



7. The Balkans under the Angeli, 1185-1204 (Map by the University of Wisconsin Cartographic Laboratory)

V

THE FOURTH CRUSADE

When Innocent III ascended the papal throne in January 1198, the German crusade planned by Henry VI was still in progress. Within a few months, however, it ended in ignominious

The most important single narrative source for the Fourth Crusade is the famous account by one of its leaders, Geoffrey of Villehardouin, *La Conquête de Constantinople* (ed. and tr. N. de Wailly, Paris, 1874; ed. and tr. E. Faral, *Classiques de l'histoire de France au moyen-âge*, 2 vols., Paris, 1938-1939). Splendidly complementing this semi-official narrative is the other vernacular work by a French participant, Robert of Clari (Cléry-sur-Somme), *La Conquête de Constantinople* (ed. P. Lauer, *Les Classiques français du moyen-âge*, Paris, 1924; English translation by E. H. McNeal, *Records of Civilization*, XXIII, New York, 1936). Shorter accounts in Latin, supplying occasional details, are: the anonymous *Devastatio Constantinopolitana*, ed. C. Hopf, *Chroniques gréco-romanes inédites ou peu connues* (Berlin, 1873), pp. 86-92; and *MGH, SS.*, XVI; Gunther of Pairis, *Historia Constantinopolitana*, ed. P. Riant (Geneva, 1875); also printed in the same editor's *Exuviae sacrae Constantinopolitanae* (Geneva, 1877), pp. 57-126; the Anonymous of Soissons, the Anonymous of Halberstadt (*MGH, SS.*, XXIII), and the Anonymous canon of Langres (all in Riant, *Exuviae*, pp. 3-9, 10-21, and 22-34 respectively), written largely to authenticate relics brought back or sent back to the west by clerics in the crusading armies after the sack of Constantinople. Hopf (*Chroniques*, pp. 93-98) furnishes a Latin translation of the section of the Russian Novgorod chronicle dealing with the capture of Constantinople, the original of which apparently was written by an eyewitness, probably a Russian.

Western chronicles containing accounts of the Fourth Crusade include the *Annales Colonienses maximi* (*MGH, SS.*, XVII); Aubrey of Trois-Fontaines, *Chronica* (*MGH, SS.*, XXIII); Robert of Auxerre, *Chronicon* (*MGH, SS.*, XXVI); Roger of "Hoveden", *Chronica* (ed. W. Stubbs, 4 vols., *Rolls Series*, LI); Rigord, *Gesta Philippi Secundi* (*MGH, SS.*, XXVI); and ed. H. F. Delaborde, *Société de l'histoire de France*, I, Paris, 1885). The *Chronique d'Ernoult* (ed. L. de Mas Latrie, *Société de l'histoire de France*, Paris, 1871), an Old French text written in Syria, reflects the attitudes and interests of the baronage, but it is not accurate for the Fourth Crusade.

The correspondence of Innocent III is, of course, a fundamentally important source (registered in A. Potthast, *Regesta pontificum Romanorum*, 2 vols., Berlin, 1873; texts of letters in *PL*, CCXIV-CCXVII); also valuable is the *Gesta Innocentii III papae* (*PL*, CCXIV), a biography drawn from the letters and containing brief narrative passages. The Venetian documents that survive are printed in G. L. F. Tafel and G. M. Thomas, *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig* (*Fontes rerum Austriacarum*, 3 vols., Vienna, 1856-1857).

For the Greek point of view, the contemporary eyewitness account of Nicetas Choniates, *Historia* (*CSHB*, Bonn, 1835) is the chief source.

Most modern scholarship on the Fourth Crusade has been preoccupied with the "diversion" problem, which will be discussed below with appropriate references. For accounts of the expedition by secondary authorities one may turn to A. Luchaire, *Innocent III: La Question d'orient* (Paris, 1907), now somewhat out of date, and to the discussions in the standard works of Vasiliev, Kretschmayr, and Norden. See also L. Bréhier, *L'Eglise et l'orient au moyen-âge: Les Croisades* (Paris, 1928), pp. 152 ff.; *idem*, *Le Monde byzantin*, I: *Vie et mort de Byzance* (Paris, 1947), pp. 365 ff.; Charles Diehl, "The Fourth Crusade and the Latin Empire," *Cambridge Medieval History*, IV (1927), 415 ff.; R. Grousset, *Histoire des croisades et du*

failure.¹ Thereupon pope Innocent decided to take upon himself the task of arousing Europe to a new effort to recover the Holy Land. In so doing, he was reverting to Urban II's original conception of the crusade as a papal responsibility, and simultaneously revealing his own exalted conception of the role of the papacy in the affairs of Christendom. He announced the project in an encyclical sent out in August 1198 to the archbishops of the west, to be communicated by them to the bishops and other clergy and to the faithful of their provinces.² Innocent followed the traditional lines of crusading propaganda, stressing his peculiar grief over the sufferings of Jerusalem, denouncing the princes of the west for their luxury and vice and wars among themselves, and summoning all Christians to win eternal salvation by girding themselves for the holy war. Passing over monarchs and lesser rulers, Innocent sent his summons to all cities, counts, and barons, whom he commanded to raise troops in numbers proportionate to their resources, and to send them overseas at their own expense by the following March, to serve for at least two years. Archbishops, bishops, and abbots were to contribute either armed men or an equivalent amount of money. Two cardinal-legates would proceed to Palestine to act as the pope's representatives there in preparing the way for the coming of the host. The proclamation included the usual inducements: plenary indulgence for crusaders, papal protection for their possessions, and a moratorium on the payment of debts and interest during their absence.

Innocent then wrote to king Philip Augustus of France and king Richard the Lionhearted of England, who had been at war ever since Richard's return from captivity in 1194, admonishing them, under penalty of an interdict to be laid on their lands, to make peace or at least a five years' truce with each other, not only because the war they were waging was causing untold miseries to the common people of their realms, but also because it would interfere with the recruiting of troops for the crusade he was inaugurating.³ The two cardinals who were eventually to go to Palestine were in the meantime employed on special tasks at home: cardinal Soffredo

royaume franc de Jérusalem, III (Paris, 1936), 173 ff.; F. I. Uspenskii, *Istoriya vizantiiskoi imperii*, III (Moscow-Leningrad, 1948), 367 ff.; M. A. Zaborov, "Krestovye pokhody v russkoi burzhuaznoi istoriografii," *Vizantiiskii vremennik*, n.s., IV (1951), 176 ff.; G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (tr. Joan Hussey, London, 1956), pp. 330 ff.; S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, III (Cambridge, 1954), 107 ff.

¹ See above, chapter III, pp. 116-121.

² Innocent III, *Epp.*, an. I, no. 336 (*PL*, CCXIV, cols. 308 ff.).

³ Innocent III, *Epp.*, an. I, no. 355 (*PL*, CCXIV, cols. 329 ff.).

went to Venice to enlist the support of the Venetians, and cardinal Peter Capuano⁴ went to France to promulgate the crusade there. Two cardinals were also sent to persuade the Pisans and Genoese to make peace and prepare to take part in the crusade. The pope wrote to the Byzantine emperor, Alexius III Angelus, reproving him for not having long since come to the aid of the Holy Land, and admonishing him as well to acknowledge the primacy of the papacy. Alexius replied in February 1199 with recriminations of his own.⁵ Arriving in France late in 1198, Peter Capuano called an assembly of the French clergy at Dijon, where he promulgated the papal bull. He found Philip Augustus, by Christmas 1198, faced with a coalition of French lords whom Richard had won over to his side — including count Baldwin of Flanders and Hainault, count Louis of Blois, and the counts of Boulogne and Toulouse — and therefore eager to listen to Peter's proposals for a truce.⁶ Two or three weeks later Peter met with Richard in Normandy. Though Richard maintained that he was only fighting to recover the lands which Philip had perfidiously seized in his absence on the Third Crusade, and accused Philip of responsibility for his captivity in Germany, complaining also that the pope had not given him the protection due him as a returning crusader, he finally yielded to Peter's plea that the war was hindering the recovery of Jerusalem. Late in January 1199 Richard and Philip met and made a truce for five years.⁷ But before the end of March Richard was dead, and Philip Augustus soon renewed against John his efforts to seize the Angevin lands on the continent.

The date, March 1199, originally set by the pope for the departure of the armies, passed — as did most of the rest of the year — without even the formation of an expeditionary force.

⁴ Sometimes erroneously referred to as Peter of Capua, he came not from Capua but from Amalfi, and belonged to a noble family of that city; see especially M. Camera, *Memorie storico-diplomatiche dell' antica città e ducato di Amalfi*, I (Salerno, 1876), 90, note 1; 383 ff., 665. He was to be Innocent's chief agent in the promotion of the crusade in the west until the spring of 1203, when he was sent on a special mission to the east. At the time of his French mission he held the titular office of cardinal-deacon of St. Mary in Via Lata, and was later advanced by Innocent to the title of cardinal-priest of St. Marcellus. Soffredo was cardinal-priest of St. Praxed.

⁵ Innocent III, *Epp.*, an. I, no. 353 (*PL*, CCXIV, cols. 325 ff.); an. II, no. 210 (*ibid.*, cols. 765 ff.).

⁶ Both Roger of Wendover, *Flores historiarum*, ad ann. 1198 (ed. H. G. Hewlett, Rolls Series, LXXXIV), I, 280 ff., and the verse biography of William Marshal, *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal* (ed. P. Meyer, Paris, 1891-1901), lines 11355-11372, ascribe the entire mission of Peter Capuano to a ruse of Philip, who had allegedly begged the pope for a legate to make peace between himself and Richard, and who had paid so well for the favor that Innocent had complied. The verse reflects the English point of view.

⁷ Innocent III, *Epp.*, an. II, nos. 23-25 (*PL*, CCXIV, cols. 552 ff.), Innocent's letters of congratulation to Peter, confirming the truce.

Innocent III kept writing letters: to the archbishops and high clergy of the west to spur them to greater efforts; to the patriarch and clergy of the kingdom of Jerusalem, explaining why the crusade had been delayed; and to the princes of "Outremer" to urge them to compose their quarrels and make ready to participate in the coming war on the "infidel". Finally, at the very end of the year, he took a bold and unprecedented step. This was nothing less than an attempt, announced in another circular letter to the archbishops, to finance the crusade by a levy on the incomes of the clergy.⁸ The pope announced that he and the cardinals and clergy of Rome had assessed themselves in the amount of a tenth of their revenues for the next year for the expenses of the crusade. Now by his apostolic authority he commanded all the clergy of both orders to contribute a fortieth of their revenues for the following year to the same cause. Exception was made in the case of certain religious orders, like the Carthusians, Cistercians, and Premonstratensians, who were to contribute only a fiftieth.⁹ Each archbishop was to call together the bishops of his province in council, and transmit to them the papal command. Each bishop in turn was to summon the clergy of his diocese, and order them to make a true return of one fortieth of their annual revenues, see that the money was collected and deposited in a secure place, and report to the papal court the amount collected. The archbishops were authorized to use some of the money to help pay the expenses of indigent crusaders. In addition the pope commanded that a chest be placed in every parish church to receive the gifts of the faithful, who were to be exhorted in sermons every Sunday to make such contributions, with the promise of papal indulgence in proportion to the amount of their alms.

