

refusing the peace terms, and Honorius III, expecting the participation of Frederick II, seems to have been unwilling to accept any peace. The constant turnover of contingents meant that strategy and tactics had to be debated again and again, while for long periods the army was so weak that its survival was in doubt. It should be born in mind that many of the contingents came from states which had been fighting each other in the west, and that this must have complicated the problems of command. As in all medieval politics the accidents of personality were crucial. King John of Jerusalem, the selected leader, was quite able, but he was less strong a personality than the Legate and chose to absent himself leaving Pelagius to take charge of military functions which were clearly beyond his competence but which nobody else who was consistently present was fitted to discharge. Moreover, Pelagius had to bear in mind instructions from the papacy and the expected arrival of Frederick II. Innocent and Honorius had prepared the way for the crusade as well as possible, but in the end they were dependent on others for the success of their schemes. In this case the crucial failure was the time it took for all the elements of the crusade to rally. Thus overwhelming force was never brought to bear on Egypt. Pelagius set off in July 1221 at a time very close to the Nile flood. He probably felt that the army would fall apart if there was any further delay. Really, he had to gamble, and he lost.

The next venture in the Mediterranean would emphasise the fragility of the crusade as an instrument of papal control. Frederick II had taken the cross after his coronation in 1215. He seems to have taken this step in the excited atmosphere created by the preaching of the Fifth Crusade as an act of thanks to God for his elevation to the Empire, in order, as he wrote afterwards, 'to repay God for the many gifts bestowed on us'.⁹ But if the decision to take the cross was largely a spontaneous one which Innocent III both promoted and endorsed, Frederick's eventual espousal of the crusading cause was a much more complex affair. In the first place he knew that he was widely blamed for the failure of 1221 because he had not gone to Egypt as all had anticipated. Of course there were good reasons for this but it was a deficit to his prestige that had to be addressed. The popes were deeply suspicious of Frederick because they feared that he intended to make permanent the union of Sicily and was evidently ambitious to dominate the quarrelling cities of Lombardy. A united Italy was a papal nightmare, and as the quarrel developed Frederick needed to safeguard himself against the charge of apostasy by fulfilling his vow. His made the papacy particularly sensitive. An imperial crusade which liberated Jerusalem, might serve to overwhelm the papacy and its objections to Frederick's imperialism. It is even possible that he was seeking to espouse an imperial crusade in opposition to the papal project to which Rome was dedicated. At the very least crusading would serve his imperial diplomacy. Moreover, there seems to have been a wider dimension to his crusading policy. His grandfather, Barbarossa, had spoken with scorn of the Byzantine

⁹ Quoted in D. Abulafia, *Frederick II. A Medieval Emperor* (London: Penguin, 1988), 212.

emperors as 'kings of the Greeks' and his father, Henry VI, had made them impose a tax to pay for the evils they had inflicted upon Barbarossa's army as it passed through the imperial lands. Henry VI had died before he could go to the Holy Land, but he had made plain his ambitions on Byzantine territory. Frederick II was heir to the Hohenstaufen pride, but he had also been brought up in Sicily whose Norman kings had dreamed of a Mediterranean Empire. Frederick may well have seen hopes of realising these dreams in the enfeebled state of the Eastern Mediterranean.

The capture of Constantinople in 1204 had given birth to a series of quarrelling successor-states. The dominant force amongst the conquerors of Constantinople was Venice, and it was their manoeuvring which secured the election of Baldwin of Flanders as emperor. But Baldwin was only given five-eighths of the capital and a quarter of the empire. The rest was to be allocated by a mixed commission of crusader leaders and Venetians. The lion's share went to Venice, which received three-eighths of Constantinople and of the territory of the empire including all the islands, as much as had been allocated to the western barons as a whole. Moreover, Baldwin had to concede to Boniface the kingdom of Thessalonica which he claimed by family right. Boniface sold his claim to Crete to the Venetians who eventually made of it a great base. The position of the emperor has often been seen as hopeless from the first. He had powerful rivals, was obliged to rule with rather than over the Venetians and the greater barons, and faced many enemies. But medieval rule was about personality rather than anything else. Baldwin's resources were substantial. He might not be the grantor of lands, but many of the territories given to Latin lords were still actually in Greek control, so a ruler who could possess men of their rightful property would be in a strong position. The Latins had many enemies and a leader who could unite them against these forces in a successful programme of conquest would be respected. Moreover, these external enemies were formidable, but divided because the old Byzantine Empire had now fragmented amongst a series of successor-states.

Byzantine power over the Balkans had all but evaporated in the later years of the twelfth century, and in its stead two new powers had emerged. The Bulgars were a people who had settled on the lower Danube, pre-eminently to the south of the river and into Thrace, though Wallachia and Transylvania to the north of the river had substantial Bulgar settlement. The 'First Bulgarian Empire' had been destroyed and incorporated into the Byzantine Empire by Basil II 'the Bulgar-Killer' (976-1025), but as Byzantium weakened after the death of Manuel Comnenus, Ioannitsa (1197-1207) was able to establish himself as Tsar with a capital at Tarnovo. Innocent III skilfully exploited his need for recognition: in 1207 a papal legate consecrated a primate for the Bulgarian Church and crowned Ioannitsa. This attempt to lure Bulgaria into the Catholic sphere of influence was ruined by the arrogance of Baldwin I of Constantinople who inherited the pretensions of Byzantium to govern Bulgaria, only to be defeated and captured by Ioannitsa at the battle of Adrianople in 1205. The southern Slavs settled in the Balkans accepted Orthodox Christianity during the ninth century. Byzantium

