

*Wi*PRIME COLLECTIONS

I

THE CRUSADES

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first PDF in our new *WiPrime Collections* series. In each of these online omnibuses, available exclusively to *WiPrime* Members, we bring together themed articles from the *Wargames Illustrated* archive for your reading pleasure and referencing ease.

This month I've dug through The Vault and searched for articles focused on the Crusades. Presented here are 17 articles about the Medieval religious wars that the Church helped to spread through the Holy Land, written by undisputable experts.

Future PDF Collections will feature articles penned by a broad and varied group of scribes, but with Doctors Steve Tibble and Gianluca Raccagni providing so many Crusades contributions to *Wargames Illustrated* over the years, I didn't need to broaden my search beyond them!

These knowledgeable authors are the perfect guides to this fascinating period, and they tell the history, present gaming ideas, showcase intriguing characters, and even offer a few fantastical takes on various parts of the Crusades. If you're reading this when the PDF first goes online (February 2024) then you'll be able to get a pre-release look at Steve's latest article - Pirates, saints, and crusaders - which is not due to be published until *Wi435*.

We hope you enjoy this compilation of articles. Thanks to Steve and Gianluca for adding their broad knowledge and excellent writing to the pages of *Wargames Illustrated* over the years. We'll be back with a second installment in the *WiPrime Collections* series soon.

Until then, may all your Crusades be the First, and your opponents' the Fourth!

James Griffiths

Project Manager



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REIMAGINING THE CRUSADES – PART 1



SIEGE WAREFARE



Over the next five issues of the magazine we're very excited to be able to bring you a series of articles from a leading expert in the field of Crusader warfare. Each month Dr Steve Tibble (honorary research associate at the University of London) will be focusing on a different area of the Crusades and bringing us up to speed with the latest research and his radical new understanding of medieval warfare in the Holy Land. Over to Steve...

Four years ago I started research on a new book on crusading warfare: a reappraisal based on the vast new body of academic work and archaeological evidence that has emerged over the past 40 years. Although I'm an enthusiastic wargamer, I didn't really think too much about that while I was writing: the book was, after all (literally) an academic exercise.

Having finished it, however, and being conscious of several new rule sets on the market, I've come to realise that there are some interesting implications for wargaming as a whole, and certainly for the way I build and field my medieval armies.

On a macro level, it raises important issues about how accurate our armies really are. Figure designers inevitably have to work with visual information that is often just well-informed (or less

well-informed) guesswork. Army lists are, by their very nature, simplifications: necessary and often extremely helpful, they can also be crude, distorting or just plain wrong. They inevitably need to be treated with caution.

And on a micro level, thinking about the crusades in particular, much the same is true. The more closely you look at anything, the more complicated it all seems. Do my crusader armies really look like the troops that emerge from the primary sources? Do they behave on the wargames table in the way that they did in the chronicles? Or do we all take the line of least resistance, following the overly-familiar clichés that have been taken for granted since army lists emerged some 40 years ago?

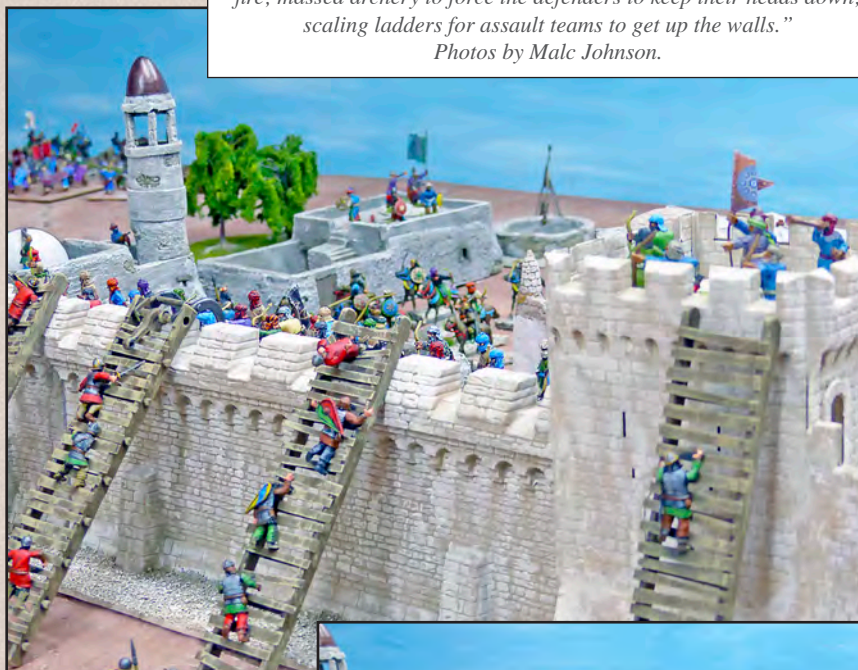
In this short series of articles, I shall try to kick the tyres on the way we wargame the crusades. The normal rule of thumb is that nothing is quite what you thought it was.

Let's start with siege warfare.

Throughout the period, there were two basic approaches to dealing with fortifications: going over them or going under them. All parties, whether they were Frankish or Byzantine, Fatimid or Turkic-Syrian, were capable of using either approach to their advantage, and all had very similar techniques to help them do both. In practice, however, all parties played to their respective strengths, most of which were ultimately dictated by demographics rather than technology.

GOING OVER

'Going over' was the favoured approach of crusader armies. This played to their strengths. Frankish forces were typically outnumbered but heavily armoured and more effective than their opponents in close combat. If even a few Frankish knights could be placed on the walls of a besieged city, the most likely outcome was that the enemy troops would fall back and the defence would collapse in the ensuing panic. Between 1099 and 1124 every one of the heavily fortified cities of the Palestinian and Syrian coastline, with the single exception of the Egyptian border fortress of Ascalon, was captured by the crusaders. Significantly, this was achieved without the advantage of having a standing navy, despite the Muslim-held ports being supported and supplied with varying degrees of efficiency by the Fatimid fleet. If there was an 'argument' between offence and defence, the attackers (the Franks in this case) were certainly winning the debate in the first decades of the century.



"Going over the walls involved a combination of different techniques: deploying catapults to bombard the battlements and provide covering fire; massed archery to force the defenders to keep their heads down; scaling ladders for assault teams to get up the walls."

Photos by Malc Johnson.

Going over the walls involved a combination of different techniques: deploying catapults to bombard the battlements and provide covering fire; massed archery to force the defenders to keep their heads down; scaling ladders for assault teams to carry rams and light artillery but also, more importantly, to deliver heavily armoured men to the top of the walls.

Artillery always looked impressive and, as a result, has probably tended to attract more attention than it deserves, both from contemporary chroniclers and, more recently, from Hollywood. Significant effort went into the building and deployment of catapults, however,



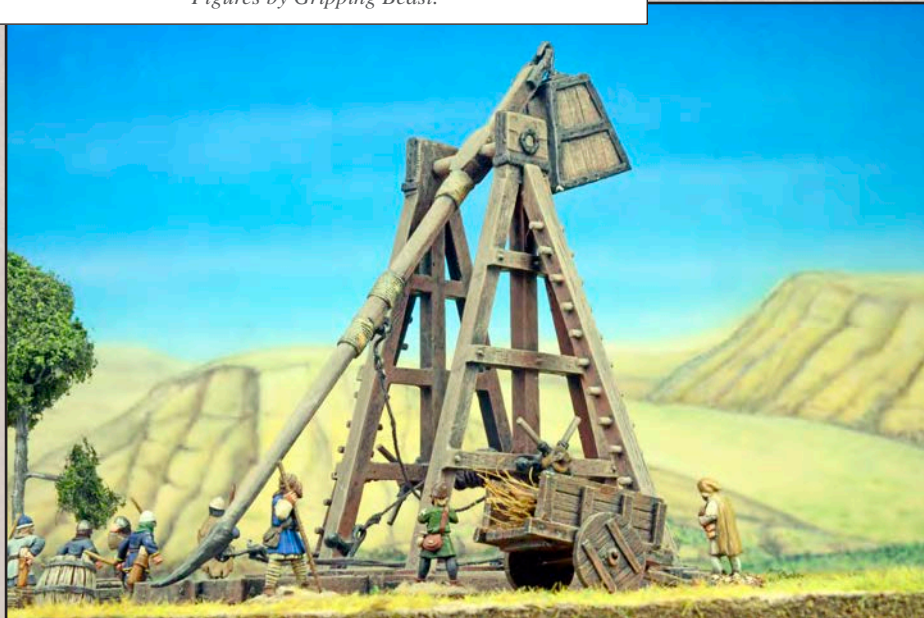
and this investment would not have been made if there was no payback. As the Turkic-Syrian states grew in size from the 1130s onwards, they acquired the resources to radically increase their artillery capabilities.

There were technological improvements too. Catapults (trebuchets) became bigger and more powerful during this period. The earliest machines of the crusader period were relatively light 'traction' engines, powered by pulling (hence 'traction') at the end of the short arm to propel projectiles towards their targets. At some point, probably towards the very end of the twelfth century, a more advanced form of catapult was introduced: the 'counterweight' trebuchet, so-called because it operated by replacing traction power with a heavy weight as a counterpoise.

But while artillery was recognised as being useful, it was rarely critical. Catapults of this period were not designed to knock down castle walls, and were entirely incapable of doing so under normal circumstances. In fact, there is no clear example in the entire twelfth century of castle walls being brought down by artillery. Rather, the main aim of catapults was to sweep defenders off

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Figures by Gripping Beast.





“The coastal sieges of the period demonstrate most of the basic ingredients of a successful Frankish siege: mobile towers and other engines, catapults and rams.”
Figures by Gripping Beast

the top of the walls, the battlements, or at least force them to keep their heads down, so that teams of men engaged in other tasks, such as miners or assault squads with ladders or in siege towers could go about their work more easily.

The Franks used artillery, like everyone else, but their weapon of choice was the siege tower. It allowed them to gradually dominate a particular sector of the walls. It gave a height advantage on the way in (allowing snipers to shoot onto the battlements or streets below, for instance) and, once it had arrived, delivered groups of heavily armoured elite troops onto the top of the defenders’ defences. Siege

towers were a strong statement of intent and the necessarily slow but remorseless nature of their advance meant that they had a debilitating effect on the morale of any city they were deployed against. Their effectiveness is proven by the degree of fear they inspired, and the increasingly desperate sorties and counter-measures that were deployed against them as they got closer. Once a siege tower had been manoeuvred next to a wall, everyone knew that the siege was entering its final phase.

The Franks could build siege towers on their own, but the real unsung heroes of the siege tower in the Latin east were the

Italians and their fleets. Their help was needed from the very first days of the crusader states. They had carpentry and engineering skills. More prosaically, but just as importantly, they also had access to good timber: wood was always scarce in the Middle East and the corner-posts of a siege tower required long beams if the strength and stability of the structure was to be maintained.

Shipbuilding skills were readily transferrable to the construction of siege engines: the combination of Italian naval expertise and seasoned wood was a siege winning advantage. Logistics were also a major issue, particularly in terms of transporting the long corner-beams, and here too the Italians played a vital role, moving key supplies by sea wherever possible or, as in the case of the siege of Jerusalem, using their engineering skills to carry the timbers inland.

The siege tower had its weaknesses, however, and they were substantial. Suitable timber was scarce. They took time to build, during which enemy relief forces could be mustered and despatched. Expertise was required in their construction, otherwise they might collapse under their own weight, or with

SIEGE TOWERS

The ‘killer-app’ of crusading siegecraft. Once they had been manoeuvred next to the opponents’ walls, the end of the siege was near. Negotiations for surrender often took place as they moved slowly across the last few yards, when defenders tried to pre-empt the unpleasantness that inevitably followed a break-through by besieging troops.

CATAPULTS (TREBUCHETS)

Dramatic but easy to over-rate. They got more powerful as the years progressed, but were only ever suitable for suppressive fire. They damaged the battlements (ie the top of the walls) and might suppress the defenders...but they were never going to create a full breach.

NAVAL ASSETS

Surprisingly, western fleets were the key to a successful crusader siege. Italian shipping provided marines, vital engineering skills, supplies of seasoned timber, logistical support and the ability to enforce a blockade by sea.



the encouragement of rocks thrown by enemy catapults. They required a level surface upon which to move, and as the tower was moved closer to its target it became more vulnerable to fire, either from bonfires lit around its base by troops charging out from the town, or from naphtha thrown from the walls.

Most importantly, the logistics associated with siege towers were an absolute nightmare. On the coast, where Italian ships and naval artisans were, literally, able to do most of the heavy lifting, they were viable. Once the fighting moved inland, however, the Franks' 'super-weapon' was so difficult to deploy that it became almost unheard of.

The coastal sieges of the period demonstrate most of the basic ingredients of a successful Frankish siege: mobile towers and other engines, catapults and rams, a field army prepared to behave aggressively in the face of enemy interference and a tight blockade by land and sea. What is perhaps less obvious, however, were the weaknesses that were inherent in the Frankish approach to siegecraft, even when successful. Their capabilities, particularly the lack of disposable manpower, meant it was necessary to work slowly and methodically, and this was only possible if there was no imminent threat from a relief force. This was sometimes the case in the first quarter of the twelfth century, when the Muslim states were at their most disunited and when crusader sieges were mainly on the coast (and therefore at the furthest points from the centres of Egyptian and Turkic power), but such circumstances became increasingly unlikely thereafter.



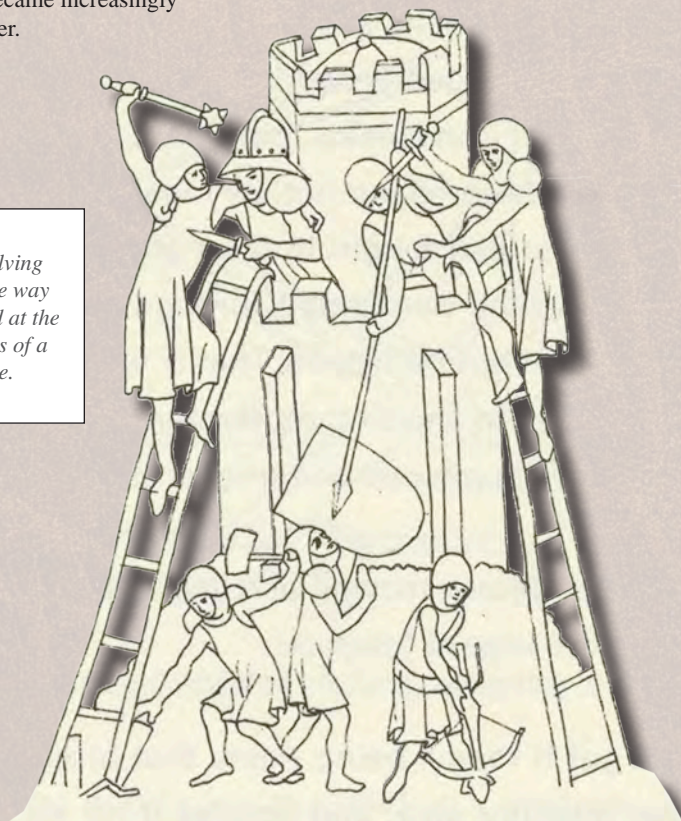
Once the crusader states turned their attentions further inland and conducted sieges on their own, their success rate plummeted. The major Muslim cities of the interior were attacked in earnest on several occasions, in increasingly desperate attempts to extend the eastern frontiers. Aleppo was the objective for two serious campaigns (1124–5 and 1138); Shaizar was besieged twice (1138 and 1157); and Damascus was the target of concerted assaults in 1129 and 1148. Each siege ended in failure, however, despite the fact that crusader field armies were generally highly feared and respected. Why was that?

Perhaps surprisingly, the failure of these sieges was never the result of a lack of strategic clarity. There were well-focused, and generally successful, attempts to generate allies and reinforcements for each of the key expeditions. The tactical reality, however, was that Frankish armies, once inland, were outnumbered, surrounded and isolated in enemy territory.

The Franks have a reputation for being good at siege warfare in the early part of the twelfth century, but are thought to have suffered from a gradual decline in performance over the successive decades. In fact, even this analysis probably flatters them. Sieges, if they were far inland, generally needed to be quick: if they went on too long, the besiegers lost momentum, they suffered from a lack of supplies and, most importantly, enemy relief columns appeared. Unlike their Muslim opponents, the Franks never had sufficient manpower to throw at a siege, swamping the defenders and achieving a quick result. Often, they did not even have enough men to enforce a strict blockade. At the famous 'siege' of Damascus in 1148, for instance, Turkic and local Syrian troops came and went through most of the city gates without fear of interference from the crusaders for the entire duration.

When Frankish sieges were successful, it was generally because they had naval allies to hand, rather than because of their inherent abilities. Left to their own devices, the crusaders were never very good at siege warfare: the events of the latter decades of the century merely brought to the surface the underlying weaknesses that had previously been masked by the frequent presence of Christian fleets in the eastern Mediterranean up to 1124.

An assault involving ladders. Note the way the ladder is fixed at the bottom by means of a driven wedge.

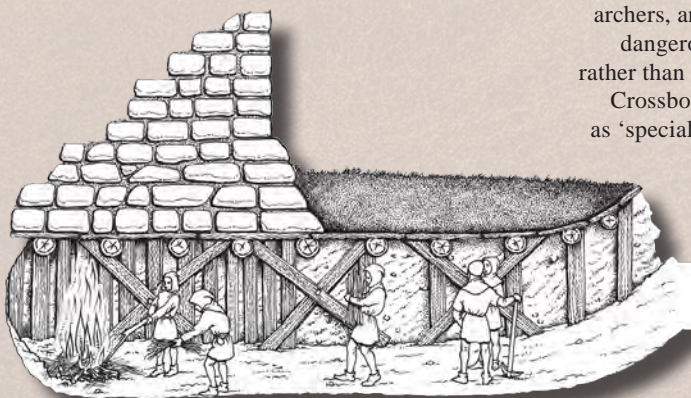


GOING UNDER

At its most basic, the undermining of castle walls required two main ingredients: expert miners and sappers to do the work efficiently and quickly; and sufficient suppressive fire, directed at the defenders on the battlements above, to allow them to carry out their work with the minimum of interference.

Although both sides knew the principles of mining, the balance of expertise and resources lay with the Muslim armies. Their focus on mining was reflected in a degree of specialisation that we do not see among the Franks. One group, the *naqqabin*, were particularly expert at mining operations, digging, excavating and constructing the wooden structures that were needed to support mineshafts. These men worked closely with other specialists,

"The Franks had crossbowmen and archers, and they could be extremely dangerous. But these were snipers rather than the main body of the army".
Figures by Gripping Beast.



The Franks had crossbowmen and archers, and they could be extremely dangerous. But these were snipers rather than the main body of the army.

Crossbowmen were still thought of as 'specialists', and there were rarely enough archers in a Frankish besieging force. Among Muslim armies, however, archery skills were both widespread and of a very high quality, particularly among the increasingly numerous Turkic mercenaries.

and lay down suppressive fire in the run-up to an assault. Given the smaller numbers of archers and crossbowmen at their disposal, however, Frankish armies found it difficult to lay down such fire on a consistent basis. Turkic-Syrian armies had no such constraints.

By the 1170s, those Frankish castles that had not been upgraded were woefully vulnerable to the huge volume of firepower which the Muslim armies of the period could bring to bear. The formerly formidable town of Tiberias, for instance, was captured in a single day (2 July 1187), as massed archery masked the actions of miners at the base of a tower. The balance of power in crusader siegecraft had shifted irreversibly.

"Mining operations had to be extremely close to the walls (ideally at their base) if they were to be effective within a realistic period of time: this was not The Great Escape."

Both Frankish and Muslim armies were able to field siege artillery which could help to damage the battlements

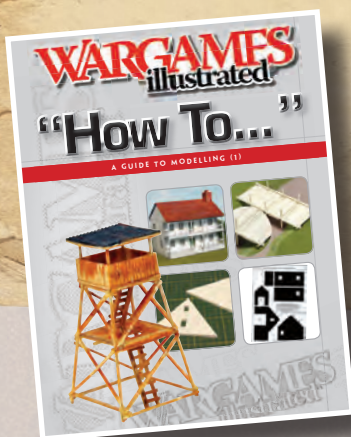
the *hajjarin*, who were stone-workers skilled in demolitions, and particularly valuable in dealing with the large foundation stones of a castle.

Mining operations had to be extremely close to the walls (ideally at their base) if they were to be effective within a realistic period of time: this was not *The Great Escape*. And it was essential that miners and other engineering workers, together with any assault teams, should be protected as far as possible from interference by defenders on the battlements.

The natural corollary of this was that successful mining also required the ability to direct powerful suppressive fire at the enemy battlements. Having artillery certainly helped, and it was used more frequently by Muslim armies as the century progressed, but the old-fashioned approach was far simpler and potentially just as effective: using massed archers to lay down a high volume of fire at appropriate moments.

SIEGE TOWERS

If you would like to know how to make a 28mm scale siege tower – the one in this photo in fact! – check out WI267 via our online Vault for Paul Davies' 'How To...'. Alternatively get this article along with ten others in our 'How To...' – Volume One bookazine, available via the Wargames Illustrated web store.



WARGAMING A CRUSADER SIEGE

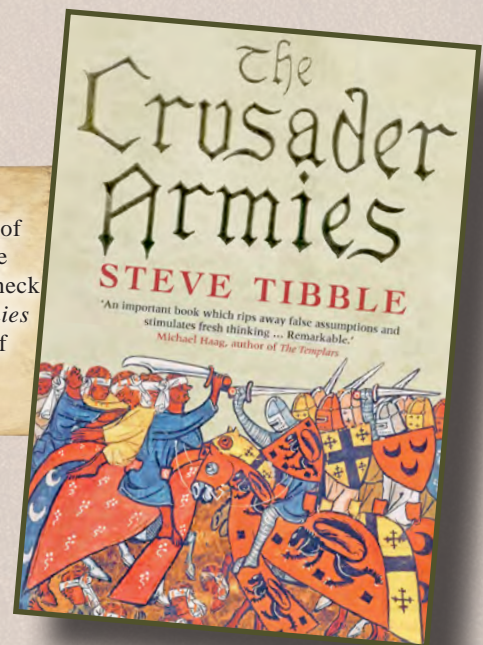
So, how do we reflect any of this on the wargames table? All rule sets are different but, most importantly, we need to be clear about exactly what it is that we are trying to simulate: if your favourite rules don't allow you to factor in these things, then you may need to look at making some changes. The key factors, for the crusader armies, are:

- the importance of naval engineers, and particularly humble carpenters;
- the importance of siege towers, as it allowed them to deliver their heavy infantry to the enemy battlements;
- their limitations in terms of logistics (ie transporting siege towers), and manoeuvrability (ie getting them next to the enemy's walls);
- the necessity of having access to supplies of long beams of well-seasoned timber (again, particularly important for the crusaders, as they needed them for the stability of the corners of their siege towers).

For the Muslims we need to be able to simulate:

- their superiority in mining-both in terms of numbers of miners, and in the expertise given to their mining operations by a greater degree of specialisation;
- their superiority in numbers (in general) and in archery for suppressive fire (in particular).

Dr. Steve Tibble is author of *The Crusader Armies*, Yale University Press, 2018. Check out our *The Crusader Armies* discount offer on page 4 of this magazine.



And for both sides:

- the fact that catapults and other siege artillery look great on the table (and in movies), but they are for shooting at battlements, not knocking down walls... the concept of suppressive fire is not just for WWII, we need it in a medieval context too.

Most rule sets can accommodate these kinds of adjustments. Miners need to be skilled and placed adjacent to the walls if they are going to be of any use: typically, besiegers only have a few days before relief forces arrive. Catapults need to have very restricted objectives: a hit on any part of the walls below the battlements is almost pointless. Siege towers look great and a siege is usually over if they can get to the walls, but they are a nightmare to get into position. The overarching principle is that the most simple solution is generally the most realistic.

NEXT TIME

Formations. Did crusader armies really deploy and perform in the way we usually see on the wargames table? Tune in next month..!

FURTHER READING

Latin Siege Warfare in the Twelfth Century, R. Rogers (Oxford, 1992) and anything by the wonderful Dr Mike Fulton.

Photos by Malc Johnson. Taken from our *Larger Lion Rampant* article in WI360 in which Dave Tuck and Malc Johnston present their ideas for moving *Lion Rampant* from skirmish to mass battle level. Incorporating sieges along the way.



THE FIRST TEMPLAR



HUGUES DE PAYNES AND THE FOUNDATION OF THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

Dr Gianluca Raccagni of the History and Games Lab, University of Edinburgh, and author of *Crusader States*, the *Lion Rampant* expansion, takes us on a journey back to the inception of the Templar Knights and introduces us to founding father Hugues de Paynes.

From humble beginnings, within a few decades the Templars became one of the greatest powers in Christendom. At their peak they held land from Scotland, Poland and Portugal in Europe to Israel and Jordan in the Middle East. Hugues de Paynes was the first master of the first Christian military religious order. Why and how did Hugues create the Templars? And how did the Templars become so powerful so quickly?

INSECURITY IN THE HOLY LAND IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE FIRST CRUSADE

"It might be questioned why so many Christian corpses should lie unburied, but it is in fact no surprise. There is little soil there and ... who would be stupid enough to leave his brethren and be alone digging a grave. Anybody who did this would dig a grave not for his fellow Christian but for himself."

An Anglo-Saxon pilgrim called Seawulf wrote those lines in a travelogue of

his pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the immediate aftermath of the conquest of Jerusalem by the First Crusade in 1099. They highlight how insecure the fledgling Crusader States felt at that time.

Insecurity is a recurring theme of medieval sources on the Crusader States, and especially in the first decades of their existence, when control of the land was patchy and fragile. Banditry abounded in the rugged territory of the Holy Land. There were plenty of caves, ruins and secluded places where outlaws could hide, and entire local communities could be involved in the practice, forming sizeable warbands. King Baldwin I of Jerusalem (d.1118) led various expeditions against bandit strongholds, and he was personally severely wounded when he attacked those around Mount Carmel in 1103. Yet raiding was a common activity for rulers and their men too, Christians and Muslims alike, and they did not necessarily spare their co-religionists either.

The problem for the Crusader States was compounded by the fact that, when the host of the First Crusade marched from Antioch to Jerusalem, it bypassed many secondary objectives, which remained in Muslim hands for years. Not to mention that many crusaders returned to Europe after conquering Jerusalem, leaving behind them a shortage of manpower. The most isolated Muslim-controlled enclaves (large portions of their population being eastern Christians) were gradually conquered with the help of new arrivals from the West. Acre fell in 1104, Tyre in 1124. King Baldwin also pushed beyond the River Jordan in the 1110s, creating the Lordship of the Oultrejordain.

However, insecurity persisted. In the 1120s the chronicler Fulcher of Chartres famously wrote that anyone venturing out of a fortified place was at great risk, and the populace was always attentive to the sound of trumpets warning them of danger.

“Christian pilgrims could stray into Muslim territory by accident, which could be fatal.” Figures by Gripping Beast. Trees by Debris of War.



Pilgrims from faraway lands, badly armed and often bewildered by the exotic locations, were prime targets for raiders and robbers. Christian pilgrims could stray into Muslim territory by accident, which could be fatal. The memoirs of Usama ibn Munquidh, the nephew of the Muslim lord of Shaizar, mentioned what happened to one such group of pilgrims at some point before 1130: his Uncle massacred the men and enslaved the women and children. In 1119, a group of seven hundred Christian pilgrims fell victim to raiders between Jerusalem and the river Jordan. Nearly half of them were killed, while many others were taken prisoner. The shockwave of that event was possibly the catalyst for the creation of the Knights Templar, which were officialized in 1120.

HUGUES DE PAYNES: FROM PILGRIM TO CREATOR OF THE TEMPLARS

That is the situation Hugues de Paynes found in the Holy Land. Various countries claim to be his birthplace, but the consensus is that he was a petty lord from the border between Burgundy and Champagne. Hugues was born around 1070, but he did not take part in the First Crusade. Instead, he was one of the many

pilgrims and settlers who travelled to the Holy Land in its aftermath. He probably followed his overlord there, Count Hugues of Champagne, who travelled to the Holy Land once per decade in the first three decades of the twelfth century. Details are understandably sketchy regarding the formation of the Templars but we know that by the 1120s Hugues had been a part in their creation, becoming their first master.

There are differing accounts on how that came to be, but they generally agree that, shortly after his arrival in the Holy Land, Hugues belonged to a pious group of knights who decided to take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience with the Patriarch of Jerusalem in the manner of a new religious community. King Baldwin II gave them some space in his palace, whose site was associated with Solomon’s Temple, hence the name of the new order. So far, nothing exceptional: new religious communities were not rare, and some of them received royal patronage.

What was exceptional about Hugues and his companions was that while knights normally left their military life behind when they joined religious communities, the Templars didn’t. On the contrary,

they became the first military religious order, whose initial aim was the defence of the roads of the Holy Land, and the pilgrims who travelled on them. Soon that expanded into defending the Crusader States as a whole, as well as other frontiers of Christendom, and later still, into supporting crusades.

There are diverging stories as to how that unusual association of religious and military life came to be. Some of them state that it was the king and the patriarch of Jerusalem who persuaded Hugues and his companions to retain their military life, of which there was great need. The Welsh writer Walter Map (d.1210) attributed more agency to Hugues: he originally took upon himself the pious task of defending pilgrims, and then proselytised that by appealing to the king of Jerusalem and by recruiting companions among pilgrims of knightly background (see the following scenario).

The creation of the Templars fitted the militant spirit that had emerged in Western Christianity in the eleventh century and produced the First Crusade. Crusaders took a religious vow, but they remained lay people. The great majority of them returned to their normal life once



“The Templars became the first military religious order, whose initial aim was the defence of the roads of the Holy Land, and the pilgrims who travelled on them.” Figures by Gripping Beast. Scenery by Two Sheds Fred.

their armed pilgrimage was done. Their recruitment and financial assistance were episodic, and quite difficult to obtain sometimes. The Crusader States needed more consistent help. The creation of institutionalised military religious orders devoted to that cause was the next step in that line of development. The Templars were trailblazers in that, and they gradually built an immense network of properties and assets across Western Christendom. Many other similar orders followed their example, including the Hospitallers, the Teutonic knights, and many smaller orders.



"The Templars were officialised in the Holy Land at the Council of Nablus of 1120." Figures by Gripping Beast. Scenery by Two Sheds Fred. Buildings by Adrian's Walls.

The Templars were officialised in the Holy Land at the Council of Nablus of 1120, but initially they had a modest existence, which possibly inspired the representation of two knights sharing the same horse in the Templars' seal (right). The new order really took off when Hugues went on a fund-raising and recruiting tour of Western Europe in 1125. That led to the papal confirmation of the Templars



at the Council of Troyes of 1129, which is when white vestments were conceded to professed knights in recognition of the vow of celibacy (it was also possible to be associate members, which did not require that vow, or to have a temporary membership). Hugues also gained the support of the greatest influencer of the time, Bernard of Clairvaux, who wrote a pamphlet for him entitled *In praise of the new knighthood*. Hugues returned to the Holy Land in 1129, where he took part in a failed siege of Damascus. He oversaw the expansion of the Templars until his death in 1136.

MARAUDERS!

For our *Lion Rampant: The Crusader States* game, we pieced together a 'Marauder' force using a mix of Gripping Beast metals and plastics, from their Armies of Islam range.

Left to right, back to front, we have: Two units of Light Cavalry, one unit of Light Cavalry with javelins, one unit of Fierce Foot, one unit of Light Infantry with mixed weapons, and two units (of six) Skirmishers.

For those of you unfamiliar with *The Crusader States*, it uses the same unit formations as *Lion Rampant*, but with some name tweaking e.g. *Lion Rampant* Foot Yeomen become *The Crusader States* Light Infantry.



GAMING THE FIRST TEMPLAR WITH *LION RAMPANT: THE CRUSADER STATES*

This scenario takes place during the embryonic years of the order, before it was officialized at the Council of Nablus in 1120. It is inspired by the account on the origins of the Templars written by Walter Map (d. 1210 circa), who was a member of the English royal court (possibly of Welsh descent) and then a high-status clergyman. Walter recounted the story of a Burgundian knight called Paganus (most likely referring to Hugues de Payens, which is *paganus* in Latin), who heard of frequent attacks by pagans against pilgrims at a horse-pool by Jerusalem, and took it upon himself to defend them. He did that by hiding and then ambushing the raiders when they attacked the pilgrims. After Hugues's initial successes, the pagans stepped up their presence in that area, which led Hugues to escalate his efforts too by proselytising among other knights visiting Jerusalem, and by approaching the king himself, which eventually led to the creation of the Templars.

SET-UP

- Place a smallish pond at the centre of the table, and sparse vegetation and rocks around it. The scenario takes place in the Judean Mountains around Jerusalem, in a dry but not desert environment.
- Use the Pilgrims army list (rather than the Military Orders one, because this is before the creation of the Templars) on one side, and the Marauders one on the other, both comprising 24 points on a 4' x4' table.
- The Pilgrims deploy first. This warband needs to include one unit of heavy cavalry or heavy infantry to represent Hugues and his companions, which starts off the table. This unit can be given the free Religious Fervour upgrade of the Pilgrims' army list (that is optional). The rest of the warband needs to be deployed around the pool or in its immediate vicinity. The warband should include one holy character.
- The Marauders deploy second, and they can start from any side of the table, perhaps spreading on multiple sides too, but that is the player's choice. They do not want the Pilgrims to escape.
- The Marauders know that Hugues is around (he has already foiled them in the past), but they don't know where he is.



The Marauders deploy - choosing to go for the "multiple sides" option.



FASCINATING FOLKS

Who are the most interesting historical figures? We asked our wargaming personalities.

Harald 'Hardrada' Sigurdsson

Warwick Kinrade (game designer)

Alexander the Great

Pete Brown (author of assorted wargaming books): "So little is known about him."

Leonardo da Vinci

Noel Williams (*WI* contributor): "A painter to inspire your figure painting ... but a weird genius too, so a man after my own heart."

Haile Selassie

James Morris (*WI* contributor)

Virginia Hall

James Griffiths (*WI* Project Manager): "Would have every medal, twice over, but for the inconvenience of her being a one-legged lady the US Government didn't want to shine a light on!"

The Empress Theodora

Jim Graham (*WI* contributor): "From very humble beginnings she held the Empire together while Justinian wavered."

Gabriel Feraud

Alan Perry (sculpting supremo)

There's just too many!

Michael Perry (sculpting supremo)

Cyrus the Great of Persia

Bill Gray (*WI* contributor):

Diogenes

Fet Milner (Salute 2019 Painting Competition Best in Show winner): "What a dude!"

Robin Hood

Dan Faulconbridge (*WI* Editor) "Half legend, half real, 100% local hero".

Sir Robert Wilson

Duncan Macfarlane (*WI*'s founder and original Editor)

"Fought the French in Flanders in 1794 and rode into Paris alongside the Czar in 1814. In between, more military campaigns and diplomatic missions than almost anyone else around at the time - and left loads of journals and memoirs to give us a good insight into the period two centuries on. (Replaces my earlier hero, Genghiz Khan.)"

SPECIAL RULES

- The Marauders move first.
- Hugues and his unit enter the table at any turn after the first one (the choice of the turn is at the discretion of the Pilgrims player), and they can enter from any side of the table.
- Pilgrims units can leave the table on their own accord, thus escaping the Marauders, but Hugues's unit cannot leave the table until all the other pilgrims are gone, or have been routed or wiped out.
- If you use Hugues as the leader of the Pilgrims' band, he automatically has the Blessed skill. Using him as the leader is optional: the Pilgrims do not necessarily know him, but when he comes to their rescue, they would certainly see him as their champion. Again, this is up to the player.

ENDING THE SCENARIO

- Keep playing until the Marauders have lost units (routed or wiped out) worth half of the total points of their warband. From that point on, roll a die at the start of each turn. If the score is higher than the number of Marauders' units left on the table, the remaining Marauders' units are automatically battered. It is possible to rally them, but they still need to flee the battlefield, exiting the table, and they can only move or attack in the general direction of the closest side of the table (in other words, it is not necessary to take the fastest rout out). The game ends when all Marauders' units have left the table (routed or fleeing) or have been wiped out.
- The game also ends when there are no pilgrims left on the table.

Battle is joined across the tabletop. Scenery by Two Sheds Fred, Adrian's Walls and Debris of War.



VICTORY CONDITIONS

• The Marauders gain no glory points for Pilgrims who leave the table on their own accord (they count as escaped), but they gain two glory points for each Pilgrims unit that is routed (they count as captured at some point after the fight); and one point for each Pilgrims unit that is wiped out (they count as dead). You cannot ransom or sell dead Pilgrims, but slaughter is still a valuable display of strength. That does not apply to Hugues's unit: routing it or wiping it out, or killing Hugues in duel, is worth three points (you get good ransom money for knights, but getting rid of that annoying Hugues is still an achievement). Add boasts to that.

• The Pilgrims gain two points for each Pilgrims unit that leaves the table on its own accord (they count as escaped), or for each Pilgrims unit (including Hugues) left on the table after all the Marauders have been wiped out, routed, or have fled. Pilgrims also gain one point for each Marauders unit that is wiped out. A dead marauder does not come back! Add boasts to that.

Find out more about the History and Games lab at: historyandgames.shca.ed.ac.uk



Marauder Fierce Foot move in against a unit of Pilgrims.

Giants

IN Miniature



HUGUES DE PAYNES
(The Last Templar)
GiM 57

WiPrime
Members
50p off
every figure



PRINCE LOUIS
GiM 78



SAINT LOUIS
GiM 57

REIMAGINING THE CRUSADES - PART 2



FORMATIONS

Having looked at sieges in our first article on crusading warfare, and re-evaluated some of our default assumptions, Doctor Steve Tibble now looks at how crusader armies deployed, and the formations they used against their Muslim enemies. As crusader armies are envisaged, by most of us at least, as the archetypal 'western' army of the period, there will surely be fewer surprises here, and little we need to change on the wargames table?

NOT SO

Our initial reaction is to assume that the two main drivers of Frankish military practice, the disciplined knightly charge and the gradual development of well-equipped heavy infantry, were typical of European warfare, and that this was the mode of warfare that the crusaders brought with them. In fact, the opposite was true. Warfare in the East was a crucible of innovation for European warfare, leading developments, not reflecting them.

