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The Third Crusade in historiographical perspective

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Abstract

The Third Crusade (1187–1192) is renowned as a conflict between King Richard I of England and the Muslim Sultan Saladin—a reductionist perspective that reflects an enduring fascination with these protagonists both inside and outside academia. In fact, the expedition was significantly more diverse, with the German emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, and the king of France, Philip Augustus, leading major contingents to the East, while a number of smaller-scale expeditions also constituted part of the overall Third Crusade. This article surveys key developments in the enterprise's historiography—focusing primarily on the crusading careers of Richard, Frederick and Philip—and introduces the main sources. It suggests that hindsight has played a surprisingly prominent role in directing scholarly interpretations and that historiography has gradually diversified during the 20th and 21st centuries, moving away from the traditional Richard versus Saladin narrative to explore understudied individuals, events and themes.

1 | INTRODUCTION

On July 4, 1187, the army of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem was defeated at the Horns of Hattin by Saladin, sultan of Egypt, Damascus and Aleppo. The king of Jerusalem, Guy of Lusignan, and a prized relic of the True Cross were captured, and on October 2, Jerusalem itself capitulated to the Muslim sultan (Barber, 2012, pp. 289–323;

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Bronstein, 2019; Ehrlich, 2007; France, 2015; Lyons & Jackson, 1982, pp. 255–277; Herde, 1966; Kedar, 1992). In response to Hattin (but seemingly unaware of Jerusalem's plight), on October 29, 1187, Pope Gregory VIII announced the expedition now known as the Third Crusade—a complex military campaign led by three of Western Europe's premier rulers. While the German emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, took the land route but mysteriously drowned in the River Saleph (Göksu) on June 10, 1190, Kings Philip II of France and Richard I of England ('the Lionheart') travelled by sea; the former departed following Acre's capture in July 1191, whereas the latter left the Holy Land on October 9, 1192, having agreed a 3-year truce (the Treaty of Jaffa) with Saladin on September 2. Thus, the expedition failed to recover the relic of the True Cross and to liberate Jerusalem (Asbridge, 2010, pp. 367–516; Mayer, 1988, pp. 137–149; Tyerman, 2006, pp. 366–474). Alongside these major crusading contingents, a number of smaller-scale voyages fall under the Third Crusade's umbrella, including 50 or 60 vessels despatched by William II of Sicily in 1188; north-western European ships co-opted by King Sancho I of Portugal to attack Silves in 1189; and a Dano-Norwegian expedition that arrived in the Holy Land after the Treaty of Jaffa was finalised.

The breadth of the Third Crusade goes some way towards explaining the lack of an authoritative, scholarly account of the expedition, with the most detailed treatments found in biographical studies of the main protagonists and general histories of the crusades. Indeed, the crusade's multifarious character, coupled with constraints on length, has necessitated restricting the scope of this historiographical survey in three ways. It focuses primarily on the armies of Richard, Philip and Frederick, in order to bring together scholarship in English, French and German; and, chronologically, it synthesises major contributions in the 20th and 21st centuries, even though an analysis of earlier works—such as Thomas Fuller's *The Historie of the Holy Warre*—would undoubtedly be fruitful (Fuller, 1639). Perhaps more controversially, the focus here is squarely on the crusader armies, without dealing extensively with the vast corpus of literature pertaining to Saladin, which warrants its own review essay. Key features of this latter corpus, which interested readers can access through numerous biographies, include the extent and sincerity of Saladin's commitment to *jihad* against the Franks before and during the Third Crusade (with Carole Hillenbrand positing that his dedication faltered after capturing Jerusalem); whether he entered into an anti-crusader alliance with Byzantium; why he failed to crush the Latins outside Acre in 1189–1191; his difficulties in maintaining a field army; and the significance of the crusade in the context of his wider career (Brand, 1962; Eddé, 2011, pp. 238–270; Ehrenkreutz, 1972, pp. 195–223; Gibb, 1952, 1973; Hillenbrand, 1999, p. 195; Lyons & Jackson, 1982, pp. 295–363; Möhring, 1980, 1984, 2008, pp. 74–90; Neocleous, 2010, 2013; Phillips, 2019, pp. 220–300).

Two overarching points recur throughout the following survey: first, that hindsight has proved a formidable, but not insurmountable, barrier to historical analysis of the Third Crusade; and, second, that over the course of the 20th and 21st centuries, scholars have increasingly looked beyond the traditional Richard versus Saladin narrative, causing the scope of historiographical enquiry to diversify significantly.

