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**THE CHOICE OF DAMASCUS
AS THE OBJECTIVE OF THE SECOND CRUSADE :
A RE-EVALUATION¹**

« Voltaire to the contrary, history is a bag of tricks which the dead have played upon historians. The most remarkable of these illusions is the belief that the surviving written records provide us with a reasonably accurate facsimile of past human activity »².

— Lynn White, Jr.

I

The ill-starred Second Crusade has received a universally bad press from medieval and modern historians alike. A particular wealth of critical comment, however, has been devoted to the principal military engagement of the crusade : the choice of Damascus as the objective of the abortive attack of the joint armies of the Second Crusade and of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem in July 1148 has been labeled foolish and even harmful to the kingdom. It has been argued that at the time of the campaign Jerusalem and

1. The argument of this paper is based on the author's doctoral thesis *Jerusalem, Damaskus und der Zweite Kreuzzug. Konstitutionelle Krise und äußere Sicherheit des Kreuzfahrerkingreiches Jerusalem, A.D. 1126-1154*, Frankfurt a.M., Lang, 1993.

2. L. White Jr., *Medieval Technology and Social Change*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 1962, p. v.

Damascus were allies against the growing might of their common and principal enemy Nur ad-Din of Aleppo. Some scholars even go so far as to regard the expedition as a willful breach of the treaty of alliance then in force between the Latin Kingdom and Damascus, leading more or less directly to the fall of the Syrian capital to Nur ad-Din in 1154³.

Presumably these acrimonious judgements to a degree reflect the dismal outcome of the attack which is here referred to as the « Syrian Campaign » of the Second Crusade. The original sources record the bare facts of the campaign, but they do not indicate the Eastern and Western Crusaders' motives for choosing Damascus. And while much ink has been spilled about the reasons militating *against* this choice, little effort has been devoted to investigating the motivation *for* choosing Damascus. As early as 1973, however, R.C. Smail has pointed out that the Crusaders' attempt to capture Damascus was probably not as foolish as it may seem, and that they must have had good reasons for their course of action⁴.

Based on an analysis of the strategic situation as perceived by the Crusaders at the time the decision was taken, the present study aims to indicate the reasons which spoke in favor of choosing Damascus as the objective of the Second Crusade.

II

The Latin settlers' first task in consolidating their rule after the conquest of Jerusalem was to gain control of the Muslim-held coastal cities⁵. This was accomplished with the capture of Tyre in 1124, which left only Ascalon in enemy hands until 1153. In the crucial struggle for Tyre, Damascus pro-

3. See B. Kugler, *Studien zur Geschichte des zweiten Kreuzzuges*, Stuttgart, Ebner & Seubert, 1866, p. 216 ; S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, vol. II, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1952, p. 281 ; M. Benvenisti, *The Crusaders in the Holy Land*, Jerusalem, Israel UP, 1970, p. 6, 150 ; J. Prawer, *The Crusaders' Kingdom. European Colonialism in the Middle Ages*, New York, Praeger, 1972, p. 25 ; H.E. Mayer, « Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem », *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 21 (1972), p. 127; *Id.*, *The Crusades*, 2nd ed., Oxford, Oxford UP, 1988, p. 103.

4. R.C. Smail, « The Sepulchre Belongs to Us », *The Times Literary Supplement*, n° 3708 (30 March 1973), p. 355 ; *Id.*, « The Crusaders and the Conquest of Damascus », unpublished paper presented at the Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, Jerusalem, April 1984, p. 15-16. Cf. J. Riley-Smith, *The Crusades. A Short History*, London, Athlone, 1987, p. 101-2 ; Ch. Oman, *A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages*, vol. I, London, Methuen, 1924, p. 261.

5. J. Prawer, « Crusader Security and the Red Sea », in *Id.*, *Crusader Institutions*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 1980, p. 472-4.

ved to be the principal antagonist of the Franks⁶ : it was by far the largest Muslim city in southern Syria, and hence the natural counterpart to the Latin Kingdom.

