

8. The Balkans in 1216, at the Death of the Latin Emperor Henry (Map by the University of Wisconsin Cartographic Laboratory)

VI

THE LATIN EMPIRE OF CONSTANTINOPLE, 1204-1261

On April 13, 1204, the fifth day of the second siege, the crusaders and Venetians took Constantinople. When order had been

Our excellent narrative sources for the Fourth Crusade, both western and Byzantine, break off not long after the foundation of the Latin empire. Villehardouin's account stops with events of the year 1207; Robert of Clari records one event as late as 1216, but after the year 1205 he is writing from hearsay only; Nicetas Choniates closes his history in 1206. None of the narrative sources for the period of the Latin empire is in the same class as these. Villehardouin found his continuator for the years 1207-1209 in the Old French work of Henry of Valenciennes, *Histoire de l'empereur Henri*, ed. and tr. N. de Wailly, in his edition of Villehardouin (Paris, 1874), pp. 304-420; ed. J. Longnon (Paris, 1948), in the *Documents relatifs à l'histoire des croisades*, publiés par l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres. Ernoul continues to furnish information needing confirmation from other sources.

For the period 1220-1242, one must consult the vernacular *Chronique rimée de Philippe Mouskes* (ed. [F.] de Reiffenberg, Brussels, 1838), II, Collection de chroniques belges inédites; also *MGH, SS.*, XXVI (partial text only). The Old French *La Cronique des Vénéciens de Maistre Martin da Canal*, ed. F.-L. Polidori, *Archivio storico italiano*, VIII (1845), 229-798, gives important details, especially naval, from the Venetian point of view. A fourteenth-century Venetian chronicle preserving a good tradition is the Latin *Andreae Danduli chronicon* (*RiSS*, XII; new ed., Bologna, 1939 ff.). Aubrey of Trois-Fontaines (*MGH, SS.*, XXIII) continues to be very useful. The work of the Dominican Simon of St. Quentin, which furnishes information on the Latins in Asia Minor unavailable elsewhere, is preserved in Vincent of Beauvais, *Bibliotheca mundi* (Douai, 1624). For the complicated but useful Franciscan source material see G. Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente Franciscano*, 5 vols. (Quaracchi, 1906-1927); *idem*, "Disputatio Latinorum et Grecorum," *Archivum Franciscanum historicum*, XII (1919), 418-470; L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, 27 vols. (Quaracchi, 1931-1934). Three works of the fourteenth-century Venetian, Marino Sanudo (Torsello), are also useful: *Secreta fidelium crucis* (ed. J. Bongars, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, Hanover, 1611, II); *Istoria del regno di Romania* (ed. C. Hopf, *Chroniques gréco-romanes*, Berlin, 1873, pp. 99-170), the Italian version of a lost Latin original, dealing mostly with the Morea; and, short but very valuable, a supplement to Villehardouin (ed. Hopf, *ibid.*, pp. 171 ff.; ed. R. L. Wolff, "Hopf's So-called 'Fragmentum' of Marino Sanudo Torsello," *The Joshua Starr Memorial Volume*, Jewish Social Studies, publication V, New York, 1953, pp. 149-159).

The most important single Greek narrative source for the whole period 1204-1261 is *Georgii Acropolitae opera* (ed. A. Heisenberg, Leipzig, 1903, I), but this deals only occasionally with the Latins, and reveals a detailed knowledge of events only beginning with the 1240's. George Pachymeres, *De Michaelē et Andronico Palaeologis, Libri XIII* (2 vols., *CSHB*, Bonn, 1835) is useful for the last years of the Latin occupation; Nicephorus Gregoras, *Byzantina historia* (3 vols., *CSHB*, Bonn, 1829-1855) is occasionally helpful. The Greek verse chronicle of the Morea (ed. J. Schmitt, London, 1904; ed. P. Kalonaros, Athens, 1940) also supplies an occasional detail, as do the French and Aragonese versions (see bibliographical note to chapter VII for full references). A. Heisenberg, "Neue Quellen zur Geschichte des lateinischen Kaisertums und der Kirchenunion," *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Philosophisch-philologische und historische Klasse (Munich, 1922-1923), I, II, and III, published very important texts of the Greek archbishop of Ephesus, Nicholas Mesarites. M. A. Andréeva, "À propos de l'éloge de l'empereur Jean III Batatzès par son fils Théodore

restored, and the booty divided, attention turned to the choice of the first Latin emperor. As commander of the host, Boniface of

II Lascaris," *Annales de l'Institut Kondakov (Seminarium Kondakovianum)*, X (1938), 133-144, provides an interesting text.

The principal western documentary sources include the Venetian collections of R. Morozzo della Rocca and A. Lombardo (2 vols., Turin, 1940), as well as Tafel and Thomas, cited in the bibliographical note to chapter V, where the correspondence of Innocent III has also been referred to. For Honorius III, Innocent's successor, we have the incomplete work of P. Pressutti, *Regesta Honorii papae III* (2 vols., Rome, 1888, 1895); some complete texts of letters in *Honorii III Romani pontificis opera omnia* (ed. C. Horoy, Medii aevi bibliotheca Patristica seu eiusdem temporis Patrologia, 4 vols., Paris, 1878-1880); and seven previously unpublished or partly published letters dealing with the Latin empire in R. L. Wolff, "Politics in the Latin Patriarchate of Constantinople, 1204-1261," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, VIII (1954), 225-303. For the popes who succeeded Honorius we have the splendid editions of the correspondence produced by the École française d'Athènes et de Rome: L. Auvray, *Les Registres de Grégoire IX* (3 vols., Paris, 1899-1910); E. Berger, *Les Registres d'Innocent IV* (4 vols., Paris, 1884-1910); and C. Bourel de la Roncière, *Les Registres d'Alexandre IV* (2 vols., Paris, 1902-1931). For important letters not in the registers, see K. Hampe, "Aus verlorenen Registerbänden der Päpste Innocenz III. und Innocenz IV.," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, XXIII (1902), 545-567; XXIV (1903), 198-237; F. Schillmann, "Zur byzantinischen Politik Alexanders IV.," *Römische Quartalschrift*, XXII (1908), part 4, 108-131; J. Van den Gheyn, "Lettre de Grégoire IX concernant l'empire latin de Constantinople," *ROL*, IX (1902), 230-234. The letters of the Latin emperors themselves are scattered; see *RHGF*, XVIII, 527 ff.; Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, *passim*; P. Lauer, "Une lettre inédite d'Henri Ier d'Ange, empereur de Constantinople, aux prélats latins," *Mélanges offerts à M. Gustave Schlumberger*, I (Paris, 1924), 190 ff.; A. Teulet, *Layettes du trésor des chartes*, II, III (Paris, 1866), *passim*; [Jean] du Bouchet, *Histoire généalogique de la maison royale de Courtenay* (Paris, 1661), see the "Preuves"; and F. Dölger, *Facsimiles byzantinischer Kaiserurkunden* (Munich, 1931). Other indispensable collections of documentary sources are A. Theiner (ed.) *Vetera monumenta Slavorum meridionalium historiam illustrantia* (2 vols., Rome and Zagreb, 1863-1875), and *Vetera monumenta historica Hungariam sacram illustrantia* (2 vols., Rome, 1859-1860).

Greek documentary materials include V. Vasilievskii, "Epirotica saeculi XIII," *Vizantiiskii vremennik*, III (1896), 233-299, the correspondence of John Apocaucaus, metropolitan of Naupactus (Lepanto); J. B. Pitra, *Analecta sacra et classica spicilegio solesmensi parata*, VI (Paris and Rome, 1891), the correspondence of Demetrius Chomatianus, metropolitan of Ochrida; J. B. Cotelerius [Cotelier], *Ecclesiae Graecae monumenta* (Paris, 1686), III. For a bibliography and discussion of the Greek and Latin lists of archbishoprics and bishoprics, see R. L. Wolff, "The Organization of the Latin Patriarchate of Constantinople," *Traditio*, VI (1948), 33-60.

Bulgarian materials bearing on the Latin empire include: M. G. Popruzhenko, "Sinodik Tsarya Borila," *Izvestiya Russkago arkheologicheskago instituta v Konstantinopolie*, V (1900); G. A. Ilinskii, "Gramota Tsarya Ioanna Asienya II," *ibid.*, VII (1902), 25-39; F. I. Uspenskii, "O drevnostyakh goroda Tyrnova," *ibid.*, 1-24; M. Lascaris, *Vatopedskata gramota na Tsar Ivan Asienya II* (Sofia, 1930); V. N. Zlatarski, "Asienoviyat Nadpis pri Stanimaka," *Izvestiya na Bulgarskoto arkheologicheskoto druzhestvo*, II (1911), 231-247.

Among secondary works, there are only three full-scale treatments of the Latin empire in print, of which two, though still useful, have been superseded. These are C. du Fu du Cange, *Histoire de l'empire de Constantinople sous les empereurs français* (1st edition, Paris, 1657; 2nd edition, ed. J. A. Buchon, 2 vols., Paris, 1826); and the pages (67 ff. and 246 ff.) in Hopf's "Griechenland im Mittelalter . . .," cited above in the notes to chapter V. J. Longnon, *L'Empire latin de Constantinople et la principauté de Morée* (Paris, 1949) provides a consecutive modern treatment. E. Gerland, *Geschichte des lateinischen Kaiserreiches von Konstantinopel* (Homburg v.d. Höhe, 1905) contains only the first part of a study that was never completed, and covers only the years 1204-1216, for which it is excellent. L. Santifaller, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des lateinischen Patriarchats von Konstantinopel* (Weimar, 1938) deals with five surviving documents of the Latin patriarchs, and with the development of the Latin cathedral chapter of Hagia Sophia; see the review by J. Longnon, *Journal des Savants* (1941), pp. 174 ff., printing two new documents.

Montferrat expected to be elected. He occupied the imperial palace of the Boukoleon, reserved by treaty for the successful candidate, and consented to leave it only under pressure of public opinion aroused by the doge. Moreover, Boniface had perhaps already married, and was certainly engaged to marry, Margaret ("Maria"), widow of emperor Isaac II Angelus and sister of king Emeric of Hungary, an alliance surely designed to lend legitimacy to his imperial claims. Even the Greeks of Constantinople, reduced as they now were to those women, children, old men, and members of the lower classes who had not been able to flee the invaders, expected that Boniface would be their new ruler, and when they met a Latin on the street would try to curry favor with him by holding up two fingers in the shape of a cross, saying mournfully "Aaios phasileos marchio", the sacred emperor the marquise.¹

But Boniface found himself unable to name all six of the crusader electors to the twelve-man commission, and in the end the crusaders picked six churchmen, only three of whom favored Boniface. This sealed his fate, since the six electors chosen by the Venetians, all laymen, unanimously opposed him; the doge did not propose to allow the selection of an old ally of the Genoese. To a man the six Venetians therefore favored count Baldwin of Flanders and Hainault,² who also had the support of three of the crusader electors. Boniface's supporters gave up, and joined the others in announcing the unanimous election of Baldwin, at midnight on May 9, 1204. Though bitterly disappointed, Boniface did homage to Baldwin, who was crowned on May 16 at a solemn ceremony in Hagia Sophia by the assembled bishops of the crusading armies acting together, in the absence of a Latin patriarch. The Latins, who had witnessed the coronation of Alexius IV Angelus less than a year earlier, copied Byzantine ceremonial; Baldwin wore the sacred purple boots, and jeweled eagles on his mantle. He and his

¹ Gunther of Pairis, *Historia constantinopolitana* (ed. P. Riant, Geneva, 1875), p. 53. For the sack, which lasted for the three days following the capture, see above, chapter V, pp. 184-185.

² Later Venetian tradition as preserved in the still unpublished chronicle of Nicholas Trevisano records a different version of the election: that on the first ballot all six Venetian electors voted for the doge, and all six crusaders for Baldwin; and that then the Venetian Octavian Querini changed his vote, saying that, if the doge should be elected emperor, all the knights from beyond the Alps would desert the empire, and it would be empty and so crushed. Though very interesting, this account of events cannot be accepted unconfirmed, in the face of the general agreement among other sources that the doge never wanted the office of emperor for himself or any other Venetian. But in the reasoning attributed to Octavian Querini by Nicholas Trevisano we may perhaps catch an echo of the doge's own thinking. For the text see F. Thiriet, "Les Chroniques vénétiennes de la Marciana et leur importance pour l'histoire de la Romanie gréco-vénétienne," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, École française de Rome, LXVI (1954), 265.

successors called themselves "Porphyrogenitus, semper Augustus", signed imperial documents in sacred cinnabar ink using Greek letters, and bestowed an occasional Greek title (such as *protoves-tiarios*, chamberlain) upon their followers. But most of their household retained the familiar western names (seneschal, marshal, butler, constable). Despite the external trappings associated with the divinely ordained power of the Byzantine autocrat, the Latin emperor remained a western feudal ruler, whose power had been sharply limited before he had even been chosen.

The crusader-Venetian treaty of March 1204, which had laid down the procedure for the election of the Latin emperor, had allotted to him, besides the two Byzantine imperial palaces in the capital, only one quarter of the empire. The remaining three quarters were to be divided between the Venetians and the non-Venetian crusaders. The doge himself would take no oath to render service to the emperor, but the doge's vassals would be required to do so. Nor would the emperor participate in the distribution of fiefs; a mixed commission of crusaders and Venetians would have this responsibility, although it would be the emperor who would have to find all necessary troops and equipment beyond what the feudatories might furnish.

The barons had set aside Asia Minor and the Morea (Peloponnesus) as a consolation prize for the unsuccessful candidate for the throne. But Boniface asked instead for the "kingdom of Thessalonica". No doubt he was pursuing the family claim, but he probably also wanted lands bordering on those of his new brother-in-law, the king of Hungary. Boniface's demand precipitated a dangerous quarrel with Baldwin, who disregarded the marquis's request that he not enter Thessalonica, and even issued an imperial edict confirming its traditional Byzantine municipal privileges. In revenge, Boniface asked the Greeks of Adrianople to accept as emperor one of his two young step-sons, children of Isaac Angelus by Margaret of Hungary. Open warfare in Thrace between the two crusader leaders threatened the entire Latin position in the area. Only pressure from the doge and the barons eventually induced Boniface and Baldwin to submit their dispute to arbitration. A joint "parlement" of crusaders and Venetians then awarded Thessalonica to Boniface. Venetian support for the marquis was probably procured by his sale to the doge of the island of Crete, long ago promised to Boniface by Alexius IV. Thus Venice thwarted its chief enemy, Genoa, whose representatives were also negotiating for Crete.

The establishment of the kingdom of Thessalonica and the Venetian purchase of Crete were the initial features of a new territorial settlement. In October 1204 came a wholesale division of Byzantine territory, set forth in a second major treaty, the work of twenty-four commissioners, twelve Venetians and twelve non-Venetians.³ This pact divided the Byzantine empire into three major shares: one for the Latin emperor (presumably one quarter), and one each for the Venetians and the non-Venetian crusaders, presumably three eighths apiece. The portion of each beneficiary was then further subdivided into a share near Constantinople and a share more remote.