claimed the whole area, but its authority was weak, while the Dalmatian coast and cities like Ragusa looked to Venice and Italy. In the course of the twelfth century the Serbs came under the domination of two important *Zupans*, those of Zeta and Rashka, but it was only with the ascendancy of Stefan of the Rashka house of Nemanja that a degree of unity was imposed. The *Zupan* Nemanja abdicated in 1196, and though he had designated his younger son, Stefan 'the First Crowned' (1196–1227), the elder son, Vukan contested his authority. It is a sign of how Byzantine power in the area had deteriorated that in 1200 or 1201 Stefan disowned his wife, Eudocia, daughter of Isaac II. Stefan was able to build a formidable state, but he faced constant intervention from Hungary, which meant that both these powers were preoccupied. These disputes and the fact that the Dalmatian coast was largely Catholic in allegiance, meant that the papacy sought to establish its power in return for recognition. Moreover, both Serbia and Bulgaria were very fragile and succession problems brought out the local particularism of their nobilities. Thus in Bulgaria the death of Iohannitsa ushered in a violent period before John Asen (1218–41) established himself as a formidable successor.

But the key successor-states of the old empire were Greek. Byzantine court life had long been dominated by factions grouped around the great families, and when the capital fell they established themselves as rulers in areas where they had traditional dominance, and aspired to regain the empire. Epirus was a Greek state on the Adriatic coast ruled by the old imperial line of the Angeli. Theodore Lascaris, who had been offered the imperial crown on the eve of the sack of Constantinople, created the 'Empire' of Nicaea, while a branch of the Comnenan dynasty established themselves at Trebizond. More remotely, the Hungarians saw opportunities for expansion in the Balkans, while the Seljuk dynasty of Rüm, centred on Iconium, had close relations with both Trebizond and Nicaea.

That there was enormous potential is evident from the reign of Henry of Flanders (1206–16). He played upon the divisions of his internal rivals, and pursued a skilful diplomacy against external enemies. He profited enormously from the civil war within Bulgaria after the death of Ioannitsa. At one stage it seemed as if Bulgaria would become Catholic when in 1213 Boril espoused the Roman cause, but he was ultimately overthrown by John Asen and the Orthodox triumphed. The difficulties of Stefan of Serbia were also helpful, and so Henry was able to expand the lands in Latin control. One most important factor in his success was that Henry conciliated his Greek subjects, particularly by recognising their religious sensitivities. In the old provinces of the Byzantine empire there were plenty of local nobles who were quite prepared to come to some accommodation with the Latins. The old Byzantine court had been very remote from them and they shared nothing of the bitter hatred of Catholicism so characteristic of the mob at Constantinople. The key to coming to terms with them was religion and Henry recognised this by his tolerant policies. But he was hampered by the attitudes of the Latin hierarchy. In the wake of the conquest the Venetians had seized control of the Patriarchate and the chapter of St Sophia, with their vast

lands. The pope resented this, as did the other Latin clergy. It was thus virtually impossible to pursue a consistent policy towards the native religion and this was made the more difficult by succession problems. However, many of the Latin lords of Greece were very pragmatic in their religious attitudes and at a local level managed to reconcile native gentry to their rule.

Henry's successor was his nephew, Peter of Courtenay (1217–18), but he never reached Constantinople because he was captured *en route* by Theodore of Epirus. His successor, Robert of Courtenay (1221–28) was quite unable to cope with his enemies, and in 1224 Theodore of Epirus (1214–30) seized Thessalonika while in 1225 John Vatatzes (1222–54) of Nicaea captured Adrianople. It was only the competing ambitions of these powers and John Asen of Bulgaria (1218–41) that enabled the empire to survive. Robert made an unsuitable marriage and fled before the rage of his knights to the west, dying in 1228, leaving a son of 11, Baldwin II whose age necessitated a regency. In the event John of Brienne, former King of Jerusalem, was invited to become emperor (1229–37), with the proviso that Baldwin II would succeed him. Though he was able to fight off a Nicaean–Bulgarian attack on Constantinople, the empire remained terribly weak at his death in 1237. The capture of Constantinople had been justified by the belief that it would help the crusader states of the Holy Land. This proved to be an illusion: some knights left the Palestine to seek fiefs in Greece. Far more significantly, the settlement in Greece was so weak that it needed crusades for its support. In 1223 a crusade was preached to defend Thessalonika, threatened by Theodore of Epirus. It was led by the Montferrats and others with particular claims in Thessalonika, and was a total failure. Despite the urgings of the papacy northern crusaders like Richard of Cornwall preferred Palestine: Matthew Paris records that the crusaders who took the oath for this crusade at Northampton on 12 November 1239 displayed a disdain for the settlements in the Aegean. Baldwin II (1237–61) was so impoverished that he depended heavily on Gregory IX (1227–41) and spent much time in France petitioning Louis IX for help which came only at a price. In 1238 Baldwin mortgaged his county of Namur to Louis for 50,000 *livres*, enabling him to hire 30,000 troops, but such was his poverty that the effort could not be sustained and he was soon back begging for help. Matthew Paris recorded: 'Also at this time some hungry foreign nobles arrived in England with empty stomachs and open mouths gaping for the king's money, namely Baldwin, emperor of Constantinople, with some of his supporters.'¹⁰ St Louis' decision to go on crusade to Egypt, arriving in the east in 1249, was, therefore, unhelpful to his cause, while by 1254 Innocent IV (1243–54) was thinking of coming to terms with Nicaea. Michael VIII Palaeologus (1258–61) was in a strong position by 1261 and in order to seize Constantinople he concluded an alliance with Genoa. While he waited the coming of a Genoese fleet Michael VIII despatched two armies, against

¹⁰ Matthew Paris, *The Illustrated Chronicles of Matthew Paris*, ed. R. Vaughan (Cambridge: Sutton, 1993), 27.