Instead, the three tactical formations which came to typify crusading warfare were a direct consequence of the need to solve the problems posed by nomadic light cavalry. The charge had to become more disciplined and better focused. A 'fighting march' was essential to ensure that the flanks and rear were protected. And an 'infantry shieldwall' was needed, combining missile weapons to keep enemy cavalry at a distance, with spears to deter them from close contact.

THE CHARGE

Taking the charge first, it is important to remember that they, like battles, were rare. Even when they did take place, they were often over in a matter of minutes. Yet it was these few minutes that could decide the outcome of a campaign or the fate of an entire kingdom.

On the face of it, the knightly charge is not one of the innovations or tactical developments that would immediately spring to mind as having emanated from the crusades. On the contrary, if the fluid harassment of light horse archers typifies Turkic battle techniques, one would intuitively suggest that the Western equivalent, the 'signature dish' of crusader armies, was surely the knightly charge.

This is true, but only up to a point. The concept of the Western heavy cavalry charge was subtly different in Outremer and these differences had a profound impact not just in the Holy Land but eventually back in Europe as well.

Frankish charges in the East were better than their European equivalents. They were far more than just the transfer of best practice from the West. This was not a coincidence. They were better because they needed to be.

For a charge to be successful against a more mobile opponent, it needed to find an opportunity to connect. Unlike their counterparts on European battlefields, where the enemy army presented a large and relatively slow-moving mass, getting into contact and finding the 'fixed point' of an enemy in the East was far more difficult. Charges had to be more effective, better disciplined and timed to perfection if they were to have a chance of connecting with Turkic cavalry.

Ironically, given the knights' reputation for arrogance and individualism, the true power of a Frankish charge lay in its restraint. A group of individuals charging wildly at an enemy unit could be countered as individuals. A tightly disciplined Frankish charge was elemental in its impact, however. If pushed through with resolution, it could break the enemy on the spot. Once the momentum of the charge was lost, however, or if unit cohesion lessened, the fighting would become more general. The Frankish knights were highly trained in individual fighting skills, but in a *mêlée* numbers inevitably tell, and the Christian armies rarely had numbers on their side.

THE TRUE CROSS

The True Cross, and splinters taken from it, provided a powerful motivator for the devout Christian armies of the crusades. There were also more tangible benefits, however. Anything that could help improve command and control on the fighting march was extremely important. The True Cross and other religious icons and standards were often placed in the centre division of a march and served as a rallying point and an indicator of the column's progress. Because they were deliberately raised to as great a height as possible, they helped show the vanguard and rearguard divisions where the centre point of the army was and, in the absence of any other commands, served to show its speed and direction.



Poor cohesion in Western armies could often be traced back to a lack of training. When most feudal forces gathered, they were unused to working together as units. The crusader states faced many military problems, but in this regard they had certain advantages. In the Latin East, with its chronic levels of threat, the men inevitably became well used to mustering together and campaigning both as units and as an army. They were more consistently militarised than their European peers and the high levels of campaigning in the Holy Land meant that they were more accustomed to operating and manoeuvring together as part of an army.

The growth of the military orders in the course of the twelfth century also meant that there was a core of semi-professional knights, bound together by vows of obedience and well-practised in charging as a disciplined unit. A contemporary pilgrim account was full of admiration for the way the Templars were able to deploy themselves in battle: *'They go into battle in order and without making a noise, they are first to desire engagement and more vigorous than others; they are the first to go and the last to return, and they wait for their Master's command before acting.'* But the interest this excited from

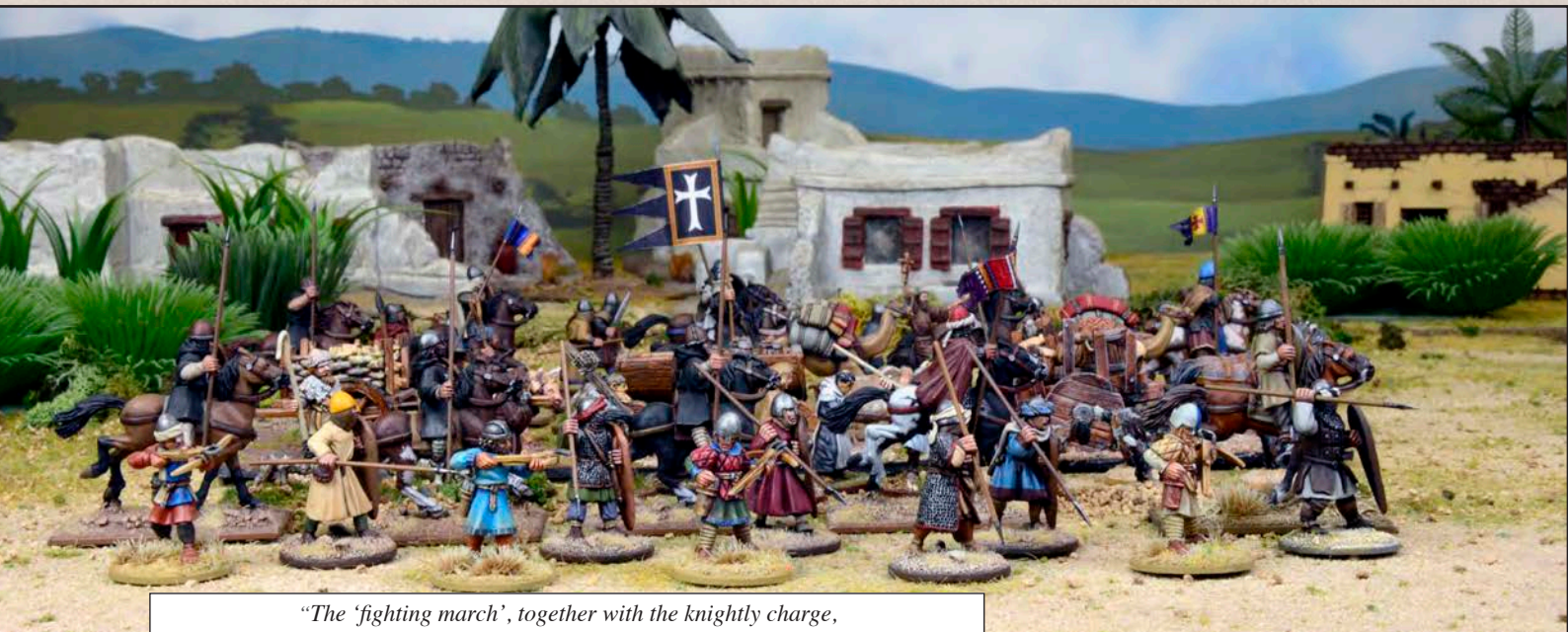
a European visitor shows that this level of discipline, far from being typical, was highly unusual in the West.

Launching an effective charge under the conditions faced by Frankish armies in the East was never easy. It needed good leadership at both unit and army level. Mistakes that would have been inconsequential when facing the cumbersome armies of western Europe were severely punished in the East. The crusader armies were better at the charge than their European counterparts for the simple fact that they had to be.

"On the face of it, the knightly charge is not one of the innovations or tactical developments that would immediately spring to mind as having emanated from the crusades."

Figures by Gripping Beast





“The ‘fighting march’, together with the knightly charge, is the formation most closely associated with the crusader armies”
Figures by Gripping Beast

THE FIGHTING MARCH

The ‘fighting march’, together with the knightly charge, is the formation most closely associated with the crusader armies. At its most basic, the formation was an elongated rectangular ‘box’, with the narrow end of the formation facing the direction of march. It generally consisted of three divisions: van, centre and rear. In the centre division, and in the middle of the box, would be the baggage train, the wounded and non-combatants, the highly visible main army standards and religious artefacts. The outer layers of the box would consist of mixed infantry units, combining archers or crossbowmen with spearmen. Sheltering

behind this outer layer, for the protection of the horses more than their riders, would be the cavalry, held in reserve (and hopefully relative safety) until the moment came to launch a charge.

Interdependency and protected flanks, having comrades you could rely on to help when you needed them most, were at the heart of the successful fighting march. Most obviously, the ‘solid wall’ of infantry on the outer sides of the formation was able to keep the Muslim horsemen at bay. The spearmen were able to discourage them from coming to close quarters, while the crossbowmen and archers were able to force the enemy archers either to keep their distance, or to absorb casualties.

They were helped by the fact that light cavalry bows tended to have a lesser range than, say, crossbows or infantry longbows, and the penetrative power of their arrows tailed off significantly at longer ranges: hence the fact that Frankish troops were often able to be struck by many arrows without being seriously wounded.

From a Frankish perspective the key lay in the preservation of healthy horseflesh. The knights themselves were very well protected, but their horses were always extremely vulnerable to archery. The fighting march allowed the horses to move slowly within the relative safety of an outer shield of heavy infantry. Similarly, the infantry on their own





“The knights themselves were very well protected, but their horses were always extremely vulnerable to enemy archery.”

would always find it difficult to break a cavalry-dominated Muslim army, so their self-interest also lay in the preservation of a powerful cavalry force.

But the interdependency did not stop there. Each of the three main divisions of a Frankish army on a ‘fighting march’ could rely on its comrades for support, as long as formations were kept tight and the units were not allowed to move too far away from each other. The most vulnerable division from this perspective, and the one which was most difficult to handle, was generally the rearguard. The enemy would naturally tend to focus on it, and try to force delay as it struggled to keep enemy horse archers at bay. The vanguard might well be oblivious to this, and the natural tendency would be for it to keep moving forward, opening gaps in the formation. The centre division, better placed to see the pressure the rear-guard was under, and the extent to which its pace was slowing, would find it difficult to keep aligned between the two other divisions, and to prevent dangerous gaps appearing.

For this reason, the military orders were often given command of the rear, as this was the most highly threatened command, and was one to which their (hopefully) more disciplined knights were better suited. The central division on the march was the location for the Frankish field commander to base himself, as better visibility and interior lines helped him to balance the needs of the van and rear divisions.

Both sides knew their roles well. The crusaders kept their formations as tight as possible, while the Muslim cavalry focused on the rear of the Frankish column and their more vulnerable horses. Turkic tactics were as much about provocation and disruption as about causing casualties. The knights were well protected, and their casualties would generally have been relatively light. But there

were two other considerations, each of which was perhaps just as important. From a cultural perspective there was huge pressure on the knights to be able to demonstrate that they were behaving well, that their conduct was beyond reproach. Not riding out to attack the Muslim light cavalry laid the knights open, in their own minds at least, to potential accusations of cowardice.

The other provocation was both more practical, and more compelling. The horses were being killed, even if the knights were not. There were spare mounts in the ranks but even these were gradually lost. If the Turkic cavalry could get close enough to harm the horses, they would simultaneously be able to degrade the Franks’ aggressive capabilities or, by threatening to do so, perhaps provoke them into making a rash and uncontrolled charge.

But it is important to realise that the fighting march was not primarily the response of ‘crusaders’ to ‘Muslim’ armies. It was the response of sedentary societies, Byzantine and Frankish alike, to the threat posed by nomadic light cavalry. And it is significant that the fighting march formation was not employed against all Muslim opponents: just those which had a large Turkic cavalry component in them. When at war against the Fatimid Egyptians, for instance, no one thought that a fighting march was useful or necessary.

The reasons behind this are clear. The fighting march was inevitably cumbersome and severely limiting in terms of being able to deal a fatal blow to

HATTIN: THE FINAL CHARGES

The battle of Hattin is famous as the defining disaster of the crusader states. But even at the end of the battle, with the Christian cavalry dehydrated and demoralised, and having taken massive casualties from skirmishing and archery, a series of charges by just 150 exhausted Frankish knights gave Saladin great cause for concern. His own son described him as being ‘overcome by grief and [with] his complexion pale’. Similarly, as the tired and outnumbered crusader vanguard charged towards the Muslim cavalry blocking their way forward, Saladin’s troops flinched, either involuntarily or because it was thought wiser and safer to let the Franks pass through. No matter how much they were outnumbered, or how much they had been softened up, a charge by Frankish knights was always to be feared. There was a recognition, on the Muslim side as much as on the Christian, that even their heaviest cavalry were no match for the Frankish knights on a man-to-man basis.





“The basic infantry combat team seems to have consisted of two pairs of men...”

the enemy. It was essentially defensive, and a formation aimed at fighting nomads in particular, rather than Muslims in general. The fighting march was an effective way of limiting the downside for any force facing a Turkic army. But it also limited the upside.

THE ‘COMBINED ARMS’ INFANTRY SHIELDWALL

The interdependency of the knightly cavalry and the Frankish heavy infantry was at the heart of any crusader army, whether in the deserts of Palestine or on the wargames table. For the first time since the fall of the Roman empire in the West, large numbers of high-quality infantry were needed to protect the horses and keep enemy light cavalry at bay. The infantry ‘combined arms’ shieldwall formed the outer layers of the ‘box’ in each fighting march and a rallying point in more set-piece battles behind which the heavy cavalry could ready themselves before an attack, or regroup after a charge.

One reason why a Frankish shieldwall could be effective was the sheer density it provided. This was partly to deter enemy cavalry: if the riders wanted to engage in hand-to-hand combat, they would be outnumbered, but even if they tried to close, their horses would naturally tend to shy away from an unbroken formation of heavily armed infantry, particularly spearmen.

The other advantage (particularly important from a wargame’s perspective) was the density of firepower. Muslim light cavalry, manoeuvring around at speed and engaging in archery fire-fights, would inevitably take up a great deal of space. The Frankish archers and crossbowmen, on the other hand, had a density which meant that even though they might be outnumbered on the battlefield as a whole, they could generally bring a higher volume of fire to bear on individual Muslim cavalry units as they approached.

We are lucky that a rare description of how a Frankish infantry contingent operated exists from the battle for Jaffa, in the summer of 1192. The infantry contribution would normally have been brushed over lightly, if mentioned at all. As there were almost no knights present, however, and as it was an important victory for a small Christian army under King Richard I, the chroniclers had little choice but to include them in the narrative.

More importantly, however, we have unusually detailed information about the way the Frankish infantry were disposed, showing how the ‘combined arms’ nature of the shieldwall worked. The basic infantry combat team seems to have consisted of two pairs of men. Two spearmen in the front rank, providing cover with their shields and deterring enemy cavalry from making contact, while behind them were a pair of crossbowmen. They either alternated shooting or the better marksman of the pair stood in front, between the two shields, while his partner loaded another crossbow behind him. This relay system maximised protection and rate of fire. The infantry also set up makeshift barricades in front of their lines, including tent pegs and lines to deter enemy horses.

As with a Napoleonic square, it was enormously difficult to persuade horses to connect with such a formation, particularly deployed behind field defences. Successive lines of Turkic cavalry tried to contact the crusader infantry, but the unbroken units of spearmen, hastily constructed barricades and the volume of missiles meant that each assault failed.

But there is nothing to suggest that the tactical abilities and performance of the Frankish infantry at Jaffa in 1192 were particularly unusual. Given a good

“The infantry also set up makeshift barricades in front of their lines...”
Figures by Gripping Beast





“The crusader charge can be difficult to replicate in a wargame. Nomadic-heritage light cavalry will be able to evade their heavier, slower moving opponents...”

commander and an orderly deployment, this was exactly what crusader infantry were expected to do: provide a robust shieldwall, keep enemy cavalry at bay, and create a line behind which the Frankish knights could stay protected from enemy archery until the time to charge was right. The role was essentially ‘passive’, with limited emphasis on manoeuvrability other than when on a fighting march, but vital for the success of a Frankish army. The social status of the infantry meant that their role was often down-played: the main difference at Jaffa was not how they were used, but rather that there was no celebrity focus to detract from them.

WARGAMING CRUSADER FORMATIONS

If crusader formations are all subtly different from what we might expect, then what do we need to do differently to reflect this on the tabletop?

There are certainly differences with the crusader knightly charge that need to be considered:

- Frankish knights look ‘typical’, but were far from it. They were better than their contemporaries in Europe, and this should be reflected in our rules. Elite elements of the Frankish army (such as the knights of the military orders or some of the more hardened frontier contingents) should be even more highly rated.

- the crusader charge can be difficult to replicate in a wargame. Nomadic-heritage light cavalry will be able to evade their heavier, slower moving opponents almost indefinitely under many rule sets, far more so than they could in practice. In reality, Frankish knights were often able to connect with their opponents, particularly by aiming at the central division of the enemy army, where the presence of baggage, slaves, prisoners and booty, together with enemy

commanders, made rapid manoeuvre far more difficult. Nomads are tough opponents, but they are not super-human.

There are also key differences in how the ‘fighting march’ operated:

- rather than thinking of it as a single column, our rules need to reflect the fact that it operated as three very distinct groupings (van, centre and rear), each with their own sub-commanders, and each with their own problems;

- the role of a central religious icon (such as the True Cross) is far more than that of just boosting morale (though it certainly did that too). Our rules need to give it a command and control role, reflecting its function as a visual benchmark for the van and rear divisions.

The infantry shieldwall is a vital, often under-estimated part of the Frankish wargames army, and there is a good case for rule sets treating them in a more nuanced way. There is no direct evidence for volley fire, for instance, but one could make the case for letting the more ‘elite’ units (such as Italian marines or veteran garrisons) have a shooting bonus if they are deployed in optimal conditions.

Next time: Army Lists. Who really were the soldiers of the crusader armies?

Dr. Steve Tibble is author of *The Crusader Armies*, Yale University Press, 2018.

TOURNAMENTS IN THE HOLY LAND

As always, the small details of a society say a lot. In western Europe tournaments, either in single combat or as more general mêlées, were an increasingly important part of the social life of the elite, providing vital opportunities to practise warfare in a (relatively) safe training environment. But we never find tournaments in the crusader states. They had no need of fake warfare when they had so much of the real thing, and no need of artificial training exercises when they were on campaign so regularly. The knights of Outremer fought together more often, for longer periods of time and for a greater span of their lives than any comparable group in Europe.

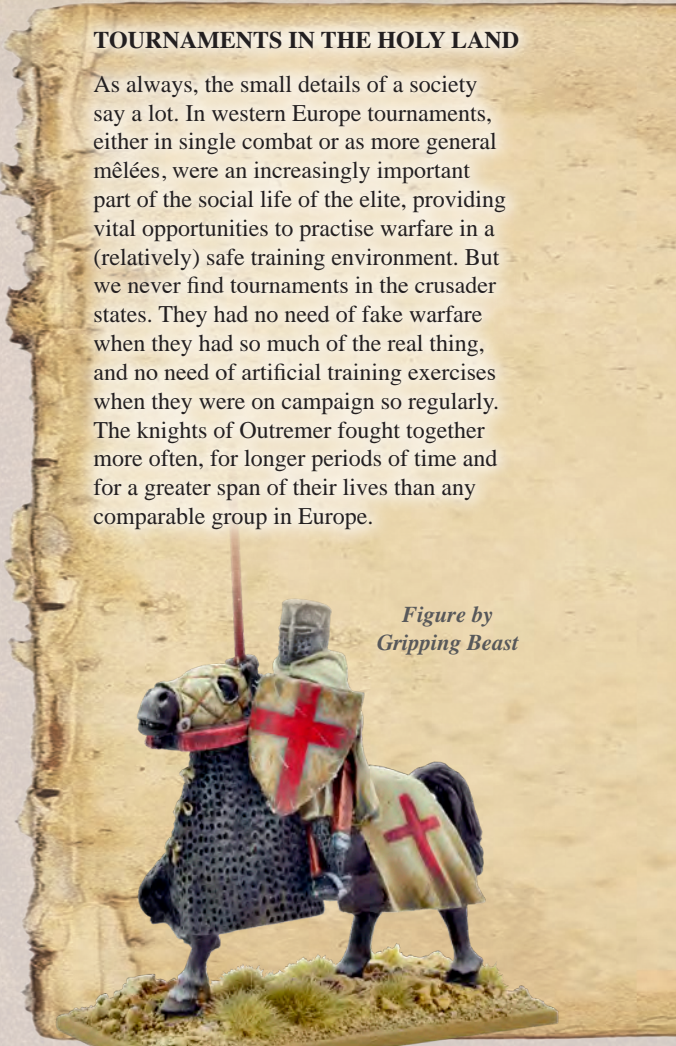
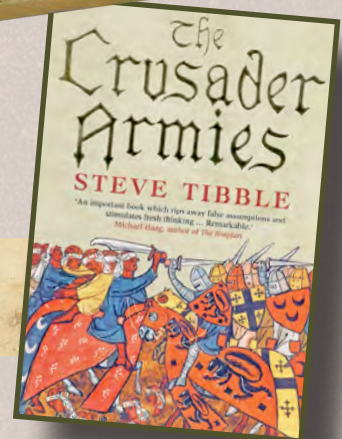


Figure by Gripping Beast



LOUIS IX

SAINTS, HOOKERS AND MERCENARIES ON CRUSADE



Our new Giants in Miniature figure is the saintly King Louis IX, famous for his crusading exploits, and particularly for the invasion of Egypt which he undertook as part of the doomed Seventh Crusade. Crusader expert Dr Steve Tibble tells us a bit more about Saint Louis and the ill-fated Eighth Crusade.

The Eighth Crusade had been launched as an attempt to relieve some of the pressure from the beleaguered crusader states of the Holy Land - it had its own strategic logic, but it was characterised by problems from the very outset. It had been unenthusiastically received by the French people when it had first been mooted, and much of the Christian army was delayed in arriving.

The French army eventually landed on the North African coast, just outside Tunis, on 1 July 1270, and began siege operations. Sickness soon broke out in the Christian camp, and the Sicilian fleet, led by Louis's brother, Charles of Anjou, arrived late. By the time Charles got to the siege works, much of the French army was sick, and

Louis himself, together with his son, were dead. The siege was eventually abandoned on 30 October 1270, a tragic end to the career of one France's most enthusiastic crusaders.

For wargamers, however, the Eighth Crusade is more than just a sad footnote. It provides us with a unique opportunity to game an extraordinary conflict between Christian knights fighting as mercenaries against their own crusading co-religionists.

MERCENARIES

Bizarrely, there was a little-known but lively mercenary trade going on in the western and central Mediterranean, largely played out between Christian Spain and the Muslim states of North

Africa. There was a long-standing tradition of Christian troops being employed by Muslim rulers in this region, and they were widely respected as professionals. When the Almoravid capital of Marrakesh fell to the Almohad army in March 1147, for instance, we know that many of the local civilians were killed, but the garrison, who were Christian mercenaries, were given the far more attractive alternatives of either conversion to Islam or a ticket home - most went back to Toledo as quickly as possible.

Eventually, large parts of the local military infrastructure in North Africa ended up being run by Christian mercenaries. The Almohad caliph,

SAVE ONE FOR ME

Being a saint, a king and a crusader - all at the same time - was never easy.

The Eighth Crusade also allows us to field some of the more exotic civilian figures that we may have gathering dust on our shelves - medieval sex-workers.

Louis IX of France (reigned 1226-1270) is an interesting example of the challenges facing medieval rulers in their attempts to manage prostitution, particularly in a crusading context.

Louis (later Saint Louis) was not a bad man. He was complex, and he occasionally had his moments. But his intentions were usually good. His problem lay less in intentions and more in the contradictions he faced in balancing the different roles which he had to fulfil - all had their own priorities and all were occasionally in conflict with each other. He was trying to run a country. He was trying to be an effective military commander, often under the most precarious circumstances. He was also trying to conduct himself - and his people - according to the often conflicting Christian principles of sexual continence, universal love and charity. And he was attempting to do all this, certainly by modern standards, with very limited resources.

In his capacity as a military commander there were other problems to consider. Wherever there were armies, there were bound to be prostitutes. But whether one was genuinely devout, or simply superstitious, this presented difficulties. The Church disapproved of sexuality in general and prostitutes in particular - and if ever a group of people were in need of God's unadulterated good favour, it was an outnumbered crusader army operating on the fringes of Christendom.

There were also practical issues. Keeping arrogant and independently-minded knights focused on boring but dangerous tasks such as sieges was always difficult, but was made slightly easier by the lack of distractions while on campaign in a foreign country. Prostitutes, however, presented an overwhelmingly attractive distraction, and made the already difficult task of enforcing military discipline even more awkward.

Louis did the best he could under the circumstances. He learnt through experience that it was extremely difficult to keep hookers away from armies, and vice versa. Even on campaign, where one would have thought that transport difficulties would have reduced the problem, there were large numbers of prostitutes on hand to service the men. Despite Louis's desultory attempts to stop them, the issue was never fully resolved. They eventually found a way of rubbing along together - the prostitutes realised that they could get by as long as they maintained a low profile and kept out of his way.

But there was a kindlier aspect to all this too - you don't get to be a saint without putting in some effort. In order to improve conditions for the prostitutes, Louis began a programme to give 'large and generous alms to...unmarried girls, prostitutes, widows, pregnant women...'. He set up a modicum of social care facilities to allow women who wanted to give up the game to retire. He also tried to 'save' and rehabilitate the younger women by giving them access to more respectable and safer ways of making a living. Following Louis's example, caring for such women began to take a more central part in French acts of public charity.

Medieval social care was necessarily rudimentary but it did move in the right direction occasionally.

The Eighth Crusade on the way to North Africa.



Yusuf al-Mustansir (reigned 1213-1224), had an elite Christian force based in Marrakesh commanded by the brother of King Alfonso II of Portugal, no less. Another was based in Meknes, under the command of a renegade whose father was a Christian mercenary leader named Gonzalo and whose mother was - probably apocryphally - said to be the sister of the king of Castile.



Above: 'Crusaders Landing at Tunis' by Chroniques de Saint-Denis (14th Century).

A later Almohad caliph, al-Mamun, only gained power with the help of Christian mercenaries and an army loaned to him by King Ferdinand III of Castile. He was so grateful to his mercenaries, and so eager to maintain their loyalty, that he broke with traditional Almohad practice, and allowed a Christian church, dedicated to the virgin Mary, to be built close to the mercenaries' headquarters in Marrakesh. Even more shockingly, he went so far as to declare ingratiatingly that 'we have rejected falsity and have published the truth and that there is no other Mahdi than Jesus, son of Mary.'

Even the military orders could be swept up in the mercenary industry that flowed so easily between Spain and the Maghreb - professional soldiers in a tight spot often had little else to trade. We know, for instance, that a Templar Brother named Bernard of Fuentes fled from Aragon to North Africa when the Templars were suppressed and persecuted. His talents were in great demand and he eventually became the leader of the Christian militia in Tunis. He did not change his religion, however, and he eventually returned to Spain, so that he could - prosaically, but very understandably - start to collect his old Templar pension.

But, however civilised relations might be, this cross-cultural human arms-trade sometimes led to very awkward situations. When the armies of the Eighth Crusade arrived outside Tunis in 1270, for instance, the Christian crusader forces inevitably found themselves confronting large numbers of Muslim troops - this was only to be expected. But they were also confronted by the elite Christian mercenaries of Aragon, who were acting as a bodyguard for the local Muslim ruler - which they did not expect.

And that was just the beginning. Even though some Christian Castilians were in the crusader army, one of their number - Frederick of Castile, brother of King Alphonso X - was the Muslims' senior military adviser. Extraordinarily and very

unhelpfully, further reinforcements for the Muslim cause were also provided in September 1270 - these were Christian knights, whose presence was legitimised by their king, James of Aragon. And just to make an unusual situation even stranger, their wages were even being paid by a Christian priest, the dean of the cathedral of Valencia.

The local ruler, al-Mustansir, had paid very handsomely for their services. And both parties to the agreement got what they wanted. Al-Mustansir got his high quality, reliable guardsmen. The king of Aragon got money, and, just as importantly, influence in Tunis.

But the splitting of Christian resources was extremely unhelpful. Loyalties, ambitions and interests were chronically divided. Discord was unhelpfully driven by the rivalries between different Christian dynasties - James of Aragon (effectively fighting by proxy on the Muslim side) and Charles of Anjou on the crusader side were arch rivals. The siege was eventually called off, and the crusade came to an embarrassing ending.

WARGAMING LOUIS AND THE EIGHTH CRUSADE

Long, unsuccessful sieges, and particularly those where the main dynamics are driven by disease and sickness, are very difficult to wargame - and boring. The presence of not one, but two Christian armies at the siege of Tunis, however, provides us with something rather different, and much more eye-catching - elite Spanish mercenaries facing off against French crusaders. We know that large scale skirmishes took place around the crusaders' siege camp, allowing us to field an unusual array of figures together. The local troops can include mamluk cavalry, and Egyptian and Arab infantry, all fighting alongside Bedouin and Spanish reconquista-style mercenaries. The crusaders, on the other hand, include many troops from across Western Europe, including French, Sicilian and Navarrese knights, infantry and marines. The siege of Tunis allows an unusual blend of figures to be fielded for a striking and unusual wargame on the sandy fields and dunes of the medieval North African coast.



Sacré Bleu! Sacré-Cœur

One of Saint Louis' most famous representations is an equestrian statue that fronts the entrance of Paris' Sacré-Cœur. Via WiPrime we'll show you how to use this month's Giants in Miniature release to replicate that statue.



From Outremer by Footsore Miniatures.

THE CRUSADES AS WARS OF RELIGION: ARCHETYPE OR ANOMALY?



What if the crusades aren't actually the archetypal religious wars? Dr Steve Tibble puts forth his case and deals with the unusual problems this creates for wargamers.

We all know that the First Crusade was proclaimed in 1095 to liberate Jerusalem, the Holy City, and bring it back into Christian hands. In doing so it triggered a convulsive series of conflicts with the local Muslim powers that spanned over 200 years. The reverberations of these religious wars are still with us today, in conflict in the Middle East, and in the headlines of our daily newspapers.

The crusades are obvious, archetypal wars of religion - if there is a 'religious wars' genre, they could almost be said to have invented it.

But what if none of this is true? What if the crusades were, at their core, anthropological and social wars rather than religious conflicts? If that is the case, what does it mean for us as wargamers, and how we simulate warfare in a period which is superficially familiar but, as we shall see, simultaneously alien?

A PRIMAL SOCIAL WAR

It is important to try and step back from our current labels, perceptions, and cultural assumptions; to look instead at what the underlying dynamics might have been at the time.

We often define conflict in this time and place in terms of religious affiliation. In the West, we talk about 'crusading warfare' and 'crusading armies', implying that spiritual beliefs were the defining pivot around which we need to describe military activity. Others, for similar reasons, might look to explain the warfare as 'jihadist' in nature. Contemporary politics would encourage us to extrapolate further, and describe this warfare as being between religious cultures in a broader sense: perhaps, say, the clash of an Islamic civilisation with that of Western societies born out of very different social and political traditions.

But it is entirely possible to write a broad history of the crusades from a wargaming perspective without mentioning religion. An anthropologist, examining the vast ebbs and flows of human development, might perhaps be unaware of the detailed religious background to the crusades. If so, he or she would not necessarily jump to the conclusion that the root of the conflicts in the region lay in a clash of religions.

This has a huge impact on how we as wargamers need to work with the period.

SAME BUT DIFFERENT?

Religion was undoubtedly a powerful proximate factor in determining patterns of conflict - it had an obvious immediate role to play - but the ultimate explanation of the crusades, the higher-level cause, is to be found elsewhere. Ironically, the root causes were more topical than ever, but not the ones we might naturally assume. As we shall see, climate change and massive migration crises were fundamentally far more important than religion in shaping warfare in the region during the period of the crusades.

It was the eruption of nomadic tribes into the region, rather than the views of popes or imams, that changed everything. And that migratory tsunami was dictated by climate change rather than religion.

TRIBAL TROUBLE

In the middle of the eleventh century, a loose confederation of Turkic warbands, led by the Seljuk family (very recent and only skin-deep converts to Sunni Islam), left their tribal steppe-lands north of the Caspian and Aral Seas. They moved south, capturing much of modern Iran and northern Syria. By 1055 the Seljuks had taken Baghdad and their leader adopted the title of Sultan ('power'). The settled lands of Byzantine Anatolia, to the west of this new 'Seljuk empire',

MUCH MORE THAN CHRISTIANS VS MUSLIMS

Religion was not necessarily the prime mover; battle lines were never neatly drawn between 'Christians' and 'Muslims'. The sedentary societies were not all Christian. The Fatimid state, one of the leading sedentary powers in the region during the first half of the twelfth century, was led by a Shi'ite Muslim government. Moreover, on the other side, many of the nomads were pagans, Christians, or individuals with only the vaguest understanding of the precepts of Islam.

Saladin, like Zengi and Nur al-Din, the Muslim strongmen who preceded him, spent the majority of his military career fighting his co-religionists. Far more fundamentally, nomadic-heritage warlords conquered all of the local (sedentary) Muslim states long before they were able to overcome the major Christian societies.

inevitably proved attractive. During the course of the 1060s groups of nomadic warriors began to push into the heartlands of what we now know as Turkey, raiding and destabilising the local communities. The Byzantine authorities were overwhelmed, on the defensive as they struggled to keep the nomads at bay.

The Byzantine defeat at Manzikert opened the floodgates for further nomadic penetration. With imperial forces shattered, nomadic groups, nominally under Seljuk authority but in practice often acting independently, had a much freer hand to push into Syria and Palestine. By the 1080s nomadic warlords had taken over most of the Syrian city states and much of Palestine - the stage was set for the crusades.

And in this context, it is more realistic to envisage the crusades as a duel between herders and farmers, rather than as a purely religious conflict between Islam and Christianity.

HERDERS AND FARMERS

It would be entirely wrong to suggest that religious belief was irrelevant, or that leaders of the period were just cynically exploiting religious rhetoric for their own ends. These were deeply religious times, and the majority of the population, on all sides and at all levels of society, were true believers. Religion

was a consistently powerful rallying cry to pull disparate interest groups together, and a motivating force for the many genuinely devout people of the period. Religious symbols were powerful: fragments of the True Cross, mobile shrines and leadership from the clergy were all important features in raising morale and maintaining cohesion on the battlefield. But these were the trappings of recruitment and morale-building: symbols rather than fundamentals, symptoms rather than causes.

Nomadic activity was at the centre of the crusades and the defence of the crusader states. Nomadic invasions created the environment in which the crusades were made necessary.

Beyond the religious rhetoric, albeit often very genuine and inspirational, the crusades were fundamentally a movement to defend the sedentary Christian population of the region from nomadic incursions. Nomads created the situation in which the crusades could, initially at least, be successful, as they destabilised all the existing political entities in the region, replacing them with a volatile patchwork of small warlord-dominated city-states. Nomads determined the pattern of conflict in the region: what we rather egotistically call 'crusading warfare' was to a very large extent dictated by the very real dangers posed by nomadic light cavalry.



"In the middle of the 11th Century, a loose confederation of Turkic warbands, led by the Seljuk family, left their tribal steppe-lands north of the Caspian and Aral Seas and moved south."

All the figures seen throughout this article are by Gripping Beast.



“The sedentary societies tended to field heavy cavalry and blocks of close-order infantry.”

FORCES FOLLOWING THE FEATURES OF THE PEOPLES

It was this axis of conflict, the primal struggle between nomadic and sedentary groups, that shaped not just the causes of the warfare, but also its conduct. As one would expect, the sedentary societies tended to field heavy cavalry and blocks of close-order infantry. This was true of the Muslim Fatimid state just as much as the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem or the County of Tripoli. These were armies that had their roots in the towns or settled rural infrastructure of Europe and the Middle East.

Similarly, their main opponents had their origins on the steppes: nomadic or nomadic-heritage cavalry, led by an elite group of warlords with similar cultural roots in the hardships of life on the Eurasian plains. They tended to field armies based around high-quality horse archers, increasingly focused, as time went on and they became more settled, around a core of heavier 'askar cavalry (the more regular contingents of the Turkic-Syrian city states), though even they were still armed with bows as well as lances.

These nomadic or quasi-nomadic armies were no more familiar to the local peoples of Syria and Palestine than the knights or heavy infantry of the crusaders. They were poor by the standards of sedentary societies, they lacked technology or material resources beyond the animals they rode and herded. But they were mobile where the sedentary populations were fixed,

robust where the farmers were fragile. They were easily, almost inherently, militarised and they always had far less to lose.

The skills that a life of hardship and conflict gave them turned nomadic groups into natural warriors of the highest quality. Members of sedentary societies could learn to fight, but nomads were born to it. There would always be more villagers than nomads, but demilitarised peasants were hardly more effective in confronting them than the domesticated animals they were born to herd.

REDEPLOYING CRUSADERS - PROBLEMS FOR THE WARGAMES TABLE

Visual appearance of armies is just one way we must adjust our crusader armies to fit this more realistic and less 'religio-centric' approach. We still have to deal with the far deeper issue of how to field wargames armies from an 'anthropological' rather than religious perspective - how do we revise our thinking to reflect a sedentary/nomadic axis to the fighting and simulate some of the most fundamental but fluid battlefield manoeuvres of the pre-industrial age?



“The nomads tended to field armies based around high-quality horse archers.”

RE-VISUALISING THE CRUSADES - NON-RELIGIOUS 'WARS OF RELIGION'

Taking much of the religious fervour out of the equation has immediate implications for how we visualise (and therefore paint) our wargames armies for the period. Ethnicity and the visual signals that we associate with particular religions are far less clear cut than one might imagine:

TURN UP THE TURBAN PRESENCE

There was a huge 'Arab' component in most of the ostensibly Western armies of the crusader states. This showed in their appearance - there were far more turbans in 'crusader' armies than you would expect.

ARMENIANS APLENTY

The massive Armenian contribution to Frankish forces is often overlooked. Although these men were mainly Christians, they were also seen as 'heretics' from the perspective of Western Europe.



Their ethnicity was inevitably reflected in the ways they were employed, and the way they dressed - their characteristic small turbans should dominate the appearance of northern 'crusader' armies.

SLIP IN SOMETHING SUB-SAHARAN

There was a very substantial sub-Saharan African (and Christian) component in most Egyptian armies.

MERCUS GONNA MERC

With Frankish knights fighting for the Turks, Turkic light cavalry in crusader armies, Bedouin fighting for everyone (and no one but themselves!), there was a widespread use of inter-religious mercenaries on both sides. Business was business, regardless of religion.

Religion was often not the major consideration for desperate recruiting sergeants, and this was apparent in the look and feel of crusading armies.



Reassessing the crusades as anthropological wars, rather than religious ones, is a far from theoretical procedure, particularly on the tabletop. Fundamentally, it means that there are two quite different types of game to play - each of which needs us to use very different mechanisms.

We would never dream of conflating the Battle of the Little Bighorn (a sedentary versus nomads conflict) with the Battles of Antietam or Shiloh (sedentary versus sedentary conflicts) in 19th century North America. Quite rightly so! But in the crusades that is what we traditionally do.

