



Cartographic Laboratory UW-Madison

1. Western Europe

# I

## THE CRUSADE IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

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**T**he historiography of the crusades has undergone considerable emendation in recent times, and many accepted ideas have had to be revised. One of the most notable among these altered conceptions is that of the limits of the Age of the Crusades. The older historians considered the crusades as a movement coterminous with the life of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, at least in regard to the closing date of this tragic confrontation between two large sections of medieval humanity. According to the old school of thought, the crusades suddenly began in 1095 with Urban II's famous declarations at Clermont in Auvergne, and ended equally suddenly in 1291 with the termination of Latin dominion in the Holy Land when Acre and the remaining Christian outposts fell into the hands of the Bahri Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Khalil.<sup>1</sup> This is the cataclysmic viewpoint of the Age of the Crusades, which has been repudiated in the light of modern researches in this field.

Here we are concerned only with the closing chapters in the history of the movement, and this volume will, it is hoped, show beyond doubt that the fall of Acre did not spell the end of the crusades. When the last vestiges of the Latin kingdom in Palestine disappeared before the irresistible advance of Islamic forces, its crown was transferred to the Lusignan dynasty in Cyprus,<sup>2</sup> and the Hospitallers, who had been its staunch defenders, moved the center of their crusading activities from Syria to the island of Rhodes,<sup>3</sup> which they wrested from Byzantium after a short sojourn in Cyprus.

The deadly blow which the Christians had sustained at Acre seems to have awakened western Christendom to the stark reality of their precarious position in the Levant. To the contemporary mind, the collapse of Acre in 1291 was comparable to Saladin's storming of

1. See volume II of this work, pp. 595-598, 754.

2. See below, chapter X.

3. See below, chapter VIII.

Jerusalem in 1187. Toward the end of the thirteenth century, the crusading spirit had been slumbering throughout Europe. Now the time was ripe for action, but the calamities and humiliations which had befallen the Christian hosts in the past indicated the need for better organization and a greater measure of harmony in the future. Thus the crusade in the fourteenth century passed through two distinct stages. The first was that of propaganda, consisting mainly of literary works by numerous thinkers and pious travelers who planned the *passagium* and advised the leaders on the elements of a successful campaign. The second comprised positive action in a series of expeditions conducted against the Moslem states in the Near East. The first phase occupied roughly the first half of the century, while the second followed as a natural corollary to propagandist efforts on behalf of the crusading cause. In a number of cases we find that propagandists also took part in some of the memorable crusading campaigns of the later Middle Ages.

In regard to the crusading terrain, the fourteenth century presented a broader arena. In 1096, when Godfrey of Bouillon embarked with the blessing of pope Urban II on his momentous journey to the Near East, the medieval world was still very limited in dimensions. Beyond the confines of Egypt and the Fertile Crescent, if we except certain areas on the western shores of India, the rest of the globe was enveloped in the thick mist of oblivion.<sup>4</sup> It was not until the age of the later crusades that the clouds began to lift and the imagination came to perceive the alien regions of Central Asia and the Far East. This immense growth in the size of the known world was, in part, a by-product of the later crusades. Even though the movement lacked the full vigor and the spectacular achievements of the early crusades, its later history brought forth results of a more enduring value for mankind. It is true that the traditional scene of action remained as before in the Levant, and the eyes of all Christians remained fixed on the land of promise, but the crusading mind traveled much farther into limitless Cathay with the adventurers and missionaries who opened up the eastern route to Khanbaliq ("Cambaluc," Peking) in the heart of Asia. The idea of collaboration with the Mongols, who had become a growing factor in world politics and who shared with the Christians an abhorrence for the Moslem Mamluks, was regarded as basic to the foreign policy of the papacy and its

4. For a full discussion, see John Kirtland Wright, *The Geographical Lore of the Time of the Crusades* (New York, 1925), and a more recent work by I. de Rachewiltz, *Papal Envoys to the Great Khans* (Stanford, 1971).

associates in western Europe, and was reiterated by the propagandists for the crusade in the later medieval period.<sup>5</sup>

Thus the field of crusading activities during the fourteenth century included not only Europe and the Levant but also the Mongol world with its sweeping vistas far beyond the frontiers of the Near East. Though the face of the *Respublica Christiana* in Europe was changing, and crusading ideas were being submerged in the tumult which accompanied the rise of the new nations and the continuous decline of the old order, certain events helped to resuscitate the moribund cause throughout the decades under review. The fall of Acre in 1291, like the loss of Jerusalem in 1187 and the collapse of Constantinople in 1453, brought home to Christians in Europe a feeling of dismay and aroused in them a spirit of defensive, if not offensive, crusading. The occasional presence of wandering kings from the Near Eastern Christian states served their western coreligionists in Europe as another reminder of the sad fate of fellow Christians beyond the sea. The western peregrinations of Peter I de Lusignan (whom Philip of Mézières described as the *athleta Christi*) between 1362 and 1365 preceded the sack of Alexandria in the latter year. King Leon VI of Cilician Armenia spent his closing days as a refugee in Europe until he died in Paris in November 1393, hardly three years before the crusade of Nicopolis. It was after the rout of the united forces of Europe outside the walls of Nicopolis that emperor Manuel II Palaeologus undertook his "mendicant pilgrimage" to the west between 1399 and 1401, in order to persuade the pope and the kings of France and England to send military aid for the relief of his beleaguered city of Constantinople.<sup>6</sup> Even after the downfall of Byzantium and the flight of the Palaeologi to the Morea, an imperial pretender, Thomas Palaeologus, would take refuge in Rome in 1461. By then, however, the opportunity for major crusading conquests would be gone beyond recall.

During the fourteenth century, propagandists for holy war included even more potent elements than the solitary royal figures from the Near East who moved from court to court in Europe without any direct contact with the people of western Christendom. The innumerable wandering knights of the dislocated military-religious orders and the dwindling Latin principalities in the Levant did much to renew the crusading zeal which, though weakening, had

5. See below, chapter XV.

6. See below, chapter III.

never been extinguished. Men of the sword and men of the pen together with a stream of pilgrims returning from Jerusalem helped to rekindle enthusiasm for the cause by word of mouth and by the written letter. Indeed, it would be idle to attempt to make a full list of the late medieval propagandists and to outline their life and work. The fourteenth century in particular is marked by an avalanche of literary propaganda covering almost all the countries of Europe.

