

THE CATALAN COMPANY AND THE EUROPEAN POWERS, 1305-1311

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PERHAPS the most fantastic military adventure of the later Middle Ages was that of the Catalan Grand Company of the Orient. A nomadic pirate-republic, it fought its way by land and sea eastward over Asia Minor to Lesser Armenia, and westward over Byzantium to Athens. Though its core was a light-armed infantry not very superior in equipment to the legions of ancient Rome, it met and defeated armies of Turks, Caucasians, Balkan mountainfolk, Genoese archers and cavalry, Thracian, Macedonian, and Asiatic Byzantines, and a representative array of French chivalry. Despite the able researches of men like Hopf, Schlumberger, and Rubió y Lluch, these "almost incredible deeds" (as George Sarton termed them)¹ are too often not well known to the mediaevalist unless he be directly engaged in Hispanic or Byzantine studies. Even in these latter instances many aspects still merit exploration, especially in the light of recent research advances. Kenneth M. Setton has stimulated interest in the subject with his admirable *Catalan Domination of Athens 1311-1388*.² The present study is an analysis of the complex of diplomatic relations between the Company and the western powers during the military expedition which preceded (1303-1311) and founded that domination.

An outline will set the Mediterranean scene for the reader. The War of the Sicilian Vespers, which had shaken Europe for twenty years and had been so costly in treasure and in blood, drew to a close in the treaty tents at Caltebellota late in 1302. Peace found the indefatigable merchants of Aragon in a position to dominate the trade of the western Mediterranean; title to Sardinia, Corsica, and (for all practical purposes) Sicily now buttressed their mercantile ambitions. A few years previous to the peace, James II of Aragon had dashed Ghibelline hopes by returning his Sicilian throne to Charles II of Anjou, King of Naples, and becoming an ally of the Franco-papal forces; now married to Charles' daughter, he was immersed in domestic and Spanish peninsular affairs. His brother Frederick (Fadrique), slipping into the vacated Sicilian throne, had successfully maintained his crown against the forces sent by its overlord, Pope Boniface VIII — that is, against the Angevins of Naples backed by France, and (briefly) against James of Aragon. The treaty now assured Frederick his Sicilian throne for life as a papal fief and arranged his marriage with a daughter of the Neapolitan king.

In France King Philip the Fair faced both east and west. In the west he had terminated his war with England and taken up the final phase of his struggle with Boniface VIII. In the East he pursued the Angevin dream of seizing Constantinople — this time through a papal crusade led by his brother Charles of Valois.

Venice and Genoa, exhausted by their fierce struggle for the Levant trade,

¹ *Science and Learning in the Fourteenth Century* (Baltimore: Carnegie Institution, 1947), I, 300.

² Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1948.

warily parried and built up reserves of strength against a renewal of the fight. Genoa was supreme now at the Byzantine court, but the projected Valois attack promised to reverse the political situation upon which that supremacy rested. Meanwhile the unhappy Byzantines, with much of their outlying territory still in western hands, fought Bulgars and Serbs on one frontier and irresistible Seljuk hordes on the other.

The Catalan Company's own story may be summed in a few key events. Roger de Flor of Brindisi, apostate Templar and privateer extraordinary, had materially furthered the victory of Frederick of Sicily during the closing years of the War of the Sicilian Vespers. With Frederick's blessing he then offered to Emperor Andronicus II of Byzantium the services of those seasoned Spanish veterans who had formed the backbone of Frederick's mercenary armies and who were now unemployed. Wily Andronicus, his Asian possessions beleaguered by the Turks, gladly received (1303) the "company" Roger had formed: some 1500 cavalry, plus 5000 sailors and soldiers including the famed Almogávares. He observed their startling successes against the Turks (and their equally startling plunder of his wealthy Asiatic subjects) first with amazement and then with deep mistrust. Though they had in effect subdued the Seljuk armies, he recalled them to the Gallipoli peninsula. There ensued a protracted quarrel over wages. At the very point of agreement, with Roger acknowledged a "caesar" and the feudal lord of Asia Minor, co-Emperor Michael IX treacherously murdered the adventurer and moved huge armies to destroy the Company. The latter's reaction is known to history as the Catalan Vengeance: a two year devastation of Thrace and a two year devastation of Macedonia, each havoc ceasing only when very little remained for the Company or their Turk allies to ruin. "They laid the empire prostrate in the dust, bleeding with wounds from which it never recovered."³ Then the disgruntled warriors, who had added to their Sicilian, Aragonese, and papal fealties that of France, plundered their way southward through Thessaly. They took service with the Angevin duke of Athens; shortly afterwards they took Athens.

After Rogers' assassination (30 April 1305) the Company had been led briefly by a relative new-comer, the Catalan noble Entenza, until his capture by the Genoese. The seneschal Rocafort succeeded him, but his control was soon disputed — first by one Arenos, and secondly by the returned Entenza acting for James of Aragon. Before this three-way schism could be mended, Frederick of Sicily despatched Prince Ferran of Mallorca to assume command, as he had previously but futilely sent Sancho of Aragon. The resultant troubles saw Entenza killed, Arenos gone to the service of Andronicus, Ferran sailing sadly for home, and Rocafort installed as supreme leader (July 1307). At this point the papal crusade under Valois contracted for the Company's services, Valois' lieutenant Cepoy held nominal command through the Macedonian devastation and allied intrigues, until 1310. In mid-1309 Rocafort was sent as prisoner to Italy by Cepoy and a soldiers' council replaced him.

³ George Finlay and H. F. Tozer, *A History of Greece from its Conquest by the Romans to the Present Time, B.C. 146 to A.D. 1864*, 7 vols. (Oxford, 1877), III, 388.

The military exploits of the Catalan Grand Company occasioned no little interest in European courts and councils. Both Aragon and Sicily had bid — in semi-official manner, to avoid embarrassing responsibilities — for more direct control of the Company when they had despatched the Catalan *rich hom* Entenza and the royal bastard Sancho. Now the monumental proportions of the Catalan Vengeance had accelerated the tempo of international intrigue. Fabulous Romania (though a shadow of its former self) was never long out of sight or mind of the divers western powers, and the score of Aragonese banners streaming from Byzantine strongholds was an unnerving thing for them to contemplate.

I

Genoa and Venice would have been among the first European powers to hear of the Catalan outbreak, for before declaring war the Company had sent a large deputation to Constantinople to offer feudal defiance in the presence of representatives of Genoa, Venice, Pisa, and Ancona. Limitations of space forbid our detailing their reactions over the subsequent six years, but the broad pattern may be sketched. Officially friendly both with Sicily and Aragon, the Genoese exerted every effort compatible with discretion to injure the Company. Twenty thousand Genoese ducats had helped outfit the Catalans and acts of sincere friendship by the Galata Genoese can be noted even up to the capture of Entenza. But the Catalans, already serious trade rivals, threatened in the person of the Company the unique military and economic dominance enjoyed by Genoa in the empire. This consideration, rather than the several overt acts of violence against Genoese colonies and nationals, would have motivated those strenuous court-intrigues with which the men of the commune had pursued the Company since their first successes. At the outbreak of hostilities, by reason of her close alliance with Andronicus, Genoa may be said to have become technically the Company's enemy — a situation confirmed not only by her imprisonment of Entenza in Italy and her prompt offer after Apros battle of substantial military aid, but also later by Spinola's formal challenge in the name of "the Commune of Genoa and of all the Genoese in the world." However, in the long run she did very little, even after many direct appeals from the emperor:⁴ scattered naval contingents and a few bellicose gestures in the Company's direction. This unwonted timidity reveals itself upon inspection to be practical expediency. Aragon had entered the picture with diplomatic support, and the Company had secured a terrifying throat-hold on Genoa's Black Sea trade.⁵ An exchange of documents and legates — anxious

⁴ Georgios Pachymeres, *'Ανδρόνικος Παλαιωλόγος* (edd. P. Poussines, S.J., and I. Bekker, *Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae* [Bonn, 1828–1897], xxix), vii, 14, p. 590; 18, pp. 597–598. I shall try to avoid excessive documentation from Pachymeres and contemporary chroniclers by simply referring here to the synthesis made of them (though now sadly dated) by Gustave Schlumberger, *Expédition des "almugavares" ou routiers catalans en Orient de l'an 1302 à l'an 1311* (Paris, 1902 and, without change, 1924).

