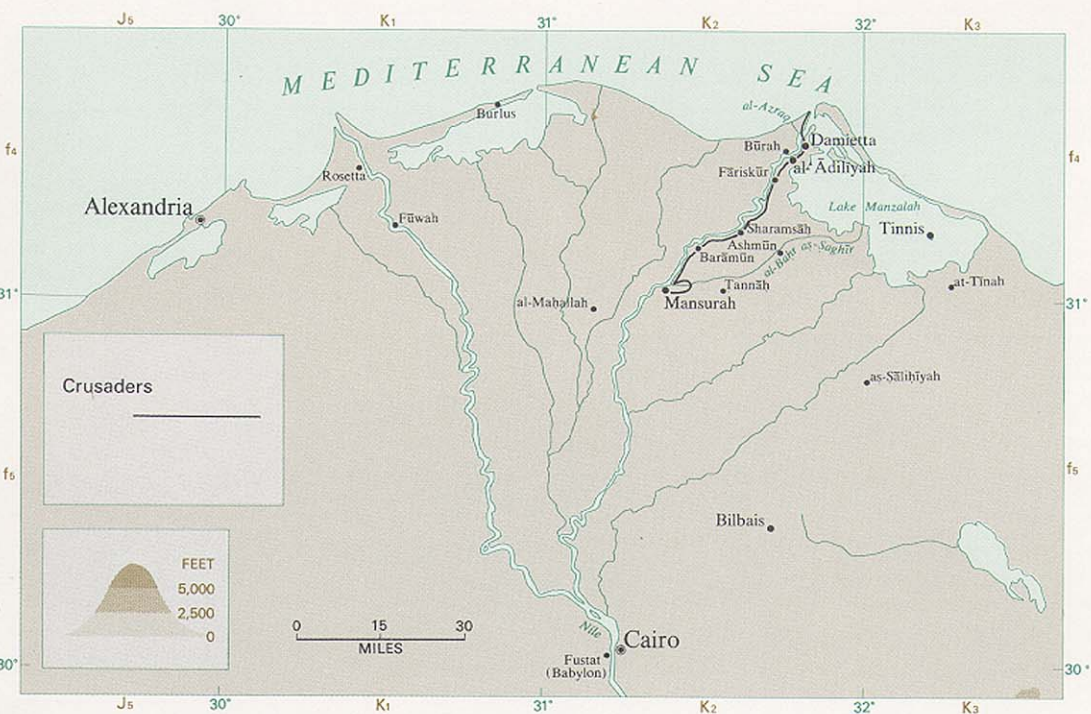


14. The Fifth Crusade, 1218–1221 (*Map by the University of Wisconsin Cartographic Laboratory*)

15. The Crusade of Louis IX, 1249–1250 (*Map by the University of Wisconsin Cartographic Laboratory*)



# XIV

## THE CRUSADES OF LOUIS IX

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The crusades of Louis IX mark both the culmination and the beginning of the end of the crusading movement. None of the earlier expeditions was as well organized or financed, none had a more inspiring leader, none had a better chance of success. The crusade of 1249 was the last whole-hearted effort of Christendom against the infidel — it was watched with friendly interest even

The two chief narrative sources for the first crusade of Louis IX are John of Joinville's *Vie de St. Louis* (many editions, the most valuable being that of Natalis de Wailly, Paris, 1874) and the continuation of William of Tyre known as the Rothelin manuscript (published in *RHC, Occ.*, II, 483-639). Louis himself gave a good brief account of his adventures in Egypt in a letter printed in Duchesne, *Historiae Francorum scriptores* (Paris, 1649), V, 428-432. The French chroniclers and writers of pious lives (William of Nangis, Geoffrey of Beaulieu, et al.) appear in *RHGF*, XX, XXII, and XXIII; they contribute little additional information. Matthew Paris gives a tendentious account of the crusade but includes valuable documents in the *Additamenta* (vol. VI of the Rolls Series edition). Most of the fragmentary financial records of the crusade are collected in *RHGF*, XXI, 264-280, 283, 404, 513-515, 530-537. The *Layettes du trésor des chartes*, II and III, contain scattered material on financial aspects of the crusade, but there is less than might have been expected from these royal archives. L. T. Belgrano's *Documenti inediti riguardanti le due crociate di S. Ludovico* (Genoa, 1859) is difficult both to find and to use; fortunately his valuable material on Louis's financial arrangements with the Genoese was summarized by A. Schaube, "Die Wechselbriefe König Ludwigs des Heiligen," *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik*, LXX ([3rd series, XV], 1898), 603-621, 730-748. Contracts for ships were published by Belgrano (*op. cit.*, and in *Archives de l'orient latin*, II [1884], 230-236) and by Jal (*Pacta nauorum, Collection de documents inédits: Documents historiques*, I, Paris, 1841). R. Röhricht's *Kleine Studien zur Geschichte der Kreuzzüge (Wissenschaftliche Beilage zum Programm des Humboldts-Gymnasiums zu Berlin*, Easter, 1890) include accounts of Louis's two crusades "in Regestenform" which include valuable bibliographical references. No secondary work has treated adequately all aspects of the crusade; the most readable accounts are in H. Wallon, *Saint-Louis et son temps*, I (Paris, 1875), and R. Grousset, *Histoire des croisades*, III (Paris, 1936), 426-531.

For the Tunisian expedition, the primary narrative source is the chronicle of Primat, published in *RHGF*, XXIII. The other chronicles give briefer accounts; all are published in *RHGF*, XX, XXII, or XXIII. Information about finance and shipping may be found in books listed above. Most modern writers have passed over this crusade very rapidly; the one full account is by Richard Sternfeld, *Ludwigs des heiligen Kreuzzug nach Tunis, 1270, und die Politik Karls I. von Sizilien* (Berlin, 1896). Sternfeld's attempt to minimize the responsibility of Charles of Anjou is not wholly convincing, but he gives valuable material on papal and Angevin diplomacy, and his summary of the events of the crusade is good. The old *Vie de Saint Louis* by Le Nain de Tillemont (vol. V, ed. J. de Gaulle, Paris, 1849) gives an account of the crusade which is still useful. R. Röhricht sums up all available information about the crusade of Edward I in his "Études sur les derniers temps du royaume de Jérusalem," *Archives de l'orient latin*, I (1881), 617-632.

in regions which were jealous of the leadership of the French king and suspicious of the policy of the pope. But the very magnitude of the undertaking brought disillusion when it failed. If Louis, the richest and most powerful ruler in western Europe, could not conquer the Moslems and recover the holy places, who could? Thus the failure of Louis contributed to the loss of confidence, the hesitations, and even the cynicism which weakened all later crusades.

The high hopes with which this crusade began were due in large part to the character and abilities of the leader. Louis's devotion to the crusading ideal was evident even to the skeptical Frederick II. Neither the pressure of public opinion nor the emotional exhortations of the clergy was responsible for his taking the cross. Love of glory and hope of profit were equally foreign to his nature. He made his decision unaided by his family and advisers, but once he decided that the welfare of his soul and of Christendom required a crusade, he never looked back. He was not a reluctant crusader like Philip Augustus, nor an impatient one like Richard the Lionhearted. He was willing to devote all the time, money, and energy to the crusade which the business required. The loss of opportunities for expanding his kingdom, the boredom of a long period of purely defensive operations, did not cause him to lose interest. From 1245 to 1270 the crusade was the basis of his foreign policy; he made every effort to keep peace in Europe, so that Christendom could unite in an attack on the Saracens. His singleness of purpose and his freedom from selfish motives gained him the devotion of many of his followers and the respect of all.

To these qualities of character were added real abilities as a war minister. Louis had both the experience and the patience needed for organizing an army, and he had surrounded himself with men who knew how to carry out his plans. He overcame almost completely the material difficulties which had plagued earlier crusaders — finance, transportation, supply. He not only raised and equipped a large army; he succeeded in bringing most of it to the point of attack without the tremendous losses of men and supplies which had characterized earlier overseas expeditions. His courage was an inspiration to his army, but he never fell into the foolhardy rashness which destroyed other brave leaders. His one great weakness was in generalship — he was better at organizing an army than in commanding it in the field — but even in this respect he was no worse than most crusading leaders.

It is also true that the situation in the Near East in the 1240's

was not unfavorable to the Christians. Saladin's empire had been divided among heirs who hated one another as only relatives can hate. They were incapable of uniting against an invader; some of them were even ready to make an alliance with the crusaders against their rivals. The sultan of Egypt, whose outlying possessions included the holy places, was a sullen, suspicious tyrant; his heir had been sent out of the country and was almost unknown to his future subjects; his slave army of mamluks was becoming conscious of its power and resentful of a regime of many punishments and few rewards. Farther east the thunder-cloud of Mongol invasion was about to break over Baghdad. The Syrian Moslem princes could not face their Christian enemies squarely with this menace rumbling behind their backs. All in all, the Moslem world was weakened and divided as it had not been for a century, so weak and divided that even when Louis went down to unexpected defeat it could not fully exploit the victory.