Near the capital, the emperor received a small, roughly triangular piece of territory, the easternmost extension of Thrace, including Constantinople itself, a strip of Black Sea coast running as far north as Agathopolis, and a strip of Marmara coast-line running almost as far west as Heraclea. The Venetians received the remaining coast-line of the Marmara from Heraclea almost to the end of the Gallipoli peninsula, and a strip of territory extending inland to include Adrianople. The non-Venetian crusaders got the tip of the Gallipoli peninsula, and land in Thrace on both sides of the Venetian corridor from the Marmara to Adrianople: south of the corridor their holdings extended west along the Aegean to the boundary of the kingdom of Thessalonica (the Maritsa); north of the corridor the crusaders got a small enclave between the imperial and Venetian territories.

Far from the capital, the emperor received Asia Minor and the Aegean islands of Lemnos, Lesbos, Chios, Scyros, Samos, Samothrace, and Tenos. Venice received the entire east coast of the Adriatic, including places deep in the interior of Albania and Epirus, the Ionian islands, the entire Morea, both shores of the Gulf of Corinth, Salamis, points at both ends of Euboea (the island of Negroponte), Aegina, and the Aegean island of Andros. The crusaders received Macedonia between the Vardar river and

³ The text is in Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, I, 464-501, also a useful introduction and geographical commentary; see also G. L. F. Tafel, "Symbolarum criticarum geographiam Byzantinam spectantium partes duae: II," *Abhandlungen der historischen Klasse der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, V (1848); W. Tomasczek, "Zur Kunde der Hämus-Halbinsel," *Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Akademie der Wissenschaften*, XCIX (1882), 437-507, and CXIII (1886), 285-373; and "Zur historischen Topographie von Kleinasien im Mittelalter," *ibid.*, CXXIV (1891), section 8; K. von Spruner and T. Menke, *Handatlas für die Geschichte des Mittelalters und der neueren Zeit* (Gotha, 1880), pp. 40-41; further commentary in L. de Thalloczy, C. Jireček, and E. de Sufflay, *Acta et diplomata res Albaniae mediae aetatis illustrantia*, I (Vienna, 1913), 41 ff.; and D. A. Zakythinos, "Μελέται περί τῆς διοικητικῆς διαιρέσεως καὶ τῆς ἐπαρχικῆς διοικήσεως ἐν τῷ Βυζαντινῷ κράτει," *Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Ἐταιρείας τῶν Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν*, XXI (1951), 179-217; XXII (1952), 159-182.

Lake Prespa, Thessaly, including the commercially valuable Gulf of Volos, and Attica. Though the text of the treaty awarded them also "Dodecanisos", this does not refer to the islands we now call the Dodecanese, nor to the Cyclades (Naxos, Paros, Delos, etc.) but to the island of Ahil in Little Prespa Lake in Macedonia.⁴ The Cyclades not specifically mentioned in the treaty seem to have remained temporarily unassigned. Nor did the treaty mention the region between the Maritsa and the Vardar rivers. This was to be the area of Boniface's new kingdom of Thessalonica. Most of the lands thus lightheartedly allotted remained to be conquered; the Latins were presumptuous indeed, though not as presumptuous as Nicetas Choniates, patriotic Greek observer, accuses them of being; Lydia, Persia, and the Caucasus, which Nicetas in his bitter hyperbole declares they parceled out, do not appear in the text of the partition treaty of October 1204.

After it had been signed, Baldwin awarded many fiefs. We know that his brother Henry obtained Adramyttium in Asia Minor, Peter of Bracieux "another kingdom toward Iconium", Louis of Blois the "duchy" of Nicaea, and Stephen of Perche a "duchy of Philadelphia". In the European sector, a knight of Hainault, Renier of "Trit" (Trith-St. Léger), received Philippopolis (Plovdiv), up the Maritsa in Bulgarian territory. Hugh of St. Pol obtained the Thracian city of Demotica. Each fief was evaluated at so many knights' fees, the basic unit being land worth 300 *livres* of Anjou. Census-takers went out to inquire into the local revenue.

The partition treaty and the award of fiefs marked the official establishment of Latin feudal practices on Byzantine soil. Yet the western system had already been introduced in all its essentials by the Byzantines themselves. Though not hereditary and not subject to subinfeudation, the *pronoia* was in all other respects a fief, and the Byzantine peasants serfs. There is much evidence that in the countryside the Greeks were at first willing to accept their new masters. At Philippopolis they welcomed Renier of Trit and took him as their lord. At Thebes the people hailed Boniface of Montferrat "like one who had just returned from a long absence". In Asia Minor the people of Lopadium, with crosses and bibles, came forth to meet Peter of Bracieux, and at Adramyttium the local

⁴ This identification, long ago suggested by Tafel ("Symbolarum . . .", p. 127), has not always been accepted; indeed the suggestion is usually ignored. The author of this chapter feels that explorations of Lake Prespa, made since Tafel wrote, strikingly confirm his identification; see especially I. Ivanov, "Tsar Samuilovata Stolitsa v Prespa," *Izvestiya na Bulgarskoto arkhheologicheskoto druzhestvo*, I (1910), 55-80. The term "Dodecanisos" refers to a church of the twelve apostles, which had become the most important on the island, and by whose name it had become known.

peasants freely brought in their crops to Baldwin's brother Henry, and supplied him and his men with food. It was Latin greed and mistreatment — the Latin sources themselves assure us — that turned the Greek peasants against their new lords, who in many instances proved worse than their old ones. Indeed, the Greeks often found their former Byzantine master confirmed in his lands by the conquerors. Despite the violent mutual antipathy between Latins and Greeks in general, a certain sense of common interest in some instances drew the nobles of both sides together.

The constitution of the curious new hybrid Latin state, developed in the two treaties of March and October 1204, received its finishing touches within the next two years. When the aged Enrico Dandolo died in May 1205, the Venetians in Constantinople, without waiting for word from home, assembled and elected as their chief a certain Marino Zeno, who took the new title of *podestà* and *dominator* of one quarter and one half of a quarter of "Romania". Zeno surrounded himself with an administration modeled on that at Venice: judges of the commune, councillors, a chamberlain. He issued an edict forbidding any Venetian in the empire to dispose of property except to another Venetian. So independent was Zeno's behavior that the authorities at home grew concerned lest their colonists might intend insubordination. Renier Dandolo, who had been acting as vice-doge in Venice during his father's absence, demanded and received reassurances. Zeno wrote him that he had never intended to challenge the authority of Venice, and added that the Venetians at Constantinople would accept as *podestà* any appointee whom the authorities at home might send.

After the election of Peter Ziani as doge (August 1205), he required Zeno to cede to Venice the area along the Epirote coast assigned in the partition treaty to the doge. This strategic region, still to be conquered, was thus to be placed directly under the control of the Venetian home authorities. A further edict of Ziani empowered any citizen of Venice or an allied state to conquer any of the Aegean islands or territory formerly Byzantine, and to pass on his conquests to his heirs. The edict does not mention the Venetian colony or *podestà* at Constantinople. Thus in two sharp actions Ziani limited the power of the outpost and reasserted that of the mother city. The grandiose title of *dominator* over a quarter and half of a quarter of Romania shortly passed from the *podestà* at Constantinople to the doge himself.

In 1207 Ziani replaced Zeno with a new *podestà*, and thereafter the doges regularly sent the *podestàs* out from Venice, requiring

each of them first to take an oath⁵ to support and uphold the honor of Venice, to obey all commands from the doge and his council, to act as a just civil and criminal judge, to engage in no diplomatic correspondence without the consent of his council, to distribute property of the commune only with the consent of his council, and to pay his own debts while not exacting more than the services due him. His term was to be a short one, as a further precaution against his assuming too much power. Despite the large gaps in our records we know of sixteen different podestà-ships during the years between Zeno's replacement in 1207 and the expulsion of the Latins in 1261. In every important crisis we find the podestà acting as chief of the Venetian colony and as faithful agent of the doge.

While Zeno was still podestà, in October 1205, he signed another important treaty with Baldwin's brother Henry,⁶ who was acting as *moderator* or regent of the empire after Baldwin had fallen prisoner to the Bulgarians. The new agreement specified that, whenever the podestà's council and the barons should agree with the emperor that it was time for a campaign, all knights, Venetian and non-Venetian (or Frankish), would have to participate in the campaign from June 1 to September 29 (Michaelmas). If any enemy ruler should have invaded the empire, the knights were further bound to stay in service as much longer as the "aforesaid council" should require. The emperor too was to follow the advice of the "aforesaid council", since it was on this understanding that he had received one quarter of the empire. The emperor might not punish anybody for infraction of these military rules, nor could any individual knight punish him for an infraction. The Franks and Venetians would in each such case appoint judges, and the emperor would have to render satisfaction before them at the bidding of the "aforesaid council".

This new treaty for the first time bound the Venetians to fight for the empire. By regularizing the term of military service it further strengthened the emperor's position. That he was subordinate to the magnates we knew already, but the wording of the new treaty reveals the form of the body to which he was responsible. The "aforesaid council" in the treaty is defined as consisting of the Venetian podestà and his council, acting together with the non-

⁵ For text and commentary, see R. L. Wolff, "A New Document from the Period of the Latin Empire of Constantinople: The Oath of the Venetian Podestà," *Annuaire de l'Institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales et slaves*, XII (1952), *Mélanges Henri Grégoire*, IV (Brussels, 1953), 539-573.

⁶ Text in Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, I, 571 ff.

Venetian barons. This hybrid group, a curious fusion of Italian municipal and French feudal institutions, formed what may be called the council of the Latin empire. One may compare it to the high court of Jerusalem, where of course the Venetian component was absent. Moreover, the Jerusalemite high court itself heard cases; in Latin Constantinople the Venetians and non-Venetians jointly appointed judges to do so, in accordance with Venetian rather than with feudal practice.

Thenceforth, every time a new Latin emperor was crowned, he was required to swear to uphold all the conditions of the three basic treaties: the pact of March 1204, the partition treaty of October 1204, and this new agreement of October 1205. Henry himself, who had already sworn once, as *moderator*, to observe the Venetians' privileges, had to swear again, before his coronation on August 20, 1206, to abide by all the provisions of these three documents. He swore on the high altar of Hagia Sophia, in the presence of Zeno, the papal legate, and the Latin patriarch. To the Venetians, these three documents formed the constitution of the new state, and they lost no opportunity to remind their partners, the Latin emperors, of the exact nature of their mutual obligations.

At the level of everyday affairs, a further agreement regulated financial claims which might arise between Venetians and Franks in Constantinople.⁷ Its most interesting clause provided that a member of either nation might make good his claim against a member of the other by producing a witness *who belonged to the debtor's nationality* who would swear that his fellow-national did in fact owe the money. Thus a Venetian witness against a Venetian, a Frank witness against a Frank: these supplied *prima facie* proof that a claim was justified. Business between Venetians and Franks was brisk, and the national solidarity of each group was vigorous.

The treaty of March 1204, by its provision that the party which should fail to elect the emperor would appoint a cathedral chapter to Hagia Sophia, which would then elect a Latin patriarch, had provided, though most uncanonically, for the ecclesiastical future of the new Latin empire. Indeed, some little time after the choice of Baldwin I the Venetians exercised their right and named a Venetian cathedral chapter, which then chose Thomas Morosini, only a subdeacon but a member of a noble Venetian family, to be Latin patriarch. For some months pope Innocent III remained unaware of the illegal action. When he learned of it, early in 1205,

⁷ Text in *ibid.*, II, 49 ff.

he denounced it. But none the less he confirmed Morosini, whom he promoted to be deacon, priest, bishop, and archbishop, and on whom he bestowed certain privileges, including that of anointing kings.

Indeed, Innocent III might have preferred to see the patriarchal throne of Constantinople vacant, and to have had the opportunity to use it as a card in negotiating with the Greeks for a union between the churches. But his hand was forced; he wanted further Venetian assistance in the east. Faced with a *fait accompli*, he made the best of it. He even revised current papal political theory in order to elevate the position of the new Latin patriarch. Most of Innocent's predecessors, especially since the schism of 1054, had held that only Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, all founded directly or indirectly by Peter, were patriarchates. But the pope now adopted the position that the Byzantine church had held ever since 381: that Constantinople, as new Rome, held second place in the ecclesiastical hierarchy as well as the civil. Innocent III endorsed the theory of five patriarchates. His letters associate Constantinople especially with the apostle John, who preached to the Greeks in Asia; the eagle, which, with the other beasts in Revelation 4, stands close to the throne, represents both John and Constantinople. As the eagle flies higher than other birds, and as John was the last and greatest of the apostles, so the patriarchate of Constantinople is the latest but the greatest of the patriarchates; it owes its elevation, however, to Rome. Innocent adopted the very language of the canon of the Council of Constantinople of 381, and this he later embodied in the fifth canon of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. The new political theory was well adapted to the new situation, in which the Latins held actual physical possession of Constantinople, and might use it to favor the twin papal policies of a successful crusade against the Moslems and a union between the Latin and Greek churches.

Innocent continued his efforts to win the Greeks to accept the supremacy of Rome. In December 1204, soon after the Latin conquest, his legate cardinal Peter Capuano summoned the Greek clergy of Constantinople to a colloquy in Hagia Sophia. This interchange was apparently only a long and inconclusive debate, after which Peter commanded the Greeks to conform. In 1205 Benedict, cardinal-priest of St. Susanna, another legate, had stopped in Athens and Thessalonica on his way out to Constantinople, and had held conciliatory discussions with the Greeks on the procession of the Holy Ghost and the use of unleavened wafers for the mass.

Innocent wanted to proceed by persuasion; he quite understood the terrible effect of the sack of Constantinople: "How can the church of the Greeks," he wrote, "be expected to return to devotion to the apostolic see, when it has seen the Latins setting an example of evil, and doing the devil's work, so that already, and with good reason, the Greeks hate them worse than dogs?"⁸

Morosini, who was contentious and hot-tempered, only made matters worse. He quarreled with all his fellow-Latins, even the podestà of the Venetians. On one occasion he stopped Greek services in all churches in Constantinople because the Greek clergy refused to mention his name in their prayers, an act which would have been tantamount to recognizing the Latin patriarch. Nor were repeated debates on the questions at issue, theological and others, of any avail. The Greeks looked across the straits to Nicaea, where a new Greek emperor by 1208 had a new Greek patriarch. Most Greek bishops fled their sees or refused obedience to Morosini. Those few that accepted him balked at accepting a new consecration according to the rites of the Latin church, no doubt feeling that this would constitute a tacit admission that their earlier consecration according to the Greek rite had been uncanonical. The pope commanded Morosini to overlook these refusals of a new consecration. Even in cases where the Greek incumbent refused submission, he was to be summoned thrice before he could be suspended and excommunicated. And only the papal legate might thereafter replace him by a Latin. Everywhere the lower level of the clergy remained Greek, continuing to marry and have families (their sons had to render military service unless they had taken orders), and paying the customary Greek land tax (the *akrostikon*) to the secular authorities.

