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Proceedings Paper:

Murray, AV (2018) *The Middle Ground: The Passage of Crusade Armies to the Holy Land by Land and Sea, 1096-1204*. In: Theotokis, G and Yildiz, A, (eds.) *A Military History of the Mediterranean Sea: Aspects of War, Diplomacy and Military Elites*. First International Conference on the Military History of the Mediterranean Sea, 25-28 Jun 2015, Istanbul, Turkey. Brill . ISBN 978-90-04-36204-8

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**The Middle Ground:
The Passage of Crusade Armies to the Holy Land by Land and Sea (1096-1204)**

Alan V. Murray

The crusades were wars unlike any others in the history of Christianity. Two especially significant differences marked this form of holy war from other forms of warfare in the Middle Ages. The first was the character of participation in the crusade movement. Crusades had the status of penitential pilgrimages which offered the opportunity to gain spiritual rewards, and thus often attracted large numbers of participants from beyond the traditional military classes of nobles and knights. The second difference was the sheer magnitude of the undertaking in practical terms. Crusade expeditions had to travel vast distances from their starting points in Western Europe in order to reach their geographical objective, the Holy Land, and later, Egypt, meaning that they were in transit for many months, or in some cases, years, before they could engage with their Muslim enemies. Edward Peters has drawn attention to the fact that much of the modern historiography of the crusades has concentrated on two main areas. On the one hand there is the organisation of crusades in Europe, together with everything associated with it: ideology, motivation, finance, preaching, recruitment and so on; on the other hand, there are the primarily military activities of crusaders in the Holy Land and other theatres of war. What happened in between these two complexes, he claims, has tended not to attract the attention of historians.¹ The aim of this essay is to examine the factors which influenced the choice of land or sea routes in the passage of crusade armies to the East, looking at the relative aims and practicalities of land and seaborne crusades, as well as other issues contingent upon this choice, in the hope that it might serve as a useful starting point for further research.

Soon after Pope Urban made his famous appeal for the liberation of the Holy Land from Turkish rule at the Council of Clermont in November 1095, several seaborne expeditions were evidently being planned, but the majority of the forces that took part in the First Crusade (1096-99) and the expeditions which followed it in 1101 travelled by land routes. The smaller naval expeditions in the First Crusade and those that followed in the course of the next forty years tended to come from two regions with strong maritime traditions and capabilities: the northern Italian city-states of Genoa, Venice and Pisa, and the North Sea region of Norway, Denmark, Saxony, Frisia, Flanders and England.² The clear preference for larger forces from the European mainland was to travel by land routes, as in the Second Crusade (1147-49), when the main German and French expeditions led by Conrad III and Louis VII travelled overland, while a single combined Anglo-Norman, German and Flemish fleet sailed via the Iberian Peninsula to the Holy Land. However, a major change occurred at the time of the Third Crusade (1189-92). The departure of Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa from Regensburg in May 1189 was the last occasion that a land route was taken by a major crusade expedition for another two centuries. The following year both Richard I of England and Philip II Augustus of France chose to sail to the Holy Land, with the necessary shipping being either constructed or hired specially for the occasion, while Barbarossa's son Henry VI appears to have considered only a sea passage for the crusade that he launched in 1197, but did not take part in himself.³

¹ Peters, "There and Back Again: Crusaders in Motion, 1096-1291", pp. 157-58.

² For seaborne expeditions between 1101 and the Second Crusade, see especially: Doxey, "Norwegian Crusaders and the Balearic Islands" (on the crusade of King Sigurd Jorsalfar of Norway); Riley-Smith, "The Venetian Crusade of 1122-1124"; Queller and Katele, "Venice and the Conquest of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem".