⁵ "So lange diese die Einfahrt in den Hellespont beherrschten, war der Verkehr mit Constantinopel und dem Schwarzen Meere gefährdet" — and Genoa helpless (Georg Caro, *Genoa und die Mächte am Mittelmeer 1257–1311: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des XIII. Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols. [Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1895–1899], II, 378).

on Genoa's part, bland or indignant on Aragon's—left the Italians badly outmanoeuvred. Thus, after the failure of Spinola's siege of Gallipoli, they had no recourse except the opportunist policy of conciliating Catalan and Byzantine alike, and even (on the part of some) of flirting for a time with the idea of joining the Valois crusade against the empire.⁶

Venice by the peace of 1303 was a friend and quasi-ally of Andronicus. Yet the great Valois crusade-plans against Byzantium had for some time claimed Venetian attention as the long-range but permanent solution to their Levantine woes. As a principal in that project she could well hope to dominate again a Latin and Catholic Byzantium.⁷ When Roger de Flor was struck down, Doge Pietro Gradenigo had returned no effective answer to Entenza's envoy and letters begging aid.⁸ In 1307 the Catalans abandoned devastated Thrace and began to move ominously closer to the Venetian sphere of influence, the southern Aegean. As with the Genoese, it would seem that Venetian reaction was motivated not so much by their sporadic acts of violence as by evidences of a well-laid plot to seize Negropont, "the right eye" of Venice. A bit of diplomatic fencing, together with a rapid alerting of military strength in Crete and Negropont, helped to foil the Company.⁹ The home government kept in close contact with her colonies during all this, advising and commanding; after the capture of Ferran and Muntaner (the motives for which action remain obscure) her chancery engaged in a thirty-year duel of documents on the subject with the Sicilian chancery.¹⁰ Mutual enmity against the Company was an explicit item in the 1310 treaty between Venice and Andronicus. These alarums and excursions served as prelude to much more serious trouble, which developed between the Company and the Venetians shortly after the establishment of Catalan Athens.¹¹

⁶ Pertinent documents have recently been published by Antonio Rubió i Lluch in his monumental *Diplomatari de l'orient català (1301–1409)*, *colecció de documents per a la història de l'expedició catalana a orient dels ducats d'Atenes i Neopàtria* (Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1947) — hereafter cited as *DOC*. Cf. docs. xvii, xviii, xxxi, xix, xxxviii, xxxvi.

⁷ The treaty is given by G. Thomas and R. Predelli, edd., *Diplomatarium Veneto-Levantinum sive acta et diplomata res Venetas, Graecas, atque Levantes illustrantia, 1300–1454*, Monumenti storici pubblicati dalla R. Deputazione Veneta di Storia Patria, Series 1, Vol. v; 2 vols. (Venice, 1880, 1899), docs. vii, viii, xxvii, xxxii, xxxiv, xli. On 13 May 1307 a Barcelonian wrote to warn James of Aragon that Venice was preparing sixteen armed galleys "qui devén entrar en Romania en ajuda de misser Karles [Valois];" he also speaks of hints of war between Venice and Genoa (Heinrich Finke ed., *Acta Aragonensis. Quellen zur deutschen, italienischen, französischen, spanischen, zur Kirchen- und Kulturgeschichte aus der diplomatischen Korrespondenz Jaymes II, 1291–1327*, 3 vols. [Berlin: 1908–1922], III, 167–168, doc. lxxi).

⁸ *DOC*, doc. xiv, 10 May 1305. Cf. R. Predelli and P. Bosmin, edd., *I Libri commemorali della repubblica di Venezia regesti (1293–1787)*, Monumenti storici pubblicati dalla R. Deputazione Veneta di Storia Patria, Series 1, Vol. i (Venice, 1876), docs. cccviii, ccclx.

⁹ *DOC*, doc. xlvi 29 September 1308. Doc. of 29 November 1309 from the doge to the bailo of Negropont (see A. Rubió i Lluch, "La Companyia catalana sota el comandament de Teobald de Cepoy [campanyes de Macedònia i de Tessàlia], 1307–1310," *Miscellània Prat de la Riba*, Institut d'Estudis Catalans, I [1923], p. 267 and n.).

¹⁰ Docs. in *DOC*, e.g., that of 5 August 1308 (xlvi) where the doge in answer to Frederick's letters, includes details of the seizure, computation of damage, and Muntaner's appeal to the Sicilian king.

¹¹ Treaty in *DOC*, doc. xlvi, 11 November 1310; *Diplomatarium Veneto-Levantinum, op. cit.*, docs. xlvi–xlvii, pp. 82–85. The story is continued from this point by Setton, *Catalan Domination of Athens, 1311–1388*; cf. pp. 26–27, 30 ff., 34–35, and notes.

II

In Romania the embattled Company flew the papal banner and acted “in the name of the Holy Apostolic Father” against their schismatic foe.¹² The entire affair was tinged with a crusading fervor. Not only were James of Aragon and Frederick of Sicily in a sense liege-men of the pope, but the Company itself had first “invoked the name of the church and raised its standard” as prelude to their war on Andronicus.¹³ They assured James they were fighting “in exaltationem catolice fidey,”¹⁴ and under that title they would request European aid. To Spinola’s multiple challenges before the siege of Gallipoli, Muntaner gave answer that “I had come to Romania in the name of God and to exalt the Holy Catholic Faith”; he demanded “in the name of the Holy Apostolic Father, whose banner we had, as he could see, to join us against the Emperor and his followers, who were schismatics and very treacherously had killed our chiefs and our brothers when we came to serve them against the infidels; and so we required him, in the name of the Holy Father and of the King of Aragon and of the King of Sicily, to help us take this vengeance. . . .”¹⁵ This was more than the theological or pious bent one might expect would tinge such a venture in the Middle Ages. It was a direct attempt to play the crusader. Clement V would prove to be something less than enthusiastic, however, and Muntaner would lament: “I do not believe that the Pope nor the house of France wished that all the infidels of the world should be conquered by the followers of the Lord King of Aragon.”¹⁶ Paradoxically enough, though Clement was much too involved in the Valois crusade to offer active aid, the Company was destined to be that crusade — insofar as it would have any being at all. The larger portion of the Company had played a considerable (and excommunicate) role in the Sicilian wars against Pope Boniface VIII, but they also counted in their number elements of a genuine crusade. Lauria’s abortive preparations in 1303 for a descent on the Holy Land had terminated in an amalgamation of these forces with the Company.¹⁷ Besides, as early as mid-July 1304

¹² Rámon Muntaner, *Crónica o descriptió dels fets e hazanyes del inclyt rey D. Jacme primer rey D'aragó . . .*, cap. cxxxvii. Quotations in this article are from the English translation by Lady Goodenough, *The Chronicle of Muntaner*, 2 vols., Hakluyt Society Series 2, Nos. 47 and 50 (London, 1920–1921). In cap. ccix he tells us how the banners of Aragon, Sicily, and St George were carried into battle, while that of St Peter of Rome was flown from the main tower of Gallipoli (cf. also cap. ccx).

¹³ “Invocato nomine Ecclesie sacrosancte eiusque elevato vexillo, insurrexerunt adversus predictum imperatorem” (*DOC*, doc. xv, *circa* September 1305). On Frederick’s vassalage to the Holy See, confer *Le Registre de Benoît XI*, ed. Chas. Grandjean (Paris: Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d’Athènes et de Rome, 1905), doc. 1239 (December 1303); doc. 1112 (November 1303); doc. 1279 (June 1304). James of Aragon had been honored with the office of “Vexillarium, Ammiratum, et Capitanum Generalem” of the Church; this he proudly added to his other titles, telling Frederick that he was “among all other Kings and Princes of the world the General and chief Defender of the Roman Church”; Aragon was put under special protection of the Holy See by Boniface VIII, and Corsica and Sardinia were given James on condition of hommage, military service, and 2000 marks of silver a year. James sent ambassadors to renew this hommage as soon as Benedict was elected.

¹⁴ *DOC*, doc. xxiii, 22 January 1306.

¹⁵ Muntaner, *op. cit.*, cap. cxxxvii.

¹⁶ Muntaner, *op. cit.*, cap. cxxix. Lluís Nicolau d’Olwer echoes Muntaner’s pique with his remark that the papacy was an enemy to Catalan mercantile expansion as such (*L’Expansió de Catalunya en la Mediterrània oriental*. [Barcelona, 1926], p. 14).

¹⁷ *DOC*, p. 12 n.

Frederick had informed the Holy See of his intent to conquer Constantinople. Later (if Frederick's account is to be believed) he had despatched two Dominican friars to Benedict XI, requesting permission to attack Andronicus; the Holy Father gladly ("plurimum sibi gratum") lent his moral backing, as a result, to Sancho's expedition. On this occasion — once again, we have Frederick's word for it — the Sicilian king was looking largely to the glory of the Valois project and the good of Mother Church. Frederick notes how useful these lands will be as a jumping-off position against Egypt, the Seljuks, and Islam's transport lines.¹⁸

The Catalan victories, especially that of Apros in the summer of 1305 when co-Emperor Michael's forces were scattered, later inspired at least one crusade publicist to use it as an example of what might be done on crusade against these degenerate Greeks.¹⁹ The Company sent legates (En García de Vergua and En García de Pére d'Ayerbe) to the court of Clement V; Entenza also, when freed by Genoa, had been sent by James to seek papal subsidy for the Company.²⁰

In the dual problem of church union and crusade which never ceased to harrass Christendom, Clement rather favored the policy of Martin IV. While a general crusade to the Holy Land was one to the projects dearest to his heart, it seemed more practical and direct simply to conquer schismatic Constantinople. Thus, at one blow, Byzantium would be saved from the Seljuk threat, united to the parent church, and available as a gathering-point from which the great crusade might be launched. If those preparing the Valois conquest saw an ethical problem in all this, it did not loom sufficiently large in their minds to distract them. Clement, crowned at Lyons in mid-November 1305, had heard of the Company's troubles from Entenza a few weeks later (as also did the king of France). Through the next year and a half, while the Catalan Vengeance weakened the empire and frightened its ally Genoa, Clement must have looked upon it as a preliminary to his own carefully prepared conquest of Constantinople. In June of 1307 he granted extensive ecclesiastical tithes to Valois, and excommunicated Andronicus together with all and sundry who should afford him "consilium, auxilium, vel favor-
em publicum vel occultum."²¹ Inasmuch as Andronicus had long since broken from his father's policy of persistent attachment to the church union (which the latter had pushed through at the Council of Lyons), this gesture would seem rather one of clarification or of morale. That same summer saw the brutal Catalan Vengeance linked to the Angevin crusade by a formal alliance.