As J. Prawer has shown, from the middle of the 1120's on the « security doctrine »⁷ of the Latin Kingdom stipulated that its territory should be extended so that its borders would coincide with natural frontiers, such as the Mediterranean Sea and the Syrian Desert⁸. This means that Damascus and its southern province, the Hauran, could easily be used as a staging base for raids and invasions into the heartland of the Kingdom of Jerusalem⁹. From the 1120's on other sectors of the kingdom's land borders were relatively secure on account of the adjacent stretches of desert which functioned as *cordons sanitaires*, but both the Fatimid stronghold of Ascalon and the frontier with Damascus remained sensitive areas in this respect¹⁰.

Not surprisingly, therefore, soon after the capture of Tyre the Franks directed their attention towards Damascus. As early as 1126 and 1129 they attempted to capture the city, but their attacks were repulsed on both occasions¹¹. Relations between Jerusalem and Damascus were not only characterized by war and raids, however : it appears that truces and *condominia* were often in force between the neighbors¹².

The strategic situation in Syria was to undergo a substantial change with the arrival of 'Imad ad-Din Zengi. Atabeg of Mosul from 1127 and ruler of Aleppo from 1128, he built up a powerful empire in northern Syria and Mesopotamia. Zengi was not content with dominating these northern lands, however : in 1130 he began a military and diplomatic campaign against Damascus and its provinces. By 1135 he controlled Hamah, and in 1137 he gained suzerainty over Banyas. In the following year he concluded a marriage alliance with the Damascene ruler Shihab ad-Din, and was given Homs as

6. Hoch, *Jerusalem*, *op. cit.*, p. 22-6.

7. J. Prawer, « Territory, Strategy and Politics in the Crusaders' Security Doctrine » (Hebrew), *Elazar-Papers*, 2 (1979), p. 16-23.

8. Prawer, *Crusaders' Kingdom*, *op. cit.*, p. 20-24 ; *Id.*, « Crusader Security », *op. cit.*, p. 474-8.

9. Benvenisti, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

10. Cf. Ph. Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1984, p. 63-4.

11. J.P. Phillips, « Hugh of Payns and the 1129 Damascus Crusade », in M. Barber (ed.), *The Military Orders. Fighting for the Faith and Caring for the Sick*, Aldershot, Variorum, 1994, p. 141-7 ; see also Smail, « Conquest of Damascus », *op. cit.*

12. M. Köhler, *Allianzen und Verträge zwischen fränkischen und islamischen Herrschern im Vorderen Orient. Eine Studie über das zwischenstaatliche Zusammenleben vom 12. bis ins 13. Jahrhundert*, Berlin, de Gruyter, 1991.

dowry¹³. With secure lines of communication from Aleppo to Banyas, Zengi was now in a position to threaten the southern Syrian states.

Zengi again invaded Damascene territory in 1139. He captured Baalbek, defeated the Damascene army, laid siege to Damascus itself and remained in the immediate vicinity of the city for several months. Eventually, in the spring of 1140 the Damascene leadership approached the Latin Kingdom for help. A formal treaty was concluded and approved by an assembly of the kingdom's nobles. The agreement stated that in return for relieving Damascus, the Franks were to be reimbursed financially. Moreover, the treaty stipulated that Banyas should be recaptured and ceded to the Jerusalemites. Indeed Zengi retreated from Damascus after he learned of the approach of the Frankish force. And after a siege by the armies of Damascus and Jerusalem, Antioch and Tripoli, Banyas surrendered and was subsequently handed over to King Baldwin II¹⁴.

From the Jerusalemites' point of view the Frankish-Damascene treaty of 1140 ensured that Damascus could not be used as a base for an assault on the Latin Kingdom. Hence the treaty was fully in accordance with their security doctrine. It must be borne in mind, however, that the treaty of alliance was concluded in a specific strategic situation which posed a threat to both signatories: by 1140 it had become evident that the expansionist tendencies of Zengi's empire threatened both the Crusader states and Damascus¹⁵. The treaty was certainly not an unconditional long-term alliance. In fact, its sole *raison d'être* was the defense against the expansion of Zengid rule into southern Syria.

III

The city of Edessa was captured by Zengi on Christmas Eve 1144, and the trans-Euphratic parts of the county were subsequently lost as well. Zengi, however, was murdered in September 1146. His empire was divided between his sons: Nur ad-Din took control of northern Syria, while his elder

13. *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades. Extracted and translated from the Chronicle of Ibn al-Qalanisi*, tr. H.A.R. Gibb, London, Luzac, 1932 [hereafter cited as IQ], p. 183-252; « The First and Second Crusade from an anonymous Syriac Chronicle », tr. A.S. Tritton, ann. H.A.R. Gibb, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1933 [hereafter cited as SyA], p. 100-101, 273-4. See also Köhler, *op. cit.*, p. 162-81.