³ Naumann, *Der Kreuzzug Kaiser Heinrichs VI.*

1. Land Passages

The diverse armies which made up the First Crusade took three distinct overland routes to Constantinople. The forces from northern and central France and Flanders, under Hugh, count of Vermandois, Stephen, count of Blois, Robert Curthose, duke of Normandy, and Robert II, count of Flanders, all followed a route through France and the Italian peninsula to Apulia. From the ports of Brindisi or Bari they sailed across the Adriatic Sea to the Byzantine port of Dyrrachion (mod. Durrës, Albania), and then marched through the Balkans to the Byzantine capital along the ancient road known as the Via Egnatia.⁴ Since Roman times there had been a relatively good network of roads in France and Italy, and the city of Rome with its huge number of shrine churches was an attractive staging point on the journeys of crusaders, who regarded themselves as pilgrims. However, this route involved a crossing of the Alps, which restricted the use of wheeled vehicles, and thus the amount of equipment and supplies that armies could carry. The Normans of southern Italy had experience of campaigns against Byzantine territory, and so the Adriatic crossing was the obvious route for the followers of Bohemund, especially since he could presumably organise shipping locally on favourable terms.⁵ Hiring ships may well have been more expensive for the northern French, whose longer journey meant that they already had a considerable outlay for victuals and other expenses before they reached Apulia. The Adriatic crossing was also potentially dangerous. In 1097 a ship from the army of Robert Curthose and Stephen of Blois capsized, resulting in the loss of some 400 men and many animals and treasure chests.⁶ Hugh of Vermandois was shipwrecked and cast ashore on Byzantine territory, having lost most of his baggage; one wonders whether his relatively passive role on the crusade may have been caused by a loss of equipment and funds that restricted his ability to reward his followers adequately.⁷

The route through Italy and across the Adriatic would also have been an obvious one for the army of Raymond of Saint-Gilles, count of Toulouse and marquis of Provence, which left in December 1096. However, instead of travelling south down the peninsula, Raymond and his followers marched due east through Lombardy and then turned south-east to traverse the rocky, inhospitable coast of Dalmatia until they eventually joined a reasonably well-maintained road system after reaching the Byzantine frontier. As is detailed in the account of the priest Raymond of Aguilers, they suffered considerable privation and delay, not least due to the hostility of the local population.⁸ No satisfactory explanation has yet been advanced why the count of Saint-Gilles chose such an unfamiliar and difficult route on which his forces suffered so much, rather than taking the better known and undoubtedly easier passage down the peninsula to the Apulian ports. John France makes the suggestion that Raymond did not travel to Bari because December was an unfavourable time for sea crossings, adding that a “sea passage for such a large army would have been costly and ships might not have been available”.⁹ One wonders, however, why Raymond departed so late; most of the other armies had left before this time, and it is possible that his departure had been delayed by difficulties in organising his diverse followers. Raymond’s forces were recruited from the widest area of any of the armies of the princes: Provence, Languedoc, Auvergne, Septimania and Catalonia; alongside the households and military retinues of lords and bishops it also contained numerous poorer pilgrims drawn from the non-military classes of the Occitan-speaking south, which was, after

⁴ Murray, “Roads, Bridges and Shipping in the Passage of Crusade Armies by Overland Routes to the Bosphorus; Pryor, “Modelling Bohemond’s March to Thessalonike”, pp. 1-24. On the Via Egnatia, see Belke, “Roads and Travel in Macedonia and Thrace in the Middle and Late Byzantine Period”, pp. 74-79.

⁵ Theotokis, *The Norman Campaigns in the Balkans*.

⁶ Fulcheri Carnotensis *Historia Hierosolymitana*, pp. 168-71.

⁷ Anne Comnène, *Alexiade*, 2: 213-15.

⁸ “Raymundi de Aguilers canonici Podiensis *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*”; Ilieva and Delev, “Sclavonia and Beyond”.

⁹ France, *Victory in the East*, pp. 104-5.

all, the region which was first affected by Pope Urban's crusade preaching. Once his army was on the march, Raymond must have soon gained a clear impression of the numbers involved and realised that many of the poor were unlikely to have had the financial means to pay their passage across the Adriatic, which would mean that he ran the risk of having to subsidize them from his own funds. Certainly Raymond seems to have carefully husbanded his financial resources at least as far as Syria, and a need to avoid drastically depleting them would explain why he crossed the north Italian plain and then followed the shortest land route to Byzantine territory, thus avoiding any sea crossings.¹⁰

