Unknown Crusader Castles

Kristian Molin

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Introduction

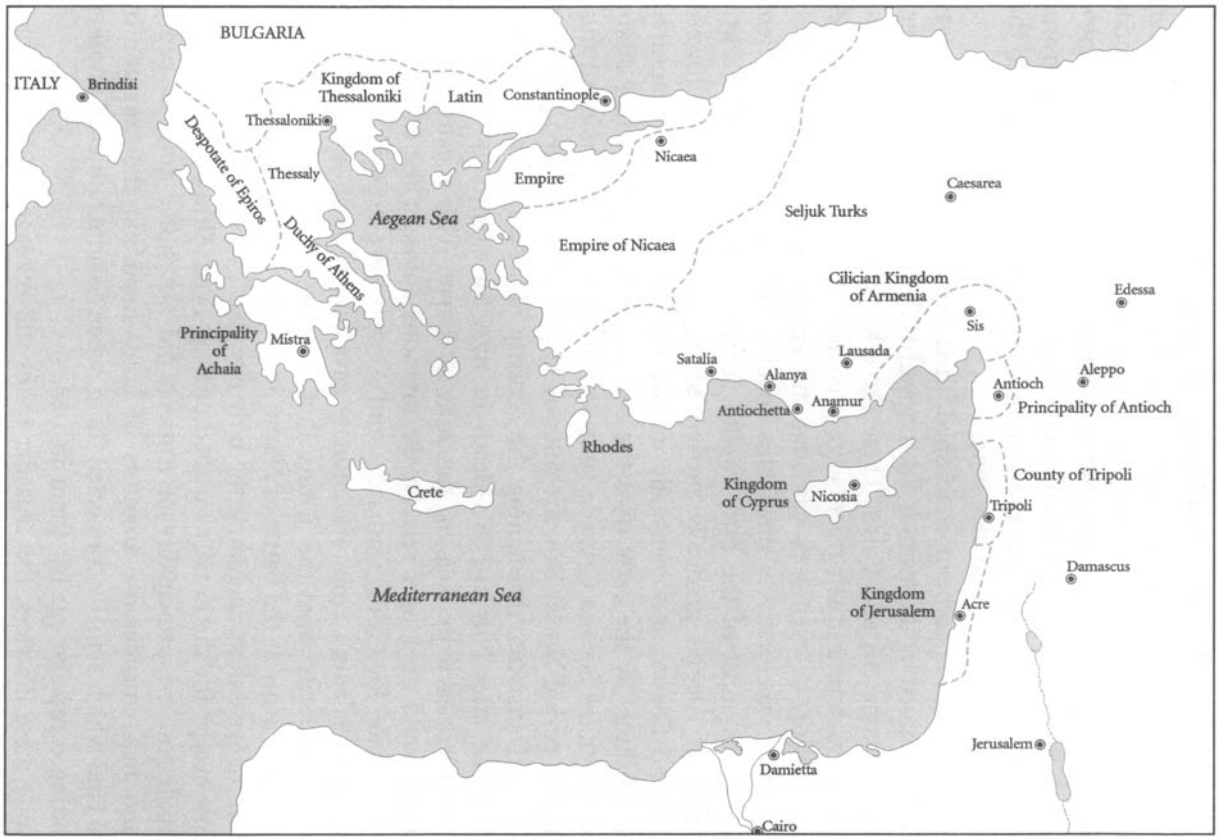
In November 1095 Pope Urban II launched the First Crusade at Clermont in south central France. The popularity of his message turned out to be enormous, as tens of thousands of people joined the expedition to liberate Jerusalem from the Muslims in order to cleanse their own souls and, hopefully, achieve salvation after death. Having suffered enormous hardships as it travelled from western Europe through the Balkans, across Asia Minor and into Syria, the First Crusade finally captured Jerusalem in July 1099. During this gruelling journey its participants passed through several different regions whose history was to become inexorably linked with that of the future crusader states. Stretching from the Adriatic to Constantinople and dominating most eastern Mediterranean islands, including Cyprus, the Byzantine empire viewed the arrival of this and future Crusades with mixed feelings. On the one hand, the empire's inhabitants were fellow Christians and therefore grateful for any aid they might receive against the Turkish threat to the east. On the other hand, they were of course Orthodox Greeks rather than Catholics, and were consequently separated from western Europe by profound differences in religion, culture and outlook, which often caused tension or even open warfare.

After they crossed the Bosphorus the armies of the First Crusade entered an even more alien world as they gradually began to move into Muslim territories. During the period covered by this book, these lands can loosely be divided into the three key regions of Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt. Asia Minor had originally been Byzantine, but by the 1090s most of it had been lost for good because of a series of Turkish advances achieved in the course of the eleventh century. During the next two hundred years the most dominant people in the region were normally the Seljuk Turks. However, after the mid fourteenth century the various Turkish peoples of Asia Minor were eventually unified under the rule of the Ottomans, who subsequently expanded their power in such a spectacular fashion that by 1520 they had created an empire stretching from North Africa to the Balkans via Egypt, Syria, Turkey and northern Greece. But at the time of the First Crusade and for a long time thereafter no such unity existed. The Muslims who inhabited the other key regions of Syria and Egypt were sporadically at war

both with the Turks of Asia Minor and with each other. Unlike western Europe, where urban growth was still extremely limited, these political struggles were largely centred around the most important cities of the Muslim world. Inland these included Aleppo, Damascus and Cairo, all of which had grown extremely rich because of their trade links with Asia or Africa. Through ports such as Alexandria, Acre and Tyre they also had economic connections with Italy and the Byzantine empire, which ensured that the eastern Mediterranean was far richer and far more sophisticated than any of the north European lands inhabited by most members of the First Crusade.

The region also differed from the west in its cultural diversity. The Muslim peoples were not just divided geographically or politically, they varied considerably in terms of their ethnic background and according to whether they adhered to the Sunnite or to the Shi'ite faith. The eastern Mediterranean also had a notable population of Jews, plus several non-Catholic Christian groups, many of whom lived under Muslim rule. These included various Orthodox communities, as well as Maronites, Nestorians and Syrian Jacobites. The most important such group for the purposes of this book was the Armenians. They inhabited a large part of what is now south-eastern Turkey and northern Syria, and in particular the region to the north west of Antioch known as Cilicia. They had consequently lived under Byzantine rule until the Turkish incursions of the eleventh century. Although the Greek emperors continued to enjoy some sporadic authority over them during the next hundred years, their distance from Constantinople ensured that by the late twelfth century the Armenians had effectively become independent. This move toward independence was greatly aided by the local terrain, for Cilicia itself was surrounded by mountains to the north, east and west, and by the Mediterranean to the south. These barriers helped to protect the Armenians both from the Greeks and from the Seljuk Turks. Like the Byzantine Greeks, they enjoyed a love-hate relationship with the crusading newcomers, for they were fellow Christians yet they were non-Catholics with their own language, history and cultural identity.

This was the world which the members of the First Crusade entered in 1099. Rather than feeling overawed by the rich and complex society they had encountered, those crusaders who chose to remain after the fall of Jerusalem wasted no time in consolidating the military gains they had made. Former Muslim territories in western Syria and Palestine were gradually conquered and turned into four new crusader states: the kingdom of Jerusalem, the principality of Antioch, and the counties of Tripoli and Edessa. The westerners who undertook these campaigns were mostly French, but others came from Italy, Germany and Spain. Former Muslim ports such as Acre



MAP 1. The eastern Mediterranean, showing approximate frontiers in the early thirteenth century

now fell under Christian control and their lucrative Asiatic trade links came to be dominated by the Italian maritime cities of Venice, Genoa and Pisa. In the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries many crusader lands were also held by the Hospitallers, Templars and Teutonic Knights. These were Military Orders, groups of western knights who confronted the Muslims in battle yet followed an austere and celibate lifestyle under the protection of the pope. Like more traditional monastic orders, they grew wealthy on the donations of land or money made by their European patrons, and these resources enabled them to make a substantial contribution to the military activities of the crusader states.

After these states had been established, their twelfth-century history was largely determined by the attitude taken towards them by the Muslim rulers of Aleppo, Damascus and Cairo. These three key cities were frequently at war, and at such times their rulers were prepared to negotiate peace treaties with the Latins, or even seek Christian aid against each other. Although its field army was relatively small, this enabled the kingdom of Jerusalem to prosper for most of the early twelfth century. However, in the north the rulers of Aleppo gradually proved to be more pugnacious toward Antioch and Edessa, and eventually in 1144 the latter city was recaptured by the Muslims. By the early 1150s the entire county of Edessa had disappeared, the failed Second Crusade (1148–49) doing nothing to prevent this. During this period Nur al-Din, the ruler of Aleppo, also managed to extend his rule to Damascus, threatening the security of Jerusalem itself. Worse was to come after Nur al-Din's death in 1174, for eventually his Syrian lands were annexed by Saladin, the ruler of Egypt. This meant that the Christians could no longer rely on the divisions amongst the Muslims to keep them safe, for Cairo, Damascus and Aleppo were now all controlled by one man. Saladin's empire eventually gave him such an overwhelming military superiority over the Latins that he was able to annihilate the crusader field army at the battle of Hattin in July 1187. Thereafter the entire kingdom of Jerusalem, including the holy city itself, was recaptured by the Muslims except for the heavily fortified port of Tyre. Although the county of Tripoli and the principality of Antioch did not suffer quite as badly, they too lost considerable amounts of land, including the corridor of coastal land which actually connected them, when Saladin launched another devastating campaign against them in 1188.

