Conclusion

> Even if the Greeks deserve to pay for their stubborn persistence in rebellious sinfulness, the Turks are nevertheless crossing over from there towards us and true Catholicism. Already Cyprus, Crete, Rhodes, Euboea, and, closer to us, Achaia and Epiros, are being attacked.
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> Francesco Petrarch, letter to Pope Urban V, 29 June 1366 x 1368.[1]

The words of Francesco Petrarch, echoing those of Marino Sanudo some thirty years earlier, aptly sum up the shift in the perceptions of the Turks and in the focus of crusading which came about during the first half of the fourteenth century. This was a time in which the religious and political makeup of the eastern Mediterranean was fundamentally altered. By the end of the period, the Turks and not the Byzantines were the undisputed masters of Asia Minor and were considered the greatest threat to Latin Christendom in the region. After this point the Ottomans were able to secure a foothold in Europe and overcome any Latin and Greek attempts to halt their advance. They expanded their empire at breakneck speed – only checked by Timur in 1402 – before conquering Constantinople itself in 1453. The Ottoman sieges of Vienna in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the ultimate manifestation of Turkish military might born on the plains of Anatolia in the early years of the fourteenth century.

The merchant crusaders of the Aegean played a fundamental role in helping shape the image of the Turks in western Europe, which would prevail into the early modern period. The reports of several significant naval victories against the beyliks, most notably the defeat of Masud the Mentesheoglu by the Hospitallers in 1312 and the joint victory of the Hospitallers and Zaccaria over a fleet from Aydin in 1319, combined with the reports of Turkish raids on Venetian territories, began the first step in this shift in the perception of the beyliks in the West.[2] This was from one of general ambivalence to one where crusading could be considered as a feasible means

[1] Francesco Petrarch, *Letters of Old Age*, vol. 1, p. 255 (VII.1).

[2] Finke, *Papsttum und Untergang des Templerordens*, vol. 2, pp. 298–302, doc. 146; *Chroniques d'Amadi et de Strambaldi*, vol. 1, p. 391; Mas Latrie, *Histoire de l'île de Chypre*, vol. 2, pp. 118–25; Gatto, 'Martino Zaccaria', 337–9, doc. 1; Delaville le Roulx, *Les Hospitaliers à Rhodes*, pp. 365–7, doc. 2.

with which to oppose them, reflected by the reports of these victories in the writings of the crusade theorists, as well as by authors from the Italian peninsula.[3] The western perception of the Byzantines, on the other hand, gradually changed to one of reconciliation as it became apparent that a united Christian front would be the best means of holding back the Turks.

As the century progressed and the Turks became the target of crusading, their depiction took on another form which was also very much influenced by the mercantile context in which western authors operated. These were predominantly Italian and had close connections to the merchant classes and consequently to eastern trade and the operations of the Genoese and Venetians overseas. Against the backdrop of the Crusade of Smyrna and the economic difficulties affecting the Mediterranean world in the 1340s, Umur Pasha, in particular, emerged as a significant figure in the writings of the Anonimo Romano and the apocryphal *Epistola Morbasiani*, as well as featuring in the works of Giovanni Villani and Giovanni Boccaccio.[4] However, by now the menace of the Turks was well known in the West, and *Morbasanus* was instead used as a mouthpiece by which these authors could criticize the policies of the Venetians overseas, as well as the factional strife which both hindered the Crusade of Smyrna and also caused turmoil within Italy. This mechanism became widespread in the fifteenth century and beyond as western writers continued to use Turkish rulers as a mouthpiece for voicing criticisms within Christendom.

Merchant crusaders also played a fundamental role in attempting to halt the Turkish advances. In the early years this took the form of mutual naval assistance from the eastern Aegean powers on Chios and Rhodes who utilized their shared intelligence networks to keep the nearby beyliks in check. Gradually this concept was blended with the idea of a united Christian fleet, at times including the Byzantines, initially envisaged as a means to enforce the economic embargo on trade with Muslims. Marino Sanudo first proposed this idea and by 1333–4 it had become a reality in the form of a naval league. The leagues, although limited in scope to temporarily halting Turkish raids in the Aegean, both enjoyed remarkable success. They were great feats of logistics and cooperation, consisting of large numbers of well-equipped galleys, commanded by skilled captains and crews from five separate Christian powers. At their peak they probably numbered up to 15,000 men for each league. In terms of their military success, both of the leagues went undefeated during the time in which they patrolled the Aegean

[3] Giovanni Villani, *Nuova cronica*, vol. 2, bk. 10, ch. 120, p. 323; *Chroniques d'Amadi et de Strambaldi*, vol. 1, p. 400; William of Adam, *How To Defeat the Saracens*, pp. 53–5, 65–7, 81; Marino Sanudo, 'Epistolae', pp. 297–8 (letter 5); Roddy trans., pp. 156–60 (letter 15); 'Directorium ad Passagium Faciendum', pp. 457–8.