2 | RICHARD VERSUS SALADIN

As alluded to above, the Third Crusade has often been presented as a conflict between Saladin and Richard the Lionheart, both in public-facing and academic works (Nicolle, 2006; Reston Jr, 2001). This not only reflects an enduring western fascination with two adversaries who were mythologised even during the Middle Ages, but also the survival of detailed narratives written by members of Richard's and Saladin's armies, as well as the emergence of the modern biography as the principal medium for examining the expedition (Broughton, 1966; Chism, 2019; Eddé, 2011, pp. 465–502; Jubb, 2000; Phillips, 2019, pp. 315–328). Thus, scholars are well served by a proliferation of biographies of Richard I in English, German and French, as well as four important collections of essays (Bennewitz & van Eickels, 2018; Berg, 2007; Brundage, 1974; Fischer, 2006; Flori, 2006; Gillingham, 1989, 1994, 1999; Kessler, 1995; Minois, 2017; Nelson, 1992; Schubert, 2017; Turner & Heiser, 2000). Interpretations of Richard's crusading career have varied widely, ranging from John Gillingham's largely positive appraisal in two seminal biographies to Michael Markowski's damning verdict that 'as a crusade leader, Richard was a dismal failure'

(Gillingham, 1989, pp. 125–216; 1999, pp. 123–221; Markowski, 1997, p. 363). Within these overarching assessments, several contested points have emerged. Richard's diversion to Cyprus in 1191 has been seen as either a calculated move or purely accidental, while, perhaps unsurprisingly, his decision to execute between 2600 and 3000 Muslim prisoners outside Acre on August 20, 1191, remains highly controversial (Bradbury, 1998, p. 86; Brundage, 1974, pp. 100–101; Gillingham, 1999, pp. 145–154; Kessler, 1995, pp. 127–150; Richard, 1999, pp. 223–224). There is an ongoing debate as to whether this was an exceptionally violent act by 12th-century standards; and whereas older studies ascribed it to Richard's short temper—an interpretation which overlooks the complex evidence surrounding his anger—more recent explanations have centred on his eagerness to move the army forward without leaving so many prisoners in his rear, his desire to strike a psychological blow to Saladin and the mutual distrust that existed between both parties (Asbridge, 2010, pp. 452–455; Flori, 2006, pp. 356–361; France, 2011, p. 22; Friedman, 2002, pp. 90–92; Gillingham, 1989, pp. 182–184; 1999, pp. 167–171; Grousset, 1936, p. 61; Lyons & Jackson, 1982, p. 333; Spencer, 2017).

The significance of the battle of Arsuf (September 7, 1191), regarded by some as a crushing blow to Saladin and a demonstration of Richard's 'superb generalship', has often been downplayed since R. C. Smail characterised it as 'a striking and temporary tactical success, but nothing more' (Gillingham, 1989, p. 191; Smail, 1995, p. 165). The battle appears to have evolved organically during a fighting march from Acre to Jaffa, when two members of the Christian rearguard (the marshal of the Hospitallers and Baldwin of Carew) broke ranks to charge the harassing Muslims, but did King Richard seek to engineer a decisive encounter with Saladin? Rejecting the highly stylised version of events in Ambroise's *Estoire de la guerre sainte* (discussed below), in which the king proactively pursued battle, Thomas Asbridge has posited that, though Richard was perhaps prepared for the eventuality of a major confrontation, his principal objective was to reach the orchards of Arsuf intact and then to proceed to Jaffa, from which Ascalon and Jerusalem could be threatened (Asbridge, 2010, pp. 468–469, 474–475). In contrast, Benjamin Kedar, who prioritised Ambroise's account, has seen Richard's decision to continue marching south, despite the rearguard having been engaged, as a deliberate ploy to lure Saladin's forces to a suitable battle-site for delivering a devastating cavalry charge (Kedar, 2015). Another view is that both sides had good reasons to instigate a definitive engagement and recognised that it would unfold in the Forest of Arsuf; and it is also possible that Richard had stationed trusted subordinates along the marching column to maintain discipline, in which case the marshal and Baldwin may have acted in accordance with the king's wishes (Bennett, 2017; Ehrlich, 2014).