By contrast, the various popular expeditions of 1096 as well as the army of Godfrey of Bouillon, duke of Lower Lotharingia, took routes that led from the Rhineland eastwards to Regensburg, and then followed the course of the Danube via Passau, Vienna and Buda to reach the Byzantine frontier close to present-day Belgrade, and turned south through the Balkans to Constantinople.¹¹ We find a similar division of travel routes during the so-called Crusade of 1101. Armies from northern and central France under William II, count of Nevers, and Stephen, count of Burgundy, marched south of the Alps through Italy and sailed across the Adriatic. A Lombard army travelled east to reach the Danube in Hungary, as did a force from southern France under William IX, duke of Aquitaine, which then joined with a German army coming from southern Bavaria.¹² The precise routes of these three latter forces have not been established with certainty, although it is noticeable that they avoided the Dalmatian coast which had caused the southern French such difficulties in 1097; it is likely that after crossing the plains of Lombardy and Veneto they moved north-east through the Ljubljana gap in Carniola and thence along the River Drava to reach the Danube near present-day Osijek in Croatia.¹³

After 1101 the Danube route proved to be the most popular way to Constantinople, being taken by both land armies in the Second Crusade as well as by the force of Frederick Barbarossa during the Third. For crusaders coming from Germany or northern France, it had two great advantages. Firstly, there were large centres of population situated at fairly regular intervals: Metz, Worms, Regensburg, Passau, Vienna and Buda, which functioned as markets and distribution centres. As the chronicler Odo of Deuil observed, this infrastructure meant that agricultural produce could be channelled efficiently to the large numbers of hungry mouths produced by the sudden arrival of crusade armies.¹⁴ After the completion of a fine new bridge over the Danube shortly before the passage of the Second Crusade, the city of Regensburg became an ideal point for crusaders coming from the north to cross to the southern bank of the river and join others coming from the west and south.¹⁵ Secondly, the navigability of the Danube eastwards from Regensburg enabled armies to place a considerable proportion of their baggage on boats or rafts, which could thus be conveyed downriver as far as the Byzantine frontier. As far as armies could follow the Danube they also generally found usable roads on the southern bank, but the situation changed drastically at the point where they had to leave the river. At Belgrade the Byzantine *Via Militaris* led along the southern bank of the Danube to the fortress city of Braničevo or Brandeiz (mod. Kostolac, Serbia), some 60 km to the east, then turned south to cross the Balkans via Niš, Sardika (mod. Sofiya, Bulgaria), Philippopolis (mod. Plovdiv, Bulgaria) and Adrianople (mod. Edirne, Turkey) to

¹⁰ On the march between northern Syria and Palestine Raymond offered to pay several of the other princes and their own retinues if they accepted his leadership, which suggests that he had been able to conserve and possibly even increase his funds up to this point. See Murray, "Money and Logistics in the Armies of the First Crusade".

¹¹ Hagenmeyer, *Le Vrai et le faux sur Pierre l'Hermitte*; Murray, "The Army of Godfrey of Bouillon, 1096-1099".

¹² Mulinder, "The Crusading Expeditions of 1101-2".

¹³ For the passage of armies through Carniola, see Kosi, "The Age of the Crusades in the South-East of the Empire (between the Alps and the Adriatic)".

¹⁴ Odo of Deuil, *De profectioe Ludovici VII in orientem*, p. 30.

¹⁵ Feistner (ed.), *Die Steinerne Brücke in Regensburg*.

Constantinople. In the later twelfth century much of the frontier zone was disputed between Byzantines, Serbs and Bulgarians, and suffered from the effects of raiding and border warfare. In the “Bulgarian Forest”, as this region came to be known to crusaders, roads were of poor quality and sometimes impassible. Food supplies were difficult to obtain, and foragers and stragglers were vulnerable to attack by bandits.¹⁶

After arriving at Constantinople, crusade armies were dependent on the Byzantine authorities for the assistance required to cross to the Asian shore. The Byzantine emperors were generally nervous about allowing large numbers of armed Westerners, many of whom despised the Greeks, to remain close to their capital, and so they were usually keen to make ships available. One notable exception occurred in 1189-90, when relations between Frederick Barbarossa and Emperor Isaac Angelos broke down completely and the German crusaders spent most of the winter in violent occupation of eastern Macedonia and Thrace. During this time Barbarossa seriously considered hiring ships from Venice, Genoa and Ancona to transport the German army to Asia, even though this would have constituted a major additional expense. It was only after Isaac came to terms and agreed to the treaty of Adrianople in February 1190 that the Byzantines agreed to provide ships which conveyed the Germans over the Hellespont.¹⁷

