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INTRODUCTION: THE STUDY OF WARFARE IN THE LATIN EAST

In May 1291 Muslim troops commanded by the Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Khalil captured and destroyed the city of Acre. Although it was not the last Latin-held site to be surrendered, contemporaries regarded the fall of Acre as symbolic of the temporary end of Latin rule in the area.[1] Similarly, in July 1191, the capture of Acre by forces of the Third Crusade had been a decisive point in the campaign, even though the treaty of Jaffa, which acknowledged the re-establishment of the Latin Kingdom, was not signed until September 1192.[2] The Kingdom of Jerusalem, which had been virtually eliminated by Saladin after the battle of Hattin in 1187, was to survive, in a rather reduced form, for nearly a century. Until the defeat of St Louis's first crusade in 1250, the kingdom was maintained largely as a result of Muslim divisions, rather than Latin strength. After this, the Mamluks' usurpation of power in Egypt and their subsequent unification of the Muslim states in the area lead to the Christian losses of the 1260s. Only a few, mainly coastal, sites were able to hold out until 1291.

It would be quite unreasonable, however, to regard the 'Second Kingdom' as a mere appendix of the First. Recent work on the constitutional and social history of the Latin Kingdom has shown that there was much positive achievement in the later period – even allowing for a fragmentation of authority, implications of innate strength are apparent in, for example, the baronial resistance to the demands of Frederick II and the constitutional debates and internecine conflicts which raged throughout much of the thirteenth century.

[1] For an analysis of contemporary reaction see S. Schein, 'The West and the Crusade. Attitudes and Attempts, 1291–1312' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, Cambridge, 1979), pp. 27, and 79–113, *passim*.

[2] J. Prawer, *Histoire du royaume latin de Jérusalem* (2 vols., Paris, 1969–70), vol. II, pp. 67–8, 99.

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Introduction

MILITARY HISTORIANS AND THE MILITARY HISTORY OF THE LATIN EAST

In 1956 R. C. Smail published his book on the military history of the Latin states from the period of their establishment to the end of the Third Crusade. By analysing a detailed body of evidence, Smail was able to place the military history of the period in its social and political context, and thus demonstrate the importance of warfare to the Latin East. He showed that this was in sharp contrast to the work of most military historians, who had been content to describe and sometimes analyse a quite arbitrary selection of battles, apparently chosen for their tactical significance.[3] Except for the study of castles, which will be considered later, the thirteenth century has had less attention from scholars concentrating on military affairs. John of Joinville's narrative of the battle of Mansurah seems to be the only contemporary account which has received widespread consideration.

Several scholars, however, have considered certain aspects of the subject. Delpech dealt with the battles at Agridi in 1232, near Gaza in 1239 and at Mansurah in 1250. But his work was coloured by a preconception that medieval armies not only knew precisely what they wanted to do (often based on the theories of classical authors such as Vegetius) but also had the ability to carry out complex manoeuvres in battle.[4] This, coupled with an uncritical use of source material, rendered questionable many of his conclusions regarding the tactics of the thirteenth century.[5] In the case of Gaza in 1239, Delpech was exceptional amongst general historians of medieval military history in making use of a very detailed account of this conflict.[6] His analysis of this battle suggested that he wished it to conform to three predetermined ideas, none of which can really be justified from an objective reading of the sources. First, he noted the exploitation of the terrain by Rukn-ad-Din al-Hijawi, although it was clearly the crusaders' own decision to camp in a valley surrounded by low hills: this position was in no way forced on them by the Muslim

[3] R. C. Smail, *Crusading Warfare (1097–1193)* (Cambridge, 1956), pp. 1–17.
[4] H. Delpech, *La Tactique au XIIIème siècle* (2 vols., Paris, 1886), vol. I, pp. 265, 331–54; vol. II, pp. 67–81, 130–46.
[5] See the summary dismissal of his work by J. F. Verbruggen, *The Art of Warfare in Western Europe during the Middle Ages* (Amsterdam, 1977), pp. 1–2.
[6] In 'Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr de 1229 à 1261, dite du manuscrit de Rothelin', *RHC Oc.*, vol. II (hereafter 'Rothelin'), pp. 541–6.

