The papers presented in this volume were delivered at a conference held at the University of Western Ontario (London, Ontario) in November 1988. The conference brought together experts on the Crusades from England, France, Canada, and the United States to discuss the confrontation between the Franks and Muslims in twelfth-century Syria. This collection goes far beyond its original mission, however, in providing new insights into Crusades' studies, and contributing an innovative historiographical overview. What marked this conference was the desire to balance the traditional European view with an Islamic perspective. It investigates specific issues shared by both Islamic and Christian historiography, such as the nature of their respective propaganda. On the Crusades, there has been much more European scholarship than Islamic scholarship—a fact which might lead students to conclude that Arabic source material is lacking, or that the Crusades had little impact on Islamic society, neither of which is true. It is true however, that the scope and the depth of European Crusade studies and Christian soul-searching stand in great contrast to Islamic Crusade historiography. Today, as in the past, hardly any Islamic historians have devoted their entire careers exclusively to this topic, as many European historians have done. Nonetheless, as these papers show, chronicles, diplomatic, literary, and legal sources amply demonstrate the impact of the Christian penetration on Islamic society, even though this impact was not immediately noticed.

Each author's individual contribution lies in the new ideas and insights he or she has brought to a particular topic. Jonathan Riley-Smith provides much needed bibliographical material in his brilliant essay on the state of historical studies of the Crusades of the period under consideration, from 1095 to 1204. There have been many changes and developments in our interpretation of crusading events in the twelfth century. New facts have emerged, new dimensions have been discovered, even in the frequently examined subject of Urban's journey through France in 1095–1096. One of Riley-Smith's most valuable insights is his conviction that a clear perception of the Crusades—what they were and what they were not—developed slowly in the European consciousness. Moreover, our sympathetic understanding of the Crusades has
been influenced by developments in the present century, as a result of which we can perceive more accurately their fascinating mixture of religious enthusiasm, spiritual need, and the dynamics of an expanding society.

James Brundage's essay, with its attendant documents, addresses the question of whether or not there were professional canonists in the Latin Orient. When did they appear in the sources? Who were they, and how many of them were trained in canon law? We know that much litigation occurred in the twelfth-century Latin Orient, and Brundage demonstrates the importance of trained canonists to that society. They represented a significant element in Crusade society, and Brundage suggests that they exercised a far greater influence than their numbers might imply.

No investigation of twelfth-century Syria could be complete without an essay on the settlements which the Italian city states created in the Latin Orient. Despite the dearth of evidence, Michel Balard constructs a convincing picture. He begins with the basic concessions made to the Italian maritime states and the circumstances under which these were made. He then examines the organization and activities of these states within states. In this way he is able to explain why it was that no matter how much the princes of the Latin Orient resented the privileged position of the Italian city states, they could never free themselves from dependence on the maritime republics. Each of these states succeeded in creating an independent urban environment which permitted its citizens to defy the authority of the Latin princes, thus contributing to the decline of Frankish power.

John Gilchrist correctly identifies Innocent III's pontificate as the crucial period in the definition of the Crusades. At this time, greater precision was obtained by combining thoughts and images from the Bible with concepts drawn from contemporary feudal practice. The Crusades became a morally acceptable war between God and his enemies, a theological development which Gilchrist sets firmly within the context of the great pope's religious understanding. In Innocent's eyes, the world was a transitory place filled with much suffering. Even though human nature was corrupt, steps could be taken to prepare for entrance into the heavenly kingdom. Christ's cross preceded, and the crucifixion of the self led to participation in heavenly joys. Taking up the cross was the Christian's duty, which also led to his liberation. The disasters which befell the Holy Land were part of the Church's struggle to direct the believer along the right path, which led to salvation. Thus, in Innocent's mind, the Crusade was the
epitome of following Christ. The Latin East was Christ’s patri­mony, and to its defence the Pope summoned faithful souls, deploying all his skills as theologian, jurist, universal bishop and charismatic leader of the Christian people.

A great depth of feeling existed here. Penny Cole’s investiga­tion of the heathen pollution of the Lord’s inheritance in the Latin East shows how profoundly Christian Europe had appro­priated certain scriptural texts. Here was no religious abstraction, but rather a use of Scripture to justify a menacing situation. The aggressive infidelity of the Muslims had to be resisted and their acts of pollution had to be cleansed by force, by fire and by the sword. All authorities on the Crusades accepted and justified the use of violence. Appeals for help were couched in bellicose forms, denouncing unprovoked aggression against Christ. The Crusade documents call for a war of reprisal, as the truth of Christian revelation demanded a cleansing of the holy places of the Lord, a purging by violence of what the heathen had maliciously soiled.

Yet how effective was this abundance of emotional rhetoric, this splendid manipulation of human feeling in favour of defend­ing Jerusalem? John Rowe’s examination of Alexander III’s Crusade policies suggests a limited result. The coruscating splen­dours of Curial rhetoric were lost in a welter of tensions and conflicting ambitious. Whether in Latin Christendom itself or in the relationships between Latins and Byzantines, too many distractions hindered the Christian responsibility to defend and sustain the Holy Land. A coherent deployment of Christian resources to launch a new expedition to the East proved impossible, even though the Papacy devoted its energies and resources to achieving this goal. In the end, the loss of Jerusalem, long feared and resolutely opposed, could not be avoided.