The character of the journey changed drastically once armies landed on the Asian shore. In 1096 the Byzantines held only a few strongpoints in Bithynia, but the armies of the First Crusade restored a considerable amount of territory in western Anatolia to Byzantine rule. Nevertheless, the Christian-Muslim frontier shifted considerably in the course of the twelfth century. This meant that after crossing into Asia, most crusade armies soon left secure Byzantine territory and entered a disputed frontier zone in which isolated Byzantine settlements co-existed with nomadic Türkmen tribes who occupied most of the surrounding countryside. Beyond this zone were the Seljuk sultanate of Rūm and the Danishmendid emirate, whose Turkish rulers could deploy mobile armies of professional horse archers as well as numerous Türkmen auxiliaries. During this part of the march crusade armies were not only regularly harassed and attacked by these forces, but suffered privation as a result of the lack of food and water.¹⁸ The roads in Asia Minor were extremely poor or non-existent, and wheeled vehicles could not be used because of the gradients or steps that characterised the main routes.¹⁹

The question of supply was obviously crucial to the success or failure of crusades and consequently has received considerable attention. Because the greatest part of the march took crusades through Christian, and thus friendly territory, they were reliant on obtaining the bulk of their provisions by foraging or purchase en route. Recent studies have confirmed the different character of sections of the route in this respect. There were often difficulties in persuading the local population to come forward to offer goods in markets, and also in agreeing on fair prices and measures, but in general the march as far as the Hungarian-Byzantine frontier proceeded smoothly (with the exception of the passage of the unruly “popular” expeditions of the First Crusade), with sufficient provisions available. However, thereafter the supply situation was generally difficult until forces reached Constantinople and its hinterland, while, as we have seen, Asia Minor presented the

¹⁶ Eickhoff, *Friedrich Barbarossa im Orient*, pp. 59-67; Csendes, *Die Straßen Niederösterreichs im Früh- und Hochmittelalter*; Pascher, *Römische Siedlungen und Straßen im Limesgebiet zwischen Enns und Leitha*; Koytcheva, “Travelling of the First Crusaders across the Byzantine Balkans”; Koytcheva, “Civitates et Castra on Via Militaris and Via Egnatia”; Belke, “Roads and Travel in Macedonia and Thrace in the Middle and Late Byzantine Period”; Stephenson, *Byzantium’s Balkan Frontier*, pp. 124-35, 281-83.

¹⁷ “*Historia de expeditione Friderici imperatoris*”, pp. 40-43, 60-66.

¹⁸ Bachrach, “Crusader Logistics”; France, “Logistics and the Second Crusade”; Roche, “Conrad III and the Second Crusade”.

¹⁹ Haldon, “Roads and Communications in the Byzantine Empire”.

greatest difficulties in obtaining sufficient food and water.²⁰ Armies had no choice but to carry large sums of money in order to buy supplies in friendly territory, and considerable detail about the coinage and bullion carried has been established from investigation of hoards discovered along the march routes. One especially illuminating find is the so-called ‘Barbarossa Hoard’ from south-eastern Turkey, which contained over 7000 coins (mostly silver pennies), ingots of silver and plundered jewellery, and probably represents the funds of a group of German crusaders in the Third Crusade. Since there were no higher denominations in circulation in Western Europe other than silver pennies until the end of the twelfth century, armies may have taken hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of coins with them, as well as silver or gold ingots and precious objects. This essential financial provision must have made up a considerable proportion of the weight carried by pack animals or vehicles. However, some crusaders, particularly leaders, were able to augment their funds en route through plundering and tribute. Frederick Barbarossa especially was able to amass large sums of money from payments extorted from the Byzantine emperor and booty from the capture of the Seljuk capital of Ikonion (mod. Konya, Turkey).²¹

2. Sea Passages

For a long time the course and character of seaborne crusades were almost completely neglected, but we owe many advances over the last twenty-five years to a small band of scholars, notably John France, Thomas F. Madden and above all, John Pryor.²² One of the significant problems, as Pryor points out, is that the great majority of narrative sources had a very poor understanding of maritime matters, with some exceptions such as the Genoese chronicler Caffaro, who actually sailed to the Holy Land with a naval force from his home town in 1100. Despite such difficulties, recent research has clarified many issues: the routes taken and the problems of navigation according to prevailing winds; developments in ship types and their construction; the provisioning of fleets and the crusaders transported by them; the use of fleets to supply land crusades and provide communications; the transport of horses by sea; and the contribution of naval personnel to warfare on land.²³

