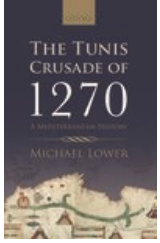

The Tunis Crusade of 1270: A Mediterranean History

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https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198744320.001.0001

Published: 2018 **Online ISBN:** 9780191805707 **Print ISBN:** 9780198744320

CHAPTER

6 Why Tunis?

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https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198744320.003.0007 Pages 144–173

Published: May 2018

Abstract

The diversion to Tunis is usually explained either in terms of Louis's wish to convert the emir *or* Charles's desire to extract money from him. These alternatives are often seen as mutually exclusive. The crusade was either a drive for souls or a drive for money, but could not be both. It was either a campaign of elimination or an attempt at accommodation, but could not be both. It was an episode in which religion mattered either very much or very little, but could not be both. This chapter argues that these two ways of understanding the crusade are actually complementary. Louis and Charles both found what they wanted in Tunis: it was a place where Muslim souls could be won *and* Hafsid money could be had; where Latin Christian commercial interests *and* missionary initiatives could be advanced; and where methods of militant confrontation *and* conciliatory diplomacy could be tried.

Keywords: conversion, tribute, Hafsid, Dominican, medieval Jewish history, Paul Christian, Ramon Martí, Ramon of Penafort, Ibn Khaldun

Subject: European History, History of Religion, Medieval and Renaissance History (500 to 1500)

Collection: Oxford Scholarship Online

There are few remaining mysteries in the history of the crusades, but the diversion of the Tunis Crusade is definitely one of them. Secrecy and death joined forces to make it so. In the run-up to the expedition, Louis and Charles maintained strict confidentiality about their plans. Louis took those plans with him to the tomb, while Charles, if he ever did reflect on the strange events of the summer of 1270, kept his thoughts to himself. There is no smoking gun for the Tunis Crusade, no deathbed confession from the last of the famous crusader kings, no candid conversation overheard at his brother's table by a nosy monk and recorded for posterity. It is important to respect the mystery at the heart of this crusade. As historians looking back on events of hundreds of years ago, sifting reticent sources for clues, we cannot access the innermost thoughts of the main actors. We can only reconstruct the historical environment that made Tunis appear to them a plausible first target for a Holy Land crusade.

In the absence of definitive testimony from the principals, two main theories emerged to explain the Tunisian landing. One came from the chronicler Saba Malaspina, a churchman who was probably based in the Calabrian town of Mileto at the time of the Tunis Crusade. Saba believed that Charles had inspired the diversion for financial reasons:

> For the king of Tunis, on account of the recent rebellion of Sicily, which had been suppressed with many deaths, was refusing (having withheld it from King Charles for three years) to pay a certain annual rent or tax, which he was supposed to pay annually to the king of Sicily, so that foodstuffs might be brought freely into Tunis and Arabs might be able to cross the Sicilian Sea securely when they wanted and the Berbers might not be vexed by Sicilian pirate attacks. And for this reason, wishing to go to that country and desirous of driving by the force of others the serpent from his cave [i.e. al-Mustansir], Charles had acted adroitly to lead such an important army against Tunis.[1]

Saba belonged to a Roman family with a strong tradition of support for the papal cause. He would enjoy a
p. 145 long career as canon and dean of the ↳ cathedral chapter of Mileto, as an official of the papal curia, and finally as bishop of Mileto. His links to the Guelf cause meant that he was well positioned to comment on Charles's diplomatic and military aims in the spring of 1270. Saba, however, did not write his account of the crusade until the early to mid-1280s, when the revolt of the Sicilian Vespers (1282) was threatening to topple Angevin rule. By then, Saba had become disillusioned with Charles's leadership over the Guelfs, and his frustrations are reflected in his history.[2] Saba saw the Tunis Crusade as another example of Charles's willingness to exploit others for his own financial gain.

If the Tunis Crusade was about money for Saba, for Geoffrey of Beaulieu it was about souls. As Louis's trusted confessor, Geoffrey developed the other major explanation for the diversion, which was as pious as Saba's was profane:

> It must not be passed over in silence that in the same year, when the pious king had to cross the sea for the last time, the king of Tunis sent to him solemn ambassadors, and on the feast of Saint-Denis, the king had solemnly baptized a certain famous Jew in the church of that same Saint-Denis. As the king with many magnates raised him from the sacred font, he wished that the ambassadors of the king of Tunis might solemnly take part in the baptismal ceremony. After they were brought over, the king said with great emotion, "Say on my part to your lord the king, that I so strongly desire the health of his soul, that I would wish to be a captive of the Saracens for all the days of my life, I would wish never to see the light of the sun again, so long as your king and his people from their true hearts became Christians."[3]

This description of the crusade as a missionary venture appeared in Geoffrey's *Vita Ludovici noni*, which Pope Gregory X commissioned him to write for Louis's canonization procedure and which he completed sometime between his return to France in 1271 and the pope's death in 1274. Probably a native of northern France, Geoffrey joined the Dominican Order in 1248 and two years later was serving as Louis's confessor on the Egyptian crusade. He was, in fact, the first long-term appointee to the role that we know of, and he would continue in it for some twenty years, until he heard the king's final confessions in Carthage.[4]

p. 146 Geoffrey's intimacy with Louis is both his greatest strength and greatest weakness as a source. On the one hand, he knew Louis as well as anyone and was present for all the big moments of the crusade: the meeting with the Tunisian ambassadors, the departure ceremonies at Saint-Denis, the halt on Cagliari, the occupation of Carthage, the death of Jean Tristan, and Louis's last painful days outside Tunis. He is the best witness we have to the king's aims. On the other hand, his closeness to the king made him unapologetically partial. The *vita* is an argument for sainthood from a man who loved the king very much. His account of the Tunis Crusade is fundamentally defensive, because the decision to crusade there was criticized after Louis's death. "We believe," he wrote, "that it would be expedient to assign the reasons that the lord king gave at the time concerning this, on account of the murmurs of the multitude, who would have preferred it if he had gone to the aid of the Holy Land by the most direct route."[5] Among the critics was Pope Gregory X, whose election in September 1271 ended the long papal interregnum. Gregory did not believe the crusaders had fulfilled their vows by attacking Tunis. Geoffrey was therefore at pains to insist that the expedition had been launched with the most indulgence-worthy intentions: converting the emir and Christianizing North Africa.

Saba Malaspina and Geoffrey of Beaulieu offered opposing visions of the Tunis Crusade. Their explanations for the diversion were mono-causal (money or souls), exclusive (either Charles or Louis, but no one else, was responsible), and totalizing (no other motives or actors were considered). As a result, they left modern scholars with a stark choice. The crusade was either an act of sinful duplicity or one of pious simplicity; an attempt at accommodation or a campaign of elimination; a tribute grab or a missionary venture. It could not be both, and it could not be more.

Modern scholarship has pushed against these limitations to a certain degree. Important research on the Mongols, the Genoese, the Mamluks, and the Hafsids has opened up new perspectives on an old controversy. But the basic framework set out by Saba and Geoffrey many centuries ago remains in place. Faced with the mutually exclusive interpretations of the two most important medieval analysts of the crusade, most historians have felt compelled to pick a side.

In the nineteenth century, Saba's version of the crusade was the popular choice. As a "Frenchman" who executed a "German" prince to seize power over an "Italian" kingdom, Charles was an easy target for the
p. 147 emerging ↳ national schools of historiography. In an era of balance-of-power diplomacy and colonial

engagement with the Maghreb, many French historians thought Louis was naive for trying to convert an emir. They preferred to believe that Charles had led him to North Africa under false pretenses. Henri Wallon's verdict in his 1876 biography of Louis was typical. Geoffrey of Beaulieu's arguments were chimeras; the only reality that mattered was that al-Mustansir had stopped paying tribute to Sicily. German historians were disgusted with Charles for a different reason: the execution of Conradin. Sicilian patriots such as Michele Amari despised him nearly as much for bringing foreign rule to the island. Amari celebrated the Vespers Revolt of 1282 as a blow for freedom and self-determination. By the end of the century, Charles was firmly established as the villain of the piece.[6]

The task of toppling this conventional wisdom fell to Richard Sternfeld, a young German historian who had begun his career with a study of Charles's rule as count of Provence. One by one, Sternfeld undermined the assumptions supporting the argument that Charles had diverted the crusade. In the first place, Sternfeld maintained, Charles had no reason to turn against Tunis. His policy touchstone was "war with Greece, friendly relations with Africa." The North African campaign was a distraction from his real aim, which was to conquer Byzantium. Second, Louis was no one's dupe. Formidable, admired throughout Christendom, and still in command of his faculties, the French king was very much in charge of his final campaign. Third, Charles only found out about the diversion after the fact. That is why he did not mention the Tunis landing in his correspondence until July 21, 1270, three days after it had taken place. What could be interpreted as reticence on Charles's part—a tactical silence—was actually ignorance. It was Louis, in his pursuit of a pure crusade ideal, who drove the crusade to Tunis.[7]

