

# Introduction

The Eastern Mediterranean world witnessed the expansion of Latin Europe during the time of the crusades. From Sicily in the West to the Syrian coast and beyond, to Mesopotamia and Transjordan, and from Constantinople to the Nile delta, Frankish presence was effective in taking over political rule, establishing dominions, carrying out military campaigns and intensifying trade. After a little less than two hundred years, the crusaders' rule came to an end in face of a politically more united and militarily empowered Near East which was strong enough to also withstand the Mongol threat. However meaningful or marginal local milieus of confessionally mixed societies may have been during that time, there was obviously no ideological foundation for a lasting cohabitation of Muslims and Christians under Latin rule, neither in Sicily nor in the Near East. In the overall perspective, their strategic alliances and political objectives remained committed to confessional concerns and were nourished by the rivalry towards Greek dominance in the East.

The crusades instigated the formation of a Muslim antibody, against which the Franks, their allies in the region and the weakening support from the European homeland could not resist. However, despite conflict and ideological constraints, the impact of the events, directly and indirectly, gave rise to political alignments cutting across regional and cultural boundaries. The Frankish alliance with Eastern Christianity, the consequences of the Latin presence in Byzantium, which incited a Byzantine elitist reaction and finally induced new alliances with the Seljuks, illustrate such policies. The presence of the Franks in the region also left its imprint on the image of Muslims in Latin Europe: Although the culturally alien and heretical character of Muslims remained an unchallenged attribution, Latin Europe's perception of Muslims gradually liberated itself from invalid stereotypes, and the crusades were identified more as a political than a religious movement. The multi-faceted processes of change in the social and political fabric of Muslim society should also be seen as interrelated with the Frankish presence in the region. The Muslim side, often quite pragmatic in their dealings with the Franks of the Levant, transformed the challenge into a more activist vision of Islam and Islamic institutions. The crusades indeed prompted an increase of contact, commerce, and fostered, even if limited, a growth of discernment and mutual impulse between the agents divided by creed and political alignment. In this vein, the period of the crusades may be seen as heir to the Mediterranean legacy of cross cultural contacts, controversial as this may seem in view of the violence and suffering which they brought about.

The time of the crusades is commonly perceived as a period of confrontation, innovation and, to an extent which remains a matter of debate, exchange. Seen from a Western perspective, the heroic character of the enterprise, its religious

motivation and political background, constraints and dynamics naturally demand attention. Seen from the Muslim East, emphasis is rather on the aggressive character of the Frankish intrusion, its effects upon local societies and political rule, and its defeat through Muslim armies. However, the dynamics of the crusades go well beyond any bi-polar constellation: Latin Europe was not united, of course, nor was the Near East; Byzantium, the Armenian kingdom in Cilicia and Eastern Christianity also played their role.

Modern historiography tends to contain these perspectives in an attempt to incorporate contemporary perceptions of all sides into a comprehensive tableau. This remains a challenging endeavour, as source material from Latin Europe, Byzantium, the Arab Near East, as well as historiography on the Seljuks needs to be considered; the role and vision of Armenians, Syrian Orthodox Christians, possibly also Nestorians and Jews, later Mongols, demand due attention, too. In response to this rather wide range of highly specialized requirements, the present volume offers an interdisciplinary collection of studies which include most of the aspects mentioned above.

The contributions to this volume go back to the conference entitled “The Eastern Mediterranean between Christian Europe and the Muslim Near East (11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries)” held by the Orient-Institut Beirut/Istanbul in Istanbul in May 2007 under the auspices of its former director Professor Manfred Kropp.\* Dr. Axel Havermann, who had designed and organized the meeting, brought together experts of European and Near Eastern history with the aim of presenting a variety of visions and approaches in different fields. Dr. Christoph Herzog, affiliated with the Orient-Institut at that time and now Professor of Turkish Studies at the University of Bamberg, Germany, took the initiative of inviting the conference participants to publish their contributions. Quite some time has elapsed before this book could be brought to print, but this does not result in an outdated of its contents. All contributions published at this instant have undergone recent amendments and completion.