Despite these disasters, the crusader states still managed to survive into the thirteenth century. The participants of the Third Crusade (1189–92), and in particular Richard Lionheart, managed to reconquer the coastal regions of the kingdom of Jerusalem between Tyre and Jaffa, including the vital port of Acre. It was also at this time that Richard conquered the island

of Cyprus from the Greeks, thereby creating an important new crusader state which came under Latin rule. These successes were followed by the death of Saladin in 1193, which caused his empire to be divided between various members of his family, known collectively as the Ayyubids. As a result the situation reverted to that of the early twelfth century, for the cities of Aleppo, Damascus and Cairo were once again ruled by different individuals whose squabbles took the pressure off the Latins. It was not until the second half of the thirteenth century that the Muslim world was reunified once again. The remaining coastal territories still held by the Latins were finally wiped out in 1291. These losses could not be prevented by the numerous crusades sent to the region after 1200, most notably the Fifth Crusade (1217–21) and the Crusade of Louis IX of France (1248–54), both of which made failed attempts to invade the sultanate of Egypt.

Meanwhile, new crusader states had been set up in Greece after the Fourth Crusade (1202–4), a joint expedition involving Venetian naval forces and contingents of French and Italian knights. Its original purpose had been to build on the achievements of the Third Crusade and attack the Muslims of Egypt, but instead it ended up capturing Constantinople from the Greeks. This diversion was caused by numerous political and economic factors, such as the request for western aid by a Greek claimant to the imperial throne and the Venetian desire to augment its share of the lucrative trade passing through the Aegean. It also reflected the growing tension between the Greeks and the Latins, as there was often mutual distrust between these two peoples because of their differences in language, culture and religion. Both this expedition and Richard I's earlier conquest of Cyprus reflected a growing willingness in the west to direct crusades against people who were not necessarily Muslim but were nevertheless considered schismatic opponents of Catholicism.

After the fall of Constantinople in 1204 some parts of the former Byzantine empire were carved up into a number of new western states, whilst others remained under Greek control. The period until 1380 witnessed a protracted struggle between Latin newcomers and Greeks trying to recreate the Byzantine empire. On the mainland this struggle generally favoured the Greeks, but by the late fourteenth century both sides found themselves being confronted by an even stronger opponent, the Ottoman Turks, who gradually swallowed up all Christian territories around the Aegean regardless of whether they were Greek or Latin. Meanwhile, the Muslim armies which had already driven the Franks out of the Holy Land in 1291 also conquered Cilician Armenia in 1375. This was also a period of crisis for the kingdom of Cyprus, for in 1374 it was invaded by Genoese forces hoping to use the island as a base from which to dominate local trade and to undermine the influence

of their great rivals, the Venetians. This highly destructive episode marked the beginning of the end for Cyprus as a fully independent Frankish crusader state, for it resulted in the Genoese occupation of Famagusta until 1464, after which the entire island fell under Venetian control from 1489 onwards. Finally, in 1571, Cyprus was conquered by the Ottoman Turks, thereby destroying the last Christian domain in the eastern Mediterranean whose Frankish settlers could trace their ancestry back to the earliest crusader states created by the members of the First Crusade.

This book is a study of the various military and non-military functions of fortifications occupied by Latin or Armenian Christians who settled in the Holy Land, Cyprus, Cilician Armenia and Greece between 1187 and *c.* 1380. The political and military upheavals of the period ensured that fortifications played a prominent role in its history. Yet the study of such structures still has a number of important gaps which this book aims to fill. There has been a tendency in the past for scholars to concentrate their efforts on castles in the Holy Land, and in particular famous and well-preserved structures such as Crac des Chevaliers in Syria. Although this imbalance is being addressed by the work of scholars such as Denys Pringle, Ronnie Ellenblum and Adrian Boas, who in recent years have excavated, studied or recorded very many smaller crusader fortifications and domestic structures, their studies are still focused on the Holy Land itself, and especially on the kingdom of Jerusalem. A primary aim of this book is to shed more light on fortifications built or occupied by Latins and Armenians in the more obscure areas of Cyprus, Greece and Cilician Armenia.

The second, and closely related aim is to make up for the lack of studies which deal with crusader fortifications from the thirteenth century onwards, even though this period, as we have seen, represented a massive expansion of crusading endeavour as Latins settled on Cyprus and in the former Byzantine territories around the Aegean. Within the Holy Land itself there has often been a tendency for historians to focus on the period between 1095 and the end of the Third Crusade in 1192. This is perhaps understandable, bearing in mind that some of the most famous military encounters of the middle ages, most notably the First Crusade and Richard Lionheart's struggles with Saladin, took place during this period. It may also reflect the nature of the sources, and in particular the fact that William of Tyre's well-known history of the Holy Land, which contains so many clear and accessible accounts of castles being built, besieged or destroyed, ended in 1184. Thus for example, R. C. Smail's famous work on crusader warfare dealt with the period from 1097 to 1193.[1] In recent years scholars such as C. Marshall, whose book on warfare between 1192 and 1291 represents a continuation of Smail's work, have begun to address this shortfall.[2] However,

this book hopes to extend the work of Marshall and others by taking a further look at the Holy Land in the thirteenth century, and by including the post-1291 history of Cyprus, Greece and Armenia. Hence each chapter begins with a brief section on warfare in these regions, to show how the nature of local fighting influenced the appearance and functions of local fortifications.

The third aim of this book is to provide an analytical rather than a purely descriptive study of fortifications in the eastern Mediterranean. Once again, this is something which is already being done in the Holy Land. Alongside purely archaeological or architectural works such as D. Pringle's recent survey of secular structures in the kingdom of Jerusalem,[3] some scholars have also researched the ways in which castles were actually used by the Latins, and how they fitted into the wider military and political history of the Latin East. The earliest and most influential book of this kind was undoubtedly Smail's *Crusading Warfare*, but, as we have seen, this has now been complemented by Marshall's important study of the period after 1192. Other books to appear in recent years which have viewed castles in the same light include Hugh Kennedy's *Crusader Castles* (Cambridge, 1994), plus numerous publications by leading archaeologists such as Pringle's *The Red Tower* (London, 1986) and Ellenblum's *Frankish Rural Settlement in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Cambridge, 1998).

Beyond the Holy Land itself, the picture is very different. Studies already exist devoted to the visible remains of fortifications in Cyprus, Greece and Cilician Armenia,[4] but apart from giving brief historical outlines of the sites they refer to, these works are largely devoted to listing and describing surviving structures. What these fortifications were actually used for, rather than what they looked like, is a topic which has barely been touched upon, and it is one of the principal aims of this book to make up for this silence. At times it will become apparent that this can be a difficult task, because some areas, most notably Frankish Greece and Cilician Armenia, are lacking both in reliable historical sources and in recent subsurface archaeological excavation. No studies exist for these areas which can compare with the very detailed research undertaken in the kingdom of Jerusalem, where a wealth of information from papal letters, contemporary chroniclers or surviving charters, combined with the meticulous investigations of leading archaeologists, has sometimes made it possible to recreate the history of certain crusader castles virtually year by year.

Despite the limited scope for this type of research outside the Holy Land, a combination of archaeological and historical sources can shed much new light on the functions of local fortifications. For example, during the last thirty years the archaeologists Hansgerd Hellenkemper and Robert Edwards

have produced comprehensive studies which list and describe virtually every single surviving stronghold in Cilician Armenia. Yet because there are very few traces of any urban fortifications left in this region, they have rejected the notion that the Armenians constructed defences of this kind, preferring instead to live in or near remote mountain castles. I hope to show that a closer scrutiny of the historical evidence actually indicates that the Armenians did dwell inside cities, whose older Byzantine ramparts they were happy to repair or rebuild. This would suggest that Edwards and Hellenkemper have relied too much on the archaeological evidence (or its absence) to draw their conclusions, without studying the written sources as well.[5] While there are chapters in each of the parts of this book which deal with military architecture, it is my intention to do more than simply describe fortifications, and to look at a variety of sources in order to highlight the ways in which such structures were actually used to defend or conquer new land, to suppress hostile locals or to impose central authority over recalcitrant vassals. This is an approach which has not been used before with regard to Greece, Cyprus and Cilician Armenia, but in the Holy Land I hope to build on the research already carried out in this field by Smail, Marshall and others.

