the central Middle Ages, it is true, there was a marked interest in the allegorical significance of Jerusalem as a figure of the celestial city; the belief was expressed that its occupation by Christians marked an essential stage in the progress of the world to its end; and there were many references made to its status as the mother of Christians, the head of churches, the navel of the world.³⁵ But the allegorical, chiliastic and symbolical viewpoints were underpinned by the physical. Jerusalem was the same city in which Christ had preached, had suffered and had risen: its streets and stones retained a memory of his presence and were endowed with something of his *virtus*. And this imprint of Christ, and of other figures in scripture, was to be experienced not only in Jerusalem but also throughout Palestine. Reading the itineraries composed for the use of pilgrims one is struck by the number of references to physical objects associated with the careers of the prophets and apostles and with the life and ministry of Christ. Near Nablus was a well by which he had rested when weary. By the River Jordan, the waters of which were 'sanctified', as James of Vitry put it, by contact with his earthly body, was a large stone on which he was believed to have stood when he was baptised. Outside Tyre there had been a slab of marble on which he was believed to have sat, although it had been broken up by (presumably) relic-hunting Latins after the capture of the city. Guides at Qarantene, the Mount of Temptation, showed pilgrims a huge rock which they

ed. L. de Mas-Latrie (Paris, 1871), p. 216; 'L'Estoire de Eracles empereur et la conquiste de la Terre d'Outremer', *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Historiens occidentaux*, ii, p. 88).

³² Ernoul, pp. 170-1; 'L'Estoire de Eracles', ii, pp. 65-6.

³³ Frolow, *Recherches sur la déviation*, pp. 63-71.

³⁴ James of Vitry, *Lettres*, p. 103; Oliver of Paderborn, 'Epistolae', ed. Hoogeweg, *Die Schriften*, p. 288.

³⁵ See P. Alphandéry and A. Dupront, *La chrétienté et l'idée de croisade* (Paris, 1954-9), i, pp. 20-6, 39-42; P. Rousset, *Les origines et les caractères de la première croisade* (Neuchâtel, 1945), pp. 78-80.

said was the site of the Temptation in the Wilderness.³⁶ European reliquaries could contain stones and earth from Palestine.³⁷ 'Those places where the Lord's feet have trod', wrote James of Vitry, 'are held by the faithful to be holy and consecrated and as precious relics.'³⁸

In fact the appeal to men in the Middle Ages of that land 'full of nobility, of charity and of largesse', as the mid-thirteenth-century poet Rutebeuf put it,³⁹ was obsessive. In their eyes the Latins in Palestine were not only defending Christendom against the onslaught of the pagans, but were also fighting for, in fact on, a most potent and sacred relic. Even if not crusaders, they were engaged in a sacred task and it is not surprising that contemporaries of the early years of the Latin settlement did not clearly distinguish the point in 1099 when the First Crusade ended and the defence of the newly established kingdom began. A letter, written in September 1099 from Syria by those leaders of the crusade who were returning home, referred to the 'army of God which is in the Land of Israel'.⁴⁰ Fulcher of Chartres, who was an eyewitness of, or was at least close to, what happened in the East, continued in his account of the events that took place after the ending of the crusade to use the terminology of holy war, and even of crusading, when writing of the settlers. They laboured in God's service and in God's name.⁴¹ Their defence of the Holy Land and their acquisition of new territories expressed love of God.⁴² Campaigning in the North in 1104, soldiers from the Principality of Antioch were on a 'pilgrimage'.⁴³ And in his description of the events leading up to the Battle of Ramle in September 1101 Fulcher put into the mouth of King Baldwin I a remarkable speech, full of references to the holy war.

'Soldiers of Christ, be strong and fear nothing. Act manfully and in this battle you will be strong. Fight, I ask you, for the salvation

³⁶ John of Wurzburg, pp. 115-16, 175, 182; Theoderic, pp. 73, 94; James of Vitry, 'Historia orientalis seu Hierosolymitana', ed. J. Bongars, *Gesta Dei per Francos* (Hannau, 1611), i, p. 1076. For the itineraries, see R. Röhrich, *Bibliotheca geographica Palaestinae* (Berlin, 1890), *passim*; T. Tobler, *Bibliographia geographica Palaestinae* (Leipzig, 1867), *passim*.

