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CHAPTER THREE

The Crusade in the Later Middle Ages

INTRODUCTION

CRUSADING HISTORIOGRAPHY, as already stated, has recently been subject to considerable revision and emendation, and older concepts have given way to new schools of thought. Until the last few decades, historians identified the span of the Crusade movement with the duration of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem on the Asiatic mainland. Inaugurated by Urban II's memorable speech at Clermont-Ferrand in 1095, the holy war presumably ended with the tragic exit of the Franks from Palestine in 1291–92. This cataclysmic view of the Crusade has been repudiated in the light of cumulative research in the field; and in the present chapter an attempt will be made to outline the fate of the movement after the fall of Acre on the Syrian coast to the Egyptians toward the close of the thirteenth century. Notwithstanding ostensible changes in its basic motives, the continuance of the Crusading movement in the later Middle Ages will be proved beyond any shadow of doubt from a quick survey of the events. Strictly speaking, the fourteenth century was the age of the later Crusade in its fuller

sense. Afterward in the course of the fifteenth century, the Crusade began to lose its real significance and ended in becoming a forlorn cause without hope of resuscitation.

The first half of the fourteenth century, extending roughly from 1292 to 1344, abounds in propagandist literature for the resumption of the Crusade. The second half of the century, lasting from 1344 to 1396, is a period of successive Crusading campaigns in the East. That century witnessed a number of monumental changes in the delineation of the traditional frontiers of Crusading terrain. Hitherto, holy war had been confined to the area of the Near East. In the later Middle Ages it reached distant horizons beyond the Holy Land in almost every direction. Though lacking in the qualities of vigor and valor, and in the sensational achievements of the early Crusaders, the fourteenth-century movement left its impression on the annals of mankind by the spectacular opening of the way to Cathay. The exploratory adventures of the Latin missionary at the court of the Mongol kingdom of Khān Bāliq * signalled a revolution in the geographical lore of the Middle Ages. The idea of collaboration with the Mongols, after their conversion to Christianity, in the struggle against the Mamluk sultans of Egypt and Syria has sometimes been described as the "Mongol" or "Tartar Crusade." This became a major feature in the propagandist literature of the time, and the idea was espoused by Popes and kings. The enlargement of the map of the Old World was, in a sense, a byproduct of the Later Crusade.

Though the final goal of the whole movement remained the acquisition of the Holy Land, the fourteenth-century Crusaders appear to have pursued their quests by devious ways, through attacking or sacking other ostensibly more important centers in the Muslim Empire, which, it was thought, should first be enfeebled and impoverished before making any serious landing on the shores of Palestine. As will be seen, the new

* Khanbalik or Cambaliech, otherwise Peking in subsequent history.

Crusades were conducted against Anatolia, Egypt, North Africa, and the Balkans rather than the Holy Places.

The seizure of Acre in 1291 by the Muslims, like the fall of Jerusalem earlier in 1187, and the collapse of Constantinople later in 1453, provided Europeans with a rude reminder of the sad state of the East. Other reminders were the wandering or "mendicant" kings from countries of the Near East. Peter I de Lusignan, called "athleta christi" by his chancellor, Philippe de Mézières, spent almost three years (1362–65) roaming from court to court throughout the continent of Europe soliciting aid for his bellicose projects. King Leo VI of Armenia, a disconsolate refugee without a crown, died childless in 1393 in Paris. Between 1399 and 1401 Manuel II Palaeologus left Byzantium on a tour of Western Europe to implore the Holy Pontiff and the strong monarchs of France and England for effective relief for his imperial city, long battered by a succession of Ottoman sieges and assaults. Even after the extinction of the Eastern Empire and the downfall of that great city, an imperial pretender by the name of Thomas Palaeologus took refuge at Rome in 1461. The Crusade, however, had become a defensive rather than offensive movement in the course of the fifteenth century.

FOURTEENTH-CENTURY PROPAGANDISTS AND MISSIONARIES

The fourteenth century was the real age of propaganda for the Crusade, notably in its early decades. This was the natural reaction of the European conscience to a situation which was steadily becoming desperate in the Levant. The failure of the Crusaders to save the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem and defend the city of Acre was one of the most poignant features of the time, and Europe had to search for the reasons of its discomfiture in the face of Islam. This accounts for the avalanche of

propagandist literature which marked that era. In reality, the promoters of the idea of the Crusade seem to have come from all classes of medieval society and included Popes, kings, men of the sword and of the pen, ministers of state and of religion, and an endless stream of pilgrims returning from the holy city with fervent tales to tell about the East. Theorists pondered, not only over the reconquest of the birthplace of Christ, but also over the most effective manner whereby it could be retained in the hands of Christians after the reinstatement of the lost kingdom of Jerusalem.

A certain Thaddeo of Naples, an eyewitness of the Acre catastrophe in 1291, inaugurated the movement with a tract called "Hystoria," in which he described the fate of this last bastion of Latin Christianity on the shores of Palestine. His exhortations for union among all the princes of Catholic Christendom under the leadership of the Church Militant to save "our heritage" were in full conformity with the official policy of the Papacy. Nicholas IV (1288–92), his contemporary, actually planned a "passagium generale" in collaboration with Charles II of Anjou (d. 1309), whose interest in the project was enhanced by his claim to the crown of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem. Even before the fall of Acre, a Franciscan by the name of Fidenzio of Padua advised Pope Nicholas on the details and plan of the projected campaign in a work entitled "Liber Recuperationis Terre Sancte." The maritime blockade of the Muslim Empire, the problem of military bases in Armenia and Syria, naval and land forces, routes to the East, and other important subjects were discussed by the author on the assumption that Acre was still in Christian hands, a fact which minimized the value of some aspects of his counsel. Nevertheless, the pontificate of Nicholas IV did witness the birth of a new phase in the literary and diplomatic propaganda for the Crusade.