Clement could have had no grounds for further concern over the Company —

¹⁸ *DOC*, doc. xv, *circa* September 1305; doc. xi, mid-July 1304.

¹⁹ Anon. Dominican archbishop, *Directorium ad faciendum passagium transmarinum* (ed. C. Raymond Beazley), *American Historical Review*, XIII (1907), 80–81.

²⁰ *DOC*, doc. xxiii (22 January 1306); doc. dccc (25 December 1305).

²¹ "Excommunicatio Andronici Graecorum Imperatoris, ejusque complicum, et adhaerentium," *Bullarum privilegiorum ac diplomatum Romanorum Pontificum amplissima collectio*, ed. Chas. Cocquelines, 14 vols. in 29 (Rome: J. Mainard, 1739–1754), III, 2, doc. iv, p. 113. See too the *Diplomaticum Veneto-Levantinum*, *op. cit.*, doc. xxxiii, p. 61, and doc. xxxiv, p. 62. Also Walter Norden, *Das Papsttum und Byzanz, die Trennung der beiden Mächte und das Problem ihrer Wiedervereinigung bis zum Untergange des byzantinischen Reichs (1453)* (Berlin: B. Behr, 1903), pp. 389–393 and *passim*, including 619–633; the tithes were renewed by the papacy 6 February 1310.

except for certain disturbing reports which must occasionally have reached his ears and been promptly submerged in more pressing crises of the day. Thus, two monks of Athos made their way to him by sea near the beginning of 1308 to plead that Catalan ravages of their neighborhood be restrained. Even when the Company became a threat to Venetian holdings in the east and severed its ties with the Valois, it yet remained something of an Angevin ally in De Brienne's vasty schemes. The seizure of Athens itself may well have seemed to Clement providential. Papal thunders, soon to resound over Catalan Athens, are not in evidence until a considerable space of time after Cephissus; a year would elapse before the note of rightful indignation would be struck. Less than three years after Cephissus Clement, speaking of the mounting volume of complaints which reach him concerning the Company's depravity, refers in retrospect to those "who once were believed to have gone to those parts to help the faithful and who, some were trusting, would defend the lands of those faithful . . ."²² A more positive fact tending to support our conclusion was that in connection with the Council of Vienne the papal vice-chancellor, Cardinal Arnold Novelli, urged that the powerful and strategically placed Company be made the spearhead for a great crusade against Byzantine and Turk.²³ Incidentally we may note that at this very time Andronicus sent off a bishop to consult with the pope, the king of France and Valois, with hints of submission to Rome and union of the churches if a match could be arranged between Valois' daughter (Latin heir to Constantinople) and one of Andronicus' sons. Failing in this, the imperial nuncio apparently attempted a marriage with Aragon.²⁴

It is unfortunate that our documentation of papal attitudes toward the Company in these early years is not as full and illuminating as that for the later period. Clement, probably influenced by Angevin pressure and Catalan inhumanities, threw the weight of his authority behind the Briennist claims to Athens. He threatened the Company with an attack by the Knights Hospitaller and the Morea in May 1312. He excommunicated them and reprobated them more than

²² *Regestum Clementis Papae V*, ed. monachi ordinis S. Benedicti, 9 vols. (Rome: Vatican Press, 1885–1892), 9th year, doc. 10167, 14 January 1314: "qui olim ad partes illas credebantur in favorem fidelium accessisse, et a quibus sperabantur eorumdem fidelium partes defendi, non exercentes eorum vires in exteros, sed in ecclesiis . . ."

²³ *DOC*, doc. LII, 22 November 1311. "Übrigens hatte der Kardinal selbst noch einen anderen Plan: man solle zuerst Griechenland erobern, dann über Armenien auf dem Landwege vorgehen. Katalanen und Aragonesen, die in der Romania schon längst Proben ihres Mutes gegeben hätten, könnten hier am besten vollenden, was sie dort schon begonnen hätten. Niemanden, meinte der Kanzler, fürchteten die Griechen so sehr als die Heere des Königs von Aragon, selbst nicht einmal die Soldaten des französischen Königs." (Ewald Müller, O.F.M., *Das Konzil von Vienne 1311–1312, seine Quellen und seine Geschichte* [Münster: Vorreformationsgeschichtliche Forschungen, ed. H. Finke, 1934], p. 166).

²⁴ "Fidem catholicam recognosceret et servaret et domino summo pontifici ut quilibet christianus catholicus obediret" (*DOC*, doc. XLIX, 7 June 1311). At that time Valois' daughter was engaged to marry the fourth son of Charles II Anjou, Philip of Taranto, although two years would pass before the actual marriage (doc. LXI, 1313). This was not the only union overture in Andronicus' reign; see Henri Omont, ed., "Projet de réunion des églises grecque et latin sous Charles le Bel en 1327," *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, LIII (1892), 254–257; and his "Lettre d'Andronic II Paleologue au Pape Jean XXII," *ibid.*, LXVII (1906), 587.

once in plain and fancy invective (“senseless sons of damnation,” wickedly in league with schismatics and infidels, plunderers of church goods, murderers of clerics and laity “without number,” who “rage with pitiless ferocity” against their own coreligionists).²⁵ But this was only the beginning of their troubles with a series of pontiffs; and twenty years later John XXII would order a crusade preached against these quondam crusaders.²⁶ In their naive championing of the faith, they had strenuously broken most of the Decalogue, allied with Islam, massacred women and children, conducted a major slave-mart of the Orient at Gallipoli, and finished by betraying the Valois crusade, plundering Latin churches, and sustaining several decades of excommunication.

III

The writings of men like Sanudo, Dubois, Villaret, and Lull; the surface success of the recent Council of Lyons and its aftermath; the shock of losing Acre, and the renewed activity of the Turk — all tended to keep heartily alive the spirit of crusade and church union.²⁷ These two inseparable problems (each but a reverse aspect of the other) were seen in the light of the conquest of Constantinople in 1204. It had left physical beachheads in the Balkan peninsula and the islands of the Aegean, and moral beachheads in the genealogical legalities of “Latin emperors” and princelings. The schism could be healed and Islam more vigorously faced were the rightful Latin heir to sit once again on the throne of the eastern Caesars. Thus the great focal point in Clement’s crusade planning was the winning of Constantinople for Charles de Valois.²⁸ Tradition and reaction favored

²⁵ *Regestum Clementis Papae V*, *op. cit.*, cf. vii, docs. 8138 (p. 125), 7890–91 (pp. 72–73), 8597 (p. 238), viii, doc. 9153 (pp. 131–132), ix, docs. 10166–67 (pp. 44–46); in the *DOC* confer the three docs. of 1314: lxxi, lxiii, and lxvi.

²⁶ *DOC*, doc. cl (14 June 1330); and cf. docs. cli, clii, clviii. Setton, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

²⁷ Besides Norden, *op. cit.*, for background cf. M. Viller, “La Question de l’union des églises entre grecs et latins depuis le concile de Lyon jusqu’à celui de Florence (1274–1438),” *Révue d’Histoire Ecclésiastique*, xvii (1921), 260–305; Aziz S. Atiya, *The Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Methuen, 1938). Philip the Fair formally promised the Council of Vienne that he would shortly go on crusade, and one of the three major themes of that ecumenical council was a crusade to the Holy Land. Ramon Lull’s recommendation read to the council urged “quod omnes milites religiosi uniantur in uno ordine et quod una pars eat ad acquirendam Constantinopolim, quia per hoc posset acquiriri successio[n]e Turquia et dare passagium ad Terram Sanctam” (Müller, *op. cit.*, doc. iv, p. 694; and cf. doc. i, p. 678). Dubois had favored a conquest of Jerusalem first, followed by the seizure of Constantinople which Valois would then hold in union with Rome and as a bulwark against the Turks. (In 1336 Petrarch exhorted Urban V to seize Constantinople because its schismatic existence was an evil as great as the loss of Jerusalem.) At the height of the Catalan Company’s success (1306–1307) thorough-going plans for crusade were being pushed by the kings of France, Aragon, and England, the pope and Valois, and many lesser rulers.

