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The Second Crusade: Extending the Frontiers of Christendom

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It is nearly a century and a half since Bernhard Kugler published the last substantial monograph devoted to the Second Crusade (*Studien zur Geschichte des zweitenKreuzzugs* (1)), a book which was disadvantaged by being printed in gothic typeface as well as academic German. This is sufficient reason to welcome Professor Phillips? account of the same enterprise, but additionally the volume is scholarly and well researched, reflecting its origins in an undergraduate ?special subject? by its thorough approach to primary sources and historiographical debates. The high production values of the book, which includes six clear maps and a section of well chosen photographs, are also a credit to the publisher and the author.

The crusade is presented in 14 chronologically sequenced chapters, but before we even reach these and the roman-numbered pages, there are a preface, a prologue and an introduction. Of these, the prologue, which recounts the capture of Edessa by the forces of Zengi in December 1144, sets the scene for the action of the crusade, while the introduction provides a rationale for the whole book. More contextual information fills the first two chapters: chapter one gives the historical background of ?Ongoing contact between the Latin East and the West and the development of crusading, 1099-1145?. It is largely a reprise of Phillips? own *Defenders of the Holy Land* (2) and deals summarily with the Military Orders, pilgrimage and papal responses to crises, with some emphasis on the problematical relationship with Byzantium, particularly in

the decade before the capture of Edessa. The second chapter discusses the intellectual legacy of the First Crusade, which had succeeded in capturing Jerusalem in 1099 and thereby unleashed unprecedented activity in the writing of histories, which in turn had given the First Crusaders legendary status which was exploited by the pope in promulgating the Second Crusade. Phillips touches on a matter of terminology which might be more fully explored: the earliest accounts of the First Crusade were more likely to call the participants ?Galli? than ?Franci?, and the ?francification? of the crusading movement is of some interest, not least because it has a bearing on how the Second Crusade has been viewed and judged.

Phillips? exploration of the papal bull *Quantum praedecessores*, its content, authorship and use, is pivotal to his argument, and has a chapter devoted to it. (There is also a full English translation of the bull as an appendix to the book.) In Phillips? judgement Pope Eugenius III has been unfairly treated by historians, who have allowed Bernard of Clairvaux to overshadow him, and have also accused Eugenius of an unduly slow response to the news of the fall of Edessa. Phillips makes a convincing case for restoring Eugenius to the centre of the action, and for measuring his success by the unprecedented scale of recruitment following *Quantum praedecessores*. It does, however, take him a long time to reach his analysis of the document itself, following a discussion of the members of the papal circle who *may* have influenced its composition; a diversion to Cluny and the First Crusade; the recovery of Tarragona; heresy in France; the canonization of Henry II of Germany, and the arrival of an Armenian delegation. The analysis of the bull is more incisive, and lays emphasis on the idea of replicating the First Crusade.

?The launch of the Second Crusade?, is actually about floating the *idea* of the crusade: the expedition to the Levant will not set out for another 100 pages. Uncharacteristically, the author falters briefly at the beginning of this chapter: he refers to ?Louis?s brother, Hugh the Great? as a leader of the First Crusade, meaning Philip I?s brother, and shortly afterwards to ?the controversy over the marriage between Raoul of Vermandois and Theobald?s niece? without telling us who these people were or ? tantalisingly ? what was the controversy (pp. 61?2). He also claims shortly afterwards that, ?The churchmen at Bourges must have been aware of the centrality of the papacy to the crusade movement,? which raises the question of whether there was yet a ?crusade movement? rather than a single, glorious, unprecedented event which the pope hoped to reproduce. The chapter centres on Louis VII?s motivation for espousing the cause of the crusade. It is impossible, however, to discuss recruitment for the expedition without St Bernard, and he duly takes centre stage at Vézelay, at Easter 1146, and dominates the following chapter, which is an account of Bernard?s preaching tour in Flanders and Germany. Alongside the minutely reconstructed itinerary is a rather more interesting examination of Conrad?s involvement: the traditional view is that Bernard, on his own authority, persuaded and enlisted the reluctant German king, Conrad III, but Phillips? reassessment of contemporary evidence restores him as a central and senior figure. Phillips therefore explores Conrad?s reasons for taking the cross, as well as the circumstances in the imperial territories which worked against his absence on crusade. The Cistercian Radulf?s rabble-rousing activities in the Rhineland at this time, and the consequent attacks on the Jews, are described with a sense of proportion which has not always been maintained in their regard.