The propagandist output of the time is bewildering in its dimensions, and a severe measure of selectivity must necessar-

ily be observed in the treatment of some of its representative or outstanding landmarks. Perhaps the most novel approach to the subject was that ascribed to a Catalan by the name of Raymond Lull, born in 1232 and stoned to death by infuriated Muslims on the shores of North Africa in 1315 or 1316. Lull was one of the most extraordinary personalities of his age or any age. A poet, a philosopher, a writer of at least several hundred books, and the author of a new system of philosophy based on the unity of knowledge as demonstrated in his work entitled "Arbor Scientiae," he was also one of the earliest Orientalists, who mastered the Arabic tongue and even composed Arabic poetry. Though he began his life by promoting a new plan of Crusade in his "Liber de Fine," it soon dawned upon him that it might be more appropriate if he tried to win the Muslims over to Christ, and that by thus saving their souls from perdition, he would eventually bring the Holy Land and the whole world of Islam into the fold of the faithful without violence or the spilling of blood. To him, therefore, the study of Arabic and Islamic theology was a vehicle for the preaching of Christianity, and he became the apostle of missionary work among Muslims. Thrice he crossed over to North Africa with this perilous quest in view. In the first voyage he formulated his debates with a certain ibn 'Ammār, the grand mufti of Tunis, in a treatise called "Disputatio Raymundi Christini et Hamar Sarraceni." In the second, he was immediately seized by the Tunisian authorities and kept behind bars until his deportation by the lenient Muslim governor. In the third, he earned his much-desired crown of martyrdom when he was stoned by an intolerant mob outside the Algerian seaport of Bugia (the Arabic Bijayah), when he had reached the advanced age of eighty-two; his body was recovered by Genoese mariners and deposited in the cathedral of his native town of Las Palmas on the island of Majorca.

At the same time the traditional Crusading spirit was being nurtured at the court of France, where Philip IV (1285–1314),

after humiliating Pope Boniface VIII (1294–1303) in Rome and establishing the Papacy within his realm at Avignon, envisioned the extension of French hegemony over most of the world. Among other things, he wished to install one of his sons at the head of a new Eastern Empire incorporating Byzantium, the Holy Land, and the Mamluk sultanate of Egypt. Apparently he regarded himself as the rightful heir to the universal leadership of the Holy Pontiffs, with the Crusade as the basic element of his foreign policy. Consequently his court harbored men who flourished on feeding royal aspirations with propagandist documents of the highest interest. Notable among them were two famous French jurisconsults, namely, Pierre Dubois and William of Nogaret. Eminent men of action, too, such as James de Molay, grand master of the Templars, Fulk de Villaret, grand master of the Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, Henry II de Lusignan, Latin king of Cyprus, and Benito Zaccharia, the Genoese admiral of the French navy, came to solicit cooperation in executing the French monarch's plans.

The prevailing ideas at his court are best represented in Dubois's remarkable treatise "De Recuperatione Terre Sancte." A medieval publicist of the highest order, Dubois worked out a set of rules for universal governance with his imperious master as the central figure in authority. Political discord among the princes of the West must be eradicated, preferably by persuasion, but if necessary by force. A European tribunal consisting of three high clerics and three laymen should be set up for international arbitration, and economic sanctions could be imposed on recalcitrant states. The right of appeal to the Papacy was maintained; but the Popes must continue to live in France within the French monarch's sphere of influence, as they had done since the beginning of the Babylonian Captivity at Avignon. Church fiefs should be administered by the king, and the ecclesiastical hierarchy must return to the original rule of poverty. The Orders of the Templars and Hospitallers were to

be merged into one organization, and their vast revenues confiscated for use in financing Eastern campaigns. The constitution of the Holy Roman Empire was to be transformed into an hereditary regime with a French prince at its head. The crown of Egypt and the Holy Land after the reconquest would be conferred upon Philip's second son. Details of the new reformed military government of the East were provided, and missionary work among the so-called dissident Eastern Christians, as well as the Muslims, was to be undertaken by scholars conversant with Oriental languages. The keynote to this incongruous patchwork of ideas was evidently the implementation of the Crusade to confirm French supremacy over the rest of the world.

Dubois was a propagandist with preconceived ideas and no personal experience in the field. Of a totally different character was another propagandist, Marino Sanudo the Elder (Il Vecchio) (1274–c. 1343). A rational thinker, Sanudo spent a lifetime in the Levant and was a descendant of the Venetian ducal dynasty of Naxos in the Archipelago. He was a man of great acumen and immense knowledge of an area in which he had travelled far and wide. During his comprehensive peregrinations he managed to collect a tremendous mass of concrete data about the countries of the Near East in the form of accurate descriptions, figures, and statistics. In fact, Sanudo could claim the title of the first statistician in European history.

His argument was preeminently based on economic considerations. If the sultan of Egypt were to be deprived of his chief source of revenue, which was trade, he would ultimately fall into a state of material and military bankruptcy. Consequently the Crusaders could defeat his armies and reconquer and retain the Holy Land without much difficulty. The trade emporia of the Mamluk Empire were the terminal points of the Eastern spice and pepper trade, ardently sought by the maritime powers of southern Europe. They paid a heavy toll to the

enemy of the Cross for the acquisition of these articles. In addition to the enrichment of the sultan's coffers from these dues, Genoa and other Italian communes supplied him, in partial exchange, with war material and slaves from the markets of Caffa and elsewhere destined to swell the Mamluk battalions. Marino Sanudo recorded his reactions to this paradoxical position and his thoughts on the solution of the Western predicament in a monumental work entitled "Secreta Fidelium Crucis," of which the first edition was dedicated to Pope Clement V in 1309 and the second to King Charles IV of France.