An exploration of strongpoints in the eastern Mediterranean can also give us greater insight into how local Christian settlers actually lived. In the past there has sometimes been a tendency amongst scholars to focus on the purely military functions of fortifications, and the ways in which they could withstand sieges, dominate strategic valleys or form elaborate networks of intervisible castles. Whilst these topics will be discussed, it is important to bear in mind that many years or decades might pass before a fortress came under siege or found itself involved in any kind of warfare. Consequently this book is intended to redress the balance by considering the many non-military functions of strongpoints as residences, prisons, courthouses or centres of trade and agriculture. This topic is dealt with at length in part five, but throughout the book it will become apparent that it is misleading to view castles and warfare as separate from other aspects of medieval society, such as trade and farming. In part four, for example, the numerous rural towers which were constructed by Latin settlers in Greece will be considered. It is tempting to see these towers as evidence of chronic local warfare. Whilst it certainly seems to be true that such structures could provide shelter against pirates or Turkish raiders, it should be borne in mind that their construction would have been expensive and time-consuming, and therefore only possible at a time when local lords were relatively rich and their estates were untouched by external attackers. In the Holy Land this approach has already led to many important new discoveries by Ellenblum, who has shown that Frankish settlers built countless smaller fortified or

semi-fortified structures which were simply intended for local farming and defence. Strongpoints of this kind had no importance whatsoever in terms of the large-scale warfare between Richard Lionheart and Saladin which has become so famous in the popular view of the Crusades, yet they accounted for the vast majority of fortifications built by Christian settlers after the First Crusade.

The vast majority of research already carried out on crusader fortifications, as is already clear, has concentrated on the Holy Land, and in particular on the kingdom of Jerusalem (or Acre, as it is often known after 1187). This book nevertheless contains a chapter on that region, partly because it is the most famous and important area of crusading endeavour, and partly because it gives this research as a wide a scope as possible, so that comparisons can be made between the functions of fortifications in the Holy Land and those situated in other parts of the eastern Mediterranean. It is hoped that this will show how the famous castles built by the crusaders in the Holy Land were sometimes very different from, but sometimes very similar to, the many less well-known strongpoints constructed in Greece, Cyprus and Cilician Armenia.

This book deals with the period from 1187 to 1380. From what has already been said it will be clear that much work has already been done on the Holy Land, particularly during the twelfth century, yet after 1187 the Latins acquired far more crusader territories around the eastern Mediterranean than they had held before the battle of Hattin. It was also a time when Cilician Armenia gained independence from Byzantine authority, being transformed into another Christian state which had to face the growing pressure applied by powerful Muslim neighbours. Many more Christian strongpoints were built or occupied during this period than the hundred years immediately after the First Crusade. The year 1380 seems a natural ending point for this book for a number of political, military and cultural reasons: Cilician Armenia fell in 1375, bringing its history as an independent state to a close. Cyprus was invaded by Genoa in 1374, and although the Genoese were only able to conquer a small part of the kingdom, this period signalled the end of the island's status as a prosperous crusader state, for its economy was in decline and its political life gradually came to be dominated by Italians rather than by the Frankish families who had originally settled there after 1192. In Greece, meanwhile, the tide had definitely turned in favour of the Ottoman Turks, for by the end of the fourteenth century they had already conquered most of the Byzantine empire and were beginning to penetrate the remaining Latin states in south-western Greece. Technologically speaking, 1380 also seems an appropriate date at which to stop, because by that point gunpowder was already known in

Europe. Although it would be a long time before it revolutionised warfare in its entirety, this new discovery heralded the beginning of the end for the kind of medieval fortifications dealt with in this book. Hence both politically and technologically the late fourteenth century marked the end of an old era and the beginning of a new one.

PART ONE

The Holy Land
1187–1291

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1

Warfare

The history of the crusader states in the Holy Land between 1187 and 1291 can be divided into two roughly equal parts. First, the period from 1189 to the early 1240s witnessed a series of efforts by the Franks to restore the losses suffered after the battle of Hattin (1187), which had resulted in the erosion of Christian territories around Antioch and Tripoli and the loss of all land in the south apart from Tyre. The Third Crusade (1189–92), whose most prominent participant was undoubtedly Richard Lionheart, achieved the reconquest of Acre and a coastal strip as far south as Jaffa.[1] Five years later German crusaders took Beirut,[2] and the Embriaco lords of Gibelet reoccupied their old castle through diplomacy.[3] In 1204 another peace treaty[4] confirmed Frankish possession of Jaffa (lost temporarily in 1197),[5] Lydda, Ramlah and Nazareth, and at about the same time the Templars and Hospitallers consolidated their position in the county of Tripoli by strengthening their local castles and launching punitive raids against neighbouring Muslims.[6] Further gains were made during the crusade of Frederick II (1228–29), whose treaty with the Egyptians acknowledged Christian control over Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, the territory of Toron and those parts of the lordship of Sidon previously held by the Muslims.[7] Finally, during the separate but overlapping crusades of Theobald of Champagne (1239–40) and Richard of Cornwall (1240–41), complex negotiations with Egypt and Damascus led to the restoration of Belvoir, Toron (Tibnin), Tiberias, Châteauneuf (Hunin), Beaufort, Saphet and Cave de Tyron.[8] The Franks also reoccupied Ascalon, whose citadel was rebuilt, and Jerusalem, which had been lost briefly in 1239–40.[9]

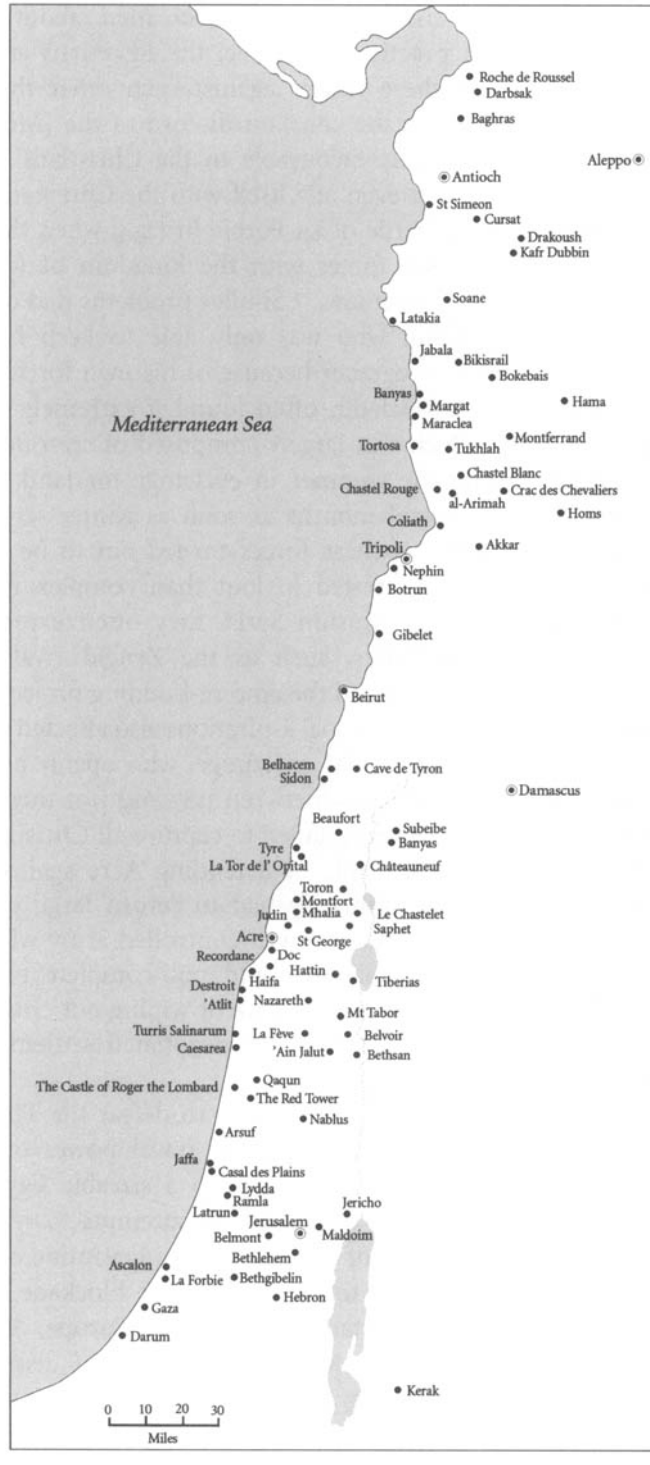
After the successes of the early thirteenth century, the next fifty years represented a period of sporadic retreat. In 1244 the truce with Cairo broke down and Jerusalem was lost to the Khwarizmians, a violent tribe of nomadic horsemen who were allied to the Egyptians and supposedly numbered between 12,000 and 20,000 troops.[10] Shortly afterwards this alliance defeated the Franks at the battle of La Forbie, enabling the Egyptians to retake much of southern Palestine, including Ascalon and Tiberias in 1247.[11] Further Muslim conquests were temporarily halted by the first Crusade of Louis IX (1248–54), who refortified several sites in the Latin East, although his

disastrous campaign in Egypt prevented him from actually regaining lost strongholds.[12] Moreover, within ten years of Louis' departure the Egyptian sultan Baybars (1260–77) had resumed the offensive, so that by 1271 Christian territories had been reduced to a narrow coastal strip between Latakia in the north and 'Atlit (Pilgrims' Castle) in the south.[13] Many of the remaining outposts in this region were gradually picked off during the 1280s, until Acre itself was finally lost in 1291.[14]