Recruitment achieved, Phillips applies to the participants the prosopographical approach pioneered by Constable and implemented by Riley-Smith for the First Crusade.(3) He has identified 350 individual crusaders ? about half as many as Riley-Smith classed as ?certainties? for the First Crusade, but this is explicable by the relative shortage of narrative accounts of the Second Crusade. Unfortunately, the names and pedigrees are presented one after another in a single long paragraph, and they would be more easily consulted and assimilated as an appendix. The examination of the participants? motives in going on crusade are more clearly analysed: besides the papal indulgence, there were strong strands of family tradition, kin association and patronage, as well as pious and acquisitive reasons. The same chapter deals with practical preparations for the expedition, which included both raising funds and providing for the safety of land and kin left at home during the absence of the head of family. The kings, Louis and Conrad, had not only these concerns, but also diplomatic, strategic and logistical decisions to make. A description of these and of the ceremonial surrounding the kings? departures occupies chapter seven, which also has the first statement of a key idea of the book, that the crusade was by this point conceived as a war on three fronts: in the Levant, in

the Baltic against the pagan Wends, and in the Iberian peninsula against the Moors.

In fact, little has been said about Iberia before this, which makes the transition to the next chapter, ?The conquest of Lisbon?, quite a leap. This, the only entirely successful campaign of the Second Crusade, is comparatively well recorded in two narrative accounts, yet it continues to be debated among historians whether the siege of Lisbon was planned, or the result of quick thinking on the part of the Portuguese duke, Afonso Henriques, when the combined fleet from the Rhineland, Flanders and England put in in north-west Spain. Phillips produces a number of arguments for a planned rendezvous, though some of them are more convincing than others. Setting out in May, for instance, is adequately explained by the long and hazardous journey across the bay of Biscay (where they were scattered by a storm even then) and through the straits of Gibraltar into the Mediterranean, and the short sailing season: they needed to arrive in the Levant before the autumn equinox. On the other hand, more weight could be given to other navigational factors, including the attraction of restoring Lisbon to Christian hands as a haven where water and other supplies could be taken on during future expeditions. Quite simply, we do not know enough about the leadership of the combined fleet to do more than speculate. It is quite possible that the English command, who seem to have taken the lead, had some prior communication with the Portuguese, while the Rhineland and Flemish segments had to be persuaded to undertake the siege. There were certainly tensions between the Anglo-Normans on the one hand and the Rhinelanders and Flemings on the other, and the evidence of the ?Lisbon letter? is that the Cologne contingent, at least, believed themselves to be en route for the Holy Land, not opening up a second front in the war on the infidel.

