

Arab Historians of the Crusades

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Selected and translated
from the Arabic sources
by

FRANCESCO GABRIELI

*Translated from the Italian
by E. J. Costello*

IBN AL-QALĀNISI¹

Abu Ya'la Hamza ibn Asad at-Tamīmī, known as Ibn al-Qalānisi (Damascus, c. 465/1073–555/1160). He is the earliest Arab historian to write about the Crusades, in his chronicle known as *Dhail ta'rikh Dimashq* (*Appendix to the History of Damascus*, referring to a chronicle of that title by Hilāl as-Sabi). This work, which is attached to as-Sabi's in a single MS., covers the period 363/974–555/1160, the year of the author's death, and deals to some extent with the history of Mesopotamia, but chiefly of Syria and Damascus, where Ibn al-Qalānisi held various municipal and administrative posts. He writes from first-hand experience of the First and Second Crusades up to the time of Nur ad-Din's entry into Damascus. The narrative is circumstantial and accurate, showing a certain partiality for Tughtikīn's dynasty in Damascus. The style is dry and objective, apart from a few chapters in more stylised prose. His objectivity about most matters, his eye-witness accounts of events through which he lived and his use of documents make Ibn al-Qalānisi's chronicle a basic source for the first period of the Crusades.

Text: Amedroz' edition, Leiden, 1908.

¹ The order of these notes, which in all cases but the first corresponds to that in which the authors appear in the book, is only roughly related to their chronological order.