That propaganda was inaugurated by an eye-witness of the fighting which had taken place within Acre in 1291, one Thaddeus of Naples. He wrote a tract of considerable interest under the title of *Hystoria de desolacione . . . tocius Terre Sancte . . .*<sup>7</sup> shortly after he had been forced out of Acre with the rest of its Christian inhabitants. He describes himself as "Magister Neapolitanus" and presents his work in the form of an *Epistola* addressed to the whole of Christendom. He describes the siege and the storming of the city in a style designed to arouse the feelings of all Catholics for the revival of the crusading movement against the enemies of the cross. He exhorts all the princes of Europe to abstain from their local squabbles and join their forces and efforts into one united body under the leadership of the church militant in order to save the Holy Land, which he calls "our heritage."

Thaddeus was a contemporary of pope Nicholas IV (1288–1292), whose pontificate was an important landmark in the history of propaganda for the crusade. Nicholas grouped around himself at the Roman curia a number of men devoted to the cause, two of whom are worthy of special mention. Charles II of Anjou, king of Naples, who had inherited his father's claim to the crown of the kingdom of Jerusalem, was naturally interested in the affairs of the east; he was also a papal vassal and as such collaborated with Nicholas IV in his project of a *passagium generale*. The second advisor to Nicholas was a Franciscan friar named Fidenzio of Padua, who had just returned from a special mission to the east before the Moslem conquest of Acre. He drew up his recommendations in his *Liber recuperationis Terre Sancte*.<sup>8</sup> He favors a maritime blockade of the Mamluk empire, and he states that certain points on the coast of Cilician Armenia would provide a fine base for military operations against Syria and Palestine. His book deals with the routes as well as with numerous details concerning the fleet and the land forces and other items of interest to the pilgrim and the crusader. Perhaps the most vulnerable

7. Ed. Paul Riant (Geneva, [1873]).

8. Ed. G. Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell' Oriente francescano*, 1st ser., II (Quaracchi, 1913), 1–60.

point in his memorandum is that he wrote it when Acre was still in Christian hands, and so considerable modification had to be introduced in his plans to cope with the new situation. On the whole, the reign of Nicholas IV witnessed the birth of an epoch of intense literary and diplomatic propaganda for the crusade.

During the same period, a new departure in propagandist literature appeared in the work of Raymond Lull, a Catalan born in 1232. A poet, a philosopher, and a prolific author of several hundred books and treatises of the most varied nature, Lull was also one of the most active figures of his time. Like Roger Bacon, he was one of the early pioneers of the principle of the unity of human knowledge, which he exemplified in his *Arbor scientiae*. Like Frederick II, he was one of the earliest orientalists, mastering the Arabic tongue and even composing Arabic poetry; and like him, too, he was a crusader who believed in the ways of peace rather than the ways of war for a permanent settlement of the causes of difference between east and west. Whereas Frederick II resorted to diplomacy, Raymond Lull became the great exponent of religious missionary work among the followers of Mohammed. It is here that Lull's real contribution rests, though he was not without a precursor in this field. Around the middle of the twelfth century, Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny, after a visitation tour of the Cluniac houses in the Iberian peninsula which brought him into direct contact with Moslems, had formulated a new thesis for relations with the enemies of the cross. His treatise, entitled *Contra sectam Saracenorum*,<sup>9</sup> makes it clear that he wished Christians to approach Moslems "not with arms as the crusaders do, but with reason, not with hatred but with love," for, in so doing, they might win them over to Christ and save their souls from perdition. His work was a counterfoil to that of his great contemporary, Bernard of Clairvaux, whose vehement appeal to arms is found in his treatise *De laude novae militiae*.<sup>10</sup>

Peter paved the way for Raymond Lull, the great apostle of missionary work among Moslems. Though he did, like most of the authors of his time, start by promoting a new plan for a crusade, in the *Liber de fine*,<sup>11</sup> which he wrote at an early stage in his career, Lull afterward gave up this plan and embraced the idea of converting Moslems to Christianity, instead of destroying their bodies and the

9. In Migne, *PL*, CLXXXIX, as "Adversus sectam sive haeresim Saracenorum," and trans. J. Thomä, *Zwei Bücher gegen den Muhammedanismus* (Leipzig, 1906). On Peter, see James Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam* (Princeton, 1964).

10. In Migne, *PL*, CLXXXII-CLXXXV; also several other editions and translations.

11. Ed. A. Gottron in *Ramon Lulls Kreuzzugsideen* (Abhandlungen zur mittleren und neueren Geschichte, vol. XXXIX; Berlin, 1912).

souls therewith. In order to achieve his aim, he bought a Moorish slave who was a good enough scholar to teach him Arabic and thus enable him to preach the Christian doctrine and attempt to refute Islam in the countries beyond the sea. Thrice he crossed the western Mediterranean to the sultanate of Tunisia, where he engaged himself in perilous discussions with the shaikhs of Islam. During his first and second trips, he was able to formulate the terms of his debate with them in his treatise called *Disputatio Raymundi Christiani et Hamar Saraceni*,<sup>12</sup> but he was deported by the lenient Moslem governor after a period of captivity. In his third crossing, after a relatively peaceful stay among the Moslems of Tunis, he sallied into Bugia on the Algerian coast, where he earned his much desired crown of martyrdom. At the age of eighty-three, in the year 1315 or 1316, he stood in the middle of the town market to preach his faith, but the fury of the fanatic Berbers led them to stone him to death on the beach, where his body was picked up by a Genoese ship and taken for interment in the cathedral of Palma on the island of Majorca.

Contemporary with the movements identified with Nicholas IV on the one hand and Raymond Lull on the other, there arose a royal center of propaganda at the court of Philip IV the Fair, king of France (1285–1314). Philip's reign was one of great moment in the annals of France, of the papacy, and of Europe in general. He had visions of amalgamating France and the empire under his own sovereignty. He disgraced Boniface VIII and succeeded in drawing the papacy to France, at Avignon, with immeasurable consequences. He even dreamt of the creation of a new eastern empire, including Byzantium together with the Holy Land and the whole of the Mamluk sultanate of Egypt, under the rule of one of his sons. Such visions of world hegemony in the age of the crusades were bound to direct the king's attention to the possibilities accruing from the leadership of the movement of holy war. The crusade, which was a basic element in papal foreign policy, eventually became one of the chief factors in the effort to impose the supremacy of the Roman see over Europe. Thus Philip undoubtedly wanted to follow the example of the pontiff and, by espousing the international cause, place himself at the head of the Christian commonwealth. His advisors and courtiers naturally echoed the royal aspirations in their propagandist writings. They included two great jurists, Peter Dubois and William of Nogaret, as well as four men of action—Jacques de Molay, grand master of the Templars, Fulk of Villaret, master of the Hospitallers,

12. Ed. I. Salzinger, *Opera omnia*, 10 vols. (Mainz, 1721–1740), IV; cf. A. Gottron, *L'Edició maguntina de Ramón Lull* (Barcelona, 1915).

Henry II de Lusignan, king of Cyprus, and Benedict Zaccaria, Genoese admiral.