The following two chapters revert to Conrad and Louis and their journeys overland to Constantinople and into Asia Minor. The German army?s cataclysmic defeat at Dorylaeum (scene of a famous victory in the First Crusade) is followed by an attempt to calculate the percentage casualty rate. Since the overall numbers on the expedition are no more than an estimate (earlier in the same chapter), the use of decimal points in the calculations seems gratuitous, but a figure of c.17% is suggested. The defeat of Louis? army is not subjected to a similar calculation, though the narrative sources are superior. Finally, the remnants of the two armies arrived in the crusader states. Phillips maintains plausibly that to this point the goal of the expedition remained Edessa. In probably the best known, and certainly the most discussed, episode of the crusade, Louis seems to have changed his mind during a stay with his wife Eleanor?s uncle Raymond at Antioch. The contemporary gossip is duly scrutinized, though it is worth restating that what happened (or did not happen) is less important than what people were saying. At all events, Louis headed south to Jerusalem where he rendezvoused with Conrad, and at the council of Palmarea, in June 1148, in concert with the secular and ecclesiastical powers of the kingdom, they agreed to attack Damascus. This decision has been much criticized, both at the time and retrospectively, but more recently there have been persuasive rationalizations, which Phillips discusses fully. A further tactical decision taken at Damascus, to move the crusaders? camp from the western side of the city to the south-eastern, is also defended, though Sibt ibn al-Jauzi?s explanation ? that the crusaders, encamped in the orchards, ate too much fruit and made themselves ill ? merits a mention.(4) Without being defeated in battle, the forces withdrew ignominiously, and the crusade in the Levant was effectively at an end.

Meanwhile in Europe, campaigns against the Wends had been granted crusading status. Phillips discusses their context and commission, concluding that while from the papal perspective they were not successful at this stage, in the eyes of local leaders there were reasons to maintain the status quo, which ensured a profitable tributary relationship. The future emphasis was to be on conversion and subjugation. Crusade privileges were also granted to Genoese forces attacking the Iberian towns of Almería, Jaen, Tortosa, and Lérida. This initiative is put into the dual contexts of the Moorish occupation of Spain and Genoese involvement in earlier crusades, and Phillips concludes that for this theatre of war the Second Crusade marked an important stage of development. It remains only to look at the consequences of the crusade in a chapter discussing its aftermath: a legacy of criticism and low morale in Western Europe, and increased ill-feeling towards the Byzantines. It took the capture of Jerusalem in 1187 to rouse western forces en masse for another major crusade, while anti-Byzantine feeling led to the capture of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade. Difficult though it is to extract anything positive from the failures of the Second Crusade, Phillips

claims that its prosecution, and especially *Quantum praedecessores*, was important in the development of holy war theory and the crusading movement.

Throughout this complex narrative Phillips has deployed an impressive array of evidence, which is fully referenced in endnotes and listed in a comprehensive bibliography. The index is usefully provided with sub-entries. There are one or two points to make about primary sources. Firstly, the use of the *Chanson d?Antioche* as evidence for anything in the first half of the 12th century is problematical, since it exists only in a version which cannot be dated before *c.*1200 (pp. 26?7). The same goes for *Les Chétifs*, only part of which probably originated at Raymond of Antioch?s court, and which is generally agreed to describe the legendary exploits of survivors of the massacre at Civetot (not the 1101 crusade) (p. 208). Niketas Choniates is referred to by his first and second names in the same paragraph, which is disconcerting and possibly misleading (pp. 197?8). These are minor points in the context of Phillips? achievement in bringing together the strands and layers of this complicated history to make a coherent whole. He has thus succeeded in his second stated aim of giving ?a more detailed and accurate analysis of the successes and failures of the various campaigns than has hitherto been attempted? (p. xxv). How far his first aim, ?to relate the story of the crusade in an accessible fashion?, has been achieved is difficult for an academic colleague to gauge, but I certainly found some of the densely detailed passages hard to assimilate, and I suspect this may apply to a general readership too. There is probably still room for a ?popular? history of the Second Crusade.

Notes

1. Bernhard Kugler, *Studien zur Geschichte des zweitenKreuzzugs* (Stuttgart,1866).Back to (1)
2. Jonathan Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land: Relations between the Latin East and the West 1119-1187* (Oxford, 1996).Back to (2)
3. Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders, 1095-1131* (Cambridge, 1997).Back to (3)
4. F. Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades* (London, 1967), p.62.Back to (4)

The author is happy to accept this review and wishes to thank the reviewer for her thoughtful, constructive and generous comments.

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