[4] Anonimo Romano, *Cronica*, pp. 84–5; Giovanni Villani, *Nuova cronica*, vol. 3, bk. 13, ch. 39, pp. 388–91; Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, pp. 124–5 (II.7).

and each managed to inflict significant damage on the maritime beyliks. They were able to achieve this through a combination of detailed local geographical knowledge and effective communication. This often resulted in a surprise attack followed by the successful pursuit of the Turks onto land.

But what level of support did these leagues enjoy from the papacy, and can we really consider them as crusades? Until the 1330s papal crusading initiatives planned for the Aegean were dictated more by the priorities of the Capetians, Angevins and Valois than by those of the local powers in the eastern Mediterranean. In the first two decades of the century Popes Benedict XI and Clement V partially justified their crusade plans on the basis that an expedition to recover Constantinople would help drive the Turks from western Anatolia, but the rhetoric they contained undoubtedly suggested that the primary 'target' of the crusade was still the schismatic Greeks.[5] The planned crusades of Charles of Valois and Philip of Taranto are prime examples of this. In the 1320s, at a time when crusade strategy was beginning to shift slowly away from the Greeks and towards the Turks, John XXII still harboured hopes of launching a general passage to the Holy Land with the kings of France. As negotiations with the French became increasingly hindered by financial constraints and the escalating conflicts with England, an Aegean campaign led first and foremost by the resident Latin states became a more likely alternative to the grand projects of the French Crown. However, John XXII did not see eye-to-eye with the Venetians in the run-up to the first naval league; he was wary of their conciliatory attitude towards the Catalans and the Byzantines, both of whom were considered as a threat to papal-Angevin interests in Greece. He also considered the union of the Greek and Latin Churches as being an important component of any crusade against the Turks which included Greek participation. Nevertheless, the skilful linking by the Venetians of the naval league to the Holy Land crusade of Philip IV was enough to garner papal support. The eventual contribution of the papacy towards the league was an important development in crusade strategy. It was the first campaign in which the pope had actively committed papal resources (four galleys), and consequently marked an acceptance that a primarily maritime expedition, organized by the Aegean powers, was the most effective method of defending the region.

Despite John XXII's eventual commitment to the first naval league, its status alongside other crusading projects of the time suggests that it was conceived as a lesser campaign, especially if the privileges granted are compared with those issued to participants in other operations. John XXII was the first to grant mechanisms in support of an Aegean campaign against the Turks. He decreed indulgences *in articulo mortis* to the Latins in Achaia

[5] *Le registre de Benoit XI*, doc. 1006; Clement V, *Regestum*, vol. 1, doc. 243.

in 1322 and to Martino Zaccaria in 1323 and 1325.[6] He awarded the same *in articulo mortis* indulgences to John of Cepoy and his contingent for the league in 1334, which were still less generous than those granted for the Holy Land crusade being planned by Philip VI at the same time.[7] Preaching was also not decreed for the league and although papal funds were used to pay for the galleys, clerical tithes were not levied. These privileges were significantly less than those decreed for the Crusade of Smyrna, which can rightly be seen as the first expedition against the Turks to receive all of the mechanisms traditionally allocated to a crusade to the Holy Land. It was the high point of crusading against the Turks in this period – both in terms of papal support and the achievement of the mission. Housley was correct to suggest that the pope's role in the Crusade of Smyrna had been decisive: he secured Venetian participation in the league in early 1343 and published crusade bulls for the expedition in that summer.[8] These bulls announced a level of papal support greater than any previously received for a crusade solely aimed at the Turks: preaching of the crusade was ordered, clerical tithes were used to fund it and the full crusade indulgence was issued for participation on the campaign alone, or to those who could make financial contributions. That the Crusade of Smyrna was allocated such a high level of involvement by the Church was both a reflection on Clement's commitment to the crusade and of the change of perception of the Turks, who were now regarded as representing the most serious threat to Christendom. This was mirrored in the enthusiastic response to the expedition which came from those, especially from northern Italy, who had no commercial interests in the Aegean.

Papal support for a campaign against the Turks and the eventual formation of a fleet to be used in the Aegean did, however, pose its own problems. Secure commerce in the Aegean was of paramount importance to the Latin states of the region, both in order to sustain their maritime empires, as was the case with Genoa and Venice, but also to provision the Aegean islands and hinterland. Because of this, promoting and participating in military action against the beyliks created a vicious circle of sorts: both of the naval leagues, for example, were designed to bring security and stability to the Latins of Romania, but they also had the adverse effect of limiting trade with Asia Minor. This cut off a potential source of trade, which consequently threatened the livelihood of some participants and also restricted

[6] ASVat, *RA* 18, fol. 152v, ep. 209; *RV* 74, fol. 93v, ep. 209 (20 Dec 1322); summary in JXXII *Lettres communes*, vol. 4, doc. 16672; Gatto, 'Martino Zaccaria', 344–5, doc. 5 (20 Feb 1323); ASVat, *RA* 22, fol. 450v; *RV* 78, ep. 882 (28 Apr 1325); summaries in John XXII, *Lettres communes*, vol. 4, doc. 16977, vol. 5, doc. 22117.

