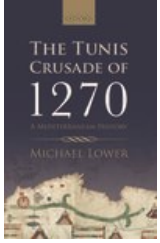

The Tunis Crusade of 1270: A Mediterranean History

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CHAPTER

1 Baybars, Louis IX, and the Battle for Syria

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Abstract

In the middle of the thirteenth century, two powerful rulers waged a battle for Syria. King Louis IX of France was one of the greatest kings of the medieval west. Baybars was a former slave who rose to become sultan of Egypt. Despite their different backgrounds, Louis and Baybars shared a powerful commitment to religious confrontation. For Baybars, the battle for Syria would bring religious legitimation to his fledgling regime and a bulwark against a powerful external threat, the Mongols. For Louis, it offered self-sanctification and the potential re-Christianization of sacred space. This chapter explores how each tried to define the looming struggle in absolute terms, as a contest pitting a unified, purified community against a religious other.

Keywords: Mamluk, Mongol, King Louis IX of France, Sultan Baybars of Egypt, kingdom of Jerusalem, crusader state, battle of ʿAyn Jalut, battle of Mansura, Abbasid Caliphate

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

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Mansura: February 8, 1250

The origins of the Tunis Crusade lie in a battle fought between French crusaders and Egyptian forces in and around Mansura, a small town in the Nile Delta, in the early winter of 1250. The leader of the crusaders was King Louis IX of France, who was one of the most powerful monarchs in western Christendom. Even though he was 35 years old in 1250, a husband and a father, the Egyptian campaign represented a coming-of-age moment for him.[1] Succeeding to the throne as a youth of 12, Louis had become accustomed to ruling in close collaboration with his mother, Blanche of Castile. Now Blanche was home in Paris, serving as his regent, and he was in command of what was probably the best organized and best funded crusade that had yet been launched, an expedition that had been four years in the planning. Following a halt on Cyprus, Louis and his men had landed outside Damietta, a port city that guarded an entrance to the Nile, in June 1249. To their surprise, they occupied the city without encountering significant resistance. Then, after a long wait for more reinforcements to arrive from overseas, the crusaders headed up the Nile in late November. Their goal was Cairo, the capital of the Ayyubid confederation that ruled not only Egypt but also much of Syria and the Holy Land, including, since 1244, Jerusalem. The crusader army made slow progress and eventually ground to a halt before a tributary of the Nile called the Bahr al-Saghir. On the other side of the river stood Mansura, a fortified settlement that had been built specifically to stop an army invading from the coast. It was here that the main body of Egyptian troops regrouped to resist the crusaders. Most of the army established itself in a camp outside the town proper, near the Bahr al-Saghir, while some elite troops remained within the walls of Mansura.[2]

p. 12 One of the officers inside Mansura was a 21-year-old Qipchaq Turk named Rukn al-Din Baybars al-Bunduqdari. Captured in the south Russian steppe as a youth, Baybars had been sold to an Ayyubid emir in

the northern Syrian city of Hama.[3] In 1246, Baybars caught the attention of the authorities in Cairo and joined the most prestigious Mamluk regiment, the Bahriyya. This regiment, usually housed on an island in the Nile (Bahriyya means "river-y"), served as the personal bodyguard of the Ayyubid sultan.[4] The Bahri Mamluks had played no part in the fiasco at Damietta and were now being counted on to hold their nerve as the crusaders searched for a way to cross the Bahr al-Saghir and continue their march on Cairo.

After several unsuccessful attempts to dam the tributary, Louis paid a local Bedouin 500 bezants to reveal the location of a nearby ford. At dawn on February 8, 1250, Louis's brother Robert of Artois and his men rode their horses through the shallow waters of the crossing. Meeting no resistance on the opposite bank, they charged into the Egyptian camp and took it by surprise. They killed the commander as he rose from his morning bath and slaughtered many of the ordinary soldiers. The ford way was now clear for the crusader infantry to cross, but rather than holding his position to screen the infantry advance Robert of Artois continued his charge into Mansura proper. He was not aware that the Bahri Mamluks, along with another elite regiment, the *jamdariyya*, were garrisoned here, not in the camp closer to the river. The Mamluks, with Baybars among them, engaged the vanguard and quickly got the better of the fighting. The crusaders' horses were tired and found it hard to maneuver in the narrow streets of the town. The Mamluks annihilated the entire vanguard, including Robert of Artois. For the chronicler Ibn Wasil, the victory represented a turning point: "This was the first battle in which the Turkish lions were victorious over the polytheist dogs."[5]

Louis and the rest of his men were eventually able to cross the ford and fight their way to the Egyptian camp, where they slept that night after the Egyptian troops withdrew into Mansura. It was a pyrrhic victory. The crusaders had lost a significant proportion of their effective fighting force in the streets of Mansura.
p. 13 They could not advance further up the Nile, while the rotting corpses that lay strewn about the old Egyptian ↳ camp and in the waters of the Bahr al-Saghir spread disease and made it dangerous to stay where they were. Food became scarce once the Egyptians blockaded the Nile and prevented the crusaders from receiving supplies from Damietta. After hesitating for several weeks, Louis ordered the withdrawal downstream toward the coast. Encumbered by the ill and wounded, the army moved slowly. Near Faraskur, the Egyptians, with Baybars and the Bahri again heavily involved, forced Louis and his men to surrender.[6]

The encounter between Louis and Baybars at Mansura transformed the fortunes of both men. Baybars, the former slave who had distinguished himself in battle against the infidel, would become sultan within a decade. Once in power, he fought to confirm the verdict of Mansura by turning Egypt and Syria into a citadel of Islam, bordered by the Mediterranean in the west and the Euphrates in the east. Louis, the great king who seemed poised to regain much of those lands for Christendom, was instead escorted in shackles to the former house of an Ayyubid chancery official.[7] Dramatizing the humiliation of his captivity, the king's biographers would liken the house to the slave quarters where the Israelites had lived out their bondage under pharaoh.[8] Once he had returned to France, Louis would seek to reverse what he saw as the harsh but just judgment that God had handed down in the delta. He would transform himself into a king who was so pure in God's sight, and whose realm was so aligned with the divine plan for humankind, that Christ would someday allow him to redeem himself by restoring the Holy Land to Latin Christianity.

Baybars

Baybars's arrival in Cairo in 1246 came amid a wave of Mamluk recruitment in the Ayyubid realms of Egypt and Syria. Mamluk soldiers had been fighting in Near Eastern armies since the ninth century, but pressures of supply and demand expanded the market for their services in the early decades of the thirteenth. On the supply side, the Mongol drive westward across Eurasia, begun by Ghengis Khan in the early 1200s, displaced many Turkic-speaking peoples. Among these were the Qipchaqs, who resettled in the region north of the Caspian Sea. By the early 1240s, the Mongols had tracked them down there and defeated them again, taking
p. 14 many ↳ captives in the process. As a result, the slave markets around the Black Sea and in northern Syria and Cairo were swamped with Qipchaqs who would come to form the core of many Mamluk regiments. In one of the many ironies of this historical period, the Mongols had unwittingly helped to bring into being the armies that would defeat them in Syria just a few decades later.[9]

Driving demand for these slave soldiers was factionalism within the Ayyubid confederation. The Ayyubids were the successors to Saladin, the famous sultan who had suppressed the Fatimid caliphate in Egypt, brought much of Muslim Syria under his control, and reduced the Frankish crusader states to a narrow strip

along the Mediterranean coast by his death in 1193. The Franks were able to preserve these holdings, and even expand them over the next several decades, largely because Saladin's successors were more concerned with internal rivalries than with defeating the crusader states.[10] As large populations of Turkish nomads appeared on the slave market, the Ayyubids turned to them as vital tools in their domestic struggles. These nomads were prized for their ability to fight with bow and arrow on horseback. This skill was deeply ingrained in the culture of the steppe lands from which they had originally come, but it could not be taught easily to settled populations. Just as important, the nomads were thought to be loyal since they owed their lives to the masters they served. This was a desirable quality to possess in a world of shifting allegiances.