²⁸ Other more general plans were also allowed to go into operation, but proved abortive. It is interesting to note the interpretation placed on one such in a letter to James of Aragon from his Genoese agent Cristiano Spinola (8 January 1309). After detailing the armaments requested from each country by the head of the hospitallers, Spinola adds that it is not believed they are intended for use against the Saracens; rather “credunt, quod pro imperio Romanie tale fieri debeat armamentum.” A few, he says, think they will be used to invade Sicily. (Finke, *op. cit.*, iii, doc. lxxxviii, pp. 191–192; see, too, doc. xcii, pp. 197–199.)

these views: the tradition of Angevin ambition for Romania, and the romantic reaction of knight errantry which closed the thirteenth century and introduced the fourteenth. Moreover, a goodly collection of powers was openly committed to this procedure: notably the papacy, France, Venice, Aragon, Naples and Sicily. The Byzantine crown, that “miraggio eterno degli Angioini,”²⁹ must have seemed to Valois to be within his grasp; no longer would he be Charles Lackland or “King of the Winds” but truly “karolus Dei gratia Constantinopolitanus imperator Romeorum, moderator semper Augustus.”

The most important state in the Balkans, rude and vigorous Serbia, would swing out of the Byzantine orbit and be wholeheartedly behind him by mid-1308. Significantly enough, it was just at this time that the Catalan Company, having left Thrace in ruins, was demonstrating occidental vigor by its siege of well-fortified Thessalonica. The Company at this time, let it be noted, was under the Valois standard; and its raids were close enough to Serbia for comfortable observation by that power. Indeed, Serbian military aid to defend Mount Athos against the Company had been solicited by Danilo, the fighting abbot of Khilandari, in a personal visit to Skoplje. From his rough wooden palace, the Kral of Serbia, Stephen Uroš II Milutin (“child of grace”), whom Dante numbers among his “evil kings,” had long continued his father’s policy of plotting the dismemberment of Byzantium. Now he was sending envoys and letters to Clement and to his father’s friends, the Angevins. In the abbey of Lys, near Melun, a Franco-Serb offensive and defensive alliance was drawn up by which Uroš committed himself to the Valois crusade. He was to become a Catholic, thus consummating the long-labored-for union of the Serb church with Rome; his daughter Zoriza would marry the second son of Valois (Charles); Uroš was to hold certain lands in Macedonia and Albania by money tribute under his feudal lord, the Byzantine emperor Valois. This agreement of 27 March 1308 was ratified on 25 July at Golak-Ghilan, in Macedonia, by Uroš.³⁰ Since his fine promises were based on transient political fact, the Serbian king eventually “penitus nichil egit.”³¹

²⁹ Romolo Caggese, *Roberto d’Angiò e i suoi tempi*, 2 vols. (Florence: R. Bemporad, 1922–1930), I, 22. Charles of Valois, “dieser Fürst ohne Land” very nearly became at one time or other king of Aragon, Holy Roman Emperor, and emperor of Byzantium; he was son, brother, father, and uncle to kings of France. It solved chancery difficulties to refer to him as “Emperor of Constantinople,” to co-Emperor Michael IX as simply “Emperor of the Greeks,” and to Andronicus II as “Emperor of the Romans (*Romeorum*)” with full titles. A general treatment of the Valois crusade is given by J. Delaville Le Roux in his *La France en orient au XIVe siècle: expéditions du Maréchal Boucicaut*, 2 vols. (Paris: Écoles Françaises d’Athène et de Rome, 1886), I, ch. iii.

³⁰ The Valois-Serb treaty is given in the *Recueil de chartes* in Charles Du Cange (ed. J. A. Buchon), *Histoire de l’empire de Constantinople sous les empereurs français jusqu’à la conquête des Turcs*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1826), II, doc. xxviii, 1308, pp. 350–351, and its confirmation in doc. xxix, 1308, pp. 351–352. See, too, the analysis of Jules Quicherat in *Bibliothèque de l’École des Chartes*, xxxiv (1873), 115–118. And Constantin Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben*, 2 vols. (Gotha: F. A. Perthes, 1911–1918), I, 330–354, esp. 345–346. The mother of Uroš II (1282–1321) was Helen (+1314), a cousin of Charles of Anjou and a zealous Catholic; Boniface VIII took Serbia under the special protection of the Holy See and Benedict XI wrote Uroš on the possibility of reunion in 1303 and in 1304. Dante mentions him in the *Paradiso*, xix, 140.

³¹ *Vita paparum Avenionensium*, edd. S. Baluze, G. Mollat, 4 vols. (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1914–1922), “Vita Bernardi Guidonis,” I, 65.

It was not long before these events that the Bulgarian czar, Theodore Svētislav, craftily noting the increased intensity of Andronicus' efforts to make peace with him because of the Catalan attacks, negotiated instead to ally with the Company against Andronicus. He offered Rocafort his sister in marriage. These were not, of course, his only connections with the Company. Roger de Flor had married the daughter of exiled John Asēn III of Bulgaria; a Bulgarian attempt on the Byzantine empire in 1304, which looked close to succeeding, had been hastily withdrawn when Andronicus had recalled the Company from Asia Minor to meet the peril; the Alans, some time later, on their way to take service as Bulgarian mercenaries had been slaughtered on Svētislav's border by the Catalans. At their destructive height, the Bulgar king made political capital of them by again invading Byzantium and extorting rich prizes of territory (1307) from Andronicus.³²

More vital yet was the fifth-column operating for Valois within the empire itself. Strong church-union sentiments may have remained to be exploited in some quarters; certainly there existed a distressing feudal separatism, which disorders like those of the Catalan Company tended to amplify. Above all, many were now distrustful of Andronicus' ability to shield his faltering country from the Turks — and the turban was hardly, as some have too quickly said, preferred to the tiara. When one recalls the extent to which the Byzantine empress, Irene of Montferrat, had already gone to foil her husband and to secure principalities for her sons, one finds it difficult not to suspect that her hand was also in this intrigue.³³ Andronicus' sister Irene had been in contact with Catalan leaders, plotting against the emperor until betrayed by a Catalan; was this a private conspiracy or part of the larger pattern?³⁴ We do know that important nobles of the unruly and independent Byzantine baronage were prepared to open their provinces to Valois. Constantine Ducas Limbydaris, governor of Lydia, Sardes, and Neo-castra in Asia Minor (whose sister was married to Andronicus' brother Theodore), wrote to Valois at the beginning of 1308 to assure him the loyalty of many lords. He begged Charles to march swiftly on Constantinople before the hard-pressed Asian themes were lost to the Turk hordes.³⁵ Once again the date is significant:

³² "Zum Überfluss des Unglücks drang der Bulgarenzlar Svetoslav in das Reichsgebiet erobernd ein. In seiner verzweifelten Lage beeilte sich der Kaiser, Frieden zu machen (1307), in dem der Bulgarenherrscher die gemachten Eroberungen behielt, darunter auch die wichtigen Hafenstädte Anchialos und Mesembria, um deren Besitz das Reich unter Michael VIII mit grösstem Kraftaufwand gerungen hatte" (G. Ostrogorsky, *Geschichte des byzantinischen Staates* [Munich: C. Beck, 1940], pp. 354–355). On the 1304 descent by Svētislav (1295–1322) see Muntaner, *op. cit.*, caps. ccviii, ccx.

³³ Irene was the daughter of William V, marquis of Montferrat; she was the second wife of Andronicus and brought him the kingdom of Salonica. On her intrigues see Nicephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ ἱστορία* (edd. J. Schoppen and I. Bekker in Bonn *Corpus*, vols. 8–10), VII, 5, pp. 233 ff.; Ostrogorsky, *op. cit.*, p. 343. The latter also remarks, anent the contemporary flourishing Byzantine feudalism (p. 344): "Diese Entwicklung schwächt den Staat nicht nur politisch, sondern auch finanziell und nicht zuletzt auch militarisch."

³⁴ Pachymeres, *op. cit.*, VII, 30, p. 634.

³⁵ "Ομως διὰ τοῦ ἐλέου σου ἀ Σλήθη Διναμῆς ἐν σηντέμος μήπως λαυθῆ, καὶ ἐτοῦ δὲ λαὸς δύον ἀπαλμηνεν, σημβῆ δὲ καὶ ἀπὸ βῆστον ἡ ἀνθρωποι προσκηνήσουν καὶ τηρεῖ τοὺς Τούρκους καὶ λαοθον πωλή Χριστηάνη. The full letter of Κωνσταντῖνος Δούκας δὲ Λημπηδάριος is edited by H. Moranville, "Les Projets de Charles de Valois sur l'empire de Constantinople," *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, LI (1890), 83–85. The Du Cange *Recueil* (see note 30 above) has a summation: doc. xxii, 1306, p. 344.

Thrace was hopelessly ruined and the desperate emperor too preoccupied with the Catalan Vengeance (and the Bulgar menace it had stimulated) to proffer Asia effective aid. Even the Alans he had despatched thither with the Catalans in 1304 were now scattered by the Company, who had also shut the imperial armies impotent into the cities and absorbed the imperial turcopoles into its own ranks. At this same time John Monomachos, eparch of Macedonia and governor of Thessalonica, one of Romania's barons and a skilled general of no small fame, sent similar letters both to Valois and his wife.³⁶ The Company was then plundering Macedonia and attacking Thessalonica by land and sea under the nominal command of Valois' captain Thibaud de Cepoy. At least one contemporary author takes cognizance of the new leadership, if most do not: “exercitus domini Karuli... convertit se ad regnum thesalonicensem et actus mari terraque expugnat civitatem thesalonicensem dictam cum regione circumadjacente.”³⁷ We may conjecture that the separatist party of Monomachos either could not manage a surrender at that moment (empress and co-empress were also in the city), or that more probably they firmly intended to be allies of Charles rather than victims of the Catalans. It must have been apparent to them that Cepoy's control of the latter's policy was tenuous indeed. Of course Cepoy was even now in contact with the plotters. The nature of the intrigue indicates that it had been brewing for some time past — say, two years; if so, we may remark that it parallels the military successes of the Catalans closely.

