

THE KINGDOM  
OF THE CRUSADERS

*by*

DANA CARLETON MUNRO

*Late Dodge Professor of Medieval History  
in Princeton University*



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Commerce also brought the Franks and natives together. During the siege of Antioch, as has been mentioned, Armenian merchants from the city had sold provisions to the Crusaders, although at an exorbitant price. In 1099 the Christians had made "a firm peace with Ascalon on account of trade." In 1115 Baldwin I had allowed traders of all religions free entrance into Jerusalem. The following year Mohammedan caravans began again to go across the Christian territories because it was more convenient and the transit dues were small. Yet these tolls made up a considerable portion of the revenues of the king of Jerusalem.

The Christian seaports in Syria became active centers of trade. Muslim merchants had to pay a tax on their wares of one kirat per dinar of value (a dinar equals twenty-four kirats) when they entered Acre. This was the most important port. At Acre a strong trading company of men from Mosul lived under the protection of the Templars. In their bazaars could be found rich stuffs from Bagdad and Persia, glassware from 'Iraq, porcelain from China, pearls from the Persian Gulf, precious stones from India, ivory, perfumes, spices, and other wares from many a distant land, as well as the damascened bronzes for which Mosul was famous. There were two extremely wealthy merchants who were leading citizens of Damascus. "All their trade was carried on along the Frankish coast, where their names were held in high esteem and they had agents under their orders. Caravans which bore their merchandise were con-

stantly going and coming; they had colossal fortunes, as well as great influence both with the Mussulman and Frankish princes." These native merchants were well received and well treated at Acre, according to the testimony of Ibn-Jubayr: "We were taken to the custom-house, a caravansary prepared to receive caravans. Before the gate is a carpeted platform, on which the Christian clerks sit. They have inkstands of ebony ornamented with gold-work. They keep their accounts in Arabic, and also speak this language. Their head, who is chief of the customs, is called simply sahib—a title derived from the importance of his work; for the Christians employ this name for all their important men who are not in the army. All the receipts belong to the chief of the custom-house, who pays a very large sum to the government. The merchants in our company carried their merchandise thither and installed themselves in the upper story. The baggage of those who had no merchandise was examined to make sure that it contained nothing dutiable, and then they were allowed to go where they pleased. The examination was made in a quiet and courteous manner, without any violence or overcharge."

Italian merchants from Venice, Pisa, and Genoa, and French from Marseilles, had their warehouses and caravansaries in the Syrian ports, and the Templars and Hospitallers also participated in the trade and had their own magazines. It was to the interest of these merchants and military orders that nothing should be done to offend the Muslim merchants or

divert their trade. In addition to the exotic goods mentioned above Syria furnished many wares of its own manufacture, such as linen, silk, cotton, sugar, indigo, saffron, and the pottery for which Jaffa, Beirut, and Tyre were famous. In case of need Christians borrowed money from Muslims. Thus Baldwin II borrowed from Usamah's father, and the Orders of the Temple and Hospital had many dealings with the Muslims.

It could not be otherwise, for the people of the two religions mingled constantly. It is possible to trace such associations in the agreements made about hunting. Both Christians and Muslims were very fond of the chase, and they lived in such close proximity that it would have been impossible to have engaged in hunting if either party had been constantly exposed to the danger of being captured and held for ransom. Consequently hunting agreements were made which secured them against such a mischance. Rey states that "in the inventories of the archives of several Arab families in Syria there is mention of permissions to hunt granted, reciprocally, in certain limited portions of the two territories, by Christian princes and Persian emirs." The two at times met and hunted together. The Christians learned from the Muslims to use the cheetah, or hunting leopard, which afterwards became so popular with the rulers in the West. Each admired the other's falcons, dogs, and horses. Soon they began to trade these and this led to association. Thus Usamah says that there were "friendly relations and correspondence" between his father and

the Armenian princes; the latter sent each year ten falcons, and his father sent in return horses, perfumes, and garments from Egypt.