The work which best represents the ideas and policies prevailing at Philip's court is Peter Dubois's treatise entitled *De recuperatione Terre Sancte*,<sup>13</sup> which he wrote under the auspices of the French king and dedicated in 1307 to Edward I of England, known for his crusading enthusiasm. Dubois's treatise is one of the most remarkable documents of its kind produced during this period. Written by a man of law, it deals systematically with all the contemporary problems arising from the projects of crusade and offers all the solutions in line with the royal policy. Dissensions in Europe should be completely eradicated, and the unwilling states brought to reason by force. Discords must be submitted for final settlement by a European tribunal of arbitration composed of three ecclesiastical dignitaries and three laymen known to be inaccessible to corruption. Trade with the recalcitrant members of European society should be banned, and their citizens transported to colonize Palestine. The right of appeal to the pope should remain, but the papacy, according to his conception, must be deprived of its independence and dispossessed of its landed heritage. The popes must be settled in France, and the whole of the church hierarchy should return to the life of poverty exemplified in its early history. The administration of church fiefs should be entrusted to the king of France, and the revenues of the Templars and Hospitallers should be confiscated and used for financing the crusade. In fact, these two orders should be united into a single organization whose sole business would be crusading. The routes to the east could be selected according to the position and exigencies of each country. The empire must adopt a hereditary regime with a French prince on its throne. The government of the Holy Land, after its reconquest, should be arranged on a military basis with a *dux belli* and a body of centurions and cohorts of twelve warriors in every town. Each state should have its special hostels prepared for the reception and accommodation of its own subjects. The eastern Christians and all heretical sects must be persuaded to join the Roman church. Missionary work should be undertaken by competent persons conversant with the languages of the Orient. The priories of the Templars and Hospitallers should be utilized for the institution of schools where these languages would be taught. The crown of Egypt and "Babylon" would be conferred upon Philip's second son, Philip

13. Ed. C. V. Langlois (Collection de textes pour servir à l'étude et l'enseignement d'histoire, IX; Paris, 1891); trans. W. I. Brandt, *The Recovery of the Holy Land* (Columbia University Records of Civilization, no. 51, New York, 1956).



(V), who would organize an eastern empire with French leanings. This curious medley of ideas, both feasible and unfeasible, provides the keynotes to the project formulated by Peter Dubois under the auspices of a royal master to whom the crusade appears to have been a means rather than an end in itself.

Perhaps the most practical propositions were those which came from a Latin resident in the Levant, Marino Sanudo Torsello, who was related to an important Venetian dynasty settled in the Archipelago. He wrote a monumental work which he called *Liber secretorum fidelium crucis*;<sup>14</sup> he submitted its first redaction to pope Clement V in 1309 and the second to king Charles IV of France in 1323. As one who had traveled far and wide in the Levant, he had managed to collect more data and original material about the countries of that part of the world than any of his Latin contemporaries. His conception of a successful crusade is based on economic principles above all other considerations. The chief source of Mamluk superiority is trade. The western maritime powers send their ships to the trade emporia of Egypt and Syria for the purchase of goods imported from India and the Far East. By this means they enrich the sultans with Christian money which they employ in fighting the Christians in Palestine. Furthermore, some of the Christian states themselves perfidiously supply the enemy with war material from European markets and with slaves from Kaffa and elsewhere, destined to feed the Mamluk ranks with warriors. Past experience has taught Christians the hopelessness of depending solely on armed expeditions for the recovery of the Holy Land. In order to defeat the Mamluks, the Christians must first drain their foes' economic resources and stop their slave trade with the Tatars. Therefore, a general ban on trade with the Islamic states in the Near East should be declared by the papacy on pain of excommunication and interdict. Next, a maritime blockade should be enforced on the Moslem shores of Egypt and Syria. Special galleys should stand by to guard the waters of the Levant against intrusion and intercept any Moslem craft attempting to reach the western world. If this blockade were rigorously sustained over a period of three years, the Mamluk sultans would be completely crippled, and their resources of men and material dried up. It is only then that the Christians might conduct their crusade with assured success for the recapture and retention of the Holy Land.

In reality, the examples mentioned represent only a fraction of

14. Ed. J. Bongars in *Gesta dei per Francos* . . . (2 vols. in 1, Hanover, 1611); partial trans. by A. Stewart for Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society (London, 1896).

the vast propagandist literature originating from the pens of theorists, ideologists, and pilgrims of various nations in the west during the fourteenth century. In the meantime, the idea of an alliance with the Mongols for joint action against Islam, formulated in the age of Innocent IV (1243–1254) and Louis IX (1226–1270), continued to haunt the imagination of western potentates even after the decline of the crusade. During this period the most striking efforts to convert the Mongols to Christianity are exemplified by the heroic careers of John of Monte Corvino and his worthy contemporary Odoric of Pordenone, whose lives and activities are landmarks in Far Eastern missionary history. Settled at Khanbaliq after extensive peregrinations in Asia, John of Monte Corvino became the original founder of the Catholic church in Cathay. He might have passed unnoticed by the west had one of his letters not accidentally reached pope Clement V. In 1304, he is said to have baptized five thousand souls at what is now Peking, and built two churches. He may have translated the New Testament and the Psalter into the Mongol language, which he had mastered, though this remains to be proved. It was probably in the second decade of the century that Odoric joined him at Khanbaliq after one of the longest journeys on record in the Middle Ages. Odoric took the route to China by way of Constantinople, Tabriz, Baghdad, Hormuz, then by sea to Malabar, Ceylon, and Madras, whence he attained Sumatra and Java in the East Indies, finally reaching Zaitun (probably Tsinkiang) and Khanbaliq. He returned to Avignon in 1330 completely exhausted, to die at Udine in the following year. In the meantime John, who had been elected bishop of Sultaniyeh and the Far East, had died in 1328. When James of Florence was murdered at an unknown place in the heart of China in 1362, it may be said that Catholic Christianity had come to an end in those remote regions, though the idea of joint action with the Mongols never died, but lay dormant in the western mind until Christopher Columbus revived it by his westward journey to India, only to discover the New World and give history a new orientation.<sup>15</sup>

While the propagandists were busy stirring up the medieval mind for the crusade, a number of leading men decided to take positive action. Thus a series of minor preludes led the way to the greater campaigns of the second half of the fourteenth century. Apart from some abortive attempts against the Byzantine empire, the first expedition to come within the category of holy warfare at this time was

15. See below, chapters XV and XVIII.

the Aegean crusade, which resulted in the capture of Smyrna in 1344.<sup>16</sup> After prolonged negotiations between the Roman see and Venice, pope Clement VI in a memorandum dated August 1343 proclaimed the formation of a Holy League to suppress Turkish aggression. The constituent members of the League agreed among themselves on raising a fleet of twenty galleys to intercept Turkish movements in the Archipelago; Venice was ready to provide six, the pope four, king Hugh IV of Cyprus four, and the Hospitallers six. Clement VI finally nominated Henry of Asti, the Latin patriarch of Constantinople, as head of the coalition fleet and Martin Zaccaria, the Genoese former lord of Chios, as commander of his naval squadron. Venice appointed Peter Zeno admiral of the Venetian galleys. They met at Negroponte and were joined by the remaining ships from Cyprus and Rhodes, now the seat of the Hospitallers, under their master Hélión of Villeneuve. The joint fleet then sailed toward Anatolia and took the city of Smyrna by surprise, though the citadel was held by Umur Pasha, emir of Aydin. Their armies made a triumphant entry into the city on October 28, 1344. It would remain in the hands of the Christians until the whole of Asia Minor was seized by the invincible hordes of Timur after the battle of Ankara in 1402.