The eparch's brother, Constantine Monomachos, had slipped away with Philip (“the Greek”) Marchiano and Matthew Balbo to represent the plotters at the Angevin court. One interesting communication carried by these gentlemen was from the hieromonk Sophronios. Addressed to “Τῷ ὑψηλοτάτῳ Βασιλεῖ καὶ αὐτοχράτορι Ρωμαίων, λαμπροτάτῳ καὶ διαφαναστάτῳ κυρῷ Καρούλλῳ,” it compares Charles in an extended laudatory figure to the sun; he must come soon to dispel the darkness and ruin which has settled on the land, and be their savior.³⁸

There was one last ally to be gained, in 1307: the Catalan Company.³⁹ Charles viewed them as a major factor in his crusade. It is one of history's ironies that the ancient enemy of the Angevin should have so contributed to the Valois strength, both by weakening the empire and by helping to precipitate foreign alliances. It is

³⁶ Moranvillé has a critical edition of John Monomachos' letter (*op. cit.*, pp. 82–83); Du Cange (*loc. cit.*) has an imperfect version. If my identification of our conspirator is correct, see on Monomachos himself (Ξπαρχος δο Μονομάχος) John Cantacuzene, *Ιστορίων Βιβλία Δ* (edd. L. Schoppen et alii in Bonn *Corpus*, vols. 13–15), I, 52, p. 260, and 54, p. 273; II, 28, p. 473, and 34, p. 511; III, 31, p. 190, and 37, p. 228, and 38, p. 236. He speaks of him (I, p. 473) as συνέσει τε ἀγαθὸς καὶ πράγμασιν εἰδὼς κρῆσθαι.

³⁷ Cf. Rubió i Lluch, “La Companyia catalana sota el comandament de Teobald de Cepoy,” *op. cit.* (note 9 above), p. 246 n.

³⁸ “ΑΛΛ’ ἐπεδὴ τοιῶντος εἰς ἐπιθυμοῦμεν φανῆναι σε καὶ ἐν τοῖς τόποις τούτοις πλείστη γὰρ σκότῳ καὶ ζόφῳ κατέλαβε τὰ ἡμέτερα. Τί δὲ ἔστι τὸ καθ’ ἡμᾶς σκότος, καὶ τίς δὲ ζόφος; αἱ τῶν θνῶν ἐπιδρομαὶ, αἱ αἰχμαλωσίαι, οἱ ἀφανισμοὶ τῶν πολέων τῶν κάστρων, τῶν χωρῶν χρέα δὲ ἐν τούτοις τοῦ σώζοντος καὶ λυτρωσομένου. Full text is given in H. Moranvillé, *op. cit.*, pp. 85–86. A hieromonk is both monk and priest.

³⁹ “Das Wichtigste war jedoch nach dem damaligen Stand der Dinge die Gewinnung der katalanischen Kompanie, die im byzantinischen Osten die Lage faktisch beherrschte.” (Ostrogorsky, *op. cit.*, p. 355).

even more ironical that, when they were themselves finally absorbed as allies into the scheme, they effected more perhaps than any single factor to destroy it.

Valois realized that the Company cherished prior loyalties for Aragon, and he cannot have been entirely unaware of their Sicilian lord's imperial ambitions — which ran directly counter to his own. He did not intend to back an independent military force; it must rather be assimilated to his own cause. Thus, when James of Aragon sent Entenza and a fellow knight to Lyons just before Christmas of 1305 to sound him out on the subject of financial support, Charles had pleaded that in the circumstances the required expenses were beyond his purse. He appealed to James, nevertheless, to foster Angevin interests with the Company — an expedient not merely less expensive but also indicative of the Valois point of view.⁴⁰ Theoretically, he was justified in assuming this support. Both Aragon and Sicily were nominally committed to the crusade; we have seen how this was blandly claimed late in 1305 as one of the motives inducing Sicily to send Sancho's fleet to Gallipoli; the same pretences were evident at Entenza's first departure for the Orient. On 2 February 1306, almost one year and a half before Valois would actually make contact with the Company, the crusade leader announced that his enterprise had now reached the point of action and requested James' encouragement, counsel, and help. Especially did he urge him to write the Company so that they should do nothing to hurt the high cause: "quar nous sommes certain que il ne desobeiront mie a ce que vous leur manderaiz."⁴¹

But the real task of winning their allegiance was entrusted to Charles' most important agent for affairs of the Levant, Thibaud de Cepoy. This talented Beauvais knight, noted for his heroic defence of Saint-Macaire against the English in 1296 and for distinguished leadership subsequently in several major battles, had been loaned by Philip the Fair of France to assist in crusade diplomacy. His connections with the Company began on 9 September 1306, when he left Paris to arrange an Orient passage. It is possible that even this early he actually was in secret contact with elements of the Company; if so, he may bear some responsibility for the murder of Entenza, and his later troubles with Rocafort could be a case of the tool becoming unruly and ambitious rather than of an unruly or ambitious warrior who refused to be a tool. At Venice in December of that year we find him concluding a treaty of alliance with Venice (for the twin purpose of crusade and church union) and gathering naval armament. It was here that Marco Polo presented him with a copy of his first manuscript.⁴²

⁴⁰ *DOC*, doc. DCCCI (25 December 1305).

⁴¹ *DOC*, doc. DCCII (2 February 1306).

⁴² On Cepoy and the Company, see A. Rubió i Lluch, "La Companyia catalana sota el comandament de Teobald de Cepoy"; Joseph Petit, "Un Capitaine du règne de Philippe le Bel, Thibaut de Cepoy," *Moyen Âge*, x (1897) [series II, 1], 224–239. Delaville Le Roux, *op. cit.*, pp. 45–46; Du Cange *Recueil* (see note 30 above), II, doc. xxx (1309), the expense account of Cepoy. Also H. Moranville ed., "Mises et despens pour le voyage de Constantinople," *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, LI (1890), 66–81. Muntaner (*op. cit.*, cap. ccxxxvi) believed that Rocafort joined Valois because he had "lost the favour of the House of Sicily and Aragon and Mallorca, and also of all Catalonia."

A five-month interval provided time for ten Venetian galleys and a leny to rendezvous (May 1307) at Brindisi in the heel of Italy. Thoughtfully, supplies of imperial pennants and flags had been laid aboard, and henceforth constant contact by messenger would be maintained with Valois. Cepoy surely knew of Ferran's similar and almost simultaneous mission to command the Company for Frederick of Sicily. When fate or Ferran's own stupidity had placed that prince in Cepoy's power at Negropont, the niceties of a Venetian safe-conduct must have weighed lightly against this splendid opportunity to dispose of his feared rival. The long imprisonment to which the royal Ferran was promptly committed indicates Valois' position. By the time the young prince was freed — after negotiations between Philip, Valois, the king of Mallorca, and probably Frederick and James — the Company would be legally secured under those Valois banners Cepoy had carried to the east. Indeed, when Cepoy disembarked at Kassandreia in August with his small token force of knights, he constituted the first wave of the long-heralded crusade. The Catalan Company was its spearhead. Probably the agreement between the two parties called for a march on Constantinople, but novel circumstances had rendered that impossible.⁴³

This is not the place to detail Cepoy's subsequent painful relations with the independent Catalans, except to express admiration for his patience and perseverance. Before he silently deserted the Company, during the early months of 1310, he had negotiated important and delicate treaties with Athens and Thessaly, and made contact with Lesser Armenia (which was then independently planning a union and crusade), with the Levantine Venetians, and probably with his allied Byzantine nobles and Serbs (who made an unsuccessful descent at this time). He helped finance and vouchsafe the Company, and even played a decisive role in its internal history, despite his own precarious position therein. He had also been forced to contemplate his turbulent "subjects" plundering Mount Athos (though the union of churches could hardly be less felicitously prepared for) and