Yet certain flaws in the Latin Orient were beyond remedy. Peter Edbury’s paper on factionalism in the closing years of the First Kingdom draws attention not only to problems of interpre­tation but also to the inherent weakness of Latin power, which was spread so thinly across the expanse of Syria-Palestine. This weakness found expression in debates about how to use the meager military resources of the Latin Orient. Should the Latins attempt merely to contain the superior strength of Saladin or should they risk confrontation? Opinions shifted constantly. There emerged, as Edbury suggests, a kind of pragmatism which weighed possibilities and entertained options. Unfortunately the process came to a not unexpected close at Hattin, where the result proved catastrophic and permanent.
How all this influenced the Muslim recovery, and how much of the recovery came from internal developments, is a pertinent question. Nikita Elisseeff describes the rise of the concept of Jihad after the fall of Jerusalem in July 1099. The full exposition of the theme was by al-Sulāmi, a preacher from Damascus, who called for a reassertion of Islamic values and the recreation of a genuine Islamic unity. Al-Sulāmi’s acute insight into how the Muslims should respond to the Frankish conquest was set aside until his plan was adopted by Nūr al-Dīn, the first person to organize a Muslim counter-attack. There, the Jihad became the embodiment of Muslim devotion, and Nūr al-Dīn, through various methods of propaganda, encouraged the development of the idea of himself as the truly holy warrior and martyr in the cause of Islam. Nikita Elisseeff shows that the political recovery was a slow process, centered around Damascus and Aleppo. There were causes for—and symptoms of—the early hesitancy, and Elisseeff provides many insights which allow us to understand the initial mixed reaction, and the sweeping reorientation in resources and mentalities which was required for recovery. Under the Crusaders’ impact, Muslim society had to discard many outlooks, and new attitudes had to be adopted. The Muslims needed to put their house in order, but that process implied more than merely military and political unification; it also required an inner rejuvenation. A new belligerence was inspired by the old Jihad ideology, which received new faces and new applications.

In the midst of all these new developments, however, certain patterns survived from the past. Donald Richards’ work describes the career and work of ‘Imād al-Dīn al-İsfahānî, who spent a significant portion of his life serving Saladin, the great Muslim leader, as both his personal secretary and friend. Richards shows how turbulent was his life, as befitted the troubled times.

Malcolm Lyons’ pioneering study deals with mentalities. Searching for the mood and spirit of the common people in the Middle East during the period of the Crusades is a difficult task, which Lyons undertakes by studying the collection of hero cycles in popular Arabic. This extraordinary source is filled with historical inaccuracies and additions made both by early narrators and through later additions. Its study is further complicated because the text exists only in uncritical editions, and there are few pertinent studies of the poems. In spite of these obstacles, Professor Lyons persists with this task, as he believes that it provides us with a unique chance of understanding the mentality of these usually inaccessible members of medieval Arabic society. Lyons
concludes that "the Crusades were not seen in terms of Middle East history as an isolated phenomenon", but were understood in conjunction with the pre-Islamic wars between Persia and Byzantium, or later wars with foreign invaders. They formed part of a pattern of expansion and contraction to which, because of its inevitability, "common people were forced to make their accommodation".

Hadia Dajani-Shakeel describes the relationship between the Crusaders and the Muslims which was expressed in diplomatic contracts and peace treaties during the first fifty years of the Latin presence in Syria. Her study shows that even though religious principles on both sides dictated absolute and uncompromising war, force of circumstances, the shifting web of private interests, and the endless alternation between power and weakness, all combined to produce the facts of compromise and co-existence. These patterns did not differ from those existing between neighbours of the same religion. Even if this study does not state it explicitly, it provides a good picture of the suffering of the local Muslim and Christian populations, and of the decimation and desolation of the land. This forms the background for diplomacy and peace treaties. This study reinforces the assertions made elsewhere in this volume regarding the dearth of knowledge about the life of ordinary people in twelfth-century Syria, and how difficult it is for their voices to be heard and studied.

The bibliography which follows the papers draws together the primary and secondary sources used by the authors for the study of themes investigated here. Its purpose is to provide a detailed, comprehensive description of these sources for those who come to the study of the Crusades from other disciplines. Two papers which were read at the Conference were not included in this collection, one of them my own. My paper, entitled The Crusades and Islamic Warfare—A Re-evaluation, concludes that the Crusades had little or no influence on the development of the Arabic military manual, and has since been published in Der Islam.

For those of us at the University of Western Ontario, the Conference was an opportunity to affirm the commitment of the scholarly community and the University to medieval studies. It also marked the many years of committed work by our senior medievalist, John G. Rowe, who was involved in every stage of the Conference and the editorial work, and his contributions to the field of Crusades' studies. We would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Academic Development Fund and the Deans of Arts and Social
Science at the University of Western Ontario for their contributions to the cost of the conference and to the cost of preparing the manuscript for publication. We wish to thank the secretarial staff of the Department of History, especially Mrs. Laura McFadden, for their assistance in preparing this volume. Many thanks also go to Mr. Ken Craft, a graduate student in the Department of History, who has provided unflagging assistance throughout the long and difficult preparation of the Conference. Mrs. Susan Merskey assisted with the final stages of the editorial process, as did Mrs. Julia Bernheim at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. Maribel Dietz, a graduate student at the History Department, Princeton University, helped greatly with the bibliography. Many thanks are due to the School of Historical Studies for making the last stages of the editorial work possible.

December 1992
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