The crusade of Humbert II of Viennois was the natural continuation to the success of the Holy League in the Aegean. Meager as it may seem, the capture of Smyrna was hailed by the pontiff as the beginning of the end of the sorrows and humiliation of the Latins in the Near East. Processions were ordained to commemorate the victory in the streets of Avignon. The pope urged the kings of England and France, Edward III Plantagenet and Philip VI of Valois, to desist from the Hundred Years' War and unite their forces against their common enemy. He wrote the doge of Venice a congratulatory message to induce him to persist in his struggle against the Turks. In brief, western Europe seemed astir, and another Godfrey of Bouillon was expected to emerge on the scene of events and lead the Christian hosts to a crushing victory over the forces of Islam.

It was at this moment that Humbert II, dauphin of Viennois, a very unhappy man, took to the idea of the crusade. The death of his only son and heir had left him inconsolable, and he had resolved to drown his grief in fighting the Moors in Spain and to atone for his past disaffection with ecclesiastics by serving the Roman see. As soon as the news of the fall of Smyrna reached the west in December

16. See Paul Lemerle, *L'Émirat d'Aydin, Byzance et l'occident* (Bibliothèque byzantine, Études, II; Paris, 1957), pp. 180–203, and cf. below, pp. 294–295.

1344, he decided to deflect his project from Spain and continue the Aegean campaign under the auspices of the pope. After renouncing his feudal rights over the Dauphiné, which would ultimately go to the French crown, he offered to equip five galleys with twelve bannerets, three hundred knights, and a thousand arbalesters. In return, he requested that the pope grant him the high command of the crusade, allow him the proceeds of the usual tithes, and recognize his suzerainty over all the conquered territories. With some reluctance, Clement VI and his cardinals approved these terms on condition that Humbert should remain in the east for three years with some hundred men-at-arms. Finally the "Captain-General of the Crusade against the Turks and the Unfaithful to the Holy Church of Rome," as Humbert was styled, sailed from Marseilles in September 1345 and disembarked at Genoa, to cross Lombardy to Venice and, after weeks of negotiation, resume his voyage. He was urged by the pope to proceed, if possible, to the Genoese colony of Kaffa across the Black Sea, and to help in its relief from the Tatars, who were besieging the whole of the Crimea.

When Humbert reached the Aegean, he allowed himself to become involved in the futile diplomatic and military broils of the Genoese with the members of the League and the Latins of the Orient to such an extent that he suffered some losses at the hands of the Genoese in the waters of Negroponte. Afterwards, he seems to have scored some minor successes over Turkish mariners on the high sea and later at Smyrna. But until the summer of 1347, he neither attained the Black Sea nor achieved any substantial victories over the enemies of his faith. Meanwhile his wife died, and her death completed the tragedy of his private life. In despair, he suddenly decided to relinquish all his plans and retire to France, where he became a Dominican friar. The pope absolved him from his previous obligations and, in 1351, even granted him the honorary title of Latin patriarch of Alexandria. On January 24, 1354, he was nominated bishop of Paris, but he died at Clermont at the age of forty-three before reaching his new see. To the end, he preferred to retain the semblance of his old titles and subscribed himself "the late dauphin of Viennois."

The highwater mark in the history of the Levantine crusade in later medieval times was reached during the reign of Peter I de Lusignan, Latin king of Cyprus (1359-1369). Since the extermination of the crusader states in the Holy Land, Cyprus had become one of the chief bulwarks of western Christianity in the eastern Mediterranean. It was therefore natural that its Latin monarchs should do

everything in their power to enhance the cause of holy war against their dangerous Moslem neighbors. Thus the island, which became an important trade emporium for the Latins, also turned out to be a key point in crusading activities. As a beginning, the Lusignan kings conducted several minor attacks on some of the coastal towns of Mamluk Syria and Turkish Anatolia. Peter managed indeed to capture the city of Adalia and some other smaller settlements on the southern coast of Asia Minor, but these successes proved to be merely modest forerunners to the sack of Alexandria in 1365.<sup>17</sup>

Peter's closest associates in the forthcoming fray were Peter [de] Thomas and Philip of Mézières, two of the outstanding figures in the propaganda for the crusade. Peter Thomas became Latin patriarch of Constantinople and apostolic legate for the east in 1364. Thenceforth he devoted himself to the twofold task of converting the Orthodox Greeks to the Roman creed and promoting the cause of holy war against Moslems in the Levant. Realizing the tenacity of the Greeks in matters of faith, he found it more advantageous to dwell in Cyprus with a king who shared his aspirations and with his disciple Philip of Mézières.

When these three champions of the crusade assembled in Cyprus, war with the Moslems became a foregone conclusion. Peter's occupation of Adalia in 1361 only whetted the king's appetite for further and greater victories against the Moslems in other fields. In order to ensure the success of his *passagium generale*, the king embarked on a European tour to implore the sovereigns of western Christendom for manpower and materiel. He sailed from Famagusta in the company of the patriarch Peter Thomas and his chancellor Philip of Mézières on October 24, 1362. After a short halt at Rhodes, where he was encouraged by the Hospitallers and their master Roger de Pins, he landed with his suite at Venice on December 5, 1362. He had a royal reception in the commune and obtained promises from the doge Lorenzo Celsi to supply the crusade with indispensable galleys. The king then led a triumphant journey through the north Italian towns of Mestre, Padua, Verona, Milan, Pavia, and Genoa, where he spent more than a month to reconcile the Genoese and win their sympathy and maritime aid for his project. Then he proceeded to Avignon, the seat of pope Urban V, where he successfully carried out some important negotiations under papal auspices with the French king John II the Good, who promised full support to the august visitor. The pope then officially declared the crusade on April 14 and appointed cardinal Elias Talleyrand of Perigord apostolic legate for

17. On Peter I and the sack of Alexandria see also below, pp. 353-357.

the campaign, while the two kings took the cross from Urban's hands. Thence Peter traversed almost the whole of the European continent in search of recruits and material aid from its various potentates and great feudatories. He followed a rather circuitous route across France, Flanders, Brabant, Germany, and back to Paris to discuss concrete details with John II, then traveled around Brittany and Normandy until he sailed from the port of Calais to England. He was received with honor at Smithfield by Edward III, who paid all his expenses during his stay in England and presented him with a good ship named Catherine, costing 12,000 francs.