⁴³ In effect this would be the whole Valois crusade, as Marino Sanudo Il Vecchio indicates in summarizing it: "Postmodum vero, multo tempore elapso, Veneti cum comite de Valesio, patre illius Francie qui nunc [1328–1350] regnat, se sociarunt, mittentes exercitus gallearum per plures annos ad expensas utriusque partis, ad expugnandum et conquirendum dictum imperium Romanie, ac etiam cum societate Catelanorum in Romaniam euntium, tractando conquisitionem Constantinopolis et aliarum terrarum imperii; sed finaliter parum fecerunt." ("Fragmentum Marini Sanuti Torselli," in Charles Hopf, *Chroniques greco-romanes inédites ou peu connues publiées avec notes et tables généalogiques* [Berlin: Weidmann, 1873], pp. 171–174). The "Mises et despens," *op. cit.*, p. 69, tells us: "Monseigneur [Valois] fist faire armeures pour la voiage de Constantinoile, bennieres et pennonceaus et en emporta monseigneur Thibaut une partie quant il s'en alla. . . ." See also the arms, ships, and other items on pp. 71–72, and the companions listed p. 73 and *passim* through the document. There are many interesting expense notes here, such as: "a Bertran d'Urban, escuier, qui avoit apporté nouvelles des Cathelaines qui guerreoint en Constantinoble" (p. 76); and "Monseigneur Françoys chevalier et Berengier d'Agh vindrent environ Pasques l'an CCC et VIII du Grece à monseigneur [Valois] en message de par monseigneur Thibaut de Cepoy e orent en deniers pour leur despens" (p. 68). Ferdinand Lot has recently suggested — but not too convincingly — that Muntaner himself was won for a short time to the Valois cause by Cepoy (*L'Art militaire et les armées au moyen âge en Europe et dans le Proche Orient*, 2 vols. [Paris: Payot, 1946], I, 388 n.).

sieging Thessalonica with a view to reviving that kingdom (though the internal allies of Valois, especially the Macedonian magnates, would hardly have viewed that episode without great alarm). He had seen Rocafort ally with Angevin Athens to plot against Venice in the Levant, yet Cepoy represented Angevin interests as financed considerably by Venice. The tone of the Negropont correspondence with Cepoy (late 1309) suggests that, owing to the ambitions of the Company, Venetian-Valois relations had cooled. This, with the gradual dimming of his Constantinopolitan chances, may have been a contributing factor in Cepoy's flight from the Catalans. On his return to France, however, and before his death two years after that, Cepoy was substantially rewarded for his patient services by Charles, Charles' wife Catharine, and Pope Clement.⁴⁴

Throughout his relationships with the Company, Valois had appreciated the difficulties of his own position and had done his utmost to remedy them. The voyage of Ferran, one of a series of attempts to control the Company directly, underlined the ambitions of Frederick of Sicily. We have seen how Charles had requested James of Aragon (25 December 1305) to foster Valesian interests with the Company, and how he had soon afterwards urged James quite strongly (2 February 1306) to instruct them not to do anything harmful to the Valois plans. After Cepoy had concluded his partnership with the Catalans, Charles wrote Queen Blanca of Aragon, an Angevin herself, to have James ratify his overlordship.⁴⁵ If James would inform Rocafort and the Company that the crown of Aragon was highly pleased at their espousal of the Valois cause, then James' long-standing desire for the Vale of Aran would be acted upon favorably by Philip of France. This brought action from James. On 10 May 1308 a crown letter left Valencia for the east, commanding obedience to Charles. It spoke of James' close love for the latter and exhorted that they strain every nerve on behalf of his crusade ("fideliter, sollicite, fervide, perseverantes . . . stenuie ac viriliter"). At the same time he sent to Paris En Joan Borgunya and En Llop Sánchez de Luna, and wrote to assure Charles he had faithfully followed his request.⁴⁶ One cannot suppress a suspicion that the march of events had caught the wily monarch off balance and that he is here belatedly making the best of a *fait accompli*. All this was but a prelude to long strife after Cephissus between the Company and the Angevins — especially Naples, Achaea, the exiled Brienne family, and Philip I of Anjou-Taranto.

⁴⁴ Document from Cepoy's son Jean to Charles Valois, 22 March 1312, appended to Petit, *op. cit.*, p. 237. Rocafort was eventually carried off by Cepoy's men to King Robert of Naples. The latter, a long-memoried enemy, starved him to death in the vaults of Aversa castle (between Naples and Capua).

⁴⁵ *DOC*, doc. xxxviii (1308). Blanca or Blanche or Bianca was the daughter of Charles II (and of Mary, daughter of Stephen of Hungary); Margaret, another of Charles' children had been Valois' first wife, and Eleanor, another daughter of Charles, was married to Frederick of Sicily. Charles' son Philip of Taranto, who succeeded to the Angevin claims to Romania, would marry Valois' daughter Catherine (1313) who had succeeded to the Valois pretensions to Romania after her mother's death (1308). In 1306 Philip led an unsuccessful attack on Anna of Epiros.

⁴⁶ *DOC*, doc. xxxix (10 May 1308); and excerpt of doc. from James to Valois on p. 49 n. Rubió i Lluch, "La Companyia catalana," *op. cit.*, p. 233.

IV

The last and most complex question we must now ask ourselves is: what was the precise relationship between the Catalan Company and the kingdoms of Mallorca, Sicily, and Aragon?

The realms of Sicily and Aragon were, of course, legally independent. In actual practice, however, in some of their internal relations they acted not merely as would members of a dynastic empire but as though a loose feudal bond subjected Sicily to Aragon (as was in fact the relation of Mallorca to Aragon). It may have been nothing more than the expression of a strong loyalty to the mother country. Certainly it was not a direct political sovereignty — indeed, the cautious James made little direct interference — but it did constitute a species of real jurisdiction.⁴⁷ Muntaner was to tell the successor of James that “He can reckon that he is king of Aragon and of Valencia and of Sardinia and of Corsica and of Mallorca and of Sicily; of all he is head and chief and they are at his orders.” He warns that, while the kings of Mallorca, Sicily, and Aragon are strong as long as they support one another, “they would destroy each other” if they were at odds.⁴⁸ This rendered the Company’s relations with the three kingdoms somewhat complex. We may sum these: (1) the Company was an independent mercenary expedition (and a Catalan of that day could be very independent indeed); (2) it swore vassalage to Byzantium, especially for Asia Minor,⁴⁹ and made treaties with foreign powers: (3) yet all the while it made specific exception in these allegiances in favor of its immediate overlord Frederick of Sicily; (4) above all, it never forgot that it was essentially Aragonese, proud to be a subject of James of Aragon; (5) to which we may add that it owed special allegiance to the pope, for (as we have seen) both Frederick and James were in a sense vassals of Clement, and any Catholic warrior battling the Turk or the schismatic tended to regard himself as a crusader for Christ’s vicar.

Thus it was Frederick who cooperated with Roger de Flor, his vice-admiral and royal counsellor, when he negotiated with Andronicus to sail for Romania

⁴⁷ “En Muntaner és el fervent panegirista d'aquesta unió glòria, d'aquest imperialisme polític que féu nostra grandesa en el xivè segle. Per a ell el rei d'Aragó és sempre el cap i major de tots els altres” (Rubió i Lluch, “Contribució a la biografia de l'infant Ferran de Mallorca,” *Estudis Universitaris Catalans*, VII (1919), 298, and cf. 297–98, 301–02. The tone and contents of letters like that sent to James by the queen of Mallorca (April 1306, asking his aid to reconcile Ferran and James of Mallorca) illustrate well the position of James of Aragon as overlord of Mallorca. Documents in connection with this quarrel hint also that Ferran and James of Aragon did not always see eye to eye: “nisi daret se [Ferran] et conferret dominacioni vestre [James of Aragon] et vestram voluntatem seque-
retur in omnibus, non parceret [James of Mallorca] sibi nec suam graciā redderet nec amorem.” (Doc. vi (20 April 1306), *ibid.*, pp. 322–323; *DOC*, p. 723 n. James II of Aragon had restored the Balearics to James II of Mallorca as a feudal holding in 1294; James of Mallorca had previously lost the islands, and had kept only Roussillon and Montpellier, as punishment for his treason to Pedro III. The commerce of Catalan Greece, after its conquest by the Company, would benefit Mallorca more than either Sicily or Aragon (Setton, *op. cit.*, p. 85).

⁴⁸ Muntaner, *op. cit.*, cap. ccxii.

⁴⁹ *DOC*, doc. xv (ca September 1305); Entenza indeed retains his title of grand duke (*Megadux*, μέγας δούκες) and his pretensions to Asia Minor during the war with Andronicus; even after his capture and return to Europe, the Company will refer to him as megadux (*ibid.*, doc. xxiii [22 January 1306]).

as Byzantine megaduke; the Sicilian crown also supplied food and ten royal war galleys.⁵⁰ True, Frederick was committed to the Valois cause and this he was prudent enough never to forget, but Andronicus was his in-law and friend — and there were Levantine economic aspects to weigh as well. The Greek chroniclers often recognized that for these Spaniards Italy constituted a point of origin. Theodoulos Monachos speaks of them as Ἰταλοί and οἱ μὲν ἐκ Σικελίας δρμώμενοι, Chalcondylas as οἱ δὲ Ταρακῶνες and ἀπὸ ἑσπέρας τε καὶ Ἰταλίας ἄνδρες. Pachymeres is aware that these Spaniards, these Κατελάνοι and Ἀμογάβαροι, are ἐκ Σικελίας and in a sense Ἰταλοί, as appears throughout his treatment of them. Both Pachymeres and Nicephoros Gregoras detail the Sicilian background which gave birth to the Company.⁵¹

Now incongruously assuming the role of secular arm of the Church, Frederick responded readily to the first whispers of intrigue brought by knights returning from the eastern exploits. Not only did he foster extant tensions between Company and empire; he seems to have created them. He was royal patron for Entenza's first trip to Constantinople and was annoyed when that gentleman, instead of probing for possibilities of legal revolt, broke his promises and his patron's commands by becoming a vassal of the empire — even though he subordinated that vassalage to his Sicilian commitments. As early as July 1304, only ten months after Andronicus had greeted the Company in his capital, we find Frederick's plans of conquest full-blown; the Holy See has been notified and has approved; James' support is being solicited, and plans are ready to be converted into action. Yet it will be over nine months more before Roger is killed. Already Frederick has seized one throne by sheer audacity; perhaps another now seemed available.