Louis took the cross in December 1244. A serious illness was the immediate occasion for his decision, but the events which had taken place during the year must have impressed any sincere Christian with the need for a new crusade. The persistent quarrels of the descendants of Saladin had twice enabled the Christians to recover Jerusalem and a large part of Galilee, but the equally persistent quarrels between imperialists and Ibelins, Temple and Hospital, Acre and Tyre, had prevented any solid reorganization of the recovered territories. As a result, when the Aiyūbid sultan of Egypt formed an alliance with the Khorezmian bands of northern Syria against a coalition of Syrian princes and Christians, the inland parts of the kingdom were almost defenseless. The Khorezmians took Jerusalem, massacred a large part of the garrison, and destroyed the few remaining fortifications during the summer of 1244. Then they joined an Egyptian army coming up from the south and inflicted a complete defeat on the Christian-Syrian Moslem army at Ḥarbiyah, northeast of Gaza, on October 17, 1244. The work of the last two decades was undone. All that had been gained by the diplomacy of Frederick II in 1229, the crusade of Theobald of Champagne and Navarre in 1239-1240, and the negotiations of Richard of Cornwall in 1240-1241 was swept away. The holy city was lost, and the Christians, still bickering among themselves, were thrown back to their fortified coastal cities.<sup>1</sup>

The need was great, but the situation in western Europe was not

<sup>1</sup> See below, chapters XVI and XX. On the Khorezmians, see below, chapter XIX, pp. 668-674.

entirely favorable to a new crusade. Italy and Germany were torn by the conflict between pope and emperor, and neither Innocent IV nor Frederick II was anxious to send supporters away on an expedition to the east. In England Henry III and his barons were on such bad terms that a concentrated effort for a crusade was almost impossible. Spain, as usual, had her own problems, and the king of Norway contributed only empty promises. France alone had both the will and the resources for a crusade, and Louis's army was almost entirely French. Yet in spite of troubles outside France, the church was able to secure some financial contributions from other countries, and small groups of Englishmen and Lorrainers took part in the expedition.

Preparations began early in 1245. Odo of Châteauroux, cardinal-bishop of Tusculum, was given charge of preaching and organizing the crusade in France, and preachers were also sent to England, western Germany, and the Scandinavian countries. Innocent IV tried to ensure sufficient funds for the army, even though he had great need of money for his war on Frederick II. The Council of Lyons ordered a grant of one twentieth of ecclesiastical revenues for the support of the crusade, and the French clergy voluntarily<sup>2</sup> increased the rate to one tenth of their revenues. In addition many minor revenues, such as redemptions of crusade vows and legacies for the Holy Land or unspecified pious uses, were assigned to the king, his brothers, and other leaders. These grants produced important sums, even though the twentieth was not a success outside the French-speaking provinces bordering on Louis's realm. Lunt and Powicke agree that the subsidy was never collected in England.<sup>3</sup> Haakon V of Norway managed to convert the levy in his kingdom to his own purposes, and in Germany proper the little that was received was used for the war against Frederick II. But the dioceses of the old kingdoms of Lorraine and Burgundy paid sizeable sums which were given to Louis and his brothers. This was an important precedent; throughout the rest of the century the clergy of these districts were taxed for the benefit of the French king, and French influence grew in the lands beyond the Meuse and the Rhone. In

<sup>2</sup> "Voluntarily" may be a little too strong. Certainly both pope and king put pressure on the clergy. The archbishop of Narbonne and his suffragans protested that since they had not attended the assembly which raised the rate from a twentieth to a tenth they were not bound to pay. Innocent IV hesitated a little but finally ruled in July 1247 that, since they were "in prefato regno constituti" they must pay at the same rate as the other clergy of the realm (E. Berger, *St.-Louis et Innocent IV*, Paris, 1893, p. 195).

<sup>3</sup> W. E. Lunt, *Financial Relations of the Papacy with England* (Cambridge, 1939), p. 254; F. M. Powicke, *King Henry III and the Lord Edward* (Oxford, 1947), I, 366.

France itself the tenth was eventually extended to five years, and it became the chief source of revenue for the crusade.

Unfortunately we do not have a complete record of the income produced by the tenth, but it is possible to compare the payments made by some dioceses with those made in 1289 when a total is available. The average payment for the first tenth is about 74 % of that for the second, and since the tenth in 1289 produced 256,613 *livres tournois* net, the earlier levy should have yielded about 189,894 *livres* a year or roughly 950,000 *livres* for the five years. Since the total cost of the crusade to the king was estimated in the fourteenth century as 1,537,570 *livres*, it is evident that the French clergy paid by far the largest share of the expenses.<sup>4</sup> This view is supported by Joinville, who told the king at Acre in 1250 that people believed that so far he had spent none of his own money on the crusade but had relied on the contributions of the clergy. This assertion was not literally true, and there is room for a considerable number of errors in our earlier calculations; but, no matter how the figures are cast, the church made a notable contribution to the financing of the crusade. No earlier crusade was as well supported; the system of taxing the incomes of the clergy reached its full development only in the middle years of the thirteenth century, and the 1249 crusade was the first overseas expedition to profit from the new techniques.

The king also tried to increase his income from other sources. Most of the revenues from the royal domain were fixed, either by custom or through long-term leases, but the towns could be pressed to give money to the king. A very incomplete account shows that the towns of the old domain paid at least 66,000 *livres tournois*.<sup>5</sup> This excludes the towns of Normandy and Languedoc, which must have paid something to the king. Even with these omissions it is a respectable sum; the king's annual income at this time was probably not more than 240,000 to 250,000 *livres tournois*.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the towns continued to send money to the king once he had gone overseas. When their accounts were being

<sup>4</sup> The evidence on which these calculations are based may be found in *RHGF*, XXI, 404, 513-515, 533-536, 542, 556. The figures for total expense may well be inflated; the French government had reason to overestimate its expenditures on behalf of the church in order to justify new requests for assistance.

<sup>5</sup> *RHGF*, XXI, 264-280.

<sup>6</sup> Schaube, "Die Wechselbriefe König Ludwigs des Heiligen," *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik*, LXX, 614, estimates the expenditure of the French government, 1256-1259, at an average of 113,785 *livres tournois* a year. *RHGF*, XXI, p. LXXVI, gives a higher estimate of royal income for 1238 and a lower one for 1248 than the average stated above. 5 *livres tournois* were equivalent to 4 *livres paris*.

examined in 1260, many of them complained that they were heavily in debt, because they had contributed two or three times to the expenses of the crusade.<sup>7</sup>

Lesser sums were raised by the great counts and the barons who accompanied the king. As we have seen, the church gave generous grants to the king's brothers, and most lords could expect some contribution from their domains. Few could imitate Alphonse of Poitiers, who received 7,500 *livres tournois* from Auvergne alone, but anything which they could collect was a gain for the crusade. In the end king Louis had to assist most of the barons through gifts, wages, or loans, but the fact that they could support themselves for the first weeks or months of the expedition eased the drain on his resources.

While money was being raised, the king arranged for transportation and supply. In 1246 his agents hired sixteen ships from Genoa and twenty from Marseilles. The contracts were drawn up with great care, with exact descriptions of equipment, provisions for defense, and number of seamen. The continued support of Genoa was assured by giving the inhabitants of the city many opportunities for profit. For example, two Genoese, Hugo Lercari and Jacob di Levanto, were made admirals of the royal fleet. This position was more that of business manager than naval officer. The two admirals received important contracts, for example one for supplying cross-bow bolts, and acted as bankers for the king on many occasions. Most other Genoese businessmen, great and small, had some share in the profitable work of exchanging or lending money to the king. The good relations between Louis and Genoa meant that the king was always well supplied with transportation and always able to secure money for his immediate needs. Even after his capture and ransom, his credit was good, and his drafts on the Paris treasury were promptly honored by Italian bankers in the Holy Land.

While the work of securing ships was going on, the king sent agents to Cyprus to lay in a store of provisions. They did their work well; Joinville speaks with admiration of the mountains of grain and wine-barrels which the crusaders found when they reached the island. Except when they were cut off from the sea by the Saracens' naval victory on the Nile, Louis's troops seem to have been well supplied with food.

Raising money, securing ships, and buying supplies took about a year longer than the king had first expected. The first contract

<sup>7</sup> *Layettes*, III, nos. 4598, 4609, 4611, etc. Roye, for example, gave 1,200 *livres parisis* to the king before he sailed and 1,100 *livres parisis* on three occasions while he was overseas.

for ships called for them to be ready by midsummer of 1247; Louis actually embarked at Aigues-Mortes on August 25, 1248. It is difficult to know how much of the army sailed with him; certainly many crusaders either took ship later or embarked at other ports. Cyprus was the rendezvous, and the king, who reached Cyprus on September 17, had a long wait before his forces were fully assembled.