After a detailed inquiry, he prescribed a ban on trade with Muslim territories on pain of excommunication and even of interdict. Further, a strict maritime blockade should be organized under papal leadership to watch over the execution of that ban until the resources of Egypt were completely drained and its army starved of men and war material. He estimated that three years would bring about the desired results. Though the plan received the Holy Pontiff's immediate support, it was ultimately defeated by two main circumstances: first the issue of papal dispensations to some Venetian ships to resume trade with the enemy; and second, perfidious Genoese smuggling of war material and slaves to the Egyptian markets in exchange for valuable staples and special trade privileges.

It would be futile to attempt a full parade of the fourteenth-century propagandists. Nevertheless, we should not overlook one principal idea, that of alliance with the Tartars for more effective Crusading against Islam. This new feature captivated the Western imagination and gave rise to the Latin mission to Tartary, with immense consequences for Crusading. Started during the pontificate of Innocent IV (1243–54) and the reign of St. Louis (1226–70), king of France, the most spectacular phase in the Catholic mission to Cathay may well be associated with the names of John of Monte Corvino and Oderic of Pordenone. John had, of his own volition and

without any noise, made his way to the kingdom of Khān Bāliq and is said to have baptized 5,000 souls at Peking in 1304, built two churches and even translated the Psalms and the New Testament into the language of his congregation. A decade later he was joined by Oderic, who had rounded the continent of Asia by way of Iran, India, and the islands of Indonesia; Oderic returned to Avignon in 1330, completely exhausted, to die at Udine in the following year. Meanwhile, in recognition of his triumph, John was appointed archbishop of Sultaniya and the Far East by the Pope, who also despatched seven bishops suffragan to assist him in that vast new diocese. He died in 1328, and his last successor, John of Florence, was murdered at an unknown place in the heart of China during 1362. The knell of Roman Catholicism was tolled in medieval China; but the idea of joint action with the Mongols was later revived by Christopher Columbus, who wanted to reach India by the western route. The New World barred his way, and the discovery of America changed the whole face of history and of the Crusade.

AGE OF THE LATER CRUSADE

The outcome of sustained propaganda over a number of decades was the resumption of holy warfare in a series of campaigns of varying intensity during the latter half of the fourteenth century. The first chapter in these wars was the Aegean Crusade, in which the Holy League composed of Venice, Cyprus, and the Hospitallers, under the leadership of Pope Clement VI, succeeded in wresting Smyrna from Turkish hands in 1344. It remained in the Hospitallers' custody until Timur overthrew its Christian garrison in 1402, and the Turks ultimately took over the reigns of government in the whole of Anatolia, after the withdrawal of the Mongols from the Peninsula.

The new Latin foothold on the Asiatic mainland, though

insignificant, was hailed in Europe as the beginning of the end of the Islamic Empire. Thanksgiving processions and popular celebrations were held in numerous cities of the West, and the Avignonese Pope Clement VI invited Edward III of England and Philip VI of France to reap the benefit of this auspicious Christian victory in the East by joining arms for decisive action against their common enemy, instead of continuing their internecine strife in the Hundred Years' War. The position appeared to be pregnant with magnificent possibilities for a definitive Crusade, and Christendom lived in the expectation of a second Godfrey of Bouillon to lead its forces into the field.

At that time, an unknown and unhappy feudatory from the southeast of France by the name of Humbert II, dauphin de Viennois, espoused the cause of the Crusade and persuaded the Pope to grant him the title of "Captain-General of the Crusade against the Turks and the Unfaithful to the Holy Church of Rome" on condition that he should equip five galleys with twelve bannerets, 300 knights, and 1,000 arbalesters for fighting in the East, where he was to remain for at least three years. Humbert had lost his only son and heir and had become inconsolable. He had formerly quarrelled with the Church, and only the Pope's personal clemency had rescued him from the sentence of excommunication. The Crusade offered him opportunities for drowning his sorrow over the loss of his son and atoning for his past sins against Holy Church. So he renounced his hereditary rights over the Dauphiné, which consequently devolved on the French Crown,* and devoted himself to the service of the Holy Pontiff in the new cause.

Humbert's Crusade, a continuation of the Aegean campaign, was planned by the Pope first to relieve the Genoese at their mercantile colony of Caffa in the Crimea, which was be-

* The Dauphiné was given by the French king to his heir, who became identified with the title of dauphin after that time.

leaguered by the Tartars, and then to attack the Turks in Anatolia. The former dauphin, sailing from Marseilles in August 1345, crossed Lombardy after disembarking at Genoa to resume the voyage with his troops from Venice to Negropontis. Unable to risk the hazardous passage through the Marmora, he became involved in the petty squabbles and local differences of the Latin principalities of the Archipelago and only engaged in minor skirmishes with Turkish mariners in the Aegean and later at Smyrna. His subservience to papal command in practically all details enhanced his indecision, and the news of his wife's decease cast new shadows of hopelessness on his life. In the summer of 1347 he decided to become a Dominican friar and was absolved from his military obligations by the Pope, who bestowed upon him the honorific title of Latin patriarch of Alexandria and nominated him archbishop of Paris later in 1354. He died at the relatively early age of forty-three, while proceeding through southern France toward his new archdiocese after an unsuccessful career.