14. IQ, p. 254-62; Guillaume de Tyr, *Chronique*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens, Turnhout, Brepols, 1986 [hereafter cited as WT], 15, 7-11.

15. WT, 15, 7. See also Köhler, *op. cit.*, p. 187-8.

brother Sayf ad-Din held the Mesopotamian possessions¹⁶. The other states in Syria tried to take advantage of this situation; in October 1146 Mu'in ad-Din Anar, the de-facto ruler of Damascus, seized Baalbek and concluded a truce with Homs and Hamah¹⁷. In the winter of 1146/47 Count Joscelin of Edessa, with the support of the largely Armenian population, regained control of the city of Edessa. Nur ad-Din, however, brought up his army from Aleppo and recaptured the city, with decidedly more dramatic consequences than in 1144: Edessa was pillaged and razed, and the non-Muslim population were put to the sword or enslaved¹⁸. Nur ad-Din's action in effect rendered the envisaged recapture of Edessa a pointless exercise for the Christians.

While Zengi's empire had been so extensive as to threaten Damascus, Nur ad-Din's smaller realm could be accommodated — or so it may well have been thought — in the Syrian system of equilibrium then espoused by Damascene politics¹⁹. Zengi's killer had fled to Damascus where he initially received a warm welcome. But when Mu'in ad-Din Anar returned from his expedition against Baalbek, he had the murderer arrested and extradited to Nur ad-Din. The new entente was confirmed in March/April 1147 by a formal treaty of alliance between Damascus and Aleppo, and the marriage of Anar's daughter to Nur ad-Din²⁰. The rapprochement between Aleppo and Damascus was to effect as profound a change of the strategic situation in Syria as had Zengi's expansionist policy a decade earlier.

Whereas the new arrangement of equidistance from both Aleppo and Jerusalem served the interests of Damascus quite well, it was an entirely different matter for the Latin Kingdom. The Jerusalemites' motivation in entering into the alliance with Damascus had been to look after their security, not necessarily to preserve an equilibrium of power in Syria. With the Damascene-Aleppine rapprochement in effect, one could well argue that the treaty between Damascus and Jerusalem had in fact been rendered obsolete — after all, this treaty had been directed against the Zengid empire²¹. Worse still, the entente between Damascus and Aleppo raised the specter of combi-

16. IQ, p. 266-72; WT, 16, 4-7; SyA, p. 280-92.

17. IQ, p. 272-3.

18. IQ, p. 274-5; SyA, p. 292-8; WT, 16, 14-16. See also M. Amouroux-Mourad, *Le Comté d'Edesse*, Paris, Geuthner, 1988, p. 86-7.

19. Köhler, *op. cit.*, p. 193-4.

20. IQ, p. 273-6.

21. This does not preclude the possibility that the treaty of 1140 was never formally rescinded: see WT, 16, 8; cf. Köhler, *op. cit.*, p. 198-9. The fact remains that the treaty between Damascus and Aleppo had fundamentally changed the strategic situation in Syria, even if the implications of this agreement apparently escaped the notice of William of Tyre.

ned operations against the Latin Kingdom from a staging base close to the heart of the Christian territory. It is noteworthy that a strikingly similar strategic situation had occurred in 1113 when Tughtegin of Damascus and Mawdud of Mosul joined forces for an invasion of the kingdom in which the Jerusalemite army was routed and which very nearly marked the end of Latin rule over Palestine. This Muslim alliance against the Crusader states continued for more than a decade ²².

From the Crusaders' point of view, then, Damascus could well appear to have changed sides in the spring of 1147. To perceive the treaty with Nur ad-Din as a reorientation of Damascene foreign policy which threatened the vital interests of the Latin Kingdom was perfectly reasonable. The fact that the Damascene leadership would turn its back on Nur ad-Din only a few years later — when his power had grown and, much like Zengi, he encroached on the independence of Damascus — was by no means foreseeable in early 1147. The Crusaders cannot, therefore, be faulted for seeking other ways to look after their security interests.

