



THE CRUSADES

A Reader

edited by

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READINGS IN MEDIEVAL

CIVILIZATIONS AND

CULTURES: VIII

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Then these northmen desired much that
n or Sigurd, should go as commander of the
is expedition. The kings agreed to this, and
ommon expense. Many great men, both of
is, high-ranking people], took part in this
for the journey, it was determined that Sig-
meantime, should rule the kingdom upon

Magnus, King Sigurd sailed with his fleet of
topped in Spain to fight, and then traveled

in the land of Jerusalem in autumn, and in

de a magnificent feast for King Sigurd and
many holy relics. By the orders of King
as taken a splinter off the holy cross; and on
at this wood was of the holy cross, upon
ed. Then this holy relic was given to King
, and twelve other men with him, should
all his power, and erect an archbishop's seat
t the cross should be kept where the [late]
should introduce tithes, and also pay them
rned to his ships at Acre; and then King
a town called Saet, which some think had
onged to the heathens, he wished to con-
On this expedition King Sigurd [in 1110]
, and sixty ships; and after the kings had
rendered, and they took possession of it,
d their men found other booty....

d to his ships, and made ready to leave
island of Cyprus; ... [next they went to
s guests of the Byzantine emperor.] Then
many northmen remained, and went into
urd traveled from Bulgaria, and through
avaria.... When King Sigurd came to
de a sumptuous feast for him; and it was
t the Danish king Nicolaus, who received
a great entertainment for him, accompa-
e him a ship provided with everything
rned to Norway, and was joyfully wel-
It was the common talk among the peo-

ple, that none had ever made so honorable a journey from Norway as this
journey of King Sigurd. He was twenty years of age, and had been three years
on these travels.

*Questions: What motivations for crusading are apparent in this text? What kind of
experience did these crusaders have? What were Baldwin's concerns in dealing with
them? What light is shed on crusading by the statement of Sigurd's age?*

54. STORIES OF WOMEN CRUSADERS

*The extracts below show some of the ways in which women participated in crusading.
The first, by the Greek historian Niketas Choniates, describes noblewomen who went
on the Second Crusade; their leader is usually assumed to be the French queen, Eleanor
of Aquitaine. The second, reporting an incident during the Third Crusade, comes from
The Itinerary of the Pilgrims and Deeds of Richard. The third, from the memoirs
of a knight named Ramon Muntaner, concerns the French invasion of Spain in 1283
under the pretext of a holy war declared by the pope against the Christian king Peter of
Aragon.*

Sources: Choniates: trans. H.J. Magoulias, *O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates*
(Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984), p. 35; Itinerary: trans. G.A. Giles, *Chronicles of the
Crusades, Being Contemporary Narratives*, ed. H.G. Bohn (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1848), p. 128;
Muntaner: trans. G.G. Coulton, *A Medieval Garner: Human Documents from the Four Centuries Pre-
ceding the Reformation* (London: Constable, 1910), pp. 438-39; revised.

Annals of Niketas Choniates

But while the [Greek] emperor governed the empire in this fashion, a cloud of
enemies, a dreadful and death-dealing pestilence, fell upon the Roman bor-
ders: I speak of the campaign of the Germans, joined by other kindred nations
[that is, the Second Crusade]. Females were numbered among them, riding
horseback in the manner of men, not on coverlets sidesaddle but unashamedly
astride, and bearing lances and weapons as men do; dressed in masculine garb,
they conveyed a wholly martial appearance, more mannish than the Amazons.
One stood out from the rest as another Penthesilea [that is, the mythical queen
of the Amazons] and from the embroidered gold which ran around the hem
and fringes of her garment was called Goldfoot.