Although Sternfeld's analysis was in the hardheaded tradition of empirical history pioneered by Leopold von Ranke, it captured the imaginations of postwar crusades historians who wanted to take the religious motivations of medieval people more seriously. Étienne Delaruelle discerned a profound change in Louis's
p. 148 character after the Egyptian crusade. The ↳ "knight king" who had sought adventure in Egypt gave way to the "missionary king" who sacrificed everything for the peaceful conquest of souls in Tunis. For Michel Mollat, the king's last crusade was a harbinger of Christian humanism in which violence gave way to a missionary impulse and newfound respect for the shared humanity of Muslims and Christians. The king's two most distinguished French biographers—Jean Richard and Jacques Le Goff—both agreed that he went to Tunis to convert al-Mustansir. For Georges Duby, Louis's last crusade was a "great solitary dream." As strange as it might appear to us, Jean Longnon argued, the "mystical explanation" of Geoffrey of Beaulieu made the most sense of the diversion to North Africa.[8]

It is only recently that the pendulum has begun to swing back toward Charles. In a revisionary study of the entire range of his diplomatic engagements, Gian Luca Borghese has proposed that Charles was not as fixated on conquering Byzantium as previous generations of scholarship have assumed. His main goal was to establish himself in the *Regno* and protect his new conquest on all sides, including the southern maritime frontier with Ifriqiya. In this scenario, Tunis was not a distraction from his eastern plans; it was a problem in its own right. Borghese has also suggested how unlikely it was for Louis to have concerned himself with Tunis in 1270 if his brother had not established himself in Sicily four years before. While Geoffrey of Beaulieu ascribed motivations to Louis that bordered on the naive, other sources, notably Saba Malaspina, pointed to Charles as responsible for the objective of the expedition.[9]

Borghese is right to take Saba's testimony seriously. The only question is whether Geoffrey's account has to be dismissed as a result. Their explanations for the diversion are not mutually exclusive, even though they are usually presented that way. We can gain a better understanding of the crusade by replacing a single conjunction. The crusade was not about money or souls; it was about money and souls; it was not about confrontation or accommodation, it was about confrontation and accommodation; it was not about Louis or Charles, it was about Louis and Charles. Once we swap "or" for "and," other interpretive possibilities open up as well. The Tunis Crusade could have been about money, souls, and more besides. The Arabic sources, which have been largely ignored, make it clear that there was a strategic dimension to the campaign that
p. 149 both Saba ↳ and Geoffrey underplayed. Louis and Charles were pursuing different goals in the run-up to the crusade, but neither had to trick the other into the diversion. Unfortunately for the city and its people, in the late spring of 1270 Tunis offered an ideal compromise between the brothers' divergent interests.

Money (Part I)

"So he who was thirsty drank from Arab gold," declared Saba Malaspina toward the end of his account of the Tunis Crusade. "The vulgar common people," reported Guillaume of Nangis, "blamed Charles of Anjou [for the truce]; they said that he had arranged the truce in order to return the tribute, which for some years before had not been paid." "Once Charles joined our army, and found his brother dead," wrote Pierre of Condé back to a friend in France, "he decided that he would acquire by violence what he had previously sought after [i.e., the tribute] through negotiations."[10]

Even by the standards of thirteenth-century European princes, Charles's financial circumstances on the eve of the Tunis Crusade were dire. To fund the conquest of Sicily, he had borrowed from the papacy, his brother, and northern Italian banking concerns. After the battle of Benevento in 1266, they all wanted their money back. With a crusade of his own to organize, Louis pressed Charles for repayment. In January 1270 Charles surrendered his revenues in the county of Anjou to Louis's men so they could collect 5,000 *livres tournois* of the loan. The papacy still expected its annual tribute of 8,000 gold ounces.[11]

Though known as a wealthy land, the kingdom of Sicily did not produce as expected. From 1268 to 1270, Sicily suffered a rare run of bad wheat harvests, which caused famine on the island and reduced royal export income. There was also a shortfall in tax revenue, which hurt all the more because Charles's military spending only increased after the conquest.[12]

There was the Hohenstaufen insurgency to put down, the invasion of Conradin from the north, the promotion of Angevin interests on Sardinia and Corfu, and the mounting threat that Michael VIII
p. 150 Palaiologos posed in the Aegean, to which Charles responded with an intricate (and ↳ expensive) web of military bravado and marriage diplomacy. By the spring of 1270, his financial affairs were very complicated indeed. He was requesting postponements of the tribute he owed to the papal curia, pleading with the Pisans to hand over the money they owed him, diverting taxes raised for his daughter's wedding to buy ships and supplies, wringing special fees out of Calabrian barons, borrowing back money he had just returned to Louis, and taking out fresh loans from Alphonse of Poitiers.[13]

By the time he showed up in Carthage, Charles was broke. Within two weeks of landing, he had to pawn two jewel-encrusted crowns and three chests of luxury clothing for 3,000 gold ounces from King Philippe III.[14] The settlement Charles extracted from al-Mustansir—70,000 gold ounces as his one-third share of the indemnity—was less a windfall than a financial necessity. When he received the first proceeds from Philippe III in November and December, he could only keep about two-thirds of it. Of the 35,000 gold ounces due to Charles, Philippe retained 11,400: 3,000 owed to him, 8,000 to his father, and 400 in shipping costs. That did not include the 3,200 gold ounces (= 8,000 *l.t.*) Charles owed to Alphonse, or the expenses of the crusade that these loans did not cover. These were considerable: on the same day Charles received his cash from Philippe III, he imposed an assessment of 60,000 gold ounces on the mainland provinces of the *Regno* to help cover the costs of the campaign.[15]

The Treaty of Tunis provided Charles with tribute in addition to the indemnity. The tribute had political significance, but the money mattered too. During their first round of negotiations, in August 1269, al-Mustansir had conceded the tribute, but could not bring Charles to agree on the arrears or the amount to be paid going forward. It took two further rounds of negotiations (and the crusade, of course) for Charles to accept a 60,000 gold ounce back-payment and 24,000 gold ounces a year from November 1270 onward. The new payment was more than symbolic. It was three times as much as Charles owed the Apostolic See as a papal vassal every year and, at about 60,000 *l.t.*, equaled just under one quarter of the annual revenues of the French crown in the 1250s. It is no wonder that the "Tunisian Tribute" became a major bone of contention in the Angevin–Aragonese conflict over southern Italy in the following century. Given the lengths to which Charles had gone to procure it, it had mattered to him too.

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Securing the *Regno*

Charles's conquest of the *Regno* is often told as a tale of two battles. In reality, establishing Angevin rule over southern Italy involved more than winning at Benevento and Tagliacozzo. We have seen the challenges the Hafsids posed to Angevin control over Sicily: the emergence of Tunis as a haven for Hohenstaufen exiles; the invasion of Sicily they launched from there in autumn 1267; the refusal to pay the wheat export fee to Sicily; and the negative effect that increased piracy and chaos in Sicily had on Provençal and Sicilian trade in the central Mediterranean. Stabilizing relations with al-Mustansir could drive the remaining Hohenstaufen holdouts into the open, where Charles could hunt them down and destroy them; remove a base of operations and logistical support for the insurgents still fighting on the island; start the profitable trade routes flowing again; provide commercial privileges for Sicilian and Provençal merchants, two key Angevin stakeholders; and help stabilize the Angevin fiscal administration with annual infusions of cash.

Through a combination of diplomacy and military intervention, Charles accomplished each of these goals. The provisions of the Treaty of Tunis on Angevin enemies, friendship with al-Mustansir, trade across the Sicilian Straits, and tribute precisely addressed his concerns. It is possible that Charles could have achieved a similar result through negotiations alone. He might have preferred to avoid the enormous upfront expenses involved in campaigning in North Africa. He probably would have received less tribute as a result, but the trade-off could have been worth it. Louis's crusading plans, however, changed the equation. Louis had not stood in the way of Charles's invasion of southern Italy. In return, he expected Charles to support his Holy Land crusade and had invited him to take the cross at Viterbo in 1267. Charles was not willing to go that far, but some degree of logistical support was unavoidable. He made Syracuse available as a base, helped Master Honoratus with his siege engines, and geared up the Angevin administrative machine to resupply the expedition once it landed on Sicily. All this meant that the crusade was something of a sunk cost for Charles once it became clear that it would not be delayed beyond summer 1270. Because he was going to spend a fortune on Louis's crusade no matter what, there was no financial disincentive to solving his problems with Tunis militarily.

Mediterranean Expansion

Once pacified, Sicily was meant to be the core of an expansive Angevin presence in the Mediterranean,
p. 152 fanning out westward toward Provence, ↳ Sardinia, and the frontier with the Crown of Aragon, and eastward toward the Aegean and the frontier with Byzantium. Two main aims guided Charles's first efforts in the east. In the short term, his marriage diplomacy with Hungary and Achaia and his alliance with Emperor Baudouin II of Constantinople were meant to construct a defensive perimeter around the *Regno* against the perceived Byzantine threat. Over the long term, these agreements would lay the groundwork for Angevin expansion into Epiros, Achaia, and the Byzantine heartlands.