Afterward, Peter spent Christmas of 1363 in Paris and went to meet the Black Prince in Aquitaine, where the news of the death of king John in April 1364 forced his return to the French capital to attend the royal funeral. He had to renew negotiations with John's successor, Charles V the Wise, who was more restrained in his promises than his late father. After assisting in the coronation ceremony at the cathedral of Rheims, the train of the Cypriote monarch again penetrated Central Europe and won more adherents to the cause, notably at the courts of margrave Frederick III of Meissen, duke Rudolph II of Saxony, and even the Holy Roman emperor Charles IV at Prague, in addition to the kings of Hungary and Poland. Jousts, tournaments, and all manner of festivities were held in his honor everywhere. Cracow was probably the farthest point that he attained eastward. Finally, his entry into Venice was registered on November 11, 1364, and soon afterward he and his chivalry boarded the Venetian fleet prepared for the occasion.

While the king thus journeyed throughout Europe, diplomatic action was conducted by the papal curia in other fields. Cardinal Talleyrand had died, so Urban V appointed Peter Thomas as his successor in the crusade. The new legate and Philip of Mézières were the chief instigators in papal activities. Letters were sealed by the pontiff inviting all the sovereigns of Europe to join the crusade, and papal bulls were issued at Avignon to grant the usual privileges together with plenary indulgences to all crusaders. Men of many nations had already been waiting at Venice before the king's arrival, and a number of small companies are said to have sailed from Otranto and Genoa, though the Genoese contribution was much more modest than that of the Venetians in this campaign. All the forces were ordered to converge in the waters of Rhodes, and the king and his retinue finally set sail from Venice on June 27, 1365. Their ultimate objective was guarded as a close secret within the limited circle of his most trusted advisors. He feared the perfidy of

the Venetians, who he suspected might betray the destination of the crusade to the enemy in exchange for trade privileges.

The joint fleet which was convened at Rhodes from Cyprus, Venice, and elsewhere between June and October 1365 totaled about 165 vessels, including transports, galleys, and all manner of sea-craft. In the end, the various contingents went aboard their respective ships on Saturday, October 4, 1365, in readiness for their unknown destination. The waters of Rhodes rang with their war cries, and the captains were ordered to sail parallel to the southern coast of Anatolia. Off the little island of Crambusa, the aim of the campaign was announced and the fleet was ordered to turn south in the direction of the city of Alexandria, which they sighted on Thursday, October 9.

Alexandria was undoubtedly one of the most important seaports not only in the Mamluk empire but in the whole of the Mediterranean basin. Its remarkable hostels and bazaars abounded in all manner of merchandise. Its markets surged with tradesmen from the east and the west, for here was the center of exchange of the staples and goods of all nations. The immense revenues levied by the sultan from these vast transactions filled his coffers with the money necessary for the purchase of the implements of war and the slaves used in fighting the Christians, more especially since the breakdown of the European maritime blockade. Peter's decision to capture Alexandria and use it as a base for further conquests to disable Egypt was regarded as wise, and the times were propitious for the campaign. Ibn-'Arrām, governor of the city, was absent on a pilgrimage to Mecca. The reigning sultan Sha'bān was a small boy of eleven, and his guardian prince Yelbogha abused the wide powers with which he was entrusted. The Mamluk battalions were torn asunder into factions without an overall leader. Yet it would be wrong to assume that Alexandria was in no position to withstand attacks. The city was strongly fortified with double walls and a series of invulnerable towers. Its arsenal was full of war materiel, even though the number of regular troops was depleted. The unexpected collapse of the defense was due to other unforeseen causes.

When Peter made a forced landing, after some opposition which his men crushed with little difficulty, the crusaders began to attack the Green Gate on October 10. They soon saw the futility of their endeavors, since the upper walls were heavily guarded in that area. Later in the day, however, they discovered that the section of the walls overlooking the Custom-House Gate was completely undefended. That gate opened from the inside to the Custom-House,

which was locked by the customs officer Ibn-Ghurāb to prevent theft of the goods stored therein. Meanwhile, a great tower barred access from the part of the wall above the Green Gate to that above the Custom-House Gate. That gap in the defense provided the attackers with their sole opportunity, which they seized immediately by burning the undefended gate while others employed ladders to mount the wall. The bewildered Egyptians watched the assault and then hastened toward the land gates to save their lives. These are the main data on which William of Machaut<sup>18</sup> and an-Nuwairī al-Iskandarī,<sup>19</sup> the two historians and eye-witnesses of the crusade from the opposing camps, are in full agreement.

For the rest of the story, we have to rely on the Egyptian annalist—that is, from the occupation of the city on October 10 to its evacuation on October 16. The havoc that followed the appearance of the Christian knights within the walls was indescribable. Masses of inhabitants thronged the narrow circuitous lanes with their light treasures, pushing toward the Rosetta Gate in the east and the southern land gates. The miserable fate of those who lagged behind was sealed, for they were either killed or carried into captivity. The trade storehouses were pillaged, and what could not be carried away was destroyed. Public buildings and emptied warehouses were set aflame. The sack of the city was completed systematically, and in that short span of time the “Queen of the Mediterranean” was left in a state of irreparable wreckage; even the Coptic churches of their fellow Christians of the east were looted. The harmless beasts of burden were put to the sword after the conveyance of the booty, and their bodies were collected and burnt only later by the Moslems on reëntering the city. When all their havoc was accomplished, the looters took to their ships in groups, deserting their posts in the city, much to the disgust of such dedicated leaders of the crusade as the king and his two consultants, Peter Thomas and Philip of Mézières. At this juncture the vanguard of the troops from Cairo, alleged to be some hundred thousand strong, appeared in the outskirts of the city.

In the end, after some futile negotiations between Yelbogha's emissaries and the king on board one of his galleys, the Christian fleet sailed back home laden with booty and without releasing the

18. Ed. Louis de Mas Latrie as *La Prise d'Alexandrie ou chronique du roi Pierre I<sup>er</sup> de Lusignan* (Société de l'Orient latin, série historique, no. 1; Geneva, 1877).