In addition to hunting agreements, proximity led to many other associations. One of the most significant examples is given by Ibn-Jubayr: "In the neighboring plain there is a vast extent of cultivated land, dominated by a fort belonging to the Franks and named Honein. This is three parasangs from Paneas [Baniyas], the frontier town of the Mussulman territory. The district formed by this plain is shared equally by the Franks and the Mussulmans,—i.e., the two peoples divide into equal shares the crops which grow in it, and the herds of the two peoples pasture together without any wrong being done by either party."

"Safe conducts" were often obtained for travel. Thus Nureddin asked King Baldwin II to send him one so that Usamah and his family and goods might pass in safety from Egypt to Syria, either by land or sea. In this case the king caused the vessel to be wrecked so that he might profit by the right of flotsam and jetsam. Usamah lost property to the value of 30,000 dinars and his library of four thousand volumes. The king gave to the members of his family only 500 dinars for their expenses in returning home. Usually "safe conducts" were better respected, especially by the Muslims. They were given freely. Tancred wrote to the uncle of Usamah, "This is a revered knight of the Franks who has completed the holy pilgrimage and is now on his way back to his

country. He has asked me to introduce him to you so that he may see your cavaliers. Accordingly, I have sent him to you. Treat him well." Roger of Antioch wrote to the uncle, saying, "I am dispatching one of my knights on urgent business to Jerusalem, and I ask thee to send an escort of horsemen to take him from Afamiyah and conduct him to Rafaniyah." These examples illustrate the prevalence of such passports.

Contacts and mutual respect led to many friendships. Baldwin I had shown great courtesy to the wife of one of the shaykhs whom he had captured in 1101 in his expedition across the Jordan. He liberated her, and her husband became one of the most faithful allies of the Franks. The friendship of Raymond of Tripolis and Saladin will be recorded later. Usamah writes, "In the army of King Fulk, son of Fulk, was a Frankish reverend knight who had just arrived from their land in order to make the holy pilgrimage and then return home. He was of my intimate fellowship and kept such constant company with me that he began to call me 'my brother.' Between us were mutual bonds of amity and friendship. When he resolved to return by sea to his homeland, he said to me: 'My brother, I am leaving for my country and I want thee to send with me thy son (my son, who was then fourteen years old, was at that time in my company) to our country, where he can see the knights and learn wisdom and chivalry. When he returns, he will be like a wise man.' Thus there fell upon my ears words which would never come out of

the head of a sensible man; for even if my son were to be taken captive, his captivity could not bring him a worse misfortune than carrying him into the lands of the Franks. However, I said to the man: 'By thy life, this has exactly been my idea. But the only thing that prevented me from carrying it out was the fact that his grandmother, my mother, is so fond of him and did not this time let him come out with me until she exacted an oath from me to the effect that I would return him to her.' Thereupon he asked, 'Is thy mother still alive?' 'Yes,' I replied. 'Well,' said he, 'disobey her not.'" Actual compacts of brotherhood were entered into between Muslims and Christians. Count Joscelin gave up some booty which he had captured when he learned that it belonged to a Muslim with whom he had such a compact.

Courtesies were frequently exchanged, and examples will be cited later in connection with Saladin's career. Christian rulers frequently sought the loan of physicians from Muslim rulers, as the skill of the eastern doctors was highly appreciated by the Franks. When King Amalric saw that his son, later King Baldwin the Leper, was suffering from a disease which the Christian doctors could not diagnose, he sought the services of the most skillful doctors in Damascus. An amusing illustration of the difference in methods between the doctors of the West and of the Orient is given in the naïve account of a Muslim physician who had been loaned to a Frankish lord to treat some difficult cases: "They brought before me a knight in