As we have seen, in the course of the twelfth century there was a gradual trend for passages by land increasingly to give way to passages by sea. However, the debate about the two different forms of route has recently been reopened by Bernard Bachrach in an essay that also has wider implications for our understanding of the original aims of the crusade movement as conceived by Urban II. He asks: “if the recapture of Jerusalem were Pope Urban’s primary war aim, why did he

²⁰ Murray, “Money and Logistics in the Armies of the First Crusade”; Murray, “Finance and Logistics of the Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa”; Bachrach, “Crusader Logistics”; Haldon, “Roads and Communications in the Byzantine Empire”.

²¹ Wielandt, “Münzfund aus Thrakien zur Kreuzzugszeit”; Grierson, “A German Crusader’s Hoard of 1147 from Side (Turkey)”; Hendy, “The Gornoslav Hoard, the Emperor Frederick I, and the Monastery of Bachkovo”; Stumpf, *Der Kreuzzug Kaiser Barbarossas*; Hiestand, “Die Kriegskasse des Kaisers?”; Murray, “Zum Transfer von Zahlungsmitteln bei Kreuzzugsexpeditionen”; Murray, “Barschaft und Beute”.

²² Pryor, *Geography, Technology, and War*; Pryor, “Transportation of Horses by Sea during the Era of the Crusades”; Pryor, “From Dromon to Galea”; Pryor, “The Naval Architecture of Crusader Transport Ships and Horse Transports Revisited”; Pryor, “Water, Water Everywhere, Nor Any Drop to Drink”; Pryor, “The Venetian Fleet for the Fourth Crusade and the Diversion of the Crusade to Constantinople”; Pryor, “A View from a Masthead”; France, “The First Crusade as a Naval Enterprise”; France, “The Western Mediterranean Powers and the First Crusade”; Madden, *Enrico Dandolo and the Rise of Venice*; Madden, “Food and the Fourth Crusade”; Bachrach, “Some Observations on the Role of the Byzantine Navy in the Success of the First Crusade”; Gertwagen, “Harbours and Facilities along the Eastern Mediterranean Sea Lanes to Outremer”.

²³ Pryor, “A View from a Masthead”, p. 92.

send the army to Constantinople?”. This is a question that has hardly been discussed by historians, but it is one which deserves close consideration. Bachrach sets out an “option not chosen” by the pope: rather than having crusade contingents travel overland to Jerusalem via Constantinople, he argues, it would have been perfectly feasible to mobilise an army amounting to around 15,000-20,000 men at various ports in Italy, southern France, and eastern Spain, which could then have been transported, together with their horses and equipment, to the port of Jaffa in southern Palestine. From here, and supplied by sea, the army could march the relatively short distance to Jerusalem and besiege the Holy City. The fact that Urban and his advisers rejected this option is interpreted by Bachrach as a clear indication that the pope’s primary war aim was thus not to capture Jerusalem, but to provide military assistance to enable Byzantium to recapture territory in western Anatolia lost to the Turks.²⁴

Pryor’s work provides one major objection to this scenario on technological grounds. The fighting power of mailed knights mounted on warhorses was the key element in Western military tactics at this time, and the transport of horses required specially adapted shipping, as well as plentiful supplies of fodder and water and regular access to fresh air. At the time of the First Crusade, horses had recently been transported across the Adriatic Sea, across the English Channel, and from Italy to Malta and the Balearic Islands, but they had not travelled anything like the distance between Western Europe and the Levant. Pryor argues that it was only by the later twelfth century that specialised transport vessels (Fr. *uissiers*) were developed, which allowed horses to be conveyed long distances without suffering injury or sickness while at sea; such ships were undoubtedly in use during the Fourth Crusade and in subsequent naval expeditions. It is also questionable whether, even if Jerusalem could be taken, the city could possibly be held without Christian control of the areas to the north of Palestine, above all the key city of Antioch (mod. Antakya, Turkey) and its nearby ports. A crusader occupation of Jaffa and Jerusalem would have been dependent on supply from Cyprus, the nearest area of Christian control, and thus vulnerable to attack by the Fātimid navy.²⁵