19. Or, as he describes himself, “al-Iskandarānī.” Excerpts ed. É. Combe, in Farouk University, Faculty of Arts, *Bulletin (Majallat Kulliyat al-ādāb)*, III (Alexandria, 1946), 99–110, 119–129. The full text of an-Nuwairī's “Kitāb al-ilmām” dealing with the crusade from the Egyptian side has been published by the present writer in 6 vols., in the *Da'iratu'l-Ma'arif-il-'Osmania* (new series, Hyderabad, 1968–1973).



Moslem captives. There ensued a series of minor incidents during the next four years. Prolonged negotiations were interrupted by Cypriote raids on the Syrian and Egyptian shores to force a written peace treaty out of the sultan's hands. But Yelbogha was only playing for time while Egypt was diligently importing timber from Syria to construct a fleet for retaliation on Cyprus. The Egyptians never forgot the calamity which had befallen them at Alexandria, and the Cypriotes were doomed to pay a heavy price for their untoward adventure.<sup>20</sup> Peter Thomas died at Famagusta in 1366; his disciple Philip of Mézières did not return to Cyprus after the assassination of Peter I in 1369. He later became tutor to the French crown prince Charles (VI).

Perhaps the main immediate result of the sack of Alexandria was the promotion of another crusade which took place in a totally different region. As soon as the tidings of the triumph achieved at Alexandria were circulated in the west, a wave of excitement swept the European courts for the continuation of the work so auspiciously reinaugurated by Cyprus. Pope Urban V at Avignon was overjoyed, while Charles V of France delegated John d'Olivier to inform Peter de Lusignan that his hosts would soon join the Cypriotes in a final effort to rout the Moslems and return the Holy Land to the Latins. Bertrand du Guesclin renewed his crusading vow, and Florimont of Lesparre actually reached Cyprus with a band of followers for the purpose of aiding the king in his strife. Still more important was the project of count Amadeo VI of Savoy, who had previously taken the cross with king Peter from Urban's hands at Avignon. As he was preparing to sail to Cyprus, the Venetians told him, allegedly, that peace had been concluded with Egypt. In any event, he directed the new expedition toward Byzantium to fight the Turks and Bulgars. Amadeo was motivated to take up arms in the Balkans by his relationship with John V Palaeologus, his cousin.

In January 1366 the count began his preparations for what was intended to be a *passagium generale*. In addition to his own feudal militia, he recruited great numbers of mercenaries from Italy, Germany, France, and England. His fleet, totaling fifteen galleys, was to sail in three squadrons from Venice, Genoa, and Marseilles, with Coron in the southern Morea as their rendezvous, whence concerted action would begin according to a preconceived plan. The count himself sailed from the lagoons of Venice on June 11, 1366, and all the galleys reunited at Coron on July 19. After settling a local dispute

20. See below, pp. 371-375.

between Angelo, the Latin archbishop of Patras, and Marie of Bourbon, the titular empress of Constantinople, Amadeo's ships proceeded toward their first objective, Gallipoli, across the Aegean by way of Negroponte. Gallipoli had been the earliest European prey to Ottoman aggression when in 1354 it was wrested by sultan Orkhan from emperor John VI Cantacuzenus; thenceforth that peninsula had become the chief landing place for the Asian troops on European soil and a magnificent base for military operations in the Balkans. It was in August that the crusaders landed there and took the town of Gallipoli by surprise. After the Moslem garrison fled from the invaders, Amadeo appointed Aimon Michel captain of the citadel and entrusted James of Lucerne with the governorship of the town. He left the German company with them as a garrison and set sail for Constantinople.

On his arrival in September, Amadeo discovered that his imperial cousin had been detained at Vidin because the Bulgarians would not permit him safe passage through their territory. This proved fatal to the campaign against the Turks, since Amadeo pursued the Bulgarians to regain John V's freedom instead of purging the Balkans of Moslem contingents. The count, wisely avoiding the treacherous land route to the heart of Bulgaria, sailed through the Bosphorus and northward on the Black Sea until he landed at a small place named Sozopolis. His men took it by storm, together with a few other Bulgarian coastal towns including Mesembria, until they finally laid siege to the fortified city of Varna. Realizing the impregnability of its walls and towers, however, he decided to send a group of envoys to negotiate the liberation of John V. An agreement was reached whereby the emperor was freed and the siege of Varna was raised. The campaign lasted from October till December and the smaller towns were ceded to the Greeks against the payment of a sum which helped Amadeo to meet his liabilities to the mercenaries, soon to be disbanded after their year's term of service. At the same time, Amadeo tried hard to persuade John to accede to the principle of the reunion of the eastern church with Rome, but his efforts were foiled by the Greeks, who hated the Latins. In the end, the party sailed from Pera on June 4, 1367, and reached Venice on July 31. The count visited Urban V, now in Rome, and ultimately regained Turin, his capital.

A lull in crusading activities followed the indecisive campaigns of Peter de Lusignan and Amadeo of Savoy. Toward the beginning of the last decade of the fourteenth century, the center of crusading

gravity was moving slightly to the west, where in France the "good duke" of Bourbon, Louis II of Clermont, was persuaded by the Genoese to lead a joint crusade with them in North Africa. Genoese trade had been suffering considerably at the hands of Saracen corsairs in the western Mediterranean, and some drastic measures had to be taken to save their merchant fleet from imminent dangers of piracy. The Hafsid kings of Tunisia encouraged the Moorish pirates, whose chief nest was the strong town of Mahdia, known in the French sources as the "Cité d'Auffrique"; and the Genoese therefore decided to launch a great campaign against it. On the other hand, Louis of Bourbon was fascinated by the idea of marching in the steps of the great St. Louis by conducting a crusade against the city of Tunis. A compromise was reached in 1390 by the allied parties. The Genoese republic provided the fleet with its equipment and manpower, while the duke recruited an army of fifteen thousand, comprising nobles, knights, men-at-arms, and squires. The Avignonese pope Clement VII granted plenary absolution from sins to all those who joined the crusade, and the French king issued royal ordinances empowering Louis to carry out the enterprise. Gentlemen from France, England, Hainault, and Flanders hastened to enlist under the ducal banner. John Centurione Oltramarino was appointed admiral of the fleet and was accompanied by one thousand arbalesters and two thousand men-at-arms in addition to four thousand mariners from Genoa. The French embarked from Marseilles, and the foreign contingents took to the sea from Genoa. After an uneasy voyage, the ships reassembled at the islet of Conigliera, sixteen leagues off the African coast, and within reasonable reach of Mahdia. They halted at that island for nine days for recuperation and for consideration of their tactics. This delay gave the Tunisians time to muster their forces for the coming battle and to reinforce the city garrison.