A Sicilian fleet was idling in Greek waters at the very moment Flor's head fell: ten galleys under the bastard Sancho and a consultative body of mature knights. Pachymeres assures us that this fleet frightened Andronicus not a little, for reports told of a conspiracy between Catalans and Sicilians to attack openly, of messengers passing to and fro between the two groups, and of several assaults by Sancho on certain islands. The Galatan Genoese had previously warned Andronicus that both Entenza's force and that of Sancho were forerunners of Sicilian conquest. When the troubles broke Entenza's main appeal seems to have been to Sicily. He sent three knights there immediately, and he was shortly afterwards thrown a bit off guard when he mistook a large Genoese fleet for Sicilian aid. A year later, when Cepoy was pushing the Valois crusade to the point of action, Frederick began in some secrecy to collect his own group, appointing to its command a brave and chivalrous knight, son of James of Mallorca and cousin of Frederick himself, the royal Infan Ferran. After a year or so of preparation Ferran solemnly swore to Frederick that "he proposed and was resolved to betake himself to the lands of Romania," there to act as vicar of the Catalan Company in

⁵⁰ Muntaner, *op. cit.*, caps. cxcix, cc; *DOC*, *loc. cit.*, doc. xv.

⁵¹ But only Pachymeres subsequently gives attention to their continued relations with Sicily — and even this attention is sketchy enough. One also finds them designated Δαρῦνοι, or more rarely Φράγκοι.

that king's stead.⁵² In all things (even in choice of a wife should he take one) he will act only according to the pleasure of the king. The Company is in a sense subinfeudated to him — or rather given him as proxy of Frederick, whose vassal he now is, so that “nomine et parte ejusdem domini regis, faciat fidem et homanagium.” This was Frederick's masterstroke: “a prince in the direct line of the House of Aragon,” as Muntaner remarks, by reason of his royal rank a truly dazzling figure in the Levant, a symbol of the Aragonese dynasty so beloved by the Company, and (in the phrase of the Sicilian chronicler Nicolaus Specialis) a “vir magnanimus, armorum laudis, et gloriae appetitor.”⁵³ Unfortunately, the lad was a weak reed to lean upon in matters of diplomacy, with rash romanticist tendencies.

Even after Ferran's capture we know of at least one semi-official fleet “equipped with the money of the Lord King” of Sicily to raid in Romania; quite as an aside Muntaner reveals its existence when telling of the assistance it gave to Sicilian forces at Djerba.

We may close our catalogue of Sicilian influences by remarking that the Company's chancellor and Boswell, Ramon Muntaner, was desperately loyal to the cause of Ferran. And it was to Frederick that Ferran sent him, after Cepoy had plundered their ship, to report in person on the fate of the expedition and to appeal against Cepoy's injustice. Frederick waged a paper-war for him with the Venetian republic and also appointed him to the responsible post of governor of Djerba isle.

V

One who looks closely will detect the strong hand of James of Aragon behind the Muntaner appeals, and indeed behind the Company's entire career. As Rubió i Lluch has astutely noted, he never for an instant lost sight of his jurisdiction over the Company. He could and did disavow this connection when policy so counselled. His reply to the Genoese ambassadors that the Catalans were independent citizens engaged in a private affair differs materially from his swift intervention on behalf of Valois when Aran vale was dangled before his eyes.⁵⁴ The Company was essentially Arago-Catalan both in rank and file.⁵⁵ It flew the

⁵² *DOC*, doc. xxxii (10 March 1307). On Sicily and the Company in Pachymeres, see *op. cit.*, v, 12, p. 394; vi, 6, p. 490; vi, 12, p. 499, vi, 16, p. 508; vii, 11, p. 585.

⁵³ Specialis, *Historia Sicula in VIII libros distributa ab anno MCCLXXXII usque ad annum MCCXXXVII* (L. Muratori, ed., *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* [Milan: 1723–1751], x), xxii, col. 1051. Muntaner, *op. cit.*, cap. cxxxx, for quotation. We should note that Muntaner wished to leave Frederick and return to Catalonia, and that his own account does not mention Sancho — which some have seen as an indication that he did not favor Frederick's personal ambitions in the east. His prior loyalties would lie, then, with the house of Aragon. In this connection it is significant that doc. xv (*supra cit.*), of Sicilian origin, ignores the role of James II and seeks to excuse Sancho's actions (cf. *DOC*, p. 16 n.).

⁵⁴ *DOC*, doc. xix on the Genoese ambassadors *supra cit.* Aran vale is at the extreme north of Catalonia; Philip had promised in 1297 to restore it to Aragon, and it was actually handed over in 1312.

⁵⁵ Catalonia's male population would have been at this time less than a hundred thousand; the number of nobles alone from Aragon-Catalonia was sizeable enough to command the attention of the homeland. Rambaud remarks: “Tout Aragon et Catalogne semblaient vouloir se deverser sur les

banner of Aragon, entrusted itself to the patron saint of Catalonia (St George), struck a seal bearing St George and the modified arms of Aragon, assured James it was fighting for the honor of his throne,⁵⁶ and charged in battle with the cry "Aragon! Aragon! St George!" When Frederick first actively embarked on his Constantinople plans, he sought the approval and aid of James. Moreover, Roger de Flor and Entenza had sent to James (about October 1303) a nuncio, En Ferrarius de Torellas de Vilafranca, announcing their expedition; James heartily encouraged them "pro tam laudabile opere et servicio," urging them to match their words with deeds "viriliter et . . . studiose."⁵⁷ At about this time Frederick and James were cooperating in a plan to recover the Holy Land; when this failed, the troops gathered would join the Company. In the latter half of 1304 James corresponded with Frederick on the latter's Romanian plans, encouraging him and offering willing help.⁵⁸ The Infan Ferran would likewise contact the court of Aragon, at least in the initial stages of his preparations; we have two letters of his to Queen Blanca and another to James (1306), on the subject of his mission to the Company, which indicate that James shared in the project.⁵⁹

To James the men of the Company are "naturalibus nostris" or "subditi et fideles nostri et de Cathalonia."⁶⁰ He makes no scruple about entering directly into their affairs — as when he ordered their leaders (September 1306) to hand over to the rightful heir the "multa bona" of En Berenguer de Casas, a Barcelona citizen who had died at Gallipoli.⁶¹ The Genoese attack on Entenza he assailed as an attack on himself. Entenza he seems to have regarded as a personal agent. After freeing him from the Genoese, he sent him to Valois and Clement with letters asking aid; he helped organize Entenza's return expedition and received assurances of loyalty from him while the fleet prepared its general rendezvous at Tortosa.⁶² In actual practice the powers of Europe had no illusions as to who stood behind the Company. An appeal of the Athos monks was directed thither; Valois made his forceful appeals directly to the king and queen of Aragon. Some time after the Catalans had seized Athens, it was to James that the pope (and also France and Navarre) made demands that he should stop these subjects of his

campagnes de Byzance" (E. Lavisson, A. Rambaud, edd., *Histoire générale du IV^e siècle à nos jours*, 12 vols., revised ed. [Paris: A. Colin, 1922], III, 800).

⁵⁶ *DOC*, doc. xxiii, 22 January 1306. Rubió i Lluch's conclusions are worth quoting here: "Jaume II fou considerat com a senyor natural pels catalans que formaven la Companyia i ell no abandonà el dret d'exercir autoritat damunt d'ells" (*ibid.*, p. 728 n.). "Jaume II, que sempre havia tingut un alt ascendent moral sobre la Companyia come sobre tots els naturals sortits del casal d'Aragó . . ." ("La Companyia catalana sota el comandament de Teobald de Cepoy," *op. cit.*, pp. 233–234).

⁵⁷ *DOC*, doc. ix (30 October 1303); also previous letter of Frederick to James on p. 9n., 30 March 1303.

⁵⁸ *DOC*, doc. xi (mid-July 1304), and doc. xiii (20 September 1304).

⁵⁹ *DOC*, doc. xxv (21 March 1306); but especially Rubió i Lluch, "Contribució a la biografia de l'infant Ferran," *op. cit.*, p. 301 and note, with docs. ii–v (all 1306) on pp. 319–322.

⁶⁰ *DOC*, docs. xxvi or xxxix (where he addresses himself to the Company's "fidelitati vestre qua nobis naturaliter estis astricti." Frederick is never considered by James as overlord in his letters to the Company.

⁶¹ *DOC*, doc. xxx (25 September 1306).