One of the more successful Ayyubid dynasts—and one whose policies in many ways anticipated those of his more famous follower—was Baybars's master al-Salih Ayyub (b. 1206–7), a grandnephew of Saladin. On his
p. 15 father's death in 1238, al-Salih had inherited the Jazira, the most ↳ remote Ayyubid province. From this Mesopotamian outpost, al-Salih launched a dizzying sequence of campaigns, intrigues, and maneuvers that within two years had brought him to power in Cairo, the greatest Ayyubid prize of all.[11] Along the way, he became known for his reliance on Mamluks. As Ibn Wasil reported, "He bought more Turkish mamluks than had any other member of his family, until they became the major part of his army."[12]

Al-Salih Ayyub's creation of a Mamluk military elite in Cairo would eventually undermine the dynastic project it was meant to preserve. In the short term, though, it enabled him to consolidate his position in Egypt and even compete for control of Ayyubid holdings in Syria. He occupied Damascus in 1245 and by the end of the decade his only significant Ayyubid rival in the north was al-Nasir Yusuf, who ruled a lordship centered on Aleppo. When al-Nasir seized Hims from him in 1248, he mounted a campaign to retake the northern Syrian city. Too ill to oversee the siege personally, he stayed behind in Damascus. It was here that news reached him of Louis IX's invasion of Egypt. Calling off the siege of Hims, he arranged a truce with al-Nasir and tried to hurry home. He had to be carried in a litter because he was no longer fit to ride.[13]

On May 17, 1249, al-Salih reached Mansura and set up his military headquarters to oversee the defense of Damietta and oppose a crusader advance up the Nile. Unable to prevent the loss of the port three weeks later, al-Salih died on November 22, 1249, leaving a power vacuum behind him as the campaign against the French reached a crisis point. Rather than risk an open transfer of power, al-Salih's widow, Shajar al-Durr (Tree of Pearls) kept his death a secret. Only revealing the truth to two trusted army commanders, she dispatched messengers to Hisn Kayfa, in Mesopotamia, to fetch her late husband's son, al-Malik al-Muʿazzam Ghiyath al-Din Turan Shah, who was serving as governor there in deep exile from the royal court. Though some suspected that al-Salih was no longer alive, Shajar al-Durr continued to have orders issued in the late sultan's name until Turan Shah reached Mansura on February 25, 1250.[14]

p. 16 The new sultan arrived to find the situation transformed by the Egyptian victory over the crusaders earlier in the month. Even so, he was unhappy to learn that the treasury had been emptied in the struggle. He had already spent heavily gaining the favor of his father's supporters in Damascus on the way down to Egypt and he was not sure where he was going to find the money to win over the Mamluks of Cairo. He did himself no favors with several clumsy attempts at fundraising: he offended Shajar al-Durr, for example, by demanding that she hand over her jewelry. Besides his financial troubles, Turan Shah was also worried about the newfound prominence of the Bahri Mamluks after their victory at Mansura. Lacking money to buy their support, he chose instead to replace them with the Mamluks who had come down with him from Hisn Kayfa. Turan Shah's contempt for the Bahri was palpable. He avoided their company except for public meals and in the evenings after a few drinks he would chop off the tops of candles with a sword while calling out the names of the Bahri officers he wanted to kill.[15]

But it was hard for Turan Shah to act on these violent fantasies while the crusaders were still in the delta and in possession of Damietta. Under these circumstances, he needed all the experienced soldiers he could get. When the crusaders fell into his hands in April, he became a much greater threat to the Bahri. Rather than attempt to retake Damietta, he could now negotiate with Louis IX from a position of strength. This meant that he would not need the Bahri for the investment of the city. Moreover, any ransom money that the French might pay to secure their release would be his to keep, as opposed to the plunder that might be gained from reconquering Damietta, which would have to be shared out among the troops. With both sides motivated to do a deal, an agreement was quickly reached. Louis would return Damietta to secure the release of his own person and would pay an indemnity of 400,000 *livres tournois* (*l.t.*) to free the rest of his army.[16] With the crusader threat eliminated and the promise of a financial windfall on the horizon, Turan Shah was now ready to move against his father's Mamluks.

They never gave him the chance. On May 2, 1250, Baybars entered the tent where Turan Shah was finishing up a meal with his emirs and slashed at his head with a sword. Turan Shah raised his hand and deflected the blow; Baybars dropped the sword and ran away. Turan Shah then retreated to the top of a wooden tower he
p. 17 had constructed next to the dining pavilion. Some Bahri surrounded the tower and shouted for him to ↳ come down. He refused, until they threatened to set it on fire. Back on the ground, he begged for mercy and promised the financial rewards he had so far withheld from them. At this point, Baybars charged at him again with a raised sword and Turan Shah ran for the Nile, seeking the safety of some galleys that were moored nearby. He was wading through the water toward them when Baybars caught up with him and cut him down.[17]

Two days later, the leading Mamluks gathered to choose a successor. They turned to al-Salih Ayyub's widow, Shajar al-Durr. She was very much one of them, sharing their servile origins and Inner Asian Turkish heritage, and she was certainly one of the main ringleaders in the coup. Given how unhappy the conspirators were about not sharing in the spoils of the crusader defeat, it was no surprise that she confirmed the agreement that Louis had made with Turan Shah. The king paid over half the ransom—200,000 *l.t.* (400,000 bezants)—and sailed for Acre.

Though welcome in many respects, Louis's exit had one downside for the newly founded Mamluk coalition. It allowed latent tensions within the ruling group to bubble to the surface. The virtually unprecedented accession of a female ruler exacerbated the situation, providing a ready-made excuse for pretenders to challenge Shajar al-Durr's regime. The early 1250s saw heavy factional infighting on two fronts, as the leading Mamluks jostled among themselves while confronting Ayyubid holdouts in Syria.

At first, Baybars and the Bahri regiment fared badly in these power struggles. Baybars and about 700 of his fellow Bahri had to flee Cairo in 1254 and would pass the next five years in exile in Syria.[18] They would not return to Egypt until 1259, under the impetus of a massive external threat.

By the 1250s, the Mongols had conquered an empire that ran from Korea in the east to the borders of Hungary and Poland in the west. Their military success was rooted in the nomadic culture of their steppe homeland. Many Mongols were nomadic pastoralists. They reared cattle, sheep, goats, and especially horses and migrated seasonally from one pastureland to another. As a result, they could operate with extreme mobility in warfare and were proverbially gifted mounted archers, traits they shared with other nomadic peoples of the steppe, such as the Qipchaq Turks who provided recruits for the Mamluks. Not all Mongols were pastoral nomads, however. Some were forest dwellers, living off hunting and fishing, while others were settled farmers. The Mongol empire would forge these different constituencies into a powerful whole
p. 18 by dominating ↳ trade routes and extracting tribute from sedentary neighbors. As the empire took shape, a full-blown ideology of world domination emerged. The Mongols came to believe that they had a divine mission to unite the world under their rule. This led to a rather uncomplicated view of international relations: the world had been given to the Mongols by the eternal heaven (Tenggeri), and all other rulers—whether they realized it or not—were their subjects. Therefore, the only way to secure peace was to submit to an approaching Mongol army; to resist was to rebel and invite destruction.[19]

As of the early 1250s, Islamic western Asia remained outside the Mongol ambit. The *qaghan* (Great Khan) Möngke decided to rectify this by organizing an invasion in 1252.[20] Under the command of his brother Hülegü, an expeditionary force set out for Iran. Its first targets were the strongholds of the Nizari Ismaʿili (often known as the Assassins) to the north of the country. Although the Nizaris had survived in northern Iran for generations, Hülegü's army had more or less wiped them out by the end of 1256. Heading westward, the Mongols made next for Baghdad, the home of the Abbasid caliph al-Mustaʿsim biʾllah. Like many of his immediate predecessors, al-Mustaʿsim did not exercise in reality the vast spiritual and temporal authority that his caliphal title conferred on him in theory. He did not actually control much more than Baghdad and its surroundings and was unable to muster strong resistance when the Mongol army placed the city under siege in mid-January 1258. Less than a month later, Baghdad belonged to the Mongols. They brutally sacked the city and, on Hülegü's orders, executed al-Mustaʿsim. Showing consideration for his rank, they wrapped him in a carpet and trampled him to death—to avoid the spilling of royal blood.

In early 1260, Hülegü and his forces advanced into northern Syria. They besieged Aleppo and took the city after a week of hard fighting, massacring the Ayyubid garrison. The nominal ruler of the city, al-Nasir Yusuf, was absent. He had set up camp with the bulk of his army outside Damascus. Unwilling to risk a battle, he
p. 19 had negotiated off and on with Hülegü as the Mongol forces rumbled their way toward Syria, to no ↳ noticeable effect. Other regional powers quickly submitted to the Mongol invaders. King Hethum of Lesser

Armenia had become a Mongol tributary, as had his ally Bohemond VI, prince of Antioch and count of Tripoli. Both, in fact, had helped besiege Aleppo. When al-Nasir learned of the fall of Aleppo, he fled the camp outside Damascus and headed south, leaving the city to its fate. Abandoned by their ruler, the city elders entered into negotiations with Hülegü to surrender. His leading general, Kitbuqa, entered Damascus in triumph on March 2.

By that time, it is likely that Baybars had already left the Ayyubid military camp outside Damascus and made his way to Gaza. Unlike al-Nasir Yusuf, he was not fleeing the Mongols. Quite the opposite, in fact: Baybars was moving south to carry on the resistance against them. Over the previous months he had tried to persuade al-Nasir Yusuf to confront Hülegü. Faced with continued inaction, Baybars had then involved himself in a plot to oust al-Nasir Yusuf from the command of the Ayyubid army. It was the failure of that plot that drove Baybars to a desperate but likely unavoidable gamble. The Mongols had conquered much of Islamic Syria and were now setting their sights on Egypt. To prevent them from eliminating the entire theater of his political ambitions, Baybars entered into negotiations to reconcile with the Mamluk regime in Cairo.[21]

Under normal circumstances, these negotiations would not have been easy. The Mamluk sultan of Cairo was now Sayf al-Din Qutuz, who had personally carried out a political assassination that had sparked the exodus of Baybars and his companions out of Egypt in 1254. But as both sides were well aware, these were not normal circumstances, and an alliance of convenience was soon struck. Baybars and Qutuz certainly agreed on one thing: only a military confrontation would see off the Mongols now. When Mongol envoys from Hülegü delivered an ultimatum to Qutuz in the late spring of 1260, Qutuz listened to what they had to say and then had them cut in half.[22] The fight was on.