From the Muslim point of view, these triumphs represented the culmination of a long period of change. Politically the Muslims had been hopelessly divided during most of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, for the Ayyubid sultans of Egypt were almost constantly embroiled in power struggles with the Ayyubid rulers of Damascus and Aleppo, and were at times also challenged by smaller powers such as the lords of Kerak. Inevitably, disputes of this kind were most common whenever a leading political figure died, hence the Frankish territorial gains of 1197–1204, 1229 and 1239–41 can be linked to the internal clashes which followed the deaths of the Egyptian sultans Saladin (1193), al-Adil (1218) and al-Kamil (1238).[15]

These problems began to resolve themselves in the mid thirteenth century, for in 1250 the Ayyubids of Egypt were overthrown by the Mamluks. The Mamluks were soldier slaves who had been acquired in childhood by individual Ayyubid rulers and then brought up to form an extremely loyal and highly skilled military bodyguard. This made them very effective soldiers, but tensions inevitably arose whenever an Ayyubid ruler died, for his Mamluks could then find themselves being ousted from key military posts by the Mamluks of his successor. Problems of this kind resulted in the Mamluk seizure of power in 1250, and subsequently led to a decade of political instability in Egypt as rival Mamluks, lacking a strong hereditary precedent, struggled for power. Whilst this period benefited the Christians in the short term, in 1260 it led to the accession of the Mamluk sultan Baybars, who was to prove one of their greatest opponents. Furthermore, the year 1260 witnessed the arrival of the Mongols, who, having spent the previous decade advancing westwards, captured both Damascus and Aleppo. As a result, Saladin's Ayyubid descendants in Syria were virtually all driven out of power, so that when a Mamluk army from Egypt managed to defeat the Mongols in the autumn of 1260, Baybars was able to extend his power over Aleppo and Damascus with relative ease. From 1260 onwards Egypt and Syria were therefore once again united under one ruler, and the crusader states found themselves surrounded as they had been in the time of Saladin.[16]

These dramatic political changes inevitably influenced the military effectiveness of the Muslims. Before 1250 the Ayyubids could theoretically raise



MAP 2.
The Holy Land

a combined field army of around 22,000 men, about half of whom came from Egypt.[17] In practice, of course, the Egyptians and the Syrians spent more time using these troops against each other than the Franks, who prospered 'because of the constant discord of the [Muslim] princes of the land, which was highly favourable to the Christians'.[18] Alternatively, one Muslim power might even ally itself with the Christians against another, as was the case at the battle of La Forbie in 1244, when the ruler of Damascus was prepared to join forces with the kingdom of Jerusalem against the Egyptians and Khwarizmians.[19] Similar problems had occurred even during the reign of Saladin, who was only able to keep his cumbersome and regionalised empire together because of his own forceful personality. After the battle of Hattin Saladin often found it extremely difficult to maintain his field army, which was largely composed of seasonal troops who served the sultan during the summer in exchange for land or money, but then went home for several months as soon as winter set in. Even when they were present, some of these forces turned out to be ill-disciplined, badly trained and more interested in loot than complex notions of holy war. Drawn from all over Muslim Syria, they often expressed greater loyalty toward their local rulers, such as the Zengid rivals of Saladin in the north, than they did toward the empire-building projects of Saladin himself. Regional loyalties and personal aspirations also affected the various members of Saladin's own family and entourage, who openly argued over strategies in the middle of campaigns. Between 1187 and 1192 these serious weaknesses help to explain why Saladin failed to capture all Christian lands in the wake of Hattin, proved incapable of defending Acre against the armies of the Third Crusade, and ultimately had to return large parts of the coast to Richard Lionheart. Without a well-controlled army which stayed with him throughout the year, Saladin could not complete the task of capturing powerful Latin strongholds like Tyre or wiping out crusader forces in battle, being eventually forced to reach a negotiated settlement with the leaders of the Third Crusade.[20]

Another reason why Saladin failed to defeat the Third Crusade was his inability to match the overwhelming naval power of the Latins, despite his considerable efforts at building up a sizeable Egyptian fleet.[21] In the thirteenth century there were sporadic attempts to remedy this weakness, but Frankish possession of Cyprus and the Levantine coast made it difficult for Egyptian war galleys to reach, let alone blockade, the sea lanes which connected the crusader states with western Europe. A notable example of the troubles faced by the Muslims was Baybars' disastrous naval raid on Limassol in 1271, involving eleven to fourteen Egyptian galleys. Before they even reached Limassol these vessels were shipwrecked off the coast because

of the incompetence of their sailors, some of whom were taken prisoner. This was the last major naval offensive attempted by the Mamluks before 1291. Apart from illustrating just how far the Muslims had fallen behind the Latins in this particular form of warfare, it helps to explain why coastal strongpoints such as Acre held out far longer than crusader fortifications inland.[22]

On land, however, it was a very different story, for by the mid thirteenth century many of the weaknesses which had plagued Saladin's field army were beginning to disappear. The empire which Baybars created after 1260 was similar in size to that of Saladin, but far more centralised, as the regional Ayyubid rulers in Syria had virtually all been removed by the Mongols. Hence Baybars was able to push ahead with reforms which improved military training, equipment and administration. He also built on policies begun during the 1240s which ensured that the *halqa*, or cavalry elements within his army, continued to grow.[23] At this time the quality and quantity of archers also increased steadily, so that by 1289, for example, Sultan Kalavun (1279–90) was reputedly able to deploy thirty such troops against each arrow slit in the city walls of Tripoli.[24] Furthermore, greater centralisation enabled Baybars to use the resources of his empire more effectively than Saladin had done, causing the overall size of field armies to rise to between 12,000 and 40,000 troops. Whilst this latter figure may not be reliable, the former probably is, implying that major Mamluk campaigns launched against the Franks after 1260 rarely involved fewer than 10,000 men.[25] Most late thirteenth-century offensives carried out by the Mamluks were also better organised than those of Saladin. Although internal wrangles still affected the Muslims from time to time, the majority of crusader strongpoints fell during the key reigns of Baybars (1260–77) and Kalavun (1279–90), whose leadership on campaign never seems to have been seriously questioned by their own followers. This resulted in some very carefully prepared and highly successful attacks on crusader castles by these two rulers. During his campaign against the Templar stronghold of Saphet (1266), for example, Baybars patiently supervised the siege weapons, set up field hospitals for the wounded and offered financial rewards for the bravest attackers, whilst simultaneously sending out contingents to carry out diversionary raids which prevented the Franks from relieving the castle. Even though it took several weeks of hard fighting, the siege was eventually brought to a successful conclusion without any overt criticism of Baybars' leadership.[26]

Two other factors also improved the fighting capacity of Muslim armies at this time. First, greater use was made of Mamluks, who were originally soldier slaves imported by individual sultans from Central Asia and the Black Sea region. These troops were trained as professional soldiers from

an early age and were instilled with a deeper sense of loyalty toward their own sultan than most seasonal or mercenary forces. Although Mamluks had already been used for many years, their numbers increased significantly in the course of the thirteenth century. It is difficult to say how many Mamluks were accumulated by each sultan. Kalavun is reputed to have owned between 6000 and 12,000, whilst the average number for most of his contemporaries seems to have been between 2000 and 4000.[27] These troops formed the core of late thirteenth-century field armies. Although Mamluk sultans were still reluctant to undertake sieges in midwinter, they did make all-year-round campaigning, such as Baybars' raids on the fortress of Margat in January 1270, much easier.[28]

Secondly, the Muslims became increasingly adept at using mines and catapults to capture Christian strongpoints, including Acre itself, whose outer walls were either sapped or bombarded to the point of collapse during the final siege of 1291.[29] Earlier, the Mamluks had captured a number of crusader castles by digging mines beneath their walls, including the Hospitaller fortress of Margat (1285), forced to surrender when the enormous inner tower guarding the southern tip of the fortress was in danger of collapsing.[30] Whereas the basic art of digging siege tunnels had changed little over the centuries, more profound developments affected catapults during the crusader period. In the course of the twelfth century more and more large catapults, or trebuchets, came to be fired by heavy counter-weights filled with sand or stones rather than by men pulling on ropes, and as a result stronger and more accurate weapons could be built. A recent reconstruction of a trebuchet proved capable of hurling objects (including a piano) weighing up to 500 kilogrammes over considerable distances.[31] Ammunition weighing almost this much was used in some of the most decisive sieges of the thirteenth century. At Acre in 1291, for example, catapults were used which could easily launch stones weighing nearly 200 kilogrammes.[32] Ammunition of this kind was deadliest if it could be aimed against exactly the same part of a castle's ramparts again and again, thereby literally shaking it to destruction. In order to achieve such accuracy, the weight of the stones fired by a trebuchet needed to be calculated in advance so that it did not vary.[33] Furthermore, if it was to be capable of throwing such large stones over a long period without falling apart from the strain, the trebuchet itself had to extremely tall and sturdy. Indeed, the modern reconstruction just referred to stood to a height of sixty feet.[34] Hence trebuchets needed to be handled by skilled siege engineers, and required large amounts of money and logistical planning for their upkeep. After Baybars had united both Syria and Egypt under his personal rule in 1260 these resources became available, enabling him to construct large numbers

of trebuchets which could be used against the Christians. In 1268, for example, Baybars is said to have deployed twenty-six catapults against the castle of Beaufort. These weapons also played a prominent role in Baybars' attacks on Saphet (1266) and Crac des Chevaliers (1271), and were regularly brought along on campaigns in large prefabricated sections which were normally stored in key centres such as Damascus.[35]