The first real "passagium generale" was reserved for the Lusignan kings of Cyprus, whose island was destined by its geographical and political position to become the meeting place of all Crusaders and of most Latin merchants. In this they were encouraged by the seizure of some outposts on the southern Anatolian coast, including Gorigos and Adalia in 1361. It was then that three champions of the idea of the Crusade were assembled on Cyprus: King Peter I de Lusignan (1359–69); Peter de Thomas (d. 1366), the Latin patriarch of Constantinople and apostolic legate for the East since 1362; and Philippe de Mézières (d. 1405), who became chancellor of the Cypriot kingdom and was one of the most celebrated propagandists of the age. Philippe spent his latter years writing extensively to promote his newly established military order of religion, which he called the "Militia Passionis Jhesu Christi." He dreamed of the creation of a unified military brotherhood

throughout Europe under the banner of his novel Militia, which should incorporate all other military orders together with the feudal contingents of Europe as the only remaining hope for the reconquest of the Holy Land.

For the present, he accompanied the king of Cyprus during part of his European peregrinations lasting from 1362 to 1365 and extending from Poland to France and from England to Venice, in order to raise funds and recruits for his forthcoming project of Crusade. The various European detachments thus assembled were enjoined to converge in the waters of Rhodes, and Peter I sailed from Venice in June 1365 to lead a fleet totalling 165 vessels against an unknown target beyond the sea. The secret of his objective was closely kept by the king and his chief consultants—Peter de Thomas and Philippe de Mézières—for fear of Venetian or Genoese treachery in alerting the enemy. Their direction toward Alexandria was divulged only as the naval squadrons attained the high seas. They came within sight of the city on Thursday, October 9, 1365, and they landed on the shore of its western harbor on the following day. The storming and the sack of the city lasted seven fateful days with immeasurable consequences.

This occurred in the reign of Sultan Sha'bān (1363–76), who was only a boy of eleven, while the city governor, ibn 'Arrām, was in the Hijaz performing pilgrimage. The Mamluk court was torn asunder by disaffection, and the atabek Yalbogha, who acted as guardian of the sultanate, could with difficulty marshal enough manpower to press onward to Alexandria. Even then, he had to circle his way around the edge of the western desert, owing to the Nile flood in the Delta. As soon as the Egyptian army came within sight in the Mareotis area, the bulk of the Christian occupation forces evacuated the city on October 16, without making any earnest attempt at the defense of their conquest, contrary to the command of the king and against the advice of Peter de Thomas and Philippe de Mézières. Once they had completed

the pillage of the city's treasures and set on fire its public buildings and principal warehouses, their only concern was to sail back to Cyprus in safety with their rich booty. Thus ended the tragedy of the most successful of all fourteenth-century Crusading adventures; the Egyptians could never forget its vandalism, for which the Cypriots had to pay a heavy price in the following century.

However, the immediate result of that untoward event was the promotion of another Crusade. News of the ephemeral triumph at Alexandria, as in the case of preceding campaigns in the Levant, soon circulated in the West, and Pope Urban V urged the faithful to pursue these occurrences to a successful conclusion. The most serious response to his call came from Amedeo VI, count of Savoy, who had previously taken the Cross with King Peter de Lusignan at Avignon from the Pope's own hand. His preconceived plan to go to Cyprus was changed by marriage between members of his dynasty and the Palaeologi. The course of his expedition was deflected to fighting for Byzantium against the Turkish invaders and some of their Balkan Christian allies and vassals. Sailing from Venice in June 1366 at the head of his own feudal militia, Amedeo VI was joined by an army of mercenaries from Italy, Germany, France, and England, meeting him at Coron in the Morea, whence a total of fifteen galleys advanced on Gallipoli, their first objective. That little peninsula, in Ottoman possession since the reign of Sultan Orkhān (1326–60), proved to be invaluable to the Turks both as a landing-place and as a base for expansionist operations in the Balkan Peninsula. Its garrison was surprised by the Crusaders, and its recapture in August was a serious blow to the Turks. Afterward the count went to Constantinople, where he discovered that his cousin, Emperor John V Palaeologus, had been taken prisoner by King Shishman of Bulgaria. So he was constrained to campaign for the deliverance of the Emperor, rather than reap the fruit of his recent brilliant ac-

quisition from the Turks. After penetrating Bulgaria from the Black Sea as far as Varna, he successfully negotiated the liberation of the captive Emperor. By the end of 1366 his material resources were running out, and he was forced to retire to Constantinople, where John reimbursed him with 15,000 florins in exchange for ceding the conquered territory; this sum helped the count to pay off his mercenaries and ultimately dismiss them before the middle of 1367.

The next Crusade took place in 1390 against the kingdom of Tunis. A joint expedition was organized by the Genoese commune and the kingdom of France for different motives. Whereas the Genoese aimed to chastize the Barbary corsairs who had been harassing their merchant ships in the waters of the western Mediterranean, the French nobility, under the leadership of Duke Louis II of the house of Bourbon, cherished the idea of walking in the footsteps of St. Louis against the Muslims in Tunisia. Under the auspices of the Hafsid kings of Tunis, Muslim Moorish pirates had nestled in the strong town of al-Mahdiya, known in the French sources as the Cité d'Auffrique. It was agreed between the allied Crusading parties that Genoa should provide the expedition with a whole fleet fully equipped with an army of seamen, while the duke furnished the land forces consisting of feudal nobility, knights, men-at-arms, and squires. Pope Clement VII blessed the project and officially declared the Crusade, while gentlemen from France, England, Hainault, and Flanders swelled the ducal numbers to 15,000 strong. The Genoese totaled 6,000 of whom 2,000 were redoubtable arbalesters and men-at-arms, the rest being proved mariners, under Admiral Giovanni Centurione d'Oltramarino, whose first target was the island of Conigliera sixteen leagues off the African coast, within easy reach of the sea town of al-Mahdiya.