As Qutuz prepared his army, he received encouraging news: Hülegü had withdrawn from Syria with most of his army, leaving behind his general Kitbuqa with a rump force of about 10,000 fighters. Hülegü was headed east, possibly to stand for the succession to the *qaghan* Möngke, who had died in August 1259. In late July
p. 20 1260, Qutuz and the Mamluk army marched out of Cairo, seeking battle with the now much reduced ↳ Mongol forces. The most sensible route north lay along the Mediterranean coast, where they could avoid some of the summer heat and have access to fresh water. Qutuz sent envoys to Acre to secure permission to pass through the kingdom of Acre.

The Frankish barons debated long and hard over what role they should play in the looming Mamluk–Mongol showdown.[23] Should they form an alliance with the Mamluks, or should they join forces with the Mongols, who were rumored to harbor pro-Christian sympathies? (Kitbuqa's wife, Doquz Khatun, was known to be a Nestorian Christian, for example.) There were risks involved in both choices. If they fought alongside the Mamluks, they might sustain losses to their armed forces, which would leave them vulnerable if Qutuz later turned against them. On the other hand, the idea of allying with the Mongols was a something of a nonsense at that time. One did not form alliances with Mongols; one gratefully submitted to them or faced destruction. In the end, the Franks chose a third way. They allowed the Mamluks to cross through their territory, provided them with supplies, and even permitted them to camp under the walls of Acre for three days before Qutuz turned inland in search of Kitbuqa. In this way, they preserved their limited military strength, allowed Qutuz to fight their battle for them, and at least gave themselves the chance of maintaining their independence from Mongol rule.

With Baybars leading the vanguard, the Mamluk army marched southeast into the Galilee. Kitbuqa did not try to avoid battle. He brought his army to the plain north of the Gilboa Mountains, where ʿAyn Jalut (the Spring of Goliath) provided fresh water. On September 3, 1260, the two armies fought a ferocious battle there. The Mamluks gained the advantage when the Ayyubid ruler of Hims, an erstwhile Mongol client, betrayed Kitbuqa at a critical juncture. Kitbuqa was killed in the fighting and the Mongols withdrew, first from the battlefield, then from Syria altogether.[24]

The battle of ʿAyn Jalut brought together two armies, and really two peoples, who fought and lived in similar ways. Steppe nomads and former steppe nomads, trained from youth in the intricacies of mounted archery combat, confronted each other on a battlefield thousands of miles from their ancestral homelands, with the future of the Middle East at stake. For Abu Shama (d. 1268), a scholar from Damascus, that similarity was
p. 21 the key to the Mamluk victory. The Mongols had finally, and quite ↳ literally, met their match: "To everything," he observed, "there is a pest of its own kind."[25]

The confrontation is remarkable in another respect too. In an era when armies went out of their way to avoid large set-piece battles, and when those few that did take place often ended indecisively, here was a battle that had a momentous impact on the history of the Middle East. It destroyed the Mongols' reputation for invincibility, halted their westward advance toward Egypt and North Africa, conferred prestige on the Mamluk victors, and accelerated the Islamization of the region. More immediately, it allowed the Mamluks to extend their rule into Syria with relative ease in the fall of 1260, because the Mongols had already swept away the Ayyubid regimes that had previously contested Mamluk claims in the region. Al-Nasir Yusuf of Aleppo was gone; a Mongol patrol had captured him not long after his flight from Damascus and brought him to Hülegü, who had him executed as soon as he found out what had happened at ʿAyn Jalut.[26] As a result, Sultan Qutuz had no difficulty occupying Damascus and placing it under a Mamluk governor in September 1260. By the time Qutuz set out for Cairo in October, the outlines of a Mamluk realm that united Syria and Egypt were clearly visible.

If Qutuz could see the potential for creating a large Mamluk state in the wake of the Mongol withdrawal from Syria, so too could other prominent emirs in the army. His relations with the Bahri remained poor; old grudges had not been forgotten. As the army approached al-Salihiyya en route to Gaza, Qutuz spotted a hare and rode off to course it. Several leading Mamluks followed him, among them Baybars. After the hare was caught, they struck the sultan down with swords and possibly arrows. In the meeting of emirs that immediately followed Qutuz's assassination, the issue of who had dealt the fatal blow loomed large. One emir argued that because Qutuz did not have a son to succeed him, the sultanate should fall to the man who murdered him. With that, Baybars stood up and said that he was the killer. After promising to compensate the emirs who had felt hard done by under Qutuz, he received oaths of allegiance from everyone at the meeting. Without waiting to tell the rest of the army what had happened, he rushed off to Cairo to secure the capital in a bid to make his election as sultan a fait accompli.[27]

p. 22 Baybars's rise from slave-boy to sultan was a rare feat of premodern self-fashioning, but it was only a first step for him. The Mamluk sultanate was not firmly established prior to his accession. The reigns of his predecessors had been brief and tenuous. Over the seventeen years of his reign (1260–77), Baybars created a genuine Near Eastern superpower and a state that would endure into the sixteenth century. His first steps along this road were cautious and almost reactionary. Looking back to his beloved master al-Salih Ayyub as a model, he aimed to consolidate his hold on power in Egypt *and* Syria while strengthening his military to fend off external threats. His early goals were defensive and focused on the Mongols: he wanted to prevent them from penetrating across the Euphrates into Syria while simultaneously denying a beachhead to any support that might come to them from western Europe.[28] The Franks who gathered in Acre in the summer of 1260 to ponder a Mongol alliance were convinced that joining them in a genuine military collaboration was impossible. After ʿAyn Jalut, however, Mongol attitudes toward relations with other powers shifted significantly. As early as 1262, Hülegü was making diplomatic overtures to western Europe.[29] Throughout his reign, Baybars would work to prevent a Mongol–European alliance that could attack the Mamluk sultanate on two fronts.

Baybars pursued his plans for internal consolidation and frontier defense in several interrelated ways. His first priority was military reform. While exact numbers are always lacking for medieval armies, he appears to have nearly doubled the number of soldiers at his disposal, with his army reaching an effective strength of perhaps as many as 40,000 men. Although spread throughout his vast domains, and never all available at the same time, this represented a fighting force that dwarfed what any contemporary European ruler could mobilize. Because they were so essential to the Mamluk way of fighting, cavalry formed a privileged core within the army. Besides a unit of "the sultan's" Mamluks, Baybars maintained a personal guard of 4,000 Mamluks, known as the *Zahiriyya* after his regnal name of al-Malik al-Zahir ("the triumphant king").[30]

p. 23 Unlike many of his peers in the Islamic Near East, Baybars also tried to ↳ build up a naval presence in the Mediterranean. He could sometimes be found in the shipyards of Alexandria overseeing construction, and he sent a squadron of these precious vessels on an ill-fated expedition to Cyprus.[31] There was an internal dimension to this military build-up as well. Under Baybars, the Mamluk state became a military autocracy through and through, with civil administration undergoing rapid militarization.

Maintaining and expanding the military required Baybars to engage in complex multilateral diplomacy. Mamluks formed the backbone of his army. Keeping up their numbers required constant infusions of new recruits, because they could not reproduce themselves. A Mamluk was a former slave converted to Islam. If he had a son, the boy would be born a free Muslim and could not become a Mamluk like his father. To keep the supply line open between Egypt and the Mamluk recruiting grounds in the south Russian steppe,

Baybars had to deal with three powers: the Golden Horde, the Mongol splinter group that ruled the area and controlled trade routes through the Caucasus and Anatolia; the Genoese, who dominated shipping in the Black Sea; and the Byzantines, who had retaken their capital Constantinople in 1261 and thus controlled trade traffic across the Bosphorus. Not only did Baybars have to maintain peaceful relations with each group individually, he had to make sure that they got along among themselves as well. In 1264, for example, Baybars had to intervene when the Golden Horde invaded Byzantium. He was able to arrange a truce between Berke, khan of the Golden Horde, and Michael VIII Palaiologos, the Byzantine emperor, which kept the slaves flowing into Alexandria.[32]

Baybars's diplomatic aims extended beyond military procurement. He cultivated Manfred, the Hohenstaufen ruler of the kingdom of Sicily, because Manfred could help keep the pope preoccupied in southern Italy, which would make it more difficult for the Apostolic See to organize a crusade against Egypt and Syria. By dint of his central Mediterranean location, Manfred could also disrupt potential French naval support to the Mongol state that Hülegü was developing in Iran, known as the Ilkhanate, and its clients in Lesser Armenia. Beyond these strategic considerations, Sicilian trade was important to the merchants of
p. 24 Alexandria. Baybars's ↳ most important ally, however, was Berke, khan of the Golden Horde since 1257. In addition to controlling the Mamluk recruiting grounds, Berke served as a counterweight to the Ilkhan Hülegü in Iran. Following the classic divide and conquer strategy, Baybars did as much as he could to foster discord between the Mongol rivals. Berke's status as a Muslim convert certainly helped, but issues of power and control mainly seem to have driven the conflict. Baybars was thrilled when open war broke out between the Ilkhanate and the Golden Horde in December 1262 and was even more pleased when Berke emerged as the victor.[33]