Famously, the crusaders twice advanced to Beit Nuba, just 12 miles from Jerusalem, but on both occasions (in January and July 1192) were ordered to withdraw. Should Richard have besieged Jerusalem? His defenders insist that he made the correct strategic decision, formed in consultation with local military experts, and that by July 1192 negotiation was the only realistic method of acquiring Jerusalem (Gillingham, 1999, pp. 190–191, 209). However, historians have generally become less sympathetic to the king's predicament. In refusing to invest the Holy City, it is argued, the Lionheart contravened the expectations of the army and the papacy; he squandered a key opportunity to capture Jerusalem following Arsuf, electing instead to refortify Jaffa; he may have 'lost his nerve' or, if hoping to unhinge Saladin, simply miscalculated; and his indecision and failure to grasp the distinctive nature of crusading warfare, especially the allure of Jerusalem to his followers, manifested a mismanagement of the two advances (Asbridge, 2010, pp. 490–491, 508–509; Flori, 2006, pp. 139–140; Markowski, 1997, p. 361; Möhring, 2008, p. 85; 2018, p. 86; Tyerman, 2006, pp. 464–465).

All the aforementioned debates are relevant, in one way or another, to the broader question of whether the Third Crusade should be considered a triumph or failure. Naturally, the Treaty of Jaffa has been central to scholarly assessments; indeed, the fact that the expedition was resolved through a negotiated truce, rather than a military coup, has caused historians to arrive at startlingly different conclusions. Saladin retained possession of Jerusalem—as well as the True Cross, which, surprisingly, was not a major bone of contention in negotiations—and Ascalon, the key to Egypt, was dismantled. Yet the crusaders secured Jerusalemite coastal territory from Jaffa to Tyre, along with pilgrim access to holy shrines, while Saladin's reputation was damaged after multiple defeats in combat. Accordingly, Saladin has been condemned for his 'catastrophic failure to eliminate the Christian kingdom from

Palestine' and lauded for leaving the Muslims in a stronger position than the Franks and for only making concessions which did not diminish his control of Jerusalem (Eddé, 2011, p. 269; Ehrenkreutz, 1972, p. 223; Möhring, 2018, p. 86). Similarly, Richard has received credit for creating a springboard from which a more propitious campaign could be launched and criticism for weakening his negotiating position by reopening diplomatic channels only after the second retreat and by publicising his need to return home due to his brother John's meddling (Appleby, 1965, pp. 56–106; Möhring, 2008, p. 86; Norgate, 1924, p. 262). However, the Lionheart's actions during the expedition suggest that he matched, perhaps even surpassed, Saladin in the art of diplomacy (Asbridge, 2013). Some simply consider the treaty a stalemate (Lyons & Jackson, 1982, p. 360). Matters become even more complicated when the longer-term implications of the truce and expedition are considered. The treaty has been described as an 'almost incredible success'—but later downgraded to a 'modest' achievement—because it ensured the survival of the Latin East for another century (Mayer, 1982, p. 739; 1988, p. 149). Following Saladin's death in March 1193, the agreement provided the basis for a period of relative peace, and it has been identified as marking a 'historic break' in Frankish–Muslim treaties through the unprecedented establishment of whole towns (Lydda and Ramla), not just rural areas, as *condominia* (Köhler, 2013, pp. 265, 267; Nierman, 1975). More broadly, Cyprus acquired a long-term strategic significance under Lusignan rule (from 1192); Acre afforded the kingdom of Jerusalem a vibrant commercial lifeline; and the Third Crusade shaped the direction of future crusading activity by elucidating the potential for targeting Egypt and journeying by sea (Edbury, 1991; Tyerman, 2006, p. 473).