The military and political improvements which took place in the Muslim world between 1187 and 1291 form a direct contrast with contemporary events inside the crusader states. Whereas the Mamluk conquests of the late thirteenth century were the result of tangible military reforms, Frankish territorial gains made before 1241 were an illusion, achieved almost entirely through negotiation rather than success on the battlefield. In reality the Franks were often weak, and much of this weakness stemmed from the political situation within the kingdom of Jerusalem. In 1225 Isabella, the heiress to the kingdom, married the German emperor Frederick II, and as a result the throne passed to their son Conrad (1228–54) and grandson Conradin (1254–68). But normally Frederick and his Hohenstaufen heirs were either absent in Germany or too young to rule in their own right, or both. As a result, a succession of regents and lieutenants had to be appointed to govern the kingdom in their place, but these representatives often proved incapable of controlling (or were themselves controlled by) local factions within the crusader states. The death of Conradin and the extinction of the Hohenstaufen line in 1268 should have clarified matters, but instead the throne came to be disputed between the rival claimants Hugh III of Cyprus (1268–84) and Charles of Anjou, brother of Louis IX of France. It was not until Charles died in 1285 that Hugh III's son Henry II (1285–1324) could succeed to the kingdom in peace, and Acre finally came under the control of an undisputed monarch who actually lived in the Latin East.[36]

During the long period of weak or absent rulers between the 1220s and the 1280s there were numerous internal clashes in the Latin East both in the kingdom of Jerusalem and in the north.[37] After Frederick II's marriage to Isabella in 1225, the emperor came to the Holy Land between 1228 and 1229. This campaign was not simply intended as a crusade against the Muslims, it also gave Frederick the opportunity to impose his authority (and that of his newly born son Conrad) over the kingdom of Jerusalem. But certain factions in the East, and in particular the powerful Ibelin family, were deeply hostile toward the idea of Hohenstaufen rule, whilst many churchmen, most notably the Templars, were opposed to Frederick because his arguments with the papacy had already led Pope Gregory IX to excommunicate him. Shortly after Frederick's arrival in the East fighting broke out between his supporters and Ibelin sympathisers both on the mainland

and on Cyprus. Frederick returned to Europe in 1229 but continued to send imperial troops from Lombardy under the command of his marshal, Richard Filangieri, to try to defeat the Ibelins. During the winter of 1231–32 Richard Filangieri made a failed attempt to capture the Ibelin stronghold of Beirut, and by the spring of 1233 the imperialists had also been defeated on Cyprus. But after these setbacks Frederick's supporters continued to hold Tyre, whilst the Ibelin faction dominated Acre. It was not until 1242 that the Ibelins finally managed to capture Tyre by stealth and bring a formal end to hostilities. For more than a decade the kingdom of Jerusalem was therefore not only ruled by an absent German dynasty but was also deeply divided within itself.[38]

While the damage caused by this type of warfare may have been exaggerated in the past, it must still have caused a lot of troops and resources to be squandered which could otherwise have been used in the struggle with the Muslims. The Latins could ill afford to waste their time on internal struggles, for the sources make it clear that they were often heavily outnumbered by their Muslim opponents; a situation which can only have deteriorated as Egyptian armies grew in size after the mid thirteenth century. Already at the battle of La Forbie (1244), where we have seen that the Khwarizmians alone contributed up to 20,000 cavalry troops, it seems that there were no more than 2000 Latin knights present; a figure which probably represented the absolute maximum for the Holy Land.[39] Similarly, in 1291 the Muslim besiegers of Acre are said to have outnumbered the city's entire population of 40,000 people, and as a result the 200 knights and 500 infantry sent there by King Henry II of Cyprus and Jerusalem (1285–1324) must have seemed like a drop in the ocean.[40]

Attempts by the Franks to remedy this problem by appealing for help from the West were fraught with difficulties, for the arrival and departure of crusading expeditions, which were anyway only a temporary solution to the lack of soldiers, could not be predicted accurately. This was vividly illustrated by King Andrew II of Hungary's decision to leave the Fifth Crusade (1217–21) before it had even reached Egypt, where numerous subsequent disputes between fellow Christians, combined with Frederick II's failure to appear despite repeated promises to do so, eventually contributed to the collapse of the entire expedition.[41] Even when crusaders did turn up, harsh weather, disease and food poisoning could take a heavy toll; problems which affected numerous expeditions, including that of Edward, the future king of England (1271–72).[42] This period also witnessed a rapid escalation in the cost of warfare generally, and in particular horses, whose 'price tripled between 1140 and 1180, and had doubled again by 1220'.[43] During the 1260s, when the income of the French King Louis IX stood at around 250,000

livres tournois per year, the total annual cost of maintaining a mere hundred French knights whom Louis had stationed in Acre came to 10,000 *livres tournois*. This was a cripplingly expensive bill which, so the evidence suggests, even Louis could not always afford to pay on his own.[44] Thus the cost of equipping and transporting expeditions to the East became so great that crusading armies shrank in size, and could only be financed by the wealthiest European lords.[45]

These factors, combined with the fact that most crusaders lacked any experience of fighting in the Latin East, weakened the effectiveness of expeditions. In 1269, for example, an Aragonese crusade to the Holy Land enabled the Franks to launch a raid against Muslim villages near Montfort with an army containing 130 knights.[46] This force was far too small, however, to recapture any Christian territories lost to the Mamluks, or indeed risk a direct confrontation with Baybars, who was said to have had such a large field army close by that one contingent alone numbered 15,000 men. Moreover, during skirmishes just outside Acre, some Aragonese leaders of the campaign, declaring that they had come to fight for Christ, were needlessly killed because they simply charged into the enemy ranks and were immediately cut down by Muslim troops ravaging the area. The crusade achieved nothing permanent, wasted Christian lives, and provoked Baybars into carrying out a damaging counter-raid against Acre.[47] Temporary crusades could therefore create more problems than they solved, for they did not remedy the permanent shortfall of troops, and even if they did succeed in regaining territory this had to be defended by local Franks who subsequently found themselves even more thinly spread out than before.

On top of this there were the usual security problems common to virtually all parts of medieval Europe. Incidents of localised raiding, violence and crime were common, and there was also the more remote but nevertheless real possibility of an uprising by Muslim peasants under Latin rule. Indeed, during the years or decades which separated full-scale invasions by Saladin, Baybars or Kalavun, this must have been the type of fighting which affected most Christian territories. We are therefore left with the impression of a region where Latin settlers virtually always found themselves heavily outnumbered by external aggressors, but also had to cope with the possibility of lawlessness or rebellion within their own lands. It is against this background that the various functions of crusader fortifications should be discussed, for castles and urban defences were relied on by the Christians to protect their property, maintain their hold on the land and above all make up for their lack of soldiers in the field. Unlike European crusades, such structures lasted for decades or even centuries, and remained firmly under the control of local settlers. They were therefore relied upon to solve

the numerous military weaknesses which have been described in this chapter, and as such became vital to the continued existence of the entire crusading movement in the Holy Land.

2

Military Architecture

During the thirteenth century the Latins occupied a vast array of fortifications in the Holy Land, most of which were either built on top of, or incorporated into, earlier Arabic, Byzantine, Roman or even older defences. Indeed, some strongpoints, such as the vast fifth-century ramparts at Antioch, barely contained any Frankish building work at all, whilst fortresses like Montfort and 'Atlit, which were built on previously unoccupied or long abandoned sites, were extremely rare. These complexities make it preferable to divide a few Latin strongpoints into general categories depending on size, location and function, rather than describing all fortifications built in the area individually.