The landing of the Christians took place without interruption just outside Mahdia. Then they remained in a continuous state of war for nearly two months of the merciless African summer. On the whole, the city garrison assumed a strictly defensive attitude, while the joint armies of the kingdoms of Tunisia, Bugia, and Tlemsen unremittingly harassed the Christians from outside without allowing themselves to be drawn into an open or decisive battle with them. Though prodigies of valor were allegedly displayed and all manner of war machinery was used, the issue remained undecided until the Genoese secretly began to treat with the enemies in favor of their trade interests. A truce was concluded for ten years, during which the Moslems were bound to abstain from all acts of piracy on the high

seas. Aḥmad, the ruler of Tunisia, also promised to pay an annual tribute for fifteen years to the Genoese for retaining Mahdia in Moslem hands, and further, to pay an immediate war indemnity of 25,000 ducats, to be shared between the duke and the commune. Both sides were exhausted, and the Christian council of war approved the treaty, with the duke insisting that he should be the last to board a galley. The armies reached Europe in October 1390. The Genoese had achieved their aims, and the crusaders had unwittingly helped in the fulfillment of the Genoese aspirations. In other words, the duke and his contingents proved to be a cat's-paw for the clever Genoese merchants, and the Barbary crusade failed to accomplish its original purpose as a holy war.<sup>21</sup>

The pious propagandists and earnest crusaders had again suffered disillusionment, and their spiritual agonies were voiced in the works of Philip of Mézières, who had retired in 1380 to the convent of the Celestines in Paris, to devote himself to crusade propaganda until his death in 1405. The period between the campaign of 1390 and the crusade of Nicopolis in 1396 represents the peak of Philip's prolific output in the field of propagandist literature. It was then indeed that his project of a New Militia found its fullest expression in several new tracts, notably in his unpublished epistle to Richard II dated 1395.<sup>22</sup> The importance of this document lies in the fact that it was semi-official, since it was submitted by order of Charles VI of France to the English king. In its nine "materes," or chapters, he preached peace between the two monarchs and the unity of their armies with the New Militia in order to serve effectively the cause of the crusade. Although the proposition was not discountenanced in either of the two courts, its supporters had to turn elsewhere for a leader of the new movement, and this they found in rich Burgundy. Its duke Philip II the Bold wanted his son, John of Nevers, to be knighted in the field of honor fighting the "infidels" and, moreover, to earn much prestige for his duchy by leading the crusade.

The time was ripe for war in the east. Alarming news had reached the west about the advance of the Ottoman Turks even beyond the confines of the Byzantine empire. King Sigismund of Hungary sent John of Kanizsay, the archbishop of Gran, to solicit help at the French court in 1395. The response to the call for a crusade was widespread among the French nobility, particularly in Burgundy.

21. On Louis of Bourbon's crusade see also below, pp. 481-483. Apparently neither the indemnity nor the tribute was ever paid.

22. British Museum, MS. 20, B VI.

John (le Meingre) Boucicault, marshal of France, the admiral John of Vienne, Enguerrand of Coucy, Philip and Henry of Bar, Guy and William of Trémolay, and many other nobles of distinction took the cross and came with followers, feudal retainers, and mercenary troops to join the movement. Elaborate preparations for this Hungarian voyage were undertaken everywhere, especially in Burgundy, where nothing was overlooked and no expense spared, according to Froissart's report.<sup>23</sup> Benedict XIII, the Avignonese pope, issued a series of bulls in the course of 1395 to release John of Nevers, now recognized as head of the Franco-Burgundian contingents, from certain vows and to grant him and all his followers the usual plenary absolution from sins on the occasion of the crusade. Still earlier, the Roman pope, Boniface IX, had already declared the holy war in the countries adhering to his obedience in east Central Europe in 1394. The Great Schism of the church in the west did not affect the unanimity of all parties in regard to this crusade.

The news spread far and wide in the western states, and auxiliary armies began to form in Germany and elsewhere. The German crusaders were led by the palsgrave Rupert II (Ruprecht Pipan), the count of Katzenellenbogen,<sup>24</sup> count Hermann II of Cilly, and burgrave John III of Nuremberg. Although it was formerly believed that a large English contingent participated in the crusade, the contemporary sources do not justify this view.<sup>25</sup> A few Englishmen did take part, and similarly small numbers of volunteers and mercenaries were raised from Spain and the Italian communes. But the main bulk of the army accompanied Sigismund from Hungary, and detachments of no mean size also came from the eastern European countries of Bohemia, Poland, and, above all, Wallachia. The total numbers of the combined forces have been estimated at anywhere from ten to a hundred thousand strong.<sup>26</sup>

23. Ed. J. M. Kervyn de Lettenhove, 25 vols. (Brussels, 1870-1877); also numerous other editions and translations, including abridged version of Thomas Johnes's text as revised by H. P. Dunster, in *Everyman's Library* (London and New York, 1906), p. 540. Cf. the account of J. Delaville Le Roulx, *La France en Orient au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle: Expéditions du Maréchal Boucicaut* (Paris, 1886), pp. 211-299.

24. Alois Brauner, *Die Schlacht bei Nikopolis, 1396* (Breslau, 1876), p. 10, identifies him as John III, of three contemporaries who held this title.

25. See C. L. Tipton, "The English at Nicopolis," *Speculum*, XXXVII (1962), 528-540.

26. The units of the crusading army have been estimated as follows: French and Burgundians, 10,000; Germans, 6,000; English, 1,000; Hungarians, 60,000; Wallachians, 10,000; with the other 13,000 comprising Bohemian, Polish, Spanish, and Italian volunteers, and mercenaries; A. S. Atiya, *The Crusade of Nicopolis* (London, 1934), pp. 66-67, 184, notes, and *idem*, *The Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (London, 1938), p. 440, note 7. But cf. R. Rosetti, "Notes on the Battle of Nicopolis," *Slavonic and East European Review*, XV (1937), 636, estimating each side's strength at 10,000 to 20,000.

The Franco-Burgundian forces started from Dijon in April 1396 and pursued the route along the Danube. Their general rendezvous with the other contingents was Buda, where all the leaders held a council of war with Sigismund to consider future plans and tactics. This must have taken place in late July or early August 1396. Sigismund suggested the adoption of defensive tactics, which he knew from experience to be more effective in dealing with the Turks. His advice was rejected outright by the western generals, who, according to Froissart, had come "to conquer the whole of Turkey and to march into the empire of Persia, . . . the kingdom of Syria, and the Holy Land."