⁶² *DOC*, doc. xxvii (15 June, 1306), and doc. xxix (29 August 1306); cp. with doc. x (20 June 1304).

who have “nequierer et motu . . . furioso” killed the rightful duke of Athens, and who have “sine causa” invaded the duchy. James complied with the demands of these powers, strenuously urging the Company to abandon their ill-gotten gains (“*illicitis occupationibus et invasionibus*”).⁶³

True, he was eminently cautious, never exploiting the Company or seeking to control its immediate policies directly in the same degree as Frederick did; indeed, he apparently preferred to leave this sort of commitment to his brother. Yet James was always held by the Company to be their high lord, and he consistently acted as such. He did not commit himself openly to any Constantinopolitan project of his own. As papal “*Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae vexillarius, ammiratus et capitaneus generalis*” he professed (and very possibly entertained) great amity for the crusade idea, though its Angevin leadership may have chilled his enthusiasm slightly. All in all, his seems to have been a paternalistic overlordship of the Company, seldom interfering with their autonomy but capable of acting upon occasion with a real jurisdiction.

Muntaner gives us to understand that the Company held the king of Sicily as their “head, chief and lord” and the king of Aragon as a superior, less direct “natural lord.” Apparently this was built upon dynastic-national prestige and a proud respect rather than (at least as regards Aragon) upon feudal or other obligation. The Company does not seem to have heeded James’ express command (“*expresse mandamus*”) concerning Mount Athos; nor can they be said signally to have advanced Cepoy’s purposes, despite the intent of James’ letter. Rocafort destroyed Frederick’s laborious efforts to “capture” the Company; Entenza would seem similarly to have thwarted Sancho. Even when settled in Athens, when after due counsel they had sought and accepted Sicilian dominion, “the Company remained legal owner of the land . . . and did not, except in theory, hold by enfeoffment from the royal duke” whom the king gave as their ruler.⁶⁴

Further to compound the confusion of this ill-defined double sovereignty over a travelling republic given to independent habits, there are indications that James and Frederick in their Levantine plans did not always see eye to eye. It has been suggested that here they were often rivals: James under the spell of the Valois dream (or at least the Valois method) and Frederick inclining (at least at the beginning) to less drastic means and even to a Byzantine alliance. There may be some truth in this; the ambitious Frederick may have envisaged a negotiated peace, for instance, with a large share of trade falling to Sicily. Some see in Entenza James’ personal agent, with Sancho and Ferran representing Frederick’s interest. Martin-Chabot has interpreted the so-called rivalry between these strong-minded brothers so strictly as to suggest that Sancho deliberately provoked the Genoese to capture Entenza. Yet we must not forget that Frederick kept James posted on his Orient plans, and Sancho (who was “*regius camerarius*” to Frederick) also offered his services wholeheartedly to James. Entenza himself was accurately described by Frederick, when the latter sent him to James in

⁶³ *DOC*, doc. LXII (27 March 1314); doc. DCCIII (15 November 1311); doc. LXIII (26 March 1314); doc. LXVI (14 January 1314); doc. LXVII (23 February 1314; cf. p. 799); doc. LXVIII (23 February 1314).

⁶⁴ Setton, *op. cit.*, p. 18. See, too, doccs. LIII (1312), DCCV (1334) in *DOC*.

1303, as “consiliarius, familiaris, et fidelis noster.” Entenza and Ferran had the general backing of both monarchs in the last analysis, even though in different proportion. It seems safe to admit a rather moderate version of this rivalry thesis.⁶⁵

In assessing Sicily-Aragon-Company relationships we should not forget to make allowance for such possible semi-intangibles as caution of expression (even in private documents), shifts of policy itself as the Company’s successes mounted, rhetorical conventions employed by scribes, hidden motives, and compromise between national ambition and desire for a crusade. Our documents are too meager and too scattered, and even our chroniclers too committed to various loyalties, to permit any facile simplification.

VI

We may now hazard some general conclusions from our study of the relations between the Company and the European powers. The appearance of these Spaniards as a portent of western empire to come, as a small illustration of the influence of the Spanish military frontier on mediaeval European armies, as a study in the origins and nature of Renaissance condottieri — these and many other lessons we must here omit as not pertinent to our purposes. Likewise we must pass over what seems to me to be the major importance of the expedition: the “positive” effects resulting from their negatively destructive impact upon Byzantium. Only by indirection did these latter come to affect the politics, trade, and religious life of the European peoples. As for the founding of Catalan Athens itself, and its significance, we again refer the reader to Kenneth Setton’s able monograph. We must bypass, too, the whole *inner* sphere of diplomacy between Byzantium and the Company, between parties within the Company, between the Company and the Turks, the Alans, and such political entities as Lesser Armenia or the principedom of Thessalian Vlachia.

However, from our point of view, that of relations entered into with the west, six conclusions may be recommended for consideration. These diplomatic relations (1) form indispensable background for any integral view of the Company, for it was not at all isolated from the political, economic, and religious currents of these western nations; (2) are illustrative of contemporary crusade directions, feudal loyalties, and the level of politico-religious international ethics; (3) constitute an important element in the growth of the Aragonese dynastic empire; (4) afford interesting glimpses into the diplomatic policies and methods pursued by the western Mediterranean lands when their eastern interests were in crisis.

But above all the historian should ponder two major elements in east-west relations which were seriously affected by the Company. The Catalans helped crush the remnants of understanding between schismatic east and Catholic west,

⁶⁵ E. Martin-Chabot, “Un Document relatif à l’expédition de la Compagnie catalane en Orient (1304),” *Moyen Age*, xxiii (1910) [second series, xv], 200–201. See notes of Rubió i Lluch in the *DOC*, pp. 11, 16. Rubió i Lluch does not seem really to have reached a conclusion on this thorny question, but offers several intriguing conjectures. In his “Contribució a la biografiá de l’infant Ferran” (*op. cit.*, p. 301) he says: “En Jaume II d’Aragó més d’una volta va pensar que aquella forta allau de soldats invencibles podia esser l’instrument d’una energica política d’influencia sobre l’Orient bisantí, enfrot de les pretensions d’en Carles de Valois, i dels Anjou en general, sobre Constantinoble.”

demonstrating once again how narrowly national western religious thinking could become; and they crippled forever Europe's long dream of uniting the two civilizations by the Angevin-papal sword. We need not exaggerate the first of these two points; neither can we fail to see how identified were the religious, political, and economic interests of the Spaniards in this episode, how cynically cruel and irreligious they appeared to the scandalized Greeks, how unforgettably humiliating and embittering was the senseless Catalan Vengeance for this proud and ancient people, and how that vengeance was exploited by the powers of the Catholic west. Neither side forgot for a moment the theological coloring of the war, and the inevitable result was that these two religion-based civilizations were hardened in their mutual animosity. It was almost as though the nightmare of 1204 were being repeated in 1305. As Petrarch's famous teacher, Barlaam de Seminaria (abbot of St Salvador in Constantinople, and imperial legate of the pope), was soon to assert: "Understand this well: it is not so much differences in dogma which separate the Byzantine orthodox from you, as much as hatred for the Catholics bred in their hearts by the many great evils these Catholics have inflicted on them at various times — evils which they still suffer daily. Unless you first cast this hatred from their hearts, there can be no union."⁶⁶ In passing, we may note that an ironical thesis could be advanced: crusading Spain by her crimes in the East helped open the back door of Europe to the Turks.

Our second point also should not be exaggerated by isolating it from allied forces working to the same end. Briefly, it is that the Company proved fatal to the Angevin — or more properly, the European — crusade. Absorbed into it, by strange alchemy of circumstance they first fostered and then destroyed it — as much of it, that is, as promised real results. Under their pounding, Byzantine morale and finances and military establishment had sagged to a new low, emboldening Serb and Bulgar and Turk and Hospitaller and western powers to plot what territorial seizures they could. Initially the Company had precipitated the discontents within the empire and the ambitions outside it. The crusade then, coalescing under Valois-papal diplomacy and spearheaded by the Company under Cepoy, went unwillingly down a blind alley until even Cepoy could understand that the Company would never be his instrument but he theirs. Instead of gaining an empire, the Angevins lost the important Athenian beachhead. As the Company had effectively helped frustrate the Angevin in the War of the Vespers, so now it contributed to an equal frustration in the east. Rubió i Lluch employs a happy phrase when he characterizes all this as the *coup de grâce* to Angevin dreams of domination in Romania.

ALMA COLLEGE

⁶⁶ *Oratio pro unione Avenione habita coram Benedicto XII pontifice maximo*, in J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Cursus Completus . . . Series Graeca* (Paris, 1857–1866), *CLL*, col. 1336: "scitote et hoc vere, quia non tantum differentia dogmatum separat corda Graecorum a vobis, quantum odium quod intravit in animos eorum contra Latinos ex multis et magnis malis, quae per diversa tempora passi sunt Graeci a Latinis, et adhuc patiuntur per singulos dies; quod odium nisi prius abjicitur ab eis, non poterit unio fieri . . ." (he repeats this seven sentences later). Perhaps it was something like this that Andronicus had in mind when he showed himself favorable to a union (1327) but added "Sed hoc invenimus difficiliter fieri posse propter suspicionem quam haber[et] [gen]eraliter populus noster" (Henri Omont, ed., "Projet de réunion des églises grecque et latine sous Charles le Bel en 1327," *op. cit.*, doc. II, p. 255).