

shun opportunities to increase knowledge in this way. The latter occupy the high moral ground but do nothing to help salvage the wreckage. The lack of consensus prevents a constructive outcome: a combination of pragmatism in dealing with what has already happened and a more idealistic strategy for preventing it happening again. There is no argument, however, about the causes of the mining of Iraq's archaeological sites and the illegal export of its antiquities. These causes become all too clear to the reader of this book: international sanctions and invasion, the state's impoverishment of its people, the people's ignorance and desperation, and the greed and ingenuity of the market, its agents and their clients.

A. R. GEORGE

*School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*

CRUSADER CASTLES AND MODERN HISTORIES. By RONNIE ELLENBLUM. pp. xi, 362. Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008.

doi:10.1017/S1356186308009437

In 1874 Johannes Sepp and Hans Prutz conducted an excavation in the ancient port of Tyre. Funded by Otto von Bismarck, the project at Tyre aimed to locate the tomb of Frederick I Barbarossa. Sepp proposed to Bismarck that, once found, the remains of the emperor could be transferred from Tyre for reburial in the cathedral of Cologne. The tomb was never discovered however, and acrimony between Sepp and Prutz led the two scholars to publish separate accounts of the excavation. These events are discussed in Ronnie Ellenblum's intriguing book on Crusader castles. That both archaeology and the historical appreciation of the Crusades should be so closely intertwined with nineteenth-century European nationalism is well illustrated by the unfulfilled goals of the Tyre excavation. Indeed, there seems to be no aspect of Crusader studies through the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century that was not, in some way, affected by the politics of nationalism and colonialism. It is also apt that Sepp and Prutz should have disagreed so vehemently about the interpretation of the results; a recurrent theme explored by Ellenblum is the way in which eminent scholars have reached highly divergent opinions based on the same body of architectural and historical data.

Ellenblum's subject is the military architecture of the Crusader states of the Middle East (1098–1291), but the book is not primarily a work of architectural history. Where previous surveys of Crusader fortifications are extensively illustrated, the present work allows for only a few ground-plans, tables, and maps. Like his previous book, *Frankish Rural Settlement in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (1998), Ellenblum's intention is to reexamine the colonial enterprise of the Crusades using primary textual sources, extant monuments, and recent advances in archaeology. A necessary point of departure in both cases is a critique of the earlier scholarship. The first part of *Crusader Castles and Modern Histories* presents a concise overview of the birth of Crusader studies in early nineteenth-century Europe, and the subsequent evolution of its principal nationalist strands – French, German, and British (Chapters 1–3). For historians, novelists and politicians all over Europe the Crusades became not just a source of national pride, but a justification for future colonial expeditions in North Africa and the Middle East. Some scholars, particularly in France, also sought to characterise in the most positive light the interaction of the Frankish colonists with indigenous Muslims, Christians, and Jews.

Particularly interesting in the present context is the evolving discourse concerning the functions performed by the castles and other fortified structures. Were they designed as part of a coherent strategy to defend the changing borders of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the other Crusader states, or might they have had other utilities? Paul Deschamps favoured an interpretation that emphasised the role of castles in guarding the major roads running through the Crusader states. Writing in the 1950s,

Raymond Smail rejected the earlier concept of border defence, and Deschamp's refinement of this position. Viewing fortifications from a typological standpoint, Smail found no evidence for a long-term defensive strategy (he rightly believed it to be impossible for Franks to defend their borders in the way modern nation state might seek to do). Rather, castles were largely the initiatives of individual lords, and functioned principally as administrative and economic centres of regions. Aspects of this interpretation were taken up by Joshua Prawer though he stressed the intrinsically defensive quality of Frankish settlement within the Crusader states. As Ellenblum notes, Prawer's concentration upon internal security – a ruling minority of Franks separating themselves from the potentially hostile native population – was, in part, determined by the strategic and demographic challenges faced in the 1950s and 1960s by the state of Israel.

Ellenblum's reassessment starts by focusing upon the central concepts of the castle and the border. He questions the usefulness of these terms in the understanding of medieval strategy and political theory. He makes some valid points concerning the inherent difficulties involved in forming typological distinctions in Crusader fortifications (Chapters 4–7), but perhaps the most significant observations appear in his discussion of the Crusader 'border' (Chapters 8–11). Drawing recent scholarship on medieval European political boundaries, the author demonstrates that the Crusader states and their Muslim neighbours were not defined by the linear borders seen in modern cartography. His analysis of primary textual sources suggests that movement from one territory to another involved passing through a frontier zone in which physical markers in the landscape, buildings, and ritualised encounters (such as the levying of duties on imported goods) represented points of transition between Muslim and Frankish authority. Thus, rather than defining a linear border, a castle or other fortified site might exist *within* the frontier and, like the cultivated land of this zone, represent a resource to be contested and exploited by the neighbouring polities. By extension, it was not the borders that defined political entities but their centres, and the depth of the 'frontier' was contingent upon the perception of external threat shared by the inhabitants of a given polity. Ellenblum asks provocatively, "Can the entire area of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem be considered a 'frontier'?" (p. 146).