A conventional crusade to Egypt or the Holy Land would not advance this dynastic agenda and in fact ran counter to it in several respects. As long as Sicily remained unsettled, Charles did not want to risk a long personal absence on a Holy Land crusade. Sending substantial land and sea forces to the Levant posed an immediate security risk to the *Regno*. A direct attack on Baybars also jeopardized Sicilian and Provençal trade in Alexandria, the major eastern Mediterranean commercial center. By neutralizing Baybars diplomatically, Charles could freely pursue his ambitions in the Aegean.

More importantly still, Charles does not seem to have believed that the battle for Syria could be won on the battlefield. He had first-hand experience of Mamluk military power and had looked on as Baybars drove the crusader states to the brink of extinction. His efforts to negotiate a peace treaty with the sultan for the Franks were less a betrayal of the crusader cause than a clear-eyed assessment of the risks of directly assaulting Mamluk Egypt. Charles saw his own interests at stake in Frankish Syria too. In the late 1270s, he briefly made good on a claim to the throne of the kingdom of Jerusalem. He was alive to the possibility that a crusade to Syria might actually do the Frankish settlements there more harm than good.

Louis's Interests

Tribute, peace in the central Mediterranean, good relations with Baybars: Charles had concrete reasons to direct the crusade against Tunis. Louis's motivations are harder to grasp. After years of preparing a campaign against the Mamluks, why did he abandon the plan at the last minute? The absence of an obvious rationale has allowed Saba Malaspina's accusations to fill the void: perhaps only an act of deceit could have diverted the quintessential crusader king from the Holy Land.

One problem with Saba's conspiracy theory is that all the evidence we have points to Louis and Charles
p. 153 coordinating in the build-up to the ↳ crusade. Their final movements toward Tunis were choreographed in tandem. Charles sailed from Naples to Messina three days after the crusade departed Aigues-Mortes for Cagliari; arrived in Palermo the day after the council of war on the *Montjoie*; and revealed the destination as Tunis to his officials three days after the landing before Carthage. The sequence of events looks more like a collaboration than the unfolding of a plot.

In fact, Tunis was an attractive target for Louis too. His consuming passion for crusading combined elements of grand strategy for the defense of the crusader states with a vision of a more profoundly Christianized world. Though he is often seen as a throwback to an earlier age of crusading, he was in many ways a progressive. He blended Mongol alliances, campaigns in Egypt, Inner Asian missionizing, and domestic reform into a crusading ethos that departed significantly from traditional models. By the late 1260s, as his Christianization drive intensified, his crusader piety became unmoored from the specific goal of crusading in the Holy Land. He was strategically flexible about how best to support the crusader states and, while he could certainly pursue Christianization in the east, he could pursue it elsewhere too.

This flexibility brought Tunis to the fore as Louis's original plan for an eastern campaign collapsed over the late spring of 1270. Logistical problems abounded. On Louis's side, there was the late arrival of the Genoese fleet, which increased the chances of an extended stopover for the army in the Mediterranean over the fall and early winter of 1270–1. On Charles's side, there were the distractions of his other commitments, continued political instability on Sicily, his consequent reluctance to leave the *Regno* for any extended period, and the expensive prospect of hosting a large army for several months as it waited for the spring passage to Syria. There were timing issues for the larger anti-Mamluk coalition as well. The Ilkhan Abaqa had been unable to link up with the first wave of the Holy Land crusade in 1269 because of attacks along his frontier with Transoxiana. He would not be able to rendezvous with the crusade in the east until 1271 at the earliest.[16] Going to Tunis addressed these logistical challenges. It would give Abaqa time to get his act together, keep Charles close to home, avoid the troubles on Sicily, address their root cause by dealing with al-Mustansir, and provide—whether through a sack or a settlement—much needed funding for the next phase of the campaign.

p. 154 Conversion

Tunis made sense for Louis as a short-term expedient. It also tapped into deeper royal desires, none greater than the urge to Christianize the world. According to Geoffrey of Beaulieu, Louis first announced his desire to convert al-Mustansir at the baptism of a prominent Parisian Jew. This triumph for the king's domestic program of conversion made him dream of a missionary project beyond the borders of Christendom:

> The most catholic king desired with the greatest devotion that the Christian faith, which in the time of Saint Augustine and other orthodox doctors had flourished in Africa, and most of all at Carthage, might flourish again and be extended in our time to the honor and glory of Jesus Christ. He thought, therefore, that if a large and renowned army suddenly placed itself before Tunis, the king of Tunis could scarcely have such a reasonable occasion to receive baptism, because, by this means, he could avoid death at the hands of his men, keep possession of his kingdom, and others who wished could become Christian with him.[17]

Louis had long conceived of crusading as a vehicle of proselytization. Accounts of his first expedition abound with references to missionary work. The chronicler Guillaume of Palthus estimated that Louis converted forty Muslims to Christianity, while Primat claimed the number exceeded 500. Matthew Paris narrated an interview between a captive Louis and the sultan of Egypt that ended with the king nearly converting his Muslim counterpart. These reports may testify more to the king's reputation as a missionary

than to his actual success, but other evidence is more concrete. In a letter of March 31, 1249 to Pope Innocent IV, Eudes of Châteauroux, cardinal-bishop of Tusculum, papal legate for the crusade, and intimate royal advisor, described a mass conversion of fifty-seven Muslim captives on Cyprus, many of whom he baptized with his own hands. Some of these converts may have returned to France with Louis. Royal accounts of 1256 list pensions for six formerly Muslim *baptisati* (baptized ones).[18]

A few months before the mass conversion of Muslim prisoners, Louis had dispatched an embassy to the Mongols after hearing reports of their sympathy for Christianity. The reports came from two envoys from
p. 155 the *noyan* (general) Eljigidei, who had reached the crusader camp on Cyprus ↳ in December 1248. They delivered a letter that departed from the usual Mongol demands for submission. Instead, Eljigidei wrote warmly to Louis, expressing the hope that he might meet the king in person, asking God to grant him victory "over his enemies who despise the cross," mentioning the Mongol edict of protection to Christian clergy (which actually applied to religious officials of all faiths, but never mind), and urging him to treat all Christian denominations in the east equally. What the envoys had to say was even more encouraging. They told Louis that Eljigidei was a Christian and that the *qaghan* Güyük had also accepted baptism. They also proposed a military alliance: while Louis invaded Egypt in 1249, Eljigidei would attack Baghdad. Suspicious but intrigued, the king sent three Dominican brothers—André of Longjumeau, his brother Guillaume, and Jean of Carcassonne—in search of the Mongol general who seemed to love the Christians so much.[19]

The friars traveled with cups and liturgies to celebrate mass, a relic of the cross, and a scarlet tent to serve as a miniature chapel, embroidered with scenes of the crucifixion. When they eventually tracked Eljigidei down, he told them that Güyük was dead. They would have to meet with the *qaghan*'s widow, the regent Oghul Qaimish, instead. She was not as welcoming as Eljigidei's letter to Louis had led the friars to expect. When they met up with the king again in Caesarea in 1251, they brought with them a letter from her accepting his "tribute" and demanding more of the same in the years ahead.[20]

Louis was discouraged, but not for long. In 1253, another mendicant brother left the crusader army on a journey into the heart of Inner Asia. The Franciscan William of Rubruck wanted to preach the gospel to the Mongols and minister to some Latin Christians he had heard were their prisoners. Despite the failure of his embassy to Eljigidei, Louis was eager to support this new missionary venture. He provided William with a letter of introduction that congratulated the Mongol prince Sartaq on his rumored conversion and encouraged him to treat Christians well. Misunderstanding ensued once again, as William was mistaken for a royal envoy bearing a letter of submission and was sent up the ranks of the Mongol leadership until he was
p. 156 summoned for an audience with Möngke ↳ (r. 1251–9), the new *qaghan*. Rather than convert, Möngke reaffirmed the syncretism that was central to traditional Mongol religion. "We Mo'als," he told Rubruck, "believe that there is only one God, through whom we have life and through whom we die, and towards him we direct our hearts…But just as God has given the hands several fingers, so he has given mankind several paths."[21]

On the Egyptian campaign, Louis combined missionizing, crusading, and diplomacy with mixed results. While Muslim prisoners might accept Christianity, Mongol princes remained elusive. Missionizing became an important component of the king's domestic agenda when he returned to France in 1254. His targets were the kingdom's Jewish communities, whose threat to the religious purity of the realm had always troubled him.

