

most eye-catching materials. Expanded to take into account the necessity for such a bottom-up perspective, the class formation paradigm, as Trotter desires to convince us, does have the potential to provide the fuller understanding of the black urban experience our historiography requires.

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Norman P. Zacour and Harry W. Hazard, eds. — *The Impact of the Crusades on the Near East*. Volume Five of *A History of the Crusades*, ed. by Kenneth M. Setton. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985. Pp. xxii, 599.

Volume V of the distinguished series *A History of the Crusades*, entitled *The Impact of the Crusades on the Near East*, while imposing and informative, is not a particularly useful book, at least not “for general readers and for scholars in many different disciplines” for whom it is designed. It is highly scholarly throughout in the conventional American History Department sense: thoroughly documented, flawless as to apparatus, completed by a Gazetteer and Notes on Maps, and, finally, Index, both of the latter totaling 80 pages of a 599 page book, which is large of size, heavy of weight (in the literal sense), and dull to read.

Because all of the historians involved are admirable as individual scholars, the result of their collective enterprise — so finely printed and illustrated and handsomely bound by the University of Wisconsin Press — is especially disappointing. Volume V purports to examine the impact of the Crusades on the Near East, particularly upon “the daily affairs of the Near East and its inhabitants — Moslems, Christians, and Jews — ... It is about crusades too” (p. xv).

Indeed, except for the splendidly written, insightful, and often evocative essay by the late Philip Khuri Hitti (“The Impact of the Crusades on Moslem Lands”), the primary source portions of the study by the late Nabih Amin Faris (“Arab Culture in the Twelfth century”), and some excellently researched material presented by Joshua Prawar (“The Social Classes in the Crusader States: the ‘Minorities’”) and Josiah C. Russell (“The Population of the Crusader States”), the volume is primarily about the crusaders and tells too little about “the daily affairs” of Near Eastern people of the time. The intent was there, the performance was below expectation. And not from any lack of expertise or critical theory, but due to the narrow focus of the series itself, the Crusades.

The general readers, who will probably never buy such a densely written and dry book anyway, and the scholars who know the sources well enough not to need further single-volume rehashings, will not find the enterprise particularly memorable. It seems rather isolated and self-congratulatory, somewhat like the work of an academic committee consisting of senior professors who have not budged from their familiar individual postures.

On the Near Eastern side of insularity, Faris’ close reading of his sources, as good as it is, is too often lacking in the “distance” that might make valuable material accessible to the general readers and to scholars unfamiliar with Arabic historiography.

At the very least it can be said the volume is missing a rounded world view. Perhaps this is the problem with any such collection of separately authored essays. It is rarely solved by mere editorial hopes and publishing efficiency. Far more useful to an understanding of the Near East and its inhabitants would be sponsorship of publications of primary sources, of “eyewitness reports of contemporary travelers” (p. 11), and, if assimilated well and aimed at the general reader, authored by one person only, one with literary skills. As one possible model, Roy Mottahedeh’s recent *Mantle of the Prophet* is an admirable work of assimilation and literary art based on years of research and reflection.

It is long overdue for serious scholars to become more knowledgeable of others' sources, as well as more imaginative and more artful with their own, if they wish to reach the audience at whom such books as Volume V in *A History of the Crusades* are expressly aimed.

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