The significance of the rapprochement between Damascus and Aleppo in 1146/47, and its effect on the relations between Jerusalem and Damascus, has hitherto been accorded little attention in the interpretation of the Latin Kingdom's attitude towards Damascus in the late 1140's ²³. But it was the reorientation of Damascene foreign policy expressed in the treaty of alliance with Nur ad-Din of 1147 — as it is argued here — which set the stage for both the Hauran Expedition of 1147 (see below) and the Syrian Campaign of 1148. With hindsight the Crusaders' course of action may seem precipitate, but it was clearly neither foolish nor an indefensible reaction to the turn events had taken.

The first conflict between the Latin Kingdom and Damascus in the new strategic situation took place just a few weeks after the conclusion of the alliance between Aleppo and Damascus. Altuntash, the Damascene governor of the semi-autonomous Hauran province, offered to surrender Bosra and Sarkhad, the two principal strongholds, to the Latin Kingdom in return for an adequate compensation. The proposal was debated at an assembly of the Jerusalemite nobles and accepted. King Baldwin III led the army of the kingdom to secure the strongholds in what is known as the « Hauran Expedition ». Negotiations ensued between Anar and the leadership of the Frankish army, but no agreement was reached and the Jerusalemites then invaded Damascene territory. Anar had called Nur ad-Din to help who brought down his army from Aleppo. They joined forces and succeeded in keeping

22. Hoch, *Jerusalem*, *op. cit.*, p. 21-6.

23. However, cf. J. Riley-Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

the Franks from reaching Bosra. The Christians eventually negotiated a retreat with Anar and returned to the kingdom. Bosra and Sarkhad were taken over by the Damascenes ²⁴.

While the sources do not relate the arguments for and against Altuntash's proposal voiced at the Jerusalemite assembly, it stands to reason to assume that the decision to enter into near certain military conflict with Damascus was facilitated by the recent reorientation of Damascene foreign policy. But the Hauran Expedition in turn also strengthened the alliance between Anar and Nur ad-Din. Accordingly, the danger that Damascus could be used as a staging base by the joint forces of Damascus and Aleppo loomed ever larger. As a result, relations between Damascus and Jerusalem must have been at their lowest point since 1129. Thus the Latin Kingdom's strategic situation vis-à-vis its Muslim neighbors in Syria had deteriorated dramatically in the year immediately preceding the arrival of the Second Crusade.

IV

The Second Crusade was launched in reaction to the loss of Edessa in 1144, which had marked the most serious setback yet suffered by the Eastern Franks. It was by far the most substantial expedition from the West since the original crusade. After suffering severe losses on the march through Seljuk-held Asia Minor, the remnants of King Louis VII's army reached the Principality of Antioch in early 1148, while the few surviving members of the German expedition under King Conrad III arrived by ship in the Latin Kingdom.

The original objective of the crusade had been the recapture of Edessa. In 1148, however, once the Western Crusaders had familiarized themselves with the situation in the East, that goal was apparently dropped ²⁵. It must have become obvious that little could be gained by the recovery of Edessa which had been laid waste by Nur ad-Din in the winter of 1146/47. But what, then, were the possible objectives of the Second Crusade in the East? Against the background of the strategic situation of the Crusader states in 1148, three options are in evidence :

24. IQ, p. 276-8 ; WT. 16, 8-13 ; see also Mayer, « Melisende », *op. cit.*, p. 122-4 ; Köhler, *op. cit.*, p. 196-8.

25. For a discussion of Edessa as the objective of the crusade, see J.P. Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land. Relations between the Latin East and the West, 1119-87*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 1996, p. 82-5 ; R. Hiestand, « "Kaiser" Konrad III., der zweite Kreuzzug und ein verlorenes Diplom für den Berg Thabor », *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 35 (1979), p. 83-9.

- (1) In northern Syria, Antioch would have benefited most from the capture of Aleppo which, incidentally, was both closer and more dangerous to the northern Frankish center of power in Antioch than was Edessa.
- (2) In southern Syria, the capture of Damascus would have greatly improved the strategic situation of the Latin Kingdom, the heartland of the Frankish East, which had dramatically worsened since 1147.
- (3) Finally, there was Fatimid-held Ascalon, still a thorn in the flesh of the Latin Kingdom. Ascalon, however, had lost much of its offensive potential by the construction of the Frankish *Gegenburgen* of Bethgibelin, Ibelin and Blanchegarde in 1136-42²⁶.