whose leg an abscess had grown; and a woman afflicted with imbecility. To the knight I applied a small poultice until the abscess opened and became well; and the woman I put on a diet and made her humor wet. Then a Frankish physician came to them and said, 'This man knows nothing about treating them.' He then said to the knight, 'Which wouldst thou prefer, living with one leg or dying with two?' The latter replied, 'Living with one leg.' The physician said, 'Bring me a strong knight and a sharp ax.' A knight came with the ax. And I was standing by. Then the physician laid the leg of the patient on a block of wood and bade the knight strike his leg with the ax and chop it off at one blow. Accordingly he struck it—while I was looking on—one blow, but the leg was not severed. He dealt another blow, upon which the marrow of the leg flowed out and the patient died on the spot. He then examined the woman and said, 'This is a woman in whose head there is a devil which has possessed her. Shave off her hair.' Accordingly they shaved it off, and the woman began once more to eat their ordinary diet—garlic and mustard. Her imbecility took a turn for the worse. The physician then said, 'The devil has penetrated through her head.' He therefore took a razor, made a deep cruciform incision on it, peeled off the skin at the middle of the incision until the bone of the skull was exposed and rubbed it with salt. The woman also expired instantly. Thereupon I asked them whether my services were needed any longer, and when they replied in the negative I



returned home, having learned of their medicine what I knew not before."

The most intimate associations naturally resulted from marriages. All classes from the highest to the lowest felt no aversion to such unions. Of the kings, Baldwin I and Baldwin II married Armenians. Baldwin III and Amalric I married Greek princesses. The movement was a reciprocal one. Emperor Manuel married Mary of Antioch, and later, the favorite wife of Sultan Baybars was a Christian. The common people entered into such marriages from the very first. Usamah tells of several marriages between Muslims and Christian captives. "A number of maids taken captive from the Franks were brought into the home of my father (may Allah's mercy rest upon his soul!). The Franks (may Allah's curse be upon them!) are an accursed race, the members of which do not assimilate except with their own kin. My father saw among them a pretty maid who was in the prime of youth, and said to his housekeeper, 'Introduce this woman into the bath, repair her clothing, and prepare her for a journey.' This she did. He then delivered the maid to a servant of his and sent her to al-Amir Shihab-al-Din Malik ibn-Salim, the lord of the Castle of Ja'bar, who was a friend of his. He also wrote him a letter, saying, 'We have won some booty from the Franks, from which I am sending thee a share.' The maid suited Shihab-al-Din, and he was pleased with her. He took her to himself and she bore him a boy, whom he called Badran. Badran's father named him his heir apparent, and he became

of age. On his father's death, Badran became the governor of the town and its people, his mother being the real power. She entered into conspiracy with a band of men and let herself down from the castle by a rope. The band took her to Saruj, which belonged at that time to the Franks. There she married a Frankish shoemaker, while her son was the lord of the Castle of Ja'bar."

The offspring of the marriages between Franks and natives were very numerous and, while somewhat despised by the Franks, were the most potent intermediaries in causing the adoption of native customs. "Their children, who are called Pullani, were brought up in luxury, soft and effeminate, more used to baths than battles, addicted to unclean and riotous living, clad like women in soft robes, and ornamented even as the polished corners of the Temple; how slow and slothful, how timid and cowardly they proved themselves against the enemies of Christ, is doubted by no one who knows how greatly they are despised by the Saracens. A multitude of Saracens would flee from before their fathers, even though they were few; at the voice of their thunder they hasted away; but they feared their cowardly descendants no more than so many women, unless they had some French or other Westerns with them." The Pullani conformed so closely to Muslim usages as to excite the wrath of zealous churchmen. "They are suspicious and jealous of their wives, whom they lock up in close prison, and guard in such strict and careful custody that even their brethren and nearest relatives

can scarce come at them; while they forbid them so utterly to attend churches, processions, the wholesome preaching of God's Word, and other matters appertaining to their salvation, that they scarce suffer them to go to church once a year; howbeit some husbands allow their wives to go out to the bath three times a week, under strict guard. The richest and most powerful of them, to show that they are Christians, and to somewhat excuse their conduct, cause altars to be set up near their wives' beds, and get Masses performed by starveling chaplains and half-fledged priests." As the Pullani made their living by catering to the wants of the pilgrims, they got a very bad reputation; they were accused of outrageous charges to the pilgrims for lodging and other services, of cheating and plundering, and of pouring contempt upon the "warriors and exiles for Christ's sake, insulting them and calling them the idiots," but their services were much in demand, and they exercised a great influence on the habits of the other Franks.