Louis's first efforts to eliminate Jewish practices he regarded as sinful focused on moneylending. In the Ordinance of Melun (1230), Louis and his mother (and regent) Blanche of Castile confronted a practice that had become a staple of the French economy and a major point of contact between Ashkenazi Jewry and the Christian majority. The ordinance forbade Christian borrowers from usury, liquidated outstanding loans, and withdrew royal and baronial enforcement of loan repayment to Jews. If a Jew fled her lord's domains to avoid these regulations, the lord could hunt her down and bring her back, "like his own serf."[22] In comparing Jewish legal status to serfdom, the ordinance affirmed attitudes that were widespread in thirteenth-century northern Europe. The secular rulers who allowed Jews to settle in their domains usually regarded them as a kind of chattel.[23]

To a degree, Louis shared this common view of the Jew as an exploitable financial asset. He was at the forefront of efforts to professionalize government in medieval Europe. Administrative reform was expensive, and taxing or seizing Jewish income could help balance the books. Louis was no stranger to such expedients. Despite the coercive measures buttressing it, the royal usury ban proved difficult to enforce. On several occasions after 1230, therefore, the king authorized a *captio*, or "taking," of the proceeds of Jewish

p. 157 moneylending. In 1248, on the eve of his first crusade, ↳ he authorized a *captio generalis*, which he enforced by seizing the property of Jewish lenders until the debts were surrendered to the crown.[24]

In several respects, however, Louis parted ways with the exploitative paradigm that marked relations between northern European secular lords and "their" Jews. The moral implications of the *captio* troubled him; he worried about profiting from a practice that his legislation aimed to stop. "He did not wish to retain their poison," said one chronicler, and the latent hypocrisy involved in taxing usury while paying lip service to toothless decrees against it was intolerable to him. When he collected a *captio*, he retained the principal for the crown but tried to return the interest on the debt to the Christian borrower. In the late 1230s, Pope Gregory IX helped him solve the problem of what to do with the interest payment if the borrower could not be found. The pope allowed the king to channel the unaccounted-for interest toward a pious cause, such as support for the Latin empire of Constantinople in 1237 and Louis's own crusade in 1248. When Louis called for Jews to forgo moneylending or face exile in 1253 and 1254, he showed that he was willing to pass up the profits of moneylending if it meant removing a blight on his realm and conscience.[25]

There were other early signs that Jewish beliefs and practices greatly concerned the king. At the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, Pope Innocent III had called on Jews to distinguish themselves from Christians in the manner of their dress. Few secular rulers seem to have enforced this measure, but Louis took it seriously and became the first French king to enforce the dress requirement. With further papal encouragement, he also became concerned with Jewish devotional life. In 1239 a Jewish convert to Christianity named Nicholas Donin told Pope Gregory IX that the Talmud had replaced the Bible as the key sacred text for Jews and that it was filled with blasphemies and insults against Christianity. Gregory was shocked and wrote to the Christian monarchs of Europe, encouraging them to seize copies of the Talmud for investigation. Louis and Blanche carried out the pope's wishes in March 1240 and then assembled a tribunal to interrogate Jewish religious
p. 158 leaders on the text. Featuring prominently on the panel was Donin himself, who had grown up in La ↳ Rochelle and converted to Christianity sometime after 1225. After Rabbi Yehiel of Paris and others underwent interrogation, the Talmud was found guilty, sentenced to burn, and forbidden to Jews. The Jewish communities appealed the sentence to the papacy, which mitigated the punishment to excising the offensive passages. Even though the papal ruling became standard policy in the rest of Europe, the French court refused to rescind the original sentence. In 1242, twenty-four cartloads of Talmuds were burned in Paris. It is possible that not every copy of the Talmud was destroyed, since Louis renewed his demand for Jews to renounce the text in the Great Reform Ordinance of 1254.[26]

Nicholas Donin's example pointed to another way of removing Jewish error from France. Converting Jews became an obsession of Louis's later years. In the 1250s, he began to sponsor their christenings, personally. He also offered life pensions to converts, with rights of survivorship. The spouse of a deceased convert continued to receive half the original pension. Royal officials converted Jewish orphans to Christianity as a matter of course and provided for their upkeep. The children appear in royal records as *Ludovici baptisati*, the adults as *Ludovici conversi*. We do not know how many Jews converted to Christianity in this period, but by 1260 there were enough of them living in the towns of the Île de France that Louis had to issue an ordinance clarifying their jurisdictional status. The mayor of Senlis, as well as the mayors of the region's other "good towns," would have justice over "baptized Jews" charged with crimes.[27]

Louis's initial approach to converting Jews combined the carrot and the stick, rewarding Jews who received baptism while punishing those who refused it. In 1269, his methods shifted toward the coercive end of the spectrum. In March, he collaborated with his son-in-law and fellow crusader Thibaut, king of Navarre and count of Champagne, on a *captio* of Jewish assets in the royal domains and the county of Champagne.[28] On
p. 159 June 18 he issued two ordinances on the advice of Paul Christian, a ↳ Dominican and converted Jew. In one, the king required Jews to wear a badge; in the other, he compelled them to attend Paul's sermons, surrender their books to him, and answer his questions.[29]

Six years previously, in 1263, Paul had participated in the Barcelona Disputation, which forced Jewish religious leaders to debate the messianic claims of Christianity in the presence of King Jaume I of Aragon. Now back in northern France, he was ready to collaborate with Louis on a new missionizing campaign:

> Since our beloved brother in Christ, Paul Christian of the Order of Preaching Brethren, the bearer of the present letter, wishes and intends, for the glory of the divine name, to preach to the Jews the word of light, in order, we understand, to evangelize for the exaltation of the Christian faith, we order you to force those Jews residing in your jurisdiction to present themselves to hear from him

> and without objection the word of the Lord and to present their books as the aforesaid brother shall require. You shall compel the Jews to respond fully, without calumny or subterfuge, on those matters which relate to their law, concerning which the aforesaid brother might interrogate them, whether in sermons in their synagogues or elsewhere.[30]

As he geared up for the coming crusade, Louis compelled Parisian Jews to attend Paul's sermons. According to a contemporary chronicler:

> In the same year [1269]...a certain friar of the Dominican Order...who had been a Jew and was a learned cleric in Mosaic law and in our law, came and publicly preached to the Jews in the royal court in Paris and in the court of the Dominicans. They came there at the order of the king, and he showed them that their law was null and invalid, that for a long time they had not observed it, and that they have deviated daily from all its articles.[31]

As in Barcelona, Paul sometimes supplemented his preaching with disputations against Jewish scholars. Abraham ben Samuel of Rouen debated Paul in front of audiences of Jewish men, women, and children at the mendicant chapter houses of Paris and the royal court.[32]

Paul and Louis aimed to create a coercive environment that would promote conversion without compelling
p. 160 it by force. According to Geoffrey ↳ of Beaulieu, Louis took a similar approach with al-Mustansir. The crusade army was not supposed to compel the emir's conversion at sword-point; its presence outside Tunis was meant to intimidate the populace into allowing the emir to repudiate Islam voluntarily. The premise behind the plan was that al-Mustansir was ready to make the change and just needed help with the final step. Once he accepted Christianity, he could work with Louis and his men to bring everyone else around.

What made Louis think that al-Mustansir would turn Christian? Part of the answer had to do with the wider context in which Louis evaluated that possibility. The seeming openness of key Mongol leaders to Christianity and the knowledge their conquests brought to Europeans of the existence of significant Christian communities (mainly Nestorian) living to the east of the Islamic regimes of western Asia created a broader optimism in some European circles about the prospects for evangelizing more generally.

Most crucially, though, Louis's belief in the plausibility of the emir's conversion was grounded in the special place that North Africa occupied in the mental geography of Europeans who shared the king's desire to Christianize the world. While crusading was viewed as the primary means of expanding Latin Christendom into western Asia and the Iberian Peninsula, it did not appear in the Maghreb until deep in the thirteenth century. In the 1250s, King Alfonso X and Pope Alexander IV anticipated the Tunis campaign by promoting an "African Crusade" that attacked the Moroccan Atlantic port of Salé in 1260. Prior to those expeditions, papal policy toward North Africa had focused on protecting the existing Christian communities of the region and gaining converts among the Muslim majority. In this context, a conversionary narrative about North Africa took hold among some members of the Mendicant orders, their supporters in the papal curia, and sympathetic secular rulers, who dreamed of restoring the "land of Augustine" to its former position as a bulwark of the church. This "dream of conversion," as Father Burns once called it, colored Louis's perception of Tunis and its emir.[33]

The smaller role played by crusading in the thirteenth-century European encounter with North Africa went
p. 161 along with the development of strong ↳ commercial relationships among the Hafsids, the Hohenstaufen, the Catalans, the ʿAbd al-Wadids, the Italian maritime republics, and the Marinids. Al-Mustansir's openness toward the northern Mediterranean world brought European Christians to Ifriqiya in considerable numbers. In addition to the mercenaries serving in the palace guard and the merchants trading in the markets there were also Christian slaves in the major cities. These new arrivals made up the vast bulk of the Christian population. There were likely to have been few, if any, Christians from North African communities that pre-existed the Islamic conquests of the seventh and eighth centuries left in Ifriqiya in al-Mustansir's day. By the late twelfth century, indigenous North African Christianity had faded away after a long decline.[34]

Ecclesiastical structures disappeared along with the indigenous Christians. If Pope Leo IX could lament that only five bishops remained in "all Africa" in 1053, and Gregory VII could regret the presence of only two in 1076, by the early thirteenth century there was no formal church hierarchy for the region at all. The first efforts to minister to the newcomers from the northern Mediterranean were necessarily ad hoc. Each merchant community brought its own clergy to staff the *funduk*'s chapel and bury the dead in its cemetery. The Pisans and Genoese dedicated their chapels in Tunis to Mary, while the merchants of Marseille

dedicated theirs in Bijaya to Peter. Christian captives and slaves lacked the means to import clergy, of course, but at the end of the twelfth century two religious orders came into being to serve them and buy their freedom if they could. Although much of the early work of the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians in Ifriqiya is shrouded in legend, they seem to have been active in Tunis and Bijaya from the 1210s onward.[35]

The third major Christian group in Hafsid territory—the mercenaries—initially lacked pastoral care. As they grew in numbers and influence, this became a concern to the papacy, which began to re-engage with the
p. 162 Maghreb ↳ from the pontificate of Honorius III onward. The popes worried about mercenaries apostatizing and saw them as a potential source of leverage in diplomacy with their employers. The papacy therefore threw its support behind mendicant efforts to minister to the Latin Christian communities of North Africa, including even the Christian soldiers who served infidels for pay.