There are further objections to Bachrach’s scenario, the first being the issue of coordination. It is difficult to see how squadrons sailing from more than half a dozen different ports several hundred kilometres apart (Barcelona, Narbonne, Marseilles, Genoa, Pisa, Amalfi, Venice, Brindisi) could have co-ordinated their voyages to arrive together at the far end of the Mediterranean Sea, given the difficulties encountered with currents and winds. The fleet of Richard the Lionheart was dispersed by storms shortly before reaching Cyprus in 1191; several vessels were wrecked or grounded, and it took considerable time and effort to regroup.²⁶ Of course it would not have been absolutely necessary to have squadrons sailing from so many different ports as Bachrach proposes; it would have been possible to use Byzantine Cyprus, with good harbours at Limassol and Famagusta, as the main assembly area. Yet even with a united fleet crossing from Cyprus to the Palestinian mainland it was not simply a matter of sailing into Jaffa and storming ashore. The Fātimid forces in Palestine would surely have been aware of a forthcoming invasion, and would have undoubtedly opposed any landing. During the First Crusade, Italian fleets were only able to disembark once the port had been captured by land forces in 1099. The majority of vessels available would have been sailing ships functioning as transports, but these could not have been manoeuvred in to shore, since the sea off Jaffa contained rocks and reefs. Troops might be landed by transferring them in dribbles onto small boats, but this was a highly risky undertaking in the face of an enemy; it would have also required a large number of sailors to man all the vessels. In fact, the only effective means of landing troops outside a port was by using galleys, whose oar-based propulsion afforded the necessary manoeuvrability. It was galleys that enabled the forces of the Third Crusade to

²⁴ Bachrach, “Papal War Aims in 1096”, pp. 319-44.

²⁵ Pryor, “A View from a Masthead”, pp. 125-40; Pryor, “A Medieval Mediterranean Maritime Revolution: Crusading by Sea, ca. 1096–1204”.

²⁶ The Chronicle of the Third Crusade, pp. 175-82.

disembark near Acre in northern Palestine. The port itself was held by Saladin's forces, but these were confined by Christian forces which had erected fortifications around the city.

It is questionable whether the Italian maritime powers had sufficient galleys in 1096 for the type of major amphibious operation that Bachrach proposes. Galleys were designed primarily for war, and the numbers available would be greatly outnumbered by the sailing vessels that were used for commercial purposes. We know of a Genoese fleet including 12 galleys that sailed in July 1097 and another with 26 galleys in 1100.²⁷ The fact that they left at such a considerable time after the council of Clermont, and about a year after the land armies, suggests that the galleys may have been specially constructed for a campaign in the East, an operation which took some time. There is no clear agreement whether these expeditions were undertaken as private enterprise, on the initiative of the Genoese state, or a combination of both, but the progress made by the crusade by the time they set off is an indication that they hoped to gain trading concessions and possibly territory that would justify their costs.

This consideration brings us to a final objection to Bachrach's "option not chosen". An amphibious attack on Jaffa carrying the numbers projected by him would have required a greater number of galleys than were actually sent east in the entire period 1097-1100. This is additional evidence which suggests that the construction of the requisite number of vessels, plus payment and supplies for their crews for the duration of the campaign, would have required considerable financial outlay. Genoa and Venice may well have been prepared to make this sacrifice in exchange for commercial concessions; this was, after all the prevailing pattern of the Italian republics' involvement in the crusades throughout the twelfth century. However, what of the crusaders who would be expected to undertake all of the fighting? Troops travelling by land had considerable outlays for food, but they could also resort to foraging (especially to secure green fodder for horses) or plundering if necessary. By contrast, for individual crusaders the costs of sea voyages were all up front. Before they could travel they needed sufficient funds to pay for their passage as well as their provisions for the entire voyage. Even horses represented an additional expense at sea. On land, they could generally graze free on grass; on ship, bought-in fodder was required every day.