Returning to the castles themselves, Ellenblum offers two main approaches to their interpretation. The first comprises an analysis of the chronological and spatial distribution of twelfth-century fortified sites in the Kingdom of Jerusalem (Chapter 11). Dividing the period into three phases (1099–1114, 1115–67, and 1168–87) brings greater clarity to the different roles performed by castles and other defensive structures. The first phase is characterised by the employment of existing settlements, with relatively few new castles built on unoccupied sites. By contrast, the relatively peaceful decades of the second phase are marked by extensive military construction both in Palestine and Transjordan. Ellenblum argues that during the final phase the Crusader states switched to a more defensive aspect with the increasingly successful campaigns of Nur al-Din and Salah al-Din. During the last two decades expenditure on castle building was focused on the frontier areas to the north and east.

The second approach occupies the fourth part of the book (Chapter 12–17). Picking up on Hugh Kennedy's observation that castle design in the medieval Middle East needs to be understood in the context of changing siege tactics employed by Franks and Muslims during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Ellenblum embarks on an ambitious survey of textual sources and military architecture. This survey leads him to evaluate the technological resources and logistical skills available to besieging armies in different phases of the Crusader period. Importantly, he identifies general patterns that are pertinent to castle construction and techniques employed in sieges. Sifting through the available texts, the author determines that the Crusaders enjoyed a significant advantage in skilled man-power and their knowledge of heavy catapults. Naval support aided both when laying siege to ports, and in the provisioning of the Crusader armies. The marked superiority of the Frankish armies in open conflict was a likely factor in determining the short duration of the sieges conducted by Muslim armies. Having only a few days before a relieving army arrived to the besieged town or castle, the Muslim forces did

not have the option of starving the inhabitants. Throughout the twelfth century their most potent weapon was the use of sappers to undermine the walls. The changing balance of power in the 1160s allowed the armies of Nur al-Din and Salah al-Din to conduct longer sieges (often with effective use of heavy artillery). Turning to the Crusader castles, the author notes the strengthening of the outer walls and the development of the ‘concentric castle’ (exemplified by the massive Pilgrims’ castle at ‘Athlit). These new, or newly renovated structures were much better able to withstand prolonged bouts of bombardment, while internal changes improved the firepower of the defenders.

Ellenblum advances important arguments in this part of the book, and in Chapter 16 he shows the potential value of this approach in the interpretation of his ongoing excavations of the unfinished castle of Vadum Iacob. He is however, hampered by the paucity of scholarship concerning Islamic castle design and warfare in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The study of Islamic fortifications is in its infancy and it is to be hoped that current research at sites such as the urban citadels of Aleppo and Damascus and castles of Shayzar and Shawbak will help to redress this problem. While the author exploits a range of Arabic sources in his search for data on Muslim siege technology, this part of the picture remains somewhat undeveloped. Attempts to fill the gap with testimony from Frankish sources like William of Tyre are historically suspect. In the case of the siege of Jaffa in 1102 (p. 223), Ellenblum tacitly admits the unreliability of the William’s account of the siege equipment of the Fatimid army and yet no such reservations are voiced concerning the same chronicler’s observations on techniques employed by the Muslim defenders of Jerusalem in 1099 (pp. 199–200). That William wrote his history some eight decades after these events is clearly problematic, but one must also be aware of his likely biases when dealing with the activities of Muslims. It is surprising, therefore, that Ellenblum records uncritically William’s spurious claim that during the siege of Jerusalem “two Muslim witches and three apprentice witches” threw curses against a Frankish siege engine. (p. 201)

Some minor criticisms should be noted. The author’s uneven treatment of the Arabic citations in the bibliography contrasts with the care taken over titles penned by Frankish authors. Most Arab writers are not accorded their full names, book titles are given diacritics in some cases and not others, and there are mistaken transcriptions. Second, more illustrations (particularly ground-plans and elevations of specific castles) should have been employed to support the discussion of changes in the design of fortifications.

In conclusion, this is an important contribution to the study of military architecture in the Crusader period. The most impressive aspect of Ellenblum’s scholarship is his ability to question long-held assumptions and offer promising new lines of interpretation. His focus on the dialectic between military architecture and siege technology in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem is especially valuable, and could well be applied to the study of Frankish and Muslim castles elsewhere in the Middle East. Perhaps his initiative will also encourage others to complete a deeper exploration of the Arabic sources for further data on the evolving technology of Islamic warfare.

MARCUS MILWRIGHT

*University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada*

THE TANGLED WEBB: A LIFE OF SIR RICHARD BURTON. By JON R. GODSALL, pp. xxxii, 576. Leicester, Troubador Publishing Ltd, 2008.

doi:10.1017/S1356186308009449

Though he did not merit a place in Lytton Strachey’s *Eminent Victorians* – he was not even on Strachey’s short-list – Captain Sir Richard Burton was, nonetheless, a Victorian of undoubted eminence, one of the most colourful figures of the Victorian age.