Though Franciscans were present in Tunis as early as 1219, the first good view we have of mendicant activity comes in 1234, when the leaders of the Franciscans and Dominicans in the city wrote to Ramon of Peñafort with questions about ministering to their unconventional flock. Ramon was a leading canonist, a supporter of the mendicant mission to North Africa, and a papal penitentiary. He offered guidance on a host of issues, ranging from the mundane (the papal embargo on trading in war materials) to the deeply problematic (mercenaries who tried to deal with bad debts by pledging family members to their Muslim creditors). Though his answers varied, the underlying goal was always the same: to prevent apostasy and keep even the most troubled North African Christians in the church.[36]

Even as the mendicants defended a Christian community they saw as vulnerable, they tried to expand it through a program of evangelization. By al-Mustansir's day, they were pursuing this aim more discreetly than they had when they first arrived in North Africa. In an incident traditionally dated to January 1220, five Franciscan friars had achieved martyrdom by preaching in the streets of Marrakesh, in deliberate violation of local norms. Pope Honorius III introduced a more staid approach in the mid-1220s. He instructed two Dominicans on their way to Morocco in 1225 to "convert the infidel, build up the fallen, strengthen the weak, comfort the doubters, and confirm the strong." The missionary work, in other words, should be pursued in tandem with pastoral care for local Christians and should not compromise their safety or that of the brothers themselves. This program focused on the western Maghreb, but the Hafsids were targeted too: in 1246, Pope Innocent IV wrote to Abu Zakariya to recommend a new bishop of Morocco, who, the pope hoped, would inspire a "new planting" of Christianity throughout North Africa.[37]

p. 163 For brothers who wanted to engage with non-Christians by learning Arabic and Hebrew, the Dominicans founded language schools. In 1250, the Spanish provincial chapter of the order assigned eight brothers "to the study of Arabic" (*ad studium arabicum*). The order did not specify where the friars were supposed to study. Two possibilities are Tunis and Murcia. Pere Marsili, who completed a loose Latin translation of Jaume I's autobiography around 1313, to which he added material on Ramon of Peñafort, said that Ramon founded language schools in those cities and assigned Catalan brothers to study there. Later evidence points to Mallorca as another possible site for this early *studium Arabicum*.[38] Humbert of Romans, master-general of the order from 1254 to 1263, also encouraged language study as he made evangelizing non-Christians an explicit focus of Dominican work. In 1255, he called for volunteers to learn Arabic, Hebrew, Greek, "or other barbaric languages" so they could "depart the fortress" of their own nations "for the salvation of souls."[39]

The promotion of Arabic study coincided with growing optimism in the papal curia and among leading Dominicans that proselytization efforts might succeed in North Africa. In June 1256, Pope Alexander IV ordered the Spanish provincial chapter of the Dominicans to send more brothers to al-Andalus and
p. 164 "throughout the whole kingdom of Tunis" to receive ↳ and baptize Christian converts.[40] Four years later, Alexander received good reports about their work. He told Ramon of Peñafort that, "we have heard that the preaching brothers sent to Tunis and to other barbarous nations, as much to convert the infidel as to strengthen the faithful, have harvested not a little fruit."[41] Ramon shared the pope's assessment of the situation. In a letter to an unnamed master-general of the Dominican Order, probably written in the mid-1250s, he listed six "fruits" of the friars' ministry in Africa and Spain. The first five pertained to the pastoral care of Latin Christians: (1) mercenary soldiers working in the Maghreb; (2) slaves; (3) apostates who had returned to the fold; (4) those who had once believed that Christianity was idolatrous but had renounced that opinion; and (5) captives. "The sixth fruit," however:

> is among the Saracens, to whom the grace and favor of God has so much been brought—and especially to the powerful, and even to Miramolin [*amir al-muʾminin*] or king of Tunis—that at

> present the door appears open to virtually inestimable fruits, so long as the harvesters do not abandon their work; and even now many of them, especially in Murcia, have been converted to the faith both secretly and openly.[42]

While Ramon remained focused on existing Latin Christian communities, he also allowed himself to dream of a spectacular conversion: al-Mustansir of Tunis, identified here by his self-styled caliphal title.

The growing, if fundamentally misplaced, optimism about Muslim conversion expressed by Ramon of Peñafort and many others did not go unnoticed in the wider Mediterranean. It inspired what we could call "the conversion gambit," by which a non-Christian ruler would promise baptism to gain diplomatic concessions. We have already encountered this stratagem several times: when the Hafsid prince ʿAbd al-ʿAziz fled Tunis seeking a papal baptism in 1236; when the Ilkhan Abaqa touted his Christian bona fides to Louis in 1269; when Michael VIII Palaiologos promised to renounce eastern Orthodoxy in favor of the Latin rite at the same time; and when Hafsid soldiers approached the crusader camp and offered to convert in the summer of 1270.

Other examples of the conversion gambit can be cited as well. In 1239, Guillaume Champenois of Tripoli (perhaps the Dominican author of *De statu Sarracenorum*) approached the leadership of the Barons' Crusade
p. 165 on ↳ behalf of the emir of Hama, who wanted the crusaders to come to his city so he could become a Christian without fear of reprisals. The crusaders smelled a ruse—the emir of Aleppo was threatening Hama and the arrival of the crusader army might encourage him to withdraw—and declined to march north. In Ifriqiya, the Tunis Crusade seems to have set a precedent for future maneuvers along these lines. In 1281, the governor of Qasantina, Ibn al-Wazir, told the Aragonese that he would convert to Christianity only if they could install him in Tunis first. In 1313, the Hafsid emir of Tunis Ibn al-Lihyani revealed to King Jaume II of Aragon that he was a Christian "in his heart" and at the same time asked for military support against his many enemies.[43]

In 1270, Baybars devised a clever variation on the gambit when he sent two Assassins to murder the powerful Frankish baron Philippe of Montfort, lord of Tyre, and his nephew Julian, lord of Sidon. According to the "Templar of Tyre," the Assassins infiltrated the retinues of the lords by receiving baptism, then exploited their newfound positions of trust to carry out their attacks. The lord of Tyre was killed coming out of his chapel one morning, while the lord of Sidon, after being warned what was afoot, managed to avoid the attentions of his Assassin "godson."[44] In the spring of 1272, as we shall see, Baybars reprised this plan when Prince Edward of England came to Syria. Like the rest, these schemes depended on powerful Latin Christians believing that Muslim conversions were not only desirable but possible.

