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**Contemporary Documents concerning the Fourth Crusade  
and the Latin Empire of Constantinople**

**(a) Innocent III to the Illustrious Emperor of Constantinople** (*Lateran Palace, 16<sup>th</sup> November 1202*). *This letter, written a week before the fall of Zara, is a key piece of evidence for the diversion of the Fourth Crusade, as well as important testimony to the pope's view of the disputed imperial succession in Germany.*

‘We have received your letter and envoys with the courtesy which befits your imperial authority, and we have diligently examined those matters which these same envoys wished to put before us, as well as what was contained in the letters themselves. Your envoys indeed suggested (and these ideas are detailed in your letters) that since the Christian army which was coming to the aid of the Holy Land preferred to invade your highness's territory and take up arms against Christians, it was fitting to our office that we should recall them from such a purpose, lest by defiling their hands with the blood of Christians they should by this incur the displeasure of God, and being weakened in no small measure would be to some extent anyway unable to attack the enemies of Christ.

Moreover, on your excellency's behalf they added that we should show no favour at all to Alexius, son of Isaac Angelos the former emperor, who approached Philip, Duke of Swabia, in order to obtain with his help the empire in your place. This was because there is no reason for the empire to be given to him [*Alexius*], since the empire is conferred by election, not by succession, unless by chance he had been born after his father had acceded to the exalted rank of imperial authority. Alexius certainly cannot claim this, when he was born before his father was elevated to imperial rule. Since his father was then a private person he cannot claim for himself any right to the empire.

In addition, your highness has suggested to us that since the Emperor Frederick gravely offended the Roman Church,<sup>1</sup> and persecuted it with great hatred, and his sons, following in the footsteps of their father, have caused it no little damage,

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick I Barbarossa, Western Emperor 1152-90.

we should not grant help or favour to the said Duke of Swabia, that he could by any means whatsoever obtain the kingdom [*of Germany*]. We were easily persuaded to follow this policy since this same Philip had publicly received clerical status, and persons of this sort cannot abandon this, nor be decorated with the belt of knighthood, nor obtain any [*secular*] dignity from the people, since they are bound by the chain of excommunication.

Furthermore we can inform your imperial prudence as follows: that the said Alexius some time ago came to us, and in our presence and that of our brothers – with many noble Romans standing by – made a grave charge; asserting that you had unjustly arrested his father, that you had also wickedly had the latter blinded, and had kept him bound and in prison for a long time. Since he could have recourse to no one superior to us, and we, according to the Apostle, ‘were debtors both to the wise and the unwise’;<sup>2</sup> it was our responsibility to provide justice for him. And when we replied that we would see what might be done, he left us and travelled in haste to the said Philip, his brother-in-law. After discussion it was decided that Philip would send messengers to the leaders of the Christian army without delay, requesting and begging them that since he [*Alexius*] and his father had been wickedly deprived of their rights and of the empire, they should go with him to the kingdom of Constantinople and lend him counsel and assistance to recover it. He has promised them that he will pay them back generously, both with aid for the Holy Land and in money and gifts, and also that he is prepared to obey our instructions in everything and about everything, and that he wishes to honour the most holy Roman Church in every possible way, to the best of his ability, and to fulfil what shall be pleasing to our wishes. However, after some discussion these said leaders replied that they could not nor ought to proceed further in such a difficult matter without our instructions and authority – they wished to consult us on the issue and then to do what was pleasing to us. They instructed our beloved son Peter, Cardinal Priest of S. Marcello,<sup>3</sup> who was supposed to sail with them, to return to our presence and to find out our wish on all these matters above. This cardinal did indeed come to see us and took great pains to explain everything to us.

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<sup>2</sup> *Romans*, i.14.

When your envoys have arrived at our court, we shall consult with our brothers about these issues, and we shall make a decision which will be properly pleasing to you; even though various people have suggested that we should look with kindness and favour upon a plan of this sort, because the Church of the Greeks has not been obedient and faithful to the Apostolic See. And with regard to the advice which your highness wants to give us, that we should assist in obtaining the Roman empire [only] a person who must love the Roman Church and be obedient to our instructions; you should know that, although the said Philip is powerful and wealthy, King Otto is however raised by the grace of God, with the assistance of our support and striving. Up to now he [*Philip*] has been unable to prevail against him. What will happen hereafter will depend on how much you help us, for although many promises have been made to us, your imperial majesty will not be unaware that you ought to have our favour [only] insofar as you actually provide us with assistance, not merely with promises. For if this same Philip should have obtained the empire, much harm would have come to you from his rule, since he would have been able very easily to mount an attack upon your empire through the land of our dearest son in Christ Frederick, the illustrious King of Sicily, his nephew, just as the former emperor Henry, his brother, planned to occupy your empire from Sicily.