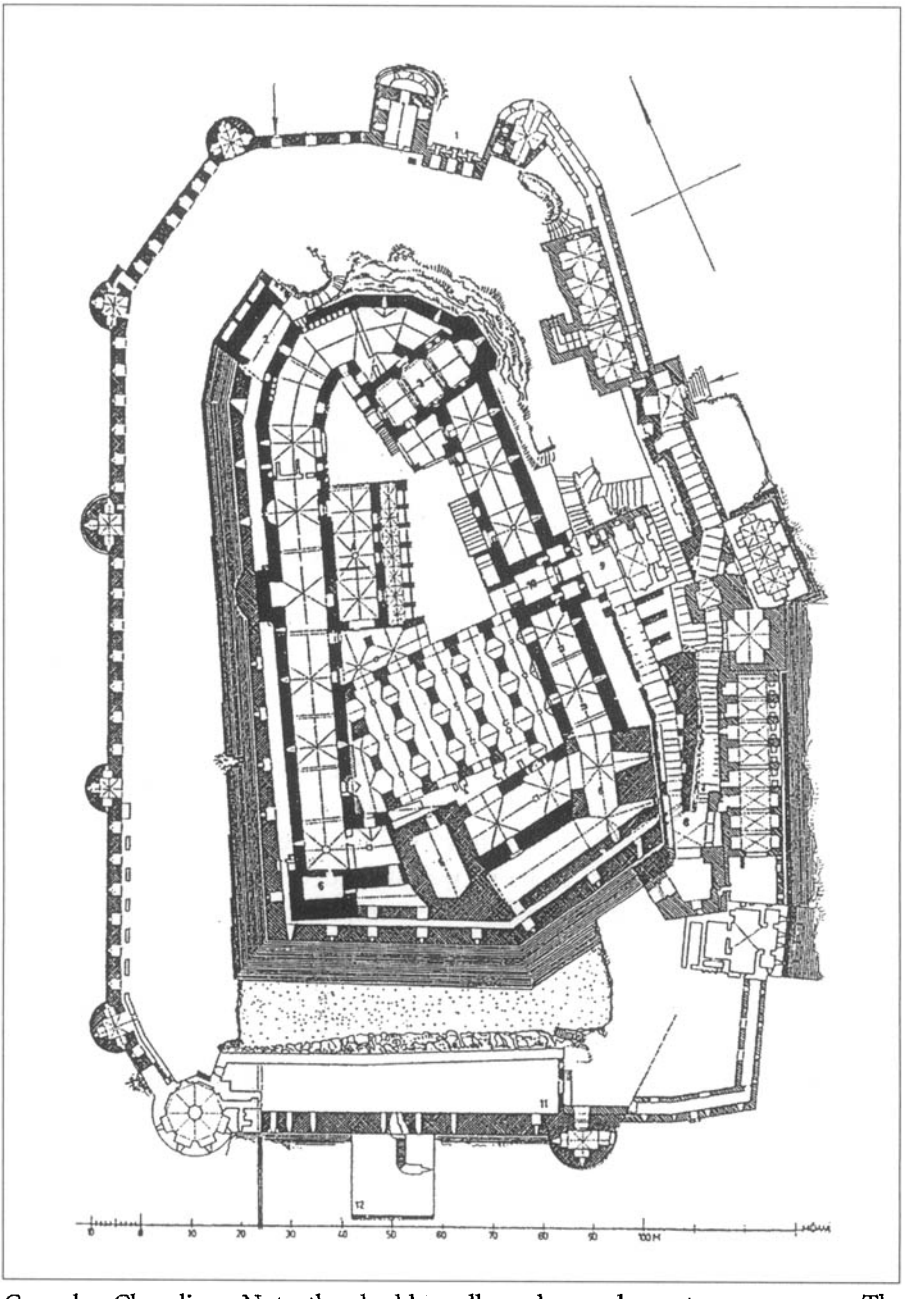
First, the Franks held a number of major castles which were constructed on a very large scale in order to withstand substantial Muslim invasion forces. In the north, the best preserved and most famous such fortifications were the Hospitaller strongholds of Margat and Crac des Chevaliers. The outer walls of Margat enclosed an extensive triangular mountain spur which dominated the coastal route between Tripoli and the principality of Antioch. Indeed, Margat covered such a large area that it contained a small town, situated to the north of the inner citadel and separated from it by a rock-cut moat. The citadel itself consisted of numerous towers and buildings ranged around an inner courtyard, many of which date from the period after 1186, when the Hospitallers bought Margat from its original secular owner. The most important of these structures was the keep, a huge round tower with walls at least 5.5 metres thick which stood at the exposed southern tip of the site and therefore guarded the likeliest point of attack.[1]

The layout of Margat's defences compares very closely with that of Crac des Chevaliers, another former baronial castle which was also situated on a mountain spur and was acquired by the Hospitallers in 1142.[2] Thereafter the Order added several flanking towers and an enormous talus to the south and west sides of the original enclosed courtyard, and then constructed a whole new curtain wall around the entire site. As was the case at Margat, the keep was placed at the most vulnerable point along the south side of the castle, where it formed the central flanking tower of the inner bailey.[3] These major alterations appear to have been undertaken after the earthquakes of

1170, 1200/01 and 1202/03 but to have been completed by around 1220.[4] The earthquake of 1170 was particularly devastating, for according to one Muslim source, it left 'several fortresses of the Franks ... such as Hisn al-Akrad (Crac des Chevaliers), Safitha (Chastel Blanc), al-Arimah [and] Arkas ... plunged into an ocean of ruins'.[5] Bearing in mind that the Hospitallers did not acquire Margat until 1186, this suggests that the Order carried out its building programme in the thirty years following Saladin's invasion of Syria. This is made all the likelier by the fact that virtually identical improvements were made by the Hospitallers at the fortress of Silifke, an Armenian stronghold which they did not acquire until 1210.[6]

Not far from Crac des Chevaliers and Margat, the Templars held the equally substantial strongholds of Tortosa and Chastel Blanc (Safita), which were also considerably rebuilt during the crusader period. This was done at a much earlier stage, however, for a document dating from 1152 reveals that the Templars had probably already acquired Chastel Blanc by this stage, and were in the process of constructing new defences at Tortosa.[7] Unlike Crac des Chevaliers and Margat, where all new Hospitaller towers were either round or horseshoe shaped and *donjons* were attached to adjacent ramparts, Tortosa was provided with a massive rectangular keep which stood in isolation at the north-west corner of the site. During a further phase which appears to date from the early thirteenth century, and therefore coincided with the Hospitallers' work at Margat and Crac des Chevaliers, this keep was provided with two flanking corner towers placed at the water's edge. At this point the keep was also protected from potential land attacks by the addition of two successive ditches and curtain walls to the north, east and south and was flanked by two corner towers situated at the water's edge. Some idea of the sheer scale of these defences can be gained from those sections of the inner curtain wall which still survive to their original height of 25.5 metres.[8]

A similar process seems to have taken place at the hill top fortress of Chastel Blanc, for the impressive rectangular keep which stands at the summit was probably constructed in the middle years of the twelfth century, or perhaps after the earthquake of 1170, whilst some at least of the outer curtain walls and elaborate gateways defending the lower slopes were probably constructed later.[9] Indeed, there may have been several phases of improvement and reparation, for we have seen that in 1200/01 and 1202/03 more earthquakes struck the region, whilst in 1218 an Aleppine invasion force attacking Chastel Blanc supposedly 'destroyed its towers'.[10] Meanwhile, the Templars were responsible for the construction of another rectangular keep and related defences at the fortress of al-'Arimah, which occupied a long ridge above the coastal plain between Tripoli and Tortosa. Little

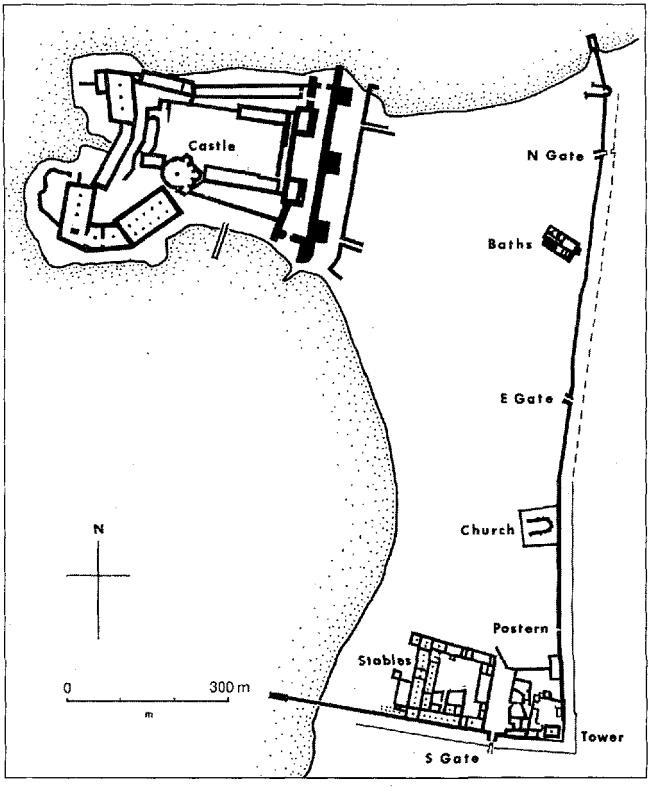


Crac des Chevaliers. Note the double walls and complex entrance passage. The revetments and vaulted undercrofts of the inner bailey strengthened the castle against siege weapons and earthquakes.

is known about the history of this fortress, although it had probably already been acquired by the Templars with Chastel Blanc at some point before 1152.[11] This group of Templar bases, along with both Margat and Crac des Chevaliers, survived numerous Muslim incursions in the course of the thirteenth century before finally succumbing to the Mamluks from 1271 onwards. In that year Crac des Chevaliers and Chastel Blanc fell,[12] followed by Margat in 1285[13] and Tortosa in 1291.[14] Al-'Arimah may have been lost in 1271, for in 1282 a peace treaty between the Muslims and the Templars stated that the Order still possessed some estates nearby, but that the fortress itself now belonged to the sultan of Egypt.[15]