There the Christian ships reassembled after a rough passage, and the council of war decided the tactical procedure before setting siege to the city. Once on African soil, they

became exposed to guerilla attacks from the joint armies of the kingdoms of Tunis, Bugia, and Tlemsen; the latter systematically avoided a pitched battle with superior contingents. The Europeans, on the other hand, used all manner of modern devices of warfare in their attempt to storm the city walls and gates, including one of the earliest examples of the use of gunpowder. Nevertheless, they remained unable to achieve their final goal; and the practical Genoese, seeing the difficulties with which they were beset, began secretly to negotiate a unilateral settlement with the enemy, who was approaching the point of exhaustion. A ten-year truce was approved together with a cessation of piratical practices, and the king of Tunis agreed to pay an annual tribute over fifteen years for peacefully retaining al-Mahdiya, as well as an immediate indemnity of 25,000 ducats to be divided between the commune and the duke. In the end, the council of war was summoned to ratify the proffered treaty, even against the will of the duke, who declared that he would be the last Crusader to board a galley. They finally returned home in October 1390, after the astute Genoese merchants had used the French as their cat's-paw for the solution of one of their major problems.

The greatest and indubitably the most disastrous of all fourteenth-century Crusading campaigns was still to come in 1396 in the face of the rising tide of Ottoman expansion in Eastern Europe. The new menace was sighted within the confines of Hungary, and was reported in 1395 at the French court by Nicholas of Kanizsay, archbishop of Gran and treasurer of Hungary, on behalf of King Sigismund, who solicited help from the West. It was around that date that Philippe de Mézières wrote his hitherto unpublished Epistle to Richard II (1377–1399) of England by order of Charles VI (1380–1422) of France, promoting peace between their two countries and urging unity of action in the East.

But eyes were fixed on the richest man in Europe, Philip

the Bold, duke of Burgundy (1363–1404), for an effective initiation of the movement. Philip, who was eager to have his son and heir, John de Nevers, the future John the Fearless, knighted in the field of battle while fighting the infidels, readily espoused the new cause and appointed John to command of the Franco-Burgundian contingents. Both the Avignonese Pope, Benedict XIII (1394–1415), and the Roman Pope, Boniface IX (1389–1404), issued bulls endorsing the Crusade, each within his own jurisdiction; and the most elaborate and lavish preparations were undertaken for a universal "passagium." Men of the highest distinction from France, such as John le Meingre, dit Boucicaut, marshal of the realm, Admiral John de Vienne, Enguerrand de Coucy, Philip and Henry de Bar, Guy and Guillaume de la Trémouille, and many others hastened to enroll under Nevers's banner, together with their feudal retainers and mercenary troops.

The response was even more general. German auxiliaries came under the Count Palatine, Ruprecht Pipan, count of Katznellenbogen, Count Hermann II of Cilly, and Burgrave John III of Nuremberg. John Holland, earl of Huntingdon, and John Beaufort, son of the duke of Lancaster, also joined at the head of a detachment of a thousand English knights. Further volunteers were recruited from Spain and Italy, while a Veneto-Genoese fleet was joined by the Hospitallers' galleys on its way to the Danube. King Sigismund of Hungary, who later became Holy Roman Emperor from 1410 to 1437, contributed the main bulk of the armed forces from his own realm, and other groups came from Austria, Bohemia, Poland, and notably from Wallachia. Not since the First Crusade had such a truly great army been assembled. The total has been estimated at 100,000, and their rendezvous was Buda, where the first general council of war was held in the midsummer of 1396 to draw up procedures and tactics.

Sigismund wisely favored defensive tactics, which he knew from past experience to be more effective in battle with the

Turks. But the Western leaders deprecated his advice, for, in Froissart's words, they came "to conquer the whole of Turkey and to march into the Empire to Persia, . . . the Kingdom of Syria and the Holy Land." * So lightly did they take their enterprise, and so confusing and misleading was their knowledge of Eastern geography!

The united hosts marched along the Danube as far as Orsova, where they crossed the river at the famous Iron Gate into Bulgaria, then under Turkish suzerainty. In seizing the towns of Widdin and Rahova, the Crusaders displayed no discrimination between hostile Turkish garrisons and friendly Orthodox Christian natives. On September 10 they received their first formidable check at the sturdy fortifications of the city of Nicopolis, situated on a hill overlooking the Danube to the north and a plain to the south. It was decided to set siege to Nicopolis from the land, while the galleys of the Venetians, Genoese, and Hospitallers encircled the city from the river. The siege lasted fifteen days, during which little or no constructive action was taken and the time was wasted in debauchery, orgies, and gambling.

In contrast to this was the position in the Turkish camp. On hearing the news of the Christian advent, Sultan Bayezid I (1389–1402) speedily called off a siege which he had been setting against Constantinople, summoned all his Asiatic and European troops, and marched to the relief of Nicopolis with about 100,000 men under his highly disciplined command. He reached the outlying hills on the south side of the plain in the neighborhood of Nicopolis on September 24, organized his army with great military cunning in a fortified position near the hilltop, and awaited the pitched battle which occurred on the following day.

Sigismund's appeal for placing the Hungarians, who were

* Froissart, Jean: *Chroniques*, ed. by Kervyn de Lettenhove, XV, Brussels 1870–77, 242. Cf. Atiya: *The Crusade in the Later Middle Ages*, London 1938, 441; and *The Crusade of Nicopolis*, London 1934, 55–56 and 180 n.

conversant with Turkish methods of warfare, and the Wallachians, whose loyalty was doubtful, in the van facing the enemy, while the French and foreign legions were saved in the rear for the decisive blow, was rejected outright by the impetuous French, who accused the Hungarian monarch of attempting to rob them of the glory of a great day. Bayezid's irregular light calvary (akinjis) formed the first Ottoman mobile line of battle, concealing behind them an extensive field of pointed stakes which separated them from the next line of foot-archers (janissaries and azebs), up the hill. The French and foreign knights on horseback had no difficulty in routing the first line of mounted Turks, who fled to the rear and reorganized their corps beyond the stakes and the archers. Confronted with the barrier of stakes, however, many Christians descended from their horses under showers of arrows, to uproot the stakes in order to make way for the rest of the mounted attackers. This, too, they soon accomplished, and they further inflicted heavy slaughter on the Turks after fierce hand-to-hand fighting. Then they pursued their fleeing victims upward to the hilltop, which they attained in a state of complete exhaustion, believing that to have been the end of a good day.