³⁷ Frolow, *La relique de la vraie croix*, pp. 71-2, 324-6; see also p. 351. For a stone, supposedly from the Holy Sepulchre, treated as a relic in the early twelfth century, see 'De reliquis sanctissimae crucis et dominici sepulchri scaphusam allatis', *Recueil des historiens des croisades, Historiens occidentaux*, v, p. 338.

³⁸ James of Vitry, 'Historia', i, p. 1081.

³⁹ Rutebeuf, *Onze poèmes concernant la croisade*, ed. J. Bastin and E. Faral (Paris, 1946), p. 71.

⁴⁰ *Epistolae et chartae ad historiam primi belli sacri spectantes*, ed. H. Hagenmeyer (Innsbruck, 1901), p. 168.

⁴¹ Fulcher of Chartres, pp. 362, 364, 389.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 362, 397, 409. ⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 476.

of your souls and in everything exalt the name of Christ, whom these degenerates (the Muslims) always reproach and against whom they loudly rail, believing neither in his Nativity nor his Resurrection. If you should be killed here you will certainly be blessed. Already the gate of the heavenly kingdom is open to you. If you survive as victors your glory will shine among all Christians; but if you wish to flee, France is indeed a long way away from you.⁴⁴

Any confusion of thought did not persist, but as the twelfth century progressed there were several expressions of the idea that the defenders of Palestine were engaged in a holy war. An appeal for alms, written by the Master of the Hospitallers probably in the 1140s, began by invoking the names of 'Our Lord Jesus Christ and the most glorious Holy Sepulchre and all the *virtutes* of Jerusalem', and went on to promise benefactors a share in the prayers of Jerusalem and to assure them that whoever entered the Order's confraternity 'will be safe in the mercy of God, just as if they fought in Jerusalem'.⁴⁵ William of Tyre's *History*, written in the second half of the century, is an important source for this attitude. It is perhaps not surprising, given his dependence on early material, that he should have made the Patriarch of Jerusalem remind the Christian army of the indulgence before battle with the Egyptians in August 1105.⁴⁶ But he referred to the Doge of Venice, who was not a crusader when he arrived in the East in 1123 and exacted a price for Venetian aid in the capture of Tyre, as having come 'for the service of Christ and the increment of the realm'.⁴⁷ He described the expedition which in 1126 invaded the Hauran as 'the army of the faithful'. He wrote of Bohemond of Antioch fighting 'in the service of Christ' in 1127. He attributed the failure of Baldwin II's campaign against Damascus in 1129 to a judgement of God because the king had presumed upon the power of numbers rather than only upon men from his own kingdom, as though these subjects of Jerusalem were especially favoured.⁴⁸ One of William's successors, the author of a treatise of the 1190s,

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 411–12. See also Albert of Aix, pp. 509, 546.

⁴⁵ *Cart. gen. Hosp.*, no. 46. The editor's tentative dating of this document to c. 1121 is certainly wrong. It must date from the 1140s because of the clear reference to the Hospitallers' military activities.

⁴⁶ William of Tyre, pp. 455–6. Fulcher of Chartres (p. 495) was much less explicit.

⁴⁷ William of Tyre, p. 549. See the 'Pactum Warmundi'. *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig mit besonder Beziehung auf Byzanz und die Levante*, ed. G. L. F. Tafel and G. M. Thomas (Vienna, 1856–7), i, p. 84. In the same document (p. 88) reference was made to future rights in Ascalon and Tyre 'if the Holy Spirit should wish to hand them over to the Christians.'

⁴⁸ William of Tyre, pp. 583, 590, 598.

described the barons of the kingdom as being always prepared to fight 'for the inheritance of the Lord.'⁴⁹ It is not as easy to find statements of this sort in the thirteenth-century sources, but the practice in certain parts of Europe of suspending the sentences of criminals in return for a commitment from them to settle in Palestine,⁵⁰ the very real interest in the defence of the kingdom taken by rulers in the West like Louis IX of France or Edward I of England, the extraordinary reputation in Europe of those knights like Geoffrey of Sergines, Oliver of Termes and Erard of Valéry, who spent their lives in service in the East,⁵¹ and the language of many papal encyclicals proclaiming crusades, all bear witness to the way contemporaries still regarded participation in the defence of the Holy Land as a special and sacred duty.