Although in the time of your predecessor Manuel of famous memory the Constantinopolitan empire did not indeed deserve that we should do this, since he always replied favourably to ourselves and our predecessors but actually did nothing, we have acted in a spirit of gentleness and kindness, believing that once you have seen the grace with which we have treated you, you must speedily correct those things which up to now you and your predecessors have failed to do. You ought to work for this as thoroughly as human endeavour can do, to put out the fire in distant parts, not to feed it, lest it spread to your area. We therefore ask your imperial majesty, [indeed] we advise, suggest to you and exhort you that, however you act in these matters, you take care to respond to us with deeds and not merely with words, since we have been at pains to demonstrate the love which we have for you in our actions as well as our

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Capuanus, from Amalfi, appointed cardinal deacon of S. Maria in Via Lata in 1193, promoted to cardinal priest in 1201, died August 1214. He was subsequently legate in the Holy Land 1203 and 1206, and in Constantinople 1204-5.

speech. However, we propose to send [to you] our envoy about this matter; [even] if perhaps he is rather slow, do not you delay in letting us know your response to this as quickly as possible. Dated at the Lateran, 16<sup>th</sup> November.

[Translated from *Die Register Innocenz' III. 5 Pontifikatsjahr 1202/3*, ed. O. Hageneder *et alii* (Vienna 1993), 239-43 no. 121].

**(b) Innocent III to the Marquis of Montferrat and the Counts of Flanders, Blois and St. Pol.** (Ferentino, summer 1203, c. 20<sup>th</sup> June?). *The pope expresses his disappointment with the leaders of the Crusade after the attack on Zara, and orders them to proceed directly to the Holy Land, forbidding any attack upon the Byzantine Empire.*

Since you have departed from Egypt ‘through a mighty hand and a stretched out arm’ <sup>4</sup> to offer yourselves as a sacrifice to the Lord, we have lamented not a little and we do lament that Pharaoh still pursues you, <sup>5</sup> or rather that you follow Pharaoh who strives to reduce you to servitude under the yoke of ancient sin through a specious excuse of necessity and a veil of piety. As we have already informed you, we have lamented and we still lament both for ourself and for you, and for all the Christian people. [We lament] on our own behalf because we have with our tears sown seed, <sup>6</sup> not without bitterness of heart and with no little bodily exertion, often preaching the word of God to you and others, and exhorting those who worship the name of Christ through our envoys and letters, to avenge the injury done to Jesus Christ. We believed that the crop which would result from this would benefit the people. But unforeseen the Enemy of Man has sown weeds in this our harvest, and has so ruined the crop that the wheat seems to have degenerated into tares. <sup>7</sup> For you, however, [we lament] because though you have purged the old yeast, and we believe have with your actions now more or less driven out the old [*sinful*] man, even just a tiny bit of yeast may infect the whole crop. For only if you do not serve in your white garment just as though you were wearing your old clothes, if you do not take your

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<sup>4</sup> *Deuteronomy*, v.15.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Exodus*, xiv.8.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Psalm*, cxxvi.5 (AV).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Matthew*, xiii.25.

hand once again from the plough and look behind you like Lot's wife,<sup>8</sup> will you now seem to me to be, as the Apostle says, 'fit for the Kingdom of God'.<sup>9</sup>

We have also lamented and we still lament for the Christian people, since they are being further brought low where it was hoped that they would instead benefit. For when many who had gone before you to help the Holy Land heard that you had not gone there, they lost heart and returned to their homes by the next passage. Knowing of their departure and doubting whether you would ever come, the Saracens have taken heart [in their struggle] against the Christians, and although we are reluctant to say for certain that they have prevailed as a consequence of sin, this is what is being said nearly everywhere. Still, we rejoice that after receiving our letter and realising your grave fault, you devoutly and humbly followed the apostolic command. Since you, my sons, the counts, and two French barons, have acknowledged and affirmed on oath and pledged yourselves in a sealed letter to make satisfaction in accordance with our instructions for what happened at Zara that led you to incur the sentence of excommunication, you have [now] received the blessing of absolution. I trust that your repentance is genuine, so that, because you are penitent for what you have done, you will be careful to avoid doing anything similar in future. A person who goes on to commit once again the sins for which he has been sorry is not a penitent but a trickster. The penitent committing the same sin again is like 'a dog returning to his vomit'.<sup>10</sup> A person who sins once, and then returns to commit the same sin again, is indeed irresponsible. None of you should therefore dare to assume that it is permissible for you to seize or to plunder the land of the Greeks, even though the latter may be disobedient to the Apostolic See, or on the grounds that the Emperor of Constantinople has deposed and even blinded his brother and usurped the imperial throne. For though this same emperor and the men entrusted to his rule may have sinned, both in these and in other matters, it is not for you to judge their faults, nor have you assumed the sign of the cross to punish this injury; rather you specifically pledged your self to the duty of avenging the insult to the cross.

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<sup>8</sup> See *Genesis*, xix.15-26.

<sup>9</sup> *Luke*, ix.62.

<sup>10</sup> *II Peter*, ii.22.