Bulgaria and Epirus. The commander of the latter force discovered that almost all the Latin garrison of Constantinople had gone to attack Daphnusia, and he was able to get into Constantinople by treachery and restore it to Byzantine control.

At no stage in its existence was the Latin domination of Constantinople secure. The Emperor Henry had shown the way, but his successors had grave problems and regencies were unhelpful. Most fundamentally the empire failed to attract settlers or support. Henry I, for all his success, complained: 'nothing is lacking for the achievement of complete victory, except an abundance of Latins'.¹¹ For the Catholic elite crusading to Constantinople lacked the cachet of Jerusalem or the convenience of crusading in the Baltic. In any case Constantinople had to compete for manpower with the Albigensian Crusade, the campaigns in Spain which culminated in Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212 and the new crusade to the east which Innocent began to prepare almost immediately after the events of 1204. In addition, the churches of Christendom objected to taxation to support Constantinople. The Latin barons of Greece had their powerbase in the Peloponnese where their fiefs attracted relatives and family friends from home. The Venetians, by far the dominant western power, did little until 1260 when they proposed to subsidise a regular garrison for Constantinople drawn from the barons of southern Greece, and by then it was too late. It was its numerous enemies and their rivalries that enabled western-dominated Constantinople to survive for as long as it did. It was largely a matter of chance and personality that determined that Nicaea was ultimately successful. An important influence was the rise of a new power on the Eurasian steppe, the Mongols. Hungary was deeply preoccupied by the Mongol threat, and in 1241 its army was virtually destroyed by them. They menaced Bulgaria, whose power in any case waned after John Asen's death in 1241, and in 1243 reduced the Seljuks of Rûm to vassal status. This opened the way for Michael VIII's vigorous and successful attack in 1261.

In these circumstances it is possible to see why Frederick II was so sanguine of success in his crusading effort. With England and France caught in regencies, he was the sole hope for the recovery of Jerusalem. And he knew that the Ayyubids of Syria and Egypt were bitterly divided. Moreover, the situation in the Kingdom of Jerusalem favoured his ambitions. After Richard I's treaty of 1192 with Saladin, Henry of Champagne (1192–97) succeeded as king by right of his marriage to Isabel, daughter of Amalric of Jerusalem, while Guy of Lusignan was compensated with Cyprus. Henry fell out of a window in 1197, leaving no son, and the succession went to Amalric II of Lusignan, who had succeeded his brother Guy as king of Cyprus (1192–94). When Amalric died in 1205 the kingdom reverted to Isabel, on whose death it passed to her daughter Mary. The barons of Jerusalem, led by

¹¹ Quoted by M. Barber, 'Western attitudes to Frankish Greece in the Thirteenth Century', in B. Arbel, B. Hamilton and D. Jacoby, *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204* (London: Cass, 1989), 111–28.

John of Ibelin, arranged for Mary to marry John of Brienne, an experienced soldier nominated by Philip of France, who now became king. His position was weakened by his wife's death in 1212. This was one reason he was so eager to intervene in the affairs of Armenia during the Fifth Crusade. In 1222 he went to the west to seek a husband for his daughter and heiress, Isabel and in 1225 agreed her marriage to Frederick II, probably on the assumption that he would be allowed to rule for at least a while. John was infuriated when Frederick immediately claimed the kingdom with the support of the nobles and the Military Orders who saw in him real military power.

Frederick had much to gain by a crusade, but he had delayed for a very long time when, in 1225 he came to terms with Pope Gregory IX (1227–41) at San Germano by which he promised to depart with an army by 15 August 1227. In the event his army went, but Frederick was stricken with plague. Gregory IX denounced him in extreme terms and excommunicated him, revealing clearly that it was political differences over Frederick's ambitions in Italy which were at stake. In the event, Frederick sailed for the Holy Land in 1228 and the following year concluded a ten-year truce with the Sultan of Egypt under which Jerusalem and much of the old kingdom was returned. During his absence Gregory launched an attack on Sicily, while news of his excommunication caused bitter divisions in the Holy Land where many were shocked by his friendly diplomacy with Egypt. Moreover, Frederick demanded that the barons of Jerusalem submit fully to his royal authority. But they had enjoyed a long period of ineffective royal government during which kings were, at best, first among equals, and were disinclined to accept such masterful views. A faction, led by the Ibelin dynasty, rebelled, precipitating a bitter civil war within the kingdom which lasted for nearly 20 years. Frederick, with other concerns in his own lands, was never able to settle the matter in his favour. Gregory IX was forced to come to terms with the emperor, shining with his prestige of liberating Jerusalem, by 1230, but ultimately the papacy was to wage war on Frederick till his death in 1250.