Baybars's diplomacy also featured espionage. He valued military intelligence and early in his reign restored the postal system (*barid*) that had once run throughout the Near East. Using a network of horse relays, the *barid* transmitted military intelligence and administrative correspondence between Damascus and Cairo, often in as few as four days. Supplementing the horse relays were a pigeon post and optical signals. An early-warning system of bonfires ran along the sensitive Euphrates frontier to warn of impending Mongol incursions. Back in Cairo, Baybars appointed a spymaster, set up a secret department for back-channel payments, and hired "couriers" who traveled deep into Frankish, Mongol, and Armenian territory. In the intelligence battle between Baybars and his main rivals, there was no contest. He would exploit his superior intelligence gathering again and again over the course of his reign.[34]

As Baybars strengthened the army and assembled his network of allies and spies, his advisors developed an ideology to justify his rule over Egypt and Syria. In keeping with the militarized culture of the Mamluk ruling elite, the language of war predominated in official pronouncements. Baybars's chancery often invoked an image of the state as a citadel or fortress that needed defending from external enemies.[35] Baybars's titles also emphasized his role as a war leader. In two Syrian inscriptions dating from his reign, Baybars is called among other epithets *al-murabit* ("the defender of the border fortress"), *fatih al-amsar* ("conqueror of the cities"), and *qatil al-khawarij* ("killer of the rebels").[36] Underpinning this martial
p. 25 vocabulary was a sense of struggle against religiously defined enemies. ↳ Here, the juridical tradition of jihad came to hand. By the mid-thirteenth century, Islamic legal scholars commonly recognized two forms of jihad, a greater one that an individual waged against his or her faults and a lesser one that the leader of the Islamic community waged against the non-Muslim world. In Baybars's hands, these two forms of holy war came together in a linked effort to purify the realm of internal taints while prosecuting the jihad against the infidel Franks of the crusader states and the Shamanist–Buddhist–Nestorian Christian-sympathizing Ilkhanate of Iran.[37] In Egypt, Baybars launched a series of morality campaigns, banning hashish consumption, wine making, and taverns; expelling Frankish prostitutes from Alexandria; and forbidding prostitution outright in Cairo. He also maintained a friendship with Shayhk Khadir b. Abi Bakr al-Mihrani, who became a kind of spiritual advisor to him. To the frustration of his retinue, Baybars lavishly funded Shayhk Khadir's Sufi *zawiya* in Cairo and took his advice even on military matters. Esteemed by Baybars for his abilities as a clairvoyant, Shayhk Khadir predicted success for the sultan in his campaigns against the Mongols and the Franks. In this, at least, he was proved correct.[38]

For many medieval Near Eastern regimes, ideological imperatives did not align with the practical demands of statecraft. This was the case with the Ayyubids and the crusader states in the early decades of the thirteenth century. Despite articulating ideologies of holy war, authorities on both sides usually found it more advantageous to pursue their interests through treaty negotiations than open warfare. The two powers were able to coexist in a relationship that at times bordered on the symbiotic. For Baybars, by contrast, a

pious commitment to jihad perfectly suited the strategic situation he faced. The new factor, of course, was the Mongols. Whereas the Ayyubids and the crusader states mainly had to deal with each other, the appearance of a third party on the scene, and a powerful, unpredictable one at that, created a new strategic calculus. Faced with two external enemies, Baybars would attempt to turn a two-front war into a one-front war by eliminating the lesser threat: the fractious, divided Franks of Palestine and Syria.[39]

The intertwining of practical and ideological rationales for war against the crusader states made Baybars appear a bitter enemy to the Franks and their supporters in western Europe. The reality was more complex,
p. 26 since ↳ fear of a Mongol incursion across the Euphrates remained uppermost in his mind. His major campaigns against the Franks were launched during pauses in the conflict with the Ilkhanate. The first serious Mamluk incursion into Frankish territory took place in the spring of 1263, shortly after Berke of the Golden Horde had defeated the Ilkhan Hülegü. Taking advantage of the freedom of action that this victory gave him, Baybars advanced north in late March 1263 and made camp at Mount Tabor. There, he received envoys from the Franks of Acre. They reassured him that they intended to honor a truce they had made with him in 1261. Baybars accused them of breaking the agreement by not returning prisoners they had promised to release. He broke off negotiations and refused to let the ambassadors spend the night in camp. Shortly after that, he authorized a raid on nearby Nazareth. His troops made sure to destroy the church of St Mary, signaling the symbolic intent behind the strike. A few weeks later, on April 15, 1263, Baybars himself left the camp at Mount Tabor with a small raiding party in the middle of the night. By dawn of the next morning, they were outside the walls of Acre, the capital of the Frankish kingdom. They destroyed a mill that made up a part of the city's fortifications and devastated the agricultural land that surrounded the city. Many Frankish knights died in the fighting. Message delivered, Baybars returned south to Mount Tabor without trying to take the city.[40]

In the spring of 1264, the Franks launched retaliatory raids under the leadership of Geoffrey of Sergines, the *bailli* (governor) of Acre and a trusted confidant of Louis IX. Geoffrey and his men attacked Mamluk territory around Ascalon in June, destroying crops and rustling livestock. Baybars responded by launching raids as far north as Caesarea and Chastel Pèlerin. In November, a small group of French crusaders led by Olivier of Termes, another close associate of Louis IX, raided around Baysan, where they plundered what they could and set fire to everything else.[41]

In 1265, this low-level raiding gave way to large-scale Mamluk attacks on Frankish strongholds. The impetus came from the Ilkhanate. In January 1265, Hülegü attacked the fortress of al-Bira, the linchpin of the Mamluk defensive system along the Euphrates. Baybars was on a hunting trip when he heard the news. Before he had even returned to Cairo, he sent an emir on a racehorse to Syria to gather 4,000 cavalry to rush
p. 27 north against Hülegü. On January 25, Baybars himself marched out ↳ of Cairo with as many troops as he could muster. Soon after that, though, he learned that the Mongols had lifted the siege. Baybars was so grateful for this unexpected boon that he banned the drinking and brewing of beer in his domains.

The sultan now had a large army in the field with no Mongols around to trouble it. He had a large tent put up in his camp at al-ʿAwja. Inside it, carpenters built five catapults. Other siege equipment was assembled in secrecy. On the morning of February 27, 1265, the Mamluk army fell on Frankish Caesarea, taking the garrison by surprise. Caesarea lay on the coast and could not be surrounded without naval support. Louis IX had rebuilt its fortifications about a decade earlier. Nonetheless, the city fell in about a week, with the garrison fleeing by ship to Acre. Because of its position on the coast, Baybars ordered Caesarea to be demolished. When Saladin had conquered up and down the Mediterranean coast, he had left the crusader strongholds intact, which gave the Third Crusade a bridgehead from which to renew the fight against him. Baybars learned from that mistake. He would not leave anything on the coast to which the Franks could return. In mid-March 1265, he brought his army south to Arsuf. The Frankish garrison here held out longer, but in the end the result was the same. The Mamluks captured the town at the end of April and tore it down to the ground.[42]

The Mamluk raids of 1264 had aimed at reducing the productive capacity of the kingdom of Acre; they had also made clear that there was no safe haven for its subjects from Mamluk attacks, even under the walls of its capital. The campaigns of 1265 had sliced off two key southern strongholds of the crusader kingdom, leaving it reduced in size and more vulnerable to attack. The offensive of 1266 seemed to combine the goals of the previous two campaigns into a total onslaught that devastated large swathes of Frankish territory and culminated in the loss of a major inland castle.

Baybars rode out of Cairo on May 10, 1266 at the head of a large army. At Gaza, he sent off a detachment of about 7,000 cavalry to Hims, in northern Syria. It was only once these units had reached the city that they received orders to attack the county of Tripoli, the crusader state that lay immediately to the north of the kingdom of Acre. Avoiding the great Hospitaller castle of Crac des Chevaliers (Hisn al-Akrad), they destroyed as much agricultural land as they could and picked off several smaller strongholds nearby. After two weeks
p. 28 of this, they returned to Hims with ↳ about 3,000 Frankish prisoners. While these troopers ravaged up north, Baybars directed raids along the coast above Acre, focusing on Tyre and Sidon.