The Latins did not limit themselves to the substitution of Latin prelates for Greek ones. Largely for financial reasons, they gradually brought about a substantial reorganization of the Byzantine hierarchy of metropolitan sees, with their suffragan bishoprics, and autocephalous archbishoprics without suffragan sees. Sometimes they reduced former Greek metropolitan sees or autocephalous archbishoprics to the level of suffragan bishoprics. Sometimes they elevated to the level of archbishoprics sees which under the Greeks had been suffragan bishoprics only. Sometimes they put suffragan bishoprics under the jurisdiction of former Byzantine autocephalous archbishoprics which had not previously possessed any. Sometimes they founded entirely new bishoprics or even metropolitan

⁸ *PL*, CCXV, col. 699 (no. 126); Potthast, *Regesta*, no. 2564, July 12, 1205.

archbishoprics.⁹ Western monasticism also took root; the military orders and the Cistercians were followed before long by the Franciscans.

Among the Latins themselves, grave controversies raged on ecclesiastical matters. The pope combatted fiercely the efforts of the Venetians to create a perpetual monopoly of the patriarchate for themselves. Before allowing Morosini to come to Constantinople, the Venetians required him to swear never to accept any non-Venetian as a member of the cathedral chapter of Hagia Sophia. They forced each such newly appointed Venetian canon to swear in turn never to vote for any but a Venetian patriarch. Innocent III secured through his legates the appointment of a few non-Venetians to the cathedral chapter. He further prescribed that the *praepositi* of thirty French churches in Constantinople should participate equally with the predominantly Venetian cathedral chapter in electing future patriarchs. He forced Morosini to abjure his oath publicly. But when Morosini died in 1211, the Venetians forcibly prevented the French clergy from participating in the new election, which thus resulted in a double choice. The pope himself eventually named the new patriarch, after an interval of four years; he chose Gervase, archbishop of Heraclea, a Venetian, but the candidate of the French party. Similarly, in 1219, the papal legate John Colonna sought, by the mass creation of new French *praepositi* entitled to vote in a new election, to swing it away from the Venetians. The new pope, Honorius III, eventually named the third patriarch, Matthew, also a Venetian, and rebellious, money-grubbing, and biased in favor of his fellow-Venetians. Between them, popes Innocent and Honorius and their legates successfully prevented the Venetians from making good their extreme claims. But they thereby weakened the Latin patriarchate as an institution. And by the early 1230's, when pope Gregory IX reversed their policy, permitted the patriarch to appoint to the thirty conventual churches, and even appointed him papal legate, the decline in the fortunes of the Latin empire had gone so far that the act seems only a gesture.

Within the empire itself, Latin clerics and laymen struggled over the question of church property. The treaty of March 1204 had provided that the property of the Byzantine churches be divided among the victors along with the rest of the booty, leaving only enough to permit the clergy to live "honorably". Needless to say, patriarch and pope alike began soon after the conquest to make

⁹ R. L. Wolff, "The Organization of the Latin Patriarchate of Constantinople," *Traditio*, VI (1948), 33-60.

vigorous demands for compensation. As early as March 1206, emperor and barons agreed to give the churches, instead of their lost possessions, one fifteenth of all property outside the walls of Constantinople. A commission was to divide all real estate into fifteenths, and award one fifteenth to the churches. Moreover, the Latin laity was to pay tithes as they did in the west, though the Greeks had not yet been compelled to follow this alien custom. Though ostensibly satisfactory, the agreement did not include the Venetians. Moreover, Morosini sequestered all the fifteenths after they had been awarded, because he insisted that he was entitled to one half of the total sum, although the papal legate had fixed his share at only one quarter. A later legate obtained a new settlement (1214-1215) providing that one twelfth should be awarded to the churches. But this too led to quarrels and remained a dead letter. Not until 1219 was a new agreement reached. This provided for the cession of one eleventh of all property to the churches, decreed that cathedral churches were to have their lost property restored, and required cash payments from such villages as paid money rents and could not be divided into elevenths. At the same time, the new agreement provided for two priests in every village of twenty-five hearths, and proportionate numbers for larger settlements. The Greeks were allowed to pay one thirtieth instead of the full tenth for tithes. In 1223 the Venetians adhered to the agreement. The elevenths were distributed, and the property question was settled.¹⁰

When one considers the fortunes of the crusader state whose secular and ecclesiastical institutions we have been describing, one concludes that its eventual collapse was probably inevitable; founded on alien soil, amid hostile Greeks who soon had leaders around whom they might rally, dependent on a flow of money and men from the west which might be cut off at any time, the Latin empire could have survived, if at all, only through statesmanship so far-sighted and astute that one would be unrealistic in demanding it of flesh-and-blood crusaders and Venetians. Thus, for example, it would probably have been sound policy for the Latin conquerors to exploit the deep social cleavages among the Greeks which had helped bring the Byzantine empire to its ruin. Yet the concept of supporting the peasantry against their former masters, and thus winning favor in the countryside, was so utterly alien to the

¹⁰ R. L. Wolff, "Politics in the Latin Patriarchate of Constantinople," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, VIII (1954), 227-303.

westerners that it almost surely never occurred to them as a possibility. But even within the framework of the possible, the Latins, a modern student comes to feel, failed initially to make the most of the diplomatic and military opportunities that lay open to them.

They repulsed advances from the leaders of the recently founded Vlacho-Bulgarian state, blessed by Innocent III himself in 1204 before he knew of the fall of Constantinople; and so they drove these potential allies and dangerous enemies into the arms of the Greeks. The Latins failed to see the benefits which might have accrued to them from an alliance with the Selchükids of Rûm behind the Greeks in Asia Minor. The only allies the crusaders made, the Armenian settlers of the Troad, they betrayed and saw exterminated. Because of their diplomatic ineptitude the Latins found themselves forced to fight on both sides of the straits at once: against Greeks in Europe and in Asia, and against the Vlacho-Bulgarian state with its terrifying Kuman auxiliaries in Europe. The Latins had insufficient manpower for such operations. Again and again they had to interrupt an assault that was going well to rush across the straits to meet a new emergency. Detecting weakness, populations docile in the face of strength went over to the enemy, so that the Latins could never be sure that a conquered town would stay conquered, and often had to conquer it several times. Slow to understand Kuman military tactics, they repeatedly allowed themselves to be drawn into ambushes, and were slaughtered by fast-moving horsemen who peppered them with arrows. They wasted men in expensive and long-drawn-out formal sieges. Their enemies had replacements; they did not. Moreover, from the beginning the Greeks had the services of Latin auxiliaries, usually their best troops. Some of these may have been English or Scandinavian mercenaries formerly in Byzantine service, who continued to fight for the Greeks after the loss of the capital. Others were deserters from the forces of the Latin empire, dissatisfied with their rewards and deaf to all papal admonition.

The Greeks of the Byzantine empire within a short time after the loss of Constantinople had three chief leaders among whom to choose. In April 1204 Trebizond fell to an expedition led by Alexius and David Comnenus, grandsons of emperor Andronicus I (1182-1185), sponsored by their first cousin once removed, queen Tamar of Georgia. David Comnenus continued his conquests westward along the Black Sea coast, taking Oenoë and Sinope — assigned by the partition treaty to Baldwin — and extending the borders of the Trapezuntine state to Pontic Heraclea. This brought

him into contact with the Latins. Second among the new Greek leaders to appear was Theodore Lascaris, son-in-law of Alexius III. At the very moment of the crusaders' triumphal entry into Constantinople, after Alexius V Mourtzouphlus had already fled, there was some sort of ceremony in Hagia Sophia, in which Theodore seems to have been chosen emperor in preference to a rival named Theodore Ducas,¹¹ but refused to accept the insignia. He crossed the straits to Asia Minor, persuaded the inhabitants of Nicaea to shelter his wife Anna and his three daughters, set up headquarters at Brusa (Bursa), reached an understanding with the Selchükids, and defeated three princelings who had set themselves up in the turbulent region of the Maeander valley. By 1208, when he named a new Greek patriarch, who crowned him basileus, Theodore had made Nicaea his capital. The third Greek leader was Michael Ducas Angelus Comnenus, illegitimate son of a high Byzantine official, who suddenly deserted Boniface of Montferrat, in whose service he had been, and at Arta, in southern Epirus, married the daughter of the local governor and soon had extensive holdings there.

In addition to these three local rulers, the former emperors, Alexius III Angelus and Alexius V Ducas Mourtzouphlus, were refugees. Alexius III succeeded in having Alexius V, his son-in-law, blinded; after a series of adventures the former made his way to Iconium, where the Selchükids for some time used him as a threat to Theodore Lascaris, his other son-in-law.

The Vlach-Bulgarian state, in 1204, had for seven years been in the capable hands of Ioannitsa (1197-1207; "Kaloyan"), younger brother of the two Vlach rebels who had founded it in 1186. Claiming descent from the rulers of the first Bulgarian empire, Ioannitsa had asked Innocent III to crown him emperor, as former popes had done, he said, for his "ancestors", and to consecrate the chief of the Bulgarian church as a patriarch. Innocent had sent a cardinal-legate, Leo, who crowned Ioannitsa king, not emperor, and made the archbishop Basil a primate, not a patriarch (November 1204). The Vlach monarch wrote to the pope, after he learned of the Latin conquest: "Write to the Latins to keep away from my empire, and if they do, my empire will do them no harm. . . . But if they make an attempt against it, and some of them are killed, let not your holiness suspect my empire because it will not

¹¹ B. Sinogowitz, "Über das byzantinische Kaisertum nach dem vierten Kreuzzuge (1204-1205)," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, XLV (1952), 345-351, has tried, but not successfully, to demonstrate that the emperor chosen in Hagia Sophia was Theodore's brother, Constantine Lascaris, who held the throne only until early in 1205.

be my fault."¹² Ioannitsa had already tried to make friends with the Latins, who had contemptuously rejected his advances. He therefore entered into relations with Greek nobles in Thrace, possessing troops of their own, whom the Latins had also rebuffed. The folly of this Latin policy was compounded by their rejection of the offer of an alliance from the Selchükid sultan in exile, Kai-Khusrau I, who was soon afterward restored to power in Iconium.

Yet the consequences of the folly did not manifest themselves at once. The first campaigns of the Latins, in the autumn and winter of 1204-1205, were successful. In Asia Minor, though set back at Brusa, parties of crusaders won notable victories over Lascar, obtained the alliance of the Armenians of the Troad, seized strong points, and captured the blinded Alexius V Mourtzouphlus. They forced him to climb the great sculptured column in the forum of Theodosius and to jump to his death from the top: "For a high man, high justice", as Dandolo put it in a grim jest.¹³ Indeed, one of the scenes carved on the column showed an emperor falling from the summit; so that an old prophecy was now fulfilled. The Latins henceforth called the column "Mourtzouphlus's leap". On the European mainland, Renier of Trit took possession of his dukedom of Philippopolis. Reinforcements from Syria arrived in Constantinople. From Thessalonica, Boniface of Montferrat struck south through Thessaly to Thebes and Athens, building a castle on the bridge across the channel to Euboea, and, at Corinth, driving the local magnate, Leo Sgourus, into the citadel. The impetus of the campaign wore itself out in the sieges of Corinth and Nauplia. A nephew of the historian and marshal, the younger Geoffrey of Villehardouin, landed at Modon (Methone), and the conquest of the Morea was begun. Marco Sanudo, nephew of the doge, seized the island of Naxos, key to the Cyclades, and two years later, in a second expedition, conquered the islands left unassigned by the partition treaty, most of which were thereafter held as fiefs from him. Sanudo himself eventually received from the Latin emperor Henry the title of duke of the Aegean Sea (*Αἰγαῖον πέλαγος*, "Archipelago"), and held his fief "on a freer tenure than any baron in Romania".¹⁴

Despite these Latin successes, the year 1205 brought the first of

¹² A. Theiner (ed.), *Vetera monumenta Slavorum*, I, 39. See R. L. Wolff, "The 'Second Bulgarian Empire', Its Origin and History to 1204," *Speculum*, XXIV (1949), 167-206.

¹³ Robert of Clari, *Conquête* (ed. Lauer), p. 104.

¹⁴ Text in K. Hopf, "Urkunden zur Geschichte der Insel Andros," *Sitzungsberichte der k. Wiener Akademie der Wissenschaften*, XXI (1856), 243. For the entire early history of the dukedom, see J. K. Fotheringham, *Marco Sanudo* (Oxford, 1915).

a series of setbacks. Ioannitsa and his Greek allies had seized both Demotica and Adrianople, where the new Venetian rulers were allegedly mistreating their Greek subjects. Thrace rose in revolt. Abandoned by most of his men, Renier of Trit and a small force retired into the castle of Stenimaka, deep in Bulgaria. Baldwin did not wait for the return of the Latins summoned from Asia Minor in the emergency, but laid siege to Adrianople. Ioannitsa came with a large force to relieve the siege. The Kuman archers inflicted such heavy punishment upon the Latins that orders were issued that henceforth nobody should be lured away from the main battle line. But at the very next Kuman advance, count Louis of Blois forgot the injunction and pursued the Kuman horsemen. Emperor Baldwin followed him. Louis was killed, and Baldwin captured. Leaving lamps and fires lighted in their tents, at Dandolo's suggestion, the remnants of the Latin armies slipped away at night. Many set sail for the west in panic. Baldwin's brother Henry, arriving from Asia Minor with the needed reinforcements, rushed on ahead of the Armenian foot-soldiers he had brought, and these were massacred with their families by the Greeks. The remaining Latins named Henry regent of the empire. Soon afterwards the aged Dandolo died (May 1205).

Henry appealed for aid to Innocent III, who instructed him to make peace with Ioannitsa (not an easy thing to do), and threatened Ioannitsa with a great phantom army of Latins that would come to aid Constantinople. The pope also asked Ioannitsa to free Baldwin. But the armies from the west did not come. In the summer of 1205 the Kumans, who could not bear the heat, withdrew, and Ioannitsa moved westward against Boniface's kingdom of Thessalonica. Henry strove vainly to reconquer Thrace. At Philippopolis the Paulicians of the city offered to yield it to Ioannitsa; so Renier of Trit emerged from his castle and burned down the Paulician quarter. The Greeks of the city made common cause with Renier's Latins, and thus forced Ioannitsa to besiege a city he had expected to take without effort. Infuriated at what he chose to regard as Greek treachery, Ioannitsa burned Philippopolis and massacred the Greek population. Throughout the winter and spring of 1205-1206 he pursued a campaign of frightfulness in Thrace, destroying most of the towns, exterminating the Greek inhabitants, and taking the sobriquet of *Romaïoktonos*, slayer of "Romans", to proclaim himself the counterpart of the Byzantine emperor Basil II *Boulgaroktonos*. To keep Ioannitsa away, the frightened Greeks of Demotica and Adrianople agreed to accept as their lord Theodore Branas, a

powerful Greek magnate in the Latin service, married to Agnes, a princess of the French royal house and the widow of Alexius II and of his murderer Andronicus I. Venice formally ceded Branas her rights in Adrianople. For his part, he agreed to protect all Venetians, and to supply 500 armed men for the Latin armies. Ioannitsa's siege of Demotica now failed, and Henry and his forces pursued the Vlachs deep into Bulgaria.