Innocent recognized the exceptional character of the levy, and assured the clergy that it would not be used as a precedent for establishing a papal tax on their incomes. Nevertheless, the measure seems to have met pretty generally with at least passive resistance. More than a year later, Innocent had to write to the clergy of France reproaching them for their laxity. He reminded them that they had voluntarily promised his legate, at the Council of Dijon, to

⁸ See the letter sent to archbishop Ludolph of Magdeburg, dated December 31, 1199 (Innocent III, *Epp.*, an. II, no. 270 [*PL*, CCXIV, col. 828]). Roger of Hoveden, *Chronica* (Rolls Series, LI), IV, 108, quotes the letter sent to England. Potthast, *Regesta pontificum Romanorum*, I, no. 914, lists a copy sent to the archbishop of Ragusa (Dubrovnik).

⁹ On the general question of papal taxation for the crusades, see below, chapter X, pp. 347-358. See also M. Villey, *La Croisade, essai sur la formation d'une théorie juridique* (Paris, 1942), pp. 135 ff., and in general A. Gottlob, *Die päpstlichen Kreuzzugssteuern des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Heiligenstadt, 1892).

contribute a thirtieth of their incomes, but had not yet paid even the fortieth he had commanded.¹⁰ Ralph de Diceto reports that the notary sent from Rome to oversee the levy acted high-handedly, and there was a general suspicion that such funds were apt to stick to the fingers of the Roman gentry.¹¹ In speaking of the levy, Matthew Paris calls it a questionable exaction (*argumentosa extorsio*), which future events were to show was displeasing to God.¹² According to Ralph of Coggeshall the Cistercians protested against the pope's attempt to collect the levy as a persecution of the order.¹³

There is no way of knowing how much money was collected locally under the terms of this levy, or how much was actually transmitted to Rome. With all this opposition, tacit and expressed, on the part of the clergy, the levy was probably not very successful. Nor do we know what pecuniary results, if any, attended the pope's tentative effort to extend the levy to monarchs and nobles. In June 1201 the papal legate, Octavian, cardinal-bishop of Ostia, who had succeeded cardinal Peter in France, made the proposal to the kings of England and France. Philip Augustus and John met together and agreed to contribute a fortieth of a year's income from their lands and the lands of their vassals, on the condition that they should undertake the collection themselves and decide how the money was to be used. The monarchs then issued writs commanding their vassals to assess themselves in this amount.¹⁴ Of any money which may have been raised in this way, probably not much went to defray the expenses of the crusade. Both Philip and John had other and more pressing uses for any revenue they could collect.

As a further recruiting measure in France, on November 5, 1198, Innocent III, presumably acting through Peter Capuano, had commissioned the parish priest, Fulk of Neuilly, to preach the crusade to the people. For some two or three years previously, Fulk

¹⁰ This letter, *Verendum est*, is found only in the *Gesta*, chap. LXXXIV (PL, CCXIV, cols. 132 ff.). Potthast (no. 1045) dates it April-May 1200, but it must have been written after April 1201, since it contains an unmistakable reference to the pope's confirmation of the treaty between the Venetians and the French envoys. See below, note 29.

¹¹ *Opera historica* (Rolls Series, LXVIII), II, 168-169.

¹² *Historia Anglorum* (Rolls Series, XLIV), II, 91.

¹³ *Chronicon Anglicanum* (Rolls Series, LXVI), p. 130. Eventually, it seems, the pope accepted a compromise with the Cistercians; Potthast (*Regesta*, no. 1435, July 1201) cites a letter of Innocent thanking abbot Arnold Amalric of Cîteaux and the chapter for the offer of 2,000 marks for the crusade.

¹⁴ Roger of Hoveden (*Chronica*, IV, 187 ff.) tells of the meeting of the kings and gives the writ issued by John. The writ of Philip Augustus is found in Delisle, *Catalogue des actes de Philippe Auguste*, no. 619. See also Delaborde, "À propos d'une rature dans une lettre de Philippe Auguste," *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes*, LXIV (1903), 306 ff., and A. Cartel-lieri, *Philip II. August*, IV, i, 77.

had been conducting a revivalist campaign in the regions around Paris. With the license of his bishop he had been traveling about, preaching to great crowds of people and flaying them for their sins, especially usury and prostitution, and many tales were told of the sudden conversion of moneylenders and harlots, and of the miracles of healing and other wonders that attended his preaching. From November 1198 until his death in May 1202, Fulk devoted himself entirely to the crusade. He undoubtedly succeeded in arousing among the common people an immense, if short-lived, enthusiasm. Contemporaries generally testify to his large influence.¹⁵

The first nucleus of an expeditionary force came into existence late in November 1199, at a tournament held in Champagne at count Theobald's castle of Écry, attended by counts, barons, and knights from the counties of Champagne and Blois and from the Île de France. There count Theobald himself and count Louis of Blois took the cross, and their example was followed by many other jousts. Geoffrey of Villehardouin, who apparently was present and took the cross with the others, begins his narrative of the actual expedition with this incident; except for the unreliable Ernoul, no other contemporary chronicler mentions it. Nothing in Villehardouin's account implies that Fulk of Neuilly was present at the tournament. Instead, the taking of the cross appears as the spontaneous response of the lords to the prevailing excitement over the crusade. Had Fulk been there, Villehardouin would scarcely have failed to mention it. Yet later historians, especially the nineteenth-century writers of the Romantic school, such as Michaud, have so popularized the legend that Fulk in person won the nobles for the cross at Écry that it still appears in histories of the crusade.¹⁶

¹⁵ Innocent III, *Epp.*, an. I, no. 398 (*PL*, CCXIV, col. 378), appears to be an abbreviation of Innocent's commission, rather than a later supplement to it, as argued by Gutsch, "Fulk of Neuilly, a Twelfth-Century Preacher," *The Crusades and other Historical Studies Presented to Dana C. Munro* (New York, 1928), pp. 202 ff., and by E. Faral, in his edition of Villehardouin, I, 4, note 1. Villehardouin, Robert of Clari, Gunther of Pairis, Rigord, Otto of St. Blaise, Roger of Hoveden, Robert of Auxerre, and Ralph of Coggeshall all note Fulk's extraordinary success as a preacher. Ralph of Coggeshall, *Chronicon Anglicanum* (Rolls Series, LXVI), p. 130, reports that Fulk himself claimed to have given the cross to 200,000 persons during three years of preaching. He also was a most successful money-raiser. The funds were deposited at Cîteaux for the needs of the Holy Land. Ernoul (p. 338) tells how Cistercians came to the east with some of the money for use in repairing the walls of Acre, Beirut, and Tyre, all damaged by earthquakes. The *Devastatio* (*MGH*, SS., XVI, 10; ed. Hopf, pp. 86-87) reports that the large sums in Fulk's possession at the moment of his death were turned over by Philip Augustus to Odo of Champlitte and the castellan of Coucy to be spent on the crusade.

¹⁶ E.g., in Jean Longnon, *L'Empire latin de Constantinople* (Paris, 1949), pp. 21 ff. See E. H. McNeal "Fulk of Neuilly and the Tournament of Écry," *Speculum*, XXVIII (1953), 371 ff.

The example set by counts Theobald of Champagne and Louis of Blois inspired neighboring and related princes of northern France to similar action. At Bruges on Ash Wednesday (February 23, 1200), count Baldwin of Flanders and Hainault, who was married to a sister of Theobald, took the cross, together with his brother Henry and many high barons of the region; in Picardy, count Hugh of St. Pol; in Perche, count Geoffrey and his brother Stephen, cousins of Louis of Blois. Thus by the summer of 1200 a considerable crusading army had been formed. An initial meeting at Soissons was adjourned for two months to allow time for further enlistments. At a second meeting, held at Compiègne, each of the three counts, Theobald, Louis, and Baldwin, named two of his barons to act as his agents in contracting for ships to carry the host overseas. Some time around the turn of the year the six envoys set out for Venice.¹⁷

The forces raised in northern France in this first stage of recruiting were to form the core of the army that went on the Fourth Crusade. The leaders belonged to the very highest rank of the feudal nobility of France. Theobald and Louis were scions of the two branches of the family of Blois-Champagne, one of the great feudal dynasties of France. They were double first cousins, since their fathers were brothers and their mothers were sisters. They were also nephews both of Philip Augustus and of Richard the Lionhearted, their maternal grandmother, the famous Eleanor of Aquitaine, having been married first to Louis VII of France and later to Henry II of England. Thus the mothers of the young counts were half-sisters of Philip Augustus, as well as of Richard and John. Participation in the crusading movement had been a tradition with the family, ever since an ancestor, Stephen of Blois, had taken part in the First Crusade. Theobald's older brother, Henry, had played a prominent role in the Third Crusade, and had been ruler of Jerusalem until his death in 1197.¹⁸ Count Baldwin IX of Flanders, who had married Theobald's and Henry's sister Mary, was also Baldwin VI of Hainault, a fief of the empire, held of the bishop of Liège. All three of the counts were young men, under thirty years of age. Villehardouin's list of the northern French barons who had so far taken the cross includes, notably, Matthew of Montmorency, Reginald of Montmirail, Simon of Montfort, Reginald of Dampierre,

¹⁷ Geoffrey of Villehardouin (*Conquête*, chap. XIV), who was one of the two agents of the count of Champagne, says that the envoys were given only the general instructions to arrange for ships at some seaport, and decided among themselves to apply to Venice. The *Devastatio* asserts that the choice of Venice was dictated by the pope, but this statement is unsupported.

¹⁸ See above, chapter III, pp. 53, 81-85, and below, chapter XV, pp. 522-529.

Guy of Coucy, James of Avesnes, and Peter of Bracieux.¹⁹ The most interesting name is that of the historian himself, Geoffrey of Villehardouin, marshal of Champagne. A man of mature years, he had held high office at the court of Champagne, and from his first responsible task as Theobald's representative in Venice, he was to play an important role in the expedition and in the establishment of the Latin empire.²⁰ His comrade-in-arms Conon of Béthune, one of Baldwin's barons and his representative on this first mission, was well known as a courtly poet, and had ahead of him a long and distinguished career in the east.²¹

This crusading host resembled the ordinary feudal levy in its composition and organization. The divisions or army corps were the regional contingents, each commanded by the prince of the territory, as the counts of Champagne, Blois, and Flanders. Within each division, the companies were captained by the barons who were the vassals of the count, and the companies were composed of knights and sergeants serving under the banners of their own baron. Thus the bonds which held the host together were essentially feudal in character. Taking the cross was in theory a voluntary act on the part of the individual crusader, but in fact the relationship of vassal to lord had played a decisive part in the enlistment, and it was the determining factor in the exercise of command.