The delay in Cyprus was costly to the crusade in many ways. Many crusaders died, including important men such as counts John of Montfort and Peter of Vendôme and the lord of Bourbon. Others ran out of money and had to borrow from Italian bankers or enter the king's service and so add to his expenses. Worst of all was missing a favorable opportunity to attack Egypt. The sultan aṣ-Ṣāliḥ Aiyūb had taken most of his army to Syria to attack an-Nāṣir, the ruler of Aleppo, and his troops were occupied with the siege of Homs during the winter of 1248–1249. It was precisely during those months that there was some chance for a rapid march up the Nile. To wait for spring meant that the crusaders could hardly hope to establish a beachhead before the regular summer rise of the Nile made progress through the Delta impossible.

To counterbalance these disadvantages the king and his advisers had one great argument. The longer Louis remained in Cyprus, the larger his army became. Belated barons from France, seasoned warriors from Syria and the Morea, the troops of the Temple and Hospital more than made up for the losses caused by sickness. Even at its maximum size, which was probably attained in the spring of 1249, the crusading army was barely large enough to carry out its mission. As usual, the totals given by chroniclers (50,000 and the like) are mere guesses without authority. Most of the Christian writers obtained their information at second hand, and the Arabs had an obvious incentive to exaggerate the size of the defeated forces. Statements about the number of knights, mounted sergeants, and crossbowmen are worthy of a little more consideration — these specially trained men were set apart from the bulk of the army in many ways and might have been roughly counted by men like Sarrasin and Joinville. If we accept Sarrasin's estimate of 2,500 knights (Joinville says 2,800) and 5,000 crossbowmen, and assume that there were about two mounted sergeants and four foot-soldiers for each knight, we would come out close to Wallon's figure of a total force of 25,000 men.

Even this seems high in view of what we know of the cost of the crusade. Knights were paid at least 160 *livres tournois* a year (many



received more), and crossbowmen and men-at-arms about 90 *livres* a year. If Louis had supported 1,500 of the 2,500 knights and 3,000 of the 5,000 bowmen and men-at-arms, he would have spent over half a million *livres* a year or about a million *livres* for the two years devoted to the Egyptian campaign. This would leave only half a million *livres* for shipping, the ransom, the long stay in Syria, and the cost of fortifying coastal cities, since we know that the treasury estimated his total expenses at 1,537,540 *livres*. This is clearly impossible; we have accounts for the Syrian period of the crusade showing that the king spent well over a million *livres* after he left Egypt. The discrepancy is too great to be explained away. It is possible that Louis supported less than three fifths of the army, though even the greatest lords called on him for financial assistance. It is possible that French officials, working years after the crusade, inadvertently omitted part of the expenses, though they had every reason to exaggerate, since they were trying to impress the papacy with the sacrifices which French kings had made for the faith. Making all possible allowances for error, it still seems that Louis must have supported at least half the army and that he could not have spent much more than 350,000 *livres* a year during the Egyptian campaign, in view of what we know about his potential sources of income. This would indicate an army of some 15,000 men — a large force for the time, but one which could not stand many losses without falling below the level needed for the conquest of Egypt.<sup>8</sup>

By spring of 1249 the last troops, coming from Acre, had joined, and the fleet was ready. According to one source<sup>9</sup> the mariners had spent the winter in repairing and building small boats for landing operations — a very natural occupation, even if unrecorded by men like Joinville who had little understanding of naval matters. Either at this time or earlier, Damietta was selected as the point of attack. Some chroniclers give an elaborate story of sealed letters containing the destination, which were to be opened only when the captains had put to sea, but it is unlikely that any such complicated device was used. It was obvious that the crusade was going to Egypt, for

<sup>8</sup> The best discussions of the size of the army are L. de Mas Latrie, *Histoire de Chypre*, I, 350, and Wallon, *St.-Louis et son temps*, I, 284. Schaube, *op. cit.*, p. 615, has some interesting calculations about Louis's expenditures in Syria. The essential figures are in *RHGF*, XXI, 404, 513, 530. Material on pay for military service may be found in E. Boutaric, *St. Louis et Alfonse de Poitiers* (Paris, 1870), pp. 115, 116, and in J. Strayer, *Administration of Normandy under St. Louis* (Cambridge, 1932), p. 65.

<sup>9</sup> *RHGF*, XXIII, 119, chronicle of John de Columna, an Italian Dominican who wrote before 1275.

there was no other reason for wintering in Cyprus, and the only alternative in Egypt to Damietta was Alexandria. Damietta had been taken once before by a crusade, and most of the chroniclers seem to think its choice for Louis's expedition inevitable. Whatever precautions were taken were useless. The sultan was convinced the attack was to be made on Damietta, put a garrison into the city, and lay with the rest of his army a little farther up the Nile.

The army sailed from Cyprus at the end of May, after a false start, broken up by a storm, a week or two earlier. They reached the Damietta mouth of the Nile on June 4 (according to most of the sources), and a council of war decided on an immediate attack. This boldness had its reward; the landing on June 5 was the one completely successful operation of the crusade. The beach picked for landing was on the west bank of the Nile, across the river from the town. It was guarded by a strong detachment of the enemy, but some troops had to be left in the city and even more remained with the sultan in his camp up the Nile. The crusaders probably had a large numerical superiority, and they planned their landing skillfully enough to make the most of this advantage. They had a sufficient number of shallow-draft craft to embark a large part of the army simultaneously, and efforts were made to hold the force together instead of letting it waste its strength in piecemeal attacks. The Saracen defenders either failed to use their bowmen efficiently, or else were checked by the counter-blast of crossbow bolts from the boats. In any case, they did little damage to the men afloat. Then, as the Christians began to jump out of the boats, often waist-deep in water, the defenders tried a cavalry charge. The horsemen were no more effective than the bowmen. The crusaders braced the butts of their lances against the sand and the light-armed Saracens, whose horses were probably hampered by bad footing, were unable to ride them down. The king, with the courage he showed throughout the crusade, came ashore as soon as his men had planted his standard on the beach, and had to be restrained from rushing at once on the enemy. The beachhead was soon well established, and the Saracens withdrew. The Christians had had only minor losses, but two of the Saracen emirs were killed.

Good planning and brave fighting now brought an extra dividend. The Moslem coastal defense units, which retreated across the Nile on a bridge of boats, did not join the garrison of threatened Damietta, but sought safety further up the river. This was not very encouraging to the garrison, the Arab tribe of the Kinānah, who must have felt that they were being sacrificed to gain time for the

rest of the army. They joined the retreat, apparently in a state of panic, since no one thought of destroying the bridge of boats.<sup>10</sup> The Christians soon discovered that the town was abandoned and entered it the next day.

This was a great achievement. Damietta was a good and easily defensible base, full of food and plunder. It had resisted the Fifth Crusade under John of Brienne for over a year before yielding. It was important enough to Egypt to be used as a hostage to secure the surrender of Jerusalem — this offer had been made to John of Brienne after the first capture of the city.<sup>11</sup> And Louis had gained all this at the cost of a single skirmish — his army was intact, better supplied than he could ever have hoped, and absolutely secure while it planned its next move.

If the decisive boldness which had led to a landing on a hostile shore the day after arrival had continued, the crusade might have achieved its objective at once. The Egyptians were terribly discouraged — they had counted on a long siege of Damietta which would waste the Christian army while they gathered strength. The unpopular sultan was seriously ill, and the heir to the throne, living in semi-exile in Syria, was an unknown quantity. Christian morale was at its peak; an immediate attack might have broken all opposition. Instead the crusading army remained in Damietta for five and a half months.

There were good reasons for delay, as there always are in war. Alphonse of Poitiers, the king's brother, was expected daily, with a large body of troops. He had benefitted more from papal generosity than any other crusader, save Louis himself; he had raised large sums of money from the laymen of his provinces; his forces would be a welcome addition to the army. The Nile was about to overflow, and only a rapid march would bring the crusaders out of the Delta before the floods began. Perhaps the risk was too great, yet nothing went well after the decision to spend the summer in Damietta. The sultan in a last burst of energy restored discipline in his army by hanging the leaders of the runaway garrison of Damietta. He concentrated troops and supplies at the strategic point of Mansurah and sent raiding parties down to the crusading lines. Meanwhile morale among the crusaders declined. The usual vices of garrison life appeared in Damietta and, when part of the army was moved

<sup>10</sup> This may have been unimportant; a Genoese chronicler (*MGH, SS.*, XVIII, 227) states that the Christian fleet was forcing an entrance to the Nile while the army landed. In any case, Louis had complete control of local waters, and could have ferried his army to the other shore; the bridge was merely a convenience.

<sup>11</sup> See above, chapter XI, pp. 419, 423.

out of town to get food and exercise for the horses, Saracen raids became annoying. It was hard to restrain young knights, bored by the long delay, angered by loss of friends, from making wild sorties among the enemy, and this resentment against discipline asserted itself later in more dangerous circumstances. No great physical damage was done the army during the summer, but when it moved again it had lost some of its edge.