Louis fell into this camp. His close links to Dominican enthusiasts who could "confirm" al-Mustansir's pro-Christian feelings made him susceptible to the conversion gambit. As a great Dominican patron, he was familiar with Ramon of Peñafort, who had served as master-general from 1238 to 1240. The king also knew Humbert of Romans. Before he promoted missionizing and language study as master-general, Humbert had served as provincial prior of the Dominicans of France. He did not go to Egypt with Louis, but the duties of his office involved him in the fundraising, governmental reform, and anti-heretical/Jewish initiatives that preceded the campaign. After he finished his term as master-general in 1263, Humbert became a crusade
p. 166 propagandist. In the late 1260s, he helped promote Louis's war against Baybars by composing a manual on ↳ *Preaching the Holy Cross against Saracens*. Christianization and crusade went together for Humbert and Louis both.[45]

The king's relationship with André of Longjumeau went back to 1238, when the Dominican diplomat and missionary went to Constantinople and then Venice to collect the Crown of Thorns for display in Sainte-Chapelle. After that André went to the Near East for Pope Innocent IV. As with Humbert, his work combined missionary outreach with crusade promotion. He sounded out Ayyubid princes on the possibility of allying with Rome against the Mongol onslaught, tried to persuade Jacobite and Nestorian church leaders to accept papal primacy, and made contact with Mongol companies moving into the Near East. He was well prepared to represent Louis on the mission to the *qaghan* Güyük in 1250. André met up with Louis again at Caesarea in 1253, but after that his movements become harder to trace. He seems to have gravitated toward the western Mediterranean, perhaps in response to Humbert of Romans's call for more missionizing and pastoral work there. He is reported to have made himself known to al-Mustansir. Geoffrey of Beaulieu described Louis on his deathbed as calling out for "a certain brother of the Preaching Order, who had gone there [Tunis]

another time, and was known to the king of Tunis." The *Grand chroniques de France*, the quasi-official history of the Capetian dynasty produced at Saint-Denis, named this friar as André of Longjumeau.[46]

Francis Cendra linked France to Tunis as well. In 1262, Francis traveled up to Paris to receive a gift from Louis on behalf of the Dominican convent of St Catherine's in Barcelona: a single thorn from the crown André of Longjumeau had brought back from Constantinople. The gift of this precious relic affirmed an intimate relationship between the convent and their distant royal patron.[47]

Ramon Martí was a Catalan friar who achieved a mastery of Arabic (and also Hebrew) that was rare within the order. He was one of the eight brothers whom the Spanish Provincial Chapter assigned to study Arabic in 1250. By the end of the decade, he commanded the language well enough to produce two polemical treatises:
p. 167 *Explanatio simboli apostolorum* and ↳ *De seta Machometi*. Both works defended Christian doctrine against Islamic beliefs. Based on a close reading of the Qur'an, the *Sira* of the prophet, and several hadith collections, Ramon sought to demonstrate the falsehood of Muhammad's claims to prophethood and the miserable fate that awaited those who believed his blasphemies.

By the early 1260s, Ramon had turned to Rabbinic Judaism. In 1264, the year after the Barcelona Disputation, he joined a panel of clerics to investigate alleged anti-Christian passages in the Talmud. He would go on to produce two of the seminal works of medieval Latin Christian anti-Jewish polemic: the *Capistrum Judaeorum* ("Muzzle of the Jews," *c.*1267) and the *Pugio fidei* ("Dagger of Faith," *c.*1278). As their titles suggest, these works fantasize a progressively violent intellectual confrontation with Judaism, moving from the forcible silencing of Jews envisioned in the *Capistrum* to "cutting the throat" of Jewish "perfidy" in the *Pugio*.[48]

Sometime in early spring 1269, Francis Cendra and Ramon Martí went to Tunis. It is not clear whether Francis had been there before, but Ramon had. In one passage of the *Capistrum*, completed two years before the 1269 mission, Ramon claimed to have already lived in Muslim lands for twelve years.[49] In another, he described the old Christian churches in Tunis that had been turned into mosques but retained many of their original features. When he visited them he could still read the names of former bishops inscribed on the altars.[50] Pere Marsili, writing around 1313, claimed that Ramon was "most close and dear to not only the king of Aragon, but also to Saint Louis king of France and to the good king of Tunis."[51] From Tunis, Francis and Ramon sailed to Agde, were spotted by Jaume I of Aragon's cook, declined an invitation to visit with the king, and headed north toward Paris. They seem to have been in the city when Louis told the Tunisian envoys, about three weeks later, that he hoped al-Mustansir would convert to Christianity.

p. 168 Money (Part II)

When French Jews refused to convert to Christianity, Louis would take their money and put it toward a pious cause. Seizures of Jewish assets helped fund his crusades in 1248 and 1269. Geoffrey of Beaulieu described a similar strategy in play at Tunis in the summer of 1270:

> That city was full of money and gold and infinite riches, as was possible with a city that had never been conquered. Thereupon, it was hoped that if, God willing, the said city were captured by the Christian army, the treasures found there would contribute very effectively to the conquest and restoration of the Holy Land.[52]

Even if al-Mustansir remained a Muslim, Tunisian treasure could fund the Syrian or Egyptian phase of the campaign.

Arabic sources insisted that Charles was not the only Capetian brother interested in extracting wealth from North Africa. For the Mamluk historian and legal scholar Qutb al-Din Musa al-Yunini, Louis's expedition was quite literally about money. In al-Yunini's account, officials in the Tunisian customs house caught French merchants trying to pay the duty they owed on their goods with counterfeit currency. The workers brought this deception to the attention of the emir, who asked, sensibly enough, "Who is the richest among the Franks?" and when told that it was the Genoese, had them arrested and confiscated their money. The Genoese naturally turned to the French king for redress and offered to subsidize his expenses if he would lead an army against Tunis. Louis agreed and a deal was struck: the French and the Genoese would ally together against al-Mustansir until the Genoese merchants had been released and compensated for their losses. After a long siege, "peace occurred on the return of the Genoese money."[53]

The details of al-Yunini's account of the diversion—hitherto ignored—are open to question. The Genoese were shocked when the crusade turned against Tunis and did not collude with Louis to direct it there. Al-Mustansir had Genoese merchants arrested after the crusade arrived, not before. But the larger context of commercial disputes that al-Yunini described is compelling and important. The rumors al-Yunini was hearing about counterfeiting in Hafsid Ifriqiya had some foundation. In the early 1260s, al-Mustansir introduced a copper coin—the *handus*—to facilitate small-scale trade and address concerns about the
p. 169 devaluation of the Hafsid silver currency. The *handus*, however, soon succumbed to a counterfeiting ↳ campaign that rendered it nearly valueless, prompting riots in Tunis. Al-Mustansir restored calm by suppressing the new coin and forgiving the rioters, but the failure of the *handus* had broader implications as well: an unreliable local currency could allow currency manipulation and counterfeiting to proliferate, giving rise to the kind of currency disputes that al-Yunini described.[54]

A trading relationship gone wrong was also central to Ibn Khaldun's account of the Tunis Crusade, which involved French merchants and their dealings with a Tunisian financier named Abu al-Abbas al-Lulyani. Belonging to a politically prominent family in al-Mahdiya (his father was the governor of the city), al-Lulyani started off as a tax collector for the Hafsids. He was an upwardly mobile member of the Ifriqiyan urban elite. Not content with local prominence, he set his sights on Tunis. At first, he succeeded brilliantly. Shrugging off charges of embezzlement, he became a banker to Hafsid officialdom and used the proceeds to invest in Mediterranean commerce. As we have seen, though, the competition for preeminence in al-Mustansir's court was unforgiving. He ran afoul of other court favorites, who spread the rumor that he was planning an uprising in al-Mahdiya and turned the emir against him. When al-Mustansir remarked, ominously, to a courtier that "Today is a day of tears," the courtier replied, "and today harm will be driven away." Al-Lulyani soon found out what that meant. He was arrested, interrogated, tortured, forced to surrender his fortune, and then turned over to the head of the emir's corps of freedmen, who had him beaten to death. His decapitated body was then exposed to the crowds.[55]

Among the many creditors whom al-Lulyani left behind were some French merchants trading in Tunis. They sought redress with al-Mustansir, who gave them no satisfaction. Angered by his response, they complained to Louis IX, prompting, in Ibn Khaldun's telling, the French king to direct his crusade against Tunis. To forestall the king's attack, al-Mustansir sent an embassy to Paris with 80,000 pieces of gold "to assist their negotiations."[56] Louis took the money but told them he was going to direct his expedition against their country anyway.

Later Arabic authors picked up on Ibn Khaldun's story of bad debts and deals gone wrong. By the time the Hafsid historian Ibn al-Shammaʿ came to sum up the crusade in his *al-Adilla* (*c.*1456), the financial motives behind the campaign seemed clear-cut: "Their descent on Tunis aimed to seize the riches that the lord Abu
p. 170 Zakariya had bequeathed along ↳ with other wealth the sultan (al-Mustansir) had created after his father's death."[57]

The Arabic sources have been criticized for misreading Louis's motives.[58] It is true that he was not likely to have diverted his long-planned expedition to deal with a counterfeiting crisis or settle a minor trade dispute. But the emphasis placed on money in these accounts is not off the mark. In pointing to French designs on Tunisian wealth, they align with the testimony of Geoffrey of Beaulieu, the royal intimate who always presented his master's motivations in the best possible light. Failing the re-Christianization of Ifriqiya, Tunis still made sense as a potentially lucrative stopover en route to Syria or Egypt. The late arrival of the Genoese fleet at Aigues-Mortes, which prevented Louis from entering the Mediterranean until July 1, had made it more likely that the expedition would have to halt for the winter in the central Mediterranean before embarking for its final destination the following spring. Stopping at Syracuse would have cost Louis and Charles money. Sacking Tunis would have turned that loss into a gain.

The Egyptian Strategy 2.0

In the late twelfth century, Saladin had brought Egypt and much of Syria and historical Palestine under his personal rule, including Jerusalem. The dynasty he founded—the Ayyubids—kept their capital at Cairo but continued to threaten what remained of the kingdom of Jerusalem from their Syrian bases. King Richard I of England considered striking against Ayyubid power at its Egyptian source. Although he opted to join the siege of Acre in the end, the Fifth Crusade would put this Egyptian strategy into effect in 1218, landing at Damietta, taking it after a long siege, and launching an expedition up the Nile.

