Introduction

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Introduction

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This special issue of *Reading Medieval Studies* contains a series of articles by leading and aspiring scholars in the field of crusading history. The first article, 'The Challenge of State Building in the Twelfth Century: the Crusader States in Palestine and Syria' was given in 2008 by Professor Emeritus Malcolm Barber on the occasion of the University of Reading Stenton Lecture. The other articles in the volume were originally papers given in Professor Barber's honour at the Symposium which accompanied the Stenton Lecture. They comprise 'The First Crusade and Identity Formation' (Marcus Bull), 'Capuchins and Mercenaries in Southern France in the Late Twelfth Century' (John France), 'Eleventh and Twelfth Century Perspectives on State Building in the Iberian Peninsula' (William Purkis), 'Nomadic Violence in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Military Orders' (Jochen Schenk) and finally 'Salvation and the Albigensian Crusade: Pope Innocent III and the Plenary Indulgence' by the organiser of the lecture and Symposium, Rebecca Rist. The choice of papers reflects the wide-ranging interests and different approaches of historians in Britain today to the study of the crusades. All the contributors have been helped and inspired by Professor Barber either at postgraduate level or in their early careers. Each paper expands on or adds a new dimension to the overall theme of the impact of crusading on state building in the Central Middle Ages.

The title of Malcolm Barber's paper 'The Challenge of State Building in the Twelfth Century: the Crusader States in Palestine and Syria' refers to the growth of the idea of the nation state during the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period, while also reminding us of recent events and the politics of state building in the Middle East today. Malcolm Barber argues for the uniqueness of the crusading states in the Near East. The Kingdom of Jerusalem, the County of Edessa, the County of Tripoli and the Principality of Antioch, like the developing nation states in the West, were very medieval entities in that they relied on the principles of privilege and service. Yet they were different in that they were formed without any existing established laws or conventions on which the settlers could draw. This uniqueness derived partly from the circumstances of their foundations and partly because the Holy Land had a long, prestigious and multi-cultural ancient history.

It was also because the status of the Holy Land as the patrimony of the whole of Christendom meant they held a special place in the hearts and minds of medieval Christians. They were by no means mere colonies, passive purveyors of wealth to the West.

Yet to maintain their special status, the crusader states needed long-term commitment. This included not only European military manpower and expertise, but the financial and naval support of the maritime merchant republics of Italy. Malcolm Barber highlights that lack of sufficient men and money continued to be a serious problem throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It proved very difficult to persuade crusaders to remain in the Holy Land after the success of the First Crusade and to settle the conquered territories. He emphasises that all too often frequent appeals for more defenders of the territories fell on deaf ears. There was a great disparity between the numbers of Latin Christians and the subservient Muslim populations, while the relatively small Frankish aristocracy needed constant replenishment from the West. The inability to recruit large numbers of new crusaders ensured that the crusader states came increasingly to rely on the Military Orders and in particular on the Templars and Hospitallers to ensure their existence.

Malcolm Barber argues that this lack of sufficient manpower was not the only damning weakness of the conquered territories. Relations with neighbours brought crusaders and settlers into almost continual friction and conflict. In particular Barber points to the ambivalent attitude of the crusaders towards Constantinople throughout the Comenian period and their hostility to the Byzantines, whom, ironically, they had originally been called-in by the papacy to help. He also analyses the settlers' political and religious preoccupation with the conquest of Egypt and their realisation that the crusader states would have to expand in order to survive. In discussing the various attempts to take Egypt, Barber explores the conquests of King Amalric of Jerusalem. He argues that the failure of the Egyptian invasion derived from one simple strategic reason: the Franks never had the manpower to take Egypt and simultaneously defend the Northern States. The failure to seize control of Egypt was not due to a lack of understanding of its tactical importance, but because it was beyond the settlers' resources.