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commander.[7] Secondly, following the account of Albert of Trois Fontaines, he emphasised the imbalance amongst the crusader forces caused by a lack of footsoldiers; in this he appears to have overlooked the assertion (in the 'Rothelin' account) that the mounted troops were reluctant to abandon their footsoldiers, even though this would have allowed the former, at least, to escape from the Muslims.[8] Thirdly, he criticised the crusader knights for charging the Muslims, and thus breaking formation. He ignored the statement that this charge was necessary because the crusaders' crossbowmen had run out of arrows.[9] These examples illustrate Delpech's tendency to manipulate the sources in order to justify certain preconceived ideas, thereby seriously diminishing the value of his study of battle tactics in the thirteenth century.

Oman incorporated a long account of the crusades and the Latin states into his study of medieval warfare. However, he dismissed the Second Kingdom as 'a mere survival without strength to recover itself', and he had little to say about its military history. He preferred to concentrate on the crusaders' invasions of Egypt which he regarded as 'wholly independent of the defence of Palestine', and his only use of material from the thirteenth century was that concerning the battle of Mansurah, for which he produced a composite account from some narrative sources. Oman also referred occasionally to evidence from the Latin East in his chapters on fortification and siegecraft.[10]

Lot dealt with the Latin East during the thirteenth century in a work which, like Smail's, attempted to place military history in its social and political context.[11] The results, however, are of limited value: Lot relied largely on secondary materials (which was understandable, given that his intention was to write a general survey of medieval warfare for French-speaking students) and he produced little more than a short political history with military overtones.

In more recent years two studies have added in different ways to the general understanding of medieval warfare. The first was

[7] 'Rothelin', pp. 541–2; Delpech, *La Tactique*, vol. II, pp. 68–9.
[8] Albert of Trois Fontaines, 'Chronicon', *MGHS*, vol. XXIII, p. 946; 'Rothelin', p. 543; Delpech, *La Tactique*, vol. II, p. 67.
[9] 'Rothelin', p. 544; Delpech, *La Tactique*, vol. II, p. 69 and note 2.
[10] C. Oman, *A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages* (2 vols., London, 1924), vol. I, pp. 231–352, especially pp. 263, 266, 340–52; vol. II, pp. 37–9, 49, 51–3.
[11] F. Lot, *L'Art militaire et les armées au moyen âge*, vol. I (Paris, 1946), pp. 169–210.

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Verbruggen's *Art of Warfare in Western Europe*. Apart from a section on strategy, the author was primarily concerned with the roles of knights, footsoldiers, archers and crossbowmen, and the tactics which were employed by combatants when they were in a battle situation.[12] Verbruggen was prepared to use material from battles which took place in the east, but for the thirteenth century he limited himself to occasional references to the battle of Mansurah. In a section on discipline he made extensive use of the Templars' *Rule*, which includes detailed regulations on how members of the Order should conduct themselves on campaign. Finally, in his chapter on strategy Verbruggen relied heavily on the plans to recover the Holy Land (the *De recuperatione Terrae Sanctae* texts) which were written in the west after the fall of Acre. Verbruggen's book provides many important insights into medieval warfare. However, his conclusion – that 'the weaker of the contestants took refuge behind the defence of his many fortresses ... [which] created a balance between the various countries which was not easily upset'[13] – cannot be applied to the situation in the Latin states during the thirteenth century. The Latins were sometimes able to use their strongpoints as places of refuge. But the balance, if there ever had been one, between Muslims and Christians was upset by the marked superiority of the former in most types of military encounter, and by the inability of the latter to deal with Muslim methods which were geared towards the progressive reduction of Christian territory in the area, primarily by the use of the siege. Contemporaries attested to the growing sense of panic and bewilderment amongst Christians as a result of this Muslim strategy.

Contamine, in *War in the Middle Ages*, illustrated how the schemes of the Franciscan Fidenzio of Padua, in his 'Liber recuperationis Terre Sancte', reflected the improved administrative techniques of the period as employed by Edward I of England, Philip IV of France and Charles I of Anjou. This is characteristic of Contamine's wide vision of warfare. He concentrated on the period c. 1100–1400, dealing not only with battlefield tactics but also such diverse aspects of warfare as armaments, siege techniques, the social impact of military affairs and the motivation of troops. His work, therefore, treated tactics

[12] This allowed him to consider some aspects of battlefield psychology; see Verbruggen, *Art of Warfare*, pp. 39–64, including (pp. 44–6) material from John of Joinville.
[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 80, 82, 194, 76–9, 87–8, 92–3, 254–73, 300.