In the kingdom of Jerusalem, there were a number of major strongholds which resembled Tortosa, Chastel Blanc, Crac des Chevaliers and Margat. Tortosa was similar to the Templar fortress of 'Atlit (Pilgrims' Castle), in that both could rely on the sea to protect them from the west but needed very extensive defences against attackers approaching from inland across the relatively flat coastal terrain. 'Atlit, which was constructed from scratch in 1217–18 with the aid of the Teutonic Knights and members of the Fifth Crusade, was better off than Tortosa because it actually lay on a promontory jutting out into the sea, but it still had vast man-made defences to protect its landward side. These consisted of an outer ditch and rampart with three gate towers, and a much higher inner wall whose two flanking towers were so tall that their defenders could spot potential attackers eight miles away. Together these towers acted as the inner *donjon* of the castle, in much the same way that the inner southern towers of Crac des Chevaliers did.[16] Like Tortosa, 'Atlit also proved to be so well defended that it was never taken by force, being simply evacuated by the Templars in August 1291.[17]

The appearance of both Tortosa and 'Atlit was determined by their proximity to the sea, but there were also fortresses in the south situated on hill tops and which required successive defensive rings to protect them on all sides. About half a century after they completed Chastel Blanc, the Templars rebuilt Saphet, an important Galilean castle which they had originally acquired around 1168 and which was restored to them as a ruin in the peace treaty of 1240.[18] The new fortress built after 1240 consisted of an outer wall, approximately 22 metres high and 825 metres long, which ran around a second and much higher rampart dominated by a large, probably circular keep. The exact appearance of this keep is difficult to establish, for it was later replaced by a similar Mamluk structure before a nineteenth-century earthquake flattened the entire fortress. It may have been one of the seven towers along the inner rampart mentioned in *De constructione castri Saphet*, an invaluable contemporary account of the castle's construction and appearance. This document indicates that the outer wall was also



'Atlit: the fortress and the town (or *bourg*).

flanked by seven towers, and was provided with underground tunnels which led to several casemates guarding the castle's outer moat.[19] When it was besieged by the Muslims in 1266, this massive stronghold managed to withstand six weeks of almost constant mining and bombardment, only capitulating once sultan Baybars had managed to sow discord amongst its defenders.[20] Such resilience helps to explain why the Military Orders had already begun to erect similar concentric castles in the second half of the twelfth century, particularly at Belvoir, an almost symmetrical fortress composed of two successive walls forming a square within a square. Belvoir was built by the Hospitallers between 1168 and 1189 on a lofty hilltop guarding the Jordan crossings south of Lake Tiberias. In 1189 it was lost to Saladin. Although it was theoretically restored to the Franks in 1241, it seems unlikely that the Hospitallers actually reoccupied it during the brief period before the Egyptian and Khwarizmian conquests of 1244–47.[21]

The inland castles mentioned so far had concentric defences intended to protect them on all sides. There were also a number of important strongholds located in more isolated surroundings with less regular fortifications. In

1255 Alexander IV, acting on behalf of the monks who lived there, granted the Hospitallers Mount Tabor, a strategic hill top which lay within sight of Belvoir and to some extent must therefore have been intended to compensate the Order for the loss of this latter castle.[22] In 1211 the Egyptian sultan al-Adil had ringed the summit of Mount Tabor with a massive curtain wall, 1750 metres in length and flanked by ten towers.[23] Seven years later, following a failed Latin attack on the castle,[24] the Muslims decided to demolish this rampart and abandon the site rather than risk a more successful Frankish assault in the future.[25] One might therefore expect that when the Hospitallers arrived more than three decades later they would have attempted to repair and regarrison al-Adil's wall, but there is no archaeological evidence to suggest that plans to build new defences were ever put into action. Instead it seems that the Hospitallers merely occupied (and perhaps fortified) the small monastery in the south-east corner of al-Adil's castle, and simply relied on the height of Mount Tabor's summit and the steepness of its slopes to keep attackers out. To some extent this may have been done because of inadequate troops and resources, for in 1263 Baybars seems to have captured the site with such ease that more extensive man made defences would clearly have been desirable.[26]

The Muslims found it far harder to capture heavily fortified mountain strongholds such as the castle of Beaufort, situated in the mountainous interior south east of Sidon. Beaufort could rely on sheer cliffs hundreds of metres high to protect it from the east, whilst steep gorges deepened by the Franks defended it from the north and north west. Consequently, the outcrop occupied by this castle formed an isolated stronghold which only needed flanking towers and multiple ramparts along its more exposed southern face. This fortress, lost to Saladin in 1190, was regained by the Franks in 1240 and garrisoned by them until Baybars conquered it for good in 1268. During this period the Franks strengthened the castle's defences by building a separate citadel which was situated on the southern plateau opposite the castle's main entrance.[27]

Another impressive example of a mountain castle built by the Franks was Montfort. This fortress lay at the heart of an extensive lordship held by the Teutonic Knights a few miles north east of Acre and acted as the Order's headquarters until it was captured by Baybars in 1271. Montfort was built on a precipitous spur formally acquired by the German knights in 1228 and therefore dates entirely from the thirteenth century.[28] Its defences were arranged around a large 'D' shaped keep which stood at the eastern end of the fortified spur and was isolated by rock-cut ditches. Access to this keep was also blocked by a wall along the north and west slopes of the castle, although the apparent absence of any medieval remains on the south

side suggest that this slope was considered steep enough not to require additional man-made defences.[29] This 'semi-concentric' arrangement would not have been feasible at the more gently-sloping sites of Saphet, Crac des Chevaliers, Margat and Belvoir.[30]

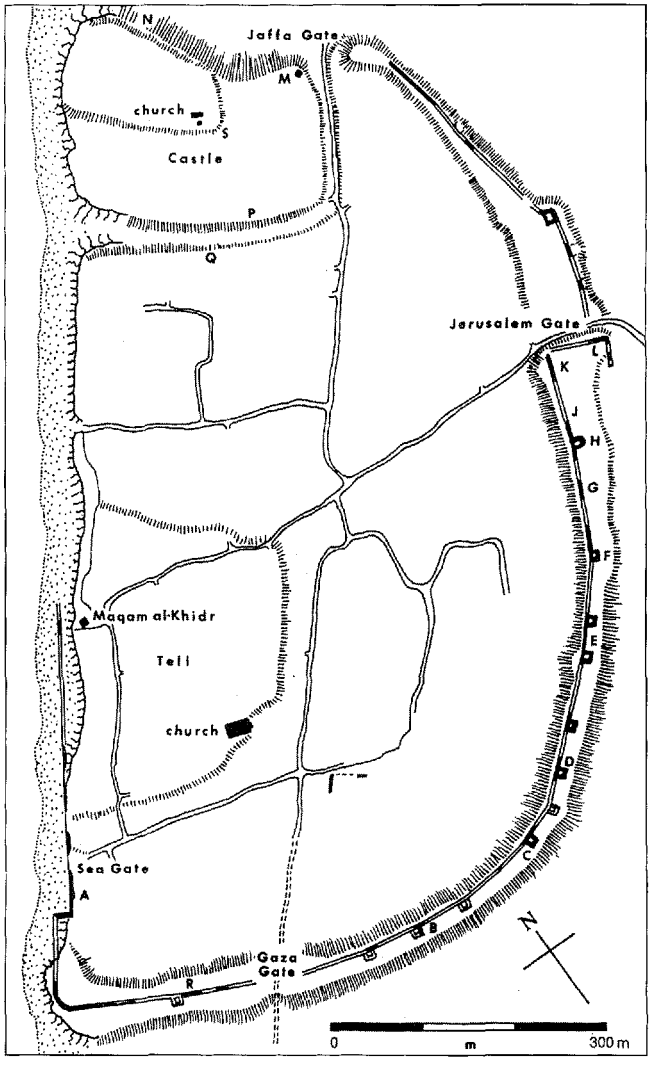
To the north of Montfort, the castle of Akkar (Gibelcar), situated in the county of Tripoli, also occupied a mountain spur which only needed extensive defences where it could be approached from the neighbouring mountains. Its keep, a relatively simple quadrangular structure, also resembled that of Montfort in that it was placed at the neck of the ridge connecting the castle with surrounding hills. This ridge had also been severed by a rock-cut moat, whereas the rest of the site was so inaccessible that it was apparently only protected by a single curtain wall following the edge of the spur.[31] Perhaps the most extreme use of nature to protect a stronghold occurred not at larger fortresses such as Akkar or Montfort but at Cave de Tyron, a cave fortress carved into the side of a mountain opposite the town of Sidon. Even though it only housed a tiny Frankish garrison, it must have been virtually impregnable, for it lay hundreds of metres above sea level and could only be approached along a path barely one metre wide.[32] Both Akkar and Cave de Tyron had been occupied by the Franks at various times since the twelfth century, and the former was not lost until 1271, whilst the latter seems to have been abandoned by 1260.[33]