Therefore we advise and strongly urge you noblemen, and by this Apostolic letter we command you, that you neither deceive yourselves nor allow yourselves to be deceived by others that you are behaving in some pious way, for this will result in harm to your souls, which God forbid! But rather you should abandon these frivolous and unnecessary commitments and sail to aid the Holy Land and avenge the injury to the cross; there you will gain booty from the enemy which, if you make a delay in Romania, you may perhaps be forced to extort from [your] brothers. For otherwise we shall be unable, and nor ought we, to promise you the grace of remission [from your sins]. We want you to be clearly mindful of the terms of our prohibition: that we forbid you, under threat of excommunication, to invade or dare to harm the lands of Christians, unless these should wilfully hinder your journey or because some other just or necessary reason should occur. If you should pursue any other course of action, you should take care to follow the advice of our legate, but we warn you not to act lightly against these instructions. However, to prevent the guilt of the doge and people of Venice bringing harm to you, we order your to fulfil our wishes by delivering to them the letters which we have directed to them, and to make these publicly known among you. Any delay in this will lead to sin. Dated at Ferentino.

[*Die Register Innocenz' III. 6 Pontifikatsjahr 1203/4*, ed. O. Hageneder, J.C. Moore & A. Sommerlechner (Vienna 1995), pp. 163-5 no. 101].

(c) **Innocent III to the Archbishops and other Prelates in France** (Rome, 26<sup>th</sup> May 1205). *The pope requests them to send both monks and religious books to the new Latin Empire of Constantinople.*

Divine clemency moves us in many different ways, that we may wake from the sleep of death to life and be relieved from the lake of misery into hope of Eternal glory. We rejoice therefore, and the whole Church of the saints ought rightly to rejoice, that the East has looked forth and visited us from on high, so that a great part of the eastern Church, namely almost all of Greece, which for a long time past has refused to follow in the footsteps of its mother, the Holy Roman Church, has in our time been transformed from disobedience to obedience, and from contempt to devotion.

To increase this joy still further, it appears that our dearest son in Christ Baldwin, the illustrious Emperor of Constantinople, is devoting all his energies to this end, and intends to spread the Christian religion in every way he can and should; and he is working with burning zeal and diligent care that the building which is now very largely completed does not collapse. For indeed he is spreading abroad the devotion planted in his breast into fruitful good works, and he has humbly requested us to arrange for the despatch to the Constantinople region of devout and prudent men from the Cistercians, the Cluniacs, canons regular and other religious orders, to implant the truth of the Catholic faith and to strengthen it in perpetuity, and [for us] to provide what is needful for its prelates that they may come there. He has asked that we have missals, breviaries and other books containing church services according to the teaching of the Holy Roman Church sent to those parts, at the very least as examples [to be copied].

Since we wish to give these requests of the emperor a gracious assent, one commensurate with the extent to which we are so often impressed with the sincerity of his faith, we fervently ask and exhort you all, and instruct you through this Apostolic Letter that you aid his pious wish as much as you can, choosing men from each of these orders who are distinguished for their learning and good behaviour and strong in their faith to send to these parts. Through them that new plantation will be well instructed in the teaching of the Lord and will yield an appropriate harvest, that the enterprise which has in these times been so amazingly begun may be even more miraculously fulfilled to the praise and glory of the Redeemer. Take care to send the books, with which we know you are provided not just in abundance but even to excess, at the very least as examples, so that your abundance may relieve their need and that the Church in the East may not say the Divine service differently from that in the West, but – just as there is one God and one Faith – so East and West may praise and glorify Him in the same way. Dated at Rome, 26<sup>th</sup> May, in the eighth year [of his pontificate].

[*Die Register Innocenz' III. 8 Pontifikatsjahr 1205/1206*, ed. O. Hageneder and A. Sommerlechner (Vienna 2001), pp. 129-30 no. 71].



(d) **Innocent III to the [Latin] Patriarch of Constantinople** [Tommaso Morosini] (Lateran Palace, 7<sup>th</sup> December 1210). *The pope writes to the Patriarch to prevent Latins from taking service with the Despot Michael of Epiros and the Emperor of Nicea, Theodore Lascaris. This letter is important evidence for the parlous military and financial situation of the Latin Empire, even in its early years.*

From the letters of our dearest son in Christ the illustrious Emperor Henry of Constantinople it has become known to our see that Michael [Dukas] has acted in contempt of the fealty which he had pledged to the emperor, holding his men for naught, and not least breaking the oath which he had taken to this same emperor and his brother Eustace, to whom Michael had given his eldest daughter as wife.<sup>11</sup> Capturing through treachery Amadeus, the imperial constable, with about a hundred knights and other men, he has had some of them flogged, shut up others in prison and wickedly killed certain of them; and, what is horrible to say, he has crucified the constable, his chaplain and three other men. Now Michael is bent on further mischief, and strengthened by the power of certain Latins, who have been blinded by cupidity and fled to him, he has besieged the emperor's castles, burned his villages, and had all the Latin priests whom he has been able to capture, along with a bishop-elect - who had been confirmed in office<sup>12</sup> - beheaded. Meanwhile Lascaris, who claims to be the emperor, has furnished himself with Latin troops. These men have abandoned fear of God and respect for man. They despise the wages which were all that this same emperor could afford to pay them, preferring to receive larger payments from his enemies than those that he can afford to give them. Lascaris has also captured one of his principal men and, so it is alleged, had him flayed.<sup>13</sup>

If the Greeks should recover the empire of Romania, this will more or less completely prevent aid going to the Holy Land, and lacking this help that place and its people may once again be lost. Before imperial rule was transferred from the Greeks to the Latins, the former were never willing to aid the Holy Land, even though they

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<sup>11</sup> They had married in the summer of 1209.