For our wargaming purposes there are therefore two very distinctive kinds of anthropological conflicts in the Age of the Crusades and we can broadly apply them.

SEDENTARY VERSUS SEDENTARY

There are far more sedentary versus sedentary (SvS) conflicts than one might imagine. Typical configurations could include:

BYZANTINES AGAINST CRUSADERS

Generally allies, but relationships often took a turn for the worse, particularly with the northern crusader states, which had, in effect, been carved out of old Byzantine lands.

ON THE TABLETOP - SEDENTARY VERSUS SEDENTARY

These are not intrinsically difficult conflicts to simulate. The main characteristics of sedentary versus sedentary warfare were the same, regardless of the religion of the participants, whether they were Catholics, Shi'ite Muslims or Orthodox Greeks:

- There were large numbers of infantry involved - they should be the majority of all sedentary armies.
- Archery should similarly be focused on the infantry arm, rather than the cavalry, though there are, of course, exceptions.
- Armies should be slow to manoeuvre, usually operating around a central, semi-fixed core where the main commanders and baggage train take up their positions.
- The cavalry, regardless of how much protective clothing they wear, would normally operate as what we would describe in wargames terms as 'medium' or 'heavy' cavalry.

Heavy, medium, or light are, of course, very problematic terms to use in a more generalised sense, but do convey a view of how such troops might feature on the tabletop. Such cavalry operate in compact groups - lines rather than swarms - and seek victory through definitive close contact with the enemy.

All very familiar territory. So far so good?





"Crusaders against Crusaders."

CRUSADERS AGAINST CRUSADERS

This was not common, but it did happen - the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem was the senior of the crusader states, but the others occasionally took advantage of a regency or similar period of weakness to exert a bit more independence.

Similarly, headstrong lords occasionally went into rebellion - these tantrums were usually short lived (no one could sustain the luxury of disunity in the face of overwhelming numbers of Muslim enemies for too long), but there could be some nasty clashes in the short term.

FATIMID FIGHTING

There could be fighting between the Fatimid Egyptians and either the Byzantines (particularly before the arrival of the First Crusade) or the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, especially in the first decade of the twelfth century when the crusader states were woefully under resourced and still taking shape.

SEDENTARY VERSUS NOMADS

The less conventional, and far more problematic to simulate, nomads versus sedentary (NvS) scenarios are amongst the most difficult of military situations to recreate accurately on the table.

Although these are by no means the only kind of set piece encounter in crusading warfare (as we have seen), they were in many ways the most archetypal - it was, after all, the eruption of Turkic tribes into the Near East in the second half of the eleventh century that sparked the entire crusading movement. And it was the Turkic tribes' social composition as nomads (rather than their fairly lukewarm adherence to Islam), that gave warfare in the region its main thrust.

This anthropological mismatch presents profound challenges for the wargamer - but it is in trying to meet that challenge that we get closest to the dynamics of the warfare of the period. And it is these

dynamics that make wargaming the crusades so fascinating and so distinctive.

The nomads will tend to be largely cavalry armies, and although their elites will be more heavily armoured than the majority of their troops, they will generally be able to operate as what we would characterise as bow and javelin armed light cavalry. Even the heaviest of their troops would not be able to repel a charge by unbroken Frankish knights.

SWARMING AND FLANKING

They would operate as swarms, moving quickly to envelop the flanks and rear of enemy formations, inflicting cumulative casualties with archery. Perhaps even more damagingly than actual casualties, this method of attack would cause their enemy's unit cohesion to break down. Their greater manoeuvrability was the key to unnerving many enemy units, particularly those of lower calibre troops, even before the fighting had got fully underway.

The other key to the success of nomadic armies was not, perhaps surprisingly, their numbers. They were frequently described as 'hordes' but this was often down to their manoeuvrability making them appear far more numerous. Their success often lay in the high quality of their individual skills as warriors, completely counter to the horde perception.

They might have preferred, entirely reasonably, to inflict damage and disorientation on their enemies from a distance, but they were never scared of closing in for the kill, fighting fiercely with swords, maces and light spears.

It is this combination of disorientating manoeuvrability, long-range weaponry, and high morale which makes them such hard opponents to face on the wargames table.



"The nomads will tend to be largely cavalry armies ... They would operate as swarms."

ON THE TABLETOP - SEDENTARY VERSUS NOMADS

There are three key difficulties in conveying the strength of nomadic armies in your wargaming, and in developing practical mechanisms to recreate how this plays out.

1) EDGE OF THE TABLE FLANKS

Possibly the most daunting aspect of fighting a nomadic army was their ability to move quickly around their opponents, and to envelop them in a matter of minutes. The space limitations of the tabletop could mean that non-nomadic armies always have the luxury of impenetrable table flanks - anything to mitigate this will be extremely helpful and it is suggested that players attempt to artificially 'broaden' those flank areas by allowing the nomadic player to 'move off the table' if a flank can otherwise not be reached.

2) ENVELOPMENT

The process of, and the effect envelopment had on sedentary troops, is not just about casualties. The archery of a swirling, fast moving nomadic army will usually produce cumulative but relatively limited casualties - largely because they are being kept at a distance by archery from the large numbers of foot bowmen to be found in many sedentary armies.

Combined with the hugely disorienting effect of quickly surrounding an enemy, however, nomadic cavalry armies were able to degrade the effectiveness of an unnerved sedentary army to the point where it would be at risk of breaking - despite having absorbed relatively few casualties up to that point.

The really heavy casualties, of course, were inflicted once individual units (or the entire army) had broken. Creating this process of 'dissolution without casualties' in a game, however, is tricky - rules don't tend to be written with it in mind. Players might want to establish a modifier that can be applied to any damage an enveloping unit causes, allowing it to inflict more of a morale reduction than standard for each wound it inflicts - two successful hits would still only cause two



wounds, so the unit's strength wouldn't be largely diminished, but from a morale test perspective each wound could cause the equivalent of two wounds when it comes to morale tests on the first turn of envelopment. This could increase to the equivalent of three wounds in the next turn, and so on. Therefore, even if the enveloping unit only inflicts a total of four wounds in their second enveloping turn, it will have a far more catastrophic impact on morale, impacting that check as if the unit suffered 12 casualties.

3) THE TIPPING POINT

Nomadic armies, having disoriented and surrounded their enemy, would try to judge the right moment to move in for the kill. If their judgement was correct, their performance in hand-to-hand combat, as they transitioned

from long-range mobility to short-range contact, could be strangely effective.

Once again, this is tricky to recreate in games - how does the impact of lightly armed men on small ponies differ so, under the right circumstances, their melee effectiveness is temporarily enhanced? Again, we can look to enemy morale as our starting point. Take the morale modifiers from above (Envelopment) and, if they fail a 'tipping point test' they fight as if those 'morale casualties' are real casualties - much of their unit will be unable to partake in the combat.

You should, of course, bear in mind that these nomads were not supermen; high quality sedentary armies always had a good chance of defeating them if they could maintain sufficient discipline.

RELIGION AS A RALLYING CRY - ANTHROPOLOGY AS DRIVER

Wargaming the crusades is fundamentally about reflecting this changing dialogue between nomadic and sedentary societies, rather than about theological niceties. If we can detach ourselves from our Eurocentric tendencies, it is clear that the crusading armies were actors in, as opposed to directors of, the drama that unfolded in the Middle East from the late-eleventh century onwards.

All the major changes in the pace and direction of warfare in the region were dictated by nomadic and nomadic-heritage states, with their powerful cavalry armies, rather than being driven by sedentary societies.

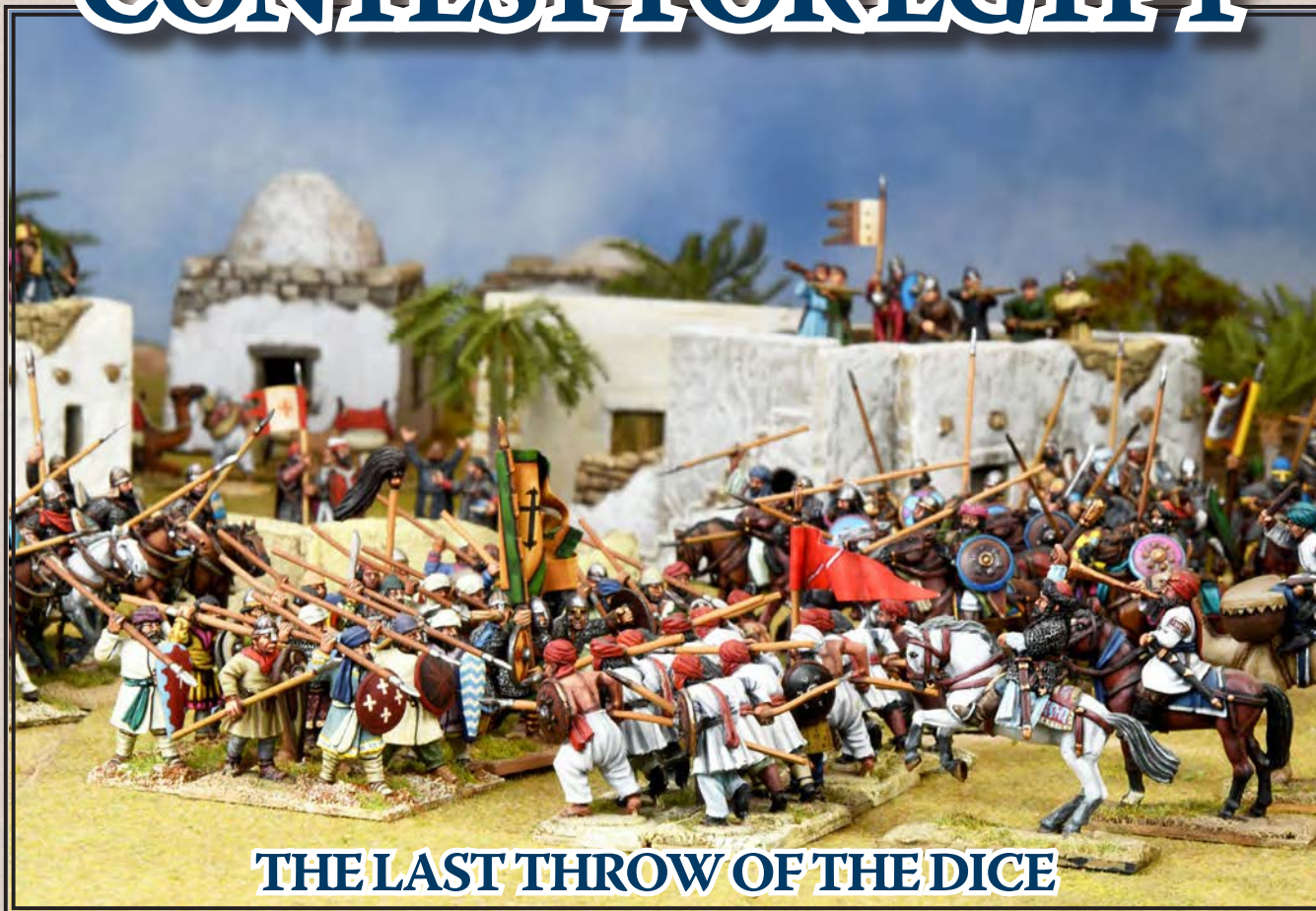
Religion had an interesting part to play and was always important to the players on the ground. But we need to keep a sense of perspective about its overall significance.

Dr Steve Tibble is the author of *The Crusader Armies* (Yale 2018), now out in paperback, and *The Crusader Strategy* (Yale 2020).



"The crusades were fundamentally a movement to defend the sedentary Christian population of the region from nomadic incursions."

THE CRUSADER CONTEST FOR EGYPT



THE LAST THROW OF THE DICE

The crusades are amongst the most colourful episodes in medieval warfare. But in this, the third in our series of articles looking at how we can wargame the crusader strategies of the twelfth century, it gets even better. Dr Steve Tibble takes up the story.

The 'Egyptian strategy' of the 1160s gives us truly vivid wargaming opportunities. Here are crusader knights and Turcoples, Armenian archers and Nubian slave-infantry, Turkic light cavalry and Bedouin - all fighting each other in desert sands, chasing up and down the Nile, engaging in brutal coastal sieges, or skirmishing in the shadow of the pyramids. Only the most jaded wargamer can fail to get excited by that.

EGYPT AS THE KEY TO THE HOLY LAND

Fighting in Egypt to protect the crusader states in Palestine and Syria seems counterintuitive, almost perverse. But with the Muslim enemy in Syria becoming ever more consolidated, the Franks were faced with the inevitable prospect of being destroyed piecemeal. The loss of Edessa in 1144 and the failure to take Damascus in 1148 showed

that crusaders had unequivocally failed to establish themselves inland - the Egyptian strategy was an inevitable consequence of this failure.

The status quo was not acceptable: the crusader states had only a very precarious and limited future ahead of them if they were confined to a string of coastal cities. They could be picked off one by one and would never have sufficient manpower for long-term survival. Egypt was the key to solving this dilemma, and by this time it was the only potentially sustainable hinterland still available.

There was a recognition on the part of the Franks that Egypt was critical if they were to have any long-term future. This belief was a central policy objective that transcended individual reigns, and clearly constituted an 'institutional' strategic view within what passed for the bureaucracy of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.

The great Fatimid military base of Ascalon, their last stronghold in Palestine, fell to the crusaders in 1153 - the Egyptian empire was visibly fading. It was not just the Bedouin and Turks who smelled blood. With Egypt newly vulnerable to attack and with little wriggle room left in Syria, the crusaders' decision to invade was inevitable. The only issue was when.

An aggressive southern front was opened up almost immediately. Soon after the fall of Ascalon, a Sicilian Norman fleet destroyed the important trading port of Tinnis, on the Nile Delta. And while Christian fleets dominated the Eastern Mediterranean, Frankish troops, and particularly the Templars, were increasingly contesting the border zones.

INVASION OF 1163

Inevitably, King Baldwin invaded. In 1161 he led his men across the

THE EGYPTIAN STRATEGY

From *The Crusader Strategy*. Courtesy of Yale University Press.



border with Egypt, down towards al-Arish and beyond. It is not clear whether this was a serious attempt at conquest, or merely a reconnaissance in force to test the capabilities of the Fatimid army. Perhaps it was an attempt to extort money to finance a more serious attempt at a later date. Certainly, the Fatimid government started paying protection money to the Franks from this time onwards, and was rapidly approaching 'vassal-state' status. The payments only stopped in 1163 when Baldwin III died of dysentery, aged just 33.

His brother Amalric succeeded him on the throne and pursued the Egyptian strategy with just as much enthusiasm. In September 1163, within a few months of his accession, he launched the first of five invasions of Egypt. Amalric 'assembled a strong force of knights and a large army and ... descended upon Egypt with a great host'.



Above: Crusader infantry by Perry Miniatures.

The Fatimid force was well equipped and looked great on paper. As always, however, they performed far less well on the battlefield than they did at palace duties. The Franks had made a policy of cultivating good relations with the local Bedouin and they recruited them as guides and as auxiliary cavalry. Despite having a 'countless multitude', the Egyptians were routed and the vizier 'lost the greater part of his men either by capture or death'. He was forced to retreat to Bilbais with the remnants of his forces. Frankish troops advanced to within 55 kilometres of Cairo, and were stopped only when the desperate Fatimid government deliberately flooded the Nile to hinder their advance. As Amalric wrote to King Louis VII of France shortly afterwards, the only barrier to success



was a lack of numbers. With assistance from Western troops, he suggested in his usual, slightly wheedling manner, 'Egypt could easily be marked by the sign of the Holy Cross'.

INVASION OF 1164

The logic of the Egyptian strategy was compelling for the Franks. Ominously, however, its merits were equally clear to Nur al-Din and his growing Syrian empire. Turkic troops, commanded by his Kurdish general Shirkuh (whose nephew was a young man named Saladin), invaded Egypt in an attempt to muscle their way into the fight for control.

Amalric was offered huge sums of money as an inducement by the Fatimids

to come back and encourage Shirkuh to leave. Accordingly, in July 1164 he 'marched forth at the head of his entire army and went down to Egypt a second time'. The Frankish troops and their new Egyptian allies put the citadel of Bilbais under siege and were eventually able to starve the Turks out.

But, as an almost inevitable consequence of the crusaders' lack of manpower, Turkic troops in Syria and the Golan were wreaking havoc in the absence of the main Frankish field army. The Franks were forced to return home. By October Amalric and his men were back in Jerusalem. He had led an ostensibly victorious army into Egypt, but in reality they had achieved little.

INVASION OF 1167

At the beginning of January 1167, word reached Cairo and Jerusalem that Shirkuh was preparing to invade Egypt yet again, leading a Turkic army across the Sinai desert.

The Fatimids submitted to the humiliation of having crusader knights in Cairo to negotiate a 'treaty of perpetual peace', and paying them handsomely for the privilege of agreeing to do so. With the funding in place, further Frankish reinforcements flowed in, including contingents led by Humphrey of Toron, the Royal Constable, and Philip of Nablus. Amalric could go on the offensive. A detachment of troops led by the Frankish lord Milo of Plancy and the son of the vizier overran an island which Shirkuh had garrisoned in an attempt to protect his flanks, and captured many of his troops.

Things were not looking good for the Kurdish general. Faced with the combined armies of Egypt and Jerusalem and the prospect of being surrounded, Shirkuh was forced to retreat. Resourceful as ever, he did the best he could under the circumstances. He withdrew upriver, forcing Amalric and his Egyptian allies to leave their infantry behind, taking them ever further from their protection, and ever deeper into areas of desert where the Frankish knights would find it difficult to launch one of their 'famous charges'.

Shirkuh eventually turned to face his pursuers. At the battle of Babayn, on 18 March 1167 (see sidebar), the Franks



Above: Perry Miniatures Armenians.



Above: Perry Miniatures Armenians.

and their Egyptian allies were handled very roughly by the superb Turkic light cavalry, but the redoubtable Amalric was eventually able to recoup the situation.

Shirkuh and his nephew led their men north to Alexandria, where they were trapped and besieged by the Franks and a Pisan squadron of ten galleys. Shirkuh escaped but Saladin, who had been left in command, was forced to surrender the city in return for safe conduct for himself and his men. Frankish troops entered Alexandria in triumph and installed a garrison there, with the agreement of a

compliant Fatimid government. Huge tribute payments were collected and the main body of the royal army returned home, reaching Ascalon on 21 August 1167. Frankish success in Egypt was at its height.

INVASION OF 1168

The following year, Amalric and his men were back again. Negotiations had opened up between the Fatimid government and Nur al-Din, as the Egyptians sought to play their powerful neighbours off against one another. In October 1168 Amalric launched a pre-

emptive strike. As an expression of long-term strategic focus, this could hardly be clearer – this was his fourth invasion of Egypt in five years.

The Egyptian military were incapable of meeting the Franks in the field. Amalric and his army marched unopposed down to Bilbais and captured it on 3 November, after a siege of only three days. Cairo lay open and ready for the taking. Everything was set for a resounding victory. It was not to be. The situation unravelled with appalling speed.

In the absence of military force, the vizier did everything he could to delay the inevitable, hoping against hope that Turkic troops would arrive in time to counterbalance the Franks. ‘What they lacked in strength’, wrote William of Tyre, ‘they accomplished by strategy and . . . subtle schemes’. Their most ‘subtle scheme’ was money, and even the promise of it might be enough. The authorities in Cairo bought time by haggling.

Amalric, a king with huge ambitions and an almost bankrupt state, was easily swayed. The Franks were offered huge sums of money - suspiciously huge sums in fact - to withdraw from the city. On the promise of 1,000,000 dinars, Amalric pulled his troops back. But the only money he ever saw was a down payment of 100,000 dinars. For that welcome but relatively modest sum the Egyptians bought themselves time, and the prospect of a relief force from Syria.

Amalric’s withdrawal was arguably the turning point of the entire history of the crusader states. The Franks had shown themselves strong enough to wound the already weakened Fatimid state – but not strong enough to supplant it.

On 2 December, as the Franks sat listlessly waiting for their promised money to appear, Nur al-Din sent Shirkuh and an army of 8,000 cavalry to Egypt. Amalric tried (and failed) to intercept them en route. Once the Turks had joined up with the regular Egyptian army

THE BATTLE OF BABAYN 1167

The Third Crusade’s Battle of Babayn provides wargamers with a wonderful opportunity to field many different troop types - the Fatimid Arab and Armenian cavalry, fighting alongside the Frankish knights and Turcopoles, facing off against Turkic steppe horsemen.

Find it online at www.wargamesillustrated.net



(who seem to have been able to field at least the same number of troops in their own right), Amalric's position was completely untenable.

Outnumbered, outmanoeuvred and demoralised, the Frankish army was forced to retreat. On 2 January 1169, without having faced Nur al-Din's armies in battle, they set off back to the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. The last best chance to save the Christian Middle East was gone.

INVASION OF 1169

For the first time, Nur al-Din's men were left in Egypt on their own, operating without fear of Frankish intervention. They exploited this situation to the full. They had been invited in under strict guarantees of safety, but these promises were soon forgotten. With hindsight, it is clear that the vizier had 'placed too much reliance on the goodwill of the Turk', but in practice he had little choice. He was killed by his new guests soon after the Franks had left, murdered by Saladin himself or by one of his bodyguards. There was no attempt to pass it off as a 'tragic accident' - instead, they just 'threw him to the ground, stabbed him through and through, and cut off his head'. The need for subtlety had passed.

With Turkic armies now in control, the Franks knew that their strategic situation had deteriorated significantly - as one perceptive chronicler wrote, 'all the regions around us are subject to the enemy' and 'all things are now for the worse'. Egypt was under competent military control, and its resources (including a professional navy and a huge revenue stream) could be turned against the crusader states to the north.

But they had one last chance. At the end of September 1169 a vast Byzantine fleet arrived at Acre, where it began detailed planning and liaison with the army of Jerusalem. It was said to have consisted of 'one hundred and fifty [galleys]', and was so large that it could not fit in the harbour.

The opportunity for the Franks was immense. The allied forces mustered together at Ascalon on 15 October. The land forces set off on 16 October and joined up with the Byzantine navy outside the fortified coastal city of Damietta on 27 October.

But there were problems from the very beginning. There was a pause of three days while the fleet settled in and the armies set up their encampments near the city. The delay was crucial. Saladin used this short respite to rush reinforcements down river, including 'a host of Turks, infinite in number, and ships loaded with armed men. Thus our army was obliged to look helplessly on while the city which earlier had been practically empty was filled to overflowing'.

Below: Gripping Beast Crusaders.



Eventually, the whole enterprise had to be called off. The Frankish army got back to Ascalon by forced marches, arriving in Jerusalem in time for a sad and subdued Christmas - the contest for Egypt had ended with a whimper.

EGYPT - TUNNEL VISION OR STRATEGIC INSIGHT?

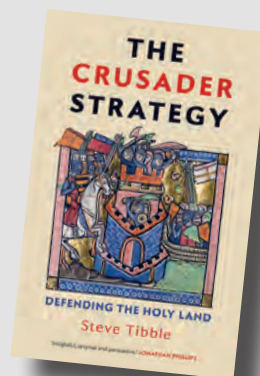
Campaigning in Egypt in the 1160s and beyond was clearly consistent. One could hardly accuse Baldwin and Amalric of being anything other than single-minded. But was it truly part of a long-term, planned approach? Was it really a 'strategy'?

Unlike the impression sometimes given by the chronicles, there was nothing happenstance about the planning for

DISCOUNT VOUCHER

Dr Steve Tibble's *The Crusader Strategy* (2020) is published by Yale University. His previous book, *The Crusader Armies* (2018), is now out in paperback.

You will find a discount voucher for Steve Tibble's latest book *The Crusader Strategy*, hardback on page 65.

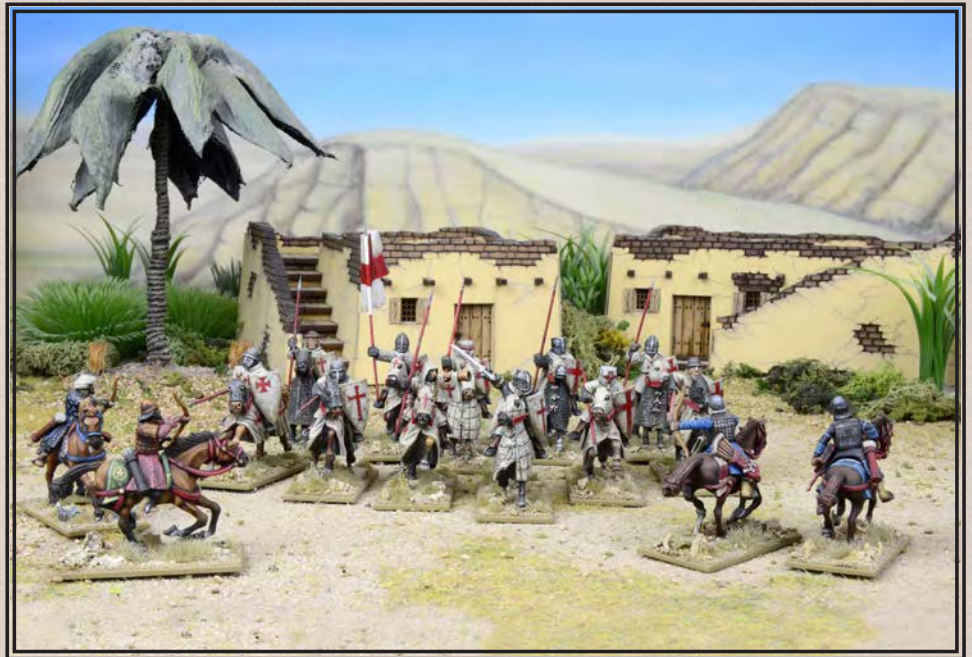


the Egyptian campaigns. On the contrary, a continual stream of diplomatic missions, letters and pleas for help were sent back to the West. Such was the huge volume of requests and the time lag involved in strategic planning, that it is even difficult to establish which campaign Amalric and his advisers were drumming up support for.

The Franks had started the decade at a disadvantage, with Egypt as their only strategic option for breaking the deadlock in a long-term and sustainable way. But by 1169, with Saladin in charge of the old Fatimid empire, even that last vestige of hope had been taken away. Surrounded and increasingly outnumbered, they needed to exert every sinew just to hang on to what they already had.

WARGAMING THE 'EGYPTIAN STRATEGY'

The wonderful thing about wargaming the 'Egyptian strategy' is that it creates so many new opportunities to field a wide range of medieval troop types across the spectrum of different tabletop settings. For the crusaders we have local Frankish settlers, Turcopoles, volunteers from France, Germany and England, Byzantine regulars, Sicilian-Norman knights and sailors, and Italian city state naval contingents. For the



Above: Gripping Beast Crusaders and Seljuks (acting as Egyptian allies).

Fatimid Egyptians we can call on Arabs, Armenians and Nubian infantry - most of whom, ironically, seem to have been Christians. And for the Syrian armies we will need Turkic light cavalry and Kurds - so many people want to claim the heritage of Saladin's victories that it is easy to forget that he and his uncle Shirkuh were actually Kurds, rather than Arabs or Turks.

The types of game on offer are also similarly varied, with huge scope for

imaginative reworking. On a macro level, we have traditional campaigning, with Egyptian, Syrian and Frankish armies all manoeuvring across the desert in what was often a three way Mexican standoff. We have fully pitched, stand-up battles like Babayn. And we have a series of evocative, visually stunning sieges, on the Egyptian coast, on the Nile Delta, and further inland.

So many choices for gaming - enjoy!



Above: A colourful collection of Perry Miniatures from their 'Crusader' range.

PIRATES, SAINTS, AND CRUSADERS



HOW AN ENGLISH BUCCANEER SAVED THE CRUSADES

Steve Tibble casts his expert eye over the adventures of Godric of Finchale, the unlikely individual who was pivotal in the continuation of the crusader states. The history concludes with an exciting, fast-paced *Never Mind the Boathooks* naval scenario.

The Venn diagram of medieval pirates, saints, crusaders, and Englishmen has an extremely small, almost negligible, point of intersection; at that point sits an extraordinary Norfolk sailor named Godric of Finchale, a man who changed the course of history. In this article I'll give Godric his time in the limelight and on the tabletop!

The horse, in a spectacularly distressed state, moved slowly down the road towards the small crusader port of Arsuf. The beast was well-bred and had once been well-groomed, but he would not now fetch much more than meat price in a market.

The bedraggled knight who rode him was in little better condition. Arrow wounds leaked over his filthy body and anyone unlucky enough to be close was met with the acrid stench of fear, sweat, dirt, and dust. He had been sleeping rough for several days and was traumatised, in a deep state of shock.

A BEGINNING

This wounded and broken man was King Baldwin I of Jerusalem. He may have been bedraggled, but he was also the leader of the senior of the four crusader states which had been set up to defend the Holy Land. His horse was no ordinary beast either; Gazelle was Baldwin's trusted warhorse and a minor celebrity in his own right.

But it is the story's third hero - a man who Baldwin had yet to meet - who is the most striking character of all in this tale. He was an Englishman, far from home, travelling around the fragile war zone that was the Eastern Mediterranean of the early 12th Century. He was a ship's captain and, when he needed to be, a rough man of action. Bizarrely, adding an even more exotic job title to an already unlikely list, he was later to become a saint. Even more exceptionally, this man of a strangely eclectic career path, was also a pirate. Godric - or St Godric as his friends came to call him - was a truly fascinating man!

There was already an English heritage of pilgrimage, armed or otherwise, to the Holy Land. The exploits of the very earliest crusaders had turbo-charged that process of militant religiosity. Stories about the larger-than-life celebrities of the First Crusade were eagerly devoured by the Anglo-Norman nobility and their knights. This quickly transferred into more active expressions of admiration; the tradition of English crusading was born.

GODRIC OF FINCHALE

The pirate hero of our tale, Godric of Finchale, had many claims to fame. He was born around 1065-1071, into the most tumultuous period of English history - just as the old Scandinavian culture was about to be torn apart, and England was forcibly thrust into the mainstream of European culture. This was a time of danger and change, but for those resilient enough to take it, it was also a time of opportunity.

He came from the bottom rungs of what might charitably be described as the lower middle-classes. His forbearers were firmly on the losing side, and he had an Anglo-Saxon peasant background, rather than coming from the Norman nobility.

But Godric was an exceptional man in many ways. We even know what he looked like, so those who want to do some conversion work to create a character figure for skirmish gaming can have a pretty good idea of the desired outcome. Physically, he certainly looked more like a merchant-adventurer than a ploughman. He was a strong and vigorous man, 'of middle stature, broad shouldered, and deep-chested.' He had 'a long face, extremely clear and piercing grey eyes, bushy eyebrows, a broad forehead [and] a nose of comely curve, and a pointed chin'. And to complete the jaunty, nautical air, he also sported a beard that was 'thick, and longer than the ordinary.' Always a man of contrasts and extremes, his hair at the time of his

adventures in the Holy Land was black, but in later years became 'white as snow'.

Godric was a man of imagination. He grasped the opportunities for international trade that the new regime offered, and he built up a small trading business operating across the North. The proceeds of his commercial activities were reinvested in shipping and, what were to eventually become, pirate vessels.

IN THE CRUSADER STATES

Godric became increasingly pious as he grew older and more successful. Although he had been intimately involved in the rough end of commerce for many years, he felt the need for repentance. Pilgrimage and crusade (terms which were largely interchangeable at the time) were the obvious way to proceed.

He visited the crusader states twice (once in c.1102 and again in c.1108), and on both occasions he threw himself wholeheartedly into the role of pilgrim, alongside whatever other commercial, raiding, or military opportunities presented themselves. He fasted, he prayed, and he visited as many of the Holy Places as possible, but he was also there as a crusader and as a man of action. He and his contemporaries saw no contradiction in this; his biographer wrote that, as a pilgrim, he bore on his shoulders 'the banner of the Lord's Cross' and in describing the banner, he used the suitably military phrase familiar to medieval wargamers, '*vexillum crucis*'.



Infantry figures from Footsore Miniatures' Outremer range. Mounted models from Fireforge and Perry Miniatures.

Presumably, this more active devotional role also encompassed his activities as a pirate, attacking Muslim shipping as he sailed down to the Middle East, and harassing the Egyptian naval squadrons which resupplied the Fatimid coastal cities of the Palestinian seaboard. There was little tension between the roles - crusader-pilgrims were expected to be devout, but they were also acting as the soldiers of Christ. Godric was simultaneously a crusader, a pirate, and genuinely devout; he saw that each role sustained and supplemented the other. He and his fellow crusaders were working to recover the old Christian heartlands of the Holy Land and to defend the local Christian communities; they knew that this was always unlikely to be achieved peacefully. Men of God needed to be, on occasion, men of action.

Later in life, Godric described some of his behaviour and personality at this time as verging on the abominable, more suited (appropriately enough) to a career as a pirate or venture capitalist than to the quiet, reflective life of a hermit. He later admitted that he had lied, cheated, and generally led a dissolute sort of lifestyle.

For Godric, however, redemption was at hand - and in a very tangible way.



Godric (centre) being played by Hugues de Payens, from our Giants in Miniature range, surrounded by Footsore Miniatures.

DISASTER AND DELIVERANCE

On 17 May 1102, King Baldwin I of Jerusalem set off to intercept what he probably believed to be a large but lightly armed Muslim raiding party. He had with him a mainly mounted force, consisting of perhaps somewhere between 200 and

700 knights, most probably towards the lower end of that range. What Baldwin did not realise, but was soon to find out, was that this was the main Egyptian field army; his tiny cavalry force was facing perhaps some 15,000 men, rather than just a few hundred bandits.



Godric's ship in Arsuf Harbour. MDF vessels by Sarissa Precision.

When Baldwin saw them, he was appalled by the extent of his mistake, but by then it was too late to do anything about it. The chronicler Albert of Aachen, who later interviewed some of the survivors, wrote that the Fatimid forces were so close that the crusader heavy cavalry had no opportunity to manoeuvre or to disengage. The king charged, hoping to fight his way through, but his men were massively outnumbered and outflanked. Casualties amongst the Frankish nobility were horrendous.

Baldwin, surrounded by his tough bodyguards, was luckier than most. He and a group of some fifty knights fought their way through the Egyptian line. They managed to make it to the rudimentary refuge offered by a newly built tower in the nearby town of Ramla, pursued closely by Fatimid cavalry. By nightfall the Franks were surrounded, and the enormity of the disaster gradually sank in. With half of the nobility and government dead, and the kingdom's heavy cavalry destroyed, the military situation was dire.

The king - brave, impetuous, or reckless, depending on your point of view - decided to try to break out before the siege became impossibly tight. Mounted on his charger, Gazelle, he and his squire, Hugh of Brulis, burst out through a breach in the wall of the courtyard, accompanied only by three knights, who acted as a form of suicide squad to buy time for him to make good his escape.

For three harrowing days, Baldwin hid in the nearby foothills, evading the Egyptian scouts who were out scouring the land for him. Exhausted and on the verge of mental and physical collapse, he eventually found a road he recognised, and stumbled down to the newly captured Frankish port of Arsurf, on the coast north of modern-day Tel Aviv.

Baldwin's survival was central to the survival of the crusader states. Most of the survivors of the Frankish government had gathered, together with their families, at their port of Jaffa. They waited to hear the latest communiqué from the front, to find out if their king was alive or dead; if the news was as bad as many suspected, they were packed and ready to sail back to Europe. The crusades had barely started but they were almost over.

It was essential that Baldwin was taken back to his people, so he could reassure those who were about to give up and then start to gather a new army around him, but this was enormously difficult. The Frankish garrison of Arsurf was surrounded and the road to Jaffa was definitively blocked for the foreseeable future. The only other way out was by sea, but the port was heavily blockaded



Egyptian seamen attempt to block Godric's breakout.

by the Fatimid navy, with Muslim ships on continuous patrol and sailing close to the harbour's entrance. That route too looked impassible... but it is here that our pirate hero enters history in the most spectacular fashion.

GODRIC THE SAVIOUR

While the king recovered himself, Godric studied the blockading ships and decided that there was a way he could take the king back to Jaffa. He prepared his ship, which was referred to, as one might expect for a pirate coming from the North Sea, as the type 'commonly called a buss'. Everything that might slow the vessel was stripped out. He and his men would sail straight through the weakest point between the blockading Egyptian squadrons, but to do this they had to set sail in broad daylight to ensure a clear line of sight.

Their main advantage was the surprise afforded by undertaking a scheme that seemed like utter folly. It was so foolhardy, so dangerous, that the Muslims might not immediately realise what was happening and would react slowly as a result. It was incredibly risky, but there was no alternative; the king had taken seven days to recover and if he did not get back to Jaffa very soon, the settlers would assume the worst and return to the West. The crusading dream of recovering the Christian Middle East would be over before it had properly begun.

Godric managed to get the king on board, together with a small bodyguard. With only a small chance of success, Godric and the king acted with the bravado of the desperate. Albert of Aachen wrote that the pirate ship sailed with Baldwin's 'banner fixed to a spear and raised in the air to catch the sun's rays, so that this sign of his would be recognised by the Christian citizens and they would have

confidence in the king's survival', all of which was fine in theory, but Godric still needed to fight his way through.

Not surprisingly, the Egyptian navy 'saw and recognised his sign', and they tried to intercept them close in, by the harbour mouth, 'at that place where the city was surrounded by sea'. The entire squadron was soon bearing down on the English pirate, and 'they met him in twenty galleys and thirteen of the ships which they commonly call cats, wanting to encircle the king's buss' - hence the traditional medieval complaint: you wait all day for a northern trading vessel to appear, and then three come along at once!

The seamanship of Godric and his veteran crew was their only hope. The Egyptian ships were sluggish, turning slowly as 'the waves of the sea in front of them were swelling and resisting'. While they struggled to manoeuvre, Godric dodged through the gaps that opened between the enemy ships and struck out for more open waters. Eventually, 'the king's' buss was sliding and flying on an easy and speedy course among the stormy waters, and he suddenly arrived in the harbour of...Jaffa, his buss having given the enemy the slip'.

Godric, a commoner (and a pirate commoner at that), had clearly saved the day, but the chroniclers felt the need to give Baldwin at least some of the credit. One contemporary history suggested, entirely implausibly, that the king 'shot and wounded six of the Saracens with his bow from the little vessel'.

But everyone knew the truth.

It was as if Jack Sparrow had rescued the British Empire - an English pirate had changed the course of the crusades.