Alphonse arrived on October 24, just as the best season for fighting in Egypt began. Discussions during the summer had made it clear that one group among the barons preferred an attack on Alexandria to a march through the Delta, and a council of war was held to decide between the two plans. There were strong arguments in favor of seizing Alexandria. The crusaders had full control of the sea, they could probably reach Alexandria before the sultan could move his army there from Mansurah, and possession of the chief Egyptian port would put tremendous pressure on the enemy. If an earlier sultan had been willing to surrender Jerusalem to regain Damietta, even greater concessions could be expected in exchange for Alexandria. Safe behind their fortifications, sure of ample supplies by sea, the crusaders could hold the key positions of Alexandria and Damietta until the Egyptians surrendered all their conquests in the kingdom of Jerusalem. This seemed both safer and surer than a repetition of the dangerous march through the Delta which had led the Fifth Crusade to disaster.

The arguments on the other side are not as well known; the chroniclers who reported the discussion favored the attack on Alexandria and gave little space to the ideas of the opposing group. It seems clear that the party which wished to strike through the Delta at Cairo invoked the sound military principle of seeking the main force of the enemy. Why had they come to Egypt instead of Palestine? Was it not because any gains in the Holy Land were precarious if the main Egyptian army remained undefeated? And would the situation be any better if the crusaders forced the surrender of Jerusalem by occupying Egyptian seaports without destroying the forces of the enemy? The Christians in the Holy Land were bound to be inferior in numbers to the Saracens who surrounded them; the only way to give them any security was to destroy the military and political organization of the chief Saracen state. As the king's brother, count Robert of Artois, said, the best way to kill a snake is to smash its head. Joinville, who reports this phrase, also claims that Artois was the only prominent supporter of the Delta route, and that it was only because he was the king's

brother that he succeeded in convincing Louis despite the opposition of most of the other barons. This may be a little unfair; there is a tendency in Joinville and some of his contemporaries to blame all the misfortunes of the crusade on Robert of Artois because of his fatal disobedience of orders later in the campaign. But though the advice to push on against the main Egyptian army conforms perfectly to Artois's impetuous character, the same advice might have been given by more sober councillors. It might have proved the best advice, had the terrain been favorable and supply assured. Even with tenuous lines of communication and the watery Delta to hamper their heavy-armed host, the crusaders brought Cairo to the edge of panic before they were turned back.

The advance began on November 20; a few days later the crusade had its last piece of luck when the sultan died. This caused a political and military crisis among the Egyptians. The heir to the throne, Tūrān-Shāh, was far away, and it was many weeks before he could reach Egypt to take over the government. To avoid a panic the sultan's widow, Shajar-ad-Durr, with the aid of a few high officials, concealed the ruler's death and succeeded in forging an order which placed the emir Fakhr-ad-Dīn in command of the army. By the time the news leaked out, the regency was in full control of the situation, and the army had become accustomed to obeying its new commander. This adjustment was aided by the slow advance of the crusaders. It was difficult to move an army across the streams of the Delta; one canal had to be dammed in order to let them proceed. It proved equally difficult to bring a fleet of galleys and small craft up the Nile, and yet the fleet was absolutely essential to insure supply, since no garrisons were left along the way to keep open communications by land. As a result, it took the crusaders a full month to reach the main Egyptian defensive position at Mansurah, protected by the Ashmūn-Ṭannāḥ branch of the Nile.

Here the Christians met a serious obstacle. They could not cross a river with a powerful enemy holding the opposite shore, and they were pinned down in the triangle between the Nile and the Ashmūn-Ṭannāḥ branch where raiders could nibble away at their forces. They held their own in the skirmishes which followed during the next few weeks, but fighting in detail was dangerous to the crusaders. Some troops had had to be left behind to garrison Damietta; others had been lost during the advance; and the remaining forces were too small to stand the attrition caused by frequent

skirmishing. Louis realized the danger and issued strict orders to remain on the defensive; but he was not always obeyed, and even when he was, there were bound to be some losses. Another ominous sign was the beginning of attacks on the fleet bringing supplies up the Nile. The crusaders made a prolonged attempt to build a causeway across the Ashmūn-Ṭannāḥ branch, but the works protecting the causeway were swept by missiles and Greek fire, and what little progress had been made was negated when the enemy dug away the bank on the opposite side.

The situation was serious when Louis discovered a way to turn the Saracen position. A native revealed, for a substantial reward, the existence of a ford further down the Ashmūn-Ṭannāḥ branch. Here, after weeks of waiting, was a wonderful opportunity to take the enemy by surprise, attack him in the rear, and win a complete victory. The operation was planned for February 7, 1250. An advance-guard composed of the best cavalry, including the force under count Robert of Artois, the Templars, and an English contingent led by William of Salisbury, was to cross the ford at dawn, secure the further bank, and wait for the rest of the army. The king would then bring over the rest of the cavalry, with some of the infantry crossing last. Duke Hugh of Burgundy was left to guard the camp, with a few horsemen and a strong contingent of crossbowmen. This detachment of a camp-guard, though necessary, still further reduced the size of the crusading army and made it absolutely essential for it to act as a unit. Louis realized the danger, and issued strict orders for all groups to remain in contact and to advance only under his orders.

The attack was made the next day, and this rapid execution of the plan gained the advantages of complete surprise. The ford proved difficult, but was crossed successfully by the advance-guard. Once on the other side, Robert of Artois became completely intoxicated with the excitement of combat. He refused to wait for the rest of the army and led a wild charge against the Saracen camp. The movement was completely successful; the enemy had had no warning, and the Egyptian commander, Fakhr-ad-Dīn, was killed before he could arm himself. This victory deprived Artois of what little discretion he still possessed. The camp on the river was merely an outpost; the bulk of the Saracen army was quartered in the fortified town of Mansurah. Artois insisted on attacking this position at once, though he should have known, as many of his followers did, that cavalry was of little use in the narrow streets of a medieval town. He led his forces into a trap where the enemy was

protected by house-walls, where the Christians were exposed to missiles from the roofs, and where it was almost impossible to keep formation. The Saracens saw their opportunity, rallied, and destroyed most of the advance-guard. This success gave them encouragement and time to reform under subordinate leaders, most notable of whom was Baybars, the future sultan.

Meanwhile the king had crossed with the rest of the cavalry. He did not yet know of the disaster which had overtaken the advance-guard, though he must have been disturbed to see no sign of it near the ford. He had barely time to form his troops in order of battle when the Saracens came down on him from Mansurah. Following their usual tactics, they fired repeated volleys of arrows to break the crusaders' ranks. This was an especially effective maneuver on this occasion, since few, if any, of the Christian bowmen had yet been able to cross the river, and the Saracen archers were not disturbed by counter-fire. Retreat was impossible; the crusaders had to advance, but as they came into contact with the enemy their lack of numbers exposed them to new dangers. The Egyptians pressed them so closely that they could hardly move, and fresh enemy troops waited to take the place of weary units.

Louis kept his courage, and through his own calm bravery held his army together. He soon saw that his best plan was to fight his way through the enemy till he reached a point opposite his old camp. There he might get some cover from his bowmen and reinforcements might be ferried across. But this sensible maneuver was halted repeatedly. The king, in typical feudal fashion, had to consult his chief subordinates before making any decision, and this meant that group commanders had to be sought out in the heat of battle and brought to him for hasty conferences. Then he heard, belatedly, that his brother Robert of Artois was trapped in Mansurah, and halted while a small detachment went out in the forlorn hope of rescuing him and his troops. Joinville, who took part in this sortie, gives the impression that it was overwhelmed, almost before it started, by superior numbers. Meanwhile, however and wherever the king moved, his rear-guard was under heavy pressure and was more than once in danger of being cut off. Here again Joinville gives a vivid picture of how he and a few companions, returning from their sortie, held a small bridge over a little stream which protected the king's rear. Thus the Christian host fought its way doggedly along, now decimated with arrows, now swaying back and forth under the shock of hand-to-hand fighting. Toward evening

reinforcements of crossbowmen arrived under the constable Humbert of Beaujeu. According to one source, they were brought across the river on a wooden bridge hastily constructed by the men who had remained behind to guard the Christian camp.<sup>12</sup> This would indicate that the king had already fought his way through the enemy to a point opposite his old quarters. Wherever they came from, the reinforcements turned the tide. The Saracens withdrew to Mansurah, and Louis had the satisfaction of camping amid the wreckage of the Egyptian outposts.

Crusading heroism had won the battle, but chivalrous folly had already lost the campaign. The only chance for success had been to destroy the Egyptian army, and that army, relatively stronger than ever, still lay at Mansurah, between the Christians and Cairo. If Artois had not lost the advance-guard, a more complete victory might have been gained, though it is doubtful whether the crusaders had ever had a large enough force effectively to cut the enemy's line of retreat. As it was, the Saracens had preserved their morale and most of their forces, while Louis's army had fallen below the level necessary for offensive operations.

The events of the next weeks showed that the Egyptians understood how to profit from the situation. They kept up steady pressure on the crusaders without ever committing themselves so far that they risked a serious defeat. On February 11 they mounted a strong attack, in the hope of capturing the camp, or at least of cutting off some sections of the Christian army. The crusaders had to fight desperately to beat off the attack, and Louis again proved his high courage in rescuing the unit commanded by his brother, Charles of Anjou. In the end the Saracens withdrew in good order to Mansurah, leaving the Christians once more victorious, but reduced in numbers. Lesser raids also took their toll, while dysentery, scurvy, and all the other diseases of the camp began to weaken the forces which had survived the battles.