The Itinerary of the Pilgrims and Deeds of Richard

On another occasion [during the siege of Acre in 1191], amongst those who
were carrying earth to make a mound in the ditch for assaulting the town

more easily, was a woman who labored with great diligence and earnestness, and went to and fro unceasingly, and encouraged others unremittingly, in order that the work might be accomplished; but her zeal put an end to her life and labors; for while a crowd of all sexes and ages were constantly coming and going to complete the work in question, and while the aforesaid woman was occupied in depositing what she had brought, a Turk, who had been lying wait for her, struck her a mortal blow with a dart. As she fell to the ground, writhing with the violence of her pain, she entreated her husband and many others who had come up to assist her, with tears in her eyes, and very urgently, saying, "By your love for me, my dearest lord, by your piety as my husband, and the faith of our marriage contracted of old, permit not my corpse to be removed from this place; but I pray and beseech you, that since I can do nothing more towards the fulfillment of the work, I may deem myself to have done some good, if you will allow my lifeless body to be laid in the trench instead of earth, for it will soon be earth." This she urged with supplications to all the multitude that stood around, and soon after gave up the ghost. Oh! wonderful faith of the weaker sex! Oh! zeal of woman, worthy of imitation, for she ceased not, even dead, to help those who labored, and in her death continued to show her zeal in the cause!

Memoirs of Ramon Muntaner

There was a lady at Perelada whom I knew and saw: men called her Marcadera because she sold merchandise [that is, in Spanish, *mercaderia*]; she was a very doughty woman, solid and big of bones. One day while the French army lay encamped before Perelada, she went forth to fetch herbs from the garden outside the walls: she put on a man's quilted doublet and armed herself with sword and shield and lance, and thus went forth into her garden. And as she stooped in the garden she heard a sound of bells, whereupon she marveled, and stopped picking her colewort, and went to see what this might be, when lo! in the way between her garden and her neighbor's, she saw a French knight fully harnessed on his horse, which was all hung about with little bells at his breast-band; he rode hither and thither to find a way out of that path. When she was aware of him, she strode forward a step and dealt him so shrewd a thrust with her lance through the cuisses [that is, thigh armor] that she drove also through thigh and saddle, and even wounded the horse also. When the beast felt the hurt, he reared and kicked again, and would surely have thrown his rider, but that he was bound by a chain to the saddle. What more shall I say? She drew her sword and ran round by a little gate and smote the beast so sore on the head that he staggered. What more? She seized the rein and cried to the knight, "Yield, or you are a dead man!" and he, that thought himself but dead,

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Ramon Muntaner

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cast away his sword and yielded himself prisoner. She therefore took up the
 sword, drew the lance from his side, and led him to Perelada. The king and the
 prince made merry over this story, and would often bid the lady tell them how
 she had taken him. In brief, the knight and his armor were hers; he ransomed
 himself for 200 gold pieces, which fell to her share. Thereby may you know
 God's anger against the French.

Questions: What roles were these women playing in the respective military campaigns? What were their motivations? How were their actions limited by their sex? How were they viewed by contemporaries? Compare them to the Muslim women described by Usamah Ibn Munqidh in document 30.

55. CRUSADING SONGS

Crusading was a pervasive theme in medieval song, both religious and secular, because it inspired kings and peasants alike, it separated lovers, and it brought exotic new locales to the attention of Europeans. The first song below, written in French, exhorts knights to accompany Louis VII on the Second Crusade. The second was written about the same time in Provençal, the language of southern France, by the noted musician Marcabrun. One of the best-known crusading songs, it tells of crusading opportunities in both the Middle East and Spain. The third song below, written by the Italian nobleman Rinaldo d'Aquino in the mid-thirteenth century, adopts the voice of a woman left behind by her crusader lover.

Sources: "Chevalier, Mult Es Guariz": trans. E. Amt from text ed. N. Clare, liner notes, *Music of the Crusades* (New York: London Records, 1971); other songs: trans. J.J. Wilhelm, *Medieval Song: An Anthology of Hymns and Lyrics* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1971), pp. 123-25, 205-07.

Chevalier, Mult Es Guariz [Knights, Much is Promised]

Knights, your salvation is assured
 Since God has made appeal to you
 Against Almoravids and Turks,
 Who to our Lord dishonor do.
 Against all right, they've seized his fiefs.
 At this we suffer in accord,
 For it was there that God was first
 Obeyed and recognized as Lord.