As to numbers, it may be roughly estimated that between eight and ten thousand fighting men had been enrolled by the end of the year 1200. Geoffrey of Villehardouin's list contains the names of some ninety barons, and while he expressly states that he did not name them all, it may be supposed that his list is fairly complete. Robert of Clari later describes the company in which he served under the banner of his lord Peter of Amiens as containing ten knights and sixty sergeants. This first enlistment, therefore, probably consisted of about a hundred barons' companies of some eighty to a hundred men each. The force comprised in the main three categories of troops: armored knights, light-armed squires (sergeants on horseback), and foot-soldiers (sergeants on foot), in the usual proportions of one to two to four.

In seeking transportation overseas at an Italian port, the envoys

¹⁹ See the map showing the fiefs and places of origin of these crusaders in E. Faral's edition at the back of vol. I. This James of Avesnes is the son of the James who died at Arsuf (see above, chapter II, p. 75).

²⁰ See the introduction to Faral's edition, I, pp. v-xii, and J. Longnon, *Recherches sur la vie de Geoffroi de Villehardouin* (Paris, 1939).

²¹ See A. Wallensköld, *Les Chansons de Conon de Béthune* (Helsinki, 1891; new edition, Paris, 1921, with introductory material much abridged). Two of the poems (iv, v) are concerned with the Third Crusade.

were following a well established practice, for the sea route had by now almost entirely superseded the long and difficult land route of the first crusading expeditions. The Italian maritime cities had developed a lucrative passenger traffic in pilgrims and crusaders, along with their carrying trade in the Mediterranean. Individual pilgrims now usually sought passage in the great freighters which set out each year from Pisa, Genoa, and Venice, while bands of crusaders often contracted to hire individual ships at one or another of these ports. In this case, however, the six envoys from the three counts were asking Venice to furnish a fleet large enough to transport a whole army, and the Venetians would certainly consider so serious an undertaking as a matter of state policy, to be determined in the light of their other interests and commitments.

By the end of the twelfth century Venice had already entered upon her greatest age as a commercial, colonial, and maritime power.²² Her widespread interests in the eastern Mediterranean required the maintenance of a powerful naval establishment and the pursuit of a vigilant and aggressive diplomacy. Like the other Italian maritime cities, Venice had long since acquired valuable trading privileges and exemptions in the ports of "Outremer", such as Acre and Tyre, in return for naval help given to the kingdom of Jerusalem. This had given the Venetians a practical interest in the affairs of the crusader states and had deepened their rivalry with Pisa and Genoa. More recently Venice and her rivals had also developed a profitable trade in Egypt through the port of Alexandria. From the point of view of the crusader states and the papacy, this was traffic with the enemy, especially as Egypt demanded much-needed timber and other naval stores in exchange for the spices of the Far East. Popes and councils had fulminated in vain against this trade in war contraband on the part of Italian cities.

Venice especially had a bad reputation among the Christians of the east as being more concerned with the profits from this trade than with the triumph of the cross.²³ In her trade with Constantinople and other cities of the Byzantine empire, Venice still enjoyed the special advantages granted by emperor Alexius I in 1082 in

²² On the position of Venice at this time, see H. Kretschmayr, *Geschichte von Venedig*, I (Gotha, 1905), chaps. VII, VIII; W. Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au moyen-âge*, tr. Furcy Rainaud, I (Leipzig, 1885); and A. Schaube, *Handelsgeschichte der romanischen Völker* (Munich and Berlin, 1906), chaps. X-XIX. A chapter on the Venetians is planned for volume IV of the present work.

²³ It was this feeling presumably that gave rise to the popular story repeated by Ernoul (*Chronique*, p. 345), that the sultan succeeded in bribing the Venetians to turn the projected crusade away from his land.

exchange for Venetian help against Robert Guiscard. John II Comnenus had tried to revoke this grant, and Venice had resorted to war to force him to renew it in 1126. Manuel I had again renewed it in 1148, but Byzantine relations with Venice continued to be strained. Manuel's mass arrest of Venetians in 1171, and his confiscation of their property, coupled with the massacre of all the Latins in 1182, had heightened the tension. Although Isaac II Angelus in 1187 and Alexius III Angelus in 1198 had renewed the privileges, the Byzantines owed Venice much money. Moreover, Alexius III was not only favoring the Pisans and Genoese unduly but also levying tolls on Venetian ships, contrary to the provisions of the treaties. When the six French envoys arrived early in February 1201, Venice was under the governance of one of the greatest personages of her history, the aged, half-blind, but indomitable doge Enrico Dandolo. Elected to this lifetime office in 1192, he had guided the fortunes of the city in troubled times with great craft and vigor. According to Marino Sanudo the younger (d. 1533),²⁴ he is said to have been 85 years of age at the time of his election as doge. Although this seems scarcely credible, as it would make him 95 at the outset of the Fourth Crusade, in which he was to play so active a part, the sources generally agree on his great age and his badly impaired vision.²⁵

The envoys of the French counts presented to the doge and his "small council" of six their request for ships to carry the crusaders oversea. A week later, in reply, the Venetian authorities offered not only to provide transport, for pay, but also to join the crusade as equal partners. They would supply enough transports to carry 4,500 knights and their horses, 9,000 squires, and 20,000 foot soldiers, with their gear and provisions, in return for the sum of 94,000 marks of silver, to be paid in instalments. This estimate of the size of the army for which transportation would be needed must have been made by the envoys themselves. It was at least three times as large as the number of crusaders actually enrolled before the envoys had set out on their mission. They were anticipating many more enlistments of crusaders than in fact they would obtain. This miscalculation was a primary source of the troubles that were to haunt the expedition throughout its whole course. The Venetians

²⁴ *Vite dei dogi* (RISS, XXII, 4), p. 527.

²⁵ Villehardouin, *Conquête*, chap. LXVII: "si n'en veoit gote, que perdue avoit le veüe par un plaie qu'il ot el chief." The Russian chronicle of Novgorod (ed. C. Hopf, *Chroniques*, p. 98) attributes his partial blinding to a trick with a burning glass perpetrated by the Greeks when he was in Constantinople on a diplomatic mission. On his age and blindness, see H. Kretschmayr, *Venedig*, I, 466, 472.

were to put the transports at the service of the crusaders for a year from the time of departure, which was set for the day of Sts. Peter and Paul of the following year (June 29, 1202), unless that date should be changed by common consent. As their own contribution, the Venetians were to furnish fifty war galleys fully manned and equipped for the same length of service, on condition that Venice should share equally with the crusaders in any conquests or gains made on the campaign.

The envoys accepted the proposal, which the doge then submitted for ratification first to the "large council" of forty, and then to larger bodies of one hundred, two hundred, and a thousand, and finally to the people as a whole, before whom the envoys knelt weeping to loud cries of "We grant it" from more than 10,000 assembled in St. Mark's for mass. After the terms had been accepted by both sides, the covenant was drawn up and signed, on the one hand by the six envoys in the names of the three counts who had accredited them, and on the other by the doge and his council of state and council of forty.²⁶ The negotiators also agreed secretly that the attack should be directed against Egypt, "because more harm could be inflicted on the Turks there than in any other land." But they would keep up the pretense that the expedition would go direct to Palestine, no doubt to conceal their true intentions from the enemy and to prevent discontent from arising among the rank and file of the crusaders, who naturally expected to be led to Jerusalem.

It was stipulated in the covenant that a copy of it should be transmitted to pope Innocent to secure his confirmation. This joint expedition of a French army and a Venetian fleet, however, arranged for on their own initiative by the French leaders and the government of Venice, was something quite different from the general crusade of western Europe under papal auspices envisaged by the pope. Nevertheless, he felt constrained to accept it as a partial realization of his own project. Not only did he confirm the covenant when it was presented to him at Rome,²⁷ but he went further and undertook to make the plan his own. In May, a few weeks after receiving a copy of the treaty, he wrote to the clergy in England, instructing them to see to it that those who had taken the cross in that land

²⁶ Text of the treaty in Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, I, 363 ff.

²⁷ "Mult volentiers," says Geoffrey of Villehardouin (*Conquête*, chap. xxxi). The *Gesta*, on the other hand (chap. lxxxiii; *PL*, CCXIV, col. 131) asserts that Innocent answered "caute" and made his confirmation conditional on the crusaders' future consultation with the holy see. This author, however, writing after the event, was evidently intent on demonstrating the extraordinary foresight of Innocent (*quod futurorum esset presagiens*). Innocent must surely have welcomed this evidence that some military action was at last preparing.

should be ready to proceed overseas by the next summer, "at the time set by our beloved sons, the counts of Flanders, Champagne, and Blois."²⁸ He also wrote, about the same time, to the French clergy, endorsing the expedition planned by the envoys and the Venetians.²⁹ Similar instructions may have been sent to the German clergy, for bishop Conrad of Halberstadt and abbot Martin of Pairis in Alsace were eventually to lead contingents from that country to Venice.

The negotiations at Venice had taken several weeks, and the envoys were not able to set out for home until some time in April 1201. Late in May, after their return, count Theobald of Champagne died. He had been the first to take the cross, and seems to have been regarded as the leader of the crusade. In any event, it was now decided to replace him with a formally elected commander-in-chief. So a council was held at Soissons toward the end of June, which was attended by the counts of Flanders, Blois, St. Pol, and Perche, together with a number of high barons. There Geoffrey of Villehardouin proposed the name of marquis Boniface of Montferrat, "a very worthy man and one of the most highly esteemed of men now living." Villehardouin was able to assure the assembly that Boniface would accept the nomination, so it is clear that somebody had already consulted him about it. After considerable discussion, the barons agreed, and decided to send envoys to Boniface to ask him to come to France and accept the command.³⁰

Vassals of the empire for their principality in northern Italy, the members of the house of Montferrat had distinguished themselves as crusaders. Boniface's father, William the Old, had fought in the Second Crusade, and had been captured fighting at Hattin in 1187. His eldest brother, William Longsword, had married Sibyl, daughter of Amalric of Jerusalem (1176), and was posthumously the father of king Baldwin V. A second brother, Renier, had married, in 1180, Maria, a daughter of the emperor Manuel Comnenus, had become caesar, and was poisoned by Andronicus Comnenus in 1183. A third brother, Conrad, had married, in 1185, Theodora, a sister of the emperor Isaac Angelus, had also become caesar, and helped put down a serious revolt against Isaac in 1185.