SCENARIO: ESCAPE FROM ARSUF



The port and citadel of Arsuf was to become an important crusader fortification, but in 1102 it was just a small walled town with a famously dangerous and inadequate port. This was usually a problem for Frankish sailors (and pirates) but in this instance it was probably helpful - the Egyptian blockading squadron were unable to get as close in as they would have liked. This enforced distancing, and the effect this had in forcing the Fatimid galleys to spread out, gave Godric his chance of success.

The scenario starts in the small port of Arsuf. The crusaders have one ship, a buss captained by Godric of Finchale, the unlikely veteran pirate, venture capitalist, and saint. On board are twelve armoured and elite Frankish Men-at-Arms and twelve English pirate-sailors (Shooters in *Never Mind the Boathooks*).

Also on board is King Baldwin. He is a brave warrior but still recovering from his ordeals of the previous two weeks. He is fighting below par, and his precious cargo, so his men will try to keep him heavily protected, placed towards the rear, if they are boarded.

The Egyptian/Fatimid navy of the time was large but did not have a reputation for excellence or operational cohesion. They had perennial recruitment problems and their ships will be less well captained and crewed. Their marines will be of lower quality, armed with the usual array of hand-to-hand weapons, and a high proportion of crossbows.

The crusaders will have a good chance of success if, as happened historically, they are able to evade the numerous Fatimid galleys. If they stop and are forced into a fight, however, their chances of success diminish with every passing turn.

The stakes are high, almost binary - an Egyptian success could easily have led to the collapse of the nascent crusader states and the end of the crusades, while Baldwin's survival ensured that he led the tiny Frankish army to a resounding victory just a few days after his safe arrival in Jaffa.

Strangely enough, this tiny naval skirmish, easy to play out on the wargames table, is a potential pivot point in world history.

Godric's flight with King Baldwin and his breaking of the Egyptian blockade can be played as a *Never Mind the Boathooks* scenario with the following rules.

THE MODELS

Never Mind the Boathooks was designed for naval warfare in the 14th and 15th Centuries, but it works perfectly well for the 'crusader era'. At the risk of stating the obvious, the Fighting Crew models for the *Escape from Arsuf* scenario should come from appropriate collections; crusader/Norman foot knights and archers/crossbowmen, along with *Armies of Islam/11th Century Arab* infantry for the Egyptians. We used models from *Footsore Miniatures' Outremer* range in our photos.

If you have specific Crusader era ships and boats in your collection, great, if not, generic 'Medieval' naval models will be fine. We used models from Sarissa Precision's *Medieval Fleet*.



FORCES

The Crusaders

GODRIC'S BUSS

Treat as a Cog, with the following exceptions:

- No Fighting Top allowed.
- No Gunners or artillery.

Godric is an exceptional captain and his vessel benefits from the following:

- Movement under sail: +1 to all dice rolls.
- Grappling: When any vessel tries to grapple Godric's buss it must roll 4+ for success (rather than 3+).
- Twice during the game Godric's player may choose to Move two squares rather than (the normal) one.

GODRIC HAS THE COMMAND CLASS OF HERO.

King Baldwin, who is a passenger on Godric's Buss, must be identified to both players before the start of the game. He has no specific role within the game (other than to avoid being killed!) but is included as an additional man-at-arms figure.

The Fighting Crew rules conform to those in *Never Mind the Boathooks*.

SUPPORTER VESSELS

Although not detailed in contemporary texts Godric's breakout game will benefit from him being supported by two Pinnaces. These two vessels use the normal *Never Mind the Boathooks* rules, with the following exceptions:

- No Gunners or Spearmen.
- They may not board any enemy vessels - their task is to obstruct and irritate the opposition.

SAME SCENARIO, 400 YEARS HENCE

Never Mind the Boathooks players whose interest (or figure collections) don't stretch back to the 11th Century should not hesitate to make use of this scenario by setting it in the regular setting of 15th Century Western Europe. Godric's later medieval descendent could quite easily be breaking free from the blockade of a French or Flemish port, with an important English dictinary or cargo.



The Egyptians

The blockading fleet consist of: two Cogs, three Galleys, and one Pinnacle. NB: We can afford to be quite flexible here - if your collection contains e.g. three Cogs and two Galleys, that's fine - go with what you have available.

Use the *Never Mind the Boathooks* rules for these vessels with the following exception:

- No Gunners or artillery.

All Egyptian Captains are Dolts, with a Command Class of 1. The Admiral is a Commander, with a Command Class of 2.

SET UP

A 6' x 4' playing area is ideal, with a port (Arsuf) at one short table edge. NB: If you don't want to go to the trouble of representing the port, no problem - it can be just off table.

The Egyptian Fleet

All the Egyptian vessels are placed first, in random locations on the board. Use any method to randomly distribute the models across the length and breadth of the board.

The Crusaders

During the first turn the Crusader player can bring their vessels into play on any square next to the port.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The Crusaders

Need to exit the far table edge with King Baldwin and Godric still alive.

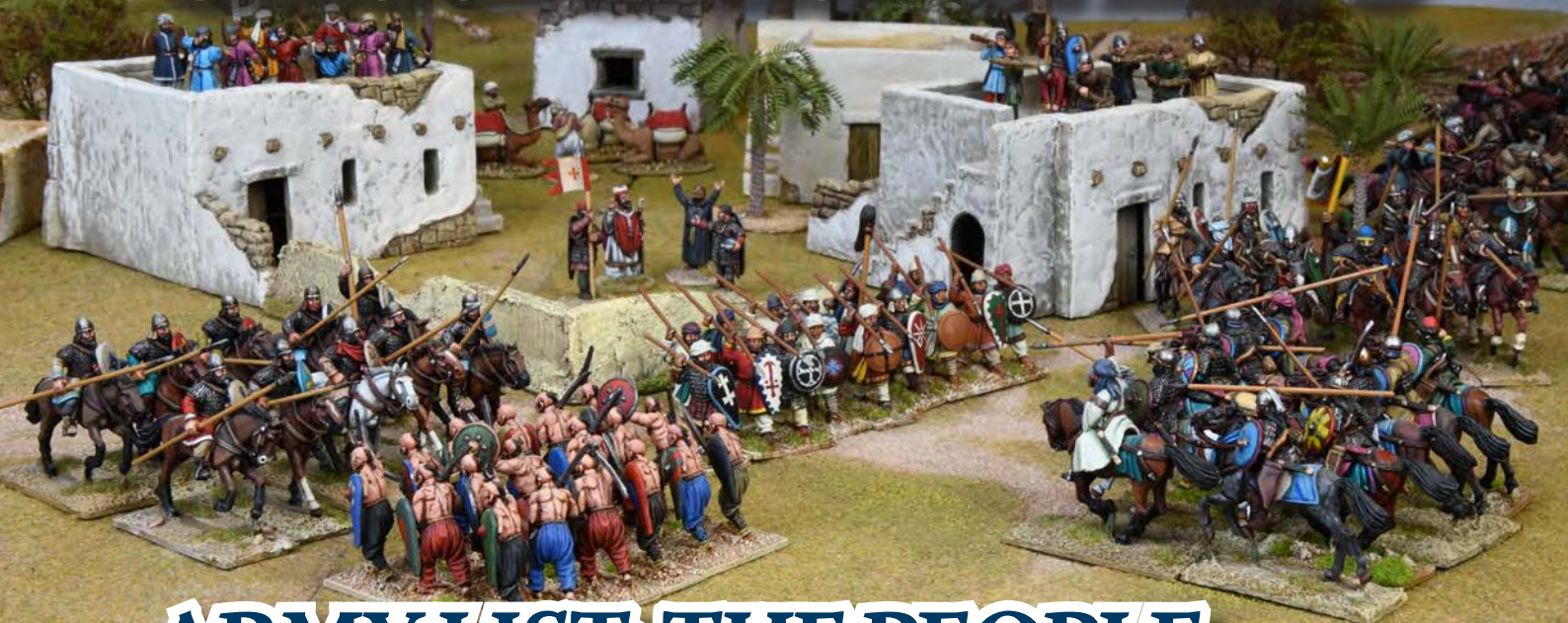
The Egyptians

Stop Godric. Kill him and King Baldwin.

Enjoy and good luck!



REIMAGINING THE CRUSADES - PART 3



ARMY LIST: THE PEOPLE

In this article, part of a short series looking at how to wargame the crusades in the light of the latest archaeological and academic evidence, Dr Steve Tibble turns to the vital tool that helps us construct the armies we field: the Army List.

Wargamers tend to assume, not unreasonably, that crusading warfare was primarily that of newly arrived European forces, pitched against local Muslim armies. And that is generally mirrored in the way we approach the appearance of our armies on the wargames table. Crusader or Frankish armies were, one imagines, generally made up of crusaders or Franks. And their Syrian or Egyptian opponents presumably fielded armies of Syrians and Egyptians.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

FRANKISH MANPOWER

We need to be very circumspect about the number of 'European' troops we are looking to field, for instance.

The shortage of crusaders in the very early days was extreme. Most of the veterans of the First Crusade stayed in Palestine just long enough to defeat the Egyptians at Ascalon in August

1099, a few weeks after the recapture of Jerusalem, but even then they were heavily outnumbered. After that, most of them were gone.

Those left behind in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, the main crusader state, had only one small port, Jaffa, and a barely defensible road from there on towards the capital, Jerusalem. There was scarcely an army worthy of the name. As one chronicle put it, the 'departure of many heavily armed mounted troops from the army so reduced the number

of such soldiers ...that barely two hundred [knights]... remained to defend Jerusalem'. Each of the main Muslim-held coastal cities could individually raise a far bigger army than this, as could each of the major Turkic- governed states of the hinterlands, such as Damascus or Aleppo.

The numbers of European knights available in the Latin East grew only very slowly. There seem to have been no more than 250 knights at any given time during the first years of the kingdom



Frankish manpower! Figures by Perry Miniatures.

of Jerusalem. When King Baldwin I collected his men and set out on an expedition down to the desert regions on the Egyptian border at the end of 1100, we are told that his entire field army consisted of only 'one hundred and fifty knights and fifty infantry'. Crusaders continued to arrive from the West but the situation was not helped by the high mortality rates. Every time the army went into battle the small number of elite heavy cavalry were inevitably in the forefront of the fighting. Even in a battle that was won, casualties among such a small group were hard to bear. When battles were lost, however, such as at the second battle of Ramla in 1102, losses were catastrophic. Many senior positions in the Latin Kingdom were filled by individuals who we hear of once or twice, and are then quickly replaced by an equally short-lived successor.

The lack of knights, and the urgent need to find replacements for them, was reflected throughout the army as a whole. Every effort had to be made to increase the Christian population in order to build a sustainable pool of manpower available for military service.

EUROPEAN COLONIES

One obvious solution was to grow the Frankish population by increasing the number of settled 'European' families in the region.

Ironically, one of the most telling clues as to how we should visualise crusader armies is contained in one of the least visual sources: an obscure legal record from 1114, referring back to the events

of 1099 or 1100. The document talks of huge swathes of land in a strategically important area to the north of Jerusalem which were being used for the settlement of some of the remaining soldiers of the First Crusade and their families. If men were to be encouraged to stay, they needed to have something to stay for.

But, most importantly of all, they also had to have the emotional attachment and practical support of building new families. We know that there were women on the First Crusade, but mortality rates on the march across Asia Minor had been high. Most of the female survivors, like the men, soon went back to the West. So many, probably most, of the wives at the heart of these new families and communities were local Arab Christians. Their children were of mixed race and, from the 1120s onwards, as the offspring of the new settlers came of military age, we need to visualise even the 'Frankish' elements of crusader armies as being far more ethnically diverse than has generally been presumed. This was just the beginning of a huge colonisation programme. But far from being isolated 'white settlers', the soldiers provided by these settlements were always culturally integrated into the local region. After a few years, most of the 'Frankish crusader' families were of mixed race, with Palestinian, Syrian or Armenian blood, and that process had started at the very top.

Large numbers of marriages with local women took place at all levels of the social spectrum, from the royal family downwards. Over time, this created

a significant new 'local Frankish' population. This was distinctive enough to eventually cause friction with later generations of crusaders arriving from Europe. Arguments among Frankish forces in the aftermath of the failed siege of Damascus in 1148, for instance, or after the defeat at Hattin in 1187, reflected not just differences in military opinion but also elements of cultural and racial prejudice against the *pulani*, as the Frankish or semi-Frankish population of the crusader states became known.

In fact, Frankish colonisation was widespread and, by the standards of the age, extremely sophisticated: more organised, better structured and carried out on a far bigger scale than previously imagined. These were communities of mixed race 'crusader' yeoman farmers, men prepared to fight for their land as they had nowhere else to go.

As well as a growing number of Frankish villages and small towns, there was also an increasingly large European population in each of the main coastal cities. Again, as the century progressed, and as a greater degree of stability was introduced into the region, particularly from c.1125-70, it became easier to attract new urban settlers.

Less predictable but nonetheless helpful, were the large numbers of pilgrims or crusader groups who came to the East. The difference between 'pilgrims' and more formally armed 'crusaders' was less profound than one might imagine. A pilgrim who had a sword, or who was



Mounted knights of the colonies.
Figures by Perry Miniatures.

given a crossbow, could become a useful military asset. And many of those whom we tend to think of as being on a military expedition, as crusaders, were as devout as unarmed pilgrims. Some might stay permanently, but most did not. While they were there, however, they were a potentially useful source of manpower and could often be coaxed or conscripted into helping in times of emergency.

LOCAL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

Saying that there were very few Europeans or crusaders in the Middle East in 1099 is not the same as suggesting that there were not many Christians, however. When he started negotiations with Saladin during the Third Crusade, King Richard I referred, with genuine indignation, to the fact that the Muslim armies had invaded Palestine and were now in possession of 'our lands'. Saladin's own advisers, heavily involved in the talks, said that the precondition Richard set down for progress was that the Muslims 'should restore all the lands to us and return to your own countries'. This reads strangely to modern eyes but it was not just a rhetorical flourish or a negotiating stance. When he said 'our lands', he was referring to the Christian lands: the heartlands of the religion, whose people had been subjected to Muslim invasion and rule at different times, but who, even in the twelfth century, were still very largely Christian.

MAGNA MAHOMERIA

The settlement at Magna Mahomeria is a good example of the Frankish 'yeoman militia', though, as in so many instances, we only know of its military resources by coincidence.

In the winter of 1170, an infantry contingent from Magna Mahomeria arrived at Gaza to join the Frankish army mustering to halt an invasion by Saladin. They were described as 'a company of sixty-five light-armed youths, valiant fighters'.

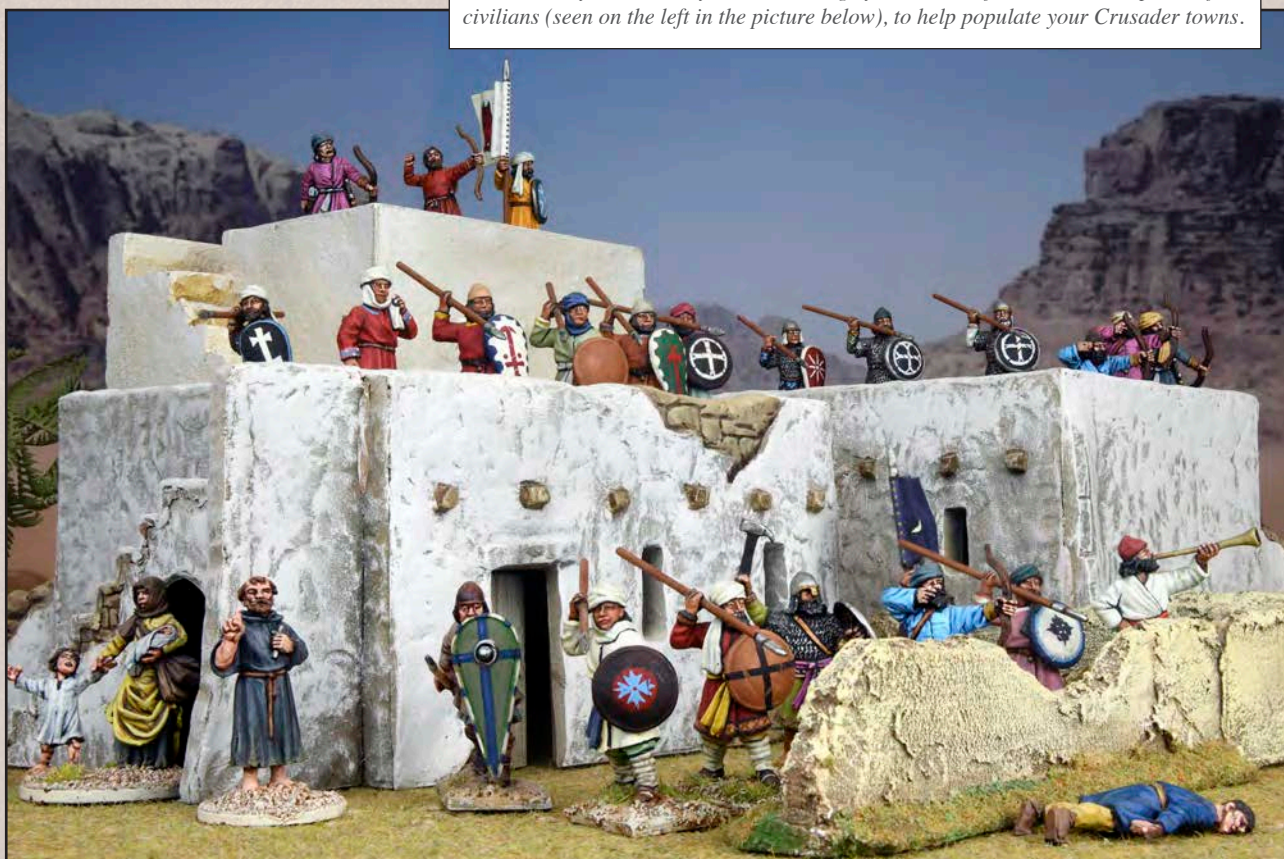
The young men of Magna Mahomeria's militia were still in position, defending the gate to which they had been assigned, when the enemy broke into the city along the walls in between the gate and the citadel. The Frankish youths were cut off from the rest of the garrison and, 'taken by surprise, [they] were unable to resist longer and perished by the sword.' Particularly in the 1170s and 1180s, as the kingdom of Jerusalem was thrown onto the defensive, contingents of farmers and artisans from Frankish settlements across the kingdom would be called on to defend their land.

There was no major attempt to reconcile or clarify religious differences between the various Christian sects. You could afford to take a hard line on heresy if you lived in western Europe. But if you lived in Palestine or Syria, you needed all the help you could get. Instead, the crusaders focused on the far more practical approach of just trying to rub along together, and defending the Holy Land.

ARMENIANS

There were particularly large numbers of Christians in the northern crusader states, the most prominent of which were the Armenians. It is hard to overestimate their influence or their military contribution. Both of the first two kings of Jerusalem had previously been counts of Edessa, and most of the rulers of Jerusalem were at least partly of Armenian descent.

Again these figures are by Perry Miniatures, they are in fact 'Armenians'. For our game we felt they had the right 'colour' to be used as members of the local Christian community. In the Perry Crusader range you will also find several nice packs of civilians (seen on the left in the picture below), to help populate your Crusader towns.





Armenian knights. Figures by Perry Miniatures.

Their influence in the crusader states was also a recognition of their military contribution. In a region which had seen most of the population deliberately demilitarised since classical times, the Armenians were always exceptional. Occupying harsh lands and on a sensitive border march, the area had a tendency to breed good soldiers, and the aggressive, entrepreneurial spirit that often characterises

people who have no obvious fall-back position. Even before the Muslim invasions the Armenians had occupied a buffer zone between Rome and the Persian empire to the east. For centuries before the crusaders arrived, they were stuck between the Byzantines to the west, co-religionists who viewed them as heretics, and the Muslim Turkic nomad tribes filtering off the steppes into the richer lands of Asia Minor.

Mobile as ever, we find evidence of Armenian knights throughout the northern crusader states and even further south, in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. There was an early influx of Armenian knights into Galilee, probably from 1113 onwards, and they became part of the elite 'crusader' forces on the eastern frontiers facing off against the armies of Damascus.

The role of the Armenian community in the defence of the crusader states is generally underplayed by chroniclers who were uninterested in ethnicity and keen to focus on the exploits of the elite Frankish knights. Where evidence is available, however, they seem to have played a surprisingly prominent role.

In the Antiochene campaign of 1119, for instance, it is only because of a stray remark by one of the chroniclers (himself a native Christian) that we discover that almost half the 'crusader' cavalry referred to in all the other battle reports were in

ARMENIANS: 'SPECIALIST SKILLS'

Armenian soldiers provided important military specialists for the crusader armies. The fact that they had developed and maintained such specialisms showed the extent to which these skills were exercised. At the critical siege of Tyre in 1124, for example, the crusaders' eventual success was largely due to the expertise of an Armenian artillery specialist called Havedic, one of the veteran professionals whose services were constantly in high demand. A region in a perpetual state of war was a natural training ground and an active marketplace for high-calibre mercenaries such as this.



Armenian infantry. Figures by Perry Miniatures.

fact Armenian. We do not know how many of the professional infantry in the army were locally recruited (presumably a very significant proportion), but we do know that the majority of the army were non-feudal Armenian volunteers serving as auxiliaries, 'who had gone to battle for the sake of pay' or plunder. And after the army's crusader commander had been killed, it was an Armenian knight who led the last-ditch defence around the fragment of the True Cross, rallying the survivors of the Frankish centre and vanguard in a forlorn attempt to fend off the Turkic cavalry. So, in one of the most pivotal battles of the crusader states, we find that not only were almost half the 'Frankish' cavalry actually local Christians but most of the infantry were too, and that the senior figure in charge of the last stand was Armenian.



Armenian archers. Figures by Perry Miniatures.

ARMENIANS: 'SPECIAL FORCES' AT KHARTPUR

One of the most heroic and audacious feats of arms ever undertaken by a 'crusader' army was in fact carried out by a unit consisting entirely of Armenian troops.

In the spring of 1123 King Baldwin II of Jerusalem was on campaign on the frontiers of Edessa when he was captured by Turkic troops as he crossed a tributary of the Euphrates. Baldwin was sent to join other Frankish prisoners of war in the dungeons of Kharput, a Muslim castle about 150 km from Edessa's northern borders.

Armenian troops in Edessa were determined to do whatever they could to rescue their Frankish overlord. A small group of elite troops, between 15 and 50 in number, set off on a long-range raid, deep into the heart of enemy territory, to rescue. They were able to talk their way into the castle, and soon freed King Baldwin, but the region was immediately flooded with Turkic cavalry, putting the castle under siege.

The Armenians were eventually promised their lives if they gave up the castle, but, in the event, the agreement was ignored. They were all tortured to death. The most striking part of the whole enterprise, however, quite apart from the skill and bravery of those who carried out the mission, was the way it showed that native Christian troops were so fully integrated within the crusaders' military system.

THE MARONITES

The Maronites were another warlike Christian community (then and now) based in the mountains of the County of Tripoli and were generally well disposed towards the Franks. William of Tyre described them as 'a race of Syrians . . . by no means few in numbers; in fact they were generally estimated at more than 40,000 . . . They were a stalwart race, valiant fighters, and of great service to the Christians in the difficult engagements which they so frequently had with the enemy.' William was perhaps being a little over-enthusiastic with regard to numbers, but he was correct in making the point that there were a lot of them, and they were useful men to have on your side in a fight: this needs to be reflected in our army lists.

Turcopole cavalry. Figures by Perry Miniatures.



ARAB CHRISTIANS

Local Arab Christians were present in large numbers in the major centres of the crusader states, each of the capital cities and the coastal towns. They were also in many of the rural areas, even in the more far-flung places such as the south of the Transjordan, which had always been on the fringes of Christianity.

It is hard to be exact about the extent to which Arab Christians featured in Frankish armies. At the upper end of the social spectrum, we know that there were some senior local families and local knights. We find Arab knights in possession of significant estates in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, for instance. Even the marshal of Jerusalem from 1125 to 1154, one of the most senior military positions in the country, was a local Arab, and there are many instances of local Christians being listed as 'milites', or knights.

Local Christians played a particularly prominent part in garrisoning the many castles that were dotted around the crusader states. We know that the important rock-cut castle of the Cave de Sueth had an entirely Arab garrison, and this shows how entire units of the 'Frankish' army were in fact sometimes made up of local Christians. In the lordship of Margat not only were most of the knights local Christians, but they were commanded by an Arab castellan. Similarly, in the County of Tripoli, not far away, we find a lord 'David the Syrian' in control of a cave fortress and associated lands in the Lebanese mountains until 1142, commanding a native Christian garrison and the local militia. This was



"Bedouin scouts would be bringing back news of enemy troop movements..."

an army unit whose commands would have been given in Arabic, and whose appearance would probably have been a hybrid of Eastern and Western traditions, with Frankish weapons perhaps, but also with many items of traditional Arab clothing and headgear.

Similarly, large numbers of the Frankish cavalry arm, even the majority on occasion, were Turcoples. Most of the Christian cavalry seem to have been of native origin in one form or another. We have little firm evidence as to exact proportions, but we do know that native Christians were present and that they were generally fighting in large numbers.

WARGAMING THE SOLDIERS OF THE CRUSADER STATES

So, what are we to do differently on the wargames table? Well, fundamentally, it appears that most of the population of the crusader states in the twelfth century were still Christian despite the length of time that had elapsed since Muslim armies had first invaded. In Antioch and Edessa, the two northern crusader states, Christians were perhaps two-thirds of the population. Further south, in the County of Tripoli and the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, perhaps just under half the population was Christian.

But being Christian does not mean they were of European heritage. We need to fundamentally review the skin tones we are using, and the extent to which we use more Middle Eastern items of clothing and equipment. A small crusader force, for instance, would probably be unrecognisable from the Victorian clichés of valiant knights and sergeants.

Instead, we would be faced with the sights and smells (never underestimate the smells), of the medieval Middle East. The voices talking and shouting, perhaps in Armenian or Syriac. The

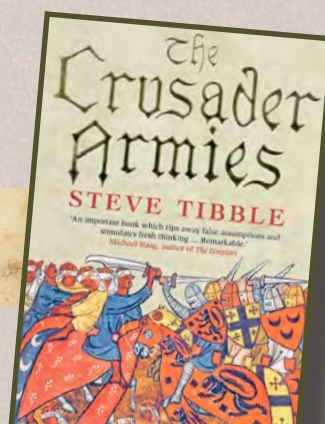
lower level commands being issued perhaps in Arabic and what we would now call medieval French. Maybe there would even be a smattering of Turkic in the ranks, depending on the provenance of the Turcoples or other local light cavalry mercenaries. Turbans would have been worn to keep the heat of the sun off the helmets. Bedouin scouts would be bringing back news of enemy troop movements, reporting in Arabic, regardless of whether they were Muslim or Christian. Bad-tempered camels or donkeys were in the baggage train, handled by increasingly frustrated Syrians shouting abuse at them in local dialects. All a far cry from Sir Walter Scott.

The 'crusader' armies of the Middle East in the twelfth century often had relatively few genuine crusaders in them. After the first couple of decades, the majority of the Franks were mixed race local settlers, most of whom had never set foot in the West: Europe was just a faraway land, somewhere they had heard of as a tale of their own 'Outremer', part of a childhood story. And in many crusader armies even these local Franks were in a minority, marching in units with Armenian-speaking comrades, or with other native Christian soldiers. None of the armies of the crusader period corresponded to the easy caricatures painted of them: our armies on the tabletop need to reflect that variety and the prevalence of local dress and equipment.

Next time: Army Lists - The Troop Types. Do crusader armies on the wargames table really reflect the kinds of troops they fielded, and the way in which they were used?



Dr. Steve Tibble is author of *The Crusader Armies*, Yale University Press, 2018.



BEDOUIIN AND BARONS



Steve Tibble, *Wi's* Crusades expert, turns an extraordinary true story into a mini-campaign for *The Barons' War: Outremer*.

A remarkable first-hand account has survived of what it was like to be on the receiving end of an extended attempt at armed robbery by the Bedouin. Usama ibn Munqidh, the wandering Syrian prince, had bad luck in his dealings with these ancient Arab tribes. This was a hardship for him, but a great bonus for us; it gives us a chance to use the Bedouin rules in the new *Outremer* supplement for *The Barons' War*, and to create an extremely unusual linked mini-campaign!

INEVITABLE BAD FORTUNE?

Usama ibn Munqidh travelled a lot, and any travel in the Holy Land was dangerous. On several occasions he acted

as an envoy between the governments of Syria and Egypt. The route along the coast, then overland through Palestine, was blocked by the crusaders, so communications between Cairo and Damascus had to go by a perilous overland passage across the Sinai desert. He would have had to skirt Frankish patrols and move quickly to avoid the even more dangerous attentions of the local Bedouin tribes. No one undertook this trip lightly.

Usama made the journey twice, both times in heavily armed parties, yet on both occasions it almost ended in disaster. His second trip, in 1154, was the more eventful of the two, and it nearly ended in his death. Extraordinarily, as well

as having a first-hand account of the unceasing banditry which dogged the high-value caravan of Usama and his party, we also have a crusader account of what happened to the party in the latter stages of their doomed journey.

Travel between Egypt and Syria was difficult and Templar patrols were a particularly dangerous concern, but not the only one. Setting off from Cairo on 30 May 1154 with a heavily armed group of soldiers and attendants, Usama and his party were systematically harried and attacked by Arab tribesmen along the whole route. He had made the mistake of backing the wrong side in the complex world of Egyptian palace politics being party to (and probably the co-instigator



of) a palace coup in Cairo in 1153. When the dust settled on the putsch, Usama's friend and employer al-Abbas had become vizier of the Fatimid empire. So far so good...

Things quickly unraveled; in the face of increasing opposition from rebel forces and dissension amongst his own troops, al-Abbas, his son Nasir al-Din, and their confederate, Usama, all decided to make a run for the border. Pausing only to strip the treasury of its best moveable assets, they filled their saddle bags and, with a large body of mercenaries to protect them, made a mad dash across the desert. They were desperate to get to Syria where, they hoped, they would be able to buy their way into Nur al-Din's affections, but after their actions it was hardly surprising they faced constant, angry attention.

The Bedouin were on them from the very beginning - circling constantly, picking off stragglers, and eventually closing in for the kill. Usama himself was attacked, and barely escaped with his life. He later wrote: "Suddenly the Arabs attacked me, and there I was: I couldn't find any way to repulse them, my horse couldn't help me escape, and their arrows started falling on me. I thought to myself, 'Jump off the horse, draw your sword, and have at them'. But as I gathered myself to jump, my horse stumbled and I fell onto some stones and a patch of rough ground. A piece of skin from my head was ripped off and I became so dizzy that I didn't know where I was. A group of Arabs gathered around me, while I just sat there, bare-headed, clueless, my sword lying in its scabbard."

Usama was seriously concussed - "One of [the Bedouin] struck me twice with his sword, saying 'Hand over the money!' But I didn't know what he was saying. So, they took my horse and my sword." He was only saved when one of the Turkic bodyguards came back to get him, and the Bedouin moved off. He survived that incident, but the problems with bandits continued throughout the journey.



Usama finds himself dismounted, woozy, and surrounded. Figures here and throughout the article are from Footsore Miniatures.

ESCALATING DANGERS

From 7 to 19 June 1154, Usama and the Fatimid group continued their march and eventually entered crusader territory. There they were intercepted and attacked by Frankish troops, doubtless aided by the Bedouin auxiliaries with whom they had built up good working relationships. William of Tyre later wrote that, "the Christians, apprised of [al-Abbas's] approach, had laid an ambush for him... and there they were stealthily lying in wait. The vizier, all unsuspecting, fell into the trap. At the first encounter he was fatally wounded by a sword thrust and at once perished... the immense riches which they had carried away with them out of Egypt, fell into the hands of the Christians and the booty was divided among them according to the custom. Consequently, our people returned home laden with the richest spoils, indeed fairly bending under the burden of treasures hitherto unknown to our land."



Footsore Crusaders prepare for their ride out into the desert.

Usama was not waiting around to ask who they were, but we know from other sources that most of the troops he encountered were elite Templar cavalry and their Bedouin auxiliaries, who operated increasingly aggressive patrols in the area from their base in Gaza.

Usama's co-conspirator, the son of the vizier, was captured in the debacle. "In the distribution of the spoils", wrote William, "beside other things there fell to them by a lot [Nasir al-Din], the son of Abbas". The Templars "held this man a prisoner for a long time. He professed an ardent desire to be reborn in Christ and had already learned the Roman letters and been instructed in the rudiments of the Christian faith when he was sold by the Templars for 60,000 pieces of gold to the Egyptians, who demanded him for the death penalty. Heavily chained hand and foot, he was placed in an iron cage upon the back of a camel and carried to Egypt, where...the people literally tore him to pieces bit by bit with their teeth."

The Templars came in for some criticism for their decision to take the ransom money, particularly given al-Nasir's strangely convenient conversion to Christianity. But they were undoubtedly correct in doing so. They had suffered grievous casualties in the siege of Ascalon just a few months earlier. Templar knights had made a brave but reckless assault into the centre of the town, before being cut off and wiped out - they were in no mood to be too sentimental about the fate of Fatimid commanders. More importantly, and as his own people knew, the murderous al-Nasir was completely untrustworthy - his conversion was far less genuine, and infinitely less tangible, than the ransom money they received.



A Templar (left) and Knight of Lazarus from Footsore's Outremer range.



The baggage train's progress is watched by local bowmen.



Even though Usama and some of the others managed to escape, Bedouin bandits continued to prove every bit as dangerous and, if anything, even more tenacious than the Franks and their allies.

"We continued on through Frankish territory", he later wrote, "until we reached the mountains of the Banu Fuhayd...in Wadi Musa. We climbed through narrow and treacherous paths that led to a wide, desolate plain, full of men". Having escaped from the Christians, the Muslim Banu Fuhayd killed anyone who got separated from the main party straight away.

Members of yet another Arab tribe arrived and Usama was able to pay the two groups to attack each other. On receipt of one thousand dinars, the new arrivals drove off the other bandits: "We continued on, those of us who survived the Franks and the Banu Fuhayd [and all the previous Arab tribesmen that they had encountered], reaching the city of Damascus on [19 June 1154]".

The journey had been a nightmare. Usama and his men had been hunted down mercilessly, robbed, and killed. They also appear to have been attacked along the way by some of their own men, as the mercenaries they had employed to guard the caravan turned on them when they found out how much money was being transported.

The Bedouin were an enduring menace to anyone they encountered. Religion was not a factor - vulnerability was everything.

WARGAMING THE FLIGHT OF THE FATIMIDS

There are three major phases to Usama's journey to Damascus, and these are reflected in a series of three linked scenarios.

1. As they set off from Egypt, they must endure the constant probing attacks by local tribesmen. The Bedouin try to scatter the party and pick off stragglers without taking any casualties themselves.
2. A run-in with Frankish patrols (largely Templar cavalry) and their Bedouin auxiliaries.
3. The final leg of the journey, as rival Bedouin tribes fight amongst themselves.

The campaign is an unusual one in many ways. To have a detailed account from a survivor is remarkable in itself. Although Usama (as a diplomatic chancer and freelance politician) is famously self-regarding and hypocritical, he seems relatively reliable in this instance - he was clearly just glad (and mildly surprised) to have survived to tell the tale.

BRING IN OUTREMER FOR A WIDE RANGE OF COMBATANTS

It is also an opportunity to employ the wonderful Bedouin retinues in the *Outremer* supplement (pp. 89-90) to good effect. We find Bedouin tribes fighting an eclectic mixture of Fatimid Egyptian troops, which makes for an interesting change in itself. Usama's guards could have included Armenian cavalry and foot archers, sub-Saharan slave infantry, and perhaps a smattering of Turkic mercenaries. Later on we find Bedouin fighting alongside their Templar employers, riding out with elite crusader cavalry and their Turcopole horse archers. Finally, we have a chance to field them against each other - swirling battles between two tribes as the survivors of the Fatimid party use the distraction to make a final push through to the (doubtful) safety of Nur al-Din's newly installed regime in Damascus.

This is a campaign which is cumulatively impactful and yet still allows us to employ relatively small numbers of models on the tabletop. These were, after all, large skirmishes rather than full blown battles.

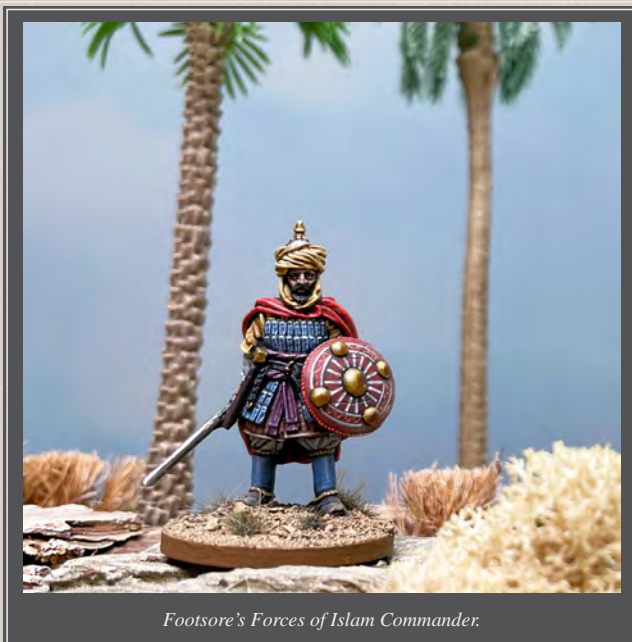


Minis from Footsore Miniatures' Outremer range.

THE PARTICIPANTS

One player, or team, will take the part of the Fatimid party - rich, heavily guarded, and heavily armed they may be, but they are also friendless and ultimately operating in an environment in which they are out of place.

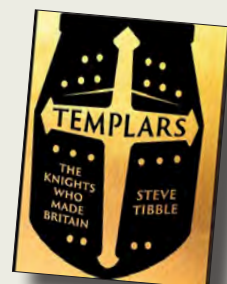
The other player, or team, takes the part of a series of opponents; the exact nature of these opponents will change in each scenario.



Footsore's Forces of Islam Commander.

TEMPLARS: THE KNIGHTS WHO MADE BRITAIN

To get more insight on the Templars make sure you check out Steve's new book which is packed with information and narrative flair.



