



HISTORY OF THE CRUSADES: (Complete in Three Volumes)

Joseph F. Michaud

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This is the complete 3-volume English edition, fully edited with linked footnotes and table of contents.

Originally published as "Histoire des croisades," 6 vols. (Paris, 1812–22), it first appeared in English as "The History of the Crusades," translated by W. Robson, 3 vols. (New York, 1853). This kindle edition is the 3-volume "New Edition" translated by W. Robson with a preface and supplementary chapter by Hamilton W. Mabie and published in 1881 by A.C. Armstrong and Son (New York).

Joseph François Michaud (1767-1839) was a historian born at Albens, Savoy. He belonged to an ancient family of Savoy. Educated at the College of Bourg at Gresse, in 1786 he entered a publishing house at Lyons, but left it after a few years to take up journalistic work at Paris, where, during the Revolution, he defended warmly and not without risk the royal cause. Arrested in 1795, he succeeded in escaping and resumed the journalistic war. Under the Consulate he wrote several pamphlets in which appeared criticisms of Napoleon that led to his imprisonment for a time. After his release from prison he decided to abandon politics for literature. In 1808 he published the first volume of the "History of the Crusades." In the same year he founded with his brother the "Biographie Universelle." Elected to the French Academy in 1814, he was, under the Restoration, deputy editor of "La Quotidienne," and then lecturer to Charles X. In May, 1830, he undertook a voyage to the East and the Holy Land in order to study phases of Eastern life and thus impart more realistic color to the accounts of his "History of the Crusades."

In his choice of the subject and the manner in which he treated it, Michaud was considered an innovator in his time. His work was one of the first productions of the historical school which, inspired by the works of Chateaubriand, restored the Middle Ages to a place of honour, attempting to correct Voltaire's dismissals of the crusades.

Current historians of the crusades tend to view them with irony, as a terrible and tragic waste; and the western crusaders as violent lunatics. Michaud, in contrast, sees the crusades as an imposing spectacle, suggesting that within the confusion of events one "can discern the sublimest virtues mixed with all the disorders of the wildest passion." His emphasis on the perseverance and religious motivations of those involved, evinces Michaud's approval of medieval Christianity.

His work was the starting point of studies relating to the Crusades, and it was under the influence of this publication that the Academy of Inscriptions in 1841 decided to publish the collection of historians of the Crusades. Michaud had accompanied his work with a "Bibliothèque des Croisades" (Paris, 1829), which contained French translations of the European and Arabic chronicles relating to the Crusades.

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