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as one of many facets of warfare, whereas Verbruggen had considered tactics largely in isolation. Contamine's study of the period 1150–1300 examined most of the military resources which were available to the state. Beginning with manpower, he dealt with knights, other mounted troops (including crossbowmen), archers and various types of infantry, besides briefly considering the Military Orders as a separate element. Then he examined the methods by which the state could bring into existence a fighting force appropriate to its requirements and limited resources. These varied from the *arrière-ban* and the *servitium debitum* to services for money and ultimately the employment of mercenaries; during this period a shift occurred to 'an economy of paid feudal warfare', in which the fief, however, remained a central feature. Fortified sites were another major military resource dealt with by Contamine. The main development was the use of stone rather than wood for fortifications, whilst in suggesting the possible nature of a garrison force he made use of the text describing the rebuilding of Saphet, a Templar castle in Palestine, in the 1240s. Contamine also examined the likely course of a siege campaign. He showed that the assault improved in technique during this period, rather than in terms of the materials that were available to the attackers. He was able to create a general impression of how military institutions and activity were a product of their social context and he therefore concluded that warfare's increasing sophistication (at least on an organisational level) by the end of this period reflected developments within society as a whole. The military institutions of the Latin East were dealt with only briefly, however, and mostly from the researches of Smail. Contamine also had little to say about the thirteenth century in this respect, since his work was mainly concerned with north-western Europe.[14]

The achievements of military historians are impressive – not least because most have dealt with an enormous range of subject matter. It is not surprising that their analysis of the military history of the Latin East in the thirteenth century has been limited in scope. They have adopted two perspectives. First, historians of tactics, such as Delpech, Oman and Verbruggen, have concerned themselves with what happened when two armies met on the battlefield. Even on this level there is much material available, but

[14] P. Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 59–118, *passim*, and 209.

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these writers were largely content to examine, at most, three battles which were removed from their appropriate context and used in quite arbitrary fashion, either as a reflection of the 'crusaders' warfare' of the thirteenth century, or to illustrate points about western European warfare simply because (as in the case of Mansurah) the accounts contained what scholars saw as detailed, and therefore important, information about tactics and strategy. Most historians who have concentrated on battles have placed their accounts in an artificial setting which is unrelated to the actual historical context of the event.

Secondly, scholars such as Lot and Contamine have made some attempt to examine the social and institutional aspects of war. They did not divorce warfare from other aspects of history, but their treatment of the Latin East was restricted, in the case of Lot by the nature of his method, which largely produced a political narrative, and in the case of Contamine by his acknowledged bias towards material from north-western Europe. Smail's work on the twelfth century was unique in offering a study of warfare in the Latin East which combined the better features of these two perspectives: there was no lack of detail concerning the performance of armies in the area (and this was not restricted to the battle) and military history was shown to be an important aspect of the general history of the Latin states.

Most military historians have concentrated on the fighting man as the principal military resource at the disposal of a commander and the battle is therefore the subject of greatest interest to them. At a time when the number of soldiers was often restricted, however, other assets, particularly strongpoints, could have a crucial role to play in the survival of territory against an aggressor. Smail pointed out that the capture and maintenance of such sites was perhaps the key to the entire military history of the Latin East in the twelfth century,[15] and the same is true of the period to 1291. The study of the Latin East's castles has been intensive over the last century, but two features limit the value of much of the work. First, the approach of most scholars has been primarily architectural. Like most military historians who have studied battles, such authors prefer to examine their subject in isolation from its context, considering its form rather than the role that it may have played in the military establishment of the Latin

[15] Smail, *Crusading Warfare*, pp. 24–5.