ADD IN USAMA PROBLEMS

You could introduce an RPG angle to the campaign by enhancing the role of Usama himself. Slippery as ever, his objectives will be like that of the Fatimid party but, as his priority is looking after number one, they will never be entirely aligned. Think of him as a medieval Flashman type of character for the purposes of the campaign and you won't go far wrong!

A campaign umpire could add story elements highlighting Usama's self-preservation and selfishness to throw extra friction into the gameplay. These would be via the unexpected events his behaviour causes; The near-death tumble from his horse could be one such moment, resulting in a portion of his force needing to redirect to protect him. There are countless other ideas that a crafty umpire could concoct too. How about Usama 'making it rain' and using treasure to distract the enemy from finishing him off, leaving them vulnerable to counter-attack. Maybe he switches sides in a double-cross of shifting allegiances, or his gift of the gab might delay a coup de grace and leave the attacker vulnerable in another round of combat.



Footsore's Forces of Islam Imam figure.

SCENARIO ONE - DEATH BY A THOUSAND CUTS

The beginning of the campaign sees the caravan at full strength. It consists of a double strength Fatimid retinue, guarding a baggage train of camels, horses, and other pack animals. For the composition of Fatimid retinues see *Outremer* pages 65-88.

Although the Bedouin foe are at half the strength of the caravan defenders, they are more free in their movement. The Bedouin are a single retinue but can split their force to enter the board at any points on the perimeter.

TERRAIN

Play this battle from one short edge of the board to the other on a 6' by 4' table. It is the Fatimid's mission to progress their baggage train the length of the board without suffering too many losses.

Terrain features are almost non-existent - just a few pieces of scrub for visual effect which have no impact on movement or line of sight.

SPECIAL RULES

DEFENDER EXHAUSTION

As the party is still poorly acclimatised to its new, and very challenging, desert environment, it is advised that the rules for Exhaustion are used and effect a different defender (determined at random) each turn to represent them becoming dehydrated. If you are not playing with *The Baron's War Outremer* rules, then reduce the movement distance of the figure. If it becomes dehydrated again, stall its movement completely for two turns.

BAGGAGE TRAIN

The baggage train is made up of three sections that are progressed across the board individually by up to 10" at the start of each turn. Each section includes animals and four handlers, and these handlers are key to progress. Handlers have no fighting capability - they will be killed if an enemy model makes base-to-



base contact with them uncontested - and both handlers must accompany the animals for the section to move at full pace.

If one handler is killed, the move of the baggage train is reduced to 6"; if both handlers are killed the baggage train will move in a random direction at the start of the turn. Roll a D10:

- 1 to 3 - Move 6" 45 degrees to the left.
- 4 to 7 - Move 6" ahead.
- 8 to 10 - Move 6" 45 degrees to the right.

ATTACKER ADVANTAGE

The Bedouin attackers are trying to slow down the Fatimids and pick off the stragglers before the caravan makes it to the other board side. The more they slow the progress across the board, the more vulnerable the treasure in the baggage train will become. Refer to the table on the right to determine how much to modify scenario two.

CARAVAN TURNS REQUIRED TO EXIT	ATTACKER BONUS
Up to 8	-1
9	0
10 to 11	+1
12+	+2

SCENARIO TWO - THE TEMPLAR MENACE

Usama and the survivors of scenario one now blunder into a far more aggressive enemy - the Templars. The attackers consist of two retinues - a Frankish / Templar cavalry force consisting of mounted knights, sergeants, and Turcoples (see *Outremer* pages 45 and 50-63 for lists and attributes) and a force of more Bedouin, employed as auxiliaries by the Templars.

The defending Fatimid force is made up of the survivors from the previous battle. They will have no chance of winning this fight unless they have somehow avoided becoming depleted in the first scenario, but hopefully they can hold on until their caravan moves to safety.

TERRAIN

The defenders can deploy anywhere they please within one quarter of a 4' by 4' board. The attackers can deploy along the opposite two board edges.

This fight is in heavier terrain so use some rocky cover and a few hill rises that can impact line of sight.

SPECIAL RULES

HOLD THE LINE

The defending force must delay the attackers for long enough that their baggage train can move to safety. The amount of turns will be determined by how successful they were in the previous mission. This scenario lasts six turns but modify the turn total by the previous game's Attacker Bonus. At the end of the scenario's final turn it is assumed that the defenders manage to break away and run off to catch up with the baggage train and tend to their wounds.



SCENARIO THREE - HONOUR AMONG THIEVES

Usama and his weary band must make one final push for safety. The bad news is that a double retinue of Bedouin block their escape; the good news is that the survivors have an additional Bedouin retinue fighting on their side to help them on their way. Can they break the enemy line and push their baggage train 'across the finish line'? The battle ends when there are no more baggage sections on the board; this could be because they have either pushed through to safety or been destroyed.

TERRAIN

For added drama, how about playing this climactic battle in the ruins of a structure or within the foliage and pools of a lush oasis, even if this may not be quite historically accurate conditions?

I suggest to alternate deployment on the opposing edges of a tight 4' by 4' board to encourage a brutal and intense fight. Before the game starts the defender chooses where to place each of the three caravan sections in the attacker's deployment zone.

SPECIAL RULES

WAVERING LOYALTY

The Bedouin retinue that joins the caravan will assist by taking on the tribesmen blocking their way and fight as usual. But, running true to form, each turn there is a chance that these Bedouin 'allies' will make the pragmatic decision to instead help themselves to the treasure-carrying baggage animals and leave the field.

Roll a D10 for any figure in the Bedouin retinue that is within 6" of a baggage section at the start of a turn. On a 2 they snag what riches they can and ride off from the battle. Remove them as if they were a casualty. On a 1 the worst has



happened; they have ridden off with the baggage section. Remove the Bedouin figure and the baggage section from the table.

Once again, the only chance for Usama and the fleeing Egyptians is to get across the board as quickly as possible.

PUSHING ON

The baggage sections move as described in scenario one and begin with a restock of handlers. The same rules for enemies taking out handlers apply here too. In addition, if a baggage section has no living handlers or other friendly models within 3" at the start of a turn, and has any enemy in base-to-base contact, it will be wiped out and should be removed from the board.

DETERMINING THE FINAL VICTORY

If Usama and his followers manage to get even one baggage section to the opposite edge of the board then they achieve a minor victory. Two is a real achievement and three is an act of heroism (or luck!) that truly deserves to go down in history!

Any survivors who make it through to Damascus will have to encourage the authorities there to give them refugee status. An even harder task will be persuading them not to confiscate the treasures they have stolen from the Egyptian treasury...

But that is a story for another day!

FURTHER READING

Usama Ibn-Munqidh. The Book of Contemplation, tr. P.M. Cobb, London, 2008, 18-23 and 32-8.

William of Tyre, A History of Deeds done beyond the Sea, tr. E.A. Babcock and A.C. Krey, 2 vols, Records of Civilization, Sources and Studies 35, New York, 1943, II pp. 251-2.

THE TEMPLARS' LAST CHARGE

LION RAMPANT AND THE END OF THE CRUSADER STATES

Steve Tibble casts his expert gaze over the last moments of the Templars at war, during the Siege of Acre.

It was 18 May 1291, and the early morning calm in the besieged city of Acre was broken by screams, fear, and death. Panic spread almost instantaneously - Muslim troops had broken through the outer walls!

The Templar Grand Master, William of Beaujeu, responded as quickly as he could. He gathered his men to seal the gap in the wall, but their numbers were pitifully few. There was no army left, just a few brave soldiers. The Templar cavalry were no more than "ten or twelve brethren and [William's] own household troops".

They frantically strapped on whatever armour they had to hand and ran towards their horses. This was a gallant but forlorn gesture - a bitter hope thrown against an unstoppable tide of jubilant soldiery. The men saddled up and rode off towards the sound of the fighting. There was no chance of success, and they all knew it, but the Templars would not go down quietly. Their duty was clear. They had to buy time for the civilians to retreat to the citadel.

The doomed band charged down the dry moat between Acre's two sets of walls and headed for the St. Anthony Gate, where enemy troops were pouring in. This was the last charge of the Templars.

Like the order itself, it began in bravery and ended in horror.

A DEVASTATING DEFENCE

The Mamluks hastily formed a shield wall as they saw the tiny force of elite knights hurtling towards them. Their assault teams lined the walls, raining death down on the crusader cavalry with crossbows, and "did not cease from their work of hurling javelins." Shockingly, for those on the receiving end, they also threw clay hand-grenades full of 'Greek fire', or naphtha. This was a particularly vicious form of medieval napalm. It stuck to its victims and burnt ferociously, causing appalling casualties to the brother knights.



The chronicler known as the 'Templar of Tyre', William of Beaujeu's secretary and a member of his household, was an eyewitness. He left a moving account of the horrors he saw that day. There was one incident he found hard to forget; an English squire had his horse taken out from under him, and as he struggled to get up, pots of Greek fire exploded all around him, spraying his head and his clothing. He was so badly hit "that his surcoat burst into flames. There was no one to help him, and so his face was burned, and then his whole body, and he burned as if he had been a cauldron of pitch, and he died there."

The Templar charge had been extremely hurried. In their mad rush to respond to a dire emergency, the brothers had leapt on their horses at speed, without pausing to put on their full armour. This speed was essential, but it also had consequences. During one of the repeated charges, and the hand-to-hand melee which followed, "a javelin came at the Grand Master of the Temple, just as he raised his left hand." It struck him at a critical point under the armpit - his arming had taken place so hastily that there was a "gap where the plates of the armour were not joined". The shaft sank deep into his body. William paid the ultimate penalty for rushing to do his duty.

THE MASTER FALLS

The last fighting Master of the order "dropped the spear on the ground, and his head slumped to one side. He started to fall from his horse, but those of his household sprang down from their horses and supported him and took him off." His Templar comrades gave no thought for their own safety. They laid him, appropriately enough, on a large shield that they found discarded on the ground. Crouching under continual enemy fire, they dragged him back to what was left of the Christian lines.

William rushes out after hearing the commotion of battle, quickly arming up. This haste would be his downfall.



Panic on the streets of Acre. Figures from Footsore Miniatures and Fireforge Games.



William clung to life for the rest of that day without saying a word. Even at the end, he tried to keep a grip on how the battle was unfolding. When “he heard the clamour of men fleeing death, he wanted to know what was happening. They told him that men were fighting, and he commanded that they should leave him in peace. He did not speak again but gave his soul up to God.”

William’s charge had bought some time, but it could not stem the assault - thousands more Mamluk troops were pouring into the city. It did, however, give the civilians a chance to dash for safety. The Templar compound formed the last fall-back position for the Frankish capital, and “the greater part of the people, men and women and children, more than ten thousand persons,” sought refuge there.

Negotiations for surrender took place in bad blood, and with bad grace. Four hundred cavalry were sent into the compound to guard the Mamluk negotiators, but, exhilarated by victory, their discipline broke down. They began assaulting young boys and women in the fortress; provoked beyond endurance, the defenders turned on the Muslim troops and massacred them. Discussions reached a definitive end.

The Templar Marshal, Peter of Sevrey, was the senior surviving officer, and the man now leading the defence of the city. He tried to revive negotiations, and ventured out for discussions under a guarantee of safety. Instead, Peter and his men were all bound and beheaded when they reached the enemy lines. There was no more talking to be had.

The last Templar defences were eventually mined, and collapsed some ten days after the rest of the city had fallen. Appropriately enough for such a mutually destructive end, the final tower “collapsed outwards towards the street, and crushed more than two thousand mounted Turks” when it did so. There were no survivors from this final, desperate garrison of Templar die-hards.

The brother knights had given their all, but it was not enough.

WARGAMING THE LAST CHARGE

This scenario presents us with a marvellous opportunity to use the *Lion Rampant 2nd Edition* rules, and the extremely erudite expansion rules for the defence of the Christian Middle East: *Lion Rampant: The Crusader States*.

Inevitably, the scenario is deeply skewed. The Mamluk assault, once a breach had been made, was manifestly unstoppable. As the chronicle of the ‘Templar of Tyre’ put it:

“They came on afoot, so many that they were without number. In the van came men carrying great tall shields, and after them came men who cast Greek fire, and after them came men who hurled javelins and shot feathered arrows in such a thick cloud that they seemed to fall like rain from the heavens. Our men who were inside the chat [a temporary wooden fortification, erected during the siege] abandoned it. At this, the Saracens, whom I have mentioned, took two routes, since they were between the two walls of the city - that is to say, between the first walls and ditches, which were called the barbican,

and the great [inner] walls and ditches of the city proper. Some of them entered by a gate of that great tower called the Accursed Tower, and moved towards San Romano, where the Pisans had their great engines. The others kept to the road, going to St. Anthony’s Gate.”

For the Templars, hugely outnumbered, this is clearly a last stand without hope. Their objective can only be to buy time and make a final, desperate statement.

FANATICS?

Perhaps surprisingly, but entirely correctly, the new rules about ‘Religious Fervour’, introduced in the *Crusader States* expansion, are not applied to the Military Orders, despite their key role in this most ostensibly religious of conflicts. Although the Templars and their Mamluk opponents were generally devout, like most people at that time, there was little of the religious fanaticism which is often ascribed to them. They were all seasoned players in the longstanding and convoluted politics of the region.

The Templars, for all their supposed fanaticism, had long term connections with all of the local Muslim powers, and had a more sensitive understanding of cultural nuances than most crusaders. Similarly, the Mamluks had often chosen to focus on the threat posed by their fellow Muslim enemies rather than on the crusader states. Religion always played a role, but it was by no means as definitive as one might expect.



TERRAIN

The terrain is simple, but distinctive. The charge took place along what was, in effect, a large, open corridor: the space between the main outer walls, some of which are still visible and can be walked along today. If you have suitable castle walls, this is an excellent chance to bring them out, but note that by this period they should be sloped, rather than purely upright. If you don't have castle walls, don't worry; the game can be played along a relatively simple strip of open terrain, with a few pieces of small rubble along the way, and improvised barricades at one end.

SETUP

The Templar's Last Charge can be played out in several different ways; the exact setup will depend on what you have available. The following should give some useful guidance.

The Templars

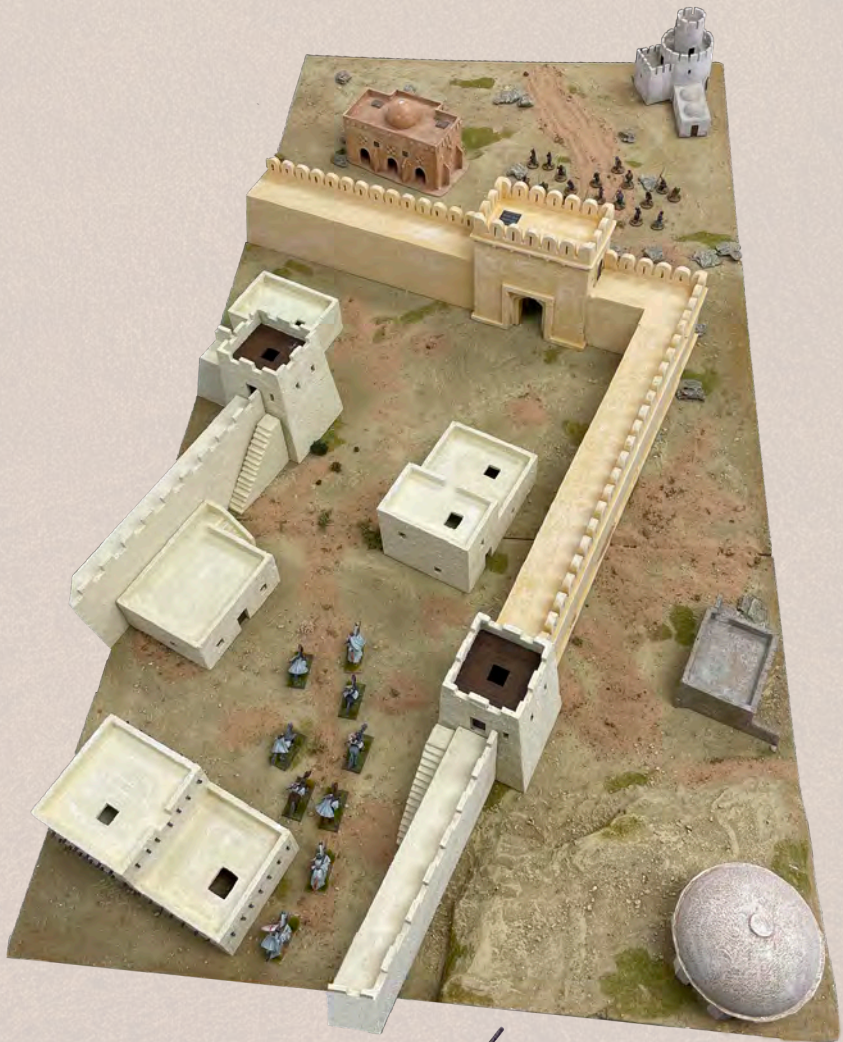
The number of Templar units is, of course, smaller than normal for *Lion Rampant*. There are two mounted Templar units, and the majority of the men are Templar brother knights. They should be classified as Elite Cavalry with the Drilled upgrade. The remaining squires and mounted sergeants could possibly be upgraded to medium cavalry, but by this time in the crusader states' history, it is probably more realistic to categorise them as heavy cavalry. All mounted Templar troops may reroll one failed courage test per game, which reflects their discipline and resilience.

Behind the Templar cavalry are two units of high-quality heavy infantry (all upgrades available). These are foot sergeants and mercenaries in Templar employ, one unit armed with crossbows, and the other unit armed with spears – they are initially positioned behind makeshift barricades of upturned wagons, barrels, sacks, and tables. The main role of the infantry is to create a fall-back position for the mounted troops, in the traditional crusading fashion, but they may also be used for close support, or to recover wounded brothers, at the Templar player's discretion.

For the Templar forces, see *Crusader States* pages 52 to 56.



Fireforge Games Crusader Knights.



The Mamluks

The Templars' Mamluk opponents are on foot, as they represent some of the forward elements of the victorious siege assault parties. They are present in far greater numbers than the crusaders. There are six Mamluk units to start with, but additional Mamluk troops enter each turn; these represent a continuing stream of besiegers pouring through the breaches in the city walls of Acre. Roll 1D6 -1 to determine the number of new entrants each turn - they can be added to existing units to replace casualties, or just boost numbers.

There will be a mixture of Heavy and Light Infantry, with all upgrades available. See *Crusader States* pages 72 to 76.



Footsore miniatures have a wonderful range of figures that you can use for attackers and defenders alike.



GREEK FIRE

Importantly, and to give the game a distinctive flavour, some of the Mamluk infantry will be armed with Greek Fire grenades. These were primarily used in siege warfare and, usually, against fixed targets such as siege engines or other wooden structures. Their characteristics included, as our unlucky English squire found out to his cost, an ability to stick to most materials, and to be inextinguishable by water. It is perhaps best to think of it as an early, and equally horrific, form of napalm.

Rules for its use in this scenario are as follows:

Cost: 1 point per unit

Most units can be upgraded by adding ceramic or glass fire grenades to their weapons. In any turn the unit equipped with fire grenades can decide to use them instead of their normal weapons, counting it as a shooting attack.

Shoot: 7+ **Range:** 6" **Hitting on:** 5+

- Not available for Levy.
- After two uses of the grenades, remove the upgrade from the unit.
- **Target type:** See the special rules below. Horse units are hit on a 6+.
- **Dangerous to handle:** A shoot activation roll of double 1 is a fumble. Roll hits to damage the unit that is using the grenades.
- **Missing the target:** Upon a successful shoot activation followed by no successful hit, refer to the special rules below.



AGAINST LARGE OBJECTS

Four cumulative hits will be sufficient to neutralize them and render them unusable. This could be against the Templar barricades.

AGAINST A UNIT

Roll hits like a normal missile weapon. In the case of successful hits, the unit rolls for courage, regardless of casualties, and the damage continues in the following turn, as well: automatically roll for hits, but on a 6+.

DANGEROUS DEFLECTION

When using Greek Fire, roll 1D6 for any misses. On a 1 or 6, the grenade simply failed to break (they could be quite sturdy objects) but otherwise it will scatter. Use the 1 (which will be on one of the lateral sides) to determine the direction in which the grenade went, and 1D6 to determine how many inches it goes from the original target. If that touches a target, such as a large object or a unit, roll hits again for damage, irrespective of whether it is friend or foe.

If the scatter does not hit any target, place a 3" marker on the ground, which should be treated as dangerous terrain for the next two turns.

See *Crusader States* pages 30 to 32 for the full rule additions for Greek Fire.

PLAYERS AND VICTORY

The scenario lends itself well to several different approaches. If you want a multiplayer game, one player could take the role of the Mamluk troops, with one or more other players commanding the Templars. Alternatively, the Mamluks could be AI controlled with a single or multiple players in charge of the Templars. Mamluk actions could be determined by picking cards or chips; this is feasible, as their victory is ultimately assured, and their scope for creative decision making is distinctly limited. If the Mamluk forces are played this way, two or more players could compete as Templar commanders who set out to achieve notable acts of heroism in this inevitably doomed conflict.

Obviously, it is difficult to play as a definitively competitive game, as there can only be one outcome; this is a situation in which outright victory for the Templars was never a realistic prospect. Instead, it should be played based on victory points allocated each turn. The Templars gain VPs as the game progresses, with each passing turn allowing increasing numbers of civilians to escape to (temporary) safety. Playing this game is your chance to give the Templars the heroic final charge their order deserved and write your wargaming version of this historic moment.

SUGGESTED READING

- Marshall, C., *Warfare in the Latin East, 1192-1291*, Cambridge, 1992.
- Tibble, S., *Crusading Armies*, London, 2018.
- Tibble, S., *Templars - The Knights of Britain*, London, 2023.
- Crawford, P. tr., *The 'Templar of Tyre'*, Farnham, 2003.

A DOUBLE FINALE

As an additional possibility, this scenario could be played as a short mini-campaign alongside scenario 12 from *Crusader States: The Last Assault of the Defenders of Acre*. This is set just a few weeks earlier and represents a crusader sally into the Mamluk siege lines.





W7392 cover artwork by Wayne Reynolds. 'The Templars' cavalry charge, in a scene of the mid-13th Century from WAR 91 Knight Templars © Osprey Publishing www.ospreypublishing.com

FUN IN THE SUN

THE BARONS' WAR: OUTREMER



We take a look through this exciting new expansion book, discuss the new armies, rules, and figures available, and suggest some exciting Crusader States historical battles you can play at a skirmish level.

Footsore haven't rested on their laurels since their medieval skirmish game - *The Barons' War* - won the Best New Rules category at the 2021 *Wargames Illustrated* Awards. *Outremer*, their second printed expansion since then, moves the action away from the gloom of Europe to take in the Crusades, 1098 to 1291. Pack your sunblock, sharpen your holiday blade, shove your religious fervour into the overhead storage, and jet off for some thrilling skirmish battles in the Crusader States!

INTO THE NEW BOOK

The background to the Crusades is a far cry from the European scuffles that are covered by the core *Barons' War* rules. *Outremer* begins with a background section, penned by Benedict Coffin, that capably fits the highlights and power exchanges from two centuries of combat into 24-pages. This introduction takes the reader through the chronology of the seven Crusades while casting its focus over the areas and peoples those Crusaders were invading.



EXPERT OPINION

Dr Steve Tibble is our regular Crusades contributor and an expert on the period; so much so that he's one of the authors suggested in *Outremer's* further reading section! It seemed sensible to pass the book his way so we could share his first impression and some gaming ideas. Check box out with this style throughout this article to read his thoughts.



This section provides tantalising tidbits on the background and culture of the Middle East, reinforced through faction details and traits later in the book. Curious armchair historians can check the list of further reading suggestions that ends the introduction.



EXPERT OPINION

ACADEMIC ACCURACY

Steve Tibble: This comprehensive and thoughtful extension to the Barons' War offers a new type of gaming for the Crusader States and brings some very distinctive (and very important) troop types into a field that has been sadly overlooked.

Refreshingly, *Outremer* is based firmly on the latest academic research. Armed with this knowledge, Benedict Coffin and Andy Hobday are not afraid of challenging the historical and visual clichés that have hamstrung much of Crusading wargaming over the past decades. They have taken this research, and with the lightest of touches, converted it into a very playable and insightful set of wargaming expansion rules. This is particularly true when looking at the way in which new retinues are introduced and the new Crusades-specific rules, which add a much needed sense of nuance and granularity.



Plentiful character and infantry figures with personality are available in the new Footsore range. Shown here (left to right) are Military Order Knight riding barded horse, Knight with Sword and Shield, Military Order Sergeant with Crossbow, Military Order Knight with axe, and Knight Commanders (mounted and on foot). These represent just some of the different weapons and armour options you can equip your combatants with for gaming.

Retinue Lists

Most of the book consists of faction-specific retinues for the armies and enemies of the Crusader States. These function in much the same way as in the ones in *The Barons' War*, the difference is that these have plentiful new Crusader States possibilities across nine broad options: Settled Franks, Crusading Franks, Military Orders, Seljuqs, Fatimids, Zengids, Ayyubids, Mamluks, and Bandits and Bedouin.

The Armies of Outremer and Forces of Islam are your playground to design incredibly diverse armies. Each Retinue type has a selection of broad Abilities and associated points costs, backed up by traits to nuance the force, then there are plentiful unit selection options.



The specialists from the Forces of Islam bring some punch to their generally less well-equipped armies. You may take a maximum of one group of Naffatun per 500 points, which stops these explosive equipped troops from becoming too much of a powerhouse. They can throw their Naptha Grenades up to 10" and will force targets to pass an immediate Morale check or become Broken. They can upgrade to the Naptha Siphons for 4 points per figure, and these are potentially even more devastating and have greater range.

No single book could provide an exhaustive list, but *Outremer* certainly does its best. Troops vary from lowly Pilgrim Rabble, through local Christian infantry and assorted tribesmen, to Turkik Ghulams and heavily armoured Military Order Knights. New specialised units feature too, using some special rules that are new to this book, and others that are a continuation of abilities established in *The Barons' War*.

Light horse Faris have 'kwa wa farr' - a hit and run ability, Naffatun can be equipped with Naptha Grenades or Siphons for pyrotechnic attacks, Saint Lazarus Leper Knights fight on and attack through losses they take, Assassins can target specific

The options available to each command choice and unit are comprehensive. This Baron has a veritable armoury to choose from and can be accompanied by a command group with a bannerman, musician, and priest if you so desire.



enemy commanders in units, Hospitallers help friendly units to rally, and many of the Armies of Outremer are emboldened by their 'faith' and 'devotion'.

You only need to take a quick peek at some of the new figures Paul Hicks has sculpted to accompany *Outremer*, shown throughout this article, to see the wonderful diversity available. We've highlighted some more of their new rules and points of interest along with them.



The Forces of Islam can choose an Emir or Sayyid as their commander and must then pick an Askar - the core of professional cavalymen paid for and supplied by the city-state - for them to lead. Fatimid, Isma'ili, Khurasanian, Kurdish, Mamluk, and Turkic all have their own flavour. Mamluk groups get +2 Attack dice when Inspired if they are on Barded mounts, representing their dedication to their master. Fatimid infantry are masters of the ranged volley; their archers do not get Hindered if line of sight is drawn through a friendly Group close by. The Turkic tribes of the steppe are masters of hit and run attacks, and if your retinue consists of unarmoured cavalry, they may Evade oncoming charges if they pass a Morale roll.

Looking good!

We've rushed headlong into the content with the impetus of a Teutonic Knight's charge, but we've not yet talked about another major part of *Outremer's* appeal - how nice it looks. The visuals and layout provide the initial 'oomph!' as you flip through this small-format book. It has a modern design aesthetic and includes many inspiring images of beautifully painted



figures. There's some great artwork and plentiful maps present; everything oozes the 'used to work at Games Workshop' production quality you'd expect from author Andy Hobday, who used to work at Games Workshop!

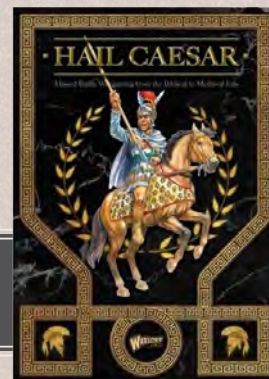
We're also pleased to say that function goes hand in hand with form; the book is logically ordered, and the Faction lists, Traits, and Abilities of the different armies can all be parsed quickly and effectively without a load of page flipping. Things do get a little crammed at times, and although we are nit-picking here, that cramming does raise a question and brings up the small-format elephant in the room...

Why so little?

We remain unconvinced that small-format rulebooks are a good alternative to larger ones unless they are 'getting started' guides with low page counts. Small-format books with plentiful pages such as *Outremer* constantly flip closed, which is a real pain when gaming. Some might argue that this size makes it more transportable, but we say "pshaw!" to that and cluck our tongue while we heft around multiple Really Useful Boxes full of our armies and terrain!



Next to *Hail Caesar*, *Outremer* is rather small.



When a book is designed as nicely as *Outremer*, it feels like an act of blasphemy against the layout gods to use a smaller format too! The pages could look stunning if they were twice as large. More space would allow the cramped tables the breathing room they deserve and allow for more scenic shots, figure photos, and larger maps and artwork.

Some may love these smaller books (though we're yet to speak to any truly passionate fans), and we recognise practical elements play a part here - printing costs and keeping the format consistent with the original *Barons' War* book - but if ever a rulebook's deserved more real estate, it's *Outremer*!

Gaming with character

Enough of that, let's get back to the effusive praise! Named characters can be chosen to lead your army if both players agree to it, and there are ten Dramatis Personae in the book. Richard the Lionhearted; Gerard de Ridfort, Grand Master of the Knights Templar; and the unfortunate King Louis IX of France are some of the *Outremer* options, while the Forces of Islam can be led by Salah Al-Din, Sultan of Egypt; Shīrkūh, the Kurdish Lion; Gökböri, Emir of Harran and Erbil; and Sultan Baybars, Father of Conquests.



EXPERT OPINION

ARMENIANS

Steve Tibble: Armenians are a particular favourite of mine and feature heavily in the new retinues.

It is good to see them having an all too rare shout-out for their value and abilities. These were the tough, unsung heroes of many conflicts in the region, and incidentally, they were also highly inter-married into Frankish society. Most of the early kings of Jerusalem, for instance, were at least partly of Armenian descent.



FRANKISH ABILITIES

NAME	DESCRIPTION	POINTS
ARMENIAN	Once Byzantium's frontier against the Arabs, Armenia's soldiers fought bravely for the empire, Antioch, their own kings or even the Fatimids. If a Group with the Armenian Ability fails a Morale check and would be Broken as a result, it may immediately re-roll the test provided the Group has more models than Morale dice.	1

Each of these has different abilities, equipment, options, and command group upgrades to define their character, and if they don't quite suit the type of game you wish to play, you can use the character creator to concoct your own special leader.

There are plenty of lighter mounted options to choose from, including the Christianised local allies - the Turkopoles (left) and Muslim Medium Cavalry.



EXPERT OPINION

SCENARIO: TYRE 1124 - WHEN SALLY MET HAVEDIC

Steve Tibble: Armenian soldiers provided important military specialists for the Crusader armies. The fact that they had developed and maintained such specialisms showed the extent to which these skills were exercised. At the critical siege of Tyre in 1124, for example, the besieging Venetian fleet had initially been in charge of the Christian siege artillery, but the Tyrian counter-battery fire was so effective that it was felt necessary to neutralise it before further progress could be made.

The Crusaders' eventual success was largely due to the expertise of an Armenian artillery specialist with the great name of Havedic [No chortling at the back! - Ed]. It is a safe assumption that Havedic and his peers were veteran professionals whose services were constantly in high demand. A region in a perpetual state of war was a natural training ground and an active marketplace for high-calibre mercenaries such as him.

How about playing a scenario involving a sally from Tyre where a fast-moving group of Tyrian soldiers aim to take out Havedic and put an end to his irritatingly effective counter-battery fire?

The attackers

Tyre was still nominally an Egyptian Fatimid possession at this time, with a polyglot garrison: the sally party 'retinue' can thus, ironically, also include a significant number of Armenians (either Christian mercenaries or Muslim converts) with which to attack their fellow countryman [see 'Armenian infantry' on p. 84 of *Outremer*]. In addition, you can realistically include any number of sub-Saharan African troops and grenade-throwing Naffatun whose mission is to disable the offending Frankish catapult [see pp. 83 and 85].

The defenders

Havedic's immediate retinue will consist of several Armenian companions, supplemented by standard Frankish troops, or (again, if you want something equally realistic but a little bit different) Venetian marines and combat engineers. They should take up a defensive position behind some rudimentary fieldworks.

A hasty attack

The element of surprise is critical, so the sally's success is set to an extremely limited timeframe. Tyre was highly defensible because it was on a relatively narrow causeway; exiting from a sally port was not possible in secret. Enforce an element of speed on the besiegers if they are to get the job done and have any chance of survival. After turn three, bring additional Frankish/Venetian reinforcements into the game every turn to further bolster the defence of the artillery.

Peril on the Pilgrim Road

Into its later pages, the book provides a mini-campaign between two invented protagonists - Lorenzo di Firenze of the Knights Hospitaller and Nizar ibn Malik who leads Ayyubid raiders - which takes place across six scenarios. The forces provided for each game, along with the different challenges, highlight the intriguing tactical clash at the core of much of *Outremer*; who will emerge victorious between the armoured strength of the Franks and the nimble hit and run specialists of the Forces of Islam?



Eastern Infantry's standard Equipment is a Spear, but as with most units in the book, they can pay extra to use other weapons. These have paid +1 extra per warrior for Composite Bows, which have a long range of up to 20" and a short range of up to 6", and gain +1 attack at long range. The Recurve Bow special rule means that at short range these bowmen will ignore one defence dice of a target in Mail, ideal for punching holes through the warriors of the Crusader States.



EXPERT OPINION

EXHAUSTION - THE UNFORESEEN CONSEQUENCES OF HARDSHIP

Steve Tibble: One of the other very fine features of the *Outremer* expansion is the inclusion of special 'Exhaustion' rules to simulate the effects of heat and the other climatic characteristics of the region [see pp. 138-40]. These are so good that it is tempting to try to play a scenario that focuses on how exhaustion impacts groups of heavily laden men in the Middle East, and there's a particular clash that rushes to the forefront of my mind.

The scene is the battlefield of Hattin, 4 July 1187. The Frankish army of King Guy of Jerusalem has been on the march for too long and spent a seemingly endless night without water. The men are exhausted, their fighting capabilities are massively degraded, but the Sea of Galilee is within sight... the only problem is the 30,000 Muslim soldiers in the way!

I managed to walk the battlefield on the anniversary in 1987, and as any fair-skinned person who has walked the Horns of Hattin on 4 July will know, the temperatures are crippling. That's without wearing layers of armour or having the dubious pleasure of fighting your way through thousands of people who are trying to kill you.

The Franks' ostensible objective, the town of Tiberias, was in Muslim hands before the march even started, and Saladin's men controlled all of the main watering points along the way. Some attempts have been made to paint Guy's march as being less foolhardy than it might seem. It is true that there were minimal water supplies at Turan and, probably, at Maskana; both were along the line of march the Crusader army took. There were also relatively abundant springs at the village of Hattin, but the army never reached the springs there. It was a disaster.



The outcome of each battle impacts what comes next: if messengers escape from battle four, then the Knights of Lazarus will arrive as reinforcements in the final battle; if Ayyubid forces hold control points at the end of the Assault mission, they will have a broader deployment area in the next fight, etc. Supplies, assassins, and healers all play a part in the development of the campaign, and armies grow from 500 points to 1,000 for the final clash.

The campaign also gives the book the opportunity to re-examine the siege rules established in *The Barons' War* book, with a handy roundup of details as well as a breakdown of the features of the Hospitaller Fort that features in the campaign. Siege equipment options get two pages of ideas and rules, and this is something exciting about skirmish games; the depth in the options is pleasing and dramatic, with ladder assaults and improvised battering rams possible in *Outremer*.

New rules

The final 14 pages cover new rules and some *Outremer* themed tokens. It's more than just deserts that you'll game over, and terrain gets a detailed breakdown: the sands, river deltas, cultivated lands, and cooler Northern terrain are all examined.

You can't have a good holy war without a holy relic at the centre of your show of religious pomp and power; these icons can be purchased as relics or banners by any Retinue, but the True Cross is exclusive to Armies of Outremer. These all have the potential to become the central target for games or even campaigns, and should you want to make your gaming historically adjacent, the True Cross was lost to Salah al-Din at the battle of Hattin in 1187.

Finishing off the extras is Exhaustion, an optional special rule that ups the penalties suffered when your warriors over-exert themselves in the oppressive heat. Groups with Weary tokens



The Isma'ili sect of Shia Muslims relied on killing enemy leaders instead of military strength. One Infantry group per 500 points in a Retinue that has chosen the Isma'il Askar may select the Assassin upgrade. The Assassin will single out an enemy of their choice from the target unit and fight them one-on-one within a broader melee.

will progress to Exhaustion if they complete an action that would make them Weary again, command groups performing three actions in a turn will Exhaust themselves, and groups wearing Mail will become Exhausted if they lose any combat while Weary. The effect of this is that they'll suffer a rather nasty -2 penalty to any dice roll, and you'll want to try and recover in the Housekeeping phase to regain some combat effectiveness.

SCENARIO: HATTIN 1187: THE POOR BLOODY INFANTRY



The men have decided that enough is enough. Their commanders think, entirely correctly, that their only hope is to keep marching, keep attacking, and try to punch a way through to the springs, but the Frankish infantry are done. Disorientated and barely able to move, they begin to disobey orders en masse. They push their way up one of the nearby hills (or 'horns') so that they can take refuge behind some ancient walls. Dehydration and exhaustion have clouded their judgement and eroded their loyalties.

The poor bloody infantry

The retinue should be taken from the 'Settled Franks' list [pp. 31-49], but they are all on foot and should be split between mercenaries and militia (conscripted farmers and shopkeepers).

The Muslim defenders

Their opponents are an Ayyubid retinue, which can be drawn from Ghulams [p. 76], Faris [p. 77], Mamluks [p. 78], Horse Archers [p. 79], and if you want to include some infantry, from Muslim Warriors or Muslim Archers [pp. 81-2]. This force should be smaller than their opponent's.

Pushing up the slopes

The Frankish infantry retinue's mission is to force their way up the lower slopes of the hill. Their entire force is Exhausted and should be penalised accordingly from the start of the game.