At Stenimaka they rescued Renier of Trit from his castle. From him they heard that Baldwin had died in captivity. According to Nicetas Choniates, Ioannitsa had ordered Baldwin horribly murdered because he was so angry at the Greek-Latin collusion at Philippopolis and the burning of the Paulician quarter. The somewhat later account of Acropolites says that Ioannitsa cut off Baldwin's head, and had the skull hollowed out and adorned with jewels for use as a drinking cup. Perhaps Ioannitsa was deliberately imitating his famous "predecessor" Krum, who in the ninth century had done the same with the skull of the Byzantine emperor Nicephorus I. Or perhaps Acropolites, struck by the parallel between Nicephorus and Baldwin in Bulgarian hands, invented the story for literary effect. In any case, we can hardly doubt that Baldwin died or was killed in captivity. Ioannitsa himself told Innocent III in a letter that he could not set Baldwin free because he had died in prison. The point has some importance, because in 1225 a "false Baldwin" appeared in Flanders and Hainault, and became the protagonist of a local revolution. Some historians have held that he really was the emperor, but our sources for affairs in the east render this virtually impossible. Twenty years after their count had died in Bulgaria, the unhappy Flemings, victims of French aggression and bad government, wanted to believe that Baldwin had returned.¹⁵ Better informed, the sorrowful crusaders in Constantinople in 1206 were convinced that he had died, and chose Henry to succeed him. Morosini crowned Henry in Hagia Sophia on August 20, 1206. This second Latin emperor proved to have the extraordinary personal qualities which alone could have availed in the desperate position of the empire.

Ten days after his coronation, Henry forced Ioannitsa to raise a siege of Adrianople, and pursued the Vlach forces into their own territory. In Asia he entered into relations with David Comnenus, and helped him against Theodore Lascaris. Together Latins and

¹⁵ R. L. Wolff, "Baldwin of Flanders and Hainaut, First Latin Emperor of Constantinople: His Life, Death, and Resurrection, 1172-1225," *Speculum*, XXVII (1952), 281-322.

Trapezuntines attacked Nicomedia, diverting Theodore from an assault on Pontic Heraclea. Theodore did drive the Latins back across the straits, but now David sent supplies to Constantinople, and agreed to become Henry's vassal. During the winter of 1206-1207 the Latins won Pegae, Cyzicus, and Nicomedia. In difficulty, Theodore Lascaris appealed to Ioannitsa to help him by launching an attack on the Latins in Europe. As soon as Ioannitsa did so, and Henry had to weaken his forces in Asia, Theodore attacked. A dash across the straits by Henry in person saved the garrison but not the fortress of Civetot (Cibotus). Another saved Cyzicus from a naval attack led by a Calabrese pirate, Stirione, once admiral of Alexius III and now in Lascaris's service. The Latins chased him out through the Dardanelles into the Aegean. A third expedition saved Nicomedia, and a fourth rescued the survivors of a Latin force which Lascaris had defeated. All this time Ioannitsa was besieging Adrianople, which the Latins could not relieve. When Lascaris proposed a two-year truce, offering to exchange all his Latin prisoners for the right to raze the Latin fortresses at Cyzicus and Nicomedia, Henry accepted the offer. He had nothing left in Asia but Pegae and Charax. The truce almost fulfilled Lascaris's war aims of the moment: to expel the Latins from Asia. Freed for a European campaign, Henry began an advance, but lost many men in a new ambush.

In February 1207 Henry had married Agnes, the daughter of Boniface of Montferrat, at a solemn ceremony in Hagia Sophia, followed by a splendid wedding feast in the imperial palace of the Boukoleon. Now, in the summer of 1207, Henry and Boniface conferred on the banks of the Maritsa; Boniface did homage to Henry, and received Thessalonica from him as a fief, as he had from Baldwin. Soon after the conference, however, Boniface was killed in a skirmish with the Bulgarians. About the same time, Ioannitsa himself died suddenly, of a hemorrhage of the lungs; the death was at once attributed to St. Demetrius, defender and patron of Thessalonica. These two deaths substantially altered the situation.

Ioannitsa's proper heir was his young nephew, John Asen. Too young to make good his claim, however, he fled to Russia, and there ensued a struggle for the throne among three rival chieftains: Slav, a relative of the royal family, with headquarters at Melnik in the Rhodope mountains; Strez, another relative, but the protégé of king Stephen of Serbia, with headquarters in the strong Vardar valley fortress of Prosek; and Boril, Ioannitsa's sister's son, who married his uncle's Kuman widow and seized Tirnovo, the capital.

Henry quickly profited by the disunity. At Philippopolis on August 1, 1208, some 2,000 men, of whom one sixth were Greek, defeated a force of 33,000 under Boril. Henry then had a conference with Slav, who became his vassal and was betrothed to an illegitimate daughter of Henry's. To the pope, Henry wrote that he had added fifteen-days'-journey-worth of territory to his holdings: "Our condition has improved, and gets better every day. We do not attribute this to ourselves but rather to God and to you . . . unless our land of Romania be ruled under your paternal guidance, there is no doubt that it will succumb, but if we have your help, the fortunes of war will be ours."¹⁶ Henry also intervened effectively once more in Asia Minor to support David Comnenus against Theodore Lascaris.

The death of Boniface of Montferrat had raised new problems in the kingdom of Thessalonica. The heir was Demetrius, infant son of Boniface and Margaret. But the most powerful magnates, Oberto of Biandrate, the regent, and Amédée Pofey (Amadeo Buffa), constable of the kingdom, were plotting against Demetrius and against Henry. Henry therefore decided to lead an expedition to Thessalonica to require the Lombard lords to do homage to him for the kingdom on behalf of Demetrius. It was a miserably cold winter journey, made more dangerous by Vlach attacks. Biandrate closed the gates of Thessalonica against the emperor, and demanded all the land between the Vardar and the Adriatic (it "belonged" to Venice, but was in fact ruled by Michael of Epirus), together with all continental Greece and the Morea. He also demanded a corridor to the Black Sea, and asked that Henry accept Philippopolis as the western limit of the Latin empire. The proposals were so outrageous that they were probably intended to be refused. Henry, however, agreed to them, but only as a ruse to win admission to the city, because otherwise he and his men would have died of cold. He did not intend to abide by his promise once he was inside, and the clerics who were with him had absolved him from it. He also stipulated that Margaret must approve the conditions. By this deception he got into Thessalonica, where Biandrate received him with all due honor.

Biandrate and his fellow-plotters intended to turn Thessalonica over to William IV of Montferrat, son of Boniface by an earlier marriage, who was now the marquis at home in Italy. They regarded William as their true lord, and much preferred him to the alien Margaret, regent for a half-alien infant. Indeed, the Lombards hoped to

¹⁶ Text in *PL*, CCXV, col. 1522, no. 207.

make William the emperor of Constantinople, supplanting Henry, and righting what they still felt to be the wrong done to Boniface in 1204. Though they had repeatedly urged William to come out to Greece and assume the imperial power, he cautiously preferred "a pair of oxen and a plow in Montferrat to an emperor's crown abroad".¹⁷ Uncomprehendingly, the few great Lombard nobles who were in on the plot complained that their lord must be a bastard. Hoping that William would reconsider, they had waited, pretending to support Margaret and Demetrius. Now Henry had skillfully turned their embarrassment to his own account. He had accepted Biandrate's humiliating terms, *provided* that Margaret would approve of them. Biandrate had had to accept the proviso for fear of revealing prematurely his disloyalty to Margaret. Once inside Thessalonica, Henry was able to demonstrate publicly that Biandrate's territorial demands had only a limited amount of support among the Lombard nobles, and to persuade Margaret to repudiate them, despite the pressure which Biandrate and his followers had brought to bear on her. Henry thus extracted himself from his dilemma, and without dishonor. Now, on January 6, 1209, he crowned the infant Demetrius as king, and Biandrate took a new oath of homage as regent of the kingdom of Thessalonica.

But Biandrate garrisoned the important fortresses of Serres and Christopolis (Kavalla) with men loyal to William of Montferrat. In the crisis Henry supported Margaret, on whom he conferred great estates in Thessaly, formerly the property of Alexius III's wife Euphrosyne. Biandrate, furious, resigned, and went off to prison. Henry had to fight for Serres, which he took, but Christopolis held out, and the Lombard revolt spread to Thessaly. Henry spent the spring of 1209 campaigning there, taking Larissa but treating the defeated garrison with kindness, and receiving a warm welcome from the Greek population at Halmyros. At Ravennika, the emperor held a "parlement", hoping that the Lombard lords would make peace. Only Amédée Pofey appeared, declared his repentance, did homage, and received his fief once more. Though disappointed, Henry took advantage of the presence of the French lords of southern Greece to receive the younger Villehardouin as his vassal and make him seneschal of the empire, thus attaching Achaëa directly to Constantinople instead of to Thessalonica. Villehardouin also recognized that Henry's rights had precedence over those of

¹⁷ V. de Bartholomaeis, "Un Sirventès historique d'Élias Cairel," *Annales du Midi*, XVI (1904), 469 ff.; H. Jaeschke, *Der Troubadour Elias Cairel* (Romanische Studien, ed. E. Eberling, part 20, Berlin, 1921), pp. 149 ff.

the doge; and soon afterwards Venice ceded her rights in the Morea, except for Modon and Coron, to Villehardouin, who gave an annual token tribute to the Venetians and maintained a house in Venice.¹⁸

Henry then resumed the fight against the remaining Lombard rebels. At Thebes the Greek population welcomed him warmly, but he had to besiege the castle. He forced the surrender of the Lombard defenders, and agreed to give Biandrate a trial before his imperial court. On the way to Thebes, Biandrate escaped to Euboea. Henry then proceeded to Athens, worshiped in the church of the Virgin established in the Parthenon, boldly crossed to Euboea despite the presence of Biandrate, and was preserved from treason by the lord of the island, Ravano dalle Carceri of Verona, until recently one of Biandrate's allies. Biandrate himself now submitted. Henry accepted his new oath of homage, and restored him to office as regent of Thessalonica. It seems probable, however, that Biandrate returned to Montferrat and continued his efforts to induce William to claim Thessalonica. The Lombard revolt in Greece was over.

Henry's successes had alarmed Michael of Epirus, who now sent to request a parley. He agreed to do homage for all his possessions, and married his daughter to Henry's (probably illegitimate) younger brother Eustace. But during the very first year after accepting these arrangements Michael violated his oath. He seized the newly reinstated rebel, Amédée Pofey, now constable of the Latin empire, and one hundred other Latins. He mistreated all of them and crucified Pofey, his chaplain, and three others. This sudden treachery led to warfare between Michael and Henry, in which Michael had the services of some Latin mercenaries, sent across the Adriatic in Venetian ships. By January 1212, Henry commented in a letter, Michael had four separate times broken his oath not to take up arms against him,¹⁹ but we do not know the details of their relationships. In 1210 Venice formally ceded to Michael the Epirote lands obtained by the partition treaty, but it is not clear whether this cession took place during one of the periods of peace between Michael and the Latin empire. In any case, by early 1212 Henry had effectively defeated both Michael and Strez of Prosek.

But his other enemies now threatened once again. Defeated by Henry in 1208, Boril had since occupied himself with a campaign to stamp out Bogomilism among his subjects; the Bogomils were

¹⁸ Text in Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, II, 95 ff.

¹⁹ Text in *RHGF*, XVIII, 531.

perhaps supporters of John Asen. By 1211 Boril had temporarily suppressed them. Theodore Lascaris, for his part, had been engaged against the Selchükids of Rûm. In 1211, with an army almost half of which was made up of Latins, Lascaris defeated the Turks — to whom Henry had also sent Latin auxiliaries — and captured their ally, his contentious father-in-law Alexius III, who was to die in a monastery in Nicaea. After this victory, Theodore issued a general letter to all the Greeks, promising, if they would assist him, to free the land from the Latin “dogs”. By 1211, then, both Boril and Theodore were free once again to turn on Henry.

The Latin emperor pursued Boril westward in Bulgaria without coming to grips in a major engagement. Henry’s brother Eustace wiped out Strez’s forces on the plain of Pelagonia, with the assistance of the mercurial Michael of Epirus, this time assisting his son-in-law. Then Henry turned against Lascaris, who had captured and cruelly killed Peter of Bracieux, one of the leaders of the Fourth Crusade. Lascaris’s propaganda was beginning to make the Greeks of Europe restive. On October 15, 1211, on the Asia Minor shore, Henry with 260 knights defeated Lascaris, who had 1,700 men in his own battalion alone, and eighty-nine other battalions also, no doubt much smaller in number, besides 160 Latins. By Henry’s own account, his own forces lost not a single man. In the ensuing campaign, Henry took Poemanenum, Lentiana, Adramyttium, and regions still farther south. At Nymphaeum (Kemalpasha), thereafter, he and Lascaris signed a treaty, giving to the Latins the entire Asiatic coast-line of the Sea of Marmara and a considerable stretch along the Aegean. Not only were the towns of Nicomedia, Cyzicus, Pegae, and Adramyttium back in Latin hands, but they also obtained a strip of hinterland stretching as far inland as Achyraûs (Balıkesir). The Nicaeans regained Pergamum and other towns to the south and east. A kind of no-man’s-land separated Latin territory from Greek. From Pergamum in January 1212, Henry wrote a triumphant report: “Our four . . . enemies — Boril, Lascaris, Michael, and Strez — are humbled and altogether deprived of strength. Ye must know that there is nothing lacking to the winning of a final victory and complete possession of the empire save an abundance of Latins, to whom we may give the lands we are acquiring, or rather have already acquired, since, as ye know, it does little good to acquire it unless there are those who will protect it.”²⁰ To secure his gains, Henry needed reinforcements that never came. After the siege of Lentiana, he formed his Greek

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 533.

captives into military units, and entrusted to them the defense of his new eastern frontier against Lascaris, which remained stable for the remainder of Henry's reign.

In the west, Eustace and Slav defeated Boril, who also sued for peace. John Asen had returned from Russia with Russian auxiliaries, and civil war had broken out in Bulgaria. As part of the settlement with Boril, Henry, whose Montferrat wife Agnes had died, married Boril's daughter, overcoming his initial reluctance because of her parentage. Sometime thereafter, Henry and Boril went together on an expedition against Stephen I of Serbia, advancing all the way to Nish before the Serbs defeated their forces. King Andrew II of Hungary and Strez of Prosek were also allies of Henry and Boril, but Stephen captured and killed Strez, who had been a vassal of his own. In 1214 the murder of Michael of Epirus by a servant led to the succession of Michael's brother Theodore (1214-1230), an ally of Lascaris. Theodore of Epirus soon secured also the alliance of Slav; Henry's daughter had died, and Slav now married a niece of Theodore. On June 11, 1216, the Latin emperor Henry himself died at Thessalonica, aged only forty. Despite the conjectures of historians that either Henry's Vlacho-Bulgarian wife or his old enemy Oberto of Biandrate was guilty of his murder, there is no evidence that contemporaries ever suspected either of them.

By 1216 Henry had rescued the Latin position from what in 1206 had seemed certain ruin. He had great talents as a soldier: a Greek source calls him "a second Ares".²¹ As diplomat, he concluded dynastic alliances with Slav, Michael of Epirus, and Boril, shrewdly reversing the initial haughty attitude of the Latins. Henry gained advantages also from the alliances with David Comnenus and the Selchükids. In his handling of the Lombard revolt he was clever, firm, and generous. But most dramatic of all was his extraordinary reversal of his predecessors' policy toward the Greeks. The coöpting of Theodore Branas, the use of Greek troops against Boril, and the formation of Greek prisoners into a trusted defense corps against a Greek enemy all illustrate a keen sense of political necessity. One might dismiss as mere Latin propaganda the tumultuous receptions which western authorities declare the Greek populations accorded Henry at Halmyros, Thebes, and Negroponte, were it not that the Greek sources also attest to his popularity.