Louis followed in the footsteps of the Fifth Crusaders on his first expedition. Once Damietta had fallen, his counselors debated two courses of action. One was to cross over to Alexandria, conquer it, and use it as a bargaining chip to regain Jerusalem. The other was to march to Cairo and take the Ayyubid capital. With the dynasty eliminated, the crusaders could reconquer Jerusalem and possibly the entire old kingdom up to its
p. 171 Jordan River border. Following his brother Robert of Artois's advice—"he who ↳ wishes to kill the serpent must first crush the head"—Louis opted for the second course, with catastrophic results.[59]

After nearly two decades of military expansion and internal consolidation, Mamluk Egypt was stronger than Ayyubid Egypt had ever been. Many European chroniclers, all basing themselves on a now lost common source, reported that Louis's plan for his second crusade was to attack Baybars's "citadel of Islam" indirectly, through an approach on his western flank. Al-Mustansir, according to these accounts, provided aid to Baybars and impeded transportation between western Europe and the Holy Land.[60] Geoffrey of Beaulieu also accused the emir of supplying military aid to the Mamluks "in the form of horses, arms, and warriors, to the distress and great harm of the Holy Land."[61]

It is tempting to dismiss these claims as rationalizations of an expedition gone wrong. Al-Mustansir was not as friendly with Baybars as the European chroniclers believed. We have no indication that he ever provided military assistance to the sultan. Nor was the emir an active opponent of the crusader states, which were, after all, thousands of miles from Hafsid Ifriqiya. The military operation envisioned in this plan, moreover, seems a better fit for the age of Montgomery and Rommel than it does for the medieval world of horses, crossbows, and sailing ships.[62] Having taken Tunis, the crusaders would then have had to march or sail about 1,600 miles east just to reach Alexandria.

Faced with this logistical conundrum, a number of modern scholars have concluded that the Tunis Crusade was the result of a geographical error. The crusaders, it is claimed, thought that Tunis was a four-day journey by horse from Egypt.[63] But there are several reasons to doubt that Louis and his advisors were this confused. First, I have not found a medieval source that makes this claim. Second, Louis used Genoese crews and navigators, many of them on assignment from ships that regularly plied the routes between Genoa, Alexandria, and Tunis. These sailors must have had some idea of where the two African cities were in
p. 172 relation to each other. Third, Louis himself, while no one's idea of a ↳ seaman, had personal experience sailing around the Mediterranean from his first crusade and was therefore roughly aware of the distances involved.

Fourth, the Mamluks do not seem to have regarded the Tunisian landing as a miscalculation. All the Mamluk sources for the Tunis Crusade took seriously the possibility that Louis's ultimate objective was to attack Egypt. Ibn Wasil offered this crucial, though misdated, testimony:

> He [Louis IX] continued to stay there [in his own country] until after the year 660 [November 1261–November 1262]. [Then] he gathered a copious host and planned to attack the lands of Islam a second time. But he was told that if he invaded Egypt what happened on the first occasion would befall him; and it was suggested to him that he should first attack Tunis in Ifriqiya (its king at that time was…al-Mustansir)…, and that if [Louis] defeated him and conquered Ifriqiya he would be in a position to invade Egypt by land and by sea, and would reduce it with ease.[64]

Ibn Aybak al-Dawadari and al-Maqrizi both echoed this claim, stating that Louis raised an army to attack Damietta again but was persuaded by his officers to make for Tunis instead, because the capture of the one would facilitate the conquest of the other.[65] Ibn ʿAbd al-Zahir, an early biographer of Baybars, described the sultan's extensive precautions against a French return, including building bridges to facilitate troop movements, dispatching Bedouin auxiliaries based in Barqa to Tunis, digging wells along their line of march, and personally setting off for Ascalon, which he feared Louis might want to refortify.[66] These measures suggest that Baybars regarded Louis's expedition to Tunis as a threat to Mamluk Egypt.

In fact, no geographical error was required for Baybars and Louis to see Tunis as strategically important to their struggle with each other. The initial failure of Charles and al-Mustansir to establish peaceful relations implicated the central Mediterranean in the battle for Syria. The Hohenstaufen–Hafsid insurgency on Sicily made the island hard to use as a crusader base. Louis therefore had an interest in stabilizing Angevin control over the central Mediterranean, while Baybars would try to maintain the status quo. The Sicilian Straits are 40 miles across at their narrowest. The brothers could not have completely dominated maritime traffic
p. 173 through them had they conquered Tunis or converted it into a ↳ Latin Christian client. But they certainly

could have favored French and Provençal shipping, threatened Alexandria's commercial preeminence, reduced Ifriqiyan piracy, and made it easier for western European military aid to flow to the crusader states.

For Louis, the strategic dimensions of crusading were inextricably linked to an evangelical agenda. On his first crusade, he engaged in diplomacy with the Mongols to win converts and gain a military alliance, while he conquered Damietta to Christianize the city and open a path to Cairo. The Tunis Crusade combined these aspirations on a grander scale. Writing to the clergy of France not long after his father's death, Philippe III noted that:

> [Louis] came to the port of Tunis and took it with no loss of his men, and he held this very renowned harbor, which lies at the entry to the land of Africa, which he intended, if God had granted him life, to dedicate to God by the increase of the Christian religion, and to expel the barbaric lineage of Saracens and eliminate their horrible filth.[67]

To increase Christianity and expel the Muslims: Philippe's letter brought together conversion, conquest, and crusade into an ideology of elimination that achieved full expression outside Tunis in the summer of 1270.

The chilling grandeur of the old king's vision for the crusade is hard to reconcile with the careful calculations of his younger brother. With its enduring centrality to the Mediterranean-wide networks of conflict and collaboration that were crucial to the aspirations of both men, few places besides Tunis could have brought their divergent interests together so well.

Notes

1 Saba Malaspina, pp. 228–9.
2 Jean Dunbabin, *Charles I of Anjou: Power, Kingship, and State-Making in Thirteenth-Century Europe* (London: Longman, 1998), p. 70.
3 Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 22 *(Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 117) (slightly altered).
4 Natalis de Wailly, "Examen critique de la vie de Saint Louis par Geoffroy de Beaulieu," *Mémoires de l'Académie royale des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 15 (1845): pp. 403–36; Auguste Molinier, *Les sources de l'histoire de France: Des origines aux guerres d'Italie (1494)*, 6 vols (Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1901–6), vol. 3: p. 116; Thomas Kaeppeli, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum medii aevi*, 4 vols (Rome: Ad S. Sabinae, 1970–93), vol. 2: p. 15; Jacques Le Goff, *Saint Louis* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), pp. 333–5; *Sanctity of Louis IX*, pp. 19–20.
5 Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 22 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 116).
6 Henri Wallon, *Saint Louis et son temps*, 2 vols (Paris: Libraire Hachette, 1875), vol. 2: pp. 518–19; Karl Hampe, *Geschichte Konradins von Hohenstaufen* (Leipzig: Koehler Verlag, 1940; original edition 1894), pp. 305–27; Michele Amari, *La guerra del Vespro Siciliano* (n.p., 1947), p. 41, originally published as *Un periodo delle istorie siciliane del secolo XIII* (Palermo: Poligrafia Empedocle, 1842). On Charles's reputation in nineteenth-century historiography, see David Abulafia, "Charles of Anjou Reassessed," *Journal of Medieval History* 26 (2000): pp. 93–114; Dunbabin, *Charles of Anjou*, p. 70; Longnon, p. 185.
7 Sternfeld, pp. 234, 307–10, 313–14.
8 Étienne Delaruelle, 'L'idée de croisade chez Saint Louis', *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique* 61 (1960): pp. 244, 251; Mollat, pp. 302–3 (who also quotes Duby on the crusade as Louis's "great solitary dream"); Jean Richard, *Saint Louis* (Paris: Fayard, 1983), pp. 563–5; Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, p. 558; Longnon, p. 195.
9 Borghese, p. 56.
10 Saba Malaspina, p. 230; *Gesta Ludovici*, p. 478; Pierre of Condé, "Letter to Abbot Mathieu, November 18, 1270," in *Spicilegium*, vol. 3: pp. 667–8.
11 *RCA*, vol. 3: p. 219, no. 634 (Lefevre, no. 49); Sternfeld, p. 330 (appendix A, no. 16); *RCA*, vol. 5: pp. 80–1, no. 346 (Lefevre, no. 131).
12 Dunbabin, *Charles of Anjou*, pp. 158–9.
13 *RCA*, vol. 5: pp. 240–1, no. 141 (Lefevre, no. 201); Sternfeld, p. 273.
14 *RCA*, vol. 6: p. 20, no. 71 (Lefevre, no. 214); *RCA*, vol. 5: pp. 269–70, no. 303 (Lefevre, no. 212); Sternfeld, p. 274.
15 *RCA*, vol. 6: p. 43, no. 151 (Lefevre, no. 264); *RCA*, vol. 6: pp. 374–5, no. 1885 (Lefevre, no. 297); Sternfeld, p. 274.
16 Jean Richard, "La croisade de 1270, premier 'passage général'?" *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 133 (1989): pp. 520–1; Jean Richard, *The Crusades, c.1071–c.1291*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 433.
17 Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 22.
18 Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches toward the Muslims* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 161–5; *Seventh Crusade*, p. 82.
19 *Seventh Crusade*, pp. 65–9, 74–81.
20 Joinville, pp. 224–6, 422–36 (Smith, pp. 178–9, 262–7); Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410* (London: Pearson-Longman, 2005), pp. 99–100; Jean Richard, "La politique orientale de Saint Louis," in *Septième centenaire de la*

mort de Saint-Louis: Actes des colloques de Royaumont et de Paris (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1976), pp. 201–2; Paul Pelliot, *Les Mongols et la papauté*, 3 vols (Paris: A. Picard, 1923), vol. 3: pp. 160–214; Amand Rastoul, "André de Longjumeau," in *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie écclésiastique* (Paris: Letouzey et ané, 1912–), pp. 1677–8.