Victory points for the scenario should be allocated by temporary survival rates: how many Franks can get across the table towards what they falsely believe (in their exhausted state of bewilderment) to be 'safety'?





Beautiful single figures, such as these bannermen and wielder of a holy relic (left and centre), along with more basic troops – Pilgrim Rabble and Abid Infantry - will not only look great in games of *Outremer* but will be perfect to add to armies for games such as *Lion Rampant* and *SAGA*.

OVERALL

Covering such a broad period is no small task, but *Outremer* tackles it with a boldness, efficiency, and inspiring diversity in its offerings. We're really excited by this book and can't wait to get some skirmish level games going in the always intriguing and powder keg charged atmosphere of the Crusader States.

If you're already fascinated by this period of history then *Outremer*, along with the weighty range of new Footsore figures that accompanies it, will be like all your religious and non-religious holidays landing at once (along with a few excellent wargaming shows thrown in for good measure)!

If you're yet to dip your toes into the warm sands of the desert, this book has the potential to turn those grains into a quicksand pool of temptation that will pull you, inexorably, into wargaming a new period.



The Barons' War

OUTREMER



From Outremer by Footsore Miniatures.

DESIGNER'S NOTES: LION RAMPANT: THE CRUSADER STATES

Co-author of the new *Lion Rampant* expansion supplement *The Crusader States* Dr Gianluca Raccagni gives us his Designer's Notes on the latest edition to the Rampant stable.

I was introduced to *Lion Rampant* by a friend shortly after its publication. It helped me rediscover my love for wargaming but gave it a new historical twist. In my teens I played *Warhammer Fantasy Battles*, collecting Empire and Dogs of War armies. You could already see my historical interests there, because those were quasi-historical factions. I then studied history at university, but in the new millennium role-playing games took over my gaming interests, which is where I started designing my own scenarios and campaigns. Once again, I mainly played relatively low fantasy games, such as *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*, or weird historical ones such as *Call of Cthulhu Dark Ages*, creating a sprawling campaign set in 11th-century Byzantium, for instance. In turn, that probably influenced my current wargaming projects: attendees at conventions keep saying that my scenarios remind them of role-playing games.

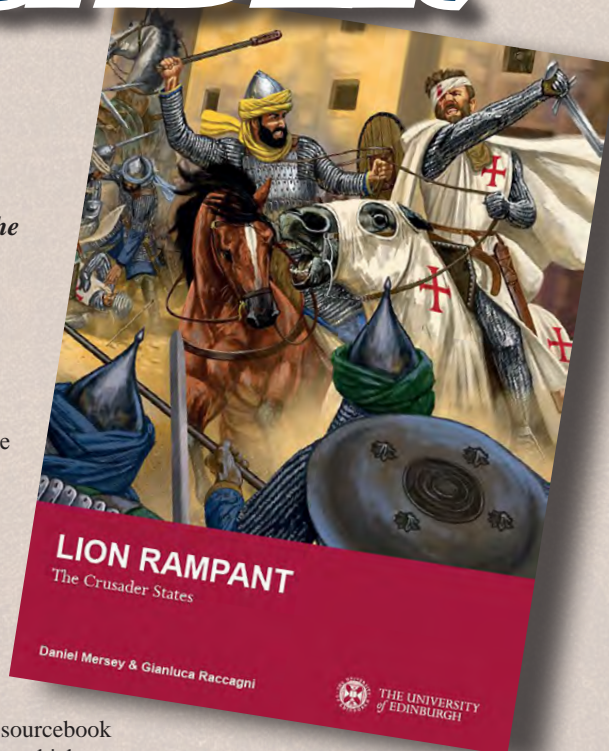
Lion Rampant and then *Dragon Rampant* inspired me to recover my miniatures from my parents' attic and prompted a journey of rediscovery that soon took on a life of its own. By this point I had also become a lecturer in medieval history at the University of Edinburgh, and *Lion Rampant* produced a light bulb moment: why don't I gamify my research? Academics are now incentivised to engage more with the world outside academia. Why not do that with games! Not only did that lead to this project with Dan Mersey but it also led to the recent launch of the History and Games Lab at the University of Edinburgh, which encourages collaborations between historians, gamers and game designers.

WHAT'S IN THE BOOK

Lion Rampant is a generic, flexible and easily adaptable set of medieval wargaming rules. Those are its great strengths. Yet the Middle Ages were a very long and diverse period that encompassed many local differences as well.

Therefore, Dan and I thought that it would be interesting to think about a sourcebook tailored to a specific context, which would also provide a solid historical introduction to it. In other words, a historical game book. The resulting *Lion Rampant: The Crusader States* comprises five sections:

- A sizeable historical introduction (13 pages) that summarises the history of the crusader states in their classical period, that is, from their inception in 1097 to the Fall of Acre in 1291, plus an essential chronology and bibliography.
- New general upgrades for units and warbands, which include Religious Fervour, Assassination, Fear, Holy and Unholy Characters (which I see as, essentially, historical battle magic!), Greek Fire, and four categories of Talismanic Objects (which I see as historical magical items). Each of those is historically contextualised.
- Army lists for twelve factions, but some of them include sub-factions too. These feature Frankish factions (the term 'Franks' was used for all Western Europeans at that time), such as Western



Crusaders, Italian Maritime Republics, Frankish settlers, and Christian Military orders (such as the Templars, Hospitallers, Teutonic Knights etc.). There are factions representing Muslim polities, such as the Principalities of Syria and Anatolia, Fatimid Egypt, and Saladin, Ayyubids and Mamluks. Then there are Eastern Christian factions, such as Byzantines and Armenians. Finally, there are the Mongols, not to mention Pilgrims and Marauders, who did not belong to any single religious denomination (Mongols were not very fussy about religion ... just as long as it did not get in the way of their conquests). Subgroups include the leper knights of the Order of San Lazarus within the Christian Military Orders; the Assassins under the Syrian Muslim principalities; Wild Turks under the Marauders; and Sudanese under Fatimid Egypt. Each of them comes with an historical introduction that also serves to justify the features of each faction.

- Last, but not least, the book includes twelve scenarios inspired by real historical episodes found in accounts written by Western, Byzantine, Armenian and Muslim medieval authors, which again come with historical introductions on the authors and the situations that they described. Throughout the book there are also photos of scenarios using miniatures, beautiful illuminations depicting scenes of battle and Greek Fire from medieval manuscripts, and colour photos of Islamic weapons, etc. This helps to supply real-life examples of weapons mentioned in the army lists and adds historical flavour/colour.



Above: The First Annual Walter Scott Roundtable on the Middle Ages and Popular Culture: Gaming with History back on October 2016. Gianluca Raccagni introduces the event, held at Blackwell's bookshop in Edinburgh. (In the foreground Dan Mersey feverishly does some last minutes cribbing of his notes!)

WORKING WITH DAN(S)

I am a medievalist by profession and *Lion Rampant: The Crusader States* is my first wargaming publication, but fortunately I co-authored it with a veteran of wargaming - Daniel Mersey. The idea was born at a roundtable on history and gaming I organised at Blackwell's bookshop in Edinburgh (pictured above), where Wi Editor Dan was a member of the panel. During the social side of that event we were drawn together by our mutual interest in medieval history and warfare. Food and drinks helped to fuel the idea of starting a project together!

ARMY LISTS

Why did we choose the crusader states? The starting point of the project was a chat about expanding on the brief suggestions for historical army lists that were already included in the original *Lion Rampant* book. I wanted to connect this project to my academic research, and, after years working on the Italian city republics of the High Middle Ages, I was researching their participation in the crusades. One option was to do a sourcebook on the Italian cities, but their forces were quite similar to one another, and we wanted to do something more varied than that.

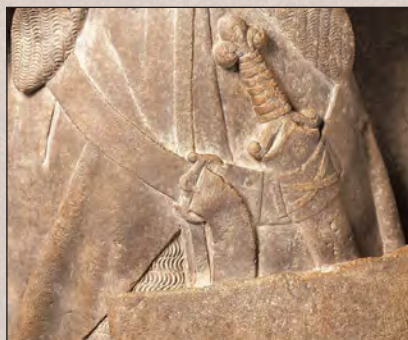
The crusader states fit that bill much better because they were one of the most varied medieval battlegrounds (and included the Italian city republics too!). It is a coherent and specific setting that covers the coastal area between modern Turkey and Egypt between 1098 and 1291. Yet it brings together people and military forces from all over Europe and the Middle East, and as far afield as Asia (the Mongols, and Chinese Nestorian Christian pilgrims) and



East Africa (the Nubian troops of Egyptian rulers, and Ethiopian pilgrims), with all their different cultural features and styles of warfare.

Yet it is not just a matter of stark contrasts between opponents, because there was a lot of cultural mixing in and around the crusader states. There were certainly strong divides, which peaked when crusades or jihad were called. Yet we wanted to show daily warfare, which often saw alliances, friendships, and mercenaries trumping cultural borders. For example, native Christians intermarried with Franks and fought for them alongside Turkopoles. Vice versa, Western Europeans fought as mercenaries or allies for Muslims (including Saladin!), Byzantines, and even Mongol rulers.

So with this sourcebook it is perfectly possible to have mixed multiplayer games as well as culturally varied warbands, although the latter is more applicable to some factions than others. It does not really go with freshly arrived Western crusaders or the Assassins, for example (but our scenarios include the classic exception that proves the rule, featuring a mixed Frankish and Assassins warband versus a Templar one). That is why we have different factions for Western crusaders and Frankish settlers, with the former often criticising the latter for “going native”. In turn, there were differences between those two and the military orders, or the Italian maritime republics that relied more on marines and crossbowmen.



Above: Detail of the tomb of a Frankish knight with Chinese sword.

Yet even the Muslim world was not a monolithic block: the military forces of the Turkish-dominated principalities of Syria and Anatolia were far more mobile than those of Fatimid Egypt, which, conversely, employed a lot of Armenians and Nubians. Saladin and the Mamluks brought those two traditions together. Then, of course, there were the independent Eastern Christians, such as the Byzantines (who played a little known but important role in the crusader states until the Fourth Crusade), who extensively employed Frankish and Turkish mercenaries, and the Armenians,



Above: Mongol face mask.

who could be found across the Middle East, but especially in the honorary crusader state of the Kingdom of Cilicia.

Since the terms that were used in the original *Lion Rampant* were distinctively European ones, we used more generic terms here, such as Heavy Cavalry instead of Mounted Men-at-Arms, and Light Cavalry instead of Mounted Yeomen.

DIVERSIFYING FACTIONS

We diversified these factions in two ways, to replicate the feeling of their historical details.

Firstly, for each faction we suggested restraints on the availability or use of unit types. For example, the heavy cavalry was the “signature dish” of the Franks, whose charge could ‘punch a hole in the walls of Babylon’, as the Byzantine princess Anna Comnena wrote. Accordingly, we limited its use for other factions (including the Italian republics). Vice versa, Western crusaders used mounted skirmishers far less than Frankish settlers and the military orders, while the best skirmishers were the Turks and Mongols, which convinced us to introduce a new type of mounted skirmisher that only a few factions can use.

Then we gave special abilities and special weaknesses to each faction according to their characteristics. Those include the possibility to reroll certain tests, to apply bonuses and penalties in other tests, to have some free activations, or to have easier or more difficult access to certain upgrades.

Finally, for each faction we supplied a typical suggested warband.

MARAUDERS!

From a visual point of view, the faction that probably allows for the most flexibility and colour is that of the Marauders, which refers to local bandits. They were a scourge across the Middle East and could form sizeable bands. Many came from culturally coherent groups, such as the Bedouins, or Turks from Central Asia who had not found employment as mercenaries. Yet bandits could also form motley collections of renegades and deserters from across the cultural and political spectrum, including Franks. Jacques of Vitry (who was bishop of Acre and then a cardinal in the early 13th century) wrote that the Holy Land was a magnet for wicked people who ‘changed the sky above their head, but not their character’. He provided a list of those that included (I am quoting) ‘criminals, corsairs, whoremongers, homicides, minstrels, drunkards, mimes and actors, apostate monks, prostitutes and nuns that were common harlots’. The equipment of these bandits would also be a colourful assortment of looted items. Their natural prey were pilgrims, who were not necessarily defenceless (hence the idea to give them their own army list).



Above: Perry Miniatures Bedouins.

THE LIVING DEAD

The faction which I had most fun designing was that of the military orders, and specifically the subgroup of the leper Knights of St Lazarus. They were sometimes known as 'the living dead', possibly because of the physical appearances of the disease. Leprosy took some time to take a toll on the body after detection, and once they were diagnosed, knights could move to the Order of St Lazarus and continue their military career for as long as possible. Leprosy was surrounded with fear and superstition, and sources report how the knights of St Lazarus were often wiped out in battle, which suggests that they recklessly sought death. We portrayed that by lowering the armour of their heavy cavalry (leprosy was still a physical disability), but gave a free Fear upgrade, and allowed them to buy the Religious Fervour upgrade, not allowed for other military orders. The latter could be seen as a counterintuitive rule, but that upgrade helps with Wild Charges, while the military orders were the most disciplined among the Frankish forces. Their religious zeal is manifested in the game by enhancing their morale resilience, instead.



Above: Perry Miniatures bodies with Games Workshop Zombie heads. From the collection of Willie Anderson - theandersoncollection.blogspot.com

NEW UPGRADES

The idea of including new upgrades was inspired both by the abilities and weaknesses that we gave to each faction, but also by the Fantastical Rules of *Dragon Rampant*. We thought to create something along those lines, but of an historical kind.

Some upgrades come directly from *Dragon Rampant*, such as Fear (to which the Mongols have easier access, for example), while others came from our medieval sources. The inclusion of Greek Fire was a late addition inspired by the siege of Acre of 1291, where the Franks used it. That source also suggested making its use potentially dangerous for the user too. Another upgrade is related to the Assassins: Richard the Lionheart was famously accused of having employed them against Conrad of Montferrat, hence the idea of offering their skills to third parties.

Nearly half of the upgrades have something to do with the supernatural. This is partly because these are additions to the upgrades that are already available in the original *Lion Rampant*. Yet we also felt that the supernatural is often overlooked in historical wargames, probably to differentiate that genre from fantasy. The supernatural, however, did play a significant role in medieval warfare. That was especially the case in settings like the Holy Land, which had competing religions.

You can also find plain wizardry and shamanism (in the sense of non-religious supernatural practices) in medieval sources too, which is usually what your enemy did to you, rather than vice versa. Magic had negative connotations, which



Above: Muslim 13th century hand grenade from Wikimedia Commons.

means that medieval authors generally did not attribute it to their side, and they mentioned it to demonize their opponents (literally speaking too, because magic usually meant summoning demonic interventions).

Then there were items that were imbued with supernatural powers, or which were supposed to connect the owners to those powers. Those included relics (most famously the True Cross or the Holy Lance), charms, icons, religious images, verses from religious texts that could be painted or carved on military equipment, or even parchments or miniature copies of religious texts that were attached to battle standards.



Above: Turkopoles escorting Frankish infantry.

THE WITCHES OF JERUSALEM

One of the starkest examples of wizardry during the crusades comes from the siege of Jerusalem during the First Crusade. According to the Christian William of Tyre, the Muslim defenders employed witches and their acolytes to cast spells against the siege engines of the crusaders. Luckily for the crusaders, those witches were killed by projectiles thrown by those very siege engines just before they finished their incantation. What a shame! It would have been interesting to read a description of a demonic attack against siege engines!



Miniature copies of Koran.

How do you translate all that into a historical game without adding fantasy elements to it? Obviously, we did not include fireballs etc. On the other hand, even the most sceptical person would accept that belief in the supernatural could influence friends and foes. In terms of game play, we manifested the supernatural with bonuses and penalties of various kinds, depending on the perceived power of the items (we have four kinds of talismanic objects), or the active intervention of practitioners of the supernatural (whose holy or un-holy status was quite subjective). Players are invited to be creative in role-playing colourful curses and blessings.

SCENARIOS

For the scenarios we scanned medieval sources for interesting episodes to gamify. The scenarios are scattered throughout the history of the crusader states, from their foundations during the First Crusade to the fall of Acre in

1291. Their choice is meant to show the evolution of the crusader states and highlights in their history, as well as to cover all the factions of the sourcebook. We started each scenario with an historical introduction on the specific event, its sources, and their authors, which are followed by set-ups, special rules, and victory conditions.

We set the first two scenarios during the First Crusade, representing episodes that belonged to crucial junctions such as the sieges of Antioch and Jerusalem; the next four scenarios represent the heyday of the Crusader States in the 12th century, including attacks against pilgrims, the brief period of Byzantine hegemony around 1150, and a curious case involving Templars and Assassins. That golden age ended with the Battle of Hattin in 1187, which brought the fall of Jerusalem and is the topic of a scenario showing how some Franks escaped the massacre. Then we did some experimentation, including a “vertical”

scenario that takes place entirely inside a keep in the aftermath of Hattin. The last four scenarios take place in the 13th century and feature border raids; civil wars among the Franks; the arrival of the Mongols; and, finally, a sally during the siege of Acre of 1291, whose fall is generally accepted as the end of the crusader states.

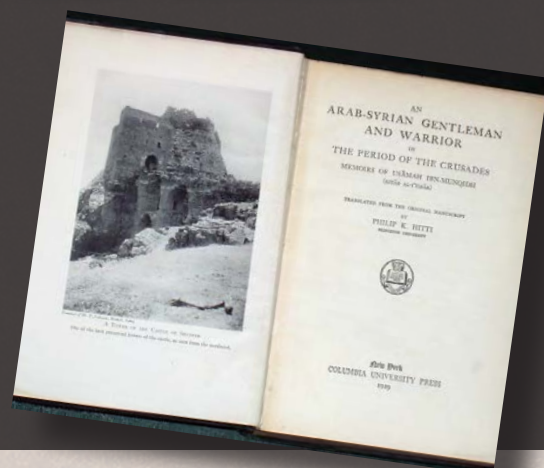
As in the original *Lion Rampant*, it is possible to link the scenarios into a campaign by simply de-contextualising them, perhaps setting them in a border area. Raids were a way of life in that region (as often across the medieval world in general).

CONCLUSION

The History and Games Lab is meant to foster collaborations between historians and game designers. *Lion Rampant: The Crusader States* is its first output, and planned to be the first of a series of sourcebooks for *Lion Rampant* that will provide entertaining ways to engage with history.

MEMORIES OF AN ARAB-SYRIAN GENTLEMAN

My personal favourite author is Usama ibn Munquidh (1095-1188). He was a knight, diplomat and writer from the Syrian castle of Shaizar, which his family had taken from the Byzantines in the 1080s. His memoirs are full of skirmish actions and colourful vignettes from his long and adventurous life. He spent his youth fighting Christian and Muslim neighbours, but he also entertained European guests in Shaizar. Usama was then exiled by his uncle and travelled extensively in the Middle East, often taking part in plots and conspiracies, until he retired under the patronage of Saladin, which is when he wrote his memoirs. They are available in English and are a very good read!





Above: Knights destroying a (Sarissa) trebuchet.



Above: Last stand.

WILDBEASTS

You can find more about the H&GL here:
historyandgames.shca.ed.ac.uk/.

And more about *Lion Rampant: The Crusader States* here: [facebook.com/crusadercastle/](https://www.facebook.com/crusadercastle/). We have a flipthrough of the book on the *Wargames Illustrated* YouTube channel.

And if you wish to have a chat about the History and Games Lab and its projects feel free to contact me at: gianluca.raccagni@ed.ac.uk.

In the scenarios we included non-player units (such as villagers, captives, and peasants defending their property), and even wild beasts. The latter are often mentioned as a common danger in chronicles as well as in pilgrims' guidebooks. Those included lions, leopards, bears, and wolves. There were even crocodiles in the marshes around the city of Caesarea.



Above: The Emir orders his men to attack.

REIMAGINING THE CRUSADES - PART 4



ARMY LISTS: THE TROOP TYPES

Dr Steve Tibble concludes his fascinating series on The Crusades with a look at troop types who formed the Crusader armies.

Wargamers often think of crusader armies as consisting of knights and foot sergeants, with perhaps, if one were looking for slightly more exoticism, a unit of native auxiliaries attached for local colour.

But just as most aspects of crusading warfare were deceptively disengaged from Western practice, so too were the troops with whom that warfare was conducted. What we think of as archetypal 'European' armies were actually very different on the ground.

When looking to field a crusader army, it is important to resist the temptation to be overly rigid or definitive. These were desperate times, with manpower in short supply. There have been lengthy debates, for example, about whether a 'sergeant' was a mounted soldier or an infantryman. In practice, we can find instances of both, as both were needed. The way men were used was largely dictated by need, availability and skills, rather than by a manual. If cavalry were in short supply, or if the army was expected to be on campaign for a long period and over

extended distances, any sergeant who had a horse, or who could be provided with one, would doubtless have gone mounted. If fighting nearer home, on the other hand, a sergeant with a crossbow and expertise in how to use it would have been deployed on foot.

The kinds of troops involved would also inevitably depend on the type of actions envisaged and the men available at the time. There was no uniform, 'one size fits all', crusader army. A long-range patrol in the desert frontiers, for instance, would have had a higher than usual proportion of cavalry, particularly lighter cavalry, and would have included local Bedouin guides and auxiliaries, some of whom would probably have been riding on camels. Any infantry on the patrol would perhaps have been mounted on mules or other lower value baggage animals. A frontier garrison might have been a small but relatively professional group, probably with a disproportionate number of crossbowmen. Similarly, a force that had to move fast to relieve a castle or go to the aid of another crusader state would have had more mounted men and a high proportion of 'regular' and 'professional' troops in it (though both terms need to be used in a less demanding, medieval, way, rather than in a modern context).

It is important from a wargames perspective to look at different categories of troops within the armies of the crusader states, but we need to be continually aware that any definitions we might try to impose would have been far more flexible in practice, and subject to major variation.

KNIGHTS

Knights were the celebrities of Frankish society and the main battle tanks of the army. They shared some of the characteristics of both. Small in number and extremely high profile, they could win a battle in minutes, even when facing seemingly overwhelming odds. But there were other similarities too. Like celebrities, they could be fragile and fractious. And like main battle tanks, they were few in number and strangely brittle: vulnerable if they were not carefully supported or if their attack was launched under adverse conditions. Where the knight excelled, where he was unique, was in the charge. It was in the charge that he could, if everything went well, win the battle.

Luckily for Saladin and the others who faced them, there were never many knights available at any given time. The combined total of the feudal knightly

contingents available across all four of the crusader states amounted to just 2,000 men: approximately 700 each from Jerusalem and Antioch, with Edessa and Tripoli perhaps having access to another 300 men each.

The effectiveness of their armour and equipment was reflected in the sheer difficulty of trying to stop them. The head and face were particularly vulnerable, however, and received a great deal of attention. At the beginning of our period the helmets worn by the knights were conical in shape and generally had a distinctive nasal bar to give some facial protection without detracting too much from visibility. They protected the head from enemy archery and most horizontal and downward sword thrusts.

By the middle of the twelfth century we find other types emerging alongside it, as increasing efforts were made to protect the face, particularly important in light of the high volume of projectiles that were inevitably directed at the front ranks of any crusader charge. By 1170 face guards began to appear on helmets, sometimes as an integral feature, and sometimes added on.

The other core element of defensive equipment was the hauberk, the main body armour worn by a knight. It was an essential piece of equipment but it did not come cheap. A mail hauberk and jerkin may not have made the wearer invulnerable, but they did provide excellent protection.

The large kite shield also provided defence for the front and left side of the charging knight, and its effectiveness may go at least part of the way towards explaining why mail leggings were not universally worn in the early part of our period.

Ironically, the most striking difference between a knight arriving at Jerusalem in 1099 and a knight fighting at Hattin in 1187 is the one we know least about. From the mid-twelfth century onwards we find knights wearing long, often sleeveless, fabric garments over their hauberks. The surcoat may have originated in the Frankish armies of the Holy Land, as they copied the example of their Muslim opponents and adopted a loose fitting and light-coloured covering for their body armour. This would have had the effect of simultaneously

deflecting the sun's rays and creating a breeze between the surcoat and their body armour.

There were other, less tangible but nonetheless helpful benefits as well, however, which have a significant impact on what a crusading army looks like on the war-games table. The introduction of visors and full-faced helmets in the second half of the twelfth century led to greater protection for the face, particularly against enemy archery, but there was always a compromise between facial protection and visibility. The surcoat allowed much greater individual 'branding' to take place, and for striking shapes and colours to be displayed as a way to address these problems.

The knights were equipped with a range of weapons. The lance was the preferred weapon for the initial charge, approximately four metres long and ideally made of ash wood. These would often shatter on impact with the enemy, and as the *mêlée* slowed, lances would be dropped and weapons such as swords or maces drawn instead.

The most important piece of equipment used by a knight, however, as well as the most vulnerable, was his horse. Horse armour later became more prevalent but during the twelfth century almost all Frankish horses were unarmoured and the vulnerability of their horses dictated much of the battle tactics of the period.

Archery was the great leveller. In a matter of seconds, a couple of cheap arrows, fired by a poorly armed man on a pony, could turn the Frankish knight, the most expensive piece of military kit on the battlefield, into a slow-moving and disorientated infantryman. The knights, and their unstoppable charge, were at the core of how a crusader army needed to perform. Until the moment was right, however, a delicate balancing act was always required to simultaneously protect the horses and stop the enemy overrunning the flanks and rear.



"The combined total of the feudal knightly contingents available across all four of the crusader states amounted to just 2,000 men" Figures by Gripping Beast.



SQUIRES

There were a large number of squires in the army, certainly more than the number of knights, as each had one or more squires to assist him. But the term 'squire' covered a range of different social positions, and we need to reflect these differences on the wargames table. Some, for instance, were trainee knights and therefore of high social status, while others were servants, acting as grooms, cooks and so on. This inevitably affected the military roles they were given on campaign.

The squires were not generally expected to fight in the front rank of the charge: that dangerous privilege was given to the knights. But in the military orders at least, they were expected to play an active role in combat. When battle seemed imminent, the older, better trained squires were formed into a squadron of their own, under the command of the standard bearer. The other squires, the less able remnant, were instructed to retire with the mules from which the brother knights had dismounted, and regroup around the standard bearer. As the charge was launched, the standard bearer had to decide how best to deploy this far from elite force, some of whom were presumably mounted only on mules or other baggage animals. The tone of his instructions in the Templars' military manual is one of 'just do the best you can'. But even the most junior squires were expected to fight if circumstances required it.

MOUNTED SERGEANTS

If the knights were the fine tip of the army, the mounted sergeants were, in theory at least, the solid backbone of heavy cavalry that rode in behind them. Together with the squires and the Turcoples, they provided the numbers required to exploit a successful charge, and hopefully turn a breakthrough into a rout.



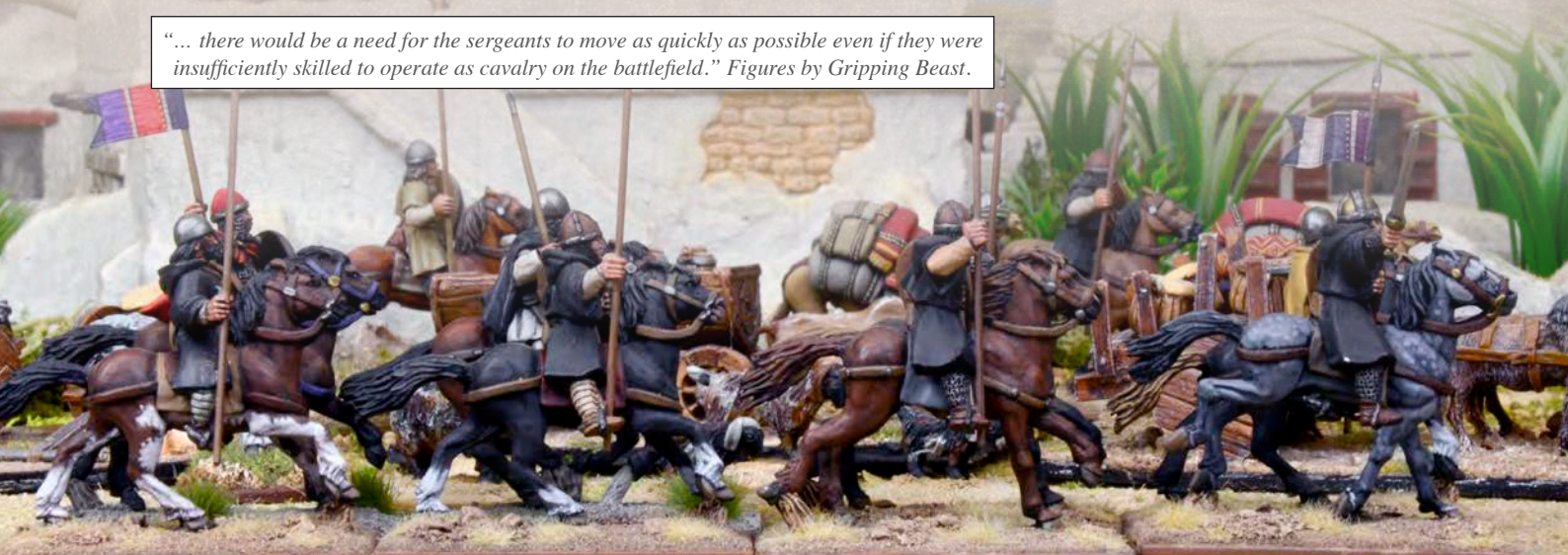
"The term 'squire' covered a range of different social positions, and we need to reflect these differences on the wargames table..." Figures by Perry Miniatures.

As ever, and particularly with army lists, the temptation is to read too much into relatively limited evidence and to use hindsight to impose rules and firm boundaries that may never have existed. Men did whatever was required on the day, subject to the limitations of their skills and equipment.

At one end of the spectrum would be professional soldiers, perhaps mercenaries attracted from the West or drawn from other parts of the Middle East. Some would be Armenian veterans with years of experience. Others might be yeoman farmers from the various settlements, or prosperous burgesses from the towns, well-motivated and independent but not necessarily highly skilled at arms. Or, at the other end of the scale, some might be taken from the urban poor, pulled together at the last moment to make up numbers and meet legal obligations.

It is unclear whether these men were expected to serve as cavalry or infantry. There was certainly a continual need for additional cavalry to support the kingdom's cadre of knights: this would argue that pressure was applied to ensure as many sergeants as possible were mounted. Equally, given the fast-moving Muslim armies that they would be responding to and the need to gather at specified muster points, sometimes at the opposite end of the kingdom, there would be a need for the sergeants to move as quickly as possible even if they were insufficiently skilled to operate as cavalry on the battlefield. It is likely that some of them were equipped as impromptu 'mounted infantry', perhaps using nags or mules to move more quickly towards muster points.

"... there would be a need for the sergeants to move as quickly as possible even if they were insufficiently skilled to operate as cavalry on the battlefield." Figures by Gripping Beast.





"The Franks certainly used the word 'Turcopole' as a label but in most cases it merely meant 'Christian horse archer, usually operating as light cavalry'. Figures by Perry Miniatures.

TURCOPOLES

Outnumbered, surrounded and often operating in unfavourable terrain, the cumbersome crusader armies should have been wiped out soon after they had arrived. The extraordinary success of the Frankish military in the Middle East during much of the twelfth century is almost inexplicable without an appreciation of the role of the Turcoples. Their availability as a group of native auxiliaries has always been seen as one of the more exotic components of crusading warfare. But their numbers have been grossly underestimated and the value of their contribution underplayed.

The Franks certainly used the word 'Turcopole' as a label but in most cases it merely meant 'Christian horse archer, usually operating as light cavalry'. In practice, it seems that the Franks recruited this troop type from among anybody who was suitable, rather than just amongst men of Turkic origin.

But the most important thing about the Turcoples is their sheer volume. There were a lot of them in Frankish armies. They are often invisible in the chronicles, but when we do come across them, generally as an accidental aside, it is clear that they formed a very large part of the Frankish mounted arm, and sometimes even the majority.

A cavalry detachment from Tripoli in 1109, for example, was intercepted by a Muslim army from Shaizar, and even at this early stage, fully 40 per cent of the Frankish troops were said to be Turcoples (the 'archers for the Franks'). And their numbers only grew over time. By the 1180s most of the Frankish cavalry in the field seem to have been Turcoples: Frankish knights were only a

minority. On the tabletop, our 'crusader' cavalry need to have a far more Middle Eastern visual flavour than we have traditionally allowed.

At first the Turcoples were used as semi-independent units which could be deployed at the forefront of the Frankish battle line, protecting the flanks of the knights to ensure that their assault could take place with minimal disruption. This sounds very reasonable in theory but in practice it was an absolute disaster, as they were invariably outnumbered and outclassed by genuine Turkic cavalry.

The best way to use Turcoples was eventually felt to be to split their main contribution into two: first, on the battlefield, to deploy them in the charge, but in the rear ranks, rather than to give them an independent role and, second, on campaign, to give them the full range of tactical and operational tasks normally associated with light cavalry.

The Turcoples were thus employed as the 'workhorse' of the Frankish armies, and the flexibility they provided allowed the slower crusader armies to operate and survive in an environment where the majority of their enemies had a far greater degree of manoeuvrability. We tend to focus on the knights, but it is easy to forget that the majority of troops in most Frankish armies were the even more ponderous infantry.

Turcoples helped to create the necessary operational flexibility and manoeuvrability that a heavy Frankish army would otherwise have lacked. They undertook long-range reconnaissance and spying missions. They scouted in front of the army on campaign and shadowed enemy forces on the move. They harassed Muslim supply lines and isolated columns. In short, while they could not entirely 'solve' the issue of how to deal with large numbers of Turkic light cavalry on the battlefield, they could act as a bridge between European and Eastern modes of fighting.

AS-SENNABRA - THE FORGOTTEN DISASTER

We persuaded Steve to give us one more 'Reimagining' article, which you will find on the *Wargames Illustrated* website; As-Sennabra, The Forgotten Disaster - How the crusader states nearly ended soon after they had started.

In this online article Dr. Tibble tells us about this little known battle and provides notes on playing the encounter soon on the tabletop.





INFANTRY

Back in the West, infantry of this period tended to be poorly armoured and equipped. They were treated as social and military inferiors by the mounted elite. In the crusader states, however, their role gradually assumed greater prominence. The inconvenient truth of warfare in the East was that any European-style army without large numbers of missile-armed infantry, archers or crossbowmen, was a sitting target for enemy light cavalry.

Demand helped drive progress. The increasing professionalism of the crusading infantry was reflected in the quality and sophistication of their defensive armour. Towards the end of the century we find examples where infantrymen were still fighting and manoeuvring in formation despite having many arrows sticking out of their armour and, as chroniclers always enjoyed pointing out, looking more like hedgehogs than men.

The crossbow was one of the key weapons of the Frankish army. Although the social status of the lance ensured that it got much more attention in the chronicles, the crossbow was arguably just as important. The relationship between crossbow and lance encapsulated the interdependency of infantry and cavalry in the army.

There was always a clear recognition that the effectiveness of infantry was largely dependent on the way they interacted with the cavalry. The knights needed infantry support but the reverse was also true. From the earliest days of the Latin kingdom commentators were aware that the Frankish army operated best as a 'combined arms' force, and that disaster was more likely to strike if either arm was left to fight on its own.

The Frankish infantry were capable of performing disciplined manoeuvres in the face of the enemy, even when closely engaged but the professionalism of the Frankish infantry should not be overstated. The quality of the infantry available to crusader armies was inevitably variable and every force would encompass men with widely differing abilities and skills. Unlike western Europe, however, the key difference in the crusader states was the urgency of the need. Infantry in the East had to become better equipped, better deployed and far better integrated into military practice because no Frankish army could survive without them. Desperation, as ever, trumped the conservatism of social conventions.

WARGAMING WITH CRUSADER ARMIES: TROOP TYPES

So, how does all this affect the way we field different troop types within a crusader army?

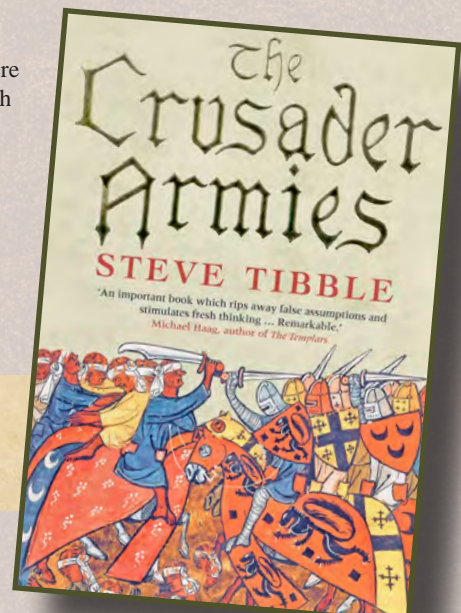
Well, quite a lot really.

- We need to recognise that cavalry were generally a minority within a Frankish force. And even amongst the cavalry arm, most of the troops were not knights. The knights were the sharpened tip of the spear, but most of the men in any Frankish charge were squires, mounted sergeants or Turcoples;

"The Frankish infantry were capable of performing disciplined manoeuvres in the face of the enemy, even when closely engaged but the professionalism of the Frankish infantry should not be overstated." Figures by Gripping Beast.

- The Turcoples in particular, played a far more prominent role than they are normally credited with, and that should be reflected in terms of their numbers on the table;
- Infantry should play a far more important part than they do in many medieval armies;
- And a far higher proportion of the army should consist of native Christians. This should be reflected in the way they look on the tabletop: darker skin tones, more turbans and bow cases than we usually expect.

Dr. Steve Tibble is author of *The Crusader Armies*, Yale University Press, 2018.





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W7398 cover artwork by Neil Roberts. Richard the Lionheart versus Saladin.

WARGAMES CAMPAIGNS AND MEDIEVAL STRATEGY



A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS?

Dr Steve Tibble, author of *The Crusader Armies* (Yale, 2018) and *The Crusader Strategy* (Yale, 2020), looks at wargaming multi-player campaigns, and why we might take the idea of 'medieval strategy' more seriously.

This short series of articles looks to address two things that have struck me very forcefully during my many years of wargaming.

Firstly, why have I not played more multiplayer campaigns? In practice, I already know the answer - they take time, commitment and a lot of planning. But, on reflection, they more than repay the effort. When I look back at the games I've most enjoyed, the real highlights of my wargaming experience, the few campaigns that I have been involved in certainly stick out - they have been fun, they have been sociable, and they have depth. I'll remember them, and the happy hours spent with much missed friends like Brendan Hardy and Steve Webster, more than any number of one-off games - I should have done more and I plan to do more.