With the crusader states from Arsuf in the south to Tripoli in the north under simultaneous attack, Baybars revealed the final objective of the campaign: Safad, a massive castle located about 25 miles east of Acre. The Templars had rebuilt Safad at enormous cost in the 1240s as a base from which to dominate the Galilee and the eastern approaches to Acre from Damascus.[43] They did not give up the castle easily. Several attempts to storm the fortifications failed in early July 1266. On July 20, part of the outer works fell and the garrison retreated to the citadel. Three days later, the Templars tried to negotiate a withdrawal. Believing that they had come to an agreement with Baybars's *atabak* (commander-in-chief), they left the stronghold and were taken into custody. The next morning, they realized that while they might have an agreement with the *atabak*, they did not have one with the sultan. Baybars brought the Frankish captives—mainly Templar Knights and their many support staff—to a hill where the knights used to execute Muslim prisoners. He had all of them (about 1,500) beheaded, except for two: one to tell the authorities in Acre what had happened, and another, a Syrian Christian, who was spared because his fluent Arabic had allowed him to serve as a go-between during the negotiations. News of the loss of Safad and the slaughter of its garrison would travel back to Acre and far beyond. By the late summer of 1266, it had reached France, where it would inspire a king to take the cross for the second time.[44]

Louis IX

Louis did not return home after his release from captivity in the summer of 1250, sailing instead to Acre. He stayed in the Holy Land for the next four years, trying to make up for the disastrous opening stages of his crusade. He hoped to take advantage of the conflict between the new Mamluk regime in Cairo and the leading Ayyubid prince of Syria, al-Nasir Yusuf of Aleppo and Damascus. Louis was unable to exploit this division, however, because of the large number of crusader prisoners that remained in Mamluk hands after
p. 29 his Nile campaign. To secure their release, he had ↳ to ally with his former captors. Once again, Louis found himself unwittingly facilitating the rise of the power that would eventually prove to be the crusader states' greatest enemy. Limited diplomatically, the king devoted himself to refortifying several Frankish strongholds: Haifa, Caesarea, Jaffa, and Sidon. He also set up a garrison of one hundred French knights in Acre, under the command of Geoffrey of Sergines. Having exhausted his usefulness, and with the regent of France—his mother, Blanche of Castile—having died in late 1252, he sailed for France in April 1254.[45]

He came back a changed man. Like many of his contemporaries, Louis subscribed to the sin–punishment paradigm for understanding disasters on the epic scale of his Egyptian crusade. Mansura and its aftermath could not be blamed on a loving God; these calamities must have been the fault of the crusaders, or of the Christian people in general, or of the king who had led his crusade into captivity. As Louis searched for redemption, he took up the life of a perpetual penitent.[46] The first change contemporaries noticed was in his clothing. Jean of Joinville, his loyal companion on the crusade, observed how:

> After the king's return from overseas his conduct was so devout that never again did he wear vair or grey fur or scarlet, nor golden stirrups and spurs. His clothes were made of camelin or dark-blue wool, his blankets and clothes were trimmed with deerskin or lambskin or with fur from the legs of hares.[47]

Vair was a lavish kind of fur mantle or coat that was made from sewing together the gray backs and white underbellies of squirrels into an interlocking pattern; camelin, by contrast, was a modest woolen fabric. Louis's confessor, the Dominican Geoffrey of Beaulieu, explained that the clothing decreased in value enough to affect the king's donations:

> And, since such clothing seemed to be of less worth for giving to the poor than did the more costly clothes he was accustomed to wearing in his youth, he made up for this by ensuring that each year his almoner would have sixty Parisian *livres* to give for the sake of God, in addition to what he

> usually received. For our pious king did not want his more public show of humility to deprive something from the poor.[48]

As Geoffrey makes clear, the king paid as much attention to charity as he did to his dress. Giving alms to the
p. 30 Christian poor was standard practice ↳ for medieval European kings, even for those not noted for their piety. After the failure of his first crusade, Louis took charitable giving to unprecedented levels. He gave money to institutions, particularly hospitals, leprosariums, residences for former female prostitutes, and religious houses of many kinds. Joinville gives the following list of religious houses that Louis founded in and around Paris in 1258–9 alone: a house for the Carmelites near Charenton; a farm for the Augustinians near Montmartre; a place for the Brothers of the Sacks on the Seine near Saint-Germain-des-Prés; a residence for the Order of the White Mantles near the Old Temple Gate; and a house for the Brothers of the Holy Cross in Temple Crossroads. Louis also gave directly to people. Every day, wherever he was, he hosted some 120 poor Christians for meals.[49]

Louis's service to vulnerable Christians took on strong overtones of self-abasement after the disaster in the Nile Delta. When he arrived at Sidon to begin refortifying the stronghold, he found the remains of a defeated Frankish squadron. He spent the morning gathering up the half-rotted limbs, entrails, and bones of these ordinary soldiers for proper Christian burial. Back in Paris, he washed the feet of three poor men every Saturday, finishing the task with a kiss. One day he was washing the feet of an old man who, either unaware of or unconcerned about the status of the person caring for him, demanded that the king be sure "to wash and clean between the toes, where the grime was hiding." Louis's entourage gasped, but the king stuck his fingers between the old man's toes and cleaned away until the job was done to his liking.[50] Guillaume of Chartres, who tells this story, tells another about the king sharing a rich and greasy dish with a "wretched and sickly" poor man who tucked into it for a few minutes with "filthy, ulcerous hands" and then declared himself full:

> And then our renowned king, seeing this, out of his innate virtue of humility, asked to have back what the poor man had left and in which he had stained his dirty hands, saying, "Give me back my pudding!" And, to the amazement of many, as much as the mind was horrified, he began to eat from this with such relish and enthusiasm as if no one had touched it at all.[51]

When it came to demonstrating humility, Louis did not shy away from the grotesque.

Louis's public displays of piety tended to dramatize a grandiose style of humility that only the exalted could
p. 31 achieve. For who else besides a king, ↳ born into privilege, could descend so far? Out of the public eye, in the private sphere that only his confessors saw, he mixed conventional forms of devotion with a taste for physical repentance. He loved listening to sermons and he confessed at least once a week—on Fridays—and sometimes more often than that. After the crusade, he had two confessors on staff—Geoffrey of Beaulieu and Guillaume of Chartres—so that one of them could be available to hear him at any time. After making his confession, he would receive discipline "with five identical slender iron chains, the heads of which were well bound to a small ivory case." "If his confessor was sometimes lenient with his blows," Geoffrey explained, "and the king thought he was sparing him this way, he would nod to him as a sign to strike harder." Louis would give these little boxes of iron switches to his children or close friends "as a form of secret gift."[52]

As Louis's idea of what might make a nice gift suggests, the tone at court in the wake of the failed Egyptian campaign was austere. The new spirit matched the mendicant brand of piety to which the king was deeply attracted. His confessors were both Dominicans, which was one of the two main mendicant orders. One of his chief advisors, Eudes Rigaud, archbishop of Rouen, belonged to the other, the Franciscans. The Dominican Vincent of Beauvais educated Louis's children. The king was coy about which order he liked better. "He was particularly fond of these two," Geoffrey says, "for he used to say that if he could make two portions from his body, he would give half to one and the rest to the other."[53] Louis was perhaps the greatest patron of the Franciscans and Dominicans in Europe.[54] By 1275, there were 423 mendicant houses in France.[55] Louis was such a partisan of the mendicants in their dispute with the secular masters of the University of Paris that supporters of the secular masters began to call the king *Frater Ludovicus*.[56] Geoffrey of Beaulieu, admittedly a far from disinterested source on the matter, thought that Louis's secret wish was to become a mendicant friar once his eldest son came of age. According to Geoffrey, at least, Louis only gave
p. 32 up the plan when his ↳ wife pointed out to him that divine providence had placed him on a king's throne and for that reason he should probably stay on it.[57]

The secular masters received strident support from poets who had their own reasons for disliking the mendicant cast of the post-crusade regime. The poet Rutebeuf, who depended on courtly patronage for his living, was unhappy to see less singing, dancing, and feasting at court. He grumbled, "Now we are not allowed to dance, because it is this that lost the Holy Land."[58] In one sardonic line, Rutebeuf summed up the gloomy consequences of the king's search for personal redemption in the aftermath of disaster.

Rutebeuf's quip also points to the broader impact of Louis's drive for purity and deeper Christianization. As a king, Louis had to answer before God not only for himself and his household, but for all the Christian subjects of his kingdom. His own struggle for salvation was inextricably linked to the fortunes of those commended to his care. Louis was always aware of this larger responsibility and had acted on it vigorously in the run-up to his first crusade. As he sought to purify himself and the realm before departing overseas in 1248, he had intensified his support for inquisitorial proceedings against heretics in the Languedoc, made reparations for abuses carried out by royal administrators, and stepped up surveillance of Jewish life. While the spiritual intent behind these measures is clear enough, each also had financial implications. The property of convicted heretics went to the heretic's lord, who was in many instances the king of France; reforming government administration could lead to more efficient revenue collection; and debts paid to Jews could be confiscated and repurposed to a pious end: the crusade to the Holy Land. In his enthusiasm for the expedition, the king had raised large sums of money, and not just from these expedients. He had also collected about 950,000 *l.t.* from taxation on the French Church and another 274,000 *l.t.* from "voluntary" contributions from towns in the Île de France.[59]

On his return to France in 1254, Louis decided that he had been too vigorous in extracting money from his subjects. To rectify this mistake, he launched a fresh reform effort, which he hoped would create a truly just realm. He took two important measures within his first year back in the country. First, he made oversight of
p. 33 local officials a permanent feature of government. Prior to his first crusade, he had sent special ↳ investigators—*enquêters*—around the kingdom to examine the performance of royal administrators in their duties. They resumed their work in 1254, accepting petitions for redress from vulnerable members of Christian society. What had been an ad hoc measure to help gear up for the king's first crusade became an established feature of his rule.[60] Second, he issued a series of reform ordinances that are collectively known as the Great Ordinance of 1254. The measures covered his familiar concerns with equitable administration, Jewish policy, and the suppression of heresy.