Choice and focus of the studies compiled in this volume are informed by our interest in the processes of change which accompanied the crusades or resulted from the Frankish presence in the Near East. Beyond the general framework of a gradual erosion of the Frankish power and the reorganization of the Muslim Near East, as it is set up by the course of history, manners and effects of the Frankish engagement in the Near Eastern polities and societies are addressed. The contributions are organized into four chapters. Chapter one deals with the shift of power between Latin Europe and Byzantium and its repercussions on societies in Sicily and Anatolia (12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries). Chapter two discusses the

---

\* Since 2009, the Orient-Institut Istanbul has been an independent institution within the *Foundation of German Humanities Institutes Abroad* (Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland).

ideological and political reaction of the Muslim Near East to the crusades (12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries) with particular attention given to the question as to what extent we may discern an impact of the Frankish presence. Chapter three is dedicated to the particular interests and strategies which guided the Frankish policies, and their various agents, in their dealings with Near Eastern society. Chapter four sheds light upon the ideological dimensions of the Frankish attitudes regarding the religion of their Muslim adversaries, depicting a gradual and timid rationalization of attitudes moving away from the heritage of early medieval discourse. This chapter, and in fact the entire volume, ends by highlighting the benefits which the encounter between Latin Europe and the Near East was able to bring about for the study of scientific knowledge in Europe.

David Abulafia offers a panorama of Sicily in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the famous mosaic of ethnic groups, often living in rivalry, and home to Greek, Latin and Muslim Arab populations. Retracing the ascent and history of the Norman kingdom, he highlights the process of gradual Latinisation instigated by their rule. According to the author's careful analysis, the accounts of al-Idrīsī, Benjamin of Tudela, Ibn Jubayr, and the "letter of Peter", indicate a growing awareness that the ethnic balance on the island was changing and that crisis was imminent.

Ralph-Johannes Lilie describes the circumstances and impact of the increasing presence of Franks in Byzantium during the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Their indispensable military services and growing influence posed a threat to the Greek elite and buttressed the deep-rooted antagonism between "cultured" Greeks and "barbarian" Latins. This conflict was also nourished by religious rivalry and was exacerbated by the crusaders' rule in regions of the Near East which had been before – in substantial parts – under Byzantine rule.

Sara Nur Yıldız carefully introduces an aspect of Byzantine-Seljuk elite interaction which offers some surprise. Particularly as a result of the tumult of the Fourth Crusade, the integration of Byzantine elites – as illustrated by the Mavrozomes clan – into Seljuk elites came as a response to the loss of territories and positions. As the author suggests, the assimilation of the Komnenian legacy into the Seljuk system contributed to the "Byzantinization" of the Seljuk political culture.

Stefan Leder summarizes the recent discussion concerning the revitalization of *jibād* in the wider context of the resurgence of Sunni Islam and political reorganization. He suggests that the crusades indeed presented a stimulus and direct inspiration for this process. The *jibād*-ideal depicted in Ibn Shaddād's portrayal of Saladin illustrates the religious, ethical and aesthetic mobilization by combining militant defense of Islam with inner edification. It promotes the ideal society unified in the struggle against the Franks and also gives evidence of a new "islamified" terminology which developed during the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

Yehoshua Frenkel depicts various areas in which mobilization was effective during the Islamic re-conquest of the Frankish dominions (12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century): *Jibād*-rhetoric in epigraphy and treatises, political discourse and official *jibād*-policy

supported by the religious establishment; encouraging the establishment of pious endowments for the safeguarding of coastal settlements, for redemption of war prisoners, and for entertaining religious institutions; encouraging loyal Muslims to settle in coastal towns. The author's panoramic survey demonstrates that the re-conquest shaped the administrative institutions in the Syrian provinces.

