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## OBITUARY

## Earl of Cranbrook

**Hon. Sir Steven (James Cochran Stevenson) Runciman CH:  
7 July 1903- 1 November 2000**

Sir Steven Runciman was a distinguished historian who, in the late 1950s, was temporarily diverted from his main lifetime interest in Constantinople-Byzantium to write a history of the Brooke family in Sarawak, published in 1960 as *The White Rajahs* (Cambridge University Press).

The Runciman fortune, founded on shipping interests developed by his grandfather, gave Steven the independence to follow his own bent. His family background (his mother gained a First in history at Girton, Cambridge, and both parents were politically and socially prominent) opened many prospects to him. His personal intellectual attainments shone through. From childhood he displayed great capacity for languages, and he won scholarships to Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge. At Trinity he, too, achieved a First in history (1925) and was subsequently elected a Fellow. His historical studies of this period established his lifetime interest in the Byzantine world. During the War he was attached to the British legation in Sofia and, later Cairo, and from 1942-45 was professor of Byzantine history and art at the University of Istanbul.

His acclaimed three-volume *History of the Crusades* (1951, 1952 and 1954) made Steven Runciman known to a public much wider than the sphere of academic historians. His achievement was to tell the story, not just from the traditional preconceptions of the West but also, by drawing on Greek, Armenian and Muslim texts, as Islam and Constantinople had perceived events.

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