To their horror, it was only the beginning of the end, for they saw beyond the skyline Bayezid's picked cavalry (sipahis), together with his vassal Serbs under Stephen Lazarovitch, totalling some 40,000 in complete array ready to begin a fresh phase of the battle. The deadly massacre was reversed, and the pursuers became pursued; the survivors were carried into captivity. In the meantime, the riderless horses discarded by the French earlier in the battle, stung by Turkish arrows, stampeded in confusion to the rear across the plain and were regarded by both Hungarians and Wallachians as a sure sign of the discomfiture of their allies. The latter took to flight and Sigismund, grand master of Rhodes, and the burgrave of Nuremberg barely managed to save their skins by boarding a

Venetian ship which floated downstream, as the Ottomans began to make their appearance later in the day amid the remaining Christians.

As the sounds of battle were quelled, however, and the sultan had time to look around the field, he was alarmed at his own losses, which were estimated at 30,000, and he displayed his wrath in the cold-blooded massacre of 3,000 prisoners of war on the following day. Bayezid discovered among these captives Jacques de Helly, whom he had previously employed in his eastern campaigns and who understood Turkish. Through Jacques' intercession, the French nobility, including John de Nevers, Enguerrand de Coucy, Philip d'Artois, Guy de la Trémouille, and others, were saved from decapitation and held as precious hostages pending payment of a ransom of 200,000 gold florins. The news of this catastrophe overwhelmed Europe with deep sorrow and dismay; and the grim fate of the chivalry of the West at Nicopolis marked the end of one chapter and the beginning of another in the relations between the East and the West. The prospect for the Crusade became dimmer every day, and the Turk had to be accepted as a member of the European commonwealth of nations despite his race and religion.

After the great calamity which befell the Christian chivalry at Nicopolis, the nations of Western Europe became more and more unwilling to embark on hazardous adventures to overthrow the power of Islam and put an end to Turkish domination. The great propagandist upheaval of the early century began to subside, although we still encounter some writers clamoring for resumption of the Crusade. Most outstanding among these was Philippe de Mézières, who spent the later years of his life in a retreat at the Abbey of the Celestines in Paris, writing several voluminous works of high interest in defense of the old cause. After the defeat of 1396 in Bulgaria, he took up his pen to compose a penetrating epistle entitled

"Épistre lamentable et consolatoire," which he addressed to the duke of Burgundy.

De Mézières tried to analyze the causes of and prescribe the remedies for the downfall of the Christians in the East. He explained that the root of Christian impotence was imbedded in the lack of the four virtues of good governance—Order, Discipline, Obedience, and Justice. Instead of these, society was ruled by the three vicious daughters of Lucifer—Vanity, Covetousness, and Luxury. The "Summa Perfectio," declared Mézières, could be attained only by the adoption of his "Nova Religio Passionis," which provided for the redemption of the birthplace of Christ. This organization or military order of religion was the sole road leading to a successful Crusade, that is, if the old cause could be resuscitated. Meanwhile, it should be noted that de Mézières aptly described himself as an old pilgrim and an old dreamer, an echo of bygone days.

THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

The complete discomfiture and humiliation of the hosts of Europe, and the massacre of the flower of Western chivalry in the Balkans, rudely awakened the Christian potentates to the stark realities of the Crusades and their futility as an implement for the solution of East-West relations. Furthermore, the fifteenth century resounded with other momentous problems of immediate consequence nearer home which distracted public attention from the old cause. The reopening of the Hundred Years' War between England and France, with its devastating ferocity, on the one hand, and the Conciliar Movement to end the Great Schism of the Church in the West on the other, were issues which consumed public attention throughout Western Europe.

Nevertheless it would be a serious error to contend that the

Crusade, both as idea and as action, was extinct. Although the movement had already started to lose its universal character, vestiges could be traced in a series of localized struggles to arrest Ottoman expansion in Eastern Europe and the Levant. In the first place, Burgundy, which bore the brunt of the heavy ransom paid to Sultan Bayezid I for the deliverance of the Nicopolis prisoners of war, became the center of deliberations for revenge. This yielded a new harvest of propagandist literature, which remained confined to the realm of theory. In the second place, the principalities of East Central Europe, led by the kingdom of Hungary, became the real bulwark of Christendom; and resistance in that area has frequently been termed the Hungarian Crusade. In the third place, the mid-century was characterized by the heroic but hopeless aspirations for the defense of the imperial city of Constantinople, which was almost continuously beleaguered by the Turks until the extermination of the Byzantine Empire. Afterward, practically all wars of defense fought against the Ottomans were conducted under the misnomer of Crusade.

Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy still entertained thoughts of leading the holy war, but preferred to proceed with the utmost caution and deliberation in order to avoid another disaster. For a perfect understanding of the position of his adversary, he commissioned two ambassadors in succession to go to the lands beyond the sea and attempt to gather original information about the Islamic polity in an intelligence report coupled with their recommendations. The first of these two was Ghillebert de Lannoy, who spent the years 1420–23 in the Near East, and the second was Bertrandon de la Broquière, whose embassy lasted from 1432 to 1439. While de Lannoy devoted most of his time and attention to Egypt and the Holy Land, de la Broquière, after performing pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the holy places as far as Sinai, retraced his steps to the north, where he conducted his inquiry

on Armenia, Anatolia, Byzantium, and above all the Balkan territories subject to the Grand Turk. He visited the court of Sultan Murad II (1421–51) at Adrianople and remarked that the Turks were more friendly to the Latins than the Greeks were. He described the Turkish armies and armor as well as the whole Ottoman military system for the enlightenment of the duke.