<sup>12</sup> That is, whose election had been formally confirmed by his canonical superior, but who had not yet received consecration.

<sup>13</sup> Jean Longnon, *Les Compagnons de Villehardouin. Recherches sur les croisés de la quatrième croisade* (Geneva 1978), p. 98, suggested that this was Pierre de Bracheux, for whom below note 16.

were often advised and requested by us [to do this]. Indeed the Emperor Isaac had a mosque built in Constantinople at Saladin's request. If they could destroy the Latins, they would be reinforced in their sinful apostasy, and their hatred of the Latins, to whom even now they refer as dogs, would continue; and thus their modern day deviation would be made worse than before. For they grumble incessantly that the army of the Latins was diverted to capture Constantinople through the deliberate plan of the Apostolic See.

We instruct you, our brother, by this Apostolic letter that you diligently warn and persuade the Latins, and admonish them on pain of excommunication not to give help or comfort to the Greeks against the aforesaid emperor and those faithful to him, and especially not to the aforesaid Michael, who by killing priests has incurred the bond of excommunication. Nonetheless, you should advise the emperor to furnish adequate wages for his men, so that they are not forced by poverty to go over to the Greeks. Do not hesitate, however, to restrain those who ignore your instructions and dare to side with the Greeks against the emperor and his men through ecclesiastical censure, without right of appeal. Nobody shall dare to set aside the sentences which you have imposed upon them because of this except from on the express instructions of the Apostolic See. Dated at the Lateran, 7<sup>th</sup> December, in the thirteenth year [of our pontificate].

[Innocent's Register, Book XIII, ep. 184, *Patrologia Latina* 216 cols. 353-4].

**(e) The Emperor Henry sends out a newsletter describing recent victories** (13<sup>th</sup> January 1212) *This letter, which survives in three manuscripts, from monasteries in the dioceses of Liège, Tournai and Cambrai respectively, is one of our most important pieces of evidence for the early history of the Latin Empire.*

Henry, by the grace of God the most faithful emperor in Christ, crowned by God, ruler of Romania and always Augustus, to all his friends to whom the course of this present letter shall come, greeting in the Lord of Lords.

Since your affection had sought to be informed of our [present] state and of how we are doing, we are therefore confident that you will be overjoyed when we tell you in this present document what the Lord has granted to us, even if [we do not include] every single event. You know that we have up to now had four principal and most powerful enemies in our empire; being placed exposed in the midst of these, we have sustained constant attacks from them and harassment on all sides. The first and greatest of these was Lascaris, who holds all the land beyond the Arm of St. George as far as Turkey, and there claims for himself an imperial title.<sup>14</sup> He has caused us a great deal of trouble from that region. From the other side Boril has threatened us. He had similarly usurped for himself the name of emperor and the insignia of imperial rule among the Bulgarians, among whom he seized the rulership for himself by violence, and he then for a long time wore us out through his attacks.<sup>15</sup> In another region, namely in the kingdom of Thessalonica, were Michael, a most powerful traitor, and Straces, the nephew of Johannitza, formerly the great scourge of Greece, who although they both once took oaths of fealty to us were still striving with all their forces for our defeat in those regions. Hence first, on the advice of our barons, and so as to defeat and overthrow the excessive power of these men, we journeyed to the region of Thessalonica, twelve days march from Constantinople, as we believe that you have previously been informed. After having there a long struggle with the aforesaid enemies, finally with the help of God we reduced them to a point where they could do nothing, or very little, to harm us or anyone else, nor did the dishonest and unheard-of betrayals which they had been so often accustomed to practice against us profit them. For Michael had sworn oaths to us four times, and Straces three times, which neither of them had any hesitations about breaking. But we have therefore finished by punishing them for this, that they are forced to repent having broken their faith to us so many times, more than for all the other sins they have committed. For we have taken from them the majority of the best land that they hold, and if we had not been called back to Constantinople to deal with more important business, not a single cottage (*domuncula*) would have remained to them within our empire. But two other enemies of our empire, namely Boril and Lascaris, were posing a grave threat to Constantinople, one by land and the other by sea, and now Lascaris had captured one

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<sup>14</sup> Theodore Lascaris, ruler of Nikea 1205-22, was crowned as emperor in March or April 1208.