Of course, as Malcolm Barber illustrates, internal as well as external politics played a large part in the complex and paradoxical history of the crusader states. Relations between rulers, their subjects and the ecclesiastical authorities were fraught with difficulties from the very beginning. For example, it took time for the hereditary principle to be established in the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The rulers of Jerusalem realised early on the importance of creating a cult of kingship and it was Baldwin I who, with the help of the clergy, finally established himself as king over a feudal hierarchy. This cult of kingship was boosted by the increasingly popular

belief that the first settlers - the First Crusaders - had belonged to a golden heroic age.

Drawing on these unique circumstances of the foundation of the crusader states and the 'origin myth' of the first settlers, Marcus Bull's contribution 'The First Crusade and Identity Formation' explores the impact of the written word on the formation of identity. His article discusses various texts and narratives written about the First Crusade which reflect the experience of crusade and settlement and examines the power of the written word both in forming collective memory and in highlighting the tensions and anxieties surrounding the desire for political power. Bull argues that the First Crusade was a collective experience and one which involved complex and competing interplays of power and authority. At the same time he challenges the common idea that there was an easy transition and a 'smooth narrative', from the First Crusade to the aftermath of settlement and he queries the extent to which 'eye-witness accounts' really acted as 'cultural scripts' for the growth of the crusader states.

Furthermore, Marcus Bull questions whether the collective memory of the First Crusade can provide us with a satisfactory blueprint for the settlers' political behaviour, insisting instead on a conceptual gap between crusade and settlement. Arguing that political identities and political power engendered ongoing and unresolved tension in the written sources, he demonstrates that, although they voiced anxieties of belonging and identity, they did so within a very limited sphere of political suzerainty and geography. He concludes that the very ambiguity and inconsistency of the First Crusade texts means that historians should view them as revealing the political and religious motivations for the actions and experiences of the First Crusaders, not as guides to the future politics of the crusader states.

Jochen Schenk's article 'Nomadic Violence in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Military Orders', similarly explores the importance of the written word in the formation of collective identity and state building, but with particular reference to travel accounts and contemporary chronicles which describe Bedouin and Turcoman violence in the Near East. Schenk explores the theme of 'internal' versus 'external' enemies in the crusader states and highlights the importance of borders and boundaries in the history of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

Jochen Schenk also continues Malcolm Barber's central theme of the lack of adequate men and manpower to defend the crusader states and the disparity between Latin Christians and Muslims. In particular he highlights the crucial defensive role played by the Templars and Hospitallers against specifically nomadic violence. Drawing on the well-established idea that medieval boundaries in the Kingdom of Jerusalem were determined by an overlap of competing influences, he argues that the castles of the Military Orders were established to control areas where violence by the non-sedentary population was most prolific and embedded and where royal control was therefore weakest. Complementing

Malcolm Barber's discussion of the settlers' astute political reasons for attempting to conquer Egypt, Schenk argues that castles were erected by and for the Military Orders to create boundaries between two major groups: the enemies outside the perceived borders of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the nomadic populations within.

William Purkis continues the theme of state building in his article 'Eleventh and Twelfth Century Perspectives on State Building in the Iberian Peninsula' but in the context of Spain and state building in the West. In the Iberian Peninsula, unlike in the crusader states in the Near East, there was already a history of earlier western settlement – namely the kingdom of the Visigoths. Yet, like the crusader states, relations between kings and their lay and clerical subjects also held the potential for great difficulties following the *Reconquista*. William Purkis examines the themes of re-conquest and restoration as part of the process of state building and, like the previous papers, explores these ideas through analysis of the language and context of contemporary texts.

Purkis discusses recent historiography of Spain and a general trend in the historiographical tradition to see the fulfilment of the *Reconquista* as of great importance to the state building ambitions of the West, the aim of Iberian Christians being the re-conquest of the whole peninsular and the revival of a centralised monarchy. His paper examines ongoing debates surrounding the significance of the *Reconquista* to Iberian Christians and argues for the need for a more nuanced and reflective approach to the idea of 're-conquest'. Purkis's approach is twofold: analysis of the language used by contemporaries and discussion of the contexts in which they placed the conflict. He concludes that there were many complex and competing ideas surrounding 're-conquest' which were used to foster and legitimise expansion and he calls for greater awareness and sensitivity in interpreting contemporary ideas about state building and 're-building'.