In effect Frederick had done what kings had earlier threatened to do, used the crusade as an instrument of prestige for political ends. Richard's crusade was almost inseparable from his own political interests, while John of England (1199–1216) took the cross to pacify Innocent III. Crusading depended upon men and women identifying all kinds of interests with the ideological ends proclaimed by the papacy, and this quite naturally brought the risk of the tail wagging the dog, of private and political interest submerging the ideological. We do not have to believe that Enrico Dandolo was a caricature of self-interest to perceive that forces other than the ideological influenced him. Those who went on the Fifth Crusade seem to have had a keen sense of the limitations of their commitment – one year was quite enough. Baltic crusaders were pre-eminently Germans for whom the voyage was much shorter than to the Holy Land where few of them had kin. Frederick II, whatever his later calculations, may have taken the cross in a fit of enthusiasm. The papacy was dedicated to the reconquest of Jerusalem, but crusading enthusiasm came in waves whose power was unpredictable and whose

success depended on factors beyond its control and individual popes at times faced conflicting priorities. The crusades of Theobald of Champagne and Richard of Cornwall 1239-41 illustrate some of these themes very nicely.

Frederick II's truce of 1229 was to endure for only ten years. By 1235 the papacy was issuing calls for a new crusade. These were made all the more urgent because of the situation in the kingdom. In July 1228 Frederick landed in Cyprus over which he claimed suzerainty. Amalric, brother of Guy of Lusignan, had legitimated his possession of the island and its separation from Jerusalem by performing homage as king to the Emperor Henry VI at the time that he was preparing for a crusade which was aborted by his death. Now Frederick was in a position to do something about it and the moment was favourable. Henry I of Cyprus (1218-53) was a child and the regent was his mother, Alice of Champagne. However, effective power was held, though rather dubiously, by John of Ibelin and his family who were amongst the most powerful lords of Cyprus and *Outremer*. Frederick demanded wardship of the child-king and control of the incomes of Cyprus and deposed John of Ibelin. Frederick went on to liberate Jerusalem, but his view of kingship was so dominating that he made many enemies and they had a perfect excuse for resisting him when they heard of his excommunication. Civil war broke out in Cyprus and in Syria between the imperial representatives and the Ibelin party. Cyprus fairly quickly fell to the Ibelins, but civil war raged in Jerusalem with the native barons claiming to act in the name of Frederick's child son, Conrad who they regarded as their true monarch after the death of Isabel. To justify their position the barons of *Outremer* rewrote the history of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem to make it appear that the kings had never been more than first amongst equals. A series of legal tracts and law codes, like that of Philip of Novara, were key instruments in their propaganda. In these circumstances little had been done to consolidate the tenuous hold on Jerusalem gained by Frederick II's diplomacy. In 1239 Egyptian forces seized the city of Jerusalem, though the Tower of David remained in Christian hands. But if the situation in the east was full of threat, by the time crusader armies arrived in Jerusalem it also offered promise. The death of al-Kamil in 1238 initiated a power struggle in the Ayyubid house whose chief protagonists were al-Salih Ismail of Damascus (1239-45) and the ambitious al-Salih Ayyub (1240-49) who seized Egypt during the crusade.

The crusaders were delayed because although the settlers urged them on, they faced considerable complications. Gregory IX had called for a crusade to the Holy Land, but by 1236 he was also appealing for aid for Latin Constantinople in its parlous state and trying to persuade at least some of those taking up arms to go there. He made considerable efforts to raise money for Constantinople and the Emperor Baldwin II raised money from Louis of France that enabled him to collect 30,000 troops who he led to Constantinople in 1239: how far they weakened the effort in the Holy Land must remain a matter for speculation. At the same time Frederick II was unwilling to allow crusaders to cross his lands in Germany and Italy before the truce of 1229 had expired. As a result, it was not until 1239 that the French barons gathered at Lyon in July 1239 under the leadership of

Theobald IV of Champagne and they did not reach Acre until September. The lack of leadership in the kingdom immediately began to influence events. The Templars pursued a policy friendly to Damascus, while the Hospitallers favoured an Egyptian alliance. The barons seem to have been divided. In the event the army decided to menace the Egyptian frontier by rebuilding the castle at Ascalon, prior to an attack on Damascus. This was a most unhappy compromise. In the event as the army moved south Peter of Dreux led a successful ambush of an enemy food convoy. This inspired some of the other leaders to attempt to raid the Egyptian forces at Gaza. Theobald was sensible enough to oppose this but as Peter of Dreux had not forewarned him of his expedition, so the proposers of the raid on Gaza defied him. However, they were ambushed with heavy losses at Beit-Hanun north-east of Gaza. The main army then retired to Acre and contemplated the final surrender of the Tower of David in Jerusalem without doing anything.

However, they remained an army in being and as such a threat to the Muslim powers whose quarrels were becoming very complex indeed. At first Theobald allied with al-Salih Ismail of Damascus who ceded Galilee and promised much else, and the joint army confronted the Egyptians at Gaza. However, zealots, led by the holy men of Damascus, objected to the alliance with infidels, and so great was their influence that the Damascene army melted away. So Theobald held what had been ceded and obtained the rest of the old kingdom from al-Salih Ayyub of Egypt. This was a substantial achievement, even if it had been reached by inglorious means. Theobald, perhaps exasperated by the quarrels of the local lords and the Orders, returned home before Richard of Cornwall arrived at Acre on 8 October 1240. He found the Hospitallers in favour of the agreement and the Templars against, still hoping for an accord with Damascus. Richard confirmed the agreement with the Egyptians over the protests of the Temple, rebuilt the castle at Ascalon and returned to England in May 1241, leaving behind the bitter and legalistic quarrels of the settlers.