At various stages each of these options was discussed by Eastern and Western Crusaders. Prince Raymond of Antioch, e.g., tried to convince King Louis to campaign against Aleppo. Louis, however, refused the Antiochene proposal, preferring instead to visit Jerusalem first and fulfill his vow of pilgrimage. With regard to the crusade, he wanted to take action in conjunction with King Conrad and the Eastern Franks²⁷.

The decision to attack Damascus was first adopted at an informal meeting in Jerusalem about Easter 1148, as Otto of Freising, the only source on this important agreement, relates. Participants were King Baldwin III, King Conrad, Patriarch Fulcher of Jerusalem and unspecified representatives of the Knights Templar²⁸. The meeting took place while King Louis was still in Antioch. Presumably he was informed of the plan to attack Damascus when after leaving Antioch in June he was met by Patriarch Fulcher who had been dispatched in order to hasten Louis's journey to Jerusalem²⁹.

Apparently Queen Melisende, Baldwin's mother, had no part in this agreement³⁰. During the second quarter of the XIIth century the Latin Kingdom underwent a constitutional crisis which set various members of the royal family and their supporters against each other³¹. As H.E. Mayer has pointed out, Baldwin stood to profit from military campaigns because he could lead an army in the field and thereby demonstrate his qualities as a

26. M. Hoch, « The Crusaders' Strategy against Fatimid Ascalon and the "Ascalon Project" of the Second Crusade », in M. Gervers (ed.), *The Second Crusade and the Cistercians*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1992, p. 120-23.

27. Phillips, *Defenders*, *op. cit.*, p. 90-97.

28. Bischof Otto von Freising und Rahewin, *Die Taten Friedrichs oder richtiger Cronica (Gesta Friderici)*, ed. F.-J. Schmale, tr. A. Schmidt, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965, I, 63.

29. WT, 16, 29.

30. Mayer, « Melisende », *op. cit.*, p. 127-8.

31. For a fuller discussion of the crisis, see Hoch, *Jerusalem*, *op. cit.*, p. 43-75.

war leader (and hence claim leadership in peace as well), whereas Melisende, as a woman, had to be represented in the field by the royal constable³².

The final decision about the campaign that was to be the climax and conclusion of the crusade was reached at a joint assembly of Jerusalemite and Western nobles at Palmarea near Acre on 24 June 1148. Both William of Tyre and the Damascene chronicler Ibn al-Qalanisi report that a lengthy discussion took place to decide which Muslim city should be attacked. Unfortunately the sources do not relate the arguments exchanged on this occasion. In the end it was decided by common consent that the objective of the campaign should be the capture of Damascus³³. While it was by no means unusual to set the stage for important decisions by informal agreements among the principal protagonists³⁴, the final decision, at least on the Jerusalemite side, rested with the assembly of nobles who had to give their consent before a campaign on foreign territory could be launched³⁵.

In July 1148, the army of the Latin Kingdom and the Western forces — the latter having been reinforced by mercenaries — marched against Damascus led by the three kings Louis, Conrad and Baldwin. On 24 July, the army approached the city via the orchards to the west and northwest which were cleared of the enemy. Heavy fighting continued for a number of days. During this period the Damascenes were continually reinforced by troops from their provinces. On the evening of 27 July the Christian leaders held a council of war in which it was suggested, apparently by Jerusalemites familiar with the local situation, to shift the point of attack to the east of the city which was supposed to be less well defended. Upon arrival at this point, however, it became evident that there were no better chances of success. After another debate whether the attack should be continued, it was decided to lift the siege. On 28 July the Crusaders retreated to the Latin Kingdom. The Syrian Campaign had failed in what was to all appearances an act of

32. Mayer, « Melisende », *op. cit.*, p. 117-18.

33. WT, 16, 29-17, 2; IQ, p. 282. See also Hiestand, « "Kaiser" Konrad », *op. cit.*, p. 90-91; J.P. Niederkorn, « *Traditio a quibus minime cavimus*. Ermittlungen gegen König Balduin III. von Jerusalem, den Patriarchen Fulcher und den Templerorden wegen Verrats bei der Belagerung von Damaskus », *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 95 (1987), p. 62-3.