The united armies thus moved south as far as Orsova and crossed the Danube at the Iron Gate. From that point, the real campaign began with several minor successes. The crusaders seized the towns of Vidin and Rahova in Bulgaria, and evidently they did not discriminate between the Turkish garrisons and the original Orthodox Christian natives. Their victorious march south of the Danube, marked by atrocities, met its first check at the strong city of Nicopolis, which they reached on September 10. Nicopolis was built on a fortified hill overlooking the Danube to the north and a vast plain to the south. It was surrounded by double walls and invulnerable towers, and was impossible for the crusaders to take by storm, so they decided to lay siege to it. Although the Venetians had agreed to provide naval support for the crusade, their flotilla never came near Nicopolis. The grand master Philibert of Naillac, however, did appear with a contingent of Hospitallers. The siege lasted fifteen days. During that period, no constructive measures were taken to face future emergencies; the besiegers wasted the time in gambling, orgies, and debauchery.

The position on the Turkish side stood in complete contrast to that of the Christian camp. Sultan Bayazid I, called "the Thunderbolt" (Yıldırım), was besieging Constantinople when the news of the advent of the crusaders was communicated to him from Nicopolis. He raised the siege immediately and mustered all his Asian and European troops for the relief of Nicopolis, which he reached on September 24 with an army about the size of the crusaders'.<sup>27</sup> But although the two camps were numerically almost equal, the Turks were far superior to the Christians in discipline, unified action, tactics, and unflagging leadership.

27. The Turks have been estimated to have had a 34,000-man vanguard of infantry, 30,000 cavalry in the "main battle," and 40,000 more cavalry in the rear guard and the sultan's bodyguard; Atiya, *Nicopolis*, pp. 68-69, 185, note, and *Later Middle Ages*, p. 446, note 3. But see preceding note for smaller estimate.

In the first instance, Sigismund urged the French and foreign contingents to remain in the rear for the decisive blow in the forthcoming battle, but these protested vigorously against a plan which would in their opinion deprive them of the honor of leading a victory. Sigismund pleaded that the Hungarians were more conversant with Turkish methods of war, and that he wanted to plant the Wallachians in the van rather than leave them in the rear on account of their doubtful allegiance, but his plea was without avail. On Monday, September 25, the French and allied legions occupied the main battle in the van for the first assault, while the greater masses of the Hungarians, Wallachians, and other eastern European contingents were stationed in the rear. Whereas the Christians occupied the plains, the Ottomans arranged their lines on a southern hill in a very strong position. Bayazid placed his irregular light cavalry (akinjis) on the hillside facing the Christians with a thick field of long, pointed stakes behind them. Next above stood the foot-archers (janissaries and azabs). The French and allied contingents galloped uphill with their heavy shire horses and had no difficulty in routing the mounted Turkish vanguard. The survivors fled right and left to regroup their formations behind the archers in readiness to resume hostilities. Confronted by the stakes and exposed to Turkish arrows, the Christian front lines had to dismount and pull the stakes in order to reach the Ottoman bowmen for hand-to-hand fighting. With considerable effort and some losses, they achieved their purpose and inflicted heavy slaughter on the Turks, who fled for their lives toward the hilltop pursued by the Christians. On attaining the summit completely exhausted, the latter, to their horror, saw Bayazid's picked cavalry (sipahis), together with his vassal Serbs under Stephen Lazarevich, several thousand strong, hidden behind the skyline. Thus the pursuers became the pursued and the slaughter was reversed even more fiercely, while the survivors were carried into captivity.

The position of the Hungarians and Wallachians had become desperate even before the Turks descended on the plain. The stampede of the riderless horses discarded before the field of stakes was taken in the rear as a sign of discomfiture, and the Wallachians started to withdraw. Confusion followed in the Hungarian lines as a consequence, though Sigismund and his loyal feudatories continued to fight as hard and as long as was humanly possible. In the end, he had to take to flight with some of his leading men, the grand master of Rhodes, and the burgrave of Nuremberg. They boarded a small boat and floated down the Danube to the Black Sea, whence they returned in Venetian galleys to their respective homes by way of

Constantinople, Rhodes, and Ragusa. The rest of their men, apart from the few who managed to save themselves by hurried flight through the neighboring woods, were either killed or imprisoned.

Later, Bayazid was startled when he realized his own losses, estimated at "thirty thousand," and his wrath was demonstrated in the treatment of the three thousand Christian prisoners on the morrow of the day of the battle. Stripped of their clothes and tied together with ropes, the captives were led before the sultan in groups to be decapitated in cold blood. Bayazid discovered among them a certain James of Helly, whom he had previously employed in his eastern campaigns and who knew Turkish. It was through his mediation that the French and Burgundian nobility escaped the rank and file's grim fate; their lives were spared for the heavy ransom of 200,000 gold florins. Among others, these included John of Nevers, Enguerrand of Coucy, Guy of Trémolay, and Philip of Artois, count of Eu. Young men under twenty were spared for sale in the slave markets of the Levant or presentation to other Moslem potentates. The news of the complete discomfiture of the crusaders overwhelmed European society with deep grief, which was alleviated only slightly by the return of the few noble captives after the payment of their heavy ransom.

The downfall of the western chivalry on the field of Nicopolis marked the end of any hope that the Ottoman empire could be destroyed by Christendom, and Turkey was accepted as a European power. Though the road to the Hungarian plains was open before the Turks after Sigismund's disaster and flight, Bayazid preferred to consolidate his Balkan possessions and bide his time for further expansion. Meanwhile, the crusade had become an anachronism. Only a few revered its memory and continued to work hard at resuscitating the moribund movement. After the defeat of 1396, Philip of Mézières, in his retreat in the convent of the Celestines in Paris, composed yet another of his famous epistles, which he entitled *Epistre lamentable et consolatoire* and presented to the duke of Burgundy.<sup>28</sup> In it, he enumerates the causes of the calamity and prescribes remedies for healing the wounds of Christendom, which lacked the four virtues of good governance—Order, Discipline, Obedience, and Justice. In their stead, the three daughters of Lucifer—Vanity, Covetousness, and Luxury—ruled the whole society. The "Nova Militia Passionis" is termed the only hope for the eradication of these vices and for redeeming the honor of (western) Christendom. Philip extols the principles of his new organization, representing the *summa*

28. Extracts in vol. XVI of Froissart's *Chroniques*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove.



*perfectio*, to ensure victory for his three “estates” of kings, nobility, and bourgeoisie, equivalent to the classes of commanders, cavalry, and infantry in the forthcoming campaigns against “miscreants.” Again, Philip preaches peace and goodwill among all Christians of the west, and he advises the duke of Burgundy, the kings of France and England, and all good Catholics to join forces to avenge their humiliation in the east and restore the birthplace of Christ to Rome. But Philip of Mézières was, to use his own words, an old dreamer—a voice from the past in a world of change. The crusade of Nicopolis was the last serious attempt by western Europe at united offensive action of the traditional kind in the history of the holy war against Islam.



## 2. Central Europe