These two crusades, undertaken in the teeth of obstacles, reveal the substantial force of crusading ideology to move at least some of the great men of the west, and this was to be quickly reaffirmed. By 1243 Frederick II's attempt to rule in the east was over. The nominal ruler was Conrad, son of Frederick II who reached his majority in 1243. But he was far away in Germany and the regent, Henry I of Cyprus (1218-53) had other preoccupations. Balian of Ibelin, who was Henry's *baillie* at the time of his death in 1247, was the leading figure in the High Court of Jerusalem and his the leading family in the kingdom. Effectively there was nobody in charge. The Orders had different landholdings in the kingdom and, therefore, different interests, which goes far to explaining their quarrels over policy towards Egypt and Damascus. The Hospitallers had latterly come to favour Frederick II in the civil war because he had threatened their extensive lands in the empire and this sharpened the differences between the two Orders. The Italian cities owned self-governing colonies in the cities of the Holy Land, and their constant quarrels meant that they tended to side with the factions in the kingdom. The end of the Hohenstaufen intervention in 1243 found the Templars as the strongest single

force in the kingdom. Therefore, when war broke out between Damascus and Egypt the kingdom favoured Damascus with whom the kingdom formed an alliance. However, al-Salih Ayyub of Egypt found a useful ally in the Khorezmian horde. The Khorezm-Shahs had dominated Transoxiana, but as Mongol pressure destroyed all the powers of the southern steppe around them they attempted to expand and employed a vast army of Turks whose depredations pressed heavily upon the native population. Under Muhammad (1200–20) they seemed to be a rising power, reaching into Iran and Iraq, but they incurred the hostility of the Mongols who destroyed their empire in 1219–20. The army survived under the command of Muhammad's son, Jalal-ad-Din, who tried to establish a new domination, profiting from the quarrels of the area, but he died miserably in 1231. The remnants of his horde were therefore happy to take Egyptian pay and to attack Damascus and its Christian allies. As these gathered their forces the Khorezmians swept into Palestine and sacked Jerusalem on 11 July 1244 before riding on to join the Egyptian army at Gaza. The army of the kingdom, consisted of about 1,200–1,500 horse in a total of 5,000. Their allies, the Damascus army, contributed about 4,000 horsemen. The Ayyubid force had about 3,000–5,000 Egyptian foot and 20,000 Khorezmian cavalry, encamped at Harbiyah (La Forbie) north of Gaza, and it was here that the battle took place on 17 October 1244. The leaders of the Damascus army advised that the allies should stand on the defensive in a fortified camp: the Khorezmians would not attack a defended position and would then become restless. However, the Latins were impatient. Probably they were made overconfident by the weakness of the Ayyubid regime in Egypt. The crusaders launched an attack, but the Khorezmians broke through the army of Damascus on the left and surrounded the Franks who were assaulting the Egyptian infantry. The result was a massacre. Al-Salih Ayyub went on to conquer Damascus and most of the kingdom, confining the Latins to Acre and a small coastal strip from Acre to Arsuf.

News of these disasters provoked a new expedition, revealing the persistence and force of crusading. This was doubly impressive because the Mongols, whose emergence we have already noted, were threatening Christendom. The steppe of central Asia had always been dominated by nomad tribes whose way of life depended on pastoral farming and hunting. This way of life in a harsh environment made them excellent soldiers and ferocious raiders of their settled neighbours on the edges of the great plains. From time to time federations arose which made a much greater impression. The Roman Empire was attacked by the Huns in the fifth century, while the Avars in the sixth and the Hungarians in the tenth also threatened the west. In general the 'Catholic core' was shielded from the raiders by the peoples to the east, in particular Hungary and Poland. The need for light cavalry to combat such raids is one reason why these regions developed very numerous petty aristocracies. However, this shield faltered before the new threat arising in the steppe lands. Amongst the tribes to the north of China there was born about 1162 a leader of genius, Temüjin (died 1227), who welded the peoples of the steppe into a great political power. By 1206, as Chingis Khan

('Universal Ruler'), he dominated all of Mongolia, establishing his capital at Qaraqorum. He unleashed an astonishing expansion, attacking China, where a Mongol dynasty established itself by the 1260s. Persia was devastated in 1220, Kievan Russian destroyed in 1240 and Baghdad sacked in 1258. The Khans imposed upon their lands a sophisticated governmental system, derived from the Chinese and the other peoples whom they conquered. This sustained the army whose organisation skilfully disciplined the natural martial skills of the Mongols.