The Franks relished the luxuries and food with which they became acquainted in Syria. The use of spices became universal and soon spread to the West. The castors, which are now sought by collectors of antiques, were adopted from the Muslims to hold the various spices desired on every table. Persian wines and drinks cooled with snow from Lebanon or Hermon became popular. The Christians also learned to avoid eating pork, and Muslim guests at table were assured that they would find no food forbidden to them by the Koran.

The Franks admired and wore the flowing garments and the turbans. They allowed their beards to grow in imitation of the Muslims. Furred robes and shoes with long curved points became fashionable. The Arabic kufiyah was worn over the Western helmet to ward off the heat of the sun. Its common use is shown by the fact that it became the origin of the heraldic lambrequin. The churches were built in Western style, but decorated by Greek or Saracen artists. The castles, as has been noted, were much influenced by those that the Crusaders found in Syria. Houses were seized from the natives, and, when new ones were built these were copies of the oriental models, and were supplied with running water, fountains, glass windows, perfumed candles; the walls were adorned with hangings, porcelains, and bronzes. At the banquets the Christians employed Saracen entertainers and dancing girls; in the baths, Saracen attendants; for funerals they hired professional mourners, as did the Muslims. The streets of Tyre and Acre were hung with stuffs, as in the days of Muslim rule.

In order to carry on commerce with the Muslims and other natives, the Christians had to adopt the weights and measures in use in the country and needed a form of money which would be acceptable to the Oriental merchants. While Greek and western coins were used among the Crusaders, a new coin, the saracenate, or bezant, or dinar of Tyre, was struck for use in commerce. This was a gold coin imitating closely the standard bezant, coined by Muslims, with

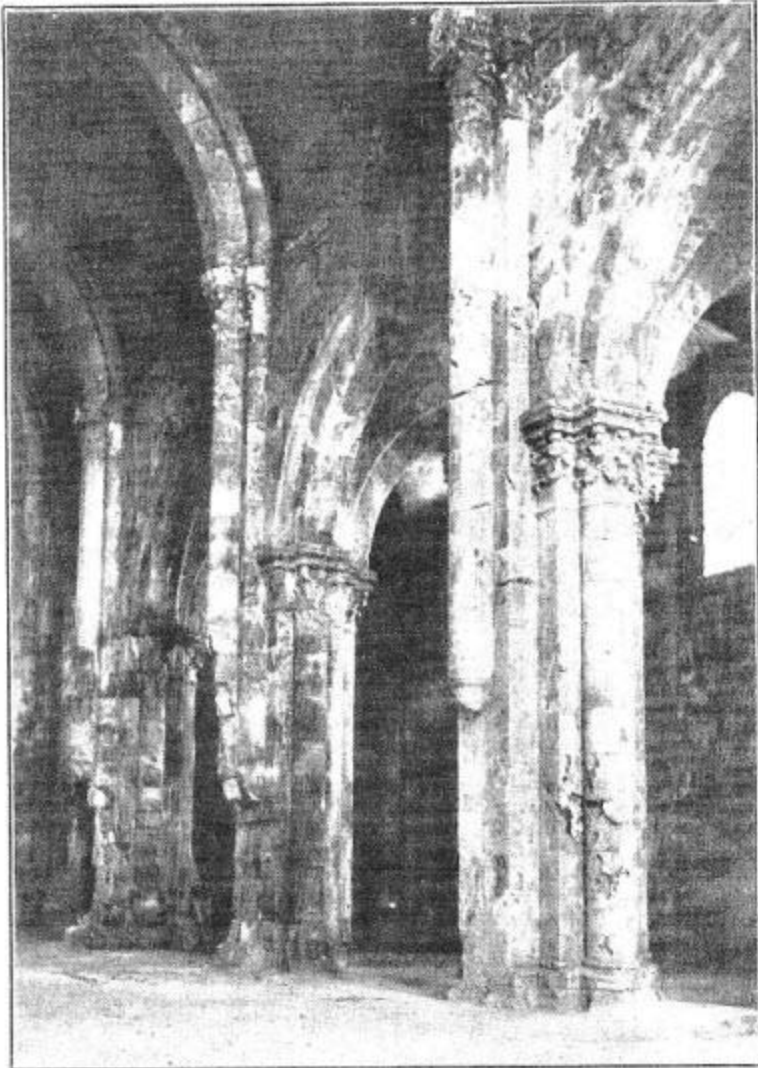
Arabic legend, usually a text from the Koran. This became the coin commonest in use in the land of Outre-Mer, and references to it are very frequent in the documents. It is interesting to note that it continued to be used by the Crusaders till the visit of St. Louis to the Holy Land in the middle of the thirteenth century. Then Pope Innocent IV forbade such impiety, and through the influence of Louis the texts from the Koran were replaced on the coin by Christian inscriptions, but these were still written in Arabic in order not to prevent the circulation of the coins among the Muslims.<sup>2</sup> Commerce was bound by no religious or racial scruples.