²⁸ Roger of Hoveden, *Chronica*, IV, 365. No English contingent actually took part in that expedition.

²⁹ This is the letter in the *Gesta*, referred to above in note 10. In it the pope mentioned by name three of the six envoys, evidently the delegation sent to Rome with a copy of the covenant for his confirmation, and suggested that their advice should be sought in organizing the crusade in France.

³⁰ Villehardouin, *Conquête*, chap. xli.

He had escaped from the fiercely anti-Latin atmosphere of Constantinople, saved Tyre from Saladin in 1187, married Isabel, the heiress to the kingdom of Jerusalem (whose first husband, Humphrey of Toron, was still alive also), and considered himself king from 1190 until his assassination in 1192. The intimate identification of Boniface's whole family with the east, however, could hardly have been the sole reason why the crusaders chose him as their commander. The *Gesta* of pope Innocent III declares that Philip Augustus favored Boniface,³¹ but it is not clear why.

We know that, after leaving Venice, four of the six crusader envoys had proceeded to Genoa,³² and it is possible that the Genoese authorities, intimately linked with the family of Montferrat, had informed them of Boniface's interest. Two historians report, moreover, that Manuel Comnenus had bestowed Thessalonica on Renier of Montferrat, and had crowned him "king".³³ Of course, no Byzantine emperor would have done precisely that, but we know Manuel had made Renier caesar. Nor is there anything inherently improbable about the story that Manuel had given Renier Thessalonica as a *pronoia*: in 1081 Alexius I Comnenus, in the first recorded act of his reign, had made Nicephorus Melissenus caesar, and assigned Thessalonica to him.³⁴ After the crusade, Boniface of Montferrat was to insist on having Thessalonica,³⁵ and no other property, for himself, and he did in fact become its first Latin king. We are perhaps justified, therefore, in assuming that, as early as the spring of 1201, his interest in obtaining the command of the crusader armies sprang from a determination to fight on Byzantine soil for what he considered a family fief,³⁶ and possibly

³¹ *Gesta*, chap. LXXXIII (*PL*, CCXIV, col. 132): "cum consilio regis Franciae". Cf. E. Faral, "Geoffroy de Villehardouin: la question de sa sincérité," *Revue historique*, CLXXVII (1936), 571.

³² Villehardouin, *Conquête*, chap. XXXII.

³³ Robert of Torigny, *Cronica* (*MGH*, SS., VI), p. 528; Sicard of Cremona, *Cronica* (*RISS*, VII [1725], col. 612; *MGH*, SS., XXXI, 173).

³⁴ Anna Comnena, *Alexiad*, II, viii, 3 (ed. Leib, I, 89).

³⁵ See below, chapter VI, pp. 190, 192. Boniface made an agreement with the Venetians in August 1204 (printed in Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, I, 512 ff.), the surviving text of which refers to Thessalonica as having been given by Manuel to Boniface's father; but the emendation of *patri* to *fratri* clears up this difficulty.

³⁶ The leading authority on the family of Montferrat, Leopoldo Usseglio, *I Marchesi di Montferrato in Italia ed in Oriente*, II (Turin, 1926), 247, note 2, rejects the story on the ground that no Byzantine emperor ever crowned a subject king. True, but Usseglio fails to see that the ceremonial bestowal of the title of caesar, plus a fief in or near or including Thessalonica (all of which a Byzantine emperor might easily have given), might strike a western historian like Robert or Sicard, unfamiliar with Byzantine protocol, as a royal coronation. Authorities taking this view (and both unknown to Usseglio) are F. Cognasso, "Partiti politici e lotte dinastiche in Bisanzio alla morte di Manuele Comneno," *Memorie della R. Accademia delle Scienze di Torino*, ser. 2, LXII (1912), 220, and J. K. Fotheringham, *Marco Sanudo* (Oxford, 1915), pp. 26 ff.

even for the imperial throne itself. About fifty years old, Boniface apparently had never been overseas or taken part in any crusading movement. He had, however, campaigned in Sicily in Henry VI's war with Tancred, and had also fought a long-drawn-out struggle with the Lombard communes. At his court chivalry flourished and he patronized Provençal troubadours like Peter Vidal. His own court poet was the troubadour Rambald of Vacqueyras.³⁷

Boniface now appeared at Soissons, and accepted the command which the crusaders offered him. Villehardouin says that only thereafter did the marquis receive the cross, in a special ceremony; but there is some evidence³⁸ that he may already have taken it in Italy. From Soissons, Boniface proceeded to Cîteaux at the time of the annual chapter of the Cistercians (Holy Cross day, September 14, 1201). Fulk of Neuilly preached a sermon, and many Burgundians took the cross. The marquis then went on into Germany to attend the Christmas court of his suzerain, the German king, the Hohenstaufen Philip of Swabia, whose loyal friend he was. Philip, brother of the recently deceased emperor Henry VI, had married Irene, daughter of the Byzantine emperor Isaac Angelus, and widow of the Sicilian prince Roger, whom Henry VI had conquered.³⁹ With his Byzantine bride Philip had acquired the cause of her father Isaac Angelus, who had been deposed, blinded, and relegated to prison with his son Alexius in 1195 by his brother, Alexius III Angelus. Moreover, Philip had inherited from his late brother Henry the traditional enmity toward Byzantium which had expressed itself in Henry's great but abortive plan for an expedition against the Byzantines, a legacy to the Hohenstaufens from their Norman predecessors in Sicily. When Boniface took command of the crusading armies, new interests thus found a voice in the leadership. From Germany he went back to Montferrat to make his final preparations.

The covenant between the Venetians and the crusaders had set the date for the arrival of the host in Venice before the end of April 1202, in order to permit departure at the time of the summer cross-

³⁷ In addition to the work of Usseglio, see D. Brader, *Bonifaz von Montferrat bis zum Antritt der Kreuzfahrt* (Berlin, 1907); K. Hopf, *Bonifaz von Montferrat und der Troubadour Rambaut von Vaqueyras*, Sammlung gemeinverständlicher wissenschaftlichen Vorträge (ed. R. Virchow and F. von Holtzendorff, Berlin, 1877), 12; O. Schultz [Schultz-Gora] (ed.), *Briefe an Bonifaz I. (II.) Markgrafen von Montferrat* (Halle, 1893); Italian version, ed. G. del Noce (Florence, 1898). See the entry under "Rambaut de Vaqueyras" in A. Pillet and H. Carstens, *Bibliographie der Troubadours*, Schriften der Königsberger gelehrten Gesellschaft Sonderreihe, vol. III (Halle, 1933), pp. 352 ff.

³⁸ *Gesta*, chap. XLVI (PL, CCXIV), cols. xc-xci.

³⁹ See above, chapter III, p. 119.

ing toward the end of June. In fact, however, the first bands did not leave the various regions of France until April and May, and others straggled along throughout June, July, and August. Boniface himself arrived in Venice with his contingent of Lombards only in the middle of August, and the small bands of crusaders from Germany put in their appearance at about the same time. Worse still, a number of the "high men" from the Île de France, Burgundy, and Provence decided on their own initiative not to sail from Venice at all, but to seek transportation overseas for themselves and their men at other ports, some from Marseilles and some from southern Italy. So when the leaders in Venice were able to make a muster of the forces at their command, they found to their dismay that only about a third of the expected 33,500 men had turned up at Venice. The leaders had counted on raising the large sum of money still owing the Venetians by collecting passage money from the individual crusaders, but they found that, with only ten or twelve thousand troops on hand, they could not meet their obligations. After the individual soldiers had made their contribution, Boniface and the counts and some of the high barons added what money they could spare from their private funds, and pledged their gold and silver plate to the Venetian moneylenders,⁴⁰ but in the end they still owed the Venetians some 34,000 marks. Thus the expedition was threatened with failure before it ever got under way, for the Venetians were not likely to go on with it unless they received all the money that was coming to them by the terms of the contract. Villehardouin lays the blame for the threatened fiasco on those who, as he says, were false to their oaths and went to other ports. The primary cause, however, was the excessively high estimate made in the first place by Villehardouin himself and the other envoys as to the size of the army for which transportation would be needed. Even if all the defaulting contingents had come to Venice, they still would not have made up more than half the estimated number of 33,500 men.

At this juncture, doge Enrico Dandolo came forward with a proposal that offered a way out of the impasse. For some time the rulers of Hungary, now in control of the Croatian hinterland, had been encouraging the towns along the Dalmatian coast to rebel against Venetian authority, dominant in Dalmatia for about a

⁴⁰ See the document printed in Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, I, no. xcv, in which count Baldwin acknowledges his indebtedness to certain Venetian merchants in the amount of 118 marks, 3 ounces, with interest. Note also R. Morozzo and A. Lombardo, *Documenti del commercio veneziano nei secoli XI-XIII*, I (Turin, 1940), 542, no. 462.

century, and to seek Hungarian protection. In 1186 Zara, one of the most important of these Venetian vassal cities in Dalmatia, had in this way gone over to king Bela III of Hungary. Despite repeated efforts, Venice had failed to recover it. The doge now asked that the crusading army help him regain Zara. In return Venice would allow the crusaders to postpone payment of the debt until such time as they could meet it out of their share of the booty, to be won later during the expedition. Since the alternative was the abandonment of the crusade and the probable forfeiture of the money already paid, the leaders accepted the proposal, although many crusaders objected violently to turning their arms against Christians. With this matter settled, early in September 1202 the doge himself took the cross at a great assembly in St. Mark's, and prepared to go with the expedition as commander of the Venetian forces, leaving the government of Venice to his son Renier in his absence. Then it was that the Venetians began for the first time to take the cross in great numbers, Villehardouin tells us. Apparently they had been waiting for the doge to take the lead.

At this point in his narrative, Villehardouin records what he calls a marvelous and portentous event:⁴¹ the appeal of a Byzantine prince to the crusaders to help him recover his rights in Constantinople. This was the "young Alexius", son of Isaac II Angelus, who had succeeded in escaping to the west to seek the help of his brother-in-law, Philip of Swabia. Landing at Ancona, the party of the young prince traveled north through Italy, and at Verona, according to Villehardouin, encountered some tardy crusaders who were on their way to Venice. Learning from them of the gathering of an army which was preparing to go overseas, Alexius and his advisers decided to send envoys to the leaders of the crusade and ask them for help. Boniface and the counts and high barons were sufficiently interested, Villehardouin tells us, to send envoys of their own to accompany Alexius' party to Philip's court. "If he will aid us to recover the land of Outremer, we will aid him to conquer his land; for we know that it was unjustly taken from him and his father."⁴² So Villehardouin reports the response of the crusaders to an appeal which he dates immediately before the departure of the fleet in the fall of 1202. Indeed, if one accepts Villehardouin's version of events, one must assume that the fleet actually sailed on October 1, 1202, without any commitment to the young Alexius,

⁴¹ *Conquête*, chap. LXX: "Or oiez une des plus grant merveilles et des greignor aventures que vos oncques oisiez." The reader will recognize, of course, that this dramatic pronouncement is to some extent a cliché of the literature of the time.