3 | DIVERSIFICATION

I would argue that alongside the enduring Richard and Saladin binary, the 20th and 21st centuries have witnessed a gradual diversification of scholarship pertaining to the Third Crusade in terms of both the protagonists and topics examined. Frederick Barbarossa's death in the River Saleph has cast a shadow over medieval and modern treatments of his 1189–1190 expedition. All the narrative accounts were written with foreknowledge of his demise, and the benefit of hindsight has led some scholars to argue that the emperor always intended to die in the East, with the crusade being the grand finale he had worked towards throughout his life (Johnson, 1969, p. 90; Munz, 1969, pp. 371–372). Unsurprisingly, the greatest advancements have been made in German scholarship. Ekkehard Eickhoff's landmark monograph on Frederick's crusade appeared in 1977, offering a detailed reconstruction of the course of the expedition based on an intimate knowledge of the topography (Eickhoff, 1977). A lengthy 1992 article by Rudolf Hiestand represents a key juncture in modern scholarship, revising previous assumptions and setting the agenda for future research. Hiestand convincingly refuted the interrelated assumptions that the crusade was the culmination of a long-term policy and that the emperor himself saw the expedition as his final act. A letter issued in Frederick's name in May 1189 expressly signalled his intention to return; the chancellery saw no reason to include contingency clauses in the event of his non-return; and, if the crusade was truly a longstanding objective, one would expect at least some preparations to have begun pre-1187 (Hiestand, 1992, pp. 52–55). Significantly, Hiestand insisted that the expedition cannot be divorced from the political context of the empire in the 1180s. Reversing the traditional view that a period of peace followed Henry the Lion's exile in 1180, which provided the ideal conditions for Frederick to journey east, he contended that the emperor could establish peace only *because* he had resolved to go crusading: 'It was the crusade that gave him the opportunity to come to peace with the Church and to compel the princes and aristocracy to peace, and not an existing peace in the years before 1187 that created the opportunity for the crusade' (Hiestand, 1992, p. 57). Valuable light was also shed on Frederick's preparations for departure. His experiences on the Second Crusade, personal relationships with individuals in the Latin East and decades of rule all enabled Frederick to tackle the logistical and organisational challenge of crusading 'with rationality and professionalism' (Hiestand, 1992, pp. 65–66). This, in conjunction with his far-sighted planning and the army's internal organisation (all were subjected to 'the overall extraordinary authority of Barbarossa'), speaks against any suggestion that the emperor succumbed to a *coup de théâtre*—a phrase Jonathan Riley-Smith had used

to describe the circumstances of his death (Hiestand, 1992, pp. 66, 71, 80, 90–91; Riley-Smith, 1987, p. 112). Though Hiestand insisted that by April 1189, Frederick had done all that was possible and necessary to prosecute a successful campaign, a more critical tone was adopted when discussing the expedition's consequences: the crusade cemented Frederick's reputation as the Christian emperor par excellence, but since the German army suffered heavy losses—including the emperor and his younger son, Frederick of Swabia—it weakened the Staufen in terms of both personnel and resources (Hiestand, 1992, pp. 91, 101).

Several studies have built upon Hiestand's conclusions. For example, the problematic nature of Frederick's death for Latin Christian authors—the fact that he did not fall fighting Muslims in the Holy Land, but rather drowned in Christian Cilicia, without having made confession, received the sacraments or drawn up a will—has been subjected to detailed investigations by Manuel Kamenzin and Leila Bargmann, with the latter revealing how the emperor's passing did not fit the idealised paradigm of a 'good death' (Bargmann, 2010; Hiestand, 1992, pp. 105–107; Kamenzin, 2020, pp. 355–379). Alan Murray has expanded our knowledge of the logistical dilemmas of Frederick's land-based crusade—a key theme of Hiestand's study—by exploring how funds were transported and utilised, especially in light of the remarkable discovery in the 1980s of the so-called 'Barbarossa Hoard', comprising coins, silver ingots and jewellery deposited by German crusaders (Murray, 2007; see also Hiestand, 1991; Stumpf, 1991). A recent contribution from Daniel Franke has re-examined the political climate in which Frederick committed himself to the expedition, contending that Hiestand underplayed the extent of conflicts within the empire, which 'were not extinguished simply because the emperor took the cross', and called for even greater recognition of the political aspects of crusading (Franke, 2016, p. 131). In addition, scholars are increasingly looking beyond the emperor's death, as Hiestand recommended, to appreciate his achievement and contribution to the collective Third Crusade. For Christopher Tyerman, Frederick's ability to lead his army, depleted but still vast, to Cilicia by May 30, 1190, 'compared with the most remarkable achievements of the whole Third Crusade' (Tyerman, 2006, p. 427). Indeed, an important study by Graham Loud has offered several correctives, highlighting that the capture of Iconium was a major military accomplishment and the dissolution of the German contingent stemmed not from the emperor's death but from the epidemic which ravaged the army at Antioch (Loud, 2010, pp. 27–29). The German crusade also served as a distraction to Saladin, preventing him from focusing his energies and manpower on decisively confronting the crusaders outside Acre in summer 1190 (Asbridge, 2010, pp. 422–423).