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East. One exception to this was Smail, though his work was concerned with the twelfth century.[16] The importance of architectural studies of this kind cannot be denied, but the value of such investigations is further restricted by a second feature: the visible materials available to facilitate such work are themselves far from adequate. There has not been enough archaeological investigation and an example of the difference that such an examination can make may be seen in the case of the castle of Belvoir, by comparing the very basic plan that Smail was able to produce with that of Prawer, when the site had been cleared and excavated. In the details of the inner defences, in particular, Prawer's plan is far more substantial.[17]

One of the first modern historians to examine the monuments of the Latin East was Rey.[18] His study, although over a hundred years old, remains useful as many sites have disintegrated since he visited them. Some of his work was consequently incorporated into Deschamps's *Les Châteaux des croisés en Terre-Sainte*.[19] The studies of Rey and Deschamps are the standard works on castles in the Latin East, and the authors did try to place this aspect of warfare in an overall context, but they made little attempt to analyse the information at their disposal. For most castles a description of the remains was complemented by a history which was dependent on the survival of narrative accounts. Deschamps went beyond this to consider the location of the site and its theoretical ability to control an area. His views will be discussed below when the functions of castles in the thirteenth century are examined.[20] Other studies, both of individual sites and of groups of them, will be noted later. But only detailed archaeological and architectural work and careful analysis of texts will produce advances in the present state of knowledge, after which more informed generalisations may be made. Dr Pringle has shown what can be achieved. In 1983 he directed a survey of the Frankish

[16] R. C. Smail, 'Crusaders' Castles of the Twelfth Century', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 10 (1951), pp.133–49, and *Crusading Warfare*, pp. 60–2, 204–15.
[17] Smail, *Crusading Warfare*, p. 249; J. Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. European Colonialism in the Middle Ages* (London, 1972), p. 302.
[18] E. G. Rey, *Etude sur les monuments de l'architecture militaire des croisés en Syrie et dans l'île de Chypre* (Paris, 1871).
[19] P. Deschamps, *Les Châteaux des croisés en Terre-Sainte*, vol. I: *Le Crac des Chevaliers* (Paris, 1934), vol. II: *La Défense du royaume de Jérusalem* (Paris, 1939), and vol. III: *La Défense du comté de Tripoli et de la Principauté d'Antioche* (Paris, 1973).
[20] For example, in *Le Crac*, pp. 16–42. See below, pp. 129–31.

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settlements (including a number of castles) in the Sharon Plain and an excavation of Tour Rouge. He has now published a study which analyses the archaeological, architectural, geographical and historical materials relating to the various sites. This has produced a detailed picture of the nature of Frankish settlement in the countryside; it emphasises the importance of castles at a local level, both in a military and an administrative context.[21]

The Military Orders are another element of the military establishment which has received attention. They became increasingly significant for the survival of the Latin states in the thirteenth century, but many studies of them are merely narrative accounts which fail to analyse the specific role which they played in the area's military structure. An example of this is the work by Melville, still the best general account of the Templars in the Latin East. She described some of the institutions of the Order, from the Templars' *Rule*, and considered the political history of the Latin Kingdom, but she was unable to bring the two elements together, except when the Templars played a clearly defined role, as in the final siege of Acre. Much of what she had to say about the thirteenth century is, therefore, just a political history with occasional references to the Templars.[22]

Another detailed study of a Military Order, this time the Hospitallers, was undertaken by Professor Riley-Smith. Like Melville, he gave a separate narrative account of the Latin settlement in the thirteenth century, but he was then able to place the Hospitallers within this political framework. The Hospitallers' role in the military history of the period received careful examination in his study, but his general analysis of warfare in the thirteenth century was somewhat tentative. An extensive account of the Hospitallers' activities in the Latin East thus remained rather isolated. Riley-Smith noted their provision of soldiers for raids, advice on military affairs, acceptance of responsibility for the defence of various sites and the strategies which were adopted

[21] R. D. Pringle, *The Red Tower* (London, 1986), pp. 12–15 and *passim*.

[22] M. Melville, *La Vie des Templiers* (Paris, 1951), pp. 239–44, and *passim*. Recently two scholars have dealt with public opinion regarding the Military Orders and their role in the politics of the Latin East, before and after 1291: see J. Prawer, 'Military Orders and Crusader Politics in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century', in *Die geistlichen Ritterorden Europas*, ed. J. Fleckenstein and M. Hellmann (Sigmaringen, 1980), pp. 217–29, and A. J. Forey, 'The Military Orders in the Crusading Proposals of the Late-Thirteenth and Early-Fourteenth Centuries', *Traditio*, 36 (1980), pp. 317–45.