But there was another side to this. It is hard to think of another community which was subjected to such continual and venomous abuse from westerners as were the residents in Palestine of European descent. The Latins were accused of faithlessness, avarice, luxury, impurity and moral turpitude, including unnatural vice; and the city of Acre, the capital of the kingdom in the thirteenth century, had an unequalled reputation for iniquity. It would be a futile task to try to assess the accuracy of this invective, although there is evidence that Acre, a great commercial port, a centre for the employment of mercenaries and in some ways a penal colony, did to a certain extent deserve its lurid reputation.⁵² But it is worth while making some judgement on another common charge: that the Latins were soft and inadequate when it came to military affairs. It is, of course, easy to see how such an idea could develop in western Europe, far from the frontiers of Christendom, where there was little under-

⁴⁹ 'Tractatus de locis et statu sancte terre ierosolimitane', ed. G. M. Thomas, *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Klasse der Bayrischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, part 2 (Munich, 1865), p. 157.

⁵⁰ See P. A. Throop, *Criticism of the Crusade* (Amsterdam, 1940), pp. 97-100.

⁵¹ For Geoffrey of Sergines, see Riley-Smith, *What were the crusades?*, pp. 65-70. For Oliver of Termes, see B. Z. Kedar, 'The passenger list of a crusader ship, 1250', *Studi Medievali*, ser. 3, xiii (1972), 276-8. See also Rutebeuf, *Onze poèmes*, *passim*.

⁵² See the material collected in Prutz, *Kulturgeschichte*, pp. 527-31; also E. Stickel, *Der Fall von Akkon* (Bern/Frankfurt, 1975), pp. 106ff., 193ff. For Acre, see James of Vitry, *Lettres*, pp. 86-7; James of Vitry, 'Historia', i, pp. 1088-9, 1096-7; Burchard of Mt Sion, 'Descriptio Terrae Sanctae', ed. J. C. M. Laurent, *Peregrinatores medii aevi quatuor*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig, 1873), pp. 88-9; Matthew Paris, *Chronica maiora*, ed. H. R. Luard (Rolls Series, London, 1872-83), iv, p. 274; Gregory IX, *Registre*, ed. L. Auvray (Paris, 1896-1955), nos. 4134-5; Innocent IV, *Registre*, no. 4106; S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1967-), i, pp. 126-7; and see also 'Livre des Assises de la Cour des Bourgeois', *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Lois*, ii, pp. 151, 170; J. Richard, *Le royaume latin de Jérusalem* (Paris, 1953), pp. 209-10.

standing of the reluctance of the Latins to add to the burdens of defence by retaking the lost city of Jerusalem or of their desire to maintain a reasonable relationship with their Muslim neighbours—the same accusations were hurled at the Military Orders⁵³—but the interesting thing about this charge is that it was also made by senior churchmen who knew the kingdom and its inhabitants well.

One of them, in fact, was himself born and raised in Palestine. In a reflective passage in his *History*, which must have been written in the 1180s, William of Tyre gave the reasons why he thought the balance of power had now tilted towards the enemy. He drew attention to the sins of the present generation and to the fact that Syria and Egypt were now united under one ruler; but he also argued that

those venerable men who, led by divine zeal and filled with the ardour of faith, first descended on Eastern parts, were accustomed to the disciplines of war, trained in battle, familiar with the use of arms.

He went on to write that at that time the orientals were not warlike. He did not say, but certainly his silence suggests it, that the descendants of those early crusaders could not match their ancestors.⁵⁴ What was implied by William was openly and vehemently expressed by James of Vitry, who was Bishop of Acre for several years of the early thirteenth century. To James the ancestors of the present inhabitants had fought manfully, but

their children, who are called *pullani*, were reared in luxury, soft and effeminate, more accustomed to baths than battles, . . . clad like women in soft robes. . . . How idle and uncaring, how faint-hearted and timid they showed themselves to be against the enemies of Christ! . . . A multitude of Muslims would flee from before their fathers, even though they were few, . . . but they feared the inertia of these descendants no more than women, unless they had French or westerners with them.⁵⁵

And the Franciscan Fidenzio of Padua, who knew the Kingdom of Jerusalem well in its later years, also declared that the Latins were effeminate. He went on to write that 'the Christians who lived in the Holy Land lost heart and in warfare behaved as vilely as women'. They always fled, he asserted, so that a few Muslims could defeat many Christians. The Latins only showed bravery when fighting one another.⁵⁶ This picture of soft, pampered effeminates, presented by

⁵³ Riley-Smith, *The Knights of St. John*, pp. 201–02.