In the administrative realm, the king took steps to reduce corruption among royal officials. In Louis's day, the kingdom was divided into districts called *bailliages*, each administered by its *bailli*. The reform ordinance of 1254 instituted an audit system for office holders and prevented *baillis* from embedding themselves in the communities they served by forbidding them from owning property there or marrying their children to local residents.[61]

Increased oversight and greater centralization were also features of the ordinance addressing inquisitorial investigations. With the agreement of Pope Alexander IV, Louis placed the University of Paris in charge of these proceedings for the entire realm and called on the *enquêters* to ensure that property confiscations were carried out with greater concern for the rights of the accused than they had been prior to his first crusade.[62]

No measures suggested more strongly the king's concern to purify his realm than those he enacted against the Jewish communities of France. In 1253, while still in Syria, Louis had issued an order expelling from the kingdom Jews who engaged in usury, or lending money at interest. In December 1254, as part of his great reform ordinance, he reissued this call and put in place further strictures as well. Jews were to stop their usury; henceforth, they were to live only "from the labor of their own hands or from commerce." Copies of the Talmud, along with other Jewish books "in which blasphemies were discovered," were to be burned. All Jews who did not wish to observe these regulations were to be expelled.[63] As we shall see, Louis's desire to eliminate Jewish practices and beliefs that he regarded as sinful would intensify in the last years of his life. Eventually, this drive to eradicate Jewish error would merge with a growing interest in conversion to exert a decisive influence on the Tunis Crusade.

p. 34 While the Jews of France came in for severe scrutiny, Louis found the behavior of many of his Christian subjects wanting as well. In tandem with his administrative overhaul he launched a program of moral reform, which targeted prostitution, swearing, and blasphemy. His aversion to blasphemous oaths was proverbial. In Caesarea, Louis put a blasphemous goldsmith in the stocks, with pig entrails piled up to his nose. Back in France, Louis branded "the nose and lips of one Paris bourgeois" who had been caught

swearing. This was an extreme punishment by the standards of the time. Joinville thought a slap to the hand or face was the appropriate response to anyone who cursed a fellow child of God to the devil.[64]

Louis's quest for redemption also directed him toward the role of peacemaker in Europe. After his return from crusade, he tried to reduce conflicts with neighbors and rivals on the principle that Christians should not fight among themselves. As Joinville recounts, some of Louis's counselors questioned whether this was good strategy. Left to their own devices, the enemies of France could exhaust themselves fighting one another. The king disagreed: God would bless the peacemakers, and in any event if he refused to intercede his enemies might band together in hatred of him and launch a joint attack too powerful for him to withstand. Louis also had more practical grounds for seeking peace. Conflicts among the major European royal houses had limited participation in the Egyptian crusade. If western Christendom were ever to organize a coordinated effort to reconquer the Holy Land, it would have to begin with peace on the home front.

Louis started with England, a long-standing enemy. After years of negotiations, he agreed to the Treaty of Paris with King Henry III in 1259. Both sides made concessions to secure the agreement. Henry acknowledged that Normandy was lost to his dynasty forever, while Louis paid an indemnity and surrendered disputed lands in the Limousin, Quercy, and Périgord. When his counselors complained that he had given up too much, Louis answered that he and Henry were related (they had married sisters) and their children were cousins, so the familial bond should prevail. Even before negotiations with Henry concluded, Louis reached an agreement with another powerful neighbor, King Jaume I of Aragon. In the Treaty of Corbeil, the two monarchs fixed the boundary between their two realms at the Pyrenees, with the exception
p. 35 of Montpellier, which remained under Aragonese rule. Louis's reputation as a ↳ peacemaker began to spread. To Christian contemporaries, if not to Jews and Muslims, he was the *rex pacificus*.[65]

The New Crusade

While Louis settled his differences with Aragon and England, other European conflicts remained intractable. The papacy and the Hohenstaufen dynasty had been at war since the late 1230s. As the conflict dragged on, the leading figures on both sides changed, but the basic dynamic remained in place: with the Hohenstaufen in control of the kingdom of Sicily in the south and the German empire in the north, and with the dynasty's Ghibelline allies active in northern Italy, the papacy feared for its independence as both a spiritual and secular power in Europe and the Mediterranean. Regarding the Hohenstaufen as an existential threat, successive popes poured crusading resources into military campaigns to defeat them.

The impact of this struggle on European support for the crusader states of the Holy Land was direct and multifaceted. In the mid-thirteenth century, the papacy remained at the center of crusade policy. While it retained formal authority over the launching of expeditions, its real influence over the movement derived from its ability to tap into lucrative sources of funding: legacies and testamentary bequests left in aid of crusading causes; the redemption of crusader vows for cash payments; and taxation on church revenues. While many European nobles who went on crusade had funded their own campaigns in the twelfth century, by the thirteenth, papal funding was regarded as indispensable to their participation.[66] The popes, however, retained the right to shift crusading resources from one theater to another as their own priorities dictated. In the late 1250s and early 1260s, many venues were competing with the Holy Land for the curia's attention. A partial list would include crusades against the Golden Horde in eastern Europe; against Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos to regain the Latin empire of Constantinople; against rivals to the Teutonic Knights around the Baltic Sea; against Muslim al-Andalus in the Iberian Peninsula; and against the baronial opposition to King Henry III of England. None of these venues, however, competed for crusading resources with the Holy Land as successfully as the conflict in the papacy's own backyard.

p. 36 In 1262, Pope Urban IV tried to recruit a prince who could seize the kingdom of Sicily from the Hohenstaufen and rule it as a papal ally. He entered into negotiations with Charles of Anjou, count of Provence and Louis IX's youngest brother. These discussions led to crusade preaching on Charles's behalf in 1264–5 and the imposition of a 10 percent tax on the income of the French church for three years.[67] The promotional campaign for Charles's Sicilian crusade coincided exactly with Baybars's first sustained offensives against the kingdom of Acre, placing the papacy on the horns of a dilemma.

Balancing the conflicting priorities proved challenging for Pope Clement IV, who succeeded Urban IV in February 1265. Clement was well known to both Charles of Anjou and Louis IX from his previous service as bishop of Le Puy and archbishop of Narbonne. He had depended on these men for patronage as he advanced through the ranks of the French Church. He now occupied a higher office, but found that he needed them more than ever as the struggle with the Hohenstaufen reached a crisis point. With the future of the papacy seemingly at stake, he plunged into the family drama at the heart of the Tunis Crusade. Louis—the older brother, the reigning monarch—had spent the past decade remaking his life and his realm in anticipation of a new crusade to the east. He continued to sponsor the French regiment in Acre and was disturbed by its inability to stop Baybars's attacks.[68] For Louis, the Holy Land remained the priority. Charles—the youngest brother, the would-be king—was fixated on Sicily. Clement was too, but he knew that its conquest would never go forward against Louis's wishes. Clement's solution to this quandary drew on the traditions of medieval scholasticism and casuistry, where the goal was always to reveal the deeper harmonies underlying seemingly conflicting goods. He argued that crusading to the Holy Land and crusading to Sicily were not irreconcilable goals. The conquest of Sicily was essential to the long-term security of the crusader states for two reasons, one ideological, the other strategic. First, the Church was a body with the pope as its head. How could the various members of the body survive if it suffered decapitation? Second, with its central Mediterranean location Sicily could serve as a staging ground for Holy Land expeditions.[69]

p. 37 For a time, Louis accepted these arguments. He had already seen how the papal–Hohenstaufen conflict had hindered recruitment outside the kingdom of France for his first crusade. Since then, the problem had gotten worse. While papal crusade preachers gathered the three-year tenth in France for the Sicilian campaign, the Holy Land received a smaller subsidy: a five-year hundredth in the same territory.[70] Clement also allowed crusaders to commute their vows from the Holy Land to Sicily, while still earning the full Holy Land crusade indulgence.[71] Louis may have felt that papal priorities would not shift until the Sicilian question was settled. Putting Charles on the Sicilian throne might also allow the island to fulfill its potential as a strategic hub for Latin Christian control of the narrow sea lanes through the central Mediterranean. The Hohenstaufen had maintained peaceful relations with the Ayyubids and the Mamluks. With a Capetian in control, Sicily could help to restrict Mamluk naval operations in a way that could benefit crusader Syria.