⁴² *Conquête*, chap. LXXII.

whose appeal, we are to believe, had only recently been delivered to them.

It was, of course, this appeal and the eventual decision of the crusader chieftains to accede to it that resulted in the "diversion" of the Fourth Crusade from its original purpose of fighting the Moslems in Palestine, or in Egypt, to Constantinople, where the expedition would first restore Isaac and the young Alexius, and then oust them and found a Latin empire on Byzantine soil. This endeavor coincided with the interests of Venice, of Boniface of Montferrat, of Philip of Swabia, and — to the extent that it placed a Roman Catholic dynasty and patriarch on the imperial and ecclesiastical thrones of Constantinople — of Innocent III as well. So modern scholars have often questioned Villehardouin's version of events, which has seemed to them "official" history, concealing behind a plausible narrative a deep-laid secret plot among the interested parties, hatched long before their intentions were revealed to the rank and file of the crusaders, most of whom would have much preferred to carry out a real crusade against the "infidel". Few problems of medieval history have elicited so much scholarly controversy as the "diversion" problem. Though numerous, the sources are often vague or contradictory, naturally enough, since if there was indeed a plot one could hardly expect a contemporary in the secret to reveal it, while one who had no knowledge of it could not reveal any. Both the modern editors of Villehardouin accept his story at face value, and are thus partisans of what has come to be called the *théorie du hasard* or *d'occasion*, according to which the decision to help the young Alexius was really not made until the last moment.⁴³

In the early days of the discussion, the Venetians received most of the blame for the diversion. They had, it was alleged, concluded a secret treaty with al-ʿĀdil, the Aiyūbid sultan, promising not to attack his lands. Indeed, one scholar wrote as if the text of the treaty itself were available. But by 1877, it was clear that the treaty in question actually belonged to a far later date, and that Venice had made no secret promises to the sultan before the Fourth Crusade. Though innocent of this charge, Venice was of course profoundly hostile to Alexius III Angelus; she wished at least to assure herself that the rights owed her by treaty would be respected, and at most to take over the commerce of Constantinople completely. The doge may have lost his eyesight through action by Byzantines,

⁴³ In addition to the comments by Natalis de Wailly and Edmond Faral in the introductions to their respective editions of Villehardouin, see Faral's article cited in note 31 above.

and in any case hated the Greeks. The Venetians were also deeply concerned with the growing influence of Genoa at Byzantium.⁴⁴ Even before the Venetians had been cleared of treason, scholars were shifting the blame for the diversion to Philip of Swabia and Boniface of Montferrat: Philip's kinship with Isaac and the young Alexius, the traditional Norman-Hohenstaufen hostility toward Byzantium, Boniface's family claim to Thessalonica and honors in the Byzantine empire, and Boniface's loyalty to Philip were alleged to be the underlying motives. Innocent III too was declared to be involved in the secret diplomacy.

For so important a project as the diversion of the crusade to be carefully plotted in advance, all agree, one must shake Villehardouin's testimony that the young Alexius landed in Italy as late as August 1202, since, if he really arrived as late as that, there would have been no time to hatch the plot, Villehardouin is correct, and one must accept the *théorie du hasard*. As a matter of fact, however, we have a good deal of evidence tending to show that the young Alexius arrived in the west not in August 1202, but sometime in 1201. If this is accepted, a plot becomes highly plausible but not absolutely certain.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ L. de Mas Latrie, *Histoire de l'île de Chypre*, I (Paris, 1861), 162-165, was the first to level the charge against the Venetians, basing it upon the accusation made by the anti-Venetian Syrian source, Ernoul (*Chronique*, pp. 344-346). See also R. Cessi, "Venezia e la quarta crociata," *Archivio veneto*, LXXXI (1952), 1-52. Karl Hopf, "Griechenland im Mittelalter und in der Neuzeit; Geschichte Griechenlands vom Beginn des Mittelalters bis auf unsere Zeit," *Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste*, ed. J. S. Ersch and J. G. Gruber, section 1, part 85 (Leipzig, 1867), p. 188, and elsewhere dated the hypothetical treaty so positively in 1202 that it was assumed he had discovered the document; see also L. Streit, *Venedig und die Wendung des vierten Kreuzzugs gegen Konstantinopel* (Anklam, 1877). The decisive refutation of the charge came with the article by G. Hanotaux, "Les Vénitiens ont-ils trahi la chrétienté en 1202?" *Revue historique*, IV (1877), 74-102. But the myth persisted, and is often accepted by later writers, e.g. Alice Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea* (London, 1912), p. 41. It is a surprise, however, to find it in Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, III (Cambridge, 1954), 113. For Venetian jealousy of Genoa, see J. K. Fotheringham, "Genoa and the Fourth Crusade," *The English Historical Review*, XXV (1910), 20-57.

⁴⁵ The first to put the blame on Philip and Boniface were E. Winkelmann, *Philipp von Schwaben*, I (Berlin, 1873), 296, 525 ff.; and P. Riant, "Innocent III, Philippe de Souabe, et Boniface de Montferrat," *Revue des questions historiques*, XVII (1875), 321-374, and XVIII (1875), 5-76. Supporting Villehardouin and the *théorie du hasard* in opposition to these scholars were V. Vasilievskii, "Kriticheski i bibliograficheski zametki," *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosvieshcheniya*, CCIV (1879), 337 ff.; J. Tessier, *La Quatrième croisade* (Paris, 1884); W. Norden, *Der vierte Kreuzzug im Rahmen der Beziehungen des Abendlandes zu Byzanz* (Berlin, 1898) and *Das Papsttum und Byzanz* (Berlin, 1903), pp. 152 ff.; and Kretschmayr, *Geschichte von Venedig*, I, 483. But P. Riant returned to the subject in another article, "Le Changement de direction de la quatrième croisade," *Revue des questions historiques*, XXIII (1878), 71-114, and reaffirmed his earlier arguments. W. Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant*, tr. Furcy Raynaud, I (Leipzig, 1885, reprinted 1936), 265 ff., accepts the date 1201 for Alexius's appearance in the west. So also do P. Mitrofanov, "Izmenenie v napravlenii chetvertago krestovago pokhoda," *Vizantiiskii vremennik*, IV (1897), 461-523, and E. Gerland, "Der vierte Kreuzzug und seine Probleme," *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum*,

The contemporary Byzantine historian, Nicetas Choniates, who is reliable, but whose chronology is often difficult to unravel, declares that Alexius III Angelus had freed his nephew, the young Alexius, from prison and taken him along on his campaign against a rebellious official, Manuel Camytzes, in 1201. Early in the campaign (1201), Nicetas says, the young Alexius fled the imperial camp, boarded a Pisan vessel (which had put into the Marmara port of Athyra ostensibly for ballast), escaped his uncle's agents by cutting his hair in western style and dressing in western clothes, and sailed away to the west, where, Nicetas knew, he turned to his sister Irene and her husband Philip of Swabia for help.⁴⁶ The *Gesta Innocentii* reports that Boniface of Montferrat visited Innocent in Rome, at a time *after* Boniface "was said to have discussed" with Philip of Swabia a plan to restore the young Alexius; with him he brought a letter from Philip Augustus, to which we have the reply, dated March 26, 1202.⁴⁷ This would push the alleged conversations between Boniface, Philip, and the young Alexius back to a date in 1201, certainly long before the summer of 1202, Villehardouin's date for the arrival of the young Alexius in the west.

Then too, Alexius III Angelus, who was of course fully conscious, once his nephew had escaped, of the danger that now threatened him, wrote to the pope, asking for assurances that he would not support Philip of Swabia and the young Alexius against him, and offering to negotiate for a union between the Greek and Latin churches, as the Byzantine emperors usually did when danger threatened. Innocent answered somewhat reassuringly in a letter dated November 16, 1202. He reminded Alexius III that papal policy opposed Philip of Swabia and supported his rival Otto IV for the German imperial throne. Innocent also referred, however, to a visit which the young Alexius had paid him in Rome; and in so doing used the word *olim* to describe the period elapsing since the visit had taken place. It has been cogently argued that the word

XIII (1904), 505-514, an excellent summary of previous scholarship. More emphasis is put on the role allegedly played by Innocent III in the works of F. Cerone, "Il Papa e i Veneziani nella quarta crociata," *Archivio veneto*, XXXVI (1888), 57-70 and 287-297, and J. Güldner, *Über die Versuche Papst Innocenz III. eine Union zwischen der abendländischen und morgenländischen Kirche herbeizuführen* (Tübingen, 1893). See also the two recent articles by the Soviet historian, M. A. Zaborov, "Papstvo i zakhvat Konstantinopolya krestonostsami v nachale XIII v.," *Vizantiiskii vremennik*, n.s., V (1952), 152 ff., and "K voprosu o predistorii chetvertogo krestovogo pokhoda," *ibid.*, n.s., VI (1953), 233 ff.

⁴⁶ Nicetas, *Historia; De Alexio Angelo*, III (CSHB), pp. 711 ff. For the convincing argument against Faral's dating, see H. Grégoire, "The Question of the Diversion of the Fourth Crusade," *Byzantion*, XV (1940-1941), 158-166.

⁴⁷ *Gesta*, chap. LXXXIII (PL, CCXIV, col. 132).

olim could not refer to anything as recent as August 1202, but must refer to a considerably longer period, as far back as 1201.⁴⁸ The *Annals* of Cologne also include a passage which may well date the young Alexius's arrival in the summer of 1201.⁴⁹ Finally, Robert of Clari tells us that in mid-December 1202 at Zara, Boniface of Montferrat, in a speech to the crusaders, told them that "last year at Christmas," that is, Christmas 1201, he had seen the young Alexius at the court of Philip of Swabia.⁵⁰

When all these passages are taken together, they strongly suggest that Villehardouin was wrong about the date of the arrival of the young Alexius in the west, and that he had in fact been there since sometime in 1201, or long enough to have launched a plot with Boniface and Philip, and perhaps with the Venetians and the pope. But this is a long way from proving that such a plot was actually launched. Nor need we believe that Villehardouin deliberately lied about the time the young Alexius arrived. He may simply have erred. Moreover, he may be right, and the other evidence misleading. The problem of the diversion is still with us. Though scholars have not heeded a plea made half a century ago to give up trying to solve an insoluble problem,⁵¹ the plea itself makes excellent sense. We are unlikely to be able to go beyond the statement that the diversion which occurred suited the interests of the young

⁴⁸ Innocent III, *Epp.*, an. v, no. 122 (*PL*, CCXIV, col. 1124); argument from the word "*olim*" originated and pressed very hard by Grégoire, *loc. cit.*, 165 f.