The major fighting unit of a Mongol army was the *tümen*, of 10,000 mounted men, subdivided into elements of 1,000, 100 and 10. Iron discipline reinforced the natural habits of cooperative hunting and herding. This was the secret of their military success. The Khans incorporated conquered peoples into this structure, notably the Turks who often were a major element in their cavalry, and Chinese and others who provided infantry and engineers. Mongol cavalry were poorly armed and mounted on ponies, but each soldier had a whole string of animals, so that they could move quickly across the steppe, or sustain concentrated combat over long periods by changing mounts. Individually, Mongol horsemen were inferior to almost all their enemies in the settled lands. To compensate, Mongol generals tried to marshal superior numbers whose discipline enabled them to operate in a concerted manner and to accept heavy casualties. However, in preparing campaigns they employed careful reconnaissance. They also recognised the value of terror and deliberately unleashed destruction on enemy lands to frighten their foes. So dreadful was their reputation that westerners called them Tartars, denizens of Tartarus or Hell. The primary weapon of attack was the bow. The best archer in a Mongol group used special arrows incorporating whistles as a guide to the rest. Waves of mounted archers would break up the formations of their enemies before engaging at close quarters. A favourite tactic was to lure the enemy into ambushes by feigned retreat in the certain knowledge that encircling them would undermine morale: this was directly derived from the great encircling movements by which Mongol tribes rounded up game over vast areas to slaughter them for the winter. Their horse-archers were very poorly armoured, but increasingly Mongol armies incorporated better protected elements of heavy cavalry, sometimes raised from subject peoples, for the close-quarter battle.

Under Khan Ögödei (1227–41) a deliberate decision was made to move westwards and the great general, Sübedei, was chosen to command the assault on Rus which brought Christendom into the Mongol view. The southern and eastern principalities of Rus fell to Mongol domination by 1240. Some of the Cuman tribes who had contested their advance now took refuge on the eastern plains of Hungary whose monarch, Bela IV (1235–70) viewed them as a useful support against both his internal enemies and the threat from the steppe. It may be that the primary purpose of the attack in 1241 was to punish him rather than to make new conquests before Rus had been digested. Good intelligence would have told the Mongols that no great power would fight them because of the bitter conflict between the Emperor Frederick II and the papacy. However, the intention of the Mongols to move west was well-known by 1240 and this brought together Bela

IV, Duke Wenceslas I of Bohemia (1230-53), the warring rulers of the four principalities into which Poland had dissolved and other minor powers. Such a coalition could have successfully resisted the Mongols. Sübedei had an army of about 150,000, but he was well aware of the fighting power of western infantry and knights. He therefore sent a diversionary force of 30,000 under Baidar and Kadan into Poland in the hope of distracting the allies, while his main force prepared to assault Hungary. Henry II of Silesia, the most important of the Polish princes, rallied an army 20,000 strong, consisting of the levies on foot and horse of the other Polish princes, volunteers like the Bavarian gold-miners of Silesia, some French members of the Temple and the Hospital and a formidable force provided by the Order of the Teutonic Knights who saw the Mongols as a grave threat to their position in the Baltic lands. They gathered near Liegnitz and awaited support from Wenceslas.

Sübedei's diversion had been very successful. It divided into two groups with Baidar thrusting into Poland burning as he went. His men lured out and massacred the garrison of Cracow, which was sacked, then advanced towards Breslau where he joined Kadan. Henry of Silesia was awaiting the army of 50,000 Bohemians, but as the Mongols approached he chose to give battle on 9 April 1241, not realising that Wenceslas was only a day's march away. Accounts of the battle are confused but Duke Henry was killed and his army destroyed. The thrust into Poland had prevented any junction of the allies with Hungary and produced a major victory on a quite unexpected scale. On 11 April Sübedei's main army destroyed the Hungarian army at Mohi. Then, unaccountably, Mongols went home. Ultimately this was due to the death of the Khan Ögödei (1227-41) which precipitated a struggle for succession at Qaraqorum. However they did not then give up control of Rus. It is likely, therefore, that their retreat was due to heavy casualties in the two battles, difficulties in feeding their vast numbers of horses, and to a sense that they had achieved their real purpose, the punishment of Bela. Although they remained a threat to Poland and Hungary the Mongols became more and more preoccupied with the conquest of China and the assault on the Muslim Middle East.

But when Louis IX of France took the cross in December 1244 it was with the purpose of freeing Jerusalem. Louis was deeply respected and his charismatic personality was matched by considerable organising ability. For once a crusade would be entirely homogenous, have united leadership and a strong command structure, though this was largely an accident of the politics of Christendom. Louis wanted to lead the whole Catholic west to the rescue of Jerusalem. But, despite his efforts, the conflict between Innocent IV (1243-54) and Frederick II over Italy became more savage when, at the Council of Lyon in July 1245, Innocent declared Frederick deposed. To Louis' indignation Innocent then extended crusader privileges to those who fought for him in the Italian war and diverted much preaching to this end. Henry III of England (1216-72) still hoped to regain Angevin lands in France, though a small English contingent, including William Longespée earl of Salisbury, served under the king's half-brother, Guy of

Lusignan. Haakon IV of Norway (1217-63) had taken the cross in 1237, but he preferred to discharge it by an expedition to Estonia in 1240. Spain was at the crest of a great wave of conquest in which Cordoba, Valencia and Seville all fell to the Christians. Poland and Hungary had been devastated in 1240-41 by the Mongols. Effectively, Louis could find no allies.