Secondly, why does the general public tend to assume that medieval warfare and 'strategic' thinking are almost contradictory notions? Academics certainly know otherwise. As wargamers, we are far better informed than most, but I am conscious that we all (myself included) often enjoy sweating the details rather than looking at the bigger picture - we agonise about the differences between, say, 'light cavalry' and 'heavy cavalry', rather than looking at how armies were really employed, and how they achieved the objectives of the societies that created them.

So, over the next couple of months, I will use my knowledge of the crusader states to provide some case study solutions to both of these issues. I will set out ideas to create some interesting multiplayer campaigns. And, at the same time, I will

try to show that the nuances of medieval leadership and strategic thinking were far more subtle than we might imagine.

CRUSADER STRATEGY?

It is easy to see medieval warfare as being long on activity, but chronically short on reflection. Contemporary chronicles, and most modern narrative accounts of medieval history, read more like a soap opera than a strategic planning document. Armies invade and fight. The warrior elite have their moments of glory or disappointment, a stream of celebrities wandering across the stage of history with chroniclers as their paparazzi. Not entirely aimless perhaps, but implicitly lacking in what we would now describe as any form of strategic direction.

For many people, the idea of 'medieval strategy' is a modern joke, a contradiction

“For many people, the idea of ‘medieval strategy’ is a modern joke, a contradiction in terms. This is lazy thinking, however, and potentially very misleading.”

in terms. This is lazy thinking, however, and potentially very misleading. We believe we are good at strategy because we use the word a lot. Modern governments, their generals and their PR teams all talk a lot about ‘strategy’. But talk is cheap. Actions are always more powerful and far more telling.

In the crusader states, on the contrary, where the resources and structures for planning and communication were in chronically short supply, there was far less talk of strategy. If we care to look for it, however, it is surprisingly evident in the activities of most of the major players. We find this evidence through deconstructing actions on the ground, and establishing patterns of behaviour.

First, we need to accept that the major participants were not all idiots: and why should they have been? Some were, of course, but most were reasonable, highly motivated people, surrounded by well-informed advisers. Secondly, by deconstructing the actions that took place

on the ground, we can arrive at a far more realistic assessment of what was actually intended. And lastly, working back from that, we can examine the patterns of real behaviour as they played out over time, and deduce the broad lines of strategic thinking that underpinned military and political activity.

Of course, there are no surviving ‘strategy’ documents, no memos or irritating Friday afternoon meeting notes from the crusader states. Probably, in the modern sense at least, there were never any formal strategy documents in the first place. But there is an abundance of evidence to show that planning took place and that the development of long-term strategies was a direct consequence of those plans - they enacted strategy in an intuitive but often surprisingly subtle way.

DEFINITIONS

We need to be clear about the language we use. The word ‘strategy’ has come to mean so much that it now means almost nothing. The word ‘strategic’ in modern

usage often means something little more specific than ‘important’. Or just ‘big’. Or something which you would like to achieve (which, incidentally, is really an ‘objective’). So, for the sake of clarity, let’s define certain phrases as follows:

- ‘Strategy’ (and ‘strategic activity’) is designing and implementing the forms and structures of warfare needed to pursue the policy goals of a given society: if our goal is to conquer Egypt, for instance, how can that best be achieved? Strategy is thus the direction of warfare above the level of the battlefield, as the military expression of statesmanship, policy and the objectives of the state.
- ‘Operational activity’ is the conduct of campaigns which see that strategy played out on the ground (mustering troops, organising logistical back-up, long distance manoeuvring, and so on).
- ‘Tactical activity’ is manoeuvring and fighting on the battlefield or in a siege – the sharp end of the military interface.



THE HOLY LAND 1146 - 86

But if we define what strategy is, we also need to understand what it is not. It is not, for instance, the objectives, or the objective setting: it is about how to achieve things, rather than trying to establish what those things might be.

Despite occasional appearances to the contrary, crusader military decision making was rarely 'random'. As we shall see in more detail later, strategy was certainly being enacted, if we care to look for it.

THE COASTAL STRATEGY 1099 - 1124

The first clear strategy that we see emerging in the crusader states was the 'coastal strategy'. Capturing Jerusalem, the extraordinary culmination of the First Crusade, was always a beginning rather than an end. Landlocked, under-populated and barely self-sufficient, the Holy City was almost indefensible.

Fundamentally, if the crusade was to be anything more than just a one-off hugely violent act of pilgrimage, the first phase of Frankish strategy needed to focus on quickly taking control of the entire coastline of Syria and Palestine. The only way to maintain direct links home was by capturing the fortified ports along the Palestinian and Syrian coastlines.

These links were not just an expression of logistical theory. Without a constant flow of reinforcements and money, the isolated new Christian states would quickly be wiped out. The immediacy of this danger inevitably helped to shape strategy.

So the logic behind the coastal strategy was clear. But if the crusaders were to survive in the East, they also needed to be able to roll out this strategy in practice. For embryonic states, with no fleets of their own and only tiny armies, this would never be easy.



THE SIEGES

Caesarea provides a good case study of how the coastal strategy was rolled out.

Early in the morning of 17 May 1101, Christian assault teams with scaling ladders rushed towards the walls of the ancient coastal city. They were keen to see the job done quickly, and their leaders were prepared to lead from the front. Once they had got to the walls, a knight, armed 'with just his breastplate and helmet and sword, and with many following him, climbed the ladder right up to the top'.

The knight got to the top of the wall first and, for a moment, was there alone. Just then, as more men rushed onto the ladder, it shattered under their weight. Luckily for him, several other assault squads, on other parts of the wall, made it to the top at almost the same time – outflanked, the Egyptian defenders decided to pull back to their inner line of defences. He made his way along the wall to the next tower.

In an episode too odd not to be true, and strangely reminiscent of an unnerving scene at the end of *Saving Private Ryan*, he found himself in a fistfight on the stairs. A 'Saracen who was coming down the tower flung himself on top of him. He gripped [him] powerfully with his arms, and the [knight] held him. As they came tumbling down, the Saracen said: "Let go of me, and it will be for your own good, as you will be able to get up the tower faster and safer"'. They decided to call it a draw and ran off in different directions.



With this bizarre encounter behind him, the knight was able to turn his attention to getting more of his men into the town as quickly as possible, and Caesarea was soon captured. As so often in the crusades, however, all was not what it seemed. The storming parties consisted entirely of Italian sailors and marines, rather than Franks. The knight leading the charge was the Genoese consul Guglielmo 'Testadimaglio'

('Hammerhead') Embriaco, and the siege was largely driven by Italian know-how and matériel. He was known as 'Hammerhead', not because he was a good man to have by your side in a bar brawl (though his performance suggests that this was indeed the case), but rather because he had been in charge of much of the timber work in building the siege engines at Jerusalem in 1099. Caesarea was a siege with an Italian fleet providing



JUST A REMINDER - THE BATTLE OF THE SPRING OF THE CRESSON

Crusader generalship could be surprisingly sophisticated - but we should not forget that they had their fair share of mentalists too.

May 1, 1187. A Templar column, about 130 cavalry in total, had set off in pursuit of Turkic raiders earlier in the day. The knights had been desperate to catch the intruders, eventually intercepting them near the Spring of the Cresson, one of the traditional watering holes and muster points for the kingdom of Jerusalem. They should have been more careful about what they wished for.

Having found them, the Templars realised that the 'raiding party' they were chasing was in fact a group of some 6,000 to 7,000 cavalry. There were several Muslim armies operating in the Holy Land in May 1187, and this was just a flying column that had broken away from one of them. The numbers involved were huge, dwarfing their Frankish opponents. Despite its size, a force like this did not even qualify as an 'army' in the Muslim sources: Ibn al-Athir merely described it as 'a good-sized detachment'. But if this was a 'detachment', it was one which significantly outnumbered the entire mounted arm of all three crusader states put together.

Frankish reinforcements were on the way but the Templar commander, Gerard of Ridefort, overruled his lieutenants and ordered a frontal charge on the enemy. With an air of grim inevitability, the Frankish cavalry moved forward at a walking pace. They were aimed squarely at the centre of the huge force in front of them. The vast numbers of Muslim

cavalry outflanked the knights on all sides. The crusaders' only chance, and a tiny chance at that, lay in killing the commander at the heart of the enemy army.

As the crusaders speeded up into a trot, arrows started to rain down, doing little to damage the men, but inflicting cumulative carnage on their unprotected horses. The Turkic cavalry to their front flinched as they continued onwards, edging nervously backwards. No one wanted to be on the receiving end of the first fury of a Frankish charge.

The fragile Templar line charged into the Muslim centre. Turkic horsemen were thrust off their mounts, lances shattering on impact with their horses and armour. Swords were drawn as splintered lances were discarded. But the vast majority had simply advanced around and behind the tiny Frankish squadron. As they did so, they loosed wave after wave of arrows, bringing down the vulnerable crusader horses. Close quarters fighting continued across what remained of the chaotic line of knights, but the energy of the charge had been sustained and absorbed. The horses were out of breath or wounded and starting to fall. The knights were exhausted and surrounded. Line after line of fresh Muslim cavalry crashed into the Templar survivors from all sides.

The end came with shocking speed. Within minutes the entire crusader force was either dead or taken prisoner, awaiting death or captivity. A bad Templar commander, with no sense of strategy, had thrown away the lives of some of the best knights in the Holy Land.



the blockade, using Italian timber for siege engines built by Italian carpenters, and firing artillery manned by Italian crews in support of teams of Italian soldiers.

Even the wrestling match with the 'Saracen' on the staircase was subtly counterintuitive from a wargames perspective: most of the 'Muslim' garrison were Christians, either Nubian or Armenian mercenaries. The cultural gap between 'Hammerhead' and his 'Saracen' opponent was perhaps not as wide as one might suppose, and may partially explain how pragmatism helped trump fanaticism on both sides at that adrenalin-filled moment. The Franks have a reputation for siege warfare, and capturing the Muslim coastal cities was vital, but it was never a straightforward process.

The key to the coastal strategy was the crusaders' ability to conduct a series of successful sieges against some extraordinarily well protected cities. The coastal ports of Palestine and Syria were rich, populous and highly fortified. They usually had naval support in their fight against the Franks, either from the Fatimid regime in Egypt or, in the case of the Byzantine ports of northern Syria, from the imperial fleet operating out of Cyprus. And in addition to their own garrisons and urban militia, they also had occasional access to military help from the Muslim armies of Egypt and Syria.

Frankish armies adapted as best they could and became skilled at using their numerically small but heavily armoured shock troops to assault enemy fortifications. They used rams and siege artillery, but placed a special emphasis on the intimidating siege towers which could deliver their knights to the enemy's battlements. Perhaps even more important, however, was their dependence on allies from Western Europe to provide the naval resources needed to overcome their opponents. These naval assets were able to create a blockade by sea, and also (something which is far less widely recognised) to provide essential timber and siege engineers. The crusaders could bring good quality manpower to a siege, albeit in limited numbers, but they needed the



mundane expertise of naval craftsmen and matériel far more than their chronicles would have us believe.

But by 1110, with this Italian naval assistance, all the coastal cities of Palestine and Syria had been incorporated into the newly established crusader states, with the two exceptions of Tyre and, in the south, the Fatimid military base of Ascalon – the sea routes back to Europe had been secured.

STRATEGY OR SERENDIPITY? DIPLOMACY AND POLICY

But did this really constitute 'strategy' in any meaningful use of the word? Did it involve long-term planning? Or did the Italian squadrons which made it all possible simply turn up because they happened to be in the area, cruising for commercial opportunity?

A cursory reading of the chronicles certainly gives the impression that the fleets appeared in an entirely fortuitous way. In fact, of course, nothing was ever that easy, nor were motives ever that one-dimensional. There was genuine piety in the maritime states that provided the Christian fleets, but they were in the Eastern Mediterranean to compete with each other for long-term commercial gain. The timing of their expeditions was similarly neither coincidental nor fortuitous. Their presence was the culmination of extensive diplomatic activity carried out by the crusader states to further their own strategic objectives.

Irritatingly from a historian's perspective, the oral nature of this diplomacy, and

the inevitable disappearance of most of the (few) written records, means that hard evidence of strategy and long-term diplomatic initiatives is scarce. The Venetian crusade of 1122–1124, however, provides a fascinating case study of how this process really played out in practice.

On the surface, this was a very typical (and typically fortuitous) intervention. In writing of the arrival of the Italian fleet, Fulcher of Chartres makes the expedition sound like a splendid surprise ('we were delighted to hear that a fleet of Venetians had entered many of the ports of Palestine'). Its movements, he implied, had been the object of gossip rather than planning, as 'rumour had for a long time foretold its arrival'. William of Tyre makes a similarly rather bland introduction, merely stating that the Venetians 'had learned of the straits in which the kingdom of the East was placed and had ordered a fleet to be made ready'.

It is only by accident that evidence for the far more complex nature of the Venetian crusade has survived. As well as writing about the arrival of the fleet, William decided to quote the agreement with the Venetians in full. With the survival of the complete legal document, it suddenly becomes clear that everyone was skating over much more prosaic issues: the planning and strategy that had made it all possible.

In negotiating the division of spoils after the capture of Tyre, for instance, we find that the patriarch of Jerusalem had 'confirmed the promises of the said King

Baldwin according to the proposals made in his own letters and messages which the king himself had previously sent by his own envoys to Venice to this same doge of the Venetians'. In fact, preparations had been in train for a full five years before Tyre fell. So, far from being a random or fortuitous event, we find out in a chronicle (and even then only as an accidental aside) that the Franks had been sending letters to Venice long in advance of the expedition, making detailed proposals for its objectives and the rewards that might be forthcoming, carried by a series of envoys.

With the fall of Tyre in 1124, the coastal strategy came to a natural conclusion. The strategy had been successful, as the crusaders capitalised on Muslim disunity to establish control of a series of highly defensible fortified cities on the coastline of the Eastern Mediterranean. By doing so they were able to build a vital bridgehead into the Middle East and maintain the all-important links back to Europe.

That very success masked far more fundamental problems, however, and created a false sense of capabilities. The coastal cities could be taken with very limited manpower, because of the presence of European fleets in the Eastern Mediterranean. As we shall see in the next article, however, the Muslim population centres of the hinterland, where the Franks were far from Italian support and were themselves surrounded, would not succumb so easily.

WARGAMING THE CRUSADERS' 'COASTAL STRATEGY'

The wonderful thing about making a multiplayer campaign out of the 'coastal strategy' is that it can operate on so many levels, and allows different styles of wargaming to be incorporated.

On a grand level, it acts as a form of competitive board game, pitching a range of different players against each other. It is best to have at least three players - one crusader, one Fatimid Egyptian and one Turkic Syrian. If there are more than three players it gets even better - both the crusader forces and their Turkic enemies in Syria naturally split to create as many competing roles as might be required. There are a range of different boardgames that are useful for this. *The Crusades* (1978) by SPI and *Onward Christian Soldiers* (2006) by GMT Games both have great maps of the region and lots of counters and cards that can be used by a number of different players. At the time of writing - in the middle of the Covid-19 lockdown - this phase of the campaign

is particularly appropriate, and can be started using Zoom or Skype calls.

Once we move on to the operational level of the campaign, we get to the intricacies of siege warfare. Once again, some boardgames are helpful. *The Art of Siege: Acre 1191* (SPI 1978), for instance, has a good map and some useful mechanisms for siege resolution. Once we are out of full lockdown and able to game together, however, you might want to move on to tabletop rules such as Warhammer Historical's beautiful and inspiring *Siege & Conquest* rules.

And finally, it is easy to forget that there is often a tabletop tactical level in all this. The Fatimids had the biggest regular army in the region, and all the local Turkic players have very effective cavalry forces at their disposal. Crusaders carrying out coastal sieges always had to worry about being attacked by Muslim forces on land as well as by sea.

So, enjoy - and look forward to the post-lockdown delights of multiplayer crusading!

PART TWO NEXT MONTH



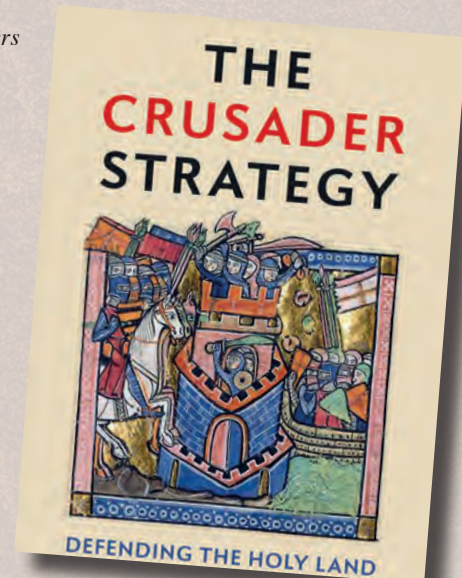
(Left to right) *The Crusades* by SPI (1971).

Siege and Conquest by Warhammer Historical.

Onward Christian Soldiers by GMT Game (2006).

Right: *The Crusader Strategy* (Yale 2020) is available for pre-order on Amazon.

Many thanks to Ron Ringrose for supplying all the photos for this article, using figures from his collection, many of which were painted by Dave Upton.





W1357 cover artwork showing the leaders of the Third Crusade. Centre foreground is Richard I, left is King Philip of France, and right, Leopold Duke of Austria.

THE CRUSADER HINTERLAND STRATEGY



The first article in this short series (W1392) looked at the crusaders' 'coastal strategy' in the Holy Land, and how we might translate that strategy into a stimulating wargames campaign. In this article Professor Steve Tibble leads us into the next phase of the Crusaders' military activity - the 'hinterland strategy' that broadly ran from 1125-1153.

Above: A crusader supply unit is ambushed outside Damascus (27 July 1148). Featured in CAM 204 The Second Crusade 1148. Illustrated by Christa Hook © Osprey Publishing www.ospreypublishing.com.

In many ways this hinterland strategy provides an even richer, more satisfying backdrop against which to run a campaign. Rather than static sieges, this involved armies manoeuvring in the field across large swathes of the Middle East - and even the sieges were easier to play out on the tabletop, as they often deteriorated into large-scale skirmishing.

MOVING INLAND

So, what was the 'hinterland strategy', and why was it necessary?

Well, capturing the coastal area was an essential precondition for survival, as it safeguarded the lines of communication back to Europe. But it was all still very fragile - for the most part, the crusader states were just a thin coastal strip of land on the fringes of a Muslim dominated Middle East.

If the Franks had a substantial hinterland, however, they would be able to create a defence in depth. And if they were able to control the interior, their states would be able to put down roots and mature. In this strategic context, the key issue was how far one could push the envelope. Could the old Christian cities of the hinterland, such as Damascus, Aleppo, Shaizar and Homs, ever be recaptured? And, if so, could they be held against the inevitable Muslim counteroffensives?

The Eastern Mediterranean had a far richer urban heritage than Western Europe, and this was reflected in the relative importance of the large cities. These major centres were a critical factor in the long-term control of the region. Their significance was well known to contemporaries, and they emerged as pivots of military and political activity throughout the twelfth century.

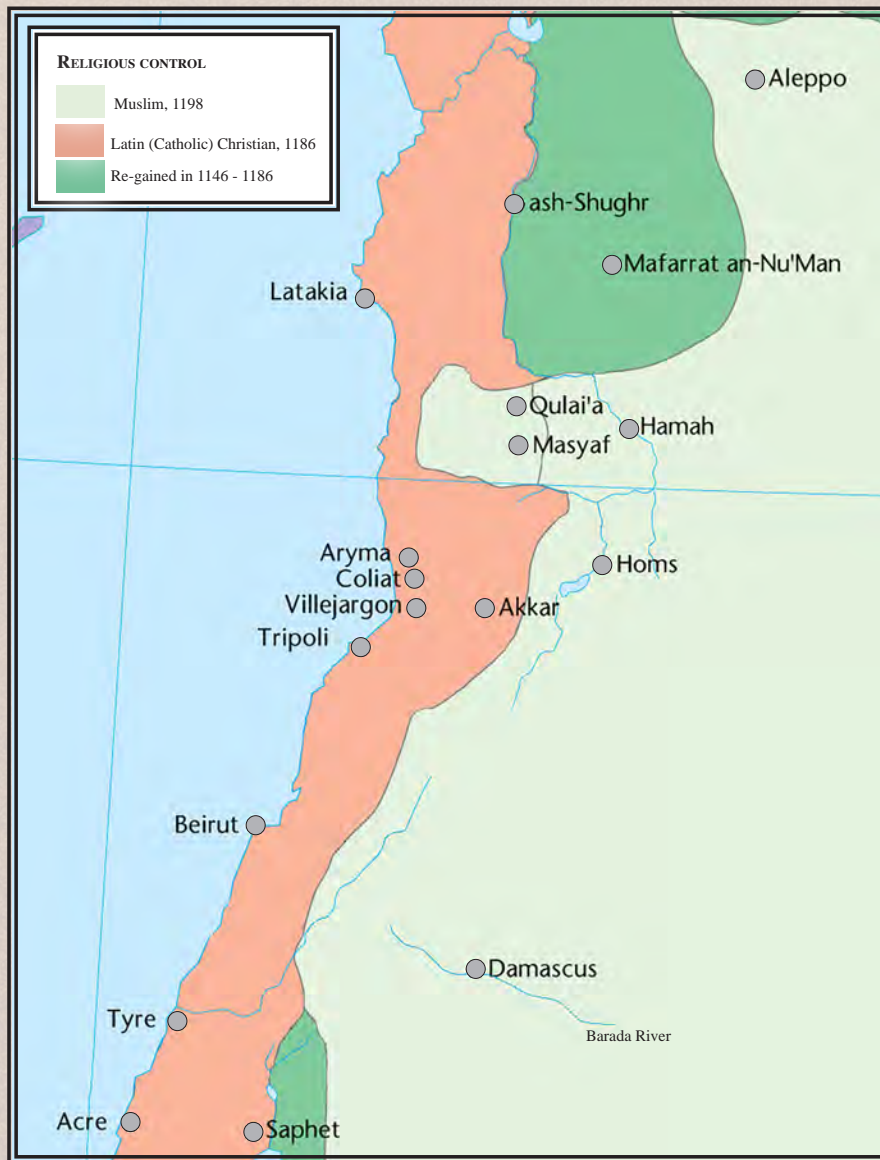
All of the major Muslim cities were attacked in earnest on several occasions, in increasingly desperate attempts to open up the interior. Aleppo was the objective for two serious campaigns (1124-5 and 1138); Shaizar was besieged twice (1138 and 1157); and Damascus was the target of concerted assaults in 1129 and 1148. The crusaders knew the areas of vital importance to their long-term security and pursued them whenever feasible.

THE DAMASCUS CASE STUDY

Damascus was perhaps the most tempting objective, and provides a useful case study.

Damascus was the biggest prize - the great Islamic regional centre, a major commercial and population hub and the pivotal Muslim opponent of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. A prosperous Christian provincial city at the time of

THE LATIN HOLY LAND 1146-86



The crusader army marched towards Damascus in July 1148. Their arrival was punctuated by two short but intense battles. The first of these was a fight through the well-irrigated orchards on the south and south-west of the city - a battle which is crying out to be played out on the war-games table, or as an exhibition game at a show. The terrain was unique, almost a form of medieval bocage, and the unfamiliar nature of the fighting was dramatic enough to impose itself forcefully on the imaginations of contemporary chroniclers. It was almost entirely unsuitable for heavy cavalry, so the Muslim defenders must have hoped that neutralising the knights, the 'super-weapon' of the Frankish field army, would put them in a stronger position.

The individual plots were small enclosures, bisected by irrigation channels leading from the Barada River to the north. There were only narrow, dangerous pathways between them. To make matters worse, ownership of the orchards was defined by mud walls along their boundaries, and many of the owners had also erected small watchtowers on their property to guard their crops. Every small-holding was a separate battlefield, and one in which the normally vulnerable light infantry and archers could find themselves in a position of equality with the cavalry.

The Damascenes stationed as many of their archers as possible in the watchtowers, so they could pick off the crusaders as they approached. The

the Arab invasions, it had been overrun by Muslim armies in 634 – and despite early attempts by the Byzantine military to recover it, it had remained in Muslim hands ever since.

Its capture would free up vast tracts of fertile land in the Hauran and beyond to attract settlers and create much needed fiefs to support the army. It would bolster the eastern flanks of the crusader states. It would prevent the political and military union of Syria and Egypt, and help stem the flow of nomadic tribes into the region from the north.

The Franks were understandably beguiled by the prospect of capturing it, and had spent the second half of the 1120s harassing and, unsuccessfully, besieging the city - all to no avail. In 1148, however, an allied army was gathered - Western crusaders, pilgrims, local Christians and Eastern Franks - and the crusaders were ready to try again.



buildings and compounds within the fields were also fortified, acting as a rudimentary set of pill-boxes for the Franks to overcome. Blockades were set up at key junctions, manned by local troops and villagers. There was even a primitive form of roadside ambush with which to contend. Traps were set up behind the mud walls that lined the paths, where there lurked men armed with lances who, themselves unseen, could look out through small peepholes carefully arranged in the walls and stab the passer-by from the side – not exactly an IED, but dangerous nonetheless.

The Frankish knights dismounted and had their precious horses taken back to the relative safety of the rear. The fighting quickly descended into a series of small but brutal skirmishes. Several of the barricades were stormed and, as the crusaders moved forward, the defenders of the orchards were outflanked and killed. Faced with seemingly unstoppable Christian heavy infantry and dismounted cavalry, they eventually broke and ran back to the city. The battle of the orchards was over, but another battle was about to begin.

The main body of the Muslim army was drawn up on the far banks of the Barada River, to the north of the orchards which the crusaders had just fought their way through. The regular 'askar cavalry of Damascus was there in strength, alongside Turkic mercenaries. There were also levies from the local villages, the 'ahdath urban militia



from Damascus and, ominously for the crusaders, ever-growing bands of ghazis and other volunteers. Large numbers of archers were thrown forward to contest the crossing, together with longer range 'ballistae'.

The local Frankish troops, the vanguard for the battle through the orchards, were exhausted by this point. They could make little headway against the enemy troops drawn up in front of them. The Emperor Conrad, frustrated by the delay, pushed his fresh troops up to the front line, eager to demonstrate their famous prowess with the sword. He and his men 'all leaped down from their horses and became infantry, as is the custom with the Germans when a desperate crisis occurs. Holding their shields before them, they engaged with the enemy in a hand-to-hand fight with

swords. The Damascenes at first resisted bravely, but soon, unable to sustain the onslaught, they abandoned the river and fled to the city'.

By the end of the day, on the evening of 24 July, the Franks had begun to fortify their positions on the west side of the city, 'cutting down trees and building stockades with them, and destroying the enclosures'. Well protected in their new camp, they would be able to start the siege of Damascus in earnest on the following day.

Early the following morning, however, there was a sortie from the city, looking to contest the Christian occupation of the area north of the Barada. The fighting was fierce and extended along the river. The battle on Sunday 25 July was clearly hard-fought. Charge was met with countercharge and, despite the casualties, the Damascene forces gave a good account of themselves.

The fighting on Sunday was inconclusive, but Muslim troops were still guarding the city in force, and, because of their superiority in numbers, were operating aggressively outside the walls. At nightfall, the city militia and most of the infantry retired into Damascus and manned the walls, while the regular cavalry of the 'askar stayed in position opposite the Franks. Significantly, there was still no sign of an effective blockade around Damascus, let alone a full siege.

Both sides needed to regroup, but by Tuesday 27 July, the siege had still barely begun. If the crusaders had any siege engines or catapults in their baggage train,



there is no record of them ever being positioned or used in anger. If they had not brought any with them, and were planning to make them in situ from the wood provided by the suburban orchards, they had certainly not had time to do so yet.

Damascus was not even under a significant blockade, let alone a close siege. Other than in the west of the city, Muslim troops were able to enter and leave at will. Volunteers and mercenaries continued to flood into the area and, as if that was not bad enough for the crusaders, word began to arrive of fresh Muslim armies mustering nearby.

The Frankish army's position to the west of the city was good for a longer, more traditional siege, as it was defensible and had relatively good access to food and water; but it was also facing some of the strongest parts of the city's defences. The fortifications to the south of the city, on the other hand, which the army had marched past as they approached Damascus on Saturday, coming up the road from Darayya (now a suburb of Damascus), were thought to be weaker and more amenable to a swift assault. By Tuesday night the decision to shift position had been made, albeit with misgivings on all sides.

In the event, the situation deteriorated very quickly. The withdrawal from the Barada River and the orchards took place relatively smoothly, but Muslim forces naturally moved in behind the retreating army and occupied their positions among the smallholdings as they left. When



the army got to the southern walls of Damascus, it was obvious that the city's defences were not as weak as had been hoped and, even more importantly, that water supplies were insufficient for the army to remain there.

Going back was not an option, as Muslim troops now defended the orchards in great strength, and staying where they were would clearly lead to disaster. As the day

wore on, the Christian army's leadership had no choice but to retreat. And by now even that would not be easy.

The Frankish army withdrew in good order, which cannot have been easy, and was a continuing testament to their tactical professionalism. The Muslim forces did not pursue the Franks too closely, contenting themselves with killing stragglers and harassing the



DEATH FROM THE SKIES - ARTILLERY AT SHAIZAR

The siege of Shaizar in 1138 was one of the few occasions where we have good contemporary commentary both from the besiegers and, even more unusually, from those on the receiving end of a sustained medieval artillery bombardment.

We live in a time where 'remote' destruction is the norm – when the television news from a war zone looks like video game footage. We find the close up, visceral nature of face-to-face death repulsive and unnerving: the stuff of horror movies. The opposite was true in the Middle Ages. Warfare usually involved getting blood on your clothes. You would expect to see your opponent before you died, or before you killed him.

Catapults were different. The effect of artillery in a siege was as near as the medieval mind got to our form of 'remote' killing. The shock it created, emotional as well as physical, was immense. Usama, the Arab writer and a member of the ruling family of Shaizar, was away at the time but pieced together personal recollections from other people who had been on the receiving end of the bombardment to create an intimate history of the attack on his home town.

The Byzantine engineers had positioned batteries of 'terrifying mangonels' outside and the damage to the less fortified residential buildings was severe – one of Usama's friends had part of a millstone thrown onto the roof of his house and the entire structure was levelled in a single blow.

The emir's residence in the citadel was an obvious target and received a great deal of attention from the Byzantine artillerists. Aiming at the emir's standard, 'a stone from a mangonel hit the spear [i.e. with the banner attached to it] and the broken half with the spearhead flipped over, spun around and fell into the path just as one of our comrades was crossing it'. Like a scene from *The Omen*, the 'spearhead, attached to the spear fragment, fell from a great height right through his collar-bone and into the ground and killed him'.

In another episode, one of the soldiers serving under Usama's father stood next to an old man urinating against a section of the outer wall. He turned his head to give his comrade some privacy, and a second later found that 'the old man had been struck on the head by a mangonel-stone, which crushed his skull and pinned him so that his brains ran down the wall'.

The sheer volume of anecdotes about the power of the Byzantine artillery carries echoes of the shock felt by those who had to endure the bombardment. Above all, it was the unseen and potentially catastrophic nature of the blows which seemed to resonate. In a deeply religious time, the catapult, and death from the skies, looked uncannily like the hand of God in action.



rearguard. They did not want to provoke the crusaders into a full-scale battle, with all the risks that would entail.

The Franks had been unable to blockade the city - on the contrary, substantial Muslim reinforcements and supplies were entering at will. No formal siege train, no catapults, no siege tower had been deployed by the Christians. Increasingly surrounded, the 'siege' was only going to end one way.

Damascus had not been cowed into surrender. There had always been a vague hope that, once confronted with a powerful Frankish army, the Damascenes would have opened up negotiations, agreed to some form of condominium or alliance, or might perhaps even have surrendered. But if any of this had been going to happen, it would have happened already, at the moment of initial shock. That moment had passed. Once the crusaders' bluff had been called, they did not have the means to deliver on their implicit threat. There were insufficient troops to surround the city. Even a blockade was impossible.

The size of the original crusader armies, the presence of several kings and many other Western celebrities, together with the spectacular recriminations that followed its failure, meant that the 1148 campaign against Damascus received more attention, both at the time and in the present day, than it perhaps deserves. In fact, it was an attack, a demonstration



that barely became a blockade, rather than a full-blown siege. The Christian troops were eight kilometres outside of Damascus on Saturday 24 July, and fought their way into the outskirts of the city successfully. But by Tuesday 27 July, they were already discussing the best way to extricate themselves – and by Wednesday they were on their way back to Jerusalem.

On the most obvious level, the siege of Damascus was a prime example of the tactical failure of the Frankish art of siegecraft. They did not have the specialist resources to undertake a swift assault or sufficient manpower to enforce a lengthy blockade.

But, far more importantly, it also confirmed their underlying strategic

weakness. Lack of resources meant that allies were essential. But it was enormously difficult to implement effective strategy within an alliance - every decision became a focus group, every setback became a conspiracy.

Similarly, the crusaders might be able to identify the correct strategic objectives, yet even with every resource marshalled in pursuit of these objectives, it was not enough. However great the stretch, success remained tantalisingly out of reach.

Ironically, the siege of Damascus just ended up showcasing the demographic catastrophe that continually faced the Christian states – the Franks were too few in number to capture or to hold any of the major population centres of the interior.

GREAT VISION, SHAME ABOUT THE RESOURCES

The hinterland strategy phase which followed the capture of the coastal cities was sound in principle, but far more ambitious. Ultimately it ended in failure. The manpower issue was insoluble, and without the additional land that a successful hinterland strategy would have brought with it, the longer-term demographic problems could never be adequately addressed. Frankish siegecraft was severely limited once it moved beyond the coastal littoral.

The failure of these sieges was never a consequence of any lack of strategic intent. There were well focused (and generally successful) attempts to generate allies and reinforcements for each of the main expeditions. The campaign against



Damascus in 1129, for instance, had been preceded by several missions to the West which had succeeded in persuading large numbers of crusaders to help with the cause. Similarly, the campaign against Damascus in 1148 was accompanied by the French and German armies of the Second Crusade, who had been lobbied intensively to help.

The tactical reality, however, was that Frankish armies, once inland, were outnumbered, surrounded and isolated in enemy territory - beyond the coast, it was unusual for any crusader siege to gain sufficient purchase around a heavily populated Muslim city. Even when it did, far from a Christian fleet (and hence lacking a cadre of experienced siege engineers), and without sufficient logistical support to transport timber, the crusaders could not bring sieges to a swift and successful conclusion.

But even if the crusaders had been able to capture some of the major inland centres of the Muslim Middle East, it is by no means clear that they would

have been able to retain them - if the crusaders had been able to break into Damascus in 1148, for instance, they would almost instantly have been under siege themselves, with very little chance of relief.

The Franks tried hard to square this circle. Their strategic objectives and intent were generally sound. But they were ultimately too few in numbers to take a major Muslim population centre. More ominously, it was also a symptom of the deeper systemic issues facing the Christian states of the Middle East.

WARGAMING THE HINTERLAND STRATEGY

The hinterland strategy is classic wargames campaign territory. Almost every aspect of it lends itself well to multi-player dynamics. Taking the siege of Damascus as a case in point again, we find several potential factions on the Christian side (visiting crusaders, local Franks, and the Military Orders) and similarly tense fault lines on the Muslim side (Zengists from the north, the

Damascene locals, visiting jihadists from Lebanon, and so on). The possibilities for diplomatic (and not so diplomatic!) interactions abound.

Similarly the lack of Frankish manpower meant that all major sieges were, in fact, more like loose blockades. This was irritating for the crusaders but helpful for us - there were often major skirmishes around the suburbs and local villages - and these can be quickly turned into battles that can be more easily played out in a face to face evening game.

It also gives us a chance to field some of the medieval troops that rarely get an outing on the wargames table - the civilians, the bandits and the pilgrims all have a role. So too do some of the more esoteric troop types such as Byzantine artilleryists and Assassins (usually helping the Franks) and the Muslim infantry of the urban militias that rarely feature in more set piece encounters. As the crusaders found to their cost, when they moved inland, there were always a lot more people waiting to meet them.

Many thanks to Ron Ringrose for supplying all the photos for this article, using figures from his collection, many of which were painted by Dave Upton.





From *Outremer* by Footsore Miniatures.

THE ASSASSINS

CULTISTS, SPECIAL FORCES OR GUERRILLAS?



Stephen Tibble, author of *Crusader Armies* from Yale Press, draws us into the world of the Crusades, and introduces the sect which came to be known as the Assassins.

As one contemporary Muslim historian unequivocally put it, the Assassins were 'a rabble of reprobates, half-wits, peasants, low fellows and vile scum'.

And this was a far from isolated view. The crusaders and the Turks, indeed all of Sunni Islam, disagreed on many things, but the Assassins was not one of them.

How did such a small group of highly religious individuals become so unpopular, so quickly and so universally?

HOW TO MAKE ENEMIES AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE

The origins of the Assassins, as is perhaps appropriate for any group with pretensions to, literally, cult status, are obscure. With that obscurity, of course, often comes preconceptions of ancient beginnings, and of mysteries which have been lost in the mists of time. In fact, however, the Assassins were far less ancient than is usually assumed, and barely predated the crusader period in which they played such an intriguing part.

The Nizari Isma'ilis, popularly known as the Assassins, split from the Fatimid

Isma'ilis in 1094. Led by a Persian called al-Hasan ibn-as-Sabbah, the original Old Man of the Mountain, they set up their own power base at Alamut in north-west Iran.

By the early twelfth century their missionaries had moved into northern Syria, suffering brutal persecution but making many local converts - importantly for the history of the sect, they found themselves at the epicentre of the conflict between the crusaders coming from Europe and the Sunni Turkic warlords who controlled much of the region.

Early on, the Assassins realised that they needed their own independent state if they were to survive and prosper. The search for a mountain fortress on which they could centre such a state became paramount in what passed for the sect's 'foreign policy'.

During the 1130s and 1140s they established a substantial principality with ten fortresses in the Lebanese mountains bordering the crusader states of Antioch and Tripoli and the Sunni Muslim states centred around Aleppo, Hama and



Above: Alamut Castle 'home of the Assassins' as it is today.

Shaizar. The most important Assassin base was the fortress of Masyaf, which they captured in 1141 - using this as the capital of their small, mountain-refuge state, they could regroup, consolidate and perfect the extraordinary practices for which they are now so famous.