⁴⁹ *MGH*, SS., XVII, 810, dealing with the consecration of archbishop Siegfried of Mainz in July 1201, and continuing: "Per idem tempus Alexius . . . venit in Alemanniam ad Philip-pum regem sororium suum. . . ." Gerland, "Der vierte Kreuzzug und seine Probleme," p. 510, note 2, points out that there is some ambiguity as to which archbishop is meant, Mainz or Magdeburg; and that the date 1201 or 1202 hinges on this question. Faral and Cerone reject the passage; Usseglio (*I Marchesi di Monferrato*, II, 186 f.) refutes their arguments; Grégoire follows Usseglio. It seems likely that the passage really can be used to support the date 1201 for Alexius's journey.

⁵⁰ Ed. Lauer, p. 16; tr. McNeal, pp. 45-46.

⁵¹ Luchaire, *Innocent III: La question d'orient* (Paris, 1907), p. 97: ". . . on ne saura jamais, et la science a vraiment mieux à faire qu'à discuter indéfiniment un problème insoluble." The references given above show that scholars did not take his word or his advice. In addition, see H. Vriens, "De Kwestie van den vierden Kruistocht," *Tijdschrift voor Geschiednis*, XXXV (1922), 50-82, and the new and most interesting review of the subject by A. Frolow, "La Déviation de la 4e croisade vers Constantinople," *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, CXLV (1954), 168-187; CXLVI (1954), 67-89, 194-219, who emphasizes the role played by the relics of Constantinople in the motivation of the crusaders. Nor have scholars ceased to take downright positions on the vexed question. See, for example, R. S. Lopez, *Cambridge Economic History*, II (Cambridge, 1952), 311: ". . . the Pope, the Venetians, and a number of feudal lords planned the Fourth Crusade as an expedition against the Byzantine Empire", and note 1: "The legend of a last-minute 'diversion' of the Crusade from the Holy Land to the Byzantine Empire is no longer tenable in the light of decisive Greek and Latin evidence." With such flat statements we must disagree: to us the evidence for a plot seems compelling but not decisive, while we find no evidence that the pope participated in it, though this does not rule out the possibility that he did: no evidence is what one would expect to find if the pope had plotted with the others.

Alexius and Isaac, Philip of Swabia and Boniface of Montferrat, and the Venetians, and that they may therefore have planned it.

Before the fleet sailed on October 1, 1202, Innocent III had learned of the plan to attack Zara. He had sent Peter Capuano to Venice, to accompany the crusaders to the east as papal legate. But the doge and his council, says the author of the *Gesta*, afraid that he would interfere with their wicked plan to attack Zara, told him bluntly that they would not accept him as a legate; he could come along as a preacher if he wished; if not, he could go back to Rome. Insulted, he returned and told Innocent about the proposed attack on a Christian city. The pope wrote instantly, sending the letter by the hand of abbot Peter of Locedio, forbidding the crusaders to attack any Christian city, and mentioning Zara specifically by name as a place in the hands of the king of Hungary, who had himself taken the cross. Peter Capuano also told the pope about the proposals to attack Constantinople on behalf of the young Alexius. Innocent's letter of November 16, 1202, to Alexius III Angelus, already referred to, assures the emperor that Philip of Swabia and the young Alexius had indeed sought to loose the crusading force against Constantinople, that the crusaders had then sent Peter Capuano to the pope to ask his advice, that — despite Alexius III's propensity for fine words and no action — the pope would not permit the attack, although, he said ominously, there were many of his cardinals who thought he ought to allow it because of the disobedience of the Greek church.

But the papal commands, however firmly intended, were disobeyed. During the first week of October 1202, the great fleet (from 200 to 230 ships, including sixty galleys, and the rest transports, some with special hatches for horses)⁵² sailed out into the Adriatic. For more than a month it coasted along the Istrian and Dalmatian shores, putting in at various ports in an awesome demonstration of Venetian might. On November 10 it appeared off Zara. Quite probably because of papal warning of excommunication, Boniface had prudently stayed behind, and did not participate in the operations. It was after the landing at Zara that the disaffection that had been brewing in the host came into the open. Some of the barons belonging to the party that had opposed the attack on Zara from the beginning sent word to the defenders not to capitulate,

⁵² On this fleet, in addition to the sources already named, see the letter of Hugh, count of St. Pol, written from Constantinople to the "duke of Louvain" (Henry, duke of Brabant and count of Louvain), in Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, I, 304.

for the crusaders, they said, would not take part in the assault. At an assembly of the crusading leaders and the Venetians, abbot Guy of Les Vaux-de-Cernay arose and forbade the attack in the name of the pope. He was supported in his opposition by Simon of Montfort and a number of the high barons. The leaders, however, persuaded the majority of the crusaders that they were bound to help the Venetians capture the city, although Simon of Montfort with his followers withdrew some distance from the walls so as to have no part in the sinful action. After two weeks of siege and assault, Zara surrendered; the garrison and inhabitants were spared, but the crusaders and Venetians occupied the city, dividing the booty between them. By this time (November 24, 1202), it was too late to undertake the passage overseas, and the expedition wintered in Zara. Within three days a major riot broke out between French and Venetians, ending in many casualties.

In mid-December, Boniface of Montferrat arrived. Some two weeks later came envoys bearing proposals from Philip of Swabia and the young Alexius: if the armies would help Isaac Angelus and the young Alexius recover the Byzantine imperial throne, they would bring the empire back into submission to the papacy. Moreover, they would give 200,000 marks of silver, to be divided equally between the crusaders and the Venetians, and would also pay for provisions for the whole expedition for an additional year. The young Alexius would then join the crusade against the Saracens in person, if the leaders wanted him to do so, but in any case he would contribute an army of 10,000 Greeks, and would maintain at his own expense as long as he should live a garrison of 500 knights to serve in Syria in defense of the Holy Land.

At the headquarters of the Venetians, the doge and the leading barons heard this tempting offer. The next day, at a general assembly of the host, the lesser men heard the proposals for the first time. The majority of the rank and file clearly opposed further warfare against Christians, and, supported by some of the clergy, urged that the armies proceed directly to Palestine. Many of the important barons shared this view. But even the clergy was divided, some arguing, like the leaders — whose opinions Villehardouin reflects — that the only way to recover Jerusalem was to begin the war by the Byzantine adventure. Despite the divided opinion, the chiefs of the expedition, including Boniface, Baldwin of Flanders, Louis of Blois, Hugh of St. Pol, and others — fewer than twenty — signed the agreement accepting the offer of the young Alexius and pledging the host to intervention at Constantinople. The move did

not end dissension. Many of the lesser people, suffering from hunger and other discomforts while the more important barons monopolized the army's resources, deserted during the winter, fleeing in merchant ships, some of which were lost at sea, or by land through Croatian territory, where the inhabitants massacred them. One group of nobles also departed, swearing that they would return after delivering messages in Syria; but they did not come back. A Flemish contingent, which had been proceeding by sea, arrived safely in Marseilles; although Baldwin commanded its leaders to make rendezvous with the main body off the coast of Greece, they went instead direct to Palestine. Simon of Montfort, Enguerrand of Boves, and other important barons also departed, having made arrangements with king Emeric of Hungary to permit them to pass through his Croatian territories, and thus regain Italy by marching along the shores of the Adriatic. These defections, Villehardouin reports bitterly, hurt the crusader forces seriously.

Those crusaders who had taken part in the attack on Zara, in defiance of the pope's specific commands, had automatically incurred excommunication. The leaders now first secured provisional absolution from the bishops in the host, and then sent a delegation to Rome to explain to Innocent how they had been unwillingly forced into the sin of disobedience, and to ask forgiveness. Eager not to jeopardize the success of the whole crusade, of which he still expected great things, the pope received the delegates kindly. He sent them back with a reproving letter, but not nearly so vigorous in its denunciation of the taking of Zara as one might have expected. After the guilty crusaders should have restored what they had taken illegally, and on condition that they commit no more such offenses, the pope agreed to absolve them.⁵³ The Venetians, however, could not be let off so easily. They had rebuffed Peter Capuano at Venice, had openly flouted Innocent's warning not to attack Zara, and had shown no signs of repentance. Though the envoys of the crusaders tried to dissuade the pope from excommunicating them, he would not accede. Indeed the papal emissary who brought the letter of absolution for the crusaders bore also a letter of excommunication for the doge and the Venetians. Boniface and his fellow barons, however, took it upon themselves to withhold this letter. They wrote the pope explaining that they had done so to prevent the dissolution of the crusade, and saying that they would deliver it if the pope should still insist.⁵⁴

⁵³ Innocent III, *Epp.*, an. V, no. 162 (*PL*, CCXIV, cols. 1179 ff.), February 1203.

⁵⁴ Innocent III, *Epp.*, an. VI, nos. 99, 100 (*PL*, CCXV, cols. 103 ff.).

The surviving correspondence between pope and crusaders up to this point deals only with Zara. Yet the pope was well aware of the designs upon Constantinople; we have observed his reference to them in his letter of November 1202 to Alexius III. It was not until Innocent received Boniface's letter explaining the withholding of the papal ban from the Venetians that, in June 1203, he finally wrote commanding Boniface to deliver the letter of excommunication on pain of incurring a similar punishment himself, and flatly forbidding the attack on Constantinople.⁵⁵ By then it was too late. The fleet had left Zara before the letter was written, much less delivered. How far does the curious papal failure to condemn the diversion in time argue Innocent's complicity in a plot? Some modern historians believe that the pope was protesting "for the record", and had secretly endorsed the attack on Constantinople. The Greeks, from that day to this, have regarded Innocent as the ringleader in a plot. It seems more likely that Innocent rather allowed the diversion to happen. Perhaps he felt he could not prevent it. Moreover, it promised to achieve — though by methods he could not publicly endorse — one of the chief aims of his foreign policy, the union of the churches, and simultaneously to further a second aim, the crusade.

From Zara, most of the army sailed early in April 1203, Dandolo and Boniface remaining behind until the young Alexius could join them. Then they touched at Durazzo (Dyrrachium), where the population received the young Alexius as their emperor. The news that the great expedition had now been launched against him came direct from Durazzo to Alexius III in Constantinople, where bad naval administration had reduced the city's defenses to a pathetically low level. So fond was Alexius III of hunting that the imperial foresters would not permit the cutting of trees for ship-timber, while the admiral of the fleet, Michael Stryphnus, brother-in-law of the empress Euphrosyne, sold nails, anchors, and sails alike for money. Only about twenty rotten and worm-eaten vessels could now be hastily assembled.⁵⁶ Meanwhile the advance party of the crusaders had arrived in Corfu, where the inhabitants at first received them cordially. The arrival of the young Alexius, however, spurred the Corfiotes to attack the fleet in the harbor. In revenge, the armies devastated the island. It was already clear that the appearance of a Latin-sponsored claimant to the Byzantine imperial

⁵⁵ Innocent III, *Epp.*, an. V, no. 101 (*PL*, CCXV, col. 106).