"Henry," says Acropolites, "though a Frank by race, won most cheerful acceptance by the Greeks and the inhabitants of Constan-

²¹ Ephraem (*CSHB*), verses 7729 ff.

tinople, for he had installed many of them in high office, and he treated the common people as if they were his own."²² When the vehement papal legate Pelagius, cardinal-bishop of Albano, exerted pressure on the Greeks of Constantinople in 1214 by closing their churches, Henry received a deputation of leading Greek citizens, who told him frankly that he might rule their bodies but not their souls; they would fight for him in war, but would not give up their faith or alter their way of worship. Henry acceded, defied the papal legate, and reopened the Greek churches. To Innocent III an unknown member of the Greek clergy of Constantinople wrote: "We consider that we have as our lord the emperor, sire Henry, and that we live and labor, till the soil, tend our flocks, and sail the sea beneath his shadow. For without us the granaries will not be filled, or the wine-presses; no bread, no meat, no fish will be eaten, nor can human life and society continue to be maintained."²³ The records of a law-suit tried in Thessalonica in 1213 show that the city had a Greek administration, and that all the Greek bishops of the archdiocese sat in judgment together with the civil administrator. When the case was appealed twenty years later, on the ground that it had been argued during the Latin domination, Greek counsel opposing the appeal argued that during the reign of Henry Greeks had lived without fear, obtaining due and proper justice from fellow-Greeks.²⁴

Of course, Henry's work was built on weak foundations. He could not pay his forces. The presence of large numbers of Latin mercenaries in the Nicaean and Epirote armies reflected the basic insecurity of his military position. Both the Nicaeans and the Epirotes, as well as the Vlacho-Bulgarian state, represented indigenous peoples, not rootless interlopers. The Latins might temporarily thwart them by diplomacy, and repeatedly defeat them in the field. Their own domestic concerns might temporarily distract them. Their rivalries among themselves might paralyze them. But they remained to oppose the Latins and eventually to overwhelm them.

On Henry's sudden death Conon of Béthune, distinguished *trouvère* with an accent of Artois which had embarrassed him in his youth, brilliant soldier and diplomat, and trusted leader of the

²² Acropolites, *Opera* (ed. Heisenberg), I, 28.

²³ J. B. Cotelerius, *Ecclesiae graecae monumenta*, III (Paris, 1686), 516 ff.

²⁴ *Analecta sacra et profana spicilegio solesmensi parata*, VII (ed. J. B. Pitra, Paris and Rome, 1896), cols. 447-462, in the correspondence of Demetrius Chomatianus, archbishop of Ochrida. See also M. Drinov, "O niekotorykh trudakh Demetriya Khomatiana kak istoricheskoi materialie," *Vizantiiskii vremennik*, II (1895), 15 ff.

Latin enterprise against Byzantium since its inception, became bailie of the empire, with the Byzantine title of sebastocrator. The barons chose as the next emperor Peter of Courtenay, count of Nevers and Auxerre, the husband of Yolanda, a sister of Baldwin and Henry. In April 1217 pope Honorius III crowned Peter at Rome in St. Lawrence "outside the walls", deliberately choosing that church lest Peter should later claim that his coronation by the pope as emperor *in* Rome gave him rights over the western empire. Though Honorius wrote of Peter as a "man who hitherto, by the excellence of his magnanimity and the splendor of his actions, has proved himself worthy of an imperial crown",²⁵ the new Latin emperor, a grandson of king Louis VI, was in fact one of the most notoriously quarrelsome and violent barons in all of France. For many years he had engaged in open warfare against the bishop of Auxerre, and had perpetrated some scandalous atrocities. Another contemporary's judgment seems nearer the mark than that of Honorius: "a man indeed of royal blood and unbounded strength, but with no restraint in his emotions and with a dreadful temper, who would not on any account moderate the force of his anger in the working of harm and the doing of injuries."²⁶ Though Peter was bringing 6,000 reinforcements, he could hardly have proved a fit successor to Henry.

Before Peter left Rome, the Lombard faction succeeded in obtaining from him the investiture of William of Montferrat with all the rights and duties of the kingdom of Thessalonica, leaving to Demetrius nothing but the empty title. It seems probable that Margaret took refuge in her native Hungary. Thus Peter signed away what Henry had fought to keep. Oberto of Biandrate was surely at the bottom of the affair. We know little about the Lombard seizure of power in Thessalonica itself, but the old feuds there between adherents and opponents of Montferrat probably weakened the kingdom in the face of the onslaught of Theodore of Epirus. Peter also undertook, on behalf of Venice, to besiege Durazzo, which had already fallen to Theodore, whose power extended to much of Thessaly, as well as Ochrida and large parts of Macedonia.

Embarking his pregnant wife Yolanda on a ship bound directly for Constantinople, Peter crossed the Adriatic and laid siege to Durazzo. When it held out, he abandoned the siege and proceeded across Albania. Theodore of Epirus now captured him, together

²⁵ Pressutti, *Regesta*, no. 497; *Opera* (ed. Horoy), II, col. 360, no. 294.

²⁶ L-M. Duru, *Bibliothèque historique de l'Yonne* (Auxerre and Paris, 1850), p. 441, who prints the text of the contemporary life of the bishop of Auxerre, Hugh of Noyers.

with his whole army and the new papal legate, cardinal John Colonna. Honorius III immediately began to bring pressure on Theodore for Peter's release. But like Baldwin I, Peter was to die in captivity, probably early in 1219, although as late as 1224 the pope still believed that he was alive and might be set free. Theodore did, however, liberate the papal legate, who had arrived in Constantinople by mid-1218. Although secret negotiations continued for some time, Theodore made no agreement with Rome. Instead, he continued his conquests at the expense of the Latins, taking Neopatras (Hypata), and in 1219 the great Vardar fortress of Prosek, as well as Platamon, which rounded out his holdings in Thessaly. Thessalonica itself was clearly menaced, and Theodore's exultant followers were already predicting its fall.

Meanwhile Yolanda had long since arrived in Constantinople, where she gave birth to a son, the future Baldwin II. She ruled as empress until her death in the summer or fall of 1219. One of her daughters (Agnes) she married to Geoffrey II of Villehardouin, heir to Achaea, and another (Mary) to the Nicaean emperor, Theodore Lascaris. This new dynastic tie reinforced the peaceful relations between Constantinople and Nicaea achieved by Henry after his victory of 1211. And no doubt these were still further strengthened by a five-year treaty concluded in August 1219 between Lascaris and the podestà of the Venetian colony in Constantinople, the future doge Jacob Tiepolo, which opened the territory of each empire to the subjects of the other, freeing the Venetians from tolls and fees in Nicaean lands but requiring the Nicaeans in Constantinople or in other Venetian possessions to pay the legal customs dues. Lascaris also promised not to send warships to Constantinople without the express consent of the podestà, or to enlist Venetian mercenaries without such consent. In March 1220 Tiepolo also concluded a new trade treaty with the Selchükids of Rûm.

Upon Yolanda's death Conon of Béthune was again chosen bailie. The eldest son of Peter and Yolanda, Philip of Namur, refused the imperial throne; so the office fell to his younger brother, Robert of Courtenay. He came east by land to Constantinople, crossing Hungary, where he visited his brother-in-law and sister Yolanda, the king and queen, and then proceeding safely across Bulgaria. This was possible because, after a seven-year siege, John Asen had finally succeeded in capturing Tirnovo. He seized and blinded Boril, and became king of the Vlachs and the Bulgars (1218-1241). Soon thereafter he married Maria, a daughter of king Andrew II

of Hungary, and thus became the nephew-in-law of Robert. Taking advantage of Asen's benevolence, Robert entered Constantinople, where he was crowned by the patriarch Matthew on March 25, 1221. In the period of five years since the death of Henry, only the ominous advance of Theodore of Epirus on the west had diminished Latin possessions. So well had Henry done his work that the empire had successfully weathered the dangerous period under bailie, empress, and bailie once more. No doubt Conon of Béthune, the Venetian podestà, and the papal legate John Colonna among them had provided the necessary strength and wisdom.

But emperor Robert, his contemporaries agreed, had none of the necessary qualities: "*quasi rudis et idiota*" is perhaps their most succinct and damning judgment.²⁷ In Constantinople, the Venetians extended their possessions. Across the straits fighting broke out, as Theodore Lascaris seized the opportunity provided by the death of Yolanda and broke his treaty with the Latins. Shortly after Robert's coronation, the two sides negotiated for peace. Theodore promised to marry his daughter Eudocia to Robert, and prisoners were exchanged. But the Nicaean patriarch objected to the marriage on grounds of consanguinity: Theodore was married to Robert's sister Mary. The question was still open when Theodore Lascaris died in August 1222. When his daughter Irene's husband, the extraordinarily able John Ducas Vatatzes (1222-1254), succeeded to the throne, two of Theodore's brothers deserted to the Latins. Robert made them commanders in his army.

For a period of two years after his coronation, Vatatzes was unable to attack the Latins. But Theodore of Epirus continued his campaigns against them. By early 1222 he had taken Serres, and Thessalonica was ringed. The pope strove to restrain Theodore and encourage Robert; Oberto of Biandrate and William of Montferrat, Honorius wrote, were on their way east to aid the empire. But in the autumn of 1224, before the western expedition had gotten under way, Theodore's force took Thessalonica. Young king Demetrius and the Latin archbishop fled to Italy. Now master of the second city of the Byzantine empire, Theodore of Epirus assumed the purple. Constantine Mesopotamites, the Greek metropolitan of Thessalonica, refused to crown him, but the learned Demetrius Chomatianus, archbishop of Ochrida, gladly consented to do so. Though the Nicaeans naturally objected, and sneered at Theodore's insufficient acquaintance with protocol, the new "emperor" of Thessalonica secured the support of his own clergy by threatening

²⁷ Aubrey of Trois-Fontaines (*MGH, SS.*, XXIII), p. 910.

a flirtation with the papacy. A second Greek imperial claimant for the Byzantine heritage had now asserted himself.

Robert not only failed to exploit this division among the Greeks, but reverted to the fatal policy of fighting two-front wars and quickly lost most of what Henry had gained. At Poemanenum in 1225 Vatatzes' forces defeated the Latins so severely that they withdrew another army engaged in besieging Serres. Vatatzes conquered most of the Latin holdings in Asia Minor, built ships, and launched naval attacks on the Gallipoli peninsula. Encouraged, the Greeks of Adrianople asked for troops. Nicaean forces entered the city, an admirable base for the conquest of the remaining Latin possessions in Europe. But this thrust of Vatatzes also threatened Theodore of Epirus, who had by now pushed east from Thessalonica to take most of Thrace. Arrived at the gates of Adrianople, Theodore persuaded the inhabitants to expel Vatatzes' troops, and to open the city to him instead. Thereafter the Latins made peace with Vatatzes, retaining only Nicomedia in Asia, while Theodore of Epirus swept on to Vizya, in Thrace, and to the walls of Constantinople itself. By 1226 the Latin position seemed desperate. The Montferrat crusade to liberate Thessalonica failed, despite the vigorous support of Honorius III. William of Montferrat died in Thessaly in September 1225, and his forces subsequently dispersed.

Probably the only factor that saved the Latins from being driven out of Constantinople in 1225 or 1226 was the benevolence of John Asen. Theodore of Epirus concluded a peace with him, marrying his brother Manuel to Asen's illegitimate daughter Maria. Asen probably demanded that Theodore permit Robert to retain undisturbed the lands the Latins still held. The text of the truce concluded in 1228 between Theodore and the Latins, permitting the free movement of merchants across the frontiers, shows that the Latins still held in Thrace the three towns of Vizya, "Verissa" (Pinarhisar), and "Genua" (Sergen?).²⁸ The great dated inscription set up in 1230 by John Asen in the church of the Forty Martyrs at Tirnovo speaks of the Latins as possessing their lands only because of his assent.²⁹

Asen's benevolence was, of course, far from disinterested. He planned to take over the Latin empire himself. Robert had conceived an infatuation for a French woman of relatively humble birth, whom he had married secretly and taken to live with him in the

²⁸ R. Predelli, "Il *liber Communis* detto anche *Plegiorum*," *Archivio Veneto*, III-VIII (1872-1874), supplement, pp. 184-185.

²⁹ F. I. Uspenskii, "O drevnostyakh goroda Tyrnova," *Izvestiya Russkago arkheologicheskago instituta v Konstantinopolie*, VII (1902), 6 ff., and plate 5.

imperial palace. Outraged, his own French knights broke into the imperial bedchamber, mutilated the features of Robert's wife, and seized and later drowned her mother. Unable to avenge himself and full of shame, Robert fled to Rome, and complained to pope Gregory IX, who persuaded him to return to Constantinople. But on the way back in 1228, Robert died in Greece. His sister, Mary of Courtenay, was regent for a time during his absence. After his death the barons chose Narjot of Toucy bailie. The heir, Robert's younger brother Baldwin II, was only eleven years old, and a regency was needed.

This was the moment for which John Asen had been waiting. Like the Bulgarian ruler Symeon some three centuries earlier, Asen hoped that the authorities in Constantinople would arrange a marriage between his daughter Helena and the heir to the imperial throne, and that he would thus become the father-in-law of the future emperor and regent for him. Indeed, the barons approached Asen and made him the offer he wanted. He accepted, and promised to win back all that the Latins had lost to Theodore of Epirus. But those Latins who were guilty of the outrage against Robert's wife began to fear that young Baldwin II, once consolidated in his power by Asen, might punish them for their crime. So they advised that Baldwin reject Asen's daughter, though she was a handsome girl. Like Symeon before him, Asen was thwarted in his ambitions.

To supplant him, as Romanus Lecapenus had once supplanted Symeon, the barons chose John of Brienne, tall and irascible, once king of Jerusalem, claimant to the throne of Armenia, leading participant in the Fifth Crusade, father-in-law of the western emperor Frederick II, and husband of Berengaria, a sister of king Ferdinand III of Castile. John was then commander of the papal troops of Gregory IX, fighting Frederick II in southern Italy. The barons of Constantinople offered the hand of Baldwin II to John's daughter by Berengaria, Mary of Brienne. John would be crowned emperor, and would serve for life; but when Baldwin should reach the age of twenty, he would do homage to John and be invested with the realm of Nicaea and all the land in Asia Minor, except for Nicomedia, which would remain in John's hands. To his heirs John might leave either Asia Minor or the lands of Theodore of Epirus and Slav and Strez. John's heirs would do homage to Baldwin for these lands, none of which were in Latin possession at the time of the new agreement, which drastically revised the

partition treaty of 1204.³⁰ All Venetian possessions were specifically exempted from its provisions. It was ratified by John and pope Gregory IX in April 1229. By the summer of 1231 John had arrived in Constantinople, and he was crowned soon after. Baldwin and Mary were married, and Baldwin did homage to his father-in-law.