Prudence dictated a retreat, but at this point the piety of Louis overcame his generalship. He could not believe that the army had been brought so far, through so many dangers, only to fail at the last. He might still have gained large concessions by walling himself up in Damietta, but instead he remained obstinately in his positions on the Nile. His only hope was an outbreak of civil war among the

<sup>12</sup> Other sources put the building of the bridge later, and it does seem difficult to believe that it could have been constructed so promptly, especially as the workmen would have been under enemy fire for part of the time.



leaders of the Egyptian army. Instead, there was a momentary solidifying of forces around the new sultan. Tūrān-Shāh appeared at Mansurah on February 28, and a few days later the enemy discovered a new means of harassing the crusaders. The Moslems took boats to pieces, carried them on camel-back around the Christian position, and relaunched them further down the Nile. This flotilla soon gained complete control of the river, and cut off the provisions which had been coming up from Damietta. Dozens of Christian ships were captured, and so few escaped the blockade that the crusading camp was soon on desperately short rations. It is hard to understand why more attention had not been given to securing the line of supply, or why the excellent sailors in the king's service found it impossible to arm galleys which could break the blockade. It may be that the commanders of a feudal army showed their usual lack of understanding of naval power, and that the shipmen were never given the materials or the money needed to create an effective river fleet. Many of the Christian chroniclers do not even mention the blockade, which would indicate that their sources of information in the army failed to understand its importance. The Moslem writers, on the other hand, stress the closing of the river and consider it one of the chief causes of the Christian collapse.

Despite death, sickness, and starvation, Louis held out until the end of March. Then, far too late, he began a withdrawal. Skillful planning and heroic fighting by the rear-guard brought the army safely across the bridge over the Ashmūn-Ṭannāḥ branch, but the crusaders were not much better off in their old camp than they had been before. About this time there were some half-hearted negotiations with the Saracens on a proposal to exchange Damietta for Jerusalem, but it is difficult to believe that the sultan and his advisers took the proposals very seriously. The crusaders' position was hopeless, and a council of war soon decided to fall back on Damietta. The weaker members of the host were placed in the few galleys which remained, while the rest of the army withdrew by land. They left their fortifications on April 5, and the full weakness of the crusaders was soon revealed. Outnumbered, faint from illness and lack of food, they struggled halfway to Damietta, with the Saracens swarming around them like flies, to use Joinville's expression. At that point they could do no more. Louis, who had refused to try to escape by boat, surrendered with the land forces. Most of the galleys were captured at the same time, though one, carrying the legate, escaped.

Except for the garrison in Damietta, the crusading army had

ceased to exist as a fighting force. And even Damietta was not entirely secure; when news of the surrender came, some of the sailors talked of abandoning the town. Fortunately for Louis, he had left queen Margaret in Damietta, and she succeeded in stopping the proposed flight. Though she had just given birth to a son, she called in the Pisan and Genoese leaders, begged them not to leave her, and clinched the argument by raising a large sum of money for their wages and supplies.

The Saracens were somewhat embarrassed by the completeness of their victory. They had to provide for thousands of prisoners, though they simplified the problem by massacring the sickly and the poor. The greatest possible profit had to be made from the capture of the king and the great barons, and there was difficulty in deciding how this could be done. The fact that Louis had no authority in the kingdom of Jerusalem made it useless to ask for cessions of territory there. The fact that his troops still held Damietta made it necessary to moderate extreme demands; a prolonged siege of the town might well cost more than could be gained from the prisoners. It was clearly to the interests of the Egyptians to get Louis and his army out of the country as soon as possible, before expeditions for rescue or revenge could be organized in France. Difficulty in deciding on terms was perhaps increased by the hostility to Tūrān-Shāh which was beginning to appear in the Egyptian army. Finally, an agreement was reached toward the end of April. After asking for a million bezants as ransom, the sultan reduced his demand to 800,000 bezants. Damietta was to be surrendered, and half the ransom paid before the king left Egypt. In return all surviving captured crusaders were to be freed, and the supplies stored in Damietta were to be preserved until ships could be sent for them.

No sooner had this agreement been reached than it was threatened by a revolt of the Egyptian army. The mamluks had been restive under the old sultan, whom they feared; for Tūrān-Shāh they had only contempt, and they were quick to strike for power. On May 2 the young sultan was assassinated in the presence of the whole army. Baybars was conspicuous in the plot (according to some sources he dealt the final blow as Tūrān-Shāh pleaded for his life), but it was another mamluk, Aybeg, who became commander of the army, and soon husband of Shajar-ad-Durr, and co-sultan with the youthful Aiyūbid al-Ashraf Mūsā. The blood-lust and the indiscipline caused by the revolt led to threats against the prisoners, but the army commanders soon realized that it would be foolish to sacrifice

valuable captives. They decided to maintain the treaty; on May 6 Damietta was surrendered and the king was set free.

Half the ransom (400,000 bezants) was paid during the next two days. There is some dispute as to its exact value in French money, but it is fairly clear that Joinville, who helped collect the money, thought it amounted to 200,000 *livres tournois*. Royal accounts, prepared much later, value it at only 167,000 *livres tournois*, but this could easily have resulted from writing the sum in terms of the more valuable *livres parisis* (which would amount to 160,000), and then failing to make the necessary adjustment when adding it to other expenses stated in *livres tournois*.<sup>13</sup> (The odd 7,000 *livres* could be interest on loans or cost of exchange.) Whether 167,000 or 200,000 *livres tournois*, it was a large, but not impossible, sum to pay. As we have seen, the king's annual revenue was probably somewhat larger, and the tenth being paid by the French church brought in about as much each year. The fact that the money could be collected so quickly shows that the king's resources and credit were still intact. It is true that, to complete the payment, the king had to seize 30,000 *livres* from deposits entrusted to the Temple, but Joinville, who accomplished this mission, makes it clear that his use of force was merely symbolic, and that the Templars had no great objection to providing the money as long as they were freed from blame. The best proof that the ransom did not bankrupt Louis is found in the hundreds of drafts on the French treasury which were issued in the following years while the king stayed in Palestine. These drafts were honored by Italian bankers without question, and the charges for exchange and interest were kept at the very low figure (for the Middle Ages) of ten to fifteen per cent. Whether royal credit would have remained so good had the full ransom been paid is another question, but, as we shall see later, Louis was eventually freed from his obligation to pay the remaining 400,000 bezants.

As soon as the ransom was paid, Louis sailed for Acre. He had few troops with him, since only the greater men had been released from prison, and some of these had headed directly for France. Nevertheless, he was received with joy by the inhabitants of Acre; a few hundred men were always a welcome reinforcement to the hard-pressed kingdom of Jerusalem. Louis was to remain in Palestine for almost four years (about May 13, 1250, to April 24,

<sup>13</sup> The value of the ransom is discussed by Schaube, *op. cit.*, p. 615; Wallon, *St.-Louis et son temps*, I, 370, 389; N. de Wailly in his edition of Joinville, pp. 461-462.

1254). It seems doubtful that he had at first planned so long a stay, but he had certainly determined to salvage what he could from the wreckage of the crusade. The release of the remaining captives had to be secured, and something might be done to ensure the safety of the remnants of the kingdom of Jerusalem. Both operations took longer than had been expected, and before they were completed political events in the Arab world gave the king some hope of regaining the holy city. So his stay was prolonged, month after month, much to the benefit of the crusading kingdom, and, despite the fears of his advisers, not greatly to the detriment of France.

The moral greatness of Louis never appeared more clearly than in this decision to remain overseas. Most of his predecessors, when defeated in battle, had run for home as soon as possible; most of his followers were desperately anxious to return to France. Joinville gives a graphic description of the councils in which the king's decision was discussed. He may have exaggerated the importance of his own arguments, but it is clear that many great barons wanted the king to leave, and that Louis was grateful to Joinville for supporting the opposite point of view. But while Louis could not be persuaded to depart, he could not prevent the departure of most of his followers. His own brothers, Charles of Anjou and Alphonse of Poitiers, sailed on August 10, and the king had great difficulty in retaining even a small body of troops. No one had any money left; Louis had to meet all expenses and pay excessively high wages to the men who entered his service. According to Joinville, the king never had more than 1,400 troops at any one time in Palestine, and even this figure may be exaggerated.

Fortunately for the Christians, the assassination of Tūrān-Shāh had started a bitter quarrel between the Syrian and the Egyptian Moslems. Loyalty to the house of Saladin still existed, and the most prominent representative of the Aiyūbid family, an-Nāṣir, the prince of Aleppo, knew how to profit from it. He seized Damascus in July 1250 and began planning an attack on the upstart Mamluk rulers of Egypt. This quarrel put Louis in a much stronger position than he could have expected when he went to Acre. He occupied a strategic block of territory between Cairo and Damascus and his small army of seasoned warriors might hold the balance of power in a war between two equally matched adversaries. As a result, both Syrians and Egyptians began to seek his support. The Syrians offered him Jerusalem while the Egyptians began to concern themselves with the fate of the Christian captives. The Mamluks had been rather careless at first about obeying the terms of the treaty;

the king's war machines and food stored in Damietta had been destroyed and many of the prisoners slain. Now they began to restore the captives, in larger and larger groups, as they saw the need to conciliate the king. More than this, soon after the invading Syrian army had been driven back (February 2 or 3, 1251), the Egyptians began negotiating with Louis for an alliance, holding out the hope that he could recover all Palestine up to the Jordan as a price for his aid.