Among the numerous biographies of Frederick (e.g., Laudage, 2009; Opll, 2009), two published in the last decade—by Knut Görich and John Freed—deserve attention. Both include succinct, narrative-driven chapters on the preparations for, and events of, the crusade, yet offer novel perspectives by situating the expedition within broader reinterpretations of Frederick's reign. Görich stressed the importance of aristocratic culture and values, especially the concept of honour, which, he argued, was frequently the guiding principle behind Frederick's actions. Of course, a concern for the maintenance of reputation and the *honor imperii* ('honour of the empire') has implications for our understanding of the German crusade. It perhaps explains why Görich concluded that the crusade project was ever-present throughout Frederick's life—not as an incessantly pursued objective, but as a challenge that recurred with varying degrees of urgency and reflected a desire to both achieve salvation and fulfil his duties as the premier Christian ruler (Görich, 2011, pp. 176–191, 548, 659; see also Görich, 2001, 2006). In Freed's revisionist biography of 2016, the Third Crusade featured primarily as an event which glossed over the emperor's failings. The fourth Italian campaign of 1167, during which an epidemic decimated the imperial forces, was identified as the pivotal moment of his reign, after which he effectively operated as one of the German princes. Death on the Third Crusade 'redeemed Frederick's reputation, but he went because the pope had summoned the kings and knights of Europe and not because it was the emperor's special responsibility to defend Christendom' (Freed, 2016, p. 517). If Frederick had died at home or outside Rome in 1167, he would be remembered as a ruler who persecuted the Church, suffered defeats in Italy and who witnessed the deterioration of his authority in Germany (Freed, 2016, pp. xxii, 348).

Less has been written about the crusading career of King Philip Augustus of France, which no doubt reflects its brevity and unspectacular conclusion. Again, hindsight has proved an obstacle to historical analysis. The

Anglo-Norman chroniclers (who wrote the more detailed accounts) vilified the French monarch for failing to persevere with the journey, and such antagonism has occasionally seeped into modern interpretations, causing his contribution to be undervalued. However, a number of historians have sought to rehabilitate Philip's crusading reputation. A glowing appraisal is presented in the second instalment of Alexander Cartellieri's four-volume biography, which introduced several lines of argument that would be taken up and expanded upon in later studies: Philip was a willing crusader, but only insofar as it served his main priority of increasing French power; Richard humiliated Philip at every opportunity, and this ongoing conflict hamstrung the expedition; at Acre, Philip performed an essential function as overall commander-in-chief and, with the city on the brink of collapse, postponed the final assault out of respect for Richard. A cornerstone of Cartellieri's analysis was the juxtaposition of the calculated, calm Philip and the boorish, hot-headed Richard. Thus, he insisted the French king did not deserve rebuke for abandoning the enterprise, since his departure was a praiseworthy example of monarchical pride and the consequence, not the cause, of untenable conditions, with Richard identified as the chief sower of discord (Cartellieri, 1906, pp. 258–262).

Sidney Painter and James Brundage adopted similarly sympathetic approaches to Philip's departure, emphasising the significance of political circumstances and opportunities in the West, as well as his illness and fractured relationship with Richard (Brundage, 1974, pp. 129–131; Painter, 1969, pp. 69–70). Regrettably, the most enthusiastic attempt to salvage Philip's reputation—Jim Bradbury's 1998 biography—often reads as an apologia, one underpinned by a rather narrow view of the expedition's outcomes and, in the same vein as Cartellieri's study, frequent comparison with Richard I (almost always in the French king's favour). For Bradbury, the main achievement of the Third Crusade was the capture of Acre, and the credit afforded to Philip should be augmented accordingly: 'he made an important contribution to this crusade, one might indeed argue *the* most important contribution' (Bradbury, 1998, p. 72). However, it is somewhat controversial to argue that Richard's successes after July 1191 'simply followed from this' and were 'inevitable' (Bradbury, 1998, pp. 97, 98). Others have been more balanced in their evaluations. In Jean Flori's eyes, Philip's departure was indicative of sage political realism but still 'less than glorious' (Flori, 2007, p. 54; see also Richard, 1982; Baldwin, 1986, pp. 77–80). James Naus likewise concluded that this act was in reaction to the evolving political landscape, with the demise of several French barons during the crusade creating opportunities to consolidate his rule in France. Adding texture to the debate, Naus plausibly suggested that the Anglo-Norman chroniclers lambasted Philip to deflect criticism from Richard for failing to capture Jerusalem (whereas his withdrawal attracted little derision within France), and that he succeeded in maintaining the associations between crusading and Capetian kingship (Naus, 2016, pp. 112–40).