<sup>15</sup> Boril, Tsar of Bulgaria 1207-18, nephew of the previous tsar Kalojan, who had seized the throne from his cousin Slav

of a our greater men, lord Peter de Bracheux, <sup>16</sup> and had mustered a large number of galleys in order to attack Constantinople. For this reason the city was placed in great danger and was in fear, to such an extent that many of our people, who despaired of our return, proposed to flee by sea, while many others had indeed already deserted to Lascaris, promising him on oath help against us. Thus returning in haste because of this, we arrived at a certain city of ours called Roussa on Easter Day. <sup>17</sup> We left at dawn the next day, and after going a little way from the city we learned from a faithful messenger that Boril was not far in front of us with a great host of Cumans, Vlachs and Bulgarians, and lay in ambush awaiting our arrival. He had blocked the road on which we were about to travel, which was very narrow and difficult, enclosed by mountains on both sides, hoping treacherously to trap us in this difficult mountain terrain. And if the Lord had not revealed his cunning and hidden trap, he would have been able easily to capture our little party on that journey, since we did not have more than sixty knights [with us]. But once we had learned the truth from the messengers and scouts whom we sent out there, we left that road and made a detour by another road which ran along the sea shore, travelling from one to another of the castles which we held there, and adding the troops who were stationed in these to our force; and as we marched onwards we met many [other] men of ours, who had made the three days' journey from Constantinople to join us. Seeing that our numbers had now been increased, we promptly turned round to pursue Boril, with the intention of fighting him if we could find him anywhere. But hearing of our advance, he took flight, and although we chased him for two days we were never able to pursue him quickly enough to catch him. Then indeed we turned back to Constantinople, where we were received joyfully and with great ceremony, for the people there had for a long time been anxious for our arrival. We remained there until the month of July, and in the meantime we heard all sorts of rumours from different places.

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<sup>16</sup> A nobleman from the Beauvaisis, a vassal of Count Louis of Blois, attested from 1180 onwards, who joined the Fourth Crusade with Boniface of Montferrat after the capture of Zara, and who was frequently mentioned by Villehardouin. He returned briefly to France in 1209, before coming back to Romania. He may well be the 'principal man' whom, according to Innocent III Lascaris had flayed after his capture, above (d). For his career, see Longnon, *Les Compagnons de Villehardouin*, pp. 91-8.

<sup>17</sup> Easter in 1211 fell on 3<sup>rd</sup> April.

For the barons whom we had left to look after the interests of the throne in the march of Thessalonica, namely Count Berthold,<sup>18</sup> our brother Eustace and various others, informed us that our enemy Straces, whom we had left all but powerless, had recovered his strength with the help of Boril, who had sent to help him 52 squadrons (*acies*). Straces was now causing us a great deal of harm, but the aforesaid barons had mustered their forces and allying themselves with Michael, who had now made a treaty with them, had met Straces in the plain of Pelagonia, where they had fought with him and gained the victory. Straces had left the majority of his army dead on that field.

On the other shore, we were informed that the Sultan of Iconium, who had concluded a sworn alliance with us and pledged his help against Lascaris, had entered the latter's lands with a great army of Turks.<sup>19</sup> However, Lascaris had met him in battle with a huge host of Greeks, and also of Latins who had joined him despite the excommunication of the supreme pontiff, and with their help Lascaris had gained victory in this battle against the Sultan, who was trapped and killed, along with the majority of the Turks. As a result Lascaris became fiercer and more arrogant; he sent letters to all the Greek provinces, announcing the honour and reward of his victory, and also signifying that if they wanted to help him then he would soon liberate all of Greece from the Latin dogs. Because of this, everyone began to murmur against us, and they promised him help if he should come to fight against Constantinople. When we were informed of this, and on the advice of those faithful to us, we crossed the Arm of St. George to attack him, wishing rather to take the offensive against him than wait for him to attack Constantinople. However, after we had crossed the Arm, but before all our knights had made the crossing, Lascaris promptly came with a great host to meet us near the town of Pegae, which was the only place we held there. And although we were very few in number, we were as though many in our courage and spirit, and we went out to do battle with him outside the town, but he immediately took flight into the nearby hills, in the closeness of which he trusted. He was, however, unable to retreat so fast as to avoid us, who were following him close

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<sup>18</sup> Count Berthold of Katzenellenbogen, who had been an ally of Boniface of Montferrat, but had not joined the latter's Lombard vassals in opposing the rule of Margaret of Hungary and her son Demetrius.

<sup>19</sup> Kay Khusraw I.

behind, inflicting heavy casualties on the tail of his army, the greater part of which we slew, capturing many horses with their equipment. Afterwards, when we had mustered our army [fully], we began to ride openly through the land, but he did not dare to attack us in the plain, but holding the hills with his army, he set ambushes for our foragers who were sent out to gather foodstuffs. Finally, seeing us riding around their territory wherever we wanted, the people of that land held an assembly and sent a message to Lascaris, on behalf of them all, telling him that they were unwilling or unable to put up with this any longer, and if he did not join them in fighting they would not hesitate to surrender to us. On hearing this, Lascaris mustered a great host of people, both infantry and cavalry, so that he had ninety squadrons, of which eight were of Latins, who abandoning their fear of both God and men were rendering help to him against us, despite excommunication by the lord pope. Thus Lascaris met us with this great multitude on 15<sup>th</sup> October near the River Luparcus where we had pitched out tents. However, he did not lead his army into the plain, but rather lay in hiding next to a certain mountain while he sent two squadrons out before our camp. Some of our men saw these and pursued them, and they discovered his host drawn up near us. Once they had told us of this, we immediately ordered our men to don their arms, and marching there we were struck by admiration and wonder, seeing so many people there, drawn up and divided into squadrons, for in one single division of Lascaris's army there were 1500 men in armour (*loricati*), more indeed than there were in our whole army. For we had only fifteen small squadrons, one of which remained behind to guard the tents, and in each of these squadrons there were no more than fifteen knights, apart from our own division, in which we posted fifty. Seeing, however, that we could not safely avoid battle, we placed our hope entirely in God alone, and in the most holy Cross, which was borne before us;<sup>20</sup> and so we ordered twelve of our squadrons simultaneously to charge – fearing that if a smaller number attacked they would be swallowed up by the enemy multitude. The latter indeed charged against us with great cries and the sound of trumpets, pitting horse against horse and sword against sword, and manfully sustained the first encounter. But the result of the battle remained in doubt only for a little while, for not long after