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against their Muslim neighbours. By examining the extensive documentation of the Hospitallers, he established the overall structure of the Order. He then dealt specifically with the military side of the Order's operations, drawing conclusions about the role of the soldier which, if used carefully, have implications for the study of military life within the Latin East as a whole.[23] Riley-Smith's work was not primarily concerned with the military history of the Latin East, but it revealed much about a significant aspect of that history. He tried to describe the Order as an element that should not be divorced from its surroundings.

HISTORIANS OF THE LATIN EAST AND MILITARY HISTORY

It has long been possible to write a reasonable narrative account of the Latin East's history during this period and, in all such works, military activity inevitably assumes great significance. Runciman's account of the period c. 1260–77, for example, reads as little more than a narrative of military events.[24] By the use of materials such as the kingdom's law books and charters and the papal registers it is possible both to produce a more complete narrative history and at the same time to examine the constitutional and social history of the kingdom in far greater depth. This can also yield a detailed picture of aspects of the military history of the kingdom.

In the early 1950s Prawer and Richard were able to redefine the constitution of the Latin Kingdom. The first narrative history to acknowledge this was Richard's *Royaume Latin de Jérusalem*, which appeared in 1953. The author used a wide range of sources besides the chronicles to produce a detailed impression of the Latin Kingdom's society. This extended to the field of military history, where he showed, for example, how important was assistance from Europe (with both money and men) to the survival of the kingdom in the thirteenth century, and demonstrated the significance of the patriarch in military affairs.[25]

[23] J. S. C. Riley-Smith, *The Knights of St John in Jerusalem and Cyprus, c. 1050–1310* (London, 1967), pp. 85–197, 236–40, 304–28 and *passim*.

[24] S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades* (3 vols., Cambridge, 1951–4), vol. III, pp. 315–48.

[25] J. Richard, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (2 vols., Amsterdam, 1979), vol. II, pp. 376–83. His ideas concerning the patriarch were developed by S. Schein, in 'The Patriarchs of Jerusalem in the Late Thirteenth Century – *Seignors Espirituels et*

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Prawer's *Histoire du Royaume Latin de Jérusalem* remains one of the best narrative accounts of the Latin Kingdom's history ever produced. His examination of military history was made outstanding by an intimate knowledge of the area's geography. He was thus able to discuss in theory and practice the significance of the treaties which were agreed between the Christians and Muslims in 1229 and 1240–1. The limited expeditions which took place when the troops of the Fifth Crusade gathered at Acre in the autumn of 1217 were similarly scrutinised, and information relating to a battle was shown to have additional interest if it could be placed in a geographical context. The value of the sources describing the battle near Gaza of 1239 has already been noted; Prawer was able, through his acquaintance with the region, to suggest the likely route taken by the crusaders from Jaffa, leading to their final defeat near the village of Beit-Hanun.[26]

One of the most influential historians of the Latin Kingdom's constitution is Riley-Smith. His major study of the kingdom's political ideas in theory and practice demonstrated again the significance of military affairs to almost any assessment of its history. Directly, he dealt, though not in great detail, with military service as a central element of feudalism in Palestine. Indirectly, the military situation often provided the background against which political, constitutional and economic developments took place. For example, the increasing poverty of the lords in the thirteenth century was due largely to expenses incurred in the defence of their fiefs; many of them were therefore obliged to alienate their properties to the Military Orders. Riley-Smith was particularly concerned with constitutional developments. The attempts by Frederick II to assert his authority, on Cyprus and on the mainland, led to a wide range of military engagements: Riley-Smith examined these as part of the Ibelin faction's efforts to secure their own position by use of the *Assise sur la ligece*. Similarly, during the War of St Sabas John of Jaffa and John II of Beirut manipulated the complex regency laws in order to switch

Temporeles?', in *Outremer*, ed. B. Z. Kedar, H. E. Mayer and R. C. Smail (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 297–305.

[26] Prawer, *Histoire du royaume*, vol. II, pp. 137–43, 198–204, 272–4, 286–7. Knowledge of terrain has recently been used in a study which compared the tactics of 'Ain Jalut in 1260 with those employed at Tagliacozzo in 1268: see P. Herde, 'Taktiken muslimischer Heere vom ersten Kreuzzug bis 'Ayn Djalut (1260) und ihre Einwirkung auf die Schlacht bei Tagliacozzo (1268)', in *Das Heilige Land im Mittelalter: Begegnungsraum zwischen Orient und Okzident* (Würzburg, 1981).

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