On the other hand Louis enjoyed the support of the papacy, and the French church was to raise nearly a million of the estimated million and a half *livres* cost of the crusade. With the financial backing of the French crown Louis was able to raise a great fleet which gathered at the newly built port of Aigues-Mortes. He paid great attention to logistics and created vast stockpiles in Cyprus which was his chosen base. Inspired by their king, the nobility of France made a supreme effort and an army 15,000 strong gathered, with perhaps 2,500 knights as its core. Louis sailed for the east on 25 August 1248 and arrived there on 17 September. However, it took time for his army to gather in Cyprus and for forces from Jerusalem to join them. This delay has been blamed for many problems. Many crusaders died of disease in Cyprus and others found the long delay expensive and ran out of money. More importantly, al-Salih Ayyub, Sultan of Egypt, had a rival in the person of an-Nasir of Aleppo, against whom he led an expedition in the winter of 1248-49. His own illness and the obvious threat from Cyprus forced him to a compromise and he returned to Egypt in April 1249. Louis was unable to profit from this disarray in the Ayyubid family. In fact it is unlikely that any sea borne assault could have been mounted before spring 1249. Louis arrived at the end of the summer sailing season and few would have wanted to embark a great army on a grand enterprise at such a time of the year. That many of the barons arrived late was unsurprising: coordinating medieval armies was difficult and subject to every kind of delay. Some of the ships carrying his followers wintered at Acre which was a better port than any on Cyprus. In the spring of 1249 a bitter quarrel between Genoese and Pisan sailors erupted there and was not settled until 19 March. Moreover, Louis seems not to have entirely settled upon his strategy until he arrived in Cyprus.

The Mongol devastation of Hungary and Poland had terrified all Christendom, but Innocent IV recognised that these people might be useful allies. The papacy knew that the Mongols were pagan shamanists who had Christians in their ranks. If they could be won for Christianity they would be useful allies against Islam, which is why he sent an embassy to the Great Khan. St Louis too contacted them, although he must have realised that any response from the great Khan would arrive too late to effect his operations. However, serious consideration was given to an expedition to Asia Minor where the Seljuks of Rüm had recently been defeated by a Mongol army. Some French sergeants, perhaps moved by the costs of staying on Cyprus actually went there. However, the Sultan of Egypt controlled Jerusalem, so he had to be defeated if it was to be liberated. In any case Louis used the delay well, acquiring flat-bottomed boats which could be used to assault the beaches of Egypt. The crusaders did not sail from Cyprus until 13 May, and even then they had to regroup after a storm and only on 4 June appeared before

Damietta. The Sultan kept his main army back from the coast and dispatched elite units to repel the attack, but Louis' knights stormed ashore covered by crossbow fire. Then the French had a remarkable stroke of luck – the garrison of Damietta, where the Fifth Crusade had delayed so long, panicked and fled the town which by 6 June was securely in Louis' hands. Further advance had to wait, partly because Louis was still awaiting more troops and partly because of the rising of the Nile which made movement through the delta impossible.

When reinforcements arrived in October there was disagreement over what to do next. The idea of an attack on Alexandria was mooted – the crusaders commanded the sea and its fall would fatally weaken Egypt. However, Robert of Artois, the king's brother, successfully urged an attack on Cairo following the precedent of the Fifth Crusade. In this debate Louis seems to have been rather passive, allowing others to make the running, and this perhaps reflects his limitations as a general which were soon to be more cruelly exposed. On 20 November the army set out towards the fortress of Mansourah, making painfully slow progress as they had to keep filling in canals and countering enemy attacks. By the time they got there and began a difficult siege al-Salih Ayyub was dead and his heir, Turan-Shah, was far away. However, Fakhr-ad-Din, supported by the dead Sultan's wife, rallied the troops and averted a crisis. On 7 February 1250, guided by a renegade, elements of the crusader army were able to cross the Bahr as-Saghir which separated them from Mansourah. But Robert of Artois charged into the enemy camp before Louis's main force was deployed, then rushed into the town where it was cut to pieces in the narrow streets. The Egyptians then counter-attacked, but Louis kept his nerve and fought them off.

However, although he won a victory, it was at terrible cost and Mansourah, supported by a formidable army, stood between him and Cairo. Louis remained, but his army was weakened by disease and by enemy attacks which became worse when the Moslems used their ships to cut the river link with Damietta. Only on 5 April did Louis order a retreat, but by then he was outnumbered and his helpless army surrendered. Louis, refusing to abandon them, also fell into captivity. A huge ransom was asked for the king and the army, and the surrender of Damietta was demanded. In the event half, 400,000 bezants, was paid very rapidly, Louis was released and went to Acre. But by this time Turan-Shah had been assassinated and war broke out between the Egyptians and Syrians, enabling Louis to free more of his army and to cancel the remainder of the ransom. He tried to take advantage of the fighting between Syria and Egypt and he fortified Acre, Caesarea, Jaffa and Sidon. His room for manoeuvre was limited when Syria and Egypt came to a peace in 1253. Louis returned to France in 1254 leaving a permanent force of 100 knights under Geoffrey of Sargines at Acre. He had come very near to success but had been defeated by the hydrology of the Nile delta and by his own limitations as a general. He was a good organiser and a brave leader. Many of his misfortunes were typical of those of medieval western armies, notably the indiscipline of Robert of Artois. But unlike Richard on the Third Crusade

Louis did not have much sense of the limitations of his power. Richard called off the advance to Jerusalem – Louis could not bear to abandon Mansourah.