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<sup>20</sup> This letter never expressly refers to Henry's men as Crusaders, but this passage is nonetheless significant, and especially in the light of a letter of Pope Innocent, written on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1211, which does refer to Henry as a *crucesignatus*, *Patrologia Latina* 216, col. 470, no. 109.

receiving the first blows the other side began to flee, and as they fled our swords struck them in the back.

We then began to pursue them fiercely and valiantly, and we continued to slay them from the first hour of the day when the battle began until sunset, being so mixed up with them that they could scarcely distinguish their own men from others. Hence one ought not to doubt that many [of them] perished from the sword that day. What is however wonderful in the eyes of all those hearing this, nobody from our entire army perished or was found to have received a mortal wound, although many of the Latins on the side of Lascaris fell in the battle. Some of these, indeed, were captured alive and held prisoner, and others who were able to escape with their lives surrendered to our mercy the following night. From this day onwards Lascaris has been almost without forces, nor has he dared to venture anything against us, but from then on he has begun to surrender land to us, and all the inhabitants right up to the Turkish frontier have come to submit to our empire, apart from a few castles which we are confident that with the help of God we shall force to surrender next summer.

At this same time, while we were busy in these regions, a message was sent to us from our barons of the kingdom of Thessalonica, namely Count Berthold, our brother Eustace and others, to whom we had entrusted guardianship over the frontier, that Boril had arrived there with a great army, inflicting considerable harm upon us; but these same barons had mustered together, and in conjunction with our brother-in-law Sclavus, they had attacked him.<sup>21</sup> But he fled the land in fear of them, leaving behind him twenty-four companies of foot and two of horsemen, who were all killed by our men who were pursuing them, and nobody at all escaped. So therefore you will understand that we have everywhere obtained victory through Divine help, and the four enemies whom we named above, namely Boril, Lascaris, Michael and Straces, have all been completely humiliated and stripped of their power.

You should know that there is [now] no obstacle to our total victory and possession of the empire, apart from a [sufficient] force of Latins to whom we shall be

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<sup>21</sup> Sclavus (Alexios the Slav), a cousin of Boril, held the fortress of Melnik and Ochrid as a vassal of Henry until his death in 1216, Prinzing, 'Der Brief Kaiser Heinrichs', p. 431.

able to give the land which we have already gained, or shall gain [in future], since as you know there is no point in gaining something unless one has men to hold it.

Dated at Pergamum, on the Octave of the Epiphany, in the year from the Lord's Incarnation 1211. <sup>22</sup>

[G. Prinzing, 'Der Brief Kaiser Heinrichs von Konstantinopel vom 13. Januar 1212. Überlieferungsgeschichte, Neuedition und Kommentar', *Byzantion* 43 (1973), 395-431, at pp. 411-18].

**(f) The Treaty of Perugia (April 1229)** *The terms by which John of Brienne became Emperor of Constantinople are set out in this document. The initial agreement was negotiated in 1228, and the terms were then referred back to the barons of the Latin Empire, who approved them with one addition. They were then confirmed by John and Pope Gregory IX at Perugia in the spring of 1229, although John did not in the event travel out to Constantinople for another two years.*

We John, by Divine permission King of Jerusalem, make known to all you who will read the present document that in the presence of our most holy father in Christ Gregory, by the grace of God Supreme Pontiff of the Holy Roman Church, and of the lord Cardinals, and the lord Simon, Patriarch of Constantinople, <sup>23</sup> and in our presence, [there appeared] the lord John, Bishop of Mandytos, and the noblemen Vilain of Aulnay and Pons of Lyons, <sup>24</sup> envoys of the barons of the empire of Constantinople, who have been given full and free power by these same barons to make and ordain whatever arrangements for the said empire that shall seem expedient to them, as is described in a letter patent from the nobleman Narjot of Toucy, *Baiulus* of the Empire of Romania and from the other barons of that same empire. With our consent and that of the said envoys, a plan has been drawn up for this empire, as follows: In the name of the Lord, amen. First, a marriage has been agreed between

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<sup>22</sup> The year was reckoned here by the so-called 'Florentine' style, in which the New Year began at the Annunciation of the Virgin, 25<sup>th</sup> March.