A large group of Assassins forces its way into a Crusader castle. Figures by Gripping Beast.

ASSASSINS AS CULT FOLLOWERS?

The 'cult' (and cult status) of the Assassins is best understood as an extreme form of 'branding' - and the 'brand promise', in this extraordinary instance, was death itself.

The cult of the Assassins did not happen by accident. The identity they developed was distinctive and effective - an identity founded on fear. Not fear in any abstract sense. The Assassins never had the numbers or leverage to make vague threats about invasions or economic sanctions with any semblance of credibility.

Instead, the fear they sought was deeply personal. The Assassin's 'foreign policy' was simplicity itself. The implicit promise was: If you don't come to an understanding with us, you will die. If you persecute us, you will die. And if you attack us, you will die. We will penetrate any security you can erect around you. We can do so because we have men who are willing to die in the attempt, and who have the patience and skills to wait for years before launching that attempt.

Even the language of hierarchy was twisted in the interests of an intimidating PR programme. They called their chief

the 'Old Man of the Mountain'. This was originally a personal honorific but gradually became a job title, used to signify whoever was the Assassins' current leader in Syria. The mystery of an ominous title had a gratifying impact on their image.

And it was not just the job title that was intimidating. The deliberate theatre of fear was rolled out in all his public appearances. As one member of the military orders wrote in the 1250s, 'When the Old Man rode out he had a crier ride in front of him who carried a Danish axe that had a long handle covered with silver and with many blades embedded in it. He called out, 'Make way for the man who holds the death of kings in his hands'. Conjuring up a dystopian sense of menace - a cross between Vincent Price and a Mad Max gang leader - was a vital ingredient in the Assassin mythology. In the absence of military muscle, the Assassins knew fear was a powerful weapon, and one which was cultivated assiduously.

The core of this death cult image lay in the ability of the Old Man of the Mountain to persuade his cult followers

to commit dreadful, implacable acts of violence. The 'extreme ways' of Jason Bourne and the Treadstone programme, with unstoppable, brainwashed murderers set loose at the behest of their evil political masters, can be traced back directly to the myth of the Assassins.

ASSASSINS AS SPECIAL FORCES?

The myth was exaggerated and deliberately created - but it was not entirely without substance. The list of their victims read like a 'Who's Who' of the medieval Middle East.

ASSASSINATION TEAM IN TYRE AND BEIRUT - 1270

(See Scenario One)

The exploits of an Assassin team operating in the crusader states in 1270 provide a good example. Philip of Montfort, Lord of Tyre, was elderly by the standards of the day but he remained an effective crusader leader. The Sultan Baybars found him to be an irritating opponent and he paid the Assassins to launch an attack on him. The attempt, when it came, used the classic Nizari attack techniques - patience, guile, treachery and disguise.



Assassins in disguise offer their services. Figures by Gripping Beast.

The two-man Assassin team dressed themselves as professional cavalymen and rode up 'to Tyre on horseback, carrying Turkish arms and belts of silver, in the manner of Saracen men-at-arms. They went straight to the Lord of Tyre and asked him for baptism'. Their request was taken at face value. The men, and their disguises, were extremely convincing. As with all good frauds, it is much easier to sell a lie that your target wants to believe - in this instance, the Frankish states, always short of manpower, were desperate to believe that these resourceful, tough men were genuine recruits.

They were employed by Philip of Montfort as light mounted archers, the famous Turcoples. Even more impressively, they were quickly so



A large Assassin force made up using Gripping Beast Plastic Arabs.

trusted that they were made part of their new masters' households, with all the opportunities that that presented.

The murders were planned to take place simultaneously in two locations - as with other terrorist attacks through the ages, multiple strikes were calculated to maximise confusion. The team split up - one travelled to Beirut, where the Lord of Sidon was staying. The other remained in Tyre, where the Lord of Tyre was based. The Assassins agreed to strike their respective targets on the following Sunday.

The Tyre attack started well. On Sunday morning 'the Assassin came into the courtyard [of the citadel of Tyre] very early'. There he found Sir Philip of Montfort at the entrance of his chapel, on foot'. He also 'saw that there was no one in the chapel except for the Young Lord [Philip's son, John of Montfort] and one other knight, called William of Picquigny'. The Assassin spotted his opportunity.

The act itself was fast and simple - 'on emerging from the chapel, he ran into the Old Lord, Sir Philip of Montfort, and stabbed him in the chest with the dagger'. A slightly OCD habit on the part of the elderly Frankish lord almost saved his life as 'at this moment the Old Lord was handling one of his rings on his finger on the other hand, in the blow he pierced the hand which was on his breast, and then he left the dagger in him'. But the wound was deep.

Leaving Lord Philip bleeding out on the floor, the Assassin 'put his hand to his sword and went back into the chapel to kill the other lord'. Philip's son was less resourceful than his father. John, 'who was in the chapel reading his book, turned to see what was going on. When he saw the Assassin coming in with a naked sword in his hand, he lunged towards the altar which had a board painted with pictures of saints on the front of it, and he got behind it'.

An almost comical game of tag took place. As John ran around the altar, the frustrated Assassin threw his sword at him. Luckily for John, but upsetting for



"The famous Turcopoles."

future generations of art historians, it stuck in the ornate altarpiece penetrating so far 'that it could not be withdrawn'.

John's companion, William of Picquigny, was similarly unarmed but realised that more effective action needed to be taken. He 'came up and grabbed the Assassin from behind, and told the Young Lord that he could come out. The Young Lord came out and took the Assassin by the hair with one hand, while with the other hand he tried to pull out the sword'. The hapless Young Lord couldn't even do this properly, however - as he over-excitedly struggled to free the sword, 'two fingers of his hand were injured'.

While the fighting carried on in the chapel, the Old Lord, Philip of Montfort, had struggled to his feet and staggered away towards the doorway across the courtyard of the citadel, towards his chamber, where he directed his men to run to try and save his son. The household sergeants 'ran to the chapel and immediately killed the Assassin, and rescued the Young Lord of Tyre'.

Philip was alive, but died of his wounds soon afterwards, only slightly outliving his assailant. The garrison of Tyre immediately sent a Turcopole messenger to Beirut, to warn the Lord of Sidon about the other Assassin and to have him arrested. The Assassin caught wind of this, however, and managed to escape.

Few people come out well from this sad story. Everyone was refreshingly incompetent. The breach of security in allowing Muslim professional soldiers into the household is astounding, and speaks volumes for the plausibility of the assailants. Similarly, the failure to capture the surviving Assassin was unimpressive. And the Young Lord was so frightened that he managed to wound himself, despite his opponent being held captive by a companion. Even the performance of the Assassins was underwhelming - the Assassin in Tyre proved unable to kill two unarmed men in the chapel, despite having the element of surprise on his side - the Nizari were often impressive, but they were also human.

ASSASSINS AS GUERRILLAS?

The Assassins did not just deploy 'lone wolves' or small murder squads, however - they could also summon larger bodies of troops and militia on special occasions, albeit at the cost of dramatically degrading the overall quality of their fighting men.

THE ATTACK ON SHAZAR, 1114.

(See Scenario Two)

The Assassins' actions were often so outrageously bold that they took their opponents by surprise. Possibly the boldest attack they ever undertook was the attempt to take over an entire principality in one fell swoop - the surprise attack on the Arab Munqidh dynasty's base at Shaizar.

The walled town of Shaizar was imposing enough in itself, but its fortress was particularly formidable. Strong Byzantine and Frankish armies, lavishly equipped with catapults, siege equipment and cadres of miners, tried and failed to capture it on several occasions during the twelfth century. The Assassins, bold as ever, had a tiny force and no siege equipment, but thought that they could do better.

In March 1114 the Easter celebrations of the local Arab Christians were taking place in one of Shaizar's neighbouring villages. Much of the population of the town and most of the garrison left to participate in the celebrations, as was traditional. There was never going to be a better opportunity.

A force of about one hundred Assassins rushed the town and 'having seized it and driven out many of its defenders, they closed the gate'. Just one male member



"The Assassin came into the courtyard."



"The household sergeants ran to the chapel...."

of the ruling Munqidh family remained inside. With the Assassins in control of the town and most of the castle, he felt he had no option other than to start surrender negotiations with their leader. The Nizari's leader was feeling generous and offered good terms. But pausing to negotiate had broken the momentum of their assault - the Assassins had misjudged the situation and overplayed their hand.

The Munqidh women stepped in to take control - they were calmer, braver, more determined than the men in the face of the Assassins' assault. While the men were talking, the women were distributing weapons and armour to the domestic servants. One elderly matron put on 'a mail hauberk and a helmet, with a sword and shield', fully prepared to fight for the family's honour.

The Assassins had made the mistake of not rushing on to capture the last few remaining chambers in the castle - time was running out. The embarrassed Munqidh cavalry had been summoned back 'when the alarm was sounded in the fortress' and eventually got back to the foot of the citadel - they were able to shout up, asking the defenders to lower ropes down to them.

Once more, the men were ineffectual. One old scholar had a panic attack when he was asked to find some rope. When the troops eventually recaptured the castle, they found him wandering around naked, and more confused than ever. The people with the wits to let down the ropes, proved, again, to be the women of the household. They helped pull the relief forces up into the citadel and showed them where the enemy were.



The photographs on this page show our re-fight of *The attack on Shaizar*. Figures by Gripping Beast from their *Early Crusades*, *Armies of Islam* and *El Cid* ranges. Buildings by Grand Manner.



An elderly matron.



Once the household troops began to enter the castle, their greater numbers and better equipment inevitably began to tell - the Nizaris were hunted down and destroyed. Killing cornered fanatics was never going to be easy, however. Even when completely trapped, and far beyond hope, the Assassins refused to give up, and had to be killed, one by one - the 'men of Shaizar attacked [them] in increasing numbers, put them to the sword, and killed them to the last man'.

ASSASSINS: REFLECTIONS

The Assassins were a small, isolated group, and their very existence was always insecure. They calculated that if they could not achieve tolerance on their own terms, they might at least be able to inspire fear.

They always played a high stakes game. With them, it was all or nothing. Death or defeat. Victory or complete failure. And it is this binary quality which makes them such intriguing candidates for skirmish war-games scenarios.



SCENARIO ONE: ASSASSINATION SQUAD IN ACTION - 1270

The Nizari team operating in Tyre and Beirut in 1270 provides an interesting and layered skirmish scenario. The first part of the scenario takes place early one Sunday morning in the citadel of Tyre. The scene is a central courtyard, with the entrance to a chapel on one side, and access to the lord's chambers and household rooms on the other. The Assassin is armed with a dagger and a sword and initially faces just one unarmed and elderly man, Philip of Montfort, lord of Tyre. A few yards away, inside the chapel, are two other

targets, again, both unarmed - John, the Young Lord of Tyre and his companion William. Speed is of the essence and will impact significantly upon the ability of the Assassin to escape after the attack. Interestingly, although escape was not essential it was, contrary to folklore, certainly welcomed by Assassins - they were, after all, a scarce and very valuable resource for their cult.

Much of the household is asleep, but the Assassin will only have the element of surprise for a few seconds, perhaps a minute at most. His priorities should be reflected in the victory points allocated for certain objectives:

- Killing the Old Lord: 10 points
- Killing the Young Lord: 5 points
- For each additional Frank killed: 1 point
- Escaping from Tyre: 5 points

Depending upon the skirmish rules used, the initial surprise period should only last for 4-5 bounds. Each turn thereafter, two armed sergeants will enter the courtyard from the direction of the lord's chamber until the game ends.

The second part of the scenario is played out in Beirut, later that same day. Although we do not know exactly how

events unfolded, it seems that guards were sent to arrest the second Assassin, while he was preparing to attack the lord of Sidon. The Assassin will be confronted in the dining hall of the citadel by three soldiers: one will be a Turcopole messenger, armed with a bow and sword, and the other two will be foot sergeants, armed with swords or polearms. The lord of Sidon is not present, so the objective for the Assassin will purely be to escape. He will need to get out quickly - on every turn after turn four another Frankish soldier will enter the hall. The Assassin is deemed to have won if he can leave the hall and reach the stables outside - from there he is assumed to have grabbed a horse and escaped to the Muslim territories nearby.

SCENARIO TWO: ASSAULT ON SHAIZAR - 1114

This scenario is a small battle and is different from the normal stereotype of lone Assassin warriors. In fact, however, it is in many ways entirely typical of how the sect operated militarily when undertaking its own 'land-grabs'.

Shaizar is a well fortified town with a strong citadel / castle in one corner of

the site. A large team of approximately 100 Assassins has managed to infiltrate both the town and the citadel while the majority of the Arab garrison are absent. The town is assumed to have already been captured and secured by the Assassins before the scenario begins, but the race is on to secure the whole of the citadel - it is imperative to prevent the remaining defenders from letting down ropes from the citadel chambers to allow the erstwhile garrison to re-enter.

For gaming purposes we assume a force of 20 Assassins to be operating inside the citadel, five of whom are elite, highly trained killers, while the remainder are well motivated but less skilled cult followers. At the beginning of the game the defenders occupy one third of the citadel and consist of only 15 individuals, 5 of whom are women and 10 of whom are old men or below averagely skilled garrison troops. On every turn after turn five, two well armed, professional warriors are deemed to have climbed up rope ladders to reinforce the defenders.

In the historical version, the Assassins were too complacent, and failed to push forward quickly enough to overwhelm the last defenders in the citadel. The Assassin player in the game cannot afford to repeat that mistake.

THE ASSASSINS - COLLECTING AND PAINTING

What did an Assassin look like? Well, the short answer is that it depended - on the time, the place and, above all, the mission.

For most of the time, at home in their villages or in their castles, the Nizaris looked like any other Arab community of their era - Mediterranean / Arabic skin tones, loose fitting, light coloured robes, turbans for the men, and modest clothing for the women.

On a mission, however, Assassins took on whatever appearance best suited their cover story. In the court of Saladin, for instance, they dressed as elite Turkic guards, while on missions for the Sultan Baybars in the thirteenth century they dressed as Mamluk men-at-arms. On active service against the crusaders, they might even dress as monks.

But, give the nature of their activities, there were widespread caricatures about how a Nizari would look appear, just as (ridiculous though it is with hindsight) German paratroops in 1940 were often thought to be dressed as nuns. An unusual anecdote from the 1250s shows us clearly what a crusader

thought they would look like. One day, King Louis IX came across an ancient little church out in the fields near Sidon, and saw a priest performing Mass. He told Joinville, the companion who was in charge of his bodyguard that day, that he wanted to 'go inside to listen to the Mass begun by the priest'.

Joinville was completely unnerved by this request, because he thought that the Assassins were masters of disguise, and could be hiding anywhere. When King Louis entered the church, Joinville 'noticed that the clerk who was assisting in singing the Mass was large, dark, thin and hairy'. Joinville was concerned that 'it might turn out that he was one of those wicked Assassins and that he would kill the king'. It turned out that he was worrying needlessly. But it does show the pervasive level of fear they had created - and, more prosaically, what a newly arrived Frenchman thought an undercover Assassin would look like!

Ultimately, the Assassins did whatever it took to get them close to the target, and their appearance varied accordingly - it's the perfect opportunity to dust off a wide range of medieval skirmish figures.

All figures by Gripping Beast.





W7382 cover artwork by Neil Roberts. Prince Louis in action during his 1216 invasion of England.



THE TEMPLARS AND THE DEMON WARS OF 1307-1314

Dr Steve Tibble brings demons and magic to the Templars for our 'Just Add Fantasy' theme as well as looking at the real events surrounding the Order's fall.

It hopefully goes without saying that there were no demons involved in the events of 1307-1314 that marked the destruction of the Knights Templar order. Much of the flavour text and gaming fun in this article is fiction and fantasy, but it all comes alongside a heady dose of wild historical inspiration. Extraordinarily, the collapse of the Order really was accompanied and propelled by many accusations and rumours of demons - shocking stories of devil-worship, blasphemy, sodomy, and heresy. How could one, when presented with this month's theme, resist applying a contemporary alternative twist to those events of 700 plus years ago?

FACT AND FICTION - THE TRUTH OF THE SUPPRESSION OF THE TEMPLARS

The tabloid horror stories, bizarre accusations, and religious hysteria of the time was made even more fascinating by the tales of vast wealth and religious treasure hoards the Templars were rumoured to hold, including even the Holy Grail itself. The attractiveness of these stories, then and now, is demonstrated by the ever-increasing volume of conspiracy theories that the Order generates - so many, in fact, that it is now almost a self-sustaining industry.

I have tried to weave in as many true events as possible into the 'Raid on Saint-Chapelle' scenario here. The

Order of the Templars was indeed destroyed in France and, soon afterwards, everywhere else across western Europe. There were multiple accusations of idolatry and demon-worship, and, in some cases, even confessions of such activity by the Templars themselves. There was not, however (unless it was kept extraordinarily secret), an attack on Saint-Chapelle to destroy the Crown of Thorns and usher in an age of demons.

In the early parts of this article, I am intentionally vague about the boundaries between reality and fiction. Many areas that read as make-believe will be far closer to the truth than you might expect; this is all part of the fun of the fantasy theme!




THE BURNING

It was an overcast March evening in Paris, 1314, and the cold wind swept up the Seine. Onlookers turned up their collars and huddled slightly closer to their companions. The place, appropriately enough for a scene of execution, was the Ile des Juifs - the island of the Jews - near the palace garden of Philip IV, king of France. He was called, perhaps ironically under these most ugly of circumstances, 'the Fair'. But no one was interested in iron that day.

As the sun slowly set, two elderly male cult-members were brought out. Both tired, bedraggled, clearly worn out by their troubled confinement in the local dungeons. Whatever had taken place, you knew it had not been good, and it had not happened quickly. These were men reshaped by their experiences, knocked down, tantalised, and then knocked down further still. They had reached the end ...


... But there was something in their manner that said that they had not been entirely beaten. These condemned men refused to conform to their role of broken and conquered Satanists and devil-worshippers; the way they held themselves, the way they looked at each other, showed that despite their suffering, the physical pain, and



psychological torment, they remained resolute. They were the last surviving demon-masters of the Templar Order; their burning was (in theory at least) the final act in the Demon Wars that had convulsed France for the previous seven years, but they were uncowed. The two men were led to the pyre and the guards withdrew.

These hardened heretics and demon-masters, two of the most powerful magicians in Christendom, protested their innocence, but it was not the usual implausible, maudlin whining. It was considered, a statement of anger on behalf of their 'heretical' brethren, a form of corporate last will and testament - a final opportunity to set the record straight and to spit out their hatred at the weak mortals they so despised.


The smoke eventually obscured the heretics from sight, but one or two of the crowd, eager to drench themselves in the immediacy of the drama, gathered as close as they could - stretching to catch any final words or agonising sounds of pain. They later said that in the last few seconds the heretics' talk of innocence changed to threats and curses. They would be avenged. They would



be remembered for the truth they told and the power of the devils they served; those who had persecuted them would be dead within a few months.

The men burned that day were the greatest demon-masters that the Templars had ever produced. The senior of the two was the Grand Master and Supreme Mage, James of Molay. The other was his loyal chief magician, Geoffrey of Charnay. Within a few weeks, undoubtedly through the power of those two men, minor devils and ancient familiars allied with the Order were positioned to strike and started to take their revenge.


Pope Clement V, who had allowed the suppression to take place, was the first to feel the power of their hatred. Demons in the employ of the Templars still had many senior contacts at the Vatican. They fed him a series of sophisticated and extremely painful poisons. He died on 20 April 1314. On the night that his body was laid out to rest, the last demonic powers



of the Order were deployed to launch lightning bolt attacks on the church, causing a disastrous fire. By the time the flames were put out, the Pope's body had been almost entirely consumed - an ironic mirroring of the devil-worshippers' own ghastly deaths.

The main instigator, King Philip the Fair, met a similarly gruesome fate just a few months later. Lesser demons were concealed in trees along the path of a royal hunt in the Forest of Halatte. They ambushed the king, frightening his horse, and throwing him to the ground. In the confusion that followed, Templar familiars were able to inflict serious injuries on the king before his household retainers could intervene. He died in agony a few weeks later, on 29 November 1314, at Fontainebleau. As predicted, neither man had lived to see the end of the year.

The Demon Wars were over. The Templars were gone. But echoes of their power remain to this day.



BUT WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?

Believe it or not, much of what I've penned in the flavour piece above happened as described (mostly!). The deaths of James of Molay, and Geoffrey of Charney, the masters of this putative demon-worshipping sect, occurred. James of Molay really did curse the French king who had persecuted him and the Order, as well as the Pope who had been too weak to defend them. Both of those cursed men died in unpleasant circumstances before the end of the year.

Before you get too excited, the paths of history and fantastical conspiracies sharply part company at this point. Disentangling the truth from the many conspiracy theories is a job for the later part of this article, but it deserves a brief summary before we dive into the fantasy wargaming options. As always with the Templars, the truth is even stranger than the fiction!

The burning of the two famous 'Demon-Masters' is ostensibly a classic image from a ferociously religious age; humble, battered heretics, counterpoised by hatred and religious invective. In the context of the crusades, one might assume that this kind of event was typical. It was anything but. In fact, it was an ending, rather than a beginning. The crusades, the archetypal wars of religious frenzy, had ground to a halt, but the hunt for heretics continued.

The burning took place just a few years after the final loss of the Holy Land. The men burning at the stake in Paris that night were no normal heretics - not, in fact, 'heretics' at all, despite the accusations that had been brought against them. On the contrary, they were the last of the Templars - the cream of the crusading movement, famed for their bravery and devotion to the Christian cause.

HOW COULD SUCH AN ORDER FALL SO FAR?

The suppression of the Templar Order was carried out across Christendom, but the impetus behind it originated in France at the court of King Philip IV. Not coincidentally, although the Templars operated throughout Europe and the Mediterranean, it was mainly in France or in areas under French control that large numbers of shocking, hugely incriminating confessions were initially forthcoming.

There was no warning of the suppression. The axe fell as suddenly as a guillotine blade. In October 1307 the king's troops moved in force against the Order. This was the medieval equivalent of the Night of the Long



Above: Illustration from *Knights Templar: A Secret History* (c) Osprey Publishing Ltd. www.ospreypublishing.com

Knives when Himmler's SS turned on Ernst Röhm's SA 'Brownshirts' - both were vicious attacks on institutions that had been lulled into a false sense of security by the narcotic complacency of power and their own fanatical loyalty.

The king's motives, and those of his closest advisors, in carrying out this extraordinary putsch are not entirely clear. But the bloody consequences have been the subject of endless confusion, scholarly debate, and an entire industry of conspiracy theories. Which I'm only going to add to here, with the fantasy scenario ahead. Sorry!

I'll atone for my historical sins shortly, in the conclusion of this article, but for now, here's a full-on fantasy Demon Wars scuffle, presented within the *Frostgrave* rules but suitable for just about any skirmish game.

REDUNDANCIES - TIME TO MOVE ON

Of the three main military orders, only the Templars looked redundant - and it was this lack of purpose which made them uniquely vulnerable. Their old competitors, the Hospitallers, had made major efforts after the loss of the Latin East in 1291 to create a renewed strategy and a more appropriate set of 'corporate objectives'. They quickly started building a substantial military base in Rhodes and established naval patrols around the eastern Mediterranean - and at the same time they also fell back on their original duties of looking after the sick.

The youngest military order, the Teutonic Knights, slipped easily into another crusading role on Europe's other eastern front - pagan Prussia.

Only the Templars were left - underemployed, unfocused, and with few friends. Arrogance and a lack of imagination meant that they had been slow to adapt to the new world order. They continued to advocate boots-on-the-ground action in the Middle East to try to liberate the Holy Land once more. But this was their only idea, and it was far too ambitious and unrealistic - no one was buying what they had to sell.

The Teutonic Knights had been accused of witchcraft by some of their opponents, and the Hospitallers, who still exist today, had had false accusations of heresy hurled at them, but it was the famously devout and heroically disciplined Templars who committed the major 'crime' of becoming redundant.

GAMING THE DEMON WARS

THE RAID ON THE SAINT-CHAPELLE

The Demon Wars began with simultaneous attacks on the Order's properties throughout France on the suitably ironic day of Friday 13 of October, 1307.

The focus was aimed squarely at the Templar headquarters in Paris. Crack squads of royal knights led the assault, accompanied by siege engineers - some wielding huge axes, while others were equipped with battering rams, each strengthened by a tiny sliver of the True Cross. They hurled terracotta pots full of holy water into the rooms they assaulted, incapacitating and stunning the occupants before charging in. Most of the attacks went off as planned, but even as they did an unexpected resistance and counter-attack of the most dangerous kind was underway.

The Templar Grand Master could never match the sheer numbers of men King Philip was sending against the Templars, but he knew where the Christians were at their most vulnerable. The ultimate source of King Philip's power was the Crown of Thorns, a precious relic of enormous strength, held nearby in the king's grand but poorly defended private church - the Sainte-Chapelle.

James briefed his last remaining elite squad of brother knights, ordering them to fight their way through to the inner sanctum of the Sainte-Chapelle, crack open the reliquary and ritually burn the Crown of Thorns. If this could be done, the Templar cult still had a chance - with royal power diminished, the Order could begin to fight back from a position of strength and eventually bring Satan back to rule the material world.



Figures seen here by Footsore, Fireforge, and 1st Corps.



GAME BACKGROUND

The Saint-Chapelle is under constant guard and the men are aware of the fighting taking place nearby; they have seen some of the Templar devil-worshippers being paraded past the chapel doors and onward to the dungeons and interrogation rooms of the Palais de la Cité but are ever vigilant in their defence.

FROSTGRAVE - THE FROZEN CITY BECOMES THE SAINT-CHAPELLE

With magic at its fore and many other fantasy elements within its rules, the game of *Frostgrave* is an excellent skirmish option with which to play this game. If you have another fantasy or historical skirmish game that you're more familiar with, you can, of course, modify these suggestions and use them in your chosen ruleset.

THE FRENCH - DEFENDER WARBAND AND SETUP OPTIONS

The defender controls the royal guard and must protect the Crown of Thorns.

The centre of the table should include some sort of inner sanctum containing the Crown, and be protected by three experienced, battle-hardened sergeants - use the Knight stats profile. These sergeants may not leave the central area of the table unless they pass a Will Roll (TN17). Modify this roll with a +1 per enemy that has been taken out of the game.

Another D6+3 guard patrol the rest of the table and should be placed randomly, divided into groups of three (or as close as possible). Pick these at random from the Standard Soldier Table (roll a D6 and count down). On a roll of 6 you may choose to re-roll using the Specialist Soldier Table (roll 2D6 and count down - if your roll is high enough to go off the end of the table you may choose any option).

All the above elements are found between pages 29 to 31 of the *Frostgrave Second Edition* rulebook.

Leading the defenders are a modified Knight with 14 Health and +3 Will and two junior chaplains. The chaplains use the Starting Apprentice stat line and randomly select two spells from the following table (see the *Frostgrave* rules for details of the spells). Re-roll any duplicate spell (four different ones must be used in total):

D6 roll	Spells
1	Blinding Light
2	Combat Awareness
3	Wall
4	Slow
5	Enchant Armour
6	Circle of Protection (all Attackers classed as demons)

DEFENDER REINFORCEMENTS

Reinforcements are also close at hand as the chapel is in the heart of the royal palace complex. To determine how many more Royal troops will join the battle at the start of each turn, the French player rolls one D6 + the turn number. For each number above 7 they will get a reinforcement model (e.g. On turn 5 a roll of 5 will = 10 in total bringing three reinforcements). These enter from any of the board edges.

For each additional figure who arrives, roll another D6:

D6 roll	Royal troops
1 - 3	Guard (randomise as above)
4 - 5	Sergeant (not fixed to centre of board)
6	Chaplain (randomly choose just one spell from the table above)



Above: Illustration from *Knights Templar A Secret History* (c) Osprey Publishing Ltd. www.ospreypublishing.com

THE TEMPLAR ELITES - ATTACKER WARBAND AND SETUP OPTIONS

The attacker must destroy the Crown of Thorns and enters the table from a board edge of their choosing.

Pick this warband as you would a standard *Frostgrave* warband but with 800 gold crowns to spend and up to ten soldiers allowed.

The Templars are led by Geoffrey of Charnay, one of the Order's most skillful mages, and commander of the Templars in Normandy. He is accompanied by his devoted cult followers including his apprentice in battle. The rest of the warband are fanatical brother knights, with skills honed by years of fighting and assassination missions in the Middle East, along with their retainers. Geoffrey of Charnay should use the rules for a wizard and his second in command is his apprentice. These two should be treated as level 10 (choose their advances before the battle).

TURN ORDER AND ACTIVATION

The French defender's main knight and the Templar attacker's Geoffrey of Charnay activate in the wizard phase. These figures and 0-3 soldiers that started the phase within 3" and in line of sight of the wizard, may be activated as per the standard *Frostgrave* rules.

Any one of the French chaplains (other chaplains will activate as if they are regular soldiers this turn) and the Templar's apprentice activate in the apprentice phase. These figures and 0-3 soldiers can activate as above.

Activate any remaining models in the soldier phase. There is no creature phase unless you add in some scenario rules that call for it.

SCENARIO MODIFIERS

Various scenarios from the *Frostgrave: Second Edition* rulebook have interesting elements that could be used in your game to represent the Crown and the environment. Here are some suggestions, but remember that the most important element of the game is that you come up with a way for the Templar player to destroy the Crown and, thus, win the battle. We suggest using *Frostgrave's* treasure system as a part of this and randomising which treasure counter represents the Crown of Thorns.

- **The Library:** The Set-Up rules for this scenario are perfect to represent the inner confines of the Saint-Chapelle. Treat the central treasure as the Crown with the Templar player needing to pass a Fight Roll in order to 'pick it up' (which we will consider destroying it). For extra victory points, the Templar could attempt to also exit the table through the scenario's doorways, but the main goal is the destruction of the Crown.
- **The Living Museum:** You could use this scenario's five statues and associated random treasure reveals/construct summoning as an alternative to the central guards.
- **The Complex Temple:** Another randomisation option for the Crown of Thorns here.
- **The Orb:** Yet another possible way to represent the Crown of Thorns - treat the winged imps that defend it as an arcane security system.
- **The Ice Storm:** Even more Crown possibilities! The icicle smash rule could represent the Crown sending out defensive thorn projectiles.

AN EMBARRASSING TRUTH

Contrary to this bold and utterly fantastical mission to destroy the Crown of Thorns, there was no combative resistance from the Templars in Paris or beyond, all of whom were devout Christians and loyal Frenchmen. Unlike the state-of-the-art castles they manned in the Holy Land, their buildings in France were generally unfortified; being in the heart of Christendom, this was hardly surprising. Much the same was true of the brother knights who were caught up in the initial wave of arrests - unlike the elite warriors who fought so hard in the Middle East, the brothers stationed in the West were mostly administrators, and those who were not were most often wounded brothers, broken in mind or body, recuperating in a place they knew (or at least thought) to be safe.

The Order's headquarters in Paris were an exception. They were fortified and would have been capable of putting up a limited defence if they had been ready.



SEX, LIES, AND VELLUM

The suppression of the Templars was the most extraordinary story of the Middle Ages and the confessions the Templar knights made as their Order was being dissolved make incredibly compelling reading: sex and heresy, demons and idolatry, monks and magic, riches and power, cannibalism and sorcery.

Disappointingly, however, almost none of it was true. One stressed Templar, brother Bernard of Parma, was so scared - and hence so highly motivated - that he made up what was an almost entirely new religion in his efforts to appease his torturers. The Order existed to worship an idol implausibly called 'Maguineth', he said - a name presumably derived from 'Mahumet' or 'Muhammad'. The previously devout recruits to the Templar Order were expected to give all their money to this idol and were - one imagines - encouraged not to tell their friends and relatives that this was what they were doing.

There was a very tangible upside to this devil worship. This idol would, in return for their devotion and sacrifices, save the lives of the brothers. But, and Bernard was clearly scraping the barrel at this point, it was also very useful in performing far more pedestrian acts - it was good for germinating flowers, for instance, and it also helped trees to grow more quickly. The slightly limp and disappointing ending to the confession suggests strongly that brother Bernard's desperate imagination was running on empty by this time. Not surprisingly, few other Templars seem to have been aware of this parallel religion that was supposedly at the heart of the Order.

In fact, the charges of idolatry that were brought against the Templars were so absurd that they now appear ludicrous. Only the most gullible or credulous of judges - or, more cynically, those who already knew what their verdict was - would take the forced testimony and other 'evidence' seriously.

For our Satanic Templars, we used Gripping Beast's Hexenjager and Order Militant Fanatics. This photo also features our Giants in Miniature Dante figure.



But they were completely unprepared. The 'Demon Wars', as we are fancifully calling them, started as an undeclared raid, an unannounced putsch conducted with overwhelming force. The Templars, as the French king had planned, were taken by surprise.

In practice, most of the 'action' involved in the suppression consisted of stunned and unarmed men - often elderly non-combatants - being arrested, tortured, and imprisoned - and then later executed. I often feel there is a parallel between the end of the Templars and the Valkyrie conspiracy of 1944. Both are compelling and fascinating sideshows in already intriguing periods. But they are both also tantalisingly difficult to wargame because of the lack of military action involved - and hence the more satisfying results that can be achieved by turning it into a fantasy scenario. That doesn't mean the history lacks interest however!

SHOCKING ACCUSATIONS

The sins of the Templars were a huge surprise to everyone - there was no backdrop of significant complaints about devil worship, heresy, or any other major misdemeanours. Some of the same monks who were tried, tortured, and later executed, were on royal service, helping the king of France's officials. When the order for the suppression was issued, some arrested Templars had to be escorted back to Paris by the very people they were helping.

The Order was entirely unprepared for the accusations put to them and the combination of shock, dislocation, and torture - particularly the latter - was overwhelming. Almost everyone, from the master down to the newest novice, confessed to everything. After the shock had passed, however, the Order gradually started to regroup and defend itself. By the Spring of 1310 no less than 600 Templars had retracted their initial confessions. The trumped-up charges of devil worship and satanism were so patently absurd that their defence soon began to gain momentum.

But recanting was even more dangerous than failing to confess in the first place. Once a confession had been made, any backsliding laid one open to charges of having become a 'relapsed heretic' - or behaving, as the Jesuits so vividly used to say, like a 'dog returning to its vomit'. And the penalty for such a relapse was death, potentially in the most horrible way. King Philip and his lawyers acted swiftly to stop this resurgence in its tracks. Fifty-four of the Templar retractors were reclassified as 'lapsed heretics' based on the defence that they were trying to mount - they were burnt at the stake in Paris as an example to anyone else who might think about resistance.

The defence of the Order collapsed as the survivors realised that any attempt to achieve legal recourse was only going to end in death. The Templars'

remaining brothers were either sent to other monasteries to live out their lives in obscurity or submitted to heavy penances.

TROUBLE AT THE TOP

There remained the issue of the Templar leadership. On 18 March 1314 a special council was convened in Paris, to conclude the matter once and for all. The four main leaders of the Order were put on trial in front of royal and papal representatives and sentenced to life imprisonment. "Since these four, without exception, had publicly and openly confessed the crimes which had been imputed to them," wrote the monkish continuator of the chronicle of William of Nangis, 'they were judged to be thrust into harsh and perpetual imprisonment'.

Two of them, Geoffrey of Gonneville and Hugh of Piraud, accepted the sentence. But the master of the Order, James of Molay, and Geoffrey of Charney, the master of the Templars in Normandy, preferred to recant the confessions they had made under duress despite the obvious consequences - they declared their personal innocence, together with that of the entire Order. The last of the Templars did not play the parts of victims or heretics as meekly as they were supposed to. On the contrary, they "were seen to be so prepared to sustain the fire with easy mind and will that they brought from all those who saw them much admiration and surprise for the constancy of their death and final denial".



Above: A Templar and Defender trade magical blows. Visit the Wi website for a guide on making these effects.

Talk of last-minute curses and threats spread quickly around Paris and, in part, inspired the fantasy elements of this article. Ultimately James of Molay and Geoffrey of Charney were cherished as martyrs. Giovanni Villani, the famous Florentine chronicler, wrote that on “the night after the said master and his companion had been martyred, their ashes and bones were collected as sacred relics by the friars and other religious persons, and carried away to holy places”.

They, and perhaps the whole Order, had their weaknesses - but at least they had the decency to die well!

CATAclysm AND CONSPIRACY

Contrary to the glamour and secrecy surrounding the Templars, the answer to their enduring reputation and the thousand conspiracy theories they have inspired, lies in acts that are astonishingly trivial and mundane.

The Templar records were lost soon after the order was suppressed. Their rival, and extremely similar, military Order, the Hospitallers, found a new role. They tried to adapt, and they were - slightly - less arrogant than the Templars. The Hospitallers survived and so did their records; the disputes they lay out are often very different, some are trivial, some less so, but they all share one quality - they are colossally boring! They are the dregs of old arguments, the dull everyday records of landownership and privilege compiled by monastic orders with nothing better to do. The one thing they do not give a scope for, however, is conspiracy. With records as prosaic, venal, and dull as this, the scope for paranoid fantasies is almost zero.

With the Templars, however, it was very different. Almost nothing remains. We have only two surviving documents from their records relating to the Latin East - and even these are both copies rather than originals. The Order’s most critical archives, the ones that would have shown links with all manner of conspiracies - devil worship, the Holy Grail, or the Shroud of Turin, for instance - have vanished.

Their destruction was more than just a sad historical footnote, or a nuisance for academics. The lack of real records created a vacuum. All that were left were a few stray scraps, the Templar confessions and their trial papers - the frightened, self-serving testaments of broken men, desperate to please their torturers. These were men eager to confirm any mad occult theory their inquisitors wanted to hear about, no matter how crazy or far-fetched. These fantastical theories have multiplied exponentially over the years - a phenomenon which is, of course, broadly in line with the growth of the internet.

The trial of the Templars was so absurd that it would be funny if it were not so sad. For many of the brothers, it was a personal tragedy. But even more depressingly, it was an inglorious and shoddy end to an Order that had been a home and inspiration to generations of Europe’s bravest knights. The crusades would continue, in one form or another, long after Philip and his show trials were just a distant memory. But with the destruction of the Templars, the spirit of crusading would never be the same.

An era of extraordinary passions had come to an end.

Scenery by Gale Force Nine. Gaming Mat by Deep Cut Studios. Figures (mainly) by Gripping Beast.



NEXT ISSUE:
*Wi*PRIME COLLECTIONS

II

PAINTING AND
MODELLING ONE