The proof of this argument can be seen in events over a century later, when conditions for a naval expedition were actually far more favourable. From 1198 preaching and recruitment were under way for a new crusade, which was intended to be directed against Egypt, the main seat of Fātimid power, rather than Jerusalem. By this time crusading taxation was well established and functioned reasonably well.²⁸ A considerable amount of money was collected by the church, although it is uncertain how much filtered down to individual crusaders. The crusade leaders only seem to have considered a sea passage, and their plenipotentiaries started negotiations with the republic of Venice to secure the necessary transport. At the conclusion of the talks, the Venetians agreed to provide transport and provisions for an army of 33,500 men and 4500 horses at a cost of 2 marks per man and 4 marks per horses, amounting to a total of 85,000 marks of the standard of Cologne. However, recent research has emphasised how much of a financial contribution was made by the Venetian republic itself, which had 50 galleys constructed at its own expense and agreed to supply ships and crews who might otherwise have been deployed in more lucrative commercial activities for the duration of the campaign. So a large proportion of the up-front costs was borne by Venice rather than the other crusaders. The subsequent course of the crusade is well known. When the army assembled at Venice, far fewer than the projected number of crusaders were found to be present; many had taken other routes or simply failed to leave. Even after two voluntary collections, the total sum raised was only 51,000 marks, leaving 34,000 marks still owing to the Venetians. The

²⁷ Pryor, "A View from a Masthead", pp. 92-93; France, "The First Crusade as a Naval Enterprise", pp. 389-90.

²⁸ Cazel, "Financing the Crusades"; Constable, "The Financing of the Crusades in the Twelfth Century".

need to pay off this debt started a chain of events that led to the ultimate diversion of the crusade to Constantinople.²⁹

In 1096 there was no mechanism in place for taxation that could have paid for the construction of galleys, hired their crews and augmented the funds of poorer crusaders. The effects of the Investiture Contest meant that much of Germany and northern Italy refused to acknowledge the authority of Pope Urban II, and without the co-operation of any of the Western monarchies, it is scarcely thinkable that the papacy could have organised the finance necessary to pay in advance for a large-scale amphibious operation against Palestine. No land passage ever suffered from such financial problems as bedevilled and ultimately subverted the crusade of 1201-4. The option not chosen in 1096 was not chosen for very good reasons.

The Fourth Crusade marked a fundamental change in the aims and logistics of crusading in that its intended goal was no longer the Holy Land, but Egypt. The advance of the Seljuks of Rūm and other Turkish emirates and the collapse of Byzantine power in Asia Minor pushed back the Christian-Muslim frontier and extended the area of hostile territory that would need to be traversed by land armies, while Saladin's conquests in 1187 brought large sections of the Syrian and Palestinian littoral under enemy control. After the failure of the Third Crusade, the Western powers recognised that the key to the liberation of Jerusalem was Egypt, the economic powerhouse that paid for Saladin's armies and fleet. An overland passage to Egypt would have added hundreds of kilometres to an already difficult journey, and so only naval expeditions were considered against Saladin and his Ayyūbid and Mamlūk successors.³⁰ This preference for Egypt as the key strategic objective continued up to and beyond the fall of the last Christian possessions in the Holy Land in 1291, with seaborne crusades being launched in 1217-21, 1227-29, 1239-41, 1248-54, 1267, 1269-70, 1270-72 and 1309, either to launch attacks on Egypt or to defend the diminishing Frankish territories in Palestine.³¹ It was only in 1396 that a major overland campaign was again launched, when a combined force from England, France and Hungary launched an attack down the lower Danube that ended in disaster at Nicopolis.³² By this time the geopolitical situation had changed completely, and the immediate aim of crusading was to stem the advance of the Ottoman Turks, who were now threatening the Christian kingdoms and principalities of south-eastern Europe. Pope Urban II's dream of the recovery of the Holy Land had long ceased to be a realistic possibility.

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²⁹ Queller and Day, "Some Arguments in Defense of the Venetians on the Fourth Crusade"; Queller and Madden, "Some Further Arguments in Defense of the Venetians on the Fourth Crusade"; Madden, "Vows and Contracts in the Fourth Crusade"; Madden, "Food and the Fourth Crusade"; Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*.

³⁰ Murray, "The Place of Egypt in the Military Strategy of the Crusades, 1099-1221".

³¹ Hiestand, "Friedrich II. und der Kreuzzug"; Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade*; Lower, *The Barons' Crusade*; Bleck, "Ein oberrheinischer Palästina-Kreuzzug 1267"; Lloyd, "The Lord Edward's Crusade, 1270-1272"; Housley, "Pope Clement V and the Crusades of 1309-10".

³² On the Nicopolis campaign, see most recently Veszprémy, "Some Remarks on Recent Hungarian Historiography of the Crusade of Nicopolis (1396)".

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