⁵⁴ William of Tyre, pp. 1014–16; and see p. 1132.

⁵⁵ James of Vitry, 'Historia', i, p. 1088. For James's first impression of them, see his *Lettres*, p. 86.

⁵⁶ Fidenzio of Padua, 'Liber recuperationis Terrae Sanctae', ed. G. Golubovich,

eyewitnesses who ought to be taken seriously even though it is certain that James had read William and likely that Fidenzio had read James, has passed into a certain genre of writing on the crusades as one of the characteristics of a half-orientalized Latin population in the East.⁵⁷

It is certainly the case, in so far as one can generalize about them, that the chief interest of the feudal nobles in the Holy Land was not affairs of war, in spite of their exposed situation on the frontiers of Christendom, but the most pendent and mind-splitting jurisprudence; and the emergence of a school of learned jurists drawn from the highest nobility is the most striking characteristic of the feudatories in Palestine, among whom the greatest compliment that could be paid to a peer was that he was a good pleader in the courts.⁵⁸ But the accusations against them of cowardice and inertia were palpably false, for they actually played their military rôle rather well. It should be remembered that the burdens of the defence of Palestine did not rest entirely, or even mainly, on the shoulders of the king or of the brothers of the Military Orders. It was the barons who held and garrisoned most of the great fortresses; and certainly from the 1180s, and probably from the beginning, they had the right, with its concomitant responsibilities, to conduct their own foreign policy with regard to their lordships, with the privilege of independently making war or truces with neighbouring Muslim powers. Any consideration of them, especially in the thirteenth century when the kings were often absentee, must lead to the conclusion that their participation in the defence of Palestine was significant and creditable, and it remained so to the end.⁵⁹ The evidence does not support the strictures of James of Vitry and Fidenzio of Padua.

How then is the obloquy, from the knowledgeable as well as the ignorant, to be explained? First, it is a reflection of the obsession with the Holy Land that reigned in European, and particularly in high ecclesiastical, circles that those in the front line were blamed whenever the enemy was successful. Secondly, the apologists for holy war were caught in an ideological trap. Reverses in military actions fought on behalf of an immanent God who, it was firmly believed, could and would physically intervene in the workings of the natural order, required explanation. And the only satisfactory answer for

Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell' Oriente francescano (Florence, 1906-48), ii, p. 14.

⁵⁷ See for instance E. J. King, *The Knights Hospitallers in the Holy Land* (London, 1931), pp. 299-300.

⁵⁸ J. S. C. Riley-Smith, *The Feudal Nobility and the Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1174-1277* (London, 1973), pp. 121-44. Cf. Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom*, pp. 75-6; Richard, *Le royaume latin*, pp. 323-6.

⁵⁹ Riley-Smith, *The Feudal Nobility*, pp. 27-31.

God's inaction was that this was a judgement on the sins and inadequacies of those entrusted with the sacred task, a proof of their unworthiness. It was St Bernard, above all, who had developed this idea after the failure of the Second Crusade and it was constantly repeated in the century and a half that followed his death.⁶⁰ The almost hysterical abuse is further confirmation of the importance Europeans attached to the custody of the Holy Land and of their view that the defenders of Palestine were waging a holy war.

But it cannot have been pleasant for the lay knights of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The conviction that the defence of Palestine was a sacred responsibility and the blame that inevitably attached to them whenever anything went wrong must have imposed particular stresses on them. And these must have been aggravated by the fact that, for ideological reasons, peace with the Muslim world was unattainable. The Muslim doctrine of the Jihād stemmed from the ideas of the prophet himself. It was not possible to reach agreement with an outside world that did not adhere to Muslim principles and a state of permanent war had to reign until the rule of Islam extended over all. This war was, therefore, expansionist. The inhabitants of newly conquered territories would be forced on pain of death to become Muslims, unless they were members of those religious groups—Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians—which had holy scriptures; these would be allowed to adhere to their beliefs but would be treated as inferiors, with legal disabilities and liabilities. The state of permanent war, however, could be modified: safe-conducts could be granted to foreigners travelling through Muslim territory; and truces for limited periods, in principle not more than ten years, could be arranged with the outside world, although these could legitimately be broken by the Muslims at any time.⁶¹ In the eleventh century the idea of the Jihād was dormant in Palestine and Syria, but, following the disaster to Muslims of the First Crusade, it began to re-emerge. It was taken up after 1118 by the rulers of Damascus and Aleppo, reached an apogee in the second half of the twelfth century in the careers of Nūr-ad-dīn and Saladin, and, although rather less pronounced in the period 1193–1260, was triumphantly reasserted after 1260 by the Mamluk rulers of Egypt. In the Near-Eastern Jihād of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, moreover, the idea of Jerusalem as a holy city of Islam and, by