Some of the royal advisers, notably the Templars, favored an agreement with the Syrians, but Louis seems to have had little hesitation in choosing the Egyptian side. This was probably a wise decision, though it did not produce all the results which had been expected. Egypt was unified as Syria was not, and the Egyptian army had just inflicted a decisive defeat on the Syrians. It looked as if Cairo would, in the long run, dominate Damascus, and it was well for the Christians to be on the winning side. More important, perhaps, to the king, was the fact that the Egyptians could offer him concrete advantages while the Syrians merely gave promises. An eventual cession of Jerusalem was an uncertain basis for policy. The wheel of fortune turned with extraordinary rapidity in Moslem countries; the rise of a new military leader, the advent of a new sultan, the creation of a new alliance might upset any arrangement. But the Egyptians had both Christian captives and the king's promise to pay the second half of the ransom, and once these were surrendered no political upheaval could bring them back. Louis secured all he could ask for on both these points. All the surviving captives, even those who had been converted to Islam, were returned. The payment of the remaining half of the ransom was canceled. With these tangible gains, Louis had no hesitation in making an alliance with the Egyptians early in 1252. He agreed to support their invasion of Syria in return for the cession of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and most of the lands west of the Jordan.

The new allies were to meet in May between Jaffa and Gaza, to combine operations against the Syrians. The king, with as large a force as he could raise, was in Jaffa in good time, but the Syrians blocked the union of the two forces by occupying Gaza. Louis did not give up hope, but remained in Jaffa for over a year. Meanwhile al-Musta'şim, the caliph in Baghdad, did his best to end a war which might have had disastrous results for Islam. Since neither adversary had been able successfully to invade the other's homeland, they were not unwilling to listen to proposals of peace. A treaty was finally made about April 1, 1253, which ended the war between

Syria and Egypt, and, at the same time, destroyed Louis's last hope of regaining Jerusalem.

While negotiating with the Moslems, Louis had worked steadily to improve the defenses of the coastal strip still remaining in Christian hands. His mere presence in Palestine had done much to suspend the bickering among Christians which had made co-operative efforts almost impossible. Under his leadership the fortifications of Acre, Caesarea, Jaffa, Sidon, and some smaller places were rebuilt or strengthened. The value of this work was shown when the Syrian army, free to harass the Christians after the peace of 1253, made demonstrations along the coast. They did not dare attack Jaffa and Acre, which were well fortified, but did a good deal of damage to the people of Sidon, where the work of fortifying the town had just begun. Louis also tried to protect the northern flank of the crusading kingdom by strengthening the principality of Antioch. He reconciled the young prince of Antioch, Bohemond VI, with his mother Lucienne, and encouraged close relations between Antioch and the Christian kingdom of Armenia. Finally, Louis made earnest, if rather uncomprehending, efforts to come to some sort of understanding with the Mongols. He had begun the exchange of messages with the Great Khan Göyük while still in Cyprus in 1248 and knew by this time that the Mongols had some leanings toward Nestorian Christianity and fairly definite plans to attack the Moslems of the Near East. Here were the raw materials for an alliance, but neither people could understand the other. Louis thought primarily of conversion, the Mongols of conquest. Louis was annoyed by Mongol attempts to treat him as a vassal prince, and the Mongols were irritated by French independence. A working agreement between Mongols and Christians was not entirely impossible, as was shown by king Heṭoum I of Armenia a few years later, but it required a knowledge of the orient and a flexibility which Louis did not possess.

Most of the work of fortification was finished by the time that peace was made between Damascus and Cairo. It soon became apparent that there was little more for the king to do. He sent part of the army on an unsuccessful raid on Banyas and learned that the enemy was now too strong to be shaken even by a surprise attack. There was no possibility of maneuver; the Christians could do little more than defend what they had. The king of France was not needed for garrison work. He was needed at home. The regent Blanche of Castile had died at the end of 1252, and the king's brothers, able though they were, could not quite fill her place. Some

time toward the end of 1253 or early in 1254 Louis decided to return to France as soon as good weather had set in. He left Geoffrey of Sargines with 100 knights to reinforce the garrison of Acre and sailed from that port on April 24, 1254. After a long and dangerous voyage he landed at Hyères in Provence early in July.

King Louis often thought of the Holy Land during the prosperous years which followed his return to France. He maintained the French garrison in Acre under Geoffrey of Sargines, and helped the hard-pressed Christians raise money to defend their last fragments of territory. The French treasury later estimated that this assistance in men and money cost the king an average of 4,000 *livres tournois* a year between 1254 and 1270. The consciences of most rulers were satisfied with considerably less, but Louis was not content with such routine expressions of piety. He felt responsible for the failure of the 1249 crusade and longed to redeem himself by a successful expedition. He was encouraged in this hope by his brother Alphonse, who began planning a new crusade almost as soon as he returned from Syria. But, as usual, the internal politics of the commonwealth of Christendom interfered with its foreign policy. The popes were spending most of their time and all the money they could raise on the old quarrel with the Hohenstaufens. Louis's younger brother, Charles of Anjou, was drawn into the struggle; and, when he set off to conquer the kingdom of Sicily from Manfred, he took with him some of the best fighting men of France. Only when he had won his decisive victory at Benevento in 1266 was it possible to consider the needs of the Holy Land.

It was time, and past time, to think of the Christian outposts in the Levant. Baybars, sultan at Cairo since 1260, had revealed his great qualities as a military leader. Just before assassination had cleared his way to the throne, he had been largely responsible for defeating a Mongol army which had occupied Syria. There were few men, from the Mediterranean to the Yellow Sea, who could claim such a victory, and Baybars had greater prestige and authority than any Moslem ruler since Saladin. With Egypt and Syria united under him, Baybars began a steady attack on the Christian fortresses. One by one they fell, Caesarea and Arsuf in 1265, Safad in 1266, Jaffa and Antioch in 1268. Undermanned, divided by political and economic rivalries, the remaining towns were in no condition to defend themselves. A new effort was needed if any Christian states were to survive in the eastern Mediterranean.

With Charles of Anjou as king of Sicily, the pope no longer had to concentrate all his resources on Italy, but it seems doubtful that Clement IV planned a full-scale crusade as a result of the victory at Benevento. He continued the policy of the last few years, raising a little money for Palestine through a one per cent tax on ecclesiastical income, and encouraging individuals to redeem their crusading vows by spending a few months fighting around Acre. It was not lack of energy which made him hold back, but rather the complicated political situation in Italy and the Levant. There was still a Hohenstaufen heir, young Conradin, around whom all the opponents of the papacy and the Angevins might unite. War or rebellion in Italy was not merely possible; it was probable. There was a difficult decision to be made about Constantinople. Charles of Anjou, hardly secure on his new throne, was planning a reconquest of Byzantine lands, and a revival of the Latin empire of Constantinople. Michael VIII Palaeologus, who had only recently regained the great city on the Bosphorus, was countering with an offer to reunite the Greek and Latin churches. The old plan of persuading the Mongols of Persia to form an alliance with the Christians against Baybars, had been revived and had to be investigated. The pope wanted to be very sure where the most effective blow could be struck before he called out the forces of western Europe. But Louis, always disdainful of power politics, saw only the captivity of the holy places and the oppressions of Baybars. Late in 1266 he secretly told the pope his intentions, and on March 24, 1267, at a great meeting of his barons, he and his three sons took the cross.

There was little enthusiasm for the new crusade among the nobility of France. Joinville flatly refused to follow the king to whom he was bound by so many ties of memory and affection, and said bluntly that the new expedition was a mistake. Jongleurs and troubadours, who wrote for the upper classes, criticized the whole crusading idea. For generations the only successful crusades had been those directed against Europeans, and Frenchmen were becoming cynical about the reasons for, and pessimistic about the results of, overseas expeditions. One chronicler reports that the royal council was unanimously opposed to the crusade, and several say that the king had to make repeated efforts to persuade a respectable number of barons and knights to take the cross. Even the royal family was not united on the plan. A special embassy was sent to Charles of Anjou, and the terms of the king's letter indicate that he knew that his brother had no great liking for the expedition.



The one favorable element in the situation was that there was some hope of securing aid from other countries. King James I of Aragon was dreaming of ending his long reign with a victorious expedition to the east, and Henry III of England, as he grew old, began to think that it was time to redeem the crusading vow he had taken so many years before.