As momentum for a Sicilian crusade built over 1265, Clement and Louis reached a rough and ready compromise. Louis allowed his brother to go ahead with the invasion and receive the larger share of available papal crusade funding. In the meantime, Clement permitted Louis to take control of the smaller portion that would be devoted to the crusader states. In an unprecedented move, Clement instructed his legate in France, Gilles of Saumur, archbishop of Tyre, to hand over the proceeds of the hundredth to Louis for him to distribute as he saw fit.[72] In the summer of 1265, as the king digested the news of the fall of Arsuf and Caesarea to Baybars, a small expedition of French knights, led by two men with close ties to royal circles, prepared to depart for the crusader states. Érard of Valery and Eudes, count of Nevers, arrived in Acre in October 1265 with a relief force of about sixty knights.[73] In the same month, Charles set out for Rome with a much larger army.

Not everyone agreed with the priorities reflected in this distribution of troops. The papal legate Gilles of Saumur became frustrated with the lack of support for the crusader states. On November 23, 1265, he wrote a letter to an official who was helping him look after his affairs in Tyre. The tone was formal and correct. Within that letter, Gilles enclosed an unsealed, unaddressed, and undated document, in which he unleashed
p. 38 a withering critique of the papal crusade policy he was dutifully carrying out. "It seems ↳ hard enough," he began, "that the lord pope grants the power of commuting the cross of the Holy Land in aid of Apulia [i.e. the kingdom of Sicily], yet it seems harder still that money assigned by the devotion of the faithful for the said Holy Land is directed toward Apulia and the wishes of testators are scarcely fulfilled, which we have found in many places we have gone to preach." He went on to complain about clergy who had taken the cross for the Holy Land, which should have exempted them from paying any crusade-related taxation, nonetheless being compelled to pay the tenth for Sicily. He ended by wondering when he might be allowed to return to Tyre, where he wished to die.[74]

His wish would not come true. Although Pope Clement granted him permission to return to his diocese in the early spring of 1266, Gilles never made it there. He passed away in Dinant on April 24.[75] By then, the papal plan he opposed had been put into action. In February 1266, Charles of Anjou invaded southern Italy and defeated the Hohenstaufen king of Sicily, Manfred, at the battle of Benevento. With Sicily in Capetian hands, the papacy had less reason to fear committing to a Holy Land crusade.

Pope Clement began to shift crusade recruitment and fundraising toward the Holy Land in April 1266. He ordered Simon of Brie, the cardinal-priest of St Cecilia (and future Pope Martin IV), who had been promoting the Sicilian crusade in France, to switch to Syria. Clement seems to have envisioned a smaller force recruited from the Low Countries, northern Germany, and the northern Francophone borderlands. There were two advantages to organizing a smaller expedition, which crusade theorists would come to call a *passagium particulare*. First, it could set out sooner than a great "general passage." Clement urged crusaders to depart for the east in the autumn 1266 sea passage if they could manage it; failing that, they should sail in the spring 1267 passage. Second, a modest expedition could leave intact funding for the Sicilian crusade. The campaign in Sicily may have been over as far as Clement was concerned, but paying for it had just begun. The three-year Sicilian tenth was still being collected in France and there was no question of diverting those revenues toward another crusading theater. Another of Louis IX's brothers, Alphonse, count of Poitiers and Toulouse, asked Clement whether he could draw on the Sicilian tenth if he were to take the cross for the Holy Land. The short answer: no, he could not. If he wanted money to go to Syria, he should ask Louis to release some funds from the five-year hundredth for the Holy Land.[76]

p. 39 By the late summer of 1266, a *passagium particulare* for the Holy Land was taking shape. Clement granted subsidies from the hundredth to the counts of Flanders, Juliers, Cleves, and Luxembourg. Pierre of Brittany (the son of Count Jean) and the bishop of Liège had also signed on by mid-August. Two thousand crossbowmen were to be recruited from France and England to support the knights.[77] In September 1266, however, these plans were thrown into doubt when news of Baybars's capture of Safad and execution of the Templar garrison reached the major European capitals.

For Louis, Safad was the turning point. He sent a secret embassy to Viterbo to inform the pope that he planned to take the cross. On some level, Clement must have known this was coming. Louis had been preparing for this step for a long time. Still, the pope was shocked when the moment finally arrived. Louis was an old 52 and quite frail. Looking back on this time in the king's life, Joinville recalled having to carry him into a Franciscan residence one day because he was too weak to walk in under his own power.[78] How could this man lead the forces of Christendom into battle against Baybars? Clement also knew that any crusade involving the king was likely to be slow to get going. Louis had taken the cross for his first crusade in 1244 and had not reached Damietta until the spring of 1249. He could certainly mount a larger expedition than the one Clement was organizing, but could it reach the Holy Land in time to do any good? The pope was so reluctant to approve Louis's proposal that he wrote a letter urging him to reconsider. Shortly after, he had second thoughts about telling the most powerful king in Europe not to bother trying to save the kingdom of Acre. He had the first envoy chased down, and replaced his original cautionary message with a new one encouraging Louis to "carry out this praiseworthy proposition."[79]

In March 1267, Jean of Joinville received a summons to attend on the king in Paris. When Joinville arrived on March 24, no one would tell him why Louis had asked all the leading barons of the realm to meet with him. Sick with a fever, Joinville fell asleep during Matins and dreamed of the king kneeling before an altar while churchmen clothed him in a chasuble of red serge (a thick woolen cloth, still favored by the Canadian Mounties). Joinville's priest would offer a gloomy interpretation of the vision. The chasuble represented the cross, red with Christ's blood, which Louis would take tomorrow to mark the beginning of his crusade.
p. 40 Inaugurated ↳ in blood, the campaign would achieve little.[80] Later that day, Joinville overheard more pessimism about the king's plans. Two members of the royal council shared their dread over what could happen to them and the country if Louis took the cross:

> One of them said, 'Never believe me again if the king doesn't take the cross now.' And the other replied that, 'If the king does take the cross, this will be one of the saddest days there has ever been in France. For if we don't take the cross we'll lose the king, and if we do take the cross we'll lose God, since we would not be taking the cross for him, but out of fear of the king.'[81]

The cross-taking ceremony that took place the next day, March 25, gave the king his first chance to pile on the pressure. The papal legate, Simon of Brie, preached the cross, as was normal on these occasions. Exceptionally, Louis delivered an exhortation too. He appealed to the assembled barons and knights to avenge Christ's injuries in the Holy Land and called on them as Christians to retake their patrimony, "which had for so long been in the hands of infidels due to our own sins."[82] Generalizing the redemptive narrative through which he seemed to understand his providential role, Louis demanded that the French nobility share in the duty of freeing the Holy Land from Muslim control.

Besides Louis himself, three of his sons took the cross that day. From many others, the response was less enthusiastic. Joinville refused, and accused those who advised Louis to go on crusade a second time of committing a mortal sin. The kingdom was at peace, Louis was too frail for the journey, and everything had gone to wrack and ruin since he left.[83] Joinville made these observations with the benefit of hindsight, but they still capture something of the initial bewilderment that many who were close to Louis expressed when he placed the crusader's cross on his shoulders again.

Louis's decision set the stage for a final showdown with Baybars, the man who had helped to defeat him at Mansura seventeen years before. Despite vast differences in background and leadership style, both men were united in their pursuit of holy war. Syria was the inevitable focus of this shared concern, promising Baybars the religious legitimation he required as an upstart and Louis the personal redemption he craved as a failed crusader. The ramifications of their struggle extended well beyond the two men. Egypt and France were placed on a war footing, with their subjects bound to increasingly elaborate codes of personal conduct
p. 41 and ↳ piety. Victory in the holy struggle, both men believed, would only go to the united and the pure.

Not every ambitious ruler in the Mediterranean, however, subscribed to the ideology of elimination that drove Baybars and Louis to wage the battle for Syria. In Sicily and Tunis, two dynasts were embarking on a different kind of relationship, one that emphasized negotiation and exchange over all-out conflict. As planning for the new crusade got under way, these two contrasting systems of interreligious relations, one dedicated to confrontation along religious lines, the other to pragmatic accommodation across them, began to intersect in unexpected ways, extending the battle for Syria into the central Mediterranean and profoundly altering the character of the struggle in the process.

Notes

1 William Chester Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade: A Study in Rulership* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 7–13.

2 The standard narrative for the first phase of the campaign remains Strayer, pp. 487–518.

3 Thorau, p. 29.

4 For the origins of the Bahriyya, see Linda Northrup, "The Bahri Mamluk Sultanate, 1250–1390," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, ed. M. W. Daly and Carl F. Petry, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), vol. 1: pp. 244–50.

5 Joinville, pp. 274–93 (Smith, pp. 199–207); Ibn Wasil, p. 57 (*Seventh Crusade*, p. 145).

6 Joinville, pp. 293–339 (Smith, pp. 208–27); Ibn Wasil, pp. 69–74 (*Seventh Crusade*, pp. 148–50).

7 Ibn Wasil, p. 69 (*Seventh Crusade*, p. 148).

8 Guillaume of Chartres, p. 30 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 135).

9 Reuven Amitai, "The Early Mamluks and the End of the Crusader Presence in Syria (1250–1291)," in *The Crusader World*, ed. Adrian Boas (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 325–6; Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410* (London: Pearson-Longman, 2005), p. 39; Paul M. Cobb, *The Race for Paradise: An Islamic History of the Crusades* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 220. For the Mamluk concept in general, see David Ayalon, *Le phénomène mamelouk dans l'Orient islamique* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1996); and Julien Loiseau, *Les Mamelouks XIIIe–XVI siècle: Une experience du pouvoir dans l'Islam medieval* (Paris: Seuil, 2014). For its Abbasid roots, see David Ayalon, "The Military Reforms of Caliph al-Muʿtasim: Their Background and Consequences," in his *Islam and the Abode of War: Military Slaves and Islamic Adversaries* (Variorum Collected Studies, Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 1994), pp. 1–39; and Hugh Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs: Military and Society in the Early Islamic State* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 118–37.