John, who was naturally miserly, lost his forces to other employers rather than pay them. He waited until 1233 before crossing the straits to attack Vatatzes, who was engaged in war with the autonomous ruler of Rhodes, Leo Gabalas. The Latins took Lampsacus and campaigned along the shore of the Sea of Marmara. They seized Pegae, and held it briefly, but accomplished nothing lasting.

Meanwhile the balance had markedly shifted. In 1230 Theodore of Epirus broke his treaty with John Asen and invaded Bulgaria, marching up the Maritsa from Adrianople. At a place called Klokotnitsa, John Asen, using as his standard the actual parchment of the violated treaty affixed to a lance, completely defeated and captured Theodore. Asen swept ahead, taking Adrianople, Demotica, and all western Thrace, as well as Serres, Pelagonia, Prilep, Thessaly, and a large part of Albania. This virtually liquidated the holdings of Theodore. Asen garrisoned most of the fortresses in his great new Balkan empire, and treated its inhabitants with rare kindness. He even spared Theodore, until he caught him plotting a rebellion; then he blinded him. Theodore's brother Manuel, Asen's son-in-law, ruled over Thessalonica itself and its immediate neighborhood, using the title despot (1230-1236), and relying on his family relationship with Asen to protect him. Manuel continued to sign official documents with the sacred red letters, however, as if Thessalonica were still the center of an empire.

Like his predecessors of the first Bulgarian empire, and like his own uncle Ioannitsa, John Asen, who had already begun to call himself tsar of the Bulgarians *and the Greeks*, now also wanted an autonomous Bulgarian patriarchate. In 1232 he opened negotiations with the Nicaeans, and transferred from the Latin patriarchate to that of Nicaea some of the bishoprics he had conquered. Between 1232 and 1235 Asen was engaged in trying to build a coalition of Orthodox powers with the object of recovering Constantinople from the Latins. The final conclusion of the agreement between Asen and Vatatzes was delayed until 1235, probably because Vatatzes

³⁰ R. Predelli, *loc. cit.* (note 28 above), pp. 185-186; Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, I, 265 ff. For John of Brienne in the Fifth Crusade, see below, chapter XI, pp. 389-428; for his reign over the kingdom of Jerusalem, see below, chapter XV, pp. 536-542.

was awaiting the outcome of negotiations he had undertaken with the papacy. The Nicaean patriarch, Germanus, had sent a letter to Gregory IX by the hands of five Franciscan monks who had passed through Nicaea. Soon afterward the pope sent to Nicaea a mission made up of two Franciscans and two Dominicans to confer about ending the schism. Arriving in Nicaea in 1234, they held a series of discussions on the usual questions of the *filioque* and the use of unleavened bread for the sacramental wafer. Vatatzes inquired whether the pope would restore the rights of the patriarch of Nicaea (i.e. of Constantinople) if he should promise obedience to the holy see. The friars answered only that the Greek patriarch would find the pope very well disposed toward him. They refused to attend a general council of the Orthodox churches, since their instructions from the pope had not extended so far, and withdrew to Constantinople.

But Vatatzes put great pressure on them to return to Nicaea. They consented to do so, but, they later reported, this was largely because of the frightening situation they found in Constantinople:

The land of Constantinople was as if deprived of all protection. The lord emperor John was a pauper. All the paid knights departed. The ships of the Venetians, Pisans, Anconitans, and other nations were ready to leave, and some indeed had already left. When we saw that the land was abandoned, we feared danger because it was surrounded by enemies. Asen, king of the Vlachs, menaced it from the north, Vatatzes from the east and south, and Manuel from the west. Therefore we proposed to negotiate a one-year truce between the emperor of Constantinople and Vatatzes. Indeed, so that we might not seem to be making this effort on our own initiative, we consulted the chapter of Hagia Sophia and the prelates of the land, and the emperor himself on the matter, and all of them unanimously advised us to do so.³¹

With this motive, the friars took part in the council of the Orthodox churches at Nymphaeum, which broke up in mutual violent recriminations, the Greeks reverting to the horrors of 1204, the Latins replying that the crusaders who had perpetrated them had been excommunicated sinners. In the circumstances, the friars paid little heed to Vatatzes' offer to use unleavened bread for the

³¹ P. G. Golubovich, "Disputatio . . .," *Archivum Franciscanum historicum*, XII (1919), 446; M. Roncaglia, *Les Frères Mineurs et l'église grecque orthodoxe au XIII^e siècle*, 1231-1274, Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della terra santa e dell'oriente francescano, ser. 4: *Studi*, II (Cairo, 1954), pp. 23-120; R. L. Wolff, "The Latin Empire of Constantinople and the Franciscans," *Traditio*, II (1944), 213-237.

sacramental wafer if the Latins would drop the *filioque* from the creed. Indeed, the two Franciscans and two Dominicans barely escaped with their lives from the infuriated Greeks, and all negotiations came to nothing.

Almost immediately (1235) Vatatzes concluded the pact with John Asen. The daughter whom Asen had once intended for Baldwin II was now engaged to Vatatzes' son, the young Theodore (II) Lascaris. Driving the Latins from Lampsacus, Vatatzes then crossed the straits and sacked the Venetian town of Gallipoli, massacring the population. Here Asen met him, and Vatatzes took the Bulgarian princess back to Asia, where she married Theodore Lascaris. Simultaneously Vatatzes and the Nicaean clergy raised Joachim, the Bulgarian metropolitan of Tirnovo, to the rank of an autonomous patriarch. Then Vatatzes and Asen joined forces, swept through Thrace, and appeared before the walls of Constantinople. John of Brienne emerged, and with only 160 knights utterly defeated the vastly superior Nicaean-Vlach forces. Even the contemporary Flemish chronicler, Philip Mouskes, often bitterly critical of John's avarice, likens him on this occasion to Hector, Roland, Ogier the Dane, and Judas Maccabaeus.³² Moreover, the victory on land was accompanied by a decisive Venetian naval triumph over Vatatzes' fleet, and the capture of twenty-five Greek galleys, including the flagship.

But the Greek-Bulgarian assault soon began again. With papal pleas to France and to Hungary ineffectual, the Latin emperor drew his support chiefly from Geoffrey II of Villehardouin and from the Venetians, Pisans, and Genoese, momentarily at peace with one another. Naval contributions probably also came from the duke of the Archipelago, Angelo Sanudo, who intervened with Vatatzes and procured a two-year truce. All parties no doubt welcomed it. John of Brienne's forces, underpaid, tended to "go over into Vlachia". Baldwin II set off for Rome to find some money. On the other side, Asen had begun to fear that only Vatatzes would profit by their joint victory. He asked to have his daughter come home for a visit. Though Vatatzes understood the stratagem, he complied with the request.

In Rome, Gregory IX urged count Peter of Brittany to go to Constantinople instead of Syria on his projected crusading expedition, and commuted the vows of 600 northern French knights on condition that they go to help the Latin empire instead. Hungarian churchmen received similar pleas. But before there had been much

³² Mouskes (ed. de Reiffenberg), II, 614-615, verses 29068-29079.

response John of Brienne died in Constantinople on March 23, 1237, having taken Franciscan orders shortly before his death.³³

Now began the last quarter-century of the Latin empire, reduced to the city of Constantinople itself, to which a few wretched Latins clung. Dependent on aid from the west, they had to face the harsh fact that the western states were preoccupied: Louis IX with his own crusading plans, the Hungarians with the Mongol invasions, the popes with their struggle against the Hohenstaufens. Even Venetian commercial interest seems to have slackened. The continued survival of the empire probably reflects the fact that its enemies too were preoccupied: the Bulgarians by John Asen's fear of Vatatzes and, after Asen's death in 1241, by internal weakness, Vatatzes by his distaste for an outright assault on the capital, and by the impact of the Mongol invasions on Asia Minor. Yet Vatatzes' ultimate purpose never wavered; in response to a letter from Gregory IX, summoning him to submit to John of Brienne or suffer blows from new western armies, Vatatzes wrote scornfully that he would never abandon his attacks on the thieves and murderers who occupied a city of which he was legitimate ruler. A real emperor, he told the pope, ruled over people, and not merely over the wood and stone of which fortifications are made.³⁴

Vatatzes' ally Asen, however, opened negotiations with the papacy, and allied himself with the Latins. New support came also from bands of Kuman invaders who, in flight before the Mongols, crossed the Danube on inflated skin rafts and poured into the Balkans. Outlandish pagan ceremonies marked the Latin conclusion of an agreement with these savages, and there were even marriages solemnized between noble Latins and daughters of Kuman chieftains. In 1237 a mixed Latin-Kuman-Bulgarian army under the command of Asen besieged Tzurulum (Chorlu), a fortified town in Thrace held by Vatatzes. But Asen broke off the siege on hearing that his wife and son had died. This was a punishment, he decided, for his treachery to Vatatzes. So he returned his daughter Helena to her Greek husband, Theodore Lascaris, and renewed his own alliance with Vatatzes.

Once again the crisis of the Latins in Constantinople became

³³ For details, see article by R. L. Wolff, cited above, note 31; cf. J. M. Buckley, "The Problematical Octogenarianism of John of Brienne," *Speculum*, XXXII (1957), 315-322.

³⁴ See V. Grumel, "L'Authenticité de la lettre de Jean Vatatzes, empereur de Nicée, au pape Grégoire IX," *Échos d'Orient*, XXIX (1930), 450-458, for discussion and French translation. The Greek text is available in A. Meliarakes, *Ἱστορία τοῦ Βασιλείου τῆς Νικαίας καὶ τοῦ Δεσποτάτου τῆς Ἡπείρου* (Athens and Leipzig, 1898), pp. 276 ff.; also published by I. Sakellion, in the Greek periodical *Ἀθηναῖον*, I (1873), pp. 371-378.

acute. Again the pope spurred on western crusaders, and wrote to the clergy of Greece describing the dreadful food shortages in Constantinople and the weakness of its defenses. He levied a tax of one third of the movable property and income of the clergy of the Morea to help save the capital. Disappointed in Asen, Gregory IX preached the crusade against him too, especially in the lands of Asen's ex-brother-in-law, king Bela IV of Hungary (1235-1270). But Bela refused to fight Asen unless the papacy granted him extensive rights to make ecclesiastical appointments in conquered Bulgarian territory, and also asked to be made papal legate in Hungary. Though Gregory acceded to all Bela's requests except the last, the Mongol invasions effectively prevented Bela from attacking John Asen. And Asen himself, though he had returned to the Nicaean alliance, never again took the field jointly with Vatatzes, and maintained only the semblance of a friendship with him. Gregory IX, not content with striving to raise men and money in the west, issued a series of emergency decrees for Constantinople itself. No litigation might take place for two years, so that all energy would go into defense. The pope agreed to absolve renegade Latins who had fought for the Greeks if they would now repent and fight for the Latin empire again. No item useful for defense might be exported from Constantinople without the special permission of the emperor, the *podestà*, and the barons.

Baldwin II himself visited Paris, where he appealed to Louis IX and to the queen-mother, Blanche of Castile, great-aunt of his wife, Mary of Brienne. Blanche found Baldwin childish, insufficiently wise and vigorous for his role as emperor; none the less she befriended him. In Flanders, Baldwin had to fight to obtain the marquisate of Namur. In 1238 he visited England, where Henry III at first received him coldly because of an old grudge against John of Brienne, but eventually welcomed him to London and gave him some money. From Constantinople came bad news; Mary and the barons were hungry, the enemy had rolled up movable towers preparatory to a siege, and some of the barons were stealing out through the gates secretly by night to flee to the west. Baldwin decided to dispatch at once part of the army he had been collecting. But Frederick II delayed their passage in northern Italy, where he was besieging Milan. When Gregory IX furiously demanded that Frederick give them safe passage, he consented. But then the commander, John of Béthune, died at Venice while arranging transportation, and the men dispersed. Only a Venetian fleet averted the loss of Constantinople.

In these difficult times, the hard-pressed Latin barons arranged to mortgage the Crown of Thorns to the Venetians. The podestà took over the great relic as surety for a loan of 13,134 hyperpers, a sum originally advanced by four different creditors, including the podestà, but subsequently consolidated by Nicholas Querini, a single Venetian, who thus acquired custody of the crown. Absolute ownership would pass to him if repayment were not forthcoming within a prescribed length of time. Late in 1238 Louis IX redeemed the crown, which proceeded on its famous journey to Paris and its resting-place in the specially built Sainte Chapelle.

Further disappointment awaited Baldwin, who found that most of the great French nobles were unwilling to fight any enemy in the east except the Saracens. Sailing to the Levant in June 1239, they went to Acre instead of Constantinople.³⁵ Baldwin himself mortgaged Namur to Louis IX for 50,000 *livres parisis*, and then marched out with some 30,000 or more troops, arriving at Constantinople safely in 1239, having received no hindrance but rather help from Asen. In 1240 Latin-Kuman forces took Tzurulum, selling their Greek captives into slavery to their fellow-Greeks. A Venetian fleet once more defeated Vatatzes, whose admiral attributed the loss to the superiority of the Latin vessels.

Meanwhile the widower John Asen had married Irene, the beautiful daughter of his prisoner Theodore of Epirus, and had set Theodore free after ten years in prison. Theodore put himself at the head of a conspiracy of his former favorites and expelled Manuel from Thessalonica. Because he was blind, Theodore could not again become "basileus", but he named his son John (1236-1244) to the office.

The death of Gregory IX in 1241 deprived Baldwin II of his most powerful friend, and the two-year papal interregnum which ensued damaged his prospects. When Baldwin sought to raise money by conferring his western fief of Courtenay on Geoffrey II of Villehardouin, prince of Achaea, Louis IX angrily refused to invest Villehardouin with the estate, which was intimately connected with the French royal family. Baldwin acknowledged the rebuke, but pleaded poverty. The year 1241 brought also the death of John Asen, who was succeeded by his young son Coloman I. This development, together with the reestablishment of a "basileus" in Thessalonica, naturally aroused Vatatzes' wish to intervene once more in Europe. He made a truce with the Latins to give himself a freer hand. Having secured the person of Theodore of Epirus by

³⁵ On the 1239 crusade, see below, chapter XIII, pp. 469-481.

trickery, Vatatzes invaded Europe and forced the basileus John to lay down the imperial crown, and to content himself with the title of despot as an award from the Nicaean empire. But a Mongol victory over the Selchükids and the consequent threat to Asia Minor drew Vatatzes back across the straits to Asia.

Our appreciation of Baldwin's poverty is vividly enhanced by the information that there were fighting in the Selchukid armies at this period about 1,000 Latins. They had proved the decisive influence in bringing to the throne sultan Ghiyāth-ad-Dīn Kai-Khusrau II, and enjoyed the special privilege of not kissing his foot. Records of their extraordinary valor against the Mongols reflect the awe in which both their employers and their enemies held them. Indeed, the sultan was so anxious to procure more of these splendid fighters, and so unaware of the weakness of the Latin empire, that about this time he offered Baldwin II an alliance. He asked for a Latin princess as a bride, and promised that she would not have to abandon Christianity, but might have her own chaplain and other clerics and maintain an entire Christian household. Himself the son of a Greek princess,³⁶ Kai-Khusrau II even offered to build churches in all his cities, and pay Christian priests to officiate in them. He would put the entire hierarchy of Christian bishoprics within his dominions under the jurisdiction of the Latin patriarchate of Constantinople. In fact, he hinted, if his bride should prove truly affectionate, he might himself become a Christian.

