

Timothy Guard, Chivalry, Kingship and Crusade. The English Experience in the Fourteenth Century, Woodbridge (The Boydell Press) 2013, X–280 p., 4 maps (Warfare in History, 38), ISBN 978-1-84383-824-1, GBP 60,00.

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Alan V. Murray, Leeds

Most scholarship on the crusades has understandably concentrated on the two centuries of campaigns fought for the liberation and defence of the Holy Land and Egypt up to 1291, but as this important study demonstrates, the 14th century was characterised by a renewed enthusiasm for crusading throughout Western Christendom. Crusades were not only prosecuted with new vigour, but were directed to a wide range of targets far beyond the objectives originally envisaged by Pope Urban II in 1095. Despite the conquests of Mamlūks and Ottomans, expeditions continued to be sent against Palestine, Syria, Egypt and the Aegean coast of Turkey, but large numbers of crusaders also signed up to combat the foes of Christendom on such diverse fronts as Spain, North Africa, the Balkans and Lithuania. Guard's aim is to establish how crusading remained a defining function of English chivalric society, from the resumption of crusading efforts in 1307 up to the reign of Henry V. His book thus effectively provides a continuation of Simon Lloyd's study »English Society and the Crusade 1216–1307« (1988), while achieving a greater depth of investigation for the 14th century than was possible in the now standard work by Christopher Tyerman, »England and the Crusades 1095–1588« (1988).

The book is structured in two main parts. Part I contains four chapters setting out the main characteristics and participants in the four main fronts of the Levant, Spain and North Africa, the Baltic, and south-eastern Europe. Part II gives analyses of the four themes of military careers, crusading as salvation, literary and political culture, and the place of crusading in royal ideology. 14th-century England was particularly rich in relevant documentation, and the numerous household accounts, safe-conducts and royal licences to travel, writs of protection and pardons as well as the expected narrative sources offer the possibility of a far more comprehensive picture of English crusading than in either of the previous centuries. Guard also makes excellent use of numerous literary and other texts, many of which deserve to be better known. One such is »Li Charboclois d'armes du conquest precious de la terre sainte de promission«, a crusade treatise compiled by the Hospitaller Roger Stanegrave, who turned up to meet Edward II at York in 1318 after spending almost three decades in Mamlūk captivity until he was released through the agency of Jewish moneylenders.

With the help of this wealth of source material, Guard is able to provide a prosopographical register listing the names of more than 200 crusaders, together with information on their areas of activity, expenses, and associations with other crusaders. This catalogue quite clearly illustrates not only how many Englishmen went on crusade, but often did so on multiple occasions, something that was rare before 1291. Thus John Beaufort, Marquess of Dorset, fought at Tunis in 1390 and Nicopolis in 1396 and twice went to Prussia, while Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of



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Hereford, fought two campaigns in Prussia and three in the Levant; even a less exalted personage such as the knight Thomas Ufford joined no fewer than four *reysen* to Prussia.

The organisation and infrastructure provided by the Teutonic Order in Prussia offered a relatively risk-free opportunity to fight the heathen in the company of the flower of Western chivalry, a prospect that greatly appealed to England's aristocracy and gentry. Research on Western crusaders to Prussia has been largely limited to the magisterial work of Werner Paravicini¹, so it is interesting to have an additional perspective, especially since Guard is able to add at least 27 names to the number of English crusaders identified by Paravicini. Large retinues, the costs of transport and above all the lavish expenditure expected during the Prussian social season made these events very expensive, but crusading on any front was a costly business for individuals. Thus when John, Lord Mowbray, volunteered to help defend Constantinople in 1368, he went equipped with £100 and bills of exchange for 800 marks (much of this borrowed). Yet hundreds of Englishmen regarded such expenditure as worthwhile in terms of their personal salvation, military companionship, and above all the honour and distinction that it brought them.

The investigation of the Crown's attitude to crusading is one of the most intriguing themes of the book. Of the kings in this period only Edward I actually led a campaign to the Holy Land, although Henry IV went twice to Prussia before his accession. It is quite surprising to learn how Edward II, despite the fragile circumstances of his accession, was keen to portray himself as a potential crusader, since this image suited his political ambitions in Scotland and France. Even Henry V, after his coronation as king of France, could claim to be the true heir of St Louis, thus side-lining his Valois opponents. Richard II was another enthusiastic promoter of crusading, although one wonders whether the mismatch between rhetoric and deeds was another factor in the baronial opposition to him, particularly considering how several of his opponents had impeccable crusading credentials.

It is difficult to do justice to the sheer breadth and richness of Guard's work in a review of this length; there is so much original material and analysis in it that one has the impression that either of the two parts could easily have been developed into a monograph in its own right. As it stands, his book is a wonderful treasury of detail on the activities and motivation of English crusaders and their careers in royal service, the practicalities of travel, literary reflections of crusading, the significance of the Holy Land in the ideology of the English monarchy, and much more.

Many of Guard's findings and the sources highlighted by him could in themselves constitute starting points for new avenues of research, and his work has the potential to encourage dedicated studies on individual families or wider kinship groups, finance, piety, or the changing ideology of the crusades. This is one of the most important books on the crusades to appear in the last twenty years.

¹ Werner Paravicini, *Die Preußenreisen des europäischen Adels*, Teil 1, Sigmaringen 1989 (Beihefte der Francia; 17/1); Teil 2, Sigmaringen 1995 (Beihefte der Francia 17/2).



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