10 A recent overview of the Ayyubid confederation is Paul A. Blaum, "Eagles in the Sun: The Ayyubids after Saladin," *International Journal of Kurdish Studies* 13 (1999): pp. 105–80. The classic study remains R. Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus, 1193–1260* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1977).

11 Michael Lower, *The Barons' Crusade: A Call to Arms and Its Consequences* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), pp. 165–73; Peter Jackson, "The Crusades of 1239–41 and Their Aftermath," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 50 (1987): pp. 32–62.

12 Ibn Wasil, p. 19 (*Seventh Crusade*, p. 134); Amalia Levanoni, "The Mamluks' Ascent to Power in Egypt," *Studia Islamica* 72 (1990): pp. 122–7.

13 Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi (Shams al-Din Abu al-Muzaffar Yusuf b. Qizughli), *Mirʾat al-zaman fi taʾrikh al-aʿyan*, vol. 8/2 (Hyderabad: Matbaʻat Majlis Daʾirat al-Maʻarif al-ʻUthmaniyya, 1951–2), pp. 772–4 (*Seventh Crusade*, p. 154).

14 Ibn Wasil, pp. 36–64 (*Seventh Crusade*, pp. 135–46).

15 Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi, *Mirʾat al-zaman*, vol. 8/2: pp. 774–7, 781–3 (*Seventh Crusade*, pp. 158, 161); Ibn Wasil, p. 73 (*Seventh Crusade*, p. 150); *Seventh Crusade*, p. 126.

16 Joinville, p. 354 (Smith, p. 234).

17 Ibn Wasil, pp. 74–7 (*Seventh Crusade*, pp. 151–2); Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi, *Mirʾat al-zaman*, vol. 8/2: pp. 781–3 (*Seventh Crusade*, p. 161); Joinville, pp. 347–52 (Smith, pp. 231–3); Thorau, pp. 38–9.

18 Thorau, pp. 51–7; Amitai, "The Early Mamluks," pp. 326–8.

19 Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, pp. 31–49; Beatrice Forbes Manz, "The Rule of the Infidels: The Mongols and the Islamic World," *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. Michael Cook, 6 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 128–37. For the development of the Mongol ideology of world empire, see Reuven Amitai, *Holy War and Rapprochement: Studies in the Relations between the Mamluk Sultanate and the Mongol Ilkhanate (1260–1335)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 37–55.

20 On the Mongol invasion of Syria, see Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk–Ilkhanid War, 1260–1281* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 26–35; Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, pp. 115–19; Manz, "Rule of the Infidels," pp. 142–5.

21 Humphreys, *Ayyubids of Damascus*, p. 338; Thorau, pp. 65–70.

22 Al-Maqrizi, vol. 1: pp. 427–8 (English translation: Bernard Lewis, *Islam from the Prophet Muhammad to the Capture of Constantinople*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1974), vol. 1: pp. 84–6.

23 Peter Jackson, "The Crisis in the Holy Land in 1260," *English Historical Review* 95 (1980): pp. 503–7.

24 Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "ʿAyn Jalut Revisted," *Tarih* 2 (1992): pp. 119–50; John M. Smith, "ʿAyn Jalut: Mamluk Success or Mongol Failure," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 44 (1984): pp. 307–45.

25 Shihab al-Din ʿAbd al-Rahman b. Ismaʿil Abu Shama, *Tarajim rijal-al-qarnayn al-sadis wa-l-sabiʿ al-maʿruf bi-l-dhayl ʿala al-rawdatayn*, ed. Muhammad al-Kawthari (Cairo: Maktab Nashr al-Thiqafa al-Islamiyya, 1947), p. 208; cited and translated in Amitai, "The Early Mamluks," p. 330.

26 Jackson, "Crisis in the Holy Land," p. 508.

27 Thorau, pp. 79–85; Ibn ʿAbd al-Zahir, whom Baybars commissioned to write his biography, would stress that his master dealt the fatal blow in order to strengthen his claim to the succession: Ibn ʿAbd al-Zahir, pp. 67–8.

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29 Paul Meyvaert, "An Unknown Letter of Hulagu, Il-Khan of Persia, to King Louis IX of France," *Viator* 11 (1980): pp. 245–59.

30 On Baybars's military reforms, see Amitai, "Early Mamluks," pp. 331–2; Northrup, "Bahri Mamluk Sultanate," pp. 259–62; David Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army," *Bulletin of the School of Asian and African Studies* 15 (1953): pp. 203–28, 448–76; 16 (1954): pp. 57–90; reprinted in Ayalon, *Studies on the Mamluks of Egypt (1250–1517)* (London: Variorum, 1977).

31 Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: pp. 193–4, vol. 2: pp. 152–3.

32 Andrew Ehrenkreutz, "Strategic Implications of the Slave Trade between Genoa and Mamluk Egypt in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century," in *The Islamic Middle East, 700–1900: Studies in Economic and Social History* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1981), pp. 335–45; Reuven Amitai, "Diplomacy and the Slave Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean: A Re-examination of the Mamluk–Byzantine–Genoese Triangle in the Late Thirteenth Century in Light of the Existing Early Correspondence," *Oriente Moderno* 87 (2008): pp. 349–68.

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34 Amitai, "Early Mamluks," p. 333; Thorau, pp. 123–8.

35 Humphreys, "Ayyubids, Mamluks, and the Latin East," pp. 14–15.

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37 Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 227–44.

38 Thorau, pp. 196, 225–9.

39 Cobb, *Race for Paradise*, p. 221; Humphreys, "Ayyubids, Mamluks, and the Latin East," pp. 10–11; Amitai, "Early Mamluks," pp. 336–7.

40 Thorau, pp. 135–9, 145–8; Jean Richard, *The Crusades, c.1071–c.1291*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 416–17.

41 Thorau, pp. 149–50; on Baybars's use of economic warfare in his campaigns against the Franks, see Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), pp. 47–8.

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45 Joinville, pp. 422–512 (Smith, pp. 262–99); *Seventh Crusade*, pp. 205–31.

46 Étienne Delaruelle, "L'idée de croisade chez saint Louis," *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique* 61 (1960): pp. 251–4; Jordan, *Louis IX*, pp. 142.

47 Joinville, p. 544 (Smith, p. 313).

48 Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 6 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 77, slightly altered).

49 Joinville, pp. 578–82 (Smith, pp. 325–7); Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 11 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 90).

50 Guillaume of Chartres, pp. 31–2, 35 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, pp. 137–8, 145).

51 Guillaume of Chartres, p. 35 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, pp. 144–5).

52 *Sanctity of Louis IX*, pp. 87–8. (The chapter from which these excerpts are drawn was not included in the edition of the text printed in the *RHGF*.)

53 Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 7 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 80, slightly altered).

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57 Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 7 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 80).
58 Rutebeuf, "La complainte de Constantinople," verse 9, lines 103–4, in Rutebeuf, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. and trans. Michel Zink (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 1990), pp. 410–11.
59 Jordan, *Louis IX*, pp. 51–64, 80–6, 98.
60 Jordan, *Louis IX*, p. 153.
61 *Ordonnances*, vol. 1: p. 67 (investigation of previous office holder), p. 71 (prohibition on local marriages); Jordan, *Louis IX*, pp. 159–60.
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65 Joinville, pp. 554–6 (Smith, pp. 316–18); Richard, *Saint Louis*, pp. 352–60; Jordan, *Louis IX*, p. 203.
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67 Norman Housley, *The Italian Crusades: The Papal–Angevin Alliance and the Crusades against Christian Lay Powers, 1254–1343* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 18–19.
68 Strayer, p. 508.
69 *Registres de Clément IV*, no. 817 (Manfred of Sicily as threat to Rome), no. 838 (aid for the Holy Land may be more easily furnished from Sicily).
70 *Registres de Clément IV*, no. 217; *Layettes*, no. 4893.
71 *Registres de Clément IV*, no. 216.
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74 *Layettes*, nos. 5118–19.
75 Sternfeld, p. 15.
76 *Registres de Clément IV*, nos. 1045, 843–4, 1046.
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78 Joinville, pp. 584–6 (Smith, p. 329).
79 *Registres de Clément IV*, no. 1139; Geoffrey of Beaulieu, pp. 20–1 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, pp. 114–15).
80 Joinville, pp. 582–4 (Smith, p. 328).
81 Joinville, p. 586 (Smith, p. 329).
82 Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 21 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 115).
83 Joinville, p. 586 (Smith, p. 329).