⁵⁶ Nicetas, *Historia; De Alexio Angelo*, III (*CSHB*), p. 717.

throne — no matter how legitimate his claim — would arouse only hostility among Greeks.

At Corfu Alexius confirmed his agreements, and, in all probability, undertook to give Crete to Boniface. Here too, the leaders had to face new dissension. A large group of the barons — perhaps half of the total — who had opposed the diversion to Constantinople now withdrew from the host and set up camp by themselves, intending to send over to Brindisi and secure ships to take them direct to Syria. Boniface and the counts and a number of high barons, accompanied by the bishops and abbots and by the young Alexius, went to the camp of these “deserters”, and besought them with tears not to break up the host in this way. Finally the recalcitrants yielded; they would stay with the expedition until Michaelmas (September 29), on the solemn assurance that at any time after that date, on two weeks’ notice, they would be supplied with ships to transport them to Palestine.

Leaving Corfu on the eve of Pentecost (May 24, 1203), the fleet set sail for Constantinople. It skirted the Morea, entered the Aegean Sea, and made its first landing on the island of Euboea (Negroponte), whence some of the galleys and transports detoured to the island of Andros and forced the inhabitants to recognize young Alexius and pay him tribute. The rest of the ships proceeded to Abydos on the Asiatic shore at the mouth of the Dardanelles, and occupied it without resistance. Taking advantage of the spring harvest, the host took wheat on board. A week later, after the other vessels had come up, the reunited fleet passed through the Dardanelles and the Sea of Marmara, and anchored off the abbey of St. Stephen, seven miles south of Constantinople, now in full view. Having foraged on the Marmara islands, the fleet passed so close to the walls of the capital that some of the defenders opened fire. It then landed and disembarked men and horses at Chalcedon on St. John’s day, June 24, just a month after the departure from Corfu. From Chalcedon the crusaders set out by land for Scutari (Chrysopolis), a league to the north, while the ships followed along the shore.

At Scutari, foraging parties raided the land around for provisions, and the crusaders had their first encounter with the armed forces of emperor Alexius III, when a scouting party of some eighty knights attacked and put to flight a much larger body of Greek troops that had been stationed to watch their movements. An envoy from Constantinople now arrived at the camp at Scutari with a message from the emperor. He demanded to know what they were

doing in his land, since they were supposed to be on their way to recover the Holy Sepulcher; if they were in need, he would gladly give them provisions for their journey, but if they harbored any hostile intentions toward him or his empire, he would destroy them to a man. The crusader spokesman, Conon of Béthune, answered that Alexius III was a traitor and usurper, and demanded his surrender to his nephew, whom, Conon said, the crusaders would try to persuade to treat him gently.

After sending back this defiance, the leaders decided to appeal to the people of Constantinople to acknowledge their protégé. The galleys set out from the harbor of Scutari, one of them bearing the young Alexius, Boniface, and Dandolo, and sailed as close as they could to the sea walls, while those on board shouted out to the crowds thronging the shore and the walls that they were come to help the people of Constantinople overthrow their tyrant and restore their rightful lord. The demonstration failed, as the only response was a shower of missiles.

So the leaders now made preparations for an attack, mustering their forces (probably something over 10,000) in the plain outside Scutari in seven "battles" or divisions, each containing as far as possible men of the same region and each commanded by one of the counts or high barons. On July 5 the fleet crossed the Bosphorus; the French repulsed a Byzantine force and made a landing at Galata, across the Golden Horn from Constantinople. The next day the French stormed and captured Galata's principal defense work, a great tower. The Venetian fleet broke the harbor chain that closed the opening of the Golden Horn, and moved in, sinking or capturing the few Byzantine galleys stationed there as a defending force.⁵⁷ They now wanted to concentrate the attack against the sea walls from the waters of the Golden Horn; but the French preferred to fight on land, and agreed to time their assault to coincide with the Venetian action. So the French forces now marched inland from Pera along the shore of the Golden Horn until they came to the little stream at its upper end. Over this they threw a bridge, then crossed and established their camp outside the land walls of the city near the Blachernae palace, at the angle between the land walls

⁵⁷ On the topography of Constantinople, see A. M. Schneider, *Byzanz*, Istanbuler Forschungen herausgegeben von der Abtheilung Istanbul des Archäologischen Instituts des deutschen Reiches, vol. VIII (Berlin, 1936); supplemented to some extent by R. Janin, *Constantinople byzantine*, Archives de l'orient chrétien, IV (Paris, 1950). The treatment of A. Van Milligen, *Byzantine Constantinople: The Walls of the City and Adjoining Historical Sites* (London, 1899) is still valuable for its special subject. The large map of the land walls by "Misn" (Nomides), *Χάρτης τῶν χερσαίων τείχων τῆς μεσαιωνικῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως* (Constantinople, 1945) is also extremely useful.

and the walls of the Golden Horn. The Venetian fleet moved up to the inner end of the harbor, and maintained contact, preparing scaling ladders and siege artillery, and building platforms high up on the spars of their galleys. Repeated Byzantine sorties kept the land forces engaged, and necessitated the building of palisades around the camp. It was ten days before the preparations for the assault were complete.

It came on July 17. The Varangian guard of English and Danes successfully defended with swords and axes the section of wall chosen by the French crusaders, but the Venetians, with the blind old Dandolo waving the banner of St. Mark in the foremost galley and shouting at his forces, beached their galleys below the sea walls, and with scaling ladders seized first one tower and then another until they held twenty-five along the sea wall, and actually were capturing horses within the walls and sending them to the crusader forces by boat. For defense against the vastly superior Byzantine forces, they set fire to the buildings inside the walls, destroying the whole neighborhood utterly and beginning the tragic ruin of the city. Meanwhile Alexius III with a huge army made a sortie against the crusader battalions attacking the land walls. Wisely refusing to break ranks, the crusaders drew up before their camp, and awaited an onslaught which, in the end, failed to materialize; Alexius III approached close, but then withdrew. At the news of the Byzantine sortie, Dandolo ordered his forces to withdraw from the towers they held, and the Venetians now joined the French. Despite the temporary lodgment of the Venetians on the walls, the action as a whole had failed.

But that night Alexius III fled with his daughter Irene and his jewels to Mosynopolis, a Thracian town. Abandoned, the Byzantine officials released Isaac from prison and restored him to office, sending messengers before dawn to inform the Latins of their action. The wary host sent four representatives, two Frenchmen and two Venetians, to investigate the truth of the report. Through the open gate and between the lines of the axe-bearing Varangians, Villehardouin and his three colleagues came into the Blachernae and the presence of Isaac Angelus. They required him to ratify the obligations which the young Alexius had assumed toward the crusading army, and returned with the proper chrysobull, reluctantly granted. Then the Byzantines opened the city to the entire crusading force, which escorted the young Alexius into the capital. The next day the Latins yielded to the urgent request of Isaac and Alexius to take their forces out of Constantinople proper, in order to avoid a

riot, and to lodge them across the Golden Horn in the Jewish suburb of Estanor, now Pera. The object of the expedition attained, the Latins became wide-eyed tourists amid the marvels of Byzantium, wondering at the sacred relics, buying briskly from the Greeks. On August 1, 1203, the young Alexius was crowned co-emperor.⁵⁸

Late in August 1203 the leaders sent to the pope and the monarchs of the west an official circular letter, explaining their decision to go to Constantinople, recounting their experiences since their departure from Zara, announcing the postponement of the attack on Egypt until the spring, and summoning crusading Europe to join the host there in glorious deeds against the "infidel". This letter was apparently the first word Innocent III had had from the expedition since it had left Zara in April. He also received an accompanying letter from Alexius IV, dated August 23, in which the newly elected emperor assured the pope of his filial devotion and of his firm intention to bring the Greek church back into obedience to Rome.⁵⁹ Not until February 1204 did the pope reply, reproving the leaders for their disobedience, and commanding them to proceed at once with all their forces to the rescue of the Holy Land. He conjured young Alexius to fulfill his promise in respect to the Greek church, and warned him that, unless he did so, his rule could not endure. To the doge of Venice, who apparently had sent a conciliatory message, he recalled the Venetians' persistent disobedience, and admonished him not to forget his vows as a crusader. He wrote also to the French clergy in the host commanding them to see to it that the leaders did penance for their misdeeds and carried out their professed good intentions.⁶⁰ By the time the pope's admonitions and instructions arrived, the dizzy pace of events in Constantinople had presented Christendom with a startling new development.

In the months between August 1203 and March 1204 relations rapidly deteriorated between the crusading armies and the emperors they had restored. Alexius IV began to pay instalments on his debt of 200,000 marks to the crusaders, who in turn paid off their own debt to the Venetians and reimbursed the knights who had paid passage money from Venice. But the leaders once more postponed departure for Palestine, as Alexius IV begged them to

⁵⁸ Hereafter we refer to him as Alexius IV.

⁵⁹ Innocent III, *Epp.*, an. VI, no. 210 (from Alexius) and 211 (from the crusaders) (*PL*, CCXV, cols. 236-240). Cf. the letter from Hugh of St. Pol in Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, I, 304.

⁶⁰ Innocent III, *Epp.*, an. VI, nos. 229-232 (*PL*, CCXV, cols. 259 ff.); an. VII, no. 18 (*ibid.*, cols. 301 ff.); Potthast, *Regesta*, nos. 2122-2125, 2136.

delay until the following March (1204) in order that he might have time to raise the rest of the money he owed them. So greatly did the Greeks hate him, because he had won restoration through a Latin army, that he declared he feared for his life. He hoped, however, to make himself secure within the next seven months. Meanwhile he promised to pay for the Venetian fleet for an additional year, and asked the crusaders to renew their own agreement with the Venetians. The leaders agreed, but when the news became known, those who at Corfu had opposed the entire venture demanded ships for immediate passage to Syria, and were with difficulty persuaded to stay.