The theme of crusading in the West through analysis of both contemporary sources and later historiography is continued by John France in his article 'Capetians and Mercenaries in Southern France in the Late Twelfth Century'. His focus is the period immediately prior to the Albigensian Crusade, which would eventually see the annexation of the south of France and its absorption into the French Kingdom. John France argues, contrary to a prevalent trend in historiography, that the Capetian movement was not simply a continuation of the Peace Movement, but that the southern French were reacting to the Church's desire to extend the crusading movement to tackle mercenaries - a point which he believes that twentieth-century historiography, with its emphasis on the Capuchins as social revolutionaries, has obscured. In the late twelfth century mercenaries were engulfing a chaotic southern France. Agreements were made between the high nobility and the upper ranks of the Church to try to stabilise the situation. Yet their involvement in the fighting meant a lack of response by the nobility.

Rather the Capuchins, who had official support and were militarily effective, took the lead.

John France argues that this inability by the nobility to take a leading role meant not only no possibility of organising meaningful efforts towards peace but also explained the short life of the Capuchin movement. Although the Third Lateran Council sought to use 'crusading' enthusiasm to recruit and organize forces, the drive against mercenaries actually had subversive implications because many lords viewed it as an intrusion. Furthermore, whereas some strongly approved of the Capuchin fraternity, later writers who echoed aristocratic indignation at what they saw as outside intervention in local affairs, portrayed them as social revolutionaries. Just as Malcolm Barber highlights the detrimental effects of political disagreement on the crusader states in the Near East, so France argues, the Capuchins failed, as the Peace Movement failed, because the political divisions in southern French society were too great.

John France's discussion of embryonic attempts to encourage crusading in the south of France leads to the final paper in the collection: Rebecca Rist's 'Salvation and the Albigensian Crusade: Pope Innocent III and the Plenary Indulgence'. Like Malcolm Barber, who draws attention to the impact of Pope Urban II's call for crusade in 1095 on state building in the Near East, Rist also highlights the importance of the papacy in Innocent III's decision to call for a crusade against heretics in the south of France. Just as settlers in the East were constantly short of manpower despite frequent papal interventions and calls for aid, so despite Innocent III's promise of the plenary indulgence, Simon de Montfort, the leader of the crusade, continually lacked men. Indeed, although as, John France shows, mercenaries were one of the major scourges of southern France against which the Church tried to legislate, Simon himself had no choice but to employ them. It was this lack of manpower which in 1210 influenced the papal legates to promise the plenary indulgence for only forty days of fighting.

Like the other contributors, Rebecca Rist makes a detailed study of language and context, this time of papal correspondence. Rist shows that, just like in the crusader states, in the south of France there was frequent miscommunication and differences in opinion between crusaders, the local clergy, legates and the pope far away from the action in Rome. She also demonstrates how the papacy, in order to justify crusading in a new venue, turned the original idea of the defence of the Holy Land, the patrimony of the whole of Christendom, into the idea of defending Christianity itself against heresy. The papal curia did this, not only by continuing to employ the same rhetoric as used about crusading to the Near East, but by invoking the Holy Land in its promise of the plenary indulgence. This was despite the fact that, as Malcolm Barber points out, the conquest of Egypt was crucial for the survival of the crusader states and there was indeed concern by some western Christians over the diversion of manpower from the Fifth to the Albigensian Crusade.

All five papers are united in exploring, through the language and ideas of contemporary protagonists, whether lay or religious, the complex mix of religious and political motivations and the shared collective identity which lay behind crusading and state building in the Central Middle Ages. Following the First Crusade of 1095, the creation of the crusader states in the Near East in the twelfth century were the first fruits of a crusading movement which would include Spain and France in its vast geographical reach and which would contribute to the building of the nation states of Europe in which we live today.