In addition to acknowledging French and German contributions to the Third Crusade, scholarship has diversified by moving away from the expedition's main protagonists to examine underexplored individuals, groups, events and themes. For example, the multifaceted roles performed by the Genoese—as crusaders, merchants, suppliers, bankers and negotiators—and the contributions of women (specifically, their potential involvement in combat, about which the sources are divided) have been examined in focused studies (Mack, 2011; Nicholson, 1997b; Phillips, 2015). The siege of Acre (August 1189–July 1191), especially the period before the arrival of the kings in April and June 1191, has come into sharper historiographical focus. John Pryor has suggested that Saladin's inability to dislodge the Latin besiegers from their camps in September–October 1189 had a marked impact on the outcome of the siege, whereas Stephen Bennett—whose 2021 monograph sheds light on the factors which encouraged western nobles to participate in the expedition—has countered suggestions that Guy of Lusignan was an ineffectual general through a re-examination of the battle of October 4, 1189 (Bennett, 2018, 2021; Pryor, 2015, p. 115). Other understudied protagonists—such as Guy's brother, Geoffrey, and Saladin's nephew, Taqi al-Din—come to the fore in John Hosler's 2018 military history of the siege, which analyses the full range of land- and sea-based engagements, and, owing to the work of Thomas Wagner and Piers Mitchell, we can now appreciate the impact of infectious diseases on the siege and wider expedition (Hosler, 2018c; Wagner & Mitchell, 2011; see also Hosler, 2018a, 2018b, 2020).

Another area to have received renewed attention is the preaching of the Third Crusade. It has been suggested that the mobilisation for war 'reinvented crusading' through the careful organisation of preaching campaigns, such

as those of Archbishop Baldwin of Canterbury in Wales and Henry, cardinal bishop of Albano, in Germany and France; developments in crusade financing and taxation, such as the introduction of the Saladin Tithe in 1188; and greater precision in the definition of a crusader's status and privileges (Brundage, 1963; Cole, 1991, pp. 65–79; Edbury, 1996b; Hurlock, 2011, pp. 58–91; Tyerman, 1988, pp. 57–85; 1998, p. 27; 2006, pp. 375–399, at 375; 2015, pp. 114–123; Round, 1916). *Audita tremendi*, Gregory VIII's call to arms, contained several novel features. A specific enemy was named, Saladin; the sins of all Christians, including those in Europe, were deemed the root cause of the disaster; and a highly emotive tone was adopted to promote mass grief and repentance (Asbridge, 2010, p. 370; Cole, 1991, pp. 63–64; Tyerman, 2015, p. 52; Schein, 2005, pp. 170–177, 186). Three recent articles are particularly innovative. Applying a new methodological framework for the identification of medieval news texts, Helen Birkett has examined the transmission of news about the battle of Hattin, fall of Jerusalem and the launch of the Third Crusade in 1187–1188. An important finding concerns the delayed dissemination of reports regarding the fall of Jerusalem on October 2: Birkett revealed that, while the papal curia had received reports of the defeat at Hattin by mid-October 1187, news of Jerusalem's loss did not penetrate the West until spring 1188, significantly later than previous scholars, most notably Cartellieri, had assumed (Birkett, 2018; Cartellieri, 1906, pp. 272–273). The cultural impact of the loss of the True Cross in Western Europe has been explored by Megan Cassidy-Welch, who utilised modern trauma theory and an array of medieval sources to suggest that it constitutes an example of 'collective trauma'. As such, Cassidy-Welch's article complements the work of Penny Cole and Sylvia Schein on Latin Christian reactions to, and explanations for, the losses at Hattin and Jerusalem (Cassidy-Welch, 2017; Cole, 1993; Schein, 2005, pp. 159–187). In an equally valuable study, Thomas Smith has argued convincingly that *Audita tremendi* not only underwent a papal programme of revision and refinement, with the encyclical issued on four occasions between October 29, 1187 and January 2, 1188, but also received further, unofficial modifications in localities. Moreover, once thought to have been the result of weeks of drafting, Smith contended that *Audita tremendi* was a hurried response to Hattin and was crafted with the principal goal of inspiring communal repentance—the call to arms representing little more than an addendum (Smith, 2018).