Apart from castles, the Franks also built or occupied a number of citadels intended to defend existing urban settlements, and these could often be as powerful as individual fortresses. Even though it has already been discussed in the context of major Syrian castles, Tortosa was strictly speaking a citadel rather than an independent fortress, for a much older walled town had already existed next to it before the Templars built their new keep from 1152 onwards. By contrast, 'Atlit was built from scratch by the Templars in 1217–18, effectively becoming a citadel once a walled settlement sprang up just beyond its outer defences. Thus the distinction between castles and citadels is not always such an easy or useful one to make, but if we define most citadels as strongholds which were attached to important walled settlements already in existence before the time of the First Crusade, it is clear that the Latins possessed a number of such structures both inland and near the sea. Along the coast, the citadels of Arsuf, Beirut, Jaffa and Ascalon all resembled Tortosa in that they were placed as close to the shore as possible, in order to protect them from the west, but needed fairly elaborate defences on their landward side. This was clearly the case at Beirut, whose citadel had been left intact by Saladin in 1187, was recaptured and repaired by German crusaders in 1197, and then strengthened even further by the new Ibelin lord of the city in the early thirteenth century.[34] When the German pilgrim Willbrand of

Oldenburg passed this castle in 1211, he described it as a large, imposing structure, built on a rocky knoll and defended by a deep ditch, several towers and two successive curtain walls.[35] Investigations carried out early last century appear to confirm that it did indeed stand next to the shore on the site of a later Ottoman fort, whilst present rebuilding work in Beirut has uncovered some of the castle's masonry which is similar to that at Belvoir.[36]

To the south of Beirut, Arsuf, Jaffa and Ascalon were all partially or totally destroyed by Saladin's forces at the time of the Third Crusade.[37] But between 1191 and 1192 Richard Lionheart reoccupied these sites along with Caesarea, and he may have carried out some repairs both there and at Arsuf. He also built more extensive new fortifications at Ascalon and Jaffa,[38] the latter successfully withstanding a Muslim attack shortly afterwards.[39] The sheer speed with which Richard erected these defences suggests that they generally amounted to a limited reconstruction of citadels rather than city walls, although at Ascalon the inner curtain wall around the town was hastily rebuilt, even if many of the powerful outworks which had protected the site in the twelfth century must surely have been left in ruins.[40] Even these efforts proved short-lived, for in 1192 Ascalon was flattened as part of Richard's peace treaty with Saladin, and five years later Jaffa was sacked and demolished by the Muslims.[41] Caesarea and Arsuf, meanwhile, may only have been defended by citadels during the next couple of decades, for during the Fifth Crusade (1218) the city walls of the former were rebuilt, whilst in 1211 the inhabitants of the latter still lived in constant fear of bandits, implying that the urban defences of these settlements were either inadequate or possibly even incomplete.[42]

Subsequent efforts to fortify Caesarea, Ascalon, Jaffa and Arsuf were just as patchy. The fortifications of Ascalon lay in ruins from 1192 until the crusade of 1240–41, when reconstruction of the citadel was begun by Theobald of Champagne and completed by Richard of Cornwall.[43] Thereafter the citadel was entrusted to the Hospitallers, but Ascalon was lost again to the Egyptians a mere six years later.[44] Further north the ramparts erected at Caesarea in 1218 were destroyed by the ruler of Damascus within a few months of their completion.[45] Both this settlement and Jaffa, which had apparently remained unfortified since 1197, were given new citadels during the Emperor Frederick II's rebuilding programme in the late 1220s.[46] A quarter of a century later Louis IX considered it necessary to provide Caesarea and Jaffa with massive new urban fortifications, suggesting that for the previous twenty-five years these places had primarily relied on Frederick's citadels to protect them. Even if their city walls had been repaired since Frederick's time, they were now falling into decay again.[47] A similar situation may have prevailed at Arsuf, for although the citadel was strengthened by



Ascalon: the city walls and citadel.

John of Ibelin in 1240, and later described as 'very strong' by Joinville,[48] the urban defences were considerably improved after the Hospitallers acquired the site in 1261.[49] This again implies that whilst Arsuf must have had walls around it for much of the thirteenth century, these were not always in a particularly good state, and that the Ibelins, unable to foot the maintenance bill any longer, therefore sold the lordship to a Military Order. By this point the military situation had deteriorated to such an extent that not even the Hospitallers could hang on to Arsuf, which fell to Baybars in 1265 along with Caesarea. Three years later, Jaffa was also lost for good.[50]

The citadels of Jaffa, Arsuf and Ascalon no longer survive, but at the latter site a combination of historical and archaeological evidence suggests that the stronghold constructed during the Crusades of Theobald of Champagne and Richard of Cornwall amounted to an impressive structure with towers, ditches and double walls built out of ashlar blocks and recycled Roman columns. It was probably situated on a mound in the north-west corner of the city, where it is still possible to make out two approximately rectangular lines of defence, plus the remains of a masonry glacis.[51] At Arsuf the citadel stood on an almost identical hill to that of Ascalon, being separated from the surrounding town by a deep moat and connected to the port via a long staircase.[52] Although it has long since vanished, the citadel of Jaffa should be placed in the same category,[53] as indeed should that of Tiberias, a pre-1187 Frankish settlement which, like Ascalon, only came under effective crusader rule in the thirteenth century between the peace treaty of 1241 and the Egyptian conquests of 1247. During that brief spell its Frankish lord, Odo of Montbéliard, rebuilt the town's citadel, which was defended by a massive wall and moat on one side but could rely on Lake Tiberias (rather than the Mediterranean) to shield it on the other.[54]

Whilst the coastal citadels were situated at the water's edge, others made even greater use of the sea as a means of protection. That of Caesarea, whose thirteenth-century history has already been touched upon, stood on a narrow promontory whose neck was defended by powerful ramparts and a water-filled moat.[55] This castle represented a scaled down version of 'Atlit, as did the baronial fortress of Nephin, which was situated just south of Tripoli on a small headland defended by 'twelve good towers' and separated from the coastal plain by two rock-hewn ditches.[56] For most of the twelfth century Nephin was held by the same baronial family as that which controlled Maraclea, another coastal settlement located between Tortosa and Margat. This site does not seem to have been particularly well fortified, for in 1188 it was evacuated just before the arrival of Saladin, and in 1271 Baybars probably occupied it soon after the fall of Crac des Chevaliers.[57] However, the inhabitants may have used an isolated rock, situated about fifty metres off the coast, as a place of refuge in times of danger. At some point after 1277 Bartholomew de Ravendel, lord of Maraclea, returned to the area and built a powerful new tower on this rock. Although Bartholomew's tower was demolished in 1285 as part of a peace treaty with Sultan Kalavun of Egypt,[58] its design and location can be compared with that of the sea castle at Sidon, built by Frederick II's followers during the winter of 1227–28 on a small island in the harbour. This structure, which was connected to the shore via a stone and wooden bridge, was gradually altered and improved

by its crusader occupants until it was finally evacuated shortly after the fall of Acre in 1291.[59]

Another tactic adopted by the Franks was to place urban citadels not at the strongest point of the defences but at the weakest, as they had done with the *donjons* of Montfort and Margat. The fortifications of such sites tended to be more regular in design, for they could not rely on the sea to protect them. Hence at Gibelet, situated between Nephin and Beirut, the citadel consisted of a rectangular enclosure with four corner towers built around an isolated central keep. It stood at some distance from the sea, so that it could guard the land approaches to the walled town which grew up between it and the shore.[60] This fortress, which had originally been built at the beginning of the twelfth century, was lost to Saladin in 1188 but was then regained through negotiations in 1197 and held by the Genoese Embriaco family at least until 1289.[61] The layout of Gibelet was also copied at Sidon, for in 1253 Louis IX constructed an irregular enclosure defended by several flanking towers on a small motte at the most landward extremity of the town. Excavation of this motte indicates that Louis' land castle merely replaced an earlier twelfth-century fortification, which must therefore have been the town's only refuge point until the sea castle was constructed in 1227–28.[62]

Contemporary descriptions and plans suggest that the citadels of Acre and Tyre were also rectangular in form, and perhaps resembled a partially preserved urban castle built at Famagusta around 1300.[63] That of Tyre was placed 'near the Sidon gate', suggesting that it defended the northern side of the narrow causeway which connected the city with the mainland. It was apparently reconstructed from around 1212 onwards, for in that year John of Brienne, king of Jerusalem, bought land inside the city so that he could finish building a new castle.[64] At Acre the citadel had originally fulfilled a similar purpose to that of Gibelet, but rapid urban growth during the crusader period eventually left it stranded behind newer ramparts constructed further inland. By the late thirteenth century it functioned more as a barracks than as a strongpoint, and appears to have played no significant role in the defence of Acre during the final siege of 1291.[65]

A more crucial role was played by the citadel of Jerusalem, where the massive Herodian structure known as the Tower of David was incorporated into a medieval stronghold built around a central courtyard and attached to the western wall of the city. The Tower of David, which was so strong that one contemporary described it as 'a single stone from its base up',[66] clearly formed the core of this citadel, but it seems that other elements were added or repaired by the Latins until the late 1230s. Most notably, archaeologists believe that parts of the sloped masonry revetments which form the