⁶⁰ Rousset, *Les origines*, pp. 157–9; Stickel, *Der Fall von Akkon*, pp. 106ff., 190ff. Of course, there was also severe criticism of what was believed to be a lack of response in the West to the needs of the Holy Land. (Stickel, *Der Fall von Akkon*, pp. 113ff).

⁶¹ E. Tyan, 'Djihād', *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leyden, 1960–), ii, pp. 538–40; E. Sivan, *L'Islam et la croisade* (Paris, 1968), pp. 5–6.

extension, of the sanctity to Muslims of the Holy Land developed in reaction to Christian control of them.⁶²

For most of the time, therefore, even during the moderately calm first half of the thirteenth century, the Jihād dominated Muslim relations with the Latins in Palestine. The agreements that were made between the two sides were, in all cases save one, temporary truces, lasting no longer than a little over ten years.⁶³ And the one exception that I know of proves the rule. In 1167 King Amalric of Jerusalem marched into Egypt to help preserve the Fātimid caliphate from the sunnite forces of Nūr-ad-Dīn. The Egyptian government, weak and threatened, was at this time persuaded to make what William of Tyre, who was in a position to know, called a perpetual peace.⁶⁴ Two Latin ambassadors, Hugh Lord of Caesarea and a Templar called Geoffrey Fulcher, were sent to Cairo, where there occurred the famous incident in which Hugh demanded that the caliph extend to him his bare hand—clearly not, as is usually supposed, out of West European *bonhomie*, but in order to emphasize the altogether exceptional nature of the treaty being entered into.⁶⁵ The Egyptian government had been forced to break fundamental Islamic law and to transgress popular religious feeling. With this in mind, it is easy to see why the Templars refused to take part in Amalric's campaign into Egypt in 1168 on the grounds that it would be breaking faith, and one can understand what lay behind William of Tyre's bitter attack upon the Master of the Hospitallers, Gilbert d'Assailly, for his part in influencing the decision that brought the peace to an end.⁶⁶

This perpetual peace, governing only relations with Egypt, seems to have been unique. The norm, a truce of up to or a little over ten years, was known and understood in Europe as well as in Latin Palestine, and at times one can see the papal curia making early preparations for the launching of crusades to coincide with the ending of truces. In 1211 the Latin kingdom and Egypt agreed to a cessation of hostilities for six years.⁶⁷ In 1213 Pope Innocent III proclaimed the Fifth Crusade and by 1215 he was planning for it to depart on 1 June 1217, exactly six years after the truce had been made.⁶⁸ In 1229 the Emperor Frederick II made a truce with

⁶² Sivan, *L'Islam et la croisade*, *passim*.

⁶³ See, for example, P. M. Holt, 'Qalāwūn's treaty with Acre in 1283', *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xci (1976), 802–12.

⁶⁴ William of Tyre, p. 909.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 948–9, 957–8.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 910–13.

⁶⁷ 'L'Estoire de Eracles', ii, p. 317.

⁶⁸ *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, ed. G. D. Mansi (Florence/Venice, 1759–98), xxii, col. 1058. For the direct relationship between the ending of the truce and the timing of sailing, see 'L'Estoire de Eracles', ii, pp. 318, 321.

al-Kāmil of Egypt to last for ten years.⁶⁹ Frederick was bitterly condemned in the West for this agreement, but the papacy recognized it, at least after pope and emperor had themselves come to terms in 1230; in September 1234 Pope Gregory IX began to enlist support for a new crusade, to leave in 1239, when the truce expired, and he strictly forbade crusaders to depart from Europe before the time of the general passage.⁷⁰

The Latins, of course, knew not only about the Jihād and its effects on the kinds of truces that could be made with Muslims, but also of the freedom Muslims claimed to have to break these truces whenever circumstances warranted. In a letter of 1239 to Thibaut of Champagne and his fellow-crusaders, the leaders in the Kingdom of Jerusalem, presumably mindful of Pope Gregory's prohibition, urged them not to delay on account of the truces,

because the Muslims do not hold to a truce with Christians; on the contrary, many pilgrims have been killed and captured during this truce.⁷¹

Permanent peace could never be achieved. There could be no aftermath of war. The most that could be hoped for was fragile truces with the Muslims.

