

PREFACE

The second volume of this work now lies before us at last. As the editors of volume I promised and warned, the narrative continues the account there set forth. It begins essentially with the critical events of 1189, and carries on through the tumultuous decades of the thirteenth century to various suitable stopping points a hundred years or so beyond the start. Only occasionally — as in the first chapter, on the Normans, the fourth, on Byzantium, and the eighteenth, on Armenia — will the reader find any considerable retrospect into the earlier twelfth century, and this the authors always undertake with an eye to the events of the late twelfth or thirteenth. In these cases we try to pick up at their point of origin threads which, in the course of time, wove themselves into the later fabric of events.

Once the operations of Richard the Lionhearted and Philip Augustus have been completed, and those of Frederick Barbarossa and Henry VI brought to their abortive ends, we focus our attention upon the Byzantine empire, against which Henry, like so many of his Norman predecessors, had planned to sail. With the tragic and controversial Fourth Crusade, the whole crusading enterprise changes its complexion, as Christians overturn a Christian empire, and found new states upon its dismembered territories — a development that not only effectively destroys the hope of Christian unity against the Moslems and sets Greek against Latin, but also divides the efforts of the western Europeans themselves, who must now protect and support, defend and reinforce both their establishments in the Levant and those in lands formerly Byzantine. This dispersal of effort and frittering away of resources is further enhanced as the popes of the thirteenth century begin to use the crusade first as an instrument against the Albigensian heretics in their own western European world, and then as a weapon in their private political quarrels.

Yet the efforts against the Moslems continue, of course, and once we have chronicled these various thirteenth-century perversions of the crusading undertaking, we move east once more for the operations of Pelagius and John of Brienne in Egypt, for the spectacular diplomatic triumphs of Frederick II (their lustre

dimmed by the hostility of the papacy), for the peculiar performance of the westerners in the years 1239-1241, and for the mighty but ineffectual efforts of Louis IX, perhaps the only real crusader that ever existed, and certainly the last. We close the volume with a series of eight chapters considering all these events from the point of view of the easterners themselves and in connection with their own domestic history: first of the Christians now domiciled in the crusader states and on Cyprus, and of the Armenians of Cilicia, and then of the Moslems: Turks, Aiyūbids, Mongols, and Mamluks.

The brave reader who sits down and reads the book straight through will sometimes encounter the same military operation or diplomatic negotiation discussed twice or even oftener. Let him remember that the editors and authors planned it that way: in part because we have striven to see around events where possible, by treating them from all the points of view made identifiable by the sources. Our hypothetical consecutive reader at times may feel, as the editors have felt, often to their anguish, that he is confronted by an almost intolerable dose of marching and countermarching. As he swallows it, let him consider that this is what chiefly interested the medieval writers on whose accounts scholars must so largely depend.

But behind the dust clouds raised by the trampling hooves, let the thoughtful reader notice the flashes by whose light we gain insight into the motives and character of human beings: the giants, like Innocent III or Frederick II or St. Louis, often glimpsed in unfamiliar aspects of their careers; the lesser-known but often arrestingly attractive or repulsive figures, like the Sicilian admiral George of Antioch, the Latin emperor Henry of Constantinople, John of Brienne, Baybars; or even, in rare cases, the *menus gens*. Explicitly in the chapter on the Children's Crusade, and implicitly in many other places, the reader will find himself looking at the evidence for the pathology of religious emotion; if he reflects on these data he may discover that he is leaving the Middle Ages altogether and considering later chiliastic movements, the delusions of crowds, or even the essential nature of human piety. He can single out the few moments of heroism or disinterested nobility that contrast the more sharply with the long chronicle of greed, stupidity, treachery, duplicity, and incompetence. He can ponder the lasting effects of the actions here described — not least perhaps those of the permanent breach between western and Orthodox Christians. And if he does indeed avail himself of these privileges, we hope he may come to regard our shortcomings with a tolerant eye.

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