<sup>23</sup> Simon of Maugustel, Latin Patriarch of Constantinople 1227-33, and formerly Archbishop of Tyre 1216-27.

<sup>24</sup> Longnon, *Les Compagnons de Villehardouin*, p. 219, describes him as the Emperor Henry's *agent des affaires*, active from 1208 onwards in diplomacy and raising money in the west for the empire.



Baldwin and the daughter of King John, and this marriage will be consummated when they are come of age; and since this same Baldwin is of minor age, and on account of the weak state of the empire, the lord King John will have imperial rule and be crowned as emperor, and he will be the emperor for the whole of his life. He shall have plenary power and plenary dominion, as emperor, throughout his life. Whatever he shall do, whether in those lands which have already been gained, or in those to be gained, shall remain firm and stable in perpetuity, saving those who lawfully hold those places, which the recent Latins and their successors have held from the time of the Latins.<sup>25</sup> After the king's death, Baldwin or his lawful heirs shall have and hold full lordship over the empire, saving the donations which the king shall have made, both in fiefs and in other property, whether in lands which have already been gained, or in those to be gained, and apart from the hereditary portion assigned or to be assigned to the heirs of the king.

The lord king shall keep Baldwin safe and shall provide honourably for him, in accordance with his honour and Baldwin's honour, until Baldwin shall reach the age of twenty;<sup>26</sup> and when Baldwin has reached the age of twenty he shall be invested with the kingdom off Nikea, and with everything that pertains to it, and with all the land which the Latins have ever held beyond the Arm of St. George,<sup>27</sup> adding to this the duchy of Neocastro, saving [however] the tenures of the Latin men which they lawfully held from the time of the Emperor Henry and his heirs until the loss of the land, apart from the duchy of Nicomedia, which shall remain in the hands of the emperor.

And let it be known that it shall be in the will of the king to take what he shall prefer for his heirs, either all the land that is beyond the Arm, as the Greeks and Latins hold or have ever held [it], or all the land which Comnenus<sup>28</sup> holds as far as the appurtenances of Dimotika and Adrianople, and all the duchy of Philippopolis, whoever holds it, and all the land of the Slavs and that which was formerly that of the Thracians, apart from that which Asen holds,<sup>29</sup> and apart from the kingdom of

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<sup>25</sup> That is from the time of the Latin conquest.

<sup>26</sup> Baldwin was about eleven or twelve in 1229.

<sup>27</sup> The Dardanelles.

<sup>28</sup> Theodore Angelos, Despot of Epiros 1215-30, who styled himself 'Theodore Comenus Dukas'.

<sup>29</sup> John Asen, Tsar of Bulgaria 1218-41.

Thessalonica. [This shall be] in such a way that the heir of the king shall do liege homage to Baldwin, or to his heir, when he shall come to rule the empire after the death of the king, and he shall perform the due service for his land, without peril to his land, with this exception: that he will not be forced to go on a military expedition (*in exercitum*) in which the emperor is not present in person.

And if anybody shall have a fief in the land beyond the Arm, inside the lands of the heirs of the king and the emperor, he shall do liege homage to that lord in whose land the major part of his fief shall be, until he shall have heirs of his own flesh, among whom he can divide his fief after his death, and this shall be done, to avoid the fief being lost to either side.

Item, whoever shall hold a fief or lordship directly from the emperor shall perform liege homage to King John for his lifetime, and give fealty to him against all men who could live or die, except the aforesaid Baldwin, who, when he shall come to the age of twenty shall be held on oath to serve the king and his men and observe the aforesaid agreements. And this same Baldwin shall be required to provide the due service to the empire from his men in return for the land assigned to him; and the men of this land, whom Baldwin will have, shall perform liege homage to King John, and observe the aforesaid agreements. The barons will in the future enfeoff knights in the land which shall be acquired or re-acquired, according to the value of that land.

Item, lands worth 20,000 *hyperperata*, according to the judgement of the patriarch and of four barons of the empire, shall be assigned to the king's daughter, who shall be the wife of Baldwin, for a wedding portion (*dotalicia*).<sup>30</sup>

Item, a marriage portion shall be assigned to the queen, namely the wife of the king,<sup>31</sup> from the land that the king chooses for his heirs; and if it should happen that the king dies before the lands of his heirs shall be gained, a marriage portion shall be provided for the queen from the land which has already been gained, with the advice of the patriarch and of four barons. This will be done on condition that as soon as the land of the king's heirs shall be gained, she will receive her marriage portion in that

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<sup>30</sup> Mary, John's eldest daughter by his third marriage, then aged about four.

same land, if it is then to be found – this to be at the decision of the aforesaid arbiters; and then that [other] land will revert absolutely to Baldwin.

All those holding fiefs (*feodati*) in the empire shall indeed swear that they will hold to and observe these terms, and receive the king as [their] lord and emperor, when he shall with God's assistance come to this land. However, when the king is crowned, he will swear on oath to preserve, maintain and defend the empire, the rights of the empire, and the honours and approved customs of the empire, with good faith and on his own behalf, for as long as he shall live, and to the advantage of Baldwin and the latter's successors after his death, saving the rights and honours of the Venetians and of the churches, so that these things shall [indeed] be done.