Reuven Amitai takes us in detail to the realities of the Mamluk state and its most important segment: the military apparatus. He explains how the allocation of resources was obtained – through re-conquered territories – and offers insight into the complex organization of the armed forces including the intelligence service and communication. The driving force behind the extraordinary efforts of the Mamluk state was the Mongol threat and fears of a Mongol-Frankish coalition, thus classifying the Frankish presence second in danger to the Muslims of the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Marie-Luise Favreau-Lilie offers a comprehensive survey on the extent, value and conditions of trade organized from the rivaling Italian port cities in the Islamic Levant (11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> century). Trade, which predated and outlived the crusades, was essential to both sides of the Mediterranean and created a diverse and complex network of relationships: Securing the juridical status necessary for the protection of their activity and settlements required continuous costly efforts and adaptation to unstable conditions. The engagement in the crusaders' enterprise, which promised safe ports, constituted a danger to commercial interests elsewhere in the Islamic Levant.

Hubert Houben studies the curious activity and possessions of the Teutonic Order in the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly in the two new kingdoms of Cyprus and Armenia, tied to the Staufen Empire by a bond of vassallage. The Armenians of Cilicia, who were seeking support from the Western world in an attempt to counterbalance their Byzantine and Turkish adversaries, offered the Teutonic Order an important gateway to their expansion to the East, as they were able to establish an Armenian bailiwick. Cyprus even remained a stronghold of the Teutonic Order even after the fall of the Staufen dynasty.

Peter Bruns retraces the alliance and narrow ties between Catholic Franks and the Syrian-Orthodox Church. United by their anti-Byzantine stance, and propelled by the ambition of allying themselves against Muslim hegemony, the Frankish role of arbitrators in Syrian Orthodox church matters was welcome, and in fact needed, in a society characterized by factionalism. Disturbance occasionally occurred through Frankish ignorance of the pragmatic rules of Christian-Muslim cohabitation on a local level.

Peter Herde contributes a study of the efforts that the Papacy undertook for a strategic alliance with Christianized Mongols against the Mamluks, who threaten the Frankish dominions in the Levant. Careful analysis of correspondence and reports reveals that the ambitious policy was hampered by the priority of missionary efforts, which were a purely dogmatic requirement. In contrast, the

evaluation of confessional divides between Nestorians and the Latin Church shows that differences, although important in local perspectives, were not insurmountable.

Georg Gressner summarizes the long history of Christian terminology and stereotypes used to characterize Muslims, from biblical exegesis in Late Antiquity to papal documents contemporary to the crusades. In contrast to the image of heathendom apparent in exegesis, the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century recognizes Islam as a – heretical – religion which needs to be taken seriously. The correspondence with the Ḥammādid an-Nāṣir in which Gregor VII refers to Abraham as a historical link between the religions is discussed as a particular and exceptional case probably informed by the Pope's acquaintance with Jewish religion.

Maria Vittoria Molinari discusses the propagation of crusade ideology in literature distinguishing between the popular genre containing bold depictions of the hero and the poetry of the Minnesong giving voice also to inner conflict and individual stance. Notwithstanding these differences, she identifies a repertoire of common ideas and images, revealing a concerted propaganda project at the time of the Third Crusade. In contrast, the praise of the crusades by Walther von der Vogelweide is more political in character, reflecting the conflict between Emperor Frederic II and the papacy.

Dietrich Lohrmann demonstrates that our reconstruction of the Western reception of Arabic science needs to take the Eastern centres, particularly Antioch, into account. The author draws attention to many details giving evidence that Western access to knowledge was part of the culture of the crusade period. First acquaintance with Ptolemaic Arabic astronomy seems to have taken place in Antioch, which thus may be seen as rivaling the importance of Spain as a centre of the transmission of knowledge.

The editor is indebted first of all to the organizers of the conference mentioned above. Without their inspired initiative, the present collection of contributions would not have materialized. Antje Seeger, Martin-Luther-Universität at Halle, Germany, who was charged with the desktop-editing, has spared no efforts in verifying references and applying a unified page style for the two languages used in this book. The experienced assistance of Dr. Barbara Pusch, Orient-Institut Istanbul, guided and encouraged the editor all the way through the work on this volume. The publication was produced in cooperation between the Orient-Institut Beirut and the newly-founded Orient-Institut Istanbul. We hope that it will contribute to the good auspices of a fruitful cooperation of both institutes in the future.

Stefan Leder, Beirut