Reinforcing the precarious nature of these truces was the practice and appeal of crusading: I have already referred to some crusades timed to arrive in the East when truces ended. A fundamental difference between the Jihād and the crusade was that the former was aggressive, the latter theoretically was not, being subject to the essential pre-condition of all Christian war, a just cause. Although a few contemporaries wrote in terms of the expansion of Christendom, the general view was that crusades were justified only as defensive reactions to the injuries sustained by the faithful in consequence of past or present aggression.⁷² But conditions in Palestine and the threat posed by the Jihād allowed campaigners much freedom of action. The body of Islam had the declared aim of the subjugation of Christendom; in the past, moreover, it had seized the Holy Land and other territory that had once been subject to Christian rule. It clearly menaced Christendom, and in particular the Holy Land, and must be resisted. In addition, the obsessional concern for Jerusalem that gripped the West demanded that the holy

⁶⁹ See T. C. Van Cleve, 'The Crusade of Frederick II', *A History of the Crusades*, ed.-in-chief K. M. Setton, 2nd ed. (Wisconsin, 1969-), ii, pp. 455-6.

⁷⁰ Roger of Wendover, *Chronica*, ed. H. O. Coxe (London, 1841-4), iv, pp. 327-30; *Monumenta Germaniae historica. Epistolae saeculi XIII*, ed. C. Rodenberg, (Berlin, 1883-94), i, no. 663.

⁷¹ *Thesaurus novus anecdotorum*, ed. Martène and Durand, i, col. 1012.

⁷² See Riley-Smith, *What were the crusades?*, pp. 18-33.

city, held by westerners only between 1099 and 1187 and between 1229 and 1244, must be kept in Christian hands or reoccupied. Whatever *modus vivendi* with the Muslims the Latins in Palestine might have been able to reach—and in the first half of the thirteenth century the Christian ports were important to the whole Syrian economy, providing strong motivation for the Muslims to renew truces whenever possible⁷³—the concern in the West for the Holy Land, and especially for the city of Jerusalem, would mean that periodically, whether the Latins in the East liked it or not, a host of crusaders would descend on Palestine or on a neighbouring power like Egypt, to renew the war with Islam.

In the central Middle Ages the Jihād and two forms of Christian holy war, the crusade and the defence of the Holy Land, were involved in a struggle for the mastery of Palestine. In such a situation there could be no lasting peace or even the prospect of it. The Latins, on one of the most exposed frontiers of Christendom, were responsible for the custody of a land that engaged the obsessive interest of all Christians. Charged with a sacred duty, the defence of a priceless relic, they were looked to and abused by western Europeans who felt a proprietorial concern, donated large sums of money to the cause and every now and then launched a crusade in their support. They had no hope of evading the invective. Common sense could have told them that they could hardly hope to hold off the superior might of Islam for ever, but they were not judged by their western backers in a practical but in an ideological light. The very thing that attracted western support, the belief that they were fighting a holy war on God's behalf, put them in an impossible situation, for the only acceptable explanation for their inevitable failure was that they were unworthy of the responsibilities entrusted to them by God. There were, of course, periods of truce and the kingdom was integrated into the economy of the region in a way that modern Israel is not. But the conditions of existence must have been stressful. It is impossible to say how, as individuals or in a group, the Latins reacted to these pressures, and anyway modern psychology is opposed to generalizations about human responses to stress.⁷⁴ It is enough, I think, to remind ourselves that decisions made by members of the Latin community in given situations and the often peculiar development of institutions in the Latin kingdom should be seen against a background provided by contemporary Christian and Muslim ideologies of war.

⁷³ Riley-Smith, *The Feudal Nobility*, p. 64.

⁷⁴ See L. R. C. Hayward, 'The subjective meaning of stress', *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, xxxiii (1960), 185–94.