The period from 1192 to 1254 saw significant changes in crusading. It became a more directed and organised activity, supported by a piety focused on Jerusalem and an elaborate ritual all of its own. It also became even more obviously centred on the papacy. Innocent III gave new impetus to the papal project to unify Catholic Christendom around the papacy and the crusade, to give a political and military expression to Catholic Christendom, the cultural and religious unity of the peoples who accepted papal authority. The liberation of Jerusalem was to be the goal of the whole of Catholic Christendom. Remarkably, his successors maintained this impetus. In this period all major kings were to justify their policies by reference to the crusade to one degree or another. Reform, peace and the proper order of Christian society, the liberation of Jerusalem, were the goals of the papacy. None dared dissent openly and kings found it politic to adopt this purpose as their own. In 1246 Louis IX justified his seizure of Provence for his brother, Charles, in terms of preparing and settling matters to make possible a crusade. In 1254 Alfonso X of Castile and Henry III of England presented the settlement of their dispute over Gascony as the preliminary to a crusade against the Muslims of North Africa. The papal project was not entirely uncontested. Frederick II may have had an alternative vision of imperial leadership, but ultimately his belief that emperor and pope should cooperate for the good of Christendom overshadowed this. He was adept at turning papal propaganda against the papacy and claiming to act for the peace of Christendom, but his successes were transient. The fact was that papal leadership was clearly recognised and there was no coherent body of critics prepared to contest it. The vision of the papacy and of Christendom as a whole focused on Jerusalem. This does not mean that other objectives were seen as wrong or demeaning of a noble ideal. But in the minds of western Christians Jerusalem had come to enjoy a special place and the popes were its special advocate.

St Louis exemplified the qualities of an ideal monarch and the conventional pieties of his age. It is no accident that his crusade aimed to liberate Jerusalem, though by the means of conquering Egypt. Crusades to other places were more successful, but they enjoyed nothing like the attention of prestige of the attack on Jerusalem. The period covered by this chapter was the zenith of the crusading movement, but it enjoyed greatest success where it enlisted other forces: the greed of Baltic merchants and German nobles, the ambitions of Spanish kings. These forces were paralleled elsewhere – in the Welsh March, in the English Pale in Ireland, in the obscure extirpation of Central European paganism. The papacy could, in certain circumstances, endow such drives with real force and moral appeal. But there were limits, as the failure of support for the western domination of Constantinople shows. The crusade to Jerusalem was the ultimate ideological appeal, and it was fostered by all possible means. But ideology in itself had a limited appeal and visibly far too few people had a direct stake in what happened

in Jerusalem. In this crescendo of papal crusading it is easy to chart the popularity of the movement, not least in the 'Children's Crusade', but it is easy to forget that passive resistance limited the extent to which the popes could mobilise power. Criticism of crusading was relatively rare, but so was crusading. Its ideological drive drew upon the notion of Christendom with its sense of community and identity, but that was limited in a fissured and particularist continent.

Moreover, the crusade of St Louis pointed to another factor, the rise of the monarchical state. In France and England monarchs were increasingly able to command the loyalty of their barons. In the empire and the kingdom of Sicily Frederick II proclaimed a vision of monarchical power based on Roman law. His skilful use of the crusade as a diplomatic instrument was a grave warning to the papacy. The popes were no longer the giants of Christendom, towering over petty princes. They had always had to negotiate with kings, but the balance of power was visibly shifting. St Louis was the very model of a Christian king, but he was far from being the creature of the pope and the crusade to Damietta was his project, not that of Rome. However, the trend towards monarchical centralisation was as yet limited, but the case of Frederick II showed that it could pose a threat to the vision of a Christendom united against infidel and heterodox alike under the banner of the papacy.

SELECTED READING

The history of the Crusader States in this period is outlined by M. N. Hardwicke, 'The Crusader states, 1192–1243' and S. Runciman, 'The Crusader states, 1243–91', in Setton, *Crusades* 2. 522–98. This same volume also contains chapters on individual expeditions: E. H. McNeal and R. L. Wolff, 'The Fourth Crusade', 153–86; T. C. Van Cleve, 'The Fifth Crusade', 429–62; S. Painter, 'The crusade of Theobald of Champagne and Richard of Cornwall, 1239–41'; J. R. Strayer, 'The crusades of Louis IX', 487–521. However, there are more modern treatments of some of these. D. E. Queller and T. F. Madden, *The Fourth Crusade. The Conquest of Constantinople 1201–4* (2nd edition, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997) remains the most authoritative work. His collection of articles, *Medieval Diplomacy and the Fourth Crusade* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1980) is also very valuable. There is an absolutely magisterial treatment of the Fifth Crusade by J. M. Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade 1213–21* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986). For the crusades of St Louis the work of J. Richard, *Saint Louis, Crusader King of France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) is very valuable. The best work on criticism of the crusade, including that of Gerhoh of Reichersberg, is E. Siberry, *Criticism of Crusading 1095–1274* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985) which provides a sharp modern analysis but one which treats with respect older ideas on this subject. A good understanding of the evolution of chivalry is provided by R. W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), who stresses its violent nature. Bouchard, *Strong of Body, Brave and Noble* analyses the nobility and the literature created around them, as does J. Flori, notably his *L'Essor de chevalerie* (Geneva: Droz, 1986). J. Riley-Smith has done much to establish the concept of crusading families, notably in his *The First Crusaders* and 'Family traditions and participation in the Second