In view of the general lack of enthusiasm it seems likely that Louis had to bear even more of the expenses than he had on his previous crusade. We know that the duke of Burgundy received a generous stipend from the king, and if so great a man could not or would not rely on his own resources, the poorer crusaders must have leaned heavily on the king. Even prince Edward, who was to lead the English forces in place of his father, borrowed 70,000 *livres tournois* from Louis for crusading expenses in 1268, though the English clergy and laity were about to make large payments for his expedition. It may be that this money was to be used primarily to secure the aid of Edward's Gascon vassals, since the prince agreed to give 25,000 *livres tournois* to Gaston of Béarn and to repay the loan from Gascon revenues. When Louis did not make direct grants, he paid indirectly by allowing the pope to divert revenues to great lords. Thus Alphonse of Poitiers, Theobald V of Champagne, count John of Brittany, count Guy of Flanders, and other lords of the Low Countries all received large sums from grants which had been made to the king by the pope.<sup>14</sup>

To meet these expenses the king had the same revenues as before. Grants by the church were once again the largest single source of income. A tenth of the revenues of the ecclesiastics of France and a twentieth of the revenues of churchmen in the border dioceses (Liège, Metz, Toul, Verdun, and the non-French parts of the province of Rheims) were conceded soon after Louis took the cross. Since money for the Sicilian war was still being collected, the crusade tenth could not begin until 1268 — it then ran for three years. The king also received the small change of papal income in France — the remnants of the one hundredth of 1262, redemptions of crusading vows, indeterminate legacies, and the like. The towns were asked to pay an aid for knighting the king's eldest son and for the crusade, and this levy was extended as widely as possible, despite claims to exemption. At the same time it was far from covering all laymen, in contrast to the twentieth granted to Henry III by the English parliament. The royal ambassadors reminded

<sup>14</sup> The king, however, would not assent to Alphonse's request that he be given the proceeds of the tenth in all his lands: see Boutaric, *St.-Louis et Alphonse de Poitiers*, p. 315.

Charles of Anjou that he owed his brother 49,000 *livres*, but Charles made no effort to pay the debt until 1270. Alphonse of Poitiers relieved the king of a considerable expense by making energetic efforts to raise money in his own domains. He took aids from the nobles and received 30,000 *livres tournois* from the pope, as well as indeterminate legacies and redemption of vows in his lands. The non-nobles paid heavily; there was a double *cens* in the northern counties, and a *fouage* for three years in his southern holdings. The Jews were seized and forced to ransom themselves. Altogether, Alphonse must have raised well over 100,000 *livres tournois*, which left him in a much better financial position than most of the crusaders.<sup>15</sup>

King Louis began to spend his money as soon as the first sums from the tenth became available. Contracts were made with the leaders of feudal contingents, and agents were sent to the Mediterranean to secure ships. Venice and other maritime cities were approached, but in the end the contracts went to Genoa (19 ships) and Marseilles (20), just as they had before. The admiral, this time, was to be a French subject, Florent of Varennes, but the Genoese chose two consuls who were in virtual command of their ships. Chartering old vessels and commissioning the building of new ones were an immediate drain on the king's resources, since the Genoese demanded down payments of one third to one half of the total sum. Prices were somewhat lower than in the 1240's, but new ships still cost 7,000 *livres tournois* apiece, while old ones were chartered at prices running from 850 to 3,750 *livres tournois*. It is not surprising that the French envoys were occasionally short of money. Louis, however, still had good credit in Genoa, and by the summer of 1269 most of the arrangements for the fleet had been made. The ships were to be at Aigues-Mortes by early summer in 1270.

These contracts are much more specific than those of the 1240's, and in some of the details we may see the first signs that the king was thinking of Tunisia as a possible objective of the crusade. The king is given a very free hand in controlling the movements of the fleet. He may ask it to stop briefly at some port or island so that he may hold a council. He may land his army once, reëmbark it after a month, and land it a second time, at no extra cost. If his operations are so prolonged that he needs the fleet during and after the winter months, he may keep the ships by making an additional payment of two fifths of the base price. No destinations are mentioned, but these provisions would permit a quick blow against a nearby

<sup>15</sup> See Boutaric, *op. cit.*, pp. 280 ff. for a description of Alphonse's financial expedients.

enemy, such as Tunisia, to be followed, if possible, by a longer expedition to the east. They might also be interpreted as envisaging a stopover at some eastern base such as Cyprus or Crete in order to reassemble and reprovision the army before a landing in Egypt or Syria. The precedents of 1248 favor this second interpretation, but there are strong reasons for believing that no landing at an eastern base was contemplated in 1270. In the first place, no supplies were shipped ahead of the army to Cyprus, though Louis had found this very helpful for his earlier attack on Egypt. In the second place, these contracts, so specific in all other respects, are remarkably vague about the destination of the fleet. This could hardly have been accidental, since in the negotiations with Venice which immediately preceded those with Genoa, a voyage to the Holy Land and a halt in Cyprus or Crete were specifically mentioned. It looks as though Louis changed his plans some time in 1268 to include an attack on Tunis. If he did, there was every reason to keep his destination secret, not only to deceive the enemy but to avoid alienating his friends. The Genoese had no desire to ruin their trade with Tunisia, and the crusade was unpopular enough without trying to explain an unprecedented diversion to the western Mediterranean. So the contracts were drawn in such a way that the king was free to move against Tunisia, while those who were not in on the secret could still think that an ordinary expedition against Egypt or Syria was planned.<sup>16</sup>

It may seem unfair to accuse an honest man of such tortuous behavior on very slender evidence, but it is difficult to come to any other conclusion. Certainly the attack on Tunisia must have been decided on before the army sailed in the summer of 1270. The fact that the rendezvous for the fleet was fixed at Cagliari proves this; Sardinia was impossibly remote from any eastern objective. Louis never made important decisions on the spur of the moment; it is difficult to believe that he made no plans about Tunisia until the spring of 1270. We know that he was in constant contact with Charles of Anjou, and Charles had had trouble with Tunisia from the beginning of his reign in the kingdom of Sicily. He must have told his brother of his difficulties, and the fact that a Tunisian embassy visited Paris in 1269 after negotiating with Charles shows that Louis was taking some interest in the problem. No one of these arguments is decisive, but the cumulative effect is strong. Louis

<sup>16</sup> The contracts with Genoa and Marseilles are published in the books by Jal and Belgrano cited in the bibliographical note. The contract proposed by the Venetians is in Duchesne, *Historiae Francorum scriptores*, V, 435-436.

must have decided on the Tunisian diversion late in 1268, or early in 1269.

It is easier to accept the fact of an early decision to attack Tunisia than to understand the reasons which led to it. Contemporaries of Louis and modern historians have been equally puzzled by the act.<sup>17</sup> Scholars of great ability have even denied that Charles of Anjou influenced the decision, and have claimed that he merely followed his brother reluctantly into the adventure. But can anyone believe that Louis would have concerned himself with Tunisia if Charles had not been king of Sicily? France had no political or economic relations with Tunisia, and Louis was interested in the Holy Land, not in the conquest of North African ports. Sicily, on the other hand, had an important trade with Tunisia and was immediately affected by unfriendly acts of the Ḥafṣid ruler, Muḥammad I. Charles had every reason to be dissatisfied with the behavior of the emir. He had been a friend of the Hohenstaufens; he had allowed supporters of Conradin to sail from his ports in 1268 to stir up rebellion in Sicily. Even after the shattering defeat of Tagliacozzo the emir had sheltered these enemies of Charles in his domains. Moreover, he had refused Charles the annual payments which he had regularly made to the Hohenstaufen emperors for free access to Sicilian waters and markets. Charles had been demanding these payments since he became king, and an attack, or at least a demonstration against Tunisia, was an obvious way of backing up his diplomacy.

It is true that Tunisia was not a major objective and that Charles's policies at this time were aimed primarily at the reconquest of the Latin empire of Constantinople. But the crusade planned by Louis imposed a serious obstacle to this plan. Charles knew that his brother would keep his vow, and that many of the French warriors who might have joined an expedition to Romania would follow their king instead. He knew that Louis was anxious to have his support, and family pride, gratitude for recent assistance, and political expediency forbade him to reject the request. Charles could hardly escape a crusade, but he could hope to make it brief and profitable to himself. Louis was always willing to listen to advice from his brothers, and in this case he greatly needed the assistance which Charles could give. By himself he could hardly raise a respectable army; with Sicilian assistance he might be able to strike a real blow against the Moslems. Under these conditions Charles could argue

<sup>17</sup> The fullest discussion of the problem is in Sternfeld's *Ludwigs des heiligen Kreuzzug nach Tunis*. H. F. Delaborde gives a useful criticism of Sternfeld's thesis in *ROL*, IV (1896), 423-428. The Moslem interpretation is treated in the chapter on North Africa in volume III of the present work (in preparation).

that Louis should consider the interests of Sicily and strike a blow against the infidels across the strait.

