

## In Memoriam

### Robert Ignatius Burns, S.J. 1921-2008

ROBERT IGNATIUS BURNS, S.J., who was best known for reconstructing a vanished Islamic society, the post-Crusade subject Muslim communities in the Kingdom of Valencia, died on 22 November 2008 in Los Gatos, California. He was eighty-seven. Born Robert James Burns on 16 August 1921 in San Francisco, California, he took the middle name Ignatius when entering the Society of Jesus (popularly known as the Jesuits) in August 1940. Novitiate and undergraduate studies in the classics followed at Santa Clara University in California and at Gonzaga University in Washington (B.A. Honors, 1945). Before earning a master's degree in medieval history at Fordham University in 1950, he took a M.A. and a licentiate in philosophy at Mount St. Michael's School of Philosophy and Science (at Gonzaga University). In 1954, he was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in San Francisco and thereafter assumed the *laqab* "Father Burns," by which most in the academic world came to know him.

Taking seriously Samuel Eliot Morison's advice that every historian should work in two fields—a modern field and an ancient field—Father Burns took doctorates in medieval history (1958, Johns Hopkins University) and modern history (1961, University of Fribourg, Switzerland). These two doctorates were not unrelated. The Hopkins dissertation dealt with the interpenetrating Christian-Muslim society of the Crusader Kingdom of Valencia. The Fribourg dissertation concerned the nineteenth-century Indians of the Pacific Northwest Plateau and Rockies. Both dissertations examined frontier societies and focused on such themes as colonial conquest, acculturation, cultural antagonism, exploitation, and accommodation. Both dissertations became award-winning publications: *The Jesuits and the Indian Wars of the Northwest* (Yale University Press, 1966) and *The Crusader Kingdom of Valencia: Reconstruction on a Thirteenth-Century Frontier*, 2 vols. (Harvard

University Press, 1967). His article, "The Missionary Syndrome: Crusader and Pacific Northwest Religious Expansionism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 30 (April 1988), pp. 271-85, reflects on the parallels and continuities between medieval Valencia and the nineteenth-century Pacific Northwest.

Like his treatment of the American West, which was pioneering in its use of European and Jesuits archives for the study of the American Indian, his many publications on medieval Valencia were also pioneering in their extensive exploitation of archival sources. The rich trove of records in the Crown of Aragon was made possible by the paper revolution in Europe, which Burns linked directly to the capture and technological transformation of Islamic Valencia's paper industry ("Paper Comes to the West, 800-1400," in *Europäische Technik im Mittelalter: 800 bis 1400, Tradition und Innovation: ein Handbuch*, ed. Uta Lindgren [Berlin, 1996], pp. 413-22). Burns was not the first to exploit this rich resource, particularly the deteriorated early paper records, but he was unique in the determined, methodical, and resolute way he went about his work, returning year after year to the archives and producing year after year archivally-based studies.

All of this activity was carried out while teaching heavy course loads at the University of San Francisco (1958-76) and the University of California at Los Angeles (1976-91). He was a generous and supportive mentor to many, even to those who were not his students, a brilliant scholar and researcher, a compassionate and kindly gentleman, a devotee of good talk, and a pleasure to be around. Of his thirty books (incl. revised in translation), more than 200 articles and chapters in books, 200 historical abstracts, and numerous reviews, his crowning academic achievement will probably be his skillful reconstruction of the vanished society of the Mudejars, or Muslim communities, of Valencia in the age of Christian reconquest and domination. His groundbreaking study of this society, *Islam Under the Crusaders: Colonial Survival in the Thirteenth-Century Kingdom of Valencia* (Princeton University Press, 1975), was followed by *Medieval Colonialism: Postcrusade Exploitation of Islamic Valencia* (Princeton University Press, 1975), *Muslims, Christians and Jews in the Crusader Kingdom of Valencia: Societies in Symbiosis* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), and *Negotiating Cultures: Bilingual Surrender Treaties in Muslim-Crusader Spain under James the Conqueror* (with Paul E. Chevedden) (Brill, 1999).

In summer 2007, the Jesuit order decided to move Father Burns to the Sacred Heart Jesuit Center in Los Gatos, California, rather than opt for assisted living in the Los Angeles area as he and some of his UCLA colleagues had proposed. An unfortunate side effect of this decision was to separate

him from his books and his papers, thereby hampering production of the fifth and final volume of his magnum opus, the *Diplomatarium of the Crusader Kingdom of Valencia: The Registered Charters of Its Conqueror, Jaume I, 1257-1276*, 4 vols. to date (Princeton University Press, 1985-2007). Despite this setback, Father Burns soldiered on until his death, working from a typescript of the final volume that he had sent to him. Death overtook him before he could complete this task to the standard of which he was capable, and at present there remains some question about the disposition of the final volume.

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### **John Damis** **1940-2009**

**JOHN DAMIS**, Professor Emeritus of Political Science and Director Emeritus of the Middle East Studies Center at Portland State University, passed away on June 10, 2009, in Portland, Oregon, after a long battle with pancreatic cancer.

Dr. Damis grew up in a loving Greek family in Portland, and graduated from high school as valedictorian, class president, and outstanding athlete, earning eight varsity letters in three sports. Entering Harvard College in 1958, he excelled academically and athletically. He played three years of varsity football, as well as rugby and basketball. He graduated *magna cum laude* in history in 1962. He then earned an M.A. in Middle East studies at Harvard, followed by an M.A. in law and diplomacy, and a Ph.D. in international relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, administered jointly by Harvard and Tufts University. He received a Fulbright fellowship for study in Morocco in 1964, the first of three Fulbright awards to Morocco and the beginning of a love affair with that country where he formed many deep and lasting friendships.

Beginning his career in the political science department of Portland State University (PSU) in 1972, Dr. Damis taught politics of the Middle East and North Africa, along with international politics and American foreign policy. From 1975 to 1977, he served as U.S. State Department policy analyst for the Middle East and prepared daily briefings for Secretary of State Henry