34. Cf. G. Althoff, *Verwandte, Freunde und Getreue. Zum politischen Stellenwert der Gruppenbindungen im früheren Mittelalter*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990, p. 186-95.

35. Hiestand, « "Kaiser" Konrad », *op. cit.*, p. 90; Smail, « Conquest of Damascus », *op. cit.*, p. 16. For a differing view, see H.E. Mayer, « Le service militaire et le financement des campagnes en Syrie du nord et en Egypte au XIII^e siècle », in *Id.*, *Mélanges sur l'histoire du royaume latin de Jérusalem*, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale/de Boccard, 1984, p. 131-2.

flagrant treachery. While a number of explanations has been offered by medieval and modern historians as to who is to be held responsible for the failure of the campaign, no clear picture has emerged³⁶. It has been argued that the shifting of the point of attack was a militarily sensible reaction to the arrival of Damascene reinforcements or the stalling of the Crusaders' attack³⁷. This seems unlikely, however, since the Crusaders' withdrawal was apparently initiated before they could join battle with the enemy from their new base — which one would have to expect if the shift had merely been a tactical move³⁸.

The failure of the attack on Damascus did not mark the end of the crusade, however. An agreement was reached by the participants in the Syrian Campaign to attempt the capture of Ascalon. This so-called « Ascalon Project » of the Second Crusade could not be carried through, however, apparently because the majority of the Jerusalemite barons refused to join the muster of the armies. Only after this second debacle did King Conrad leave the Holy Land, blaming the Jerusalemites for repeated duplicity and the failure of the crusade. King Louis returned home in 1149 after celebrating Easter in Jerusalem³⁹.

V

Relations between Jerusalem and Damascus improved again after the Second Crusade, and when by 1150 it became evident that Nur ad-Din posed as much a threat to the independence of Damascus as his father Zengi had, the Frankish-Damascene alliance was reinstated⁴⁰. This course of events, however, could not be anticipated by the Crusaders in 1147/48. When Damascus finally fell to Nur ad-Din in 1154, the strategic situation of the Latin states suffered a critical setback as they now faced a united enemy front from Aleppo to Damascus with a staging base close to the center of the Latin Kingdom. This was very much the scenario which the Syrian

36. For a discussion of the Syrian Campaign and the original sources, see G. Constable, « The Second Crusade as Seen by Contemporaries », *Traditio*, 9 (1953), p. 273-4 ; V.G. Berry, « The Second Crusade », in M.W. Baldwin (ed.), *A History of the Crusades*, vol. I, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958, p. 507-10 ; A.J. Forey, « The Failure of the Siege of Damascus », *Journal of Medieval History*, 10 (1984), p. 13-23 ; Niederkorn, *op. cit.* ; Hoch, *Jerusalem*, *op. cit.*, p. 122-33.

37. Forey, *op. cit.* ; cf. Berry, *op. cit.*, p. 509.

38. Cf. Niederkorn, *op. cit.*, p. 57-8.

39. Hoch, « Crusaders' Strategy », *op. cit.*, p. 123-4 ; *id.*, *Jerusalem*, *op. cit.*, p. 133-9.

40. IQ, p. 296-307. Cf. Köhler, *op. cit.*, p. 212-21.

Campaign of the Second Crusade, the Crusaders' last effort to win Damascus, had been meant to forestall.

In summary, this study argues that both the Hauran Expedition of 1147 and the Syrian Campaign of the Second Crusade in 1148 were launched by the Crusaders in reaction to a re-orientation of Damascene foreign policy in 1146/47 which proved a critical threat to the security of the Latin Kingdom and by which the treaty of alliance with the Latin Kingdom of 1140 was rendered obsolete. Contrary to traditional interpretations, the Crusaders' course of action did *not* contravene the strategic interest of the Latin Kingdom as it was fully in accordance with its security doctrine. Thus it can be demonstrated that the decision to attempt the capture of Damascus in 1148 was in fact reasonable and justified by the particular strategic situation on the eve of the arrival of the Second Crusade in the East ⁴¹.

41. I would like to express my indebtedness to my preceptor Dr. Andrew S. Ehrenkreutz, professor emeritus of the University of Michigan. This study was originally conceived in his seminars, and without his unfailing encouragement it could not have been brought to fruition. I am also grateful to Dr. Jonathan P. Phillips for his comments on a draft of this study.