21 *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, trans. Peter Jackson, introduction, notes, and appendices by Peter Jackson with David O. Morgan (London: Hakluyt Society, 1990), pp. 33–47, 236.

22 *Ordonnances*, vol. 1: 53–4. English translation: Robert Chazan, *Church, State, and Jew in the Middle Ages* (West Orange, NJ: Behrman House, 1980), pp. 213–15.

23 The provision was actually stronger than the serfdom analogy implied. For Christian peasants, the famous adage of the day was "town air makes a man free," meaning that a serf could gain freedom after living for a year and a day in a self-governing town. Town air had no such effect on the Jews: according to the Ordinance of Melun, the dominion their lords exercised over them knew no geographical bounds.

24 For Louis's policy on Jewish moneylending, see Gérard Nahon, "Les ordonnances de Saint Louis sur les juifs," *Les nouveaux cahiers* 6 (1970): pp. 18–35; Robert Chazan, *Medieval Jewry in Northern France: A Political and Social History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), pp. 103–47; and William Chester Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews: From Philip Augustus to the Last Capetians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), pp. 129–46.

25 Guillaume of Chartres, p. 34 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 142); *The Apostolic See and the Jews*, ed. Shlomo Simonsohn, 8 vols (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1988–91), vol. 1: no. 157; *Ordonnances*, vol. 1: pp. 73–4.

26 Isidore Loeb, "La controverse de 1240 sur le Talmud," *Revue des études juives* 1 (1880): pp. 247–61; 2 (1881): pp. 248–70; 3 (1881): pp. 39–57; Hyam Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial: Jewish–Christian Disputations in the Middle Ages* (East Brunswick, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982), pp. 19–38; Robert Chazan, *Daggers of Faith: Thirteenth-Century Christian Missionizing and Jewish Response* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 31–3; Jordan, *French Monarchy and the Jews*, p. 139; Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 317–25; Robin Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims and Jews in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 139–42.

27 *Ordonnances*, vol. 11: p. 333; Nahon, "Ordonnances de Saint Louis," pp. 23, 28; Jordan, *French Monarchy and the Jews*, pp. 149–50; Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, pp. 808–9.

28 *Layettes*, no. 5488.

29 *Ordonnances*, vol. 1: p. 294; Joseph Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris: Un chapitre dans la polémique entre chrétiens et juifs au moyen âge* (Paris: Peeters, 1994), appendix 1, p. 35.

30 Shatzmiller, *Deuxième controverse*, appendix 1, p. 35. English translation: Chazan, *Church, State and Jew*, pp. 261–2.

31 Léopold Delisle, "Notes sur quelques manuscrits du Musée brittanique," *Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de Paris* 4 (1877): p. 189. English translation: Chazan, *Church, State and Jew*, p. 262.

32 Shatzmiller, *Deuxième controverse*, appendix 3, pp. 43–76.

33 Charles-Emmanuel Dufourcq, "Un projet castillian du XIIIe siècle: La croisade d'Afrique," *Revue d'histoire et de civilization du Maghreb* 1 (1966): pp. 26–51; Manuel González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio* (Barcelona: Ariel, 2004), pp. 138–9; Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *The Gibraltar Crusade: Castile and the Battle for the Strait* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), pp. 11–33; Michael Lower, "The Papacy and Christian Mercenaries of Thirteenth-Century North Africa," *Speculum* 89 (2014): pp. 616–28; Robert I. Burns, "Christian–Islamic Confrontation in the West: The Thirteenth-Century Dream of Conversion," *American Historical Review* 76 (1971): pp. 1386–434.

34 Lower, "Papacy and Mercenaries," pp. 613–16; Dominique Valérian, "La permanence du christianisme au Maghreb: L'apport problématique des sources latines," in *Islamisation et arabisation de l'Occident musulman médiéval (VIIe–XIIe siècle)*, ed. Dominique Valérian (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2011), pp. 139, 149; Mark A. Handley, "Disputing the End of African Christianity," in *Vandals, Romans, and Berbers: New Perspectives on Late Antique North Africa*, ed. A. H. Merrills (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 309–10, 304; Mohamed Talbi, "Le Christianisme maghrébin de la conquête musulmane à sa disparition: Une tentative d'explication," in *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bikhazi, Papers in Mediaeval Studies 9 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990), pp. 329–30, 338–9.

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38 Ramon Hernàndez, "Las primeras actas de los capítulos provinciales de la Provincia de España," *Archivo Dominicano* 5 (1984): p. 32; English translation: Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims and Jews*, pp. 105–6. For Pere Marsili's statement about Ramon of Peñafort, see *Raymundiana*, p. 12 and Pere Marsili, *Opera omnia*, ed. Antoni Biosca Bas (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), p. 429; for the later evidence relating to Mallorca, see Eusebi Colomer, "La controversia islamo-judeo-cristiana en la obra apologética de Ramon Martí," in *Diálogo filosófico-religioso entre Cristianismo, Judaísmo e Islamismo durante la edad*

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39 Benedictus Maria Reichert, "Litterae encyclicae magistrorum generalium," in *Monumenta Ordinum Fratrum Praedicatorum historica*, 26 vols to date (Rome: Institutum historicum fratrum praedicatorum, 1896–), vol. 5: pp. 17–20; discussion and English translation: Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims, and Jews*, p. 45.

40 Text printed in Coll, "Escuelas," pp. 136–8.

41 Thomas Ripoll, ed., *Bullarium Ordinis Praedicatorum*, 8 vols (Rome: Ex typographia Hieronymi Mainardi, 1729–40), vol. 1: no. 275.

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44 *Templare di Tiro*, pp. 130–6 (Crawford, pp. 63–6).

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46 Delaruelle, "L'idée de croisade," p. 256; Pelliot, *Les Mongols et la papauté*, vol. 3: p. 221; Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, pp. 88–95; Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 23 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 121); Jules Viard, ed., *Les grandes chroniques de France: Tome septième (Louis VIII et Saint Louis)* (Paris: Libraire de la Société de l'histoire de France, 1932), pp. 280–1.

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49 Ramon Martí, *Capistrum iudaeorum*, ed. Adolfo Robles Sierra, 2 vols (Corpus Islamo-Christianum, series Latina 5, Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1993), vol. 2: p. 184; Montane, "Studium Arabicum," p. 616.

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51 Marsili, *Opera omnia*, p. 394; quoted in Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims, and Jews*, p. 231.

52 Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 22 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 118).

53 Al-Yunini, vol. 2: pp. 454–6.

54 Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: pp. 658–9 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: pp. 354–5).

55 Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: pp. 655–6 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: pp. 350–2).

56 Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: 655–6 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: pp. 350–2).

57 Ibn al-Shammaʿ, p. 73.

58 Mohamed Talbi, "Saint Louis à Tunis," in *Les croisades*, ed. Robert Delort (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1988), p. 77; Harry W. Hazard, "Moslem North Africa, 1049–1394," in *History of the Crusades*, vol. 3: p. 473.

59 Joinville, p. 254 (Smith, p. 190).

60 *Alberti Milioli notarii regini liber de temporibus*, in *MGH SS*, vol. 31: p. 538; Salimbene de Adam, *Cronica fratris Salimbene de Adam ordinis minorum*, in *MGH SS*, vol. 32: pp. 483–4; anonymous continuator of Gerard Frachet, *Chronicon Girardi de Fracheto et anonyma eiusdem operis continuatio*, in *RHGF*, vol. 21: p. 5; *Martini Oppaviensis chronicon*, in *MGH SS*, vol. 22: p. 474; *Vita Clementis Papae IV, ex MSi Bernardi Guidonis*, in *RIS*, vol. 3, part 1: p. 596. On these chronicles, see Sternfeld, p. 378, and Kedar, *Crusade and Mission*, pp. 168–9.

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64 Ibn Wasil, p. 83. I am grateful to Peter Jackson for the English translation of this passage.

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66 Ibn ʿAbd al-Zahir, pp. 373–4.

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