Baldwin II was greatly tempted by this offer, and tried to persuade Blanche of Castile of the sultan's great power and high potential usefulness as an ally. He asked that she request one of his sisters to send a daughter out to Constantinople to seal the bargain, since Baldwin and Mary had none of their own. But no more is heard of the proposal. Baldwin's enthusiasm may have abated when he learned more about his prospective ally. Kai-Khusrau was a weak and dissipated man, and was not an enemy of Vatatzes, as he tried to make Baldwin believe, but on excellent terms with him. Moreover, on July 2, 1243, a month before Baldwin wrote to Blanche, the Mongols had defeated the sultan at Köse Dagh in eastern Anatolia, and broken through to Iconium, which they ravaged. It was Vatatzes, anxious to preserve Nicaea from the Mongols, who concluded an alliance with the Selchükids. But the Mongols withdrew from Asia Minor, and thereafter

³⁶ (Jean) du Bouchet, *Histoire généalogique de la maison de Courtenay* (Paris, 1661), *Preuves*, p. 19, but cf. below, chapter XIX, p. 692, note 12, for a different identification of Kai-Khusrau's mother.

contented themselves with collecting tribute from the Selchûkids, who never again regained their former power or prestige.³⁷ Though the threat to Nicaea was thus averted, it had seemed serious enough to divert Vatatzes' attention for several years from the Latins in Constantinople.

In this period of Baldwin's first sojourn in Constantinople (1239 to 1243 or 1244), he leaned heavily upon Louis IX and Blanche of Castile. He sent relics to Paris, surely in the hope of receiving money in exchange, and also consulted both mother and son about his problems. In a letter of August 1243, he replied to a charge that Blanche had made against him, that he had two Greeks on his council, and governed according to their advice:

We declare and swear to you that we have never in the past made use in any way of the advice of any Greeks, nor do we now make use of it, nor shall we ever make use of it. On the contrary, whatever we do is done at the counsel of the noble and good men of France who are in our company. . . . Whatever you may find needs correction, we beg you to tell us to correct it, and you will find us ready to follow your advice and your command. . . . All our faith and hope lie in the grace of our lord the king, your most serene son, and in your own.³⁸

Baldwin's denial that he had Greek councillors and his insistence that he relied solely on Frenchmen provide a striking commentary on the change in policies since the death of the emperor Henry. In its humility, the letter to Blanche reveals the imperial dependence on Paris, no doubt made even more complete in these years by the vacancy on the papal throne. In 1243 or early 1244, Baldwin returned to the west, to remain until October 1248.

In the spring of 1244, he played a considerable role in the futile negotiations for peace between Frederick II and pope Innocent IV, interceding with Innocent on behalf of Frederick, serving as one of Frederick's envoys and confidants, and obtaining Frederick's intercession with Vatatzes to win a truce for one year, presumably 1244-1245. After the flight of the pope to Lyons in December 1244, Baldwin II remained with Frederick, and may have acted as his representative in the preliminaries to the Council of Lyons. But at the council (June 28, 1245) Baldwin sat at the pope's right hand, holding the place of honor among secular princes. He heard

³⁷ On the Selchûkids, see below, chapter XIX, pp. 682-692; on the Mongols, chapter XXI, pp. 715-718.

³⁸ A. Teulet, *Layettes*, II, pp. 518-519, no. 3123.

Nicholas, the Latin patriarch of Constantinople, tell the assembled prelates of the aggression of the Greeks, and Innocent preach a sermon on his five great sorrows, one of which was the Greek schism and the Greek threat to Latin Constantinople. Though the main business of the council was the quarrel with Frederick — Innocent had him “deposed”, one of the charges being the marriage between his daughter Constance and the recently widowed Vatatzes — it also adopted canons setting aside monies in aid of the Latin empire; these were to include one tenth of the pope’s own income and one half of all income from any benefice whose holder had not been in residence for six months or more, unless he had been away on official business.

For the next two years Baldwin’s complicated business affairs in the Low Countries detained him in the west, but by October 1248 he was back in Constantinople. Deep in debt, he authorized the empress Mary to mortgage any of his western lands to raise the sum of 24,000 hyperpers which he owed to certain merchants of Constantinople. This large sum may well have been the debt to the Venetian merchant brothers, John and Angelo Ferro, for which, we know, Baldwin at some time mortgaged the person of his only son Philip of Courtenay, who was born about 1240. Early in his childhood Philip was sent off to Venice as surety for his father’s debt, and spent many years there in the custody of his father’s creditors. His mother, the empress Mary, in 1248, upon Baldwin’s return, set off in her turn for the west. She never did mortgage her husband’s western lands, probably because of the opposition of Blanche of Castile and Louis IX to such a procedure. Nor did Louis, as has sometimes been asserted, redeem her son, the mortgaged Philip; he did send him in 1258 some money for expenses (1,000 *livres tournois*), but the sum needed to secure Philip’s freedom was too large for even Louis’s generosity. It was eventually to come from quite another benefactor.³⁹

During Baldwin’s absence the Mongol danger to Nicaea had subsided, and the despot John of Thessalonica had died and been succeeded by his dissipated younger brother Demetrius. In 1246, therefore, Vatatzes visited Europe. When he heard that Coloman I of Bulgaria had also died, Vatatzes proceeded to take over from the Bulgarians by bloodless conquest Serres, the Rhodope mountains, and most of Macedonia. These great territorial acquisitions led plotters inside Thessalonica to put forward feelers to him.

³⁹ R. L. Wolff, “Mortgage and Redemption of an Emperor’s Son: Castile and the Latin Empire of Constantinople,” *Speculum*, XXIX (1954), 45–84.

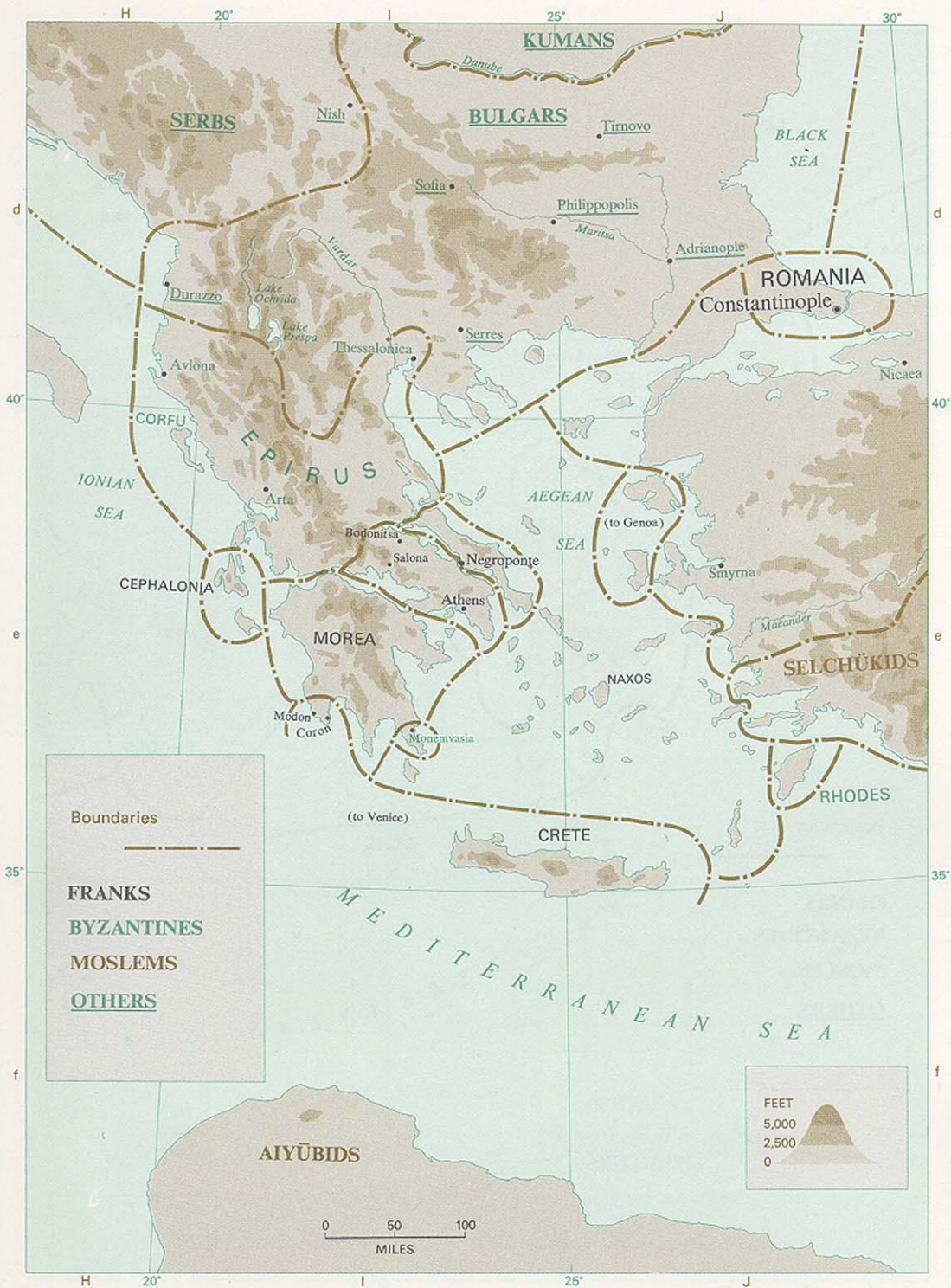
Vatatzes promised them that he would renew the city's privileges, and the conspirators admitted him. Their leader seems to have been Irene, daughter of Theodore of Epirus and widow of John Asen. Vatatzes, now ruler of Thessalonica, took Demetrius back with him to Asia late in 1246. The Greek "empire" of the west had now virtually disappeared. The aged Theodore clung to his little principality around Ostrovo, but was no real menace to Nicaea. More of a threat was Michael, a bastard son of Michael I, the founder of the Epirote house. Starting in the 1230's in Acarnania, he had reasserted the old Epirote autonomy. The fall of Thessalonica brought despot Michael II (1236-1271) and Vatatzes face to face.

In 1247, the truce procured by Frederick II having expired, Vatatzes attacked the Latins at Tzurulum, capturing it after a major siege. Inside he found his own sister-in-law, Eudocia Lascaris, once intended for the emperor Robert but long since married to a French noble, Anseau of "Cahieu" (Cayeux), who had left her behind in Tzurulum in the hope that her presence there would deter Vatatzes from the siege. But Vatatzes merely sent Eudocia back to Constantinople, and proceeded to take Vizya. Inside the capital, the Latins now feared the worst. But a new emergency on Rhodes, where the Genoese and the prince of Achaea were battling the Greeks, drew Vatatzes away from the attack on Constantinople.

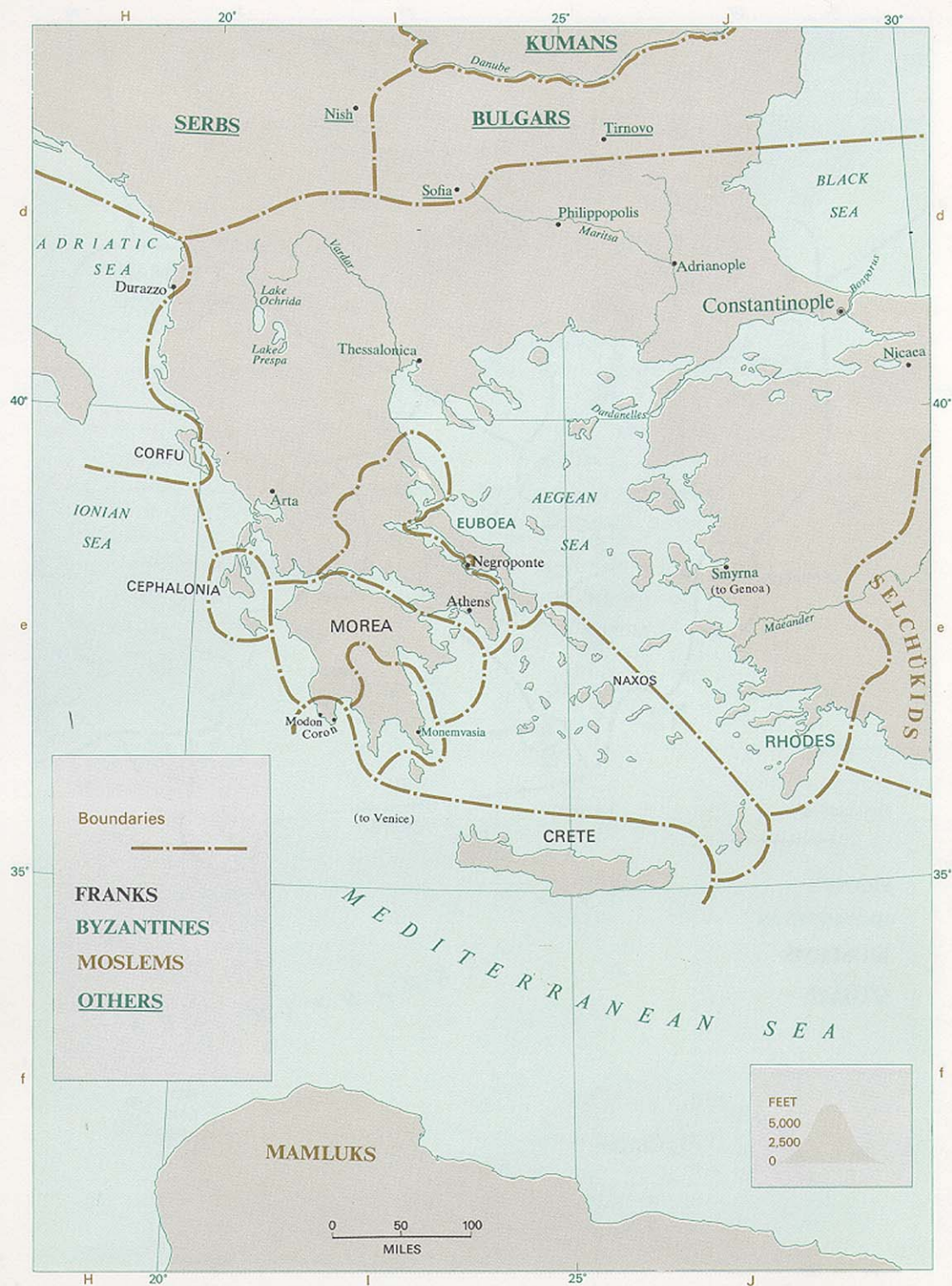
The wretched last years of the Latin empire have left scanty records. Baldwin II was apparently absent from Constantinople much of the time, engaged in a fruitless search for more money and more men than anybody would spare. In 1249 he seems to have visited king Louis's camp at Damietta.⁴⁰ In his absence Philip of Toucy acted as bailie in Constantinople. He too borrowed from Louis IX in Palestine in 1251.