4 | THE SOURCES

As Smith's reappraisal of *Audita tremendi* attests, our understanding of the source base for the Third Crusade has developed enormously. Though the charters, letters and lyrics pertaining to the enterprise have all received historiographical comment, my focus here is on the earliest narrative accounts which have been instrumental in directing scholarly views and reconstructions (Gillingham, 2000; Hiestand, 2007; Mayer, 1977; Murray, 2014; Paterson, 2018, pp. 47–75; Power, 2014; Rieger, 1998; Sayers, 1985). The Third Crusade is the first crusading expedition for which we possess detailed first-hand testimonies from both Muslim and Latin Christian perspectives. Fortunately, two members of Saladin's entourage wrote lengthy accounts in Arabic. Though Baha al-Din Ibn Shaddad was only in the sultan's service for five years (from 1188), he held two key positions as judge of the army (*Qadi al-'askar*) and governor of Jerusalem, whereas Imad al-Din al-Isfahani served Saladin for much longer, becoming his secretary in 1175. Both enjoyed close and frequent access to their master. Importantly, their works are related, with Ibn Shaddad seemingly using Imad al-Din's *al-Fath al-qussi fi'l-fath al-Qudsi* ('The Eloquent Exposition of the Conquest of Jerusalem') to augment his own notes (Richards, 1980, p. 61). Neither author, of course, can be considered an impartial observer. They were Saladin's 'spin doctors': Imad al-Din praised Saladin from almost every angle, presenting him as the champion of *jihad* in elaborate rhyming prose; and Ibn Shaddad's *al-Nawadir al-Sultaniyya wa'l-Mahasin al-Yusufiyya* ('The Sultan's Rare Deeds and Joseph-like Merits') was written with the didactic purpose of 'urging people to bless his name and to remember his excellent qualities' (Hillenbrand, 2019; Massé, 1972; Richards, 1993, 2002, p. 245; Richter-Bernburg, 2014). These texts can be supplemented by the 13th-century works of Abu Shama and Ibn al-Athir; the latter, a Zengid supporter from Mosul, is often characterised as hostile to the Ayyubids, yet, as Françoise Micheau has shown, his coverage of Saladin is relatively even-handed.

Nonetheless, his work remains a valuable counterweight to the panegyrics composed by the sultan's advisors (Gibb, 1950; *Le livre des deux jardins*, 1898–1906; Michaeu, 2014, pp. 78–81; Richards, 2007).