The aforesaid *baiulus* Narjot and the other barons, faithful subjects and fiefholders have added one more point to this agreement, concerning the duchy of Philippopolis: that this, which their beloved and faithful companion (*consors*) and baron of the empire, lord Gerard of Stroim, and his predecessors lawfully held, shall be held for the appropriate service from him in whose part the said duchy falls, whether this be of the emperor or of his heirs. For we do not believe that it is the intention of anyone that he or anybody else shall any longer be deprived of their right. Therefore, once the said treaty had been seen by them [*the barons of Constantinople*], and deemed it to be useful and profitable, they approved the action of their envoys, rendering thanks to Him who would not permit his humble servants to perish from their tribulations.

These terms, as written down [above] in every detail, were agreed, welcomed and confirmed, and holding the Holy Gospels they swore firmly and faithfully to observe and fulfil them, and not to do anything against them. As evidence of this deed, they had drawn up letters patent, validated by the evidence of their seals. These were brought to the lord pope and to us by the noblemen Vilain of Aulnay and William of Douai, the envoys of the aforesaid barons. We have received these and accepted the terms contained in them. We add this, or rather declare it openly, with the assent of the aforesaid envoys, namely Vilain and William, since it has been

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<sup>31</sup> Berengaria, daughter of King Alfonso IX of Leon, whom John had married in 1224.

understood both by us and by the lord pope and the cardinals from the beginning of the aforesaid negotiations: that if it should happen that either Baldwin or our daughter should die, whether before or after the marriage is contracted between them, or the marriage be prevented for some other reason, while we are still living, we shall [still] have and hold rule over the empire for the whole space of our life; and those other things which have been described above as belonging to our wife and our heirs shall remain [to them] firmly and completely in perpetuity.

We have confirmed personally and on oath that we shall strictly observe all the terms written down above, in good faith, and not infringe them. In testimony of this fact we have had the present document drawn up and validated by our seal. Done in the year of the Lord 1229, in the month of April, at Perugia.

[*Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig*, ed. G.F.L. Tafel and G.M. Thomas (3 vols., *Fontes Rerum Austriacum*, Vienna 1856-7), ii.266-70 no. 273].

**(g) From the account of the envoys of the Roman Church to Nikea (1234)**

*This extract is taken from a lengthy report of the (eventually unsuccessful) negotiations for Church re-union which took place in Nikea and Nymphaion in the early months of 1234, which went into great detail both concerning the negotiations and the theological issues which divided the two Churches.*

Towards the end of March the patriarch wrote to us saying that he had received our letter, but he had barely been able to listen to it because of his heartfelt sorrow, since its content filled his heart with sadness.<sup>32</sup> And since he had been all on his own at Nikea, he had been unable to make any response to us, since the making of peace and its terms, and the discussion of our faith, was a matter that concerned everyone, but I now have their agreement to discuss all these matters with you.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, if you now change your mind it will seem to us that you have not come to

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<sup>32</sup> Germanos II, Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople (in exile) 1223-40.

<sup>33</sup> Here Germanos seems to have been referring in particular to the other Orthodox Patriarchs (of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem), since at an earlier stage of the negotiations he had said that it would be wrong to act without their advice, *Disputatio*, c. 13, p. 444.

secure peace, but rather in order to tempt us'. He also wrote to our brothers, namely Friar Benedict the Minister of Romania, and Friar James of Rossano, who were then staying at Constantinople, urging them to pass on to us what he planned, promising that if we would come to his council, then we would return most joyfully to the Curia. Furthermore, we received letters from the emperor <sup>34</sup> who sought us to come without fail to Lescara, since he had prepared a ship for us, and everything that was needed for our voyage, and that of his own envoys, whom he was about to send to meet the lord pope in person. Furthermore, the land of Constantinople was all but completely unprotected. The lord emperor John was a pauper. All the paid knights (*militēs stipendiarii*) had departed. The ships of the Venetians, Pisans, of the men of Ancona and of other nations had been made ready to leave – some indeed had already left. Considering therefore how desolate the land was, we feared danger since that land was placed in the midst of its enemies. Asen, the king of the Vlachs, was to the north; Vatatzes to the east and south; while Manuel enclosed it from the west; <sup>35</sup> and thus we suggested negotiating a year's truce between the Emperor of Constantinople and Vatatzes. These reasons were so compelling that we were all willing to return to the land of Vatatzes. However, to avoid seeming to undertake too much on our own initiative, we consulted the chapter of St. Sophia and the prelates of that land, and as well as the emperor, about this matter, all of whom unanimously advised us [to go ahead].

[*Disputatio Latinorum et Graecorum*, c. 16, ed. H. Golubovich, in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 12 (1919), 445-6.]

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<sup>34</sup> John III Vatatzes, Emperor of Nikea 1221-54.

<sup>35</sup> Manuel Angelos, Emperor of Thessalonica 1230-7.