[7] ASVat, *RA* 46, fol. 560v; *RV* 107, fol. 243r, ep. 729–30 (19 May 1334); summaries in John XXII, *Lettres communes*, vol. 13, docs 63170–1.

[8] Housley, *Avignon Papacy*, pp. 121–2.

the provisions needed to supply both the combatants and the Aegean colonies. A solution to this conundrum was found in the widespread issuing of trade licences, which harmonized the contrasting ideals of cross-cultural exchange and holy war, and adequately served the purposes of both the papacy and the merchant crusaders.

The first example of this is given by the Zaccaria, whose rulership over the rich island of Chios and dominance of the alum trade bought them much wealth. However, without the resources of a maritime empire – as the Venetians enjoyed – they required papal support in order to maintain a hostile policy against the Turks. In their petitions for trade licences made at Avignon (in 1320 and 1325), they specifically linked the maintenance of secure trade with the protection of the Christians in the Aegean.[9] Thus for both the Zaccaria and the papacy, trade and crusade had begun to be perceived and projected as two complementary facets in the defence of the faith. In the following years Martino Zaccaria, probably aided by the close support of the papacy, managed to form a small empire in Romania. He enjoyed the acclaim of the crusade theorists and intermarried with the nobility of Frankish Greece. However, by furthering his own personal interests, Martino antagonized his overlord Emperor Andronikos III and his own brother Benedetto II, eventually losing Chios to the Byzantines in 1329.[10] Martino reappeared as the papal captain during the Crusade of Smyrna, but his participation was viewed with suspicion by the pope. He died outside the city walls along with the other crusade leaders in 1345. The involvement of other Genoese in the Crusade of Smyrna was similarly undistinguished: Simone Vignoso's capture of Chios caused problems for Humbert of Viennois and Genoese conflicts with Venice in the early 1350s eventually ended any hope of re-forming the naval league. Although the crusade had reached a stalemate by this point, it is clear that the rivalries between the two great maritime republics still remained a potentially devastating obstacle to any crusade.

Like John XXII, Clement VI also recognised the concerns and interests of the maritime republics in the crusade. He was aware of the difficult economic situation in the Aegean after the closing of the Black Sea markets and the problems this caused for trade in the eastern Mediterranean. He granted the Venetians and others extensive licenses to trade with Egypt in order to facilitate continued participation in the naval league. These licences reveal the complex attitude of the papacy in regard to trade with the infidel. They show that limited trade with certain Muslim groups was acceptable, so long as it was conducted with papal permission and ideally in order to aid the defence of the faith in other regions. Given this, it can also

[9] Delaville le Roulx, *Les Hospitaliers à Rhodes*, pp. 367–8, doc. 3 (5 Mar 1320); summary in John XXII *Lettres communes*, vol. 3, doc. 11081.

[10] Carr, 'Trade or crusade?', pp. 127–34.

be said that the licences and the merchant crusaders who petitioned for and received them helped to break down black and white conceptions of Islam which usually characterized papal policy towards Islam in the Middle Ages and the attitudes of crusaders. In fact, it could even be argued that through the widespread use of licences, the Crusade of Smyrna actually led to greater exchange between European merchants and Egypt, even if it aimed to restrict contact with the Turks.[11] In many senses the licences prove that holy war and trade between different religious groups were not mutually exclusive.[12]

Bearing these things in mind, it may be necessary for a reappraisal to be made of the role of the maritime republics in the crusades. It is hoped that this study has shown that the motivations of the papacy, the Genoese and the Venetians towards the crusade were multi-faceted and inseparable. In the fourteenth-century Aegean, as the maritime states became the primary participants in a crusade against the Turks, motivating factors of religion and commerce became blended together. The Zaccaria and the Venetians were no doubt fighting for the preservation of their trade routes, but they were also fighting for the defence of the faith. This was understood by the papacy and the merchants alike. As has been explained in another context, the idea of "religious ideology" positing consistent fanaticism and zealotry, such as Gibbon's myth of the possessed Muslim riding out of the desert offering the cowering infidel the Quran or the sword, seldom reflects the complexity of human religious and material motivations.[13] It must be remembered that religion can play a variety of roles in situations which involve confrontation, as can commerce, and that motives can rarely be separated. In the second half of the century, as the Turks increased their expansion into the Aegean and the Ottomans emerged as the dominant power in the eastern Mediterranean, the maritime republics would begin to play an even greater role in the defence of the faith. The strategies and attitudes developed in the first half of the fourteenth century would henceforth come to dominate western contact with the Turks in the following years.

[11] Lane, 'The Venetian galleys to Alexandria', pp. 435–6.

[12] See similar observations by Chrissis, 'New frontiers', p. 19.

[13] See for example, the comments of B. Braude, 'Review of *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia* by Rudi Paul Lindner', *Speculum* 62 (1987), 701–3, at 702.