While Alexius IV was out of Constantinople with some of the Latins on an imperial progress to receive homage, to assert his sovereignty over disloyal territory, and to try to capture his uncle Alexius III, tension ruled in the city. The Greek clergy were vigorously resisting Alexius' efforts to effect a union with Rome, and smoldered with resentment at his melting down church vessels to get money to pay the Latins. Bitter hatred swept the Greeks at the sight of their new emperor fraternizing with the hated Latins. Greeks pillaged the old quarters of the established Latin merchants. Latins burned down a mosque, and probably started a great conflagration, which lasted a week, endangered Hagia Sophia, did vast damage, and killed many people. To avoid a massacre, the remaining resident Latins took their families and as much as they could of their property, and crossed the harbor to join the crusaders. On his return, Alexius IV changed his attitude towards the Latins, stopped visiting their camp, gave them only token payments, and began to put them off with excuses. In November 1203 a six-man delegation, three French and three Venetian, delivered an ultimatum to Isaac and Alexius. Relations now degenerated into war.

Twice the Greeks sent fire-ships in the harbor down against the Venetian fleet in a determined but unsuccessful effort to burn it. By now a conspiracy had been hatched inside the city against the pro-Latin Alexius IV.⁶¹ At its head was the son-in-law of Alexius III, a Ducas also named Alexius, known as Mourtzouphlus because his bushy eyebrows met.⁶² Late in January 1204 a mob in Hagia Sophia told the senate and the high clergy that they would no longer be ruled by the Angeli. An unwilling youth, Nicholas

⁶¹ The only full account of these events is in Nicetas, *Historia; De Isaacio Angelo et Alexio filio (CSHB)*, pp. 741 ff. See also *Devastatio*, ed. Hopf, p. 91; Novgorod chronicle, ed. Hopf, pp. 94-95; and the letter of Baldwin of Flanders to the pope in Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, I, 502-503.

⁶² Mourtzouphlus had participated in an abortive palace revolution against Alexius III Angelus as far back as 1201, when he was already leader of an anti-Latin faction. It lasted only a day, and was put down. Mourtzouphlus's "front man" on the earlier occasion was a

Canabus, was put forward and chosen emperor. Alexius IV appealed to the crusaders to occupy the Blachernae and give him protection, but chose as envoy Mourtzouphlus himself, the leading spirit of the conspiracy. Shedding the cloak of deceit, Mourtzouphlus came out into the open, seized the throne late in January, and early in February imprisoned and probably executed Canabus; strangled Alexius IV with a bowstring; possibly murdered Isaac, who in any case soon died; and seized the throne. Alexius V Ducas Mourtzouphlus, a great-great-grandson of Alexius I Comnenus, thus came to power as the avowed leader of the passionately anti-Latin populace. Warfare between the Greeks and the Latins continued. Alexius V restored the sea walls and added new wooden defenses; he took personal command of his troops and in one sharp skirmish against Henry, brother of Baldwin of Flanders, suffered defeat and lost a celebrated icon he was using as a standard.

The leaders of the crusade now decided to take Constantinople for a second time, acting on their own behalf. In March 1204 Dandolo, acting for Venice, and Boniface, Baldwin, Louis of Blois, and Hugh of St. Pol. acting for the non-Venetians, concluded a new treaty regulating their behavior after the city should have fallen.⁶³ All booty was to be piled up in one place. The Venetians would receive three quarters of it up to the amount needed to pay the remaining debt owed them by the crusaders, while the non-Venetians would receive one quarter. Anything over and above the amount of the debt would be evenly divided between the two parties, but if the total should be insufficient to pay the debt, the non-Venetians would none the less receive one quarter. Food would be divided equally. Venice would retain all titles and property, lay and ecclesiastical, previously held in the Byzantine empire, and all privileges, written and unwritten.

Twelve electors, six Venetians and six non-Venetians, would then proceed to elect a Latin emperor. He would have one quarter of the empire, including the two Byzantine imperial palaces, Blachernae and Boukoleon. The remaining three quarters would be divided evenly between Venetians and non-Venetians. The clergy of the

certain John Comnenus. The most important source is the "Logos Aphegematikos" of Nicholas Mesarites, ed. A. Heisenberg, *Nikolaos Mesarites: Die Palastrevolution des Joannes Komnenos*, Programm des k. alten Gymnasiums zu Würzburg für das Studienjahr 1906-1907 (Würzburg, 1907); see also Nicetas, *Historia*; *De Alexio Angelo*, III (CSHB), pp. 697 ff.; his encomium of Alexius III in C. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη*, I (Venice, 1872), 84-89; *Nicephori Chrysobergae ad Angelos Orationes* (ed. M. Treu, Breslau, 1892), pp. 1-72. Eudocia, daughter of Alexius III, was successively married to Stephen I of Serbia (who divorced her), Alexius V Mourtzouphlus, and Leo Sgourus of Corinth.

⁶³ Text in Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, I, 444 ff.

party to which the emperor did not belong, would then have the right to name a cathedral chapter for Hagia Sophia, which in turn would choose a patriarch. Each party would name clergy for its own churches. The conquerors would give to the church only as much of the Greek churches' property as would enable the clergy to live decently. All church property above and beyond this minimum would be divided with all the other booty.

Both parties agreed to remain in the east for one year to assist the new Latin empire and emperor; thereafter, all who might remain would take an oath to the emperor, and would swear to maintain all previous agreements. Each party would select a dozen or more representatives to serve on a mixed commission to distribute fiefs and titles among the host, and to assign the services which the recipients would owe the emperor and empire. Fiefs would be hereditary, and might pass in the female line; their holders might do what they wished with their own, saving the rights of the emperor and the military service owed to him. The emperor would provide all forces needful beyond those owed by his feudatories. No citizen of a state at war with Venice might be received during such a war in the territory of the empire. Both parties pledged themselves to petition the pope to make all violations of the pact punishable by excommunication. The emperor must swear to abide by all agreements between the parties. If any amendment to the present agreement should be thought desirable, it might be made at the discretion of the doge and six councillors, acting together with Boniface and six councillors. The doge would not be bound by any oath to render service to the emperor for any fief or title assigned to him, but all those to whom the doge might assign such fiefs or titles would be bound by oath to render all due service to the emperor as well.

The provisions of this pact of March 1204 foreshadow the future problems of the Latins at Constantinople. Though crusaders and Venetians clearly regarded their operations as a raid for plunder, they nevertheless proposed to found a new state on the very ground they intended to ravage. The future emperor would have only a quarter of the empire; the doge, who would take no oath to him, would have three eighths. Though the doge's own vassals would owe military service, the doge himself would not. The emperor would have to supply all necessary troops and equipment beyond what might be furnished by the feudatories. Yet he himself would not even participate in the distribution of fiefs or the assignment of obligations. Before the first Latin emperor of

Constantinople was even chosen, his fellow-Latins had made it certain that he would be a feudal monarch with insufficient resources and little power. The Venetian establishment in former Byzantine territory, however, was greatly strengthened. No longer dependent upon grants from successive Byzantine emperors, the Venetians had "constitutionally" excluded their enemies from competition. Laymen had disposed, in advance, of the most important ecclesiastical office, and had virtually secularized church property. Taken together with subsequent Venetian behavior, the treaty of March 1204 indicates that Dandolo had little interest in the title of emperor, and was ready to let the crusaders take the post for one of their own candidates, in exchange for the commercial and ecclesiastical supremacy.

This agreement made, the Venetians busied themselves with getting the fleet ready for action. This time a combined force of crusaders and Venetians operating from the ships would launch the assault against the sea walls on April 9. At daybreak the fleet stood out across the harbor on a front a half league long, with the great freighters interspersed between the galleys and the horse transports. The freighters were brought as close to the wall as possible and the flying bridges swung out to reach the tops of the towers, while some of the troops disembarked and tried to scale the walls from the ground. On this day the assault failed and after several hours of desperate fighting the assailants gave up the attempt, reëmbarked on the vessels, and returned to the camp across the harbor. On April 12th they renewed the attack. With a strong wind at its back the fleet crossed the harbor and made for the same section of the wall. The great freighters were able to grapple their flying bridges onto the tops of a few of the towers and the troops swarmed over and drove off the defenders. Others landed, scaled the walls, and broke down the gates from inside. The horses were led ashore from the transports; the knights mounted and rode through the gates. The Greeks retreated farther within the city, and the assailants consolidated their hold on the section in front of the wall they had taken. During the night some of the Germans in the division of the marquis, fearing an attack, set fire to the buildings in front of them, and a new conflagration raged through that part of the city, to add to the terrors of the populace.

That night the crusaders and Venetians slept on their arms, expecting to have to renew the fighting in the morning. In fact, however, Mourtzouphlus had fled the city, and the Latins entered, meeting no further resistance. For three days they indulged in

excesses which the Greeks have not forgotten to this day, and which Innocent III himself bitterly condemned when he heard of them. The Latins defiled Greek sanctuaries, murdered and raped, stole and destroyed the celebrated monuments of the capital. The historian Nicetas Choniates wrote a separate treatise on the statues which had perished in the terror.⁶⁴ When it was over, Boniface of Montferrat ordered all booty brought in for division. Many risked execution in an effort to keep what they had already seized, and much was doubtless concealed. But what was turned in yielded 400,000 marks and 10,000 suits of armor. The humbler knights resented the greed of the leaders, who took all the gold and silk and fine houses for themselves, leaving the poorer men only the plain silver ornaments, such as the pitchers which the Greek ladies of Constantinople had carried with them to the baths. Sacred relics shared the fate of profane wealth. The Fourth Crusade had come a long way from Écry, and now terminated without having encountered a single armed Moslem.

Indeed, we may regard the momentous events of 1203-1204 as the culmination of an assault of the Latin west upon the Byzantine east that had been intermittently under way for more than a century. Boniface of Montferrat, as ally of Philip of Swabia, had inherited the anti-Byzantine ambitions of Robert Guiscard, Bohemond, the Norman kings of Sicily, and their Hohenstaufen heir, Henry VI, as well as the claims of his own elder brothers, Conrad and Renier. Dandolo was avenging the Byzantine massacre of the Latin residents of Constantinople in 1182, the mass arrest of the Venetians by Manuel Comnenus in 1171 (the bills for this affair had never been settled), and possibly early injuries to himself; these episodes had in turn sprung out of the natural mutual hatred between the Greek population and the pushing, rowdy, shrewd, and successful Italian interlopers in Constantinople, whose privileges and possessions in the capital dated back to the chrysobull of Alexius I of 1082. In the French and German barons of 1204 we may see the successors of all those hosts of crusaders that had poured through Constantinople, with an envious eye to its wealth and a scornful distaste for its inhabitants, since the days of Godfrey of Bouillon, or Louis VII, or Frederick Barbarossa. The sword that had hung precariously over the heads of the Byzantines for so long had fallen at last.

⁶⁴ See Innocent's letter, an. VIII, no. 133 (*PL*, CCXV, cols. 710-714); Nicetas's treatise is to be found on pp. 854-868 of the volume of *CSHB* containing his history. See the famous paraphrase of the passages of Nicetas's history in Gibbon's account of the sack.