The kingship took on an oriental character. The king was approached humbly with bent knee. He made a royal progress through the streets, surrounded by pompous escorts; at home he sat with crossed legs encased in purple boots, in Muslim fashion, on rich rugs. What a change for the rude western warriors! For attendants in the palaces, eunuchs were employed.

Ideas changed rapidly, even in regard to religious matters. Sybel attributes the decline of the kingdom of Jerusalem to the loss of religious zeal. This was

<sup>2</sup> Similar devices to insure circulation of coins among peoples of other faiths were not uncommon. In the Spanish peninsula Christian rulers had minted coins with Arabic legends. Some Muslims adopted a similar device, and "on coins of the Urtukis, for example, a petty dynasty of some crusading fame that ruled a few fortresses in Mesopotamia, we meet with not only the figures of Byzantine emperors, but those of Christ and the Virgin, with mangled inscriptions of Christian import. Figures of a similar character also appear on the coinage of the Ayyubis (Saladin's Kurdish house), and that of the Beny Zangy of Mosul and Syria, together with the earliest known representation of the two-headed eagle, which has since obtained high favor in Europe."

\* brought about by the admiration felt for the Muslims and by the constant associations with men of so many different sects. They all met at common shrines. In the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, as today, different Christian sects worshipped; but the intermingling at holy places was not confined to Christians. At the great cathedral of Tortosa both Christians and Muslims worshipped. The fig tree, which had furnished food for the Virgin Mary, the spring where she had washed the Infant's clothes, were revered by the followers of both religions. The chapel built near the Burning Bush seen by Moses was entered by Muslims barefooted, as in their own mosques. Muslim parents brought their children to Christian priests to be baptized, because they thought that this would make them stronger and more healthy. Our Lady of Sardenay, in a village northwest of Damascus, worked miracles for Muslims as well as Christians; by her intervention a sultan of Damascus was healed of his blindness. Ibn-Jubayr says: "In the eastern part of the city of Acre is the Spring of the Ox. From this Allah caused the ox to come forth for Adam. The descent to the spring is by polished steps. Near this spring there was formerly a mosque, of which the oratory remained uninjured. To the east of it the Franks have constructed an oratory; thus, Mussulmans and infidels meet there—although it belongs to the Christians—and each one says his prayers, facing in the direction that his faith prescribes." In the Christian cities mosques were set apart for the use of the faithful. "Whenever I visited Jerusalem,"



*Courtesy of P. K. Hitti*

INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH OF NOTRE DAME AT TORTOSA  
(TARTUS)

Usamah writes, "I always entered the Aqsa Mosque, beside which stood a small mosque which the Franks had converted into a church. When I used to enter the Aqsa Mosque, which was occupied by the Templars, who were my friends, the Templars would evacuate the little adjoining mosque so that I might pray in it. One day I entered this mosque, repeated the first formula, 'Allah is great,' and stood up in the act of praying, upon which one of the Franks rushed on me, got hold of me and turned my face eastward saying, 'This is the way thou shouldst pray!' A group of Templars hastened to him, seized him and repelled him from me. I resumed my prayer. The same man, while the others were otherwise busy, rushed once more on me and turned my face eastward, saying, 'This is the way thou shouldst pray!' The Templars again came in to him and expelled him. They apologized to me, saying, 'This is a stranger who has only recently arrived from the land of the Franks and he has never before seen anyone praying except eastward.' Thereupon I said to myself, 'I have had enough prayer.' So I went out and have ever been surprised at the conduct of this devil of a man, at the change in the color of his face, his trembling, and his sentiment at the sight of one praying towards the *qiblah*."