Another propagandist of a different character, also from among the adherents of the Burgundian court, was Bishop Jean Germain, chancellor of the Order of the Golden Fleece, who compiled a political discourse to prove that the general position was still more favorable to the Christians than to the Muslims and that it was not yet too late for Crusading. Jean Germain wrote in 1452, on the eve of the downfall of Constantinople. He seemed to underline the shadowy religious union of the Christian East with Rome, concluded at the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1439, which according to his estimate would bring to the Crusader ranks 200,000 combatants from Armenia, 50,000 from Georgia, some recruits from the Greek empires of Constantinople and Trebizond, the "Jacobites of Ethiopia," Russia, and "Prester John of India." The rosy picture he painted for Christian leaders was of secondary importance, since its author derived his arguments from wishful thinking rather than original knowledge. He had no direct acquaintance with the East and compiled his material from sundry sources.

The flickering ray of hope for the defense of Christendom was largely forthcoming from the hard-pressed peoples of East Central Europe in what has been described as the Hungarian Crusade, while reinforcements from the West grew less every day. The pivotal figure in this conflict was John Hunyadi (1444–56,), regent of Hungary and voyavode of Transylvania, whose heroic career passed into legend in contemporary Balkan annals. His spirited attacks on the Turks almost brought Murad II's reign (1421–51) to a dis-

astrous end. The story began with the sultan's irruptions of the year 1438 into Transylvania across the Danube, as far as the strong city of Hermannstadt to the north and as far as the gates of Belgrade in Serbia to the west. It was at this precarious juncture that Hunyadi emerged on the scene in a coalition with Ladislas, king of Poland (1434–44) and also of Hungary since 1440, as well as George Brankovitch, despot of Serbia (1427–56).

At first each of the three leaders conducted hostilities against the Turkish battalions independently within his own realm. When Murad repeated the invasion of Transylvania in 1442, he was again beaten at Hermannstadt, leaving behind him 20,000 dead. In fury, he made a third and desperate attempt on the city and suffered the same consequences. Hunyadi captured 5,000 Turkish prisoners of war and 200 Ottoman standards. The myth of Turkish invincibility seemed shattered, and the voyavode, hitherto on the defensive, was further encouraged to take the offensive south of the Danube by the arrival of a number of detachments of Latin Crusaders under Cardinal Julian Cesarini in 1443. Again, joined by King Ladislas and John Brankovitch, John Hunyadi sallied into Serbia and scored a new triumph by routing the Turks at Nish, before he seized the Bulgarian capital, Sofia. Even the Albanians, who were Murad's sworn vassals, became so emboldened by these momentous victories that they seceded from Turkish suzerainty and declared open revolt under John Castriota, better known as Scanderbeg. On July 15, 1444 Murad was constrained to sign the Treaty of Szegedin with the coalition leaders. By its terms, George Brankovitch was reinstated in Serbia, a ransom of 60,000 gold ducats was paid by the sultan for the liberation of his captive sons-in-law, and a ten-year truce was approved; but it was later broken under pressure from Cardinal Cesarini. In the end, the despairing sultan decided to abdicate and disappeared from the scene of strife into the interior of Anatolia.

Hopes were revived in the West on hearing of the new triumphs. Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy (1419–67) received an embassy from the Byzantine Emperor, John VIII (1425–48), to court his support at Châlons-sur-Saône; and he consequently equipped four galleys under Geoffroy de Thoisy and Martin Alphonse, while Pope Eugenius IV (1431–47) contributed ships under the command of his own nephew, Francesco Condolmieri, to fight the Turks. The Crusading fire was rekindled, and Cardinal Cesarini's position was strengthened in persuading Hunyadi to break a truce held to be null and void in principle since it was concluded with an infidel. Moreover, the voyavode was promised the crown of Bulgaria on the final liberation of that country from the Turkish yoke.

The first great objective of the joint forces was the strong coastal town of Varna on the Black Sea. On the way, the Christian fleet from the West helped in the relief of the Hospitallers of St. John, who were under siege by the Egyptians in their island fortress of Rhodes during 1444. Afterward, the men-of-war proceeded directly to the Black Sea, to join the siege of the strong city of Varna, already surrounded on the land side and heavily battered by the coalition contingents under the command of the intrepid Hunyadi. Another shattering victory was within sight, when suddenly the old sultan emerged from his retreat at the head of 40,000 picked men whom the perfidious Genoese had transported from Asia to Europe for gain and the promise of trade privileges. During the mortal fighting which ensued outside Varna, both Ladislas and Cardinal Cesarini fell, leaving the weight of the defense operations solely on Hunyadi's shoulders. The Poles and Latins were demoralized by their leaders' sudden disappearance from the field, and the Hungarians faced extermination by an invincible enemy. Hunyadi had no choice but to take to flight on November 10, 1444 to save the remnants of his exhausted army.

Nevertheless, the Albanian rebellion continued to rage under the indomitable Scanderbeg; until, in 1448, Hunyadi reassembled another army of 24,000 men and crossed the Danube at the Iron Gate to invade Serbia. Murad was waiting for him with a superior army of 150,000. They met on the old field of Kossovo-Polye, where the heroism of Hunyadi and his desperate followers did not save them from disaster. Their numerical inferiority, the incoherence and absence of concerted tactics between the Albanians and the Hungarians, the doubtful loyalty of the Wallachians, and the exhaustion of ammunition in the hands of the German and Bohemian infantry, rendering their fearful gunfire utterly ineffective—all these were factors culminating in the tragedy of the Second Battle of Kossovo (October 17–19, 1448), which ended the Hungarian Crusade with irreparable rout.