The earliest western account is probably the *Estoire de la guerre sainte*, written in Old French verse at some point between 1194 and Richard I's death in 1199. The author, Ambroise, was probably a cleric from Normandy, although some scholars favour a *jongleur* (entertainer), and his work is notable for its inherent bias towards King Richard, frequent claims of eyewitness observation as a method of authentication and its status as an early example of a vernacular verse history about the recent past (Ailes, 2004, 2008; Ailes & Barber, 2003; Bull, 2018, pp. 219–255; Croizy-Naquet, 1998, 2001, 2014a, 2014b; Damian-Grint, 1999, pp. 76–79; Hanley, 2001). The relationship between the *Estoire* and a Latin account, the *Itinerarium peregrinorum et gesta regis Ricardi*, or *IP*2, has long been disputed (Edwards, 1933; Norgate, 1910; Paris, 1897, pp. lix–lxxvi; Stubbs, 1864; Vielliard, 2005). Most scholars now accept that the author of *IP*2—often identified as Richard de Templo, prior of Holy Trinity, Aldgate—utilised and translated large sections of Ambroise's work, which he augmented with material garnered from other sources and possibly also memories of his own crusade experiences (Nicholson, 1997a, pp. 12–14; Staunton, 2017, pp. 142–149; Spacey, 2019). One such source was the text now known as *IP*1, which, as Hans Eberhard Mayer demonstrated, accounts for the first book of *IP*2 (Mayer, 1962). Formerly attributed to a Templar (an attribution refuted by Hannes Möhring), Helen Nicholson has persuasively argued that *IP*1 was composed by an English clerk in the service of Baldwin of Canterbury, whose death at the siege of Acre in November 1190 concludes the work (Möhring, 1982; Nicholson, 2019). Two interrelated accounts of the Third Crusade were written by Roger, parson of Howden, who participated in the expedition before leaving Acre with Philip Augustus in July 1191. His *Gesta regis Henrici secundi*, previously believed to be the work of Benedict of Peterborough, was used and revised for his *Chronica*, finished in 1201 (Corner, 1983; Gillingham, 1982, 2006; Stenton, 1953; Stubbs, 1867, 1868–1871). Philip Augustus' biographers, Rigord and William the Breton, offer a useful counterpoint to the Anglo-Norman accounts, as do the key sources for Frederick Barbarossa's crusade, which were translated and reassessed by Graham Loud in 2010 (Carpentier et al., 2006; Castellani, 2019; Croizy-Naquet, 2019; Delaborde, 1885; Loud, 2010). Chief among these is the *Historia de expeditione Friderici imperatoris*, which Loud demonstrated to be a composite work of *c*.1200 based largely upon eyewitness testimony, and the textually related *Historia peregrinorum* (Chroust, 1928; Loud, 2010, pp. 1–8). Loud's study typifies an ongoing scholarly desire to look outside the traditional canon of sources for the Third Crusade. To give just a sample of this material: we now possess modern editions and/or translations, with accompanying commentaries, of two tracts by Peter of Blois (Huygens, 2002; Markowski, 1992; Southern, 1985), Ralph Niger's *De re militari et triplici via peregrinationis Ierusolimitane* (Cotts, 2017, 2018; Schmugge, 1977), the *Libellus de expugnatione terrae sanctae per Saladinum* (Brewer & Kane, 2019), a verse account of the fall of Acre attributed to 'Haymarus Monachus' (Falk & Placanica, 2006), Gerald of Wales' *De principis instructione* (Bartlett, 2018), Arnold of Lübeck's chronicle (Loud, 2019) and the *De itinere navali* (Cushing, 2013; David, 1939), in addition to detailed studies of the Latin Continuation of William of Tyre (Kane, 2018; Salloch, 1934), *Chronique d'Ernoul et de Bernard le Trésorier* and Old French Continuations of William of Tyre (Croizy-Naquet, 2001, 2011; Edbury, 1996a, 1997, 2010, 2018, 2019; Gaggero, 2018, 2019; Kane, 2016; Pryor, 1992), *Historia de profectione Danorum in Hierosolymam* (Jensen, 2018; Skovgaard-Petersen, 2001) and the key Anglo-Norman chronicles (Staunton, 2017).

5 | CONCLUSION: A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

Hindsight has had a marked impact on scholarship pertaining to the Third Crusade, with foreknowledge of Philip's return, Frederick's death, Richard's refusal to besiege Jerusalem and the fact that the expedition ended with a truce all helping to shape historical opinion and the questions historians have asked. This, in conjunction with the partisan nature of the medieval narrative sources and the dominance of modern biographies as the primary format through which the enterprise is studied, has led scholars to arrive at divergent interpretations of the Third Crusade and its

central protagonists: to consider the Treaty of Jaffa a triumph, failure or stalemate; to amplify or downplay Richard's successes; to determine (in a somewhat binary fashion) whether he was a 'good' or 'bad' crusader; to promote Philip's contribution to the siege of Acre or revile him for returning prematurely; and to view Frederick's death as the fulfilment of a masterplan or a catastrophe which masked his organisational achievement. There was no outright winner of the Third Crusade, and much depends on how we measure success: for example, whether we examine the enterprise's immediate outcomes in relation to the goals laid out in *Audita tremendi* and other material for the expedition's preaching; whether the recovery of Jerusalem and the True Cross are considered the sole objectives, with all other gains sitting outside the 'official' crusade; whether we compare the extent of the Muslims' and Christians' territorial holdings in the Latin East before and after the crusade; or whether the long-term consequences of events like the conquest of Cyprus and capture of Acre are prioritised. Fortunately, the field has both expanded and diversified considerably during the 20th and 21st centuries, as attested by the shift away from the traditional Richard versus Saladin narrative, the growth of scholarship addressing underexplored events and themes, as well as the interrogation of source material outside the traditional canon. Under these conditions, it is hoped, an authoritative general history of the Third Crusade can finally be written.

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