

Outremer: Quest for a Crown

Joe deMiddelaer

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The title is *Quest for a Crown*, and it is intended to be the first of an Outremer trilogy covering the period of the occupation of the Holy Land by Frankish rulers - the period later known as the Crusades.

This first part of the trilogy tells the story of John, a Flemish orphan, raised at the Court of the Counts of Flanders, and who ultimately becomes the Count's confidant. Flanders at this time is aligned with France, the most powerful region in Northwest Europe. He joins his master Robert I of Flanders on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and upon returning they both enlist as mercenaries for Alexius, Emperor of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire.

The Count returns to Flanders, but John marries a Greek noble woman and continues to build a brilliant career in the service of the Emperor. At the onset of the First Crusade, John is appointed a special imperial envoy to the western armies that flood the Empire on their way to the Holy Land. As such, he is a prime witness and participant in the toils and troubles the crusaders' suffer until finally Jerusalem is seized. It is he who convinces the Emperor to accept Godfrey of Bouillon as the Frankish ruler of Palestine.



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