Perhaps the only positive result of this painful chapter in Crusading history was the prolongation of the agonies of the tottering Byzantine Empire by a few more years. Even before the downfall of Constantinople in 1453, the sultan's suzerainty over the imperial city had in some way or other been tacitly recognized by most members of the imperial family. On John VIII's death in 1448, his three brothers appealed to Murad II for arbitration on their right of succession to the imperial throne, and the sultan's choice fell on Constantine Dragases, the last Emperor destined to defend the city with his life. The defense of this last bulwark of Eastern Christendom, in which a few detachments from the Christian West participated, was described by some contemporaries as a Crusade. Nevertheless, the story of the triumphant entry of Sultan Muhammad II (1451–81) into Constantinople, at midday on April 29, 1453, must be regarded as the consummation of the Turkish Counter-Crusade, and as such will be treated elsewhere in this book.

Although long foreseen and even expected, the final downfall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453 was received

throughout Christian Europe with utter bewilderment and great embitterment. The flight of many Greek personalities for refuge in the West became a living reminder of the fateful events in progress in Eastern Europe. The last of the Palaeologi, Thomas, brother of Constantine Dragases, ultimately settled down at the Roman Curia in 1461, taking with him the head of the Apostle Andrew, one of the priceless relics which he had saved from desecration. Pope Pius II (Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, 1458–64), who had previously associated himself with the moribund cause as a staunch propagandist for holy war, now espoused the cause of the imperial pretender and took the Cross himself. He invited all European monarchs to join him in a new universal Crusade for the recovery of Byzantium and the reconquest of the Holy Land. The only response to his call came from Philip the Good, who promised to follow the Holy Pontiff with 6,000 men. A little later, the Burgundian duke requested respite for a year and laid the blame on Louis XI's machinations against his duchy. As a matter of fact, Pius II himself was a very sick man at the time, and the whole project was ultimately buried with him on his decease in 1464. His successor to the tiara, Paul II (1464–71), was less ambitious and more practical. He decided to relegate the funds accumulated for the Crusade to Hungary and Venice as a contribution toward the cost of their intermittent wars with the Turks.

The call to Crusade was fading into a distant cry, though its echoes lingered in the minds of Western princes as late as the seventeenth century. Pope Innocent VIII (1484–92), attempting in vain to renew the plan of an expedition against the Turks, was heartened by the advent of Bayezid II's brother and rival Djem as a fugitive in Rome. Innocent VIII conceived the possibility of inciting rebellion in Turkey in favor of his protégé, but it is said that he was persuaded by the sultan's agents to give up the project, with Djem's body yielded in return for a prize of 300,000 gold ducats.

Alexander VI (1492–1503) succeeded Innocent and became the chief actor in this mysterious tragedy, in conjunction with King Charles VIII of France (1483–98). The Holy Pontiff surrendered his hostage to the king, and finally we hear of Djem's unnatural death in the course of 1495. The sultan was thus relieved of this menace, and immediately he resumed his irruptions into Hungary, Croatia, Moldavia, and even as far as remote Poland, until the peace treaty of 1503 provided Europe with a breathing space for some seventeen years. Both the Popes and the Western monarchs adopted a passive attitude and stood on the defensive, awaiting fearfully the next step to be taken by the Supreme Porte.* In the year 1515 Pope Leo X (1513–21) did indeed consider the renewal of hostilities against the Ottoman Empire in conjunction with King Francis I (1515–47) of France and Emperor Maximilian I (1493–1519) of the Holy Roman Empire, but their plan remained in the realm of discussion. Perhaps the only positive action of the period occurred when Emperor Charles V (1519–56) granted the Hospitallers a new abode on the island of Malta (1530) after their expulsion from Rhodes by Sultan Sulaiman the Magnificent (1520–66). Subsequently, a number of imperial detachments descended on Algiers in 1541, and again on the shores of al-Mahdiya in 1550, to chastise the Barbary corsairs. On the other hand, these minor successes scored by the Emperor induced his antagonist, Francis I, to swing French policy toward the conclusion of the alliance of 1536 with the Supreme Porte, marking the birth of the famous Capitulations. Only at the gates of Vienna (1529) and in the waters of Lepanto (1571) was Europe able to arrest the progress of Turkish invasions.

Henceforward, the Turkish wars became more or less localized in Central Europe; and in the following century we hear of the deliverance of Jerusalem only occasionally,

* "Al-Bāb al-'Āli" in Arabic and Turkish, equivalent to the "lofty gate," otherwise the "Supreme Porte" of the sultanate at the height of its power.

as a mere dream. Cardinal Richelieu (1585–1642) and the famous French diplomat Father Joseph (1577–1638) spoke about the Holy Land and how to save it. Ferdinand I of Tuscany went a little further when he landed on the island of Cyprus in the course of 1607–08 and tried to arouse the discontented Turkish subjects for joint action against their lord, Sultan Ahmed I (1603–17). The attempt yielded no practical results and Ferdinand himself died shortly afterward in 1609. It was in these years that a certain Father Giovanni Dominelli, an Italian priest living in Cairo, wrote what may be regarded as the last propagandist document outlining a project for saving Jerusalem and the holy places. He argued that the times were eminently suited for landing in Palestine since the sultan was engaged in fighting on several fronts in the continents of Asia and Europe, while his men silently harbored the spirit of insubordination and his Christian subjects were biding their time and chance for insurrection in order to throw off their heavy yoke of servitude. Father Dominelli's faint voice passed unheeded in a changing world, and Crusading days were mere memories.