The chroniclers report some of the reasons which may have persuaded Louis to attack Tunisia. He had no very clear picture of the geography of North Africa, and he probably thought that Tunisia was closer and more accessible to Egypt than was actually the case. He was told that the Mamluk army drew military supplies from Tunisia, and he may have believed that Tunisia would furnish a base from which pressure could be exerted on Egypt. The rather remote danger of the Tunisian navy blocking the straits of Sicily was also mentioned. The payment owed by Tunisia for access to Sicilian ports may have been represented as a service owed by a vassal to his lord. Louis had strong feelings about disloyal vassals — witness his attitude to the English barons during their rebellion — and he would certainly have felt that a vassal who denied service to a Capetian prince deserved punishment. There was a rumor that the emir of Tunisia was ready to become a Christian if he could be assured protection, and it is quite possible that Muḥammad I himself started the story in order to gain time in his negotiations with Charles. Louis may not have fully believed the report, but it would have quieted his religious scruples and made it easier for him to convince others. It was generally believed that Tunisia could be easily and quickly conquered, so that Louis could still hope to take his army to the east after an inspiring and profitable victory.

All this is speculation, but behind the speculation lie the hard facts of Capetian family loyalty and the dependence of the two brothers on each other. Tunisia was the only objective which satisfied both the religious policy of Louis and the political needs of Charles. Each king could hope that after the Tunisian raid his interests would prevail. Louis could dream of a united French-Sicilian army sailing on to attack the Egyptians, while Charles, wise with his years of military experience, could feel sure that the crusade would break up after one campaign and that he might then recruit knights and bowmen for a war on the Greeks.

Louis had planned his troop movements so well that he and the larger part of the army arrived in Languedoc several weeks ahead of the ships. The Genoese were late, and the king was not able to sail until July 2, 1270. This was at least a month behind schedule, and it was a month which Louis could ill afford to lose. Not only would he land in Tunisia during the worst of the summer heat; he

would also have very little good weather left for the second stage of the voyage to the east.

Most of the army seems to have embarked at Aigues-Mortes or Marseilles at about the same time; there were very few laggards compared to 1248. This would indicate a relatively small force, since it was very difficult, under thirteenth-century conditions, to embark a large number of men within a limited period. Other evidence supports the conclusion that Louis had a smaller army in 1270 than in 1248. The king's own household included only about 327 knights, and yet this should have been one of the largest divisions of the army. The lower cost of shipping also indicates a small force; with no great demand for vessels, Genoa and Marseilles had to deflate their prices. Troops from the Latin states of the east, which had played a prominent role in the Egyptian campaign, were not present in Tunisia. Louis's great reluctance to undertake any important operations before the arrival of Charles of Anjou also suggests a small army. It is true that he had waited for Alphonse at Damietta, but he had been willing to risk a pitched battle and a siege upon landing, and the sultan of Egypt was a far more dangerous foe than the ruler of Tunisia. The Arabic historian al-Maqrizī regularly exaggerates the size of crusading forces, but his figures, for what they are worth, indicate a smaller army in Tunisia than at Damietta. Altogether, a very rough guess might place the number of men who sailed with the king at no more than 10,000.<sup>18</sup>

The rendezvous for the fleet was at Cagliari, in southern Sardinia. Here the final council was held, and the decision to attack Tunis was announced. The secret had been well kept, and both the sailors and the rank and file of the army were surprised. Many of the Genoese seamen were so sure that they were going to the Holy Land that they had contracted loans payable in Syria. No chronicler gives a very full account of the arguments used to persuade the men, but it is clear that the wealth and weakness of Tunis were stressed. There was also talk of the conversion of the emir and the value of Tunis as a Christian base against the Moslems. Pious crusaders were assured that they would receive the same indulgences for fighting western Moslems as for service in the Holy Land. There seems to have been no real opposition to the plan; Louis's reputation stood so high that few men could question his decisions.

It took about a week to assemble the fleet at Cagliari. The run across to Tunisia was made quickly, and a landing was made on

<sup>18</sup> See the estimates of F. Lot, *L'Art militaire et les armées au moyen-âge* (Paris, 1946), I, 196.

July 18 without serious opposition. Tunisian outposts harassed the crusaders, and tried to cut them off from water, but after the Genoese had taken the fort built on the site of ancient Carthage the Christian camp was reasonably secure. Then both sides settled down to a waiting game. Louis, conscious of the smallness of his army, remembering his experiences in Egypt, issued strict orders against any sorties. He was determined not to risk a pitched battle until Charles of Anjou arrived, and he did not wish to dribble away his forces in indecisive fighting. He was better obeyed than he had been in Egypt, and the army on the whole resisted the temptation to attack Moslem skirmishers. As for Muḥammad I, he realized that he was reasonably safe behind the walls of his city, and that his greatest danger was to risk his army in the open. So he limited his operations to aggressive patrolling of the Christian lines and small-scale attacks on foragers.

Meanwhile heat, lack of sanitation, and scarcity of fresh food brought the usual diseases to the Christian camp. The royal family itself was stricken. The king's eldest son, Philip, was too weak to lead his division, and young John of Nevers soon became mortally ill. Born in Damietta during the dark days of the retreat from Mansurah, John died just as the king himself fell ill. Louis, no longer strong enough to fight off disease, weakened gradually, and on August 25 he died, as he had lived, in the service of the faith.

Just as the king's death was being announced, the vanguard of the Sicilian fleet appeared. Charles of Anjou was saddened by his brother's death, but had no intention of becoming a martyr himself. The new king of France, Philip III, was in nominal command, but his illness and lack of experience forced him to leave everything to his determined uncle. Charles soon decided, after a few more skirmishes, that the crusaders' position was untenable. The army must either risk a full-scale attack on Tunis, or withdraw. The Ḥafṣid emir was also anxious to end hostilities. Sickness had appeared in his army, and he had no desire to face a prolonged siege. With both leaders in this state of mind, it was not difficult to arrange a peace. There was a good deal of indignation among the lesser men in the camp, but Charles had no great difficulty in persuading the leaders to follow his plans. The treaty was ratified on November 1, and seventeen days later the crusaders embarked for Sicily.

A large part of the indignation against the treaty was caused by the fact that Charles was the only one to derive much benefit from its terms. True, Tunisia paid a war indemnity of 210,000 gold-

ounces, but even if these were worth 50 *sous tournois* apiece,<sup>19</sup> they amounted to only 525,000 *livres*. This was far less than the crusaders' expenses, especially since the king of Sicily received one third of the sum. Charles, on the other hand, regained all the old privileges of the kings of Sicily in Tunisia. His subjects and friends could trade freely in Tunisian ports, and could exercise their faith freely in Tunis. The supporters of the Hohenstaufens were to be expelled from the lands of the emir. The annual payment for the right to trade with Sicily was doubled and arrears were to be made up. On the whole, Charles had gained most of his objectives. He had engaged in a crusade at a minimum cost in time and money, and in return he had restored his position in Tunisia and broken up a possible center of opposition there. Of all the crusaders, he was the only one who had reason to be pleased.

The unsatisfactory results of the crusade were emphasized by the events of the return. Edward of England arrived just as the final negotiations with Tunisia were being concluded. He was not pleased with a peace which prevented him from fighting, but he could do nothing but accompany Charles and Philip to Sicily. When the fleet reached Trapani, it was struck by a storm which did great damage to the French and Italian vessels, but left Edward's ships unscathed. Pious crusaders were quick to see in this disaster a divine judgment on the faint-hearted. In spite of the warning, all the leaders except Edward agreed to put off further expeditions for three years. More misfortunes were not slow in coming. Theobald of Champagne and Navarre died of an illness contracted in Africa. With many of his ships out of commission and the winter storms beginning, Philip had to take the difficult land route back to France. The hardships of the journey were too much for his pregnant queen, Isabel of Aragon, and she died after giving birth to a dead child. It was not an army but a great funeral procession which returned to France. The young king carried with him the remains of his father, his wife, his stillborn son, his brother, and his brother-in-law. It is not surprising that the next appeal for an overseas expedition drew little response from the French.

The final episode of the crusade was Edward's journey to the Holy Land. Deprived of all outside support, he was accompanied by only a few hundred of his own countrymen. This was too small an army for any effective fighting, as he soon discovered. A few raids in 1271 accomplished nothing, and a truce in 1272 between

<sup>19</sup> This may have been their nominal value, but actual exchange rates at this time give a value closer to 40 *sous tournois*. See Belgrano, *Documenti inediti*, pp. 136, 142, 324-325.



Acre and Baybars ended hostilities. True to his principles, Edward refused to accept the truce, but he could hardly continue fighting when the town which was his chief base of supplies was at peace. He finally followed Louis's example, and left a garrison in Acre at his expense when he sailed at the end of the summer. As a military expedition, his crusade had been useless, but as a political gesture it was a great success. Edward's steadfastness and devotion to the Holy Land were contrasted with the weakness and political maneuverings of Philip and Charles. He gained a reputation for pious zeal which was to be of assistance to him in his later quarrels with Scotland, France, and the papacy. But while his record was better than that of the other kings he had drawn much the same conclusion from his experiences. Like Philip and Charles, he would talk of regaining the Holy Land, but he would always find some reason why it was impossible to make the effort. The age of the great crusades, led by the kings of the west, had ended.