There were many attempts, some partially successful, at a union of various Christian sects. Among the suffragans of the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem were the Armenian archbishop and the Jacobite bishop. Many Greeks recognized the supremacy of the Latin hierarchy, and there were some conversions from



Islam to Christianity, but one of the churchmen writes sorrowfully that he "fears these are not genuine, but induced by fear or interest." Franks became renegades to the Christian religion in times of peril, or when compelled because of their crimes to flee from justice. Some of these converts to Islam secured high positions at the courts of Saracen rulers and had no incentive to return to their co-religionists.

The Christian attitude toward the Jews in the Holy Land was not as favorable as toward the Muslims. While the Jews had the rights of citizenship and a good position legally, their witness being received in court as equal to that of the Christians, they were not permitted to hold land. There were evidently intermarriages between Jews and Christians, as such marriages were repeatedly denounced by zealous clerics, who also warned against the employment of Jewish doctors in Christian families. When Benjamin of Tudela, our chief authority, travelled through the country shortly before the Third Crusade, there were only a few thousand Jews in all the Christian territories; not as many as were to be found in the two cities of Damascus and Ba'labakk. Benjamin mentions few outstanding Jews living among the Franks, but he found many more at Damascus.

Muslim writers frequently praised Christian leaders such as Joscelin, who in the words of Kemaleddin "made himself famous for his generosity and courage." Christian writers, although mainly of the clergy, admitted the good points of an adversary. Thus

Bishop William of Tyre characterized Nureddin as "the greatest persecutor of the Christian name and faith, nevertheless a just prince."

It is significant that Christians soon came to boast of Muslim descent. The change in their point of view can be gathered from two legends. The first explained the greatness of Zangi by giving him as his mother Countess Ida of Austria, and the second explained Thomas Becket's remarkable ability by giving him a Saracen mother. Such feelings of mutual admiration were confined, as might be expected, to the leading men of either faith; the lower classes, as Ibn-Jubayr says, "heap curses on Mohammed, whom Allah has exalted." The Muslims noted that the streets and lanes of Tyre were cleaner than those of Acre, the infidel belief of its inhabitants of a more courteous character, and their habits and feelings more generous towards Mussulmans.

As these quotations indicate, good feelings between Franks and natives were by no means universal. In fact, in reading the western chronicles of the Crusades a very different impression is formed. The writers, almost all of whom were members of the clergy, were opposed to the tendencies springing up in the Holy Land, and spoke of the natives as "people odious to the Divinity." Few of them were residents in the Holy Land, and newcomers were by no means as tolerant as those Christians who had spent years in the land. Usamah noted that "everyone who is a fresh emigrant from the Frankish lands is ruder in character than those who have become acclimatized

and have held long association with the Moslems."

Adventurers who were out to achieve fortune by fighting were as biased as the clerical writers and had an attitude entirely different from that of the Italian or French merchants, who preferred peaceful associations with the natives.<sup>3</sup> Finally it must be noted that the Muslim writers frequently felt a certain amount of contempt for the western barbarians, especially for some of their customs. It is easy to understand such contempt when one reads Usamah's account of a wager of battle, or of an ordeal, or of the race for the pig on the part of two old women; this last delighted the Frankish nobles who had arranged it and who laughed when the old women fell down. No Muslim gentleman could find any amusement in such mockery of old women.

<sup>3</sup> Jacques de Vitry thus describes the Italians: "The Italians are graver and more discreet, prudent and wary, frugal in eating, sober in drinking. They make long and polished speeches, are wise in their counsels, eager and zealous to further the interests of their own States, grasping and provident for the future. . . . They are very necessary to the Holy Land, not only for fighting, but for seafaring, and carrying merchandise, pilgrims, and victuals. As they are sparing of food and drink, they live longer in the East than other nations of the West."