As if to symbolize the hopelessness of the Latin position, pope Innocent IV himself reversed the traditional policy of the popes towards Constantinople. As early as 1247 we find him countermanding earlier commands to the clergy to give money for the Latins. He hoped instead to end the schism by direct negotiations with Vatatzes. Queen Maria of Hungary reported that Vatatzes would accept papal supremacy, and in May 1249 Innocent sent the minister-general of the Franciscans, John of Parma, to negotiate directly. He was authorized to call a council in the east, if the Greeks would accept the *filioque*. Vatatzes' return mission was held

⁴⁰ For the crusades of Louis IX, see below, chapter XIV.



9. The Balkans in 1237, at the Death of John of Brienne (Map by the University of Wisconsin Cartographic Laboratory)



10. The Balkans in 1291, at the Fall of Acre (Map by the University of Wisconsin Cartographic Laboratory)

up in southern Italy, first by Frederick II, deeply suspicious of the papal-Nicaean discussions, and, after Frederick's death in 1250, by his successor Manfred. The pope finally received the Greek envoys, and sent them back with new proposals. These long-drawn-out negotiations during the years 1249-1252 gave the Latins a new respite. If Vatatzes could win back Constantinople by diplomacy, he would not launch a full-scale siege.

These years saw an increase in the power of Michael II of Epirus. Though Vatatzes had arranged a dynastic marriage between his own granddaughter, Maria, child of Theodore (II) Lascaris, and Nicephorus, son and heir of Michael II, Michael none the less listened to the siren voice of his aged blind uncle, Theodore of Epirus, who would conspire as long as there was a breath left in his body. In 1252, therefore, Vatatzes' armies ravaged Theodore's appanage at Ostrovo and Michael's territory alike. Michael had to surrender numerous strong points in Epirus and Albania as the price of peace. The presence of so large a Nicaean army in Europe led Innocent IV once again to instruct the clergy to aid the barons and Venetians and the prince of Achaea in any resistance against Vatatzes.

But a new embassy from Nicaea arrived in Rome in 1254. Vatatzes now offered to recognize papal supremacy in matters of faith, and to call a council to consider the *filioque*. In exchange, however, he demanded that Constantinople be restored to him, and its patriarchal throne to his patriarch Arsenius. These demands the papacy had always previously refused to consider. But this time Innocent IV replied only that he could make no promises with regard to Constantinople, because the Latin emperor had not been charged with any offense for which he could be summoned before the papal court and convicted. The pope promised to use his good offices to settle questions at issue between the Latin and the Greek emperors. He also allowed himself to hint that complete Nicaean submission to Rome might be followed by papal support for the resumption of Greek control over the capital. He was prepared to call the Nicaean patriarch "patriarch of Constantinople". Then, "after it had come about by some turn of fortune" that the city of Constantinople had fallen to Vatatzes, Innocent IV would restore the Greek patriarch to his ancient residence, where he would govern the subjects of both Latin and Greek patriarchates.⁴¹

These guarded words make it clear that Innocent was reconciled

⁴¹ R. L. Wolff, *op. cit.* (in note 39), p. 69, note 54. Text in F. Schillmann, "Zur byzantinischen Politik Alexanders IV.," *Römische Quartalschrift*, XXII (1908), part 4, p. 114.

to the fall of Latin empire and patriarchate if he could obtain union by negotiation. If Nicaea should submit to Rome, Innocent would look the other way while Vatatzes captured Constantinople. But both Vatatzes and Innocent died in 1254, and the negotiations were interrupted. In 1256 pope Alexander IV sent bishop Constantine of Orvieto to Vatatzes' successor, Theodore II Lascaris, with the authorization, if necessary, to repeat the offer of Innocent IV. The discussions apparently came to nothing, but it is clear from the papal correspondence that the Latin empire had failed as an instrument of papal foreign policy. Neither a union of the churches nor a successful crusade had been achieved through its instrumentality, and Innocent IV and Alexander IV therefore wrote it off. Perhaps Baldwin's friendship with Frederick II and his later intimacy with Manfred may have helped the popes reach this decision.

Theodore II Lascaris passed his brief reign (1254-1258) in Balkan warfare against Bulgarians, Epirotes, Albanians, and Serbs, but had no opportunity to move against the Latins. After Lascaris's death Michael Palaeologus, descendant of the Byzantine imperial families, successful and ambitious general, and commander of the Nicaean emperor's Latin mercenaries, succeeded to the throne by an elaborate conspiracy. In 1259, at Pelagonia in Macedonia, he defeated the troops of Michael II of Epirus, Manfred, and William of Villehardouin, prince of Achaea, who had formed a coalition against him. William was taken prisoner.⁴² The Greeks who had fought in the armies of the coalition now went over to Michael VIII Palaeologus, whose destiny had become clear.

Soon after the accession of Michael VIII, Baldwin II, who apparently believed that the new Nicaean emperor would be willing to make concessions, sent ambassadors to Michael. First, they asked for the cession of Thessalonica and all the land between it and Constantinople. Michael answered "pleasantly" that he regarded Thessalonica as his own native city, and could not consider abandoning it. The envoys then asked for Serres and the territory from that town east to Constantinople. But Michael declared that this was the site of his first military command, and that he therefore would not give it up. When the Latin envoys reduced their demand to the region from Voleron eastwards, this proved to be Michael's

⁴² D. J. Geanakoplos, "Greco-Latin Relations on the Eve of the Byzantine Restoration: The Battle of Pelagonia — 1259," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, VII (1953), 101-141. See also the same author's "The Nicene Revolution of 1258 and the Usurpation of Michael VIII Palaeologus," *Traditio*, IX (1953), 420-430. On William of Achaea, see below, chapter VII, pp. 244-259.

favorite hunting preserve. The discouraged Latins then asked what land he would be prepared to concede, and were told none. Indeed, as the price of peace, Michael asked for one half the customs dues and one half the revenue from the mint at Constantinople. The courteous insolence of Michael VIII reflects his certainty of eventual triumph.

At this late stage in the history of the Latin empire, a new source of assistance and protection emerged. In 1258 Mary of Brienne obtained from her cousin, Alfonso X, "the Wise", king of Castile, the money needed to redeem her unfortunate son Philip of Courtenay from Baldwin II's Venetian creditors. By May 1261, at the latest, Philip was free. For the empress Mary, favorite great-niece of Blanche of Castile, it was natural to turn to Alfonso, at whose court her own three brothers were leading nobles. As early as 1246-1247 Baldwin II had tried to obtain military aid from the Spanish order of St. James, but the negotiations had fallen through. Now in the late 1250's, however, Alfonso X was striving to accumulate support enough to obtain general recognition as emperor in the west. Aid to the Latin empire of Constantinople was one of the methods he used to enhance his own prestige. He engaged one of his daughters to Philip of Courtenay. There seemed a lively prospect for a Castilian marriage and perhaps for Castilian military support.⁴³

But Baldwin II was not to enjoy the chance to use Castilian aid to redress the balance in the east. Early in 1260 Michael VIII plotted to take Constantinople, not by full-dress siege, but by collusion with a Latin noble who had been taken prisoner at Pelagonia, and who now won his freedom by promising to unlock one of the city gates — his house was in the walls — to admit Michael's forces. But the noble failed to keep his part of the bargain, and Michael had to content himself with seizing the environs of the capital. Galata successfully resisted siege, and a one-year truce was concluded between Greeks and Latins. But Baldwin was so poor that he had to strip lead from the roofs of the palaces of Constantinople to raise money.

In the new crisis, the Venetians took a step which, had it come in time, might have preserved the Latin empire considerably longer. The doge (Renier Zeno) and his council authorized the bailie for the captive prince William of Achaea, the barons of the Morea, the rulers of Athens, Negroponte, Crete, Lemnos, and the duchy of the Archipelago, and others to band together for

⁴³ R. L. Wolff, *loc. cit.*, note 39 above.

the purpose of stationing a permanent, regularly-paid garrison in Constantinople, to consist of 1,000 men. Venice would pay her share of the stipend, and would secure guarantees from the other partners for their share.⁴⁴ But this practical approach to the fundamental problem of defense for the capital came too late. There is no evidence that further action was taken, probably because events supervened.

Before striking at the Latins, Michael VIII Palaeologus rendered himself secure in Europe and Asia by negotiating agreements with the Bulgarians, the Selchükids, and the Mongols. For the actual blow at Constantinople, he believed that he needed naval power not available at Nicaea. He turned to the Genoese, rivals of the Venetians, who had recently expelled the Genoese from Acre (1258). Indeed, the Genoese, quite willing to brave papal displeasure in order to have so useful an ally, seem to have made the initial overtures to Michael. On March 13, 1261, the two powers signed a treaty at Nymphaeum, which was ratified in Genoa on July 10. The Genoese undertook to supply a squadron of up to fifty warships, to be used against the enemies of Genoa, the expense to be borne by Michael. Nicaea would admit Genoese merchants to its territories free of all duties, and would cede to Genoa Smyrna and quarters in all key Byzantine ports, including Constantinople, where they would obtain not only all their own former possessions but all those now belonging to the Venetians. The Black Sea would be closed to all enemies of Genoa, except Pisa. Genoese subjects might serve in the Nicaean armies, and the Nicaean authorities might command the services of Genoese vessels in Nicaean waters to assist in the defense of fortresses.⁴⁵

But before the Genoese fleet could be sent to the east, even before the ratification of the treaty, Michael's troops had taken Constantinople. In the spring of 1261 he sent two armies westward; one, under his brother John, the despot, was to oppose Michael II of Epirus; the other, under the caesar Alexius Strategopoulus, was to oppose the Bulgarians, and on the way to make a demonstration to frighten the Latins at Constantinople. The inhabitants of the immediate environs of the capital, between the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea, were of course Greek farmers and fishermen, on

⁴⁴ Text printed by W. Norden, *Das Papsttum und Byzanz* (Berlin, 1903; reprinted New York, 1958), pp. 759 ff.

⁴⁵ Text in C. Manfroni, "Le Relazioni fra Genova, l'impero bizantino e i Turchi," *Atti della Società Ligure di storia patria*, XXVIII (1896), 791 ff.; also see *Liber juris reipublicae Genovensis* (*Monumenta Historiae Patriae*, VII, Turin, 1854), cols. 1350 ff., no. 945. A discussion of Genoese commercial affairs in the Levant is planned for volume IV of this work.

whom the city relied for food. The historian George Pachymeres calls them *thelematarioi*, or voluntaries, because their allegiance to Greek or Latin was a matter of their own shifting will. The free access to the city enjoyed by the thelematarioi and their natural Greek sympathies made them useful intelligence agents for Michael VIII, who had also established contact with some Greeks living inside the city and nominally loyal to the Latins. On his expedition, Strategopoulus made use of the thelematarioi, who told him of a passageway through or under the city walls, wide enough to admit a single armed man at a time. At the moment of Strategopoulus's arrival, moreover, the Venetian podestà, Marco Gradenigo, a particularly active warrior — no doubt sent out from Venice to act in the spirit of the recent Venetian resolve to defend Constantinople — had loaded most of the Latin defenders aboard ship to attack the island of Daphnusia, in the Black Sea about 70 miles east of the opening of the Bosphorus. This virtually stripped Constantinople of its defenders. It is certainly possible that Michael VIII had arranged for Gradenigo to be offered Daphnusia as bait, and had thus lured him into leaving the capital almost undefended.

In these favorable circumstances, Strategopoulus may have infiltrated men through the passageway by night until enough were inside to attack the Latin guards on the walls, open the gates from within, and admit the rest of the Greeks. Or he may have been admitted by some of the thelematarioi who placed ladders inside the walls, killed the guards, and opened the Gate of the Spring to the waiting Nicaean armies. Once the Greeks were inside, a few street fights in the dark completed the operation. Baldwin II fled from the palace of the Blachernae, far up the Golden Horn, to the Boukoleon on the Sea of Marmara. He left behind the imperial purple hat, made according to a Latin design but decorated with a great ruby, as well as the imperial swords wrapped in purple silk and the purple boots. Hastening back from Daphnusia, the fleet found that the conquering Greeks had set fire to the commercial quarter along the Golden Horn, where the families of the Venetian residents lived. This move Strategopoulus took on the advice of John Phylax, a Greek who had been a confidant of Baldwin II, but who now quickly and expediently changed sides. So when the Venetian ships sailed into the harbor, the wives and children of the men aboard were standing on the quays crying for help while their houses and shops burned behind them. The fleet saved the victims, and Strategopoulus's troops completed their occupation of the capital unimpeded.

Some of the Latins rushed to monasteries and tried to disguise themselves in monastic habit, while their women hid in dark corners. One ship belonging to the Venetian firm of Ca' Pesaro rescued Baldwin II, who was wounded in one arm and hungry. The fleet set out for Euboea, but had insufficient provisions, and on the journey many of the refugees died of hunger. At Negroponte Baldwin was welcomed by his vassals, the rulers of the island, by the lord of Athens, and by the duchess of the Archipelago. He created some knights, and sold some relics. Then he sailed away to Italy, where Manfred received him with great friendship and enlisted him among his strong supporters, a relationship which led to the grave suspicions of the papacy and to the weakening of the Castilian alliance sponsored by the empress Mary. Carrying with him "only the shadow of a great name",⁴⁶ Baldwin II embarked upon a long series of intrigues to obtain support for the reconquest of Constantinople. Only disappointment and failure lay ahead.

Michael VIII heard of Strategopoulus's victory at Meteorium. On August 15, 1261, preceded by the sacred icon of the "Virgin who points the way", the Hodegetria, he made his ceremonial entry through the Golden Gate into Byzantium, depopulated and in disrepair after the long Latin occupation but always the sacred city of the Greek world. When the procession reached Hagia Sophia, Michael was crowned basileus. The rule of the Latins was over.

Doomed to failure from the first, the Latin empire of Constantinople yet takes its place in history as something more than an outpost of Venetian colonial enterprise and of French and Lombard feudalism on Greek soil. Its freakish constitution claims our interest; the efforts of its wisest emperor and of several popes to heal the breach between Latins and Greeks deserve our attention. Even more arresting: Latin rule deepened and perpetuated the hatred between the two branches of Christendom. Though Michael Palaeologus, in his fear of a renewed assault from the west, would in 1274 actually consent to a union between the churches, he could command very little support for this policy from his people; and in practice the act remained null. One future emperor would in 1369 be personally converted to the Roman faith. No reign would pass without negotiations looking towards unity, and at the Council of Ferrara-Florence a new treaty would in 1439 finally be signed. Yet public opinion could never be won to support reunion with the hated Latins: only extreme danger from the Turks had made it possible, and the rank and file of the Orthodox Greeks on the whole

⁴⁶ *Annales S. Iustinæ Patavinæ* (MGH, SS., XIX), p. 182.

preferred the turban of the sultan to the cardinal's hat. After 1261 the restored Byzantine empire, with its pretensions to world rule undimmed, remained nothing but a Balkan state, shorn of its territories and its resources, plundered and weak. When it eventually fell to the Turks in 1453, its spiritual heirs, the Russians, who had absorbed the Orthodox distaste for the west, attributed its fall to the agreement its emperor had made with the papacy at Ferrara-Florence. Since Constantinople had been punished for its abandonment of orthodoxy, Moscow and Moscow alone, so its churchmen insisted, was the only possessor of the truth. In a very real sense we may trace back to the atrocities of the Fourth Crusade and the persecutions of the period of Latin rule at Byzantium a breach between the Orthodox world and the west that is far from healed in our own day.